

## Nomads: Sophisticated Cultures on the Move

### I. Nomadic Emergence

#### A. Theories

1. Pre-existing condition
2. Economic specialization
3. Escape from political subjugation
4. Niche (hunters → nomads → migrant laborers  
gatherers → slash and burn → sedentary agriculturalists)

#### B. Contact with sedentary groups

1. Symbiotic
2. Confrontational

### II. Types of Nomads

#### A. Max Weber — ideal types according to dominant animal

1. sheep and goats (most widespread — Bakhtiari)
2. cattle (Dinka, Nuer, Masai)
3. camel (Bedouin)
- [4. horse (Hittites, Hyksos, Hsiung-nu [Huns], Cimmerians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Pechenegs, Polovtsians, Qipchaqs, Mongols)]
- [5. reindeer (Lapps)]

#### B. Domestication — two stages

1. Husbandry — culling herd of young males
2. Breeding

#### C. Earliest evidence of domestication of ruminants

1. Sheep — Zawi Chemi; Shandar, Iraq — 8650 B.C.
2. Goats — Ganj-Dareh, Iran — 8200 B.C.
3. Pigs — Cayönu, Turkey — 7200 B.C.
4. Cattle — North Africa — 6800 B.C.
5. Horses — Ukrainian steppe — 4800–4500 B.C. (Przewalski's horse)
6. Camels — Middle East — 1200 B.C.  
– but see Genesis 12–50; and Steve Caesar, “The Diffusion of Camel Domestication from Turkmenistan to Egypt and Its Reflection on the Patriarchal Narratives,” AL thesis, Harvard University, 2002.

Video: Jacob Bronowski, “The Ascent of Man,” no. 2: *The Harvest of the Seasons*

### III. Nomadic Life

#### A. Social distinctions

1. gender
2. patron-client
3. rank within clan
4. rank of clan within chieftaincy

#### B. Political distinctions

1. khan
  - a. chiefs (heads of chieftaincies)
    - (1) heads of clans
    - (a) families
2. assembly of notables

#### C. Religious Practices

1. Herodotus
2. Later travelers

### IV. Impact of Nomads

#### A. Franz Oppenheimer, *The State (Der Staat)*, Frankfurt, 1907)

1. founders of complex societies and states were nomads
2. pastoral nomads conquered sedentary people and est. themselves as nobility
3. diet—the reason for success (high in protein)
4. Evidence to support theory
  - a. Babylonians, Assyrians, and Chaldeans
  - b. Medes, Persians, and Aryans
  - c. Vikings (nomads of the sea)
5. Evidence against the theory
  - a. Egyptian civilization
  - b. most inventions and advances in technology and thinking
  - c. nutritional studies

#### B. David W. Anthony, “Horse, Wagon & Chariot: Indo-European Languages and Archaeology,” *Antiquity*, September 1995

1. Sintashta-Petrovka
2. Mounted nomadism since 4000 B.C.
3. Chariots, ca. 2000 B.C. (8- and 12-spoke wheels)
4. Evidence from *Rg Veda* on burial rituals

See also: David W. Anthony, *The Horse, the Wheel, and Language: How Bronze-Age Riders from the Eurasian Steppes Shaped the Modern World* (Princeton University Press, 2007).