



Seminar for Arabian Studies 2016 Paper Abstracts

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Renewed excavations at Salūt (Central Oman): the discovery of the main Iron Age settlement

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For more than ten years between 2004 and 2015 the Italian Mission To Oman (IMTO) has been investigating the Iron Age 'fort' of Salūt in central Oman, revealing its outstanding architecture and material culture, and defining its main chronology. After the completion of the restoration programme at the site, and after the conclusion of the excavations at the nearby Early Bronze Age tower ST1, a new project of archaeological research was started in late 2015 that led to the discovery of the outstanding Iron Age settlement directly associated with the fort.

The sites comprise a complex terrace system occupying the whole hill on which the fort sits, and a lower part extending on the surrounding plain. Following the local designation of 'Husn' Salūt for the excavated fort, the settlement was named as 'Qaryat' Salūt. Its extension and the monumentality of at least some of the buildings qualify the site, especially when considered together with the 'Husn', as one of the most impressive sites for its period in southeast Arabia.

The first field work season revealed the wide extension of the site and already a considerable portion of its architecture; clear ancient surfaces and floors were discovered where deeper test trenches were excavated, and abundant archaeological material was collected and catalogued. An outline of the first results will be presented here, for it is a site that promises to allow an in-depth study of settlement layout and internal organization.

Keywords: Iron Age; southeast Arabia; settlement layout; material culture; Central Oman

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New Excavations in the Sultanate of Oman

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During the 1980s the German Mining Museum together with the Ministry of Heritage and Culture conducted salvage excavations at al-Akhḍar in central Oman. In addition, an accidental find by children of a communal tomb in 1984 at al-Wāsiṭ yielded numerous prehistoric artefacts, mostly weapons and stone vessels. The *wali* of Buraimī submitted this large collection to the Department of Antiquities. In 1989 Gerd Weisgerber conducted a *post-hoc* excavation of the tomb site, which yielded further numerous artefacts.

Finds from the Lizq fort L1, al-Moyassar, Samad al-Shān and the 'Ibrī/Selme hoard illuminated the pottery and artefactual spectrum of the EIA in central Oman, but it took far longer to advance the aforementioned two fieldwork projects to publication maturity. By the mid-1980s archaeologists intuitively had recognised the main outlines of the Early Iron Age and Wadi Suq find assemblages.

The excavation at Samad al-Shan served to extract and define the Late Iron Age find classification from the general body of the Iron Age. In 1989 Gerd identified a late Wadi Suq find contexts, those from Nizwā grave N1985 and al-Wāsiṭ tomb W1. The excavated pre-Islamic multi-period cemetery at al-Akhḍar and the Late Bronze Age collective tomb, al-Wāsiṭ W1 are reviewed in this talk. These sites update and verify our knowledge of certain contexts, find inventories and periods.

Keywords:

From Satellite to Sand: integrating remote sensing and field survey in the eastern Ḥaḍramawt and al-Bayḍā' regions of Yemen

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Prolonged economic and political instability in Yemen and its recent descent into civil war have made archaeological fieldwork in the country impossible. In order to overcome this problematic situation, new approaches are necessary and remote sensing techniques offer a distinct opportunity to map the archaeological landscapes of the country in spite of continued debate of the validity of these forms of datasets.

This paper will explore how data gathered from satellite and historical aerial imagery by the current Endangered Archaeology project may be combined with the results of field surveys to shed light on the interpretation of archaeological sites and on landscape change. The study will focus on case studies in the eastern Ḥaḍramawt and al-Bayḍā' area, both regions having been subject to Yemeni-

French field surveys in the late 1990s and early 2000s, and additionally covered by non-archaeological aerial reconnaissance in the 1950s.

From a methodological viewpoint, this paper will first test whether the integration of remote sensing and fieldwork data can lead to meaningful progress in the understanding of Yemen's archaeological landscapes. Secondly, the analysis of historical aerial photographs and more recent satellite imagery will be broadly used to assess landscape change and heritage management issues in these regions.

Keywords: Remote sensing; aerial archaeology; field survey; Ḥaḍramawt; al-Bayḍā'; Yemen

The Discovery of a new Iron Age ritual complex in central Oman: recent excavations near Adam

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Recent excavations near Ādam (Oman) yielded new data about the margins of the desert in central Oman during the early and late Iron Age periods. After nine campaigns of excavations and surveys in the area of Ādam, several graves were identified during the surveys and two graveyards were excavated. It thus seems that the area was not highly occupied during this period, contrary to the situation observed in the major site of Salūt, only 45 km to the northwest. However, the discovery of an enigmatic Iron Age site near Ādam allows us to reconsider this first impression. This site consists of a group of structures located on the eastern tip of Jabal Mudhmar (Jabal Maḍmār), near Wādī Ḥalfayn. The main stone building contains unique copper weapons (real size, reduced models and miniatures) including arrows, bows, quivers and daggers that could be used for ritual purposes. One other building was excavated, and the micro-regional topography and survey brought other data about the function of the site. From its geographic location and its unusual content, the site could have several functions: a meeting place linked to social, political or religious use, or a relay on the ancient road between Ādam and Sinaw.

Keywords:
