

New Bronze Age civilisation discovered in Russian Caucasus

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A site of excavations located in the mountains south of Kislovodsk, pictured in 2009. Traces of a previously unknown Bronze Age civilisation have been discovered in the peaks of Russia's Caucasus Mountains thanks to aerial photographs taken 40 years ago, researchers said

Traces of a previously unknown Bronze Age civilisation have been discovered in the peaks of Russia's Caucasus Mountains thanks to aerial photographs taken 40 years ago, researchers said Monday.

"We have discovered a civilisation dating from the 16th to the 14th centuries BC, high in the mountains south of Kislovodsk," in Russia's North Caucasus region, Andrei Belinsky, the head of a joint Russian-German expedition that has been investigating the region for five years, told AFP.

He said researchers had discovered stone foundations, some up to a metre (3.3 feet) high, at nearly 200 sites, all "visibly constructed according to the same architectural plan, with an oval courtyard in the centre, and connected by roads."

The sites are spread over about 100 kilometres (60 miles) between the Kuban river in the west and the city of Nalchik in the east.

The decorations and forms of bronze items found in the area indicate the civilisation is linked to the Kuban civilisation, which was discovered at the end of the 19th century at the foot of Mount Kazbek and is known for its artistic bronze works.

The discovery of this older [civilisation](#) "was possible thanks especially to old black-and-white photographs taken in the Soviet Union," said Dmitry Korobov, another participant in the expedition.



An aerial picture approximately taken in 1970 shows a stone structure located in the mountains, south of Kislovodsk. Traces of a previously unknown Bronze Age civilisation have been discovered in the peaks of Russia's Caucasus Mountains

thanks to aerial photographs taken 40 years ago, researchers said Monday.

Using modern research methods such as global positioning systems, the [archeologists](#) were able to use the photographs to uncover the sites, which are at a height of between 1,400 metres (4,620 feet) and 2,400 metres (7,920 feet). Valentina Kozenkova, an archeologist specialising in the Caucasus at the Russian Academy of Sciences, said the discovery was of historical importance.

"This is a discovery without parallel, notably for the number of sites found in the same place," she said.

"The impact of this work is even more important because these 200 sites are in very good condition thanks to their location," she said.

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