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A Late Pleistocene wetland setting in the hyperarid Jurf ed Darawish region in central Jordan

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Current conditions in the southern Levant are hyperarid and local communities rely on fossil subsurface water resources. However, the Levantine Corridor provided a pathway for the migration of humans out of Africa and their spread in the Near East and beyond in the Pleistocene, but times of more favourable wetter periods are not well constrained yet. To improve our understanding of past climate and environmental conditions in the deserts of the Near East, two nearby sedimentary sections (9.8 and 16.5 m thick, respectively) from the Central Jordanian Plateau containing a layer of stone tools and production debris were investigated using micropalaeontological analysis and OSL dating. Recorded fossils are mostly ostracod valves of the genera *Pseudocandona*, *Potamocypris* and *Ilyocypris*. Additional remains are shells of aquatic and terrestrial gastropods and charophyte gyrogonites and stem encrustations. The organism remains and mostly silty sediments suggest that a wetland with small streams and ponds existed at the location of Jurf ed Darawish in the past. OSL dating of the sedimentary sequence revealed mostly Late Pleistocene ages of the Marine Isotope Stages 4 and 3. The sedimentary layer containing stone tools and production debris was formed ca. 60 ka ago. In contrast, the base of the section provided only minimum ages of ca. 150 ka. The accumulated data indicate that climate conditions supported human activities on the Central Jordanian Plateau in the middle part of the Late Pleistocene.

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