



Universität
Basel

Research Project

BioarcCaucasus : Mobility, migration and demographic change in the Bronze Age of North Caucasias

Third-party funded project

Project title BioarcCaucasus : Mobility, migration and demographic change in the Bronze Age of North Caucasias

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Organisation / Research unit

Departement Umweltwissenschaften / Integrative Prähistorische und Naturwissenschaftliche Archäologie (IPNA Schünemann)

Department

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Status Completed

From the 19th century onwards, the Indo-European expansion has been a grand historical narrative telling that during the 3rd millennium BC pastoral nomads migrated in several waves from the Pontic steppes into the West. The image of highly mobile groups riding on horses, using wagons pulled by oxen, and burying their dead in monumental mounds is supported by the virtual absence of settlements in the pre-Caucasian steppe. It is, however, also biased by the knowledge of impressive historical invasions and 20th century political conflicts. The objective of the proposed study is to critically review the expansionist image of the Eurasian Bronze Age and to challenge its central paradigm – the existence of large scale migrations in the pre-Caucasian steppe. An international team of scholars from Russia, Germany, and Switzerland will conduct interdisciplinary research at the borderline of the humanities and sciences. The study will integrate archaeological investigations and modern bioarchaeological research on skeletal remains including stable isotope analyses of strontium, oxygen, carbon, and nitrogen in human teeth and bones and anthropological procedures, such as palaeopathology and the analysis of skeletal activity markers. The proposed research will be conducted using a huge collection of well documented skeletal series, excavated and stored according to modern standards by the department of antiquities GUP “in the Stavropol’ Region, Russia. Their quantity and excellent preservation will ensure a representative selection based on archaeological and environmental criteria. Moreover, the study will draw on archaeological and modern specimens to establish isotope ratio comparative maps (isoscapes) of the chemical elements under investigation. The project will foster international collaboration, method development and disclose past mobility patterns using evidence that is independent of burial rituals, ideologies, and images derived from modern history.

Keywords Bronze Age, Indo European expansion, Migration, Dietary reconstruction, Stable isotope analyses, Caucasus region

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Add publication

Published results

4216723, Knipper, Corina; Reinhold, Sabine; Gresky, Julia; Belinskiy, Andrej; Alt, Kurt W., Economic strategies at Bronze Age and Early Iron Age upland sites in the North Caucasus: Archaeological and stable isotope investigations, 978-1-138-30858-9, Isotopic investigations of pastoralism in prehistory, Publication: Book Item (Buchkap., Lexikonartikel, jur. Kommentierung, Beiträge in Sammelbänden etc.)

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Add documents

Specify cooperation partners

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
3571716	Pichler, Sandra	Hansen, Svend	DAI Berlin - Eurasia Department	01.04.2016	31.03.2018
3571717	Pichler, Sandra	Buzhilova, Alexandra	Lomonosov University Moscow - Anuchin Research Institute	01.04.2016	31.03.2018
3491821	Pichler, Sandra	Knipper, Corina	Curt-Engelhorn-Zentrum Archäometrie Mannheim	01.10.2015	31.03.2018

ID	Kreditinhaber	Kooperationspartner	Institution	Laufzeit - von	Laufzeit - bis
3227138	Pichler, Sandra	Krause, Johannes, Director	Max-Planck-Institut für Menschheitsgeschichte Jena	01.01.2015	30.06.2020
3703496	Pichler, Sandra	Belinsky, Andrej, Head of GUP Nasledie	Ministry of Cultural Affairs, Stavropol	01.04.2016	31.03.2018