
Reconstructing Environmental Impacts on Late Pleistocene and Early Holocene Societies in the Marginal Zone of the southern Levant: A Case Study from Shubayqa

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Résumé

The Younger Dryas event has for a long time been described as a key climatic trigger event that disrupted the stability of the early Natufian, and led to a re-adjustment of late Natufian and early Neolithic settlement and economy in the Levant. To test what impact the Younger Dryas had on Late Natufian economy, settlement and society in the southern Levant we initiated the Shubayqa Archaeological Project in 2012, targeting a series of late Pleistocene and early Holocene sites in the semi-arid to arid zone of northeast Jordan. One of the underlying ideas of this project has been that the environmental degradation that has been suggested to have occurred as part of the Younger Dryas could be expected to have been particularly severe in the so-called ‘marginal’ steppe and desert zone of the southern Levant. Consequently, the effect of the Younger Dryas on late Natufian groups in the area could also be expected to have been severe. In this paper, we present some of the results of our ongoing palaeoenvironmental and archaeological fieldwork in the Qa’ Shubayqa area. Drawing on archaeobotanical, zooarchaeological, archaeological, chronological and geomorphological data we examine palaeoenvironmental and cultural change during the late Pleistocene and early Holocene of northeast Jordan, we show that although there is some evidence for increasing aridity in the area that the overall impact on late Natufian economy and settlement pattern was negligible.

Mots-Clés: Late Epipalaeolithic, Pre, Pottery Neolithic, Natufian, Jordan, Levant

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