

Abstract #: 1467

## **TRACES OF LIFE: INTEGRATING PHYTOLITH AND ETHNOARCHAEOLOGICAL ANALYSIS IN LEVANTINE SITES**

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The Neolithic in southwest Asia (c 11,700–7800 cal BP) is an important period in human history that saw the advent of sedentism, agriculture and ultimately paved the way for increased social complexity and urbanism. It is also, however, one of the most poorly understood. This is partly because of the paucity of Neolithic sites and also because when sites are found preservation is often limited, particularly for organic remains. This presentation outlines results from an integrated phytolith and ethnographic study conducted on the 20th Century site of Al Ma'tan, Jordan which was similar in construction and layout to Levantine Neolithic sites. We split our samples into different context categories for example middens, hearths and floors. We found that phytolith signatures were in accord with what would be expected based on the oral histories provided by former residents of the settlement and that signatures were strongest for categories linked to construction practices rather than activities.

### **Keywords**

Phytolith, Ethnoarchaeology, Neolithic, Levant, Jordan

### **Note/comment**