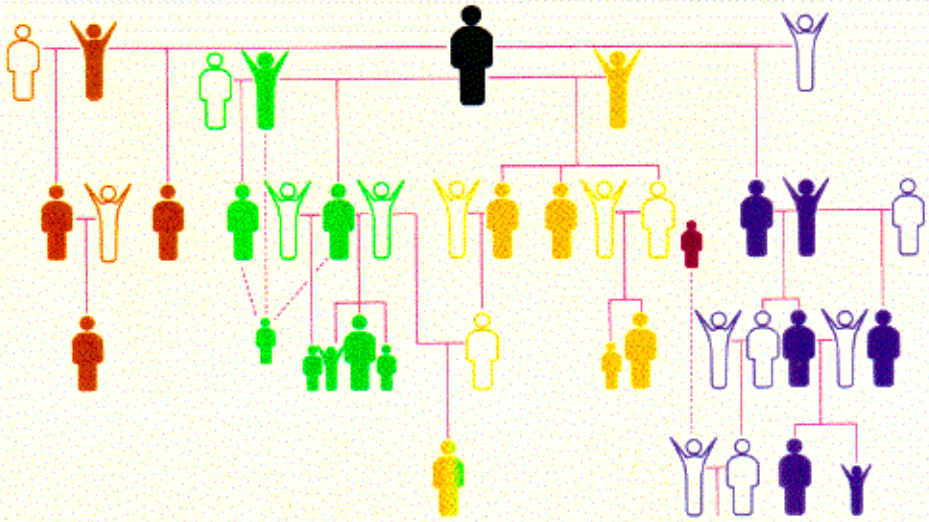


Neolithic Studies Group Seminar Papers 19

The current paradigm-changing ancient DNA revolution is offering unparalleled insights into central problems within archaeology relating to the movement of populations and individuals, patterns of descent, relationships and aspects of identity – at many scales and of many different kinds. The impact of recent ancient DNA results can be seen particularly clearly in studies of the European Neolithic, the subject of contributions presented in this volume. We now have new evidence for the movement and mixture of people at the start of the Neolithic, as farming spread from the east, and at its end, when the first metals as well as novel styles of pottery and burial practices arrived in the Chalcolithic. In addition, there has been a wealth of new data to inform complex questions of identities and relationships. The terms of archaeological debate for this period have been permanently altered, leaving us with many issues.

This volume stems from the online day conference of the Neolithic Studies Group held in November 2021, which aimed to bring geneticists and archaeologists together in the same forum, and to enable critical but constructive inter-disciplinary debate about key themes arising from the application of advanced ancient DNA analysis to the study of the European Neolithic. The resulting papers gathered here are by both geneticists and archaeologists. Individually, they form a series of significant, up-to-date, period and regional syntheses of various manifestations of the Neolithic across the Near East and Europe, including particularly Britain and Ireland. Together, they offer wide-ranging reflections on the progress of ancient DNA studies, and on their future reach and character.

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