جامعة السلطان قابوس
Sultan Qaboos University

المؤتمر الدولي الأول لآثار شبه الجزيرة العُمانية
وزارة التراث والسياحة - جامعة السلطان قابوس ١-٣ فبراير ٢٠٢٦م
THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF THE OMAN PENINSULA
MINISTRY OF HERITAGE & TOURISM - SQU 1 - 3 FEB 2026

1975 - 2025
اليوبيل الذهبي لمجلة الدراسات العمانية
THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF THE JOURNAL OF OMAN STUDIES

وزارة التراث والسياحة
Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

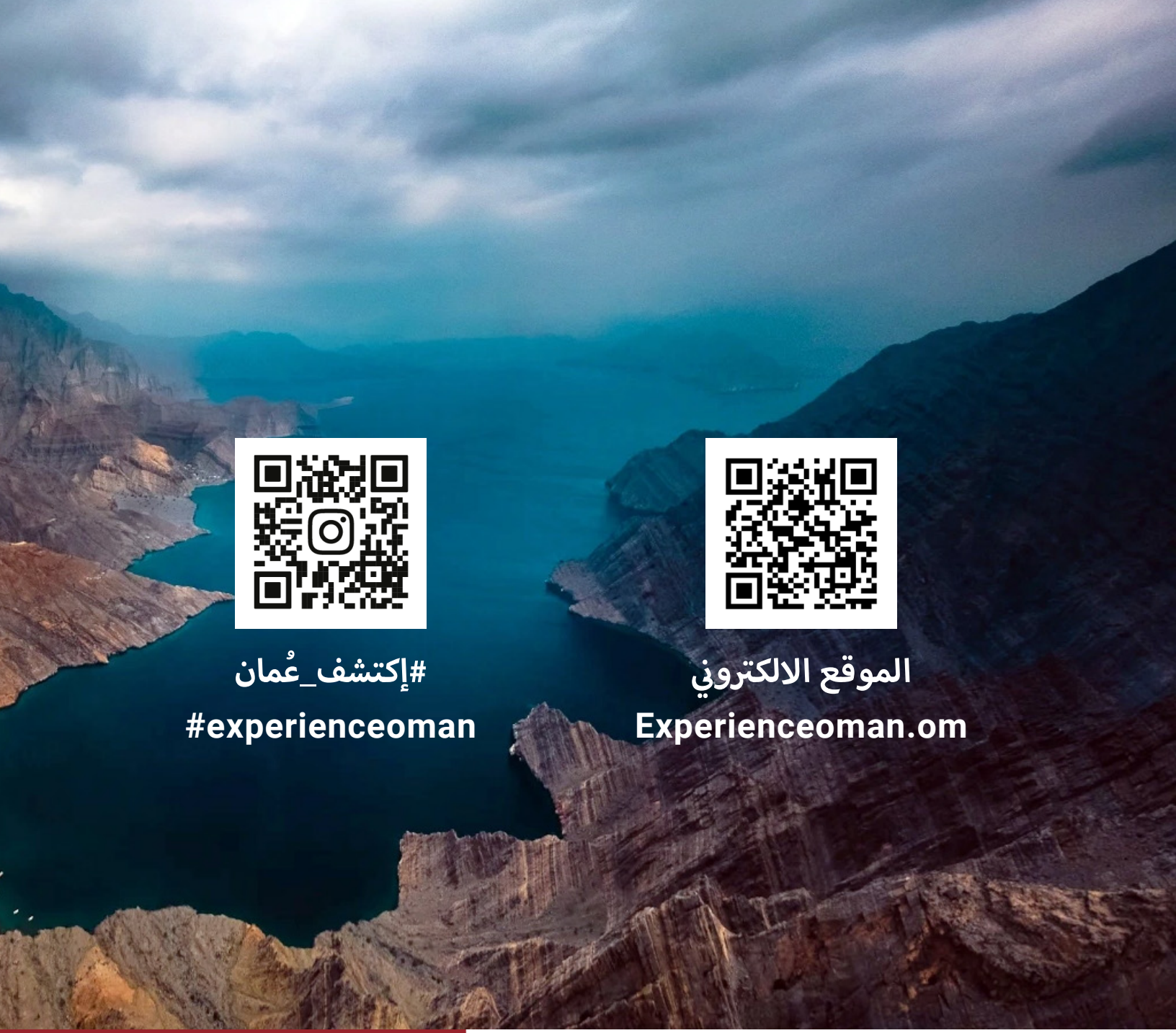
First International Conference on the Archaeology of the Oman Peninsula

Muscat, 1-3 February 2026

الدليل السياحي لسلطنة عُمان
Oman Tourism Directory

فيلم عن سلطنة عُمان
Oman Film

للـــجمـــال عـــنـــوان
Beauty Has An Address



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Welcome Address

H.E. Sayyed Ibrahim bin Said Al-Busaidi

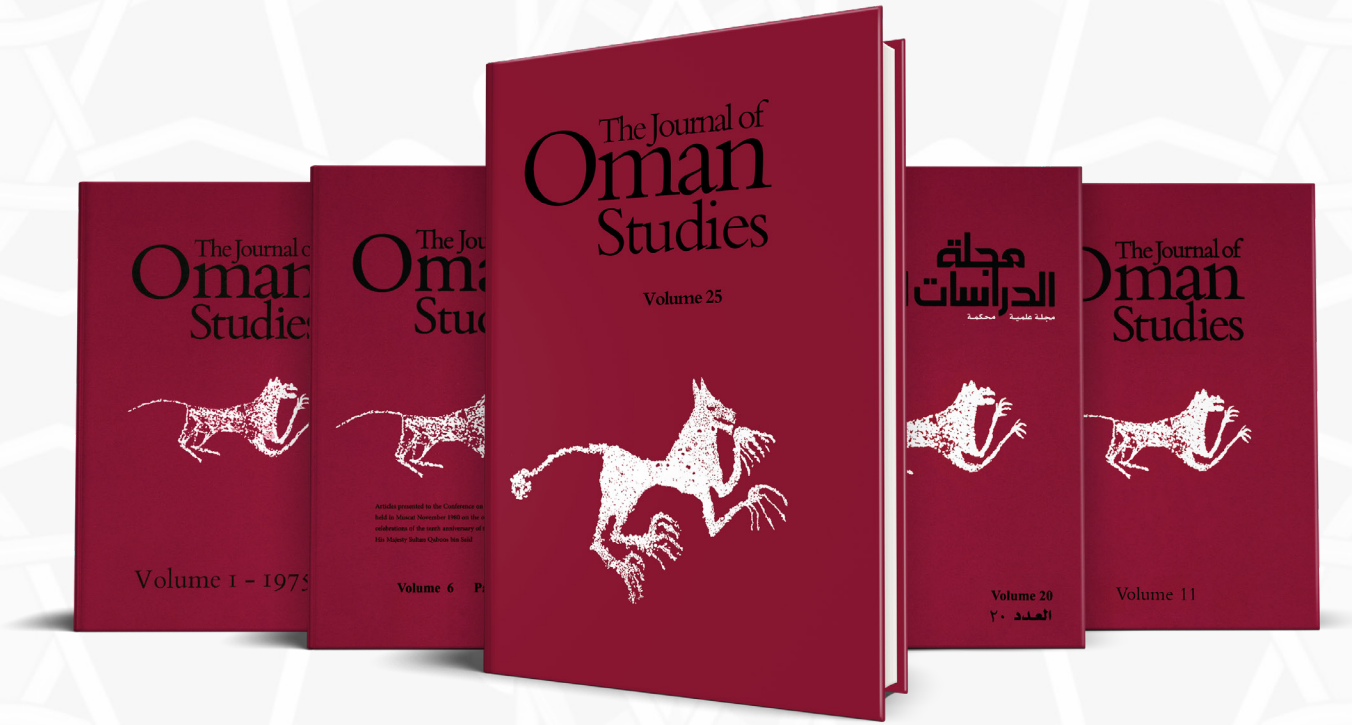
Minister of Heritage and Tourism

It is with great pleasure and profound pride that I extend my patronage to the "First International Conference on the Archaeology of the Oman Peninsula" and to celebrate the Golden Jubilee of the *Journal of Oman Studies*.

Since 1975, at the very onset of archaeological research in the Sultanate, the *Journal of Oman Studies* has been a prestigious platform for the international presentation of the projects undertaken under the auspices of various national authorities, whose responsibilities were consolidated in 2020 within the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. Over these fifty years, more than 350 scholarly papers in Arabic and English have been published in the *Journal of Oman Studies*, addressing the intellectual interests of scholars worldwide and consolidating the Sultanate's position in the field of archaeological research at the regional and international levels.

This event therefore represents the culmination of the scholarly endeavour reflected in these many thousands of pages, which allow for a continuing intellectual journey across Oman's historical and natural landscapes, guided by the expertise of eminent scholars and leading research organisations from around the world. The Ministry of Heritage and Tourism hereby extends its profound appreciation to all researchers and experts for their scholarly dedication and the methodological rigour of their papers, which have played a vital role in enhancing the value of these publications. Through these sustained efforts, broader horizons have been opened for exploring the heritage of the Sultanate of Oman and for deepening our shared understanding of human history.

As custodian of Oman's heritage, the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism pursues its mission with intellectual curiosity and scientific integrity, recognising the crucial importance of cooperation with local and international academic and scientific institutions in preserving and perpetuating this legacy to future generations, ensuring that the echoes of Oman's past continue to inspire and enlighten us all.


The Journal of
Oman
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Volume 25
Volume 6
مجلة
الدراسات
مجلة علمية محكمة
Volume 20
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The Journal of
Oman
Studies
Volume 11

Message from the Chair of the Organizing Committee

Professor Dr. Nasser Said Al-Jahwari

Sultan Qaboos University

It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the «First International Conference on the Archaeology of the Oman Peninsula», the first international scientific conference dedicated exclusively to the archaeology and heritage of this region. This conference is held on a cherished scientific and cultural occasion, marking the celebration of the 50th anniversary (Golden Jubilee) of the *Journal of Omani Studies*, which I have the honour of serving as Editor-in-Chief. The journal is the most established academic platform devoted to the cultural and natural heritage of Oman.

The organisation of this conference represents the foundation of a regular event, jointly organized by Sultan Qaboos University, represented by the Department of Archaeology, and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. The aim is to establish the Sultanate of Oman as a leading regional and international hub for academic research, dialogue, and collaboration on the archaeology and heritage of the Omani Peninsula and south-eastern Arabia.

The conference vision is to position Oman at the forefront of international archaeological research and scholarly exchange, while its mission is to bring together researchers and specialists from around the world to share knowledge, advance fieldwork and academic studies, foster research partnerships, and disseminate high-quality scientific outcomes in accordance with the highest academic standards.

The scientific programme of the conference is structured around six main thematic axes, encompassing prehistoric periods, Islamic archaeology, rock art, built heritage, palaeoenvironment and palaeoclimate, and underwater archaeology. Together, these themes reflect the richness and diversity of the archaeological record and cultural heritage of the Oman Peninsula. A total of sixty scholars will present the results of their studies and scholarly contributions within these diverse subjects.

This first conference seeks to stimulate critical discussion, introduce new perspectives on the archaeology and heritage of Oman, and establish a major recurring academic gathering that brings together scholars working on south-eastern Arabia. It provides a platform for presenting the results of archaeological missions, encouraging scholarly debate, developing collaborative research projects, and contributing to the advancement of the archaeological sector in the Sultanate of Oman. In this context, the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University plays a central intellectual and coordinating role in shaping and guiding the academic discussions.

The conference is closely linked to the celebration of 50 years of the *Journal of Oman Studies*, first published in 1975. Over the past five decades, the journal has published 356 scholarly articles in Arabic and English, including special issues, covering a wide range of interdisciplinary studies related to Oman's cultural and natural heritage. In 2025, the journal entered a new phase through an agreement with Archaeopress Publishing (Oxford, UK) to become an open-access digital publication, alongside ongoing efforts to index it in leading international academic databases.

Through this conference, we aim to establish a lasting and successful tradition of international scientific meetings dedicated to the archaeology and heritage of the Sultanate of Oman, providing a unified academic platform for presenting and discussing the results of ongoing archaeological fieldwork and research projects.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to all institutions, organizers, contributors, and participants whose efforts have made this conference possible. I wish you a productive and inspiring conference and look forward to the scholarly collaborations that will emerge from this important initiative.

Message from the Supervisor of the Archaeological Missions Programme and Heritage Publications

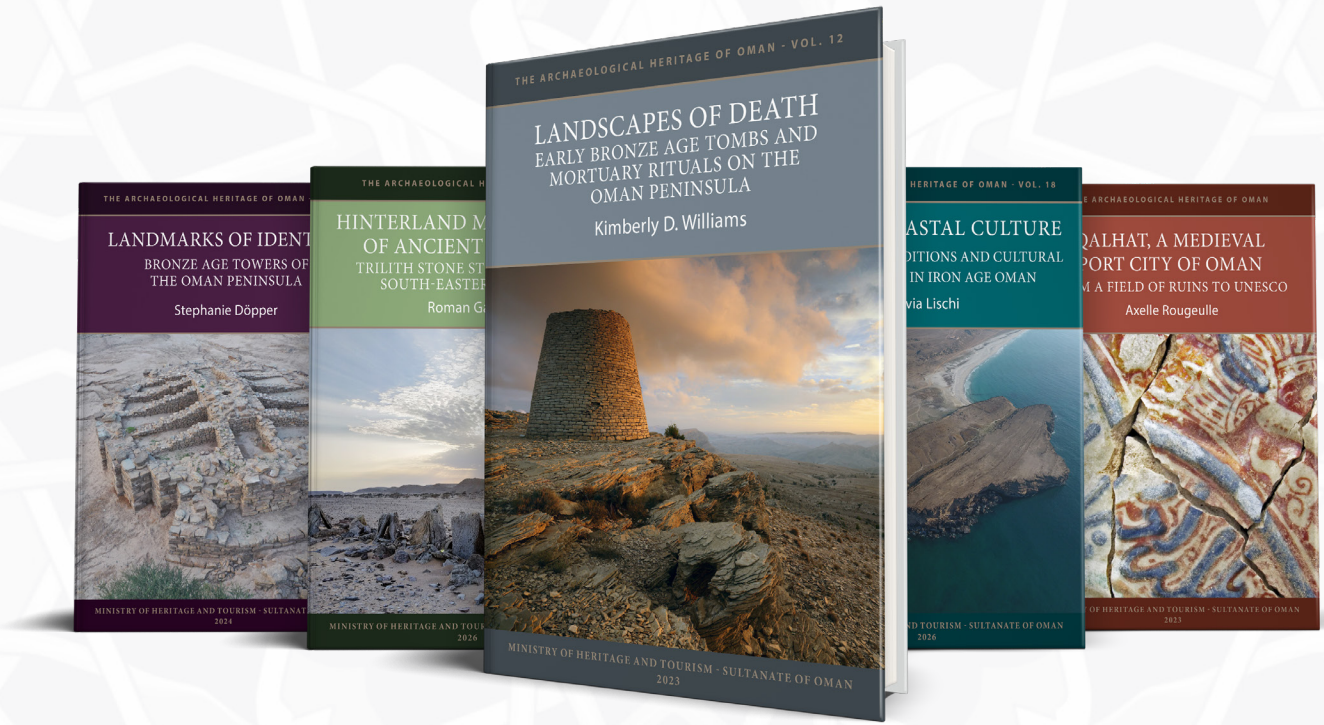
Sultan Saif Al-Bakri

Ministry of Heritage and Tourism

The "First Conference on the Archaeology of the Oman Peninsula" represents a specialised scientific platform aimed at highlighting the cultural and civilisational significance of the Sultanate of Oman and the wealth of material evidence it preserves, which forms a continuous historical record reflecting the development of human societies and their interactions over thousands of years. The Oman Peninsula, due to its geographic location and historical role, has served as a bridge between multiple civilizations, clearly reflected in the diversity of its sites, architectural styles, and material remains.

From our position overseeing the Archaeological Missions Programme, we affirm that recent years have witnessed a significant expansion in survey, excavation, and research activities, through effective partnerships with local and international academic institutions. These efforts have contributed to the documentation of new sites, the re-examination of known sites using modern scientific methodologies, and the application of advanced techniques in documentation, analysis and study. Heritage Publications also receive special attention, as they constitute a primary channel for disseminating scientific knowledge and documenting the outcomes of fieldwork and specialized studies. This ensures accessibility for researchers and specialists and enhances the presence of Omani cultural heritage in regional and international academic circles.

The conference aims to provide a scholarly space for dialogue and the exchange of expertise, to discuss current issues related to archaeological research, site management, and heritage protection, and to explore opportunities for future scientific cooperation. Such efforts contribute to building a solid knowledge base that supports conservation and cultural development initiatives. As we welcome all participants, we look forward to the conference papers and deliberations making a meaningful contribution to the advancement of archaeological research on the Omani Peninsula, deepening our understanding of the region's rich past, and safeguarding its cultural heritage for future generations.


THE ARCHAEOLOGICAL HERITAGE OF OMAN - VOL. 12
LANDSCAPES OF DEATH
EARLY BRONZE AGE TOMBS AND MORTUARY RITUALS ON THE OMAN PENINSULA
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February 1, 2026

8:00 – 9:00	**Conference registration**
9:00 – 9:05	**Recitation of the Holy Quran**
9:05 – 9:10	**Welcome address by H.E. Eng. Ibrahim bin Said Al-Kharusi, Undersecretary for Heritage Affairs, Ministry of Heritage & Tourism**
9:10 – 9:20	**Keynote by Prof. Dr. Moawiyah Ibrahim Yousef, Professor Emeritus**
9:20 – 9:30	**Documentary film "The Golden Jubilee of the Journal of Oman Studies 1975 - 2025"**
9:30 – 9:35	**The web platform of the Journal of Oman Studies: Introduction by Mr. Sultan bin Saif Al-Bakri, Advisor for Heritage to the Minister of Heritage and Tourism**
9:35 – 9:45	**The web platform of the Journal of Oman Studies: Technical presentation by Mr. Patrick Harris, Archaeopress Publishing (Oxford, UK)**
9:45 – 9:50	**Launch of the Commemorative postage stamp**
9:50 – 9:55	**Group photograph with the Event Patron, H.E. Ibrahim bin Said Al-Busaidi, Minister of Heritage and Tourism**
9:55 – 10:00	**Exhibition opening**
10:00 – 10:40	**Coffee break**

	Session A | Conference Hall	**Session B** | Lecture Hall 1
	Chairperson: **Derek Kennet**	Chairperson: **Ayoub Al-Busaidi**
10:40 – 11:00	M. Al-Kindi **Quaternary (Recent) Sediments in Oman and Their Significance for Quaternary Environments and Early Human Life**	M. Hesein, G. Gernez, K. Douglas & N. S. Al-Jahwari **The Strategic Role of Manaqi within the Wadi al-Far System during the Iron Age in Northern Oman**
11:00 – 11:20	B. Khrisat **Geomorphic Vulnerability and Palaeogeographical Reconstruction: Assessing the Erosional Fate of Archaeological Landscapes in Central and Northern Oman**	R. Loreto, L. Corrado, M. Cozzolino, B. Musella, C. Martinelli, R. Marchese, C. Russo & M. Musto **Results from 2019-2025 field seasons of the University of Naples L'Orientale at Wadi Bani Khalid: Archaeological activities, conservation, and valorisation strategies**
11:20 – 11:40	N. Sutton, M. Meredith-Williams, A. Al.Kathiri, Lee Arnold, Dominik Chlachula, Ash Parton, Dominik Koscielny, David Alsop, Kira Otterbach, Dana Munnik, Riley Flood, Mathieu Duval, Roman Garba & Yamandu Hilbert **Middle Palaeolithic of Central Oman: Wadi Baw 4**	F. Genchi **The metal weapons of south-eastern Arabia at the turn of the second and first millennia BC: Influences and originality in manufacturing**
11:40 – 12:00	D. Chlachula, M. . Maiorano, Y. Hilbert, T. Beuzen-Waller, A. Beshkani, L. Arnold, M. Meredith-Williams, J. Rose, V. Usyk, A. Danielisová & R. Garba **Human Occupation of Central Oman during the Early Holocene**	P. Bielinski **Remains of Iron Age Settlements near Ayn Bani Sa'dah and Their Chronology**

12:00 – 13:40	**Lunch break**	
	Session A | Conference Hall	**Session B** | Lecture Hall 1
	Chairperson: **Mohammed Al-Kindi**	Chairperson: **Dennys Frenez**
13:40 – 14:00	A. Beshkani, M. Al-Kindi, A. Columbu, J. Al-Sheryani, H. Al-Haji, D. Pleurdeau & P. Voinchet **Newly Discovered Paleolithic Shelters and Caves with Associated Lithic Industries from the Al Hajar Mountains, Oman**	K. Olson, A. Buffington & J. McCorriston **Dhofar and its Settlement History**
14:00 – 14:20	A. Al-Kathiri & A. Al-Mashani **Exploring the Link between the Archaeological Finds of the Natif Cave and the Fishing Practices of the Safailah in the Wilayat of Sadah: A Study in Cultural and Social Extension**	S. Lischi **The DHOMIAP Project: Investigating Cultural Interactions between Indigenous and South Arabian Communities in Iron Age Dhofar**
14:20 – 14:40	V. Charpentier, M. P. Maiorano, F. Borgi & J. Vosges **Forty Years of Archaeological Research along the Omani Shores of the Arabian Sea**	R. Garba **Trilith stone structures of Southeastern Arabia: Hinterland monuments of ancient nomads**
14:40 – 15:00	C. Castel **At the Turn of the Third Millennium BCE and Beyond: New Clues from Al-Arid to Trace the History of the First Sedentary Communities**	A. Al-Jallad **Beyond Decipherment: The Subclassification of Iron Age Inscriptions in Oman**
15:00 – 15:40	**Coffee break**	
	Chairperson: **Jennifer Swerida**	Chairperson: **Joy McCorriston**
15:40 – 16:00	T. Beuzen-Waller, C. Schmidt, D. Pietsch, L. Proctor, J. Unkelbach & C. Schmitt **Results from the UmWeltWandel Project in Al-Khashbah, Sultanate of Oman**	A. E. Fossati, M. Arbach & R. Garba **Chronicles in stone: Tracing the extensive rock art of Nafun (south-central Oman) spanning over six millennia**
16:00 – 16:20	M. P. Maiorano, L. Proctor, E. Maini, J. Harris, P. Paulsen, J. Moreau, P. Creamer, J. Sneberger & T. Beuzen-Waller **Returning Places: Exploring Neolithic mobility and place persistence in the Hajar piedmont**	M. Arbach & A. E. Fossati **The Rock Art and Inscriptions of Ẓufār: Preliminary Results of the 2023–2025 Field Campaigns**
16:20 – 16:40	N. Mazzucco, R. Hadad, S. Sani, L. Biancalani, A. Agresti, J. Freulard, D. Arobba, N. Emonet, K. Lidour, L. Morandi, A. Neri, M. Rousou, K. Douglas & N. S. Al-Jahwari **Hayy Al-Sarh (Rustaq, Southern Batinah): Chronological, Palaeoeconomic, and Palaeoenvironmental Reconstruction of a Late Neolithic Campsite in the Al-Hajar Foothills**	A. T. Mahi **Livestock in Rock Art in the Dhofar Region: Indicators of Prehistoric Art**
19:30 – 21:30	**Official dinner (Private Invitation)**	

February 2, 2026

	Session A | Conference Hall	**Session B** | Lecture Hall 1
	Chairperson: **Khaled Douglas**	Chairperson: **Angelo Fossati**
9:00 – 9:20	M. Cattani **Early 3rd millennium BCE in Eastern Oman: Transformations between global and regional networks**	F. Masoud & H. Al-Hadi **Animal riding in the rock art of the Omani Peninsula**
9:20 – 9:40	M. Al-Issai **Soft Stone Craft Production and Exchange from the Late Fourth to the End of the Second millennium BCE**	E. Taha **Bridging Technology and Sustainability: A New Approach to the Study and Preservation of Omani Rock Art**
9:40 – 10:00	V. Azzarà & A. De Rorre **Living and Crafting at the Edge of Arabia: The Early Bronze Age Settlement System of Ras Al Jinz**	M. Deeb **Rock Art and Trapping Structures: A Comparative Study of Cultural and Historical Significations between the Sultanate of Oman and Syria**
10:00 – 10:20	E. Maini & M. Bormetti **Tracing Dolphin Exploitation along the Omani Coast: Zooarchaeological Evidence from Ras al-Hadd and Ras al-Jinz (4th–3rd Millennium BCE)**	A. Al-Mashani **Michaelis' Questions on the Oman Peninsula: An Analytical Reading in the Light of Inscriptions and Mythology**
10:20 – 11:00	**Coffee break**	
	Chairperson: **Kimberly Williams**	Chairperson: **Guillaume Gernez**
11:00 – 11:20	M. Jean, M. Sauvage, T. Beuzen-Waller, O. Munoz, L. Proctor, K. Rointru, T. Mespoulet, D. Pietsch, A. Al-Oufi & A. Al-Tamimi **Bisya as an Early Bronze Age oasis landscape: results of 4 years of exploration**	D. Kennet **The Sohar Project: excavations at a key early Islamic Indian Ocean port**
11:20 – 11:40	J. Swerida, S. Nugent & R. Bryant **Arabian Palimpsests: case studies from the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Bat and al-Khutm**	R. Giunta & A. Pavan **Investigating Urban Space, Trade, and Daily Life at Al Baleed (ancient Zafar): Archaeology and Heritage Valorisation**
11:40 – 12:00	S. Döpper (online) **Recent discoveries from the Umm an-Nar period in the Al-Mudhaybi region**	M. Gaudiello **Beyond the Iron Age Tombs: Tracing Islamic Settlement and Smelting at Al-Ṣalaylī, Sultanate of Oman**
12:00 – 12:20	D. Frenez **There and Back Again? Globalising Models of Socio-Technical Interactions between the Greater Indus Valley and the Oman Peninsula in the Early Bronze Age**	S. Al-Khalasi & A. Al-Ghafri **Falaj Al-Qaswat in the Wilayat of Izki: A Testament to Omani Ingenuity in Water Resource Management**
12:20 – 14:00	**Lunch break**	

	Session A | Conference Hall	**Session B** | Lecture Hall 1
	Chairperson: **Mathilde Jean**	Chairperson: **Ali Al-Mahrooqi**
14:00 – 14:20	K. Douglas, N. S. Al-Jahwari & M. Hesein **The Architecture of the Umm an-Nar Culture: Shared Traditions on Both Sides of the Hajar Mountains in Oman**	Z. Al-Fori & N. Benkari **HBIM for Integrated Documentation and Conservation Diagnosis in Oman: The Bibi Maryam Mausoleum, Qalhat**
14:20 – 14:40	S. Pizzimenti, K. Douglas & N. S. Al-Jahwari **The Omani-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Al Tikha: New Insight from 2026 Field Season**	A. Al-Hashim **Approaches to Documenting, Protecting, and Revitalising the Architectural Heritage of Oman**
14:40 – 15:00	N. Economou, K. Douglas, M. Khan, N. S. Al-Jahwari, S. Pizzimenti, M. Hesein, K. Al-Hooti, B. Al-Shaqsi & S. Al-Abri **Revealing anthropogenic buried structures by integrating geophysics, artificial intelligence, and archaeological studies at EBA settlements in Oman**	A. Al-Kharousi & N. Al-Habsi **Omani Settlements in the Western Al-Hajar Region: The Settlement of Sital as a Case Study**
15:00 – 15:20	K. Al-Karoui & S. Al-Bakri **Towers of the Third Millennium BCE in the Sultanate of Oman: An Archaeological and Architectural Study of the Bat and Al-Khatm Sites**	G. Hamed, K. Douglas, N .S. Al-Jahwari, M. Hesein & H. Al-Dihani **Urban Sociology of Omani Neighborhoods: The Sima Neighborhood in Izki as a Model – The Dialectical Relationship Between Space and Society**
15:20 – 16:00	**Coffee break**	
	Chairperson: **Maurizio Cattani**	Chairperson: **Aliya Al-Hashim**
16:00 – 16:20	K.D. Williams **"Ancestors," "ancestors," and "family" of the Northern Oman Peninsula: Evidence of Continuity, Transition, and the Development of Sacred Spaces from the Last 50 years of Research**	J. Al-Shaibani & Z. Qudah **Architectural documentation and surveying projects in the Sultanate of Oman**
16:20 – 16:40	E. Bortolini **The funerary landscape of Wadi Halfayin, Ad-Dakhiliyyah Governorate**	M. Al-Ali & N. Al-Saqri **The Influence of Omani Architecture on Bahrain over the Past Three Centuries**
16:40 – 17:00	S. Righetti **The Wadi Suq Period (2000-1600 BC): Transformation and Adaptation in Bronze Age Southeastern Arabia**	A. H. Al-Mahrooqi **Earthen Architecture between Authenticity and Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of the Omani and Moroccan Experiences**
17:00 – 17:20	M. Degli Esposti & A. Zerboni **Middle Bronze Age (Wadi Suq) graves in the ancient oasis of Bisya and Salūt: evidence of local funerary-related practices?**	

February 3, 2026

	Session A | Conference Hall	**Session B** | Lecture Hall 1
	Chairperson: **Romolo Loreto**	Chairperson: **Said Al-Khalasi**
9:00 – 9:20	G. Gernez **The copper-alloy tools from Al-Ghithrayinah (Ad Dakhiliyah) and their significance**	K. A. Al-Rawahi & M. Al-Naaimi **The cultural heritage of Omani ports in Islamic eras from the perspective of Omani university students**
9:20 – 9:40	T. Miki, Y. Itahashi, T. Kuronuma, K. Tanabe & Y. Kondo **The further excavation at Mugharat al-Kahf, the Wādī Tanūf, the Ad-Dākhilīyah, Oman: Tracing human activity in inland southeastern Arabia during the second millennium BCE**	A. Al-Lawati **The Impact of Indian Ocean Trade on Architecture in the Historic Port of Mutrah (Sur Al Lawatia as a Model)**
9:40 – 10:00	P. Yule, J. Schreiber, I. Al-Mustafa & N. Ayash **News from the Samad Late Iron Age Cemetery of Mahaliyah, Ash Sharqiyyah North**	A. Al-Busaidi **Oman's Efforts in the Preservation and Management of Underwater Cultural Heritage**
10:00 – 10:20	I. Al-Fadli **Pre-Islamic Coins Preserved in the Currency Museum of Oman**	M. El-Hosary **The Role of Archaeological Surveys in Revealing Submerged Archaeological and Heritage Sites in the Omani Peninsula**
10:20 – 11:00	**Coffee break**	
11:00 – 12:00	**Concluding remarks from Prof. Dr. Nasser Said Al-Jahwari, Chairman of the Organizing Committee**	
12:00 – 13:40	**Lunch break**	
14:00 (Start)	**Visit to Old Muscat (Private Invitation)**	

Moawiyah Ibrahim YOUSEF

Keynote Speaker, Dr. Moawiyah Ibrahim Yousef, Professor Emeritus of Archaeology

Dr. Moawiyah Ibrahim Yousef is Professor Emeritus of Archaeology at Yarmouk University in Irbid, Jordan, and served as Professor and Founding Chair of the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University from 1994 to 2004. He began his academic studies in history at Damascus University (1961–1964) before pursuing postgraduate studies at the Free University of Berlin in Germany, where he obtained his doctorate in Ancient Archaeology and Oriental Languages (1970).

Following his doctorate, Professor Ibrahim joined the Jordanian Department of Antiquities, serving as Head of the Excavation and Studies Department and as Assistant to the Director General. Simultaneously, he developed an academic career, lecturing at the University of Jordan (1975–1978) and holding visiting professorships at the Free University of Berlin (1973–1974) and the University of Tübingen (1976).

In 1979, he joined Yarmouk University, where he served as Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Social Sciences and Humanities (1981–1984) and as Founding Director of the Institute of Archaeology and Anthropology (1984–1991).

He was a Fulbright Visiting Professor at the University of Pennsylvania (1985–1986) and Fulbright Professor in Residence at the College of International Studies at the University of Richmond in Virginia (1992–1993). At Sultan Qaboos University, he established academic curricula, research strategies and field training programmes, laying the foundations for archaeological education in Oman (1994–2004). In 2006, he was appointed Director of the Centre for Consultancy, Graduate Studies and Community Service, and Dean of the Faculty of Arts at Al-Isra University in Jordan. He served as Advisor to the Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs in Oman and participated in UNESCO committees, representing Jordan in reporting on the preservation of Jerusalem and Palestinian antiquities.

Throughout his career, Professor Ibrahim supervised numerous archaeological projects across the Middle East. In Jordan, these included Sahab, Deir Alla, the Jordan Valley Survey, and Al-Zirqun. His regional work extended to Sar Al-Jisr in Bahrain, Tell Akkaz in Kuwait, and Yemen, where he coordinated international excavations at Tamna. In 2005, he served as Senior Supervisor of the Mahram Balqis excavations in Marib, conducted by the American Foundation for the Study of Man. In Oman, he directed fieldwork in Wadi Al-Safafir, Wadi Samail, the coastal region between Al-Qurayat and Sur, Nizwa, Wadi Al-Haymala, and Wadi Bani Kharous.

With over 100 publications in books and specialised academic journals, Professor Ibrahim is recognised as one of the most influential figures in Arab archaeology. Elected Vice-President of the International Society for Arabian Peninsula Studies (1991) and an ACOR Trustee (2006), he is a member of the American Society of Overseas Research (ASOR), the German Archaeological Institute (DAI), and the German Oriental Society (DOG). His honours include the Order of Merit (First Class) of Germany, the Union of Arab Archaeologists' Shield, the State Appreciation Award of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan (2021), and the Abdul Hameed Shoman Award (2022).

Mohammed AL-ALI & Nasser AL-SAQRI

The Influence of Omani Architecture on Bahrain over the Past Three Centuries

Omani forts and castles represent a distinctive model of defensive architecture, constructed out of the need to ensure the security of coastal and inland regions. This architectural style transcended its purely military function to become an architectural text that generated cultural meanings and historical narratives. Thus, it may be examined through the integration of architectural studies with semiotics and hermeneutics, presenting Omani forts as symbolic productions connected to their historical and social contexts. The importance of this architecture becomes evident when recognized as a transboundary tradition extending to Bahrain, where Omani migrants contributed to the transfer of architectural characteristics through construction activities. This paper offers a historical reading of the transmission of Omani architecture and its relation to the artistic and cultural contexts of Bahrain. It inquiries into Omani influence within two historical contexts: the eighteenth century, when the Omanis built Arad Fort; and the mid-twentieth century, when they arrived as migrants and participated in residential construction. The study aims to understand their impact on the Bahraini architectural character, particularly given that they functioned as executing laborers under the supervision of Bahraini contractors. The study adopts historical and descriptive methods to examine Omani architectural influence, emphasizing the roles of design and execution as parallel authorities shaping the final form. The paper focuses on Omani craftsmen as cultural agents and intermediaries between Omani architecture and the new environment. Through comparative analysis, the study reveals two patterns of influence: direct and indirect, with Omani craftsmen remaining the principal common factor. This demonstrates how Omani architectural influence extended across time and space, highlighting its significance as a historical and transboundary phenomenon.

Mohammed Abdullah Mohammed Al-Ali is a PhD researcher in the Department of History at Sultan Qaboos University. His research interests focus on knowledge production, with a strong commitment to contributing to the study of history, culture, and sociolinguistics. Throughout his academic career, he has developed solid research experience and consistently strives to transcend the boundaries of his specialisation, contributing to the service of society through his scholarly output.

Ayoub AL-BUSAIDI

Oman's Efforts in the Preservation and Management of Underwater Cultural Heritage

The Sultanate of Oman possesses a rich maritime legacy that testifies to its historical role in navigation and trade across the Indian Ocean. This legacy includes several underwater archaeological sites that represent a vital extension of Oman's maritime identity and cultural memory. This paper aims to present an overview of the national efforts undertaken by the Sultanate of Oman in preserving and managing underwater cultural heritage through an examination of institutional policies, research projects, and regional and international collaborations. The study explores the development of the legal and institutional frameworks that underpin heritage protection, as well as the role of the Directorate General of Antiquities at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in establishing mapping and documentation programs for submerged sites. It also highlights major underwater archaeological projects conducted along the Omani coast in cooperation with international organizations such as ALECSO and UNESCO. Selected case studies—such as the historic shipwrecks discovered in the Al Hallaniyat Islands and the stone anchorages identified at the ancient city of Qalhat—are presented to illustrate the applied methodologies of documentation and conservation, as well as the technical and environmental challenges faced in the field. The paper concludes that Oman's experience in safeguarding underwater cultural heritage represents an evolving model within the Arab region, combining modern scientific approaches with strong community awareness of maritime heritage as a driver for national identity and sustainable development. The study recommends expanding field research, developing specialized national expertise, and establishing a National Center for Underwater Cultural Heritage to serve as a hub for research, education, and international cooperation.

Ayoub Naghmoush Suwaid Al-Busaidi is the Acting Director General of Antiquities at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, Sultanate of Oman. A specialist in underwater archaeology, he possesses extensive experience in project management, field research, and the preservation of maritime cultural heritage. He earned his BA in Archaeology from Sultan Qaboos University in 2002 and has completed advanced training in maritime heritage documentation at University College London and the Alexandria Centre for Underwater Antiquities. Since 2010, he has spearheaded major underwater surveys and excavations, most notably the high-profile investigation of Vasco da Gama's shipwrecks in the Al-Hallaniyyat Islands. A dedicated researcher and contributor to scientific publications and documentary films, He represents Oman at prestigious international forums, including UNESCO, ICCROM, and ALECSO. His professional focus remains on documenting submerged archaeological sites, applying international standards for heritage protection, and fostering scientific cooperation between local and global institutions. Through his leadership, he continues to safeguard Oman's rich archaeological legacy while advancing the field of maritime archaeology.

Ibrahim AL-FADLI

Pre-Islamic Coins Preserved in the Currency Museum of Oman

Historians note that Alexander of Macedon recognized the strategic importance of the Arabian Gulf due to its influence on navigation and trade. His interest intensified after his occupation of Mesopotamia and his intention to make Babylon the eastern capital of his empire. Accordingly, he commissioned his commander, Nearchus, to explore the eastern coast of the Gulf. Nearchus undertook a famous voyage, departing from the mouth of the Indus River and sailing across the Gulf until he reached the settlement of Dir Nis (present-day Basra). Following this, Alexander reported: "I cannot feel secure about the safety of my forces in Egypt and the Mediterranean if foreign powers control the Gulf." While Alexander was preparing to launch a military campaign aimed at subjugating the Arabian Peninsula, he died in 323 BCE. Later, the Roman Emperor Trajan sought to follow in Alexander's footsteps and dispatched forces to the Gulf. These forces confronted the Persians, marking the beginning of a fierce conflict that lasted for nearly three centuries. Following the decline of Seleucid, Roman, and subsequently Persian influence in southeastern Arabia, Arab powers succeeded in undermining the foundations of colonial forces. Oman has been known since ancient times for its maritime leadership and extensive historical connections with civilizations, particularly the Sumerian, Babylonian, Pharaonic, and Roman. Frankincense from Dhofar was transported to India and East Asia, and overland by caravan routes to Gaza and the Levant. These networks necessitated the circulation of foreign coinage in Oman for trade exchange. This study sheds light on the collection of the Currency Museum of Oman, focusing on coins from the fourth century BCE to the seventh century CE. The study traces Greek, Roman, Seleucid, Ptolemaic, Kushan, Indian, Parthian, Achaemenid, Byzantine, and Sasanian coins through an analytical examination of their characteristics, decorative motifs, emblems, symbols, and inscriptions.

Ibrahim Ahmed Mohammed Al-Fadli is a researcher specializing in Islamic numismatics. He holds a PhD in Islamic Archaeology (specialization: Islamic Coins) from Fayoum University, Egypt (2020), awarded with distinction. He was given the GCC General Secretariat Award Shield in the category of Archaeology and Museums (2011). He has participated in numerous international and local workshops and seminars, most recently the 27th general conference of the International Council of Museums (ICOM), held in Dubai in November 2025. Dr. Al-Fadli has taken part in several archaeological excavations and surveys in Oman and other Arab countries. He has also contributed to the media field by authoring content for the documentary *History of Coinage in Oman* (2009) and the program *The Evolution of Currency in Oman* (2018). His publications include: *The Waqbah Hoard* (2015); *Islamic Coins Minted in Oman* (2019); *Pages from the Documents of Al-Musannah* (2021); *Islamic Coins Circulated in Oman* (2023); and *The Story of Omani Banknotes* (2023).

Zainab AL-FORI & Naima BENKARI

HBIM for Integrated Documentation and Conservation Diagnosis in Oman: The Bibi Maryam Mausoleum, Qalhat

Oman's built heritage needs a modern, repeatable way to document complex sites and make conservation decisions based on evidence rather than intuition. This pioneering study demonstrates a complete, end-to-end Heritage Building Information Modeling (HBIM) workflow on the Bibi Maryam Mausoleum (Qalhat) and shows how the same method can scale nationally. The research integrates four strands: (1) literature synthesis on documentation in hot-arid contexts; (2) stakeholder engagement through surveys and expert interviews; (3) multi-sensor field capture—terrestrial laser scanning (TLS), UAV photogrammetry, close-range imaging, and selective manual measurements; and (4) a semantic, parametric HBIM at roughly LoD 300, encoding geometry, construction systems, materials (including lime–sarooj plasters and stucco layers), chronology, and pathologies within a single, queryable model. Implemented in a Revit-based environment, the workflow privileges interoperability (IFC/CSV) and living records over one-off drawings, enabling multi-party updates without model corruption. Results show that compared with mesh-only outputs, HBIM delivers greater adaptability, semantic depth, and life-cycle updatability. It supports diagnosis, risk mapping, and option evaluation (from minimal intervention to compatible repair) while reducing duplication of effort across agencies. The pipeline translates directly into policy actions: defining national HBIM standards (LoD/LOI/metadata and QA/QC), assigning custodianship, and training teams to extend the method to forts, harāt, and urban ensembles. Crucially, the model accommodates intangible heritage, oral testimonies and craft knowledge, anchoring conservation in the memory of making. In short, this case proves HBIM is feasible and scalable under Omani conditions, offering a template to standardize workflows, de-risk conservation spending, and build a national digital heritage backbone.

Naima Benkari (PhD, Ms. Arch, B. Eng.) is an Associate Professor in Urban planning at Sultan Qaboos University and an Associate Research Fellow at the Institute of Industrial Science, University of Tokyo. Her expertise spans vernacular construction systems, urban morphology, and the built heritage in the Arab world. A long-standing member of ICOMOS, she serves as the International Focal Point for the UN SDGs, aligning heritage practice with the 2030 Agenda. Within the UNESCO World Heritage system, she has contributed to expert panels for site evaluations and capacity-building. Dr. Benkari serves as a heritage consultant worldwide, where she develops conservation frameworks and strengthens heritage education. An emerging voice on applications of artificial intelligence for heritage documentation, she ensures tradition and innovation work together. A committed educator, she publishes in international fora and mentors the next generation of architects and heritage professionals.

Alia AL-HASHIM

Approaches to Documenting, Protecting, and Revitalising the Architectural Heritage of Oman

The built heritage of the Sultanate of Oman is one of the fundamental pillars of national identity and a rich source of architectural and urban knowledge, reflecting the interaction of the Omani people with their natural and social environment through centuries of accumulated experience. With the acceleration of urban development and social change, it has become necessary to adopt scientific and systematic approaches to preserve this heritage and re-employ it in line with the requirements of the times without compromising its authenticity. This theme aimed to discuss ways to document, protect and revive Omani architectural heritage through multiple approaches combining scientific methodology, digital technologies and community participation, in addition to activating HBIM in the restoration of historic buildings and employing spatial information systems, scientific methodology, digital technologies, and community participation, in addition to activating (HBIM) in the fields of historic building restoration, the use of spatial information systems, and digital modelling. Partnerships between universities and relevant government agencies The discussion will focus on the following: 1) Digital documentation of built heritage: Use of LiDAR, aerial photography, and 3D scanning technologies to preserve heritage sites; 2) Rehabilitation and sustainable reuse of historic buildings to serve tourism and cultural development; 3) Involving local communities in conservation processes to ensure the sustainability of efforts and achieve social impact; 4) Policy and legislative framework for the protection and development of Oman's urban heritage in line with national trends; 5) The role of education and scientific research in transferring heritage knowledge and developing innovative tools for documentation and analysis. This theme aims to build a platform for dialogue that brings together researchers, academics and practitioners to discuss future challenges and opportunities in preserving Omani heritage and enhancing its role in shaping a contemporary urban identity rooted in authenticity.

Alia Abdul Sattar Al-Hashim is an assistant professor in the Department of Civil and Architectural Engineering at Sultan Qaboos University. Her research focuses on the digital documentation of Omani architectural heritage, analyzing traditional architecture, and repurposing heritage buildings for urban sustainability. She is currently supervising a Royal Grant project entitled "Development of a Unified System for Digital Documentation and Archiving of Omani Heritage Sites." She has also led field studies on traditional coastal architecture as part of a project on climate design strategies for coastal dwellings. Through her academic work, she links education and research by integrating design studios with 3D scanning, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs), and heritage building information modelling (HBIM). Dr. Alia also participates in national initiatives related to the Omani Building Code and historic building regulations with the Ministry of Housing and Urban Planning and the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. She believes preserving built heritage includes reviving urban memory and promoting community participation.

Mohammed AL-ISSAI

Soft-Stone Craft Production and Exchange from the Late Fourth to the End of the Second millennium BCE: A Comparative Archaeological Study of Oman, Eastern Saudi Arabia, and Southern Iran

This study offers a comprehensive reassessment of soft stone craftsmanship, particularly steatite and chlorite vessels, across the Oman Peninsula, Saudi Arabia, and Iran from the late fourth to the early second millennium BCE. As one of the most prevalent categories of prehistoric material culture in the Gulf, soft stone objects provide a crucial lens for understanding technological innovation, socio-economic interaction, and cultural identity during periods of intensified regional connectivity. Through an integrated comparative and chronological framework, the research combines typological classification with petrographic microscopy to reconstruct manufacturing techniques, identify workshop traditions, and trace interregional exchange networks. Original fieldwork conducted in Oman, complemented by an extensive review of excavation reports and museum collections from Saudi Arabia and Iran, forms the empirical core of the study. These datasets reveal notable shifts in vessel morphology, decorative systems, and raw material procurement strategies, reflecting broader transformations in craft specialization and long-distance trade. Ethnographic insights from a contemporary Omani stone craftsman further illuminate persistent techniques and evolving practices, bridging ancient and modern traditions of stone working. By bringing together archaeological, petrographic, and ethnographic evidence, this thesis highlights the pivotal role of soft stone industries in shaping the cultural landscape of the ancient Gulf. It demonstrates that soft stone vessels were not merely utilitarian artefacts but dynamic expressions of technological choice, identity negotiation, and regional connectivity across a millennium and a half of cultural development.

Mohammed Khalfan Ahmed Al-Issai, specialist in Bronze Age studies of the Oman Peninsula, with a focus on the Hafit, Umm an-Nar, and Wadi Suq periods. He holds a master's degree in Archaeology from the University of Bologna (Italy) and currently serves as an Assistant Director at the Bat, Al-Khutm, and Al-Ayn Archaeological Sites, a UNESCO World Heritage property located in the Oman Peninsula. His research centers on the production and distribution of soft stone vessels, examining their manufacturing technologies and exchange patterns across the Oman Peninsula, eastern Saudi Arabia, and southern Iran during the third and second millennia BCE. He has participated in several archaeological field projects and has extensive experience in site management, documentation, field survey, material analysis, and the application of digital tools in archaeology. His work contributes significantly to understanding regional exchange networks, craft specialization, and cultural identity in the prehistoric societies of the Oman Peninsula and surrounding regions.

Ahmad AL-JALLAD

Beyond Decipherment: The Subclassification of Iron Age Inscriptions in Oman

The script types and epigraphic traditions of Oman have long posed a challenge to scholarly interpretation. The comprehensive study conducted by Al-Shaḥrī & King (1993) succeeded in documenting hundreds of texts; however, it did not result in a successful decipherment of the script. Subsequent studies offered preliminary and conjectural readings of these inscriptions, yet as late as 2024, Castagna declared that the script remained undeciphered and that its language was still unknown. This lecture builds on the initial work carried out on the decipherment of the Dhofari script (Type 1a) (Al-Jallad 2025) by proposing a preliminary identification of the phonetic–symbolic values in Types 1b and 2. It also presents a systematic analysis of the grammatical and lexical features of the languages of Type 1a and Type 2, highlighting the significant linguistic differences between the two groups.

Ahmed Al-Jallad is a linguist, epigraphist, and historian of language. He currently holds the Sofia Chair in Arabic Studies at Ohio State University in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures. His work focuses on the languages, writing systems, history, and cultures of pre-Islamic Arabia and the ancient Near East. He is the scientific director and curator of the Online Corpus of Inscriptions from Ancient North Arabia (OCIANA), which is the global central resource for the pre-Islamic epigraphic heritage of Arabia. His work can be viewed here: https://leidenuniv.academia.edu/AhmadAlJallad

Khaled AL-KAROUI & Sultan AL-BAKRI

Towers of the Third Millennium BCE in the Sultanate of Oman: An Archaeological and Architectural Study of the Bat and Al-Khutm Sites

At the end of the fourth millennium BCE, the Omani Peninsula witnessed a significant cultural transformation, marked by the establishment of stable communities known collectively as "Magan." This civilization maintained extensive trade and cultural relations with the civilizations of Mesopotamia, the Indus Valley, and Dilmun, highlighting Oman's prominent role within the ancient exchange network. Archaeological surveys and excavations have revealed multiple sites, among which Bat, Al-Khutm, and Al-Ayn stand out as hosting concentrations of towers and distinctive tombs. The Bat and Al-Khutm sites comprise eight massive stone towers, with Al-Khutm Tower and Al-Rujum Tower being among the best-preserved. This study focuses on the architectural features of each tower while providing a comprehensive assessment of the condition of the aging and fractured stones and associated issues, including cracks, gaps, and erosion. The condition of the aging and fractured stones plays a crucial role in structural stability, as weakened stone cohesion leads to uneven load distribution, undermining the interlocking of the stone layers. For example, on the rear façade of Al-Rujum Tower, stone deterioration and fragmentation resulted in substantial collapses, exposing the internal structure. This demonstrates that stone weakness affects not only the surface but also the overall stability of the towers. The study also highlights advanced architectural techniques, such as the use of variable-sized stone blocks and deep wells for load distribution. Furthermore, the study documents restoration efforts. Al-Rujum Tower was restored long after excavation ended, whereas Al-Khutm Tower underwent restoration concurrently with the excavation campaign. By integrating the assessment of the condition of aging and fractured stones with architectural analysis, this study provides an in-depth understanding of construction techniques and the integrated economic and social systems of oasis communities in the third millennium BCE.

Khaled bin Mohammed Al-Karoui is one of the most prominent Arab experts in architectural heritage preservation and historical documentation, having dedicated his career to the service of Arab cultural heritage through a combination of fieldwork, academic research, and international institutional engagement. Since 2012, he has served as an expert at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism in the Sultanate of Oman, working within the framework of a joint cooperation protocol with the Republic of Tunisia. He has participated in extensive restoration projects, including castles and forts such as Al-Hazm Fort and Barka Fort, the watchtowers of Bandar Al-Jissah and Muscat Bay, as well as historic mosques such as Al-Mazarah and Al-Awaina. He has also supervised conservation projects at sites inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List, including the restoration of the historic Bahla Souq and city wall, the Great Mosque of Qalhat (13th century AD), and the Bronze Age towers of Al-Rojoom and Al-Khutm.

Amir AL-KATHIRI & Abdulaziz AL-MASHANI

Exploring the Link between Archaeological Finds from Natif Cave and Abalone Fishing Practices in Sadah, Oman: A Study of Cultural and Social Continuity

This study explores the practice of abalone fishing in the Wilayat of Sadah, located in the Dhofar Governorate in southernmost Oman. It draws on recent archaeological discoveries from Naatf Cave in the Hasik area, dating back to approximately 10,500 BCE, which revealed a variety of artifacts, including fishing tools, shells, and ornamental items that may be linked to abalone fishing. The research aims to explore the potential connections between these ancient finds and traditional abalone fishing practices by tracing patterns of continuity and transformation in the tools and customs associated with the activity up to the present day. It also sheds light on the socio-economic transformations of this profession in recent decades, particularly due to the rise in abalone prices and growing demand, which have fostered widespread community engagement and contributed to the development of new cultural practices. The study adopts a qualitative methodology, analyzing semi-structured interviews with local fishermen and reviewing relevant literature. The data were analyzed using MAXQDA software to extract the cultural and social meanings linked to abalone fishing. The findings indicate that some contemporary practices and tools continue to echo the symbolic or material characteristics of the ancient finds, reinforcing the hypothesis that abalone fishing is deeply rooted in the region's coastal cultural heritage and not merely an economic activity. This study contributes valuable insights to archaeologists by offering a living cultural context through which ancient artifacts may be reinterpreted, thus bridging the deep past with the living present in the Omani maritime experience.

Amir bin Azad Al-Kathiri is an academic and researcher in linguistics. He currently works as a Senior Lecturer in Arabic Linguistics and Head of the Requirements Unit at the University of Technology and Applied Sciences (UTAS), Salalah, Sultanate of Oman. He holds a PhD in Arabic Language and Literature from Sultan Qaboos University. His doctoral dissertation, entitled "*Plosive Consonants in Contemporary Omani Dialects and Languages*." Dr. Al-Kathiri has made significant scholarly contributions to the fields of general linguistics and sociolinguistics, with a particular focus on Omani Dialects and Modern South Arabian languages spoken in Oman, such as Shehret (Jibbali) and Mehri. His research has been published in internationally peer-reviewed journals. He has participated in prestigious international conferences held in London, Paris, Berlin, Granada, Malta, Kutaisi, Cairo, and Riyadh. He is the author of several publications in linguistics related to Omani dialects and languages, as well as Omani folk culture. His works include books on local languages, the culture and folklore of frankincense. He had contributions to the documentation of Omani folk poetry, all of which support the preservation and strengthening of Omani cultural identity. Dr. Al-Kathiri is also a member of scientific editorial boards and international research projects .

Saeed AL-KHALASI & Abdullah AL-GHAFRI

Falaj al-Qaswat in the Wilayat of Izki: A Testament to Omani Ingenuity in Water Resource Management

Falaj al-Qaswat is one of the most distinctive cultural heritage landmarks in the Wilayat of Izki, Ad Dakhiliyah Governorate, representing a unique model of the sustainability of traditional water systems in the Sultanate of Oman. This falaj belongs to the 'Addi type, which relies on the natural flow of water from deep groundwater reservoirs without the use of pumps. It extends for approximately 6.4 kilometers between the villages of Siddi and Harat al-Raha. Historical sources document its origin more than a thousand years ago; it is mentioned in *Bayan al-Shar'* by Shaykh Mohammed ibn Ibrahim al-Kindi (5th century AH), and is also referenced in a rare manuscript written in the hand of Imam Nasir bin Murshid al-Ya'rubi (17th century), conferring upon it well-documented historical significance within Oman's water heritage. The engineering of the falaj is characterized by the precision of excavation and lining to ensure continuous flow. Its water salinity measures approximately 182 parts per million at a pH of 8.7, with an average discharge of about 17 liters per second. The irrigation system is managed through a precise traditional method known as al-Muhadara, which is based on dividing time into units called al-Athar, currently regulated using modern hours. The study aimed to document its hydrological, architectural, and social characteristics. It included an exploration of the falaj's source *Umm al-Falaj*, its main channel *Shari'at al-Falaj*, and the farms it irrigates, in addition to examining the Gharraq Falah system and analyzing traditional water distribution methods. The study concluded that Falaj al-Qaswat enjoys remarkable hydrological stability and that its efficiency in water distribution remains high due to regular maintenance and inherited traditional management. Findings demonstrated that the falaj plays an effective role in supporting sustainable agriculture and biodiversity. Recommendations include continued documentation of traditional knowledge, strengthening preventive maintenance programs using materials compatible with the original structural fabric, and scientific research to assess the impact of climate change on water resources.

Saeed bin Shannan bin Ali Al-Khalasi serves as an Assistant Professor at the UNESCO Chair for Aflaj Studies and Social Water Sciences at the University of Nizwa. He holds a PhD in Animal Nutrition and a BA in Islamic Sciences, combining modern scientific knowledge with a deep cultural and humanistic perspective. He has taught the course Aflaj of Oman, which explores the history and engineering of Omani aflaj systems, as well as methods for their preservation and sustainability. Through this course, he has contributed to raising awareness among younger generations about the significance of this ancient water heritage and its role in sustainable development. Dr. Al-Khalasi has more than twenty-four years of experience in agricultural extension, scientific research, and the development of animal feed production technologies. He has authored two books and published numerous research papers focusing on animal feed and the utilization of local trees and herbs. His research interests also include bioenergy and biofuels as sustainable and environmentally friendly energy sources.

Abdulaziz AL-KHAROUSI & Najah AL-HABSI

Omani Settlements in the Western Al-Hajar Region: The Settlement of Sital as a Case Study

Old settlements (*harat*) are considered among the most significant urban features in Oman, as they embody the ingenuity of the Omani people, their architectural and engineering capabilities, and their construction skills. These settlements are known for their distinctive structural characteristics and strategic locations. The settlement of Sital, located in Wadi Bani Kharous in the Wilayat of Al-Awabi, represents one of the ancient Omani settlements; notably, it comprises smaller sub-settlements that fall within the boundaries of the larger settlement. The settlement is distinguished by its strategic location, as it is situated on elevated ground overlooking the wadi, specifically in the southeastern section. This position rendered it a safe area, protected from the destructive flash floods that occur intermittently in Wadi Bani Kharous. It also withstood numerous attacks during certain phases of its history. The settlement encompassed various aspects of social, cultural, economic, administrative, and military life, and it underwent different stages of development over time. The study comprises several sections in addition to the introduction, conclusion, and appendices. The first section introduces Sital and its geographical location, as well as the concept of the Omani settlement and the location of Sital Settlement in particular. The second section presents a map of Sital Settlement and its components, including the smaller sub-settlements, their roads and branches, the types of houses and their architectural design, and the falaj water channel and its course. The third section discusses social and cultural activities and the buildings associated with them, such as the Qur'anic school, the modern school, the sablah, the Eid prayer space, and the location of the cemetery. The fourth section addresses economic activity within the settlement, including the location of the market and the nature of commercial movement.

Abdulaziz Bin Hilal Bin Zahir Al-Kharousi holds a Ph.D. in History from the University of Algiers 2, Democratic People's Republic of Algeria, obtained in 2013. He previously served as the supervisor of the Oral History Project at the National Records and Archives Authority. He is also one of the founders of the Omani Oral History Project at the National Records and Archives Authority in Oman. Dr. Al-Kharousi is a full-time researcher specializing in Documentary Studies and Oral History. Achievements and Memberships: League of Arab States Award Shield (2016): He was given the Award Plaque from League of Arab States for 2016 in the field of Documentary Studies and Oral History research, recognizing him as one of the top four researchers across the Arab world; member of the GCC Society for Historical and Archaeology; member of Various scientific committees for local and international symposia and conferences.

Mohammed AL-KINDI

Quaternary (Recent) Sediments in Oman and Their Significance for Quaternary Environments and Early Human Life

Quaternary (recent) sediments distributed across various regions of the Sultanate of Oman, including floodplains, coastal and inland sabkhas (salt flats), sand dunes, wadis (valleys), and alluvial fans, constitute a rich geological record that documents the climatic and environmental changes experienced by the region during the Quaternary period. These sediments form a natural archive that enables the reconstruction of past climatic conditions, such as phases of humidity and aridity, which directly influenced the distribution of plant and animal life, as well as patterns of human activity and settlement over time. Evidence of these dynamics can be observed in numerous remains of ancient human settlements. This study focuses on examining the sedimentological and morphological characteristics and surface formations in Oman as precise environmental indicators that reveal the close interaction between natural processes and the development of early human life. It also discusses plant and animal microfossils as evidence of more humid climatic phases and periods of environmental flourishing that enabled early humans to settle and engage in herding, hunting, and food-gathering activities in areas that are arid today. The research is based on field studies and geological analyses, and its findings highlight the vital role of Quaternary sediments in understanding the evolution of natural environments and their relationship with humans, in addition to fossil traces identified at ancient human settlement sites and within caves.

Mohammed Hilal Nasser Al-Kindi holds a Bachelor's degree in Physics and Geology from the University of Aberdeen in the United Kingdom (2003), and a PhD in Structural Geology from the University of Leeds (2006). He has over 20 years of experience in the fields of oil, mining, and geotourism. He has held several positions, including President of the Geological Society of Oman and Production Geologist at Petroleum Development Oman. He is currently the Founder and CEO of the Earth Sciences Consultancy Center. Dr. Al-Kindi has extensive expertise in geological data analysis, project management, and reservoir modeling. He has also led mining

Ali AL-LAWATI

The Impact of Indian Ocean Trade on Architecture in the Historic Port of Mutrah (Sur Al Lawatia as a Model)

The houses in Sur Al Lawatia (The Lawatia Wall) in Mutrah differ significantly from the prevalent central courtyard houses found in the coastal regions of northern Oman. The central courtyard/ ḥawsh in coastal architecture (specifically Suhar) has been presented generally in other research papers describing the dominance of the square/ rectangular central courtyard in the house plan and the simplicity of the rooms, a distinguishing feature of Arabian homes in general. However, in Sur Al Lawatia, the central courtyard is absent and moves to the upper floor, with the staircase being used as a ventilation tower while integrating the functions of vertical circulation. This pattern is unique in the Arab world. Furthermore, the facades are rich in ornamentation on the wooden balconies and internal rawāzin (projecting wooden windows/niches). This naturally prompts questions about the possible influences that led to the development and emergence of this type of architecture. The decorative abundance in wood carving on the facades also reveals an Indian influence in construction and carpentry. This influence can be explained by the commercial history of the Port of Mutrah, where Khoja merchants hold an important position. To place Sur Al Lawatia in its historical context, the surveyed observations (social inputs) will be compared with the historical events concerning India's relations with the Omani coast during the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, in order to describe and interpret the physical spatial and architectural characteristics of the houses.

Ali bin Jaafar Al-Lawati is an architect and a PhD candidate at the School of Architecture, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom. He is also the producer and presenter of the radio program "*Voice of Architecture*" on Oman Radio. He was awarded the Mohamed Makiya prize for Architecture (2020). He is the author of the book History of Bank Architecture in Oman.

Ali AL-MAHROUQI

Earthen Architecture between Authenticity and Sustainability: A Comparative Analysis of the Omani and Moroccan Experiences

This paper examines earthen architecture as represented by traditional settlements, known in the Sultanate of Oman as *harat* and in the Kingdom of Morocco as *qsour* (fortified villages), as a significant component of Omani cultural identity and Moroccan cultural identity. Earthen architecture reflects human interaction with the surrounding environment, while also embodying social, religious, and economic influences. Both countries possess a large number of *harat* and *qsour* that share many characteristics, particularly in terms of spatial planning and building materials. A comparative approach allows for the derivation of important conclusions regarding the historical origins of this architectural pattern, a deeper understanding of its components and development, as well as the factors contributing to its decline. Omani *harat* reflect human adaptation and resilience in response to natural and climatic conditions. Through this architectural technique, communities were able to overcome climatic challenges and the continental environment by harmonizing the planning of settlements, both their internal and external spaces, with the surrounding environment, climate, and topography. Given the importance of Omani architectural heritage and its strong presence in the cultural landscape, many architectural structures have been classified as national and human heritage. Similarly, Moroccan *qsour*, with their diverse architectural forms, constitute a record of Moroccan civilization and society. They reflect human interaction and adaptation to environmental conditions, while also expressing social, economic, religious, and political dimensions. These structures represent an architectural, civilizational, and historical legacy that embodies the Moroccan people's adaptation to their environment. Oman and Morocco seek to preserve and ensure the sustainability of *harat* and *qsour* through various approaches. The paper also reviews preservation efforts in terms of legal protection, valorization, maintenance, and restoration, emphasizing in particular the importance of involving local communities in conservation and management processes.

Ali Hamood Saif Al-Mahrouqi is the Director of Archaeological Surveys and Excavations at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism. His extensive experience includes serving as Administrative Director of the Journal of Oman Studies (2006–2022) and Director of Forts and Castles. A recognized material heritage expert, Dr. Al Mahrouqi serves with ICESCO and ALECSO's Urban and Architectural Heritage Observatory. He is a board member of the Omani Historical Association and the GCC History and Archaeology Association, and sits on the Advisory Council for the UNESCO Chair for Aflaj. His research focuses on Omani traditional architecture and the archaeology of the Wilayat of Adam. Building on an MA from Sultan Qaboos University, his doctoral work investigates the architectural evolution of Al-Aqar village in Nizwa. Furthermore, he is actively involved with ICCROM in the international documentation and registration of historic buildings, bridging local architectural traditions with global heritage standards.

Abdulaziz AL-MASHANI

Michaelis's Questions on the Oman Peninsula: An Analytical Reading in the Light of Inscriptions and Mythology

This study seeks to re-examine the questions posed by the German scholar Johann David Michaelis (1717–1791) for Carsten Niebuhr's expedition to the Arabian Peninsula (1761–1767), viewing them as an intellectual document that reflects the spirit of the European scientific method during the Enlightenment era, while simultaneously revealing the earliest beginnings of an orientalist perception of people and place in Oman. Notably, these questions have not yet been analyzed in the light of Omani inscriptions and archaeological and mythological sources, despite their significance in shaping early European awareness of Oman's history and culture. The research gap lies in the absence of studies that link European intellectual documents, namely Michaelis's questions and Niebuhr's travel accounts, with the material evidence and local inscriptions that document ancient Omani civilization. The study adopts a historical and textual content analysis of Niebuhr's expedition records and the associated scholarly correspondence, combined with an inductive comparison with archaeological findings and inscriptions discovered at sites such as Sumhuram, Dibba, and Al-Baleed. It also employs a comparative mythological reading to interpret how local myths and symbols were reflected in European perceptions of place and the Omani man. The study underscores the importance of moving beyond traditional orientalist readings toward a critical local perspective that highlights Oman's role in shaping historical and cultural consciousness in the Arabian Peninsula, and contributes to reconstructing a balanced civilizational narrative grounded in both material and textual evidence.

Abdulaziz Al-Mashani received a master's degree in modern history from Yarmouk University (2016). specializing in the social and economic history of the Sultanate of Oman in the 19th and 20th centuries. Lecturer at the College of Arts and Applied Sciences, Dhofar University, from 2023 until now, and Teacher of History at the Sultan Qaboos Higher Center for Culture and Science in the Sultanate of Oman. Published a book entitled: Frankincense and Cultural Heritage (2024). He published a book entitled: Frankincense: Community and Folklore (2024). He is head of a research project entitled: Employing Cultural Heritage in the Sultanate of Oman in the Cultural and Creative Industries: Inventory, Collection, and Employment, Ministry of Scientific Research and Innovation, (January 1, 2025 - December 31, 2026).

Muna AL-NAAIMI & Khamis AL-RAWAHI

The cultural heritage of Omani ports in Islamic eras from the perspective of Omani university students

This study aims to reveal the extent of Omani university students' awareness of the cultural heritage of Omani ports during the Islamic era, and to examine their perceptions of the role of these ports in the commercial, cultural, and scientific exchange between Oman and the Islamic world. To achieve this, the study sample was selected using convenience random sampling, comprising (500) male and female students from five Omani universities. The study employed a descriptive-analytical approach, and data were collected using an awareness scale consisting of (4) axes followed by (40) items, after ensuring the necessary validity and reliability. The results of this study revealed that the overall average across all axes was high, and that many students are aware of the historical and commercial importance of Omani ports. However, only a limited percentage possess detailed knowledge of the cultural and civilizational role that these ports played during the Islamic era. The study also revealed a need to enhance academic and societal awareness of the Sultanate of Oman's maritime heritage through university curricula, cultural programs, and research activities. This aligns with the higher education objectives in Oman, which aim to foster a deeper understanding of the role of maritime ports in Omani civilization. The study recommends integrating topics related to maritime heritage and historical ports into university curricula and encouraging students to conduct field studies at historical coastal sites. This will contribute to strengthening national and cultural identity and deepening understanding of the Sultanate of Oman's pioneering role in Islamic history.

Khamis bin Ali bin Saif Al-Rawahi is an Assistant Professor at Sohar University, Sultanate of Oman. He holds a PhD from the University of Tunis, a Master's degree from Al al-Bayt University in the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan, and a Bachelor's degree from Yarmouk University, Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan. Al-Rawahi has contributed to the supervision, development, and accreditation of academic programs, curricula, and course descriptions at Sohar University. He has authored numerous scholarly books, participated in the organization of conferences, workshops, and seminars, served as a reviewer of academic theses, and published research in Arabic.

Juhaina AL-SHAIBANI & Zakaria QUDAH

Architectural documentation and surveying projects in the Sultanate of Oman

In recent decades, the Sultanate of Oman has witnessed growing attention to documentation and architectural survey projects of historic buildings, recognized as a fundamental component of safeguarding Omani architectural heritage and a cornerstone for planning sustainable restoration and rehabilitation initiatives. Governmental and academic institutions have come to recognize that heritage protection cannot be achieved without a precise knowledge base that records the material and symbolic attributes of buildings before they are exposed to deterioration or transformation. This paper aims to analyze the most significant field-based architectural documentation experiences in the Sultanate, with particular emphasis on projects implemented through partnerships between the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the University of Technology and Applied Sciences. The study presents selected examples of documentation projects covering a number of prominent sites, including the forts and castles, as well as numerous historic quarters and mosques. These sites were subjected to rigorous documentation programs that, alongside historical data, incorporated photographic documentation, architectural surveying, three-dimensional modeling, three-dimensional visual sections, and the recording and analysis of construction materials and architectural elements. The methodology is based on a descriptive and comparative analysis of traditional documentation methods (manual surveying and architectural drawing) and contemporary digital techniques (3D laser scanning and aerial photogrammetry using unmanned aerial vehicles). Architectural documentation in Oman is undergoing a transitional phase toward digital transformation in heritage preservation, and partnerships between governmental bodies and universities have contributed significantly to the development of national capacities and unified professional standards. The paper recommends the establishment of a national center for the digital documentation of architectural heritage, dedicated to collecting, organizing, and continuously updating data related to historic buildings in line with Oman Vision 2040.

Juhaina Ahmed Al-Shaibani is an Architectural Engineer & Conservation Architect with a BA from the University of Technology & Applied Sciences (UTAS) in Muscat. She possesses significant expertise in architectural design, heritage conservation, and sustainable technologies. She participated in the Nawafidh program by Shell Oman, learning about sustainable practices and green solutions. Additionally, she is taking a role in the Sustainable practices and Urban projects by collaborating with different initiatives focusing on designing sustainable human-centered Projects. In the realm of conservation and rehabilitation, Juhaina has contributed to several significant projects, including the Development and Rehabilitation of the old city of Mirbat and its souq, Rehabilitation of Quriyat Fort in Muscat, Adam Fort, Musandam Harats/Houses, Hibi Fort in Sohar, and conservation of two old houses in the Al Dakhiliya Governorate. Other projects include Bait Al Moqhim, Al Mansoor Fort, Bait Seedof and the Documentation, and redrawing of the Nizwa UTAS building.

Mounir ARBACH & Angelo FOSSATI

The Rock Art and Inscriptions of Dhofar: Preliminary Results of the 2023–2025 Field Campaigns

The rock art of Ẓufār, consisting of both engravings and paintings, was first documented through the pioneering work of Ali Ahmad Mahash al-Shahri in the early 1990s. He reported the presence of painted caves in the monsoon-affected coastal area and subsequently identified engraved rocks in the semi-desert region of the Nejd. Despite their significance, these paintings and engravings—including several rock inscriptions in the South Arabian alphabet (27-29 letters) with a local variant that can be called 'Omani script', whose earliest traces date back to around the 4th-3rd century BCE —have not yet been the subject of systematic scientific study. The iconographic context includes animals (mainly ibex, camels, dogs, snakes), anthropomorphs, footprints, ships and inscriptions in Ancient Arabic alphabet. Two fieldwork campaigns, conducted in 2023 and 2024 by the CNRS–CEFREPA (Centre Français de Recherches de la péninsule Arabique) with the authorization of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman, mark the beginning of such an effort. The project included the complete recording of a boulder from Wadi Lahjeej, now housed in the Oman Across Ages Museum, carried out with the support of the museum's directorate. A multi-level documentation process has been initiated, comprising the inventory of engraved rocks with GPS coordinates, a photographic survey, plastic-sheet tracings of the engravings, the compilation of a figure catalogue, and the establishment of a relative chronology leading to preliminary interpretative hypotheses. Particular attention is devoted to identifying and characterizing the figurative styles represented in the rock art of Ẓufār—both in the cave paintings and in the Nejd rock carvings. In addition, a comparative study of the inscriptions is underway to determine whether the painted scripts found in the caves differ from those engraved on rocks in the Nejd. The language of the rock inscriptions will also be determined: Old South Arabian epigraphic as Hadramatic epigraphic, Old Shahri, or Old Arabic, or another unknown local language. Finally, the project seeks to investigate the possible connections between the rock art of Ẓufār and that of Central Oman (Al-Wusta Governorate) and the northern regions of the Sultanate of Oman.

Mounir Arbach is research director at the French CNRS, Archéorient - Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée – Université Lumière Lyon 2. He is an epigraphist and historian of South Arabian civilization before Islam. For the past thirty years, he has participated in numerous field missions in Yemen, Saudi Arabia and recently in Oman, where he headed the French-Omani epigraphic prospecting mission (2021-2024) under the auspices of the Centre Français de Recherche de la péninsule Arabique in Koweit (CEFREPA). He is the author/co-author and co-editor of fifteen scientific books. In 2024, he was awarded the Albert Bernard Price from the Académie des Sciences d'Outre-mer in Paris for his book Le Yémen ancien: Histoire inachevée des cités-Etats et royaumes VIIIe-VIe siècles av. J.-C. (Geuthner, Paris). He has also published more than one hundred and fifty articles in international journals.

Valentina AZZARÀ & Alexandre DE RORRE

Living and Crafting at the Edge of Arabia: The Early Bronze Age Settlement System of Ras Al Jinz

The bay of Ras Al Jinz, at the easternmost tip of the Arabian Peninsula, hosts one of the most significant Early Bronze Age settlement complexes of coastal Oman, offering a unique window onto the settlement patterns and socio-economic transformations that marked the region during the Bronze Age. Excavations conducted over the past three decades at RJ-2 and RJ-3 reveal a long sequence of occupation spanning from the Late Neolithic (ca. 4300–3200 BCE) through the Hafit period (ca. 3200–2600 BCE) to the Umm an-Nar period (ca. 2600–2000 BCE). During the Umm an-Nar period, these two neighbouring sites, located on opposite sides of the bay, formed a single, extensive settlement complex covering 3–4 hectares, continuously occupied throughout this phase. This integrated landscape reflects an evolving organization of space, work, and community life that illustrates the broader cultural and societal developments of the Early Bronze Age in Southern Sharqiyah. RJ-2, the main residential nucleus, presents a long stratigraphic sequence organized into successive architectural compounds that demonstrate evolving construction techniques and increasingly complex spatial planning. Evidence of domestic life, storage, and large-scale food processing, including smoking installations for fish curing, attests to intensive exploitation of marine resources and the production of surpluses. Across the bay, RJ-3 functioned as a specialised workshop quarter, where excavations revealed a series of ephemeral huts and working floors with abundant production debris related to the manufacture of shell and stone ornaments, supported by specialised toolkits. Together, RJ-2 and RJ-3 represent a coherent socio-economic system in which residential and productive dimensions were closely integrated. Their spatial and functional complementarity embodies a decisive step toward economic diversification and intra-site specialisation, key hallmarks of complexification during the third millennium BCE.

Valentina Azzarà is currently the Head of Social Sciences & Humanities at the Netherlands eScience Center, a Dutch public research organisation, Honorary Research Fellow at Leiden University, and Director, with **Alexandre De Rorre**, of the archaeology field school Time of Magan. She has directed archaeological fieldwork in Tunisia, Turkmenistan, Egypt, and Oman, where she has been active since 2002. Since 2017, she has led the Time of Magan project, focusing on settlement archaeology and the processes of socio-economic diversification between the Late Neolithic and the Early Bronze Age within the coastal communities of Omani Sharqiyah.

Amir BESHKANI, Mohammed AL-KINDI, Andrea COLUMBU, Jaber AL-SHERYANI, Hamood AL-HAJI, David PLEURDEAU & Pierre VOINCHET

Newly Discovered Paleolithic Shelters and Caves with Associated Lithic Industries from the Al Hajar Mountains, Oman

Paleolithic research in the Sultanate of Oman, which is still in its formative stage compared to neighboring regions such as the Levant and the Iranian Plateau, requires extensive application of absolute dating methods on undisturbed cave and rock-shelter deposits to establish a reliable and detailed chronological framework for early human occupation and environmental change. In 2023, our field surveys across the governorates of Ad Dakhiliyah and Ad Dhahirah identified a wide range of rock shelters, each with distinct geomorphological and archaeological potential (Beshkani 2023). For the first time, we propose that several inselbergs surrounding the Wilayat of Manah- most notably Karsha Rock (Jabal Sarouj), located within the residential area of Karsha and previously known primarily for its Islamic-period villages and fortifications- were likely occupied during the Late Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. In the outskirts of Ibri, where the Umm er Radhuma Formation provides a favorable lithological context for speleogenesis, our preliminary studies attribute the dispersed lithic artifacts discovered at the entrances of rock shelters to the Late Paleolithic.This evidence corresponds with increased precipitation during the Early Holocene and suggests a demographic expansion and intensification of habitation along the foothills of the Al Hajar Mountains (Preston et al., 2015). We also registered three relatively large caves in Wadi Dhank. The characteristics and composition of the cemented deposits within these caves indicate the former presence of enclosed water basins prior to the collapse and subsequent exposure of their entrances. The occurrence of speleothems in Al Mihayniyah-2 Cave, located adjacent to the Dhank–Fida road, provides a valuable opportunity to reconstruct the paleoclimate of the western Al Hajar Mountains, a region that today exhibits a semi-arid to arid landscape.

Amir Beshkani is a specialist researcher in Prehistoric Archaeology (Palaeolithic) and a Postdoctoral Researcher at the CNRS, Musée de l'Homme – Muséum national d'Histoire naturelle, in collaboration with Université Paris Nanterre. He holds a PhD in Prehistoric Archaeology (2019), focusing on the techno-functional analysis of Mousterian lithic industries. Dr. Beshkani has extensive field experience in Iran and Oman, where he has led numerous archaeological projects. One of his most significant contributions is the discovery of the Nubian Levallois technique in northern Oman in 2016, providing vital evidence for early *Homo sapiens* in the region. He has documented dozens of Palaeolithic sites and published over 17 peer-reviewed articles, serving also as Guest Editor for *Paléorient*. His research interests include lithic technology and human–environment interactions during the Pleistocene. Proficient in Persian, English, and French, he possesses advanced technical skills in Geographic Information Systems (QGIS) and topographic fieldwork.

Tara BEUZEN-WALLER, Conrad SCHMIDT, Dana PIETSCH, Lucas PROCTOR, Julia UNKELBACH & Katharina SCHMITT

Results from the UmWeltWandel Project in Al-Khashbah, Sultanate of Oman

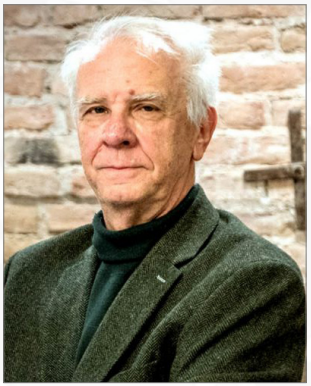
Despite the significant scarcity of water resources, human groups in Oman developed long-term strategies enabling sustainable occupation of drylands. These adaptive capacities were shaped over millennia of settlement in challenging and fluctuating environments that, over the past 10,000 years, experienced major shifts from humid to arid conditions driven by monsoon variability. Such climatic fluctuations profoundly influenced the availability of water, plant, and animal resources. The long-standing interactions between environment and early Omani societies, situated at the intersection of natural processes, climatic trends, and resource management strategies, are traceable in both archaeological and environmental records. The UmWeltWandel joint project (2020–2024) investigates the local-scale environmental evolution of the Al-Khashbah area in Oman through a multidisciplinary approach integrating geochemistry, geomorphology, geophysics, soil science, archaeobotany, and palynology. The project aims to reconstruct the long-term evolution of landscapes and resources in Central Oman over the last 10,000 years. This paper presents an overview of the project's results, focusing on how the Al-Khashbah sector in the Ash Sharqiyah North Governorate evolved from the humid conditions of the Holocene Humid Period to the present arid climate, and how Bronze Age societies began to transform the surrounding landscape to optimize local resources around Al-Khashbah. By intensively investigating a single area through a multidisciplinary framework, this study both extracts new and challenging datasets and highlights the potential of selected environmental proxies for reconstructing human–environment interactions in Oman and, more broadly, in drylands.

Tara Beuzen-Waller is an Associate Professor in Geoarchaeology and Physical Geography at the University of Perpignan Via Domitia (UMR 7194 Histoire Naturelle de l'Homme Préhistoire). Her research explores long-term human–environment interactions in arid and coastal landscapes, with a regional focus on Oman and the Arabian Peninsula. She specializes in geoarchaeological methods, palaeoenvironmental reconstruction, and landscape evolution from the Palaeolithic to the Iron Age. After earning her PhD in Geography from Sorbonne University in 2020, she worked as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Tübingen within the BMBF-funded UmWeltWandel project. She has extensive field experience across Arabia, Greece, and Africa, and currently co-leads research within the ArabianSeaShores and FAMCO projects in Oman. Her work integrates geomorphology, sedimentology, and archaeology to understand how climate and landscape change have shaped human adaptation in desert environments

Piotr BIELIŃSKI

Remains of Iron Age Settlements near Ayn Bani Sa'dah and Their Chronology

Remains of Iron Age Settlements near Ayn Bani Sa'dah and Their Chronology ABSTRACT Since 2016, intensive archaeological research has been carried out as part of the Omani–Polish research project in the Qumayrah microregion, near the village of Ayn Bani Sa'dah. Within this area, remains of settlements from both the Umm an-Nar cultural period and the Iron Age have been identified. The Iron Age remains were discovered at three closely situated sites designated as QA 3, QA 20, and QA 21, each representing a distinctly different type of settlement architecture. At site QA 20, archaeologists uncovered compact, densely arranged structures that can be interpreted as having a proto-urban character. In contrast, the nearby site QA 21 revealed a dispersed, rural-type settlement, including evidence of deliberate slope terracing, suggesting agricultural adaptation. The situation at QA 3 is considerably more complex. Iron Age structures have been identified only at the southern edge of the site, and there is no indication that these remains served residential purposes. Moreover, they are generally in a very poor state of preservation, likely due to subsequent activity by inhabitants of a later Islamic-period village located in the same area. Within a roughly triangular area enclosed by a broad wall, the remains of three small structures were found—one of which is a small "pillared house," a known architectural type from the Iron Age. The relationship between this architectural group and the structures at QA 20 remains uncertain and clearly requires further investigation.



Piotr Bielinski is a leading archaeologist associated with the University of Warsaw and the Polish Centre of Mediterranean Archaeology, internationally recognised for his research on the archaeology of the ancient Near East and the Arabian Peninsula. His scholarly work focuses on settlement archaeology, architecture, material culture, and interregional contacts from the Chalcolithic through the Bronze and Iron Ages. A major component of his research has been dedicated to the Sultanate of Oman, where he has played a central role in advancing archaeological investigation in the northern regions of the country. Since 2015, he has directed the Qumayrah Archaeological Project, conducted in cooperation with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman. This long-term programme investigates prehistoric and early historic settlement patterns in the Qumayrah Valley. Excavations and surveys have documented domestic architecture, defensive structures, and material assemblages that contribute significantly to the understanding of early communities, resource exploitation, and regional interaction networks. His work has provided important new data on settlement organisation and chronology, reinforcing Oman's role within broader cultural and economic systems of the wider Near East.

Eugenio BORTOLINI

The funerary landscape of Wadi Halfayin, Ad-Dakhiliyyah Governorate

Wadi Halfayin is an alluvial corridor situated at the core of the ad-Dākhilyyah region, northern Oman. A systematic survey documented presence, structural variability, and chronological and spatial distribution of 682 monumental tombs dated to the interval ~3100-600 BCE, along with a variety of diagnostic findings. The study area includes the already documented Oasis of Zukayt and other relevant sites to the south of Izki. Collected evidence hints at a continuous occupation over the entire period, offering a unique perspective on the evolution of the funerary landscape of the area from the Early Bronze Age to the late pre-Islamic era. Results highlight the importance of this alluvial corridor as a link between other widely investigated areas, and will pave the ground for future investigation as well as for the musealisation of this archaeologically rich wadi and its key sites.

Eugenio Bortolini is Associate Professor in Methods for Archaeological Research at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna (Ravenna Campus), Italy. He has a strong interest in the Prehistory of the Arabian Peninsula, where he conducted field research over the past twenty years, as well as in the mechanisms of cultural adoption and transmission in both archaeological and contemporary contexts. His research focuses on applying and developing quantitative methods to study cultural evolution, population mobility, human interaction, and gene-culture coevolution at different scales. He is currently directing archaeological excavations at the Bronze Age site of Halban (Al Batinah South Governorate) and at the Final Palaeolithic site of Romail (Ash Sharqiyah North Governorate), Sultanate of Oman.

Corinne CASTEL

At the Turn of the Third Millennium BCE and Beyond: New Clues from Al-Arid to Trace the History of the First Sedentary Communities

Al-Arid is an important Early Bronze age archaeological site located in the inland piedmont region of Al-Hajar Mountains. It is situated 15 km as the crow flies north-west of the UNESCO World Heritage site of Bāt in the Ad-Dhāhirah Governorate (Sultanate of Oman). Thanks to multidisciplinary investigations since 2019 (pedestrian, aerial and geophysical surveys, targeted excavations on very different types of structures and multiple analysis), the results obtained by the Bāt/Al-Arid archaeological Mission enable us to sketch out a new history of the end of the fourth and the third millennium. This story is still full of gaps, but our discoveries already allow us to assume that the site was probably not only a simple staging post for transhumant nomads at that time, not only during the Umm an-Nar period but even at the turn of the third millennium BCE, during the period known as Hafit. This lecture will focus on presenting the various clues that support this interpretation, which of course does not exclude pastoralism in such an arid region already at that time.

Corinne Castel is archaeologist and Director of research at CNRS (the French National Center for Scientific Research). She is faculty member of the laboratory « Archéorient. Sociétés et environnements de l'Orient ancien » (CNRS/University Lyon 2) at the Maison de l'Orient et de la Méditerranée (MOM). She holds a PhD in Near Eastern archaeology from the University Panthéon-Sorbonne in Paris and an Habilitation from the University Lyon 2 to supervise PhD and masters students.

Maurizio CATTANI

Early 3rd millennium BCE in Eastern Oman: Transformations between global and regional networks

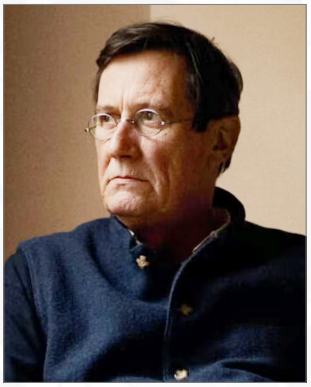
This contribution examines the global factors affecting the Gulf and Oman area from the late 4th and early 3rd millennium BCE and focuses on the regional factors most typical of eastern Oman. Burial models with construction variations, settlements with mud-brick architecture, targeted distribution of metals objects can be identified in the archaeological evidence. The absence of objects imported from Mesopotamia or the Indus Valley does not indicate external contacts or influences and suggests local regional interactions in the selection of innovations.

Cattani Maurizio he is Associate Professor in Prehistory and Protohistory at University of Bologna, Department of History and Cultures and team member of the master of second cycle of "Archaeology and Cultures of Ancient World" with English curriculum of "Applied Critical Archaeology and Heritage". He is encharged Professor of following courses at the Department of History and Cultures and at the Department of Cultural Heritage: "Prehistoric archaeology" "Prehistory and Protohistory of Asia", "Prehistory and Protohistory" and "New frontiers of archaeological research". Master in Ancient History (110/110 cum laude) at University of Bologna, "PhD" in Archaeology at Istituto Universitario Orientale of Naples. Currently he is the Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in the Sultanate of Oman, where he started as Member from 1985, with excavation direction of Bronze Age sites at Ra's al-Hadd and supervisor of field activities at the monumental site of Al-Khutm. Currently Member of ISMEO (Rome) and of the Italian Institute of Prehistory and Protohistory (IIPP, Firenze). From 2001 to 2012 he has been director the Italian Archaeological Mission in Kazakhstan, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the University of Bologna. From 2010 to 2019 he has been director of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Turkmenistan, supported by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by ISMEO. Main topic of research concerns the analysis of the socio-economic complexity in the Bronze Age, stressed in several multi-disciplinary aspects and applied in an extended geographic frame, from European contexts to central Asia and Arabian Peninsula. Among field activities carried out in the Sultanate of Oman, he has participated to the following excavations: Ra's al-Hamra in Qurum RH-5 and RH-6; Ras al-Jins RJ-2, RJ-4; - Ras al-Hadd HD-1, HD-5, HD-6, HD-7, HD-15; Khutm tower, part of the Unesco site of Bat, Al-Ayn and Khutm.

Vincent CHARPENTIER, Maria Pia MAIORANO, Federico BORGI & Jérémie VOSGES

Forty Years of Archaeological Research along the Omani Shores of the Arabian Sea

Research conducted along the Omani coastline of the Arabian Sea has revealed a new chapter in the history of early maritime communities. Globally, most coastal habitats from the early Holocene have been submerged by rising sea levels. The caves in the cliffs of Natif (Hasik, Dhofar) are an exception in Arabia: they are currently the only evidence of maritime communities from the Late Paleolithic period on the peninsula. Between the early 9th and 8th millennia BCE, these early Arabian fishermen focused on catching small pelagic species (anchovies and sardinella), as well as rays and sharks. Around 6000 BCE, the shores of the Arabian Peninsula were covered with Neolithic settlements, sometimes consisting of large shell middens. The mission discovered a large number of these along the Arabian Sea and explored several, notably at Suwayh, Ruwayz, Khuwaymah, Masirah Island, Sharbithat, Hasik, Ad Dahariz, Hallaniyah Island, etc. Among these, the Suwayh SWY-1 settlement is particularly noteworthy, as its inhabitants specialized in shark fishing between 5800 and 4400 BCE. This Neolithic period also saw the conquest of island environments, including the large island of Masirah and the Hallaniyat archipelago. While Masirah was occupied early on (5900-5600 BCE), Hallaniyah was settled much later (around 4400 BCE). By this time, the entire territory of Oman had been conquered by Neolithic communities. At the same time, the mission worked to establish a chronology for these periods. In Sharbithat Bay, as in Hasik, it is currently bringing to light a new facies from the very end of the Neolithic period, between 3700 and 3100 BCE.

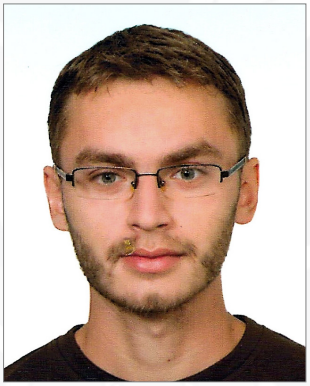


Vincent Charpentier (UMR 7041, CNRS) has worked in France, the North American Arctic (Nunavut, NWT), Iraq, United Arab Emirats. Since 1985 he has been involved in excavations along the Omani coasts. He is actually director of the French Archaeological Mission in the Sultanate of Oman, "Archaeology of the Arabian Seashores". He is also head of department at the French National Institute for Preventive Archaeological Research, as well as being a broadcaster for France Culture (Radio France).

Dominik CHLACHULA, Maria Pia MAIORANO, Yamandu HILBERT, Tara BEUZEN-WALLER, Amir BESHKANI, Lee ARNOLD, Matthew MEREDITH-WILLIAMS, Jeffrey ROSE, Vitalii USYK, Alžběta DANIELISOVÁ & Roman GARBA

Human Occupation of Central Oman during the Early Holocene

This paper presents new evidence of Late/Final Palaeolithic occupation in central Oman. Despite intensive research over the past two decades, evidence for human occupation of Southeast Arabia at the end of the last Ice Age and its continuation into the Early Holocene remains sporadic. Lithic industries from this period, found in stratified contexts in Dhofar, are characterized primarily by blade production from simple, unidirectional, narrow working-surface cores and by the presence of so-called Fasad points. Similar Late/Final Palaeolithic industries have been recorded in the UAE; however, although earlier attempts to culturally link them with Levantine PPN traditions, they appear to be of autochthonous southern or southeastern Arabian origin. Their emergence at the end of the Last Ice Age, cultural ancestry, development, distribution, and eventual transition into South Arabian Neolithic ways of life remain poorly understood. The Late/Final Palaeolithic occupation of central Oman was previously inferred from the presence of extensive surface blade-production workshops documented by Swiss expeditions in 2007–2008, but until now this interpretation had not been systematically investigated or confirmed. Our recent excavations, combined with studies of surface sites within the Duqm SEZAD zone, have verified Early Holocene occupation of the region and provide the first insights into the Late/Final Palaeolithic hunter-gatherer-fisher economy, behaviour, and gradual development toward Early Neolithic lifeways.



Dominik Chlachula is a student of archaeology with a defined interest in the study of hunter-gatherer societies, with a particular focus on the Palaeolithic of the Middle East. His primary specialisation lies in the analysis of lithic industries.He has developed skills in experimental archaeology, basic statistical data analysis, and spatial analysis. He has gained experience in field research in the Czech Republic and in Oman. He completed a Master's degree programme in Archaeology at Masaryk University in Brno between 2020 and 2023, following a degree programme in Prehistoric Archaeology of the Near East at the same university from 2016 to 2020. Since 2021, he has been working as an archaeologist at the Centre for Paleolithic and Paleoanthropology, Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences in Brno. As part of his professional and academic activities, he has participated in archaeological projects and excavations abroad, including the project Triliths: Stone Monuments of the Coastal Highlands of the Sultanate of Oman (2018–2020) and the project Archaeological Landscape Evolution and Environmental Dynamics of Duqm and Nejd (ARDUQ) in Oman (2022–2023).

Mayassa DEEB

Rock Art and Trapping Structures: A Comparative Study of Cultural and Historical Significations between the Sultanate of Oman and Syria

Rock art is one of the most significant archaeological sources contributing to the understanding of human history and culture in the Omani Peninsula and the Levant from prehistoric times through historical periods. It is the collective memory of early human, expressing perceptions of the surrounding world, beliefs, and patterns of daily life. Both Syria and Oman have a rich heritage of rock art; however, these corpora are often studied separately. This underscores the importance of the present research, which offers a comparative approach to the rock art of the two regions in terms of themes, artistic styles, social and cultural functions, and associated architectural features. The core research problem centers on whether these rock engravings are the product of local cultural phenomena that developed independently in each region, or whether they reflect mutual civilizational influences resulting from cultural interaction among ancient communities. The study aims to identify shared characteristics and differences in both form and content, with particular attention to inscribed texts reflecting a desire to document memory and identity; depictions of animal hunting and migration; representations of daily life; and artistic motifs. The research adopts a comparative analytical methodology combining field survey data with anthropological approaches to interpret symbols and meanings. The study anticipates identifying similarities in general concepts and themes, as well as their association with architectural features referred to as traps, used for hunting and animal domestication. At the same time, differences in techniques are expected, reflecting culturally proximate yet independently developing environments. The research is expected to enhance understanding of civilizational interconnectedness between the Omani Peninsula and the Levant, highlighting rock art as a primary source for reconstructing ancient Arab cultural history.

Mayassah Younes Deeb holds a PhD from the University of Damascus. She is the Director of the Technical Institute for Archaeology and Museums at the Ministry of Culture and served as Deputy Director of the Al-Basel Center for Scientific Research and Archaeological Training (2018–2022). Dr. Deeb has over 20 years of experience in the preservation, documentation, and inventorying of cultural heritage, including damage assessment using 3D technologies and oral documentation. Her expertise extends to archaeological excavations with foreign missions and museum work involving the restoration of artifacts. She has extensive experience in organizing international exhibitions and the scientific editing of specialized books. Actively engaged in voluntary cultural heritage protection, she promotes community awareness and oral heritage documentation. She has contributed to numerous journals and authored the book *The Wheel and the Cart and their Civilizational Impact in Syria*.

Michele DEGLI ESPOSTI & Andrea ZERBONI

Middle Bronze Age (Wadi Suq) graves in the ancient oasis of Bisya and Salut: Evidence of local funerary-related practices?

The wide scope of the Salūt and Bisya Archaeological Mission (SBAM) includes the survey and investigation of the different types of archaeological remains that together form the remarkable palimpsest of the ancient oasis of Bisya and Salut. A significant component of this work, involves the investigation of graves located on Jabal Salūt. Among these are burials dating to the Wadi Suq period (Middle Bronze Age, c. 2000–1600 BC). While Wadi Suq funerary architecture is generally characterized by a high degree of variability, with unique variants suggesting the expression of specific intent, new research suggests the presence of regional trends in these practices. This contribution specifically highlights the recent discovery of peculiar structural annexes to Wadi Suq graves on Jabal Salūt. These features are interpreted as a possible demonstration of such emerging regionality and will hopefully contribute to a broader understanding of Middle Bronze Age funerary patterning.

Michele Degli Esposti is an archaeologist whose main field of research is Southeast Arabian archaeology, mainly from the Early Bronze Age to the Late Iron Age. Among his interests are the dynamics of human-environment interaction, with a focus on water management; intra- and interregional connections; ancient metallurgy; and funerary landscapes. A PhD holder in Oriental Studies from the University of Pisa, Italy, he is Assistant Professor (research) at the Institute for Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences. He has conducted extensive excavation and research at key sites in the Sultanate of Oman, ranging from the Early Bronze Age (Saut-ST1) to the Iron Age (Salut) and the Late pre-Islamic period (Khor Rori - Sumhuram). He is currently Field Director of the Salut and Bisya Archaeological Mission, and Director of the Italian Mission in Umm Al Quwain (UAE), focused on the stratigraphic excavation of the multi-period site of Tell Abraq and the investigation of the nearby burial site of Abraq 2. Since 2022, he is also Co-Director of the Siniya Island Archaeological Project, focused on the excavation of a unique Sasanian-period town and a Late Antique monastery.

Stephanie DÖPPER

Recent discoveries from the Umm an-Nar period in the Al-Mudhaybi region

The Early Bronze Age in Oman is widely regarded as a period of profound transformation in terms of subsistence strategies, resource exploitation, and social complexity. This paper presents new insights into Umm an-Nar period (Early Bronze Age, 2700-2000 BCE) in the Mudhaybi region of eastern Oman, based on recent fieldwork conducted by the author at the sites of Al-Khashbah, Mukhtru, Al-Musalla, Shariq, and Al-Qabrayn. These sites collectively demonstrate the diversity and complexity of Umm an-Nar activity in the interior, ranging from collective tombs and monumental "towers" to rectilinear architectural compounds and areas with ephemeral traces of occupation. By examining the spatial configuration of these elements and their location within the broader landscape, the paper explores how environmental and social factors shaped site placement and use. The paper engages with current scholarly debates on settlement systems, permanence, and locational choices during the Umm an-Nar period, contributing to a refined understanding of the transformations that characterized this.

Stephanie Döpper is a Junior Professor of Digital Humanities for Near Eastern Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Würzburg in Germany. After receiving her doctoral degree from the University of Tübingen in 2015, she conducted postdoctoral research at the universities of Leiden and Frankfurt, focusing on the reuse of tombs in Eastern Arabia and settlement systems in central Oman. Her research interests include digital archaeology, landscape archaeology, the archaeology of mobility, pottery studies and mortuary practices. Since 2010, she has conducted fieldwork in the Sultanate of Oman, excavating Bronze Age and Islamic sites in Bat, Al-Ayn, Al-Khashbah, and other sites in Wilayat Al-Mudhaybi.

Khaled DOUGLAS, Nasser AL-JAHWARI & Mohamed HESEIN

The Architecture of the Umm an-Nar Culture: Shared Traditions on Both Sides of the Hajar Mountains in Oman

Recent excavations carried out at Al-Ghoryeen (2018–2024), located on the western slopes of the Hajar Mountains in North Al-Sharqiyah Governorate, have uncovered a distinctive building (S3) dating to the early phase of the Umm an-Nar Culture (2800/2700 BCE). The structure was built with a certain and specific architectural layout, consisting of two symmetrical halves separated by a wall running along the building. One half includes a series of parallel, adjoining rooms that open onto a long corridor, while the other half contains fewer rooms, arranged differently from those in the adjacent section. The building is connected to a large courtyard enclosed by a massive wall. This architectural concept shows a remarkable similarity to Dahwa (DH1)—particularly in building (S10). Dahwa lies about 200 km northwest of Al-Ghoryeen, on the eastern slopes of the Hajar Mountains in North Al-Batinah Governorate, and dates to the middle phase of the Umm an-Nar Culture (2500/2400 BCE). What, then, is the spatial and chronological relationship between the two sites? And does the architectural similarity reflect a shared functional aspect of both buildings?

Khaled Douglas is Full Professor of Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, College of Arts and Social Sciences, Sultan Qaboos University (Muscat, Sultanate of Oman). Obtain his PhD 1999 from Tübingen University, Germany. Well published, Khaled serves as Director and Co-Director of several Archaeological Excavations in Jordan and Oman. Most recent and running projects are excavations at the Early Bronze Age settlements at Dahwa, Al-Ghoryeen and al-Tikha in Oman. Khaled research interest is the Ancient Civilizations, Old World Complex Societies with the emphasis on the Early Bronze Age of Southeast Arabia and Southern Levant and Architecture through Ages.

Nikos ECONOMOU, Khaled DOUGLAS, Muhammad KHAN, Nasser AL-JAHWARI, Sara PIZZIMENTI, Mohamed HESEIN, Khalil AL-HOOTI, Bader AL-SHAQSI & Said AL-ABRI

Revealing anthropogenic buried structures by integrating geophysics, artificial intelligence, and archaeological studies at EBA settlements in Oman

Archaeological excavation is a systematic method, providing direct and detailed information for the recovery of buried structures at archaeological sites. Its limitations are the labor-intensive nature of the implementation, the low rate of production and the disturbance of the stratigraphy. Applied geophysics provide several methods which are non-invasive and non-destructive, which can detect and map buried anthropogenic structures and are very effective in covering large areas. Limitations include the indirect nature of the results and the limited detail of imaging small archaeological artefacts, like coins or pottery. The combination of geophysical methods and targeted excavations allows for minimizing the need for large-scale destructive and time-consuming excavation and at the same time maximizing the obtained information.. Several geophysical techniques are suitable for the detection and mapping of buried antiquities such as electrical, electromagnetic, and magnetic mapping, Electrical Resistivity Tomography (ERT) and Ground Penetrating Radar (GPR). Additionally, seismic methods like Seismic Refraction tomography (SRT), or Multi-channel Analysis of Surface Waves (MASW) can provide information about the stratigraphy of the site. . An integration of geophysical and archaeological studies is taking place at Oman since 2022, with the aim to reveal buried structures at Early Bronze Age (EBA) settlements at Oman. These studies are within the frame of a cooperation between the Sultan Qaboos University at Oman, the Technical University of Crete, Greece and the University of Pisa in Italy. Here, we will present results of the on-going integrated research at EBA settlements at Oman, describe the methodology needed to image the buried structures and discuss about the perspectives and extend of this research.

Nikos Economou received his B.Sc. (Mineral Resources Engineer, 1998), M.Sc. (Applied Geophysics, 2003), and Ph.D. (Applied Geophysics, 2010) from the Technical University of Crete (T.U.C.), Greece. He works at the Applied Geophysics Laboratory and has been since 1998. He has also served as visiting professor at the University of western Macedonia in Greece in 2021 and as an Associate Professor at the Earth Science Department at Sultan Qaboos University at Oman in 2022. He was the Leader of the project "Development of advanced GPR data processing techniques" for the TUD COST Action TU1208 during the years 2013–2017, served as Chief Guest Editor for the journals Geophysics, Signal Processing and Geosciences from 2017 until today and recently he was member of the International Scientific Committee at the 13th International Workshop on Advanced Ground Penetrating Radar (IWAGPR25). He is the author and co-author of more than 85 publications in scientific journals and scientific events while his current research interests are related to data adaptive non-stationary signal (GPR and seismic) processing and inversion, as well as low-frequency EM modeling.

Mahmoud EL-HOSARY

The Role of Archaeological Surveys in Revealing Submerged Archaeological and Heritage Sites in the Omani Peninsula

The Omani coasts are a living record of Oman's pioneering role as a trading center and crossroads of civilizations throughout the ages. They constitute a major corridor for trade and navigation networks between the Indian Ocean and the Gulf of Oman. Coastal archaeological sites and settlements, such as the Khuriya Muriya Islands (Hallaniyat Islands), Ras Madrakah in Duqm and Musandam, the ancient city of Qalhat, and the historic port of Samharam, along with the remains of shipwrecks and sunken ports, represent a cultural treasure trove for understanding the region's maritime and economic history. Ancient climatic changes, rising sea levels, and coastal erosion caused by storms and cyclones led to the submergence of many coastal sites. Geological and human factors, such as land subsidence and sudden disasters like earthquakes and tsunamis, also contributed to this submergence. These submerged sites represent a record of interactions between nature and humans; therefore, underwater archaeological surveying is the most effective tool for uncovering them. Surveying and marine sonar help identify submerged sites, creating a comprehensive record using advanced GPS navigation systems. The study employs remote sensing technologies, most notably side-scan sonar to create images of the seabed, magnetometers to detect buried metal objects, and sub-bottom profilers to penetrate sediment layers. Survey results contribute to reconstructing Oman's pioneering role by documenting trade routes and exchange networks. These surveys are a scientific bridge redrawing the contours of Oman's maritime history. Through the combined efforts of institutions and international missions, this submerged heritage can be transformed into a source of knowledge, affirming Oman's position as a maritime and historical power.

Mahmoud Hamed El-Hosary is an Associate Professor of Egyptian Archaeology and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Faculty of Arts, Department of Archaeology, New Valley University, Arab Republic of Egypt. He holds a PhD in Archaeology and the Ancient Egyptian Language, awarded with Highest Honors by Tanta University in 2017. He has worked as an Antiquities Inspector, Judicial Enforcement Officer, and Antiquities Expert at the Egyptian Ministry of Tourism and Antiquities and within the Museums Sector during the period 2008–2009. He is also a certified international trainer (ToT), accredited by the Supreme Council of Universities. His scholarly output includes numerous research papers, as well as several books in the fields of tourism and archaeology in Egypt. He has participated in a wide range of archaeological missions and international conferences. Through these roles, he gained hands-on experience in the management of archaeological and heritage sites, sunken antiquities, architectural archaeological surveying, and the preparation of archaeological sites for tourism investment.

Ali AL-TIJANI ELMAHI

Livestock in Rock Art in the Dhofar Region: Indicators of Prehistoric Art

This paper examins the significance of indicators found in prehistoric rock art in Dhofar. The evidence and markers of rock art in Dhofar are embodied primarily in depictions of animals drawn by humans in the region during prehistoric periods. The paper begins by presenting the various geographical and environmental aspects of Dhofar that shaped the setting in which these rock drawings were produced. Rock art in Dhofar encompasses a wide range of depictions of different animals, both domesticated and wild. These animals undoubtedly played an important, central, and essential economic role in human life in this part of Oman. The extent to which rock art reflects an animal-based economy is evident in scenes depicting different animal species and the types of activities associated with them. The study focuses on livestock represented in the rock art, namely camels, cattle, and goats. It argues the Dhofar was not the natural environment in which these animals originally existed in a wild state before being domesticated. Rather, these animals were domesticated in regions geographically distant and far removed from Dhofar and from Oman more broadly. The depiction of these domesticated animals therefore provides clear evidence of migrations by groups originating from outside the Dhofar region, and even from beyond Oman, who brought these domesticated animals with them. The animals highlighted in the rock art thus arrived alongside the humans who migrated to Dhofar . The paper further discusses the reasons why humans produced these drawings, as well as the surrounding geographical and natural context governing the distribution and livelihood of this livestock in Dhofar in accordance with their environmental requirements. It also raises and examines the question of authorship: who created these drawings, men or women? Artistic skill, the study argues, is not linked to gender, whether male or female.

Ali Tigani ElMahi is a Professor of Archaeology and has held several senior academic and administrative positions within university archaeology departments. He served as Head of the Department of Archaeology at the Faculty of Arts, University of Khartoum, from November 1991 to 1995. He later worked at Sultan Qaboos University, College of Arts and Social Sciences, where he held the position of Head of the Department of Archaeology during two separate periods, from September 2000 to September 2006 and from September 2008 to September 2010. In addition, he held the position of Professor between August 2013 and August 2015.

Angelo FOSSATI, Mounir ARBACH & Roman GARBA

Chronicles in stone: Tracing the extensive rock art of Nafun (south-central Oman) spanning over six millennia

The discovery in 2020 of the Nafūn rock art complex, located in al-Wusṭā Governorate in south-central Oman, has emerged as one of the most extensive rock art sites in south-eastern Arabia. To date, the archaeological investigations led by the Institute of Archaeology Prague and the permission of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, has brought to the discovery of 61 flat limestone panels, bearing approximately 1000 engraved figures and 200 rock inscriptions offering further evidence of the regional use of South Arabian writing traditions (abecedary of 27-29 letters) used in South Arabian kingdom who are Sabaic, Qatabanic, Minaic and Hadramatic inscriptions, as is the case with the North Arabian variants (Dadanite, Lihyanite, Thamudic, Safaitic, etc.). This variant - Omani script - was also used in the Zofār region and in the north of Sultanat of Oman, whose earliest traces date back to around the 4th-3rd century BCE (in the Khôr Rôrî in Zofār region). The engravings depict a remarkable variety of subjects, including maritime fauna such as sea turtles (*Dermochelys coriacea*), sperm whales, squid, jellyfish, ray fish, and mola mola, alongside the more characteristic representations of dromedary camels—sometimes mounted—horsemen engaged in hunting scenes featuring oryx and wild canids, and other terrestrial motifs. The Nafūn assemblage attests to a long and complex rock art tradition that can be tentatively dated from the 5th millennium BCE to the 2nd millennium CE, providing an unparalleled window into the evolution of cultural expressions and lifeways in the Arabian Peninsula over a span of more than six millennia.

Angelo Eugenio Fossati is a Professor of Prehistory & Protohistory at the Catholic University of the Sacred Heart in Milan, Italy, where he is part of the Department of History, Archaeology, and History of Art. He currently serves as President of IFRAO (International Federation of Rock Art Organizations). A rock art specialist, his research focuses on the Alps (Valcamonica, Valtellina, Aosta Valley), the United States (Montana, Wyoming, Washington, Oregon, Colorado), and the Arabian Peninsula, particularly Oman, the UAE (Sharjah), and Saudi Arabia. He also studies Alpine statue-stelae and collaborates with epigraphists on inscriptions in pre-Roman and ancient Arabian scripts.

Dennys FRENEZ

There... and Back Again? Globalising Models of Socio-Technical Interactions between the Grater Indus Valley and the Oman Peninsula in the Early Bronze Age

This presentation explores long-distance interactions between the Greater Indus Valley and the communities of the Oman Peninsula during the Early Bronze Age, with particular focus on the middle and late Umm an-Nar period (ca. 2500–2000 BCE). Moving beyond diffusionist or centre–periphery models, it proposes a globalising framework of socio-technical interaction in which maritime trade acted as a catalyst for reciprocal innovation, selective adoption, and local reconfiguration of technologies and practices. Drawing on archaeological, archaeometric, and textual evidence, the presentation examines the circulation of key commodities and the technical knowledge embedded in their production and use. Special attention is given to Indus craft production and socio-economic specialisation, revealing a highly structured and intentional commercial strategy oriented towards external markets. Rather than passive recipients of foreign influence, the Umm an-Nar communities emerge as active agents who integrated external inputs into existing economic and social frameworks, fostering indigenous trajectories of complexity without urbanisation. By situating these interactions within the broader Middle Asian Interaction Sphere and adopting a longue durée perspective from the Neolithic to the early Iron Age, the presentation highlights the dynamic and experimental nature of third-millennium BCE quasi-global practices across the western Indian Ocean.

Dennys Frenez (PhD, FRAS) is Subject Expert in Prehistory and Protohistory of Asia at the University of Bologna and Lecturer in the Archaeology of the Indus Civilization at the University of Padova. His research focuses on commercial and cultural interactions between urban-level societies in Asia during the Early Bronze Age, with particular emphasis on ancient technologies, writing and administrative systems, and the socio-technical significance of craft productions. He has directed archaeological projects in India and the Sultanate of Oman, and collaborated with museums and expeditions across Western and Central Asia, publishing numerous edited volumes and scientific papers on Indus external trade, its administration, and the role of the Indus craftspeople in establishing cross-cultural interactions. He is a Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and Advisor for Archaeology and Heritage at the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman.

Roman GARBA

Hinterland monuments of ancient nomads: Trilith stone structures of Southeastern Arabia

Triliths are enigmatic stone monuments distributed in the coastal plains and highlands of southern and south-eastern Arabia, stretching from Hadramawt in Yemen up to Ras Al-Hadd in Oman. They form a 'space' with a special meaning, where standing stones, platforms, square boulders, and large circular hearths are spatially distributed and hierarchically structured elements of intentional arrangement. The exact function of these 2000-years-old monuments is still not fully understood. This talk will present their geographical extent, chronological range and cultural significance. The latest dataset on trilith monuments comprises more than one thousand sites, and radiocarbon dates from trilith hearths suggest first trilith use back to 700 BCE. Statistical analyses show that triliths played a role in mobility and rituals associated with safe passage, pre-Islamic water rites, and ancestor veneration. A spatio-temporal analysis reveals the migration patterns of the trilith builders across south-eastern Arabia, potentially linked to semi-historical events. These new findings help us to gain a better understanding of ancient nomadic societies of southeastern Arabia.

Roman Garba is affiliated with the Institutes of Archaeology and Nuclear Physics Institute of the Czech Academy of Sciences. He holds a PhD in Asian, African and Mediterranean Studies from the University of Naples L'Orientale in Italy. He led the TSMO Expedition (Trilith Stone Monuments of Oman) and is currently heading the ARDUQ Project (Archaeological Landscape & Environmental Dynamics of Duqm and Nejd). Through fieldwork in Oman, Western Asia, Europe and East Africa, his research covers Arabian archaeology, the early human dispersals from Africa to Eurasia, and dating methods in archaeology with focus on cosmogenic nuclide dating.

Michela GAUDIELLO

Beyond the Iron Age Tombs: Tracing Islamic Settlement and Smelting at al-Salayli, Sultanate of Oman

The al-Ṣalaylī Archaeological Project in eastern Oman has revealed a multi-phase Islamic settlement embedded within a site long known for its Iron Age hut tombs. Initially surveyed between 2018 and 2021 under the co-direction of Prof. Paul Yule (Heidelberg University), the project transitioned in 2022 to the University of Tübingen. Three consecutive field seasons, conducted between 2022 and 2024 and funded by the Beatrice de Cardi Awards from the Society of Antiquaries of London, focused on the Settlement/Workshop area, designated SAL-5. Excavations in Trench 1 and Trench 2 revealed a stratified architectural sequence. Phase I consists of a square building dated to the Early Islamic period, confirmed by a radiocarbon sample calibrated to AD 773–979. Phase II introduced copper smelting installations, including feature F02 (AD 1309–1363), which reused earlier walls. Phase III comprises rounded structures built atop infilled spaces; while no datable materials were recovered from Phase III, surface ceramics from SAL-5 span the Early to Late Islamic periods. Ten additional charcoal samples are expected to confirm the earlier phases and broader use of the area. The 2024 season continued the analysis of ceramic sherds systematically collected during surveys and excavations. The assemblage includes Appliqué Turquoise ware, Plain Opaque White Glaze, Monochrome Sgraffiato, Julfar, Bahla, and Chinese imports, confirming long-term occupation and regional connectivity. Al-Ṣalaylī's proximity to Bilād al-Muwādin, a documented Islamic smelting center, and an undocumented copper site situates it within a broader industrial landscape. These sites illuminate the economic and architectural transformations of central Oman during the Islamic centuries, offering new perspectives on resource exploitation and settlement continuity.

Michela Gaudiello holds a PhD in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from the University of Naples "L'Orientale." Her research focuses on the interaction between the Horn of Africa and Ancient South Arabia during the 1st millennium BC. Between 2010 and 2019, she worked on international projects in Ethiopia, where she began her collaboration with Prof. Paul Yule. Active in Oman since 2013, she worked at Al Seeb and Bimah, and participated in the Batinah Expressway rescue project. In 2022, she became the scientific director of the al-Salayli Archaeological Project after receiving the Beatrice de Cardi Award for three consecutive years as an honorary affiliated researcher at the University of Tübingen. Her extensive field experience includes missions in Sudan and Uzbekistan, and directing the first excavation at the Nabataean tombs in Al-Bad, Saudi Arabia. Since 2023, she has served as Heritage Site Lead at NEOM. Most of her publications on Oman are co-authored with Paul Yule. Her recent articles present the results of the smelting settlement at al-Salayli, published in the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies (2024) and Athar (2023).

Francesco GENCHI

The metal weapons of south-eastern Arabia at the turn of the second and first millennia BC: Influences and originality in manufacturing

The paper focuses on defining the production and circulation of metal weapons in southeastern Arabia, which saw a significant development in terms of quantity and quality between Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age (1500 - 600 BC). Absolutely central in the material culture of this period is the metallurgy, especially that of bronze that characterizes the tribal society that inserted Eastern Arabia, and the peninsula of Oman in particular, in the circuits of inter-economic exchange in the Near and Middle East. It is therefore an intensive exploitation of the copper mines found in the Hajar mountain range, which were already being fully utilized during the third millennium, and a source of trade goods as Sumerian texts indicate. Recent data that have increased our knowledge of aspects of metallurgy come mainly from funerary and ceremonial contexts, as well as from workshop and object recycling areas. Production is concentrated in the manufacture of copper and bronze weapons, mainly arrowheads, spearheads, axes and daggers, some of which do not appear to represent votive objects. The aspect that we wish to emphasize here is the close relationship observed between the weapons found in the sites of Oman and UAE and the typical production of Iranian tradition. The convergent characters are multiple and indicate a clear influence especially from Luristan, tracing an obvious trajectory of cross-cultural transmission between the two regions. These metallic specimens thus testify to a deep intercultural knowledge that extends throughout the region during this crucial period of Arab prehistory.

Francesco Genchi is a researcher at La Sapienza University of Rome. He is a professional archaeologist specialising in stratigraphic excavations, material culture and digital documentation. Genchi has supervised excavations at Ras Al-Hadd, Ras Al-Jinz and Ras Al-Hamra and has also been field director for the Ministry of Cultural Heritage and Activities in various restoration projects, such as Duqm, Jamma, Sohar and others. He is currently directing the excavation of the multi-layered settlement of Shokur near Dhank and has directed the exploration of Iron Age collective tombs at Dibba Al-Bayah in the Musandam Governorate.

Guillaume GERNEZ

The copper-alloy tools from Al Ghithrayinah (Ad Dakhiliyah) and their significance

A group of eighteen copper-alloy tools was discovered accidentally at the small locality of Al Ghithrayinah, approximately 70 km southeast of Adam (Ad Dakhiliyah Governorate). These artefacts, all morphologically identical, belong to a relatively uncommon type in Oman, generally attributed to the late third millennium BC and whose function remains a matter of debate. This paper presents these tools and discusses their possible functions, as well as their parallels in Oman and neighbouring regions. It further considers the implications of this find for understanding the inland exchange networks that linked the mountain areas with the coastal zone of Al Wusta during the Bronze Age.

Guillaume Gernez, former researcher at the French Institute for the Near East (Beirut) and at the Humanities Research Center of Sultan Qaboos University (Muscat), is now Associate Professor at Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne University. An expert in material culture and protohistory, he has participated in excavations in Syria and Lebanon, and directed the French Archaeological Mission in Central Oman (2012–2020), conducting excavations at Adam, Mudhmar and Salut.

Roberta GIUNTA & Alexia PAVAN

Investigating Urban Space, Trade, and Daily Life at Al-Baleed (ancient Zafar): Archaeology and Heritage Valorisation

The archaeological site of Al-Baleed (ancient Zafar), located in the Dhofar region of southern Oman, is one of the most important Islamic port cities of the Indian Ocean. Since 2021, the University of Naples L'Orientale has been conducting research at the site in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism, with the aim of understanding of its urban development, economic role, and long-term occupation within the broader framework of Islamic settlement in southern Arabia. As a major hub along the maritime routes of the Indian Ocean, Al-Baleed offers a privileged perspective on long-distance commercial networks linking southern Arabia with other Islamic lands, the Indian subcontinent and China. Archaeological evidence allows the reconstruction of the urban settlement, as well as patterns of exchange, circulation of goods, and economic strategies typical of a medieval port city, highlighting its central role within regional and interregional trade systems. After addressing these broader commercial dynamics, the research has progressively shifted towards the investigation of everyday life practices. Recent excavations have brought to light religious and productive spaces that provide insight into how the city functioned on a daily basis. In particular, contexts related to food preparation and consumption shed light on diet, subsistence strategies, and shared practices within the urban community. These data also open new avenues for exploring social and communal behaviours, including shared meals, coffee drinking, shisha use, and betel chewing, as integral components of daily life in a cosmopolitan port environment. Alongside research activities, the project places strong emphasis on heritage valorisation. One of the main challenges lies in communicating the complexity of Al-Baleed in an effective and meaningful way, capable of conveying both its role within Indian Ocean trade networks and the lived experiences of its inhabitants. Digital documentation, interpretative tools, and narrative strategies are therefore conceived as core components of the project, essential for presenting the site's history in a coherent and engaging manner.

Alexia Pavan teaches Archaeological Research Methodology at the University of Naples L'Orientale. She holds a PhD from the University of Pisa and specialises in the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic period, with a focus on urban contexts, material culture, long-distance trade networks, and the study of museum collections. Since 2000, she has participated in numerous archaeological field projects in Syria and the Arabian Peninsula and has carried out research on museum collections in Europe, Yemen, and Oman. She has also contributed to the design and curation of museums and exhibitions. She has directed archaeological excavations and conservation projects in southern Oman. Between 2023 and 2024, she served as Co-Principal Investigator and Project Manager of the Hajj and Trade Routes Survey Project in the NEOM region. She is currently Deputy Director of the Italian Archaeological Mission of L'Orientale at Al-Baleed.

Gahad HAMED, Khaled DOUGLAS, Nasser AL-JAHWARI, Mohamed HESEIN & Huda AL-DIHANI

Urban Sociology of Omani Neighborhoods: The Sima Neighborhood in Izki as a Model – The Dialectical Relationship Between Space and Society

This paper explores the complex relationship between urban planning and social fabric in traditional Omani neighborhoods, using the Sima neighborhood in the Wilayat of Izki as a case study. The paper draws on a theoretical framework from the sociology of urbanism, utilizing the ideas of Pierre Bourdieu and Anthony Giddens, to analyze how architectural and spatial planning embodies and reproduces social values. The methodology employs descriptive, interpretive, and analytical approaches using primary and secondary sources. The paper concludes that the Sima neighborhood constitutes an integrated socio-spatial system. The clustering of houses and their distribution reflect social hierarchy, while the internal layout of each house organizes family dynamics and gender roles. Central institutions such as the mosque and the market serve to reinforce social cohesion and build social capital. It became clear that urban planning in Sima – through the clustering of dwellings, house design, and the distribution of institutions such as the mosque and the market – was not merely a negative reflection of the social structure, but rather an active tool in shaping social hierarchy and strengthening community cohesion. This paper offers a valuable contribution to understanding local urban models and provides a framework for contemporary restoration and planning projects.

Gahad Hamed is an associate professor of sociology at Sultan Qaboos University. His diverse research explores social institutions, group dynamics, interdisciplinary studies, and contemporary issues across the Arab and Muslim world. A former president of the Institute for Middle East Studies (IMESC), his work delves into themes such as religion and politics, sovereignty in Islam, violence in cultural perspective, radicalism, and the sociology of terrorism. Dr. Hamed's research demonstrates a deep commitment to understanding the complex interplay between culture, society, and the individual.

Mohamed HESEIN, Guillaume GERNEZ, Khaled DOUGLAS, Nasser AL-JAHWARI

The Strategic Role of Manaqi within the Wadi al-Far System during the Iron Age in Northern Oman

The present study aims to investigate the archaeological site of Manaqi, located in the northern part of Al-Rustaq, and to highlight its significance within the broader context of Wadi al-Far, one of the principal valleys linking the foothills of the Western Hajar Mountains with the coastal plain of northern Oman. Through two excavation seasons conducted in 2024 and 2025, a number of architectural structures were uncovered, varying in both form and function, alongside a rich assemblage of archaeological materials, among which clay figurines and ceramic finds are particularly noteworthy. The importance of the Manaqi site lies in its integration within a wider settlement system extending along Wadi al-Far, encompassing sites such as al-Uqayriyah, al-Mazahiṭ, and ancient Wibil. These sites collectively display architectural and material characteristics typical of the Iron Age II and III. Preliminary evidence suggests that Manaqi occupied a strategic position that enabled it to control the communication routes as well as the agricultural and economic activities connecting the Omani interior with the coast. The study adopts a comparative approach between the recent excavation results at Manaqi and the data previously recorded from neighbouring sites through archaeological surveys, with the aim of understanding spatial distribution, settlement continuity, and the functional relationships among sites within Wadi al-Far.

Mohamed Hesein is an academic specializing in archaeology in the Sultanate of Oman and currently serves as Head of the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University. He obtained his PhD in Landscape Archaeology from the University of Leicester, where his research combined spatial analysis and field investigation to understand ancient communities and cultural landscapes. Dr. Hesein has over twenty years of experience in archaeological research, cultural heritage studies, and landscape analysis. He has significantly contributed to advancing the understanding of prehistoric and ancient periods in Oman, particularly during the Iron Age and Bronze Age. He leads several important archaeological projects, most notably the excavation at the Manaqi site in Al Rustaq, and has participated in excavations at Al-Ghurayen, Dahwa, and Al-Taykha. Dr. Hesein employs advanced digital technologies, relying on Geographic Information Systems (GIS), Unmanned Aerial Vehicle (UAV) aerial photography, and 3D photogrammetry to document sites with high precision. His work has developed innovative methodologies for field analysis, supporting the conservation of cultural heritage. He has published peer-reviewed research in international journals such as Arabian Archaeology & Epigraphy and Antiquity, and participated in numerous conferences addressing ancient settlement patterns and heritage site management.

Mathilde JEAN, Martin SAUVAGE, Tara BEUZEN-WALLER, Olivia MUNOZ, Lucas PROCTOR, Kaina ROINTRU, Théo MESPOULET, Dana PIETSCH, Ayoub AL-OUFI & Ahmed AL-TAMIMI

Bisya as an Early Bronze Age oasis landscape: Results of four years of exploration

Bisya (Ad Dakhiliyah, Oman) has long been known as a major Bronze and Iron Ages centre in the Oman peninsula. Recent exploration by the French Archaeological Mission to Central Oman (FAMCO) makes it possible to discuss its development in relation to the early oasis systems in the Early Bronze Age. Regional survey (remote sensing, geophysics, on-site documentation) evidenced new monumental sites and ca. 3000 tombs. Excavations at Al Dhabi 2 revealed a well-preserved 3rd millennium site gathering evidence of monumental, domestic and funerary architecture; crafts and trade; and a large dataset related to early oasis system and subsistence including vegetal remains (date palm, cereals), soils, ditches, fish bones, and bioanthropological data. Thanks to extensive radiocarbon dating, the sequence of occupation at the site is now well documented and allows a clear reconstruction of the history of this early oasis centre. The paper will present the results of 4 years of research at Bisya at the regional to intrasite scales, including surveys, excavations, environment and material studies. It will discuss the concept and definition of early oasis systems and societies in the light of these new data and regional reference, to open up new perspectives on the EBA landscape of inner Oman.

Mathilde Jean is an Assistant Professor in Prehistory and pottery technology at the University Paris Nanterre in France. She has worked in Oman since 2012 in Bisya, Adam and Jabal Mudhmar. She is the co-director of the French Archaeological Mission to Central Oman since 2021. She also contributes to other projects in Western Asia, focusing on Lebanon, Syria, and Iraq.

Derek KENNET

The Sohar Project: Excavations at a key early Islamic Indian Ocean port

The massive increase in the volume of Indian Ocean trade during the 8th to 10th centuries CE is surely one of the most significant contributions of early Islamic civilisation. But little is understood about this trade, about the commodities involved, who the protagonists were, the precise chronology, the changing volume, and the way in which trade affected those who lived on the shores of the Indian Ocean. It is almost certain that Omani seafarers played a key part in the trade, whilst the historical sources from Ibn Habib to al-Maqdisi make it clear that Sohar, was, along with Basra and Siraf, one of three key early-Islamic emporia. New excavations by the University of Chicago and Sultan Qaboos University starting in 2024 have begun to explore the archaeology of Sohar more fully. Their aim is to investigate the development of the town in relation to both the maritime trade economy and to the agricultural economy of the site's hinterland. Imported pottery demonstrates developing contacts with Tang/Northern Song China, NW India, Iraq, and East Africa. Deep stratigraphic sequences and environmental sampling will be linked to analysis of land use, agriculture practice, and irrigation systems in the site's hinterland. It is hoped that Suhar will provide important new perspectives on this early trade over the coming seasons. This paper will present an overview of what is known about the period, the site, adding information from the first three seasons of survey and excavation.

Derek Kennet is the Howard E. Hallengren Professor in Arabian Peninsula and Gulf States Archaeology in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations and the Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures. His research areas include the Arabian peninsula, the rise of Islam, economic responses to arid environments, and the interactions between the Arabian peninsula and adjacent regions. He was formerly the resident archaeologist at the National Museum of Ras al-Khaimah in the UAE and spent 25 years at Durham University in the UK before moving to Chicago in 2024. He completed his undergraduate studies at Institute of Archaeology in London and his PhD is from the University of London's School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). He has coauthored several books, the most recent of which, *The Bronze Age communal graves of Qarn al-Harf, Ras al-Khaimah (UAE): Southeast Arabia at the dawn of the second millennium*, was published in 2025.

Bilal KHRISAT

Geomorphic Vulnerability and Palaeogeographical Reconstruction: Assessing the Erosional Fate of Archaeological Landscapes in Central and Northern Oman

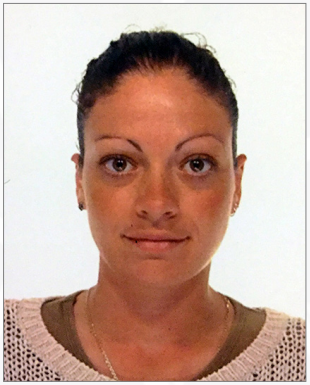
The archaeological heritage of central and northern Oman is facing a persistent threat from a dynamic and predominantly erosional landscape. The very landscape that once supported ancient settlements is now erasing their traces. Shaped by a hyper-arid climate, the region—marked by rocky mountains, sparse soils, desert plains, and dynamic alluvial systems—has undergone significant geomorphic change over the past three millennia. Especially vulnerable are sites located near active wadis or in areas prone to wind-driven erosion, many of which have already been lost or severely degraded.. In this study, I bring together geomorphology, paleoclimatology, and geoarchaeology with remote sensing, GIS-based spatial analysis, and fieldwork to reconstruct how these landscapes evolved from the Neolithic through the Iron Age. While direct field validation remains limited, the integration of remote sensing and legacy data provides a robust framework for understanding human–environment interactions in this part of Oman. The results show that early settlement patterns were tightly linked to the presence of water and cultivable land—resources made temporarily abundant during Holocene wet phases that expanded habitable zones onto floodplains now long abandoned. Furthermore, the study identifies critical landscape transformations linked to Holocene climatic shifts, notably the weakening of the Indian Ocean Monsoon after ~5,000 years BP, which likely triggered increased aridity and reconfigured human settlement strategies. Yet as the climate shifted toward greater aridity, erosional forces intensified: wadis cut deeper into the terrain, sand dunes advanced, and fragile archaeological deposits were gradually stripped away. Beyond piecing together the region's ancient geography, this work offers a practical, spatially explicit assessment of geomorphic risk. By identifying which areas are most susceptible to ongoing erosion, the study provides a vital tool for prioritizing conservation efforts—helping to safeguard what remains of Oman's irreplaceable cultural record before much of it vanishes entirely over time.

Bilal R. Khrisat is an Associate Professor in the Department of Archaeological Conservation Science at the Hashemite University in Jordan. With a PhD in Geoarchaeology and over two decades of experience, he has served as Department Head, Dean Assistant, and Commissioner of the Petra Archaeological Park. His expertise centers on geoarchaeology, heritage conservation, and the application of geospatial technologies like GIS and remote sensing to archaeology. Dr. Khrisat has served as a key consultant for UNESCO and other international organizations, notably on the Siq Stability Project in Petra. He has led numerous archaeological excavations across Jordan and India, published widely in refereed international journals, and secured several research grants. His professional memberships include ICOMOS and the World Archaeological Congress, underscoring his active role in the global heritage conservation community.

Silvia LISCHI

The DHOMIAP Project: Investigating Cultural Interactions between Indigenous and South Arabian Communities in Iron Age Dhofar

The DHOMIAP Project (DHOfar Map and Inqitat Archaeological Project) has been active since 2016, conducting systematic fieldwork across the Dhofar Governorate to investigate the formation, organisation, and cultural networks of southern Oman between the Bronze Age and Late Antiquity. Its primary focus lies on the Iron Age, particularly the Late Iron Age, when South Arabians from the South Arabian kingdoms entered Dhofar, initiating complex cultural and economic interactions with the indigenous population. The project integrates archaeological excavation, survey, and multidisciplinary scientific approaches to examine the relationships between sedentary and (semi-)nomadic communities. Distributional and spatial analyses have identified at least two distinct yet interconnected cultural groups: the Dhofar Coastal Culture and the Dhofar Inland Culture. Understanding the nature of their interactions and the extent of South Arabian influence constitutes one of the central aims of the project. To this end, ongoing investigations are being conducted in three key regions. At Khor Rori on the coast, research focuses on land use and on the interactions between the Dhofar Coastal Culture and the South Arabians. In Andhūr, on the Nejd Plateau, excavations aim to clarify the relationships between the Dhofar Inland Culture and the South Arabian presence. Finally, in western Dhofar, the recent discovery of inscriptions in various scripts and archaeological remains provides new evidence for understanding South Arabian penetration into Dhofar and the evolutionary stages of interaction among the diverse human groups that crossed this area, which can be interpreted as a cultural crossroads. The presentation will outline the main results achieved by the DHOMIAP Project to date and discuss future research directions aimed at reconstructing how such a diverse and interconnected cultural mosaic developed within a geographically limited region, offering a more nuanced understanding of Dhofar's complex archaeological palimpsest.



Silvia Lischi is a Postdoctoral Researcher at Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne and the French National Centre for Scientific Research UMR8167 «Orient & Méditerranée». She obtained her PhD in History from the University of Pisa, where her research focused on settlement dynamics and cultural interactions in Dhofar (Oman) between the Bronze Age and Late Antiquity. Following her doctorate, she held a research position at the University of Oxford, where she developed her first monograph on the Dhofar Coastal Culture, a cultural horizon she identified and defined through her doctoral work. Her research specialises in the archaeology of the Arabian Peninsula, with particular emphasis on Iron Age Dhofar, South Arabia, and the dynamics between nomadic and sedentary communities. She has extensive field experience in Oman, Saudi Arabia, and Jordan, and has been conducting archaeological research in Oman for over sixteen years. She is the Director of the DHOMIAP Project in Dhofar and Co-Director of the archaeological component of the Badia Epigraphic Survey in Jordan. currently serves as Editor-in-Chief of the Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies.

Romolo LORETO, Lucio CORRADO, Mattia COZZOLINO, Benedetta MUSELLA, Clémence MARTINELLI, Rosanna MARCHESE, Carlotta RUSSO & Michela MUSTO

Results from 2019-2025 field seasons of the University of Naples L'Orientale at Wadi Bani Khalid: Archaeological activities, conservation, and valorisation strategies

Since 2019, the University of Naples archaeological project at Wadi Bani Khalid is conducting archaeological research as well as performing conservation and valorisation strategies for the fruition of the main Iron Age settlement of WBK1. From the archaeological point of view, this contribution intents to highlight the main scientific results related to the chronology of the Early to Late Iron Age settlements in Wadi Bani Khalid (WBK1 and fort WBK49) and the definition of the related material culture, from the EIA to the LIA, to better understand the role of such a rich landscape within the eastern Arabia Iron Age. Furthermore, from the conservation and valorisation point of view, this contribution intents to introduce first buildings' conservation strategies and the definition of fruition pathways in WBK1, as well as the planning of a digital apparatus (virtual museum and gaming platform) for the dissemination of the scientific results.

Romolo Loreto is an archaeologist and Associate Professor for the teaching of Archeology and History of Art of the Ancient Near East at the University of Naples L'Orientale and of Archeology of the Arabian Peninsula for the Inter-University Scuola di Specializzazione Interateneo Beni Archeologici "Tra Oriente e Occidente" (Naples L'Orientale - University of Salerno). From 2002 to 2010 he collaborated in the excavations of the Italian Archaeological Mission in Yemen, in Baraqish and Tamna. Since 2011 he is Director of the Italian archaeological and restoration missions in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (Dumat al-Jandal, ancient Adummatu) with the patronage of University of Naples L'Orientale, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation, the ISMEO and the Saudi Ministry of Culture. Since 2013 he is Director of the Archaeological Mission of L'Orientale in the Sultanate of Oman in the Sharqiya North region and since 2014 he is co-director of the Underwater Mission in the Red Sea in Ummluj, on behalf of L'Orientale and the Saudi Ministry of Cultures. He is the author and co-author of over 130 scientific publications and six monographs on the archaeology and history of the Arabian Peninsula.

Elena MAINI & Matteo BORMETTI

Tracing Dolphin Exploitation along the Omani Coast: Zooarchaeological Evidence from Ras al-Hadd and Ras al-Jinz (4th–3rd Millennium BCE)

The DExPO Project (Dolphin Exploitation in Prehistoric Oman), conducted in collaboration with the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism and the Natural History Museum of Oman, investigates the role of cetaceans within the coastal economies of southeastern Arabia from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age. This paper presents the results of a study on the marine mammal assemblages from Ras al-Hadd (HD-1, HD-2, HD-5) and Ras al-Jinz (RJ-2, RJ-3). Dolphin bones form a substantial yet understudied part of the faunal record. Over 570 diagnostic elements—mainly vertebrae, cranial, and flipper bones—were recorded using a dedicated analytical protocol for cetacean remains in the region. The identification of skeletal elements and species was aided by modern reference materials at the NHM Oman. Anatomical, biogeographic, and taphonomic factors complicate identification, so the adopted protocol integrates a suite of bone measurements statistically discriminating between species. Additionally, taphonomic marks such as traces of combustion and butchery were documented. The integrated analytical results support the hypothesis of a selective targeting of small-sized delphinids, likely *Stenella* spp., indicating that dolphin procurement was not opportunistic but structured and recurrent. These practices appear to have been seasonally patterned and closely linked to the ecological dynamics of lagoonal and open-sea environments. Moreover, evidence suggests dolphin remains were systematically used in fire production. This research highlights the emergence of specialised maritime economies and strategic exploitation across diverse coastal environments.

Elena Maini is a zooarchaeologist specialising in prehistoric and protohistoric animal exploitation and environmental reconstruction. She obtained her PhD in Archaeology from the University of Bologna in 2012 and has held teaching and research positions at Sapienza University of Rome, the University of Bologna, and the University of Milan. She is currently an external collaborator of ArcheoLaBio – Research Centre for Bioarchaeology (University of Bologna) and has served as archaeological advisor to the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism of Oman for the CALSA Project (Central Archaeological Laboratory and Storage Area). Since 1998, Dr. Maini has participated in archaeological fieldwork in the Sultanate of Oman, contributing as both field archaeologist and zooarchaeologist to several missions, including the French–Italian Joint Hadd Project (sites HD-6, KHB-1), the excavation of Ras al-Hadd HD-5, and more recently as scientific director of the DExPO Project (Dolphin Exploitation in Prehistoric Oman) in collaboration with Dr. Matteo Bormetti (University of Milan). Her research also extends to projects in Türkiye (Karkemish), Iraq (Nineveh), Uzbekistan (Samarkand), and Italy, where she leads studies on Bronze Age animal husbandry. Dr. Maini has authored over seventy publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference proceedings and regularly presents her work at international meetings on Arabian and Mediterranean archaeology.

Maria Pia MAIORANO, Lucas PROCTOR, Elena MAINI, Joseph HARRIS, Paige PAULSEN, Jakez MOREAU, Petra CREAMER, Jiří ŠNEBERGER & Tara BEUZEN-WALLER

Returning Places: Exploring Neolithic mobility and place persistence in the Hajar piedmont

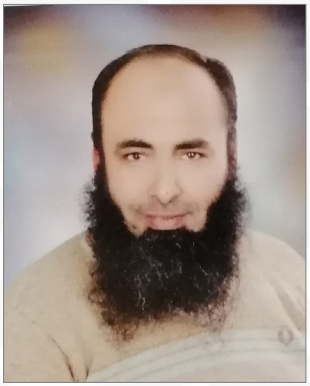
Shifting the focus from the well-studied coast to the inland piedmont opens a new chapter in understanding the Neolithic of South Arabia. The HERDS in Oman Project at the site of KHS-A, near al-Khashbah, offers a rare opportunity to view Neolithic lifeways from an inland perspective, helping to clarify long-standing questions about mobility, resilience, and adaptation in the region. Our multidisciplinary approach combines the study of material culture with diversified field technologies—such as thermal imagery, drone prospection, and high-resolution survey—alongside geomorphological analyses and bioarchaeological insights from zooarchaeology, archaeobotany, and isotopic studies. The identification of a large, repeatedly occupied Neolithic campsite in the southern Hajar piedmont, together with several nearby sites, refines models of occupation and movement within the interior. Integrating survey, excavation, and material analyses from KHS-A with comparative data from inland and coastal sites, we propose that KHS-A represents a persistently revisited focal place within a broader landscape of mobility. Its position near key resources and natural corridors likely made it a recurrent destination for hunter-forager-herder groups facing increasing aridity at the end of the Holocene Humid Period. Framed within global discussions of mobility and resilience, KHS-A exemplifies a long-term strategy of place persistence enabling adaptation to environmental stress.

Maria Pia Maiorano is an archaeologist whose research focuses on the Prehistory of the Arabian Peninsula, with particular emphasis on the Sultanate of Oman. She is currently a researcher at the Institute of Archaeology of the Czech Academy of Sciences (Prague, CZ), where she investigates lithic production and cultural change in Southern Arabia during the Early and Middle Holocene. Her work explores technological innovation, cultural transmission, shifts in subsistence strategies, and the processes of neolithization in arid environments. She has been conducting fieldwork in Oman for more than a decade and currently directs or collaborates on several ongoing projects, including HERDS iN Oman – Human Environmental Resilience and Desert Subsistence in Neolithic Oman, Exploring the Omani Rub al-Khali, the French Mission "Archaeology of the Arabian Seashores", and the Czech Archaeological Mission to Duqm (ARDUQ Project). Her research has been supported by several prestigious grants and fellowships, including the Alexander von Humboldt Fellowship, the Beatrice de Cardi Award, and the Fokus AB award. Dr. Maiorano has published in numerous international scientific journals and serves as a reviewer for leading publications in the field of archaeology.

Fayez MASSOUD & Habib AL-HADI

Animal riding in the rock art of the Omani Peninsula

The Omani Peninsula is among the richest regions of the Arabian Peninsula in terms of the diversity and chronological range of its rock art scenes. Numerous engravings and carvings are spread throughout the region, many of which remain undocumented due to the ongoing discovery of new sites. These scenes vividly reflect the life of ancient Omani communities in its religious, social, economic, and symbolic dimensions. Among the most significant themes represented in the region's rock art are scenes of animal riding, where humans are depicted mounted on camels, horses, and donkeys. These images embody multiple meanings related to transportation, travel, hunting, and ceremonial practices, in addition to serving as symbols of power, bravery, and social status. This study aims to analyze scenes of animal riding in the rock art of the Omani Peninsula through a descriptive and analytical approach, seeking to uncover the purposes, functions, and meanings embedded within these depictions. It also explores the symbolic relationship between humans and animals and its role in shaping the visual identity of early Omani society. The significance of this study lies in highlighting rock art as a reliable visual record documenting ancient human life and contributing to the reinterpretation of Oman's cultural heritage. Furthermore, rock art represents a cultural and touristic resource that can be employed to promote heritage tourism and strengthen national cultural awareness. The research methodology adopts a descriptive–analytical framework, focusing on identifying and interpreting rock art scenes related to animal riding, while comparing their stylistic, thematic, and symbolic dimensions. The study is structured around four main axes: 1) Rock art in the Omani Peninsula: origins, types, and artistic styles; 2) Depictions of camel riding in Omani rock art; 3) Depictions of horse riding and their symbolic and social implications; 4) Artistic and symbolic analysis of animal-riding scenes. The expected outcomes include: 1) Documenting the diverse uses of animals in ancient daily life; 2) Revealing the evolution of artistic and aesthetic awareness among ancient Omanis; 3) Affirming that rock art serves as a living, multidimensional cultural document linking humans with their environment, history, and identity.



Fayez Anwar Abdul Motaleb Massoud is a Professor of History in the Department of History, Faculty of Arts, at Damanhour University in the Arab Republic of Egypt. His general academic specialisation is Ancient History, with a specific focus on the history and civilisation of the Ancient Arabian Peninsula. He obtained a Master's degree in Ancient History from the Department of History and Egyptian & Islamic Archaeology in 2002. His master's thesis, entitled Rock Art in the Fezzan Region during the Hunting and Round Heads Phases: A Comparative Analytical Study, was awarded an Excellent grade, with a recommendation that it be published at the university's expense and circulated among universities. He subsequently completed his PhD in Ancient History in the same department in 2010, receiving First-Class Honors. His doctoral dissertation was entitled *Political Awareness of the Ancient Egyptian People up to the End of the New Kingdom*.

Niccolò MAZZUCCO, Rémi HADAD, Simone SANI, Luca BIANCALANI, Alberto AGRESTI, Julien FREULARD, Daniele AROBBA, Nolwenn EMONET, Kevin LIDOUR, Lionello MORANDI, Alessandro NERI, Maria ROUSOU, Khaled DOUGLAS & Nasser AL-JAHWARI

Hayy al-Sarh (Rustaq, Southern Batinah): Chronological, Palaeoeconomic, and Palaeo-environmental Reconstruction of a Late Neolithic Campsite in the Al-Hajar Foothills

The Neolithic development of Oman represents a pivotal stage in Arabian prehistory, marked by shifts in mobility, subsistence, and landscape exploitation. While most research has focused on coastal shell middens, new investigations at Hayy al-Sarh (Rustaq) expand our understanding of inland adaptations. Excavated since 2018 as part of the PrehistOman Omani-Italian Joint Project (University of Pisa and Sultan Qaboos University), the site occupies the foothills of the Al-Hajar Mountains and preserves one of the few stratified Neolithic deposits in northern Oman. The 2024–2025 excavation campaigns revealed a well-preserved circular dwelling structure with postholes, hearths, and associated features, radiocarbon-dated to the mid–4th millennium BCE. These discoveries provide insights into domestic architecture and site organization among inland Neolithic groups. The artefactual record reflects a diverse use of raw materials, radiolarites, quartz, and cherts, indicating mobility and exchange networks linking coastal and interior regions. Palaeoenvironmental analyses, including pollen, anthracological, and non-pollen palynomorph (NPP) studies, reveal a landscape more humid and ecologically varied than today. The presence of *Alnus* sp. and *Tamarix* sp., alongside aquatic algae and diatoms, points to riparian environments with periodic water availability. Coprophilous fungi and ruderal taxa suggest pastoral activities, supporting the interpretation of Hayy al-Sarh as a seasonal campsite selected for water access and herding. Altogether, Hayy al-Sarh provides a unique inland perspective on Neolithic lifeways, refining models of mobility and human–environment interaction during the Late Neolithic.

Niccolò Mazzucco is an Associate Professor at the Università di Pisa, Italy, a position he has held since 2024, where he occupies the Chair of Prehistory of Agriculture and Prehistory of Complex Societies. Prior to this appointment, he served as a Contracted Senior Researcher (RTDb) within the "Brain Return" programme at the Università di Pisa from 2021 to 2024. In 2023, he directed the excavation of the Neolithic open-air site of Hayy al-Sarh in Rustaq, Oman, within the framework of the PrehistOman project, focusing on prehistoric contexts in arid environments. In 2022, he directed a survey campaign in the South Batinah region (Rustaq, Oman) as part of the ProArcheo project, with research activities centred on survey methodology, lithic scatters, and landscape archaeology.

Takehiro MIKI, Yu ITAHASHI, Taichi KURONUMA, Kantaro TANABE & Yasuhisa KONDO

The further excavation at Mugharat al-Kahf, the Wadi Tanuf, the Ad-Dakhiliyah, Oman: Tracing human activity in inland southeastern Arabia during the second millennium BCE

The Wādī Sūq period (c. 2000 – 1600 BCE) is characterised by a decrease in sedentary sites in inland regions and in variegated burial shapes compared to the preceding Umm an-Nar period (c. 2700 – 2000 BCE). One of the factors causing this cultural shift is the aridification of the 4.2 ka event. However, the scarcity of Wādī Sūq sites with radiocarbon dates in central Oman prevents us from understanding human activity and its diachronic change during this period. One of the potential sites resolving this issue is the cave of Mugharat al-Kahf, the Wādī Tanūf, the Ad-Dākhilīyah, Oman, with previous excavations yielding the Wādī Sūq pottery, stone vessels, and the charred date stones whose radiocarbon dates ranged between 2000 – 1500 calBCE (Miki et al. 2020, 2022). To acquire further evidence of human activity in this cave during the Wādī Sūq period, we excavated a new test pit (TP4), and this paper reports our findings and results of the radiocarbon measurements. New radiocarbon measurements on the charcoal samples revealed a sequence of human activity involving the use of fire, spanning from 1900 to 1600 calBCE. In addition, we discovered a well-preserved ceramic vessel placed upright near a large rock in front of the neighbouring rock shelter. These new findings confirm repeated use of the cave during the Wādī Sūq period, providing a refined chronology for this period in inland Oman.

Takehiro Miki is an Associate Professor, Department of Archaeology and Ethnology, Keio University, Japan. He has been working in West Asia, South Asia, and the Oman Peninsula over the last 15 years, focusing on the Chalcolithic, Bronze Age, and Neolithic pottery in these regions.

Kyle OLSON, Abigail BUFFINGTON & Joy MCCORRISTON

Dhofar and its Settlement History

Since 2008, the Arabian Human Social Dynamics (AHSD) and Ancient Socioecological systems in Oman (ASOM) projects have been investigating the relationship between the construction of small-scale stone monuments, evidence of human settlement, and the long-term socio-ecological dynamics of past pastoral ecosystems in Southern Arabia. These are archaeological cultures with few material remains, strongly suggestive of sustained mobility and organic, perishable toolkits and crafts. A spectacular find, such as the accessories of Ötzi the Iceman or the Urumqi mummies of the Tarim basin, can draw public attention and archaeological focus to such communities, but for the most part, the lifestyles, identities, and beliefs of Bedouin cultures of Arabia and the Sahara leave few permanent traces. It has been easy to think theirs a timeless lifestyle, what Eric Wolf famously pilloried as "People without History." Leaving aside for the moment the new discovery that the alphabetic Dhofar script can now be read and may indeed offer history in emic terms, our paper offers a second avenue to history for the Dhofar pastoralists. Recent archaeological work has established that settlements in the Dhofar escarpment and coastal plain are the encampments of mobile pastoralists without dependence on crop agriculture and products. What has been less clear is the chronology of this settlement pattern, recently tied to the Late Iron Age (300 BCE-300 CE). Our paper reports new radiocarbon assays from archaeological survey and test excavations that complement published radiocarbon dates from highland Dhofar sites, Halqoot and Shakeel. We offer a Bayesian analysis to provide chronological refinement of the crude "history" provided by unconstrained calibrations, and link settlement histories to other published datasets from Dhofar.

Professor Joy McCorriston has been faculty in the Department of Anthropology at The Ohio State University since 1999. She received her PhD from Yale University in 1992 and her BA from the University of London Institute of Archaeology in 1985. Her archaeological research focuses on two primary areas: (1) archaeobotanical analysis of ancient food production and human environments, and (2) Arabian prehistory and the integration of domesticated plants and animals into Arabian lifeways. She has conducted extensive research in Jordan, Syria, Yemen, and Oman. Her major publications include *Pilgrimage and Household in the Ancient Near East* (2011), *Landscape History of Hadramawt* (2020), *World Prehistory and the Anthropocene* (2019), and *Persistent Pastoralism: Monuments & Settlements in the Archaeology of Dhofar* (2023). In 2022, her co-edited volume with Michael Harrower received the Anna Marguerite McCann Award for Fieldwork Reports and the JoAnne Stolleroff Imprint. She was selected as a Joan N. Huber Faculty Fellow in 2023 and received the national mentoring award from the Society for Ethnobiology in 2025. McCorriston's work is highly collaborative, supported by eleven US National Science Foundation grants and 44 other fellowships.

Sara PIZZIMENTI, Khaled DOUGLAS & Nasser AL-JAHWARI

The Omani-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Al Tikha: New Insight from 2026 Field Season

The site of Al Tikha is located on the eastern slopes of the Al Hajar Mountains, between Wadi Sahtan and Wadi al-Ghashab, approximately 42 km southwest of the Batinah coast and north of the modern city of Rustaq. First identified during the Rustaq-Batinah Archaeological Survey, it preserves evidence of occupation from the Umm an-Nar and Iron Age periods. Between 2022 and 2026, the Omani-Italian Archaeological Expedition — a joint project between the University of Pisa and Sultan Qaboos University, under the supervision of the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism — carried out five field seasons aimed at investigating the settlement sequence and organization of the site. The 2026 campaign continued the excavation of the Umm an-Nar towers, the copper workshop area, and the associated settlement sectors, with the goal of achieving a more comprehensive understanding of architectural development, craft production, and spatial organization within the community. After five years, the results provide an increasingly detailed picture of the site's internal layout, phases of occupation, and its role within the settlement dynamics of inland South Al Batinah during the 3rd millennium BCE.

Sara Pizzimenti is Associate Professor of Archaeology of Western Asia at the University of Pisa. She earned both her degree in Archaeology of the Ancient Near East and her PhD—focused on Bronze Age cultures of Mesopotamia—at Sapienza University of Rome. She currently serves as Co-Director of the *Omani-Italian Archaeological Expedition at Al Tikha (Oman)* – together with Khaled Douglas and Nasser al Jahwary (Sultan Qabbos University), and as Field Director of the Lagash Archaeological Project (Iraq). Over the course of her career, she has also participated in excavations at Ebla (Syria), Arslantepe (Turkey), Karkemish (Turkey), Jebel al-Mutawwaq (Jordan), Nigin (Iraq) and Niniveh (Iraq)gaining a broad and comparative research perspective. Her main research interests lie in the archaeology of the Gulf, south-eastern Arabia, Mesopotamia, and the Northern Levant, with a particular focus on the 3rd millennium BCE. She also works on Bronze Age material culture—especially pottery—and on archaeoastronomy. She is the author of numerous essays, scientific articles, and contributions to international volumes, and she is a regular speaker at major international conferences and symposia, including the *International Conference on the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, the *Rencontre Assyriologique Internationale*, and the *ASOR Annual Meeting*. She actively collaborates with institutions and colleagues on interdisciplinary projects that integrate archaeology with the natural sciences, materials analysis, and digital technologies applied to cultural heritage.

Sabrina RIGHETTI

The Wadi Suq Period (1600-2000 BC): Transformation and Adaptation in Bronze Age South-eastern Arabia

The transition from the late 3rd to the early 2nd millennium BC in southeastern Arabia represents a pivotal moment of transformation rather than decline. Traditionally interpreted as a phase of collapse following the Umm an-Nar culture (Early Bronze Age), the Wadi Suq period (Middle Bronze Age, 2000–1600 BC) has often been described as a "dark age" marked by depopulation, settlement abandonment, and the decrease of long-distance trade, particularly in copper. Excavations conducted over the last four decades, both in the oases of the north and along the southeast coast of the peninsula, have, however, yielded evidence of a more complex and probably less heterogeneous culture than previously assumed. These finding reveal societies that adapted to shifting environmental and economic conditions. Evidence points to a reorganization of settlement systems, while funerary practices underwent significant changes with the emergence of new forms of collective and individual tombs more heterogenous than before. These developments unfolded within a broader context of climatic event, which likely drove new patterns of mobility, exchange, and resource use. Far from representing a cultural rupture, the Wadi Suq period emerges as a time of resilience innovation and adaptation. This perspective invites a reconsideration of southeastern Arabia's second millennium BC not as an age of decline, but as a complex and dynamic phase during which societies reshaped their economic and social landscapes.

Sabrina Righetti is an archaeologist specializing in the Middle and Late Bronze Age of southeastern Arabia (Oman and UAE). She worked in Central Oman (Adam) and the Ja'alan region until 2013. She obtained her PhD in 2015 from University Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, where she reassessed the Wadi Suq period by compiling fifty years of research and exploring new hypotheses of cultural development. Formerly involved with *Patrimoine sans frontières*, she also has worked as a project coordinator supporting associations that reconstruct stone heritage through the social and professional inclusion of people distant from employment. Her research interests include settlement dynamics, funerary practices, and processes of cultural adaptation in the Bronze Age Arabian Peninsula.

Nicolas SUTTON, Matthew MEREDITH-WILLIAMS, Ali AL-KATHIRI, Lee ARNOLD, Dominik CHLACHULA, Ash PARTON, Dominik KOSCIELNY, David ALSOP, Kira OTTERBACH, Dana MUNNIK, Riley FLOOD, Mathieu DUVAL, Roman GARBA & Yamandu HILBERT

Middle Palaeolithic of Central Oman: Wadi Baw 4

This paper presents the newly identified Middle Palaeolithic site of Wadi Baw 4, in the Al Wusta Governate, close to Duqm. Middle Palaeolithic sites are very rare, especially in central Oman, where no sites had been identified prior to this, making this an important site not only for Oman, but the broader Arabian Peninsula. The site is a large (100m2) and relatively dense (>30 artefacts/m^2) lithic scatter located on a slightly elevated limestone ridge with outcropping chert nodules at its base and flanks. The lithic assemblages produced from these chert nodules exhibit technological variability and weathering heterogeneity, indicating a likely palimpsest of Pleistocene (Middle Palaeolithic) and later Holocene occupation phases that targeted this raw material. By extending the Middle Palaeolithic record of hominin activity into the Huqf area of south-eastern Arabia with the first evidence of Levallois lithic technology, Wadi Baw 4 helps to diversify the picture of Arabian prehistory and promises to make an important contribution to wider debates surrounding the early peopling of the Arabian Peninsula. Work is in progress to establish a robust chronostratigraphic framework for the site through a multi-technique dating approach. In the meantime, this paper will present some preliminary results from the analysis of the Middle Palaeolithic lithic artefacts from the site and briefly consider where they might fit within the wider context of the Arabian Middle Palaeolithic.

Nicholas Sutton is a member of the Australian-led archaeological research mission 'La Trobe Archaeological Research in Oman', directed by Dr. Matthew Meredith-Williams of La Trobe University in Melbourne, Australia. He is currently a PhD candidate at La Trobe University, with a primary research interest in the Palaeolithic archaeological record of the Arabian Peninsula, especially the Sultanate of Oman, and in the role that was played by this region in the wider story of human evolution and global dispersals during the Pleistocene epoch. Prior to commencing his PhD, Sutton worked as an archaeologist in New Zealand for almost a decade.

Jennifer SWERIDA, Selin NUGENT & Robert BRYANT

Arabian Palimpsests: Case studies from the UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Bat and al-Khutm

The UNESCO World Heritage Sites of Bat and al-Khutm are renowned for their Early Bronze Age monuments. Together, they form part of a broad archaeological complex dispersed across the Wadi al-Hijr floodplain, its tributaries, and surrounding hills. While archaeological remains are distributed throughout this landscape, the highest densities of materials—towers, tombs, settlement structures, and related features and artifacts—are found on the hill peaks and slopes lining the wadi valley, including the Bat Settlement Slope, al-Ahilya, and al-Khutm Settlement. These locations preserve dense palimpsest of domestic, monumental, and mortuary materials at or just below the ground surface. Rather than a continual occupation, the remains reflect an intermittent presence and repeated reoccupation from the late fourth through the first millennium BCE. Such complex sets of multi-period surface remains are common at archaeological sites throughout the Hajar region, yet are rarely addressed through an explicit methodological or theoretical framework. Drawing on recent fieldwork by the Bat Archaeological Project, this paper conceptualizes the Bat and al-Khutm landscape as a cultural palimpsest spanning the Bronze and Iron Ages. Methodologically, it examines the challenges posted by superimposed occupational layers of site documentation, spatial analysis, and material characterization. Theoretically, it considers how palimpsest—where each occupational phase overlays and interacts with preceding remains—shapes the formation, use, and perception of the site as a cultural space over time. Results speak to larger interpretive issues of continuity and change in this characteristically Arabian landscape.

Jennifer L. Swerida (PhD) is Assistant Professor in Archaeology of West Asia in the Department of World Archaeology at the University of Leiden since 2024. Since 2019, she has also been a Consulting Fellow in the Near Eastern Section of the Penn Museum at the University of Pennsylvania. Between 2020 and 2024, she served as a Part-Time Assistant Professor of Anthropology in the Department of Anthropology at Kennesaw State University. She was a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of Classical and Near Eastern Archaeology at Bryn Mawr College from 2022 to 2023 and a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Archaeology at American University of Beirut from 2019 to 2020. Earlier, she held a Post-doctoral Fellowship in the Near Eastern Section of the Penn Museum at the University of Pennsylvania from 2018 to 2019. She has been Project Director of the Bat Archaeological Project in Oman since 2019 and Assistant Project Director of the Naxçivan Archaeological Project in the Sharur Province of Azerbaijan since 2015.

Eman TAHA

Bridging Technology and Sustainability: A New Approach to the Study and Preservation of Omani Rock Art

Rock art sites in the Sultanate of Oman represent a vital cultural archive that preserves millennia of human interaction with landscape, belief, and environment. Yet these sites face growing pressures from natural weathering, this paper demonstrates the transformative role of modern technologies in advancing the study of Omani rock art. It details the application of methods such as Reflectance Transformation Imaging (RTI) for enhanced visualization and recording of faint engravings. Furthermore, the use of portable X-ray fluorescence (pXRF) for elemental analysis of pigments (where applicable), researchers can achieve greater accuracy in documentation, detect previously unseen details, and gain deeper insights into the materials, techniques, and context of the ancient artworks. The study also explores new frontiers in conservation science through the application of biopolymers, derived from renewable sources, as a sustainable alternative to traditional chemical consolidates. These eco-friendly materials offer enhanced compatibility with Rock surfaces, reduced chemical degradation, and lower environmental impact, aligning with global sustainability goals in heritage preservation.

Eman Mohammed Taha is Head of the Mounting Department for Exhibition at the Grand Egyptian Museum. She is also a Visiting Lecturer at several institutions and universities specialising in heritage studies and works as a Heritage Conservation Project Coordinator and Manager as well as a Senior Conservation Specialist. She holds a PhD in Conservation of Antiquities from Cairo University and a Diploma in Heritage Sciences from the Egypt-Japan University of Science and Technology (E-JUST). With more than seventeen years of professional experience in cultural heritage conservation and museum management, she has participated in numerous heritage projects both within and outside the Grand Egyptian Museum and has collaborated with several international organisations, including UNESCO and ICCROM. She is a member of the American Research Center in Egypt (ARCE), the International Council of Museums (ICOM), and the International Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works (IIC).

Kimberly WILLIAMS

"Ancestors," "ancestors," and "family" of the Northern Oman Peninsula: Evidence of Continuity, Transition, and the Development of Sacred Spaces

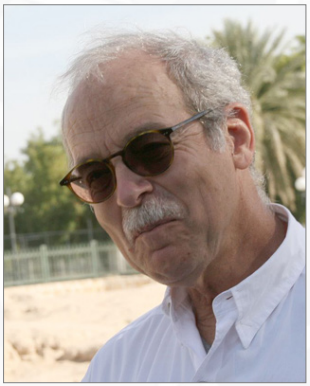
Mortuary monuments and graves have received significant attention by researchers working on the Oman Peninsula and publishing in the *Journal of Oman Studies*. We benefit from early archaeologists who first identified these sites as important evidence of past communities. Gazetteers, excavation reports, geospatial surveys, and later chronometric dating and isotope work have aided in developing a chronology and establish basic categories of behavior. Excavation of these sacred spaces has elucidated aspects of trade relationships, mobility, and landscape creation in addition to teaching us about monumentality and architectural changes over time. All of these data have contributed to inferences about the individuals interred. Some speculate that these people are Ancestors that overlook the landscape, whereas some highlight local familial and ancestor statuses. Where can we go now with modern techniques to explore chemical markers of age, health, and heredity? How can modern technology help to answer those questions that remain? Can the existing data break free from dogma of territory and resource procurement? This paper explores what we know about the mortuary landscapes of the Oman Peninsula, taking a *long durée* approach to understanding how ancient people saw their relationships to one another and the recent and long-ago perished dead. New models for understanding this history will be presented incorporating modern archaeological methods, anthropological theory, ethnographic references, and the rich data amassed by researchers who have published about these phenomena. New directions for scholarship for the forthcoming 50 years of the *Journal of Oman Studies* will be explored.

Kimberly D. Williams is Professor and Chair in the Department of Anthropology at Temple University. She is a mortuary archaeologist with additional training in anthropology, skeletal biology, and genetics. She leads field projects in environs of Dhank, Oman as well as the mortuary archaeological aspects of the site of Dahwa, Oman. She has worked in Oman for the past 18 years. In addition to her own projects, she has collaborated with a number of teams, most notably Joy McCorriston's team (Ohio State University) in Dhofar and the Department of Archaeology at Sultan Qaboos University, where she was a visiting scholar for two years. Most recently, she is the author of *Landscapes of Death: Early Bronze Age Tombs and Mortuary Rituals on the Oman Peninsula*, published by the Ministry of Heritage and Tourism/Archaeopress Publishing in 2023.

Paul A. YULE, Jürgen SCHREIBER, Isaak AL-MUSTAFA & Nasser AYASH

News from the Samad Late Iron Age Cemetery of Mahaliyah, Ash Sharqiyyah North

In 2023, the author's gazetteer of Iron Age sites joined as a source in the Digital Atlas of Ancient Arabia. It provides basic data regarding EIA and late pre-Islamic sites in SE Arabia, such as their location, character, discovery date, and bibliography, which were previously difficult to overview. The number of documented SLIA (Samad Late Iron Age) sites has increased to 114, with 78 in Sharqiyah, 33 in Dakhiliya, and 5 in Muscat governorates. The vast majority are funerary. The largest of these, Mahaliya, has the potential to challenge the dominance of the type-site, Samad/al-Muyassar, as the primary source of information. Artefact classes serve as the method to progress the study of SE Arabian prehistory. Recently, seven stratified 14C determinations of charcoal came to light in the Mahaliya settlement. In combination with previous datings, they bolster the beginning of the period to 300 BCE. Another novelty is the study of imported glazed vessels in some of the graves, which indicates the isolation of this assemblage from centres to the north and south. The Heidelberg project solidifies the typological and spatial definition of the SLIAn (Samad Late Iron Age, near), related to both the SLIA and the PIR. Finally, the different SLIA sites had little contact each other, to judge from the heterogeneity of their find-repertories. This notion is bolstered by the strong individuality of grave structures. While many of the finds were already published, re-examination emended many pottery descriptions. One result is new evidence for a break between EIA and SLIA pottery and other finds.



Paul A. Yule completed his doctorate at the Institute of Fine Arts, New York University and his habilitation at Heidelberg University, where he taught until 2015. Today, he conducts fieldwork in the Sultanate of Oman, and until 2010 in the Yemen at Zafar, as well as in Tigray. Written work focusses on Arabia in the second half of the 1st millennium BCE to the first half of the 1st millennium CE. Other specialities include prehistoric metalwork, Early Iron Age and proto-historic south-eastern Arabia, tomb architecture, as well as cultural resource management. Corresponding member of the German Institute of Archaeology. Editor and referee for different institutes and periodicals. His site gazetteer for the EIA and late pre-Islamic Age is an ongoing project.