

PŘEDNÁŠKA
IAN KUIJT

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

Reconsidering arguments for Near Eastern Neolithic early urbanism, high population density villages, and population pressure

 18. září 2025, 14:10

 Knihovna Archeologického ústavu AV ČR, Praha
Letenská 4, Praha 1

 <https://cesnet.zoom.us/j/95942198666> | Password: 18092025

PŘEDNÁŠKA | IAN KUIJT

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING?

Reconsidering arguments for Near Eastern Neolithic early urbanism, high population density villages, and population pressure

Some researchers argue that the world's earliest Near Eastern Neolithic villages were occupied by thousands of proto urban farmers, and that population growth and pressure served as the evolutionary driver for the emergence of complex, large, villages. Population density and pressure are fundamental parameters in modeling human ecology, carry capacity, and social complexity. Demographic estimates are foundational in modeling of the emergence, evolution, and abandonment of Late Pre-Pottery Neolithic / Pottery Neolithic village systems. In this presentation I argue that researchers have historically relied upon spatial information, such as settlement area and architecture, to develop population estimates, but their uncritically application of these has created highly inflated population estimates for Near Eastern Neolithic settlements. Drawing upon ethnographic, geoarchaeological and archaeological studies, such as Neolithic Çatalhöyük, Turkey, I argue that the trajectory of Pre-Pottery / Pottery Neolithic villages does not reflect an explosive population baby boom, high population density, or population pressure. This new analysis raises significant questions as to explicit or implicit arguments for prehistoric population pressure, the evolution and collapse of Near Eastern Neolithic villages in general, and the extent to which researchers have artificially created the idea of Neolithic proto urban villages.

