

## **Kuiryktobe site – medieval Keder**

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### **Abstract**

1. Kuiryktobe is one of the largest sites in the medieval Farab-Otrar district on middle Syrdarya river. This site is identified with the capital of the district – Keder in 9-11 ct AD.
2. First part of the life of the city is related to the epoch of Kangui state and with Otrar-Karatau archaeological culture. In the lower layers of the site, the ruins of fortified settlement belong to first centuries AD.
3. Lower layers of the citadel date back to Kangar period which is dated by 7-9 ct. AD. Palace's ruins erected on massive stylobate were found during excavations. The center of the palace is represented by the main hall measuring about 150 square meters with sufes along the walls and remains of the wooden throne. Wooden carved plates with depictions of the cults and secular scenes were hanged on the walls.
4. Parts of the development belong to Samanid and Karakhanid epochs (so-called period of Muslim renaissance). Borders of living quarters were marked out, pottery of 9-12 ct., coins of 11-12 ct., and a mosque of 10-11 ct. AD were investigated.
5. During Mongolian time 13-14 ct. AD, rabad became habitable where ironmaking workshops, living quarters of craftsmen were excavated.

# **Society for the Exploration of EurAsia: Objectives and projects 2004-2015**

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## **Abstract**

The private Swiss non-profit Society for the Exploration of EurAsia was founded in 2004 by a group of scholars in the fields of archaeology, history and history of art. Its objective is to provide a scientific contribution towards the archaeological exploration of Eurasia. It supports and coordinates archaeological fieldwork in close cooperation with local scientists and institutions. The results from research are published on the Society's website, in contributions in scientific and popular scientific publications, through lectures and contributions in local newspapers, radio and television.

At present, the society supports six projects in five countries. Four projects are concluded, of which one is under evaluation to be resumed.

# **Aspects of Urbanization und Centrality in Nomadic Empires of Mongolia**

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## **Abstract**

Comparative archaeological debates on urban settings and handbooks on early cities more or less neglect the constructed centers of nomadic empires. Archaeological investigations of nomadic empires and their urban centers present a critical, yet still rare, subject of scientific inquiry in need of inclusion within broader discussions of urban development, political complexity, and greater world history. It is my aim to examine the urban sites of the Xiongnu, Türk, Uyghur and Mongol empire period in Mongolia within the methodological framework of historical archaeology, comparative analyses and empirical urban theory. I will present the actual state of knowledge, discuss the evidence of political landscapes and the city-hinterland relationship.

# **Protohistoric settlement pattern in Central Asia: the case of Ulug-depe and Dzharkutan during the Bronze Age.**

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## **Abstract**

Since more than 15 years, two French archaeological Expeditions are leading excavations together with both an Uzbek (MAFOuz-Protohistoire) and a Turkmen (MAFTUR) team, on two major Protohistoric sites of Central Asia, Dzharkutan and Ulug-depe.

These two sites are well representative of the Oxus Civilisation or Bactrian-Margian Archaeological Complex. They testify to the development of complex cities, surrounded with fortification walls, including living quarters, storage and handicrafts areas, and with more important buildings interpreted as palaces and temples, reflecting strong social hierarchies. The finest art and crafts are associated to this urbanism, mainly, among other things, metallurgy, work of fine stones, and a very standardized pottery production. All these elements inscribe these cities into a larger exchange network with the neighbouring civilisations of the Indus Valley and the Iranian Plateau. In this paper, we will come back on these various elements by putting in perspective the results of our recent excavations at Dzharkutan and Ulug-depe.

# **Walled Sites in the Inner Syrdarya delta: Evidences of Non-Permanent Urbanism during the Iron Age (2nd half of the 1st millennium BC)**

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## **Abstract**

The interpretation of the Iron Age in the Syrdarya delta by S.P. Tolstov and other “Khoresmian” scholars, in which the region is regarded as a great agrarian state reliant upon its technologically advanced irrigation systems, still dominates the discourse today.

According to this model, the fortified sites are considered as real urban centres (cities) from which the state could administer, defend, and store the agricultural surplus.

This paper provides an alternative interpretation, definition and characterisation of urbanism and settlement pattern developed in the ancient Central Asian oasis, steppe and desert-steppe zones, with a peculiar reference to the meaning and function of Iron Age fortified enclosure sites widespread in the Inner Syrdarya delta (Chirik Rabat, Sengir Tam, Babish Mulla and Balandy). The outcome of the author's investigations and analyses is a re-framing of these sites as specialised centers for the elites, within a non-nucleated, dispersed and low-density agro-pastoral settlement system. They were characterised by some peculiar features, as a restricted and monitored site access, conservative architectural style, and exclusively presence of ceremonial, mainly funerary, intra-mural features, but they lack of the typically urban characters. The data collected in last season during the archaeological excavations, geophysical survey and surface exploration suggest that these sites were specialised venues for secure administrative, ceremonial and martial events and regal centres for itinerant ruling elites.

# **The phenomenon of urbanization between the Bronze and Iron Ages in the alluvial fan of the Murghab River (Turkmenistan). First data from the excavation of the Bronze Age sedentary site of Togolok 1**

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## **Abstract**

Turkmenistan is largely desert and, despite the arid climate, since the Bronze Age local populations have been able to create, through an impressive network of water canals, an artificial agricultural territory with villages and large towns.

Extensive researches conducted in the area highlight that, between 2400 and 1950 BC, the Murghab alluvial fan was characterised by the presence of complex urban societies. The period was followed by a deep crisis (1950-1300 BC - Late Bronze Age), that led to the disappearance of the largest sites. At the beginning of the Iron Age (1300-900 BC), the Murghab River suffered from a decrease of water flow and the desertification of the distal portion of the alluvial fan. This environmental change resulted in a southward shift of settlements and the abandonment of large portion of territories by sedentary farmers.

At the same time, new groups of mobile pastoralists were settling in the area starting to interact with farmers. Togolok 1 is one of the more crucial Bronze Age sedentary sites in the Murghab region providing necessary data on the integration between sedentary and nomadic cultures, at the base of the birth and evolution of the urbanism in the later Iron Age.

# **City of Kings and Gods Gonur Depe – A Capital of Margush Country: Its Opening by Prof. Victor Sarianidi in Turkmenistan and Newest Discoveries**

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## **Abstract**

Only a little more than 40 years ago (in 1972) Prof. Victor Sarianidi has picked up first fragments of pottery from the surface of the huge hill named by aboriginal people as Gonur Depe (Grey hill in Turkmenian). Not every year the excavations were carried out there: he was digging near Kopetdagh mountains, at other sites in ancient Murghab delta sites and in North Afghanistan also. But year by year the discovered monumental architecture, fine art, complicated world outlook, ideology and social stratification more and more persistently forced to a new look at historical processes of the eve of Third and Second Mil. BC. “Only” 4 thousands years it was needed to slightly open curtain on the mystery of formation and development of previously almost unknown country – the center of ancient Oriental civilization.

The steps of uncovering the Margush country, its dimensions and structure, the best discoveries of engineering, architecture, fine art are describing. The funeral, agricultural rituals, worship of animals and elements of nature are discussing. Special attention is given to Gonur Depe (2300-1600 BC) as a capital settlement of the country and new researches in the ancient Murghab delta during recent years.

# **The Hellenistic fortress of Bactria Uzundara**

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## **Abstract**

The fortress of Uzundara was discovered in 1991 by the academician of AN of RUZ E. V. Rtveladze during archaeological investigations in the Surkhan-Darya area of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Since 2013, the Baktrian group of the Central Asian archaeological expedition of the Institute of archeology of the Russian Academy of Sciences, headed by N. D. Dvurechenskaya, together with the Tokharistan archaeological expedition of Institute of Art Studies of AN of RUZ, began stationary complex archaeological researches of this monument. Uzundara fortress is located in Baysun mountains at top of the kuesta of Suzistag at the height of more than 1700 m, between the natural boundary and the gorge with steep walls. The fortress was precisely inserted into a complex mountainous terrain. It consists of the main diamond-shaped quadrangle, the citadel and additional outlying walls, and is strengthened by eleven towers. Total length of the 3.5 m wide walls of stone is more than 900 m. The unique III-century BC military complex of material culture of Uzundara fortress can play an essential role in determining the northern borders of the Greek-Bactrian state, which constitutes one of the most important problems in Central Asian history.



# **On the interpretation of the female figure on a ceramic fragment from Taraz**

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## **Abstract**

The medieval settlement Taraz is located in the central area of modern Taraz-city in the South of Kazakhstan. In 2014, a joint research-group “Turan”, represented by the archaeologists from Al-Farabi National University and Margulan Institute of Archaeology made a remarkable find, which is presumed to be a fragment of glazed pottery containing the image of a young woman. The piece was found in the cultural layer belonging to the Qarakhanid-Khanate period. Historically the period is characterized by opulence of the “classical Islam”, and, hence, by the increased prohibitions, particularly concerning the depiction of human beings. The artifact’s uniqueness is represented by the figurative female image in combination with Islamic symbolism. This is the first and so far the only known relic of this kind in Central Asia. The paper presents an iconographical and stylistic analysis of the elements of the image. On this basis the author succeeded in identifying the specific features of cultural interrelations in the Qarakhanid-Khanate, as well as determining the significance of the Turkic component in artistic processes in the studied period.

Keywords: Taraz, Karakhanids, glazed ceramics, Islamic art

# **Nomadic Urbanism: New discoveries of highland cities of the Kharakhanid Empire**

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## **Abstract**

The Karakhanid Empire was one of the largest polities of the medieval Silk Routes and their known urban centers are generally found in lowland plains and deltas. While the Karakhanids certainly derived much of their wealth and power from lowland Silk Road cities, ancient sources suggest their political and economic roots were still tied to nomadism and centered in the highlands of the Tian Shan and Pamir Mountains. Until recently, however, no urban centers were known above 1000m elevation. The latest discovery of large, dense urban centers (between 10-100 ha.) in the mountainous regions of Ustrushana (Southeast Uzbekistan) now allows for a completely original viewpoint of the economic productivity and regional control that fueled the expansion of Karakhanid iron production and ideological transformation from the 10th to the 12th c. CE. More specifically, two newly discovered cities found near Tashbulak (Uzbekistan) in 2011 and recently excavated with support from the Max Van Berchem foundation and National Geographic Society provide novel architectural, economic, and demographic data to recast our understanding of the local, regional, and macro-regional networks that underpinned the political, technological, and religious developments of the Karakhanids. This paper presents the latest evidence from excavations (2012 and 2015) at Tashbulak, a Karakhanid city located above 2000m elevation and previously unknown to the academic world.

# **The Excavations at Kojtepa (Samarkand Area) (Uzbekistan: First Results and Work Perspectives**

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## **Abstract**

Located in the Middle Zeravšān Valley, in the Pastdargom (lower Dargom) District, Kojtepa is close to Chandyr Village, about 30 km S-W of the modern city of Samarkand. It is located in a strategical area between the southern piedmont region of Karatyube Mts. - populated by nomadic tribes - and the northernmost more extensive agricultural area cultivated with wheat and cotton. Kojtepa consists of a central citadel (tepa) 9 meters high, encircled by fortified walls and by a moat. The main canals irrigating the area are the Dargom, Eski Anghor and Čilibursay. Between 2008 and 2013, the Uzbek-Italian Archaeological Mission investigated four areas of the site: Area no. 1 - close to the eastern walls; Area no. 2 - on the top of the tepa; Area no. 3 - close to the southern walls; Area no. 4 - zone between eastern and northern walls.

# **Elements of military equipment as votive offerings at Qarshovultepa**

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## **Abstract**

During excavations on Qarshovultepa archaeological site, carried out since 2010 with financial support of the SEEA, various stone objects were found. There are large beads, a fragment of a stone vessel, the stone stamp with Sogdian inscription «Baga Farn» (Glory Lord), etc. All of them are found in the layer of burning near so-called platform. Objects are scattered on the area of the court yard surrounding a platform. If we accept the assumption of cult or ceremonial use of a platform, a fire layer on one of last stages of inhabiting of Qarshovultepa can testify to plunder and burning of the given complex. In that case, chaotically scattered small objects can be the rests of the votive offerings stored in some of premises, adjoining a platform. Probably, what seemed to robbers not so valuable simply was thrown out. Many stone objects, for example, beads have traces of stay in fire. There are some stone objects which are elements of military equipment, namely, parts of the long sword set. Presentation would be devoted to defining they places on a structure of a sword and a sheath, to the review of analogies and to finding-out of the reason of their occurrence in a context of supposed cultic structure.

# **Burials of urban population of Chach**

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## **Abstract**

Within the project of Qarshovultepa, excavations were made on a necropolis, situated 200 m to the east of the site. 11 burials have been opened till now.

The burials differ on sepulchral constructions and orientation of the buried. Three constructions are catacomb graves, two are side chamber (podboy) graves, in other six it was not possible to establish construction, as only pits with skeletons have remained. The catacomb № 5, dug ca. 5 m below the present surface, is best preserved. Its construction and grave goods have direct analogies to Central Asian nomad burials of the first centuries BC. The burial goods are extremely poor. Exception is the catacomb double burial № 5 in which, despite a robbery, the rests of a richly ornamented iron sword and arrow heads have remained. The date of Qarshovul burial ground is from the first centuries BC to the early Middle Ages. The study of urban necropolises of the Chach region is so far not satisfactory. We know, basically, ossuaries which were found mostly by chance. Therefore, the Qarshovultepa burials are very important as they show tendencies to the preservation of nomad funeral traditions of already settled population.

# **Urbanism in Sogdiana? A view from the western fringes of the Bukhara oasis**

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## **Abstract**

Urbanisation in post-Achaemenid Sogdiana is typically viewed from the perspective of 'cities'. Far less is known about the situation in the rural hinterland. What was the nature of the networks linking the oasis fringe with urban sites? How did dynamic border regions impact on the development of urban networks in Sogdiana - and Central Asia more broadly? This paper will present results from the first survey season of a new fieldwork project on the western border of the Bukhara oasis. We will investigate settlement and land-use dynamics in and around the Bukhara oasis between the Iron Age and the Early Medieval periods in an effort to better understand the change during this time from a predominantly pastoral-nomad influenced society to a sedentary, agricultural society.

# **The connected oasis: Ancient Khorezm between the Near East and the Eurasian steppes.**

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## **Abstract**

Lying on the delta of the Amu Darya where it flows into the Aral Sea, Khorezm (in modern Uzbekistan) is surrounded by extensive stretches of desert and desert steppe (today called the Kyzylkum and the Karakum). It is often considered the most isolated of the Central Asian oases. However, through its mixed population of herders and agriculturalists, Khorezm was, in fact, very well connected with neighboring regions, including the vast world of mobile pastoralists in the Eurasian steppes to the north. Therefore, this seemingly isolated and peripheral region offers unique insights into exchange and interaction in the ancient world, and in particular into trans-Eurasian exchanges. The long-durée approach adopted in this paper facilitates new perspectives on Khorezm by highlighting the continuous, symbiotic relations between populations living in and around the oasis, and those further afield. Key questions concern the nature of these interactions: how did the herders and agricultural groups of the oasis establish and maintain their extensive ties with the mobile populations of the steppe, and inhabitants of contiguous regions? How are these relationships expressed in the material culture? Using archaeological and historical sources this lecture explores the links between Khorezm and the Near East, the Eurasian steppe, and the rest of Central Asia through a discussion of these mobile and sedentary groups over two millennia.

# **Formation of the earliest urban centre in Central Asia (according to materials from Altyn-Depe)**

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## **Abstract**

The results of many-year investigations of Altyn-Depe in Southern Turkmenistan have led to identification of two stages of the formation of the earliest urban civilization of the Bronze Age in Central Asia.

The first stage is dated to the Late Eneolithic (about 3100–2750 BC) when in Southern Turkmenistan there were taking place a transformation of the Anau cultural complex of the Middle Eneolithic period. The Altyn-Depe cultural complex of the Late Eneolithic transformations in the technology and organization of the main branches of industry, as well as changes of the dimensions and structure of the settlement. These processes reflect the formation of the cultural and technological basis of the earliest proto-urban centre.

The second stage was related to the further development of culture during the Early Bronze Age (about 2750–2350 BC) induced primarily by the technical and technological progress. By the end of the Early Bronze Age at Altyn Depe (as in Southern Turkmenistan in general), the main components of the cultural complex of the Middle Bronze Age had been established and the process of construction of the industrial base of specialized crafts completed. New types of transport means and domestication of camel led to intensification of cultural and trade interactions with all the surrounding cultures and centres in the last third of the 3rd mill. BC.



# **Urban development in the Chu Valley in the Middle Ages in context of the archaeological materials of Novopokrovskoe II, Kyrgyzstan.**

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## **Abstract**

The archaeological works on the site have brought a lot of new facts and observations regarding the urban tradition in the region. The analysis of the ceramic complex and architecture changes some accepted historiography schemes. Now we can see that the urban tradition in the Chu valley was much more complex than previously assumed.

The most interesting data came out from the lower horizon of the settlement. The ceramic complex practically has no parallels in the Chu-Valley. These ceramics share similarities with ceramic complexes from the settlements on the Syr-Darya River.

The cultural tradition of the Karakhanid period (based on materials from the upper horizon) was more unified, so we see good parallels in archaeological materials from other sites of the Chu Valley. The fortification in the late Karakhanid time loses its function and the settlement explodes outside the settlement walls (inside the walls of the settlement and outside of them living structures were built), which can be substantiated through changes in the political situation and appearance of the great Karakhanid Khanate.

# **Urban cultures of Inner Asian Nomadic Empires: from Xiongnu to Mongols**

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## **Abstract**

The Inner Asian urbanization processes were studied during the periods of nomadic empires 209 BC – 1368 AD (RSF # 14-18-01165). It was the result of complex interaction of world-system networks in Eastern Eurasia. The Xiongnu had rural settlements and cities whose population were mostly farmers. In the Uighur empire there was one imperial trading megacity and some towns. The annexation of a growing number of significant agricultural territories to the Liao empire required the creation of a more sophisticated mechanism of government. The Khitans built large cities with gorgeous temples and palaces to house the imperial court and the emperor's officials. The excavations of towns show that their population was international. The Mongols during the first decades of the existence of the empire organized a large scale mobilization of human resources and began towns-building. All this formed a basis for the fruitful unprecedented technological and cultural exchange and integration of cultures, religions and civilizations, facilitated implementation of new opportunities and unique discoveries, which were destined to have a revolutionary effect on the world for several hundred years.

# **One of the temples of the buddhist monastery in Krasnaya Rechka (Northern Kyrgyzstan)**

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## **Abstract**

The presentation highlights the key outcomes of the archaeological excavations of the Buddhist temple discovered in Krasnaya Rechka site (Northern Kyrgyzstan) in 2010. The excavation was conducted jointly by the archaeological expedition of the State Hermitage museum (Saint-Petersburg, Russia) and the Institute of History and Cultural Heritage (National Academy of Sciences, Kyrgyz Republic).

Krasnaya Rechka is the largest medieval city in the Chu Valley, located thirty five kilometres east of Bishkek. The site is identified by most scholars with the city of Navekat (Nevaket) known from Chinese, Persian and Arab written sources (for the first time it was mentioned in 711 in a Sogdian document from Mt. Mugh).

The ruins of the Buddhist temple are located in the western part of the city. The temple forms part of a larger architectural complex (Buddhist monastery) that is centered on a large pyramidal mound (stūpa) and surrounded with walls on four sides. A deep irrigation ditch divide the complex into two parts, with most of its structures and the pyramidal mound located on the western side, and two other separate mounds (northern and western) left on the eastern side.

The northern mound has been the focus of the excavations for the five fieldwork seasons, which revealed the Buddhist temple adorned with murals and sculptures. Its archaeological excavations during the period of 2010–2015 resulted in a near complete uncovering of the temple ruins, and the unveiling of the construction process of the building, which can be divided into three construction periods. The temple (sized  $22,4 \times 19,5$  m) has rectangular-shaped plan and extended along in the north-south directions. A cella ( $8 \times 7,3$  m, slightly extended along in the east-west directions) with a small altar room is surrounded with four galleries of the circumambulatory corridor 1,7–2 m in width.

The most prominent find was a painted clay sculpture of a seated Buddha sized  $90 \times 154 \times 84$  cm, which was located at the rear section of the altar room. The sculpture was preserved in situ to about 1/3 of the torso. The legs under the folds of the dress are crossed in the lotus position (padmāsana). The left forearm, covered with garment folds ending in volutes, rests on the left leg. A fairly broad relief band, presumably representing garment folds, sweeps over the crossed legs. Among the other finds worth mentioning are relatively small head of a fierce deity, a sculptural torso with crossed ribbons and a pendant with Kirtimukha image. Survived mural fragments include an image of a Buddha sitting on a lotus throne and an ornament of a semi-column.

General conclusions were obtained on the basis of the layout of the temple and several details of its interior. It is evident that the temple dates back not earlier than 8th century and it continued to function even during the early Kharakhanid period.

# **Settlement patterns at the Sasanian time in South Turkmenistan (Preliminary survey results in the Abiverd and Merv regions in 2014-2015)**

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## **Abstract**

The Sasanian Empire (224/226–651 CE) was one of the most extensive and powerful pre-Islamic empires. It was divided into four principal regions. One of them was called Khorasan, which incorporated north-eastern Iran and southern Turkmenistan. The position of the empire's north-eastern frontier was dependent on military fortunes. Throughout most of the Sasanian reign, the north-eastern edge of the empire lay in Southern Turkmenistan, notably around the ancient city of Merv (nowadays Mary province of Turkmenistan) and in Abiverd area (Ahal province of Turkmenistan). These two regions have the highest concentration of Sasanian sites. While various research teams have studied the South Turkmenistan for decades, a larger regional survey looking for Sasanian sites has never been conducted. The survey results of the regional study in 2014-2015 build on prior work by utilizing systematic surveying approaches which have up to now not been used and attempt to connect the development of these regions to that of other local areas both within and outside Turkmenistan. Such methods have not previously been used in this region. Also it was the first systematic settlement survey of Sasanian sites along this crucial north-eastern boundary zone and trying to find diachronic (e.g., settlement hierarchy before Sasanian arrival vs. after) and comparative differences (e.g., Sasanian settlement patterns in Iran vs. in Turkmenistan).

# **The Study of Ceramics from Sanjar-Shah: Technological, Cultural and Administrative Connections with Panjikent**

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## **Abstract**

The paper presents a preliminary discussion and analysis of the ceramic assemblages of Sanjar-Shah based on the results of the recent excavations. The pottery from Sanjar-Shah will be compared with the ceramics from Panjikent, which lies just 12 km to the west. This can provide important information on the relations between these two adjacent sites and on the Sogdian administration in the 6-8 centuries.

Interestingly, no evidence for pottery production was found in Panjikent, which has been continuously excavated since 1940s. At the same time, a pottery kiln has been uncovered at Sanjar-Shah in Area 2. Is it possible that the ceramic industry at Sanjar-Shah served both sites? In addition, the quality of Sanjar-Shah ceramics is usually higher than in Panjikent. The paper will discuss possible explanations for this phenomenon and its implications for the connections between the two sites.

# **Protohistoric settlement pattern in Central Asia: the case of Ulug-depe and Dzharkutan during the Iron Age.**

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## **Abstract**

Around 1500 BCE a major cultural, economic and ideological shift happened in southern Central Asia, leading to the disappearance of the Bactrian-Margian Archaeological Complex and to the beginning of the Iron Age. One of its most impressive consequence is a radical transformation of the settlement pattern: small villages replace large proto-urban sites, although they are usually located in the same oases. Due to the history of researches in the area, only few Iron Age settlements have been excavated, but two ongoing excavations allow shedding a new light on this period: Dzharkutan in Uzbekistan (dir. J. Bendezu-Sarmiento, J. Lhuillier, S. Mustafakulov), and Ulug-depe in Turkmenistan (dir. O. Lecomte, J. Bendezu-Sarmiento, M. Mamedow). While most of the Iron Age settlements are new foundations, these two sites are some of the very few settlements known in Central Asia occupied without any hiatus from the Bronze Age to the Iron Age and are well preserved, thus allowing following the evolution of the occupation. In the continuity of Julio Bendezu-Sarmiento's paper on the Bronze Age occupation of those sites, we will characterize this new settlement pattern, and bring some elements of understanding of this transformation, especially in correlation to the stratigraphy and the evolution of the economy.

# **Parthian Nisa: landscape, topography and settlement plan**

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## **Abstract**

The paper will introduce a brief overview on the settlement pattern in the Ahal district (nowadays southern central Turkmenistan) during Parthian times and will focus, in particular, on the topography of Parthian Nisa.

Unfortunately, we still have very little information about the hill known today as New Nisa (probably the city proper at that time), while more data are available on the ceremonial centre of Old Nisa.

A general overview on the ancient landscape around the arsacid centre will be presented. Moreover, the new excavations, carried out in the last years (2008-2015) in the southern and eastern part of Old Nisa, revealed here the presence of economic and functional buildings likely related to the central monumental ensemble. Today a more complete plan of this ceremonial citadel is available.

# **Hisorak in the Upper Zeravshan valley and its Bactrian connections**

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## **Abstract**

Hisorak is an early medieval site located in the mountainous part of Zeravshan valley some 240 km from Panjakent. It was flourishing in early Middle Ages and corresponds to Martshkat in the Mount Mugh documents (before 722 CE). The excavations of the site were conducted in 1998 by the expedition led by B.Ya. Stvaviskiy and Yusuf Yakubov and, since 2010, by the Hermitage expedition. The works revealed a sophisticated city-life in this distant and severe place. The soil of Hisorak appeared to preserve great amount of organic materials which are usually lost in lowland parts of Middle Asia. The site of Hisorak could be reached from lowland Zeravshan valley, that is, Sogdiana, and through surmountable passes to the north, from Ustrushana and Fergana, and from the south, the upper Wakhsh valley in historical Bactria or Tokharistan. The materials from the site have a number of similarities to other sites in Upper Zeravshan (Kum, Gardani Hisor, Mount Mugh), Mainland Sogdiana (Panjakent, Samarkand, Sanjar-shah) and Ustrushana (Shahristan oasis, Myk fortress, Kalai Kofar). In the present paper we will focus on southern, Bactrian connections, which are evident in singular finds, elements of pottery assemblages and, most importantly, building techniques. Modern toponymy of the surroundings of Hisorak also delivers some hints that a dialect close to Bactrian could have been spoken here in medieval times.



# **Urbanscape vs. Landscape or Urbanscape as Landscape? A case from ancient Samarkand (Sogdiana)**

**Simone Mantellini**

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## **Abstract**

Samarkand has always been considered as one of the most important centers along the ancient Silk Road, playing a crucial role in the trade between the major ancient Central Asian cities. However, no city can survive and develop without its hinterland and Samarkand is no exception to this rule. The recent geo-archaeological investigations carried out by the Uzbek-Italian Archaeological Expedition unveiled a more complex relationship between the urban landscape of the city and its regional connections, making it an unprecedented case study for the complementarity between urbanscapes and landscapes. It is commonly accepted that the full urbanization of this area occurred as early as the Achaemenid period (7th-6th centuries BC). Fresh data from field surveys, combined with stratigraphic excavations and 14c dating, are here used to suggest that it took place in the Hellenistic-Kangju periods (3rd-2nd centuries BC). At that time, a complex network of canals was created to supply the city and to irrigate the field. A clear master-plan ensured a rational exploitation of the territory, with urban spaces around the city and areas for irrigated agriculture in the plain and breeding in the foothill. According to this scenario, the growth of Maracanda is explained in the perspective to consider it as the result of the mutual symbiosis between the settled farmers and the semi-nomadic pastoralist.

# **Pottery assemblage of Early Hellenistic time from the Sogdian City Paikend**

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## **Abstract**

Paikend is the city on the lower stream of Zerafshan river in the south-western part of Bukhara oasis (modern Uzbekistan). It is located at the intersection of old trade routes, running from China to Iran, and from Europe to India.

The medieval Persian and Arabian sources said that the one of the most ancient fire-temple was constructed in Paikend by legendary Iranian king Feridun; that Zoroastrian priests from Bukhara used to gather in Paikend once a year; that Paikend was the residence of Bukharan kings; that Paikend had honorary names “The city of merchants” and “The Copper (Strong) City” as well. But in the 11th century Paikend was abandoned due to lack of water.

Paikend site is excavated with large interruptions since 1913. In 1981 the joint Russian-Uzbek Bukharan expedition begun to work on the site. It's works showed that in the medieval times the city consisted of a citadel, two shahristans (urban areas proper) and some suburbs, or rabads out of city walls.

The most ancient part of the site is the citadel. According to archaeological data, the Zoroastrian fire-temple was the core of it. Near the platform of it, in 2012-2014, we excavated earliest fortification walls. The ceramics which were found near are similar to the so called transitional ceramic assemblage (post-Achaemenidians – early Hellenistic). Cylinder-conical container vessels were found along with new forms of table pottery which spread to Central Asia under influence of the Greek pottery tradition after the expeditions of Alexander the Great. They have analogs in Sogdian and Bactrian lands and could be dated back to the end of 4th and beginning of 3rd century BC.

# **Archaeological investigations at Vardāna: preliminary results**

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## **Abstract**

The archaeological site of Vardāna is located on the northern border of Bukhāra oasis (Uzbekistan), which formed the westernmost territory of Sogdiana in ancient times. During the early medieval period (5th-8th centuries AD) this settlement controlled the surrounding territory and formed a small principality known as the 'lands of Abuya'. Descriptions of Vardāna are present in several Islamic sources, suggesting the antiquity of this place but also its strategic and political role, particularly relevant at the time of the Arab advance in the region.

This paper presents the results of the archaeological investigations run by the Society of Exploration of EurAsia at the citadel of Vardāna between the 2009 and 2015. In particular, I shall examine the constructive phases dated from the 5th to the 8th century AD. During this period, the top of the citadel hosted a rectangular palace, encircled by a wide corridor. The analysis of the excavated structures and the material culture have shown the presence of classic Sogdian traits as well as local peculiarities that need further investigation.

# **Results of archaeological excavations on the site Novopokrovskoe II 2004-2014**

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## **Abstract**

The site Novopokrovskoe II is located in the Chu valley on 11 km to the east from Bishkek. The first excavation is located in the South-Eastern corner of the settlement. The Second Excavation is located in the centre of the settlement.

In both excavations the same stratigraphic situation was documented. There are two building horizons, each of them includes some building periods.

The upper horizon is dated on the base of ceramic and coins into 11-12 centuries. The excavated building structures of this horizon are typical for the Karachanid period with sufas along the walls, kitchen with tandyr and badrabs. The walls of rooms are built of unburned bricks. The rooms had slight roofs.

The date of the lower horizon is relatively complicated. The finds of Türgesh coins in correlation with a ceramic complex and architectonic tradition indicate to the 8th century. The rooms were built in some different building tradition. As mentioned, a very interesting ceramic complex belongs to the lower horizon.

The archaeological work could also find out the period of desolation following the lower horizon and covering it. Later this layer was a platform for rubbish pits.

# **Sanjar-Shah – a Sogdian Town in the Zeravshan Valley. Some Preliminary Results of the Recent Archaeological Investigations**

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## **Abstract**

This paper will present some preliminary results of the excavations conducted at the site of Sanjar-Shah in 2014-2015. Sanjar-Shah is located 12 km to the east of the Sogdian city of Panjikent (modern Tajikistan) and seems to be roughly contemporary with it (5th-8th centuries CE). The previous excavations in 2003 and in 2007-2013 have mostly concentrated on the Round Tower in the northwestern corner of the site and on the Area II in the eastern part of the town. The architectural layout of the Tower finds no parallels in the Sogdian fortifications. Some important finds have been made there in 2008-2009, including a well-preserved cotton shirt and five fragments of Arabic letters written on paper. These fragments are dated to the first half of the 8th century CE, which makes them the earliest known Arabic texts written on paper.

The results of the recent excavations suggest that all the rooms uncovered so far in Area II belong to two different households separated by a large open courtyard and a wide street. Furthermore, it appears that this part of Sanjar-Shah was most probably a craftsmen's quarter. In addition we shall discuss the possible ancient name of Sanjar-Shah and its relations with the neighboring city of Panjikent in light of the evidence of the Mount Mui documents.

# **Archaeological investigations on Qarshovultepa**

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## **Abstract**

In 2008 an archaeological team from Tashkent started excavations on Qarshovultepa. Since 2010, the project is financially supported by EurAsia.

The site is located in a SW part of the Tashkent oasis. Total area of the site is about 6 hectares. The southern side of the site is directed to the ancient riverbed of Chirchiq river and has been partly destroyed by water.

Main works were conducted in the central part of the site for investigating a supposed cultic construction. There are also excavations of a city gate and fortifications in the northern sector. The necropolis is situated on a separate hill 200 m to the east from Qarshovultepa.

Archaeological findings (ceramics, metal and stone objects, more than 50 coins), building materials and methods show that the site belongs to so called Kaunchi archaeological culture of ancient Chach and it was inhabited till the 8th century AD. This small town reflects processes of sedentarisation of the former nomads and urbanization within the state of Kangui. Probably, shortly before the destruction of the town, there was here a country-side residence of one of the pre-Islamic rulers of Chach, with a ceremonial centre possibly connected to the ancestral cult.

# **Urban Hinterlands: Five years of investigations along the "Long Wall" of Bukhara**

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## **Abstract**

Territorial barriers are a widespread phenomenon in many micro-regions of Western Central Asia where they specifically take the shape of large-scale oasis walls, surrounding the entirety or large parts of the agricultural hinterland of important urban centers vis-à-vis stretches of desert or desert steppe in the region. Nonetheless, starting with their dating, our understanding of these sizable monuments is still very insufficient. The most monumental and best preserved one of these territorial barriers, the "long wall" of Bukhara--at least 250 miles long and complete with an impressive array of adjoining fortresses and watchtowers--, is since 2011 subject to comprehensive investigations carried out in the framework of an American-Uzbek field project. The results of five seasons of extensive field surveys and excavations (the latter including substantial works at a border fortress and the citadel of a border town) allow, for the first time, substantiated conclusions regarding the chronology of the barrier and provide important new insights into questions related to the purpose(s) of Bukhara's "long wall" system in the context of political and economic dynamics in Sogdiana during the first millennium CE.

# **Cross-planed constructions in the Tianshan Foothills region**

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## **Abstract**

In 2011 a cross-planed construction was discovered by the expedition led by E. Smagulov in Kul-tobe settlement in Turkestan city (Kazakhstan). The construction has three rooms: the first one was long room extended along in the west-east directions and two other small rooms, which were connected with the first one with a passages. It should be noted that the construction has not any entrances to the outside, while each room has narrow embrasures. During the first construction period the construction served as a military tower of a single family-clan. Such a construction are known in the Talas Valley and Middle Syr Darya region. During the second construction period a small castle was attached to the tower. The castle was planed across a yard and has three circumambulatory corridors and other three towers. The castle is dated back to the middle of the 2nd century A.D. Eventually a settlement was attached to the castle and the settlement, surrounded with fortification wall, is dated back to the 3–4th centuries A.D. The settlement was destroyed by fire during 4th century A.D. The most interesting thing is that the cross-planed construction and the castle attached to it reflect the early period of urbanization process in Kangui state.



# **The Long Spell of the Territory – Population – Resources Paradigm: Reading the Settlement Landscape in the Spiral of Time.**

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## **Abstract**

The time of urbanism is here projected to the vast continuous land-mass locked within the Eurasian continent. During Early and Middle Holocene, post-Pleistocene adaptations of hunters and gathers throughout this land-locked continent were directed by the intensification of natural resources, privileging as elsewhere ecotone areas where the niche-pocked crowding of trophic cycles origin could ensure access to a rich biomass all year. Piedmont areas as well as river banks and deltaic plains with gallery forests, terminal lagoons and lakeside shores were the places of most intensive and permanent frequentation by the largest groups of foragers. Intensification of food resources and continuity of settlements assured larger and denser human communities.

More food, more people, more people, more labor, more labor, more food. It is the virtuous cycle of growth, precondition of nucleation and hence the intensification of transactions, exchanges, and ultimately alliances. Urbanization as a concept and as a process had to be cast within this more general and vastly implemental process of nucleation. None denies its “revolutionary effect”: we still accept the paradigm of V. G. Childe and its “Wendelpunkt” factor, but at light of the work consistently carried out in the field by decades of systematic surveys by Settlement Archaeology, we have to consider carefully other than urbanism, as strictly defined by the “Uruk Perspective”, the aggregation outcasts that expanded societies in other parts of the world.

During the Middle Holocene, different parts of the world and in particular from the Late Neolithic of Europe, document cases of nucleation with population density even larger than the Uruk of the early 3rd millennium BC. For example settlements of Tripolye culture in central Ukraine are made by aggregation of hundreds of long houses with cautious estimations of 10 thousand inhabitants, nourished by the high fertility of the surrounding chernosol, the black soil.

By the end of the Sixties, the New Archaeology movement headed by L. Binford and S. Struever, designed the Territory - Population - Resources paradigm that over the past 50 years has guided us in reading settlement landscapes across all regions of the world and its transformations in the spiral of time.

Soon after, mostly during 70's and 80's Marxist archaeologists had oriented the paradigm to incorporate the evaluation of human labor as a quantum of energy derived from the capacity of aggregation determined by the alliances through cooperative efforts, hierarchy and heterarchy alike. Labor means energy directly derived by the balance of people and food, as an extraordinary machine of human dimension able to transform landscapes to the human dimension.

The long spell of the T-P-L paradigm is strengthened by a better measure of human labor that has contributed to maintain it as a robust tool of investigation.

The earliest visibility of farming villages turning into towns fed by irrigation canals of over 3 km and then into 30-40 ha central places that might be labeled “cities”, takes place during the Middle Holocene along the Northern foothills of the Kopet Dag culminating in the Early Bronze Age in the centers of Namazga depe (c. 60 ha) and Altyn depe (c. 30 ha).

In general, the emergence of urbanism along the foothills of the Kopet Dag and its slightly later expansion to the east, from the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, to the Murghab delta, closely resembles the growth profile and territorial structure of early urban centers of Iran and Afghanistan. Quite different in configuration and territorial articulation is the phenomenology of urbanism across the vast expanses of the Amu Daria delta in Khorezm, along the fertile lowlands to the south of the Aral Sea. Here for the whole of the 2nd and 1st mill. BCE there is no direct evidence for a urban-like pyramidal configuration in the rank-sized profiles. The nomadic economy based on food from animal breeding develops an equal footing if compared with farming production. This duality determined an equal productivity of steppe environments, of animals and crops of the same piece of lands that has largely determined the configuration of the settlement landscapes through time. The degree of nucleation and its consequent urbanization was not determined by the primary production of food, but by trade and industry.

From the western borders of China to the northern gates of India and Iran, until the open vastness crossed by the Volga, urbanism became one thing with trade first, to provide market places and the specialized manufactures for the production of textiles, metals, leather products, often routed in local resources and interactions within other exchange circles. Samarkand and Merv, Kashgar and Astrakan are splendid expressions of a geniality that turns scarcity into wealth and capital.

The Great Silk Road is the monument to the geniality of farmers and herders alike, able to unify a continent divided by a diversity of traditions and cultures, too often invaded by the armies of aggressive empires surrounding the heartlands of the continent.

Blessed by a wealth of natural resources and crossed by the axial trade routes connecting the extremes of the Eurasian continent, Central Asia is a region of the world historically characterized by the interaction of two different socio-economic realities: irrigation agriculture and nomadic stock-breeding. Traditionally historians have viewed this duality in terms of conflict between two supposedly irreconcilable alternatives. The recent intensification of archaeological and ethnographic work throughout the region as well as the reinterpretation of historical text is finally changing this perspective. And rather than speak of a duality between farmers and herders it appears more correct to imagine an interwoven fabric of local specializations, distinguished by ethnical or tribal identity and politically organized in terms of alliances by exchanges of mutual advantage.

# **Dzhuvara – Ancient Capital of Oguz in the Light of Recent Archaeological Excavations**

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## **Abstract**

Recent archaeological researches conducted on Kesken Kuyuk kala site gave possibility to collect vivid data related to such important, but still unknown field of the history and archaeology as Oguz or Oguz-Kypchak culture.

Oguz and Turkmen tribes as a core of Oguz's and Seljuk's state played an important role in the history of Eurasia. Duration of their stay on the territory falls on 9th -12th centuries AD, before these tribes left the Kazakhstan area heading to the south of Central Asia, Iran, Afghanistan, Transcaucasia and Asia Minor where they became a part in the formation of Turkmen, Azerbaijani and Turkish nations.

Problem of localization of medieval Oguz capitals Dzhanakent, Dzhuvara and Dzhenk - big cities in the Lower Syrdarya river being mentioned in all written sources describing the Seljuk period in the history of Oguz tribes and the first period of the Mongolian conquest, - are included into a range of issues addressed by one of the most eminent researcher of the history of Turkmen and Oguz, S.G. Agadzhanov, as the so-called "Oguz Issue".

Most interesting and important materials were received during complex archaeological investigations of Dzhuvara starting 2008, an ancient capital of Oguz tribes. Temple with treasure-rooms or tabernacles as well as living quarters with numerous altars were found during excavations. Recent discoveries give strong basis for further interpretations and reconstructions of religious and utilitarian sides of life of unknown Oguz.

# **The Swiss Research at Gonur Depe in 2014 and 2015**

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## **Abstract**

Geomagnetic and archaeological fieldwork at Gonur Depe were started in 2014/2015, following to a cooperation agreement between the Margiana Expedition of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Moscow) and the Institute of Archaeological Sciences (IAW) of the University of Bern. A delegation participated in the work at Gonur Depe in 2014 and 2015. The project includes a geophysical examination of so far non-excavated areas of Gonur Depe and archaeological excavations in selected areas. The aim is on the one side to reconstruct the settlement structure on the base of non-invasive methods and to fine-tune the site chronology. The non-invasive investigations are conducted with the support of the Society for the Exploration of Eurasia, the excavations are undertaken in cooperation of the Swiss-Liechtenstein Society for Archaeology (SLSA).

The geomagnetic surveys were conducted in not excavated areas around the Kremlin/Palace of Gonur, between the Kremlin/Palace of Gonur and the “Temenos” of Gonur South as well as in its next vicinity. As a result of the collected geomagnetic data overview maps of the different prospected areas were compiled, which showed amounts of more than 100 disturbances of the geomagnetic field/dipole-anomalies with characteristic North-South orientation that might be seen/interpreted as high temperature range areas like for example large pyrotechnological installations/kilns for the production of pottery. New, so far unknown, dwelling areas around the Kremlin/Palace and the Temenos of Gonur South have been detected too as well as over 200 possible graves and some round structures could be discovered. An unknown system of long extended ditches was found in the West of the Kremlin/Palace. This trench system seems to have formed the border of the settlement during Period II. The existence of this artificial ancient trench system was able to confirm by archaeological excavations in 2014. Further excavations in 2015 also revealed different settlement phases of Period II in this area, documented by well preserved inventories.