

Archaeological context for 83 newly reported ancient samples

Overview

This note provides archaeological context information for the 83 samples for which genome-wide data is presented for the first time in this study. Descriptions of the context for the remaining ancient samples analyzed in this study have been published in previous publications. Specific references for each sample are given in Supplementary Data Table 1.

Anatolia Neolithic (n=26 samples)

Since the 1950's, central and southeastern Anatolia have been the subject of archaeological research focused on the origins of sedentism and food-production. The Marmara region of northwestern Anatolia, the location of the to archaeological sites that are the sources of the Anatolian samples in this study (Menteşe Höyük and Barcın Höyük) was for a long time considered to be a region where early agricultural development had not occurred.

Systematic multidisciplinary research in the eastern Marmara region started at the end of the 1980s under the auspices of the Netherlands Institute for the Near East, Leiden (NINO) and its annex in İstanbul, the Netherlands Institute in Turkey (NIT). The first excavations were at Ilıpınar Höyük near İznik Lake. These were followed by excavations at Menteşe and Barcın, situated near an ancient lake in the basin of Yenişehir. These sites have provided key data on early farming communities, their environmental settings, and their cultural development over more than a thousand years, from 6600 calBCE (Barcın) to 5500 calBCE (Ilıpınar). A fourth important site in the same region, Aktopraklık, is being excavated by the Prehistory Department of İstanbul University.

These Neolithic villages are distinctive for monochrome pottery, a sophisticated bone industry, single room dwellings with mud and timber frame walls, and mud-brick buildings that were either freestanding or side-by-side in rows. Ilıpınar includes a large number of free standing timber wall buildings consisting of posts closely set in ditches and coated with mud, and pitched reed-covered roofs carried by central posts¹. These buildings are regarded as prototypes for houses in eastern and central Europe after the onset of the European Neolithic.

Another characteristic of the eastern Marmara region is the abundance of graves in or near settlements. Given the few hundred burials uncovered so far, it has been hypothesized that the regional tradition involved interment of a large part of the deceased population in the village ground. This custom contrasts with nearby regions of western Anatolia and Turkish and Bulgarian Thrace, where inhumations are scarce². In central Anatolia, for example at Çatal Höyük³, burial frequencies are similar to the Marmara region. There are also other links between the two regions in terms of ceramic assemblages and other material culture elements.

With a few exceptions, the funeral practices of the eastern Marmara region were as follows. Graves were spread across the courtyards or concentrated in one spot near the village⁴. The

dead were buried in single graves and lay in contracted positions on their left or right side with varying body orientations. The articulated skeletal parts point to primary interments. Another feature of the burials is the presence of wooden remains in many grave pit bottoms, showing that the deceased had been deposited on wooden boards⁵. Grave goods often accompanied the dead, as there were pottery vessels, necklaces, pendants, stone tools, and also animal parts (horns, scapulae).

Menteşe Höyük in Anatolia (n=5 samples)

Several archaeological excavations were carried out at Menteşe between 1996 and 2000 with the purpose of comparing the extensive chronological and socio-economic data from [Işıklar](#) with that from Menteşe. Menteşe was a small farming community in the plain of Yenişehir with a millennium-long occupation history and an economy based on plant cultivation and animal husbandry. Houses were built with light mud and timber-frame walls of the wattle-and-daub type. The material culture includes monochrome pottery and falls within the tradition of the Marmara region loosely defined as the Fikirtepe culture⁶. Eleven radiocarbon dates running from 6400 to 5600 calBCE corroborate the stratigraphy of the mound.

The total number of individuals excavated at Menteşe is 20: 11 adults and 9 infants and children⁷. The following 5 individuals produced genome-wide data:

- I0724 / UP

This individual is estimated to be 10-14, years old, with a stature of 157 cm. Osteological analysis indicates a male, and we confirm this genetically. He was found close to an adult woman who was older than 40. He was lying on his left side in a S-N orientation with his back turned to the woman.

- I0725 / UA SSK15 (filtered out of main analyses)

This individual is estimated to be 23-34 years old, with a stature of 155 cm. Osteological analysis indicates a female, which we confirm genetically. She had two traumas: a healed impression fracture of the vault of her skull, and a split and fused distal phalanx of one of her thumbs. She was buried on her right side in a SW-NE orientation, and wooden remains at the bottom of her grave indicated she was buried on a wooden plank. Two aspects of her burial were unusual and suggested the possibility of a later burial: her grave yielded some broken pottery of a type that is unusual for the Menteşe archaeological assemblage, and the truncated burial shaft was dug more than one meter deep from an unknown surface. Population genetic analysis of data from this individual indicates that she is an outlier compared to other Anatolian Neolithic samples. Combined with the other unusual features of her burial, this led us to filter her data out of our main analyses.

- I0727/UA JK 16

This individual is estimated to be 34-40 years old, with a stature of 168 cm. Osteological analysis indicates a male, which we confirm genetically. He probably suffered from diffuse idiopathic skeletal hyperostosis (DISH) and osteoarthritis, and his left forearm showed a healed fracture. His highly flexed skeleton was buried its right side in a SW-NE orientation. A broken pot that was of a style that does not fit well for the archaeological assemblage of Menteşe was found near his face. Despite this feature, we did not filter out his data from our main analyses because unlike I0725 / UA SSK15, he is not a population genetic outlier.

- I0726 / UF

This individual is estimated to be 23-40 years old. Osteological analysis indicates a male, but the genetic data contradicts this and suggests a female. The individual, who suffered from osteoarthritis, was buried with pottery vessels as indicated by sherds near the head and feet, and was lying on its right side in a W-E orientation.

- I0723 / UH

This individual is estimated to be 43-48 years old, with a stature of 166 cm. Osteological analysis indicated a male, which we confirm genetically. A bone tool found near his waist suggests that he wore a belt when he was buried. Like I0726 / UF, he suffered from osteoarthritis. His skeleton was lying on its left side in a S-N orientation.

Barcın Höyük in Anatolia (n=21 samples)

Barcın Höyük is located in the Yenişehir Plain in Northwest Turkey, originally on a small natural elevation at the edge of a retreating lake⁸. Excavations have demonstrated continuous occupation between around 6600 calBCE and 6000 calBCE⁹, producing about 4 meters of stratified Neolithic settlement deposits. From the start of habitation, animal husbandry and crop cultivation were the mainstay of this subsistence economy. The deepest levels at Barcın Höyük represent the oldest known farming community in northwestern Anatolia.

It is important to place the site of Barcın within the context of a broader understanding of the Neolithization of western and northwestern Anatolia. Ongoing excavations in both regions now indicate a rather sudden appearance of farming villages around 6700-6600 calBCE¹⁰. This development breached a boundary that had remained in place for more than 1,500 years between agricultural landscapes in southeastern and central Anatolia to the east and uninhabited or lightly inhabited forager landscapes to the west¹¹.

Excavations at Barcın between 2007 and 2014 yielded large assemblages of human remains, mostly from primary and single inhumation burials within the settlement². Infants, juveniles and adults are all represented. To date, remains of 115 individuals have been excavated (47 adults, 68 non-adults). More than half of the burials belong to infants. DNA was successfully extracted from 21 samples (15 infants, 1 child, 5 adults). Fourteen of the 21 the skeletons were osteologically analyzed. The age determination of the infants that were not examined was estimated by observing bone dimensions when the samples were collected.

The sample numbers and descriptions are given below:

- I0707 / L11-213

This infant is estimated to be about 3 months old based on long bone size and 4-8 months old based on dentition. The sample is genetically determined to be female.

- I0708 / L11-439

This is a badly disturbed burial that is both osteologically and genetically male.

- I0709 / M13-170.

This is an older infant estimated from bone size. The sample is genetically male.

- I0736 / L11-216
This is estimated to be a neonate (from the bone size). The sample is genetically female. It is also genetically a first degree relative of I0854 / L11-215.
- I0744 / M10-275
This is estimated to be a neonate (from the bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I0745 / M11-363
This is estimated to be a neonate (from the bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I0746 / L11-322
This infant is estimated to be about 3 months old based on long bone size and 4-8 months old based on dentition. The sample is genetically male.
- I0854 / L11-215 (filtered out of main analyses)
This is estimated to be a neonate (from the bone size). The sample is genetically female. The sample is also genetically a first degree relative of I0736 / L11-216. We use this sample's first degree relative to represent this family because it has more genetic data.
- I1096 / M10-76
This infant is estimated to be 1-2 years old. The sample is genetically male.
- I1097 / M10-271
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I1098 / M10-352
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically female.
- I1099 / L11-S-488
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I1100 / M11-351
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically female.
- I1101 / M11-352a
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I1102 / M11-354
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I1103 / M11-S-350
This is estimated to be a neonate (from bone size). The sample is genetically male.
- I1579 / M13-72
This individual is osteologically determined to be a 35-45 year old female, and is also genetically female. She was buried on her left side in a highly flexed position.

- I1580 / L12-393

This individual, genetically female, was not fully examined. A flint artefact was in the grave.

- I1581/ L12-502

This adult, genetically female, was not examined.

- I1583/L14-200.

This child, age about 6-10 years, is genetically male.

- I1585 / M11-59.

This badly disturbed burial of an individual from middle to older age did not have an osteologically determined sex. The sample is genetically female.

Iberia Chalcolithic (n=14 samples)

El Mirador Cave in Iberia (n=14 samples)

All the Iberia Chalcolithic samples are from El Mirador Cave, which overlooks the southernmost flank side of Sierra de Atapuerca (Burgos, Spain), at an altitude of 1,033 meters above sea level. The mouth of this karst cavity is now approximately 23 meters wide and 4 meters high, penetrating some 15 meters inwards. Initial archaeological work was carried out in the 1970s. In 1999, the fieldwork was resumed, and it is still ongoing¹².

Three different assemblages of human remains have been retrieved from this site:

- (a) A single burial from the Middle Bronze Age dated to 1,740 calBCE (Beta-296226)
- (b) Six individuals from the Early Bronze Age dated to between 2,030 and 2,430 calBCE (Beta-153366, 182041 and 182042) that correspond to human remains that were cannibalized and then abandoned¹³.
- (c) A minimum of 23 individuals from a collective burial from the Chalcolithic period, excavated in a small natural cavity located in the NE corner of the cave (Fig. 1). The remains are associated with smooth hemispherical bowls, fractured deer antlers, and river shell valves. Two bones have been radiocarbon dated, yielding similar dates: 2,880 calBCE (Beta-296227), and 2,630 calBCE (Beta-296225). Based on the union of the calibrated confidence intervals, we estimate the burials to be between 2,570 and 2,900 years calibrated BCE. Mitochondrial DNA of some specimens was published in 2014¹⁴.

The following 14 samples successfully produced genome-wide data:

- I0581 / MIR5 and MIR6

This sample is genetically male. Initially these samples were thought to be from two different individuals but the genetic analysis indicates they are the same individual so we merged them.

- I1274 / MIR11 (filtered out of main analyses)

This sample is genetically male. Genetic analysis indicates that this individual is a first degree relative (parent-child or sibling) of I1277 / MIR14. We filtered this sample from our main

analyses because its first degree relative has more genetic data.

- I1277 / MIR14

This sample is genetically male. Genetic analysis indicates that this individual is a first degree relative (parent-child or sibling) of I1274 / MIR11.

- I1302 / MIR24 (filtered out of main analyses)

This sample is genetically male. Genetic analysis indicates that this individual is a first degree relative (parent-child or sibling) of I1314 / MIR26. We filtered this sample from our main analyses because its first degree relative has more genetic data.

- I1314 / MIR26

This sample is genetically male. Genetic analysis indicates that this individual is a first degree relative (parent-child or sibling) of I1302 / MIR24.

- I1271 / MIR1

This sample is genetically female.

- I1272 / MIR2

This sample is genetically female.

- I1276 / MIR13

This sample is genetically female.

- I1280 / MIR17

This sample is genetically female.

- I1281 / MIR18

This sample is genetically female.

- I1282 / MIR19

This sample is genetically male.

- I1284 / MIR21

This sample is genetically male.

- I1300 / MIR22

This sample is genetically female.

- I1303 / MIR25

This sample is genetically male.

Neolithic samples from Mittelbe-Saale, Germany (n=15)

This study includes 15 newly reported samples from the transect-through-time study in Mittelbe-Saale, Central Germany that featured in previous publications^{15,16}. For the reader's convenience and reasons of consistency, we repeat summary descriptions for some sites followed by the list of samples for which genome-wide data are newly reported in this study.

LBK in Germany: Halberstadt-Sonntagsfeld (n=1)

The *Linearbandkeramik* (LBK) Halberstadt-Sonntagsfeld site was discovered during construction of a new development and was excavated between 1999 and 2002, uncovering 1324 archaeological features across an area of 9947m². The majority of the finds could be attributed to the LBK, with contours and remnants of seven long houses, several pits and 42 graves¹⁷. The remaining finds could be attributed to the Middle Neolithic Bernburg culture as well as the Unetice and Urnfield cultures of the Bronze Age. The site is a classical example of LBK settlement burials, where the majority of graves were grouped around five long houses, while one group of six graves was located inside the central yard area of the settlement. We add one 40-60 year-old individual clearly associated with an LBK house.

- I1550 / HAL19

This is grave 22, feature 666. The sample is osteologically and genetically female.

LBK in Germany: Karsdorf (n=1)

The site of Karsdorf is located in the valley of Unstrut, Burgenlandkreis, Saxony-Anhalt, Germany. The slope on which Karsdorf is located is characterized by alluvial loess. The place itself was settled intensively since the earliest phase of the LBK in the region. The settlement area is at least 50 acres in size and nearly 30 houses have been excavated. So-called 'settlement burials' were regularly found in pits in the center of the settlement area. We add one individual.

- I0797 / KAR16

Feature 611. This sample is genetically male.

Salzmuende culture in Germany: Salzmünde-Schiebzig (n=1)

The spur on which the site of Salzmünde (7 km south of Halle/Saale, Saxony-Anhalt) is located has been inhabited intermittently since the Paleolithic. Human occupation intensified during the Neolithic, with archaeological evidence for settlements and burials. Around 3300 BCE people of the eponymous Middle Neolithic Salzmünde culture built a causewayed enclosure (earthwork) with double trenches. Ground plans of houses and several clay pits indicate permanent settlements at the site. Excavation between 2005 and 2008 found human remains of 141 individuals, which reveal a number of complex burial rites: remains were found both inside and outside the enclosure, sometimes underneath layers of potsherds, and sometimes as isolated skeletal elements (mostly skulls) in trenches and clay pits. We report one new individual from this culture.

- I0551 / SALZ3b

Feature 6582. This is a 2.5-4 year old child from an unusual multiple grave of nine individuals that was found in a 1-1.5m deep, circular pit of 1.3m diameter underneath a layer of 8000 sherds of amphorae and other pottery. The sample is genetically male.

Corded Ware in Germany: Esperstedt (n=9)

The site of Esperstedt forms part of large-scale excavations initiated in 2005 in the context of major infrastructural roadworks in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany to build motorway A38. Individuals from Esperstedt reference site 4 could be unambiguously assigned to the Corded Ware culture, both by accompanying pottery and by characteristic orientation of the burials¹⁸.

Males were usually buried in a right-hand side flexed position with head to the west and facing south, while females were buried on their left-hand side with their head to the east. We added nine new individuals from this site:

- I1532 / ESP8.
Feature 4182. This is genetically male.
- I1534 / ESP14
Feature 6141. This is genetically male.
- I1536 / ESP17
Feature 4098. This is genetically male.
- I1538 / ESP20
Feature 2200. This is genetically male.
- I1539 / ESP25
Feature 4179. This is genetically female.
- I1540 / ESP28
Feature 2152. This is genetically male.
- I1541 / ESP32
Feature 4290. This is genetically male.
- I1542 / ESP33
Feature 2101. This is genetically male.
- I1544 / ESP36.
Feature 6232. This is genetically male.

Bell Beaker in Germany: Benzingerode-Heimburg (n=2)

The archaeological site was excavated 2000-2005 in the context of major infrastructural roadworks in Saxony-Anhalt, Germany, to build motorway B6n. Numerous Late Neolithic finds across the 2.5km long and 30-100m wide section V between the villages Benzingerode and Heimburg indicate settlement activity during the Bell Beaker and Early Bronze Age Unetice periods¹⁹. We include two new individuals attributed to the Bell Beaker period:

- I1546 / BZH2
Grave 8, feature 5079. This individual is genetically female. The body was oriented in right-hand-side flexed position in SO-NW orientation with the head in the southwest facing north. Based on this it was tentatively classified as Bell Beaker by excavator Tanja Autze²⁰.
- I1549 / BZH15.
Grave 1, feature 1289. This individual is osteologically and genetically female, and was classified as Bell Beaker x by excavator Tanja Autze¹. The body of the 50-65 year-old was oriented in right-hand-side flexed position with the head in the east facing northeast.

Bell Beaker in Germany: Quedlinburg VII (n=1)

The site of Quedlinburg, Harzkreis, is situated in the fertile foothills of the northern Harz, a region characterized by rich loess soils. A group of six graves was discovered at the Quedlinburg reference site VII in Saxony-Anhalt and has been attributed to the Bell Beaker culture based on the form and orientation of the burials²¹. We included one new individual:

- I0805 / QLB26

Feature 19614. This 35-45 year-old individual is osteologically and genetically male. The body was buried in NO-SW orientation with the head in the north facing east. Grave goods are scarce and include three silex arrowheads, a few potsherds, and animal bones. A notable observation from the physical anthropological examination is traits at the acetabulum and the femur head suggesting that the individual frequently rode horses.

Prehistoric Samples from Russia, Eneolithic to Bronze Age (n=27)

This study contains 26 additional samples from Russia obtained during the Samara Valley Project, and 1 from Karelia, in addition to those previously published in ref. 16. For the reader's convenience we repeat summary descriptions for some sites that contained both previously published graves and graves that are published here for the first time.

Hunter-gatherer sample: Karelia Russia (n=1)

In this study we added another individual from the ~5500 BCE Mesolithic site Yuzhnyy Oleni Ostrov (an island in Lake Onega) in Karelia, Western Russia, to the one reported in ref. 16. Mitochondrial data from seven other individuals from the same site have been described²².

- I0221 / UZ0040

MAE RAS collection number 5773-40, grave number 39/1. This is genetically male.

Khvalynsk Eneolithic in the Volga steppes: Saratovo, Russia (n=3)

Three individuals described here were among 39 excavated in 1987-88 at the Eneolithic cemetery of Khvalynsk II, Saratov oblast, Russia, on the west bank of the Volga River, 6 km north of the village of Alekseevka. Khvalynsk I and II are two parts of the same cemetery, excavated in 1977-79 (Khvalynsk I) and 1987-88 (Khvalynsk II).²³ The two excavations revealed 197 graves, about 10x larger than other cemeteries of this period in the Volga-Ural steppes, dated by radiocarbon to 5200-4000 BCE (95.4% confidence). Bones of domesticated cattle and sheep-goat, and horses of uncertain status, were included in 28 human graves and in 10 sacrificial deposits. The 367 copper artifacts in the graves, mostly beads and rings, are the oldest copper objects in the Volga-Ural steppes, and trace elements and manufacturing methods in a few objects suggest trade with southeastern Europe. Together with high ¹⁵N in the human bones from Khvalynsk, which might have caused a reservoir effect making ¹⁴C dates too old, the circulation of so much copper, which increased in SE Europe after 4700 BCE, suggests that a date after 4700 BCE would be reasonable for many graves at Khvalynsk. Copper was found in 13 adult male graves, 8 adult female graves, and 4 sub-adult graves. The unusually large cemetery at Khvalynsk contained southern European and northern European cranio-facial types, consistent with the possibility that people from the northern and southern steppes mingled and were buried here.

- 10122 / SVP35 (grave 12)

Male (confirmed genetically), age 20-30, positioned on his back with raised knees, with 293 copper artifacts, mostly beads, amounting to 80% of the copper objects in the combined

cemeteries of Khvalynsk I and II. Probably a high-status individual, his Y-chromosome haplotype, R1b1, also characterized the high-status individuals buried under kurgans in later Yamnaya graves in this region, so he could be regarded as a founder of an elite group of patrilineally related families. His MtDNA haplotype H2a1 is unique in the Samara series.

- 10433 / SVP46 (grave 1)

Male (confirmed genetically), age 30-35, positioned on his back with raised knees, with a copper ring and a copper bead. His R1a1 haplotype shows that this haplotype was present in the region, although it is not represented later in high-status Yamnaya graves. His U5a1i MtDNA haplotype is part of a U5a1 group well documented in the Samara series.

- 10434 / SVP47 (grave 17)

Male (confirmed genetically), age 45-55, positioned contracted on his side, with 4 pathological wounds on his skull, one of which probably was fatal. No grave gifts or animal sacrifices accompanied the burial. His Q1a Y-chromosome haplotype is unique in the Samara steppe series, but his U4a2 or U4d MtDNA haplotype are not unusual.

Middle Bronze Age Poltavka culture, Samara, Russia (n=5)

Five Middle Bronze Age (MBA) individuals described here were excavated by Samara archaeologists at five different MBA kurgan cemeteries of the Poltavka culture, all located in the Samara oblast. The Poltavka culture evolved from the Yamnaya culture beginning about 2900-2800 BCE and lasted until about 2200-2100 BCE. Four of the five individuals are directly dated with ¹⁴C dates that fall between 2925-2484 BCE. Poltavka graves exhibited new types of pottery vessels and some small innovations in grave shape and construction compared with the earlier Yamnaya, but the Poltavka economy was a continuation of the mobile pastoral economy introduced during the Early Bronze Age Yamnaya period beginning about 3300 BCE. MBA Poltavka settlements excavated during the Samara Valley Project were ephemeral seasonal camps that yielded <1 artifact per 2m², a signal of high mobility.

Kutuluk III, kurgan 1, grave 2

- 10126 / SVP51

Kutuluk III is a Poltavka kurgan cemetery dated to the MBA located on the Kinel' River, a tributary of the Samara, near two earlier EBA Yamnaya kurgan cemeteries. Kurgan 1, grave 2 contained a male (confirmed genetically), age 25-35, feet stained with red ochre, ovicaprid bones associated in the grave. Y-chromosome haplotype R1b1a2a2, MtDNA type H6a2.

Grachevka II, kurgan 1, grave 1

- 10371 / SVP11

Grachevka II is a Poltavka kurgan cemetery dated to the MBA located on the Sok River, north of the Samara River in Samara oblast, within a regional cluster of Bronze Age kurgan cemeteries. Kurgan 1, grave 1 contained a male (confirmed genetically), age not recorded. Y-chromosome haplotype R1b1a2, MtDNA type U2d2.

Nikolaevka III, kurgan 5, grave 1

- 10374 / SVP16

Nikolaevka is a cemetery of five kurgans dated to the MBA located south of the estuary of the Samara River near its junction with the Volga. Kurgan 5, grave 1 contained a male (confirmed genetically) age 35-45. Y-chromosome haplotype R1b1a2a, MtDNA type H13a1a.

Lopatino II, grave kurgan 1, grave 1

- 10440 / SVP53

Lopatino II is a cemetery of kurgans dated to both the EBA and MBA located on the Sok River in Samara oblast, within a regional cluster of Bronze Age kurgan cemeteries. Kurgan 1,

grave 1 contained a male (confirmed genetically) age 25-35 with red ochre staining on his distal tibia. Y-chromosome haplotype R1b1a2a2, MtDNA type I3a.

Potapovka I, kurgan 5, grave 6

- 10432 / SVP42

Potapovka I is an important cemetery of the late MBA or MBA2 Sintashta-culture era, but this grave shows that an older MBA Poltavka cemetery was located in the same place on the Sok River, in the transitional forest-steppe zone of Samara oblast. Grave 6 was dated 2925-2536 calBCE (4180 ± 84 BP: AA12569), centuries older than the MBA2 grave pit that cut through it, removing about 60% of the Grave 6 skeleton. Grave 6 was that of a male (confirmed genetically) age 35-45 years, his foot bones stained with red ochre, buried with the lower leg bones of a sheep or goat. His Y-chromosome haplotype was R1a1a1b2a, the only R1a male in the EBA-MBA series and a signal of an emerging broader set of more varied male haplogroups that would become better defined in the MBA2 and LBA. His MtDNA haplotype was U5a1c. Another Poltavka grave under kurgan 3 was cut through in the same way, so Potapovka I seems to have been established in the MBA2 directly on top of an older Poltavka cemetery.

Late Middle Bronze Age (MBA2) Potapovka culture, Samara, Russia (n=3)

Three individuals of the MBA2 period, 2200-1800 calBCE, were excavated from two MBA2 kurgan cemeteries of the Potapovka culture near the village of Utyevka in the Samara oblast. The Potapovka culture was a western variant of the Sintashta culture, which was centered 400 km to the east and produced the oldest dated chariots, buried in graves with paired horse teams and weapons. In the Samara steppes, cemeteries of the Potapovka type contained material culture very similar to Sintashta in graves with paired horses and cheekpieces, but no spoked wheel remains survived.²⁴ Sintashta and Potapovka are argued to have been the parent cultures from which the LBA Andronovo and Srubnaya cultures evolved, and so played a key role in the transition from the mobile EBA/MBA economies to the more settled LBA economy. The MBA2 period witnessed innovations in warfare and weaponry, the beginning of a change to sedentary pastoralism, and the extension of trade contacts from the northern steppes to Central Asian urban centers. The population afforded graves under kurgans expanded to include not just a few adult men, but many women and children as well, perhaps entire elite families.

Utyevka VI, kurgan 6, grave 2

- 10246 / SVP41

The Utyevka VI cemetery was located 0.8 km north-northeast of the village of Utyevka, Samara oblast, south of the Samara River. It contained some of the richest and most unusual graves of the Potapovka culture. Kurgan 6, grave 2 contained six humans: a male-female couple buried facing each other aged 15-17; and four children and infants too old and numerous to be the offspring of the couple—perhaps siblings. Horse sacrifices, shield-shaped studded bone cheekpieces interpreted as chariot-driving gear, weapons (three copper daggers, a flat copper axe, 16 flint projectile points), copper beads and rings, and other objects were found in the grave. Sample 10246 is from the 15-17-year-old male (confirmed genetically). His Y-chromosome haplotype was P1.

Utyevka IV, kurgan 4, grave 1

- 10418 / SVP24

The Utyevka IV cemetery was located 1 km SE of the Utyevka VI cemetery. Kurgan 4, grave 1 contained a mature female (confirmed genetically) age 45+, buried with the bones of an ovicaprid. Her MtDNA haplotype was T1a1.

Utyevka VI, kurgan 7, grave 1

- 10419 / SVP27

Kurgan 7, grave 1 at Utyevka VI contained a mature male (confirmed genetically) age 45+ . He was buried with a Potapovka-style ceramic pot and his grave was covered by a pair of sacrificed horse skulls and hooves probably originally attached to their hides. His Y-haplotype was R1a1a1b; MtDNA was U2e1h, found in other ancient steppe graves.

Late Bronze Age Srubnaya culture, Samara, Russia (n=14)

Fourteen individuals of the LBA Srubnaya, or Timber-Grave, culture were sampled from 7 kurgan cemeteries in the middle Volga region of Russia. The LBA Srubnaya-Andronovo horizon was a chain of similar settlements, cemeteries, and material culture types associated with a settled form of pastoralism that extended across the Eurasian steppe belt, connecting China with Europe and Iran for the first time. The upper Samara valley south of the Urals was the border between Srubnaya to the west and Andronovo to the east; many settlements in this region contain both styles of pottery. Srubnaya material culture types appeared earliest about 1900 BC in the Samara region, then spread west and south to the Dnieper in Ukraine by 1700 BC. Srubnaya settlements extended north into the forest-steppe zones in the Samara region between 1900-1200 BC. Srubnaya cemeteries included the whole population in normal proportions by age and sex. Unlike the cemeteries of the EBA-MBA and MBA2, the cemeteries of the LBA provide a demographic sample with data in all age and sex classes. Chariots were used, and large copper mines operated in and around Samara oblast, although most Srubnaya settlements in the region were family-sized homesteads of 3-5 structures. The Spiridonovka II cemetery was the richest Srubnaya cemetery in the Samara valley, probably associated with a local chiefly family.

Novosel'ki, kurgan 6, grave 1

- 10232 / SVP12

Novosel'ki was a Srubnaya cemetery containing 11 kurgans and 76 Srubnaya graves, located in Tatarstan oblast near the forest-steppe/forest zone ecotone, an early example of a Srubnaya community located in the forest-steppe zone, well north of the steppes. Kurgan 6, grave 4 contained a young male (confirmed genetically) age 17-25, with a normal steppe Y-chromosome haplotype of R1a1a1b2, MtDNA type U5a1f2.

Rozhdestvenno I, kurgan 5, grave 7

- 10234 / SVP25

Rozhdestveno was another forest-steppe zone Srubnaya cemetery located west of the Volga. Kurgan 5 grave 7 contained an adult female (confirmed genetically) age 25-35, MtDNA type K1b2a, previously unusual in the steppes.

Rozhdestvenno I, kurgan 4, grave 4, skeleton 2

- 10235 / SVP26

Rozhdestveno I, kurgan 4, grave 4, skeleton 2 was that of an adolescent female (confirmed genetically) age 15-17. Her MtDNA haplotype was I1a1, previously unusual in the steppes.

Barinovka I, kurgan 2, grave 24

- 10422 / SVP30

Adult female (confirmed genetically) age 40-45, MtDNA type T1a1.

Barinovka I, kurgan 2, grave 17

- 10423 / SVP31

Adult male (confirmed genetically) age 40-50 with Y-chromosome type R1a1a1b2; MtDNA type was J2b1a2a.

Uvarovka I, kurgan 2, grave 1

- 10424 / SVP32

Adult male (confirmed genetically) age 40-50 with Y-chromosome type R1a1a1b2; MtDNA type was T2b4.

Spiridonovka IV

Spiridonovka IV was one of four Srubnaya kurgan cemeteries located on the southern bank of the Samara River, north and south of the village of Spiridonovka. Cemetery IV was located southeast of the village and contained 9 kurgans, two of which were excavated by Samara archaeologists in 1996, uncovering 24 Srubnaya individuals in kurgan 1 and 15 in kurgan 2, including 7 adult males, 5 adult females, 11 sub-adults, and 1 undetermined. About half the graves contained a pottery vessel and a few had beads or a bracelet of copper or bronze.

Spiridonovka IV, kurgan 1, grave 15

- 10354 / SVP1

Adult female (confirmed genetically) age 35-45 with MtDNA type U5a1.

Spiridonovka IV, kurgan 2, grave 1

- 10358 / SVP6

Adult female (confirmed genetically) age 35-35 with MtDNA haplotype H6a1a.

Spiridonovka IV, kurgan 1, grave 6

- 10359 / SVP7

Adult female (confirmed genetically) age 25-35, MtDNA haplotype U5a2a1.

Spiridonovka IV, kurgan 1, grave 11

- 10360 / SVP8

Male (confirmed genetically) of undetermined age; a secondary burial of bones exposed and only partially collected before burial. His Y-chromosome haplotype was R1a1; his MtDNA type was U5a1.

Spiridonovka IV, kurgan 2, grave 5

- 10361 / SVP9

Adolescent male (confirmed genetically) age 15-17, Y-chromosome type R1a1a, MtDNA type H5b.

Spiridonovka II

Spiridonovka II was the richest Srubnaya cemetery in the lower Samara River valley, located northwest of the village of Spiridonovka. At least 14 kurgans were counted, and four were excavated (1, 2, 10, 11). Kurgan 1 contained 17 graves and kurgan 2, 37 graves. Grave 1 in kurgan 1 contained a male age 17-25 with weapons—a dagger and a set of 12 lanceolate flint projectile points—and a bone clasp or belt ornament. Grave 2 contained an adolescent age 13-16, probably female, and a juvenile age 6-8 years, decorated with faience beads that were probably imported from outside the steppes, and numerous bronze bracelets, beads, and pendants, including a pair of long, dangling earrings made of leaf-like sets of pendants arranged in three rows. Grave 7 contained a bronze bracelet, ring, and bead, while Grave 13 contained an adult female age 25-35 with 16 tubular bronze beads and eight bronze medallions. In kurgan 2, grave 29 contained a child about 12 years of age buried with a copper-bronze bracelet and a pair of gold-silver pendants gilded using a technique known as depletion gilding, documented elsewhere before the first millennium BC only in the jewelry from the Royal Cemetery of Ur in Iraq. Samples 10421 and 10430 below, buried under different kurgans with distinct groups of graves, were first-degree relatives, and given their shared MtDNA types, they were either mother and son or brother and sister.

Spiridonovka II, kurgan 11, grave 12

- 10421 / SVP29

Adult female (confirmed genetically) 35-45, MtDNA type H3g. She is a first degree relative of I0430. We exclude her data from population genetic and selection analyses because of the higher coverage of their first degree relative, who we use to represent the family.

Spiridonovka II, kurgan 1, grave 1

- 10430 / SVP39

Adult male (confirmed genetically) age 17-25 buried with weapons, see above; Y-chromosome type R1a1a1b2a2a; MtDNA type H3g. He is a first degree relative of I0421.

Spiridonovka II, kurgan 1, grave 2

- 10431 / SVP40

Adolescent age 13-16, female (confirmed genetically), MtDNA type H2b.

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Supplementary Information section 2

Population interactions between Anatolia, mainland Europe, and the Eurasian steppe

Substantial progress has been made in the study of ancient European population history due to the ability to obtain genome-wide data from ancient skeletons¹⁻¹⁵. The most recent synthesis of European prehistory 8,000-3,000 years ago⁵ presents the following reconstruction.

Before the advent of farming, Europe was populated by at least three different groups of hunter-gatherers. Western European hunter-gatherers⁷ (WHG) were widely distributed in Luxembourg⁷, Iberia^{8,11}, and Hungary³. Eastern European hunter-gatherers (EHG) lived in far eastern Europe (Russia), including both the steppe (Samara region) and Karelia⁵. Scandinavian hunter-gatherers (SHG) from Sweden^{5,7,14} can be modeled as a mixture of WHG and EHG⁵ and persisted in Scandinavia until after ~5,000 years ago^{14,15}. EHG are distinguished by a greater affinity than either WHG or SHG⁵ to Native Americans and to the ~24,000-year old Mal'ta (MA1) individual from Siberia¹⁰, making them a proximate source for the “Ancient North Eurasian” ancestry present in subsequent Europeans^{5,7,16,17}. All European hunter-gatherers were outside the range of genetic variation in present-day Europeans^{5,7,8,11,14,15}, but are genetically closest to present-day northern Europeans.

Both the Tyrolean Iceman⁶ and a Funnel Beaker individual from Sweden¹⁵ (both ~5,000 years old) were at the southern edge of present-day European genetic variation, resembling living Sardinians, rather than the present day populations of the Alps or Scandinavia. The Stuttgart female⁷ (~7,500 years ago) was an early European farmer (EEF) from the Linearbandkeramik (LBK) culture of central Europe and shared this affinity to Sardinians, documenting a relatively homogeneous population of early farmers since the Early Neolithic. The EEF traced part of their ancestry to the Near East but there is substantial uncertainty about the proportion due to a lack of an appropriate reference population⁷. Genome-wide data of Epicardial individuals from Spain⁵ proved that EEF in both Iberia and central Europe belonged to a common ancestral population, with the implication that they were descended from a common source prior to setting along different paths (Danubian and Mediterranean) into Europe. This finding was further confirmed by the analysis of a Cardial individual from Mediterranean Spain⁹.

During the Middle Neolithic period, European farmers in both central Europe and Iberia manifested a “resurgence” of WHG ancestry relative to their Early Neolithic predecessors⁵. The evidence of resurgence of WHG ancestry could reflect a history in which pockets of populations with substantial hunter-gatherer genetic heritage persisted across Europe long after the advent of farming¹⁸ and then mixed with local farmers in many locations. Alternatively, the resurgence could reflect large-scale population turnover within Europe, whereby at least one population that had a higher proportion of WHG ancestry than many preceding farmer populations, spread and replaced earlier groups.

Unlike Europeans from the Middle Neolithic period and earlier, present-day Europeans cannot be modeled as two-way mixtures of European hunter-gatherers and EEF in any proportions, but instead have at least three sources of ancestry⁷. The third source is related to the MA1 individual from Siberia. This ancestry was conveyed via the EHG and the later Yamnaya steppe pastoralist populations of ~5,000 years ago⁵. It is estimated that steppe

ancestry accounts for ~3/4 of the ancestry of early Corded Ware people of the Late Neolithic period ~4,500 years ago⁵ and a substantial portion of ancestry of other Late Neolithic/Bronze Age groups of central Europe (~4,500-3,000 years ago) and present-day Europeans throughout Europe, especially in the north⁵. By contrast, in the eastern expansion of steppe groups to the Altai, represented by the Afanasievo culture¹, there seems to have been no admixture with local populations. The later Sintashta and Andronovo populations were descended from the earlier steppe populations, but despite living far to the east of the Yamnaya from Kalmykia¹ and Samara⁵, they had an affinity to more western populations from central and northern Europe like the Corded Ware and associated cultures¹.

Here we co-analyze 147 previously unreported samples, with 83 samples reported for the first time here that span six archaeological cultures with no published ancient DNA data, to address open questions about the population history of Europe, the steppe, and Anatolia¹⁹.

The Anatolian Neolithic is a likely source of the European Neolithic

Our population sample from the Neolithic of Northwestern Anatolia (Fig. 1, Extended Data Fig. 2) has a clear affinity to early European farmers. However, EEF are shifted slightly towards the direction of the WHG in the PCA (Fig. 1) and share more alleles with them than do the Anatolian Neolithic samples (Extended Data Table 3).

To quantify admixture, we used the method described in supplementary information section 9 of Ref. 5, which fits the model:

$$f_4(\text{Test}, O_1; O_2, O_3) = \sum_{i=1}^N \alpha_i f_4(\text{Ref}_i, O_1; O_2, O_3)$$

The *Test* population is modeled as an N -way mixture of Ref_i populations in proportions α_i , using f_4 -statistics that relate the *Test* and Ref_i populations to a triple of outgroups $O_1; O_2, O_3$. For m outgroups, there are $m \binom{m-1}{2}$ equations of the above form and the proportions α_i are estimated by least squares under the constraint that they sum up to 1 and are in $[0, 1]$. We use a set of 15 world outgroups^{5,7}:

“World Foci 15” set of outgroups: Ami, Biaka, Bougainville, Chukchi, Eskimo, Han, Ju_hoan_North, Karitiana, Kharia, Mbuti, Onge, Papuan, She, Ulchi, Yoruba

To enhance this set’s ability to differentiate between reference populations, we can add to it populations that are differentially related to them. For example, when we study admixture in LBK_EN between Anatolia_Neolithic and WHG, we can add EHG as an additional outgroup, as $f_4(\text{WHG}, \text{Anatolia_Neolithic}; \text{EHG}, \text{Mbuti}) = 0.00823$ ($Z=22.2$), so allele sharing with EHG helps distinguish between WHG and Anatolia_Neolithic as sources of ancestry.

Extended Data Fig. 3C shows that Early Neolithic groups from Europe can be modeled as predominantly of Anatolia_Neolithic ancestry with only 7-11% WHG ancestry. This confirms the visual impression from the PCA (Fig. 1) and ADMIXTURE analysis (Extended Data Fig. 2) of the close relationship between Early Neolithic Europe and Neolithic Anatolia. The relationship is also supported by the low $F_{ST} = 0.005 \pm 0.00046$ (Supplementary Data Table 2) between LBK_EN and Anatolia_Neolithic and 0.006 ± 0.00054 between Hungary_EN and Anatolia_Neolithic. A direct link between Neolithic Europe and Anatolia is furnished by the fact that around half of the Y-chromosomes of Anatolia_Neolithic belong to haplogroup G2a

typical of ancient EEF samples^{5,20}, and by the occurrence of mtDNA haplogroup N1a which is typical of EEF^{21,22} in Neolithic Anatolia (Supplementary Data Table 1).

Our results add to the evidence in favor of the hypothesis that the Anatolian Neolithic was the source of the European Neolithic, but we add two notes of caution. First, the fact that our samples are from northwestern Anatolia should not be taken to imply that the Neolithic must have entered Europe from that direction: it simply places a plausible ancestor population at the doorstep of Europe and confirms the hypothesis that the genetic similarity between central European and Iberian farmers could be explained by such a common ancestor. Second, we do not know the geographical extent of people with this ancestry within Anatolia itself and across the Near East. If the population of which the Anatolian Neolithic was a part was sufficiently widespread this ancestry could have entered Europe from a different geographic route. To understand the geographic spread and deeper origin of the Anatolian farmers, it will be necessary to obtain ancient genomes from multiple locations within the Near East.

Lack of steppe ancestry in the Iberian Chalcolithic

Ancient North Eurasian ancestry is ubiquitous across present-day Europe^{5,7} but was absent in Early and Middle Neolithic Europe⁵, raising the question of when it spread there. When we add Yamnaya_Samara as a third ancestral population there is no improvement in fit for the Iberia_Chalcolithic population (Extended Data Fig. 3B), and this population can be modeled as a mixture of ~77%/23% Anatolia_Neolithic/WHG (Extended Data Fig. 3C). The Iberian Chalcolithic did not have more WHG ancestry than the earlier Middle Neolithic population, as the statistic $f_4(\text{Iberia_MN}, \text{Iberia_Chalcolithic}; \text{WHG}, \text{Chimp})$ is not significantly different from zero (Extended Data Table 3). A recent analysis of a different Iberian Chalcolithic population also suggests that it had more hunter-gatherer ancestry than the earlier European farmers⁴.

The Iberian Chalcolithic population lacks steppe ancestry, but Late Neolithic central and northern Europeans have substantial such ancestry (Extended Data Fig. 3E) suggesting that the spread of ANE/steppe ancestry did not occur simultaneously across Europe. All present-day Europeans have less steppe ancestry than the Corded Ware⁵, suggesting that this ancestry was diluted as the earliest descendants of the steppe migrants admixed with local populations. However, the statistic $f_4(\text{Basque}, \text{Iberia_Chalcolithic}; \text{Yamnaya_Samara}, \text{Chimp})=0.00168$ is significantly positive ($Z=8.1$), as is the statistic $f_4(\text{Spanish}, \text{Iberia_Chalcolithic}; \text{Yamnaya_Samara}, \text{Chimp})=0.00092$ ($Z=4.6$). This indicates that steppe ancestry occurs in present-day southwestern European populations, and that even the Basques cannot be considered as mixtures of early farmers and hunter-gatherers without it⁴.

Transformations of steppe populations

Our paper presents a complete transect of the Samara region beginning with the Samara EHG hunter-gatherer (~5,600BCE)⁵ and ending with the Srubnaya culture (~1,850-1,200 BCE) and a singleton “Scythian” Iron Age individual (~300BCE). In eastern Europe outside the steppe, a new individual from the Karelia region resembles the two previously published EHG individuals⁵ autosomally, but surprisingly belongs to Y-chromosome haplogroup J usually associated with Near Eastern populations (Supplementary Data Table 1).

In a previous study⁵ it was shown that Yamnaya populations from the Samara region were a mixture of the EHG and a population of Near Eastern ancestry for whom present-day Armenians could be a surrogate. The Samara_Eneolithic from Khvalynsk II (~5,200-4,000BCE) predates the Yamnaya by at least 1,000 years but had already begun admixing with this population, although the individuals of this population appear to be heterogeneous (Fig. 1) between EHG and Yamnaya. Taken as a whole, we estimate that they have ~74% EHG and ~26% Armenian related ancestry. The three Eneolithic individuals belong to Y-chromosome haplogroups R1a, R1b, and Q1a; the last of these three is associated with present-day Siberian populations and Native Americans, while R1a and R1b were previously found in the two EHG hunter-gatherers⁵. These results suggest a great degree of continuity with the EHG for the Eneolithic population.

The Yamnaya samples from Samara⁵ and Kalmykia¹ and the Afanasievo¹ population from the Altai form a tight cluster (Fig. 1, Extended Data Fig. 2). Our study includes new data from the later Middle Bronze Age population of the Poltavka culture (~2,900-2,200BCE), which cluster with the Yamnaya and Afanasievo. The Poltavka also possess R1b Y-chromosomes (Supplementary Data Table 1), continuing the dominant Y-chromosome type found in the Yamnaya^{1,5}. This group of populations have even less EHG ancestry than the Eneolithic population (Extended Data Table 3), estimated to be ~42-52% (Extended Data Fig. 3D).

Admixture into steppe populations continued with the Potapovka culture (~2,500-1,900BCE) and the Srubnaya culture (~1,850-1,200 BCE). Admixture in these later steppe populations is from a different source than in the earlier ones. For the Yamnaya/Afanasievo/Poltavka *Steppe* group, the statistics $f_4(\text{EHG}, \text{Steppe}; \text{Armenian}, \text{LBK_EN})$ are negative, and the statistics $f_4(\text{Steppe}, \text{Srubnaya}; \text{Armenian}, \text{LBK_EN})$ are positive, suggesting a different source of population change during the EHG→*Steppe* transition and the later *Steppe*→*Srubnaya* transition. The *Steppe* group had ancestry related to Armenians and the *Srubnaya* had an additional source related to European farmers. This is also clear from the PCA where the *Srubnaya* differ from the *Steppe* group in the direction of European farmers, and in the ADMIXTURE analysis (Extended Data Fig. 2), which shows them to have an EEF/Anatolia Neolithic-related component of ancestry not present in the *Steppe* group. Clearer evidence of this discontinuity is seen when we model different steppe populations as mixtures of Armenians and EHG (Extended Data Fig. 3A), and add Anatolia_Neolithic as a third ancestral population: this has no effect in fit for the earlier populations, but significantly improves fit for the Potapovka, *Srubnaya*, and eastern Sintashta and Andronovo populations. A discontinuity between earlier and later steppe populations is also suggested by the shift from an R1b Y-chromosome gene pool into an R1a-dominated one in the *Srubnaya* (Supplementary Data Table 1). We caution that this does not mean that new populations migrated into the steppe as R1a was also detected in Eneolithic Samara and an outlier Poltavka individual (Supplementary Data Table 1); it is possible that R1a males continued to abide in the Samara region but were not included in the rich burials associated with the Yamnaya and Poltavka elites in the intervening period.

It is unclear how the *Srubnaya* acquired farmer ancestry. One possibility is that contact between early farmer and steppe populations produced populations of mixed ancestry that migrated eastward to the Samara district and further east to form the Sintashta/Andronovo populations. A different possibility suggested in Ref. 1 is that the Corded Ware population of central/northern Europe migrated into the steppe. Our new data document the existence of

farmer-admixed steppe populations in the European steppe and provide a plausible source for the more eastward migrations of such populations. Further evidence for a connection between the Srubnaya and populations of central/south Asia—which is absent in ancient central Europeans including people of the Corded Ware culture and is nearly absent in present-day Europeans²³—is provided by the occurrence in four Srubnaya and one Poltavka males of haplogroup R1a-Z93 which is common in present-day central/south Asians and Bronze Age people from the Altai²⁴ (Supplementary Data Table 1). This represents a direct link between the European steppe and central/south Asia, an intriguing observation that may be related to the spread of Indo-European languages in that direction.

Our results on European steppe populations highlight the complexity of their interactions with surrounding populations. At the earliest period, gene flow from a population related to Armenians, presumably from the south, diluted their EHG ancestry and created the mix of ancestry of the Yamnaya/Afanasievo/Poltavka group. Later, gene flow from a population related to Anatolian and European farmers further diluted their EHG ancestry to create the Srubnaya/Sintashta/Andronovo group. This latter group resembled Late Neolithic/Bronze Age populations from mainland Europe (Fig. 1), and like them could be derived from both the farmers of Europe and Anatolia and the earlier steppe populations (Extended Data Fig. 3E). The population history of mainland Europe and the steppe could be summarized as: (i) the dilution of hunter-gatherer ancestry by migrations from different parts of the Near East, (ii) the formation of populations of mixed hunter-gatherer/Near Eastern ancestry (Middle Neolithic/Chalcolithic in mainland Europe, and Eneolithic/Yamnaya/Poltavka on the steppe), and (iii) the migration of steppe populations into Europe during the Late Neolithic (~2,500BCE) and of farmer populations into the steppe, leading to the formation of an array of populations of mixed ancestry encompassing both mainland Europe and the Eurasian steppe. Future research must elucidate how present-day populations emerged from the populations of the Bronze Age, and how populations from mainland Europe, the Eurasian steppe, and Anatolia influenced and were influenced by those from the Near East and Central/South Asia.

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