Why manage garbage?
New light on the management of garbage in early urban societies

GARBAGE MANAGEMENT

Garbage forms a large part of the archaeological record. Nonetheless, garbage and its management are seldom considered as much in the study of the socioeconomic organization of ancient urban societies. The Danish Archaeological Expedition to Iraq (DAEI) presents new evidence of systematic management of garbage during the mid-4th millennium BC in the Zagros foothills of eastern Mesopotamia, where early urban settlements interacted with and managed the accumulation of garbage.

MULTI-SCALAR APPROACH

The project uses a multi-scalar methodology developed at Tell Brak in Syria by the authors. It employs surface prospection, surface mapping, archaeological excavation, remote sensing, and historical and systematic soil and C-14 sampling. In combination with remote-sensing (satellite imagery and U/V/Aerial photography) these methods provide important insights into the strategies for handling and managing garbage in early urban societies.

ACCUMULATION OF GARBAGE

Following a phase of urban transformation in the mid-4th millennium BC, large deposits of garbage and refuse were excavated at Tell-Bab-wa-Kur in northeastern Iraq. The garbage and refuse deposits were investigated with remote-sensing (satellite imagery and UAV aerial photography) these methods provide important insights into the strategies for handling and managing garbage in early urban societies. The garbage deposits, as well as their linear arrangement, suggesting that they were created by specialized activities with industrial levels of production of food and non-food products such as pottery, metal objects, and industrial和社会 activities.

CONCLUSIONS

The preliminary results of our investigations of garbage deposits, refuse, and garbage management in this site and other sites in the Zagros foothills of northeastern Iraq suggest that the garbage deposits represented mass-produced vessels, pits and garbage deposits that contained both northern and southern Mesopotamian pottery types, as well as large numbers of mass-produced objects, including food and non-food products such as pottery, metal objects, and industrial goods.

ABOUT DAEI

The project is a collaboration between the National Museum of Denmark and the University of Copenhagen and is directed by Tim Skuldbøl, Carlo Colantoni, and Matti Marie Hald. The collaborative project is investigating the urban phenomena that occurred in the eastern margins of Upper Mesopotamia in the mid-4th millennium BC as a result of early urbanisation and the organisation of early cities and the organisation of urban societies in the eastern margins of Upper Mesopotamia. It aims to provide new insights into the organisation of urban societies in the eastern margins of Upper Mesopotamia, as well as new methods and techniques for investigating early urbanisation.

REFERENCES


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