



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

An overview of archaeological research at Kimirek-kum 1, central Uzbekistan: the contexts and limitations of characterizing cultures in late 2nd millennium BC Central Asia

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Abstract

The last quarter of the 2nd millennium BCE marks a period of profound transformation across the Near East and Central Asia, often interpreted as a “collapse” of the early urban cultures of the Bronze Age. In Central Asia, the unwinding of Bronze Age traditions and the punctuated emergence of the Iron Age encompassed major environmental shifts, socio-political fragmentation, and changes in material culture, production technologies, and trade networks. A key opportunity to investigate the intersection of these transformations lies deep in the Kyzylkum desert, at the widespread archaeological site of Kimirek-kum 1 (KK1). This presentation outlines archaeological work at KK1 from 2022–2024, which included excavations of archaeological and geo-hydrological features, landscape surveys, and extensive material collections. This overview of KK1 contextualizes the various analyses of these materials, the results of which are given throughout other presentations in this session. Findings from KK1 suggest a complex narrative of continuity and adaptation positioned within a broader network of inter-regional exchange, challenging conventional models of collapse and transformation. By examining KK1’s role in these broader contexts, we explore the foundation for characterizing archaeological cultures and their use as a heuristic and narrative construction in Central Asia’s Late Bronze–Early Iron Age transition.

Keywords

Early Iron Age, Uzbekistan, excavation, material cultures, resilience

Session

7. Characterizing culture ?

Workshop

A16297LR - Characterizing culture in Central Asia's late bronze & early iron ages: Merging new analytical data with regional paradigms

Type of paper

Oral presentation