

Preliminary Analyses of the Bronze Age and Post-Bronze Age Mortuary Monuments at the Dahwa Sites, North Batinah Coast, Sultanate of Oman*

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Allo stato attuale disponiamo di scarse informazioni circa la distribuzione e la cronologia delle sepolture preistoriche sulla costa settentrionale della regione di al-Batina nel Sultanato dell'Oman. Il presente contributo è incentrato sull'indagine preliminare del locale complesso di Dahwa con attenzione preminente ai monumenti funerari, anche in assenza di coeve testimonianze insediative. Abbiamo in particolare documentato e avviato lo scavo di due tombe del periodo Umm an-Nar (2700-2000 a.C.), e mappato e scavato alcune sepolture di epoca Wadi Suq (2000-1500 a.C.) e post-Bronzo (e.g. Età del Ferro, periodi pre-islamico e islamico) che ri-occuparono il sito Dahwa 1 (DH1).

INTRODUCTION

The Dahwa sites (e.g., DH1, DH5, DH6, DH7, DH8), located approximately 24 km Southwest from Saham (Fig. 1), comprise an important Umm an-Nar period (2700-2000 BCE) settlement. The remains of these settlements include at least 61 buildings and two Umm an-Nar circular tombs. Excavations at DH1 (Al-Jahwari et al. 2018; Al-Jahwari, Douglas, Williams forthcoming; Douglas et al. forthcoming; Williams et al. forthcoming) demonstrate that this settlement hosted significant copper smelting activities and likely acted as a regional trade center connecting the coast and sites further inland. Substantial amounts of Indus ceramics found both on the surface and in closed settlement contexts speak to the intensive nature of this trade activity.

In the present paper, we document the distribution of mortuary structures at this site and report the findings of tomb excavations conducted between 2015 and 2017. Significant reuse of the site for the construction of tombs occurred after the Umm an-Nar period, but the site was not reinhabited until the Islamic Period. This work contributes new information about pattern of use and reuse of an Umm an-Nar Period site for the construction of later mortuary monuments, provides architectural information about tombs that are relatively poorly described elsewhere in the literature, and in some cases, provides information about the mortuary goods and burial ritual evident in these monuments.

METHODOLOGY AND DOCUMENTATION

A systematic survey of the entirety of the Dahwa sites (Fig. 2) was conducted between January and May 2016. Buildings, tombs, graves, and other features of interest (e.g.,

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