



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Agricultural practices in the eastern foothills of the Kugitang range, Archaeobotanical study of Bronze and Iron Age sites in southern Uzbekistan

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Abstract

In the mid-second millennium BCE, southern Central Asia underwent significant cultural and socio-economic transformations, leading to the decline of the Oxus civilization. Recent Franco-Uzbek archaeological excavations on Protohistoric settlements in the Surkhandarya Province of Uzbekistan, have provided new insights into the early Iron Age, marked by the emergence of new cultures.

Our research aims to deepen the understanding of subsistence strategies and environmental resources use during this transitional phase by analysing plants macroremains and phytoliths. Archaeobotanical investigations conducted at five sites, Dzharkutan, Tulki Tepa, Katta Bulak, Burgut Kurgan and Kayrit Tepa, show that cereals, notably barley, wheat and millet, alongside legumes and a few fruit species were cultivated in the lowlands and foothills of the Kugitang range.

The identified crops provide an overview of the agricultural practices and their adaptations to environmental constraints, such as aridity. Wild plant remains reflect the surrounding natural landscapes, now degraded by overgrazing. These small and clustered communities, practised agriculture while also gathering natural vegetation for fuel and fodder. Beyond agricultural production, we will discuss the evolution of the agricultural assemblage over time, including the introduction of new crops such as millet and the development of irrigation and storage techniques.

Keywords

Central Asia, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Archaeobotany, Agriculture

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