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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

NEOM, a land for the future of Arabian archeology: surveys, excavations and heritage management in North-West Arabia

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Abstract

NEOM represents a visionary, progressive and ambitious innovative city of the future situated in the northwestern reaches of Saudi Arabia, bordered by the Gulf of Aqaba & the Red Sea. Spanning a vast area of 26,500 km².

The NEOM Heritage Department monitored extensive surveys on land and at sea (Lecture 1&2). To complement our efforts, we harnessed Machine Learning techniques and centralized platform, leveraging geo-databases (utilizing ESRI ArcGispro) (3&4). A Saudi-Japanese team established connection between the Neolithic culture of Northern Hejaz and the Fertile Crescent in Masyoon & Wadi Sharma 1 (7). A Saudi-French team excavating Al-Bad' prompting a reevaluation of the Levant to Mediterranean connection in the Bronze Age (8). A joint Saudi-Austrian team, brought to light mining activities & new sources of copper oxides from the Bronze Age (9). Over 500 rock art and inscription (Safaitic, Thamudic, Nabatean, Arabic scripts) across the Hisma desert region shed light on the pre-Islamic Arabic script (10).

Several new excavations recently start to enhance our comprehension of the region's history : at Magna it yielded an Abbasid village (5), in Al-Bad' it focus on a significant Nabataean necropolis with monumental tombs and a Nabatean-Roman fort dating from the 1st to 3rd centuries AD (6). With the NEOM boundary, a comprehensive restoration initiative is underway, for sites and various Ottoman and early Saudi villages (11&12).

Our collective efforts unveiled significant new insights into North Western Arabia, ranging from Paleolithic to the Ottoman period. Previously, scarcely represented on archaeological maps, our findings contribute valuable knowledge for future research. It confirms the region's pivotal role and its historical connections with the Mediterranean, Jordan, and Central Arabia. It underscores NEOM's commitment to preserve historical and intangible heritage (13), as well as our strong partnership with the Heritage Commission of the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

Keywords

ARABIA, NEOM, ARCHAEOLOGY, UNPUBLISHED, MULTI-PERIODS

Program

1. Large scale archaeological land surveys of NEOM, North-West Arabia, phases I and II.

- authors : Matthew Jameson (Chronicle Heritage), Pierre Simeon (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Isabel Bernardes (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Julian Jansen van Rensburg (Chronicle Heritage), Greg Williams (Chronicle Heritage), Katherine Crawford (Chronicle Heritage), Michael Harrower (Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore)

2. Large scale archaeological Maritime surveys of NEOM Red Sea and Gulf of Aqaba phase I and II.

- authors : Chiara Zazzaro (Professor, Università di Napoli "L'Orientale"), Jamal Omar (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Pierre Simeon (NEOM Heritage Department, Saudi Arabia), Julian Jansen van Rensburg (Chronicle Heritage), Mahdi Khsaif Alqarni, Faris Hamzi (Heritage Commission, Saudi Arabia), Dana Carris (Chronicle Heritage)

3. Optimizing archaeological surveys in Neom (or North Eastern Arabia) with machine learning: Improved stone feature detection using MaskR-CNN and ArcGIS Pro.

- authors : Isabel Bernardes (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Katherine Crawford (Chronicle Heritage), Michael Mirro (Chronicle Heritage), Michael Harrower (Professor, Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore), Pierre Simeon (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Steve Karacic (Chronicle Heritage)

4. Next-generation archaeological databases: Leveraging AI, 3D visualization, and data analytics for Neom Heritage Department

- authors : Isabel Bernardes (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Eslam Rizk (GIS manager), Mohammed Ismael (Speridian), Kotibabu Bathula (Speridian)

5. Assessing the Archaeological Potential of Magna along the Gulf of Aqaba : Surveys & Excavations Preliminary Results

- authors : Cyril Driard (Éveha International), Samara Broglia de Moura (Éveha International), Carole Grellier-Chevalier (Éveha International), Pierre Simeon (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Jonathan Baines (Independent researcher), Sandrine Bertgeith (Independent researcher), Yvon Dreano (Éveha International), Caroline Durand (Independent researcher), Nicolas Garnier (Laboratoire Nicolas Garnier), Chloé Girardi (Éveha International), Clément Joseph (Éveha International), Alexandre Longelin (Independent researcher), Éva Noyer (Éveha International), Christelle Sanchez (Éveha International) and Arnaud Watel (Éveha International).

6. Al-Bad': first results from the Nabatean monumental tomb and the Roman Fort excavations

- authors : Brahim M'Barek (Éveha International), Carole Grellier-Chevalier(Éveha International), Elodie Lassalle (Éveha International), Pierre Simeon (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Jamal Omar (NEOM Heritage Department, Sharma, Saudi Arabia), Jonathan Baines (Independent researcher), Louise Bigot (Independent researcher), Agathe Desmars (Independent researcher), Caroline Durand(Independent researcher), Alexandre Longelin (Independent researcher), Éva Noyer (Éveha International), Elisa Pleuger(Éveha International), Asma Radhouani (Independent researcher), Lucie Robert (Independent researcher), Christelle Sanchez(Eveha International), Thibaut Vernat (Éveha International)

7. Masyoon and Wadi Sharma 1: Incorporating Neolithic Northern Hijaz into the Fertile Crescent.

- author : Sumio Fujii (Professor, Institute for the Study of Ancient Civilizations and Cultural Resources, Kanazawa University, Japan)

8. Synthese of Bronze age in the Region

- authors : Charloux Guillaume (CNRS UMR 8167), AlTarib Abdulillah (Tabuk, Heritage Commission, Saudi Arabia)

9. New Mining Reconnaissance in the Hinterland of 'Aynuna, Tabuk, Autumn 2024.

- authors : Nima Nezafati (Deutsches Bergbau-Museum, Bochum Leibniz-Forschungsmuseum für Georessourcen), Marta Lucian (University of Vienna, Dept. of Prehistoric and Historical Archaeology), Ahmed Abualhassan (Heritage Commission of the Ministry of Culture, Saudi Arabia)

10. Ancient and early Islamic rock inscriptions of the ?ism? plateau.

- authors : Risa Tokunaga (Ryadh, Heritage Commission, Saudi Arabia), Abdulmohsen Bin Monef (Ryadh, Heritage Commission Saudi Arabia), Abdulelah Altarib (Tabuk, Heritage Commission, Saudi Arabia)

11. Preserving Heritage in NEOM: A New Strategy for Archaeological Conservation in Al-Bad', Al-Aqan Village, and Magna.

- authors : Garcia Elise (RC Heritage), Cristofoli Francois (RC Heritage), Gabay Max Arthur (Lefèvre Architectes), Leuckx Simon (Lefèvre Architectes), Ricca Simon (RC heritage), Georgios Michail (NEOM Heritage Department)

12. Revitalizing archaeological assets in NEOM Region: Design of the Al-Muwayleh archaeological cluster

- authors : Sebastien Moriset (CRATerre), David Gandrea (CRATerre), Maria Bolognesi (CRATerre), Federico Garcia Martinez (CRATerre), Paola Penet (CRATerrre), Alexandre Varet (CRATerre), Georgios Michael (NEOM Heritage Department, Saudi Arabia)

13. Intergenerational Wisdom and the Echoes of Ancestral Bonds: Exploring the Legacies of Intangible Cultural Heritage in NEOM

- authors : Sultan Al Saleh (Saudi Heritage Preservation Society, Abdulelah Al Tokhais (Saudi Heritage Preservation Society), and Amina Samy (NEOM Heritage Department).

Session

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Type of paper

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