

21H580 Lecture Outlines
Fall 2003
OCW Materials

21H580: Topic 2: Corpses and Chariots: Mummies, Horses and the rise of Nomadism

September 11, 2003

Outline:

Preface: A Moment of Silence

The Ice Man : A Man in Motion

Riding the Horse; Discovering the Chariot

The Mummies of the Tarim Basin

The Bodies: How were they preserved?

The Clothing: Where did it come from?

Where Did the People Come From?

What Language did they Speak?

The Proto-Indo Europeans and their Spread

Reconstructing the Language Family

Where Was the Homeland?

When did they leave?

Putting it All Together: Horses, Nomadism, and Prehistoric Migrations

Discussion

Civilizations and “Barbarians, 3500- 300 BCE”

The Origins of Civilizations

Main features of Civilizations:

- i. Writing
- ii. Cities [large walled compounds]
- iii. Class divisions [religions, rulers, and priests]
- iv. Bronze Metallurgy
- v. Ideas of a Dominant Culture

Civilizations are the Pegs of the Silk Road Network

Irrigated Agriculture is Central Source of Power

The Role of the Chariot

The Main Civilizations and Their Connections

Mesopotamia [3500 BCE -
Egypt [3200 BCE -
Indus valley [2500 BCE -
BMAC [2000? BCE -
Shang China [1800/1600 BCE -
The Question of Xia [2200? -]

The Nomadic Alternative

Cimmerians?
Scythians / Saka
Sauromatians
Xiongnu
Etc.

Digression: How many Chinese words are foreign words?

Shana
Che [*klyag] ← PIE *kwekwlo [Gk kuklos; Eng cycle; Tocharian kuka]
Jiang ← Southern Chinese aboriginal word?
Dao [*dhrag] ← PIE *dhragan [Eng : ‘trek’; Ger ‘tragen’] ???

***Nomads with Names: Herodotos, Persia and the Scythians
[Saka]***

The Persian Wars

Scythian/Saka culture: kumyss, animals, gold, and grasslands

Chronology

3500 BCE Earliest Cities in Mesopotamia: large ceremonial complexes

3200 BCE Earliest writing. [Sumerian]

3100 BCE Palaces in Egypt

2500 BCE Cities in Indus valley [Harappa and Mohenjo Daro]

2350 BCE Troy #1

1800 BCE Shang dynasty of China