ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Faunal remains from Kimirek-kum-1: Flexibility and resilience

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Abstract

Riparian environments in southern Central Asia are characterized by fluctuating availability of water along shifting river channels. During periods of cultural transition, these unstable environments created conditions that required the use of carefully managed animal economies. Faunal remains recovered from the Final Bronze/Early Iron-age site of Kimirek-kum-1 reflect flexible strategies of animal husbandry rather than a rigid focus on a single approach. The site's location on a branch of the Zerafshan River on the margins of the irrigated Bukhara Oasis would have provided its inhabitants with access to a variety of different micro-environments, ranging from desert to wetland, but the rapidly shifting nature of these habitats incentivized the use of multiple paradigms of human-animal interaction, including the use of diverse domestic animals including cattle, sheep, goat, horse, and camel. The diversity of Kimirek-kum-1's faunal assemblage suggests that people using the site were knowledgeable about how to exploit the liminal zone between the wetlands watered by the Zerafshan River and the Kyzlkum Desert, reflecting cultural knowledge drawn from specialization in many different types of environments. Faunal findings further suggest that parts of the site were at least occasionally flooded, further emphasizing the challenges of the unpredictable river ecosystem.

Keywords

Zooarchaeology, Uzbekistan, Riparian ecosystems, Human-animal interaction, Kimirek-kum-1

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