



Historic Al-Diriya

World Heritage Site



الهيئة العامة للسياحة والآثار
Saudi Commission for Tourism & Antiquities

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Al Dir'iyah is a historic oasis located on the banks of Wadi Hanifa that had attracted urban settlements since time immemorial. Al Dir'iyah's land that occupies the fertile curve of Wadi Hanifa on the outskirts of Riyadh, the capital city of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. Al Awja was its traditional name and its modern popular name being Al Dir'iyah. Al Dir'iyah features a beautiful natural landscape. Its rich and fertile land is characterized by stunning environmental heritage linked to stable human civilization that had built residential buildings, irrigation system, canals, tunnels and agricultural villages. Al Dir'iyah is unique with its surrounding geography.







Al Dir'iyā's name is attributed to its residing families and first settlers; it was believed to be drawn from the name Al Doroa Hissn "Fortress Shield". Al Doroa is a tribe that had settled in Wadi Hanifa and which ruled Al Hajr and Al Jaza areas for a long time. "Bin Deri", one of its rulers had invited a son of his uncle, Mani Al Meredi, of the clan Al Marda from Bani Hanifa, who used to live in the Najd lands, east of the Arabian Peninsula, to settle in the Wadi Hanifa. We find that the invited clan settled in an area between Qasiba and Al Melaibeed. The beginning of the foundation of present Dir'iyā began with the arrival of Mani Al Meredi in 850 AH/1446 CE.

Al Dir'iyā was an important station along the trade rout which linked the Arabian Peninsula from its west to its east in addition to its control of the pilgrimage road up to Makka. It was controlling a jurisdiction of a number of villages of Wadi Hanifa and its power extended up to Darmain on the western side of Twaiq Mountain and the Aba Al Kabash to the North Dir'iyā.

In (1157/1233- AH / 1788/1818- AD), in the rule of Prince Imam Mohammad bin Saud, founder of the first Saudi state, who adopted the reform call of Sheikh Mohammad bin Abdul Wahab, and started a new page in the history of Dir'iyā, Al Dir'iyā where it became the most powerful city in the Najd country. By adhering to the message of reforms it achieved many successes. Its political, military, religious standing attracted huge wealth and prosperity and merchants flocked to its markets. Gradually it became a beacon for science,

education and witnessed the influx of students from neighboring countries.

The famous Imams of the first Saudi State were wise, firm and committed to religious values and upholders of the spirit of the Islamic faith, its customs and traditions. This resulted in huge security and people lived in assure security of their life, property and trade. Much of the areas throughout the Arabian Peninsula came under the control of Al Dir'iyā, including Al Ared, Al Ahsa, Al Qaseem, Mount Shamar, Makka, Al Madina, Al Hejaz, Al Taif and the territories of Tehama and Yemen.

Al Dir'iyā was a most famous city in Wadi Hanifa during the twelfth and thirteenth century Hijri/seventeenth and eighteenth century AD and remained famous even after the armies of the Ottoman Empire caused the destruction of its environment and geographical location in the year 1233 AH / 1818 AD.

In recent times, emerging from the Saudi State's interest towards historic Dir'iyā a Royal Decree No. 528/m dated 171429/6/ AH (21st June 2008) was issued assigning the Al historic Dir'iyā development and restoration to Ar-Riyadh Development Authority (ADA) chaired by His Royal Highness Prince Salman Bin Abdul Aziz, the Amir of Riyadh and the membership of a number of officials from the relevant authorities.



“ On 31st July, 2010, Al Turaif Quarter, in Al Dir'iyya municipality, registered in the World Heritage List of UNESCO. ”



Program includes the development of Al Dir'iyah historic villages and neighborhoods along the west to east of the valley, including Qasiba, Al Zahra, Al Zowaihra, Al Bejairi, Al Mlaibeed, while on the west bank is located the Al Turaif Quarter. The geographical scope of program includes the limits of Al Dir'iyah at the height of its prosperity during the reign of the first Saudi state. The project is implemented in partnership with the Ar-Riyadh Development Authority (ADA), the Saudi Commission for Tourism and Antiquities (SCTA) and the Al Dir'iyah Municipality.

On 13th August, 2006, a Royal Decree, No. m/5455 was issued, according to which SCTA was assigned to work for the registration of Al Turaif Quarter within the World Heritage List of UNESCO.

On 16th October, 2006, SCTA submitted Al Turaif Quarter site within the preliminary list of sites to be registered on the World Heritage List.

SCTA raised the nomination file for the registration site and the site management plan prepared in accordance with the requirements of the registration status of UNESCO World Heritage List.

