



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Neolithic transformations in the Eastern Fertile Crescent: New evidence from neighbourhood-scale investigations in the Central Zagros

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Abstract

This paper examines key results from new neighbourhood-scale excavations and interdisciplinary analyses at the Early Neolithic site of Bestansur 7660-7000 cal BCE and preliminary excavations at Zawi Chemi Razan 8600 cal BCE. We provide an overview of new data on the key themes of: changing environments and sustainability; creating communities through built environment design, use and social relations; connected communities of craft and local and cross-regional networks. The results are drawn from the ERC funded project Middle East Neolithic in Transition: Community Approaches. The focus of this paper is on new results from large-scale excavations and microstratigraphic, micromorphological and phytolith micro-contextual analyses.

The emergent Neolithic pathways uncovered reveal increasing complexity and interconnectedness as well as local adaptation. Preliminary excavations at Zawi Chemi Razan, opposite Zarzi Cave in a key biodiversity area today, reveal a small-scale community with semi-subterranean round buildings and close material culture similarities with other communities locally and in the Eastern Fertile Crescent. Extensive excavations at Bestansur, reveal a remarkably innovative and industrious community with diverse large and smaller-scale architecture and access to a wide range of local and more distant materials and plant and animal resources. There is also evidence of periods of disruption and change.

Keywords

Neolithic, Sustainability, Communities, Environment, Architecture

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