



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

The plastered skulls from Tell Aswad: new dating, new chronocultural data

KHAWAM R.^{1*}

¹ Archorient, Damas, Syrie

*Corresponding author

Abstract

The Neolithic site of Tell Aswad is a large tell located 40 km southeast of Damascus. As part of an ongoing monographic publication project (Sánchez Priego J.A éd. : *Le Village néolithique de Tell Aswad en Damascène*), a new series of dates has been brought to light. These new data and the re-examination of all available dates with Chrono Model software have enabled us to refine the chronology of the different phases of occupation of the site (Vol. I, Chap. 2: Sánchez Priego, J.A., Stordeur D., Gourichon L. and Zazzo A. *Cadre archéologique : topographie, stratigraphie et datations*, in preparation).

The definitive results of the dating study will be published in this book, but it is fair to say that they will lead to a general rethinking of the site's chronology. This is the case for levels B0 and B-5, the two burial areas where the plastered skulls were discovered. Level B0 is dated to the middle of the 9th millennium BC (between 8618 and 8322 cal BC, according to three dates for the burial area), a period attributed to the Chronological Horizon of the early PPNB. Level B-5 would be situated between the middle of the 9th and the very beginning of the 8th millennium BC (between 8290 and 7997 cal BC for one dating of the funerary area), a chronology that would correspond to the Early-Middle PPNB, contrary to what had been put forward in previous publications. These indicated an attribution to the middle-recent PPNB for B0 and recent PPNB for B-5 (Stordeur 2003, Stordeur et al., 2006, Stordeur and Khawam, 2007, Stordeur et al., 2010, Khawam 2014).

So we find ourselves in a new chrono-cultural framework in relation to all that was known about the advent of the practice of plastered human skulls in the Levant. Tell Aswad plastered skulls are believed to be the oldest discovered to date. These data will help us to develop our knowledge of the relationship between chronology and the cultural identities of agricultural populations in the early and middle PPNB in the Levant, and more specifically in the Central Levant region.

Keywords

Plastered skull, Chronology, Dating, Syria, PPNB, Neolithic.

Session

5. Neolithic paths

Type of paper

