The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age of the
Lake Baikal Region: A Review of Recent
Research

Andrzej Weber

Rich settlement and burial evidence from the Baikal/Angara region in Central
Siberia provides one of the most promising opportunities in the global boreal
forest for studying Holocene foragers. The Neolithic and Early Bronze Age
prehistory of the region is known to western scholars only through a few English
translations of the works of A. P. Okladnikov. Since the publication of
Okladnikov’s model, the region has witnessed large-scale archaeological
fieldwork that has produced abundant quantities of new evidence. Moreover,
the model has been partly invalidated by extensive radiocarbon dating.
Research advances over the last couple of decades have augmented the area’s
previous reputation but have also revealed the need for new theoretical
perspectives and modern analytical techniques.

KEY WORDS: Lake Baikal; foragers; Neolithic; Bronze Age; Siberia.

INTRODUCTION

The Lake Baikal region has a very rich archaeological record and
forms an excellent laboratory for the study of early Holocene foraging ad-
aptations. Human presence over the last 20,000 years has resulted in nu-
merous stratified habitation sites and scores of burial sites. Excavations
often produce large quantities of both artifactual and osteological material,
creating opportunities for studying various aspects of foraging adaptations.
The material is also relevant from a global perspective because there is a

1Department of Anthropology, University of Alberta, Edmonton, Alberta, T6G 2H4 Canada.