

Chasing the Roots of Agriculture and Settled Life at Aşıklı Höyük, Turkey

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Aşıklı Höyük is the earliest pre-ceramic Neolithic mound site in Central Anatolia. Its basal cultural layers were founded in the wake of the Younger Dryas and exceed 8200 BCE. The occupations begin with round-house architecture, followed in just a few centuries by the development of rectangular densely packed buildings. Sites of this age with good preservation are extremely rare in the Middle East. Aşıklı Höyük preserves clear evidence of the very beginnings of wheat and sheep domestication. One of the key questions of collaborative research at this site is the early evolution of domesticates, the means of reproductive isolation that lets domestication take place, and its many socioeconomic ramifications. Our approach integrates zooarchaeological, geoarchaeological, isotopic, botanical and radiocarbon dating methods to learn about the ecological and social substrates from which village economies arose directly from a hunter-gatherer heritage.