Early Bronze Age Developments

• What happened in the Pontic-Caspian region after the Suvorovo-Danilovka Incursion into the Balkans and Thessaly — the possible departure of speakers of pre-Anatolian c. 4200?

• How can we connect archeological cultures with proto-Indo-European and/or ‘dialects’ of PIE?
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Recap

- In the late ‘Copper Age’ c. 4000-3800 a sophisticated settled agrarian society — Cucuteni-Tripolye (‘Old Europe’) came to an end.
- The Dnieper river, formerly a robust cultural border, is breached, and widespread contact appears to emerge between Europe and the steppes.
- The Sredni-Stog Culture, centered on the Dnieper River, probably represented speakers of Proto-Indo-European.
- Distinctive grave styles:
  - distinctive posturing of the dead: on the back with knees raised and oriented toward the northeast
  - some individual graves, beneath small kurgans (mounds)
- Agro-pastoralist economy: livestock as well as wheat, barley and millet
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The End of the Eneolithic

• The relevant ‘final’ Eneolithic cultures included:
  A. Steppe Cultures
     i. Mikhailovka I
     ii. Post-Mariupol
     iii. Late Sredni-Stog
     iv. Late Khvalynsk  ]  possibly PIE speakers
     v. Repin
  B. Peripheral Cultures
     i. ‘Super Town’ Tripolye C1: defensive communities on S. Bug R.
     ii. Maikop (north Caucasus): rich grave goods from Mesopotamia
     iii. Botai-Kersek (trans-Ural steppes in Kazakhstan): equestrian
     iv. Afanasievo  →  far east, Altai Mountains: proto-Tocharians?
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Mesopotamian Influences

- Earliest cities appeared 3700-3500 in lower Mesopotamia
- Earliest wheeled vehicles appear in Mesopotamia c 3500
- Contact with the urbanized southern civilizations was crucial for the spread of wheel technology to the steppes
- Trade objects:
  - raw wool, textiles, metal objects, timber, precious stones
- New cities needed a lot of metal and Anatolian mines provided some, setting the stage for the increased power for the Hittite Kingdom
- Uruk Expansion 3700-3100: significant increase in trade and settlement in areas outside Mesopotamia.
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Maikop Culture  3700-3000

• Maikop Culture in the north Caucasus region from c. 3700
• Elaborate goods found in chieftans’ graves suggest significant wealth
• Included are fine objects obtained through trade from the south, including distinctive ‘Mesopotamian Power Symbols’: lions and bulls
• Although Maikop Culture has kurgan graves, the people were probably native to the Caucasian region (and not PIE speakers)
• Maikop people probably traded metal mined in the Caucasus and precious stones (turquoise, carnelian, lapis lazuli) with for Mesopotamian objects
• Some objects (wheel? model of a wagon?) found in Maikop graves suggest that wheeled vehicles had arrived there from the south.
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Maikop trade with the steppes

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• What could steppe peoples have provided the Maikop culture in trade?
  — cannabis ?
  — thick wool from northern sheep?
  — horses? — none in Mesopotamia yet, but apparently in the northern Caucasus

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Yamnaya Culture

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• A new culture of semi-nomadic people using both wagons and horses opened up vast new areas of the steppe for habitation and use.
• The Yamnaya archeological horizon has frequently been associated with a ‘PIE’ culture as its ‘material expression’.
• Around 3300 BCE it began to spread from the Don-Volga eastward.
• Horse-riding peoples were dispersed through a large area of the Pontic-Caspian steppes and their cultures — and presumably their language — showed variation.
• The material record shows a difference between east and west groups.
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The ‘Ruki’ Rule

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- The Ruki Rule changed dental sibilants (s- and z-sounds) to post-alveolar (/ʃ, ʂ/) in the environment of r, u, i and the velars (*k *g *gʰ).

  *ğeus ‘to enjoy’       Skt jóṣaḥ ‘enjoyment’
  *h₂ueks ‘grow’         Skt ukṣitá- ‘grown strong’, NE wax, NHG wachsen
  *ters ‘dry’            Skt ṭṛṣyáti ‘be THIRSTY’
  *h₂eus-r- ‘dawn’       Lith aušrā, Skt uṣaḥ
  *h₂eus-o-m ‘EAR’       R uxo
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Yamnaya Lifestyle

• A new era of ‘high mobility’
• Wagons like ‘mobile residences’ in which herders could live in while following animals to new pastures in the deep steppe regions
• Crucially, wagons could carry water and food to places far from river valleys and lakes
• Yamnaya kurgan cemeteries were used sporadically and re-used later.
• Wagons (as well as animals) appear as sacrifices in graves.
• The cow becomes an important focus of attention (both practical and spiritual), as milk and dairy products emerge as essential foods
• Early Yamnaya people showed high levels of bone lesions cribra orbitalia, consistent with high-dairy diet or close contacts with animal-borne parasites
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