

Copper: When and Where?

Illustration

Here is a compilation of data redrawn from the book: *E.N. Chernykh, (Inst. Archeology, Academy of Science, Moscow): "Ancient Metallurgy in the USSR; The early metal age" Cambridge University Press, 1992*. Encircled in red are areas / time ranges that might be seen as culturally connected. Yellow stars indicate places mentioned in some detail in the Hyperscript.

While this collection of data is for sure neither complete nor always correct, it does illustrate some persistent general trends.

- Nothing much was going on before about 4 500 BC, even in the "advanced" regions, where native copper was known for thousands of years by then.
- Regional differences are large.
- There is an "arsenic copper" pocket in the "South-east" before the coming of bronze.
- Moving from occasional working with native copper to first copper smelting took more than 2 000 years.
- Early copper smelting cultures ("Varna") disappeared, leaving a gap of several 100 years before the technique reappeared in the general area.
- Copper smelting on a large scale, including alloying (first with arsenic, than with tin) appeared around 3 200 BC ("**Early Bronze Age**") or about 4 000 years after the first use of native copper.

