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QATAR ROCK ARTS: RE-CONSIDERATION AND PROSPECTIVES OF QATAR CULTURAL HERITAGE TOURISM MAP

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ABSTRACT

Qatar possesses numerous cultural tourist attractions such as museums, archaeological sites and heritage attractions. The question posed by this paper: How to boost Qatar Rock Art sites through re-consideration of the current cultural tourism map?. These Rock Art sites provide audience with a great opportunity to interact with values, rituals and symbols of one of the oldest communities who lived on this area of the Arabian peninsula. The paper provides a historical overview of Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art site, and examines how representative is Qatar Rock Art on Qatar Tourism Authority media, digital and printed media. Support is given by a first undertaken questionnaire presented to Qatar University students about this Rock Art. It concludes that Rock Art sites are neither presented nor advertized on Qatar tourist map and there is lack of statistics and analysis of tourists types, practices and motivations to visit Rock Art sites in Qatar. Here we propose that Rock Art sites is a chance to include them in cultural tourism, which would lead to the diversification of income sources, therefore, be compatible with the sustainable development in the State of Qatar.

KEYWORDS: Qatar Rock Art Sites, cultural tourism, cultural heritage , map, Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah

1. INTRODUCTION

Cultural tourism plays an important role as tourist destination in the international tourism market. It is a cultural and educational entertainment experience that combines tangible and intangible heritage as well as arts, literature and history. It is great attraction for all tourists, but it is essential destination for those who usually have a sense of exploration and who often wish to learn more about new cultural experiences and environments. This has made cultural tourism a great mean to promote identity and belonging, as well as a vehicle for social and cultural interaction, understanding and accepting of other cultures. It educates visitors and encourage them to visit historical sites and tourist areas and to get acquainted with the cultural heritage of the hosted country. It is also a profitable industry that supports local companies, including hotels, restaurants and local crafts, as well it provides more venues for job creations, hence, supporting both state and individuals economy (McKercher and Du Cros, 2002; Thomas et al 2017).

In 1963, the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations announced the first official acknowledgement of cultural tourism as "to support the concept of friendship and understanding among peoples", and in 1966 the UNESCO declared that "cultural tourism contributes to strengthening the peace process". In 1976 the first legislation of culture was adopted in Brussels, among its articles is "Respect of universal and natural cultural heritage which must take precedence over any other consideration". This legislation was revised in 1988, urging tourists to "respect the heritage and environment of each community" (Kamel, 1975).

The success of UNESCO's world cultural heritage list in identifying and promoting unique cultural heritage sites around the world is an evidence to the role, significance, and international appeal of cultural heritage of nations. For example, the World Heritage Committee of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) has listed Al-zubara archaeological site which was recently inscribed in 2013. (Al-Najjar et al., 2011).

The State of Qatar has paid special attention to the tourism sector, so as to increase its role in boosting the national economy, accordingly the Qatar Tourism Authority was established in April 2000, to launch the country's tourism strategy to promote tourism for both internal as well as to external communities through comprehensive plans, policies, regulations, and stakeholder coordination mechanisms, bearing into consideration Qatar's culture

and traditions. (QTA Annual Report, 2016/ <https://www.visitqatar.qa/>)¹.

International cultural tourism interest in Rock Art sites has grown gradually since the 1980s, this is reflected in the efforts of many countries and international organizations to protect rock art sites through par example the UNESCO World Heritage list. Also, there has been a swift increase in the number of guests in numerous sites of Rock Art. (Sanz & Keenan, 2011).

Qatar possess large number of natural and culture attractions, but in particular this paper highlight the added culture and economic value of having Rock Art Sites on its tourist map. These Rock Art Sites provide rich chapter of the culture heritage of the Qatar Peninsula and the ingenuity of the people who carved them.

There are a number of Rock Art sites in Qatar, however, the present review paper will focus on Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah as an example of Rock Art.

2. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF JABAL AL-JUSĀSIYYAH ROCK ART SITE

The historical overview includes aspects of their geographical location, discovery of Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art Site, raising Questions about Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Arts, archaeologists' views on Rock Art concepts, the dating of Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art and linking Rock Arts to its environment and the social and economic lifestyles that shaped people's lives (Al-Kholaifi, 2000; Gillespie, 2006).

2.1 *Discovery and Raising Questions about Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Arts*

It is located near shore on the northeast coast of Qatar Peninsula between Al-Hwailah and Fuwairat (Fig.1). (Al-Kholaifi, 2000).²

¹ The United Nations World Tourism Organization report stated that Qatar is the only country in the Middle East that have been able to achieve steady growth over the past decade. We have seen a significant increase in the number of visitors to Qatar, where they reached 2.93 million in 2015, which means an increase of 3.7% compared to 2014". (QTA Annual Report, 2015/ <https://www.visitqatar.qa/>). Qatar Tourism Authority works in parallel with the national strategy of tourism sector to draw attention to the State of Qatar as a global tourist destination to increase tourist numbers and visitors to 7 million by 2030. (QTA Annual Report, 2015/<https://www.visitqatar.qa/>).

² For Rock Art sites at Gulf countries see (Badawi, 1984); For Saudi Arabia (Haerinck, 1988); For Kuwait, Emirates see (De Ceuninck, 1988); For Oman and Bahrain see (Clarke, 1975; Wood, 1989).

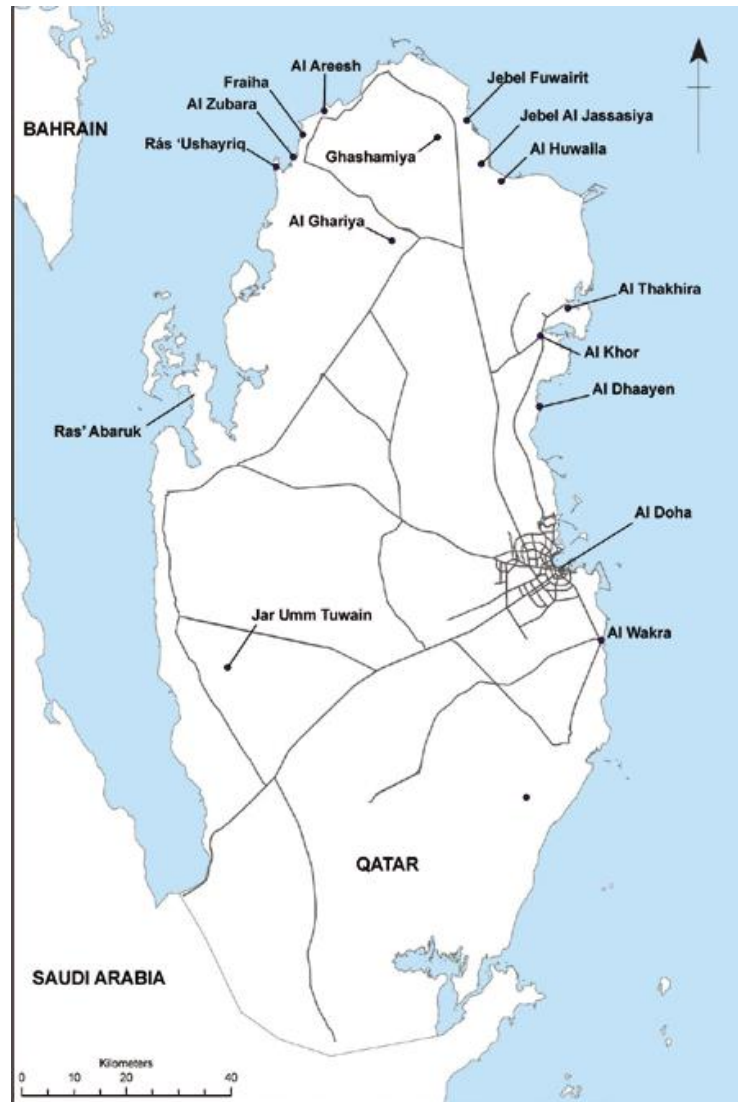


Figure 1. Map of Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art Site and Rock Art Sites in Qatar (after Pelling, 2014)

The site was first discovered by the Danish team headed by Peter Glob in 1956 (Glob, 1956; Glob, 1957), it was then studied by Geoffrey Bibby in 1964 (Bibby, 1964) and Beatrice De Cardi in 1973 (De Cardi, 1973; Badawi, 1982), then Hans Kapel in 1983 (Kapel, 1983; Gillespie, 2006), who categorized the Rock Art at Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah site to the following categories: "ships bas-relief, ships line drawings, game boards in rows, game boards rosettes, figures resembling animals, foot-prints, symbols or signs, systems of connected holes and others" (Kapel, 1983; Nayeem, 1998). Whereas Nayeem applied newer standard categorization which compose of: "1. Human and animal representation, 2. Animal representation, 3. Boat representation; 4. Cup-Marks, 5. Large cavities, 6. Geometric designs, 7. Ancient script characters/Tribal marks (Wasums), 8. Hand and foot prints" (Nayeem, 1998, 231).

The exceptional Rock Art at Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah that includes more than 900 Rock Art patterns draws

attention to think about its implications as art work worth of interpretation. It triggers questions concerning the aim of the engravings and also the theories raised around its carvings. What are these carved cups? What are these ships or those animals point to? What is this geometric design refer to? Does this round hollow shape imply a star?

There are patterns of Rock Art that resembles ships with oars (Fig.2a, b, c, d, e) or may be fish extending their fins, others illustrates crab (Fig.3) and animal representations as a donkey (Fig. 4) and an ibex (Fig.5).³ There are signs that might indicate a preliminary step towards writings while others may represent cup marks (Fig.6). (Al-Khulaifi, 2000).

³ In 1979 three sets of Rock Art composing the crab, donkey and an ibex were moved to Qatar National Museum where Nayeem did not mention its site of origin, however, Mohammed Jassim Al-Khulaifi mentioned that they came from Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah site (Nayeem, 1998).



a) Ships with oars (after Khulaifi, 2000)



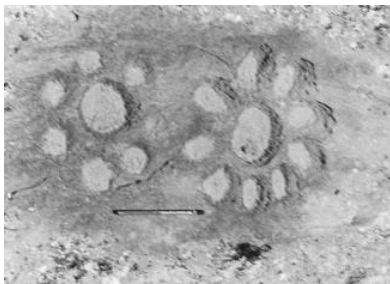
b) a crab? (after Nayeem, 1998)



c) a donkey?



d) ibex (after Nayeem, 1998)



e) cupules (after Khulaifi, 2000)

Figure 2. representative designs at Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art

2.2 Archaeologists' Views on Rock Art Concepts

Historically, the ancient inhabitants of Qatar have settled in many sites along the coast, requiring their populations to rely mostly on marine resources for survival, which has had an impact on economic life-styles in order to survive. Some researchers debated

that the ancient fishermen, pearl divers or traders (Kapel, 1983) might have used their times while waiting on the coast for ships to draw models of boats (Facey, 1987), such as those used for fishing. Researchers also argued that these Rock Art, which represent symbolic shapes like cup marks arranged in two parallel rows (Badawy, 1984) may have represent an entertainment game called «Hallousha», which is practiced locally in order to entertain themselves during the waiting time. (Gillespie, 2006; Pelling, 2014). Others believe that these Rock Art may be an attempt to record astronomical or natural phenomena that represent astronomy or plants (Badawi, 1984). While others suggested that the circular shapes would reflect a primitive idea of ancient religious beliefs during this early historical period (Badawy, 1984). Nayeem (1998, 256) pointed out that the written signs are similar to the Thamudic and the Mesnad script (Fig. 7). He added that these signs may be associated with tribes in order to mark their possessed animals so that they distinguish them from other tribal animals (Nayeem, 1990; Khan, 1993).

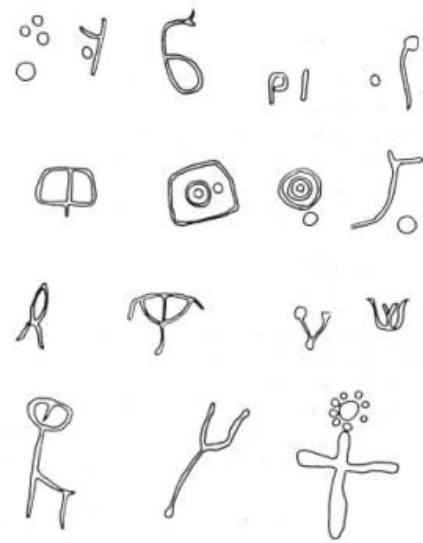


Figure 3. Written signs (after, Nayeem, 1998)

2.3 Dating of Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art

Badawy (1984) suggested that engraving of these carvings would require bronze tools and that the use of this kind of metal was discovered during the second half of the third millennium BC. Whereas Kapel (1983, 3) suggested that “The diversity of these drawings and engravings with the varieties in their technique and the degree of drilling in them can lead us to argue that they have been engraved in several thousand years ago”. The Danish expedition found sherds of pottery near Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah hills where they estimated their age between 1200 and 1800

years ago, accordingly they estimated the Rock Art at the site following the same the age. (Kapel, 1983). However, the difference in engravings and the degree of digging them may lead One suggest that they were engraved at different time periods and that they were not all engraved over a single period of time. A recent study published recently in QScience Connect (Hassiba et al, 2012) revealed that Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art in Qatar is not ancient as it was previously thought.

A team of researchers applied radioactive carbon analysis techniques to the oxalate shell formed over the surface of the carvings since its formation. The cortex analysis allowed scientists to determine the minimum age and the maximum age for those configurations. The analysis was conducted on more than a dozen of different samples. The analysis concluded that the age of the samples was approximately 235 years, but this dating inheres severe uncertainties. However, more future research studies are needed to reveal the true age of these carvings (Liritzis et al. 2013).

There is no doubt that these rock arts highlight the lifestyles of people in the past and their customs and social and economic traditions under such harsh environmental conditions. It also reflects the artistic style of the people who carved it. Answering these questions will probably highlight the ancient Qatari human behaviour, which presumably could attract tourist to attempt to analytically understand Qatari history in the past. (El-Sheikh & Abdel-Fattah, 2002).

3. QATAR ROCK ART IN QATAR TOURISM AUTHORITY MEDIA & NATIONAL HERITAGE

3.1 Assess Qatar Tourism Authority

Examining the official QTA site⁴ show only one site with rock art mentioned briefly along other historical sites, the webpage display general photo of the site with the following information (Fig. 4): "Al Jassasiya rock carvings on the north east coast comprise a total of 874 carvings, known as 'petroglyphs', the earliest thought to date from Neolithic times. Discovered in 1957, they consist of various designs and patterns such as cups in rows, rosettes, ships and foot marks".



Figure 4. A ship like with oars and 14 adjacent cupules in arrow. A similar scene is published on QTA <https://www.visitqatar.qa/ar/discover/cultural-treasures/historic-sites/al-jassasiya-rock-carvings.html> (after Hassiba et al, 2012, fig. 10)

Another web site administered by QTA Information require revisiting for example the Danish Team excavated the site in 1956, also there was a debate whether foot marks represent really foots or it is an arm with a hand at its end. (Glob, 1956; Nayeem, 1998). The information needs to be developed as well. Assessing QTA Website plans for One-Day Itinerary⁵ and Three-Day Itinerary⁶ shows no mention of visiting any of the Rock Art Sites in Qatar. At any rate the precise age is not known yet. The printed and digital media apparently underscore Rock Art Sites and this is an additional factor for their urgent attention (Anteel, 1980; Al-Rouby, 1987; Lumisdon, 1997; Website⁷), in contrast to Saudi Rock art sites that are included in the Unesco sites⁸.

3.2 Questionnaire Distributed to Qatar University Students and Analysis

We have conveyed a questionnaire to Qatar University Students that has as follows in Table 1.

⁴ <https://www.visitqatar.qa/discover/cultural-treasures/historic-sites/al-jassasiya-rock-carvings.html>.

⁵ <https://www.visitqatar.qa/ar/plan/itineraries/one-day-itinerary.html>.

⁶ <https://www.visitqatar.qa/plan/itineraries/three-day-itinerary.html>.

⁷ <https://scth.gov.sa/en/Antiquities-Museums/InternationallyRegisteredSites/Pages/HailRockDrawings.aspx#4>.

⁸ <https://scth.gov.sa/en/Antiquities-Museums/InternationallyRegisteredSites/Pages/HailRockDrawings.aspx#4>

TABLE 1 The Questionnaire

1-	Nationality	Qatari () Non-Qatari ()
2-	Have you visited any Rock Art sites in Qatar?	Yes ()- Which site how many times..... No ()
3-	Have you been with your family or friends?	Family () Friends ()
4-	What was your motivation for the visit?	For cultural tourism () Other reason (s) please state.....
5-	Are you aware that there are Rock Art sites in Qatar?	Yes () From what source please state..... No ()
6-	Do you have more information you would like to mention?
7-	<p><i>“Imagine that you have been invited to visit a Rock Art site in Qatar”</i></p> <p>a. What is the information that you would like to know about this site?</p> <p>b. What are other facilities that you might need that makes you enjoy Rock Art tourism?</p>	<p>a.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>-----</p> <p>b.</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

The questionnaire was conducted on a sample of 236 Qatar University students (male and female) age between 19-23 years of whom 195 were Qatari and 41 were non-Qatari. Only 23 Qatari students mentioned that they visited Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art site with their parents for the purpose of cultural tourism. Surprisingly, 18 students mentioned that

they visited the Rock Art site called Al-zubarah indicating that they were not aware of the differences between the two sites. Therefore, this category was included with those who did not visit the Rock Art sites. Thus, the actual number of students (male and female) who did not visit Rock Art sites is 213 students as shown from the following chart (Fig.5).

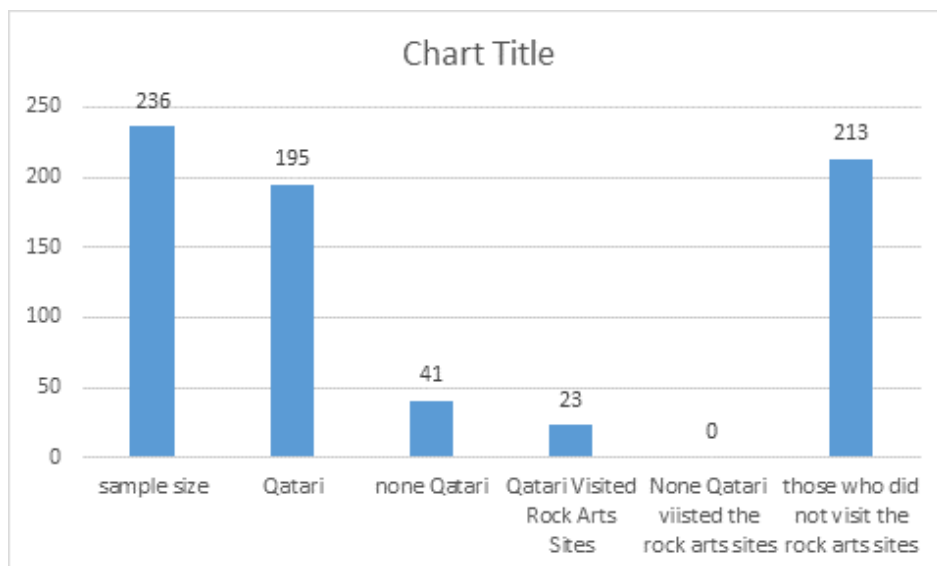


Figure. 5 Distribution of sample population of the questionnaire

Regarding the question about their awareness of Rock Art Sites in Qatar: 28 students mentioned that they previously knew about those sites, where 23 of them have already visited Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art Site besides 5 students who declared that they knew about those from other media sources such as: Al Rayyan Channel, Qatar Museums Authority and the Internet various Websites.

For any question asked if they have any additional information, some of them stated that: "They were astonished to know that there are Rock Art Sites in Qatar where they have not been informed about them or visited those sites while they were in schools or University".

Regarding the question of what are the information that they would like to know about Rock Art Sites in Qatar they inquired about the following: "When have these Rock Art Sites were discovered? Who carved them? To what civilization these sites are attributed? What was the purpose of carving those patterns on the rocks? How did they engraved it? Who were the inhabitants of these sites? What were there carriers? What were their religion? Did they wrote any information about themselves? What are the difficulties facing researchers while studying the Rock Art in Qatar? How can we preserve them and utilize them in future?"

Regarding the question about the appropriate amenities to make the tourists and visitors enjoy the Rock Art tourism see Appendix.

4. CONCLUSION

This research concluded that the Qatari Rock Art Sites are not well presented neither properly managed on Qatar tourist map, which requires developing plans associated with Rock Art Sites to maintain the social and economic needs of short -and medium- term, addressed by the tourism development

(Clottes, 2005), a similar need that applies to other countries with Rock Art sites (Smith, Helskog & Morris, 2012). There is lack of statistics⁹ and analysis of tourists types, practices and motivations to visit Rock Art sites in Qatar, where this information can then be used in the development of sustainable Rock Art cultural tourism.

⁹ When inquired about Qatari cultural tourism statistics and Rock Art tourists numbers from QTA, QTA directed me to contact Mr. Faisal Abdulla Al-Naimi, Director of Archaeology, QM, who stated that: "There is no statistics of the actual number of visitors to the Rock Art sites and requests for visiting Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah Rock Art site is from educational destination by three schools per year. There is a request to visit the site from researchers ranging from 4 to 5 per year for the purpose of studying. There is also a monthly request from a group of tourists ranging from 9-20 tourists visiting the site through the tourist offices". (Communication 24th of April 2017).

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APPENDIX

PROPOSALS AND NOTES ON PLACING THE ROCK ART SITES ON THE TOURIST MAP OF QATAR

Rock Art sites is a chance to include them in cultural tourism in Qatar, which would lead to the diversification of income sources, therefore, be compatible with the sustainable development in the State of Qatar. (Güçer, 2004). Kaltham Al-Ghanim argued that "The Qataris will endorse the promotion of cultural tourism if tourism is in line with their customs and also be compatible with the preservation of their traditions but not against. In this case it would be accepted as an opportunity for cultural exchange and economic benefits". (Interview 15th of June 2016).¹⁰ There are number of tourism studies that criticized tourism (Murphy, 1985) because of its negative impact on Rock Art sites, therefore it is necessary to take precautions to reconcile preservation and tourism development. (Deacon, 2006; Stanley-Price, 2000; Yunis, 2006).

The consciousness grown to the bad state of the Rock Art sites in Qatar was highlighted through an earliest study funded by QNRF-UREP award project (Al Abdulla & El-Menshaw, 2009). When visiting Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah and Al Furaihah Rock Art sites, the research team observed that "the Rock Art undergoing human damage caused by carved graffiti on the rocks and natural damage probably affected by climatic changes condition" (www.environment.gov.au). The team voiced their concern that "the Rock Art if not conserved, would be totally damaged" (Soleilhavoup, 1993; Soleilhavoup, 1994). Al-Kholaifi¹¹ mentioned that "it is difficult to move such Rock Art from its location, therefore, the State of Qatar might think of building a transparent glass panels on such Rock Art sites", thus, preserving it as heritage sites which can attract cultural tourism to Qatar. (Al-Kholaifi, 2000; Giavarini & Domus, 2001).

This current study recommends the following issues to be implemented.

1. Supporting research and documentation works (e.g. their chronological frame, digital storage, networking these with ancient nearby settlements, social context etc).
2. Introducing Rock Art sites through Qatar tourism authority and make it visible in their programs, advertising brochures and manuals distributed to tourists and visitors, besides placing documentary films about these Rock Art sites on their website.
3. Link Rock Art sites with infrastructure and plan educational trips (Duval & Smith, 2013; Dragovich, 1995; Brown et al., 2003; Fernandes, 2004)
4. Conduct an advertisement program targeting school and university students as part of local tourism.¹²
5. Provide infrastructure services next to the Rock Art sites and introduce items at selling points. (Fig. 6).



Figure 6. Characteristic motives from postal office of Qatar (after Scott, 2008)

6. Provide trained tourist guide with a wide knowledge of the history of Qatar to be able to explain and provide analysis to such Rock Art and to respond to tourist questions (El-Menshaw, 2016).
7. Add Jabal al-Jusāsiyyah unique archaeological Rock Art site in Qatar to Al UNESCO World Heritage list -- parallel to Al-zubarah site at Qatar and Hail Province Rock Art site in Saudi Arabia-- because of their historical and tourist importance (Al-Najjar et al., 2011).

¹⁰ An Interview with Dr. Kaltham Al-Ghanim, Director of the Center for Human and Social Studies, University of Qatar, June 15, 2016, Center for Human and Social Studies CHSS.

¹¹ Al-Kholaifi (<http://archive.al-watan.com/viewnews.aspx?d=20140417&cat=culture1&pge=3>).

¹² For example cooperation with the Ministry of Education to add information about the sites of rock inscriptions in textbooks.

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