ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Settlement Dynamics of the Akkar Highlands between Neolithic and Ottoman Times. Results of the Surveys of the project MEG-A. First megalithic builders of thenorthernLevant

WALDOCH F. [1], WYGNA?SKA Z. [1], JASTRZ?BSKA E. [1], MAKOWSKI P. [2]*

[1] Institute of Mediterranean and Oriental Cultures of the Polish Academy of Sciences, Warszawa, Poland
[2] Faculty of Archaeology, University of Warsaw, Waszawa, Poland

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The surveys conducted as part of the ‘MEG-A’ project focus on analyzing the distribution of megalithic architecture and identifying associated material. The three years of the project have yielded a substantial amount of data related to other periods, allowing for a preliminary assessment of settlement development in the region. The Akkar Highlands, situated within a belt of basalt hills between the coastal Akkar plain to the west and the Levantine rift in the east, can be classified as a hinterland. The region's natural abundance of trees and ample water supply undoubtedly made it attractive for settlement since ancient times. Initial assessments indicate that the late Neolithic period is one of the most easily identifiable. Ceramic materials clearly show that also the Roman, Byzantine, Crusader and Ottoman periods occurred frequently, suggesting that the region was densely populated during these times. The Bronze Age, Iron Age, and early Islamic periods are significantly more challenging to identify. This observation contrasts with the results of earlier surveys in the plain of Akkar. However, this absence of occupation in the region may be illusory, likely caused by limitations in defining local wares. One identified example is the so-called Menjez ware, representing local Chalcolithic pottery.

Keywords

Akkar Highlands, archaeological survey, settlement dynamics

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