



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# What Drives Choices? Reflections on Neolithic Plaster Raw Material Selection

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## Abstract

The choice of raw materials in ancient societies reveals much about their technological, environmental, and socio-economic contexts. At Tell Sabi Abyad in North Syria, plaster use began during the Pre Pottery Neolithic period around 7100 BCE and peaked in the Early Pottery Neolithic (6700-6250 BCE), where lime plaster and gypsum plaster were used for both architectural features and portable objects, such as plaster ware (white ware/ vaisselle blanche). Interestingly, archaeometric analyses have shown that despite the local availability of limestone, which offered superior properties for storage and durability, the inhabitants strongly favoured gypsum plaster, even though sourcing gypsum required traveling greater distances. This preference raises important questions about the factors influencing material selection. Beyond the obvious technological and environmental considerations, this study explores potential economic, cognitive, social, and emotional motivations underlying these decisions. By exploring these different influences, the paper discusses how early Neolithic communities made decisions about materials, giving us a clearer picture of how their environment, society, and cultural beliefs shaped their choices.

## Keywords

materiality, plaster, procurement, Neolithic, raw materials

## Session

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