

Re- documentations and New Discoveries of Archaeological Sites in North Darfur State

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Abstract:

This paper discusses the archaeological works that have been carried out in the Darfur region 2022 by a joint archaeologist's team from NCAM, Darfour Heritage centre (Nylah University) and University of Alfasher. The archaeological work in Darfour continue after the war again in 2021 in South Darfour and in 2022 in North Darfur with good partnership with NCAM and the British Museum in Khartoum and Darfur Heritage Center in Nyala and El Fasher University, where the discovery was made. A large number of archaeological sites in the state of North Darfur in the locality of Kutum, the locality of Mellit and the locality of El Fasher, which indicates the importance of studying all of the Darfur region and the open invitation to all archaeologists in the world to go to the region, the work in North Darfur (2022) in a partnership with the British Museum, the Darfur Heritage Center in Nyala and El Fasher University, where the discovery was made. This work is carried out during the period from 20 /1/2022 - 10 /2/ 2022 under the title of Green Heritage Project and was sponsored by the British council. The survey was conducted by National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Local Ministry of Cultural and Social affair and Darfour heritage centre in Nyala city and University of Alfasher at alfasher city. It is known that archaeological work in the Darfur region have been done between 1902 -1955 before the independence of Sudan by McMichael and Arkel and others , also a large number of European were visited the regoin after the independence and from NCAM Dr.Algazafi Ishag (2003,2006) , Arkel, visited Ain Farah and Jebel Uri and wrote some articles about them with a lot of deatails and all these were published , as well as the many of German expeditions who came via Wadi Hawar for examples University of Cologne mission, Berlin Technical Univsityer , which connects the Darfur region to the Nile River in the Al-Dabba area in the northern state. Among the Sudanese archaeologists, we mention Professor Ibrahim Musa, professor. Archeology at Al-Nilein University The former Director General of Sudanese Antiquities and Museums, he also wrote

about the site of Ain Farah and Uri, along with a number of current archeology students. The North Darfur region is considered one of the regions rich in antiquities and contains civilizations dating back to the pre-Stone Ages, the Islamic kingdoms of Darfur, and the civilizations of West Africa, as it is considered a very important crossing point to the East, Arabs, North and South, and from there Islam spread to the regions of West Africa. The study was carried out in the locality of El Fasher, Kutum, Melit and Malha. Among the sites that were re-documented were Ain Farah and Uri, and the new sites that were recorded were the Tibago Mountains, Bir Abu Nashab, Mount Benqnu Cave, King Namido Cave, the village of Dar Janna, the village of Umm Khairy, the Mapo Mountains, and finally the historic city of Malha and Ain El Malha. The study reached a number of important points and recommendations that we will review within the presentation.

Keywords: Re-documentation, Discovery, Archaeology, Darfur.

إعادة التوثيق والاكتشافات الجديدة للمواقع الأثرية بولاية شمال دارفور

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مستخلص:

تتناول هذه الورقة الأعمال الأثرية التي تم تنفيذها في إقليم دارفور 2022 من قبل فريق آثاري مشترك من الهيئة العامة للآثار بالخرطوم ومركز تراث دارفور (جامعة نيالا) وجامعة الفasher. تواصلت الاعمال الأثرية في دارفور بعد الحرب مرة أخرى في عام 2021 في جنوب دارفور وفي عام 2022 في شمال دارفور بشراكة جيدة بين الهيئة العامة للآثار والمتاحف والمتحف البريطاني ومركز تراث دارفور في نيالا وجامعة الفasher حيث تم الاكتشاف. عدد كبير من المواقع الأثرية بولاية شمال دارفور في محلية كنم ومحلية مليط ومحلية الفasher مما يدل على أهمية دراسة إقليم دارفور كله والدعوة مفتوحة لجميع علماء الآثار في العالم للذهاب إلى دارفور والكشف عن حضارتها المتعددة وضمها إلى خارطة السودان الأثرية. ومن المعروف ان العمل الاثاري باقليم دارفور قد بدا منذ بداية القرن الماضي وحتى المنتصف (1902 - 1950) حيث ان هناك عدد كبير من علماء الاثار الاوربيين قد زاروا الاقليم وعلي راسهم الانجليزي اراكل وماك مايكل والذين قاموا بزيارة منطقة شمال دارفور وتحديد منطقة عين فرح وجبل اوري وايضا عدد من البعثات الالمانية الذين قدموا عن طريق وادي هور والذي يربط اقليم دارفور بنهر النيل في منطقة الدبة بالولاية الشمالية ومثال علي ذلك جامعة كولون والمركز التقني للآثار ببرلين ومن علماء الاثار السودانيون نذكر البروفيسور ابراهيم موسي استاذ الاثار بجامعة النيلين والمدير العام السابق للآثار والمتاحف السودانية وقد كتب ايضا عن موقع عين فرح واوري بجانب عدد من طلاب علم الاثار حاليا.. وتعتبر منطقة شمال دارفور من المناطق الغنية بالآثار وتحتوي علي حضارات ترجع الي ما قبل العصور الحجرية وممالك دارفور الاسلامية وحضارات غرب افريقيا اذ تعتبر معبرا مهما جدا شرقا وغربا وشمالا وجنوبا ومنها انتشر الاسلام الي مناطق غرب افريقيا تمت الدراسة في محلية الفasher

و كتم ومليط والمالحة ومن الماقح التي تمت اعادة التوثيق لها عين فرح واوري والمواقع الجديدة والتي تم تسجيلها جبال تيباقو وبير ابو نشاب و كهف جبل بنقنو وكهف الملك ناميدو وقرية دار جنا وقرية ام خيرى وجبال مابو واخيرا مدينة المالحة التاريخية وعين المالحة. توصلت الدراسة الي عدد من النقاط المهمة والتوصيات سوف نستعرضها داخل العرض.
الكلمات المفتاحية: اعادة توثيق، اكتشاف، آثار، دارفور.

Sort Introduction:

North Darfur State is located in western Sudan, between 12 – 20° N and 24 – 26.7° E. The state covers an area of 296,000 m². The discovery of new sites at the Northern part of Darfur will provide new information on medieval and early Islamic past. The aim of this article is to show the importance of Darfur region and to encourage archaeologists to conduct research in this region.

Those efforts began 2021 in South Darfur and continued in this year 2022 to work in North Darfur in a partnership with the British Museum, the Darfur Heritage Center in Nyala and El Fasher University, where the discovery was made.

The first explorations:

Our information about Darfur and Kordofan derives from three different developments;

First, the oldest information was recorded by early Arab geographers and European travelers and explorers, mainly from the 9th to the 19th century AD. They were not interested in Archeology or the ancient history of the area, but made general observations on the archaeological sites.

The region of Northern Darfur was mentioned by several Arab Medieval authors, the most important being Al Idrisi and Ibn Hawqal. In early modern times, Northern Darfur was visited by some travellers along the Darb al-Arbain, most importantly by al-Tunisi, W.G. Browne and Heinrich Barth. For more information about early records on Northern Darfur, also we have to menthend the work of Prof Ibrahim Mosa the former director of the National Corporation FOR Antiquities and Museums at Ayn Farah and Uri also, and in the last years we have to mention the work of Ibrahim

Neleen University in the same area. Beside the works of al-Gazafi. Yousef Ishag in South Darfour. (Preliminary report, NCAM. 2003-2006).

In the second phase, the recording of information was carried out by the British administrators between 1916 and 1956; sometimes they were amateur archaeologists or historians for example:

- Arkell
- McMichael
- Brown
- Blaikie J. A. 1938

Finally, after independence, the work of professional archaeologists and historians concerned these regions. Using new, more rigorous methods, they continued and added essential information to our knowledge of the ancient Darfur civilizations.

University of Cologne mission

- B.O.S1980 - 1993 visited the upper Wadi Hawar in 1980 and 1981
- ACACIA - 1995 - 2008 Wadi Hawar

Berlin Technical University: Jutta Haeser visited Jebel Mara in 1991 and 1993

Zigger Humboldt University – Some reports on Darfur

Dr. Gazafe work in Darfour region 2003-2006

This survey was held between 2003 and 2006, it covered the southern part of Jebel Dajou, east of Nyala town, also it covered some sites west, south and northern part of Nyala. The survey was conducted by National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Local Ministry of Cultural and Social affair and the Tourism Administration Office in the southern Darfur state. It covered 17 sites in general; some of them were visited by A. J. Arkell during 30's of the last centuries.

The results of this work according to Dr. Gazafee , he discovered sites with a high density of archaeological remains (adorn-

ments like beads, hand axes, ceramics, and iron objects). some samples have been collected from the eroded graves and settlement sites to make a preliminary attempt to evaluate the archaeological materials. As well as he recorded some rock painting sites at Jebel Dajou and cemeteries with a different type of stone superstructures.

NCAM 2021 :

2021 Ncam began heading again towards Darfur region to starting surveing project and trying to complete the archaeological map in the region and then include it in the archaeological map of Sudan. The beginning in year has been done by a team of archaeologists from NCAM went to South Darfur, where a large number of archaeological sites were discovered in Nyala, Kass, Radom and Nertiti locality-Jebel Marra. We discoverd different sites like stones building, tumulus cemeteries and settlements as well pottery sherds with decorations

NCAM 2022 THE GREEN HERIGHE PROJECT:

In this year 2022 NCAM continued the work in Darfur region but in North Darfur at kutm locality and Maleet and Malah, this time in partnerships with the Centre of Darfur Heritage at University of Nyala and the University of Al fasher (an expert from Faculty of Environment and Natural Resources at University of Fasher,)

The team consisted of various members of documentary and antiquarian work such as aerial photography (drone), traditional portable camera photography in addition to a proficient expert for studying natural and man-made climate change threats at archaeological sites.

This work is carried out during the period from 20 /1/2022 - 10 /2/ 2022 under the title of Green Heritage Project and was sponsored by the British council. The survey was conducted by National Corporation for Antiquities and Museums, Local Ministry of Cultural and Social affair and Darfour heritage center in Nyala city and University of Alfasher at alfasher city.

This project was funded by the British council under the title the green Heritage project.

Many information was contributed by local people. For the time being, we have to rely on these legends and stories of the past, since we lack scientific proof yet.

(1) **Ain Farah**

Ain Farah is located west of Kutum with a distance of an hour travel by car. Alongside the way to the site, the team survived great number of archaeological sites including a cemetery at Abdalbagi Village (N 14244332 – E 2456965), having a widespread on top hill of circular stone-built shape.

The same shapes are scattered all around the area and extended from east to west with approximate dimensions of 3-2.4m. Different decorated potsherds have also been found there.

Not far from Abdalbagi village, Hilat Algoose (N 1422234 – E 2451902), which is located at about 3km to the west, similar cemeteries has been found.

The gafir's house:

The gafir's house (N 141566.7 – E 241847.1) site is composed of about five circular stone buildings located at the foot of the Jebel separated by a large valley of trees. the team didn't get into it for being impenetrable in the way up though it's dimensions have been taken from the opposite side east of the valley and south of the spring.

Ain Farah mosque:

This mosque (N 141556.7 – E 241857.1) is square shape room built of stone and red bricks (17×31×50 cm). it is located at the south-western side of the ruins of the royal palace with area of about 100m square having 4 triangular shape columns with a height of 2.5m and 1.5m width but without ceiling.

Anthony Arkell wrote about the ruins of Ain Farah in 1936, and suggested that it was a Christian medieval church which was later converted to a mosque. He published the first rough sketch plans of the site.

On top of rocky slopes descending from the Jebel the team found a rectangular structure pool (N 145504 – E 241857.0) built by red bricks at length of 1.70m; its wall's dimensions were 40cm×1.40m.

Many circular buildings (N 145503 – E 241867.0) have been found built by stone located west of the mosques' ruins having different dimensions of about 1.70m×5.30m.

The old town

The old town is located southwest of the mosque having circular buildings built of stone with different dimensions of about 1.18-1.36m. its area is about 100×50m extending around the Jebel from southwest to northwest. Moreover, decorated potsherds have been found on its surface.

(2) Jebel Uri

This General introduction into the complex site of Uri (explaining different parts of the town with their main buildings, like Palace, Dari house and Maiarm house and other details:

At Jebel Uri there is a circular enclosure wall located at (N 142622.3 – E 242334.9) with height of 190cm×80cm width. There is a well located at (N 142622.2 – E 242335.5). There are more than 500 stone buildings located at the southwestern side of the Jebel at (N 142621.2 – E 242333.8). Their walls' dimensions are (90cm×5m×160) and fragments of decorated potsherds have been found at this site. There is a square shape stone building at (N 142619.2 – E 242333.2).

The measuring of this area is (1197m) with dimensions of (70×160×110m) this is unclear. Please give the dimensions of the stone building having an entrance from the northern side, with a shapes on a piece of large rock have been recorded at (N 142618.9 – E 242332.6).

The place was also visited by Arkell in the 1930's, he published a short description with sketch plan in 1946.

Old mosque at Uri:

This site has an outer stone wall located at (N 142616.4 – E

242318.5) with dimensions of (170×190×90cm). it Contains 66 rounded columns from inside the building without cell, there is about 10 rooms attached to the wall from outside. We should know that Arkell visited the site in 1936 and published some notes about it in 1941

Uri old market

This area is located at the southwestern side of the Jebel at (N 142618.7 – E 242317.2

Uri lower town:

Ruins buildings are located at (N 142623.5 – E 242310.3) south west of Uri well with large enclosure wall and about 10 rooms from inside made from stones in circular shape. Some pottery shreds has been collected from the site.

In the slope of the Gabel there are some buildings made of stone and located at (N 142622.1 – E 242306.2), having a wall of 60 width and 150cm height.

Dali's house:

The Area of Dali's house is about 500×70m. It consists of several circular rooms (3m* 2m dimension) around a circular courtyard made from the stone in square shape. Early Islamic pottery shreds has been recorded.

Maiarim house and the southern town:

These ruins include the Maiarim's house located at (N 142619.9 – E 242301.3). These ruins constitute a number of circular stone buildings located southwest of the Jebel taking a shape of large residential compounds.

The Upper Palace:

This site is located at northeast towards the southern side of the town at (N 142623.0 – E 242300.9). it has different-sized triangular rooms gradually descending and extending to the nearby valley located to the east with an area of 500×80m. The height of its circular buildings is 4.70cm, width 4.55cm, its wall dimension is 120cm. Other adjacent buildings have 6.60m length and 110m width, their entrance's width is at 90cm and 1m height, and its wall dimension is 88cm, its indoor coordinates (N 142623.1 – E

242301.4).

To reach the Upper Palace and the upper town there are staircases made of stones (or maybe it's just like agriculture tresses (according to Dr. Ebrahiem Mosa: Survey in Northern Darfur).

In the upper town are buildings with many rooms made of stones in circular shape with many pieces of decorated pottery shreds.

Northern town:

This town is located at northeast of the Upper Palace at (N 142627.2 – E 242257.8) having circular and semi-circular buildings surrounded by stone wall. Many pieces of pottery shreds has been found.

King Namadu's Cave is located at the top of the Jebel with height of 4.50cm of the main entrance and 10.20m of the cave height, faintly existed through deliberately erased and distorted by paint and graffiti,

Abu Nashab area: site is an area having old wells, rock engravings and circular stone tombs. The oldest well, its depth is 27 man, length 19m, dug at the foot of the Jebel at an area of 200×10cm , near the well there is an old tomb with length of 330cm, Near the well there is an old tomb with length of 330cm.

Conclusion:

To make comparison study for two big sites and some small SITES in between we can say that:

The are same techniques and similar art especially in the ROCK ART AT the cave of king Namadu and the rock art at Abu Nashab area and that give us an area that the people in the tow area were very close in the every thins especially in the daily life and there traditions and costumes. As well as you can realizes other similar art in many different sites in hat region , maybe the big reasons of this similarity is same activities and the movements with goat and sheep for searching for water and food.

Also ther is some notes Parallels and differences in structures

and the date of used and construction for example if we make comparison between the pottery sherars decoration in the Churches/ and old mosques in both sites at Ayn Farah and Uri, easily we can find out the same decorations and techniques in Nile valley sites and this show us the big Link between Darfur and Nile valley area and this results were included by Prof Ibrahim in his article concerning the layout of the mosques in North Darfur

Other similarty in this study the location of the palaces at Ayn Farah ahd Uri:

Both sites located on the top and that mean for more secure and control for both palaces because the two sites belong to the king Shawdar Sheed.

General remarks

The preliminary descriptive archaeological, ethnographic and environmental fieldwork survey in North Darfur has targeted at Ain Farah and Jebel Uri.

Moreover, we integrated efforts of public outreach:

- Two workshops have been held at University of Fasher, Darfur Museum in Nyala and Khalifa House Museum in Omdurman for presenting and discussing the results of the fieldwork survey in relation to impacts of climate change on heritage.
- An official meeting with North Darfur State governor is arranged and crowned with a rare opportunity of press conference's briefing which has been disseminated to the community on Sudan TV as well as on daily newspapers.
- A radio interview of an hour's time has been made at the North Darfur Radio Corporation on the theme of impacts of climate change on heritage.

We realized that the sites are endangered because of various factors:

- Impacts of man-made damage and distortion of rock drawings constitute eminent threat to disappearance of invaluable memory of prehistory.
- Traditional gold mining destroyed cemeteries and other buildings.
- Antiquity theft during the 1980s has been recorded at

Uri site.

- Prehistoric human occupation at Uri, Ain Farah, towns is still unidentified since current resident communities are recent dwellers.

To put in a **Footnote**: One important social impact of this project is the great welcoming and hospitality of the joint team at each site which resulted in an official request forwarded to the Supreme Council on Culture at North Darfur State Government for revisiting survey of Malha area at a vast and sufficient timing. The Meidob king and the Baza Band leader in Malha are behind such request. They also would embrace the notion of providing generous aid and kind assistance to the upcoming joint team if their request is approved.

Footnote: Team members

Footnote This joint expedition includes experts from the NCAM in addition to Universities of Nyala and Fasher have proved that cooperative fieldwork of different professionals in disciplines of archaeology, ethnography and environment is essential for studying current state of Darfur antiquities though lacking linguists.

Eventually, intimacy, collaboration and teamwork have brilliantly marked and shaped the results of this most significant preliminary descriptive archaeological, ethnographic and environmental survey tour. Everywhere, mention, acknowledgement and thanks are devoted to the generous fund of both the British Council and Aliph Foundation.

Future plans:

- To enlarge the survey (new fund, new partners), and this is one of the NCAM futures plans in order to complete the Sudan archaeological map and fill the gabs in our understanding of Sudan's ancient history and heritage.

- Build a network and encourage new collaboration with foreign missions from different international institutions to make an interdisciplinary projects in the region.

- Raising awareness of Darfur's local communities by organizing annual events and lecturers.

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Ayn Farah



Malha



Distribution of sites in Ayn Farrah



ghafir's house



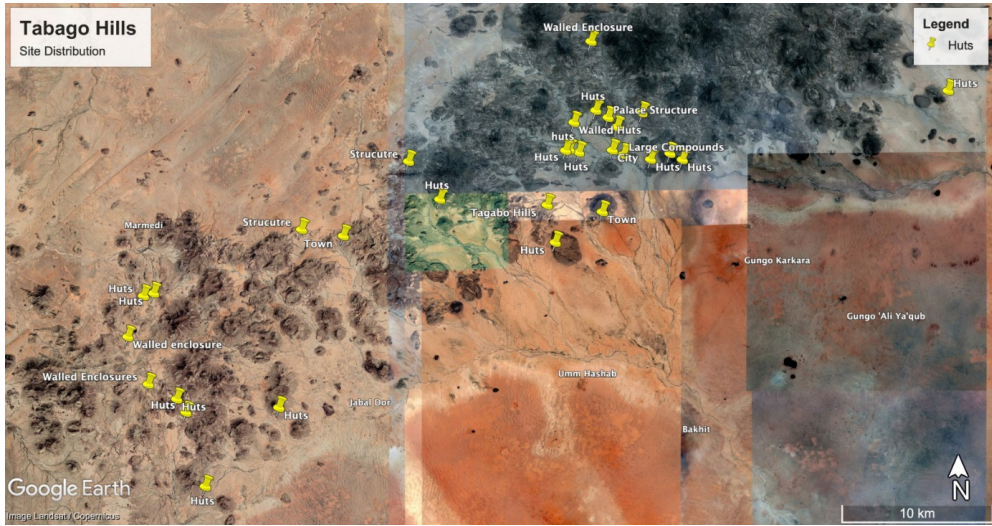
The mosque in Ayn Farah



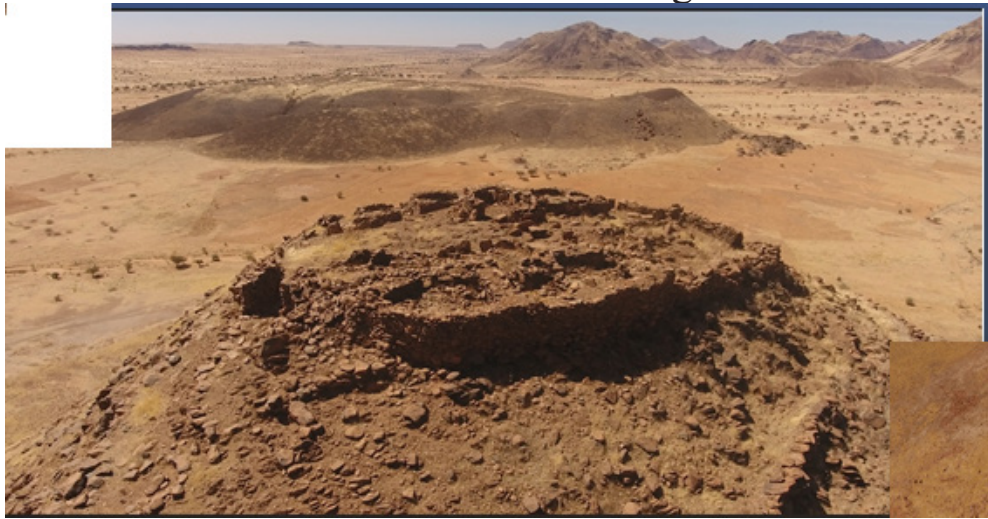
Distribution of sites in Uri



General view of Uri houses



Distribution of sites in Tabago hills



Um Kary site



Graffiti in Aumu village



Abu Nashab



Rock art in Abu Nashab



Old wells in Mabu mountain



Rock painting in King Namdo cave



Ancient spring of Malha