



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The HERDS in Oman Project: Inland Neolithic settlement and mobility in north-central Oman

PROCTOR L. ¹, MAIORANO M. ²*

¹ Utah State University, Logan, United States

² Czech Academy of Sciences, Prague, Czechia

*Corresponding author

Abstract

Investigations of Neolithic communities in the southeastern Arabian interior have been limited compared to coastal areas due to a lack of identified sites with secure dating and preserved, stratified deposits, and a research emphasis on later periods. The identification and dating of a substantial, preserved Neolithic site in the vicinity of Al-Khashbah (?????), Oman is providing new insights into inland communities during the Middle and Late Neolithic periods. The KHS-A site is located on a relict alluvial terrace of the Wadi Samad in north-central Oman. Results from three initial field campaigns have identified multiple phases of intact fireplaces and structures spread across 3600 sq. metres. Radiocarbon dating suggests repeated occupations dating to the middle–late sixth and early fourth millennia BC. Lithic remains from the site suggest several unique characteristics that differ from coastal sites, while malacological and anthracological data confirm long-distance connections with the coast. We argue that the site represents an important “persistent places” where mobile Neolithic peoples returned to repeatedly over centennial timescales to camp, exploit lithic outcrops, graze domestic animals, and/or hunt. Only through further exploration of inland Neolithic sites will it be possible to understand the full breadth of Neolithic lifeways in southeastern Arabia.

Keywords

Neolithic, Resilience, pastoralism, lithics, archaeobotany

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