



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Cultural Complexity in Proto-Historic southern Central Asia

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## Abstract

The Late Bronze – Early Iron Age transition has long been considered a period of decline in Central Asia, attributed to mobile steppe populations, and until recently, conceived of as a “Barbarian occupation period”. This presupposition, a focus on ceramic production, and the research carried out mostly on a local scale in a context of strong nationalism all contributed to distorting our perception of the transition. Although recent research on the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Age have suggested multifactorial causes, the mechanisms of this cultural transition are still understudied. The excessive focus on transformation continues to mask the high adaptability of Early Iron Age societies, which developed long-term strategies that succeeded without any apparent evolution for four to five centuries. Ongoing research in marginal areas (e.g., Kimirek-Kum 1 and the Kayrit Oasis in Uzbekistan) shows the ability of Early Iron Age societies to exploit a large variety of ecotones. This presentation raises questions about the narratives associated with the study of the Late Bronze – Early Iron Age transition, revisiting the theories surrounding this research, and reconsiders the notion of decline or crisis by drawing on recent research data to discuss new hypotheses and research perspectives.

## Keywords

Central Asia, Bronze Age, Iron Age, socio-cultural transition, cultural variability

## 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

