

Kazakhstan's Valley of Kings

author:



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Synopsis

Gold and horses! Few ancient civilisations were greater masters of metalworking and horse riding than the Saka culture of Central Asia. Also known as the "Eastern Scythians", these peoples ruled over a large area of the Great Steppe more than 2,000 years ago. And recently, new archaeological initiatives in Kazakhstan have started to reveal so much more about these horse lords and their way of life. Great burial mounds have been excavated, revealing a wealth of extraordinary artefacts. From golden sword scabbards to richly-decorated horse gear, it's fascinating evidence of the long-lasting and rich history that Kazakhstan possesses.

In this very special episode, join Tristan on his venture to Kazakhstan. He visits the remote Altai Mountains in the far east of the country to see an incredibly rich group of Saka tombs, popularly known as Kazakhstan's Valley of Kings. He interviews Kazakh archaeologist Zhanat Erlanova about the amazing archaeology that has so far been unearthed in this highland valley and what it has revealed about these ancient horse lords of Central Asia.

Following this we return to the UK and Cambridge University, where Drs Rebecca Roberts, Saltanat Amir and Rinat Zhumatayev explain the wider Saka culture, and why the archaeology of Kazakhstan deserves to be much better known.

This episode was edited by Aidan Lonergan

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