

**GHAZI BISHA**  
**(1945-2022)**  
**THE HUMAN, THE SCIENTIST, THE MANAGER**  
**AND THE FRIEND**

*Mohammad Najjar*

Ghazi was born in 1945 in a small house at King Talal Street in the center of the Amman to a Circassian family living that had emigrated to Jordan in the eighties of the nineteenth century. His father was an officer in the Jordanian army. He studied primary and preparatory stages at the Islamic Scientific College and then completed his secondary education at Al Hussein College, after which he completed his studies at the University of Jordan in 1963-1967. In 1969, Ghazi left for the United States, where he received his master's degree from Ann Arbor University Michigan and then returned to work for the Department of Antiquities. Ghazi left again for the United States to the same university where he received his doctorate in Islamic Archaeology in 1979.

The beginning of my acquaintance with Ghazi was in 1982 when I was appointed as a "museum curator" at the Jordanian Archaeological Museum at Amman Citadel (Jabal Al Qal'ah). Ghazi visited the museum frequently either to study archaeological finds he had found in the Al Hallābāt Palace or to hand over archaeological finds that had recently been uncovered elsewhere. Ghazi was the typical field archaeologist example of a tall man, single, fluent English speaker and most importantly an excellent reader and follower of everything new in the field of archaeology.

All Ghazi wanted to become the happiest human being on the face of the earth was a good archaeological site (Al Hallābāt, Mushāsh, Ash SHawbak, Al 'Aqabah, Tabaqat Fahī (Pella), Mādabā, and many others), a tent and an old Toyota vehicle.



In short, Ghazi was the model that we all looked forward to and tried to imitate, except for tallness and marriage from where we had exceeded the age at which we might become taller or where we could abandon wives.

In 1986, Ghazi headed the Jordanian archaeological team that carried out archaeological excavations at the Saar area in Bahrain, of which I was a member, and when Ghazi became Director General of Antiquities in 1988, he transferred me from the Citadel Museum to the main Department at the third circle in Jabal 'Ammān where I was appointed head of the Department of Excavations and Archaeological Surveys which he himself headed from 1982 to 1986.

Ghazi retired in 1992 to return after being for three years, the director of the Madaba Archaeological Project to fill the post of Director General of Antiquities for the second term. I can say that Ghazi was ascetic in administrative jobs and has been attracted by the field and the

library much more strongly than classrooms or luxury offices, but in spite of that he was flooded with jobs from an antiquity's inspector to the head of the excavation department to a projects' manager and a technical assistant to a director general of the Department of Antiquities.

Ghazi was never an aspirant in any administrative work and his acceptance of administrative positions was reluctantly the result of the enormous pressure exerted on him, but out of the motivation of commitment and duty Ghazi was successful everywhere he was placed. He told me in his last days in the Department of Antiquities that he would prefer to be an inspector of antiquities of Umm Qays rather than to be the director general of antiquities, but this was not achieved for him, after his second retirement from the post of director general of antiquities in 1999 he was appointed to supervise the Jordan Museum project.

During his scientific career, Ghazi has completed many researches, articles and scientific reviews, including but not limited to his distinctive contributions to the series of exhibition trails "Museum Without Borders" on Islamic art in the Mediterranean region, and the comprehensive documentary book on Qusayr 'Amrah in cooperation with the French Institute of Archaeology in Amman, and his views were considered an argument in Islamic antiquities where Ghazi received great recognition and re-

spect among archaeologists at the international and local levels.

The French State awarded Ghazi with the Order of the Knight for his significant contributions to the preservation of Jordan's archaeological heritage in cooperation with the competent international institutions.

Ghazi was a lover and practitioner of sports, especially basketball and football, and he was a persistent fan of English football, and everyone in the circle knew that you could not call Ghazi or visit him during the World Cup matches, and some of the drivers in the Department of Antiquities were following the English matches and the local matches with the intention of discussing the details of each match with him, and the discussion was raging to become a discussion between enthusiastic and fanatical fans.

His height, his gray hair, with the intention of thick prescribed glasses and his features of rigidity, like any other Circassian, gave him a majestic and even deceptive appearance, for those who did not know him.

For those who met him for the first time he left the impression of a very serious and sober person who thinks only of scientific research and archaeology only.

But, to his friends, Ghazi (Abu Jameel) had a high sense of humor that many did not enjoy and saw a humorous aspect in the most serious things in life.