

## Interview with Dr. Gonca Dardeniz Arıkan IEMA Visiting Professor

*Dr. Gonca Dardeniz Arıkan completed a PhD at the Koç University Department of Archaeology and History of Art in 2017 with a dissertation entitled “Vitreous Material Crafting in the Second Millennium B.C.: Glass, Faience and Frit Production at Tell Atchana, Ancient Alalakh.” Since then, she has been a post-doctoral fellow at the Research Center of Anatolian Civilizations (at Koç University) and a research fellow at the Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. Her current research focuses on understanding pyrotechnology and cross-craft integrations in Anatolia, with a special focus on the Halys Basin in Central and North-Central Anatolia. This research is funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK).*

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**How did you come to be part of IEMA at the University at Buffalo? What were you doing before you came to be here?**

After I had finished my dissertation, I continued my research as post-doctoral fellow at the Research Center of Anatolian Civilizations (Koç University). Last year, I was the honorary research fellow at the Department of Archaeology, Classics and Egyptology at the University of Liverpool. Both of these fellowships contributed extensively to my academic career; I published my research while I was developing new projects.

My current project, which has been funded by the Scientific and Technological Research Council of Turkey (TUBITAK)—the equivalent of the NSF in the USA—is a product of those two fellowships. IEMA at the University at Buffalo with its resources and wider network of academics from various disciplines provides the best research environment to conduct the project and make it a success.

**What is your current research project or the current focus of your work?**

My research focuses on understanding pyrotechnology and cross-craft integrations in Anatolia, with a special focus on the Halys Basin in Central and North-Central Anatolia. I examine vitreous material technologies and their possible integration to metallurgy of copper. I have limited the time frame from the end of the third millennium B.C. until the mid- second millennium B.C., which covers the period known as the end of the Early Bronze Age (EBA III) until the end of the Middle Bronze Age (MBA) in Anatolia. This period is particularly interesting as Anatolia went through dynamic social and political changes, which affected the organization, production and exchange of metals and vitreous materials. of metals and vitreous materials.

By using complementary methods of archaeology and archaeometry, I am trying to develop our understanding on the vitrified materials and their cross craft integration to metallurgy of copper and its alloys by examining resource procurement, manipulation of raw materials, technical know-how of artisans, and integrated and multifunctional crafts before the dominating culture of the Hittite Empire started at the second half of the second millennium B.C.

**Whose work has had the most influence on you own? Who has inspired you as a scholar?**

My research is two-fold as archaeology and archaeological science come together. There have been a number of people in both fields who have inspired my research. Foremost, Belkıs Dinçol, who is a Turkish Hittitologist encouraged me to research Anatolian archaeology and mentored me through ways in which I have dwelled into history, archaeology and art history without framing myself with disciplinary divisions. Dominique Collon is my John Berger; she showed me ‘ways of seeing’ and how to look at things. Julian Henderson, one of my PhD advisors, has impact on my interdisciplinary research on vitreous materials. As for theory of organization of societies and economies, I regularly come back to Timothy Earle and Fernand Braudel.

**So far, what has been the most rewarding part of joining an organization like IEMA? Have there been any challenges?**

The most rewarding aspects have been researching in a vivid academic environment, giving lectures and establishing connections to the greater scholarly community in the USA. Even though it has been just three months since I arrived, I have been invited to other universities to give lectures. This is rewarding as it gives me the opportunity to disseminate my research. I have not encountered any challenges yet

except several challenging conferences approaching at which I am going to present!

**What contributions do you hope to make to IEMA as a visiting professor?**

I have the chance to meet several graduate students and discuss their research, all of which are truly inspiring. Their interest in archaeological science and Anatolian Archaeology has been energizing thus I hope to continue my interaction with graduate and undergraduate students, who would like to reach out for feedback or criticism for their research. I am about to start a reading group with interested graduate students, where we will read and discuss Anatolian Bronze Ages.

**What advice do you have for students looking towards careers in this field?  
How can students use organizations like IEMA to their advantage?**

They should be persistent and have the willingness to persevere. Organizing ideas, framing projects, submitting work for publications/presentations as well as participating in field work might well be a hurdle for both graduate and undergraduate students. I advise them never lose their curiosity for their research. Being open to feedback and sharing of knowledge helps a lot.

Regarding all this challenges, IEMA, with its research structure as well as its support and participation in projects serves as a great opportunity for students who look forward to a career in this field. Annual symposium and lectures along with the access to field and laboratory projects are favorable circumstances to explore how much still needs to be done!