

meeting points along the steppe roads over the long term. It will use results of several regional surveys and kurgan burial excavations, as well as some stray finds from this territory. It will focus on archaeological contexts of burial practices, of stopping and camping stations, of material exchange including luxury and everyday items, including those of long-distance trade. The goal is to survey and highlight the rich fabric of Islamic exchange culture in the seemingly remote region that was largely devoid of significant urbanization up until the Mongol Period in the 13th century CE, and was mainly the land of pastoral nomads.

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## 212. THE MUSLIM CEMETERY OF KARAKORUM: AN ISLAMIC COMMUNITY AT THE HEART OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE

**Contribution format:** Oral

**Contribution authors:** Julia Olive Busom – Alice Toso – Susanne Reichert (University of Bonn) – Dunburee Batsukh (Institute of Archaeology, Mongolian Academy of Sciences) – Jan Bemann (University of Bonn)

Karakorum, the former capital of the Mongol Empire (13th to 14th centuries), was home to a rich fabric of cultures, which included Chinese artisans, Muslim merchants, and captives from different corners of the empire. All of them were part of the intricate system that not only served the Khan's court but also articulated a multicultural trading hub. During archaeological campaigns carried out between 2023 and 2024, 29 skeletons and 27 graves were excavated as part of a Muslim cemetery located just outside the northern gate of the city. This was the maqbara of the Muslim community of Karakorum, who most likely settled there as part of a forced relocation instigated by the Khan's effort to populate the newly established city. Historically, little is known about this community beyond the fact that they had their own neighbourhood and engaged in long-distance trade. The presence of a Muslim cemetery, with a diverse paleodemography, further confirms the settlement and growth of this community. Furthermore, certain formal aspects related to the disposition of the graves and the biological characteristics of the individuals buried there suggest possible traces of a Sufi community, whose settlement in Karakorum is already attested by a commemorative stele. Here, we discuss the possible connections and similarities that this community, settled at the edge of the Muslim world, yet at the centre of the Mongol world, shared with the broader Dar al-Islam from a bioarchaeological (including palaeopathological and stable isotope analyses) and funerary perspective. We also examine signs of observed disruption and their possible connection to a process of religious and cultural syncretism or to the community's minority status.

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## 737. ALMUNIAS AND LIVESTOCK ROADS IN THE UPPER FRONTIER OF AL-ANDALUS

**Contribution format:** Oral

**Contribution authors:** Jesús Brufal (Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona)

There is an interesting historiographical debate about the concept of *almunia* in the territories of the former Upper Frontier of al-Andalus. This discussion is based on the term *almuniae* or *almunia*, which is clearly visible in 12th-century Latin documents, especially from the 1230s to the 1260s. This word refers to places in Andalusian territory, usually areas suitable for agricultural use, which the conquerors, whether nobles or clergy from the feudal kingdoms and counties, appropriated, gave away or sold. However, there is no record of this term in the scarce Arabic documentation that has been preserved. Archaeology, for its part, does locate and identify small fortified settlements at high altitudes, but without any data to link them to these unique *almunias*. When looking at the landscape of the old district of Lleida, which borders the kingdom of Aragon and the counties of Ribagorça, Pallars, Urgell and Barcelona, these *almunias* can easily be linked to communication routes. Of these, a few have been recognised since Roman times, especially those linking the ancient Roman *civitas*, now integrated into either the Andalusian or county political reality. However, there are many other routes that connect the territory, mainly for moving livestock for grazing. These not only run within the district, but also easily reach the Pyrenean area, which borders the aforementioned counties. We can therefore affirm that, despite the political border, there were intense contacts between the two sides in terms of land use, including trade, but also military confrontations. In this context, the enigmatic type of *almunia* settlement plays a prominent role, if the textual data does not confuse us.

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## 2526. AT THE CROSSROADS OF WORLDS: THE FORTRESS TYAGIN

**Contribution format:** Oral

**Contribution authors:** Svitlana Biliaieva (Institute of Archaeology of NAN of Ukraine)

The creation of the fortification system on the southern border of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by Grand Duke Vitovt at the end of the 14th/beginning of the 15th century was an important factor for bringing diverse cultures and civilizations together—those from the West and East, from Christian and Islamic societies. The Tyagin fortress, located on the Lower Dnieper River was part of that fortification system and it presents a brilliant example of this kind of multicultural phenomenon in the North Black Sea region. It belongs to the type of stone castle fortresses

of the Constantinople style, which possessed a donjon and corner towers. Some archaeological finds unearthed from the fortress had Lithuanian origin, such as cross-shaped linings on bags, crossbow bolts, and a slab with the heraldic sign of one of the Lithuanian families, with a possible close connection to Vitovt himself (the letter “V” was depicted near the heraldic sign). Among other finds, there were Genoese bombard stone balls and multiple iron artifacts, which attested to the mass production of iron in Lithuanian and Ukrainian culture. There were Tatar coins with countermarks of Genoese Kafa, as well as Polish coins of the first half of the XV century, and some coins of the Crimean Khan Mengli Geray. There were also various influences from the Islamic lands, such as the use of a Seljuk decoration at the tower of a monumental building. And there were numerous ceramic wares, which have analogies in the ceramics of Crimea. This syncretic Cristian and Islamic culture is characteristic of all the fortresses in the Black Sea region and they played an important role in the creation of multicultural spaces in that area.

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## 324. SHAPING CONNECTIVITY ALONG THE DANUBE, SAVA, AND DRAVA RIVERS UNDER THE OTTOMANS

**Contribution format:** Oral

**Contribution authors:** Jelena Živkovic (University of Tübingen | Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade) – Vesna Bikić (Institute of Archaeology, Belgrade)

This paper discusses the preliminary results of an archaeological study on ceramics from Ottoman-period riverine settlements (the 16th-17th centuries) located in the Middle Danube region. The focus is on the marshland situated between the Danube, Sava, and Drava rivers, an area that was part of the long-standing frontier between the Ottoman Empire and Hungary. Following the conquest of Belgrade in 1521, the Ottomans took control of all settlements between the rivers, initiating the forced resettlement of local population and waves of migrations. Within this dynamic socio-political landscape, a new horizon of material culture emerged, characterised by the wide distribution of pottery with uniform morphological traits. This phenomenon reflects the regional connectivity of communities settled along the rivers, shaped within the Ottoman network in Southeastern Europe. The study investigates this connectivity through patterns of common pottery distribution across the Srem region in Serbia. This pottery was used in medium-size towns connected by the rivers. The research examines the regional variability of ceramic wares by comparing data on their morphology, quantities and technological traits. All data were systematically recorded in a database and interpreted in relation to archaeological and historical evidence concerning settlements, the fluvial environment, migration patterns, and broader socio-economic conditions.

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## 964. PERSIAN FAIENCE WARE IN OTTOMAN HUNGARY

**Contribution format:** Poster

**Contribution authors:** Tünde Komori (Hungarian National Museum)

Asian decorative ceramics have been a topic of Ottoman archaeology research in Hungary since the beginning of the field. Among these objects, Persian faience has been identified early on and has been separated from Iznik ware and Chinese porcelain. Recently, a comprehensive study has been conducted on Asian decorative ware unearthed at Hungarian Ottoman-period (1541-1699) sites, resulting in a revision of the existing typology of these objects. This revised typology brought about the identification of Persian faience has been further refined. This partly meant the separation of Kütahya ceramics from the Persian types, and partly the identification of the Gombroon type among the Persian pieces. The latter is a previously unidentified type in Hungary, bringing a new angle into not only the history Ottoman material culture, but also to the history of trade and trading networks. The appearance of Gombroon ceramics in the second half of the seventeenth century in the Ottoman Empire represents the contemporary trading networks of the early modern Silk Routes that persisted throughout this period, showing the importance of key geographical points such as the Persian Gulf. The aim of this poster is to present the separation of Kütahya ware from Persian faience, as well as to present the types connected to partly the main Safavid production centers such as Kirman and Mashhad, and partly to Gombroon. Furthermore, the trading routes through which these objects might have moved from the Safavid Empire to present-day Hungary are also presented.

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## 53 NEANDERTHAL-HOMO SAPIENS SUBSISTENCE DIFFERENCES 60,000 TO 40,000 YEARS AGO IN CENTRAL AND SOUTHEAST EUROPE

**Session theme:** 8. Along and across the Danube!

**Session format:** Regular session

**Session keywords:** Middle to Upper Palaeolithic transition, Zooarchaeology, Subsistence strategies, Late Neanderthals and early Homo sapiens, Central and Southeast Europe

**Session organisers:** Anna Wagner – Geoff Smith (University of Reading) – Lia Vidas (Institute for