

Dating the Sealing: Revisiting Tell Sabi Abyad and the Case for Property Control in Late Neolithic Upper Mesopotamia

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Abstract

Some 25 years ago, hundreds of clay sealings as well as a series of stone stamp seals were found in excavation at Tell Sabi Abyad in Syria. Dating to the late seventh millennium cal BC, the find represents one of the largest assemblages of prehistoric sealings known in the Near East until now. Their occurrence in securely stratified contexts allowed for interpretations about their use in controlled storage events by pastoralists. This paper is primarily concerned with the date of introduction of the sealing practice at Tell Sabi Abyad and its embedding in the wider cultural setting of the time.