



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Uncovering Pleistocene population dynamics and behaviour of hunter-gatherers in the Jordan Valley, Jordan.

Third-party funded project

Project title Uncovering Pleistocene population dynamics and behaviour of hunter-gatherers in the Jordan Valley, Jordan.

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Umweltwissenschaften / Urgeschichte (Le Tensorer)

Department

Departement Umweltwissenschaften

Project start 01.06.2022

Probable end 31.12.2022

Status Completed

The proposed research will investigate an important period in human evolution in an area of at the crossroad of Africa and Eurasia in the Jordan Valley, which yielded, during surface surveys undertaken between 2014 and 2018, well conserved archaeological material associated with the end of the Lower and Middle Palaeolithic. The location of Jordan is an exceptional place to study human behavioural evolution and population dynamics due to its diversified topography, microclimate, and stone raw materials. The goal of this research is to establish a chrono-climatic and culturally framed hominin behavioural record from Jordan, adding to the growing body of data in the Levant that allows the evaluation of local paths of technological evolution and the introduction of features from adjoining regions. This in turn will allow a wider understanding of more global questions concerning population movements from Africa to Levant and cultural shifts or adaptations. This proposal challenges two objectives: firstly, whether climatic conditions influence the presence or absence of hominin populations in the Jordan Valley and secondly if the changing character of lithic technology coupled with chronological and geoarchaeological evidence can offer information with which to test the hypotheses on local cultural stability and influences from outlying regions. The research questions will be addressed with target test-pits on Zamliya-Munqiah-Jaffin sites (associated with Early and Middle Palaeolithic) and further surveying of this region and Tabaqa area (associated with the Yabrudian). The project includes one field season of test excavations and surveys as well as collection and analysis of set of archaeological, environmental and chronological proxies.

Research Brief

This Jordan Valley project is aimed at excavating, dating, and studying sites identified from lithic surface material related to the end of Lower and Early and Middle Palaeolithic. It aims to establish a chrono-cultural behavioral record and will test whether climatic conditions influence hominin population settlement in the Jordan Valley. This region at the crossroad of Africa and Eurasia is an exceptional place to study human behavioral evolution and population dynamics during the Middle Pleistocene whilst contributing to the discussion of 'out-of-Africa' human dispersal and adaptation in the Levant.

Financed by

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