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ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Downtown Kanesh: The Three Lives of an Anatolian City during the Middle Bronze Age

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Abstract

This paper explores questions around the 2nd millennium occupational history of Kültepe-Kanesh, focusing on social change in a city destroyed twice by an extensive conflagration, reoccupied twice by evidently resilient communities, and eventually abandoned at the cusp of the Middle-to-Late Bronze Age transition.

As the headquarters of the Assyrian mercantile operations in Anatolia, a sizeable urban centre with excellent archaeological preservation, an immense quantity of archival material, and a long history of excavation, Kültepe-Kanesh has a significant bearing on Anatolia's Middle Bronze Age. The positioning of this site, however, as an absolute reference point for Anatolian archaeology over-extrapolates its significance, unquestioningly imposing the site's own tripartite phasing onto a vast region and timespan. Furthermore, the archaeological interpretation of the site's occupational history is so often unevidenced or demonstrably misaligned with published data that it raises significant questions as to the soundness of even some of the most fundamental premises we take for granted as characterizing Kültepe-Kanesh.

Problematizing the issue as one of (flawed) production and (uncritical) consumption of archaeological knowledge, the paper will explore how the social history of Kültepe-Kanesh can be informed by a critical reassessment of the archaeological evidence for continuity and change during its MBA occupation.

Keywords

Anatolia, Old Assyrian, karum, phasing, cities

Session

7. Characterizing culture ?

Type of paper

Oral presentation