

---

## REVIEWS

---

ARCHAEOLOGY IN SOVIET CENTRAL ASIA. By *Grégoire Frumkin*. Handbuch der Orientalistik, part 7, vol. 3, sec. 1. Leiden and Cologne: E. J. Brill, 1970. xviii, 217 + 58 pp. 19 maps, 40 illustrations, 67 plates. 96 Dutch guilders.

This book sets out to review the principal developments of the past two to three decades in the archaeology of Kazakhstan, Kirghizia, the Fergana Valley, Tadzhikistan, Uzbekistan, and Turkmenistan. The author concentrates almost exclusively on synthesizing the work of Russian scholars, thus making available, often for the first time, archaeological materials excavated from sites previously dealt with only in the Russian literature. The author unfortunately provides the reader with a continual apologia for the Russian archaeologists' point of view, constantly reminding the Western scholar that their Marxist orientation of the prehistoric past is viable and too long prejudicially dismissed by Western scholars.

Russian archaeologists have been perhaps the most active in their excavations and research in Soviet Central Asia, an area which played so important a role throughout antiquity. Each of the areas reviewed by the author merits a separate book. Thus he is forced all too often to restrict his discussion to a cataloguelike recording of sites excavated, without following up the nature of the site's importance or placing it within a broader context. The book is selectively illustrated with both line drawings and photographs, often using materials not easily accessible—that is, the Chilitkin gold hoard of early Scythian date, Buddhist painted ceramics from Giaur-Kala, and the recent finds from Toprak-Kala. The author is to be commended for not allowing his own historical reconstructions to intrude in his treatment, and in this manner provides a clear, concise summary of the work of the Russian scholars. A series of most useful maps show the position of the various sites discussed.

The book is clearly oriented toward the later periods, even though archaeological work in Soviet Central Asia has been as actively pursued in the earlier Neolithic and Bronze ages. Paleolithic sites are merely mentioned, and at times important sites such as Dolgunice are ignored. The most important prehistoric work, with direct ramifications for the archaeology of Mesopotamia and the Near East in Turkmenia on the sites of Namazga Tepe, Kara Tepe, Geoksyur, and Djeitun, is compressed into less than six pages. Similarly the work undertaken as part of the Khorezm Project is inadequately discussed. The later periods—Kushan, post-Kushan, Parthian Empire, Islamic, and Buddhist—are more fully discussed and illustrated.

The author is to be thanked for cataloguing the most important sites excavated in this vast area. The survey is quite comprehensive in the recording of sites but minimal in detailing their significance. The author has successfully conveyed the active interest and research in this area—an area of fundamental importance to our understanding of the cultural history of Asia in general and the specific area of Soviet Central Asia in particular. The book contains a most useful and comprehensive annotated bibliography of the Russian sources, from which the specialist must in the end derive his direct discussions.

C. C. LAMBERG-KARLOVSKY  
*Harvard University*