long time to come, as it still has important lessons for us.

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Marija Gimbutas. *Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* (Paris & The Hague: Mouton, 1965, 681pp., 462 ill., 115 pl., hbk, ISBN: 9783111283418; e-book ISBN: 9783111668147, https: //doi.org/10.1515/9783111668147)

The book under review was published in 1965 and aimed to provide a comprehensive presentation, evaluation, and reassessment of the Bronze Age in

Central and Eastern Europe from Germany in the west to the Urals in the east. A book written at the height of the Cold War—the preface is dated 1963, one year after the Cuban Missile Crisis—with an integrative perspective on the archaeological cultures of the Bronze Age across and through the Iron Curtain was a decidedly courageous undertaking. It is the result of long-standing studies before, during, and after WW II by one of the most extraordinary scientific personalities of the twentieth century, Marija Gimbutas.

Her name stands for some of the most controversial theses of continental European archaeology: the destruction of a supposedly peaceful 'Old Europe' by warlike, Indo-European 'Kurgan people' at the end of the Neolithic. Readers expecting the multicoloured scenarios of her later writings when reading her early *magnum opus* will be disappointed. Gimbutas' great oeuvre—it is described as such by almost all contemporary reviewers—is typical of the archaeological books of the time: full of facts, in-depth discussions on the dating of key finds and find assemblages, and identification of archaeological cultures. The book's subject is the Bronze Age, when the presumed invasion of the Indo-European 'Kurgan people' had already happened (Gimbutas, 1956), providing the setting for the author to present her ideas on the aftermath of this invasion. It is intended as a handbook and it remains the only work to date to attempt to present the Bronze Age phenomena of Western Eurasia as an integrative whole, irrespective of geopolitical boundaries.

The book was written mainly in 1958, when Gimbutas was working at Harvard, but published in 1965 after her appointment to UCLA Los Angeles (for her personal history, see Chapman, 1998 or Kokkinidou, 2020). It is compendious, contains numerous illustrations, a twenty-one-page index, and the references at the end of each chapter include an abundance of original sources in several languages, including German and Russian, as well as notes on transcription and a list of abbreviations of the series and journals cited. Even today, it is still a valuable overview of the primary sources relevant at that time. The book's structure in two parts is outlined in the introduction: it consists of a chronological systematisation and correlation of European Bronze Age cultures, and an overview of archaeological trajectories in different geographical areas ordered in a southern and a northern block of cultural families. The author aims to 'define central and east European Bronze Age cultures' in their dynamics, 'making the complicated history […] understandable', 'making unknown sources available', and 'bringing forward new facts, hypothesis, classification, and labels' (Foreword & p. 20). Gimbutas' book thus stands at the beginning of several comprehensive portrayals of the European Bronze Age, although it is hardly valued in this context today.

To adequately review the archaeological information in *Bronze Age Cultures in Central and Eastern Europe* from today's perspective would be nonsensical. The book was completed before the radiocarbon revolution, and, after more than fifty years and countless monographs on individual topics treated by Gimbutas, the state of research is completely different. Radiocarbon dating has rendered most chronological approaches obsolete, and with them many of the synchronisations postulated. The author foresaw this and laments in her introduction that she could not yet use this new source of chronological information. In this, she was much more far-sighted than many of her contemporaries. Many key chronological sites she relied on, especially those then in the Soviet Union (e.g. Faskau or Tli in the

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Caucasus or the Gorbunovo peatbog sites in the Transurals), have since been shown to have had long occupation sequences often spanning up to a millennium. Many archaeological phenomena which she subsumed under certain culture names are understood differently today, and their dating and context is no longer what it was then.

The comments I choose to make here are therefore directed at aspects of her methodology, perceived as highly contentious already in the 1960s, but above all at how the book was received and acknowledged—or rather not—by contemporaries and subsequent generations of researchers. It is not a comment on Gimbutas' scientific work, which, controversial as it is, was an immense contribution to European intellectual history. It is an attempt to understand why this elaborately written book, in which every sentence reveals the author's prodigious knowledge of the Bronze Age of a vast region, has received so little attention in subsequent research. A look at the current *Oxford Handbook of Bronze Age Europe* (Fokkens & Harding, 2013), for instance, does not even cite it in the introduction. Earlier Bronze Age overviews (such as Coles & Harding, 1979 or Harding, 2000) refer to Gimbutas' work, but not without clearly criticizing its basis, and then follow other lines of research. The citations in the Bronze Age literature paint Gimbutas as a highly esteemed specialist with a wealth of knowledge. Yet, she is cited only for certain correlations of individual complexes or contexts, such as the connection of the Mycenaean shaft graves with finds in the Carpathian Basin (see e.g. contributions in Hänsel & Geislinger, 1982) or the Eurasian forest-steppe zone (e. g. Safronov, 1968). Hardly any aspect of her overall perspective, except the 'Kurgan people' invasion, was later discussed. Why?

Marija Gimbutas, an archaeologist trained in the young Soviet Union and with a PhD defended in Germany at the end of WW II, was deeply influenced by the culture-historical concepts of her time. She saw and discussed archaeological remains as sources for reconstructing coherent prehistoric peoples; throughout the book, the terms 'culture' and 'people' are used synonymously. These peoples operated as historical actors in various scenarios, often outlined as migrations, expansions, or invasions. She outlined these scenarios in detail, e.g. the advance of Central European 'Tumulus people' into south-eastern Europe in the Middle Bronze Age, or the involvement of 'Caucasian peoples' in shaping the southern groups of cultures. To her, most of these movements were a direct or indirect heritage of the warlike invasion of 'Kurgan people' in the third millennium BC. John Chapman (1998) believes that the reason for this emphasis on invasions as historical triggers reflects Gimbutas' personal fate as an emigrant from the Baltic, fleeing from a region that saw repeated conflict during WW II. This is certainly right in many respects. But her essentialist concept of culture provided few alternatives to understand geographical shifts of archaeological materials other than by migrating people.

What was, however, criticized much more severely by her contemporaries—and this criticism still applies today—is that she combined groups that had previously been discussed as separate regional entities into large-scale 'cultures' without much argument in support. She tried to develop new terms and chronological classifications for most of the areas considered, drawing from them historical scenarios without discussing earlier concepts of these phenomena, as noted for example in Rowlett's (1972) review. Moreover, from today's perspective, it is often surprising how little she discussed the archaeological ideas of

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her time. Alexander Häusler (1968), who wrote the most profound contemporary review on her book, and who was himself one of the few experts on the Bronze Age in Eastern Europe at the time, predicted the failure of her reorganisation of the European Bronze Age for precisely this reason. He was to be proved right. Gimbutas squeezed too many different regional phenomena into all-embracing categories, ignored local vectors, and thus created non-existent cultural conglomerates. These poorly related groupings, which then served as the basis for chronological synchronisation and supposed historical developments, were not only bound to fall apart with updated and independent dating but they were misconstrued from the outset. This is true both for the 'Kurgan culture/people' of her earlier work, and for most of the cultures in the book reviewed here, and this is why it is so difficult to pen a review of this brilliantly written book.

It was not just Gimbutas' attempt to develop her own history of the Bronze Age that led to the problematic appreciation of her work. Not long after its publication, a generation of new Bronze Age researchers entered the scene in Central and Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union alike. They considered geographically more limited aspects of Gimbutas' global perspective, started to compile the material more systematically, and developed new approaches for the understanding of large-scale archaeological phenomena. The concept of a 'historical cultural community' (Merpert, 1974), or 'cultural package' first established for the Bell Beaker phenomenon (Burgess & Shennan, 1976), broke with the basic idea that a particular materiality and cultural practices are to be assigned to a certain people only. On both sides of the Iron curtain, statistical approaches were beginning to be applied in the field of metallurgy (e.g. Junghans et al., 1960; Chernykh, 1967). They not only introduced new concepts regarding the relationships between metal production, typology, and cultural vectors, but also developed the basis of most modern debates. Gimbutas saw these more differentiated approaches as highly promising arenas but did not adopt them herself.

Can the book therefore be justifiably omitted from the history of research on the European Bronze Age? If one looks a little more closely, many of the questions raised by Gimbutas are just as relevant today as they were then—and just as unresolved. The connections between the Mediterranean and Central Europe are still fiercely discussed. The question of Bronze Age chronology and cultural groupings, for example in southern Russia or the Caucasus, have been clarified only over the last two decades but the absolute dating of Bronze Age groups in central Russia, the Urals, or western Siberia, not to mention the Baltic zone, is still far from resolved, as are issues of cultural interaction, trade, or the exchange of ideas or people in Bronze Age Europe. It took fifty years and more to rekindle the geographical interest of Gimbutas work for an integrated perspective on the Bronze Age from Central Europe to the Urals. Yet these new attempts do not have her scope and involve numerous authors (e.g. Kristiansen & Larsson, 2005; Kashuba et al., 2020). Finally, recent research in bioarchaeology, particularly palaeogenomics, has revived the idea that geographical shifts in Bronze Age populations across Western Eurasia were much more important than has been assumed for many decades. Thus, can palaeogenomics rehabilitate Gimbutas' perspective on the European Bronze Age? The answer is a decisive no. Even though genomic studies have shown that dramatic population changes took place at times that more or less correlate with some of the upheavals,

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migrations, and invasions in Gimbutas' scenarios, a link to her perspective on Bronze Age Europe would be wrong. She was right to postulate far more dynamic interaction and movement across much larger geographical spaces, but her groupings do not correlate with phenomena today subsumed under the same labels. Moreover, 'archaeological cultures' are not representations of early peoples but archaeological categories of analysis, and they are under discussion even as such. It is now obvious that developments in populations were highly complex, that much of the interaction took place on an individual level or among limited groups, and that a similar materiality and cultural practice reflects neither ethnic nor biological coherence. The archaeology of the twenty-first century has to find its own, more complex, narratives about the developments in the third to first millennia BC. And letting multilingual authors express their multifaceted views in edited collections may be more suitable for portraying Central and Eastern Europe than listening to a single voice.

Therefore, it is not the answers Gimbutas gave in her book on the European Bronze Age that can inspire today's archaeologists, but the questions concerning the far-reaching entanglements present in Western Eurasia. This was indeed her intent, as was her treatment of a vast region that is not often thought of as an integrated whole in a European perspective. Her answers have been largely refuted by later research, but most of the issues she raised are as relevant today as they were then.

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Almudena Hernando. *Arqueología de la Identidad* (Madrid: Akal, 2002, 224 pp., 14 b/w illustr., hbk, ISBN 84-460-1654-0)

Arqueología de la Identidad is the book that I have recommended to my students most frequently. It provides the conceptual tools to understand: 1) the ontological Other, past and present; 2) our own historical genealogy as individualized selves in the Western world; 3) archaeology as a modern discipline within this genealogy; and, 4) the origins and evolution of gender asymmetry between men and women.

The knowledge of the Other is an old but still vivid question. In a foundational work, Tzvetan Todorov (2010: 296) invited readers to acknowledge the Other without projecting onto them our own Western rationality, but he also admitted that it was easier said than done. This is precisely what *Arqueología de la Identidad* accomplishes, starting from Hernando's 'confession' that her own ethoarchaeological project, conducted among Q'eqchí slash-and-burn farmers from Guatemala in the mid-1990s, made no sense. Through the experience of living with them, she realized that they had wholly different ways of understanding the world, based on distinct perceptions of space, territory, time, and reality (p. 7). Then, she had to re-conceptualize her project's premises and, in fact, her entire thought. This book is the result. Almudena is convinced that we can—and as archaeologists, I would say we must—escape our own mind-sets to understand otherness, including the past, analyzing the structures that underline self-formation or personal identity. To demonstrate this, she mobilizes knowledge in human cognition rarely considered in archaeology despite its more than indisputable potential.

The core idea behind her robust and compelling proposal is that, as humans, we need to organize reality in order to survive and cope with the world, and that identity is the main device to achieve this goal. Identity is the most basic mode of constructing an idea of who we are, what types of relationships connect us to everything else, and what the world we live in is like (p. 16). The book explores the different ways in which we can construct identity, which are always related to our capacity to control reality. However,