



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Transformation of mortuary landscape in Southeast Arabian mountain region. A case study of the UNESCO site of Al-Ayn (Sultanate of Oman) based on the recent archaeological surveys

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## Abstract

The transformation of the Southeast Arabian mountain region's mortuary landscape has not been meticulously investigated. The exploration of these regions can improve the understanding of the mortuary landscape in Southeast Arabia. In 2024, to clarify the detailed transformation of the mortuary landscape, we surveyed the entire boundary of the UNESCO site of Al-Ayn in a valley on the southern foot of the Al-Hajar Mountains. The site is characterised by the well-preserved Early Bronze Age cairn tombs on which the past investigations have only focused since the 1970s. However, the remainder of the UNESCO boundary has escaped from the detailed surveys. As a result of our survey, we registered 111 tombs from the Early Bronze Age to the Islamic period. The discovery includes the foundation remains of cairns, the secondary use of the tombs for mortuary and non-mortuary purposes, the large Iron Age cluster cemetery, and several tombs from the Middle Bronze Age and Islamic period. The shift of the tomb location from higher visible ridges to lower flat terrains was also observed. Such shifts indicate the transformation of the mortuary landscape, indicating the apt use of limited land reflecting the changing mortuary ideology.

## Keywords

Southeast Arabia, Cemetery, Landscape, Survey, GIS

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