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GIS system the data taken in the field up to this point, and integrating them with data that are constantly acquired by remote sensing procedures.

The overview of the geo-archaeological heritage would lend itself to programming each step of the research, emphasizing and protecting the most important emerging information. Referring to raw material and softstone quarries present in the investigated context, studies have not yet been undertaken in order to identify them precisely, but it would be desirable to plan an explorative investigation during further operations in order to detect the effective presence of raw material sources possibly matching with softstones which came to light from WBK1.

The same goes for the metal sources, distant from the site WBK1 too. Currently the area of Wādī Banī Ḥālid, rich in ophiolitic resources, does not present studies of this sector. However the finding *in situ* of metal items suggests that the research into metal resources can be deepened, whether this resource is local or imported.

As regards to the realization of the geo-archaeological map, concerning the integrated management of a balanced approach to archaeology and tourism, the northern Šarqīyah governorate is well suited to such an approach. The coastal area, and its hinterland, represent diversified archaeological landscapes with multiple facets and perspectives, as well as being beautiful natural spaces.

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Review of 3rd mill. BCE graves in HD-7, HD-10 and HD-15 (Ra’s al-Hadd, Sultanate of Oman)

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Since the 1980s, thanks to the survey carried out by the British team headed by Julian Reade, several groups of cairns (HD-7 and HD-10) have been known at Ra’s al-Hadd, located on the margin of the rocky platform which borders to the west and south the main Hafit site of HD-6. Each group of tombs has been given a code. Between 1997 and 2000, Sandro Salvatori and his team investigated some of the cairns from HD 10-3, HD 10-4, HD 10-2 and HD 7-3,

one for each group. The team chose the cairns which were apparently more preserved and so richer in information.¹ Between January and March 2007, five cairns of the group HD 7-3 were investigated by Olivia Munoz, Guillaume Seguin and their team because of their proximity to the construction of a new building for the Omani Security Services.

Recent expansion of the modern village is endangering the area with new buildings, requiring more detailed fieldwork.



Figure 1 GIS map by Francesca Barchiesi.

In Salvatori’s article there is a map of the Ra’s al-Hadd southern beach with site locations (including the tombs), resumed and partially modified in Munoz’s excavation report. We realized that, while there is information on the cairns excavated by the aforementioned researchers, there was no documentation regarding the others. Therefore, we decided to achieve a complete documentation with images and 3D models of the structures so far identified. For each feature GPS points were acquired with two kinds of hardware: a smartphone application (MotionX GPS for iPhone) and GPS Garmin. We noticed some discrepancies between the number and the position of the structures that we identified in this campaign and the structures marked in the maps of Salvatori and Munoz. We created a new map in a GIS with several images from Google Earth and other digital maps, locating features according to visibility and GPS points. It would be desirable, in future, to re-position all the tombs with a more precise instrument (such as a differential GPS) in order to obtain a new updated and precise map.

Since only the excavated tombs have been labelled, we gave a label also to the others in progressive order.

Concerning the characters and the state of preservation of the cairns, as already pointed out in Munoz’s report, the HD 7-3 group shows a significant difference compared to the

¹ The state of conservation is very variable; some tombs still have a clearly visible heap of stones, for others only some alignment is recognizable and little else.

others:² the burials have an external wall made up with a facing of worked white slabs in sandy conglomerate coming from the coastal area of Ra's al-Jinz. We recognized this type of external cover from graves of other groups close to HD 7-3: HD 7-2.1, HD 7-12.1, HD 7-12.2, HD 7-12.3, HD 7-12.4, HD 15-1.1, HD 15-1.2, HD 15-1.3, HD 15-1.4, HD 15-1.5, HD 15-2.1, HD 15-2.2, HD 15-2.3, HD 7-6.1, HD 7-6.2, HD 7-6.3, HD 7-6.4, HD 7-6.5 and other ambiguous structures in HD 15-1 group. Most of the tombs have a mixed wall made up of the sandy conglomerate and local rock blocks.

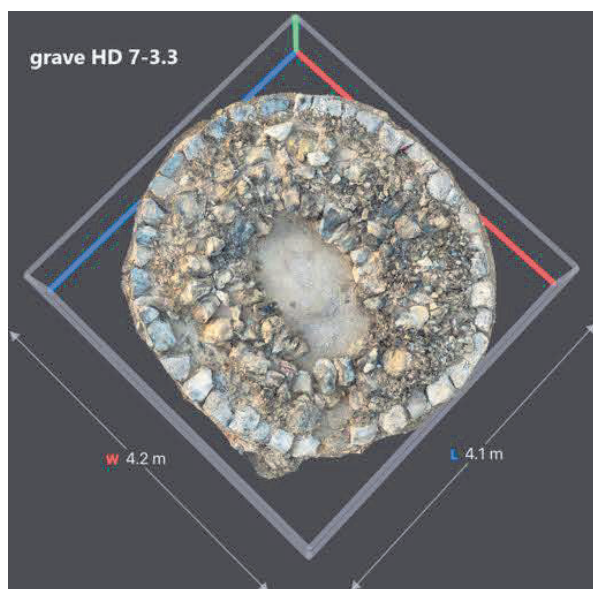


Figure 2 Lidar model by Lorenzo Bonazzi.

From Salvatori's excavation thousands of beads, a bronze knife, two shark tooth pendants, a *Pinctada* ring, a conus bracelet plate and two fragments of a bronze object (maybe a bracelet) have been collected. All these objects are consistent with a dating to the beginnings of the 3rd millennium BCE (Hafit period). The material collected by Munoz³ seems to belong to the end of the 3rd millennium BCE, coinciding with the practice of cremation and the architectural method (worked white slabs of the external wall) for the Umm an-Nar period. This group of cairns is more probably related to the HD-5 site, located on the coast very close to terrace with HD-7 burials, dated to the second half of the 3rd millennium BCE. This detail leads us to consider the hypothesis that the graves with a white or mixed external face may be contextual to the settlement of HD-5 dating to the Umm an-Nar phase or to an intermediate phase within the first half of the 2nd millennium BCE.

Unfortunately, the imminent risk of urban growth in the area means there is a need to excavate more graves, which is also needed to better understand the relationship between

² Usually, the burials have this kind of structure: a homogeneous coverage made of small limestone boulders. The proper cairn structure consists of a thick inner wall, made up as a double-faced limestone masonry with sometimes an entrance dromos to the east. The inner wall is surrounded by bigger stone slabs.

³ Various lithic industry, metal hooks, beads, conus, a metal razor, sharks' teeth, a softstone vessel and a lid with dot-in-circle motifs, copper and mother-of-pearl rings, shell pendants and pottery.

the two types of tombs. Lastly, we would like to improve the documentation of the structures by taking advantage of the use of the drone or lidar on the iPad⁴ devoted to a valorisation of the site.

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- ⁴ We tried lidar on the iPad Pro, with good results for some cairns of the HD 7-3 group.