



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Death, burial, and marking the landscape: Reanalysis of the collective burials of northwest Saudi Arabia

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## Abstract

Northwest Saudi Arabia is known for its Bronze Age funerary landscape, with the region dominated by thousands of monumental tombs. However, a series of older burial structures dating from the 5th-4th millennia BCE, have been identified across the landscape. Excavations within these have revealed multiple individuals, often in-excess of 10, with the remains of adults and children recovered. Previous excavations of two heavily looted burial structures suggested that these tombs were used over centuries and were used as markers of territoriality, to claim ownership over long used domestic sites. However, recent analysis as part of the Prehistoric AlUla and Khaybar Excavation Project (The University of Sydney) suggests that these tombs are significantly more complex. The excavation of two additional, undisturbed, funerary structures indicate that these may have been secondary burials, with the deceased initially interred somewhere else before being reburied during a single depositional event. This connection between the deceased and the structures of previous generations finds precedent in a series of burials at Neolithic mustatil sites, suggesting a longer tradition of interring the dead within earlier features.

## Keywords

Collective Burials, Northwest Saudi Arabia, Neolithic, Secondary Burials

## Session

6. Life and death: Human behaviour and practices

## Workshop

A16178MP - Burial studies on the protohistoric Arabian Peninsula: current trends and perspective for future investigation

## Type of paper

Oral presentation