



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Lost in Transition: Tracking the Final PaleolithicNeolithic passage through the assemblages of South-Central Oman (85005500 BCE)

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Abstract

The Early Holocene human occupation of Southern Arabia presents a complex and challenging archaeological landscape. Preservation issues, worsened by shifting climates and deflation have left many archaeological sites with scant stratigraphy and predominantly surface-level finds. Organic remains are rare, with lithic artifacts and shells standing as the primary materials for reconstructing prehistoric periods. Lithic analysis has been critical in tracing technological developments and cultural transmission across time and space in Southern Arabia. Despite the integration of multidisciplinary approaches—ranging from geomorphology to bioarchaeology—several gaps remain in our understanding of key prehistoric periods. One such enigmatic phase is the 7th millennium BCE, a poorly documented era likely holding the key to understanding the transition from the Final Palaeolithic to the Neolithic. This presentation explores both the known and the recently uncovered data from South-Central Oman, focusing on the assemblages of desert sites near Maitan, the rock shelter at Wadi Sayy, and the Natif Cave along the Dhofar coast. By synthesizing these findings with data from neighbouring regions such as Yemen, Southern Saudi Arabia, and the UAE, this study aims to shed new light on the elusive Final Palaeolithic–Neolithic passage in Arabia and its broader implications for the region's prehistory.

Keywords

Early Holocene, Transition, Neolithic, Final Paleolithic, Southern Arabia

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