VOLUNTEER CAMPS IN KAZAKHSTAN IN 2019

During the summer and autumn of 2019, the Laboratory of Geoarchaeology (Faculty of History, Archeology and Ethnology, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University) is organizing archaeological investigations covering all periods from Palaeolithic to Modern times all over Kazakhstan. The programme of work consists mainly in mapping, documenting and collecting paleodata for analyses. Open-air lectures in the history, archaeology and paleoenvironment of Central Asia are included. Sessions will take place between June and October 2019 and are 15 days in duration. Volunteers and students of archaeology are welcome to join us. The participation fee is EU300 (or 340USD) per week and academic credit is given by the Kazakh National University. Interested volunteers and students of archaeology should contact the LGA to ask for full details on the various survey and excavation opportunities on offer.

Renewed information is also available on the Laboratory of Geoarchaeology web site:
http://www.lgakz.org/VolunteerCamps/Volunteer.html
Or you can check the updated announcement of our volunteer camps on the Fieldwork webpage of the Archaeological Institute of America

There will 4 expeditions occurring from June 15, 2019 - October 15, 2019

1) North Balkhash lake region (Geoarchaeological study): 14-28 June
2) Botai region (Geoarchaeological study): 8-22 July
3) Chu-Ili mountains (Petroglyphs documentation), 2 sessions: 31 July-14 August and 26 September-10 October
4) Syrdarya delta (Geoarchaeological study): 4-19 September

Application Deadline: Not applicable

1. GEOARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE NORTHERN BALKHASH REGION

Director:	Renato Sala & Jean-Marc Deom
Site/Period:	Paleolithic to Ethnographic period
Volunteers:	5-10
Experience required:	No previous experience necessary
Excavation dates:	14-28 June 2019
Application deadline:	ASAP
Minimum stay:	Two weeks
Cost:	EU300 per week
Fare:	Not included
Accommodation:	Provided
Food:	Provided (vegetarian and non-vegetarian)
Vaccination:	Anti-tetanus recommended
Passport/visa:	Valid passport; for visa contact organizer 4 weeks in advance.

The lake Balkhash is more than 500 km long and 10-60 km wide, representing the fifth largest water surface on earth. The 80% of its tributary waters come from the Ili river. The western part of the Balkhash, by receiving water and sediments from the Ili, is made of fresh but muddy and shallow water, while the eastern part is saline, clearer and deeper. The water level during the last 10,000 years fluctuated of 15 meters between 348 and 333 m asl (today at 341 m). The rocky northern shore has been inhabited from Paleolithic times during different Holocene climatic periods as testified by numerous Neolithic campsites, Bronze and Iron Age winter camps

found around the lake shores.

The aim of the fieldwork is to collect paleoenvironmental and archaeological data to be intercorrelated for understanding the Holocene lake level change and the chronological pattern of human habitats. This will be done through the implementation of cores in the lake sides and by the survey of archaeological sites previously identified but not accurately documented.

Volunteers will be introduced to modern techniques of preliminary geographical study using satellite, aerial photography and detailed maps. Documentation will be provided by traditional and new advanced methods (GIS, digital-video). The ecological features of the landscape (summer-winter camps, tracks etc.) will be studied.

Geological and trial trenches will be excavated to collect paleosoils for dating and paleoenvironmental reconstruction. The weather is generally hot during the day and cool in the evening, rains are also frequent till September. Volunteers should bring a sleeping bag, a mat, a sweater, some strong shoes, a rain coat and a flashlight. Further tours can be organized at the end of the fieldwork.

Useful reading

Sala R., Deom J.-M., Nigmatova S., Endo K., Kubota J. 'Soviet, recent and planned studies of the behavior of the Balkhash lake'. In: News of the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, series of Geology and Technical sciences, Vol.2, №416, 2016, pp.76-86 (link: http://www.lgakz.org/Texts/LiveTexts/2017%20up_%20Balkhash%20Izvestiya%202016.pdf)

Contact: Jean-Marc Deom, Laboratory of Geoarchaeology (Faculty of History, Archeology and Ethnology, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University), av.al-Farabi, 71, 4th Floor, room 4-8, 050060 Almaty, KAZAKHSTAN		
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2. NEOLITHIC TO BRONZE AGE SOCIETIES AND ENVIRONMENTS OF THE BOTAI REGION

Director:	V.Zaibert
Site/Period:	Neolithic to Bronze
Volunteers:	5
Experience required:	No previous experience necessary
Excavation dates:	8-22 July 2019
Application deadline:	ASAP
Minimum stay:	Two weeks
Cost:	EU300 per week
Fare:	Not included
Accommodation:	Provided
Food:	Provided (vegetarian and non-vegetarian)
Vaccination:	Anti-tetanus recommended
Passport/visa:	Valid passport; for visa contact organizer 4 weeks in advance.

Located in a hilly woodland and lake environment 100 km west of Kokshetau, Botai (3,700-3,000 BCE) represents one of dozens of similar permanent settlements where the earliest horse domestication has been documented.

In northern Kazakhstan, the wet climate of the Atlantic pluvial phase (around 4,000 BCE) favoured the growth of steppe lands. The increase in grassland and forests attracted populations of large mammals, and this environmental context enabled the development of the Botai-Tersek culture that steadily spread through the entire Ural-Irtysh region.

Born out of the Atbasar Neolithic culture, Eneolithic settlements continued to develop in the two regions: the Tersek culture (around 3,700 BCE) of the Tobol, Ubagan and upper Turgai river basins, whose sites include Bestamak, Kumkeshu and Duzbai; and the Botai culture in the Ishim (Esil) and Chaglinka river basins, whose main sites are Botai and Krasnyi Yar.

Botai village was made of 160 semi-subterranean dwellings with wooden roofs covered by clay plaster. Its

Neolithic cultural heritage is expressed by the large amount of flint tools, microliths and harpoons discovered, and by the animal bones that reflect an economy based on hunting and fishing. The overwhelming majority of equine bones has led to the supposition that the Botai people had a diet almost exclusively based on horse meat and that this specialized economy led to horse domestication.
The Botai village culture and its contemporaries were followed by the arrival of mixed cattle and sheep stockbreeders who were also metallurgists. This hugely significant new technology heralded the start of the Bronze Age, which, in combination with the mastery of horses, would allow human civilization to leap forward.
The environmental background of the Botai culture is still poorly known as most of the paleoproxies available for that period are coming from lake sediments located in ecological refuges made of Boreal pine-birch sparse forests (Borovoe, Karkaralinsk, Naurzum) and not from the steppe and forest-steppe environments. The archaeological context also lacks some basic information about the Early Bronze exploitation of copper resources available in the region.

The aim of the fieldwork will consist in surveying river terraces and lake shores in order to collect paleoenvironmental data for a better understanding of the Holocene climatic change during the Eneolithic period. The geoarchaeological researches will also survey copper mines in order to reveal and collect potential artifacts connected with Bronze Age mineral extraction in the region.

Useful reading:

S. L. Olsen, Early horse domestication on the Eurasian steppe. In : Documenting Domestication: New Genetic and Archaeological Paradigms, M. A. Zeder, D. G. Bradley, E. Emshwiller, B. D. Smith, Eds. (Univ. of California Press, 2006), pp. 245–269.

Outram A., Kasparov A., Stear M., Varfolomeev V., Usmanova E. & Evershed R. Patterns of pastoralism in later Bronze Age Kazakhstan: new evidence from faunal and lipid residue analyses. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 39(7) 2012. pp. 2424–35.

D.W. Anthony, The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes, Princeton, 2007.

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3. ROCK ART OF ANCIENT PASTORAL SOCIETIES, SURVEY OF THE CHU-ILI MOUNTAINS AND NORTH-WEST BALKHASH REGIONS

Director:	Renato Sala
Site/Period:	Bronze, Early Iron, Turkic
Volunteers:	5-10
Experience required:	No previous experience necessa
Excavation dates: Application deadline:	2 sessions: 31 July-14 August and 26 September-10 October ASAP
Minimum stay:	Two weeks
Cost:	EU300 / week
Fare:	Not included
Accommodation:	Provided
Food:	Provided (vegetarian and non-vegetarian)
Vaccination:	Anti-tetanus recommended
Passport/visa:	Valid passport; for visa contact organiser 4 weeks in advance.

The Chu-Ili mountains are smooth undulations of a maximum altitude 1500m in a semi-desertic landscape south-west of Lake Balkhash. Their springs and oases constituted a refuge and a corridor for cultures from Palaeolithic to ethnographic times, represented

archaeologically by cemeteries, houses, steles and, most predominantly, petroglyphs. From the Middle Bronze to the Turkic periods the area was a crossroads for tribal migrations reflected in the character and range of petroglyphs, which now represent the most important monuments of the area and are among the most important rock art sites of Central Asia and Siberia.
Fieldwork will be directed by specialists from the Laboratory of Geoarchaeology. During this survey, the camp will be nomadic. You will work various sites including the recently discovered petroglyph sites of the southern border of the Chu-Ili range (site of Kuljabasy) and the disseminated petroglyphs sites located in the gorges around the Balkash lake. The objective of this camp is to continue the survey and documentation of the petroglyphs sites existing in the region and to map the archaeological monuments. Volunteers will be introduced to modern techniques of preliminary geographical study using satellite, aerial photography and detailed maps. Documentation will be provided by traditional and new advanced methods (GIS, digital-video). The ecological features of the landscape (summer-winter camps, tracks etc.) will be studied.
Geological and trial trenches will be excavated to collect paleosoils for dating and paleoenvironmental reconstruction. The weather is extremely dry. Volunteers should bring a sleeping bag, a mat, a sweater, some strong shoes, and a flashlight. Further tours can be organised at the end of the fieldwork.

Useful reading

Sala R., Deom J.-M., 2005 *Petroglyphs of South Kazakhstan*. Almaty. (Available in English and Russian, link to sale online: Alibris.com.).
Aubekerov B.J., Rogozhinskii A.E., Sala R, 2004 Pamyatniki Kazakhstana (*Rock art sites of Kazakshtan*) in: Rogozhinskiy A (ed) (2004) *Rock Art sites of Central Asia: documentation, conservation, management, community participation*. Almaty. (Available in English on CD-Rom, contact ispkz@yahoo.com for purchasing).

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4. ANCIENT WATER USE IN THE SYRDARYA DELTA

Director:	Renato Sala
Site/Period:	Neolithic to Ethnographic period
Volunteers:	5
Experience required:	No previous experience necessary
Excavation dates:	4-19 September 2019
Application deadline:	ASAP
Minimum stay:	Two weeks
Cost:	EU300 per week
Fare:	Not included
Accommodation:	Provided
Food:	Provided (vegetarian and non-vegetarian)
Vaccination:	Anti-tetanus recommended
Passport/visa:	Valid passport; for visa contact organiser 6 weeks in advance.

The active and ancient delta of the Syrdarya is filled with numerous sites and monuments dated from the Neolithic period to the modern times. Some ancient irrigation networks surrounding antique and medieval monuments have been researched in the 1950'ies but the study of ancient wells and water collection devices have never been implemented. The goal of our fieldwork will consist in mapping and documenting all kinds of traditional

devices and techniques of water collection. It will concern both right and left sides of the Syrdarya from Kyzylorda till Kazali. Volunteers will be taught all the successive phases and methods of archaeological investigations. Documentation will be provided by traditional and new advanced methods (GIS, digital-video). The ecological features of the landscape will be studied.
Geological and trial trenches will be excavated to collect paleosoils for dating and paleoenvironmental reconstruction. The weather is generally very hot during the day and cooler in the evening till end September. Volunteers should bring a sleeping bag, a mat, a sweater, some strong shoes and a flashlight. Further tours can be organized at the end of the fieldwork.

Useful reading:

B. V. Andrianov, Ancient Irrigation Systems of the Aral Sea Area: The History, Origin, and Development of Irrigated Agriculture. Edited by Simone Mantellini. American School of Prehistoric Research Monograph, Oxbow Books, 2016

R.Sala, Historical survey of irrigation practices in west Central Asia
(link: http://www.lgakz.org/Texts/LiveTexts/CAsiaIrrigTextEn.doc)

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