

Institution: Oxford Brookes University
Unit of Assessment: 17 - Geography, Environmental Studies and Archaeology
Title of case study: Pearling: Testimony to an Island Economy
<p>1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)</p> <p>Oxford Brookes Archaeology and Heritage (OBAH) offers research, and consultancy services in archaeology, heritage and the ancient environment. OBAH undertook four major excavations on behalf of the Government of Bahrain between 2009 and 2010. The impact of OBAHs excavations and reports were instrumental in (a) the sites excavated being designated national monuments, protected under law, and (b) underpinning a UNESCO World Heritage bid by Bahrain in 2010. <i>Pearling and its cultural landscapes in Bahrain</i> was awarded World Heritage status at the 36th meeting of the UNESCO World Heritage Committee in June 2012.</p>
<p>2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)</p> <p>OBAH is a university-based consultancy, which offers research and consultancy services in archaeology, heritage and the ancient environment. The consultancy is based in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences specifically to bridge the gap between research and archaeological and heritage practice. OBAH was initiated via a successful HEFCE Higher Education Innovation Funding (HEIF) 4 funding initiative (£175k) awarded in May 2008. OBAH provides the highest level of expertise and experience in the Arabian Peninsula and the Gulf region. As well as conducting archaeological and environmental assessments, and survey and salvage operations for corporate clients, OBAH provides advice to museums and heritage organisations working in Arabia and the Gulf region and advises governments on policy.</p> <p>Dr Robert Carter, Senior Research Fellow and OBAH Manager, 2008-2011 (moved to UCL Qatar, October 2011), is a world leading expert on the history and prehistory of Arabia and the Persian Gulf region. He has conducted numerous archaeological surveys and excavations in Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, Iran and the United Arab Emirates. Dr Mike Morley, Senior Research Fellow, is a geoarchaeologist and has worked in the Gulf region. Carter's research focussed on maritime interactions from the Neolithic to the present day exploring the role of pearling in the Gulf region over the last 7,000 years. Since 2008 he has published four books, several papers and key reports, which underpin this impact case study. They include:</p> <p>2010: <i>Maritime interactions in the Arabian Neolithic</i>. Main author and co-editor. The book explores maritime interaction between Ubaid Mesopotamia and Neolithic Arabia during the 6th/5th millennia BC. It is based on the results of excavations in Kuwait, and includes extended discussion and analysis of early seafaring and interregional interaction, full specialist analyses, and a detailed account of boat-related finds. It also highlights the earliest evidence for the collection and trading/exchange of pearls.</p> <p>2010: <i>Beyond the Ubaid: Transformation and Integration in the Late Prehistoric Societies of the Middle East</i>. Co-editor with Graham Philip (Durham). Presents results of a major international conference exploring prehistoric interactions across the Middle East during the Ubaid Period.</p> <p>2010: <i>The Archaeology of a Desert Island</i>. Main author and co-editor (with Robert Killick) and main author of a volume exploring coastal occupation at al-Khor, Qatar from the Bronze Age to the Late Islamic Period.</p> <p>2009: <i>How Pearls Made the Modern Emirates. New Perspectives on Recording UAE History</i>. This paper demonstrates how the urban configuration of the UAE was determined largely by the growth of the historic pearl fishery. Prior to the coming of oil, pearling played a formative role in the development of the region's political and financial structures and in the foundation of the major towns including Abu Dhabi and Dubai.</p> <p>2008: <i>Athar Sharjah: Highlights from the Collection of the Sharjah Archaeology Museum</i>. Carter compiled this catalogue highlighting a selection of objects currently on display at the Sharjah Archaeology Museum. The volume explores Sharjah's ancient past from the Stone Age 7000 years</p>

Impact case study (REF3b)

ago to the pre-Islamic era. Published jointly in English and Arabic.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

- Carter, R. A.** and H. E. W. Crawford, Eds. (2010). *Maritime interactions in the Arabian Neolithic: Evidence from H3, As-Sabiyah, an Ubaid-related site in Kuwait*. American School of Prehistoric Research. Leiden, Brill. ISBN: 9789004163591 <http://www.brill.com/maritime-interactions-arabian-neolithic>
- Carter, R. A.** and R. Killick, Eds. (2010, e-book). *Al-Khor Island: Investigating Coastal Exploitation in Bronze Age Qatar*. Ludlow: Moonrise Press. ISBN: 9780953956128 <http://www.moonrisepress.co.uk/?p=38>
- Carter, R. A.** and G. Philip, Eds. (2010). *Beyond the Ubaid: Transformation and Integration in the Late Prehistoric Societies of the Middle East*. Chicago, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago. ISBN: 9781885923660 <http://oi.uchicago.edu/research/pubs/catalog/saoc/saoc63.html>
- Carter, R. A.** (2010). The Social and Environmental Context of Neolithic Seafaring in the Persian Gulf. *The Global Origins and Development of Seafaring*. A. Anderson, J. Barrett and K. Boyle. Cambridge, McDonald Institute Monograph: 191-202. ISBN: 9781902937526 <http://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/global-origins-and-development-of-seafaring.html>
- Carter, R. A.** (2009). *How Pearls Made the Modern Emirates. New Perspectives on Recording UAE History*. Abu Dhabi, Centre for Documentation and Research. ISBN: 9789948050711
- Carter, R.A.** (2008). *Athar Sharjah: Highlights from the Collection of the Sharjah Archaeology Museum, Sharjah Museums Department, UAE*. SMD Publishing ISBN: 9789948036364 http://www.archaeologymuseum.ae/learning&research_publication.html

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)

Carter's expertise led to the invitation for OBAH to undertake archaeological and historical work in Bahrain. Pearling, and its cultural landscapes in Bahrain, is an outstanding example of a traditional maritime trade, which shaped the economic and cultural identity of an island society. This millennia-long practice is the most significant example globally of a natural pearl-collection tradition. The practice is based on the Arabian Gulf oyster beds north of Bahrain, which have been the best-known source of pearls since the sixth millennium BC. The urban cultural landscape of pearling on Muharraq Island comprises groups of historic buildings and locations, located parallel to the historic coastline, which represent the core places of the social, cultural and economic system of pearling (5.1). Key sites were evaluated and excavated by OBAH, led by **Carter** and **Morley**. OBAH provided key inputs and guidance, including a 10,000-word report, which comprised chapters 2b and 3c of the Government of Bahrain's successful UNESCO World Heritage bid, awarded in July 2012 (5.2). The "Pearling Trail" is Bahrain's second recognised World Heritage Site (5.3, 5.4, 5.5).

The UNESCO site consists of seventeen buildings in Muharraq City, three offshore oyster beds, part of the seashore and the Qal'at Bu Mahir fortress on the southern tip of Muharraq Island, from where boats used to set off for the oyster beds. The listed buildings include residences of wealthy merchants, shops, storehouses and a mosque. The site is the last remaining complete example of the cultural tradition of pearling and the wealth it generated at a time when the trade dominated the Gulf economy (2nd century to the 1930s, when Japan developed cultured pearls). It constitutes an outstanding example of traditional utilisation of the sea's resources and human interaction with the environment, which shaped the economy and the cultural identity of the island's society.

OBAH was commissioned by the Ministry of Culture to undertake six projects totalling £170k between May 2009 and March 2010. These were as follows:

- 1: £2k, initial emails and desk-based survey investigation (May 2009)
- 2: £5.3k, brief history of pearling report (July 2009)
- 3: £10.5k, 10,000 words for Chapters 2b and 3c of the UNESCO World Heritage Nomination file

Impact case study (REF3b)

(July - August 2009)

4: Fakhro Amara 1st Phase (fieldwork and report): £50k (October - November 2009)

5: Bu Maher Fort (fieldwork and report): £48k (Feb - March 2010)

6: Fakhro Amara Phase 2 (fieldwork and report, including mosque site): £55k (Feb - March 2010)

Knowledge Transfer

Carter and the OBAH team, including **Morley**, produced three major reports and a chapter, which helped inform Bahrain's *Pearling, Testimony of an Island Economy* UNESCO World Heritage application (5.4). The OBAH reports are available online. The work has brought to the fore the archaeology and cultural heritage of one of Bahrain's most important historical and cultural traditions, which is being preserved for future generations. The sources of knowledge transfer that the various stakeholders brought to the UNESCO bid including OBAH, and the transfer of knowledge to present and future generations is vital for understanding the rich cultural heritage of Bahrain, its peoples and the global economic reach of this former industry. Examples include:

(i) OBAH providing training to host country archaeologists in excavation and recording methods.

(ii) The excavations undertaken by OBAH at Bu Maher and Muharraq led to the sites being designated national monuments under Decree Law No (11) of 1995 Concerning the Protection of Antiquities on 10th January 2010.

(iii) November 2011, the Ministry of Culture drew up a vision for the development of old Muharraq – and the area that surrounds them, which includes a buffer zone. This sets out a holistic approach for preserving the historic character of Muharraq. New laws limit the increase in unplanned construction or population, prevent the deterioration of the special character of the urban fabric, and protect sites, urban settlements and antiquities (5.3).

(iv) The Bahraini Government and media report that the designation will enhance tourism, increase foreign direct investment, and lead to additional cultural exchanges between the countries of the Arabian Gulf (5.4).

(v) The Bahrain example has been extended to the Qatar Museums Authority with expert consultancy provided by OBAH in 2010 on Qatar's pearl-fishing heritage, during the construction of the Qatar National Museum.

Media

OBAH's work and contribution to the project has attracted media coverage including:

- Newspaper and online reports e.g. Reuters, Khaleej Times, Gulf Daily News (5.5)
- 07 May 2009 - Public lecture by **Carter** at the Bahrain National Museum organised by the Bahrain Culture and Information Ministry and the Italian Embassy
- Bahraini TV, YouTube (5.6).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

1. Carter, R.A. (2012). *Sea of Pearls: Seven Thousand Years of the Industry That Shaped the Gulf*. Arabian Publishing. ISBN: 9780957106000 (compiled, written and in press whilst at Oxford Brookes) <http://www.oxbowbooks.com/oxbow/sea-of-pearls.html>

2. UNESCO World Heritage status announcement for *Pearling and its cultural landscapes in Bahrain* (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1364/>)

3. Nomination to the World Heritage List, "*Pearling: Testimony to an Island Economy*". Ministry of Culture and Information, Government of Bahrain, 348pp. Dr Carter named in document as a contributor (p.337) to the bid (pdf available on request) wrote two key chapters for the bid: Chapter 2b: The history of pearling in Bahrain and Muharraq 21pp; Chapter 3c: Comparative analysis of the pearl fishery of Bahrain, the Gulf and the World. 42pp. Available on request.

<http://heritage.brookes.ac.uk/projects/previous/bahrain-pearling/>

Impact case study (REF3b)

4. Ministry of Culture and Information report on UNESCO bid and Dr Carter's and Oxford Brookes's involvement. <http://www.proudlyarabian.com/Bahrain/Bahrain-Pearling-Industry-Top-Heritage-Site.aspx#>
5. Reuters - Muharrag's "Pearling Trail" Becomes Second Bahraini Landmark on UNESCO World Heritage List 02/07/2012
<http://www.reuters.com/article/2012/07/02/idUS202061+02-Jul-2012+PRN20120702>
6. Excavations at Bu Maher Fort, Bahrain
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=saxbS3aSI8I&list=PL7MUhfLcCEUKjCH3Y36VuNWGZ47qHelpM>