

Wednesday, 28.01.2026, 18:00 C.T. – 20:00

**Invisible Crops:  
The Arabian Peninsula as a Corridor for Prehistoric Millet  
Diffusion**



*Aerial photograph of the Mugli site (Sindh, Pakistan), Bildquelle: Courtesy of Marco Moderato*

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Millets such as pearl millet (*Pennisetum glaucum*) and sorghum (*Sorghum bicolor*) are highly nutritious and climate-resilient crops that play a key role in subsistence strategies across arid and semi-arid regions of Africa and Asia today. Despite their importance, the role of millets in early agricultural societies and the routes through which they spread in prehistory remain poorly understood. One major reason for this gap is their low visibility in archaeobotanical records based primarily on macrobotanical remains, which are often affected by taphonomic processes.

This talk presents an ongoing research project that investigates the early use, management, and diffusion of millets during the Bronze Age, with a particular focus on the Arabian Peninsula as a potential corridor between Africa and South Asia. Using a multi-proxy archaeobotanical approach that combines the analysis of seeds, phytoliths, and starch grains from sediments and food-related artefacts (such as ground stone tools and pottery), the project aims to identify millets at different stages of processing and consumption. The study focuses on three archaeological sites along a possible diffusion route: Tell Saq (AlUla, northern Saudi Arabia), Sohr Damb/Nal (central Baluchistan, Pakistan), and Mugli (upper Sindh, Pakistan), dated between ca. 3500 and 1500 BCE. Emerging evidence, including early millet remains from the Indus Valley, suggests that the Arabian Peninsula and adjacent regions may have played an active role in the prehistoric movement of African millets toward South Asia. By integrating micro- and macrobotanical data, this research contributes to broader discussions on early agriculture, crop dispersal, and interregional connections across arid landscapes during the Bronze Age.

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**Online Link:** <https://fu-berlin.webex.com/fu-berlin/j.php?MTID=m300204f2ebec2b89741989ec6db87bfa>

**Meeting-Kennnummer:** 2732 922 5013

**Kennwort:** ipaw25