

Tanner Z. Kovach

Postdoctoral Fellow, Michigan Society of Fellows
Assistant Professor, Department of Anthropology
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I. Education

2026	Ph.D., Anthropology, University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
2020	M.A., Anthropology, <i>high pass</i> , University of Connecticut, Storrs, CT
2017	B.A., Anthropology, <i>magna cum laude</i> , New York University, New York City, NY

II. Dissertation

2026	Kovach, T.Z. Investigating the Origins and Evolution of the Upper Paleolithic in the Southern Caucasus. University of Connecticut, Storrs.
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III. Academic Positions Held

2026–present	<i>Postdoctoral Fellow</i> , Michigan Society of Fellows, University of Michigan
2026–present	<i>Assistant Professor</i> , Anthropology Department, University of Michigan
2025–present	<i>Co-director</i> , Field School in Armenian Prehistory, University of Connecticut
2025	<i>Instructor of Record</i> , Anthropology Department, University of Connecticut-Avery Point
2018–2025	<i>Graduate Assistant</i> , Anthropology Department, University of Connecticut

IV. Research Interests

- The Middle and Upper Paleolithic of the southern Caucasus and broader Eurasia
- Interactions between *Homo sapiens* and Neanderthals
- Lithic technology
- Quantitative methods
- Evolutionary approaches to behavioral change

V. Teaching Experience

Instructor of Record – University of Connecticut, Avery Point

ANTH 1500: Great Discoveries in Archaeology (Fall 2025)

Teaching Assistant – University of Connecticut, Storrs

ANTH 1000: Peoples and Cultures of the World (Fall 2018; Spring 2019; Spring 2020; Fall 2023)

ANTH 1000W: Peoples and Cultures of the World (Spring 2021; Fall 2021; Fall 2024)

ANTH 1001W: Anthropology Through Film (Spring 2025)

ANTH 1006: Introduction to Anthropology (Spring 2023)

ANTH 1500: Great Discoveries in Archaeology (Spring 2024)

ANTH 2501: Introduction to Archaeology (Fall 2019; Fall 2020; Fall 2023; Fall 2024)

ANTH 3720-001: Archaeological and Forensic Science Lab Methods: Data Analysis with R (Spring 2023)

ANTH 3990H: Archaeological Field School in Armenian Prehistory (Summer 2019; Summer 2025)

Research Assistant (with teaching duties) – University of Connecticut, Storrs

ANTH 2600: Microscopy in Applied Archaeobotany Research (Spring 2022; Spring 2023)

VI. Publications

Journal Articles (Peer-Reviewed)

- 2026 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Petrosyan, A., Wilkinson, K.N., Frahm, E., Raczynski-Henk, Y., Gill, J.P., Sherriff, J.E., Gasparyan, B., Avetisyan, H.G., Gnuni, A.V., Adler, D.S. Small tools, big moves: Navigating the Upper Paleolithic landscape of Armenia with new data from Solak-1. *Journal of Paleolithic Archaeology* 9: 1. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41982-025-00248-9>
- 2025 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Petrosyan, A., Wilkinson, K.N., Raczynski-Henk, Y., Rodrigues, K., Frahm, E., Beverly, E., Gill, J.P., Sherriff, J.E., Gasparyan, B., Avetisyan, H.G., Gnuni, A.V., Adler, D.S. Contextualizing the Upper Paleolithic of the Armenian Highlands: New data from Solak-1, central Armenia. *Journal of Human Evolution* 199: 103632. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jhevol.2024.103632>
- 2025 Wilkinson, K.N., Allué, E., Armitage, S.J., Arsdale A., Bar-Oz, G., Brittingham, A., Gasparyan, B., Gill, J.P., Glauberman, P., Higham, T.F.G., Frahm, E., **Kovach, T.Z.**,..., Adler, D.S. The Geoarchaeology, chronology and environment of Lusakert-1, a late Middle Palaeolithic Rockshelter (Kotayk, Armenia). *Quaternary Environments and Humans* 3(1): 100054. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.qgeh.2024.100054>
- 2025 Adler, D.S., Cullen, V.C., Wilkinson, K.N., Gasparyan, B., Tushabramishvili, N., Griffith, P., Blockley, S., Mallol, C., Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.**, and Smith, V. Not by Chemistry Alone: Tephrostratigraphy, Correlation, and Context at Two Palaeolithic Sites in the south Caucasus and Armenia Highlands. *Quaternary Science Reviews* 356: 109292. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.quascirev.2025.109292>
- 2023 **Kovach, T.Z.** and Gill, J.P. School of Rocks: An Optimal Transmission Time Investment Framework for Lithic Technology. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory* 31: 251–286. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10816-023-09602-z>

Special Issues

- 2026 Falcucci, A.; **Kovach T.Z.** (Eds.). Toward an Integration of Quantitative Approaches to Lithic Analysis. *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*.

Journal Articles in Preparation

- In prep. **Kovach, T.Z.**, et al. Patterns of continuity and change during the Middle to Upper Paleolithic Transition at Ortvale Klde, Georgia. For submission to *PLOS One*. [Dissertation chapter]
- In prep. **Kovach, T.Z.**, et al. Multivariate analysis of laminar technologies during the Early Upper Paleolithic: Implications for the origins of the Upper Paleolithic in the southern Caucasus. For submission to *Journal of Archaeological Science*. [Dissertation chapter]

VII. Service

University Service

- 2025 Graduate Student Panelist: Professional Development in Anthropology - U. of Connecticut
- 2021–2025 Graduate Admissions Peer Mentoring Program: Department of Anthropology - U. of Connecticut
- 2020 Graduate Student Panelist: Institute for the Recruitment of Teachers - U. of Connecticut

Ad Hoc Manuscript Referee

- 2025 *Journal of Archaeological Method and Theory*

VIII. Funding

Research Funding

2024	<i>National Science Foundation</i> . Doctoral Dissertation Research Improvement Grant. Adler, D.S., P.I., Kovach, T.Z. , co-P.I., Investigating the Origins and Evolution of the Upper Paleolithic in the Southern Caucasus	\$31,221
2024	<i>The Leakey Foundation</i> . Research Grant. Kovach, T.Z. , P.I., Adler, D.S. co-P.I. Investigating the Middle-Upper Paleolithic Transition in the Southern Caucasus	\$19,400
2024	<i>The Leakey Foundation</i> . Research Grant. Gill, J.P., P.I., Kovach, T.Z. , co-P.I., et al. Pleistocene Behavioral Landscapes of Northern Armenia	\$30,000
2024	<i>The Rust Family Foundation</i> . Archaeology Grant. Gill, J.P., P.I., Kovach, T.Z. , co-P.I., et al. Pleistocene Behaviors in the Debed River Valley of Northern Armenia	\$8,652
2023	<i>Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut</i> . Summer Research Fellowship	\$3,880
2020	<i>Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut</i> . Summer Research Fellowship	\$4,250
2016	<i>College of Arts and Sciences, New York University</i> . Dean's Undergraduate Research Scholarship	\$1,000
2016	<i>Department of Anthropology, New York University</i> . Alumni Undergraduate Travel Award	\$250
2016	<i>Center for Ancient Studies, New York University</i> . Antonina S. Ranieri International Scholars Travel Grant	\$1,000

Conference Travel Funding

2024	<i>Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut</i> . Conference Travel Fund	\$500
2024	<i>Paleoanthropology Society</i> . Travel Grant	\$200
2023	<i>Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut</i> . Conference Travel Fund	\$500
2023	<i>Norian Armenian Programs, University of Connecticut</i> . Travel Grant	\$1080
2022	<i>Department of Anthropology, University of Connecticut</i> . Conference Travel Fund	\$500
2022	<i>Paleoanthropology Society</i> . Travel Grant	\$200

Academic Scholarships and Fellowships

2025	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Department of Anthropology Dissertation Writing Award	\$12,000
2022	<i>Global Affairs, University of Connecticut</i> . Study Abroad Scholarship	\$2,500
2022	<i>University of Tübingen</i> . TüConn Doctoral Fellowship	€4,095
2022	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Jorgensen Fellowship	\$20,000
2021	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Jorgensen Fellowship	\$20,000
2020	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Jorgensen Fellowship	\$20,000
2019	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Jorgensen Fellowship	\$20,000
2018	<i>University of Connecticut</i> . Jorgensen Fellowship	\$20,000
2016	<i>New York University</i> . Henry and Sylvia Kadish Scholarship	\$1,000
2016	<i>New York University</i> . College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship	\$35,510
2015	<i>New York University</i> . College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship	\$35,510
2014	<i>New York University</i> . Global Pathways Scholarship	\$2,900
2014	<i>New York University</i> . Arthur and Eva Glass Scholarship	\$2,000
2014	<i>New York University</i> . College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship	\$35,510
2013	<i>New York University</i> . College of Arts and Sciences Scholarship	\$35,510

IX. Conferences and Presentations

Professional Presentations

- 2026 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Adler, D.S. Testing Hypotheses for the Origins and Relatedness of Early Upper Paleolithic Laminar Technologies in the Southern Caucasus. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting for the Society of American Archaeology, 2026. San Francisco, CA.
- 2026 Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.**, Frahm, E., Gasparyan, B., Adler, D.S. Realized to Potential Utility: Integrating 3D Measures of Retouch at the Late Middle Paleolithic Site of Lusakert-1, Armenia. Paper to be presented at the annual meeting for the Society of American Archaeology, 2026. San Francisco, CA.
- 2025 Gill, J.P., Sherriff, J.E., Rodrigues, K., Haydosyan, H., **Kovach, T.Z.**, Jarl, J., Wilkinson, K.N., Gasparyan, B., Adler, D.S. Pleistocene Behavioral Landscapes of Northern Armenia Project. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Paleoanthropology Society, 2025. Denver, CO.
- 2025 Adler, D.S., Allué, E., Bar-Oz, G., Blockley, Brittingham, A., Frahm, E., Gasparyan, B., Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.**,..., Yeshurun, R. Recent Discoveries at Lusakert-1, a Middle Palaeolithic Rockshelter in the Armenian Highlands. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Paleoanthropology Society, 2025. Denver, CO.
- 2024 **Kovach, T.Z.** Beyond Extinction: Modelling Diverse Neanderthal-*H. sapiens* Interactions. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Paleoanthropology Society, 2024. Los Angeles, CA.
- 2023 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Raczynski-Henk, Y., Frahm, E.; Petrosyan, A., Adler, D.S. Organization of technology at Solak-1, an Upper Paleolithic open-air site in the Armenian Highlands. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society for American Archaeology, 2023. Portland, OR.
- 2023 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Gill, J.P. Complexity, Transmission, and Lithic Technology. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Society for Social Studies of Science, 2023. Honolulu, HI.
- 2023 Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.** Schoolhouse Rock: Transmission Time Investment and Pleistocene Lithic Technology. Paper presented at the 8th Annual Northwest Evolution, Ecology and Human Behavior Symposium. Boise, ID.
- 2022 **Kovach, T.Z.**, Raczynski-Henk, Y., Frahm, E.; Gill, J.P., Wilkinson, K.N., Petrosyan, A., Beverly, E., Gasparyan, B., Adler, D.S. Preliminary Lithic Technological Analysis of Solak-1, an Open-air Upper Paleolithic Site in the Armenian Highlands. Poster presented at the annual meeting for the Paleoanthropology Society, 2022. Denver, CO.
- 2022 Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.** Passive Loss or Adaptive Simplification? An Optimal Transmission Framework for Investigating Lithic Technological Change. Paper presented at the annual meeting for the Paleoanthropology Society, 2022. Denver, CO.

Conference Sessions Chaired

- 2026 *Toward an Integration of Quantitative Approaches in Lithic Analysis*. Society for American Archaeology 91st annual meeting, with A. Falcucci.
- 2023 *Pleistocene Landscapes and Hominin Behavior in the Armenian Highlands*. Society for American Archaeology 88th annual meeting, with J.P. Gill.

Invited Talks

- 2024 Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.**, Sherriff, J.E., Haydosyan, H., Adler, D.S., Wilkinson, K.N., Gasparyan, B. Pleistocene Behavioral Landscapes of Northern Armenia Project. Paper presented at the Denver Chapter–Colorado Archaeology Society Lecture Series. January 2024.
- 2022 Gill, J.P., **Kovach, T.Z.** Passive Loss or Adaptive Simplification? An Optimal Transmission Framework for Investigating Lithic Technological Change. Talk given to the Computational Archaeology Laboratory Meeting of The Hebrew University of Jerusalem.
- 2022 **Kovach, T.Z.** Solak-1 and the Upper Paleolithic of the Southern Caucasus and Armenian Highlands. Talk given to the Colloquium for the Department of Early Prehistory and Quaternary Ecology of the Institute of Pre- and Protohistory and Medieval Archaeology, University of Tübingen. November 2022.

X. Research Projects

Field Projects

2022–Present

Ortvale Klde, Georgia (Co-PI): *Excavation, Lithic Analysis, aDNA Sampling*

- Analyzed Middle and Upper Paleolithic lithic assemblages from Ortvale Klde rockshelter, located in western Georgia. Funded by National Science Foundation and Leakey Foundation grants awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** and D.S. Adler
- Assisted in the sampling of the site for sediment aDNA and micromorphology, as well as the collection of surface and exposed artifacts during sampling. Funded by Department of Anthropology (UConn) Summer Research Fellowship awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** and Office of the Vice Provost of Research (UConn) awarded to D.S. Adler

2021–Present

Solak-1, Armenia (Co-PI): *Lithic Analysis, OSL and Geoarchaeological Sampling*

- Analyzed lithic assemblages from the Upper Paleolithic open-air site of Solak-1 in central Armenia. Funded by Department of Anthropology (UConn) Summer Research Fellowship, as well as National Science Foundation and Leakey Foundation grants awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** and D.S. Adler
- Collected samples for OSL dating and geoarchaeological analyses
- Surveyed the plateau on which the site is located to recover surface artifacts and document the extent of the site and other potential sites nearby

2019–2025

Ptghavan IV, Armenia (Co-PI): *Excavation, Data Collection, Lithic Analysis*

- Excavated the Middle Paleolithic open-air site of Ptghavan IV in northern Armenia. Funded from 2019–2022 by the Leakey Foundation, awarded to D.S. Adler, K.N. Wilkinson, and J.E. Sherriff; from 2024–2026 by Leakey Foundation and Rust Family Foundation awarded to J.P. Gill (P.I.), **T.Z. Kovach** (co-P.I.), et al.
- Operated Leica total station to document the 3D coordinates of individual finds and features, and managed data collection and artifact databases using New Plot software
- Surveyed local caves and rockshelters for potential Paleolithic deposits
- Analyzed Chalcolithic lithic artifacts recovered during excavation
- Supervised undergraduate student excavators as co-director of the University of Connecticut Archaeological Field School in Armenian Prehistory

2022

Ptghavan V, Armenia (Site Director)

- Conducted the test excavation of Ptghavan V, an open-air site located in northern Armenia, as part of a Leakey Foundation funded project awarded to D.S. Adler, K.N. Wilkinson, and J.E. Sherriff
- Established site grid, operated Leica total station, excavated test units, and analyzed recovered artifacts

2017

La Ferrassie, France (Excavator)

- Excavated Upper Paleolithic layers at the site of La Ferrassie in the Dordogne region of France under site director Laurent Chiotti
- Operated Leica total station to document the 3D coordinates of individual finds and features
- Utilized New Plot software to record and analyze 3D plotted artifacts and features
- Cleaned, labeled, and catalogued lithic and osseous artifacts

2016

Sous-le-Roc, France (Excavator)

- Excavated Aurignacian through historic deposits at the site of Sous-le-Roc, a large rockshelter located in the Dordogne region of France under site director Dr. Randall White
- Utilized total station technology to document the 3D coordinates of individual finds and features
- Cleaned, labeled, and catalogued lithic and osseous artifacts in the field lab

Laboratory and Collections-Based Projects

2025–Present *Dzudzuana Cave, Georgia: Lithic Analysis*

- Analyzed Early Upper Paleolithic assemblage from Dzudzuana Cave, located in western Georgia. Funded by National Science Foundation and Leakey Foundation grants awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** and D.S. Adler

2023–Present *Lusakert-1, Armenia: Lithic Analysis*

- Analyzed several lithic assemblages from the Middle Paleolithic cave site of Lusakert-1, located in central Armenia. Funded by Department of Anthropology (UConn) Summer Research Fellowship, as well as National Science Foundation and Leakey Foundation grants awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** and D.S. Adler

2022–2023 *Morphometric Analysis of Armenian Grape Seeds: Quantitative Analysis*

- Conducted morphometric analyses of archaeological and modern grape seeds to study the origin and variability of early wine production in Armenia, under the direction of Dr. Alexia Smith, UConn.

2017 *Abri Pataud, France: Lithic Analysis Internship*

- Analyzed Protoaurignacian and Early Aurignacian lithic artifacts from the sites of Sous-le-Roc, Abri Pataud, and La Ferrassie under the direction of Dr. Laurent Chiotti, Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, Paris. Funded by the Dean's Undergraduate Research Scholarship awarded to **T.Z. Kovach** as part of my honors thesis research.

2016 *Faunal Analysis Laboratory: Student Researcher*

- Sorted, catalogued, and analyzed prehistoric faunal remains from Türkiye and Ireland in the zooarchaeology lab of Dr. Pamela Crabtree, NYU.

2015 *Primate Dental Cast Collections 3D Scanning Project: Student Researcher*

- Utilized Next-Engine technology and GeoMagic to 3D scan and process primate dental casts belonging to the dental anthropology lab of Dr. Shara Bailey, NYU.

XI. References

Daniel Adler, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, U. of Connecticut. 354 Mansfield Road, Unit 1176. Storrs, CT 06269-2176. (860) 436-0518. daniel.adler@uconn.edu

Natalie Munro, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, U. of Connecticut. 354 Mansfield Road, Unit 1176. Storrs, CT 06269-2176. (860) 486-0090. natalie.munro@uconn.edu

Christian Tryon, Ph.D., Professor of Anthropology, Department of Anthropology, U. of Connecticut. 354 Mansfield Road, Unit 1176. Storrs, CT 06269-2176. (860) 486-2137. christian.tryon@uconn.edu