

Abstract #: 3545

MOBILITY IN THE GOBI-ALTAI MOUNTAINS (MONGOLIA): A DIACHRONIC ANALYTICAL APPROACH

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The archaeological research increasingly investigates the mobility of nomadic and semi-nomadic communities in light of their potential role in the development of early trans-Eurasian interconnections. Spatial modelling based on the analysis of genetic, archaeobotanical, and zoo-archaeological information has recently opened stimulating research horizons on pastoral mobility in Central Eurasia. However, the chronological depth of modern paths and routes interconnecting steppe, high-mountain, and arid environments has been scarcely considered in this regard. In this paper, we illustrate our mapping of paths presently or until-recently used by the local herders in the Gobi-Altai Mountains (Bayankhongor Aimag, Mongolia). Moreover, we analyse paths' relation to ancient archaeological features, particularly the (1181) Late Prehistoric mounds located in the same research area. The results of our spatial analysis indicate that there is a consistent pattern of spatial proximity between modern pastoral paths and ritual and funerary structures of the 2nd and 1st millennium BC. This (statistically) significant relationship is open to multiple interpretations that will hopefully contribute to the general discussion. The outcomes of our study namely suggest that the modern articulation of both long-distance and local paths could be rooted in the spatial choices of the Late Bronze and Iron Age people. This diachronic perspective can also help to elucidate the impact of pastoral mobility on the shaping of local and global dynamics in the Eurasian landscape over time.

Keywords

Nomadism, Mongolia, Paths, Mounds

Note/comment