

Burial Findings in Prehistory Qatar: Archaeological Perspective

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Abstract : Death, funerary beliefs and customs form an essential feature of belief systems and practices in many cultures. It is evident that during the pre-historical periods, various techniques of corpses burial and funerary rituals were conducted. Occasionally, corpses were merely buried in the sand, or in a grave where the body is placed in a contracted position- with knees drawn up under the chin and hands normally lying before the face- with mounds of sand, marking the grave or the bodies were burnt. However, common practice, that was demonstrable in the archaeological record, was burial. The earliest graves were very simple consisting of a shallow circular or oval pits in the ground. The current study focuses on the material culture at Qatar during the pre-historical period, specifically their funerary architecture and burial practices. Since information about burial customs and funerary practices in Qatar prehistory is both scarce and fragmentary, the importance of such study is to answer research questions related to funerary beliefs and burial habits during the early stages of civilization transformations at prehistory Qatar compared with Mesopotamia, since chronologically, the earliest pottery discovered in Qatar belongs to prehistoric Ubaid culture of Mesopotamia, that was collected from the excavations. This will lead to deep understanding of life and social status in pre-historical period at Qatar. The research also explores the relationship between pre-history Qatar funerary traditions and those of neighboring cultures in the Mesopotamia and Ancient Egypt, with the aim of ascertaining the distinctive aspects of pre-history Qatar culture, the reception of classical culture and the role it played in the creation of local cultural identities in the Near East. Methodologies of this study based on published books and articles in addition to unpublished reports of the Danish excavation team that excavated in and around Doha, Qatar archaeological sites from the 50th. The study is also constructed on compared material related to burial customs found in Mesopotamia. Therefore this current research: (i) Advances knowledge of the burial customs of the ancient people who inhabited Qatar, a study which is unknown recently to scholars, the study though will apply deep understanding of the history of ancient Qatar and its culture and values with an aim to share this invaluable human heritage. (ii) The study is of special significance for the field of studies, since evidence derived from the current study has great value for the study of living conditions, social structure, religious beliefs and ritual practices. (iii) Excavations brought to light burials of different categories. The graves date to the bronze and Iron ages. Their structure varies between mounds above the ground or burials below the ground level. Evidence comes from sites such as Al-Da'asa, Ras Abruk, and Al-Khor. Painted Ubaid sherds of Mesopotamian culture have been discovered in Qatar from sites such as Al-Da'asa, Ras Abruk, and Bir Zekrit. In conclusion, there is no comprehensive study which has been done and lack of general synthesis of information about funerary practices is problematic. Therefore, the study will fill in the gaps in the area.

Keywords : archaeological, burial, findings, prehistory, Qatar

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