



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Changing scale, changing crops? Farming strategies in Lowland Mesopotamia

*DOUCHE C. 1**, CHARLES M. ¹

¹ University of Oxford, Oxford, United Kingdom

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The rise of urbanism in Lowland Iraq between the 4th and 2nd millennia BCE, was accompanied by a series of socio-economic changes. Key among these strategies of agricultural production with increasing political control by elite of the population. State institutions were responsible for the what and how of cultivation as well as subsequent who and how much of redistribution. In parallel, shifts in climate and landscape contributed to the adaptation of production and consumption modes. Macro-botanical remains recovered in archaeological contexts enable us to better reconstruct regional, local, and intra-site specificities but have previously been limited in their suitability (both quantity and quality) for analysis. Instead, much of our current knowledge on plant exploitation in southern Mesopotamia derives from indirect textual evidence. This presentation aims to present recent archaeobotanical results obtained from new excavation projects carried out in the region. In the last decade, more systematic sampling strategies have been developed at 'Uwaili, Girsu, Ur, and Larsa. The archaeobotanical analysis of these sites—which represent distinct settlement patterns (from 4 to more than 200 hectares)—offers an opportunity to explore and compare the plant economy from the 7th to the 2nd millennia BCE.

Keywords

Archaeobotany, Agriculture, Lowland Iraq, Bronze Age, Ubaid

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