

Archaeology of the Caucasus in Three Acts

I. COURSE OVERVIEW

This course explores the long-term archaeological record of the Caucasus from the appearance of the first hominins in the Pleistocene to Antiquity. In this class we approach this long history as a narrative in three Acts. After an orientation on the history of archaeological research in the region, we shall begin with the deep prehistory of the region, the arrival of the *first Homo sapiens*, and the appearance of the first farming villages in Act I. In Act II, we will tackle the appearance of life in the highlands and the cultural mosaic of the Chalcolithic period, demographic shift and large-scale migrations in the Early Bronze Age, and the appearance of nomadism and social inequality, and the “Indo-European Question” in the Middle–Late Bronze Age. In Act III, we will conclude our journey with a discussion on the first states and empires, and the genesis of the modern national identities of the Caucasus in Antiquity. In each Act, students will be introduced to the most important sites and finds of each period. We will also discuss the cultural dynamics and forces of cultural change that shaped the Caucasus in each Act from various technological, climatic, economic, and social perspectives. Finally, as we tackle the critical questions and ongoing debates in the scholarship of each time period, we will ground the discussions through comparison with the archaeological record of Mesopotamia, the greater Near East, and eastern Europe.

II. REQUIRED TEXTS

Sagona, A. 2017. *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

In addition to the textbook, weekly articles will be made available online.

III. COURSE STRUCTURE

This is a weekly seminar. Each seminar is divided into an initial lecture followed by discussions. The lecture, which complements Antonio Sagona’s book, will provide the basis and foundations of the course subject matter. Each week, the lecture will be followed by an in-class discussion based on the articles. These discussions will allow us to unpack the lecture information and engage with the readings and the most fundamental issues and questions related to the topic of the week.

IV. REQUIRED GROUP ASSIGNMENTS

There are three required assignments for the class: one-page thematic summaries, three brief presentations, and a final term paper. These three assignments are interlinked and have built-in redundancies, so that your thematic summaries will lay the ground work for your three presentation, which together are the building blocks of your term paper. **These assignments will be done in pairs or in small groups assignments. Detailed instructions for each of the three assignments will be provided on the first day of the seminar.**

— One-Page Thematic Summaries (6 summaries total)

Each pair or group is responsible for choosing one of several themes on the instruction sheet. Some of the themes include: technology and material culture, subsistence adaptations, rituals and religions, settlement patterns, architecture and site formation processes, etc. Each group/pair will then research their particular theme related to the periods covered in each Act, using the scholarly sources, including primary sources and site reports.

The summaries must present, in a single page, the type of archaeological evidence for each theme, with reference to specific sites and datasets. Naturally, the available archaeological record and research for some themes will be scant in Act I, but as we progress with the semester and as the literature becomes more extensive, you will learn to become more selective in your approach. I will check with each pair/group on a regular basis to make sure that they are on track and, and to lend any assistance that might be needed in navigating the literature.

— **Brief Presentations (3 presentations total)**

The last day of each Act will be dedicated to in-class presentations. Pairs/groups are responsible for making enough copies of their summaries for everyone in the seminar. Each group must then provide a PowerPoint presentation (10-15 minutes long, depending on the number of groups) on the salient patterns and topics related to its theme and the time periods covered in each Act.

— **Collaborate Term Papers**

Your theme of choice, your summaries and, your presentations are the building blocks of your term paper, though you must choose your specific topic in consultation with me. In this research paper (no more than 20-pages long, double spaced), you will write a narrative that explores your theme, its archaeological record, and the theoretical, analytical and methodological challenges associated with it. You may choose to synthesize the data across a broad time frame, or you may choose to pursue a more specific question. **Pairs/groups that produce excellent and thoughtful papers, will have the option to work with me after the semester to turn their paper into a collaborative and publishable manuscript**

V. COURSE OUTLINE

9/3 – Introduction

9/10 – Geography, Politics, and History of Archaeology

Dolukhanov, P. M.

1995 Archaeology in Russia and its impact on archaeological theory. In *Theory in Archaeology: A World Perspective*, ed. by P. J. Ucko, pp. 327–342. Routledge, London.

Gadjiev, M., Kohl, P.L., and R.G. Magomedov

2007 Mythologizing the remote past for political purposes in the North Caucasus. In *Caucasus Paradigms: Anthropologies, Histories and the Making of a World Area*, eds. by B. Grant and L. Yalçin-Heckmann, pp. 119–144. Transaction Pub., London.

Khatchadourian, L.

2008 Making nations from the ground up: traditions of classical archaeology in the South Caucasus. *American Journal of Archaeology* 112:247–278.

Kohl, P.L.

1993 Nationalism, politics, and the practice of archaeology in Soviet Transcaucasia. *Journal of European Archaeology* 1(2):181–88.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 1.

Smith, A.

2005 Prometheus unbound: southern Caucasus in prehistory. *Journal of World Prehistory* 19(4):229–279.

DUE ON 9/10: name of group/pair members and their themes of choice

ACT I. Peopling and Settlement of the Caucasus

9/17 – Scene 1: Arrival of the First Hominins

Doronichev, V.B.

2008 The Lower Paleolithic in Eastern Europe and the Caucasus: a reappraisal of the data and new approaches. *PaleoAnthropology* 2008:107–157.

Doronchiev, V.B. and L. Golovanova

2010 Beyond the Acheulian: a view on the Lower Paleolithic occupation of Western Eurasia. *Quaternary International* 223:327–344.

Ferring, G., Oms, O., Agust, J., Berna, F., Nioradze, M., Shelia, T., Tappen, M., et al.

2011 Earlier human occupations at Dmanisi (Georgia Caucasus) dated to 1.85–1.78 Ma. *PNAS* 108(26):10432–10436

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 2 (pp. 34–46).

9/24 – Scene 2: Neanderthals and the Middle Paleolithic

Adler, D.S., Bar-Oz, G., Belfer-Cohen, A., and O. Bar-Yosef.

2006 Middle and Upper Paleolithic hunting behaviors in the southern Caucasus. *Current Anthropology* 47(1):89–119.

Adler, D.S., Bar-Yosef, O., Belfer-Cohen A., Tushabramishvili, N., Mercier, N., et al.

2008 Dating the demise: Neanderthal extinction and the establishment of modern humans in the southern Caucasus. *Journal of Human Evolution* 55(5):817–833.

Bar-Yosef, O., Belfer-Cohen, A., and D.S. Adler

2006 The implications of the Middle–Upper Paleolithic chronological boundary in the Caucasus to Eurasian prehistory. *Anthropologie* 44(1):49–60.

Golovanova, L.V., and V.B. Doronchiev

2003 The Middle Paleolithic of the Caucasus. *Journal of World Prehistory* 17(1):71–140.

Pinhasi, R., Higham, T.F.G., Golovanova, L.V., and V.B. Doronchiev

2011 Revised age of late Neanderthal occupation and the end of the Middle Paleolithic in the northern Caucasus. *PNAS* 108:8611.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 2 (pp. 46–66).

DUE ON 9/24: First one-page summary

10/1 – Scene 3: Arrival of *Homo sapiens* and the “Last” Hunters

Golovanova, L.V., Doronchiev, V.B., Cleghron, N.E., Koulkova, M.A., Sapelko, T.V., et al.

2010 Significance of ecological factors in the Middle to Upper Paleolithic transition. *Current Anthropology* 51(5):655–691.

Kushnareva, K.K.

1997 *The Southern Caucasus in Prehistory: Stages of Cultural and Socioeconomic Development from the Eight to the Second Millennium B.C.* University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, pp. 3–12.

Leonova, E.

2014 Investigation of Mesolithic and Upper Paleolithic multilayer sites in the north-west Caucasus. *The Dolní Věstonice Studies* 20:43–48.

Lioublin, V.P.

1994 Human adaptation in the mountain environments of the Caucasus during Upper Paleolithic and Mesolithic. *Prehistoria Alpina* 28:207–219.

Meshveliani, T., Bar-Oz, G., Bar-Yosef, O., Belfer-Cohen, A., Boaretto, E., Jakeli, N., et al.
2007 Mesolithic hunters at Kotias Klde, western Georgia, preliminary results. *Paléorient* 33(2):47–58.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 2 (pp. 66–84)

10/8 – Scene 4: Neolithization and the “First” Farmers

Chataigner, C., Badalyan R., and M. Arimura

2015 The Neolithic of the Caucasus. *Oxford Handbooks Online*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Hovsepian, R., and G. Willcox

2008 The earliest finds of cultivated plants in Armenia: evidence from charred remains and crop processing residues in pise from the Neolithic settlements of Aratashen and Aknashen. *Vegetation History and Archaeobotany* 17(1):63–71.

Kotova, N.

2009 The Neolithization of northern Black Sea area in the context of climate changes. *Documenta Praehistorica* 36:159–174.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 3.

10/15 – Student Presentations (*Second one-page summary due*)

ACT II. Upheavals, Transformations, and Migrations

10/22 – Scene 1: Environmental and Demographic Shift in the Chalcolithic Period

Areshian, G., Gasparian, B., Avetisyan, P.S., and R. Pinhasi

2012 The Chalcolithic of the Near East and south-eastern Europe: discoveries and new perspectives from the cave complex Areni-1, Armenia. *Antiquity* 86(331):115–130.

Lyonnet, B.

2010 Late Chalcolithic cultures in Western Azerbaijan: recent excavations and surveys. In *Proceedings of the Sixth International Congress of the Archaeology of the Ancient Near East*, Vol. 2, eds. by P. Matthiae, F. Pinnock, and L. Romano, pp. 357–369. Harrassowitz Verlag, Wiesbaden.

Marro, C.

2010 Where did Late Chalcolithic Chaff-Faced Ware originate? Cultural dynamics in Anatolia and Transcaucasia at the dawn of urban civilization. *Paléorient* 36(2):35–55.

Ollivier, V., Fontugne, M., Lyonnet, B., and C. Chataigner

2015 Base level changes, river avulsions and Holocene human settlement dynamics in the Caspian Sea area *Quaternary International* 395:79–94.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Ch. 4.

10/29 – Scene 2: Cultural Turnover in the Early Bronze Age

Batiuk, S, and M. Rothman

2007 Early Transcaucasian cultures and their neighbors: unraveling migration, trade, and assimilation. *Expedition* 49(1):7–17.

Hovsepyan, R.

2015 On the agriculture and vegetal economy of Kura-Araxes culture in the South Caucasus. *Paléorient* 41(1): 69–82.

Kohl, P.L.

2009 The Maikop singularity: the unequal accumulation of wealth on the Bronze Age Eurasian Steppe. In *Social Complexity in Prehistoric Eurasia: Monuments, Metals and Mobility*, eds. by B.K. Hanks and K.M. Linduff, pp. 91–106. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Palumbi G., and C. Chataigner

2014 The Kura-Araxes Culture from the Caucasus to Iran, Anatolia and the Levant: Between unity and diversity, a synthesis. *Paléorient* (40)2:247–260.

Sagona A.

2014 Rethinking the Kura-Araxes genesis. *Paléorient* 40(2):23–46.

Wilkinson, T.C.

2014 The Early Transcaucasian phenomenon in structural-systematic perspective: cuisine, craft and economy. *Paléorient* 40(2):203–229.

DUE ON 10/29: Third one-page summary

11/5 – Scene 3: Social Complexity, Horses, Wagons, and the Indo-European Question

Anthony D.W.

1995 Horse, wagon and chariot: Indo-European languages and archaeology. *Antiquity* 69(264):554–565.

Mallory, J. P.

1973 A short history of the Indo-European problem. *Journal of Indo-European Studies* 1(1):21–65.

Puturidze, M.

2003 Social and economic shifts in the South Caucasian Middle Bronze Age. In *Archaeology in the Borderlands: Investigations in Caucasia and Beyond*, eds. by A.T. Smith and K.S. Rubinson, pp. 111–127. Cotsen Institute of Archaeology, Los Angeles.

Sagona, A.

2017 *The Archaeology of the Caucasus: From Earliest Settlements to the Iron Age*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, Chs. 7 and 8.

Smith, A.T.

2006 Before Argishti: the roots of complex societies in Caucasia. Notes from the Tsakahovit Plain, Armenia. In *Beyond the Steppe and the Sown: Proceedings of the 2002 University of Chicago Conference on Eurasian Archaeology*, eds. by D.L. Petersen, L. Popova, and A.T. Smith, pp. 172–82, Brill, Leiden.

11/12 – Student Presentations (*Fourth one-page summary due*)

ACT III. Nomads, States, and Empires

11/19 – Scene 1: Scythians and the Steppe in the Early Iron Age

Khazanov, A. M.

1978 The early state among the Scythians. In *The Early State*, eds. by H. J. M. Claessen and P. Skalnik, pp. 425–439. Mouton Publishers, The Hague.

Unterländer, M., Palstra, F., Lazaridis, L., Pilipenko, A., Hofmanová, Z., Groß, M., et al.
2017 Ancestry and demography and descendants of Iron Age nomads of the Eurasia Steppe. *Nature Communications* 8:14615.

Tosi, M.

1994 The Egalitarian foundations of Steppe empires. In *The Archaeology of the Steppes: Methods and Strategies*, ed. by B. Genito, pp. 651–666. Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli.

Petrenko, V. G.

1995 Scythian Culture in the North Caucasus. In *Nomads of the Eurasian Steppes in the Early Iron Age*, eds. J. Davis-Kimball, V.A. Bashilov, and L.T. Yablonsky, pp. 5–22, Zinat Press, Berkeley.

Moškova, M. G.

1994 On the nature of the similarity and difference in the nomadic cultures of the Eurasian steppes of the 1st millennium B.C. In *The Archaeology of the Steppes: Methods and Strategies*, ed. by B. Genito, pp. 231–241. Istituto Universitario Orientale, Napoli.

Murphy, E.M., Schulting, R., Beer, N., Chistov, Y., Kasparov, A., and M. Pshenitsyna

2013 Iron Age pastoral nomadism and agriculture in the eastern Eurasian steppe: implications from dental palaeopathology and stable carbon and nitrogen isotopes. *Journal of Archaeological Science* 40(5):2546–2560.

11/26 – Scene 2: Urartian Empire

Badalyan, R. S., A. T. Smith, and P. S. Avetisyan

2004 The emergence of socio-political complexity in Southern Caucasia. In *Archaeology in the Borderlands: Investigations in Caucasia and Beyond*, eds. by A. T. Smith and K. Rubinson.

Burney, C., and D.M. Lang

1971 From the rise of Urartu to the birth of Armenia. In *The People of the Hills: Ancient Ararat and Caucasus*, pp. 127–173., Weidenfeld and Nicholson, London:

Hammer, E.

2014 Highland fortress-polities and their settlement systems in the southern Caucasus. *Antiquity* 88(341):757–774.

Smith, A. T.

1999 The making of an Urartian landscape in southern Transcaucasia: a study of political architectonics. *American Journal of Archaeology* 103(1):45–71.

Zimansky, P.

1995 Urartian material culture as state assemblage: an anomaly in the archaeology of empire. *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research* 299/300:103–115.

DUE ON 11/26: Fifth one-page summary

Nov 27–Dec 1 Thanksgiving Recess

12/3 – Scene 3: Caucasus between Persia and Europe

Garsoïan, N.

1997 The emergence of Armenia. In *The Armenian People from Ancient to Modern Times*, ed. by R.G. Hovannisian, pp. 37–62, St. Martin's Press, New York.

Khatchadourian, L.

2008 Unforgettable landscapes: attachment to the past in Hellenistic Armenia. In *Negotiating the Past in the Past: Identity, Memory, and Landscape in Archaeological Research*, ed. by N. Yoffee, pp. 43–75, University of Arizona Press, Tucson.

Knauss, F.

2006 Ancient Persia and the Caucasus. *Iranica Antiqua* 41:79–118.

Ter-Martirissov, F.I.

1997 Un peuple convoité: l'état Arménien et les Achéménides, les Ervandides, les princes Hellénistiques et les empereurs Romains (VI^e siècle avant J.-C. – IV^e siècle après J.-C.).” In *Arménie: Trésors de l'Arménie ancienne des origines au IV^e siècle*, ed. by J. Santrot, pp. 178–249, Somogy Editions d'Art, Paris.

Toumanoff, C.

1971 Caucasia and Byzantium. *Traditio* 27:111–158.

12/10 – Student Presentations (*sixth one-page summary due*)

Final papers due during the final examination period