



Universität
Basel

Research Project

Le Paléolithique d'El Kowm (Syrie)

Third-party funded project

Project title Le Paléolithique d'El Kowm (Syrie)

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Umweltwissenschaften / Integrative Prähistorische und Naturwissenschaftliche Archäologie (IPNA Schünemann)

Department

Project Website <http://elkowm.unibas.ch/>

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Probable end 31.03.2010

Status Completed

The El Kowm area (central Syria) can be considered as a region of reference for early Prehistory in the Near East. The presence of permanent water sources in the heart of the arid steppe favored continuous occupations since the beginning of the Quaternary.

Since 1997, the Institute for Prehistory and Archaeological Science of the University of Basel has undertaken a complete interdisciplinary research program of this major site of Hummal under the direction of Prof. Dr. J.-M Le Tensorer associated with the Directorate General of Antiquities and Museums of Syria. The site of Hummal is a prominent mound at an artesian spring built out of the sediments which piled up during the Quaternary. The impressive stratigraphy –twenty meters high- comprises more than 25 geological units preserving a great number of archaeological levels. It covers an extremely long period of time ranging from the Oldest Paleolithic (Oldowan) to Upper Paleolithic (Aurignacian) over more than a million years. Therefore, it is the longest and most important cultural sequence known as yet in an arid landscape in the Middle East.

The outstanding feature of the Mousterian period (around 150,000 to 80,000 years ago) consists in the remains of a giant camel. The animal measured over 3 meters at shoulder-height. Roughly speaking, it was bigger than the modern camel by 1,5 to 1,75 time.

In the same layers, beside the large amount of flint tools, we also found 3 human remains at Hummal. For the moment, the scanty evidence does not allow a clear determination of the species (Neanderthal or archaic Homo sapiens).

Moreover, the archaeological results are of outstanding importance. The study of transitional cultures such as Yabrudian and Hummalian between Old Paleolithic and Middle Paleolithic might certainly provide an answer to one of the most important question into which scientists have been looking for a certain time: the origins of Modern Man.

Financed by

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Add publication

Published results

100717, Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie; Jagher, Reto; Rentzel, Philippe; Hauck, Thomas; Ismail-Meyer, Kristin; Puempin, Christine; Wojtczak, Dorota, Long-term site formation processes at the natural springs Nadaouiye and Hummal in the El Kowm oasis, Central Syria, 0883-6353, Geoarchaeology, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

102475, Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie; Muhesen, Sultan; Schmid, Peter, Le Paléolithique de Hummal à El Kowm : premier bilan des fouilles syro-suisse 1999-2008, Chronique Archéologique en Syrie, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

102496, Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie; Schmid, Peter, Out of Africa : über die frühesten Auswanderer und die Wurzeln unserer Kultur : on the earliest emigrants and the roots of human culture, Publication: Other Publications (Forschungsberichte o. ä.)

102510, Schmid, Peter; Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie, Out of Africa, 0042-5672, Vierteljahrsschrift der Naturforschenden Gesellschaft in Zürich, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

102578, Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie, Le Paléolithique ancien de Syrie et l'importance du Golan comme voie de passage lors de l'expansion des premiers hommes hors d'Afrique, Publication: ConferencePaper (Artikel, die in Tagungsbänden erschienen sind)

102582, Hauck, Thomas; Wojtczak, Dorota; Wegmüller, Fabio; Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie, Variation in lower and middle palaeolithic land use strategies in the Syrian desert steppe : the example of Hummal (El Kowm area), 3-935751-00-1 (Vol. 1) ; 3-935751-01-X (Vol. 2) ; 978-3-935751-10-0 (Vol. 3), Settlement dynamics of the middle paleolithic and middle stone age, Publication: Book Item (Buchkap., Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden etc.)

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275815, Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie; Muhesen, Sultan; Jagher, Reto, Paleolithic settlement dynamics in the El Kowm Area (Central Syria), 3-935751-00-1 (Vol. 1) ; 3-935751-01-X (Vol. 2) ; 978-3-935751-10-0 (Vol. 3), Settlement dynamics of the middle paleolithic and middle stone age, Publication: Book Item (Buchkap., Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden etc.)

275870, Leuzinger, Urs; Jagher, Reto, Eldorado für Faustkeilforscher, 0176-8522, Archäologie in Deutschland, Publication: JournalArticle (Originalarbeit in einer wissenschaftlichen Zeitschrift)

Add documents

Specify cooperation partners

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
102388	Le Tensorer, Jean-Marie	Jammous, Bassam, Director General	Direction Générale des Antiquités et des Musées	01.05.2007	31.12.2014