



# The Prehistoric Black Sea

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## Abstracts



**Prof. Joni Apakidze**  
Sokhumi State University

***Towards the New Chronology of the Late Bronze- and Early Iron Age Necropolis of the Central Local Variant of the Colchis-Culture***

To date, there are no known Colchis-Culture necropoleis dating to the Late Bronze Age (15–12th c. B.C.). The earliest cemeteries of a local variant of this culture date to the 11th – 10th century and are found in the Shida Kartli (Tli/Tlia) region of Georgia. The rich necropoleis of Krasnyj Majak (Tsiteli Shukura), which represent a northwestern variant of the Colchis-Culture could be of great importance for dating the burials of the early first millennium B.C. 104 of the 152 graves date to the transitional Late Bronze - Early Iron Age period. Based on the stratigraphy of the cemeteries Muchurcha and Nigvziani of the Central Colchis and the individual graves of Paluri, the beginning of those necropoleis could be dated to the beginning of the first millennium B.C. Also important for the differentiation of the cemeteries Ergeta I-IV and Dgvaba are those find complexes which do not have iron objects and are different in their ceramic material from other graves. They are followed by find complexes with only a few iron objects and finally by find complexes with many iron objects. The oldest find complexes, with only bronze objects, which have been discovered up to now in Central Colchis in the collective pit graves of Ergeta (Ergeta I, burials 1, 3, 8–9; Ergeta III, burial 3; Ergeta IV, burials 3–5) show that such complexes could exist. Fragments of pottery of the Late Bronze Age from burial 8 of Ergeta I and numerous late Bronze Age settlements and hoards indicate that in this period (11th – 9th century B.C.) cemeteries also existed in the core area, in the central local variant of the Colchis-Culture. Necropoleis from the 8th – 7th century have been found in large numbers in Colchis.

**Dr. Bogdan Athanassov**  
New Bulgaria University

***Space and Distance in the Western Black Sea Area in the Late Bronze Age***

How should we envision long distance contacts around the western Black Sea during the LBA? In the neighboring Aegean, the Bronze Age is a time of intensification of contacts between peer polities (Renfrew 1972) which will transform autonomous agricultural villages into trade centers. This interaction is seen as one of the prime movers towards social complexity and state formation (Flannery 1972) as it resulted in the accumulation of information, and the redistribution of goods and social and ideological “technologies”. Despite its geographic vicinity to the Aegean and Anatolia, such processes seem to be absent from the Black Sea region until the arrival of Greek colonists in the 7<sup>th</sup> c. BC. Bronze Age groups living on the shores of the western Black Sea appear to be much more part of a “continental” European world based on agriculture and limited craft specialization than that of the Mediterranean and Oriental bureaucratic societies where centralized trade has a crucial economic and ideological role. The aim of this paper is to present an overview of available evidence for inter-regional and long-distance interaction in the western Black Sea during the second half of the second millennium BC. The character and organization of western Black Sea trading networks will be examined on the basis of metal finds, pottery and architectural remains in the Sabatinovka-Noua and Coslogeni stylistic provinces. Reaching as far south as Troy the role and significance of maritime, riverine and overland routes will be considered. I will conclude by painting a potentially contentious picture of high mobility on the one hand and low social complexity on the other - the “yin/yang” character (O’Shea 2011) of the Black Sea - for

the organization of space and local and long-distance contacts during the LBA. The Black Sea both hindered movement and demarcated and directed transport and travel.

**Dr. Alexander Bauer**  
Queens College CUNY

***Handmade Burnished Wares of Sinop, Turkey: Evidence of a Bronze Age Black Sea Community?***

Since 1996, the Sinop Regional Archaeological Project (SRAP) has been conducting intensive systematic regional survey in the Black Sea coastal region of Sinop, Turkey. Of the nearly 400 sites identified through this research, approximately 80 can be dated earlier than the Greek Colonization period of the first millennium BCE. Analysis of the pottery assemblages from these pre-historic sites from both stylistic and technological perspectives indicates very localized ceramic production in the region, but also suggests the possibility of connection between Sinop and elsewhere in the Black Sea, particularly during the Early Bronze Age (end 4<sup>th</sup>-mid 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BCE). This paper will present an overview of the prehistoric material found by SRAP with the aim of identifying how and when the region first becomes 'plugged in' to a larger Black Sea network.

**Prof. Owen Doonan**  
California State University Northridge

***Iron Age in Sinop Promontory, Turkey: New results from the Sinop Regional Archaeological Project***

Iron Age poorly understood on the Sinop Promontory. Previous to our survey the region was thought to be essentially empty at the time of Greek colonization. Slowly the picture of a robust local population minding its business up through the middle of the first millennium, and then proactively engaging the opportunities offered by exchange with colonists at Sinope is emerging. Settlement density appears to have been low in comparison to later periods, a preference for defensible settlement locations appears likely, and material culture rather conservative. There seems to have been little interest in the sea, with the exception of one (or possibly more) fishing camps that appear to have been populated by visitors from the north Pontus rather than locals. Both local indigenous and maritime patterns appear to be continuations of long-term economic strategies and set the stage for the significant developments in the later first millennium BCE. Such a model is consistent with our observations of subsistence-type economy, circum-Pontic exchange limited in both scale and economic impact, and conservative material culture that left these communities all but invisible to researchers.

**Dr. Bleda Düring**  
Leiden University

***Marginal Landscapes and Connected Societies: Assessing Connections of the Cide Region in the Early to Mid Holocene***

The Cide Region on the southern Black Sea coast is in many ways a marginal landscape: hemmed in by the steep and impenetrable Pontus Mountains to the south and the Black Sea – which is notoriously difficult to navigate – to the north. One might expect that prior to major advances in seafaring, which probably occurred first in the Iron Age, the region

was relatively isolated. However, our investigations in the Cide Region – which yielded a series of somewhat ephemeral assemblages dating to the Early to Mid Holocene (10.000 – 3.000 BC) – do suggest cultural connections with mainland Anatolia and (more tentatively) the circumponic. In this paper I will discuss some of the Cide materials, focusing on an Early Holocene lithic assemblage found at Aybasan and a fifth millennium ceramic assemblage found at Okçular, and assess what these can tell us about cultural connections in Prehistory.

**Dr. Claudia Glatz**

University of Glasgow

***Material Connections and the Bronze Age societies of the West-Central Turkish Black Sea Region***

The Bronze Age of Anatolia is characterised by intensive inter-regional trade and exchange networks on the one hand and the emergence of large-scale political networks on the other. Both resulted in the development of material connections between different societies within Anatolia and beyond, including, at different times and with different degrees of intensity, neighbouring Black Sea regions. In this paper I will discuss evidence for the Bronze Age (ca. 3000-1200 BC) of the Cide Region of Turkey and the shifting geographical foci of its material connections. I further want to begin to explore what these connections imply about the nature of local societies, their inter-regional relationships and potential modes of interaction.

**Prof. Blagoje Govedarica**

Freie Universität Berlin, Deutsches Archäologisches Institut

***Conflict or Coexistence: Steppe and Agricultural Societies in the Early Copper Age of the Northwest Black Sea Area***

The northwest Black Sea area, the steppe region of historical Bessarabia, represents one of the most important contact zones in European prehistory. At present, the first known contacts of the agricultural communities and steppe nomads in this zone have been documented for the period of the Early Copper Age, the mid 5<sup>th</sup> millennium BC. At that time the Bolgrad-Aldeni culture spread from its autochthonous homeland in northern Dobrogea and Romanian Moldova to the steppe area east of the Danube River. Almost at the same time the oldest steppe graves appeared in this area and also spread farther west of the lower Danube. Much discussion among scholars has been devoted to this first encounter of the antipodal civilizations, and especially to the appearance of richly furnished steppe graves. Those graves were mostly considered as belonging to a western branch of the Ochre Grave culture, which penetrated into the Danube area from the region of the northern Caucasus and the Volga River. Attempts have been made to specify their origin, narrowing it down to the area of lower Dnepr River, from where they expanded mostly to the west. This phenomenon is accentuated by the migrating, conquering and conflicting character of the protagonists. Theories about great movements, whose consequences are apparent in richly equipped steppe graves located in border areas of agricultural communities, are countered by contrary opinions that view this phenomenon in the context of social changes caused by the emergence of metallurgy and other forms of production in the eastern Balkans. One recent interpretation of the rich steppe graves is the definition of the “Zepterträger” (sceptre bearers) and their ascription to the local steppe elite of this region. In this reference the appearance of graves of this type in the more eastern parts of the Black Sea steppe area

would be a chain reaction among related steppe populations and the gradual acceptance of social stratification that developed on the basis of eastern Balkan models, adapted to meet the needs of the different, emerging steppe elites. Arguments and counter-arguments of these opposing hypotheses are discussed in this paper.

**Dr. Peter Grave**

University of New England

**Prof. Lisa Kealhofer**

Santa Clara University

***Looking for Interaction in the Iron Age: Lessons from a Program of Large Scale Ceramic and Sediment Compositional Analyses in Anatolia***

Regional studies are essential for understanding the scale of political and economic systems, however, this type of large scale analysis presents a variety of methodological challenges. From 2005 to 2009 the Anatolian Iron Age project ([www.une.edu.au/a-ia/](http://www.une.edu.au/a-ia/)) collaborated with the directors and/or ceramicists of seventeen sites currently being excavated across central and western Turkey. The goal was to understand patterns of interaction during the Iron Age. A large scale program of elemental (NAA) analysis of both ceramics and sediments from around each of these sites was directed at differentiating local from nonlocal ceramic production. The larger goal was to provenience nonlocal ceramics to their sites of origin to define patterns of exchange. A total of 8000 samples were analyzed during this project. Not only do the results highlight differences in the production and exchange spheres, the study also revealed the complexities of large scale data analysis. Some of these complexities range from site based differences (e.g., chronological frameworks and typologies), to larger issues related to geochemical redundancy across the region (undercutting the classic provenience postulate). We reflect on the lessons learned, and offer some suggestions for planning future large scale projects in the Black Sea region.

**Dr. Richard Jones**

University of Glasgow

**Dr. Effie Photos-Jones**

Scottish Analytical Services for Art & Archaeology and University of Glasgow

***The Potential of Portable XRF Analysis of Artefacts for Information on Technology and Origin***

Portable XRF (pXRF) analysis allows in situ, rapid and non-destructive determination of elemental composition of large numbers of artefacts – notably metals, glass, obsidian and pottery - and other (inorganic) materials. This presentation will demonstrate its role at various stages in the evaluation of finds from excavation and survey, as well as museum objects. At an early stage, it is very well suited to resolving questions of identity – what is this, or are X and Y the same material? - and, by screening a large number of artefacts in situ, helping to refine questions about technology or origin that could subsequently be tackled with more precise techniques of analysis. pXRF is also able to tackle more complex questions including making statements about origin, but in this type of application, first, the instrument's limitations need to be appreciated and, second, the questions asked of the analysis should be carefully posed. Examples will be drawn from a number of projects around the Mediterranean and beyond.

**Dr. Krassimir Leshtakov**

Sofia University

***New Evidence for the Late Neolithic on the Bulgarian Black Sea Littoral – The site of Krushaka in the Bourgas Region***

The Late Neolithic settlement of Krushaka was discovered by a team from Sofia University in the course of construction works on the Trakia motorway in 2003. Two seasons of rescue excavations revealed a series of pisé-built dwellings as well as some semi-subterranean structures, whose pottery and small finds indicate strong cultural affinities with contemporary sites in Eastern Thrace such as Kırklareli and Ilipinar in Asia Minor. In this paper, I will provide an overview of the results of excavations at Krushaka and the evidence for cultural interaction with the Marmara region.

**Prof. Yuri Rassamakin**

National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine

***Black Sea Steppe in the Copper Age: Between Balkans and Caucasus***

Different cultures in the Pontic steppe during the Copper Age (4750? - 3000/2900 BC) existed in the context of development and under the influence of an agricultural world. In this paper the author focuses on the early and late periods of the Copper Age in the steppe zone. In the early period of the Copper Age (4750? - 4200/4100 BC) the steppe world took part in prestigious exchange, on the one hand, with the pre-Maikop culture (Svobodnoe-Meshoko type of settlements) in the Northern Caucasus and, on the other hand, with the Cucuteni-Tripolye and the Karanovo-Gumelnitsa-Varna cultures in the Balkan-Carpathian region (ceramics, copper and gold objects). The early burials and artifacts of the period show that the mobile groups of the steppe population (the so-called "early kurgan people" or "groups of the steppe elites") played a basic role in communications between the different farming regions. The middle period of the Copper Age shows the mainly active influences of the Cucuteni-Tripolye Culture on cultural development in the Pontic steppe region. The late period of the Copper Age (3500/3400 - 3000/2900 BC) shows the active influences of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya Culture on the Pontic steppe region. We can not only see imported ceramics in the burials, but can also assume the movement of some population groups through the distribution of so-called burial of the Zhivotilovka-Volchansk type. The materials from these burials show us the close connection of the Maikop-Novosvobodnaya and Late Tripolye traditions. An active role in this process was evidently played by Northern Caucasian impulses.

**Antonia Santangelo**

CUNY

***Black Sea Fishing: Local Practices and Interregional Connectivity***

This presentation will briefly outline the theoretical and methodological process behind a new study of Black Sea fishing, fish processing and preliminary archaeological investigations in Eastern Crimea. The overall aim of this work is to reconstruct local maritime subsistence practices and potentially commercial fisheries, in order to determine whether these fishing communities were related to the development of larger social networks at play in the interconnected regions surrounding the Black Sea before Greek colonization took place. These initial investigations involve analyzing fish bone

material from coastal sites representing the phases just prior to and during the Classical period (6th-5th c. BCE) in Eastern Crimea and thinking about how such work can allow for connections to be made with comparative data from other sites in Anatolia, Europe and the Caucasus. This multiple coastal site approach deals with a survey of maritime iconography, fishing structures, equipment in addition to zooarchaeological analysis. In order to explain how sea faunal remains will be identified, this talk will introduce a growing comparative Black Sea fish bone and mollusca collection.

**Dr . T. Emre Şerifoğlu**  
Biltilis Eren University

### ***Cide and its Surroundings During the Iron Age***

The northwestern Black Sea coast of Anatolia witnessed important changes during the Iron Age. Increasing Phrygian political and military pressure from the south, Greek colonisation of the coasts, and Achaemenid conquest all transformed the socio-political structure of Anatolia. Although the situation seems to be different during the Hellenistic period, Cide appears to be a culturally isolated coastal area during much of the Iron Age. My talk will focus on what the archaeological evidence can tell us about how much this geographically isolated region was affected by the wider political, social and economic developments of this period.

**Dr. Susan Sherratt**  
University of Sheffield

### ***Questions concerning the Black Sea during the Late Bronze/Early Iron Age transition (late 13th to 7th centuries BC)***

The period spanned by the later centuries of the 2nd millennium and the early centuries of the first millennium BC is arguably one of the murkiest when it comes to our understanding of Black Sea prehistory, not least on its southern shores. It begins with Hittite records of hostile encounters with the Kashka (who may or may not have had a maritime aspect to their culture) in the later 13th century BC, and ends with the establishment of Milesian colonies on the northern, western and southern shores of the Black Sea from around the mid-7th century onwards.

There are several puzzles associated with this extended period, and several obstacles which stand in the way of their resolution. The puzzles can perhaps be summarised in the following questions (in no particular order):

- Why Greek (especially Milesian) colonies in the later 7th century, and not earlier?
- What drew Milesians into various parts of the Black Sea then?
- What was going on in the Black Sea between the end of the 13th and the 7th centuries BC?
- Did the Black Sea have any bearing on the collapse of the Hittite empire?
- Was it in this extended period that the sail was introduced into the Black Sea? - and, if so, when?

The obstacles that stand in the way are many and various, and include:

- The scarcity and/or patchiness of archaeological knowledge of many Black Sea coastal regions during most of this extended period, and the several difficulties involved in constructing a joined-up picture at any given time.

- The associated problems of constructing reliable and consensual archaeological (particularly ceramic-based) chronologies, and especially of correlating these across regions.
- Ignorance of political configurations, especially in Anatolia, during this extended period (e.g. the extent of Phrygian power and/or influence)
- The problems presented by texts (Hittite, Greek and others) of widely varying dates and (one has to assume) with widely differing agendas, and the problems caused by text-driven interpretations of the archaeological record.

This brief paper does not claim to offer solutions to any of the puzzles, and the obstacles are ones that can only be overcome by future regular communication and collaboration of the kind which, it is hoped, this Workshop will foster. However, it will be suggested that, by looking at the Black Sea in a wider context, it may be possible to begin to sketch the outlines of a narrative that might be applicable to this extended shadowy period.

**Dr. Toby Wilkinson**  
Sheffield University

***A Tale of Two Seas: Modelling Ancient Travel in the Black and Caspian Seas Regions***

The Black Sea has long been recognized as an important medium for (and frequent barrier to) the transmission of materials, peoples and ideas between its littoral lands. In comparison, the Caspian has remained a long-forgotten cousin: physically unconnected to its neighbour, but playing, potentially, a similar role as alternate barrier or facilitator of human interaction. The exact nature of travels and routes across, around and beyond both these seas remain under-studied. The effects that water and the surrounding topography had on travel is vital to the understanding of cultural transformations in the Near East, Europe and the steppes, which include the origins of languages and the transmission of new technologies such as metallurgy and the wheel. This experimental paper will use a set of GIS analytical techniques as a foray into unpicking travel and interaction in the Black and Caspian Sea regions. Given the limitations of current techniques, a focus will be placed on the construction of a model of land-travel *from* and *around* the Seas that may, in future, be placed against models of travel *across* them. The possible effects of sea-level changes will be considered, both on travel potential and on relative archaeological visibility.

**Prof. Valentina Yanko-Hombach**  
Odessa National University, Ukraine and Avalon Institute of Applied Science, Canada

***Black Sea Level Changes and Adaptation Strategies of Prehistoric Populations during the Last 30 KA***

This presentation focuses on the study of the evolution and interrelationship of the environment and prehistoric populations in the northwestern part of the Black Sea during the Late Pleistocene and Holocene. It has been determined that during last 30 ka, the Black Sea level fluctuated in an oscillating manner. Quick sea-level rise brought the level of the Early Neoeuxinian lake from about -100 m to -20 m, most likely due to the discharge of Caspian water into the Early Neoeuxinian lake through the Manych Outlet. At the Last Glacial Maximum (27-17 ka BP), when the level of the Early Neoeuxinian lake was -100 m below present, Late Paleolithic sites were located within the deep valleys of small rivers. These valleys were flooded in the course of the Late Neoeuxinian



transgression (17-10 ka BP). However, they are well expressed geomorphologically and can be easily traced on the present Black Sea shelf. This topographic information can be used to search for submerged Late Paleolithic sites on the shelf, thereby helping to locate evidence for the transition among ancient human groups from hunting large herd animals to small non-gregarious species. The beginning of the Mediterranean transgression occurred around 9.5 ka BP. Both the transgression and faunal migration occurred over the course of six transgressive-regressive stages. Mesolithic sites continued to be located along river valleys; they bear some evidence of the transition from hunting to gathering of edible plants. No signs of catastrophic flooding of the Black Sea in the Early Holocene have been found.