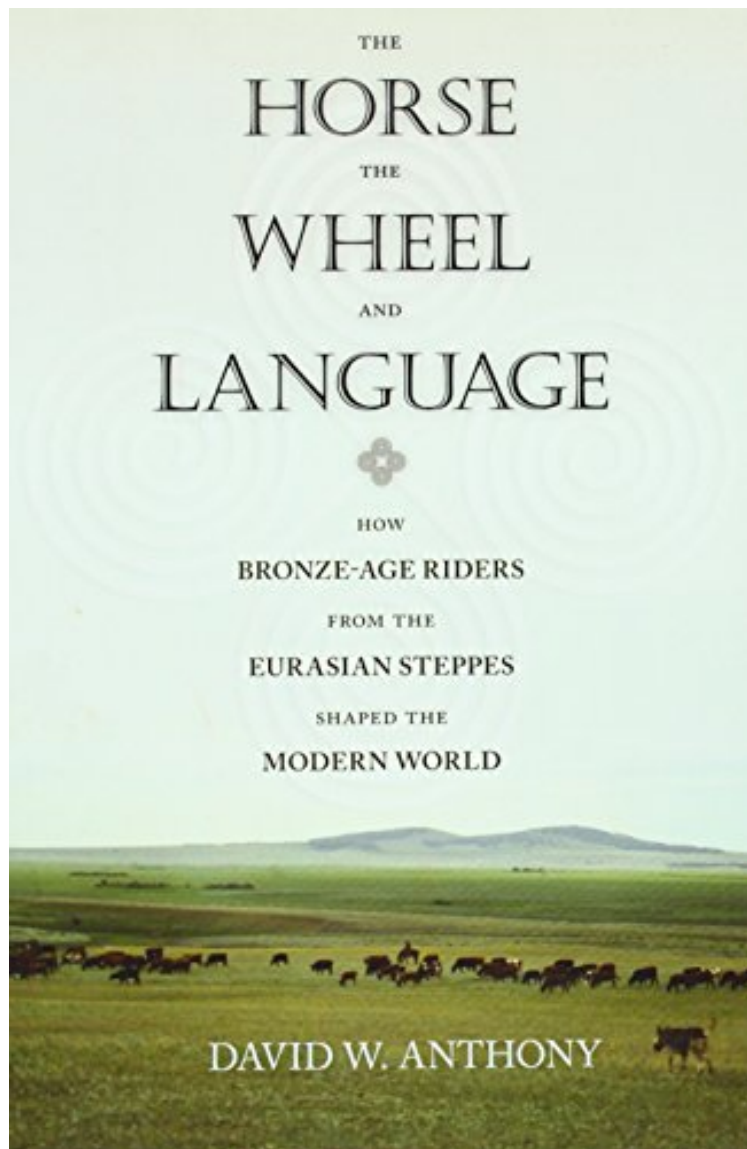


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The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World

David W. Anthony

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#50856 in Books David W Anthony 2010-08-15Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.14 x 1.34 x 6.10l, 1.76 #File Name: 069114818X568 pagesThe Horse the Wheel and Language How Bronze Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World | File size: 36.Mb

David W. Anthony : The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern

World:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Serious proto-indo-european archaeology. Not pop science! By Alan U. Kennington This is a seriously professional book on the archaeology and reconstructed early history of Indo-European languages. The author not only answers the question very convincingly of where PIE originated geographically, but also the more puzzling question of how this language group spread so successfully. The conclusions of the book are stated clearly in Chapter 17, pages 458-470. (If you don't like pots, bones, mud and horses' teeth that much, you could start with Chapter 17.) First, the author leaves very little doubt that PIE was spoken in the steppes area just north of the Black Sea, Caspian Sea and Caucasus Mountains (illustrated on page 84), and the time-range was about 4500 to 2500 BCE. This contradicts some other theories I have heard (like 7000 BC in Anatolia), but the arguments for the Pontic-Caspian steppes at the later time are overwhelming. (See pages 43-48 for a clear explanation of why an Anatolian origin is not credible.) Second, it seems to me that the author has made the very persuasive case that the success of the indo-european languages arose initially from some technology developments which gave the PIE speakers great mobility and also great wealth. By combining pastoralism (herding sheep, goats, cattle and horses) with transport by wagons, and the individual mobility and herding efficiency of horseback riding, the PIE speakers were able to build up huge wealth in the form of mobile year-round food (the animals) and various animal products, such as sheep-wool. The steppes area provided huge grasslands to feed the animals, and longer-range mobility meant that the sizes of herds were not limited to the amount of feed within a narrow area. Also, since agricultural and hunter-gatherer people did not use the open plains between the rivers much, there was a very much under-utilized resource which could be exploited. (See pages 461-462.) But then a third conclusion is that the PIE speakers did not propagate their language group by breeding like rabbits. The language group must have been spread by the "prestige effect", or the "elite dominance" effect. (See page 464.) Thus the PIE and IE speaking peoples obtained their food and wealth from the steppes, which provided a kind of east-west corridor, perhaps analogous to the way that the Mediterranean provided a corridor for the spread of the Greeks and Phoenicians at a later time. But instead of ships, the PIE speakers had mobile herds, wagons and horses, by which they were able to spread their technology, culture and language along the length and breadth of the Steppes corridor. (The author does not draw any analogy with the Mediterranean, but this seems to be almost implicit.) There are a hundred other conclusions to be drawn from this book, including many big surprises. I'll resist the temptation to spoil those surprises for you. Perhaps I'll just say that the author mentions numerous historical turning points which were triggered by climate change, particularly when the climate became both cooler and drier. (You can find these in the index under "climate change".) One of the best things about this book is the very generous provision of maps. There are so many books on archaeology and history which are almost ruined by the lack of maps to make sense of thousands of place-names. This book does not have that fault. If I had to find something negative about this book, it must be the extensive end-notes, which oblige you to keep two markers in the book while reading because so much important material would be missed otherwise. Most of the end-notes could have been incorporated into the main text or included as foot-notes. Even though this book is not "pop science" (because most casual readers would not be able to cope with so many pots, bones, horses' teeth and grave-maps), it is almost completely self-contained because of the numerous maps and explanations of technical terms. So if you seriously want to know where the Indo-European "439 languages and dialects spoken by about three billion people" came from (to quote wikipedia), this is the book.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The origin of western culture. By The Old Philosopher Very interesting story of western civilization and culture. The author chronicles the new high tech horse and wagon culture of the Eurasian steppes, and how their language and culture came to dominate from India to Ireland. Well researched. Sometimes slow reading because of the scholarly details.

16 of 16 people found the following review helpful. Excellent Work! By Joseph P. Brennan Anthony makes a compelling case for the location of the Indo-European homeland, tracks the probable course of Proto-Indo European (PIE) and its daughter languages' expansion, and convincingly argues that PIE speakers domesticated the horse and invented the spoke-wheeled chariot. Anthony asserts he powerful cultural complex that they developed around their herding lifestyle helped expand the range of PIE and its daughter languages -- at one point likening the lifestyle changes engendered by herding combined with wagon and chariot-driving to the similar lifestyle revolution in twentieth-century America brought on by the proliferation of automobiles and the Interstate highway system. Anthony uses evidence from archaeolinguistics, from oft-overlooked Russian steppe archaeology, and his (and his wife's) own pioneering work on bit-wear markings in ancient horse teeth to make his case. He cites Native American linguistics and archaeology to help bolster his case when appropriate, along with the well-studied history of British colonization of North America -- and does so quite convincingly. Anthony writes in a learned, but accessible style with an occasional witticism to keep the text from being overly-dry. Perhaps my only criticism would be his neglecting to compare the spread of Indo-European with that of the Turkic languages across Eurasia -- which was also accomplished with stunning celerity (in historical terms), and also caused enormous cultural shifts which are still visible today. Perhaps he could do so in the second edition!

Roughly half the world's population speaks languages derived from a shared linguistic source known as Proto-Indo-European. But who were the early speakers of this ancient mother tongue, and how did they manage to spread it around the globe? Until now their identity has remained a tantalizing mystery to linguists, archaeologists, and even Nazis seeking the roots of the Aryan race. *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language* lifts the veil that has long shrouded these original Indo-European speakers, and reveals how their domestication of horses and use of the wheel spread language and transformed civilization. Linking prehistoric archaeological remains with the development of language, David Anthony identifies the prehistoric peoples of central Eurasia's steppe grasslands as the original speakers of Proto-Indo-European, and shows how their innovative use of the ox wagon, horseback riding, and the warrior's chariot turned the Eurasian steppes into a thriving transcontinental corridor of communication, commerce, and cultural exchange. He explains how they spread their traditions and gave rise to important advances in copper mining, warfare, and patron-client political institutions, thereby ushering in an era of vibrant social change. Anthony also describes his fascinating discovery of how the wear from bits on ancient horse teeth reveals the origins of horseback riding. *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language* solves a puzzle that has vexed scholars for two centuries--the source of the Indo-European languages and English--and recovers a magnificent and influential civilization from the past.

From Publishers Weekly In this study of language, archeology and culture, Hartwick College anthropology professor Anthony hypothesizes that a proto-Indo-European culture emerged in the Ponto-Caspian steppes 4,000 years ago, speaking an ur-language ancestor to the Romance, German and Slavic family of languages, Sanskrit and modern English. Citing discoveries in the Ukraine, Russia and Kazakhstan made possible only after the fall of the Iron Curtain brought together Soviet and western scientists, Anthony combines evidence from radioactive dating, demographic analysis of migration patterns, linguistic analysis and the study of epics such as the Iliad and the Rig Veda to substantiate his contention. Central to his thesis is the role of the horse, originally domesticated for food and first ridden to manage herds; only later, with the development of the chariot, were they ridden during combat. Anthony provides a comprehensive, in-depth analysis of his subject, complete with a history of relevant research over the past two centuries (including evidence and opinion that counter his own, such as the now-discredited Aryan race hypothesis). A thorough look at the cutting edge of anthropology, Anthony's book is a fascinating look into the origins of modern man. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. Winner of the 2010 Book Award, Society for American Archaeology "David W. Anthony argues that we speak English not just because our parents taught it to us but because wild horses used to roam the steppes of central Eurasia, because steppedwellers invented the spoked wheel and because poetry once had real power. . . . Anthony is not the first scholar to make the case that Proto-Indo-European came from this region [Ukraine/Russia], but given the immense array of evidence he presents, he may be the last one who has to.... *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language* brings together the work of historical linguists and archaeologists, researchers who have traditionally been suspicious of each other's methods. [The book] lays out in intricate detail the complicated genealogy of history's most successful language."--Christine Kenneally, *The New York Times Book* "[A]uthoritative . . ."--John Noble Wilford, *New York Times* "A thorough look at the cutting edge of anthropology, Anthony's book is a fascinating look into the origins of modern man."--Publishers Weekly (Online s Annex) "In the age of Borat it may come as a surprise to learn that the grasslands between Ukraine and Kazakhstan were once regarded as an early crucible of civilisation. This idea is revisited in a major new study by David Anthony."--Times Higher Education "Starting with a history of research on Proto-Indo-Europeans and exploring how this field for obvious reasons assumed an ethno-political dimension early on, leading PIE scholar Anthony moves on to established facts . . . then shifts his focus to the interrelation of the three essential elements of horse, chariot, and language and how the first and second provided the means for the spread of Indo-European languages from India to Ireland. The bulk of the book contains the factual evidence, mainly archaeological, to support this argument. But a strength of the book is its rich historical linguistic approach. The combination of the two provides a remarkable work that should appeal to everyone with an interest not just in Indo-Europeans, but in the history of humanity in general."--K. Abdi, Dartmouth College, for CHOICE "David Anthony's book is a masterpiece. A professor of anthropology, Anthony brings together archaeology, linguistics, and rare knowledge of Russian scholarship and the history of climate change to recast our understanding of the formation of early human society."--Martin Walker, *Wilson Quarterly* "The Horse, the Wheel, and Language brings together the work of historical linguists and archaeologists, researchers who have traditionally been suspicious of each other's methods. Though parts of the book will be penetrable only by scholars, it lays out in intricate detail the complicated genealogy of history's most successful language."--Christine Kenneally, *International Herald Tribune* "The Horse, the Wheel and Language maps the early geography of the Russian steppes to re-create the lost world of Indo-European culture that is as fascinating as any mystery novel."--Arthur Krim, *Geographical s* "In its integration of language and archaeology, this book represents an outstanding synthesis of what today can be known with some certainty about the origin and early history of the Indo-European languages. In my view, it supersedes all previous attempts on the subject."--Kristian Kristiansen, *Antiquity* "A key book."--David Keys, *Independent* From the Back Cover "If you want to learn about the early origins of English and related languages, and of many of our familiar customs such as feasting on holidays and exchanging gifts,

this book provides a lively and richly informed introduction. Along the way you will learn when and why horses were domesticated, when people first rode horseback, and when and why swift chariots changed the nature of warfare."-- Peter S. Wells, author of *The Battle that Stopped Rome*"A very significant contribution to the field. This book attempts to resolve the longstanding problem of Indo-European origins by providing an examination of the most relevant linguistic issues and a thorough review of the archaeological evidence. I know of no study of the Indo-European homeland that competes with it."--J. P. Mallory, Queen's University, Belfast