



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Summary of Three Years of Excavations at Menjez Northern Lebanon (MEG-A Project): Possible Scenarios for this Megalithic Community at the Turn of the 4th Millennium BCE

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Abstract

Over the past three years, the Swiss team of the MEG-A project has excavated 23 tombs, 4 houses, 2 menhirs, 8 terrace walls, an enclosure gate, 2 paths, and a quarry at Menjez. Findings reveal key methodological and archaeological challenges: limited artefacts, poor archaeo-biological preservation, and disturbed sediment layers complicating OSL dating. Structures were built directly onto bedrock. Despite focusing on a small section of Akkar (while the Polish team surveyed the extended area), excavations show a complex occupation of Menjez at the 4th-3rd millennium BCE transition. Two phases emerge: an initial one featuring paths, house remains near the present-day village, and agricultural infrastructure (terraces, plough marks); and a later phase where pastoral communities left mostly monumental tombs.

Agricultural land management and evidence of regional trade (obsidian, flint, seals) suggest a structured economy in the early phase. The later phase marks a shift towards pastoralism, retaining trade networks but seeing more elaborate megalithic tombs and rituals. These results indicate continuity in ancestor worship and the use of stones and engravings, reflecting adaptations to environmental shifts. MEG-A's findings, enhanced by Polish survey data, allow comparison of Menjez's development with other Akkar megalithic communities, exploring settlement motivations in this basaltic region.

Keywords

Dolmen, Settlement, Carving, LC-EBA, Lebanon

Session

1. Advances in Near Eastern Archaeology

Workshop

A16675MH - Exploring the 'Land Behind': settlement and mobility in Lebanon's inner valleys and mountains.

