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# The monumental landscape of the Bronze Age towers in Oman: the archaeological complex of Al-Khutm (Bat).

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## Résumé

The towers of the third Millennium BC in the Oman peninsula represent magnificent expression of monumentality during the prehistory. The construction of these monuments required a great collective effort and a significant amount of what Trigger defined “blind energy expenditure” (1990) provided by the communities gathered around the oases. Several assumptions about their function have been proposed during the last 40 years, from stable fortified residences, to strongholds, areas controlling the irrigation systems of the surroundings and ritual platforms, but an exhaustive interpretation of this phenomenon is still lacking.

This is mainly due to the limited number of investigated structures and the variability in the building materials (stone, mudbrick) and in morphological features (architectural technique, dimension). Moreover, their different environmental setting, ranging from rocky hilltops to floodplains, foot of larger mountains or coastal high cliffs, makes plausible different interpretations for their use. In addition, the generally poor state of conservation has not permitted so far to obtain a detailed chronological span of their occupation.

The extensive investigation carried out between 2015 and 2018 at the Unesco site of Al-Khutm (Bat) has yielded fresh data to update the formation of this monumental landscape in the Oman Bronze Age. In fact, thanks to its good state of conservation, it has been possible to investigate several structures inside and outside the perimeter of the tower, including a controlled entry path with access devices (thresholds and pivots). These features give hints to understand the meaning of the site and provide relevant information to outline the transformation of the area through time in comparison with other monumental contexts.

**Mots-Clés:** Oman, towers, Bronze Age, Al, Khutm, Bat

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