PART ONE
THE ANDRONOVO CULTURAL ENTITY
CHAPTER ONE

HISTORY OF RESEARCH ON THE ANDRONOVO CULTURE

Andronovo sites extend over 3,000km across the steppe and forest-steppe, from the western slopes of the Ural mountains as far east as the Yenisey; in the north the Andronovo culture reached the borders of the taiga zone and in the south it extended up into the high mountainous regions of the Tian-Shan and the Pamirs and penetrated the deserts and oases of Central Asia as far as the left bank of the Amu-Darya (Oxus).

One can discern four stages in the development of Andronovo studies: 1) Pre-revolutionary; 2) 1920s – 1947; 3) 1947 – beginning of the 1970s; 4) Modern.

In 1825 S. B. Bronevsky uncovered individual burials that were later assigned to the Andronovo culture of Kazakhstan; in the 1850s A. N. Zyryanov was opening burials in the Urals; in 1862 V. V. Radlov conducted the first scientific excavations near Karkaralinsk. At the end of the 19th / beginning of the 20th century, Andronovo graves were being studied in western Siberia, Kazakhstan, and in the Urals. One should especially note the works of N. K. Minko, V. Y. Tolmachev, and Yu. P. Argentovsky. Collections of metal objects were made, including a large one assembled by the Beloslyudovs.

The second stage of research dates from the 1920s to 1947. In S. A. Teploukhov’s report to the Russian Museum the Andronovo culture was singled out as a special culture of the Minusinsk region and was named after a cemetery near the village of Andronovo near Achinsk, which was studied in 1914 by A. Ya. Tugarinov (Teploukhov 1929a: 43-44, 58; 1929b). In 1929 M. P. Gryaznov outlined for the first time the chronological and territorial borders of the Andronovo culture, situating it in western Siberia, Kazakhstan, and he synchronized the culture with the Timber-grave and Seyma periods.

The establishment of Marxist methodology in archaeology directed research toward the study of the productive forces of the peoples of the USSR who had no written history. This led to the organization of expeditions to Kazakhstan, Siberia, the Tian-Shan, and Central Asia, and the excavation of settlements, houses and industrial complexes which were extremely important for the study of the history of production. This form of economic archaeology became the most important contribution of Soviet scientists to the development of archaeological thought. Excavations of the Alekseevka settlement and the cemetery by O. A. Krivitsova-Grakova (1948) must be especially mentioned, as she investigated the economy, way of life and ideology of an early group of people. Research into ancient mining and the settlements of metallurgists in Kazakhstan, undertaken by S. S. Chernikov (1939, 1948, 1949), made it possible to discuss for the first time the question of the organization and technology of the metal industry. This was accomplished at a time when much debate revolved around outdated models of migration (where Gustav Kossina’s approach had been adopted by the