Examining The Archaeology of ‘Antik’-quity: The Eastern Caucasus Beyond Rome And Parthia

Lara Fabian
University of Pennsylvania, lfabian@sas.upenn.edu
Examining The Archaeology of ‘Antik’-quity: The Eastern Caucasus Beyond Rome And Parthia

Abstract
A new political power, Caucasian Albania, grew in the eastern Caucasus between the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire and the consolidation of the Sasanian Empire (ca. 300 BCE – 300 CE). During this period, the region was a multi-polar intersection of Mediterranean, Iranian, and Steppe zones of interest and socio-political frameworks. Although never comfortably integrated into the Seleucid, Roman, or Arsacid empires, residents in the eastern Caucasus interacted with all of them. Antik Albania, however, has remained at the margins of modern scholarship, creating a gap in our perceptions of the networks flowing across antiquity.

In this dissertation, I provide an archaeological, historical, and historiographic investigation of Antik Albania that addresses that gap. It focuses on Albania’s interactions with the Mediterranean world, while also exploring the ancient Iranian context. Additionally, it examines the intellectual history of the Russian Empire, the Soviet South Caucasus, and contemporary Azerbaijan that generated most archaeological data and previous scholarship on the region.

Building from an examination of textual sources, I consider the way that the landscape of the eastern Caucasus shaped movement and connectivity. The mountainous terrain created distinct transit corridors through the space, but instead of positioning themselves directly along one of these, the Albanians chose to build their base of power in more distant space that controlled a juncture between low- and highlands. Despite their choice of an out-of-the-way location, the material culture associated with Albanian state administration demonstrates that local political authorities constructed their own vocabulary of power, which freely incorporated and re-imagined elements from Mediterranean and Iranian neighbors. Finally, mortuary data reflecting social identity highlight the sustained presence of mobile pastoralist populations connected to the Pontic and Eurasian steppes. These data show the fluidity between elements of the population that have been previously been presumed to be either mobile or sedentary.

Throughout this study, I argue that the ‘remoteness’ of Albania in both its ancient context and within our Anglo-American scholarly one is, in fact a conceptual strength of the space. It prompts us to wrestle with diverse datasets and conflicting intellectual histories, enriching and expanding our vision of a connected antiquity.

Degree Type
Dissertation

Degree Name
Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)

Graduate Group
Art & Archaeology of Mediterranean World

This dissertation is available at ScholarlyCommons: https://repository.upenn.edu/edissertations/2824
First Advisor
Lauren Ristvet

Keywords
Archaeology, Azerbaijan, Parthia, Rome, South Caucasus

Subject Categories
Ancient History, Greek and Roman through Late Antiquity | Classics | History of Art, Architecture, and Archaeology
EXAMINING THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ‘ANTIK’-QUITY:
THE EASTERN CAUCASUS BEYOND ROME AND PARTHIA

© Lara Fabian 2018
DEDICATION

To my family.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The practice of archaeology is, by its nature, an intensely collaborative process. Although most of my dissertation research unfolded in libraries and archives rather than on excavations, this dissertation is nevertheless the product of profound collaboration. It has only been possible with the intellectual, emotional and material support of a tremendous number of people and institutions.

The first threads of the project developed when, on something of a whim early in graduate school, I participated in a summer of fieldwork on Lauren Ristvet’s excavation in Naxçıvan, Azerbaijan. At the time, I had vague plans to write a dissertation on some type of Roman periphery – so Lauren’s Bronze and Iron Age Caucasus project seemed like an interesting diversion. But, over the course of that summer, I became fascinated with the archaeology of the Caucasus. Upon returning to Philadelphia and digging into the library to learn more, I found that readily available resources about the relationship between the eastern Caucasus and the Mediterranean world were fairly quickly exhausted. This dissertation is an outgrowth of that realization.

Lauren has been a tremendous advocate of this project from the beginning, and an altogether stellar supervisor. I want to extend my deepest gratitude to her for her unflagging support. She saw the promise of the project long before I did, and encouraged me to embrace all of the various complicated facets of this research. Along the way, she introduced me to one of my favorite authors, Yury Dombrovsky, whose Faculty of Useless Knowledge should be required reading for archaeologists working in the formerly Soviet space. On a more practical (but critically important) level, as part of the first wave of foreign archaeologists to work in Azerbaijan in recent years, Lauren was a fount of wisdom about navigating the research realities. My project would not have been possible without the relationships that she had developed in Azerbaijan.

I thank also the other three members of my dissertation committee. Brian Rose’s detailed and thoughtful editing taught me how present my project to the wider community of Mediterranean archaeologists. Julia Wilker’s Roman History seminar on Provincial Perspectives was foundational in my thinking about the threads that connect
the distant corners of the Mediterranean to the world beyond. Cam Grey gave hours of his
time to conversations about how to tell a materially grounded social history. All three
were extremely patient as I deluged them with Russian historiography. I could not have
wished for a better dissertation committee.

Although the genesis of this research was in Philadelphia, the intellectual heart of
the project developed during my time in Azerbaijan. I owe a tremendous debt to my
colleagues and peers in Baku. On a formal level, I am grateful to the Institute of
Archaeology and Ethnography of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences and to its
director Dr. Maisə Rəhimova, as well as to the former head of the Antik department, Dr.
İlyas Babayev. Among my many colleagues in Azerbaijan, Ceyhun Eminli has been both
close friend and an important interlocutor as I have found my footing in the world of
Azerbaijani archaeology. Emil İsgəndərov has also been an endless source of
bibliography, and an entirely generous colleague. To this list, I add Orxan Zamanov and
the Faculty of History and Archaeology at Xəzər University, as well as Təvəkkül Əliyev,
all of whom have shaped my understanding of the Antik period in fundamental ways.
Finally, my many thanks to the archivist of the Institute of Archeology, Dr. İdris Əliyev,
as well as the patient librarians at the Milli Kitabxana. I could name an equally long list
of thanks to colleagues in Georgia, but will simply briefly mention Dr. Vakhtang Licheli,
Dr. Darejan Kachavara, Dr. Michael Vickers, and Dima Jachvlian.

My dissertation research in the Caucasus and Russia was funded by a Council on
Library and Information Resources Mellon Fellowship for Dissertation Research in
Original Sources, as well as by a Multi-Country Research Fellowship from the Council of
American Overseas Research Centers, and a fellowship from the Kolb Society of Fellows
of the University of Pennsylvania Museum. Earlier stages of the research were supported
by the American Numismatic Society, through their Summer Seminar where I first began
to work on the coins of the Caucasus. Parts of chapter 5 and 6 were further developed
following participation in Eivind Heldas Seland’s “Sinews of Empire: Networks and
regional interaction in the Roman Near East” conference, and published in the resulting
volume. Preliminary research in Azerbaijan was funded by the American Research
Institute of the South Caucasus (ARISC), as well as by the Art and Archaeology graduate group at the University of Pennsylvania and the University of Pennsylvania Museum.

Through ARISC, and particularly because of the initiative of Karen Rubinson, I have had the great pleasure of benefiting from the dynamic and supportive community of American researchers in the South Caucasus. The intellectual generosity and warmth of the South Caucasus scholarly community cannot be overstated—I want particularly to acknowledge Emily Hammer, Kathryn O’Neil Weber, Nat Erb-Satullo, Kate Franklin and Elizabeth Fagan.

Over the course of the dissertation, Ceyhun Eminli and I began a collaborative fieldwork project in the Talış mountains in the Lerik district of Azerbaijan, the Lerik in Antiquity Archaeological Project. The first two seasons were co-directed by the two of us and Susannah Fishman, along with extensive support from Hannah Lau. Although this fieldwork is not part of my dissertation, it has been foundational in my thinking about archaeology in Azerbaijan. We have been very lucky to have wonderful teams both seasons (Emil Isgenderov, Selin Nugent, Xeyala Karmimova, Jen Swerida, Petra Creamer, Steven Ammerman and Nicholas Ames)—and I particularly thank the 2017 team, who put up with my dissertation-typing in the wee hours of the morning. Thanks also to Sitta von Reden and my colleagues at Universität Freiburg on the Beyond the Silk Road ERC-funded project, who have supported me as I finalized this dissertation over the last months.

Finally, this project came to fruition within a wonderful network of friends and colleagues: Susannah and Hannah, whose contributions extent far past the fieldwork in Lerik; my cohort-mates at Penn, Lucas Stevens and Kurtis Tanaka; and the wider Penn community—Kate Morgan, Sarah Linn, Sarah Beckmann Katherine Burge, Olivia Hayden, Tom Hardy, Emily French, Anna Sitz, Steve Renette, Daira Nocera, Stephanie Hagan, Alice Hu, Jane Sancinto, and Tricia Kim.

And of course, none of this would have happened without my parents, Teresa and Larry, and my brother Christopher—who was the one to set me on this path of archaeology. My deepest thanks to all.
ABSTRACT

EXAMINING THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF ‘ANTIK’-QUITY: THE EASTERN CAUCASUS BEYOND ROME AND PARTHIA

Lara Fabian
Lauren Ristvet

A new political power, Caucasian Albania, grew in the eastern Caucasus between the collapse of the Achaemenid Empire and the consolidation of the Sasanian Empire (ca. 300 BCE – 300 CE). During this period, the region was a multi-polar intersection of Mediterranean, Iranian, and Steppe zones of interest and socio-political frameworks. Although never comfortably integrated into the Seleucid, Roman, or Arsacid empires, residents in the eastern Caucasus interacted with all of them. Antik Albania, however, has remained at the margins of modern scholarship, creating a gap in our perceptions of the networks flowing across antiquity.

In this dissertation, I provide an archaeological, historical, and historiographic investigation of Antik Albania that addresses that gap. It focuses on Albania’s interactions with the Mediterranean world, while also exploring the ancient Iranian context. Additionally, it examines the intellectual history of the Russian Empire, the Soviet South Caucasus, and contemporary Azerbaijan that generated most archaeological data and previous scholarship on the region.

Building from an examination of textual sources, I consider the way that the landscape of the eastern Caucasus shaped movement and connectivity. The mountainous
terrain created distinct transit corridors through the space, but instead of positioning themselves directly along one of these, the Albanians chose to build their base of power in more distant space that controlled a juncture between low- and highlands. Despite their choice of an out-of-the-way location, the material culture associated with Albanian state administration demonstrates that local political authorities constructed their own vocabulary of power, which freely incorporated and re-imagined elements from Mediterranean and Iranian neighbors. Finally, mortuary data reflecting social identity highlight the sustained presence of mobile pastoralist populations connected to the Pontic and Eurasian steppes. These data show the fluidity between elements of the population that have been previously been presumed to be either mobile or sedentary.

Throughout this study, I argue that the ‘remoteness’ of Albania in both its ancient context and within our Anglo-American scholarly one is, in fact a conceptual strength of the space. It prompts us to wrestle with diverse datasets and conflicting intellectual histories, enriching and expanding our vision of a connected antiquity.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .................................................................................................................. III

ACKNOWLEDGMENT ................................................................................................. IV

ABSTRACT ................................................................................................................... VII

TABLE OF CONTENTS ............................................................................................... IX

LIST OF TABLES ......................................................................................................... XI

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS ......................................................................................... XI

PREFACE ..................................................................................................................... XIX

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ..................................................................................... 1
  Why Study the Eastern Caucasus? ............................................................................ 4
  Caucasian Albania: Where, What and When? ....................................................... 10
  Dissertation Structure ......................................................................................... 23

CHAPTER 2: THE VALUE OF THE REMOTE ............................................................ 26
  Approaching ‘Empire’ in the Inter-Empire ............................................................ 28
  On the Edge of (the Roman) Empire ....................................................................... 36
  The Caucasus within the Mediterranean Framework ............................................ 46
  From Rome to Roman Studies ............................................................................. 51
  Conclusions ....................................................................................................... 55

CHAPTER 3: RUSSIANS AND ROMANS IN THE CAUCASUS ................................. 58
  Classical Traditions In Russia Before the Nineteenth Century ......................... 61
  Frontiers, Identity and Orientalism in the Nineteenth Century ......................... 73
  Archaeologists and Infrastructure in the Nineteenth Century ......................... 88
  Classics, Communism and Archaeology ............................................................. 104
  Conclusion ....................................................................................................... 123

CHAPTER 4: KNOWING THE ‘UNKNOWABLE’: HISTORIES OF ALBANIA ........... 126
  Histories (mostly) from Textual Sources ............................................................. 128
  Pompey: History for Whose Sake? ....................................................................... 164
  The Albanians and the Sarmatians: Ethne in the Texts ....................................... 182
  Historical Geography: Ancient Borders in Modern Contexts ......................... 190
  Conclusions ....................................................................................................... 211

CHAPTER 5: IN THE IN-BETWEEN: COASTAL PATHS AND MOUNTAIN PASSES 213
  Calcified Cartographies ...................................................................................... 216
  The ‘Highland Imaginary’ and Mountain Realities ........................................... 223
  GIS, Movement of People and Movement of Things ......................................... 228
  Defining a Route System Computationally ......................................................... 230
  Network Analysis Results .................................................................................. 239
  Contextualizing Computational Analysis .......................................................... 242
  Conclusions ....................................................................................................... 248

CHAPTER 6: EXCAVATING THE STATE OF CAUCASIAN ALBANIA .................... 251
  Towards a State: Textual Foundations of Albania ............................................. 253
  Early-ANTIK Archaeology .................................................................................. 261
MID- AND LATE-ANTIK SETTLEMENTS AND MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE ................................. 273
ANTIK MATERIAL CULTURE OF ADMINISTRATION ............................................................. 299
CONCLUSIONS .................................................................................................................... 341

CHAPTER 7: CHASING A SHADOW: ON THE SARMATIANS .................................................. 343
SOCIO-POLITICAL LOGICS OF MOBILE PASTORALISM ...................................................... 346
SARMATIAN HISTORIOGRAPHY ......................................................................................... 357
CHRONOLOGIES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURES ....................................................... 359
PRE-SARMATIAN PASTORALISM: SCYTHIAN TRACES? ....................................................... 366
SARMATIAN CONSIDERATIONS .......................................................................................... 376
CONCLUSIONS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SHADOW BOXING .................................................. 399

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSIONS ................................................................................................ 401
CAUCASIAN ALBANIA AS SUBJECT ..................................................................................... 402
CAUCASIAN ALBANIA AS OBJECT ....................................................................................... 408
BEYOND BORDER(LAND)S ................................................................................................ 411

APPENDIX A: OTHER ANTIK/ALBANIAN SETTLEMENT SITES IN AZERBAIJAN 413
APPENDIX B: COIN FINDS FROM AZERBAIJAN AND THE SOUTH CAUCASUS ........ 430
APPENDIX C: ILLUSTRATED SEALS FROM EXCAVATIONS IN AZERBAIJAN .... 445
TABLES ................................................................................................................................. 489
ILLUSTRATIONS ................................................................................................................... 490
BIBLIOGRAPHY .................................................................................................................... 564
LIST OF TABLES

1. Table of texts with noteworthy accounts of Albania/ Caspian area.

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

1. Geopolitical map of the Caucasus, with inset providing regional context. Dashed lines indicate contested borders (Fabian, Basemap courtesy of ESRI GeoEye).

2. Antik-period polities in the Caucasus. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

3. Physical geography of the eastern Caucasus, showing most important regions discussed in text. On sea levels, see chapter 5. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).


7. Greek imported ceramics from the 5th c. BCE Greek Necropolis at Pichvnari (Tsetskhladze 1999:fig. 16 [top], 17 [bottom]).

8. Achaemenid vessels from burials. Left: Silver phialai from Akhalgori (Knauss 2006:fig. 1). Right: Glass bowl from Tsintsqaro (Knauss 2006:fig. 7).


10. Greek inscription #2 from Armavir (Mahé 1996:fig. 13).

11. Fragmentary architecture (possibly part of a warehouse?) from the artificial terrace of Samadlo, late 4th or early 3rd c. BCE (Furtwängler et al. 2008:fig. 37).
12. Settlement and temple complex from Tsikhia Gora built in similar construction technique to Samadlo remains, from the early Hellenistic period (Furtwängler et al. 2008:fig. 38).

13. Uplistsikhe rock-carved urban acropolis plan (Licheli 2001:fig. 6).

14. Region near Dedoplis Mindori and Dedoplis Gora (Furtwängler et al. 2008:fig. 2).

15. Plan of Dedoplis Mindori temple complex (Furtwängler et al. 2008:fig. 31).

16. Plan of Dedoplis Gora hill and excavated structures (Furtwängler et al. 2008:fig. 3).

17. Drawing of Qobustan inscription (Cəfərzadə 1948:fig. 1).

18. Photograph of Qobustan inscription (in current location?) (WikimediaCommons, User ‘Grandmaster’).


20. Inscription found near Mtskheta, reporting the help of Vespasian and Titus in strengthening the walls of the Iberian capital. SEG 20.112. (Uvarov 1902).

21. Contested territories in the South Caucasus (Hoch, Souleimanov, and Baranec 2014:fig. 1).

22. Administrative districts immediately before the Russian Revolution (1903-1914), showing late Imperial configuration of space (Tsutsiev 2007:fig. 15).


24. View of Şamaxı and environs (Osmanov 1982:fig. 1).


27. Topographic map of Azerbaijan (Trever 1959:fig. 41).

28. Map of Caucasus and neighboring zones between the 5th and 7th c. CE (Trever 1959:fig. 42).

29. Map of archaeological settlements and coin hoards (Babayev 1990:fig. 2).
30. Eastern Caucasus and Northern Iran archaeological sites (Koshelenko 1985:fig. 6).

31. Topographic plan of Almas topə, provided without additional wider context (C.Ə. Xəlilov, Qoşqarlı, and Arazova 1990:fig. 1).

32. Murav’ev’s analysis of Ptolemy’s geography, hypothesizing a transgression of the Caspian far into the Kura lowlands (Murav’ev 1983:fig. 7).

33. Murav’ev’s representation of the sea level of the Caspian between the 4th and 3rd c. BCE (Murav’ev 1991:fig. 6).

34. Comparison of Pleistocene and Holocene sea level change estimates for the Caspian (Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:table 1).

35. Range of Caspian coastlines with corresponding Caspian Sea levels (Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:fig. 4).

36. Illustration of the difference between a 30m sea level rise and one of 3-4m (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

37. Least Cost Path study points. Zone of interest marked by box (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

38. Cumulative Cost Paths (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

39. Cumulative Cost Paths ranked by frequency of route selection (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

40. Primary, secondary and tertiary routes (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

41. Metric choice across the three networks (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

42. Peutinger table. Top- view showing relative positions of Caucasus polities. Bottom- Detail view showing section labeled ‘Iberia-Albania’ (Talbert 2010).

43. Capital cities with respect to cumulative cost paths (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

44. Drawings of archaeological material near Derbent, after information from Kantemir (Bayer 1728a:462).

45. Dahyu of Armenia (Map by Khatchadourian, from Khatchadourian 2016:124).

46. Sites with Achaemenid remains (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 2)
47. Plan of Gumbati (Knauss 2000:fig. 1).

48. Reconstruction of Gumbati (Knauss 2006:fig. 10).

49. Plan of Ideal Təpə propylon, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 11).

50. Reconstruction of İdeal Təpə propylon, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 14).

51. Plan of Qurban Təpə structure, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 17).

52. Reconstruction of Qurban Təpə structure, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 21).


54. Column base comparison from the South Caucasus. 1: Sarıtəpə; 2-3: Gumbati, fragments; 4: Gumbati, reconstruction; 5: Benamin, fragment; 6: Qaracəmirli, fragment; 7: Tsikhiagora, reconstruction (Gagoshidze and Kipiani 2000:fig. 1).

55. Base from Sarıtəpə (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 7).


57. Seal impression from Sarıtəpə (Nərimanov 2001:151).

58. Map of Qəbələ rayonu showing modern villages (Габала. На страницах истории, n.d.:22).

59. Map of Qəbələ areas, showing Çaqallı (excavation areas 1 and 2 marked); Səlbir; and Qala (after Babayev and Əhmədov 1981:fig. 1).

60. Medieval fortification walls of Qəbələ at the time of Şərifov’s work (Şərifov 1927:174).

61. DigitalGlobe image of Qəbələ with detail of Çaqallı (imagery from Google Earth).

62. Plan of large rectilinear structure, upper context (Babayev and Əhmədov 1981:fig. 6).

63. Photograph of column base from large rectilinear structure (Babayev 1990:92 fig. 15).
64. Section illustration of column base (Babayev 1990:93 fig. 16).

65. Tiles from above excavated structure (Babayev 1990:80 fig. 10).

66. Plan of large rectilinear structure, lower context. Legend—1: Agricultural pit. 2: Post hole. 3: Paving gravel. 4: Mudbrick wall. 5: Burn traces. (Babayev 1990:87, fig. 13).

67. Plan of small rectilinear building (Babayev 1990:87, fig. 12).

68. Plan of Oval building #1, excavation area 3 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïskandarov, et al. 2014:99, fig. 4).

69. Plan of Oval buildings #2 and 3, excavation area 3 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïskandarov, et al. 2014:103, fig. 11).


71. Photograph of pithoi storage from 2012 excavation season. See plan of Oval buildings 2 and 3 for location of pithoi (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïsmayılov, et al. 2014:130, fig. 4a).

72. Photograph of pithoi storage from 2012 excavation season. See plan of Oval buildings 2 and 3 for location of pithoi (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïsmayılov, et al. 2014:130, fig. 4b).

73. Ceramic production area found below Oval building #1 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïsmayılov, et al. 2014:137, fig. 12).

74. Locations of key settlements mentioned in text (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

75. Xınıslı building remains (C.Ə. Xəlilov and Babayev 1974:106, fig. 6).

76. Xınıslı column bases (Babayev 1990:99, fig. 17).

77. Qırlartəpə structure foundations, plan and section (Osmanov 2006:plate 2).

78. Qırlartəpə structure foundations, plan and section (Osmanov 2006:plate 2)

79. Plan of Dedopolis Mindori complex (left) and detail of temple structure (right) (Furtwängler et al. 2008:pt. 13, figs. 30-31).


82. Photograph of Great Hall of Armaztsikhe (Gamkrelidze 2014:94).

83. Plan of one of the bath complexes at Armaztsikhe. Upper plan shows foundation level and hypocaust system, Lower plan shows floor level (O. Lordkipanidze 1991a:168, fig. 73).

84. Plan of Dzalisi complex, including bath (Gamkrelidze 2014:106).

85. Map of coins in database (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

86. Coin hoards by size (Fabian).

87. Coins by metal type (Fabian).

88. Coins in database by minting power (Fabian).

89. Roman coins in database (top); Arsakid coins in database (bottom) (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

90. Coins from the eastern Caucasus (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

91. Hoards from the piedmont region (Fabian).

92. Locally minted coinage. Drachm of less common (earlier) type (Rəcəblı 1986:fig. 2).

93. Locally minted coinage. Drachm of more common (later?) type (Rəcəblı 1986:fig. 3).

94. Qəbələ hoard histogram (Fabian).

95. Xınıslı hoard histogram (Fabian).

96. Coins from Iberia (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

97. Coin hoards from Iberia with Roman or Arsakid coins showing hoard composition (Fabian).

98. Iberia imitation staters. Top-‘Lysimachus’ type; Bottom- ‘Alexander’ type (T. Dundua and Dundua 2013, digital resource accessed at geonumismatics.tsu.ge)

99. Qəbələ bullae, published group one (C.Ə. Xəlilov and Babayev 1974:103, fig. 3).

100. Qəbələ bullae, published group two (Babayev and Əhmədov 1981:fig. 20).
101. Qəbələ bullae, published group three (Babayev 2010).

102. Sasanian border fortifications along the Caspian coast. White lines indicate linear fortifications, white circles indicate forts (Lawrence and Wilkinson 2017:fig. 5).

103. One typical interpretation of supposed Scythian and Cimmerian migrations (Bliev and Bzarov 2000:35).

104. Illustration of one of the Mingəçevir supine burials (Qazıyev 1949a:22, fig. 10).

105. Materials from Mingəçevir supine burials. 1- Stone vessel with silver encrustation (?); 2-Gold items of personal adornment; 3- Bronze belt fragment; 4- Bronze mirror (Qazıyev 1949a:24–25, figs. 13-16).

106. Photograph of supine burial excavated by BTC pipeline project (Huseynov, Agayev, and Ashurov 2006:34, photo 3).

107. Schematic plan of Zilgi settlement (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:fig. 2).

108. Map of catacomb burials (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).


110. ‘Combination’ catacomb with internment in jar (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).

111. ‘Combination’ catacomb with internment in timber coffin (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).

112. ‘Simple’ catacomb with internment placed on a wooden platform (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).

113. Ceramics and vessels from catacomb burials at Mingəçevir, including glass objects (#6-8) and metal (9) (Aslanov 1955:66, fig. 26).

114. Ceramic and glass vessels from Qəbələ catacomb #8 (Ha, Yeo, and Babayev, n.d.:27, 29)


116. Tripod bowl from Mingəçevir (Qazıyev 1960:Tab.23 no. 3).


118. Footed bowl (from Mingəçevir?) (Rzaev 1976).
119. Footed bowl from Dailaman (Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966:pt. 43, n. 10)

120. Map of locations with late supine burials (Fabian, basemap using USGS data).

121. Example of Ustyurt stelae. 1- Konai Sanctuary; 2- Baite III Sanctuary (Olkhovskiy 2000:41, figs. 3–4).

122. Xınislı stele, discovered by chance in 1946 (İbrahimov 2013:48, fig. 39).

123. Xınislı stele, reused as burial cover (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1960b:1127, fig. 2).

124. Partial Xınislı stele (İbrahimov 2013:23, fig. 11).

125. Dağkolani stele (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1965a:fig. 118).

126. Images of Çıraqlı stelae. (Left- screen shots from Dadaş Qorqud, see ch. 7, p. 396, n. 463; Right- C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985b:pt. 36)

127. Examples of slightly later anthropomorphic stelae from Tərtər (İbrahimov 2013:43, figs. 32-34).
Note on transliteration conventions:

Language is a complicated issue in the Caucasus. Overlapping use of multiple languages as well as a succession of scripts used to render these languages can cause considerable confusion. In this dissertation, I have tried to make the material approachable for a reader without regional language competency, while also enabling the further research of specialists.

I have used standard English spellings for names of well-known places and people (Baku rather than Bakı; Peter I rather than Piotr I). I have used the standard modified Library of Congress transliteration scheme for Russian, without diacritical marks. Azerbaijani names and toponyms are used in their original (untransliterated) Azerbaijani forms. Contemporary Azerbaijani uses a Latin-script alphabet similar to that of modern Turkish, although with some variation. For the sake of readability, the letters with pronunciations unfamiliar to an Anglophone reader are summarized below, with IPA guidelines in brackets:

\[
\begin{align*}
\text{C, c} & \quad [dʒ] \\
\text{Ç, ç} & \quad [tʃ] \\
\text{Ə, ë} & \quad [æ] \\
\text{Ğ, ğ} & \quad [ɣ] \\
\text{I, İ} & \quad [ɯ] \\
\text{İ, i} & \quad [ɪ] \\
\text{J, j} & \quad [ʒ] \\
\text{Q, q} & \quad [ɡ] \\
\text{Ö, ö} & \quad [œ] \\
\text{Ş, ş} & \quad [ʃ] \\
\text{Ü, ü} & \quad [y]
\end{align*}
\]

To increase clarity in the historiographical aspects of this work, I refer to Azerbaijani scholars who published in Azerbaijani by the Azerbaijani spellings of their names. I follow this rule in the text as well as in citations, even when the works cited were published in Russian under names that would transliterate into English differently. Thus, Xəlilov (1960a), rather than Khalilov (1960a), where the latter would reflect a direct transliteration of the Russian spelling used by the author, writing in Russian in this case, Халилов. I also follow this rule in the case of authors who write in Russian, but have a preferred transliteration of their name that does not follow the LoC rules (Gadjiev, for example). The bibliography groups all works by authors in these categories under the name spelling used in the text, but individual entries provide full original-script citations to allow findability. In the bibliography, letters absent in English are alphabetized according to their position in Azerbaijani (most importantly Ə after E; İ after I; Ş after S).
Chapter 1: Introduction

This dissertation grapples with the archaeology, history, and historiography of a stretch of the eastern Caucasus known from exogenous historical accounts as *Caucasian Albania*, from the fall of the Achaemenid Empire until the rise of the Sasanian Empire, or roughly 330 BCE – 300 CE. The territory under considerations spans at least three modern nations, with the greatest part falling within Azerbaijan, while smaller sections are found in eastern Georgia, and the Republic of Dagestan in Russia (fig. 1, 2). Too far to the east to attract the interest of most Hellenistic and Roman archaeologists, too far to the north for Near Eastern scholars, and ‘behind’ the Iron Curtain for much of the twentieth century, Caucasian Albania has received little attention outside of Russophone scholarship and remains essentially overlooked in dominant historical narratives about Hellenistic history, Parthia’s expansion, and Rome’s frontier system. It should not be so. This oversight impoverishes our understanding of the space of the imperial in-between, where socio-spatial networks overlapped and intersected, creating a dynamic climate for innovation.

---

1 Vurğun (1960:28), translation by author.
As I began the research for this project, my goal was to ‘re-integrate’ this key region into the wider system of Roman borderland studies. Coming out of a tradition of Anglo-American Roman archaeology, I was imagining, perhaps, that over the course of my dissertation research, aided by an ever-better understanding of Russian and Azerbaijani, I would be able to take the archaeological data I discovered in a century’s worth of publications and archives from the region and simply shoehorn Caucasian Albania into its rightful place along the fringe of the Roman world, as if a space were sitting there, waiting for it. As I pored over that literature in the libraries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Russia, however, I came to realize the futility of this approach. There was no space ready and waiting for Caucasian Albania. As I tried to make one, I found myself entrapped, on the one hand, in a notional history centered on Mediterranean (and to a lesser extent, Iranian) paradigms, in which the Caucasus was intrinsically an afterthought; and, on the other hand, in an assumption that my own intellectual heritage—that of a graduate student trained in the Anglo-American sphere—was both normative and correct. I initially found myself measuring the data about Caucasian Albania against that from better-studied regions—and finding it somehow defective: it was “not clear enough,” “not the right kind,” or most often, just “not enough.” I came to realize that in order to tell the story of these data with the reflexivity and an empathetic engagement they demanded, I needed to engage with them on their own terms rather than on mine. This realization in turn led me to new questions about the historical paradigms that I’ve inherited.

The modern geopolitical complexity of the Caucasus has divided archaeological datasets along myriad geographic, linguistic, and historical axes. In thinking about the
region, however, there is strong reason to argue for an underlying cohesion, although of a type marked at once “by a cultural and historical unity and individuality” (Toumanoff 1963:11). The archaeological and historical study of Caucasian Albania that has developed within a particular intellectual framework of Russian Imperial and later Soviet archaeology, however, obscures this unity. The data available for study is made more challenging by (1) the fragmentation of the archaeological record as a result of over a century of shifting borders and geopolitical confrontations; (2) the seeming chasm between the scholarly approaches of researchers who worked inside and outside of the Soviet Union; and (3) the entanglement of archaeology in heated modern territorial and ethnic debates. It is neither responsible nor possible to tell the story of ancient Caucasian Albania without engaging with its unique historiographic (really, archaeolographic) context. Thus, this dissertation is not just about the distant past of Caucasian Albania or of the great empires on its borders. It is equally an examination of how we have assembled narratives of ancient history over time, and an argument that we can build deeper empirical truths about the past only through sustained engagement with the details of that intellectual journey.

Two scholars of later Caucasia have made this point particularly forcefully, first Cyril Toumanoff, who already in 1963 rejected the term ‘Transcaucasia’ as anachronistic and limiting (Toumanoff 1963:11–12), and who argued eloquently for an understanding of the region as an essential part of the Byzantine world. More recently, a similar understanding of Caucasus as a whole has undergirded the work of Stephen Rapp, who looks towards Iran rather than Byzantium in his study of the formative external connections of Medieval Georgia (Rapp 2003:7). Although both of these studies focus on later history, their perception of the Caucasus has been influential for my understanding of the immediately pre-Christian past of the area.
**WHY STUDY THE EASTERN CAUCASUS?**

Why is this little corner of Caucasian Albania worth the attention? And particularly for this dissertation: Why is it relevant for the study of the Roman world? Why is this little corner of Caucasian Albania worth the attention? And particularly for this dissertation: Why is it relevant for the study of the Roman world? What can it tell us that other (more accessible and better-studied) borderlands of the Mediterranean world cannot? The answers require that we start by thinking about the importance of ‘borderlands’ in principle: Borderlands and frontiers are contentious zones, where various groups lay claim to a physical place. They are also ideological space. They are regions of cultural negotiation with messily complex historical records, which challenge centripetal narratives of power written from imperial centers.

The Caucasus was an active part of the frontier systems of Iranian and Mediterranean empires as far back as the fifth century BCE, and continuing during the rise of the Seleucid and then Arsakid empires on its southern borders. It was here that Rome came face-to-face with its most powerful state neighbor—Arsakid Parthia—as well as a formidable non-state neighbors—the Sarmatians, nomads from the Eurasian steppe. We know of this region through a small but robust set of textual and material sources, which detail interactions between local dynasts and both Roman and Arsakid imperial authorities over the course of several hundred years. They recount, for example, the

---

3 This is not to deny the tremendous importance of the Arsakid world and of Iranian currents in the developments of the eastern Caucasus. Instead, it is simply to make clear that in this project, I am approaching the Caucasus as part of the halo of territories just past the edge of Roman control, and I am interested in how this particular relational position is reflected in the material and historical development of the region.

4 The spread of post-colonial thought into archaeological discourse spurred interest in theoretical frameworks for understanding life in borderland zones (Dietler 2005; Donnan and Wilson 1994; Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995). This scholarship has re-centered the so-called peripheries, demonstrating them to be dynamic sites of cultural production, and exploring the role of material culture in identity formation (D’Altroy and Hastorf 2001; Dietler 2010; van Dommelen 2006; Stahl 2002; Stein 2002).
expedition of Pompey through the territory; deep involvement of Caucasian dynasts in
the struggle for the Armenian throne in the first half of the first century CE; the presence
of the 12th Legion Fulminata on the shores of the Caspian in the late 1st c. CE, and the
pivotal position that the region held as a new threat rose in the North Caucasus, the
Alans, who menaced both Roman and Arsakid territories.

Because of the its multipolarity, the diversity of its actors, and the longevity of
interaction-without-incorporation, eastern Caucasia was a border unlike any other for the
Hellenistic and Roman Empires. And yet, archaeological studies of imperial programs of
the ancient Mediterranean empires have all but ignored the Caucasus (but see
Khatchadourian 2016; A. T. Smith 2015), and particularly the Caspian regions.

The social, political, and cultural networks that developed at the interstices of
these powers were complex and diverse, reflecting the interplay between ‘local’ and
‘imperial’ priorities that had developed over centuries. As a multipolar space, residents in
the Caucasus had to position themselves with respect to a variety of neighbors of
differing socio-political structures. The cultural patterns that develop in the context of
this multipolarity look chaotic – whence stems Toumanoff’s “unity and individuality”
(1963:11). I do not attempt to mask the challenges of this region, nor apologize for the
space’s non-conformity. Instead, I use these conceptual ‘cracks’ as my starting points.
My exploration rests on three themes: the functioning of landscape; the materialization of
administration and authority; and the evolution of identity. I argue that, in each case, the
eastern Caucasus offers a counterpoint to perceptions nurtured in provincial corners of
the Roman world, where material culture charts a simpler course from interaction to integration (B. K. Miller and Brosseder 2017:470).

This dissertation considers the territory of Caucasian Albania as a space that was persistently not-empire, but that survived (and occasionally thrived) by taking advantage of both local and trans-regional relationships made possible by the growth of empires on its borders. I argue that the local responses to the ever-intensified presence of Mediterranean and Iranian networks are widely visible in the material culture, as well as in accounts from historical sources, although the use of explicitly ‘Hellenistic’ ‘Roman’ or ‘Iranian’ cultural practices was both limited in extent, and diverse in nature. Albania has long been dismissed as a backwater – a literal blank spot on our maps of antiquity. In reality, it was actively engaged in the imperial affairs of its neighbors, and choices made locally had serious consequences beyond its borders. Understanding the social, political, and economic context of these choices, therefore, is essential for understanding the constraints and opportunities available to Roman and Arsakid imperial actors, which in turn helps to explain the configuration of these empires.

**Sources of Data (and Confusion)**

My data for this dissertation are both textual and archaeological. The archaeological material comes from published and archival sources, for the most part generated by Russophone archaeologists. The textual sources are principally drawn from the corpus of Greek and Latin literature, although with important contributions from Georgian, Armenian, and Islamic textual traditions, as well as some rare epigraphic material.
The difficulties with using Greek and Latin texts to study this period of history in the Caucasus stem from the lack of familiarity on the part of many of the authors about this distant periphery, which was far from the Greek and Roman cities where the authors lived and worked. The earliest preserved accounts authored by local individuals postdate considerably the period under consideration, embedded in medieval contexts. Thus, the only contemporary, or roughly contemporary, accounts preserved about the period of history discussed in this dissertation are written by outsiders, reflecting a worldview (and, indeed, a set of facts) far removed from that of residents in the territory and their daily lives.

These are common problems for ancient historians, however, and can be negotiated. More consequential for the shape of this study is the difficulty associated with the archaeological evidence. This body of data, and the literature that had been written about it, was generated within—indeed predicated on—theoretical debates that differed sharply from those which have guided the majority of research on the borderlands of the Mediterranean and Iranian empires.

During the twentieth century, fieldwork in the Caucasus was carried out by Soviet researchers, and collaboration between archaeologists on either side of the Iron Curtain was limited (Khatchadourian 2008a; Lindsay and Smith 2006; Tsetskhladze 2008). Publications of excavations were difficult to find outside of the Soviet sphere and remain so today. Furthermore, all of the seminal publications about this period in Azerbaijan are written in languages not widely read by foreign archaeologists (Babayev 1990; İ. H. Əliyev 1989; for overviews, see K. H. Əliyev 1974; Osmanov 1982; Qoşqarlı 2012;
Rasulova 2008; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a; Koshelenko 1985). Works in western European languages on this material are few (but see I. G. Aliev and Goshgarli 1995; Babayev 2001; Casanova et al. 2016; Eminli and Iskenderov 2016; Fishman 2016; Knauss et al. 2007; Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013; Ristvet et al. 2012).\(^5\)

The data from these excavations are often arranged and prioritized in unfamiliar ways for scholars not trained in the Soviet tradition. And it is difficult to compare material from across the Caucasus, since material from each modern state has been studied within its own intellectual tradition. Despite understanding the literal language of the texts, when I first worked with the material, I often came away feeling that I had grasped neither the archaeological material itself, nor its scholarly context. In my more aggrieved moments, I felt that the archaeology was being intentionally intransigent, which, of course, wasn’t true. My difficulty with grasping the material wasn’t mine alone, however: the South Caucasus has persistently been treated as an “unknowable” periphery by foreign powers, travelers and scholars alike (Grant and Yalcin-Heckmann 2007).

Formative modern roots of this perception lie in the nineteenth century, when the restive South Caucasus was gradually incorporated into the Russian Empire. New scholarly networks borne out of Russian expansion led to some of the first modern research in the region about its ancient history, as well as to some of the earliest archaeological infrastructure. At the same time, as part of “Russia’s Orient,” the South

---

\(^5\) The situation has been no better for scholars based in the South Caucasus, for whom access to up-to-date European publications remains difficult.
Caucasus became an important site for Russian literary imagination, presented as an untainted, exotic mountain wilderness and a persistently foreign land (Gutmeyr 2017; Hokanson 2008; Layton 1994). Then, in 1917, during the upheaval of the Russian Revolution, the South Caucasus saw rapid political reconfigurations, including brief periods of independence for each nation, ending with incorporation into the Soviet Union by 1922. Scholarship in the zone continued for the next seventy years within the context of the Soviet academy. The republics regained independence only in 1991, with the post-Soviet period allowing for new types of research and possibilities for collaboration, but also bringing diminished funding sources and an escalation in border conflicts (Darieva and Voronkov 2010). The archaeology that I found so difficult to understand reflects the complexity of research in this territory of shifting borders, administrative languages, and even alphabets.6

Additionally, the traditional interests of Soviet archaeology and the exigencies of modern nationalism have profoundly shaped research programs in this area (Formozov 2004; Klejn 2012a; Platonova 2010; Tunkina 2002). This reality has resulted in significantly different assumptions about the past and research priorities (Dolukhanov

---

6 As an example of how relatively low-level challenges can present real complications for scholars, consider for a moment the ramifications of script changes used to write Azerbaijani over the course of the last hundred years. There have been three major shifts: first from the Perso-Arabic script that had long been used, to a Latin script during the course of the 1920’s; then to a Cyrillic script in 1939 by mandate of Stalin; and finally gradually back to a modified Latin script over the course of two decades following the end of the Soviet Union (Hatcher 2008). The full ramifications of these changes on identity and political self-formulation in Azerbaijan have been significant (Ergun 2010; Garibova 2009; Sebba 2006). But the script changes have also had consequences for quotidian research tasks, such as the ease with which one can find resources in American and European library catalogues, as the myriad of scripts have generated even more (and more confusing) transliteration schemes. This is a rarely discussed topic, but see Husic (2002). The central problems stem from inconsistent application of transliteration schemes, although the frequent dual-language titling (Russian and Azerbaijani) adds a further layer of complication. Although these problems are navigable, they inhibit ready access to the material by foreign scholars, even ones familiar with the relevant languages.
While the last decade has brought increased scholarly collaboration, the process has been slower in Azerbaijan than in neighboring Armenia or Georgia, and the history and archaeology of the eastern Caucasus remains frustratingly uncontextualized.

Our archaeological data from the Caucasus comes to us filtered through this particular past, both figuratively and literally. The project of this dissertation is to untangle these strands and trace a story of Albania.

**Caucasian Albania: Where, What and When?**

What follows is the foundation of that project: a wide and shallow introduction to the context of Caucasian Albania, placing it within its geographical and chronological framework in the Caucasus by describing its physical geography, socio-political context, and the chronological framework within which I consider the region. Each of these themes is explored in depth in the chapters that follow, but given the unfamiliarity of the region, a brief overview is necessary.

**Physical Geography and Territory**

Albania is located in eastern the eastern reaches of the Caucasus, an isthmus of land roughly 1000 km across at its narrowest, situated between the Black Sea to the west and the Caspian Sea to the east and defined on the north and south by the Greater and Lesser Caucasus mountain ranges respectively (see figs. 1 and 2). Taking a wider perspective, the coastal pathway along the Caspian Sea offered one of the most straightforward ways to move from Iran, Mesopotamia, and Anatolia into the Eurasian
Steppe, as well as likely across the Caspian.\textsuperscript{7} Control of the eastern Caucasus, then, provided strategic access to one of the best routes across the Caucasus.\textsuperscript{8}

The terrain and ecology of Caucasia are varied, including regions of dense mountains, such as the central Caucasus near the modern capital of Georgia, Tbilisi, or the contested territory of Nagorno-Karabakh further to the east. The southern expanse of the Caucasus includes the highland plains of the Armenian plateau, while the eastern flanks of the Greater Caucasus are dominated by lower-elevation plains. The course of the two largest rivers flowing east to the Caspian, the Kura and Aras,\textsuperscript{9} play a central role in defining the physical space of the southern stretches of the territory, while the Terek, Sulak, and Volga do the same in the north. There are coastal wetlands, particularly in the west along the Black Sea and in the north of the Caspian basin at the Volga delta; and there are steppe zones like the Mil and Muğan steppes in the east and the Kuban steppe in the northwest, and also alluvial plains, such as those along the lower Kura.

I focus on the territory of eastern Caucasia, the land along the lower reaches of the Kura River valley stretching north into the mountainous southern and eastern foothills of the Greater Caucasus. This territory is thought to have been the heartland of the polity of Albania beginning in the mid-first millennium BCE.\textsuperscript{10}

\textsuperscript{7} The other route is through the Dariali Pass in Iberia.

\textsuperscript{8} On hypotheses about the Antik coastline of the Caspian, see extended discussion in chapter 5.

\textsuperscript{9} In this project, I use the English forms ‘Kura’ and the ‘Aras’ to refer to the two rivers. They, however, are known by various names in local languages. For the Kura, Azerb.: \textit{Kür}; Georg.: მტკვარი [mt’k’vari]; Arm.: Կուր [Kur]; Farsi: کوروش [kūrūš]. For the Aras, Azerb.: \textit{Arac}; Georg.: არაქსი [araksi], Արաքս [Araks]; Farsi: ارس [ārās].

\textsuperscript{10} An extended discussion of the precise location and extent of Caucasian Albania can also be found at in at the end of chapter 4, which considers the location of the southern border in more detail.
The term *Caucasus* (Кавказ; Caucasus) has been used at least since antiquity to refer to this broader region, and to the Greater Caucasus mountains in particular (Herrmann 1921).\(^{11}\) Variations on the term continued in use through the Islamic period, though often in corrupted forms [von Klaproth 1825:1, n.2]). In the major modern languages used in the region, some form of ‘Caucasus’ is common (Rus., Кавказ [Kavkaz]; Azerb., Qafqaz; Georg., ქავკასია [k’avk’asia]; Arm., Հայկական [Kovkas]).

As Russian control in the territory expanded, the region on the south side of the Greater Caucasus watershed came to be known as *Zakavkaz’e* (Закавказье), which translates to *Transcaucasia*, or the territory across the Caucasus mountains—reflecting the position of the territory from the point of view of the Russian imperial and then Soviet centers of power. The North Caucasus, meanwhile, became *Predkavkaz’e* (Предкавказье), or *Ciscaucasia*. In recent decades, as the strength of Russian control in the region has lessened, there has been a shift away from the Moscow-centric vocabulary, and towards the more neutral terms *Iuzhnyi Kavkaz* (Южный Кавказ) ie. the *South Caucasus*, and *Severnyi Kavkaz* (Северный Кавказ), or the *North Caucasus*, which are the terms used in this dissertation when referring to the political territories.\(^{12}\)

---

11 The etymology of the name remains debated, see Iuiukin (2012) for a recent hypothesis and overview of the debates.

12 Exceptions include quoted text (either in the original or in translation), where the term is reproduced as written, and also formal political terms from the Imperial and Soviet periods, such as the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Republic (Закавказская Социалистическая Федеративная Советская Республика).
the vocabulary of Toumanoff and Rapp, I use the term ‘Caucasia’ to refer to the territory more broadly, and ‘eastern Caucasia’ to refer to the space of Albania.\textsuperscript{13}

The name \textit{Albania}, meanwhile, comes down to us first Greek and Latin texts (\textit{Ἀλβανία, Albania}). It is an exonym—the endonym of the people is unknown (Hewsen 1982). Medieval sources, meanwhile, attest to some form of the name \textit{Arrān} for roughly this geographic area (Arab., ḍārān [ar-Rān]; Georg., ṣősὸ [rani]; Old Arm., Աղուանք [\textit{Alvanq}]). Easily confused today with that of the modern Balkan state of Albania, this name has been the subject of interest since antiquity when its etymology was connected to a mythological migration of peoples from Mount Alban to the Caucasus alongside Hercules.\textsuperscript{14}

\textit{Description}

Eastern Caucasia derives its physical structure from orography of the Greater Caucasus watershed and lateral ranges, which have elevations of up to 4000m (fig. 3). The zone has an awkward topology, swooping around the southeastern edge of the Greater Caucasus in a series of valley systems, steppe zones, and alluvial plains running from the range line, south to the Kura valley, and east to the Caspian coast.

The southern edge of this eastern zone is somewhere in the lower Kura river valley in the Kura-Aras lowlands, reaching north from the rich plain around modern Lake

\textsuperscript{13} Albania fell largely into the South Caucasus, but it may have reached also north along the coast and into the mountainous piedmont of the North Caucasus, making the claim that the space was simply part of the “South Caucasus” misleading.

\textsuperscript{14} Pomp. Trogus/ Justin 42.3.4, see Chapter 4 for a discussion of this text.
Mingachevir (formed in the late 1940’s by the construction of a hydroelectric dam).\textsuperscript{15} To the north, the territory turns into the foothills of the Greater Caucasus, spreading east towards the Caspian coast. The western limit of this eastern piedmont is roughly demarcated by the Qanix river,\textsuperscript{16} which flows from the Greater Caucasus down into the Kura. In addition to the Kura lowlands, the region is dominated by the Qanix-Əyriçay river valley, an extremely fertile and productive stretch of land north of the lowlands, with elevations between 200m and 500m ASL, watered by numerous mountain-fed rivers running eventually into the Kura and then the Caspian. To the east of this valley, the territory turns into the drier and more rugged foothill zones of the Qobustan piedmont, as well as spurs of the Greater Caucasus, including the Ləngəbiz and Yurtandağ ranges, with elevations of up to 1000m. Then, wrapping north around the eastern edge of the Greater Caucasus, this territory includes the Samur-Dəvəçi lowlands (100-250m ASL), as well as the Qusar plain and the steppe foothills of Dagestan, with the northern reaches once again marked by a series of mountain-fed rivers flowing into the Caspian Sea, principally the Samur, Sulak, and the northernmost Terek rivers.

**Empires, Polities and Tribes**

*Imperial and Transregional Powers*

A series of asymmetrical neighbors surrounded Caucasia in the period under discussion, which is perhaps a natural consequence of life in the transitional zone

\textsuperscript{15} On the construction of the Mingachevir dam and the start of related archaeological works, see Qaziyyev (1949a); Rahimova (2006). For more about this project, and particularly about the role of Qaziyyev, see Cefarova (2009:38–62).

\textsuperscript{16} Called the Alazani (ალაზანი) river in Georgian.
between Anatolia, the Steppe, and the Iranian highlands. In the middle of the first millennium BCE, the northern South Caucasus (that is, the Kura valley) appears to have been the northern border of the Achaemenid Empire, and perhaps also the southern territory of Scythian mobile pastoralists.

Following the dissolution of the Achaemenid Empire, most of the region fell just outside of the control of Alexander the Great and his successor states, which dominated other previously Achaemenid holdings in Mesopotamia and Anatolia. Seleucid political power in the Caucasus was strongest in the southernmost territories of Armenia and Atropatene, but even there, control was unstable and diffuse. Further to the north along the Kura and certainly in the North Caucasus, direct Seleucid sovereignty is not attested.

The expansion of the Roman and Arsakid empires in the first century BCE brought realignment. The Caucasus became increasingly integrated into both the Mediterranean and Iranian spheres through a long series of proxy wars fought in the area. At the same time, this period seems to coincide with the growth of the Sarmatian presence in the region, generally thought to have entered the area from the north from their heartland in the Eurasian Steppe.

Local Polities

Although these transregional powers held some formative power on the broader historical trajectory of the region, the affairs of eastern Caucasia actually developed within a framework of local polities of varying socio-political structures. I argue that Albania, for example, is best described as a federation, composed of both sedentary and
mobile pastoralist elements. Albania’s nearest neighbor was the kingdom of Iberia, located to the west along the middle Kura valley, and the mountains to the north and south of the river. Further west still, along the Black Sea coast, lay Mediterranean-facing Colchis. To the south, two other political entities arose: the better attested one, Armenia, was situated in the west, in the mountainous territory between lakes Van and Sevan. Atropatene was located further to the east, including parts of the Muğan plain as well as the Talış mountains, stretching south into the Iranian highlands. It was typically closely tied to the powers controlling the Iranian plateau, though occasionally contested by Mediterranean authorities. Finally, over the course of the first centuries CE, the northern Alans came to prominence in the central and eastern North Caucasus.

Our understanding of the structure and internal dynamics of these neighboring groups varies considerably, with study challenged by many of the difficulties that have already been described in the case Albania. But in the case of the most prominent neighbors, Iberia and Armenia, both written sources and archaeological data provide rich comparative foundations that allow us to describe a landscape of considerable local variety.

17 See discussion in chapters 6 and 7.
18 Armenia is undoubtedly the best-attested of the South Caucasus polities because it became an important site of Roman-Parthian proxy wars and continued to experience Roman-Parthian conflict until the fall of Parthia in 224 CE. This long-running conflict is occasionally treated in Greek and Latin historical and literary sources, sometimes with references to Caucasian Albania and Iberia. Some important accounts include: Dio 62.19-27, Joseph. BJ 18.4; SHA Had. 13.9-10; 17.10-12; SHA Ant. Pius 9.6; Suet. Nero 13, Domit. 2; Tacit. Ann. 6.31-38, 15.24-31. See chapter 4 for a full discussion of the textual material.
Chronologies

In absolute terms, this dissertation considers the course of eastern Caucasia from roughly the fall of the Achaemenid Empire ca. 330 BCE, until the rise of the Sasanian Empire ca. 250 CE. In historical terms, this period of around 600 years corresponds to the emergence and consolidation of Albania. Problematically, though, the timeframe delineated here is fundamentally based on external imperial rhythms, rather than on purely internal developments with the Caucasus, which are very difficult to date precisely. This section discusses the challenges surrounding chronological delineations and periodizations in the region and explores my choice to use this particular temporal framework despite its shortcomings.

Archaeological Periodizations in Iran and the South Caucasus

Archaeological chronologies of material from the South Caucasus based on material typologies have been the subject of relatively little work, as discussed by Smith, Badalian and Avetisian (2009:1:33 ff). Instead, historical epochs (and the ruptures between them) have been the guiding principle for periodization, often with the effect of obscuring nuances of material development. Before discussing those historically grounded evaluations, I will provide an overview of the few explorations based on typology and change.

19 The use of epochal chronologies is of course not limited to the Caucasus, see for example Kotsonas (2016) for a discussion of a similar situation in Greece. However, the problems in the Caucasus are particularly acute given the ambiguity of the space and the presence of conflicting epochal frames of reference.
First, there exists a materially grounded archaeological periodization developed on the basis of ceramic material from Iran that partially covers the period of interest. Traditionally within this chronology, the Achaemenid period is considered to be Iron Age IV (Haerinck 1989; Piller 2013), while a subsequent Parthian phase is also identified, although not integrated into the Iron Age sequence (Haerinck 1983). In the case of the region of Iran nearest to the eastern South Caucasus, Iranian Azerbaijan, this Parthian phase is further divided into an early (3rd-2nd c. BCE) and late phase (1st c. BCE- 2nd c. CE) (Haerinck 1983:123–48).

As part of their work in the Tsaghkahovit plain, the researchers of Project ArAGATS developed a modified chronology covering this period. Here, the Achaemenid period becomes Iron Age IIIa (ca. 600-350 BCE), followed by Iron Age IIIb (ca. 350-200 BCE) and Iron Age IV (ca. 200 BCE-300 CE) (A. T. Smith, Badalian, and Avetisian 2009:1:34). Their research, however, focuses on the earlier periods of this chronology. IA III and IV are not discussed in any detail, with readers referred to Khatchadourian’s dissertation (2008b) for more information, which, however, discusses only IA IIIa. Thus, the material framework for distinguishing IA IIIa, IA IIIb, and IA IV material on the basis of the ArAGATS exploration remains unclear.

For this reason, although the IA IIIb/IA IV terminology is attractive, it is not clear that this distinction carries over in a meaningful way to the material of the eastern

---

20 IA IIIa, which is called IA III in her dissertation, is described as follows: “Thus, provisionally, the Iron 3 period refers to the era in which a material culture (particularly pottery) tradition emerges that is both distinct from that of the period of the Urartian empire (Iron 2), as well as from the ceramic repertoires of Artashat and its contemporaries, which begin in the third century BC (e.g. Garni, Atsavan, Hoghmik, Beniamin II). This Iron 3 period thus provisionally spans the sixth through third centuries BC” (Khatchadourian 2008b:225–26)
Caucasus, and I have chosen not to use it in this project. Given the lack of clarity surrounding the typology, and the almost complete lack of absolute dating from the eastern Caucasus, I fear that the use of these terms would impart a greater degree of certainty and scientific authority to my account of the region than is appropriate.

Beyond the Iranian Iron Age models and modifications thereof, the other prominent example of a materially based classification (that is, typological rather than dynastic) for later periods in this region comes from scholarship on the Sarmatians in the North Caucasus and Eurasian Steppe, which uses a tripartite division (early, middle and late) to describe Sarmatian cultural groups (Grakov 1947; Simonenko 2011). Although much material from the eastern Caucasus can be discussed within this framework, not everything is consistent with the Sarmatian horizon, so this materially grounded chronology is also of limited use.

**Historical Periodizations**

The system of using dynastic chronologies as frameworks for archaeological material is possible in the case of both Armenia and Iberia, where chronicles provide fairly significant detail about the early dynastic history. Knowledge about the dynastic sequence in Caucasian Albania is significantly more fragmentary, however, so the practice of relating local developments to a dynastic chronology has not featured prominently in past research, although the umbrella terms ‘Albanian’ or ‘Albano-Sarmatian’ do appear frequently in scholarship.

---

21 Debates about the precise distinctions within this chronology as well as absolute dates have raged for several decades, as is discussed in chapter 7.
The Azerbaijani archaeological establishment, which has conducted most of the fieldwork on Albanian monuments, uses the following understandings of period distinctions for the first millennium BCE and CE:

1. Early Iron Age (*ilk damir dövr*): up to ca. 7th c. BCE,
2. Antik Period (*antik dövr*): 6th c. BCE – 4th c. CE
3. Early Medieval (*ilk orta əsrər*): 4th c. CE – 7th c. CE

The *Antik* period, then, is a broad temporal horizon that spans from the rise of the Achaemenid empire through the coming of Christianity to Caucasian Albania. The name of this period, *antik dövr* in Azerbaijani, or, *antichnyi period* (антический период) in Russian, may strike an Anglophone reader as an uncommon use of a term that best translates into English as ‘ancient’ or ‘Classical.’ For, although we refer to ‘antiquity’ in a general sense in English, we would rarely include the Achaemenid period in this designation, and we tend to prefer a greater degree of cultural specificity in our designations (Hellenistic or Roman for example). Furthermore, although the archaeology of the Achaemenid period is contained under the umbrella of the *Antik* in Azerbaijan, the specific designation of a site as “Achaemenid-period” has been until recently almost unheard-of in the Azerbaijani scholarship, even in the case of sites with clear material ties to the Achaemenid heartland. Instead, Azerbaijani archaeologists have historically avoided specific cultural referents, and preferred the non-specific term *Antik*.

---

22 It is, for example, through the *Azərbaycanın antik dövr arxeologiyası şöbəsi* (The Department of Antik Azerbaijani Archaeology) that excavations at the Achaemenid site of Qaracamirli have been conducted in recent years.

23 The Achaemenid ties have long been recognized, but they have been framed as connections between a local culture and that of Achaemenid Iran, rather than as a sign of local participation within Achaemenid...
Inside of the Antik, several traditional subdivisions have developed, although names and precise dates for the divisions are variable, when they are provided at all, and the system does not always cover the entirety of the Antik. The seminal monograph of Kamilla Vasil'evna Trever (1959) Ocherki po istorii i kul'ture Kavkazskoi Albanii: IV v. do n.e. - VII v. n.e. [Studies on the history and culture of Caucasian Albania: 4th century BCE- 7th century CE] set the standard early periodization for Caucasian Albania. She divides her examination into three periods:

1. 4th c. BCE- 2nd c. BCE
2. 1st c. BCE- 3rd c. CE
3. 4th c. CE- 7th c. CE

Later works by C. Ə. Xəlilov, Osmanov, and Babayev focused only on the earlier parts of this tripartite structure, considering the third timeframe to be early medieval. Thus, these later authors circumscribe their investigations of Caucasian Albania as being between the fourth century BCE and the third century CE.

In addition to chronologies that rest within subdivisions of the Antik, there is also a parallel practice of periodizations that use ‘archaeological cultures’ as their referents. The most notable of these is the Yaloylutəpə culture described in the 1950’s and thought to correspond to an early phase of autochthonous development in the Antik period (İsmizadə 1956; see also Khatchadourian 2008a:263–64). Although the Yaloylutəpə culture is understood to have occurred during the Antik period, the term has acted as a

frameworks, see Nərimanov’s early description of Sarıtapə for this framework, “The stone column bases along with the hill of Sary-tepe testify above all to the highly developed level of architecture of ancient Azerbaijan, and reflect the cultural ties of Azerbaijan with Achaemenid Iran” (1960:146).
more specific indicator of a specific cultural assemblage, usually tied to a specific tribe or presumed tribe. More recently, there has been a turn towards using the term *Albano-Sarmatian* as a delimiter of a particular type of mixed archaeological culture in the region, particularly by authors focused on the North Caucasus (Abramova 1987; Gadjiev 2002).

In this dissertation, I use the Azerbaijani term *Antik* to refer to this wider timeframe, following the usage within Azerbaijani scholarship. I follow roughly the following internal divisions:

1. Early *Antik* (6th c. BCE - 5th c. BCE)
2. Middle *Antik* (4th c. BCE – 2nd c. BCE)
3. Late *Antik* (1st c. BCE - 3rd c. CE)

Where possible and appropriate, I add specificity with reference to external frameworks, for example “Seleucid-period,” or “Early Sarmatian,” using these terms to connote both chronological and material affiliations of certain bodies of data. Nevertheless, given the nature of the archaeological data, such specificity is often impossible.

There are two benefits to retaining the term *Antik* as a default. First, without this term, it would be difficult to avoid using either the imperial delimiters of ‘Hellenistic,’ ‘Parthian,’ or ‘Roman,’ or the more local designations, like ‘Albanian’ or ‘Albano-Sarmatian.’ All of these terms carry cultural connotations. They therefore make *a priori* claims about cultural affiliations or connections, although the detailed investigation of the nature and extent of these affiliations and connections is itself central in this research.

Second, and most importantly, the unfamiliarity of the term *Antik* serves to remind us that
the understanding of chronology within which this material has been studied does not
map perfectly onto our own ordering of antiquity. We are cautioned, with each encounter,
to consider the place of the Antik within our own frameworks.

**DISSERTATION STRUCTURE**

The Antik eastern Caucasus is located along an uneasy juncture of territorial
empires and conceptual approaches to the past. Chapter 2 approaches these questions
from theoretical and practical perspectives. I examine the nature of ‘empire’ as an object
of archaeological study, as well as the more specific field of study concerning the ancient
Mediterranean and Iranian empires. In both cases, I focus on the ways that borderland
spaces have been incorporated into the study of these empires (or, as in the case of the
eastern Caucasus, not incorporated). I argue that spaces like Caucasian Albania play a
critical role in expanding our understanding of the imperial systems with which they
interacted by adding new centers of interaction and questioning our perceptions of
connectivity. But, I also discuss the pitfalls as we push beyond our traditional spheres of
inquiry and seek to bring new datasets into dialogue with dominant perspectives. The
goal of this chapter is to make a case for studying Caucasian Albania as part of broader
Mediterranean history.

Chapter 3 takes on regional historiography in a comprehensive way, situating the
territory of the South Caucasus generally, and the eastern Caucasus specifically, within
the framework of Russian Imperial, Soviet, and contemporary Eurasian archaeology. This
is not merely an exercise in historiographic contextualization. Instead, I suggest that the
very different ways in which the Classical past has been put to use within these traditions
provides fertile ground for Anglo-American archaeologists in thinking about our own disciplinary inheritance.

Following the discussion of the role of the Caucasus within contemporary history, **Chapter 4** provides an overview of textual sources for the ancient history of the eastern Caucasus and of the history of scholarship of these texts. The second half of the chapter considers the benefits and limitations of the textual corpus through an examination of subsets of the texts that deal with issues of ethnicity, imperial engagement, and territorial extent.

In **Chapter 5**, I present a different way of thinking about the question of ‘territorial extent,’ which draws on a holistic consideration of how the landscape has functioned historically, metaphorically, and physically. After a discussion of the historic and metaphorical entanglements of ‘space,’ I use a formal network analysis methodology to develop an alternative cartography for the eastern Caucasus. I use the region’s dramatic and rugged topography to create a map of movement potentials across the space on the basis of computational analyses of the terrain. This cartography of connectivity identifies corridors of through-movement within the landscape, providing new axes for appreciating how local residents capitalized on their positions along imperial interstices.

In the final two chapters of the dissertation, I present two lenses through which to trace strands of archaeological evidence concerning lifeways in the eastern piedmont of the Caucasus. **Chapter 6** focuses on discussions of socio-political structure in the eastern Caucasus, considering the question of the political unit Caucasian Albania, while
Chapter 7 looks at questions of identity, and particularly the question of a ‘Sarmatian,’ or more accurately, a mobile pastoralist presence in the territory.

I have chosen these two organizing concepts because the themes intersect with traditional foci of Azerbaijani archaeology, but also with questions that contemporary scholars studying the Roman borderlands are asking. An exploration of how the concepts of ‘socio-political structure’ and ‘identity’ have functioned within the archaeology of the eastern Caucasus allows us to chart the deep genealogies of scholarship and the development of a historical narrative, while the reconsideration of the data themselves enable us to question the structures that (re)produced political sovereignty in the space.

In our historical focus on the Caucasus as a crossroads and a bridge between ‘East’ and ‘West,’ it has been too easy to lose sight of the fact that for its residents, this was not a space of transit – it was home. In this study, in order to understand how that ‘home’ was constructed, I center Albania as both a physical space and a conceptual formulation. Although I often look (far) past its frontiers in search of both data and contextual frameworks, my ultimate interest lies in understanding the lives of the individuals and communities who dwelt in and along the foothills of the Caucasus.
Chapter 2: The Value of the Remote


*Dədə Qorqud:* Qarşu yatan qara dağının aşına qolmişəm. Aşndə mökəl suyuñı keçmişə qolmişəm. Geň atəğənə, dar qoltuğuna qışlağa qolmişəm.

-Kitabi Dədə Qorqud, Bamsı Beyrək.24

*Deli Qarchar:* No one with feet has ever come here. No one with a mouth has ever drunk from my water. What about you? Has your fortune ended? Has your line ended? What are you doing here?

*Dede Qorqud:* I have come to cross that crooked black mountain. I have come to ford the beautiful running water. I have come to nestle in your narrow foothills and your tight corners.

Eastern Caucasia seems hopelessly remote from the metropolises of the ancient Mediterranean and Near East—the centers of imperial power from which we tell history. Textual sources make only fleeting reference to the distant mountainous corner of the world, and the archaeological markers of imperial presence are just as ephemeral. In light of this, is it really appropriate to study Albania as though it were meaningful part of any of these ancient *oikoumenai*?

I argue that the eastern Caucasus, including all of its historical gaps and socio-cultural ambiguities, should rightly be seen as a critical component of ancient imperial space, and particularly of the Roman world. To be clear, I am not arguing that Albania was either consistently or formally Roman, or that it was part of the Arsakid world in either of these senses. Instead, it grew within the halo of autonomous and semi-

---

24 Azerbaijani text following the un-modernized version offered by Əlizadə and Hacieyev (2004:58), translation by author.
autonomous polities that sat along the fringes of the imperial domains, including better-known centers like Commagene, Hatra, and Armenia. Ancient empires did not have precise territorial borders, and imperial power spread across territory in variable intensities. These spaces in the imperial in-between, only partially integrated into normative state power structures, nevertheless saw sustained interaction with imperial systems over centuries. The eastern Caucasus sat along the same continuum of socio-political transformation that rippled through imperial space proper. It participated in both the material flows and the historical crosscurrents precipitated by imperial expansions.

Here, I describe the eastern Caucasus not as a ‘liminal’ periphery whose local course of development can be explained simply as a product of gradual incorporation into one imperial framework or another. It is, instead, a central space in a different sense, located at the intersection of zones of influence, interest, and control of Mediterranean, Iranian, and Steppe powers. Although the operational reach of empires was thin in the Caucasus, the long-term consequences of their spread are unmistakably imprinted on both material and political realities in the region, where the Antik period brought rapid shifts of material practice and social organization. Situating the story of its development in the context of these diverse networks does much to expand our understanding of the reach (as well as the limits) of imperial power.

To negotiate the archaeological and historical data from this remote ‘central periphery,’ I begin by tracing the contours of a broader dialogue underway among

---

25 On the existence of precise borders in premodern spaces and concepts of territoriality more generally, see Parker (2012); M.L. Smith (2005); VanValkenburgh and Osborne (2012); Wilk (2004).
archaeologists and historians concerning the nature of imperial power and its physical manifestations, as well as the understanding of borderlands and frontiers, and consider how these themes have been deployed within studies of Mediterranean antiquity. Highlighting the ramifications of Albania’s multipolarity, I demonstrate that the study of the eastern Caucasus is an important part of the intellectual project because it destabilizes the traditional narrative of Mediterranean power and Romanization by centering our attention on the experience of a so-called borderland zone. The deeper value of an examination of the eastern Caucasus that considers the space as “central, unto [itself]” rather than as a periphery is that it prompts a rethinking not just of the ancient Mediterranean sphere but also of the archaeological and historical frameworks atop which our traditional understanding is built.

**Approaching ‘Empire’ in the Inter-Empire**

In order to reach the point where we can examine Albania as central unto itself—a space of agentic residents entangled within a vibrant material universe—we have to begin with the much more staid concept of ‘empire.’ Imperial narratives structure our understanding of the Mediterranean and Near Eastern worlds in antiquity, giving shape to chronologies, as well as to developmental paradigms. We speak necessarily in imperial shorthand: the ‘Hellenistic world’ or ‘Roman period,’ although

---

26 The intellectual roots of this aspect of the project lie in subaltern studies after Bhabha (1994), Chakrabarty (2000) and Spivak (1988).

27 Bruce Grant, in his remarks as the president of the Association for Slavic, East European, and Eurasian Studies, asks “What happens when the lesser known persons and regions of the world area we study are not peripheral to our own ranges of vision, or even to the metropoles that have historically governed them, but central, unto themselves?” (2012:4).
we of course understand that the vastly more complex reality on the ground was comprised socio-spatial networks of varying scale and organization. Broadly speaking, in the case of the ancient Mediterranean, the concept of ‘empire’ has remained remarkably enduring.

Modeling Empires

The study of empires has waxed and waned in recent decades, often in tandem with debates about Westphalian and post-Westphalian state structures (Ando 2017a:4–7). Among the questions that have been raised: Is the term ‘empire’ appropriate to describe ancient political structures (Burbank and Cooper 2010; Goldstone and Haldon 2009; Morrison 2001b; Bang and Bayly 2011)? Can the more basic unit of the ‘state’ even be seen as a trans-historical phenomenon, or is even this too modern (Richardson 2012:6)? These debates should not be overlooked as mere battles over terminology. They represent the evolution of thinking about how power functions across space and time, and have added considerable nuance to understanding of the potentials and limits of entities like the Roman Empire—or indeed, on a much more local level, of the Albanians themselves.

So, what precisely is an empire? And what is an empire in an ancient context? In general, empires have been framed as territorial hegemonic structures (D’Altroy 1992; Hassig 1985; Luttwak 1976), which exert some degree of formal or informal coercive control over subject populations (Doyle 1986) with diverse mechanisms for

---

28 On the concept of socio-spatiality, see Soja (1980). For a recent example of historical application of socio-spatial networks, see Schayegh (2017). See also Mann (1986) for discussions of power across these networks.
expressing this power (Sinopoli 2001). Simply put, empires can be defined as “large states with heterogeneous ethnic and cultural composition that are formed through the incorporation of less powerful polities and regions by conquest or coercion” (Sinopoli 2006:324). ‘Empires,’ importantly, are not generally seen to be synonymous with ‘States’:

Empires differ from state-level polities in scale, complexity, and internal diversity; thus the political systems that administer empires must work to both integrate and exploit the diversity inherent in supra-local expansion. (Parker 2003:525)

Thus, the core of traditional perceptions of empire are that of power and otherness: an empire is that which holds “power over” a zone of control (Khatchadourian 2008b:12) that includes territories seen to be different from itself.29

Important components of this model of interaction can be traced back to Wallerstein’s (1974) World Systems Theory, which divides imperial space into core, periphery and semi-periphery zones, and posits a centripetal hierarchy and inequality of power between an exploitative center interested in extraction of resources, and a marginalized periphery. Similar framings of empire as a hegemonic force predicated on a core-periphery binary echo through other models of imperial power—indeed, one of the features of nearly all considerations of imperial power is the presence of such a binary.30

Although Wallerstein’s model has been influential among archaeologists, critiques of core-periphery models of state interaction have long demonstrated the

---

29 The directionality that relationship has come under greater scrutiny in recent years, leading to a growing recognition of the role of provincial populations in shaping imperial programs (Morrison 2001a). See below.

30 See for example the discussion of models for understanding empire advanced by Doyle (1986:22–30).
challenges with using the approach to discuss the logics of the pre-modern world (Chase-Dunn 1990; Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991; Rowlands, Larsen, and Kristiansen 1987). These reactions against core-periphery models, although rooted in the long tradition of interest in the political structures of empire, have developed particularly under the influence of post-colonial scholarship (Stoler and McGranahan 2007).

In place of the study of stable and territorial fixed empires, research has increasingly emphasized the inchoate nature of the imperial project (Morrison 2001b). By up-ending top-down models of imperial action (A. T. Smith 2003), these approaches have generated discussion about the performative nature of power in state systems generally (Ristvet 2015:32). Furthermore, peripheral territories have increasingly been seen as fundamental in this process of “negotiated empire” (Morrison 2001a) and therefore critical in shaping the developmental arc of imperial systems (Khatchadourian 2008b).

As debates about interaction between the material and political worlds have evolved, they have reflected shifting perceptions about the intersection of structure and agency (Bourdieu 1977; Giddens 1984; Latour 2005), reconfiguring the place of the material world from passive sign to active participant in the process of encoding meaning and reproducing cultural logics (Appadurai 1986; DeMarrais, Gosden, and Renfrew 2005; Hodder 2012; Knappett 2011b; Meskell 2005; D. Miller and Tilley 1996; Preucel 2006). At the same time, although the connection is not always made explicit, archaeological evaluations of early states and pre-modern empires tend to be framed around issues of political economy in the sense articulated by Stein, “as the
relationship between political organization and the social organization of production, exchange, and consumption” (2001:356). Thus, although our questions are about ‘cultural logics’ in a broad sense, much of our data is related to a relatively narrow set of institutional activities. This is a particularly persistent problem for the study of Albania.

The next part of this puzzle lies in understanding how the material world makes meaning. The behavior of material culture in situations of political inequality has been well-studied in a number of colonial encounters. This research shows that states use materials to express sovereignty and instantiate power (DeMarrais, Gosden, and Renfrew 2005; Johanson and Bauer 2011; Khatchadourian 2016; Sinopoli 1994; A. T. Smith 2003, 2015). But it also calls attention to the variety of responses from residents and subject populations as they engage with colonial structures (Deagan 2003; van Dommelen and Rowlands 2012; Voss 2008). Purely diffusionist readings of material culture are a thing of the past.

It is important to distinguish between the way that colonial contact has been studied, and a related but distinct consideration of cultural contact in borderland zones more generally. The field of borderland studies is discussed in more detail below (Brauer 1995; Donnan and Wilson 1994; Ferguson and Whitehead 1992; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Scott 2009; A. T. Smith 2003; VanValkenburgh and Osborne 2012. Yoffee 2005). It is noteworthy that the key studies cited above come from explicitly colonial contexts—where two disparate societies come into contact in the framework of a marked hierarchal interaction. The ability to interpolate political meaning to
artifactual data is more confusing in contexts of weaker “indirect rule” (M. E. Smith and Montiel 2001:263), or in situations that lacked clear imperial hegemony. That the Antik eastern Caucasus falls on the weak side of the spectrum has ramifications in shaping conclusions from our artifactual data.

**Defining Peripheries**

As a consequence of archaeology’s engagements with modern imperialism, there is a long history of archaeological fieldwork in ‘frontier’ territories (Gutron 2010; Hingley 2000; Hyung 1994; Lattimore 1962; Trigger 1984; Habu, Fawcett, and Matsunaga 2008). The more recent development of frontier studies and research on transnationalism and globalism have concentrated further attention on borderland spaces (Baud and Schendel 1997; Briggs, McCormick, and Way 2008; Donnan and Wilson 1994; Hagen 2004; Hitchner 2008; Lightfoot and Martinez 1995; Naum 2010; Skaff 2004; Tsing 2000). Nevertheless, for both intrinsic and contingent reasons, borderlands remain less thoroughly theorized than ‘empires’ or ‘states.’

Intrinsically, whereas ‘empires’ and ‘states’ are defined by what they are, ‘borderlands’ are traditionally defined by what they are *not*. It is more difficult to articulate a meaningful conceptual category on the basis of not-being. Contingently, disciplinary preoccupations with core territories have also contributed to the imbalance. Finally, ‘frontiers’ are historically complicated and charged spaces in our

---

31 But, see Parker (2003) and Glatz (2009) for examples that approach questions of interaction on the basis of wider bodies of material correlates.

32 Homi Bhabha’s conception of ‘Third Space’ (Rutherford 1990) is one formulation that seeks to materialize the interstitial. See below, pp. 35 and following for a more detailed conversation on the usefulness of Bhabha’s understanding of the spaces in between.
cultural imaginations (Bassin 1993; Johnson 1981; Naum 2010; Slotkin 1981). They are places of tremendous promise, but also of significant risk and danger—all characteristics that have shaped scholarly approaches.

The study of borderlands also highlights the question of perspective. These are spaces that can (and should) be interpreted from a variety of vantage points. But this multiplicity also makes them slippery and elusive. The conceptual imbalance between how we approach traditional centers of inquiry and borderlands is clear when contrasting the dense conversations about the definition of ‘empire’ with as-yet unresolved debates about how to understand terms like ‘border,’ ‘borderlands,’ and ‘frontier’ (Alconini 2016; Feuer 2016; Parker 2006). For example, Feuer has recently suggested a spatial as well as conceptual difference between borders — which he argues lie at the edge of the sphere of control of a given sedentary society — and frontiers — which sit past that society’s functional control (2016:14). Parker sees an element of spatialization, but not along a core-periphery axis—rather, for him a border is a “linear, static dividing line,” while a frontier is a “dynamic, fluid zone” (see also Alconini 2016:6; 2006:80). Myriad other definitions have been advanced from within archaeology, history, political science, and geography, many linked to specific historical particularities (Adelman and Aron 1999; Kopytoff 1987).

In this dissertation, I follow the framework established by Parker, understanding eastern Caucasia as a ‘borderland’ zone: a space where various borders and frontiers overlap and intersect in divergent ways (2006:80). In this construction, borderlands are understood as a matrix of different types of boundaries (cultural,
political, economic, geographic, and demographic) whose nature is described along a continuum of border (static, restrictive) and frontier (porous, fluid) types (2006:82). A different, material-focused model for describing the archaeological manifestations of borderland spaces that has also been influential for my examination of Albania comes from Green and Costion (2013, 2017), who organize cross-cultural contacts according to the intensity of interaction and directionality of exchange, seeing the contact process as composed of many simultaneous but distinct sub-processes.

One of the most cited models for investigating the role of cultural contact in borderland spaces is hybridity, developed from the work of Homi Bhabha (1994). In its most common archaeological formulation, hybridity is used to describe the process by which material culture comes to reflect the traits of a source tradition, as well as a second tradition with which it has interacted. In the process, an entirely new object or practice emerges from the confluence of two or more antecedents. Other related theories for modeling material and cultural development in borderland zones include acculturation and creolization (van Dommelen 2005; Knapp 2008; Stockhammer 2012; Webster 2001).

Borderlands, however, are also spaces of incommensurability. Although this framing, also drawn from the work of Bhabha (Rutherford 1990:209), has not found widespread use among archaeologists or ancient historians, I argue that it is a particularly important concept for understanding the Caucasus. As Bhabha says,

The difference of cultures cannot be something that can be accommodated within a universalist framework. Different cultures, the difference between cultural practices, the difference in the construction of cultures within different groups, very often set up among and between themselves an incommensurability. … [I]t is actually very
difficult, even impossible and counterproductive, to try to fit together different forms of culture and pretend that they can easily coexist (Rutherford 1990:209).

*Incommensurability* is not a fixed or perpetual state, but is instead a characteristic of the meeting of difference: a consequence of the perspectival complexity of the in-between. Whereas hybridity reflects the ongoing process of cultural negotiation and reformation, incommensurability explains why, despite long-term contact, some borderland spaces stay unique.

For archaeologists wrangling physical material, *hybridity* is a more attractive theoretical model than *incommensurability*—because the consequences of hybridity can be seen materially. But in thinking about a space like the eastern Caucasus, which so firmly seems to reject ready classification and integration into both ancient empires and modern conceptual frameworks, the concept of incommensurability offers a way of embracing disjuncture, rather than shying away from it.

**ON THE EDGE OF (THE ROMAN) EMPIRE**

In the course of this dissertation, I will suggest that interactions with the Iranian world were profoundly formative for Albania. And yet: my imperial focus is not centered on the Arsakid world, but rather on the Mediterranean empires. There are two historiographic rationales: (1) the Roman world is the source of the vast majority of the historical sources concerning the Caucasus; and (2) most modern scholarship on the region from the Anglo-American and Western European traditions has been produced by Classical archaeologists and historians who are rooted in Mediterranean
approaches. The expansion of the Roman Empire sits at the historical center of Old World archaeological thought, as well as the formal analysis of empire (Luttwak 1976; Morrison 2001b), and Roman limes have remained an extremely active locus of research over the last several decades (Dietler 2010; Elton 1996; Mattingly 2011; Wells 2005; Woolf 1997). Meanwhile, investigations of Arsakid Parthia have a far shorter and less extensive history, given the paucity of historical sources, and the limited excavations concentrated on a small number of urban Parthian sites (Bivar 1983; Hansman and Stronach 1974; Hauser 2012; Hopkins 1972, 1979; Invernizzi 1997; Pilipko 2001; Potts 1996; Shayegan 2011; Wiesehöfer 1998).

Both the history and the material culture of Rome, consequently, are far better understood relative to that of Parthia. As a result, although the archaeological materials of the Caucasus reflect a wide variety of contexts and contacts with powers like those of the Steppe and the Iranian plateau, models for imperial contact drawn from the Mediterranean world underlie traditional investigations into the area. By approaching the data with a sensitivity to the distorting power of these divergent disciplinary historiographies, I argue that it is possible to approach a fuller picture of the region, even in the face of incomplete data and imperfect historical understanding.

In what follows, I shift from broad and general conversations about the anthropological and sociological understandings of borderland zones to an
examination of the borderlands of the Roman Empire. An exploration into the shape of Roman expansion and intellectual paradigms about the empire’s structure demonstrates the unique position of the Caucasus within the continuum of Roman borderland interactions. It elucidates why the Caucasus has largely been excluded from such conversations, and how its inclusion will improve our understandings of ancient imperialism.

The bibliography on Roman imperialism is, of course, vast. Here, I concentrate on the edges of the Roman world, considering how the frontiers of Roman space have been conceptualized and studied. I will present a brief historical sketch of the development of Roman frontiers focusing on the ways that the Caucasus fits into this history, and then provide an overview of the theoretical approaches that have been adopted by scholars in considering the functioning of the peripheries and the footprint of this particular empire. There are three main axes on which these discussions operate: 1) Frontiers as military and economic zones, requiring significant state investment to maintain; 2) Frontiers as ideological spaces, essential to imperial aspirations and self-perceptions, as well as the trajectories of local populations; and 3) Frontiers as territories of contact, where, for example, self-identified Romans interacted with non-Romans (both smaller independent polities and other empires), bringing new ideas and technologies to both sides.

34 These studies include both structural historical investigations, and ones more interested in material culture. For a sample of the shape of the debates in the last decade, see Morley (2010); Gardner (2013); Versluys (2014).
35 For a more detailed discussion of the historical events of Albania’s past, see chapter 4, p.128 and following.
The expansion of the Roman state was initially slow, but Republican Rome eventually began to grow quickly in the Republican period. The reasons for this remain debated.\(^6\) The process of expansion was not monolithic, but instead was marked by diversity and contingency, rather than a proscriptive trajectory (Hingley 2005; Mattingly 2011). In any case, expansion of the zone of Roman interaction first enveloped the Italian peninsula before turning outward during the Middle Republic (ca. 260-130 BCE) (Dench 2005; Pelgrom 2008; Stek 2013; Terrenato 2008). Early and Middle Republican military activities were both aggressive and defensive. There were, on the one hand, incursions into neighboring lands (Witcher 2000), but, on the other hand, encounters with external groups like the Celts, with whom the Romans grappled over the course of the fourth century BCE (Dyson 1985:17). Both types of interaction had lasting consequences for Roman perceptions of their neighbors, both near and distant.

In thinking about the expansion of the Roman Empire, it is important to consider not just the territorial gains that created an ever-larger borderland area, but also the consequences that these gains had for social identity. One fundamental axis of Roman identity – Roman citizenship—presents an interesting case. In the Republican period, the imposition of citizenship following a Roman victory brought coercive integration into the Roman legal and social system (Ando 2017b:177). As Ando points out in his recent work on integration in Roman contexts, inclusion in the Roman state

\(^6\) For overviews of the sources of Roman expansion in the Middle Republic, see Burton (2011); Harris (1985); Rich (1993).
meant being *governed* by the state, and therefore losing autonomy. The legal category of granting Roman citizenship can be connected to the slower (but no less dramatic) process of social reconfiguration that occurred in many parts of the Roman world—Romanization.\(^{37}\)

The Romans were remarkably successful with their expansions both territorially and in terms of identity though, and by the mid-second century BCE, Rome had mushroomed in size and complexity. In time, the Roman empire directly administered parts of Greece, Punic North Africa, and Macedonia, as well as parts of both Hispania and Gaul, although not all details of the administrative system at this time are entirely clear (Ando 2006:178).

At the same time, it is most important to recognize that Roman imperial interactions during this period were not always based on *territorial* control. As Whittaker has argued:

> This ambivalence between frontier and empire, or between an empire of administration and an empire of control, revealed itself very clearly in Rome’s early relations with the principalities and empires of the east. Alliances were struck with states that seemed to be outside the empire, but in reality they found themselves expected to submit to Roman jurisdiction (C. R. Whittaker 1994:17)

The Roman term ‘province’ (*provincia*) was, then, not primarily a territorial term in this period, but rather one that described power relations: it was a space where the Senate had entrusted imperial control to a magistrate holding *imperium* (C. R. Whittaker 1994:17). As such, the concept of ‘frontiers’ in this period is extremely nebulous.

---

\(^{37}\) On ‘Romanization’ and the discontents surrounding the term, see below p.47.
Transitional Frontiers at the Juncture of the Republic and Empire

Despite growing internal tensions in Rome in the first century BCE, the pace of territorial expansion was quick, with particular growth in the Eastern Mediterranean, including in inland and Pontic Anatolia. This was also the period of the first contacts between Roman officials and local dynasts in the Caucasus. Roman borderland interactions became far more diverse than they had previously been, necessitating increasing administrative sophistication (Dyson 1985:4).

The era of Augustus is generally seen as one of organization and systemization of the provincial space: that is, a period of territorial rationalization (Nicolet 1991). The model that developed—a combination of senatorial and imperial provinces administered by a thin layer of aristocrats sent out from Rome—would continue largely unchanged for some two centuries (Ando 2006). In Syria, Augustus inherited Antony’s governing structure, as well as his system of allied kingdoms, although there were some territorial annexations and border realignments there and in Anatolia (Sartre 2005:54ff). While Augustus’ reign was one of widespread direct territorial expansion—as he himself said, *omnia provinciarum fines auxi* (RG 26)—the development of a more articulated system of allied states, or so called ‘client kingdoms,’ was also a part of the Augustan legacy, although these arrangements, of course, predated the Empire (Braund 1984). But, even as the imperial frontiers (that is, the formal *limes*) began to crystallize in the early empire, Roman influence did not stop at the edge of directly held Roman territory (Slootjes and Peachin 2016). This is a
particularly important point for the central and eastern Caucasus, as Roman direct control never fully extended into the territory.

*Imperial Frontiers*

Following the tumultuous first century BCE and Augustus’ unprecedented governmental restructuring, the Julio-Claudian period was a time of frontier consolidation. The pace of expansion slowed, although both the territorial gains in Britain under Claudius and Nero’s ambivalent settlement in the east had significant consequences for later history. The late 60’s was a time of strife on a variety of imperial frontiers, from Jewish revolts in Palestine to Civilis’s revolt on the German frontier.

The following Flavian emperors were especially active in the east, though there is debate about how organized their policy of border reorganization really was (Dąbrowa 1989). Nevertheless, testaments to Flavian military activity are common even beyond the Euphrates frontier (Dąbrowa 1980; Grosso 1954). Domitian’s Dacian wars also deserve mention, along with a more generalized expansion of the Danube fort system (Wilkes 2005), while the African frontiers were pushed further west in this era (C. R. Whittaker 1995). The activity of the Flavian period ushered in Luttwak’s second phase of imperial border strategy, marked by the creation and stabilization of ‘scientific’ defensive borders around the edges of imperial space (Luttwak 1976:60).

The empire reached its maximum extent in the second century CE under Trajan, whose Dacian and Eastern campaigns brought significant changes to the South Caucasus (Wells 2005; C. R. Whittaker 1994:57). Trajan’s annexations of Armenia
and Mesopotamia, while short-lived, were also formative, foreshadowing Severus’ eventual creation of the provinces of Osrhoene and Mesopotamia. In the traditional interpretation of frontier development, the subsequent phase (Hadrianic through Antonine) ushered in the fully developed system of defensive borders (Luttwak 1976:63). In the west, this border is understood to have been an actual built system (Crow 2007), while in the East the defensive borders were established through border diplomacy, as evidenced by the territorial returns of Armenia and Mesopotamia, and Hadrian’s efforts to curry favor with eastern allied kings (Braund 1991; Dench 2005). In addition to these administrative changes, the second century also saw the development of a second wave of Romanization, with the development of fairly widespread ‘hybrid’ cultures over the course of the century, as can be clearly seen in North Africa (Mattingly and Hitchner 1995).

Later Imperial Frontiers

The early third century was marked by Severan campaigns in Mesopotamia that resulted in the imposition of direct Roman control over previously allied kingdoms. However, despite this early activity, the crisis of the third century seems to have precluded significant changes to frontiers during these tumultuous years (Luttwak 1976:146). Or, at any rate, this is the picture that modern historians inherit from sources. Despite a marked expansion of the size of the Roman army under Severus, there was no commensurate territorial expansion (Fulford 1992). However, the divisive imperial politics of the third century in combination with external
pressures, particularly from the rising Sasanian Empire to the East, meant that there was a great deal of fighting around the empire during these years (Potter 2006).

As Whittaker has surveyed in his study of late imperial frontiers, the Dominate at the end of the third century heralded a new arrangement on the imperial frontiers—one that was characterized by great diversity from region to region, but also growing external pressures across many zones (C. R. Whittaker 1994:132). From the Alans to the Sarmatians to the Sasanians to the Goths, the emperors of the fourth century needed to be able to respond to numerous localized frontier disturbances. These disturbances are often credited with the fragmentation of frontier provinces into smaller units, and the proliferation of imperial administration in the frontier zones in this late period.38

Frontier Terminology

As discussed above, Roman historians traditionally distinguish between solely territorial boundaries—which were active spaces of state expansion—and frontiers, which represented the crystallization of earlier waves of expansion. In this understanding, borders came first, while ‘frontiers’ are generally ascribed to the early Principate, or at the very earliest in the mid-first century BCE (Elton 1996:12; C. R. Whittaker 1994:26ff). The two terms represent the transition from an aggressively expanding territorial zone in the late Republic to a state with fixed defensive borders under the Empire (C. R. Whittaker 2004:6). This is the presumption underlying

38 Although the debates about whether impressions of imperial organization drawn from the Notitia Dignitarum are really accurate still continue. See Kim (2013:47).
Luttwak’s work (1976), and the work of nearly all of his critics (Isaac 1990; Millar 1982; C. R. Whittaker 2004)—even those who deny that frontiers of the Roman empire were actually designed to be defensive.³⁹

Within the body of scholarship, the term ‘frontier’ is simply associated with the Roman Empire rather than the Roman Republic. Whittaker states the point most succinctly: “No military frontier or ‘proto-limes system’ was developed by the Romans in the Republican provinces, nor was there any sense of spatial limit apart from the civil boundaries detailed in the formae provinciae” (1994:27). He is obviously not arguing that there were no borders to Rome at all, but is, rather, privileging a particular type of boundary: the “military frontier,” which reflects the preoccupation with militarized frontiers in Roman studies. The readily visible presence of frontier infrastructure may be traced across so much of western Europe.

The focal point of this preoccupation are the so-called limes, the later militarized borders that march across the woodlands of Europe and the deserts of Arabia (Isaac 1988).⁴⁰ These boundaries serve, in Roman imagination (and often in our own as well) as the division between the civilized and the uncivilized worlds: literally qui barbaros Romanosque divideret (‘that which separates the barbarians from the Romans’ [SHA. Had. 11.2; Cherry 1998:24; Dyson 1985:3]). One conceptual problem

³⁹ These are much-debated terms in Roman studies. Of particular relevance to this project, see the work of E.L. Wheeler (1993a, 1993b, 2007), which cover the tendentious debates about ‘defensive imperialism’ as well as Roman approaches to ‘the East.’ This scholarship demonstrates the important role that the eastern Roman world can play in explaining Roman development more generally.

⁴⁰ While there has obviously been much discussion about the appropriate terms for borderland zones (see above, p.33), the use of the terms that animates Roman frontier studies is uncommon within the field of borderland studies.
for the study of the Caucasus within the established Roman borderland system, then, is that such *limes* were never of much importance east of Cappadocia or in the eastern Pontic space,⁴¹ despite the clear evidence for long-standing Roman activity in the Pontic and Caucasus (Braund 1994; Dąbrowa 1989; Wheeler 2012).

**THE CAUCASUS WITHIN THE MEDITERRANEAN FRAMEWORK**

Our understanding of how empires were implicated in the transformation of the *Antik* Caucasus has been stymied by the fact that the dominant frameworks for studying inter-regional interaction in the ancient Mediterranean broadly, and especially in the Roman world specifically, assume a teleological progress from *interaction* to *integration* (B. K. Miller and Brosseder 2017:470). Accordingly, only peripheral areas that eventually become part of a particular state unit have been studied within the framework of that unit. Even more explicitly, the goal of studying the pre-integration interaction in a given space is often to better understand the shape of the post-integration system.⁴² As a result, studies of peripheral societies are skewed toward those which follow one particular developmental path (from periphery to province in the Roman case), which is implicitly understood to be the normative one. The eastern Caucasus, which was never fully integrated into either the Seleucid, Roman, or

---

⁴¹ On Roman Pontic limes, see Bennett (2006); Mitford (1980).
⁴² See, for example, Shaw (1981:37), which opens with the following sentence: “It has long been recognized that the study of the pre-Roman social structures of the ancient Maghrib is a necessary pendant to the understanding of the long-term process of the economic and political changes that followed upon the integration of North Africa within the Roman ‘world system’.”
Arsakid imperial structures, is therefore conspicuously absent from these conversations.

Furthermore, unlike many better studied ancient ‘peripheries’, which sat at the edge of a single dominant power (D’Altroy 1992; Dietler 2010), the eastern Caucasus was ensconced within a web of competing influences emanating from the Mediterranean, Near East, and Steppe. But, at the same time, it was a space where neither the ancient Mediterranean empires, nor their post-Achaemenid Iranian competitors established meaningful hegemony. So, the question that I ask, approaching this space from a Romanocentric intellectual position is this: Where did the Caucasus fit within the Roman space?

**A Roman(ized) World?**

The earlier discussion of Roman expansion demonstrates the incredible sweep and variety of Roman programs, in terms of their goals, geography, and historiography. Historians and archaeologists tend to take up the task of rationalizing this project, and of describing its consequences. In recent generations, questions of identity have been at the forefront of archaeologists’ and historians’ research focusing on Mediterranean antiquity and the Roman Empire specifically. These conversations have been held chiefly through the lenses of Hellenization and Romanization (or, more recently, ‘Hellenization’ and ‘Romanization’). Although rooted in an interest in identity, these studies are nevertheless entwined with more traditional explorations of
Hellenistic and Roman political history, as these –ization movements are seen to follow the territorial conquests of the states in question.\textsuperscript{43}

Although the Romanization debates have burned bright (Hingley 2014b; Millett 1990; R. M. Reece 1990; Versluys 2014; Woolf 1998), they have been confined, in the main, to a rather narrow sector of Roman history and archaeology, chiefly that of the western provinces and, to a lesser degree, North Africa. There have been some discussions of the Roman East, the Pontic basin and Arabia within this paradigm (Cherry 1998:chap. 3; Oltean 2007; Schmidt-Colinet 1997; Woolf 1994). But, the theoretical home of the debates has unambiguously been Anglophone scholarship on the western provinces (Hingley 2000). As a result, the evidentiary basis for the discussions has been grounded in a defined subset of Roman provincial material. As Versluys points out, if Millet “had analyzed Roman Syria instead of Roman Britain, the Romanization discussion in the English-speaking world would have been markedly different” (Versluys 2014:11).

Two shifts over the course of the last decade have reformulated the high-level thinking on Romanization processes. The first of these is conceptual, involving the more rigorous investigation of concepts of globalization with respect to the Roman world (Gardner 2013; Geraghty 2007; Hingley 2005, 2014a; Hitchner 2008; Hodos 2016). The second is an outgrowth of the material turn (DeMarrais, Gosden, and Renfrew 2005; Meskell 2005), and is manifested by a growing interest in objects as they moved through Roman space (Oyen and Pitts 2017; Versluys 2014). Although the

\textsuperscript{43} For a recent reconfiguration of identity debates which seeks to rehabilitate ‘style’ as a significant and meaningful category, see Versluys (2017).
potential of these developments is not yet fully realized, they reflect a growing
recognition that the Roman Empire was not a hermetically sealed unit, and that the
spaces *outside* of it may have been constitutive in similar ways to its provincial
borderland belt, long recognized to be of critical importance.

**Beyond Empires**

The *Antik* Caucasus was just such an inter-imperial space, with access to a
wide variety of sociocultural models that didn’t experience significant periods of direct
external hegemony. Although it is not possible to articulate a single overarching
Roman strategic goal in their interaction with the eastern Caucasus, it is clear that the
space played a particularly important role in Rome’s broader engagement with the
Arsakid Empire.

The context of Albanian-Roman interaction in this space on a broad scale can
be seen as what Gosden called “Middle Ground colonialism” (2004:26ff),
characterized by ambiguous cultural hierarchies (Dietler 2010; Stein 2005). Gosden,
drawing on White's (1991) exploration of the Middle Ground, describes a space in
which patterned misunderstandings between more or less equal partners are culturally
productive. In understanding the material culture of such spaces, a practice-based
approach rooted in materiality studies is particularly helpful in bridging the gap
between people, states, and things (Lightfoot 2015; Silliman 2010; Stahl 2012;

In seeking models that address these dynamic characteristics of cultural change
and the ties between empires, peripheries and economies, archaeologists have begun to
turn to network approaches (Glatz 2009; Schortman and Urban 2012). Network thinking – where ‘networks’ are used in both a metaphorical and formal sense (Knappett 2011a) – provides a structure for analyzing the ways in which “the relationships between entities like people, objects or ideas” are meaningful (Brughmans 2012:625, emphasis added). Networks are relational, and in that sense they tend to focus attention on the mechanisms of interaction, rather than the products of the process.

In a more expansive sense, the ideas of ‘network thinking’ have also been tied to the global turn, as networks have been seen as an essential part of the contemporary processes of globalization (Sheppard 2002). As scholars interested in antiquity, network modeling offers a framework for describing connectivity that does not inherently privilege the ‘empire,’ or even the ‘state.’[44] It does, however, come with contemporary baggage, suggesting a totalizing process of integration and connectivity (Cooper 2001), which does not reflect the varied and contingent patterns of connectivity that characterized Hellenistic, Roman, and Arsakid interactions. But it is not necessary to adopt the idea of ‘global networks’ in its entirety in order to profit from the conceptual framework of connectivity that comes with it.

This perspective does not assume that integration is a natural outflow of interaction, but instead looks at how nodes of networks develop into spheres of interaction. When applied to the Roman borderlands, and particularly to the eastern

[44] In contemporary contexts, it has been argued that networks allow research to model social patterns in ways that are “neither global nor local” (Danchev and Porter 2017), which seems particularly appropriate for the overlapping space of ancient borderlands.
Caucasus, thinking in terms of networks highlights the great historical particularism of the region’s development and elucidates the broader historical processes. This point of view creates a space where the idiosyncratic data from eastern Caucasia can be meaningfully interpreted as part of larger, systemic shifts in the region, rather than simply dismissing them as an impenetrable cultural curiosity.

**FROM ROME TO ROMAN STUDIES**

When we move beyond the borders of the Roman empire, we should not be surprised to find ourselves in a space where social logics differed from the practices at the center of Roman power. Objects become multivalent as they are entangled in contexts beyond their original universe. Similarly, when we move past the traditional boundaries of ‘Roman Studies’ as we have collectively styled the discipline, we should expect to be confronted with differences in the practice of archaeology and history, and more fundamentally in the epistemological understandings of antiquity. These differences have consequences for the study of ancient societies, which for example have been interpreted in markedly different ways in Soviet and Western ancient history.\(^{45}\) However, the situation is starker in the case of archaeological data, which only become available for study (as they are excavated) through the intervention of contemporary actors, embedded in contemporary epistemic positions.

In this final section of the chapter, I shift gears to explore the ways that raw archaeological data turns into information about the past, and I consider the

---

\(^{45}\) See particularly chapter 3, pp. 104 and following.
consequence of that process on our ability to create a space for Albania within studies of the Roman Empire.

**Time in Archaeology**

Although the archaeologist’s object of inquiry is the chronological “past,” to practice archaeology is to negotiate diachronicity. It could be argued that archaeologists juggle the following schematic temporalities: First, we confront the timeframe of that deep past spanning perhaps hundreds or thousands of years, when our archaeological material was in use and then gradually faded from view. Second, we come to the moment in the nearer past of excavation or discovery, when the once-hidden or overlooked signatures of the past become “materialized” in the present, and are therefore available for study and interpretation.46 Third, we reach the post-discovery life of the archaeological assemblage, when it is iteratively interpreted and reinterpreted, displayed in museums, stored in the recesses of archaeological depots, or thrown out. Fourth and finally, we arrive at our own temporal moment, when we look back at the body of archaeological data both new and old and continue the cycle of interpretation.

Historically, archaeologists have focused on the first timeframe. As practitioners within the “discipline of things,” we devote considerable energy to wringing meaning from material traces (Olsen et al. 2012). From the earliest typological studies through more modern archaeological stratigraphies and relative

---

46 “Materialization” in this sense refers to the process through which the physical materials of the past are brought into our present, see Lucas (2002:211).
chronologies, we have charted the development of things and places over time. More recently, we have engaged with theories of materiality and the semiotics of things to explore how the material world is actually “implicated in the construction, maintenance, and transformation of social identities” (D. Miller and Tilley 1996:1). In contrast, the discipline has long elided the second through fourth timeframes, from the moment of excavation up to our own era.47

It was only with the advent of the post-processual theoretical movement in the late twentieth century that Anglophone and Western European archaeologists began to explore the consequences of diachronicity more fully.48 Much of this theorization still focused on the first timeframe: on understanding and nuancing our conceptualization of temporal processes in the past.49 But, this work has also emphasized the modern subjectivity of the field and brought sustained examinations of archaeological practice to the scholarly mainstream.50 One result has been greater attention to the position of the archaeologist with respect to archaeological research (Lucas 2010:243), first through the incorporation of phenomenology into archaeological practice (Tilley 1994), and more recently through ethnographic explorations of fieldwork (Berggren and Hodder 2003; Dissard 2011, 2012; Edgeworth 2003; Hamilakis and

47 If these periods were addressed at all, it was to bemoan the lack of information about early excavations or criticize the recording practices of prior generations, rather than to engage substantively with disciplinary history or the ramifications of disciplinary practice on our ability to reevaluate old data. 48 On theories of time in archaeology in the Anglo-American academy, see Holdaway and Wandsnider (2008); Lucas (2005); and Murray (1999). For a Russian perspective on time and archaeology, see Klein (2012b). 49 For example, debates about time perspectivism, which consider whether the investigation of different time scales requires different types of data. See Bailey (Bailey 2007). 50 On studies of time and their entanglement with notions of subjectivity, see Lucas (2005:chap. 2). On archaeological subjectivity, see Hodder (1999); Lucas (2002).
Anagnostopoulos 2009; Khazraee and Gasson 2015), as well as archival research into
disciplinary history (Murray 2012; Schlanger 2002; Trigger 1985; Schlanger and
Nordbladh 2008). It should be noted that an interest in disciplinary history, although
perhaps motivated by different theoretical undercurrents, is also visible in current
Russian archaeological practice, as well as in the work of scholars from the South
Caucasus (Cəfərova 2009; Shnirelman 1995; Tunkina 2002).

Post-processual scholarship has also explored archaeology as a generative
discipline, rather than a passive one. For, although it has long been a truism that the act
of excavation irrevocably destroys the depositional circumstances of a site, it also
creates a new dataset in the form of the archaeological record: a term used to refer to
the physical traces discovered in the course of excavation, as well as the records of
these traces (Lucas 2012:6ff). Different choices about where to dig, how to dig, and
what material to record, save, and study will yield startlingly different information
about the past. As such, the archaeological record is itself the product of “an
interpretative practice, an active intervention engaging in a critical process of
theoretical labor relating past to present” (Shanks and Tilley 1987:103). 51
Archaeological datasets are, then, the products of specific archaeologists or groups of
archaeologists, and in a wider sense, of particular cultures of scholarship. It is for this
reason that I, an archaeologist educated in the Anglo-American tradition, found myself
at first unable to meaningfully interpret archaeology written in the Soviet

51 See also Patrik (1985).
archaeological tradition. It was embedded in a different epistemological framework that diverged in many ways from the one I inherited.

‘Assemblage’ as History and Historiography

Over the course of the last decade, discussion of the central strands that I have outlined here—temporality, subjectivity, and the nature of the archaeological record—have coalesced under the umbrella of “assemblage theory.” This approach developed from the work of Deleuze and Guattari (1980), and has been the subject of recent discussion among social theorists and archaeologists (Jane Bennett 2010; Hamilakis and Jones 2017). It is a relational approach that sees archaeological practice as a dynamic collection of interlocking parts (“things, practices and interpretations” [Fowler 2013:5]), all of which are agentive—able to shape and reshape each other. In this understanding, archaeologists and the archaeological records that we create are embedded in the process of meaning-creation alongside the artifacts that we study.

As we think about the physical networks of antiquity that moved objects around the ancient world and shaped empires, we should think at the same time about the intellectual networks that have brought these objects to light in the modern world, and find a way to connect the various timeframes and actors of archaeological exploration, to bridge the gap between ourselves, our predecessors, and our data.

CONCLUSIONS

In this chapter, I have made an argument for studying Albania in terms of its relationship to the Roman world. I have used both general and specific understandings of imperial processes to situate the Caucasus not as a void or *terra incognita*, but
instead an active sphere of interaction. I have further suggested that understanding the complex space of the eastern Caucasus requires multi-temporal conversations about ancient empires and Soviet archaeologists. The truth, of course, is that we always engage in such layered discourses—yet we are often oblivious to the process. It is the very unfamiliarity and incommensurability of Albania that forces our introspection.

As Rachel Mairs has commented concerning a similarly challenging body of material from Central Asia,

> The challenge with such material is to move beyond its exoticism — or sheer oddness — and try to elucidate something of the social and cultural dynamics of the society that produced it, and to relate this society in a meaningful way to its regional hinterland and contemporary states (Mairs 2014:4).

The theoretical approaches towards borderlands, empires, and inter-imperial space discussed here provide a way past exoticism and oddness, situating the material from the eastern Caucasus as the predictably complex product of overlapping zones of imperial and transregional activity. The consideration of this material, furthermore, is a critical component of the contemporary project to consider a more ‘global’ world in antiquity.

Albania is critical in the project of ‘provincializing’ both Rome and Roman studies. With respect to the latter, I have also laid out an approach to bringing data from ‘beyond the empire’ into the general dialogue about the Roman borderlands. The method for doing so is rooted in an appreciation of the deep genealogies of knowledge that structure archaeological datasets, which have long-echoing consequences on the

---

52 After the concept of “provincializing Europe,” Chakrabarty (2000).
interpretive scaffolds we build atop the data. In the next chapter, I expand on the themes I’ve begun to develop here, taking a closer look at the role of Russian history and thought in the structure of data from the eastern Caucasus, as well as at how the different understanding of ‘frontiers’ in this context shaped historical formulations of Albania.
Chapter 3: Russians and Romans in the Caucasus

The archaeology of the eastern Caucasus in the Antik period has predominantly been studied through the paradigm of antichnaia arkheologiia (античная археология)—literally ‘ancient’ or ‘classical’ archaeology—conducted in the main by scholars within first the Russian imperial, then the Soviet and finally the post-Soviet spheres. Despite the similarity in name, the Russian category of antichnaia arkheologiia maps imperfectly on to the Anglo-American tradition of ‘classical archaeology.’ The two studies of antiquity grew within different systems of academic, social and political practice, and the separation between Soviet and non-Soviet scholarship during the twentieth century allowed for little exchange between the streams of archaeological and historical thought. Despite similar underlying interests, the traditions of antichnaia arkheologiia and classical archaeology are, today, hesitant and episodic conversation partners. In order to understand our data

---

53 A range of terms are used in Russian to refer to the archaeology of the broader Greco-Latin world. Beyond antichnaia arkheologiia, these include arkheologiia klassicheskikh drevnostei and klassicheskaia arkheologiia. For the sake of clarity, I will be using the term antichnaia arkheologiia to refer to this phenomenon.

54 There is a truly vast body of scholarship on the development of Russian archaeology in general, and a small but important body of work on classical archaeology or the study of classical antiquity more specifically. For general overviews, see Miller (1956); Mongait (1961); Formozov (1986, 1995, 2004); Lebedv (1992); Dolukhanov (1993, 1995); Smirnov (2011); Klejn (2012a) and Krikh (2013). For the history of Russian studies of antiquity and antichnaia arkheologiia, see Khatchadourian (2008a); Tsetskhladze (2001); Tunkina (2002, 2003); Frolov (2006).

55 ‘Classical Archaeology’ itself is a discipline without a clear and universally accepted definition, see the discussion in Snodgrass and Millet (2012). For the purpose of this chapter, ‘Classical Archaeology’ is taken to mean the field of inquiry that considers the ancient Mediterranean world and related regions from the beginning of the historic period through Late Antiquity, with a particular focus on Greek and Roman civilizations and their neighbors, studied primarily from a Western European perspective.
about ancient Albania, we must understand the system of knowledge within which that data has been generated.

The two traditions of classical archaeology and antichnaia arkheologiia are based on differing epistemologies that have shaped historical investigation by delimiting appropriate subjects of inquiry, structuring categorical groupings of material, and informing interpretive judgments about the data (Trigger 1984; Habu, Fawcett, and Matsunaga 2008). I do not want to set up a false dichotomy, or to suggest that we can measure the value of one against the metrics of the other. Nor would I encourage the false impression that antichnaia arkheologiia is a monolithic body of scholarship, any more than classical archaeology is. A wide variety of theoretical and methodological approaches have fed into the development of antichnaia arkheologiia, a discipline that can trace its roots to the seventeenth century, and its practitioners today are not univocal. Instead, I argue that it is critical for those of us engaging with the fruits of antichnaia arkheologiia to understand the core cultural and historical frameworks of the discipline, and to grapple with the ramifications of those histories on interpretation of raw data.

The field of antichnaia arkheologiia is built atop a wider variety of emic perspectives on the relationship between ‘ourselves’ and ‘our classical past’ than is the case in Western European classical archaeology, and still entertains this plurality of perspectives.\(^56\) The straightforward narrative of descent from Greco-Roman stock that

---

\(^56\) Though this is not to argue that there is a single ‘Western European’ tradition. See, for example, the multiple perspectives in Alcock and Osborne (2012), which itself reflects largely only Anglophone preoccupations.
long underpinned scholarship in Western Europe has been more complicated and variable within the Russian scholarly tradition. There, long-running debates about national identity, which played out most clearly in the Slavophile-Westernizer discourse of the nineteenth century, predisposed Russian scholars to approach the ancient world from many angles (not simply as a venerated ancestor, but also as a long-time foe). Furthermore, in the highly politicized climate that developed first under Stalinist rule and continues into the post-Soviet era, ethnic identities and archaeological cultures of the classical period have become central to narratives of national sovereignty along Russia’s historic frontiers in the Black Sea and Caucasus.

In this environment, bridging the gap between archaeological traditions requires a process of critical interpretation that resembles the act of textual translation. Archaeological concepts function here like lexical units; each one sits within a wider web of associations and assumptions that are implicit to a ‘native speaker,’ but often slippery to transpose into a second archaeological language. Fundamental building blocks of the disciplines (like ‘culture’, ‘state’, and ‘frontier’) have markedly different connotations in Russian archaeological scholarship than in Western European or Anglo-American contexts, and sometimes denote entirely different concepts. Working in the Caucasus, then, demands an explication of ontological frameworks. To that end, and from my own position as an American-educated archaeologist, this chapter explores the development of the epistemological framework of antichnaia arkeologii that influence research on Albania: divergent in many ways from the one I inherited—and yet still familiar.
CLASSICAL TRADITIONS IN RUSSIA BEFORE THE NINETEENTH CENTURY

Peter the Great’s ‘Europeanizing’ reign (1682-1725) marks the decisive moment in the emergence of classical scholarship in Russia (Wes 1989). However, classical traditions transmitted primarily through the vector of the Byzantine Empire had deep roots in both the textual and architectural culture of medieval Russia that should not be overlooked. They provide a ‘prehistoric’ base for the eighteenth-century classical influx.  

Medieval ‘Prehistory’

During the first millennium CE, a range of stories predominantly from Greek myth and history, but also occasionally the Roman world, found their way into Slavic compilations. Popular subjects included accounts of the Trojan War, fragments from Josephus, and stories from the Alexander Romance tradition (Frolov 2006:16).

The medieval kingdom of Kievan Rus’, centered in modern-day Ukraine, placed a premium on written language, had a well-developed liturgical literary culture, and a strong manuscript tradition. Within this tradition, references to the world of antiquity were promulgated through chronicles and chronologies, and also through more widely familiar saints’ lives. Beginning around the eleventh century, a popular

---

57 For the early textual tradition, Frolov (2006) provides the most complete account. On the connections between Byzantium, Europe and medieval Russia generally, see RafLensperger (2012) for a recent interpretation that highlights the European ties of Kievan Rus’, while not ignoring links with Byzantium.

58 For the use of Greek in within the sphere of Kievan Rus’, see Franklin (1992) who suggests that Greek had limited presence in the world, and may in fact have often been valued for its foreignness rather than for its intelligibility.

59 Although much of this material consisted of hagiographies and works on religious themes, some were devoted to the subject of the ancient world, for example the 15th century compilation Letopisets ellinskii i rimskii [The chronicler of the Greeks and Romans], see Frolov (2006:25ff).
genre in Kievan Rus’ was a global history, mixing biblical history with episodes from Greek mythology, from the life of Alexander the Great, and from other mytho-historic episodes from both Greek and Roman sources (Frolov 2006:26). While these texts do not constitute a substratum of accurate historical narrative about the ancient world within the medieval Russian tradition (Thomson 1995), they do demonstrate the long history within Russian consciousness that associated the Slavic world with Greco-Roman civilization in broad strokes.

Over the last century, there has been a historiographical debate about the cultural affiliation of Kievan Rus’—whether it was Byzantine, Slavic, Scandinavian, or something else entirely—and about the consequences of this heritage on the spirit of modern Russia. The evolution of the debate demonstrates the strong role of contemporary geopolitics on the study of the relational history of Russia and the rest of Europe, with our understanding of either “mutual otherness” or “similarity” framed by the imperial games of scholars’ own eras. Thus, during the twentieth century, there was a predisposition to see Russia’s medieval history and that of the rest of Europe as oppositional, leading the noted Russian historian Dimitri Obolensky to interject the following corrective into the debate,

The heritage of East Rome was not, as it is sometimes suggested, Russia’s “mark of the beast” that isolated her from medieval Europe: it was the main channel through which she became a European nation. Byzantium was not a wall, erected between Russia and the West: she was Russia’s gateway to Europe (Obolensky 1970:17–18).

---

See Raffensperger for an overview of these debates (2012).
Obolensky does not object to seeing medieval Russia as a fundamentally Byzantine space, but instead argues that this Eastern Roman heritage allowed for access not just to the descendants of the Eastern Roman Empire, but also to those of the Western Roman Empire. A subsequent shift has regarded the inherited narrative concerning medieval Russia’s Byzantine alignment as simplistic for having failed to account for the many ways in which the Kievan Rus’ kingdom participated in the European social and political landscapes (Raffensperger 2012, 2014). Although the precise vector of transmission of classical culture into medieval Rus’ (either through Byzantium directly, or through contact with wider Europe) remains unclear, by the time of the late medieval Muscovite tsars, Russia had already begun to define itself partly in reference to the states of classical antiquity.

A famous ‘prophesy’ by the early sixteenth-century Pskovian monk Filofei demonstrates both the historical and historiographic complexities of Russia’s medieval interpretation of its classical heritage. It positions Muscovy as the “Third Rome,” having assumed the title after the first two Romes (Rome and Byzantium) fell—Rome to the apostate Latin church and Byzantium to Islamic expansion. The “Third Rome” trope, intended to encourage the Muscovite court to stricter religious adherence so that it might live up to its venerated status, did not find favor in the period and quickly fell

---

61 The ‘prophecy’ reads: "So be aware, lover of God and Christ, that all Christian empires have come to an end and are gathered together in the singular empire of our sovereign in accordance to the books of prophecy, and this is the Russian empire: because two Romes have fallen, and a third stands, and a fourth there shall not be." Trans. from Poe (2001:416). There is an extensive bibliography about the history and historiography of this idea, including the relatively recent work by Poe, but also earlier critical pieces by Andreyev (1959); Hammer (1944); Stremoukhoff (1953); Toumanoff (1955).
out of use (Poe 2001:413). Although unsuccessful, its existence demonstrates the interest in antiquity of at least some of Russia’s elite and their desire to represent Russia’s contemporary reality in the mytho-historical language of Europe’s shared past.

**Peter the Great: ‘Europeanization,’ and the Science of Archaeology**

By the Petrine Era (1682-1725), Russian and Western European intellectual traditions had diverged considerably. The humanistic renaissances that had reshaped much of Western European culture had not had the same types of repercussions in Russia. Unlike his Western European peers in the late seventeenth century, Peter the Great came to power in a country that had experienced neither the Renaissance nor the spasmodic era of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. And yet, by the end of his reign, thanks to a multifaceted program of intellectual, architectural, social and governmental reforms, a cultural and scientific renaissance had taken root in Russia and the stage was set for over 200 years of dynamic exchange between Russia and Western Europe. Classicism was central to the development of this new age within Russia, and to its presentation to Russian and international audiences alike.

---

62 It did, however, set up a metaphor for imperial succession that would be rediscovered and activated again in Russia in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, including by Stalin (Poe 2001:419).
63 There has been discussion about the reasons for this dating back to the nineteenth century, and indeed even earlier. Some have suggested that the ‘failure’ to participate in the Renaissance is a consequence of Mongol invasions; more recent assessments point out that, whatever ties Russia had to the world of antiquity through the Byzantine empire, it did not participate in the “sphere of medieval Latinity” (Halperin 1985:445:122) that actually generated the Renaissance.
On October 22nd 1721, Peter the Great held a ceremony in St. Petersburg to officially constitute the Russian Empire, transforming it from the Russian Tsardom. During the ceremony, he was hailed by the Russian Senate using language imported from Rome—addressed as the *pater patriae* of Russia (Wes 1992:34ff). One of his senior officials explained that the ceremony was modeled on the practice of the “Roman Senate of offering such titles publicly to their emperors in a sign of gratitude for their great deeds, and inscribing such titles as Pater Patriae, Emperor, and Great on statues…” (Madariaga 2014:37–38). These self-conscious Roman resonances, however, belie the continuation of a strong connection to Byzantium in the self-fashioning of the emperor, making it possible “to trace the features of Byzantium behind the mask of the Roman” (Madariaga 2014:39).

Peter the Great’s wide-reaching reforms, often based on classical models, reached far past imperial self-fashioning, penetrating many aspects of Russian life, particularly among the Russian elite. As the architectural historian Dmitry Shvidkovsky notes, “he created not only new laws and institutions but also a new living environment” (2007:194). Both the physical building projects launched in Russia (especially the construction of St. Petersburg) and the social restructuring of the era created a landscape physically and conceptually marked by the classical world.

---

64 This came following the Treaty of Nystad and the end of Russia’s Great Northern War with Sweden, and changed the political structure that had been initiated by Ivan IV in 1547.

65 This was not a move without negative repercussions within Russia, where the term “Emperor” held negative associations with the Catholic church. For more on the classical allusions, see Wes (1992). For more on presentations of monarchy in Russian history, see Uspenskii and Zhivov (2012).
One element of this program was the creation of a formal and state-sponsored scientific cadre in Russia, including the field of ‘historical science.’ As part of this state interest, Peter the Great instituted a program of manuscript acquisition, encouraged the translation of ancient historical texts into Russian, and sponsored modern historical writing (Frolov 2006:48). He was an ardent proponent of printed texts, and created partnerships with foreign printing printers to publish Russian books. Among the first books to be printed in Russian through these international partnerships were an encyclopedic history textbook and a Latin grammar titled *Latina grammatica in usum scholarum celeberrimae gentis slavonico-rosseanae adornata* in 1699 (Frolov 2006:49).

The early eighteenth-century also saw an intensification of research, creating the foundation for later research on antiquity (Formozov 1986:17). The Kunstkamera, which opened as Russia’s first public museum in 1714, was an important institutional innovation. It was founded by Peter the Great after the model of similar collections in Europe (Tunkina 2002:26). The explicit goal of the collection was to expose the Russian people to science through objects—as the Tsar himself is quoted to have said, “I want people to look and to learn” (Tunkina 2002:26). The Kunstkamera brought together ‘rarities,’ including an impressive array of dramatic anatomical specimens, numerous scientific instruments and also ancient artifacts. It quickly became a highly

---

66 There was a particular interest in the translation of military texts, like works of Curtius Rufus and Frontinus (Frolov 2006:53ff).
67 For an overview of historiography of the Kunstkamera, see Neverov (1985); Stanyukovich (1953).
valued public collection of encyclopedic knowledge for both Russian and visiting scholars (Baird 2008).68

Then, in 1724-5, the St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences was founded, consisting of three branches: the mathematical sciences, the natural sciences, and the humanitarian sciences (Frolov 2006:58). The study of classical antiquity (philologically, materially and historically) was a key interest of the humanities research at the Academy of Sciences. The early researchers in charge of this scholarship were often German, as was the case with the first and most prominent, Gottlieb Siegfried Bayer, who had grown up in Prussian Königsburg (Dubowoj 1985; Tunkina 2002:27).69 Bayer’s interests were wide-ranging. During the 12 years he spent in St. Petersburg, he published prolifically on historical themes encompassing ancient numismatics, to Chinese linguistics, to the development of Russia. Particularly important for the questions at the heart of this dissertation, Bayer was among the first modern researchers to look closely at the question of the origin and migrations of the Scythian population,70 and also published about the Caucasus specifically, using information gained during Peter the Great’s Persian campaign (1722) to discuss the Caspian Gates (Bayer 1728a).71

Bayer, with a small circle of intellectuals including Basil Nikitich Tatishchev and Antioch Dimitrievich Kantemir, met regularly at the house of the progressive

68 For a contrasting point of view—one that sees the Kunstkamera as a failure in the Petrine modernization program, see Anemone (2000).
69 The German identity of the department continued though the mid nineteenth c., when the two Ancient specialists were Johann Georg Lotter and Christian Krusius, both German (Frolov 2006:85)
70 For example, see Bayer (1728a, 1728b, 1728c, 1729, 1732, 1738).
71 See ch. 6, p. 278 for more on this.
bishop Feofan Prokopovich for what they termed *noctes atticae*, or Attic Nights, in reference to the work of Aulus Gellius (Wes 1992:32). Prokopovich, a close confidante of Peter the Great, was an important proponent of the development and deployment of classical learning in Petrine Russia—likely the driving force behind the Roman symbolism of Peter the Great’s 1721 imperial coronation (Wes 1992:34). The influence of this small group of thinkers on Russian intellectual and cultural life was significant. Bayer’s student Gerhard Friedrich Müller was to become one of the most important historians of Russia, while Mikhail Vasilyevich Lomonosov, a student of Prokopovich’s, became the most important humanist of eighteenth-century Russia, and was, along with Kantemir, one of the first propagators of Russian classicism as a literary tradition (Segel 1973:48).

Following the death of Peter the Great, his successor Peter II (1727-30) followed a different course. Uninterested in St. Petersburg and wider Europe, he moved the now-xenophobic court back to Moscow (Dubowoj 1985:135). The Imperial Academy suffered both from this slight, and from further financial difficulties during the subsequent reign of Anna Ivanovna (1730-40). Nevertheless, the foundation laid by the intellectuals of the Petrine era was, in the words of Wes, “a patina of *latinstvo* [latinitas]… which could no longer be removed” (1992:33). The repercussions for Russian literature and art, to say nothing of Russian academic scholarship, were profound (Frolov 2006:108–9).

---

72 Müller’s name is traditionally transliterated into Russian as Миллер, and from this back into English as ‘Miller,’ which is how Tunkina refers to him in some of her English texts (Tunkina 2007), while elsewhere she uses ‘Mueller’ (Tunkina 2003).
Catherine the Great: Neoclassicism and Territorial Expansion

Some 40 years after the death of Peter the Great, Catherine the Great (1762-96) came to power following the assassination of her husband. Russia entered a new stage in its relationship with Europe and the classics. An avowed supporter of Neoclassicism, she quickly took steps to bring Russian Imperial architectural practice in line with this trend (Shvidkovsky 2007:229). She was also a philhellene, naming one of her grandsons Constantine (and referring to him as Constantine II in personal correspondence), and issuing coins upon his birth that linked him iconographically to Constantine the Great (Ragsdale 1988:93). There was also her controversial ‘Greek Project’ intended to develop a new Christian capital at Istanbul.73

Continuing in the footsteps of Peter the Great, Catherine was an ardent proponent of translations of Latin and Greek literature into Russian, and the period saw an explosion of these print runs, particularly historical texts (Frolov XX; Baehr 1978:5), as well as many literary texts that had been translated earlier in the eighteenth century, but only published in the 1750’s and ‘60’s (Segel 1973:56). She also founded the Hermitage Museum (Dianina 2004).

While Peter I’s reforms brought the study of European classical monuments to Petersburg, it occurred within an extremely limited sphere. It was in the time of Catherine II that a domestic (oetchestvennaia) study of ancient history truly began (Frolov 2006:92), which overlapped with the flowering of classicism in Russian

---

73 See Ragsdale (1988) for a discussion both of this project and of the controversy surrounding it in Russian historiography. For the purpose of the present conversation, the degree to which the project was intended to be realized is less important than its symbolism.
literature. By this point, the students of Russia’s first wave of classical education had come of age. They were producing new works influenced by the variety of intellectual traditions percolating in Russia, including classicism. The ‘domestication’ of classical studies allowed interest in antiquity to transition from an esoteric science within the Imperial Academy into wider academic circles, and eventually into popular discourse. The late eighteenth century saw, for example, the quick growth of classical studies at Lomonosov’s own Moscow University (Pozdeeva 1962). In this period a profusion of Russian popular texts about the classical world brought the material into broad contact with learned Russian society.

The power and appeal of ancient civilizations in the eighteenth century was, in part, their flexibility and ability to accommodate a wide variety of formulations of myth and cultural value. For example, it was possible for Lomonosov to frame Russian history in explicitly Roman terms, drawing straightforward equivalencies between Russian mythical heroes and Greco-Roman ones. But it was no less plausible for Mikhail Ivanovich Popov, another historian of the era, to instead present Slavic mythology in a long-running agonistic struggle with Greek and Roman myth, no less grand, but with its own individual (indeed superior) character (Segel 1973:56).

Along with the diffusion of literary classicism, the late eighteenth century also marked the beginning of archaeological excavation of classical sites located on

---

74 There is a vast bibliography on Russian classicism and the reception of the classical world in eighteenth century Russia, in both Russian and Western European languages. For overviews, see Gukovski (1928); Kahn (1993); Pumpianskii (1983); Segel (1973).

75 For an overview and detailed bibliography of secondary scholarship, see Kahn (1993).

76 Lomonosov argued that “in Russian history, one finds heroes and deeds that are fully comparable to those of the Greeks and the Romans” (trans., Baehr 1978:3).
Russian soil. This work commenced only after Catherine II’s Russo-Turkish war (1768-74), which led to the Russian acquisition of the coastal territories of Crimea and elsewhere along the Black Sea, opening the flood-gates of research into Russia’s very own classical heritage.

The new access sparked intense interest about the North Pontic region, where military topographers drafted detailed descriptions of the local lands, including references to ancient monuments (Tunkina 2003:305). This was not the earliest archaeological activity in the Russian Empire—the Imperial Academy of Sciences had sent out noted expeditions to Siberia and other corners of the Russian Empire beginning in the early eighteenth century (Formozov 1986:17). But it was the first extended work on the classical past. The projects launched by the Academy were interdisciplinary in nature, considering not only local topography and monumental landscapes, but also geological, botanical, historical, ethnographic and linguistic information drawn from all the available sources, including ancient writings. As Tunkina has pointed out, this provided an “ecosystemic” perspective on the material, focusing attention on the relationship between ancient cities, their hinterlands and broader regional developments (2003:310).

Building on the techniques developed on the earlier Siberian expeditions, a number of teams of natural scientists and surveyors worked in the Black Sea region by

---

77 This is a pattern familiar from European archaeology also, see for Shanks and Witmore (2010).
78 The work of the Petersburg Academy of Sciences was enormous. For an overview of all projects run under the auspices of the institute in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, see the brief descriptions published in Ghucheva (1940). Tunkina (2002) provides the expanded detail about the Pontic projects, as well as comprehensive bibliography for these researchers.
the end of the eighteenth century, recording detailed plans of anthropogenic traces in
the landscape that “have not lost their significance even today” (Tunkina 2003:306).
The best examples of this type of work were by Karl Ludwig Hablitz and Peter Simon
Pallas, who surveyed the Herakleian Penninsula in Crimea, recording traces of many

In contrast to this careful survey work, early excavation in the northern Black
Sea was, like much early excavation across Europe at the time, carried out by non-
specialists and was minimally documented (Frolov 2006:127). The work was
conducted by military officers and other government officials (including many non-
Russians), who had been stationed in the new outposts of South Russia.80 They were
eager to find antiquities, but generally had little understanding of the materials they
uncovered.81 Destruction was rampant—metal objects were occasionally simply
melted down by soldiers working at the sites (Tsetskhladze 2001:X). Some of the gold
and silver discovered was sent to St. Petersburg, while other parts of the collections
were distributed amongst soldiers and officials, or sold off.82

79 For more detail on the work of Hablitz and Pallas, see Tunkina (2002:44–48). Pallas, a German in the
employ of Catherine II, undertook expeditions in eastern and southern Russia, and published an account
of his travels in the south (Pallas 1803). For further biography of him, see Wendland (1992).
80 For the phenomenon of Germans working in Russia at this time, and more on Pallas on particular, see
81 In part, this was due to the general state of archaeological knowledge in the eighteenth century, as well as
the lack of a scientific practice of archaeology, or the idea that such thing was a desideratum.
82 Important sites and monuments excavated in this vein include the Litoi Barrow by A.P. Mel'gunov (with
the material studied by G.F. Müller of the Academy of Sciences) in 1763, as well as the necropolis of
Phanagoria, excavated by Van der Weide and Ovidopole, excavated by F. de Wollant in 1795. Although
it was not understood at the time of its excavation, much of the material from these excavations was
Scythian (Piotrovsky 1973; Tunkina 1998, 2007). Müller and Mel’gunov, for example, dated the Litoi
Barrow material on parallels with Hungarian material to the seventeenth century CE (Tunkina 2007).
By the end of the eighteenth century, classicism as a literary and artistic style was embedded in Russian intellectual life, and archaeological investigations were quickly sprouting in the newly gained Pontic territories. Scholars had begun to congregate at imperial research centers and universities in Moscow and St. Petersburg, setting the stage for continued growth over the next century. All of the pieces had come together for a truly *otechestvennaia antichnaia arkheologiia* (domestic classical archaeology), rooted in the territory of Russia itself.

**FRONTIERS, IDENTITY AND ORIENTALISM IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY**

The nineteenth century brought changes to the *antichnaia arkheologiia* of Russia in general, and saw the entry of the Caucasus into the fray. I will look first at the social and political concerns of the new century, and discuss the role that the study of the past played in this period. In particular, I examine the role of the ‘frontier’ as a concept in nineteenth-century Russian thought, and explore the way that identity became spatialized in the context of a debate about whether Russian identity was essentially ‘European’ or ‘Slavic.’ These two perspectives, both of which involve the borders of Russian space conceptually and practically, created the conditions for what I called in this chapter’s introduction the ‘wider variety of emic perspectives’ on a classical heritage. These perceptions structured Russian thought about antiquity, shaping both historical and archaeological scholarship.

Nineteenth-century Western European archaeology was predicated on the study of the central realms of the classical world (Greece or Rome) or on spaces that were unambiguously ‘other’—colonial holdings in the Near East, for example.
Nineteenth-century Russian archaeology, on the other hand, was tasked with the more difficult job of transforming its own territorial frontier into Russia. The newly-crystalized domestic science of antichnaia arkheologiia was an active participant in the practical and ideological construction of Russian identity in this period. Ancient studies played many roles, with its ideological flexibility emerging as a key value. As Wes says about this period, “every age finds what it wants in the classics” (1989:663).

**Classics and Expanding Russian Frontiers**

Above all, a newfound sense of patriotism in the face of rapid expansion in the nineteenth century drove Russian society to look for meaning from antiquity—this time with a Romantic eye as much as a Classicist one. The patriotic zeal to rationalize Russian society with a reach toward antiquity took many shapes. For the imperial authorities seeking to control the new territories of the Black Sea, the area’s deep Christian roots served as a justification of Russian control. Meanwhile, for members of the Union of Salvation, who led the anti-Tsarist Decemberist revolt in 1825, the stories of Greek and Roman historians, especially accounts of Roman Republican virtue, fueled their anti-imperial anger (Frolov 2006:119–20; Wes 1989:664). As one Decemberist, Piotr Ivanovich Borisov, wrote, “reading Greek and Roman histories and biographies of great men from Plutarch and Cornelius Nepos lodged in me from the time of my childhood a love of liberty and national sovereignty” (Frolov 2006:120).

---

83 A.S. Smirnov’s (2011) publication Власть и организация археологической науки в Российской империи: очерки институциональной истории науки XIX–начала XX века [State Power and the Organization of the Archaeological Sciences in the Russian Empire: Research on the Institutional History of Science in the 19th and Early 20th Century] is the first study to consider in detail the institutional history of archaeology as an apparatus of state control in the Russian Empire.
And it was not only military men and revolutionaries who were drawn to
antiquity—humanists flocked to the field as well. Aleksei Nikolaevich Olenin, the
director of the Academy of Arts and then of the Imperial Public Library, ran a salon in
St. Petersburg that served as a central node in the development of a Russian patriotic
narratives framed in relation to classical heritage (Wes 1992:133). It was here that the
philosophical perspectives of Sergei Semenovich Uvarov developed—he would later
to become the most influential proponent of classicism as the Minister of Education
(1833–49). In sharp contrast to the anti-authoritarian deployment of classics of the
Decemberist Borisov, Uvarov saw the classics as the foundation of the autocratic
modern Russian state (Shnirelman 1996:221).\footnote{Under Uvarov, perceptions of antiquity became explicitly political in Russia for the first time, leading to
the development of an official government perspective about Russian history and its philosophical roots. For Uvarov and the importance of classics, see Uvarov (1864:20, 23–24). Modern critical assessments of
Uvarov and his program can be found in A. Miller (2008); Whittaker (1978).}

Among all the humanists who embraced a classical past, the most important
was undoubtedly Alexander Pushkin, the nineteenth century Romantic Russian poet so
important that he is still referred to in Russian as, “Pushkin, our everything” (Пушкин
– наше всё). His work demonstrates the creative redeployment of classical themes in
the nineteenth century, a model for subsequent generations.\footnote{Unsurprisingly, the bibliography about Pushkin’s engagement with the classical world is also vast. See in particular Formozov (1974); Hokanson (2005); Houston (2007); Pellicer (2011).} Pushkin was of
aristocratic birth and classically educated. He used ancient motifs freely in his work,
but not slavishly. Often, his “treatment of classical subjects served only as a pretext for
the expression of an entirely modern idea” (Frolov 2006:118). For Pushkin, himself a
hero of the Decemberist movement, \textit{libertas} was a particularly important ancient
topos, which can be found scattered throughout his works from his very earliest schoolboy poems through to the end of his career (Wes 1992:chap. 4). His fascination with the ancient concept of ‘freedom’ would repeatedly get him into trouble with authorities, including exile.86

Another theme of Pushkin’s, less explicitly dependent on classical models but no less important to understanding the epistemology of antichnaia arkheologiia, was the concept of ‘the periphery’ (Hokanson 2008; Layton 1994). Pushkin’s interest in Russia’s frontiers is most clear in a series of four works written around the time of his exile to Bessarbia on the Black Sea, his so-called ‘Southern Poems’ that explore the edges of Russian space. The most famous of these, the Prisoner of the Caucasus (Kavkazkii plennik), will be discussed shortly in the context of the developing notion of a Russian Orient in the Caucasus. Two other pieces, however, Gypsies (Tsygany) and To Ovid (K Ovidiiu)— deserve mention at this point for the relationship that Pushkin builds between himself and his Roman interlocutor Ovid, who had served an exile at the Black Sea port of Tomis nearly two thousand years earlier.

In To Ovid, Pushkin begins by addressing Ovid and his legacy:

Овидий, я живу близ тихих берегов,
Которым изгнанных отеческих богов
Ты некогда принес и пепел свой оставил.
Твой безотрадный плач места сии прославил;
И лиры нежный глас еще не онемел;

Ovid, I live near the quiet shores
To which you once brought your banished native gods
And where you left behind your ashes.
Your joyless lament made these lands famous,
Your tender-voiced lyre has not gone mute. (lines 1-5, trans. Sandler 1989:42)

86 The topic of Pushkin and his exilic poetry has been covered particularly in Sandler (1989).
But Pushkin layers his perception of the zone over Ovid’s, playing with the inversion of their relationships to the Pontic—south from Pushkin’s home, but north from Ovid’s. While Ovid laments the snowy wilderness with its brief warmth (l. 8-10), for Pushkin “… the gloomy northern snows were quite normal” (l. 63) and the winter storms brief (l. 65). Pushkin is not without sympathy for Ovid, but neither does he entirely identify with him:

Чье сердце хладное, презревшее харит,
Твое уныние и слезы укорит?
Кто в грубой гордости прочтет без умиления
Сии элегии, последние творенья,
Где ты свой тщетный стон потомству передал?

Суровый славянин, я слез не проливал,
Но понимаю их; изгнанник самовольный,
И светом, и собой, и жизнью недовольный,
С душой задумчивой, я ныне посетил
Страну, где грустный век ты некогда влечил.

Whose cold heart, scorning your graceful words,
Would reproach your melancholy or your tears?
Who, coarsened by pride, could read these elegies,
Where you conveyed to your descendants your vain complaint,
Who could read these last words and not feel emotion?

As a severe Slav, I have not shed any tears,
But I understand them. A self-willed exile,
Unsatisfied with the world, life, and myself,
I, with a meditative spirit, have now visited
This land, where you once lived out a sad eternity. (l. 49-58, trans. Sandler)

Pushkin, however, was not a self-willed exile—just like Ovid, he had been torn from his urban context and forced into the liminal space of the Pontic. Sandler, in her study of Pushkin’s works from and about exile, suggests that Pushkin uses the idea of Ovid’s exile to deflect from his own situation—allowing Ovid’s pathos to speak for his own (1989:45ff).
The challenges that faced Pushkin as he tried to layer his experiences over Ovid’s demonstrates the fundamental difficulty facing a Russian intellectual confronting antiquity. How could these “severe Slav[s]” articulate their place with respect to both a classical model and a modern context? As Hokanson has said, “Pushkin had to deal with two opposing problems: how to prove that he, a barbarian northerner, could also be a masterful poet, and at the same time to cast Petersburg and its autocrat in the roles of Rome and Augustus in a convincing way” (Hokanson 2005:62). These issues were explored not from the metropolitan center of the Russian world, but rather came into high relief along the empire’s frontiers. The frontiers, then, provided a space for negotiating the complexities of Russian identity.

Another facet of this negotiation can be seen in the last of Pushkin’s exile poems, Gypsies, which pushes against the imagined reality of the ‘noble savage’ living at the edges of Russian control. Here, Pushkin’s hero Aleko travels to the seemingly primordial and timeless nomadic world at the fringes of civilization—painting what is at first a Rousseauian picture of the wandering gypsies and their free ways. After confronting the betrayal of his beloved Zemfira, however, the story takes a sharply anti-Rousseauian turn as Aleko realizes that human happiness is absent even among the unconstrained gypsies—that the frontier of civilization does not provide an escape from the problems of humanity.

Both of these works explore the poetic potential of the Russian frontiers. The new lands held mystery, promise, and disappointment. The liminal spaces quickly became central to literary imaginations and to the development of a Russian sense of
self; frontier consciousness, and frontier anxiety, were central preoccupations of the early nineteenth century. This phenomenon is not surprising, given the dramatic territorial expansion of the Russian Empire in this period and the newly created borderland zones from the north Pontic to Central Asia.

**Slavophiles, Westernizers and the Frontier in Polemical Histories**

The second socio-cultural development that is critical for understanding how constructs of Russian identity shaped antichnaia arkheologiiia from this point forward is the Slavophile-Westerner (Zapadnik) polemic.\(^7\) Bubbling to the surface during the rule of Nicholas I (1825-55), the Slavophile and Westernizer intellectual movements developed out of opposing strains of thought that date back at least to the time of Peter the Great. These opposing movements pitted elites with a western-gaze against those who valorized the pre-Petrine past and its putatively pure Slavic orientation. At stake was the relationship between the pasts and the futures of both Russia and ‘the West’—which many contemporary Russian intellectuals saw as two discrete cultural spaces (Offord 2007:233). Both the Slavophile and Westernizer movements were based on passionate nationalism—the fundamental divergence between them lay in their diagnoses of the problems facing Russia and their prescriptions for moving forward. The combination of perspectives demonstrates how complex Russian nationalism was, which in turn has consequences for the practice of archaeology.

---

\(^7\) Much has been written about the beginning of the Slavophile-Westerner discourse, and its long and influential afterlife in Russian and then Soviet society, which continues to resonate even today in the post-Soviet period in the ongoing Ukrainian crisis. For a starting point into this, see Rabow-Edling (2012).
The Slavophile and Westernizer stances were each heterodox, and no formal associations ever developed for one camp or the other. Nevertheless, it is possible to sketch the broad positions of each group. The Slavophiles, inspired by Russia’s rich Orthodox heritage and strongly holding to a narrative of Slavic descent, believed that it was harmful to the Russian nation to follow western models for development. Instead, they argued that older collectivist Slavic models should guide the next stage of Russian development, not imported individualistic western paradigms.88

Westernizers, on the other hand, believed that Russia’s future lay in following the European model. For them, Russia was and had always been European. They blamed Russia’s cultural stagnation (that is, its failure to develop as Europe had) on the difficult medieval history of Russia, and most especially the Mongol invasions. The path to a stronger Russia lay in a “sober recognition of its glaring national deficiencies in comparison to modern Europe” and in the realization that only a wholesale adoption of European intellectual and practical frameworks could bring Russia back to her rightful position (Bassin 1993:489).89

The Westernizer-Slavophile dichotomy is at the heart of nineteenth-century historiographic trends, which sought to systematize Russian history, and articulate the place of the Russian Empire with respect to its neighbors in Europe and the Steppe alike. This historical paradigm had critical ramifications on perceptions of territorial

88 Proponents of this position saw St. Petersburg as a central example of the dangers of the Russian fetishization of the West and its brutal logic, and wanted to move the capital back to Moscow. Indeed, the informal center of the movement was at Moscow University.
89 The power base of the Westernizer movement was then, as it had been even before the polemic began, in Peter and Catherine’s great window into Europe, St. Petersburg.
space, and on the nature of the Russian frontier zone, which I argue have shaped later archaeological scholarship.

Mark Bassin (1993) has demonstrated that the concept of ‘frontier’ functioned differently in nineteenth-century Russian history than it did in America and Europe. His analysis was based on a comparative study of the concept in the works of the influential historian of the period, Sergei Mikhailovich Solov’ev, and the creator of the American frontier hypothesis, Frederick Jackson Turner. For Turner, the wide-open spaces of America’s frontier were the engine behind the growth of the young country. Frontiers, then, were vibrant places of possibility. For Solov’ev, however, the spaces were more sinister—Russia’s vast steppe frontiers were blamed for sapping the energy from the emergent state and diluting its power. Solov’ev was trying to articulate a middle-way between Slavophile and Westernizer positions, to explain why “Russia was and why it wasn’t European” (Bassin 1993:490). In this task, he turned to the vast frontiers of the Russian sphere to explain why the Slavs had failed to develop as prosperously as their European neighbors, arguing that the flat, undifferentiated sweep of the Steppe was to blame. This formulation proved influential for later-nineteenth and twentieth-century Russian historical understandings, as historians embraced the duality of Russia’s frontiers as productive sites of imperial expansion, but also as dangerous and ambiguous zones that confounded the hopes and expectations of emergent Russia.  

---

90 This ambivalence about the concept of ‘frontier’ connects to a second issue within Russian historiography and identity claims: Muscovite, Imperial and Soviet historians have seen the inhabitants of the Russian frontier—the mobile pastoralists of the Steppe in a profoundly negative way (Gammer 2005:486).
The Integration of the Caucasus into Imperial Space

At the same time as these debates were percolating at high levels of Russian intellectual thought, the actual battles for control of the Caucasus were finally beginning to turn in Russia’s favor. Here, I consider the place of the Caucasus within the socio-political framework outlined above, as it grew into an iconic imperial frontier space.

Russian attempts to gain control in the Caucasus date back to Peter the Great’s Persian campaign in 1722-23, which took the imperial army south with the hope of opening a corridor towards the Safavid and Ottoman worlds.\(^91\) This provided the first recorded opportunity for Russian and European antiquarian interest in the ancient history of the Caucasus, but proved largely ineffective strategically.\(^92\) Despite Russian interest, most of the kingdoms and khanates of the Caucasus stayed just beyond the grasp of the Russian Empire throughout the eighteenth century, when they were under the control of first the Safavid dynasty, and then the Qajars. In the early-nineteenth century, Russia began to control more and more of the network of autonomous principalities ruling in both the South and North Caucasus, following military victories in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century Russian Persian wars. By 1828, the territories corresponding to modern Georgia, Azerbaijan and Armenia had all been

\(^{91}\) For an overview of the history of the Russian relations in the region see Atkin (1980). For Peter the Great’s campaign specifically, see Benningsen (1974).

\(^{92}\) This tradition is on display in an article of T.S. Bayer in *Comentarii Academiae Scientiarum Imperialis Petropolitanae* (the journal of the St. Petersburg Academy of Science) “De Muro Caucaseo,” where Bayer refers to information provided to him by Dimitri Kantemir, a Moldovan prince and prolific humanist. Kantemir, the father of the Antioch Kantemir whose involvement with classicism in eighteenth-century Russia has already been mentioned, accompanied Peter the Great on his Caucasian campaign, where he saw fragments of ancient architecture (Bayer 1728a:425).
incorporated into the Russian Empire, with the Araxes River comprising the southern border.\textsuperscript{93} Intense fighting along the northern borders of these territories, however, continued for several more decades.\textsuperscript{94} It was not until 1864 that the Caucasian War finally ended, giving Russia uncontested dominion over the entire zone.

The long period of unrest and instability delayed the beginning of archaeology in the region and limited the presence of Russian and foreign intellectuals who fueled antiquarian study elsewhere in the Russian Empire (Khatchadourian 2008a:250). Furthermore, unlike the northern Black Sea, where a plausible case could be made for Russian land claims on the basis of Slavic roots and religious heritages, the situation in the Caucasus resisted such simple analogies. Archaeological sites, therefore, although present, attracted less attention than did those of the Black Sea region.

**Travelers and Poets**

The Caucasus appeared in Russian literature since the time of the Rus’, with interactions attested throughout the medieval period. One particularly famous example comes from the account of Afanasii Nikitin, a fifteenth-century merchant from Tver who detailed his travels through eastern Caucasia (A. Nikitin 1986).\textsuperscript{95} But the

\textsuperscript{93} During a dynastic power struggle that followed many years of unrest and Persian aggression (which included the destruction of Tbilisi in 1795), one of the aspirants to the Georgian throne called for Russia’s involvement in the conflict. This paved the way for Russia to formally annex the territory that comprised western and central modern Georgia. For Georgia at this juncture, see Gvosdev (2000); Suny (1994). Much of Azerbaijan and eastern Georgia were the next territorial units to be incorporated into the Russian Empire under the Treaty of Gulistan between Russia and Persia in 1813. See Swietochowski (1995). The Khanate of Yerevan was the last large area to be incorporated into the Russian Empire in 1828, by the Treaty of Turkmenchay. See Bournoutian (1982) for the final years of Yerevan’s independence.

\textsuperscript{94} For a detailed collection of mostly British maps covering this time period, see Burdett (1996).

\textsuperscript{95} For a brief account of these early travelers, see Əlibayova (2009:12–13).
changing circumstances in the nineteenth century created new opportunities for both Russian and other European travelers to visit the region. A number of the Russian accounts were written by Imperial authorities, who came to the space in the course of their consolidation of Russian territorial control (Əlibəyova 2009:13–20).96

Of the non-Russian travelers from this period, the most prominent were Frédéric Dubois de Montpéreux (a Swiss geographer),97 James Morier (a British diplomat)98 and Robert Ker Porter (a Scottish painter in service of the Russian emperor Alexander I).99 These three authors were attentive to archaeological sites, making them valuable sources. But there was in fact a lively tradition of more general travel literature about the Caucasus, dating back to the seventeenth century, that frequently references ancient history and ruins, although in general terms (Maranci 2000).

These writings were part of a wider phenomenon of Western European travel literature about trips to the east—the broader ‘Orient’ (Campbell 2002; Harrigan 2008; Levell 2000). The role of this body of literature in both the construction of the ‘Orient’ and its development as topos for European culture is clear. As Said has argued, “From travelers’ tales, and not only from great institutions like the various India companies, colonies were created and ethnocentric perspectives secured” (1979:117). Within Russia, a similar body of travel literature developed in the eighteenth century

---

96 The relevance of these accounts for the construction of Albania’s history is discussed at greater length in chapter 6, p.278.
97 Duboise de Montpéreux (1839). See also Khatchadourian (2008b:122–28) for all three of these travellers in their South Caucasian context.
98 Morier (1818). James Morier, the son of a naturalized British citizen who had lived in Smyrna for many years, was raised in Turkey, educated in England, and eventually worked as an emissary for the British government to Persia. See Laisram (2014:chap. 2) for a biographical sketch and overview.
99 Porter (1821). See also Barnett (1972).
(Dickinson 2006), with a subset of works focused on Russia-Persia interactions (Andreeva 2007). However, the straightforward east-west binary that defined orientalist perspectives in Western European travel literature was more complicated in Russia. As Knight has said,

Most obviously the stark dichotomy between Orient and Occident around which Said's analysis hinges transforms in the Russian context into an awkward triptych: the west, Russia, the east. Russia, after all, was not only the subject of orientalist discourse, but also its object… When Russian scholars turned to the east it was often with a sharp awareness of their own supposed backwardness and inferiority in the face of the grand civilization of Britain, France, and Germany (Knight 2000:77).

Russian travel literature about the Caucasus and Iran, even in the early nineteenth century, was not marked by the dramatic romanticism of Western European accounts (Andreeva 2007:29).

There is other evidence that the east-west binary so foundational in European orientalism was structured differently in the Russian context. A clear example comes from an early nineteenth-century essay by S. S. Uvarov, a government attaché in Vienna who would become the Imperial Education Minister. Uvarov wrote this essay to support the creation of a Russian academy for the study of the Orient. In it, he positions Russia as a critical mediator between the earliest societies in the Near East, Asia, and the European sphere, suggesting that Russia’s unique geography as well as political ties to Asia gave it a natural predisposition to play this role (Hokanson 1994:338). Says Uvarov:

La Russie, adossée à l’Asie, et maîtresse de toute la partie septentrionale de ce continent, partage avec les autres puissances l’intérêt moral qui les guide dans leurs noble entreprises ; mais elle possède de plus un intérêt politique si clair, si positif, qu’un coup d’œil jeté sur la carte suffit pour s’en convaincre. La Russie repose, pour ainsi dire, sur l’Asie. Une frontière sèche d’une immense étendue la
For Uvarov, the “relations si intimes” between Russia, Turkey, China, Persia and Georgia were a great strength for the Empire. Uvarov turned the peripheral position of Russia vis-à-vis Europe into a mediatory advantage—a functionalist formulation of the Russian Orient.

At the same time, not all formulations of Russian orientalism were nuanced in this way. A more traditional artistic vision of the Caucasian Orient appears throughout nineteenth literature. The single greatest force in this process was Pushkin’s poem of 1822, *Prisoner of the Caucasus (Kavkazkii plennik)*, which drew on Byronic romanticism. From Lermontov, we can add *Ismail Bey*, as well as his *Prisoner of the Caucasus*. From Bestuzhev-Marlinskii, we have *Amalat-Bek* and finally as an outlier in the early twentieth century, Tolstoy’s *Hadji Murat*. As Layton has argued, the Caucasus of this literary imagination became “a clarifier of the semi-Europeanized Russian self during the romantic era” (Layton 1994:288).

The vision of the exotic “noble savage” of the Caucasus endured in the Russian imagination of the space, with the related paradigm of violence and conflict pitted against staunch nobility in the unknown mountain wilderness (Hokanson 1994). Emotional narrative drama was tied to the physical topography of the rugged and unforgiving mountains (Layton 1986), echoing Russian anxiety about the difficult-to-control territory. The treatment of the Caucasus was not uniform—Georgia became feminized, while the Muslim tribes represented mountainous masculinity (Layton 1994:192).
In the “clarification of self” of these authors, then, the Caucasus served a number of roles. It was at once the Oriental other, but also a place worthy of a type of respect--the seat of free strong men who maintained their independence. Recalling Pushkin’s own anti-authoritarian tendencies and the topos of *libertas* in his wider body of literature, one can see how the Caucasus became an ambiguous space for him, wherein his poetry both underwrote Russian civilizing missions, and also militated against them (Hokanson 2008; Layton 1994). It was this enduring ambiguity of the Caucasus as much as any specific trope that became embedded in the Russian discourse about the Caucasus.  

Several strands from this conversation filtered into archaeological perceptions of the zone in the following decades. It is hard to imagine that the surface level of Russian chauvinism about the Caucasian peoples failed to influence the early generations of Russian archaeologists working in the area, particularly given the ongoing violence in the North Caucasus, which pitched Russian imperial authorities against the irrepressible (and predominantly Muslim) North Caucasus populations. The subtler — but more generalized—ambivalence about the space is, of course, a more difficult thing to track archaeologically. However, as we will see momentarily, the trajectory of archaeological research in the Caucasus was radically different than that

---

100 Under the Soviet Union, this ambiguity allowed for a wide variety of perspectives to be developed about the conquest of the Caucasus, and even Pushkin’s role in Tsarist activities (Layton 1994:6). The conquest was difficult for Soviet historians, who at once condemned the rampant imperialism of Tsarist Russia, while also needed to support ongoing Soviet control in the region. The prevailing school of thought by mid-century posited Tsarist Russia as the ‘lesser evil’ in contrast to either Iran or Britain (Shteppa 1962; Tillett 1969), though debates raged throughout the twentieth century about how to frame the anti-Tsarist fighters in the Caucasus (Gammer 1992). Under this general formulation, in any case, Pushkin became a model of humanitarian progressiveness (Gadzhiev 1982). See the introduction of Layton (1994) for commentary about this perspective.
in neighboring regions like the North Black Sea. While many of these differences might be attributable to institutional and historical frameworks, I suggest that the particularly confusing place that the Caucasus occupied in the Russian imagination contributed as well.

**Archaeologists and Infrastructure in the Nineteenth Century**

Having established the socio-political context of the nineteenth century in southern Russia, I now explore the formalization of archaeology over the course of the nineteenth century from an institutional perspective, starting broadly with the individuals and structures that advanced archaeological research, and then moving to the Caucasus.

**Early Infrastructure**

Russian archaeology “was formed and grew just as the archaeology of the borderlands, the archaeology of the frontier” (A. S. Smirnov 2011:XX). Nowhere was this truer than in the North Black Sea, which had only recently come under Russian control. As the nineteenth century began in so-called Novorossia (New Russia), the often small and informal excavations of earlier years gave way to organized archaeological expeditions, increasingly headed by military or government officials, expeditions that although larger and more frequent were still “of a merely antiquarian character” (Tunkina 2003:312). Alongside the government officials, powerful groups of amateur archaeologists continued to work in the region, driving research agendas and archaeological practice. The tensions between these groups, and the gradual
development of formal archaeological work in the territory, provide a model for the trajectory of the discipline more generally.

Alongside the excavations, there was also a thriving industry of straightforward grave robbery, despite efforts chiefly by the Academy of Sciences academician Heinrich Karl Ernst Köhler to put an end to the illicit activity. Köhler, who himself ran excavations in 1804 (Majak Peninsula) and 1821 (Olbia), advocated for the passage of a series of measures aimed at safeguarding antiquities as early as 1805 (Tunkina 2003:320). There were some early successes, but the turning point in government interest in protecting antiquities—or at least, in maintaining sole rights in extracting the valuable commodities of its new frontiers—didn’t come until 1830, when the dramatic and rich Kul’-Oba barrow was discovered in Kerch (Piotrovsky 1973:27; Tunkina 2003:321). Research around Kerch was at this point under the control of the Tsar’s administration (Shnirelman 1996:222), and the excavation was put into the hands of a pair of local officials, Dem’ian Vasil’evich Kareisha and Anton Bal’tazarovich Ashik, whose primary responsibilities were to secure “golden objects and other works of superb ancient craftsmanship” for the authorities in St. Petersburg (Tunkina 2003:323).

The methodological line in this early period (in Russia as in Europe) between grave robbing and archaeological excavation was not, of course terribly sharp. Many sanctioned excavations were focused on the collection of artifacts and had little concern for either archaeological context or documentation. Nevertheless, the aggressive efforts of Köhler demonstrate that contemporary actors understood there to be a stark difference between the ‘proper’ archaeology and artifact hunting of the sort that soldiers had been carrying out in the late eighteenth century.

Both of these officials had unfortunate and scandal-mired ends to their careers, being accused of stealing antiquities for personal gain. They were vilified by post-Revolution historiographers, who saw them as symbols of the corrupt Tsarist system. Tunkina, however, maintains that the criticisms of their archaeological practice have been unduly harsh (Tunkina 2003:324).
Despite this interest in protecting antiquities, the initiatives of the metropolitan experts of the Academy of Sciences—of then-director Köhler his colleagues and successors P.M. Leont’ev, Christian Fredreich Gräfe, and Ludolf Stephani—were focused less on archaeological method or theory, and more on historical and art historical analysis, to the detriment of the development of scientific excavations (Tunkina 2003:341). For them, and the group of experts assembled at the newly opened Hermitage museum, Greek and Roman artifacts were signifiers of advanced civilization and high culture and were therefore central to the historical narratives of the past. The presence of rich deposits of classical material along the Black Sea coast provided a measure against which other local ancient artistic styles could be compared, and inevitably found lacking (Tunkina 2003:329). The Scythians were the chief subject of these unfavorable comparisons.

The art historicism of this tradition sprung from dominant trends in German scholarship, particularly the perceptions of antiquity of Winckelmann and his art historical school (Petrakova 2010:25). The movement of ideas from Germany to Russia was facilitated by fertile exchange between universities in the two countries, with both the St. Petersburg Academy and Moscow University’s faculty still largely composed of either German or German-trained scholars (Tunkina 2003:328). An internal political backlash against these foreign scholars, and the foreign (i.e. classical)

---

103 On the ties between Germany and Russia apparent in this period, see Frolov (2016).
subject of their study developed as early as the 1830’s. It was still percolating in the early nineteenth century, and would not come to fruition until mid-century.\footnote{The Scythians would come to play a role in this conflict, since they had been established in the second half of the eighteenth-century as the pre-Slavic inhabitants of the Eurasian steppe, and therefore the distant ancestors of modern Russia (Mordvintseva 2013b; Tatishchev 1962).}

But in the early years of the nineteenth century, far from Petersburg and Moscow and before the politicization of Pontic archaeology, most fieldwork in the Pontic sphere was conducted not by either the military or scholars, but by groups of interested antiquarian amateurs. The word ‘amateur’ is used without insult here; the early amateur societies in the Black Sea were organized and powerful. The largest of these centers, at Odessa and Kerch, were critical centers for field research. They held rights to excavate in particular zones, financed their own excavations, and published in their own journals, though as with the metropolitan academicians, the quality of these publications was variable.\footnote{The early private journals, however, often had narrow distributions, meaning that much of their work was not widely familiar outside of the Pontic zone.} Local museums were founded in the early nineteenth century, which housed many of the finds from excavations, although particularly spectacular pieces were still sent to St. Petersburg (Tsetskhladze 2001:X) Like the metropolitan experts, the amateur archaeologists were often foreigners, or at least foreign-educated, and focused on classical antiquity. There was, then, no clear presence of a local voice in this period of archaeology.

The output of a pair of colleagues, Paul Dubrux, a French emigrant and Ia. Stempkovskii, the governor of Yenikale on the Kerch straight, who had lived for some years in France where he studied ancient languages (Frolov 2006:129), exemplifies the
best of the work of amateur researchers.\footnote{Dubrux’ first contribution was the development of a responsible method for excavating kurgan burials, as Frolov says, “with the objectives of a scientist” (2006:128). This method, however, was not widely followed by others working in the area, and did not make a significant impact on broader patterns of field practice.} Their central contribution was survey work conducted in the 1830’s in Crimea. They generated extensive, detailed maps of surface remains from ancient cities in Crimea. These cities, fairly intact at the time of the 1830’s survey, have since been used as stone quarries for modern construction, leaving the plans of Dubrux and Stempkovskii as the best record of the ancient traces (Tunkina 2003:323).\footnote{However, rivalries between the metropolitan specialists and the provincial amateurs were intense, with each side accusing the other of inadequate concern for antiquities and scholarship. Rather than creating a climate of productive competitiveness, the rhetoric on the part of the specialists was harsh and damaging, and by the mid-nineteenth century, the amateurs no longer published independently. Their contributions have been largely overlooked by subsequent generations of scholars.}

Amongst both the metropolitan specialists and the provincial amateurs, archaeology already in this early period was fundamentally entwined with nationalism and the ambitions of imperial growth.\footnote{This element of archaeological history is rarely explicit in twentieth century Soviet archaeological histories, and Simnov’s 2011 publication is one of the first to look at the question of the entanglement between the imperial bureaucracy and archaeology broadly in the nineteenth century.} The clearest examples of this come from the work of military officials in the Black Sea sphere, who explicitly looked to the region’s Christian past as a way of solidifying their new land claims. Thus, the vice admiral of the Black Sea Fleet, A.S. Greig, developed an archaeological project intended to memorialize the purported place of baptism of Prince Vladimir, the tenth-century prince who brought Christianity to the region. Under his initiative, excavations began around Chersonesus in 1827, leading to the discovery of a fifth-sixth century...

Although it would take several more decades for the explicit use of nationalism to become central in Russian archaeological thought, this generation of work marked a turning point. Excavations of the early nineteenth century laid the groundwork for the many later developments and preoccupations within Russian archaeology. This period suggests that, from the very beginning of the formalization of archaeology in Russia, issues of identity were both central and enmeshed in institutional approaches to the past.

In a mark of just how far-reaching and successful this project has been, consider, for instance, the afterlife of one of the best-known excavations of the period, at Chersonesus on the Black Sea coast, which sought to establish a Christian heritage for the Crimea. When Russian Federation President Vladimir Putin spoke to the Duma on the 18th of March, 2014 in his speech discussing the Russian annexation of the peninsula, he drew on the story of Prince Vladimir’s baptism, saying:

В Крыму буквально всё пронизано нашей общей историей и гордостью. Здесь древний Херсонес, где принял крещение святой князь Владимир. Его духовный подвиг — обращение к православию – предопределил общую культурную, ценностную, цивилизационную основу, которая объединяет народы России, Украины и Белоруссии. (Putin 2014)

Literally everything in Crimea speaks of our shared history and pride. This is the location of ancient Chersonesus, where Prince Vladimir was baptized. His spiritual feat—adopting Orthodoxy—predetermined the overall basis of the culture, civilization and human values that unite the peoples of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus.

Archaeological and historical scholarship in the nineteenth century played a key role in the construction and maintenance of these narratives. Although this example
concerns Christian history, in fact the underpinnings of the identity claims rest on a
deeper foundation—one that connects the ancient Greek past to the development of
Slavic identity, and only eventually to Orthodox Christianity (A. S. Smirnov

**Archaeological Practice and Theory**

As the nineteenth century proceeded, Russian archaeology became increasingly
interested in such questions, and the sphere of inquiry expanded from the Pontic
shores outward. The founding of the Imperial Archaeological Commission in 1859
was both a product of this process, and a key factor in its eventual success. The
Commission was the first central organizing body for all archaeological investigations
in the Russian Empire, responsible for all permits and overseeing all archaeological
work. The infrastructure allowed for the exponential growth of the number of
excavations, particularly in the Pontic sphere (Tsetskhladze 2001).

These developments were followed by the founding of the Moscow
Archaeological Society in 1864 by Count Alexei Sergeevich Uvarov (the son of S. S.
Uvarov) and Ivan Zabelin. Uvarov had been active in archaeological activities in the
north Black Sea, publishing some of the earliest summaries of work there (A. S.
Uvarov 1851–1856). This association began to sponsor All-Russian Archaeological
Congresses, which created a unified, empire-wide system for disseminating new
archaeological finds. Fifteen Congresses were held across the empire from 1869 until
1911, with each congress coinciding with large-scale local excavations organized by
the local organizing committee for the congress, and with the findings reported at the meetings (Tsetskhadze 2001:XII–III).

While the study of classical monuments continued to be of importance in the second half of the nineteenth century, particularly in the northern Black Sea, growing nationalist sentiment and the concomitant interest in Slavic prehistory—in the origins of the Slavs—became a preoccupation within the field (Shnirelman 1996:223). By the 1850’s, the interest in Slavic archaeology had expanded from the borderland zones of the Russian Empire and had acquired a central place within Imperial archaeological priorities. A.I. Voitekhovich, who was the Ober-procurator of the Holy Synod, took control of the Russian Archaeological Society in 1850. He advocated greater imperial interest in Slavic archaeology. The 1850’s and ‘60’s saw a wave of research on ecclesiastical structures around the Russian Empire, although later generations of researchers took a dim view of the quality of this work, judging that the “restoration of architectural works conducted in a method approaching falsification” (Formozov 1986:147).

The interest in Slavic archaeology grew alongside an increasingly popular theory that connected the Scythians to the (much) later Slavs. This process had started already in the eighteenth century through Vasilii Nikitich Tatishchev’s encyclopedic

---

110 The roots of this, too, come from the 1820’s, when the first Imperial archaeological surveys had gone in search of the Eastern Slavs, conducted by Khodakovskii in Novgorod. For more on Khodakovskii and the archaeological construction of Slavic identity in this period, see Formozov 1974; Saunders 1982.
111 This position, established by Peter the Great, designated a lay-leader of within the Russian Orthodox Church who was part of the Tsar’s cabinet. The position is typically understood to have been part of the mechanism of Imperial control over the Russian Orthodox church.
112 Beyond Formozov’s overview, a good catalog of archaeological activities of the Russian Orthodox church can be found in Kosykh (2009) as well as Smirnov (2011).
Istoriia Rossiskaia (History of Russia), which placed the Scythians, Sarmatians and Slavs on a continuum of steppe inhabitants (Mordvintseva 2013b:205). The increasing body of archaeological research on Scythian sites laid the groundwork for this connection. Excavations of Scythian kurgans, for example, were a central focus of late nineteenth-century archaeology, with significant work conducted in the lower Dnepr basin and the Taman’ Peninsula, where Ivan Zabelin excavated the so-called Scythian royal tombs between 1859 and 1874. By the late nineteenth century, scholars began to recognize that the material from kurgans excavated in this zone were not exclusively Scythian, but rather represented also Sarmatian cultures. Excavations from the Don to the Urals reinforced ideas seen already in Tatishchev’s historical account of steppe nomads that connected the Scytho-Sarmatians of the north Pontic to the territory east of the Don, and indeed into Asia.

Michael Ivanovich Rostovtzeff was the central early researcher on the Scytho-Sarmatian cultural groups, although he broke with many of the beliefs of his nineteenth-century predecessors. Best known in the West for his works on Roman social and economic history, his scholarship in the 1910’s was preoccupied with the Scythian question.113 Rostovtzeff posited an Iranian basis for Scythian style, and argued that long-distance migrations from the east had brought this material into the Black Sea region. The idea of long-distance human migrations as a central vector for

---

113 Despite Rostovtzeff’s importance in twentieth century ancient history, biographic sketches of his life are relatively few in number, and the works that do exist tend to overlook his work on Scythians (Wes 1988). This began to change in the post-Soviet era, when a wider variety of his personal papers, which had been in St. Petersburg archives, were published—see Rostovtseff (1993); Tunkina (2008); Bongard-Levin (1997); Krikh (2009). For more detailed considerations of his role in Scytho-Sarmatian historiography, see Meyer (2009, 2013); Mordvintseva (2013b).
cultural transmission, and the perception that the steppes of Southern Russia were a territory that easily accommodated this type of human movement, can be traced to Imperial Russian perceptions of medieval history, and particularly to the interaction between Muscovy and the Turko-Mongolian “Golden Hoard” (Frachetti 2011:199).

Finally, the late-nineteenth century saw an increasing interest in the theoretical frameworks connecting the ever-growing body of archaeological data to human actions in the past. Three archaeologists define the theoretical developments of the Russian Imperial archaeology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, Alexander Alekandro维奇 Spitsyn, Alexander Sergeyevich Lappo-Danilevsky and Vasiliy Alekseyevich Gorodtsov.

All three worked under the broad influence of cultural-historical models, drawing ideas also from evolutionary approaches (Platonova 2010:99ff, 198ff). Spitsyn worked on the Early Iron Age, and was interested in Slavic prehistory, which he saw in the Iron Age material (Shnirelman 1996:224). Lappo-Danilevsky was, meanwhile, concerned specifically with archaeological theory (developing a type of middle ground theory of his own)\textsuperscript{114} and was a rigorous critic of unscientific archaeology and publication. Gorodtsov, finally, turned to typological methods as ways of universalizing information about historical processes. Later Soviet archaeologists criticized all three of these scholars for being simply empiricists, or formalists, but in fact their theoretical work provided the basis for the development of archaeology within the Soviet Union (Platonova 2010:259–62).

\textsuperscript{114} On Lappo-Danilevsky, see Tikhonov (2003:41ff); Platonova (2010:112ff).
Of Orientalism and Archaeology in the Caucasus

Before turning to the twentieth century, we need to step back and look at archaeological practice in the Caucasus in the nineteenth century. Of all of Russia’s frontier zones, none was more restless or complex than the Caucasus. None had the same bewildering array of languages or religions, of contradicting identities and paradoxical pluralisms (Grant 2007). Unsurprisingly, the contested histories that grew out of both local and imperial narratives about the South Caucasus shaped the development of archaeologies in the Caucasus, where archaeology and political ideology have been inextricably and intractably interwoven from the beginning (Shnirelman 2012; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Kohl, Kozelsky, and Ben-Yehuda 2008).

In this section, I trace the trajectory of nineteenth century archaeology in the Caucasus, and in Azerbaijan in particular.

Early Archaeology in the South Caucasus

By the mid-nineteenth century, the situation in the Caucasus had stabilized enough to allow for the growth of archaeological investigations. The administrative center and unparalleled intellectual capital of the South Caucasus was at this time (as it

---

115 The discussion about contested archaeologies in the South Caucasus typically focus on Soviet and post-Soviet spaces (Chernykh 1995; Shnirelman 1995, 2001, 2012). Nevertheless, as the analysis of Gadjiev, Kohl and Magomedov (2007) point out, this tendency can be seen even in very early twentieth century debates between Caucasian scholars, suggesting that we must begin this investigation at least in the nineteenth century. Gadjiev et al (2007:120) point particularly to a Georgian-Armenian polemic debate that played out between Ilia Chavchavadze (1902) and Khristofor Abbakumovich Vermishiev (1904). Although the archaeological data being discussed at this early stage is fairly minimal, the long and deep tradition of mustering archaeological material in the advancement of ethnic aims by scholars in and of the South Caucasus bears note.

116 For the development of Russian control in the Caucasus, see Jersild (2002); Rhinelander (1975).
would be in the Soviet period) the Georgian capital, Tbilisi. It was here that the first imperial museum in the Caucasus opened in 1867, the Caucasian Museum, which would later become the Simon Janashia Museum of Georgia (Jersild 2002:66). Tbilisi was the regional center of the Society of Friends of Caucasian Archaeology (1873), as well as the branch of the Moscow Archaeological Society that opened in 1901 (Khatchadourian 2008a:254). It was also the site of the Fifth All-Russian Archaeological Congress, held in 1881 (Khatchadourian 2008a:255).

The pioneer excavator of classical sites in the South Caucasus was Count A.S. Uvarov, already mentioned as the founder of the Moscow Archaeological Society. His reasons for moving into the South Caucasus are not clear, but Khatchadourian has speculated that he was in the region in search of “second zone of antiquities—this one of the classical East—in ‘Russia’s own Orient’” (2008a:257). The first scientific work on a classical period site took place in advance of the 1881 All-Russian congress, when a ‘survey’ was directed by A.S. Uvarov in preparation for the meeting. This led to Uvarov’s excavation of the site of Armavir in Armenia, an Urartian and classical site, although Uvarov misinterpreted the site as a late antique settlement (Khatchadourian 2008a:256). Uvarov’s other significant contribution in preparation for the congress was the proposal to move and reassemble the Roman temple from Garni, Armenia in Tbilisi (Khatchadourian 2008a:256).118

117 The museum was developed as an outgrowth from the Caucasian department of the Russian Imperial Geographic Society, which had been founded in 1852. It was developed into a full museum under the direction of the German explorer and naturalist Gustav Radde. See the introduction to Melkadze and Jersild (2002); Radde (1899); as well as Tushmalishvili, Burkaze and Nakashize (1966).

118 Although this project was never accomplished, see Khatchadourian for more detail (2008a)
The work on *antichnaia arkheologiia* in the Caucasus in this period, however, turned out to be fairly limited—as was archaeology in the South Caucasus in general.\(^{119}\) Some of the earliest excavations in the period targeted the region’s prehistoric past, with Alexander Yeritsov conducting work in the Iron Age cemetery of Vornak in northern Armenia 1871, followed by work of an Austrian, Fredrich Bayern at Samtavro cemetery in Georgia, and a Frenchman, Jacques de Morgan, at the Debend Pass on the Caspian coast.\(^{120}\)

By the 1890’s, archaeological excavations were being carried out across the region, including Azerbaijan, where the German schoolteacher Emil Rösler excavated Bronze Age cemeteries in Nagorno-Karabakh, while the Imperial Archaeological Commission sent Aleksei Arsen’evich Ivanovskii to western Azerbaijan, where he carried out major excavations on Iron Age necropoleis, and N. Fyodorov to Naxçivan.\(^{121}\)

Unlike in the northern Black Sea, where archaeological investigations in the early nineteenth century were predicated on connecting the local material to a greater “Russian” tradition, the work in the Caucasus in the late nineteenth century demonstrates a different stage of Russian imperial self-consciousness. Rather than an aggressive project of Russification, the academic specialists who worked in Russia’s Orient began to advocate for projects that developed *local* historical narratives,

---

\(^{119}\) It is not even mentioned in overviews of Tunkina and Smirnov, for example.

\(^{120}\) Lindsay and Smith (2006:168); Piotrovsky (1949:4ff).

\(^{121}\) Much of this material is published by Ivanovskii (1911) in volume VI of *Materialy po arkheologii Kavkaza* (Materials on Caucasian Archeology)
arguing that it was only through an appreciation of their own diverse local heritages that these populations could be responsibly incorporated into their new Russian homeland (Khatitchadourian 2008a:257).

At the forefront of this movement was Nikolai Marr, a German-Georgian archaeologist whose work would have significant currency into the early Soviet period. He is best known for his controversial Japhetic theory of linguistic development that posited the presence of an indigenous strain of pre-Indo-European languages in the Caucasus and across Europe (Slezkine 1996). Eventually, Marr attempted to incorporate the Marxist conception of class struggle into a global theory of linguistic development, which found favor in the early Soviet period, before being strongly denounced in a publication signed by Stalin himself in 1950.122 Before he worked out these linguistic theories, though, Marr was an active archaeologist, particularly at the medieval Armenian city of Ani. There he ran a series of important excavations (1892, 1904-1917), which were a critical training ground for local archaeologists (Lindsay and Smith 2006:170).

In the first decades of the twentieth century, a small circle of scholars worked on the archaeology of the classical periods in the South Caucasus. Besides Alexander Yeritsov, already mentioned as the excavator of Aramvir, the most prominent excavators were the Georgian scholar Ekvtime Takaishvili, who worked at Mtskheta and Vani, as well as Yervand Lalayan, who ran the excavations at Nic in Azerbaijan (Lalayan 1919).

122 Stalin (1950); actual authorship was likely by Marr’s strong opponent Arnold Chikobava, see Graham (G. Smith et al. 1998:178).
In Azerbaijan specifically, some excavations of classical period burials were also conducted in modern Gəncə by O. Rösendorf (1906), and Vladimir Adamovich Skinder (1906). As Khatchadourian has pointed out, pre-Soviet work on the classical-period archaeology of the Caucasus was conducted across regional national borders. The interests and archaeological practices of Lalayan, Takaishvili and Yeritsov overlap in meaningful ways, and the concerns of this body of scholarship demonstrate regional scholarly exchange. This pattern would change in the Soviet period.

The final element of the study of the South Caucasus in a classical context in the late nineteenth century comes from the growing field of epigraphic investigations into regional monuments, as well as from studies of the literary sources for the region. Ivan Vasil’evich Pomialovskii, who studied at St. Petersburg University with the eminent researcher Fedor Fedorovich Sokolov, was an early proponent for the use of epigraphy as a historical source in Russia (Frolov 2006:199). Pomialovskii published a catalog of all the Greek and Latin inscriptions from the region (1881), which provided a valuable evidentiary base for the Caucasus and was influential to the work of Vasilii Vasil’evich Latyshev. Latyshev, who was a leading figure in pre-Revolutionary classics, published a similar catalog of inscriptions for the north Black Sea (Latyshev 1885–1901). He, furthermore, compiled a sourcebook of Greek and Latin descriptions of the Pontic and Caucasus regions, and interactions with nomadic tribes (Latyshev 1893–1906).

123 See also Pogrebova (2004).
Latyshev’s biography and training provide a window onto the international character of classical studies in the late Russian Empire, and the participation of the Caucasus in this system (Frolov 2006:255ff; Tunkina 1999). Born in 1855 to a middle-class family of bureaucrats from Tver province in Russia, he had a classical education at a provincial school before receiving pedagogical training in St. Petersburg at the Historical and Philological Institute. In 1880, Latyshev was nominated by the Ministry of Education to travel to Greece and study with Ulrich Köhler and Paul Foucart, the directors of the German Archaeological Institute and French School at Athens respectively. Unlike the earlier days of Russian classical studies, by the time of Latyshev, Russian specialists were no longer second rate—they had become full participants in the mainstream world of European classical scholarship.

The opening years of the twentieth century would see a continuation of this internationalism within Russian classical studies. Russia’s most famous ancient historian, Michael Ivanovich Rostovtzeff, was a product of this environment (Wes 1989). But this moment passed quickly. In summing up the achievements of Black Sea studies in the early twentieth century and with wistful sadness for what was soon to be lost, Frolov says, “these and other zones of ancient studies grew quickly and developed Russian classical specialists in the course of the blooming of the splendid sunset of humanistic culture that marked the last decades in the life of Old Russia” (Frolov 2006:247).
CLASSICS, COMMUNISM AND ARCHAEOLOGY

As Frolov’s tone suggests, the Russian Revolution in 1917 and the rise of the Soviet Union had dire consequences for classical scholarship in Russia. While the discipline of archaeology charted an ideologically acceptable course for itself within the Soviet system, the specific study of classical antiquity—perceived as the domain of the irredeemable elite—suffered. Greece and Rome were often relegated to moralizing exempla in Marxist histories. The robust nineteenth-century explorations into the classical-period history of Russian territories fell by the wayside. The situation was somewhat more complex with regard to Classical Archaeology, but here too, the field suffered from increasing isolation from the rich intellectual networks within which it had been practiced before World War I. Nevertheless, one of the legacies of Cold War isolationist policies was the development of a sophisticated body of Soviet archaeological practice and theory that matured largely outside of the influence of western European and Anglo-American archaeology (Dolukhanov 1995; Formozov 1995; Klejn 2012a; Sveshnikova 2009). The discipline had a complex relationship to Marxist social theory, and was marked by frequently shifting intellectual perspectives.

124 The high standard of Classical studies in the late Russian Empire has been called by one historiographer “the splendid sunset of humanistic culture,” destined to collapse in 1917 (Frolov 2006:247). And so, although Russian universities continued to teach the ancient languages throughout the twentieth century, it was at a much-diminished scope. See for example Budaragina (2013).

125 Until the 2000’s, there was a fairly thin body of literature about Russian studies of ancient history under socialism. Other than Frolov, see also Heinen (1980); Kusishchin (1980a); Raskol’nikova (1975). This field has attracted new interest in recent years, see particularly the works of Krikh (2009, 2013, 2018). For an overview, see also Makhlayuk and Gabelko (2013).
In what follows, I will begin by summarizing the state of classics and ancient history under the Soviet Union, before moving on to a discussion about the developments within archaeological theory in the early Soviet Union, when changes happened quickly with the effect of moving the field away from its pre-Revolution roots. Then, I will look at the South Caucasus specifically, considering two phases of archaeological thought and practice in the region: one before World War II, and the other after it. In this period of exploding archaeological datasets and contradictory interpretations of modern presents and archaeological pasts, I will point out several over-arching tendencies in archaeological interpretation that have ongoing ramifications for contemporary engagement with this data.

**Classics and Ancient History Under the Soviet System**

The decisive split between Russian and Western European academics happened gradually during the 1920’s, but by the end of the decade, the lines were firmly drawn. Although ancient history was important to Marxist ideology, the academic study of the field was not considered central to ongoing revolutionary processes and was therefore deemed a low priority for university studies in the early decades of the Soviet Union. It would regain a fraction of its old importance in future decades, although often with a decidedly ideological slant.\(^{126}\)

---

\(^{126}\) As will be discussed in greater detail with respect to archaeology, the degree of ideological investment in classical studies varied over the course of the century (as did, in fact, the ideology itself). Raskol’nikova (1975) identifies a period from 1917-1934, another from 1934-1956, and a third starting in 1956 and continuing through the 1980’s. Of this, the period from 1934-1956 was most ideologically guided, as this was the period of greatest Stalinist influence.
Nevertheless, throughout the twentieth century, Russian universities continued to teach the ancient languages rigorously, and the study of antiquity never disappeared (Graham 1961, 1994). Soviet scholars paid greater attention to the populist masses as well as to ‘barbarians’ and nomads—groups who fell outside of the power structure of elite Greek and Roman society. Slavery, for example, was a central concept in Marxist narratives of social development (Yavetz 1988:115ff), and therefore the question of slavery in the Roman Empire became the subject of intensive research with slave revolts credited as a central cause for the fall of the Roman Empire. Finally, and for the first time, knowledge about the ancient world became popularized broadly outside of the Russian elites. The work of Sergei Ivanovich Kovalev, who wrote influential textbooks on ancient history including the first Marxist ancient history course, was critical in this popularization (Frolov 2006:466–90).

Popular science and public engagement with historical knowledge grew sharply under the Bolsheviks (Andrews 2003), which increased the profile of ancient history in the public sphere of the socialist state. At the same time, however, the scholarly register of the discipline found itself operating at a much-reduced scale within the new socialist academic structures. Suddenly isolated, it would not regain its pre-Revolution status despite its popular expansion.

---

127 See Krikh (2018) for recent work on concepts of slavery in the Near East among Soviet researchers.
128 Frolov (2006:444). This view was popularized beginning in the late 1920’s by Aleksandr Il’ich Tiumenev and Sergei Ivanovich Kovalev.
129 The earlier antiquarian societies had been limited largely to Russia’s pre-Revolution elites, while in the Bolshevik world, a basic knowledge of historical processes was seen to be critical for the formation of good socialists. As Frolov has suggested, this created an interesting dichotomy between a decrease in the level of advanced, rigorous scholarship, but a rise in populist knowledge (Frolov 2006:467).
Archaeological Theory in the Early USSR (1919-1939)

Unlike classical studies, archaeology found quick favor within the socialist system of sciences, with Lenin establishing the Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture (Rossiiskaia akademiia istorii materialnoi kul’tury) in 1919.\(^{130}\) There is no doubt about the tremendous quantity of archaeological data that was generated by Soviet archaeological projects, and examinations of twentieth century Soviet archaeology have identified theoretical advances within the Russian sphere foreshadowed much later movements in Western European archaeology (Trigger 1989).

Unlike the relatively sparse historiographic work on Imperial archaeology, detailed research on the position of archaeology within the Soviet Union generated by both Soviet and non-Soviet scholars has produced a fairly comprehensive picture of the stages of development of the field in the Soviet Union and the role of ideology in archaeological practice over time (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982; Formozov 1986, 1993, 1995, 2004, Klejn 1977, 1993, 2012a; Kradin 2011; M. O. Miller 1956; Mongait 1961; Platonova 2010; Shnielman 1995; Sveshnikova 2009; Trigger 1978). In the late twentieth century, there was a flurry of historiographic activity that called attention to their points of similarity and divergence between Soviet and Western European / Anglo American archaeological traditions, and that sought to allow each to benefit

\(^{130}\) Abbreviated RAIMK, and soon after renamed as the State Academy for the History of Material Culture (GAIMK). The most accessible English survey of this period is in Klejn (2012a). For a discussion of Klejn’s perspective as well as a different reading of this period, see Platonova (2010).
from developments in the other.\textsuperscript{131} While these general studies of archaeology include information about \textit{antichnaia arkheologii}, comprehensive study about classical archaeology within the Soviet Union remains a newer endeavor.\textsuperscript{132}

Despite the drastic changes within Russia’s political system and the significant violence of the revolution, archaeology in the 1920’s continued much as it had just before the revolution (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982:274). Eventually, however, the priorities of the new Soviet state would change “how, where and why archaeology was practiced,” this transformation took time (Lindsay and Smith 2006:171).

\textit{Theoretical Foundations}

N. Y. Marr, mentioned already in conjunction with his work at Ani and in the South Caucasus, became the director of the Russian Academy of the History of Material Culture, which replaced the Imperial Archaeological Commission and expanded its purview.\textsuperscript{133} The change of name to include “Material Culture” is not insignificant, and suggests that even in the early days of Soviet power, there was an attempt to incorporate a Marxist world-view into scholarly work (Graham 1967:90).\textsuperscript{134} But, “unlike ethnology, archaeology was not co-opted initially by the nascent Soviet state,” and a true Marxist archaeology would not develop until the 1930’s (Gadjiev, Kohl, and Magomedov 2007:122). Thus, in the early years, institutional structures

\textsuperscript{131} Sadly, the lofty goals of growing collaboration and mutual understanding that can be found in writings from the late 1970’s and ’80’s largely went unfulfilled in the post-Soviet period, despite an obvious increase in collaborative projects following the end of the Soviet Union.

\textsuperscript{132} The works of Krikh (2013) are particularly important in this. See Ladynin (2017) for an overview of recent work that touches on these historiographic themes.

\textsuperscript{133} For more on Marr, see Alpatov (1991); Kleijn (2012a:189–215); Krikh (2016); Slezkine (1996).

\textsuperscript{134} For Lenin’s own hand in this, see Klein (2012a:16).
changed but the scholars themselves remained, with Gorodtsov in Moscow and
Spitsyn in Petersburg. This continuity lasted throughout the years of Lenin’s New
Economic Policy (1921-1928).

But by the end of the decade, a new and increasingly political cadre of post-
revolutionary archaeologists had ushered in a “Marxist history of material culture” in
the Soviet Union that was different in scope, structure, and intent from the discipline
practiced by pre-revolutionaries.\(^{135}\) The discipline was quickly refashioned in new and
explicitly ideological ways by this group of activists,\(^ {136}\) particularly Vladislav
Iosifovich Ravdonikas, Sergei Nikolaevich Bykovskii and Fedor Vasil’evich
Kiparisov (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982:274; Klejn 2012a:23). This generation
found typological studies particularly untenable, saying that the “naked artefactology”
that characterized pre-revolutionary work and that was the foundation of typological
study was a “product of bourgeois evolutionism, a method which fetishized objects
and biologized history” (Klejn 2012a:23). Ravdonikas announced that his generation
was embarking on a “Marxist history of material culture” which could be
distinguished from the “old archaeology” practiced by pre-revolutionaries
(Dolukhanov 1995:324) The cultural-historical model advanced by Gorodtsov fell out
of official favor in this period, when it was associated with bourgeois formalism

\(^{135}\) This was a complicated time with many opposing camps of archaeologists fighting amongst themselves
in Moscow and Petersburg, who Klein characterizes as “ideological enthusiasts, at first with little
experience of either Marxism or archaeology.” (2012:18). Debates about the period continue in modern
historiographic literature: see appendices of Klein (2012).

\(^{136}\) As Formozov (2004:54f) points out, many from this group were not trained as archaeologists, but were
really party functionaries. For more detail about Bykovskii and his non-archaeological background,
including a violent stint in the army, see Dolukhanov (1995:124–26).

By the 1930, ideological politicization had expanded within Soviet archaeology. One of the most successful attempts at fashioning a Marxist archaeological theory was in the development of the idea of *stadiality*, the ‘theory of stages’ developed out of Marr’s Japhetic theory of linguistic development. This theory rose to have tremendous influence over archaeological thought and practice (Platonova 2010:253–58).  

‘Stadiality theory’ held that all changes in society and culture (be they linguistic, material, etc.) were actually caused by ‘technical innovations’, which is to say the restructuring of economic systems. Stadial models (at least, as interpreted in the 1930’s) ruled out human migrations as a cause of linguistic change, and demanded autochthony (Slezkine 1996:843). Thus, for example, the Scythian and Sarmatian migration hypothesis of Rostovtzeff was firmly denounced as “artificial” (Mordvintseva 2013b:208). At the same time, ethnic arguments that claimed

---

137 Platonova also suggests that the historiographers have been overly simplistic about archaeology in the 1920’s, and the degree to which it actually was so empirical (2010:30f).

138 See Platonova (2010); Sveskhnikova (2009), both of whom use 1930 as the turning point.

139 The idea of stadial development, through the vector of V. Gordon Childe, made its way into global archaeological theory in the 1930’s (Dolukhanov 1995:326), and has been cited as an important component in the theoretical development of New Archaeology (Trigger 1989:326).

139 Klejn 2012 (2012a:24). For one of the central articulations of stadial theory in this period, see Ravdonikas (1932).

141 Although the foremost scholar of the Scythian period in the late 1920’s, Boris Grakov, initially continued to draw on migration theories in his writings (Mordvintseva 2013b:207).
evolutionary connections between the past and the present were viewed for a time as a type of “Bourgeois nationalism” (Shnirelman 1996:231).

Stadiality was a popular model for explaining development because it avoided the Scylla and Charybdis of migration theories and ethnicity arguments. Indeed, Bykovskii was explicit that archaeological cultures could not be identified with modern populations—that modern ethnographic and political identities could not be connected to past societies (Dolukhanov 1995:127). Marr wrote in 1933 that what appear to be ethnic differences between tribal groups were actually class differences (Dolukhanov 1995:122; Marr 1933, 236).

The other dominant strains of archaeological thought in the 1930’s, identified by Klein and expanded by Sveshnikova, include several with clear ties to Marxism, such as the pronounced interest in labor outlay, and the prominence of autochthonous interpretations of cultural development. Other trends in the scholarship, however, like interest in ethnographic parallels, were popular in Western Europe and Anglo-American archaeology at the same period (Klejn 2012a:27; Sveshnikova 2009).142

By 1936, the tide against nationalism had turned. The new Soviet Constitution promulgated ethnically defined administrative units for the Soviet Union. National histories (and particularly the history of the Slavs) became central to archaeological research, and Marrism fell out of favor (Shnirelman 1995:233), denounced as vulgar Marxism. The Stalinist purges had a chilling effect on archaeologists, as was true for all intellectuals. But, by the end of the 1930s, a number of large excavations began

---

142 And indeed, even the trends identified by Klein as securely Marxist have been central research preoccupations in Western European and Anglo-American archaeologies of the twentieth century.
across the Soviet Union, in Novgorod, Kiev, Otrar, Karmir Blur and Mtskheta, that became the foundation for post-war ‘nationalist’ archaeological projects (Formozov 2004:74ff).

Migration hypotheses re-entered archaeological discourse, and along with the concept of ethnically identifiable ‘archaeological cultures,’ became a central explanatory mechanism of post-war Soviet archaeology (Frachetti 2011:198).

Practice of Archaeology in the South Caucasus

Despite the turmoil of the post-revolution years, the 1920s was a boom-time for archaeology both in the Soviet Union generally (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982:276), and in the Caucasus specifically. This outcome resulted, in part, from infrastructural investments on the part of the young Soviet state, as well as from efforts by local scholars.143

Politics and Infrastructure

In 1922, after a brief period of local independence, the South Caucasus was incorporated into the Soviet Union in the form of the Transcaucasian Soviet Federative Socialist Republic (Zakavkazskaya Sovetskaya Federativnaya Sotsialisticheskaya Respublika) from 1922 to 1936, with Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan each holding the status of a Soviet Socialist Republic (SSR). The Soviet Socialist Republics, which numbered 15 at the time of the dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, divided up the Soviet Union into constituent parts. The Russian Federation was the largest, while the

143 For a recent monograph on the development of archaeology and ancient history in Azerbaijan in this period, see Ölibəyova (2009).
remaining SSR’s were largely territories that had been added to the Russian Empire in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. In principle, all had equal rights. The colonial holdings of the Russian Empire, then, had been transformed into member states. As Klein has pointed out, “one aspect of [the USSR’s] unprecedented, exceptional centralism was that the center embodied the metropolis, while many outlying areas were ethnic provinces, strongly resembling colonies” (Klejn 2012a:135).

They were not, of course, actually colonies, and the language of internationalism in the Soviet Union argued strongly that no such shadows lurked under the organizational structure of the new Communist Party. On the fringes of the new Soviet state, however, the tensions between colonial pasts and internationalist futures were never far from the surface. Furthermore, although the three South Caucasus republics were united under one administrative umbrella, the historical particularities of the three had noticeable impacts on the development of archaeological research across the region. Georgia’s position as the birthplace of Stalin, and Azerbaijan’s converse situation as the seat of struggles against pan-Turkic identity, shaped the practice of socialist archaeology differently even across this small zone.

Azerbaijan had a plurality of identities that were activated as needed in the early-twentieth century, which are easy to over-schematize, but included ties to Shi’ite Iranian Azerbaijanis in Tabriz, to North Caucasus Muslims in Dagestan, and to Sunni Turks among others. The first decades of the twentieth century saw extremely complicated political (and social) relationships in the territory, with Azerbaijani
leaders taking advantage of their triangular connections between Turks, Persians and the Caucasus (Swietochowski 1996). This flexibility, in combination with their rich natural resources (crude oil), made Azerbaijan dangerous for the pre-Revolution Tsarist authorities, who recognized the potential for instability.144

The years of the revolution and the subsequent civil war brought to the fore complex and cross-cutting tensions between social classes and ethnic-national groups in the South Caucasus (Suny 1996). In the wake of this upheaval, the Soviet government faced the challenge of reintegrating this zone into the new Soviet state—a particularly thorny problem given the local complexities that pitted early nationalist consciousness against central governance.

While much of this reintegration happened politically, Khatchadourian has identified a package of four types of institutions that were used by Communist Party officials in the 1920’s to meet the objectives of the socialist state, which fit well into the paradigm of ‘reintegration’. These are state universities, state museums, commissions for the protection of antiquities and state research institutes (Khatchadourian 2008a:258). In Azerbaijan, the State Museum was founded in Baku in 1920, and the Azerbaijan Committee for the Protection of Antiquity, Art and Nature was formed in 1923. The Society for the Study and Investigation of Azerbaijan

144 Said Vorontsov-Dashkov, a Tsarist official, “…should we ever have to deal with a separatist movement among any of the peoples of the Caucasus… it could only occur among the Muslim population owing to its numerical superiority over other ethnic groups and the possibility of an outburst of religious fanaticism fed by the proximity of the Caucasus to the Muslim states” (Trans. by Swietochowski 1996:218).
(Obshchestvo obsledovaniiia i izucheniiia Azerbaidzhana) was also set up, along with its journal Izvestiya (Əlibəyova 2009:34).

Fieldwork and Ideology

This administrative infrastructure supported the growth of field archaeology in Azerbaijan, where investigations into the Bronze and Iron Age predominated. The most important early excavations of Azerbaijani antichnaia arkheologiia were carried out in 1926 by Davud Mikail Şərifov in the Nuxa district, where he excavated a necropolis at Yaloylutapə under the auspices of the Azerbaijan State Museum (Şərifov 1927).

There was no attempt to connect this material to any known historical frameworks. Unlike the historical-archaeological work in Armenia and Georgia, archaeological investigations in Azerbaijan in this period seldom turned to texts to explain historical phenomena, even in periods for which texts existed (Khatchadourian 2008a:260). The result was an antichnaia arkheologiia that constructed its subject in the same way as prehistoric archaeology: by defining spatial distributions of identifiable material culture, representing homogeneous archaeological ‘cultural assemblages’ (Khatchadourian 2008a:274).

Looking at antichnaia arkheologiia more broadly across the South Caucasus, it is clear that the situation in Azerbaijan was, in some key ways, anomalous. In contrast

145 Ivan Meshchaninov was sent by the Society to run field projects in Naxçivan and Nagorno Karabakh, with both A. Miller and Alesker Alekperov also working in Naxçivan (Ələşgar K. Ələkbərov 1927; Meshchaninov 1927; A. A. Miller 1926).
146 See also İ.H. Əliyev and Əlibəyova (1977:109).
to the scant work on the *Antik* period in Azerbaijan, the 1930’s were a particularly fruitful time for *antichnaia arkheologiia* in Georgia, when a number of Russian scholars chiefly Ivan Meschaninov, Aleksandr Iessen and Kuftin, along with some Georgian archaeologists, particularly Girogi Nioradze and Nino Khoshtaria excavated Greek sites on the Black Sea, (Khatchadourian 2008a:261). The local infrastructure for Georgian studies of antiquity grew quickly. The Marr Institute of Language, History and Material Culture was founded in 1936, under the direction of Simon Janashia, which took over from the old Institute of Caucasian Studies (Gamkrelidze 2012:24). The work of Janashia was steeped in Marxist-Leninist approaches, possibly accounting for its ready acceptance and high profile (Khatchadourian 2008a:261). In central Georgia, the long-running excavations at Mtskheta, the classical capital of the region, began in 1937, directed by Ivane Javakhishvili.

In Armenia, meanwhile, as in Azerbaijan, this period did not see high-profile long-running investigations into classical period sites, despite ambitious goals at Vagharshapat (Khatchadourian 2008a:263). However, Boris Piotrovsky’s large-scale influential excavations at the Iron Age Urartian site of Karmir Blur began in Armenia in the 1930’s, setting the stage for post-War projects (Piotrovsky 1959).

In both Georgia and Armenia, Marr’s previous work in the region set up a strong foundation for early Soviet archaeology, and it is likely that his own close ties

---

147 As in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, the organization of archaeology would shift several more times. In 1941, the Marr Institute was restructured, and archaeologist were transferred to the newly-created Institute of History, Archaeology and Ethnography at the Georgian Academy of Sciences (Gamkrelidze 2012:27)

148 For early work at Mtskheta, see Apakidze (1958); Kapanadze(1955).
to the area and his position as the director of GAIMK (Gosudarstvennaia akademiia istorii material’noi kultury, The State Academy of the History of Material Culture) helped to facilitate regional projects. Azerbaijan, however, remained on the outskirts. Historical works about Azerbaijan were contentious, exposing tensions between pan-Turkic tendencies and the Soviet framing of identity and class struggle (Khatchadourian 2008a:260). The notion of Azerbaijani identity had not yet crystallized in the 1920’s (Yilmaz 2013:522), and these identity questions were dangerous for the early Soviet state. To work on the historical archaeology of Azerbaijan meant confronting Azerbaijan’s Persian medieval architectural legacy as well as its contemporary Turkic identity. It comes as no surprise, then, that there was little state interest in or support for the study of Azerbaijan’s ancient history in this period.149

Archaeology, Ethnicity and Nationalism (post-World War II)

World War II and the early years of the Cold War witnessed an ethnogenetic turn in archaeology in the South Caucasus. Following developments in archaeological theory in Soviet archaeology already discussed, it became increasingly acceptable to talk about cultural ethnogenesis. Interest in the question of ethnic history would

149 The fact that archaeology of medieval forts in Azerbaijan featured prominently in the very first ancient history publications of the Russian Empire (by Bayer) suggests to me that the subsequent lack of attention to the region stems not from a lack of material, but rather from a confluence of political and social conditions. In the nineteenth century, this might best be attributed to religion, while it seems that with the beginning of the Soviet Union, the best explanation is to be sought in Azerbaijan’s problematic position vis-à-vis Iran and Turkey.
remain prominent in Soviet archaeology until the 1960’s, and lasts into the present day (Klejn 2012a:68).

New Nationalisms in the South Caucasus

The ethnogenetic turn can be traced to the geopolitical situation in the 1940’s, when there was a perceived threat against the “existence and sovereignty of the peoples of the USSR” that spurred in academic literature a “growth of national self-consciousness, the expression of national pride and the fostering of the best indigenous traditions” (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982:276). This perceived threat was paired, of course, with the actual damage of the war years, which saw tremendous loss of life among the young generation of scientists, as within society more generally. Questions of national ethnogenesis with relationship to the Scythians, Sarmatians, and Slavs became prominent in Soviet-wide archaeological discourses, with a particular interest in proving a Slavic archaeological heritage free of German influence (Shnirelman 1995:234).

Archaeologists working in the various Soviet Socialist Republics also began to incorporate these ideas into their works on local ethne. Shnirelman has framed this as an ideological movement “from internationalism to nationalism” (1995). Klein, meanwhile, argues that the centralism and demands for uniformity within academic culture of the early Soviet Union were simply unsustainable over the long term, leading to a necessary fracturing of global perspectives along regional lines (Klejn 2012a:136).

---

150 See Formozov (2004:76ff) for a brief account.
Given the fractious history of the South Caucasus, as well as the emergent redeployments of national identity in Azerbaijan (Goluboff and Karaeva 2005; Yilmaz 2013, 2015), the archaeological search for national origins found fertile ground in the region. Although always somewhat at odds with Marxist ideology, the discourse surrounding ethnogenesis became a palatable, if not unproblematic, scholarly preoccupation on the southern edges of Soviet space (Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982:276; Khatchadourian 2008a:265).

Connected to the interest in ethnogenesis was the further development of the concept of ‘archaeological culture,’ an idea which dated back to the late-nineteenth-century German and Russian Imperial scholarship. This idea was picked up and used widely by Spitsyn and Gorodtsov in the early-twentieth century (Platonova 2010:109ff), and became at once much-debated and enshrined in Russian archaeological practice (Klejn 2012a:98–105). At its simplest, the concept of an archaeological culture enabled the association between a distinct material assemblage, a territorial space, and a historic tribal population.

As ethnogenetic explanations matured, the boundaries between ‘historic tribal populations’ and modern nationalities began to dissolve. This led to facile connections between presumed ancient populations and states, like those of Caucasian Albania and Urartu, and modern populations inhabiting the same general territory. In these encounters, archaeological material was endowed with ethnic meaning and harnessed

---

151 For the most thorough treatment of the topic of deployments of the past in modern history in the South Caucasus, see Shnirelman (2001). These links were easier to draw in the case of Armenia and Georgia (Yilmaz 2015:28).
in ongoing fights about the territorial extent of modern nation-states (Shnirelman 2001:19ff)

Fieldwork and the ‘Local’

Archaeological investigations in the second half of the twentieth century in Azerbaijan unfolded in this climate. One of the most important projects of antichnaia arkheologii began in 1946 at the site of Mingəçəevin, where the construction of a hydroelectric power plant threatened a large, multi-period archaeological site with remains from the Neolithic through Medieval periods. The excavations, under the direction of Saleh Mustafa Qazıyev, uncovered a wealth of necropolis material dating to the classical period, which was partially published.152 Researchers have often remarked on the wide and long-running diversity of burial styles at this necropolis, where at least 7 overlapping burial traditions coexisting in just the classical periods, including various types of burials in unlined grave cuts, jar burials, burials in stone and tile lined cuts, and catacomb burials (Qoşqarlı 2012). Of special importance was the discovery of an inscription in the Caucasian Albanian script (Trever 1959:306ff).153

Similarities between material from Mingəçəevin and material known from a site called Yalolyutəpə added to the growing identification of an “Yalolyutəpə Culture” which was identified as the autochthonous ancestor of Caucasian Albanian polity (Trever 1959:61), and by extension of modern Azerbaijan (İsmızən 1956;

152 For Qazıyev’s biography, see Cafaro (2009); on early accounts of the work at Mingəçəevin, see Qazıyev (1946, 1949b, 1949a, 1950, 1960).

153 Complexity and controversy surrounds the Caucasian Albanian language. For an overview of the current scholarship, see Gadjiev (2008b); Gippert et al. (2008); Schulze (2015a, 2015b).
Khatchadourian 2008a:263). Other burial grounds that yielded material associated with this ‘archaeological culture’ include Cəfərxan, Qaratepə and Sarıtəpə.154 Contemporary work at a wide variety of necropoleis both in the Mil Steppe, and to both the east and south, was focused on identifying the various burial traditions, which beyond Yaloylutəpə also included a ‘Jar burial culture’ (Qolubkina 1961). Beyond work at necropoleis, new excavations began also at some settlement sites from the classical period, most importantly Qəbəłə (Qazıyev 1964, 1965a, 1965b).

Although the polity of Caucasian Albania had been discussed in historical scholarship since the mid nineteenth century (Ianovskii 1846; Kruze 1835), the growing body of archaeological evidence in the 1940’s and 50’s was a turning point in the expansion of studies. Works attempting to synthesize Greek and Latin sources alongside Armenian and Georgian chronicles, as well as archaeological evidence about Caucasian Albania became increasingly common (K. H. Əliyev 1992:6–13).155

In contrast to Azerbaijan, where the work at Mingəçevir represents the largest scale antichnaia arkheologiiia carried out in the post-War decades, both Georgia and Armenia witnessed the beginning of large-scale, long-term projects at key classical sites (Khatchadourian 2008a:265). In Armenia, perhaps the most important figure of this period was Babyan Nikolayi Arakelyan, who ran excavations at both Garni, Aramvir and Artashat in the 1950’s and ‘60’s, along with Gevorg Artashesi Tiratsyan.156 Following Arakelyan’s interests in the formation of the Armenian state in

154 For an overview of research on this topic see K.H. Əliyev (1992:6–13).
155 See especially the work of Trever (1959). This tradition continues in recent decades, see Babaev (1990); Osmanov (2006); Rasulova (2008).
156 For overviews of work in Armenia, see Lindsay and Smith (2006); Khatchadourian (2008a).
the Hellenistic era, late twentieth century work in Armenia sought to tease out the social and economic structures of the area in this period. Beyond the large-scale projects, a number of smaller excavations began outside of the Ararat Plain in the 1970’s (Khatchadourian 2008a:268).

The ‘Hellenization’ of Armenia presented a particular problem for researchers, as the concept of Hellenization was seen by Marxist scholarship to be a product of incorrect Western historical science, which failed to recognize the role of local cultures in contact zones, and also failed to see that conflict grew not out of Greek vs. non-Greek ethnic differences, but instead from class clashes (Khatchadourian 2008a:271). Archaeologists in Armenia, wishing to stress the role of local populations in the achievements of Hellenistic-period art and architecture, tended to emphasize the local characteristics of monuments from this era, rather than concentrating on their international connections (Khatchadourian 2008a:271). As a part of the quest for local roots in deep pasts, formulations that connected Urartu to later Armenian civilization grew, particularly in popular histories (Kohl and Tsetskhadze 1995:157–58).

In Georgia, it is possible to track a similar tendency to downplay external characteristics of archaeological material, exemplified by reconstructions of Greek-Colchian interaction (Kohl and Tsetskhadze 1995:162ff).157 This pattern can be seen in the work of most influential archaeologist of the second half of the twentieth century in Georgia, Otar Lordkipanidze, who ran excavations at Vani for many

---

157 Related to this, perhaps, is the move to rename antichnaia arkheologiia in Georgia to ‘Iberia-Colchoology,’ placing the focus on the local Iberian and Colchian kingdoms of ancient Georgia. See Gamkrelidze (2012).
decades. At the same time, this bias needs to be contextualized within the vast scope of post-War archaeology in Georgia (as in Armenia), which saw the continuation of long-running excavations at the ancient capital of Iberia, Mtskheta (A. M. Apakidze et al. 1958; Tsetskhladze 2008), and alongside work along the upper Kura, looking at classical material (Furtwängler et al. 2008).

CONCLUSION

From the first encounter of Russian imperial authorities with the hill forts of the Caucasus in 1722, through Pushkin’s writing of the southern Orient, Marr’s emphasis on the local histories of the Caucasus, and the post-War struggle for ethnic identity, archaeological remains have figured prominently in the historical imagination of the Caucasus. At the same time, these historical events and ideological lenses have guided the development and practice of the discipline of archaeology, and therefore have shaped the archaeological datasets available to us today. The accumulated body of data can only be fully understood in the context of these narratives.

Studies of the history of archaeology in the Russian Empire and former Soviet Union tend, perhaps unsurprisingly, to emphasize the historical ruptures. The clear breaks in the twentieth century make it easy to delimit these studies- ‘pre-Revolutionary archaeology’ or ‘post-Perestroika archaeology.’ This fragmentation obscures the deep interplay between continuity and rupture in the study of ancient history in the Russian sphere. Each of these movements layer atop the ones that came before it—while political structures may have sharp breaks, the development of scholarship is always entangled with its own past.
As a result of the twentieth-century aversion to engaging with ‘decadent’ Classical history, as well as the use of archaeology to bolster nationalist narratives of ethnically defined polities, Antik-period archaeological research in Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus more broadly remained focused on the local. Therefore, although we know that Antik-period dynasts from Azerbaijan were interacting with the broader ancient world, the emphasis within archaeological and historical studies has been on the polity as a historically particular and entirely local phenomenon, with external actors largely relegated to supporting roles in the genesis of the state. Azerbaijani Antik archaeology does not try to situate the polity within a quasi-universal narrative of classical descent, but rather within a highly local system of interactions, where questions of ethnicity have been of central importance (Shnirelman 2001:chap. 13).

This approach necessarily should be contrasted with the traditional strategies of political legitimation in Western Europe, where as Michael Dietler describes, there was a “shared discourse” predicated on a common Greco-Roman cultural heritage (Dietler 2005:39f). In that environment, understandings of power—and particularly expansionist colonial power—relied on implicit associations between Greece and Rome and modern local populations, who had inherited the cultural legacy of the great empires. The tendency in early archaeological exploration in Western Europe, then, was to downplay signs of regionalism or resistance to Greek and Roman expansion, and to emphasize Hellenizing or Romanizing traits. In contrast, the dominant narratives about ancient history in the South Caucasus, developed in the context of the

---

158 See, for example, the presentation in Babayev (1976).
different trajectory of Russian Imperial and Soviet scholarship, have long
foregrounded the experience of local populations—prefiguring the trend towards
studying the “local” that would become prominent in Anglophone archaeology only in
the late twentieth century.

In the next chapter, we will begin by moving far back in time and closer to our
subject of inquiry, considering the textual corpus on which the story of Caucasian
Albania has been built.
Chapter 4: Knowing the ‘Unknownable’: Histories of Albania

The Caucasus is persistently cast as a “place of closure to those ‘from outside,’” resistant to external interpretation (Grant and Yalcin-Heckmann 2007:2). It is a space of myth and mystery, presented by authors like Pushkin and Lermontov as an untainted mountain wilderness and an invariably foreign land (fig. 4). Although important roots of this perception lie in the nineteenth century discussed in the previous chapter, the history of the trope is actually far longer, stretching back into antiquity. In Strabo’s account of the territory, for example, we find that the mythical Amazons are said to live side-by-side with the local Albanians. Strabo himself comments on the readiness to accept myths as histories in this space, writing:

I was sad when we parted; 
and as my thoughts turned to poetry
I recalled the Caucasus, 
where grim Mount Beshtau, like an awesome hermit, 
dommates with its five peaks the villages and fields of 
the Circassians. 
It became for me a new Parnassus, mount of 
inspiration. 
I'll never forget its flinty summits, 
its gushing springs, its parched heathlands, 
its sultry wastes, that landscape 
that made such a deep impression on the two of us— 
where warlike raiders roam the hills 
and a wild imagination 
lies in ambush in the empty space?

-Pushkin. Preface to Prisoner of the Caucasus.  

159 Translation following that of Clark (Pushkin 2005). 
160 On Russian literary perceptions of the Caucasus more generally, see discussion in chapter 3.
A peculiar thing has happened in the case of the account we have of the Amazons; for our accounts of other peoples keep a distinction between the mythical and the historical elements; for the things that are ancient and false and monstrous are called myths, but history wishes for the truth, whether ancient or recent, and contains no monstrous element, or else only rarely. But as regards the Amazons, the same stories are told now as in early times, though they are marvelous and beyond belief (Strabo 11.5.3, trans after Jones [Strabo 1917–1932]).

This was a widespread problem in the territory around the Caspian Sea. The Scythian Circumcaspian reaches were described by Pliny thus: *nec in alia parte maiior auctorum inconstantia credo propter innumeratas vagasque gentes* (“about no other places is there greater inconsistency among the authors, I think that it is because of the immense number of peoples and their nomadism”) (Pliny NH 6.19). The Caucasus, by dint of its remoteness and unfamiliarity, became the site of fanciful historical projections for Greek and Roman authors.

Intermixed with these flights of fancy, however, are accounts that provide real, if fleeting, glimpses into the area’s socio-political disposition and its engagements with imperial histories. It is according to these sources that the central and eastern Caucasus were held in the Antik period by the Iberians and Albanians, paired by Plutarch as the most important peoples in the area (μέγιστα δὲ αὐτῶν ἔστιν Ἑθνη Ἀλβανοὶ καὶ Ἰβηρες [Plut. Pomp. 34.1]).

From a Roman perspective, these peoples inhabited a conceptual space where they were neither consistent allies in a political sense, nor unrelenting barbarians in a cultural one. This chapter considers the history and historiography of their interactions with external powers, and particularly with the Romans, based chiefly on textual sources. I begin by using the sources to stitch together a chronological overview of historical processes in Albania, with reference to the affairs in Iberia and Armenia as well. I then
present three more detailed studies of slices of the texts to highlight specific strengths and
the limitations of the textual corpus in understanding the history of eastern Caucasia. The
first examines Roman accounts of one episode in Roman-Caucasus interaction, exploring
the role that these accounts have played in Roman internal historical narratives. The
second explores how ancient authors present the question of identity in the eastern
Caucasus, and specifically the representation of mobile pastoralist – sedentary
interactions, exploring how Roman perceptions of nomads color these accounts. The third
considers geographical accounts of the territory of Albania, and examines how questions
of ancient geography have come to be embedded in modern debates.

**Histories (mostly) from Textual Sources**

No extant ancient work is dedicated to the history of Albania, or even devotes
significant coverage to the area. A broad historical framework for understanding local
history, however, can be drawn by tracing the region’s interaction with the sequence of
imperial projects operating in and around its borders. It is critical to recognize, however,
the distorting power of the very different source material and scholarly traditions that
have been used to study these various neighbors, both in terms of intensity of study and
research foci, as discussed in chapter 2. Thus, while the textual corpus describes a
gradual intensification of relations during the Late Iron Age, culminating in Roman-
Parthian direct conflict and proxy-warfare in the region in the first century CE, this
history needs to be understood inside of the context of available source material, and the
preoccupations that shaped exogenous literary accounts about the region.
Textual Corpus

Our richest contemporary pool of evidence concerning Antik Albania comes from roughly thirty texts written in Greek or Latin between the late first century BCE and the fourth century CE that preserve historical or geographic references to the places and peoples of eastern Caucasia (the most important of which are collected in table 4.1). These references come from a wide variety of genres: chiefly biography, history, and geography. It is a challenging collection of sources, marked by laconic and conflicting accounts, invariably from a Greek or Roman perspective.

The other extant written sources for this history of this region come from later Armenian and Georgian chroniclers, as well as Islamic historians and geographers. Although these later texts incontestably contain historically significant descriptions, they also reflect a profoundly different (and anachronistic) understanding of the ancient Caucasus, insofar as the region had undergone significant reorganization in the Sasanian period. These later reports are of particular interest for understanding the development of emic perspectives on local identity, but they are of less interest for this project. Therefore, the Greco-Latin documents, as the only contemporary (or near contemporary) written sources in the pre-Christian period, occupy the central place in the following discussion of political history, although references are made to texts from the medieval traditions as well.

161 For an overview of these sources, see Bais (2001). For further details about the slightly later and more northern Alans, see Alemany (2000).
162 For a good example of this, see Rapp (2009). Unfortunately, the body of manuscript evidence concerning Caucasian Albania is much more limited to that about Armenia or Georgian K’art’li, and is preserved largely in translation inside of those traditions, creating a further set of interpretive problems. On Albanian manuscripts, see Gadjiev (2008b).
These ancient references to the eastern Caucasus tend to coincide with moments when local historical trajectories intersected with events of importance within internal Roman political or military machinations. The majority of the references to Caucasian Albania date to the following four general episodes within Roman history, occurring between the mid-first century BCE and the late-second century CE:

1) Mithridatic wars and Pompey’s foray into the eastern Caucasus in 65/64 BCE
2) Tiberian-Claudian interactions with the Parthian king Artabanus
3) Neronian activity, particularly surrounding Corbulo’s settlement of Armenia, and the repercussions of this activity in the early Flavian period
4) Hadrianic repositioning of the Eastern kings, and the Antonine ramifications of this jostling.

These groupings, however, do not map onto the phases of development of Roman policy in the eastern Caucasus more broadly—they simply show the moments at which affairs in the region became part of the Roman narrative. They are snapshots of larger processes.163

And there are, of course, a number of references to Albania that fall outside of these categories, particularly the geographic descriptions of the area in Strabo, Ptolemy, and Pliny the Elder.164 The volume of relevant historical material expands somewhat if other accounts of the South Caucasus are considered, since the situation in Armenia received considerably more attention by Roman authors.

These ancient textual accounts of Albania specifically have been considered at a high level in the Russian-language scholarship, with noteworthy treatments by Trever

---

163 Edward Dabrowa has offered the most systematic study of Roman policy in the region diachronically, and has proposed there was a gradual formalization of Roman policy towards the Caucasus, which started under Tiberius, began take hold under Nero after the battle of Rhandeia in 63 CE, and was finally fully articulated under the Flavians in the late first century CE. See Dąbrowa (1980, 1989).

164 Strabo 2.5.31, 11.1-4; Ptolemy Geography 5.8-11; Pliny NH 6.11-12. Also, Aelian On the Nature of Animals 17.7.
and Akopian (1987), and have been presented to non-Russophonic audiences through the work of Bais (2001) and Traina (2003, 2015), as well as Wheeler (1977) and Gregoratti (2013).

**Historical Overview**

What follows is a brief overview of the political history of the Caucasus, with an emphasis on the eastern reaches of the territory. To the degree possible, the account is based on textual sources, although archaeological data appear in some sections for which texts are lacking. Following the scheme provided above, the discussions covers interactions with the four major powers who brushed up against the eastern Caucasus in the Late Iron Age: the Achaemenid, Seleucid (and more generally, Greek), Arsakid and Roman worlds.

*Mythical Prehistory, Greeks and Achaemenids*

The sixth century BCE was a time of change and re-organization across the Caucasus, in the aftermath of the collapse of the Early Iron Age Urartian Empire centered around Lake Van, when both Mediterranean and Iranian ties intensified, while contacts with both Scythians and Cimmerians arose. The Black Sea coast saw increased contact with the Greek world via maritime trade, while much of the rest of the region was incorporated to one degree or another into the satrapal system of the Achaemenid Empire (Braund 1994; Khatchadourian 2008b).

---

165 The precise sphere of control of the Urartian Empire in the northern South Caucasus is a debated topic, and one with its own constellation of contemporary political consequences. For an overview, see Zimansky (1995a)
Evidence for the early interaction between the South Caucasus and the Mediterranean and Iranian worlds rests primarily on archaeology (O. Lordkipanidze 1991b, 1991a; Tsetskhladze 1999; Vickers and Kakhidze 2004), but Greek literary sources hint at the relationships as well. This is nowhere truer than in mythical references to the region preserved in, among other places, stories of Prometheus and Jason and the Argonauts. Both of these have ties to the world of the eastern Black Sea and western South Caucasus, with the ties functioning somewhat differently in the eastern Caucasian territories (Braund 1994:27–28, 1997). These myths had tremendous currency for Greek authors, such that “till the very end that land remained for them a legendary one: virtually all Greek authors attach major importance to that myth [of Jason] in their writings and do not write about the actual history.” (Tsetskhladze 1994:89). The Caucasus mountains themselves came to feature in these tales, developing into a mythological character in their own right.166

But, beyond these mythical topoi, there are scattered references in Greek literature from as early as the seventh century BCE that display awareness of Colchian toponyms, with Hesiod mentioning the Phasis river in his catalog of world rivers (Hes. Theog. 340).167 By the fifth century BCE, Herodotus would provide an extended description of the Colchians and their supposedly Egyptian ancestry (Hdt. 2.103-105). Despite the spurious lineage he presents, Herodotus’ account, as well as his more detailed description of the physical connection between this area and Persia (Hdt. 1.104), indicate the depth of

166 See extended discussion in chapter 5.
167 For an overview of the contentious question of the identification of the Phasis river, and an overview of the textual sources, see Lordkipanidze (2000b).
Greek familiarity with the region, with reasonably accurate descriptions of not just the coastal stretch of the territory, but the inland reaches and mountain passes well (Braund 1994:16). As with the textual mentions, which concentrate on the coastal reaches of the territory, archaeological evidence for Greek interaction in this early period is strongest along the Pontic coast and in the Kolkhida lowlands stretching inland: the territory of the Colchian polity (R. C. Hughes 2015; Kacharava 1995; Tsetskheladze 1992).

The Kolkhida lowlands and their enclosing foothills were separated from the Eastern Georgian heartland by the Likhi Range, and the region is certainly quite distant from the eastern Caucasus. It had access to a different set Circumpontic networks that provided the earliest contact with Mediterranean communities, which become archaeologically visible as early as the eighth or seventh century BCE (Tsetskheladze 1994:78). By the end of the sixth century BCE, the material ramifications of this system of coastal connections were readily apparent. For example, Colchian metalworking traditions demonstrate contact with those of the Greek world (figs. 5, 6) (Mitten 1996; Treister 2007), while imported Greek ceramic forms are also noted at a higher level, particularly in the late sixth century BCE and into the fifth century BCE (fig. 7) (Braund 1994:94; Kacharava 1990, 1995; Tsetskheladze 1999).\footnote{It is possible that the coast saw formal Greek colonial settlement as early as the 6th c. BCE, though the evidence for this is only literary. The two most significant colonial sites described in the sources, Phasis and Dioscurias, have not been excavated—indeed Dioscurias has not even been identified (Tsetskheladze 1992). Discussion of these sites, though, has been an important topos and an issue of personal importance to Georgia’s foremost scholars (O. Lordkipanidze 2000b; Nawotka 2005).}

The Greek imports come largely from the coast, but are not confined to that zone entirely.\footnote{Literary sources attest to the foundation of three cities by Greeks along the coast: Phasis, Dioscurias and Gyenos, although only the last of these three has been the subject of sustained fieldwork, and even there, there is confusion (Tsetskheladze 1994:81 ff).} They began to appear around
the sixth century BCE at the hilltop site of Vani, located in south-eastern Colchis, and suggested to have been a regional political-administrative capital (Kacharava and Kvirvelia 2008:59). These imports were not evenly distributed across the region: the important coastal site of Asparos, for example, preserves no evidence of Greek presence at all (Mamuladze, Khalvashi, and Kakhidze 2005), and Greek material appeared at Pichvnari only later, in the mid-fifth century (Vickers and Kakhidze 2001, 2004). The imports, furthermore, were rare in the territory east of the Sukhumi ridge, or the Eastern Georgian territory associated with later Iberia. The picture, therefore, is of heterogeneity and the overlapping existence of both local continuity and growing external contact, although the depth of the penetration of that material outside of elite culture may have been quite limited (Tsetskhladze 1994:91).

Meanwhile, as these indicators of Greek trade and connection were growing in the west Caucasus, so too were markers of Achaemenid interaction in the central and eastern reaches. The textual support for this political history is even more tenuous than that concerning the Greek – Colchis relationships. Whereas Greek literature preserves both historical and literary accounts, Achaemenid texts are more limited, with references to the South Caucasus appearing only in confusing satrapal lists (both epigraphic and as reported by Herodotus).

Where the texts are quiet, however, archaeological evidence paints a fuller picture. Achaemenid imperialism is frequently understood archaeologically through a relatively narrow band of elite objects and monumental architecture seen to be markers of ‘Persian culture’ (Khatchadourian 2008b:25–26). Even along this limited axis, the
material evidence of Achaemenid expansion is clearly visible across the South Caucasus, from the Armenian highlands to the Kura river valley (figs. 8, 9) (Knauss 2006). Particularly striking is the quantity of Achaemenid monumental architecture and architectural fragments at sites along the Kura river valley (Gagoshidze and Kipiani 2000; Knauss 2000; Knauss et al. 2007; Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013; O. Lordkipanidze 2000a; Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962). To the south, in Armenia, local traditions appear to have been stronger, and the Achaemenid impact is less apparent (Knauss 2006:100). Nevertheless, the site of Benjamin featured a new Achaemenid construction (Ter-Martirossov 2001), while Altintepe and Erebuni further to the south saw rebuilding in the Achaemenid style (Khatchadourian 2008b; Knauss 2006).

Understanding the Achaemenid presence in the South Caucasus beyond these palace complexes is uncertain. Archaeological markers of Achaemenid imperial activity are difficult to pinpoint (Dandamayev 2005; Kuhrt 2001), and are less well-understood in general than in the case of the Greek material already discussed. Achaemenid items in elite burials from Colchis, for example, may suggest the existence of formal gift-exchange systems in the region rather than direct Achaemenid control (or even presence [Tsetskhladze 1994:98]).

On the basis of the textual and archaeological material, however, it seems likely that Achaemenid control in the region extended along the Kura valley (Brosius 2010:30),

---

170 See chapter 6 for a fuller discussion of this architecture.
171 Tsetskhladze (1994) has framed the difference between Greek and Achaemenid activity in Colchis as follows: In the case of the Greeks and the Colchians, the ties were economic and cultural; while in the case of the Achaemenids and the Colchians, the ties were only political. A full exploration of this question is outside the scope of this dissertation, but this schematic division of cultural and political spheres may be obscuring a more complex underlying reality.
although this is not universally accepted, and the precise political disposition of the entirety of the Caucasus within the Achaemenid Empire remains unclear (Jacobs 1994:87:176ff; Khatchadourian 2008b:78ff). The central reaches were likely incorporated under the satrapy of Armenia, while the east may have fallen under the purview of Media Atropatene, with coastal Colchis existing as a vassal state. Whatever the precise political configuration might have been, the Achaemenid period marks the beginning of Caucasia’s widespread entanglement with the “Iranian Commonwealth” (Rapp 2009), which shaped the rest of antiquity.

*The Battle of Gaugamela and the Early Hellenistic Period*

The fall of the Achaemenid Empire to the forces of Alexander the Great at Gaugamela in the late fourth century had profound consequences for Caucasia--despite the fact that Alexander himself never campaigned in the region, and that direct Seleucid control in the area was extremely limited (Hammond 1996). Nevertheless, the loss of the stabilizing international power of the Achaemenid Empire can be connected with the growth of the local polities across the region (Babayev 1976; Lang 1983).

The Orontid dynasty took power in Armenia in the wake of Alexander’s victory, led by Mithranes, the pro-Alexander son of the former Achaemenid Satrap in Armenia, Orontes II, who was given Armenia in recognition of his support of Alexander (Lang 1983). Textual sources tell us that the local Orontid rulers were semi-autonomous, and seem to have been politically tied to the later Seleucid kingdom only as a vassal state

---

172 Most of the recent attention to the question of Achaemenid control in the territory has been focused on Colchis, with the eastern territories more seldom entering the discussion. But, if Herodotus’ account is to be accepted, Achaemenid control covered the entire territory up to the Caucasus range (Hdt. 3.97).
(Khatchadourian 2007). The rest of the Caucasus appears to have been even less under the political sway of the Seleucids (but see Braund 1994:144).

In contrast to Achaemenid-period Armenia, where Urartian markers on the landscape were passed over or even razed by the ruling elite, the Orontid and later Artaxid rulers in Hellenistic-period Armenia developed vocabularies of power that drew explicitly on Urartian models, turning away from Achaemenid exampla (Khatchadourian 2008b:397). Thus, the early Orontids abandoned the Achaemenid capital city at Erebuni, and planted their imperial seat at the Urartian site Argishtihinili, which they re-formed as Aramvir (Khatchadourian 2007). To this, they added practices learned from their southern Hellenistic neighbors. Construction in both Aramvir, and then later in the Artaxiad capital Artashat show the use of some Hellenistic stone-working techniques (Tiratsyan 1979; Invernizzi 1998). Some have argued that the very plans of these sites have Hellenistic overtones (Tonikyan 1992), although the quixotic fortified hilltops of Artashat seem to rest uneasily within the corpus of Hellenistic urban planning.

Further, and more important, evidence for the penetration of further Hellenistic practices comes from seven inscriptions in Greek from the site of Aramvir, dated broadly to the Hellenistic era (fig. 10). They preserve fragments of Hesiod, dedications to the

\[173\] This engagement with of Urartian material was not a habit simply of the elite. Several Urartian sites in Armenia, Aramvir, Oshkan and Teishebaini, became Hellenistic graveyards. The new non-elite tombs were embedded purposefully in within Urartian monumental architecture, respecting the older organizations of space but creating entirely new funerary contexts (Khatchadourian 2007:23; Tiratsyan 2003).

\[174\] Nevertheless, both sites preserve remains attesting to robust trade with the Hellenistic world, and one strand of interpretation posits Hellenistic Armenia as a critical trade link (Zardarian and Akopian 1994).
kings Mithras and Orontes, a calendar, and other fragments of elegiac poetry (Mahé 1996; Santrot and Badalian 1996). This material suggests that Hellenistic-period Armenia maintained a lively network of contacts with Hellenistic communities, although temporal and geographic variation created variety within the region (Zardarian and Akopian 1994). At the same time, this was not an uncomplicated Hellenism (Traina 2005), and as elsewhere in the East (Versluys 2017), the elite Armenian configurations of identity in this period drew on Iranian models as well, reflecting continued interaction with this other cultural space.

Further to the north, clear evidence of both Iranian and Seleucid interactions is more ephemeral. As in Armenia, the Hellenistic period seems to have brought a consolidation of regional elites in Iberia under the banner of King Parnavas (Lang 1983), and the development of social systems that would continue to dominate through subsequent centuries (O. Lordkipanidze 1991a:158; Meißner 2000). The structure of the monarchy that arose and the naming practices of Iberian rulers known from this time, however, demonstrate deep familiarity with and reliance on Iranian structural patterns and titulature (Rapp 2009:660), suggesting that the region was developing through contacts with both the Mediterranean and Iranian regions.

Archaeological material from this early Hellenistic period comes largely from a cluster of sites in central Georgia including Samadlo, Zizamuri, Sairkhe, Urbnisi, and Tsikhia Gora (figs. 11, 12, 13) (O. Lordkipanidze 1991a, 2000a). This area would

---

175 Interpretation of these is difficult, though, since Greek never became a local lingua franca, and when the Artaxid king Artaxias I set up stelae in his name along the road system, he inscribed them in Aramaic—the Achaemenid rather than Seleucid bureaucratic language (Khatchadourian 2007).
develop as the power base of the Iberian kingdom by the first century BCE. However, the fragmentary nature of both the textual and archaeological material obscures comprehensive interpretation of this early stage of development, and the nature of Hellenistic-period political organization in Iberia is poorly understood.\footnote{176
One example of Hellenistic urbanism remains well preserved at Uplistsikhe, but the interpretation of the site, and Hellenism in Georgia more generally, has received little scholarly attention outside of Georgian-language scholarship (Licheli 2007).}

Back along the Black Sea, growth in the burgeoning coastal city Dioscurias seems to have slowed in the third century, possibly because of regional instability hinted at in Classical literary sources, as well as eastward expansions of the ascendant Iberian kingdom to the east (Braund 1994:145). The site of Vani, however, continued to thrive, and saw a period of enlargement in the third century BCE.\footnote{177
In this, it’s fourth period, it perhaps became a cultic ‘temple-city,’ in the interpretation proposed by the site’s excavator (Kacharava and Kvirvelia 2008:67). Though not uniformly Greek stylistically, this period saw the construction of a round cultic building, as well as architectural details and new pottery shapes that have Hellenistic resonances (Kacharava and Kvirvelia 2009; O. Lordkipanidze 1991a, 1991b).}

Even less can be said about the early Hellenistic period in the eastern Caucasus, because of a lack of both literary and archaeological evidence. It is noteworthy, however, that the first textual reference to the Albanians in Greek or Latin literature recalls this period, describing how the Albanians fought on the side of Darius against Alexander (Arrian, Anab. 3.11.13).\footnote{178
It is worth noting that this account, although describing the late-fourth century BCE, comes down to us in the work of Arrian, writing in the second century CE.}

Although the Albanians do not show up in the earliest texts mentioning the region – the works of Herodotus and Xenophon – these Greek authors describe a number of other Caspian tribes inhabiting the coastal territories and inland areas near the Caspian.
According to Hellenistic descriptions thought to be preserved in Strabo, these groups include the Amardi, Anariacae, and Vitii (Strabo 11.8.8). These resistive groups clashed repeatedly with Achaemenid, Seleucid and Roman powers (Strabo 11.13.3-4; Syme 1988; Ter-Martirossov 2000), although the sources leave us with only a hazy picture of fierce warriors, often mounted. These resistive groups clashed repeatedly with Achaemenid, Seleucid and Roman powers (Strabo 11.13.3-4; Syme 1988; Ter-Martirossov 2000).

The eastern Caucasus may have witnessed a process of power consolidation similar to that which occurred in Iberia and Armenia, resulting in the rise of the Albanians. Nevertheless, our sources for the earlier Hellenistic period provide no such detail, and the archaeological picture discussed at length in chapters 6 and 7 is similarly murky. However, these eastern stretches of the Caucasus, and particularly Media Atropatene (which had been allowed to remain under the rule of the Persian satrap Atropates [Strabo 11.13]), preserved closer ties to the Iranian plateau than the rest of the Caucasus, which shaped historical trajectories in ways that are not reported in the preserved in the Greco-Latin corpus.

Finally, although not reflecting actual historical events from the Hellenistic period, authors began to focus on a particular and new mythical configuration of the space in this period, in which the Caucasus was connected to the successes of Alexander, despite his conspicuous absence from the region in reality. The insertion of Alexander

---

179 For example, on the character of one of these groups, the Cadusii, placed in the upland reaches of what are today the Talış mountains see Strabo 11.6.1, 7.1; Xenophon Cyro. 5.2.25, 5.3.22ff; Xenophon, Hellen. 2.1.13; Ctesias apud Diodorus, 2.2.3, 2.33.1-5. See also Meier (1940); Piller (2013); Schmitt (1990); Syme (1988).
into the Caucasus built on another of the mythic tropes of the Black Sea area: that of the Amazons (Braund 1994:12–13). These stories, connected first to the Alexander historian Kleitarchos (Strabo XI.5.4; Plut., Alex. 46.1, see also Meißner 2000:179–83), became widespread fodder in the Alexander Romance tradition (Meißner 2000:180), and were the subject of often skeptical interrogation among ancient historians (Diod. Sic. 17.77.1-3; Arr. Anab. 7.13.2-3).

Although the historical value of these accounts is limited, they provide a backdrop in front of which later authors were operating. Through the association with Alexander and his eastern campaign, the territory of the Caucasus became intimately entwined with the more distant lands of India, whose Hindu Kush mountains were depicted as part of the mountainous continuum that began in the Caucasus. Gradually, the Caucasus was assuming the reputation as a transit space marked by its connective potential (Meißner 2000), but also its stubborn refusal to conform to the patterns of civilized space.

**Geographic Digression: On the Passes of the Caucasus**

Before discussing the historical periods for which Greco-Latin textual sources provide greater detail, it is helpful to make a brief digression into the confusion among these Greek and Roman authors concerning the passes that connected the South Caucasus to its northern neighbors. Understanding the locations of these passes is important in constructing an accurate picture of events in the area, as they feature frequently in historical accounts. However, confusion about their identifications persists in both

---

180 This digression is a precursor to the final case study presented in this chapter, which considers the borders of Caucasian Albania in detail and examines the limits of positivistic readings of ancient geographical texts.
contemporary and ancient scholarship, even though the misunderstandings surrounding
the passes are somewhat surprising. The passes were critical chokepoints that allowed
threatening northern nomads to pour south and menace Roman territories. Roman authors
understood these routes as of central importance to their own security interests and to the
stability of affairs of Armenia, but they nevertheless accepted considerable uncertainty in
their historical accounts of the critical routes (Braund 1994:216).

The most common name used for a pass in the region is the ‘Caspian Gates’
(claustria caspia; claustra caspiarum; portae caspiae, πύλαι κάσπιαι).

Modern scholars have argued about the identity of this pass, typically suggesting that the ancient
authors were referring to one (or more) of three distinct passes under this name: (1) the
pass we today call the Dariatli gorge near Mount Kazbegi in modern Georgia; (2) the
Derbent pass along the Caspian in modern Dagestan; or (3) the Rhagae pass near modern
Reyy in Iran. The confusion about this term is not ours alone, and it in fact stems from an
ancient discrepancy. Pliny (N.H. 6.40) addresses the confused geographic accounts,
saying:

Corrigendus est in hoc loco error multorum… namque hi Caspias
appellavere portas Hiberiae quas Caucasias diximus vocari, situsque
depicti et inde missi hoc nomen inscriptum habent… sunt autem aliae
Caspis gentibus iunctae, quod dinoisci non potest nisi comitatu rerum
Alexandri Magni.

In this place we must correct a mistake made by many people… These
have given the name of Caspian Gates to the pass in Hiberia, which, as
we have stated, is called the Gates of the Caucasus, and maps of the
region sent home from the front have this name written on them. …
There are however other Caspian Gates adjoining the Caspian tribes;
the distinction between the two passes can only be established by

181 For the robust discussions about these confusing terms, see Bais (2001:81, n.326); Bosworth (1977:nn.
15, 24); Braund (1994:216, 230–31); Gadjiev (2007:499ff); Manandian (1948); E.L. Wheeler
(1977:56ff).
means of the report of those who accompanied the expedition of Alexander the Great (N.H. 6.40, trans. Rackham [Pliny 1938]).

His is only a partial correction, though. First, Pliny does not seem aware of the Derbent pass, distinguishing only between the Dariali and Rhagae pathways. Second, his attempted correction is not consistent with the pattern of use of a number of other ancient authors who clearly use the term ‘Caspian Gates’ to refer to the Dariali Pass (Suet. Nero 19; Tacitus, Ann. 6.33.3; Josepheus, Iud.Ant. 18.97; see Wheeler 1977:60). The term even shows up in the epigraphic record, on a grave stele found at Rome that commemorated an Iberian prince, which can only be connected to the Dariali pass (IGR 1.192).

As evidenced by the widespread use of the term, the ‘Caspian Gates’ appears to have become a standard Greco-Latin way to denote the idea of trans-Caucasus transit, “more or less crudely identified” (Braund 1994:216). In this type of movement, the Dariali Pass played a central role, and accordingly is often the space indicated by the term; but the deeper mythological associations of the term with the travels of Alexander, in combination with the unfamiliarity of the South Caucasus, means that we must exercise caution. The term appears often to have been used in an expansive sense to connote trans-Caucasus pathways in general.

Early Arsakid Consolidation and Republican Roman Advances under Pompey

Our knowledge of the political history of the Caucasus grows dramatically in the late Republican period, when the Caucasus took on new importance as a critical territory along a tumultuous frontier between Rome and her most troublesome imperial foe, Arsakid Parthia in the first century BCE. For the next several hundred years, these fights would result in bewildering dynastic intrigue, recorded at some length by contemporary
Roman historians. Before situating the eastern Caucasus in this period, it is helpful to consider the contours of the rapidly-expanding Arsakid territory.

The Arsakids began their political rise along the southeastern coast of the Caspian in the mid-third century B.C.E, following a weakening of Seleukid power in the region.\footnote{For an analysis that situates the histories of early Arsakid and Bactrian dynasties, see Lerner (1999).} Greco-Latin and Iranian sources concerning the (legendary?) eponymous founder, Arsaces, are conflicting (Pomp. Trogus/ Justin 12.4,12, 41.4.6-8; Am. Marc. 23.6.2; Strabo 11.9.2-3; Hauser 2005; Olbrycht 1998a:60ff). However, one oft-cited narrative places him as a Parni chief who was successful at consolidating power in the mid-third century BCE, following defections among Seleucid satrapies in the east (Bivar 1983:24–31; Brosius 2006:83–84; Curtis 2007:7; Wolski 1993:37ff). Although both Seleucus II and Antiochus III tried to regain the lost territory (Pomp. Trogus/ Justin 41.5.7), neither was entirely successful. Little is known about the years after Antiochus III’s partial recapture of the territory in ca. 209 BCE, when Parthia was ruled by Artabanus I.

The expansion of the Arsakid Empire began in earnest in the 170’s, with the reigns of Phraates I (ca. 176-171) and then especially under Mithridates I (ca. 171-138 BCE) (Bivar 1983:32).\footnote{On the role of cuneiform texts in understanding this period, see Shayegan (2011:60ff).} In the years around the death of Mithridates II (138/7 BCE), the Parthians began to come under pressure from mobile pastoralist Saka peoples on their eastern borders. The Saka, it is traditionally thought, had been displaced by Yueh-chi migrations from China, and had therefore begun to push west. The rule of Phraates II (138-127 BCE) was spent engaging with both the Seleucid army to his west, and the Saka to his east, to whom he eventually lost his life (Bivar 1983:36). So, the Arsakid empire...
controlled a gigantic territorial spread, from the Persian Gulf to the Indus, including Media in central and western Iran by the time of Mithridates II (124-88 BCE).

Nevertheless, the empire found itself under increasing pressure from the east, causing the Arsakid seat of power to shift westward, from Nisa (mod. Turkmenistan), to Ecbatana (mod. Hamadan, Iran) and then finally to Ctesiphon, near the old Seleucid capital at Seleucia-on-the-Tigris (mod. Baghdad, Iraq) (Hauser 2012:1004).

The last years of the reign of Mithridates II and the years following his death were a period of intense internal strife for the Parthians, featuring rival claimants for the throne, and a split in the Parthian dynastic line (Olbricht 2016). It was only under Phraates III (70-57 BCE) in the middle years of the first century BCE that the Arsakid and Roman Empires came into serious conflict. While the Arsakids had been consolidating power in the east since the mid-second century BCE (Bivar 1983), it was not conflict with Parthia that first brought the Romans to the Caucasus, but rather pursuit of the Pontic emperor Mithridates VI (ca. 120-63 BCE). Mithridates had found an ally in the Artaxiad ruler of Armenia, Tigranes II, and was also in control of Colchis (Braund 1989; Højte 2009). Mithridates’ growing power, as well as internal Roman competition, drew the general Lucullus to the region in 69 BCE, when he laid waste to Tigranes’ capital at Tigranocerta, where Mithridates had taken refuge. And then, after several years, the conflict brought yet another Roman general to the territory (Chaumont 1985), ending in Pompey’s campaign through the South Caucasus in 65 BCE (Plut. Pomp.).

---

184 With the Romans likely enticed by the general instability within the Arsakid dynasty (Gregoratti 2017:128).
185 On the location of Tigranocerta, see Bivar (1983:46).
Since the literary tradition surrounding this historical episode is discussed at length below, for now it will suffice to focus particularly on the new information with which we are provided with respect to local political and social organization through descriptions of this episode. Most notably, it is from accounts of this time that we get our first mention of a specific Albanian dynast, a King Oroses,\(^\text{186}\) who attacked Pompey’s forces during their march through the area.

We can also thank Pompey’s presence in the region for the most detailed description of Albania in Greco-Latin sources, provided by Strabo. Although written later, Quellenforschung has demonstrated that Strabo’s description of the Caucasus draws extensively on source material from the early days of Roman presence in the area,\(^\text{187}\) particularly the work of Theophanes of Mytilene, who was a companion to Pompey during his time the South Caucasus. Most importantly, it appears that Strabo’s overview of the population and military power of Albania is drawn from Theophanes, and thus corresponds to the situation in Albania in the early- or mid-first century BCE (Meißner 2000:184).

In his description, Strabo goes to great lengths to differentiate Iberia and Albania by the level of their sophistication and cultural development. This differentiation is a

---

\(^{186}\) There is an earlier rex Albaniae mentioned in conjunction with a gift of a dog to Alexander the Great in Pliny (N.H. 6.149), which reads: ‘Indiam petenti Alexandro Magno rex Albaniae dono dederat inusitatae magnitudinis unum <sc. canem>’ (Traina 2003:318), but the passing comment does not offer provide support for conjecturing about an Albanian consolidated kingship this early.

\(^{187}\) Source criticism has been a significant preoccupation of these local scholarship on Strabo, with Boltunova (1947), Trever (1959:1–11), K.H. Öliyev (1960), Babayev (1990:52) and Gadjiev (2009) all treating the topic. They base their interpretations largely on the work of Neumann 1881, 1883, Fabricius (1888), Honigmann (1931) and Dubois (1891). Communis opinio today prefers sources dating to the second/first century BCE, and highlights Theophanes of Mytilene and Hypsicrates as among the most important of his sources (Gadjiev 2009:26). For works on the sources for Strabo in regions just past the South Caucasus, see also Rostovtseff (1914), Olbrycht (2001).
tropic element of Strabo’s categorization of the world, with the peoples of the *oikoumene* radiating out from the Mediterranean in bands of increasing barbarity: the further from the center, the further to the north, the more barbarian (Dueck 2009:243; Ilyushechkina 2017). In this configuration, the Iberians come out as the more cultured, with the Albanians next, and the semi-mythical Amazons (localized by Strabo to the Caucasus highlands) standing in opposition to civilization. As Meißen (2000:184–85) has pointed out, Plutarch’s account of the Iberians and Albanians makes the two groups look rather more similar, although Plutarch too was drawing on Theophanes. In any case, the picture that emerges of the Albanians is confusing and contradictory.

Strabo’s Albanians don’t use money and live a life that Strabo himself cites as *cyclopedic* (11.4.3). They don’t make good use of their fertile land, but live in plenty despite their own simplicity (11.4.4). They are, however, able to field a larger army than the Iberians, and collaborate in military affairs with nomads, although the relations between the two groups are not always peaceful (11.4.5). Strabo also describes the territory’s frightening poisonous flora and fauna (11.4.6), as well as religious practice that includes human sacrifice (11.4.7). In a curious final coda, Strabo paints a more sympathetic picture of the group, citing their reverence for the aged, as well as their habit of burying their dead with coins (previously said not to be used among them).}

---

188 Meißen suggests that Theophanes’ description of the region painted both Iberians and Albanians in this quasi-barbaric light, and that the description of the Iberians preserved in Strabo therefore is augmented by information from a source beyond Theophanes (2000:186).

189 Meißen speculates that this section also comes from a source other than Theophanes (2000:185). Trever (1959:9) also suggests that the passage reflects an earlier source.
Amid this body of ethnographic material, Strabo’s description of the socio-political organization of the Albanians merits particular attention:

υνι μὲν οὖν εἰς ἄπαντων ἄρχει, πρῶτογον δὲ καὶ καθ’ ἐκάστην γλώτταν ἱδία ἐβασιλεύοντο ἐκαστὶ. γλώτται δ’ εἰσίν εἴὲ καὶ εἶναιν αὐτοῖς διὰ τὸ μὴ εὐεξίματον πρὸς ἀλλήλους.

For currently, one king rules all, but before each [of the groups] was ruled separately by kings of their own according to their languages. And, they have twenty-six languages, by which they lack easy means of interaction with one another (11.4.6, trans following Jones [Strabo 1917–1932]).

This passage provides explicit textual evidence for the type of consolidation that we know to be happening across the South Caucasus in the Hellenistic period. It situates the process, in the case of Caucasian Albania, in the late second century BCE or first half of the first century CE. It, furthermore, hints at a term that describes Albania’s political structure in this period: a *federation* of hitherto diverse populations.\(^{190}\)

The picture of diverse and overlapping groups living side by side in the region is reinforced by Pliny (*N.H.* 6.15) as well as Ptolemy (5.8), both of whom list a range of neighboring populations, including most significantly the Udi,\(^{191}\) Caspians (Hdt. 7.67; Strabo 11.8.8), Gargarians (Strabo 11.5.1), Sakasenians (Strabo 11.8.4, 11.14.4; Ptolemy 5.13.9), Gelians (Pliny *NH* 7.18; Strabo 11.7.1, 11.8.1), Sodians (Pliny *NH* 6.11, Ptolemy 5.12), and others (Hewsen 1982:33). The dispositions of these various groups and their

\(^{190}\) The term ‘federation’ or ‘confederation’ appears occasionally Anglophone in secondary literature to describe the Albanians. See E.L. Wheeler (1977:88) and Schulze (Schulze 2015a:376) The Russian term ‘союз’ (alliance, federation) is a mainstay of descriptions of the Albanians in this period (Trever 1959:46)

\(^{191}\) The Udi/ Uti (Udini) are the most frequent group mentioned in the ancient and medieval texts (Herodotus 3.93; 7.68; Strabo 11.7.1; Pliny *NH* 6.16, 8.2, 11.7; Ptolemy 5.12.4; Movsès Kalankatowacci 1. 4 [see Dowsett 1961, 4], Anania Širakac’i, *Aṣxarhac’oyc* 5.10a [see Hewsen 1992:77:65, m. 226, 163A]). The group that has also aroused the most contemporary interest because of the continued existence of a majority Christian population under the same name down to the present day. On the Udi and particularly their language, see Gippert et al. (2008); Schulze (2005, 2015a).
precise relationships to Albania are often unclear. In the case of the Caspians, however, we see a shift from their existence as an independent population at the time of Eratosthenes (Eratosthenes *apud* Strabo 11.8.8) to an extinct group whose lands have been assumed by the Albanians by the mid first century BCE (Theophanes *apud* Strabo 11.4.5), speaking to the same process of shifting social organization in the late Hellenistic period.

The process we are witnessing across the Caucasus in this period is analogous to that known from other spaces along the “violent edge of empire” (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992:1), where pressures from expanding state powers create new configurations within local populations. One common aftereffect is the emergence of ‘tribal’ structures, which are created by state agents as much as by local populations, as a way of imposing control through “clear political boundaries” onto spaces actually marked by “multilayered and constantly shifting allegiances” (Ferguson and Whitehead 1992:14). The idea that the Albanians in this period were less centralized than their Iberian neighbors is impossible to fully substantiate; but the emphasis of ancient authors on the diversity of the space, which stretches into the early Sasanian period, should not be ignored. The term ‘Albanian Federation’ captures the hazy picture glimpsed in the textual sources better than the idea of an Albanian state.

Archaeological material clearly relatable to the early years of Roman-Parthian presence in the northern South Caucasus and North Caucasus is scarce. The most notable exception comes from central Iberia, where a series of interconnected palace and temple spaces at Dedoplis Mindori and Dedoplis Gora developed in the second-first century
BCE (figs. 14, 15, 16) (Gagoshidze 1992, 2001; Furtwängler et al. 2008). These structures, and particularly the temples, look back to Achaemenid models for inspiration, as can be clearly seen in the modified bell-shaped column bases, as well as the porticoed tetrastyle main temple hall (Gagoshidze 1992). These features could either be explained as a reflection of Parthian models, or as an autochthonous re-animation of Achaemenid tropes which might actually have been understood as ‘local’ by this period. Less well-dated but also built on an eastward-looking model is the curious longitudinal columned hall from Armaztsikhe-Bagineti, with its Parthian-style column bases (O. Lordkipanidze 1991a:151). A series of poorly-published structures from Qəbələ, the capital of Caucasian Albania, might also fit with this local assemblage of public architecture, but as will be discussed in chapter 6 (p.277), these buildings are very difficult to date accurately. More generally, the beginning of local coin minting and the presence of imported coinages in the northern South Caucasus, also discussed in chapter 6 (p.307), provides some of the clearest evidence for the new configurations of local networks in this period, although it is difficult to connect this material to the precise historical events discussed above.

*From Carrhae through the Flavians: Imperial Jockeying*

By the mid first century BCE, following Pompey’s defeat of the Pontic Mithridates, the stage was set for the territory of Armenia to become the primary proxy battleground for Roman-Arsakid competition during the next hundred and twenty years (Keaveney 1982; Keitel 1978). But the decisive moment in this phase of Roman-Parthian

---

192 See further brief discussion of these structures in chapter 6, p.295.
relations was the defeat of the Roman army under Crassus at Carrhae in 53 BCE, which took place amid considerable internal dynastic struggle in Parthia (Bivar 1983:49). The peoples of the eastern Caucasus are mentioned only occasionally in conjunction with this jockeying in Roman historical sources, although an analysis of their participation belies the impression that they were marginal actors.

Pompey’s actions in the South Caucasus, whether intentionally aimed at bringing the region under Roman domination or not (Sherwin-White 1984:195–203), created conditions for an intensification of relations over the century and a half after his campaign, although the intensification was not consistent. The formal status of Albanian-Roman relations in this period is somewhat unclear, although it is possible that Albania became a ‘client kingdom’ (Wheeler 1977:97; 122, 2007:243). After Pompey, it was not until 37 BCE that a Roman general again entered the eastern Caucasus. The Arsakid emperor Orodes II (50–37 BCE), was however actively engaged in the Caucasus from early in his rule, particularly through a powerful dynastic marriage between his family and that of the Armenian king Artavades (Bivar 1983:56). In 37 BCE, the Romans re-entered the space, when one of Antony’s generals, P. Canidius Crassus, campaigned against the Iberian and Albanian kings, with the result that ἐν τοῖς βαρβάροις ὀνόμα καὶ κλέος ηὗ ἔτο τῆς Ἀντωνίου δυνάμεως (the name and fame of Antony’s power increased among the barbarians) (Plut. Ant. 34.10; see also Strabo 11.3.5; Cass. Dio 49.24.1). His campaign is generally considered to have been little more than

193 I hesitate to draw this conclusion, however, as it is based on analogies between the situation in Iberia and that in Albania. See chapters 6 and 7 for discussions of the material variations between these spaces, that suggest different types of relationships with neighbors.
grandstanding (Sherwin-White 1984:308), and to have brought few lasting political consequences for the territory’s relationship to Rome (Dąbrowa 1989:67). However, it seems unlikely that the local elites in the northern South Caucasus viewed the threats of these incursions so calmly. Events of a marginal scale in Roman eyes would have had outsized consequences for local populations.¹⁹⁵

We can speculate on some ramifications of these interactions: Strabo mentions that the Albanians would frequently collaborate with their mobile pastoralist neighbors when facing conflicts with outsiders (11.4.5), and thus the Roman aggression in the region likely affected the relationships between local settled and mobile pastoralist populations—a trend that is also noticeable archaeologically. The first mention of interaction between the Albanian confederation and the Roman Empire that does not include armed conflict comes from the Roman Emperor Augustus’ (27 BCE- 14 CD) Res Gestae, which lists the Albanians and Iberians as among the groups who sought amicitia with Augustus (RG 31).¹⁹⁶ There is little clarity about the nature of this petition and its implications for the disposition of the Caucasian dynasts.¹⁹⁷ Dąbrowa (1989:68) stresses that the activity was clearly initiated by the Caucasian rulers and therefore reflects their active participation and desire to establish mutual connections. Meißner (2000:189)

¹⁹⁴ For an alternative position that sees this moment central for Roman understanding of the geopolitical importance of the Caucasus, see Giardina (1995:96).
¹⁹⁵ See chapter 7, p.343 for more on this subject.
¹⁹⁶ nostrum amicitiam appitiverunt per legatos…Albanorumque rex et Hiberorum.
¹⁹⁷ See discussion of this period in E.L. Wheeler (1977:98 n. 129), who points out that although Mommsen believed that the Iberians and Albanians became client states during the time of the young Tiberius’ Armenia settlement ca. 20 BCE, the Iberians and Albanians are not explicitly mentioned in conjunction with this activity. Braund (1994:217) suggests that the king of Iberia “can only have paid close attention to Tiberius’ dealings with both Armenia and Parthia,” though these episodes didn’t make it into surviving literature.
focuses on the position of the Caucasus within the *Res Gestae*, where the territory is once again linked to India, reflecting the continued Mediterranean perception of the space as the edge of the world.

Whatever ideological potential the territory held for Augustus, it was also clear by the late first century BCE that Armenia had become the testing ground for both the Roman and Arsakid empires. Controlling the complex networks of alliances in the territories surrounding the highland Armenian core could play a defining role in the outcome of these skirmishes. This context explains Octavian/Augustus’ sustained support over several decades for Artavasdes of Media Atropatene and his son Ariobarzanes II in their struggles against both Arsakid and Armenian foes. Maintaining connections with Atropatene through this support gave the Roman emperor a foothold in the otherwise-impenetrable mountainous region.

The northern South Caucasus was, therefore, an ‘edge’ that became increasingly central in the first century CE. Our evidence is thin for the first third of the century, but the political relationships between the Iberians, the Albanians, and the Roman Empire that had begun under Augustus were sustained during this period (Tac. *Ann.* 4.5.2). After the death of the Armenian king Artaxias III in 34 CE, Tiberius sought Iberian cooperation to establish a more favorable (that is, a non-Arsakid supported) ruler in Armenia. According to Tacitus (*Ann.* 6.32-36) and Cassius Dio (58.26.1-4), Tiberius took advantage of a dispute within the Iberian royal family between the king, Pharasmanes,
and his younger brother, Mithridates, to turn both against Armenia.\(^{198}\) Pharasmanes secured support from his neighbors to the north and east,

contra Pharasmanes adiungere Albanos, accire Sarmatas, quorum sceptuchi utrimque donis acceptis more gentico diversa induere. sed Hiberi locorum potentis Caspia via Sarmatam in Armenios raptim effundunt. at qui Parthis adventabant, facile arcebantur, cum alios incessus hostis clausisset, unum reliquum mare inter et extremos Albanorum montis aestas impediret, quia flatibus etesiarum implentur vada: hibernus auster revolvit fluctus pulsoque introrsus freto brevia litorum nudantur.

Pharasmanes, however, attached Albanians and summoned Sarmatians. (Sarmatian rulers, taking gifts from each side by national habit, donned diverse loyalties.) The Iberi, advantageously positioned, rapidly poured Sarmatians against the Armenians along the Caspian road. Those arriving for the Parthians were easily repulsed. Their opponent had closed all entrances but one lying between the Caspian and Albania’s mountain flanks, which summer blocked. (The fords were swollen by Etesian winds. Winter’s south wind reverses the waves and, driving the sea inwards, lays bare the shallows.) (Tac. Ann. 6.33.2-3, trans. Damon [Tacitus 2012]).

The question of the Sarmatians in this passage will be discussed more fully below;\(^{199}\) here it is sufficient to note that the Albanians, Iberians and their northern neighbors participated in this action against Artabanus, with the Sarmatians explicitly allied with the Iberians (Wheeler 1977:107). Pharasmanes set upon Armenia and wrested control of the throne from the Arsakid-backed ruling family, handing power to his brother (Braud 1994:219–20; Dąbrowa 1989:69; Wheeler 1977:99–101). Mithridates, however, soon found himself out of power, called to Rome by the newly installed Gaius, and held in Rome until the ascension of Claudius in 41 CE,\(^{200}\) at which point Roman support

---

\(^{198}\) Josephus (B.J. 18.97) claims that Tiberius bribed the two parties.

\(^{199}\) Josephus (A.J. 18.97) calls the ‘Sarmatians’ in this story the ‘Alani,’ οἱ δὲ αὐτοὶ μὲν ἀντείχον, Ἀλανοὶ δὲ διοδὸν αὐτοῖς διδόντες διὰ τῆς αὐτῶν καὶ τὰς θύρας τὰς Κασπίας ἀνοίξαντες ἐπάγουσι τῷ Ἀρταβάνῳ. This part of the text is corrupt, however: for more discussion, see discussion of names below, p. 187.

\(^{200}\) The reasons for Gaius’ choice to remove him from power are not certain (Braud 1994:220
allowed him to retake the restive territory (Tac. *Ann.* 11.8.1-2).\(^{201}\) In subsequent years, however, unrest between the Iberian brothers grew, bringing intensified conflict to the region (Tac. *Ann.* 12.44-45). Eventually, Pharsamanes sent his son Radamistus on a successful mission to dethrone Mithridates in Armenia (Tac. *Ann.* 12.44.1-4).

Although the previous violent episode in Armenia was marked by Iberian-Albanian cooperation, Tacitus’ presentation of this later conflict suggests that the situation throughout the period was more complicated. Pharasmanes, searching for a cause of war against Mithridates, cites the latter’s refusal to support a war against the Albanians as his justification (Tac. *Ann.* 12.45.1).\(^{202}\) We know almost nothing about this war (Wheeler 1977:111), but the fact that it was advanced as a *casus belli* suggests that the episode was familiar within the region.

In the subsequent contest between the Romans and Arsakids over the status of Armenia, the Iberians found themselves on the losing side, while the consequences for Albania were less clear. The Arsakid king, Vologases I, was successful in installing his brother Tiridates in Armenia, expelling the Iberians and removing their access to the valuable Armenian territory, as well as their expansionist aims.\(^{203}\) It is clear that the Albanians did not cooperate with the Iberian-Roman alliance in this conflict. The best evidence comes from Tacitus (*Ann.* 13.41.1), where the Roman general Corbulo receives word that the target of his pursuit, the enemy king Tiridates, has sought refuge either

---

\(^{201}\) For Armenian sources on this period, see Schottky (1989:168–71)

\(^{202}\) *interim Pharasmanes belli causas confingit: proelianti sibi adversus regem Albanorum et Romanos auxilio vocanti fratrem adversatum.* On the date of this episode, see Schieber (1975:85)

\(^{203}\) It is not clear precisely what role the Albanians played in this period. For a fuller description, see Braund (1994:221–24); E.L. Wheeler (1977:113 ff).
among the Medes or the Albanians. E.L. Wheeler (1977:122) has framed this moment as a sign of the Albanians’ withdrawal from their previous status as a Roman client state. It certainly is possible that the Romans saw the situation this way. However, in the context of the realpolitik of the Caucasus, this incident rather highlights the fact that the Albanians may have been more concerned with the maintenance of local alliances (that is, an alliance with Tiridates) than with the concerns of their imperial neighbors.

Nero’s Armenian settlement in 64 CE resulted in a temporary agreement over Armenia, in the form of a Rome-sanctioned ascension of an Arsakid prince to the throne (Tacit. Ann. 14.26.2), which further reduced the relevance of the Iberians in Roman policy (Dąbrowa 1989:70). Shortly thereafter, Nero, perhaps motivated by unbounded ambition and inspired by the Alexander’s supposed conquest of the Caspian territories (Suet. Nero 19.2; see also Braund 1994:225), laid the plans for an ambitious military action against the Albanians in 68 CE that would have brought the Romans to the shores of the Caspian (Pliny NH 6.15; Tac. His. 1.6.2; Suet. Nero 12.2; Cass. Dio 63.8.1).

Because this campaign was abandoned in the wake of Nero’s untimely death, much about it will always remain a mystery. It has, however, aroused considerable historical interest and speculation (Anderson 1934; Gadjiev 2007; Kolendo 1982; Manandian 1946; Schur 1925). One central question in modern research has been whether Nero intended to engage with the Albanoi or the Alanoi—whether he had his sights on the ‘Sarmatians’ of the northern reaches of the Caucasus or on the local polity of the eastern Caucasus. Mommsen, who saw the ‘Sarmatians’ to be the greater threat to the region, emended the text of Tacitus’ account of this activity, replacing Albanoi with
Alanoi (Mommsen 1881: V:394 n. 1; see also Bosworth 1976: 74 n. 75). Although some have followed Mommsen’s emendation, other analyses of the Roman objectives in the eastern Caucasus suggest that it was incorrect: Nero had ample reasons to pursue a campaign against the Albanians (Braund 1994: 225; Trever 1959: 125; Wheeler 1977: 123). From a Roman perspective, greater control in the eastern Caucasus would have had several beneficial consequences: (1) a reduced possibility of Albanian-Sarmatian collusion, which threatened Roman Asia Minor as well as Iberia (Wheeler 1977: 123; but cf. Kolendo 1982: 25); (2) a stabilized power base to protect Armenia from falling further into Arsakid hands, and (3) possibly also an ability to capitalize on trade routes through the area (again cf. Kolendo 1982: 25).

Gadjiev (2007: 504) has recently suggested that the either-or scenario presented by modern scholars concerning Roman aims in the region (either the Albanians or the Alans) is too simplistic. He points out that the territory of the eastern Caucasus appears to have been a zone of considerable interaction between traditional archaeological markers of mobile pastoralist groups and of the settled populations, particularly in mortuary material (Gadjiev 2007: 507–8). Following Gadjiev, I suggest that Roman objectives in the region were not simplistic or one-sided, and likely included a combination of all three factors noted above. But, I think it is also important to stress that, from the Roman perspective, this was an action against the people they knew as the Albanians—their understanding of the social complexities of relationships between settled and mobile pastoralists in the region does not appear to have been sophisticated. Their target, then,
was the Albanian federation, which had stubbornly refused to side unambiguously with Roman authorities, and which controlled territory of increasing strategic importance.

Regional tensions continued to flare under the Flavians. These tensions were demonstrated in an episode in 72 CE when the the Alans attached Media and Armenia. The event is known to us only from an account in Josephus (Bell. Iud. 7.7.4; see also Wheeler 1977:124–30), which states that the Alans in this case invaded not via the Caucasus, but instead via a route along the southern shores of the Caspian. The geography here is complex. The Alans are said to have circled all the way around the Caspian to make their invasion. Although this route has elicited a fair amount of skepticism in the literature (Bosworth 1977:223 n. 24), it does hint at Circumcaspian connections that will be discussed in chapter 7. In any case, the main target of this set of Alan raids was the Arsakid empire and its allied territories, with Roman territories in Anatolia purposively avoided (Bosworth 1977:224).

The broader pattern of general unrest and unease in the east led to significant Roman border reorganizations in the period, though there is debate about how organized this policy really was (Dąbrowa 1989). In any case, it is likely that this renewed period of activity along the eastern fringes of Roman space included a visit of at least some part of a Roman legion to the Caspian Sea (Grosso 1954), accounting for one of the two large lapidary inscriptions from this period in the eastern Caucasus.²⁰⁴ The other lapidary inscription is a Greek-language funerary inscription, held in the Georgian National

²⁰⁴ In addition to these two extant inscriptions, Trever also reports several bricks from the area of Nic that were discovered in 1907, which featured Greek inscriptions. She, however, was not able to ascertain if they still existed, and did not see them herself (1959:342).
History Museum. It, apparently, was reused, and was found in the wall of a bath house in
the Nuxa district (mod. Böyük Dəhnə) in 1902 (fig. 17).

The inscription of more interest, here, however was found carved on a rock near
the ancient petroglyph site of Qobustan, south of the Abşeron peninsula, recording the
presence of a centurion, Lucius Julius Maximus (figs. 18, 19):

IMP DOMITIANO  
CAESARE AVG  
GERMANIC  
L IVLIVS  
MAXIMVS |  
LEG XII FVL

It is generally dated to between 84 and 96 CE, and is thought to relate to the presence of
either the entire 12th Legion Fulminata (or some detachment thereof) along the Caspian
shores, as part of the above-mentioned Flavian border realignments (Cəfərzədə 1948;
Iampol’skii 1950; Pakhomov 1949a; Tumbil’ 1948).

The historical context of this inscription is unclear—but it should not be taken as
proof that the Flavians “subjugated Albania,” as Dabrowa has argued (1989:72). Instead,
the inscription testifies to a further stage of interaction between the Roman imperial
authorities and local populations in the region. This inscription comes from a prominent
petroglyph site in the vicinity of a broad corpus of locally carved petroglyphic imagery
dating back centuries. It is not plausible to believe that the Roman legion wandered

---

205 See Trever (1959:340–41) for more information and full bibliography on this piece. According to
Trever’s reading, the inscription is Αἰλίος Ἰάσων Εὐνώνῃ τῷ Ἐος ὑπεγέτη μνήμης χάριν.
206 This site has often been misidentified in Anglophone scholarship, with claims that “the Soviet first
publication carefully concealed the exact location of Bejuk Dag” (Bosworth 1976:75). The first
publication by Cəfərzədə is, however, explicit in naming the location. It comes from a spot about 45 km
south of Baku, which was not a fortress (again pace Bosworth [1977: 226]), but instead features a large
collection of petroglyphs in close proximity. The site is also very near to a large field of mud volcanoes,
which must have been quite an unfamiliar site for the Roman soldiers.
there by accident. Rather, the choice to situate this new ‘petroglyph’ alongside much older local ones seems a clear sign of significant engagement between local residents and Roman military authorities, located at a prime place for accessing both land and Caspian Sea routes (see fig. 74 for location of Qobustan).

Similarly, there is a Greek inscription from near the Iberian capital of Armaztsikhe-Bagineti that details the assistance of Roman military engineers in the construction of fortifications for the city in approximately this period (fig. 20). Again, this inscription should not be read as a sign of Roman dominance, but rather as a “symptom of” Rome’s renewed interest in the Caucasus (Braund 1994:230; but, for an alternative, see Bosworth 1977:227).

The stakes of this conversation about Roman domination in the South Caucasus in the Flavian period touch on a key issue for this dissertation: how does Roman imperial policy articulate itself along this multipolar frontier? Bosworth follows a traditional model, seeing a passage from Statius (Silv. 4.4.63-4) which lists the Caspian Gates as a place to which a young Roman military might be sent, as a sign that “it was now the Romans, not the kings of Iberia and Albania, who would determine the movements of the Sarmatians to the north” (Bosworth 1977:227). Given the absolute scarcity of archaeological or textual evidence suggesting a sizeable Roman presence in the territory, this is an untenable proposition. Instead the challenge for the Roman generals, governors,

---

207 There are reports of another Latin inscription from along the Aras river, seen in 1930 though not fully recorded or published. See Iampol’skii (1950:182); Trever (1959:354 n. 2) for the report of this piece.
and emperors was how to entice and orchestrate local collaboration in the service of Roman goals. The situation of the Arsakid emperors was quite similar.

The High Empire

In keeping with the general trajectory that began with Pompey’s activities, the South Caucasus became an ever-more important intermediary between Rome, the Arsakid empire, and the Steppe populations of the North Caucasus during the second century. All of this happened against the backdrop of Roman activity in Armenia, and particularly Trajan’s establishment of the short-lived province of Armenia, attested by Latin inscriptions from Artashat concerning a Roman garrison under Trajan in the area in 114/115 CE (Tonikyan 1992). Of particular interest to the eastern Caucasus, as part of his settlement of Armenia and surrounding territories, Trajan is said to have given a king to the Albanians (Eutrop. 8.3.1-2), although the references are brief and the precise sense is not clear.

Along with the continued intensification of ties, the period also saw a continuation of local tensions. We know, for example, that the Iberian king Pharasmanes II ran afoul of Hadrian, due to an aggressive campaign that he launched against his Albanian neighbors, resulting in incursions of steppe tribes into Anatolia (SHA Had. 17.10-12; Dio 69.15.1-2). The heightened regional tensions once again involved mobile

---

209 Although the involvement of Rome in this area between the Flavian period and Trajan is unclear (Wheeler 1977:213ff).
210 Albanis regem dedit. This sense is repeated in Festus (Brev. 20). The Albanians are perhaps one of the people for whom affairs were settled without battle (Cass. Dio 68.18.3). See E.L. Wheeler (1977:218–19).
pastoralists. The power of the Alans also continued to grow in the second century, having come to widespread attention in 72 CE, at the time of their aforementioned sweep around the Caspian (Bosworth 1977:223), followed by a more dramatic incursion in 135 CE, in which the Iberians called on Alan allies (Wheeler 1977:227ff).

We have a unique source of information about the behavior of the Alans in the second century, in Arrian’s *Order of Battle against the Alans* (Ἐκταξις κατὰ Ἀλανῶν), a fragmentary text that describes his successful defeat of Alans as the legate of Cappadocia in the 130’s (Bosworth 1977; Wheeler 1977). The same battle is mentioned by Cassius Dio (69.15). He says that it was instigated by Pharsasmenes, and that it targeted first not Cappadocia, but actually Albania and Media, and only later involved Armenia and Cappadocia, after the Arsakid king Vologases gave the Alans gifts in exchange for leaving his territory alone. According to Dio, their progress into Roman territory was cursory, as they were frightened away by Arrian.

The idea that the Iberians and the Alans had close relations has already been discussed in conjunction with Strabo, and is also attested by a range of onomastic and later historical evidence (Braund 1994:210–11; Wheeler 1977:229–31). These connections have also recently been discussed archaeologically (Sagona, Sagona, and Michalewicz 2017). Although the data is difficult to interpret, there does seem to be a consistent pattern of extensive ties between the Iberian elites and their northern neighbors. E.L. Wheeler, in his study of the Alan invasion, suggests that it was fundamentally entangled with simmering regional tensions between Iberia and Rome.
In any case, a subsequent visit of Pharasmanes to Rome under Antoninus Pius (SHA Ant. Pius 9.6.) – a trip attested by epigraphic evidence at Ostia (Braund 1991) – suggests that these difficulties were eventually resolved (Wheeler 1977:227ff).

Despite the internal complexities of this region, local elites began to appear in the epigraphic record outside of the Caucasus, marking the expanded universe of connections for the region’s ruling class. Beyond the inscriptions concerning Pharasmanes’ trip to Rome, there is also a Greek epitaph marking the death of an Iberian prince while fighting on the side of Trajan (IGRR 1.192; Braund 1994:230; Wheeler 1977:220–21), which was found at Rome and which demonstrates the deep connections between Rome and the Iberian elites.

In Iberia, in addition to the ‘soft power’ of Roman building assistance seen already in the late first century CE, we also see a marked increase in the volume of luxury Roman goods in the second century, particularly silver vessels, which should be understood in the context of elite gift exchange (Braund 1994:236–37). Although fewer in number, silver vessels also appear in the eastern reaches of Albanian territory in this period, and fit into the same pattern (Qoşqarlı 1978, 1979).

Finally, the third century CE, which saw the rise of the Sasanian empire, was a period of relative literary silence in the Greco-Latin record, perhaps as a result of changing Roman imperial priorities. The Sasanians were successful in a task that neither the Romans nor the Parthians ever attempted in earnest: controlling the eastern reaches of Caucasia.
Beyond Histories

Although the source material outlined above is not particularly abundant by the standards of the Roman historian, there is enough to sketch the broad outlines of a story. The rest of this chapter explores the particular distortions that develop because of this marginal textual presence.

POMPEY: HISTORY FOR WHOSE SAKE?

In the first example, I provide a close examination of the textual accounts of one episode of early Roman contact with the South Caucasus—the campaign of Pompey the Great. Although this exercise provides a more detailed description of the episode, my principal interest lies in establishing how this episode functions in Roman historical narrative. We will see how historical events from the South Caucasus could be massaged to fit a variety of ideological and programmatic goals. I argue that the unfamiliar Caucasus was an easy site of manipulation and projection for Roman authors. It was a physically distant space, one with which few Romans had any direct connections, and it therefore offered historians a temptingly blank slate.

Background for Pompey’s Campaign

The final years of the Third Mithridatic War are the backdrop for Pompey’s campaign—with Mithridates’ flight northward out of Armenia sparking Pompey’s circuitous pursuit of him, through the eastern Caucasus. The region, while geographically removed from the main battles of the Mithridatic Wars, was certainly involved with the conflict even before Pompey’s invasion. Plutarch’s Lucullus attests that the Iberians and Albanians were fighting on the side of Tigranes in Lucullus’ battles against the Armenian
ruler in 69 BCE (Plut. Luc. 26.4). Coastal Colchis, of course, was even more involved in
the conflict. Mithridates had a unique relationship with Colchis, since this territory
provided him with critical support for his naval fleet perhaps through provision of lumber
(Strabo, 11.2.18),\(^{211}\) and conflicts over Colchis had played a central role in the Second
Mithridatic War (App. Mithr. 64). It was to Colchis that Mithridates retreated during the
winter of 66 BCE, when he had been driven out of Armenia (App. Mithr. 101-2). But the
reasons that Pompey may have had for engaging with the Albanians and Iberians (who
were not on the direct path from Armenia to Colchis) deserve discussion.

**Textual Accounts**

The following are the extant mentions of this episode, in chronological order
according to date of composition:

1) Livy *Periochae* 101.4. (Composition from late 1\(^{st}\) c. BCE/ early 1\(^{st}\) c. CE, epitome from 4\(^{th}\) c. CE)
2) Pomp. Trogus/ Justin 42.3.4. (Composition from late 1\(^{st}\)
c. BCE/ early 1\(^{st}\) c. CE, epitome possibly from 2\(^{nd}\) c. CE, or (Syme) the 4\(^{th}\) c. CE.)\(^{212}\)
3) Velleius Paterculus 2.40.1. (ca. 25-30 CE.)\(^{213}\)
4) Frontinus *Strategemata* 2.3.14. (ca. 85 CE.)\(^{214}\)
5) Plutarch *Pompey* 34-36.1 (Late 1\(^{st}\) c. CE/ early 2\(^{nd}\) century CE.)\(^{215}\)

---

\(^{211}\) See also Braund (1994:157–59) for a survey of scholarship on this point, as well as an overview of
Mithridates’ activities in Colchis. Braund 1994:157–59 for a survey of scholarship on this point, as well
this point, as well as an overview of Mithridates’ activities in Colchis.

\(^{212}\) On the date, see Yardley (2003)

\(^{213}\) On the date, see Woodman (1975:282)

\(^{214}\) On the date, see Turner 2007:428 ff)

\(^{215}\) On the date, see Jones (1966:72)
6) Florus 1.40.21 (ca. 140 CE.)
7) Appian *Mithridatic Wars* 103. (ca. 150 CE.)
8) Cassius Dio *Roman History* 36.54, 37.1-6. (ca. 220 CE.)

Within these sources, both the motivations for Pompey’s campaign and its sequence of events differ significantly.


In approaching the confusing textual sources, these authors tend to weave together a narrative of Pompey’s proposed actions based on a composite account, combining elements from various ancient authors. But, there are serious pitfalls in trying to generate a composite history from a mix of authors.

The nine accounts of Pompey’s roundabout pursuit of Mithridates differ sharply in scope, tone and intent, to say nothing of context of composition and date. They share only the kernel of a story, which is the account in the epitome of Livy’s book 101.4, which therefore provides a straightforward entry point into the corpus. It says only:

```
Cn. Pompeius cum Mithridaten persequeretur in ultimas ignotasque gentes penetravit. Hiberos Albanosque, qui transitum non dabant, proelio vicit.
```

---

216 On the date, see Den Boer (1972:2)
217 On the date, see Bucher (2000:416)
218 On the date, see Barnes (1984)
219 On the date, see Den Boer (1972:114 ff)
Gnaeus Pompey, when he was pursuing Mithridates, penetrated into the final and unknown peoples. He defeated the Iberians and Albanians in battle, who were not providing him with passage (101.4).

These are the main details: Pompey, in a far distant land, chasing Mithridates, is able to defeat those blocking his path, who were the last of the unknown peoples. This simple account embodies the attitude from Rome’s center about this episode—Rome was powerful enough to police its borderland zones as necessary, and Pompey was the vehicle through which this dominion was exercised.

This is the simplest account against which to compare the other accounts of the episode. Of the nine accounts, three are epitome-like in their brevity (Velleius Paterculus, Florus and Eutropius), three are expanded accounts of the activity (Plutarch, Appian, Cassius Dio), and two emphasize specific parts of the interaction, rather than the engagement generally (Justin and Frontinus).

*The brief: Velleius, Florus and Eutropius*

That each brief account emphasizes slightly different parts of the Pompey story places into high relief that the the written narrative was shaped by the perspectives of the authors, as much as by the historical events themselves. The closest in simplicity to Livy’s epitome is Velleius Paterculus’, which adds little factual detail to the story-kernel, but introduces editorial commentary about Pompey. Given the centrality of Pompey in late Republican history, authorial depictions of his eastern campaigns are frequently entangled with authorial opinions about the man himself. Like Livy, Velleius Paterculus was writing from a position at the center of the Roman world—an author of the early
Principate writing under Tiberius and dedicating his work to Marcus Vinicius, consul in
30 CE.\textsuperscript{220} Thus, in Velleius, Pompey’s march is told as follows:


Then, these were the following military affairs of Gnaeus Pompey, about which it is difficult to say whether the glory [they brought] or the labor [they required] was greater. Media, Albania and Iberia were invaded in victory; then, the troops were shifted against those nations that inhabit the interior to the right of the Black Sea, the Colchians, Heniochi and Achai. And, Mithridates, the last of all the independent kings except the Parthians, was crushed, under the auspices of Pompey, but by a plot of his son Pharnaces (2.40.1).

A recent analysis by Seager (2011:303–4) of the treatment of Pompey throughout Velleius argues that Velleius tries to focus on Pompey’s military exploits in order to avoid the dangerous territory of discussing his political activities.

Nevertheless, Velleius’ ambivalence about Pompey’s Caucasus campaign is noteworthy. Most damning is the line oppressus auspiciis Pompei, insidiis filii Pharnacis. Here, in what Seager (2011:291) calls a “vitriolic epigram,” Velleius roundly criticizes the effort of Pompey’s campaign, since Mithridates was killed under Pompey’s watch, but by internal insidiousness. So, the great energy expended by Pompey to catch him was for naught. Nevertheless, in keeping with Velleius’ tendency to put a positive spin on Pompey’s military exploits and on the expansion of Rome more generally, the general is shortly thereafter named ‘conqueror of all the nations which he had passed through’ (victor omnium quas adierat gentium, 2.40.2).

\textsuperscript{220} For a survey of modern recent work on the subject, see Rich (2011); Woodman (1975).
This author, embedded in the power structure at Rome in the early Principate, uses the Caucasus episode as an opportunity to launch fairly specific criticisms at Pompey, among them, that his ambitions were out of scale. At the same time, Velleius is still able to support the larger program of imperial expansion, making explicit the great extent of his conquests. For Velleius, the Caucasus themselves were simply the background for a discussion far more interested in Pompey’s character than in his specific actions.

Proceeding chronologically, the next brief account comes from Florus, the epitomizer of ambiguous identity writing in the mid-second century CE (Baldwin 1988; Den Boer 1972:Ch. 1). He, in fact, mentions Albania and Iberia twice, and gives the two nations a greater measure of both self-determination and individuality than the other brief accounts already discussed. The first mention comes as part of a list of peoples who rallied to support Mithridates following his disastrous siege of Cyzicus:

Hiberi, Caspii, Albani et utraque sollicitantur Armeniae, per quae Omnia decus et nomen et titulos gloriae Pompeio suo Fortuna quaebat.

The Iberians, the Caspians, the Albanians, and both the Armenian peoples were rallied to his cause, Fortune thus seeking fresh opportunities to win honor, fame and new titles of glory for her own Pompey (1.40.21, trans. Forster [Florus 1929]).

The presentation of the Iberians and Albanians gives them a direct role in the battles following Mithridates’ Cyzicus defeat, and therefore makes them more important regional actors. This is the only such mention in any of the accounts of the Mithridatic wars.

The second mention by Florus of the South Caucasus describes Pompey’s expedition into Albanian and Iberian territory; its placement deserves an initial comment.
In 1.40.23-26, immediately preceding the Caucasian digression, Florus details the last formidable battle of Mithridates against Pompey. He recounts that on a moonlit night, Mithridates lost the war (et Mithridates quidem nocte illa debellatus est, 1.40.24). Florus likens the subsequent behavior of Mithridates like that of a snake, writhing and flailing its tail even after its head has been crushed and death is imminent, as Mithridates was about to be killed by the plot of his own son (1.40.26). Pompey’s foray into the Caucasus follows this reference. His expedition is described as a pursuit of the remains of rebellious Asia (rebellis Asiae reliquias, 1.40.27), rather than of Mithridates himself, who no longer poses any threat. Pompey’s trip takes him first into Armenia, where he captures Artaxata and then allows a repentant Tigranes to retain his kingdom. Then:

And in the north, following the route to Scythia by the stars, just as [the sailors] in the sea, he defeated the Colchians, pardoned the Iberians, and spared the Albanians. With a camp having been pitched under the Caucasus themselves, he ordered the king of them, Orodes, to descend into the plain, but Arthoces, who was ruling the Iberians, to hand over his children as hostages; [Pompey] even rewarded Orodes, with Orodes also sending from his own Albania a gold bed and other gifts (1.40.28).

In a very brief account, Florus takes pains to distinguish the two nations, and to describe the differences in their treatment at the hands of Pompey—with Arthoces sending his children as hostages, but Orodes receiving (and sending) gifts. Both of these treatments—the taking of hostages and reciprocal gift-giving—are tropes of Roman foreign policy, and appear in various accounts of the Romans in the eastern Caucasus. Indeed, two of the three more extended accounts (Dio’s and Plutarch’s) differentiate
between the two nations in this way. But given the brevity of this account, Florus has made a choice in including this level of detail.

As modern scholarship on Florus has noted, the much-maligned ‘epitomizer’ was not just copying Livy, but was instead both relying on a range of sources and crafting his own narrative arc (Den Boer 1972:chap. 1). Several alterations are clear in this passage. Livy, along with most of the other accounts, describes the final death and defeat of Mithridates after Pompey’s pursuit to the Caucasus, thus framing Pompey’s assaults in the Caucasus as part of the pursuit of Mithridates (Livy Perioch. 101-102). Florus’ alteration increases the prestige of rebellis Asiae reliquiae by making these nations intended targets of Pompey’s actions, rather than collateral damage. The detail he introduces, differentiating between the two nations of the northern South Caucasus, furthermore gives these peoples a greater measure of individuality and identity—greater prestige.

Florus’ emphasis on national individuality and gift-giving might well reflect the influence of imperial policy of Florus’ own historic period, which seeps into the his account of events some 200 years earlier. No matter when in the second century one wants to date Florus, he would have likely been familiar with accounts about contemporary political strategies in the Caucasus, which featured an individual recognition of the two states (since the Iberian king of that era, Pharasmanes, was engaging in acts of aggression against his Albanian neighbors [Dio 69.15.1-2]), as well as

221 For a recent overview of opinions about the dating of Florus, see Lavin (2013:126 n.4).
dependency on gift-exchange as a mechanism of imperial outreach (SHA, *Had.* 13.9-10; 17.10-12; 21.13).

It is also possible, however, to interpret Florus’ more generous treatment of the borderland peoples as a product of sympathy that he felt for those conquered by the Roman Empire. A recent analysis by Lavan traces the use of language of servitude in Florus and Cassius Dio, and suggests that the two authors share a preoccupation with the plight of the nations ‘enslaved’ by Rome during her expansion (Lavan 2013).

The final of the brief accounts comes from Eutropius’ *Breviarium ab urbe condita*. Commissioned by the emperor Valens and composed in 369/70 CE (Burgess 2001:66), this account was written by a man who himself had accompanied Julian on his eastern campaign (See also Eutrop. *Brev.* 10.16). Eutropius, who relied on earlier *Kaisergeschichte* as well as other now-lost histories in crafting his historical overview, cast Pompey as the hero of the mid-first century BCE political struggle (Bird 1990:88).

This account recognizes individual courses of action of each northern South Caucasian polity, acknowledges gift giving, and also introduces the additional wrinkle of multiple conquests:

Pompeius mox etiam Albanis bellum intulit et eorum regem Oroden ter vicit, postremoper epistulas ac munera rogatus veniam ei ac pacem dedit. Hiberiae quoque regem Artacem vicit acie et in deditionem accept.

Soon after, Pompey also made war upon the Albani, and defeated their king Orodes three times. Finally, being begged through letters and gifts, he gave to him mercy and peace. And he also defeated Artaces, the king of Iberia, in battle, and he received him in surrender (6.14).

Unlike earlier authors, who struggled with attributing to Pompey both military and political greatness, Eutropius felt no such qualms. Even in his brief look at the South
Caucasus, Eutropius allows Pompey to be both the valiant warrior (…Oroden ter vicit; …vicit acie et in deditionem accepit) and the smooth politician (…rogatus veniam ei ac pacem dedit). And so, while Eutropius gives the Albanians and Iberians status as independent actors, his primary emphasis is on Pompey’s beneficence and military triumph. The account is also the only of the brief mentions to note that Pompey did not conquer the region just once, but rather thrice. The concept of multiple conquests of Pompey in the region appears in the Dio’s and Plutarch’s longer accounts, but is left out of the other brief mentions. One wonders, particularly in light of contemporary Roman campaigns in former Parthian territory, whether the emphasis on repeated conquests had contemporary resonances for Eutropius.

*The digressions: Pomp. Trogus/ Justin and Frontinus*

The accounts of Iberia and Albania preserved in Justin and Frontinus are both suitably brief enough to have been included in the above section of short references. However, in contrast to the overview histories of Livy, Velleius, Florus, and Eutropius, Justin and Frontinus’ mentions of Albania appear outside of traditional historical narratives. While Justin’s *Historiae Philippicae* is itself a straightforward history, the mention of Albania appears as part of an embedded myth, rather than as part of the running political history. Frontinus’ mention, meanwhile, comes from an overview of battle tactics.

Justin’s work engenders much disagreement among modern scholars. The date of Pompeius Trogus’ original is generally accepted as Augustan, and Trogus himself is acknowledged to have been a Romanized Gaul (Yardley 2003:3). Beyond this,
disagreement abounds—about Trogus’ attitude to the Roman empire; about the date of and identity of Justin, the so-called epitomizer; and about the liberties Justin took in representing Trogus’ work (Adler 2011:37). Despite all of these challenges, Justin is an invaluable text for historians of the Parthian-Roman interactions, although a problematic one.222

In book 42 Justin launches into a digression about the historical ties that bound Armenia and the Caucasus to the Mediterranean world through the mythical character Jason. Jason, he recounts, was said to be the first human after Hercules to have subdued that quarter of the world (eam caeli plagam, 42.3.2), and appointed kings to some of the nations. Justin appointed no kings to the Albanians, though:

Cum Albanis foedus percussit, qui Herculem ex Italia ab Albano monte, cum Geryone extincto armenta eius per Italiam duceret, securi dicuntur, quique memores Italicae originis exercitum Cn. Pompei bello Mithridatico fratres salutauere.

With the Albanians he made an alliance, they who are said to have followed Hercules out of Italy, from the Alban mount, where after Geryon was killed, he was leading his herds through Italy, and who, mindful of their Italian origins, saluted the soldiers of Pompey as brothers, during the Mithridatic War (42.3.4).

Justin is the only account of the region to mention the blood ties of the Albanians. It is also the only one that includes a reference to the soldiers of Pompey as having been seen as fratres to the Albanians. Patterson postulated that this indicates that Pompey was using kinship diplomacy during his time in the Caucasus, since the story is presumably a Roman, rather than local, invention (L. E. Patterson 2002). He furthermore suggests that there is reason to believe that the historical account embedded in the myth, that is, the

222 For a survey of this scholarship, see Adler (2011:chap. 2).
interaction between Pompey’s troops and the Albanians, came from Trogus’ hand rather than Justin’s, as Trogus’ uncle was a high-level commander in Pompey’s army, and could have had first-hand knowledge of the campaign (L. E. Patterson 2002:320; Just. 43.5.12.).

Another facet of this passage deserves attention: it casts Albania in a distinct and important role. Modern literature tends to either overlook or downplay the presence of Albania in the historical accounts. And, indeed, Iberia is more-often mentioned, particularly in later accounts. But in the period of Pompey at least, this passage suggests a central role for Albania. The other digression, from Frontinus’ *Strategemata*, could confirm this. This passage describes Pompey’s strategy in the face of the Albanians, an enemy superior both in numbers and in cavalry (*hostes et numero et equitatu praevalebant* 2.3.14). No mention is made of fighting the Iberians.

*The extended: Plutarch, Appian and Cassius Dio*

Perhaps surprisingly, the three longer accounts of Pompey’s time in the South Caucasus, from Plutarch’s *Pompey*, Appian, and Cassius Dio, are easier to make sense of than the fragmentary mentions already discussed. All three were written in Greek by authors from the East, each of whom had a different relationship with the Roman Empire. Appian and Cassius Dio were each writing a universal history, although their historiographical programs differed in many ways, and they were separated in time by

---

223 This greater prominence of Iberia may be reflected in the visit of the Iberian king Pharasmanes to Rome under Antoninus Pius, *SHA Ant. Pius*. 9.6
nearly a century. Plutarch, on the other hand, was writing his *Life of Pompey* as part of a series of moralizing biographies, where Pompey is paired with Agesilaus.

Plutarch’s account is the earliest of the three long references, and is often the principal account that historians rely on to reconstruct Pompey’s movements, usually paired with that of Cassius Dio. The two accounts are quite similar in structure (see page 178 for comparison). However, the comparison also reveals some key variations—for one, the two provincial voices speak in very different terms about Pompey. Some of these variations can be explained because of the difference of purpose between the two authors—Plutarch’s biographic moralizing did not require that he be as accurate about time as Dio. He is much less specific about when things are happening, conflating events that Dio separates by a winter. He also shortens the battle scenes, concentrating on result rather than process. Other variations are more substantive. Plutarch makes Pompey less aggressive in his interactions with the eastern South Caucasus. His campaign through the South Caucasus is compulsory (ἀναγκαίως, 34.1). He attacks only when attacked (the Albanians), or when his path is blocked (the Iberians). And when he makes the decision to turn back against Albania after having reached Colchis, it is because he heard that the Albanians had once again revolted against him (Ἀλβανοὶ δὲ ἀφεστῶτες αὐτῷ 35.1).

The favorable impression of Pompey throughout is manifest throughout. This presentation sits well within a larger argument about the text advanced by de Wet, who

---

224 See Gowing (1992) for a discussion of how these differences shaped the historians’ depictions of the subsequent Late Republican epoch.

225 In particular, see Braund’s account.
postulates that Plutarch intentionally downplayed negative aspects of Pompey’s career preceding his third triumph. The over-positive presentation makes Pompey’s fall from grace all the more dramatic (De Wet 1981:129).

Dio, writing considerably later in the third century CE and without the pressure of crafting a moralizing biography, casts Pompey in a different light. Dio’s Pompey is eager for revenge against the Albanians (σφόδρα ἐπεθύμει, 36.4.1), and is dogged in his pursuit of the Iberians, repeatedly refusing entreaties from the Iberian king. He is vindictive, moreover, in his desire to return and finish off the Albanians after deciding to abandon his pursuit of Mithridates. He takes truly extraordinary measures to sneak up on them, traveling deep into Armenian territory to preserve the element of surprise.

As Millar made clear in his seminal work on Dio, the author was not simply regurgitating his sources (Millar 1964:34 ff). His negativity with respect to Pompey may have roots in his strong anti-Republicanism, pointed out by Gowing (1992:chap. 15). This would predispose Dio to shape his depiction of Pompey in the harshest possible terms. But, the tone of the passage could also reflect a third-century interest in the costs of Roman expansion, which Lavan credits with producing an expansive critique of Roman enslavement that runs through Dio’s text (Lavan 2013:148). In this interpretation, the Roman senator from Bithynia could be subtly pointing out the harsh treatment of the South Caucasian polities at the hands of Pompey.

For these reasons, one needs to be careful when combining elements from one of these accounts to flesh out gaps in the other. The two authors are approaching the history from markedly different standpoints, and are structuring narratives to their purposes.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLUTARCH’S ACCOUNT</th>
<th>CASSIUS DIO’S ACCOUNT</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>First Encounter</strong></td>
<td><strong>First Encounter</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pompey passes through the Caucasus, entering Albania first, by virtue of necessity during his pursuit of Mithridates (ἀναγκαίως is Plutarch’s phrasing, 34.1)</td>
<td>• Pompey passes the winter at Anaïtis, which is either in or near Albania, where he is treated well by Tigranes (36.53.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning of Fighting (Albania)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beginning of Fighting (Albania)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Albanians agree to allow him passage, but then, during the feast of the Saturnalia, when the army is relaxing, they muster a force of 40,000 to attack (34.2).</td>
<td>• The Albanians attack on Saturnalia, partly because they want to do a favor for Tigranes, and partly because they are afraid that the Romans were planning an invasion (36.54.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pompey allows them to get close, and then destroys their army (34.3).</td>
<td>• The Albanian king Orooses splits his troops to attack the three encampments of Romans. He is defeated with ease (36.54.2-5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The Albanian king asks for mercy. Pompey concedes, and makes a treaty with him (34.4).</td>
<td>• Pompey makes a truce on Oroeses’ request, although he was very eager (οὐδὲν ἐπεθύμει) to get revenge. However, on account of the winter, he agrees to a truce (36.54.5).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beginning of Fighting (Iberia)</strong></td>
<td><strong>Beginning of Fighting (Iberia)</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pompey then turns to attack the Iberians, who are more numerous and warlike than the Albanians (34.4). They have a great desire to do harm to Pompey out of allegiance to Mithridates, although they have never been subject people of any kingdom (οὔτε γὰρ Μήδοις οὔτε Πέρσαις ὑπήκουσαν Ἴβηρες).</td>
<td>• In the following year (65 BCE), Pompey attacks the Iberians, compelled against his own purpose to attack them first (παρὰ γνώμην ἠναγκάσθη, 37.1.1). This premature strike is prompted when Artoces, the Iberian king, prepares to attack Pompey (37.1.2-3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pompey nevertheless defeats them, and proceeds to Colchis (34.5).</td>
<td>• Pompey then, proceeds into the heartland of Iberia, to Armaztsikhe (modern Mtskheta), forcing Artoces to flee, and yield territory to Pompey. Artoces, seeing Pompey’s advances, sends request for peace, but then becomes afraid and retreats further (37.2.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Arrival in Colchis and Backtracking</strong></td>
<td><strong>Arrival in Colchis and Backtracking</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He learns that Mithridates has fled to the north, and tries to follow, but faces great difficulties (ὑπὸρίας εἶχε μεγάλας). He then learns that the Albanians have revolted, and he turns back east to quell them (35.1). He meets great resistance, including fights with Amazons (35.2-4), but eventually wins against the Albanians.</td>
<td>• Pompey then proceeds to Colchis, intending to pursue Mithridates by foot (37.3.1).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Following the successful battle, Pompey wants to continue on to the Caspian Sea, but is overwhelmed by lizards and poisonous snakes when he is only three days from the coast, and so turns back to Lesser Armenia (36.1).</td>
<td>• Upon comprehending the scale of the difficulty, he decides to send his fleet to blockade Mithridates, and himself turns back against the Albanians (37.3.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• He does not take the direct route (through Iberia), but instead heads through Armenia in order to have surprise on his side (37.3.3).</td>
<td>• He does not take the direct route (through Iberia), but instead heads through Armenia in order to have surprise on his side (37.3.3).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The march proves hard for the troops, who are lead in a less-than-direct route by local guides. They are, however, supplied with food from the local population (37.3-4.6).</td>
<td>• The march proves hard for the troops, who are lead in a less-than-direct route by local guides. They are, however, supplied with food from the local population (37.3-4.6).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Upon learning that Oroeses was nearing them, Pompey has part of his army hide, so as to look less threatening (37.4.1-2). • Pompey wins in a rout, with the Albanians sent fleeing and crying “oh the Saturnalia, the Saturnalia!” in regret (“ἰῶ Κρόνια Κρόνια” 37.4.4.)</td>
<td>• Upon learning that Oroeses was nearing them, Pompey has part of his army hide, so as to look less threatening (37.4.1-2). • Pompey wins in a rout, with the Albanians sent fleeing and crying “oh the Saturnalia, the Saturnalia!” in regret (“ἰῶ Κρόνια Κρόνια” 37.4.4.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pompey marks his defeat of the territory by granting peace to the Albanians, as well as other Caucasian tribes all the way to the Caspian Sea (37.5.1). He then turns his attention to Phraates, and leaves the South Caucasus.</td>
<td>• Pompey marks his defeat of the territory by granting peace to the Albanians, as well as other Caucasian tribes all the way to the Caspian Sea (37.5.1). He then turns his attention to Phraates, and leaves the South Caucasus.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
of Roman expansion, which Lavan credits with producing an expansive critique of Roman enslavement that runs through Dio’s text (Lavan 2013:148). In this interpretation, the Roman senator from Bithynia could be subtly pointing out the harsh treatment of the South Caucasian polities at the hands of Pompey.

For these reasons, one needs to be careful when combining elements from one of these accounts to flesh out gaps in the other. The two authors are approaching the history from markedly different standpoints, and are structuring narratives to their purposes. Noteworthy, then, is the fact that both of these accounts feature a two-time engagement with the Albanians—with Pompey backtracking all the way from Colchis to near the Caspian. This consistency could reflect reality, and speaks to the value that Pompey placed on the region, as well as the effort that he was willing to expend to secure his (and the Romans) glory.

On this detail, however, Appian’s account disagrees. In fact, Appian’s version diverges sharply at several points. His account can be summarized as follows:

- Pompey is in hot pursuit of Mithridates directly to Colchis, but then decides that he is no longer a threat, because he would be able not reach Pontus or Lake Maiotis, and that even if he did, he would not be able to accomplish anything (οἶδὲ μεγάλοις ἔτι πράγμασιν ἐγχειρήσειν ἐκπεσόντα, 103).
- Pompey then decides that he is more interested in exploring Colchis, with a particular eye to seeing mythical places (τὸ πάθος μάλιστα ἵδεν θέλων, 103)
- He is exploring Colchis, joined by neighboring tribes, when he is attacked by the Albanian and Iberian kings, who have joined forces (Ὀροίζης δ’, ο τῶν Ἀλβανῶν βασιλεύς, καὶ Ἀρτώκης, ὁ Ἰβήρων, ἐπτὰ μυρίαν ἐλόχων, 103).
- Pompey has been warned ahead of time of the planned attack, and drives the enemy into a forest, where they are trapped.
- Pompey sets fire to the forest, and the fleeing enemy are thus forced to surrender and turn over hostages.
This version states that Pompey’s pursuit of Mithridates was direct (εὐθύς) all the way to Colchis, and that it was only after it that Pompey encountered the Albanians and Iberians for the first time. Appian offers novel motives for Pompey’s interest in the region—antiquarianism and a desire to explore. Finally, Appian also presents a different version of the battle between Pompey and local forces. This is the only account that posits an active alliance between the Iberians and Albanians at this early date. At the same time, the subsequent forest battle is reminiscent of Cassius Dio’s account.

So, did Appian confuse events, taking bits and pieces and combining them nonsensically? Traditional assessments of Appian’s work, which account for his errors as indicative of “bungled attempts” to patchwork together sources, would answer affirmatively (Bucher 2000:412). However, modern reassessments increasingly acknowledge Appian’s own contributions to his history (Goldmann 1988), and furthermore recognize that he was referring to a wide variety of sources, some quite reliable. It is not wise to discount Appian’s account prima facie.

Rather—it is once again salutary to consider what Appian’s changes to the basic narrative have added to the story. His is the only account that states explicitly that Pompey’s pursuit of Mithridates to Colchis was direct. Appian also provides the most extended, if still somewhat unbelievable, explanation for Pompey’s decision not to continue chasing Mithridates past Colchis. This explanation, combined with the details about Pompey’s motivations for exploring Colchis, paints a far more sympathetic picture of the general than that found elsewhere. Gowing’s valuable comparison of Appian and Cassius Dio’s triumviral histories has made clear that Pompey himself was a figure of
central importance for Appian, who sympathized with the Republican and saw him as the victim of the political climate of his era (Gowing 1992:205).

In this light, Appian’s version of events makes more sense—he has generated the most positive account that he can, from the sources he has available. Appian’s biography is also relevant. An Alexandrian who traveled in elite circles at Rome and benefited from the peace and prosperity of the imperial system of his day, he was apparently both in debt to the Roman empire whence his fortunes came, and also deeply connected to his Alexandrian roots (Gowing 1992:10 ff). This author, torn between his Roman fortunes and his Greek roots, used the Caucasus episode to frame his late-Republican hero Pompey as an warrior-intellectual *par excellence*: as interested in ancient myth as he was capable of readily dispatching huge numbers of barbarian troops.

**Malleable Histories**

This approach to the sources suggests that historical material concerning Pompey’s time along the Kura river valley follows a basic pattern, but reshapes internal elements without concern for historical reality. Scholars working with these accounts often gloss over the differences as a result of the fragmentary nature of the historical record and different source traditions. And, of course, that is true. But this is also a story about depicting the fringes of an empire. The territory rarely appears in the Roman narrative, and then only to underline some exceptional historical event. In the case of Pompey’s excursion through the South Caucasus, the personality of Pompey himself looms large in every retelling. The best predictor for how each account will unfold is the author’s attitude toward Pompey.
While all modern scholars recognize that historical ‘facts’ were frequently slippery in the ancient world, some facts are easier to alter than others. For ancient historians or biographers wanting to shape their narratives in a particular way—to emphasize Pompey’s generosity, for example, or conversely his megalomania—the nebulous zone of the Caucasus presented an easy site for such manipulations. This was, after all, a place that no reader of Velleius, Appian, or Eutropius would ever have visited; it was a totally foreign place that never became Roman, where the historical and geographical accounts mention Amazons and Romans in the same sentence—freely mixing the mythical and the historical.

THE ALBANIANS AND THE SARMATIANS:ETHNE IN THE TEXTS

We turn now from questions of how the texts describe actions to how they discuss identity, looking at one particular axis of socio-cultural identity: the depictions of mobile pastoralist peoples dwelling in the eastern Caucasus, usually discussed in modern literature under the name ‘Sarmatians.’ As Anca Dan has recently stated, “Sarmatian identity is an etic construct of the Greeks and Romans, who assigned certain geographic and ethnic particularities to certain nomadic groups located on the northern edges of the ancient oikoumene” (Dan 2017:113). This section of the study will contextualize these etic accounts of mobile pastoralists in the Caucasus, exploring how they fit into a wider discourse on nomads on the edges of imperial space, and what they reflect about the particularities of the Caucasus. I do not examine them as accurate renderings of what
must have been complex and ever-contingent ethnicities in the space (McInerney 2014).

Here, instead, I take as a starting point the idea that these accounts reflect a Greco-Roman ordering of space and identity. I argue that even this seemingly restricted interpretive scope provides meaningful information about how socio-political identities interacted in the eastern Caucasus. According to the texts, mobile pastoralist groups were in sustained and close contact with their settled neighbors. Although the texts often describe these groups as dichotomous and antagonistic, the picture presented from a close reading is more one of significant overlap and cooperation. I argue that the entity we know as the Albanian federation likely contained both sedentary and mobile pastoralist elements, imperfectly identified by some ancient and many modern sources as ‘Sarmatians.’

Mobile Identities: From Scythians to Sarmatians

The essential distinction between the Albanians and the nomads can be traced back to Strabo’s Geography (Traina 2015:43). Strabo’s contrasting presentation of the two groups focuses on their ability to be ruled by the Romans:


\[\text{Ἀρμένιοι δὲ καὶ οἱ ὑπερχεῖμενοι τῆς Κολχίδος Ἀλβανοὶ τε καὶ Ἰβηρεῖς παρουσίας δέονται μόνον τῶν ἵππωμένων, καλῶς δὲ κρατοῦνται: νεωτερίζουσι δὲ διὰ τὰς τῶν Ῥωμαίων ἀπασχολίας... καὶ τῶν νομάδων: τὸ μὲν γὰρ ψήφισσον τὸ δὲ ἄχρηστον εἰς πᾶν διὰ τὸ ἀκοινόντιον, φυλακὴς δὲ μόνον δεόμενον.}\]

As for the Armenians, and the peoples who are situated above Colchis, both Albanians and Iberians, they require the presence only of men to lead them, and they are excellent subjects, but because the Romans are

226 Questions concerning the material realities of ‘Sarmatian’ presence in the Caucasus are dealt with at length in chapter 7, along with deeper discussions of the historiography of the study of these groups in Caucasus.
engrossed by other affairs, they make attempts at revolution… whereas the Nomads, on account of their lack of intercourse with the others, are of no use for anything and only require watching. (6.4.2, trans. Jones [Strabo 1917–1932]).

Strabo does not name the nomads here (τῶν νομάδων), but his schematization is a familiar one, which has its roots in much earlier Greek tropes about nomadism, and particularly, Scythians. The central source for Scythian culture is Herodotus, who ascribed an ascetic primitivism to the group. For Herodotus, they operated as a type of “noble savage,” standing in opposition to Greek excess. Although Roman authors drew on these accounts, their depictions of the later Sarmatian mobile pastoralists were inflected differently (Yatsenko 1994, 2003:88–89). In contrast to the nobility of Herodotus’ Scythians, the Sarmatians became straightforward barbarians, the inheritors of a static culture who were incapable of change or progress, but were nevertheless worrisome foes. These depictions of Sarmatians, especially as seen in later Roman authors like Ammianus Marcellinus, were shaped by increasingly tense contact with actual mobile pastoralist groups along Rome’s border with the Barbaricum, reflecting the serious concerns that the groups posed for the later Roman Empire.

Perhaps because of the many ethnonyms used by ancient and medieval authors to these groups, contemporary studies of Caucasia tend to refer to the so-called nomads in broad terms, sometimes using the neologism Sarmato-Alan (Gadjiev 1997:88) that combines the most general of the terms (‘Sarmatian’) with the one unequivocally connected to Caucasia (‘Alans’). Although the ancient authors are often broad and unspecific with their designations of ancient groups, they do use more specific
vocabulary as well, citing three main groups of mobile pastoralists by name (in addition to descriptions of ‘nomads,’ ‘Scythians,’ and ‘Sarmatians’ more generally).

Modern analyses of the names of various groups of mobile pastoralists tend to focus on questions of migration—assigning names to particular stages of a supposed migration of Iranian-speaking mobile pastoralists westward (Dan 2017). I will take up the question of mobile pastoralist migrations in detail in chapter 7. In principle I agree with recent analyses of both Mordvintseva (2013b) and Dan (2017) that the ancient texts should not be used to build migration itineraries. Instead, I want first to disambiguate the vocabulary used by ancient authors to describe these groups in eastern Caucasia, and then examine several of the episodes of mobile pastoralist activity in the area recounted in the texts.

**Aorsi**

One of the earlier groups associated with the eastern Caucasus Sarmatians are the Aorsi, who are noted by Strabo to control trade routes along the Caspian coast:

> οἱ δὲ ἄνω Ἀορσοὶ … ἐπεχράτουν πλείονος γῆς καὶ σχεδὸν τι τῆς Κασπίων παραλίας τῆς πλείοτης ἡρχον, ὡστε καὶ ἐνεπορεύοντο καμήλως τὸν Ἰνδικὸν φόρτον καὶ τὸν Βαβυλώνιον παρὰ τῇ Ἀρμενίῳ καὶ Μήδῳ διαδεχόμενοι ἐχρυσοφόρους δὲ διὰ τὴν εὐπορίαν

The upper Aorsi … held dominion over more land, and, one may almost say, ruled over most of the Caspian coast; and consequently they could import on camels the Indian and Babylonian merchandise, receiving it in their turn from the Armenians and the Medes, and also, owing to their wealth, could wear golden ornaments (Strabo 11.5.8, trans. following Jones [Strabo 1917–1932]).

The Aorsi seem to have been relatively minor players within the ‘Sarmatian world’ as a whole (Dan 2017:103), although they are accorded great importance in the North
Caucasus (Olbricht 2001:431). Their activity as traders and their control of coastal routes have played an important role in later studies of Sarmatian peoples in the region.

**Massagetae**

The Massagetae, although most commonly localized by modern scholars in Central Asia, following an (albeit confusing) description by Herodotus (I.202-204), also feature in discussions of the eastern Caucasus. The most immediate reason for their inclusion in discussions of the Caucasus is the testimony of Cassius Dio, repeated in Ammianus Marcellinus, that the Alans (whose Caucasian identity is indisputable) are another name for the Massagetae. More important, however, has been the association of the Massagetae of the Classical sources with the Mazk'ut'k', a group known principally from the Armenian historical corpus. These accounts focus on the role of a fourth century CE king, alternately known as Sanesan or Sanatruk, who controlled the Mazk'ut'k' tribal federation along the Caspian coast, which stretched at the time from perhaps Derbent to the Kura river (Bais 2001:111–16). A “king of Msky’n” is known from the Sasanian Paikuli inscription of Narseh, positioned immediately before the “King of Iberia,” leading Bais to

---

227 Herodotus appears to confuse the names the Araxes and Oxus rivers in this passage, placing the Massagetae in the Caucasus. For the most common interpretation on the location of Herodotus’ ‘Araxes,’ see Dewar’s note on in Waterfield (1998:647 n. 4.11-12)

228 See Dio 69.15.1, “...ΕΤΕΡΟΣ δὲ ἔξι Αλάνων (εἰσὶ δὲ Μασσαγέται) ἐκνήθη ὑπὸ Φαρασμάνου” (“and a second [war] was begun by the Alans (they are the Massagetae) under the control of Pharasmanes”); Ammianus Marcellinus 23.5.16, [Pompeius] qui per Albanos et Massagetas, quos Alanos nunc appellamus...adivit Caspios lacus (“Pompey, passing through the Albanians and the Massagetae, who now we call the Alans...came to the Caspian Sea”). For a discussion of these sources, see Bachrach (1973:18, n. 38).

229 See Bais (2001:53–54) for an overview of the group. Chief accounts come from Moses Khorenatsi and the Epic Histories, attributed to Pawstos Buzand.
suggest that the Mazk'ut'k' had supplanted the Albanians in the third century CE (2001:113, n. 467).

Alans

The term ‘Alan’ (Ἀλανοί; Alanoi) begins to appear in the first century CE in Latin literature, used to describe a group of mobile pastoralists dwelling in the North Caucasus and around the Caspian Sea (Abaev and Bailey 1985; Alemany 2000:10; von Bredow 2006; Tomashchek 1893). The Alans are better known for their activities during the so-called ‘Great migrations’ period and after, when they became a powerful force stretching from the North Caucasus into western Europe (Bachrach 1973). Indeed, the archaeological culture associated with the group is generally considered to have consolidated only in the second (Malashev 2010) or third century CE (Abramova 1997).

Complicating our understanding of the Alanoi known from texts, Braund cautions that scholars are overconfident in their ability to distinguish the early Alanoi from their neighbors to the south, the Albanoi. He notes that the similarity of the two names, the physical closeness of the two groups and the vagaries of the manuscript tradition hinder attempts to untangle textual references (Braund 2000). In particular, the manuscript tradition of Josephus demonstrates that Albanoi is the lectio difficilior (Bosworth 1976:74 n. 77), and should therefore be preferred in uncertain readings.230

One example of the confusion between these two groups concerns attempts to understand the objective of Nero’s campaign in the South Caucasus, mentioned by

---

230 Braund suggests, for example, that a reading of albanos should be preferred to the manuscript tradition’s alanos at Lucan 8.223 (Braund 1994:225 n.116)
Cassius Dio (62.8.1), Tacitus (Hist. 1.6) and Pliny the Elder (N.H. 6.15) and discussed above. As we recall, the questions about these accounts stem from a lack of clarity concerning geographic terms for the various mountain passes in the region, the *Caspiae Portae* and the *Portae Hiberniae*, which are used imprecisely by the ancient authors (Alemany 2000:24).

Thus, the named groups of Sarmatians who are said to intersect with the eastern Caucasus are all textually confusing—only the Alans seem unambiguously and extensively tied to the region (with both the Aorsi and the Massagetae falling perhaps too far to the north or east), and then only later in the late Antik and post Antik periods.

**Collaboration in the Borderlands**

There are a number of more general descriptions of the Antik mobile pastoralist groups in the Caucasus, however. These texts tend to depict a close relationship between the settled Iberians and Albanians and their mobile pastoralist neighbors, presenting this relationship in genetic terms. Thus, in his opening description of the Albanians, Strabo calls them τὸν νομαδικοῦ γένους ἐγγυτέρω (“closer to nomadic stock”) than their Iberian neighbors (11.4.1). Strabo also tells us that τούτοις δὲ συμπολεμοῦσιν οἱ νομάδες πρὸς τοὺς ἐξωθέν, ὠσπέρ τοῖς Ἰβηροι, κατὰ τὰς αὐτὰς αἰτίας. (“against outsiders the nomads join with the Albanians in war, just as they do with the Iberians, and for the same reasons”) (11.4.5). And, in his section on Iberians, he makes clear what those reasons were:

τὸ μὲν οὖν πεδίον τῶν Ἰβηρων οἱ γεωργικῶτεροι καὶ πρὸς εἰρήνην γενεικτές οἰκουσίαν ἀφενειστε τέ καὶ μηδιστὶ ἐσκευασμένοι, τὴν δ’ ὄρειν οἱ πλείους καὶ μάχμου κατέχουσιν Σκιθῶν δία ζώντες καὶ Σαρματῶν, ὄντες καὶ ὄμοροι καὶ
Now the plain of the Iberians is inhabited by people who are rather inclined to farming and to peace, and they dress after both the Armenian and the Median fashion; but the major, or warlike, portion occupy the mountainous territory, living like the Scythians and the Sarmatians, of whom they are both neighbors and kinsmen; however, they engage also in farming. And they assemble many tens of thousands, both from their own people and from the Scythians and Sarmatians, whenever anything alarming occurs (11.3.3, trans. after Jones [Strabo 1917–1932]).

Thus, while there is a normative Roman position towards mobile pastoralists which paints them sitting in stark opposition to settled positions, historians noted the particularities of the situation in the Caucasus, where the two types of populations overlapped.

One characteristic of the Roman accounts of this space is that they reflect frequent reconfigurations of allegiance and alignment among local patterns. Thus, we see the Alans leaving the Albanians alone in the 70’s (Cassius Dio 65.15.3), but attacking them in the 130’s (Cassius Dio 69.15); and we see the Iberians and Albanians as well as the Iberians and Armenians in a series of border tussles stretching across the entire period. The deep presence of transhumant or mobile pastoralist lifeways within the region created an atmosphere in which this flexibility was especially profound, despite our difficulty seeing ancient mobility either archaeologically or historically.231

Strabo, describing the seventy tribes around the Black Sea port of Dioscourias, says Σαρμάται δ’ εἰσίν οἱ πλείους, πάντες δὲ Καυκάσιοι (“the greater part of them

---

231 On problems with archaeological studies of mobility (but also the importance of this factor in human behavior, see Close (2000). See also Raczek for a comparison to a situation of intense mobile pastoralist-sedentary interaction, which also highlights the misleading dichotomy of viewing these populations as separate (2011).
are Sarmatians, but all of them are Caucasians”) (11.2.16). There has been extensive scholarly attention paid to untangling the question of where the Sarmatians show up, and how to differentiate them from the local populations. But Strabo himself suggests an underlying truth: these two identities ‘Sarmatian’ and ‘Caucasian’ were neither oppositional nor exclusive.

**HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY: ANCIENT BORDERS IN MODERN CONTEXTS**

In this final case study, we turn to the question of physical space. Since the advent of eighteenth-century research in the South Caucasus, one of the principal axes of scholarly engagement with Greek and Latin texts has been discussion of the borders and toponyms described by ancient authors, particularly in the geographical writings of Strabo and Ptolemy. The general approach of this body of scholarship towards the ancient texts has been one of historical positivism (Traina 2015:42). In the case of Caucasian Albania, the aim has been to identify set cities and territorial borders for the putative state, extrapolating from available textual evidence and piecing together a whole from the fragmentary shreds of textual evidence. This section provides an alternate way to read the geographical texts.

**Territoriality and Caucasian Albania**

The borders of Caucasian Albania as presented in secondary literature, reconstructed on the basis of laconic and rare textual mentions, have varied considerably. But, there has been little room for ambiguity or uncertainty in the debates with each new
iteration presented as definitive (despite the challenging nature of the sources). The search for these borders has been a relatively recent affair, compared to similar research in other parts of the ancient world. As late as 1835, Kruze notes in an article that:

“In a word, the ancient geography of these countries [in the South Caucasus], although entertained at a high level, is nevertheless nearly a tabula rasa, and is shaded in such darkness that we still don’t know with any degree of confidence the location of the ancient capital of Armenia…” (Kruze 1835:431)

Over the course of following decades, scholars picked up Kruze’s call to develop a historical geography for the region, and by the late-nineteenth century, several specialist studies had been produced on the theme, although works on Caucasian Albania lagged behind research on neighboring territories.

With respect to historical geography, the most relevant Greco-Latin texts are Strabo (chiefly 11.2-5 and 14), and Ptolemy (5.8, 5.10-13), with other extended descriptions in Pliny the Elder (Nat.Hist. 6.10-12) and briefer mentions in Cassius Dio (35.54-55; 37.3-5); Plutarch Pompey (34-36), Tacitus (Ann. 6.33), and Pomponius Mela (3.34).

Ianovskii, who in 1846 published a description of Caucasian Albania, conducted the first detailed consideration of the sources. He argued that Caucasian Albania stretched

---

232 See, for example, the opening sentence of a recent contribution to the field, “Science has long known that the borders of the country of Albania are quite definitely shown in the writings of the greatest geographers of antiquity- Strabo, Pliny the Elder and Ptolemy, whose reports are confirmed and supplemented by other ancient and Armenian historians and geographers” (Svazian 2015:48).

233 There have been a number of specialist treatments of Strabo and Caucasian Albania or neighboring regions (Boltonova 1947; I. H. Oliyev 1975; K. H. Oliyev 1960; Gadjiev 2009; Olbrycht 2001).

234 On Ptolemy specifically, see especially Murav’ev (1983), although his assumptions based on sea levels are incorrect. See chapter 5 for more on the issue of the ancient coastline.


236 There is much additional information in later Armenian, Georgian and Islamic sources. However, these later sources are shaped in fundamental ways by the new geopolitical configurations of their period of composition and are therefore not useful in considering historical geography.
only from the Əyriçay river valley, through Şəki and Şirvan (Ianovskii 1846:106–7), although he noted that the size varied over time (Ianovskii 1846:98). Already at the time that he was publishing, there was a difference of opinions: a brief article on Albania in *Entsiklopedicheskii leksikon* suggested the country’s borders stretched considerably farther, “from Derbent to the Aras” (“Албания” 1835:415).

Discussion continued for the rest of the nineteenth century: In 1875, Dorn pushed the northern border even further, to northern Dagestan (Dorn 1875). The next important discussion of the geography of Caucasian Albania is found in the work of Iushkov (1937), who used a toponymic study to argue that the term ‘Caucasian Albania’ referred to an even more expansive territory, stretching from the left bank of the Kura river north, including modern Dagestan. Iushkov’s basis is the association of rivers as provided in the sources with the major modern rivers of the eastern and north eastern piedmont zone: the Sulak, Agsai and Terek. Triangulating between Ptolemy and Pliny’s descriptions, Iushkov identifies three rivers that they both reference, the Kase (Καίσιος), Albane (Ἄλβανος) and Kire (Κύρος). The Kire is, obviously, the Kura. To identify the Kase, he points out that the modern name of the Sulak is only used to apply to the lower reaches of the river. In the highlands, the river is still known by its pre-Turkish name, Kase (Iushkov 1937:135), thus he identifies the ancient Kase with the modern Sulak. Next, relying on to Ptolemy’s geography, he identifies two further rivers to the north of the Kase-Sulak: the Gerr (Γέρρος) and the Soana (Σοάνα). On the basis of relative positions, he argues that the Gerr should be associated with the modern Agsai, while the Soana should be understood as Terek. It is here along the modern Terek, Iushkov argues, following
Ptolemy, that the territory of Albania ends. Iushkov’s maximalist claims about the northern extent of Caucasian Albania were picked up also by Leviatov (Leviatov 1950:78). Many scholars, however, have questioned Iushkov’s reconstruction. Trever raised questions about this already in the late 1950’s (Trever 1959:31), saying “however weighty some of his arguments are, the situation remains contested, and only archaeological research, eventually, will help to clarify this question.” The question here concerns where the Steppe nomads ended, and the Albanians began. This is a question that will be considered in more detail in the final chapter of this dissertation. Suffice it here to emphasize that there has been tremendous inconsistency in scholarly opinion about how to map the northern reaches of the territory.

As much disagreement as there has been over the northern limits of Albania, it is actually the southern border that has become entrenched in modern polemic, as it is this border that has been implicated in arguments over the status of Nagorno-Karabakh (Bais 2005:n. 2; Traina 2002:229). Nagorno-Karabakh, a mountainous swath of territory located south of the Mugan Steppe on the southern side of the Kura river valley, is today one of the South Caucasus’ several disputed territories (fig. 21). Although internationally recognized as part of Azerbaijan, it has been a de facto independent state (the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic), under the control of ethnic Armenians since 1988. The spark that set off this iteration of conflict was a 1987 dispute between Armenian farmworkers and collective farm owners, and their Azeri counterparts. This dispute escalated, developing into widespread protests. The protests expressed longstanding tensions in the region, and

237 Among the critics are Murav’ev (1983) and Bais (2001).
led eventually to an armed conflict, which solidified over the course of the early 1990’s into a frozen conflict between Azerbaijan and the Nagorno-Karabakh Republic, involving both Armenia and Russia. The conflict continues to prove intractable.

There is vast scholarship on the conflict, and a nuanced consideration of it in the context of twentieth and twenty-first century geopolitics, all of which obviously falls far outside the scope of this dissertation. It is a “multifaceted” dispute (O’Lear and Whiting 2008:186), with factors of religion, ethnicity, and nationality overlapping to create diverse and divisive interest groups. In both Azerbaijani and Armenian thought, the territory is of “great symbolic importance: as a sanctuary, a stronghold, a vital economic area” (Mouradian 1990:2), and the discourse surrounding the conflict is marked by allusions to past iterations of regional violence, chiefly the Armenian Genocide (Zurcher 2007:155). This discourse is also entangled with Azerbaijani negotiations of identity, including deep grievances over the treatment of the Azerbaijani SSR by Soviet authorities (Swietochowski 1990). In this sense, the fierce debates can be seen as the product of the distorting power of the Soviet nationalities project (Mouradian 1990:3), which sought to create territorial homelands for all of the officially-sanctioned ethnic groups of the USSR. Although the immediate roots of this post-Soviet conflict “are closely connected to the political cartography of the early Soviet Union” (Zurcher 2007:152; see also Suny and Martin 2001:17), much earlier, deeper narratives of history,

---

238 The bibliography, in addition to being vast, is filled with works that are themselves part of the polemic. The following bibliography provides a fairly balanced starting point into this discussion: German (2007); O’Lear and Whiting (2008) Zurcher (2007:chap. 6).
ethnogenesis, and autochthony have been deployed by multiple parties in the conflict, with a common goal of strengthening land claims (Zurcher 2007:152).

Questions concerning the identity of Nagorno-Karabakh have simmered underneath archaeological and historical research in the region for almost a century. It is, therefore, essential to explore the ways in which antiquity has been invoked in these debates, and to understand the role that this modern historical narrative has shaped understandings of the past. The animating question amongst scholars is if and when in the ancient or medieval periods Caucasian Albania controlled the right bank of the Kura – including the territory of modern Nagorno-Karabakh. In the context of local geopolitics, this is an explicitly political question thought to have ramifications on the status of Nagorno-Karabakh.

The arguments extend to arenas far beyond geography. Linguistics, for example, has been important, although geography has always served as the foundation (Shnirelman 2001:19–197). Although debate over the extent of Caucasian Albania has played out in exchanges between Azerbaijani and Armenian scholars over the years, it is also a preoccupation of popular media and political spheres in both countries. Illustrative is the language of the President of Azerbaijan, İlham Əliyev, in a series of tweets on August 7th, 2014, one of which read “We don’t want war either. But unlike them [the

---

239 See also Hewsen (1982) for a balanced treatment of some of the root issues.
240 The problems with popular distillations of history have been commented on also by scholars, see for example Əliyev, “It is entirely bad when the press becomes the arena of out-of-date diatribes and judgments, of veiled pseudo-science and eloquent mystics” [Совсем плохо, когда печать служит ареной устаревших диатриб и вердиктов, завуалированного наукообразия и велеречивых мистагогов] (K. Н. Əliyev 1992:13)
Armenians], we want our lands back. We want the lands of our ancestors back” (Əliyev, İlham (@presidentaz). 5:47 AM, 7 August 2014. Tweet).

Nagorno-Karabakh is a good example of a “discursive landscape,” a concept advanced by Hākli (1999:124), where concepts of statehood and national identity are interpreted and negotiated, where national space is read and written. Debates about the territory have played a linchpin role in the development of post-Soviet consciousness in both Azerbaijan and Armenia, with each state filtering its past through the mountainous enclave. Underneath the surface debate about borders and territorial extent lies a larger discourse about ethnicity, identity, inheritance, and the falsification of history. Amid these debates, and in the context of the claims and counter-claims of falsification and historical malfeasance, it is understandable that ancient Greek and Latin texts have taken on an oversized importance, valued for their perceived neutrality and objectivity.

Debates about the meaning of the ancient texts have therefore raged fiercely. To understand the shape of debates, I will provide an overview of two scholarly conflicts over the question, one from the mid-1960’s and one from the late-1990’s. The earlier episode of explicitly political scholarship came with the publication of a different pair of works, Buniatov’s Azerbaidzhana v 7-9 vv. [Azerbaijan in the seventh-ninth centuries] (1965) and A.O. Mnats’akan’ian’s O literature kavkazskoi Albanii [On Questions of

---

241 The language of “falsification” is a particular marker of the nature of the debate in the South Caucasus, and is often applied to discussions of maps and historical geographies. And indeed, the scholarly landscape of the territory includes also proven incidents of historical falsification—the most explicit of which was the forgery of a so-called Book of the Albanians, purported to be a lost medieval chronicle of Albania, which was said to demonstrate the linguistic relationship between medieval Caucasian Albania and the Lezgin people, a present-day ethno-linguistic group straddling the border between Azerbaijan and Dagestan (Gadjiev 2008b).
Albanian Literature] (1969), both of which focus on the medieval period, but incorporate ancient history in their arguments about the territory and ethnic makeup of the South Caucasus. A consideration of these texts by Hewsen (1982) demonstrates that each author presents totalizing descriptions of the ethnic character of the region based on selective or poorly supported readings of the texts, with Buniatov erring in one direction (towards seeing an ethnically unified and expansive Albania from an early period), and Mna’tsakan’ian in the other (towards not acknowledging the entity of Caucasian Albania in nearly any period).

For a more detailed example from recent decades of the tone of this body of scholarship, the debate between Məmmədova (1986) and Akopian, Muradian and Iuzbashian (1991) is instructive. Məmmədova, in her 1986 book (replete with maps), depicts a maximalist Caucasian Albania encompassing both banks of the Kura, all the way up to Dagestan. She, furthermore, argues that “…the territory of Albania from the third century BCE to the eighth century CE—that is, for the period of around 1000 years—remained (with a few small exceptions) more-or-less stable” (Məmmədova 1986:240). To explain inconsistencies in the sources that would trouble these conclusions, Məmmədova suggests that the ancient authors were simply incorrect in their statements: that they got details wrong.

242 These debates about the Late Antique and early Medieval status of the Caucasus fall outside of the chronological sphere of this dissertation. They are, however, important context for understanding the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh. For context in English, see in particular the work of Hewsen (1982) and Dudwick (1990). Much of the Russian language literature on this topic, as the Azerbaijani and (I assume) the Armenian is highly polemic. An important exception to this is work of Gadjiev.
The response to her publication by Akopian, Muradian and Iuzbashian (1991) offers a more nuanced treatment of sources, but one that is nevertheless selective. They rightly argue that the issue of the southern border of Caucasian Albanian is borne out of chronological confusion. In their view “the ancient and early Armenian sources denote, under the terms “Albania,” and “Albanians,” the country and population to the north of the lower reaches of the Kura river, but unconditionally included the southern side of the Kura politically and ethnically in the concept of “Armenia” (Akopian, Muradian, and Iuzbashian 1991:166). It is only in the medieval authors, they argue, that the term “Albania” comes to refer to the south bank of the Kura, following the Sasanian abolition of the province of Armenia. Nevertheless, they present the ancient sources in overly schematic and simplified ways, not acknowledging the internal contradictions and complexities of the source material.

It would be misleading to believe that this is just a debate over how sources are read and chronologies are constructed. Instead, the following programmatic statements from the work of Məmmədova and Akopian et al. demonstrates the underlying stakes for each work:

…this research demonstrates the groundlessness and illegitimacy of the so-called Armenian tradition, according to which the territory of Albania from the third century BCE to the fourth century CE proceeded from the river Kura [to the north], that is, that the interfluvial territory between the Kura and the Aras – the districts of Artsakh, Uti and Kaspiana (Paitakaran) are considered to be Armenian” (Məmmədova 1986:240–41).

…but, the representations by certain researchers about Caucasian Albania, unfortunately, are far from an adequate reflection of ancient history. This lays the groundwork for the development of speculative concepts, marked by the tendency to modernize the ancient and medieval history of the Transcaucasus, and to present Albania as a civilization that was in all elements and in all epochs at least equal
Both treatments of Caucasian Albania’s borders are using ancient textual sources to make much broader arguments about the past. The authors are eliding borders, states and ethnicities, both ancient and modern. The resulting discourse is intractable and ultimately unproductive.243

As the dispassionate overview of the sources like the one provided recently by Bais (2001:149–84) makes clear, the ancient sources are anything but clear. The ancient authors use the ethnonym Albanians and the politico-geographic term Albania in overlapping and unclear ways, making it difficult to ascertain the relationship between the ethnic and political borders in the region (Bais 2001:155). Furthermore, the numerous toponymic associations between ancient place names and modern rivers, mountains, and cities, often weak, are in no cases substantiated epigraphically. Nevertheless, on the basis of the above-mentioned Greek and Latin sources, as well as Armenian and occasionally Georgian data, Bais traces the following contours:

1) **Southern border (after Bais 2001:156–69):**

   Bais holds that the Kura is the southern border of the territory beginning in the mid-first c. BCE (when the situation is first presented in the sources), until the mid-fourth century CE, when more of the right bank is taken over by a newly-expansionist Albania.

2) **Western border (after Bais 2001:170–74)**

   Bais suggests that the border between Albania and Iberia fell somewhere within the territory of Cambysene, perhaps extending to the lower reaches of the

---

243 Hewsen, writing about the earlier Buniatov- Mna’tsakan’ian episode, points out that the issues discussed by this type of scholarship are, in fact, modern political ones, and “will not be settled by scholars rummaging about in the fragments of data which have come down to us on the ethno-history of southeastern Caucasia two millennia ago” (1982:35).
Qabırı (Iori) river in the first c. BCE, although likely fluctuating between the Qabırı and Qanix (Alazan) rivers over time.

3) **Eastern border (after Bais 2001:174–82)**

From the first mentions through the mid-third century CE, the Albanian territory is said to stretch all the way to the Caspian coast. After the mid-third century, under Sasanian reorganizations, the coastal zone became a separate territory, Balasagan.

4) **Northern border (after Bais 2001:174–84)**

Bais suggests a northern border in line with the main chain of the Greater Caucasus, which he places near modern Sumgait, although he accepts Albanian influence up to Derbent.

In the case of both the northern and southern borders, I believe that the texts are less clear than Bais considers them to be, although he does acknowledge the complexities of the material (Bais 2005:344–45). Bais’ argument about the northern border has two broad problems: (1) he relies too heavily on an identification of Soana river with the modern Sumgayıtçay on the basis of Muravev’s work (Murav’ev 1983) which is based on an incorrect premise of sea level change;244 and (2) he associates the Cerauni mountains of Ptolemy (5.8.5) with the main spur of the Greater Caucasus that runs to Abşeron, rather than a more northern section of the mountains, without supporting this assertion.245

In the case of the southern border, the situation is more complicated, and is the subject of an extended discussion in Bais (2005), where he covers five ancient sources: Strabo, Pliny, Plutarch, Ptolemy and Cassius Dio.246 The fundamental claim of his nuanced and technically sophisticated treatment is that there the use of the Kura as the southern border of Caucasian Albania matches “almost all the data handed down, and the

---

244 See chapter 5, p.232 for the problems with Murav’ev’s hypothesis.

245 See Gadjiev (2015:33) for a compelling counterargument.

246 Although later medieval sources, cited in Bais (2001) do use the Kura as a more straightforward dividing line.
information which seems to be inconsistent with it can easily be accounted for” (Bais 2005:344–45). I question, however, whether we should be so dismissive of the data that fail to fit the model.

Two of the authors, Strabo and Pliny, present particular difficulties in this regard. In each case, the individual authors themselves offer what seems to be internally contradictory information. Consider Bias’ approach to Pliny. At one point, Pliny writes that the Albanians dwell in *planitiem omnem a Cyro* (“the entire plain from the Kura onward [northward]”) (*Nat. Hist.* 6.29), which is a straightforward association use of the river as a border. Elsewhere, however, he writes that *flumina per Albaniam decurrent in mare Casus et Albanus, dein Cambyses, in Caucasus ortus montibus, mox Cyrus, in Coraxici* (“the Casus and Albanus rivers run through Albania down to the sea, then the Cambyses, which arises in the Caucasus mountains, then the Kura, rising in the Coraxici”) (*Nat. Hist.* 6.39). By calling the Kura one of the rivers that runs *per Albaniam*, Pliny seems to be implying that it is not a border. Bais resolves this inconsistency by arguing that, “a river dividing two territories can be taken to belong to either of them,” (Bais 2005:343), which is an interesting argument, but not definitive.

But I prefer to call attention to a clearer problem with Pliny’s description: He uses the Kura as the dividing line not only between Albania and Armenia, but also between Iberia and Armenia. The full passage cited above about Albania reads:

```
Incolae per confinium Armeniae nunc dicitur. Planitiem omnem a Cyro usque Albanorum gens tenet, mox Hiberum, discreta ab iis amne Ocazane in Cyrum Caucasus montibus defluente.

*Let the peoples on the edges of Armenia now be discussed. The entire plain from the Kura on is held by the people of the Albanians, and by that of the Iberians, separated from them [the Albanians] by the*
The Kura, however, was not the dividing line between the Armenians and Iberians: the capital city of the Iberians in this period is on the right bank of the Kura, said here to fall into Armenian territory. If Pliny is wrong concerning the Iberians, why should we follow his borders in the case of the Albanians?

The situation as presented by Strabo is less clear. He mentions the Kura at least 9 times, (X1.1.5; 2.17; 3.2; 3.5; 4.2; 7.3; 8.9; 14.4 and 14.7), of which the following mentions have been pulled out for the divergent accounts that they present:

1) Rivers appear in a general discussion of the territory of the Caucasus (11.1.5).

Here, both the Aras and Kura rivers are mentioned as flowing through territories, rather than acting as territorial borders.247

...ἀλαζανὸς ὁ μὲν διὰ τῆς Ἀρμενίας Κῦρος δὲ διὰ τῆς Ἰβηρίας καὶ τῆς Ἀλβανίας

“...the Araxes flowing through Armenia and the Cyrus (Kura) through Iberia and Albania”248

2) The same language appears in a specific discussion of Albania (11.4.1-2).

Again, the Kura is said to flow through the territory, while the southern extent is listed simply as ‘Armenia.’

Οἰκονομὶ δὲ μεταξὺ τῶν Ἰβηρῶν καὶ τῆς Κασπίας θαλάττης, ποὺς ἐω μὲν ἀπτόμενοι τῆς θαλάττης, πρὸς δὲ δύσιν δὲ ὁμοροῦντες τοῖς Ἰβηρῶν τοῦ δὲ λοιπῶν πελώριον τὸ μὲν βόρειον φρουρεῖται τοῖς Καυκασίοις ὄρεις ..., τὸ δὲ νότιον ποιεὶ ἡ Ἀρμενία παρήκμονα, πολλὴ μὲν πεδίας πολλῆ δὲ καὶ

247 There has been an attempt by some scholars to read Strabo’s διὰ as ‘alongside’ rather than ‘through,’ but on the basis of 11.1.4, this is an untenable position: it is not conceivable that the Aras is being provided as the northern border for Armenia, while the Kura is given as the southern border of Albania, with no mention of what sits in the broad, productive land in between. Rather, the more straightforward reading of διὰ as ‘through’ seems appropriate. Furthermore, following Bai (2005:340), the use of διαρρέειν for the same river in 11.4.2 unambiguously means “to flow through.”

248 All translations of Strabo in this section are following those of Jones (Strabo 1917–1932), but with alterations to clarify the geographic terminology.
They [the Albanians] live between the Iberians and the Caspian Sea, their country bordering on the sea towards the east and on the country of the Iberians towards the west. Of the remaining sides the northern is protected by the Caucasian Mountains … whereas the southern side is formed by Armenia, which stretches alongside it; and much of Armenia consists of plains, though much of it is mountainous, like Cambyse, where the Armenians border on both the Iberians and the Albanians. The Cyrus, which flows through Albania, and the other rivers which swell the stream of the Cyrus, improve the qualities of the land...

3) Rivers are also mentioned in a description of the land south of the Greater Caucasus (11.3.2), where the Kura is said to run “between” (μεταξὺ) Albania and Armenia. Bais’ comment is that this passage “dice chiaramente che il fiume scorre tra l’Albania e l’Armenia,” (Bais 2001:161), but it should be read in light of passages 1 and 2, which seem to say equally clearly that the Kura was not a boundary marker. Bais explains these discrepancies thorough reference to the diverse sources that Strabo was drawing on (Bais 2001:162–63), and furthermore by the explanation discussed above—that a river bordering two territories can be said to flow through each one (Bais 2005:341).

In the middle is a plain watered by rivers, the largest of which is the Cyrus, which, rising in Armenia, immediately enters the above-mentioned plain, having received the Aragus, which flows at the foot of the Caucasus, and other streams, passes through a narrow channel into Albania. It flows however between this (Albania) and Armenia in a great volume through plains, which afford excellent pasture…
4) A different reference to Armenia’s physical geography seems to suggest the presence of other groups (non-Albanian, perhaps Armenian-related) in the territory between the Aras and Kura (11.14.4). This complexity, while vexing from a scholarly perspective, should not be dismissed too readily, as it likely reflects the mosaic character of local peoples. This passage is once again read by Bais as saying that the Sacasene come between the Aras and Kura, and border on the Kura, and therefore on the Albanians. The text, however, is not clear that the border with the Albanians is along the Kura. Rather, it is possible to read the passage as saying that the Sacasene border on both the Kura and the Albanians, leaving open the possibility that they border on some Albanian territory either north or south of the Kura.

There are many mountains in Armenia, and many mountain plains, in which not even the vine grows. There are also many valleys, some are moderately fertile, others are very productive, as the Araxenian plain, through which the river Araxes flows to the extremities of Albania, and empties itself into the Caspian Sea. Next is Sacasene, which borders upon Albania, and the river Cyrus; then Gogarene.

5) On the other hand, the Kura is included in a description of Armenia’s rivers, suggesting that it was considered part of Armenian territory (11.14.7).

There are many rivers in the country. The most celebrated are the Phasis and Lycus; they empty themselves into the Euxine; (Eratosthenes instead of the
Lycus mentions the Thermodon, but erroneously;) the Cyrus and the Araxes into the Caspian, and the Euphrates and the Tigris into the Persian Gulf.

6) And finally, a passage in the discussion of the general extent of Armenia is noteworthy for not mentioning the Kura, or indeed any other rivers (11.14.1). Instead, the topographic feature which is given as the border are the Parachoathras mountains, usually reconstructed to mean the Lesser Caucasus, suggesting that the Armenian territory did not run all the way to the Kura.

Thus, in this brief presentation of Strabo on the Kura, I want only to demonstrate the internal inconsistency of the source. Bais, and others who reconstruct the borders, are of course triangulating multiple texts, and making judgments based on the weight of the evidence. Nevertheless, since this internally contradictory source is our best evidence for the period in question, perhaps it is time for us to fully acknowledge their ambiguity, and turn our attention to other facets of the texts. What I suggest as necessary, then, is to break out of these patterns of reading—to recognize the further potentials of the Greco-Latin sources. In what follows, I will argue that recent scholarship on the nature of geographic imagination and ancient cartographic practices present opportunities for reorganizing the textual sources into a more nuanced narrative.
Against Positivist Readings of Geography

Recent work on Greek and Roman notions of space, geography and cartography have highlighted the risks of straightforward readings of ancient geographies, and demonstrated the anachronism of expecting to find fixed territorial borders—polygons plotted on a map—between the lines of these texts. In order to argue for alternative types of readings of these sources, it is helpful to summarize several of the issues posed by the traditional type of interpretations presented in the prior sections. These issues are (1) the appropriateness of assuming a universal practice of inscribed territorial borders of the type familiar from modern nation-state projects in antiquity; (2) the textual distortions that are introduced when imperial actors describe the fringes of their space; and (3) the existence of only a small body of literary sources, requiring scholars to stitch together textual data points from a span of over 600 years.

With respect to the first issue, and taking a cue from twentieth-century discussions within fields like international relations, we should indeed question the dominance of models of state interaction based solely on territorial understandings of space. These models, it turns out, are of limited value, even when applied to the contemporary world (Agnew and Crobridge 2002:78). Furthermore, in contrast to modern orthogonal (birds-eye) views of space, Whittaker has argued strongly that an underlying ‘itinerary consciousness’ controlled Roman perceptions of space:

…space itself was defined by itineraries, since it was through itineraries that Romans actually experienced space; that is, by lines and not by shapes. This does not mean that Romans had no ‘map consciousness’, only a ‘utilitarian consciousness’. As in their paintings, they had a different visual comprehension of space from ours. Their mapping sense was accurate for what was needed, even if other aspects were distorted. (C. R. Whittaker 1994:76)
Despite attracting many proponents, this opinion has not been met with universal acceptance. Richard Talbert has criticized the focus on itineraries as overly narrow. Talbert, instead, sees itinerary space with its one-dimensional vision as just one type of Roman spatial consciousness, which coexisted with multi-dimensional views that described how “landmasses, rivers and mountain ranges related to one another, as well as to the principal settlements and peoples, around the Mediterranean and even well beyond in certain directions” (Talbert and Raaflaub 2010:269). But even he acknowledges that orthogonal mapping was not a central feature of Roman understandings of or approaches to depicting space:

Maps were recognized as a valuable means of recording landholdings, and they were regarded as a marvelous artform to celebrate the extent of Roman sway worldwide, as well as the magnificence of the greatest city in the world known to the Romans. But maps seem barely to feature among the tools of the Roman general or governor or emperor, or even ship’s captain, when they certainly could have. (Talbert and Raaflaub 2010:261)

For our purposes, despite the differences of emphasis of Talbert and Whittaker, both conversations about Roman geographic imagination support the supposition that we ought not to expect Strabo—or any other Roman author—to present us a written version of an orthogonal map of the Caucasus.

Given the nature of our documentary evidence, we should be attuned to the possibility that local forms of social organization conceptualized fundamental ideas like territoriality differently from the outside empires or later decedents who sought to describe the space. It is not clear that Roman geographers had a way to understand the

---

249 As part of his argument, he cites sundials with notations to allow them to function at different latitudes, demonstrating a sense of global space (Talbert and Raaflaub 2010).
social organization of Albania. To insist that control in these spaces required the
maintenance of fixed spatial borders is likely to miss the complex reality of local power,
more likely based on multi-modal affiliation and exchange networks rather than on a
straightforward policing of territory. After all, it is clear that even much larger imperial
actors of the period saw space and understood spatial control differently than do modern
states (M. L. Smith 2005).

These two points together thus give us pause: (1) that Greek and Roman
perceptions of space function differently than our own Cartesian notions; and (2) that
local Caucasian understandings of territory may well have been different from even the
normal Greek and Roman. Furthermore, in the context of the eastern Caucasus, where our
object of inquiry is physically and conceptually so far from the external center of power
(Rome) that seeks to describe it, we should be suspicious of the implicit, and perhaps
unintentional, application of Roman norms to these Caucasian communities. This is not
to say that the Roman historians and geographers were inventing details about the
Caucasus, but rather that they were filtering their accounts through the more familiar lens
of Hellenistic/ Roman behavioral and governance norms, which may have not been
operational in the Caucasus. And of course, we should also heed Strabo’s own words
(I.1.16), ἀλλ᾽ οὐδ᾽ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἐγγυτέρω μᾶλλον ἂν γνωρίζοιτο. Κἂν προσήκοι
tαύτα διὰ πλειόνων ἔμφανιζειν, ἵν᾽ εἰ ἐξ ἡμῶν ἡμῖν· (“it is hardly possible that we should
be informed of every locality in an equal degree; for even then we would be most
acquainted with the places nearest to us”).
Finally, leaving aside questions of the cartographic imaginations of ancient polities, and whether they can be seen to have had fixed territorial borders, the Greek and Latin texts mustered in arguments about the territorial spread of Caucasian Albania span almost 600 years of history – reflecting changing conditions in the land of fluid borders. This is particularly clear in the case of Strabo (XI.14.5), which tracks several phases of border fluctuation in Armenia.

The Caucasus through Strabo

This section will explore the possibilities of Strabo specifically for examining the Antik geography of the eastern piedmont, considered in light of the issues raised above. But beyond source criticism and positivist readings, there has been little in the way of interpretive work on the nature of Strabo’s text as it relates to the Caucasus, and even fewer attempts to understand it as part of its wider historical/geographical program.

As a descriptive geographer writing in the early first century CE, Strabo composed a pragmatic geography: one intended to provide his readers with a conception of the oikoumene in order that they better manage their affairs (Dueck 2009:237). He encounters the Caucasus along his great circular tour around the known world, in which he guides the reader from the Iberian peninsula, clockwise around the Mediterranean and Near East, concluding in Africa. Each of his 17 books is constructed from smaller tours through specific regions of the world. Throughout all of this, Rome remained always at the conceptual and physical center of the work.

The description of the Caucasus comes midway through the text, in Book XI, after a foray into Asia and before a consideration of Parthia. Here, Strabo’s narrative
leads us on a path from Lake Maeotis (XI.1-2), down to Colchis (XI.2), over to Iberia (XI.3) and then Albania (XI.4), up to the land of the Amazons (XI.5), around the Caspian Sea (XI.6-8), into Parthia (XI.9), into Central Asia (XI.10), Bactria (XI.11), before looping back around to Media (XI.12-13), and then finally through Armenia (XI.14).

As Traina points out, the space we call the South Caucasus today was not understood by Strabo as a geographic whole (Traina 2015:43). Rather, Iberia and Albania are paired physically and conceptually, while Armenia is discussed later, separately. The position of Armenia in the text, furthermore, connects it closely to the topic of discussion in Book XII: eastern Anatolia. In this sense, Armenia is connected more closely to Roman territory, while Iberia and Albania are a more distant pair of pendant territories. This understanding of space also appears on the fourth/fifth century CE Peutinger Tablet, which places Armenia as the mediator of access to Iberia and Albania, in contravention of the physical reality that linked Iberia and Colchis. It is echoed in many other mentions of the regions, including their inclusion on Augustus’ *Res Gestae*, which gives greater prominence to Armenia (RG 27), and pairs Iberia and Albania (RG 31).

On a global level, then, Strabo presents a model of space that divides the known world into constituent chunks, both practically, by regulating circulation, and ideologically, by delineating degrees of civilization. In this system of circulation, mountains serve as barriers. For Strabo, as for the illustrator of the Peutinger Table, mountains are obstructionist bands running in lines across map space, segmenting society.

---

into neat inhabited quarters. This paradigm for understanding mountains is not necessarily appropriate to the highland space of the Caucasus, where mountains are the territories themselves. Instead, rugged eastern piedmont can be better seen as a “communication space” between the peoples of the high- and low-lands (Gregoratti 2013), where groups were brought into contact with each other in unique ways because of the particular topography.

CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has provided a basic overview of the historical narrative for understanding the growth and development of Caucasian Albania on the basis of textual sources. It has also further developed the historiographic explorations into this territory, looking at the process of narrative creation both inside of antiquity and in our own modern moment.

In the course of the three case studies, I have explored the limitations of the texts, but I have also highlighted their varied and rich potentials. In the first, I discussed how a specific historical episode is reflected in the wider world of Roman historical writings, tracing the ways in which the Caucasus functions within this imperial-centered tradition. In the second, I have looked at language used to describe populations in the Caucasus, arguing that the texts demonstrate that, although the sources took pains to distinguish various groups in the area, they also recognized the overlapping nature of local identities. Finally, in the third, I traced several different ways of working with geographical accounts. The following chapter emerges from the third of these case studies, taking the
idea of geography--seen to be so dominant in the textual accounts--and examining new ways to explore the physical space of the eastern Caucasus.
Chapter 5: In the In-between: Coastal Paths and Mountain Passes

Der Lattenzaun

Es war einmal ein Lattenzaun, mit Zwischenraum, hindurchzuschaun.

Ein Architekt, der dieses sah, stand eines Abends plötzlich da –

und nahm den Zwischenraum heraus und baute draus ein großes Haus.

Der Zaun indessen stand ganz dumm, mit Latten ohne was herum,

Ein Anblick gräßlich und gemein. Drum zog ihn der Senat auch ein.

Der Architekt jedoch entfloh nach Afri- od- Ameriko.

The Picket Fence

One time there was a picket fence with space to gaze from hence to thence.

An architect who saw this sight approached it suddenly one night,

removed the spaces from the fence, and built of them a residence.

The picket fence stood there dumbfounded with pickets wholly unsurrounded,

a view so loathsome and obscene, the Senate had to intervene.

The architect, however, flew to Afri- or Americoo.

-Christian Morgenstern, after de Certeau.

From the medieval Silk Road to today’s oil pipelines, the Caucasus has long been a conduit linking the Near East, Anatolia and the Eurasian Steppe. It is a crossroads par excellence, recognized for the potential it offers for movement and connectivity. At the same time, the region is often defined in terms of its liminality: on the edge of empires ancient and modern, an unremitting frontier at the dividing line of the continents. Paradoxically, the centrality of the Caucasus stems from the fact that it seems to lie perpetually along the seams of empire, static in the in-between.

Although the concept of ‘crossroads’ implies movement, archaeological and historical scholarship of the eastern Caucasus has tended to downplay both intra- and inter-regional interaction. On one hand, this is a result of geographic divisions within the discipline that have relegated the zone to a perpetual periphery (A. T. Smith 2005),

and therefore the terminus of others’ space rather than as an actor in its own right. Furthermore, as a consequence of modern geopolitics, macro-scale patterns entwining the territory’s physical geography and its social and political life have been obscured in favour of the historicizing study of a sequence of polities (Urartu, Armenia, Albania, Iberia, etc.), abutting each other either spatially or temporally, controlling a fixed territory (Khatchadourian 2008a).

In seeking to break through these tropes and find a foothold for furthering debate, this chapter presents an interrogation of the region’s geography and topography. Building on the textual discussion of Strabo at the end of Chapter 4, I use contemporary geospatial modelling tools to develop a framework for thinking about geography and mobility in the ancient eastern Caucasus that is concerned not with borders or territorial extents, but rather with movement. Issues of place and space, terms used in the spirit of de Certeau (1984), undergird this exploration. In this system, a place is a configuration of positions—a container relationship between objects. A space, on the other hand, is dynamic: defined by vectors of interaction and intersection between objects and ideas. As de Certeau says:

…In relation to place, space is like the word when it is spoken, that is, when it is caught in the ambiguity of an actualization, transformed into a term dependent upon many different conventions, situated as the act of a present (or of a time), and modified by the transformations caused by successive contexts… In short, space is a practiced place. Thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. (de Certeau 1984:Volume 1:117)

To understand the physical world of the eastern Caucasus, I argue, it is necessary to think along both of de Certeau’s levels: to consider the place but also the space.
Studies of the region tend, however, to discuss geography only in terms of *place*, seeing space through administrative borders and internal boundaries.

The chapter begins by discussing the unique cartographic sensibility inherited from the Soviet Union, and exacerbated by on-going territorial conflicts in the post-Soviet South Caucasus. As a result, a rigid framework has been created for those studying the geography of the past, one which has not successfully explained the contours of the space. I argue that the defining topographical feature of the region – its mountains – is the key to understanding both the region’s liminality, and its connective centrality. The remainder of the chapter looks at how the *affordances* of the mountainous environment have shaped life in the eastern Caucasus, both metaphorically and practically. The concept of affordances, first drawn into archaeology in the 1990’s from the work of the environmental psychologist James Gibson (1979), has seen a resurgence in recent years, and is particularly useful in thinking through the entanglements of people and landscape.

First, metaphorically, I consider the place of the Caucasus in the historical imagination, and the ways that topography has molded perceptions about the South Caucasus as well as lifeways within it. Then, practically, I present the potentials of a Geographic Information System (GIS)-based analysis to model route networks through the mountains, identifying places that attract movement. This technique uses quantitative approaches to develop essentially phenomenological cartographies that reflect interactions between humans and their environment.\(^\text{252}\) The resulting insights

\(^{252}\) On using GIS to examine the affordances of physical geography, see Gillings (2012); Llobera (2001).
into the human experience of highland space are then triangulated against other bodies of historical data (particularly route itineraries from late antiquity and the medieval periods). This approach provides context for the choices that the people and societies of the Caucasus have made in navigating their rugged landscape, and enables us to avoid the static and zonal understandings of territorial control that have traditionally framed research.

**CALCIFIED CARTOGRAPHIES**

In the wake of the dissolution of the Soviet Union, contested borders have proliferated across post-Soviet territories (J. Hughes and Sasse 2002), but the South Caucasus stands out as an exception for the wide scale of local conflicts and the high level of associated violence (Zurcher 2007:2; see also German 2012; Hunter 2006; Sagramoso 2007). In the context of these disputes, the territorial extents of ancient and medieval populations have become directly linked to the borders of modern nation states (Dudwick 1990; Gadjiev, Kohl, and Magomedov 2007; Gadjiev, Kuzentsov, and Chechenov 2006; Shnirelman 2001), and have wrenched scholarship about the ancient past into the immediate present as discussed in chapter 4. The explicit politicization of the past and of place is of course not a new phenomenon, nor is it limited to the South Caucasus. But here, where ideas of ‘the homeland’ have taken on a particularly ethno-territorialized meaning, inherited from Soviet approaches to ethnicity and land

---

253 The discussion about archaeological engagements with the state have been an increasing research focus in both the traditional European sphere and globally (Graves-Brown, Jones, and Gamble 2013; Kohl 1998; Lahiri 2000; Meskell 2002; T. C. Patterson 1994; Diaz-Andreu and Champion 1996; Kohl and Fawcett 1995; Ucko 2005).
(Hirsch 2000; Megoran 2010), maps have become a vital sparring ground (Kabachnik 2012; Kaiser 2002; Radcliffe 2009). Government initiatives have used programs of wide-scale toponymic change to reframe land claims (Saparov 2017). As such, the act of interpreting ancient geographical texts in order to theorize about the disposition of ancient peoples and polities is embedded in a deep political debate.

The challenges with maps in the South Caucasus, however, extend beyond disputed territories and conflict zones. Indeed, some of the most profound consequences come from the underlying inheritance of Soviet approaches to geography, and from the place of geospatial understanding within this strand of intellectual history and archaeological practice.

**Cartographic Sensibilities in Soviet Archaeology**

*Administrative Borders, Scholarly Divisions*

The first issue is that Soviet administrative borders were used to delineate research territories, with each Soviet Socialist Republic controlling research within its borders (figs. 22, 23). This delineation was not purely spatial—instead, each republic focused on historical research problems seen to be tied to the history of the peoples living within that territory. Thus:

> The division of Soviet academic sciences into regional schools, studying the problems of history within the strictly defined geographic framework of their own "republics" led to a paradoxical situation when the historical past of the Dagestan... was studied almost exclusively within the current administrative boundaries of Dagestan. Territories and political entities were the principle objects of historical analysis, rather than the peoples who, in fact, created history. Thus, the unified historical process that unfolded in the Eastern Caucasus was artificially torn apart. (Ələkbər K. Ələkbərov 2015:24)
The effect of purely territorial demarcations were, then, intensified by pressures created as a result of Soviet nationalities policy, which fixed nationalist (and often ethno-nationalist) perspectives firmly within mainstream historical scholarship (Shnirelman 2001:6), explicitly and implicitly placing pressure on researchers to study within the proscribed boundaries.

In the case of the study of Caucasian Albania, the clearest consequence of this type of division has to do with the understanding of its northern reaches of the territory, from the Samur river north, as these fell within the territory of the Dagestan ASSR, rather than the Azerbaijan SSR, with Azerbaijani and Dagestani researchers operating in slightly different historical frameworks. Although there was always some exchange between the scholarly communities, which were all part of the broader Soviet scientific system, it has only been recently, and particularly through the work and initiative of the Dagestani scholar Murtazil Gadjiev, that these bodies of data and interpretive perspectives are being brought into more meaningful interaction (Gadjiev 2008b).

_Dangerous Maps: Soviet Cartography and the State Apparatus_

Equally consequential have been associations between geospatial data and military activities within the Soviet Union, which dis-incentivized serious scholarly engagement with geospatial data. This outcome, over the generations, has led to an archaeological practice in which space was underutilized and undertheorized.

In the Russian Empire, mapping had long been connected to the expansionist policies of the state, as it was elsewhere in Europe (Biggs 1999; Hiatt 2005; Kivelson
Cartographic practices were therefore particularly engaged in the articulation and consolidation of borderland zones through the nineteenth century (Seegel 2012). The revolutionary Bolshevik party, despite their ‘anti-imperialist’ vision, inherited this understanding of space, and recognized the power of mapping in their quest towards Soviet modernization (Seegel 2012:266). Geospatial data in the Soviet Union was tightly controlled, with cartographic services centralized under the State Cartographic Services (Ormeling 1974:39; Postnikov 2002:243), which was the sole mapping body. Speaking of the place of maps in Soviet culture, Dobrenko says, “the map is a secret object: saboteurs, spies, and Soviet intelligence agents are somehow always hunting for a map. It is precisely in the map that the most secret information is contained” (Dobrenko 2003:190). Publicly available Soviet maps were printed with small errors—just enough to make them impossible to use for accurate operations (Postnikov 2002).

There are memories of these conditions within local archaeological communities in the Caucasus, even some twenty years after the dissolution of the Soviet Union. As an example, a story still circulates in the Georgian archaeological community of the geologist S.A. Godabrelidze’s execution, a fate he met after he

---

254 Dobrenko continues, recounting an anecdote wherein a famous Soviet film director Alexander Dovzhenko was invited to meet with Stalin in his private chambers, and in the course of conversation was led into Stalin’s private map room, where “maps were hung, covered with curtains. The holy of holies” (Dobrenko 2003:190).
published his magisterial text on the mineral resources of the South Caucasus, supposedly because his book revealed too many secrets of the Soviet territories.\footnote{Godabrelidze (1933). This story was first recounted to me by my Georgian colleague D. Naskidashvili. Although I’ve been unable to verify it, it demonstrates the echoes of awareness even today of the dangers that could befall people engaging too closely in military affairs.}

But the issue does not just concern geospatial data: it is also about the development of an archaeological practice that operated, by and large, without the aid of detailed maps. In a recent article about the current use of declassified Soviet maps, Rondelli et al. highlight this fact, although they don’t explore its ramifications:

> Soviet archaeologists were well aware of the value of these [official] maps and some had access to them; however, they were unable to admit this or to publish extracts from them. They therefore used them as an additional tool for verification but not as a standard methodological instrument. (Rondelli, Stride, and García-Granero 2013:272). \footnote{Personal conversation with Naskidashvili and others suggest that similar conditions were at play in the South Caucasus: that is, that archaeologists had unofficial copies of maps, but were not able to share or print them.}

This observation is not to suggest that there was not a spatial sensibility among Soviet or Azerbaijani researchers – there clearly was. But it is to say that a survey of seminal works on the archaeology and history of Caucasian Albania (Babayev 1990; K. H. Əliyev 1992; Osmanov 2006; Trever 1959; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a) demonstrate that geospatial data were not considered a critical part of the presentation of historical and archaeological narratives. Osmanov, for example, prints only a detail view of the area around Şamaxı in his Azerbaijani edition (fig. 24), but provides an overview of the entirety of Azerbaijan in his Russian edition (fig. 25), as does C. Ə. Xəlilov (fig. 26), while Trever prints two, one topographic and one showing the territorial extents of the medieval polities of the South Caucasus (fig. 27, fig. 28), and Babayev prints one (fig. 255).
The most complete map published during the Soviet period of archaeological sites in the eastern Caucasus comes from C. Ə. Xəlilov’s contribution to the series Arkheologiiia SSR (1985b) (fig. 30).

Another illustrative example of the approach to maps within Azerbaijani archaeology is the Svod arkheologicheskikh pamyatnikov Azerbaidzhana: Arkheologicheskie pamyatniki severno-vostochnogo Azerbaidzhana (The Guide to the Archaeological Monuments of Azerbaijan: The Archaeological Monuments of Northeastern Azerbaijan) (C. Ə. Xəlilov, Qoşqarlı, and Arazova 1990). The site gazetteer lists and describes the location of hundreds of archaeological sites from the zone between the Sumqayıtçay and Samur rivers, without providing any general overview maps of sites or regions, and without providing coordinates. Instead, the relative position of each site is described in detail, with spatial references provided to its nearest village, road, or nearby built structures. For example, the description of Almas ərap reads as follows:

Almas ərap – a settlement of the early middle ages. It is located 300m to the west of the village Giandov, near to a water tank.

Limits of the monument: to the north and west, natural hills, to the south, a dirt road, to the east, the Samur-Abşeron canal. (C. Ə. Xəlilov, Qoşqarlı, and Arazova 1990:12)

For Almas ərap, as for other sites with interesting topography (tepes and hill sites) a local contour map of the feature is also supplied (fig. 31). But here again, the contour

---

257 The exception to this is the work of Faridə Mamədova, an explicitly political text which will be discussed in detail below.

258 This tendency carries over into other forms of archaeological publication (reports and site monographs), although there were exceptions. The works of the Oren-qala expedition, one of the only sites from Azerbaijan published fully in monograph form (Iessen 1959, 1965a, 1965b) stand out for the detail of the maps and plans included in the publications. The speculative historical works of Murav’ev also stand out as exceptions (1983, 1988).
maps display the sites in isolation, providing no regional context or relationship to the landscape. This publication is detailed and careful. The archaeologists present the data they think will be helpful to and necessary for their intended audiences, comprised of other archaeologists, and likely targeted at archaeologists already working in the region. In this context, the information that they deem unimportant seems just as interesting as what they include—and a general spatial overview is most conspicuous among those missing elements. Although part of this map-avoidance is doubtless due to the issues already discussed, two other contributing factors need to be mentioned: (1) the insularity of the research community, which meant that specialist works were created assuming a high degree of local knowledge; and (2) the generally low image quality of Caucasus archaeological publications from the Soviet period, which limits the usefulness of even the few printed maps.²⁵⁹

The consequences of the legacy of Soviet approaches to territory and maps is a topic ripe for further exploration. But it is clear from the examples cited above that the situation has been, until relatively recent years, dissimilar from that in contemporary western Europe and in the Americas. The traditions in the Caucasus have made it difficult to understand archaeological materials in their full geospatial context, because of disciplinary divides that segmented the material; disciplinary practice, which did not prioritize spatial presentations; and the prevalence of contested borders, discussed in the previous chapter.

²⁵⁹ This problem continues: see for example the images in Qoşqar’s (2012) otherwise sophisticated publication. See also the note in Narimanov’s fairly recent gazetteer of EBA sites in Azerbaijan, that “precisie topographical information for the Republic of Azerbaijan is difficult to access (2004:467).
THE ‘HIGHLAND IMAGINARY’ AND MOUNTAIN REALITIES

In responding to this stalemate, I refocus attention on movement and mountains. Mountainous territories have been the subject of increased interest in recent decades, particularly as climate change has called attention to the importance of their ecosystems (Messerli and Ives 1997; UNEP WCMC 2002). Archaeologists working in the Mediterranean and Near East have been slow to participate in this conversation. Highland research falls outside of the traditional sphere of interest and presents technical challenges for the discipline (Glatz and Casana 2016). But mountains quite literally define the Caucasus, and, although discussions of mountains have been a mainstay of Urartian studies for some time,\(^{260}\) their full explanatory power in the broader study of the Caucasus remains to be explored thoroughly and is still on the rise (E. Hammer 2014; Lindsay and Greene 2013). Historians of Caucasian Albania (Trever, Xəlilov, Osmanov etc.), for their part, tend to mention mountains only in conjunction with either geographical descriptions, or discussions about mountain passes exploited during fighting (for example see Trever 1959:100).

I begin by considering what ancient and modern authors tell us about life in mountainous landscapes like the Caucasus. These accounts, which tend to cast the mountains as characters in complex social and psychological dramas in which the main tropes have stayed remarkably consistent across the centuries, are worth considering because of the formative power they have had on perceptions of life in the

\(^{260}\) For example, Zimansky (1985, 1995a) and Biscione (2002). Contrast this to the situation in the Andes, where archaeologists have been developing and debating theories about the interplay between altitude and cultural development for the past several decades. See the roots of this, see Van Buren (1996) and for a recent overview, see Contreras (2010).
Moreover, today we also benefit from modern scientific studies of mountainous territories, which provide a frame for understanding the affordances of highland zones, and the ways that ‘mountain realities’ intersect with the literary and historical ‘highland imaginary.’

**Mountain Myths**

Although they have received relatively little attention by modern scholars, mountains have been a topic of conversation since the time of Herodotus, with the Caucasus featuring in some of the earliest accounts of the territory. In Greek and Latin texts, mountains were understood most basically as territorial borders. This is clearest in the work of Strabo, for whom mountains, rivers and seas divided the world into its discrete parts (Strab. 2.5.17; Pothecary 2005:177). They were also seen as technical challenges to be mastered by a fit society (Gschnitzer 1996). At the same time, in antiquity’s ‘geographic imaginary,’ highlands served a tropic function as “an alter-ego of urban civilization” (Meißner 1996:369). This juxtaposition manifested itself in the opposition of lowland and highland peoples, with the former seen as the standard bearers of civilization, while the latter were regarded as warlike bands threatening stability.\(^{261}\) Furthermore, particularly at the edges of the known world, highlands were places of alterity where men came face to face with myth (Evans 1999). In Greek and Roman thought broadly, then, mountains had a dual identity. They were manifestly

\(^{261}\) For example, Shaw 1990
physical, able to dominate and define landscape through their sheer mass; but they also had a spiritual reality that derived from their status as ‘othered’ places.

Both of these elements are clear in Greek and Roman descriptions of the Caucasus. On the one hand, the Caucasus range, according to Herodotus, ranked first among mountains, with “more and higher mountains than any other range” (ἐὸν ὥρεων καὶ πλήθει μέγιστον καὶ μεγάθει υψηλότατον) (Hdt. 1.203). They appear in Aristotle’s *Meteorology* also as the quintessential mountain range, said to be “the greatest of the mountain ranges that lie in the northeast, both in their breadth and height” (Arist. *Meter.* 350a26-36). They are used a frequent geographical delimiter, marking the edge of the known world. They are linked frequently, of course, to the myth of Prometheus (Cic. Tusc. 2.23; Sen. Med. 708). And even more relevantly, references to the Caucasus became shorthand for Roman authors looking to describe a bleak and harsh landscape (Hor. Carm. 1.22.7; Sen. Med. 43; Sen. Thy. 1048; Serv. Aen. 4.367).

Strabo’s extended description of the South Caucasus exhibits many of these mountain tropes (XI.1-5). While he uses the mountains as physical delimiters of the territory, he also describes them in social terms. Thus, the Caucasus highlands were the home of the “warlike portion” of society in Iberia, who are contrasted by their more civilized lowland neighbors (XI.3.3). At the same time, they were also the domain of the Amazons, who even Strabo suggests may be more myth than reality

---

262 For the ‘literary’ quality of ancient geography, see Romm (1994).
263 On the connection between the Caucasus and Prometheus, see chapter 4.
(XI.5.1, 5). The Caucasus are polyvalent in Strabo’s conceptual framework, as they were for Greek and Roman authors more generally. Most importantly, the rugged topographies are concrete barriers to circulation—dividing lines between continents and peoples. But these ranges were also places for ancient, even magical, interactions.

The fantastical power of the Caucasus was not confined to antiquity. It carried over into biblical traditions through stories of Gog and Magog, said to dwell in the region’s highlands; in the Qu’ran tradition of the wandering Jabal Qāf (Shingiray 2011; Vacca 2013); and then as the Russian metonym for romantic notions about mountain people: their freedom, brutality, and fierce otherness (See chapter 3; Grant 2005; Hokanson 1994; Layton 1986).

**Mountain Realities**

More recently, natural sciences research has brought new approaches to the study of mountains, articulating specific ways in which mountains differ from other landforms and opening avenues for considering the ramifications of these differences on cultural processes. One of the most striking characteristics of mountains is the disproportionate ecological diversity of highlands, which can contain disparate ecological zones in extremely close physical proximity because of their range of altitudes (Jeník 1997; Körner 2002). Highlands are cradles not only of biodiversity, but also of cultural and linguistic diversity (Stepp, Castaneda, and Cervone 2005). And they are, at least today, uniquely vulnerable to conflict: over half of all wars and armed conflicts in the late twentieth century involved mountain areas (Libiszewski and Bächler 1997).
The Caucasus exhibits many of these characteristics. Conflict, a defining literary trope since antiquity, remains an on-going political concern in the region (Hunter 2006; Sagramoso 2007). Linguistic diversity has also been a persistent hallmark. The tenth-century Arab geographer al-Masudi deemed the area jabal al-alsun, ‘the mountain of tongues’ (Catford 1977:283). A millennium earlier, Strabo mentions that twenty-six languages were spoken in the territory of Albania (XI.4.6). Recent work on ‘vertical bilingualism’ in the Caucasus, meanwhile, is explicit in connecting its unique linguistic landscape to the physical landscape and to patterns of movement within the territory (Nichols 2014:41).

Amid this flurry of general mountain research, however, the precise definition of a ‘mountain’ or ‘mountainous region’ has proved elusive. Mountains are, after all, relative: a 100m elevation along a coastal plain may be deemed a ‘mountain’ by local residents, but would not merit notice if it were found in the Alps. It was only in the late twentieth century that researchers began to attempt a quantitative answer for the question of “what makes a mountain a mountain?” (Debarbieux 2009; Funnell 2001:chap. 1). Developed using newly available global elevation data, one widely cited global mountain model combines absolute elevation (all land over 2,500 m), with slope and terrain roughness data to automatically classify both high peaks and lower-elevation mountains for the entire planet (Kapos et al. 2000).

Nonetheless, there is a sense among those who study mountains that such quantitative definitions don’t capture the essence of the landform. The most recent

---

264 For other recent scholarship on the linguistics of the Caucasus, see Comrie 2008
textbook on mountains said bluntly, “a landform is considered a mountain when local
people rate it as such” (Price et al. 2013:6). Or, in the words of the premier early
twentieth-century mountain scholar:

“A MOUNTAIN, strictly speaking, is a conspicuous elevation of small summit area. A
plateau is a similar elevation of larger summit area with at least one sheer side. An essential
and yet indefinite element in the definition of a mountain is the conspicuity. Conspicuity,
like height, is a relative matter, and depends upon the personal evaluation or the standard
by which it is measured… Mountains should be impressive; they should enter into the
imagination of the people within their shadows” (Peattie 1936:3–4).

The issue, at first glance, is whether a ‘mountain’ is the product of absolute or
relative topography. But underpinning the issue is the idea that phenomenological
encounters between mountains and humans are central to the status of the landform. A
mountain is not a mountain purely because of its topography, but because of the
emotional response of humans to the topography. This human dimension is, in a sense,
analogous to the understanding of mountainous places within Greek and Latin
literature, which rated both the physical mass and the spiritual power as intrinsic
characteristics. The persistence of this duality suggests that mountains are at an
essential level experiential.

**GIS, MOVEMENT OF PEOPLE AND MOVEMENT OF THINGS**

Given the topography of the Caucasus, a consideration of how mountains
shape mobility provides access to the experience of humans in mountains, and begins
to build an avenue for thinking about this landscape beyond what can be wrung from
the texts. I now will switch paradigms, moving from descriptions of *places* that we get
from texts, to questions of *space*, that is: of movement through this landscape. As
pointed out by Rubinson and Smith, “While the topography of the region certainly
limits the routes available for regular travel, it does not cut off communication. Indeed, by forcing travelers into a few pathways, the topography may encourage greater communication than a broad open plain” (Rubinson and Smith 2003:5)

My discussion will begin with the creation of a hypothetical route model of the Caucasus—a model of likely paths of movement through the territory—and will be followed by an analysis of how these paths coalesced into networks of mobility. This approach is possible because the rugged mountainous landscape and the borders of the Black and Caspian Seas constrain movement and funnel travelers through specific paths, allowing us to model which corridors may have been particularly attractive to overland travel. The result is a topographically informed route map that shows how space may have functioned without any references to territorial control. It provides, in this sense, a map of topographic potentials, allowing us to speculate about what configurations of space were being adopted by our ancient populations.

‘Friction of Terrain’

In order to accomplish this, I draw on the concept of ‘friction of terrain’ from the work of the anthropologist James Scott (2009). He recognizes that control of different types of terrain requires different degrees of energy investment. Highlands are particularly resource-intensive, because they are difficult to traverse and therefore difficult to supervise. ‘Friction of terrain’ is not based solely on topography, but is also socially produced, shaped by the interaction between intrinsic characteristics and efforts to either minimize friction through distance-reducing technologies (like bridges or paved roads), or maximize it through the obstruction of such technologies (Scott
This concept does not apply equally to all agents: pedestrians with good knowledge of the terrain will face less friction than a state organism using wheeled transportation to move foodstuffs (Scott 2009:42ff). ‘Friction of terrain’ is therefore a type of “geographic resource” available to highland populations seeking to limit access to and control of their territory (Sorge 2014:37). Although the concept has been applied most often to highland territories’ attempts to elude imperial power, I suggest that the residents and political authorities in the Caucasus leveraged their physical position both to resist external forces and to engage with their neighbors.

**Defining a Route System Computationally**

As discussed above, traditional maps, which circumscribe ancient polities within territorial limits, do a poor job of explaining regional interactions in the Caucasus. Beyond the issues of deciding where to place the territorial limits was the reality that these were zones of porous and ever-changing borders. A route system based on topographic potentials provides a sounder basis for understanding how objects and people circulated in the region, and how polities leveraged their territorial positions. Advances in GIS and network analysis in recent decades have yielded methods for predicting route choices in a landscape, while developments in network analysis have provided new tools for identifying central routes within a network. The following section describes the creation and analysis of such a route network for the Caucasus.

---

265 On border fluctuations, see the discussion of Strabo in chapter 4, p.190 and following.
Modelling Movement Potentials

‘Friction of terrain’ is one attempt to grapple with human encounters with these spaces: to capture the phenomenological dimensions of movement. Although the concept was largely deployed qualitatively by Scott, a different usage of ‘friction’ has featured in quantitative analyses of human movement for the last two decades, through the study of Least Cost Paths (LCPs). LCP analysis uses GIS to model movement choices through a landscape by analyzing travel decisions in terms of time and difficulty of transit, assuming that an iterative decision-making process identifies the most advantageous route, relying on raster-based processing (Bell and Lock 2000; Conolly and Lake 2006; Howey 2007; Llobera, Fábrega-Álvarez, and Parcero-Oubiña 2011; Surface-Evans and White 2012). In this system, friction is calculated as a function of slope. Alongside other travel-impeding or travel-attracting features of landscape such as topographic characteristics (slope, mountain passes), hydrological or environmental features (lakes, swamps or deserts), or cultural elements (settlements, dangerous territorial borders, or symbolic spaces) (Herzog 2013b:184), it becomes a ‘cost surface’ across which the least cost route for a specific means of transit can be algorithmically derived.

Although early research focused on movement between pre-determined points in the landscape (usually archaeological sites), recent work has sought to develop predictive LCP networks across territories that do not depend on known starting and ending points (Herzog 2013a; Llobera, Fábrega-Álvarez, and Parcero-Oubiña 2011; 266 Although, there is use of these ideas in, for example, Scott (2009:chap. 2).
Since many categories of archaeological material do not travel in a straight line from a point of origin to a destination, site-based route modeling is of limited use. However, the broader scale of a LCP network is pursued here because it provides meaningful information about circulation patterns.

These network models are often in the form of ‘from everywhere to everywhere’ Cumulative Cost Path (CCP) maps, and reflect travel potential across a landscape, picking out points in the landscape that are particularly popular for through-travel, with ‘popularity’ measured by how many individual LCPs traverse a particular route (D. A. White and Barber 2012). This technique is particularly promising in the case of mountainous topographies, where routes are restricted in marked ways, as in the Caucasus. The construction of such a network can be broken down into the following steps:

1. Creating a cost surface that reflects terrain friction and any other relevant factors through the zone.
2. Seeding non-site sample points across the zone.
3. Generating LCPs for movement from each study point to every other one across this cost surface.
4. Aggregating all the LCPs and ranking them according to how often a specific path was chosen to generate the CCP map.

Before discussing the specifics of the Caucasus model, however, a few words about the limitation of this methodology are in order. LCP analysis assumes that humans moving in a landscape are following optimal routes, which are thought to have

\[267\] See also the description in Verhagen (2013).
been ‘learned’ over repeated encounters with the landscape (Herzog 2013b:180; Surface-Evans and White 2012:2). However, poor judgment of topographical characteristics like slope and distance alongside incomplete geographical knowledge of human agents could have prevented route optimization, particularly in environments where travel was more sporadic (Freundschuh 1998). Additionally, modelling tools like this need to be designed specifically to account for issues of seasonality, which can distort results. Additionally, and especially relevant to the current investigation, the dominant algorithms for quantifying pedestrian choices may not accurately handle the exigencies of especially rugged topographies (Pingel 2010). And finally, these modelling tools are not currently able to capture a wide range of subjective and ‘random’ factors that likely shaped movement. Advances in the quantification of human movement in the future will undoubtedly reveal more accurate information about travel potentials in the territory. But even the presently available techniques give a glimpse into some of the logics of the landscape.

Modelling in Historical Landscapes

One additional topic deserves discussion: the problems that arise when we create models for historical landscapes. As the disappearance of the Aral Sea in recent decades has demonstrated, landscapes can change drastically in brief spans of time (Micklin 1988, 2007). With respect to the Caucasus, the timeframe that is considered here (ca. 2500 BP) is not long enough to allow for the accumulation of serious changes to orological features; so we can safely model highlands using modern elevation data.
The coastline of the Caspian, however, is very sensitive to global climate patterns, and it shifts dramatically within short timespans (Hoogendoorn et al. 2005; Kakroodi et al. 2012; Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014; Rychagov 1997). Indeed, the level of the Caspian Sea has undergone significant fluctuations even in the twentieth century—falling over 3 m between 1929 and 1977, and then rapidly raising again (Rychagov 1997:167). Thus, the position of the ancient coastline need to be discussed as part of mapping attempts such as the one conducted here.

The dramatic coastline shifts were, perhaps, one factor that fostered discussion of the Caspian coastline in antiquity among ancient historians. The subject of the coastline in the Antik period has been studied, particularly, by Murav’ev (Mouraviev 1992; 1983, 1991). He attempted to reconcile Ptolemy’s rivers and cities with known sites and the topography of the region. In particular, he was concerned with placing the rivers so that they ran directly into the Caspian, rather than into the Kura (fig. 32) (following Ptolemy). In order to do this, he suggested that nearly the entire Kura lowlands were underwater in the 3rd c. BCE (when Ptolemy’s information is said to have been collected), with the lowlands flooded nearly all the way to Mingəçevir (fig. 33).

He stated that this model was dependent on a Caspian Sea levels of “15-20 m above sea level” (1983:141), figures which were based entirely on the elevations of sites that he believed to be above the floodline, rather than, of course, on modern
scientific research on ancient sea levels.\textsuperscript{268} Ongoing scientific research, however, has demonstrated that his hypothesis is not supported by paleogeographic data.\textsuperscript{269}

Thanks to considerable interest in the unique fluctuations of the Caspian, today we have well-documented models for past transgressions and regressions going back many millennia. The current Caspian level is -27 mASL, and the dominant models for historic sea levels document a highstand ca. 600-300 BCE at a maximum of 5m higher than the current level, or ca. -22-23 mASL (figs. 34, 35) (Kakroodi et al. 2012; Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:51; S.B. Kroonenberg, Rusakov, and Svitoch 1997:200).\textsuperscript{270}

This is significantly lower than the highstand needed for Murav’ev’s hypothesis,\textsuperscript{271} and makes only relatively minor changes to the Caspian coastline. It therefore makes his fascinating suggestions unsupported, although his work continues to be cited in contemporary scholarship (Hewsen 2001:40). For the purposes of this study, I’ve used the ca. -23 mASL sea level as my baseline level (fig. 36).

\textsuperscript{268} It is not entirely clear from this first article whether he is talking about ‘sea level’ \textit{sensu stricto}, or means “15 – 20 m above the current level of the Caspian, which would mean an absolute high of ca. -10 to -5 mASL. However, it is clear in a later article that the means ‘sea level’ in the scientific sense, and thus is positing a 3\textsuperscript{rd} c. BCE sea level of 15 – 20 mASL (Murav’ev 1991:143).

\textsuperscript{269} Even beyond the science of the Caspian Sea levels, Murav’ev’s model would place well-attested Kura valley archaeological sites like Ali-Bairamlı underwater.

\textsuperscript{270} Neither the date and the level of this highstand is clear. Kroonenberg et al. argue that “a highstand is reached at -25m around 2600 BP” (2008:30). Rychagov argues for a highstand of -22 or 23 mASL, but places it earlier in the 1\textsuperscript{st} millennium BCE, saying that “the sea-level did not exceed -25m over the past 2000-2500 years” (1997:171).

\textsuperscript{271} Caspian Sea levels of the type anywhere near what would be needed for Muravev’s hypothesis to work were last attested in the Khvalynian phase, dated at the very latest to ca. 7000 BCE (Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:51).
Network Construction Methods

This section describes the precise steps and parameters used in the construction of the models related to the Caucasus.

ArcGIS Network Parameters

The goal of the Caucasus route model is to describe corridors of movement within the zone as well as across the territory, so a wide study area of roughly 1000km by 825km was analyzed in ArcGIS. In order to minimize edge effect (which preferentially weights the center of a study area), analysis was conducted for the entire study area and then clipped for statistical purposes to the central zone of interest.

Across the study area, a grid of 518 study points was seeded at a staggered spacing of 50km (fig. 37). An anisotropic cost surface was calculated for movement to each of these destination points, taking into account two factors: (1) slope, using Tobler’s hiking equation as a vertical factor to account for slope-based movement costs; (Tobler 1993) and (2) mountain passes, identified using a Topographic Position Index as discussed by Jenness (Jenness 2006). Regions identified as passes were given

---

272 The study area includes both the Greater and Lesser Caucasus mountain ranges with elevations of up to 5,642m. Elevations were drawn from a 3 arc-second SRTM DEM, which was resampled to a resolution of 200m because of processing limitations.

273 Both the coarseness of the resolution and the wide spacing of sample points have clear ramifications for the granular use of path data and precise path accuracy, but given the current interest in wide patterns of movement in the zone, these are not central concerns of the present study. Furthermore, an analysis conducted on a subset of the study area using a finer grid and sample points spaced 5km identified the same primary routes within the zone as the coarse grid and 50km point spacing, giving further support to the scale of analysis used here. But, for concerns, see Kantner 2012.

274 Generated using ArcGIS Path Distance tool.
a preferentially low friction to induce movement.\textsuperscript{275} LCPs from each of the other 517 study points to the destination point in question were then generated.\textsuperscript{276}

After analyzing 518 destination points, the LCP grids were added to create a cumulative cost path map aggregating over 268,000 LCPs (fig. 38).\textsuperscript{277} In fig. 39, these routes are ranked by frequency, with the darkest routes corresponding to the paths most often selected. These places can be understood as \textit{travel-attracting corridors}—“probable loci of movement” in the landscape (D. A. White and Barber 2012:2693).

This cumulative cost path map, then, reflects travel attraction as a function of the frequency of LCP presence in a given place, presenting travel attracting corridors across the territory for periods of the year when the mountain passes were traversable, with the assumption that people were using those passes. The model doesn’t distinguish between populations (local and non-local, for example), and doesn’t reflect distance-reducing interventions, like the building of bridges. As such, it is only a sketch of movement potentials – but it provides insights that are not available from looking at traditional maps.

\textsuperscript{275} This was factored into the analysis as a cost surface in the Path Distance tool, along with major hydrological features (lakes) that prevented overland movement. When mountain passes were not factored in, all traffic flowed to the coastal paths— a scenario that does not reflect ethnographic accounts of movement in the zone.

\textsuperscript{276} The LCPs were generated using ArcGIS Flow Accumulation tool. For each destination point, this created in a LCP raster grid with values from 1 to 517, corresponding to how many of the LCP’s traversed a specific grid square.

\textsuperscript{277} The values of the cumulative cost path map range from 0 to 33,494 —corresponding to the total number of times that a LCP ran through a given grid square.
Another approach for quantifying the propensity for movement within a system comes from network analysis, which characterizes network topology and identifies important routes, taking the LCP travel-attracting corridors as a starting point. Studies of urban street grids have demonstrated correlations between observed patterns of use and syntactic measures of individual streets (Hillier and Iida 2005), and the same approaches have recently been applied to regional LCP analyses (Verhagen et al. 2013). Based on the premise that only the most robust routes would have been “primary” landscape corridors involved in regular and long-distance overland movement (Verhagen et al. 2013:359), the top 50%, 30% and 10% of the routes from the cumulative cost path map were vectorized and exported to DepthmapX, a software package for spatial network analysis (fig. 40) (Hillier and Hanson 1984; Alasdair Turner 2004).

The present analysis focuses on one syntactic measure, choice, and particularly metric choice (fig. 41). Choice records the number of shortest paths to pass through a given part of a spatial system, and is equivalent to betweenness centrality in other types of network analysis (Hillier, Yang, and Turner 2012:155). Within studies of street networks, choice has been identified as corresponding to the “through-movement potential” of a given space (Hillier, Yang, and Turner 2012:156).

Following an 80/20 rule of scale-free event distribution has been more common for studies of this type, see Verhagen et al. 2013:359; Whitley and Burns 2008:2688 However, in this case, 30% was the threshold for a network that contained meaningful edges spanning the Greater Caucasus, and was therefore deemed to be more appropriate.
The cumulative cost path map in figure 39 and the metric choice maps in figure 41 then, provide two different ways of quantifying the propensity for travel across the study area, and for picking out regions of particular importance to (or remoteness from) major transportation routes.

**Network Analysis Results**

I present here the results of the cumulative cost path map (fig. 5.16), and a discussion of the route network topology as described by the Depthmap analysis. This is a consideration of *space* in the sense of de Certeau—an approach that privileges movement and connectivity. The analysis does not describe routes per se, but rather represents how accessible a path was for those who chose to use it, relative to other available options. Unlike accounts of travel through the Caucasus based on written sources, which privilege specific types of movement (usually either military campaigns or long-distance trade activity), the cumulative cost path map is a general index of the phenomenon of movement.\(^{279}\)

There are benefits to this a-personal and a-chronological approach to space: it allows us to understand the landscape’s affordances—what it enables. But, equally important is how societies interact with those affordances—how they choose to leverage the natural resource of topography. Thus, this section serves as in introduction to the discussion that continues in the subsequent section, which uses historical route data to consider how these routes have functioned across time.

\(^{279}\) But see Rennell (2012) on the difficulty of integrating GIS with landscape phenomenology approaches in the spirit of Tilley (1994).
CCP Analysis

The South Caucasus CCP model picks out east-west riverine corridors along the Kura and Aras rivers as the most conducive places for movement in the zone. Intersecting with these, a coastal path along the Caspian as well as a mountain pass through the Greater Caucasus (through the Dariali Gorge) are the most accessible routes leading north from the South Caucasus. Both of these routes are well attested in ancient and more modern accounts of travel through the territory, although each route has seasonal constraints. The model also suggests that movement can flow through a number of smaller north-south passes through the Greater Caucasus. While the Caspian coast attracted movement, the coast of the Black Sea was less favorable. The Lesser Caucasus in general are more accessible than the Greater Caucasus, leading to the exploitation of a wider variety of paths through those mountains. Nevertheless, the Aragats plain serves as a focal point of movement, sitting at the nexus of both north-south and east-west routes.

Within the central South Caucasus, the most frequently chosen corridor leads east-west from the Surami pass through the Likhi Range separating eastern and western Georgia to the confluence of the Kura and the Aragvi rivers, where it splits off into a northern and southern spur. This east-west trunk route meets several travel-

---

280 Coastline changes would have altered the exact course of the coastal route, but iterations of the model run on different coastline configurations suggest that the presence of such a route is persistent. For hypotheses about coastline changes, see above.

281 In the case of the Dariali Pass, the climactic problems occur in winter, when heavy snow makes all intermontane routes inaccessible. In the case of the Derbent pass, the problem is summer flooding, see Tacitus Ann. 6.33.

282 The use of some of these passes in antiquity has been suggested, see Braund 1994:44.

283 Supporting Marro’s (2004) suggestion about the importance of maritime networks in this area.
attracting north-south corridors, particularly those leading through the Dariali Pass (likely the ancient Albanian Gates) and the Roki and Zekara Passes. The northern spur of this route leads towards the Qanıx-Əyriçay valley, following the course of the Qanıx until it meets up with the southern spur again.

Further to the east, in the presumed heartland of ancient Caucasian Albania, most traffic is along the Kura basin, rather than in the foothills. The route follows the course of the Kura roughly until Şirvan, from where it runs directly east to the Caspian coast near the petroglyph site of Qobustan. The only other high frequency corridor there falls along the Caspian coast, running through the Derbent Pass. To the north, in the eastern half of the Qanıx-Əyriçay valley near Qəbələ, high-frequency routes are very sparse.

**Depthmap Analysis**

Depthmap analysis offers another way of understanding movement potential, in the form of choice—or the likelihood of through-traffic. Choice within the 10% network looks quite similar to the cumulative cost path map, picking out the central South Caucasus as a central zone, and identifying the Caspian path as the major north-south movement route in the territory of the eastern Caucasus. However, in the wider 30% network, and even more so in the 50% network, the Caspian path loses importance to a series of passes through the Greater Caucasus that lead to the piedmont of the eastern Caucasus, which may hint at the zone’s importance over time.

---

284 The site where the only documented Latin inscription from the territory of Azerbaijan was found. See Chapter 4.
The 30% and 50% networks allow for the exploitation of harder routes through the mountains, enabling links from the Caspian coast to the middle Kura river valley across the rugged territory of Qobustan foothills. Many of these routes run eventually through the eastern Qanıx-Əyriçay river valley.

The finding to recognize here is that the Depthmap analysis picks out some less-frequent routes – and particularly routes in rugged terrain—as critically important. This network analysis, which contrasts with the picture drawn on the basis of least cost paths, suggests that the key to the strategic importance of the foothills in the Antik period might be the same feature that impedes overland travel—the rugged terrain.

This analysis method makes the position of Albania intelligible: it is a space that exists at the interface between routes through the foothills, and the fertile lower plains of the Caucasus and the Kura valley. Thinking about the lifeways of the eastern Caucasus discussed in Chapter 4, and particularly the presence of mobile pastoralists in the local federation, the logic of Albanian spatial orientation becomes clearer. The eastern Piedmont is not necessarily a space of easy through-movement, but it is optimal for controlling the junctural territory that connects the North Caucasus to the South along the Caspian’s shores.

**Contextualizing Computational Analysis**

Incorporating historical and archaeological data is critical to the understanding of the South Caucasus CCP model. Written sources have in the past been leveraged in the construction of speculative road and route maps (Hewsen 2001; Manandian 1954;
As mentioned above, these sources present a less ‘democratic’ view of movement, since they often reflect either the episodic movement of military forces, or of state-sanctioned trade activities, rather than the quotidian movement of residents within a space. Nevertheless, they add time dimension to the analyses provided above, and sketch a variety of mechanisms for interacting with this landscape.

**Pre-Islamic Routes**

Accounts of ancient movement through the eastern Caucasus appear in several of the Greek and Latin sources already discussed, though the references are glancing. Two late antique itinerary texts (the Peutinger Table and the Antonine Itinerary) provide additional information about routes in the territory, but the many clear misunderstandings in the accounts and problems with recognizing toponyms render them unreliable (Marro 2004:106). Although it is impossible to present a complete (or even partial) overview of routes from the *Antik* period, the textual sources present several accounts of movement in the space that are significant.

Many of the accounts of movement in the wider South Caucasus describe travel along north-south paths, rather than across the ‘easier’ riverine routes. Thus, two of the South Caucasus routes that can be identified on the Peutinger Table were north-south corridors running from Artashat into Caucasian Iberia (fig. 42). As discussed in the CCP analysis above, the exploitation of these routes reflects a distinct energy

---

285 Hewsen follows Murav’ev’s incorrect hypotheses about the level of the Caspian Sea, making much of his treatment of the *Antik* eastern South Caucasus of little value. His discussion of the central South Caucasus and the Anatolian highlands, however, are extremely valuable.

286 Hewsen (2001:65); see also the work of Manandian (1954).
expenditure, since the paths were difficult to traverse. Meanwhile, most of the riverine routes (the Kura route for example) are curiously absent from the Peutinger Table.

One depiction of movement patterns in Strabo’s account of the territory also describes north-south movement. Specifically, Strabo recounts the role of the Upper Aorsi in trade:

\[\text{καὶ γὰρ ἐπεφράτουν πλείονος γῆς καὶ σχεδόν τί τῆς Κασπίων παραλίας τῆς πλείστης ἠρχον, ὡστε καὶ ἐνεπορεύοντο καμήλοις τῶν Ἰνδικῶν φόρτων καὶ τόν Βαβυλώνιον πείρα τε Ἀρμενίων καὶ Μῆδων διαδεχόμενοι. ...for they were masters of a greater extent of territory, and nearly the largest part of the coast of the Caspian Sea was under their power. They were thus enabled to transport on camels the merchandise of India and Babylonia, receiving it from Armenians and Medes.} \]

(Strabo 11.5.8, Trans. 1904).

Manandian, following Neumann (1883:349–50) believes that Strabo was wrong about the localization of the Aorsi (who he places in the western rather than eastern North Caucasus), and suggests that, instead of a Caspian route, we should imagine a “Maeotid-Colchidian highway” leading overland from Ecbatana, through Armenia up to Dioscurias, and then along the Black Sea coast (Manandian 1965:49–50). Marro (2004:104) appears to accept this route, although she does not comment on it. The CCP analysis, on the other hand, suggests that a western coastal route would have been quite difficult, and argues against easily accepting this pass. Rather, recognizing the better-documented importance of the Derbent path in the Sasanian period, I prefer to accept Strabo’s emphasis on the fact that controlling the Caspian Sea was of critical importance, while acknowledging that he may have incorrectly ascribed this control to the Upper Aorsi.
Following the pattern established in the sources already mentioned, which often describe north-south movement, discussions in Tacitus and Arian also concentrate on these more difficult routes. This lack of attention in the sources to the more straightforward and well-worn riverine routes likely should not be understood to reflect a lack of movement along these paths: rather, the texts seem to be recounting movement through landscape choke-points, resulting in a distorted picture of the landscape.

If one considers the disposition of the capital cities of the dominant Roman-Parthian period political authorities in the territory (Caucasian Iberia, Caucasian Albania and Armenia), one sees that the local polities were relating to these corridors in starkly different ways (fig. 43). The capital of Caucasian Iberia (Mtskheta), as well as that of Armenia (Artashat), were both located at nodal points of route corridors. In contrast, Albania’s capital (Qəbəla) was remote from any corridor, along less prominent routes.287 Different logics, clearly, guided the occupation of these places.

**Islamic Routes (9th-13th centuries)**

It is in the Islamic period that we begin to get more comprehensive data, enabling the development of an understanding of route systems. There is a broad body of Islamic geographic texts (Miquel 1973–1988; Pinto 2016), which have considerable information about the organization of the Caucasus in the period (Vacca 2013).

The study of routes in the early Islamic period is principally through the schematic route maps of the Islamic geographers, especially those of Al-Istakhri, Ibn

---

287 For the possible importance of these less prominent routes, see Fabian (2017); Gregoratti (2013).
Hawqal and al-Maqdisi. These maps, which list major cities and their connections to each other, can be complemented with descriptions of the post-road network of the Islamic Caliphate, particularly the works of Ibn Khurdadhbeh and Qudama (Elbabour 1980:8). With these sources, we see a clear set of east-west routes, two of which more-or-less followed the Kura and Aras river basins, with a third running further south (Marro 2004:106). There is no evidence in the works of the early geographers of an important route in the Qanıx-Əyriçay valley.

At the same time, the Islamic descriptions suggest the growing prominence of regional ‘hub’ centers, which controlled access to smaller local cities. Thus, in the eastern Caucasus, the capital had already moved south from Qəbələ to Barḍa’a (mod. Bərdə; Arm. Partaw), which grew in importance as a node in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods. According to the sources and their maps, Barḍa’a, with easy routes running to Dvin and Tiflis in the east, also served as the main access point for those wishing to cross the Caucasus, through the city of Bāb-al-Abwāb (Derbent), which itself was reached through Baylaqān (mod. Beylaqan; Arm. P’aytakaran). Thus, as political constellations shifted and Tabriz became an increasingly important political center, it pulled the organization of the territory in a south/ south-eastern direction.

**Route Data Conclusions**

A diachronic view of the routes reconstructed in these sources suggest that east-west axes across the South Caucasus have been relatively persistent over time, although not stable. There is more variety across time in the choice of north-south routes, particularly through the Lesser Caucasus. For example, while the Tabriz -
Naxçıvan City - Yerevan route through the Lesser Caucasus is fairly stable across many of the periods that Marro surveys, the paths from this route north to the Kura differ sharply. In the modern period, a western route leads from Yerevan north east to Gyumri, before turning north to meet the Kura, while a central path leads from Yerevan to the northern edge of Lake Sevan (Dilijan), and then to Tbilisi. There is no paved road that leads to the eastern Kura today (likely as a result of the region’s fraught geopolitics). Marro’s depiction of both 16th – 19th century routes and pre-modern routes, however, shows an eastern route leading from Naxçıvan to the middle Kura, passing through Bərdə along the way, while the Islamic geographers provide a route running from Naxçıvan along the Aras river to Versan.

Marro suggests that the dominance and stability of the east-west routes in contrast to the inconsistency of the north-south routes is a result of the long history of geopolitical fragmentation of the space (2004:112–13). She acknowledges the role that landscape factors play in this story, noting that topography and climate “render most north-south routes barely passable except in summer,” but goes on to say that “the notion of a ‘passable route’ is a relative one” (2004:112). She, furthermore, argues that there is a certain equivalence between the north-south and east-west routes, suggesting that on a purely geographic level, the place could equally well be seen as a bridge connecting the “Orient and Occident,” as well as “the Russian steppes and Arabia” (2004:112).

The CCP analysis, however, demonstrates that the way the topography affects north-south and east-west travel through the South Caucasus is fundamentally
different. This can be explained as a function of the greater difficulty of north-south movement expressed in the CCP analysis. In the absence of any truly good choices, there was more room for experimentation based on the priorities and needs of different times and travellers.

Interestingly, two of the routes that can be identified on the late antique Peutinger Table through the South Caucasus were north-south corridors running from Artashat into Caucasian Iberia (fig. 43). The exploitation of these routes reflects a distinct energy expenditure that correlated to their importance for imperial actors motivating the official route system, although these routes are rarely mentioned in later accounts of travel and relatively inaccessible in the CCP analysis. The absence of most of the riverine routes (the Kura route, for example) from the Peutinger Table, meanwhile, is curious, and may simply reflect a lack of attention to these straightforward and well-worn paths.

**Conclusions**

The experiential relationship between people and mountains is central to life in the Caucasus, and therefore to our study of it. While I’ve focused on movement patterns here, I’d argue that the affordances of the topography reach farther than this. However, advances in computing power and the development of quantitative studies of human movement have provided techniques that allow us to build heuristic models of how topography may have been experienced by actors in the past. We can then use these heuristic models alongside historical and archaeological and historical datasets,
creating new avenues for understanding how ancient populations were interacting with their space, and discovering exceptional moments in the texts.

In the case of the Caucasus, this brief exploration of movement potentials and historical route choices shows that we should pay particular attention to north-south routes, as the variability of choice makes these more expressive of the priorities of users. The north-south routes, many of which traverse smaller mountain passes, could have been the site of local territorial power, with residents able to help or hinder those attempting to pass through their territory. This examination also highlights the different positions occupied by local polities, with some located at accessible juncture points and others positioned along less popular routes. Network approaches give us both methodological tools and a vocabulary for discussing the logistics of interaction in this territory. The route network provides an alternative view of the territory that prioritizes movement and connectivity. It augments existing understandings of the zone’s territorial logic, and suggests underlying structural characteristics that contributed to intraregional variation. It is clear, for example, that Iberia and Albania occupied different network niches, with Iberia’s capital situated at a key juncture for through-movement, while Albania’s was almost intentionally remote. Territorial friction, after all, is not predictive, but is rather a “geographic resource” that can be leveraged in pursuit of different goals.

Ancient textual sources suggest that Albania’s importance (in Mediterranean eyes, at least) came from its position as a gatekeeper between the Near East and the mobile pastoralist (Sarmatian) communities of the North Caucasus—between mobile
pastoralists and settled populations (Gregoratti 2013). The eastern piedmont, straddling low- and highlands along the slopes of the Greater Caucasus, was situated as an ideal mediator between these places.
Chapter 6: Excavating the State of Caucasian Albania

Whereas explorations of the Roman borderlands of Europe are predicated on Helleno- or Romano-centric models that foreground issues of cultural assimilation and imperial expansion, these ideas are absent from traditional Antik history in the eastern Caucasus. But the ideas which underlie examinations of Romanization—that is, discussions of political restructuring and identity changes in borderlands, find near-parallels among archaeologists and historians of Albania, who have traditionally asked questions about (1) the degree and nature of state development and consolidation; and (2) the composition of the local population and their ethnogenesis.

Alison Wylie has suggested that all archaeological material is excavated and documented within an intellectual scaffolding designed “to address specific questions that presuppose a rich array of substantive assumptions about the nature of the subject domain, what’s puzzling or interesting and, crucially, what can feasibly be asked about it” (2017:208). An exploration of how the concepts of ‘socio-political structure’ and ‘identity’ have functioned within the archaeology of the eastern Caucasus allows us to chart the deep genealogies of scholarship and the development of a historical narrative, while the reconsideration of the data themselves enable us to question the structures that (re)produced political sovereignty in the space. But it is critical not to separate out these two exercises—to avoid the temptation of stripping the archaeological data off of its

288 For example, see the considerable space that has been dedicated to debating ideas of ‘Romanization’ in the last quarter of the twentieth century, particularly with respect to the western provinces of the Roman empire. See the full discussion in chapter 2, p.46.
scaffolding, and simply reassembling it to answer our own questions. Instead, the project is to see historiographic and archaeological perspectives as part of a totality.

In this chapter on socio-political structure I present key archaeological materials that, in the context of Azerbaijani scholarship, have been entangled with and implicated in the rise of a ‘state of Caucasian Albania.’ I start by discussing the history of Albania in local and regional scholarship, exploring the textual foundation for the polity. Two key archaeological datasets have been leveraged in these discussions, which I will examine in this chapter: (1) evidence for the capital city of Albania as well as other data concerning monumental architecture, urbanism, and settlement strategy in the Kura valley and eastern piedmont; and (2) the material culture of administration – a body of data including coins and seals which have been understood in light of their connections to state centralization and administrative practices. I will discuss evidence from the eastern Caucasus, and provide comparisons to material from neighboring regions—particularly from Iberia.

There are many ways to build this narrative, and this chapter omits or glosses over other categories of evidence that could well fit within the story of ‘Excavating the State.’ I spend little time discussing, for example, luxury toreutics—mostly silver bowls—discovered in the territory, although they are likely evidence of elite gift exchange between external authorities and local powers.\(^{289}\) Neither do I focus on imported materials like glass and fibulae, although these too attest to the deepening trade connections of the

\(^{289}\) On the toreutics from Azerbaijan, see Qoşqarlı (1978, 1979). More elaborate pieces are known from tombs in Iberia, see for example Apakidze et al. (2004).
region as the *Antik* period progressed. There are other works that treat the history and archaeology of the territory comprehensively, and my intent is not to re-write these. Instead, I aim to reframe the material excavated from ancient Albania, thinking about it not as an isolated body of data reflecting on specifically local practice, but rather as part of a vast system of interactions stretching from the Mediterranean, to the Persian Gulf, to the Eurasian steppe, and only intelligible through dialogue with these spaces.

On the basis of these datasets, I demonstrate that the eastern Caucasus in the *Antik* period was inhabited by a flexible federation that adopted a strategic policy of state-consolidation in their dealings with outside powers, while also maintaining considerable internal diversity in social practice.

**TOWARDS A STATE: TEXTUAL FOUNDATIONS OF ALBANIA**

An interest in antiquity and engagement with ancient sources is, as discussed in chapter 3, not a modern phenomenon. There were vibrant dialogues in the medieval and early modern periods about ancient history, when, for example, Greek heroes and Roman Caesars buttressed understandings of European kingship and lent legitimacy to empire-building projects. This section considers the reception of ancient history in the eastern Caucasus, sketching out major trends in the scholarship, and examining how textual evidence has been deployed in studies of Albania.

---

290 All are, however, written in either Azerbaijani or Russian (Babayev 1990; K. H. Əliyev 1974; Osmanov 1982, 2006; Trever 1959; C. Ə. Xalilov 1985b). For a recent discussion of the territory of modern Dagestan in this period, see also Gadjiev (2002) as well as Davudov (1996).

291 For example, concerning the ‘prehistory’ of Romano-British history, see Creighton (2006:3–8). Or, with respect to a space closer to the South Caucasus, see the discussion in chapter 3 about Russian Imperial engagement with classical antiquity.
Medieval Reception

In the northern South Caucasus, the interest in ancient history is particularly clear among the powerful Armeno-Georgian Bagratid families of the ninth century CE and later, who oriented themselves toward the Byzantine world and capitalized on connections between the Kʿartʿvelian ecclesiastic community and that of Constantinople (Rapp 2017; Toumanoff 1963). Their self-fashioning included direct associations between the Byzantine east and the more distant Rome – associations, as well as connections to the Iranian world which are visible in both the historiography (Rapp 2014) and the art (Eastmond 2010) of Bagratid Georgia.

Further to the east, in the territory past the reach of Bagratid control, the situation was different. Independent Albania faded from prominence by the eighth century CE, with the territory incorporated into the expanding Islamic world. Drastic demographic changes ushered in with the inflow of a Turkic population under the Seljuks, and a further incorporation into Iranian space under the rule of the Ilkhanate, introduced new points of cultural reference. Perhaps these changes simply intensified the deep connections to the Iranian sphere that had been present in the region since at least the Achaemenid period. Accounts of classical antiquity were present, filtered through the accounts of Islamic historians like al-Masʿūdī and Persian versions of the Alexander romance, like the one that survives in Neẓāmī Ganjāvī’s *Eskandar-nāma*. But close associations with the Byzantine world and an interpretation of the past that drew directly on Greco-Roman

---
292 For more on the stories preserved in these texts, see Bakıxanov’s early history of Şirvan and Dagestan, *Gülüstani-İrm*, of which a recent English translation exists (Bakikhanov 2009).
narratives, then, held less currency among the Khanates that rose in the eastern Caucasus.293

**Eighteenth and Nineteenth-century Narratives**

Therefore, it wasn’t until the Russian imperial expansion of the eighteenth century and the arrival of military officers into the territory that a more systematic, European-inflected, treatment of the ancient history of the eastern Caucasus began. The earliest study in this vein was written by Gottleib Siegfried Bayer,294 the first director of Humanities research at the Imperial Academy of Sciences discussed earlier. He wrote his first publication on the basis of notes sent to him by Dimitrii Kantemir, the polymath prince of Moldova who had accompanied Peter the Great on his Persian campaign of 1722 (Bayer 1728a). Strikingly, this work was prompted by Kantemir's interaction with material culture: specifically, ancient ruins that he encountered around Derbent (fig. 44). The architectural remains and epigraphic fragments play a central role in Bayer's article, although he is liberal in his reference to textual sources. About the wall fragments, Bayer writes:

Pars muri, quae subiecta erat oculis, de omni reliqua mole conicetram mouebat, quanta et quam admirabilis esset, præsertim in illa solitudine, super illis montium fastigis et cum praeterea hominum sermo et ipse lapidum color ad vetustatem ultiam tam insignis artificii opus referret. (Bayer 1728a:425)

A part of the wall, which had been thrust up into view, stirred conjecture about all the rest of the mass – how large and how wonderful it had been, particularly in this wilderness, upon these mountain peaks, and especially because the stories of men as well as the color itself of the stone attested to the great old age, so marked by human craftsmanship, of the work.

---

293 Much more work is needed on this topic, as there has been little research on the reception of antiquity among the Khanates.

294 See chapter 3 discussion of Bayer, p. 67.
On the basis of Kanemir’s notes and sketches, as well as a wide array of Latin, Arabic and Persian literary sources, Bayer speculated that the remains of the wall dated to the time of the Median empire, and was part of a wider fortification system built to keep out the Scythians. His dating, as it turns out, was mistaken. Modern archaeological work on fortifications in the area of Derbent dates the standing remains to the Sasanian period (Gadjiev 2008a).

Although incorrect in his attribution, Bayer nevertheless correctly recognized the strategic value of this critical coastal path, and identified the central cause of imperial interest in the space. As recent archaeological work in the area has demonstrated, there was significant infrastructural investment on the part of the Sasanian empire along their northern borders on both sides of the Caspian sea, with the impressive fortification systems erected at the Gorgān and Tammīsheh walls on the east and southeast of the Caspian, as well as at Derbent and two sites to the south in modern Azerbaijan, Gilgilçay and Beşbarmaq (A. A. Aliev et al. 2006; K. Alizadeh 2014; Gadjiev 2008a; Payne 2014; Sauer et al. 2012).

Bayer followed this first materially-grounded article with a sequence of other pieces, clearly inspired by the first, delving more deeply into textual sources for the unfamiliar region (Bayer 1728b, 1728c, 1729, 1732, 1738). In all of these works, Bayer chose to focus on the nomadic populations of the Steppe--like the Scythians and Cimmerians. This interest was likely enmeshed in Russian perceptions of the southern border of their empire, with its exotic savageness.

The first third of the nineteenth century, in the wake of the Russian Empire’s territorial expansion, engendered a deeper scholarly interest in the zone. Rather than
expanding on Bayer’s earlier interest in nomadic populations, this second wave of scholarship shifted its focus onto the states of the South Caucasus specifically, leading to some of the earliest modern considerations of Albania. These works drew exclusively on textual sources, since excavations in the area didn't commence until the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth century.

The earliest of these accounts were written in Russian and Persian, by local and foreign scholars. The first among this set is an article by Frederick Kruze, which provides a brief orientation to the political geography and environmental characteristics of the entire South Caucasus (Kruze 1835), but which also bemoans the limited understanding of the territory. Special attention however should be paid to the 1841 historical work of Abbasqulu ağa Bakıxanov, Gülüstani-İrm, which told the history of the khanates of Şirvan and Dagestan from their earliest days. Bakıxanov, descended from the ruling family of the Bakı khanate, ties together textual references gleaned from Armenian, Islamic, Persian, Russian and European traditions to recount the history of Şirvan and Dagestan.

The first of these eighteenth-century scholars to publish based on personal examination of the territory was Ianovskii (1846). The main interest of his work was toponymy, in order to locate the cities of Albania as mentioned by Ptolemy and other ancient authors. He supplements his (often questionable) associations between modern and ancient place names with extremely valuable ethnographic details gleaned from his own travels through the territory in 1829. Of particular interest for this chapter’s

---

295 Ianovskii appears to have been working with a Latin translation of Ptolemy, as he repeatedly discusses his search of Ptolemy’s civitates, invoking significantly more grand visions of these settlements than the κῶμαι (villages) of Ptolemy’s actual text.
questions concerning the monumental architecture of the Antik period, Ianovskii writes the following about the lack of major urban ruins:

All of the houses are built out of reeds (камышевой)—even the mosques are made of reeds. Only the rich live in houses of mudbrick. There are very many reeds in this territory; and they were not less in antiquity, as Moses Khorenats attests. With respect to Ptolemy, the houses of the Albanians could not have been better than the modern ones, and therefore there are no ruins anywhere in the Şaki area of the Kura valley. (Ianovskii 1846:119).

Twentieth-century Developments

A series of authors followed Ianovskii, chiefly Dorn (1875), Bartol’d (1924), Krymskii (1934, 1938), Iushkov (1937), and Leviatov (1950), all of whom focused to one degree or another on the question of the physical growth of the state and its urban development.

A turning point in the scholarship came with the monograph of Trever (1959), whose work provided the first comprehensive synthesis of thought about Albania in the Antik and Sasanian periods. Her work was published just a few years after the first serious excavation results from Mingəçevir were reaching a wider audience (Aslanov, Vahidov, and Ione 1959; Qazıyev 1946, 1948, 1949a; Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949). It also came in the wake of İsmizadə’s influential publication on the Yaloylutapə culture (1956), in which he drew a connection between the ancient archaeological culture and the development of the modern Azerbaijani people. The comprehensive nature of Trever’s work, the provocative assesments of İsmizadə and the expansion of archaeological data all led to the rapid expansion of studies of Albania, which in turn set paradigmatic

296 This piece is reprinted in Bartol’d (1963)
interpretations that continue to be in force today (Babayev 1990; K. H. Əliyev 1974; Məmmədova 1986; Osmanov 1982; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a).

The dominant modern narrative for growth and development of the eastern piedmont of the South Caucasus was laid out by İlyas Atababa oğlu Babayev in his article “K voprosu o vozniknovenii gosudarstva Albanii (Kavkazskoi)” (On the Question of the Growth of the State of Albania [Caucasian]) (Babayev 1976). Babayev traces the development of Caucasian Albania, beginning his account with the Early Iron Age at the end of the first millennium BCE. In this period, according to Babayev, the territory was a zone of refuge from external conflicts, but it saw increasing contact with neighbors. Using the terminology of Frederick Engels, Babayev argues that the dominant form of social organization in the South Caucasus in this period was a “military democracy” 297 illustrated by an expansion of fortresses and fortified settlements across the South Caucasus. That is to say: in the pre-Achaemenid period, Babayev believes that local social organization had not ‘progressed beyond’ the stage of tribal confederation (1976:41).

Subsequently, in the Achaemenid period, Babayev sees local authorities in a deferential relationship with the Iranian kingdom, although he describes the ties as being nominal in character. 298 He stresses that the territory of Albania sat at a critical point for the Achaemenid Empire, as a bulwark defensive border against “potential invasions by northern peoples” (1976:42), whom he glosses as Scythians. Because of its ability to regulate access, the territory took on increased importance in the Achaemenid sphere.

---

297 For a review of this concept in Soviet archaeology, see Khazanov (1974).
298 He suggests distance as the cause of this (Babayev 1976:41), which is questionable given the great scope of the Achaemenid empire.
prompting more intensive contact with the Near Eastern world. Over time, Babayev argues, this created the necessary conditions for local state consolidation: a process that accelerated in the aftermath of the Achaemenid collapse and the resultant power vacuum in the region. He, therefore, dates the rise of Caucasian Albania to the late-fourth or early-third century BCE, earlier than previous scholars, and particularly earlier than Trever, who had only been willing to advance a second century BCE date (Trever 1959:144ff).

Furthermore, Babayev ascribes a specific type of social structure to the ascendant Caucasian Albania: He called it a klassovoe obshchestvo — class-based society — a term with clear roots in the works of Marx, Engles and Lenin. By using this vocabulary, Babayev is unsurprisingly signaling that he is operating within an understanding of antiquity that saw the great ancient empires as slave-economies, precursors to capitalism (Kuzishchin 1980b:325). More surprising, and certainly more important, is the fact that Babayev seeks to demonstrate that Albania became one of these class-based states as early as the fourth century BCE, attaining structural parity with its Greek, Roman, and Arsacid imperial neighbors even though it fell outside of the sphere of direct Hellenization. This represents a different intellectual foundation for studying the territory than that advanced by ‘normative’ western European scholarship about the Hellenistic East, which has tended to see non-Hellenistic states as conceptually different from the territories under Hellenistic control. Babayev’s is an approach to ancient history that

299 The term appears as the title for the first chapter of Lenin’s paradigmatic explication of Marx and Engles (Lenin 1943). This serves as a useful reminder that, although Babayev was writing in the 1970’s, his use of the Russian term ‘state’ — gosudarstvo — is not intended to position his writing within studies of states and empires in the Anglo-American sense, but rather within a different teleological understanding of the past which has already been discussed in chapter 3.
foregrounds a local, non-imperial polity, and sees its development as a long-term reaction to external processes, rather than as a direct result of Mediterranean incursions into the territory.

In addition to his discussion of political structures, Babayev also briefly considers the ‘peoples’ of the South Caucasus. He discusses models for tracing the ethnic development of the local populations, which he tends to call either ‘peoples’ (narody) or ‘tribes’ (plemena). He charts these chronologically through their first mentions in the work of Herodotus, who recounts that the Caspii (Κάσπιοι) inhabited the eleventh satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire, alongside the Pausicae, Pantimathi, and Daritae.\(^3\) Babayev suggests that we should understand that the Albanians were part of the Caspii at this time (1976:41), although without support for the claim other than the fact that the Albanians would eventually come to control the zone.

**EARLY-ANTIK ARCHAEOLOGY**

As outlined above, the traditional story of Albania’s rise as an independent ‘state’ has been linked to developments in the space during the Achaemenid period, which are seen to have laid infrastructural groundwork for the rise of Albanian power. It makes sense, then, to begin the discussion of the *Antik* Albania with an overview of archaeological material relating to the Achaemenid period, with a focus on archaeology linked to administrative practice. How did the material presence of this new and highly organized socio-political entity, brought into the territory from the Iranian highlands, interact with the practices of other groups in the region? This issue is particularly

\(^3\) See account of peoples in Herod. 3.92
important in the South Caucasus because of the surprisingly visible presence of
Achaemenid architecture in the territory – a rarity for Achaemenid provincial territories.
At the same time, because of the still-nascent understanding of the Achaemenid empire
and its imperial practices, the material from the South Caucasus remains difficult to
interpret.

**Achaemenid Presence in the Kura Valley**

It is nearly impossible to determine the precise political alignment of the
Caucasus in the Achaemenid Period, as discussed in Chapter 4. Khatchadourian and
others, however, have argued for borders of the *dahyu* of Armenia which include the
middle Kura (fig. 45) (Khatchadourian 2016:124), and have suggested that the lower
Kura was perhaps the northern edges of the *dahyu* of Media (Khatchadourian
2016:146). But our information about the Lower and Middle Kura remains conflicted.
To briefly reiterate these issues: we have an odd assortment of texts on which the
reconstruction rests: Achaemenid Royal Inscriptions; Herodotus’ list of tribes; and later
tribe lists written by the Alexandrian historians. They offer incomplete and contradictory
cartographies of the South Caucasus, and are therefore open to divergent interpretations.
As with other questions of borders, these issues have taken on a political flavor in the
South Caucasus.302

In contrast to the limited textual information concerning Achaemenid presence in
the Kura valley, the volume of relevant archaeology is surprising. Of particular

301 Jacobs puts the region east of Lake Sevan in the “Minor Satrapy, Media Minor” (Jacobs 2000).
302 This debate is most clear in the differing positions within Georgian and Azerbaijani scholarship about
local sovereignty in the Achaemenid period. Compare the position of Babayev to that of Gagoshidze
(1996).
importance is a series of recognizably Achaemenid-form structures excavated along the Kura river valley and the Alazani-Qanıx valley to the north, particularly Gumbati, Qaracəmirli, Sarıtapə, Sabatlo, Tsikhegora, Samadlo and Sairiche (fig. 46). Several of these structures have been the subject of recent excavation work, producing new high-quality datasets for thinking about the spread and diffusion of Achaemenid material in the region. The constructions along the Kura are more canonically ‘Achaemenid,’ finding their closest parallels in the Achaemenid heartland and deriving little if anything from earlier local Iron Age material practices. They contrast markedly from sites like Erebuni in the Armenian highlands and Altıntepe further to the west in along the Euphrates in Anatolia, where Achaemenid-period architecture demonstrates considerable interaction with local pre-Achaemenid architectural forms (Khatchadourian 2016:144).

These structures raise critical questions about the nature and extent of Achaemenid intervention along the northern border of their empire, and suggest that the Kura river valley attracted direct Achaemenid interest for as-yet unresolved reasons. The divergence of this direct approach to architectural form from typical Achaemenid practice in other regions of the empire (and even in the neighboring Armenian highlands) may reflect, on the one hand, an absence of appropriate idioms of power in the Kura valley, which fell beyond the sphere of Urartian control and thus outside of the sphere of Iron Age fortress construction. But, as Khatchadourian has discussed, these structures in their adherence to Achaemenid materials, traditions and standards also produced a direct type of Achaemenid sovereignty in the territory through their material properties (2016:149–50). This material reality could reflect an imperial priority. The desire to maintain a more direct involvement in the region, and the investment that this required, may have been
connected with efforts to dominate routes leading from the North Caucasus into Achaemenid imperial space, with the aim of controlling access to the Achaemenid heartland, and keeping the Scythians at bay.\(^{303}\) It is noteworthy if the Achaemenids did pursue this strategy of direct control, that it was a short-lived project, not to be attempted by subsequent imperial neighbors until at least the Sasanian period. In contrast, the Hellenistic successor states, the Roman and the Arsacid empires all seem content to have ceded greater autonomy to the residents along the Kura.

*Architectural Overview*

Although this discussion focuses on architectural materials associated with the Achaemenid period in the Caucasus, it should also be noted that small finds from the middle and lower Kura valley also attest to the spread of Achaemenid stylistic and technical traditions. These elements are most clear in prestige objects like jewelry and metalwork in known Achaemenid forms (Knauss 2006), which are discovered most often in burial hoards.\(^{304}\) But there are apparent manifestations of the new political alignments even in categories beyond elite material culture in the late sixth and fifth centuries BCE, when for example new Iranian ceramic forms and technologies begin to enter the northern South Caucasus (Narimanishvili 1991).\(^{305}\) The social reconfigurations that came with these new material practices were considerable, at least in the case of the territory along the Aras (Khatchadourian 2008b).

---

\(^{303}\) For more on the issue of Scythians, see chapter 7.

\(^{304}\) The dating of these materials, however, is often contested, with Otar Lordkipanidze arguing that much of this material is actually of Hellenistic date (O. Lordkipanidze 2001:182), while Knauss sees it as Achaemenid in date.

\(^{305}\) Specialist studies on this have been conducted by scholars working in Georgia more often than in Azerbaijan, see for Georgia, see Gagoshidze 1996; Gagoshidze and Kipiani 2000.
For the purposes of this survey, however, it is evidence of Achaemenid monumental architecture from three sites in the lower Kura and eastern piedmont that is most important: Gumbati (გუმბათი, Гумбати), Qaracəmirli (Гараджамирли, Karaçamirli) and Sarıtep (Сарьтене). Two of these sites, Gumbati and Qaracəmirli, have been the focus of recent excavations (Furtwängler et al. 1997; Furtwängler and Knauß 1996; Furtwängler, Knauß, and Egold 1995; Knauss et al. 2007; Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013), while Sarıtep was explored in the middle of the last century (Nərimanov 1960; Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962) (figs. 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53).

The overall architectural plans as well as decorative architectural elements of these structures, and particularly their column bases (fig. 54), suggest the presence of or close contact with artisans from the Achaemenid heartland. Ceramics as well as small finds from the sites further demonstrate Achaemenid connections (Knauss 2006). All three of these structures have been interpreted as ‘palaces’ *i.e.* residences of Persian authorities stationed in the South Caucasus (Babaev, Gagoshidze, and Knauß 2007). The structures can be compared to a number of similar elite complexes known from across Achaemenid imperial space, for example from Dahan-e Golaman in Sistan (Scerrato 1966) to Tell ed-Duweir in the Levant (Fantalkin and Tal 2006). But, as Khatchadourian has pointed out, the phenomenon of ‘elite’ constructions across Achaemenid space cannot be interpreted uniformly: instead, the contours of the phenomenon differ across time and space, with the structures and their individual histories expressing sharp divergences (Khatchadourian 2012:970).
Sarıtəpə:

The first of the South Caucasus structures to be excavated was that at Sarıtəpə, located in modern Azerbaijan near the western border with Georgia. It was explored between 1956 and 1958 as part of work in the territory conducted by İdeal Həmid Nərimanov, along with colleagues from both the Institute of History and the National History Museum of Azerbaijan (Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962:6, n.2). The site today is occupied by a hospital, and relatively little of the excavated material has been published. The research focused on a hill that had been used as a brick-making factory, where workers reported the discovery of numerous fragments of ceramics mixed in with the clay they were collecting (Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962:7). The first two season of Nərimanov’s work uncovered remains of a settlement which he dated to the LBA-EIA (Nərimanov 1957; Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1960a).

In 1958, however, at the center of the hill, the team discovered the remains of two large rectilinear structures, built atop a platform constructed over the EIA cultural strata, which they identified as an Achaemenid palace (İsmayıldə 2002; Nərimanov 1960). Although the site was only partially published, others have followed this general conclusion, seeing the building as some type of official space (Knauss 2006:90). The excavated part of the structure is roughly 4,500 sq. m. It is composed of an outer and inner section, both of which have walls of roughly 1.6m thick built from mud brick atop river stone foundations (Nərimanov 1960). The walls feature projecting buttresses. The walls of the outer section are reinforced by bastions at corners as well as at wall

306 Work at the site built on preliminary explorations carried out earlier in the 1950’s (T. A. Buniatov and Guseinov 1957).
307 Personal communication, Knauss.
midpoints. The outer structure has a series of thirteen small rooms that open onto a corridor running between the outer and inner structures. The inner structure also features a series of six small rooms which wrap around a columned hall, although there are no openings between the rooms and the hall.

Two bell-shaped column bases were found in this hall in situ (fig. 55). The column bases are carved from local stone (İsmayılzadə 2002:35), but are similar in form to Wesenberg’s Group B bases from Iran (Wesenberg 1971:142). A recent analysis of them has shown that they were created within the same proportional framework as examples from Persepolis (Veisi et al. 2014:204). Finds associated with this structure were few in number, but include a stylistically Achaemenid tulip bowl (fig. 56), as well as a seal found in one of the small rooms (fig. 57). The seal deserves particular attention and is discussed in more detail below in the consideration of seals from the region. It is carved in a non-traditional style (that is, a non-standard Achaemenid style), but the practice of sealing is a well-known component of Achaemenid imperial practice. Furthermore, a fragment of the rim of a large storage vessel was found in the complex bearing two impressions from the same signet-ring seal, also of a possibly non-Achaemenid style (Babayev 1990:40). The discovery of the seal and seal impressions may therefore indicate the development of a local expression of the imperial sealing practice, with local glyptic repertoires being used for interactions, patterned after imperial practices.

**Gumbati**

Gumbati, located in modern Georgia along the Alazani river valley, was excavated beginning in 1994 by a German-Georgian team under the direction of Andreas
Furtwängler and Iulon Gagoshidze (Furtwängler, Knauß, and Egold 1995:178). The team uncovered the southern quadrant of a building that has been reconstructed to be at least 40m x 40m, although the northern half of the building was in a badly disturbed context and was not able to be uncovered (Furtwängler et al. 1997:353). The construction of the excavated walls is similar to that at Sarıtcpa, with mud bricks on top of a river stone (gravel) foundation, and buttressing along the walls. The corners of the structure also appear to be buttressed, but lack the large bastions seen at Sarıtcpa. The excavated remains include four rooms and a narrow corridor leading into a central space (Knauss 2000:120). Fragments of five column bases were discovered in this area, although none were in situ (Furtwängler, Knauß, and Egold 1995:190, figs. 10, 11). On the basis of the presence of bases of different diameters, Knauss has speculated that the building contained at least two different types of columned spaces (Knauss 2000:121, 2006:90). Dates for the structure ranging from the fifth to third century BCE have been proposed on the grounds of stylistic analysis of ceramics from the site, but no radiocarbon dates have been reported.

Qaracəmirli

The final most recent excavations have been conducted at the site of Qaracəmirli, excavated since 2006 by a German-Georgian-Azerbaijani team led by Florian Knauss, Iulon Gagoshidze and İlias Babayev, and have recently been discussed at length by Khatchadourian (Khatchadourian 2016:146ff). The excavations have uncovered more

---

308 The evidence for reconstructing corner buttressing, however, is tenuous, see plan (Furtwängler and Knauß 1996:368, fig. 4).
309 For a high chronology, see Knauss (Knauss 2006:91). For a low chronology, see Lordkipanidze (O. Lordkipanidze 2000a:9). For an overview of this debate, see Khatchadourian (Khatchadourian 2008a:242, n.258).
extensive Achaemenid-period remains than are preserved (or excavated) at either Sarıtəpə or Gumbati. The complex is described as a “paradise”: an integrated palatial complex (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013). The core of the complex covers a territory of at least 450 x 450 meters, with additional outlying areas that that include a possible workers’ village.\(^{310}\)

Access to the main complex is through a monumental propylon gateway on the east of the site’s enclosure wall, at the site of İdeal Təpə (figs. 48, 49) (Knauss et al. 2007). The gateway leads into a large rectangular enclosure identified through geophysical prospection. Within this enclosure, a monumental structure was uncovered in alignment with the gateway, at the site of Qurban Təpə (figs. 50, 51). Both the Qurban Təpə and İdeal Təpə structures are built of mud bricks on top of river stone foundations. The proportions of the walls and the structures themselves fit within Achaemenid standards, and once again, a number of stone bases were discovered at the site, in this case in situ (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:15). In addition to the structures at Qurban Təpə and İdeal Təpə, a number of other column bases have been discovered in the wider area. Petrological analysis of some (?) of these column bases has demonstrated that they were carved out of the same local limestone as the base from Gumbati (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:26). Additional architecture was uncovered at the site of Rizvan Təpə 500m to the south of İdeal Təpə, where ceramic remains from many closed-mouth vessels have led the excavators to speculate that the structure was a storage space for foodstuffs (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:20). The complex has been dated

---

\(^{310}\) Personal comm., Knauss. The full results of the excavation are currently being prepared for publication.
stylistically to the reign of Xerxes or slightly later, ca. 486 BCE (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:23). Evidence for the dating, however, is stylistic, based on ceramics as well as on an analysis of the similarities between this structure and the Palace of Xerxes at Persepolis. It is not clear, however, that it is preferable to see Qaracəmirli as a synchronous construction with the Persepolis palace, rather than as a later structure built according to the same plan.311

Beyond the sites discussed here, several other Achaemenid-period architectural monuments deserve brief mention. These come not from the lower Kura or Alazani river valleys, but rather from further afield in the middle Kura and Armenian highlands. However, they provide additional context for the shape and nature of Achaemenid presence in the region. Most directly, a column base that is similar to those of Sarıtəpə, Qaracəmirli and Gumbati has been found at the site of Beniamin (Armenia) (Ter-Martirossov 2001), while a unique bull-protome capital with strong parallels to examples from Persepolis was discovered at the site of Tsikhiagora (ციხიაგორა, Zikhiagora: Georgia) (Knauss 2006:92; Makharadze and Narimanashvili 2001).

Interpretations

The historiography of these structures exemplifies how assumptions about state organization have influenced interpretation of archaeological material. Although Sarıtəpə remains the most poorly understood of the structures, its earlier discovery means that it has played a larger role in the development of scholarly narratives than the other two complexes. This conversation was initially conducted almost exclusively within a circle

311 The upcoming full publication of the site will hopefully clarify these questions.
of scholars working in the South Caucasus, including the prominent Armenian archaeologist Gevorg Artashesi Tiratsyan, who commented in 1964 that "on the hill of Sary-Tepe in the Achaemenid period, we find an important site, perhaps a satrapal residence" (Tiratsyan 1964:74). Tiratsyan cites the location of Sarıtəpə as the key to its importance, as it sat at a critical point along "an ancient road, leading from the Ararat plain and Sevan basin to the Kura valley" (Tiratsyan 1964:74).

Importantly, however, Tiratsyan sees the Achaemenid traces in the South Caucasus as invasive. That is, he draws a contrast between the "local character" of most of the material culture of this zone in the fifth and fourth centuries BCE, and the "examples of luxuries belonging to the rich stratum of the population" (Tiratsyan 1964:78). He therefore stresses the ways in which the elite Achaemenid objects and spaces functioned in the process of social differentiation underway in the period. While Tiratsyan recognizes a clear connection between this material from the South Caucasus and examples known from the Achaemenid heartland, he sees the importance of that connection not in what it says about Achaemenid power, but because of the insight it provides into local social organization.

These ideas are further developed in the work of Babayev, whose early research on glyptic in Caucasian Albania predisposed him to think about style and its transmission. In this way, he frames the development of Caucasian Albania in terms of its ‘cultural influences,’ saying: "Particularly it should be mentioned that, beginning with the Achaemenid period, the ancient Azerbaijanis came into increasingly close contact with other nations and fell under their cultural influence" (Babayev 1973:210). In his
description of Sarıçapə, he concentrates on the question of craftsmen, and the process by which the structure came to be produced in the South Caucasus:

"There is no doubt that all the material under discussion from the Sarytepe excavations is locally produced... As it known, the production of small artifacts in the Achaemenid style did not present a great difficulty for local craftsmen, since imported Iranian originals were at their disposal. The construction of Achaemenid structures presented greater difficulty for local craftsmen, including the preparation of column bases of the Achaemenid type, since examples of Iranian monumental art of that period were not at hand for them. Therefore, we must imagine that the craftsmen of the Sarytepe complex either saw Persepolis and other Iranian palaces by their own eyes, or that they built them using the drawings of customers who were well acquainted with Achaemenid architecture" (Babayev 1990:40)

Similarly, Knauss is also interested in discussing the channels transmission that brought ideas from Iran to the banks of the Kura—in models of cultural diffusion. His questions shift the emphasis from style and form to technology and technique. In particular, he focuses on the presence of layout marks on a column base from Gumbati which demonstrates that the structure was constructed by an stonemason experienced in normal Achaemenid practice (Knauss 2006:95). He further argues that "the quality of execution makes us suspect that at least some of the craftsmen were foreigners" (Knauss 2006:95). Unlike Tiratsyan and Babayev, however, he adopts a perspective that foregrounds the artistic and technical contribution of Iran, downplaying the role of local craftsmen, and remaining silent on the question of the impact of these developments on local populations.

The most recent discussion of these structures has been provided by Khatchadourian (2016:146ff). She sees the Qaracəmirli complex as an “architectural delegate,” which is to say as a structure that participates directly and intrinsically in the project of imperial control through its “material composition and the practical mediations” that it affords (2016:69). Focusing on the physical properties of the
Qaracəmirli complex, she argues that it reproduces a characteristically Achaemenid set of social and material relationships that range from the affordances offered by the space for political purposes, to the physical requirements of caring for the limestone and mudbrick structure (2016:149).

The Achaemenid evidence, as tantalizing as it is, exists as an archaeological island within the field of Azerbaijani archaeology. The dating of the structures is imprecise, and nothing is known about their relationships to contemporaneous non-palatial structures. Until more data about these types of structures comes to light, it will remain impossible to understand their social context.

As we will see in the consideration of architecture in Antik Albania, however, these structures introduced new construction methods and architectural forms to the region, some of which were adopted in subsequent periods. Interestingly, however, the Achaemenid sites in the lower Kura and Alazani territories did not bear evidence of intensive reuse. Instead, monumental constructions moved to the piedmont region in the north, and the edges of the Muğan steppe in the south, although necropolis evidence suggests that occupation of some sort continued in the Kura valley.

**Mid- and Late-Antik Settlements and Monumentsal Architecture**

These Achaemenid structures serve as the background for the next section of this chapter, which considers what evidence we have for urbanism and settlement patterns as we move into the mid (4th BCE- 2nd BCE) and late (1st BCE- 3rd CE) Antik periods. Given the narrative of growing centralization in the Hellenistic period, we now turn to data to

---

312 Although some non-palatial contexts have been excavated at Qaracəmirli (pers. comm. Knauss).
see whether there is any evidence that could point to emerging settlement hierarchy or other marks of urbanization and consolidation that might be brought to bear on the question of political organization in the territory. At issue here is not just whether there were ‘cities,’ but what form they took. The exploration begins with a brief description of the textual accounts of settlements in the territory, before considering material from the putative capital of Albania, Qəbalə, and then other sites with settlement evidence.

**Textual Accounts**

Textual evidence for settlements in the eastern piedmont is conflicting. Strabo states that the residents of Albania are described as ποιμενικώτεροι καὶ τοῦ νομαδικοῦ γένους ἑγγυτέρω, (“more inclined to the shepherd’s life [than the Iberians] and closer akin to the nomadic people” [Strabo 11.4.1]), which has been taken to suggest that they might not dwell in recognizably urban sites. Referencing Homer’s description of the land of Cyclops, Strabo furthermore says that the people live here in a veritable paradise where farming requires no labor or forethought, and that on account of the fertility of the land ἀλλὰ τὰ γ' ἀσπάρτα καὶ ἄνήρτοτα πάντα φύονται (“all things sprout up for them without sowing” [11.4.3]). As discussed in Chapter 4, these descriptions situate the Albanians in comparison with the neighboring Iberians, with Strabo saying that:

Καὶ δὴ ἢ γε Ἰβηρία κατοικεῖται καλῶς τὸ πλέον πόλεοι τε καὶ ἐποικίοις, ὥστε καὶ κεραμοτάς εἶναι στέγας καὶ ἀρχιτεκτονικὴν τὴν τῶν οἰκήσεων κατασκευὴν καὶ ἀγοράς καὶ τάλλα κοινα.”

“And most of Iberia is so well built up in respect to cities and farmsteads that their roofs are tiled, and their houses as well as their market-places and other public buildings are constructed with architectural skill” (11.3.1).\(^{313}\)

---

313 Translation following Jones (1917–1932).
But other accounts of settlements in the region do not make this differentiation. Pliny the Elder, for example, places the two zones on an even footing, listing a single city in each, saying that there is a town (oppidum) in Albanian called “Cabalaca” and one in Iberia called “Harmastis” (Pliny NH 6.11) in Iberia. These have been taken to relate to Qəbələ and Armaztsikhe (არმაზციხე). Ptolemy, on the other hand, provides a list of cities and villages (πόλεις καὶ κώμαι) for each territory. In the case of Albania, he lists 4 sites specifically as cities (πόλεις): Telaba (Τέλαια), Gelda (Γέλδα), Albana (Ἀλβανὰ) and Gaetara (Γαιτάρα), as well as 20 villages (Ptolemy 5.11). Iberia, on the other hand, is the site of 11 villages, with none particularly identified as cities (Ptolemy 5.10). There have been attempts to plot these sites using Ptolemy’s coordinates (Murav’ev 1983). But geodesic specialists working on the rectification of Ptolemy’s coordinates more generally demonstrate that the process of transforming Ptolemy’s geography into a contemporary coordinate system is a complex process that requires at least some concordances between ancient toponyms and modern places (Marx 2012). The localizations of Ptolemy’s sites, then, remain unknowable.

The vocabulary that these authors use to describe settlement spaces is worth a brief further exploration. They employ the same generic terms used in Greek and Latin to describe sites from across the known world, ranging from formal and urban (polis), through more ambiguous (oppidum), to fully rural (komē). Research on the typological shades of meaning implied by these terms has demonstrated that it is possible, in certain contexts, to identify a regional site hierarchy on the basis of these designations. There is a major caveat however: this analysis comes from the Italian peninsula where site density was very dense, and relies on archaeological ground-truthing (Becker 2008).
In the case of the descriptions of Albania, however, Imperial authors were operating with much more limited information. The fact that Ptolemy does not list any cities in Iberia should itself be a tip that we cannot draw meaningful conclusions from their laconic accounts. At the same time, it is notable that these authors do list settlements of various types in the territory, and that thus they believed that the area was developed enough to support some sort of hierarchy.

**Archaeological models**

On the basis of these ancient accounts, then, it is possible to argue for some form of settlement conglomeration in the eastern Caucasus in the *Antik* period, and also for differentiation in settlement scale. The nature of these settlements – their absolute size, their economic basis, their physical form—on the other hand, is a more vexing question. Within the context of both the Mediterranean and Near Eastern spheres, there is a baseline understanding of the general nature of urban conglomerations and for their process of development. But it is not clear that the same historical processes were active in the eastern Caucasus, or that comparable forms of urbanism can be expected.

The non-conformity of the Caucasus to more typical understandings of urbanism is a problem not only for *Antik* history, but more generally in the Caucasus, where ‘cities’ often seem to be missing from the archaeological record. One narrative has been advanced to explain this absence, which posits that the South Caucasus did not see dense

---

314 Some scholars also bring maps and geographical knowledge from the Islamic manuscript tradition into this conversation, particularly the works of Ibn-Hawqal, al-Istakhri and al-Muqaddasi. Although I think they provide some valuable insights about conceptions of the territory and patterns of territorial alignment, their considerably later date and the many socio-political changes between the 4th and 10th centuries make them inappropriate to use in conversations about the *Antik* period.
urban conglomerations in the Bronze or Early Iron Age ages, but instead followed a
‘Caucasian model of development:’ a non-urban civilization ruled by a military
aristocracy dwelling in highland fortresses (for reconsideration, see E. Hammer
2014:758–59; A. T. Smith and Thompson 2004). Although the debate about the accuracy
of this model continues, archaeological work at the Tsagkhahovit plain in Armenia has
demonstrated that political complexity there did not coalesce through consolidation of
settled populations, but rather from the cyclical spatial practices of mobile pastoralists
(Lindsay and Greene 2013).

This scholarship pertains to earlier historical periods, and its relevance for later
eras is unclear. But the long-term presence of these processes in the South Caucasus
lends credence to the idea that ‘urbanism’ in the Antik period could have been organized
around axes in which the needs of mobile agro-pastoralists played a dominant role, rather
than purely those of settled populations.

Qəbələ: A Capital City

Leaving aside these questions for a moment, we turn now to a discussion of the
best-known and most important of the ancient settlements from the eastern Caucasus: the
city of Qəbələ. The history of research at Qəbələ is central to traditional scholarly
understandings of Caucasian Albania in the twentieth century.

Qəbələ (Габала/Кабала) is the putative capital of Albania, mentioned by only
two ancient authors: Pliny the Elder and Claudius Ptolemy, who render the name
Cabalaka (Pliny NH 6.11) or Καβάλα (Ptolemy GH 5.11). Ptolemy, interestingly, lists
the site not as a polis, but rather as a kome. The connection between the ancient site of
Pliny and Ptolemy and the modern village of Qəbələ dates back at least to the nineteenth century. It is featured in the poetic account of Şirvan’s ancient history by Bakıxanov (2009:13), and has been a mainstay of Azerbaijani understanding ever since.\(^{315}\) There is, however, no ancient epigraphic evidence for this conclusion,\(^{316}\) so it necessarily remains hypothetical. Although the ancient history of the site is poorly understood, occupation continued into the medieval period, garnering mentions from a number of Arab historians and travelers.\(^{317}\) It served as the capital city of Albania until the fifth century CE, when the capital shifted south to Barda.

The narrative of Albanian history discussed above suggests a line of progress from the Achaemenid period onward. However, a comparison between the material remains of Qəbələ, earlier Achaemenid architecture, and contemporaneous Iberian constructions demonstrates that the builders of Qəbələ were using architectural forms differently than either their predecessors or their neighbors, although their construction practices demonstrate technical familiarity with both traditions. This is not to deny the active role that Achaemenid presence in the zone may have had in spurring development, but it is to suggest that the roots of local political authority did not develop exclusively after Achaemenid models.

In what follows, I will consider the architecture of the site of Qəbələ, where enigmatic examples of presumably public constructions have been excavated in the last half-century. I will consider the form and possible function of this material, and

\(^{315}\) Although there is periodic discussion about whether this is the right localization, M. Xəlilov (personal comm.)

\(^{316}\) It is based entirely on the toponymic association between the ancient and modern place names.

\(^{317}\) For an overview of this history, see Shchbl’kin (1945).
contextualize it with respect to other local forms of monumental construction. I will then consider a broader range of settlement activity, summarizing the results of settlement explorations in the eastern Caucasus, and again contrasting this material to that of neighboring regions.

Geography

The ancient city of Qəbələ is located near the modern district capital of the same name, within Qəbələ district (formerly Qutqaşən rayonu), which is part of the larger Şəki-Zaqatala zone running along the southern slopes of the Greater Caucasus (fig. 58). The site of ancient Qəbələ sits within the Qanıx-Əyriçay depression (Qanıx-Əyriçay çökəkliyi), which extends from the modern Georgian border eastward to the city of İsmayıllı. The depression is defined by a dense series of mountain-fed rivers running southward from the Greater Caucasus toward the Kura river. Today, it is used as rich agricultural land with resorts occupying the scenic slopes of the Greater Caucasus.

Site description

The archaeological site of Qəbələ is divided into three areas: (1) Çaqqallı (Чаггаллы) also referred to in the literature as the antique territory (античная территория); (2) Səlbir (Сельбир); and (3) Qala (Гала) (fig. 59).

Səlbir and Qala are located on large plateaus immediately to the west of the modern village of Çuxur-Qəbələ, between the Qaraçay and Covurluçay. The northern plateau is occupied by Səlbir, with Qala in the south. Late antique and medieval fortifications surround the plateau. Some Roman-Parthian period material dating to the first century CE and later was found at these sites, but excavations since the 1960’s have
largely concentrated on the late antique and medieval levels. This discussion, therefore, will focus on Çaqqallı, located on a low river terrace along the left bank of the Qarachay approximately 2km to the southeast of Qala and Salbir. It is here that the most important mid- and late-Antik material has been excavated, dating to between the fourth century BCE and the first century CE, when occupation at the site appears to have abruptly ended and relocated to the plateaus to the north.\textsuperscript{318}

Excavation history

The first recorded explorations of the territory near Qəbələ occurred in the nineteenth century, with the work of Alexander Grigorevich Ianovskii, the Russian administrator discussed above who led an expedition in 1829 to Şəki while employed by the Finance Ministry of the Russian Imperial government in Georgia (Əlibəyova 2009:19). Ianovskii’s work came a scant decade after the writing of Kruze (1835) had brought the states of the ancient Caucasus to the attention of the Russian scholarly community (Trever 1959:24). In preparation for his expedition, he conducted toponymic research in the area, with which he identified the ancient site of Kabalaka with the extant village of Çuxur-Qəbələ. During a visit to the site, he explored and conducted some small-scale excavation, identifying fortification walls and towers associated with the plateau site of Qala (Ianovskii 1846:168–72).

A half a century would pass between Ianovskii’s work and the next round of interest in the site in the early twentieth century. This phase began with the historical work of a local school teacher, Rashid-bek Efendiev (1903), who wrote about the

\textsuperscript{318} The reason for the site’s relocation away from the river terrace is unknown, although the plateaus are more easily defensible, and are also safe from the wandering course of the Qarachay.
discovery of ceramics at the site by local residents. This was followed by a site visit and excavation of several graves by the archaeologist Yervand Alexandrovich Lalayan (1919). Although these excavations produced results in the form of excavated tombs, the work was brief and largely unpublished, with Lalayan’s methods and conclusions criticized by later scholars.\footnote{This is particularly true with respect to Lalayan’s conclusions about the graves he dug near Nic, work which was criticized strongly by İsmizadə (1956:7–9).}

Then, in 1926, the newly formed State Museum of Azerbaijan sent a team to excavate at the site under the direction of museum director Davud Mikayıl Şərifov (fig. 60). The team worked at Qəbələ, but also at associated sites in the region, including at Yaloylutəpə near the village Nic. Although their work was fairly limited, they excavated at least five burials (Şərifov 1927).

The modern phase of excavations began under the direction of Saleh Mustafa Qazıyev in 1944-1945. This work produced the first plans of the remains from the medieval fortress (Qazıyev 1945; Şəblıkın 1945). But the work was discontinued after two seasons, and didn’t re-start until 1959. Again under the direction of Qazıyev, the first years of the new campaigns from 1959-1967 focused on the upper plateau sites of Qala and Səlbir. Reports on this work were published in Azərbaycanın maddi mədəniyyəti volumes 5 and 6 (Qazıyev 1964, 1965a, 1965b). Beginning in 1967, work at the southern site of Çaqqallı began in earnest under the direction of İlyas Atababa Babayev, who directed yearly campaigns at the site through 1990 (Babayev 1977).

The most recent work at the site, beginning in 2005 and ongoing, has also been directed by Babayev and conducted under the auspices of the AMEA with the support of
the Seoul-Baku Azerbaijan-Korean Cultural Exchange Association (SEBA) (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014; Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014). Work has continued at Çaqqallı, as well as at Səlbir and Qala. The research at Çaqqallı has shed light on the region's early history, demonstrating that the area was occupied in the Early Bronze Age. Some sporadic evidence of Late Bronze and Early Iron material suggests that there was at least some activity in the region in these periods, although the published evidence is not robust enough to support a conclusion of continuous occupation (pace Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014:121–22). But the most important material of these excavations has been that dated to the Antik period. The results of this work will now be summarized.

Public Buildings of the post-Achaemenid period

Remains of at least some parts of a fortification wall from the Antik period have been excavated, though their precise position is unclear (Babayev 1990:63–66). The site of Çaqqallı preserves remains of a series of post-Achaemenid structures that are considered by Babayev and others to be public architecture. Although the excavations have been incompletely published, plans of several of these structures have been printed in enough detail to allow conversation about both architectural form and function (fig. 61).

The first of these structures to be excavated was uncovered in Babayev’s early excavations, in excavation area 2 of the site. It is ca. 72m x 14m rectilinear building with an internal area of 580m², built of 2.1m thick mud brick walls (fig. 62). The structure is

---

320 The older excavations have been reported in English in an abbreviated form (Babayev 2001), and in a more extended version in Russian (Babayev 1977).
built atop a mud brick platform laid after the clearing of earlier structures (Babayev 1977:218). It occupies the highest cultural stratum of the site, which has been dated by the excavators to between the first century BCE and the first century CE.\textsuperscript{321} Parts of the structure’s walls had been badly damaged by agricultural work prior to excavation,\textsuperscript{322} but the excavators were nevertheless able to generate a fairly complete plan. It is composed of east and west wings, with separate entrances to each. Its walls are ca. 2.1m thick throughout. The larger east wing is accessed through an open room on its easternmost side, although details are few, as this part of the structure was particularly badly damaged.

The easternmost room leads to a small 2m wide corridor running N-S, which contains a hearth along its south wall, and opens on its west into the larger of two halls along its west wall. Each of the halls has a pair of stone columns bases oriented along the N-S axis, roughly in the center of the room (fig. 63, 64). These column bases would have supported wooden shafts with a diameter of 52-55cm (Babayev 1977:221). The entrance to the western wing is on the south side of the structure, with an opening directly into a large room. A block of stone is embedded in the floor near the center of this room, thought to be a flat base for a wooden column. A hearth (not illustrated) is located in the southwestern corner of the room, near the entrance to a 2m wide corridor running E-W along the south wall.

An opening on the north side of this corridor leads to a third smaller columned room, with a set of stone column bases positioned along the room’s E-W axis. A 1.49 x

\textsuperscript{321} The full criteria for this dating have not been explained, but the structure sits atop a stratum containing material thought to be Hellenistic, including a collection of bullae.

\textsuperscript{322} Further damage was done during an earlier campaign of test excavation in 1959.
1.9m pit with a maximum depth of .9m was found between the two column bases, covered by a brick. The pit was empty, and its function is unclear. The corridor leading to this room leads to a final suite of two long narrow rooms, occupying the western corner of the structure. A series of thin wooden columns encircle the outside of the structure, spaced at ca. 3.5m distances along the exterior walls, sitting in 5-10cm pits atop river stones. These are thought by the excavator to provide additional support for the structure’s roof. The roof was tiled, with tile debris found in abundant quantities across the excavated structure (fig. 65). This structure was destroyed by fire.

Underneath this structure, traces of an earlier building (or earlier phase of the same building) were excavated (fig. 66). Some of the excavated walls of the earlier construction are in alignment with the walls of the later building. The earlier walls, however, were built with an internal structure of wooden bracing that is thought to offer seismic protection, differentiating them from the later phase. Since the site’s stratigraphy was not described, it is impossible to understand the precise relationship between the two strata. However, the evidence is suggestive of at least two phases of the building’s development, which argues for its continued use and perhaps importance within the local system.

Parallels for this structure are difficult to identify. Its building materials and construction techniques are familiar from across the South Caucasus. Nearly identical column bases have been found at sites across the territory, including at Şemaxı and Təzakənd but also in the Şamxor Fisuli and Ağdam regions, as well as at Mtskheta in Iberia, and Dvin and Artashat in Armenia (Babayev 1990:95). The examples of similar bases from the territory of modern Azerbaijan generally lack clear and well-described
archaeological context; however, the presence of these pieces at a range of sites demonstrates that the Qəbələ structure is not unique. The roof tiles, too, find comfortable parallels from other well-dated sites, particularly from Xınıslı (Babayev 1990:73ff). The mudbricks vary in size, but tend to cluster around 35x35x5cm.

The plan of the structure, however, is more enigmatic. The use of halls arranged around columns is, on the one hand, familiar from the Achaemenid tradition, and known widely across the Near East with use continuing into the Parthian period, but the long narrow plan of the structure lacks clear parallels. The excavators assign this structure its date on stratigraphic grounds and relying on a reading of the ceramics, although the basis for this conclusion is not fully explained.

The excavators note that few artifacts were found from inside of the structure, despite its seemingly chance destruction. Babayev speculates, on this basis, that it was not a cultic space, since it lacks cult instillations (altars, etc). He furthermore suggests that it was not a purely domestic space, since it also lacks objects of daily life. Instead, he gives it the broad designation of an obshchestvennoe zdanie, a public building. It should also be noted that a cache of sealings was found under the final structure, either from the stratum of the first phase of the building, or from a different stratum pre-dating the final structure. These sealings have never been fully published, and their precise depositional circumstances are unclear. A discussion of their iconography will be provided as part of a wider conversation about glyptic evidence from Albania, but the fact that sealings, generally associated with the documentation of goods and

---

323 The stratigraphic relationships are not entirely clear.
324 See fig. 99, 100, 101 for images of some of the bullae.
administrative practice, were found in the vicinity of this structure likely contributed to Babayev’s assessment of the building’s public role, and supports such a conclusion.

The excavators note that another structure was identified during the 1974-1975 seasons in the vicinity of this building, which belonged to a later cultural layer (fig. 67). This simple, large rectilinear structure has been dated to the first century CE or later, on the basis of its use of baked bricks and calcareous mortar (Babayev 1990:86). Similar combinations of mortar and baked bricks came into use in Iberia with the advent of Mediterranean architectural practices in the region,325 while its roof tiles are also of a type familiar from the Caucasus. Once again, the function of the structure is unclear. The wider archaeological landscape in this area is unknown, but it does not appear that there were other remains in the immediate area.

The question of function becomes even more vexing when we turn to the other monumental structures excavated from Çaqqallı, which are located approximately 100m to the north of the ‘public building,’ in excavation areas 3 and 4 (fig. 68, 69, 70). There, archaeological excavations carried out since 1983 have fully uncovered three large oblong structures built atop earlier settlement remains including a pottery workshop and storage warehouse containing rows of pithoi, as well as a fourth partial-oval structure, and numerous wall fragments.326 These contexts have been dated between the fourth century BCE and first century CE (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014; Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014; Babayev and Nəcəfova 2012; Nəcəfova 2013).

326 Work in 2016-17 appears to have uncovered an additional two such structures, though they are as-yet unpublished. Personal comm., Jeyhun Eminli.
We will now move from the earliest strata to the latest in this area - excavation areas 3 and 4. The stratigraphy in this area is very complicated, and recent work at the site is published only in fairly brief reports. Phasing and absolute dates have been established primarily through stratigraphy and stylistic analysis, as well as limited radiocarbon dating (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014:119). The lowest contexts from this area reveal scattered ceramics dating to the LBA- EIA which were first encountered in 2012 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014:121). Little is known about the extent or nature of this material, but Babayev notes that the pattern of Antik settlements being located in the vicinity of EBA-LBA is common in the Caucasus (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayılov, et al. 2014:121).

Widespread activity appears to have begun in or around the fourth or third century BCE, when the zone became a production and storage center. At this time, the northern section of excavation area 3 was a storage facility containing at least 220 large pithoi buried up to their shoulders (fig. 71, 72). The pithoi were arranged in straight lines of up to 20, and on the basis of residue analysis, they were used (for at least part of their lives) to store wine. Implements for pouring wine were found on the floor of the storage area, and the practice was confirmed by residue analysis (Babayev 2012:172). The full extent of this storage facility has not been ascertained, and no walls have been discovered. West of this storage facility, and dated stratigraphically to the third to second century BCE, is a kiln found with associated ceramic production debris including stacked vessels (fig. 73) (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskândarov, et al. 2014:92).

---

327 It is often unclear, however, what has been sampled for dating, and not all dates are reported.
328 The chronological relationship of these warehouses to the oval structure to the north is not entirely clear.
Sometime after the warehouse had fallen out of use, the two oblong structures with semi-circular ends were constructed in the vicinity (known as oval buildings II and III in the reports) (see fig. 69) These structures have walls of 1.8-2m thick, constructed of unbaked mudbricks laid atop stone foundations, with approximate interior dimensions of 8m x 40m, running lengthwise E-W. Each of the two adjacent structures has a doorway on its south side, and for this reason as well as on stratigraphic grounds, the excavators have suggested that the southern-most building pre-dates its northern neighbor, with the northern structure built as a replacement following destruction of the earlier one. The earlier southern oval building (building III) is dated to the third century BCE (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014:94),

About 4m west of the western edges of these buildings, a third larger oval building (building I) runs N-S, built above the remains of the Hellenistic kiln discussed above. This oval structure is considerably larger than the two already mentioned, and more complicated in its layout. It is 71m long and 19m wide. Access to the interior comes through two 8m wide doors in the southern part of the east and west wall, as well as a smaller door in the north part of the west wall. Post-holes in front of the doors testify to the presence of small porticoes supported by wooden beams. The walls, built as in the smaller oval buildings, are constructed from baked mudbrick atop pebble foundations which are reminiscent of foundation systems from the local Achaemenid complexes. A pebble flooring surface 2.2m wide extends from the interior walls of the structure, running along the interior of the walls. The center of the room features a row of 10 circular paved foundations, thought to have been used as ‘bases’ for a row of wooden
columns, which supported a thatched roof of some sort. This structure has been dated to the first century BCE through first century CE (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskandarov, et al. 2014:91).

Babayev interprets these as a series of public assembly buildings, with the sequence of structures constructed to meet the needs of a growing community, although his understanding of the phasing of the structures is unclear. He suggests that they could have been used for public ceremonies, and hypothesizes that the largest one could have sat a crowd of 500-600 people (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskandarov, et al. 2014:91).

Qəbalə Conclusions

In form and construction, the structures are mysterious. On the one hand, their use of pebble foundations and square mudbrick superstructures hearken back to Achaemenid models. But the hippodrome-shape is original and lacks known parallels. The association of the structures and both ceramic production and foodstuff storage areas, furthermore, do not fit neatly into Babayev’s paradigm. Çaqqallı, furthermore, is a curious location for a capital city. Beyond the structures discussed above, there is little evidence of settlement activity in this area, although there are some isolated Antik burials excavated in the general vicinity (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayıl, et al. 2014:117). Although remains of earthwork fortifications have been mentioned, the site is situated on a hard-to-secure river terrace, in what seems to be a vulnerable location. Why build this there? Beyond the

---

329 Only a small number of roof tiles were found from this or the other oval structures, leading to the conclusion that they did not have tile roofs.
330 Earlier assessments considered both this and building II to have been contemporary (Babayev 2012:109). Excavations in a fourth area located to the east of these structures has revealed more building remains.
specific (and unclear) functions of the individual buildings, why chose this location just at the base of the mountains for such a site?

One clue to the site selection comes from a note from Babayev about later site use. He notes that these buildings were badly damaged by the mobile pastoralist camps of later generations, who visited through this territory seasonally while traveling from summer to winter pastures. Given the lack of a known burial site associated with these structures, and the uniformly monumental (as opposed to quotidian) character of the architecture, it is tempting to hypothesize that this space also served as a seasonal meeting spot for residents in the Antik period, including mobile pastoralist groups who moved through territory. Perhaps, then, the site’s architect choose the location for the same reasons that medieval and modern herdsmen choose to build their camps nearby—because it is located along vertical transhumance routes.

But these are massive structures, and their splendid isolation on the low and difficult-to-defend river terrace is perplexing. The presence of the large wine storage facility makes it harder to interpret the space as an entirely seasonal one—as does the presence of the structure with the bullae cache. At the same time, the eventual movement of construction activity from the terrace up to the plateau around the first century CE suggests a realignment of the space toward a more sustainable and defensible settlement site—a supposition confirmed by the long life of medieval Qəbələ. The public architecture on the terrace could, then, represent an earlier stage in this process, when a local power was negotiating between the needs of more mobile and more sedentary elements of the population. Take as a whole, the wine storage, the bullae cache, and the
large assembly spaces suggest that the area may have served as a focal point for redistribution within the community.

Daily settlement activities in this early period, meanwhile, could have been in ephemeral structures (in the case of mobile pastoralist elements), or in low-density clusters in more defensible nearby locations, perhaps also built ephemerally out of reeds or similar materials, as the nineteenth-century ethnographic accounts indicate. In either case, the settlements would be nearly archaeologically invisible, especially to earlier excavation methods.

It is unclear, therefore, whether the early period of Qəbələ is an urban settlement in the manner of more traditional Near Eastern (or even South Caucasian) cities. Certainly, the built infrastructure as it is currently understood is far more limited than that along the middle Kura. And yet, at the same time, the scale of these structures, their layout (the orthogonality of the consecutive ovals) and their construction methods speak to intentionality and the presence of a planned process. The idea that these represent a central place for the community should not, therefore, be dismissed—despite the absence of so many trappings of urbanism.

Other Settlements

The broader body of data related to the question of the “cities” of Albania have been offered in several articles, chiefly that of C.Ə. Xəlilov and Babayev (1974), and in a monograph by Babayev (1990). The wider subject of settlement archaeology also occupies chapters of both Xəlilov’s (1985a) and Osmanov’s (2006) books. Xəlilov’s provides a comprehensive history of settlement excavations (1985a:25–50), while
Osmanov offers a more targeted and detailed exploration of the chief sites (Osmanov 2006:17–90). There is a separate body of literature discussing settlement locations from the northern reaches of this eastern piedmont—the territory of modern Dagestan (Davudov 1996; Gadjiev 2002), which will be mentioned here only very briefly alongside material from modern Azerbaijan (for locations mentioned below, see fig. 74).

*Sites in the Eastern Caucasus*

This literature warrants several broad observations. The first is that our evidence is thin. We have material from sites excavated or discovered in surveys over the past century, but it is mostly palimpsestic traces of architecture or bare fragments of construction materials (bricks, tiles and worked stones). The overwhelming majority of energy has gone into the excavation of necropoleis, and the settlements have proven very difficult to find. There are very few examples beyond Qəbələ where plans of entire buildings can be defined, and even more rarely can the overall layout of a settlement be identified.

The use of settlement fortifications in this period seems to be neither universal nor standardized among the piedmont and Kura basin sites. Some sites feature earthwork defenses of ditches and ramparts, including Təzəkənd, Qəbələ and Torpkhala in Dagestan (Babayev 1990:63). But many other sites appear to be without built defensive systems—although in many cases, they are located in places with favorable topography, allowing for both good visibility and access control. This is true, as Babayev notes, for the site of Şəhər-Burnu (Mingacəevir settlement #1), which was surrounded on three sides.

---

331 These and other key sites have been compiled in Appendix A.
by steep mountains, and on the fourth by the Kura river. It is also the case for a number of the smaller settlement sites, like Qalagah, Şixdare Kəlləsi and Qırlartəpə, all of which were located on promontories or ridge-lines, with good visibility. In contrast, clearly built fortification walls from this period comes from sites in the northern reaches of the eastern piedmont, Urtek and Targu, which present a seemingly quite different model of settlement.  

There have also been excavations at the site of Xınslı (Хыныслы, Khinisli), located near the city of Şamaxı. The site was excavated by the archaeologist Cabbar Ə. Xəlilov between 1958 and 1974. Xınslı was selected for excavation after a farmer discovered a large hoard of silver coins in 1958, along with many fragments of building material that suggested the presence of a significant settlement (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985b:19). Despite its prominence, very little material from the site has ever been published.  

---

332 For a comprehensive analysis of these sites, see Gadjiev (2002).  
333 See p. 455 for contents of this hoard.  
334 Small-scale excavations in the same general area in the 1930s had revealed Antik-period graves, see Pakhomov (1944).  
335 See Appendix A, p. 426. Xəlilov published preliminary results in Sovietskaia Arkeologha (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1962), which is largely covered in a German language publication of his (Chalilov 1978). This description rests on material from the archive of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography (Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyasının Arxeologiya və Etnografiya İnstitutu). This archive holds official reports submitted at the end of each season of fieldwork conducted in Azerbaijan. Although the AEI reports for Xınslı are not complete (with some years missing their images and other years missing entirely), the over 300 pages of text and 100 plates of images provide far more detail than what is otherwise available for the site. See particularly excavation reports, Cabbar Ə. Xəlilov,  Şamaxı rayonunun Xınslı qədim yaşayış yeri C. Ə. Xəlilovun 1958-ci il qazıntılarından. Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası, Tarix İnstitutunun Elmi Arxiv (AMEA Tİ EA), fond #1, delo #4133 (h. 526); C. Ə. Xəlilov, Xınslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar, 1959-cu ilin elmi hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis' #10, delo #4863 (h. 524); C. Ə. Xəlilov, Xınslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar, 1960-ci ilin elmi hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis' #9, delo #4606, (h. 323); C. Ə. Xəlilov, Xınslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar 1961-ci ilin elmi hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis' #11, delo #4915 (h. 327); C. Ə. Xəlilov, 1963-cü ilda Xınslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis' #13, delo #5642 (h. 411); C. Ə. Xəlilov, 1964-cü ilda Xınslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1,
The site contained repeated phases of construction, including the erection of buildings with stone wall foundations, paved interiors, column bases, and tiled roofs (fig. 75, 76). However, intermixed with these phases of construction were periods when the same territory was used as a necropolis. Thus, the fourth through second century BCE settlement zone becomes a necropolis, while the fourth through second century BCE necropolis becomes a settlement between the second century BCE and the third century CE, only to be used as a necropolis again in the fourth century CE. Given the state of the published and unpublished reports of this site and the incomplete reporting of stratigraphy, the exact mechanisms of this change are lost to us. However, there are several points that can be made on the basis of this site.

First of all, the repeated construction of sturdy stone-socle buildings over a span of hundreds of years suggests that this was an important place, which became a center for successive waves of human activity. Secondly, and in a pattern that is confirmed from other sites in the region, there does not appear to have been a uniform pattern to the relationship of settlements to necropoleis—instead, residents seem to be using the same spaces for both activities, though not concurrently. This is a curious pattern, and deserves more consideration: it may suggest shifting populations across the time-period under discussion, with the new populations not conforming to the spatial arrangement of the prior group.

opis’ #14, delo #5932 (h. 483); C. Ə. Xəlilov, 1965-1966-cı illərdə Xınıslıda ərxeoloji qazıntılar. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis’ #14, delo #6346 (h. 31); C. Ə. Xəlilov, Xınıslı arxeoloji ekspedisiyasının 1967-1968-ci illərdə apardığı qazıntıların hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, delo #7498 (h. 49); C. Ə. Xəlilov and A.Ş. Orucov, 1971-ci ildə qədim Şamaxıda Xınıslı arxeoloji qazıntıları hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, delo #7498 (h. 54); C. Ə. Xəlilov and A.Ş. Orucov, Qədim Şamaxıda Xınıslı arxeoloji qazıntılarının 1972-ci il hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1 (h. 76).
Other sites with limited preserved architecture include Nüydî, Uzunboylar, Qırlartəpə, and Mollaisaqlı, while more limited construction fragments (principally roofing tiles and worked stones) at for example Şixdərə Kəlləsi (figs. 77, 78). Save for the few scattered column bases, however, none of the remains known from sites other than Qəbəle suggests monumental public architecture—which is to say that they haven’t yet revealed large structures, and certainly nothing like Qəbəle. Instead, many of the structures that have been found are production facilities, rather than dwellings. For example, limited excavations at the site of Qalagah have revealed probable wine-processing facilities alongside spaces that have been interpreted as domestic.

We are faced, then, with a paucity of material—but not an absolute absence. The construction techniques, particularly the river-stone socles, the column bases, the roof tiles, and the calcareous plaster surfacing, all speak to familiarity with practices across the region, although the organizations of urban space are more ambiguous.

**Regional Comparanda**

In looking to understand the material of Qəbəle and the settlement sites of Albania, it is helpful to briefly raise some similar data from neighboring regions.

*Monumental Architecture and Settlement sites in the Middle Kura*

A comparison to public architecture from Albania’s western neighbor, Iberia, provides additional context, but does little to resolve the questions surrounding Qəbəle’s

---

336 Appendix A, p.414.
337 Appendix A, p.424.
338 Appendix A, p.418.
339 Appendix A, p.413.
340 Appendix A, p.421.
341 Appendix A, p.415.
structures. From Iberia, there are two principal clusters of relevant material: the first from the capital city of Armaztsikhe (არმაზციხე, Ἀρμοζική; Ἀρμάκτικα, [Strabo 11.3.5 Ptolemy 5.11.3 and 8.19.4]) located at the confluence of the Kura (Mtkvari) and Aragvi rivers and dating from the third century BCE onwards; and the second from a series of interconnected palace and temple spaces at Dedoplis Mindori and Dedoplis Gora developed in the first century BCE (Gagoshidze 1992, 2001; Furtwängler et al. 2008). Dedoplis Mindori, for example, preserves remains of a highly planned royal- and temple-complex (fig. 79). The material from Armaztsikhe (fig. 80, 81, 82, 83), meanwhile, provides a series of elite structures, including bath complexes, but also a long columned hall that has been interpreted in some cases as a storage space. To these vast sites, it is also helpful to add the site of Dzalisi (fig. 84), a sumptuously decorated bath complex of a smaller – likely private – scale. The dating of these is uncertain, but the presence of bathing complexes implies both access to hydraulic engineering knowledge, and also assume desire on the part of some local population for this amenity.

A different type of elite architecture comes from the site of Garni in Armenia, where an explicitly Roman-style temple was built, thought to be a summer residence of the Armenian royal family (Invernizzi 1998). In its plan, decoration and building technique, it is a singular example of Roman temple construction from the entirety of the South Caucasus. It also featured a contemporary bath complex (Invernizzi 1998).

---

There are other bath complexes known from Iberia—they are also present at Urbnisi, Armaztsikhe-Bagineti and Armaziskhevi, and all preserve striking resemblance to Roman bath complexes from across the empire. Many, though not all, of these baths are connected with palatial structures. (O. Lordkipanidze 1991a).
Although non-elite settlements from this period remain underexplored across the region, one sees hints of non-canonical urban forms from, for example, the rock-cut urban site of Urbnisi in Iberia (Chilashvili 1964), or the hilltop settlement at Artashat in Armenia (Tonikyan 1992, 1997). Here, excavation identified a new building type that emerged in the late first century CE, the corridor house (Tonikyan 1997). These structures occasionally featured hypocaust heating systems, demonstrating a synthesis of local forms and imported technologies.

**Antik Settlement Conclusions**

Even this brief discussion sites reinforce the notion of dissimilarity from the material from the eastern Caucasus. What we see in Iberia and to the south in Armenia is the presence of what can be called elite architecture. These structures, often built in imported vocabularies, reflect familiarity with external architectural form. Of particular interest is the familiarity in both regions with the cultural habit of bath-complex construction, which demonstrates not just familiarity with architectural forms, but more deeply with a particular cultural practice.

We do not see the same pattern in eastern Caucasia. There are certainly innovations in construction methodology, in the selection of building materials, for example, that attest to contact with regional trends (roof tiles from Albania are similar in form to those from its neighbors, for example). But the forms chosen by residents in the eastern Caucasus, at least on the basis of the relatively fragmentary available evidence, are not suggestive of this same desire to emulate imported *cultural practice*. We find neither Parthian nor Roman-style temples, nor Roman-form bath complexes. Instead, the
local residents are using imported construction techniques to build structures that meet a
different set of local needs: large assembly and redistribution spaces.

One could argue that the Albanian authorities were simply not as familiar with
Roman construction practices, or Arsacid ones for that matter—that their failure to build
in these styles represents an absence of knowledge. But, while the distance between
Albania and Rome is far, the distance between Qəbələ and Armaziskhevi is not: if the
Albanians didn’t know of these developments from the imperial centers, they certainly
had models on their own borders that they could have emulated. Instead, they chose not
to.

Or, one could say that we simply haven’t excavated the evidence yet—that the
lower volume of work in eastern Caucasia simply hasn’t revealed all the evidence
necessary for this discussion. But that argument would ignore the material that we do
have from Albania. We need to make sense of the profoundly non-canonical structures
that have already been excavated, while acknowledging that future work will likely
reshape our conclusions. In comparing the monumental vocabularies of Iberian and
Albania, we see a concrete, material example of Toumanoff’s thesis of Caucasian “unity
and individuality” (1963:11) discussed in Chapter 1. The Iberian monumental
architectural assemblage suggests a centralized seat of authority and the existence of a
strong elite identity by the first century CE, which was manifested in the architectural
assemblages that have been preserved from the capital city. The Albanian material, on the
other hand, is communally focused. It does not reflect the same strong centralization that
we see in the monumental complex at Armaziskhevi. It is tempting to see this as a
reflection of Albania’s federative political organization at this time, and the more
important role of pastoralists in this society. This is not an argument about a lack of development. Rather, it acknowledges the different institutional needs of a society defined by its internal diversity, where political authority came from cementing social relations between disparate groups.

**ANTIK MATERIAL CULTURE OF ADMINISTRATION**

This section discusses a body of small finds that can be considered the ‘material culture of administration.’ In addition to monumental architecture like that at Qəbələ and wider evidence for urbanism and settlement, other key evidence for the socio-political structure in the eastern Caucasus comes from two material practices: the use and minting of coins, and the use of seals. These two categories of material, like the issue of urbanization already discussed, have been often cited as signs of the region’s consolidation in the early Albanian period. Babayev, writing about seals and seal use, says:

> Glyptic products are a valuable source for the study of the extent of economic and cultural development of the population, their trade and cultural connections, the emergence of inequality, and also of ideology, particularly religious beliefs” (Aslanov and Babayev 1965:94).

Similar arguments have been made about the spread of coinage into the zone and the development of local minting traditions, with even more explicit connections to state power:

> But each coin is not simply an economic agent—at the same time, it is an important political and ideological indicator. It is for precisely this reason that … the minting [of a coinage] in one country or another indicated the presence a state system (государственности) in that place. Thus, beyond the regular and abundant tide of foreign coins throughout the 3\textsuperscript{rd}-1\textsuperscript{st} c. BCE, the implementation of native minting (собственного чекана) – even though in the form of imitations of foreign coins—was the fact of paramount importance not only as an indicator of the increased economic potential of ancient Azerbaijan in this time and of the relatively high level of development of its trade-monetary relations, but also as evidence of the presence of fully-formed institutions of
state power here – one of the most important conditions for the native minting of coins (Rəqəblı 1997:19).

Thus, the conceptual value of these categories of material within Azerbaijani scholarship has traditionally been their interpretation as markers of the development of state-level socio-political organization.

My interest, on the other hand, lies in what insight the two types of evidence provide about how local residents and authorities were adopting and adapting practices that were increasingly familiar from neighboring zones.

**Coinage: Local Minting and International Circulation**

The numismatic corpus of the eastern Caucasus exhibits the fairly surprising practice of local minting as early as the third century BCE. The prominence of locally minted coins in the corpus suggests extensive economic intervention on the part of local authorities, and provides a counterpoint to the sparse architectural material discussed above, particularly since the center of minting appears to have been in the Qəbələ region. Contrasts between minting practices in the eastern and central Caucasus, meanwhile, suggest that local practices were highly variable in the zone, and that the presence of minting activity is not a straightforward indicator of socio-political consolidation.

This section will begin by discussing the role of numismatics in the study of the eastern Caucasus, I will then provide an overview of a database of coin finds from across the South Caucasus more broadly, describing material from the eastern piedmont and Kura valley in more detail. Having laid out the numismatic evidence, I will discuss its implications for our understanding of local administrative structures.
History of Numismatic Study in the eastern Caucasus: Ancient and Modern

Coins have long been used as an interpretive tool for the study of the eastern Caucasus. This tradition can be traced to Strabo, who discusses coin use explicitly while comparing Albania and Iberia. He reports that, in contrast to the urban Iberians, the wilder Albanians “are simple and not mercenary (καπηλικοί) for they do not in general use coined money, nor do they know numbers larger than 100, but they make their exchanges by barter, and otherwise they live an easy life” (Strabo XI.4.4). While archaeological evidence is silent on the question of whether population “in general” (τὰ πολλὰ) interacted with coined money, it does demonstrate that coinage was both imported and minted locally in the eastern Caucasus already by the Hellenistic period, with the presence of local minting traditions demonstrating a considerable level of interaction with the concept and practice of coin use. Strabo’s comment, then, should not be taken to reflect an on-the-ground reality, although there has certainly been a concerted effort to prove the statement to have been factually incorrect (İ. H. Əliyev 1975).

Other testimony on the reach of monetization and formal economic activity in the eastern Caucasus has been gleaned from another passage of Strabo, where the author presents a Roman perspective on regional appreciation of economic value. He suggests that part of the lack of development of the Albanians stemmed from their squandering of resources:

Συγκατορύπτουσι μέντοι τὰ χρήματα αὐτοῖς, καὶ διὰ τούτο πένητες ζώσιν οὐδὲν πατρόφοιν ἔχοντες. (Strabo XI.4.8)

Indeed, they [the Albanians] bury their treasures with themselves, and therefore live in poverty, having no patrimony.
This idea has had deep resonances for modern thought. It was picked up by Ianovskii, who says in the mid-nineteenth century that “the people from Şaki even today are not acquisitive, and although they do not bury valuables with their dead, neither are they in the habit of acquiring these things” (1846:129). Trever, likely responding to Ianovskii as well as Strabo, finds the passage quoted above difficult in light of other evidence for the sophisticated development of the eastern Caucasus in Strabo’s own time, and suggests that this passage “was perhaps extracted from reports relating to the third century BCE,” reflecting the “ancient customs” of the “backward … tribes” and “nomads” occasionally passing through the territory, rather than the behavior of the Albanians themselves. But archaeological excavations from the half-century after Trever has demonstrated the unlikelihood of her scenario. Necropolises from across the South Caucasus provide evidence that the practice of interning deceased with prestige goods, including gold and silver coins, was common in the Antik period, although there were local variations in the practice. Strabo, then, seems to be reporting an actual practice in the territory, but misrepresenting its social consequences.

In any case, over the course of the twentieth century, as ancient coins from excavations and chance discoveries in the South Caucasus began to accumulate, specialists turned their attention to the study of this material. One of the first and most influential of these scientists was Evgenii Aleksandrovich Pakhomov (1880–1965), who

---

343 She says that “[this passage] was likely extracted by Strabo, perhaps from reports relating to the third century BCE. Or here, perhaps, are reflected the ancient customs, preserved in the lifeways of the tribes that were more backward with respect to economic and cultural affairs. Perhaps even those nomads who, according to the words of Strabo, “help in the military affairs against external enemies, … but occasionally attack the residents and disturb the working of the land.” (Trever 1959:147)

344 Issues of mortuary coin use will be discussed below in more detail, see p. 328.
wrote the fundamental 9-volume catalog of coins from the territory, which has been a foundation of much later work (Pakhomov 1926, 1938, 1940, 1949b, 1949c, 1954, 1957, 1959, 1966). Born in Sevastopol and educated in Tbilisi and St. Petersburg, he was one of the organizers of the original Baku Museum in 1922, which is today the National History Museum of Azerbaijan (Azərbaycan Milli Tarixi Muzeyi). Pakhomov, beyond his work as a numismatist, was pivotal in the development of twentieth century archaeology in the Azerbaijan SSR. In the study of the numismatics of the northern South Caucasus, he was joined by Aleksandr Nikolaevich Zograf, and then later Giorgi Dundua, Davit Gregorivich Kapanadze, Məhəmməd Əhməd Seyfəddini, Əli Məhəmməd Əcəbli, and Solmina Dadaşova. Outside of the former Soviet Union, the writings of David Lang (1955, 1966) on Georgian numismatics have played an important role in familiarity with the data from ancient Iberia. There has been no similar work on the numismatics of ancient Azerbaijan. Some of the largest hoards from the eastern Caucasus have, however, made their way into international numismatic scholarship, filtered through the work of Vladislav Vsevolodovich Kropotkin (1961), which presents an abbreviated glimpse into the numismatic landscape.

**Coin Hoards from the Eastern Caucasus**

The first section of appendix B presents a listing of all coin hoards known from the territory of modern Azerbaijan, with a hoard defined broadly as any co-location of two or more coins. In order to included, a hoard minimally needed (1) a findspot at least

---

345 For full bibliographies of Pakhomov’s considerable volume of work, as well as more complete biographical sketches, see Kuliev (2004) and Akopyan (2013).
at the level of an administrative district, and (2) a description of the find including a total number of coins, as well as minting culture and metal type. This relatively low standard means that many the coins in my database lack attribution to a specific authority, as well as metrological data.

Digitizing heritage numismatic data from this region presents difficulties related to data quality as well as concordances between sources. The identification of accurate findspots is a particularly widespread problem and often requires trusting the reports of non-specialist finders and tracing a century of toponyms changes in a zone of fluctuating administrative systems and languages. Beyond these uncertainties, missing information about coin count and coin identification is common, especially for hoards discovered in the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.

The 19 coin hoards listed include a total of 1372 coins, for an average size of 72 coins per hoard. Eight of the hoards came from securely-identified mortuary contexts eastern Caucasia, while 11 came from non-mortuary contexts. A preliminary analysis of data from other areas of the South Caucasus data suggests that graves were a central source of coin finds from the region. Some of these mortuary hoards are quite large, with up to several dozen pieces, such as one hoard recounted in Pakhomov (1957:vol. 7, n. 1738). In general, however, hoards from mortuary contexts tend to be smaller than those from non-mortuary contexts.

---

346 In cases where an exact findspot was not listed at the village level, coins were assigned a coordinate based on the center of the district in which they were found.

347 For an example of coin data that falls into a gray area, but which was not included in the dissertation analysis, see the reported find of Roman coins from Baku’s Içərişəhər, which are nevertheless of interest (Pirquliyeva 2011:9).
Typically, numismatic material is dichotomized into hoards and single finds, with hoards understood as intentionally closed collections of coins taken out of monetary circulation and put away for future use (Casey 1986:55; see also Crawford 1969a). Single finds are seen as accidentally lost pieces: the small change of the economic system, of such low value that they were not recovered by their owners after loss (Newton 2006:213). Although much work has gone into the development of more nuanced understandings of coin hoard structures (Crawford 1969a; Robertson 1988) and single finds (R. Reece 1996), critics have pointed out that the fundamental typological distinction between hoards and single coins is unstable. It is quantitative rather than intrinsically meaningful, and makes assumptions about coin value that may not always be accurate, particularly in cases where coins are used as ritual rather than (purely) economic objects (Aitchison 1988:271).

Mortuary uses of coins present specific difficulties for the standard dichotomy of hoards v. single finds (R.-Alföldi 1996). Since all mortuary coin use (whether a single coin or a hoard) was intentional, the fundamental differentiation between a stray find and hoard is not applicable. Furthermore, unlike a ‘typical’ emergency or savings hoard, hoards deposited in tombs were certainly not intended for future use, at least not in the realm of the living. The contours of funerary deposits of coins have begun to receive attention in recent years, revealing extremely diverse practices extending far beyond the deposition of so-called Charon’s obols (Brown 2013; Doyen 2012; Stevens 1991; Cantilena 1995; Dubuis, Frey-Kupper, and Perret 1999).

The complexity of coin use within the mortuary landscape of the South Caucasus can contribute to this growing field of scholarship. However, since so much of our
evidence comes from what appear to be non-economic coin depositions (that is, coins that have been taken out of circulation in order to be placed into tombs), we must be careful in how we use the data to speculate about economic behavior.

Overview: South Caucasus Numismatic Database

To aid in the analysis of the eastern Caucasian material, section II of Appendix B presents a further 15 coin finds from mortuary contexts, where only a single coin was uncovered. In order to contextualize coin hoards and mortuary coin use patterns from the eastern Caucasus with broader patterns across the South Caucasus, a broader subset of the numismatic data from the South Caucasus was collected for analysis. Given the noteworthy presence of mortuary coin use in the area, the analysis includes two types of coin finds: (1) all hoards (any collection of two or more coins found collocated); and (2) all finds from mortuary contexts, including single finds. The database does not include single finds from non-mortuary archaeological contexts or stray finds without recorded context.

Data Scope and Archaeological Context

The database comprises 250 records, of which 137 are hoards and 113 are single finds from across the three countries of South Caucasus (fig. 85). The average size of these hoards is 35 coins, but there is a high variance (fig. 86).

Coin Type, Date, and Distribution

Coin finds from the database represent every major minting culture and a wide variety of authorities, and are for the most part silver (fig. 87). The earliest coins included

---

348 The coin finds from these regions are better-published than those from modern Azerbaijan. Section 3 of appendix B provides a list of sources used in this analysis.
are Hellenistic issues, typically Seleucid tetradrachms, which are found across the entire zone at varying densities (fig. 88). Roman coins tend to be found in hoards on the Georgian coast and in the western Caucasus, while Arsacid issues are more prevalent in hoards from the east—although there is significant overlap (fig. 89). There are also several pockets where locally minted pieces comprise a significant percent of coins, particularly in the eastern Caucasus.

Differing traditions of archaeology from across the South Caucasus account for at least some of the variability in the database. For example, one reason for the high density of material from modern Georgia lies in the strong tradition of archaeological fieldwork there, and particularly long-running excavations at Iberian cemeteries that served as training grounds for generations of Georgian archaeologists. Hence, the overrepresentation of coin finds can be an artifact of modern data collection rather than ancient numismatic practice. In the eastern piedmont, where archaeological fieldwork has been far more limited, the available body of numismatic data is unsurprisingly smaller. Nevertheless, it is possible to recognize differences in the practices of coin use across the territory that demand consideration.

Coins from the Eastern Piedmont and Kura Lowlands

The coins from the eastern Caucasus tend to be earlier than those from neighboring Iberia, and a smaller proportion of them come from mortuary contexts.

349 Earlier coinage is known particularly from the Georgian coast, the territory of Colchis. See Braund (Braund 1994:118–21) for a discussion of the trajectory of this area. On Colchian coins, see also Dundua (1982; 1987), Kapanadze (1950, 1969), Tsetskhladze (1993).
These coins can be separated into two broad groups: those from the Kura-Aras lowlands, and those from the piedmont (fig. 90).

It is unclear when, precisely, coins began to enter the territory. The earliest coins from the area date to the period of Alexander the Great, with his issues known from a large hoard found at Qəbələ which contained many later pieces (Babayev and Qazıyev 1971), as well as a very recent hoard found at Qızılkənd.350

It is clear, however, that by the Hellenistic period, coins were circulating with some regularity. Thus, from the Kura-Aras lowlands come the coins and hoards discovered at the site of Mingəçevir, where rescue excavations in the late 1940’s uncovered a cemetery with small votive hoards with many Hellenistic and Arsacid issues (cat. #8, 10, 15, 17, 19, 25, 26, 30, 31, 32). To these can be added a Hellenistic hoard from Bərdə (cat. #2), as well as two hoards of exclusively Arsacid coins discovered in the Muğan Steppe (cat. #12 and 16). This area is, indeed, relatively rich in Arsacid issues: with Arsacid coins reported from several sites along the Muğan steppe, including the large hoard (cat. #16) found in 1960 near the city of Şərvan (Dadaşova 1976a; Golenko and Rəcəbli 1975). But Arsacid coins are known from across the region, including sites in the piedmont: Xənsələ, Qəbələ, Çuxuryurd (for example, cat. #28, 29 and 34). Arsacid issues, and particularly issues of Gotarzes II and imitations of his coinage, are the most common coins known from mortuary contexts. Roman coins are rarer: we know of examples found by chance in Baku,351 as well as in excavations at Mingəçevir’s Qala-get

350 The precise identification of these coins are unclear. The published photos are not of high enough quality for certainty. See “İmişli rayonu Qızılkənd kəndi ərazisində antik dövrə aid sikkə dəfinəsi aşkar edilib” 2017
351 Not included in database for lack of data, but see Pirquliyeva (2011).
Looking at the eastern piedmont specifically, however, we find that the territory has a unique numismatic profile within the South Caucasus, although the sample size is small (fig. 91). Four hoards totaling 954 coins come from this zone. Each of the four hoards contains locally minted coins—mostly drachms—that comprise 63% of the total coin count. The quantity of these locally minted drachms suggests that they played a specifically economic role in the second and first centuries BCE (Dadaşova 1980; Rasulova 2008:105ff).352

The bulk of these local drachms are best called ‘perfunctory imitations,’ of drachms of Alexander III (van Alfen 2005:329), with simplified iconography but a general adherence to a weight standard (fig. 92, 93) (Dadaşova 1980). They are thought to have been minted between the third and first centuries BCE (Dadaşova 1980:122ff). Unlike contemporary imitation Alexander staters from Iberia and Colchis, these are low denomination coins and appear in large numbers in large hoards. A broad parallel can, perhaps, be found in the more abundant imitative coinage of Arabia (Arnold-Biucchi 1991; Kitchen 2006).

The best-documented hoard from the region, cat. #3, was found in the course of excavations near the site of Qəbala in 1966. It is composed largely of second century BCE Seleucid tetradrachms, several Arsacid drachms, as well as 4 local tetradrachms and 436 local drachms. It is believed to have a closing date in the late-second century BCE or

possibly early-first century BCE. Metrological data allow for a consideration of the weight standard of local imitations, which shows an ideal minting weight of about 3.3 or 3.4g, allowing co-circulation with Arsacid drachms (fig. 94).

There is weight data for a further 72 locally minted drachms from the Xınislı hoard, found in 1958 (cat. #5). These coins complicate the picture since they are significantly lighter than those of the Qəbələ hoard and do not exhibit the typical histogram of coins minted al pondo (fig. 95). The closing date of the hoard is thought to be somewhat later, given the presence of a Roman Republican denarius as well as a drachm of Phrates III (Seyfəddini et al. 1998:28), which might explain the weight differences as a product of temporal evolution. An additional 36 locally minted drachms are known from a hoard discovered in tomb #11 at the site of Nüydi (cat. #6), while burial #47 at the site contained a hoard comprising a local imitation and drachm of Mithridates II, and burial #22 contained a single local coin. No weight data have been published for any of the Nüydi pieces (Osmanov 1980b, 2006:31). Another local drachm was discovered, possibly in conjunction with a Roman denarius, at Yaloylutəpə in 1926 (cat. #9), while a further example is known from a hoard discovered in Artashat, Armenia in 1972 (Mousheghian, Mousheghian, and Depeyrot 2000:17:93, no. 18).353

The presence of locally minted coins, of course, does not mean that coined money was the only form of exchange in the zone-- indeed, both bronze bracelets and cowry shells are found in conjunction with coins in burials, and it has been postulated that these items constituted an important part of the local exchange system (Seyfəddini et al.

---

353 Anecdotal reports suggest that finds of these locally minted coins are common in the eastern South Caucasus beyond these hoards.
1998:11). But the widespread presence of local low-denomination coins suggests that the minting authority in the territory was interested in engaging directly with economic markets in the Hellenistic period and knew how to accomplish this.

Comparative material from Iberia

This body of numismatic data can be contrasted with roughly contemporaneous material from neighboring Iberia.\(^{354}\) This cluster of material comes from the territory of Iberia (fig. 96) and dates slightly later than the material just discussed, roughly between the third century BCE and the first century CE. Eighty-two hoards containing 499 coins and 84 single finds are recorded from the territory. Most of the material comes from three regions: the capital Mtskheta and the nearby towns of Agaiani and Nastakisi; sites in the foothills of the Lesser Caucasus near Zguderi; and sites in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus Ertso and Jinvali (T. Dundua 2008:314). The hoards are small, averaging a little over 6 coins per hoard, although some finds are considerably larger (for example A. Apakidze and Nikolaishvili 1994). The small average hoard size in Iberia, which has been the subject of little discussion, relates partly to hoard context: 76 of the 82 hoards (93\%) are securely attributed to graves.

The mortuary finds date primarily to the first century BCE and later, making them later than the hoards from Albania already discussed. Arsacid and Roman coins are well represented, with Armenian and locally minted pieces also appearing. Mixed hoards, containing coins from more than one minting culture, are common (fig. 97). More work is needed to determine whether there are meaningful patterns in the co-use of Roman and

---

\(^{354}\) For a recent consideration of much of this numismatic material, as well as a catalog of finds, see Sherozia (Sherozia 2008).
Arsacid material (choice of coins, preferential use of one culture or the other, etc.).

However the presence of mixed burial assemblages suggests that coins from the two cultures were seen as conceptually similar. It is impossible to speculate about whether this carried over into economic coin use patterns on the basis of these deposits, however, since coins used in the burials may have been selected specifically for tomb use and therefore would not mirror everyday circulation (Perassi 1999).

Gold coins occur at a high frequency within the mortuary material from Iberia, although they are rare within tomb deposits in the Greek and Roman worlds more generally (Stevens 1991:225). In Iberia, 62 of the 543 coins deposited in tombs are gold (11%), while database-wide there are only 145 are gold pieces (3%).

There has been speculation that different pathways brought silver and gold coins into extra-imperial contexts, with gold pieces more likely to enter as diplomatic gifts. In the later European Barbaricum, the presence of re-purposed gold coins and gold medallions is interpreted as part of a prestige gift-exchange system (Bursche 1999). A similar explanation could account for some of the gold coins in Iberian mortuary contexts.

The cemeteries of Iberia contain not only imported gold pieces, but also locally minted ones. Of the 62 gold coins from Iberian mortuary contexts, 1 is Hellenistic, 42 are Roman, and 19 are local, mostly imitation staters with several imitation aurei (fig. 98).

The imitation staters, divided into Alexander and Lysimachus subtypes, were minted

---

355 There are two additional hoards from Svaneti that may have contained as many as 300 additional staters minted in the name of Alexander III Pakhomov 1926:vol. 1, n. 15, 1949b:vol. 4, n. 1319. However, both hoards were dispersed, and the reports of their sizes have been questioned. See Dundua 2013 for an alternate count of Hellenistic imported gold pieces, including some of this material.

356 Occasionally local imitations are found in conjunction with imported prototypes T. Dundua and Dundua 2014:191.
beginning in the second century BCE and continuing through the first century CE, by unknown authorities and at unknown locations somewhere within modern Georgia (on this type, see G. F. Dundua 1987:55ff; T. Dundua and Dundua 2013:208ff; Golenko 1964; Zograf 1936). They range in weight from 1.7 to 7.9g (T. Dundua and Dundua 2013:208)—a very high variance that argues against a fiduciary use. In any case, the frequent presence of gold, both imports and imitations, in funerary contexts suggests that the metal had a particular function within the local burial custom, even if the coins also served an economic purpose in daily life.

The heterogeneous numismatic material of the zone makes it clear that participants in this community took advantage of their central position within the wider geographic network, involving systems of exchange that gave them access to both east and west. The Iberian numismatic community drew on both materials and practices from neighboring zones, but it was not simply an extension of one imperial system or another. Instead, this numismatic network was a local configuration in which ritual use of coins played a central role.

Coin Conclusions

The numismatic networks from Iberia and Albania present two contrasting examples of local adoption of ‘the numismatic habit,’ differing in time, scope, and purpose. Coins appeared in graves across the entire territory, and it is very likely that at least some of them entered the territory not in the course of economic exchange, but rather as a result of gift exchange systems. Their presence in tombs demonstrates the way

---

357 For an overview of positions on the economic use of this coinage, see Sherozia (2008:237).
that a ritual economy was constructed at a local level, incorporating both imported and locally minted coins.

But looking at the numismatics as a whole, once again we see an example of the Caucasus’ “unity and individuality” (Toumanoff 1963:11). Although the networks I have identified above as ‘Iberian’ and ‘Albanian’ were built out of the same raw materials—coins—the diversity of practice suggests that numismatic networks were shaped by local aims as much as by imperial proximities.

In the case of the Albanian networks: some basic questions remain. Who minted these coins? Was it a collective act of all of the groups of the Albanian federation, or was it the single dominant king? For how long were they minted, and how large were the issues that we know about? With future research, we may get more answers. But even with the current state of research, it is possible to draw some conclusions about Albanian numismatic practice. First of all, and most importantly, we find coins being minted on an existing weight standard, and following the model of the most widespread of all Hellenistic coinages. We have little evidence of a bi-metallic or tri-metallic system in Albania, however, and it remains uncertain how widely this currency circulated, or how deeply it penetrated into the daily life of the region. The mere fact of production of these coins, however, displays a comfort and familiarity with a Hellenistic economic system that is otherwise absent from our material data, and explicitly refuted in our written testimonia.

---

358 A partial die study was conducted on some of these coins although its scope and conclusions are somewhat unclear (Babayev and Qaziyev 1971). Conducting a full die study would be an important step forward with the material.
359 The near-absence of bronze material, for example, merits further discussion.
I take this as evidence that the written sources are not a good source for reconstructing the true scale of the economic and exchange networks operating in the region, which must have been considerably larger than we have assumed. Furthermore, the act of coin minting demonstrates that, although the Albanians may not have been early adopters of cultural practices like that of the Roman bathhouse, they were able to adopt and adapt from their neighbors. The fact that they chose to do so explicitly in the realm of economic activity, or more broadly of trade and exchange, demonstrates the importance of these systems from a local perspective.

**Seals and Sealings**

Seals and sealings found from the Kura lowlands and eastern piedmont provide another axis for exploring the transmission and adaptation of new administrative practices in the eastern Caucasus in the Antik period. Although a limited number of seals and a wider variety of stone stamps have been found from EIA contexts in the central and eastern Caucasus, it is not until the Achaemenid and post-Achaemenid centuries that locally made and imported seals become widespread in the region, and that evidence for seal-use in the form of sealings begins to appear. The new technological and administrative practice of seal use, then, entered the Kura basin and eastern piedmont in the Achaemenid period, and is one reflection of the rapid social changes that gripped the territory. The iconography of the seals is both diverse and highly local, with seals and

---

360 See examples from excavations at Mingəçevir (Aslanov, Vahidov, and Ione 1959:89, plate 38.122) and Sarıqapı (Nərimanov 1973).

361 Some of the seals excavated from Mingəçevir have been dated to seventh through fifth centuries BCE on the basis of their discovery in supine ground burials, but Qoşqarlı has recently pushed the dating of these somewhat later, into the fourth century BCE (Qoşqarlı 2012:13). For more about these seals, see p. 350 below.
seal impressions exhibiting a complex interplay between local and international motifs, materials and styles.

Understanding the contours of this interplay is challenging. In contrast to the easily quantifiable coins that invite comparative analysis, the body of evidence related to seals is scattered, limited in quantity, and difficult to date. The broader patterns of seal use in the post-Achaemenid world, meanwhile, are much more poorly understood than contemporaneous numismatic practice, making comparative analysis tricky. Nevertheless, a consideration of the body of material demonstrates the flexibility and adaptability of local seal use behaviors, and shows the independence of the practice from any one specific imperial model. Seal use was quickly incorporated into local practice and naturalized. Whereas local authorities hewed close to imperial models in their choice of iconography when minting coins, the seals provides a window into a wider variety of choices.

I will begin with an overview of better-understood seal practices from adjacent regions in the Mediterranean and especially post-Achaemenid Near Eastern world. My purpose is twofold: On the one hand, it is clear that seal use in the South Caucasus drew on practices that had first developed outside of the local territory, and so an exploration of these practices provides context for the local articulation of the tradition. On the other hand, as the exploration will demonstrate, the study of seals and seal use in post-Achaemenid territories is still in its early days, and much remains unknown both about Hellenistic practice, and especially about Parthian modifications and adaptations beginning in the first century BCE. Because the material from modern Azerbaijan was closely connected to both the Hellenistic and the Parthian worlds, it is critical to make the
current gaps in knowledge explicit, in order to avoid reifying the holes in our lacunose datasets. Following this, I present the body of data from the eastern Caucasus, offering a new chronological assessment of the seals, and discussion of their relationship to neighboring territories. I will demonstrate that, although seals were initially borrowed from the outside world, they functioned in this inter-imperial space within local frameworks of meaning.

**Seal Use and Sealing Practice in the post-Achaemenid Near East**

In the Achaemenid-period Near East and Anatolia, as in earlier eras, seals were impressed on clay tablets, on lumps of clay securing rooms and containers, and on ‘tokens,’ clay tags that served as accounting tools for the control of products or means of identification and authorization. The precise mechanisms of sealing practices vary dramatically across time and space, even within a single administrative system (Ferioli and Fiandra 1990). However, evidence from both the Achaemenid heartland and its borderlands demonstrates the importance of seals in imperial administration across the territory, necessary as goods and people moved across the vast empire, as well as for a vast array of other archival and administrative purposes (Tuplin 1987; Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper 2008). Seals were also used in this period, as later, as items of personal adornment, perhaps sometimes entirely divorced from any functional use.

The continuation of seal-use in post-Achaemenid contexts in the Hellenistic Near East has been recognized for many decades (Rostovtzeff 1932), which along with earlier administrative practices, provided a considerable degree of continuity between the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, though with many modifications. Despite the long
recognition of these issues, comprehensive publications of seals and sealings have been fairly recent from sites like Seleucia on the Tigris (Bollati and Messina 2004a, 2004b; Invernizzi 2003; Messina, Mollo, and Invernizzi 2004) and Uruk (Wallenfels 1994, 1998). The over 25,000 sealings from Seleucia have provided a wide body of evidence concerning the nature of Hellenistic glyptic, as well as changes in sealing behaviors in the Seleucid period. These changes include the expansion of the practice to include the widespread use of clay ‘napkin ring’ sealings on papyrus documents. In addition to sealings on these rings of clay wrapped around rolled documents, seal impressions also occur on lumps of clay, or bullae, that are affixed to strings used to tie documents (Messina 2014:126). Sealings at Seleucia also continued to be used in more traditional ways: impressed on clay tablets; certifying the closure of rooms and containers; and as ‘tokens’.

Wallenfels has also documented that the iconography of glyptic and the form of seals themselves at Uruk evolved gradually but dramatically in the transition from Achaemenid, to Hellenistic, to Seleucid (Wallenfels 1994:3). The most far-reaching changes were in the types of seals used, with a shift from forms popular in the Achaemenid world (cylinder seals along with pyramidal and conoid stamps) towards oval metal finger rings that entered the region in the late Achaemenid period, and convex gems, which were themselves a Hellenistic invention (Wallenfels 1994:151). The iconography of the seals on the Uruk documents, meanwhile, demonstrates a mixture of international Hellenistic motifs with elements and stylistic influences drawn also from the Mesopotamian tradition (Invernizzi 1976:171). As Wallenfels points out, the line of demarcation between ‘Greek’ and ‘Oriental’ traditions was never absolute, and the
Seleucid period saw the development of an artistic koine that included elements of Greek, Achaemenid and Babylonian glyptic (Wallenfels 1994:151–52). Furthermore, it appears that although the average life of seals was fairly short, at least some seals were reused for considerable periods of time after they were first carved, making the periodization of individual finds even more blurry Wallenfels (1994:144). The sealings published from Hellenistic Babylon are especially important because they offer a contrasting dataset to traditional studies of Greek gems, which focus on examples known from museum collections.

Less is known about seal use and seal style in the Parthian empire. The first Parthian sealings to come to light were from mid-century excavations at Nisa (Masson and Pugacenkova 1954; A. B. Nikitin 1993), with sealings continuing to appear during more recent work at the site (Lippolis and Manassero 2015; Manassero 2010). A smaller cache of Parthian sealings from Qumis have also been explored (Bivar 1982), as well as a small sample from Nippur (M. Gibson 1994), and another partly-published group from Göbekly (Bader, Gaibov, and Košelenko 1990; Gaibov 1996; Gaibov and Košelenko 2008; Koshelenko 1996). Despite Masson and Pugachenkova’s early publication of the Nisa corpus, Parthian seals and sealings remain poorly understood, as comparably little material has been studied.

There appears to have been considerable diversity in seal practice at Nisa. The earlier sealings discovered in the Square House, impressed into bands of well-levigated
clay (Masson and Pugacenkova 1954).\textsuperscript{362} Finds from more recent Italian work in the SW building were made into the unrefined clay used in the manufacture of mudbricks at the site (Lippolis and Manassero 2015:131). A study of the reverse side of these recently discovered sealings indicates that they were mostly used to seal \textit{khums}, large storage jars, or other types of containers (Lippolis and Manassero 2015) as was the practice also at a nearby pre-Achaemenid site in Turkmenstan, Ulug Depe (Xin and Lecomte 2012).\textsuperscript{363} Less is known about the objects secured by the earlier sealings.

There has been speculation that there was little or no native tradition of seal-carving among the Parthians. As evidence of this, Bivar (1982) argues that the Parthian period at the site of Qumis saw the reuse of earlier seals (including several much older Achaemenid cylinder seals), but little new manufacture. Gibson, however, suggests that the transitions between Seleucid and Parthian styles were as fluid as those between Achaemenid and Seleucid (M. Gibson 1994:92), and argues that newly-cut Parthian seals known only in collections are being mistaken for either earlier Seleucid pieces, or in some cases, for later Sasanian examples (M. Gibson 1994:90). The new finds of sealings from Nisa as well as from Göbekly-Depe support this conclusion, presenting an increasingly recognizable Parthian glyptic corpus. These assemblages are marked by their diversity, in the case of Göbekli-Depe, combining designs “reflecting ancient Eastern, Hellenistic, and apparently local traditions” (Koshelenko 1996:380). These Parthian

\textsuperscript{362} Lippolis and Manassero speculate that the bullae known from the Russian excavations at Nisa were actually composed of bands of finely levigated clay, wrapped around a rougher clay matrix. The rougher clay was then disposed of in the course of the cleaning of the seal impressions (Lippolis and Manassero 2015:135).

\textsuperscript{363} A lack of study of the reverse sides of the older Nisa sealings, as well as speculation that the entirety of the sealing was not preserved, makes it impossible to speculate about whether those sealings were used in the same range of activities.
assemblages offer compelling comparanda for material from the eastern piedmont, a point which will be discussed shortly. Finally, another source of comparanda for the material from the eastern Caucasus comes from a collection of between 6000 and 8000 sealings dated to ca. 200 BCE – 60 CE from the site of Artashat, which have unfortunately been only very partially published (Khachatrian 1996; Manoukian 1996).

In subsequent centuries, seals continued to be used in the Roman East, with abundant evidence from the Levantine coast (Gitler 2005). Both the style and iconography of seals within the Roman world, however, shifted. The best regional reference for seals and seal impressions from the Hellenistic and Roman periods in the Caucasus comes from the Iberian site of Dedoplis Mindori (Javakhishvili 2008).

It is clear that seals continued to serve a functional purpose in administrative systems into the Sasanian period (Gyselen 1989), with clearly delineated administrative officers using seals in the Iranian sphere (Akbarzādah 2009:15ff). As in the prior Achaemenid-Seleucid and Seleucid-Parthian transitions, it can be difficult to identify a clear-cut break between Parthian and Sasanian iconography, although legends in Pahlavi become increasingly common and serve as a helpful diagnostic. Furthermore, Sasanian seals change shape, with a pseudo ring becoming increasingly common.

*Study of Seals and Sealings from the Eastern Caucasus*

Seals from the eastern Caucasus have been the subject of study since the mid-twentieth century. Following brief research by Pakhomov, who branched out from numismatics into this topic (Pakhomov 1949d), the most important work on this subject has been that of İliyas Atababa oğlu Babayev. He wrote his dissertation on the glyptic of
Azerbaijan (1965b), and has also been the author or co-author of several important discussions of seals from the territory (Aslanov and Babayev 1965; Babayev 1964, 1965c, 1965a, 1973, 2010). The seals have also been treated in excavation reports and publications, particularly those from Mingəçevir (Aslanov 1963; Aslanov, Vahidov, and Ione 1959; Qaziyev 1949a, 1960), as well as reports related to finds from jar burials, from where a number of the published seals have emerged (Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962; Nuriyev 1973; Qaziyev 1962; Qaziyev and Qolubkina 1949; Qolubkina 1956, 1959). The seals have also been discussed by survey publications, particularly the works of Babayev (1990:147–51) and C. Ə. Xəlílov (C. Ə. Xəlílov 1985a:155–61). There has, however, never been a published catalog of this material.

A comparative and better-published corpus has come from work in Georgia (Javakhishvili 1972; M. Lordkipanidze 1954, 1958, 1961, 1967), although this material includes some seals from Colchis that relate more closely to traditions in the circum-Pontic sphere, rather than those of the eastern Caucasus. Nevertheless, the well-documented seals from excavations at Armaztsikhe, Bagineti, Samtavro and Urbnisi and especially Dedoplis Mindori serve as a helpful comparative baseline.364 The partially published collection of sealings from Armenia mentioned above is also helpful in the discussion (Khachatryan 1996; Manoukian 1996). Antik glyptic from Dagestan has been the subject of less focused scholarship, although there are attestations of seal finds, generally in the context of burials.365

365 There has been more research on Sasanian glyptic from the North Caucasus, particularly Prokopenko (2009).
Seals and Sealings from the Eastern Caucasus

Because no comprehensive catalogs have been published of seals from the eastern Caucasus, discussions of the pieces are necessarily anecdotal. In an effort at control and comprehensiveness, the following examination considers all the seals that have been published with illustrations in excavation reports or in specialist works. This group, detailed in Appendix C, includes over 130 seals from excavations and chance finds within the borders of the country, which can be dated between the sixth century BCE and sixth century CE.\(^{366}\) In the following discussion, I will focus on the pieces from the Kura basin and the eastern piedmont, concentrating on those that can be dated broadly to the Antik period.\(^{367}\) I identify trends within the body of material and explore the seals’ chronology, iconography, and the traditions within which they were carved.

In both the eastern Caucasus and central Caucasus datasets, the seals known from excavation come largely from mortuary contexts, rather than settlement or domestic spaces.\(^{368}\) It appears that, in addition to the functional purpose of these pieces in the Caucasus, seals (like coins) were symbols of power or value worthy of being deposited in burials.\(^{369}\) Therefore, just as with coins, there may have been a selection bias that led to the inclusion of certain types of seals into burials, altering our view of the material.

---

\(^{366}\) More seals have undoubtedly been excavated and discovered within the territory, but have not been published or illustrated.

\(^{367}\) Because of the difficulty of dating many of these seals, I am using a broad chronological framework.

\(^{368}\) They come out of a range of burial types, found in supine and flexed ground burials, jar burials, and catacomb tombs as well as tile-lined and tub burials. This pattern persists also in Iberia.

\(^{369}\) The presence of these seals in mortuary contexts supports the conclusion of Bader Gaibov and Koshelenko in their research on sealings at Göbekly-Depe, where they speculate that the lack of mortuary contexts in that region accounts for the lack of known seals, despite the presence of many sealings (1990:64).
The following discussion will begin by providing a brief background on pre-Achaemenid seals in the region, before considering seals and sealings from the Kura basin and eastern piedmont within the framework of several broad chronological groups, which do not map precisely on to other divisions of the Antik period (since these breaks are tied to identifiable stylistic shifts in ‘imperial’ seals).

1) **Group 1 Seals**: attributable to the Achaemenid through Hellenistic period (ca. 5th c. BCE – 2nd c. BCE).

2) **Group 2 Seals**: attributable to the late Hellenistic through the Arsacid/Roman period (ca. 2nd c. BCE – 3rd c. CE).

3) **Group 3 Seals**: attributable to the late Arsacid/Roman through Sasanian period (ca. 2nd c. CE- 6th c. CE).

I have chosen to use broad and overlapping chronological groupings in an attempt to respect the ‘fuzzy’ borders between periods, while still charting changing practices over time. Wherever possible, I have tried to consider side by side imported seals and those likely manufactured in the eastern Caucasus, although the greater chronological uncertainty surrounding the latter group causes difficulties. Therefore, I discuss separately several subsets of seals of local manufacture that are exceedingly hard to date, but which also come from a limited number of contexts and therefore may reflect idiosyncratic practice.

**Background: Pre-Achaemenid Seals and Seals from the Achaemenid site Saritəpə**

Although the use of seals and sealing is predominantly a Late Iron Age (LIA) trait in the eastern Caucasus, there are several Late Bronze Age (LBA) and Early Iron Age
(EIA) cylinder seals known from the territory of modern Azerbaijan. But the first seals from the chronological scope of this project come from the Achaemenid site of Saritəpə. Here, two examples are said to come from a fifth/ fourth century BCE cultural layer which has been dated by the presence of Achaemenid-type ceramics (İsmayılzadə 2002:36). The first is a cylinder seal depicting a quadruped, likely a caprid, as well as several other unintelligible marks (appendix C, cat. #1) (İsmayılzadə 2002:36, fig. 5). It was discovered inside a small jar in room 3 of the outer block of rooms, a space dominated by two hearths (Norimanov 2001:150). Despite its findspot within the Achaemenid-style complex, the cylinder seal is not an example of Achaemenid glyptic: in both layout and style, it is without parallels from that world. The rendering of the quadruped, instead, is broadly familiar from petroglyphs from the region of Qobustan, as well as from examples on Antik ceramics, both painted and depicted in relief (Qolubkina 1951:fig. 44), and on figurines used as pendants from Antik period sites (Qaziyev 1953:fig. I.5; Quluzadə and Ağağayev 2012:fig. AF #24884; AF #2253; AF #2251).

---

370 The earliest was excavated in 1894 by Emil Rösler from one of the Archadzor (Арча̀дзоръ) kurgans, near the village of Dowtsanlı in what is today Nagorno-Karabakh ("Производство археологических раскопок: Елизаветпольская губ." 1896:fig. 8). The piece is said to be of LBA date, and have parallels in Iranian glyptic of that period (Cafarov 1981:78). This seal deserves special note: it is said to be “hollow and made from gold leaf” (Cafarov 1981:78). Another of the early seals, a chance find from the İmişli district of Azerbaijan (Babayev 1964:fig. 1) depicts a lion under a palm tree and a man shooting a bow. It is said to be of Middle Assyrian manufacture (Cafarov 1981:79). Other cylinder seals dated to the late second millennium or early first millennium BCE have been found in the southern reaches of Azerbaijan, such as the example from a destroyed grave at Şaxtaxtı village in Naşçıvan (Cafarov 1981:79–80), as well as several examples from just beyond the Azerbaijan border, in Iranian Talış (Cafarov 1981:80–81). Thus, cylinder seals known from across the eastern Caucasus in the LBA/ EIA are generally few in number and typically deposited in graves. There is no seal-use evidence from the eastern Caucasus in this period, although there is considerable evidence for distinct Urartian glyptic and seal use in neighboring territory, see Ayvazian (2006).

371 This is, to my knowledge, the Achaemenid-period cylinder seal known from the territory of modern Azerbaijan. Babayev cites another cylinder seal from Azerbaijan, said to be Achaemenid in date, although it has never been illustrated (Babayev 1964:78), and I think that it is possible that Babayev is referring to the Saritəpə example discussed here.
The second example from the same excavations is a single jar-mouth with two impressions of a stamp seal bearing the image of a quadruped – perhaps also a caprid (see fig. 57). It was discovered in the corridor between the central and peripheral rooms outside of room 10, along with grinding equipment and fragments of several other vessels (Nərimanov 2001:151). While this stamp impression is not as uncharacteristic as the cylinder seal, it is nevertheless not recognizably Achaemenid in style: the layout is not unknown amongst later Achaemenid stamp seals, but the deer motif is uncommon, as is the style of carving based on the admittedly poor-quality image. Both the cylinder seal and the stamp seal, then, depict a deer: an animal known to be of considerable local importance, in a style that is, at the very least, locally inflected.

Given the uncertainty surrounding the building’s stratigraphy and chronology, is not entirely clear that these pieces come from the initial (Achaemenid) period of use. However, if this date is accepted, then these two examples of glyptic represent the considerable power that local styles and tastes assumed within a space believed to be the headquarters of administrators from the Achaemenid heartland. If on the other hand, we hypothesize that these floor assemblages come from a post-Achaemenid period instead, then we find that the Achaemenid concept of cylinder seals had been rather rapidly adopted and adapted by the local community. In either case, the seals from Sarťapə hint at the dynamic character of sealing practice in the eastern Caucasus in the early days of local use.

372 Only one of the two impressions is visible in the photographs, but the text seems to suggest that both impressions are from the same seal.
GROUP 1 SEALS: Achaemenid and Hellenistic Seals and Sealings

The earliest seals that spread widely in the eastern Caucasus are signet-ring seals, generally considered to be either Achaemenid imports or local developments after Achaemenid models (Aslanov and Babayev 1965:98; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a:156). The motifs on these seals include a narrow range of figures (generally, standing gods, worshippers of heroes); and animals both real and mythological. While some of the pieces find clear parallels outside of the territory, many of them do not, making dating challenging.

When signet rings were first found in excavations at Mingəçevir, the majority came from supine pit burials, which were dated at the time of excavation to between the seventh and the fifth centuries BCE (Qazıyev 1949a). Thus, the seals were originally assigned a similar date range. Later, however, rings of this type were discovered also in flexed pit burials, as well as occasionally in jar burials. The absolute dates of these grave types have been the subject of much debate within Azerbaijani archaeology, with the rings consequently becoming subject to periodic re-dating. Today, following the redating of the contexts and the glyptic studies by Babayev, the earliest group of seals are generally considered to date to fifth or fourth century BCE, with Aslanov and Babayev noting that they continue in use in the region into the third century BCE (Aslanov and

---

373 See Appendix C for seals discussed in the rest of this chapter.
374 Recently, the entire burial landscape of the eastern Caucasus has been reanalyzed by Qoşqarlı, who dates the supine burials to seventh through fourth centuries BCE, and the flexed burials to fifth through third centuries BCE (Qoşqarlı 2012:14), and the jar burials to the entire period, extending into the fourth century CE (Qoşqarlı 2012:43). In reality, it is likely that the lines dividing these burial traditions are not firm, and that the practice of flexed ground burials continued into the second century BCE or later. As tantalizing evidence of this, a single radiocarbon was date taken of a tooth from a flexed ground burial discovered in the course of BTC pipeline construction at site KP 233 yielded a date of circa Cal BC 350 to 310/ Cal BC 210 to 40 (Mustafayev 2006).
I prefer this later chronology, and in fact think there is reason to push some of these pieces even later.

Although close to the Pontic basin geographically, the Achaemenid and Hellenistic material from the eastern Caucasus does not share many iconographic or stylistic parallels with the group of rings that Boardman identifies as a ‘Pontic Group,’ which relate to the Greco-Scythian world of the Black Sea coast, coming particularly from contexts like the fourth-century Chertomlyk kurgan (Boardman 1970:222, pl. 699-703). Nor, in general, do the motifs and techniques that we find in the eastern Caucasus relate to the motifs and styles developed and explored in the most familiar bodies of Greco-Persian glyptic familiar from Anatolia (Boardman 1970:323). There are some elements present in the so called ‘Mixed Style’ that are reflected in the local corpus, but by and large this material shares little with the Anatolian and Circumpontic traditions that are attested elsewhere. This argues against a spread of seals from either the west or the north-west, and supports the idea that sealing practice in the eastern Caucasus developed through contact with the Iranian world, rather than through interaction with Classical Mediterranean communities.

Taken as a whole, the motifs and stylistic traits of the early group of eastern Caucasus signet rings find their best parallels with seal impressions from metal rings on

---

375 In early assessments by Qazıyev, the core group of seals from Mingoçevir were given a date of between the seventh and the fifth century BCE (Qazıyev 1949a) which has been repeted often in later accounts. Given modern understanding of Achaemenid sealing practices, however, these early dates are unsupportable.

376 But, for well-attested examples of signet rings in Achaemenid contexts, see for example the use of such seals on Persepolis Fortification Text tablets (Gates 2002).

377 For example, the characteristic motif of the ‘flying gallop’ shows up on pieces believed to be of local manufacture, such as LF 86 discussed below.
Seleucid archival texts and sealings, known particularly through sealing corpora from Hellenistic Babylonia and Seleucia. I am not arguing that we should see the eastern Caucasus seals as exclusively Hellenistic in date, or as descending directly from Babylonian prototypes. Rather, I suggest that both the eastern Caucasus and the Hellenistic Babylonian groups are composed of a mixture of ‘heirloom’ late Achaemenid seals, alongside forms evolved from the iconography of earlier models. These Hellenistic sealings are dominated by impressions from metal finger-rings with slightly pointed bezels, of fairly small dimension, around 10-20mm long (Wallenfels 1998:xiv). Their iconography is for the most part fairly simple and dominated by themes “evolved from fifth and fourth century Achaemenid and Greco-Persian types” (Wallenfels 1998:xiv).

Many seals had long periods of use in the post-Achaemenid world. We have good evidence for this from the sealing corpora at Seleucia, Uruk and Qumis. Remember here the ambiguities discussed earlier in identifying a clear break between Achaemenid and Hellenistic glyptic styles in material from the large and well-studied corpus at Uruk. There, ‘Persian style’ seals continued to be used for some time after the end of the Achaemenid empire, while ‘Persian’ iconography was even more long-lasting. Prolonged periods of seal use, known from across the ancient world, may be a particularly common trait in extra-imperial contexts. Regional support for this argument comes from two examples of neo-Babylonian seals from the Caucasus that were found in burials dating to the fourth century BCE and even later (Kacharava 2005:299).

In some cases, it is possible to argue that seals from the eastern Caucasus were likely made in Mesopotamia or Iran, or by craftsmen deeply familiar with technological practices and stylistic conventions in these spaces (for example, cat. #7, 9, 25). But many
other examples from this group of Achaemenid-early Hellenistic seals feature uncommon stylistic or technological characteristics that suggest local manufacture (for example, cat. #14, 15, 20, 21). The high profile of locally-carved pieces may account for some of the stylistic conservatism in the corpus, with nominally Achaemenid styles continuing to be popular even after they had faded from the Iranian heartland.

In contrast to Hellenistic seals known from Babylon, the eastern Caucasus pieces are slightly larger and occur on a variety of bezel shapes, though mostly on rings rather than gems. There are important differences in technique as well, with a large collection of linear renderings (cat. # 14-17 for example). But the motifs and compositional organization bear remarkable similarity to seals known from Seleucid texts and bullae (Mitchell and Searight 2008; Wallenfels 1994, 1998). Some of the eastern Caucasus seals that find parallels with motifs common in the Hellenistic Babylonian material include an image of a man in front of an altar (cat. #5),378 a frontal bull head with moon (cat. #23),379 a sphinx (cat. #13),380 two birds sitting on a bowl (cat. #25),381 a hero with a goat leaping in front of him (cat. #2),382 and a quadruped in a flying gallop (cat. #10), which is believed to be a locally-carved piece depicting a galloping quadruped.

Of particular note are the several seals that may represent zodiac figures, a known tradition at Seleucid Uruk, though not at Seleucia (Wallenfels 1994:153). For example, cat. #16, which appears to be related to a Babylonian rendering of Capricorn, a goat-fish

378 For comparison, see Wallenfels (1994:figs. 54–57).
379 See Wallenfels (1994:1021). This motif has a long history on signet rings in the Aegean.
380 See Wallenfels (1994:fig. 619). Another motif with a long and broad history. Nevertheless, the parallels between the example from Azerbaijan and the Babylonian one are striking.
381 For a similar composition, see Wallenfels (1994:fig. 978)
382 See Wallenfels (1994:fig. 45)
(suhurmashu) (Wallenfels 1994:fig. 661), and cat. #18, which may be a hump-backed bull chasing a goat-fish, in representation of Taurus (Wallenfels 1994:fig. 707). Finally, from this group, there are a limited number of examples bearing clearly Greek iconography, particularly a seal with a satyr which is known from excavations at Mingaçevir.

A final subgroup of signet rings, which also come from burials at Mingaçevir, are thought to be of this general Achaemenid-Seleucid period, but more securely attributed to local manufacture (Babayev 1990, plate 3). In this group, we find cat. #10, already discussed. Three other of these pieces are noteworthy for their depiction of caprids (cat. #20-22). Deer are attested in Seleucid sealing corpora (Bollati and Messina 2004b:vol. III, fig. AF 115-129), but the frequency of the image in the glyptic of Caucasian Albania suggests a position of particular importance. Finally, there are stylistic parallels between these representations of animals on some of the local seals from Mingaçevir and considerably later seals from stone-lined tombs Samtavro (M. Lordkipanidze 1954:figs. 34, 52), dated to the second-fourth centuries CE, as well as from sealings known from Dedoplis Mindori (Javakhishvili 2008:fig. 82, no. 6, 8 and 9).

A final group of seals generally dated to the later Achaemenid or early Hellenistic period are glass tabloid seals related to Boardman’s Bern Group (Boardman 1970:320–22). Several of these are known from the eastern Caucasus (cat. #31-35), with a larger number known from Iberia (Dzhavakhishvili 2007). The traditional narrative about these pieces is that they are casts after originals from Asia Minor which were likely produced

---

383 For a discussion on these in the Iberian context, see Dzhavakhishvili (2007:124–27).
in Iberia. They have been dated by Babayev, following Lordkipanidze who studied the Georgian examples, to the fourth century BCE (Babayev 1965c:132; M. Lordkipanidze 1961:fig. 45). The motifs on the eastern Caucasus examples, and particularly the two horsemen engaged in battle (cat. #31), are common in other categories of Greco-Persian seals from the Achaemenid period, although the motif was also common in later Parthian iconography and sealing corpora (Koshelenko 1996:381–82).

Important new evidence for dating the period of use of these seals comes from close parallels on bullae from Artashat, dated to the second century BCE through the first century CE (Manoukian 1996:fig. 3). An additional example of this seal type was found from a burial at Urbnisi, in a grave containing a coin of Augustus (Javakhishvili 1972:fig. 131). There is, furthermore, evidence in Iberia of the possible manufacture of this type of piece into the Parthian period (Javakhishvili 1972:fig. 141). Thus, although perhaps Hellenistic-period in manufacture, these tabloid seals saw a long life in the Caucasus, and might rightly be part of Group 2.

In summary, then, the seals from Group 1 depict a range of actual and mythological figures of both humans and animals. Many of the motifs are connected to Iranian, and particularly Achaemenid, glyptic tradition, for example representations of the ‘master of animals’ motif, as well as a two-headed quadruped and fish-lion and hunting themes. Stylistically, however, there is considerably more diversity, and there are few suggestions of direct links to Achaemenid court-style glyptic. Instead, many seals find strong parallels among late Achaemenid and early Seleucid seals from Mesopotamia or Anatolia, while others fall outside of typical international styles, and likely represent local production, although often along lines familiar from Mesopotamia. The pieces
discussed so far were likely in use from the Late Achaemenid into the Seleucid period—perhaps into the second century BCE, with some of the later pieces (like perhaps the glass tabloid seals) continuing even after this. This slight re-dating of the material helps to resolve a mystery in the study of local glyptic, concerning the lack of Hellenistic material. Babayev’s comment that “seals of the Hellenistic period found in Azerbaijan are comparatively few in number” (Babayev 1990:148) thus reflects our legibility of seal tradition in this period, rather than our corpus.384

Scaraboid Seals

In addition to the glass tabloid seals discussed above, scaraboid seals traditionally dated to the Hellenistic period, are also associated with local manufacture (Aslanov and Babayev 1965:98–99). Dating these seals is extremely difficult. The iconography on the scaraboid pieces is very simple and schematic (cat. #36-41), and does not find comfortable comparanda anywhere.385 They are almost certain to be of local manufacture, but as with the tabloid seals, could perhaps be dated to the late Hellenistic period.386 The majority of these seals come out of a single jar burial. It is difficult, therefore, to argue for the widespread presence of this particular technique.

QƏBƏLƏ SEALINGS: A Hellenistic or Early Parthian Sealing Corpus

---

384 At the same time, of course, Babayev’s comment (1990:148) that this situation has arisen because of a lack of excavation of Hellenistic material in Azerbaijan cannot be entirely denied.
385 There is, however, an interesting sequence of seals from a kurgan burial that seems to be considerably earlier (6th c. BCE) in Armenia, which seem to share some stylistic affinities. See A.O. Mnatsakan’ian (1955).
386 While not a direct parallel, these pieces do seem to share something stylistically with a group of seals depicting tamagas that Manassero has identified from Nisa (Manassero 2010).
Evidence of seal use corresponding to the Hellenistic or perhaps early Parthian period comes from the collection of some 100 sealings from excavation area 1 of Qəbələ, of which some dozen examples have been published, about half in a quality that makes analysis possible. These sealings ("буллы") were found “in the entire excavation area, but especially in the north west section,” in the layers directly below the large public building discussed earlier (Babayev 1990:149; Babayev and Əhmədov 1981:19). Babayev has dated this layer on relative grounds to the third to first century BCE. According to Babayev, many of the sealings were found with impressions of strings, suggesting that they were used to seal documents, while others preserve the impression of vessel edges as well as doors (Babayev 1990:150). Babayev notes that the clay that these sealings were made from was well levigated, different from the rougher clay used for mudbricks and other activity at the site (Babayev 1990:149–50; Babayev and Əhmədov 1981:19). In this regard, the pattern at Qəbələ follows that known from the Square House at Parthian Nisa (Masson and Pugacenkova 1954:159–61), and differs from the practice at the SW building at Nisa (Lippolis and Manassero 2015:135) and Göbekly-Depe (Bader, Gaibov, and Košelenko 1990:66).

The seal impressions are generally of simple forms (fig. 99, 100, 101): recumbent and leaping deer appear, as does a striding quadruped (lion), and a schematic elongated human. Deserving of mention is an impression of a bird of prey and a snake (?). Many of the sealings bear impressions of more than one seal, and several seals appear on more than one sealing. Babayev characterizes the seals used on these sealings as both Near

---

387 For these, see Babayev and Əhmədov (1981:pt. 20, figs. 1-7); Babayev (2001:fig. 2); Babayev (1990:pts. 24–26); Another bulla has been well published from Mingəçevir, though it dates to a later period. See Babayev (1966).
Eastern and local in style, with some notable examples of Greek subjects, particularly a Heracles seal used on more than ten of the bullae (Babayev 1990:149; Əhmədov 1952:19). Given the tiny sample size of the published pieces, it would be unwise to speculate too much about their nature. However, it is difficult to avoid comparisons with the Nisa and Artashat corpora, and to note that the material from Qəbələ seems different from both. The sealings from Qəbələ don’t appear to exhibit any inscriptions, which are in contrast fairly common at Nisa (Masson and Pugacenkova 1954; A. B. Nikitin 1993). The material from Artashat, meanwhile, exhibits considerably more ‘classicizing’ iconography. The tenuous conclusion to draw from this is that, whoever these Qəbələ seal-users were, they were not ‘outsiders’ bringing an imperial practice into the region. They were, rather, embedded in the local system and they chose to use this administrative tool to satisfy their own ends.

**GROUP 2 SEALS: Late Hellenistic, Parthian and Roman Seals**

It is possible to articulate a broad division in the seals known from the Kura and eastern piedmont, recognizing a Group 2 of seals that correspond to the final Hellenistic, Parthian, and Roman periods. These seals are sometimes dated by their burial type, or on the basis of associated coin finds, or else on stylistic or formal grounds. A number of the seals from these contexts are gemstones in small ring settings, which are often poorly preserved. Nevertheless, some of the examples from this period feature Roman motifs and stylistic traditions, while others appear stylistically local, but still perhaps referencing

---

388 A number of rings are known from burial contexts which have lost their gems, see for example Danielian (1959:15).
popular motifs from the Roman world (Babayev 1990:151). Others, meanwhile, seem to fit into the Parthian sphere of activity, although not unambiguously.

Babayev, focusing on the more recognizably Roman pieces from this group, doesn’t focus on the Parthian examples (for example, Babayev 1990:148–51). I’d suggest, however, that we also need to consider what ramifications of growth of Arsacid power in the region may have had on seals and sealing practice, particularly because we saw Arsacid coins entering the area in significant numbers in the second and first centuries BCE. However, given the questions that remain about identifying Parthian seals and glyptic, and the limited body of published evidence from Azerbaijan, this is a challenging situation to unravel.

Several of the seals from this period stand out for their clear Roman manufacture. One of the most convincing pieces is a seal depicting a charioteer with his horses (cat. # 59). It bears stylistic similarities to the ‘angular blob style,’ and has parallels with a Roman gem dated to the first century BCE and later held in the Hague collection (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:fig. 166). Interestingly, this piece comes from a sixth century CE burial context. Another piece with clear Roman association depicts Victory crowing Fortuna (cat. # 54). Parallels for this motif can be found on several seals in the Hague collection (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:fig. 676, 831 and 832), with the style appearing to be the first or second century CE ‘imperial plain groove’ type (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:311). Finally, another intaglio (cat. #55) shows a seated Jupiter, flanked

---

389 In many cases, the pieces are not illustrated well enough to make this determination, see for example LF 23 and LF 49.
390 It was erroneously identified as a local piece by Rzaev (1976:fig. 173).
391 The quality of illustration leaves open the possibility that this may fit better into the so-called ‘cap-with-rim’ group, dated by Maaskant-Kleibrink (1978:fig. 913) to the late first or second century CE.
by Minerva and facing Fortuna (?). The composition is very similar to a piece from the Hague collection (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:fig. 969), although its style is closer to the third century CE ‘incoherent grooves style.’

In addition to these pieces, there are several other seals with clear Roman glyptic associations, although the quality of the published images preclude stylistic analysis. These are an image of Ares or Minerva (?) (cat. #49, 50 and 51); and an image of an altar (cat. #63).

Within the known seals are also found fleeting hints at iconographic associations popular from the Parthian world. In this regard, one seal in particular stands out, which depicts a horseman holding a lance attacking a standing figure holding a shield (cat. #61). This motif had been recently discussed in connection to a collection of depictions from Nisa (Gaïbov and Košelenko 2008), where it was a popular subject. Another of the pieces thought to date to the Parthian period because of its motif and shape depicts a mounted rider holding a hunting trophy (cat. #62). From the eastern Caucasus, several bronze rings bearing abstract (solar?) imagery (cat. #65 and 66), have traditionally been dated to the Parthian period, although comparable examples from Iberia are known to come from Parthian/ Sasanian period contexts (M. Lordkipanidze 1954:figs. 49–51).

These Group 2 seals also include imported pieces, specifically a limited number of Egyptian-style scarab seals (cat. #67 and 68) known, however, from only a single burial, which was also the source of two lightly incised conoid beads that are possibly amulets (cat. #69 and 70).

392 For comparanda, see especially the material from Dedoplis Mindori (Javakhishvili 2008 cat. 26-40, 44-50).
393 For this motif from Anatolia, see Konuk (2000:figs. 142–144).
The seals from this temporal range in Iberia display a wider range of Roman motifs, and a higher frequency of such images. Nevertheless, there are many points of comparison with Group 2/3 seals. For example, a seal depicting two stalks of wheat (cat. # 103), has a nearly exact parallel from tile tomb #536 at Armaztsikhe (M. Lordkipanidze 1958:fig. 10), generally dated to the late second or third century CE, as well as with an less close parallel with an example from Dedoplis Mindori (Javakhishvili 2008:fig. 81, no. 82).

It is interesting to note what motifs are missing from among these Group 2 seals: there are only several portraits, for example one from a second or third century CE jar burial, dated by presence of coins in the burial (cat. #46), as well as a damaged glass intaglio (cat. #47) and another from Mingçevir (cat. #48). Portraits are a common motif in the period in the region, as demonstrated from the published sealings from the site of Artashat (Khachatrian 1996; Manoukian 1996; Neverov 1996), as well as in the collection of seals excavated in Iberia (M. Lordkipanidze 1954, 1958, 1961). Studies of archival practice from the Seleucid world demonstrate that portrait seals play an important role in archival activity, often associated with ‘official’ seals.394 The absence of such material from the eastern piedmont, especially in light of its presence in neighboring regions, could suggest that local stylistic conventions selected a different seal-motif to represent authority. Or, alternately, it could be evidence of a seal use practice that didn’t require a specially-designated category of official iconography.

394 Although, on the complexity of this category, see Wallenfels (2015).
Thus, in summation, the Group 2 seals are more difficult to identify than those in either the Group 1 or Group 3. There is a small body of identifiably Roman glyptic that is easily recognizable, and that has therefore received considerable scholarly attention. But, in contrast to seal corpora from Iberia, the amount of ‘Roman-style’ material from the eastern Caucasus is actually quite limited. Because of the greater difficulty of recognizing ‘Parthian-style’ seals, it is likely that we are misidentifying at least some of these pieces. Some of the locally manufactured seals identified as part of Group or Group 3 may, in fact, have been products of Group 2. Only further excavation and better chronological control will solve this problem. Finally, although there are some clear similarities with material from Iberia and Armenia in this period, the eastern Caucasus material nevertheless remains distinct, indicating the continuation of regional tastes and patterns of use.

**GROUP 3: Late Roman / Arsacid through Sasanian Period**

In the late Roman/Arsacid and the Sasanian era, the Caucasian Albanian material bears strong similarities to material from Iberian excavations. This indicates the development of a more unified seal and sealing practice as Sasanian power and Sasanian markets spread. Several examples of this include a crouching griffin (cat. #78), possibly from the fourth century and similar in motif and style to a lapis lazuli seal from a stone-lined tomb #309 at Armaztsikhe (M. Lordkipanidze 1958:fig. 40). A similar unity of style and motif can be seen by comparing the seals from the eastern South Caucasus to Sasanian seals from the North Caucasus, where both similar themes and carving styles are attested (for examples of this material, see Prokopenko 2009).
In addition to the ‘international’ Sasanian-style seals, there is a group of seals that are likely to be either Parthian or early Sasanian, but are almost surely of local manufacture (cat. #83, 98-101). Their linear style seems to be a development of earlier local glyptic traditions, (such as that on cat. #17), while their subject matter reflects a typical range of motifs, including a scorpion, a caprid and a lotus.

The seals from the eastern Caucasus have no inscriptions save for a single example said to be from Mingəçevir, which has an “unreadable” Greek inscription of 6 letters (C. Ə. Xalilov 1985b:105). The lack of later inscriptions is somewhat surprising in the context of Parthian-Roman period seal and sealing corpora from Armenia, Iberia, Iran and Central Asia. But it is even more surprising in relation to the Group 3 seals, as Pahlavi inscriptions are common on Sasanian gems, even from northern examples in Dagestan (Prokopenko 2009). One possibility is that written language remained of low importance in the eastern South Caucasus throughout this period. Another possibility is that some of the seals that I’ve identified as Group 3 are being dated too late, and actually reflect a transitional period of Parthian-Sasanian sealcutting in the eastern South Caucasus, as an earlier date would better account for the lack of inscriptions.

Seals and Sealing Conclusions

Seal use in the Caucasus took hold by the fifth century BCE, and remained widespread over the course of the next millennium. The practice pre-dated the use of coins by perhaps a century, and seems to be a direct result of exposure to Achaemenid administrative practice. Just as the coins from the eastern Caucasus tend to be earlier than

---

395 To my knowledge, this seal has not been published.
those from the central Caucasus, so too do the seals. The signet rings known from the early stages of glyptic development in Mingachevir represent the earliest cohesive body of Antik seals from the northern South Caucasus. This is strong evidence that the local authorities in the eastern Caucasus owed their start, as Babayev and others have argued, to the power vacuum of the immediately post-Achaemenid years.

But despite its strong conceptual connections to the Achaemenid world, the glyptic tradition of the eastern Caucasus exhibited considerable freedom from and flexibility toward imperial styles from its early days, and continued until the dawning of the Sasanian empire brought greater standardization and conformity around the third or fourth century CE. The seal corpus from the eastern Caucasus is varied, and as was the case with the numismatic data, they also reflect different tastes, priorities, and practices than those known from neighboring territories in Iberia, and also in the later period in Dagestan.

A consideration of the iconographic and technological parallels of these seals and seal impressions helps us understand what models local elites were referencing as they assembled power in the territory. We find that Iranian sources were often of central importance, but that they were never the only option. Instead, inspiration also filtered into the territory from Asia Minor, and later from the broader Mediterranean world.

**Conclusions**

The data discussed in this chapter, paired with the textual accounts already covered, demonstrate the growth of a consolidated group in the Hellenistic and into the Roman-Parthian periods in the eastern Caucasus. I have discussed, in Chapter 4, the idea
that Albania might be best understood as a federation of some sort, in which populations with different lifeways and social logics interacted.

The quixotic nature of the material evidence presented in this chapter is suggestive of such a model. While some elements of the local system are analogous to those of neighbors and peers (seals), others are operating within different frameworks (urbanism) or are predicated on a different system of value (coins). These different domains of socio-political organization reflect a process of experimentation, with local residents and authorities testing models for consolidating their positions, while also interacting with a wide range of neighboring powers. The next chapter will take a considered look at the evidence for interaction with one of those neighboring groups: the ‘Sarmatian’ mobile pastoralists of the Eurasian Steppe.
Chapter 7: Chasing a Shadow: On the Sarmatians

The enemy, with his bow, his arrows dipped in venom, circles the walls fiercely on his snorting steed: and as a rapacious wolf carries off a sheep, outside the fold, and drags it through the woods and fields, so with anyone the barbarians find in the fields, who hasn’t reached the protection of the gates: he either follows them, a captive, and accepts the chain round his neck, or dies by a venomous shaft.
- Ovid, *Trist.* 4.77-84.396

In the previous chapter about the development of monumental architecture and the ‘material culture of administration’ in the *Antik* eastern Caucasus, I have outlined visible ramifications of expanding imperial presence. In this chapter, I consider the interplay between the eastern Caucasus and its northern neighbors: mobile pastoralist groups broadly characterized as ‘Sarmatian.’ Known to Classicists most often through descriptions like Ovid’s account from his *Tristia,* we have inherited the perception that these mobile pastoralists had little to offer culturally, interacting with their settled neighbors as aggressors in military contexts. In fact, however, the eastern Caucasus in the *Antik* period was a crucible in which the emerging local societies and their mobile pastoralist neighbors confronted the expansionist Mediterranean and Iranian territorial empires. These pastoralists played a significant and underappreciated role in the course of local development, and consequently also in the borderland policies of the empires.

In both the preceding Achaemenid and subsequent Sasanian periods, the relevant imperial powers built physical infrastructure in the eastern Caucasus to control movement between the Steppe and points to the south. In the Achaemenid period, this infrastructure comprised a line of palaces built along the Kura and Qanix (Alazani) rivers, on the major

---

396 Trans. Wheeler [Ovid 1939]
high-frequency east-west route identified in the GIS analysis—structures that perhaps connected broadly to the historically attested Scythian campaigns of the Achaemenid Empire.\textsuperscript{397} In the Sasanian period, imperial authorities undertook much wider infrastructure projects to control the high-frequency north-south routes, building long walls from the eastern spurs of the Greater Caucasus to the Caspian Sea as well as fortifications at the Dariali pass in the central Greater Caucasus (fig. 102).\textsuperscript{398} Although these two projects differed in their approaches, the scale of the infrastructural investments reflects a pressing imperial priority: consolidation of the northern frontier against nomadic incursions.\textsuperscript{399}

The Hellenistic, Roman, and Arsacid powers, however, pursued a different strategy. They largely avoided direct interventions in this territory, and certainly did not invest in sweeping infrastructure. Instead, as viewed in the texts, the empires interacted with the ‘nomads’ primarily through the intermediaries of Iberia and Albania. The historical dimensions of those relationships as reflected in Greek and Latin texts have been discussed in Chapter 4, which demonstrated the close but fractious relationships between these groups. This chapter, on the other hand, turns to material evidence to better understand the relationship between the residents of the eastern Caucasus and their northern neighbors. It asks the deceptively simple question: what material role did the so-called Sarmatians play in the Antik eastern Caucasus?

\textsuperscript{397} See discussion, chapter 4 p.131 and following.
\textsuperscript{398} The Sasanian fortifications have been explored as part of Eberhard Sauer’s ‘Sasanian Frontiers’ project. See Sauer et all (2015), as well as the recent edited volume related to the project, Sauer (2017). And from that volume particularly Lawrence and Wilkinson (2017).
\textsuperscript{399} Although the relationship to the ‘nomads’ is clearer in the Sasanian period than in the Achaemenid one. For a summary of recent thinking on the latter period, see K. Alizadeh (2014).
Answering this question requires interacting with the field of Sarmatian archaeology. The field, however, is constructed on an unstable foundation (Dan 2017; Mordvintseva 2008, 2013b, 2013a, 2015; Strizhak 2008), rooted in (1) the opacity of the archaeological material; (2) a fundamental mismatch between our lacunose Greco-Roman historical sources and the diverse archaeological material from the vast Sarmatian territory; and (3) the relative dearth of research on Sarmatians relative to their better-studied Scythian ancestors (Yatsenko 2003). Even the term ‘Sarmatian’ requires scrutiny—with the collective noun masking underlying socio-political (and likely also ethnic, linguistic, and cultural) diversity. In light of these challenges, it is necessary to carve out a sphere of inquiry that acknowledges the theoretical and practical pitfalls implicit in the idea of ‘the Sarmatians,’ while not falling prey to hyper-skepticism that renders the material un-interpretable.

I begin this chapter with a discussion of theoretical and archaeological perspectives on mobile pastoralism and its unique social logics. I provide an overview of relevant archaeological and historical scholarship on the rise of the Sarmatians in the Steppe. Next, I present the archaeological data from the eastern Caucasus that relates to Iron Age mobile pastoralism, beginning with a consideration of pre-Sarmatian mobile pastoralist presence. And then I provide an overview of the Antik period data related to the spread of a group I’ll be calling the Sarmato-Alans.

The data demonstrate that the South Caucasus participated in the affairs of the broader Eurasian Steppe world from the early Iron Age, continuing through the Antik period, and that eastern Caucasia was a particular arena for such interaction. I consider the models that have been used to explain these interactions, ranging from migration
hypotheses to gradual cultural adoption–frameworks that place the idea of
‘Sarmatization’ on parallel with that of ‘Romanization.’ These models, however, are
imported from imperial contexts, and based on unidirectional flows of peoples and
cultures. The data from the eastern Caucasus emerge from an evidentiary context in
which the ever-inchoate nature of ‘culture’ is acutely obvious and associated with mobile
pastoralists is deeply enmeshed in the material fabric. Despite their complexity and
idiosyncrasy, mobile pastoralists were a central element in the story of the region’s
internal development, as well as its external entanglements with Rome and Persia. The
nature of these relations and their dynamics on the local level in Albania altogether
emphasize how misleading Ovid’s model of interaction is. The examination highlights
the role local intermediaries played in articulating Imperial-Nomadic relationships – a
structural pattern that has gone largely unnoticed, but which had great importance for the
shape of Rome’s borderland policies, both in and beyond the Caucasus.

SOCIO-POLITICAL LOGICS OF MOBILE PASTORALISM

Both textual and archaeological records make it clear that the Sarmatian
phenomenon, beginning in the Late Iron Age and continuing for nearly a millennium,
operated at trans-regional, regional, and local scales, with long-distance phases of
development interacting with more limited local processes across the ‘Sarmatian world.’
Nearly all details concerning the composition, range, and chronology of the Sarmatians
remain contested in the literature. But the existence of Sarmatians sensu lato is
irrefutable. These groups participated in the larger sphere of mobile pastoralist Steppe
confederacies that stretched from the edges of Han China, north into the Altai Mountains, and west into the Central European plains in the Late Iron Age, and eventually giving rise to the Hunnic groups.

Although stereotypes of nomadic cultural backwardness persist in the work of some Mediterranean historians and archaeologists, voluminous research has been undertaken on the nature of complexity and political integration among the mobile pastoralist communities of the Eurasian Steppe over the *longue durée*. Central to this study has been scholarship on Inner Asia, grounded in the works of Lattimore (1940, 1962) and continuing more recently by Kradin (2001), Barfield (1989), Di Cosmo (2002), and Honeychurch (2014b), as well as generations of work by Russian nomadologists working both in Inner Asia and beyond (Khazanov 1975, 1994; Markov 1976; Masanov 1995).

This larger body of research has produced a richer understanding of the sophisticated organization of the steppe populations, but it has failed to yield universally accepted conclusions about the nature of steppe populations’ social structures. The complexity of this scholarship has been heightened by the ebbs and flows of Soviet (and Marxist) thought about the nature of the state (Gellner 1988), and about the migration of populations (Frachetti 2011). These subjects have dominated much of twentieth-century

---

400 To the east of the Sarmatians, these groups are discussed principally under the names of Xiongnu, Saka, Yuezhi, each of which has its own deep historiography. For recent work on Xiongnu, see especially the works of Barfield (1981, 2001), Di Cosmo (1994, 1999, 2011), and Kradin (2001), and also Brosseder (2015) and Miller (2015). On the Saka and Yuezhi, see Benjamin (2007), Bernard (1987), Callieri (2001), Grenet (2012) Liu (2001), Schlitz (2007), and Zadneprovsky (1999).

401 The explicit relationship between Hunnic populations and these earlier groups, however, remains contentious (Atwood 2012; Kim 2017; de la Vaissière 2005; Wright 1997).

402 And also on the representation of these groups in ancient sources: see for example the classic article by Shaw (1982).
discourse and left a legacy that is perhaps most clearly evident in the fierce debates about ‘nomadic feudalism’ among the steppe populations (Khazanov 1994; Kradin 2002) that began in the 1930’s and has continued into the present century (Kradin 2003). The concept of ‘nomadic feudalism’ is obviously intended to fit nomads into Marxist paradigms of social development. At the root of feudalism is explicit ownership of land, a practice for which there is little evidence among mobile pastoralist groups either ethnographically or textually.

But the difficulties in making sense of mobile pastoralists are not the product of Marxism alone. The case of ‘nomadic feudalism’ exemplifies the more general problem that has plagued scholars in this field. Models of state formation and imperial control have always been based on agrarian societies, tied to the ability to generate and control agricultural surplus. Researchers have sought to integrate mobile pastoralists into these models, and have conceptualized their social organization according to frameworks established in agrarian contexts that emphasize the “organizational limits” of pastoralist societies (Honeychurch 2014a:278–79). World-systems approaches to state and institutional development have also struggled to integrate mobile pastoralists in core-periphery models (Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991; Rowlands, Larsen, and Kristiansen 1987; Wallerstein 1974). When they are discussed at all, nomads are often treated as ‘vectors’ moving between settled communities, rather than as communities in their own right.

The contours of mobile pastoralist societies, furthermore, have been misunderstood and elided not only in such higher order theoretical-historical debates but also in archaeological fieldwork. Advances in archaeological method have rendered the trope of the ‘nomadic invisibility’ increasingly dated from a technical perspective, but it
is nevertheless difficult to draw conclusions about mobile pastoralist social structures on the basis of their archaeological signatures. Frachetti has attributed this to the fact that the “organizational aspects of steppe societies that we can trace archaeologically are often not viewed as relevant to canonically defined political systems” (2012:31). That is, although our methods have advanced, our middle range theories to connect increasingly nuanced archaeological data to questions of socio-political structure have not caught up.

The past three decades have, however, seen increasingly international and poly-focal conversations between scholars of both early- and late-period Eurasian mobile pastoralism. These discussions have only recently begun to find their way into scholarship on the Sarmatians.⁴⁰³ This research has explored the historiography of the field (Frachetti and Maksudov 2014; Hanks 2002; D. Miller and Sheehy 2008), and outlined theoretically rigorous and data-driven approaches to understanding the emergence and continuation of mobile pastoralist lifeways in the Steppe (Cribb 2004; Honeychurch and Makarewicz 2016; Korobov 2003; Makarewicz 2014; A. Porter 2012; Ur and Hammer 2013).

I believe that two intellectual developments are of particular relevance for understanding the mobile pastoralists of the Antik Caucasus: (1) the nature of sociopolitical complexity and the spread of institutions among pastoralists; and (2) the relationship between steppe societies and their settled neighbors, including better understandings of mobile pastoralist subsistence strategies that highlight the diverse adaptive strategies employed across the Steppe continuum.

⁴⁰³ This is due in part to the textual bias in the study of Sarmatians, see chapter 4 p. 205 ff. See also below, p. 399 for a discussion of the situation in the eastern Caucasus.
Nonuniform Complexity

It is increasingly clear that mobile pastoralist social, political, and institutional frameworks are distinct from those of settled populations (Frachetti 2012:2–3; Honeychurch 2014b:67), and that they themselves are, at the same time, tremendously diverse and adaptive (Honeychurch 2014a:312). Frachetti’s recent work provides important insight into mobile pastoralism complexity. He examines patterns of interaction and sociopolitical organization among early (5000-2500 BCE) Eurasian mobile pastoralists (Frachetti 2012). His work focuses on earlier periods of mobile pastoralism, and is interested in understanding how ‘political complexity’ could emerge among non-agrarian populations. He speculates that sociopolitical organization and consolidation were not transmitted across the Steppe as a single ‘cultural package,’ but instead travelled along intra- and inter-tribal pathways as a number of discrete cultural or institutional practices. The variations in the networks along which these practices traveled, as well as the divergent local conditions across the Eurasian steppe (ecologies, neighbors, economies, etc.) created a system of what he terms “nonuniform complexity.”

The development of these flexible networks can be attributed, at least in part, to structural features of the lifeways of mobile pastoralists, particularly their regular (seasonal) movement along transhumance routes, as well as other varied regimes of movement (Honeychurch 2014a:290). This pattern of movement spurs periodic reconfigurations of the physical space of pastoralist groups and creates shifting

---

404 The theme of complexity within mobile pastoralist societies has been explored in a number of regional contexts in recent years (A. Alizadeh 2010; Brass 2015; Honeychurch 2013; McCorriston 2013).
opportunities for interaction.⁴⁰⁵ In all, Frachetti’s model leads to the speculation that mobile pastoralist populations are particularly conditioned to exhibit institutional diversity.

This research should cause researchers of later-period mobile pastoralists, and of the Sarmatians in particular, to carefully consider their assumptions about the necessity of cultural uniformity within a mobile pastoralist community. This cautionary reflective perspective informs Valentina Mordvintseva’s critique of studies of Sarmatian material culture, which she argues flatten the diversity of archaeological materials from the Urals to the North Pontic in search of a single Sarmatian culture as attested in the textual sources (2013b).

**Shadow Empires and Symbiotic Impereogenesis**

Alongside discussions of the internal development of complexity, increasing interest has been directed at understanding the pathways toward consolidation of mobile pastoralist populations into structures larger than single ‘tribes,’ as well as on assessing the most appropriate language for describing these groups, from nomadic ‘tribes’ to ‘states’ to ‘empires.’

Thomas Barfield’s (1989, 1990, 2001, 2002) influential model of the “shadow empire” asserts that such structures can be called ‘empires.’ He frames the rise, existence, and decline of these mobile pastoralist confederations on the edges of imperial space as secondary phenomena that respond to the conditions created by neighboring sedentary

---

⁴⁰⁵ See Beck (1991) for a twentieth century ethnographic study of mobility patterns among the Qashqa’i mobile pastoralists of Iran, which recounts the shifting patterns of contact between groups of mobile pastoralists along their transhumance routes and shared settlement locations from season to season.
empires and that develop in response to the internal rhythms of the empires. Although Barfield sets up a global model, his more focused studies concern the Inner Asian space and particularly the Xiongnu and Turko-Mongolian groups that he regards as their successors. He posits that hierarchical tribal structures intrinsic in Turko-Mongolian social organization allowed the mobile pastoralists to consolidate into supratribal confederations, which then grew in size as they learned how to exploit their neighboring and often growing agrarian territories through raids and plunder (Barfield 2002:64). Although the model has been applied to many other (non-Turko-Mongolian) groups, the mechanism for the development of shadow empires in non-hierarchal tribal configurations has yet to be fully explored.

Beyond the issue of tribal structures, this is a model premised on a theory of intrinsic nomadic nonautarky (Khazanov 1994:69–84), according to which mobile pastoralist communities are believed unable to meet their own basic necessities (that is, their need for agricultural products) without interacting with neighboring sedentary populations (Di Cosmo 1994:1112–14). In pre-imperial situations, the nomads are able to satisfy their needs through small scale raids of neighbors. As the neighbors begin to consolidate and police their borders, the mobile pastoralists are forced to develop new strategies in parallel in order to continue extracting necessary products from the ever-stronger neighbors, which they either acquire through trading, or if trading is impossible, through violent extortion (Jagchid and Symons 1989:165). A large agrarian empire is therefore both the prerequisite to and the impetus for the development of the “parasitic” shadow empire (Barfield 2001:34). Both the size and complexity of the shadow empire are correlated to those of the “primary” empire on which it depends (Barfield 2001:29).
Despite the attractiveness of Barfield’s model and its significance in moving
debate about Eurasian pastoralists forward, archaeological and textual facts do not
support its conclusions either broadly (Honeychurch 2014b:299), or in specific historical
instances (Drompp 2005). Barfield’s thesis, however, exposes two interlocking threads of
thought about mobile pastoralist social logics that merit further discussion. The first is the
idea of parasitism: that mobile pastoralists as a rule subsist by feeding (literally) off of the
productive energy of sedentary populations. The second is that mobile pastoralist empires
are secondary phenomenon that develop along their own internal lines, but only because
of external pressure from an imperial neighbor.

Autarky and Pastoralist Lifeways

At the root of discussions of pastoralist parasitism and dependency on settled
populations are persistent (and firm) dichotomies that associate sedentarism with
agriculture and mobility with pastoralism (Khazanov 1994:83, 95). Although accounts of
Eurasian steppe populations (including Khazanov’s own typologies) propose a number of
intermediary subsistence types ranging from pure nomadism, to pastoralist
agriculturalism, semi-sedentary pastoralism, complex pastoralism, etc., they preserve at
their root a firm differentiation between pastoralists and settled populations with respect
to the practice of agriculture. But, archaeological and ethnographic work on Eurasian
steppe lifeways from the Don, to Kazakhstan, to Siberia have exposed a more
complicated picture, which is substantiated by work on the phenomenon of pastoralism in
a global context. For example, on the question of associations between settled
populations and agriculture, recent work on the Srubnaya culture east of the Caspian (said
by Anatoly Khazanov to be “in no way… nomadic” [1994:93]), has demonstrated that the cultivation of grains was very limited in some regions, particularly to the east of the Don, despite the clear presence of permanent settlements (López et al. 2003; Morales-Muñiz and Antipina 2003). Work on Srubnaya sites in the Samara region has also demonstrated the absence of cultivated cereal grains, as well as a lack of biological markers of grain consumption, despite equally clear indicators of sedentary settlements in that region (Anthony and Brown 2007). Thus, the emergence of settled populations in the steppe is not straightforwardly correlated with the practice of agriculture, since sedentary sites can arise in the absence of cereal cultivation.

It is increasingly evident that mobile pastoralist communities can subsist on a diet with a very limited reliance on agricultural products (Shakhanova 1989), and can engage in agricultural activities as necessary, while maintaining a nomadic identity (Vainshtein 1980:145–65). In the case of the Siberian Tuva pastoralists, for example, Sevyan Vainshtein’s research draws on textual, linguistic, and archaeological evidence to demonstrate the deep history of agriculture among the group, despite earlier ethnographic accounts that suggested that they engaged in ‘pure’ nomadism until the spread of Chinese and Russian cultural influence in the nineteenth century (Vainshtein 1980:161).

---

406 One hypothesis is that mining activity in the territory was the impetus for the development of sedentary patterns, with a specialized portion of the population engaged year-round in metallurgical activities. The products of this productive activity were then traded with local nomadic populations for foodstuffs, with the archaeological traces of the nomadic communities so far going unrecognized (Anthony and Brown 2007:398–400; Morales-Muñiz and Antipina 2003:346).

407 In this case, herding, fishing and gathering of wild flora appears to have sustained the population (Anthony and Brown 2007:409).
In response to these shifting perspectives, Nicola Di Cosmo (1994, 2002:167–74) has argued for a greater recognition of the productive capacity of steppe populations, and has highlighted the ways that ‘mixed’ mobile pastoral economies (i.e. systems like that of Xinjiang in northwestern China, in which mobile pastoralist groups coexisted with sedentary and semi-sedentary neighbors (Di Cosmo 1994:1104–10) are not dependent on predation (Di Cosmo 2002:167ff). These populations can cycle through strategies of ‘pure’ nomadism, of limited farming, of hunting-gathering, or even make temporary shifts towards semi-sedentary agropastoralism, depending on the stability of the period and environmental concerns (Di Cosmo 1994:1113; Vainshtein 1980:164). Finally, there has been a growing recognition of the importance of human-animal relationships in pastoralist communities and the innovative, active management strategies of pastoralist communities in managing these relationships (Clark and Crabtree 2015; Orton 2010). This research has emphasized that the relationships that develop in any given context between sedentary and pastoralist communities are shaped by historical circumstances and local networks, rather than by proscriptive definitions of pastoralist-sedentary relationships.

*Lines and Directionality of Influence*

Other critics of the ‘shadow empire’ model have focused on its unidirectionality, with the settled populations guiding development, with mobile pastoralists following

---

408 Both textual and archaeological sources related to the Xiongnu demonstrating this point. There is not strong evidence for the routine reliance on raided or traded agricultural surplus from China, leading to the conclusion that the empire was able to secure its sustenance from within its own territory, likely by sustaining a local mixed economy (Di Cosmo 1994:1113). See also Scheidel (2011) for an overview of these debates.
along in their wake (Di Cosmo 2011). Peter Turchin (2009) reformulates the relationship by suggesting that a recursive model of mobile pastoralist-imperial interaction is a better fit for the evidence. In this model, the tensions between mobile pastoralist and sedentary practices generate pressure on both communities, which push each side to “scale up” its organizational and institutional development (Turchin 2009:191–92), leading over time to “imperiogenesis” on both sides of the nomad-sedentary divide. This reformulation allows Turchin to account for contexts in which nomadic empires appear to rise in advance of their imperial neighbors (2009:196ff).

Although helpful in its redistribution of developmental power, this model still imagines that each nomadic-imperial relationship exists as a dyad, and does not account for polyfocal interaction situations. Unsurprisingly, scholars of the broad historical processes of pastoralist-imperial interaction tend to focus on processes that function on a global scale. But, this often simplifies the conditions in frontier territories, where interactions between populations actually occurred. Thus, in the case of the eastern Caucasus: formulations like Turchin’s fail to account for the activities of the Albanian federation.

Along with an appreciation for mobile pastoralist organizational sophistication has come clearer recognition that pastoralism was not confined to a single narrow ecological zone (that is, the steppe). Archaeological research on mobile pastoralism across the sweep of Eurasia, for instance, has emphasized the different ecological niches within which pastoralism can operate (Frachetti 2012). Included in these niche-categories are mountain zones, where pastoralists exploit vertical transhumance routes between
highland summer pastures and lowland arid territories rather than horizontal movement corridors (Frachetti 2008; Shahrani 1979; Shilov 1975).  

**Sarmatian Historiography**

The study of the Sarmatians is rooted in historical perspectives gleaned from exogenous textual accounts, and only secondarily through material culture. The textual sources, mainly in Greek, Latin, and Chinese—though with important Armenian and Georgian contributions for the Caucasus—paint a complicated picture of the mobile pastoralists. The texts apply over 50 ethnonyms to the ‘Sarmatians’ and related groups over the centuries, as they spread across the Eurasian Steppe (Lebedynsky 2014:359–65), and describe the peoples and their history with widely varying degrees of exactitude and accuracy.

Although the Sarmatian peoples have long been of interest to ancient historians, archaeological discussion of the groups has unfolded largely in Russophone scholarship, with occasional synthetic works in other Western European languages (Harmatta 1970; Lebedynsky 2014; Sulimirski 1970). The group, furthermore, has received little attention in theoretically minded treatments of steppe peoples discussed

---

409 The concept of a distinct type of mobile pastoralism in western Asia that followed a different trajectory than that of the Eurasian Steppe was posited by Lattimore, who termed it “enclosed nomadism” (1962:484). The idea was developed further by Rowton (1974), and was recently inverted by Alizadeh (2010), who cites “enclosing nomadism” in the Iranian highlands as a central force in the consolidation of the Elamite state in the second millennium BCE.

410 For the textual sources, see especially Grakov (1947); Harmatta (1970); Sulimirski (1970); Maksimenko (1983); Dittrich (Dittrich 1984); Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky (1997); Alemany (2000); von Carnap-Bornheim (2003) Lebedynsky (2014).

411 See Mordvintseva (2013b) and Dan (2017) for English-language overviews of the vast bibliography.
above,\textsuperscript{412} and have been entirely absent from the discourses concerning ancient empires discussed in chapter 2.

**Sarmatians in a Eurasian Context**

Traditional scholarship traditionally has seen the Sarmatians as one in a long line of migratory groups who emerged out of the Eurasian Steppe belt, generally considered to be Iranian-speaking, and thought to have spread from east to west.\textsuperscript{413} The Sarmatians are traditionally thought to have developed out of Late Bronze Age steppe societies in the Volga-Ural zone, and particularly from the so called Andronovo Culture (Lebedynsky 2014:58), whence sprang the so-called Sauromatians, a proto-Sarmatian group that interacted with contemporary Scythian groups in the North Pontic, with whom they were both neighbors and rivals.\textsuperscript{414}

Although the relationship between these two main Classical-period groups of Eurasian nomads has engendered considerable debate, in a general sense (historiographically if not genetically), the Sarmatians have come to be seen as ‘successors’ to the earlier Scythians—but less flashy, and therefore less interesting, ones. This perception has been shaped, in part, by the history of archaeological work on the Sarmatians, which came into its own considerably later than that on Scythians. The majority of early Sarmatian research was conducted by scholars who worked principally on the Scythians, and only dipped cursorily into the history of their successors (Yatsenko

\textsuperscript{412} Turchin (2009:210) makes a single passing reference to the group;

\textsuperscript{413} Although many elements of this thesis have come under greater scrutiny. For a recent discussion of some of the more problematic assumptions, see Dan (2017).

\textsuperscript{414} The traditional the schematization of is that of Grakov (1947), as updated by Smirnov (1964). For an current iteration of this basic chronology, see Lebedynsky (2014). For a critical history of scholarship connecting the Sauromatians and the Sarmatians, see Mordvintseva (Mordvintseva 2008, 2013b).
The opulence of Scythian royal burials and the clear material contacts with the Greek world fed into perceptions of Scythian grandeur that found no parallel in the scholarly attitudes toward the Sarmatians.

Although research on the Sarmatians in the second half of the twentieth century accelerated, it still lags behind that on the Scythians. Not surprisingly, most research has focused on the core regions of the Sarmatian world in the Volga-Don and Ural regions, and secondarily in the North Pontic (Simonenko 2011, 2009). The eastern Caucasus falls well outside these core territories, resulting in even more limited research. Just as the South Caucasus sits too far to the north (and east) to be of much interest to scholars of Classical Antiquity, it finds itself too far to the south for most Sarmatian specialists.

**CHRONOLOGIES AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURES**

With the texts providing only the most skeletal of frameworks, scholars have sought to fill in the gaps with archaeological material through correlations between ‘archaeological cultures’ known materially with textually attested groups. In this field, issues of chronology and migration are deeply intertwined, since Sarmatian chronological frameworks are generally predicated on seeing changes in material culture brought by new groups of migrants, or developed under migration pressures (Mordvintseva 2013b).

The absolute and the relative chronologies of the emergence and spread of Sarmatian groups has been the subject of considerable debate in recent decades. The issues are far too vast to be discussed in full, but what follows here is an outline of the

---

415 A cogent overview is provided by Mordvintseva.
state of scholarship on both chronology and migration, and a discussion of how these issues intersect with the South Caucasus.

**Eurasian Chronologies**

Sarmatian activity has traditionally been reckoned according to a quadripartite chronology developed by Grakov (1947), with each phase representing both a time period, and an associated ‘archaeological culture’ which bore cultural indicators of the group.\(^{416}\) The system as laid out by Grakov can be schematized as follows:

1) **Proto-Sarmatian, Sauromatian, or Blumenfeld** Culture: 6\(^{th}\) – 4\(^{th}\) c. BCE.
2) **Early Sarmatian, Sauro-Sarmatian or Prokhorovka** Culture: 4\(^{th}\) – 2\(^{nd}\) c. BCE.
3) **Middle Sarmatian, Sarmatian or Suslov** Culture: 2\(^{nd}\) c. BCE – 2\(^{nd}\) c. CE.
4) **Late Sarmatian, Alan, or Sipovka** Culture: 2\(^{nd}\) c. CE – 4\(^{th}\) c. CE.

Grakov’s conception was subsequently re-worked by Smirnov (1964), who developed a scheme having increased geographic specificity, and giving greater prominence to gradual, short-distance migrations as a key feature of cultural development.\(^{417}\) His changes included a nuancing of the first (Proto-Sarmatian, Sauromatian) phase into a northeastern “Samaro-Ural” variant and southwestern “Volga-Don” variant, with the northeastern area being known as the Proto-Aorsi territory. This northern territory became, in the subsequent Early Sarmatian phase, the seat of the Prokhororova culture, which Smirnov associated with Strabo’s Upper Aorsi, while the Volga-Don became the territory of the Aorsi (K. F. Smirnov 1957:19, 1984:117–18). The Middle Sarmatian

---

\(^{416}\) On the concept of ‘archaeological cultures’ in this context, see the discussion in this chapter, p. 402 ff.

\(^{417}\) See again Mordvintseva (2013b:210).
period, according to Smirnov, was characterized by the movement of smaller sub-groups both east and west, from the Taman peninsula to the edges of Greco-Bactria. These groups have been associated with tribes known from later textual sources (the Roxolani, Siraces, etc.), and are interpreted to have been part of a Sarmatian tribal alliance (Mordvintseva 2013b:210). Gradually over the course of the Middle Sarmatian period, this tribal alliance was consolidated and became unified (K. F. Smirnov 1950:111). Within this system, the Aorsi and the later Alans played central roles, such that by the Late Sarmatian period, a single tribal group dominated, called by Smirnov the Alanorsi (after Ptolemy’s reference to the group, Geog. 6.14.9).

More recently, yet another a revision to this chronology has emerged especially from the works of Polin (1992), Skripkin (1990), and Simonenko (2004). This new scheme focuses less on the earliest ‘Sauromatian’ phase, and uses a tripartite division that pushes the Alans earlier, from the second century CE into the first century CE.

1) **Early Sarmatian**: 3rd – 1st c. BCE.

2) **Middle Sarmatian**: 1st – 2nd c. CE.

3) **Late Sarmatian**: 2nd – 4th c. CE.

Skripkin has reintroduced the idea of long-distance migration into this scholarship, and has associated each of these phases with a specific migratory group from the east. Thus the Aorsi are connected to the Early Sarmatian culture, the Alans to the Middle Sarmatian, and another anonymous Iranian group to the Late Sarmatians.

---

418 Based on Simonenko (2009:11)
**Eastern Caucasus Involvement**

The development of these overarching “paradigmatic explanatory model[s]” (Mordvintseva 2013b:203) of Sarmatian evolution requires free interpretation of textual history, and expansive generalization concerning material data. The analysis, based on data from territories considered to be within the core of the Sarmatian sphere, does not translate easily into the more southern reaches of the eastern Caucasus. Despite the supposed migrations of Early Sarmatian groups into the nearby North Caucasus in the fourth century BCE, and textual mentions of Aorsi on the Caspian coast, there has been little attention to the Early Sarmatian phase in the South Caucasus.

Instead, Sarmatian activity is seen to be a serious cultural influence only in the second half of the Antik period, with ‘Sarmatian’ finds typically dated to the first century CE and later (the Middle Sarmatian and Late Sarmatian periods). In keeping with the migratory models discussed above, the Sarmatian groups are generally seen to have spread into the South Caucasus after initially establishing roots further to the north.

More specifically, most of the ‘Sarmatian’ material that is discussed in the eastern Caucasus is connected directly to the spread of the Alan culture, which is assumed to have occurred no earlier than the late first century or second century CE— even in cases when other evidence for dating is inconclusive. However, as Mordvintseva’s (2012) work on the Nogaїchik Barrow located in the Lower Don has demonstrated, a late second century CE date of emergence for this so-called Alan catacomb burials is too late. Radiocarbon dating demonstrates that the burial tradition was already present into the North Pontic by the late Hellenistic period. The archaeological grounds for dating the so-called Sarmatian material from the eastern Caucasus will be discussed at more length
below, and I do not want to suggest that the catacomb burials from the eastern Caucasus should be re-dated based on the single Nogaîchik Barrow. It is, however, important to recognize that, as a result of the development of Sarmatian archaeology, there are strong *a priori* associations between assumed histories of migration, ‘ethnic markers’ and chronologies. These should not be simply accepted—instead, they need to be investigated.

**Caucasus Contexts**

The perception that nomads don’t enter mountains has been responsible for much of the hesitancy to see a Sarmatian presence in the Caucasus. Considering the central North Caucasus, Abramova has argued that the foothills and mountains were the domain of local Caucasian populations, with Sarmatian activity contained, in the main, to the steppes. She admits, however, that borders between these zones were never entirely fixed and notes instances of typologically Sarmatian burials in the foothills (Abramova 1995:164; Reinhold and Korobov 2007:196). Problematic for her interpretation is the fact that some of the traits used to recognize Sarmatian burials (burial structures, posture, ceramic assemblages) are also well known from burials of sedentary populations in the period (Davudov 1996:244ff). This complicates our ability to clearly distinguish the mobile pastoralists from their sedentary neighbors in the central territories of the North Caucasus, and casts doubts on dichotomous readings of the territory’s populations. Put another way, this evidence suggests that we should not be looking for two separate populations.
The situation in the eastern North Caucasus is more variegated, but again demonstrates the reach of so-called Sarmatian practices into foothill and even mountain zones. Certainly, the presence of so-called Sarmatian elements is stronger in the northern pre-Caspian steppe (the lower Terek-Sulak interfluvium) than in the more southern coastal regions with their nearby foothills. The north is distinguished by a greater consistency and uniformity in the burial traditions (burials in pre-existing kurgans; supine pose; in pit, niche or catacomb structure; with a uniform ceramic assemblage; (Abramova 2000:50ff). The north also lacks fortified settlements (Abramova 1987:72). The more southern coastal territories and their closely associated mountains, on the other hand, exhibit a wider variety of burial traditions as well as a series of fortified settlements in the mountains. The differences have been attributed to greater Albanian influence in the south, and greater Sarmatian presence in the north (Abramova 1987). But the greater visibility of South Caucasian influences in the south does not negate the presence also of traits associated with mobile pastoralists, particularly in the mixed burial traditions.

An examination of the “Caspian funnel” leading from the North Caspian steppe to the South Caucasus, then, demonstrates uneven visibility of characteristic mobile pastoralist material, with a seeming gradient from the pre-Caspian steppe southward. To be sure, the clearest evidence for Sarmatian activity in the North Caucasus is concentrated in the steppe fringe north of the mountains, mirroring the pattern in the wider Sarmatian territory, where Sarmatians largely occupy the wide Eurasian grasslands. But there is not a clear break: geomorphological traits do not present an impassible impediment to the spread of pastoralist practices, particularly in burial traditions. Of course, the unambiguous discernment of emic identity on the basis of burial practices has
long been shown to be an endeavor fraught with complications (Alekshin et al. 1983; Chapman 2013; Ucko 1969), and the presence of Sarmatian-style adornments and ceramics could be indicators of trade rather than physical presence. But the potential remains open that mobile pastoralist groups were exploiting the rich seasonal pastures in the foothills of the Greater Caucasus, and that they were one of the many groups coexisting in the area.

The story of the Sarmatian period in the eastern Caucasus I will discuss in the rest of this chapter demonstrates that there was rarely if ever a sharp divide between the mobile pastoralists and their settled neighbors in the territory under consideration, as evidenced by both archaeological and textual datasets. Instead, following Frachetti’s model of complex non-uniformity, the region’s archaeological landscape may itself be a key indicator of the long-term presence of mobile pastoralist groups in the territory.

By the Antik period, traces of the Eurasian mobile pastoralist world appear deeply enmeshed with a wide variety of other local populations. These pastoralist communities might best be grouped under the umbrella term ‘Sarmato-Alan,’ which is both vague and likely an oversimplification, but which provides a basis for discussion. Although there is certainly evidence for violence and warfare between the groups, the material record also demonstrates significant cultural exchange over long periods of time. Onomastic evidence points to ties between the ruling families of the consolidated polity of Iberia and their mobile pastoralist neighbors to the north and east.419 Archaeological evidence from the eastern Caucasus suggests that mobile pastoralists were not ‘outsiders’ in the local

419 See discussion in chapter 4, p. 186.
cultural fabric of Albania, but were rather one of the important constituent groups that coalesced into the *Antik* federation.

**Pre-Sarmatian Pastoralism: Scythian Traces?**

Before addressing that period, though, it is necessary to consider archaeological evidence for earlier Scythian presence in the eastern Caucasus. The Scythians entered the picture considerably earlier than the later Sarmatians, and so on the surface, an investigation of their presence may seem to fall beyond the scope of this project. However, as a result of the ready scholarly association between Scythians and Sarmatians mentioned above, the distinctions are often muted between the two waves of human movement and the different contexts within which they operated. Furthermore, the contours of this conversation are utterly unfamiliar in non-Russophone scholarship, which simply does not accept many of the identifications suggested locally.\(^{420}\) A brief consideration of how the Scythians are understood in the South Caucasus, then, serves as an important framework for the discussion of subsequent Sarmato-Alan presence.

**Of Scythians and Cimmerians**

There is a widely held belief that Scythians along with the related mobile pastoralist group the Cimmerians were physically present in the South Caucasus beginning in the second half of the eighth century BCE, with evidence stemming largely from textual sources, both Assyrian records and Classical sources, as well as

\(^{420}\) The accepted narrative in western European and Anglo-American scholarship places the Scythian presence known from the texts considerably further to the south, southeast of Lake Urmia in the territory of contemporary Iraqi Kurdistan and Iran.
archaeological evidence (Mehnert 2008:17). The thesis that Cimmerian/Scythian groups spread deep into the Armenian highlands formed an important part of the scholarship of Ter-Avetisian (1934), and also ran through the influential writings of Piotrovsky (1940, 1954), and the later twentieth-century work of Esaian and Pogrebova (1985). Scholars studying the Urartian Empire more broadly picked up this narrative, connecting the discovery of ‘Scythian’ socketed trefoil arrowheads at several Urartian sites to the role of the mobile pastoralist groups in the downfall of the Urartian empire (Zimansky 1995b:265). But recent reevaluations of evidence have argued that the data are inconclusive, as socketed trefoil arrowheads were quickly adopted by many groups across the Armenian, Anatolian, and Iranian highlands by the sixth century BCE, and therefore cannot be understood as markers of Scythian or Cimmerian presence, particularly in later contexts (Derin and Muscarella 2001).

A ‘Scythian Kingdom’?

Although less prominent than the Armenian narratives and the histories of the Cimmerians further to the west, the eastern Caucasus has also been part of the mid-century discussion of nomadic incursions in the eighth/seventh centuries BCE (D’iakonov 1956:248ff; Krupnov 1954). In particular, there has been speculation about existence of a ‘Scythian Kingdom’ (Скифское царство) in the eastern Caucasus (I. H. Əliyev 1979; Vinogradov 1964; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1971), although these ideas have never found favor in international scholarship.

---

421 For an assessment that covers the major sources, and that argues for seeing Scythian and Cimmerian physical presence in the South Caucasus over long durations, see Olbrycht (1998b).
422 On the Cimmerians specifically, see Ivanchik (1993, 1996).
423 On the acrimonious debate about this, see I.H. Əliyev’s (1979) comments on Xəlilov (1971).
The debates over the ‘Scythian Kingdom’ involve both archaeological and textual data, but they are predicated on a Herodotean kernel (1.103-106; 4.11-12): namely that the Scythians came into the South Caucasus in the course of their pursuit of the Cimmerians, and established a short-lived seventh-century BCE kingdom there. Although the so-called kingdom has not been accepted by all (C. Ə. Xəlilov [1971] and Vinogradov [1964] remained skeptical), İ.H. Əliyev (1979) emerged as a key proponent for the existence of a formal kingdom in the territory, and his position was influential among Azerbaijani researchers (fig. 103) (Kashkay 1997; Qoşqarlı 2012:100).

The discourse surrounding the Scythians is entirely different outside of Azerbaijani scholarship. More typically in Near Eastern archaeology, debates about Scythians and Scythian material culture have been rooted in the Iranian space, and have sought to contextualize the so-called Ziwiye hoard as a mark of Scythian activity (Barnett 1956; Phillips 1972). Although the integrity of this hoard and the wider body of ‘Ziwiye’ material have been productively deconstructed (Muscarella 1977), nearly all non-Azerbaijani accounts would nevertheless place the Scythian activities discussed in Herodotus in western Iran, southwest of lake Urmia (Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007:153).

The geographic logic of Herodotus’ account of the Caucasus and Central Asia in general is problematic and confusing, and his description of the Scythian and

---

424 See, for example, Herodotus’ garbled references to the Aras river (Αράξης), which he seems to locate somewhere in Central Asia: in the paragraph immediately preceding the above citation, he notes that the Aras was the ancient dividing line between the Scythians and Cimmerians in their Asian homeland (Hdt. 4.11). The tradition has been to suggest that Herodotus simply confused his rivers, and assign his “Aras” to the Volga, following Herrmann A. 1914: Alte Geographie des unteren Oussegebietes, (Abh. der Konigl. Ges. der Wiss. zu Gottingen, Phil.-Hist. Klasse, N.F., Bd. XV, Nr. 4): 13, note 1.
Cimmerian movements is particularly vexing. He offers two alternative paths for Scythian movements: one which has the initial Scythians population emerging from the east (the Volga-Ural area) and pushing toward the west (4.11-12), and one which has the Scythians moving from west (the North Pontic) to east (1.103-106). Despite this fundamental difference, both accounts say that the Cimmerians followed a path down the Black Sea coast into Colchis, while the Scythians in the course of their pursuit “kept the Caucasus on their right.” For example, from the second account:


… entered Median territory because they were pursuing them [the Cimmerians], but they took a wrong route. For the Cimmerians fled along the sea, while the pursuing Scythians kept the Caucasus on their right until they fell upon the territory of the Medians, by turning inwards (Herod. 4.12.2-3).425

This description has been interpreted to mean that the Scythians followed a path east along the north side of the Greater Caucasus, then turned south along the Caspian sea coast—thus keeping the Caucasus on their right as they headed east and then south.426

Accordingly, the suggestion in the above passage is that the Scythians, having been pushed out themselves by Massagetae, traveled east from their ancestral homeland in the Volga-Don delta, reaching the territory of the Cimmerians in perhaps Kuban, but then lost their way in the course of the pursuit, and back-tracked all the way west to the Caspian Sea, before turning south into the South Caucasus. In order, perhaps, to soften skepticism of this scenario, Olbrycht prefers to see the Cimmerians as having moved

425 Trans. following Waterfield (Herodotus 1998).
426 Kashkay prefers to see the Scythians moving south through the Dariali pass. Although he provides a credible discussion of archaeological material related to the Scythians from Azerbaijan, he inexplicably ignores Herodotus’ language, saying that “neither the written data, nor the archaeological materials do point to the Scythians having passed through Derbent” (1997:255)
south through the Darial pass (Olbrycht 1998b:83), although this interpretation does not
account for Herodotus’ note that the Cimmerians traveled along the sea (πορῄ
θάλασσαν).

In struggling to make sense of this confusing textual record, Olbrycht concludes,
“Herodotus’ account of the Scythian and Cimmerian movements as conducted through
the Caucasus is generally true. However, as to the accuracy of details, there is much
unreliability” (1998b:83). The texts, both Classical and Near Eastern, appear to group
many smaller mobile pastoralist bands under the names ‘Cimmerian’ and ‘Scythian’
(Mehnert 2008:21), and preserve only the most dramatic interactions of peoples.
Archaeological materials, in contrast, provide access to a different register of
information, preserving traces of the movement of people and things.

Archaeological Evidence

It was the discovery of just such archaeological materials that stoked imaginations
about a Scythian presence in the eastern Caucasus. In the 1940’s, during excavations at
Mingaçevir, 24 examples of a new type of grave were discovered: single supine burials,
placed in rectangular pits, occasionally but not always covered with large stones (fig.
104).427 The skeletons were placed on their backs, heads pointed to the northwest, arms in
line with torso, and knees slightly bent (Qazıyev 1949a:20). The burials generally
contained 6-7 red and gray ceramic vessels (Qazıyev 1949a:figs. 11–13), including many
with zoomorphic handles or decorations (Mehnert 2008:73–74; Qolubkina 1951). Most

427 The total number of burials of this type uncovered at Mingaçevir is unclear, though Ione reports 24
evacuated as of 1946 (Ione 1946:399), while Kasimova studies skulls from 21 of these burials, 15 male
and 6 female (1960:20).
of the graves had a fairly consistent weaponry assemblage (Ione 1953): 1-2 iron lance tips placed on the left side of the body at head level, pointing upwards; bronze plates thought to be affixed to the ends of a gorytos found near the spear tips; between 2 and 40 bronze arrowheads per burial, mostly trefoil in form, some with spurs, others without, placed near the left lower arm or hip pointing downwards; a crescent-shaped iron knife placed on the right side of the pelvis; finally, occasionally other straight iron daggers or short swords. Beyond the weapon assemblages, a range of decorative items were also found, including signet rings, numerous beads of the ‘sardery’ type known from elsewhere in the South Caucasus (Ione 1946:402), and at least two mirrors, one of which was a characteristic ‘Scythian’ type (fig. 105). Other than the Mingaçevir examples, a single similar burial was uncovered during work on the Baki-Tblisi-Ceyhun pipeline at site Seyidlar I which is dated to the 5th-4th c. BCE (fig. 106) (Huseynov, Agayev, and Ashurov 2006:22), and another is reported from the Tovuz district (Qoşqarlı 2012:97).

On the basis of the grave assemblages as well as the locally uncommon supine burial form, the graves were deemed to be non-local in character, with the early assessments considering them to be Median (Ione 1953:86; Qaziyev 1949a:27). More recently, communis opinio has coalesced around a Scythian identification (Esaian and Pogrebova 1985:21; Kashkay 1997:253; Qoşqarlı 2012:11–12, 97ff).

428 The incomplete publication of these graves means that a comprehensive, statistical analysis of the material is impossible, so the description that follows comes from preliminary publications of the graves, which themselves published material selectively.
429 As discussed in chapter 6, p. 346 ff.
The case for identifying these graves as Scythian is not unassailable. Qoşqarlı, in his recent assessment, sides with a Scythian attribution for this grave type, but admits that the question is confusing (Qoşqarlı 2012:85ff). The graves themselves, based on the few published drawings, do not appear typologically similar to those of the Scythians known from the regions where such graves are better understood. Superficially, they are not kurgan burials, but instead shallow pit graves. Qoşqarlı does rightly point out that the position of the skeletons in these burials is consistent with Scythian traditions more generally (Qoşqarlı 2012:99). Although non-kurgan ‘Scythian’ burials are widely known from the North Caucasus and Pontic, the Mingaçevir graves are not similar to widespread forms, such as podbois or stepped-shaft internments with wooden covers.

The identification of the graves as Scythian, then, rests on the grave goods, and particularly on the arrowheads and the animal-handle mirror (Qoşqarlı 2012:99–100). Although some are trefoil in form, the arrowheads are certainly not proof of Scythian identity. As Mehnert (2008:75) has pointed out, the selection of arrowheads that has been published is not consistent with an early Scythian date, but instead represents a broad spectrum of both early and late trefoil types. As is well known, military technology is subject to quick adoption outside of the original use-group, and later trefoil arrowheads are recognized as a reflection of this phenomenon (Derin and Muscarella 2001).

---

430 This is an observation that dates back to the excavator of the tombs, Ione, who says, “One finds significant differences between the materials when comparing the archaeological materials from Mingaçevir burials … in complexes with Scythian arrowheads with the archaeological complexes of Scythian burials” (Ione 1953:87).

431 Particularly from the North Caucasus and North Black Sea.

432 Kurgans are known from Mingaçevir, but are generally dated to pre-Scythian periods. The Mingaçevir kurgans are generally dated to the LBA. Terenozhkin (1971), however, suggests that this is incorrect, and that they should be dated to the same period as the supine pit burials, and is followed by İ.H. Öliyev (1979:6, n.9), who uses the presence of kurgan burials to bolster his argument about Scythian presence. But, Qoşqarlı’s recent treatment of the Antik burials does not pursue these suggestions.
presence of the single mirror cannot be taken as a marker of ethnic identity, although its animal handle, in conjunction with the zoomorphic ceramics from these tombs, is suggestive of a deep familiarity with the artistic canon of the Eurasian steppe.

Beyond graves from these two sites, there is other scattered evidence of Scythian-style material in the eastern Caucasus, for example a Scythian arrowhead and Scythian-style horse trappings known from Oren Qala (Iessen 1965b:3:27–29); and at least 16 collective burials (uncommon generally in the region) from a seventh- through fourth-century BCE graveyard in the Şəmkir district, where some characteristic Scythian arrowheads and weapons were also found.433

Reconsiderations of the Burials

The limited nature of these material traces has led C. Ə. Xəlilov to the theory that there was not a formal ‘Scythian Kingdom’ in the eastern Caucasus, but rather that the region served as a “supporting base” where forces mustered before and after raids, and prepared for following campaigns (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1971:187). İ.H. Əliyev vociferously disagreed, suggesting that the variety of types of ‘Scythian’ materials, as well as the local manufacture of some examples was suggestive of the strong presence of organized Scythian structure; his opinion has largely been followed by later scholars in Azerbaijan. Mehnert’s recent analysis, however, aligns more closely with that of Xəlilov, pointing out that “die skythische Trias, d. h. skythoide Waffen, Saumzeug und Objekte im skythischen Tierstil tauchen in Transkaukasien nie als vollständige Einheit auf” (Mehnert 2008:109).

The absence of this Scythian Triad from the eastern territory, she suggests, speaks against a seventh-century stronghold in the territory.

Furthermore, she suggests that many if not all of the Mingəçevir supine pit burials are dated more properly to the period of Achaemenid activity, rather than to the seventh century BCE. Although her discussion is hampered by the incomplete publication of the Mingəçevir finds, she is able to tentatively re-date the published grave goods on the basis of the following elements: the variety of arrowhead types, which she says include late forms; the ceramics, and which she argues reflect Achaemenid stylistic innovations (Mehnert 2008:72–73); the seals, which she says must be understood as Achaemenid-period at the earliest;\(^\text{434}\) and one of the gortys appliques mentioned above, which finds excellent parallels from Achaemenid contexts (Baitinger 1999:133, figs. 8-9; Mehnert 2008:75, n. 541). Thus, she connects the emergence of this new burial style with the rise of Achaemenid presence in the territory.

Although Qoşqarlı would undoubtedly disagree with some of Mehnert’s conclusions, his recent evaluation also acknowledges the broad chronological spread of these burials, which he suggests continued into the fourth century BCE (Qoşqarlı 2012:101). Herodotus’ reported ‘Scythian Kingdom’ lasted only 28 years in the seventh century (Hdt. 1.106.1), predating the rise of Achaemenid activity in the eastern Caucasus by over a century. The mismatch between this textual chronology and both Qoşqarlı’s and Mehnert’s assessments of the dates of the archaeological material reflects the fact

\(^{434}\) Or, as I argue in the previous chapter, possibly even the late Achaemenid period.
that, whatever the nature of the mobile pastoralist presence in the eastern Caucasus was, it does not fit neatly into the paradigm laid out by the ancient texts.

Instead, we find pockets of archaeological material from across the South Caucasus, one of which is located at Mingǎçevir, which demonstrate strong (but varied) connections to the broader Eurasian Steppe world. Although it is tempting to connect these materials to known moments of global history like that of the ‘Scythian kingdom,’ the material more likely reflects a long-running pattern of contact that was initiated as early as the first half of the first millennium BCE. Over the next several hundred years, elements of Eurasian mobile pastoralist lifeways were incorporated into the eastern Caucasus, where they came into contact with the practices of pre-existing populations. The currently available data are not robust enough for us to fully understand the nature of these interactions. We can’t be certain, for example, that the supine pit burials discussed above all represent one particular instance of mobile pastoralist presence (that is, we can’t tell whether they are a unified group). However, we can recognize that these burials do seem to have affinities with mobile pastoralist materials from the North Caucasus and further afield. It seems likely that, following the prescient observation of Trever, some members of the mobile pastoralist groups who were constantly moving thorough the territory developed increasingly entwined interactions with sedentary groups. Perhaps they did not arrive as early as the seventh century BCE, and likely they were not consolidated into an organized ‘kingdom.’ But the evidence suggests that by the fifth century BCE, the eastern Caucasus had been brought into the sphere of the Eurasian Steppe world and had begun to build ties that would grow in importance into the subsequent Sarmatian period and beyond.
SARMATIAN CONSIDERATIONS

As in the case of the Scythian material discussed above, the archaeological datasets regularly used to examine the phenomenon of Sarmato-Alan activity in the eastern Caucasus come from necropoleis. Most of the following discussion therefore relies on data from mortuary contexts. These data include tombs associated with steppe populations found in the Antik eastern Caucasus and Caspian zone, as well as with several types of portable material culture known from burials thought to have cultic or ritual ties to steppe practices. The mortuary data, marked by great diversity, should be understood in the context of the patterns of non-uniform complexity and mobile pastoralists’ adaptability discussed earlier, which led to the development of a number of overlapping ritual practices.

The paucity of Sarmato-Alan settlement material from the South Caucasus is mirrored elsewhere in the Sarmatian sphere, with few Sarmatian settlement sites explored, and even fewer ‘urban’ sites evaluated. Despite claims in the ancient authors of Sarmatian cities in the steppe (Tacit. Ann. 12.16-17; Ptol. Geog. 5.8), there has been little archaeological work on the question as modern scholars generally regard the ancient sources as erroneous (Yatsenko 2003:92). Evidence of Sarmatian sedentarization, however, has been recognized in the borderland areas of Sarmatian space, where the mobile pastoralists interacted with local sedentary populations—in particular, the North Caucasus, Crimean-Kerch and Danubian territories (Lebedynsky 2014:238–39).

435 Although in other cases, groups of mobile pastoralists are said explicitly not to have cities, see for example Ptolemy (6.12) on the Saka.
Thus, before moving into this mortuary material, it is worth considering the small field of settlement evidence for Sarmato-Alan populations just north of the South Caucasus, and particularly from the area to the north of the Dariali pass in the central North Caucasus. This material is distinct from the settlement evidence discussed in the previous chapter, which came from territory associated with the Antik Albanian federation (Babayev 1990; Davudov 1996:62–69; Gadjiev 2002). Instead, these Sarmato-Alan settlements come from beyond Albanian reach, and therefore provide context for the nature of the distinct Sarmato-Alan practices of spatial organization.

Proto-Urbanism of the North Caucasus

Proto-urban sites from the central North Caucasus dated to the second through fourth centuries CE have been identified, the best known of which are located at Zilgi, Nizhniy Dzhulat, Brut, and Alkhan-Kala (Lebedynsky 2014:205). They are concentrated in the territory between the Pyatigorsk plain and the confluence of the Terek and Sulak rivers (Malashev 2010:fig. 7). Further to the east, along the lower Sulak, there is less evidence for settlement activity in this period (Abramova 2005:125). Settlement evidence from the more southern Precaspian territory and the area around Derbent has already been discussed in Chapter 6. That more southern evidence, consisting for the most part of fortified hilltop sites, is of a different character from the material of the central North Caucasus and the northern steppe reaches of Dagestan (Abramova 1987).

Of the dozens of sites identified in the central North Caucasus and Dagestan steppe, only Zilgi has been the focus of regular and expansive archaeological research.

---

436 Malashev (2010:118) suggests that several dozen similar sites can be posited, though most have been investigated in limited ways.
Located in North Ossetia, it has been excavated since 1985 (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000). The hilltop settlement, called a proto-city by its excavators, preserves impressive earthwork fortifications, with analogous earthwork towns well attested in later Alan periods in the North Caucasus (fig. 107) (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:216). Excavations have uncovered a citadel surrounded by concentric rings of ditches and earthwork fortifications. Traces of habitation activity can be located on the citadel, and workshop activities are attested in other parts of the settlement (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:213–16). The majority of the ceramic materials are wheel-made, and are “homogeneous morphologically as well as technologically,” showing few connections to neighboring ceramic traditions from this period (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:219). Some imported ceramics include forms known from the central (Iberian) and eastern (Albanian) Caucasus. There are other signs of transregional interaction in the presence of fragments of glass (imports from the Pontic or Mesopotamian territories), as well as fibulae, which find parallels in late Sarmatian steppe burials beyond the North Caucasus (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:242).

The location of the site is of particular interest, as it was “strategically very well placed both for military purposes and for control over caravan routes, but it also lay in the contact-zone between the lowland farmers and the steppe cattle-breeders” (Arzhantseva and Rusanova 2010:206). This pattern, which I argued in the previous chapter to be true also for settlement conglomerations in the eastern Caucasus like Qəbələ, suggests

<sup>437</sup> Specifically, it sat along a route that could control access to the Dariali gorge.
that there were similar stimuli for the process of urbanization on both sides of the Greater Caucasus in the late Iron Age.

The evidence from Zilgi is suggestive of a uniquely Sarmato-Alan urbanism in the North Caucasus defined by earthen fortifications enclosing a well-planned, though sparsely occupied, urban core. This Sarmato-Alan urban culture is also marked by a unique ceramic profile. This material lends credence to the belief that the Sarmato-Alan period saw the beginnings of sedentarization of previously mobile groups in the steppe-foothill interface, who then developed an urban vocabulary that would continue to evolve into the subsequent period, as sedentarization expanded. There are, however, no traces of this type of proto-urbanism in the eastern Caucasus, neither in the Kura valley, nor even along the Precaspian and Derbent corridors; instead, earlier models of urbanism and fortification systems persisted.

**Necropoleis in Azerbaijan**

Given the conspicuous absence of settlement sites, archaeological research on Sarmato- Alan presence in the eastern Caucasus had depended overwhelmingly on studies of burials. Burials in the Antik period eastern Caucasus occurred in a wide number of styles, each of which is traditionally associated with a particular ethnic group-- thus, jar burials are identified with the Yaloylutaş culture, burials in ceramic sarcophagi with Parthians, catacomb burials with Sarmatians, etc. The effort to clarify and substantiate the ethnic associations of these burial types has been a dominant intellectual pursuit within Azerbaijani archaeology for nearly a century (Danielyan 1959; Ione 1946; Pakhomov 1939; Qaziyev and Qolubkina 1949; Qolubkina 1956, 1959; C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a:50–
This pattern mirrors a more general practice within Soviet archaeology, wherein burial types were seen as primary markers of archaeological cultures. The premise of this argument was summarized in the following passage, from an article written to introduce non-Russophone scholars to the state of Soviet research on burials in the Eurasian Steppe:

By investigating burial customs, one can trace the formation and development of an archaeological culture and the succession of archaeological cultures. When one archaeological culture is succeeded by another, there may be a complete or a partial replacement of funerary practices. A complete replacement of one standard burial rite by another attests to the total disappearance of the bearers of a concrete archaeological culture, which may be due to migration, military catastrophe, or epidemics. Partial replacement of a standard burial rite by another, i.e., a basic change in the majority of the components of the previously standard burial rite and its transformation into a new standard rite, attests to the penetration of bearers of an alien archaeological culture into the milieu of the bearers of the archaeological culture in question. This frequently leads to the formation of a third archaeological culture distinct from the first two. In this situation any of the traditional elements of the previously standard burial rite may be subject to influence. Changes may occur in the type of burial, the ritual activities, the composition of the assemblage of grave goods, and sometimes the form of the burial structure. The relation between the previously traditional features surviving in the new standard burial rite and the new elements resulting from outside influence addresses the question of which cultural component (local or outside) is dominant in the formation of the new archaeological culture (Alekshin et al. 1983:138).

The anthropological problems with straightforward association of burial types to individual ethnic groups are well known and need not be discussed at length here (Parker Pearson 1982; Ucko 1969). Furthermore, serious problems surround the concept of ethnicity implied by Aleshkin’s functionalist description of archaeological culture (S. Jones 1997; McInerney 2014), which have been mentioned earlier in the conversation about the concept of an ‘archaeological culture’ in Soviet theory.

However, even within Azerbaijani archaeological circles there has long been a recognition that burial types can mark a variety of identity traits beyond ‘ethnicity’ (for example, on the internal variations inside of a single burial type, see Golubkina (1961),
even if these alternative axes of identity have played a less prominent role in scholarly narratives.

More recently, the ethnicity debates have been reworked in the comprehensive re-analysis of the mortuary material from Azerbaijan by Qoşqar Qoşqarlı (2012). He gradually shifts the intellectual focus, replacing the practice of assigning an ethnic identity to burials with the desire to divide graves into ‘local’ (which is to say, autochthonous) and ‘non-local’ forms. His understanding of archaeological material follows logically from Azerbaijani archaeological thought during recent decades, which, as discussed in Chapter 3, sees autochthony as a central organizing principle. But his approach also reflects the fact that there is a growing sense of unease with overly-simple identification of *ethne*. His categorization of burial types is as follows:

1. Pit burials (грунтовые погребения)
   a. Supine pit burials (грунтовые погребения с вытянутыми на спине костями)
      i. Early group (seventh through fourth centuries BCE)
      ii. Late group (first through third centuries CE)
   b. Semi-contracted pit burials (грунтовые погребения со слабо скорченными костями)
   c. Contracted pit burials (грунтовые погребения с сильно скорченными костями)
2. Pithos burials (кувшинные погребения)
3. Stone cist burials (погребения в каменных ящиках)
4. Mudbrick chamber burials (погребения в сырцовых гробницах)
5. Timber framework burials (погребения в деревянных срубах)
6. Clay sarcophagus burials (погребения в глиняных саркофагах)
7. Catacomb burials (катакомбные погребения)

Within this schema, Qoşqarlı suggests that the clearest non-local types are the supine burials (both early and late), the clay sarcophagus burials, and the catacomb burials.

---

438 He does also have ethnic interpretations for some burial types, but he suggests that the local/ non-local dichotomy is the only category.
Although some features of catacomb burials in the eastern Caucasus have been associated with similar structures from the North Caucasus since their first discovery in the 1940’s (Aslanov 1955), debates about their Sarmato-Alan character began in earnest in the 1970’s (Qoşqarlı 2012:114). This tomb type is a shaft-and-chamber burial, which has long been understood to be an ‘ethnic marker’ of Sarmatian (or more often, Alan) identity (Korobov 2011:53). As archaeological data concerning Sarmatians have expanded in recent decades, however, both Anatoli Skripkin (1984:53) and Maia Abramova (1987, 1995) have broken the associations between burial type and ‘ethnicity’ among Sarmato-Alan period burials, recognizing that diversity within mortuary landscapes can be attributed to a wide range of variations in life stage, social status, and religious belief, among other facets of identity variation. This more nuanced approach to Sarmato-Allen burials has been adopted by Omar Davaduv (1996:74ff) in his consideration of material from Dagestan, wherein he documents the incredibly mixed mortuary landscape.

These perspectives have been slower to filter into writings concerning the eastern Caucasus. Instead, although Qoşqarlı acknowledges the internal ethnic variation of some burial traditions (e.g. he rejects the association of pithos burials with the any single ethnic group, for example, linking the spread of the burial type instead to the spread of Zoroastrianism [Qoşqarlı 2012:95]), he unambiguously associates the emergence of two new ‘non-local’ tomb types around the first century CE with the Sarmato-Alans: catacomb tombs (Qoşqarlı 2012:119–20); and late supine burials in unlined rectangular

---

439 Although Aslanov believed the burials to have been local in nature in his first publication of them, he later changed his opinion (I. H. Öliyev and Aslanov 1975).
pits, found at three sites in the foothills of northeaster Azerbaijan and one in the south (Qoşqarlı 2012:102–6).

**Catacomb Burials**

The association of catacomb burials to Steppe groups predates the *Antik* period, with much earlier Bronze and early Iron Age Steppe pastoralist groups also employing the form (Shishlina et al. 2000). The practice becomes visible among North Caucasian and Pontic Scythian groups by the sixth century BCE (Grakov 1964; Olkhovskiy 2005), and continued to play an important role in the mortuary landscape of those regions into Late Antiquity. And thus, it is the presence of such burials in the eastern Caucasus to which we turn first.

**Description**

Catacomb burials in Azerbaijan were first encountered in large numbers during excavations at Mingaçevir in the late 1940’s (Aslanov 1955; Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962; Vahidov 1955), where over 200 of the burials were excavated, although only a small fraction were published (Aslanov 1955:64; Qoşqarlı 2012:82). The catacombs are typically divided into two broad chronological phases: 1) the early group dated to the first through third or fourth centuries CE, and 2) the later group dated to the fourth through seventh centuries CE (Aslanov 1962:146; Qoşqarlı 2012:83–84). Only the early group is of interest to this study. In addition to the catacombs from Mingaçevir, five burials of this type were excavated at Torpaqqala (Aslanov 1961), and a single example was studied from Baba Dərviş (V. H. Əliyev 1969). There have also been recent excavations of
additional catacomb burials at Qəbələ, which also include both Antik and post-Antik examples (fig. 108) (Ha, Yeo, and Babayev, n.d.f).

Over 20 of the early-period catacombs from Mingəçevir were published in detail (Aslanov 1962; Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962), providing a glimpse of some of the curious features of this burial type in the eastern Caucasus. Further, the bioarchaeological analysis of 129 skulls from Mingəçevir catacombs published in 1961 by Kasimova has played a role in the discussion of the Sarmato-Alan identity of these catacombs. Of the 129 skulls, 52 displayed artificial skull deformation: a characteristic often associated with the North Caucasus pastoral populations, while 77 did not exhibit intentional deformation (Kasimova 1960:42).

Single inhumations dominate both within this sample, and more broadly across the early catacombs discussed in the secondary literature (Qoşqalı 2012:85). The early examples, which differ typologically from the later ones, tend to be single-chamber T-shaped Smirnov type I catacombs, with an oval (or circular) burial chamber positioned perpendicular to the shaft (fig. 109). All are flat catacomb burials, which is to say that they are not accompanied by kurgans.

The early catacombs can be divided into several subgroups based on the disposition of remains inside the burial chamber. The largest group are the so-called ‘combination’ catacombs, which feature internments in the burial chamber placed either

---

440 16 come from the publication of Aslanov (1962). Another 4 certain and 9 likely catacomb burials were published in Nərimanov and Aslanov (1962). Others have been mentioned in the archaeological literature, for example in Aslanov (1955), but the tomb groups in this and other similar publications are not differentiated.

441 See p. 413 f. for more on the practice of scull deformation.

442 On this traditional typology, see Smirnov (1972:74).
in jars or inside timber framework coffins (fig. 110, 111). The individuals in both the jar and the timber coffin burials tend to be found in a contracted position on either their left or right sides (Qoşqarlı 2009:85). These catacomb-jar and catacomb-timber coffin burials tend to be single inhumations, although there are also pair and multiple burials (Aslanov 1961:33). The ‘simple’ catacomb burials from the early period feature supine inhumations placed on wooden or mudbrick platforms, and are known principally from a set of three collective catacomb burials discovered on the left bank of the Kura in 1951 (fig. 112) (Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962).

In general, the Mingəceil catacombs contain grave goods that largely overlap with assemblages from other contemporaneous internment types at the site, including a range of ceramics and imported glass vessels, as well as agricultural tools and some few weapons. The burials also often contain elaborate toureutics and personal adornments including fibulae and beads, as well as belt buckles and bells associated with North Caucasian groups (fig. 113). A clearer though not yet fully published record of grave goods from catacomb burials comes from the recent work at Qəebə (fig. 114). Given the state of publication of this material, any conclusions are necessarily impressionistic. But it seems that, although the catacombs have rich inventories, the objects overlap in large parts with those known from other burial types: there is not a entirely identifiable ‘catacomb burial’ material assemblage.

---
443 From Aslanov (1962), the counts are as follows: Catacomb with internment in a jar: 5 total, graves #1, 2, 4, 9, 10; Catacomb with internment in timber framework coffin: 10 total, graves #4, 6, 13, 14, 24, 25, 17, 70, 95, 97, 116; Catacomb with simple internment: 1 total, grave # 23-23a. From Nərimanov and Aslanov (1962), the counts are as follows: Catacomb with multiple internments: 3 total, graves # 10, 18 and 19 (the skeletons were on a wooden platform in #10 and #18); Catacomb with internment in a jar: 1 total, grave #15.
444 Burials 1951 #10, 18 and 19.
Dating

The broad first century through third/fourth century CE chronological framework for the early catacomb burials is widely accepted. The relationship between the ‘simple’ and ‘combination’ catacomb burials, however, has been the subject of considerable conversation within Azerbaijani scholarship. The position advanced most recently by Qoşqarlı is that the ‘simple’ catacombs came first, dating to the first or second century CE, with the ‘combination’ catacombs representing the gradual hybridization during the third through fourth centuries CE of the burial practice with other local burial rituals, particularly with the practice of jar burials (Qoşqarlı 2013:24). His argument is predicated on the idea that the ‘simple’ catacombs represent the root form of the burial that was brought into the territory, and later adapted by local communities. He says: “We proceed from the premise that the combination-type grave could not have arisen quickly” (Qoşqarlı 2013:23).

Coins of Gotarzes II (40/41-50 CE) found in three ‘combination’ burials, have previously been used to suggest an early date for the burial type.445 However, Qoşqarlı emphasizes the fact that a fourth catacomb-timber coffin burial contained a silver coin of Gotarzes II, as well as two Roman silver pieces, one of Antoninus Pius (138-166 CE) and one of Plautilla (211-217 CE). The presence of the second/third century coins conjunction with the Gotarzes emission suggests to him that a low dating on the basis of the Gotarzes coins in other tombs is unwarrented (Qoşqarlı 2013:23). He therefore suggests that catacomb-timber coffin and catacomb-jar burial graves represent a later

445 In one catacomb-jar burial, grave #1; and in two catacomb-timber coffin burials, graves #17 and 97 (Aslanov 1962:123–25).
development of the catacomb type that can be dated to this later period, when local populations began to hybridize the burial rite (Qoşqarlı 2013:24).

There is a critical problem with his dating. The collocation of the coin of Gotarzes II, with that of Antonius Pius and Plautilla reported by Aslanov (1962:145) and repeated by Qoşqarlı (2012:86), is not consistent with reports of the coins from Pakhomov. In both instances where Pakhomov discusses these pieces, the coin of Gotarzes II is said to come from a different tomb than the coins of Antoninus Pius and Plautilla, and both of these tombs are reported to be simple timber coffin burials, rather than catacomb-timber coffin burials (Pakhomov 1951:7, 8; Pakhomov 1954:vol. 6, nn. 1547, 1557). As Pakhomov lists only one coin of Antoninus Pius from the entire eastern Caucasus, which is found in conjunction with a coin of Plautilla, it very likely to be the same coin cited by Aslanov and later Qoşqarlı. The chronology presented on the basis of the numismatic material is, therefore, not reliable. Qoşqarlı’s model, therefore, rests solely on the belief that the catacomb burial entered the eastern Caucasus as a more-or-less complete ritual practice, attached to the newly-present Sarmato-Alan ethnic group. There is, however, little other supporting evidence for this conclusion, inasmuch as evidence for a unified material corpus tied to the North Caucasus from the territory is thin.

Given the current state of publication of the eastern Caucasus catacomb burials, it is impossible to present a definitive periodization on the basis of either typological features, or of the burial assemblages: neither has been published sufficiently. Instead, a better understanding of these burials can be sought only through a discussion of regional

---

446 I chose here to defer to Pakhomov’s description of the coins’ disposition given his detailed attention to these matters, but I acknowledge that the grave that Pakhomov describes as “timber framework coffins” could in fact have been combination catacomb-timber coffin burials.
comparanda, and a consideration of the place of the catacomb burials within the eastern Caucasus mortuary landscape.

In trying to make sense of these catacombs, it is important to mention the absence of kurgans in the territory. Recent analyses of catacomb burials from the late second through fourth centuries in the North Caucasus demonstrate a strong spatial distinction between catacomb burials placed under kurgans, which come from the central and eastern North Caucasus, and flat catacomb burials, which come from the western North Caucasus. Korobov, in his study of medieval burials, has pointed out that in the slightly later third/fourth-century catacomb burials of the North Caucasus, the under-kurgan catacombs are generally significantly larger. He suggests that the greater labor investment both of the barrow building and the abundant space is suggestive that these were ‘high status’ burials, while the flat catacomb burials were significantly smaller, suggesting a more unpretentious alignment (Korobov 2003:128–29). The point here is that the use of catacombs is varied, and implicated in a range of mortuary practices.

**Interpretation**

Debates surrounding the catacomb burials have been heated in much the same way as discussions about the presence of Scythians in the eastern Caucasus. Principally, the debates have turned on whether to see the burials as a sign of migrations from outside (İ. H. Əliyev and Aslanov 1976), or to understand them instead as a local development (Abramova 1978). More recent discussions have provided an overview of this discussion.

---

447 Generally, as with Əliyev, the source is seen to be the North Caucasus. A migration route from Central Asia along the south coast of the Caspian has also been advanced (C. Ə. Xalilov 1992).
I’ll first lay out the main points of Ḥliyev’s and Abramova’s arguments, and will then suggest how our evolving understandings of mobile pastoralist social structure can help make sense of the material.

İ.H. Ḥliyev sees these catacombs as unequivocal evidence for the spread of North Caucasian practice into the eastern South Caucasus around the first century CE (İ. H. Ḥliyev 1971). İ.H. Ḥliyev’s contention is that the Mingaçevir catacombs demonstrate that the first centuries CE—a period he calls “a turbulent era of migration” (İ. H. Ḥliyev 1971:205)—saw significant in-roads from North-Caucasian Sarmato-Alan groups. His dating for this movement of peoples comes from literary evidence tied to both the Greco-Latin, Georgian, and Armenian traditions, which suggest a Sarmatian presence in the eastern South Caucasus by the mid-first century CE. He furthermore notes that this area (that is, the area just past the Iori river) was the heartland also of the earlier supposed “Scythian Kingdom,” thus suggesting the return of a second wave of Iranian-language migrants to this same territory (İ. H. Ḥliyev 1971:201). In attributing the Mingaçevir catacombs to these people, İ.H. Ḥliyev says “[T]here are no grounds for considering the Mingaçevir catacombs to be burials of local peoples” (İ. H. Ḥliyev 1971:201).

But, there has also been a recent prominence placed on the ethnic interpretation of these catacombs: with a new dialog concerning whether they represent Iranian or Turkic cultural inflows (Zeynalov 2009). It is important to understand that the deeper goal of Ḥliyev’s argument concerns spread of Iranian (or Iranian-speaking) tribes into Iran, for which purpose he cites the Sarmato-Alans as just one iteration of the practice, holding them up as an example of a migration path that can be hypothesized for earlier periods as well.

He cites particularly a reference in the K’c’ to the area of the Iori river as the site of the rear-guard camp for the Alans (İ. H. Ḥliyev 1971:201).
He argues that these features developed in the Lower Don and North Caucasus, and then spread elsewhere through the movement of the tribes (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:203). İ.H. Öliyev points to the similarities in the burial ritual seen at Mingəçevir in terms of the preparation and furnishing of the burial chamber, and the orientation of the inhumations, the occasional occurrence of horse burials to those known from North Caucasus Alan sites. A key piece of evidence in this argument is the presence of artificial skull deformation in the South Caucasus, said to be an ‘ethnic marker’ of the Alans (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:200). İ.H. Öliyev’s contention for a Sarmato-Alan identity for the graves is supported also by his analysis of the grave goods, which include some characteristically North Caucasian items (such as so-called Alan beads), as well as materials like bells that he connects to the horse-riding cultures of the Steppe generally. The weapons, too, can be said to have Sarmato-Alan affinities: from ring-pommel swords, daggers, and knives to traces of chainmail armor (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:205). He argues that, while it is not possible to claim that the assemblages are “entirely Sarmato-Alan in character,” that they nevertheless exhibit sustained Sarmato-Alan influence (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:204).

As to the nature of this ‘influence,’ he posits that the relationship between the local mobile pastoralist communities and their northern relatives was the product of sustained interactions between the ‘metropoleis’ of a developed Nomadic empire and its ‘colonies’:

It is impossible to explain the similar forms of funeral ritual that existed in the late Sarmatian time in the territory of Mingəçevir and in the vast areas inhabited by the Sarmatio-Alan tribes in the Volga, the North Caucasus, and so on, as the

---

451 He cites other particularities of the tombs as having North Caucasus analogies, like the presence of food in the burial chambers (usually in the form of interred caprines or parts thereof), dog skeletons, evidence of walnut shells, and tortoises (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:204).

452 He particularly cites Zmeiskii Necropolis.
product of anything other than sustained contact between the "colony" and "the metropolis" (İ. H. Öliyev 1971:203)

Abramova presents a different way of interpreting these graves, responding directly to Öliyev and Aslanov’s arguments. She argues that the terms “colony” and “metropolis” poorly describe the socio-political landscape of the Steppe peoples, which were more decentralized than this vocabulary suggests (Abramova 1978:78). She furthermore points out that features like skull deformation are, in fact, unknown in the North Caucasus in the first century CE (Abramova 1978:78). The syncretic features of the catacombs—the presence of the ‘combination’ type tombs, the nature of the grave goods—to her suggest to her not external influences, but rather the strong power of local practices within the burial tradition.

She points out that a strong point of comparison for the Mingaçevir catacombs comes not from the North Caucasus, but rather from the Caspian coast of northern Iran, specifically from the Dailaman excavations of the University of Tokyo projects in the 1960’s (fig. 115) (Akira 1981; Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966). Although these Dailaman burials have have been called ‘Sarmatian’ in the literature (Zadneprovsky 1969), Abramova identifies their best parallels, in fact, in the Mingaçevir burials, rather than Sarmatian material from the North Caucasus. See, for example, comparisons of footed bowls from the eastern Caucasus and Dailaman (figs. 116, 117, 118, 119)

Catacomb burials in the central North Caucasus, she suggests, predate the arrival of ‘Sarmatian’ groups by several centuries (Abramova 1978:80). They are the product not

453 Although others have more recently argued that these catacombs demonstrate that ‘Sarmatians’ entered the eastern Caucasus through a southern rather than northern route (C. Ő. Xalilov 1992), this is not Abramova’s point in citing the south Caspian material.

454 See also Kirichenko (2014).
of a single isolated migration event, but rather of a long-standing zone of contact between mobile pastoralist groups and settled populations. As a result of this long history, “the Alan culture of the North Caucasus had, clearly, a strong local foundation from the very beginning of its formation” (Abramova 1978:80). Thus, what we are seeing at Mingaçevir is not a partially imported external burial ritual, or a burial tradition that has undergone gradual hybridization with a local substratum, but rather the foundational stages of a tradition that would become widespread in subsequent centuries. This is an extremely important point, and it is one that has been met with relatively little acceptance among scholars of the eastern Caucasus.

A comparison of the catacomb and non-catacomb grave goods from Mingaçevir suggests that what we are seeing is a shared vocabulary of taste—a local koine—in which imports from Syria and the North Caucasus as well as locally-made objects circulated widely. The material overlaps in compelling ways with material from other contemporary graves of different types. The lines of division between ‘mobile’ and ‘settled’ are simply not clear, nor are the arguments for a North Caucasian origin for this material.455

**Other Sarmatian-associated burial types**

The other type of new burials that appeared in the *Antik* period and has been connected to the spread of Sarmatians are the supine pit burials (fig. 120). These have been the subject of less research. They were uncovered only in the late 1970’s, and have been studied most recently by Qoşqarlı, who dates them to the first through third centuries CE and calls attention to parallels from the territory of modern Dagestan. He

---

455 For a discussion of a similarly complex situation in Iberian burials from Samtavoro dated to a slightly later period, see Sagona et al. (2017).
suggests that they represent the southern spur of the Albano-Sarmatian cultural complex, and that they can be identified through a combination of the traces of a burial ritual that used chalk, coal, and ochre (known also from a number of sites in Dagestan), and also through their assemblage of objects, including Sarmatian-type mirrors. The lack of full publication of this material makes further comment impossible.

**Grave Stelae**

There is another body of evidence, also related to mortuary structures, that seems to suggest the same sort of long, sustained contact with mobile pastoralist groups that scholars intuit from the complexity of the catacomb burials. This material, a group of *Antik* anthropomorphic stelae known from excavations and explorations in the eastern Caucasus, attests to local adaptations of practices more familiar from the steppe. For more on these stelae, see especially the work of M.C. Xalilov (M. C. Xalilov 1988, 2002).

The creation of anthropomorphic kurgan stelae has a history stretching back into the late third and second millennium BCE in the eastern Caucasus (Schachner 2001). In first-millennium contexts, these pieces are generally associated with Scythian presence, and have a geographic spread from the Volga-Don, west into the Pontic basin, south into the South Caucasus, reaching as far as northern Mesopotamia (Boehmer 1998).

Although these stelae become increasingly rare towards the LIA, a group of stelae from the Ustyurt plateau dated to between the fifth and second centuries BCE represent a later stage of development of the Scythian stelae (fig. 121) (Olkhovski 1994; Olkhovskiy and Galkin 1990). They combine the much older practice of kurgan stelae within a new social context, not directly associated with graves, but rather as part of a cultic

---

456 For more on these stelae, see especially the work of M.C. Xalilov (M. C. Xalilov 1988, 2002)
complex. Alongside this new purpose, they also incorporate new stylistic traits encountered through the spread of Hellenism. These include more fully dimensional representations of the human figure, including both arms and legs and defined musculature. At the same time, some of the Ustyurt examples bear tamagas—an incised mark commonly associated with Sarmatians—demonstrating their clear connection to the broader Sarmatian world.

Also meriting discussion are several variations of stelae from the Antik period in the eastern Caucasus that are from this same late stage of development. One cluster of stelae comes from the Şamaxi district, with four from Xınıslı, and another from excavations at Dağkolanı. The dates of these pieces are uncertain: the Dağkolanı example is dated to the “end of the 1st millennium BCE – beginning of the 1st millennium CE” on the basis of archaeological materials known from the site (C. Xəlilov 1965a:120). The excavated Xınıslı pieces were found in a secondary use context, having been turned into covers for stone-lined graves dated to the fifth and sixth centuries CE (C. Xəlilov 1960b:1126), but C. Xəlilov dates their manufacture to the pre-Christian period, or before the fourth century CE (C. Xəlilov 1960b:1128).

All of the Xınıslı examples appear to be of local stone, and all are missing their heads. All are, following Ol’khovskii’s typology (2005:fig. 8), carved in the round,

---

457 Ol’khovskii and Galkin cite Nemrud Dag as another example of a Hellenistic-period site which combines pre-existing concepts of ancestor worship within new frameworks for presentation (1990:205).
458 For a bibliography of the connection between tamagas and the Sarmatians, see Dan (2017:99, note 5).
459 The first was a chance find (Iampol’skii 1955), while the other three came from excavations (C. Xəlilov 1960b; C. Xəlilov, Xınıslıda arxeoloji qazıntılar, 1960-ci ilin elmi hesabatı. AMEA Tİ EA, fond #1, opis’ #9, delo #4606, (h. 323):3, n. 1). The later three pieces were never fully published, and are not illustrated or fully described in the excavation report.
460 Xəlilov (1965a)
461 See also the work of C. Xəlilov’s son, fn. 461.
depicting full standing figures. The chance find from 1946 is the largest, standing 2.26 m tall (fig. 122). Its right arm bent up toward the collarbone, and left arm folded across torso, in arm position 7 by Ol’khovskii’s typology (2005:fig. 9). A star emblem is incised on the right elbow. The legs are individually defined, although they are not separated, and the waist is straight and undefined. The right knee is slightly bent, and the figure appears to be standing almost in contrapposto.

Another of the pieces, reused as a burial cover, is only 1.35m tall (fig. 123). The upper body is too badly preserved to permit comment on arm position, but the lower body exhibits schematically defined legs and more naturalistic waist, buttocks, and back, and it too seems perhaps to be leaning on its right leg. The deep groove separating the legs on the front of the figure is reminiscent of examples from the Aral-Caspian zone (Olkhovskiy 2005:figs. 143, 144, 145).

The third illustrated Xinislı piece is stiffer than the other two, depicting a figure wearing a tunic (?) (fig. 124). Its right arm is bent up towards the collarbone, with the left arm also bent in arm position 9 (Olkhovskiy 2005:fig. 9), with the hand near the wrist of the right hand. The figure has a narrow waist, which flares out towards a damaged lower body.

The Dağkolani example is better preserved, with its head intact (fig. 125). It depicts a bald, bearded figure. His hands are in the same pose as the third Xinislı piece, and his attire and lower body are rendered in a very similar way. The head and torso are a
fairly consistent thickness of 20-30cm, but the thickness of the lower body flares below the waist. On his back, there is a vertical groove running from the neck to the base.

But in an example of the stark regionalism of these pieces, we can compare these stelae to a collection known from Çıraqlı, another village in the Şamaxı district near Xınıslı (fig. 126). Here, between 1965 and 1968, C. Ə. Xəlilov explored a necropolis with a distinct stela type, several of which have been illustrated. The total number of stelae of this type discovered at Çıraqlı is unclear, but there are at least half a dozen intact pieces, as well as fragments of others. The known examples are remarkably consistent in their depictions, although they vary considerably in size.

Unlike the pieces from Xınıslı discussed above, the Çıraqlı group presents a more schematic rendering of the human form. They are, following Ol’khovskii’s typology (2005:fig. 8), flat sculptures depicting the upper bodies only. Most have a slight hourglass profile. The heads are elongated ovals with a schematic, t-shaped incision depicting the nose and brow line. In some cases, the eyes and mouth are rendered by further incised lines. The arms are depicted schematically in relief, with fingers indicated. Most arms are in position 4, but there is some variation. Several of the figures are depicted holding swords, and several wear belts. These pieces have been dated on stylistic grounds to the late first millennium BCE (M. C. Xəlilov 1984; İbrahimov 2013:42), but poor contextual details and the weak stylistic parallels for these pieces makes such an assessment speculative.

---

463 One of the most complete records of the site comes not from archaeological notes, but rather from a famous 1975 film Dədə Qorqud, which tells national legends of Azerbaijan. The opening and closing scenes of the film were shot on location in Çıraqlı, and depict a number of the actual archaeological artifacts (Arazova 2001:117), although it is unclear whether they are depicted in situ, or were rearranged for the filming.
There is also a post-*Antik* coda to the story of anthropomorphic stelae in the eastern Caucasus: a cluster of schematic early Medieval anthropomorphic columns known from the Tərtər and Ağdam districts (fig. 127). These pieces fall outside of the chronological framework of this chapter, and they are mentioned only as a demonstration of the evolving practices of stelae use in the eastern Caucasus. The Tərtər-Ağdam examples come from several sites, with a cluster found at a cult site at Şatırlı, located near Bərdə (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1986). The column-like stelae are divided into three registers, representing a head, torso and lower body. The head is indicated only by a U-shaped nose. The figures all have arms bent at the elbows, hands upraised, position 2 (Olkhovskiy 2005:fig. 9).

In Azerbaijani scholarship, the ‘Sarmatian’ character of these monuments is hardly noted. Their relationship to earlier Scythian examples as well as to later examples from the Black Sea coast is mentioned, but the local characteristics of the later examples are emphasized:

It is sufficient to point out that similar statues were widespread in the Scythian period in the southeastern steppe regions of the European part of the USSR… Sculptures of a similar shape – stone slabs, most commonly showing the outline of a human head and the upper part of the body, also served as grave markers in Bosphorus and Chersoneses. It seems that they belong to local tribes (местным племенам), to the Sindi, Maeotians and Tauri (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985b:188–89).

This description contrasts sharply with the discussion of the Ustyurt examples, the latter of which are deemed to be of uncertain “ethnocultural identity” even if “it is without question that they belong to the nomads of the Scythian-Sarmatian populations (in a broad sense) of the Eurasian steppe” (Olkhovskiy and Galkin 1990:206). The Ustyurt examples do contain more direct evidence of Scytho-Sarmatian origins—both in the morphology of the representations, and in the presence of tamagas. But both they and the
eastern Caucasus examples also demonstrate the evolution of the cultural practice of anthropomorphic grave stelae carving, developing at the interface of mobile pastoralist and settled populations. To deny that the eastern Caucasus examples too should be connected to “the Scytho-Sarmation populations (in a broad sense)” is to miss the deep impacts of mobile pastoralist practices in the region.

**Mortuary Conclusions**

What is particularly noteworthy about the mortuary evidence for Sarmato-Alans in the territory of Azerbaijan is, in fact, how idiosyncratic it is in the context of broader understandings of Sarmatian burial ritual as known from the North Caucasus and Pontic. Most importantly, catacomb burials were generally rare until later in the period. Furthermore, with the exception of a single group of pit graves that could perhaps be considered podboi-type from Xınıslı, we find no niche or podboi burials in the region, and there are no vast fields of non-catacomb kurgans. In Azerbaijan, then, we find an early instance of the catacomb practice, expressed in a unique hybrid form.

Although these catacombs have been cited in the past as remnants of perhaps a Sarmatian rear-guard military detachment with strong North Caucasus ties, I’d argue that they more likely reflect a local variant of the pastoralist-connected practice. This variant developed locally and drew from significant exchange with other regional traditions. The supine burials, meanwhile, suggest the coexistence in the region of a number of different mobile pastoralist burial rituals—which again reflects a pattern of longer and more extensive mobile pastoralist presence in the region, as well as the pattern of non-uniform spread of cultural packages in the region.
CONCLUSIONS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL SHADOW BOXING

This chapter began by asking the question, “What role did the Sarmatians play in the Antik eastern Caucasus?” As we conclude, we are more aware of why this was the wrong question. We should have asked, “What role did the Antik eastern Caucasus play in the formation of the ‘Sarmatians’?”

The long history of scholarship and interpretation of material in the eastern Caucasus predisposes us to see evidence for mobile pastoralism and to consider this to reflect intrusive presence in the region. The challenging nature of Sarmatian archaeology, combined with a relative dearth of excavated material from the territory of modern Azerbaijan in this period, contribute to the continued low visibility of mobile pastoralists in the zone. In contrast, however, the archaeological material and textual record, fragmentary though they both are, suggest widespread interaction between pastoral and sedentary populations. Mobile pastoralists were central actors in the region. It is no surprise that our historical sources for this period misinterpret these interactions—the social logics that governed mobile pastoralist systems were fundamentally different from those that the Hellenistic and Roman authors understood. The material evidence, however, speaks eloquently to the complexity of these patterns.

In the rich catacombs of Mingəçevir, we do not see the influx of an entirely new population, but the rise in prominence of a group who had long been present in the zone (though perhaps only seasonally so), but who found their wealth and power expanding in the tumultuous first centuries CE. It was, after all, at precisely this time that the Roman and Arsacid empires were fighting for supremacy in the South Caucasus. In doing so, the
upset older political structures, and involved the mobile pastoral populations directly in their power struggles.

In this way, we should understand the eventual rise of the Alans in the North Caucasus as a response to Roman and Arsacid presence in the Caucasus, which pressured local communities to develop new strategies of consolidation and mediation as they confronted these powerful imperial forces.
Chapter 8: Conclusion

The [written] histories and the [physical] remains of no land can describe in proper detail the events of the past. This land especially, because of the coming and going of many different peoples, was the place of disturbances, chaos and upheaval, and many books and documents and buildings and artifacts have perished. The books of other nations have not explained these matters in a suitable manner. However, according to the famous saying, ‘if you do not comprehend all of it, it does not mean that you are abandoning all of it.’

- Bakıxanov, Gülüstani-Irm. 464

I have made a twofold argument about the place of eastern Caucasia with respect to Mediterranean antiquity. First, I have suggested that the territory was a vital participant in the shifting social and political currents that swept through Eurasia in the centuries following the campaign of Alexander the Great, and should be studied as such. Second, I have argued that engagement with Albania offers us valuable new insights into how we have constructed ‘Mediterranean antiquity’ in our own historical narratives, offering alternative presentations of the past.

This project could be seen as an example of telling ‘history from the margins.’ I certainly draw on the intellectual frameworks developed by scholars from the post-colonial and subaltern theory communities. For sure, scholarship on the ancient Mediterranean has increasingly adopted a position of self-conscious diversity over the last thirty years and ‘histories from the limes’ are no longer rarities. Yet the persistent absence of Albania from Hellenistic and Roman histories leaves little doubt that important work remains to be done. This dissertation contributes to the project of history from the margins. But I don’t want to stop simply with an inversion of focus to the

464 Trans. Floor and Javadi (Bakikhanov 2009:2).
‘margins.’ Albania provides a fertile context for examining how we can bring diverse datasets and intellectual histories into dialogue.

Intellectual genealogies are powerfully formative. Both history and archaeology are processes of cultural sedimentation. Each layer builds on what came before it. In this dissertation, I have presented one universe of entanglements—those relating to a place that Greek and Roman authors called ‘Caucasian Albania,’ whose local name is likely forever lost to us. But I am convinced that the process I have used is more broadly applicable. I believe that it can be a tool for enlarging our understanding of a more connected antiquity, enriched not only by our inherited intellectual genealogies but also, as it were, by fresh layers sedimentation that will be added onto our scholarly enterprise.

**Caucasian Albania as Subject**

Archaeological and historical explorations of the eastern Caucasus are a young enterprise. Its first serious histories were written in the second half of the nineteenth century, and excavations commenced only in the twentieth century. Russophone scholars were the drivers of initiatives in both cases.

In situating the local and trans-regional forces operating within Antik Albania, the ancient textual tradition has provided an outline of political history, which can be elaborated by archaeological data in some cases. An evaluation of the political history suggests that the polity we know as Caucasian Albania was a federation, which grew gradually in the wake of the collapse of Achaemenid power in Iran. Albania interacted intensively with its western neighbor, Iberia, as well as with Armenia and Atropatene. It
had formal diplomatic relationships with dynasts from both the Arsacid and Roman Empires, although it was an often-unreliable ally for both powers.

The unique strengths and limitations of textual sources in the complex borderlands of the eastern Caucasus are striking. On the one hand, they reflect a nuanced (if not unproblematic) picture of interaction between settled and mobile pastoralist populations. On the other hand, they demonstrate the malleability of historical fact at the peripheries of Roman control, where authors took wide liberties in their retellings of the past. As is so often the case in the Caucasus, these problems with texts are multi-temporal, with politically charged readings of ancient textual sources having become a key part of modern border conflicts between Azerbaijan and its neighbor, Armenia. In these disputes, Strabo has come to serve as chief witness for both the prosecution and the defense, despite the fact that his description of the territory is both highly ideological and internally inconsistent.

For all the difficulties surrounding his writings, however, Strabo does highlight the role of geography and topography in understanding the eastern Caucasus. This is a region quite literally defined by mountains. These mountains have shaped impressions of the territory for two millennia. They have also shaped lifeways in the territory, creating affordances for certain types of movement and behavior, and making other types difficult or impossible.

The highland nature of the space, and the resulting contours of movement patterns, have made the Caucasus a difficult target for imperial integration. Local knowledge of mountain passes, and the ease of controlling narrow north-south routes, have long provided local residents with a ‘geographic resource’ that allowed them to
maintain control even in the face of significant imperial neighbors. The territory is also highly variable, however, and it is clear that residents in the Antik eastern Caucasus were making different choices about how to manage their ‘geographic resource’ than their neighbors to the west or south, with whom they nevertheless had close relations. The heartland of the eastern Caucasus was situated at an interface zone between high- and lowlands, in a territory that was an ideal base for a mix of social structure comprising a continuum of settled agriculturalists and transhumant pastoralists.

Archaeological material available from the territory includes evidence that speaks to the socio-political organization of the space, as well as to the shifting identities and strategies of local residents. These two concepts – political organization and identity – have been at the heart of debates about Romanization elsewhere in the ancient Mediterranean world. Albania offers an unusual and unfamiliar context for thinking through these ideas. Over the course of several hundred years of interaction, the Albanian political authorities consistently evaded unambiguous alignment with their Roman neighbors, and apparently their Arsacid ones as well. Built out of a federation of groups that included both agriculturalists and pastoralists, the Albanians managed to avoid direct rule by outside authorities until the rise of the Sasanian Empire. Theirs was not, however, a state of ‘splendid isolation.’ They borrowed pragmatically from the practical and conceptual vocabularies of their neighbors as they constructed a local dialect of authority.

Our data for understanding this dialect is lacunose, although an assemblage of archaeological material can be tied to state authority, even if tenuously. It includes monumental architecture and the material culture of state administration. Although most of our archaeological data from Albania comes from necropoleis, a concerted effort
began in the middle of the twentieth century to understand the local patterns of urbanism, and with it, excavation of monumental architecture. Excavation at the presumed capital site of the ancient polity, Ḟalə, has revealed a sequence of public buildings improbably located on a low river terrace. The nature of the buildings and their contents, which include large stores of wine pithoi, and bullae, are strongly indicative of redistributive and administrative functions. But the forms of the buildings are without parallel, and they suggest a variant of urbanism that differs from that evident in neighboring Iberia. The early remains at Ḟalə were communal spaces with productive and storage components, rather than sedentary occupation sites. The location of the site along transhumance corridors from the piedmont into the higher mountain pastures suggests that the site was perhaps used as a gathering point. This pattern is quite different from the strategies employed in neighboring Iberia, where the same period witnessed the construction of recognizable elite architecture.

The pattern of coin use in the eastern Caucasus also speaks to divergent local practices, with the dynasts in the central and eastern Caucasus engaging in very different types of minting activity. For all of the uncertainty surrounding the architecture from the eastern Caucasus, a number of coin hoards from the region demonstrate that authorities in the area were early adopters of coin technology. They began to mint their own emissions sometime in the third century BCE, and adopted a weight standard that allowed for their coins to be used side-by-side with other Hellenistic and later Arsacid coins. This practice speaks to a level of market interaction for which we have little other supporting evidence. But the related practice of seal use offers another point of reference. Seal use demonstrates both engagement with the ‘imported’ idea of seal practice, as well as the
development of a local glyptic corpus in the early Antik period. We see familiarity with external practice, but also a considered evaluation and selective adoption of external norms.

We tend to think of the consequences of this sort of development on local populations as questions about how local authorities took up imperial vocabularies. But recall the single Latin inscription from the territory, presumably carved by a member of the 12th legion Fulminata. It was not set up on a building or an arch; it was not even carved into a worked piece of stone. Instead, following the millennia-old local habit of making images on the stones of Böyük Daş, it was fashioned as a Latin-language petroglyph. Even the Roman army had to adapt in this culturally ambiguous space.

A consideration of how local identities developed in the Antik period provides a different perspective on the consequences of imperial development at the edges of the Caucasus. In contrast to the edges of the ancient Mediterranean world, where we tend to think in terms of Romanization, this process is rarely discussed in the South Caucasus. However, identity in the guise of ethnicity has been central a preoccupation of Azerbaijani archaeology. These identity/ethnicity discussions have been built on a foundation of mortuary evidence. Although there are substantial challenges associated with using mortuary evidence to build narratives of ethnicity, funerary ritual is recognized to contribute to the construction of identity. On the basis of excavated material, the case has been made for a process of Sarmatization in the region, based on several categories of tomb architecture and grave goods linked to the supposed North Caucasus homelands of the Sarmatians.
The archaeology of the Sarmatians is a thorny subject. A closer consideration of the eastern Caucasus material positions Albania not as the ultimate endpoint of a putative Sarmatian migration, but rather as the crucible in which a particular strand of ‘Sarmatian’ identity crystalized. Fueled by its position as an interstice between the steppe and the sown, Albania had a long history of contact with mobile pastoral populations who had been entering the region for hundreds of years by the first centuries of our era. The nature of these contacts changed with the expansion of the Roman and Arsacid Empires, both of which relied on local potentates to secure their northern borders against nomadic incursions. But in the complicated cauldron that was the Caucasus, it is readily apparent that at least some of these mobile pastoralist populations had exceedingly close (even familial) ties to the rulers of Albania and Iberia. And it seems that the groups were also involved in trade and transport along the trunk routes snaking through the territory. The material evidence demonstrates that mobile pastoralist populations had deep connections with other sectors of the local population, and that at least some of the mobile pastoralist elements found ways to benefit from the expansion of the empires. Indeed, by the early first centuries of our era, an elite stratum of mobile pastoralist activity is apparent in the South Caucasus, which seems to either predate or develop in parallel to a related group in the North Caucasus. This group, sometimes called the Sarmato-Alans, does not represent an external incursionary group in the eastern Caucasus, but rather a development with deep local roots.
Caucasian Albania as Object

The story of Albania—of the capital city with its bullae cache, of the Sarmato-Alans and their catacomb burials—is a story entangled with that of the Mediterranean empires although its material traces provide only a dim echo of these spaces. Albania’s residents freely adopted material culture and customs from areas that we consider ‘East,’ ‘West,’ and ‘North’ while identifying exclusively with none. The result is chaotic enough to inspire archaeological and historical aporia.

The first modern local historian of the area, Abbasqulu ağa Bakıxanov, warned us in 1841 that we should not expect to reach comprehensive understanding about the history of this fragmented space. And yet, as he wrote “if you do not comprehend all of it, it does not mean that you are abandoning all of it” (2009:2).

To unravel the threads of this story, I have engaged in a sustained examination of the theoretical and practical consequences of working in the borderlands, in this interstitial space of the inter-imperial. This description of the territory of the Caucasus in the Antik period is at once literal and metaphorical. The eastern Caucasus occupies the conceptual borderland between two very different traditions for studying the past: that of the Western European and Anglo-American scholarly community, and that of the Russian Imperial, Soviet and post-Soviet research counterparts. These two types of ‘borderlands’ are equally important in the examination of the eastern Caucasus, and are therefore considered as part of one conceptual program.

Borderlands are defined with reference to neighboring territories: a space cannot be a borderland if it does abut a demarcated neighbor. In the case of the Antik eastern Caucasus, those neighbors are broadly understood as a sequence of imperial and
transregional powers including the Achaemenid, Seleucid, Arsacid and Roman empires, and the Scythian and Sarmatian worlds, although the Caucasus also saw the rise of a number of smaller socio-political units within its mountainous landscape. Because the eastern territories never became unambiguously affiliated with any of those empires or worlds (with the possible exception of the Achaemenid empire), the region has been overlooked time and time again.

Nowhere is this truer than in studies of the Roman Empire. Even in the most recent turn toward developing a global narrative of Roman history, the sphere of inquiry has been limited, for the most part, to territories that were or eventually became part of the Roman Empire. This history is shaped by many generations of research on the question of Romanization—or the process by which the Roman empire constituted its power, on both a political and social level. The already-maligned concept of Romanization is, however, ill-equipped to explain the historical and archaeological process in the South Caucasus. And yet, it is clear that those processes occurred and that they related (even if in ways that are opaque) to the rhythms of neighboring cultures. As the Hellenistic empires expanded, local authorities began minting coins and using seals to secure transactions. As the Romans and Parthians warred on their frontier, new groups began to accumulate wealth in the territory, leading to renewed prominence of mobile pastoralists.

But because my research is situated in the intellectual (metaphorical) borderlands between research traditions, I face the problem of data comparability. Archaeological data, as a subjective reflection of the priorities and practice choices of past generations of archeologists, is entangled with its own epistemological foundation. It is not always easy
(or possible) to untangle these entanglements. As a consequence, as we expand our disciplinary horizons, we also have address the question of how to make incomparable bodies of archaeological data speak to each other.

Archaeologists know that ‘context’ is key in archaeological excavation—and that is true in this project too. In this case, it is not literal stratification context, but rather historiographic context. The data from the eastern Caucasus exist within a study of antiquity that has its modern roots in Petrine Russia, where imperial authorities began to explicitly cast their governing project within the arc of classical history. The Caucasus, and Caucasian Albania in particular, were latecomers to the Russian imperial investigations, taking on urgency only after Russian consolidation in the region in the mid-nineteenth century. But the impact of Russian perspectives on their mysterious southern border, and specifically on their attempt to understand the South Caucasus in antiquity, has been profound. Even the traditional name of the South Caucasus, Transcaucasia, (Закавказье) connotes a space on the other side of the great mountain range, set apart from the perspective of authorities in European Russia.

As one of the central sites for the expression of Russian Orientalism, the territories of the eastern Caucasus came to be seen through a number of deeply distorting filters, which emphasized the exoticism and fierceness of the territory. Despite the egalitarian rhetoric of the Russian Revolution, the perception of alterity continued into the Soviet period, with research in the South Caucasus continuing to be a niche interest, operating largely within a hyper-local framework of scholarship.

Azerbaijani and Russian archaeologists working on the subject of the Antik period during the twentieth century made choices within this context about where and how to
excavate, and about how to publish their findings. The data generated by these past
generations of scholars, available mostly through the written reports, preliminary
publications, and synthetic treatments, must be read in light of the unique scholarly
tradition within which the archaeologists were working. In my own research, I found that
a combination of broad historiographic study and focused archival work was necessary in
order to provide a fuller picture of the shape of the data and its broader entanglements.

In this exploration, I have pointed out the ways that studies of Albania have
grown to emphasize a profoundly ‘local’ perspective on the past. Rather than focusing on
interaction and connectivity, the narratives have coalesced around ideas of autochthony
and indigeneity. There are ways in which these perspectives have been limiting, but they
also represent a thought-provoking counterpoint to the approaches adopted within most
limes regions, which emphasize interaction and integration perhaps at the expense of
local standpoints.

**BEYOND BORDER(LAND)S**

My multi-temporal study of Albania examines the territory both as an ancient
subject, and as the object of generations of research. I have demonstrated, I hope, how
thinking from an ‘imperial’ perspective can help us make sense of the region, giving us
access to textual histories and theoretical paradigms for imperial expansion and its
consequences on neighboring spaces. I have also discussed the limitations of these
perspectives in dealing with the space of the persistently non-empire.

We are fortunate to have Albania. Its remoteness is a powerful thing: physically
pulling us far from the formal boundaries of the Mediterranean world. From this
perspective, as we turn and look back, we find that we acquire new viewpoints on the histories of this world zone, and new interpretive approaches through which it has come to be understood. The story of the Sarmatians in this region, in particular, suggests that the question of mobile pastoralists on the borders of the Mediterranean deserves to be comprehensively rethought. For too long, these populations have been envisioned as monolithic parasitic entities, preoccupied with warfare and raiding. Yet we can see in the eastern Caucasus what is in reality a compelling example of mobile pastoralist–sedentary collaboration, culminating in the creation of a long-lasting powerful North Caucasian pastoralist tradition.

The lessons of this intellectual project resonate beyond the borderland territories. In fact, they suggest that ‘borderlands,’ with its connotations of emptiness and absence, is a term both distorting and distracting. As our views on antiquity continue to expand and become more nuanced, we will develop better ways of understanding these spaces, and new terms for describing the in-between. We will be able to give them credit for their connective power and diversity, and move beyond models of interaction and integration. The foundation for those future explorations will be stronger and more revelatory when we come to explore not only new spaces themselves, but also their intellectual histories.
Appendix A: Other Antik/Albanian Settlement Sites in Azerbaijan

This appendix provides brief overview of some of the more prominent sites with settlement evidence in Azerbaijan from the Albanian period, focusing on sites with excavated architecture or architectural fragments. This is not a complete catalog—many other sites have been identified on the basis of surface remains (for example Şəkili, Hacıhətəmlı, Pirəbülqasım), or on the basis of very limited excavation (as with Mingəçevir settlements), or have not yet been published sufficiently to allow discussion.

It excludes a series of better-documented sites in on the Caspian coast. For these, see Gadjiev (2002). It also excludes Qəbələ, which was covered in detail beginning on p. 277.

KÜRDÜVAN

Location:

Ismayıllı district. Located 1km south of the village of the same name.

History of Research:

The site was noted during the course of survey work around Nüydi, directed by Fazil Latif Osmanov in 1976, and was published only through a brief report in Археологические этнографические изыскания в Азербайджане.465

Primary Bibliography:

Osmanov 1979b.

Site Description: 466

The site was never excavated, and the primary data about it comes from an erosion ditch that exposed a 5m section of the site, as well as a range of ceramic vessels found by local residents. The exposed section revealed 2m of river sediment resting on top of a stratum of cultural material, reportedly 3m thick. Under this cultural layer, several ground burial pits were visible (Osmanov 1979b:23). Because of the thickness of the river deposits, features of the site were not visible on the surface, except in the (higher) northernmost reaches, where some traces of a later medieval settlement were discernable.

The majority of the Antik ceramics noted in the vicinity can be dated to the 1st c-3rd c. CE, on the basis of parallels at Nüydi and Ximshl, although Osmanov dates the earliest phases of the site to 1st c. BCE–1st c. CE, without noting the source of this judgment (Osmanov 1979b:24).

465 The text of this report is reprinted in Osmanov (2006:45–47)
466 Description after Osmanov (2006) except where otherwise noted.
MOLL AIS AQLI

Location:

İsmayıllı district. Located on the western edge of the village of the same name.

History of Research:

The site was explored beginning in 1962 by Fazil Lətif Osmanov, and has been the focus of renewed interest after the discovery in 2002 of a hoard of EIA jewelry in the course of agricultural work.\(^{467}\)

Primary Bibliography:

Osmanov 1980a; more detail found in the Azərbaycan Milli Elmlər Akademiyası. Tarix İnstitutunun Elmi Arxivı (AMEA Tİ EA) report #5779.

Site Description: \(^{468}\)

In the 1960's, a regional survey identified the settlement site to be 200x200m, and found the traces of a necropolis on its western edge. Of this larger zone, traces of architecture were found only in the area of one limited 2x1m test trench. Here, building remains including worked stone, mudbricks, wooden beams and ceramic roof tiles were found, attesting to at least two phases of development in the settlement.

Mixed in with these architectural fragments were a number of ceramic vessels, as well as many statuettes, including female, male and rider figurines, which are generally considered to be from the Antik period.

\(^{467}\) On the EIA date, see Osmanov (Osmanov 2006:38).

\(^{468}\) Description after Osmanov (2006:56–58).
NÜYDİ

Location:

Ağsu district, near the village of Nüydi.

History of Research:

Archaeological work was conducted at the site in 1965, 1972, 1973 and 1975, with excavations under the direction of Fazıl Latif Osmanov.

Primary Bibliography:


Site Description: 469

The settlement has been identified as a site of ca. 12ha, located atop a plateau. Although a modern viticultural operation destroyed the upper layers of the site, beginning at a depth of ca. .7m, archaeologists uncovered architectural remains. The chief discovery was a 5m long wall constructed of unworked stones, with a width of 0.6m. At least one poorly preserved wall adjoins this one at a 90-degree angle, demonstrating that the structure had a rectangular plan. The NW corner of the structure had a small paved area, interpreted by the excavators as a hearth. A large agricultural storage vessel with charred remains inside was dug into the ground to the SW of the structure.

A burial ground to the east of the settlement was explored, with over thirty graves excavated. Except for two burials of youth in jars, the rest were ground burials.

The most widely found fragments of material culture from the settlement were red-colored ceramics with incised decoration, which have parallels from sites like Mingacevir, Xınıslı, Cafırxan, Yalolyutərap and the Alazan valley. Other materials include metal work and items that demonstrate a sophisticated craft-production system. The settlement ceramics differed from those of the necropolis, with more examples of large functional pithoi. The ceramics from the site settlement and necropolis include groups of vessels that connect both to the North Caucasus (the tripod bowls) and the Greek world (the kylix-like cups). Small finds also include numerous metal objects from the necropolis. These are both weapons and tools of various types, and also items of personal adornment.

Finally, locally minted coins were found in a hoard in grave 11, in a small ceramic vessel at the feet of the deceased. Another single example of a locally minted coin was found in grave 22, under the hand of the skeleton.

469 Description after Osmanov (2006:26–32) except where otherwise noted.
**QALAGAH**

**Location:**

İsmayılı district. Located near the village of the same name. Excavations have been carried out in the agricultural fields to the southwest of the modern village, on the western side of the ravine.

**History of Research:**

Research in the area of Qalagah began in 1933, with work conducted by Evgeni Alexandrovich Pakhomov, who excavated burials in the territory. Researchers returned to the area in 1963, when Fazil Latif Osmanov conducted exploratory work. He returned again in 1970, expanding on the earlier excavations.

**Primary Bibliography:**

Pakhomov 1939; AMEA Tİ EA, Osmanov # 5779.

**Site Description:**

After the site was first recognized by Pakhomov on account of the burials there (including ground burials, jar burials, and burials and in clay basins), subsequent explorations revealed traces of occupation over a territory of 50ha. The territory was largely covered by modern cultivated land, so excavation activities focused on the outskirts of the zone. Several trenches were placed into the area, revealing at least two phases of occupation, although the upper layers had been badly disturbed by plowing. One trench in the southwest of the site revealed remains of agricultural processing and storage, including a row of storage pithoi as well as possible grainery facilities. Post holes and traces of a wall line constructed out of unbaked mudbricks were uncovered were also discovered, enclosing an oven, near which piles of grape seeds and other fruit pits were found, which are interpreted as a wine-making facility.

The excavators note that the site was located on a naturally-fortified promontory, providing a strategic location overlooking the landscape. The site was dated broadly to the *Antik* period on the basis of its abundant ceramics, which include both domestic and production shapes.

---

470 Following Osmanov (2006:47–53) except where noted.
QALATƏPƏ

Location:

Ağcabədi district, near Salmanbəyli village.

History of Research:

Qalatəpə has appeared in archaeological literature since the early days of Azerbaijani archaeology, with Rössler having conducted some test excavation in the area. The area has seen a recent resurgence of attention, with ongoing works directed by T. Əliyev, as part of the broader Mil Steppe international archaeological collaboration. See Ricci (below) for a report on part of the collaborative fieldwork with particular relevance for the Antik period site.

Primary Bibliography:


Site Description:

The site of Qalatepe has an enormously thick cultural layer of some 8m. The upper strata are medieval, having revealed extensive brick architecture and glazed ceramics, with excavations extending over an area of more than 300 sq.m.

Lower layers of the excavation have revealed enigmantic structures which have been interpreted as part of a fortification system, as well as part of a street and a possible cultic instillation, although the prelimary nature of the published data makes broader conclusions challenging.
QARAKÖPƏKTƏPƏ

Location:

Fizuli district (currently Hadrut Province, Nagorno-Karabakh). Located near the city of Fizuli.

History of Research:

The site was explored between 1961 and 1972 by Qüdrət İsmayılzadə.

Primary Bibliography:

İsmayılzadə 1969

Site Description: ⁴⁷¹

The site of Qaraköpəktəpə had cultural layers reflecting repeated occupation from the Eneolithic period until the Medieval period.

Remains from the Antik period include a cultural layer of over 2m in thickness, which contained rectilinear structures with river stone foundations, as well as ceramics said to date to the ⁴ᵗʰ-³ʳᵈ BCE.

Stray finds in the general region include stone column bases and roof tiles, suggesting the presence of some significant construction in this area.

⁴⁷¹ Description after Osmanov (2006:84).
QARATƏΡƏ

Location:

Beyləqan district in the Mil Steppe. 4km to the north-west of Öränqala.

History of Research:

Principle excavations in the area begun in 1953 under the direction of Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Iessen, conducted as joint works by the Institute of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR, though there had been earlier work at the site.

The diachronic work of the Öränqala excavations investigated all periods of the history of the Mil Steppe, so much of the work related to periods before and after the Antik, including important contributions to understandings of the Kur-Arax culture, as well as the situation in the Medieval Mil Steppe. The results of this work were published in three volumes of the serial Materialy i issledovaniia po arkheologii SSSR (Материалы и исследования по археологии СССР).

Primary Bibliography:

İsmizadə 1959.

Site Description: 472

The site of Qaratəɾə is roughly 2ha, a tepe of ca. 140m in diameter and 4m in height. Excavations revealed several construction horizons, including an earlier horizon dated to the 7th-6th c. BCE featuring mudbrick structures.

A later layer, dated to between the 5th and 1st c. BCE, was discovered with evidence of a violent fire. Structures from this period were limited but include mudbrick rectilinear walls enclosing a structure with a rammed earth floor. This second layer produced abundant cultural material, including vessels for agricultural production.

472 Description after Osmanov (2006:65–67), with information also from İsmizadə’s reports.
QIRLARTƏPO

Location:

 Ağsu district. Near the village of Qırlar.

History of Research:

The site came to the attention of archaeologists in 1960, but was not the subject of scientific research until 1980, with excavations beginning in 1982 under the direction of Fazil Latif Osmanov.

Primary Bibliography:


Site Description:

The well-situated location saw long periods of settlement, with occupations dating back to the 5th millennium BCE. The site, however, has not been connected to any specific site mentioned in ancient literature. The hill runs E-W, with the western end being wider than the east. It is of a height 6m, length of more than 35m and width of between 8 and 18m. The initial excavations were carried out in the western part of the hill, which was higher than the eastern. Work was also conducted between the villages of Kəndyəri and Təpədalı, where a burial ground with ground burials accompanied by rich inventories was discovered.

In excavations on the western side of the hill, numerous building materials were found near the surface, particularly stones. The excavators uncovered an area of ca. 7m by 5m, wherein a density of rooftiles suggested the presence of a rectangular structure. The western area. The upper layers of this area were full of slingshot armaments and widespread graces of fire. A Parthian coin of Vologases IV (147 to 191 CE) was found in the upper layer of the site in 1986, providing help dating it the monument.

Other important small finds came from both the settlement excavation and work at the cemetery to the northwest. From the settlement came a clay statuette of a male figure with a conical body (parallel for which can be found at Nuran and Qalaqah), which is said to date to 2nd – 3rd c. CE. One grave yielded a particularly rich assortment of weapons and metallic objects, while other graves contained fibulae of Roman production.

473 Description after Osmanov (Osmanov 2006:21–26) except where otherwise noted.
474 Site plan redrawn from Osmanov
475 This identification is following Osmanov (2006). Əliyev and Xəlılov consider it a coin of Artabanus III (V. H. Əliyev and Xəlılov 2001).
476 Osmanov and Cəbiyev (1985:7) suggests that some fibulae were found in the settlement as well.
QIŞLAQ

Location:
İsmayıllı district. Located 4km to the south of the site of Qışlaq.

History of Research:
Fazil Latif Osmanov explored this area during his work in the Mollaisaqlı region in 1963-4 to 1970.

Primary Bibliography:
The site has been published only in Osmanov (2006:54). Further details can be found in AMEA Tİ EA Osmanov #5779.

Site Description:
The site, perched on a hillside with the lower reaches covered by thick river sediments, has a cultural layer of around 1.5m thick, with some stone foundations constructed of river stones traced within the layer. There are traces of burning in the upper layers, which the excavators have interpreted as possible evidence of manufacture in the area. Few ceramics are mentioned from the site, although a single terracotta figurine was discovered here.
**Şıxdərə Kəlləsi**

**Location:**

İsmayıllı district. Şıxdərə Kəlləsi (also known as Şıxdərə) is located approximately 3km to the southwest of the modern village of Mollaisaqlı.

**History of Research:**

The site was explored by Fazıl Lətif Osmanov following work at Mollaisaqlı, with investigations beginning in 1970.

**Primary Bibliography:**

Osmanov 1972a, 1972c; Osmanov and Osmanov 2006; AMEA Tİ EA Osmanov #7498.

**Site Description:**

The site of Şıxdərə stretches across a sloping elevation to the south of Mollaisaqlı, in the direction of Göyçay, north of the Khotavan forest. The excavators note that the site featured a mix of settlement activity and a necropolis, but do not discuss either chronological or spatial differentiation. Burials from the site include jar burials and, importantly, 4 clay sarcophagi.

The slope, long worked over with deep ploughs, is marked by abundant surface ceramics, covering a territory of 2km x 300m. Among the surface materials, roofing tiles of three different types were found in significant quantities (Osmanov 2006, plates 29-31). In addition to the roof tiles, numerous characteristic Antik vessel fragments were found both in the mixed upper cultural layers, and in the excavated burials. Beyond the numerous building fragments, however, no clear structures were excavated (although the full extent of excavation at the site is unclear on the basis of published or unpublished reports.)

The only features noted beyond the graves are a series of pits, said to be related to 'domestic storage.'

On the basis of the ceramics, the site is said to have begun around the 4th c. BCE, and continued through the 1st c. CE.

---

477 Following Osmanov (2006:58–63) except where noted.

478 See the critical note by Babayev in his review of report #7498.
Şortəpə

Location:

Bərdə district. Located 7km from Bərdə.

History of Research:

There has been a string of projects working at Şortəpə during the 20th century, including important work by M. Hüsynov in the 1970’s. There is also ongoing work in the region today, directed by Ə. Məmmədov. Little of the work has been published.

Primary Bibliography:

Osmanov 2002.

Site Description:

The site, around 4ha in size, is surrounded by and ditch-and-rampart fortification system, with a gate in the N-W wall.

Inside of the fortified area, production areas were discovered, including a facility for the production of metal adornments, which are datable stylistically to the Antik period. Surface finds from the fortified area were very rich, including a fragment of a piece of pottery that appears (to me, on the basis of poor photographs) to be a bowl rim of terra sigilatta, depicting a female harp player.

---

Təzəkənd

Location:

Beyləqan district in the Mil Steppe. Near the site of Örənçala.

History of Research:

Principle excavations in the area begun in 1953 under the direction of Aleksandr Aleksandrovič Iessen, conducted as joint works by the Institute of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of Sciences of the Azerbaijan SSR, although there had been some earlier work at the site.

The diachronic work of the Örənçala excavations investigated all periods of the history of the Mil Steppe, so much of the work related to periods before and after the Antik, including important contributions to understandings of the Kur-Arax culture, as well as the situation in the Medieval Mil Steppe. The results of this work were published in three volumes of the serial Materialy i issledovaniia po arkeologii SSSR.

Primary Bibliography:

Iessen 1959, 1965a, 1965b

Site Description: 480

The site of Təzəkənd is composed of at least two rectilinear mounded areas raised 3-4m above the plain, the larger of which was recorded to be 270x165m; the smaller 115x110m. Scientific excavation in the area was limited to a single 2x2m trench in the eastern corner of the larger mound, which uncovered a cultural stratum of 3.5m thick (Iessen 1965a:2:34). Conclusions on the basis of this small area are necessarily limited, but based on an analysis of the ceramics, the excavators concluded that the earliest layers here corresponded to the 1st c. BCE- 1st c. CE (Iessen 1965a:2:34).

Awareness of Antik remains in the area of Təzəkənd was sparked before Iessen's work, with the discovery of a limestone column base during the course of a 1936 expedition in the area of the larger mound (Şcebli̇kin 1946:258). The base was found incorporated into a terrace wall, but according to reports of residents, had been discovered while digging a house foundation in the area (Şcebli̇kin 1946:258). Iessen's work in the 1950's uncovered an additional two similar bases (Iessen 1965a:2:33), 481 which he dated by analogy to bases known from Dvin, suggesting a 4th c. CE date for all three (Iessen 1965a:2:33). As these are the only remains from this period found in the region around Örənçala, he proposes that Təzəkənd was the site of city known from later chronicles as Paytakaran,

480 Description after Osmanov (2006:26–32) except where otherwise noted.
481 These pieces were destroyed in a house fire at the dig-house.
thought to be the capital of the district mentioned by Strabo as Caspiane (11.4.5), which
later developed into the Eastern Armenian province Paytakaran.

Beyond the column bases, other finds from the site include a hoard of 12 silver coins
found in 1955, 4 of which were handed over to the archaeologists working at Öranqala,
although three of these were destroyed in a fire at the dig house (Pakhomov 1957:vol. 7,
n. 1737). The one coin available for study was a Roman denarius of the Gaius-Lucius
type (Pakhomov 1957:vol. 7, n. 1737). Finally, the excavators report having seen the
remains of a "late jar burial" in the vicinity of the large mound. Babayev, finally, reports
that this site features an earthworks fortification (Babayev 1990:63).
TORPAQQALA

Location:
Qax district, on banks of Qanłx river, 25km S-W of contemporary Qax.

History of Research:
Research has been conducted in the region since the 1960’s, with periodic publications in the 70’s and 80’s, and a renewed series of campaigns beginning in 2006.

Primary Bibliography:

Site Description:
Torpaqqala is a large settlement that has attracted the attention of a long chain of prominent Azerbaijani archaeologists. The site is particularly well-known for its later medieval remains, which include important craft quarters. The site, which stretches over some 20ha, includes a fortified site, Narınqala as the settlement area and a necropolis.

Excavations beginning in 2006 opened over 100 sq.m, and reached Antik contexts in some areas. The finds from the Antik period included ceramics recognizable from other sites in the piedmont, including both utilitarian and more rarified pieces. Zoomorphic ceramics are widespread at the site, with birds as a particularly popular subject. Numerous pieces of personal adornment were also uncovered, as well as statuettes.
UZUNBOYALAR

Location:

İsmayıllı district of Azerbaijan. Located between the villages of Xasidərə and Sanqalan. 482

History of Research:

The site was first noted in 1972, during work at the nearby settlement of Nüydi, but excavations in the area began only in 1981, following the exposure of more archaeological material during agricultural work in the area in the late 1970's. The site was excavated by Fazil Lətif Osmanov.

Primary Bibliography:

Osmanov 1980c, 1984a, 1984b; Osmanov, Cəbiyev, and Ramazanov 1986

Site Description: 483

The site of Uzunboylar includes some scattered remains of a settlement, as well as a number of ground burials with rich burial inventories. The precise extent of the excavations is unclear from the published reports, but appears to have been at least 12x12m. Building remains, including a 1m thick wall socle running for 3-4m, were found in the course of excavation. In addition to the wall stubs found in excavation, Osmanov report that a number of other building fragments were discovered across the plateau, including worked stones and burnt plaster, suggesting the wider presence of ancient habitation in the territory.

Many of the conclusions drawn about this site come from material found in ground burials at the site, of which 6 were published. From these, some 50-60 ceramic vessels as well as metal tools were excavated. The inventory of grave #1 included a locally-minted coin of the Alexander the Great type. The finds from these graves are dated on stylistic grounds to the 3rd c. BCE- 1st c. CE.

482 Location is sometimes said to be in Sulut, some 9km to the north. The reason for this discrepancy is not clear.
483 Description after Osmanov (2006:33–45) except where otherwise noted.
XINISLI

Location:

Şamaxı district. Located in the former village of Dərə Xınislı, now absorbed into the western edge of the modern city of Şamaxı.

History of Research:

Xınislı was excavated beginning in 1958, under the direction of Cabbar Əsədulla Xəlilov.

Primary Bibliography:

AMEA excavation reports provide additional detail.

Site Description:

The multi-period site of Xınislı saw several phases of occupation, with the site seeing repeated destruction and rebuilding in the same general vicinity. The stratigraphy of the site is further complicated by the presence of a significant number of intrusive burials that damaged the Antik layers.

The earliest phase identified by the excavators was an EBA level with a single burial (C. Ə. Xəlilov 1985a:35). On top of the EBA level, C.Ə. Xəlilov identified 4 cultural periods at the site that dated from the 3rd c. BCE through the 5th c. CE (following C. Ə. Xəlilov 1965b)

1) 4th c. BCE- 2nd c. BCE: Settlement activity from this period found in the 2nd excavation area, with contemporaneous burials known from the 1st excavation area. The architecture of the period includes fragmentary wall-lines constructed of stones lined with clay. The area used as a settlement in this period became, in the subsequent period, a necropolis. The date of 2nd c. BCE for this transition is based on the prevalence of jar burials in the necropolis, which are thought to date from the 2nd c. BCE and later.

2) 2nd c. BCE- 2nd c. CE: The location of the settlement and the necropolis switch, with settlement activity found in the 1st excavation area, and jar burials as mentioned above in the 2nd excavation area. The settlement traces in this period are more widespread, including structures said to be of different sizes, paved and unpaved interior surfaces, and column bases. It is likely that the remains from this period represent several phases of construction.

3) 2nd c. CE- 3rd c. CE: Remains from this period are found above the settlement remains from period 2, described above. It is marked, again, by extensive fragmentary remains. The largest building unit has a preserved length of 14m, with a width of 5m, and stone-built wall bases preserved to 0.7m in height,
which had a northern section with a stone-paved floor, and a southern section with a dirt floor. This structure is described in detail by C.Ə. Xəlilov (1962:215), although no plan is provided. The northern section has been hypothesized to have been a production space (with an oven and traces of grains found), while the south is taken to be domestic in nature. (Osmanov 2006:20).

4) 4th c. CE- 5th c. CE: This period is represented only by burials found in the 1st excavation area, which damaged architecture from the 2nd and 3rd

Because of the confusion introduced by the invasive burials, the phasing proposed by C.Ə. Xəlilov (1965b) is disputed by Osmanov (2006:20). Although all four contain traces of architecture, including roofing tiles and river stone foundations. The density of the architectural fragments increases in the upper layers, dated to the first centuries CE (Osmanov 2006:20).
# Appendix B: Coin Finds from Azerbaijan and the South Caucasus

## SECTION I:

The first part of this appendix presents a catalog of coin hoards from modern Azerbaijan, with ‘hoard’ defined as any two or more collocated coins.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cat. #:</th>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Findspot</th>
<th>Archaeological Context</th>
<th>Disposition</th>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>Bibliography</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Cat. #: 3

**Description:** 593 + AR
Alexander III: 7 dr.
Lysimachus: 2 post. tetradr.
Seleucus IV: 3 tetradr.
Antiochus IV: 16 tetradr.
Antiochus V: 7 tetradr.
Demetrios I: 43 tetradr.
Alexander I Bala: 17 tetradr.
Demetrios II: 2 tetradr.
Antiochus VI: 2 tetradr.
Antiochus VII: 36 tetradr.
Seleucid imit.: 3 tetradr.
Mithradates I, Parthia: 4 dr. (2 as Sellwood, 10/1; 11/1; 1/2)
Phraates II: 1 dr. (as Sellwood 16/1)
Diodotus I, Bactria: 1 tetradr.
Eucratides I: 4 tetradr.

**Findspot:** Qəbələ (Qəbələ district). 1966.
**Archaeological Context:** Found buried in edge of kurgan located 2km to the southeast of Qəbələ.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.
**Notes:** Identifications of Arsakid coins after Golenko and Rəcəbli. Largest of known hoards from Albania.
**Bibliography:** Babayev and Qaziyev 1971; Golenko and Rəcəbli 1975:87 n. 19; Thompson, Mørkholm, and Kraay 1973:n. 1737.

Cat. #: 4

**Description:** 2 AR
Mithridates II, Parthia: 1 dr.

**Findspot:** Nüydi ( Ağsu district). 1972.
**Archaeological Context:** Burial 46, pit burial.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.
**Bibliography:** Osmanov 1980b.
Cat. #: 5

Description: 330 + AR
Lysimachus: 3 post. tetradr.
Athens: 5-6 New Style tetradr.
Mithradates VI, Pontus: 1 tetradr.
Nicomedes II: 2 tetradr.
Nicomedes III: 5 tetradr.
Antiochus IV: 2 tetradr.
Demetrius I: 9 tetradr.
Alexander I Bala: 1 tetradr.
Antiochus VII: 53 tetradr.
Alexander II: 1 tetradr.
Antiochus VIII: 1 tetradr.
Seleucus VI: 1 tetradr.
Antiochus X: 1 tetradr.
Philip I: 15 tetradr.
Mithradates I, Parthia: 1 dr. (See Golenko and Rəcəbli for Sellwood identifications)
Mithradates II: 104 dr.
Mithradates II imit.: 2 dr.
Gotarzes I: 5 dr.
Orodes I: 18 dr.
Sinatruces: 23 dr.
Darius of Atropatene (?): 3 dr.
Phraates III: 6 dr.
Roman Rep.: 1 den., C. Licinius and L.F. Macer


Archaeological Context: Found by local residents in the course of agricultural work at a vineyard.

Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan, 217; Regional Museum of Şamaxı 7; Private coll. 48.

Notes: Identification of Arsacid coins after Golenko and Rəcəbli. Identifications of other after Tompson et al.

Cat. #: 6

**Description:** 36 AR

**Findspot:** Nüydi (Ağsu district). 1972.
**Archaeological Context:** Burial #11, pit burial.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.

Cat. #: 7

**Description:** 2 + AR
Tigranes II, Armenia: 2 dr. (inv. # 6410, 6411)

**Findspot:** Füzuli / Vardana, formerly Kariangino. (Füzuli district/ Western Hadrut District N-K). 1934.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.
**Bibliography:** Nercessian 2006:n. 6; Pakhomov 1938:vol. 2, n. 318.

Cat. #: 8

**Description:** 6 AR
Tigranes II: 2 dr. (Antioch)
Roman Republican:
1 den.: L. Scribonius Libo 54 BCE
1 den.: M. Poblicius; G. Pompeius 46 BCE – 45 BCE
2 den.: L. Plautius Plancus 45 BCE

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir. Right bank of Kura. 1949.
**Archaeological Context:** Found in jar burial.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?).
Cat. #: 9

Description: 2 AR  
Roman Rep.: 1 den., G. Vibius Pansa

Findspot: Yaloylutəpə (Qəbələ district). 1926.  
Archaeological Context: The coins were not found in a secure context, but in the course of sorting material from Sharifov’s excavations at the site. They may come from different contexts.  
Disposition: Unknown.  

Cat. #: 10

Description: 5 AR  
Phraates III: 1 dr. (Sellwood 33, Ecbatana)  
Mithradates III: 2 dr. (Sellwood 40/4-5; Sellwood 40/13-14)  
Orodes II: 2 dr. (Sellwood 47/24 [Thompson et al]; Sellwood 45/15-16 [Golenko and Rəçəblili])

Archaeological Context: Found in jar burial.  
Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?).  
Notes: Coin types from Golenko and Rəçəblili except where noted.  

Cat. #: 11

Description: 2 AR  
Orodes II: 2 dr. (as Sellwood 47/23; Sellwood 47/24, Nisa)

**Archaeological Context:** From a jar burial, found in excavation (original publication unclear).

**Disposition:** Unknown.

**Notes:** Identifications following Golenko and Rəcəblı.

**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəblı 1975:87 n.5a.

---

**Cat. #: 12**

**Description:** 47 + AR
- Mithridates II: 2 dr.
- Phraates IV: 45 dr.

**Findspot:** Qaradonlu (İmişli district). 4km from the village. 1913.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in the course of excavation of the middle-Muğan irrigation canal. Discovered in a ceramic vessel.

**Disposition:** Georgian National Museum

**Notes:** These counts reflect the pieces known from the GNM and reported in Pakhomov (1949a), rather than the smaller sample reported in 1926. See Golenko and Rəcəblı for further identification.


---

**Cat. #: 13**

**Description:** 2 + AR, AE
- Augustus: 1 den. (Gaius-Lucius type)
- Unc.: 1 AE

**Findspot:** Qarabağlar (Kəngərlı district, Naxçıvan). Edge of city. 1929.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Disposition:** Unknown.

**Notes:** The bronze/copper coin was fragmentary and unreadable.

**Cat. #: 14**

**Description:** 4 + AR
Augustus: 4 den.  (Gaius-Lucius type)

**Findspot:** Təzəkənd (Beyləqan district). Collective farm of L.M. Kaganovich. 1955.

**Archaeological Context:** Context unknown. Found by local residents in the course of agricultural work, and turned over to Oren-qala excavation team.

**Disposition:** 3 of 4 pieces destroyed in dig-house fire. Location of 4th is unknown.

**Notes:** Coins were partly disbursed, and original find contained at least 12 pieces.

**Bibliography:** Kropotkin 1961:n. 1538; Pakhomov 1957:vol. 7, n. 1737.

---

**Cat. #: 15**

**Description:** 1 AR, 4 AE

“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr.  (‘Gotarzes type’)
Unc.: 4 AE

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir. Qala-get burial ground. 1947.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in wood-beam coffin #5.

**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)

**Notes:** The Gotarzes piece is by Golenko and Rəcəblī to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece. According to Pakhomov, the AE pieces were analyzed at the laboratory of State History Museum in Moscow, where they were determined to be “Greco-Roman [pieces] from Asia Minor.

**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəblī 1975:87 n. 5.6; Pakhomov 1951:n. 7, 1954:vol. 6, n. 1547.

---

**Cat. #: 16**

**Description:** 110 AR
Aratabanus II: 83 dr.
Gotarzes II: 15 dr.
Vologases I: 1 dr.
Artabanus III: 4 dr.
Mithridates IV: 2 dr.
Vologases IV: 1 dr.
“Gotarzes II”: 4 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Archaeological Context: Chance find during agricultural work. Found inside a jar.
Notes: Identification after Golenko and Rəcəblı.
Bibliography: Dadaşova 1976a; Golenko and Rəcəblı 1975; Rəcəblı 1997:21

Cat. #: 17
Description: 2 AR
Antoninus Pius: 1 den. 140 CE – 144 CE
Plautilla: 1 den. ca. 212 CE

Archaeological Context: Found in wood-beam coffin.
Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)
Bibliography: Kropotkin 1961:n. 1531; Pakhomov 1951:n. 8, 1954:vol. 6, n. 1557

Cat. #: 18
Description: 207+ AR
Gotarzes II: 1 dr.
Vologases IV: 1 dr. (as Sellwood 84/98, Ecbtana)
Otho: 1 den.
Vespasian: 1 den.
Trajan: 1 den.
Hadrian: 2 den.
Various Sasanian: ca. 200 dr.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.
**Disposition:** Unknown
**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəbl 1975:88 n. 22.

**Cat. #: 19**

**Description:** 2 AE
Unc.: 2 AE

**Findspot:** Mingəçeyir. Qala-get burial ground. 1953.
Archaeological Context: Found in catacomb burial #9 (according to Aslanov’s list). Discovered near skull of skeleton.
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)
**Notes:** The two coins are said to be “Greco-Roman bronzes” and interpreted by Pakhomov as “pendant adornments” (Pakhomov 1957:7:26).
**Bibliography:** Kropotkin 1961:n. 1531; Pakhomov 1957:vol. 7, n. 1741.

**SECTION II:**

*The second part of this appendix presents a catalog of single coin finds from the territory of Azerbaijan that come from mortuary contexts.*

**Cat. #: 20**

**Description:** 1 AR
Artabanus II: 1 dr.

**Findspot:** Bilsuvar district (formerly Pushkin district). 1969.
**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial, found during excavation (?)
**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.
**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəbl 1975:87 n. 9a.

**Cat. #: 21**

**Description:** 1 AR
Artabanus II: 1 dr.

Archaeological Context: Jar burial, found during excavation (?
Notes: Possibly Gotarzes II.
Bibliography: Golenko and Rəçəbli 1975:87 n. 16.

Cat. #: 22
Description: 1 AR
Sinatrucses II (?): 1 dr. (as Sellwood 33/4)

Findspot: Gəncə, (formerly Elizabetpol’; Kirovabad).
South of city. 1937.
Archaeological Context: Found in brick-lined tomb 40 (?), excavated by Gummel.
Disposition: Unknown.
Notes: Identification after Golenko and Rəçəbli. Pakhomov identifies this as Phraates III, as British Museum Catalog, plate XI.10.

Cat. #: 23
Description: 1 AR

Archaeological Context: Burial #22, pit burial. Found under hand of skeleton.
**Cat. #: 24**

**Description:** 1 AR

Orodes II: 1 dr. (as Sellwood 46/10, Ecbatana)

**Findspot:** Gəncə, (formerly Elizabetpol’; Kirovabad). South of city. 1937.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in brick-lined tomb # 39, excavated by Gummel.

**Disposition:** Unknown.

**Notes:** Identifications following Golenko and Rəcəblə. Pakhomov lists monogram of in the shape of a deformed ‘A,’ and identifies the type as British Museum Catalog, plate XVI.2.

**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəblə 1975:86 n.4; Pakhomov 1940:vol. 3, n. 762.

---

**Cat. #: 25**

**Description:** 1 AR

Phraates IV: 1 (Sellwood 54/12, Ecbatana)

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir. Left bank. 1948.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in jar burial, field # 4.

**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan.

**Notes:** Coin identification following Golenko and Rəcəblə.

**Bibliography:** Golenko and Rəcəblə 1975:86 n. 5.2; Pakhomov 1949c:vol. 5, n. 1377, 1951:n. 3.

---

**Cat. #: 26**

**Description:** 1 AR

Augustus: 1 den. (Gaius-Lucius type)

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir. Left bank. 1949.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in jar burial 14-g.

**Disposition:** National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?).

**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1951:n. 4, 1954:vol. 6, n. 1549.

---

484 Burial given sometimes as 14-g and sometimes as 14-l.
Cat. #: 27

Description: 1 + AR
Unc.: 1 den.

Findspot: Gəncə district (formerly Elizabetpol’; Kirovabad).
Archaeological Context: Found in a mudbrick burial by Rosendorf.
Disposition: Unknown.
Bibliography: Pakhomov 1926:vol. 1, n. 46.

Cat. #: 28

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Archaeological Context: Found in jar burial.
Disposition: Unknown.
Notes: Said by Golenko and Rəcəblı to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece.

Cat. #: 29

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Findspot: Qəbələ (Qəbələ district). Near citadel. 1944.
Archaeological Context: Found in ground burial.
Notes: Said by Golenko and Rəcəblı to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece.
Bibliography: Golenko and Rəcəblı 1975:87 n. 11; Pakhomov 1949c:vol. 5, n. 1381.
Cat. #: 30

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Findspot: Mingəcebər. Qala-get burial ground, square 22. 1949.
Archaeological Context: Found in wood-beam coffin #97.
Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)
Notes: Said by Golenko and Rəcebli to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece (Golenko and Rəcebli 1975:86).
Bibliography: Golenko and Rəcebli 1975:86 n. 5.3; Pakhomov 1951:n. 5

Cat. #: 31

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Archaeological Context: Found in catacomb burial, near hand of deceased.
Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)
Notes: Said by Golenko and Rəcebli to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece (Golenko and Rəcebli 1975:86).
Bibliography: Golenko and Rəcebli 1975:87 n. 5.5; Pakhomov 1957:vol. 7, n. 1747.

Cat. #: 32

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Archaeological Context: Found in badly destroyed burial of uncertain type.
Disposition: National History Museum of Azerbaijan (?)
Notes: The Gotarzes piece is by Golenko and Rəçəblī to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece (Golenko and Rəçəblī 1975:86).

Bibliography: Golenko and Rəçəblī 1975:86 n. 5.4; Pakhomov 1951:n. 6.

Cat. #: 33

Description: 1 AR
“Gotarzes II”: 1 dr. (‘Gotarzes type’)

Findspot: Topraqqala, near to Kürdi (Şamaxı district) 1900’s.
Archaeological Context: Found by residents in a cemetery (modern?) near the mill on the right bank of the Pir-sagat river.
Disposition: Unknown.
Notes: Said by Golenko and Rəçəblī to be a ‘Gotarzes type’ piece (Golenko and Rəçəblī 1975:87).
Bibliography: Golenko and Rəçəblī 1975:87 n. 10; Pakhomov 1938:vol. 2, n. 336

Cat. #: 34

Description: 1 AR
Osroes II: 1 dr. (Sellwood 85/1, Ecbatana)

Findspot: Çuxuryurd (Şamaxı district) 1954.
Archaeological Context: Found by residents in a stone-lined burial.
Disposition: Unknown.
Notes: Identification after Golenko and Rəçəblī. Published by Pakhomov as Artabanus I.

SECTION III:

The third part of the appendix presents a brief list of coin finds used in the broader analysis presented in Chapter 4. These have been published in comprehensive national catalogs in recent years, and are therefore presented in abbreviated form.
From Tsotselia and Depeyrot (2010).\textsuperscript{485}


From Mousheghian et al. (2000).\textsuperscript{486}

Artashat (1971); Artashat (1972); Artik (1947); Garni (1955); Parakar (1959); Sarnakour (1945); Tovuz (1955); Vardenut-Aparan; Echmiadzin.

\textsuperscript{485} This list is provided for general reference only, as Depeyrot and Tsotselia’s publication conflates some stray finds into hoards and subdivides other hoards into separate finds, particularly in cases where the coins inside a hoard span several of the period divisions of the publication. This is particularly true in the case of finds from archaeological sites (for example, 377-380). In compiling my database, I drew specific information concerning each listing from the more detailed reports in Pakhomov’s catalogs, as well as those of Abramishvili (1965); Abramzon (2003); Doyen and Sherozia (2007); Dundua (1979, 1987); Dundua et al. (2003); and Golenko (1964), Kapanadze (1955, 1957, 1969); Kropotkin (1961); Pakhomov (1910); Sherozia (2008); Zograf (1936, 1945).

\textsuperscript{486} Other works consulted include Bedoukian (1978, 1991); Kropotkin (1961); Mousheghian (1973); Mousheghian et al. (Mousheghian et al. 2000); Nercissian (2006) Zograf (1936, 1945).
Appendix C: Illustrated Seals from Excavations in Azerbaijan

The following catalog presents seals that have been illustrated in Azerbaijani archaeological literature, giving whatever detail is available about provenience as well as form.

This assemblage does not offer a catalog raisonné, but instead a framework for the discussion presented in chapter 5. In many cases, the quality of the published description and images precludes a detailed re-analysis, in which case I have followed the description of earlier scholars. The chronological groupings, too, rely heavily on assessments by Babayev (1964, 1965a, 1965c, 1973, 1990:148–51, 2010).

GROUP I SEALS
(ca. 5th – 2nd century BCE)

Cat. #: 1
Description: Stone cylinder. ca. 3cm in height. Indistinct quadruped (cervid?) and linear marks.
Findspot: Sarıtapə.
Archaeological Context: ‘Palace’ Building. Room 3 floor surface, found inside of pot near hearth.
Bibliography: İsmayılzadə 2002:36, fig. 5; Nərimanov 2001:150.

Cat. #: 2
Description: Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Hero facing left in full-length garment grasps leaping lion with right hand, left hand holding weapon behind body.

**Findspot:** Mingacevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.2; Babayev 1990:fig. II.1; III.1, 2010:19; Qaziyev 1949a:fig. 19.

---

**Cat. #:** 3

**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.

Hero facing left in full-length garment grasps rampant lion with right hand, left hand behind body.

**Findspot:** Unknown. (Likely Mingacevir).

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990:fig. III.4, 2010:19.

---

**Cat. #:** 4

**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.

Hero (head and torso damaged) leaping to left, with left foot forward and right knee bent; quadruped (head damaged, lion?) on hind legs facing right, tail up.\(^{487}\)

**Findspot:** Mingacevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Supine ground burial.

**Bibliography:** Qaziyev 1949a:fig. 19.

---

\(^{487}\) This is part of a group of seals that were never published in detail, so the only images that exist are line drawings.
Cat. #: 5

**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Bearded worshiper facing altar with right arm raised towards his face and left over flaming censer, wearing a cap (?)..

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Supine ground burial.

**Bibliography:** Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19; Rzayev 1976:fig. 166.

Cat. #: 6

**Description:** Bronze ring. Round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Bearded man stands in profile left wearing a cape (?), torso bent forward with both hands over a (flaming?) censer or altar.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Supine ground burial.

**Bibliography:** Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19.

Cat. #: 7

**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval (almost round) bezel. Dim. unknown.
Bearded winged man (genie?) in a tall hat, in profile with right leg forward bearing weight, left leg bent, holding a long staff in right hand.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.
Archaeological Context: Supine ground burial.

Bibliography: Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19; Rzayev 1976:fig. 168.

Cat. #: 8

Description: Bronze ring. Round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Figure wearing a pointed cap and cape (?) stands facing left, knees slightly bent and torso forward, holding a long staff nearly parallel with groundline.

Findspot: Mingaçevir.

Archaeological Context: Supine ground burial.

Bibliography: Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19.

---

Cat. #: 9

Description: Ring (presumed to be bronze). Round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Satyr standing to right, playing on pipes.\(^\text{488}\)

Findspot: Mingaçevir.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.9; Babayev 1990:fig. II.9.

---

\(^\text{488}\) This ring is a rare example of likely Greek workmanship from among the Mingaçevir seals. Its round bezel dates it to the 4th c. BCE or later (Boardman 1970:225).
Cat. #: 10
**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown. Horseman mounted on horse, engaged in flying gallop
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990:fig. III.6, 2010:19.

Cat. #: 11
**Description:** Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Printed image unclear. Reported by Babayev (1990:42) to be a man-headed bull facing left (top); lion facing left (bottom).
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990:fig. III.8.

Cat. #: 12
**Description:** Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Human-headed quadruped standing left.
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990:fig. III.3.
Cat. #: 13

**Description:** Bronze ring. Round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Winged quadruped walking in profile, tail down; unclear mark (flower?) at right above paw.\footnote{The mark above the paw could be a miscellaneous item, perhaps a lotus or bird. It could also be a distorted Aramaic letter (Wallenfels 1994:figs. 553–557), though this is less likely based on the illustration.}

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Supine ground burial.

**Bibliography:** Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19; Rzayev 1976:fig. 169.

---

Cat. #: 14

**Description:** Conical stone. Round face. Dim. unknown.\footnote{I believe that this is the seal discussed by Babayev (1990:fig. II.6; III.2), although the image printed there makes it difficult to be certain.}
Recumbent griffin facing left.\footnote{The shape of this seal is noteworthy, as bronze rings are more typical in the early periods in this corpus. Although depicting a motif common on earlier Iranian glyptic (Wallenfels 1994:70), the linear carving technique on this piece as well as some details like the upturned wings likely speak to local workmanship.}

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 2010:19.
Cat. #: 15
Description: Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Recumbent two-headed stag. Printed image unclear: Aslanov and Babayev report the image to be of a two-headed stag with one deer head and one lion head.
Findspot: Unknown. ( Likely Mingaocevir).
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965: fig. II.1; Babayev 1990: fig. III.9.

Cat. #: 16
Description: Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Goat-fish profile facing left, left leg forward and right below.
Findspot: Mingaocevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965: fig. II.10; Babayev 1990: fig. II.2; III.5.

Cat. #: 17
Description: Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Lion attacking stag.
Findspot: Mingaocevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965: fig. II.3; Babayev 1990: fig. II.4.
Cat. #: 18
**Description:** Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown. Boardman GGFR VIII. Two animals, perhaps hump-backed bull and goat-fish (?).  
**Findspot:** Unknown. Likely Mingaçevir.  
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.  
**Bibliography:** Babayev 2010:18.

---

Cat. #: 19  
**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown. Boardman GGFR VIII. Two animals, perhaps hump-backed bull and goat-fish (?).  
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.  
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.  
**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:1.2.

---

Cat. #: 20  
**Description:** Bronze ring. Round bezel. Dim. unknown. Deer standing in profile facing left, head down (grazing?).\(^{492}\)  
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

---

\(^{492}\) The motif of a stag shown in a naturalistic pose is familiar from the Iranian and classical glyptic corpora, the technique of carving is likely local. See particularly the seal impressions from Iberia.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Cat. #: 21
Description: Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Deer standing in profile facing left, head down (grazing?).
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Babayev 1990:fig. III.16.

Cat. #: 22
Description: Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown.
Deer standing in profile facing right (or kneeling?), neck angled back sharply.
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Babayev 1990:fig. III.12.

Cat. #: 23
Description: Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Frontal bull head; horizontal crescent above.
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Supine ground burial.
Bibliography: Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19; Rzayev 1976:fig. 167.

Cat. #: 24
Description: Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Printed image unclear. Pair of confronted birds perched atop a (?)
Findspot: Mingəçəvir.
Archaeological Context: Supine ground burial.
Bibliography: Babayev 1990:fig. II.3; III.10; Qazıyev 1949a:fig. 19.

Cat. #: 25
Description: Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.
Pair of confronted birds perched atop a rim of a bowl.
Findspot: Mingəçəvir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Babayev 1990:fig. III.11.

Cat. #: 26
Description: Bronze ring. Round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Printed image unclear.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990: fig. III.15.

**Cat. #:** 27

**Description:** Bronze ring. Oval bezel. Dim. unknown.

Printed image unclear.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990: fig. III.14.

**Cat. #:** 28

**Description:** Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown.

Printed image unclear.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990: fig. III.17.

**Cat. #:** 29

**Description:** Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Dim. unknown.
Printed image unclear.

Findspot: Mingaçevir.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.


---

Cat. #: 30

Description: Clay stamp seal. 25mm x 20mm.
Dear facing right, circular marks around legs.

Findspot: Kimush.

Archaeological Context: Main cultural layer in excavation area 2, under jar burials. Cultural layer dated between 4th c. BCE and 2nd c. BCE


---

Tabloid Seals

---

Cat. #: 31

Description: Multifaceted tabloid, blue glass. 18mm x 12mm.
Two mounted warriors fighting; horse on left leaping towards opposing horse, hand of warrior above head (with weapon?).

Findspot: Mingaçevir.

Archaeological Context: Jar burial #38 "B", excavated 1950.

---

Multifaceted rectangular stamp seals, often in deep blue glass, are known from several sites in the territory of modern Azerbaijan as well as from the archive at Artashat (Manoukian 1996:fig. 3) and from the necropoleis of Iberia.
Bibliography: Babayev 1965:fig. 2, 1990:fig. II.5; Qaziyev 1960:fig. XLIV.5; Xalilov 1985:fig. LXI.

Cat. #: 32
Description: Multifaceted tabloid, blue glass. 18mm x 10mm
Griffin striding to left.
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial #57, excavated 1950. Found along with several scaraboid seals.
Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965:I.1; Babayev 1964:fig. 3, 1965:fig. 3; Qaziyev 1960:fig. XLIV.4; Qolubkina 1956:fig. 4.9.

Cat. #: 33
Description: Multifaceted tabloid, blue glass. 17.5mm x 14mm.
Horseman with spear in right arm on galloping horse facing right, chases two prey animals (gazelle?). 494
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial #77, excavated 1947.
Bibliography: Babayev 1965:fig. 1.

Cat. #: 34

494 An exact parallel for this piece is known from a burial at Tsalka dated to the 4th c. BCE (M. Lordkipanidze 1961:fig. 45).
**Description:** Multifaceted tabloid, blue glass. ca. 35mm x 20mm
Printed illustration schematic. Reported to be a winged horse (right), rearing up on hind legs attacking with front legs; lion (left) leaps toward horse.

**Findspot:** Northern edge of Naxçıvan city.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #6, excavated in 1970. Found together with cat. #35, and also with a silver coin of Alexander III, although the coin is not illustrated and it is unclear whether exactly it is.

**Bibliography:** Əliyev 1976:fig. III.6.

---

**Description:** Multifaceted tabloid, pale/white glass. ca. 20mm x 10mm
Printed illustration schematic. Reported to be a lion standing left, tail curved up.

**Findspot:** Northern edge of Naxçıvan city.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #6, excavated in 1970. Found together with cat. #34, and also with a silver coin of Alexander III, although the coin is not illustrated and it is unclear whether exactly it is.

**Bibliography:** Əliyev 1976:fig. III.7.

---

**Uncertain Date**

---

**Description:** Scaraboid. Opal-colored stone. ca. 25mm dia.
Headless (?) man walking right, right arm bent at elbow hand pointing up, left arm bent at elbow hand pointing down.

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #57, excavated in 1947. Found together with several other scaraboid seals, a glass tabloid seal, as well as a bronze ring seal.
**Description:** Scaraboid. Opal-colored stone. ca. 30mm dia.
Two-legged animal with projecting features (horns?).

**Findspot:** Mingäçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #57, excavated in 1947. Found together with several other scaraboid seals, a glass tabloid seal, as well as a bronze ring seal.

**Bibliography:** Qazıyev 1960:fig. XLIV.2; Qolubkina 1956:fig. IV; Xəlilov 1985:fig. LXI.
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #57, excavated in 1947. Found together with several other scaraboid seals, a glass tabloid seal, as well as a bronze ring seal.

**Bibliography:** Qaziyev 1960:fig. XLIV.1; Qolubkina 1956:fig. IV.8; Xəlilov 1985:fig. LXI.

---

**Cat. #: 40**

**Description:** Scaraboid. Opal-colored stone. Dim. unknown.

Headless man runs left, arms bent at the elbow, one up, the other down.

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unspecified jar burial.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.5.

---

**Cat. #: 41**

**Description:** Scaraboid. Pale stone. ca. 15mm dia.

Schematic sun (?).

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unspecified jar burial.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.7.
Cat. #: 42
Description: Bronze ring. Round bezel. Bezel dia. ca. 18mm. Figure striding left, right arm swinging forward, left arm swinging back; tree (?) in front of figure.
Findspot: Mingaçevir.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial #57, excavated in 1947. Found together with several scaraboid seals and a glass tabloid seal.
Bibliography: Qazıyev 1960:fig. XLIV.7; Qolubkina 1956:fig. IV.14; Xalilov 1985:fig. LXI.

Cat. #: 43
Description: Irregular scaraboid. Stone. ca. 35mm x 25mm. Quadruped with pointed ears (canine?) standing on groundline.
Findspot: Mingaçevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Qazıyev 1960:fig. XLIV.6; Xalilov 1985:fig. LXI.

Cat. #: 44
Description: Metal ring, square bezel. ca. 15mm x 15mm. Two abstract figures standing facing front.
Findspot: Unknown.
**GROUP 2 SEALS**

*Late Hellenistic – Arsacid/ Roman*

*(ca. 2nd c. BCE – 3rd c. CE)*

---

**Cat. #**: 45

**Description**: Glass intaglio. 10.7mm x 9mm. Portrait, in profile facing left.

**Findspot**: Mingaçevir, right bank.

**Archaeological Context**: Jar burial, excavated in 1949. Found together with cat. #57. Burial contained four Roman Republican coins and 2 Arsacid coins of Tigranes II (95-56 BCE).

**Bibliography**: Qazıyev and Aslanov 1951:fig. I.1.

---

**Cat. #**: 46

**Description**: Bronze ring with glass intaglio. Gem dia. 22mm. Male head in profile right, long beard; right half of seal damaged.

**Findspot**: Mingaçevir, left bank.

**Archaeological Context**: Jar burial 4-L, excavated in 1948. Other objects in burial include a single drachm of Phraates IV (38 BCE – 2 CE).

**Bibliography**: Ione 1948:fig. 7.
Cat. #: 47
Description: Intaglio material unknown. Male head in profile.
Findspot: Mingöçevir (from either 17, 19, 29-30 or 14L)
Archaeological Context: From one of the Mingöçevir burials with a particularly rich inventory, likely a jar burial of a type dated to ca. 1st c. CE.
Bibliography: Ione 1955:fig. 22 n. 20.

Cat. #: 48
Description: Metal ring, oval bezel (possible inset gem?). Intaglio surface 8mm x 6mm. Two faces.
Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Xəlilov 1985:fig. LXI.

Cat. #: 49
Description: Intaglio gem. Oval. Dim. unknown. Standing god (Dionysus?) facing left, right arm raised, left arm on hip.
Findspot: Mingöçevir.
Cat. #: 50
Description: Intaglio gem. Oval. Dim. unknown. Standing god (Dionysus?) facing left, right arm raised, left arm on hip. Quality of the published images makes it difficult to ascertain who.
Findspot: Mingçevehir.

Cat. #: 51
Description: Intaglio gem. Oval. Dim. unknown. Ares standing frontal, head turned in profile to left; wearing a helmet, spear in right hand and shield in left.
Findspot: Mingçevehir.

Cat. #: 52
Description: Bronze ring. Pointed bezel. Bezel dia. ca. 18mm. Figure stands facing right, right arm raised, holding unclear object, left arm behind back, holding weapon (?).
Findspot: Yardımıllı rayonu, Delleki village.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial, excavated in 1961, which contained a triple burial. One other ring was found from burial, but image was damaged. The burial was dated to 1st c. BCE – 2nd c. CE on the basis of grave goods.

Bibliography: Sadıqzadə 1963:fig. 3, 3a.

Cat. #: 53

Description: Iron ring with glass intaglio. Dim. unknown.

Printed image unclear. Reported by Narimanov to be ‘goddess of love,’ right hand up, left hand holding a bird; two animals at feet.

Findspot: Mingəçevir, left bank.

Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial #14, excavated in 1951. Context is reported to be 2nd – 6th c. CE catacomb burial.


Cat. #: 54

Description: Silver ring with intaglio gem. Boardman GGFR XXVII. Gem dia. ca. 18mm.

Individual facing right, bending at waist right hand outstretched; altar (?) in front of individual; tree on right margin; floating mark above altar (sun?).

Findspot: Qəbələ

Archaeological Context: Discovered in a ground burial in the Selbir section of Qəbələ along with Yaloylu Tapa ceramics, and an Arsacid coin of Gotarzes dated to 40-51 CE.

Cat. #: 55
Description: Intaglio gem. Dim. unknown. Victory crowning Fortuna.
Findspot: Mingçėvир.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Xəlilov and Babayev 1974:fig. 8a.

Cat. #: 56
Description: Intaglio gem. Dim. unknown. Enthroned figure facing left with flanking figures on left and right. Possibly Jupiter, Minerva (left) and Victory (right).
Findspot: Mingçėvир.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Xəlilov and Babayev 1974:fig. 8b.

Cat. #: 57
Description: Stone (?) inset into metal (bronze?) ring. Dim. unknown. Two figures facing each other.

The use of stones inset into rings of this type is said by Aslanov and Babaev to be an early Parthian characteristic.
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. I.5.

---

**Cat. #: 58**

**Description:** Agate intaglio. 12mm x 10mm.

Printed image unclear. Reported by Qazıyev and Aslanov to be two individuals holding hands.

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir, right bank.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial, excavated in 1949. Found together with cat. # 45. Burial contained four Roman Republican coins and 2 Arsacid coins of Tigranes II (95-56 BCE).

**Bibliography:** Qazıyev and Aslanov 1951:fig. I.2.

---

**Cat. #: 59**

**Description:** Silver ring. Small oval bezel. Bezel ca. 18mm x 10mm (Winged?) horse stands facing right.

**Findspot:** Kınıslı.

**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial in first excavation area, upper cultural layer, excavated in 1958.

Burial contained other metal objects, as well as a coin of Gotarzes (40-51 CE).

**Bibliography:** Xəlilov 1961:fig. VI.11.
Cat. #: 60

**Description:** Carnelian (?) intaglio. Dim. unknown. Winged charioteer drives two-horse chariot team, galloping right.

**Findspot:** Mugan Steppe, Uç tapa kurgan.

**Archaeological Context:** Found in 6th-7th c. CE tomb, but of likely 2nd – 3rd c. CE workmanship. This motif is known in many periods (Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978:fig. 166; 913).

**Bibliography:** Rzaev 1976:fig 173.

---

Cat. #: 61

**Description:** Light blue translucent spheroid (Chalcedony-Sapphire). 14.8mm x 18mm. Mounted rider on horse facing right, holding spear in right hand above head; confronting standing fighter with shield in right hand and sword in left.

**Findspot:** Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 58.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1949:fig. 1.

---

Cat. #: 62

**Description:** Dark green opaque. 9.5mm x 11.5mm.
Mounted horseman with on horse walking right, with frontal torso, right hand holding reins, left hand holding hunting trophy (?)).

**Findspot:** Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 60

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1949:fig. 2.

---

**Cat. #: 63**

**Description:** Intaglio gem. Dim. unknown.

Altar

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown. Possibly jar burial.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1990:XXVII.4.

---

**Cat. #: 64**

**Description:** Metal ring, oval bezel. Bezel ca. 12mm x 6mm. Linear scorpion.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Xəlilov 1985:fig. LXI.
Cat. #: 65
**Description:** Metal ring, oval bezel. Bezel ca. 10mm x 7mm. Linear star.
**Findspot:** Unknown.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Xəlilov 1985:fig. LXI.

Cat. #: 66
**Description:** Iron ring. Dim. unknown. Star (?)
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir, left bank.
**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial #21, excavated in 1951. Found alongside fragments of bronze ring.
**Bibliography:** Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962:fig. XII.1.

Cat. #: 67
**Description:** Faience scarab. ca. 15mm x 12mm. Printed image unclear. Reported by Qaziyev and Golubkina to be an animal with long ears, perhaps a rabbit.
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir, right bank.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial, along with cat. #67, 68 and 69. Jar burial dated to 1st c. BCE or later.

Bibliography: Qazıyev 1960:XLI.1; Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949:fig. III.2.

Cat. #: 68
Description: Faience scarab. ca. 12mm x 10mm. Printed image unclear. Reported by Qazıyev and Golubkina to be a goose.
Findspot: Mingaçevir, right bank.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial, along with cat. #66, 68 and 69. Jar burial dated to 1st c. BCE or later.
Bibliography: Qazıyev 1960:XLI.1; Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949:fig. III.1.

Cat. #: 69
Description: Light-colored scaraboid strung onto necklace. ca. 18mm x 15mm. Abstract linear designs
Findspot: Mingaçevir, right bank.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial, along with cat. #66, 67 and 69. Jar burial dated to 1st c. BCE or later.
Bibliography: Qazıyev 1960:XLI.7; Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949:fig. III.16.
Cat. #: 70
**Description:** Light-colored scaraboid strung onto necklace. ca. 18mm x 15mm. Running man?
**Findspot:** Mingəçəvir, right bank.
**Archaeological Context:** Jar burial, along with cat. #66, 67 and 68. Jar burial dated to 1st c. BCE or later.
**Bibliography:** Qazıyev 1960:XLI.7; Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949:fig. III.8.

---

**GROUP 3 SEALS**

*Late Roman / Arsacid – Sasanian*

*(ca. 2nd c. – 6th c. CE)*

Cat. #: 71
**Description:** Shape and material unknown
Male head in profile left, long beard.
**Findspot:** Mingəçəvir.
**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial.
**Bibliography:** Aslanov 1955:fig. 29, n. 23.

Cat. #: 72
**Description:** Shape and material unknown
Male head in profile left, long beard.
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial.

Cat. #: 73
Description: Agate in gold ring setting.
Two confronting figures - man and animal?
Findspot: Ağsu.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Cat. #: 74
Description: Seal type and dimensions unknown.
Man standing right, holding bird (?) on outstretched left arm.
Findspot: Mingachevir.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial.
Bibliography: Babayev 2010:21; Aslanov 1955:29 n.27.

Cat. #: 75
Description: Stone false ring with faceting on external surfaces.¹⁴⁹⁶

¹⁴⁹⁶ Possibly the same seal as cat. #71.
Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Cat. #: 76
Description: Intaglio in local yellow stone, found near badly corroded silver ring setting.
Individual standing, facing left, playing flute (?).
Findspot: Ucar district, Qaratapa.
Archaeological Context: Jar burial #2, excavated in 1953. Found together with objects including a ‘Sarmatian-type’ fibula. This context is dated by Babayev to the 3rd c. CE.
Bibliography: Babayev 1973:fig. 2b; Qolubkina 1959:fig. 4

Cat. #: 77
Description: Seal type and dimensions unknown.
Two figures confronting.
Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Description: Oval conoid. Dimensions unknown. Griffin, crouching right.\footnote{For local parallel, Lordkipanidze (1958): 40, which is dated to the 4th c.}

Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.11.

---

Cat. #: 79
Description: Oval conoid. Dimensions unknown.
Lion walking right, tail up. Scorpion in field above lion.

Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.12; Babayev 2010:21.

---

Cat. #: 80
Description: Lazurite intaglio. Ring shape unclear.
Recumbent lion facing right, horizontal crescent in field above back.

Findspot: Mingaçevir, left bank.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial #10, excavated in 1951. Found alongside glass false ring seal cat. #104. Context is reported to be 2\textsuperscript{nd} – 6\textsuperscript{th} c. CE catacomb burial.


\footnote{For local parallel, Lordkipanidze (1958): 40, which is dated to the 4th c.}
Cat. #: 81
**Description:** Shape and material unknown
Recumbent goat?
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial.
**Bibliography:** Aslanov 1955:fig. 29, n. 30.

Cat. #: 82
**Description:** Intaglio gem in ring setting (Boardman GGRF XV?). Dim. unknown.
Lion standing left; star (scorpion?) in field above lion.
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial (?)
**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. I.9; Babayev 2010:20

Cat. #: 83
**Description:** Seal shape and dimensions unknown.
Deer standing right.
**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.17.

---

498 Aslanov and Babaev date the truncated cone of the ring setting to the 3rd c. and later.
Cat. #: 84
Description: Unknown stone false ring. Recumbent dear facing right.
Findspot: Mingəçevir.
Archaeological Context: Late-period catacomb no. 31.
Bibliography: Vahidov 1955:fig. 31 n.23.

Cat. #: 85
Description: Seal type and dimensions unknown. Dear leaping left.
Findspot: Unknown.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Cat. #: 86
Description: Dark brown stone false ring. Intaglio surface 9mm x 12mm. Recumbent deer facing left, head turned to right; border above dear.
Findspot: Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 74.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 10.
Cat. #: 87

**Description:** Brown hematite false ring with faceting on external surfaces. Dim. unknown.

Winged quadruped standing right, tail up.

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir, left bank.

**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial #12, excavated in 1951. Context is reported to be 2nd – 6th c. CE catacomb burial.

**Bibliography:** Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962:fig. XII.9.

Cat. #: 88

**Description:** Seal type and dimensions unknown.

Goat standing right; garland behind back.

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir (?).

**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial (?).

**Bibliography:** Babayev 2010:21.

Cat. #: 89

**Description:** Flat carnelian. 11mm x 12.5mm.

Bull walking left; garland above.

**Findspot:** Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 59.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 3.
Cat. #: 90
Description: Stone false ring with faceting on external surfaces. Recumbant hump-backed bull facing left.
Findspot: Mingəçevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Cat. #: 91
Description: Seal type and dimensions unknown. Bull standing right.
Findspot: Mingəçevir.
Archaeological Context: Unknown.
Bibliography: Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.14.

Cat. #: 92
Description: Chalcedony. Bull standing right.
Findspot: Mingəçevir.
Archaeological Context: Late-period catacomb n. 31.
Bibliography: Vahidov 1955:fig. 31 n.:22.\(^{499}\)

\(^{499}\) I cannot be certain that this is a separate seal than the catalog entry above it, because of publishing quality.
Cat. #: 93

**Description:** Seal type and dimensions unknown.
Bird standing right.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Ground burial.

**Bibliography:** Rzayev 1976:fig. 171.

---

Cat. #: 94

**Description:** Seal type and dimensions unknown.
Bird standing right.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 2010:21.

---

Cat. #: 95

**Description:** Chalcedony in bronze ring
Bird with wings outstretched.

**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Late-period catacomb no. 31.

**Bibliography:** Vahidov 1955:fig. 31 n.21.
Cat. #: 96
**Description:** Gray chalcedony false ring. Intaglio surface 15mm x 19.5mm.
Two birds.
**Findspot:** Unknown, purchased from a dealer in Tbilisi. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 27.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 5.

Cat. #: 97
**Description:** Gray chalcedony false ring. Intaglio surface 12.5mm x 13mm.
Two birds.
**Findspot:** Unknown, purchased from a dealer in Tbilisi. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 23.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 6.

Cat. #: 98
**Description:** Seal shape and dimensions unknown.
Scorpion.
**Findspot:** Mingəçevir.
**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.
**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.16.
Cat. #: 99

**Description:** Seal shape and dimensions unknown.
Tulip

**Findspot:** Mingçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial (?)

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.15; Babayev 1973:fig. 2a; (Aslanov 1955:29 n.34?).

---

Cat. #: 100

**Description:** False ring. Material unknown.
Tamaga?

**Findspot:** Mingçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Catacomb burial.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov 1955:fig. 29, n. 31.

---

Cat. #: 101

**Description:** Seal shape and dimensions unknown.
Altar (?)

**Findspot:** Mingçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.18.
Cat. #: 102

**Description:** Oval conoid. Dimensions unknown.
Three tulips with stems connecting.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:fig. II.13.

---

Cat. #: 103

**Description:** Seal type and dimensions unknown.
Two heads of wheat.\(^{500}\)

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 2010:19.\(^{501}\)

---

Cat. #: 104

---

\(^{500}\) A very similar image is known from a burial at Armaztsikhe, where it is dated to the 3\(^{rd}\) c. CE (M. Lordkipanidze 1958:fig. 11).

\(^{501}\) Cat. #95 and 96 could perhaps be Group II.
Description: Seal type and dimensions unknown. Wheat (?)

Findspot: Unknown.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.


---

Cat. #: 105

Description: Bronze ring, Boardman GGFR XII. Intaglio surface 8mm x 10mm. Linear design with circular marks.

Findspot: Xınışlı. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi, Inv. # 57.

Archaeological Context: Burial of undefined type, explored by 1939 expedition. Found along with intaglio false ring cat. #98. Grave is dated to late Parthian/ early Sasanian period.

Bibliography: Pakhomov 1949d, fig. not numbered.

---

Cat. #: 106

Description: Carnelian (?) false ring. Intaglio surface 9.4mm x 12.5mm. Palm tree.

Findspot: Xınışlı. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 56.

Archaeological Context: Burial of undefined type, explored by 1939 expedition. Found along with bronze ring, cat. #97. Grave is dated to late Parthian/ early Sasanian period.

Bibliography: Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 4.

---

502 This piece is connected by Trever to several other Sasanian-period tree images in Caucasian Albania (Trever 1959:321, 83.1)
Cat. #: 107

Description: Agate conoid. 28.5mm x 20.5mm.
‘Gayomart’ figure.\footnote{On this well known type, see Brunner, C.J. 1978. Sasanian stamp seals in the Metropolitan Museum of Art. New York: Metropolitan Museum: #69. Sasanian period representation of Orion. The type is familiar from the Caucasus, with examples appearing from both Georgia (M. Lordkipanidze 1967:figs. 82, 83) and Dagestan (Prokopenko 2009:fig. 1.14-17).}

Findspot: Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 52.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 8.

Cat. #: 108

Description: Agate conoid. 21.5mm x 18mm.
Linear abstract design.\footnote{Perhaps also related to the well known Gayomart type, see above, cat. # 99, 100. On the other hand, this type of seal could also be related to a seal tradition known from earlier periods at Samtavro, where similar linear designs are attested (M. Lordkipanidze 1954:fig. 26).}

Findspot: Unknown. Held in Milli Azərbaycan Tarix Muzeyi. Inv. # 70.

Archaeological Context: Unknown.

Bibliography: Pakhomov 1949d:fig. 9.
**Description:** Metal (bronze?) ring, round bezel. Dim. unknown.
Sun (?).

**Findspot:** Mingaçevir.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Aslanov and Babayev 1965:I.10; Babayev 1973:fig. 3.

---

**Cat. #:** 110

**Description:** Metal (bronze?) ring. Dim. unknown.
Uncertain linear design.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1973:fig. 3.

---

**Cat. #:** 111

**Description:** Metal (bronze?) ring. Dim. unknown.
Uncertain linear design.

**Findspot:** Unknown.

**Archaeological Context:** Unknown.

**Bibliography:** Babayev 1973:fig. 3.
Cat. #: 112
Description: Glass false ring. Linear abstract design.
Findspot: Mingaoçevir, left bank.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial #10, excavated in 1951. Found alongside glass false ring seal cat. #77. Context is reported to be 2nd – 6th c. CE catacomb burial.

Cat. #: 113
Description: Chalcedony false ring. Dim. unknown. Linear design.
Findspot: Mingaoçevir, left bank.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial #6/9, excavated in 1951. Found with cat. #106. Context is reported to be 2nd – 6th c. CE catacomb burial.

Cat. #: 114
Description: Agate false ring. Dim. unknown. Linear design.
Findspot: Mingaoçevir, left bank.
Archaeological Context: Catacomb burial #6/9, excavated in 1951. Found with cat. #105. Context is reported to be 2nd – 6th c. CE catacomb burial.


Cat. #: 115

Description: Unknown stone false ring. Linear desing.

Findspot: Mingacevir.

Archaeological Context: Late-period catacomb no. 31

Bibliography: Vahidov 1955:fig. 31 n.24.
# TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>AUTHOR</th>
<th>WORK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aelian</td>
<td>De natura animalium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ammianus Marcellinus</td>
<td>Res gestae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appian</td>
<td>Mithridateios</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrian</td>
<td>Ektasis kata alanon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrian</td>
<td>Periplus Maris Euxini</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrian</td>
<td>Anabasis</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aurelius Victor</td>
<td>De caesaribus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cassius Dio</td>
<td>Istoria</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dionysus Periegentes</td>
<td>Geographica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eusebius</td>
<td>Church History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eutropius</td>
<td>Breviarium historiae Romanae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Festus</td>
<td>Breviarium rerum gestarum populi Romani</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavius Josephus</td>
<td>Bellum Judaicum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flavius Philostratus</td>
<td>Vita Apollonii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Florus</td>
<td>History</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontius</td>
<td>Strategema</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gaius Iulius Solinus</td>
<td>De mirabilibus mundi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Justin/ Trogus</td>
<td>Epitome</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livy</td>
<td>Periochoi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lucian of Samosota</td>
<td>Toxaris</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marcius of Heraclea</td>
<td>Periplus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pliny the Elder</td>
<td>Naturalis historia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plutarch</td>
<td>Antony</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plutarch</td>
<td>Pompey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plutarch</td>
<td>Sulla</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plutarch</td>
<td>Lucullus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pomponius Mela</td>
<td>Geographica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ptolemy</td>
<td>Geographica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rufius Festus Avienus</td>
<td>Descriptio orbis terrae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA</td>
<td>Antoninus Pius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA</td>
<td>Aurelian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA</td>
<td>Hadrian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SHA</td>
<td>Valerianus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strabo</td>
<td>Geographica</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stephanus of Byzantium</td>
<td>Ethnika</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suetonius</td>
<td>Domitianus</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suetonius</td>
<td>Nero</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacitus</td>
<td>Annales</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tacitus</td>
<td>Historiae</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tertullian</td>
<td>Ad nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Velleius Paterculus</td>
<td>Historia romana</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: List of texts with noteworthy accounts of Albania/ Caspian area.
Fig. 1. Geopolitical map of the Caucasus, with inset providing regional context. Dashed lines indicate contested borders (Fabian, Basemap courtesy of ESRI GeoEye).

Fig. 2. Antik-period polities in the Caucasus. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 3. Physical geography of the eastern Caucasus, showing most important regions discussed in text. On sea level, see chapter 5 (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 4. Ivan Constantinovich Aivazovsky, ‘Caucasus’ [Кавказ] 1863. WikimediaCommons.
Fig. 5. Silver aryballos from Vani burial No. 11/1969. Tbilisi, Georgian National Museum. Inv. No. 10-975: 101 (Treister 2007:fig.1.1).

Fig. 6. Silver goblet from Sairkhe. Tbilisi, Museum of Art (Treister 2007:fig. 8.2-3).
Fig. 7. Greek imported ceramics from the 5th c. BCE Greek Necropolis at Pichvnari (Tsetskhadze 1999:fig.16 [top]; fig. 17 [bottom]).
Fig. 8. Achaemenid vessels from burials. Left: Silver phialai from Akhalgori (Knauss 2006:fig. 1). Right: Glass bowl from Tsintsqaro (Knauss 2006:fig. 7).

Fig. 9. Achaemenid items of adornment from 5th/4th c. BCE burials. Left: Gold pendants with image of Ahuramazda from Sairkhe (Knauss 2006:fig. 14). Right: Gold bracelet from Vani (Knauss 2006:fig. 4).
Fig. 10. Greek inscription #2 from Armavir (Mahe 1996:fig. 13).
Fig. 11. Fragmentary architecture (possibly part of a warehouse?) from the artificial terrace of Samadlo, late 4th or early 3rd c. BCE (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 37).

Fig. 12. Settlement and temple complex from Tsikhia Gora built in similar construction technique to Samadlo remains, from the early Hellenistic period (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 38).
Fig. 13. Uplistsikhe rock-carved urban acropolis plan (Licheli 2001:fig.6).
Fig. 14. Region near Dedoplis Mindori and Dedoplis Gora (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 2).

Fig. 15. Plan of Dedoplis Mindori temple complex (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 31).

Fig. 16. Plan of Dedoplis Gora hill and excavated structures (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 3).
Fig. 17. Plan of Dedoplis Gora hill and excavated structures (Furtwängler and Gagoshidze 2008:fig. 3).

Fig. 18. Photograph of Qobustan inscription (in current location?) (WikimediaCommons, User ‘Grandmaster’).
Fig. 19. Büyük Dähne inscription (Trever 1959: fig. 31).
Fig. 20. Inscription found near Mtskheta, reporting the help of Vespasian and Titus in strengthening the walls of the Iberian capital. SEG 20.112. (Uvarov 1902).
Fig. 21. Contested territories in the South Caucasus (Hoch, Souleimanov, and Baranec 2014:vol. 23, fig. 1)
Fig. 22. Administrative districts immediately before the Russian Revolution (1903-1914), showing late Imperial configuration of space (Tsutsiev 2007:fig. 15).

Fig. 23. Administrative districts in early Soviet period (1922-1928) (Tsutsiev 2007:fig. 22).
Fig. 24. Overview map of Azerbaijan (Osmanov 2006:fig. 41).

Fig. 25. View of Şamaxı and environs (Osmanov 1982:fig. 1).
Fig. 26. Map of archaeological sites of Azerbaijan (Xəlilov 1985:fig. 1).
Fig. 27. Topographic map of Azerbaijan (Trever 1959:fig. 41).

Fig. 28. Map of Caucasus and neighboring zones between the 5th and 7th c. CE (Trever 1959:fig. 42).
Fig. 29. Map of archaeological settlements and coin hoards (Babaev 1990:fig. 2).
Fig. 30. Eastern Caucasus and Northern Iran archaeological sites (Koshelenko 1985:fig. 6).
АЛМАСТЕНЭ — поселение эпохи раннего средневековья. Оно расположено в 300 м к западу от села Гендов, вдоль водяных отстойников.

Границы памятника: с севера и запада — естественные холмы, юга — грунтовая дорога, с востока — Самур-Апшеронский канал. Памятник открыт и обследован в 1976 г. экспедицией САПА.

Поселение сохранилось в виде холма неправильной овальной формы, вытянутой в направлении запад-восток (рис.1). Вершина холма ровная, склоны умеренные. Площадь поверхности равна 2150 кв.м, высота холма неразмерная: в северо-западной части она достигает 3,5 м, а в его-западной — 8,5 м.

Памятник хорошей сохранности, без повреждений. На вершине имеется много нер грабунов. Выбросленная земля насаждена лозой, кустами яблок, винограда, виноградом, виноградом, виноградом. В настоящее время поверхность холма используется под сенокос. Холм зарос высокой травой, что затрудняет сбор подъемного материала. На западном склоне холма был заложен шурф. Толщина культурного слоя более 1 м. Здесь обнаружена преимущественно керамика, среди которой выделяются обломки днища сосуда удлиненной формы и обломки миски розового обжига грубою лепной работы.

Керамика из Алмасенэ характерна для раннесредневековых памятников этой зоны, на основании чего последняя датируется IX—XII вв.

Fig. 31. Topographic plan of Almas tapa, provided without additional wider context (C.Ə. Xəlilov, Qoşqarlı, and Arazova 1990:fig. 1).
Fig. 32. Murav’ev’s analysis of Ptolemy’s geography, hypothesizing a transgression of the Caspian far into the Kura lowlands (Murav’ev 1983:fig. 7).

Fig. 33. Murav’ev’s representation of the sea level of the Caspian between the 4th and 3rd c. BCE (Murav’ev 1991:fig. 6).
Fig. 34. Comparison of Pleistocene and Holocene sea level change estimates for the Caspian (Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:table 1).

Fig. 35. Range of Caspian coastlines with corresponding Caspian sea levels (Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014:fig. 4).
Fig. 36. Illustration of the difference between a 30m sea level rise and one of 3-4m (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 37. Least Cost Path study points. Zone of interest marked by box. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 38. Cumulative Cost Paths. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 39. Cumulative Cost Paths ranked by frequency of route selection. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 40. Primary (top), secondary (middle), and tertiary (bottom) routes. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 41. Metric choice across the three network, (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 42. Peutinger table. Top- view showing relative positions of Caucasus polities. Bottom- Detail view showing section labeled ‘Iberia-Albania’ (Talbert 2010).
Fig. 43. Capital cities with respect to cumulative cost paths. (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 44. Drawings of archaeological material near Derbent, after information from Kantemir (Bayer 1728:462).
Fig. 45. *Dahyu* of Armenia, according to Khatchadourian (from Khatchadourian 2016:124).
Fig. 46. Sites with Achaemenid remains (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 2)
Fig. 47. Plan of Gumbati (Knauss 2000:fig. 1).

Fig. 48. Reconstruction of Gumbati (Knauss 2006:fig. 10).
Fig. 49. Plan of Ïdeal Təpə propylon, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 11).

Fig. 50. Reconstruction of Ïdeal Təpə propylon, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 14).
Fig. 51. Plan of Qurban Təpə structure, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 17).

Fig. 52. Reconstruction of Qurban Təpə structure, Qaracəmirli (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 21).
Fig. 53. Plan of Sarıəpə (Nərimanov 2001:151).
Fig. 54. Column base comparison from the South Caucasus. 1: Sarıəpə; 2-3: Gumbati, fragments; 4: Gumbati, reconstruction; 5: Benamin, fragment; 6: Qaracəmirli, fragment; 7: Tsikhiagora, reconstruction (Gagoshidze and Kipiani 2000:fig. 1).
Fig. 55. Base from Sarıtepe (Knauss, Gagoshidze, and Babaev 2013:fig. 7).

Fig. 56. Bowl from Sarıtepe (Nərimanov 2001:151).

Fig. 57. Bowl from Sarıtepe (Nərimanov 2001:151).
Fig. 58. Map of Qəbələ rayonu showing modern villages (Габала. На страницах истории [Qəbəle. In the Pages of History], n.d.:22).
Fig. 59. Map of Qəbələ areas, showing Çaqqallı (excavation areas 1 and 2 marked); Səlbir; and Qala (after Babaev and Ahmdov 1981:fig. 1).
Fig. 60. Medieval fortification walls of Qəbələ at the time of Şərifov’s work (Şərifov 1927:174).
Fig. 61. DigitalGlobe image of Qəbələ with detail of Çaqqallı (imagery from Google Earth).
Fig. 62. Plan of large rectilinear structure, upper context (Babaev and Ahmadov 1981: fig. 6).

Fig. 63. Photograph of column base from large rectilinear structure (Babayev 1990:92 fig. 15).

Fig. 64. Section illustration of column base (Babayev 1990:93 fig. 16).
Fig. 65. Tiles from above excavated structure (Babayev 1990:80 fig. 10).

Fig. 66. Plan of large rectilinear structure, lower context. Legend—1: Agricultural pit. 2: Post hole. 3: Paving gravel. 4: Mudbrick wall. 5: Burn traces. (Babayev 1990:87, fig. 13).
Fig. 67. Plan of small rectilinear building (Babayev 1990:87, fig. 12).

Fig. 68. Plan of Oval building #1, excavation area 3 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ïskandrov, et al. 2014:99, fig. 4).
Fig. 69. Plan of Oval buildings #2 and 3, excavation area 3 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014:103, fig. 11).

Fig. 70. Plan of Çaqqalli excavation area 4 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014:106, fig. 16).
Fig. 71. Photograph of pithoi storage from 2012 excavation season. See plan of Oval buildings 2 and 3 for location of pithoi (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayilov, et al. 2014:130, fig. 4a).

Fig. 72. Photograph of pithoi storage from 2012 excavation season. See plan of Oval buildings 2 and 3 for location of pithoi (Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayilov, et al. 2014:130, fig. 4b).
Fig. 73. Ceramic production area found below Oval building #1 (Babayev, Mustafeyev, Ismayilov, et al. 2014:137, fig. 12).
Fig. 74. Locations of settlements mentioned in text (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 75. Xınıslı building remains (Xalilov and Babayev 1974:106, fig. 6).

Fig. 76. Xınıslı column bases (Babayev 1990:99, fig. 17).
Fig. 77. Qırlartəpə structure foundations, plan and section (Osmanov 2006:plate 2)

Fig. 78. 1.Qırlartəpə excavation area foundations, plan and section (Osmanov 2006:plate 4)
Fig. 79. Plan of Dedopolis Mindori complex (left) and detail of temple structure (right) (Furtwängler et al. 2008:pt. 13, figs. 30-31)
Fig. 80. Plan of Armaztsikhe area, showing (http://saunje.ge/index.php?id=1420&lang=ru, accessed 12.20.2017)

Fig. 81. Plan of Great Hall at Armaztsikhe (Lordkipanidze 1991:151, fig. 70).

Fig. 82. Photograph of Great Hall of Armaztsikhe (Gamkrelidze 2014:94).

Fig. 83. Plan of one of the bath complexes at Armaztsikhe. Upper plan shows foundation level and hypocaust system, Lower plan shows floor level (Lordkipanidze 1991:168, fig. 73).
Fig. 84. Plan of Dzalisi complex, including bath (Gamkrelidze 2014:106).
Fig. 85. Map of coins in database (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

Fig. 86. Coin hoards by size (Fabian).

Fig. 87. Coins by metal (Fabian).

Fig. 88. Coins by minting power (Fabian).
Fig. 89. Roman coins in database (top); Arsakid coins in database (bottom) (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 90. Coins from the eastern Caucasus (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 91. Hoards from the piedmont region (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

Fig. 92. Locally minted coinage. Drachm of less common (earlier) type (Rəcəbli 1986:fig. 2).

Fig. 93. Locally minted coinage. Drachm of more common (later?) type (Rəcəbli 1986:fig. 3).

Fig. 94. Qəbələ hoard histogram (Fabian).

Fig. 95. Xınıslı hoard histogram (Fabian).
Fig. 96. Coins from Iberia (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).

Fig. 97. Coin hoards from Iberia with Roman or Arsakid coins showing hoard composition (Fabian).

Fig. 98. Iberia imitation staters. Top-‘Lysimachus’ type; Bottom- ‘Alexander’ type (Dundua and Dundua 2013, digital resource accessed at geonumismatics.tsu.ge)
Fig. 99. Qəbələ bullae, published group one (Xəlilov and Babayev 1974:103, fig. 3).

Fig. 100. Qəbələ bullae, published group two (Babaev and Ahmadov 1981:fig. 20).

Fig. 101. Qəbələ bullae, published group three (Babayev 2010).
Fig. 102. Sasanian border fortifications along the Caspian coast. White lines indicate linear fortifications, white circles indicate forts (Lawrence and Wilkinson 2017:fig. 5).
Fig. 103. One typical interpretation of supposed Scythian and Cimmerian migrations (Bliev and Bzarov 2000:35).

Fig. 104. Illustration of one of the Mingacevir supine burials (Qaziyev 1949:22, fig. 10).
Fig. 105. Materials from Mingachevir supine burials. 1- Stone vessel with silver encrustation (?); 2-Gold items of personal adornment; 3- Bronze belt fragment; 4- Bronze mirror (Qaziyev 1949:24–25, figs. 13-16).
Fig. 106. Photograph of supine burial excavated by BTC pipeline project (Huseynov, Agayev, and Ashurov 2006:34, photo 3).

Fig. 107. Schematic plan of Zilgi settlement (Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000:fig. 2).
Fig. 108. Map of catacomb burials (Fabian, SRTM data courtesy of USGS).
Fig. 109. Smirnov’s typology of catacomb burials. Bottom row is catacombs from the North Caucasus (Smirnov 1972:75, fig. 1).

Fig. 110. ‘Combination’ catacomb with internment in jar (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).

Fig. 111. ‘Combination’ catacomb with internment in timber coffin (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).
Fig. 112. ‘Simple’ catacomb with internment placed on a wooden platform (Aslanov 1955:65, fig. 25).

Fig. 113. Ceramics and vessels from catacomb burials at Mingəçevir, including glass objects (#6-8) and metal (9) (Aslanov 1955:66, fig. 26).
Fig. 114. Ceramic and glass vessels from Qəbələ catacomb #8 (Ha, Yeo, and Babayev, n.d.:27, 29).

Fig. 115. Example Dailaman catacombs (Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966:pt. 55).

Fig. 116. Tripod bowl from Mingəçevir (Qazıyev 1960:Tab.23 no. 3).

Fig. 117. Tripod bowl from Dailaman (Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966:pt. 39, n. 13).

Fig. 118. Footed bowl (from Mingəçevir?) (Rzaev 1976).

Fig. 119. Footed bowl from Dailaman (Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966:pt. 43, n. 10).
Fig. 120. Map of locations with late supine burials (Fabian, basemap using USGS data).

Fig. 121. Example of Ustyurt stelae. Left- Konai Sanctuary; Right- Baite III Sanctuary (Olkhovskiy 2000:41, figs. 3–4).
Fig. 122. Xınışlı stele, discovered by chance in 1946 (İbrahimov 2013:48, fig. 39).

Fig. 123. Xınışlı stele, reused as burial cover (Xəlilov 1960:1127, fig. 2).

Fig. 124. Partial Xınışlı stele (İbrahimov 2013:23, fig. 11).
Fig. 125. Dağkolani stele (Xəlilov 1965:fig. 118).

Fig. 126. Images of Çıraqlı stelae. (Left- screen shots from Dədə Qorqud film. See pp. 396, n. 463; Right- Xəlilov 1985:pt. 36)
Fig. 127. Examples of slightly later anthropomorphic stelae from Tərər (İbrahimov 2013:43, figs. 32-34).
BIBLIOGRAPHY

In the bibliography, letters absent in English are alphabetized according to their position in Azerbaijani (Ә after Е; І after І; Ș after S). See preface for more detail on transliteration.

Abaev and Bailey 1985

Abramishvili 1965

Abramova 1978

——— 1987

——— 1995

——— 1997

——— 2000

——— 2005
Abramzon 2003

Adelman and Aron 1999

Adler 2011

Agnew and Crobridge 2002

Aitchison 1988

Akbarzādah 2009

Akira 1981

Akopian 1987
А.А. Акопян. 1987. Албания–Алуанк в греко-латинских и древнеармянских источниках [Albania-Aluank in Greco-Latin and Old Armenian Sources]. Ереван: Издательство Академии наук Армянской ССР.

Akopian, Muradian, and Iuzbashian 1991
Акопьян 2013

[Anon.] 1835

Alcock, Osborne 2012

Alconini 2016

Alekshin et al. 1983

Alemany 2000

Aliev, A.A. et al. 2006 (For other works by the same author, see Ə.Ə. Əliyev)

Aliev, I.G. and Goshgarli 1995 (see also İ.H. Əliyev and Q.O. Qoşqarlı)

Alizadeh, A. 2010

Alizadeh, K. 2014

Alpatov 1991
Anderson 1934

Ando 2006

——— 2017a

——— 2017b

Andreeva 2007

Andrews 2003

Andreyev 1959

Anemone 2000

Anthony and Brown 2007

Apakidze, A., Kipiani, and Nikolaishvili 2004
Apakidze, A. and Nikolaishvili 1994

Apakidze, А.М. et al. 1958

Appadurai 1986

Arazova 2001

Arnold-Biucchi 1991

Arzhantseva, Deopik, and Malashev 2000

Arzhantseva and Ruzanova 2010

Asheri, Lloyd, and Corcella 2007

Aslanov 1955


Aslanov and Babayev 1965

Aslanov, Vaidov and Ione 1959
Г.М. Асланов, Р.М. Вайдов, and Г.И. Ионе. 1959. Древний Мингечаур: эпоха неолита и бронзы [Ancient Mingechaur: Neolithic and Bronze Ages]. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

Atkin 1980

Atwood 2012

Ayvazian 2006

Babaev, Gagoshidze, and Knauß 2007
Babayev 1964

——— 1965a

——— 1965b

——— 1965c

——— 1966

——— 1973

——— 1976
— — 1977

— — 1990

— — 2001

— — 2010

— — 2012

Babayev and Əhmədov 1981
И.А. Бабаев и Q.М. Əhmədov. 1981. Qəbələ (Tarixi-Arxeoloji Əçərki) [Qəbələ (Historical-Archaeological Research)]. Баку: Elm.

Babayev, Mustafeyev, İskəndərov, et al. 2014

Babayev, Mustafeyev, İsmayilov, et al. 2014
Babayev and Nəcəfova 2012
И.А. Бабаев и И.М. Наджафова. 2012. “Раскопки античной и раннесредневековой
Габалы в 2005-2010 годах” [Excavations of Classical and Early Medieval Gabala from
2005-2010]. In Anitk va Orta ösr Azərbaycan Şəhərlər [Classical and Medieval Azerbaijani
Cities], 163–67. Baku: ELM.

Babayev and Qazıyev 1971
И.А. Бабаев и С.М. Казиев. 1971. “Кабалинскии клад монет эллинистической эпохи”
[The Gabala Hoard of Coins of the Hellenistic Era]. Нумизматика и Эпиграфика

Bachrach 1973
Minnesota Press.

Bader, Gaibov, and Koşelenko 1990

Baehr 1978

Bailey 2007

Baird 2008
O.A. Baird. 2008. “I Want the People to Observe and to Learn! The St Petersburg

Bais 2001
M. Bais. 2001. Albania caucasica: Ethnos, storia, territorio attraverso le fonti greche, latine
e armene. Milano: Mimesis.

— — — 2005
Sources.” Bâznavêp 153: 330–47.

Baitinger 1999

Bakikhanov 2009
Baldwin 1988

Bang and Bayly 2011

Barfield 1981

——— 1989

——— 1990

——— 2001

——— 2002

Barnes 1984

Barnett 1956

——— 1972

Bartol’d 1924
В.В. Бартольд. 1924. *Место Прикаспийских областей в истории мусульманского мира* [The Place of the Precaspian Territories in the History of the Muslim World]. Баку: Общество обследования и изучения Азербайджана.
— —— 1963

Bassin 1993

Baud and Schendel 1997

Bayer 1728a

— —— 1728b

— —— 1728c

— —— 1729

— —— 1732

— —— 1738

Beck 1991

Becker 2008

Bedoukian 1978
—— — 1991

Bell and Lock 2000

Benjamin 2007

Bennett, Julian 2006

Bennett, Jane 2010

Bennigsen 1974

Berggren and Hodder 2003

Bernard 1987

Bhabha 1994

Biggs 1999

Bird 1990
Biscione 2002

Bivar 1982

——— 1983

Bliev and Bzarov 2000

Boardman 1970

Boehmer 1998

Bollati and Messina 2004a

——— 2004b

Boltunova 1947

——— 1971

Bongard-Levin 1997
Bosworth 1976

——— 1977

Bourdieu 1977

Bournoutian 1982

Brass 2015

Brauer 1995

Braund 1984

——— 1986

——— 1989

——— 1991

——— 1994


Briant, Henkelman, and Stolper 2008

Briggs, McCormick, and Way 2008

Brosius 2006

Brosseder 2015

Brown 2013

Brughmans 2012

Bucher 2000
Budaragina 2013

Bulkin, Klejn, and Lebedev 1982

Buniatov, T.A. and Guseinov 1957

Buniatov, Z.M. 1965
Э.Б. Буниятов. 1965. Азербайджан в VII-IX вв. [Azerbaijan in the 7th - 9th Centuries]. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

Burbank and Cooper 2010

Burdett 1996

Burgess 2001

Bursche 1999

Burton 2011

Callieri 2001
Campbell 2002

Cantilena 1995

Carnap-Bornheim, von 2003

Casanova et al. 2016

Casey 1986

Catford 1977

Certeau, de 1984

Cəfərov 1981

Cəfərova 2009

Cəfərzadə 1948
Chakrabarty 2000

Chalilov 1978 (*For other works by the same author, see C.Ə. Xəlilov*)

Chapman 2013

Chase-Dunn 1990

Chase-Dunn and Hall 1991

Chaumont 1985

Chavchavadze 1902
И.Г. Чавчавадзе. 1902. *Армянские ученые и вопиющие камни* [Armenian Scholars and Scandalous Stones]. Тбилиси.

Chernykh 1995

Cherry 1998

Chilashvili 1964

Clark and Crabtree 2015
Close 2000

Comrie 2008

Conolly and Lake 2006

Contreras 2010

Cooper 2001

Crawford 1969a

——— 1969b

Creighton 2006

Cribb 2004

Crow 2007

Curtis 2007

Đąbrowa 1980

Dadaşova 1975

——— 1976a

——— 1976b

——— 1976c

——— 1976d

——— 1980

D’Altroy 1992

D’Altroy and Hastorf 2001
Dan 2017

Danchev and Porter 2017

Dandamayev 2005

Danielyan 1959

Darievala and Voronkov 2010

Dasxuranci 1961

Davudov 1996
О.М. Давудов. 1996. Материальная Культура Дагестана Албанского Времени: (III в. до н.э. - IV в. н.э.) [The Material Culture of Dagestan in the Albanian Period: (3rd c. BCE- 4th c. CE)]. Махачкала: ДНЦ РАН.

De Wet 1981

Deagan 2003

Debarbieux 2009

Deleuze and Guattari 1980
DeMarrais, Gosden, and Renfrew 2005

Den Boer 1972

Dench 2005

Derin and Muscarella 2001

Di Cosmo 1994

— — — 1999

— — — 2002

— — — 2011

D’iakonov 1956
И.М. Дьяконов. 1956. *История Мидии* [History of Media]. Москва, Ленинград: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Dianina 2004

Díaz-Andreu, Champion 1996
Dickinson 2006

Dietler 2005

——— 2010

Dissard 2011

——— 2012

Dittrich 1984

Dobrenko 2003

Dolukhanov 1993

——— 1995

Donnan and Wilson 1994
Dorn 1875
Б.А. Дорн. 1875. Каспий. О походах древних русских в Табаристан, с дополнительными сведениями о других набегах их на прибрежья Каспийского моря. [Caspians: On the Campaigns of the Ancient Russians in Tabaristan, with Additional Information on Other Raids on the Coast of the Caspian Sea]. Санкт-Петербург: Типография Императорской Академии наук.

Doundoua 1982

Doyen 2012

Doyen and Sherozia 2007

Doyle 1986

Dreher 1996

Drompp 2005

Dubois de Montpéreux 1839

Dubois 1891

Dubowoj 1985

Dubuis, Frey-Kupper and Perret 1999
Dudwick 1990

Dueck 2009

Dundua, G.F. 1979

——— 1987

Dundua, T. 2008

Dundua, T. and Dundua 2013

——— 2014

Dundua, T., Gagoshidze, and Managadze 2003

Dyson 1985

Dzhavakhishvili 2007

Eastmond 2010
Edgeworth 2003

Egami, Fukai, and Masuda 1966

Elbabour 1980

Elton 1996

Eminli and Iskenderov 2016

Ergun 2010

Esaian and Pogrebova 1985

Evans 1999

Əfəndiyev 1903

Əhmədov 1952
590


Олиев, И.Н. and Олибёюва 1977

Олиев, К.Н. 1960

Олиев, К.Н. и Алиев, Г.Ф. 2008

Олиев, Т. и др. 2012

Олиев, В.Н. 1969
— 1976

Əliyev, V.H. and Xəlilov, C.Ə. 2001

Əlizada and Hacıyev 2004

Fabian 2017

Fabricus 1888

Fantalkin and Tal 2006

Ferguson and Whitehead 1992

Ferioli and Fiandra 1990

Feuer 2016

Fishman 2016
Florus 1929

Formozov 1974

— — — 1986

— — — 1993

— — — 1995
А.А. Формозов. 1995. *Русские археологи до и после революции* [Russian Archaeologists before and after the Revolution]. Москва: Институт археологии РАН.

— — — 2004

Fowler 2013

Frachetti 2008

— — — 2011

— — — 2012

Frachetti and Maksudov 2014

Franklin 1992
Freundschuh 1998

Frolov 2006

——— 2016

Fulford 1992

Funnell 2001

Furtwängler et al. 2008

Furtwängler and Knauß 1996

Furtwängler, Knauß, and Egold 1995

Furtwängler et al. 1997

Gadjiev 1997
М.С. Гаджиев. 1997. Между Европой и Азией: Из истории торговых связей Дагестана в албано-сарматский период [Between Europe and Asia: From the History of Trade Relations of Dagestan in the Albano-Sarmatian Period]. Махачкала: Институт истории, археологии и этнографии Дагестанского научного центра РАН.


Gadzhiev 1982

Gagoshidze 1992

——— 1996

——— 2001

Gagoshidze and Kipiani 2000

Gaibov 1996

Gaibov and Košelenko 2008

Gamkrelidze 2012

——— 2014

Gammer 1992

——— 2005

Gardner 2013

*Ars Orientalis* 32: 105–32.


Gitler 2005

Glatz 2009

Glatz and Casana 2016

Gnucheva 1940
В.Ф. Гнучева. 1940. Материалы для истории экспедиций Академии Наук в XVIII и XIX веках. Хронологические обзоры и описание архивных материалов [Material Concerning the History of Expeditions of the Academy of Sciences in the 18th and 19th Centuries: A Chronological Survey and Description of Archival Materials]. Москва, Ленинград: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Godabrelidze 1933

Goldmann 1988

Goldstone and Haldon 2009

Golenko 1964
К.В. Голенко. 1964. Денежное обращение Колхиды в римское время [The Monetary Circulation of Colchis during the Roman Period]. Ленинград: Издательство государственного Эрмитажа.

Golenko and Rəcəblí 1975

Goluboff and Karaeva 2005
Gosden 2004

Gowing 1992

Graham 1961

— — 1967

— — 1994

Grakov 1947

Grakov 1964
Б.Н. Граков. 1964. “Погребальные сооружения и ритуал рядовых общинников степной Скифии” [Funerar Equiptment and the Funerary Ritual of Ordinary Members of the Steppe Scythians]. *Археологический сборник Государственного Эрмитажа* [Archaeological Collection of the State Hermitage], no. 6

Grant 2005

— — 2007

— — 2012

Grant and Yalcin-Heckmann 2007
Graves-Brown, Jones, and Gamble 2013

Green and Costion 2013

——— 2017

Greenhalgh 1981

Gregoratti 2013

——— 2017

Grenet 2012

Grosso 1954

Gschnitzer 1996

Gukovskii 1928
Gutmeyr 2017

Gutron 2010

Gvosdev 2000

Gyselen 1989

Ha, Yeo, and Babayev n.d.
С.Ч. Ха, Ч.Х. Ео, and И.А. Бабаев. n.d. *Катакомбы и другие захоронения на территории Сельбир города Габала.* SEBA.

Habu, Fawcett, Matsunaga 2008

Haerinck 1983

— — — 1989

Hagen 2004

Häkli 1999

Halperin 1985

Hamilakis and Anagnostopoulos 2009
Hamilakis and Jones 2017

Hammer, E. 2014

Hammer, W. 1944

Hammond 1996

Hanks 2002

Hansman and Stronach 1974

Harmatta, János 1970

Harrigan 2008

Harris 1985

Hassig 1985

Hatcher 2008
Hauser 2005

——— 2012

Heinen 1980

Herodotus 1998

Herrmann 1921

Herzog 2013a

——— 2013b

Hewsen 1982

——— 2001

Hewsen and Shirakats’i 1992

Hiatt 2005
Hillier and Hanson 1984

Hillier and Iida 2005

Hillier, Yang, and Turner 2012

Hingley 2000

— — — 2005

— — — 2014a

— — — 2014b

Hirsch 2000

Hitchner 2008

Hoch, Souleimanov, and Baranec 2014

Hodder 1999
Hodder 2012

Hodos 2016

Højte 2009

Hokanson 1994

——— 2005

——— 2008

Holdaway and Wandsnider 2008

Honeychurch 2013

——— 2014a

——— 2014b
W. Honeychurch. 2014. *Inner Asia and the Spatial Politics of Empire: Archaeology, Mobility, and Culture Contact*. New York: Springer.

Honeychurch and Makarewicz 2016

Honigmann 1931
Hoogendoorn et al. 2005
R.M. Hoogendoorn, J.F. Boels, S.B. Kroonenberg, M.D. Simmons, E. Aliyeva, A.D.
Babazadeh, and D. Huseynov. 2005. “Development of the Kura Delta, Azerbaijan; a Record
of Holocene Caspian Sea-Level Changes.” Marine Geology, Mediterranean Prodelta

Hopkins 1972
University of Michigan Press.

— — — 1979

Houston 2007
D. Houston. 2007. “Another Look at the Poetics of Exile: Pushkin’s Reception of Ovid,

Howey 2007
M.C.L. Howey. 2007. “Using Multi-Criteria Cost Surface Analysis to Explore Past Regional
Landscares: A Case Study of Ritual Activity and Social Interaction in Michigan, AD 1200–

Hughes, J. and Sasse 2002
Transition States.” In Ethnicity and Territory in the Former Soviet Union: Regions in

Hughes, R.C. 2015
Survey.” Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI.

Hunter 2006

Huseynov, Agayev, and Ashurov 2006

Husic 2002
Serials and Internet Resource Catalogers.” Slavic & East European Information Resources 2
(2): 35–46.

Hyung 1994
Archaeology in the Korean Peninsula.” East Asian History, no. 7: 25.
Iampol’skii 1950

——— 1955

Ianovskii 1846

Iessen 1959

——— 1965a

——— 1965b

Ilyushechkina 2017

Invernizzi 1976

——— 1997


Ione 1946

Ione 1948

Ione 1953

Ione 1955
G.I. Ione. 1955. “Мингечаурские кувшинные погребения с оружием” [Mingachevir Jar Burials with Weapons]. In *Краткие сообщения института истории материальной культуры* [Brief Reports from the Institute of Material Culture], 60:54–62.

Isaac 1988

Isaac 1990

Iuiukin 2012
Iushkov 1937

Ivanchik 1993

Ivanovskii 1911
А.А. Ивановский. 1911. Материалы по археологии Кавказа [Materials on the Archaeology of the Caucasus]. Vol. 6

İbrahimov 2013

[Anon.] 2017

İsmayıldə 1956
О.Ш. Исмаилзаде. 1956. Ялойлютепинская культура [Yaloylutəpə Culture]. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

İsmayılzadə 1969

— — 2002

İsmizadə 1956
О.Ш. Исмаилзаде. 1956. Ялойлютепинская культура [Yaloylutəpə Culture]. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

Jacobs 1994

Jagchid and Symons 1989

Javakhishvili 1972

Jenkk 2008

Jeni 1997

Jenness 2006

Jersild 2002

Johanson and Bauer 2011
Johnson 1981

Jones, C.P. 1966

Jones, S. 1997

Kabachnik 2012

Kacharava 1990

——— 1995

——— 2005

Kacharava and Kvirkvelia 2008

——— 2009

Kahn 1993

Kaiser 2002
Kakroodi et al. 2012

Kantner 2012

Kapanadze 1950

--- 1955

--- 1957

--- 1969

Kapos et al. 2000

Kashkay 1997

Kasimova 1960

Keaveney 1982
Keitel 1978

Kennedy 2002

Kərimov, Əliyev, and Kərimov 2012

Khachatryan 1996

Khatchadourian 2007

— — — 2008a

— — — 2008b

— — — 2012

— — — 2016

Khazanov 1974

— — — 1975

Khazraee and Gasson 2015

Kim 2013

— — 2017

Kislov, Panin, and Toropov 2014

Kitchen 2006

Kivelson 2006

Klaproth, von 1825

Klejn 1977

— — 1993


Kohl, Kozelsky, Ben-Yehuda 2008

Kohl and Tsetskhladze 1995

Kolendo 1982

Konuk and Arslan 2000

Kopytoff 1987

Körner 2002

Korobov 2003

——— 2011

Koshelenko 1985

Koshelenko 1996
Kosykh 2009

Kotsonas 2016

Kouznetsov and Lebedynsky 1997

Kradin 2001

——— 2002

——— 2003

——— 2011

Kriçenko 2014
Д. Кириченко. 2014. “Дайламан, Южный Кавказ, Азербайджан и сарматы в античное время по данным антропологии” [Dailaman, the South Caucasus, Azerbaijan and the Sarmatians in the Ancient Period on the Basis of Anthropological Material]. In Диалог культур Евразии в археологии Казахстана [Dialog of Cultures of Eurasia in the Archaeology of Kazakhstan], 349–57. Астана: Сарыарка.

Krikh 2009

——— 2013


Kroonenberg, Salomon B, Kasimov, and Lychagin 2008

Kroonenberg, S. B., Rusakov, and Svitoch 1997

Kropotkin 1961
В. В. Кропоткин. 1961. Клады римских монет на территории СССР [Hoard of Roman Coins from the USSR]. Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Krupnov 1954
Е. И. Крупнов. 1954. “О походах скифов через Кавказ” [About the Campaigns of the Scythians across the Caucasus]. Вопросы Скифо-сарматской археологии [Questions in Scytho-Sarmatian Archaeology]. Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Kruze 1835
Ф. Крузе. 1835. “О важности южнокавказских областей России в отношении античном и о Птолемее, главном писателе в рассуждении географии сей страны” [On the Importance of the South Caucasus Regions of Russia in Relation to Antiquity, and on Ptolemy, the Most Important Author in the Discourse about the Geography of This Territory]. Журнал министерства народного просвещения [Journal of the Ministry of Public Education] 5 (3): 423–39.

Krymskii 1934

— — — 1938
Kuhrt 2001

Kuzishchin 1980a

— — — 1980b

Ladynin 2017

Lahiri 2000

Laisram 2014

Lalayan 1919

Lang 1955

— — — 1966

— — — 1983

Latour 2005
Lattimore 1940

—.— 1962

Latyshev 1885–1901

—.— 1893–1906

Lavan 2013

Lawrence and Wilkinson 2017

Layton 1986

—.— 1994

Lebedev 1992

Lebedynsky 2014

Lenin 1943
Lerner 1999

Levell 2000

Leviatov 1950

Libiszewski and Bächler 1997

Licheli 2001

——— 2007

Lightfoot, K.G. 2015

Lightfoot, K.G. and Martinez 1995

Lindsay and Greene 2013
I. Lindsay and A. Greene. 2013. “Sovereignty, Mobility, and Political Cartographies in Late Bronze Age Southern Caucasia.” *Journal of Anthropological Archaeology*

Lindsay and Smith 2006
Lippolis and Manassero 2015

Liu 2001

Llobera 2001

Llobera, Fábrega-Álvarez, and Parcero-Oubiña 2011

Lomtatidze 1957

——— 1958

——— 1961

López et al. 2003

——— 1954

——— 1958

——— 1961


Lucas 2002

Lucas 2005

Lucas 2010

Lucas 2012

Luttwak 1976
Lyonnet et al. 2012

Maaskant-Kleibrink 1978

Madariaga 2014

Mahé 1996

Mairs 2014

Makarewicz 2014

Makharadze and Narimanashvili 2001

Makhlayuk and Gabelko 2013

Maksimenko 1983
Malashev 2010
V. Ю. Malashch. 2010. “Центральные районы Северного Кавказа в позднесарматское время” [The Central Region of the North Caucasus in the Late Sarmatian Period]. In Становление и развитие позднесарматской культуры (по археологическим и естественнонаучным данным) [The Formation and Development of the Late Sarmatian Culture (According to Archaeological and Natural Science Evidence)], 117–42. Волгоград: Издательство Волгоградского государственного университет.

Mamuladze, Khalvashi, and Kakhidze 2005

Manandian 1946

——— 1948

——— 1954
Я.А. Манандян. 1954. О торговле и городах Армении в свяzi с мировой торговле древних времен: (в V. до н.э. - XV в. н.э.) [About Trade and the Cities of Armenia in Connection with World Trade in Ancient Times (From the 5th to the 15th c. CE)]. Ереван: Издательство Ереванского университета.

——— 1965

Manassero 2010

Mann 1986

Manoukian 1996

Maranci 2000
Markov 1976

Marro 2004

Marx 2012

Masanov 1995

Masson and Pugacenkova 1954
М.Е. Массон and Г.А. Пугаченкова. 1954. “Оттиски парфянских печатей из Нисы” [Impression of Parthian Seals from Nisa]. *Вестник древней истории* [Journal of Ancient History], no. 4: 159–69.

Mattingly 2011

Mattingly and Hitchner 1995

McCorriston 2013

McInerney 2014

Megoran 2010

Mehnert 2008
Meier 1940

Meißner 1996

———2000

Melkadze and Jersild 2002

Meshchaninov 1927
И. Мещанинов. 1927. “Археологическая экспедиция в Нагорный Карабах и Нахичеванский край” [The Archaeological Expedition in Nagorno-Karabakh and Naxcivan]. *Известия Общества обследования и изучения Азербайджана* [News of the Society for the Survey and Research of Azerbaijan], no. 4: 104.

Meskell 2002

———2005

Messerli and Ives 1997

Messina 2014

Messina, Mollo, and Invernizzi 2004

Meyer 2009

Mammadov 2010

Mammadova 1986
Ф.Д. Мамедова. 1986. *Политическая история и историческая география Кавказской Албании* [The Political History and Historical Geography of Caucasian Albania]. Digital edition. Баку: ЭЛМ.

Micklin 1988

——— 2007

Millar 1964

——— 1982

Miller, A. 2008

Miller, A.A. 1926

Miller, B.K. 2015
Miller, B.K. and Brosseder 2017

Miller, D. and Sheehy 2008

Miller, D. and Tilley 1996

Miller, M.O. 1956

Millet 1990

Miquel 1973–1988

Mitchell and Searight 2008

Mitford 1980

Mitten 1996

Mnatsakan’ian, A.O. 1955
А.О. Мынчаканян. 1955. “Раскопки могильников у селения Атарбекян в Армянской ССР” [Excavations of Burials at the Village of Atabekyan in the Armenian SSR]. In Краткие сообщения института истории материальной культуры [Brief Reports from the Institute of Material Culture], 60:31–38

Mnats’akan’ian, A.S. 1969
А.Ш. Мынч’аканян. 1969. О литературе Кавказской Албании [On the Literature of Caucasian Albania]. Издательство Академии наук Армянской ССР.
Mommsen 1881

Mongait 1961

Morales-Muñiz and Antipina 2003

Mordvinseva 2008

— — — 2012

— — — 2013a

— — — 2013b

— — — 2015

Morier 1818

Morley 2010
Morrison 2001a

——— 2001b

Mouradian 1990

Mouraviev 1992 (See also works by Murav’ev)

Mousheghian 1973

Mousheghian et al. 2000

Mousheghian, Mousheghian, and Depeyrot 2000

Murav’ev 1983

——— 1988
C.N. Muravyev. 1991. “Проблема Аракса—Танаиса—Яксарта и Уровень Каспия в VI—
III Вв. До н. Э” [The Problem of the Aras-Tanis-Iakster and the Level of the Kaspian in the
5th-3rd c. BCE]. In Mathesis. Труды Семинара По Истории Античной Науки и
Философии, 115–75. Москва: Наука.

Murray 1999

— — 2012
University Press.

Murrieta-Flores 2012
P. Murrieta-Flores. 2012. “Understanding Human Movement through Spatial Technologies. The Role of Natural Areas of Transit in the Late Prehistory of South-Western Iberia.”
Trabajos de Prehistoria 69 (1): 103–22.

Muscarella 1977

Mustafayev 2006
M. Mustafayev. 2006. “Samedabad: Excavations of an Antique Period Earth Grave, KP 233-

Nakashize 1966

Narimanishvili 1991
Г.К. Нариманишвили. 1991. Керамика Картли V-I вв. до н.э [The Ceramics of Kartli, 5th
c.-1st с. BCE]. Тбилиси: Мецниереба.

Narimanov 2004 (for other works by the same author, see Narimanov)
Gazetteer.” In A View from the Highlands, Archaeological Studies in Honour of Charles
Burney, edited by A. Sagona, 467–73. Leuven: Peeters.

Naum 2010
M. Naum. 2010. “Re-Emerging Frontiers: Postcolonial Theory and Historical Archaeology of
Nawotka 2005

Nercessian 2006

Neumann 1881

— — — 1883

Neverov 1985

— — — 1996

Newton 2006

Nəsəfova 2013

Nərimanov 1957
И.Г. Нариманов. 1957. “Некоторые данные о древнем поселении в окрестностях г. Казаха (Азербайджанская ССР)” [Some Data about the Ancient Settlements in the Vicinity of the City of Qazakh (Azerbaijan SSR)]. In Краткие сообщения института истории материальной культуры [Brief Reports from the Institute of Material Culture], 70:183–142

——— 1960

——— 1973
—— 2001

Nərimanov and Aslanov 1962

Nərimanov and Xəlilov 1962

Nichols 2014

Nicolet 1991

Nikitin, A. 1986
А. Никитин. 1986. Хожение За Три Моря Афанасия Никитина 1466—1472 Гг. [The Journey Beyond Three Seas of Afanasii Nikitin]. Edited by Я.С. Лурье and Л.С. Семёнов. Ленинград: Наука.

Nikitin, A.B. 1993

Nuriyev 1973

Obolensky 1970

Offord 2007

Olbrycht 1998a
— — — 1998b

— — — 2001

— — — 2016

O’Lear and Whiting 2008

Olkhovski 1994

Olkhovskiy 2000

— — — 2005

Olkhovskiy and Galkin 1990

Olsen et al. 2012

Oltean 2007
Ormeling 1974

Orton 2010

Osmanov 1972a

— — — 1972b

— — — 1972c

— — — 1978

— — — 1979a
Ф.Л. Османов. 1979. “Поселение и некрополь у села Нюди Ахсуинского района” [A Settlement and Necropolis at the Village of Niudi in the Aqsu District]. In *Краткие сообщения института истории материальной культуры* [Brief Reports from the Institute of Material Culture], 159:84–90

— — — 1979b

— — — 1980a


Osmanov and Cəbiyev 1985
Osmanov, Cəbiyev, and Mekhtiev 1986

Osmanov, Cəbiyev, and Ramazanov 1986

Osmanov, İbrahimov, and Haqverdiyev 1974

Osmanov and İbrahimov 1976

——— 1979

Osmanov and Osmanov 2006

Ovid 1939

Oyen and Pitts 2017
Пахомов 1910

— — — 1926

— — — 1938
Е.А. Пахомов. 1938. Клады Азербайджана и других республик и краев Кавказа [Hoards of Azerbaijan and Other Republics and Borderzones of the Caucasus]. Vol. 2. Баку: Издательство Азербайджанского филиала Академии наук СССР.

— — — 1939

— — — 1940
Е.А. Пахомов. 1940. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа [Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan Other Republics, Borders and Territories of the Caucasus]. Vol. 3. Баку: Издательство Азербайджанского филиала Академии наук СССР.

— — — 1944

— — — 1949а

— — — 1949б
Е.А. Пахомов. 1949. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа [Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan Other Republics, Borders and Territories of the Caucasus]. Vol. 4. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

— — — 1949с
Е.А. Пахомов. 1949. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа [Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan Other Republics, Borders and Territories of the Caucasus]. Vol. 5. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.


Е.А. Пахомов. 1954. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа [Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan Other Republics, Borders and Territories of the Caucasus]. Vol. 6. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.

Е.А. Пахомов. 1957. Монетные клады Азербайджана и других республик, краев и областей Кавказа [Coin Hoards of Azerbaijan Other Republics, Borders and Territories of the Caucasus]. Vol. 7. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.


Е.А. Пахомов. 1962а. “Античные монеты в Албании (в предлах Азербайджанской ССР)” [Classical Coins in Albania (within the Limits of the Azerbaijani SSR). In Вопросы истории Кавказской Албании [Questions of the History of Caucasian Albania], edited by İ.Н. Əliyev [И. Алиев], 48–51. Баку: Издательство Академии наук Азербайджанской ССР.


Pallas 1803


Perassi 1999

Petrakova 2010

Phillips 1972

Pilipko 2001

Piller 2013

Pingel 2010

Pinto 2016

Piotrovsky 1940

——— 1949

——— 1954
Pirquliyeva 2011

Platonova 2010

Poe 2001

Pogrebova 2004

Polin 1992

Pomialovskii 1881
И.В. Помяловский. 1881. Сборник греческих и латинских надписей Кавказа [Collection of the Greek and Latin Inscriptions from the Caucasus]. Санкт-Петербург: Типография Императорской Академии наук.

Porter, A. 2012

Porter, R.K.K. 1821

Postnikov 2002
Pothecary 2005

Potter 2006

Potts 1996

Pozdeeva 1962

Preucel 2006

Price, Martin F. et al. 2013

[Anon.] 1896

Prokopenko 2009

Pumpianskii 1983

Pushkin 2005
Putin 2014

Qazıyev 1945

——— 1946

——— 1948

——— 1949a

——— 1949b

——— 1950

——— 1953

——— 1960

——— 1962


S.M. Qazıyev and Aslanov 1951

S.M. Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1949

Qazıyev and Qolubkina 1951

——— 1956

——— 1959

——— 1961
Qoşqarlı 1978

——— 1979

——— 2009

——— 2012

——— 2013

Quliyev 2004

Quluzadə and Ağayev 2012

Rabow-Edling 2012

Raczek 2011
Radcliffe 2009

Radde 1899

Raffensperger 2012

— — — 2014

Ragsdale 1988

R.-Alföldi 1996

Rapp 2003

— — — 2009

— — — 2014

— — — 2017

Raskol'nikova 1975
Rasulova 2008

Ravdonikas 1932

Reece, R. 1996

Reece, R.M. 1990

Reinhold and Korobov 2007

Rennell 2012

Rəcəblı 1986

——— 1997

Rəhimova 2006
Rhinelander 1975

Ricci 2014

Rich 1993

— — — 2011

Richardson 2012

Ristvet 2015

— — — 2012

Robertson 1988

Romm 1994

Rondelli, Stride, and García-Granero 2013

Rostovtzeff 1914
1932

1993

Rowlands, Larsen, and Kristiansen 1987

Rowton 1974

Rozendorf 1906

Rubinson and Smith 2003

Rutherford 1990

Rychagov 1997

Rzayev 1976

Sadıqzadə 1963
Sagona, Sagona, and Michalewicz 2017

Sagramoso 2007

Said 1979

Sandler 1989

Santrot, Badalian 1996

Saparov 2017

Sartre 2005

Sauer 2017

Sauer et al. 2015

Sauer et al. 2012

Saunders 1982
Scerrato 1966

Schachner 2001

Schayegh 2017

Scheidel 2011

Schieber 1975

Schlitz 2007

Schlanger 2002

Schlanger, Nordbladh 2008

Schmidt-Colinet 1997

Schmitt 1990

Schortman and Urban 2012
Schottky 1989

Schulze 2005

——— 2015a

——— 2015b

Schur 1925

Scott 2009

Seager 2008

——— 2011

Sebba 2006

Seegel 2012

Segel 1973
Seyfəddini et al. 1998

Şərifov 1927

Shahranı 1979

Shakhanova 1989

Shanks and Tilley 1987

Shanks and Witmore 2010

Shaw 1981

——— 1982

——— 1990

Shayegan 2011
Sheppard 2002

Sherozia 2008

Sherwin-White 1984

Shilov 1975

Shingiray 2011

Shishlina et al. 2000

Shnirelman 1995

— — — 1996
——— 2001

——— 2012

Shteppa 1962

Shvidkovsky 2007

Silliman 2010

Simonenko 2004

——— 2009

——— 2011

Sinopoli 1994

——— 2001

Skaff 2004

Skinder 1906
В.А. Скиндер. 1906. Опыт археологической разведки [The Experience of Archaeological Exploration]. Пятигорск.

Skripkin 1984

— — — 1990

Slavgorodskaya 1998

Slezkine 1996

Slootjes and Peachin 2016

Slotkin 1981

Smirnov, A.S. 2011

Smirnov, K.F. 1950
1957
К.Ф. Смирнов. 1957. “Проблема происхождения ранних сарматов” [The Problem of the
Spread of the Early Sarmatians]. Советская Археология [Soviet Archaeology], no. 3: 3–19.

1964
К.Ф. Смирнов. 1964. Савроматы. Ранняя история и культура сарматов [Savromatians.
Early History and Culture of the Sarmatians]. Москва.

1972
Поволжья и их отношение к катаkomбам Северного Кавказа” [Sarmatian Catacomb
Burials of the Southern Ural-Volga and Their Relationship to Catacombs of the North
Caucasus]. Советская Археология [Soviet Archaeology], no. 1: 73–81.

1984
К.Ф. Смирнов. 1984. Сарматы и утверждение их политического господства в Скифии
[Sarmatians and the Assertion of Their Political Dominance in Scythia]. Москва: Академия
наук СССР.

Smith, A.T. 2003

2005
World Prehistory 19 (4): 229–79.

2015

Smith, A.T., Badalian, and Avetisian 2009
A.T. Smith, R.S. Badalian, and P. Avetisian. 2009. The Foundations of Research and
Regional Survey in the Tsaghkahovit Plain, Armenia. Vol. 1. The Archaeology and

Smith, A.T. and Thompson 2004
Tradition.” In A View from the Highlands, Archaeological Studies in Honour of Charles

Smith, G. et al. 1998
G. Smith, V. Law, A. Wilson, A. Bohr, and E. Allworth. 1998. Nation-Building in the Post-
University Press.
Smith, M.E. and Montiel 2001

Smith, M.L. 2005

Snodgrass and Millett 2012

Soja 1980

Sorge 2014

Spivak 1988

Stahl 2002

——— 2012

Stalin 1950
И.В. Сталин. 1950. “Марксизм и Вопросы Языкоznания” [Marxism and Questions of Linguistics]. Правда [Pravda], June 20

Staniukovich 1953
Т.В. Станюкович. 1953. Кунсткамера Петербургской Академии Наук [Kunstkamera of St. Petersburg Academy of Sciences]. Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Stein 2001
2002

2005

Stek 2013

Stepp, Castaneda, and Cervone 2005

Stevens 1991

Stockhammer 2012

Stoler and McGranahan 2007

Strabo 1917–1932

Strémooukhoff 1953

Strizhak 2008

Sulimirski 1970
Suny 1994

——— 1996

Suny and Martin 2001

Surface-Evans and White 2012

Svazian 2015

Sveshnikova 2009

Swietochowski 1990

——— 1995

——— 1996
Syme 1988

Şceblkin 1945

Tacitus 2012

Talbert 2010

Talbert, R.J.A and Raaflaub 2010

Tatishchev 1962
В.Н. Татищев. 1962. История Российской [History of Russia]. Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР.

Ter-Avetisian 1934

Terenozhkin 1971

Ter-Martirossov 2000

——— 2001

Terrenato 2008
Thomas 1991

Thompson, M., Mørkholm, and Kraay 1973

Thomson 1995

Tikhonov 2003

Tillett 1969

Tilley 1994

Tiratsyan 1964

——— 1979

——— 2003

Tobler 1993
Tomaschek 1893

Tonikyan 1992

——— 1997

Toumanoff 1955

——— 1963

Traina 2002

——— 2003

——— 2005

——— 2015

Treister 2007

Trever 1959
К.В. Тревер. 1959. Очерки по истории и культуре Кавказской Албании IV в. до н. э.-VII в. н.э. [Studies on the History and Culture of Caucasian Albania: 4th Century BCE- 7th Century CE]. Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР.
Trigger 1978

——— 1984

——— 1985

——— 1989

Tsetskhladze 1992

——— 1993

——— 1994

——— 1999

——— 2001

——— 2008

Tsing 2000

Tsotselia and Depeyrot 2010
Tsutsiev 2007

Tumbil’ 1948

Tunkina 1998

——— 1999

——— 2002

——— 2003

——— 2007

——— 2008

Tuplin 1987
Turchin 2009

Turner, Alasdair 2004

Turner, Andrew 2007

Ucko 1969

——— 2005

UNEP WCMC 2002

Ur and Hammer 2013

Uspenskii and Zhivov 2012

Uvarov, A.S. 1851–1856

Uvarov, S.S. 1845

Uvarov, S.S. 1864

Vacca 2013
Vahidov 1955

——— 1961

——— 1965

Vainshtein 1980

Vaissière, de la 2005

van Alfen 2005

Van Buren 1996

van Dommelen 2005

——— 2006

van Dommelen and Rowlands 2012
VanValkenburgh and Osborne 2012

Veisi et al. 2014

Verhagen 2013

Verhagen et al. 2013

Vermishev 1904

Versluys 2014

——— 2017

Vickers and Kakhidze 2001

——— 2004
Vinogradov 1964

von Bredow 2006

Voss 2008

Vurğun 1960

Wallenfels 1994

——— 1998

——— 2015

Wallerstein 1974

Webster 2001

Wells 2005

Wendland 1992

Wes 1988
Wesenberg 1971

Wheeler, E.L. 1977

Wheeler, E.L. 1993a

Wheeler, E.L. 1993b

White, D.A. and Barber 2012

White, R. 1991

Whitley and Burns 2008
Whittaker, C.H. 1978

Whittaker, C.R. 1994

———. 1995

———. 2004

Wiesehöfer 1998

Wilk 2004

Wilkes 2005

Witcher 2000

Wolski 1993

Woodman 1975

Woolf 1994

———. 1997

Wright 1997

Wylie 2017

Xəlilov, C.Ə. 1960a

——— 1960b

——— 1961

——— 1962

——— 1965a

——— 1965b


Сарматия - Кавказская Албания: границы, контакты (I в. до н. э. - II в. н. э.)” [Sarmatians - Caucasian Albania: Borders, Contact (1st. c. BCE - 2nd c. CE)]. In Античная цивилизация и варварский мир [Ancient Civilization and the Barbarian World], 1:68–75. Материалы III-го археологического семинара [Materials of the 3rd Archaeological Seminar]. Новочеркасск: Музей истории донского казачества КемГУ.

Xəlilov, C.Ə. and Babayev 1974

Xəlilov, C.Ə., Qoşqarlı, and Arazova 1990

Xəlilov, M.C. 1984

— 1988
——— 2002

Xin and Lecomte 2012

Yardley 2003

Yatsenko 1994

——— 2003

Yavetz 1988

Yilmaz 2013

——— 2015

Yoffee 2005

Zadneprovsky 1969

——— 1999
Zardarian and Akopian 1994

Zeinalov 2009

Zimansky 1985

——— 1995a

——— 1995b

Zograf 1936

——— 1945

Zurcher 2007