

A photograph of a river scene in Iraq. In the foreground, a crowd of people is seen from behind, looking across the water. In the middle ground, there are three traditional boats: a long wooden boat with several people, a smaller round boat with two people, and a larger boat on the left with people wearing orange life jackets. In the background, another small boat with people is visible. The water is a greenish-brown color.

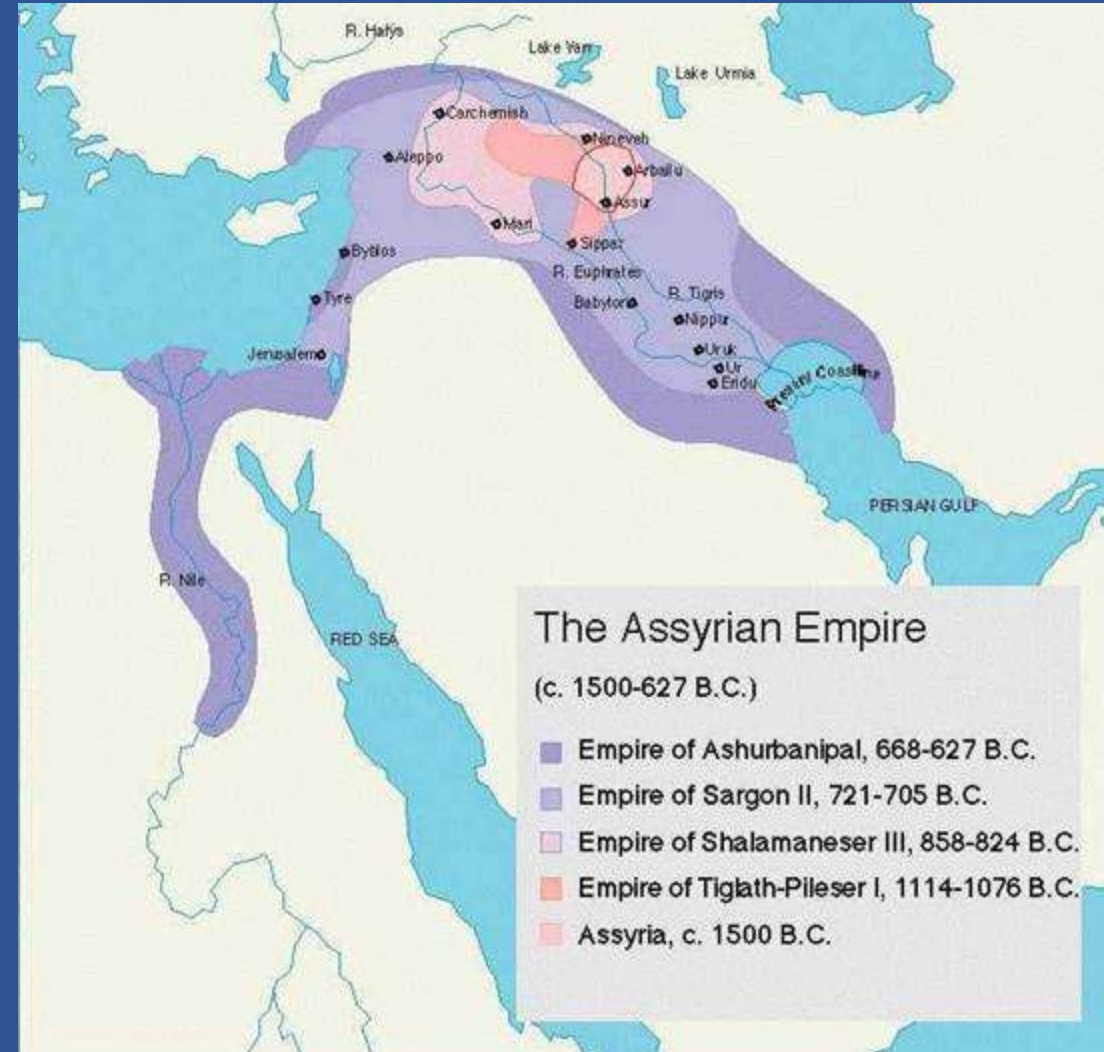
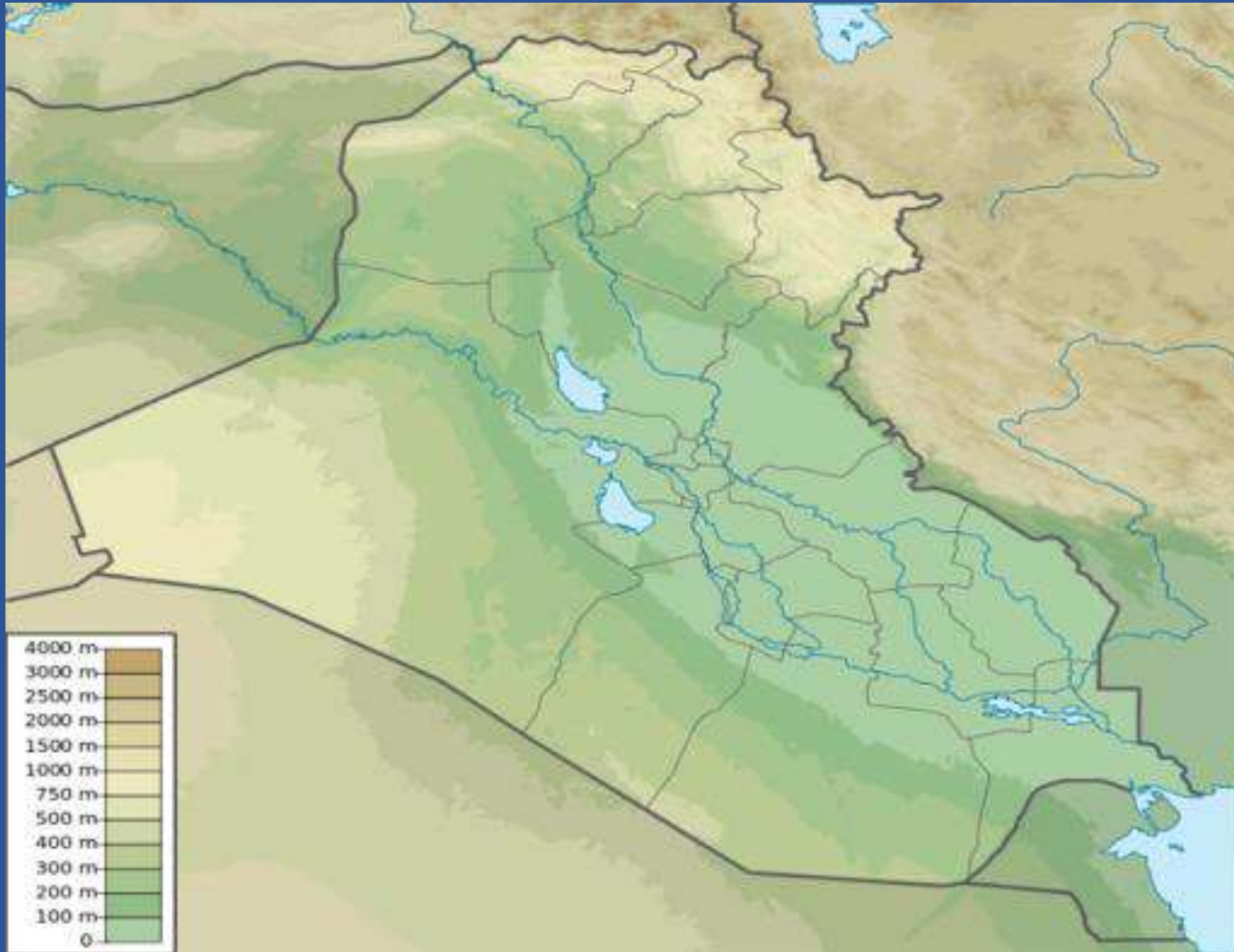
From Remembering to Revitalising

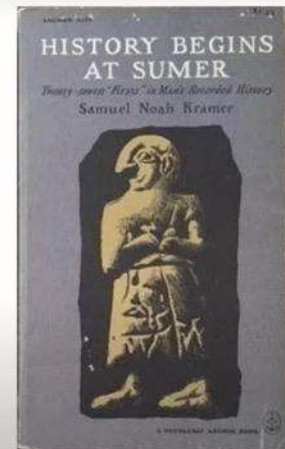
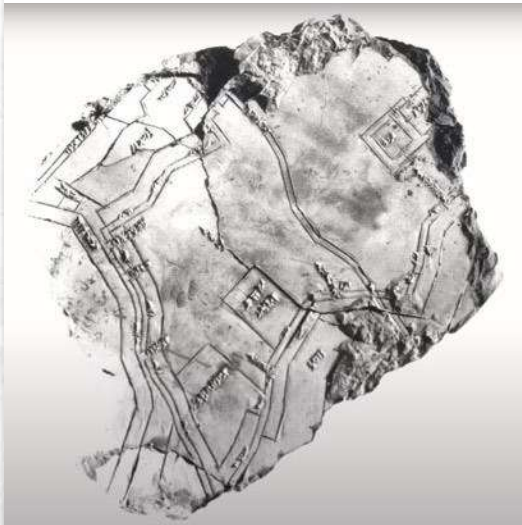
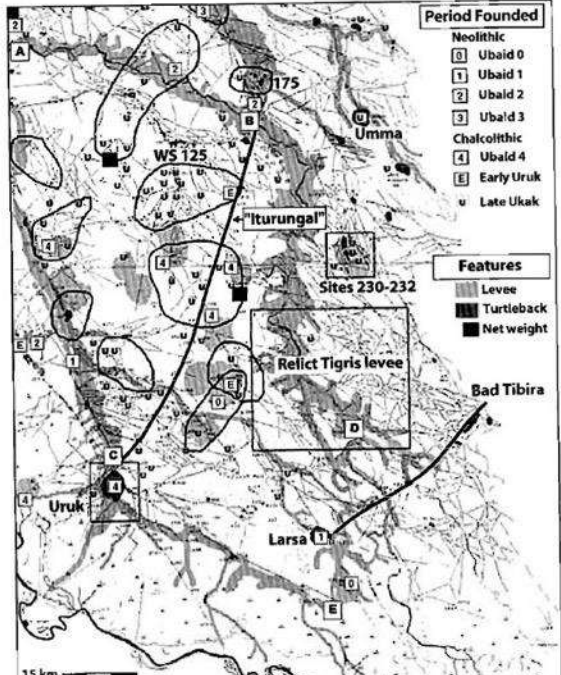
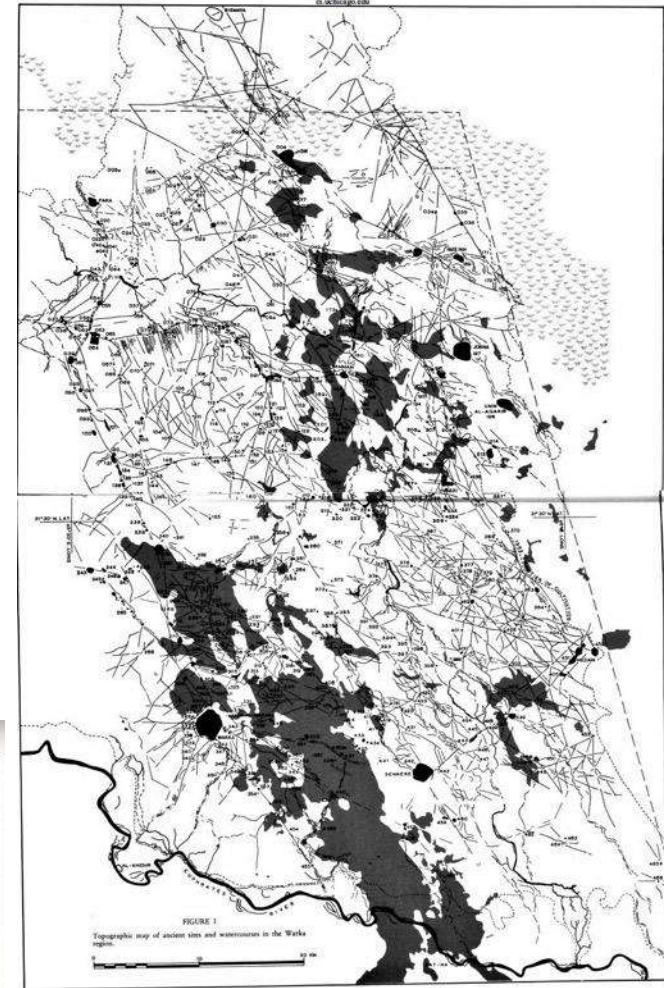
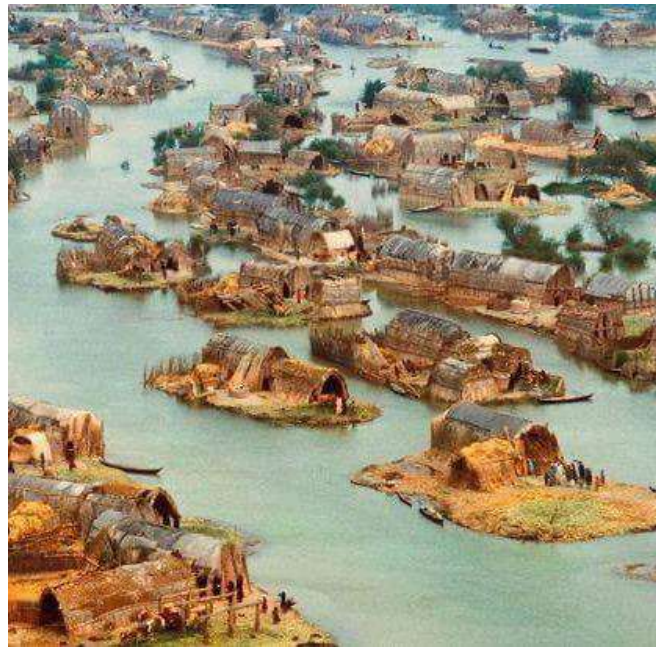
water cultures as active heritage for a future in Iraq

Hannah Lewis
Open Museum Initiative
for Water Cultures



Al-Saniya, Diwaniya, 2024





The Uruk Countryside

The Natural Setting of Urban Societies

Robert McC. Adams and
Hans J. Nissen

JENNIFER R. POURNELLE

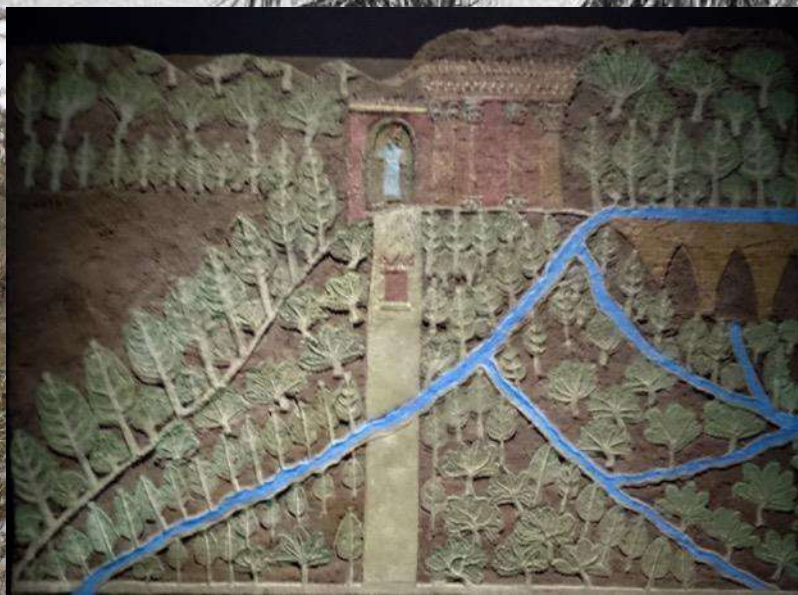
Samuel Noah Kramer

CULTURAL ECOLOGY AND EARLY MESOPOTAMIAN URBANIZATION

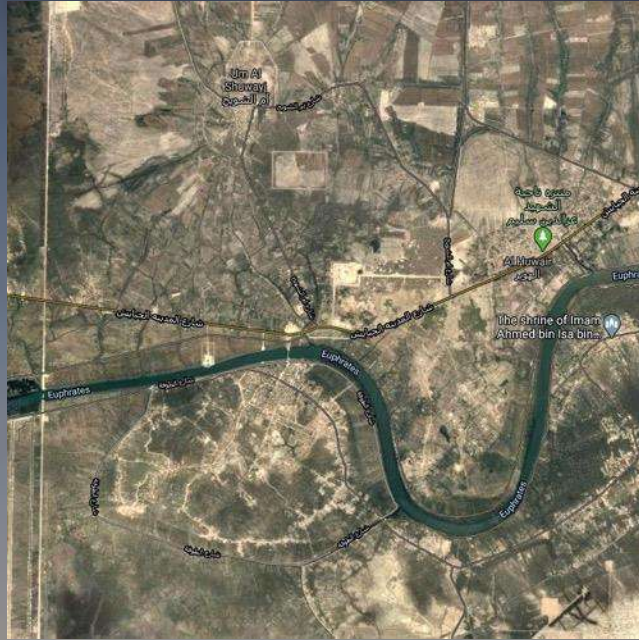
Dams Diminish Iraqi Marshes

▣ Dam





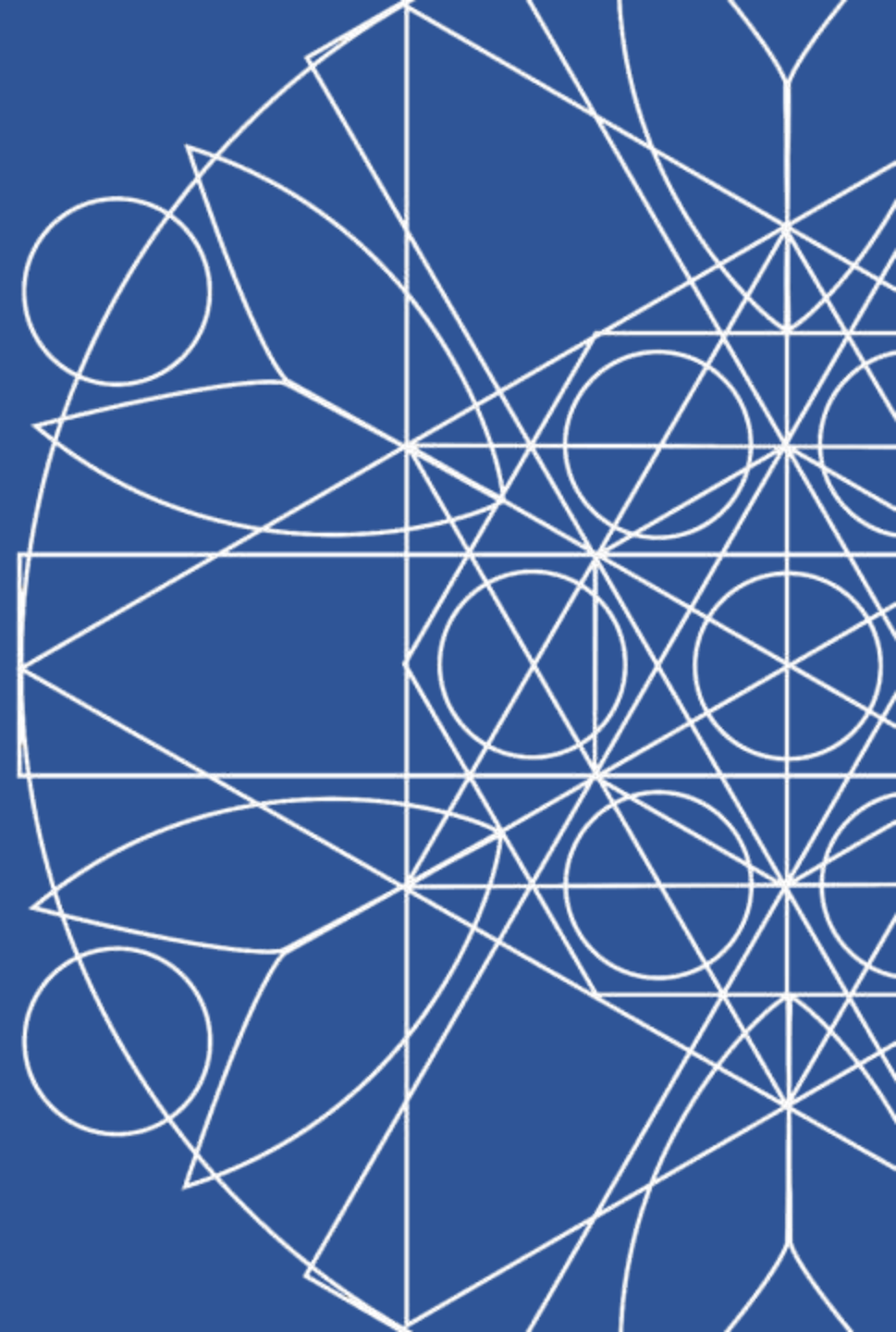


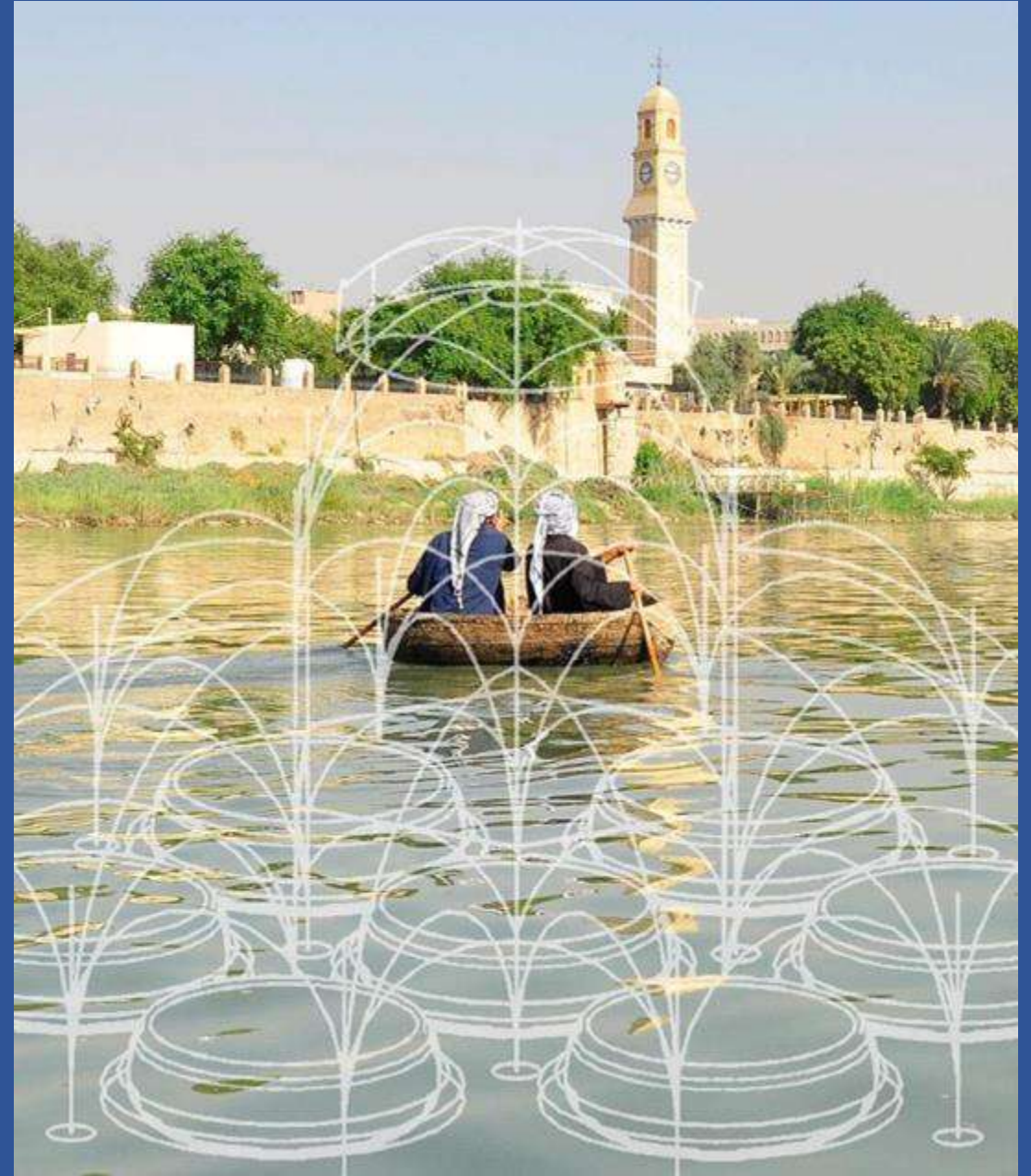




Phase 1:
Ark Re-imagined
2015–16

Concept and Scoping

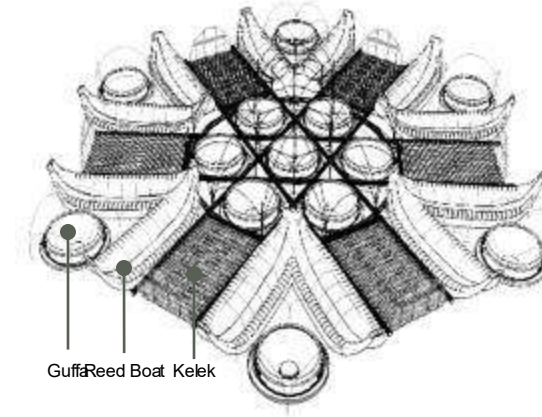
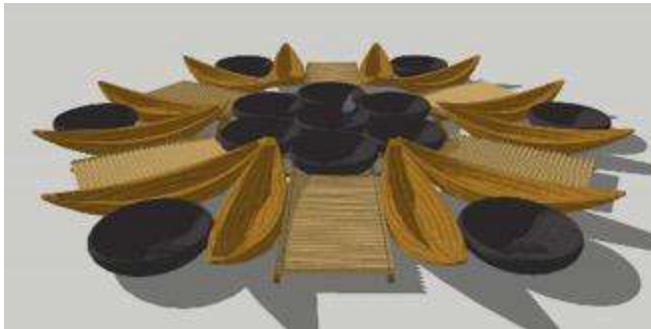
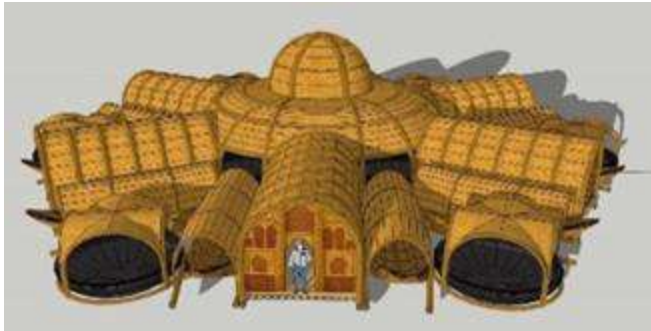
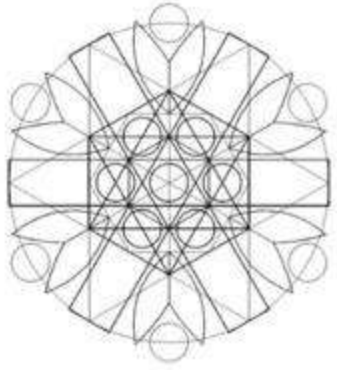




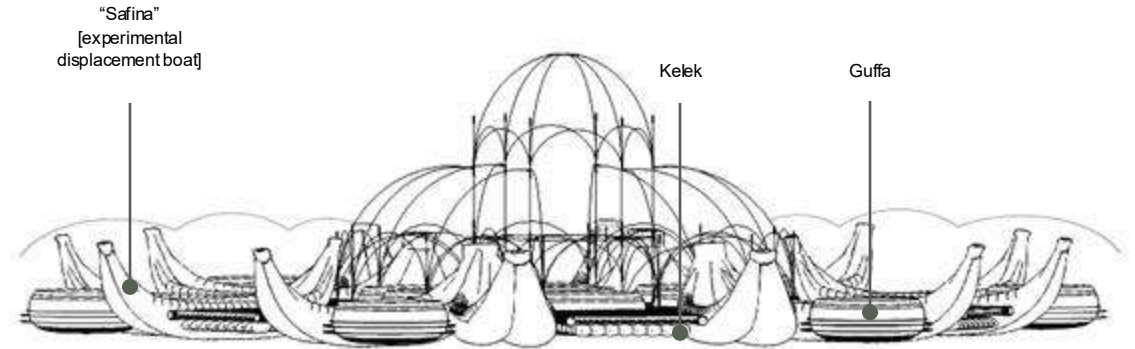
The Ark Re-imagined " لو كان هناك سفينة انقاض من طوفان مهلك، وإذا بنيت على يد انسان، فحتماً بثقافته الحرفية و مادة يضم أفضل ما في الماضي (و)بيئته في زمانه ومكانه .”والحاضر من أجل مستقبل يستحق العيش

رشاد سليم

“Had there been an Ark and if one were to build an Ark, it would be of its time and place (and) incorporate the best of past and present for a future worth living .” Rashad Salim



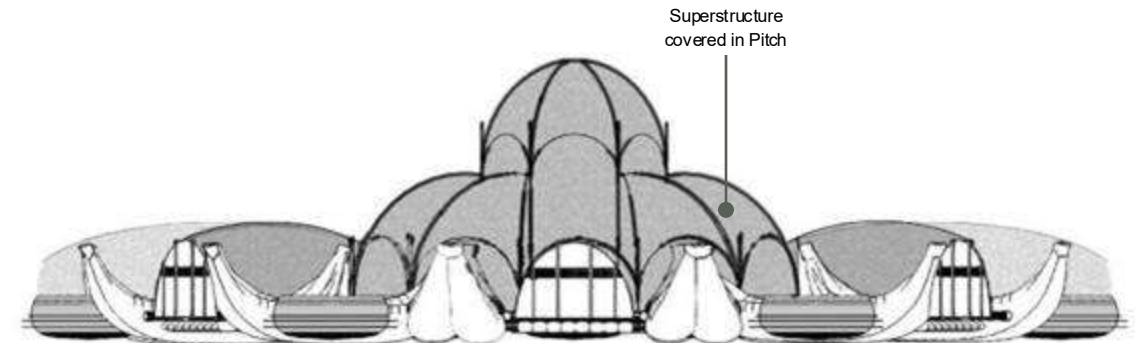
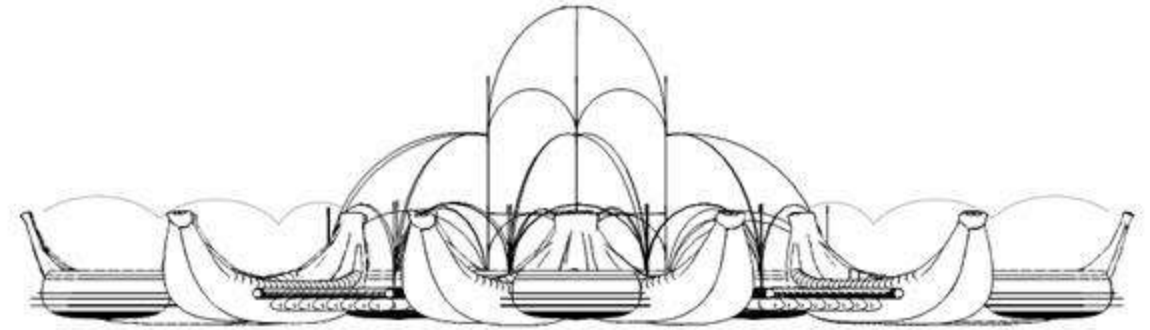
Guffa Reed Boat Kelek



"Safina"
[experimental
displacement boat]

Kelek

Guffa



Superstructure
covered in Pitch



THREE STAGES OF A GUYA.
(1). Weaving the basket foundation.



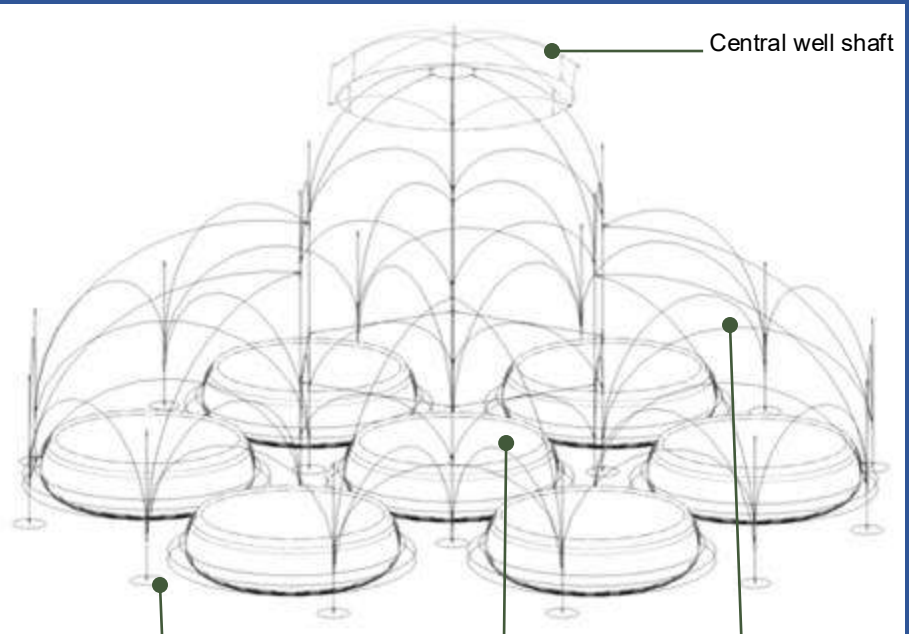
(2). Adding the "ribs."



(3). The finished guya, doused with bitumen to make it watertight.



Components of the Ark: Core with Superstructure



Stanchions support
Reed Bundle Columns

Central Guffa
accommodates the Ark Hearth

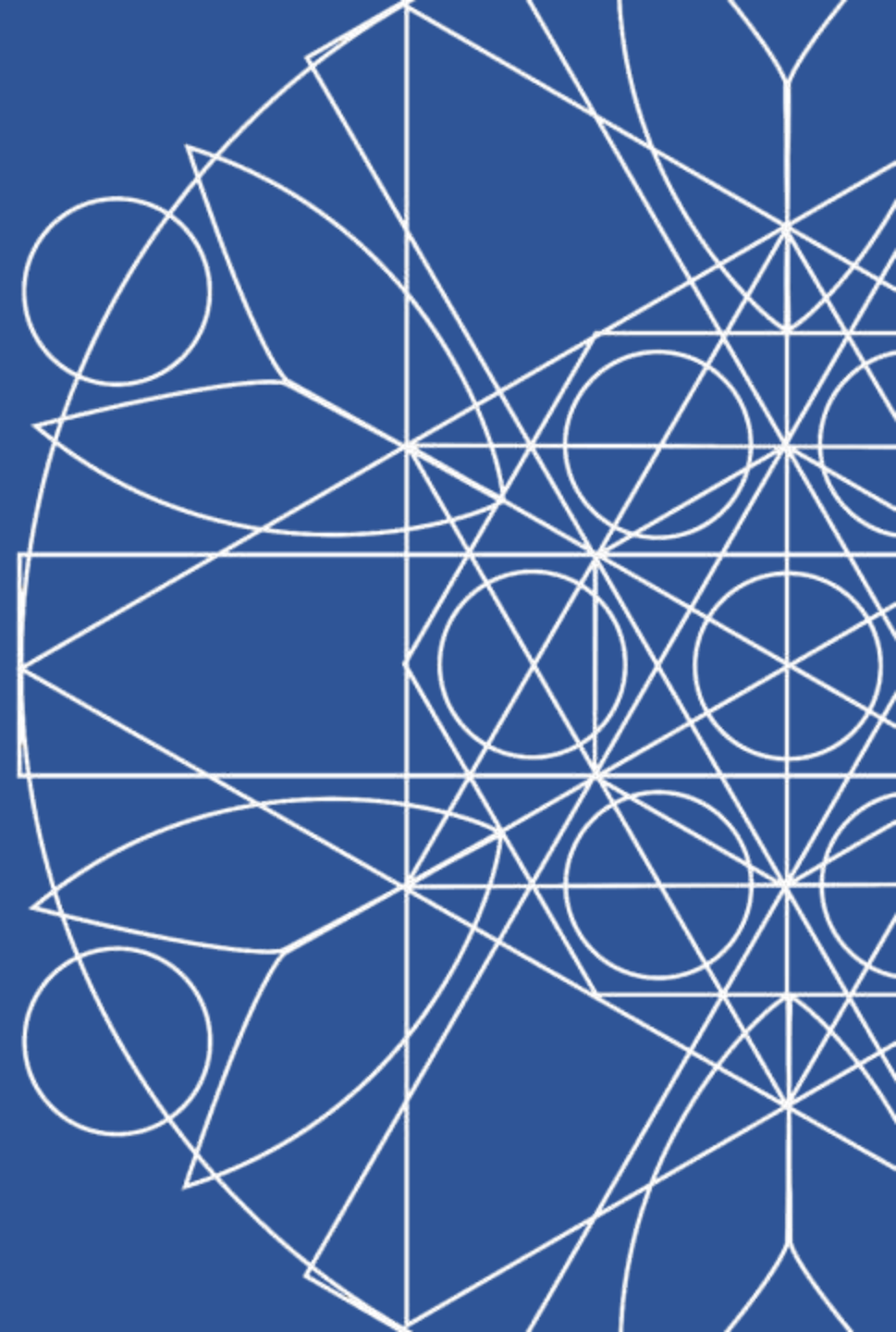
Reed Bundle Columns
and Arches form the
Ark Superstructure

Palm and reed material construction



Phase 2: Ark for Iraq
2016–21

**Boat Reconstruction
and Study**





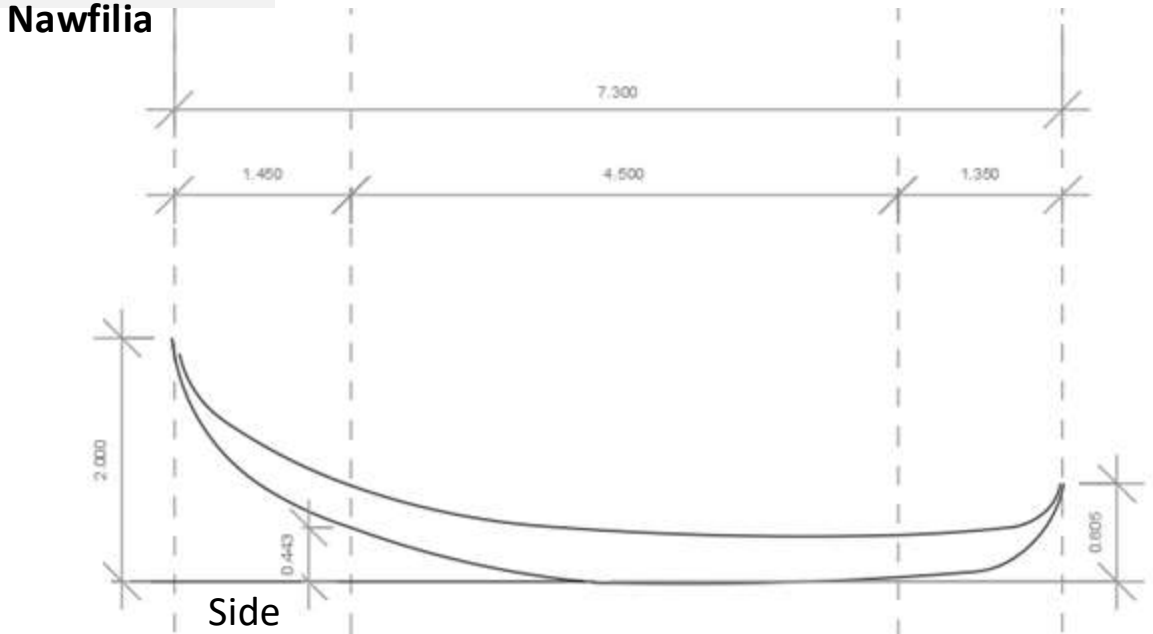
Ark For Iraq programme

A series of grant-funded projects during the past 8 years has delivered:

- ❖ A comprehensive survey and study of traditional and historical inland watercraft in Iraq
- ❖ A programme to revive the construction and use of heritage boats, including **Guffa, Shasha, Zaima, Isbiya / Kaiya, Delil, Tarada, Meshouf, Chilaika, Nawfilia, Teksi, Houri, Barkash, Ka'ed, Danek, Kelek, Ashari Balam, Groofi, Saaja, Dawwariya, Mizraq, Shekhtour, Baghdadi Balam, Muhaila, Jendoul**

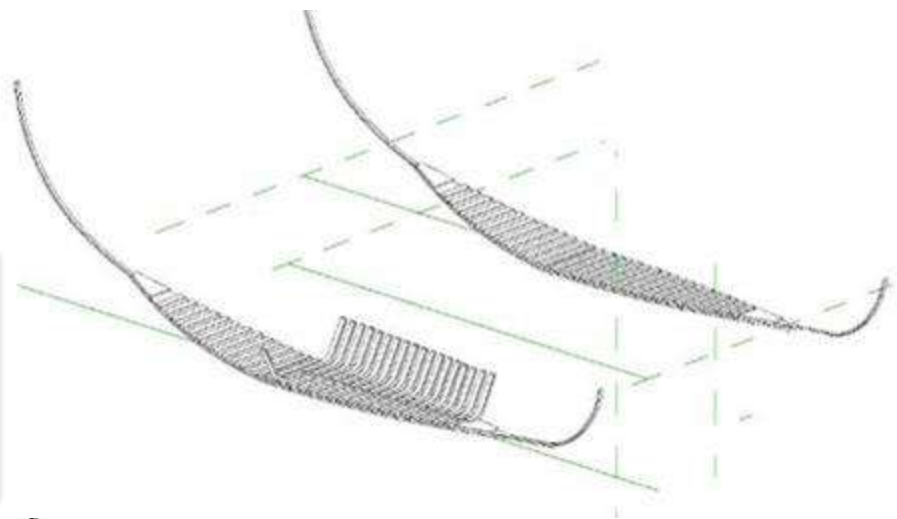
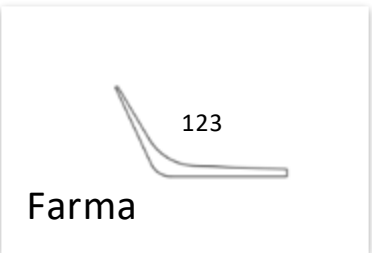
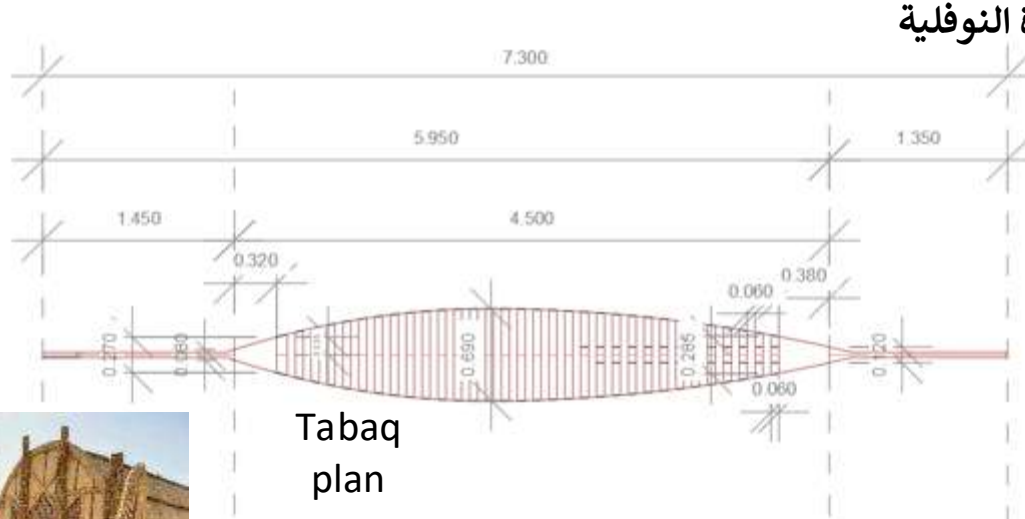


Nawfilia



Back

الطرادة النوفلية

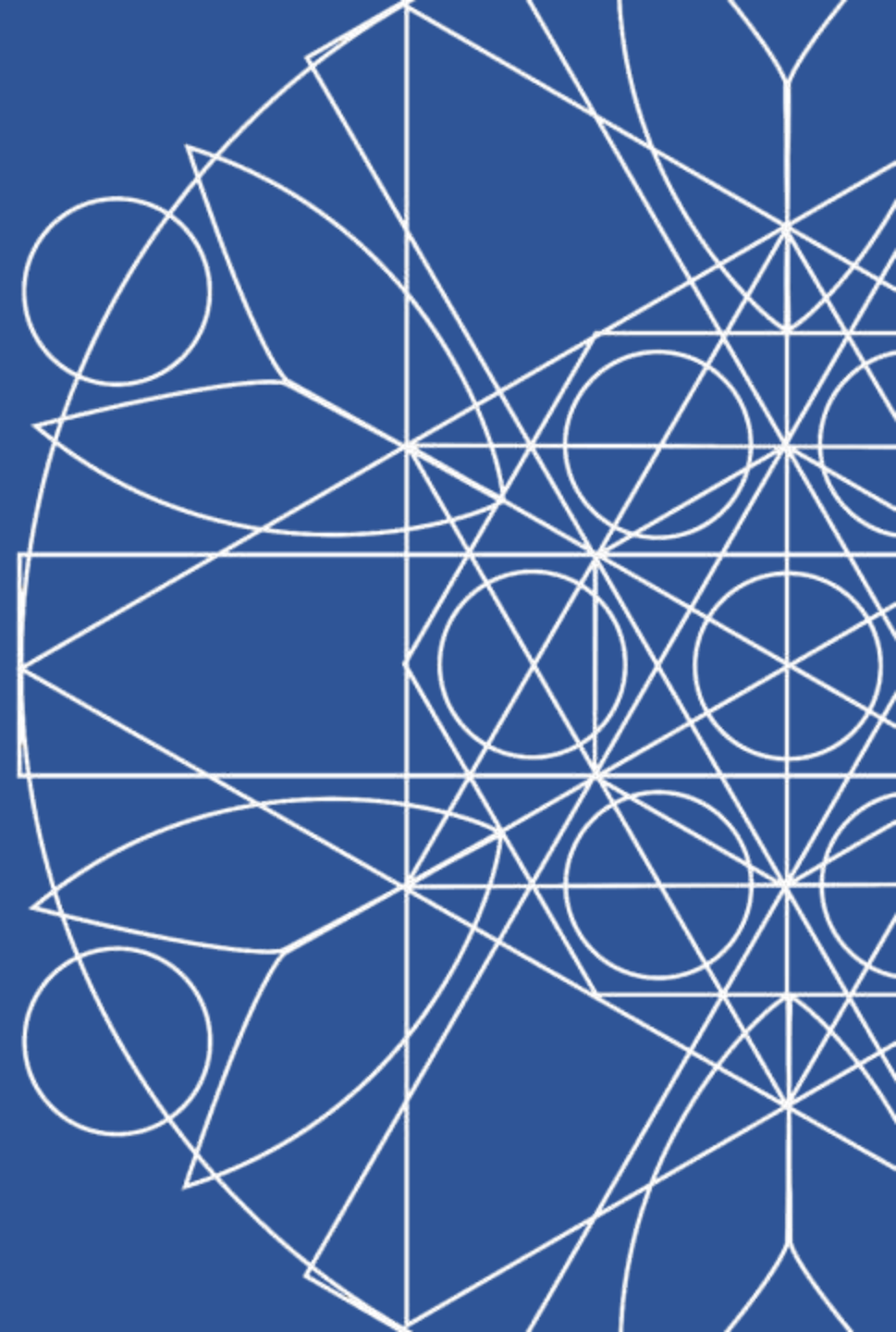


Drawing by : Alzahraa Ajina



Phase 3: Ark for Iraq
2021–25

**Revitalising Heritage and
Building Partnerships**



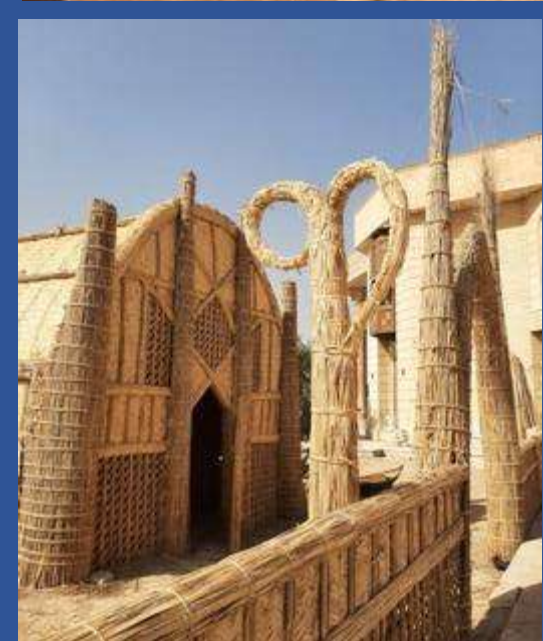








Open Museum Initiative for Water Cultures – Basra Hub



<https://www.watermuseums.net/>





Exhibitions

- ❖ Open Museum Initiative for Water Cultures (Basra Hub)
- ❖ Maritime Heritage Gallery at Basra Centre for Manuscripts & Heritage
- ❖ Iraqi Maritime Heritage Touring Exhibition
- ❖ Rivers Connect Us exhibition at Paia Agency, Sulaymaniyah
- ❖ Maritime Heritage exhibition at Diwaniya Memory Archive



Basra Centre for Manuscripts and
Heritage – Maritime Exhibition &
Reference Library



Iraqi Maritime Heritage
Touring Exhibition



Boat Clubs

Iraqi Heritage Boat Clubs Network:

Babylon

Baghdad

Basra

Chibayish

Diwaniya

Midaina

Sulaymaniyah / Dukan

Suq al-Shuyukh

Boat club members/participants: 479

Water Scouts

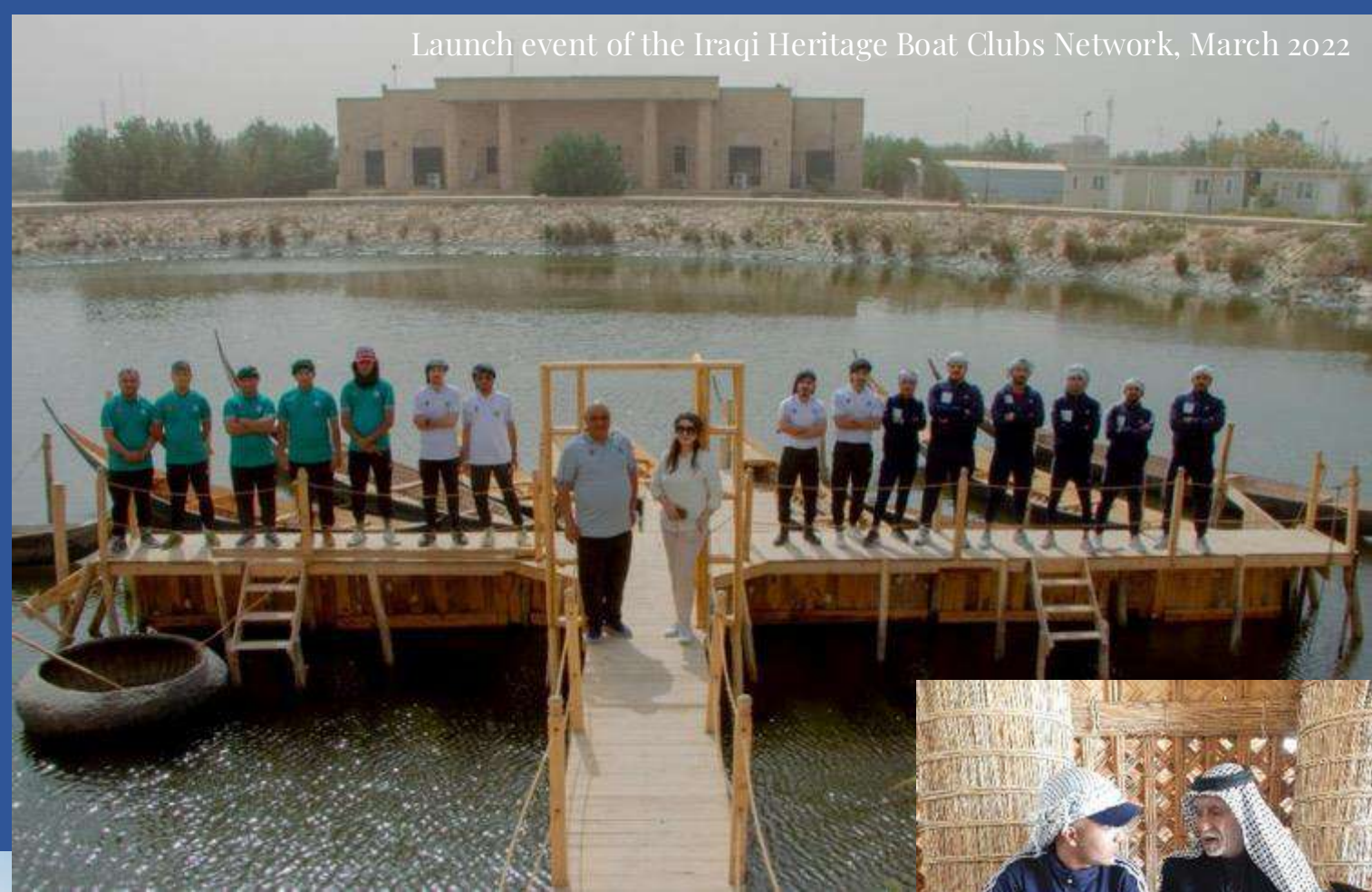
In July 2025, the Basra Scouting Association — a registered NGO — officially changed its name to the *Water Scouting Association*.

Gained the approval of the Ministry of Education's Iraqi Scouting Council to act as the coordinating body for Water Scouts initiatives across Iraq.

This development gives the programme national recognition and ensures that Water Scouts can grow as a youth movement, connecting local communities to their rivers, wetlands, and cultural heritage



Launch event of the Iraqi Heritage Boat Clubs Network, March 2022





Iraqi Heritage Boat Clubs activities in Baghdad, 2023



Launch of
Sulaymaniyah-Dukan
Heritage Boat Club,
July 2023

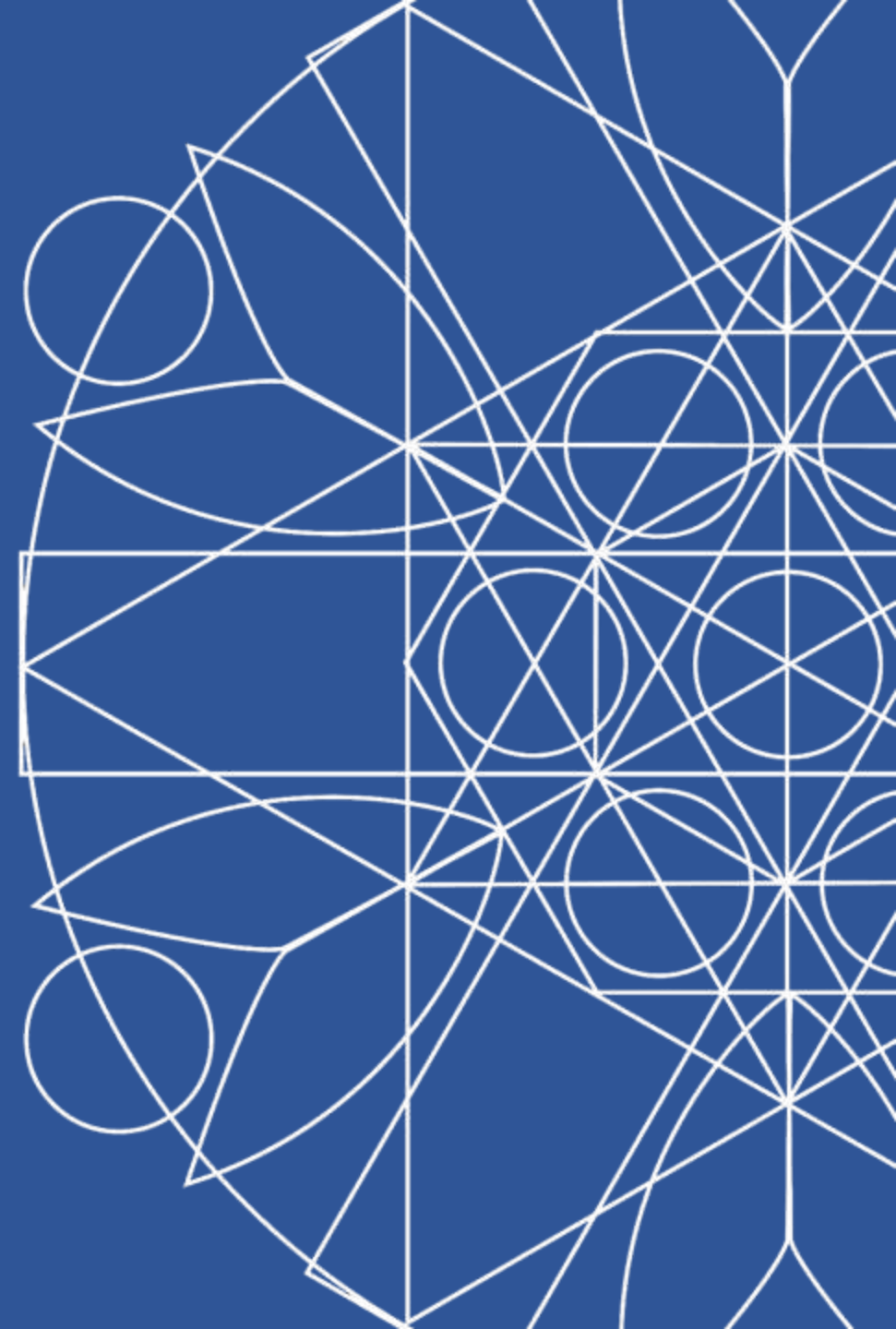


Iraqi Water Scouts Initiative launched November 2024



Contributing to
Water Governance:

**The Relevance of Cultural
Heritage in Addressing
Climate Change**



رحم الله أمرء عرف من اين و في أين و الى أين - الامام علي (ع) (ع)الامام علي

God bless those who know whence they came, where they be, and where they are going.

- Imam Ali (PBUH)



**Cultural heritage is
an inspiration and
compass for past,
present and future
generations.**



Jewad Selim

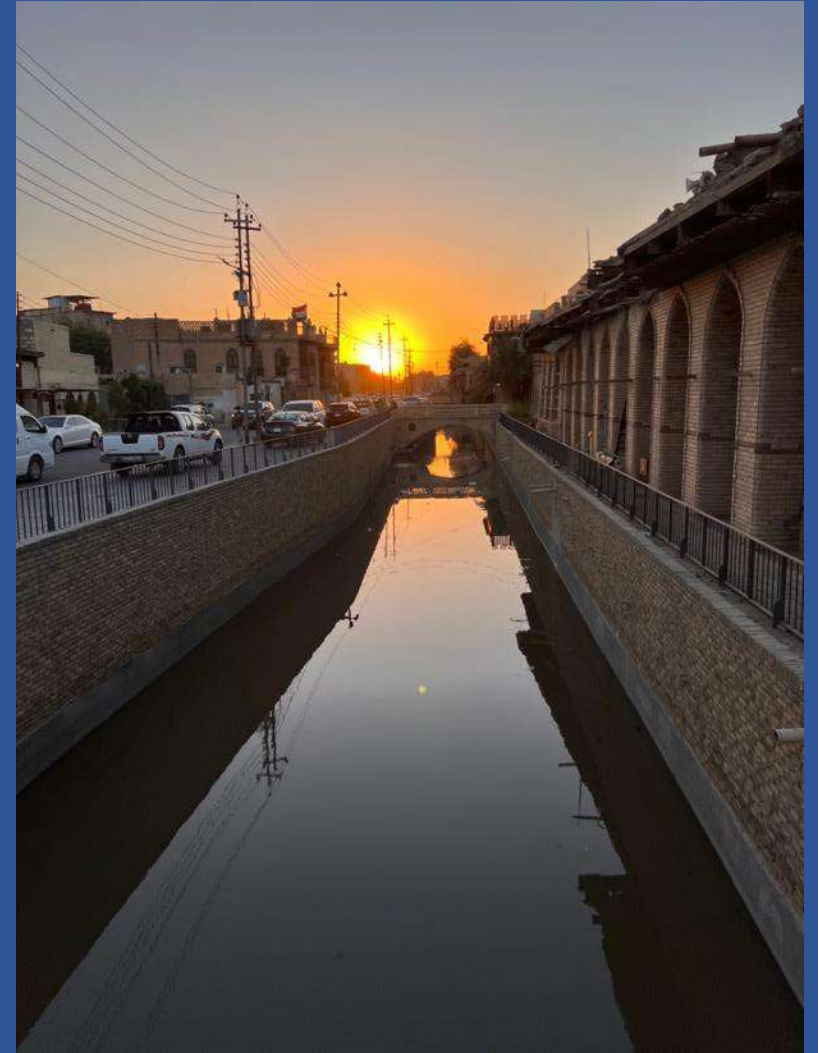
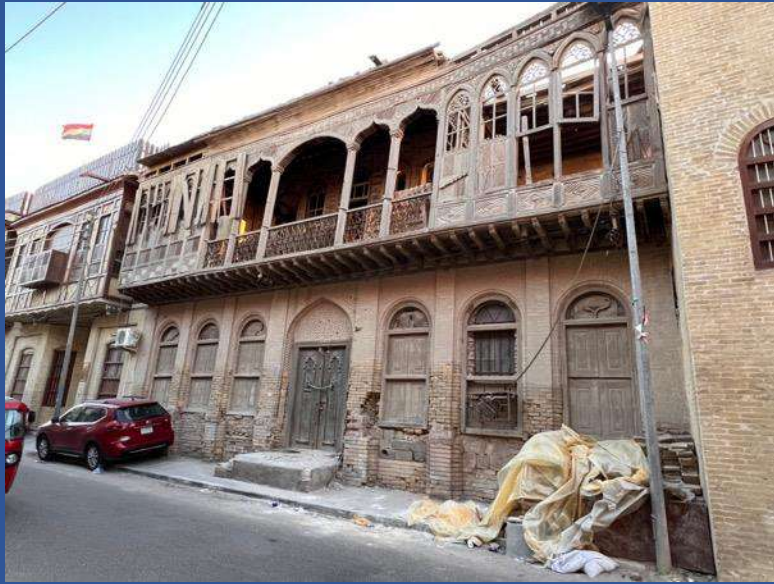


Mediha Omari



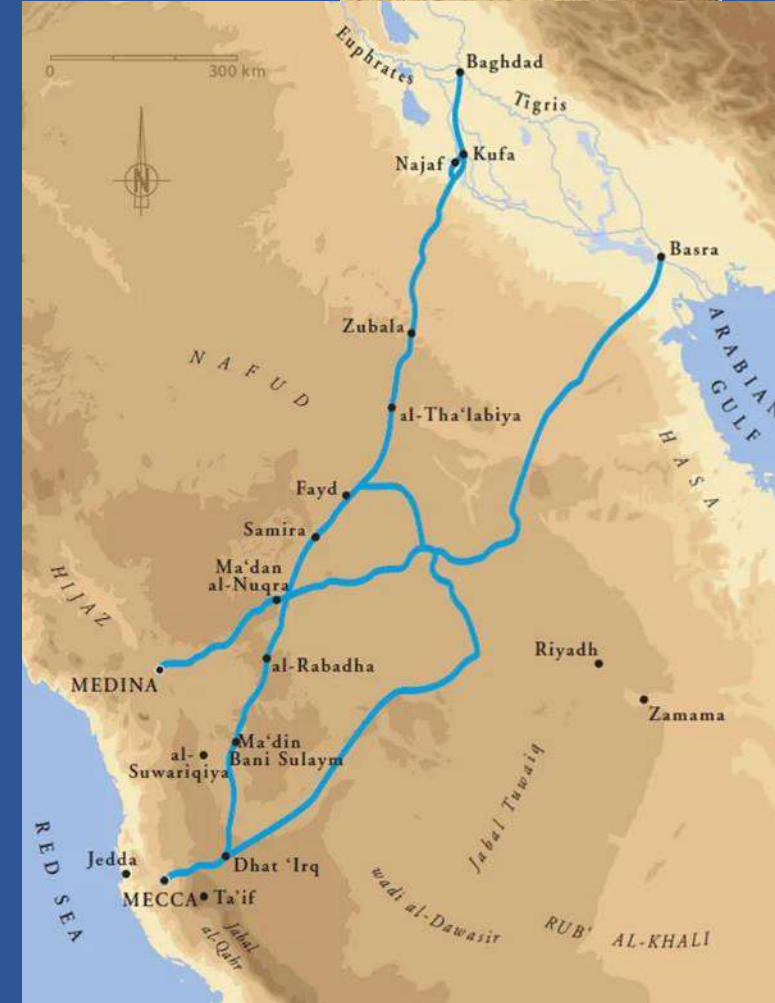
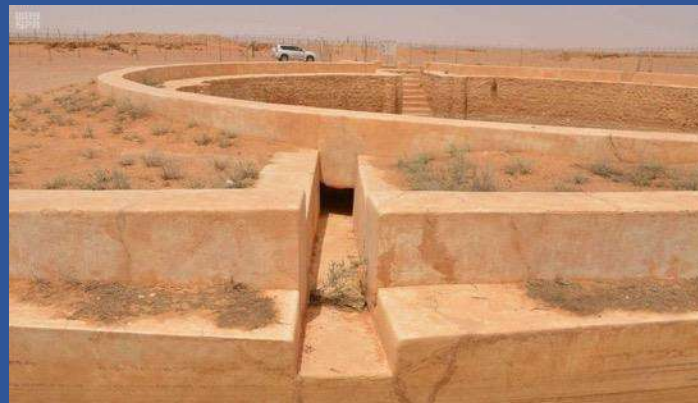
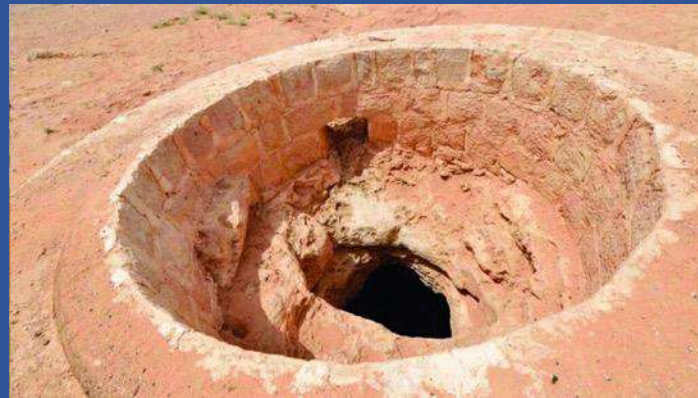
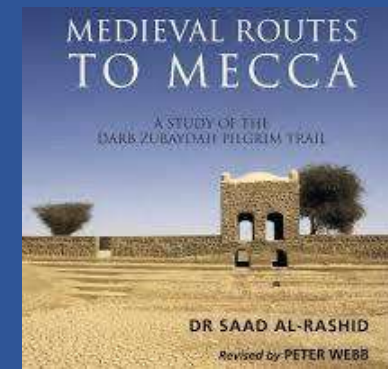
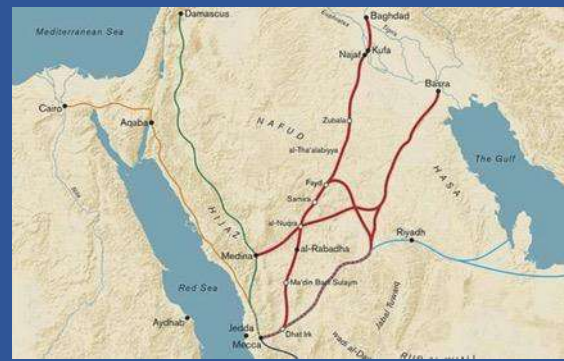






FIRST EDITION OF DARB ZUBAIDA FESTIVAL TO BE LAUNCHED

- Baghdad and Basra to Makkah (Kufa to Makkah: Darb Zubauda)
- Way stations



Saad A. Al-Rashid
University of Leeds (Department
of Semitic Studies), 1977



Launch of Diwaniya boat marathon, 2024



مركز المخطوطات والتراث البصري

مركز المخطوطات والتراث البصري
Center of Manuscripts & Heritage in Basra



مؤسسة شناشيل لإحياء التراث الإنساني

(منظمة غير حكومية)

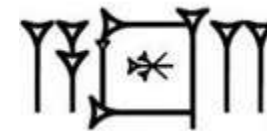
SHANASHIL FOUNDATION FOR HUMANITARIAN HERITAGE REVIVAL - NGO



جمهورية العراق

وزارة الثقافة والسياحة والآثار

Ministry of Culture, Tourism and Antiquities - IRAQ



شبكة النهرين



Thank you to all our Partners



AFAC ARAB FUND FOR
ARTS AND CULTURE
الصندوق العربي
للثقافة والفنون



WATER
MUSEUMS
GLOBAL NETWORK



المجلس العربي
للعلوم الاجتماعية

Arab Council
for the Social Sciences
Conseil Arabe
pour les Sciences Sociales



And thank you to our hosts in Brasilia

