



Records of urbanism, imperialism, & environmental change in southeastern Turkey

K. Nicoll

University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, United States (kathleen.nicoll@gmail.com)

Assessing the “human footprint” on the landscape since prehistory requires some comparison of the degree and pace of such changes, and the cause-and-effect, as well as the ability to resolve the anthropogenic signal from from patterns of “natural” environmental variation. The deep archaeological record provides valuable insights regarding the timeframe prior to the European industrial revolution; studies at specific localities may help resolve differences between anthropogenically-mediated changes and “natural” climatic changes. Results of various archaeological and palaeoecological archives across the Fertile Crescent indicates that rapid changes on landforms and biota have occurred since the beginnings of agriculture and urbanization. Work at key localities suggests that periods of imperialism such as the Neo-Assyrian ~9th century BCE are synchronous with sediment disturbances and deforestation in southeastern Turkey. New findings from geomorphic and archaeological survey and investigation in the Tigris watershed near Diyarbakir are correlated with various records across the broader region (e.g., Lake Van, Konya lakes, etc) in order to assess the spatial and temporal changes brought about by human population growth and increased exploitation of natural resources during phases of empire-building.