

12 JANUARY 2024



# BANEA 2024 DIGITAL SESSION

## WHEN IS URBAN, REALLY?

### List of Speakers

Claudia Glatz	There and back again: Local institutions, Uruk expansion, and the rejection of centralisation in the Sirwan/Upper Diyala region.
Marcella Frangipane	What is a city? Different types of urbanism in early Mesopotamia and Anatolia.
Johnny Samuele Baldi	First cities and production models: A reflection on the evolution of ceramic workshops and urbanisation processes.
Mitchell Rothman	The Origin of Mesopotamian Cities as Centers of Urban Settlement Systems.
Daniela Arroyo Barrantes	Unveiling the dynamics of urban craft systems in Mesopotamia: early urban archaeology from the outer mounds of Tell Brak, Syria.
Geoff Emberling & Tim Skuldbøl	A comparative perspective on early Mesopotamian cities: Jebel Barkal (ancient Napata), an urban center of ancient Kush (northern Sudan).

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### Speaker Timings

Ailbhe Turley - Welcome	1.10 pm - 1.30 pm
Claudia Glatz	1.30 pm - 1.55 pm
Marcella Frangipane	1.55 pm - 2.20 pm
Johnny Samuele Baldi	2.20 pm - 2.45 pm
Mitchell Rothman	3.00 pm - 3.25 pm
Daniela Arroyo Barrantes	3.25 pm - 3.50 pm
Geoff Emberling & Tim Skuldbøl	3.50 pm - 4.15 pm
All Speakers - Questions & Roundtable	4.15 pm - 5.15 pm

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### Programme Schedule

1.10 pm - 1.30 pm	Ailbhe Turley - Welcome	Opening Remarks: When is urban, really?
1.30 pm - 1.55 pm	Claudia Glatz	There and back again: Local institutions, Uruk expansion, and the rejection of centralisation in the Sirwan/Upper Diyala region.
1.55 pm - 2.20 pm	Marcella Frangipane	What is a city? Different types of urbanism in early Mesopotamia and Anatolia.
2.20 pm - 2.45 pm	Johnny Samuele Baldi	First cities and production models: A reflection on the evolution of ceramic workshops and urbanisation processes.
3.00 pm - 3.25 pm	Mitchell Rothman	The Origin of Mesopotamian Cities as Centers of Urban Settlement Systems.
3.25 pm - 3.50 pm	Daniela Arroyo Barrantes	Unveiling the dynamics of urban craft systems in Mesopotamia: early urban archaeology from the outer mounds of Tell Brak, Syria.
3.50 pm - 4.15 pm	Geoff Emberling & Tim Skuldbøl	A comparative perspective on early Mesopotamian cities: Jebel Barkal (ancient Napata), an urban center of ancient Kush (northern Sudan).
4.15 pm- 5.15 pm	All Speakers	Questions & Roundtable Discussion



# BANEA 2024 WHEN IS URBAN, REALLY? ABSTRACTS



## **What is a city? Different types of urbanism in early Mesopotamia and Anatolia** **Marcella Frangipane**

The paper will start from a reflection on what we can really define as 'urban' or 'urban society', by considering the effects produced or stimulated by the emergence of 'cities' on the economy of their territories, the development of complex production systems, the consolidation of inequalities, and the emergence of bureaucracy and the State. Different types of settlements traditionally defined as "cities" in Greater Mesopotamia and Anatolia will be then briefly presented in connection with the diverse environmental and social/economic conditions manifested in those early societies. The variability shown by these different aggregation patterns of the first hierarchical communities in the regions considered suggests the need for a more in-depth debate on 'urbanism' definition and the causes and consequences of its emergence and development, opening the way for thorough reflections on the possible future of our cities and urban societies.

## **First cities and production models: A reflection on the evolution of ceramic workshops and urbanisation processes** **Johnny Samuele Baldi**

Although debatable, discussed, criticised and repeatedly updated, the definition of the first city offered by V.G. Childe is indeed effective in establishing what the urban is. But if one shifts the focus from the urban as an object and historical fact to the process of urbanisation as a phenomenon taking place over time, the question to be answered becomes rather from when (or from what) the urban is identifiable as such. Since traditional models and descriptions of the "urban" are characterised by centralised, specialised and large-scale production, this paper aims to use the evolution of ceramic manufacturing areas as a proxy for when one can speak of "urban". Recent data and ongoing excavations in both northern and southern Mesopotamia at sites such as Logardan, Girdi Qala, 'Uwaili and Larsa focus on the arrangement and evolution of ceramic workshops. It seems evident that the location or size of manufacturing areas are by no means reliable criteria for defining the achievement of a properly urban state. Rather, clues seem to be sought in the way the workshops were organised.

## **The Origin of Mesopotamian Cities as Centers of Urban Settlement Systems** **Mitchell S Rothman**

The focus of Ancient Near Eastern archaeology has been on cities to the point that we think of cities as entities separate from the rest of their societies. In fact, all cities by definition represent the concentration of some, but not always the same, essential functions that bring people to them to live and work or to visit and interact in them. However, the idea that cities are the only place where activities like craft production (of all sorts of goods and services), as well as religion, art, even statecraft occur, and the rest of the urban network are just farmers and herders does not fit our understanding. This talk will discuss the origin of pre-state centers and propose a number of pathways that led different pre-state, pre-"urban" centers to become cities within their urban networks.



# BANEA 2024 WHEN IS URBAN, REALLY? ABSTRACTS



## **Unveiling the dynamics of urban craft systems in Mesopotamia: early urban archaeology from the outer mounds of Tell Brak, Syria** **Daniela Arroyo Barrantes**

This paper explores the nascent stages of urbanization in ancient Mesopotamia, focusing on the role of craft systems in the development of urban functions and spaces.

Asserting the urban status of Late Chalcolithic communities in Mesopotamia poses challenges due to the complex nature of archaeological evidence and diversity of interpretative frameworks. A relevant challenge stems from the lack of substantial evidence regarding early residential quarters. Furthermore, the genesis of Late Chalcolithic communities, marked by gradual evolution and overlapping cultural phases, makes the identification of a distinct urban nature a continuous transition rather than a discrete event. Addressing these challenges requires a nuanced and combined approach that integrates spatial traits, human remains and material culture to analyse the social and dimensional transformations of Late Chalcolithic populations towards city life.

Through the analysis of Late Chalcolithic pottery unearthed from Tell Majnuna and Tell Temmi, two of the outer mounds of Tell Brak, Syria, this study delves into the social and demographic implications of the systems of production, consumption and discard of crafts. Then, this evidence will be used to shed light on the new social, symbolic and economic functions that emerged during the early urban phases.

This research aims to unveil the intricate tapestry of early urban life in this pivotal region, contributing to review existing archaeological models concerning craft economies to further broaden our understanding of ancient urbanism.

## **A comparative perspective on early Mesopotamian cities: Jebel Barkal (ancient Napata), an urban center of ancient Kush (northern Sudan)** **Geoff Emberling, Tim Skuldbøl**

Understanding of the distinctive qualities of early Mesopotamian cities can be enhanced by comparative cases from other environmental regions and cultural traditions. In this presentation, two archaeologists who have worked on Mesopotamian cities discuss their recent work at Jebel Barkal (ancient Napata), which was one of the major urban centers of the ancient empire of Kush from about 800 BCE to 300 CE. We present observations on local ecology and environment, the layout of the city in its broader settlement context, site formation and preservation, and the very different research tradition in Nile Valley archaeology that has led to avoidance of settlement archaeology.

## **There and back again: Local institutions, Uruk expansion, and the rejection of centralisation in the Sirwan/Upper Diyala region.** **Claudia Glatz**

***Abstract tbc***



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WHEN IS URBAN, REALLY?  
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