Abstract:

The transition from hunting and gathering economies to those based on food production was not only economic. With plant and animal domestication came sedentary communities and population increase, which had several social implications. Ultimately, this transformation set the framework for modern society, with both positive and negative benefits. This talk provides an overall summary of the Near Eastern Neolithic, while focusing on the Levantine region where the presenter has the most experience. The sites of Ain Ghazal and Ghwair, both in modern day Jordan, are emphasized as examples of Neolithic communities. In addition, the expansion of the Neolithic to the island of Cyprus is addressed as well, since this indicates a far earlier and more common occurrence than previously thought, and has implications for the spread of the Neolithic beyond the Near East.