



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Distant in Both Time and Space. Geomorphological and Palaeolithic survey in the Western desert of Iraq

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Abstract

The rich Holocene history of the Mesopotamian floodplain has long generated widespread research interest. The Palaeolithic history of Iraq, apart from iconic sites in the Zagros Mountains such as Shanidar Cave, has received less attention and the wider Palaeolithic record of Iraq is poorly known. Most Palaeolithic sites outside the mountains have been discovered in the Western Iraqi Desert. This record is not widely known nor systematically investigated and, due to lacking geomorphological contextual information, not considered in global or regional palaeo-anthropological syntheses of human evolution and behaviour. Challenges in reaching and researching the Palaeolithic record from the Western Desert have hampered our understanding of what is out there and the integration of this information into the wider discourse. We set out to overcome this challenge, presenting here the first results of our Geomorphological and Palaeolithic Survey of the Western Desert project. Studying a period that has thus far received little attention, and in a remote region, we examine a distant time and space in Iraqi history.

Palaeolithic research in Iraq is crucial for advancing our understanding of human evolution and behavior in southwest Asia, a stepping-stone en-route out of Africa with implications for understanding our human history at large.

Keywords

Palaeolithic, Geomorphology, Survey, Iraq, Western Desert

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