



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Historical and archaeological perspective on water supply in Jeddah, Saudi Arabia

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## Abstract

The multitude of rescue excavation, preventive intervention and restoration projects across the historic Al Balad district of Jeddah (Saudi Arabia), under the umbrella of Jeddah Historic District (JHD), has provided invaluable opportunities in recent years to peer into the archaeological past of the city. These projects have uncovered, either through targeted excavation or chance discovery, numerous elements of the water supply system of historic Jeddah. The chronic lack of access to drinkable water that plagued Jeddah from its inception as the port of Makkah led to the creation of an intricate network of underground cisterns and tunnels that criss-cross the entire historic part of the city. This paper will present the main challenges the city faced over its centuries-long history in supplying water to its residents and measures taken either by private citizens, local governance or central authorities to address the scarcity of drinkable water in the area. The historical and archaeological data that was compiled over the last few years offer a compelling narrative that traces the evolution of the water supply system of Jeddah.

## Keywords

Jeddah, Islamic Archaeology, Water management, Qanat

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