

Dear Colleagues,

The World Neolithic Congress 2024 was held between November 4th and 8th in Şanlıurfa, Türkiye. The Congress was attended by 848 registered academics, over 1000 participants from 63 countries, and 486 institutions. The event was held under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Republic of Türkiye and in cooperation with Istanbul University and Harran University

The opening ceremony commenced on the evening of November 3rd at the Mehmet Akif İnan Conference Hall with an address by Minister of Culture and Tourism Mehmet Nuri Ersoy. In the introductory remarks, Necmi Karul, representing the Organizing Committee; Eleni Asouti, speaking on behalf of the Scientific Committee; Fatmanur Altun, who was present on behalf of the sponsorship provided by Turkish Airlines; Sait Ağan, who was in attendance on behalf of Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality, and Şanlıurfa Governor Hasan Şıldak conveyed their sentiments of welcome at the commencement of the event.

The proceedings commenced and continued until the end of the meetings held by the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences at Harran University. On November 4, the inaugural meeting at the university was held by Rector of the Harran University Mehmet Tahir Güllüoğlu, Rector of Istanbul University Osman Bülent Zülfikar, and Şanlıurfa Mayor Kasım Gülpınar. On the first day of the congress, Mehmet Özdoğan presented a talk entitled "The Story of the World Neolithic Congress." The presentations commenced with a keynote lecture delivered by Peter Bellwood, entitled "Becoming Neolithic: The impact of food production on global human population history during the Past 12,000 years." Subsequently, two plenary lectures were presented: On November 5th, Hsiao-Chun Hung delivered a lecture entitled "The Emergence of Neolithic Life in East and Southeast Asia: Expansions, Encounters, and New Societies." On November 7th, Melinda Zeder presented a lecture titled "Unpacking the Neolithic." Moreover, on the fourth day of the Congress, the colleagues who have worked at Şanlıurfa region were commemorated. Mehmet Özdoğan "Acknowledging the pioneers of the Neolithic research in Southeast Anatolia: Bruce Howe, Halet Çambel, Robert J. and Linda Braidwood." Barbara Helwing "From Istanbul to Istanbul: remembering Harald Hauptmann (1936-2018)" and Joris Peters "Göbeklitepe and the legacy of Klaus Schmidt in research on the Early Neolithic in Anatolia", commemorated their colleagues with their respective speeches. At the closing ceremony of the congress, which lasted for five days, Deputy Minister Gökhan Yazgı expressed gratitude to all participants.

At the WNC 2024, a number of papers were presented and discussed on the diverse Neolithic formations that occurred across different geographical locations and time periods, following diverse cultural and socio-economic trajectories. In the context of the 22 global and 23 regional sessions held concurrently, 687 oral presentations were delivered, some of which were presented via Zoom. Additionally, 62 posters were presented during the congress. In addition to the conceptual dimension of the Neolithic, sessions were held on several other topics, including Neolithic symbolism and art, domestication, subsistence strategies, bioarchaeology, archaeometry, physical anthropology, mortuary practices and death rituals, the natural environment, the built environment, architecture, population, and networking. At the global and regional levels, as well as in sessions devoted to specific regions of the world, including Southwest Asia, Anatolia, the Aegean, Southeast Europe, Eastern Europe, the Steppes, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and East Asia, the Indo-Pacific, and the Tropics, a variety of topics were addressed.

The third day of the congress program was dedicated to excursions. The six archaeological sites, which are being excavated as parts of the Taş Tepeler Project, within an area of 100 km in diameter, were visited, including Karahantepe, Göbeklitepe, Sayburç, Sefertepe, Çakmaktepe and Gürcütepe. The participants were able to experience the sites first-hand, accompanied by the directors of the excavations.

In addition to the scheduled proceedings, the Congress also hosted a series of art events. The Congress commenced on the evening of November 3rd with a concert of Turkish Waltzes by Cihat Aşkın and his orchestra, accompanied by Burcu Hancı, at the Mehmet Akif İnan Conference Hall. Furthermore, a contemporary art exhibition comprising 102 pieces was held at the Şanlıurfa Archaeological Museum. The exhibition, entitled "Beyond the Past," was curated by 22 international artists from the Taş Tepeler Contemporary Art Initiative. An additional exhibition, entitled "The Self of Reality," was organized by the photographer Yusuf Aslan and also held at the museum. On the evening of November 4th, following the concert by the Turkish Sufi Music Choir in the Şanlıurfa Archaeology Museum, the museum was made available to the participants for a tour. The preparations for the congress include a catalogue. The Neolithic Catalogue of the Şanlıurfa Museum has been prepared in the context of the Congress to include the most recent studies and findings. The Şanlıurfa Municipality has provided financial support for the preparation of the catalogue.

In the context of the Congress, which is supported by the Şanlıurfa Governorship, the Türkiye Tourism Promotion and Development Agency (TGA) organized an opening reception, while Turkish Airlines hosted a closing reception at DoubleTree by Hilton Şanlıurfa. Additionally, the Haliliye Municipality held a reception at the Şanlıurfa Archaeology Museum on November 4th.

We would like to express our gratitude to the Ministry of Culture and Tourism, TGA, Turkish Airlines, and the Şanlıurfa Governorship for their invaluable contributions. Furthermore, we would like to acknowledge the other partners whose support was crucial to the organization of the Congress and related events. These include Şanlıurfa Metropolitan Municipality, Karaköprü Municipality, Haliliye Municipality, Eyyübiye Municipality, GAP Regional Development Administration, Karacadağ Development Agency, Bunge, Doğu Group, Viyana Kahvesi, Alpin Water, and Ömür Akkor Anatolia Gastronomy Foundation. We would like to extend our acknowledgments to the Şanlıurfa Provincial Directorate of Culture and Tourism, Şanlıurfa Archaeology Museum, the Harran University Directorate, the Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences Administration, and the Archaeology Department of Harran University. We would also like to acknowledge and extend our sincerest thanks to the students of the Archaeology Department, the English Language Teaching Department, and the Department of Tourism Guidance and staff of Harran University, as well as the volunteer guides and team members of the Taş Tepeler Project for their invaluable contributions to the Congress. The Congress was organized by Oasis Tourism. We would like to thank them and the Stone Mounds team for their contributions to the conference program and e-abstract book, as well as the Stone Mounds App, which provides reliable, immersive content and rich multimedia features.

Meetings on the prospective trajectory of the WNC are convened by the Scientific Committee. Information on final decisions reached by the Committee shall be disseminated via the WNC website and social media accounts (links provided below*).

We also express our profound sadness at the passing of our esteemed Advisory Board member, Professor Erhan Bıçakçı, shortly after the congress, as well as the loss of Professor Lord Colin Renfrew, a leading figure in the field of prehistoric archaeology. Furthermore, we would like to take this occasion to remember our esteemed colleague and Scientific Committee member, Ann Cyphers, who passed away in 2023 during the postponement of the congress.

The Organizing Committee of the WNC would like to thank all those who participated in the Congress. We would also like to thank our colleagues who were unable to attend, although they played an important role in the development of the event, for their invaluable contributions to the success of the WNC. We hope that all participants found the Congress a rewarding experience.

Sincerely,

Organising Committee of World Neolithic Congress 2024

December 2024

***Please refer to the following links and social media accounts for further information.**

Group Photos

Website, <https://www.worldneolithiccongress.org/>

Instagram, [worldneolithiccongress](#)

X account, [@WNC2024](#)

Youtube [@worldneolithiccongress](#)

E-Abstract Book (WNC Website)

E-Abstract Book (Stone Mounds App)

Academia

Stone Mounds App links [here](#).