

الوثيقة

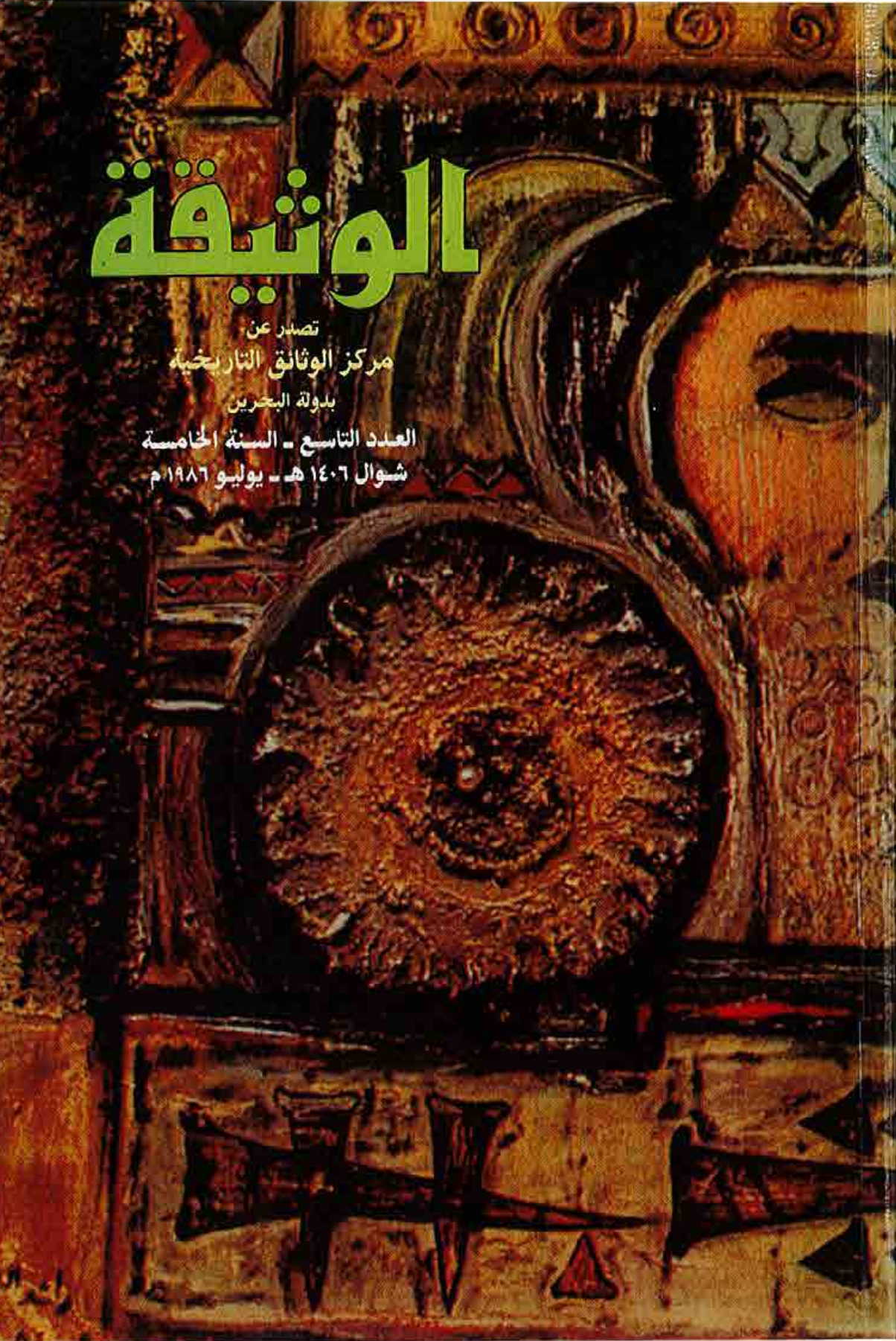
تصدر عن

مركز الوثائق التاريخية

بدولة البحرين

العدد التاسع - السنة الخامسة

شوال ١٤٠٦ هـ - يوليو ١٩٨٦ م



Yamama (Rothstein 1899:47). In a different context, Yaqut (IV, 425) notes that a village in al-Yamama was called al-Muharraqa (fem.) after it was burnt down in the 5th century conflict between the Hanifa and 'Ubaid tribes (Wustenfeld 1874:200; Fahd 1968:131, n. 5).

In addition to the use of the epithet for certain Lakhmid kings, "Muharriq" was also applied to their rivals, the Ghassanids, by Ibn Qutaiba and al-Kalbi (Noldeke 1888:7). Abu 'l-Fida' attributes this to the fact that the Ghassanids, in their turn, burnt the Lakhmid capital al-Hira (Rothstein 1899:47). Among the Ghassanids, however, "Al Muharriq" became an actual dynastic name, whereas among the Lakhmids it was restricted to individuals (Fahd 1968:130, n. 3).

These cases, as Rothstein noted in the last century, generally involved burning, and it was his belief that this accounted for the association made by the various Arab writers between al-Muharriq, the idol whose name means "the burner," and the various persons who earned the epithet al-Muharriq. Fahd has questioned this explanation, pointing to the fact that al-Mundir III, the Lakhmid king who sacrificed 400 captive nuns in 529 as well as the son of his Ghassanid rival al-Harith b. Jabala in 544, was not known by the name al-Muharriq (Fahd 1968:130-131). Yet, as Fahd himself notes, these sacrifices were explicitly made to al-'Uzza, not al-Muharriq, nor were al-Mundir's victims ever said to have perished by fire (cf. Rothstein 1899:81; Graf 1947:16, 19).

Not all references to al-Muharriq are to the pre-Islamic deity, or to Lakhmid and Ghassanid kings, however. Rothstein was of the opinion that Muharriq (without the article) referred, in some cases, to a mythical, human hero in mankind's remote past (Rothstein 1899:48-49; cf. Guidi 1921:21). Citing a verse quoted by al-Bakri — "our dress is a shining suit of armour from Muharriq's inheritance, the color of heaven, decorated with its stars" (after Wustenfeld 1869:160) — Rothstein suggested that far from being a Lakhmid king, as early Arab writers sometimes thought and F.W. Schwarzlose, in his 1886 treatise on pre-Islamic

The priests were the descendants of al-Aswad of the 'Iḡl (a sub-group of the Rabi'a). Among the 'Anaza the name Balḡ b. al-Muharriq appears, among the 'Amira and Ġfayla there were (two families with the name of) the 'Amr b. al-Muharriq" (after Wellhausen 1887:57 with new readings by Fahd 1968:128-129). The name al-Muharriq is usually understood as "the burner," perhaps in the sense of a solar deity (Wellhausen 1887:244; Noldeke 1887:712). In view of the mention of sons given over to the god, both J. Wellhausen (1887:57) and W. Robertson Smith took Yaqut's statement as a reference to human sacrifice (Smith 1890:364, n.1), whereas Th. Noldeke and others after him have preferred to see this as evidence that the children in question were merely consecrated to the god (Noldeke 1887:712).

Robertson Smith's argument, however, was not simply theological. Rather, he pointed to the fact that several of the pre-Islamic Lakhmid kings of al-Hira, Sasanian Persia's vassals in the border zone between Arabia and Mesopotamia, bore the epithet "al-Muharriq," and that the Lakhmids were thought, on occasion, to have burned captive enemies. Later Arab sources are not always clear about which Lakhmid kings they are referring to when this epithet is used (Rothstein 1899:46-47). Two traditions are most commonly encountered. According to Yaqut (I, 364) and Ibn al-Athir (I, 409), the Lakhmid king 'Amr b. Hind (reigned 554-470) received the nickname "al-Muharriq at-Tani" because he burned alive 100 captive members of the Tamim tribe in order to avenge the murder of his brother (Rothstein 1899:47; Jacob 1897:145; Wensinck 1913:352; Fahd 1968:130, n.7). Imru' al-Qays, an early Lakhmid king whose tombstone was found by R. Dussaud in 1901 at al-Namara in southern Syria, was also known as "al-Muharriq al-Akbar," but the reason for this is not clear (Fahd 1968:130, no.7).

According to another tradition, the use of the name among the Lakhmids goes back to the fact that they burned date plantations in the central Arabian district of al-