



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# A survey approach to rural land use in antique northern Bactria. Kulal Tepa Archaeological Project (2023/2024)

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## Abstract

Major changes in settlement dynamics in the Central Asian region of Bactria are indicated throughout the Antique period. Yet, research has traditionally focused on urban sites; a more cohesive appraisal of these dynamics requires further work on rural settlements and their environments. The Kulal Tepa Archaeological Project of the Czech-Uzbekistani Archaeological Expedition focuses on a small rural settlement located in the foothills of southern Uzbekistan. This presentation outlines the survey part of the project, and fresh data collected during three field seasons (2023–2024). The primary objective was to evaluate past land use in the valley surrounding Kulal Tepa utilising large-scale systematic surface survey – still a neglected method in Central Asia. Enriched by other methods facilitating additional analysis of past occupation (e.g., remote sensing, extensive survey, geophysics, test-pitting), this approach contributes a new and unique dataset in scale and focus of investigation. Our data suggest that this valley was used primarily seasonally throughout history. However, identified artefact scatters indicate a primary period of intensive agricultural activity in Late Antiquity, coinciding with the settlement's main occupation phase. These findings reflect transformations in human ecology in foothill environment, which likely relate to larger socioeconomic changes in Bactria after the decline of Kushans.

## Keywords

surface survey, landscape archaeology, Bactria, rural settlement, agriculture

## Session

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