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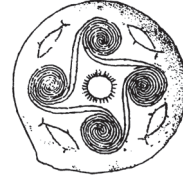
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# Of Odysseys and Oddities

Scales and modes of interaction between prehistoric  
Aegean societies and their neighbours

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*Front cover: The MBA village of Punta Milazzese on Panarea. Photograph by Helen Dawson.*



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The 2013 Sheffield Aegean Round Table took place during a rather frigid January with snowfalls threatening to cut our plans short. Thankfully, we had a very fruitful meeting and a lively discussion over the course of three days. Most of those who engaged in the Round Table have been able to publish their papers in the volume, though the event was much enhanced by the oral contributions of John Bennet, Sue Sherratt, Sara Strack and Roger Doonan. We were also fortunate to have Kristian Kristiansen deliver a thought (and discussion) provoking keynote address and our meeting concluded with an eloquent final discussion by John Barrett.

The event took place during a Marie Curie Fellowship that the editor held at the University of Sheffield 2011–2013. I was very fortunate to work with and learn from Roger Doonan during this period. Along with acting as mentor for the fellowship, he co-organised the Round Table event with me and played a key role in designing the research agenda for the event and this publication. Thank you also to all of the student helpers who made the event run so smoothly. The Round Table is generously supported by the Institute for Aegean Prehistory, to whom we are most grateful.

The Sheffield Aegean Round Table is a type of event that is relatively rare these days, as it takes place in a relaxed atmosphere where people freely speak their minds. This is really made possible through the welcoming environment that is created by Debi Harlan, Valasia Isaakidou and John Bennet. The home baked fare that they so kindly made on the opening night (thanks also to Vuka Milić) set the guests up for a very comfortable and enjoyable event. Debi and John also hosted all of the guests at their home the next evening, making a very memorable climax to the convivial environment that makes the Round Tables such unique events.

The panel of reviewers, including many of the contributors, provided invaluable advice that was vital in bringing this volume to publication, for which we are grateful. I would finally wish to express my gratitude to the participants at the event and contributors to this volume who made the entire process so stimulating. It was indeed testimony to our aspiration to work across political and traditional boundaries that have influenced Aegean archaeology that we had participants representing eleven nationalities from institutions on three continents. A final note on behalf of the authors is that papers in this volume were submitted in 2013 and 2014, and as a consequence many will be missing citations to some important more recent publications.



# Chapter 8

## Kanlıgeçit – Selimpaşa – Mikhalich and the Question of Anatolian Colonies in Early Bronze Age Southeast Europe

*Volker Heyd, Şengül Aydıngün and Emre Göldoğan*

### **Setting the scene**

This paper will explore changing patterns of settlement location, scale and complexity in the southeastern-most region of Europe - Thrace - in the third millennium BC. The purpose will be to define the contribution of local historical trajectories and 'foreign' cultural elements in the formation of social practices and material traditions, including material culture and the built environment. The character and role of exchange systems will be explored, and it is argued that influences from Anatolia were a spur to greater complexity of settlement systems and society in the study region during this period of the later part of the Early Bronze Age. We will assess the relevance of new archaeological data obtained from both excavation and survey projects for understanding these issues, and present them in light of our revised model for the trajectory of this region in prehistory and propose that a form of 'embryonic' colony can be identified, the first of its kind in Europe. In particular, we will focus on the sites of Kanlıgeçit and Selimpaşa in Turkish Thrace and Mikhalich in southeastern Bulgaria. We begin by establishing the historical scene and the specific questions to be addressed through this paper. In order to understand the social conditions and connections that provide the context for understanding these sites, we next provide a detailed analysis of high-status material culture, with a particular emphasis on those elements that both directly and indirectly attest to interaction and connectivity with elitist groups throughout the East Mediterranean, Anatolia and Europe more widely. Building on this framework, we then discuss the character of the key settlement sites that support the core arguments of this paper

in relation to the role of interaction in the changing complexity of this region in the Early Bronze Age.

A somehow puzzling picture emerges when trying to compare the most southeastern corner of Europe, ancient Thrace<sup>1</sup>, with northwestern Anatolia between the mid to later 4th and the first half of the 3rd millennia BC. On the one hand, we can recognise a similar ceramic inventory shared on both sides of the Bosphorus and the Dardanelles. These similarities - probably the first of its kind since the Neolithisation of the region - account in particular for pottery types of the second half of the 4th millennium BC (links between Cernavodă III and the so-called Fluted Wares of northwestern Anatolia: Gabriel 2001; Roodenberg and Thissen 2001; Nikolova 2008). This material culture link no doubt continues deep into the 3rd millennium BC when looking, for example, at its most iconic vessel form, the 'dark burnished plate/bowl with inverted thickened rim', which is the most numerous form at excavated and surveyed settlement sites (*e.g.*, Georgiev *et al.* 1979; Bertemes 1997; Frirdich 1997; Sarı 2009). On the other hand, this relationship is neither visible structurally in the archaeological features, such from the few known settlements or burials of this period, nor materially in the metal artefacts for example (Nikolova 1999: 287ff.; Efe and Fidan 2006).

Indeed, both regions go very different pathways culturally, with southeastern Europe becoming an integral part of the infiltration zone of Yamnaya populations from c.3050/3000 BC (Heyd 2011). These pastorally orientated populations originate from the north-Pontic/Caspian steppe lowlands. In Bulgaria their typical kurgans and burials can be found throughout the Thracian lowland regions. Geographically beyond, in Turkish and Greek Thrace, there is what we might perhaps consider a zone of influence that is revealed by the presence of some cord-decorated sherds from Kanlıgeçit in Turkish Thrace (Özdoğan and Parzinger 2012, Fig. 134), Dikili Tash in Greek Thrace or Pevkacia Magoula in Thessaly (Roman *et al.* 1992), and the anthropomorphic stelae of Skala Sotiros (Thassos Island) and Troy I, otherwise a typical northwest-Pontic Yamnaya feature (*cf.* Koukouli-Chrysanthaki 2005; Meyer-Todorieva 2010). The same cultural difference is true when looking at the settlement systems. In northwestern Anatolia, höyük (tell) sites were continuously occupied throughout the period in focus, and site sizes and complexity gradually increased, thus starting a development that would firstly see fortifications, outer-settlement areas, communal houses, shared storage facilities, workshop areas *etc.* and then eventually, in the second half of the 3rd millennium BC, strong indications for a pathway to urbanism (*e.g.* Steadman 2011; Sarı 2012; Kouka 2013).

In Thrace tell settlements are only re-settled in the latest 4th millennium BC, along with the Yamnaya infiltration, when people using a material culture (in the broadest sense) associated with the Ezero A culture (Georgiev *et al.* 1979; Schwenger 2005). While this can perhaps be regarded as a first step in a demographic concentration and process of economic re-orientation, the settlements stay modest in size and organisation, and overall a relatively moderate level of social complexity prevails.

We have not as yet recovered any outstanding burials, lavishly equipped hoards, or precious metal objects beyond the size of a simple hair ring (Alexandrov 2009). Material culture of the Yamnaya group is still the dominating factor in assemblages dated to the first quarter of the 3rd millennium BC, and one might well envisage a relatively balanced exchange system to have been in place and a kind of symbiosis to have been established between predominantly agricultural societies using Ezero A and B1 material culture and inhabiting tell sites, and the pastoralists using Yamnaya material culture that were living in the wider landscapes around. However this situation changes in the second quarter of the 3rd millennium when Yamnaya-type kurgans and burials sharply diminish in numbers, and Ezero Tell sites expand regionally and locally.

So, while the first half of the 3rd millennium BC in Thrace is characterised by a (comparatively) moderate level of social and economic complexity and the ideological dominance of pastoral tribes of a north-Pontic origin, there is a real explosion in complexity in the period between 2400 and 2000 BC and the region becomes increasingly included within a much wider network that is now dominated by frequent and highly visible exchange and trade, and new forms of prestige and status expression, as to be detailed below.

The three following sections will try to explain this situation, firstly by highlighting and contextualising the dataset of several lavishly equipped graves and hoards, and prestigious and exotic single finds of this period, discovered mostly in Bulgaria in the last two decades. It will then describe the outstanding fortified settlement sites of Kanlıgeçit, Selimpaşa and Mikhalich, foreign in their design, construction and material culture compared to local settlements, before assessing the role of these sites in a discussion around exchange and trade; the relation between local elites and foreigners likely originating from Anatolia and the eastern Aegean; and the inclusion of this most southeastern corner of Europe in the wider Aegeo-Anatolian networks. Key objectives herein concern 1) demonstrating the degree of similarities amongst these outstanding settlement sites (despite the variability of data due to different intensities of research at each site); 2) characterisation of their interaction with the landscape around; and 3) development of an explanatory models that can help us understand the mechanisms behind the specific character of the region. It may not come as a surprise that this development is not so much explained by local evolution as it is by external factors, or a combination of both, which are far better suited to understanding the available records. The method to be applied is a structural comparison of the later Early Bronze Age situations on both sides of the Dardanelles and Bosphorus. The main outcomes shall give an idea about the geographical range of these interactions, about their quality and reach into, and effects on, local societies. We will also evaluate whether these outstanding settlement sites can be seen as Anatolian colonies, including a brief consideration of the wider question of what might constitute Early Bronze Age colonies. The emerging picture highlights the connections of Thrace as a pathway

linking mainland Europe to Anatolia and the Aegean and this is set in the context of an overall high degree of connectivity characterising the second half of the 3rd millennium BC in the broader region.

### **Emerging complexity in Thrace from c.2400 BC**

There can be no doubt that this new situation emerging after c.2400 BC, within the Early Bronze Age (EBA) III or *Sveti Kirilovo* phase in the Bulgarian chronological system, is due to influence from across the Bosphorus and Dardanelles, where exactly the same developments had happened several centuries earlier in a more gradual manner. In Thrace the change appears to have been more abrupt and levels of societal and economic complexity appear to rise rapidly, despite having here a prehistoric archaeology that is still struggling with its own inherent problems of an accurate chronological system. However, overall social complexity certainly did not reach the same level as northwestern Anatolia due to a further geographical distance to the alleged centres farther to the east/southeast and perhaps the lesser time span available to build up. Nevertheless, what is to be observed in the material record can be described with the same keywords of “organised settlement structures indicating the presence of a central authority”; “large settlements with citadels and lower towns”; “first introduction of wheel-made pottery (mass production)”, “first examples of tin bronzes”, *etc.* that had been used by, for example, Vasıf Şahoğlu (2005: 339) to describe northwest Anatolian EBA contexts.

A critical assessment of the archaeological record (Figure 8.1) reveals that this social development is materialised through new forms of settlement, imported pottery and imitations of this (to be discussed in the next section), lavishly equipped elite graves and precious-metal hoards, and in particular, certain specific artefacts deposited in these latter two contexts. This can be complemented by several outstanding single finds, which often lack specific find contexts because they come from burial mounds in Bulgaria that have been looted by criminal gangs in recent decades (Figure 8.2). The most important graves in this list are from the Dübene necropole (Plovdiv region), excavated since 2004 (Hristov 2012, with references), from Izvorovo (Haskovo region), excavated in 2008 (Borislavov 2010) and Rupite (Blagoevgrad region), looted in the early 1990s (Leshtakov 2011: 563–564, Fig. 2). All of these are burial mounds. Comparably lavishly equipped graves are not yet known from Turkish Thrace, Greek Thrace, or from Romania. These graves, hoards and special single finds shall be discussed in some detail here, before assessing the key settlement sites highlighted in the title, as they present important and recently, though often preliminarily, published datasets relevant to defining the cultural context of the sites. As a key component in the multi-faceted picture of emerging complexity, they represent an aspect of the local elites that held social positions and controlled resources to enable them to obtain prestigious and exotic artefacts. By focussing on new forms of precious-metal neck decoration that constitute an innovation of the period found in all graves





Figure 8.1: Map of key Early Bronze Age sites in southeast Europe (Bulgaria, Greece & Turkey) and northwest Anatolia mentioned in the text.

and most hoards, the connectivity and degree of internationalisation of these local elites becomes apparent.

### ***The Dübene necropole***

The site of Dübene, with its nearly 20,000 single gold objects, mostly tiny beads for compound necklaces, is outstanding and the quality and quantity of finds are only matched by the roughly contemporary material from Troy II and the Poliochni treasures (Bernabò Brea 1976; Sazcı 2007). In addition, the Dübene ‘burial’ treasure contains silver and copper/bronze objects, including a dagger, and other finds include blue faience/glass beads, as well as pottery and animal bones in abundance from the c.30 ritual features (pits, stone heaps, fireplaces) around a group of five larger tumuli. The largest single precious metal object is, however, a gold/electrum dagger of c.16

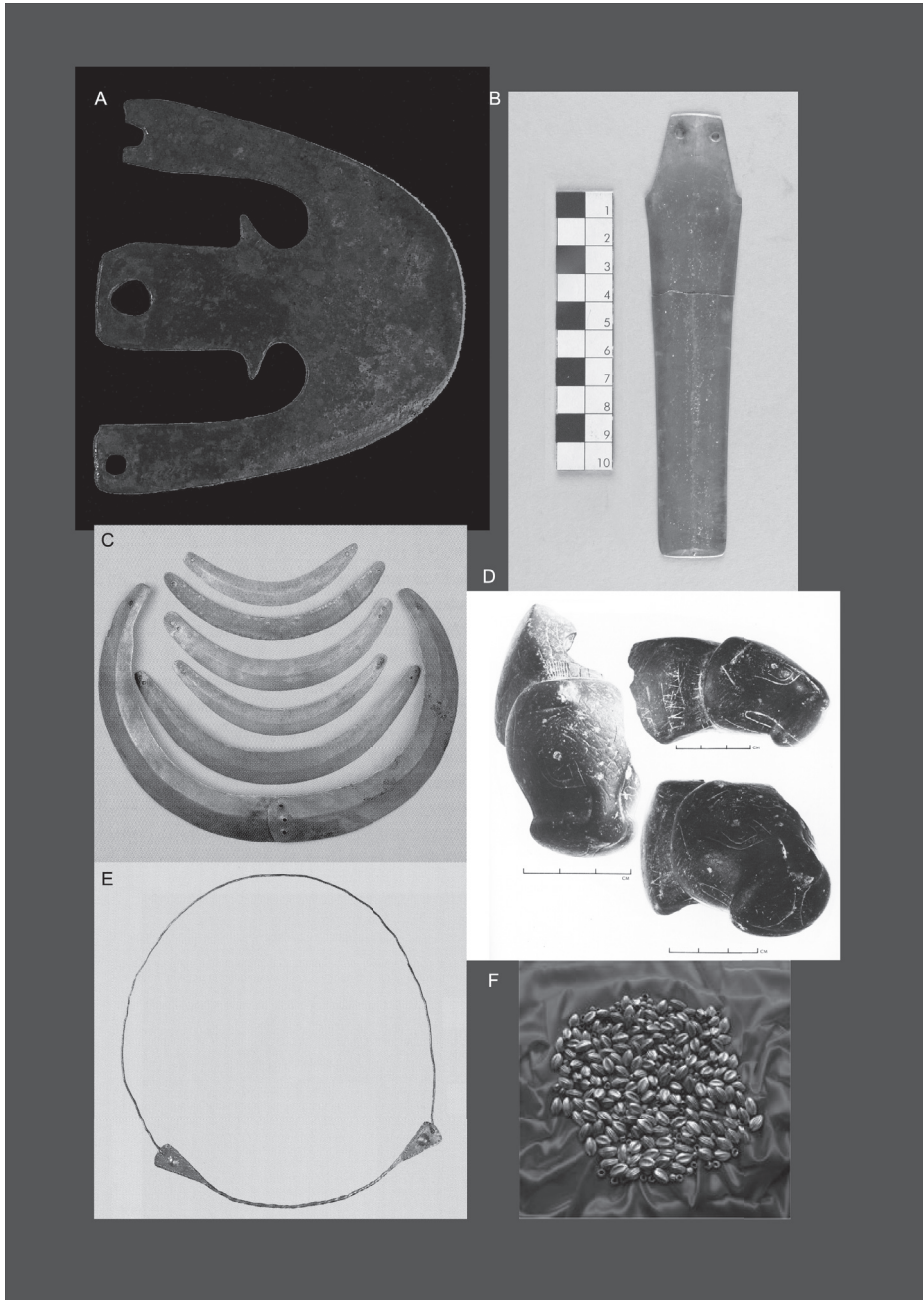


Figure 8.2: Selection of Early Bronze Age prestigious and/or exotic key finds from Bulgaria and Greek Thrace: A. Haskovo bronze axe (after Avramova & Todorieva 2005); B. Dübene electrum dagger (after Hristov 2007); C. Silver lunulae of Panayot Hitovo (after Fol et al. eds. 2004); D. Lionhead sceptre of Sitagroi (after Renfrew et al. eds. 1986); E. Golden neckring without provenance from ARES collection Sofia (after Fol et al. eds. 2004); F. Gold beads from Izvorovo (after Borislavov 2010).

cm length (Figure 8.2B), one of only two known from 3rd millennium BC Europe, the other coming from the Mala Gruda tumulus in Montenegro (Heyd 2013b, Fig. 10)<sup>2</sup>.

### ***The 'Haskovo Treasure'***

The so-called 'Haskovo treasure', assembled before 1998, is likely to also originate from looted tumuli (Avramova and Todorieva 2005). This 'assemblage' is certainly not from a sealed context because, for example, the broad flat axe (Avramova and Todorieva 2005 fig. 2, left) in it is of the Altheim/Vinča type and belongs to the 4th millennium BC. The treasure is also not complete, as all the gold one might expect for such an exceptional find was in all probability sold to a dealer before approaching archaeologists in Sofia. There are nevertheless no real arguments to doubt it comes from southeastern Bulgaria or the environs of the town of Haskovo. Claims with respect to the iconic crescentic axe that the find, or parts of it, was made somewhere in the Near East or Turkey (Băjenaru 2013: 292), are based solely on this axe (Figure 8.2A), which is the only one of its kind in Europe. However, a handful of further crescent-shaped or fenestrated axes, also dating to later 3rd millennium BC contexts, are known from western Turkey (Efe and Fidan 2006, 24; Gernez 2007). It therefore makes sense to include the 10 × 10.7 cm wide/long Haskovo example to this cluster (Figure 8.3). This would accord well with Turan Efe's 'Great Canavan Route' (2007)

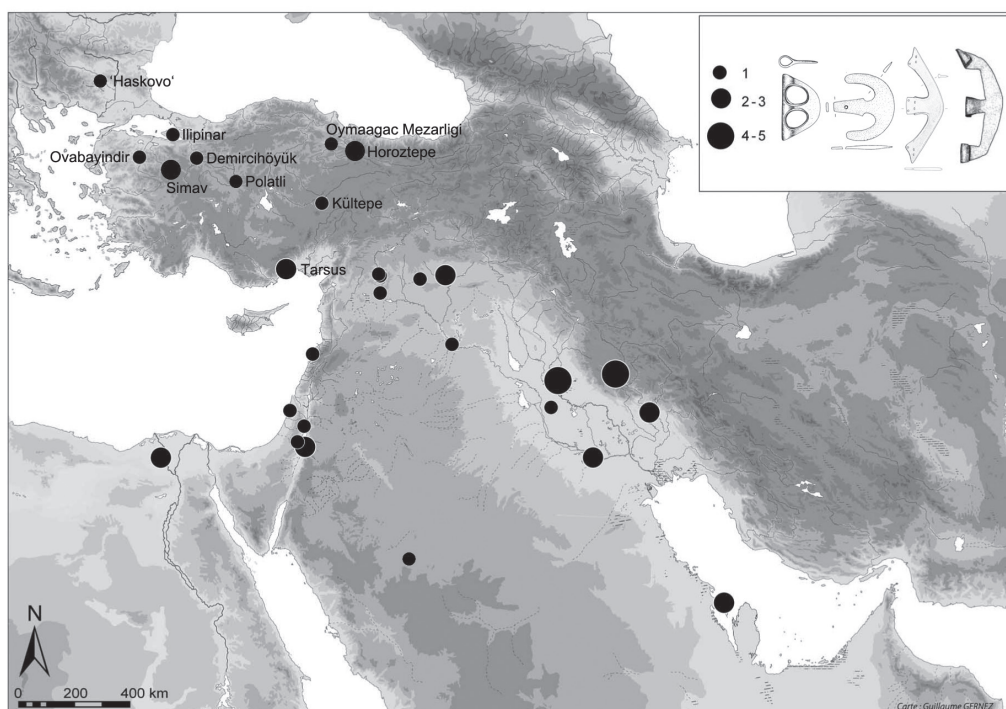


Figure 8.3: Map of 3rd millennium BC Crescentic and Fenestrated Axes after Gernez 2007 with additions. Named are 'Haskovo' and the Turkish specimens.



and Vasif Şahoğlu's 'Anatolian Trade Network' (2005) or Turan Efe's 'Great Caravan Route' (2007). These are the main theories used to explain the intensification in the cultural and economic relations of the Anatolian west and southwest with the interior, north Syria and Mesopotamia, respectively and between the north Aegean and Cilicia. These routes emerged gradually from the mid-3rd millennium BC, that is the EB III period in Turkey (see also Fig. 8.12 below). In relation to dating this collection of objects, typologically the above mentioned axe is close to the Ilipınar axe and both are rather late specimens, already predicting the development of the fenestrated axes. Guillaume Gernez (2007: 183f.) therefore equates it to the Levantine later 'Bronze Ancien IV', the period between 2200 and 2000 BC in absolute terms. Along with the axe, the triangular flat dagger deserves attention, as it is, with its 31.8 cm, not only one of the longest ever found in EBA southeastern Europe but is also described as having a 'tinned' surface. This is also said for the crescentic axe and similar observations were made for Anatolian bronzes (Muhly 2011: 866).

### ***New precious forms of neck decoration***

A link between all four burial sites comes in the form of the many small beads recovered at each of them. These occur in various forms and sizes and in silver (Haskovo) and gold (Dübene, Rupite, Izvorovo). They probably belong to neck chains and, based on the gold spacers found in Dübene (Tsintsov *et al.* 2009), and the quantity of gold beads in Izvorovo (altogether 344 pieces; here Figure 8.2F), they may have been from compound (crescentic) necklaces. These gold spacers connect the Dübene necklaces with similar ones from the Troy and Poliochni treasures. In Europe, another three specimens have been recorded from an exceptional burial found in Mound 1 of Bare (Rekovac, Pomoravlje district) in Central Serbia (Srejić 1976). Another findspot that is not securely dated to the 3rd millennium BC due to the early date of its discovery and poor contextual data, is the eastern Serbian site of Velika Vrbica (Kladovo, Bor district; Heyd 2013b: 31, Fig. 16A). These compound necklaces and the emphasis on the neck and the upper chest using splendid and brilliant ornamentation is another innovation of the mid 3rd millennium BC, probably firstly to be found in elite contexts of the Near East, Egypt and Anatolia and around the turn of the millennium, and to be subsequently copied throughout much of Europe (Heyd 2013a; see *e.g.*, Frieman 2010: 189f. for the materialisation of the same idea in northwestern Europe).

Apart from these compound necklaces there are two other, closely connected groups of neck decorations to be found in EBA south-eastern Europe, that similarly were used to adorn the neck/upper chest body with a precious metal display: torques and lunulae. Stefan Alexandrov has recently (2011) published six golden torques from Bulgaria, all being single finds recovered by metal detectorists. A seventh, 15 cm wide, from the ARES collection in Sofia can be added (Fol *et al.* [eds.] 2004, no.108; here Figure 8.2E). Among them, only the

specimen from Novae/Svishtov (Veliko Tarnovo region) is of the *Ösenhalsring*-type. It however finds its best connection in a further six golden *Ösenhalsring* torques from the recently (August 2011) discovered 'Svishtov treasure', dated by its other gold and bronze artefacts to around 2000 BC (pers. comm. S. Alexandrov). Two further gold torques have recently been published from Romania (Popescu 2013a), one of which (site of Cornăţel, jud. Sibiu) is of the *Ösenhalsring*-type, while the second (from a hoard at Răcăţău, jud. Bacău) has braided loops. All other golden Bulgarian torques have simple eyelets or braided loops too. Some are combined with a special form of golden drop-shaped hair ring (similar to types ID and II in S. Alexandrov's list of 2009), widely known from the regions adjacent to the course of the Lower and Middle Danube (cf. Hänsel and Weihermann 2000). These kind of drop-shaped hair rings are also to be found in two other yet unpublished jewellery hoards of Provadiya (Varna region) and Yankovo Shumensko (Shumen region) (pers. comm. K. Leshtakov and V. Slavchev). Besides containing more than 30 gold and silver hair rings of various sizes, the hoard of Provadiya also yielded some silver beads, probably from one (or perhaps several) necklace(s) of the kind described above.

### ***The Panayot Hitovo hoard***

Another hoard, also dated to the later EBA with good arguments (pers. comm. K. Leshtakov; however for a Chalcolithic date see Popescu 2013b) is from Panayot Hitovo (Targovishte region). It was found in 2003 (Fol *et al.* 2004, no.150) and provides evidence for lunula-shaped neck ornamentations made of silver (and one of electrum), of which at least 10 were assembled in this treasure. Of particular interest is a larger composite lunula consisting of two halves that were put together by string or rivets (Figure 8.2C). This extraordinary treasure, originally deposited in a vessel, also contained 12 bracelets, 6 elongated metal strips (probably head decorations) and more than 50 hemispherical sheet buttons, all made of silver. Similar lunula-shaped pendants, again made of silver and electrum, were found at Bulgarian cave sites of Emen and Tabashka (Veliko Tarnovo region), where they were probably deposited as small hoards (Nikolova and Angelov 1961; Hristov 2000).

Altogether these precious metal neck ornaments from Bulgaria, whether chain, torque or lunula, form part of a wider cluster of highly prestigious and innovative gold or silver neck-ornamentation that occurs at some of the most iconic 3rd millennium BC sites in the Levant, Turkey and Greece such as Umm e-Marra, Byblos, Eskiyaşar, İkiztepe, Troy, Poliochni and Steno, with some outliers reaching into the Central Mediterranean (Figure 8.4). In Bulgaria, all named hoards seem, on the one hand, to date rather late within the 3rd millennium BC, perhaps covering only the last two centuries, c.2200–2000 BC. This makes them somewhat later at least than the Dübene graves. On the other hand, their distribution, and that of some interesting single finds, extends north of the Balkan mountain range and north and



Figure 8.4: Map of Golden, Electrum and/or Silver Compound Necklaces with Spacers; and Lunulae and Torques from the Levante, Anatolia and Europe and likely dated to the second half of the 3rd millennium BC (note that the golden lunulae of northwest and northern Europe are not mapped here).

east adjacent to the above mentioned graves which are only known from southern Bulgaria so far.

Several other relevant objects can be mentioned briefly: some later shaft-hole axe hoards, such as from Ezero, level IV (Stara Zagora region; Georgiev *et al.* 1979: 179), Tutrakan (Silistra region; Chernikh 1978) and of unknown provenance recovered in 1996 (Avramova 2004); exotic finds like a rudimentary (?) slotted spearhead from Dolni Lukovit (Pleven region) (Chernikh 1978, Table 29,20 [find no.10710]); a tin-bronze miniature cup (3,6 cm high) from the site of Ovcharitsa II (Stara Zagora region; Fol *et al.* eds 2004, no.116); the lionhead stone sceptre from the 'Long House' at Sitagroi V (Renfrew *et al.* [eds.] 1986: 189, Fig. 8.4b; pl. XXV; herein Figure 8.2D). We can also mention more generally the many silver finds from later 3rd millennium BC Bulgaria, a region otherwise devoid of silver ores, but rich in gold (*cf.* Popov *et al.* 2011). We can also mention the presence of about 15 tin-bronze artefacts analysed so far (Heyd 2013b, fig. 12; *cf.* also Rahmstorf 2011: 104–106, fig. 9,1), and also tin-bronze dress pins from Assara, Mikhalich, Kanlıgeçit, Rupite, Golyamata Mogila, Mudrets and Gülübovo, can be compared with pieces from Küllüoba (Eskişehir province; Efe and Fidan 2006: 21, Tab. 4; Fidan 2012) and Seyitömer (Bilgen 2015). Taken together these, with little doubt, represent an innovative new dressing code with links to Anatolia, Syria and Mesopotamia (Klein 1992).

## Outstanding Settlement Sites

Alongside these very special grave assemblages, hoards and single finds, there are also outstanding settlement sites of significance to the case presented in this paper. The investigation of these complex EBA sites in Turkish Thrace was part of a fieldwork program from 2006 to 2011 (Özdoğan *et al.* 2008; Aydingün *et al.* 2010; Heyd *et al.* 2010; Güldoğan *et al.* 2011; Heyd and Skowranek 2012), carried out also in collaboration with Bulgarian archaeologists. During this program the outer settlement of Kırklareli-Kanlıgeçit (Kırklareli province) was investigated in 2006–2007; the settlement of Koyunbaba (Kırklareli province) in 2007; and the tell (höyük) site of Selimpaşa (Istanbul province) in 2007–2009 and 2012. In addition, information about the excavations at the Bulgarian site of Mikhalich-Baa Dere (Haskovo region) was obtained thanks to the co-excavator Krassimir Leshtakov (University of Sofia).

### *Kırklareli-Kanlıgeçit*

Following many years of excavations, this site is becoming recognised as the most important known EBA site in the whole of Thrace. It was recently fully published by Mehmet Özdoğan and Hermann Parzinger (2012); therefore only a few key characteristics need to be summarised here. Originally this was a small Ezero-type Tell, constructed using wood and wattle-and-daub architecture. The existing settlement was entirely remodelled at some time around 2400 BC. This included the construction of a fortified citadel of c.0.4 hectares using stone and mudbrick architecture and a drystone glacis technique was employed for the wall. There was also a tower/gatehouse (?) built using ashlar masonry and within the citadel, there were megaron buildings up to 25 m long and encircled by temenoi walls with buttresses. In addition to this acropolis, there was an outer settlement of c.3–5 ha that stretched around its base. Typical Anatolian red-slip pottery ware and/or wheel-made pottery, all possibly locally made, constitute c.15% of the total pottery assemblage (Özdoğan 2011: 672). There are also specimens of the *International Anatolianising Pottery* (also called Lefkandi I-Kastri pottery in the western Aegean), in the form of depata, tankards and particularly Trojan plates. There are also very important signs of a specialised economy, in the form of horse breeding (up to 15% of all bones), wool-yarn production (many spindle-whorls) and, potentially, the exploitation of copper-ores from the near-by Strandza mountains.

It is in this context of economy and trade that we can discuss a wheel-made ceramic sherd that is made from a prehistoric fabric, and has a roller stamp impression on it. This was collected during our survey in the outer settlement, southwest of the citadel (field 6, *cf.* Özdoğan and Parzinger 2012, fig. 62), in August 2006 (Figure 8.5.1). However a question mark remains for this find, as it is a surface find, not stratified, and of a ware not common in Kanlıgeçit (*pers. comm.* Mehmet Özdoğan). This means that it cannot be fully excluded that the find is of a later date. Nevertheless, the best

comparisons are with EBA II pithoi fragments, other (larger) pottery vessels and hearth decorations of the circum-Aegean region (see Rahmstorf 2006), with some examples from Lerna and Tiryns even exactly matching the decoration pattern of this sherd (Wiencke 1970 and Müller 1938). It is in this context of the use of stamps and seals that we draw attention to another sherd that has a clear round stamp impression (Figure 8.5.2). This comes from the Bulgarian settlement site of Gülübovo (Stara Zagora

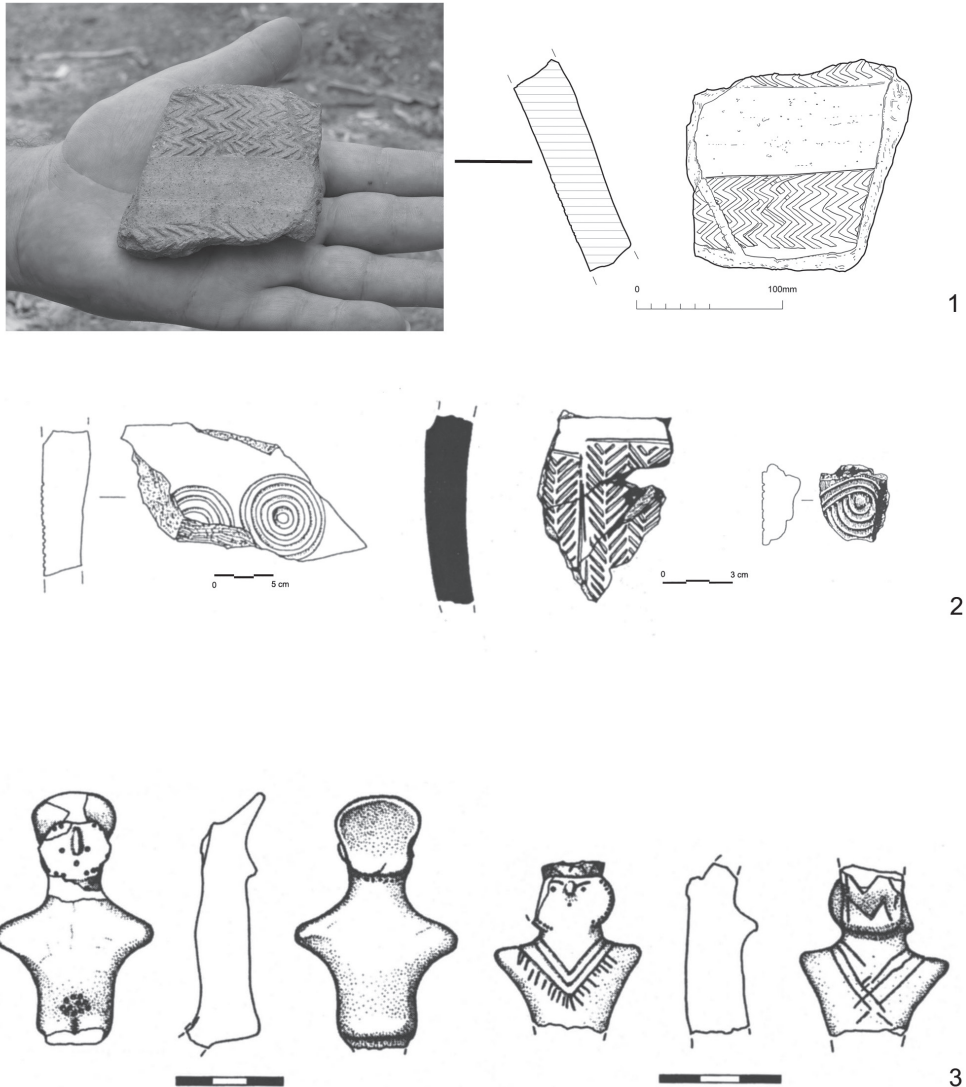


Figure 8.5: 1. Roller Impression sherd from the outer settlement of Kanlıgeçit; 2. sherds with stamps/ impressions from Gülübovo (Bulgaria, after Leshtakov 2002); 3. clay idols from the citadel of Kanlıgeçit (after Karul 2005; 2012).



region; Leshtakov 2002; in press), some 120 km away from Kırklareli, and this site contained a collection of *International Anatolianising Pottery* (depata, pilgrim flask, etc.), second in volume only to the assemblage from Kanlıgeçit. Gülübovo has also yielded a few further interesting stamp impressions on sherds, otherwise not known in the Bulgarian EBA or in Turkish Thrace.

There is yet another aspect in Kanlıgeçit that deserves attention. This refers to two clay figurines, described in detail by Necmi Karul (2005; 2012), featuring clear Anatolian features (Figure 8.5.3). There are no immediate comparisons to these in all of southeastern Europe and the few clay idols used in the Bulgarian EBA are characteristic of other traditions (Bertemes 2002). This leads to the fundamental issue of why would they copy the Anatolian clay idols, and perhaps the religious ideas standing behind them. Was this a local society, or perhaps its elite, imitating the trappings of civilization in northwestern Anatolia? The main Kanlıgeçit phase 2b is otherwise a near-perfect, albeit much smaller copy of the latest Troy II phases (IIC1-c3: Ünlüsoy 2011; see herein Figure 8.12), even displaying a very similar orientation of the Megara and the same slightly oval form of the citadel. One therefore wonders how a distinctively local elite should be capable of copying virtually everything from Troy IIC1-c3 without having a model of the architectural design, or the right people to command such an endeavour.

Similar observations also apply for the outer settlement, the focus of our survey and prospection in 2006/07 (Heyd and Skowranek 2012). We could not find any hint of a defensive ditch encircling it. It was probably never needed; the whole flatland is well watered and one might perfectly imagine a kind of protection to be given by various waterways, artificial lakes and swamps. High quality pottery was collected from many spots, particularly in the south and southwest to the citadel, including some of the best *International Anatolianising Pottery* pieces (e.g. Özdoğan and Parzinger 2012: 50–51 and Abb. 69, 7–8). Does this perhaps indicate the presence of some special quarters? At least it shows some ‘inequality’ in the outer occupation. Whatever the background, Kanlıgeçit represents a form of central place that can only be regarded as foreign in a regional environment still dominated by settlement mounds, wattle-and-daub architecture and hand-made dark burnished pottery. Interestingly now, such a local settlement is well-represented by our next site, only 12 km away from Kanlıgeçit.

### **Koyunbaba**

This site is yet unpublished and a summary of our survey and prospection results of 2007 will be given here for the first time. Koyunbaba is certainly a tell site, however much flattened and extended over c.2–3 ha due to ongoing agricultural activities and also badly damaged by road construction. It is thus not clear whether there was a kind of outer settlement around the original (smaller) tell. Ideally located on a low and flat spur-like terrace encircled by three well-watered river valleys (Figure 8.6),

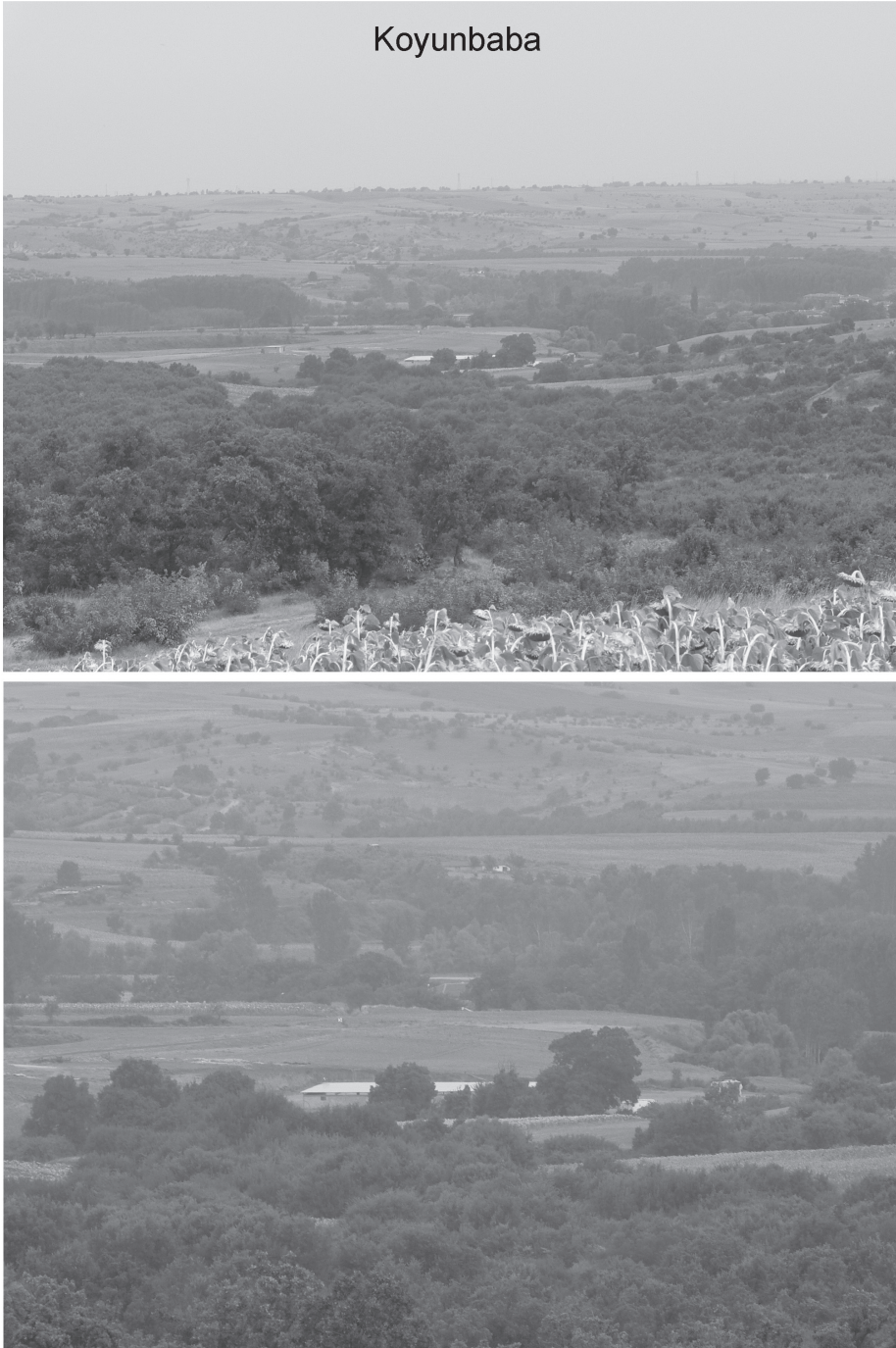


Figure 8.6: Koyunbaba (Kırklareli Province, Turkey): Photos showing the location of the site at a flat terrace over two gullies (photographs by authors).

just north of the modern village, the site yielded a rich surface pottery collection ranging in date from Chalcolithic through the Bronze to the Iron Age. However, the vast majority belong to the EBA, and are closely related in form and decoration, if not fully matching, the types of the Bulgarian Ezero B2 culture. This is also shown by the many bowls/plates with inverted rims and other ceramics with handles, decorated rims and applied notched ledges (Figure 8.7.1). More specifically, the majority of the EBA pottery assemblage probably finds its best comparisons with the latest Ezero layers III to I and Dyadovo layers IV to II, predates the EBA materials of the site of Drama (Yambol), and equates with an initial phase of Sveti Kirilovo or Bertemes' horizon group 4 (Bertemes 1997; 1998). This makes it concurrent with the pre-Anatolian occupation, and likely also the phase 2c of Kanlıgeçit. Contemporaneity and contact with this phase of Kanlıgeçit are indicated by two body sherds of Anatolian red-slip ware and one wheel-made plate, which were recovered during the survey (Figure 8.7.2). But caution needs to be applied as these are all surface finds.

The most exiting results, however, came from our extended geophysics prospection using the equipment and methods described in Heyd and Skowranek (2012). Detailed surface pottery counting revealed the presence of subterranean features that were also visible through this geophysical work (Figure 8.8A and C). Not only could many pits be detected, which had already been badly ploughed, and some linear features, but most importantly a circular ditch system, comprising of an inner circle of c.60 m diameter and an outer one of c.120 m. Unlikely to be a purely defensive structure due to topography, the best comparisons come again from the Bulgarian Ezero culture and the sites of Cherna Gora (Leshtakov 2006) and particularly Drama (Figure 8.8B), where two interlinked ditches were also utilised and closely match the situation at Koyunbaba (Bertemes 2002). François Bertemes also cites such circular ditch systems, interpreted by him as open-air sanctuaries, from the sites of Yunacite, Karasura, Gerena, Dyadovo, Konyovo, Veselinovo (?) and Dana Bunar. Koyunbaba is thus the southernmost known of this Thracian phenomenon and the only known one of its kind in the region of modern-day Turkey.

It is important to note that this very local settlement is only 12 km away from the partly contemporary, but Anatolian-influenced, site of Kanlıgeçit. One needs to mention in this context that both sites are located in parallel, NNE-SSW running well-watered river valleys (the valley of the Teke Dere on the one hand and the Okluca Dere/Haydadere river valley on the other hand), thus occupying different local catchment zones and probably being local population focal points also. Indeed, both sites seem to have similar origins in the form of rather small and typical tell sites of the Ezero culture. It is likely that Koyunbaba then became the more distinctive of the two by the construction of the possible open-air sanctuary as we have no evidence for such in Kanlıgeçit. But the transformation that Kanlıgeçit went through after some period of co-existence was even more fundamental when it became structured along very similar lines to the Anatolian-model. Koyunbaba seems to have been abandoned much earlier than Kanlıgeçit (it lacks diagnostic later Sveti Kirilovo phase materials) and it



Figure 8.7: Koyunbaba: Early Bronze Age pottery finds; 1. selection of survey potsherds; 2. special sherds from the survey, two wall sherds of Anatolian red-slip ware and a wheel-made plate rim sherd (photographs by authors).



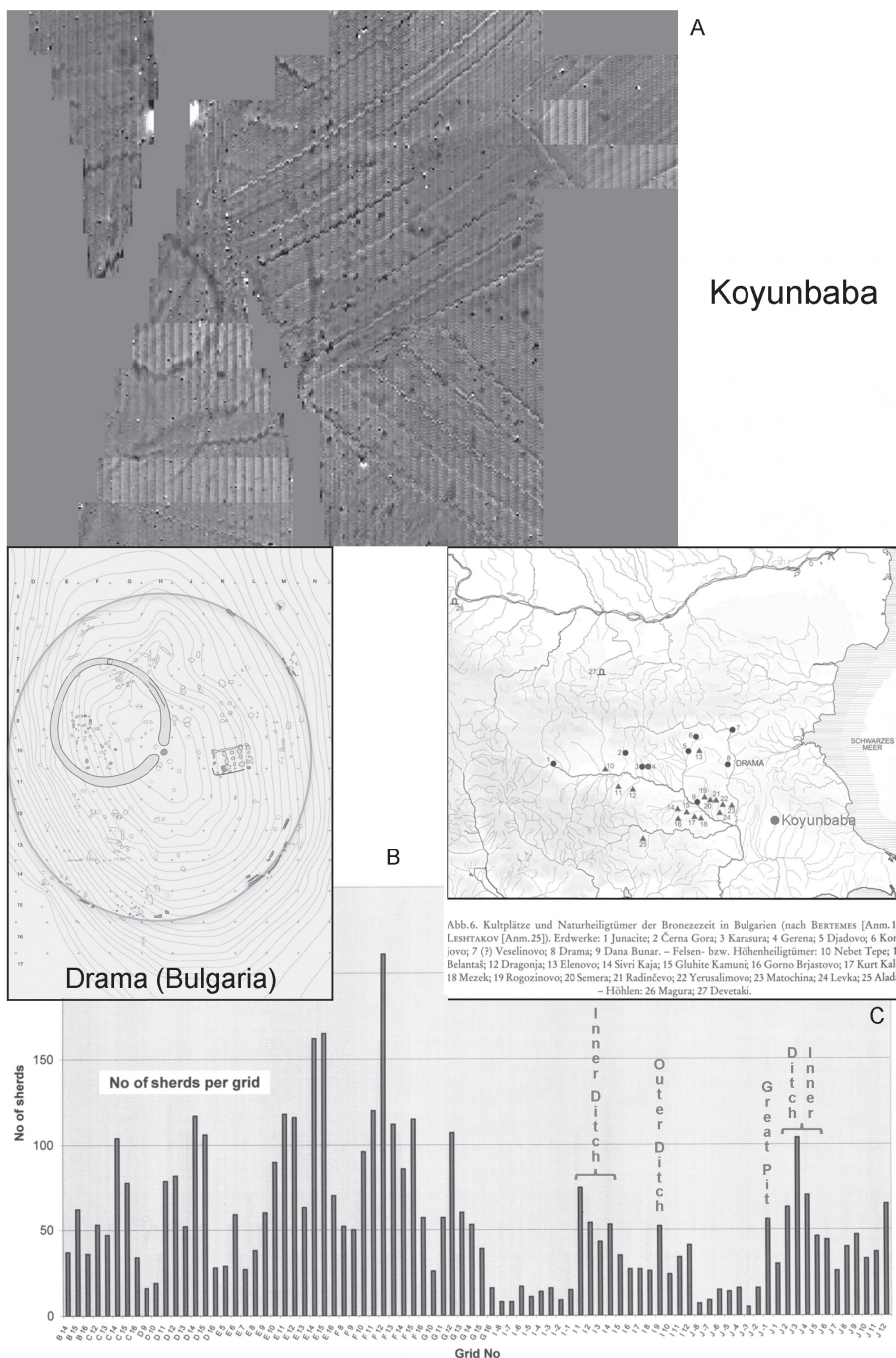


Figure 8.8: Koyunbaba: A. geophysics results showing a circular double ditch system; B. the Early Bronze Age site of Drama (Yambol, Bulgaria) as comparison, after Bertemes 1998 and 2002; C. pottery statistics from the site survey.

remains plausible that this occurred due to the transformation of Kanlıgeçit, which in turn progressed from being a local to a regional centre.

### ***İstanbul-Selimpaşa Höyük***

This site lies on an elevated area next to an 800 m long sandy bay in the Sea of Marmara, c.55 km west of the Bosphorus entry, thus making it probably the last safe harbour for any Bronze Age sea merchant wishing to enter the Black Sea. It is now the last remaining tell site on the northern side of the Sea of Marmara, and it was originally one of the largest mounds and it was certainly a regional centre on the basis that no other major settlement or tell are known within a distance of 15–20 km. The appearance and preservation of the site and the results of our survey and prospection there have been described in detail elsewhere (Heyd *et al.* 2010; Aydınğün 2014), and so a brief summary is provided here. The site (Figure 8.9) is c.150 m × 150 m wide, and has a maximum cultural deposit depth of 6–7 m. There is an upper plateau in the southeast which was originally c.60 × 60 m and it has steep sides towards the east and the south. The latter is the seafront where erosion and modern construction have cut away at least 10–20 meters of the tell. Geomagnetism and GPR have revealed an intensive occupation here and two to three semi-circular linear features around this acropolis, probably a defensive ring system made of stone walls. An outer settlement stretches to the north and west. The recovered material culture from our surveys ranges chronologically from the Chalcolithic and Troy I-Ezero to Troy II-III, Grey-Minyan, Troy VII B2 and classical sherds. In the acropolis area, however, late EBA sherds were found close to the badly damaged surface without much intrusion of later materials, making it probable that the principal occupation here dates to the period between 2500 and 2000 BC. Although not yet excavated, these features make it very plausible that Selimpaşa Höyük's acropolis was similar in appearance to that of Troy II-III and Kanlıgeçit. Among the majority of EBA Ezero bowl/plate and cup sherds, there were also many sherds of Anatolian red-slip ware and several wheel-made Trojan plates and some red burnished/slipped pithoi fragments (Figure 8.10). At least one fragment of a little *depas* vessel was recovered also.

Selimpaşa Höyük is one of only four sites on the northern side of the Sea of Marmara in which EBA Anatolian red-slip and/or wheel-made pottery was described (the others being Kanallı [Kınallı] Köprü, Çatalca (potentially: Aydınğün *et al.* 2015: 423) and Karağaçtepe). Interestingly, the immediate city centre of Istanbul - the potential key spot for crossing between northwestern Anatolia and Thrace - though excavation and survey has not yet delivered such pottery remains, despite other EBA pottery wares being found there (Dönmez 2006). But this might be due to chronological reasons. There is also a possibility that the whole social alignment of the groups inhabiting the Bosphorus land-bridge was more orientated to the Black Sea littoral and therefore these belonged to a cultural entity (see Efe 2004) different to the group at Selimpaşa, which in turn possessed closer links to the Dardanelles and Troy, at least in the second half of the 3rd millennium BC.

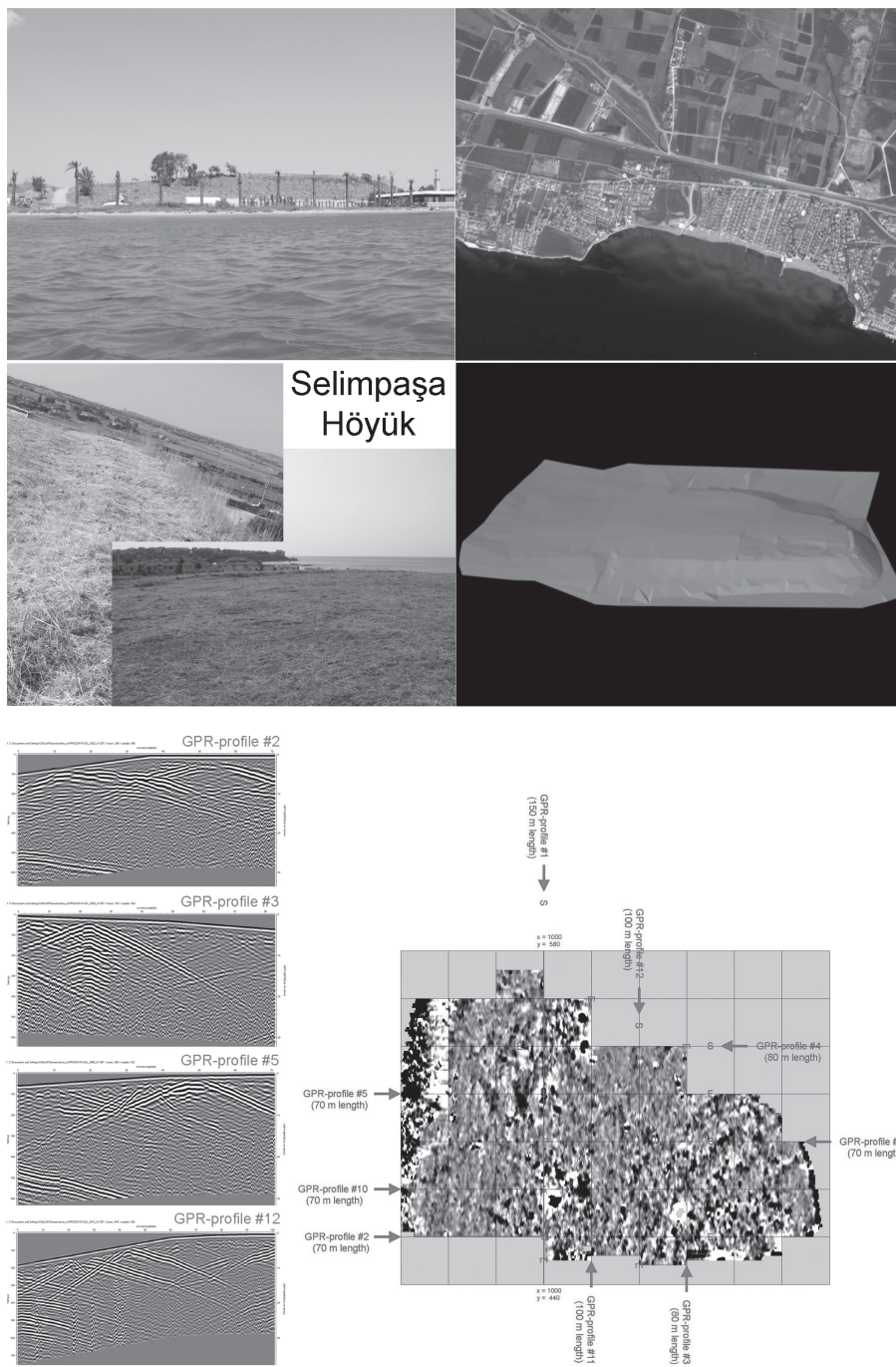


Figure 8.9: Selimpaşa Höyük (Istanbul Province, Turkey): The site (location, topography, pictures, GPR, geomagnetics), after Heyd et al. 2010.

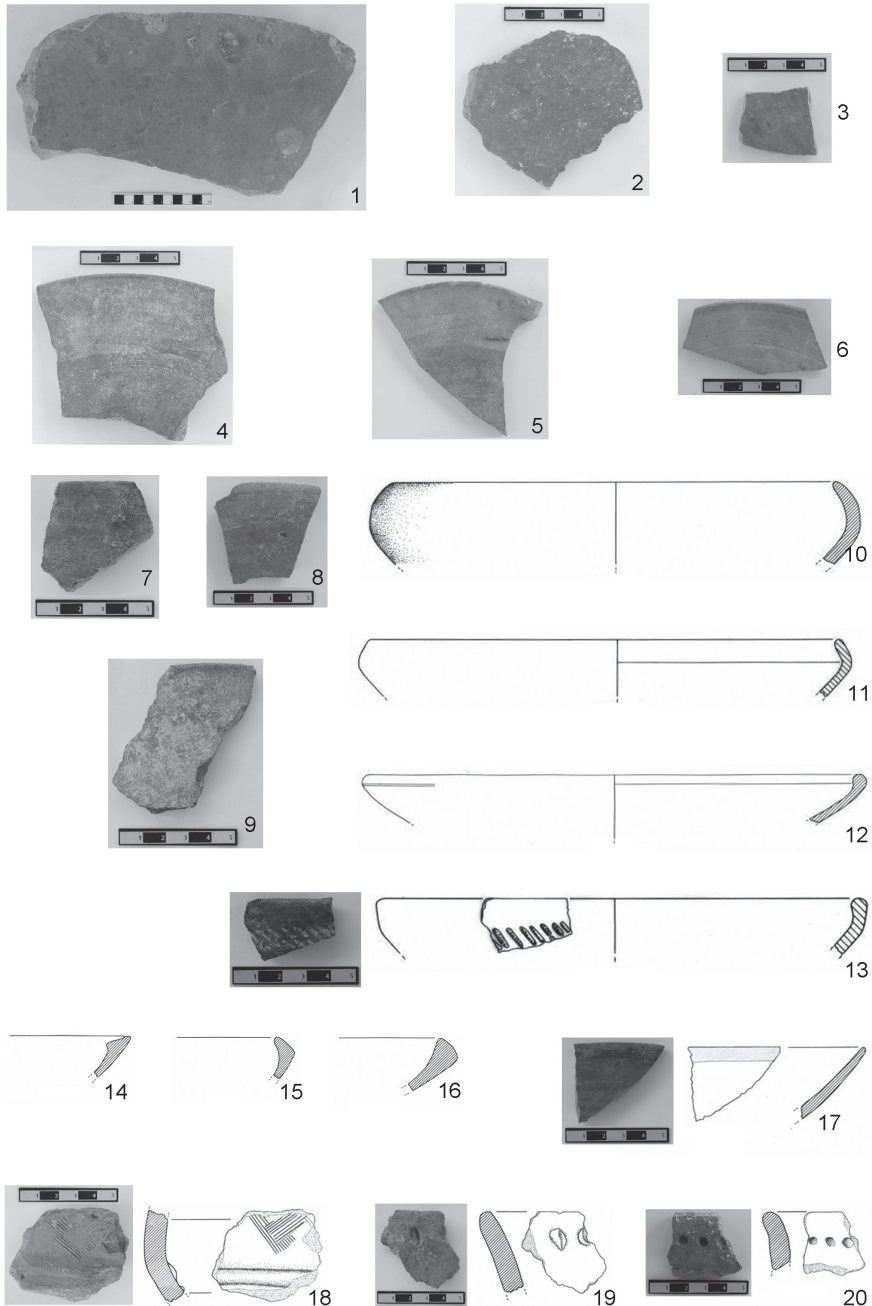


Figure 8.10: Selimpaşa Höyük: Early Bronze Age pottery finds (photos and drawings); 1. pithos wall sherd, wheel-made, reddish slip, c.2 cm thick; 2-3. Anatolian red-slip wares; 4-6. 8. 17. Troyan wheel-made plate rim sherds; 7. rim sherd of a higher form, hand-made; 9. bowls/plates; 11-16. bowls/plates with inverted and/or thickened rim, all hand-made; 18-20. decorated sherds, hand-made (photographs and illustrations by authors).



### ***Mikhalich-Baa Dere***

This site is about 70 km away from Kanlıgeçit, located in the south Sakar mountain region (Haskovo province), 1.5 km south of the modern village of the same name and not far away from the current Bulgarian-Turkish border. As in the previous cases of Kanlıgeçit and Selimpaşa, it consists of a fortified citadel in a naturally protected situation, this being a flat crest of a small hill with steep gullies to the south, east and west, and it had an extended outer settlement, stretching over some hectares apparently concentrated on two locations to the west/southwest and the northeast of the citadel (Figure 8.11). However, information about the outer settlement remains scanty and is confusing because it only comes from survey collections of pottery sherds and no excavation or detailed prospection has been conducted. The whole area is well-watered, with streams running close by and springs being within close proximity also. The first excavations in the citadel part of the site took place in the 1940s, but it was the excavations led by Morena Stefanova in the late 1990s and early 2000s that have significantly added to our understanding (see Stefanova 2004a with further references on previous expeditions). The citadel measures c.0.3–0.4 ha and has features that make it very similar to the one at Kanlıgeçit. Also having its origins as a small tell-like settlement in EBA II, it appears to be fortified during the second half of the 3rd millennium BC, when a 1.9–2.5 m wide dry-stone wall built of limestone, and preserved up to 1.2 m high, was constructed. The base was intentionally sloped and the upper part of this was built using mudbricks, as was the case in Kanlıgeçit. At least four occupation layers have been observed in the interior of this fortification, comprised of house, hearth and fireplace remains as well as settlement debris. Notable is a 130 m<sup>2</sup> large burnt house from level 3–4 whose description, including mudbrick walls, reminds us of a megaron building (Stefanova 2004a: 178). More specific details, as with the houses of the later occupation at the site, remain unfortunately unclear at present.

What is clear, however, is the fact that the Depas *amphikypellon* cups, six altogether with three of them near-complete (Stefanova 2004b, Abb. 1; Leshtakov in press), did not come from the citadel but from the outer settlement. This is perhaps another interesting parallel to Kanlıgeçit, where the citadel has yielded only a few Depas-type sherds (see Özdoğan and Parzinger 2012, Abb. 82,2; Fig. 114,17; 115,11; 118,5; 121,14) while some of the thin and finely executed handles attributed to Depata-type come from the unpublished outer settlement survey collections. The difference is in their preservation, and the complete or near-complete specimens from Mikhalich come from a restricted number of locations, which casts doubt on their use and/or deposition as a normal element in the lives of the inhabitants of the outer settlement.

Other *International Anatolianising Pottery* or wheel-made and/or Anatolian red-slip ware pottery does not seem to have been recovered from Mikhalich so far, according to existing publications. These ceramics are, however, known in some quantity from the settlement site of Gülübovo (eg. Leshtakov 2002) some 55 km away from Mikhalich and explored in the 1990s. Here also a Depas cup was found, and several of these (one intact and six fragmented) were published from the site of Assara (Haskovo region;

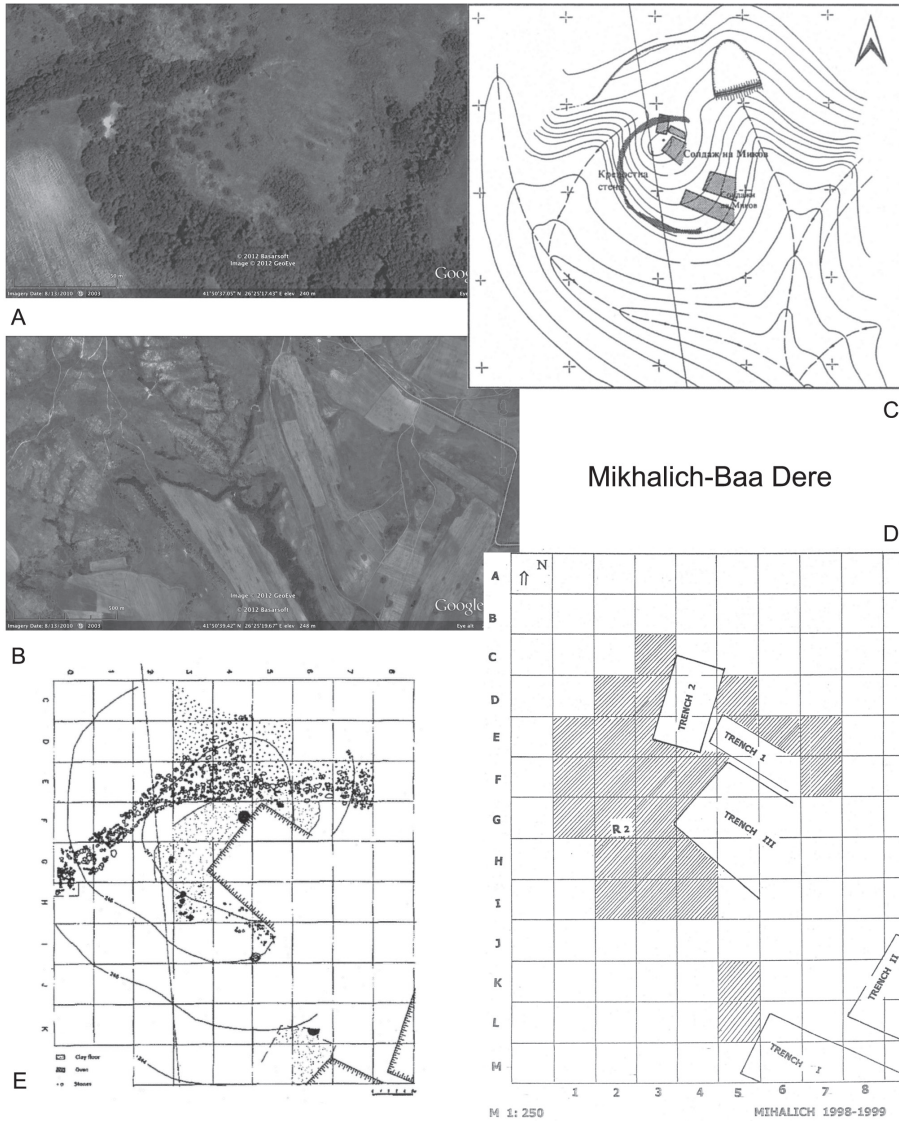


Figure 8.11: Mikhalich-Baa Dere (Haskovo, Bulgaria): The site (location, topography and excavation results); A-B. from GoogleEarth; C-E. after Stefanova 2004a.

Leshtakov 2003), 10 km away from Gülübovo. Wheel-made pottery is also mentioned for Tell Altan Tepe (Leshtakov 2002: 177, footnote 13) but not yet published (the examples also mentioned from Cherna Gora are in fact Iron Age in date). The same is true for one or two notable sherds found in pits from level V and VI of the eponymous Ezero Tell (Stefanova 2004b: 198). The dating of these to the EBA, we believe, is doubtful because their stratigraphical context appears too early to yield such pottery. While Gülübovo, Altan Tepe and Ezero are typical, albeit large Bulgarian tell settlements,

Assara is different in that it is a plateau site in a strongly fortified position next to the Maritsa river. This site was to later become a hillfort in the Iron Age, highlighting its strategic location. Much has already been written about the interpretation of these *International Anatolianising Pottery* finds in the Bulgarian EBA, whether it is their components, preservation, context, wheel-made or local imitations (eg., Leshtakov 2002; Stefanova 2004b; Rahmstorf 2006; Heyd 2013a: 51, Fig. 3.3; Leshtakov in press), and therefore does not need to be repeated here. However two aspects are important to take note of in the context of this present study: Ezero has only yielded one or two, if any, pieces of *International Anatolianising Pottery*; there are no such sherds in the well-excavated tell sites of Yunazite, Drama or Dyadovo. Taken together, these data suggest that the social processes through which these ceramics were brought to, or imitated, and consumed at, were limited in their geographical extend to the lower Maritsa region and adjacent Sakar mountain range.

### **Foreigners, Emporia, Colonies, Urbanism... Or All of Them: An Assessment**

All three outstanding fortified settlement sites – Kanlıgeçit, Selimpaşa and Mikhalich – were roughly contemporary and seem to be very similar to each other and, despite having very different degrees of fieldwork exploring them, probably follow the same design and size model. The blueprint for these naturally protected citadels fortified using stone and mudbrick and having an extended outer settlement around, certainly has no local predecessors in Thrace. It has, however, its best comparisons in north-western Anatolia, where the sites of Troy and to some extent also Külliöba (Efe 2007; Efe and Fidan 2008) and Seyitömer (Bilgen 2015) show the same model, and this had developed a few centuries earlier there. Kanlıgeçit, as the most intensively investigated of these sites, is structurally so close to Troy II/III, employing many details including architectural traditions along with potentially going much deeper into ideas of cult and religion, that one rightfully wonders how it is possible for a local elite to undertake this if they are only imitating an existing model. This leaves us in a position in which one has to seriously take into consideration an influx of foreign people. There is, admittedly, not a single individual identified by their household and possessions, or burial and customs, or using applied scientific methods (e.g. stable isotope analysis) that could attribute them to a specific Anatolian origin. The same conclusion of the existence of foreigners is also indicated by the use of many exotic and prestigious objects, often made of silver. This metal was not readily available in EBA Thrace. We can also note that tin-bronzes may have arrived into this region via Anatolia rather than Europe (Rahmstorf 2010: 683–685, fig. 6). In relation to artefacts associated with dress, adornment, and eating, drinking and feasting, we also observe that these are often not of autochthonous form. They all have their best comparisons in EBA north-western Anatolia and the eastern Aegean, and it is difficult to imagine how such a quantity and quality, and the imaginations and customs behind these, can be transferred to Europe

without having individuals or groups of people carrying them, and the infrastructure to organise their transport and wider distribution (see also Leshtakov 2011).

Considering the evidence for foreigners at these sites does not, however, exclude local elites also trying to copy these innovations and achievements. It is even likely that the immediate reach of these foreign parties only includes the coastal zones of the Marmara and northern Aegean Seas along with the catchment area of the lower Maritsa river, with its tributaries Ergene, lower Tundza and Arda, up to a northern boundary near the mouth of the Sazliyka river at modern Simeonovgrad (Figure 8.12). This contact-zone would also embrace the resource-rich Strandza and Sakar mountains, but rule out some key sites located geographically beyond, such as Gülübovo, Ezero and Dübene. These would instead be within a kind of ‘affected zone’ hypothetically covering all of Thrace up to the Balkan mountains and also to include the coastal Black Sea area. Local elites were no doubt also present in the above named zone within immediate reach, as shown by their tumuli graves, and even if we have foreigners in this immediate zone, the majority or the population would surely still have been indigenous as shown, for example, by the mass of local pottery types in Kanlıgeçit.

The importance of the second settlement site described above, Koyunbaba can be seen in this context. Being only 12 km away from Kanlıgeçit and probably having a broadly similar origin, it was distinguished by the presence of a possible open-air sanctuary, though its development was perhaps cut short at the time of, or shortly

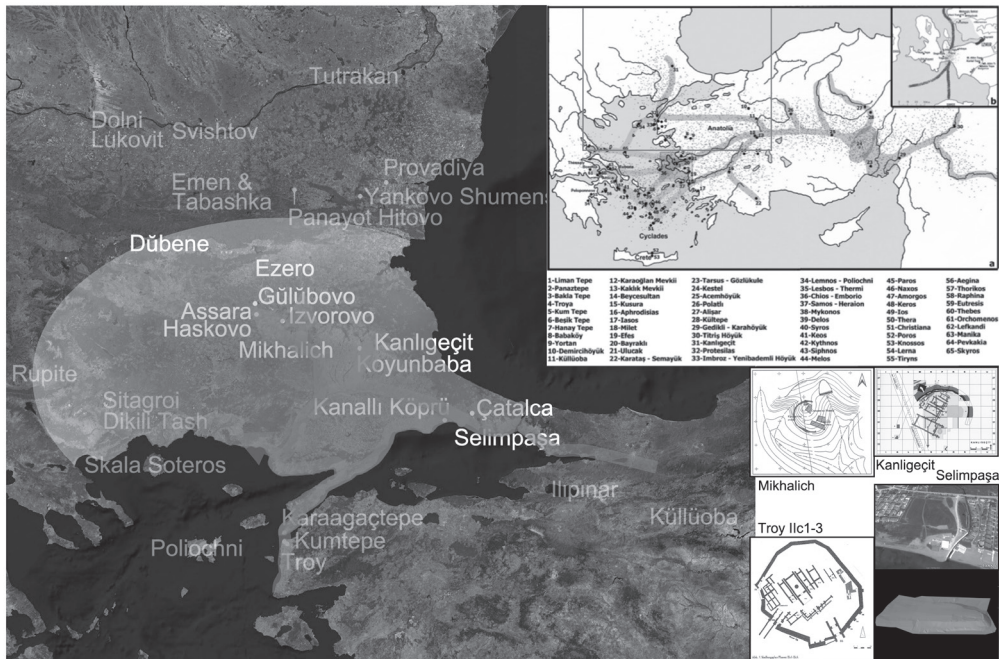


Figure 8.12: Thrace as integral part of the Early Bronze Age Anatolian Trade Network (image by authors).



after, the establishment of the Anatolian model-site of Kanlıgeçit. This suggests that the proposed influx of a foreign people was not a completely peaceful event. So while there is potential for conflict, the original foreigners can turn into locals after one or two generations, and alliances are built with the local elite, through the exchange of gifts, labour, goods, information and genes (see *e.g.* Tartaron 2005). Both sides benefit from such an interaction and subsequent symmetric cooperation. For the foreigners, they have the advantage of a social and economic autonomy securing the continuation of their exchange pattern with contact regions farther away, facilitating the influx of new foreigners of various backgrounds, while others were leaving. The local elites get fresh resources in their hands providing the means for the accumulation of wealth, for redistributive systems and creation of dependencies, and for peer-polity interaction in what might be a highly competitive social background. In consequence a 'contagious' process of conspicuous consumption develops with the result that the indigenous society is stimulated to advanced complexity; speaking generally, it is perhaps the incentive for the promotion from a *segmentary society* to *chiefdom level* (Heyd 2013a: 53–54; Kristiansen, 2014). Over time, an equilibrium might thus have been established, securing the existence of Kanlıgeçit, perhaps Selimpaşa and Mikhalich, and potentially other similar sites yet to be discovered, for some centuries.

There can be no doubt that the driving force behind this influx of goods and people is enhanced exchange and organised trade, and it is in no way an accident that concurrently the largest exchange network the world had seen up until then arrived at its peak. This network was centred in southern Mesopotamia, a region that had been fully urbanised for at least a millennium, and it stretched from as far away as western India on one side to southeast Europe on the other, and it also incorporated large parts of Central Asia (see Rahmstorf 2006; 2011). The effects of this network in terms of exchange, and social and economic progression in Anatolia and the eastern Aegean coast have already been considered nearly a decade ago when the seminal works of Vasif Şahoğlu (2005) and Turan Efe (2007) were first published. Both have already included Kanlıgeçit and Turkish Thrace in their discussion, but were not considering the degree in which this most southeastern corner of Europe was part of this network. This needs to be adjusted. So from c.2400 BC and throughout the Early Helladic II/III or Anatolian EB IIIa/IIIb thresholds, conventionally dated to c.2200 BC (Maran 1998; Kouka 2013; Massa 2014), until the very late 3rd millennium BC (Parzinger and Özdoğan 2012: 268f.), Thrace was in no way a periphery, but an integral part of this commercial network, most probably due to its richness in natural resources. This may also be reflected in the integration of this region in later networks (*e.g.* in the Late Bronze Age: Leshtakov 2007; or in the classical periods). The strong Kanlıgeçit–Troy connection no doubt favours the predominance of the Dardanelles route (and subsequently the Maritsa river valley) for this network. However, also the Bosphorus crossing needs to be seriously taken into account, despite its less investigated status, due to the distribution of the crescentic axes, the Kanlıgeçit clay idols, and other pottery evidence (Sarı 2012), while the maritime link is also significant for Selimpaşa.

Altogether it seems obvious that neither simple mechanisms of diffusion of information, ideas and goods are at work here, nor that the models of World Systems Theory (e.g. Wallerstein 2004; Harding 2013), as valuable as they are to describe the wider networks, can fully explain the situation in Thrace and therefore be easily applied. What exists is a much more complicated interference of ideological peripheries and traditional cultural boundaries, of acculturation processes, and seemingly contemporary different levels of complexity in this rather unstable contact zone region. Diffusion is traditionally rather seen as a more random process of transmission (see e.g. Elliot Smith *et al.* [eds.] 1927). However, with emerging societal complexity, this process becomes more targeted, and channelled via special 'agencies', or in our case some special sites in key networking, resource controlling or even politically dominating positions. It is exactly these sites that act here as hotspots of transmission for these new ideas, innovations and achievements. In this respect Kanlıgeçit, and perhaps Selimpaşa and Mikhalich, could well be seen as a kind of independent trading centres. However, it remains difficult to state whether the terms of 'Emporium' or 'Colony', or even 'Town', so loaded with backgrounds of classical Mediterranean civilisations, can readily be applied to this prehistoric situation of the later 3rd millennium BC. At least in Turkey one frankly considers the application of the term of 'towns' and 'early urbanisation' for the admittedly much larger, but structurally identical settlements there. Nevertheless, it is not easy to label a 4 ha large settlement with a 0.4 ha citadel a town. An Emporium is, by vague definition, an area within an existing settlement reserved for the merchandising business of foreigners. The situation at the Kültepe Kanesh Karum is the ideal analogue for this where we find definite evidence for foreign quarters within an established settlement (Kulakoğlu and Kangal 2010), in contexts only a few centuries later than ours. But here, this seems not to be the case; at least we have no evidence for such quarters beyond some uncertain inequalities at the outer settlements of Kanlıgeçit and Mikhalich, and the citadels cannot be considered to be part of the local tradition. A true colony in its classical sense (e.g. De Angelis 2009) is also not recognisable at first hand in Thrace. To argue for these, the political and to some extent also military background information on, for example, 'dependence on a mother town', 'privileged trade' or 'conquered/controlled territories' is completely missing. The same applies for any demographic pressure that stood behind the initiative. Nevertheless, what we have here might best be described as the colony idea at its very beginnings, virtually in its embryonic state, with only the basics of foreign traders, intrusive long-term settlements, negotiated or forced autonomy, merchandising network *etc.* in place (see also Stein 1999; Tartaron 2005). In such our sites would perhaps more resemble the Mesopotamian colonies, or 'trading posts', of northern Syria and southeastern Turkey dated to one millennium earlier, than the complex political institutions of the later periods. If acceptable, then Kanlıgeçit, Selimpaşa and Mikhalich might well be seen as the first of their kind, with a long list of more famous successors, on the European Continent.

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## Notes

1. That is modern Bulgaria south of the Balkan mountains, northern Greece east of the Nestos river (Greek Thrace), and the European part of Turkey, called Eastern or Turkish Thrace.
2. Interestingly in this context, the Varna Museum hosts another yet unpublished dagger made of precious metal, namely in silver, no doubt from Bulgaria but without provenance (pers. comm. V. Slavchev).

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