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Beyond being a pastoralist in Central Asia

**“Margins or Nodes” concluding online conference
March 26, 2021 - Zoom**

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Beyond being a pastoralist in Central Asia: Revisiting the “nomadic narrative” with new research programs and cutting-edge archaeological methods

Margins or Nodes project’s concluding conference March 26, 2021.

Organizers:

Taylor Hermes (Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Germany & Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Elina Ananyevskaya (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Giedre Motuzaitė Matuzeviciute (Vilnius University, Lithuania)

Critical reconsiderations have recently emerged to the long-standing view that the vast, ecologically diverse region of ancient Central and Inner Asia was the domain of highly mobile pastoralists, or “nomads”, who subsisted exclusively on domesticated animal products. Repeated findings of a wide range of cereal macrobotanical remains from sites dating from the third millennium BC demonstrate that ancient communities here were entangled in a mosaic of dietary choices beyond herd animals. The increasing application of isotope analysis to human and animal skeletal remains further reinforces that Central Asian landscapes were characterized by diverse investments in plant cultivation, especially of the isotopically distinct C₄ millets. Although this research collectively fuels important debate about the lifeways of ancient communities in Central Asia, we continue to lack a precise understanding of the breadth of subsistence engagements within and between diverse ecozones, how antecedent foraging strategies were transformed into a diverse array of foodways using domesticates, and how herding or farming production intensified in tandem with the formation of powerful polities and early states. Taken together, we face immense difficulty and contemplation in labelling the communities driving these processes. This session explores the theoretical and empirical basis of assigning a “subsistence identity” to communities located in Central, Inner Asia, and adjacent regions dating from the Eneolithic to the historical period in light of diverse methods of resolving human subsistence and mobility, in addition to novel analyses of material culture, settlement patterns, and architecture that illuminate the complexities of institutional domains and cultural dynamics. Papers in this online conference will present rigorous data collection and analysis of archaeological materials in order to provide new insights on subsistence, mobility, and everyday life that reshape how we understand community identity and interaction in the archaeology of the Eurasian steppes.

Programme of the Conference

First Session

08:00 – 08:15 GMT +2	Introductory Speech (Dr. Giedre Motuzaite Matuzeviciute – Vilnius University, Lithuania)
08:15 – 08:30 GMT +2	Pastoral adaptations in the Central Tien-Shan and the Fergana Valley in the Bronze Age (Dr. Shogo Kume - Tokyo University of the Arts; Dr. Gakuhari, T., Dr. Arai, S., Dr. Motuzaite Matuzeviciute, G., Dr. Miyata, Y., Dr. Hoshimov, H., Dr. Abdykanova, A., Dr. Matbabaev, B.)
08:30 – 08:45 GMT +2	Preliminary results of pottery organic residue analysis of Bronze Age to Early Iron Age, Kazakhstan (Dr. Shinya Shoda - Nara National Research Institute for Cultural Properties, Japan; Natsuki Murakami, Akhan Onggaruly, Yana Lukpanova, Emma Usmanova, Elina Ananyevskaya, Helen Talbot, Giedre Motuzaite-Matuzeviciute and Oliver E. Craig)
08:45 – 09:00 GMT +2	Contribution of fish and millet to human diets in Bronze and Iron age Kazakhstan revealed by compound-specific isotopic analysis of amino acids (Dr. Yu Itahashi – University of Tsukuba, Japan)
09:00 – 09:15 GMT +2	Early emergence and development of pastoralism in northwestern China from the perspective of isotopes (Dr. Minmin Ma – MOE Key Laboratory of Western China's Environmental System, University of Lanzhou, China; Lele Ren, Zhipeng Li, Qianqian Wang, Xueye Zhao, Yiru Wang)
09:15 – 09:30 GMT +2	Kushan period social and ecological transformation in the Kashmir Valley (Dr. Michael Spate, Dr. Alison Betts - University of Sydney, Australia)
09:30 – 09:45 GMT +2	Being pastoralist among hunters and fishermen - Vectors of pastroal economies in the Western Siberian forest steppe' (Dr. Sabine Reinhold - German Archaeological Institutue, Eurasia-Department, Germany; Dr. Zhanna Marchenko - Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology IEAT, Siberian Branch, Russian Academy of Sciences, Russia)
09:45 – 10:00 GMT +2	An overview of new pottery studies in northern Kyrgyzstan: questions on variability of the Andronovo ceramic production (Dr. Elise Luneau - German Archaeological Institute, Berlin, Germany)
10:00 – 10:15 GMT +2	Early Nomadic chronologies in Altai (Dr. Svetlana Svyatko - Queen's University Belfast)
10:15 – 10:30 GMT +2	Fruits of the Silk Road: Archaeobotanical advances in Central Asia (Dr. Robert N Spengler III - Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany)

10:30 – 10:45 GMT +2	A Drone, A Slope, and A Landscape: Results and early interpretations of UAV-based archaeological survey at Kok-Sai (SE Kochkor Valley, Kyrgyzstan) (Dr. Lynne Rouse - German Archaeological Institute, German Archaeological Institute, Germany; Vilnius University, Lithuania)
10:45 – 11:00 GMT +2	Economic diversity in the Xiongnu and Mongol Empires (Dr. Shevan Wilkin - Institute for Evolutionary Medicine, University of Zürich, Switzerland)
11:00 – 11:15 GMT +2	Environment or foddering? Faunal stable isotope data from the medieval fortresses on Syr Darya River (Dr. Elina Ananyevskaya – Vilnius University, Lithuania; PhD Kurmaniyazov Yslam – Al-Farabi Kazakh National University; Dr. Azilhan Tazhekeyev, Seidali Bilalov, Zhetesbi Sultanzhanov – Korkyt Ara University of Kyzylorda, Rustem Darmanov – National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan)
11:15 – 11:30	Wrestling with ‘subsistence typologies’ for the people transmitting food producing technologies through the Inner Asian Mountain Corridor (Dr. Taylor Hermes - Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany)

Second Session

13:30 – 13:45 GMT +2	Earliest evidence for pastoralism in Central Asia from the Obishir V site (Dr. Svetlana Shnaider - ArchaeoZOOlogy in Siberia and Central Asia - ZooSCAN, CNRS – IAET SB RAS International Research Laboratory; Dr. William Taylor - University of Colorado Museum of Natural History; Dr. Melanie Pruvost - Bordeaux University; Dr. William Rendu - ArchaeoZOOlogy in Siberia and Central Asia - ZooSCAN, CNRS – IAET SB RAS International Research Laboratory; Dr. Cosimo Posth - Archaeo-and Palaeogenetics group, Institute for Archaeological Sciences, University of Tübingen, Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany; Dr. Aida Abdykanova - American University in Central Asia; Dr. Choongwon Jeong - School of Biological Sciences, Seoul National University, Seoul, Republic of Korea; Dr. Taylor Hermes - Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany; Dr. Katerina Douka - Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany; Dr. Christina Warinner - Department of Anthropology, Harvard University; Department of Archaeology, Max Planck Institute for the Science of Human History, Jena, Germany)
13:45 – 14:00 GMT +2	История исследований поселений эпохи бронзы и раннего железного века в Киргизстане и новые перспективы – History of Bronze and Early Iron Age settlements research in Kyrgyzstan and new perspectives (presentation in Russian) (Dr. Kubatbek Tabaldiev - Kyrgyz-Turkish Manas University, Kyrgyzstan)
14:15 – 14:30 GMT +2	Attributes of the Bronze Age steppe animal husbandry based on the materials of the Sintashta culture funeral practices (the Cemetery of Solntse II) (PhD Polina Fricke - Institute of History and Archaeology of the UB RAS, Russia)

14:30 - 14:45 GMT +2	Between Kashmir and Inner Asia: revisiting analogous subsistence and cultural material of Neolithic sites from these two distinct regions (PhD Mumtaz Yattoo – The University of Kashmir)
14:45 – 15:00 GMT +2	Meeting in the steppes: new insights on nutrition analyses ($\delta^{15}\text{N}$, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$) of the Bronze Age population in Ulug Depe, Turkmenistan (PhD Sonja Kroll – National Museum of Natural History, France)
15:00 – 15:15 GMT +2	The earliest domestic cat on the Silk Road (Dr. Ashleigh Haruda - University of Oxford, UK)
15:15 – 15:30 GMT +2	Bronze Age Collections of the State Historical museum from northern Kazakhstan: new isotope data (Dr. Natalia Shishlina, - The State Historical Museum of Russia; Dr. Anastasiya Loboda - National Research Center Kurchatov Institute, Russia)
15:30 – 15:45 GMT +2	Settled Nomadic Identity?: Bioarchaeological and Material Evidence from the Highland site of Tashbulak (Dr. Elissa Bullion – University of Pittsburgh, USA)
15:45 – 16:00 GMT +2	Food globalisation in prehistory and globalisation of the value of food (Dr. Xinyi Liu – Washington University in St Louis, USA)
16:00 – 16:15 GMT +2	Dig in! (Why we aren't what we eat - at least not totally) (Dr. Michael Frachetti - Washington University in St Louis, USA)
16:15 – 17:00 GMT +2	Discussion

Contact details:

Taylor Hermes – trhermes@gmail.com

Elina Ananyevskaya - elina_ananyevskaya@hotmail.com

Giedre Motuzaite Matuzeviciute - giedre.motuzaite@gmail.com

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