Neolithic coastal settlements and responses to environmental dynamics: A pioneering world lost beneath the Mediterranean Sea

Fact Sheet

Project Information

BEFOREtheFLOOD
Grant agreement ID: 101039271

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10.3030/101039271

EC signature date
30 March 2022

Funded under
European Research Council (ERC)

Total cost
€ 1 498 938,00

EU contribution
€ 1 498 938,00

Coordinated by
UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Start date
1 October 2022

End date
30 September 2027

Israel

Objective

Coastal societies hold a vital place in Mediterranean history; many of their earliest trajectories, however, are archaeologically obscure due to a rise in sea levels since the last Ice Age. BEFOREtheFLOOD is based on an observation that before it was inundated, the Mediterranean littoral was extremely dynamic (e.g. formation/retreat of marshes, increased soil salinity, rapidly rising sea levels), necessitating constant reactions by its inhabitants. This project aims to study how Neolithic coastal societies in the Eastern Mediterranean pioneered cultural responses to environmental changes, and how these enabled the development of Mediterranean complex
societies. The earliest known Mediterranean coastal settlements and their paleo-landscapes, now situated offshore along the Carmel Coast, Israel, will be studied by drilling sediment cores and through underwater excavations, followed by microscopic and chemical analysis in the laboratory that will integrate geoarchaeology, bioarchaeology and paleoenvironmental reconstructions. The project’s novelty lies in its approach, which will generate a high-resolution diachronic model of how hyper-localised environmental dynamics are directly related to archaeological evidence of adaptive solutions. The project will test how Neolithic coastal communities constantly readapted to dynamic environmental processes over time by modifying their environment, and developing new technologies and social interactions (i.e. negotiations with inland farmers) that fostered the establishment of a unique Mediterranean coastal society. BEFOREtheFLOOD will elucidate an important and as-yet unread chapter of a world now lost beneath the sea; one that will help to rewrite the early story of the Eastern Mediterranean coast as the springboard for innovation, adaptation, and connectivity that set the scene for the development of later Mediterranean complex societies.

Fields of science

humanities > history and archaeology > history > prehistory
humanities > history and archaeology > history > ancient history
humanities > history and archaeology > archaeology > underwater archaeology
humanities > history and archaeology > archaeology > bioarchaeology

Keywords

Geoarchaeology Neolithic Southern Levant Human-environment relations

Programme(s)

HORIZON.1.1 - European Research Council (ERC) MAIN PROGRAMME

Topic(s)

ERC-2021-STG - ERC STARTING GRANTS

Call for proposal
ERC-2021-STG

See other projects for this call

Funding Scheme

HORIZON-ERC - HORIZON ERC Grants

 Coordinator

UNIVERSITY OF HAIFA

Net EU contribution

€ 1 498 938,00

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Activity type

Higher or Secondary Education Establishments

Links

Contact the organisation  Website  Participation in EU R&I programmes  HORIZON collaboration network

Other funding

€ 0,00

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Permalink: https://cordis.europa.eu/project/id/101039271

European Union, 2024