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THE MAKING OF BRONZE AGE EURASIA

This book provides an overview of Bronze Age societies of Western Eurasia through an investigation of the archaeological record. Philip L. Kohl outlines the long-term processes and patterns of interaction that link these groups together in a shared historical trajectory of development. Interactions took the form of the exchange of raw materials and finished goods, the spread and sharing of technologies, and the movements of peoples from one region to another. Kohl reconstructs economic activities from subsistence practices to the production and exchange of metals and other materials. He also examines long-term processes, such as the development of more mobile forms of animal husbandry, which were based on the introduction and large-scale utilization of oxen-driven wheeled wagons and, subsequently, the domestication and riding of horses; the spread of metalworking technologies and exploitation of new centers of metallurgical production; changes in systems of exchange from those dominated by the movement of luxury goods to those in which materials essential for maintaining and securing the reproduction of the societies participating in the exchange network accompanied and/or supplanted the trade in precious materials; and increasing evidence for militarism and political instabilities as reflected in shifts in settlement patterns, including increases in fortified sites and quantitative and qualitative advances in weaponry. Kohl also argues forcefully that the main task of the archaeologist should be to write culture-history on a spatially and temporally grand scale in an effort to detect large, macrohistorical processes of interaction and shared development.

Philip L. Kohl is Professor of Anthropology and Kathryn W. Davis Professor of Slavic Studies at Wellesley College. He is the author of *The Bronze Age Civilization of Central Asia: Recent Soviet Discoveries*, *Recent Discoveries in Transcaucasia* and coeditor of *Nationalism, Politics and the Practice of Archaeology*.

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EURASIA

PHILIP L. KOHL

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He cast on the fire bronze which is weariless, and tin with it and valuable gold, and silver, and thereafter set forth upon its standard the great anvil, and gripped in one hand the ponderous hammer, while in the other, he grasped the pincers . . .

He made upon it a soft field, the pride of the tilled land, wide and triple-ploughed, with many ploughmen upon it who wheeled their teams at the turn and drove them in either direction . . .

He made upon it a herd of horn-straight oxen. The cattle were wrought of gold and tin, and thronged in speed and with lowing out of the dung of the farmyard to a pasturing place by a sounding river, and beside the moving field of a reed bed . . .

And the renowned smith of the strong arms made on it a meadow large and in a lovely valley for the glimmering sheepflocks, with dwelling places upon it, and covered shelters, and sheepfolds . . .

Then after he had wrought this shield, which was huge and heavy, he wrought for him a corselet brighter than fire in its shining, and wrought him a helmet, massive and fitting close to his temples, lovely and intricate work, and laid a gold top-ridge along it, and out of pliable tin wrought him leg armour.

(Hephaistos makes Achilles' shield and armour; Iliad, Book 18, 474–477, 541–543, 573–576, 587–589, 608–612; translated by R. Lattimore 1967: 388–391)

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ABBREVIATIONS

<i>AJA</i>	<i>American Journal of Archaeology</i> , Boston
<i>AMI</i>	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan</i> , Berlin
<i>EurAnt</i>	<i>Eurasia Antiqua</i> , Berlin
<i>KSIA</i>	<i>Kratkie Soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta Arkheologii Akademii Nauk SSSR</i> (Short Bulletins of the Institute of Archeology, Academy of Sciences of the USSR), Moscow (in Russian)
<i>KSIMK</i>	<i>Kratkie Soobshcheniya o dokladakh i polevykh issledovaniyakh Instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury AN SSSR</i> , Moscow (in Russian)
<i>RA</i>	<i>Rossiiskaya arkheologiya</i> (<i>Russian Archaeology</i>), Moscow (in Russian)

PREFACE

In a sense, this study has been in the “making” since my first field experiences in southeastern Iran in the late 1960s; ideas first germinated decades ago as a graduate student have taken a long time to mature. The conception and initial writing of this narrative began in fall 1999 when I was completing a Humboldt Fellowship at the Eurasien Abteilung, DAI, in Berlin under the sponsorship of H. Parzinger, then Direktor of this division of the German institute. My stay in Berlin was sandwiched in between participation in two international conferences that were seminal for the formulation of many of the ideas in this account. In late August 1999 I had the good fortune of participating in an international conference at Arkaim in the southern Urals, which was organized by G. B. Zdanovich and which now has been published as *Complex Societies of Central Eurasia from the 3rd to the 1st Millennium BC: Regional Specifics in Light of Global Models* (Jones-Bley and Zdanovich 2002). A few months later, in January 2000, I attended a conference held at Cambridge University entitled *Late Prehistoric Exploitation of the Eurasian Steppe*, which was also the title of a book previously published by the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research (Levine, Rassamakin, Kislenko, and Tatarintseva 1999). The papers from this conference were published subsequently in two volumes, both of which are extensively cited in this study: *Ancient Interactions: East and West in Eurasia* (Boyle, Renfrew, and Levine 2002); and *Prehistoric Steppe Adaptation and the Horse* (Levine, Renfrew, and Boyle 2003). What began then as a product of these fruitful experiences has taken an additional five years to complete. A semester sabbatical leave from Wellesley College in fall 2004 proved essential to finish what often seemed like an endless (and, at times, hopeless) project.

Numerous scholars have contributed directly or indirectly to the account presented here. I have relied heavily on the ideas and materials of some of these scholars, while I have queried the interpretations of others. Such agreements and disagreements are inevitable when one attempts to write a prehistory on a macro-scale that is compiled from a necessarily incomplete and at least partially unrepresentative database. Likewise, some of the interpretations presented

here undoubtedly will be accepted by some and rejected by others. That also is natural, and healthy debate should form part of an ongoing scholarly discourse. Inevitably, I have presented the materials and modified the ideas of countless scholars; whether I have done so correctly or incorrectly, I alone am responsible for the interpretations of the data related in this archaeological narrative.

It is simply impossible to acknowledge my debt to every person who has either influenced this study or sharpened my views on what happened in the remote Bronze Age past and how best to account for it. I thank them all but can list only some of them, including T. Akhundov, D. Anthony, E. E. Antipina, R. S. Badalyan, N. Boroffka, S. N. Bratchenko, C. Chataigner, E. N. Chernykh, M. Frachetti, H-P. Francfort, M. S. Gadjiev, M. G. Gadzhiev, B. Hanks, S. Hansen, Y. Hershkovych, F. T. Hiebert, Z. Kikodze, L. B. Kircho, L. N. Koryakova, V. A. Kruc, K. Kh. Kushnareva, E. E. Kuzmina, S. Kuzminykh, C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky, E. Yu. Lebedeva, O. LeComte, M. Levine, K. M. Linduff, Kh. Lkhagvasuren, B. Lyonnet, R. G. Magomedov, M. Mantu, M. I. Martinez-Navarrete, V. M. Masson, R. Meadow, G. Mindiashvili, V. I. Mordvintseva, N. L. Morgunova, I. Motzenbäcker, A. Niculescu, A. I. Osmanov, M. Otchir-Goriaeva, V. V. Otroshchenko, H. Parzinger, E. Pernicka, D. T. Potts, L. T. P'yankova, Yu. Rassamakina, S. Reinhold, K. S. Rubinson, S. Salvatori, S. N. Sanzharov, I. V. Sergatskov, A. G. Sherratt, V. A. Shnirelman, A. T. Smith, C. Thornton, H. Todorova, M. Tosi, V. A. Trifonov, J. M. Vicent-García, N. M. Vinogradova, L. Weeks, N. Yoffee, G. B. Zdanovich, and P. Zidarov. Sadly, two very close colleagues with whom I collaborated unexpectedly died during the time in which this book was written: Zaal Kikodze and Magomed Gadzhiev were dear friends and extremely astute and able archaeologists. I learned much from them and miss them terribly.

My initial fieldwork was in southeastern Iran, digging at Tepe Yahya as a participant in the Peabody Museum, Harvard University, Project in Iran that was directed by C. C. Lamberg-Karlovsky. Over the years I have had the good fortune to continue to interact regularly with Karl and the remarkable circle of archaeologists he has mentored at Harvard. Such interactions have always proven stimulating and invaluable for broadening my knowledge and sharpening my interpretations of greater Near Eastern archaeology. I am obviously also greatly indebted to E. N. Chernykh and the “school” of natural scientists that he has assembled in Moscow. Although I sometimes feel like I might be playing Huxley to Evgenij’s Darwin, I have tried to maintain a critical perspective and question or “test” as much as possible his macrohistorical interpretations and archaeologically derived concepts, like the metallurgical province. Although many problems remain unresolved and many paradoxes raised by his work are difficult to ponder, it is impossible to overestimate Evgenij’s incredible contribution to our overall understanding of Bronze Age Eurasia. In a sense, we all follow in his footsteps.

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Norm Yoffee, the editor of the Cambridge World Archaeology series, suggested that I add the short biographical sketches of some famous Soviet/Russian archaeologists that appear in Chapters 2–5. I thought Norm’s idea was excellent. One of the principal purposes of this book is to introduce Western readers to some of the major Bronze Age discoveries made by Soviet/Russian archaeologists over the course of the last half-century or so. Although I have always tried to evaluate critically the materials presented, I also hope that this book in a real sense celebrates the accomplishments of the Russian tradition of archaeological research. Thus, it is most appropriate to sketch the contributions of some of the leading archaeologists whose works are frequently presented and discussed throughout this study. There are, of course, many other archaeologists whose works could also have been so highlighted, but I knew that my choices had to be restricted. The archaeologists chosen just seemed the most appropriate given the theories and empirical data discussed, and I did not even initially focus on the fact that they all were male and all but one had worked out of the Institute of Archaeology in Moscow! I must emphasize that there has been no attempt to slight the marvelous school of archaeologists working at the St. Petersburg Institute of the History of Material Culture or the accomplishments of the numerous Soviet/Russian female archaeologists whose works also are frequently cited in this study. Very limited choices just had to be made.

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Frontispiece: Eurasian Steppe Zone and the Greater Ancient Near East (adapted from Kohl 2002b: 188, fig. 8, originally from Aruz et al. 2000: XIV–XV)