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THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF PASTORALISM, MOBILITY, AND SOCIETY

Though mobile pastoralists were a significant component of many societies in Eurasia and Africa for a long time, scholars have considered them to be materially and documentarily "invisible." The archaeological study of pastoralism across these regions has relied on ethnographic analogies and environmentally deterministic models, often with little or no data on historically specific herding communities. This approach has yielded a static picture of pastoralism through time that has only recently been challenged. In this book, Emily Hammer articulates a new framework for investigating variability in past pastoral practices. She proposes ways to develop a more rigorous relationship with pastoralist ethnographies and illustrates new archaeological and scientific methodologies for collecting direct data on herding, mobility, and social complexity in the past. Hammer's approach to the archaeology of pastoralism promotes efforts to dismantle the legacy of evolutionary classifications of human societies, which have drawn sharp distinctions between farmers and herders, and to investigate how diverse nonagricultural and mobile groups have shaped complex societies and environments.

Emily Hammer is an assistant professor in the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures and the Price Lab for the Digital Humanities at the University of Pennsylvania. An anthropological archaeologist of the Middle East and the South Caucasus, she has conducted fieldwork in the UAE, Turkey, Azerbaijan, and Iraq. Her ongoing research contributes to three fields of inquiry: the archaeology of pastoralism, comparative studies of early urbanism in Mesopotamia and its surrounding highlands, and GIS methodologies for environmental and landscape archaeology.

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BEYOND THE GRASS PARADIGM

EMILY HAMMER
University of Pennsylvania

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PREFACE

Pastoralists, particularly those that happen to have been mobile, pose a thorny problem for historians and archaeologists. In most regions of the world, pastoralists were not the authors or subjects of written history. And, for various reasons, they have been difficult to find materially in the archaeological record.

In Mesopotamia and its highland fringes, my region of archaeological fieldwork, it has been common for archaeologists to assert – based on history, ethnography, and the presence of modern herders – the importance of mobile pastoralism in various times and places, but to exclusively survey and excavate sedentary agropastoral villages and cities. The material record of historical pastoralism found its way to me in my first year of graduate school when I was not expecting it. As part of an archaeological survey along the Upper Tigris River in southeastern Turkey in 2007–2010, I went looking for Bronze Age villages and towns, road networks, and irrigation systems that might parallel those seen in this period to the south, in northeastern Syria and northern Iraq. But, instead, the team found the remains of historical campsites, corrals, and cisterns dating to the last half millennium. I remember several professors and classmates encouraging me to choose a different research location and topic, in effect to go do some "real" archaeology set deeper in time. Somewhat reluctantly at first but later more enthusiastically, I stuck with it, weaving the archaeological survey data and spatial analysis with historical geography and textual records. The project eventually brought me to two major conclusions: First, contrary to a prevailing view in archaeology at the time, herders significantly reshape environment, settlement, and landscape in enduring ways that are archaeologically recognizable. Second, the analysis indicated that I had found an historically specific set of pastoral practices and not something that could be generalized to the deeper historical or ancient past. Over time the project led me more broadly to consider the relationships between – and especially the disjunctures separating – herding communities in the twentieth-century ethnographic present, the relatively recent historical past, and the ancient world. Since then, my fieldwork has primarily focused on early urbanism in the Bronze and Iron Age Middle East, but I have retained a deep interest in

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varied forms of pastoralism and mobility as part of efforts to broaden our understanding of the diverse people and activities that shaped early cities, their economies, and their hinterlands.

The motivation for this book stems most directly from seminars I have taught on the archaeology of pastoralism and mobility. It also stems from archaeological survey work in both Turkey and Azerbaijan, work that has led to several data-focused papers, but also to a pair of co-authored review articles summarizing our knowledge and critiquing narratives of the rise of pastoralism in Anatolia specifically and the Middle East more generally.

In writing up my fieldwork and especially in teaching those seminars and composing the review papers, I became increasingly frustrated with weak and unreliable uses of ethnographic analogy in the generation of historical narratives about ancient pastoralism from the Neolithic to the Medieval period. I increasingly realized that many archaeological conclusions about ancient pastoralists in the Middle East rested on untested assumptions that highly mobile pastoralists always existed in "agriculturally marginal zones" from the Neolithic period onwards and remained essentially unchanged; and that pastoral practices of the past were identical to or analogous with practices observed by ethnographers in the mid-late twentieth century. I also became frustrated with the premises – demonstrably untrue historically and ethnographically – that communities of highly mobile pastoralists form fundamentally different types of societies than farmers and urbanites, and that the study of highly mobile pastoralism can therefore somehow be separated from the study of agropastoralism and sedentary herding.

While I was feeling this general frustration, scientific archaeological data began to appear and rapidly transform the study of animal herding and ancient mobility. Results from laboratory analyses of ancient human and animal bones and teeth, dung layers, aDNA, isotopes, pottery vessel residues, and proteins were reshaping much of what we thought we knew about migration, the origins of pastoralism and dairying, the development of herding strategies over time, ancient transhumance patterns, and seasonality of occupation. These methods increasingly made it possible to extract broader datasets concerning pastoralism from ephemeral settlements, campsites, and activity areas but also to find evidence of herding, mobility, and the cultural significance of herd animals within urban centers, towns, burials, and other types of locales. As a remote sensing and landscape archaeology specialist, I believed that spatial and stratigraphic analysis of herding infrastructure could form an important source of data for tracking changes in the ecology, economy, and sociopolitical organization of communities engaged in pastoralism through time, and could offer an important framework needed for the contextualization of the results of laboratory analyses. But my areas of specialization cannot on their own offer

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the whole story, and so I sought to understand more about other methodologies and to keep up to date on rapidly changing conclusions.

As I grappled with these new types of scientific data and covered methodological advances in my seminar courses, I felt optimistic that, with time, a critical and empirical archaeology of pastoralism would emerge, capable of re-evaluating long-held ethnographically derived assumptions about the role of pastoralism in human (pre)history. The pace of archaeological science publications on topics relevant for the study of pastoralism has rapidly accelerated over the last decade. However, as time went on, it often seemed that these new sources of data had a lot of potential, but also significant, not-fully-acknowledged empirical limitations. The application of multiple methodologies to field data can improve archaeological interpretation, but many methods clearly generated data on mobility and herding practices that were fundamentally incompatible in their temporal, spatial, and social scales. These data seemed to me to frequently be used in problematic and reductive ways: In ways that reified problematic associations between archaeological cultural labels and subsistence practices or reduced ancient communities' identities to their subsistence practices; in ways that focused more on "first instances" and "revolutions" than on variable historical processes; in ways that considered pastoralism only as an ecological adaptation rather than a social and political strategy; and in ways that frame continuities of pastoral practices as passive defaults rather than active choices.

In search of fresh perspectives, I began to read outside of my own geographic area of expertise. In the historical and archaeological literature on pastoralism and mobility in Africa, Europe, and Central Eurasia, I was both excited and sometimes dismayed to find scholars wrestling with very similar sorts of problems, often largely in isolation from those working in other geographic regions. This book is structured around four long-standing problems that I began to see as shared in the archaeology of pastoralism across these regions, as well as efforts to overcome aspects of each of these problems. These four problems, explained in Chapter 1, are as follows: (1) conceptual conflation, (2) misuse of ethnographic analogy, (3) a paucity of direct data, and (4) separate regional traditions in the archaeology of pastoralism. Because I have not yet had the fortune to be able to design a long-term, multidisciplinary field project on ancient pastoralism – my fieldwork on this topic has, for various reasons beyond my control, been limited to surveys – I draw extensively on the work of others to illustrate major problems and conceptual and methodological advances. I also draw on others' work to illustrate what I see to be the major ongoing shifts in grand narratives of the role of pastoralism in human (pre)history.

I wrote this book not because I profess to have the answers to all of these problems but because I think it is worthwhile to explore the development and

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current state of long-standing disciplinary biases and challenges, think about how these can be both improved but also exacerbated by new forms of data, and point to possible types of solutions – even if these solutions are partial ones. My goal has been to write something useful for those who hope to move our understanding of ancient and historical pastoralism onto firmer empirical ground, something that could help archaeologists – and historians – working in different regions and with different methodologies to learn from each other.

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In reflecting on the creation of this book, the trite-but-true phrase "it takes a village" conveys my sentiments but is perhaps not the most apt metaphor for a tome about pastoralism and mobility. So, instead, I express my profound appreciation to the wonderful herd of people and institutions who helped me find my intellectual fodder, pasture my ideas, corral my thoughts, milk time for writing, shear my verbiage, and shepherd this manuscript to market (hopefully not to slaughter!).

This book would not exist if it were not for the knowledge about pastoralism in the Middle East and Central Eurasia as well as archaeological methodology that I gained from discussions over many years with Joshua Wright, Benjamin Arbuckle, Cheryl Makarewicz, and Lynne Rouse. I drafted most of the book during a year-long sabbatical in 2022 funded by a Hunt Fellowship from the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research and the University of Pennsylvania School of Arts and Sciences. Virtual and in-person faculty writing retreats at the University of Pennsylvania in summers 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022, organized by Jennifer Moore, helped me to develop early drafts of the Prologue and Chapters 1, 2, and 3. Drafts of Chapters 4, 5, and 6 took shape during a personal writing retreat at Pendle Hill Quaker Center for Study and Contemplation in winter 2022. Participation in a conference, "The Future of Ethnoarchaeology," organized by Thomas Tartaron and Megan Kassabaum at the University of Pennsylvania in April 2022, provided the impetus to improve Chapter 3.

The first full draft benefitted from a manuscript workshop funded by the Wolf Humanities Center at the University of Pennsylvania in September 2023. The guest reviewer for this workshop, Mary Prendergast, was extremely generous with her time and detailed suggestions. I especially thank her for helping me round out the incorporation of East African literature into my discussion and for pushing me to expand my discussion of the comparative archaeology of pastoralism. It was an extraordinary privilege to receive extensive feedback from a diverse group of colleagues who attended the manuscript workshop, including Christopher Atwood, Naomi Miller, Kathleen Morrison, Heather Sharkey, Thomas Tartaron, Jeremy McInerney, and Simcha Gross.

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Outside of the workshop, I also benefited from constructive comments offered by Daniel Potts, Joshua Wright, Jason Ur, Benjamin Arbuckle, Kathryn Franklin, Karen Rubinson, and two anonymous reviewers. I owe a great debt to Madelynn von Baeyer, Petra Vaiglova, Cheryl Makarewicz, and Elise Laugier for technical comments on archaeological methodology. Paul Cobb entertained my questions about Ibn Khaldun and Timothy Hogue my questions about pastoralism and mobility in the Hebrew Bible.

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The basis of my knowledge about pastoralism and mobility traces back to a seminar that I took as an undergraduate, "Nomads in Archaeology," taught by Michael Danti at Bryn Mawr College in spring 2004. This experience memorably included the in-lecture-hall appearance of an Awassi fat-tailed sheep, orchestrated by fellow students. The book began to take shape in my head over ten years later through the process of teaching my own courses on pastoralism as a junior faculty member. The first was a graduate seminar at the University of Chicago in 2015, "Nomads, Networks, and Political Complexity in the Ancient Near East," co-taught with Richard Payne. The development of that seminar benefitted from a Center for Disciplinary Innovation Grant from the Franke Institute for the Humanities, enabling us to bring Michael Frachetti and Joshua Wright as guest lecturers and interlocutors. The second was a combined undergraduate/graduate seminar at the University of Pennsylvania in 2018, "Pastoral Nomadism in the Past and Present." During that class, I learned a lot from conversations with Dotno Pount about historical perspectives on Mongolian pastoralism. Kristen Pearson gave the class an exciting tour of objects in the Penn Museum related to ancient horse riding and horse husbandry. She and I later, in 2020, did an online independent study together that helped me digest some of the literature on pastoralism in circumpolar regions.

Although this book is not based upon my own field data, important parts of the discussion were inspired by archaeological survey projects in Turkey and Azerbaijan. I have many colleagues and funding sources to thank for the success of those projects and for the impact that our collaborations had on my thinking. My dissertation fieldwork on the Hirbemerdon Tepe Survey (2007–2011, Diyarbakır Province, Turkey) was funded by the US National Science Foundation (Doctoral Dissertation Improvement Grant

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Much of the book was written during the isolated years of the COVID-19 pandemic and two pregnancies followed by night-wakeful newborn periods. Family kept me grounded: Carlos Pereira Di Salvo, John Hammer, Abby Telfer, Abigail Hammer, Rebecca Hammer, Marlene Hammer, and Oscar Wilbur. Fina Di Salvo freed me to escape to my desk, office, or a West Philadelphia coffeeshop for some periods of particularly intensive writing.

Beyond his support for this writing project, my father, John Hammer, encouraged and even participated in some of my earliest independent research on pastoral landscapes. While I was living in Ankara, Turkey, in 2010, he visited in early summer, and we took an unforgettable trip that included several days of driving deep in the mountains south of Lake Van. We met seasonally mobile herders and scrambled through the ruins of recent campsites against a backdrop of melting snow that, in June, had only recently resulted in the opening of mountain passes for the year. On that trip we also visited abandoned campsites in the Nemrut Dağı volcanic crater, near Tatvan, finding the remains of the very same sites and structures that ethno-archaeologist Roger Cribb had studied three decades earlier.

Above all, I am deeply grateful to my husband, Carlos Pereira Di Salvo, who did so much to create the time and space for me to think and write and who buoyed my confidence and spirits both daily and at so many critical junctures.

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Carlos cheerfully engaged in endless discussions that shaped the book's argument, content, and structure, and he even provided detailed edits. Our two children, Matías Andrés and Ávila Cecilia, were born while I drafted Chapters 3–9, bringing so much joy and welcome distraction from the manuscript, which often seemed like a third child – the first to be conceived, but the longest to gestate and the last to be born.

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