



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Complex human-animal relationship in early urbanising societies: preliminary findings from Shakhi Kora, Iraqi-Kurdistan

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Abstract

The complex relationship between humans and animals underpinned many of the socio-political developments in early urbanising societies of the Late Chalcolithic (LC) (4000-3100 BCE) in Mesopotamia. Despite literacy only developing in the latter part of the LC, our view on human-animal relationships in this time period has been largely shaped by later administrative texts, which portray animals solely as economic resources to be exploited - 'wealth on the hoof'. This view has shaped zooarchaeological studies to focus primarily on shifts toward intensified exploitation of 'secondary products', i.e. milk, wool, and traction. This paper will present preliminary zooarchaeological data from the Sirwan Regional Projects ongoing excavations at Shakhi Kora, situated along the Sirwan/ Upper Diyala River in Iraqi-Kurdistan. This site, spanning nearly 1000 years of continuous LC occupation, provides a unique setting to study the full spectrum of human-animal interactions, including fish and bird life. Analysis has focused not only on hand-picked faunal remains but also on micro-faunal remains to understand interactions within a wider environmental context. Through emphasizing the dynamic human-animal relationships, this research aims to challenge top-down economic interpretations and offer a more nuanced understanding of the complex human-animal relationships which shaped early urbanising societies.

Keywords

Human-animal relationships, Zooarchaeology , Late Chalcolithic, Early urbanism, Mesopotamia

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