

1 **Turning Eastward: New Radiocarbon and Stable Isotopic Data for Middle Holocene Hunter-**  
2 **Gatherers from Fofanovo, Trans-Baikal, Siberia**

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45

46 **Abstract**

47 A considerable amount of bioarchaeological research – including AMS  $^{14}\text{C}$  dating and stable carbon  
48 and nitrogen isotope analyses ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ) – has been undertaken on the hunter-gatherers from  
49 the area west of Lake Baikal, known as Cis-Baikal. No such work has previously been reported for  
50 the east side of the lake, Trans-Baikal. Here, we present new radiocarbon dates and isotopic results  
51 for twenty individuals from the Fofanovo cemetery, located along the Selenga River on the  
52 southeast coast of Lake Baikal.

53 Once corrected for an old carbon effect using regression equations developed for the Cis-  
54 Baikal, the radiocarbon results form 4 chronological clusters: 1) Late Mesolithic (LM), around 7950  
55 cal BP (n=3); 2) Late Neolithic (LN), between ca. 6000 and 5500 cal BP (n=5); 3) LN to Early  
56 Bronze Age (EBA), between ca. 4900 and 4500 cal BP (n = 2); and the largest cluster 4) later EBA,  
57 around 3700 cal BP (n=10). The LM Cluster 1 dates indicate that formal cemetery use in Trans-  
58 Baikal may have begun earlier than in Cis-Baikal. Clusters 2 and 3 reveal a previously unidentified  
59 LN component to the cemetery. Additionally, the EBA Cluster 4 appears to be largely synchronous  
60 with the EBA in Cis-Baikal.

61 As a group, the Fofanovo individuals are isotopically distinct from the Middle-Holocene  
62 hunter-gatherers in the microregions of Cis-Baikal, exhibiting a combination of low  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values (-  
63  $19.4 \pm 0.9\text{‰}$ ) but high  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values ( $15.2 \pm 0.8\text{‰}$ ). This likely reflects the distinctive isotopic  
64 ecology of the lower Selenga River, combined with use of aquatic resources from Lake Baikal  
65 itself. While further sampling is needed to test its robustness, a statistically significant difference  
66 between the LN (n = 6) and EBA (n = 11) was found, suggesting a greater reliance on the seasonal  
67 resources of the Selenga River during the EBA.

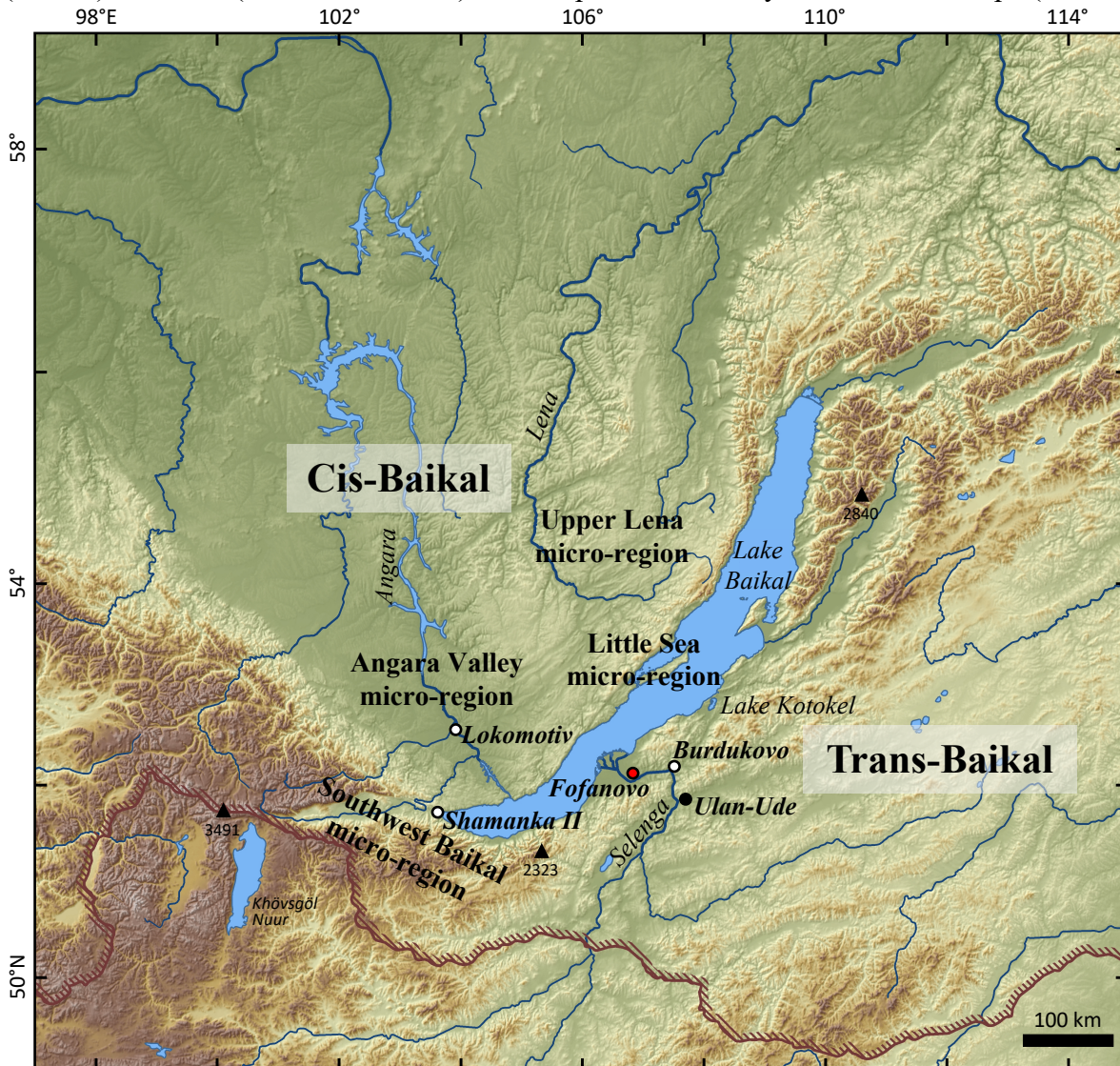
68 Further analyses on these and other individuals from the cemetery are planned and will  
69 undoubtedly provide additional insights into hunter-gatherer subsistence adaptations and dietary  
70 variation in Trans-Baikal, highlighting both differences and similarities with those of Cis-Baikal.

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72  
73 **Keywords:** Trans-Baikal; Lake Baikal; Diet; Hunter-gatherers; Radiocarbon dating; Stable Isotopes.  
74

75 **1. Introduction**

76 Since the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, archaeologists have extensively investigated prehistoric hunter-gatherers  
77 of the Baikal region, especially its particularly rich mortuary record (Michael, 1958; Okladnikov,  
78 1950; 1955). In recent decades, the Baikal Archaeology Project (BAP, 1995–2011 and 2018–  
79 present) and Baikal–Hokkaido Archaeology Project (BHAP, 2011–2018) undertook fine-scale  
80 analyses of the diet, mobility, and chronology of Neolithic and Early Bronze Age individuals  
81 excavated from cemeteries on and around the western side of the lake, known as Cis-Baikal.  
82 Decidedly less is known about hunter-gatherer adaptations on the eastern side of the lake, Trans-  
83 Baikal. In this paper, we present radiocarbon dates and stable carbon ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ) and nitrogen ( $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ )  
84 isotopic results for 20 individuals from Fofanovo, a large, multi-period cemetery located near the  
85 delta of the Selenga River in Trans-Baikal (Figure 1). The aims are to better understand the  
86 cemetery’s chronology and to characterise diet in relation to what is known about subsistence  
87 patterns in Cis-Baikal.  
88

89 **Figure 1:** Map of the Lake Baikal Region (Cis- and Trans-Baikal) and the location of Fofanovo  
90 near the Selenga River delta. Topography is based on elevation Shuttle Radar Topography Mission  
91 (SRTM) v4.1 data (Jarvis et al., 2008). The map was created by Dr. Christian Leipe (FU Berlin).



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93

94 **2. Background**

95 *2.1. Region and Ecology*

96 Lake Baikal is the oldest, deepest, and, by volume, largest lake in the world. The lake is fed by  
 97 close to 400 tributaries, of which the Selenga River is the largest with an approximate length of  
 98 1,920 km. The Selenga River’s drainage into Lake Baikal constitutes approximately half of the  
 99 lake’s inflowing water (Matveyev and Samusenok, 2015; Sampson et al., 2002).

100 The waters of Lake Baikal can be divided into five habitat zones: lagoons, expansive shallows,  
 101 gulfs, deep-water (pelagic), and open coast littoral. There are three lagoons in the vicinity of the  
 102 Selenga delta (Posol’skii, Cherkalovo, and Proval) and extensive shallows beyond the delta itself  
 103 (Kozhov, 1963; Weber, 2003). The aquatic ecology of Lake Baikal has more in common with an  
 104 ocean system than with most freshwater lakes (Matveyev and Samusenok, 2015). Fish common to  
 105 the lagoons and coast of Lake Baikal are listed in Table 1. There is an endemic species of seal  
 106 (*Phoca sibirica*) in the lake which may have contributed to the diets of the Fofanovo hunter-  
 107 gatherers. This has been demonstrated for individuals from Cis-Baikal, primarily from the Little Sea  
 108 microregion on the northwest side of the lake (Katzenberg et al., 2012; Nomokonova et al., 2013b;  
 109 Nomokonova et al., 2015; Weber, 2003; Weber et al., 1998; Weber et al., 2011). Aquatic life in the  
 110 Selenga River has not been studied archaeologically, but commercial, conservationist, and  
 111 environmental studies have recorded the fish communities in different portions of the river (e.g.,  
 112 Sampson et al., 2002; Table 2). Most notably, the Selenga is a major spawning area for Baikal  
 113 sturgeon and for one of the five main populations of the Baikal omul’ (*Coregonus autumnalis*  
 114 *migratorius*) (Dulmaa, 1999; Kozhov, 1950, 1963, 1972). The terrestrial environment of Cis- and  
 115 Trans-Baikal is dominated by forest-steppe. Terrestrial fauna is rich throughout both regions, but  
 116 vary in distribution depending on vegetation (Table 3).

118 **Table 1:** Fish common in the shallow lagoons and littoral open coastline of Lake Baikal (Weber,  
 119 2003; Kozhov, 1950, 1963, 1972). ‘+’ denotes presence in the habitat zone.

Common Name	Species	Shallow Lagoons	Littoral Coastline
Burbot	<i>Lota lota</i>		+
Graylings	<i>Thymallus</i> spp.		+
Ide	<i>Leuciscus idus</i>	+	
Lenok	<i>Brachymystax lenok</i>		+
Northern pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>	+	
Omul’	<i>Coregonus autumnalis migratorius</i>		+
Perch	<i>Perca fluviatillis</i>	+	
Siberian dace	<i>Leuciscus leuciscus baicalensis</i>	+	+
Siberian roach	<i>Rutilus rutilus lacustris</i>	+	
Taimen’	<i>Hucho taimen</i>		+
Whitefish	<i>Coregonus lavaretus baicalensis</i>		+



122 **Table 2:** Fishes common in the lower Selenga River in recent times (Dulmaa, 1999; Matveyev and  
 123 Samusenok, 2015; Sampson et al., 2002) and those sampled for isotopic study by Sampson et al.  
 124 (2002) and Dufour et al. (1999).

125 \*No isotopic data available

126

Common Name	Species
Amur catfish	<i>Parasilurus asotus</i>
Bluntnose minnow*	<i>Phoxinus phoxinus</i>
Burbot	<i>Lota lota</i>
Common carp	<i>Cyprinus carpio</i>
Gibel (Silver) carp	<i>Carassius auratus gibelio</i>
Ide	<i>Leuciscus idus</i>
Northern pike	<i>Esox lucius</i>
Omul'	<i>Coregonus autumnalis migratorius</i>
Perch	<i>Perca fluviatilis</i>
Siberian dace	<i>Leuciscus leuciscus baicalensis</i>
Siberian gudgeon*	<i>Gobio gobio</i>
Siberian roach	<i>Rutilus rutilus lacustris</i>
Spined loach	<i>Cobitis taenia</i>
Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser baerii baicalensis</i>
Taimen'	<i>Hucho taimen</i>
Whitefish	<i>Coregonus lavaretus baicalensis</i>

127

128 **Table 3:** Terrestrial fauna potentially available to Trans-Baikal Middle Holocene hunter-gatherers  
 129 (Weber, 2003).

130

Common Name	Species	Preferred habitat
Boar	<i>Sus scrofa</i>	Forest and forest-steppe
Red deer	<i>Cervus elaphus</i>	Forest-steppe and taiga
Roe deer	<i>Capreolus capreolus pygargus</i>	Steppe and forest-steppe
Elk/Moose	<i>Alces alces</i>	Taiga wet valley
Mountain goat	<i>Capra siberica</i>	Eastern Sayan mountain valleys
Musk Deer	<i>Moschus moschiferus</i>	Highland and taiga
Reindeer	<i>Rangifer tarandus</i>	Mountain highlands

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## 2.2. Archaeology and Chronology

Archaeologists have long classified Cis-Baikal Neolithic and Early Bronze Age (EBA) burials by their mortuary traditions. Recently, BAP/BHAP have refined the region's chronology through integrative studies of mortuary traditions, subsistence, diet, and radiocarbon dating corrected for the freshwater reservoir effect (FRE) (Table 4). Nevertheless, it is unclear to what extent Cis-Baikal's culture history is applicable to Trans-Baikal. Studies have highlighted significant variation in the style and timing of mortuary traditions between the different micro-regions of Cis-Baikal (Weber et al., 2016a). It is expected that similar, if not more, variation will be revealed in Trans-Baikal, especially considering that the earliest mortuary assemblages, Late Mesolithic (LM) and Early Neolithic (EN), at Fofanovo are distinct from their Cis-Baikal counterparts (Bazaliiskii, 2010).

**Table 4:** Chronology of the Cis-Baikal region (Weber et al., 2020). Chronological boundaries in the fifth column are based on Bayesian modelling of FRE-corrected radiocarbon dates on human skeletons using the trapezoidal distribution. Note that, due to the modelling, the mean Highest Posterior Density (HPD) dates are not directly comparable to mean cal BP dates.

Cis-Baikal period	Mortuary tradition	n	Range of mean cal BP <sup>14</sup> C dates	Start & End boundaries in mean HPD cal BP
Late Mesolithic	Khin	24	8427±56 to 7059±77	8633±160 to 7558±31
Early Neolithic	Kitoy	226	7756±75 to 6577±85	7558±31 to 6659±35
Middle Neolithic	N/A	0	N/A	N/A
Late Neolithic	Isakovo, Serovo	103	6110±81 to 4594±113	6060±57 to 4969±41
Early Bronze Age	Glazkovo	208	5014±110 to 3461±60	4969±41 to 3470±39

LM graves are relatively rare in Cis-Baikal, with 24 dated examples yielding corrected mean dates ranging from 8427±56 to 7059±77 cal BP, thus partly overlapping with the EN period (Table 4). These graves display substantial variation in mortuary but have been provisionally designated as the Khin Group (Weber et al., 2020). While some graves pre-date the EN Kitoy mortuary tradition from the Angara and Southwest Baikal, many, particularly in the Little Sea and on the Upper Lena, are clearly parallel to it. This implies regional asynchronicity in the development of these mortuary traditions (Weber et al., 2016a, 2020; Goriunova et al. 2020). The oldest large cemeteries in Cis-Baikal are primarily found in the Angara and SW Baikal micro-regions and date firmly to the EN.

The Middle Neolithic (MN) marks a long interruption in formal cemetery usage in Cis-Baikal, such that little is known concerning its mortuary practices. Although it is unlikely that this was a result of depopulation of the area (Weber, 2020), morphological and ancient DNA studies indicate that there is either genetic displacement between the EN and LN/EBA groups or greater admixture during the LN/EBA (de Barros Damgaard et al., 2018a, 2018b; Waters-Rist et al., 2016; Weber, 1995; Weber et al., 2002; Weber and Bettinger, 2010). Additionally, it has been posited that the incoming peoples were of western (i.e. the upper Yenisei) or southern (i.e. Mongolia or NW China) origin (Waters-Rist et al., 2016; Weber et al., 2002), though with little empirical support. Recent genetic analyses indicate that the LN and EBA component shows an increase in Ancient Northeast Asian (ANE) ancestry (de Barros Damgaard et al., 2018b). Some level of genetic continuity in the Angara micro-region has been proposed based on the cranial and dental evidence (Movsesian et al., 2014; Waters-Rist et al., 2016). The ancient DNA sample is still small, but the findings in Moussa et al. (2020) provide support for some regional genetic continuity through the MN. Examination of individuals from Trans-Baikal may provide important new insights on this matter.

In Cis-Baikal, formal cemeteries reappear in the Late Neolithic (LN) and continue into the EBA. Of the LN mortuary traditions, Isakovo is essentially only known from the Angara valley, while Serovo has been documented for the Angara, the Upper Lena (where it has also been called

175 the Archaic variant; Okladnikov, 1978; Bazaliiskii, 2010), and the Little Sea, but with a few  
176 distinctive characteristics (Weber et al., 2016a; Goriunova et al. 2020).

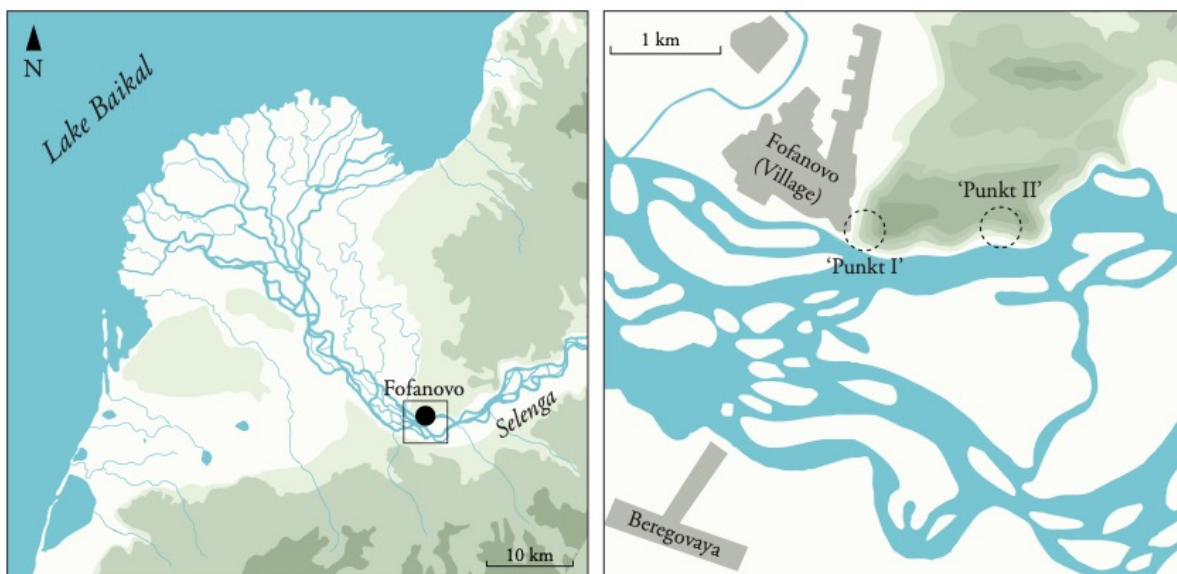
177 The relative chronological position of the EBA Glazkovo mortuary tradition is largely  
178 defined by the inclusion of copper and bronze grave goods, while retaining a hunter-gatherer  
179 economy (Weber and Bettinger, 2010). Glazkovo is also the most widespread mortuary tradition in  
180 Cis-Baikal showing a number of distinct mortuary characteristics across the micro-regions and is  
181 also archaeologically recognizable in Trans-Baikal.

182 Stable carbon and nitrogen isotope results unequivocally demonstrate a hunting, fishing and  
183 gathering subsistence economy throughout Cis-Baikal from the LM through the EBA (see Weber et  
184 al., 2016a for the most recent summary), as does the extensive archaeological evidence, such as  
185 zoomorphic art, subsistence-related stone and bone grave goods, including composite bone  
186 fishhooks, bone and stone arrowheads, and bone harpoons (Bazaliiskii 2010; Weber and Bettinger,  
187 2010).

### 188 189 **3. Fofanovo Cemetery**

190 Fofanovo is located in the Selenga River valley, on the upper slopes of Fofanovskaia Gora  
191 (Fofanovo Mountain) on the right bank of the river. The prehistoric cemetery is ca. 0.5 km upstream  
192 from the village of the same name, ca. 45 km downstream from the city of Ulan-Ude (the capital of  
193 the Buryat Autonomous Republic), and ca. 45 km upstream from the coast of Lake Baikal (all  
194 distances as the crow flies). The Fofanovo cemetery (Figure 2) is separated into a “West Part”  
195 (“Punkt I”; 52.047286°N; 106.761650°E) occupying the SW slopes of the west end of Fofanovskaia  
196 Gora, and an “East Part” (“Punkt II”; 52.046672°N; 106.773333°E) on the SW and S slopes of its  
197 east end. Both are ca. 26–38 m above the river (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975: 23; Lbova et al.,  
198 2008: 29). Further details about the relevant excavations at the site carried out by A.P. Okladnikov  
199 and M.M. Gerasimov between 1926 and 1950 can be found in Supplementary Information (SI)  
200 section S1.

201  
202 **Figure 2:** Map showing the location of Fofanovo along the Selenga River (Punkt I and II) and the  
203 surrounding area at the time of excavation. The description given in Lbova et al. (2008) places  
204 “Punkt I” just to the east of the village and immediately to the west of the modern cemetery. “Punkt  
205 II” is placed at the end of eastern end of the Fofanovo hills on the south western slope of Cape  
206 Shikhan. Adapted from Lbova et al. (2008, Fig. 2) by PH.



207

208 A history of the early and mid-twentieth century excavations at Fofanovo is provided in SI  
209 section S1. This work identified three groups of graves: Group 1, with affinity to the Kitoi mortuary  
210 tradition of the Angara valley in Cis-Baikal; Group 2 with affinity to EBA Glazkovo; and Group 3  
211 of Early Iron Age Stone Cist Culture (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975). Of the 20 Fofanovo burials  
212 excavated by Gerasimov and Okladnikov in 1936, 1948, and 1950 examined in this study, one was  
213 classified as potentially Kitoi (then considered LN, but now known to date to the EN) six as EBA  
214 Glazkovo, and 13 were unclassified (SI Table S1). Noteworthy is the fact that none were thought to  
215 belong to the LN Isakovo or Serovo mortuary traditions, both well documented in Cis-Baikal  
216 (Bazaliiskii, 2010; Okladnikov, 1950, 1955, 1974, 1975, 1976, 1978).

217

### 218 *3.1. Radiocarbon chronology*

219 Prior to this study, only burials excavated by Gerasimov in 1959 had been radiocarbon dated.  
220 Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii (1989) published 10 dates for 9 burials (1 individual was dated twice)  
221 for Group 1 and 4 dates for Group 2 (Table 5). The paper also listed an additional 87 dates for  
222 Middle Holocene human burials from Cis-Baikal (see Weber, 1995). These dates predate the use of  
223 accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) in radiocarbon dating and recent improvements in collagen  
224 extraction (Brock et al., 2010), have large errors ranges, and do not recognize the old carbon effect  
225 that was identified recently (Bronk Ramsey et al., 2014; Nomokonova et al., 2013a; Schulting et al.,  
226 2014). Nevertheless, there are a few patterns within them that are useful for general analysis and  
227 comparison.

228 First, the list published by Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii (1989) included 15 conventional  $^{14}\text{C}$   
229 dates for the Kitoi mortuary tradition from the Angara valley. These dates ranged from  $6870\pm 70$  to  
230  $6040\pm 100$  BP, excluding two dates with very large errors (350 and 400 years), one of which was an  
231 outlier by a large margin ( $7990\pm 350$  BP). In comparison, the 9 dates for Fofanovo Group 1 ranged  
232 from  $7040\pm 100$  to  $6640\pm 140$  BP, excluding one outlier with a large error ( $7610\pm 210$  BP). This  
233 suggests that the two groups may not have been entirely synchronous. More specifically, the  
234 mortuary tradition represented by Fofanovo Group 1 could have started and ended earlier than the  
235 Kitoi tradition in the Angara valley.

236 Second, the four dates for Group 2 from Fofanovo (EBA Glazkovo) ranged from  $4100\pm 100$   
237 to  $3670\pm 40$ , while the 52 dates for Glazkovo burials from the entire Cis-Baikal (the Angara valley,  
238 Upper Lena valley, and Little Sea), excluding one date with large error ( $4500\pm 600$  BP), ranged  
239 from  $4850\pm 70$  to  $3390\pm 60$  BP. Although the sample size from Fofanovo was small, this evidence  
240 suggested similarity in the timing of the Glazkovo mortuary tradition on the east and west sides of  
241 the lake.

242 Third, no dates from Fofanovo indicated that there was a mortuary tradition present which  
243 dated to the long period separating Groups 1 and 2, i.e., synchronous with the Isakovo and Serovo  
244 mortuary traditions in Cis-Baikal. Additionally, no dates appear to relate to the Group 3 Stone Cist  
245 Culture graves (EIA) defined by Gerasimov and Chernykh (1975), which were likely deliberately  
246 excluded from the late 1980's Russian dating project.

247

248



249 **Table 5:** Radiocarbon dating of human bone samples from Fofanovo reported by Mamonova and  
 250 Sulerzhitskii (1989:23–24; see also Weber, 1995: Table 1). These are conventional radiocarbon  
 251 dates using an estimated half-life of 5568 years rather than the more widely accepted  $5730 \pm 40$   
 252 years. The dates are not corrected for the old carbon effect due to the lack of associated stable  
 253 isotopic data, but can be assumed to be too old by some centuries. Fofanovo 7-7 (1) and (2) are  
 254 samples from the same individual. Fofanovo 7-4 is italicized due to its large error term.

ID	Burial Complex	Lab No.	Date BP	±
<i>Fofanovo 7-4</i>	<i>Kitoi</i>	<i>GIN 4470</i>	<i>7610</i>	<i>210</i>
Fofanovo 7-5	Kitoi	GIN 4129	7040	100
Fofanovo 7-6	Kitoi	GIN 4139	7000	60
Fofanovo 7-1	Kitoi	GIN 4476	6830	60
Fofanovo 7-7 (2)	Kitoi	GIN 4478	6780	110
Fofanovo 7-7 (1)	Kitoi	GIN 4131	6450	50
Fofanovo 7-3	Kitoi	GIN 4471	6780	120
Fofanovo 2	Kitoi	GIN 4127	6720	70
Fofanovo 6	Kitoi	GIN 4472	6670	100
Fofanovo 5	Kitoi	GIN 4470	6640	140
Fofanovo 10	Glazkovo	GIN 4803	4100	100
Fofanovo 25	Glazkovo	GIN 4485	3890	50
Fofanovo 36	Glazkovo	GIN 4474	3740	50
Fofanovo 27	Glazkovo	GIN 4473	3670	40

255  
256

### 3.2. Summary of previous typological and radiocarbon dating

257 There is a long tradition of assessing the mortuary variation and chronology of Fofanovo in the  
 258 context of developments in Cis-Baikal archaeology. Nevertheless, the differences between the Kitoi  
 259 in the Angara valley and the Group 1 graves at Fofanovo, noted by Gerasimov and Chernykh (1975:  
 260 23), have not been ignored. According to V.I. Bazaliiskii:

261

262 While they share some similarities with Kitoi burials, the mortuary assemblages of  
 263 the East Baikal (Fofanovo) group display important differences, including supine  
 264 and side body positions, both with flexed legs, and southeast orientation of the  
 265 head. The composite fishhooks of the Kitoi type, bifacially shaped arrowheads, and  
 266 clay vessels are absent in graves of this group (Bazaliiskii, 2010: 71–72).

267

268 With regard to Group 2 graves, Gerasimov and Chernykh (1975: 43–44) noted numerous  
 269 similarities in grave architecture, burial orientation, and grave good morphology with the EBA  
 270 Glazkovo in Cis-Baikal. The list included the presence of surface stone structures, burial orientation  
 271 along the river with heads pointing upstream, lithic triangular arrowheads with straight or concave  
 272 bases, lithic spear-points/knives, bone shafts for composite daggers, bone or antler harpoons, shanks  
 273 for composite fishhooks, and copper/bronze knives and fishhooks. The main difference between the  
 274 two areas was the more frequent occurrence of clay vessels at Fofanovo relative to Glazkovo graves  
 275 in Cis-Baikal, where they are rare. Furthermore, according to the authors, the pots with round or  
 276

277 pointed bottoms at Fofanovo morphologically resembled Serovo vessels from the Angara valley.  
278 One other difference was the absence of white nephrite ornaments in EBA graves at Fofanovo,  
279 though this was attributed to grave looting in the past (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975: 44).

280 Thus, excluding from consideration the five EIA graves of Group 3, both radiocarbon and  
281 typological dating identified two main Middle Holocene chronological groups: Fofanovo Group 1,  
282 roughly parallel to, although perhaps older than the EN Kitoi in Cis-Baikal; and Fofanovo Group 2,  
283 quite consistent in terms of chronology and mortuary variation with the EBA Glazkovo in Cis-  
284 Baikal.

285 Of Fofanovo's ~102 Middle Holocene graves only eight were radiocarbon dated in the  
286 1980's study, forming two temporal clusters with four graves in each. The remaining 94 graves,  
287 however, were dated only typologically or not at all. Classification of the remaining three graves  
288 from the 1959 excavations by Gerasimov and of the 17 graves excavated by Konev as from the  
289 older (EN) Group 1 appears to be sound, along with the classification of 25 Group 2 graves  
290 excavated by Gerasimov in 1959 as EBA Glazkovo. However, the similarities with pottery from the  
291 older Serovo graves, now dating to the Late Neolithic (LN), directly before Glazkovo, are  
292 suspicious (Goriunova et al., 2020). Additionally, 27 graves (10 from Gerasimov's early  
293 excavations, 15 from Okladnikov's fieldwork in 1948, and two from Okladnikov's 1950  
294 excavations) have not been classified thus far. Lastly, classification of the remaining 22 graves  
295 excavated by Okladnikov (four in 1948 and 18 in 1950) should be considered tentative due to the  
296 lack of formal justification, despite his comprehensive knowledge of the material.

297 It is important to note that much of this chronological and mortuary assessment of the  
298 Fofanovo cemetery has been conducted explicitly in reference to the much more abundant and  
299 better documented materials from Cis-Baikal and in reference to the Middle Holocene culture  
300 history model whose boundaries and units were developed by Okladnikov. In this culture history  
301 model, as has only been understood since the mid-1990s, three (Kitoi, Isakovo, and Serovo) out of  
302 five mortuary traditions, or stages, were assigned an incorrect chronological position by Okladnikov  
303 (Weber, 1995). While generally quite accurate, the limitations of typological dating have been  
304 recently highlighted due to extensive radiocarbon dating (Weber et al., 2006; Weber et al., 2016a)  
305 and the accumulation of numerous new Middle Holocene cemetery materials in Cis-Baikal.  
306 Examination of these new materials helped identify several aspects of micro-regional and temporal  
307 variation in mortuary protocols that were previously unknown (e.g., Bazaliiskii, 2010; Goriunova  
308 and Novikov, 2010; Weber et al., 2016a).

309 Overall, there is much to learn from a systematic radiocarbon dating programme, coupled  
310 with other analyses, of a large multi-component cemetery covering a very long timespan like  
311 Fofanovo in Trans-Baikal.

#### 312 313 **4. Stable Isotopic Analyses**

314 Stable carbon ( $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ ) and nitrogen ( $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ) isotopic analyses of bone collagen provide information on  
315 aspects of an individual's diet (Lee-Thorp 2008). Although rarely able to identify specific foods, the  
316 technique allows for semi-quantification of broad food groups, such as  $\text{C}_3$  or  $\text{C}_4$  plants,  
317 marine/freshwater fish, and terrestrial flora/fauna. Stable carbon isotopic ratios are affected by  
318 different photosynthetic pathways and by carbon pools (e.g., atmospheric vs. marine), whereas  
319 stable nitrogen isotopic ratios primarily reflect trophic level. Carbon isotopic values are influenced  
320 by the preferential routing of amino acids during the metabolic processes of the body, whereas  
321 nitrogen is only present in the protein component of the diet (Ambrose and Norr, 1993; Hedges and  
322 Reynard, 2007; Tieszen and Fagre, 1993). Measurements on adult bone collagen provide a dietary  
323 average of approximately the last decade of adult life, depending on the bone analysed and the age  
324 and health status of the individual (Hedges et al., 2007; Tieszen et al., 1983).

325  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values vary by  $\text{C}_3$ ,  $\text{C}_4$ , and CAM photosynthetic pathways of primary producers, so that  
326 the animals reliant on them also reflect this differentiation. However, the taiga and forest-steppe  
327 surrounding Lake Baikal are overwhelmingly composed of  $\text{C}_3$  plants so that  $\text{C}_4$  and CAM pathways  
328 are not relevant to the present study. Marine sources reflect oceanic carbon pools that are more

329 enriched in  $^{13}\text{C}$  than atmospheric carbon pools (DeNiro and Epstein, 1978; Schoeninger and  
330 DeNiro, 1984). While it is a freshwater system, Lake Baikal's unique isotopic ecology results in a  
331 wide range of  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values, from depleted, which are more typical of freshwater systems, to  
332 enriched, marine-like, values (Yoshii, 1999; Yoshii et al., 1999). This makes resources from  
333 terrestrial, lake, and riverine systems in the Baikal region isotopically distinguishable from one  
334 another to a greater degree than is usually possible, and hence offers greater potential for human  
335 dietary resolution.

336  $^{15}\text{N}$  enrichment corresponds to increasingly higher trophic levels in a food chain. Aquatic  
337 predators tend to have very high  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values due to their position within complex, extended food  
338 webs. The trophic level enrichment factor for humans is not precisely known, with a range of +3–  
339 5‰ often cited (DeNiro and Epstein, 1981; Hedges and Reynard, 2007; Minagawa and Wada,  
340 1984; Schoeninger and DeNiro, 1984), though a value as high as +6‰ has been proposed  
341 (O'Connell et al., 2012). Additionally, there is a trophic level enrichment of approximately +1‰ in  
342  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  (DeNiro and Epstein, 1978; Bocherens and Drucker, 2003).

343

## 344 **5. Baikal's Isotopic Ecology**

345 Lake Baikal's primary producers, phytoplankton and periphytic algae, have a  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  range greater  
346 than 20‰, which continues through the entire food chain (Yoshii, 1999; Yoshii et al., 1999).  $^{13}\text{C}$   
347 enrichment in fish varies by their preferred habitat. Pelagic fish species, such as the omul', tend to  
348 be depleted in  $^{13}\text{C}$  while shallow water fishes tend to be enriched. Baikal's seal population largely  
349 preys on small pelagic fish, and therefore has low  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values. Seal and pike are apex aquatic  
350 predators and have high  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values, averaging ca. 14‰ and ca. 12‰, respectively (Table 6;  
351 Katzenberg and Weber, 1999; Katzenberg et al., 2010).

352 Since, with few recent exceptions (Losey et al., 2008; Losey et al., 2012; Nomokonova et  
353 al., 2010; Nomokonova et al., 2015), archaeological excavations in the Baikal region have rarely  
354 employed dry and wet screening techniques, few archaeological fish bones have been recovered and  
355 isotopic tests on them are correspondingly uncommon. Therefore, most studies rely on results from  
356 modern fish, including those done by BAP/BHAP.  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values within an organism differ by tissue,  
357 such that measurements on fish muscle are not directly comparable to those derived from bone  
358 collagen, requiring a correction of +2.9‰ (Robson et al., 2012). Additionally, it is necessary to  
359 apply a correction of +1.2‰ to all modern samples to account for the burning of fossil fuels in  
360 modernity, which has introduced  $^{13}\text{C}$ -depleted carbon into the atmosphere (Friedli et al., 1986).

361 Previously considerable effort has gone into creating a terrestrial and aquatic isotopic  
362 baseline, analysing modern and, when accessible, archaeological terrestrial and aquatic fauna for  
363 Cis-Baikal (Katzenberg et al., 2012; Weber, 2003; Weber and Bettinger, 2010; Weber et al., 2011)  
364 (Table 6). However, gaps in coverage do remain, most notably for Trans-Baikal. The lower Selenga  
365 River is a spawning ground for omul' and sturgeon, which could have potentially provided an  
366 important resource for those living along the river.

367

368

369 **Table 6:** Isotopic values for selected terrestrial and aquatic species reported in previous studies on  
 370 Cis- and Trans-Baikal fauna. Stable carbon isotope results for modern samples have been adjusted  
 371 for the ‘Suess’ (fossil fuel) effect (+1.2‰) while those obtained from flesh have been adjusted for a  
 372 flesh to bone collagen fractionation factor (+2.9‰).

Location	Species (Common)	Tissue	Period	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$		$\delta^{15}\text{N}$		n	Source
				$\bar{x}$	sd	$\bar{x}$	sd		
<i>Aquatic</i>									
Lake Baikal	Omul’	Muscle and Bone coll	Modern	-22.0	1.8	10.7	1.1	33	Katzenberg et al. (2012); Kucklick et al. (1996); Weber et al. (2002); Yoshii et al. (1999)
Little Sea	Omul’	Bone coll	Modern	-15.1	2.0	9.4	0.1	4	Katzenberg et al. (2012)
Lower Selenga	Omul’	Bone coll	Modern	-23.0	0.5	8.9	0.8	19	Dufour et al. (1999)
Lake Baikal	Fish spp. (ex. omul’)	Bone coll	Modern	-16.5	4.5	10.6	1.7	30	Katzenberg et al. (2012); Weber et al. (2002)
Lower Selenga	Fish spp. (ex. omul’)	Bone and Flesh	Modern	-21.7	1.8	12.9	1.4	55	Sampson et al. (2002)
Lake Baikal	Seal	Bone coll	Archaeol	-22.5	0.8	14.2	1.4	10	Katzenberg et al. (2012); Weber et al. (2002)
<i>Terrestrial</i>									
Baikal Region	Terrestrial herbivores	Bone coll	Archaeol	-20.0	1.1	5.0	1.2	25	Katzenberg et al. (2012) Weber et al. (2002)
Baikal Region	Terrestrial Omnivores/ Carnivores	Bone coll	Archaeol	-18.8	1.0	10.7	3.0	9	Katzenberg et al. (2012) Weber et al. (2002)

373  
 374 Unfortunately, no isotopic measurements on archaeological fish are available from the  
 375 Selenga River, but averages for modern fish are provided in Table 6. These may not accurately  
 376 reflect those of the Neolithic and Bronze Age (e.g., due to industrial and agricultural impacts, and to  
 377 overfishing; Sampson et al., 2002). Nevertheless, modern values indicate that fish, particularly the  
 378 omul’, from the Selenga are generally not  $^{13}\text{C}$ -enriched, in contrast to some Baikal fish. Together  
 379 with archaeological and modern values for fish, seals and terrestrial fauna from Cis-Baikal, these  
 380 data provide a preliminary isotopic baseline for comparison with the human results.

## 381 382 **6. Materials and Methods**

383 Human bone from 22 individuals was sampled from collections stored at the Museum of  
 384 Archaeology & Ethnography (Kunstkamera), St. Petersburg. Due to the variable degree of  
 385 completeness, it was not possible to consistently sample the same skeletal element. Nevertheless,  
 386 only cortical bone was sampled from long bones, crania, or mandibulae.

387 Samples were first surface-cleaned with an aluminium oxide shotblaster at the University of  
 388 Oxford’s Research Laboratory for Archaeology and the History of Art (RLAHA). Those weighing  
 389 over 1 g were sub-sampled and prepared separately for stable isotopic analyses in both RLAHA’s  
 390 radiocarbon (ORAU) and palaeodiet laboratories. The pre-treatment and measurement methods



391 between the two labs differed slightly; however, no significant differences were observed between  
392 the results obtained by the two methods, as has been demonstrated previously (White et al., 2020)  
393 and, consequently, the results were averaged.

394 Both sets of samples were ground and left to soak in 5°C hydrochloric acid (HCl, 0.5 M) for  
395 three days or until they no longer reacted to the acid. The ORAU protocol samples were then  
396 washed with sodium hydroxide (NaOH, 0.1 M) in order to remove any humic acids present and  
397 ultra-filtered using a 30kD filter to remove large molecular contaminants (Brock et al., 2007, 2010).  
398 This additional step is the main difference between the two lab protocols. Following this, all  
399 samples were washed with Milli-Q water and sonicated for 20 minutes. The samples were then  
400 gelatinized by soaking them in a pH 3 solution for 24 hours, and then sealed and heated in 70°C for  
401 three days. After this the remaining liquid was filtered out and the resulting ‘collagen’ was freeze-  
402 dried.

403 All collagen samples were analysed using a Sercon 20/22 Isotope Ratio Mass Spectrometer  
404 (IRMS). The samples prepared using the palaeodiet protocol were analysed in duplicate with  
405 alanine standards and in-house standards of cow ( $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -24.21\text{‰}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 8.00\text{‰}$ ) and seal ( $\delta^{13}\text{C} =$   
406  $-12.00\text{‰}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 16.61\text{‰}$ ) bone collagen, whereas the samples processed according to the ORAU  
407 protocol were measured in triplicate with alanine ( $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -27.11\text{‰}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N} = -1.56\text{‰}$ ) and USGS40  
408 ( $\delta^{13}\text{C} = -26.39\text{‰}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N} = -4.52\text{‰}$ ) and USGS41 ( $\delta^{13}\text{C} = 37.63\text{‰}$ ,  $\delta^{15}\text{N} = 47.57\text{‰}$ ) standards.  
409 Alanine was used to correct for machine drift and the in-house cow and seal standards were  
410 referenced to international standards of VPDB for  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and AIR for  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  through repeated  
411 measurement. Values were then drift-corrected, calibrated relative to the in-house and international  
412 standards (cf. Coplen et al. 2006), and averaged between runs. Measurement precision for both  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$   
413 and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  is on the order of  $\pm 0.2\text{‰}$  based on repeat analyses of standards. Collagen quality was  
414 assessed based on collagen yield ( $>1\%$ ) and atomic C/N ratios (2.9–3.6) (Ambrose, 1990; DeNiro,  
415 1985; van Klinken, 1999).

416 Samples prepared for radiocarbon dating were combusted using a Continuous Flow IRMS at  
417 which time their isotopic composition was assessed (Brock et al., 2010). Samples were then  
418 graphitised and their  $^{14}\text{C}$  concentration measured using accelerator mass spectrometry (AMS) (Dee  
419 and Bronk Ramsey, 2000).

420 Based on previous research in Cis-Baikal, aquatic foods are expected to have played a  
421 significant role in the diets of those interred at Fofanovo. This, in turn, will lead to a varying but  
422 often considerable FRE through the introduction of old carbon from the lake and its surrounding  
423 rivers (Bronk Ramsey et al., 2014; Schulting et al., 2014; 2015; 2020; Weber et al., 2016a). Linear  
424 regression formulae have been calculated using paired human-terrestrial fauna radiocarbon dates for  
425 southwest Baikal and the Angara, Little Sea, and Upper Lena micro-regions, and for the Cis-Baikal  
426 region in general (Table 7) (Schulting et al., 2014; 2015). In the absence of knowledge of the  
427 precise reservoir offset that applies to the Fofanovo humans sampled, we have provisionally used  
428 the model developed for Cis-Baikal. While not ideal, this is undoubtedly preferable to applying no  
429 correction at all. With the exception of the Upper Lena, which has no connection to Lake Baikal,  
430 the other formulae factor in the offset caused by the consumption of aquatic resources from the  
431 lake. These will be at least partly relevant to the individuals from the Lower Selenga, since: 1) A  
432 number of fish species move between the lake and the river, especially for spawning (most notably  
433 the omul’ and sturgeon); and 2) Hunter–gatherer groups using Fofanovo for burial likely lived close  
434 enough to the lake itself to have had either direct or indirect access to its aquatic food resources.

435  
436

437 **Table 7:** FRE correction formulae (Schulting et al., 2014; Weber et al., 2016a). In the adjusted error  
 438 calculation, the standard deviation (s.d.) is that of the conventional  $^{14}\text{C}$  date. ‘S’ is the standard  
 439 deviation of the residuals from the FRE correction formulae provided in the original publication.  
 440

Source	Formula
General Baikal “Excluding outliers, $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ” FRE	$-732.8 + 76.6 (\delta^{15}\text{N})$
“Little Sea, $\delta^{13}\text{C}$ & $\delta^{15}\text{N}$ ” FRE	$-3329.5361 - 125.5967 (\delta^{13}\text{C}) + 95.1091 (\delta^{15}\text{N})$
“SW Baikal/Angara” FRE	$-1388.8522 + 125.4503 (\delta^{15}\text{N})$
Adjusted error term (Weber et al. 2016a)	$\sqrt{(\text{s. d.})^2 + S^2}$

441  
 442 The FRE-corrected dates were calibrated in OxCal v.4.3.2, using IntCal13 (Bronk Ramsey,  
 443 2009; Bronk Ramsey et al., 2013; Reimer et al., 2013). Kernel Density Estimation (KDE)  
 444 modelling, a way of summarising dates while reducing the noise and excessive spread of sets of five  
 445 or more radiocarbon dates, was carried out in OxCal as well (Bronk Ramsey, 2017).

446 All statistical tests were carried out using IBM Statistical Package for the Social Sciences  
 447 (SPSS) 24.0. Shapiro-Wilk tests were used to assess normality, and parametric or non-parametric  
 448 tests were applied, as appropriate, to compare central tendencies between groups. Outliers were  
 449 defined as exceeding 1.5 times the interquartile range (IQR).  
 450

## 451 7. Results and Discussion

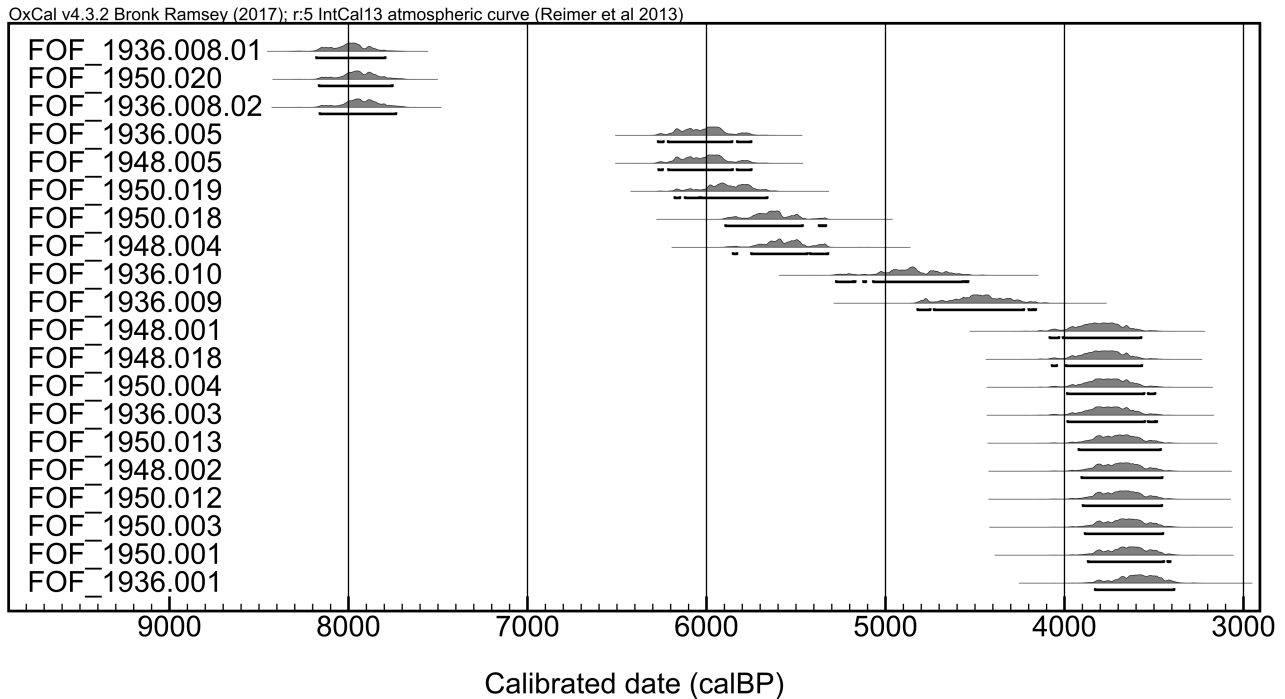
### 452 7.1. Analysis of new radiocarbon dates from Fofanovo

453 Two samples from Fofanovo failed the *in vivo* C:N criterion, with values of 12.5 (FOF\_1948.003)  
 454 and 4.25 ( FOF\_1948.010) and were excluded from analysis. All other samples had C:N values  
 455 between 2.9 and 3.6 (DeNiro, 1985). One individual (FOF\_1948.018) was dated twice as part of  
 456 ORAU’s standard procedure of randomly duplicating a certain number of measurements for quality  
 457 control. Its radiocarbon dates were R\_Combined in OxCal (see Weber et al. 2016a) and then  
 458 corrected for the FRE offset (Table 8). A general FRE correction for consumers of Lake Baikal  
 459 aquatic foods applied to the conventional radiocarbon dates from Fofanovo yields an average offset  
 460 of  $433 \pm 59$   $^{14}\text{C}$  years (Table 8; Figure 3). Using FRE correction equations developed for the  
 461 Angara/SW Baikal and the Little Sea provide slightly larger average offsets of  $521 \pm 96$  years and  
 462  $550 \pm 159$  years, respectively.  
 463

464 **Table 8:** [Catalogue uploaded as separate file]

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**Figure 3:** Calibrated radiocarbon dates from the Fofanovo cemetery corrected with the general Baikal FRE equation (see Tables 8 and 9).



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The new <sup>14</sup>C dates from Fofanovo are assessed with reference to well-established comparanda from Cis-Baikal, where considerable data are available regarding Middle Holocene cemeteries. This includes Weber et al.’s (2020) comparative assessment of 561 AMS radiocarbon dates from the entirety of Cis-Baikal (see note in SI section S2). Additionally, comparisons are made to Weber et al.’s (2016b) detailed examination of Shamanka II, an EN and EBA cemetery located in the southwest corner of Lake Baikal, approximately 220 km west along the south coast of the lake from the Selenga delta. The 14 dates published for Fofanovo earlier by Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii (1989) are also used for comparison.

Unlike the 14 dates published by Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii, which form two temporal clusters, our dates suggest four clusters, the first two of which are separated by about 1,900 years and the later two by roughly 700 years each (Table 9). The oldest three dates clearly relate to Gerasimov and Chernykh’s (1975) Group 1 graves. These dates correspond also with the expansion of the boreal forest and wet conditions at ca. 9.2–7.7 ka BP in the Selenga micro-region based on the analysis of paleoenvironmental proxies from the Burdukovo site, ca. 50 km from Fofanovo (White et al., 2013). The results of coring at Lake Kotokel support a ca. 7 ka cal BP maximum expansion of the boreal forest in the region (Kobe et al., 2020).

**Table 9:** Discrete chronological clusters of radiocarbon dates from Fofanovo (n = 20) in mean cal BP.

Chronological cluster	Range of mean cal BP <sup>14</sup> C dates	n	Period assignment
Cluster 1	7995±101 to 7930±102	3	LM
Cluster 2	6016±120 to 5561±116	5	LN?
Cluster 3	4864±160 and 4481±156	2	LN–EBA
Cluster 4	3805±124 to 3591±114	10	EBA

490

491 Conversely, the youngest 10 determinations seem to fit neatly within Gerasimov and  
492 Chernykh's Group 2, EBA Glazkovo. The intervening seven dates have no counterpart in the  
493 Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii dataset, but their number is small relative to the known size of the  
494 Fofanovo cemetery. None of these seven graves have been classified chronologically by the  
495 excavators or by Lbova et al. (2008), and will be discussed further below.

496 Okladnikov originally classified one of the burials in Cluster 1, the oldest group,  
497 (FOF\_1950.020) as EBA Glazkovo. This was likely because no red ochre was found in the grave,  
498 which otherwise lacked any diagnostic characteristics typical of either mortuary tradition. The only  
499 grave goods were an unspecified number of small discs or beads (5–7 mm in diameter). The burial  
500 was supine with legs flexed to the left and the head pointing NE. The other two dates in this group  
501 are for burials excavated by Gerasimov in 1936, which have not been described or classified  
502 chronologically.

503 Among the 10 youngest dates, only one grave was originally assigned an incorrect  
504 chronological position (FOF\_1950.012), 5 dates are consistent with the original classification, and 6  
505 were not classified at all. This may suggest that EBA graves are the easiest to classify typologically;  
506 however, in cases where clear diagnostic characteristics are lacking, they are still subject to errors.

507 It can be inferred from this comparison that the three oldest dates in our dataset, considered  
508 together with some of the 1989 Russian dates, suggest that the beginning of the Fofanovo cemetery  
509 predates beginnings of Kitoi cemeteries on the Angara and Southwest Baikal by quite a large  
510 margin.

511 Comparison with the mean cal BP dates from Cis-Baikal provides more insights (Table 4).  
512 The oldest three Fofanovo dates fit comfortably within the Late Mesolithic and the youngest 12  
513 match well with the EBA in Cis-Baikal. The youngest cluster of 10 dates (Table 9, Cluster 4) match  
514 very closely the distribution of six EBA Glazkovo dates from the Shamanka II cemetery (3593±67  
515 to 3409±72; Weber et al., 2016a). Furthermore, these 10 dates can be R\_Combined (3705±57 cal  
516 BP,  $\chi^2$ -Test: df=9, T=3.2, 5% 16.9) in OxCal. That these 10 graves come from three different  
517 excavations at Fofanovo—two from 1936, three from 1948, and five from 1950—demonstrates that  
518 they did not form a spatial cluster, yet form a tight chronological cluster. The entire EBA  
519 component from Fofanovo needs to be dated to address this matter further.

520 Assessment of the remaining five dates from Cluster 2 requires more attention. Relative to the  
521 culture history for Middle Holocene Cis-Baikal presented in Weber et al. 2016, these dates appear  
522 to be somewhat older than the lower LN boundary. However, at the time the LN boundary was  
523 defined by only 22 dates, which acted as a proxy for another 227 LN burials archaeologically  
524 documented (Weber and Bettinger, 2010). In a more recent study, the LN dataset has been  
525 expanded to 103 radiocarbon dates and the 5 dates from Fofanovo seem to fit well within the early  
526 stages of the LN Isakovo and Serovo mortuary traditions in Cis-Baikal (Weber et al. 2020).  
527 Continued dating of these materials may make the lower Isakovo and Serovo boundary still  
528 somewhat older. The matter will need to be reassessed once the freshwater reservoir correction  
529 applicable to the Selenga River is fully addressed.

### 530 531 *7.2. Summary of new radiocarbon dating*

532 The most important points emerging from the assessment of 20 new AMS dates on human remains  
533 from the Fofanovo cemetery are the following:

- 534 ● Development of formal cemeteries in Trans-Baikal may predate similar developments in  
535 Cis-Baikal by a large margin. In Cis-Baikal, LM cemeteries are small and rare, and their  
536 mortuary protocol is variable to the extent that a cohesive and coherent mortuary tradition  
537 cannot be defined. Formal cemeteries with such mortuary protocols (i.e., the classic Kitoi)  
538 mark the beginning of the EN period, but at Fofanovo these developments appear to be  
539 much older.
- 540 ● Fofanovo may have a substantial LN component which, to date, has gone entirely  
541 undetected by any typological assessment.

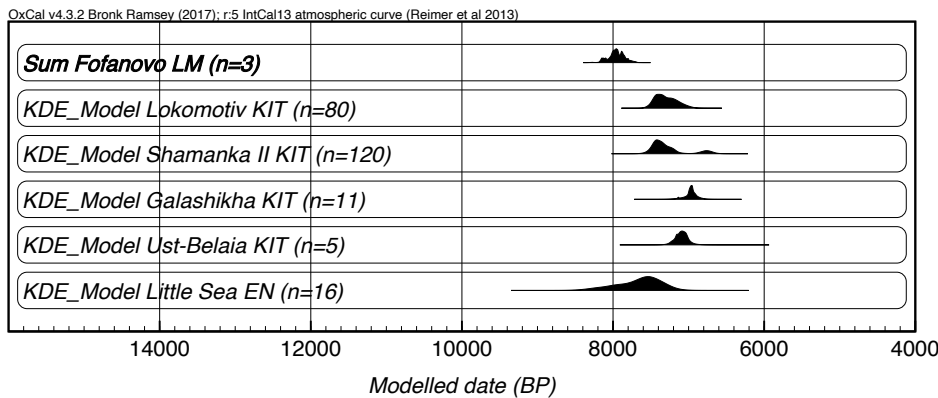


- The timing of the EBA Glazkovo mortuary tradition appears to be roughly similar on both sides of the lake.

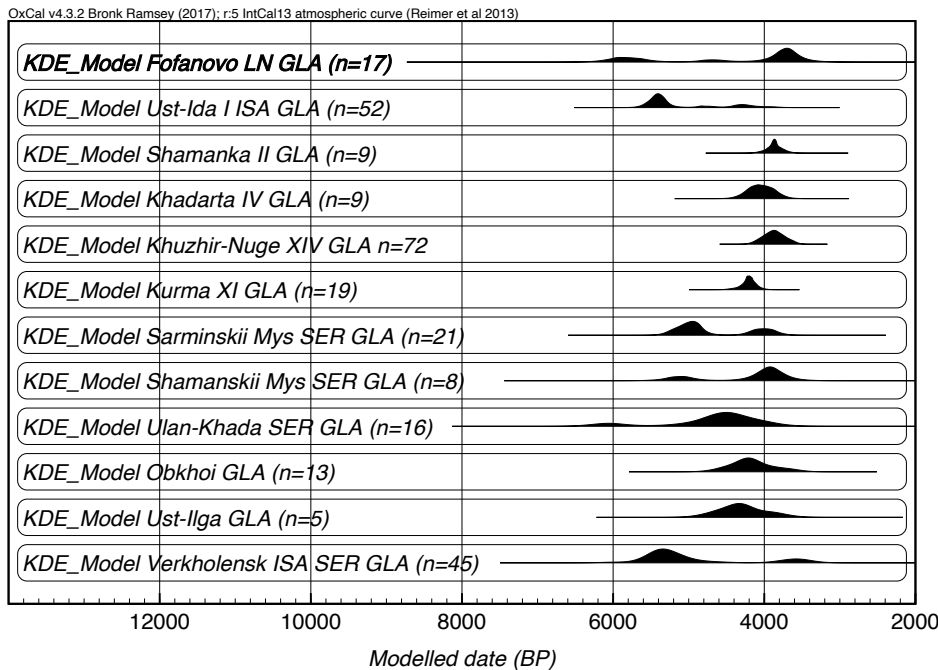
This analysis thus defines three chronological groups for the assessment of dietary patterns using stable isotope data: LM (n = 3), LN (n = 6), and EBA (n = 11). The chronological position of these three groups relative to several better-dated Middle Holocene cemeteries from Cis-Baikal is presented in Figure 4.

**Figure 4:** Chronological position of the three main analytical units from the Fofanovo cemetery relative to several well-dated Middle Holocene hunter–gatherer cemeteries in Cis-Baikal: (A) Late Mesolithic and Early Neolithic cemeteries; (B) Late Neolithic and Early Bronze Age cemeteries (Weber et al., 2020). Their relative chronological positions are directly comparable unlike the period boundaries expressed in HPD dates generated through Bayesian modelling (Table 4).

A. KDE model of LM and EN Trans- and Cis-Baikal dates



B. KDE model of LN and EBA Trans- and Cis-Baikal dates



7.3. Analysis of new stable isotope data from Fofanovo

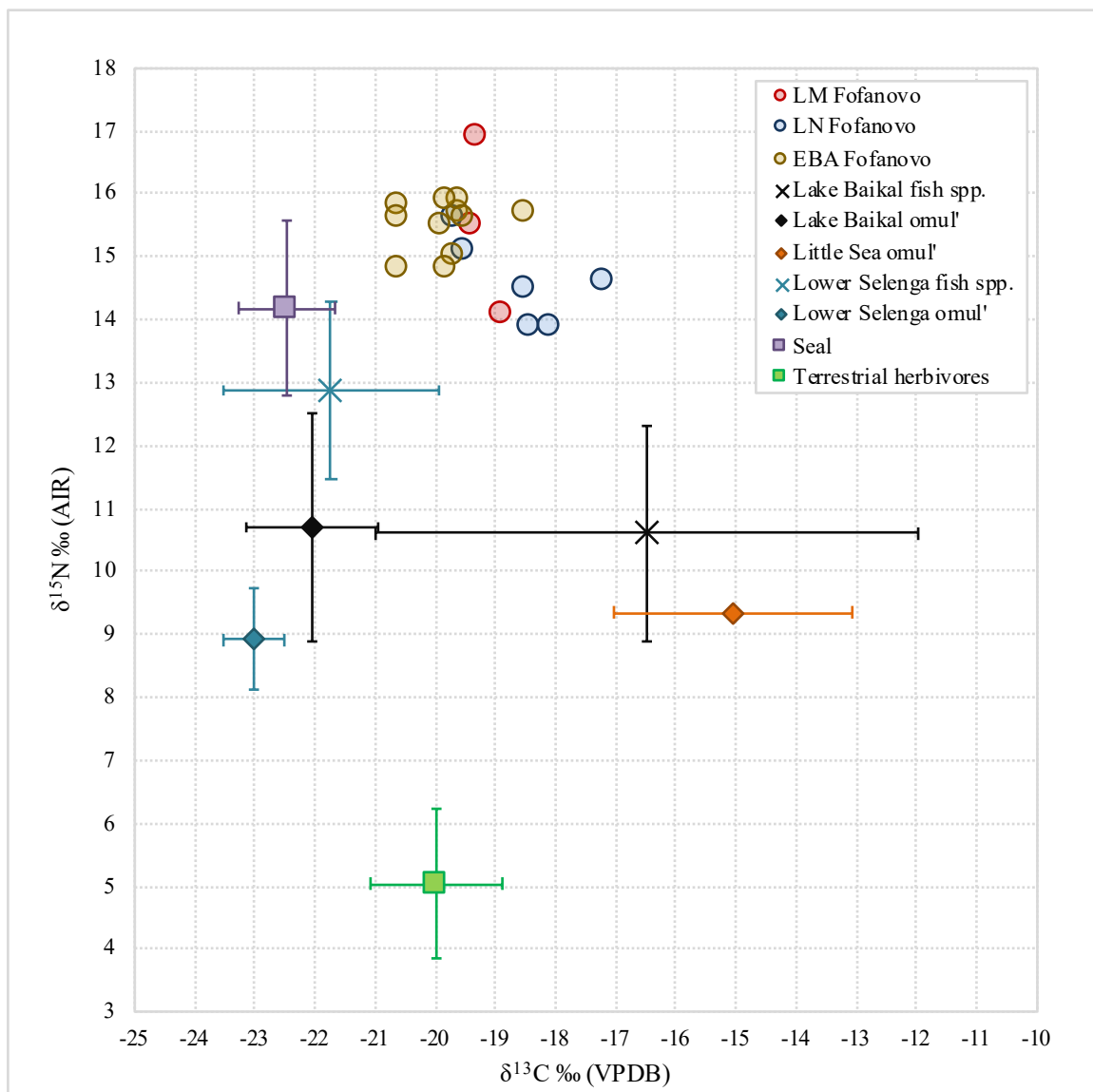
A statistical and visual summary of the  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values from Fofanovo is provided in Table 10 and Figure 5. Overall, the isotopic signatures of the individuals from Fofanovo are marked by relatively low  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and high  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values, as one would expect for individuals reliant on aquatic resources from the Selenga river, including spawning runs of some Baikal fishes, such as the omul'

565 and the sturgeon (Figure 5). This results in an isotopic signature that is distinct from all other  
 566 hunter-gatherer groups of Cis-Baikal, and thus constitutes a new microregion (Figures 6–8).

567  
 568 **Table 10:** Statistical summary of the isotopic results from Fofanovo by period.  
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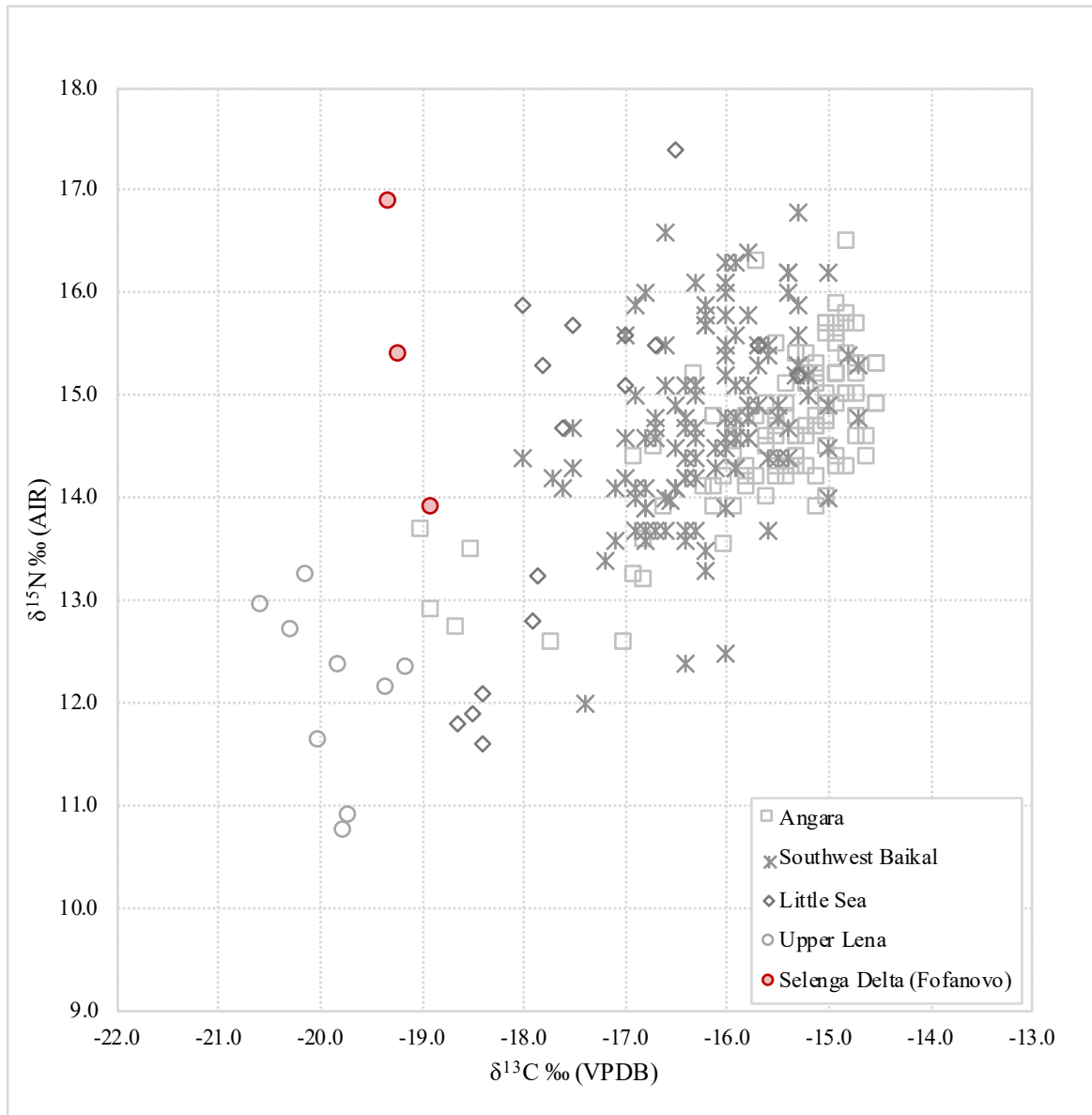
Period	$\delta^{13}\text{C}$		$\delta^{15}\text{N}$		n
	$\bar{x}$	sd	$\bar{x}$	sd	
All	-19.4	0.9	15.2	0.8	20
LM	-19.2	0.3	15.5	1.4	3
LN	-18.6	0.9	14.6	0.7	6
EBA	-19.8	0.6	15.5	0.4	11

570  
 571 **Figure 5:** Stable isotopic results from all humans analysed at Fofanovo and local fauna data (Table  
 572 6). All modern values have been corrected for the Suess effect and flesh values have been corrected  
 573 to be comparable to bone collagen isotopic values.  
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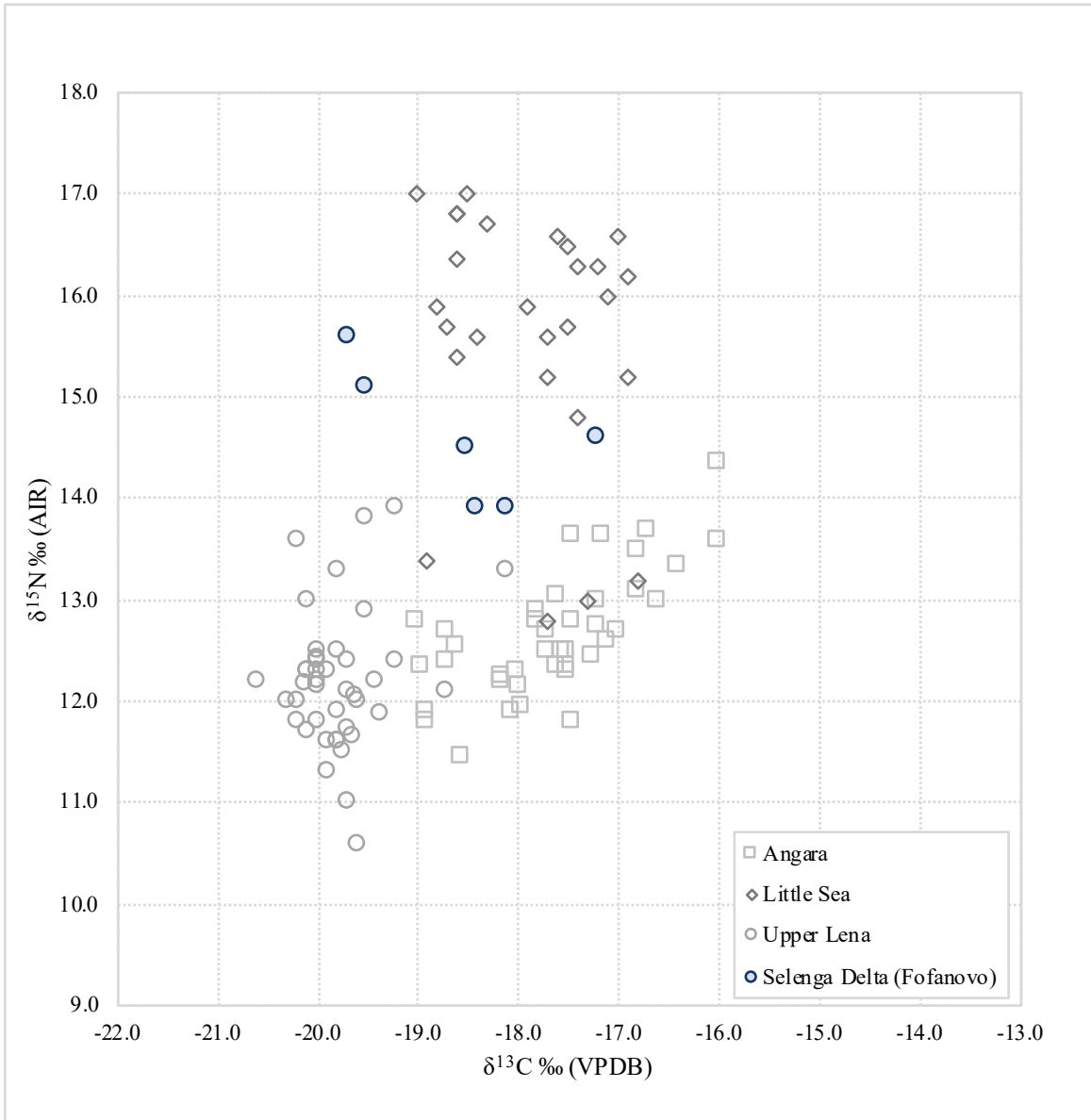
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576 **Figure 6:** LM and EN individuals (age  $\geq 5$ ) from the Baikal region in the current BAP/BHAP  
577 database.  
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582 **Figure 7:** LN individuals (age  $\geq 5$ ) from the Baikal region in the current BAP/BHAP database.  
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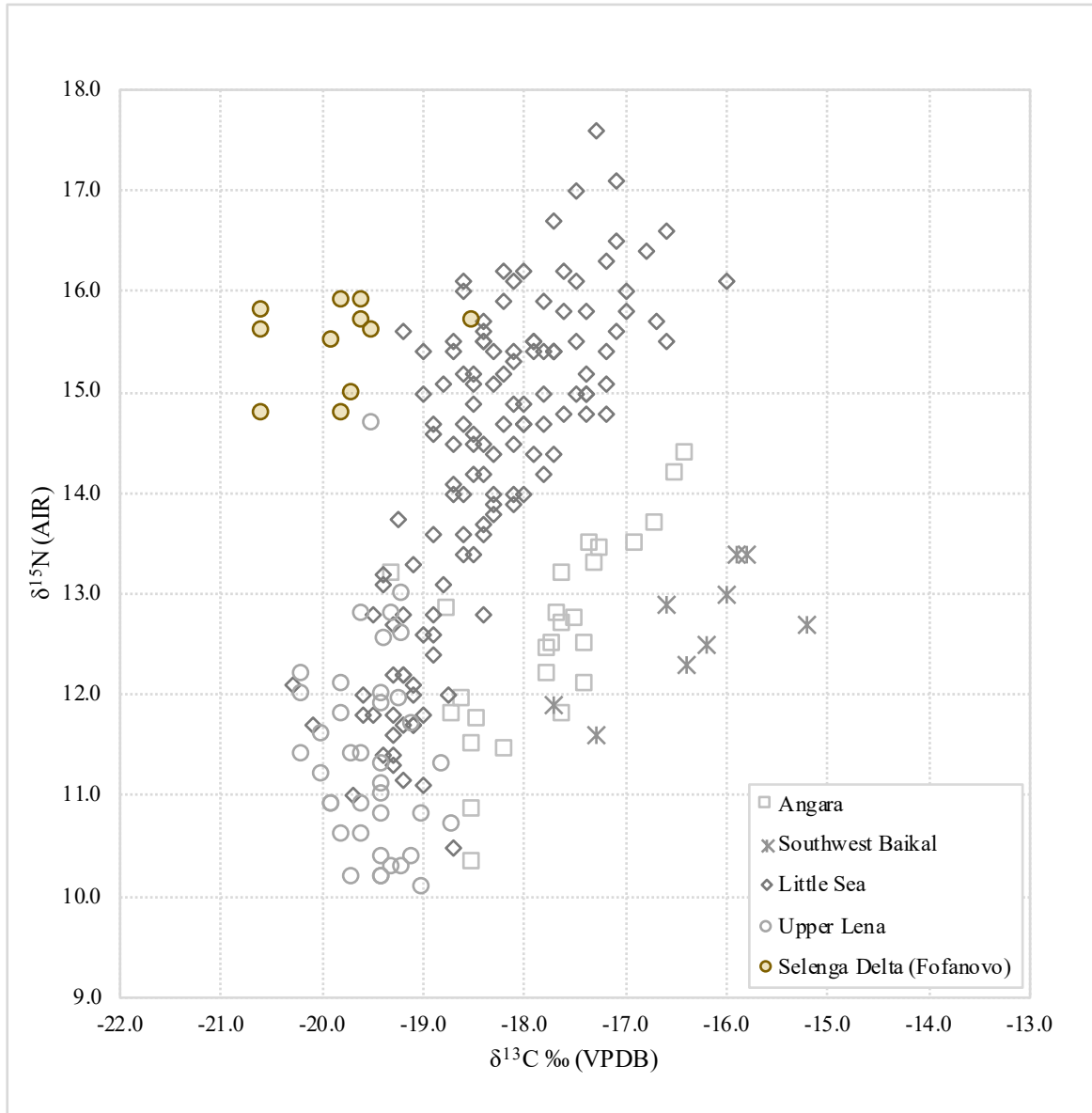


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**Figure 8:** EBA individuals (age  $\geq 5$ ) from the Baikal region in the current BAP/BHAP database.



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591 There are too few sexed individuals for each chronological unit in the dataset to test  
592 formally for possible isotopic differences between the sexes. There appears to be no obvious  
593 difference between females and males, which is consistent with previous findings from Cis-Baikal  
594 (Weber et al., 2016a; though see White et al., 2020). The single older child's  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  value of 15.6‰  
595 is 1‰ higher than the LN adult average. Whether this represents a residual nursing effect is unclear  
596 given that this child is 5–7 years old, well past the expected weaning age for Cis-Baikal's hunter-  
597 gatherers (Waters-Rist et al. 2011). Alternatively, it may reflect physiological stress (Beaumont and  
598 Montgomery, 2016; Fuller et al., 2005; Mekota et al., 2006), or simply be part of the normal range  
599 of variability for this group. More data on non-adults will be required evaluate this issue further.

600 The three LM individuals are relatively depleted in  $^{13}\text{C}$ , all within 1‰ of each other. Yet,  
601 the LM  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values are more dispersed than the LN and EBA individuals. The only male LM  
602 individual has the highest  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  value, 16.9‰, of all the Fofanovo individuals analysed. The other  
603 two LM individuals are female. There is no overlap between the range of the Fofanovo LM values  
604 and the LM–EN values from Cis-Baikal's micro-regions (Figure 6). Unfortunately, until further  
605 analysis is undertaken, there is little more that can be said.

606 The LN and EBA results from Fofanovo form two overlapping but distinct clusters (Mann-  
607 Whitney U test,  $n = 17$ ;  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$   $p = 0.01$ ;  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$   $p = 0.01$ ). In addition,  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  values are positively

608 correlated with mean dates cal BP, becoming more negative over time ( $n = 17, p = 0.00, r = 0.73$ ).  
609 The  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  values increase in the EBA compared to the LN, but are not significantly correlated with  
610 mean cal BP radiocarbon dates.

611 The isotopic distinction between the LN and EBA is possibly driven by a greater reliance on  
612 aquatic foods from the lake's shallows or lagoons in the LN and a greater reliance on the Selenga—  
613 perhaps including more intensive procurement of omul' and sturgeon — in the EBA. When plotted  
614 with LN humans from Cis-Baikal (Figure 7), Fofanovo falls almost in between 'Game-Fish' (GF)  
615 and 'Game-Fish-Seal' (GFS) diets in the Little Sea (Weber and Bettinger, 2010; Weber and  
616 Goriunova, 2013; Weber et al., 2011). Although an isotopic baseline for the littoral waters near the  
617 entrance of the Selenga into Lake Baikal is currently unknown, if the shallows of the Little Sea and  
618 those near the Selenga delta are similar isotopically and as such can be used as a proxy, then the  
619 elevated  $^{13}\text{C}$  values from the Fofanovo LN could indicate a significant reliance on littoral fish from  
620 Lake Baikal's coastal waters, ca. 45 km downriver. This would imply considerable – perhaps  
621 seasonal – mobility for the LN communities using Fofanovo for burial.

622 Compared to the LN, the EBA individuals are more tightly clustered, temporally and  
623 isotopically, being more depleted in  $^{13}\text{C}$  and elevated in  $^{15}\text{N}$ . The earliest EBA adult female,  
624 FOF\_1936.009, is an outlier in carbon, and falls closer to the range of the Little Sea micro-region  
625 (Figure 8). Given the depleted carbon signature of the Selenga River's fishes, the pelagic omul' and  
626 sturgeon, and Lake Baikal's seal, it is likely that some combination of these contributed more to the  
627 diet during the EBA. Autumn and spring runs of spawning omul' and sturgeon respectively would  
628 likely be the most productive and, hence, attractive resource on the Selenga. If so, full use of these  
629 time-limited resources would have entailed considerable processing (drying and smoking) costs and  
630 more centralised storage facilities (perhaps facilitated by freezing once winter arrived). Sturgeon  
631 have received far less attention in the resource management literature for Lake Baikal, since stocks  
632 were over-exploited historically to the extent that, unlike the omul', the fishery is no longer viable.  
633 Very likely it would have been far more productive in the past and especially attractive given the  
634 large size of sturgeon. Parallels might be drawn with the suggested importance of the sturgeon  
635 fishery to Mesolithic communities along the Iron Gates of the Danube (Bartosiewicz et al., 2008).

636 The potential role of the Baikal seal – slightly  $^{13}\text{C}$ -depleted but considerably  $^{15}\text{N}$ -enriched  
637 relative to terrestrial fauna – may be another significant resource during the EBA. Seals congregate  
638 around the mouth of the Selenga River during the autumn, as the lake is slower to freeze over near  
639 the delta (T. Nomokonova and R. Losey, personal communication). Moreover, seals have been  
640 reported to enter the Selenga itself in pursuit of prey (Pastukhov, 1993; Petrov, 1997).

641 Exactly what circumstances might have led to a greater reliance on the lower Selenga  
642 River's resources during the EBA and indeed whether the dietary difference between the two  
643 periods remains robust will be explored further in future studies. Nevertheless, at this point it is  
644 possible to posit several scenarios. One possibility is that the foraging range or seasonal round  
645 changed within the group that was using the Fofanovo cemetery. Alternatively or concurrently, a  
646 change in foraging strategy might have occurred. Changes in the isotopic baseline (e.g., resulting  
647 from environmental changes) are also possible, but in the absence of relevant terrestrial faunal data  
648 for Trans-Baikal this cannot be assessed; however, given the size of the human isotopic shifts it  
649 appears the least likely of the alternatives.

650 Analysis of the nearby Burdukovo site's sediments along the Selenga River indicated a  
651 prolonged period of fluctuation in the water level of the river (ca. 7.7 – 3.8 ka BP) during a drier  
652 period in the region, which would likely have influenced more than just the area of the site as the  
653 Selenga lower watershed's levels are directly tied into the upper watershed extending into the  
654 northern part of the Mongolian Plateau (White et al., 2013:78). This does not suggest a drastic  
655 change in the productivity of the lower Selenga River between the LN and EBA. Nevertheless, it is  
656 possible that social and/or economic changes in the local communities would have encouraged a  
657 more risk-averse foraging strategy during a time of more variable resource productivity that  
658 emphasised 'front-loaded' resource acquisition and storage of time-sensitive spawning runs and  
659 seal aggregation (Bettinger, 1999a,b, 2009; Winterhalder et al., 1999; Testart, 1982). The diverse

660 resources of the lower Selenga River could have then provided the incentive for a degree of  
661 settlement permanence during the EBA, with privileged access supported by the presence of the  
662 deceased in nearby cemeteries, demonstrating the group's ancestral rights (Charles and Buikstra,  
663 1983; Elder, 2010; Goldstein, 1981; Saxe, 1970). The EBA mortuary traditions in the Baikal region  
664 have long been noted to be more uniform throughout the different micro-regions and evidence of  
665 extensive exchange networks has also been emphasised (see discussion in Section 2.2. and cf.  
666 Shepard et al., 2016); how this might also be related to potentially more concentrated resource  
667 management in Trans-Baikal will be well worth further study.

668 While links, including the exchange of individuals as marriage partners, with other micro-  
669 regions are certainly possible, their elucidation will require additional research. One observation  
670 that can already be made, however, is that the Lower Selenga's resources are unlikely to have been  
671 of importance to individuals from the large EN and EBA cemetery at Shamanka II, some 220 km to  
672 the west. The Selenga had been proposed as one possibility in the absence of any comparably  $^{13}\text{C}$ -  
673 depleted and  $^{15}\text{N}$ -depleted values in Cis-Baikal, but this now seems unlikely (Figures 6 and 8;  
674 Weber et al., 2016b: 249–251).

675

## 676 8. Conclusions

677 The initial radiocarbon and stable isotope results reported here from the multiperiod cemetery at  
678 Fofanovo confirm the lower Selenga's status as an isotopically distinct micro-region, the first to be  
679 isotopically examined in the vast Trans-Baikal region.

680 The radiocarbon results suggest the appearance of formal cemeteries in Trans-Baikal  
681 predating the Kitoi tradition of Cis-Baikal. In addition there is a substantial and previously  
682 unrecognised LN component at Fofanovo that possibly begins as early as in Cis-Baikal. The EBA  
683 component of the Fofanovo cemetery is present as expected and thus far appears to be  
684 contemporaneous with that in Cis-Baikal. Lastly, Fofanovo may be the only large Middle Holocene  
685 hunter-gatherer cemetery in the entire Baikal region, i.e. in Cis- and Trans-Baikal, analysed so far  
686 with all four archaeological periods (LM, EN, LN, EBA) represented in mortuary assemblages,  
687 while still showing the MN break in the use of formal cemeteries. If confirmed, this implies that  
688 conditions that resulted in the well-documented discontinuity in use of formal hunter-gatherer  
689 cemeteries on the Cis-Baikal side of lake, existed also on the Trans-Baikal side or at least in the  
690 areas closer to the lake (Weber, 2020).

691 The stable  $\delta^{13}\text{C}$  and  $\delta^{15}\text{N}$  isotopic results from Fofanovo demonstrate a distinct isotopic  
692 signature for individuals along the Selenga, thereby constituting a new micro-region. In addition, a  
693 dietary difference between the LN and EBA individuals was identified, possibly resulting from a  
694 shift from greater reliance on aquatic resources from Lake Baikal shallows to reliance on the  
695 aquatic resources of the lower Selenga river. EBA utilisation of the Selenga's resources might have  
696 focused on seasonally-restricted spawning runs and seal aggregation.

697 Further research will target archaeological fish and mammal faunal bone from the newly-  
698 defined lower Selenga micro-region. Additionally, the development of a FRE correction for the  
699 Selenga River delta will be prioritized as it is currently difficult to make robust statements about the  
700 chronology until the radiocarbon dates have been adjusted accordingly. Further sampling of  
701 individuals from the Fofanovo cemetery is a priority as well so as to test whether the patterns found  
702 in this preliminary study are sustained, and to further explore dietary variability at the site. We have  
703 only begun to analyse the Fofanovo cemetery complex, but it is already clear that it has great  
704 potential to increase our understanding of long-term hunter-gatherer adaptations around Lake  
705 Baikal, complementing the considerable amount of research available for Cis-Baikal. Additionally,  
706 analysis of sites along the Selenga River invites investigation of how they and Cis-Baikal are  
707 related to cultures further up the river on the Mongolian Plateau. Our preliminary results have  
708 raised as many new questions as have been answered, and no doubt this will continue as new  
709 analyses are undertaken.

710

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**Declaration of interests**

The authors have no known competing interests or relationships which might influence the research presented in this paper.

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1 *Supplement to*  
2 **Turning Eastward: New Radiocarbon and Stable Isotopic Data for Middle Holocene Hunter-**  
3 **Gatherers from Fofanovo, Trans-Baikal, Siberia**

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44 **S1. Fofanovo Cemetery: Additional Details**

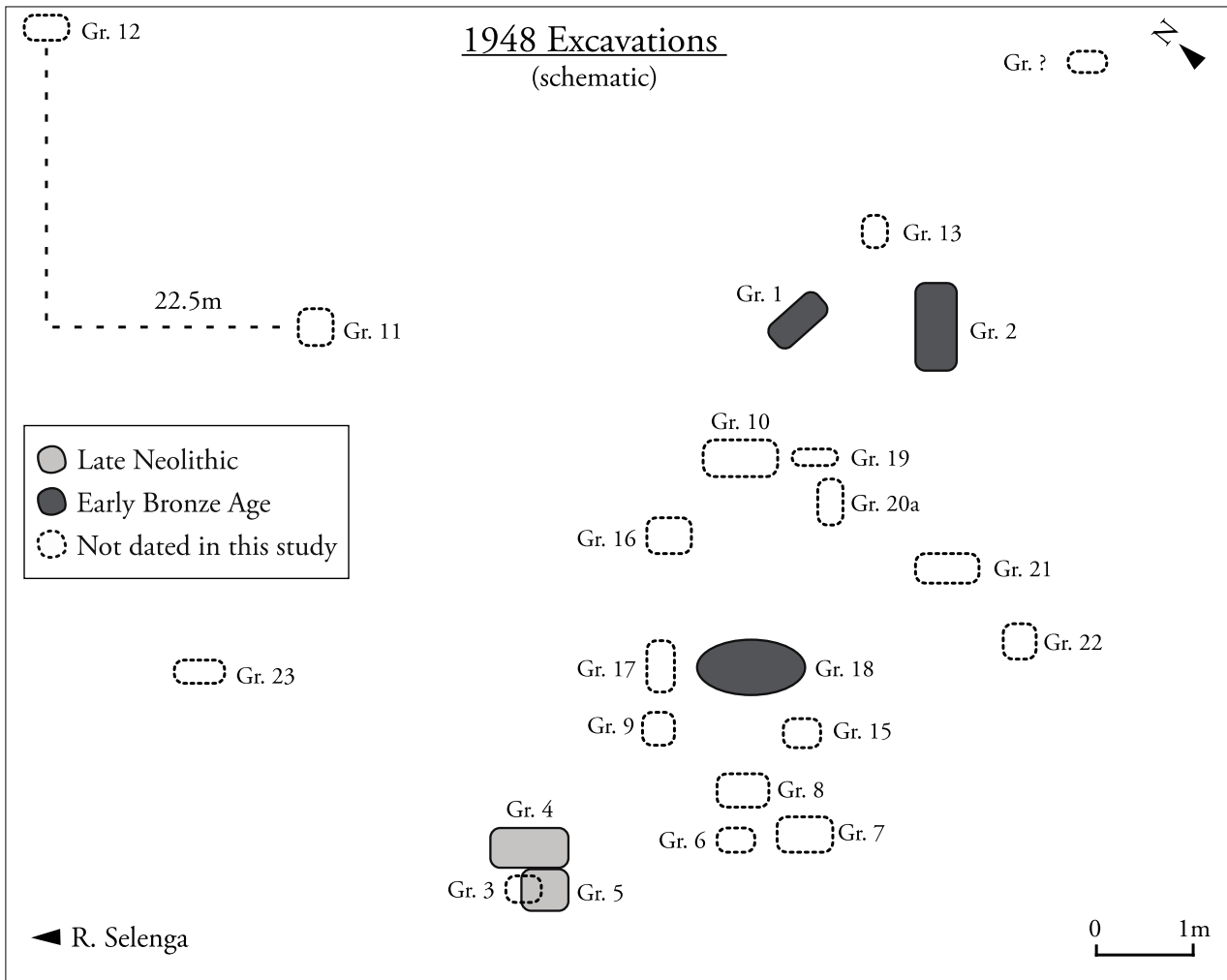
45 *S1.1. Archaeological fieldwork*

46 Fofanovo has been excavated on several occasions, though the findings of the early  
47 campaigns are poorly documented and/or published. The site was discovered in 1926 by A.P.  
48 Okladnikov, who collected surface material from “Punkt I” (Lbova et al., 2008, Fig. 5). The first  
49 excavations were conducted by M.M. Gerasimov in 1931 and 1934–36. The goal of Gerasimov’s  
50 fieldwork appears to have been the collection of surface material from the graves probably eroding  
51 from the slopes of “Punkt II”. This fieldwork remains undocumented, the collected materials have  
52 never been published, and it is unclear how many graves were represented. However, 10 graves  
53 retained enough integrity to be assigned numbers (Nos. 1–10) by Gerasimov (Gerasimov and  
54 Chernykh, 1975: 23). The human remains from these graves are stored in Kunstkamera, St.  
55 Petersburg, from which seven individuals were sampled for this study.

56 In 1948 and 1950, Okladnikov returned to Fofanovo to work in “Punkt II”. The results of  
57 these excavations have not been published; however, Lbova et al. (2008: 224–235) transcribed  
58 Okladnikov’s field notes and summarized the mortuary data in a table (Lbova et al., 2008: Table 5).  
59 Although some ambiguity remains with regard to how many graves were excavated in these two  
60 campaigns, the consensus appears to be that Okladnikov uncovered a total of 39 graves: 19 in 1948  
61 (Figure S1) and 20 in 1950 (Figure S2; Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975: 23; Lbova et al., 2008: 29).  
62 Human skeletal remains from these excavations are also stored in Kunstkamera, from which 13  
63 individuals were sampled for this study: five from 1948 and eight from the 1950 excavations.  
64

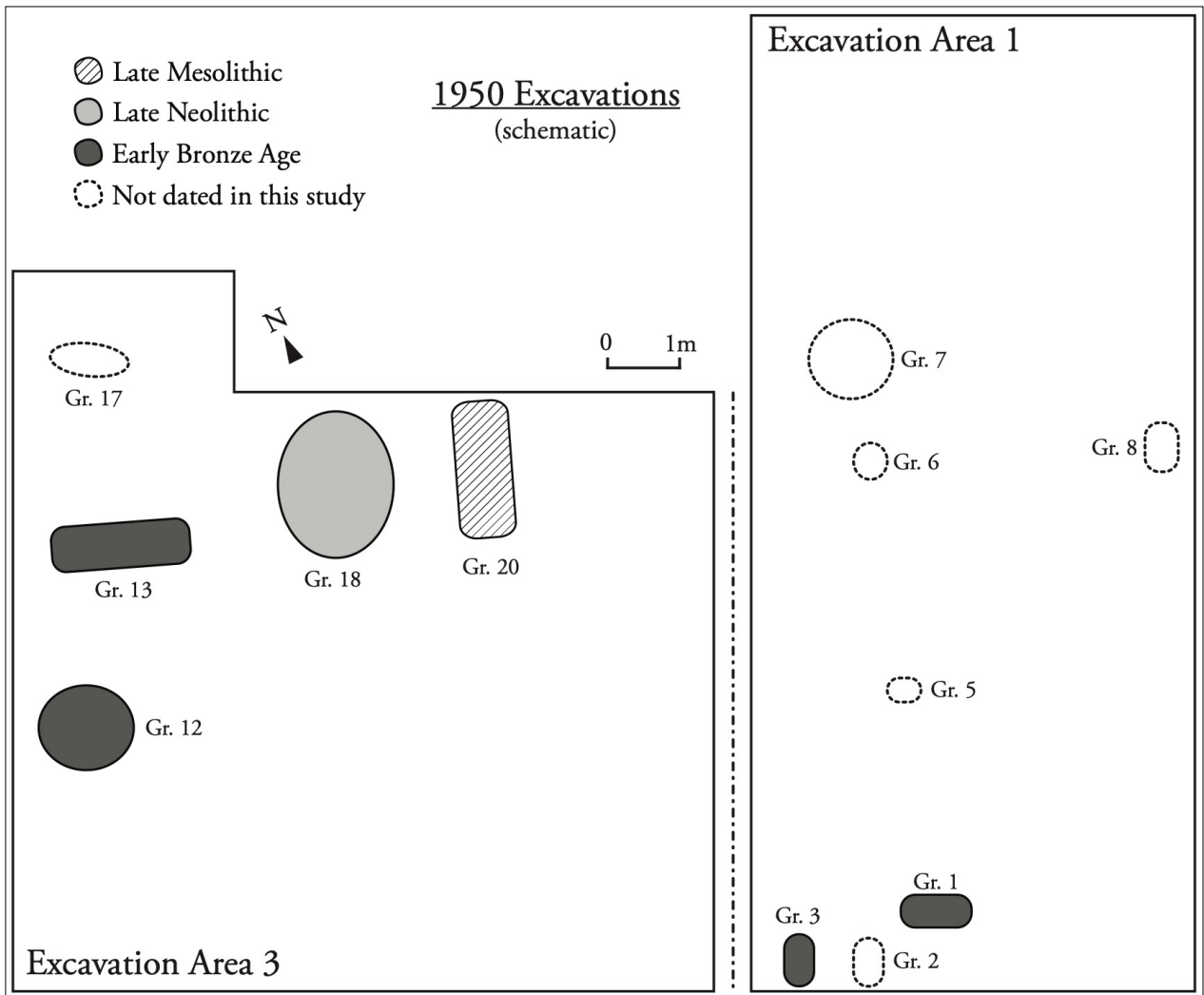


65 **Figure S1:** Schematic plan of Okladnikov's 1948 excavations reconstructed from his notes in  
66 Lbova et al. (2008: 31, Figure 6) and adapted by PH. Period assignments shown are as determined  
67 in this study.



68  
69

70 **Figure S2:** Schematic plan of Okladnikov's 1950 excavations reconstructed from his notes in  
 71 Lbova et al. (2008: 34–36, Figures 9 and 11) and adapted by PH. Period assignments shown are as  
 72 determined in this study. The relation between the two excavation areas is unclear.



73  
 74

75 Gerasimov worked at Fofanovo again as part of M.P. Griaznov’s 1959 “Expedition to Lake  
 76 Baikal”, a large archaeological operation organized in association with the construction of a dam on  
 77 the Angara River in Irkutsk. The goal of the expedition was to protect archaeological sites  
 78 potentially endangered by the expected rise of Lake Baikal’s water level. Gerasimov excavated a  
 79 total of 41 graves in “Punkt II”, published in a short report by Gerasimov and Chernykh (1975; see  
 80 also Lbova et al. 2008: 195–200). Roughly 30 years later, between 1987 and 1996, V.P. Konev  
 81 undertook a few fieldwork campaigns and excavated 17 graves, 10 in “Punkt I” and 7 in “Punkt II”  
 82 (Lbova et al., 2008). The skeletal materials from the 1959 to 1996 excavations were not sampled for  
 83 this study.

84 A total of 107 graves was excavated and documented at Fofanovo between 1931 and 1996  
 85 (Table 5) – albeit with variable scholarly rigour – of which 97 have been summarized by Lbova et  
 86 al. (2008: 189–203). In addition, it is likely that a number of graves have eroded away without any  
 87 documentation. Fofanovo is the largest multi-component middle Holocene hunter–gatherer  
 88 cemetery known thus far in Trans-Baikal, perhaps even exceeding in size the largest cemeteries  
 89 from Cis-Baikal, such as Lokomotiv in Irkutsk on the Angara or Shamanka II in the southwest  
 90 corner of Lake Baikal (Bazaliiskii, 2010). However, unlike Cis-Baikal’s Middle-Holocene  
 91 cemeteries, Fofanovo has so far received very little attention from western researchers.

93 **Table S1:** Details of the excavations conducted at Fofanovo (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975;  
 94 Lbova et al., 2008) and the number of burials successfully analysed for radiocarbon dating and  
 95 stable isotope analyses in this study.

Fieldwork director	Excavation years	Number of excavated graves	Cemetery area	Number of burials successfully analysed
Okladnikov	1926	?	Punkt I	
Gerasimov	1931, 1934–1936	10	Punkt II?	7
Okladnikov	1948	19	Punkt II	5
Okladnikov	1950	20	Punkt II	8
Gerasimov	1959	41	Punkt II	
Konev	1987–1989	10	Punkt I	
Konev	1996, 1996	7	Punkt II	
<b>Total</b>		<b>107</b>		<b>20</b>

97

### 98 *S1.2. Typological chronology*

99 Little is known about the material collected by Okladnikov in 1926 and again in 1948, and  
 100 Gerasimov did not leave behind any typochronological assessment of the material he acquired  
 101 through his fieldwork in 1931 and 1934–36. Neither did he comment on the 1930’s excavations in a  
 102 later article dedicated to his 1959 excavations (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975).

103 The graves excavated by Okladnikov in 1950 received only very brief typochronological  
 104 evaluation in his field notes without much justification (Lbova et al., 2008: 235). He attributed  
 105 Graves 1–11, 13, 16, and 20 to the EBA Glazkovo mortuary tradition, Grave 17 to Glazkovo or  
 106 Late Bronze Age (LBA) Shivera mortuary traditions, and Grave 12 possibly to Kitoi. However, this  
 107 last assignment was annotated with a “?” mark, apparently believing that in the absence of most  
 108 Kitoi diagnostic characteristics, the presence of only red ochre warranted caution. Clearly, he had  
 109 more doubts with regards to Grave 18 (with no grave goods) and Grave 19 (with beads only), as  
 110 these were omitted from his classification.

111 Chronological position of the graves excavated by Gerasimov in 1959 was discussed in  
 112 more detail in his later paper dedicated to this cemetery (Gerasimov and Chernykh, 1975). Based on  
 113 stratigraphic evidence and typological criteria, three chronological groups were proposed:

- 114 • **Group 1:** Graves 1–7 (n=7), roughly synchronous with the Kitoi mortuary tradition on the  
 115 Angara. Six graves contained single interments and one (Gr. 7) had seven, some of which

116 were placed in the head-to-toe position. All graves had copious amounts of red ochre.  
117 Individuals were usually buried on their backs with legs tightly flexed in different ways. Five  
118 burials in Grave 7 had missing skulls in a fashion similar to that known from the large Kitoi  
119 cemetery of Lokomotiv on the Angara. Grave goods were not very numerous and included  
120 boar tusks and red deer canine pendants, musk-deer canines, marmot incisors, mother-of-pearl  
121 beads and blades, daggers with microblades and blades, and flakes.

122 • **Group 2:** Graves 8–36 (n=29), generally synchronous with the Glazkovo mortuary tradition  
123 on the Angara. In all graves with well-preserved skeletal remains, the burials were laid out in  
124 the extended supine position with heads pointing E, upstream on the Selenga River. The grave  
125 goods included a broad range of lithic objects (arrowheads of different shapes, scrapers,  
126 retouched flakes, large scrapers [скребла], knives on blade-flakes, spears or spear-shaped  
127 knives, drills and perforators, flakes and micro-flakes, pestles, flakers, sinkers and others),  
128 bone or antler objects (harpoons, daggers, perforators and points, needles and needle boxes,  
129 fishhooks, arrowheads, spoons, and others), bone or antler ornaments (red deer teeth, boar  
130 tusks, and pendants), animal bones, fragments of clay pots with rounded, pointed or flat  
131 bottoms all with different kinds of surface decoration, and some bronze objects (knives,  
132 needles, an awl, and a fishhook).

133 • **Group 3:** Graves 37–41 (n=5), dating to the Iron Age Stone Cist Culture (культура  
134 плиточных могил), and hence outside the scope of this study.

135 At the time of Gerasimov and Chernykh's (1975) chronological assessment, Kitoi was generally  
136 believed to date to the Late Neolithic (LN), thus directly preceding Glazkovo (Okladnikov, 1950;  
137 1955). Nevertheless, Gerasimov doubted a Kitoi–Glazkovo continuity, as the substantial  
138 stratigraphic separation between the levels from which Group 1 and Group 2 graves were excavated  
139 suggested a major temporal gap between them. This view was consistent with his critique, based on  
140 the human craniological data, of the Kitoi's chronological position in the Okladnikov model of Cis-  
141 Baikal Middle Holocene culture history expressed by Gerasimov previously (1955).

142 Lastly, the 17 graves excavated by Konev clearly associate with Gerasimov and Chernykh's  
143 (1975) Group 1. Due to the similarities with the Kitoi mortuary tradition displayed by Group 1, it is  
144 now assigned a much older chronological position (i.e., Early Neolithic) than assumed by  
145 Okladnikov and others (Weber 1995), as has been confirmed by the extensive program of  
146 radiocarbon dating which started in the late 1980's in Russia (Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii, 1989)  
147 and continued in the West from the late 1990's (Weber et al., 2006; Weber et al., 2016a; Weber et  
148 al., 2020).

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## 151 **S2. A Note on Comparing Radiocarbon Dates**

152 It must be kept in mind that neither the AMS radiocarbon dates from Weber et al. (2020) nor the  
153 Mamonova and Sulerzhitskii (1989) radiocarbon dates are directly and fully comparable with the  
154 new Fofanovo dates. While the utility of the 1989 Russian dates is limited by the problems  
155 mentioned previously (see Section 3.1), the issues related to comparison with the large set of Cis-  
156 Baikal AMS dates are more nuanced. Although all the new dates from Fofanovo and Cis-Baikal  
157 datasets have been corrected for an old carbon effect, the subsequent processing of the corrected  
158 dates was different. After correction, Cis-Baikal dates were subjected to Bayesian modelling using  
159 two different distributions—trapezoidal and uniform—generating two sets of calibrated dates BP  
160 (Weber et al., 2016a; 2016b), neither of which are available for the new Fofanovo dates, which  
161 were only corrected and then calibrated without being modelled, as this would be premature given  
162 the small number of dates for each period (cf. Figure 5). Therefore, the new, corrected Fofanovo  
163 dates can only be directly compared with the corrected Cis-Baikal dates and the mean calibrated  
164 dates BP. Thus, placing the Fofanovo dates within the periods defined by the Bayesian analysis for  
165 Cis-Baikal requires caution. While the difference between unmodeled and modelled mean  
166 calibrated dates BP in the middle of each distribution (i.e., period) is usually negligible, the  
167 difference between the two can be as high as 200 years at the tails. Additionally, the difference

168 tends to be larger for the dates produced by the uniform distribution model. To keep the matter  
169 simple, the current study references only the mean calibrated dates BP (cf. Table 9) for Fofanovo  
170 and the Cis-Baikal cemeteries (Weber et al., 2020). This has no effect on the present analysis,  
171 which is the first publication of what is expected to be a comprehensive examination of all  
172 Fofanovo materials still available for research. Once available, a larger dataset of Fofanovo  
173 radiocarbon dates will be modelled employing the same approach as for the Cis-Baikal datasets.  
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