

Bug-Ochakov Region

Stop 1/1. Usatovo

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The late Palaeolithic site was discovered by Taras Maksimyuk who has collected over 1,000 flint artifacts (scrapers, burins, inserts of points of spears and arrows) on the right bank of Khadzhibeisky Liman, 200 m south of the contemporary village of Usatovo next to the modern cemetery (Lagodovs'ka, 1947; Patokova, 1979). The site is awaiting excavation.

The next occupation phase at this locality is referred to as the Usatovo Culture, a term known worldwide as the latest phase of the Tripolye Culture phenomenon that developed in the Pontic Steppes. This culture was discovered and excavated by Boltenko (1957) on the plateau of the eastern bank of Khadzhibeisky Liman. Its principal complex consists of settlement, an adjacent barrow, and non-barrow cemeteries dated to the end of 3-2 millennia BCE. The economy of the Eneolithic inhabitants of Usatovo was based on plough land cultivation and stock raising (cattle, sheep, goat, pig, etc.) and horse breeding, with a significant proportion of products obtained from hunting, gathering, fishing, and collecting of molluscs (*Mytilus galloprovincialis*, *Cardium edule*, and *Nassa*). The Usatovo settlement shows relatively highly developed domestic (e.g., weaving, sewing and needlework, leather processing, household article production) and communal cottage (e.g., pottery making, metal processing, stone masonry) production. A series of ritual objects (female statuettes, animal images, symbols on pottery) and a ritual place devoted to the bull cult found there enabled archaeologists to reconstruct a highly developed ideological system based on complicated ideas about life and death, a fertility cult, and nature (the Sun) worship. A series of archaeological sites referable to later historical periods was also detected around the village of Usatovo, most important of which are a settlement of the 4th-3rd century BCE covering about 2 hectares and a settlement dating to the beginning of the Christian Era.