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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Characterizing culture in Central Asia's late bronze & early iron ages: Merging new analytical data with regional paradigms

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Abstract

In the ancient Near East, the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age are broadly characterized as periods of dissolution and re-building, situated chronologically between the highs of regional cultural entities and integrated socio-economies anchored by proto-urban settlements. Although inextricably linked to our understanding of what came before and after, the Bronze Age – Iron Age transition is a critical period of cultural development worthy of attention in its own right, which unfortunately remains chronically understudied in certain parts of the Near East.

The Late Bronze Age – Early Iron Age transition in southern Central Asia (ca. 1600–1000 BCE) was a drawn-out period of punctuated changes that archaeologists now recognize through people's shifting engagements with material resources, technologies, and one another. Drawing the chronological and spatial boundaries of (sub)regional cultural groups is an interpretive process, and depends to a large degree on the material being studied (ceramics, metals, archaeobotanics, etc.) and the framing and scale of the research question. As it stands, characterizing the multitude of Late Bronze – Early Iron Age culture(s) is one of the most challenging aspects of archaeological research in southern Central Asia; it requires an attention to multiple lines of scientific evidence as well as engaging with multiple historical and archaeological paradigms.

This workshop utilizes the complexity of Central Asia's Late Bronze – Early Iron Age transition to interrogate the notion of archaeological culture(s) as both heuristic and narrative constructions. To foster meaningful conversations, presentations thematically pair the site-specific analyses of early career researchers with the regional perspectives of established scholars. We will use the newly-discovered site of Kimirek Kum 1 in central Uzbekistan, which sits geographically and chronologically at the intersection of several material cultural complexes, as a touchstone for wider discussions about how the characterization of archaeological cultures continues to steer regional research.

Keywords

archaeological culture, socio-cultural transition, interaction networks, trade and exchange, cultural variability

Program

Session 1: Material Cultures and Social Interactions: Context and Limitations in Central Asia

1-A: An Overview of Kimirek Kum 1 in Regional Archaeological Context / *Lynne M. Rouse (DAI)*

1-B: The Complexity of Regional Ceramic Complexes in LBA-EIA Central Asia / *Elise Luneau (DAI)*

1-C: When the Pieces Don't Fit: Characterizing the Ceramics of Kimirek Kum 1 in Light of Regional Typologies and Technological Analogies / *Shima Pourmomeni (University of Florida) & Elise Luneau (DAI)*

1-D: Regional Metal Typologies in Central Asia the 2nd millennium BC, with an Introduction of the Metal Object Assemblage from Kimirek-Kum 1 / *Alexander Bechter (Karakalpakstan State Museum of Art)*

1-E: Preliminary Analyses of Kimirek-Kum 1 Metal Finds and Evidence for Metal Production / *Joyce Wing-In Ho (Harvard University) & Nathaniel Erb-Satullo (Cranfield University)*

1-F: Metallurgical Provinces, Regional Technologies, and Knowledge Networks in Central Asia during the 2nd millennium BCE / *Kai Kaniuth (Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München)*

Section 2: Transformative Behaviors: Framing the Concept of Culture in Transition

2-A: Agro-pastoralism in Theoretical Context for Central Asian Pre- and Proto-History / *Giedrė Motuzaitė Matuzevičiūtė (Vilnius University)*

2-B: Characterizing (Agri)culture: Production vs. Products in the Archaeobotanical Assemblage of Kimirek Kum 1, Uzbekistan / *Sydney A. Hunter (The Ohio State University)*

2-C: [TBD: Faunal Remains from KK1 in Light of Comparative Assemblages / *Ashleigh Haruda (Oxford University)* OR *Steven Ammerman (UCLA)*]

2-D: Cultural Complexity in Proto-Historic southern Central Asia / *Johanna Lhuillier (CNRS)*

2-E: [TBD: Central Asia's Role in Integrated Development of Eurasian Prehistory / *Massimo Vidale (Università degli Studi di Padova)*]

2-F: [TBD: Bounding Knowledge and Circumscribing Thought: Archaeological Culture Paradigms in Prehistoric Central Asia and Beyond / *Bertille Lyonnet (CNRS)*]

Type of paper

Workshop