

Scales of fragmentation: bioarchaeological evidence of economic and social transformation from the Late Roman to Early Medieval period in the Eastern Mediterranean

Description for the general public

The end of Antiquity and the beginning of the Early Middle Ages (3rd – 8th c. CE) was a period of political, social and economic transformation in the Eastern Mediterranean. Appearance of new ethnic groups and changes in the trade network influenced the everyday life. Unfortunately, the archaeological and historical sources can only provide a robust reconstruction of a life of common people. The aim of the project is to reconstruct the influence of political, economic and social changes on the human subsistence and mobility. To meet the objectives, biochemical analysis of human and animal remains from several archaeological sites from the Eastern Mediterranean will be conducted and confronted with relevant historical and archaeological sources.

Biochemical analysis of human and animal remains allows for reconstruction of several aspect of diet, such as utilisation of marine/terrestrial resources, and their types, robust assessment of animal protein consumption, but also agricultural techniques. Beyond subsistence, those methods allow also for reconstruction of human mobility and transportation of food items. Biochemical signatures of the environment have impact on humans and therefore it is possible to determine whether an individual was buried in the environment in which was born, or came from another place.

Study of human and animal remains from the Eastern Mediterranean, from Sicily, through Greece, Turkey, to Levant allows for answering the question how the inter-regional changes in the trade network and social as well as political fragmentation affected diet, subsistence, and human mobility.