



**DEPARTMENT OF ARCHAEOLOGY  
EVENING LECTURES**



# Chronicles of a Connected Frontier:

The Southern Anatolian Plateau between Phrygia  
and the Mediterranean in the First Millennium BCE\*

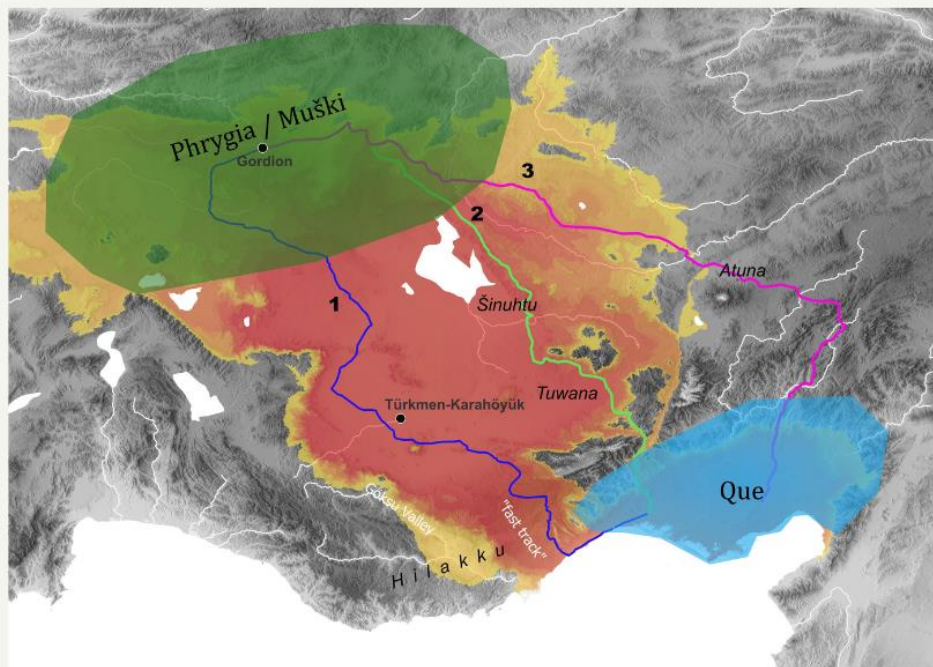
by **Dr. Alvise Matessi (University of Verona)**

November 6th, 2024

17:30

H-232

\*GE Points will be given.



### Abstract

While the concepts of "frontier" and "connectivity" have each been important in archaeology and anthropology, they are rarely studied together. This is probably because these terms seem to refer to different types of spaces: frontiers are usually identified with the edges or borders of ancient societies, whereas aspects relevant to connectivity, such as routes and exchange networks, are often studied in relation to core institutions. Focusing on the southern Anatolian Plateau during the first millennium BCE, I will show that connectivity and frontier interactions are strongly intertwined. Through the combined analysis of historical records on the local political geography, ceramic frameworks, monumentality and GIS data on route networks I will argue that strong connectivity can actually be crucial to create frontier zones. Additionally, the frontier can sometimes overlap with a political center, where leaders draw on the diverse cultural influences characteristic of border zones to legitimize their power.



#### **Bio**

I hold a PhD in Ancient Western Asian Studies from the University of Pavia, obtained in 2014 with a dissertation on the political landscapes of Hittite Anatolia. My research interests encompass several aspects of the archaeology and history of Ancient Western Asia, including frontier studies, material culture, linguistic interactions, interregional connectivity and regional identities. By integrating philological and archaeological approaches to the ancient world, I investigate different contexts and periods, but my main focus is on the Bronze and Iron Ages in Anatolia and Syria. I am author of the book *Frontiers, Territories and the Making of Hittite Political Landscape*, now in press for De Gruyter in the series *Studies in Ancient Near Eastern Records*, and co-author of *Contacts of Languages and Peoples in the Hittite and Post-Hittite World. Vol. 1 The Bronze Age and Hatti*, published by Brill for the series *Ancient Languages and Civilizations*. Since 2006, I have been taking part to several archaeological projects in Syria and Türkiye, lastly as a senior researcher to the Türkmen Karahöyük excavation directed by Michele Massa. I have been Visiting Professor at the Northeast Normal University (Changchun, China), and fellow of the Istituto Italiano per la Storia Antica in Rome. I have been postdoctoral researcher at ANAMED, the University of Verona and Bilkent University. Currently, along with Michele Massa, I co-direct the project 'LoTar: Locating Tarhuntassa', funded by the Archaeological Institute of America (AIA) and the University of Verona. The project aims to identify the second capital of the Hittite Empire through chemical analyses of clay sealings and cuneiform tablets.