



## The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys

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# The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys


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These thirty original essays form a landmark contribution to the history of metallurgy: together they present the first systematic survey of the beginning of the use of metals and alloys throughout the world. What distinguishes the book as a whole is the orientation of the writers toward seeing the objects they uncover in human-historical terms, reminding us that at all stages in history and in every part of the world, cultural change and advances in the use of metals are often closely intertwined.

The articles are arranged in roughly chronological-geographical order; some are specific studies of sites, objects, and processes; others examine more general aspects of archaeometallurgy within a general field that has come to be called "archaeometry"; and still others are interpretive and reflective essays on human history and cultural change (a particularly fine example of this approach is Heather Lechtman's essay on Central Andean metalworking).

Archaeologists, historians, metallurgists, chemists, and geologists cover topics as diverse as iron trade in northern Scandinavia, the fabrication of gold foil in Japan, copper mining in eastern India, prehistoric metallurgy in Thailand, iron bloomery in Africa, early copper smelting in Palestine, and Chinese techniques for casting old belt plaques. And in his Foreword, Cyril Stanley Smith proposes structural metaphors that describe the historical reworkings of human society in terms of the transformations of materials.

Robert Maddin is Honorary Curator of Archaeological Sciences, Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University. *The Beginning of the Use of Metals and Alloys* was derived from the second international conference on the subject, held in Zhengzhou, China in 1986.

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