

Lithic traditions and socio-cultural interactions in the Early Neolithic of Upper Mesopotamia: initial steps toward understanding regional identities

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NEO-IDENTITY is a new MSCA project investigating lithic traditions and socio-cultural interactions in Upper Mesopotamia at the onset of the Neolithic. It aims to assess whether distinct regional identities existed by analyzing technical traditions and socio-economic practices across the Fertile Crescent. The project employs an integrated methodological approach, combining lithic technology studies, use-wear analysis, and cutting-edge quantitative analyses of micro-wear texture via Confocal Scanning Microscopy, along with analytical techniques and models for examining spatio-temporal distributions of technical traits, interaction networks, and knowledge transmission.

The talk presents the initial steps of the research while addressing one of the project's core aims: the early harvesting practices in SE Anatolia within broader Neolithic developments. Using case studies from PPNA and PPNB sites in the Upper Tigris Basin, I examine the role of sickle blades in agricultural economies and their implications for regional interactions. These preliminary insights contribute to understanding technical traditions and cultural connectivity in early farming societies.

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