

PREHISTORY IN RUSSIA

Prehistoric Russia

An Outline. By T. Sulimirski. Pp. xxiii + 449 + 49 plates. (John Baker: London; Humanities Press: New York, January 1970.) 147s.

STUDENTS of European prehistory have long suffered from the lack of any modern textbook dealing with the archaeology of that larger part of the continent that falls within the frontiers of the Soviet Union. The enterprise of Penguin Books in making A. L. Mongait's *Archaeology in the USSR* available in English certainly helped to make more widely known the wealth of new material from the whole range of time explored by archaeology. What the present book—written by Professor Tadeusz Sulimirski, who formerly held the chair of archaeology at the University of Cracow, but who since the war has lived and worked in London—sets out to provide is a more detailed survey of the evidence relating to the prehistoric period. Chronologically, Sulimirski begins with the Palaeolithic and ends with the seventh century BC with the appearance of the Scythians in the Pontic region and of Greek colonization on the north coast of the Black Sea. Geographically he is concerned primarily with European Russia, but he has found it necessary to make frequent references to western Siberia and parts of central Asia, both of which were closely linked with territories west of the Ural mountains; regions east of the Yenisey, on the other hand, are recognized as belonging to a different world.

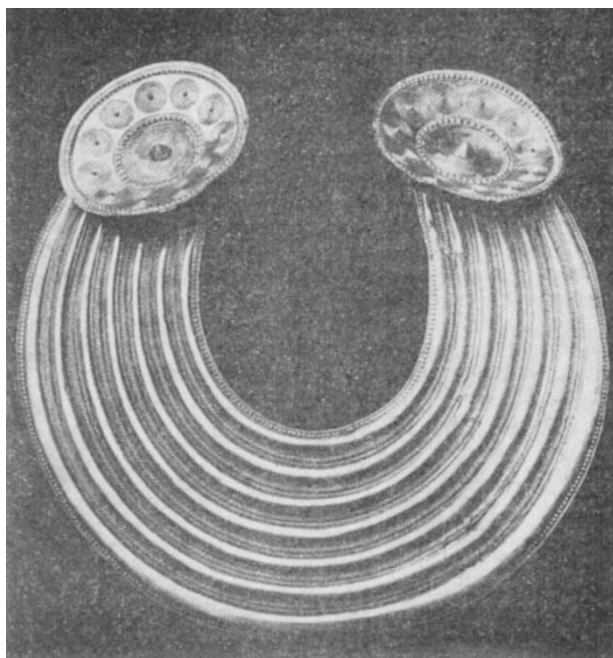
As the author so clearly admits in his preface and as a perusal of his book makes manifest, he has laid out the material surveyed in his book in terms of the terminology still traditional among Russian archaeologists. Since Sulimirski is concerned first and foremost to make more readily available extensive new material, it is arguable that he is correct to package it in the same wrappings as his Soviet colleagues. He thus applies the term "Neolithic" to cultural material from whatever part of European Russia dating from the fourth and third millennia BC, "Bronze Age" to that from the second, and "Iron Age" to that from the later part of the first. Yet it would be hard to think of any territory, unless it be the Indian subcontinent or the New World, to which the wholesale temporal application of a technologically based terminology is less appropriate. As the author describes so eloquently in the opening pages of his book, the vast territory with whose archaeology he is concerned traverses a wide range of differing environments, each of which "offered varied opportunities for the life and activities of the people who dwelt there". It is only fair to say that within his terminological straitjacket the author does his best to recognize the effect this has on the pattern of culture prevailing at any one time in the prehistory of Russia. Again, he makes full use of the radiocarbon dates available for the last three or four thousand years of Russian prehistory, dates which when they are more numerous will make otiose much of the terminological framework of the conventional system.

The Soviet Union offers quite exceptional scope for an ecologically orientated prehistory, but this should not in any way lessen the welcome given to Sulimirski's much needed book. The first step was to make the archaeological data more readily accessible, and this he has done. His text is clearly written and, once he reaches the period of settled life, he shows a scholarly understanding of the material. The many references to the literature, while clearly subordinated to the text, are sufficient to be of real value to those willing to devote time to the original sources. The numerous line and half-tone illustrations are a particularly helpful feature of the book. In addition to depicting large quantities of conventional material including the usual pots, flints and metal objects, they also show settlements and burials. No less valuable are the diagrams, including thirty-two distribution maps and a series of tables displaying the succession of cultures in

geographically defined zones. The volume is rounded off by a carefully selected bibliography, including a useful guide to monograph series and periodicals, and by an index classified under authors, sites and general entries.

GRAHAM CLARK

INTRODUCTION TO PREHISTORY



A Bronze Age gold gorget from Gleninsheen, Co. Clare, now in the National Museum of Ireland, Dublin. From *Prehistory* by Derek Roe (Macmillan: London, January 1970, 50s)—an introduction to the prehistoric period in the Old World with particular reference to the main sequence of events in Britain. The book has plenty of illustrations, six maps, and many suggestions for further reading.

MORE ON CBW

A Survey of Chemical and Biological Warfare

By John Cookson and Judith Nottingham. Pp. 376 + 10 photographs. (Sheed and Ward: London and Sydney, November 1969.) 80s.

ANY current book on chemical and biological warfare is certain to become quickly outdated by the rapid changes that are occurring in this field particularly in its political aspects. Recent months have seen important developments, such as the American decision to stop the manufacture and stockpiling of biological weapons and the current attempt by the British Government to unilaterally reinterpret the Geneva Protocol of 1925 in regard to the harassing agent CS.

In the past two years chemical and biological warfare has been the subject of three books, and this together with other publicity has made the initials CBW a familiar abbreviation, as well known perhaps as those of NATO. This book by two young graduates, John Cookson, a biochemist, and Judith Nottingham, a social scientist, is a further addition to the literature on CBW. It is not intended to be a scientific treatise but rather a popularization of the subject.

The book is divided into two sections called information and analysis respectively. The first part probably adds little to what is already known about the past and present use of CBW. This information is presented as a collage