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Proceedings of the Berner Altorientalisches Forum
ISSN 2504-2076

Abstract

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DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.22012/baf.2016.01

Location: Körtik Tepe, Province Diyarbakır, Southeastern Turkey, at the confluence of the River Tigris and the Batman Creek.

Period: Younger Dryas to Early Holocene (10400-9200 BCE)

Focus: Archaeological evidence for permanent occupation of the site; conditions favouring early sedentism at the intersection of two ecological regimes: the riverine environments and the steppe/tree-steppe mountain ranges of the hinterland; ecological and socio-economic impact of sedentism and of climatic changes from the Younger Dryas to the Early Holocene; interpretation of burial customs comparing evidence of daily practices and emerging differentiation in burial rituals.

Methods: Archaeobotany, stable isotope analyses, modelling of radiocarbon sequences; holistic approach.

Recent archaeological discoveries, refinements in genetic analyses and the archaeobotanical data require a reconsideration of the nature of the emergence of sedentary farming communities in Southeastern Turkey. In the rescue excavations prompted by the Batman and Ilısu dam projects several Early Holocene sites were discovered. For the first time, new data from Körtik Tepe now provide detailed evidence of a local Epipalaeolithic origin for these permanent settlements. We will present and discuss the results and analyses of the 2010-2015 excavations and the archaeobotanical data of the Younger Dryas layers at Körtik Tepe. Human isotope studies and the archaeological data suggest a permanent occupation of the site and might point to a local primordial adoption of a sedentary lifestyle in this region as early as the 11th millennium BC. It will be one of the main tasks of future research to provide more local off-site data for the reconstruction of local climatic developments and to compare early Holocene communities in this region, contributing to a polycentric model of Neolithisation in the Near East.