



Seminar for Arabian Studies 2016 Paper Abstracts

Session 3: Prehistoric Arabia Part 2. Chair: Derek Kennet

Umm an-Nar Settlement Patterns in North Oman: Dahwa Case Study

Nasser Al-Jahwari, Khaled Douglas & Mohammed Al-Belushi

Sultan Qaboos University, Sultanate of Oman; e-mails: Jahwari@squ.edu.om; khalidd@squ.edu.om; khaleddouglas@hotmail.com; belushi@squ.edu.om

Two new Umm an-Nar settlements (Dahwa North and Dahwa South) have been discovered (2014–2016) in the eastern foothills of al-Hajar Mountains in northern Oman. They are located 24 km to the southwest of the coastal city of Şaḥam. With a distance of c.800 m between them, both settlements were established opposite to each other alongside the wadi system of Wādī al-Sukhen (al-Sakhīn). At Dahwa North, twelve rectangular buildings and one sugar-lump tomb were found. They were distributed over two areas, one upper and one lower. Two buildings were found in the upper area, one of them was built very carefully using good cut stones. In Dahwa South, sixteen rectangular buildings and some sugar lump tombs were found that were distributed irregularly over a natural flat elongated wadi terrace. Intensive remains of copper smelting were found at the site. One of the largest buildings was excavated for two seasons (2014–2016) and produced very interesting material. Typical Indus black slipped jars, a Baluchistan jar, an Incense burner, a metal object and several types of sea shells were found inside the building. ^{14}C analysis revealed that the building was used in the earlier phase of Umm an-Nar period.

Keywords: Dahwa; Umm an-Nar culture; Indus pottery; architecture; copper smelting

References

Cleuziou S. & Tosi M. 2000. Ra's al-Jinz and the prehistoric coastal cultures of the Ja'alan, *Journal of Oman Studies* 11: 19–74.

Mery S. 2007. Indian Pottery in Oman. Pages 199–201 in S. Cleuziou & M. Tosi (eds), *In The Shadow of the Ancestors, The Prehistoric Foundations of the Early Arabian Civilization in Oman*. Muscat: Ministry of Heritage and Culture.

Prange M. 2001. 5000 Jahre Kupfer in Oman. *Metalla* 8: 7–126.

Indus Potters in central Oman during the third millennium B.C. First results of technological and archaeometrical analyses

Sophie Méry,¹ Michele Degli Esposti,² Dennys Frenez³ & Jonathan Mark Kenoyer⁴

¹CNRS, UMR 6566 - CReAHH, Rennes; e-mail: mission@sophie-mery.fr

² Dipartimento di Civiltà e Forme del Sapere, University of Pisa; e-mail: michele.degliesposti@gmail.com; michele.degliesposti@cfs.unipi.it

³ Università di Bologna; e-mail:

⁴ (University of Wisconsin, Madison, USA; e-mail:

During the last two Arabian Seminars new data has been presented on Indus artefacts and pottery found at Salūt by the Italian mission to Oman. The site offers numerous and varied types of data that open new avenues of research on the question of exchange and technology in the north-western Indian Ocean region during the second part of the Oman peninsula Early Bronze Age. We will present the first results of a technical and archaeometrical programme, which demonstrates that we can now clearly distinguish imports from local production of Indus morphological and functional types (such as cooking pots and perforated vessels), as well as local Umm an-Nar types which incorporate Indus stylistic features, including technology and shape. Based on these analytical data we hypothesize the arrival and integration of potters from the Indus region, not necessarily in large numbers, at Salūt, a local Umm an-Nar community in central Oman.

Keywords:

The Bitumen Imports at Tell Abraç: tracing the second millennium BC bitumen industry in southeast Arabia

Thomas Van de Velde¹ & Peter Magee²

¹ Ghent University, Sint Pietersnieuwstraat 35, 9000 Ghent, Belgium; e-mail: thomas.vandevelde@ugent.be

² Bryn Mawr College, 101 N. Merion Ave, Bryn Mawr, PA 19010, USA; e-mail: pmagee@brynmaur.edu

Bitumen was a widely traded material throughout the Arabian Gulf in prehistory and major papers on its movement in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age have been written. In this paper we will present the results of the geochemical work conducted on bitumen from the mid-second millennium BC at Tell Abraç (Emirate of Sharjah, UAE) with the aim of determining the geological origin of the samples.

This study uses Stable Carbon Isotope Analysis ($\delta^{13}\text{C}$) on the asphaltenes fraction and Gas Chromatography – Mass Spectrometry (GC-MS) on the Saturated Hydrocarbon fraction. This dataset from Tell Abraç offers a unique opportunity to understand trade and interaction as no bitumen from this period in south-eastern Arabia has ever been investigated. The mid-second millennium B.C. is one of immense change in the region. It is widely considered that south-eastern Arabia was disengaged from major economic interactions in the Arabian Gulf while Kassite influence in the central Gulf had drawn Bahrain (ancient Dilmun) into closer economic and political ties to Mesopotamia. Artefactual evidence from Tell Abraç suggests the situation was more complex in south-eastern Arabia than previously thought and the results of the bitumen analysis will be presented in light of these.

Keywords: Tell Abraç; Late Bronze Age; bitumen; GC-MS; Carbon Isotope Analysis

References

Van de Velde T., De Vrieze M., Surmont P., Bodé S. & Drechsler P. 2015. A geochemical study on the bitumen from Dosariyah (Saudi-Arabia): tracking Neolithic-period bitumen in the Persian Gulf. *Journal of Archaeological Science*, 57, 248-256.

Van de Velde T. 2015. Black Magic Bitumen - An archaeometrical approach to 5000 years of bitumen imports in the Persian Gulf. PhD thesis, Ghent University.

Excavations at Sarūq al-Hadid's Area 2a, an Iron Age II smelting production site

**Bernardo Villa,¹ Pedro Albarracín,² Fernando Contreras Rodrigo,³ Rashad Mohammed Bukhash³
Sheikha Obaid Al Abbar,⁴ Mansour Boraik Radwan Karim⁵ & Hassan Mohammed Zein⁵**

¹ Archaeology Specialist, Sanisera; e-mail: sanisera@arrakis.es

² Sanisera Archaeology Institute Director; e-mail: sanisera@arrakis.es

³ Department of the Dubai Municipality; e-mail: rmbukhash@dm.gov.ae

⁴ Head of the Antiquities Section of the Dubai Municipality; e-mail: soabbar@dm.gov.ae

⁵ Dubai Municipality; e-mails: mbkarim@dm.gov.ae; hmzein@dm.gov.ae

Previous archaeological missions at Sarūq al-Hadid have unveiled its importance as an inland settlement in the al-Rub' al-Khālī, midway in between the mountains and the coast. The landscape is characterized by a field of aeolian dunes, some of which have been maintained for millennia due to the presence of slag, which made possible the identification of the site in the middle of the desert. The afore-mentioned expeditions recovered finds, apart from the slag, that attest for the production of metal artefacts such as iron swords, numerous arrowheads, copper tools and gold jewellery amongst others. As of January 2015, the Sanisera Archaeology Institute was authorized by the Dubai Municipality to carry out excavations at Sarūq al-Hadid's site 2A in order to find more evidence that would shed light on aspects of metal production; as well as the subsistence and inter-regional relations of the people that used this location. Of an excavated area of around 1300 square metres, this paper will reflect the data obtained from the Sanisera expedition seasons 1 (January to May 2015) and 2 (November 2015 to May 2016).

Keywords: metal production; furnaces; Iron Age II; copper snakes; anthropomorphic figurines

References

Casana J., Herrmann J.T. & Qandil H.S. 2009. Settlement history in the eastern Rub' al-Khali: preliminary report of the Dubai Desert survey (2006–2007). *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 20: 30–45.

Herrmann J.T. 2013. Three dimensional mapping of Archaeology and sedimentary deposits with ground penetrating radar at Saruq al-Hadeed, Dubai, United Arab Emirates. *Archaeological Prospection* 20: 189–203.

Herrmann J.T., Casana J. & Qandil H.S. 2012. A sequence of inland desert settlement in the Oman Peninsula. 2008-2009 Excavations at Saruq al-Hadid, Dubai, United Arab Emirates, *Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy* 23: 50–69.