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## REVIEWS

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THE SARMATIANS. By T. [*Tadeusz*] *Sulimirski*. *Ancient Peoples and Places* series, vol. 73. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1970. 267 pp. \$10.00.

This book, written by a well-known Polish historian and archeologist, is devoted to the history and culture of an Iranian-speaking, chiefly nomadic people of antiquity. The Sarmatians, kinsmen of the Scythians, played a significant role in the history of southern Eurasia and left a distinct cultural heritage in Europe. However, only in the last decades have they been given the attention they deserve—in many studies published mainly in the USSR but also in Hungary and other countries of Eastern Europe. Thus the relatively recent accumulation of these archeological sources has enabled scholars to supplement and refine significantly the reports of ancient writers about the Sarmatians. Sulimirski's book is based on these great achievements of archeology and deals with the origin of the Sarmatian tribes, their identification with particular archeological remains, their migration from the steppes of Kazakhstan to the Danube Basin and even into France, England, and Spain, and the development of their culture. The author's discussion of the origin of the Sarmatians, in the seventh and sixth centuries B.C. (the early Sarmatians or Sauromatians), and the formation of their culture is fundamentally accurate and based on recent Soviet archeological data. Numerous Sarmatian tribes were formed as an outgrowth of a series of tribes of the Bronze Age (the so-called Andronovo and Srubnaia culture) in the lower Volga and Kazakhstan. Sulimirski examines the formation of the Sarmatians against a wide background of prehistoric cultures of southern Siberia and Central Asia, identifying these cultures with the peoples of antiquity described by Herodotus and other early writers. These identifications are at times unfortunate and debatable; sometimes they are assigned too definitive a status. The lower Volga and Kazakhstan were the homeland of the earliest Sarmatian tribes, as archeological data confirm. The author on the basis of written and archeological sources correctly characterizes the way of life and the nomadic behavior of the Sarmatians, their economy, social life, and military affairs.

Identifying the Sauromatians as the predecessors of the Sarmatians, from whom sprang various Sarmatian tribes (Aorsi, Siraces, Roxolani, Iazyges, and Alans), Sulimirski divides the entire historical development of the Sarmatians proper and their culture, from the fourth century B.C. to the fourth century A.D., into three periods: Early Sarmatian, Middle Sarmatian, and Late Sarmatian. This periodization is based on archeological data provided by Soviet scholars. Certain groups of Sarmatian artifacts, classified by Soviet scholars, are identified with the particular tribes mentioned in written sources, though not always convincingly. In explaining the subsequent migration of various Sarmatian tribes, the author assigns decisive significance to an external factor—military-political movement in the East, in Central Asia, especially the activities of the Huns. Those internal conditions that may have prompted the Sarmatian tribes to migrate in a chiefly westerly direction the author neither reveals nor takes into account. The history of the Sarmatians on the territory north of the Black Sea is discussed in detail,

but in a somewhat distorted fashion. Thus, for example, in the light of the archeological data available, it is not very convincing to place the migration into the area of the early Sarmatians, bearers of the Prokhorovka culture, and the domination there of "Scytho-Sarmatians" as early as the fourth century B.C. Furthermore, certain archeological findings of the northern Black Sea coast are not persuasively identified with the Sarmatians. The relations of the Sarmatians with other tribes of the northern Black Sea steppe and their ancient city-colonies are in general accurately described. The historical activity of the Sarmatians in Central Europe, especially the Danubian region, on the borders of the Roman Empire, is illuminated in a detailed manner. In addition to extensive citation of written material, the author relies mainly on studies of the Sarmatians in Hungary. Their relations with German tribes, the Romans, and the Huns are chiefly reconstructed by means of written sources; archeological evidence is employed very subjectively and often unconvincingly. Many philological comparisons and ethnic identifications are not persuasive. Thus, for example, the presence of Sarmatian elements in Poland and in England is very doubtful. The Sarmatian origin of several Slavic peoples—for example, the Antes, Serbs, and Croats—is also not very convincing.

In general Sulimirski's book, taking account of the main achievements of contemporary archeology and presenting for the first time in a single monograph the entire process of historical development of this great mass of Iranian-speaking tribes and the details of the emergence of their peculiar culture, represents a valuable contribution to the study of the Iranian-speaking Sarmatians. The book is richly illustrated with pictures of Sarmatian artifacts and historical maps.

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THE SLAVS. By *Marija Gimbutas*. *Ancient Peoples and Places*, vol. 74. London: Thames and Hudson, Ltd. New York and Washington: Praeger Publishers, 1971. 240 pp. \$10.00.

Making abundant use of archeological, literary, and linguistic evidence, Professor Gimbutas traces the history of the Slavs from their putative beginnings in the early second millennium B.C. to the rise of the Slavic states in the ninth and tenth centuries A.D.: "Initially an insignificant, repeatedly subjugated Indo-European group living north of the Carpathian mountains and the middle Dnieper river area, the Slavic farmers through their persistence managed to survive and ultimately succeeded in occupying a vast territory in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkan Peninsula" (p. 14).

As she develops this theme, Professor Gimbutas deals admirably with the many controversies and problems of early Slavic culture. Tribal names in historical records, social structure, religion, the origins and original homeland of the Slavs (in the early second millennium B.C. Kurgan culture of the North Carpathian region)—the author examines the evidence and puts forth her own conclusions for these and numerous other topics. She sees a cultural continuity of nearly two millennia during the Bronze and Iron Ages, and suggests that Slavs remained in their homeland from 200 B.C. to A.D. 400 despite the various barbarian invaders who overran the region. A true Slavic culture emerged about 500, and the migrations took place in the sixth