



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Delineating Neolithic lifescapes in the Eastern Fertile Crescent: A story of human experiences at Bestansur, Iraqi Kurdistan

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Abstract

The Eastern Fertile Crescent, a region corresponding to the Zagros uplands and piedmont along the Iran-Iraq border, has long remained underrepresented in bioarchaeological investigations of Neolithic trajectories of change. This has resulted in a significant geographical gap in our understanding of human life and adaptation during the foraging-to-farming transition. How did human needs determine modes of interaction with the environment? And how did these modes of interaction, in turn, shape human biology? Over the last decade, excavations conducted at Bestansur (Iraqi Kurdistan, c. 7700-7000 BCE) have offered exciting opportunities to obtain new, human-centred insights into the lifeways of a transitional community from the region. In an attempt to decode biocultural feedback loops at the site, this paper presents the results of a multi-proxy bioarchaeological study of human remains. Palaeopathological and biochemical data are integrated to offer a preliminary reconstruction of diet, activity, health and mobility, weaving these aspects of life into a narrative of community experiences. This story, a story told by the physical remains of its protagonists, is contextualised within a broader regional framework, delineating a novel picture of lifescapes during the Neolithic.

Keywords

Lifescapes, Neolithic, Eastern Fertile Crescent, Biochemical analyses, Palaeopathology

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