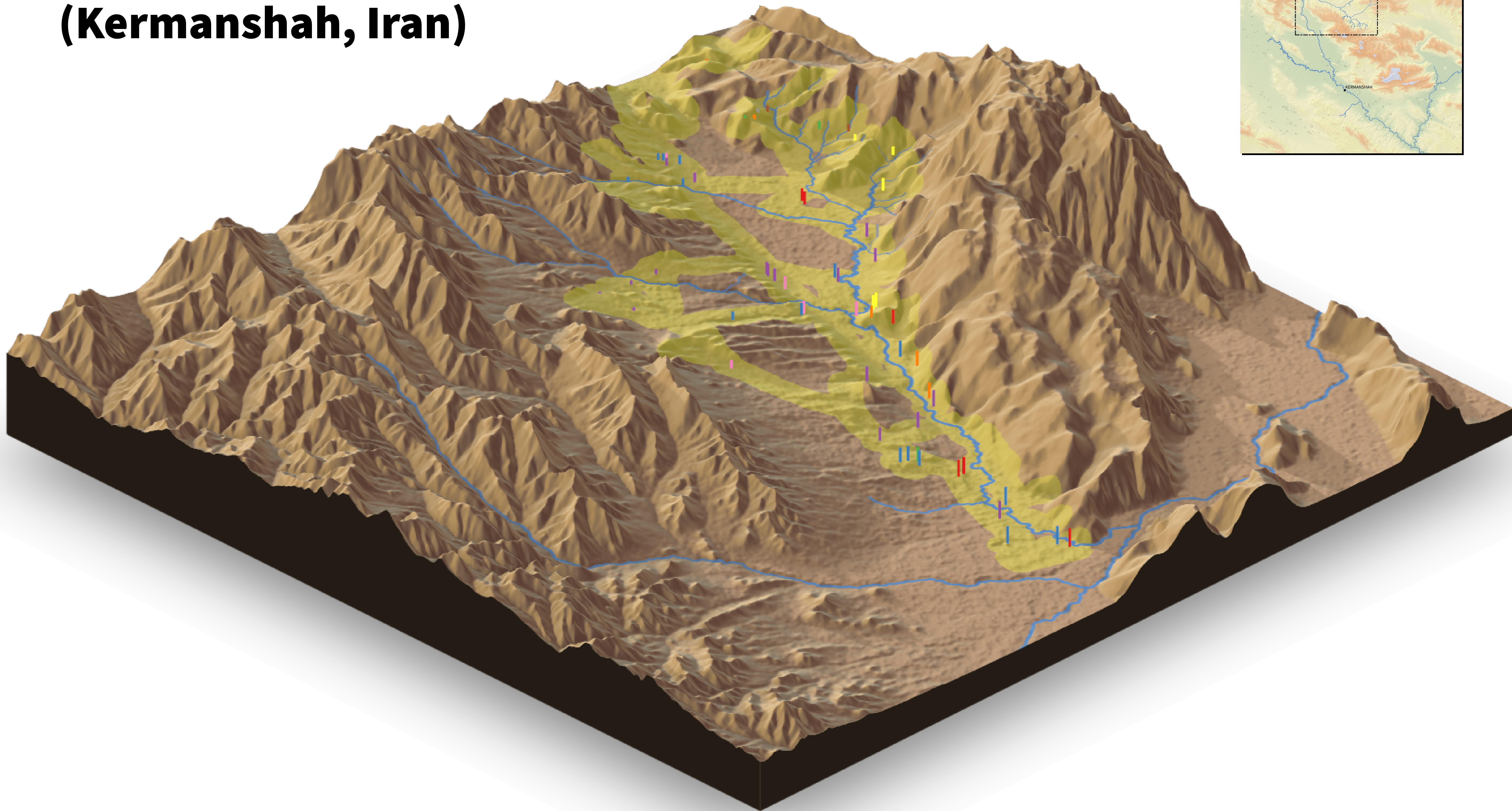
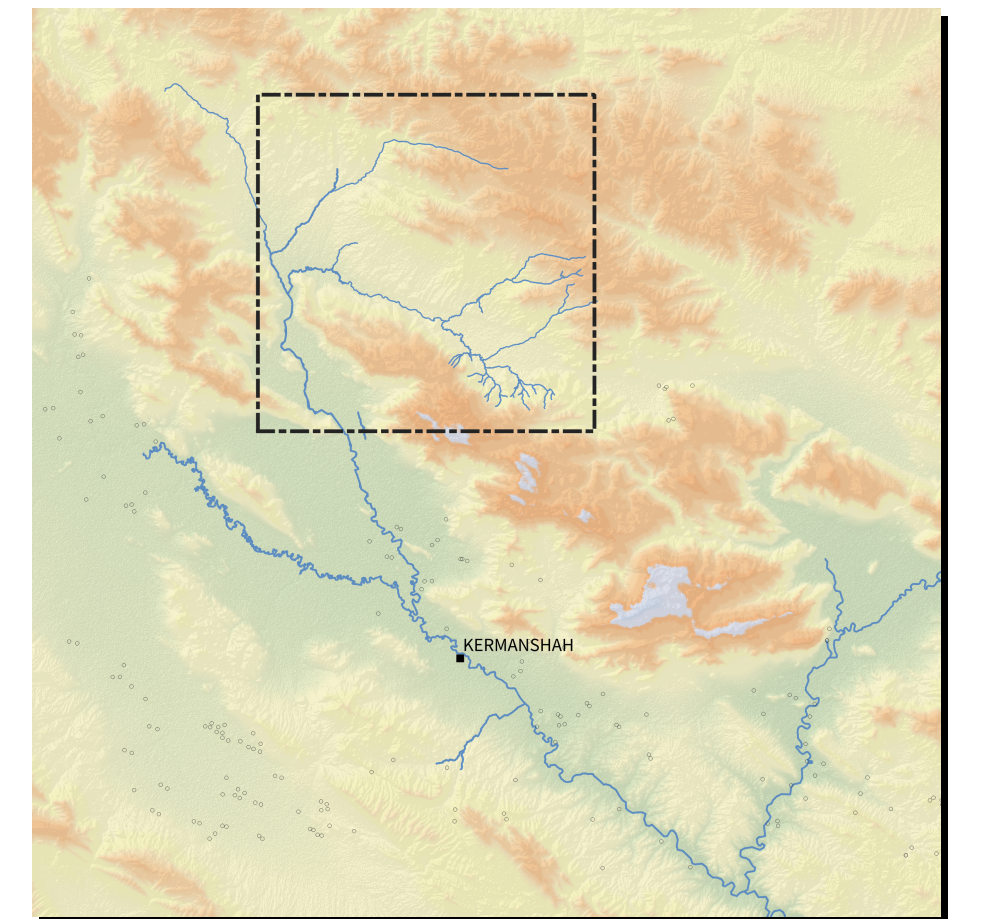


A survey of early prehistoric sites in the Razavar Valley (Kermanshah, Iran)



3D rendering of the Razavar Valley using the R package rayshader and SRTMv3 1 arc-second elevation data. The yellow shaded area indicates our estimated survey coverage based on GPS tracks. The coloured pegs represent sites. Stream network digitised from satellite imagery.

Middle Palaeolithic	Neolithic	Later prehistoric
Upper Palaeolithic	Chalcolithic	Historic
Epipalaeolithic	Early prehistoric	Undetermined



The Razavar Valley

The Central Zagros was one of the “cradles of agriculture” in Southwest Asia. Although not as well known as other centres, the area around Kermanshah especially has been visited by a number of researchers over the last 50 years.

In 2018, we targeted one of the last parts of the Kermanshah region has not been intensively surveyed: the Razavar Valley. Our aim was to prospect for new Epipalaeolithic/Neolithic sites for excavation and contribute to a more complete picture of the prehistoric landscapes of the region.



Paperless survey

We recorded sites using Android tablets and *QField*, a mobile GIS app. A single digital recording system was used for form-based site descriptions, photography, GPS coordinates, and plans drawn over satellite imagery.

Each member of the survey team was also equipped with a GPS watch that recorded their tracks throughout the day. This allowed for a precise estimation of the survey's coverage.

We collected a sample of diagnostic surface artefacts from each site as an assay of its chronology.



Results

We covered approximately 20% of the Razavar basin and documented 59 previously unknown archaeological sites. 19 of these potentially date to early prehistory, although many are only small surface scatters. Of particular interest are two tells where we found Neolithic material at the base of Chalcolithic sequences exposed by illicit trenching.

Broadly speaking, Palaeolithic sites are concentrated on the steep southern slopes, perhaps washed from caves; Neolithic sites on river terraces; and later tells further into the alluvial plain.

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Reproducible research

Full source code for generating this poster can be found at https://github.com/joeroe/rzvr_poster.



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