THE ARABIAN PENINSULA AND PREHISTORIC POPULATIONS

by

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Abstract:

Evidence coming to light in recent years gives good reason to postulate that the Arabian peninsula should no longer be considered a blank page in the history of mankind in this part of the world. Recent geologic mapping of the peninsula affords good evidence for interpretation of paleoclimatic data, and indicates that the climate, within the history of man's occupation of the area, has not by any means always been as arid and inhospitable as it is today. Flint tools that seem to range throughout the age of mankind are being found in the peninsula in abundance, very often occurring in the middle of the present day desert sands. Rock drawings depicting ancient man with his cultural accoutrements are found scattered about Arabia. Ubaidian cultural remains, that date from about the 5th and 4th millennium B.C., have recently been discovered on the eastern littoral, and are indicative of this very important population's having occupied (and perhaps having arisen in) the peninsula.

In this thesis, the above lines of evidence are discussed, analyzed, and synthesized, along with evidence from modern anthropological observations, to present a logical hypothesis that the Arabian peninsula is not a tabula rasa in the history of man in this part of the world, and that there is good evidence that it played a key role in the cultural evolution and prehistory of ancient populations in the Near East.

Chapter I is an introduction and general summary of the lines of evidence discussed above. Chapter II is devoted to a detailed analysis of paleoclimate, based largely on geological and paleo-geographical data. Chapter III is an attempt to interpret and analyze, from the evidence presented, the nature of the various ethnic and cultural groups that occupied the peninsula in prehistoric times, and fit them into the already known framework of prehistory of the Near East.