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IRON AGE NOMADS OF THE URALS:
INTERPRETING SAURO-SARMATIAN AND SARGAT IDENTITIES

By

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ABSTRACT

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This dissertation investigates the archaeological signature of pastoral nomads on the Eurasian steppe and forest-steppe. In uncovering and identifying nomadic signatures, it becomes possible to also recognize nomad identity. Iron Age nomads have been the focus of scholars working in Western Siberia, but much of the interest has revolved around their origins, and the distinctions of material culture to create chronologies. Neither has been an insignificant or unimportant task, but this study advocates for a different approach focusing more on local identity construction.

Eurasian Iron Age nomads have been identified as a common militaristic culture in the literature, a *Scytho-Siberian cultural complex*. Traditionally archaeologists have used the historic record to establish cultural identities, boundaries, and interactions across this landmass. This dissertation explores the use of the landscape, the mortuary and settlement evidence, and material culture from the Transurals and the southern Urals to reevaluate assumptions about identity and cultural interaction. The two populations occupying these areas, the Sauro-Sarmatians and the Sargat, show that the monochromatic use of pan-Siberian terminology blinds us to the uniqueness of local populations. While broad regional patterns need to be understood, the local contexts of interaction and cultural expression have been ignored.

Other studies have established a pan-Siberian description of nomad behavior. This study advocates for a different perspective on their identities. As mobile groups, the

cultural contact between regional populations is vital, but nomad identity is not created and maintained in any one context, but is shifting and contextual. While focusing on the examination of a few sites, nomad burial customs cannot be divorced from their broader regional contexts. It is towards a better understanding of local identity within a broader Eurasian nomad culture that is the emphasis of this study.

Dedicated to Mom and Pop
who taught me to learn

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Finally Bryan Hanks spent untold hours in a myriad of time zones commiserating and encouraging as only a fellow survivor could.

There have been two campus communities that fostered my academic development. At my home institution, Michigan State, Alison Rautman discussed my research interests and participated in every stage of the process. I owe her a huge debt of gratitude for sending timely epiphanies my way. Gail Barricklow and Nancy Smith did the things that no one else could –they directed me through the paperwork jungle and always asked how things were going at home, the balance I needed most. I can only call out my fellow graduate students en masse –their number and contribution to this product remains untold. In particular though, the *Iron Circle* helped to keep the passion of the academic pursuit in front of the pitfalls.

My second home institution was SUNY College at Cortland. For three years I was at home in the Department of Sociology/Anthropology, a temporary member of the faculty with the full privilege of calling them colleagues. Sharon Steadman welcomed my participation in all aspects of the department and shared her dedication to students and teaching. I wanted to be a better teacher so as not to let the standard down. Jamie Dangler, Kassim Kone, Ellis McDowell-Loudan, William Skipper, John Sosa, Anne Vittoria, and Tiantian Zheng all exemplify why I wish to stay in academia, for the camaraderie and the cake. To Gilda Haines Votra and Betsy Zaharis: you're the reason I wished to stay at Cortland.

The most important are always toward the end. The friends that I have found –by kismet, fate, or blind luck –bolstered my flagging resolve, bandaged my battered ego, and then said keep writing. Deb Rotman, Pam Galbraith, Mark Hoolihan, Carl Raymond,

Richard Yidana –I count you among the many who kept me sane(r) than most. Heather Van Wormer, you are in a class all your own. I don't know whether to call you a friend, a mentor, a madam, or a sister. You I picked.

And as ever, the family gets short shrift at the end of the page. My house overflows with love and support. The academic goddesses shined down upon me when I married into the Lerner family. They have welcomed my Russian background and filled in the empty places in my library. I wonder at divine intervention. My natal family, the ones who understand my food-tupidity and the need to do it until it's done, there are literally too many for any one person to deserve. I have always been most proud when someone knows me as your little sister. My parents never wondered why I was still in school; it's just something I was supposed to be doing. I appreciate everything you have loved into me.

My parents got the dedication, it is well-deserved. My husband deserves a medal. I lost the list of things Dan contributed, but he's not good at keeping score. Know that it would not have been finished without you. Zev, your walking was the motivation I needed to finish this dissertation. Now, we can go to the park.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The archaeological record of Siberia provides a valuable body of data with which to examine various forms of pastoralism. My own research in this region examines the relationship between nomads and sedentary groups in the Transurals and south Urals during the early part of the Iron Age (1000 BC - AD 1000; Fig.1.1) using a wealth of past research materials as well as my own material gathered during four research periods (1996-1999). Exposure to alternative schools of thought, both within and outside Russia, has provided me with an opportunity to elucidate a heretofore little known archaeological record to scholars outside the former Soviet Union. Comparisons can be made of the changes in the relationship between sedentary and nomadic groups, as well as changes in both mobility patterns and land use during this time period in two distinctive ecological areas: the Transurals or forest-steppe zone to the east of the Ural mountains, and the southern Urals steppe zone. The southern steppe populations represent a "real" nomadic form (sensu Khazanov 1994), and thus is an area that should present a clearer expression of nomadic lifestyles. The Transurals population, on the other hand, represents what is assumed to be a more mixed economic and sociocultural form, with both linguistically and culturally disparate groups (such as Ugrians and Indo-Iranians, semi-sedentary and nomadic) and their broader regional interaction sphere. Thus, the Transurals present a zone of cultural interaction and potential mixing, one within which to examine alternative ideas about the development of cultural interaction spheres.

The focus of this dissertation is to examine the many potential avenues of identity through multiple dimensions of comparative analysis. How nomads lived and maintained

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their own cultural signature has been of utmost importance to both archaeologists and

historians. In addition, the construction of "nomad" as such a distinctly "other" identity

from the sedentary realm has helped to perpetuate the image of their separateness. But as

will be shown, there are considerable degrees of both mobility and dependence upon

animal husbandry, and there also must be degrees of variation in our interpretations of the

sedentary-nomad interactions along different dimensions and at different scales. The

most common archaeological signature of the pastoral nomads of this region, the burial

mound (kurgan) will be the primary data source. These kurgans are present across the

Eurasian steppe and have been the attention and focus of archaeological and other more

pedestrian forms of investigation since ancient times. By examining these sites from

multiple levels, it is hoped that one can gain a richer understanding of the complex

interactions among and between peoples.
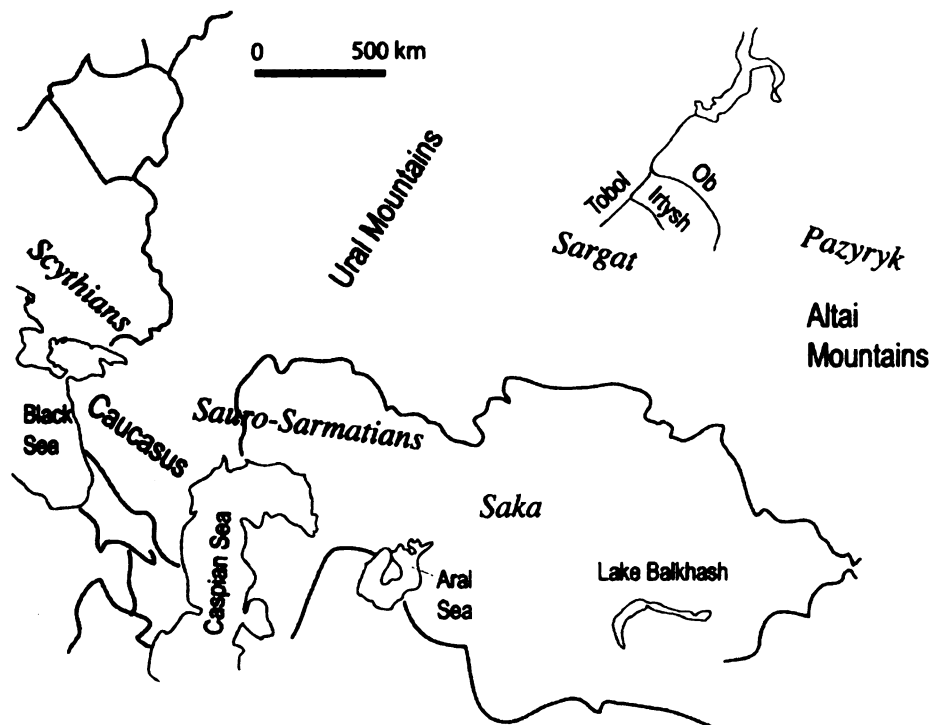
Figure 1.1 Map of locations of various Iron Age nomad groups.

Although Western Siberia was the focus of archaeological field investigations for many generations, publication of work from this area contains assumptions or generalizations that require more stringent evaluation and clarification. Moreover, the reliance on historical evidence, a mainstay of Russian, Soviet and post-Soviet archaeology, has often focused the resultant inquiry and nature of the interpretations too narrowly. In order to redress this problem, I participated in three excavation seasons (1996-1998), examined repository collections, and gathered published data from archaeological sites of two geographically separate Iron Age populations. They are related through their use of mortuary ritual, material culture, and economic strategy. The ecological settings appear similar enough, with the evident differences considered negligible to an outsider, but upon closer consideration the steppe zone of the Southern Urals is a wide swath of grassland north of the arid Central Asian desert while the forest-steppe zone of the Transurals is on the cusp of more northern and forested adaptations.

My field research at late Bronze and early Iron Age sites in Western Siberia, including Skaty, Baitovo, Malokazakhbaevo, and Bolshekazakhbaevo, were conducted as part of a joint Russian-French archaeological project, headed by Dr. Ludmila Koryakova, Professor of History and Archaeology, Ural State University, and Dr. Marie-Yvonne Daire of the Université de Rennes I. The excavations in which I participated are here included among the published materials from the early Iron Age sites of the Transurals.

Another objective of my research has been to study the methodological and theoretical issues associated with archaeology as an historical discipline and to interpose the methodology of my anthropological education and experience. The discussions of the

nature of nomadic-sedentary groups' interactions, nomadism's taphonomic signatures, and cultural identity in the archaeological record demonstrate differences in the core influences between American and Russian archaeologists. I argue that the use of a cultural-historical approach has limited the scope of Russian interpretations of the archaeological record –a record which, until the last decade, was largely known only to Russian and formerly Soviet scholars. It is these interpretations which dominate the manner in which most of the non-Russian "outside world" understands pastoral nomadism across the vastness of the Eurasian landmass. It would be inappropriate and self-aggrandizing to suggest that "the Russians have a lot to learn from US"; but it is not inappropriate to view old data through new eyes, new models, and new theoretical approaches – in essence teaching old data new tricks (Kroll 1999).

The persistent application of assumptions about mortuary behavior on the steppe has revealed a single dominant model of funerary practice, a post-Soviet hegemony as it were. It may be too simplistic to state that every burial mound must equal a nomad's burial – for 1000 years of nomadic culture. It is also important to recognize at least the potential for change in the relationship between nomadic pastoralists and the sedentary people with whom they interacted over time. Nomads may have indeed "emigrated" into and continually returned to these areas in search of fodder, but over time they may also have become part of those sedentary societies – merging and mingling, thus changing the culture of "indigenous", sedentary societies.

DEFINITIONS

Nomadism is a term that is used to encompass many, dynamic, cultural groups. Most often the terminology of nomadism has been applied to cultural groups by their neighbors, generally sedentary peoples. Historical writers from Strabo to Herodotus to the Chinese chroniclers persistently maintained an image, a stereotype, of the nomad, one that continues in the minds and imaginations of sedentary people. The freedom of nomadic groups – open, fenceless range, limitless possibilities, the lure of a life with no master, no walls, no taxes, and no military service, blinds us to the reality of nomadic interactions, including confederacies and empires. The myth of the nomad is as strong as the cultural myth of the noble savage (Khazanov 1994).

For the purposes of this research, and because it is the principal definition accepted by those who do research on the Eurasian steppe cultures, I will follow Khazanov's (1994) definition of nomadic pastoralism, "a distinct form of food-producing economy in which extensive mobile pastoralism is the predominant activity, and in which the majority of the population is drawn into periodical pastoral migrations" (1994:17). Based on prior research done on the late Bronze Age/early Iron Age Sargat and Sarmatian cultures, it is assumed that both of the study groups possessed some degree of mobility as well as some degree of mixed economic practice (pastoralism and horticulture), but that nomadic pastoralism was predominant for some groups or segments of society.

Within nomadic studies the term nomad encompasses many degrees of mobility in combination with a food producing economy based on domesticated herd animals, where "pastoralism is the predominant form of economic activity" (Khazanov 1994:16)

with the presence of "suitable animal species" (Cribb 1991:9). Whether sheep/goat, horse, cattle, camel, llama, or alpaca the animals of a nomadic pastoralist can be any combination of the above, so long as there is positively no pig (Yablonsky, p.c.). Yablonsky (1998) defines "classical nomadism" as having far more to do with herd composition.

A more appropriate means of addressing the "reality" of nomadism is to view its mobility and its economic production on two intersecting continua. As Cribb (1991) notes, the association between pastoralism and nomadism is implicit, as pastoral economies require high degrees of mobility. In the contemporary literature, nomad and pastoralist are at times virtually synonymous, if not unclearly defined and loosely used. For the purposes of this dissertation, it is necessary to clarify possible relationships that exist between mobile and sedentary populations and the terminologies used in their descriptions.

The most respected authority on Eurasian nomadism, A. Khazanov, compartmentalizes nomads into three distinctive categories – nomad, semi-nomad, and semi-settled, categories considered to be "intellectually sterile" (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:18) when pursued by Salzman (1972). Unfortunately, many discussions of Western Siberian mobile cultures use these qualitative values when it is likely that what is revealed in the archaeological record better reflects continuous variables. The broad categorical labels, however, are de rigueur in the literature. Based on a rich corpus of research in Middle and Central Asia, Khazanov (1994) distinguishes semi-sedentary (village-based, herding people with animal husbandry) and semi-nomadic (specialized, family level sub-groups within a society) from nomadic

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(division of specialized labor between different societies/groups), and forms rigid typologies that are difficult to define observable archaeological signatures in the archaeological record. In essence, what this typology requires is one's ability to see not only the economic gradations but also the cultural identities, nomadic culture vs. sedentary culture. Thus in order to examine the existence of nomadism within any region, one must examine cultural identity in the archaeological record. I maintain that the use of terms such as "nomad", "semi-nomad", or "semi-sedentary" confuses rather than clarifies research on steppe populations when these groups are not examined to carefully delineate group affiliations and relations. I argue that the use of such terms is a holdover from archaeology's roots in classificatory systems.

Salzman (2002) sees the range of economic activity falling between the two extremes of pastoralism and agrarianism; the degree of mobility, between nomadism and sedentism. It is overwhelmingly accepted that nomadic pastoralists could not exist without other food producers (Barth 1973; Lees and Bates 1974; Köhler-Rollefson 1992; Khazanov 1994; DiCosmo 1994; Barfield 2001b), but there also exists a limited opposition to this idea (Chang 1993; Salzman 2002). Anthropologists have long acknowledged that much of the material culture and food of pastoral nomads is acquired through exchange with sedentary societies (e.g. Barth 1961:98-99; Barfield 1993:68, 94-5, 100; Khazanov 1994:202-12); this is an observation that was first recorded by the Medieval Arab historian, Ibn Khaldun (2005).

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Nomadism most likely had its roots in the Neolithic[1], alongside sedentary farmers/horticulturalists, but its origins are beyond the purview of this research. A consequence of the specialization and integration of pastoralism and cultivation – within which the two systems are perceived to exist in some level of symbiosis – where the pastoralists are more aptly perceived to be like the leech on the back of glutinous sedentary civilization or a stinging parasite sapping the strength of civilizations in order to survive. I maintain that the archaeological record of Western Siberia during the late Bronze Age shows the interaction of two different economic strategies, two different cultures, but that over time those pastoralists in areas actively engaged with sedentary societies, at least in the Transurals, became more engaged with their neighbors, becoming as Khazanov describes semi-nomadic pastoralists, that "within the framework of a given society (sub-society) there are groups which devote themselves primarily, or even exclusively, to pastoralism" (1994:20). Over time the majority of the Sargat are believed to have settled down as residents of settlements and fortresses in the Transurals and adopted local economic practices (Koryakova 1996), but there remains the recognizable archaeological signature of nomadism, the burial mound or kurgan, continuing in this region. Thus a more detailed analysis of the mortuary realm is necessary to comprehend the changes in cultural interactions between these groups.

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[1] The most obvious and commonly attributed signature of Eurasian nomadism, the kurgan is first found in the Eneolithic, but become much more prevalent during the early Bronze Age with the Yamna Culture. This is probably the earliest evidence of mobility on the steppe (for a full discussion of this evidence see: Jones-Bley 1999:9-13 and Chapter 4).

Mobility & Seasonality

Due to the very definition of nomad and pastoralist given above, the definition of mobility and seasonality are almost implicit. In Western literature the term "transhumance" is most often contrasted with "nomadic" when referring to pastoralism. Transhumance is the exploitation of seasonal variation in the availability of pasture over either long or short distances. Transhumant pastoralists are traditionally seen as being village-based for at least some portion of the year, and involving only a portion of the overall population. The exploitation of seasonal resources can force a group to be nomadic, sedentary, or transhumant –and depending on the composition of the human herders (all or only a portion of the community) defines the society as being transhumant or nomadic. Again, rigid definitions belie the complexity of most groups' organization. There is often a fluidity of formation of residential association within given societies – with the potential for some group turnover in local membership, seasonal occupation, and/or longer-term association with a group or region. Cribb (1991) discusses this phenomenon in terms of the high degree of household autonomy and the need to maintain a flexible system of rights of access to territory in accordance with frequent changes in residence, wholesale shifts in the pattern of migration tracks, and the demands on grazing land. In essence, nomadism is the regular migration of a community, together, as a unit. Such mobility may be in terms of following seasonal pasturage, or seasonal rounds within a greater geographic region –but it is nonetheless territorial in nature.

GEOGRAPHIC AND GEOLOGICAL SETTINGS

Western Siberia

This study focuses on archaeological investigations carried out in Western Siberia in the forest-steppe and steppe. This particular region extends from the Ural Mountains in the west to the Tobol River in the east, from the northernmost landmass in the Arctic to the Central Asian deserts in the south. Western Siberia is broadly divided into several ecological zones: arctic, taiga (forest), steppe (grassland), and desert. Over its entirety, Western Siberia is a relatively flat plain bordered by low, weathered mountains (the Urals) and the rise of the Turgai plateau in the east. Within this plain are lakes, marshes, and four major rivers–the Ob, Irtysh, Ishim, and Tobol –which form the Ob River Basin and ultimately drain into the Arctic Ocean.

Climate

The climate of Western Siberia, cold continental, was fully expressed by the late Bronze Age (Khotinskiy 1984b:306). During the cold months, the Arctic air mass sweeps down from the north; this at times occurs during the summer months as well, creating unstable and highly variable conditions for archaeology, agriculture and pastoralism still practiced locally. The Ural Mountains effectively block what is left of Atlantic moisture, making for dry conditions that turn to droughts every eight to twelve years. The cold winters quickly transition into spring, followed by brief, hot summers. During the warmer months, the winds are predominantly off the deserts from the south-southeast.

Ecological Setting

Ecologically the forest-steppe is a transition zone from the pine forests (taiga) to the north and the grasslands to the south – birch-pine woodlands and low swamps appear sporadically across the multi-grass plains, gradually becoming the unbroken steppe. Throughout the Holocene, Western Siberia has seen long periods of stasis followed by rapid changes (Velichko 1977, 1984). Between 6000 and 4600 years ago the forest-tundra boundary became very stable, while the grassland vegetation invaded the forests from the south (Khotinskiy 1984a:199). This area abounds with domestic horses, cattle, sheep and goats, as it has for the last 4000 years. Historically bear, beavers, sable, foxes, wolves, roe and red deer, wild pigs, and steppe antelope have traversed the region (Vereshchagin and Kuzmina 1984), though in much fewer numbers today.

PROJECT AREAS AND INTERPRETING CULTURAL GROUPS

There is a large amount of data that has been collected on the Sargat, within an area stretching from the Eastern slope of the Ural Mountains to the Tobol River/ Baraba lowlands, from the Irtysh River in the north to the lake region in the south. Here, I will focus primarily on the sites around the Tobol River basin because it is here that the largest amount of detailed publication is available on both burial mounds and settlements, and it is also where I have conducted the largest amount of my own fieldwork. There exists a large amount of information regarding Sargat sites to the north, but they will not be discussed. As for the Sarmatian data, I focus on the excavation records at the site of Pokrovka 2, recorded during five field seasons by Dr. Leonid Yablonsky (Moscow State University), and by the joint American-Russian excavation project led by both Dr.

Yablonsky and Dr. Jeannine Davis-Kimball (Center for the Study of Eurasian Nomads, Ventura, California). I have made this selection in order to have a comparative data set from more southerly nomadic groups, one that is not believed to have interacted with any sedentary group in its immediate area. Also, the sites of Pokrovka have received the most in-depth study of any Sargat or Sarmatian sites to date.

Bronze Age and Early Iron Age

During the Bronze Age the Sintashta-Arkaim culture existed with its so-called "country of towns" (Zdanovich 1995), a series of small, kinship-based settlements based on household level bronze production. These were primarily fortified centers with open villages situated around them, dispersed at a distance of 20-30 km from each other. Some groups also dispersed into peripheral locations to mine ore and their villages are further apart. Within this steppe zone, the practice of advanced metallurgy was complemented by inventions that included spoke-wheeled horse-drawn chariots and specialty items of horse tack (both for adornment and for protection). By the 17th or 16th century BC factors including ecological change and migration led to the demise of the Sintashta-Arkaim culture, which were replaced or absorbed by a less extravagant, the more wide-spread Andronovo culture (coming primarily from west of the Urals (Gening et al. 1992; Zdanovich 1995) and Srubnaya culture, and the formation of the Scythian-Siberian cultural unity which incorporated groups from the Black Sea coast to the Altai Mountains (Table 1.1-1.2).

The creation of the Scythian-Siberian cultural unity (Bashilov and Yablonsky 1995; Koryakova 1996a, 1998a) coincides with the early Iron Age in the forest-steppe

zone, a time of considerable social, technological, and ideological change across the Eurasian steppe. While there existed a kind of "pastoral civilization" of nomadic/semi-nomadic groups from the Bronze Age through the Iron Age (Koryakova 1996a), changes are seen in subsistence practices, settlement, and mortuary patterning (Khazanov 1978:120, 1984:94; Kuzmina 1994; Vainshtein 1978:128), and deep, structural differences apparently arose within ideo-religious arenas (Renfrew 1996:83). The interactions of the "cultural worlds" (from Shchukin 1989) east of the Urals, primarily the Ugrian forest communities and the nomadic, Indo-Iranian steppe groups, lays the foundation of my particular research areas and interests. It is at the intersection of these economically and culturally unique areas that the Sargat culture emerges in the first millennium BC –a continuation of nomadic traditions of the Central Asian Sarmatian and Saka traditions.

Table 1.1 Regional chronology for the Eurasian Bronze Age (from Koryakova 1996:250)

Dates	European Steppe	Western Siberia	Asiatic Steppe	Middle Asia	Central Asia	China
BC 900		Irmen'-Mezhovo Final BA	Dongal Dandybai Alexeevka-Sargary			East Tchou
1000			Final BA	Bishkent	LBA	West Tchou
1100	Bjelozerka Sabatinovka	Andronoid Cultural Horizon		Choust		
1200				Yaz 1		
1300	Timber Grave	Andronovo LBA	Fyedorovo			
1400	LBA					
1500			Alakul' Andronovo LBA	Namazga VI LBA	MBA	
1600		Tashkovo Krotovo cultures MBA				
1700	Potapovka Abashevo		Petrovka	Zamanbaba		Shang Anyan
1800	Poltavka		Arkaim-Sintashta	BMAC		
1900	Pit Grave Catacomb	EMB	MBA	Namazga V		
2000	MBA			MBA	EBA	BA

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Table 1.2 Regional chronology for the Eurasian Iron Age (from Koryakova 1996:252).

Dates	European Steppe	Western Siberia	Asiatic Steppe	Middle Asia	Central Asia	China
	Huns	Sargat separation		Sassanians		
400						
300						China division
	Goths	Late Sargat		Huns		
200		IA3		Kushan Kingdom	Syanbi Huns separation	
AD	Western			Khorasmia		
100	Alans	Huns		(Kangiui)		
0			Alans			
100	Roxolany		Hunnic conquest	Parthians		Han dynasty Huandy
200	Aorsi Early Sarmatians	Sargat EIA (IA2)		Greco-Bactria	Huns-China war	Tsin Shih
300		Sargat-Gorohovo		Alexander the		Chzhan-Go
400	Scythian Kingdom	EIA (IA1)	Sacians	Great	Hun Kingdom	
500	Early Scythians		EIA	EIA		Iron Age
600	Sauromatians	Transitional pre-Sargat	Early Sacians	Yaz 2		
700	EIA		Transitional	Achaemenid		
800	Kimmerians (pre-Scythian) Transitional	LBA	Arzhan	Cities-oases Yaz 1	Plate Grave culture LBA	Tcheou BA

The Research Problem

Previous research provides nearly uniform views of sedentary - nomadic interactions and relationships during the early Iron Age. Hypotheses concerning the role of nomads in the early Iron Age can be summarized in the following ways:

1) Nomads immigrated into the area;

2) Nomads brought with them a material cultural style that linked them with other nomadic groups across Eurasia, the Scytho-Siberian unity (exemplified by the "animal style");

3) Nomads buried their dead in separate, bounded funerary areas in kurgans (earthen mounds);

4) These kurgans denote a three-part hierarchical arrangement of the society —ruling elite, warrior elite, and other (disposed of in another location and some other, as yet unknown, method).

Other descriptions of nomadic involvement in Western Siberia have largely emphasized warfare as the primary cultural interaction. The reasoning behind this is that large-scale social transitions resulted from the introduction of nomadic pastoralism and the subsequent cultural interaction between various societies and the steppe/forest-steppe led to significant social stressors – including wealth differentiation and socio-political ties. The emphasis in Russian and Soviet archaeology has been to both label and debate the location of bounded cultural groups, obtained primarily through culture-historical interpretations. Specific nomadic cultures were said to occupy specific spatial and temporal locations in a seemingly homogeneous fashion. And yet, other possible interactions between nomads and their sedentary neighbors might well be examined.

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Multiple scenarios have been created to describe the life ways of nomadic pastoralists in Western Siberia, but truly understanding the socio-economic organization of these people is difficult. Suggested reconstructions are often based on historical accounts and the minimal animal remains that can be grossly recovered, without use of screening or water screening (Hanks 2003). The strength of the data is problematic because of the heavy reliance on the historical texts and the excavation techniques used by Soviet and Russian archaeologists. The focus of archaeological inquiry has been on the excavation of mounds, and only recently settlements, to the exclusion of other archaeological methods such as survey. Recent attempts by the French-Russian project have begun to use aerial photographs with on-the-ground verification, but for the most part these are used to find more burial mounds and settlements for excavation. No attempt has been made to find the ephemeral traces of the other kinds of sites one would expect to be associated with large-scale mobility – such as paddocks, grazing land.

Another reason why our knowledge of the pastoral economy in the early Iron Age is incomplete is due to the specific interests of Soviet/Russian archaeologists. Archaeology has been the "head" of history's "horse" (Klejn 1993), where the role of the historian has been to synthesize and theorize; the role of archaeology, to dig. "Archaeology is history, what the telescope is to astronomy, the microscope to biology" (Mongait 1961:39). Much of the work of archaeologists during the Soviet era was to produce descriptive reports (Klejn 1977; Berezkin 2000). The post-Soviet era, unfortunately, has been greeted by reduced financial support, a greater threat of site destruction due to lack of policing authority, and a thriving illegal antiquities market

(Anthony 1995; Berezkin 2000). Producing new interpretations of the material culture was not the emphasis in the past and can only be an ideal in the current situation. New models of interaction between sedentary and nomadic groups will be used in this dissertation in cooperation with recent data and data collections to explore new possibilities of social interaction represented in the Western Siberian steppe and forest-steppe. Using Spielman (1991a, 1991b), this dissertation explores the dynamic nature of cultural interaction to look beyond the prevailing views of cultural interaction as being extortive (Barfield 1989; Köhler-Rollefson 1992) to explore symbiotic relations, even what Spielman denotes as "mutualism", an exchange based on cooperation, interdependence, and mutual benefit (1986:279-280).

CHAPTER SYNOPSES

A brief overview of the chapters of this dissertation is useful for outlining the argument and the kinds of data employed. Chapter two consists of a review of the relevant anthropological literature on nomadism, more specifically pastoral nomadism. In it I define both concepts, trace the history of the study of nomadic pastoralists in anthropology, and put into motion the spine of this dissertation –how nomads as cultural "others" with reference to their sedentary neighbors interacted with the latter –the subject of the next chapter. These interactions form the basis of interpretation of the archaeological data, specifically mortuary practice, material culture, and landscape data from Western Siberia.In order to contextualize the contemporary archaeological being done in Western Siberia, it is necessary to review the archaeology and ethnography of Russia. The motives and ideologies of Tsarist, Soviet, and Russian archaeologists who

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explored the mortuary domain of the early Iron Age shaped the manner in which they observed, collected and interpreted the evidence as they were in turn shaped by the scientific community surrounding them. Archaeology as a historical discipline in Russia is explored in chapter three and four, the latter chapter focusing specifically on the Iron Age of Western and South Siberia. As I show, the Iron Age is a time period during which important changes occurred on the Siberian steppe and forest-steppe, changes that involved the climate, economic adaptation, and the interaction of populations across this vast expanse of land area. How these interactions have been interpreted by archaeologists and the data that have been used in these interpretations will be further explored in this chapter.

Chapter five explores the methodologies employed to analyze pastoral nomads archaeologically. The archaeological expressions of nomadism including taphonomy and material culture are discussed with an eye toward the use of ethnoarchaeology in the future to assist with the development of further signatures of nomadism. In Siberia the signature for the nomads has been contained within their mortuary practice, thus a full discussion of mortuary analysis is contained in this chapter as well. The various forms of identity expression and cultural interaction are addressed from multiple lines of evidence, including the use of landscape, settlement data, architecture, trade goods, and evidence of ritual practice. The data being used in this analysis is articulated in chapter six. I examine the excavation data from two separate nomad populations in Siberia, the Sauro-Sarmatian evidence from Pokrovka 2 in South Siberia, and the Sargat material from two sites in Western Siberia, Malokazakhbaevo and Skaty. The analysis of these sites occurs

in chapter seven where I evaluate how local identities are expressed and whether forms of local identity compete with or support a regional appropriation of nomadism.

Chapter eight consists of a broad discussion of our understanding of nomads on the Siberian steppe and forest-steppe based on the previous chapters. Each of the lines of evidence is assessed in terms of its ability to explain the expressions of nomad identity and the interactions between nomads and sedentary groups. I review the results of the analysis, including the unexpected characteristics of these particular sites in lieu of regional expectations. The chapter concludes by identifying the course of future work.

CHAPTER TWO

ANTHROPOLOGICAL AND ARCHAEOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO NOMADISM

...to understand nomadism truly, we must grasp its dependence on human

objectives and upon multiple social, cultural, and environmental circumstances

and thus appreciate its variability, its malleability, and it impermanence.

(Salzman 2002:261)

DEFINITIONS OF NOMADS AND PASTORAL NOMADISM

Popular and romantic conceptions of nomads often reduce them to individuals with an aimless, wandering lifestyle, free from political impositions and the daily schedules of sedentary existence. Seen as adventurers on horse or camelback, our ideal nomad is either wealthy from his stolen booty, or living in abject poverty beyond the gates of prosperous civilizations. Our conceptions are rooted in Classical impressions of the barbarians (primarily from Herodotus' Histories and Strabo's Geography) and to a much lesser degree the work of Chinese historians. In contrast to the popular conceptions, nomadism is neither based on one particular kind of economic system, nor is it tied to perpetual mobility, mounted or on foot. Nomads are not limited to one type of environment. They develop a myriad of land tenure practices, and their social organization varies broadly, as does their ability to accrue wealth both individually and collectively. Due to the diversity of such practices researchers are hard pressed to come to agreement on any one definition of nomadism, even within the same volume (see Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992; Galaty and Johnson 1990; Hall and Smith 1986). Often definitions of nomadism are taken to be implicit, yet never clearly agreed upon. During

the last three decades, however, anthropologists have carefully refined their study of nomads and the language of nomadic studies to help alleviate the misconstruction of these diverse populations while simultaneously developing definitions as diverse as the populations being studied.

The vast majority of nomad research published within the last several decades has been in reference to a particular type of economic adaptation, livestock raising, coupled with a mobility strategy. This strategy can be referred to as pastoral nomadism or nomadic pastoralism, terms that I use interchangeably. Even the most broad and seemingly encompassing of titles – Nomads of South Persia (Barth 1961), Nomads in Archaeology (Cribb 1991), or "Ancient Inner Asian Nomads" (DiCosmo 1994) – all deal specifically with the raising of domestic animals on natural food resources by populations with varying degrees of transience. Nomadism is a descriptive meeting place of both mobility and economy (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980; Salzman 2002), sometimes with an emphasis on economy that includes social organization (Khazanov 1994). Some researchers have wed the pastoral nomads so closely to their physical geography (Galaty and Johnson 1990) as to offer a framework for the comparative study of pastoral systems on a global scale, a comparative look that can find similarities between geographic adaptations, e.g. Andes, Caucasus, and Himalayas that have no historical connection. Pastoral peoples have much more in common with their immediate sedentary neighbors (i.e. the Hutu and Tutsi, or the Kyrgyz and Kazakh) rather than with those groups sharing similar altitudes (Khazanov 1994:xxxiv).

There has been a distinct movement in nomad studies to recognize the complexity of nomadic adaptations and to address the diversity of most economies. Most

contemporary researchers recognize a "nomadic" lifestyle as occupying some space on a continuum between fully mobile and sedentary (Barfield 1993; Khazanov 1994; Salzman 1971, 2002). Most accept that there is a large degree of flexibility to their economic adaptation, with groups often shifting between animal husbandry alone, and husbandry mixed with other forms of production or collection. Pastoralism can depend upon a wide variety of political (Barfield 1989, 1993; Barth 1961; Honeychurch 2004; Khazanov 1994; Rowton 1981; Zagarell 1989;), social (Chang and Tourtellotte 1998; Cribb 1991), economic (Alvard and Kuznar 2001; Bradburd 1996; DiCosmo 1994; Levy 1983; Mace 1993) and environmental conditions (Adams 1981; Humphrey and Sneath 1996; Lees and Bates 1974; Rosen, Chang and Grigoriev 2000), or combinations of these (Barth 1966; Chang 1993). Nomadism must be recognized as historically and environmentally situated, making narrow definitions that dictate specific criteria for inclusion unrealistic and unhelpful. One cannot be as unconventional with one's definition as to create an altogether unique definition, as such particularism would surely hold little value in a comparative discipline such as anthropology. In order to understand the nomads of Western Siberia this study needs to examine both the nature of their movements and the basis for their economies. Thus, a clear definition of pastoral nomad is necessary.

Based on the work of Barfield (1989, 1993), Khazanov (1978, 1994 and Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992), and Salzman (1971, 1996, 2002) a clearer definition of nomadic pastoralism can be forwarded. These authors, working over the course of several decades, have provided a depth and understanding of nomads that covers a broad geographical area including Africa, Eurasia, Asia, and the Middle East, and they are among the most cited in the literature from any approach. Given the scope of their

collective work one has a stronger ability to decipher the economic, environmental and social issues associated with nomadism.

"Nomadism" is used to understand mobility patterns of entire households, or when "the majority of the population is drawn into periodic migrations (Khazanov 1994:17). "Pastoralism" relates to the raising of domesticated herd animals (goats, sheep, camels, cattle, or horses to name the most prominent[1]), specifically the "raising of livestock on natural pasture"(Salzman 2002:245 based on Salzman 1971; Barfield 1993:4; and Khazanov 1994:15-16). In this way, the issues of mobility and economy do not become "conflated" and researchers can prevent *a priori* assumptions about the nature of production, herd make-up, and movement (Salzman 2002:245). This definition also separates nomads from hunter/gatherers or seasonal workers (e.g. itinerant farmers or seasonal laborers). Nomadism specifically refers to the "regular, repeated, and frequent displacement of people's household and home base and of their community" (Salzman 2002:246). "Pastoralism" refers to herding domesticated animals while making regular movements of entire households (nomadically). This is an agreeable definition that can be useful for narrowing our perspectives on nomads, but "a definition would never become an end in itself, but only an instrument to aid our understanding of reality" (Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992:2).

With its first English translation appearing in 1983[2], Khazanov's *Nomads and the Outside World* was the first comprehensive and comparative survey of nomadism, although it does not acknowledge New World forms because they do not conform to his

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[1] Other animals included in pastoral nomadism can and do include llamas, alpaca, and reindeer, animals with very specific environmental and geographic distributions.
[2] Khazanov prepared the text in Russian while still living in the USSR, drafts of chapters and proofs from the publisher were smuggled back and forth through "holes" in the Iron Curtain (Khazanov 1994:xxix-xxx).

definition of pastoral nomadism. Khazanov's typology creates a series of empirical categories for pastoral nomads that range from *transhumance*, to a village-based *semi-sedentary* variety, to *semi-nomadic*, an extensive pastoral practice with some agricultural supplements, and finally *pure* pastoral nomadism. While studies roughly contemporary with *Nomads* initial publication date (e.g. Ingold 1986) placed the emphasis on mobility and resource appropriation, this emphasis creates a false degree of similarity between pastoralists and hunter/gatherers denying the contrasts between food-extracting and food-producing economies as well as underestimating wild versus domesticated resources. In many ways Khazanov's typology is an ideal classification, and subsequently has been criticized as too strict and narrow (see: Hanks 2002b; Ingold 1985), Khazanov states that his categories should be used only to inform one's analysis and serve the goals of investigation (Khazanov 1994). His categories focus on the size and importance of agriculture, a "defining feature of subsistence of any productive economy (Khazanov 1994:xxxiii). Thus his schema, while seeming to focus on mobility (*transhumance, semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic*), actually does so only in direct relation to agricultural production. When larger numbers of individuals are involved in agricultural work, within any given mode of subsistence, fewer people move with the herds, creating semi-sedentary societies.

Pastoralists with mixed farming present a division of labor within the same society. Pure nomadism requires a division of labor between different societies or groups (Khazanov 1994:18). This "pure" form is defined as a:

> ...distinct type of food producing economy...[where] extensive mobile
> pastoralism is the predominant activity through which the majority of the

population is drawn into periodic migrations in order to maintain herds all year round within a system of free-range pastures... characterized by the absence of agriculture even in a supplementary capacity.

(Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992:2)

In this definition, the key to uncovering pure nomadism is in the lack of agricultural production. The recovery of domesticates without the recovery of agricultural implements or the ephemeral traces of farm fields does not necessarily mean a particular group is personally practicing agriculture. Detecting domesticated grains is not at issue, but detecting the degree of their importance, use, and the origins of their production is. The necessary reliance upon agricultural goods by pastoral nomads is acknowledged and documented by many (Barfield 2001b; Barth 1969, 1973; Cribb 1991; Köhler-Rollefson 1992), but when one looks only to the archaeological record, determining the amount of grain obtained from external sources rather than that grown directly by the nomads is nearly impossible to ascertain. As pastoralists become more focused herders with greater mobility, they increasingly depend upon sedentary groups for economic resources, primarily fodder (Khazanov 1994; Lees and Bates 1974). Khazanov posits an ideological dependency of nomadic societies on their sedentary neighbors, where nomads model themselves for "comparison, imitation, or rejection" (1994:xxxii), but the degree of this self-modeling is not fully explored. Through his perspective it becomes impossible to distinguish between two groups living near each other who may be part of a single culture, yet participating in separate economic realms, versus two separate cultural groups. The sole use of archaeological materials is not seen to provide enough "unambiguous answers" about the forms that pastoralism may take

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(Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992:3). Based on his ethnographic work among four separate nomadic groups in Iran and thirty years of experience and publishing, Salzman determines the basic prerequisites for determining nomadism. One must find portable housing, such as tents, lean-tos or huts made from "disposable, local materials" (2002:246), and evidence of mobility in the course of making a living. Mobility of the bulk of the population separates pastoral nomads from herders or shepherds.

Salzman (2002) elaborates twenty general tenets of pastoral nomadism, most of which are points supported by a variety of other authors. Here, I condense these tenets into five that are specific to the direction of this research, ignoring those that pertain to nomads involved with contemporary, state-level governments. Pastoral nomads:

1. gain access to resources through movement;

2. make "rapid responses" to temporary situations;

3. do not practice just one economic activity (not *determined* by economic activity);

4. do not wander without purpose; and

5. have variable social organization.

Because of their reliance on herd animals, pastoral nomads must provide fodder for their animals. Some nomads participate in some level of horticulture or agricultural production or exchange to obtain a portion of their animals' food, while others access wild grains by moving the herds from area to area. Areas where the wild resources are seasonal necessitate a mobility or economic strategy to maintain year-round fodder. Populations without adequate storage facilities move to find wild grains and grasses or beg, borrow, or steal grains from sedentary stores. If wild resources are less abundant or lacking altogether for longer periods of time, groups may switch from pastoralism to

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cultivation and alternate their levels of mobility. The practice of swapping productive activities for a time is widespread and may be mandatory for survival (the Turkmen are discussed by Salzman 2002).[3]

Because the entire household is participating in production, pastoral nomads can respond more quickly to emergency situations caused by nature (flood, fire, drought) or culture (population expansion, war, trade). "Rapid response" also addresses their ability to access "irregular and unpredictable resources" (Salzman 2002:249), what some refer to as "contingent" responses to a wide range of physical and social variables, including everything from insects and disease to competition and unpopular, prospective authorities (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:17-18; Rosen 1992:153).

While pastoral nomads are predominantly producing domesticated animals, this does not preclude some alternate economic forms performed occasionally or regularly —e.g. hunting among the Evenki (Fondahl 1998), fishing among the Yakut (Tokarev and Gurvich 1956) and Nuer (Evans-Pritchard 1940), gathering wild resources, or cultivating among the Baluch (Salzman 2002) and San (Wilmsen 1989). The practice of domestic animal herding does not solely determine nomadism in the sense that portions of the household may participate in these activities without necessitating the regular movement of the entire household as with shepherding or contemporary ranching activities. "Heidi is not the story of a Swiss nomad girl even though she herded cows and goats each summer" (Barfield 1994:5).

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[3] The ability to provide grains and grasses for a sedentary herd is much more economically disadvantageous for groups without significant capital for investment. But it will be argued later that social capital might be expended to "purchase" fodder from seasonal partners, sedentary groups with whom the pastoral nomads might have a variety of relationships from symbiotic to parasitic.

The perception of nomads as itinerant drifters undoubtedly has been reinforced by the most common of sources, the dictionary, where the origins of the word "nomad" can be traced to the Latin for "a person belonging to a race or tribe which moves from place to place to find pasture; hence one who lives a roaming or wandering life" (Salzman 2002:245 citing *OED* VII:182). But the roots of our perceptions are deeply embedded in early histories as well (the fourth century BC *Histories* through the fourteenth-fifteenth century writings of Ibn Khaldun). This definition solidifies the perception of nomadism as tribal, ethnically or racially segregated, and somehow practiced in boundless open space, without roots or ownership of land. The ethnographic record supports none of these opinions.

Because they rely predominantly on their herds, pastoral nomads must be forever conscious of where food will be found for their animals. Thus, decisions must be made which are cognizant of the conditions of terrain, ecology, logistics, and weather to name but a few considerations. Most nomadic groups move within distinct geographic territories as direct knowledge of local weather patterns and specific resources are vital for herd survival. Pastoralists thrive using value systems that require sophisticated knowledge of the environment, sensible use of land and water resources, and a close relationship with nature (Galaty and Johnson 1990:5). Within their specific regions, pastoral nomads may move as often as daily, may follow seasonal routes, or undertake annual sojourns. And their routes do not necessarily recognize the authority of any single state or nation. Many Central Asian nomads, such as the Baluchi and the Yomut, are "fiercely independent" (Salzman 2002:251) of the state governments who "own" their

territories; while others, like the Komachi of Persia (Salzman 1996) can maintain full mobility and be fully integrated by the state.

Within pastoral groups there are highly distinctive levels of social inclusion and differentiation. Some are egalitarian, with equal access to resources and share in the decision-making, like the Nuer and Maasai (Galaty 1994), Ju/'hoansi, i.e. Kalahari Bushmen or San (Kent 1993; Lee 1979), and Turkmen (Irons 1994). It should be noted that strong debate exists as to the possibility of any system existing without basic forms of inequality (see Salzman 1999 for a thorough discussion). While others are considered "weak chiefdoms", like the Baluch, Basseri, and Rwala (Salzman 2000), to centralized tribes, some with confederacy chiefships like the Zagros (Barth 1961) and Qashqa'i (Beck 1986), Xiongnu (Barfield 1989), Saka and Wusun (Chang and Tourtellotte 1998). Salzman (2002:253) and others (Barfield 1989; Beck 1986; Chang and Tourtellotte 1998; Irons 1979; Zagarell 1989) note that social hierarchies, like chieftainships, organize in response to direct confrontation with external populations (read "states"), thereby implying or directly stating that pastoral nomads living in fringe areas or more remote locations are less likely to organize themselves hierarchically. Because individual households control the flocks, pastoral nomads like other mobile populations (hunter/gatherers) will pack up and move when conflict arises if space is available. Salzman spells this out most emphatically when he states:

> Nomadic pastoralism is politically centrifugal, militating against central and
> hierarchical power, if not always decisively. The mobility of nomadic
> individuals, households, and capital resources, especially flocks, makes
> avoidance, escape, and attack easier and more likely successful than among

sedentary populations. Nomadic mobility, in consequence, has a dampening effect

on centralizations, on chiefly coercion and oppression. Tribal chiefs thus must be

sensitive and responsible to public opinion of tribesmen.

(Salzman 2002:254)

In the archaeological record recognizing social differentiation or hierarchy within

one group, or in the interactions of two distinct populations, it is necessary to identify the

taphonomic signatures of pastoral nomadism. Can we discern nomads as separate

cultures from their neighbors, sedentary or otherwise? Often the measure of social status

is based on wealth acquisition or differential treatment of the living or the dead. The

most common measures of wealth among pastoral nomads include numbers of herd

animals ("wealth on-the-hoof"), land ownership (though in arid environments land that

has no access to water is considered of "little worth" (Horne 1994:156), portable wealth

(exotic items, items made from rare resources, etc.), and permanent/semi-permanent

structures. In this latter category, the determination of household wealth often relates to

the public displays of conspicuous consumption or those of practical use such as

production areas, the size of storage and living areas, animal enclosures, and the number

of rooms in a household (Horne 1994:159). In Western Siberia the most common

measure of social differentiation of the nomads has been the only taphonomic signature

available to us – the burial mounds and their contents.

Understanding whether I am looking at one population practicing two separate

economic modes, two interacting populations who are minimally separated by economic

practice and mobility, or the merging of two groups, where one part of the population

harkens back to nomadism as a means of differentiation is a vital question of this research. Thus the definition of pastoral nomadism constructed specifically by archaeologists practicing in Eurasia must be considered, as these are the social scientists with the most knowledge of the conditions in Western Siberia.

Yablonsky (1998) delivers a six-point classification of "classical nomads" from Eurasia, which, in order of importance:

1. composition (cannot have pig)
2. economic focus on animals
3. a hierarchical social organization
4. war as a "way of life"
5. active interactions with settled populations
6. some amount of migration or movement.

Here we see the establishment of specific requirements for nomadism but ones that maintain some flexibility. Yablonsky specifies animals for exclusion, categorically barnyard animals, flexible herd structure (sheep, goats, horse, cattle, camels), and leaves room for alternative supportive economic practices like collecting, hunting, or fishing. Within nomadism the possibility of some agricultural production exists as well. His schema allows for a wide spectrum of mobility strategies but places this as the lowest priority for classification of these groups.

Working with the Tuva of South Siberia, Vainshtein (1980) uses ethnographic, ethnohistoric, and archaeological sources to reach conclusions about nomadism that precede many of Yablonsky's and Khazanov's key elements. Vainshtein describes "nomadic herding" as comprising two forms, either continuous migrations, which are

considered rare, or migrations with prolonged stops at seasonal campsites. Neither form requires movement of any great distance, "a few kilometers to a few thousand kilometers" will suffice (1980:96). These nomadic "ways of life" create three categories. In the first, pure nomadic herdsmen migrate several times per season in "no ordered pattern" (Vainshtein 1980:97 citing Tokarev 1936:12). The second, semi-nomadic pastoralism, combines cultivation, hunting, or gathering while the group maintains a single, permanent dwelling visited annually. In the third, semi-settled pastoralism, populations practice a type of economy where the herders move between two permanent locales. For all of these the herd composition includes sheep, goats, horses, and camels, even reindeer. All these categories are based on the ethnographic research done by Soviet scholars from the 1930s through the 1970s and are used extensively by both Soviet and now Russian authors researching Eurasian nomads (Khazanov 1978, 1994; Markov 1976; Tokarov 1936; Zimonov 1958) especially those whose focus is on the Bronze and Iron Ages of Western Siberia (Gryaznov 1969; Koryakova 1988, 1996; Kuzmina 1994; Matveeva 1993, 1997; Moshkova 1995; Yablonsky 1995, 1998). Many use these categories with impunity, regardless of archaeology's ability to define the necessary markers of inclusion into one group or another. Without the supportive historical evidence for the nature of their movement and exchanges with sedentary agrarian peoples, we cannot establish the degree of reliance upon internally produced agricultural products.

A rigid adherence to any typological classification produces rules made to be broken. So, within the finite world of archaeological enquiry, it is unnecessary to classify a group as purely nomadic in order to indicate some degree of pastoralism. Perhaps a

better way to view any individual situation is to determine whether being a pastoral nomad gave individuals membership to a different status, either within a greater society or as a society unto themselves. Can individuals practicing pastoral nomadism be distinguished in specific contexts, in this dissertation within a mortuary context? Did this lifestyle allow for differential access to resources that has a material culture correlate and a unique mortuary signature?

HISTORY OF NOMAD STUDIES IN ANTHROPOLOGY

Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries

Throughout the late 19th and early 20th centuries pastoral nomads were seen as invading, destructive, and altogether antithetical to civilizing, sedentary societies. Rarely do nomads receive credit as a civilizing force, though a notable exception placed specific cultural accomplishments on the African continent not in the hands of the indigenous "Negro" populations, but instead gave credit to nomadic, and light-skinned, Hamites moving in from the North (Trigger 1995:130). This was less about the accomplishments of nomads than a rejection of the accomplishments of Africans. One can argue that the majority of histories written about the Mongol *hordes* emphasize their destructive nature, rather than the unifying qualities of their empire building, the extension of trade routes, and the sharing of genetic material that make so many Europeans "kin" to their ancestral Central Asian conquerors. It is doubtful that the Chinese would have mustered the labor and the ingenuity to construct the Great Wall without the presence of their nomadic neighbors; there would have been no need. Thus one can trace many of the accomplishments of civilizations back to nomadic "instigation", direct threat, or pressure.

During the early part of the 20th century, the Soviet Union was under the strong influence of both a materialist approach, one invoking highly inductive methods (Kohl 1981:89), and a unilinear evolutionary approach with its roots wrapped around the ideas of Morgan and Marx. These perspectives held sway over an entire generation of Soviet social scientists, though not without internal struggles and debates. The official Soviet view pitted armchair Marxists against the concrete evidence produced by ethnographers in the field. Most often it was the unilinear viewpoint that prevailed. Ethnographers and archaeologists alike found examples from primitive, patriarchal slave-owning, and feudal systems in the field, just as Lenin expected. At the end of the Czarist period, ethnographers had reported on pastoral groups who were semi-patriarchal, yet not feudal, and others who operated markets that were quite nearly capitalist. Under the watchful, dictatorial, and dogmatic eyes of the central authorities, it is hardly surprising that ... "slave-owning and feudal stages among nomads were *discovered* (Khazanov 1994:11, author's emphasis).

In the West, Montelian arguments put forth the idea that much of Europe owed a debt of gratitude to invading forces from the East, mainly Semitic and Indo-European speakers arriving during the Bronze Age, who brought with them the technologies of Mesopotamia. That nomadism acted as a cultural instigator remained a common theme into the early 20th century. Indo-Europeans spread their language, beliefs, technologies, and social customs, forcing by some estimations the "lesser developed" cultural groups of Europe to create social hierarchies they would otherwise have been wont to do (Trigger

1995:168[4]). Often indigenous European groups were merely submissive to the

conquering powers.

      Both the mobility and the "superior" nature of these nomads explained the

cultural developments seen on the European continent in the subsequent Iron Age and

later Medieval period, their eventual superiority conquered the "barbarians" living to the

north of Rome. These were the pastoral nomads, specifically *Aryans*, whom V. Gordon

Childe called the "promoters of true progress" (Childe 1925) and "cultural innovators"

(Childe 1926:143), while the European peasantry were simply "an inert mass... |with|

narrow conservatism... an intense attachment to the soil" and a high susceptibility to

foreign influences (Childe 1926:143-153). The resulting synthesis of peoples and

material culture led to the development of the concept of *archaeological culture*. Childe's

1925 work, *The Dawn of European Civilization,* introduces the idea that artifacts and

their prerequisite creators could be separated and geographically delineated according to

the attributes of the material remains (Trigger 1995:168). Childe would later cite John

Myres (*The Dawn of History*, 1911) as a key figure, who debunked earlier notions that

pastoralism merely followed hunting and fishing on the evolutionary ladder leading to

agriculture. " . . . pastoral nomadism is everywhere posterior to sedentary agriculture and

was only adopted by cultivators under the pressure of adverse climatic conditions or

political convulsions" (Childe 1926:84).

      After World War II, the renewed fascination with nomads may be attributed to

our (Western) own disgruntlement with our daily, immobile, repetitive lives. The

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[4] Trigger here cites very early 20th century authors (like Myers 1911, Crawford 1921, and Childe 1925) who perceived Neolithic Europeans as quite backward by comparison to the Indo-Europeans. This persists as a popular idea, Gimbutas (1956, 1965) clearly stated native Europeans were not less developed, while Whittle in *Europe in the Neolithic* (1996) maintains that it is not at all clear that indigenous Europeans were less developed so much as perhaps more submissive.

romantic stereotypes of the wandering, careless nomads held sway through much of the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Research continued to plug nomads into stereotypes, and prove the boundedness and stability of structural systems (Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980:15-16), at the same time researchers neglected anomalous cultural groups, individuality, and women. The Soviets, after a generation spent pursuing their own version of Marxist romanticism, shifted their emphasis during the 1950s to obtaining empirical evidence. Pastoralism proved a difficult practice to cleanly classify. Pastoralists were shown to own livestock, but not communally, and while they held livestock privately, at the family level, they did not personally benefit from buying and selling animals as a capitalist would. The degree of state formation and social stratification of living nomads proved "ephemeral and unstable and elusive" (Gellner 1994:xiii). By the 1970s much Soviet scholarship had attempted to find the slave-owners *in situ*, ethnographically or archaeologically. All pastoral nomads should have been slave-owning or feudal, or else something would be terribly wrong with their paradigm.

Contrary to these earlier pursuits of monolithic types, Barth (1969) introduced what is perhaps the most fundamental shift in pastoral terminology with the concept of *continuum*. As defined by Barth, pastoralism does not exist in an uncorrupted form, but is combined with several other activities and modes of living. Nomadism is fraught with variation as groups extend from free-range to sedentism. Individuals and groups can live in sedentary households and have pastoral pursuits, and alternately nomadic households might maintain traditionally sedentary economic pursuits. The continuum concept has been widely developed since Barth to include a spatial and temporal component as well

(Michael 1987; Spencer 1998). In the process of adopting this concept, there has been a near obliteration of the nuances of these lifestyles and the individuals who practice them.

While Barth is commonly used as the *pro forma* model of sedentarization, he is also critiqued quite appropriately for his unproven assumptions regarding pastoral capital (animals on-the-hoof denoting the wealth of individuals and groups), the cultural context within which sedentarization takes place, and the ability for groups, individual households, or individuals to become sedentary only to later revert to nomadism (critiques eloquently taken up in Swee 1981). Salzman (1972) developed an alternative model looking at the *degree* to which pastoralists relied on other modes of production; this would allow us to quantify the variability of alternate forms of pastoralism. But measuring percentages of bartered grains versus gathered wild resources versus livestock consumption has apparently proven untenable, as no one seems to have pursued it further.

The focus on economy was one direction of nomad studies. Another direction, focused on the role that the environment played in directing or even determining nomadic economic forms and social structures, had its beginnings with Evans-Pritchard's (1940) work among the Nuer (see Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980 for a thorough discussion). But the fullness of these determinist approaches resulted from the work of numerous anthropologists and archaeologists.

Environmental and Ecological Approaches

The wider availability of research money and increased numbers of archaeologists in the post-War era led to broader approaches to nomadism, in particular the introduction of environmental and ecological approaches. To say that herd size directly impacts

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household size the greater the degree of pastoral nomadic specialization seems self-evident. The size of the corporate network and the size or composition type of the herd will directly influence a particular family's ability to stave off famine, survive floods or droughts by relying on personal ties to provide a buffer during hard times. But it is especially necessary for pastoral groups to constantly factor the needs of their herds, for protection and fodder, into their movements. In order to provide food and shelter, especially in the desert or Siberian steppe, inhospitable environments where nomads are commonly found, it is necessary for pastoralists to use the natural elements to their advantage.

The accumulation of empirical field data allowed archaeologists to see that the environment, as a dynamic variable, interacted with culture and society. The culture-historical approach allowed us to learn about past ways of life by identifying cultures and constructing chronologies. Change remained an illusive concept. The environment could account for the bulk of this exogenous change (Trigger 1984:275). For Steward (1953, 1955), adaptation of groups to the environment influenced the "culture core", itself a vaguely defined concept that primarily focused on subsistence and economic arrangements, but might also include ideology or social and political organization (Kohl 1981:101). In his search for regularities of human cultures, distinct traditions were explained by environmental similarities (Orlove 1980:236-238). His cultural ecological approach, with its emphasis on multilinear lines of evolution, would influence everyone from Service's bands-tribes-chiefdoms, to Harris's neofunctional adaptations.

The New Archaeology sought to test general laws of human nature through the establishment of systematic relationships. Binford (1972) saw human cultures as open

systems that interacted, both positively and negatively, with nature creating a larger ecosystem. Harris (1968) called for a "strategy of cultural materialism" based on both the techno-environmental and techno-economic determinism of White (1969) and Steward (1955). His strategy viewed culture as a response to the environment based on a principle that "holds that similar technologies applied to similar environments tend to produce similar arrangements of labor in production and distribution, and these in turn call forth similar kinds of social groupings, which justify and coordinate their activities by means of similar systems of values and beliefs" (Harris 1968:4). Within his discussion of social organization and culture, Harris continues to see these as functional adaptations that permit populations to exploit the environment (Orlove 1980:240) if not be directed by their environment. The environment is not a passive backdrop but acts to shape culture as it is in turned shaped by culture.

The New Archaeology put humans back into nature, operating within ecosystems, surviving and adapting. Over time, it has been recognized that no one portion of a culture, be it social forms, technology, or economy, entirely determines the response of the entire system. If one portion were to be the sole determinant, then there would be far less variation seen in the archaeological record (Trigger 1995:403). Having said this, one cannot deny the limitations placed on a group's economic practices by their environment —one cannot whale hunt in the desert. Environment alone does not dictate spatial behaviors, and the elements are not the only concern of pastoral nomads.

Sahlins (1972) believed that mobility conditioned an individual's attitudes toward the material world, but the material side is often missing in ethnographic accounts from this era (Horne 1994:2). Sahlins further suggested that nomadic societies developed

down two distinct paths. Down one path, low population density and uncertain

production left nomadic populations with little hierarchical structure; when more reliable

resources and larger populations co-occurred, "chiefly" organization was favored

(Sahlins 1968:32-39). The second developmental path required an adaptation to

sedentary neighbors, leading to "confederation and centralization of the herders" (Sahlins

1968:38). Sahlins believed that the wealth of the settlements, based on agriculture, was

what attracted the nomads and assisted in their consolidation. The regular interaction

with sedentary populations, peaceful and otherwise, led to the need for permanent

leadership among nomadic groups. It is these relationships, and not internal structures,

that Sahlins views as the primary source of development among peripheral nomadic

groups (Honeychurch 2004:9). Soviet scholars during the 1980s attempted to prove

pastoral societies were internally stratified, and that land was owned by the upper classes

(Ingold 1985:385). These two issues, land tenure and social stratification, were at the

focus of Soviet scholarship while Western scholars assumed pastoralists were egalitarian

(Gellner 1994:xiii; Ingold 1986; Layton, Foley and Williams 1991) unless, as Sahlins

made clear, the nomads had taken the second path of development. Markov (1976) notes

that what inequality emerges amongst pastoral nomads is often a consequence of war and

raiding, but can never involve keeping the lower strata of society from the means of

production (animals and pasturage) as they, the elite, would have needed the labor more

than the laborers needed them.

These productive relations would need to be cooperative or consensual, a view

reiterated by Khazanov (1994) but in relation to nomads and the outside, or sedentary,

world. To Khazanov, nomadism represents a specialized, if widespread, occurrence of

economic production and mobility, with social formations and historical specificity that connect different societies and cultures. In his view, there can be no nomadic "autarky" as their very existence is dependent upon the exchange relations with sedentary peoples (Khazanov 1994:33-37. Many of his own conclusions on Eurasian nomads are rooted in his archaeological work with the Scythians (Khazanov 1975, 1978), discussed more in the next chapter on Soviet and Russian archaeology.

The interactions between nomadic and sedentary groups have remained of particular interest to anthropologists for the past twenty years. A few researchers have since documented the rare, but not impossible circumstances when nomads do live in isolation (Chang 1993; DiCosmo 1994; Hole 1978:138; Salzman 2002) largely dependent on the diversity of their economies (i.e. the more components within the economy, agriculture, fishing, hunting, gathering, and pastoralism, equates to a better chance at independence), but as Salzman states most nomads have a "versatile, multipurpose nomadism that they use to the fullest extent" (2002:249), sometimes living within states, sometimes on the fringes, and at times isolated from regular interaction – independent if not fully isolated from settled peoples. Most agree that even nomads with diversified economies could not be successful without an interaction with sedentary populations and their agricultural products (Barfield 2001b; Barth 1969, 1973; Khazanov 1978; Köhler-Rollefson 1992; Lees and Bates 1974). Spencer (1998) even goes so far as to proclaim that it is the marginalization from sedentary pursuits that maintains pastoralism as a viable way of life. In this way nomads are considered as little more than pawns to the sedentary, "civilized" world – related to, reliant upon, but not necessarily fully "integrated" (Honeychurch 2004:10). Surely as no man is an island, no cultural group

can operate in isolation, certainly not in the modern world, and likely not in prehistory either (Kohl 1987; Renfrew and Cherry 1986; Schortman and Urban 1987; Trigger 1995).

During the 1980s, a period of rampant definition and categorization, the comparative study of pastoral nomads was in disarray. While the nomads were largely recognized as integrated into greater world systems, each cultural group was treated in isolation with a "specificity jealously guarded by the ethnographer" (Ingold 1985:384). Comparisons were drawn only intra-regionally – not between East Africa and Southeast Asia, for example. And the terms "pastoralism" and "nomadism" were so loosely defined as to lose value altogether. It is during this period of disarray that Anatoly Khazanov emigrated to the West bringing with him his unpublished manuscript, Nomads and the Outside World. His viewpoint, while born in the Soviet Union, was nonetheless widely informed by anthropological and archaeological work from around the globe and created one of the first comprehensive, comparative looks at pastoral nomadism.

While many anthropologists may prescribe to Barth's continuum, in practice it is more common to use some form of typology. Some anthropologists believe we can make distinctive typologies of nomadic adaptation, from "pure" forms, where only animal herding is practiced and only animal products are consumed, to categories that include pastoralism and other pursuits (Khazanov 1994; Dyson-Hudson and Dyson-Hudson 1980 cite Jacobs's (1975, 1979) work with the Masaai, and Elam's (1973) work among the Hima). It is historically rare that groups exist completely independent of agricultural products, and perhaps more to the point, labeling a group does little to explain why they might rely solely on animal products or what this might suggest about other elements of their society. Another problem with strict typologies in any classificatory system is that

they break down whenever an exception is found to the rule. Currently, much of the anthropological work on nomads looks at more informed, far-reaching questions that integrate nomadic peoples into a broader region and socio-economic sphere (Bonte 1990; Humphrey and Sneath 1996; Salzman 2000, 2002, 2004). Those who do look primarily at the local level do so with the intention of showing the value/utility of new research methods, such as ethnoarchaeologists using large-scale survey techniques (e.g. Chang and Tourtellotte 1998).

In the latter part of the 20th century, the focus of ethnography and ethnohistoric studies has been specifically the pastoral peoples of West Africa and East Asia. Some of the rare cases focus on Inner Asia (Barfield 1989,1993, 2001a and 2001b; DiCosmo 1994; Humphrey and Sneath 1996, 1999; Humphrey and Onon 1996; Khazanov 1994), or Siberia in particular (Vainshtein 1980), but largely this area remained cut off from the West until the fall of the Soviet Union in 1991. Since that time research has been made easier for those interested in Siberian ethnography (Balzer 1992, 1999; Fondahl 1998; Jordan 2003; Reid 2002) as well as archaeology (Anthony 1991, 1995; Boyle et al. 2002; Davis-Kimball et al. 1995; Davis-Kimball, Murphy, et al. 2000; Hanks 2003; Jones-Bley 1999; Jones-Bley and Zdanovich 2002; Kroll 2000; Kroll Lerner in press; Levine et al. 1999).

Archaeologists' specific contributions to the late 20th century discussion of pastoral nomadism have focused attention on what happens when mobility is curtailed. The loss of peoples' mobility, and thus the loss of their flexibility often "precipitates dramatic changes in food storage, trade, territoriality, social and gender inequality, maie/female work patterns, subsistence, and demography"(Kelly 1992:43-44). Much of

the most recent anthropological work has focused on the post-colonial world, the

elimination of traditional lifestyles within larger states, and the curtailing of nomadism

across international boundaries (e.g. Fondahl 1998, Humphrey and Sneath 1996, 1999;

Jordan 2003. While archaeology provides a unique deep time perspective on the origins

of pastoral nomadism, our recent subdisciplinary focus has been largely on socio-political

organization, and to a much lesser degree, the post-processual critiques of the New

Archaeology – in particular gender.

Pastoral Nomad Origins

> We cannot distinguish, without access to an historical record, between cultural
>
> similarities that are analogous and those resulting from historical connections
>
> (homologous).

<div align="right">(Binford 1968:8-12)</div>

The question of the origins of pastoralism no longer looks for "an" original

location where the very first animals were tamed, bred, and herded. Hole's (1978)

suggestion that "origins should probably be sought in people who developed a technology

for the large scale processing of cereals or other plants, and the means for storage" (Hole

1978:139) points toward a general view of the potential areas to look. As with

agricultural production, we expect that pastoralism arose in many primary locations and

then spread through diffusion. When trying to examine the origins of nomadism, it is

especially difficult to isolate the cultural influences, either internal or external to this

economic adaptation. Did individual groups develop pastoral practices, animal

husbandry and full-household mobility, independently, or as a result of the diffusion of

<div align="center">45</div>

knowledge from outside groups? Was this diffusion the result of a few individuals

moving into a new area and assimilating indigenous groups, or did the concept move

across space? Since historical documents do not exist for most areas of the world when

pastoral nomadism first arose, we must heed Binford's wizened words and be prudent in

the search for analogies and homologies.

Our understanding of the origins of specialized forms of pastoralism in any region

is tenuous at best and remains one of the most highly contested debates in nomadic

studies. Most scholars rely on ambiguous, even meager archaeological materials or

interpretations, looking for the appearance of domesticated flora and fauna (Braidwood

and Howe 1960; Gilbert 1983). Pastoralism occurs in areas where humans and animals

can excel and use the same resources – grains, nuts, and other vegetation (Hole 1978:38).

These resources can be collected from the wild and do not necessitate domestication.

Ecological assessments connect the origins of diverse modes of pastoralism linking them

to cultural processes such as population expansion and sedentism (Flannery 1968, 1972b;

Hole 1978; Lees and Bates 1974). These multi-economic modes of pastoralism are

largely the result of agriculturalists who begin to breed animals (Bar-Yosef and

Khazanov 1992:5; Khazanov 1994:86). Many believe that specialized pastoral

nomadism could have originated only after the development of fully sedentary, intensive

agriculture (Khazanov 1994:89; Lees and Bates 1974; Levy 1983; Markov 1976; Sadr

1991; Shnirelman 1980; Smith 1992), or with urban centers and their centralized political

organizations (Gilbert 1983). Some infer that agriculture must have been on the decline

in order to encourage members of society to begin such a difficult and risky practice

(Lees and Bates 1974; Lattimore 1962). Depending on the ecological context, pastoral

nomadism may be a better-suited and more productive alternative than agriculture. By

some accounts, in order to maintain pastoral nomadism, mounted animals would have to

have been domesticated first to successfully move herds and to have an upper hand in the

political relations with sedentary societies (Bar-Yosef and Khazanov 1992:5; Hole

1978:13)[5].

What can be said safely of the origins question is that there is no need to put

social factors in conflict with ecological ones – you can have both a cultural push toward

mobility (animal husbandry specializations) and the environmental opportunity (e.g. the

opening of the Siberian steppe as viable grazing land during the Bronze Age)

simultaneously occurring. Both economic and social factors may combine to form a

successful adaptation: "the configuration at any given moment will be determined

principally by resource distribution, mechanisms of social boundary maintenance,

historical circumstances, and the needs of the moment (Gilbert 1983:107) –none of which

may be recognizable archaeologically. Kuznar (1990) notes the emergence of nomadism

is in response to both decreasing foraging area and socio-economic conflicts over

diminishing resources. Khazanov (1994) identifies the technoeconomic trigger

necessary, climatic desiccation, and the sociopolitical backdrop, the existence of

agricultural states, under which pure pastoral nomadism occurred on the Eurasian steppes

(Khazanov 1994:90-97).

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[5] Horse domestication is embroiled in several different debates within Eurasian archaeology. One involves
the spread of Indo-European languages with horseback riders (Anthony 1986; Gimbutas 1979; Mallory
1989) as opposed to language spread with agricultural groups (Renfrew 1986; Sherratt 1982; Shnirelman
1992). The other debate involves the timing of horse domestication itself based on horseback riding and
bitwear analysis (Anthony and Brown 2000; Brown and Anthony 1998) or traction and hippography
(Levine 1999a and 1999b; Levine et al 1999).

Most authors regardless of their general purpose of discussing pastoral nomadism as economic practice, environmental adaptation, or political process couch their discussions of origins in terms of the creation of nomads in opposition to sedentary segments of society. Few continue to propose an evolutionary schema for nomadism as the logical outcome of hunter/gatherers or collectors on their obligatory progression towards sedentism, but those that do couch it in these terms largely remain in the former Soviet Union (Kradin 1996; Kradin 1992 cited in Khazanov's 1994 introduction to the second edition). Even when defining their independence from sedentary peoples, the pastoral nomads are still compared with and defined in opposition to the settled populations in their immediate area. I believe this is a response, in whole or in part, to the perceived dichotomy between nomadic and settled, between moving or stationary even while most societies contain elements of both. As a perceptual "either-or", one cannot define nomads without defining their neighbors. No society develops in a vacuum; there must be some social interaction. The interaction, even when it is simply withdrawal from another group (avoidance), will affect the economic practice, socio-political formation, and spatial practices of pastoral nomads.

Pastoral Nomad Socio-Political Organization

One of the first Western works to address the socio-political situation of Eurasian nomads, Owen Lattimore (1940) introduced three pertinent themes to the study of the organization of nomads. First, he recognized nomadic societies' potential for as much complex organization as any other society. Secondly, he maintained that mobility would play a key role in determining the nature of social forms. And third, inter-societal

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relations not only would exist, but would help to create a "frontier" and thereby indirectly stimulate the core, sedentary areas; a viewpoint not altogether dissimilar from Childe's expectation that nomads were responsible for Europe's development. Lattimore's primary example documented the interactions between the nomadic Xiongnu (or Hsiung-nu) and the pre-state level Chinese. Corresponding to the consolidation of the Qin state (221 BC), we have evidence for the first, large-scale nomadic polity (Barfield 1993; Honeychurch 2004:11). Their "supratribal" organization structured their basic purpose – to extract products from their sedentary neighbors (Barfield 1989). Barth (1961) documented this type of extortionate relationship in Iran, as did Rowton (1981) who looked at nomadic autonomy within the Mesopotamian states during the first millennium B.C. Barth's observations of the Basseri also corroborate Lattimore's concept of central core areas being stimulated by nomadic inputs, but for Barth the nomads who had attained enough wealth could buy land in regional centers. Once settled in, these elite held a dual socio-political placement in two worlds, as tribal leaders and, due to this powerful base, as newly landed gentry influencing matters of the state.

Later Lattimore (1979) revised his early models of nomadic socio-political interactions by questioning the structural independence of the steppe polities. He saw the elites transforming their pastoral surplus into luxury and subsistence goods through coercive exchange relationships with the early Chinese states (prior to Qin). In addition, the elites redistributed the wealth with their followers to support both themselves and their military campaigns (Honeychurch 2004). This elite level within the nomadic hierarchy imposed its will over sedentary masses as well as lower level, common pastoralists. The focus of power, in the hands of a few, does not allow for shared

bureaucratic responsibilities and eventual (independent) state formation (Khazanov 1994). Nomadic states or empires could arise only in response to and dependent upon sedentary populations.

Distinctions have been drawn between nomadism occurring in "enclosed" areas, where nomads are in close contact with settled people, circumscribed by geographic elements such as mountains and seas, and "external nomadism" characterized by great, open expanses of desert sand or grassland (Hole 1978; Rowton 1974, 1981). The external forms could and did produce their own agricultural produce from within their territories, thus proving to be more self-reliant economy as well as a more stable and resilient political force. These populations were fully capable of developing large confederacies composed of many socio-economic groups (i.e. the Scythians, see: Chang and Tourtellotte 1998; Khazanov 1978). The nomadic populations living at the fringes of the confederated area developed specialized predatory means by which to obtain goods and services. These interaction zones created special political bonds between marginalized nomadic groups and their sedentary neighbors. As Adams (1981) notes, at the "edgezones" nomads became part of an "ethnic continuum" of rural producers whose mobility provided channels of communication and integration between urban producers and the "hinterlands" during state development. This once again reinforces the idea of nomads playing an integral role in the development of sedentary states.

CHAPTER THREE

SOVIET AND RUSSIAN ARCHAEOLOGY

Recent studies in anthropology regarding the impact of material culture through commodification and the constructions of cultural identity reflect current events. As our attention is drawn to the plight of indigenous persons struggling against the affects of globalization and colonialism, these studies have had an impact on archaeological interpretations as well. Archaeologists have begun to pose important questions regarding the use of material culture to create memory and shared experience and the reconstruction of indigenous conceptions of identity. That contemporary issues affect our understanding of past societies is neither new nor surprising. In order to understand the treatment of the vast majority of archaeological material coming from Siberia it is necessary to delve into the roots of modern Russian archaeology, a discipline that represents the very differences between East and West – socialist versus capitalist – Russian archaeology differs in its political, linguistic and ideological principles (Klejn 1977:12). Any contemporary science is the product of a long chain of investigation and theorizing, but perhaps none is more uniquely fashioned than a discipline that grew in near isolation from the rest of the world. The motives and ideologies of Czarist, Soviet, and Russian archaeologists who explored the mortuary domain of the early Iron Age shaped the manner in which they observed, collected and interpreted the evidence as they were in turn shaped by the scientific community surrounding them.

Russian and Soviet archaeology has never been an anthropological discipline, but as with most European countries it is housed within the discipline of history. The role of archaeology within history cannot be underestimated in order to comprehend the ways in

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which archaeological material has been and continues to be analyzed. Archaeology has been perceived as but one of several data gatherers (as with ethnography and historiography), while history or sociological disciplines (sociology, culturology, social and cultural anthropology) interpreted the evidence (Klejn 1977, 1993). The handmaiden to a historical master, "archaeology is to history what the telescope is to astronomy, the microscope to biology" (Mongait 1961:39). It is, in essence, a tool. As servants to history, most archaeologists did not shape the theory within which they operated; it was not their job. (This argument could be made with regards to the majority of cultural resource management archaeologists working in the United States as well.) As paradigm shifts did occur (amongst historians), they very slowly rippled their way out to the people in the field (the archaeologists), but as Trigger (1995) points out, it was not uncommon for there to be no theory in the field per se, just excavation, recording, and classification.

CZARIST ERA

While much of the archaeology of the 20th century can be separated both ideologically and methodologically from that of the Czarist era, the importance of Peter I ("the Great") must be mentioned with regards to the development of modern interest in Siberian antiquities, especially from burial mounds (kurgans). In 1718, Czar Peter decreed that materials both old and rare – geological, paleontological, archaeological, and golden – should be collected and sent to St. Petersburg, the then new capital (Mongait 1961). As in most areas of the world, looters require little encouragement, but it was with the czar's ukas (legislative decree) that much large-scale demolition began under the direction of local officials. Burials became of particular focus due to the wealth of

objects presumed, usually correctly, to be inside. Because the steppe landscape is rather flat and open, and mounds are quite obvious there, the many thousands of kurgans that had been built were intentional targets of "collection". In 1739 the first kurgan was officially "excavated" near Krasnoyarsk (central Siberia), and with the annexation of the northern Black Sea coast came the investigations of Scythian tombs such as Mel'gunovsky in 1763 (Mongait 1961; Trigger 1995). These "royal" tombs provided such large amounts of gold and other valuables that kurgans remained the focus of investigations, sanctioned and otherwise, scientific and not, up until the present day, though now the materials are most likely to remain in the regional museums rather than be sent to the Hermitage. Consistent scientific enquiry did not begin in Western Siberia until the 1960s, but many of the kurgans were as likely as not to have been unceremoniously investigated by someone in the past.

The Czarist period emphasized a culture-historical approach influenced by Montelius. This typological approach held that humans attempts to control nature had a cumulative effect on the development and change of technology (Bulkin et al. 1982) and diffusion and migration could account for changes in the archaeological record. Much of the archaeological organization that was put into place during this era was replaced by the Soviets, although initially under Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP 1921-1928) it was recognized that there was a need to maintain some of the bourgeois intelligentsia in order to instruct the masses (Trigger 1995:214). Science allowed for a respite from a strong tradition of Russian mysticism, an opiate of their particular people. Archaeological research was separate from undergraduate education with most researchers ensconced in regional institutes. Here full-time archaeologists worked in conjunction with specialists

from geology to plant science, so while they were not theoretically oriented, Soviet archaeologists were using a multidisciplinary approach.

SOVIET ERA

In the 1920s there were initial successes of the new Marxist ideology; within archaeology it was applied within the re-envisioned, centrally controlled Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture (RAIMK). This reorganization had more far-reaching effects than simply changing letterhead; in essence RAIMK removed the application of Marxist theory by archaeologists instead focusing their efforts on descriptive reports of "realia", things not fixed by language (Klejn 1993:341), devoid of theory. The complete yet simple acceptance of Marx, which gave peasants and workers a sense of belonging, led to the development within the historical sciences of the search for the origins of class struggle. Archaeologists armed with preconceived Marxist ideas of unilinear progress, went out into the field to find representatives of the primitive social groups from the Lower Paleolithic through the matriarchal Neolithic, patriarchal Bronze Age and tribal Iron Age. "Tribes" were often identified by stylistic patterns on artifacts (e.g. "corded-ware tribe") and represented a stage just prior to the creation of slave-holding and subsequent feudal societies based on Marx and Engels. "Ideal research in the USSR was not the study of the past but the identification and confirmation of laws which regulate historical development, supporting Marxist theory" (Berezkin 2000:155). Much of the early foundations of pastoral studies in the Soviet Union were laid in this theoretical framework long before ethnographic or archaeological evidence was brought to bear.

Archaeological change was seen as a result of socio-economic shifts, with similar languages sharing similar stages of evolution. At the directorship of RAIMK during its critical founding sat Nikolay Marr, a linguist, who tied language to an "entity in blood" [1] or racial categories (Shnirelman 1995:121). While he held rather unique views compared to his bourgeois contemporaries, those who remained from czarist times, Marr held a great deal of influence over the training of the first generation of Soviet scholars. He believed that people and language were the result of mixing or "interbreeding" rather than splitting from common origins, the latter a position advocated by Indo-Europeanists (Shnirelman 1995; Mallory 1989). During the 1930s and 1940s Marr influenced archaeologists with his "theory of stages", qualitative leaps resulting in economic developments, e.g. appearance of a productive economy (Klejn 1977:14). Dialectical in their origins and quite remarkable in terms of the cultural and linguistic changes, these leaps were coordinated with changes in technology, thus Iranian speaking nomadic Scythians became German-speaking Goth farmers, and finally feudal Slavs (Bulkin et al. 1982:275). This theory sent people out to look for autochthonous cultural units, immovable native traits that had sprung from the fertile Russian, and other Soviet, soils –although most avoided directly applying materialist theory figuring that working with material culture was enough (Trigger 1995:215). As Klejn (1977, 1993) points out, this "a-theoretical" fieldwork simply has been the responsibility of archaeology after the

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[1] This is a concept not altogether different from recent research on linguistics and genetics, the idea that demographic expansion and differentiation of descendant groups from a common ancestral population will tend to lead to both linguistic and genetic isolation of the descendant groups from one another (Cavalli-Sforza 1997; Cavalli-Sforza et al. 1994). Many have commented (see Commentary in *Current Anthropology* 41(3) that this leads to assumptions that ethnicity, language, and genetic inheritance are today shared characteristics of well-demarcated, easily defined human populations and that these characteristics generally covaried in the past as they are held to covary in the present (MacEachern 2000), and while Cavallie-Sforza et al. (1994) warn of the exceptions possible from their generalizations, as practice these warnings often go unheeded.

formation of RAIMK, as a gatherer of data. Marr downplayed the influence of large migrations as a primogenitor of cultural change, instead believing in relatively local integrations by adjacent groups. As integration took place, the languages and people mixed, structured by social classes, and created ethnicities, each ethnic group arising spontaneously from its homeland (Bulkin et al. 1982:274-276). Thus language, race, culture, and religion are in constant "flux" and ethnicity is "ephemeral" (Shnirelman 1995:121-122), but class is a cultural structure that is universal, and therefore, class struggle, inevitable. Once again Marx is validated.

Finding class struggle in situ required the excavation of a variety of domestic spheres, not just the burials of the elite. During this time State support drove intense settlement excavation with little attention being paid to classification, the study of which was considered a "bourgeois tendency to ignore the social and political significance of the archaeological record" (Trigger 1995:227) or the lingering of anti-Soviet attitudes (Bulkin et al. 1982:276). Under Stalin's regime the disenfranchising programs of intensive industrialization and agricultural collectivization required the bolstering of the ideology that drove the system and encouraged the masses to participate in the socialist vision. Strict Communist Party discipline and doctrine led to the expulsion of the intelligentsia from seats of authority and power within all institutions including the scientific community. During these years the government forbade contact with foreign scholars and removed dissenters from office. Yet the central control of science and industry also led to the universal standards in training, publishing, and a common focus for archaeological work so that a great deal of excavation was accomplished resulting in a dramatic increase in the knowledge of past peoples long ignored, such as the Iron Age

nomads (Pazyryk peoples studied by Rostovtzev). The practical technologies that were

used in the past (e.g. irrigation and mining), not just "the relics of by-gone instruments"

(Marx 1906:200) informing us about extinct forms of production, were once again

harnessed and used for the collective industries (Bulkin et al. 1982).

Ethnogenesis and Nationalism

As the Soviet experiment entered its third decade, Soviet nationalism or

"internationalism", the inclusion of all Soviet peoples, spread as the German's retreated.

As Marx did not address prehistory (Engels did later) or social evolution, historians and

their minions, the archaeologists, used the archaeological record to demonstrate laws and

regularities of historical processes, specifically the existence of primitive egalitarianism,

the advancement of technology, and the prehistoric embeddedness of ethnic divisions.

Migration and diffusion were allowed as explanatory models, so long as the migration

was from within Soviet territories. Finding ethnicity in situ was an important means of

solidifying the borders of Soviet republics, so that during this era many projects in the

far-flung locations were sponsored and ethnogenetic evidence was gathered.

Ethnogenesis, or the "formation of peoples", has played a strong role in Soviet

and Russian archaeology and is rooted in the 1930s and 1940s. The non-Russians who

had been suppressed by Czarist forces, and who now created the lion-share of the Soviet

population, were made a participating entity by finding their ancestral roots within the

USSR. Internationalism was a means by which the shortcomings of Marxism's promise,

that socialism would spread throughout the world, could be shown to have more than one

convert (Maoism would not "sweep" China for at least another decade). Within the

Soviet Union, many nationalities, ethnic groups, became the emblem of socialism's spread and inevitability. Ethnogenetic studies with their roots in 1940s and 1950s held that archaeological cultures were identifiable ethnic groups based on sets of traits or specific variables (i.e. pottery decorations); this is a view of archaeological culture that can be seen in contemporary research (e.g. pottery types corresponding to cultural groups in Western Siberia include Varabiova, Gorohova, Sargat, etc.). Soviet patriotism required an appropriate origin of the Slavs, thus one was traced from a pre-Scythian Bronze Age uninterrupted to the Kievan Rus (Shnirelman 1995:133), an origin that did not rely upon Scandinavian or other Germanic groups.

The more data that was amassed, the more it became obvious that cultural groups did not arise in a pristine vacuum – the "theory of stages" fell short as an interpretive model. Stalin himself denounced Marr's belief that dialectical change inextricably linked linguistic change, social organization, and economic practice, pointing out that Russian was the tongue of the czars and the Soviets as well (Trigger 1995), while his native tongue was Georgian. But though no longer in vogue, nothing replaced it, leaving archaeology without a middle-range theory through the rest of the century (Klejn 1977:12-13, 1993:345; Berezkin 2000:159).

Post-Stalin Period

Once Stalin's stronghold on central planning and research interests was broken, by his death, there was a general loosening of publicly allowable interpretation. Trigger (1978, 1995) claims that unilinear cultural progression was tantamount to canon under Stalin; a view that continued through the Cold War. Soviet scholars were not directly

applying Marx per se, but a modified concoction; one part Marx, one part Engels, with a healthy dose of Lenin, stirred up by Stalin's own totalitarian swizzle stick. During the 1950s and 1960s archaeological material illustrated and reinforced sociological ideas (i.e. Mongait 1961), yet it became widely recognized that many Marxist-Leninist writers had hastily applied theory, which now verged on "pedantic" (Klejn 1977:13). Soviet and Russian authors point to theoretical debates that existed (Klejn 1977, 1993; Bulkin et al. 1982; Berezkin 2000:156-157), but rarely reached the printed page and hadn't reached the West apparently. Most Western understandings of Soviet archaeology (including Trigger's) were simplistic and based misconceptions of a unilaterally accepted Marxist creed (Bulkin et al. 1982:273) and the seeming impenetrability of the Soviet Bloc. Generations later the West continued to hold narrow views of the underpinnings of Soviet science:

> It must be emphasized... that diversity of opinions exist in Soviet archaeology, and one often reads articles highly critical of the works or theories of fellow colleagues. A monolithic structure promoting uniform, dogmatically held policies is a caricature of the real situation and says more about Western stereotypic conceptions of Soviet society than it does about the real nature of Soviet archaeology.
>
> (Kohl 1984:246-247)

By the 1960s typological study had become "artifactology" or the fetishizing of things; dialectical materialism, the shift from one time period to another, was no longer explaining or synthesizing; historical materialism was recognized as unable to "function

as applied sociology" (Bulkin et al. 1982:278). Once again abandoning the models put forth in the past, and with an easing of centralized control, Soviet archaeology experienced regional renaissances, including a growth in Institutes of Archaeology in the republics. Under more reform minded leadership in the national government, archaeologists reestablished contacts with the West. New administrations in the 1970s allowed for the critiquing of Marx, but few people, within or beyond the USSR, had access to these new directions due to a lack of both publication and circulation, thus it is little wonder that the West continued to misconstrue the Soviet use of Marxist-Leninist doctrine (Klejn 1977:20). Materials that were finding their way into publication came primarily from large-scale excavation projects, projects that were big on data recovery and small on historical processes (Bulkin et al. 1982). Access to foreign literature continued to be rare and mostly limited to archaeologists in Moscow and Leningrad, two rival departments that represented long-standing rivalries in the arts, sciences, and politics since the very beginnings of the Russian Empire. In the West, little material written by Russian authors had reached English readers, with the notable exception of Mongait's Archaeology in the USSR (1961) and Semenov's Prehistoric Technology (1964), due to the political blockade and the lack of translated sources. Language barriers continue to be a stumbling block for non-Russian speakers (Kohl 1995; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995)[2].

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[2] It should be noted that there were archaeologists interacting with Soviet scholars and referencing their Russian publications early on, most notably the work of Childe (1925, 1926), and Gimbutas (1956, 1965).

The openness and recognition that debate and self-critique strengthens society and builds

better science, ideas allowed within Gorbachev's glasnost and perestroika, pointed out

the inadequacies of many aspects of the Soviet system, including archaeological

chronology. Chronologies continued to be tied to historical sources even while absolute

dates showed enormous temporal discrepancies (Bulkin et al. 1982; Klejn 1993:347;

Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995; recent investment in carbon dating is leading to further

clarification of these discrepancies, see: Goersdorf et al. 1998 for Bronze Age

chronologies and Renfrew et al. 1999 for late Bronze-early Iron Age). Analysis of

empirical data also created ambiguities for basic concepts – attribute, type, assemblage,

culture (Dolukhanov 1979 cited in Trigger 1995:238-239), as well as archaeological

culture (Yablonsky 2002:89) – so that the most important contribution the data provided

were general descriptions and minimal statistical analysis (Bulkin et al. 1982:282).

Views appeared in Russian intellectual society challenging the applicability of Marxist

unilinear stages and allowing for "cultural and social patterns not extant today were

allowed to have existed in the past, including those considered higher...although it is

difficult to say how prevalent or localized they are" (Berezkin 2000:158). Interpretation

became an unfortunate rush of nationalistic racism filling the void left by Marx

(Dolukhanov 1989). Perestoika began the unraveling of the Soviet centralized system as

control was redistributed to localities while unfunded mandates continued to be handed

down by Moscow – mandates for survey and protection of antiquities. By 1989 the

money for foreign literature in the scientific libraries was exhausted, while soaring fuel

prices denied scholars opportunities to travel to all but regional, domestic conferences (Chernykh 1995; Berezkin 2000).

In 1991 the USSR disintegrated into a series of unbalanced and tentative political entities, culminating in the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS). Out of the former 15 republics, Russia maintained control over itself and Siberia, remaining the largest country, by area, in the world. Many of the regional Institutes found themselves in independent nations with sovereign control over their own resources, while the Russian Academy of Sciences found it difficult to pay for electricity and water for many of its facilities (Chernykh 1995:140). The central government, long the funding agency of all archaeological projects, could not buy equipment or fund excavations for anything but the "supersites" (Anthony 1995[3]). Many archaeological sites were threatened by looters and neglect, and the antiquities market, long a source of funding and support (educated collectors influencing research objectives), became a market for preciosities for the uneducated (Berezkin 2000:157). Descriptive, religio-mystical, and psychic archaeology pieces dominated, rather than theoretical ones (Berezkin 2000:159; see also a critique put forth by Klejn in 1977), or other facile interpretations produced for publishers wanting ready-made history (Klejn 1993:341). The severe financial conditions led archaeologists to creatively implement new strategies, bringing about a plethora of cooperative projects with Japanese and Western institutions.

The cooperative projects, one of which I was a member, brought innovation through cultural contact between scholars who had largely been isolated from each other

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[3] Many scholars critique this particular article of David Anthony's for ignoring the socio-political struggles faced by archaeologists and their innovative methods of overcoming the hardships imposed by the times and by their government (Jones-Bley, personal communiqué). Unfortunately no one has published these critiques and Anthony |1995| remains the first Western "authority" on Russian archaeology just after the fall of the Soviet Union.

for seventy years. The sharing of Russian data and Western resources should provide a truly unique opportunity for introduction of Russia's archaeological heritage to the world. But what it exposes are discrepancies in method between researchers trained in very different traditions and conditions.

A consequence of Lenin and especially Stalin centralizing all aspects of Soviet work, even establishing research quotas under the NEP's 5-year plans, the central government channeled all archaeological research through the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow, to be redistributed back out to the provinces. The Academy controls the "Open List", the documentation of all available archaeological sites for excavation in any given year. In order to have access to the Open List, and therefore the ability to excavate, an institution must be in "good standing" a status that revolves around presentation of reports and research, production of publications for museums, universities and institutes – at the authors' expense charged by the page (Anthony 1995) – successful completion of past excavations following expected methods (Berezkin 2000:156). Obtaining the Open List provides the "license" to excavate, which has important cachet with local officials, without it archaeologists have no access to any funding sources whatsoever. The pressure to speedily comply with the very basic requirements leads to the writing of primarily site reports with thinly discussed features and materials[4]. Theoretical questions of the late 1970s continue to drive interpretations: How are

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[4] This is not a judgment on the expediency of their site reporting, as globally producing any written material from excavations and laboratory analysis often takes a backseat to further excavations. If anything the original Soviet system of central control of the *Open List* has created the impetus to produce some form of reporting, which can be obtained by any archaeologist through the central repository in Moscow. The same cannot be said for projects in the U.S. for example, where many CRM activities are little known to academic archaeologists.

archaeological cultures defined (ethnos)? How do we reconstruct ancient demography? Where was the horse domesticated? What is the nature of "pure" nomadism?

Universities do not teach archaeology as a profession so much as a specialization; departments of archaeology are reduced to mainly field and lab methods (theory, typology, rules of research are not taught), which "debases the level of professionalism in archaeology … weakening of the reliability of conclusions" (Klejn 1993:345). Many of the strategies established in the 1930s and 1940s, large-scale, horizontal settlement excavation, continue to be pursued revealing the strength of long-term projects with nearly 100 percent recovery. Ecological perspectives continue to be the basis of research revealing the continued emphasis on the scientific interactions within the regional institutes (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995, echoed by Trigger 1995), which means that it is not uncommon to have a collection of soil scientists on-site to perform analysis in the field and help direct excavation. But what is considered basic methodology in the United States – surface survey, subsurface testing, screening, flotation, etc. – do not have widespread use, as they are not dictated by the List. Sampling strategies are either non-existent or have unclear objectives (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995:2), hence many of the assumptions regarding the variety and degree of economic production are only beginning to be addressed (see: Hanks 2003 for discussion and results of such an analysis). And because of the dictatorial and oppressive nature of the Open List, there is no incentive to try new methods and collect new kinds of data to explore ideas such as ritual practice and landscape use (Kroll 2000; Kroll Lerner in press; Hanks 2002b), or regional interaction (Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995) to name only a few. Several of these issues are directly being

addressed by the Franco-Russian project (archaeometry, surface survey, use of aerial photography).

While the limitations of the Soviet system have been the focus of much discussion in the post-Soviet era (e.g. Anthony 1995), it must be reiterated that hundreds of expeditions and thousands of scholarly reports have been published, albeit by small presses and usually only in Russian (a language barrier that remains a problem only for non-Russian speakers). Archaeology has been used as an instrument of cultural enhancement, at times politicized and highly nationalistic (Trigger 1995; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1995; Kohl 1995), but nonetheless a focus of public education that has received a large amount of public funding. Russian archaeologists reach out to the broader public through traditional venues such as museum exhibits, but also by writing popular texts, which has resulted in a higher degree of public awareness of archaeological sites, artifacts, and historical constructs (Chard 1963:540; Trigger 1995). While authority and ultimate supervision remained in Moscow during the Soviet era, and to some degree remains there to this day (e.g. the Open List), much of the direct control over archaeological sites and the artifacts recovered fall under the pervue of local and regional authorities.

The Soviets were the first to use archaeological data to understand Marxist historical materialism (Trigger 1995:207), thus the intricacies of cultural identity revealed by material culture. And by focusing on the importance of human action, via class struggle, they originated the discussion of human agency that is currently a key post-processual critique in the West. It is by reinvestigating and reinterpreting the data recovered under this system that this dissertation seeks to apply an anthropological

understanding of the material culture of Western Siberia to a broader knowledge of pastoral nomads.

EURASIAN STEPPE NOMADS

The reliance upon Marxist evolutionary models, and the embedded fixed stages of social development, led Soviet and Russian archaeologists to recover the stages leading up to capitalism and socialism (communism). Their association with history gave them the first line of evidence –written sources. The first hand narratives of Greek, Chinese and Persian historians give a vivid picture the "barbarians" at the gates of civilization. These accounts, of "primitive social" and "slave holding" societies (prehistoric and ancient historic peoples) became the basis of Engel's later work. Prehistoric groups were translated into the social categories of matriarchal society (Neolithic), patriarchal clan (Bronze Age), and tribal society (early Iron Age). The late Bronze Age and early Iron Age correspond to the first expressions of pastoralism on the Eurasian steppes.

It is primarily the work of one author, Herodotus' Histories, which not only provides the conventional names for Eurasian nomadic populations, but also details their dress, mobility (horseback and wagons), warrior culture (patriarchal clan), ritual, and their mortuary customs. Herodotus, born in a coastal Greek colony in Asia Minor, traveled widely throughout the region gathering information on mythology and material culture of the non-Greek peoples he "encountered" (there is much discussion as to the authenticity of some of his "first hand" accounts and whether to treat his work as history, story-telling, or fiction, see: Gould 1989; Lateiner 1989; and Pritchett 1993). He nonetheless wrote the oft-cited details of Scythian and Sauromatae (Sauro-Sarmatian)

lives, evidence continually used as inspiration for archaeological investigation. The

names of these early Iron Age peoples represent collective identities of many independent

groups (Dyachenko et al. 2000:44) who shared aspects of socio-political tradition and

material culture. It is the compression of many populations into a handful of historical

titles – Scythian, Sauromatian, Cimmerian, Massagetae, etc. – that has promoted a

homogenized view of Eurasian steppe and forest-steppe populations and their ideological

and ceremonial practices. Mortuary practices, vivid expressions of a society's socio-

symbolic strategies and norms, are but one example of the problems of a cultural-

historical approach to Eurasian nomadism.

Since the time of their construction kurgans have been looted, investigated, and

otherwise destroyed at a staggering rate. The excavations of those Scythian kurgans on

the Black Sea coast, providing the "catalyst" for the development of Russian archaeology

(Yablonsky 2000:3) also led to categorizing thousands of Iron Age burial mounds in

other regions as nomadic. The richly appointed burials with gold, chariots, and warrior

symbols were as Herodotus similarly described. It is from the historical creation,

Herodotus' mapping of bounded cultural groups (Hanks 2002a:22), and the

corresponding archaeological similarities of the material culture and burial practice of

pastoral nomads across the Eurasian steppe that the "Pan-Siberian" or "Scytho-Siberian"

(Koryakova 1996) cultural complex was developed.

Descriptions of what became the Scytho-Siberian cultural complex began with

Gorodtsov (1901) and were fully articulated in the early 20th century by Rostovtzev

(1974 but first published in 1918), and later by Grakov and Melukova (1954) and Grakov

(1977). By the end of World War II, Soviet archaeologists had basic tenets of pastoral

nomadism codified –nomadism based on animal husbandry, warrior classes based on mastery of horseback warfare, and material culture represented by the "Scythian triad". The "triad", based on Grakov and Melukova (1954), is a trio of weaponry, horse tack, and items decorated with the "animal style" found in funerary assemblages. These pan-Siberian associations represent a diverse collection of regional artifacts that combine materialism with stylized animal forms that connect groups from China and Mongolia to Europe. The style traits stem from an assumed, uniform, nomadic way of life, interpreted as representations of their relationship to the animals of the land (Mundkir 1984). Nomadic art is culled out as quite unique from the sedentary civilizations surrounding the steppe, but nomads across Eurasia are often lumped together in broad, inclusive categories. Grousset (1970), who emphasizes the work of archaeologists over that of art historians for establishing chronologies and connections, pays only brief homage to the preferences of the Sarmations for geometric ornamentation or particular enameling techniques that make them identifiable from Scythian artwork of similar period (Grousset 1970:16). Instead the artistic motifs of the nomadic people's are largely glossed into one unified style, acting as yet another means by which nomads have been homogenized.

In the Scytho-Sarmatian art of western Siberia, as also in the identically inspired art elaborated by the Hsiung-nu of the Ordos, the stylization of animal forms is at times so complete –they entwine and interlace with one another in such complexity, and branch in such unexpected profusion –that despite the sustained realism in the treatment of deer's and horses' heads, or in those of bears and tigers, it is only with difficulty that beast can be distinguished from ornamentation. (Grousset's 1970. The Empire of the Steppes: A History of Central Asia)

Typological classifications and chronologies thus developed, primarily rooted in the written histories, and brought the work of archaeologists, historians, classicists, art historians, and linguists together. The correspondence between Greco-Roman and Persian sources and the archaeological material was unequivocally expected and accepted; any inconsistencies were largely ignored until the latter decades of the 20th century (see Moshkova 1989, 1992, 1995). Thus Rudenko (1953, 1960) and Gryaznov (1980) found Scythians as far away as the Altai Mountains and Tuva. The unsatisfactory use of archaeological terminology is quite evident when one looks at the use of Scythian i.e. "Scythian type cultures" with a blanket of some other phase or stage placed over the top, e.g. Pazyryk Stage (Bokovenko 1995). The use of Scythian indeed may provide an instantly recognizable image of cattle-breeding, horse-riding warrior nomad from the Eurasian steppe, but it continues to mask the complex and varied adaptations seen across this region. The major problem, as put forth by Yablonsky (2000:5) is that "this phrase (Scythian Siberian World) is hardly scientific because it continues the ethnic terminology 'Scythian' thereby labeling populations who could not possibly have belonged to the genuine Scythians since their genesis was unrelated to that of the population of the Black Sea region." Further reclassification has had little effect in clearing up the confusion. Terminology has been a difficulty for generations of Soviet and Russian archaeologists, one not greatly improved with the introduction of Bromley and Schtaobach's Nomenclature of Archaeological Terminology (1989). The terminology is but a manifestation of a deeper tendency, on one hand, to rely too heavily upon the ancient

histories to create archaeological categories, and on the other hand, to continue to play the role of history's handmaiden, gathering data to fulfill historical conjectures.

The need for a reanalysis of previously published data is constant in archaeology. As new methods and models are developed, it becomes productive to reassess prior conclusions. With the fall of the Soviet Union and the unprecedented exposure that Western scholars now can have to once prohibited areas, it is a unique opportunity to avail oneself of the diligent excavation efforts of several generations of archaeologists. The Transurals region of Western Siberia is one such location where pastoral nomads are the continued focus of research and where a wealth of data can be employed to reexamine the relations between nomads and their sedentary neighbors, as well as the cultural identity of nomadism itself. In order to understand the particularities of steppe and forest-steppe nomadism, it is necessary to examine the transition from part-time pastoralism of the Bronze Age to the fully nomadic activity seen across Eurasia during the Iron Age.

BRONZE AGE TRANSITION

Prior to the development of contemporary desert, steppe, and forest-steppe ecological zones, there was a large degree of north-south continuity of Mesolithic cultures as evidenced by the distribution of the microlithic material culture (Matyushin 1986). These were cultures adapted to the wetter, milder environments prior to the Holocene. But as the Holocene dawned, climatic changes led to the establishment of these three zones as separate and unique both environmentally and culturally from each

other and interactions begin to take a definitive east-west directionality (Dolukhanov 1986).

After the appearance of domesticates in Eurasia, forms of nomadism begin to be established within the agricultural sectors. These cultural groups, referred to as agro-pastoral (Khazanov 1994:92-93; Renfrew 2002:5), spread from the Ukrainian agricultural regions, the Yamna and Abashevo cultures, eastward to Siberia steppe as a highly complex but non-nomadic productive economy. These origins, which are beyond the scope of this thesis, are thoroughly discussed within the available literature (see: Gening 1977; Gening et al. 1992; Zdanovich 1995; Rassamakin 1999; Renfrew 2002). Any report of Iron Age nomads requires a thorough discussion of the events preceding the appearance of fully nomadic pastoralists. Three sub-boreal climates divide the Bronze Age from the third millennium to the mid-first millennium BC (Khotinskiy 1977, 1984a and 1984b). The intervals between each sub-boreal period subsequently corresponds with the rise and fall of settlements in the southern Urals. The first is a humid and colder period of widespread pine and birch forest corresponds with the country of towns; the second, with the rise of one of the major religious centers, Arkaim; and the by the end of the final interval, a time increasing moist, cold climate, corresponds to the decline of settlements in the southern Urals (Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002:253-255). The continental climate of today, established during the transition from the Bronze to the Iron Age, produced an "opening of the steppes" (Anthony 1995), a time of stable grasslands across the vast expanse of the Eurasian steppe and the rise of fully nomadic groups and their herds, but lessening levels of humidity from the western to the eastern slopes of the Urals. So while the Ural Mountains have never presented a significant

physical impediment to movement from east to west, they do mark the border between cultural adaptations to ecological subtleties as will be seen in the discussion of the Bronze Age. In Western Siberia, from the eastern slope of the Urals to middle Asia, the material culture and "spiritual traditions" are relatively similar (Koryakova and Patreau 1996) despite the ethnic distinctions that have been drawn.

Steppe cultures developed independently from the southern agricultural areas with respect to productive economy (Hiebert 2002:247), the southern Transurals of Western Siberia are a part of the Eurasian steppe pastoral tradition. Though there does not seem to be much discussion of how the first domesticated plants reach this region, Renfrew (2002) states that pastoralism, a reliance on livestock and animals products for a primary source of food, before plant resources make a significant impact (Renfrew 2002:2, 5). While the connections between these regions and the west are highly debated (Boyle et al. 2002), it is widely accepted that the origins of the Bronze Age cultural complex, Sintashta-Arkaim, lie in the west and these groups migrate into the area. It is during the third millennium BC that the land of towns (Zdanovich 1995) or country of towns (Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002) develops.

The defining features of the country of towns, nineteen to twenty-three well-planned settlements existing within a relative small region (400 km north-south by 150-200 km east-west, all found using aerial photos, and some of which have been excavated) along tributaries of the Ural and Tobol rivers from 2000-1250 BC. The larger of these settlements, Sintashta, Arkaim, and Kuisak, represent fortified centers surrounded by smaller, open settlements 20-30 kilometers apart. These fortified settlements were centers of craft production and stock-breeding, perhaps performing "ceremonial" or

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"religious" functions (Zdanovich 1989) within a distinct, bounded territory. The settlements had open central squares, water supplies from either dug wells and/or diverted river water, drainage/sewage systems, wooden plank streets, and evidence of advanced bronze metallurgy. In Arkaim every one of the approximately 60 households (29 have been excavated while 30 to 40 more have been identified with a magnetometer) has evidence of smelting facilities, a forge or domna ("blast furnace"). The fortifications were composed of earthen ramparts several meters high (4m) with wood stockades, reinforced with clay, surrounded by ditches, yet within the villages the houses shared common walls and were remarkably undifferentiated –they are the same size, with relatively similar features (well, hearth, and domna). The only distinctions that can be made at Arkaim, a village inhabited at the height of the Bronze Age (17th-16th century BC), are the inner and outer rings of houses a design similar to military camps found along the Don River (Kuzmina 1994), yet it has been interpreted as a religious or ceremonial center due to the lack of everyday items (Koryakova 1996a:256)

These centers focused a dynamic steppe interaction sphere that harnessed the ore mining from dispersed locations, animal products (milk and meat) from sheep/goats, cattle, and horses used as draft animals as well as for food, and the developing agricultural production. As hunting and gathering played a lesser role, the production of barley, and millet, and possibly wheat intensified. Reservoirs and irrigation canals redirected the flow of local tributaries into the villages and surrounding fields, providing water for crops, animals, and metallurgy (Gening et al. 1992; Zdanovich 1995). Even with the extensive evidence for irrigation and the impressions of domesticated grain in local ceramics (Renfrew 2002:2), there have been questions regarding the presence of

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agriculture here (Shishlina and Hiebert 1998:228), yet admittedly these settlements have a size, fortification, and permanence that does illicit the possibility of connections to the southern agricultural traditions. These connections reverberate in the discussion of the "fire cult" activities (see: Epimakhov 1995). Renfrew (2002) begs the question, how do we call settlement-building, grain growers "nomads"?

Much of the elaborate material culture from the Bronze Age comes from the burials and not the villages. The spoked-wheel, horse-drawn chariots, unique disc-shaped cheek pieces (psalia), and animal sacrifices distinguish first the "burial fields" (per Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002:251 these are burial vaults filled with grave goods and human remains) and then what becomes known as one of the signatures of nomadism, the kurgan. Sintashta-Arkaim cemeteries, mainly kurgans, are characterized by three primary complexes:

1) burial grounds with unmarked borders containing ten or more grave pits,

2) burial grounds with circular, marked boundaries also with ten or more graves, and

3) singular burials on circular grounds with distinctive borders (Gening et al. 1992:167; Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002:258).

Sometimes there is a clear contrast between the central and the peripheral graves, with wooden structures built over the center and large amounts of prestige goods, chariots, animal (primarily horse and sheep) sacrifice, and traces of fire (Epimakhov 1995; Koryakova 1996a). The burials are characterized by complicated burial structure and organization with the remains of numerous sacrificial animals, use of fire, and a variety of grave goods made from metal (bronze and copper), bone, horn, and pottery

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(Gening et al. 1992; Anthony and Vinogradov 1995; Zdanovich 1995). All age groups are represented in these graves, with even the smallest child having metal work and animal bones. As Zdanovich (1995:29-35) points out, there are "unnatural" elements to the paleodemography; infant burials are significantly underrepresented, there is a high proportion of young adults, but an average age of the adults represented equals 30 years, ten years younger than other Bronze Age Eurasian steppe sties (Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002:260). The age distribution correlated to the size of graves implies an emphasis on the age-grades, similar to egalitarian or ranked societies (Zdanovich and Zdanovich 2002:262).

The kurgan burials of Sintashta-Arkaim elaborate a social differentiation not seen in the household sizes or accoutrements of the settlements. New systems of prestige come to symbolize a three-part societal stratification – religious and military elite, nobility, and others (Malov 1995), with multiple burials often surrounding double central graves. The elite graves are marked by symbols of authority (maces, scepters, and staffs), weaponry, wheeled-vehicles, and horse tack (bridles, cheek pieces, etc.). Large cemeteries are found close to fortified centers (within 1.5 km). But this is apparently a passing authority, for the *chieftain* basis of Sintashta-Arkaim (Kuzmina 1994; Koryakova 1996a: 257) collapses in the seventeenth-sixteenth century BC due to ecological crisis and partial-mass migration (Zdanovich 1995; Koryakova 1996b), and/or the demilitarizing of the steppe (Koryakova 1996a: 257). The collapse can be seen in the decreasing size and degree of fortifications, the shrinking households, and the simplification/standardization of the pottery. During this later period, the burial rites simplified with fewer graves pits, decreasing animal sacrifice, and less above-ground

elaboration. As some of the people migrated out[5] of the southern Transurals, they were

absorbed by groups living to the west and north (from the Middle Volga to the Tobol

River), leaving in their wake a more generalized, less extravagant, and more widespread

cultural tradition –Andronovo.

The Andronovo cultural horizon (alternately a "zone" or "archaeological family")

exists on the steppe from 1500-900 BC, flanked by Srubnaya (Timber-Grave culture) at

the Volga-Ural interfluvial, the Minusinsk depression (central Siberia), the taiga to the

north (a vague boundary), and the foothills of the Pamir and Tian Shan Mountains to the

south. In the southern Transurals two basic cultural stages come to represent these

newcomers from the south, presumably speakers of Indo-Iranian languages; Alaky'l and

Fedorova (Salnikov 1967; Koryakova 1998a). Though their relationship is debated

(Renfrew et al. 2002), pottery, tool kits, and funerary tradition separate them. The

Alaky'l placed their dead in pits in a supine position; Federovo cremated the dead and

buried the ashes. When these two cultures intersected the result was a "consolidation of

eastern and western Bronze Age cultural components" (Itina 1977 cited by Yablonsky

1995:241). As these Indo-Iranian populations pushed into the forest-steppe they

introduced pastoralism and tin-bronze production to the indigenous Ugrians who

occupied the area (Koryakova 1998:214), but they did not practice full mobility.

Two large cultural families or "confederations" (Koryakova 1998:213)

characterize the Eurasian steppe during the late Bronze Age (1600-900 BC); Srubnaya

and Andronovo, the latter occupying the eastern side of the Urals from the forest-steppe

to the dry southern steppe. The Andronovo economy was a fairly stable system based on

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[5] Out-migration plays a significant role in the interpretations of observed population decreases, rather than other possible interpretations such as lower fertility due to socio-economic pressures or higher infant mortality, both conventional conclusions of common demographic processes.

stockbreeding and supplemented by hunting, fishing, and gathering, and allowed

Andronovo elites to amass a high degree of status through trade. Craft specialties were

highly revered; metallurgists are easily identifiable in the kurgans based on the tool

assemblages and highly stylized metal artifacts (Kuzmina 1986; Chernykh 1992). The

metallurgical provinces were concentrated in centers in Central Asia, Kazakhstan, the

Altai and Ural mountains (Chernykh 1992) with trade in tin coming specifically from

Altai and Kazakhstan. Semi-subterranean, timber houses formed settlements along small

rivers, continuing a pattern of earlier Sintashta-Arkaim groups in the steppe. The

complexity of social structures is once again revealed in the cemetery complexes. High

status barrows of craft specialists (metallurgists) and warriors can be identified by the

wealth of grave goods associated with the limited number of individuals. Clearly wealth

and power did not rest solely on one's ability to manipulate metal, but also in the control

of necessary trade routes for necessary components and finished goods (copper, tin, and

final bronze products), plus the other resources consumed by other elements of the

society (pastoralists) including cattle, horses, and grains (Frachetti 2002:166-167). The

elaborate chariot burials continue, often with cattle and horse sacrifice, iron ore, and

ochre. But the forest-steppe provides a different expression of Andronovo culture. No

early cemeteries are found in the area, suggesting that the indigenous population adopted

aspects of Andronovo culture (pastoralism) without full assimilation.

At the beginning of the first millennium BC, the population of the steppe and

forest-steppe once again goes through a tumultuous change. Once more climatic

degradation, a sharp rise in aridity (Yablonsky 1995:242), ushers in changes that favored

a nomadic orientation and at this time, with all the prerequisites for a fully mobile

lifestyle in place, "pure nomadism" arises.

Khazanov (1994:92-93) details the necessary component parts of pastoral

nomadism: 1) herd composition (animals capable of continual, long-distance travel), 2)

long-term practice of mobility and pastoralism, 3) dairying, 4) animal-driven, wheeled

transport, and 5) horsemanship. While horses had long been domesticated and used for

food this remains a highly contested debate, one that I feel has plenty of support, e.g.,

Levine 1998, 1999a, 1999b; Anthony and Brown 2000; Levine and Kislenko 2002) or

transport since the Eneolithic, though the evidence for horse-riding versus traction is still

debated (Anthony 1998; Anthony and Brown 2002; Brown and Anthony 1998; Levine

1999b; Kislenko and Tatarintseva 1999). All five of Khazanov's elements are in place

during much of the Bronze Age, but these groups remain agro-pastoralists and no

noticeable transformation occurs until the first millennium BC, at which point most

archaeologists, relying on the paleoecological data, refer to the drying out of the steppe as

the impetus for mobilization (Khazanov 1994:95). But for every cultural shift on the

Eurasian steppe, there cannot simply be a climatological impetus alone.

There has been too much recent speculation as to the special situation of

Andronovo culture and the subsequent rise of militarism (Renfrew 1996, 2002; Hanks

2002a), the socio-cultural changes associated with dynamic changes in trade, subsistence,

and mobility (Khazanov 1978, 1994; Kuzmina 1994; Renfrew 1996), and the

development of the "nomadic world" (Koryakova 1991; 1996a; 1998a, 2002b). The

agro-pastoralists had new communication with greater Eurasia, due to their use of

wheeled vehicles (Renfrew 2002:7), but the degree, the kind, and why this

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communication is important is not readily apparent. The bronze industry that begins with the *country of towns*, and operates through the Andronovo and Srubnaya periods provides an economic basis for the flourishing of Eurasian cultures, when bronze production and exportation eventually ties together a network of societies from Europe to China for the first time. And it is during this period that true confusion over the nature and degree of mobility, defining pastoralists as semi-nomadic, semi-sedentary, or purely nomadic inhibits understanding of the diversification we begin to see in the archaeological record at the turn of the millennium.

It is during the transition to the Iron Age[6], Renfrew's "phase four" (2002:7), Khazanov's "pure nomadism" (1994), where nearly all authorities agree that fully nomadic pastoralists for the first time disperse over the very broad expanse of the steppe and forest-steppe zone from the Black Sea coast to Mongolia. The once ephemeral traces of local steppe ceramics and other agro-pastoral material culture virtually disappear, and the disappearance is attributed to a split in society from settled pastoralism to full nomadism (Habdulina 1994). The Iron Age populations of Scythians, Sarmatians, and Saka, to name only a few of the plethora of cultural names used, establish themselves with distinctive settlements and mortuary patterns that are associated with the Scytho-Siberian cultural unity (Koryakova 1991, 1996a:261; 1998a; Bashilov and Yablonsky 1995).

Models used to describe the characteristics of the early Iron Age are often based on ethnohistoric understandings of the Huns –the marauding Turkic people of the Medieval time period. Nomadic sources of wealth are attributed to increased trade routes

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[6] Temporally this transition to the Iron Age is much later than elsewhere in Europe. In Western Siberia bronze production persisted well into the mid-first millennium BC even though iron items were produced, they have been considered *exotics*, expressions of wealth and status (Koryakova 1998a).

and warfare (raiding of neighbors and militia-for-hire), and their command of horseback mobility allowing them to dominate their sedentary neighbors. Their increased mobility brought them into increased contact with other peoples, producing an overall rise in societal stress and conflict. These interactions produce warfare and the rise of classic warrior nomadic societies with their pan-tribal confederations or "nomadic states" (Koryakova 1996a, Hanks 2002a). While Russian archaeologists have primarily been interested in teasing out the origins or classification of nomads as "early class societies" (Koryakova 1996a:265), less time has been dedicated to a richer understanding of the relationships between nomads and their immediate neighbors – not the Greek, Persian or Chinese civilizations – the populations living in the settlements in the Transurals.

The forest-steppe becomes part of the "nomadic" world, with influences from the steppe pushing northward. Distinctive changes in the mortuary ritual and burial construction took place during the early Iron Age, a shift from no visible cemeteries to the elite barrows. While kurgans first appeared in Eurasia during the Eneolithic, this did not occur in the forest-steppe until metallurgical production had a foothold here. Bronze Age burials reflect kin groups and extended families. The Iron Age sees the introduction of elite systems of interment arriving in the forest-steppe, with cultural connections to their Bronze Age forebearers from the steppe (Sintashta-Arkaim and Andronovo). The widespread use and inclusion of "animal style" art forms, horse tack, and prodigious amounts of weaponry among many Iron Age nomadic groups appears within elite barrows and links them to the other nomadic cultures. Much of the cultural interaction is attributed to the "division of labor" between metallurgical centers in the Ural foothills, the settlements across the forest-steppe, and the nomads.

The work of sedentary peoples has been interpreted as being directed toward a "mutual exchange" network where iron implements and domestic goods are exchanged for military and political "factors" (Koryakova 1998a:216), but what the expression of these factors is remains unclear. From the 5th century BC through the 5th century AD these interactions between nomads (Sakas then Sarmations) and the local populations create what has come to be known as the Sargat Culture of the Transurals, a model referred to as simply "cattle breeders, hunters and nomads" (Koryakova 1988; 1991). This Iranian-speaking influence from the steppe represents a "multi-component social and ethnic unit... |which had| no radical change of population" (Koryakova 1998a:217). The nomads summered their animals in the forest-steppe, and moved with them to steppe lands in the winter. And while the local populations were indigenous Ugrians, they adopted the mythology, burial customs, and features of social stratification from the Indo-Iranian nomads.

CHAPTER FOUR

THE SARMATIAN AND THE SARGAT CULTURES

Throughout the last two chapters I traced the historical development of nomad studies on a global level and the political-historical context of Russian archaeology. The measure by which these two trajectories intersect in my research is the topic of this chapter. As I show, the Iron Age is a time period during which important changes occurred on the Siberian steppe and forest-steppe, changes that involved the climate, economic adaptation, and the interaction of populations across this vast expanse of land area. How these interactions have been interpreted by archaeologists and the data that have been used in these interpretations will be further explored here.

THE IRON AGE –HISTORICAL DEVELOPMENT

It is evident that the very concept of the Iron Age has evolved from a general time period, to a series of specific ethnic groups, and back again to more general concepts of the "Scytho-Siberian World" or "Scythian-Siberian cultural complex". Initially, the Iron Age represented the period in Eurasian prehistory when weapons and tools began to be made from iron and over time replaced bronze almost entirely. Thompsen's introduction of the Three-Age System terminology in the 19th century led to the labeling of all iron production as a technological advancement introduced by Rome. Tsarist and early Soviet archaeologists took this ideal of ultimate diffusionism, a technological revolution spreading from the West, and applied it to all the people living during a roughly thousand-year period. They subsequently divided the Iron Age into two historical periods, the Cimmerian and the Sarmatian. Western populations with iron technology

passed this metallurgical knowledge, sometimes through migrations, on to peoples living in the east, including Western Siberia.

As political influences vacillated during the Soviet era, so did the concept of the Three-Age system as having either a Western origin or a more universal applicability. In the 1920s, the Russian Academy for the History of Material Culture (RAIMK) became the authoritative center of all Soviet archaeology, a reorganization that had far-reaching effects. In essence, RAIMK eliminated the application of Marxist theory by archaeologists and instead focused their efforts on descriptive reports and a search for Marxist stages of development (see Chapter 3 for a full discussion). This shift resulted in the onset of a search for Iron Age tribes in Western Siberia. Nomads played an important role in this time period, a period in fact labeled the "epoch of nomads" (Gryaznov 1957). Instead of two universal historical periods, Eurasia was now divided into a litany of, largely nomadic, regional periods. From the 1920s and 1930s archaeologists identified unique ethnic groups (*ethnonyms*) that corresponded with specific regions, i.e. the Scythians (Black Sea, Pontic steppe), the Saka (Aral Sea, Central Asia), and the Sarmatians (Volga River to Ural Mountains) are the most notable. Smaller cultural variants were created by the interaction of these supratribal groups within smaller regional contexts, e.g. the Sargat (Transurals/Western Siberia) or the Pazyryk (Altai Mountains).

Many of the *ethnic* tribes that were identified corresponded directly with historical texts of the Greeks, Romans, Chinese, and Iranians, in correlation with material cultures. The Achaemenids recognized at least three varieties of Saka; the Greeks, at least four Sarmatian tribes; and the Chinese list three (Hall 1997:868; Sinor 1990). No

singular Russian perspective on ethnic groups can be given, most Russian and Soviet

scholars agree that the idea of an ethnic identity or *ethnos* is a "substantial *social*

phenomenon" (Bromley and Kozlov 1989:429, my emphasis) though a minority did

attribute ethnic identity to biology (cf. Gumilev 1967 cited by Bromley and Kozlov

1989). Here ethnos is defined as

> ...a firm aggregate of people, historically established on a given territory,
>
> possessing in common relatively stable particularities of language and
>
> culture, and also recognizing their unity and difference from other similar
>
> formations (self-awareness) and expressing this in a self-appointed name
>
> (ethnonym).
>
> (Dragadze 1980:162 citing Bromley and Kozlov 1975:11)

Dragadze's (1980) definition, while taken from earlier works, is a refinement

nonetheless, as he distinguishes ethnos as separate from the common Russian word for

people, *narod*. Ethnos embodies the assumption that a group feels a special

"corporateness" (Dragadze 1980:163) and this internalized perception is not bound by

historical stages or societal development, thus avoid the pitfalls of evolutionary terms like

"band" or "tribe".

The balance of historical documentation and material culture is important because

of the way in which it was understood by Russian ethnologists and for their

archaeological establishment of ethnic groups. As Yablonsky points out, material culture

has no ethnic component of its own, but rather reflects the economic and ideological

orientation of the people who utilize it (1998:133). This approach differs greatly from

Western perspectives on ethnicity and will be dealt with in the next chapter. For now,

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suffice to say that the strict naming conventions used in Russian archaeology created

formalized, bounded ethnonyms. Created from a direct culture-historical approach, these

populations are seen to exist in particular spatial and temporal locations, as an "ethic

community: |organized according to| language, cultural features and the like"

(Shnirelman 1996:219) that ignore the necessary flexibility of cultural identity and social

relations.

While specific nomadic populations were identified, the Iron Age nonetheless

remains broadly divisible into two periods of "influence"; Scythian (7th – 3rd centuries

BC), and Sarmatian (2nd century BC – 5th century AD), despite the fact that these are both

successive and overlapping populations (Sarmatians have a roughly 1000 year

development beginning in 6th century BC). The ethnonymic divisions still remain in use

throughout Eurasian archaeology, but simultaneously a new categorization has risen to

the level of normative generalization; the Scytho-Siberian cultural complex.

Scytho-Siberian Cultural Complex

The rise of pastoral nomadism in Eurasia has traditionally been seen to rely on a

concrete series of variables that include increasing climatic aridity from the Bronze to the

Iron Age (Demkin and Demkina 2002), a progressive change to animal husbandry

(Gryaznov 1957), interaction with and increasing pressure from sedentary civilizations

(Lattimore 1940), and the development of some pre-requisite socioeconomic and

technological features (Khazanov 1975, 1994:94). Russian archaeologists detected

nomadism in the changing patterns of subsistence, settlement, funerary ritual, and

material culture (Bashilov and Yablonsky 1995; Chernetsov and Moszyonska 1974;

Gryaznov 1957, 1969; Koryakova 1988, 1996a; Okladnikov 1950; Rudenko 1953, 1960).

The variable spheres of influence of these nomads occupy the vast majority of the

literature. To a large extend the research focus has been on the origin of Eurasian

nomadism, whether related to changes in husbandry practices (Gryaznov 1957), socio-

economic prerequisites (Khazanov 1994), socio-economic pressures from settled

populations (Lattimore 1940), or climatic shifts (Zdanovich and Shreiber 1988).

Regardless of its first expressions, nomadism itself is seen as a culturally unifying force,

one that brings about cultural consolidation and the creation of ethnonyms (Tomilov

2000).

Archaeologists placed a heavy emphasis on the elements of style that indicate a

common history or at the very least a common sense of cultural values (ideology or

worldview). The literature on Eurasian nomads often makes reference to the Scytho-

Siberian cultural complex, a collection of material expressions utilized by nomads. The

package of material elements is conceived of in three parts – horse tack, weaponry, and

the use of the "animal style" for decoration. Each of these has deep-seated significance

in the discussion of the nature of nomadism from the Black Sea to Mongolia, everywhere

that this "Scythian Triad" (after Grakov and Melyukova 1954) has been found.

The appearance of horse tack (bits, bridles, and cheek pieces, or *psalia*) has been

the single most important piece of evidence indicating the dominance of nomads over

their sedentary neighbors. Pastoralism does not require the use of mounted steeds, and

even "pure" nomadic pastoralism does not focus on horses per se, only the residential

movement of the entire family unit in the course of daily herding. The horse allowed

groups to move quickly across the steppe, utilize more territory, and protect range

animals and their families. Mounted nomads, coupled with advances in weaponry and

military-style capabilities, i.e. mounted archers, presumably allowed a small number of

nomads to "menace" their sedentary neighbors (Sulimirski 1970:22). Regardless of the

type of weapon, be it short daggers, long swords, or arrows[1], these have all lent the

nomads an air of domination over their sedentary neighbors – not a means by which to

dominate each other. Subjugation of sedentary groups allowed nomadic pastoralists to

provide the necessary materials for their people and animals that they would not (could

not?) produce for themselves, primarily grains and metal goods. The existence of

specialized metallurgical centers servicing either side of the Urals (Ananyino in Europe

and Itkyl' in Siberia) is used to define the degree of "tributary dependence" (Koryakova

1998b:151)

The "animal style", a series of stylized zoomorphic motifs, is preserved on horse

wares, weapons, textiles, even body adornment. The animal style became part of the

discussion of the nomads' origins, movements of and relatedness to the Scythians, and a

unifying and homogenizing label that absorbed all groups who employed this style of

artifact embellishment. When the "Scythian Triad" appellation was invoked, it meant

that the archaeological material fell into a commonly accepted cliché of Eurasian

nomadism, an "undeviating burial tradition" (Bashilov and Yablonsky 1995:xii), of

warring tribal groups terrorizing the early Iron Age. Even the chronology became a de

facto acceptance of relative dates established by typological sequencing. This

chronology is beginning to be challenged by the establishment of regional ^{14}C dates and

the use of dendrochronology (Hall 1997; Hanks 2002a; also see Mallory et al. 2002), as is

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[1] No bows have actually been found in the burials, but they can be presumed due to the presence of quivers
and arrowheads and further from the iconography (see Rolle 1989).

the belief in a single Scythian (or Greek-influenced) animal style diffusing from west to east (Bokovenko 1995).

Moreover, the animal style has been viewed as directly reflective of the mythology and the belief systems of the nomads (Basilov 1989:37; Yablonsky 2002:87); the animals depicted were not gods, but instead were worn to invoke the power of the animal itself. These interpretations, as with many of the ethnic identities given to steppe nomads, have their bases in the historical accounts. While the similarities in these cultural features are impossible to dismiss, the assumed relationships between these groups has led to an overly simplified view of the archaeological record. Whether it is called a "cultural complex" or the "Scytho-Siberian World," it signals a unity that discourages alternative interpretations. It also uses "illogical terminology because it connects etymologically discrete terms... the first refers to ethnicity while the second to geography" (Yablonsky 2002:83-4). Yablonsky goes on to propose using the Scythian Triad not as an indication of ethnic cohesion, but instead as a means by which we might identify *cultural horizons* (after Willey 1953) rather than genetic indications. The movement of nomads across the steppe allowed for the sharing of information, ideas, and material culture, creating similarities and some degree of affinity. It therefore remains vital to examine each region of Eurasia individually to properly understand the cultures that developed there. Thus I have chosen two areas of Western Siberia, the south Urals and the Transurals, to more carefully examine the cultural identities of nomadic populations and the relations between the nomads and their sedentary neighbors.

MORTUARY TRADITIONS IN WESTERN AND SOUTHERN SIBERIA

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Kurgans represent the only known mortuary tradition of the nomads from the Iron Age. All the individuals buried within a kurgan are viewed as being of elite (non-commoner) status, either royal or warrior, ordinary or dependent populations, a system iterated by Khazanov (1975) and fully established by Grach (1980). Koryakova (1996a:249) notes that these four categories are obtained through the correlation of several key elements of funerary construction and decoration, including above ground kurgan size, internal spatial organization, and value and variety of grave goods. The size of the structure has been viewed as purely a measurement of labor investment, where the time involved in building and the materials used in construction equals an increased status of the individual(s) buried within the kurgan. Another measure of value is in the presence of large wooden funerary structures found in mounds within regions where wood is a precious commodity, i.e. the steppe (Polosmak 1994; Koryakova 2000:15). Spatial organization is viewed as a dichotomous value (central grave equals high status, peripheral grave equals lower status). Archaeologists have compared the numbers of particular grave goods in burials and inferred increased status, or their value based on availability of particular substances, gold or bronze for example. But when different categories of grave goods are compared, how can one determine the status of the individual? Usually an iron knife and arrowheads has been equated to higher status than a spindle-whorl and pottery, but this has more to do with contemporary value assessment of male versus female status, even public versus domestic roles, and cannot be unilaterally attributed to the value systems of prehistoric people.

With the four-part hierarchy of kurgan personages also comes the label "nomad" or "semi-nomad", the classification set out by Khazanov (1994) but without the specific

elements of his definitions. Largely the terms are used as if there is an *a priori*

understanding of a universal definition, one that does not indeed exist. The defining

characteristics of nomadism rest upon the material culture found in some of the graves

(for example horse and other animal bones, chariots or wagons, horse tack), though in

recent years more attempts have been made to ascertain a biophysical signature of

nomadism from the human remains themselves (see: Coutraud and Rajev 1997, 1998;

Koryakova and Daire 2000; Murphy 1998; Murphy and Mallory 2000; Murphy et al.

2002). During the Soviet era, when archaeological excavations focused on large-scale

settlement projects, surface (and aerial) surveys of specific geographic regions were not

undertaken. As a consequence, other types of nomadic sites that have been identified in

other areas of the world, such as corrals, paddocks, or temporary shelters, remain

unidentified in Western Siberia[2]. The use of aerial photography was used extensively

with the cooperative Russian-French archaeological program (Koryakova and Daire

1997; Koryakova and Patreau 1996), but to date, the photos have only been used to

identify new kurgans, thus reinforcing a sense of the monolithic site typology[3].

Nomads are classified as "warriors" based not only on Herodotus' description of

Scythians in battle, but also on the rich collection of weaponry (arrowheads, quivers,

swords, daggers) recovered from the graves. Their imputed status is not only related to

their inclusion in a restricted form of mortuary treatment, but also to the traded items and

preciosities buried with them. Linking them ideologically is their material culture, the

animal style motifs, which appear on everything from textiles (clothing and felted carpets

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[2] A few examples of these structures have been identified tentatively by Merpert (1974) and Shilov (1975) for Bronze Age sites.

[3] Aerial photographs have also been used extensively in the identification of Sintashta-Arkaim sites (see: Zdanovich 1995).

found in the Altai Mountains), to weaponry, and other imported metal objects. The "nomadic way of life", an economy and technology based on animal husbandry and trade, an ideology linked to animistic beliefs, became the de facto interpretation of all individuals found within kurgans, divided into regional ethnic groups during the 1940s and 1950s, as well as the Soviet emphasis on the continued interest in ethnogenesis (Shnirelmann 1997).

Two specific groups, the Sarmatian and the Sargat cultures, are the focus of this dissertation, and will be employed as case studies of nomadic interactions with sedentary peoples. Descending from Bronze Age groups, the Sarmation and the Sargat peoples, who spoke Indo-Iranian languages, occupied similar ecological zones (Sarmatian, the steppe, the Sargat the forest-steppe) in Western Siberia. These early nomadic pastoral groups maintained an animal herding lifestyle for roughly the entirety of the Iron Age (Davis-Kimball and Yablonsky 1995; Koryakova 1988).

THE SARMATIONS

The Sarmatians were a confederation of Indo-Iranian speaking nomads living on the steppe between the Volga River and the Ural Mountains during the second half of the 1st millennium BC[4] and into the early centuries AD (Sulimirski 1970; Melyukova 1990; Barbarunova 1995; Moshkova 1995). Russian interest in Sauro-Sarmatian remains began as early as the 18th century, with earliest archaeological excavation credited to Gorodtsov (1905). Since that time, some of Russia's most eminent archaeologists have spent time investigating the cemeteries of early Iron Age people (Rostovtsev 1910s, Rudenko 1910s,

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[4] The use of "BC" and "AD" used throughout this text is the designation of time period used by the vast majority of Soviet, Russian, and Western authors working in Eurasia. To alter it and use instead "BCE" and "CE" would simply be inappropriate at this time.

Gryaznov 1920s, Grakov 1940s, and Yablonsky 1980s to today), though the Sarmations

specifically received little individualized attention until Sulimirski's *The Sarmatians* was

published in 1970. The history of these nomads was established by the work of Rau

(1929) and Grakov (1947), who created the basic guidelines for the Scythian-Sarmation

period (early Iron Age), setting the research agendas, typological classifications, and the

study of Eurasian nomad *ethnos* (Yablonsky 2002:82).

Two hypotheses for the ethnogenesis of the Sarmatians have been put forth 1) that

there is an ethnogenetic link between the slightly earlier Saruomatian and Sarmatian

people (Grakov 1947; Smirnov 1964); and 2) that the Sarmatians were an external group

that migrated from the east (Rostovtsev 1922). The first hypothesis is generally accepted,

along with their periodization of Sarmatian culture (Moshkova 1995:92; Yablonsky

1995):

- Sauromatian 6th-4th century BC

- Early Sarmatian[5] 4th-2nd century BC

- Sarmatian[6] 2nd century BC – 2nd century AD

- Late Sarmatian 2nd – 4th century AD

Smirnov (1964) established their origins between the Volga and Urals, hypothesizing that

they were descended from two Bronze Age populations, the Srubnaya in the west, and

Andronovo people in the east. Though contemporary researchers have found a lack of

sufficient transition period sites from the late Bronze Age to the early Iron Age in the

southern Urals (Dvornichenko 1995:102), other elements of cultural continuity can be

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[5] As Grakov's early chronology was later challenged, the Early Sarmatian stage is also known as Prokhorovskaya Culture and the terminal date stretched to the 1st century BC (Davis-Kimball and Yablonsky 1995:23).

[6] Also known as Middle Sarmatian.

seen, which include a continuation of burial rites and "fire rituals" (Smirnov 1964; Sulimirski 1970; Zdanovich 1995). What is commonly accepted with regards to the origins of these and other nomadic pastoralists in the early Iron Age can be summarized in five points (Dvornichenko 1995:101):

1. In the midst of deteriorating steppe climatic conditions, a corresponding shift occurs in economic forms (from agrarian to pastoral);

2. The adaptation to horseback riding gave a distinct advantage over sedentary neighbors (militarism);

3. Increased mobility led to increased contact and increasing ethnic heterogeneity;

4. Nomads served as a *conduit* through which cultural achievements were actively transmitted to other cultures;

5. Sedentary populations, drawing on their own established industrial bases, provided nomads with necessities such as grain and luxury items.

The "advantages" of nomads over their sedentary neighbors has colored the interpretation of the archaeological record for several generations. That nomads had military interactions with sedentary people has been well documented in historical sources from Greece and Rome, to the Chinese Chronicles. But no other interaction has been investigated, and they appear mere "conduits", seemingly without contribution to the cultures of sedentary people.

Archaeologists of the Soviet era focused on the increased development of the

"military democracy" amongst pastoral nomads, fitting the steppe nomads into the

Marxist framework along the unilinear progression of kin-based communal societies

(Koryakova 1996a:244). During the 1950s and 1960s, the discovery of kurgans

containing the "Scythian Triad" in the Altai Mountains (Rudenko 1953, 1960; Sulimirski

1970) led archaeologists to begin bandying about the idea of cultural unity among

nomads stretching across Eurasia. From this began the direct application of the

ethnonym "Scythian" (Yablonsky 2002:83), which resulted in the misinterpretation of

diverse populations as a unified whole, the birth of the Scytho-Siberian cultural complex.

"The Sarmatians" as a singular cultural entity is a misappropriation of

terminology coming directly from historical sources. The Greeks (Herodotus and Strabo)

called them "Sauromatae"; the Romans (*Agrippa*, Ammianus Marcellinus) used the term

"Sarmatian". Herodotus notes the similar mode of life, social organization, and mortuary

ritual practiced by the Sauromate and their predecessors the Scythians. As legend has it

(*Histories IV. 110-117*), the Sauro-Sarmatians, originated from the Scythians, specifically

the marriage of Scythian men to Amazon women. Describing the social position of

women in Sarmatian society, Sulimirski (1970:33-34) based his archaeological

interpretations on Herodotus' origin myth, "This accounts for the *fact* that their wives

kept to the ancient Amazon mode of living, going out on horseback to hunt, and joining

their husbands in war, wearing the same dress as men" (my emphasis).

Archaeologists continued to rely heavily upon the ancient historical records,

drawing upon Strabo's *Geography* to propose four *tribes* ("tribal unions" according to

Moshkova 1995:87) within the Sarmatians –Aorsi, Roxolani, Siraces, and Iazyges

(Sulimirski 1970), and finding material similarity between historical descriptions and the

nomads living along the Volga River into the southern Urals, a distribution also

elaborated on by Strabo. Historians, describing lifestyles quite alien to Greece or Rome,

provide us with rich details of the lives of these barbarians,

> ...living in tents made of felt, |that| are fastened to wagons (drawn by
>
> oxen) in which they spend their lives; round about the tents are the herds
>
> which provide milk, cheese, and meat on which they live... in general but
>
> also on horse-meat and mare's milk... they follow the grazing herds, from
>
> time to time moving to other places that have grass.
>
> (Strabo *Geography* VII: 3, 4, 17, 18)

Sulimirski's 1970 work, *The Sarmatians*, shows the marriage of historical sources

to interpretations of the archaeological record. He draws upon a wealth of archaeological

evidence collected over a half a century, and interprets it directly through the lens of

history, giving most of the credit for the details of Sarmatian affairs to Herodotus,

Hippocrates, Strabo, and Ammianus Marcellinus. Thus not only does he rely on the

naming convention and distribution of the tribes, he has evidence for their mobility; clay

models found in a burial mound at Kerch-Panticapaeum (Sulimirski 1970:26). The

discovery of young children buried with weapons (1970:28) is evidence of the training of

young Sarmatian warriors (taken from Strabo VII 4.6); wall paintings found at Kerch-

Panticapaeum are combat scenes expressing that with "the ferocity of their glance they

inspire dread... they delight in danger and warfare" (Ammianus Marcellinus, 4th century

AD cited in Sulimirski 1970:28). History makes for interesting reading, even when

"reading" the archaeological record, but the problem is that the interpretation of material remains has often floundered in the historicization of the archaeological record. Accounts of ethnic identity reported by Herodotus or Strabo have been the foundation for locating concrete, static ethnic groups archaeologically, a perspective that is the antithesis of modern interpretations of ethnicity as fluid and flexible (Hanks 2002a:185, see also Jones 1997; Wells 1998; 2001). The increased cultural contact is seen as one of the most interesting challenges for contemporary research, in that the impact and interpretation of the archaeological record will help to provide a better understanding of the creation of cultural identity in the past (Hanks 2002a:186).

A singular Sarmatian people has been debated since the work of Rau (1929) and fueled by Moshkova (1974; see also Moshkova and Smirnov 1977). Recent analysis of Sarmatian funerary material from both the Volga/Don region and in the southern Urals (Moshkova 1995; Otchir-Gorieva 1988, 2000) has concluded that there is significant enough distinction in several aspects of funerary ritual and material culture as to warrant a separate treatment of the materials, especially after the 3rd century BC when the influence of settled Greek colonies would have more strongly influence western Sarmatian populations. As there is even difficulty in finding unified terminology (see Moshkova 1995 for a complete discussion) through which to treat materials from Europe and from Asia; this dissertation focuses on the stages of Sarmatian development found in the southern Urals alone. This Sarmatian population has direct links to the Transurals and therefore is looked to as a more compelling comparative population.

The development and flourishing of Sarmatian culture occurred over nearly a thousand year period. The focus of my research is the early Iron Age, a time of transition

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from primarily agrarian adaptation to a new emphasis on pastoral nomadism and the initial establishment of nomadic influence in the Urals and Transurals. Thus I focus on the first two stages of Sauro-Sarmatian culture, the Sauromatian (6th-4th centuries BC) and the Early Sarmatian (4th-2nd centuries BC).

During the Sauromatian stage there is a shift from agro-pastoralism to pastoral nomadism in the steppe zone, the cause of which has been directly linked to climate shifts (Koryakova 1998a:215). The rising aridity favored the expanded use of steppe grasses for grazing sheep/goat, cattle, and horses, but without the use of irrigation, this dry grassland could no longer support agriculture (Moshkova 1995:185)[7], thus the population had to become increasingly nomadic to support an economy now based solely on animal husbandry. This continuation of certain Andronovo traditions met with an infusion of populations from Central Asia (Chernetsov and Moszynska 1974:72-74; Gryaznov 1947; Dvornichenko 1995:104) revealing a population that shared some elements of earlier funerary practices. Earthen mounds (kurgans) continued to be used but now with complex stone or wood superstructures (Dvornichenko 1995:102; Sulimirski 1970:40). Graves were often primary and placed within a mound built for that individual. Occasionally secondary burials were placed within Bronze Age Andronovo mounds; collective burials are rarely found, and these are only found in the southern Urals (Dvornichenko 1995:105).

The structure of the burial pit itself varied. Narrow or wide grave shafts led down to a rectangular shaped, timber-lined grave. Within the grave the body lay in a supine position with the head toward the west or southwest. Traces of fire are significant within

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[7] While there is no direct evidence for irrigation per se, there are examples of the control and diversion of water into Bronze Age villages like Arkaim (Gening, Zdanovich, and Gening 1992).

the burial ritual, with hearths often found at the mouths of the shaft, or traces of ash and charcoal found in the grave itself. Some of the bodies show signs of partial cremation or burning from these fires (Otchir-Goriaeva 2000:197-198; Sulimirski 1970:34). Corpses were also commonly sprinkled with chalk or ochre. All of these uses of fire have been interpreted as a continuation of the "fire cult" of the Andronovo (Dvornichenko 1995:102), who "worshipped the sun as well as fire, and believed in its purificatory power" (Sulimirski 1970:34).

Grave goods show the developing nomadic interconnectedness and an emphasis on militarism. Weaponry and tools are by far the most common grave good categories. Arrowheads of bronze (few iron) were held in leather or birch bark quivers. Swords and daggers commonly had zoomorphic pommels[8]. The use of animal style decoration reveals the Scytho-Siberian cultural influences (Smirnov 1961:30, 1976; Dvornichenko 1995:106, 114-116) – connecting the southern Urals to inner Siberia. Often the animals are seen in fighting poses, but these appear to be a local tradition. All weapons decorated with the animal style are interpreted as having magical qualities, which lent protection and prestige to the bearer (Dvornichenko 1995:116; "protective amulets" Grakov 1971:36). Storage vessels made from pottery are the most common item and are found in nearly all graves, while cast bronze cauldrons, many of which indicate extensive, even daily, use (Koryakova: personal communiqué) are found throughout the Sauro-Sarmatian territory. Those that are found in situ carry food offerings usually sheep, though horse or cow is not unusual.

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[8] Pommels differ from hilts in that a hilt is a protective piece of the sword or dagger handle that is found in front or distal to the grip. A pommel is the part of the handle behind the grip and is commonly decorative rather than functional, though pommels do function as an additional surface to use for blunt strikes of the sword/dagger.

Male and female graves can be seen to exhibit unique collections of grave goods. Males are buried with weapons, horse trappings (bits, bridles, and cheek pieces), and items decorated with the animal style. Horse skeletons are more common in male burials, and human sacrifice, while rare, has been interpreted as accompanying the "princely" class (Sulimirski 1970:50) or "guard warriors" (Otchir-Goriaeva 2000:199). Female victims, however, are simply seen as "wives following their husbands" (Sulimirski 1970:50). Female burials generally do not have weaponry, instead the deceased carry a collection of tools (knives and awls), "toiletry" items (mirrors, spoons, combs), and personal adornment (bracelets and torques of bronze or gold, pendants, and beads). Rolle (1989: 61) has shown mirrors to be present in male graves as well, thus their designation as "toiletry items" and posited as distinctly female artifacts is highly questionable. Sulimirski identifies a separate class of female burials, richly furnished "priestesses", with weapons, saddles, and portable altars – incense burners with or without legs (Sulimirski 1970:46) – which speaks to another characteristic of the cultic rituals devoted to fire. Children's burials are noted only by the inclusions of sheep astragali, which are usually interpreted as game pieces (see: Jones-Bley 1999:65).

More than 1000 early Sarmatian kurgans that date from the 4th-2nd centuries BC have been excavated. This is the time of the "Royal Sarmatians" of the Pontic steppe that in the southern Urals expresses itself within two primary river basins, the Ilek and the Or. The transition to this second Sarmatian stage has its roots in massive migrations, which some have interpreted as the introduction of a new Sarmatian population into the areas of the Sauromatians (Smirnov 1964, 1975; Moshkova 1963, 1974). As populations of nomads moved from the forest and steppe, they introduced new innovations into the

south Urals mortuary styles (Barbarunova 1995:121; Moshkova 1963, 1974; Sulimirski 1970:83). "Podbois" (side niche type) graves become fairly typical, with catacomb (earthen vaults), and ledge types also present; the introduction of "dromos" style also appears; the wooden structure accommodates reuse of the same central grave chamber rather than simple earthen interment. While the body is still placed in a supine position, the orientation of the head is now towards the south instead of the west/southwest. A funeral chamber is constructed over the body made from wood planks and the mounds are built larger or there is a reuse and expansion of older kurgans. Some continuity continues from earlier mortuary patterning: the use of stone or wood superstructures, and the spreading of chalk or ochre on the bodies.

Cemeteries are arranged with smaller kurgans grouped around one or two large kurgans. Some of these cemeteries are in linear sequences along river terraces, and occasionally single kurgans are constructed separate from true cemetery complexes. While also acknowledging a great degree of diversity within one cemetery, or even within one kurgan, Barbarunova (1995) identifies two basic types of kurgan: kurgans with one to three graves, and those with three or more (upwards of 20). Within the first category, single burials predominate, but when there are two or three graves, there seems to be no systematic arrangement i.e. they are not arranged around a central grave. Men, women and children are represented, with children at times accompanied by a female. Within the second type of group kurgan, there appears to be more symmetry in their arrangement. These burials are usually concentrically placed around a central "ancestor"

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grave, occasionally in parallel lines, in what have been interpreted as kin groups. In the kin burials it is more likely to find deviations in body orientation[9].

Grave goods show continuity from the Sauromatian stage, but with some variability also evident. The variation is seen as social differentiation and a manifestation of the heterogeneity of Sarmatian tribes. The influx of new populations is seen as the creation of a heterogeneous culture, the Prokhorovka culture. Pottery continues to be the most common grave good: hand-thrown, talc tempered, round bottomed vessels showing influences from the forest-steppe. There are also some wheel-turned vessels from Central Asia, the Don and Kuban river areas. Bronze cauldrons remain common, as does the use of fire ritual, but the animal style begins to disappear.

Male burials continue to contain weapon sets – arrowheads, swords, daggers, and scale armor – though there is a breakdown in the "Scythian triad". The arrowheads are primarily three-edged, socketed, and made of bronze. The swords are over a meter long, and the daggers have bar-shaped pommels instead of animal motifs. Tools include knives and whetstones, some iron axes or celts/adzes, which may indicate farming, but the climate had not significantly shifted to allow for large-scale production without irrigation (still not evident). Horse harnesses are less frequently found, though there are some bits and cheekpieces. There are rare scattered kurgans, from the Dniepr River to the south Urals, of single male burials with rich assortments of horse accoutrements.

Female burials contain personal ornaments and pottery; however, pottery is now found exclusively with women. The female tool kits are similar to those buried with men, but with the addition of spindlewhorls, awls, and needles. Beads made from semi-

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[9] Barbarunova (1995) does not correlate dromos-style kurgans and kin burials, but one would expect to find some evidence of reentry into already established kurgans.

precious stones and bronze are the most common form of personal adornment. Less

frequent are torques, bracelets, pendants, and earrings. Richly adorned male and female

burials will contain plaques of bronze, silver, gold, or shell, sewn onto clothing.

"Toiletry items"[10] of combs, spoons, mirrors, and small clay pots accompany many

females, though the bronze mirrors are much more rare than in prior times. The inclusion

of "altars" is debatable, though Barbarunova (1995:124) includes decorated stone dishes

(without legs) as incense burners, albeit she notes these are rare.

By the height of the subsequent Sarmatian stage (2nd century BC – 2nd century

AD) additional waves of nomads, pushed out by the Huns in Central Asia, swell the

Sarmatians to their territorial maximum, approximately twice the size of the Sauromatian

area. The movements of nomads are mentioned in both Strabo and in the Chinese

Annals. But while population sizes in general are on the rise, in the south Urals the

population declines. This has been attributed to the continuing deterioration of climatic

conditions (Moshkova 1995:137). Kurgans are built smaller and are scattered, generally

singular male burials with some collective burials of women and children. The grave

goods continue to show the interconnectedness of nomad populations to the outside world

–metalwork imported from the Urals, Italy, and Asia Minor, beadwork of semi-precious

stone, European glass, paste, some Egyptian faience, and wheel-turned pottery (the

nomads made only hand thrown vessels).

By the Late Sarmatian stage (2nd-4th centuries AD) the incursions from the east

have introduced a litany of new customs to the mortuary realm sufficient to give them a

"polyethnic" interpretation. The real differences from earlier periods are in a quantitative

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[10] The continued use of phrases like "toiletry items" reinforces a gendered stereotype that is highly inconsistent with the associations between artifacts and specific sexes. This concept will be addressed in chapters 5, 6, and 7.

measure of burial structure investment in ratio to the burial rites (Koryakova personal communiqué); 95% of the burials contain only one grave, designed to save construction labor (Moshkova 1995:150-151). While local pottery continues to be included in the burials, most other elements are a hodgepodge of items representing eastern Siberian and Central Asian materials. By the end of this period strong Hunnic influences overwhelm the Sarmatian area and can be seen in the inclusion of composite bows, horse ware, Han-Chinese mirrors, and burials with cranial deformation[11]. After the Huns seized control of the Asiatic steppe, Sarmatian archaeological complex ceases to exist east of the Caucasus and Don River (Moshkova 1995:160).

Summary of the Sarmatian Interpretations

The social organization, as deciphered solely from the burials since no Iron Age settlements are found in this area, reveals a stratified system similar to that which is seen across the steppes and into the forested regions to the east (Moshokova 1974:49 cited by Otchir-Goriaeva 2000:199). Males, involved in trade networks, which moved goods both east-west and north-south (Hall and Yablonsky 1998; Hall et al. 1998), formed the higher social status groups. The burial grounds were clustered in specific localities, with a few richly adorned burials. The cultural orientation of the burgeoning "aristocracy... poised on the threshold of class formation" (Dvornichenko 1995:105-106) shows the influences of the eastern steppe – the animal style utilizes camels, birds of prey, and griffins; the pottery vessels are pear-shaped showing similarities to the Pazyryk from the Altai

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[11] Cranial deformation is a trait that can be seen in the Volga-Don area during the Catacomb period (see: Jones-Bley 1999:14; Sulimirski 1970:36).

mountains and the Saka of Central Asia; the diagonal tombs are common from the Aral Sea to Mongolia (Otchir-Goriaevo 2000; Smirnov 1961; Sulimirski 1970).

Labeled as a tribal level society, Khazanov portrays them as individual clans and "ethnic communities" (1975: 119-20), which he correlates to the material culture and historical texts. Conceptualizing ethnicity in this way compartmentalizes cultural identity, creating neat packages of bounded cultures, distributed cleanly across the map. This static conceptualization of ethnicity perpetuates and privileges discussions of ethnogenesis of cultures and their subsequent chronological sequencing. As Hanks (2002a:186) states, "this problematic situation has been perpetuated by typological dating schemes that leave a great deal of room for argument concerning artistic and stylistic patterns, cultural sequences, and cross-cultural relationships." Absolute dating techniques now being applied to the Siberian archaeological material is now putting into questions the accuracy of typological chronologies (Hall 1997; Hall and Yablonsky 1998; Mallory et al. 2002). In part the issue of labeling all animal motifs as part of a Scytho-Siberian animal style goes to Hanks' argument. By placing enormous importance on a *triad* of artifacts, we entangle economic and social categories for all those groups possessing weapons, horses, and animal decorations. It ignores the fluidity of ethnic constructs. While ethnicity is "fluid" by our contemporary conceptualization of it, there are still concrete elements of cultural identity, and these can be seen in the archaeological record in terms of patterns of material culture behavior.

Sarmatian burials display a diversity of grave types found not only within a given cemetery, but also within a single kurgan. The highest-ranking individuals were usually afforded significantly more grave preparation (wooden structures) as well as grave goods

(including imported or non-local items). Non-elites represented in the burial mounds are interred without elaboration, collectively, or in peripheral positions (in niches, as "sacrificial victims"). Generally the Sarmatian burials are individual interments, with some exceptions, for example those with only three to eight skeletons, and some with as many as 20. While there may be many skeletons in the same grave, it is important to note that they were all placed there at the same time, as part of a single mortuary event, and that the grave was not reopened to add bodies at a later date. There are alternating patterns in the choice of wood as funerary structures, sometimes as "stretchers" or litters and sometimes the use of wheeled burial vehicles (e.g., Mechet Sai Cemetery, from Smirnov 1975:124 plate 44, and p.137 plate 53). Evidence for the use of fire in the funerary ritual declines through time and is credited to Bronze Age traditions carry-over. Grave goods tended to follow sex categories, with females having domestic items, often labeled as "toiletries", and personal ornaments; males possessed weaponry, horses and horse tack; both sexes were interred with tools. While kurgans were still built and used during the Middle and Late Sarmatian periods, flat-grave inhumations became more common.

Unlike the Sargat to their north, the Sarmatians are not associated with specific settlement types or locations, though settlements exist in their region. All the archaeological material associated with the Sarmatians is found in the burials. Researchers believe the nomadic Sarmatians terrorized settled populations when they came into contact, keeping them in a subservient position through the use of fear (Moshkova 1995:85-9 citing Herodotus; Smirnov 1977; Sulimirski 1970:27-31 citing Strabo and Ammianus Marcellinus), but that when they did settle into village, agricultural

life, it is believed that "a mixed culture emerged and the traits of the diverse sedentary and nomadic ethnic groups blended into an integral whole" (Moshkova 1995:186). What these "traits" looked like is not discussed.

THE SARGAT

The burials of Western Siberia were described by travelers during the 18th and 19th centuries (Pallas 1786; Slovtsov 1890; Radlov 1891), but not united under one name, the Sargat culture, until initially penned by Chernetsov (1953). Looters, collectors, and antiquarians removed large amounts of cultural material from the burials, some of which they shipped back to the Hermitage, and were there mistakenly labeled as "Scythian" gold (Rudenko 1962; Matveev and Matveeva 1987). In some ways this mislabeling aided the acceptance of the idea of a "Pan-Scythian" or "Scytho-Siberian cultural complex" that also incorporates the Sarmatians and other notable steppe peoples (i.e. the Pazyryk of the Altai Mountains). The bulk of archaeological investigation of the Sargat burials has occurred during the past four decades (by Stoyanov in the 1960s and 70s, Gening in the 1980s, Mogil'nikov 1970s-1990s, Matveeva in the 1980s until the present, and Koryakova from the late 1970s until the present), with only a few individuals devoting time to the inclusion of settlements in the analysis (Koryakova 1988; Matveeva 1993). While complete excavation of settlements has been emphasized since the Soviet era, few cemeteries were directly associated with the settlements, and even fewer cemeteries have been examined fully (Matveeva 1993). The Soviets used much of Western Siberia to develop scientific and military projects, thus most of the area was off limits to Russians much less westerners until the 1990s. Today, western archaeological projects and

subsequent publications exist, but only within collaborative projects with Russian researchers (for example Coutraud and Rajev 1997, 1998; Hanks 2000, 2002a, 2002b, 2003; Kroll 2000; Kroll Lerner *in press*). The results of most Russian investigations have appeared primarily in small regional publications in Russian.

The defining characteristics that divide Eurasian nomads into separate cultures involve long-term social, economic and cultural processes. The people in different regions of the Eurasian landmass were involved in trans-continental communication through trade and migrations. Each cultural group has been divided according to the different climates, vegetational zones, and ecological niches in which they live. The Sargat culture is considered a northern, regional variant of Iranian steppe culture mixing with Ugrian forest cultures (Moshkova 1992:274-5) or more succinctly put, Urgro-Iranian (Koryakova 1988), a synthesis of local ingenuity and Iranian influences in the forest-steppe. The regional distribution of Iron Age (500 BC – AD 500) settlements and mortuary sites stretches from the eastern slopes of the Ural Mountains to the Tobol River, from the forest in the north to the steppe in the south. The climate of this area has been largely continental since the beginning of the Iron Age, with some periodic fluctuations. Warm weather airflows come north off the Kazakh steppe and desert steppe, while winter winds are Arctic, yet very dry (the Urals operate as a moisture sink). The resulting weather creates long, cold, but dry (low snowfall) winters, followed by brief springs which transition into short, hot (maximum 50 degree Celsius) summers, and brief falls. Droughts occur regularly, on eight-twelve year intervals. The Western Siberian forest-steppe is identified by multi-grass meadows with insurgent groves of birch/aspen trees stretching between several large rivers and their tributaries. By examining ethnographic

and ethnohistoric accounts of steppe nomads from the Middle Ages to the present, researchers concluded that the forest-steppe would provide a large amount of high quality animal fodder from early spring through the fall, allowing for combined settled and nomadic forms of animal husbandry, hunting, fishing, and even primitive agriculture (Koryakova and Sergeyev 1995:19). The expectation for the Transurals is that five to six family members acted as a single economic unit, exploiting a small range of pastures (30-40km annually) to maintain animal populations consisting primarily of horses, then sheep/goats, and cattle. Rudenko (1970) calculated that 25 horses, or their equivalent in other stock, would be needed to provide for one family unit. Historically these family units were nomadic during the warmer months, settling down during the winters in villages consisting of upwards of ten-fifteen families as a rule closely related (Koryakova and Sergeyev 1995).

Unlike the Sarmatians, there are no historical references to the Sargat *per se*, instead our understanding of their lifestyles comes from the archeological evidence, but it is additionally heavily influence by interpretations of the Scytho-Siberian cultural complex. The Sargat world view is interpreted by connecting economy, burial practice, and the Scythian triad (Koryakova 2002b:107). The nomads' religious ideology has been interpreted as animistic, ancestor worship (Rudenko 1970), or Zoroastrian sun/fire worship (Harmatta et a. 1994; Herodotus I: 4), and much has been written interpreting Eurasian nomads' beliefs in light of the *Avesta* and *Rig Veda* (Gening 1977; Kroll Lerner, *in press*; Kuzmina 1986; Mandelshtam 1968:102-103 cited in Yablonsky 1995:249; Puhvel 1987).

The location of Sargat settlements changed over time, but there is a marked increase in upland terrace and easily defensible positions during the later Iron Age. The use of fortification and size of these villages changes through time as does the size and patterning of the houses – though they appear to be single-family semi-subterranean dwellings, with single hearths. Intensive fieldwork and analysis of local pottery types, including largely round-bottomed vessels with a variety of temper and design, has allowed for chronological determinations and the determination of several archaeological cultures, among them are the Gorokhovo (Transurals steppe/forest-steppe 4th-1st century BC), Itkul' (metallurgical sites in the Middle Urals, Upper and Middle Iset River from 8th- 3rd century BC), Koulayskaya (forest zone 5th century BC – 3rd century AD) cultures, and numerous subdivisions based on local ceramic typologies (see Sharapova 2000, 2004 for a thorough discussion of recent ceramic typological classifications). As more ^{14}C dates are performed, some inconsistencies have arisen in the chronological sequence (see Hanks 2003).

The kurgans of the Sargat were placed in highly visible settings, on upland terraces, commanding expansive views of the gently rolling terrain, distinctively different from the burials of Bronze Age that were along river courses. Their construction is variable but follows several general plans. Sod is cut from an area of varying size; from three to five meters in diameter to 100m in diameter. One to several graves are then dug into the subsoil, sometimes more than one individual is placed in the grave with a variety of grave goods; males, females, adults, and subadults are represented. Sometimes there is a wooden structure built over the central grave, the graves are filled, the sod blocks are then built over the graves, possibly in a pyramidal shape (Tairov and Botalov 1988: 100-

25); at times there is a ditch or semi-continuous ditch (both interrupted circles and half circles) dug around the outermost extent of the mound. The burials are believed to show much more cultural affinity with steppe nomads, a "superstratum" of insurgent Iranian speaking nomads, while the settlements are a cultural "substratum" of local settled Ugrian peoples (Koryakova 1995:320). Four stages of development are seen for Sargat society as well (based on Koryakova 1988, 1996a):

- Pre-Sargat Bronze-Iron transition (7th-6th centuries BC)

- Sargat-Gorokhovo/ early Iron Age (5th-3rd centuries BC)

- Sargat / Middle Iron Age (2nd century BC – 2nd century AD)

- Late Sargat / Late Iron Age (3rd-5th centuries AD)

The transition to a wide use of iron tools and weapons occurred between 800 and 300 BC and were produced by local Itkul' populations in the Urals. Prior to this time iron appears as a prestige item in burials, but iron smelting is a local technology. During the 2nd century BC and 2nd century AD the Sargat had minimal connections with Central Asian states as evidenced by the trade goods that included many manufactured of bronze, gold, and silver that came from Bactria and China, in addition to those that came from Greece. By and large the convention of naming local archaeological subgroups within the Sargat culture is based upon ceramic typologies (i.e. Baitovo, Nasilovo, Vorobievo), although there are some exceptions such as the Itkul' culture, which is based on metallurgy.

The 7th - 6th century BC reveals a time of high adaptability with local Andronovo populations modifying their lifestyles in accordance to new nomadic Indo-Iranian (Saka) influences arriving from the south. Climatic instability (cold and humid weather

spreading southward) is seen as the activating mechanism for cultural change. The appearance of new horse wares and weapons (non-ferrous metallurgy) show early animal style and a *mélange* of Saka and forest cultural influences. These are interpreted as areas of exchange and not necessarily migration. Local metallurgical populations living in the Ural Mountains, the Itkul', provided the bulk of metal items.

Funerary similarities, specifically compact cemeteries, link this time period to the Bronze Age, but the burials become more individualized (Koryakova 1996a: 263). Some solitary kurgans exist, primarily on upland terraces whereas Bronze Age cemeteries tended to be closer to the riverbanks. Certain rules of Sargat funerary tradition apply to the majority of burials. Central burials have a north-south access. In general, internal wood constructions were placed over graves with social stratification of the population interpreted from the existence of some enormous barrows, but in later periods wooden structures were not built. At this time most funerary investment occurred above ground. Neither unique to the Sargat culture, nor originating in the Iron Age, mound building had a long history and a broad geographical distribution in Eurasia. As early as the Eneolithic (also called the Chalcolithic), kurgans became one distinctive method of disposing of the dead in Western Siberia. Yet, it is not until the end of the 6th century BC that there is a marked change and elite burials are the first to appear in kurgans. Koryakova (1996a: 265) attributes these new burial forms, representing the restricted access of a segment of the population, with the introduction of nomadic culture (Saka) to the forest-steppe, what she labels as a "Turkization" of Western Siberia (Koryakova 1995). During this time the Gorokhovo culture emerges under the political influence of nomadic populations that traveled through the Transurals during the summer months (Koryakova 1995).

At the dawn of the early Iron Age (5th-3rd centuries BC) Gorokhovo pottery styles, which consisted of crude hand-braided, talc tempered, round-bottomed vessels, become the common style in the Transurals along the southern reaches of the forest-steppe. This is a time referred to as the *Golden Age* of the Sargat culture, or the Sargat-Gorokhovo stage, because of the increased number of sites. Extensive settlements with fortifications/fortresses were built usually on promontories near rivers on the edges of the Sargat territory; along the taiga zone, in the southwest along the Urals (the Gorokhovo cultural sites (Matveeva 1993, 2002:379), and in the east as at Ak-Tau (Habdulina 1994). Notably, fortresses are absent along the southern steppe frontier, which is interpreted as the expansion of trade routes with the Saka in the south (Koryakova 1995). The hill forts are surrounded by defensive works that conform to particular shapes within the main river basins within the Transurals, the Tobol and Irtysh Rivers. As defined by Koryakova (1988) they can be categorized as 1) promontory with lined fortifications (Tobol River), 2) "cape style" high terraces with two lines of fortification (Irtysh River), and 3) waterside fortresses with ramparts and ditches (double fortifications) (Koryakova 1988; Matveeva 2002). In the southern forest-steppe zone, groups were scattered as this area shows an absence of long-term settlements or fortresses.

Many more cemeteries are found during the Sargat-Gorokhovo stage, and a higher ratio of burials to settlements (though a higher degree of fortification than earlier or later times). Burials are primarily inhumations in graves beneath kurgans, a burial tradition introduced by the steppe nomads. These mounds reveal a hierarchy according to size (labor investment) and amount of effort invested (personalization) in the internal structures. Large, royal constructions (often referred to as "czar kurgans") are analogous

to those found on the steppe; they contain rich grave goods and complex tomb features. The grave goods fall into three broad categories 1) royal (scepters, maces, and sumptuary items); 2) warrior (weaponry); and 3) other (pottery vessels, spindle whorls, beads). This burial practice is used for a very small segment of the population, interpreted as the warrior class consolidating its power by transforming internal conflicts between settled and nomadic elements of the society into territorial expansion (Koryakova 1995:320). While the alternative forms of disposal remain unknown, it is hypothesized that kurgans delimited subterranean cemeteries, with other members of society being interred in between the mounds. This has yet to be tested (Daire and Koryakova 2000).

Summary of the Sargat Interpretations

The interpretation of the existence of fortified settlements and hierarchical burials has been that movements of steppe nomads from Middle Asia/Kazakhstan pushed steppe nomads into the southern Urals and Transurals (Tairov 1997 personal communiqué). This marks the arrival of nomadism to the Transurals and of nomads who had active relations with states to the south, west, and east. Thus the settled populations, indigenous remnants of Bronze Age Ugrian populations formed a social "substratum", while the Iranian nomads formed a cultural "superstratum" dominating relations with their neighbors through trade and warfare (Koryakova 1995, 1996a, 1998b, 2002b). By the 3rd century BC populations of Saramatians began to impinge upon the Transurals bringing with them a changing style of kurgan ritual, one involving fire ritual, and role changes.

Increased production of iron implements, especially weaponry and its inclusion in the burials, denotes the beginning of the Sargat stage or the Middle Iron Age (2nd century

BC –2nd century AD), which was a period of increased military emphasis reflected in the

burials. Increased numbers of settlements in the Tobol and Irtysh river valleys

correspond to this increased population. Both open and fortified settlements existed

along the riverbanks, and there is some indication of both one and two-room houses.

This difference in house size may indicate social differences between people who lived

with their animals and those who had separate facilities. Trade networks existed which

pulled this region into the northern periphery of the Silk Road (Daire and Koryakova

2002). Funerary rites show a degree of continuity from the Gorokhovo-Sargat stage, but

with some new elements.

As noted earlier, kurgans commonly contain more than one grave, from two to 20,

the number dictated by clan or family statuses (Koryakova 1998, personal communiqué).

These collective graves show a complex system of grave goods including ceramic vessels

of local and non-local production (some with Iranian solar symbols on their bases, cf.

Moguil'nikov 1973), bronze mirrors from China, weapons, and items of personal

adornment. The diversity of grave goods indicates a continuity of involvement in long-

distance trade from earlier stages. Male graves held weapons (knives, swords, spears,

arrows, and horse tack). Female graves contained pottery, beads, jewelry, and weapons.

Within the kurgan the central graves were surrounded by one or two ditches (not

necessarily continuous). If one can consider social stratification in household size, it is

also seen in the mortuary realm. Kurgans are divided along three social strata –

aristocracy (military power), warriors, and ordinary people (i.e. those without property

and included in the kurgans of one of the elites; Koryakova 1988, 1998a, 2002b). High

social status was not necessarily marked by large mounds, but by internal structures, for

example the wooden linings of the graves in addition to grave goods. Despite the considerable external influences and exchanges, this stage is signified as the consolidation of Sargat culture.

Another climatic event, leading to the degradation of pasturage resulting from either an environmental decline at the macro-level, or micro-*anthroclimatic* events caused by over-pasturage (see Sinor 1990:28), and this degradation of pasturage resulted in cultural changes in the 3rd – 5th centuries AD. This final stage, the Late Sargat stage, is poorly understood due to a lack of archaeological material; the exception to the general dearth of material is within the Irtysh River basin where there are rich burials and large settlements. These sites are not a complete expression of the Sargat culture, but tend to maintain some of its components. New influences from the northern, forested zone show perhaps an expansion of the Koulayska culture while the Sargat were pushed to the south and west. The kurgans are much lower in profile, with one ditch or none at all. Some traces of fire exist, but as the mound fill is not usually the focus of recovery during an excavation, often the fill is only cursorily examined thus ash and charcoal may be missed. At the end of this period, which corresponds to the end of the final Sarmatian stage as well, came the introduction of Hunnic populations that led to the so-called "Great Migration of Peoples". This push of populations, caused by wars between the Huns and the Chinese, may have led to the decline of the Sargat populations. Another interpretation, or influence, may have been declining pasturage that undermined the stability of the Sargat populations (Koryakova 1995). More mobility and the admixture of many new populations mark the end of the Sargat period, and the end of the Iron Age.

CHAPTER FIVE

MODELS OF NOMADIC-SEDENTARY INTERACTIONS AND IDENTITY

TAPHONOMIC SIGNATURES OF NOMADISM AND THE USE OF ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

Identifying nomads in the archaeological record has historically been problematic.

Childe (1936:81) identified nomads' use of biodegradable materials and a lack of

substantial architecture (i.e. no walls of stone or brick) as reason for their "invisibility";

the myth of "invisible culture" later discussed by Cribb (1991:65-83). This led to a

lengthy period of speculation as to the nature of their material culture and its ephemeral

traces. Often the lack of settlement evidence, the absence of seasonally identifiable

economic resources, or the interruptions in the material record of sedentary groups was

taken to indicate the existence of nomads (Cribb 1991:66) due to the disruption of

sedentary sequences in the archaeological record. In many ways pastoral nomads and

other mobile populations are seen as lacking not only a presence, but as being a part of

the very "interstices", *spaces* between civilized *places* (e.g. Spielman 1986, 1991a;

Zagarell 1989). Nomads held the distinction of not being "settled", in the sense that

studies of the origins of sedentism, agriculture, and the rise of civilization often identified

nomads as a by-product of these events (e.g. Adams 1966; Braidwood 1960; Cohen

1977). Anyone focused on the origins of nomadism itself focused on the changes in the

composition of domesticated herds (Adams 1974; Gilbert 1983; Hole 1978; Khazanov

1994; Bates and Lees 1977; Masson 1972). Thus the initial signatures of nomadism

consisted of the absence of permanent settlements coupled with the presence of

domesticated animals capable of long-distance travel, e.g. sheep/goat, horses, and camels.

It was not until archaeologists began to study living populations of nomads that they

recognized the presence of a broader range of settlement types used and produced by

nomads themselves (Cohen 1992; Cribb 1991; Haiman 1992).

USE OF ETHNOARCHAEOLOGY

Archaeologists often use the ethnographic record to create analog models of

patterned behavior to assist in their interpretation of the archaeological record.

Ethnography throws light on human variability as it may be expressed, but often does not

address processes of long-term change (Plog 1974:11), which is one fundamental

contribution of archaeology to the discipline of anthropology. By the late 1970s an

increasing number of archaeologists engaged in ethnographic research among living

populations, under the rubric of *ethnoarchaeology* (or also the separate approach of

archaeological ethnography) (Binford (1978) among the Eskimos; Gould (1980) among

Australian Aborigines; Yellen (1977) among African Bushmen). Ethnoarchaeology

involved the search for regularities based on known, observed, or recorded behaviors that

would permit the archaeologist to infer human behaviors from archaeological data. One

of the earliest such studies of pastoralists involved Frank Hole's work among the Lur of

southwest Khuzistan (Hole 1978). Hole looked at patterns of movement, size and

variability of herd structure, and the division of labor among other elements of nomad

lifestyle, to conclude that nomads are constantly on the brink of death. But more

importantly for ethnoarchaeology, he determined that modern campsites have ample

evidence of occupation including animal dung accumulation (as did Chang 1999:141),

disturbance of natural plant resources, and trash. Importantly much of the trash consisted

of pottery sherds, an element of debatable assistance for distinguishing the difference between sedentary populations and nomads (cf. Cribb 1991; Koryakova 1988).

Based on this work Hole (1974) declared formerly invisible cultures found, and after thirty years of ethnoarchaeologists focusing on nomads an explicit methodology was developed for recovering and identifying nomads through a series of specific signatures or criteria (i.e. Cribb 1991). While nomads often have the same physical appearance, language, dress, household utensils, domesticated animals, and even tribal affiliation as their sedentary neighbors, there are separate material correlates to their economic practices. Archaeologists now have a healthy series of features to help identify pastoral nomadism, including corrals, enclosures, folds, encampments, even the shallow impressions left by tent poles (Chang 1993; Cribb 1991; Khazanov and Bar-Yosef 1992).

Material Culture of Pastoral Nomads

While some archaeologists have defined specific "technocomplexes" (Zarins 1992, after Clarke 1968) for their particular circumstances, Cribb (1991) set out to establish a middle-range theory to identify key indicators for the analysis of the archaeological data (cf. Binford 1983:129) associated with nomads. To define pastoral nomads in the archaeological record, the material culture must point to their specific economic identity as herders and breeders of specific animals. Cribb (1991) made extensive inventories of the material culture of Turkish and Iranian nomads. He subsequently divided these into three dichotomous dimensions, building up a model of nomad material culture with a view toward assessing the variables appropriate for archaeological investigation. Building on Binford's (1978) idea of "site furniture", Cribb

determined whether an item is permanent or portable; most nomads' material culture

must be portable to accompany them wherever they move. Heavy items, tent poles or

metal objects, may be left in caches. His second dimensions are durable or perishable.

Perishables must continually be renewed rather than circulated (Cribb 1991:68) and are

therefore less likely to become part of the archaeological record. While pastoral pottery

may instinctively be placed in the perishable column, it is actually a fairly ubiquitous

element in nomad sites, albeit as fragmented sherds; therefore it is durable. Another quite

durable feature that seems counterintuitive are nomads' tents. As many

ethnoarchaeologists have noted, not all tents are flimsy or perishable, having stone or

wooden bases, in addition to wood support structures (see Bar-Yosef and Khazanov's

1992 edited volume for many examples from the Levant). Cribb's final divisions identify

the relative worth of material possessions, either valuable or expendable. Valuables are

curated and preserved. Expendibles are readily discarded and only preserve if they are

highly durable.

Combining these three, paired dimensions (fixture vs. portable; durable vs.

perishable; valuable vs. expendable), Cribb devised an archaeological model describing

the material culture one would expect to find, and its associated interpretations. For

example, items that are portable, perishable and valuable, like carpets, are expected to

have "virtually zero archaeological visibility" (Cribb 1991:69). Unfortunately, he does

not mention the frozen tombs of the Pazyryk that have produced several items of cloth

and felt, including rich carpets (Rudenko 1970). But, allowing for the extraordinary

preservation attributed to the Pazyryk tombs, these three dimensions provide a valuable

model from which to address the material culture recovered from my research area.

Material Culture of Western Siberian Iron Age Nomads

The type of nomadism practiced in Western Siberia focused on sheep/goat, cattle, and horse husbandry. While the rare occurrences of Bronze Age short-term corrals (Merpert 1974; Shilov 1975) and even winter structures (Polosmak 1994) have been documented, because of the nature of investigation of sites in the region (an emphasis on settlement archaeology, see Chapter Three), the bulk of our knowledge about the Sargat and the Sarmatian people comes from the mortuary domain or from historical accounts. Fifty percent of Sargat graves contain horse harnesses (Koryakova 1988), which makes this the most laudable evidence of pastoral nomadism in Western Siberia. Other artifacts that attest to their mobile lifestyles include wagons and carts (more common for the Bronze Age of this region: Shilov 1975; Kuzmina 2000), and even more rarely the containers made from wood, birch bark, and leather found in the frozen Pazyryk tombs (Rudenko 1960, 1970; Polosmak 1994). Pottery, both imported wheel-turned and local hand-thrown vessels are commonly found in the burials as well. While it has been shown that the nomads could easily make their own pottery on dung-fed fires (Koryakova and Fedorov 1993; Koryakova 2000:15; Sharapova 1999, 2004), the pottery styles are commonly associated with both sedentary villages and the burial mounds of the nomads. Koryakova (2000:15) notes that the Sarmatians of the Don and Volga steppe are "known to have obtained pottery in this manner [from sedentary populations]."

Other taphonomic signatures of nomadism expected to be in abundance as noted by ethnoarchaeologists –among these are animal droppings and herd structure (Banning and Köhler-Rollefson 1986, 1992; Cribb 1991; Hole 1978) –remain to be fully utilized in

this region. Vital to the reconstruction of cultural interactions between sedentary and nomadic peoples is understanding how they occupied the landscape. The current, accepted model of nomad land-use of the Eurasian grasslands involves long-distance, horizontal movement across the steppe from the warmer climatic zones in the south, to the colder forest-steppe zones in the north where herds grazed in the warmer months (Khazanov 1994:37-39, 44-45, 51). Shishlina's (2001) Bronze Age study may provide future means by which we can identify land-use and movement. She analyzed pollen residues below the kurgans, initiated osteological investigations of fauna (age/sex structures), and the incremental analysis of dentin and cementum, to determine seasonality. In the future these types of analyses may allow us to more carefully define the seasonality of their pasturage and the timing and possible extent of their interactions with local sedentary populations. Determining the time of year in which Iron Age kurgans were constructed will allow us to better understand their seasonal timing and use of the landscape. Locating other potential taphonomic markers on that landscape, i.e. storage facilities for fodder or shelter for animals, will give us a better understanding of how pastoral nomads interact with their environment and other cultural groups.

CULTURAL IDENTITY AND INTERACTION

> People, objects, and places –this is the holy trinity in which identity is developed. The relationship between each pair of terms has its own contribution to make to the creation and continuous re-creation of personal and collective identities in the past, as much as in the present.
>
> (Chapman 2000a:27)

Cultural identity and cultural interactions between nomads and sedentary people have been the highly contested domain largely of cultural anthropologists, as revealed in Chapter Two. Archaeological contributions to these discussions have only occurred in the last ten to fifteen years, and thus far have yielded either extremely mixed or limited results.

Whether we see the nomads as outright dominant users of nefarious techniques to obtain advantage, or bound in a complex balance of fight or flight, the relations between seemingly separate populations are rarely interpreted in a balanced way. The construction of "nomad" as such a distinctly "other" identity from the sedentary realm helps to perpetuate the image of their separateness. But as has been shown, there are considerable degrees of variability in both mobility and dependence upon animal husbandry, and there also must be degrees of variation in our interpretations of the sedentary-nomad interactions.

In order to consider the interaction of two cultural groups, sedentary people and nomads, it is necessary to establish a nomadic identity as unique from its neighbors. But, to do so begins with the assumption that we can identify distinctions in the archaeological record that correlate with separate peoples. I do not feel that this is beyond the realm of archaeology so long as we do not reconstruct immutable, "monolithic, individuate entities" (Jones and Graves-Brown 1996:4). Identity creates an opportunity for archaeology to interact with other disciplines but also with the greater community. Identities can and have been used as unifying elements in the creation of supportive or collaborative groups (unions, social clubs, fraternities, the SAA), or "identities can act as

the motive forces behind history" (MacDonald 1993:7), such as the feminists, Communists, or "Liberals". None of these categories is homogenous in their membership roster, and yet a picture is created by the simple use of their names.

Cultural identity contains many components that interact with and overlap each other. We can speak of status or class, sex and gender identities, ethnicity, even occupation as a means by which we categorize a population. The ways that any of these are expressed by the individual players within a society or between societies would necessitate the use of symbols, to obtain social self-consciousness and awareness (Durkheim 1976:230-231) that evokes a strong enough reaction from others to allow for the easy identification of membership into a particular group. Especially among non-literate peoples, it is necessary to recognize that memory preserves their identity and traditions where a written record would function for literate societies (Goody 2000). Material objects and their symbolic value would facilitate fallible human memory, thus material objects become "mneumonic devices" (Wells 2001:19) that may assist in remembering the sequence of events or creating the intended sequence. Within the mortuary realm alone material symbols can be interpreted as reflections of reality (e.g. Binford 1972; Brown 1981; Chapman 1981; Goldstein 1976; O'Shea 1984; Saxe 1970); as mental building blocks with design rules and grammars or ways of thinking (e.g. Hodder 1982; Parker Pearson and Richards 1994; Peebles 1992; Shanks and Tilley 1982); as reflections of agency, personhood, and practice (Chesson 2001; Gillespie 2001, 2002; Joyce 2001); or symbols that are considered arbitrary fragments and phenomenological (e.g. Barrett 1994; Bloch and Parry 1982; Chapman 1981). Archaeology has three basic conclusions with regards to symbols: 1) any serious consideration of prehistory requires

us to deal with symbols, 2) the diversity of human symbols requires a multifaceted

approach, and 3) it is problematic to establish how varied symbols relate to one another

(for a full discussion see: Robb 1998). Mortuary behaviors have been used to explain

status identities; material culture addresses every identity from occupation, status,

ethnicity, nationality, to gender. Status as determined by mortuary remains and material

culture will be discussed in short order, so the following will briefly outline other areas of

cultural identity commonly addressed by archaeologists: sex and gender, and ethnicity.

Sex and Gender

As Meskell (2002:283) aptly puts it, "The creation of specialty topics like gender

or children, as discursive taxonomic entities has resulted in a predictable ghettoization,

whereby the majority of scholars still consider such areas outside their interpretive

remit." And yet since the early 1990s library shelves, journal indexes, and conference

sessions have become exultant with explorations of gender identity (e.g. Claassen's 1992

Exploring Gender through Archaeology: Selected Papers from the 1991 Boone

Conference; Gero and Conkey's 1991 *Engendering Archaeology: Women and*

Prehistory; or Rautman's 2000 *Reading the Body*). Sex, once thought to be a biological

imperative and one that came in pairs, is now a much more complex picture of males,

females, and intersexes based on hormones, genes, and cultural choices. Gender

archaeology began with questions of simply finding representations of women in the past,

to a broader awareness that by misidentifying women's roles we in turn misjudge the

roles of men as well. For example Patricia Galloway's (1997) *Where Have All the*

Menstrual "Huts" Gone? forces us to reconsider the interpretation of women's

segregation during menses as either a bad thing for women, or a good thing for men as they would have had to pick up the extra slack when the women were "indisposed". By doing more than "adding women and stirring" gender studies have expanded our ability to hear multiple interpretative voices, and recreate more interesting analyses. Burials and their contents are particularly good sources of information about gender because, given adequate preservation, their occupants can be sexed with a relatively high degree of accuracy, and the grave goods can be assessed according to "conformity and nonconformity of our expectations according to sex" (Nelson and Rosen-Ayalon 2002:6). This concept will be addressed in the analysis of my data and its comparison to the "gendered" approach of Davis-Kimball (1997, 1998b). In contemporary approaches to gender in archaeology, gender is positioned in relation to other identity markers such as age, class, sexuality, and ethnicity (Brumfiel 1992; Knapp 1998; Meskell 1996, 2002; Moore and Scott 1997).

Ethnicity

Archaeologists have used ancient texts written by Greek and Roman authors, among others, as fairly direct guidelines for examining Iron Age peoples. While perhaps not believed to be accurate accounts, these ancient texts are rarely scrutinized in the archaeological literature, which leaves the impression that ancient historians portrayed objective depictions of Iron Age societies. With these texts in hand archaeologists have gone into the field to find the ethnic groups and their signatures as described in the works of Herodotus, Strabo, and Ovid. In this way we have perpetuated the view of nomads from the outside (*etic* perspective) rather than attempting to understand how they may

have identified themselves (*emic* perspective). But to speak of ethnicity among some archaeologists is to grab for the proverbial "third rail", to open one's analysis up to untold amounts of criticism. And yet touch it we must.

Barth (1969) states that ethnic identity is primarily a form of social organization whereby participants make use of a selection of cultural traits or symbols in order to differentiate themselves from others with whom they come into contact. His becomes the basis for an interaction approach to ethnicity, whereby proponents assume that individuals within given societies are highly self-reflexive about their choices and quite cognizant of the symbolic meaning (Barth 1969; Comaroff 1987; Duff 1999; Emberling 1997). Groups are dynamic, and consciously manipulate symbols for cultural inclusion or exclusion. Ethnic identity creates potential disagreement for roles that must constantly be renegotiated (Emberling 1997) by the members, often through the use of visible markers that act as symbols of membership, which can and do change over time (Cohen 1978). Without this constant negotiation and reification, ethnicity will disappear, similarly without another group, a "them" against which to define "us," ethnicity will also disappear or at the very least fade from view. Ethnicity is not expressed in every interaction. Critiques of this approach to ethnic identity emphasize its focus on interaction without recognizing its cultural context, the broader cultural system (Jones 1996, 1997). To avoid this epiphenomenon, Bourdieu (1977) described the cultural content within which ethnic groups operate –the *habitus*.

Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* refers to the underlying set of rules of a society that individuals are largely unconscious of, but which result in lasting predispositions that condition how an individual perceives the world around him/her.

These rules are based on past experiences of enculturation, and influence how all new interactions are structured (Jones 1997), conditioning our perceptions, emotional reactions, and behaviors in social situations (Bentley 1987:39). Bourdieu uses children's acquisition of language as a metaphor for *habitus;* children learn vocabulary and the underlying rules without being explicitly taught the differences between nouns and adverbs. As applied to ethnicity, once a person has been raised within their particular habitus, it is difficult to learn the "language" of a new ethnicity and it is often accomplished imperfectly (Bentley 1987:35). There will be material correlates of an imperfect translation. Ethnic groups reveal affinities based on their shared habitus and changes in these material expressions come only with radical social and economic changes (Bourdieu 1977:168). The material culture is created through social practice, structuring human agency and a product of that agency (Jones 1997:117). Thus the critique of this approach to ethnicity often points to its cultural determinism (Stone 2003:39). Because *habitus* is unconscious, people cannot question it; because it is communally based and in a homeostatic state, it cannot be changed without external influence (migration, colonization) leaving the individual with little creativity or room to maneuver (Meskell 2000:20; Strathern 1996). Agency must be recognized as an element in behavioral changes and their resultant material variability, an element in a "dynamic recursive relationship linking structure and agency" (Gillespie 2001:74).

Where archaeologists have largely agreed is that *ethnic consciousness* is tied to the rise of the state (Barth 1961; Bentely 1987; Chang and Koster 1986; Emberling 1997; Jones 1996, 1997; Shennan 1989), a consciousness tied to resistance to hegemonic rule and assymetrical power (Stone 2003). But assymetrical power is found even within

"egalitarian" societies (Salzman 1999) and the existence of ethnicity in pre-state societies

is being questioned (e.g. Dolukhanov 1989; Stone 2003). Archaeologists have a difficult

time identifying ethnicity, not simply because of the baggage associated with the term

(though there is considerable baggage), but also because ethnicity is fluid and changing,

and individuals display their ethnic identity differently according to context. It is to be

expected that one would find general, broader ethnic identities when individuals are

further from their home, but more narrow and distinctive traits when they are closer to

home, but still in contact with "others". The material correlates of ethnic identity often

overlap other cultural identities and are difficult to discern; because it is created by

particular actors in a given time and space, it is highly fluid; and because it requires both .

emic and etic acceptance of membership, many feel it cannot be determined consistently

without documentation (for recent approaches to this dilemma see Bernardini 2002, 2005;

Borgstede 2004). Perhaps by eliminating other roles, especially in very particular spatial

contexts where we would expect to find identity broadcast loudly, i.e. the mortuary

domain, we may be able to find ethnicity a salient identity for discussion.

MORTUARY STUDIES

One of the key components of cultural identity and social structure, especially in

non-state societies, involves kinship. Early attempts at establishing these familial ties

equated artifact typologies with archaeological cultures and hence tribal affiliation (e.g.

the assumed relationship between ceramic design and social organization of Longacre

1964, 1974). However Saxe (1970), Binford (1971) produced a much more promising

"approach" (Saxe-Binford approach as coined by Brown 1995) involving the use of

mortuary data. It was ascertained that certain resources were crucial within any given system, and formal burial areas were used to maintain lineal claims and legitimate rights to these resources. Cemeteries were seen as having a structure, one that informed us of the organizational principles of the society.

The *New Archaeology* of the 1970s reacted against the diffusionist models of the prior century that sought to equate nearly all cultural change with migration, and all similarities between mortuary sites, subsequently the ritual expressions, were seen as shared beliefs between cultural groups within particular regions (Chapman 1995:29). Diffusionists relied on chronologies of Montelius and spatial patterns of Kossina to define cultural groups, but these ended up viewing culture as a static homogenous concept, one heavily reliant upon outside forces for change. This approach assumed disposal methods for the dead were vestiges from past societies or the results of outside influence. The New Archaeologists believed that evolution to be determined by the environment and the internal dynamics of each culture, concurrent processes that had to be understood using scientific methods.

Saxe (1970) and Binford (1971) searched for the social source of variability in mortuary treatments. Both were interested in unique or contradictory treatments that might reveal the organizational rules of the social system, and role-defined individual status (Brown 1995:11), ones that revealed the social identities an individual had achieved during the course of his/her life. In these roles, the living maintained a series of rights and duties, both to the living and the dead by means of constructing a complex social arena, the cemetery. The form, quality and quantity of grave goods and features signified the rank and status of the dead (Binford 1971:18); variation equated to

differentiation. Binford defined the variability of social obligations, the size and the composition of the social group in terms of a "duty-status" performed for the deceased. The mortuary treatment, that is the amount and quality of grave goods, reflected the social responsibilities of the living to the dead. Theoretically in egalitarian societies where achievement establishes status, a child has few identity relationships; in a ranked society, the same child inherits rank as well as the social bonds and symbols that go with it. Material culture was seen as a passive entity, one directly reflecting the structure of society that created it (Binford 1971:14-15; Peebles and Kus 1977:431), and for the first time "mortuary variability was no longer seen as an expression of cultural belief but rather as a reflection of the organizational principles of the social system itself" (Barrett 1996:394), with increasing social complexity came increasingly complex mortuary displays. In effect they created a unified analytical, even theoretical approach to a single kind of archaeological material and the "lack of correspondence of symbol, practice, or ideology motivated their search and those who followed them (Brown 1995:6).

For Saxe the number of social identities was finite, as there were a finite number of variables present in the mortuary realm. He produced a cross-cultural, nomothetic model to show how mortuary practices were interrelated with the sociocultural system. The number of "contrast sets", numbers of elaborations found within the lowest percentage of graves, equated to the social significance of the deceased (his *Hypothesis 6*), providing a means of "monitoring social complexity" (Saxe 1970:2). Later Goldstein (1976) would show through the use of ethnographic analogy that this only worked within particular social strata.

The expression of one's social relations to the deceased allowed for the living to establish links to "critical but restricted resources...by means of lineal descent from the dead (i.e., lineal ties to ancestors), such groups will maintain formal disposal areas" (Saxe 1970:119). Corporate groups would maintain formal disposal areas, rather than more dispersed arrangements, when the control of restricted resources was crucial (*Hypothesis 8*). These bounded areas became symbols of the social obligation owed to the dead, a composite of social identities and alternate identities. Mortuary ritual was seen as the medium for directly expressing social relationships (Brown 1995:12), differential treatment in life reflected that cultures social structure (Goldstein 1981:55). Within a few years, Saxe's *Hypothesis 8* was also found not to be universally applicable:

...a lineal group controlling critical resources does not always have a formal disposal area. If the area does exist, however, the reason does seem to be corporate lineal control.

(Goldstein 1976:58)

Hence, if there is a formal bounded dispersal area, used exclusively for the dead, then the culture is probably one which has a corporate group structure in the form of lineal descent system. The more organized and formal the disposal area is, the more conclusive this interpretation.

(Goldstein 1976:62)

One problem as defined by Goldstein became the question of whether cultures with similar environment and economic conditions will symbolize and ritualize aspects of

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their organization in similar ways, a question with direct implications for the pastoral

nomads of Western Siberia. But the problem with Saxe's original hypothesis is its

inherent *circularity*:

> ...cemeteries are taken to indicate the existence of corporate
>
> groups, the need for corporate groups to establish control over 'critical
>
> resources' is then assumed (Chapman 1981) and the cemeteries are seen to
>
> result from the need to legitimate that claim.
>
> (Barrett 1996: 395)

Circularity or universal applicability aside, Saxe's Hypothesis 8 still provided a

highly provocative point for many other scholars upon which to build (e.g., Brown 1981;

Chapman 1981; Charles and Buikstra 1983; O'Shea 1981, 1984; Peebles and Kus 1977;

Tainter 1977). These studies highlight the importance of economic conditions for

determining the mortuary realm.

The ways in which the mortuary data from Western Siberia have been

traditionally analyzed indicates that much of the analysis (not merely publication of site

reports) of burials has been limited to these highly influential, if not outdated, analyses of

the 1970s and, I argue, the century prior. Archaeologists have assigned mortuary remains

to nomads and to pan-Siberian cultural groups by relying the Scythian-triad (burial

mounds with weapons, horse tack, and animal style artifacts; see: Chapter Four), so that

the assemblage of artifacts equated to cultural groups with presumed tribal affiliations.

The Sargat (as interpreted by the work of Koryakova and Matveeva) and that of the

Sarmatian (especially in the analysis of Davis-Kimball 1997, 1998b) materials have

produced direct correlations between burial structure, location, and grave goods (type and quantity) to concepts of rank and status within those societies (Hanks 2000), assumptions shared by processual archaeology (Levy 1989:156[1]). Studies of labor investment (e.g. Brown 1971; Peebles and Kus 1977; Tainter 1977) have been used to establish the hierarchical nature of the kurgans, where energy expended in the building of the mounds themselves equals higher levels of status (Koryakova 1988, 2000:15) as does attaining necessary elements for interior constructions as status indicators (e.g. Polosmak 1994[2]). While Davis-Kimball does add the component of gender identity to her discussions (Davis-Kimball 1997, 1998) it once again correlates the grave goods (weaponry, trade goods, and cultic/"ritual" objects) directly to aspects of cultural identity. While energy expenditure is a valuable means with which to identify high and low status in ranked societies (as noted by Brown 1995), it remains problematic when we do not know what elements of the mortuary behavior have not been preserved or recovered archaeologically. These analyses largely ignore the work done in mortuary studies since the 1980s, including critiques of processualism, and improvements to the Saxe-Binford approach.

In death people often become what they have not been in life.

Ian Hodder, *The Present Past* (1982b:141)

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[1] "...the fundamental assumption of all these studies [processual] is that there is some regular correspondence between the morphology, contents, and spatial position and arrangement of a grave (that is, the material manifestations of at least part of the death ritual) and an individual's social position or positions in life" (Levy 1989:156).
[2] Wood tombs required a high degree of labor invested to transport trees from a great distance away, across frozen water. This parallels Brown 1975, where the value of grave goods is equated to status.

The critiques of the Saxe-Binford paradigm came from both within the processual camp and from without. Some demonstrated directly the failure of quantification to support interpretative models (Braun 1981 challenging the work of Tainter 1978). The subjectivity inherent in the labeling of *precious* grave goods, a value divined by the archaeologist, is not necessarily a direct reflection of social relations or social position. By the 1980s criticism appeared that paralleled developments in social anthropology (Hodder 1982a; Shennan 1987) that emphasized "mortuary remains as symbolic codes rather than as direct reflections of social organization" (Levy 1989:156); codes that could be manipulated by any number of social players or represent social values. Many felt that by searching for categorical realities, the Saxe-Binford approach used cross-cultural ethnographies to replace a context driven analysis. By seeking general statements that crosscut mortuary sites, processualists ignored individual actors.

Postprocessualism, a conglomerate label that represents multiple theoretical approaches developed in opposition to processualism, presents a unified front in its indictment of processual approaches to mortuary ritual (Rakita and Buikstra 2005:7). Mortuary variation could just as readily represent the decisions of the living as the social personae of the dead, and the material remains were as likely to misrepresent as represent society. Hodder (1982a:168) established that burial programs were more a reflection of the prevailing feelings towards death and rather uninformative in relation to social organization. He used the example of the Nuba, who found purity in death over the pollution of life (Hodder 1982a:125-84). Similarly expenditures and mortuary treatment did not have to equal personal status. Wealthy individuals are often not given the richest cemetery display, such as the size of crypt or monument (Parker Pearson 1982); the size

of monument or its absence may more reflect the changing attitudes of society toward

death itself, not the social value or wealth status of the individual (McGuire 1988).

Shanks and Tilley (1982:130) state material culture reflects the society that created it, but

acts recursively to reproduce and structure that society as well. The way in which the

society is structured may reflect an idealization of social order or structures by

transforming the remains of the dead (Bloch and Parry 1982:36). In this vein, Ucko

(1969) and Metcalf and Huntington (1991 citing Helander 1988) use ethnographic

examples of mortuary behavior that either masks or outright subverts the social order.

Practice may disguise the true nature of society, but sometimes a too narrow perspective

on mortuary practice blinds one to the elements of elaboration that may be hiding below

the surface (e.g. Bloch 1971). Whether society is being recreated or created in a

preferred vision of itself, mortuary behavior is non-random, thus if it is also a distortion,

one can expect these distortions to maintain a regularity and predictability (O'Shea

1981:52). As Cheeson's (2001) volume elucidates, studies of death and mortuary ritual

must help create a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between social

memory, and creation and negotiation of identities (cf. Bloch and Parry 1982; Metcalf

and Huntington 1991).

The concern for social systems remained, but an emphasis was placed on ideology

and complexity to understand variation. People did not remain passive in the face of

death ritual; they also did not need to follow preordained plans. Within this school of

thought, death itself is an important way in which societies recreate themselves, revealing

otherwise transient social systems, not just concrete claims to resources (e.g. Bloch and

Parry 1982). *Postprocessual*[3] archaeologists have sought to better understand the roles

of ritual in maintaining the society (symbolic archaeology) as well as how the living and

the significant distinctions among the dead, affect change of the system itself. Some of

what postprocessual archaeologists have embraced to clarify variation is the role of ritual

in perpetuating society (after van Gennep 1960, and Giddens 1984), ethnicity (Jones

1997, Wells 2001), social structures (Randsborg 1975), and ideology (Kristiansen 1984;

Shanks and Tilley 1982).

Treatment of the body was deemed an important vehicle of social symbolism.

Parker Pearson (1982, 1984b) states that political decisions helped to determine the way a

body was treated, that burials are an "acting out" of living relationships (1984b:69) that

legitimize authority and naturalize the social order. Barrett (1994:112) sees the body as a

"symbolic resource", one that can be manipulated by social norms or by individual

needs/desires. The material culture interred with the dead had to involve more than

assumptions about status or roles also. Material culture cannot be interpreted through the

eyes of our contemporary society as our values do not represent a "Truth" that can be

placed on objects. The material residues of past societies must be seen as ritual

indications. Building on Goldstein (1976), Trinkaus (1984) determined that the physical

treatment of the dead frequently was not the focus of significant social differentiation:

> The expression of rank is indeed present but in an "inverted" sense in
>
> which the high rank and lavish possessions during life are expressed in
>
> death with much nonmaterial asymbolism and lavish nonpermanent

[3] Postprocessualist is a term used for expediency to represent archaeologists who positioned themselves in opposition to the New Archaeology. As noted by Ashmore (2002:1173) it falsely homogenizes the perspective and its contributors, as well as "giving short shrift" to a wide range of other archaeologies. Processual vs. Postprocessual is not altogether invaluable as a device for describing opposite ends of a spectrum, but perhaps is a false dichotomy best used sparingly.

display (feasting, elaborate hearses, flowers, presence of significant

persons, etc.). The emphasis is heavily shifted from mortuary remains to

mortuary ritual.

(Trinkaus 1984:675)

While we declare "ritual makes social structure" (Bloch 1977:286), many

archaeologists have difficulty defining ritual itself other than, as with the case of

pornography, we know it when we are in its presence (Morris 1992:8-9). In order to

make a more positive identification many archaeologists have used van Gennep's (1960)

seminal volume, *The Right's of Passage* (original publication 1908), to analyze ritual

behavior and the dynamics of social life. He defined three separate stages to any social

ritual: *rites of separation, transition rites*, and *rites of incorporation*. Death is part of the

initial stage, a separation from a person's normal status, where some become mourners,

another the corpse itself. The mortuary site and funeral are part of a *liminal* zone, a place

of transition belonging to no one and part of the second stage (cf. Leach 1976). During

transition the living and the dead often travel down parallel paths toward different

destinations. The mourners are separated from society by their roles in the death ritual

often displayed through dress, action or even inaction. How soon they move out of this

stage is determined by the closeness to the deceased (van Gennep 1960:147). The

deceased, now a corpse and a soul, also remains in limbo, not ready to move on and also

commonly perceived as being in danger of returning. The rites that lift all special

regulations on the mourners reintegrate these individuals back into the realm of the

living. It is usually at this point that the soul transitions to the world of the dead or

ancestors as the mourners return to every day life. What adds to the confusion of

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interpretation of funerals is that they often contain *defensive rites*, rites that hold the

deceased at bay to ensure that he/she does not return. Van Gennep states that it is often

difficult to identify whether a particular ritual is one of protection or of separation

(1960:12). The social energy spent during the rites of separation is regenerated and

renewed during the funeral (Goody 1962), helping to restore the social fabric of daily life

that has been torn by death.

In order to address the archaeological correlates of sacred rituals Renfrew (1973)

focused on the spatial context and the social aspect of the individual, in many ways

advancing the work of Saxe and Binford to assess the class of individuals afforded a

particular type of burial as reflected by the grave goods, but also to address the symbolic

meaning behind the material culture. Grave goods may be the necessary tools to

transition the dead to the afterworld, not directly reflecting the dead's status but the

necessities accorded to all who must make the journey (van Gennep 1960:153-154), thus

one must determine whether there is a uniformity to the use of material culture in the

graves.

But not all elements of the mortuary ritual are either preserved in the

archaeological record or placed with the deceased at all, and many of the most successful

critiques of the Saxe-Binford approach come from historical archaeology (Gillespie 2001,

2002; Joyce 2001; McGuire 1992; Morris 1991, 1992; Rakita and Buikstra 2005:7). Who

was in attendance (and how many)? What did they say? What could be heard and by

whom? What did they wear? These are among any number of elements that cannot be

recovered archaeologically, thus we necessarily have only a partial picture of the total

ritual. To truly reconstruct the mortuary ritual Morris (1992:10) listed four sources of information:

1) Direct observation/participation in the ritual;

2) Verbal testimony (oral/written) describing the ritual;

3) Artistic representation of the rituals often created for the event itself);

4) The material remains.

While the writings of Herodotus do detail certain elements of Scythian funerary rites (e.g., *Histories* IV 71-75), for the mortuary rituals from Western Siberia the only direct evidence available are the material remains found in the kurgans themselves. In order to compensate for this and other limitations on the data, i.e. that only certain ritual elements preserve in the archaeological record, and this does not include things like the number of mourners, Morris (1992) suggests a careful synchronic approach, describing each episode, burial mound and grave(s), one prescribed by Jon Chapman (2000a, 2002) as well.

Identifying ritual, such as linking the establishment of formal cemeteries to inheritance, is problematic. By using ethnographic and archaeological materials Morris (1991) suggested that the inheritance of property based on links to formal disposal areas gets mixed results, often this policy is part of a culture's ideology, but in practice the living use mortuary ritual to symbolize conflicting messages, in contrast to Binford's one-to-one correlation. Others have attempted to see if kin groups can be established based on "real" spatial organization (Howell and Kíntigh 1996), thus this line of archaeological inquiry has been found to not only have staying power, but to also produce continued understanding of past societies. Not all applications of Saxe-Binford

have borne fruit – such as in Tainter's (1977, 1983) componential analysis of Middle Woodland crypts (see Braun 1981 for a critique, and Brown 1995 for a complete discussion). By far the most rigorous application of this approach is one that uses both political and economic aspects for "...life is a limited resource" (Bloch and Parry 1982:8) and mortuary practices can be restated structurally as allocation problems (Brown 1995:10), of redistributing both political power and economic resources among the living. Limitations on resources lead to competition, for grave goods, labor, etc. Some aspects of the mortuary regime may be subverted while others are emphasized in the archaeological record of any particular cemetery or given grave. In order to make effective arguments with limited or poor data, mortuary specialists sought patterns over space (e.g. Morris 1987; Beck's 1995 edited volume) and by examining the entire mortuary ritual. A broader approach seeking regional variability can help us to better understand past societies, but it can also introduce the complication of a greater emphasis on diachronic variability. Without a tightly focused chronology, based on absolute dates, this variability is difficult to explain.

By examining the placement of mortuary sites across the landscape, archaeologists attempt to establish the role of the dead, the ancestors, in the lives of the living. Seeking patterns within a region, we can identify key elements of location, individual and group treatment, and change to determine how representative any single factor is. In some societies van Gennep noted that there is not always a special place for the dead beyond the grave and that among these groups burial is a rite of incorporation into the realm of the dead (1960:163). If the dead are placed close to the living, near a settlement, or for the case of pastoral nomads, in the path of seasonal migrations, then

people may remain in the liminal stage longer by revisiting the burial site.

Archaeological approaches emphasizing the landscape as more than a sacred series of

shrines and monuments to the dead (e.g. Arnold 2002; Ashmore and Knapp 1999;

Silverman and Small 2002) help to create a more inclusive and informed view of the

deeper meanings and importance of the ancestors to the living.

Thus placement of the dead in a kurgan needs to be addressed in lieu of the

mound and/or cemetery's position in relation to other spatial features of the society

(Arnold 2002; Chesson 2001). Kurgans situated close to villages place the dead and the

living in constant communion; burials found in seeming isolation may communicate

territorial behavior (identifying trade routes or pasturage) especially among individuals

who are spatially dispersed (Ingold 1986:133; Renfrew 1973; Goldstein 1995), or may

physically manifest resource control (Chapman 1981, 1995). Beginning with van

Gennep's emphasis on ritual space and rites of passage, incorporating the material culture

found in mortuary spaces, and the placement of the burials on the landscape, one can

address the potential of the monuments to the dead, the kurgans, to communicate

information to a wide audience through time and space (Chapman 1995:46; Chesson

2001:3).

Kurgan burial may reflect the individual's place in society as prior interpretations

have established. Mound placement may in part mark territory or allow the living to

interact with the dead. Mounds may delimit trade routes or position the dead in cosmic

alignment with culturally defined vortex, but ultimately "a burial is part of a funeral, and

a funeral is part of a set of rituals (Morris 1992:1). By judging the nature of the ritual

itself, the transitory nature of the experience of death that is encompassing all members

of society (van Gennep's transition stage, or liminality per Turner 1969), the creation of kurgans (constructing) and the ceremony involved engulfs members of the society and communicates to the greater community who come into contact with that space. In the course of the ritual people symbolically express their social structure, elements of daily life. The kurgan and its contents (material culture) are symbolic expressions of society reestablishing itself after the loss of one of its members, making the transition, along with the dead, and entering the next stage. Kurgans were built within a particular cultural milieu, but afterward they represent a living entity on the landscape, a physical entity that has a changing social meaning as any other piece of material culture does. Each passing generation witnessing, interacting with, passing by, even excavating these mounds, interprets and incorporates them into a new cultural condition.

Interpretations of the "living entity" are not the purpose of this dissertation; instead it is to carefully use the material remains of past societies to gain some understanding of the complex interactions between groups. There is value in understanding the nature of differential access to mortuary sites, as we become accustomed to the development of hierarchy in the past, but direct expression of material remains as reflecting the values of past societies must be reexamined in order to find something of more interest to relate about the nomads of Western Siberia. As Davis-Kimball (1997, 1998) has begun to do for the Sarmatians, and as Hanks (2000, 2003) has called for with the Sargat, I too will add alternate categories which cross-cut the social hierarchies, such as age, sex/gender, and occupation. These cultural identities may reveal relations that unite individuals rather than divide them, and allow us to produce more interesting interpretations of the past. In order to do this it is necessary to reinvigorate

the existing data with new models that allow us to explore alternative relations between

nomads and sedentary people, relations other than fear, loathing, or assimilation.

INTERACTIONS AND MODEL BUILDING

Eurasian steppe nomads have been seen as "predatory pastoralists" (Bell-Fialkoff

2000:181) where one key element, the horse, took peaceful herdsmen and created

"swashbucklers" (Lindner 1981:4). They can be "extortionists" (Barfield 1989), who

clash over niche resources with their sedentary neighbors (Khazanov 1994:50) or

alternatively nomads were simply peripheral to civilized areas. These types of

interactions are all based on the assumption that pastoral nomads could not function

without sedentary people, but that the inverse was not true. None of these interpretations

recognize the considerable variability of this type of economic practice. Pastoral people

may supplement animal husbandry with their own small-scale agriculture, fishing, or

foraging and collecting. Sometimes nomads live in the back of wagons or in highly

portable tents (discussed in the historical texts of Herodotus and Strabo, also see

Sulimirski 1970), while others maintain substantial seasonal residences (Cribb 1991);

sometimes they purchase land and settle down (Barth 1961). When this occurs some

maintain identities of social prominence in both worlds as the wealthy, landed Basseri did

(Barth 1961), while others cease to be recognized as part of the ethnic community as was

the case among the Saami of northern Sweden (Hjort 1990). Pastoral nomadism is and

has been a flexible lifestyle that allows for flexible kinds of social identities and

interactions. As Chang and Tourtellotte (1998) speculated "farmers, herders and nomads

were all integrated into single cultural groupings – and thus autonomous in their

allegiance to a single polity" (1998:269). The degree to which pastoralists specialize in one form of production depends on their environment, demography and interactions with other local populations, the degree to which they can obtain products they do not produce for themselves (Bates and Lees 1977:825). When building a model for the cultural interaction between sedentary groups and pastoral nomads, it is important to recognize the diversity of potential interactions and seek out new perspectives.

Eurasian nomads are traditionally viewed as specialists (Irons 1979; Khazanov 1975, 1994) therefore a high degree of intergroup exchange would presumably have been practiced. Khazanov's highly influential archaeological studies of the Scythians (1975, 1978) and later his global comparison of ethnology, have made him the most oft cited authority on Eurasian nomads. In *Nomads and the Outside World* (first published in 1983, with a second edition in 1994) he used the term "symbiosis" to describe the relations between Eurasian populations. Nomads had need of specific agrarian resources that they could not produce for themselves, thus they relied upon sedentary agriculturists through trade or raid between Inner Asian nomads and the Chinese state (Barfield 1989; DiCosmo 1994), tax or tribute systems among the Baruch (Salzman 1971), even renting their fallow lands as Barth (1961) detailed among the Basseri. But the farmers did not require the existence of relations to the pastoralists in order to survive. This is not the form of *symbiosis* discussed by others, but instead what I call "parasitism". Others define a relationship of shared benefit as *mutualism*:

> ...because the resources which are acquired through mutualistic exchange
>
> constitute part of the adaptation of each population, mutualism is regular
>
> and predictable, rather than ad hoc in occurrence. Thus, both the hunter-

gatherer and horticultural populations must organize their subsistence activities to meet the needs of their exchange partners as well as their own subsistence needs. In addition, social mechanisms must be developed to sustain the economically based interactive system.

(Spielman 1983:258)

Spielman (1983, 1986, 1991a, 1991b) defines the more or less inter-reliant systems, or "subsistence interdependence" (Spielman 1986:279-80) that act as more than a buffering mechanism against shortfalls. Buffering mechanisms are stochastic by nature, determined by local shortages. Mutualism is the differential distribution of resources due to the utilization of different resource bases. While her model is based on interactions between farmers and hunter/gatherers, two groups truly involved in separate resource acquisition, the same cannot as easily be said of agriculturalists and pastoralists. Both are productive economies, often utilizing the same kinds of animals, and occupying overlapping if not the same ecological zone(s). I believe that due to farming's attachment to particular locations throughout the growing season, year after year, and pastoral nomadism's shifting locational strategy, the model is still applicable to Western Siberia.

Spielman's research involved egalitarian populations. The interactions of these groups are dynamic environmentally, demographically, and sociopolitically. For mutualism to function the relationships must be between two distinct cultures[4], where the majority participate, each using distinctively different modes of adaptation, and separate yet "contiguous ecozones" (Spielman 1986:288). Because of these differences, material

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[4] Between the Khoikhoi and the San, believed to be of related ethnicity, evolved a form of mutualism that was environmentally and socially dependent. Intertribal competition for land and water holes and the presence of strong leaders propelled these two populations through strategies emphasizing hunting/gathering, mutualistic interactions between hunter/gatherers and pastoralists, and pastoralism (Elphick 1977 cited in Spielman 1986:303-304).

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culture should not be similar so that trade can be identified readily (cf. Luedtke 1976).

Mutualism will persist so long as the costs and benefits remain relatively equal to each

party, though the benefits to each must be maintained at a high level through regular

interactions and exchanges of surplus. The kinds of resources involved in these

exchanges commonly involve critical subsistence resources; "mutualism will be indicated

by a significant increase in the volume of trade goods from non-local environments...

accumulated volume of these goods over time should leave a clear archaeological record

of continuous interaction" (Spielman 1983:258). These interactions are more than

economic gains. They lay the groundwork for the co-evolution of societies through

mutual dependence (Schortman and Urban 1987). Both groups will change separately

and in relation to each other.

One can recognize several types of mutualism within the larger overarching

construct. Facultative mutualists benefit from the presence of one another but can survive

independently, but at lower carrying capacities. Obligate mutualists cannot survive in the

absence of their partners; this relationship may involve the power and control of one

society over another, but once the cost-benefit ratio is imbalanced, there may be other

intangible benefits to maintaining a separate (ethnic) identity (Spielman 1986:305).

The types of materials one expects to find in mutualistic exchanges include food,

fodder, raw materials, finished wares (pottery, metalwork), utilitarian goods, or materials

used for gifts. Craft production is often used in exchange for food. Between pastoral

nomads and agriculturalists, pastoralists provide meat, milk, transport, and other animal

products (hair, blood, etc.), and trade items; agriculturalists provide vegetables, grains,

pottery, and metal items (Bates 1971; Lees and Bates 1974). By providing

complementary items to each other's economies, sedentary and mobile populations tend

to increase the productivity of the other and the system as a whole (Spielman 1986:298).

Certain characteristics of Spielman's model are different from the conditions in

my research area. The populations under consideration here are not egalitarian, to the

contrary they show a fairly significant degree of social differentiation based on mortuary

practice. Spielman's work involves hunter/gatherers and agriculturalists, but as noted

above, the shifting nature of Khoikhoi and San relations has elements of mutualism also.

Moreover, the interpretation of Eurasian populations may benefit significantly from this

model to explore other benefits of a mutualistic system, such as alliance formation, and

more importantly joint participation in rituals. As Spielman notes for her own research,

since trade had been the focus for too long, the models reflect the same ecological

approach that looked at buffering strategies or economic security through exchange. The

concept of mutualism allowed for a new approach to the differential distribution of

resources, an approach that also informed archaeologists of social, political,

demographic, and technological changes (Spielman 1991b:4). But due to the differences

in the available data (beyond the settlement data, Spielman also had written sources), the

application of this model requires additional fine-tuning, and will be addressed in the next

chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

A NEW METHODOLOGY FOR SIBERIAN NOMAD DATA ANALYSIS

As discussed in previous chapters the interpretations of nomad identity are often based upon one or two components of their material culture as preserved in the mortuary context. In this chapter I present data sets from the sites of Pokrovka 2, Malekazahbaevo, and Skaty (Figure 6.1), representing two geographically separate but related early Iron Age cultures; the Sarmatian culture and the Sargat culture. I begin by outlining the data selected from each of these geographic regions, then discuss the five analytical units that will allow for a more thorough understanding of nomad identity, and finally discuss the categorical analysis which allows me to systematically compare the Sarmatian and Sargat cultures.

SAUROMATIANS AND EARLY SARMATIANS OF THE SOUTHERN URALS

The Sauromatian and Early Sarmatian kurgans chosen for analysis in this dissertation include those excavated by the Ilek Archaeological Expedition at Pokrovka 2, under the direction of L.T. Yablonsky; the Kazakh/American Research Project, Inc. co-directed by J. Davis-Kimball and Yablonsky (1995b), and four subsequent field seasons (1992-1995) (Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996). During a systematic field survey conducted during the summer of 1990 using the field notes from earlier field expeditions, thirteen cemeteries and one large, single kurgan were found in and around the village of Pokrovka, situated 120 kilometers south of the city of Orenburg in the Sol Iletsk and Akbulak regions (*raions*), Orenburg *oblast*. At the time of these investigations,

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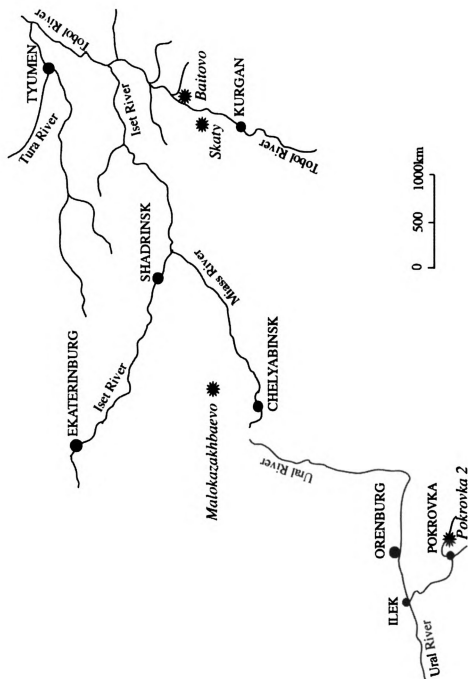
Figure 6.1 General map of south Urals and Transurals indicating sites discussed in text.

TYUMEN

Tura River

Tobol River

Iset River

Baitovo

Skaty

KURGAN

Tobol River

SHADRINSK

Miass River

EKATERINBURG

Iset River

Malokazakhbaevo

CHELYABINSK

Ural River

ORENBURG

POKROVKA

Pokrovka 2

ILEK

Ural River

0   500   1000km

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Pokrovka, located at the confluence of the Ilek and Khobda rivers, was part of a state-owned collective (*kolkhoz*), which has subsequently been divided into two separate farms dedicated to mechanized cultivation of cereal crops for 50 years. Cattle, horse and sheep grazing have taken place there for millennia. Only nine cemeteries remain in the Pokrovka farm area. The area is drained by these two larger rivers (the Ilek and Khobda) and their tributaries, all of which flow to the north. The land within the region is dry steppe to the north, flat steppe broken by small riverine terraces, and the less steppe-like Melobaya foothills in the south (Kazakhstan).

Each survey recorded the topographic location of each kurgan within the nine cemeteries, their spatial relationship to each other, their height and diameter and comments regarding condition. In general "robbed" or "deeply cultivated" were the most common comments describing their physical appearance. During the summer of 1995 the team located another cemetery, this one contains 97 low-profile (0.5 m high) kurgans that appeared to be undisturbed, i.e. not robbed (Table 6.1). Nothing further has been published related to these kurgans. I chose the Pokrovka 2 cemetery for analysis for several reasons: 1) there are abundant publications of the field notes that include physical anthropological data and archaeological materials (Davis-Kimball and Yablonsky 1995; Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996), 2) there have been repeated excavations at the same cemetery over several years, a relatively uncommon occurrence for Siberia, and 3) some other supplemental analyses had been performed that might assist in determining the origin of artifacts from within the graves, thus helping to clarify the relevant histories of the artifacts. During each year of excavation the team identified more kurgans through surface survey in the cemetery until the final number reached 29. Pokrovka 2 is also the.

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Table 6.1 Pokrovka 2: Kurgans, dates of excavation, numbers of individuals, and cultural affiliation (summarized from Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996).

Kurgan	Diameter/ Height (m)	Excavation Date	Burials (persons)	Time Period (^{14}C)	Notes
1	48/2.5	1992	2	Sauromatian/ Medieval	Robbed
2	36/2.0	1991	3 (5)	Sauromatian	Robbed
3	25/0.85	1993	2	Sauromatian (6-5th c. BC)	Plowed B2"priestess", blue beads
4	20/0.6				Not excavated
5	12/0.4				Robbed
6	12/0.05	1994	1	L. Sarmatian (3-4th c. AD)	Plowed
7	24/0.25	1994	9 (9)	E. Sarmatian (4-2nd c. BC)	Plowed B6 sub-adult male ="young priestess", B1 central, sub male ="warrior woman", B2 "hearth woman"
8	30/1.25	1994	12 (13)*	Sauromatian (6-5th c. BC)/ E. Sarmatian	B5"warrior woman" B4 "warrior priestess" B12 Man w/ infant
9	35/0.95	1994	scatter	L. Sarmatian 1-4th c. AD	Robbed, timber tomb
10	10/0.1	1994	2	Sauromatian (6-5th c. BC)/ E. Sarmatian	
11	18/0.25	1995	1	L. Sarmatian	Robbed
12	20/0.3				Robbed
13	26/0.3				Robbed
14	30/0.5				Robbed
15	20/0.4				Robbed
16	16/0.2	1993	1	L. Sarmatian	Not included in analysis
17	30/0.7	1993	2	Sauromatian/ E. Sarmatian	
18		1993		Bronze Age 15-14th c. BC	Not included in analysis
19		1993		Bronze Age 15-14th c. BC	Not included in analysis
20					Not excavated

21					Not excavated
22	16/0.1	1993	2	Sarmatian	Not included
23	20/0.3	1993	18 (29)†	Iron Age	Not included
24		1993		Bronze Age 15-14th c. BC	Not included in analysis
25	13x11(oval) /0.2	1993	2	Sauromatian/ E. Sarmatian	5 Yellow beads
26					Not excavated
27					Not excavated
28					Not excavated
29					Not excavated

Items in Notes found in quotation marks come from Davis-Kimball's on-line publication "Statuses of Sauromatian and Sarmatian Women" found at: (www.csen.org/WomenWarriors/Statuses_Women_Warriors.html), where she has made direct reference to many of the same burials summarized in Davis-Kimball 1998b.

*Kurgan 8 central grave contained no human remains.

†Kurgan 23 contained 18 separate graves with a total of 29 individuals represented, 12 in the central burial alone. It had no reliable dates, thus was not included in the kurgans under discussion here.

Kurgans 1-15 were part of the 1990 survey conducted by the Scytho-Sarmatian Department of the Institute of Archaeology, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow, headed up by L. T. Yablonsky.

Kurgans 20, 21, 26-29 have not been excavated.

Where notes indicate "plowed" (Kurgans 3, 6, and 7) this is in reference to significant historic mechanized agriculture. The entire area is in an agricultural field, but some sections show more evidence of significant disturbance.

location of some of Davis-Kimball's (1997, 1998b) most elaborate descriptions and

interpretations of Sarmatian gender roles

The Sauromatians and Sarmatians at Pokrovka located their kurgans on the first

and second terraces above the Khobda and Ilek rivers (Figure 6.2). Occasionally Sauro-

Sarmatians used existing Bronze Age kurgans, and some Sarmatian burials are found

within older Sauromatian mounds, but the preponderance of kurgans at this site were

built during the Sarmatian period. Only burials dating from the Sauromatian and Early

Sarmatian periods were used as these dates correspond to the early Iron Age sites of the Sargat culture that I use for comparative purposes.

TWO SARGAT SITES IN THE TRANSURALS

The Sargat culture, originally defined and penned by Chernetsov (1953), has mainly been researched during the past four decades, by Stoyanov in the 1960s and 1970s, Gening in the 1980s, Matveeva in the 1980s through to today, and Koryakova from the late 1970s to today, with the results of these investigations primarily appearing in small, regional publications. Only very recently, since the fall of the Soviet Union and the opening of this military/industrial region to foreign researchers, has the Sargat culture been addressed by westerners, in particular under the auspices of jointly sponsored, French-Russian research projects and the publications stemming from these projects (Coutraud and Rajev 1997; Daire and Koryakova1996, 2002; Hanks 2002, 2002a; Kroll 2000, Kroll Lerner 2004). Sargat culture is considered a northern variant of Saka steppe culture, which has a large areal distribution of settlement and mortuary sites from the east slope of the Ural Mountains to the Tobol River during the Iron Age (500BC - AD500) (Daire and Koryakova 2002).

Khobda River

N

18
19 ○ ○ 20
○ 21
○ 23

22
○
17 ○
○ 16
○ ○ 3
4
○ 5
2 ○
○ 1

26 ○ 6
25 ○ ○ 24
○ 7

15 ○

14 12 27
13 8 11
29 10
9 28

0   150   300m

Contours at 5m intervals
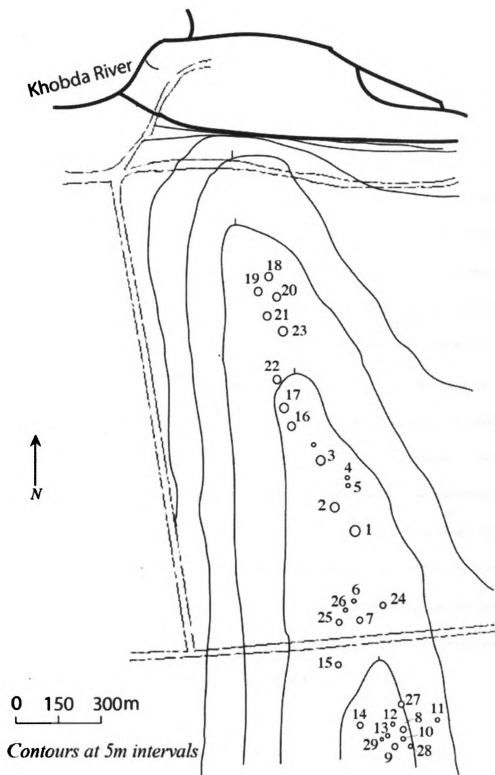
Figure 6.2 Pokrovka 2: Plan view of cemetery complex (Yablonsky 1996, Figure 18).

In 1996 I joined a project that had begun in 1993. My participation in this

particular research area involved four consecutive field seasons (1996, 1997, 1998,

1999), during which period I excavated late Bronze and early Iron Age burial mounds

and settlements in the Transurals region, and conducted laboratory studies. During this

field work I participated in a French-Russian team under the direction of Marie-Yvanne

Daire (Universite de Rennes 1) and Ludmila Nikolaevna Koryakova (Russian Academy

of Science, Institute of History and Archaeology, Ural State University, Ekaterinburg,

Russia), sponsored by the Russian Academy of Sciences (Urals Branch) and a CNRS

research grant. I was directly involved in excavations at the mortuary sites of Skaty

(1996), Malokazakhbaevo (1997, 1998), and Bolshekazakhbaevo (1998) and the

settlements of Baitovo (1996), and Malokazakhbaevo (1997). The data discussed in this

research comes from my field notes, and the French-Russian site report publication

(Daire and Koryakova 2002). The settlement of Baitovo was not associated with a

cemetery complex and will not be included in this discussion. The cemetery at

Bolshekazakhbaevo dates to the Bronze Age and also will not be included here. The

remaining two sites, Skaty and Malokazakhbaevo provide two different locations within

the Transurals, one along a significant watercourse, the other on a smaller tributary, and

from these I take a preliminary look at the mortuary tradition of the Sargat peoples and

the possible interactions they had with their sedentary neighbors.

General Geographic Conditions of the Transurals and Southern Urals

The research area is an almost flat plain with a slight northward elevation incline

and gradual transitions between ecological zones from the steppe in the south, through

the forest-steppe of the Transurals, i.e., the eastern slope of the Urals to the Tobol River

in the east, to the taiga in the north. Small lakes dot this area. There are also a few

significant rivers cutting through the region, the several largest being the Ob, Irtysh,

Ishim, Iset, and Tobol. These rivers traditionally run very high during the spring run-off,

with water levels as low as 90% compared to those during the remainder of the warmer

months (Kosarev, 1984; Koryakova and Sergeev, 1986). During the winters they freeze

solid.

The climate is continental. In the warm seasons winds come from Kazakhstan and

Central Asia, creating droughts and arid conditions. The winters are characterized by

Arctic air patterns. The Ural Mountains, while quite ancient and weathered, are not an

insignificant feature in terms of regional climate; they act to remove moisture from

Atlantic air currents before they reach the eastern slope. These factors have created a

steppe zone that reaches much further north than in European Russia. The forest-steppe

constitutes a zone of mixed wild grasses, and small birch-aspen woodland pockets

interspersed with lowland swamps that dry out for most of the year, and expanses of open

steppe. Current paleobotanical research suggests that these environments were in

existence since the beginning of the Iron Age (Daire and Koryakova 2002:7). This

ecological zone provided ample fodder and natural protection for the breeding of horses

and cattle.

Sargat Data Sets

The sites of Skaty and Malokazhbaevo are situated in different areas within the

forest-steppe. The cemetery of Skaty is located in the Kourgan *oblast*, Belozersky *raion*,

1.5 km northwest of a village of the same name. The cemetery complex is stretched

along a length of at least 1 km on a series of low sloping terraces rising 50-55m above the

left bank of a tributary of the Tobol River, which lay 14-15 km east (Figure 6.3). The

complex, first discovered during reconnaissance surveys in the 1960s, is composed of 14

identified kurgans (though from aerial photos many more kurgans are seemingly

apparent) with a wide diameter size range from small (4-6.5m) to very large (42 and

78m). Four kurgans were excavated during the 1996 field season (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2 Skaty kurgans excavated.

Kurgan	Diameter/ Height (m)	Burials (persons)	Time Period (^{14}C)	Notes
1	16/0.4	2 (2)	Gorohovo	Robbed; single ditch
2	25/0.3	1 (1)	Gorohovo	Well preserved wood structure
3	16/0.6	3 (3)	Gorohovo	Robbed
4	20/0.5	2 (3)	Gorohovo (2292 BP*)	Robbed; non-continuous ditch

* Five ^{14}C dates were obtained from two burials in Kurgan 4, dates ranged from 2220 to 2360 BP (average 2292 BP) (Koryakova personal communication 1997).

The site of Malokazhbaevo, consisting of a small settlement and a cemetery, was

first discovered in 1949 by Salnikov (1951). It is located between the cities of

Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk, in the Chelyabinsk oblast, Kynashev raion. The site rests

on a very low terrace, just 7m above the Karabolka River (200m above sea level), and

350m south of the village of the same name. The site consists of a cemetery,

Malokazhbaevo 1, with five kurgans ranging in size from 10m to 17m, and a small,

roughly circular fortified settlement measuring 50m in diameter. Only one actual kurgan

was excavated at this site during the summer of 1997; another "mound" was excavated
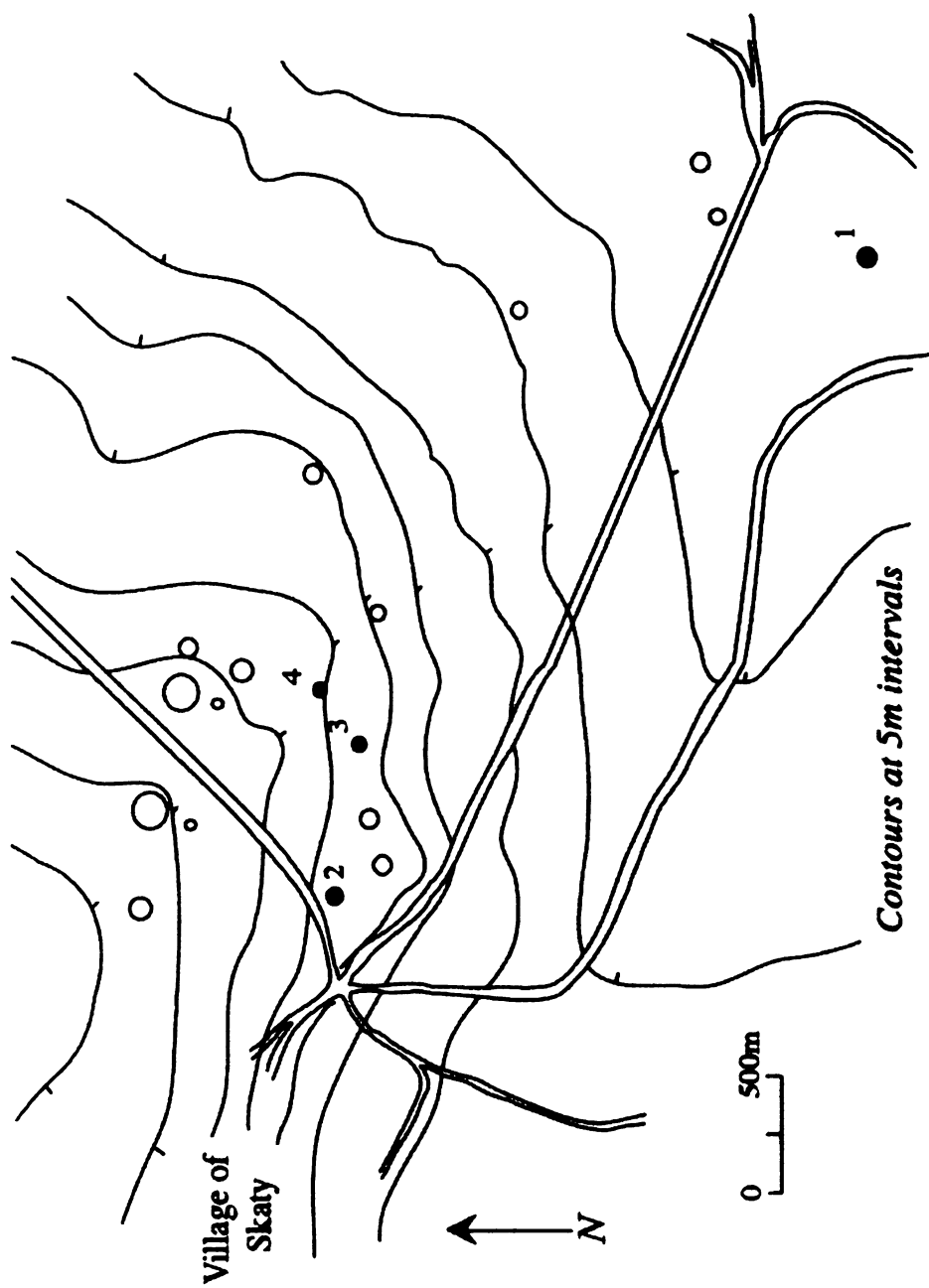
Figure 6.3 Skaty cemetery complex (from Daire and Koryakova 2002, Figure 27).

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that same year, but proved to be nothing more than a knoll. The data recovered from the

one kurgan included two entire ceramic vessels, some pottery sherds, and the scattered

remains of one individual.

Early Iron Age settlements in the Transurals are considered to be of two types, 1)

small, largely open settlements with any number of surface depressions, or 2) fortified

settlements with ditches, embankments, and/or walls protecting them. Within the

fortified category, Koryakova (1988) distinguished three additional subdivisions within

the Irtysh and Tobol rivers' basins, a) promontory with lined fortification (Tobol), b)

"cape style" or high terrace locations with two lines of fortification (Irtysh), or c)

waterside fortresses with ramparts and/or ditches (often double fortifications).

Malokazhbaevo most closely resembles this final category of waterside fortress. The

layout of the site and the relation of the cemetery to the fortress can be seen in Figure 6.4.

Contours at 2m intervals
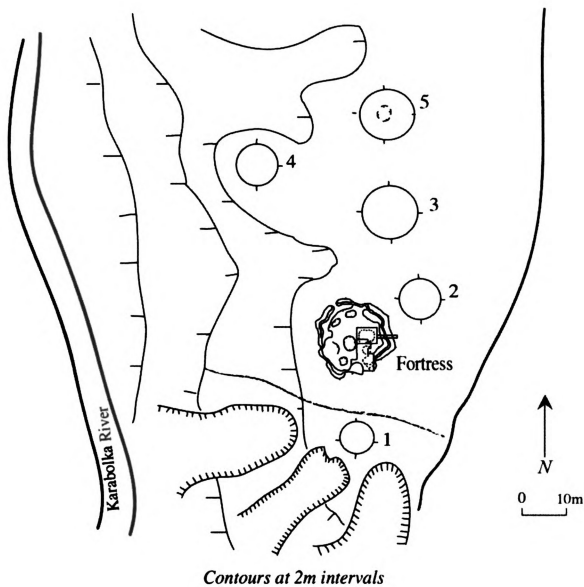
Figure 6.4 Malokazakhbaevo cemetery and fortress (after Yipimakhova survey 1992;

Daire and Koryakova 2002, Figure 81).

In order to analyze the data detailed above I employ Spielman's (1987, 1993)

approach to mutualism, in concert with Chapman's (2000a, 2002) use of categorical

analysis. People, the living, are social actors with specific social practices that result in

deliberate deposition of material remains. In a re-analysis of Hungarian prehistory

Chapman (2000a, 2002) takes data collected in the past, and by using a contextual

approach he reveals new interpretations. Hungary has well-tested typologies, and relative

dating (based on ceramic seriation), similar to Russian prehistory. Chapman examined a

small number of sites in great detail, ignoring the vast majority, to establish the context of

his few within the many, defining "the main strands...[of the] research agenda to see

whether, or to what extent, the mortuary analyses which follow will in fact articulate with

current research interest" (Chapman 2000a:12); his current interest is the articulation of

age/sex relations. His contextual analysis uses a micro-spatial context, which can be

defined as households, pits, ditches, wells, etc. He is not ignoring the overall picture, but

focuses on the distance materials travel to reach their final destination, linking the macro-

spatial with the micro-spatial by means of "artifact biographies" (Edmonds 1999;

Kopytoff 1986). Material items have a history, the story of each stage of the object life

from its creation out of raw material to its final destination. In his contextual study, the

context for final deposit of once exotic material is the key to the manner in which the

object has been domesticated. Once an object has been locally "tamed", given a new

meaning separate from the producer's meaning or value, it begins a new phase of its

biography.

Understanding artifact concentrations, places on the landscape where individuals have chosen to place their things, intentional site locales, is vital. One arena he focuses on are exchanges. How do people confront the dichotomy between local and exotic? One means of doing this is by domesticating the exotic, "linking the web of symbolic associations intertwined with object biographies to the pre-existing structures of the domestic sphere" (Chapman 2000a:78) by means of repetitive ritual use. An object's rite of passage begins with its separation from the original owner/manufacturer, at which point it loses its original identity, meaning, and possibly purpose. En route to its final destination, sometimes as part of a cache or collection of artifacts, the object enters a liminal stage. Finally the new owner ritually incorporates the object and assigns it new meaning and value within its new context. By linking to the exotic artifact, an individual creates a symbolic association with the material. For example, in Western Siberia, exchange networks bring materials into the forest-steppe, somewhere that particular technologies or raw resources are lacking (e.g. tin for making bronze), others where they were simply not used (e.g. wheel-turned pottery). If the people importing those artifacts are considered to be "nomadic" – the Scythian triad of horse tack, weaponry and animal style – were not practicing a nomadic way of life, they could link themselves to the identity and possibly the rights and privileges associated with it. One can create an elite identity through association with nomadic artifacts and local knowledge of the exotic would remake the material biography.

Instituting the social in things is a question of alienability or inalienability. Weiner (1985, 1992) puts it as "keeping while giving". The dynamic of exchange is the challenge of capturing "someone else's inalienable possessions, then embracing their

ancestors, magic and power, and transferring part of them to their own next generation."

By using or adopting someone else's material culture, we ally ourselves with their ancestors, their authority, rule and control, heritage, even lifestyle. We connect ourselves with the basic elements of who or what they are/were, creating and recreating our own dominance and authority. In this way, "cultural reproduction is achieved through the ability to reproduce more of one's self and one's group through time by asserting difference while defining an unchanging past" (Chapman 2002:75). Connecting one's own group to permanent monuments regardless of direct biological lineage to the original owner is a means of proclaiming the ancestors to be one's own, with all their rights and inheritance.

Another means of establishing and institutionalizing difference is through exchanges that demonstrate one's ability to keep-while-giving, which if successfully exercised expands social identity into forms of rank and hierarchy. This form of inalienability is constructed as "enchainment," which Chapman (1991) developed as the direct relationship between objects and people and builds from Weiner's (1992) concept of inalienability. Objects carry part of the previous owner with it, thereby leading to a chain of social relations as the objects are dispersed, sort of tracing a chain of custody (kula ring is an excellent example of this). For example, my grandmother's gold watch may have intrinsic value, but it is the enchained meaning that is of far more personal value; its biography may include my great grandmother, and so on. My mother may have secretly purchased the watch at a thrift store, and it may not even be gold, but I will impart value to it by establishing the chain of familial ties. If I simply collect watches, or buy and sell gold for profit, this contrasts enchainment and becomes accumulation.

Accumulation leads to the loss of this relationship to previous owner(s), and in Chapman's analysis, creates tensions (Chapman 2000a:32). Goods or commodities lose their personal value or symbolism (Gregory 1982, updated by Wagner 1991). If objects are separated from the "life process which created them...they lose their fractal integrity" (Wagner 1991:65) becoming merely objects of wealth (commodities). Wealth has symbolic meaning, but not necessarily the same meaning imbued by enchained objects. For example, if weaponry decorated in the animal style are merely indicators of wealth, then they no longer recreate a "nomad" in every kurgan where they are found on a wealthy man. By this line of reasoning, one cannot continue to argue that animal style artifacts are both wealth indicators and signs of nomadism; it is tautological. They may carry the message of power because they represent the nomads, but they cannot then indicate nomadic identity single-handedly.

My purpose in this analysis is not to address the act of exchange itself, but the transference of cultural identity. Is it possible to detect the acquisition of cultural identity by means of artifact adoption? That is, to display the trappings of nomadic power and authority, without actually being a nomad? One means of interpreting the material culture and associated identities might be seen as absconding with the association without having to mount the steed. Could a sedentary elite be created who obtained, or maintained, power through this "fictive" association with nomads and nomadism? As Coutraud and Rajev (1997, 1998) have noted, the biological evidence for nomadism among Sargat populations is inconclusive. By opening the possibility of alternative interpretations of the burial mounds, instead of the Scythian triad equaling nomad, we can say more about the diverse populations living across the steppe. "Like a nomad"

rather than being a nomad. Maintaining the trappings of nomadic authority without the hassle of movement makes more logical sense, because being mobile means not having direct or consistent rule over one's subjects and territory. Even the khans settled down once their wealth was secured.

Using a categorical analysis based on Miller (1985, 1986) and Chapman (2000a, 2002) it is possible to see cultural identities expressed within the burial mounds of Western Siberia. Considering the cultural biographies of artifacts allows us to demonstrate more complex patterns of people-object relations, but inherently uses the idea of artifacts as categories as developed by Miller (Chapman 2000a:30). The biography of an object expresses its life history and therefore a part of its cultural impact. Objects sometimes acquire quite long histories, from the hands that made them, through the hands of each owner. Each person who possesses the object in this chain of custodianship invests meaning into the object and adds to its biography.

Miller constitutes his theory of culture by means of objectification, a creating and recreating of culture, thereby a dual process exists in a Hegelian sense (Miller 1986:18). Through the creation of the material world, humans externalize themselves, but in turn "re-appropriate this externalization through sublation" (Chapman 2000a:31, my emphasis). Hegel's philosophical notion of sublation allows for the maintenance or preservation of something, while it is simultaneously ceases to exist (Hegel Science of Logic, n.185)[1]. The very preservation of something from an archaeological perspective involves the expected loss of some aspects of an object's original character; e.g., bodies

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[1] Miller's poststructuralist vision of modern, industrial consumption perhaps stretches Hegel a bit too far. I would restrict and simplify the use of "active reappropriation of objectification" (Miller 1986) to simply refer to the ways in which cultures objectify themselves and learn who they are by examining what they produce. Material objects reproduce, represent, and manipulate society, but not a society blind to their meanings and functions.

are "preserved" through mummification. What is sublated is not lost, and by no means annihilated. In this sense, Chapman points out that "This view of culture – where culture is the externalisation of society in history – can have no independent subjects, since they are reflexively constituted and are also, by the same token, an assertion of the non-reductionist nature of culture as process" (Chapman 2000a:31). Artifacts are both a creation from natural materials and a relation created with people, through experience and continual interaction. Miller (1986:105-106) distinguishes between categories and classes, where classes are secondary. Categories are divisions placed on artifacts by the producers themselves (an emic categorization). Categorization becomes a medium through which we can understand the subjectivity of the archaeological record, and reveal some form of habitus (1986:129-130).

By defining two systems of categories, people and objects, Chapman establishes that through categorical analysis of material culture found with individuals it becomes a vehicle to understand past biographies.

> Artifacts are, in short, insider stories –known to group members only -which
> carry within them the community's categorisation processes. Categorisation
> relies for its effect upon principles of inclusion and exclusion. The categorisation
> of any society is structure. So a key question for exploration is how material
> culture is used to make interventions about age/sex categorisation –in itself, an
> indicator of age –and sex-based tension.
>
> Chapman 2000a:33

By using the grave goods, deposited with different categories of individuals by age and sex (men, women, children), we can produce more informative analyses of the construction of social identities.

The Model

The model for analysis I have developed here utilizes elements of taphonomy, ethnoarchaeology, material culture, cultural identity, and cultural interactions (detailed in Chapter 5). The five dimensions of analysis are summarized in Table 6.3. Comparing mortuary and settlement sites within the Sargat territory (a bounded territory defined by shared material culture and mortuary style) to the mortuary remains from a well-excavated Sarmatian site in the southern Urals, I seek to discover if a "nomadic identity" can be identified, and if so, what alternate identities can be deduced from the archaeological evidence. If a nomadic identity exists (e.g., shared mortuary style and treatment of individuals that links both areas and cultural groups) then perhaps the use of "Scythian triad" or "Scytho-Siberian cultural complex" needs to be accepted and we need to address further issues of how these identities were maintained (e.g., through trade/exchange, kin networks, or marriage). But if no or little connection can be established between the two cultures in these adjacent regions, then it is time we abandon a cultural diffusionist explanation and treat each region as a more unique expression of differing sedentary-nomadic interactions.

Within this search for nomadic identity, I examine the building of the Sarmatian cemetery at Pokrovka, as a micro-spatial representation of the macro-spatial context of the nomad world. Pokrovka is used as a comparative Eurasian nomad identity.

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Examinination of the placement of this cemetery on the landscape, its physical environment, topographic location, and periods of use will enhance our understanding of how and when nomads used their landscape. The architecture of the kurgans in this cemetery reveals the elements of permanence, durability and perishability, hierarchy, and social ideology (*habitus*). Within the graves themselves, placement of the body or bodies, internal mound constructions, grave goods (local and exotic), and other more ephemeral traces (e.g., fire) will allow for a better understanding of the value of trade and the ritual activities involved in Sarmatian mortuary practices. Within the mortuary realm, identifying the symbols of status and interaction will help create an image of nomad cultural identity of the southern Ural steppes, an identity that can then be used to investigate the nature of Sargat nomad identity.

The data available from the Transurals allow us to analyze several levels of the Sargat culture as well. By taking a landscape approach, the mortuary sites can be compared to the settlements found in the immediate area, a juxtapositioning of sites with information about the interactions between local settled peoples and nomads, and a comparative element between the two regions. Settlements are well known in the forest-steppe. In the following chapter I examine the influence of the proximity of settled populations to the mortuary realm of the nomads. Settlements allow for an examination of social differentiation within sedentary populations, a hierarchy already established and accepted for the mortuary sites. With the addition of settled households, we can discuss nomad-sedentary interactions, mutualism vs. parasitism, in a context well removed physically from the large civilizations to the east, south, and west. The architecture,

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evidence of trade, and the mortuary practices of the Sargat provide the same opportunities for investigation as discussed above for the Sarmatian site of Pokrovka 2.

The creation of personal identity is itself an expression of the group to which an individual belongs. Thus personal identities (occupation, ethnicity, gender) are reflective and reflexive and can be discovered through the spatial organization within graves, within cemeteries, and within a location on the landscape. The spatial dimension is coupled with that of social relations by relating individuals to the groups with whom they are buried, and the groups with whom they share a common mortuary signature. These aspects of personhood obey the rules of the greater society, whether they are direct expressions of a person's living identity or the idealization of the mourners, how the living wish to create identity upon the dead. In these ways it is necessary to move analytically to increasingly more inclusive scales of reference, from the individual grave, to the kurgan, to the cemetery, to the broader landscape.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CURRENT ANALYSIS OF IRON AGE PEOPLES

The five categories of analysis (landscape, settlement, architecture, trade, and

mortuary ritual) detailed in the previous chapter allow for the examination of the Iron

Age materials from several scales. By examining the physical landscape I am situating

the data found in subsequent levels within a regional environment. The analysis of the

settlement data is incomplete as there is only one fortress represented here, but it does

pose several interesting questions for future research. While the examination of

architecture involves any permanent structure, as just indicated, much of the discussion of

architecture necessarily focuses on the mortuary context.

Trade and mortuary ritual involve two overlapping arenas of material culture that

create a context for the examination of status, hierarchy, and social identity. The method

I employ to examine these materials from the Transurals and south Urals utilizes a

categorical analysis of artifacts and individuals previously discussed in Chapter 6. It is

useful to consider the cultural remains by categories, which I have created, that appear to

compliment the artifacts and their uses by Iron Age peoples, e.g., arrowheads, swords and

daggers are all placed in the category "weapons", beads, plaques, and pendants, "personal

adornment". I took care not to lend unduly deterministic labels to the different

categories. Thus, mirrors and spoons are not placed in a "toiletry" category, but they are

also not considered "domestic tools" or "household items." Both these titles infuse the

material with distinctive, and for some, negative gender connotations related to

"womanly" pursuits of home and hearth. Instead I chose to place them in the category

"Other." Similarly daggers worn or placed at the side of the deceased are "Weapons,"

while knives usually found with animal bones in caches near the feet or head of the deceased are "Tools" as determined by my personal, subjective convention. It must be noted that any categorization created in the absence of historical documentation is necessarily and completely subjective, but every effort has been made to identify the reasoning behind the categories chosen. I recognize that even by placing arrowheads in "weapons" I am imparting my own meaning on these objects, yet I recognize that arrowheads could easily have been placed as votive objects with broader ritual significance.

The general demographic categories of people are based on the assessment of the physical features of the human remains in the graves, thus categories of adult (male/female), sub-adult (male/female), and child. I have assumed the accuracy of the Pokrovka 2 assessments based on the acquired status of the principle investigator, Leonid T. Yablonsky, a physical anthropologist with more than thirty years of field experience. The human remains from Skaty and Malokazakhbaeovo 1 were interpreted by Patrice Courtaud and Dmitri Rajev using standard age and sex determination techniques.

While examining each of the four lines of evidence from the Sauromatian and early Sarmatian burials from Pokrovka 2 (landscape, architecture, trade, and mortuary ritual), and the five lines of evidence from the Sargat sites of Malokazakhbaevo and Skaty (landscape, settlement, architecture, trade, and mortuary ritual) it is necessary to reiterate the defining regional characteristics of these two geographic locales to reveal similarities and discrepancies. I will provide side by side comparisons of each line of evidence where available followed by a discussion of the comparisons and contrasts of each level of inquiry.

South Urals

As mentioned in Chapter 6 the Pokrovka 2 cemetery is located five kilometers

east of Pokrovka village on the second terrace above the Khobda River. The site

stretches along the top of a low prominence. The general area is 244m above sea level,

with the elevation of the second terrace rising approximately 27 meters from the riverbed.

At this elevation, the kurgans maintain a prominent position from which to view the

surrounding, relatively flat steppe landscape, and conversely can also be seen from great

distances. Over time the mounds have been significantly diminished in size due to the

combined effects of both mechanized plowing and natural erosion. The diminution of

kurgans, by natural or cultural practices, makes it difficult to immediately identify some

of them as burial structures. The kurgans range from 48-12m in diameter with heights of

2.0 to 0.3m. All 29 kurgans are arranged in a roughly linear fashion running north-south

along the promontory (see Figure 6.2), with the Bronze Age kurgans (Kurgan 18, 19, and

24) on the first terrace. This pattern is similar to sites found throughout the southern

Urals, where earlier Bronze Age mounds occurred at lower elevations, closer to water

sources, and the Iron Age mounds were built in groups along hilltops or in isolation on

higher ground (Moshkova 1995; Koryakova 1996; Yablonsky 1995), emphasizing the

few topographical features available on a seemingly featureless landscape.

Transurals

The sites of Skaty and Malokazhbaevo are situated in different areas within the

forest-steppe. The cemetery of Skaty is located in the Kourgan oblast, Belozersky raion,

1.5km east-northeast of a village of the same name. The cemetery complex is stretched

along a length of at least 1km on a series of low sloping terraces rising 50-55m above the

left bank of a tributary of the Tobol River, which lays 14-15 km east. The cemetery

complex, first discovered during reconnaissance surveys in the 1960s, is composed of 14

identified kurgans (though from aerial photos many more kurgans are seemingly

apparent) indicating the use of this site by a significant population for the burial of their

dead. Since only four kurgans have been excavated, it cannot be stated exactly how

many or for how long individuals were interred at this location.

The site of Malokazhbaevo, consisting of a small settlement and a cemetery, is

located between the cities of Ekaterinburg and Chelyabinsk, in the Chelyabinsk oblast,

Kynashev raion. The sites rest on a very low terrace, just 7m above the Karabolka River

(200m above sea level), and 350m south of the village of the same name. The Karabolka,

while not a seasonal watercourse, is not a significant river in Western Siberia. This area

of the Transurals is dotted with a large number of small lakes and seasonal marshes many

of which dry up during arid years. The site consists of a cemetery, Malokazhbaevo 1

with five kurgans ranging in size from 10m to 17m, and a small, roughly circular fortified

settlement measuring 50m in diameter. Within the categories of fortress identified by

Koryakova (1988) Malokazhbaevo most closely resembles a "waterside fortress" with

ramparts and/or ditches and occasional double fortifications. But this is a fortress only by

name not by apparent function, as I will discuss below in the Settlement section.

Discussion of Landscape Features

Each of the sites discussed sits on a promontory or upland terrace, a position above the riverine valleys. From the perspective of mobile populations, these sites would have provided easy visibility of the surrounding territory and been readily visible for use in ascertaining a seasonal migration path with a large or small group of domesticated animals. The nomads could not have built the kurgans and settlement embankments during the harsh winter months when the ground was frozen, thus the most logical time of their creation would be during the summer months, from June through August when the soil would have been soft enough and dry enough to use. This is also the likely time of burial. That the Sauro-Sarmatian and Sargat nomads were clearly making use of these regions fairly regularly, perhaps even within the lifespan of any one individual, is attested to by the continuity of mound construction and use of the fortress. Pokrovka 2 is one of nine cemeteries in the immediate area. Malokazahbaevo shows evidence of the settlement being used from the Eneolithic through the Iron Age and if the other kurgans in the cemetery are excavated it may be found that they were constructed during times beyond the early Iron Age. Several Bronze Age kurgans were excavated during the 1997 and 1998 field season at Boshekazakhbaevo, a site within a few kilometers of Malokazakhbaevo. Skaty, a site with a considerable range of kurgan sizes may also reveal a longevity of use not necessarily seen in the four kurgans excavated during the 1996 field season.

An assumption must be made based on the continuity of use that through substantial knowledge of these locations, based on oral tradition and/or personal witness of previous burials, the community of nomads must have had an awareness of these

particular areas' importance (see Chapman 2000). Whether this awareness can be discussed in terms of direct ownership, however, cannot be addressed before examining the contents of the kurgans and their burials.

The placement of both Skaty and Malokazhbaevo allow for the best views of their respective surrounding areas. The largest mounds at Skaty are situated at the highest point on the landscape (50-55m above the river)(Figure 6.3), allowing for expansive views of the surrounding countryside, especially from the top of the highest mound (7.5m high). These are sites from which to see and be seen as they are also quite visible from the nearly treeless, gently rolling expanses. Malokazhbaevo, while much lower and closer to the river, still sits well placed for an unobstructed view of the broad river valley. Skaty shows a much clearer distinction from the Bronze Age cemeteries, usually found much closer to river courses. Malokazhbaevo is not as clearly separated from the Bronze Age sites; just to the north lies a Bronze Age cemetery, Bolshekazahbaevo, which sits at approximately the same elevation. This spatial proximity may indicate a closer affinity between the people inhabiting Malokazhbaevo and their predecessors in the area.

The proximity of settlements and cemeteries seen in other areas of the Transurals was not observed at either Skaty or at Pokrovka 2 in the south Urals. Whether this is an issue of discovery/recovery or preservation is unclear. It may be an indication of the differences between the adaptations of nomads in the steppe, and those of nomads in the forest-steppe. Perhaps this is a means by which we can begin to address the differences between more mobile populations and those who have diversified their economic portfolios and altered their mobility strategies.

The use of landscape reveals a permanence of these nomad populations, a term not often

used in conjunction with contemporary views of nomadism. But clearly these

populations were not constructing their burials to blend in with the surroundings.

Mounds were built with a view toward the viewers and the viewed. They were easy to

discern from a distance and only the ravages of geological forces, industrial farming

techniques, and archaeological excavation have taken their toll on the kurgans.

Significant time was invested to build these earthworks that distinctively altered the

natural landscape, producing a continuity between living populations and the dead in a

space used and reused for generations.

SETTLEMENT

Malokazakhbaevo

The only early Iron Age settlement available from my data sets comes from the

site of Malokazhbaevo. The local villagers have located their own cemetery in the

immediate area, thus it has been protected from agriculture and other forms of incursion

during much of the last century, but today the site is under threat due to the expansion of

this contemporary cemetery. The plan view appears circular, but in reality the

excavations revealed it to be more of a polygon (Figure 7.1). A line of protective walls

and ditches surround the entire settlement, though they are not easily distinguished.

These structures are fairly shallow, ranging from 70cm to a maximum of 120cm. Two

entrances were identified, one to the N-NW the other to S-SE. Within the limits of the

walls, a number of depressions correspond to the possible houses or other types of

domestic structures, and are concentrated in the southern part of the settlement. Two

successive horizons within the settlement were distinguished by Salnikov's excavations

of 1951 and 1952, one corresponding to the late Bronze Age, the other the early Iron

Age, Gorokhovo period (4th – 1st century BC). In 1997 the original area excavated by

Salnikov (168m2) was expanded to 264m2 to see how much impact the local Bashkir

cemetery has had, and to identify the chronology of building and expansion of the

settlement.

■ 1997 French-Russian excavations
■ 1951 Salnikov excavations
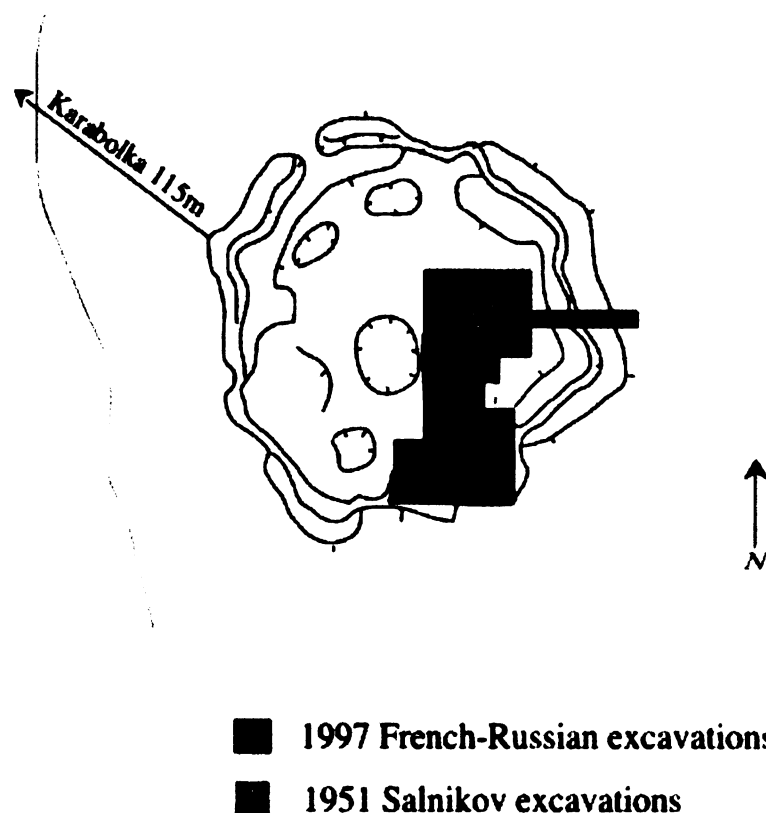
Figure 7.1 Malokazakhbaevo fortress (from Daire and Koryakova 2002, Figure 81).

Many Bronze Age (16th -13th century BC) pottery sherds were recovered,

verifying Salnikov's interpretation of this site's use during multiple time periods.

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However, the 1997 excavations also recovered 4th -3rd millennium BC Eneolithic pottery, and very little evidence of an Iron Age occupation layer other than a light scattering of pottery dating from the 6th -4th century BC. Analysis of the stratigraphy proves complex; the site is not interpreted to have been continuously occupied from the Eneolithic to the Bronze Age (Daire and Koryakova 2002). The sparse nature of the Iron Age materials might suggest that, at best, this was a temporary settlement for the Gorokhovo peoples, semi-nomadic pastoralists, and possibly associated directly with the burials in the immediate vicinity. Thus this "fortress" may actually have operated in a more humble role; as little more than a holding pen for domesticated animals. Yet this settlement site does appear to belong to nomadic populations and therefore provides an important and new context for nomad archaeological signatures in Western Siberia.

ARCHITECTURE

Architecture refers to the permanent or portable structures built at both Sauro-Sarmatian and Sargat sites, which includes both settlement and mortuary "site furniture"; durable and perishable materials that reveal a level of hierarchy based on labor investement (Cribb 1991).

Sauro-Sarmatian kurgans

The Sauromatian period (6th -4th century BC) represents the shift from agro-pastoralism to pastoral nomadism across the Eurasian steppe. Many of the Andronovo traditions from the Bronze Age continue, and at Pokrovka this can be seen in the continued use of the kurgans as the mortuary architectural signature. There are at least

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three Bronze Age kurgans on the first terrace above the river, thereby indicating this area had been used as a place to bury the dead at an earlier time as well. As in the case of the early Iron Age sites from across the southern Urals, these mounds have been built at higher elevations than their earlier models, using local soils that slowly eroded over time. The Iron Age nomads would have understood the changes to the landscape and the impermanence of this type of structure, as they no doubt would have witnessed the earlier mounds slowly shrinking in visibility and importance.

Today, the kurgans range broadly in size both in diameter and in height from nearly flat to 2.5m in height (Table 7.1). Twenty of the 29 kurgans have usable measurements, with mean dimensions of 23.05m x 0.61m. To discuss the size distribution any further it is necessary to separate these mounds by the time period during which they were first constructed. It would seem that to discuss the size distribution of the mounds is only of value for the Sauromatian kurgans, as four out of five Early Sarmatian kurgans (8, 10, 17, and 25) are reused Sauromatian ones; the fifth (Kurgan 7) measures 24m in diameter with a height of 0.25m. There are seven Sauromatian kurgans (1, 2, 3, 8, 10, 17, and 25), averaging 27 m in diameter. Much of their original height has been eroded by natural and anthropogenic forces, thus a discussion of their height seems uninformative with the exception of three of the kurgans that still had heights in excess of 1m at the time of excavation (1, 2, and 8). It is clear from the numbers of individuals buried within each of these Sauromatian kurgans that certain individuals were afforded greater labor investment, but this labor investment may have occurred over the course of many generations since the Sauromatian dates at this site range from the 6th to the 4th

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century BC and may not accurately reflect true status differences within one group so much as possible labor shortages, expediency, or other factors.

While there is clearly temporal continuity in the use of site location, what is exceptional here is that the increasing complexity of interior structures, the use of wood or stone, found at other Sauro-Sarmatian sites in the south Urals is not strongly developed at Pokrovka 2. Only four of 12 Sauromatian graves have evidence of wooden burial

Table 7.1. Pokrovka 2: Sauromatian kurgans (summarized from Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996).

Kurgan	Diam (m)	Hght (m)	Individs.	Notes
1	48	2.5	1	Center: 1 adult male, wooden structure, burned, horse burial. Medieval inclusion.
2	36	2.0	5(3)	Center: 1 adult male, wooden structure. Peripheral: 1 adult male w/ wooden structure; 1 male in pit; 2 adults near pit.
3	25	0.85	2	Center: 1 adult male. Peripheral: 1 adult female w/ wooden structure.
8	30	1.25	3	Center: 1 adult female, disturbed by later burial. Peripheral: 1 adult male; 1 sub-adult male (burial cuts into other male's).
10	10	0.1	1	Center: 1 indeterminate, disturbed by later grave.
17	30	0.7	1	Center: 1 adult male, podbois.
25	13	0.2	1	Center: 1 adult male, disturbed by later catacomb.

structures. Within the Early Sarmatian burials evidence of wood is more prevalent, but only slightly (six of 22 graves) and most of these are merely small fragments, nothing that would indicate a substantial structure such as that in Kurgan 1. None of the burials at Pokrovka 2 are intrusive burials into the Bronze Age (Andronovo) mounds, an occasional occurrence elsewhere, though five of the seven mounds originally built for a Sauromation

burial were reused in later periods; the Early Sarmation burials, and one Medieval burial.

Only one of the seven kurgans, Kurgan 2, has more than two Sauromatian graves within

it. Two of the five individuals' graves were so disturbed that their cultural association

has not been determined. The lack of collective Sauromatian burials is not unusual and

fits the pattern seen elsewhere in the south Urals.

The material investment not related to labor found within the graves may play as

much a role as the over all size in determining overall "cost" of burial. The cutting of

trees on the steppe, and transporting them would involve a great deal of effort on the part

of mobile populations. There is one adult male buried within a large (24m diameter)

wooden structure that was burned prior to the construction of Kurgan 1; the mound size

at the time of excavation was 48 m. Kurgan 2 held two adult males in two separate

wooden chambers, one additional male in a burial pit, and two more adults outside of this

third male's grave; the size of this kurgan was 36 m. For many of the individual burials,

exact dating techniques have not been applied, leaving broad relative date ranges for

individuals and some entire mounds. Due to coarseness of the dates, it is unclear if the

use of wood is a temporary tradition or a function of individual status, or either corporate

or individual identity.

The grave shafts are consistently wide with the use of only one podbois, or side-

niche style grave. More than half of the burials were substantially disturbed by pot

hunters or intrusive burials that body position can only be assessed for six of 13 burials,

five follow the expected W or SW orientation, the other is oriented S/SE (K2 B3). There

is no apparent deviation from the regional pattern related to sex or age, as the lone

deviator is an adult male. There are seven adult males, one juvenile male, one adult female, and five undeterminable, again due largely to disturbance.

If we look at the other aspects of body positioning within the kurgan specifically whether it is a central grave or peripheral one, and depth below surface, there is insufficient information to draw many conclusions. The two female burials (K3 B2, and K8 B6) are interesting in that one is indeed peripheral, fitting the common assumptions about the overall social status of females during this pastoral transition. But, because her grave was not located in the center of the kurgan it was missed when the looters burrowed into the central grave and scattered the remains of the other occupant, which was determined to be male based on the long bones and his grave goods[1]. Kurgan 3 Burial 2 proves to be one of the richest of all the Sauromatian burials at the site in terms of golden objects, beads, and a horse burial all intact. The other female burial, the central grave in Kurgan 8 (Burial 6), was largely destroyed by the subsequent burial of an Early Sarmatian juvenile male. What was recovered from her burial indicates that while there is no wooden structure, there was a large mass of sheep/goat and camel bones, some of which display cut-marks interpreted as an indication of a possible feast held during the ritual of her burial (Yablonsky (1994:34-35) indicates "processing" cut marks on the ram and camel bones found to this individual's right side).

Grave depths are reported here only when a clear gender/age category of individual is associated (Table 7.2), including both Sauromatian (six males, and two females) and early Sarmatian (six females, five males, and two sub-adult males) periods.

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[1] From those skeletal remains indicated in the report, it is unclear that a solid sex determination could have been made, thus I believe that it was assumed that the occupant of the grave was a male because of its central location and the artifacts interred with this individual, including 11 bronze arrowheads, bones of horse, camel and ram, and ceramic sherds (Yablonsky 1994).

The Sauromatian patterning that emerges by looking at the mean and standard deviation reveals that males are treated with the most variability, though this is not highly significant. Males are found in both the deepest grave (186cm) and the shallowest (73cm). This variation cannot be linked to the use of formal graves as all the burials were placed in formal grave pits. The variable grave/pit depth does not seem to contribute to preservation as one of the shallowest graves at 80cm below ancient ground surface (K2B2) contained one of only three delicate, leather quivers found at the site. The other quivers were recovered from early Sarmatian graves at depths of 165 and 163 cm below ancient ground surface. Among the early Sarmatian burials males constitute the shallowest graves (22 cm and 51cm below ancient ground surface). K8 B3, the shallowest grave, is an adult male in "warrior pose", with one leg bent. What makes this burial even more distinctive is both his curious lack of pottery, nearly ubiquitous at this time and at this site, and also some indications that he was buried expeditiously. His only grave goods point towards an untimely demise. K8 B3 was buried with a knife and a lone arrowhead, which was found in his chest cavity. This may have been worn as an amulet around his neck or it may have contributed to his cause of death. There was some evidence of wood in his grave that may indicate a coffin/box in which he was carried and buried.

Table 7.2 Body position in cm below base of mound fill (summarized from Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996).

Location	Sex category	Depth (cm)
Sauromatian		
K2B1	Male	184
K2B2	Male	80
K2B3	Male	186
K3B1	Male	133
K3B2	Female	121
K8B6	Female	138
K17B1	Male	163
K25B1	Male	73

Location	Sex category	Depth (cm)
early Sarmatian		
K7B2	Female	213
K7B4	Female	246
K7B6	Sub-male	140
K7B7	Female	195
K7B8	Male	239
K7B9	Female	100
K8B3	Male	22
K8B5	Female	200
K8B8	Sub-male	206
K8B12	Male	51
K10B2	Male	165
K17B2	Male	163
K25B2	Female	339

The early Sarmatian burials at Pokrovka 2 (Table 7.3) total 13 individuals in five kurgans, four of which are reused Sauromatian mounds. The only kurgan built specifically for this group, Kurgan 7, has a diameter of 24m and holds the remains of nine individuals in eight graves; one additional grave contained only a ceramic vessel with no evidence of human remains. This may indicate a cenotaph, a form of memorial uncommon but not rare in Iron Age cemeteries in Western Siberia (see Kroll 2000).

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Table 7.3 Pokrovka 2: Early Sarmatian kurgans (summarized from Yablonsky 1993, 1994, 1995, 1996).

Kurgan	Diam. (m)	Hght (m)	Individ. (total)	Notes
7	24	0.25	9	Center: 1 sub-adult male. Peripheral: 4 adult females (wood structure); 1 adult male; 1 sub-adult male; 2 children; 1 empty grave.
8	30	1.25	10 (12)	Center: 1 sub-adult male (cuts into Sauromatian). Peripheral: 2 adult males (1 w/ wood fragments); 1 adult female (in partial coffin); 5 children (2 w/ wood fragments); 1 indeterminate sub-adult
10	10	0.1	1 (2)	Center: 1 adult male (cuts into Sauromatian grave)
17	30	0.7	1 (2)	Center (?): 1 adult male (w/ wood fragments); kurgan added on to
25	13	0.2	1 (2)	Center: 1 adult female (cuts into Sauromatian grave)

Only some scattered wood was found in four of the peripheral graves; an additional grave contained enough wood to qualify as a possible structure, and another contained a partial wood coffin (K8 B5). Kurgan 8 contains the remains of ten individuals placed in an earlier Sauromatian mound. The central grave, a sub-adult male, cuts through the grave of the Sauromatian female. This burial pattern is similar to Kurgans 10 and 25, thus I interpret that there is no familial relationship of these later individuals to the earlier. An alternate interpretation would be that once buried disturbing the dead did not matter, but this does not seem to be indicated by the other Iron Age cemeteries in the region. Peripheral graves were added in trenches/ditches around the base of the mound (the case in Sargat burials, see Koryakova and Daire 2002) and in mound fill, but intrusive burials that crosscut earlier graves are rare.

When early Sarmatian graves are placed in an existing mound they are oriented around the new central grave, not that of the Sauromatian central burial. This arrangement is seen in Kurgan 8 where the mound was expanded to incorporate the new graves. Kurgans 10, 17, and 25 have only one early Sarmatian burial added to each of the Sauromatian mounds. Two of these, Kurgans 10 and 25, cut directly into the central grave of the former owner again in a similar way as Kurgan 8, while the other, Kurgan 17 Burial 2, misses the earlier central grave. It appears that this mound was expanded for the Early Sarmatian burial, due to its irregular shape. There is evidence of wood having been placed over at least a portion of this individual (K17 B2) as significant wood planks were found in situ.

The body positioning within the kurgans, their general placements, and their style of interment (podbois, catacomb, or simple grave) follow expected patterns with only a few exceptions during the early Sarmatian period. The innovations in mortuary style seen elsewhere with the advent of Early Sarmatian burials, such as the use of podbois (side niche) and catacomb burials (Barbarunova 1995; Moshkova 1963, 1974; Sulimirski 1970) are also found here at Pokrovka 2. The exception is that dromos-style burials, those with wooden entrances built to reuse the central grave, have not been found at this site. The preponderance of single burials seen among other early Sarmatian kurgans is not significant here; three of five kurgans are represented by single inhumations. The remaining two kurgans do show the symmetrical arrangement of graves around a central, single grave (a pattern identified by Barbarunova 1995). The two group burials, Burial 7 and 8, are both spatially organized around sub-adult males. The expected body position was with the head towards the south, no longer the W-SW orientation of the

Sauromatians. This is not the overwhelming case here at Pokrovka 2. Of 22 burials, four were too disturbed to determine the orientation of the body. Of the 18 remaining, ten are oriented W-SW, seven are oriented to the S (the expected direction), and one lay with his head to the north (Figure 7.2). This last burial (K10 B2) is distinctive among all the burials for the inclusion of a sword held in his right hand and positioned across his pelvis. This will be discussed further below.

Figure 7.2 Pokrovka 2: Orientation of head in early Sarmatian graves.
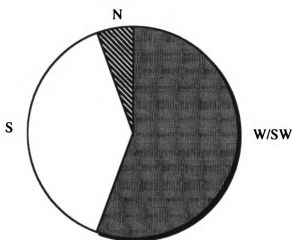
Sargat settlement and kurgans

The architecture from Malokazhbaevo again implies the temporary, perishable nature of a short-term settlement, yet one that was largely a reuse site initially occupied by much earlier individuals. With an understanding of the climate of this region, it is likely that without substantial storage facilities, none of which were recovered from the

settlement, the nomads would have used this facility during the warmer months, and then

moved with their herds further south to avoid the bitter winter months. The depth of the

ditches and height of the walls, while not impressive enough to deflect human attack,

would still have involved a communal investment of energy large enough to assume an

annual return. Thus if these nomads were in contact with any long-term resident,

sedentary people in the area, they would have had to have been on good terms with

them[2]. Their fortress was not very strong, and their population could not have been very

large judging by the size and number of house structures. There is not enough evidence

to determine whether they would have formed mutualistic relations, truly interrelated and

mutually beneficial and interdependent economic relations, but Malozakhbaevo does

represent one of the few identifiable short-term nomad sites in the Transurals.

Malozakhbaevo 1, the cemetery within which the settlement is located, consists of

five kurgans situated in close proximity to each other, within an area of 100m x 50m, a

more compact arrangement than at other Sargat sites. Each kurgan showed some signs of

disturbance from looters. Kurgan 1 was excavated while work progressed on the

settlement during the summer of 1997. Kurgan 3 was excavated in 1994, but the data

have not been published and were not available for use in this analysis. None of the data

from Malokazakhbaevo 1 have been published, thus only basic information may be

reported here (taken from Daire and Koryakova 2002 supplemented by Yipimakhov's

1992 survey map). Kurgan 1 was the smallest of the five kurgans at this cemetery, 10m

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[2] Keeley (1996) discusses the vulnerability of small-scale, pre-state societies to warfare and raiding, deducing from a collection of cross-cultural examples that the infrastructure and logistics of these groups makes them more susceptible to looting, famine, and ultimately destruction by what might be considered small raids. His work supports my conclusion that the nomads at Malokazakhbaevo would have had to be in good stead with their sedentary neighbors. Also Keeley, albeit while looking at small-scale societies, was looking at large-scale destruction including widespread evidence of fire, destruction of villages, and mass graves. None of these things are found at Malokazahbaevo.

in diameter and 0.3m high. There was no ditch around the limits of the kurgan, a

common element among Sargat kurgans. The positioning of the cemetery, quite close to

the settlement, would indicate a close association between the individuals occupying the

settlement and the individuals buried in the mounds. The relatively small size of Kurgan

1, though not distinctly smaller than those others in this cemetery, suggests that this

individual was not of particularly high social status when compared to other kurgans in

the region. Perhaps this is more a reflection on the social status of the group using the

settlement as all the mounds are of similar size and lacking in external elaborations

(ditches).

The architectural nature of the Skaty kurgans is significantly different from that of

Malozakhbaevo. First, there is no settlement in proximity to Skaty. Today the cemetery

stands near a small village of the same name, but no Iron Age fortress, settlement, or

short-term encampment has been located in this area. Skaty cemetery has kurgans

stretched out across an upland terrace overlooking the valley. The smallest kurgans in

the complex cover an enormous range of size, from 4-6.5m at the smallest, to very large

at 42 an 78m. The four kurgans excavated for this study are at the much more modest

end of the scale, 15-25m with an average of 17.75m. Within this collection, only Kurgan

2, the largest, is beyond one standard deviation, and containing only one burial, this

individual does receive significantly more labor expenditure. Considering other external

features that increase community involvement in the burial rite, external ditches are

common occurrences in Sargat kurgans, but only Kurgans 1 and 4 have ditches; the

largest kurgan, Kurgan 2, does not. Ditches may be continuous, half circles, or a series of

unconnected arches as reported from other locations. Here at Skaty, Kurgan 1 (Figure

7.3) has a continuous ditch and Kurgan 4 has the half-circle variety and evidence for a significant amount of burnt wood (Figure 7.4). Internal structures are another measure of both labor and time investment. Finding wood for the internal structures is not as difficult in the forest-steppe as it is on the steppe, but the felling of trees and transporting, shaping, and building funerary tombs is more effort than not doing it. All four of the kurgans contain funerary structures and also have evidence for postholes (from 4 to 8 postholes) revealing the size of structure that was built. Preservation of the wood logs is intermittent, as the high alkaline soil does not preserve wood well. Still there are significant enough quantities of wood found in all of the kurgans to indicate that they were not merely lining graves or building litters/stretchers; these were houses for the dead. Elsewhere among Sargat kurgans the size of the internal structures is not necessarily correlated with the size of mound, but at Skaty the largest wood structure comes from the largest excavated mound, Kurgan 2.

Another means by which to measure social differentiation is body placement, specifically numbers of graves per mound and center versus peripheral grave. All the kurgans have been extensively robbed, leaving contextual evidence from all of the central graves quite muddled. Kurgan 1 for instance, had 11 features that were excavated as if they were burials (refer to Figure 7.3), but only two individuals were found in three separate grave features. It was determined that the child grave contained elements that were inconsistent with central grave burial (Daire and Koryakova 2002:83), instead it is posited that the central grave may have either been empty, another cenotaph, or belonged to the adult female found in the adjacent grave (Feature 10). Kurgan 4, robbed repeatedly, contains the remains of two undeterminable individuals in the central grave.
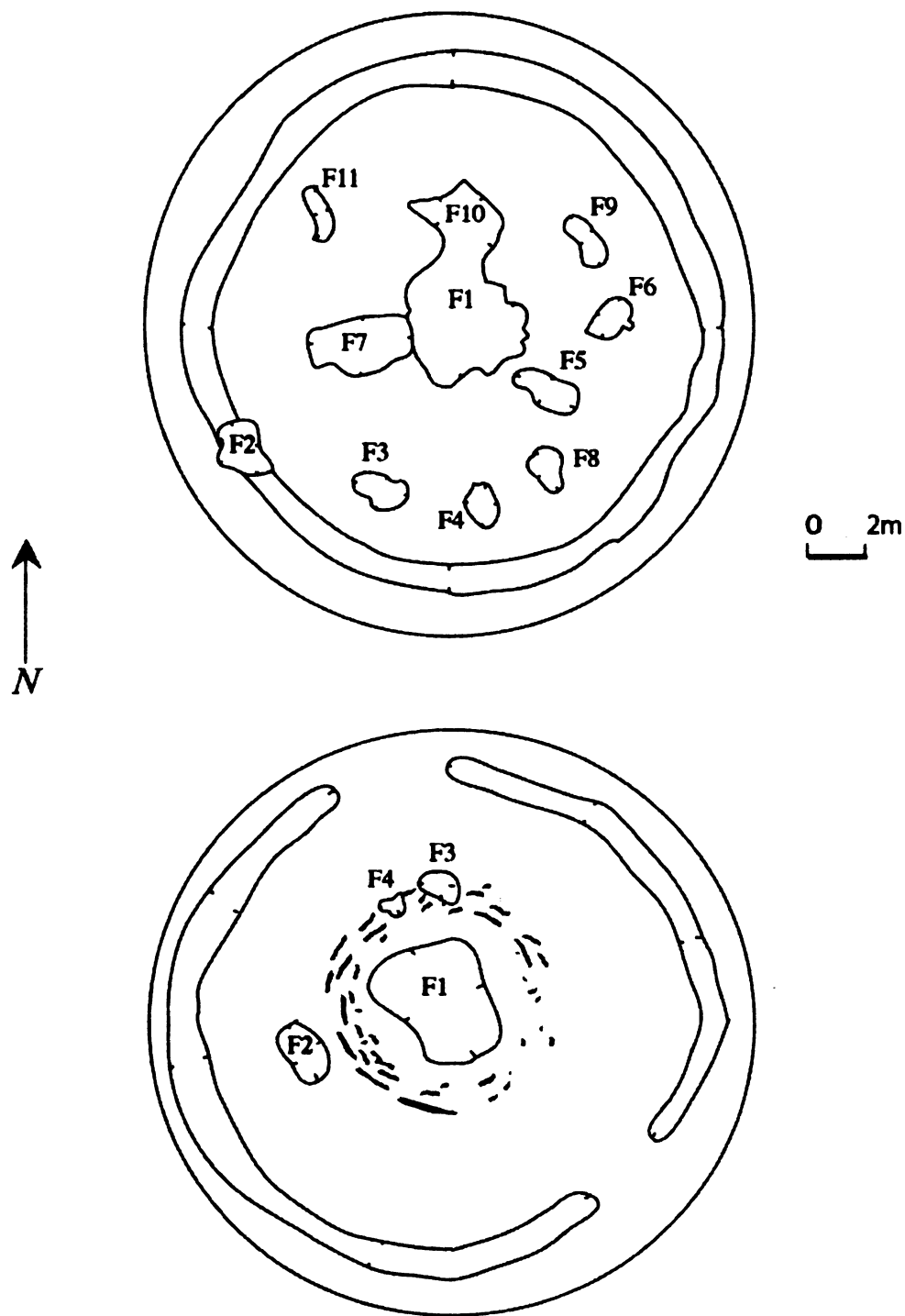
Figure 7.3 (top) Skaty Kurgan 1 with features 1-11 and continuous ditch (from Daire and

Koryakova 2002, Figure 31).

Figure 7.4 (bottom) Skaty Kurgan 4 with features 1-4 and half-circle ditches (from Daire

and Koryakova 2002, Figure 35).

Under these conditions any conclusions about social hierarchy based on body positioning can only be limited. The lone male found in Kurgan 2, the largest kurgan with interior wood construction would appear to be the highest status individual, but much larger mounds remain to be excavated from this cemetery complex and a final determination of status cannot be made at this time. It is apparent that individual status is not achieved, as there are a number of children found in these four kurgans (four of nine individuals), one of whom is buried in a central grave of Kurgan 3.

Discussion of Iron Age Architecture Features

In conclusion, the architectural features of the Sauromatian burials at Pokrovka 2 indicate a broad size range for mound construction, and a limited use of wood for internal grave structures. Perhaps other, more ephemeral materials were used to create structures over the graves, for example something resembling more the tents they built from felts (yurts), but due to preservation these may have perished over the course of time. Nonetheless, a great deal of labor investment is indicated for any burial mound. As reconstructed by Koryakova and Sergeyev (1995) it would have taken a group of four to five persons one week (28-25 person days) to build a mound 16m in diameter. The average size of the Sauromatian mounds here is 13m; the largest mound in this cemetery (48m) would have taken one family unit, of four to five adults, around three weeks to construct. This is a large amount of time for any group to dedicate to a singular activity and it is likely that either more individuals participated in a large mound's construction or the mound took an entire summer season to construct. In addition to the labor needed to construct the earthen mound, the internal structures would also have required additional

time and resources to obtain the wood for the burial chambers. Though there are not as many such structures as expected, these internal features reveal differences in the treatment of the dead within any given mound. Thus, the assumption of social differentiation between individuals who were placed in these mounds of varying size, and those who were not, is a safe conclusion. Whether this social difference was a direct expression of the individual or their kin group affiliations are both possible, and probably mutually dependent conclusions.

The amount of time involved in the disposal of the dead may indicate the stratified nature of these societies. As Criado (1989) states, egalitarian societies dispose of the dead quickly, maintaining the order of "us", the living, and "them", the ancients. The recent dead create a problem in that they blur the boundary between the living and the dead. The dead are quickly removed from society. Criado discusses the creation of large burials as a meaningful discontinuity from an egalitarian pattern, but burial variability need not signify a ranked society (Huntington and Metcalf 1979:122; Parker Pearson 1982). The assumption that graves are reflections of social order (Binford 1971; Saxe 1970) is simplistic and fails to account for the collective representations of aspects of religion and worldview (Carr 1995:110-111; Morris 1991:147). Variability becomes an especially thorny issue when we consider the treatment of children. If a particular elaborate child's burial were found with an adult, the treatment may be taken to indicate wealth, power and or status. This high rank in a child therefore must indicate ascribed status and evidence of a hierarchical society (Tainter 1978:106), suppositions not universally supported by archaeology or ethnography (Hayden 1995:49-50). The treatment of a child in death may be more a reflection of her/his parents' status, or

perhaps reflect the fact that they do not operate in an adult status realm, and unwrapping these relations draws questions about any direct association of labor investment or grave goods with a particular individual (Brown 1995:8; Gillespie 2001:77; Pader 1982:57). Again the larger arena of other aspects of the mortuary ritual, or which burial is but one component (Parker Pearson 1993:226-227) will aid in clarifying these issues. Mortuary ritual indeed may have more to do with the relationships negotiated among survivors and between survivors and the dead or ancestors (Joyce 1999; Parker Pearson 1982, 1993).

The slow construction of the mound directly links a person or group to the deceased, identifies one with their status, and establishes, reestablishes, and reinforces social differentiation. The direct link to the dead, through the building of new mounds or the reuse of existing ones, as seen at Pokrovka, allow for groups to legitimate their claims to crucial resources (Goldstein 1976; Saxe 1970), here the pasturage, or lay claims to crucial identities, nomad, by means of utilizing social memory (Chesson 2001). Assigning status based on the labor invested alone has been shown problematic (cf. Tainter 1978), including the inability to account for other aspects of the ritual that may have no archaeological signature. In order to further explore the ways in which Iron Age peoples expressed themselves through their mortuary behavior, it is necessary to further examine the contents of the mortuary ritual that did survive.

TRADE

Sauro-Sarmatian Material Culture

The grave goods of Sauro-Sarmatian sites are commonly divided into three main descriptive categories of weaponry, tools, and pottery (Barbarunova 1995; Moshkova

1963, 1974; Smirnov 1961; Sulimirski 1970). Here I have used six, broader descriptive

categories that are less subjective. Each artifact is cross-listed with one of three available

categories of personhood: adult female, adult male and subadult male (Table 7.4 and 7.5).

The expectation is that the grave goods reflect nomads' interconnectedness with the

outside world, with militarism, and during later periods a degree of social differentiation

based on in-migration, the introduction of new populations. Arrowheads are expected to

be predominantly bronze, swords and daggers will display zoomorphic designs (the

animal style), and pottery, the most commonly found artifact of all, will be found in

nearly all graves. These expectations are not met at Pokrovka 2. By count arrowheads

are the largest category of artifact (Sauromatian n=172; Early Sarmatian n= 101), but this

may reflect several things; 1) they are made of the most durable materials (bronze, iron,

and bone) and preserve well, 2) because of size and recovery techniques, they are quite

easy to find compared to small "seed" beads that are best found using flotation

techniques, and 3) if pottery is tended with care, it is either preserved as one piece, or at

the very least reassembled into one artifact and counted as such. At Pokrovka 2, often the

beads were only counted if they were of a particular size or had a unique quality, such as

distinctive color or design. Projectile points have historically been given more weight

because they have been used to establish local chronologies. Thus part of their

representation is due to an emphasis on relative typological dating. Another emphasis, it

could be said, is due to the weight given to men's roles in defining nomad society.

Table 7.4 Pokrovka 2: Sauromatian grave goods by age/sex categories

Artifact Categories	Material	Female Adult (n=2)	Male Adult (n=8)	Subadult Male (n=1)
Personal adornment				
beads	glass	x		
beads	shell	x		
belt buckle	iron		x	
clothing rings (sewn)	gold	x		
finger ring	gold		x	
finger ring	iron		x	
pendant	bone	x		
pendant	gold	x		
plaque	bronze w/ gold foil		x	
plaque	iron w/ gold foil		x	
plaque animal style	bronze		x	
plaque animal style	gold	x		
Weapons				
armor	iron		x	
arrowheads	bronze		x	
dagger	iron		x	
dagger	iron w/ gold foil		x	
knife	iron		x	
quiver	leather		x	
sword	iron		x	
whetstone	stone		x	
Containers				
ceramics	hand-made sherds		x	
ceramics	hand-made vessal	x		
Faunal				
faunal bones	antelope antler		x	x
faunal bones	boar tusk		x	
faunal bones	camel	x	x	
faunal bones	domesticated animal		x	
faunal bones	horse		x	
faunal bones	sheep/goat	x	x	
Horse tack				
horse harness rings	bronze w/ gold foil		x	
horse harness rings	indeterminate		x	
Other				
altar	stone	x	x	
brazier	iron w/ enamel		x	
lump	chalk		x	
mirror	bronze	x		
shells	sea shells	x		
spoon	bone	x		

Table 7.5 Pokrovka 2: early Sarmatian grave goods by age/sex categories

Artifact Categories	Material	Female Adult (n=6)	Male Adult (n=5)	Subadult Male (n=3)	Children (n=6)
Personal adornment					
beads	glass	x	x	x	x
beads	indeterminate				x
bracelet	gold		x		
earring	bronze w/ gold foil	x		x	
finger ring	gold				x
pendant	glass	x			
pendant	shell	x			
Weapons					
arrowheads	bone			x	
arrowheads	bronze	x	x	x	x
arrowheads	iron		x	x	
dagger	iron		x		x
knife	iron		x	x	x
quiver	leather		x		x
sword	iron		x		
whetstone	stone		x		
Containers					
ceramics	hand-made sherds	x	x		x
ceramics	hand-made vessal	x	x	x	x
container (fragments)	bronze	x			
container (fragments)	bark/birch				x
Faunal					
faunal bones	boar tusk			x	x
faunal bones	camel	x	x		
faunal bones	sheep/goat	x	x	x	x
faunal bones	sheep astralagi				x
Other					
ground stone tool	stone	x		x	x
loom weight	stone	x			
lump	chalk	x		x	x
mirror fragment	bronze	x			
mirror	bronze	x		x	
shells	sea shells	x			x
spindle whorl	clay	x		x	
spoon	bone			x	

Nomads are seen as warriors as well as herders and traditionally men are seen in this role. Thus, finding and cataloging weaponry becomes an exercise in defining manhood and nomadism in the Iron Age. Even though Herodotus depicted the Sarmatian women as warriors, it has not been common for archaeological analysis to consider them in this way. The exception to this oversight is the work of Davis-Kimball (1997, 1998b), but while I applaud her efforts in getting women's roles in Eurasian nomad societies recognized, I will also take issue with her methods in my ensuing discussion. The second highest artifact count is iron armor (n=40), all of which came from one individual Sauromatian grave (K2 B1).

Pottery is expected to be ubiquitous, but is found in only three of seven kurgans, four of 12 Sauromatian burials (minimum number of vessels equals five), but pottery becomes increasingly more common among the Early Sarmatian, as expected, where it is found in four of five kurgans and within 16 of 21 graves (minimum number of vessels equals 18). All of the pottery is hand-formed (not wheel-turned), flat or round-bottomed, thin or thick-walled, usually with a coarse, talc temper. Sauromatian adult females (n=2) were always buried with pottery, as were Early Sarmatian adult females (n=6). Two of eight Sauromation adult males had pottery (25%), while that percentage increases significantly among the same group during the Early Sarmatian period; three of five had pottery in their graves (60%). Significantly the two who did not have pottery (K7B8 and K10B2) are both uniquely positioned, the first in what is considered a "warrior pose", a supine position with one knee bent. The other individual was buried with his head pointing north, grasping a sword in one hand, the blade laid across his pelvis. The only category of Sauromatian individuals without pottery was a sub-adult (n=1), with one of

two sub-adults, but pottery is found with these groups. Among the Early Sarmatian sub-adults (n=5), two identified as male were without pottery (K7B1 and K8B8), the other three had pottery. Of these sub-adults with pottery, two of them had substantial numbers of unique grave goods including beads. Kurgan 7 Burial 6, discussed in Chapter 6 for the determination of sex as male (see Yablonsky 1995), was buried with an infant, beads, a spindle whorl, and a bronze mirror which aided in the preservation of some of the fabric of his tunic. This is Davis-Kimball's "warrior priestess" (Davis-Kimball 1998b).

It may indicate something about these particular individuals that they do not have pottery in their graves. As is the case at many sites in Siberia, pottery is also used to established chronology, but once the sherds have given all they can in the determining the age of a given grave, they are most often thrown away without counting or weighing. This skews their representation in the laboratory record. Some of the pottery vessels have been analyzed to determine their contents upon burial. Analysis of the pottery is discussed in the following section on mortuary ritual. The origins of two of these classes of artifacts, weaponry and tools, indicates a high degree of interaction between the Sauromatians and more sedentary social systems/societies. Most of these items are made of metal that would have required a high degree of specialization to manufacture and work. There is no evidence to support the local working of metal at Porkrovka 2. The limited sample size precludes confident inferences as to the nature or degree of interaction based solely on these two groups of artifacts. The pottery represented at this site is all non-wheel turned. It is coiled and could have easily been made by nomads in their summer or winter locations or during seasonal movements over open fires. Hand-

made pottery is a common craft witnessed by ethnographers, and is a common artifact in mobile hunter-gatherer archaeological sites.

Animal style artifacts have been used to unify the Eurasian steppe under a single cultural category or influence, a Scytho-Siberian cultural complex. Among the burials at Pokrovka 2 there are only nine individual artifacts displaying any animal motif decorations, found in just three Sauromatian burials. Kurgan 2 Burial 1, the burial of an adult male, has bridle ornamentation in the form of two cheek pieces with stylized horse heads on them, two horse harness rings with stylized horse heads made of bronze with gold foil, and one bronze plaque with gold foil which looks like a horse head as viewed in plan view. Kurgan 3 Burial 2, the burial of an adult female, has three mountain lion pendants that were worn around her neck, and Kurgan 17 Burial 1 has a bronze plaque with the image of two horses locked in combat as another animal, either a horse or lion, looks on. These three burial sets show opposite ends of the perspective on the animal style; one that directly reflects the lifestyles of those who adorn themselves and their animals with animal imagery, and the other that these items can help provide a glimpse into the ritual or religiousness of past peoples. For example, the three mountain lions (K3B2) are similar to emblems found in the Tien Shan Mountains (Davis-Kimball 1998b), and clearly show trade/exchange links between the southern Urals and the Far East. I have chosen to identify them as "pendants" rather than the more common "talismans" for the very reason that the significance of the latter forms an immediate idea of the purpose of the item as well as an identity for its owner, for Davis-Kimball (1998b) she is a "priestess" and/or protected by their prestigious magic (Dvornichenko 1995, Grakov 1971). This particular individual may be a good candidate for discussions of

prestige, cultural value, and social differentiation based on the entirety of her burial assemblage. There is a slippery slope that begins with assigning to archaeological artifacts classifications full of contemporary meaning, especially in the assessment of cultural identity.

Other items of personal adornment have been analyzed to determine the origin of their production. An analysis of eight glass beads from the Sauro-Sarmatian burials at Pokrovka 2 was performed to identify the source of the glass (Hall and Yablonsky 1998). Using electron probe microbeam analysis and energy dispersive X-ray fluorescence the chemical content of the beads revealed four separate origins. An additional petrographic analysis was conducted on four glass beads from Kurgan 3 Burial 2 (Table 7.6) (Anikeeva 1996).

Table 7.6 Pokrovka 2: Analyses of glass beads (After Anikeeva 1996; Hall and Yablonsky 1998)

Provenience	Bead	Color	Origin
Kurgan 3, Burial 2	1	Bright blue	Central Asia/Kyzylkum Desert (Aral Sea region)
	2	Greenish	
	3	Blue w/ green tint	
	4	Pale blue	
Kurgan 7, Burial 2	5	Clear w/ green tint	Crimea/Georgia, Egypt –Syria/Palestine
	6	Blue -irregular	
Kurgan 8, Burial 12	7	Blue "eye"	
Kurgan 25, Burial 2	8-12	Yellow	Near East or S. Asia

Beads 1 through 4 were all recovered from the burial of a Sauromatian adult female. Her burial also contained a diverse assortment of pendants, one bone, the other three were the gold snow leopard plaques discussed earlier, Caspian Sea shells, gold ringlettes sewn into her clothing, a stone altar, a bronze mirror, and the three animal style

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plaques with the mountain lion design. The beads were determined to all be from the region of the Kyzylum Desert of Central Asia near the Aral Sea.

Beads 5, 6, and 7 all originate from two possible locations, Crimea/Georgia or Egypt-Syria/Palestine. The first two were recovered from the burial of an adult female in the Early Sarmatian kurgan. Her burial also contained a bronze mirror fragment, sea shells, beads of semi-precious stones and clay, and several fragments of a bronze container. Kurgan 8 Burial 12 contained an adult male with an infant tucked into his right arm, with only an iron knife and some pottery sherds in addition to Bead 3. The "eye" bead style recovered from the burial is commonly found elsewhere in Eurasian Iron Age mounds, from the Black Sea coast to the southern Urals (Smirnov 1975: Plate 31).

Kurgan 25 Burial 2 contained an Early Sarmatian adult female grave. Also recovered from this grave were a bronze mirror, clay spindle whorl, ceramic sherds, and the scapula of a domesticated animal. All of the yellow beads found in this burial come from the same location in the Near East or South Asia.

These bead analyses reveal evidence for trade/exchange not only in an East-West direction, involving the Mediterranean and Central Asia, the focus of past research, but also North-South, adding the Indian subcontinent. Further reference to literary sources (Dikshit 1964/1965) makes mention of a thriving glass industry during the Maruyan Empire (ca. 325-185 BC) which as already noted had trade links with Bactria, Persia, China, and Afghanistan (Hall and Yablonsky 1998:1243). While trade/exchange in these exotic items is clearly evident, the interpretation of the interactions between the nomads buried at Pokrovka and the sedentary states to their east, west and south remains caught

between exacting tribute (Sulimirski 1970: 92-143) or acting as intermediaries along the trade routes that crossed their territories (Gorbunova 1993/1994).

Sargat Material Culture

Artifacts from Sargat sites are usually divided into three main categories of sumptuary items that correspond with statuses – royal wares are items denoting authority, e.g., scepters, maces, rare trade items; warriors' weapons including swords, daggers, lances, armor, etc.; and other materials such as pottery vessels, spindle whorls, and beads. Another implication of the artifact categories used for this region is that males will occupy the first two artifact and status categories, "royal" and "warrior", and women will fill the third, "other". Children are once again largely ignored in the literature, except to say that they do occur in kurgan burials. As with the Sauro-Sarmation, these items are expected to reflect the nomads' interconnectedness with the outside world, through trade and militarism. Increasing hierarchy was interpreted in part through the association of individuals with kurgan burial and access to exotic items as the Iron Age progressed. Settlements in the Transurals during the early Iron Age are seen as the product of remnant Bronze Age Ugrian populations. As the nomads move in from the south, they bring with them an Iranian cultural superstratum that dominates the sedentary substratum (Koryakova 1995, 1998). To protect their dominance, nomads warred and raided, while the sedentary people responded by building fortresses. This pattern is seen across the Transurals except in the southern area along the Ural Mountains where the "border" seems to be much more porous.

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Malokazakhbaevo is a good example of the non-fortified settlement found in the

southern Transurals. This settlement was a small, secure, temporary shelter for pastoral

nomads moving through the area during the summer months. A discussion of trade items

from either the settlement or the cemetery of Malokazakhbaevo, tucked in near the

eastern slope of the Urals, would not be fruitful at this time. The artifacts recovered from

the settlement, ceramic sherds from the Eneolithic, Bronze Age, and Iron Age

(Gorokhovo) were merely gathered and recorded. Their provenience is broadly "the

settlement." The purpose of this particular excavation was largely exploratory, i.e. to

evaluate the susceptibility of the site to further destruction by human agents, and to assess

the stratigraphy of the fortress ramps and ditches. The few artifacts that were recovered

from the lone burial mound excavated, a spindle whorl and one Gorokhovo and one

Sargat ceramic vessels, only assist in narrowing the time period of the burial to the 5th-

3rd centuries BC. These types of items are readily available throughout the Transurals,

especially here in the southwestern end of the region at this time.

The richly adorned burials at Skaty provide a much more fertile assortment of

trade goods to examine. What must be acknowledged is that two of the four kurgans had

more than 200 artifacts recorded for certain graves (the central graves of K3 and K4).

This discussion must begin from an artificially shortened list, one that encompasses the

artifacts mentioned in the field notes, on plan views, and in the text of the French-Russian

report (Daire and Koryakova 2002).

Three categories of individuals can be identified from the four kurgans at Skaty -

adult females (n=2), adult males (n=1), and children (n=4); two individuals were not able

to be identified. Since none of the large kurgans were excavated, the expectation is that

no "royal wares" would be found within the kurgans, and none were. I show the three

categories of individual and the artifact categories in Table 7.7. The six artifact

categories include:

a) Personal adornment: beads, combs, jewelry, plaques, and torques

b) Containers: both whole pottery vessels and sherds

c) Weaponry: armor, arrowheads, daggers, and swords

d) Horse tack: harness pieces, buckles

e) Other: cauldron, knives, shells.

The lone adult male burial did not have anything out of the ordinary in his grave,

weapons, horse tack, and a bronze cauldron. His grave goods show links to the nomads

of the steppe, his lance and spear are both commonly found in Early Sarmatian graves

(Smirnov 1961, 1964; Moshkova 1963), and the circular bronze plaques are used on

bridles among the Central Asian Saka (5th -3rd century BC, Grach 1980:205). The two

adult female graves held ceramic sherds, beads, a harness buckle, and a few iron

arrowheads. The only unique item from either of their assemblages showing ties outside

of their immediate community, was the inclusion of a blue and white "eye" bead (K3 F3).

The only one of its type found during this field season, beads of this sort were commonly

produced on the Black Sea coast, and are found in burial contexts throughout Eurasia. It

is the children, as with the Sauro-Sarmatian burials, that provide for the most provocative

interpretations of identity and status, which will be discussed shortly in reference to the

ritual context.

Table 7.7   Skaty: Sargat grave goods by age/sex categories.

Artifact Categories	Material	Female Adult (n=2)	Male Adult (n=1)	Children (n=4)
Personal adornment				
bead	glass	X		
bead	gold			X
bead	stone			X
bead	unidentified			X
pendant	bone			X
plaque	bronze		X	
plaque	iron			X
plaque	unidentified			X
torque	bronze			X
Containers				
ceramics	sherds			X
ceramics	vessels			X
Weaponry				
armor	bone			X
arrowheads	bronze			X
arrowheads	iron	X		X
dagger	bronze			X
lance/spear	iron		X	
quiver hook	iron		X	
sword			X	
Horse tack				
horse harness	iron		X	
horse harness buckle	bronze	X		
horse harness buckle	iron	X		
Other				
astragali	bone			X
burnt bone	bone			X
cauldron	bronze		X	
comb	bone	X		
knife	iron			X
object	stone	X		

The artifact categories used to discuss the material culture of these Iron Age cultures reveal confounding features of nomad relations and identities. Much of the material recovered from the Sauromatian kurgans at Pokrovka 2 followed the expectations set forth in the literature. Females were overwhelmingly associated with items of personal adornment and exotic items such as bronze mirrors and shells. Weapons and horse tack were, with no exceptions, the specific realm of adult males. Animals were included with both female and male burials, but horses, wild boars, and antelope were associated only with males. It is apparent the gender distinctions elaborated in the literature carry through these early interments at Pokrovka 2. Where the expectations fall apart is with the early Sarmatian remains.

Categories of personal adornment, including jewelry and beads, weaponry, containers, faunal bones, and other items are found with all categories of individual regardless of sex or age. The few distinctions appear to be sheep astralagi and birch box containers are associated only with children, expectations that are broadly Sarmatian both in the Urals and the Don-Volga basin (Jones-Bley 1999). While children did not stand out for other distinctive material culture correlations, they do stand out for their sheer numbers, the largest numbered category. This is also the case for the site of Skaty where children represent half of the total excavated population. Truly distinctive in the cross-over of artifact category with age/sex category are the inclusions of mirrors and spindle whorls with both females and subadult males. The former is an exotic item imported from China, a status indicator based on its rarity and difficulty in procurement. These

items were located with individuals who also had a volume of grave goods, which also supports a status element.

The importation of metal items includes items of bronze and gold. Though gold objects could have been procured from local sources (Hall and Yablonsky 1998), there are no indications that anyone buried at these sites was a metallurgist by trade. Whether these populations procured their metals, both exotic and local, through mutualistic sharing or parasitic raiding is unclear. Clearly metals are functional, as aspects of horse tack or commonly occurring items such as knives and arrowheads, but in order to support a claim for mutualism it is necessary to see the other half of the equation and have evidence of the materials that nomads share with their sedentary neighbors. As no metallurgical sites were included in this study, this question cannot be fully explored (cf. Spielman 1986).

What is clear from the material evidence here is that the literary focus on militaristic nomads in the early Iron Age (Hanks 2002a, 2002b; Yablonsky 1995, 2002) needs to be broadened to encompass populations whose reliance on horses and weaponry is not as evident. While the four kurgans at Skaty contain ample evidence of militarism, including armor and weapons buried with young children, the inclusion of weaponry, horses, and use of the animal style, wanes in later period burials among the early Sarmatians. Clearly there are many forms of nomadism and many interactions occurring across the length and breadth of the Urals.

RITUAL ACTIVITIES IN MORTUARY PRACTICE

One could argue that mortuary practice is ritual itself. How is it possible to remain passive in the face of death when it is necessary for the society to recreate itself, reposition living members and recreate altered social relations. Ritual maintains society, rebuilds it, and allows for it to continue (van Gennep 1960; Giddens 1984). In the mortuary realm many elements can be looked to inform us about the death rituals of the Sauro-Sarmatians.

The treatment of the body is the first important vehicle of social symbolism, whereby the body is a "symbolic resource" (Barrett 1994:112) manipulated by the society. In the Sauromatian burials throughout the southern Urals, the dead are placed with their heads to the West/Southwest. As mentioned above, all but one of Sauromatian burials fit this pattern, thus linking them as a group. The lone dissenter from this norm, an adult male, had other markers of inclusion into the greater society. He was laid to rest in a wooden chamber, there were weapons consisting of an iron dagger and bronze arrowheads, and evidence of an animal sacrifice. Among the Early Sarmatian graves there are more deviators from the proscribed regional norm of placing the dead with his/her head towards the south. Nearly half of the individuals (10) follow the earlier format of heads towards the W-SW, seven were placed with their heads toward the south, and one lay with his head to the north. Without more accurate dating, this may not be better understood. Those following the older tradition could have been from transitional time periods, or more closely related to Sauromatians. The sole unique position (K10 B2) is also distinctive among all the burials for the inclusion of a sword held in his right hand and positioned across his pelvis. His burial was placed directly over the previous

occupant of the kurgan, indicating no cultural affinity with the Sauromatians, and as he

has no pottery in his grave, this too would indicate his separation from the Early

Sarmatians as well.

Mortuary pottery has been analyzed to determine the contents of the pots when

they were placed in the graves. By collecting samples from the soil found within the

upper level of the pots and at the base of the pots, measures of P2O5 were compared to

determine what, if anything, was placed in the vessel and then placed with the dead.

These analyses were conducted in 1993 and 1994 (Demkin and Ryskov 1994; Ryskov

and Demkin 1995) and are summarized in Table 7.8. Most of the pots date from the

Early Sarmatian period, except for a few Sauromatian (K8, B4, 5, and 10) and two Late

Sarmatian (K16 B1 –both vessels). While the Late Sarmatian materials from Pokrovka 2

are not the focus of my discussion, it is valuable to note that as time progresses

individuals maintain the tradition of placing food items in the ceramic vessels, and from

Table 7.8 Ceramic content analysis (Summarized from Demkin and Ryskov 1994;
Ryskov and Demkin 1995)

Kurgan	Burial	Vessel location	Contents	Animal bones
3	2	Head	Water	Near legs
		1.25 m S of head	Water	The horse burial
6	1	Head	Milk	
		(large, broken vessel)	Water	Near legs
		Legs	Bouillon	
7	2	Head	Water	Near feet
	3	Head	Water	Near head
	5	(no skeleton)	Empty	
	6	Head	Bouillon	Near head
8	4	Legs/Feet	Cereal (kasha)	Near legs
	5	Head	Water	Near legs
		Knees	Fermented milk	
	10	Head (fragments)	Water	Near legs
16	*1*	*Legs*	*Bouillon*	*Near legs*
		Legs	*Bouillon/Cereal*	

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this extremely small sample, there appears a focus on animal products reflecting a similar emphasis among the living. Of the 15 ceramic vessels only one was determined to be empty, the only pot to come from an empty grave (possible cenotaph). Of the remaining 14, six contained water, four bouillon (one of which had both bouillon and kasha), one cereal (kasha), and two contained milk, one of which was fermented cow's milk and therefore alcoholic.

A simple analysis correlating location and contents of these pots indicates that seven of seven vessels containing water are placed near the head (100%). The only pot (100%) containing cereal was placed near the legs, as were three of four (75%) pots containing bouillon. Milk containers were evenly split (50/50%) with one at the head and the other at the knees. Of these 10 individual burials nine had animal bones in addition to the pottery vessels containing the liquids, and which have been interpreted as meat offerings (Demkin and Ryskov 1993; Ryskov and Demkin 1995). In situ food offerings of domestic sheep, horse or cow are not considered unusual within Sarmatian cemeteries (Koryakova personal correspondence), and one can readily interpret the placing of bouillon, milk, and grains in the graves as food for the dead on their journey to the afterworld. Perhaps even more valuable is to use these foodstuffs as a comparative tool to discuss changing dietary influences. Demkin and Ryskov (1993) indicate that among sedentary agriculturalists, pots containing "vegetable matter" are found most frequently.

In the Early Sarmatian kurgans at Pokrovka 2, the animal to vegetable liquid proportions are split evenly, but again with the addition of meat, milk, and bouillon, this number becomes completely skewed toward animal product consumption. This is

another indication of the diet and occupation of these individuals, as nomads are expected to employ animal products as a principle element in their diets. More importantly, the inclusion of food stuffs with the dead is interpreted here as providing the dead with a last meal, perhaps shared with members of the community who mourn his/her passing.

Animals are found in the burials of both groups, but the difference is in the type of animals buried. In the earlier burials, the inclusion of animal sacrifices (camel, horse, sheep/goat) can be found in nearly every burial, thus it is more telling to discuss when they are absent. In Kurgan Burial 1, the central grave contains an adult male, with a wealth of animal style artifacts. As mentioned above, the majority of artifacts with this motif comes from this particular individual's grave, but he has no animal bones buried with him. The only other burial completely devoid of animal bones is another adult male burial (K25 B1); this individual has only a small flat-bottomed pottery vessel in his grave. One other Sauromatian grave is without animal sacrifice, the burial of a sub-adult male (K8 B2) has an antelope antler, clearly not a sacrifice but perhaps a trophy or symbol of some other personal quality. One other antelope antler exists amongst the burials at Pokrovka 2, it is also from a Sauromatian male (adult) burial (K17 B1), but that individual also had some camel bones in his grave.

It is clear that the inclusion of animal bones in these burials represents an important element of the mortuary ritual. It is most commonly interpreted as food for the dead, or a meal for the mourners held during the funerary ritual. An adult female burial (K8 B6) contained the bones of a butchered camel indicated by the cut marks on them. In two other burials there were entire animals, in these instances single horses found near the graves of an adult male and an adult female (K1 B1 and K3 B2 respectively). Horse

sacrifices are less often discussed in terms of ritual meals, though it has been shown that horse meat is and has been commonly used as a food resource (see the discussion in Levine and Rassamakin 1999).

Animal sacrifice is also very common in Early Sarmatian burials from the site, though it is only sheep/goat that are placed with the dead. Of 21 burials, only nine are without any sheep/goat bones, and one of these is the grave lacking or absent human remains, only one ceramic vessel. Children seem far less likely to receive an animal sacrifice, only two of seven (K7 B3 and K8 B10) have sheep/goat bones. If a child is present in the grave, as there are two double burials involving infants, then there is no animal sacrifice for the male present (one adult and one sub-adult, though the latter had bouillon in the pot he was buried with). Adult females always have sheep/goat remains. The three adult males with no animal sacrifice are unique in other ways as well. One (K8 B3) is only individual placed in a "warrior pose" with one leg bent (cf. Smirnov 1973, 1975; Sulimirski 1970), again imposing contemporary interpretations of prehistoric motives and identity. Another individual (K10 B2) is the male whose body was put directly in a Sauromatian central grave, with his head oriented towards the north and a sword in his right hand; and the last one (K17 B2) was buried with two unique red clay pitchers, a dagger with a gold inlaid hilt, and a gold bracelet.

The final element of the mortuary ritual that linked the Sauromatians of the southern Urals to the Bronze Age Andronovo people was the use of fire in the ritual. Traces of fire were considered to be a significant connection to the "fire cult" (Dvornichenko 1995:102) of the Andronovo who "worshipped the sun as well as fire, and believed in its purificatory power" (Sulimirski 1970:34). The archaeological signature of

the fire cult (burnt clay layers, ash lenses, charcoal) is found in only three adult male

burials, though the inclusion of chalk is sometimes considered part of a fire ritual (Otchir-

Goriaeva 2000:197-8; Sulimirski 1970:34), and chalk is found in three of five Early

Sarmatian kurgans. Kurgan 1 Burial 1 had a large wooden structure that was partially

consumed by fire before it was buried under the earthen mound, this is evidenced by the

burned soil, charcoal, ash, and carbonized wood. Kurgan 2 Burial 3 showed a small

amount of charcoal in the bottom of the grave, and the last example, and Kurgan 8 Burial

3 had a small ash lens. Neither of these latter two examples is a strong candidate for the

adherence to a fire ritual. The first example is more compelling. What makes it most

compelling are that this is one of the oldest mounds (6th century BC based on projectile

point chronology), it is the largest (48m) and it contains only one burial, not including the

intrusive Medieval burial. There were a large number of horse skulls (n=14) buried in the

mound as well, all facing the central burial chamber that measured 24m in diameter. This

individual was buried with a bronze brazier, a cauldron-like object with holes in the

bottom. This individual is nearly idiosyncratic and clearly of very high status or the

representative of a high status kin group lineage.

Grave goods have been assessed for Sauro-Sarmatian sites throughout the south

Urals according to the sex and age of the individuals with whom they are placed. The

standards are as follows (based on Dvornichenko 1995; Moshkova 1974, 1995; Otchir-

Goriaeva 2000; Smirnov 1973, 1975; Sulimirski 1970):

- Men: weapons, horse tack (bits, bridles, cheek pieces), animal style decoration

  (these last two categories become more infrequent in the Early Sarmatian period);

horse skeletons more common in male burials; and tools, including knives and whetstones, axes or celts.

- Women: mirrors (become rare in Early Sarmatian), spoons, combs; items of personal adornment (bracelets, torques, pendants, beads –all becoming less common except for beads); tools including knives and awls, spindle whorls; altars and pottery (exclusively in female burials in the Early Sarmatian period).

- Children: barely addressed in the literature, but when assessed they have sheep astragali, and are accompanied by women.

Wealthy burials from the Early Sarmatian period bend the rules of inclusion. Both men and women possess plaques of bronze, silver, and gold, and have beads or rings sewn onto clothing. The following is a discussion of the sex and age categories found at Pokrovka 2.

Within seven kurgans and their 11 formal graves; male burials are far more common (n=8) than female burials (n=2) during the Sauromatian period, and children, not including an additional sub-adult male, are not represented at all. The lone sub-adult male's burial contained only a single antelope antler, not definitive in its singularity. The male burials contain all the weapons, including armor (one burial), arrowheads, daggers, quivers, and sword (one burial), and all elements of horse tack. This fits the regional model.

Female burials contain all the beads, pendants, shells and bone spoons. This fits the regional model as well. Both males and females have animal style plaques, ceramics, stone altars, and camel bones. The wealth of the objects found in these graves, assessed by shear number of grave goods and their uniqueness, allows for the cross-over in these

types of artifacts. The two stone altars, signs of "priestess" burials (Sulimirski 1970;

Davis-Kimball 1998b) were placed with a female of extremely high status (social

position of either earned or inherited prestige) and wealth (control of surplus, unique, or

exotic goods or services), and a male with an entirely unique collection of grave goods

(K3 B2 and K8 B1 respectively, Table 7.9). While horse burials are rare elsewhere, here

there are two –the female from K3 B2, and the male in K1 B1 —and there is also some

indication of a "camel feast" in Kurgan 8 Burial 6 (Yablonsky 1994). Since all of the

male burials largely fit the regional pattern, it is really the identity of the female in

Kurgan 3 that is most interesting.

Table 7.9 Pokrovka 2: Burial of the Kurgan 3 Burial 2, the "priestess", and Kurgan 8 Burial 1, the "priest" (Davis-Kimball 1998b; Yablonsky 1995).

Burial	Personal adornment	Weapons	Containers	Faunal inclusions	Horse tack	Other
Kurgan 3 Burial 2 "priestess"	13 Beads 2 Bell-shaped pendants (gold) Pendant (bone) Bone spoon Ringlettes for clothing (gold) 3 Animal style plaques (gold)	None	2 pottery vessels	Horse burial	Horse harness (bronze)	3 sea shells (Caspian) Stone altar Mirror
Kurgan 8 Burial 1 "priest"	Finger ring (iron)	None	Basin (enameled iron)	Camel	None	Stone altar

Not surprisingly, she has received the most attention of all the Sauromatian burials from Pokrovka 2. Davis-Kimball (1998b), based on the review of 174 skeletons collected from five of the excavated cemeteries at Pokrovka, created several categories for burials, including "priest/priestess," the category that includes this particular female. The artifacts that garner this particular status include: stone-carved "sacrificial" altars, sea shells, complete bronze mirrors, carved-bone spoons, and objects decorated with animal style embellishments (Davis-Kimball 1998b:142). The other individual with an altar (K8 B1) fits this category only by means of this one artifact, thus perhaps it is not a label to place on him.

Early Sarmatian female burials continue to contain most of the things considered part of the female "tool kit" – spindle whorls, loom weights, and mirrors and fragments of mirrors. Males have the preponderance of "weapon sets" and men's "tool kits"– daggers, quivers, and swords, knives and whetstones. What makes both of these groups unique is the inclusion of ceramic vessels with all categories of individual. Large and small, jars and globular pots, flat-bottomed and round, hand-made pottery vessels are ubiquitous to the burials at Pokrovka 2. Another element normally reserved for women are beads, both glass and those made from stone, this is another artifact category that crosses sex and age lines.

What makes Pokrovka 2 an exceptionally unique case study is the ability to discuss the roles of children and sub-adults. As mentioned previously, the role of children in nomad society is largely ignored in the literature. The seven children form the

largest age category at this site (tied with adult female), if we consider the four sub-adults

in this group, together they are nearly half the entire population (Table 7.9)[3].

Table 7.10 Pokrovka 2: Child and sub-adult burials

Location	Category	Placement	Orientation	Grave goods	Notes
K7B1	Sub male	Central	Undet.	17 glass beads, earring, iron knife, sheep	Robbed; no pottery
K7B3	Child	Periph.	SW	Pottery vessel, sheep	
K7B6	Sub male	Periph	SW	Glass beads, boar tooth pendant, iron knife, pottery vessel, bone spoon, spindle whorl, bronze mirror	Preservation of cloth
K7	Child	Periph.	SW	Unassigned	Buried with B6
K8B4	Child	Periph.	SW	Beads, shells, 40 arrowheads (1 as pendant), knife, dagger, astralagi, pottery vessel, bark box w/ sheep, boar tooth pendant, quiver w/ 40 arrowheads	Niche at feet with large number of artifacts
K8B7	Child	Periph	SW	Iron objects	Wood fragments
K8B8	Sub male	Central	Undet	Arrowheads, iron object, ground stone frag., sheep	Cut into Sauro. central grave
K8B9	Child	Periph	Undet	Pottery sherds	
K8B10	Child	Periph	SW	2 pottery vessels, sheep	1 imported vessel
K8B11	Child	Periph	S	2 glass beads, pottery vessel, gold ring, sherds	In niche above man and child burial (B12)
K8	Child	Periph	S	Unassigned	Buried w/ adult male B12

Three of four sub-adults appear to straddle the world of both male and female sex

identities. One is found in the central burial of Kurgan 7 (Burial 1), the only burial at the

cemetery entirely unique to the Early Sarmatian. Although his grave had been robbed, an

iron knife with O-shaped pommel, a gold-foil covered bronze spiral earring, and 17 glass

and semi-precious stone beads were recovered during excavations (Yablonsky 1995).

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[3] Demographic data for this population are not available.

This individual's sex was determined in the field (Yablonsky 1995:24), and while he is a

juvenile the preservation and the completeness of his skeleton allowed for his sex

determination. It is understandable that he was misidentified as a "warrior woman"

(Davis-Kimball 1998b) due to the existence of grave goods usually associated with

women[4]. Another sub-adult, indeterminate sex (K8 B4), was buried with 40 bronze

arrowheads and leather quiver, a dagger and a knife, glass beads, originating in the

Crimea or the Middle East, a boar tusk pendant, fossilized shells, and a pottery vessel

filled with kasha. The last sub-adult, a male, is buried with an infant found in a podbois

just above him (K7 B6). This individual had a woman's "tool kit" including spindle

whorl, bone spoon, and bronze mirror, and an iron "knife" worn at his waist – the usual

placement of a dagger— a boar tusk pendant, and a rather lumpy and irregularly-shaped

pottery vessel that contained bouillon. The placement of the mirror, under his shoulder,

is both unusual and fortuitous as it allowed for the preservation of some of the textile

from his clothing. This individual has been labeled a "young priestess" (Davis-Kimball

1998b), and perhaps this is the gender role that this boy was filling. The fourth sub-adult

male (K8 B8) has bronze and iron arrowheads, a ground stone fragment, and a lump of

chalk, a match for the male tool kit.

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[4] Sex determinations based on DNA evidence are providing fascinating fodder in the forensic science
literature (cf. Brown and Brown 1992; Brown 1997; Ovchinnikov et al. 1998) by Yablonsky during field
excavations in 1994 (Yablonsky 1995), but he does not reference the techniques he used to make this
assessment. He does note that this is an unusual male, due to the collection of grave goods found in
association with him, he does not further elaborate (Yablonsky 1995:23-4). Sex determinations on juvenile
individuals can be difficult, but it has been shown that using at least six criteria of pelvis morphology
produces most effective sex determinations of any individual regardless of age (see Rogers and Saunders
1994 for a complete discussion and review of the pertinent forensic literature). Regardless of methodology,
the sex identified is our interpretation of whatever evidence used, DNA, osteological markers, or material
culture, and not an individual's gender, her/his socially constructed identity, that is revealed through daily
interactions within their society.

The seven children, all in infancy or near weaning (two years), are buried in two

mounds, Kurgan 7 (three individuals total who had not reached adulthood) and Kurgan 8

(seven who had not reached adulthood). Two infants are buried with males, one adult

and one sub-adult, have no unique burial number, and no grave goods are associated with

them individually. Kurgan 7 Burial 3, a single child interment, had a pottery vessel and

some sheep/goat bones, which tend not to be found near children. The remaining five

children are all found in Kurgan 8, one infant in its own grave with an object of iron and

evidence of a wood structure (coffin?), one infant buried with Burial 12 (an adult male

buried with beads, pottery, and a knife), and three infants (1-2 years), buried individually,

with pottery (one with two complete vessels), one of whom also had a gold ring and two

glass beads. One interpretation of this large number of children all occurring within two

kurgans is that this is evidence of disease, perhaps an epidemic. This would need to be

supported with other evidence, either skeletal analysis or other burials from the area with

similar numbers of children. Alternately this just may well be where children were

buried.

Sargat Mortuary evidence from Skaty

The elements of burial that have been preserved at Skaty largely follow the

expectations set forth in the literature. Where discernable individuals' body placement

and treatment follow the norms of a supine position with the central burial on a north-

south axis. Based upon their size, internal elaborations, and the grave goods these four

kurgans represent a "warrior class" (Koraykova 1995). What makes them unique is the

large number of children buried with "warrior" status items.

Of the seven identifiable individuals from Skaty, the only adult male was interred alone, and another four individuals are children (Table 7.11). They are found in three of four kurgans, and in the central grave of one (Kurgan 3), which is also the only other single grave, other than the male, that has more than 200 artifacts. They have beads and pottery, tying them to women. The children also have bone armor, arrowheads, and daggers, the weapons of Sargat men. What makes them unique here is the inclusion of plaques of iron and bronze, and sheep astragali (interpreted as game pieces, Jones-Bley 1999:65). The plaques may be associated with horse tack, or armament. The iron plaques buried with the infant in K3F2 are considered protection when found among the Sarmatian graves (c.f. Moshkova 1963, Table 25).

The two children in Kurgan 3, buried with an adult woman, not only straddle the adult identities of man and woman – the infant in Feature 3 has both bone armor, beads, and two ceramic vessels - but also possess status markers that set them apart from the other burials. The child buried in the central grave was buried with more than 200 artifacts, among which include sherds, arrowheads, beads, astralagi, and horse and cow bones. This individual also had the only representation of animal style decoration, a wolf pendant made from bone, and 40 rectangular plates of perforated bone armor; both these items tie this child to the steppe nomads such as those buried at Pokrovka (Smirnov 1961, 1964). Finally the bronze torque, discoloring the bones of the neck green, is interpreted to be a sign of "aristocratic status" (Melukova 1989:107). One other torque was found among these burials; that one was gold and found in Kurgan 4 Feature 1, a highly disturbed central burial with two unidentified individuals.

Table 7.11 Skaty: Children's burials

	Placement	Grave goods	Notes
K1 Fea10	Peripheral	None	Charcoal, burnt bone; robbed, mixed w/ adult female remains
K2 Fea 1	Central	200+ artifacts: sherds, bones, bronze dagger, plaque, arrowheads, armor, knife, pendant (wolf), torque, beads, astragali	W/in wood structure; 3 features in assoc. w/ cow, sheep, and horse bones; ties to Sarmatians
K2 Fea 2	Peripheral	Bone armor, bronze dagger, bead, 2 pottery vessels	Ties to Sauro-Sarmatians
K4 Fea2	Peripheral	Beads, object bronze w/ gold foil, horse bones, shells, stone object	Shells from Indian Ocean

The four kurgans excavated at Skaty and the cemetery at Malokazakhbaevo do allow us to examine the types of intercommunity and intracommunity relationships being built by these individuals during the early Iron Age. More importantly it was the numbers of infants and children, as with the Sauro-Sarmatian burials at Pokrovka 2, that were most surprising, largely because there were no explicit expectations from the literature. Children have been largely ignored in the archaeological record.

Discussion of Iron Age Mortuary Ritual

I have discussed elsewhere that mortuary practice is ritual itself. With the personal and social investment of time, energy, and memory in the creation of a distinctive mortuary pattern Iron Age peoples used death to recreate the accepted patterns of their daily lives. Women were accorded their place, their objects, their statuses, as were men, and as has been discussed, children. With the death of any individual, that person's loss to their community alters the way in which things are done and forces the repositioning of social roles and relations in order that life can continue. When a great

leader is lost, a warrior, a child –their positions within the social group must be filled, or the social group must change. In this way the funerary ritual helps to maintain society.

The emphasis on the funerary remains misses the mortuary ritual elements, both preserved and not preserved. These ritual elements are potentially more vital in our understanding of social personae and social relations. Unfortunately the best sources of the unpreserved ritual expressions, historical documents and direct eyewitness accounts, are not available here. In order to situate social identities, their creation and negotiation or maintenance (cf. Bloch and Parry 1982; Metcalf and Huntington 1991; Weiner 1976) I focused heavily upon the artificially built environment (the created landscape), the elaboration of the deceased (placement of the body), the material culture, and the patterns of the categories of the individual sex identity in relation to all of the above. As Gillespie (2001) called for a need a to analyze the "person" in order to understand the "social relationships and recognize the collective aspects of agency (Gillespie 2001:73), it is through the understanding of mortuary patterns that identity may be revealed.

In both the Sauro-Sarmatian and Sargat cultural remains elements of regional mortuary tradition are expressed. The construction of kurgans, the use of specific internal elaborations, be it podbois or catacomb graves at Pokrovka 2 or elaborate wooden structures at Skaty, the lay out or disposition of the body, the use of fire or its representation (ash, chalk, ochre), and importantly material culture signifiers that link the deceased to well-established cultural traditions found throughout the region. But the unique qualities of both these sites create a more fascinating point to depart from the literature and explore the individual identities of persons or family lineages represented by the burials at these specific sites. The evidence for the roles of females, sub-adult

males, and children have only begun to tease us with their complexity. From these preliminary findings much more must be examined to more fully understand the identities and interactions of nomads in Siberia.

CHAPTER 8

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The archaeological record of Siberia provides an at times enigmatic, yet also rich, body of data with which to examine various forms of pastoralism. Outside of Russia, the archaeological perception of much of Siberia is as a metaphorical black hole, an area within which many scholars assumed that ongoing research was taking place, yet to which few had access. My research into nomadic identity and expression has, I hope, allowed for a small amount of light to escape from the black hole.

The focus of this dissertation has been to examine the many potential avenues of identity through multiple dimensions of comparative analysis. How nomads lived and maintained their own cultural signature has been of utmost importance to both archaeologists and historians. In addition, the construction of "nomad" as such a distinctly "other" identity from the sedentary realm has helped to perpetuate the image of their separateness. But as has been shown, there are considerable degrees of both mobility and dependence upon animal husbandry, and there also must be degrees of variation in our interpretations of the sedentary-nomad interactions along different dimensions and at different scales. It is the most common of the broader array of material elements of pastoral nomads' way of life that have been the primary focus of past archaeological investigation, and remain so for this dissertation. The earthen burial mounds, their kurgans, are present across the Eurasian steppe and have been the attention and focus of archaeological and other more pedestrian forms of investigation since ancient times. Such investigation was encouraged by Peter the Great, codified under the Soviet system, and today remains under the direct control of a central archaeological

planning office in Moscow. This dissertation has used the work sanctioned by these authorities in an attempt to better understand the lives of the nomads once seen as a direct threat to the existence of the Russian state itself.

A common focus of earlier interpretations of the Iron Age of western Siberia largely revolved around the nomads and their perceived warrior ways. While this is an important aspect of the lives some people led, it is not the entire picture. Exploring the full range of potential identities expressed in the mortuary realm, and from one settlement site, has allowed for a more nuanced understanding of the Iron Age. As was shown from the Sauromatian and Sarmatian burials at Pokrovka 2, little of the warrior lifestyle is necessarily reflected in their burial material, especially from the later time periods. From the Sargat remains at Skaty and the Malokazakhbaevo settlement a more complex aspect of this warrior image develops. The Sargat buried their dead in richly outfitted, even extravagant kurgans at Skaty, replete with grave goods endowed with military symbolism such as swords, daggers, and bone plate armor, but a preponderance of the individuals represented were women and children. These are not the common images of "warrior nomads." From Malokazakhbaevo a new aspect of the Eurasian nomad taphonomic signature is revealed; that of short-term settlement. It is possible, therefore, to begin the further discussion of the Sargat, not only as a *superstratum* of ruling elites, but also as seasonal residents of the forest-steppe. Both early Iron Age populations, the Sauro-Sarmatian and the Sargat, reveal a more nuanced image of the *lifestyle* of nomads, as complete individuals and complete communities including women, men, and children with more than raiding on their minds.

The image of the warrior nomad has largely been the product of Russian archaeological inquiry. For many generations, Siberia had been inaccessible to researchers outside of the Soviet Union, and today it largely remains inaccessible due to a combination of language and cultural barriers. The archaeological work conducted in the Transurals and southern Urals was largely directed by the historical record, with archaeology remaining the data-gathering arm of a primarily historical discipline. The works of Herodotus, Strabo and Ovid created a narrative of the nomads living on the edges of so-called civilization, i.e. sedentary agro-pastoralists, attacking and taking from "civilized" people the booty that they desired. While the images from the *Histories* depict vivid accounts of battles and burials, these narratives cannot be taken as accurate scripture, nor even as mildly objective. Ovid, for example, describes his exile from Rome in Siberia, which he clearly sees as a fate near to death. Herodotus' details of his encounters with Scythians and Sarmatians have been challenged for their mythical aspects, e.g., the birth of the Sarmatians as the marriage of Scythian males and Amazon warrior women, and their similarity to many other written accounts. For many generations the archaeological work in western Siberia reflected an effort to find, verify, and map the nomads as dictated by the historical accounts.

In the ensuing efforts to find nomads, defining what the term nomad meant became lost. Consequently, much of the effort of Western social science research on nomads involved defining nomadism and the contexts within which such adaptations arise. While Russian archaeologists excavated thousands of nomad sites, the West remained embroiled in defining their mobility and their economy and the continua of

each –from mobile to sedentary, from agricultural to pastoral. What becomes available in

the marriage of these two academic juggernauts, Russia and the West, is largely revealed

in the research and influence of Anatoly Khazanov. Khazanov continues to influence the

work of his native Russia, through his interpretations of Scythian archaeology and the

cross-cultural comparison of pastoral nomads from around the globe. His ethnological

work, especially the 1983 seminal volume, *Nomads and the Outside World*, created an

amalgamated model for the research on pastoral nomads, which allowed for the

complexity of their economic practices. Pastoralists were no longer expected to be either

mobile *or* sedentary, either practioners of animal husbandry *or* agriculturists.

Khazanov's typology creates a series of empirical categories for pastoral nomads that

range from *transhumance*, to a village-based *semi-sedentary* variety, to *semi-nomadic*, an

extensive pastoral practice with some agricultural supplements, and finally *pure* pastoral

nomadism. While studies roughly contemporary with *Nomads* initial publication date

(e.g. Ingold 1986) placed the emphasis on mobility and resource appropriation, this

emphasis created a false degree of similarity between pastoralists and hunter/gatherers,

thereby denying the contrasts between food-extracting and food-producing economies, as

well as underestimating the relationship between wild versus domesticated resource

reliance. In many ways Khazanov's typology is an ideal classification, and subsequently

has been criticized as too strict and narrow (see Hanks 2002; Ingold 1985). Khazanov,

however, states that his categories should be used only to inform one's analysis and serve

the goals of investigation (Khazanov 1994). His categories focus on the size and

importance of agriculture, a "defining feature of subsistence of any productive economy

(Khazanov 1994:xxxiii). Thus his schema, while seeming to focus on mobility

(*transhumance, semi-sedentary, semi-nomadic*), actually does so only in direct relation to other forms of production. His focus on the interactions between mobile and sedentary people is part of the inspiration of this dissertation, while the need to identify nomads archaeologically is another.

Identifying nomads in the archaeological record has historically been problematic, whether it be due to the "biodegradable" (Childe 1936:81) nature of their lifestyles, a false assertion that they built no substantial architecture (Cribb 1991:65-83), or a focus on settled civilizations, nomad archaeological evidence was often defined by a lack of clear archaeological signatures or a drastic disturbance in the record of settled communities. In many ways pastoral nomads and other mobile populations are seen as lacking not only a presence, but as being a part of the very "interstices", *spaces* between civilized *places* (e.g. Spielman 1986, 1991; Zagarell 1989). Nomads held the distinction of not being "settled", in the sense that studies of the origins of sedentism, agriculture, and the rise of civilization often identified nomads as a by-product of these events (e.g. Adams 1966; Braidwood 1960; Cohen 1977).

Anyone focused on the origins of nomadism itself focused on the changes in the composition of domesticated herds (Adams 1974; Gilbert 1983; Hole 1978; Khazanov 1994; Lees and Bates 1977; Masson 1972). Thus, the initial signatures of nomadism consisted of an absence of permanent settlements coupled with the presence of domesticated animals capable of long-distance travel, e.g. sheep/goat, horses, and camels. Through the use of ethnoarchaeology, archaeologists began to define the parameters of what kinds of archaeological materials would be left behind by pastoral nomads, and then go out and find those places. The results of this enterprise have allowed for the

identification of multiple kinds of nomad sites and associated signatures, such as corrals, enclosures, folds, encampments, even the shallow impressions left by tent poles (Chang 1993; Cribb 1991; Khazanov and Bar-Yosef 1992). The new models of inquiry resulting from this work will provide fruitful directions for future research throughout Siberia.

PRESENT MODELS AND ANALYSIS

The present analysis was modeled around Spielman's definition of *mutualism* as the "regular and predictable, rather than ad hoc occurrence..." of exchange where both mobile and sedentary populations "must organize their subsistence activities to meet the needs of their exchange partners as well as their own subsistence needs" (Spielman 1983: 258). The existence of pottery, which are stylistically identifiable as regional types, does not preclude the nomads from having made their own ceramics rather than trading for it. As has been shown, a pile of dung makes for ample fuel to fire many of the ceramic wares commonly found in the kurgans (Koryakova 1988; Koryakova and Fedorov 1993; Sharapova 1999), and as pastoralists herding horses and sheep (and camels as the case study of Pokrovka 2 illustrates), the nomads had plenty of fuel for their fires. Other means by which to show mutualism is to compare these nomad sites with the neighbors with whom they may possibly have shared resources. To accomplish this task, it must be shown that the two economies were truly integral to each other. Thus in the future the material records of both sedentary and mobile populations in the Urals must be examined comparatively.

Exchange in other valuable commodities, such as horses and silk, are known to have occurred based on the historical texts of Greeks, Romans and Chinese, the results of

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which have been found in the kurgans from Pokrovka 2 and Skaty. By analyzing the categories of artifacts and their relationship to categories of individuals, it has been possible to identify the different kinds of commodity exchanges that took place between early Iron Age nomads and sedentary people from across the Eurasian landmass. Beads and metalwork are the most common kinds of artifacts that had their origins in the settled communities from the Mediterranean, to the Black Sea coast, to South Asia and China. Thus, we know the nomads were consuming items of state-level production as well as more small-scale, local sedentary production. An interesting area for future inquiry would be to investigate the degree to which sedentary elites relied on either the products of nomad production or on the goods and services that nomads offered, and how this reliance fueled a mutualistic or symbiotic benefit for the nomads as well. Nomad warriors provided military service to, among others, Rome and Persia; nomads produced horses for Chinese emperors. The discussion of status differences, especially through the examination of the greater corpus of kurgan data, relies on the existence of exotic trade items buried with the nomads that help to define, display, and symbolize the differences of specific individuals from the rest of the population. Elites had access to sumptuary goods that do not or should not appear in the graves of lower status individuals. This is a consumption pattern restricted to the nomad elite alone. This is perhaps a form of elite mutualism, a change in the use of Spielman's term, but the exploration of alliance formation between nomad elite and sedentary elite holds promise for future research.

What became increasingly evident through the analysis of the data used in this dissertation is that our impressions of nomads, their identities and their lifestyles, have been highly simplistic. By focusing on only a few sites instead of the broad regional

sweep of these cultures, it was possible in this research to look at the contextual differences of nomadic identity. The regional use of the "Scythian triad" consisting of weapons, horse tack, and animal style decoration does not apply to the burials investigated here. Weapons may contribute the highest artifact count, but this is both a matter of the durability of the materials from which they are made, and the focus of archaeological researchers themselves or their visibility.

DIMENSIONS OF THE ANALYSIS

Five dimensions of analysis were examined as vehicles through which to compare the Iron Age populations from differing areas within the steppe and forest-steppe. Through examination of nomad use of the landscape, their settlement features and associations (or non-association), architecture, trade items, and mortuary ritual, it has been possible to reveal and discuss a full range of social identity and societal interaction. The image of the nomad warrior identity has been honed through generations of history and archaeology. I do not necessarily debate its existence or accuracy, only its superposition over other forms of identity.

The specific landscapes where the nomads from both the steppe and the forest-steppe chose to place their kurgans, on high ground above the floodplains, provide broad views of the surrounding area and create a visual and spatial focal point. These are not simply subtle alterations of nature, but rather can be viewed as a commandeering of the landscape for those who wish to possess it, and who wish to physically demonstrate their tenure of place. The dead, through their inclusion at these focal points, are clearly meant to be continuing participants in the lives of the living, not hidden away or disposed of

quickly. The dead are placed in earthen monuments within cemeteries that are used for generations. Pokrovka 2, consisting of 29 burial mounds, is one of nine cemeteries containing nearly 100 kurgans in the immediate area of the south Urals. Skaty has 14 kurgans that have already been identified, but dozens more can be identified in aerial photographs. And, Malokazakhbaevo's fortress, a short-term enclosure used for seasonal corralling of livestock, was not continuously occupied, but was periodically used from the Eneolithic through to the early Iron Age. The ancient settlement is found within a cemetery of five kurgans and an historical cemetery that continues to be used by the local settled Bashkir herdsmen. Clearly, the tradition of nomad burial did not deny the dead's relation to the living, but celebrated the ownership of the ancestors and a permanence of nomad identity.

The above and below ground architecture employed by the nomads to construct their kurgans and the settlement also exemplifies the permanence with which they assumed control of their landscape. While the settlement at Malokazahbaevo may indicate an impermanence or transience, its continual reuse and proximity to the cemetery shows that the nomads considered this their own. Kurgans with diameters from ten to 48 meters were built at all three sites of sod blocks, stacked over the deceased. Beneath these mounds, prior to kurgan construction, nomads constructed sometimes simple shallow pits, sometimes elaborate wooden structures for their dead; the latter indicating a high degree of social differentiation that may be interpreted as the existence of rank because of energy expended, difficulty of acquiring specific natural resources (i.e. wood on the steppe), and exotic trade items found only in the mortuary context. It has been shown (Koryakova 1988, 1996; Kroll 2000; Matveeva 1997) that the use of this kind of

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mortuary treatment is restricted to a small segment of the population, i.e. it is not

ubiquitous; not everyone is afforded this burial treatment. On a comparative basis it is

more restricted among the Sauromatians, and less restricted among the early Sarmatians

at Pokrovka 2. Temporally, it appears to become more restricted through time among the

Sargat, but there is not enough current evidence from Skaty to support this regional

pattern. The continued use of this architectural signature, the building of kurgans, attests

to the inscription of a nomad identity on the living. The direct link to the dead, through

the building of new mounds or the reuse of existing ones, as seen at these cemeteries,

allow for groups to legitimate their claims to crucial resources (Goldstein 1976; Saxe

1970), in this instance the pasturage, or lay claims to crucial social identities, nomad, by

means of utilizing social memory (Chesson 2001).

To partially understand the linkages between the nomads and their sedentary

neighbors, I explored the ownership of trade goods by performing a categorical analysis

(after Chapman 2000, 2002). The results of this analysis brought to light some

interesting new conclusions, although many of the expectations based on the

archaeological literature did hold true. For example, at Pokrovka 2 during the

Sauromatian period we see mainly males buried with weaponry, horses and horse tack,

and the existence of artifacts decorated in the animal style. The two females at Pokrovka

2 had items of personal decoration; the single subadult male had some animal bones. But

the early Sarmatian burials at Pokrovka 2 and the burials at Skaty did not fit the

expectations of the literature. Categories of personal adornment, including jewelry and

beads, weaponry, containers, faunal bones, and other items are found with all categories

of individual regardless of sex or age. This distribution of material goods indicates an

inclusiveness of these items, rather than using them to exclude individuals. All people buried within the kurgan shared these elements of identity with each other. Truly distinctive in the cross-over of artifact category with age/sex category are the inclusions of mirrors and spindle whorls with both females and subadult males. The former is an exotic item imported from China, a status indicator based on its rarity and difficulty in procurement. The composition of the grave goods and their origins, often from distant locations in China, the Crimea, or the Mediterranean, indicate that all of these people are tied into a much broader interaction with their sedentary neighbors. Whether these populations procured their metals, both exotic and local, through mutualistic sharing or parasitic raiding is unclear. Clearly metals are functional, as aspects of horse tack or commonly occurring items such as knives and arrowheads, but in order to support a claim for mutualism it is necessary to see the other half of the equation and have evidence of the materials that nomads shared with their sedentary neighbors. As no metallurgical sites were included in this study, this question cannot be fully explored (cf. Spielman 1986). While children did not stand out for other distinctive material culture correlations, they do stand out for their sheer numbers, the largest numbered category. This is also the case for the site of Skaty where children represent half of the total excavated population.

The grave goods at Skaty fit the general expectations of the literature – pottery, weapons, and exotic sumptuary items – but it is with whom these items are buried that make the results more surprising. The largest category of individual at Skaty, tied with adult female, is child, and with these children are buried large amounts of weaponry (arrowheads and armor). This variation is difficult to assess when we consider the treatment of children. If a particular elaborate child's burial were found with an adult,

the treatment may be taken to indicate wealth, power and or status. This high rank in a child therefore must indicate ascribed status and evidence of a hierarchical society (Tainter 1978:106), suppositions not universally supported by archaeology or ethnography (Hayden 1995:49-50). The treatment of a child in death may be more a reflection of her/his parents' status, or perhaps even reflect the fact that they do not operate in an adult status realm, and unwrapping these relations draws questions about *any* direct association of labor investment or grave goods with a particular individual (Brown 1995:8; Gillespie 2001:77; Pader 1982:57). In order to help clarify the treatment of children, I looked at the final dimension in my analysis, mortuary ritual.

We cannot identify all aspects of mortuary ritual archaeologically. The burial or final interment itself is only one aspect of the larger ritual, and many things simply do not preserve. In addition, things that were said or who was in attendance and what they did are only a few of the elements of the ritual that I cannot examine from these archaeological remains. What can be seen is the continuity of the treatment of the bodies, the direction of their placement, and the common elements of kurgan burial seen from across Siberia during the Iron Age. The individuals buried at these sites shared the commonality of these mortuary ritual details that could only have been shared through direct cultural access. Several elements of the mortuary ritual make these sites unique and suggest a form of local identity either uncommon or not identified in other parts of the region.

At the site of Pokrovka 2, we can discern adult males as the final caretakers of infants and children, and adult females as possessing implements of a warrior identity. At both Pokrovka 2 and Skaty, the large numbers of children present, found with large

amounts of prestige items and weaponry, and in places of centrality within the kurgans, illuminates an entire category of person that has been largely ignored in the discourse on nomads as well as in archaeology in general. The use of material culture by individuals and social groups functions to reproduce the greater society, whether to reflect or enhance it. By building kurgans, a form of Eurasian nomad material culture, these societies differentiated themselves from the groups around them, and continued to re-appropriate a nomad identity even when "pure nomadism" (Khazanov 1994) ceased to exist (as with Malokazakhbaevo) if it ever existed. The idea of a search for a purely nomadic adaptation needs to be forgotten in lieu of the recognition of the complex ways in which nomadic economies operate. The flexibility of a nomadic adaptation is a more informative way by which/through which to see how humans adapt to new social and ecological situations. The kurgan emphasized the connection to the dead, not their elimination from the living society. These mortuary sites were placed in conspicuous locations for the whole world to see. The consistent return to and ritual reuse of cemeteries, especially the reuse of older kurgans (as with Pokrovka) links living populations to this identity. The site of Malokazhbaevo produced one example of a settlement in direct association with the primary nomad signature – kurgan burials. The temporary nature of Malokazakhbaevo implies its seasonal use by mobile populations of nomads for many generations, and provides the starting point for future research into both this form of nomad signature and the specific interactions between sites like Malokazhbaevo and other more permanent settlements in the immediate area. Nomads did not necessarily need to be involved in either trading or raiding.

Mortuary sites have a continuing presence in the social landscape, one that can outlive the communities themselves or their memories of the rituals involved (Bradley 1985, 1998). Life and memory are ephemeral, but the kurgans as monuments to the nomads of the early Iron Age have true staying power. Many generations buried their dead at Pokrovka, well beyond the living memory of any one person, but not beyond the social memory of a cultural group. The kurgans will continue to be interpreted and reinterpreted by generations to come as the values of our own societies change. People manipulate the dead to fit their own purposes, whether that is to find barbarians to help define us as civilized, to find warrior women to help define us as engendered and powerful, or to find children to show our value in their contributions to our own lives. It is certain that these cultural icons, reminders of the past, will continue to influence the present and the future.

FUTURE RESEARCH INTO NOMAD IDENTITY

The results obtained from this research can in many ways be viewed as a preliminary stage in the further expansion of nomad research. The mulitiple analytic dimensions used here have provided a first lens through which to observe nomad identity, its expression and construction. In the future it will be necessary to apply further data elements, including a careful reading of the historical evidence for "eye-witness" accounts of mortuary ritual, methods, and theory in order to explore the interactions of nomads and their sedentary neighbors. Mutualism has not been shown to exist in the Urals, but it did allow for development of a new approach to nomad-sedentary relations, one not completely vested in a single idea of who the nomads were. To further examine

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their cultural interactions it will be helpful to find more kinds of nomad sites, perhaps

more of the short-term corrals/settlements seen at places like Malokazakhbaevo.

Additionally seeking traces of nomad material culture in the sites of sedentary people will

help us to identify the necessary amount of shared economic reliance to address a

mutualistic existence. The work in Western Siberia and south Siberia has been ongoing

for hundreds of years, and yet in some ways is in its infancy. I expect that addressing the

diversity of nomad identities will help bring about a greater understanding of life in the

steppe and forest-steppe during the Iron Age.

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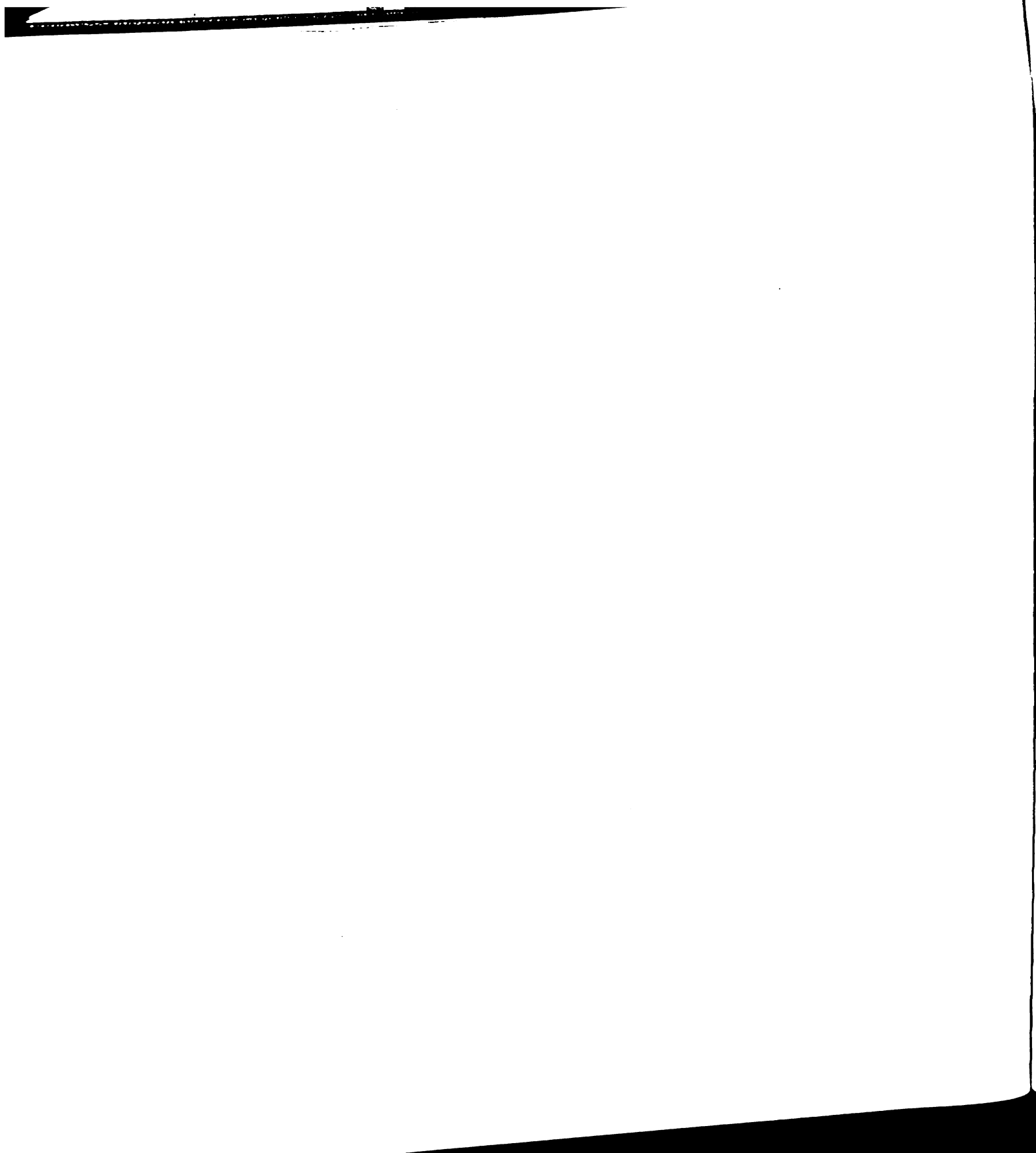
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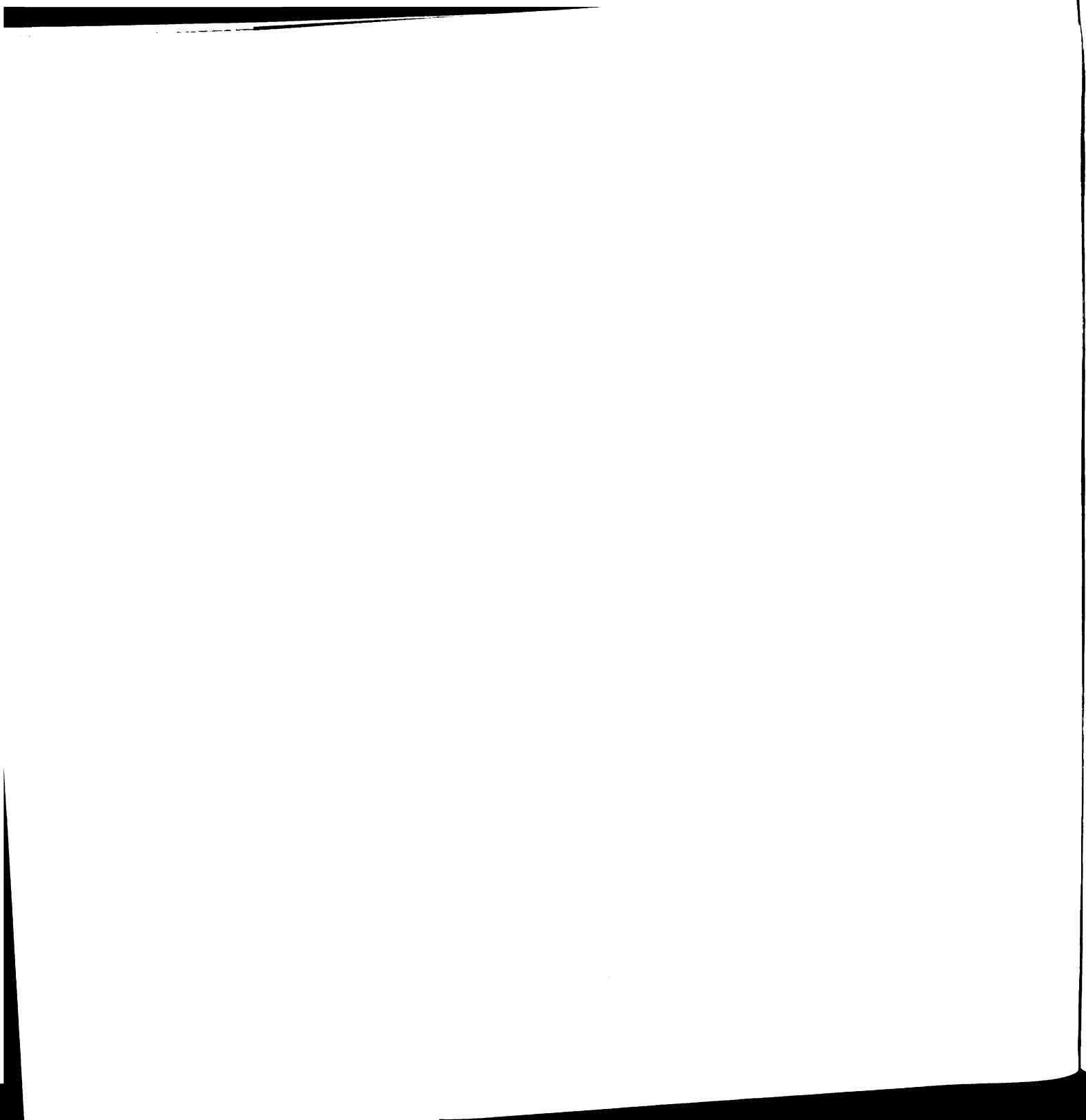
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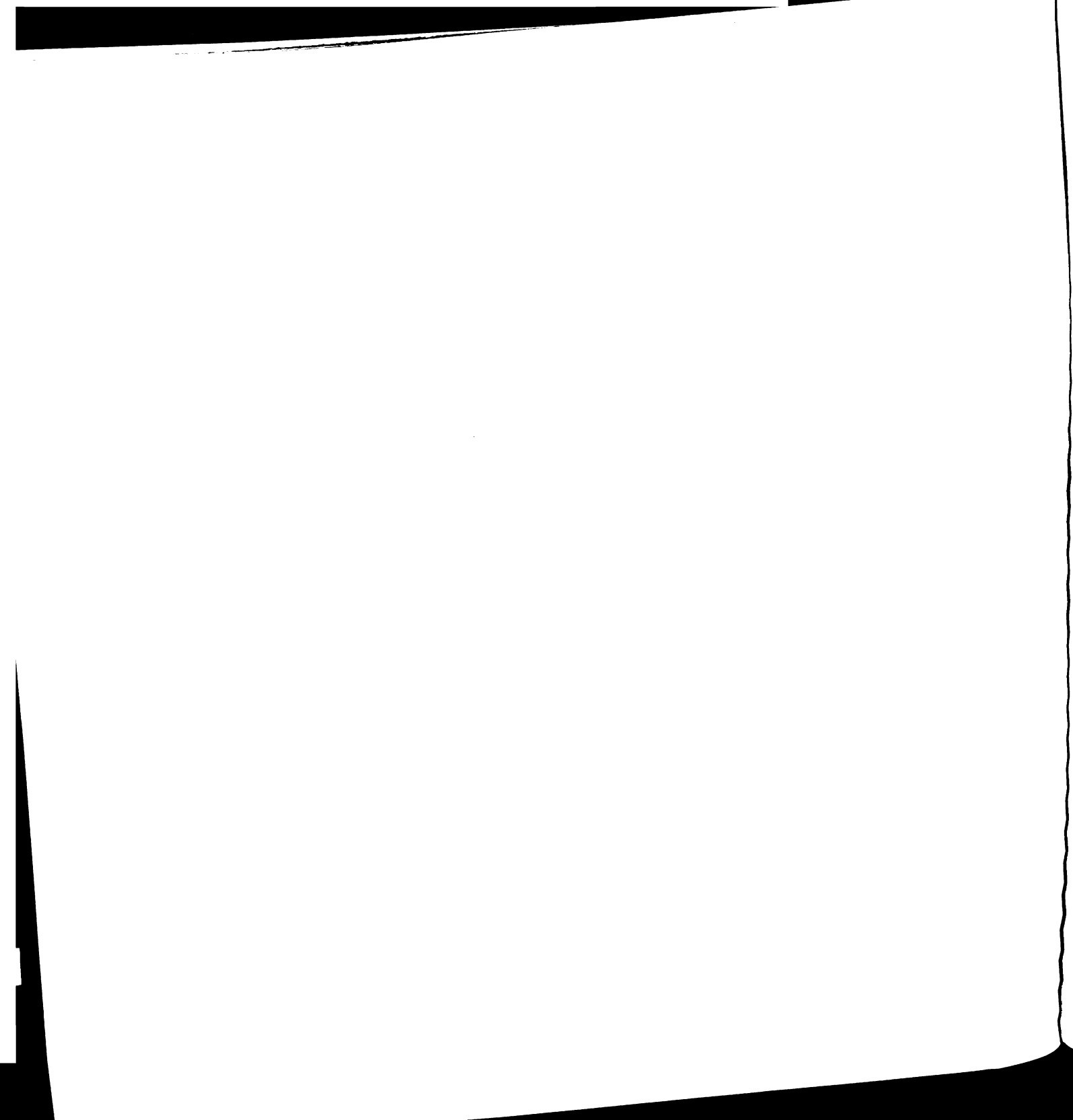
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