

Publication**A new approach to Central Omani prehistory****JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)****ID** 101787**Author(s)** Jagher, Reto; Pümpin, Christine**Author(s) at UniBasel** [Jagher, Reto](#) ; [Pümpin, Christine](#) ;**Year** 2010**Year: comment** 2010**Title** A new approach to Central Omani prehistory**Journal** Proceedings of the Seminar for Arabian Studies**Volume** 40**Pages / Article-Number** 145-160

The Central Oman Palaeolithic Survey (COPS), initiated by the Institute for Prehistory and Archaeological Science (IPAS), University of Basel (Switzerland), and carried out in the Huqf – Al Haushi area (Central Oman) in 2007 & 2008 focused on the earliest human occupation in the Southern Arabian Peninsula. 1'445 locations were surveyed and 816 archaeological sites recorded. Amongst them 609 held flint artefacts showing ample evidence of a significant and diversified prehistoric legacy.

Today, it can be stated that the rich cultural history known from the Levant during the Pleistocene shows no evident exchange with its southern neighbours. This is in sharp contrast with paleozoological observations, demonstrating a steady replacement across the Arabian subcontinent from the south to the north and vice versa, during the same times. Plaeoclimatic data from Oman clearly show the presence of several periods with increased rainfall during the last 400'000 years, easing the passage for animals and humans across the Arabian Peninsula.

Against expectations, people obviously did not follow these migrations. The COPS survey demonstrated a strong cultural boundary, separating southern and northern Arabia, over a long period. This separation can not be explained by natural constraints. At least during the later Pleistocene, Southern Arabia witnessed an independent cultural history, with no evident influence from outside. Several techno-cultural lithic entities with characteristic tool-sets endemic to the southern part of the subcontinent were observed by the COPS survey. Comparable traditions in stone tool technology are at that time completely unknown from the Levant.

Furthermore, the COPS fieldwork revealed an important settlement activity in the southern part of the Huqf during the late prehistory (i.e. the Bronze- and Iron Age), a surprising discovery, as they date from a period of deteriorating climate, with increased aridity, when humans withdrew to presently inhabited areas.

Publisher Brepols**ISSN/ISBN** 0308-8421**edoc-URL** <http://edoc.unibas.ch/dok/A5252576>**Full Text on edoc** No;