# CHAPTER IV SCYTHIAN / SAKA ART



MAP I: DISTRIBUTION OF SCYTHIAN/SAKA/SAKA SITES

## CHAPTER IV

## SCYTHIAN/ŚAKA ART.

The Scythians belonged to a broad cultural grouping that dominated the Eurasian Steppe zone between the eighth and fifth centuries B.C. They are often taken as a component of the Scytho-Siberian groups. This group included the semi-nomadic peoples, whose domains extended from the borders of Greece and Persia to the borders of China (Zhou dynasty). The Scythians were the westernmost of these peoples, inhabiting the Crimea, the steppe and forest steppe to the north of the Black Sea, and the Kuban river basin. Herodotus devoted a large part of his *Historiae* to a description of the lands of the Scythians and to their traditions. Their presence was also attested in stone inscriptions, on coins and in the writings of many observers following Herodotus. Although the Scythians were not the only non-Greeks in this large region, the area came to be known as Scythia.

The western section of Scythian art includes different groups like the Kuban, Taman, Crimean, Don, Kiev and the bordering Ural group, the latter being the marking point for the eastern section of the Śaka/Scythian art. The region forming the western section, included the Pontic steppes

۲,

7

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., p.2

and European Russia, i.e. from Ukraine to the River Volga. Scythian artifacts found from kurgans, east of Volga onwards till the frontiers of China and southwards till India have been coined as the eastern section of Scythian art.

#### A. WESTERN SECTION

Early Scythian art objects are found from burials from the west of the Caspian Sea, often, west of the Caucasus Mountains till the borders of Eastern Europe, from the north of the Black Sea region in the south and eastwards till the borders of West Asia, in the north, till Western Siberia, and in the north-east till the land of the Sarmatians in South Siberia. What archaeologists find is hardly ever representative of the total materials and artifacts used in the past. The Scythians had no ambitious funerary structures like pyramids or richly-appointed temples over the burials of their dead.

The Scythian culture was sandwiched between Central Asian, South Siberian, West Asian, Greek influences and others. The early stage of the Scythians saw the nomadic steppe origins which continued in the middle phase (beginning of the transition) and then, the later Scythic phase, saw the cultural transition from nomadic steppe origins to a partially settled

and a sort of Hellenised way of life. This last phase could be termed as the Graeco-Scythian tradition. All these three stages as reflected in the materials from the burials reveal the works of utilitarian types, ritual requirements and ornamental purposes. The age covered by these objects spread over centuries. What has made Scythian art so distinctive is that the vast majority of surviving objects are of gold, and of a gold of good quality and frequently of excellent craftsmanship.

Gold, therefore, is the most unifying aspect of Scythian art, but other metals are also important. The tradition is distinguished by mirrors and poletops of bronze, by utensils of silver, and, in the early period, by horse trappings of finely curved bone, indicative of an ancient and vital carving tradition. Horse trappings of finely carved bone include eye-bars (Plate 1) for linking bridal reins in the shape of rams and ram-birds' heads as found from Kelermes. They can be dated in the late seventh or early sixth centuries B.C. In this early Scythian or archaic period, the animal style seemed to be a natural blend of the unique Scythian artistic tradition and certain borrowed forms, mostly of ancient Oriental origin. Two imaginary creatures, specific to the Scythians, were predominant in their art especially from the early period-1) a flying ram with the beak of a bird of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy.Art.,p.23,Pl.1.

prey, and 2) the griffin or a winged lion, generally with an eagle's head. Another quiver ornament common to the early Scythian period included a curled-up beast of prey usually made of bone (Plate 2). The style of the curled-up beast was rudimentary compared to later manifestations.

Bronze firstly invaded, southern Russia, and then the mountainous region of the Altai and the basin of the Minusinsk. Introduction of the Bronze Age brought great changes to the mountain peoples. In Asia, bronze, having spread into the basin of the Indus and into Iran, gave rise to the Tazabagyab culture south of Lake Aral (eighteenth to tenth century B.C.). In Kazakhstan, it was bronze that united the pastoral tribes of the area under the Andronovo Culture (eighteenth to thirteenth century B.C.). Still, further east on Lake Baikal, the Glazkovo Culture (seventeenth to twelfth century B.C.) transmitted the secret of bronze metallurgy to China during the same period.<sup>2</sup> In ten centuries, the ancient Near Eastern bronze conquered the Eurasian economy. An equal time was necessary for the aesthetic formulas of this bronze art to recross the continent in the opposite direction. The process was favoured by the persistence of the old Iranian–Anatolian formulas subsequently modified by the Karasuk culture near Minusinsk (tenth to seventh century B.C.) and by the Scythians

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.25, Pl.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> En. Wor. Art., Vol. 2, p. 22.

(eighth to third century B.C.), in forming the basis for the subsequent nomadic art.

Progress in the creation of useful objects does not necessarily mean an accompaniment of artistic development. Moreover, it can be definitely established that given art forms do not always determine the creation of analogous forms (in similar, parallel and different artistic environments) as the bronzes of Scythia and Luristan and the accompanying potteries demonstrate the same.

Before classifying the Scythian objects it is important to note the organization of nomadic material culture. Nomadic material culture is best conceived in terms of three key dimensions. The first of these concerns the degree to which items of material culture exist permanently on a site-(i) fixtures, (ii) portables. The second dimension of material culture ranges from durables on the one hand to perishables on the other. A third dimension concerns the value of items, measured in the terms of the difficulty or cost of acquiring or replacing them (i.e. valuables as opposed to expendables)<sup>1</sup>. Considering the above factors, the Scythian nomadic material culture holds a significant place for a long period of time. The

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Roger Cribb, Nomads In Archaeology, Cambridge, 1993, p.68.

Scythian repertory made skillful use of bone, wood, wool, leather, precious metals, stones etc. An original manner of reflecting the encompassing world, common life world outlook and religious ideas, had developed under the Scythian nomads. Gold casting and stamping the gold foil or plate were widespread. Gold was used to decorate or finish bone. Wooden articles or cast gold aside, there is abundant evidence that the early nomads were using gold even before the appearance of extensive gold work in Scythia as found at Arzhan in Tuva, Mayemir kurgan in Altay Republic, and the Golden Barrow at Chiliktin in East Kazakhstan.<sup>1</sup>

The Scythians by classical times had moved into the steppes to the north of the Crimea and occupied the area roughly between Kiev on the Dnieper in the west and the Koban regions in the east. Their distinctive 'animal style' art is of a kind which is widespread in Central Asia as far east as Kazakhstan and Siberia. On coming into contact with the civilizations of the Greek world, they adopted motifs from these areas and by the fifth and fourth century B.C. the Scythian nomads roamed over the vast, almost crescent shaped steppe, which stretches from the confines of China to the banks of the Danube. In the north eastern section many of these peoples often displayed a tendency, which became more marked with the passing

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art.Scy., p.5.

centuries, to migrate to the west or south-west of their starting point, a tendency which was doubtlessly fostered by the existence on their other borders of geographical barriers which debarred them from breaking out in those directions. Inner Asia provided long distance communication, or overland movement, in as much as no region on earth as it is landlocked by the absence of feasible maritime alternatives. The major movements of peoples, cultural innovations and goods have been on Inner Asian land routes far removed from the Pacific, Arctic and the Indian Oceans. It might be noted, however, that parts of the early Silk Road traffic was channeled through Indian Ocean ports. Use of Black Sea and Caspian Sea routes were confined to margins of Inner Asia. The lists of tribes or peoples inhabiting the northern and north-eastern littoral of the Black Sea during the Scythian period is long and complex and made all the more so by the fact that literary references are not always supported by archaeology. Actually, the best of Scythian art is characterized by a number of qualities that cannot be duplicated, as they are integrated and presented, in any other arena of gold works in the ancient world. The steppe belt and land of forest and tundra were mostly inhabited by the Finno-Ugrian tribes, mostly passive to be pressed back or assimilated by their southern neighbours, the true nomads of the steppe belt. Rapidly moving war parties, the Scythians were highly mobile horse soldiers and breeders of cattle and horses.

Moreover, within the ancient world of the Near East, North Africa and the Mediterranean cultures, where the purity and workability of gold were exploited more thoroughly than in any other Western traditions, the gold of the Scythians has an unusual, if not unique, position; it survived, at least in part, where most of the gold work of the Greeks, much of that of the Etruscans, and virtually all that of the Achaemenids have disappeared.

On the basis of archaeological excavations, it is deduced that the Scythians settled around the northern shores of the Black Sea, and later spread to neighbouring regions and beyond. But their place of origin is controversial and it is difficult to ascertain whether they must be traced to the near or far part of Central Asia, or even further, to South Siberia. As the controversy continues, it is to be noted that nomads before the Scythian age roamed over vast areas of the steppe from a still earlier period, and those nomads who had settled around the northern shores of the Black Sea were termed Scythians by Herodotus. Later archaeological discoveries have linked many nomadic tribes with the Scythians. Even, the identity of archeological finds have been frequently disputed, with some scholars referring to the burials in the Kuban region, or in the area of the lower Don river for example, as Scythian and others, as Meotian. Even assuming the possibility of distinguishing a variety of traditions, it seems

certain that the social and cultural boundaries between Scythians and non-Scythians were constantly blurring. This is fairly demonstrated in the Scythians' ornamental traditions. In the region of the Caucasus mountains, for example, the Scythian ornamental use of the zoomorphic forms, attests to the assimilation of the stylistic elements from the pre-Scythian period Koban culture and its outflows. Recent excavations at Tli-Bagrat in the Koban have revealed numerous bronze artifacts classified as follows:

- a) Pre-Koban artifacts end of 3000 B.C. till middle of 2000 B.C.;
- b) Ancient Koban artifacts-1400 B.C. to 1300 B.C.;
- c) Classical Koban bronzes 1200 B.C. to 1000 B.C.;
- d) Artifacts of transition period from Bronze to Iron Age 9th Century B.C.;
- e) Artifacts of a period of wide Iron Age or Koban-Scythian 8<sup>th</sup> Century B.C. to 6<sup>th</sup> Century B.C.

An interesting bronze object from Tli-Bagrat dated in the ninth century B.C. is perhaps a symbol of eternal motion. It has three animal headed curving projections, bent in clockwise direction with a hole in the centre (similar to the driving wheel of a car). There is also an animal and bird plaque, showing a definite organization of space as in later Scythian work such as the bronze bridle plaques in Seven Brothers dated in the mid-fifth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Madina Tesieva, 'Koban Bronzes in Tli', *Aleksandravskii prospect*, No.7, Sept.-Oct. 1999, Vladikavkaz, p.3. The table, however, shows a time gap of some six hundred years (2000B.C.-1400B.C.) which might have been due to overlapping in archaeological findings.

century B.C. Also found in Tli-Bagrat is a fragment of a saddle decoration having animal designs and circular geometrical patterns. The fragment also shows a design of men on horsebacks and significantly, all men are headless, which reminds one of the Scythian custom of cutting off the enemies' heads.

Apart from the Koban region, in the region of the middle Don river, where Scythian ornamentation reflected the zoomorphic representational traditions identified with the Sauromatians to the east and, to a lesser extent, with those of the Ananino culture to the north, there was a marked influence of Scytho-Siberian traditions of Central Asia and South Siberia. By the fourth century B.C., the Scythian bridle trappings found in burials of the steppe zone north of the Black Sea reflected a determined adaptation of a Thracian tendency to treat decorative objects in terms of flat, incised surfaces, whereby established motifs, such as griffin heads, wings and feathering were simplified to a great extent. The art of the steppes portrays the griffin in an infinite variety of forms that vividly convey the force and ferocity of this mythical beast.

The tendency to adopt non-Scythian elements to Scythian traditions of ornamentation and object typology is particularly apparent with regard

to the Scythian reception of Persian, Greek, and Hellenistic elements. It was a matter of direct Hellenization and also indirect Hellenization. So energetic was that reception and reworking that one must consider it in terms of an active process; that is, a reception in which Scythian patrons and craftsmen sought out and made use of the styles, motifs and even techniques of their urbanized neighbours. This determined adoption and adaptation are evident in the imported objects found in such abundance within the grave furnishings such as clay amphorae, painted Greek ware, gold and silver vessels, and jewellery. Finds of such objects as far north as the forest-steppe zone and within burials of both commoners and wealthy members of Scythian society testify to the expansion of a receptive attention and of conscious trading in order to obtain the desired goods. Certain Scythian images worked their way into the subjects of Hellenic mythology, while some characters of Greek mythology share the attributes of similar figures in Scythian mythology and have moved from the places they inhabited in more ancient Greek tradition to the Scythian north. In the early period of Scythian art it was possible to discern West Asian and Greek elements alongside elements that clearly emerged from a steppe nomadic tradition. By the fifth century there were few objects that could be associated with a Near Eastern provenance and more that could be considered to be either Scythian, Graeco-Scythian or 'barbarian'. At the same time, and throughout the succeeding fourth century, the number of objects understood to be Greek continued to expand.

The technique and style of major Scythian artifacts or works of art would reveal all the contacts (Altaian, Caucasian, Hellenistic and others) in the western section of the Scythian art. This region comprises of European Russia, i.e. Ukraine up to the river Volga. Within this section falls different groups like the Kuban, Taman, Crimean, Dniepr, Don, Kiev, Volga and the bordering Ural group, the latter extending to the eastern section. The objects found in the various groups can be classified under three phases i.e. the early Scythian phase, middle and later Scythian phase. The orientation and relationship between the groups are difficult to comprehend, that is, it is difficult to give importance to any particular group or to assign the beginning of Scythian art to any group. According to the sites excavated, the concentration of kurgans has been found to be on the Dneiper, Don, Kuban, Taman and Crimean groups, and they are all to be seen as a whole in the evolution of Scythian art in the western section proper.

The early period of the western section of the Scythian art include the products of the Kelermes and Kuban groups, dated in the late seventh and

early sixth century B.C. The earliest major burials, Kelermes along with Litoy and Kostromskaya, indicate the presence of Scythians north of the Caucasus before the destruction of Nineveh and before the disappearance of Urartu. At the same time the material found at Kelermes reflect a productive cultural interchange with Near Eastern cultural centres. Some objects in the ruins of the Urartian fortress, Karmir Blur, are rendered in a style reminiscent of Scythian traditions of Kelermes and Litoy.

Different types of artifacts like objects of utility, ornaments, trappings and weapons belong to different periods of Scythian art.

#### 1.OBJECTS OF UTILITY

Regarding Scythian objects of utility, we have at first considered mirrors. The mirror with a raised lip and a central knob handle is exemplified by a bronze mirror with a coiled feline on the loop handle as found from Kelermes 2. Tagar burials indicate that by the early Iron Age, the knob-handled mirror was a significant part of the early nomadic burial ritual. A knob-handled mirror from the Mayemir steppe is ornamented with the raised line representations of five deer and a goat around the central

knob. The coiled feline in the bronze mirror is similar to the archaic feline type of the Arzhan, Mayemir and the Chiliktin formulations. By virtue of this feline image, the mirror type, and its bronze fabrication, this is the most authentic example of the Siberian style. The Kelermes mirror is in appearance similar to two bronze mirrors from Smela.2 From Kelermes 4, a rounded mirror with central knob or loop has been found. It is of silver covered with electrum plate. In style it combines a Siberian mirror type with motifs and styles of Ionian and West Asian origins.3 The centre of the back has the design of a series of lotus petals arranged in an oblong shape. Arranged within eight wedge-shaped sections on the back of the mirror are a number of individual and grouped images, like the Mistress of Animals holding two panther-like felines by their front paws, two lions confronting each other over a back-turned ibex, two seated sphinxes confronting each other over a standing, winged griffin, a dog like creature with a bear and an eagle like bird over the bear's back. The latter is similar to the Litoy bird plaques. In the last wedge before the Mistress of Animals, a lion savages the body of a bull over the body of a standing boar (Plate 3).4 The mirror is an useful indication of the manner in which native Scythian and nonnative traditions were beginning to be merged. Another mirror of the early

<sup>1</sup>G. Borovka, Scythian Art, New York, 1928, p.41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> E.H.Minns, Scythians And Greeks, New York, 1913, Fig. 85.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art.Scy.,p.183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Scy.Art., Pl.47.

Scythian period, was found at Annovka on the left bank of the Ingulets River in the Ukranian Steppe and it was dated in the late sixth century B.C. It is of bronze, and the handle is in the form of a female caryatid and this is similar to a bronze mirror handle in the form of a goddess with dogs and lions on her shoulders from Kherson. Seven Brothers barrow, (mid fifth century B.C.) yielded a mirror handle in the form of a youth caryatid with rams on his shoulders. The technique is reminiscent of the Greek style. Also of the early Scythian period is the mirror found at the necropolis of Olbia (sixth century B.C.). It is of bronze, with a handle terminating in a ram head and joined to the disk by a recumbent stag.

Cauldrons constitute an important Scythian utility object. They are found in Scythian kurgans from the seventh century B.C. onwards. Herodotus wrote about the well-known Scythian bronze or copper cauldrons, which were sacrificial vessels as well as national insignia. A cauldron with a caprid handle has been found from Kelermes (late seventh or early sixth century B.C.). It is made of cast bronze and the only ornamentation is a broad, raised zig-zag band below the lip. "A similar cauldron was found from Kelermes, and it was decorated with large,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>E.H. Minns, op. cit., Fig. 281.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Figs. 279-280.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art.Scy., p. 186.

rhomboid pattern in raised bands".¹ In Raskopana Mogila, of the Dnepropetrovsk Region in the Ukrainian Steppe (early fourth century B.C.), a cauldron of cast bronze with semi-spherical handles and applied bucrania, circles and palmettes has been found. It has a narrower mouth than the Kelermes type. A cast bronze cauldron with six squared caprids on the rim and a relief lozenge-shaped pattern was found at Chertomlyk on the right bank of River Dniepr (fourth century B.C.). The Chertomlyk cauldron also bears comparison with a cauldron from the earlier burial of Solokha. Solokha cauldron is characterized by typical geometrical patterns such as zig-zags and semi-spherical loops, which had all along dominated the nomadic atelier.

We come to rhytons. Fragments of a silver rhyton with engraved images of griffins; large birds, fronds, palmettes and lotus-petal border have been found from Kelermes. It belongs to the late seventh or early sixth century B.C. Seven Brothers barrow has yielded three rhytons belonging to the fifth century B.C. A silver rhyton with ridged horn terminating in the protome of a winged goat is one of them. The other two are gold rhytons, one with beaded ornamental bands terminating in a ram head and the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.190.

other terminates in the protome of a dog. The lower two-thirds of the third rhyton is covered by an engraved lozenge pattern; in the upper third by a feather pattern. The use of gold overlays was an early Scythian tradition. Also belonging to the middle Scythian period was an encircling overlay of gilded silver for a horn rhyton found at Elizavetovsk 9 (fifth or fourth century B.C.). The metal overlay, intended to ornament the upper section of a horn rhyton, is ornamented with the repeated pattern of an eagle-griffin tearing at a fish or dolphin. Another gold overlay for a rhyton, with a band of deer heads, two bands of modified twisted-rope pattern, and a lionhead tip was found at Velikaya Znamyanka (mid-fifth century B.C.). "Two large bands are ornamented with a modified twisted-rope pattern, executed in..... archaic carving techniques".2

Pole tops are one of the most significant objects used by the Scythians, and apparently it was part of the ritual furnishings. At Kelermes, was found a pair of poletops terminating in the heads of horses, and made of bronze (Plate 4).<sup>3</sup> As E.Jacobson has drawn our attention "The horses have long vertical necks, heads set at right angles, large protruding eyes, nostrils and mouths indicated by raised bands, upright ears rendered in partitioned

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.218.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 112.

heart-shaped motifs, characteristic of the treatment found on many psalia zoomorphic images in the early Scythian period (analogous formulation of horse-headed bone psalia from the Urartian site of Norshun-Tepe)".1 Two bronze poletops in the shape of great bird-heads with hanging bells was found from Ullsky 2, Kuban group (sixth century B.C.). Both these poletops are in the form of great beak-heads with superimposed smaller beak-heads marking the ridge of what would be the birds' ceres. The large beak-head is a common element in early Scythian art, as is the backturned caprid found on the more elaborate of the poletops. Along the projecting fold of the cere smaller birds' heads have been represented by parallel lines in relief (Plate 5).2 On the more elaborately decorated specimen the scroll of the beak has also been adorned with such parallel lines in relief. In the middle of this figure yet another birds' head has been depicted, facing the opposite way. Below it, the figure of a wild goat in the already familiar attitude with head turned back and legs tucked up, has been moulded in relief. These two poletops are among the finest achievements of Scythian art in the decorative treatment of organic bodily forms. A pole top terminating in a griffin head with an openwork body made of bronze (Plate 6) was found from Kelermes.3 The body takes the form of a bulbous openwork over a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 249.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 113.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 115.

squared socket. A poletop terminating in a stag on a spherical bottle (Plate 7) has been found from Makhoshevsky barrow (Kuban, late seventh century B.C.). This poletop is stylistically a bit different from the others. The style of the standing stag is similar to that of the stag found from the Altay region. This poletop is also made of bronze. An interesting poletop terminating in the head of a bell-shaped rattle has been found from Ulsky 2 (sixth century B.C.). This impressive bronze bull head has jutting flat ears and long curved horns. Separating the head from the pear-shaped rattle section is a thick twisted rope.

Scythian barrows have yielded many wooden vessels. These vessels were specially ornamented by a variety of gold plaques. Gold plaques for a wooden-bowl in the form of beak-heads and recumbent deer have been found from Ak-Mechet, Crimea from early fifth century B.C. The notched treatment on the lower edge of the beaks and the large rounded eyes and powerful ceres places this bird motif within a tradition well attested by fifth century finds from Seven Brothers and from the Dniepr forest-steppe zone. The plaques are filled with images of recumbent deer with raised antlered heads. We see relatively realistic treatment of heads, eyes, ears but in its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Fig. 116.

surface treatment there are still remnants of the earlier traditions of bone or wood carving. This alert vitality of the deer on the Ak-Mechet plaques are rooted in yet another distinctive aspect of Scythian art-its ability to capture the distinguishing aspect of a living creature, the essence, as it were, of the animal or human. During the middle period of Scythian art, that specific vitality of an animal being 'centred' (of the archaic style), was weakened as a result of the transformation of the archaic style. The vessels with their basic wooden material, have almost lost all their wooden portions. The wooden versions were ornamented with gold overlays, which were raised and secured to the wooden bowls by means of small gold nails. The gold plates would be used to cover the wing handles with which many of the vessels were provided and to ornament sections of the body. The tradition of ornamenting wooden bowls with gold plated works, most probably, with repoussé and chasing techniques, seems to have been common among the Scythians of the seventh to fifth centuries B.C.and to have lasted even into the fourth century B.C. Also the Ak-Mechet vessel overlays with images of deer and bird heads, along with Kostromskaya stag and the Kelermes panther - are the most "powerful expressions" of the psychological intensity and of the manner in which posture and surface lent themselves to the expression of monumentality of Scythian art. 1 Gold

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 67.

plaques for a wooden bowl in the form of fishes and recumbent deer have been found from Solokha, left bank of the Dniepr river, Ukrainian Steppe (early fifth century B.C.) The antlers of the deer transform into elaborate bird-heads.

Other than wooden vessels, metal ones have also been found. A vessel with scenes of Scythian youths fighting lions and mythic beasts have been found from Solokha (early fourth century B.C.). It is made of silver gilt. The two wing hands on either side of the vessel establish the divisions between the two main panels, and the handles are ornamented on the upper face by two attached rams' heads with large horns. Separating the rams' heads is a small tri-lobed palmette. Virtually all the ornamental decoration has been gilded to stand out, mouth of vessel emphasized by a delicate, gilded ivy tendril, base line identified by a gilded twisted-rope pattern (a common feature in Scythian art). Below that, the bowl is covered with a raised lotus pattern. The base is raised by a ring foot, within which, on the underside is engraved a lotus pattern-realism of texture and ornament. A vessel with images of Scythian men (Plate 8) was found at Gaymanova Mogila, north of Melitopol of the Ukrainian Steppe (fourth century B.C.). It has a notable frieze in high relief, depicting Scythian

warriors and in it Blavatskiy had seen only scenes from everyday life.1 Two of the Scythian men on the Gaymanova vessel wear thick, twisted torques visible on one side of their heavy beards, their terminals not indicated. The sides of this bowl-shaped vessel are filled with scenes of six Scythian males, conversing in an outdoor setting. The vessel body is silver, the images and all applied ornaments are gilded. A raised lotus-petal pattern, separated from the larger representations by a narrow band of lotus petals, covers the base of the vessel. The lip of the vessel is ornamented with an applied strip metal ornamented with an unusual pattern of painted and inverted leaves separated by small raised spheres and tiny palmettes. The gilded metal overlaying each of the wing handles is ornamented with ram's heads, back-to-back. The relief treatment of the ram's heads, and of parts of men, is occasionally high.2 Gaymanova Mogila served as the burial vault for Scythian royalty and the funeral objects discovered in it corresponds in many details to the customs associated with the burial of Scythain kings as described by Herodotus (even the bowl with images of Scythian men corresponds to the Scythian legend narrated by Herodotus). In Gaymanova Mogila were also found golden and silver vessels, the attributes of Scythian royal power, cups, horns for wine, a drinking bowl, a pitcher, and remains of men buried with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>V.D. Blavatskiy, Art Of The Northern Black Sea In Antiquity, Moscow, 1947, p.71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Art. Scy., Figs. 82,83.

the king. The depiction of images at Gaimanova Mogila may be compared to that of the images in the bowls from Kul Oba and Chastyye Mogily. Where Blavatskiy had seen only scenes from everyday life and Rostovtsev had found representations either of everyday life or uncertain cultic practices, Rayevskiy finds specific references to myths of Scythian origin. Rayevskiy talks about the accommodations between the Scythian version and that of the Greeks, and between 'a desire' to reflect narrative and the 'need' to reduce distracting detail. Referring to Rayevskiy's 'desires' and 'need', it is important to note that an art form, in this case, the Scythic nomadic animal art, has to work within a framework of technicalities, which actually determines the work and not being dictated by 'desire' or 'need'.

Spherical vessels without handles, having representations of Scythian males were found at Kul Oba (Plate 9) and in the Kirch peninsula (fourth century B.C.). They were made of gold or electrum. One such small, beautifully proportioned vessel is divided vertically into three sections above a low and appended ring foot. It could be a Scythian ritual vessel (the shape is similar to Indian ritual vessels, made of copper) having scenes of Scythian mythology and with ornaments in the lower part. Underneath

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> See his paper 'Skifskiy Mifologicheskiy Syuzhet v Iskusstve i ideologii Tsarstva Ateya' in *Sov. Arkh.*, 1970, No.3, pp.90 to 101.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy.Art., Pls. 184 – 187.

the vessel, on its base, is an engraved floret pattern surrounded by a circle of beads.1 The lower part of the vessel is covered with a flat pattern of lotus petals, expanding upwards from the base. Separating the lower part of the vessel from the figural frieze is a wide pattern of twisted rope, rendered, as in the case of the lower lotus-petal pattern, by means of broad, indented lines. The neck and mouth of the vessel are plain gold, unornamented except through the graceful shaping of the pulled-in neck and the high, open mouth. The figures represented on the upper section of the vessel body are rendered in a relatively high repoussé technique. These images are all of Scythian males, presented with their weapons: bows, arrows, goryti, spears and shields. Despite this warlike accountrement, however, the men are all represented in remarkable quiet interchange, (therefore, warlike accoutrements were but daily accessories of Scythian life). On one side of the vessel, two figures seated on hummocks or rocks are engaged in conversation (Plate 12) holding (in a relaxed attitude) their spears. One figure wears a gorytus on his left side, the left side of the other figure, on the right, is hidden by his large oblong shield. The men lean towards each other with intent expressions. In another section (Plate 10), one hooded Scythian helps a companion bandage his left leg. In the next section (Plate 11) one man seems to be prying into the other's mouth as if

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy.,p.203.

to assist an aching tooth. The fixed attention of the one who assists, the response of the victim of toothache, are vivid and effectively rendered. Around and between the rocks and hummocks where the men sit are engraved small, long stemmed flowers. The rendition of their clothing conveys the manner in which the soft boots, pants and belted jacket hug the body. The men's clothing is all ornamented in a similar style, but there are noticeable variations, which are realistically rendered, with fine and expressive detailing of the men's faces, bodies and hair. Although there is a particular idealized Greco-Scythian type, yet there is an impressive distinctiveness in posture and attention. The figures are well spread across the surface of the vessel; the smooth, open gold spaces separating individuals and groups, add to the overall sense of compactness, and along with the quiet focused aspect of the men, create an extraordinary sense of monumentality. There is a fine display of spacing, whereby the intervals between the figures conspire with their posture and expressions to emphasize their individuality. The sense of spacing is important in this later phase of Scythian art, as earlier individual ornamentation of a stag or griffin itself comprised the object. These scenes may illustrate a legend recorded by Herodotus, which relate how the three sons of Heracles

(apparently identical to the first Scythian king, Targiatus) decided the question of succession by stringing his bow<sup>1</sup>.

A spherical vessel with representations of Scythian males found at Chastyye Mogily 3, near Veronezh, upper Don basin., fourth century B.C. is another masterpiece of the western section. It is made of silver gilt.<sup>2</sup> Like the vessel from Kul Oba, this vessel (Plates 13,14 and 15) is divided into three main sections. The lower section has a pattern of expanding lotus petals. Separating the main figural section from both the base and the throat are two friezes of engraved double-edged lotus petals. The throat is high and straight, expanding to an open mouth, thus differing from the Kul Oba vessel. It seems that this vessel is less refined than that from Kul Oba, as the men depicted are stiffer, less spontaneous, and their strongly articulated modelling conflicts with the rounded surface of the vessel. The subject matter along with that of the Kul Oba and Gaymanova Mogila suggest a common source, perhaps a myth or legend or epic. There are six male figures grouped in three paired scenes, and one of the figures reappear in all. He is an elderly Scythian with long hair and a beard.<sup>3</sup> The men wear long kaftans, with triangular gussets, trimmed with fur and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy.Art.,p.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pls. 171-173.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art. Scy., Figs. 85-86.

embroidered on the shoulders and chest with fantastic designs. There is the typical combination of the Scythian appearance – men wearing gorytus, quiver and bow case. All the figures are gilded and only the faces and hands are silver. Each image is distinct in style. It is worth emphasizing that this is the first known example of Scythian decorative art depicting Scythian leaders of the highest rank.

Regarding the three bowls from Kul Oba, Gaymanova and Chastyye Mogily, all belonging to the Crimean group (early to late fourth century B.C.), Dniepr group (fourth century B.C.), Voronezh and Don regions (fourth century B.C.) respectively, their depiction of a seemingly similar tale shows the widespread diffusion of a common origin. Chastyye Mogily being far removed to the north-east of the main Hellenistic influence (northern Black Sea region), reveals less Hellenistic, more Asiatic influence. In order to explain the representative differences between the Kul Oba and Chastyye Mogily vessels and between them and the Gaymanova bowl, Rayevskiy proposes a process by which accommodations were made between the Scythian version and that of the Greeks, and between a desire to reflect narrative and the need to reduce distracting detail.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Loc. Cit.

Amphora is a typical utility vessel of the late Scythian phase i.e. fourth century onwards. There is only one significant vessel of this group, and that being the great amphora from Chertomlyk, on the right bank of the river Dniepr. All other amphorae found in burials are plain ceramic vessels. The amphora (Plate 16) is dated in the late fourth century B.C. It has floral ornaments, a frieze of men and horses and griffins savaging stags. It is made of silver gilt and its height is 70cms. It has faucets in the form of sculptured heads of lions (two) and of a hippocampus (one)1. Regarding the frieze in the Chertomlyk vase, all the figurines of men and horses were moulded separately and only arranged in a composition when they were soldered to the vessel. It is one of the best-known utility objects from the Scythian world. Above its splayed foot, the body of the amphora is divided into three principle sections. From the feet to the shoulder, the vessel is covered with a broad tendril motif, executed in gilded repoussé. From the tendrils sprout stylized flowers and palmettes, and among the graceful scrolls of the vines appear a variety of birds. Around the shoulder is a frieze of separately cast figures of Scythian males and horses. The collar of the vessel above this frieze is filled with images of griffins savaging stags. The front and lower centre of the tendril pattern and vessel are established by a large Pegasus head: behind the jutting head the animal's

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 265-268.

full wings spread out over the tendril pattern. In addition to this poursprout, the vessel has two lion head pour-spouts, one on either side of the
vessel and lower down, close to the foot. These beautifully modelled and
gilded heads are similar to the Kul Oba torque terminal. Long tendrils
gracefully encircle both lion heads. The raised images of griffins are
depicted with an idealized realism and a refinement of texturing, and one is
reminded of similar, if not smaller representations on the Tolstaya Mogila
pectoral. The use of the tendril pattern interspersed by large birds is
effective, unusual and unique. The images of griffin and deer, the large
tendril design and birds were done by repoussé. The gradations of relief
work in these areas are subtle and effective. It seems that the conceptual
power and stylistic perfection of this amphora cannot be explained by
reference to any known Greek paradigms.

Regarding the Scythian utility objects, one may continue that in the Kul Oba cup series, and in the Chertomlyk amphora, there are images of Scythian males represented alone or in groups of two or more, and that these images appear only in the late fifth or early fourth century B.C. These male images appear to be ordinary mortals, and it is not clear whether they represent deities or semi-divine figures.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., Fig. 18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.213.

Phiales are also an important utility object of the late Scythian period. Phiales are saucer shaped vessels. Gold and silver phials were recorded in the inventories of the Parthenon beginning in the late fifth century B.C.1 A gold phiale with three bands of lions attacking horses and deers was found at Solokha (Dniepr group-fourth century B.C.).2 The underside of the phiale is divided into three registers of densely interwoven images of lions and lionesses attacking horses and deer. The realistically detailed animals were executed according to a carefully copied pattern, repeated in a high repoussé technique. The area around the omphalus is a smooth surface bordered by a fine lotus petal pattern. Around the upper edge of the outer register of animals is an ivy leaf tendril. Another gold phiale with Gorgon-Medusa masks, snakes, feline heads, fish and dolphins was found at Kul Oba, Kirch Peninsula, fourth century B.C.3 Around the smooth surface surrounding the omphalus is a band of frolicking and playful porpoises and dolphins. A small lotus petal band separates this non-Scythian motif from the larger surface of the phiale. That area is divided into petal-shaped lobes of diminishing sizes, and a human head long bearded Scythian, dominates each lobe. The largest petal shaped

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> M. Vickers, 'Golden Greece; Relative Values, Minae, and Temple Inventories', Am. Journ. Arch., Vol. 94,1990, pp.613-625.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 162-163.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 164-165.

lobes are filled at their lower end by Gorgon-Medusa heads with jutting tongues and mock-ferocious grimaces. From these monster heads coil small snakes; above, large coiling forms with bended borders fill the lobe. Between the peaked ends of these lobes appear the frontal heads of Scythian males, bearded and generally ferocious in aspect. Small frontal and inverted feline heads and frontal boar heads fill much of the remaining space between the larger lobes. According to Esther Jacobson, the workmanship demonstrated in this phiale is impressive. The combinations and permutations of the motifs are hardly easy to reconcile with any Greek tradition, representational or decorative.

### 2. ORNAMENTS

Besides utility objects, ornaments found in Scythian burials, form an important section of the Scythian art. Like the utility objects, ornaments could also be classified under the early, middle and late Scythian periods. Within the context of West Asian traditions, the Scythians' interest in earrings and pendants as forms of personal adornments was hardly unusual. Earrings were a highly elaborate form of female adornment in Egypt and the Near East. Such objects were generally absent from early

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy.,p.215.

Scythian burials. Earliest earring types appearing in Scythian burials were boat-shaped or circular in form. This form elaborated and combined with the disc-pendant, resulting in elaborate earrings and temple pendants (worn hanging from a diadem or crown, over the wearer's temples). From fifth to third centuries B.C., there are a number of usual Greek earring forms, such as the splayed spiral with granulated terminals and earrings with posts ornamented with disks or rosettes from which dangle miniature figures such as Erotes, Nikai, or dancing figures, as at Juz Oba, Bolshaya Bliznitsa and Artjukov's barrow.1 One kind of earring well-known from the Hellenistic sites, seems virtually absent from Scythian burials except the following. This is the earring type formed by a tapered hoop and terminating in the head of an animal or person. Most of the earrings involve an elaborate use of filigree, granulations and enamel. In their elegant refinement of metalwork techniques, there is an affiliation with the less modest inlaid gold ornaments found at Tillya-tepe, at the near eastern frontiers.2 The other earrings found in Scythian burials mostly belong to the later period i.e. 4th century onwards. The earrings of the middle Scythian period include the boat-shaped earrings with rosette-ornamented terminals as found from Volkovtsy 4 on the left bank of the Dniepr river, and they belong to the fifth century B.C. They are made of gold with

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>E.H.Minns, op.cit., Fig. 318.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Art. Scy., p.84.

granulation. The boat-shaped earrings (Plates 17 and 18) have filigree ornaments and triangles of granulated surfaces and rosette terminals.1 Each earring is ornamented with a border of braid pattern. These earrings representing the basic boat-shaped formulations and ornamented with granulation are associated with Ziwiyeh and Karmir Blur finds. As in the utility objects, so also in the ornaments, the Scythian sensibility is much revealed by the pleasingly smooth surfaces of the boat elements, contrasted with the piled granulation. Boat shaped earrings with perched and hanging birds were found at Novoseltsy 4 (Dniepr group, fourth century B.C.). They were made of gold with granulation technique as in the earlier periods.<sup>2</sup> They were actually crescent-shaped earrings (Plates 19 and 20) decorated with granulated triangles and sculptured figurines of water birds at the ends and suspended on chains. The differences from the earlier ones are marked, with water birds sitting on each of the terminals. There is a variation to the boat shape. According to Jacobson, this "is not found in Greek jewellery and represents a local adaptation of a basic earring form, yet having the Scythian simple depiction of birds".3 At Dort Oba 2, Crimea, fourth century B.C., was found a boat-shaped earring with griffin headed

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 115-116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pls. 247-248.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art. Scy.,p.86.

terminals. The basic boat shape is ornamented with a traditional braid pattern and triangular masses of granulation. This is quite similar to the boat-shaped earring with griffin head from Nymphaeum dated in the fifth century B.C.<sup>2</sup>

A prime indicator of the pre-existence of a pectoral tradition is the gold pectoral from Ziwiyeh.<sup>3</sup> With goats, fantastic animals, and winged genii symmetrically arranged on either side of a stylized Tree of Life, the pectoral refers to a larger Near Eastern representational tradition; with its crouching felines in the narrowed ends of the lunette, it seems to make reference to a proto-Scythian tradition, or at least to a Central Asian nomadic tradition. From Urartu have been found a number of pectorals of silver and bronze. A smooth-roped torque with lion-head terminals has been found from a kurgan near the village of Arkhangel'skoe, left bank of the Ingulets river, in the Ukrainian steppe, fifth century B.C. It is of gold with filigree and enamel.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>&#</sup>x27; *Ibid*.,p.86

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>R.Higgins, Greek and Roman Jewellery, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1980, Pl.24 D.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> R. Ghirshman, The Arts of Ancient Iran, New York, 1964, Pl. 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Art. Scy.,p.122.

Nymphaeum 17 has yielded a necklace with twelve links of framed rosettes, dangling buds and palmette terminals. It is made of gold with notched wire and enamel. This necklace was found on the chest of a warrior (as evident from the kurgan). This delicate piece of jewellery offers an early dating for the appearance of enamel work in Scythian materials. It reflects the manner in which imported or purely Greek jewellery might be reused within a Scythian context.

At Kelermes 3 dated in the seventh or early sixth century B.C. has been found a diadem, with a griffin-headed protome, pendants and rosettes. It is made of gold with filigree and enamel.<sup>2</sup> The diadem is made of a stiff band of gold, to which are attached flowers worked separately in a die, and a centrally located griffin protome. The cells for its eyes (griffin) and the cells covering its neck are defined by raised and ridged borders. The collar is edged with filigree. Pendants in the form of small buds hang from loops in the lower edge of the band. From each end of the diadem band (worn so that the ends would be at the back of the wearer's head) dangles a gold chain terminating in rams' heads. The Kelermes griffin diadem bears striking similarities to diadems from ancient Egypt, dating to

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 45, 46.

the Hyksos period and to the New Kingdom.¹Another diadem² with rosettes, disks and birds was found at Kelermes I, Kuban (dated in the late seventh or early sixth century B.C.). It is made of gold with granulation and inlaid paste or amber. The gold band has rosettes tacked to the lower edge, disks with punch-marks and birds attached in alternating sequence to the upper edge, and alternating bands and standing flowers on the band itself. Birds have the large eyes and beaks of the archaic Scythian tradition. The leaves are ornamented with granulation – the six petals of the flowers are contrasted with large central mounds of granulation.

At Litoy kurgan has been found a diadem with gold chains and rosettes, of late seventh or early sixth century B.C. It is made of gold with granulation. This diadem<sup>3</sup> is made of three strands of gold chains bound together by rosettes. The petals and the inner circles of the flowers are picked out by granulation and the terminal of the diadem is ornamented with tiny triangulated areas filled with granulation. From each end of the diadem hangs a cluster of small single chains that terminate in gold spheres decorated with triangulated mounds of granulation. The terminal collars are also decorated with masses of granulation. A gold diadem of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy.,p.146.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

aptik form(Plate 21) with stamped band and pendants in the form of threelobed blades or pods, was found from Three Brothers 1 (latter half of the fourth century B.C.). This diadem takes the form of an aptik characterized by a low curved band that encircled the head. The band is ornamented at the top with an egg-and-dart frieze; a second frieze of alternating upright palmettes and acanthus, and a lower, main frieze of rampant lions and lionesses facing each other. The Scythian universal use of geometrical patterns is also found here. The main frieze is bordered above and below by rows of punched dots, while the lowest, finishing frieze, repeats the eggand-dart motif. As reconstructed, the aptik is ornamented with dangling elements in the form of three-lobed, blade-like pods hanging from a band combining spheres and plaques ornamented with scrolls. In ornamental motifs and in the combination of band, worked by stamps or a die, and hanging elements, this headdress falls squarely within the Scythian diadem and crown traditions of the late fourth century B.C. Remains of a gold ritual headdress with tendril and acanthus patterned band, hanging buds and dancing maenads were found at Deyev, fourth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> The bands have been embossed or stamped with a tendril motif with sprouting acanthus heads and flowers. Maenad figures were worked from this gold. From Bolshaya Bliznitsa, fourth century B.C. was found a crown in the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy. Art., Pl.223.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl. 135.

form of a low calathus decorated with scenes of griffins battling Amazons.1 It is made of gold. The crown (Plates 22,23 and 24) is entirely covered by thirty pieces of worked gold sheets to which the separately worked and cut figures have been attached. The upper edge of the crown shows an eggand-dart ornament while the lower border is filled with a motif of rosettes within squared meanders. Human figures on the crown have been raised in high relief, with considerable texturing of the surface. They wore close fitting pants ornamented with a lozenge pattern or with small floral motifs. The garments are stippled. From Karagodeuashkh (late fourth century B.C.), was found a gold plaque for a lost cone-shaped headdress.<sup>2</sup> This triangular plaque (Plate 25) was evidently used to ornament a tall coneshaped headdress and was cut from a larger piece of gold. In the upper section of the plaque appears the frontal figure of a woman in a chiton and in the middle register, another frontally standing woman with two horses on either side. A crude egg-and-dart pattern separates the upper and middle registers. Separating the middle register from the lowest and largest are two confronting winged griffins on either side of an urn. In the lowest section of the plaque appears a centrally placed and frontally seated female. She wears a long gown punched as if to indicate sewn clothing plaques and a tall conical headdress. There are standing males in Scythian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ibid., Pls. 226-228.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pl. 232.

clothings. An openwork cone shaped gold headdress (Plate 26) decorated with volutes and floral designs (fourth century B.C.) was found from Ak-Burun barrow, Crimea. It has an unusual form perhaps belonging to the Sarmatian style. This openwork headdress has no analogies with the exception of a helmet.

The Kul Oba (fourth century B.C.) pendants with relief Athena heads, dangling chains, rosettes, and amphora shaped elements are beautiful examples of Greek jewellery. They are made of gold with filigree, granulation and enamel.<sup>2</sup> One of the temple pendant (Plate 27) has a disk with a relief head of Athena in a helmet with three crests supported by a sphinx and two winged horses and little griffins at its cheek pieces. There is also an owl and a serpent. The whole disk seems to represent a myth. Attached to the disk is a tracery of twisted chains bearing drop-shaped ornaments decorated with filigree. Points of chain linking are decorated with rosettes and plaques inlaid with coloured enamels. Around the disk is an elegant ivy tendril pattern rendered in fine, notched filigree and blue and green enamelled leaves. The border is framed by filigree and accented with small florets. Appearing on the outer edge of this border are several heart-shaped leaves accented with enamel inlay. It is interesting to note

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Ibid.,Pl. 229.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl. 134.

that the so-called Athena in the disk herself wears an earring of the disk and inverted pyramid type. The amphora-shaped elements are picked out with granulation. "The style is perfectly Greek, but as nothing exactly like them has been found elsewhere we should probably regard them as a local peculiarity, possibly even made by Greeks for barbarian customers." The Athena pendant from Kul Oba has a massiveness in its design that distinguishes it from the more refined disks with Nikai also from Kul Oba. Dated in the fourth century B.C., is a pendant (Plate 28) with a relief image of a woman riding a hippocampus. It was found from Bolshaya Bliznitsa.<sup>2</sup> It has dangling chains, rosettes, and amphora shaped elements. Massive in appearance, yet more compact than the Kul Oba pendant having Athena, it is made of gold with filigree, granulation and enamel. The large disks of these paired pendants are rendered in high relief. Each disk is bordered with a frieze of delicate wire shaped in a stylized lotus pattern and edged by arrows of tiny granules. Within each disk, a woman riding a hippocampus wears a chiton and a calathus from which a cloth hangs over her shoulders. She sits sideways on the hippocampus. On one side of the disk the woman holds a chest armour with her right arm, on the other she holds greaves with her left arm. Dolphins frolic to the side of and below the main images indicating the watery environment of the hippocampi. Small half-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>R. Higgins, op.cit.,p.130.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy. Art., Pl.251.

spheres each with a central granule, and alternating with flowers, mark the points where the crossed chains are attached to the disks. The amphora shapes, chains and flowers are similar in the Athena pendants. It could be said that because of their unique size and monumentality, they reflect the Hellenized tastes distinctive of the northern Black Sea region, and keeping in mind, the art of the earlier period of North Black Sea region, it could refer to the Scythianisation of Hellenic subjects and ornamental traditions. The West Asia tradition carried out by the Scythian art perhaps eased the Scythianisation. At Kul Oba was found a pendant with a disk Nikai, having a hanging boat shape, and chains with rosettes and amphorae, fourth century B.C. It is of gold with granulation, filigree and enamel. The disks on this pair, ornamented with an outer border of large granules, and a series of inner friezes of notched wire, 'braided' wire and blue and green enameled lotus petals. The refinement of workmanship, here, reaches a climax in tiny, almost invisible, four figures of Nereids riding dolphins among the notched wire scrolls surrounding the central flower area of the disks. The boat shapes are more elaborate and compared to the Athena pendants, this is more decorative, amalgamating disk, boat shapes, scrolls, chains, rosettes, amphora, all into one earring. At Theodosia, Crimea, (of late fourth or third century B.C.), were found pendants each with a disk-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 180.

shaped ornament, having a dangling boat shape, a chain with amphorae and flowers, and a frieze with winged figures, quadriga and flowers.<sup>1</sup> It is of gold, with filigree and granulation. At Karagodeuashkh, Kuban, fourth century B.C. was found a pendant or earring in the form of a disk with hanging inverted pyramids.<sup>2</sup> This motif will again be encountered at Tillyatepe. It is of gold with filigree and granulations. The disk is ornamented with filigree tendrils and bordered by circles of filigree work.

A beautiful example of later Scythian art is a pectoral<sup>3</sup> with four twisted ropes, having three representational friezes, and lion-headed terminals. It was found from Tolstaya Mogila (fourth century B.C.), and is made of gold with filigree and enamel. This pectoral (Plates 29, 30 and 31) terminating with lions' heads and decorated with scenes of Scythian life in the upper frieze, fighting animals in the lower frieze and floral ornament in the middle is considered a masterpiece of Greek metal-work. It has a large collar like form. The decorative elements in this central frieze are composed of string wires shaped into curled tendrils; on which are superimposed three-dimensional flowers, leaves and modelled birds. The lower, openwork frieze is dominated by images of animals modelled in the half-round. The

<sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., p.93.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>E. H. Minns, op.cit., Fig. 119.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 118 – 121.

sense of vitality and reality of the elements in all the three friezes is extraordinary indeed. "The pectoral impresses one by the massive amount of gold and the technical aspects of its working. Most of the figure of animals, men, birds, some of the floral elements, and implements (vessels, goryti) were cast and soldered or pinned to the frame. Many of the flowers were prepared out of gold sheet and then ornamented with notched wire and enamel. The lower frieze has a combination of real and fantastic animals. A number of scholars have assumed that the pectoral was part of the battle regalia of the chief warrior buried at Tolstaya Mogila".1 Another pectoral, impressive in its features was found at Bolshaya Bliznitsa, Taman Peninsula, fourth century B.C. It is of gold with enamel. The pectoral has a frieze of animals and floral elements, two twisted ropes and lion head terminals.<sup>2</sup> It is a crescent shaped pectoral (Plate 32) with fifteen, sculptured figurines of animals (goats, rams, dogs and hares) and filigree flowers, and petals between two twisted plaits. The clasps are in the form of relief heads of lions, dated in the fourth century B.C. It is less of a Greek work than the Tolstaya pectoral. Bordering the frieze proper, and held within the ropes, are lotus-petal friezes. The larger animals appear to have been cast and soldered to the frames and to the vertical posts with flowers. The general finish of this pectoral is less refined than that of the Tolstaya

<sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., p.118.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy. Art., Pls. 255, 256.

Mogila pectoral, and like the Tolstaya one, here also the animals diminish in size. Solokha revealed a twisted-rope torque<sup>1</sup> with lion head terminals, datable to the early fourth century B.C. It is of gold with filigree work and enamel. The torque has terminals in the form of lion's heads and filigree plant ornament with coloured enamels. The collars are ornamented with an elegant, broad pattern of lotus and palmette motifs. The lion heads are similar to those of the single torque terminal from Kul Oba. There is the use of beaded encircling wires and the collar ornamentation with lotus buds, palmettes, filigree and enamel. This torque was found on the neck of the man buried in the famous Solokha tomb. At Kul Oba was found a twisted rope torque with terminals in the form of Scythian riders, datable to the fourth century B.C. It is of gold with enamel and filigree.2 The torque(Plate 33) is made of twisted gold wire with caps decorated with palmettes, lotus flowers and egg-and-dart ornaments inlaid with coloured enamels. The terminals are in the form of half-length facing horsemen-two bearded Scythian riders. Realistic texturing of the horses' manes and men's hair are similar to the Gaimanova and Chastiyye Mogily bowls. The collars behind the riders combine a number of elements, which are found elsewhere and frequently on the Scythian goldwork of the fourth century B.C.These include braided wires, lotus-petal friezes, and S-shaped spirals

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 122,123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pls. 126, 127.

picked out with granules of gold. In its fine exploitation of enamelled areas, this torque, like the single terminal, continues the interest in coloristic effects noted with reference to Scythian earrings and temple pendants. A torque with smooth ropes having lion-head terminals was found at Talayev barrow, Crimea(fourth century B.C.). This torque (Plate 34) is based on a solid gold rope. The ornamentation of the collars consists of a braided pattern separating and bordering large areas ornamented with long Sshapes of wire, and with scrolled centres punctuated with granules. The closest comparisons to this formulation come out of the materials of Central Asian burials, like the Issyk Kurgan and other Siberian burials.<sup>2</sup> At Kul Oba a gold smooth rope torque,3 with terminals in the form of recumbent lions (Plate 35), reveals realistic treatment and the general form is that of a single band terminating in the bodies of predatory felines, reminiscent of torque traditions from the Altay Pazyryk culture. It is similar to the Karagodeuashkh spiralled torque (Plate 36).4 A spiralled smooth rope torque (Plate 37) terminating in recumbent lions, and made of gold was found from Chertomlyk.<sup>5</sup> At the ends of the torque appear crouched felines in the form of panthers or lionesses. According to Kubarev, the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 236, 237.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Art. Scy., p. 122.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Scy. Art., Pl. 125.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., Pl. 240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid., Pl. 239.

torque is reminiscent of those with carved panther terminals from the Altay region, such as that from Kurgan 12, Ulandryk I.1 A spiralled, gold, smooth-rope torque(Plate 38) terminating in deer and approached by felines, was found at Tolstaya Mogila (fourth century B.C.).2 The torque has two groups of sculptured lions. The animals are finished in general detail, with some ribs and musculature schematically indicated. The motif of several panthers approaching deer, as if in predation, recalls the more complex treatment of the same theme on a carved wooden diadem from Ulandryk, in the Altay.<sup>3</sup> Another spiralled smooth-rope torque (Plate 39) with felines was found at Chertomlyk. It was made of gold and had applied jagged ornamentations.<sup>4</sup> As in the case of the torque from Tolstaya Mogila, the terminals are edged by a triple line and an added frieze of triangular designs. Sculptured figures of six panther-like felines, extremely smooth, recall carved wooden precedents from Altay burials of the Pazyryk culture. They also unfailingly recall the manner in which the Sakas would edge their bronze altars with rows of felines. In many cases, however, these felines would be winged as found from a square altar with winged felines from Semirechiye and a round alter with long-legged standing felines from East

V.D.Kubarev, Kurgany Ulandryka, Novosibirsk, 1987, Pl.XXVII/10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy. Art., Pl. 124.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>V.D.Kubarev, op.cit., Pl.LXIX/9.

<sup>4</sup> Scy.Art., Pl.235.

Kazakhstan.¹ Another spiralled smooth-rope torque (Plate 36) terminating in the representations of lions savaging boar was found at Karagodeuashkh (late fourth century B.C.).² The ends of the spiral behind each terminal are treated in a notched and beaded form, reminiscent of that on the Kul Oba torque. Here the bead sections are covered with diagonal incisions. Detailed texturing of the boar's bristles, lion's manes and facial wrinkles are present. In the realism of these animal groups, this torque appears to mediate between the distinctly non-Hellenised appearance of other spiralled forms and the more clearly Hellenised treatment of the twisted torques.³

From Bolshaya Bliznitsa was found a pair of bracelets (Plate 40) with doubled twisted ropes and rampant lion-terminals. It is of gold plate over bronze, with filigree and enamel<sup>4</sup> beneath the animals' legs, gold wire is used to render large palmettes that retain a trace of enamel. From Kul Oba was found a bracelet with twisted rope (Plate 41) terminating in the half-bodies of sphinxes, fourth century B.C.<sup>5</sup> It is of gold over bronze. The sphinxes have been very delicately detailed. Each collar is ornamented with a small frieze of lotus petals, a larger frieze of alternating lotus and

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>K.A.Akishev, Kurgan Issyk, Moscow, 1978, Figs. 74, 75.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy.Art.,Pl.240.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art. Scy., p. 125.

<sup>4</sup> Scy.Art., Pl.234.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid.,Pl.182.

palmettes executed in fine filigree and borders of notched wires. On this bracelet, the bronze interior is visible through a number of breaks in the gold. Although the workmanship of details, here, seems thoroughly Greek, the weightiness of the sphinxes and of the bracelets as a whole sets them outside a purely Greek taste. From Karagodeuashkh, Kuban, fourth century B.C., was found a gold, two-spiralled and flattened bracelet (Plate 42) terminating in hippocampi. The gold bands are thin and appear to have been cut and hammered into their ridged shape. The hippocampi terminals were fabricated from separate pieces of gold and then soldered on to the bands. The bracelets are rough in finish and reflect a tradition of hammering rather than casting. Hippocampi appear frequently in late Scythian art, as on the scabbard from Kul Oba and the confronting hippocampi on a gold openwork plaque from Alexandropol.

From Solokha, early fourth century, the famous gold comb (Plate 43) crested with recumbent lions, fighting figures and horses, has been found.<sup>4</sup> The men, lions and horses were all cast separately and then soldered together. The squared teeth were also separately cast. It is a small but

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art.Scy.,p.134.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy.Art.,Pl.250.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> E.H.Minns, op.cit., Fig. 42.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>V.Schiltz, Les Scythes et les Nomades des Steppes, Paris, 1994, pp. 359, 414 and Pl. 359.

monumental comb. The comb derives its style from the wooden or bone comb types of Scythian and Scytho-Siberian tradition. The crests of simpler Scythian combs may have been covered with gold, as the early comb with a crest in the form of stylized bird heads, from the Khanenko Collection, and the remains of gold covered combs found from Mastyugino and Chastyye Mogily. The squared teeth of the comb, somehow represents the formation of a Greek colonnade (in a micro form).

Clothing plaques was a major sub-group of ornaments as innumerable Scythian burials have revealed thousands of gold plaques intended to be sewn to clothing. The actual ornamentation of clothing with plaques is well attested to by representations on Scythian objects-primarily, rosettes, stars, rings, disks, stepped ornaments, squares, floral elements, and animal motifs. The Scythians must have derived their tradition of gold clothing plaques from the Assyrians and Achaemenids, but the fact remains that this decorative tradition was widespread within the nomadic world of the Eurasian steppe, and there are indications that it may have gone back to a period preceding significant contact between the nomadic and Achaemenid worlds. The intact burial at Issyk and other Saka burials establish the existence of a tradition at least as early as the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>S.I.Kaposhina, 'Pamyiatniki zverinogo stilya iz O'lbii', K.S.LI.M.K, XXXIV, 1950, Fig. 9.

fifth century B.C., of using gold plaques to so ornament a garment as to acquire the appearance of gold cloth. Evidences are also found at Tillyatepe. Plaques representing spread-winged birds (late seventh-early sixth century B.C.) were found from Litoy (Plate 44). Seven Brothers 2 (mid-fifth century B.C.) yielded plaques showing representations of recumbent ibexes, crouching sphinxes, back-turned roosters, Silenus heads, ram's and bull's heads, owls, flying boars with palmette bodies, Janus head with a helmeted warrior on one side and a lion's face on the other, youth kneeling and rampant lions. Solokha has yielded the important plaque (Plate 45) showing two Scythians kneeling and drinking from a rhyton within a squared frame (fourth century B.C.).2 Kul Oba plaques have representations of two Scythians drinking from a single rhyton (Plate 46),3 two Scythians standing back to back with drawn bows, and various animal motifs. Bolshaya Bliznitsa (fourth century B.C.) plaques (Plates 47 and 48) show various forms.4 There are plaques in the shape of dancing women in long robes and nude youths, plaques in the shape of women on animals (Plate 49), similar to several images from the Tillya-tepe burials,<sup>5</sup> a robed woman on a panther and others.

<sup>1</sup> Scy.Art.,Pl.19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid.,Pl.142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl.196.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid.,Pls.208,209.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Bac.Gol.,P1.78.

## 3. WEAPONS

From Kelermes 4, Kuban, late seventh or early sixth century B.C., was found a gold overlay<sup>1</sup> for gorytus (Plate 50). It is ornamented with the images of recumbent deer and crouching felines. It is in the form of a gold sheet and it would have been attached by nails along the edges, as is indicated by the small holes. The images on the Kelermes overlay (Plates 51 and 52) are indicative of the kind of monumentality and sober archaic style that characterized early Scythian art. Their antlers and bodies reveal the techniques of wood or bone carving, and the crouched feline images recall those found from Ziwiyeh.2 In the late period of Scythian art, from Chertomlyk (late fourth century B.C.) was found a gorytus cover<sup>3</sup> with scenes said to be from the life of Achilles. It is perhaps of Greek craftsmanship, as revealed by its ornamentation and narrative character. Its replication in almost identical goryti covers from Melitopol, Five Brothers, on firms the existence of workshops. The combinations of ornamental bands, reveal a standardized vocabulary of motifs, common to both the eastern and western sections of Saka/ Scythian art. Remains of a

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy.Art.,Pl.23.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>R.Ghirshman, op.cit.,Pl.147.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Scy.Art., Pls. 224, 225.

gorvtus cover with scenes of a battle was found from Karagodeuashkh (late fourth century B.C.).1 It is made of silver-gilt, and has borders of conventionalized lotus buds, stylized lotus petal pattern, and triple twisted rope pattern. The figural style is similar to that of the Chertomlyk gorytus. A scabbard casing, with procession of fantastic animals on the shaft, winged genii on the top, and recumbent deer on the hanging plates,2 was found at Kelermes 1, Kuban, late seventh or early sixth century B.C. A similar type was also found at Litoy kurgan of the same date. It was made of gold over perhaps a wood and leather frame. It shows a refined technique of ornamentation with winged genii. The fantastic animals on the gold scabbard casings suggest a general Near Eastern iconographic tradition. In reconstructions of warriors in regalia, the sword in the Saka/Scythian repertoire hangs on the right front of the man's belt and falls to the front or right. Such an arrangement for short swords is supported by carved images of Śakas and Persians on the Persepolis Apadana.3 An axe overlay (Plates 53 and 54) with stacked images of fantastic animals, goats, boar and deer was found at Kelermes 1.4 It used gold over an iron core. The beasts appear to be imaginative variations on the theme of the recumbent animal. A

<sup>1</sup> E.H.Minns, *op.cit.*, Figs. 124,125. <sup>2</sup> *Scy.Art.*, Pls. 32-35.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Art. Scy., p.233.

<sup>4</sup> Scy.Art., Pls.37-40.

scabbard casing (Plates 55 and 56) for an iron sword, with raised images of felines and caprids was found at Shumeiko (late sixth or early fifth century B.C.). It was made of gold with surface granulation. The lower section of the sheath is of plain gold, ornamented at its upper edge by three tiers of triangulated masses of granulation. Another gold scabbard casing (Plate 57) with lions savaging humans and deer heads was found at Solokha (early fourth century B.C.). The shaft of this casing is divided into several sections by cross-bars of a twisted-rope pattern. A beak-head in the shoulder of the feline is suggestive of the Scythian tradition (from early sixth to fifth century B.C.). From Tolstaya Mogila (fourth century B.C.), a scabbard casing (Plates 58, 59, 60 and 61) with scenes of lions and griffins savaging deer and horses, was found. Images here are treated with greater realism with respect to the musculature and texture, and by a more massive treatment of both the griffins and the lions.

The Scythians ornamented not only their clothing but also their weapons and horses with plaques of bronze, gold and silver. The most famous plaques, associated with weaponry, are those attached to shields.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls.66,67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls.155,156.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls. 150-154.

They include the large gold panther plaque (Plate 62) from Kelermes,<sup>1</sup> the deer plaques from Kostromskaya (Plate 63),<sup>2</sup> and Kul Oba (Plate 64).<sup>3</sup> A bronze bridle cheek piece (Plate 65) from Elizavetinskaia<sup>4</sup> depicts a stylized head of a stag amidst the openwork of the plaque-like cheek piece. Shown in profile, the head is almost lost among the enormous antlers which form an intricate, seemingly pure ornamental composition. Perhaps more than any other material from Scythian burials, the ornamental plaques from horse harnesses seem to reflect the changes from the native archaic tradition, which gradually transformed into new nomadic traditions in the fifth century under the influence of Hellenic tastes.

## **B. EASTERN SECTION**

In the eastern section, as mentioned above, the name Scythia or Śaka/Scythia was extended to areas east of the Caspian Sea, including Siberia, Mongolia and the western borders of China. It also included Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Afghanisthan, Pakistan and India.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl.17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl.16.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.213.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Gol. De. Eur., Pl. 153.

Before entering the eastern section proper one comes to Filippovka, a nomadic cemetery in the foothills of the Ural Mountains, at the eastern edge of the western section of the Scythian art. The reason for including the Filippovka burial in the eastern section is that most of the objects found here have stylistic affinity with the objects found from the tombs of the Altai region, Siberia and Western China.1 Spectacular gold and silver objects dating from the fifth to the fourth century B.C. were excavated between 1986 and 1990 from the burial mound at Filippovka, which lies on the open steppe in the southern Ural Mountains region, sixty miles west of Orenburg. These finds constitute a brilliant new chapter in the history of the art of the nomads. Among the precious works of art from the funerary deposits are also gold and silver vessels of foreign manufacture resembling in both form and style works from the Achaemenid Iran. Other gold and bronze plaques exhibit similarities with the art of both ancient Bactria and modern Kazakhstan. The presence of the Scythians is evident in the horse trappings and the great cast-bronze cauldrons found in the central tomb chamber at kurgan I in Filippovka. The subjects commonly represented on the Filippovka finds are similar to those in the animal repertoire of contemporary Scythian art. The stylistic affinity of the Filippovka deer, lie to the east, in Bashadar, Tuekta and Pazyryk. The overall ornamentation

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid*.,p.6.

on bodies of animals was also common on the eastern steppes not only in wood carving but also in gold work found from the Issyk kurgan.1 Filippovka was well situated to control both east-west travel along the steppes and the north-south routes, to the gold mines of the Urals and the Altai or through central Asia to the fringes of the Achaemenid empire.2 Various gold attachments for wooden vessels have been found. In pit 2 of kurgan 1, four different types of hammered gold plaques in the so-called animal style were found. Hammering the metal over a wooden form produced them. Weapons include a sword inlaid with gold (Plate 66),3 a dagger like the typical akinakes (Plate 67),4 and whetstone (Plate 68).5 The horse trappings include a gold buckle (Plate 69)6 and gold bridle decorations in the form of griffins or griffins' heads (Plates 70,71 and 72).7 Two bronze roundels depicting a combat between two camels (Plate 73)8 were perhaps ornaments for a horse's chest collar. There are only few garment plaques and jewellery.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*,p.7.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,p.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*,p.80,Pl.5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*,P1.7.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., Pl.8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*,Pls.9,10,11.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl. 13.

Scholars love to attribute the materials of the Altai group of nomads to the Scythians. The great connecting factor was the animal motifs common to the products of the western section. The present day Altay Republic was home to the early nomads of the Pazyryk culture. To the north, in the Minusinsk basin lived the people of the Tagar culture. Bronze stags cast in relief and hammered were common in the Tagar repertoire. Present day Tuva was the centre of the Aldi-Bal' and Saglin cultures, while northern and central Mongolia are identified with the so-called Chandman culture. The early nomadic tribes of Mongolia lived in khūrees, or circles (an idea of steppe nomad tribes from 800 B.C.) in the centre of which, the elder's hooded cart (gerlug) was surrounded by an encampment of gers or tents. The later Khāns adopted this but instead of the gerlug, they built a palace (butchord) and monastic compound in the centre and surrounded the whole camp with a fortified wall or fence.

Noin Ula in Mongolia is an important Scytho-Siberian centre. Over 200 kurgans dated in the third to first century B.C. contained precious objects like golden pendants, silver plaques, table like structures<sup>1</sup> with animal motifs, bronze artifacts, pottery, textiles and utensils. Bronze objects include plaques, belt-buckles, horse trappings, bronze cauldrons

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Hist. Civ. Cen. As., Vol.II,p.160.

and bronze candleholders. A significant felt rug decorated with chain-stitch designs showing typical steppe motifs like the elk and griffin locked in combat has been found in Noin Ula.1 The presence of lacquered cups, silk and other objects reveals links with China during the Han period. (206 B.C. - 220 A.D.). The effect of Scythian art is especially marked in the Hunan art of the Chu age. It largely contained animal motifs like stylized tigers, horned lions and other beasts, which had been depicted in the western section like eagle headed griffins. Under the Hans, the influence of Siberian art of the Scythian type became for a time so forceful that some of the oriental bronze plaques scarcely differed in arrangement and form from the nomadic works, whilst the Chinese dragon become twisted into an altogether Scythian posture, its head turned in one direction and its body in another. At much the same time the Chinese metal-workers began to stylize the tails and extremities of many of their beasts in accordance with the characteristic convention of the Altaian and Scythain art. The pole and furniture finials, which had flourished in early Scytho-Siberian art appeared in China. Forty graves excavated at Xiangbaobao2 in the grasslands near River Tashkurgan have yielded bronze bridle pieces executed in the Scytho-Siberian style. This locality borders the Saka territory of the Tarim basin in the west. Interestingly, the territory of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*,p.161.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,p.210.

Khotan, had, like the rest of the Tarim Basin, been under Chinese supremacy both under Han and Tang dynasties. Intaglios from Yotkan reveal careful delineations of a warrior of the Indo-Scythic type. In the Lou-Lan graves at Lop Nor the deceased wears a peaked brown felt hat much similar to the Saka type. At Alagou (Turfan county) bone ornaments are carved with the heads of animals in a style reminiscent of the Scythian art.

We have seen the stag motif very much used in the Scythian art. In Siberia, the so-called stag figures (surely of elk, as confirmed by the heavy drooping muzzle) are very common. The peculiarities of the elk, like the heavy muzzle, broad palm antlers, and exaggerated long limbs, have all influenced the Scythian art. The ceres and the hooked beak are characteristic marks of birds of prey and at the same time typical features of Scytho-Siberian stylization. Their territory was merged into the steppe belt and land of forest and tundra, mostly inhabited by Finno-Ugrian tribes. The Scythian connection with Asia Minor is clearly reflected in the so-called Ziwiyeh treasure from the Saqqez tomb in Iranian Kurdistan (seventh century B.C.), which contains outstanding artifacts in which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>M.Aurel Stein, Ancient Khotan, p.210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid*.,p.211.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.213.

images characteristic of both ancient Near Eastern and Scythian art are combined. The golden objects in the Scythian style found at Ziwiyeh are similar to finds from the Scythian burial mounds, such as the sword with a gold covered hilt and scabbard in the Elizavetgrad kurgan, Ukraine, and the gold-handled sword and axe (Plate 53) from the Kelermes kurgan in the Kuban region. As seen, all these objects combine Scythian motifs (reclining deer) with ancient Eastern imagery (the holy tree with its attendant divinities and fantastic animals) and it is probably correct to consider that they are imitates of Urartian artifacts, modified by the addition of elements in purely Scythian style. Art historians have tried to relate the birth of the Scythian art to the period of Scythian campaigns in Asia Minor, but on the other hand, we find examples of the pre-Scythian and Scythian art discovered in Siberia, which predate those from Ziwiyeh (i.e. seventh century B.C.) and are also decorated in the animal style.

It is to be noted that throughout Eastern Europe extending to Inner Asia, there existed a nomadic animal art, practised by the vast hordes of tribes, mingling to form a whole nomadic system. The term "Scythian" is now applied to a large number of ethnically unrelated tribes characterized by a strong Iranian influence in their personal and place names. Its

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy.Art., Pls.36,37.

application is frequently limited to the tribes inhabiting the coastal flatlands of the Black Sea region as seen in the western section. But archeologists have shown that the early Scythian monuments of this region are related to ancient steppe culture, which belongs to the middle of the second millennium B.C. The term Scythian denotes a vast mass of tribes sharing the same economic and cultural existence and spread over a much wider area. From the sixth to the third century B.C., the steppe lands between the Don, the Volga and the Urals were the home of a culture similar to that of the Black Sea Scythians. The bearers of this culture, whom the Greeks called Sarmatians, were in turn linked with the tribes of Eastern Kazakhstan, whose own culture is brilliantly represented by a series of gold plaques depicting reclining deer found in the sixth century Chiliktinsky kurgan. Beyond steppes of Kazakhstan, these tribes stretched to High Altai, whose frozen burial mounds perfectly preserved objects in wood, bone, felt and metal and in which the Chinese, Iranian and Scythian influences are clearly apparent. That the nomads manufactured carpets and rugs in antiquity is well illustrated by the world's oldest carpets and felt objects found in Altaian Scythian barrows. They were made of sheep's wool, goat hair and camel hair. Pile weaving traditions still continue in Kirghyzia and in Kazakhstan and felt carpets executed in the mosaic technique are of great artistic worth.<sup>1</sup> Imagery at Altai had much to contribute to the Scytho-Siberian-Śaka art. Four carved figures of walking tigers cover the length of a sarcophagus lid (Plate 74) <sup>2</sup> found from Altai dated in the sixth century B.C. Beneath the legs of the predators are depictions of hoofed animals: three rams, two boars, and two elk. The proportions are not to scale; the tigers are much larger than the other animals and dominate the composition. The tiger's fur is indicated by flame patterns, and the bodies of the hoofed animals are suggested by spiraliform designs. This stylistic approach is characteristic of early Altai art of the sixth century B.C. and illustrates the high level of the artisans wood carving.

Cast gold aside, there is abundant evidence that the early nomads were using gold even before the appearance of extensive gold work in Scythia. Bits and pieces of gold and turquoise were found from the burial of Arzhan in Tuva. In a recent discovery of 2700 years old tomb of a noble couple in Tuva, there is a marked evidence of the Scythian's reverence for their mounts. Some 5,700 pieces of gold artifacts were found, which prompted the Russian archaeologist Chugunov to comment-"Tuva has

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *I.B.I.A.S.C.C.*, Issue 5,p.71.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Gol. De. Eur., Pl. 174.

always been an archaeological white spot. Now it has a colour; gold."1 In the western section, plenty of gold has been found in the Scythian tombs in Ukraine, but those pieces were produced in later centuries, either by or under the influence of the Greeks. These new pieces2 predate the other and display a uniquely Scythian style, indicating that the Scythians were skilled gold-smiths even before they encountered the Greeks. Included in the cache from Tuva were two magnificent neck pieces, a buckle from an arrow quiver, a headpiece ornament and foil fish used to decorate a horse's bridle. There is abundant evidence that the nomads had the preference for gold objects in both the western and eastern section. Bits and pieces of gold and turquoise were recovered from Arzhan, in Tuva. The archaeology of Tuva is and will remain mainly an archaeology of barrows, for in this republic the number of barrow burials far exceeds that of all other groups in the eastern section. A burial complex of the Scythian time was found near Mount Kazylgan, and S. I. Vainstein, the archaeologist, suggested the name of the Kazylgan culture for the Scythian-type culture of Tuva.<sup>3</sup> Other Scythian sites include the area on the river Ij in Todzhin region, as well as the burial complexes of Ozen-Ala-Belig and Kokaael. The Kazylgan culture spans from seventh to third centuries B.C. From the seventh to sixth

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> M.Edwards, 'Unearthing Siberian Gold', *National Geographic*, June 2003, p.129.

 <sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.123.
 <sup>3</sup> V. Semenov, K.Chugunov, 'New evidence of the Scythian-type culture of Tuva', Anc. Civ. Scy.Sib., Vol.2, p.311.

centuries B.C. the earliest Scythian-type burials are found. L. R. Kyzlasov invented another name for the Scythian culture of Tuva: the Ujuk culture, 1 in the Ujuk valley dated in the seventh to third centuries B.C. Different ethnic groups had inhabited Tuva in the Scythian period. Typical Scythian bronze bridle-bits with cheek-pieces, a saddle-girth buckle and strap distributors were found from a hoard in the mound of Aldy-Bel', a barrow at the burial site of Ortaa-Khem in Central Tuva.2 The grave goods include the so-called "Scythian triad" (Scythian animal-style decorations, arms and horse- harnesses) which proves that Tuva was one of the centres where the development of cultures of the Scytho-Siberian cluster took place. From the kurgan 13 of Sagly-Bazhi II in the Ovur region, Tuva, a low-relief horn plaque (Plate 76) in the form of a recumbent horse<sup>3</sup> with head cast down, has been found. Although the horse was an essential feature of nomadic culture, it is unusual as a subject, as most animals represented are wild rather than domesticated. The mane is indicated by rows of curving, leaf like shapes. Curved designs including scrolls emphasise the horse's musculature. The typical almond-shaped eyes are there.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.312.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.315, Fig.4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Gol. De. Eur., Pl. 197.

Gold earrings (Plate 77) from the central Aldy- Bel' burial barrow I, of the Saryg-Bulun burial site, are reminiscent of the Taxila type. They consist of conic pendants decorated with granules and comma-shaped insets. So far the Arzhan barrow remains the only completely excavated monument among the great barrows of Tuva, though there are several other great barrows similar in appearance in the centre of the Ujuk basin.Gold garment decorations (Plates 78 and 79) representing birds of prey and an iron figurine inlayed with gold representing a predatory animal<sup>2</sup> have been found from the burial site of Kosh-Pej, barrow 2, in Tuva. The gold garment-decorations representing birds of prey are very much similar with the birds of prey found in the western section specially at Litoy kurgan (Plate 44)3 of seventh century B.C. Kosh-Pej has also revealed gold garment-decorations (Plate 80) shaped as reposing panthers4 and a gold svastika-shaped decoration and iron buckles covered with gold leaf (Plate 81).5 It is interesting that Chiliktin-type gold cornelian and turquoise beads and gold hemispheric plaques with loops soldered on to their back were found from Kosh-Pej. The garments of the dead buried in the Ujuk barrows were covered with numerous decorations of gold. Eagles

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>V.Semenov, K.Chugunov, op.cit., p.318, Fig.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.322,323,Figs.9,10.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> V.Schiltz, op.cit., p.88, Pl.64.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>V.Semenov, K.Chugunov, op.cit., p.324, Fig.11.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.325, Fig.12.

and other birds of prey carved out of gold leaf are widely represented and they were attached to a headdress. Belt of garments had various belt-clasps of bronze or iron covered with gold leaf and "butterfly"-shaped plaques¹ were found. These plaques are similar to those found in Altai, Tillya-tepe, the Minusinsk basin and the Baikal region dated in the fifth to fourth centuries B.C. Kosh-Pej 2 has images of ibexes and boars carved out of gold leaf.

In the burials of Suglug-khem dated in the second century B.C., typical Śaka/Scythian bronze buckles and belt decorations (Plate 82) were found.<sup>2</sup> The garments of a noble warrior from the same burial, decorated with more than a hundred golden figurines,<sup>3</sup> were found. The belt was inlaid with gold leaf, decorated with twenty cowrie shells which were also covered with gold leaf. In three of the female burials of Suglug-Khem high caps were found along with gold earrings, wooden combs, gold pins, gold torques, bronze cauldrons and mirrors, some of which having zoomorphic side-handles (one representing an ibex) (Plate 83).<sup>4</sup> L. R. Kyzlasov thought that the barrow of Suglug-Khem was erected by the Śakas coming from

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.327.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.332,Fig.18.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.333.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p.331, Fig.17.

central Kazkhstan. The findings are similar in style to those found from Ptichata Mogila in Bulgaria, two rich burials in the Vysokaya Mogila on the Dniepr and the kurgan of Arzhan in Tuva (all dated in the eighth to seventh century B.C.). The kurgan of Arzhan-2 in Tuva valley poses a major question about the authorship of the splendid gold pieces discovered there. The ornaments depicting workmanship of the highest quality confirmed the fact that the Scythians in the eastern section were well acquainted with Several thin gold disks, imprinted with coiled feline gold techniques. images near the Mayemir kurgan in the Altay Republic, Issyk kurgan in the East Kazakhstan, and recently excavated burial on the Ukok plateau in the Altay Republic have also revealed much richness. From the Golden Barrow at Chilktin in East Kazakhstan were recovered twenty-nine gold foil images of felines and several foil images of deer with inlaid turquoise eyes. As in the case of the Mayemir finds, these foil images had been pressed over more sturdy forms carved from wood or leather. The coiled felines from Chiliktin are similar to the coiled feline shaped bridle ornament (Plate 2) from Temir-Gora.2

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.333. <sup>2</sup> *Scy.Art.*, Pl.7.

The early Scythian gold reindeer (Plate 84) from Chilikta, 1 and the gold deer (Plate 63) from the royal Scythian burial at Kostromskaya, in the Caucasus<sup>2</sup> for instance, have a typically Scythian folded pose. From kurgan 5, Chilikta burial ground (south of Lake Zaysan), Kazakhstan, two reindeershaped plaques have been found. They have been dated to the early Scythian period, from the second half of the eighth century B.C. to the first half of the seventh century B.C. Gold and turquoise have been cleverly used. On each of these flat, gold-sheet plaques, probably used to decorate a leather quiver, the reindeer faces right, with legs folded under the body. The head is raised, with nostrils, mouth, and eye indicated by hollows; the pointed ear is inlaid with turquoise which was sufficiently found in Siberia; and the large antlers have one branch in the front and four to the rear, a more naturalistic rendering, characteristic of this eastern region, than the more stylized depictions of stags in the Scythian art of the Pontic steppes. Both plaques were hammered over a mold in low relief. From the same burial several hundred gold objects have been found. Among them were small reliefs of a typically early Scythian and Siberian animal style, especially the stags with feet crouched beneath the body, and the stylized antlers. Arresting bronze arrowheads were found in a sheath adorned with golden stags dated in the seventh to sixth century B.C. The fourteen figures

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gol. De. Eur., Pl. 170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Gol.De.Eur., Pl. 170.

of gold reindeer from Chilikta were found with remnants of a leather quiver and arrows and gold plating decorated with 24 figures of deer in separately stamped compartments like the one from Kelermes (Plate 50) in the Caucacus.<sup>1</sup>

The golden skeleton from Issyk kurgan makes abundantly clear the extent to which the Śaka would literally robe a person in gold at the time of burial. But whether the Issyk burial was that of a man or a woman is a mystery<sup>2</sup> as new evidence suggests that the buried in the Issyk kurgan was a woman. The body had been attired in boots, trousers, and a leather tunic decorated with some 2,400 arrow shaped gold plaques. Thirteen gold deer heads flanked by three gold plaques of moose with unusual twisted torsos (Plates 85 and 86) had been sewn to a belt.<sup>3</sup> Snow leopards with gaping mouths decorated a gold torque found around the neck of the skeleton. Plaques of horses with twisted torsos decorated scabbards that held an iron dagger and a sword. These ceremonial weapons, both embellished with gold animals, lay beside the remains. A short sword or dagger like the akinakes from Filippovka (Plate 67)<sup>4</sup> has also been found. The hilt is composed of

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> J. Davis-Kimball, 'Chieftain or Warrior Priestess?', Archaeology, Sept.-Oct. 1997, p.41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Gol.De.Eur., p.7, Figs.4,5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Gol. De. Eur., p.7, Figs. 4,5.

opposed griffins' heads. Near the head was a gold-bound whip handle. Ceramic, silver and bronze vessel, as well as flat wooden dishes and beaters for koumiss (fermented mare's milk) were also found in the tomb. The most spectacular object in the burial was a conical headdress elaborately decorated in gold.1 The intact burial at Issyk and other Saka burials establish the existence of a tradition at least as early as the fifth century B.C. of using gold plaques to so ornament a garment as to acquire the appearance of gold cloth. The same can be said about the Tillya-tepe burial. The headdress from Issyk was probably made of felt with a flap extending down over the neck. Its base consisted of pairs of winged mountain goats carved out of wood and sheathed in gold. Two gold foil strips painted black and red, were set vertically on the centre of the hat. On each side of these strips were what some scholars have called a pair of gold feathers or wings and a pair of upright gold arrows or miniature spears. On a felt carpet from kurgan 5 at Pazyryk in southern Siberia, of about the same date as the Issyk burial a similar motif is found.<sup>2</sup> Gold-foil depictions of mountains, birds, snow leopards with twisted torsos, winged tigers, and mountain goats were attached to the sides of the headdress, and a small gold ram was set on its point. Although the burial was said to be of a man, the headdress reminded the Kazakh excavators of hats worn by brides in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>J.Davis-Kimball, op.cit., p.40.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.40.

traditional wedding ceremonies. Artifacts in the Issyk burial are so similar to those found in burials of women warriors and priestesses at Pokrovka in the southern Ural steppe that one cannot help speculating that this person was actually a young woman. Three earrings adorned with turquoise, carnelian and white beads suggest more elaborate jewellery than is usually associated with male Saka warriors. A gilded bronze mirror is placed to the body's left and above the head. Such mirrors are associated with priestesses in archaeological contexts at Pokrovka, Tuva, in southern Siberia west of Lake Baikal and the Altai mountains. Both male and female shamans in Tuva still use mirrors in curing rituals. From the Altai culture, eighth to seventh century B.C., a bronze mirror (Plate 87) with figures of standing stag and a mountain goat has been found.2 The cast, round mirror, once brightly polished, is now corroded. The reverse has a high rim; the loop handle in the centre was broken off in antiquity. Five raisedoutline figures of stags and one of a mountain goat, arranged around the handle, decorate the surface. The animals are shown in profile, their heads raised high and surmounted by spiraliform antlers or horns. Each has four thin, elongated legs ending in pointed hooves, as if it were standing on tiptoe. The style is similar to that found on the earlier so-called deer stones and on petroglyphs in the Sayan and Altai mountains and in Mongolia. In

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.41

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Gol.De.Eur., Pl.169.

antiquity, mirrors were not simply objects of everyday use but were thought to possess magical powers, reflecting and therefore repelling evil spirits. The decoration on this mirror may also have had calendrical significance.

The Issyk burial is also similar to that of a fifth century B.C. burial of a woman in Ukok in the Altai Mountains excavated in 1993. Among the objects found at Ukok were a silver mirror with an incised deer on its reverse, wooden trays and bowls. The Ukok woman wore a short kaftan, leather boots and an elaborate coiffure resembling a conical hat. Tattoos of animals with twisted torsos on the Ukok female are paralleled in the gold ornaments from Issyk. Similar to the golden ram figurine surmounting the headdress from Issyk burial are the wooden ibex heads found from Kuturguntas, Siberia. It is not clear, however, to which object the ibex heads (Plate 88) from the Kuturguntas barrow have been attached.

Beginning with Arzhan in the eighth century B.C., the archeological remains of the Scytho-Siberians reveal that they were master bronze-casters. They were also familiar with gold-work. Two gold belt plaques show the technique of cast open work and this technique is a Siberian

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>J.Davis-Kimball, op.cit., p.41.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> M.V.Polosmak, 'Investigations of a Pazyryk Barrow at Kuturguntas', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.2, p.100, Fig.7.

specialization. An interesting gold belt plaque from the Lake Baikal area is cast and hammered and it depicts a fantastic, horse like animal locked in combat with a feline predator. The mythical creature has a beak-shaped snout and antlers with seven tines, each of which terminates in a beaked bird's head, as do the mane and long, curling tail. Empty space on the body is filled with relief images of animals. The great feline disk from Arzhan and the fine poletops from that site and from numerous Tagar finds offer testimony that the predecessors of the Scythians had developed a sophisticated understanding of bronze metallurgy. Since the Scythians did not have palaces, they carried their wealth on their own bodies and ion the regalia of their horses, their weapons and their utensils. Such an extreme display of wealth and status seems to have been one of the characteristics adopted by the Scythians during their Near Eastern sojourn.

Excavations in the old Nisa area in Turkmenistan (primarily a Parthian site) shows sculptures made of unfired painted clay and some of them are dressed in nomadic Scythian costume.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., p.247.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>G.A.Koshelenko, A.M.Bader, V.A.Gaibov, 'Archaeological Studies in Turkmenistan', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.1, p.273.

The Mongolian steppe excavations have brought to surface "deer stones" dated in the eighth century B.C. Although named from the figures of deer inscribed on them, such stones are in fact stylized portrayals of nomad warriors.1 Many such stones have been found in Mongolia, the Tuva Autonomous Republic of the former U.S.S.R. beyond Lake Baikal and mountainous Altai and in a slightly different form in the Urals.2 During the eighth century B.C. similar cultures of Scytho-Siberian type emerged and developed simultaneously as there was the gradual emergence of an economy based on nomadic cattle-breeding. The Scytho-Siberian animal style despite all its variety, developed uniformly across the vast territory stretching from the Danube to the Great Wall of China and beyond, and as far as the basin of Minusinsk, the latter fostering a culture similar to that of the ancestors of the Scythians. In the age of the Cimmerians, the culture of the Karasuk (1200 - 700 B.C.) which had succeeded that of Andronovo (1700-1200 B.C.) occupied roughly the regions of Kazakhstan and the Altai. Karasuk had as neighbours to the north an Uralic culture known as Shigir (2nd millennium B.C. to 6th century B.C.) and that of the Ob (16th to 8th century B.C.), to the south was the Tazabagyab culture (1500 to 1000 B.C.). Sculptured stone columns representing bears and rams discovered on the banks of the Yenisei have the same appearance as ornaments on

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gol.De.Eur., p.245.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.248.

knife handles of the Karasuk culture (1200 – 700 B.C.), like heads of stags, cows and horses in the round. Unlike the reclining deer that are a feature of Scythian art, the animals of the Karasuk stand solidly on all four hooves. Andronovo was more interested in geometric ornaments than in the animal art and transmitted prototypes of arms and implements by way of the centres of Seima, Shigir and Krasnoyarsk.

In the Tagar epoch (700-1000 B.C.) the Minusinsk region saw the development of an animal art that followed the same evolution as the Scythian art; monumentality gave way to a softer and more flexible rendering that strove to express movement and speed. Despite the undeniable relationships between the two cultures, the fact that they developed in an analogous and parallel way does not necessarily imply interdependence. The persistence of the Karasuk tradition may be seen in the figures of standing animals, even while a flourishing production of Scythian-derived rampant and galloping animals simultaneously developed. The animals are found in knives and small belts most frequently, but also in brooches and belt plaques, all covered with skillfully elaborated ornament. Certain clasps, or round fibulas, envelope the silhouette of the animals in concentric circles, others twist them in the form of an 'S', and in some we find the hooves transformed into circles. It is noteworthy that, from the beginning of the Bronze Age, the Chinese artist liked to contort his animals into an 'S' shape. In the eighth century B.C., Ordos art had its origins in the confluence of the Chinese art with that of Tagar, and subsequently constituting with the latter and with the Scythian Art, the triad of the steppes. The art of the Ordos itself was a powerful evolutionary factor in the passage of the Scythian Art into Scytho-Sarmatian art. Pazyryk, Shibe, Noin-ula could be the possible centres of Scytho-Sarmatian art. Here again, spirals, palmettes, roundels and other floral shapes were the most popular of the purely non-representational patterns. The saddles, which are represented on Scythian metal-work, seem closely to follow the lines of the actual saddles found at Pazyryk.

From kurgan 1 Tuekta, in the Altai Mountains, much bridle ornaments have been found. A cedar bridle ornament (Plate 89) in the form of two griffin's heads<sup>1</sup> is noteworthy. The head of a griffin with a long neck merges into a stylized body, ending in what appears to be a tail but is actually another head, smaller but identical. Depictions of serpents' or birds' heads at the end of the tail of a mythical beast were known in southern Mesopotamia and later In Assyria. The style in which the eyes, beak, and tufts are executed correspond to the traditional manner in which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.177.

griffins were depicted in the Altai during the sixth century B.C.1 This object, laterally pieced through the base, may have been a horse's bridle ornament. Similar carved wooden objects have been found by Polosmak in more recently (1991) excavated graves in the Altai Mountains.<sup>2</sup> The pieces seem to be abbreviated variations of the monstrous stag figures that decorate the belt of a person buried in the Issyk kurgan in eastern Kazakhastan. From the same grave (Tuekta) a bridle ornament (Plate 90) in the form of a head combining the features of a predator, a camel, and a griffin has been found.3 The upper jaw is like a bird's beak. Similar composite creatures (Plate 91) are found from Filippovka. An unique bridle ornament consisting of the full-face head of a tiger (Plate 92) from Tuekta shows a new style in crafting the larch tiger.<sup>5</sup> The vertical wood grain is slightly incised to create strips down the head and the body is made in the form of two addorsed profile heads of predatory bird's or griffins. The ferocity of the tiger and the bird's of prey may have served an apotropaic function for the rider. The technique of joining two bodies as found in the Scythian art of the western section (Kul-oba) is also in use in the eastern nomadic art. A similar plaque consisting of two elk-heads in relief is found

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,p.254.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid*., Pl.178.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., Pl.67.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid., Pl.180.

at Tuekta. A common ear joins the two elks. This highly ornamental design (Plate 93) can be interpreted as one frontal animal's head or two in profile. 
A cedar bridle ornament at Tuekta (Plate 94) depicts torsional, triskele composition. 
Such triskele compositions represent perhaps circular movement and are common in the Śaka/Scythian art. The tradition of fabricating psalias with references to different parts of the same animal was an established and creative tradition as found in the burials of Tuekta and Pazyryk. Similar psalias were found from Zhurovka and Axjutintsy. Appliqué work from Tuekta and Pazyryk represent a different visual perspective of the Scythian art. They are in most cases made of leather. The appliqué tiger work (Plate 95) from Tuekta<sup>3</sup> has comparable representations on southern Siberian and Central Asian petroglyphs and on Tuva metal work from the eighth to the fifth century B.C. The appliqué of two roosters from Pazyryk (Plate 96)<sup>4</sup> reminds us of the leather silhouettes used in shadow puppetry in Orissa and Southeast Asia.

Regarding the "frozen grave" barrows of the Scythian period, Ak-Alakh deserves special mention after Bashadar and Tuekte. The barrow's location is in the Kosh-Agach region of the Gorno-Altai autonomous

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*,Pl.183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.184

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Ibid., Pl.185.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.187.

district, about 14 kms. from the present Chinese border. Ak-Alakh is the largest of a group consisting of six mounds which form an irregular chain stretching along a North-South axis (a feature characteristic of the Pazyryk culture burial monuments). Several horses were buried at Ak-Alakh, and four of them were probably bridled. Among the finds were seven complete sets of wooden harness decorations (Plate 97).2 Saddles made of felt were decorated with polychrome appliqué work and some pieces of a compound bow. Ak-Alakh was a burial of the "middle-level" nobility, standing somewhere between the common people burials (as found at Ulandryk, Justyd, Tashanty) and the elite burials (the great barrows of Pazyryk, Bashadar, Tuekte, Berel and Koltandyk).3 Elite burials had richly adorned horses. Decorations of horse harness (Plates 98 and 99) in the shape of griffins4 attest to the Scythian identity of the grave. The Ak-Alakh griffins considerably enriched the iconography of them and they were so popular among the Pazyryk people. Many of the objects of wood discovered in the barrow belong to well-known types which occur in royal as well as in common burials of the Pazyryk culture. It is interesting that the griffin decoration of a horse harness from Ak-Alakh is stylistically similar to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> N.V.Polosmak, 'The Ak-Alakh Frozen Grave Barrow', Anc. Civ. Scy.Sib., Vol.1, p.347.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.348, Fig.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.353.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Ibid., p.352, Figs.4,5.

eagle shaped larch bridle ornament (Plate 100), 1 dated in the sixth century B.C. and belonging to the Altai culture. The eagle like the griffin is depicted frontally with lowered spread wings (as at Ak-Alakh). Both the bridle ornaments have a minimum of detail on the head, and the elaboration of the body is limited to two gracefully bent parallel lines in relief, indicating the wing feathers, and a fanlike tail consisting of a three lobed palmette. The motif was also known in Central Asia and India<sup>2</sup> and appeared on the Eurasian steppes in the first millennium B.C. A similar eagle-shaped plaque (Plate 101)<sup>3</sup> as the Ak-Alakh griffin, is found from the Altai culture. It is dated in the sixth century B.C. and is made of gold.

However, there are several objects, which have rare themes on them, like that of a wild boar attacked by panthers. The boar's proportions and its static figure remind us above all of the animal represented on the famous Kelermes mirror.<sup>4</sup> Noteworthy is the number of fishes cut in felt to decorate horse harnesses at Pazyryk. Two wooden shields display a simplified decorative technique: rhombic figures set one into another (Plate 102).<sup>5</sup> Ak-

<sup>1</sup> Gol.De.Eur., Pl.179.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.256.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.175.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>N.V.Polosmak, op. cit., p.354.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.353, Fig.6.

Alakh, excavated in 1990, is also important for its high sharp-pointed hats of thick felt.

From 1993 to 1997, fifty kurgans have been excavated near the town of Pokrovka in the Kazakhstan border. These kurgans reveal women buried with bronze daggers and arrowheads. The find from Pokrovka is very much similar to that found in the burial mounds on the steppes of southern Ukraine. Many of the Ukrainian graves had female burials containing swords, spears, daggers, arrowheads and armour. It is significant that Herodotus in his travels north of the Black Sea in and about 450 B.C. had reported hearing tales of warrior women who rode the steppes of southern Russia. Herodotus called them Amazons, but the neighbouring Scythians fearfully called them Oiorpata or killers of men. In time the Scythians and Amazons paired and together they left the northern Black Sea region, moving east to the steppes between the Don and Volga rivers. They also trekked south with their heads to winter in the milder climate of southern Kazakhstan or northern Uzbekistan. 1 Several artifacts at Pokrovka, which show definite Scythian influence, suggest that the winter homeland of these newcomers may have been located on one of the great east-west trade routes, perhaps somewhere in southern Kazakstan.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> J.Davis-Kimball, op.cit., p.46.

These finds include a bronze belt buckle from northern China and a set of hammered and chased gold plaques probably depicting snow leopards, which inhabit the Tien-Shan mountains of Kyrgyzstan and Western China.<sup>1</sup>

Archaeological excavations at the Bulak-Bashi Koshrabad site yielded Kaunchi I-II culture artifacts, which are believed to be indicative of the massive waves of migrating tribes of the Śaka and Kaunchi cultures from beyond the Syr Darya River. They fused with the sedentarised crop-farming population of the oases in southern Central Asia, which resulted in a syncretic culture.<sup>2</sup>

In a site 50 kms. east of Almaty, in Kazakhstan, was found a burial chamber of a tribal leader, comparable to the European Scythian burial sites. It is the first and only burial complex of such a high-ranking person to have been excavated in Central Asia. The burial (mid-first millennium B.C) was established by Śaka tribes, and both the costumes and burial rites were similar to those used at Tillya-tepe in Northern Afghanistan in the first century A.D. Gold leaf objects were used to decorate the clothing of the buried. Weapons, a circular gilt bronze mirror with handles at the

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.46, PL47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *I.B.I.A.S.C.C.*, Issue 5, p.51.

sides and two concentric circles on the back and a headgear including a diadem attached to its base were found. The man's gold jewellery comprised an earring, a pendant and two rings. Metal plaques with a tiger's head en face were sewn on to the fabric of the tribal leader's clothing between fifty-nine horizontal and fifty-nine vertical slats. They included geometric patterns such as 2411 small triangles, 30 small rectangles, 488 rectangles, 162 squares, 30 circles, 108 crescents and 113 rhomboids. The belt was made of massive rectangular plates on to which were affixed smaller plates in the shape of reclining deer heads. An iron dagger, its upper side shaped like the head of two facing griffins and its handle and sheath decorated with gold plates depicting an elk and a horse, and a sword, the upper side and cross of which is encrusted with small gold plaques and gold thread twisted, around the handle, were hung from the belt. 31 vessels were found. Two silver bowls, a large one, the outside engraved with thirty-two rings and the inside decorated with two concentric circles, and a small one, the outside decorated with twenty-six signs resembling Aramaic letters but still undeciphered, a bronze bowl, two dishes, one large and one small, made from a single piece of birch, were also found. Ten ceramic ewers and six basins were found, together with

silver forks with the upper part of the handle in the shape of a bird's neck and head with a sharp beak.<sup>1</sup>

"To the northeast were the Early Nomads or Pazyryk culture in the northern Altay mountains, and the people of the Tagar culture in the Minusinsk basin, and the stockbreeding culture of Mongolia referred to as the Chandman."2 There has been much controversy regarding the chronology of the Pazyryk burials. The bearers of the Pazyryk culture may have migrated to eastern Kazakhstan from the west Siberian steppes at the end of the first millennium B.C.3 Pazyryk headdresses included four statuettes of horses discovered at Katanda. All show reclining creatures with griffin's heads set upon the horse's bodies. Stamped gold plaques were also found at Katanda. The latter has also yielded a silk band decorated with carved wooden figures of horses, fabulous beasts, monsters, stags and bears in a row. The pieces of furniture recall examples from Pazyryk. Bukhtarna tombs reveal sixteen horses in four rows with heads pointing to the east. All fully caparisoned they had iron bits, leather bridles adorned with ornaments of carved wood and birch bark covered with thin sheets of The coffins of human burials were adorned with copper birds gold.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>J.Turner ed., *Dictionary of Art*, Cambridge, 1994, Vol. 16, p. 577.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Art. Scy., p.30.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Yu. S. Khudyakov, 'Problems of the Genesis of Culture of the Hunnic Period in the Altai Mountains', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.3,p.329.

resembling those in the Scythian tombs of the Volga and Ural regions. Weapons similar to that of the Scythian nomads were found. Further burials resembling Pazyryk were found at Bashadar where the wooden coffin sides were decorated with a carved row of four tigers advancing from left to right. The coffin lids had stags, wild boars, mountain goats, in a more flexible style than Pazyryk. Sixteen horses interned there must have belonged to a tribe similar to that of Pazyryk. Pazyryk horse representations display trimmed manes (there are a felt carpet and a bone saddle-inlay to illustrate this) which, according to V.B Kovalevskaya, is one of the characteristic features of a saddle horse. V.O. Vitt presumed that the practice of trimming equine mane had most probably developed among the Saka and Scythian tribesmen who were born archers.<sup>1</sup>

In 1991 excavation was made of the larger barrow of a complex at Kuturguntas in Pazyryk. Surviving grave goods included fragments of fur clothings, felt appliqués, and metal and wooden objects which are parallel to those found in other Pazyryk graves. These medium sized barrows contained thoroughbred horses in them. The burial there of ten horses had not been disturbed although only the wooden bridle decorations of the principal (Master's horse) survive well. These again show the popularity of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>V.O.Vitt, Loshadi, 'Pazyrykskikh Kurganov', *Sov. Arkh.*, No.XVI, Leningrad, 1952, p.198.

the griffin motif in Pazryk art.1 The lid of the main coffin at Kuturguntas was fixed with large copper nails reminiscent of the fish-representations so characteristic of the Pazyryk culture. Among the surviving grave goods were stamped bronze griffin heads (Plate 103), obviously used to decorate garments.<sup>2</sup> Pieces of thin woolen cloth, leather appliqué works shaped like griffins, two rams' heads in wood, probably from a torque or a headdress, a small iron plaque covered with gold leaf which decorated a quiver, several beads, two schematized figurines representing fantastic birds carved from thick leather and a woolen cord woven of two thick threads were also found. Incidentally, carpet making in central Asia from the third century B.C. onwards, used such woolen cords woven of two thick threads. The Kuturguntas grave goods are similar to those discovered in the Ak-Alakh barrow and Tashanta-2 burial complex, all at Pazyryk. Fur garments found at Kuturguntas were made of numerous small pieces of fur sown together. Garments made of numerous pieces were believed to possess certain magic protective qualities.3 Similar beliefs are still widespread among the Tajik, Uzbek, Karakalpak, Kazakh, Kirghiz and some other peoples.4 Horse harness decorations of the Kuturguntas barrow are very similar to the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Cf. N.V.Polosmak's paper cited above, (Note 154) p.92.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.96, Fig. 3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.99.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> N.L.Zhukovskaya, *Kategorii I Symvolika Traditsionnoi Kulturi Mongolov*, Moscow, 1988, p.93.

fantastic creatures decorating horse harness from the Ak-Alakh barrow and Tuekte barrows. Tuekte was an important centre of nomadic art in the eastern section. Bridle plaques from the Tuekte barrow had square cavities covered with pieces of red leather. This technique probably aimed to imitate metal objects inlaid with precious stones or some polychrome appliqué work.

In Azerbaijan, the region of pre-Pazyryk Hanlar is important for the Scytho-Siberian connection. On excavation of three burials south-west of Hanlar, one burial has yielded a "sledge" drawn by two stags.¹ It reminds one of the later Pazyryk burials of the Altai dating from the early Scythian period, where the horses supposed to draw the chariots had stag marks covering their heads. This tradition survived at Tillya-tepe in Northern Afghanistan.

The design of many objects such as pots from Saka burials in the Pamir Mountains and brazier altars showing winged lions from Semirechye (the Northwest foothills of the Tien Shan Range) can be seen as representational. During the last twenty-five years, several new items have been added to the collection of bronze lamps due to chance finds in

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>Ya.I.Gummel, 'Excavations to the south-west of Hanlar in 1941', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.2, p.225.

Semirechye,¹ near Almaty. An interesting lamp (Plate 104) from Alatau² had as its attachments two camels (Plate 105),³ with typical Śaka/Scythian style of big eyes, round pupils, plump cheeks, and oblong holes as ear cavities. Among the cult bronzes, a tiger-griffin (Plates 106 and 107)⁴ representation has also been found. Another lamp from Samal in the Semirechye area has fifteen animal figurines set clockwise along the rim. With ears bulging out, they have S-shaped horns, almond-like eyes and twisted tails. The lamp has a vertically set hollow tube for a wick with two figurines of mounted archers set symmetrically by the sides of the tube. The rider holds a composite Scythian bow.⁵ A graceful figurine of a bronze winged panther represents a fantastic animal with its twisted forepart. It (Plates 106 and 107) has narrow almond-shaped eyes and between its shoulder-blades, it has a convex circle formed by two 'commas'.6

At present it is possible to distinguish two principal areas where Śaka bronzes were widespread. They are Sinkiang and Semirechye. Two finds made beyond the Semirechye area include a fragment of an incense-burner

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> F.P.Grigorev, R.Ismagil, 'The Cult Bronzes of Semirechye of the Saka Period', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.3, p.241.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.242, Fig.1.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.243, Fig.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*,p.243, Figs.5,6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*,p.246.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Ibid.,p.243, Figs.5,6.

and a figurine of a warrior found near Dzhambul in South Kazakhstan. They, along with a lamp excavated from a barrow by the village of Bukon near Zaysan in East Kazakhstan, are definitely closer to the northern Semirechye Śaka style. There are already over 20 Śaka cult bronzes from Kazakhstan and Kirgizia, and probably even more from Chinese Turkestan.

Excavations at the Ili river sites have yielded bronze ornaments and jewels with early indications of the animal style. Many objects have been found, the majority of which can be attributed to the Sakas, Wu-sun and Turks. Bes-Shatyr, on the right bank of the Ili river is a major Saka site. In Kirgizya, covering the basins of the Issyk-kul and Balkhash Lake, a number of kurgans have yielded objects, the majority belonging to the nomadic tribes from the seventh century B.C. to fourth century A.D. The Sakas inhabited the Tyan-Shan, Talas, and Alay mountains as well as the Issyk-kul region. Figures of animals in an early "Scythian style" were found in the Semirechye, near Lake Issyk-Kul and near the Chu and Talas rivers and at Sokuluk, west of Frunze.<sup>2</sup> It is not always possible, however, to draw a sharp line between the Saka period and the following period of the Wu-sun. Ritual bronze utensils, discovered on the northern shores of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>M.I.Artamonov, Sokrovischa Sakov, Moscow, 1973 p.40,Fig.47.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>G.Frumkin, 'Archaeology in Soviet Central Asia. III-Kirghiziya and the Fergana Valley', Central Asian Review, Vol.12, p.18.

Lake Issyk-Kul, included sacrificial tables, lamps, a cauldron, and a bronze figure of a recumbent yak. In Central Tyan-Shan, Śaka tombs were found, and some belonged to the Wu-Sun. Kara-Nulak in Alay valley in Kirghiziya yielded iron knives, arms, various kinds of potteries, bronze articles such as mirrors, bracelets, inlaid ear-rings, jewels and other ornaments belonging to a female skeleton, all showing Śaka/Scythian affiliations.

From the ninth to third century B.C. in Uzbekistan, a typical agricultural culture called the Burgulyuk culture developed in the oasis of Shash (Tashkent region), situated to the north near the nomadic steppezone. The material culture has a clear similarity with the culture of the Śaka/Scythians.<sup>1</sup>

A process of urbanization started, and this was directly connected with a strengthening of state power. They permitted the irrigation of fertile river valleys (as archaeology has shown) of Amudarya, Kashkadarya, Zeravshan, Chirchik and Syr-Darya. A coiled feline motif from Uigarak

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>G.A.Pugachenkova, 'The Antiquities of Transoxiana in the light of Investigations in Uzbekistan (1985-1990)', *Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib.*, Vol.2, p.8.

cemetery in the lower Syr Darya region is inevitably a Śaka variation bridle plaque (Plate 108)<sup>1</sup> from Kulakovsky dated in the early fifth century B.C.

We come to the excavation of a rural settlement of Kundzhulitepa, 1.5 kms. east of the site of Erkurgan (in the district of Kashkadarya). The remains of the settlement are visible as a small circular mound and is dated in the second half of the sixth century B.C.<sup>2</sup> An oval intaglio found there shows a triumphal procession. The man in the centre is shown in full detail. He has a moustache, and is clad in a long sleeved shirt, tight trousers and soft leather boots, undoubtedly the attire of the Śaka/Scythian nomads or Śaka/Parthian nomads. The gem has a Sogdian inscription. A very close parallel can be found on a relief kept in the Toronto Museum, representing Śaka warriors.<sup>3</sup> Not only their garments but their hairstyles have much in common with those depicted on the Kashkadarya gem. The same hairstyle often appears on Parthian coins bearing portraits of Arsacid rulers.<sup>4</sup> At the same time there is one more feature often seen on the Indo-Scythian coins which offers another parallel with the gem, namely the equestrian representations of kings holding

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Scy.Art.,Pl.61.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> K.Abdullaev, S.Raimkulov, 'A Triumph Scene on an engraved gem from Kundzhulitepe (Kashkadarya)', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.2, p.221.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Dyn.Art.Kus., Fig.59.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup>D.Sellwood, An Introduction to the Coinage of Parthia, London, 1980, Pl.3(1).

various symbols of power. Similar representations occur on coins of Azilises, Azes, Gondophares and Soter Megas.<sup>1</sup> The equestrian figure on Gondophares' coins is crowned by a Nike who is flying behind him and is holding a wreath above the rider's head in a manner very similar to the composition of the gem.<sup>2</sup> The gem, thus, supplements our notions about the art of the Śakas, Parthians or Śaka-Parthian tribes on their route to India.

In the eastern section, finally, we come to a territory near the Indian borderlands; Pamirs. The Śaka graves in the Pamirs, very near the Afghan border, have yielded several objects in the animal style. Archaeological evidence from the Pamirs and its comparison with other materials confirm the evidence of written sources that in migrating to India the Śakas passed through this mountain region. A small bronze cauldron (Plate 109) with two circular handles and an additional handle in the form of a horse head, <sup>3</sup> was found from Imit in Ishkoman, Punyal (second century B.C. to first century B.C.) south of the Hindukush range. A bronze cauldron from Aliçur II, kurgan 3, on the left bank of the Gunt river, Southern Pamirs, with two

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> A.K.Srivastava, Catalogue of Śaka-Pahlava Coins of North India, Lucknow, 1972, Pl.IV.1-5,7,9,11; V.4; V.6-8; VII.1-4.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>B.N.Mukherjee, Kushāna Silver Coinage, Calcutta, 1982, p.22, Pl.V.25.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> K.Jettmar, 'The Art of the Northern Nomads in the Upper Indus valley', South Asian Studies, No.7, London 1991, p.2, Fig.1.

circular handles was similar to the Imit cauldron. The knob (Plate 110) at Alicur II, kurgan 3, has an eagle-griffin. A rhyton (Plate 111) from Imit is an artifact rooted in the artistic heritage of the nomads.

Bronze plaques acquired in the Kandia valley dated in the first to second centuries A.D. include an ibex (Plate 112) to whose horns the head of a bird is attached.<sup>3</sup> The body of the animal is worked out as an S-spiral in relief with two circular cells in it. The piece is now in the National Museum, Karachi. A petroglyph made with a metal implement from the site of Thalpan Bridge, on the so-called Altar Rock,<sup>4</sup> shows a stag followed by a beast of prey with two tails. The peculiarity of the two tails also occurs in the décor of narrative bronzes in China. A pommel (Plate113) topping the hilt of an akinakes<sup>5</sup> (the hilt is of bronze with an iron blade) was found from Akbeit, kurgan 3 in the easternmost Pamirs, very near to the Afghan and the Chinese borders. A plaque (Plate 114) depicting a stag has been found from Termansy, near Akbeit, with the typical spiralled Scythian antlers.<sup>6</sup> The S-spiral decorating the body of the Kandia plaque is used as an

<sup>1</sup>Ibid.,p.3,Fig.2.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,p.10,Fig.14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.3.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6, Fig.5.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. p.6, Fig.7.

'abstract' design covering a clasp. A similar bronze was found in Pamirskaja (Plate 115).<sup>1</sup>

The enormous amount of gold as found from the Pattan hoard in Kohistan district is remarkable. The gold ring (Plates 116 117 and 118) of Pattan<sup>2</sup> dated in the second to late first century B.C. has a series of engraved animals, most of them in a crouching pose, in a remarkable composition. The tigers depicted frequently are reminiscent of the Ordos bronzes.

Saka tombs in the Eastern Pamirs have yielded various utility objects. There were bronze objects, ornaments, bronze jewellery with semi-precious stones and bronze figures of animals, similar to Scythian animal art style of the sixth to second centuries B.C. Objects from Vakhsh have yielded a collection of seals, clay vessels with human and animal heads on the sides and handles, as well as a steatite tray of the Taxila type with a person riding a hippocampus dragon. The treasure of the Oxus contains a similar relief.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.6, Fig.6.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*,pp.14,15,Figs.20,21,22.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup>B.A.Litvinsky, Igor R.Pichikjan, 'Gold Plaques from the Oxus Temple', Anc. Civ. Scy. Sib., Vol.2, p.219.

In the next section we have discussed the differences in style, technique and character between the eastern and western sections of the Saka/Scythian art.

## C. DIFFERENCES IN (1) STYLE, (2) TECHNIQUE AND (3) CHARACTER OF ART BETWEEN THE WESTERN AND EASTERN SECTIONS

In this section an attempt has been made to delineate the differences in style, technique and character between the western and eastern sections of the Scythian/Śaka art. The Scythian/Śaka art of the western and eastern sections (or vice versa), despite their differences, can be regarded as a single great phenomenon. But a detailed churning of the archaeological data reveals that the primary motifs of the Scythian nomadic animal art, originated from the eastern section. Therefore, the problem arises of equating artifacts of the western section and later art of the eastern section with the parent art form. Apart from this fundamental criteria of chronology, some other factors are to be considered. The vast stretch of Scythian/Śaka art from the Danube to the borders of China comprising the western and eastern boundaries of the western and eastern sections had to encounter the art of other great civilizations at different moments of time. The literary sources of different nationalities had much to say about this.

Thus, inspite of being a single great phenomenon, this art had definite regional innovations and the tenacity of the original (core) animal art style, inspite of its peripheral blending never gave the feeling of being exhausted. The sojourn of the Scythian art between the two sections is a wonderful history of the evolution, growth and development of the nomadic animal art forms.

The broad terms- "Scythian", "Sauromation", "Sarmatian", and "Śaka"-have emerged to characterize the material culture of the Eurasian nomads. These terms were derived from the descriptions of ancient authors, none of them nomads, and who utilized these labels to convey a variety of meanings. They were employed both as general references to the horse-riding peoples and as specific tribal, cultural, and geographical designations. Archaeological evidences more or less suggested a tripartized society of herder-cultivators, warriors and priests. Archaeological investigations have led to the further definition of these terms as markers of particular aspects of cultural groups that flourished at a particular time, or displayed individuating genetic or linguistic traits. Certain stylistic features both differentiate the nomadic arts of the Pontic steppes, the Caucasus, the Don-Volga-Urals, the southern Siberia, Central Asia, and China and also interrelate them within a broad cultural continuum. This

unity has been conveyed by the use of the terms "animal style" and "Scytho-Siberian animal style."

The deer is probably the most common motif in the so-called animalstyle art of the steppe nomads. The deer motif in the Scythian art is generally associated with the reinder which is native to northern Siberia and the forest steppes as far west as Eastern Europe. The early Scythian gold reindeer (Plate 84) from Chilikta, in eastern Kazakhstan, 1 and the gold deer (Plate 63) from the royal Scythian burial at Kostromskaia,2 in the Caucasus, for instance, have a typically Scythain folded pose. Both have a balanced composition and smooth gold surfaces. The Kazakhstan deer plaque dated in the second half of the eighth century B.C.- the first half of the seventh century B.C., was hammered over a mould in low relief. Its large antlers have one branch to the front and four to the rear, and they bear a more naturalistic rendering. This was a characteristic of the eastern region, than the more stylized depictions of stags in the Scythian art of the Pontic steppes. The Kostromskaia deer plaque dated in the end of the seventh century B.C. is typical of the Scythian artistic tradition of combining realism and abstraction, and complemented by additional ornamental antlers, which appear as a row of rhythmically repeated S-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Gol.De.Eur., Pl.170.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.140.

spirals. The musculature of the neck is emphasized, definitely more than its Kazakhstan counterpart. The famous Kelermes deer plaque (Plate 50)1 from a gorytus (dated in the second half of the seventh century B.C.) was a formalized version (in stance and modulation of the anatomical parts) of the Chilikta deer. The Filippovka deer dated in the fourth century B.C. have top-heavy antlers and bodies covered with decorations. Its stylistic affinity lay to the east, in the Altai Mountains, where the earlier kurgans (eighth to seventh centuries B.C.) of Bashadar, Tuekta and Pazyryk yielded objects with similar over all ornaments on bodies of animals. Such ornamentations may have arisen, in part, from the ease with which decorative spirals can be produced in wood carving. This decorative tradition was common on the eastern steppes not only in wood carving, but also in gold-work (as in the stag-shaped gold belt ornaments from the Issyk Kurgan, in eastern Kazakhstan, dated in the fourth century B.C.). Although the monstrous Issyk stags (Plates 85-86) are in a folded pose, their bodies are decorated with incisions and spirals, and there are spiral ornaments beneath the chins.<sup>2</sup> The carved horn belt plaque (Plate 76) in the shape of a horse, from Sagly-Bazhi II, in Tuva, shows the same elaborately decorated surfaces as the Filippovka deer. A gold belt plaque (Plate 119) said to have been found

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.142.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., p.7, Figs.4,5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.197.

at Verkhneudinsk (modern Ulan-Ude), east of Lake Baikal, in Mongolia, 1 probably represents the eastern most extension of the style. The bird's heads on the antlers of the five deer 2 placed in the corridor of the Filippovka tomb may symbolize an aspect of a tribal deity, the bird of prey. Similar birds of prey were found on the headdress decorations, and a gold epaulet from Ziwiye (late eighth to seventh century B.C.) in the Near East. But the antler-with-bird's-head motifs widely used in the western section during the fourth century B.C. were more aggressive in appearance.

Beginning in the sixth century B.C., the repertoire of images in the art of the Altai expanded to include mythical creatures, such as the griffin. In no other ancient culture does the griffin motif appear in such a multiplicity of renderings. The Altai artists treated the griffin (Plate 89) in an original way. The tuft feathers were delineated with relief lines and the eyes were either round or almond-shaped. The curling beak was worked in relief, and the ear, leaf-shaped with a spiral at the base. But the griffins of the western section were more formidable in appearance and were more slender and agile in form (as depicted in the detail of two griffins savaging a horse from the lower frieze of the Tolstaya Mogila pectoral).

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.210.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.177.

The stylized zoomorphic style, which laid the foundation for the Scythian art, gradually became dominant in the fifth and fourth century B.C. New subject-matter began to infiltrate the Scythian art during this period. From the Sarmatians, the Scythians borrowed the image of the wolf, and from the nomads of southern Siberia the image of the elk. Zhurovka, in the Dnepropetrovsk region, testifies to this development. A plaque from Zhurovka exhibits two non-antlered elk's heads (Plate 120) with ears and snouts touching each other. The wooden plaque (Plate 93) from Tuekta, in the Altai, is comparable to the Zhurovka ornament but it is one hundred years older.

In the fourth century B.C. the dominant art form was exquisitely designed decorative objects in which ornamentation was more important than representation. The animal figures lost their former three-dimensionality and became flat and oversimplified. Relief was replaced by engraving. Some bridle decorations (Plate 121) were in the form of flowers made from birds' heads.<sup>3</sup> In many cases the image of the animal vanished

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.155.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Ibid., Pl.183.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.152.

among the intricate spirals(Plate 122). Thus the animal style, having forfeited its elegant simplicity, gained something new in both the sections. The eastern section, which had originally started with decorative compositions in its animal style, was not that fast in changing the dynamic animal style to a new phase. In the western section, the changes into rhythmical forms and original, exuberant decorative compositions were apparent from the fourth century B.C. onwards.

In Scythian art, we find small representations of beasts juxtaposed upon spaces on the bodies of large figures like the Kul-Oba deer (Plate 64),<sup>2</sup> dated in the fifth century B.C., and the Kelermes panther (Plate 62)<sup>3</sup> (dated in the seventh century B.C.) This style is rare in the Scythian art of the eastern section.

In the western section, the narrative traits were more significant. Many objects in the western section have narrative scenes, which have been analyzed by scholars as depictions of Scythian myths. The nomadic art of both the sections strove after a decorative compactness; however, the organic animal form is the original element in the eastern section. Here the purely ornamented shapes are secondary and generally arises out of the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.154.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>V.Schiltz, op.cit., p.159, Pl.116.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.20,21, Pl.8.

degeneration of animal forms which we may call transmutation. The compactness lost much of its significance in the eastern section, where animal art was a tool for ornamentation in the micro. The macro aspect in the west lost much of its relevance, as there were further changes in mediums. Significantly, gold was not much used. The narrative aspect, as seen from vessels of silver gilt found at Chastyye Mogily and Solokha, has not been seen in the eastern section. Objects from the Solokha barrow revealed the disappearance of archaic elements and there was somehow a vital Hellenization of virtually all the motifs. The panther is altogether replaced by the lion, the eagle by the griffin. Horses and boars appear with deer as prey; all are treated with the same idealized realism apparent in the handling of the predators. Graceful tendrils interwoven with flowers emerge as significant ornamental motifs. They and the birds and insects that adorn them represent the closest Scythian art comes to a deliberate reference to a landscape. Most important, however, is the appearance of human representation: idealized, vigorous, and apparently narrative in import.

A careful reading of the style and technology of many of the best objects in the western section of the Scythian art indicates a merging of the Hellenic with Scythian elements and an application of Hellenized techniques to Scythianized subjects (Plate 198).1 In addition, the best of Scythian art is characterized by a number of qualities that cannot be duplicated, as they are integrated and presented, in any other arena of gold-work in the ancient world. Of these qualities, in the first instance, mention requires to be made of monumentality in effect, not in weight or size. This monumentality is well demonstrated by the Kelermes griffinheaded pole top(Plate 6),2 bridle ornaments(Plates 123-124), also from Kelermes,3 a torque with spiralled rope from Solokha,4 and the massive spiralled-rope bracelet (Plate 41) with sphinx terminals, from Kul-Oba.5 Another distinctive quality is a particular manner of preserving a plain, gold surface, and of using the smooth surface to emphasize the power of an animal or the drama of an animal confrontation. Both these characteristics derived basically from the nomadic tradition of bone and wood carving. Within that tradition, the plain surfaces of the organic materials were favoured as expressive aspects of the object or image, as well as a sign of delight in the material itself.<sup>6</sup> At Scythian sites, where organic materials do not survive well, it is well- known that when bronze and gold works of art were cast, the craftsmen used the lost wax method involving wooden

-

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy., p.66.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Scy.Art., Pl.15.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls.4,5.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, Pls.122,123.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Ibid., Pl.182.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> Art.Scy. p.67.

models. Wooden matrices were also widely used for metal repoussé work. R. M. Minasyan believes that the whole of Scythian decorative metal work had been very much influenced by carving technique, echoes of which can be traced in the most famous examples of Scythian animal style metal artifacts.1 This understanding of the particular plastic qualities of wood, and the delight in that material, are beautifully expressed in carved wooden objects from the sixth century burials at Tuekta, and in objects from fifth and fourth century burials at Pazyryk. But, in the eastern section, the monumentality was not that apparent. In the western section the most powerful expressions of this intensity and of the manner in which posture and surface lent themselves to the expression of monumentality include the Kostromskaya stag and the Kelermes panther. This monumentality conferred on the images an almost heraldic appearance which was lacking in the eastern section. Thus what had started in bone, wood or iron at Altai (along with the dominance of the appliqué design) was later transformed into a 'heraldic' style.

Also, in the western section the understanding of the power of empty areas and the spacing of figures were more developed, as in the spacing of

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>R.S.Minasyan, 'The Origin of the Distinctive Features of the Animal Style', A.S.G.E., Issue 29,1988; Issue 30, 1990, pp.74, 75.

figures on the Kul-Oba vessel (Plates9-12),<sup>1</sup> the Chertomlyk amphora (Plate 16),<sup>2</sup> in the Solokha comb (Plate 43)<sup>3</sup> and the spacing of animals on the Bolshaya Bliznitsa pectoral(Plate 32).<sup>4</sup>

In the later Śaka/Scythian art, the respect for monumental and simple forms was somehow threatened, if not overwhelmed by, elaborations. To illustrate the loss of the early monumentality and a subsequent emphasis on stilled, tense forms we may point to the Kul-Oba phiale.<sup>5</sup> In it, the only Scythian element (aside from its find site), are the rather caricatured images of Scythian males, caught between the flourishes of Gorgon-Medusas, boar heads and bees. Significantly, the cauldrons of the western section (whether they had any magico-religious purpose is uncertain) lost much of their significance. They were hardly found in Śaka burials. Thus, archaeologically, one common cultural substratum has led to diverse yet common features, with a scope for new innovations. The animal style followed remarkably different lines of development according to the areas concerned. While the Scythian art passed from stylized linear figures to others which were much more elaborate and complex and finally

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup>V.Schiltz, op.cit.,pp.173-175, Pls.125-127.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.195, Pl.144.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p.414, Pl.359.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp.384-385, Pl.310.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>5</sup> Scy.Art.,Pls.164,165.

produced works that show traces of Greek realism, on the other hand, the art of the Siberian area passed from rigid forms, in which the volumetric structure is dominant, to others, rendered in almost geometric schemes i.e., animals twisted into the shape of a circle with legs forming an openwork circle or contorted in a horizontal S (some of which are of nomadic origin and others, Chinese).

From stereometric forms they passed to linear stylizations, often in openwork, with colour values attained through the application of enamels, precious stones, and glass paste. Notwithstanding the stylization, the form of the animal was never completely obscured, and the nomads rejected the indistinct and monstrous zoomorphic forms. "Although the clothing plaques found in Scythian burials tend to be representational, one does find examples of more geometric renderings". Clothing plaques from the eastern section have a much more detailed geometrical rendering as at Issyk.

In case of ornaments, the eastern section examples are more simple in technique. Precious-metal techniques had originated in the east, but on the ornaments of the western section, the surfaces of particular examples

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art. Scy. p. 165.

were an amalgamation of braided threads, notched threads, granulation and even tiny, sheet-gold figures. Individually, these elements can be traced in the eastern section. What happened in the west was the use of all these elements to emphasize the meticulous working of the gold (as in the boar shaped pendants), rather than functioning to border a broadly modelled image.1 The simplest technique of working gold, that of hammering, was used by both the Scythians' Asian predecessors and by settled peoples of the ancient Orient and Greece. Nonetheless, heavy hammered gold is usually ascribed to Near Eastern craftsmanship. Cast gold, particularly in its massive form, has been associated with Achaemenid traditions. An interesting Achaemenid vase(Plate 125)2 has been found from the kurgan of Filippovka. It has made use of both gold and silver. Gold is inlaid in horizontal strips around the silver body. Where cast gold occurs in the Scythian art, it is ascribed either to that tradition or to its working by Greek craftsmen. It is noteworthy to consider whether Achaemenising or Hellenizing gave a new lease of life to the Scythian art. "The refined techniques of filigree and granulation are almost always assumed to be indicators of Greek craftsmanship, even if the workshop in question is believed to have been somewhere in the Bosporus. By contrast, indicators of a rough technique, revealed so frequently on the objects or in

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.68.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Gol. De. Eur., Pl. 19.

the area of seams and joins, are seen as indicators of a non-Greek craftsmanship, i.e. of a 'barbarian' source". Embedding in gold of coloured substances, usually turquoises, first became popular in those parts of Scytho-Siberian areas adjoining the Persian frontier and then passed into west Siberia and South Russia. Earlier the Scythians did not use this technique to a great extent. The Sarmatians, however, made extensive use, in not only embedding the stones, but also setting them in cloisons.

The great development of orfevrerie cloisonee took place in Achaemenid Persia. The Scytho-Siberian objects in the Oxus Treasure form a link between the gold-smith's craft of Achaemenid Persia and that of western Siberia. The relations between the makers of the Oxus ornaments, both with Persian and Sarmatian culture and those between the Sarmatians and the early Teutonic tribes in Europe, expresses the impressive extent and unity of the ancient Scythic art. Among the Scythians, the bracelets were usually formed from a twisted or smooth gold rope terminating in a modelled element. In the western section the

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art.Scy., p.71.

bracelets are rounded, while those of the eastern section are characteristically bow-shaped.<sup>1</sup>

The ancient Near Eastern tradition of overlaying objects made from baser materials with gold sheets or foil <sup>2</sup> was continued by Hellenistic gold workers. The twisted rope bracelets from Bolshaya Bliznitsa and Kul Oba are made from gold over bronze plaits.

A gold neck ornament (Plate 126)<sup>3</sup> from the Siberian collection of Peter I, dated in the fifth to fourth century B.C., is significantly different from the neck ornaments of the western section. This ornament is made of three smooth tubes and is divided by hinges into two unequal parts. This division of a large front and a smaller back is a peculiarity of the eastern section. The animal figures, attached to the upper tube, are hollow and made from two halves soldered together and are similar to others both from Siberia and from Central Asia. Between the tubes are two ornamental strips with rhomboid and circular hollows (again a Śaka/Scythian characteristic) for turquoise and coral inlays.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p.109.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup>R.Higgins, op.cit., pp.33,34.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Gol.De.Eur., Pl.208.

Cylindrical beads with gold caps (Plate 127)<sup>1</sup> are unique to the eastern section. Gold caps were used on handles of utility objects and weapons found from the barrows of the western section. Granulation on the gold caps created beautiful triangular forms. These forms were transmitted on ornaments found from the eastern section including India, as will be seen below.

Although zoomorphic images dominated the Scythian art, depictions of people are also not unknown. Representations of mounted horsemen are a special category. These were usually found on metal utility objects, or ornaments belonging to both the eastern and western sections. But the representation of mounted horsemen on colourful felt rugs (Plate 128) was a characteristic of the eastern section as found from kurgan 5 at Pazyryk.<sup>2</sup>

In the eastern section, comparatively, there are lesser female images than the western section. Scythian males are represented in what appear to be straightforward relationship with animals: riding horses, shooting rabbits, or milking animals and preparing their skins. By contrast, when women in Scythian art are associated with animals, the animals are either fantastic, such as griffins or hippocampi; or fearful, such as lions or

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, Pl.17.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p.14, Fig.14.

snakes; or the human female becomes fused with snakes or birds. Whether they take the form of Gorgon-Medusas, Mistresses of Animals, sphinxes, battling Amazons, the human aspects of the female images shift our attention to the realms of death, the underworld, and monstrous generations. The materials drawn from the burials of the eastern section contemporary to the Pontic burials of the Scythians in the western section, appear to confirm, that human imagery had virtually no place within the subject-matter of early nomadic art.

Just as a comparison between materials from the Śaka, Pazyryk, and Tagar traditions with analogous materials from the Scythians leads to the inescapable conclusion that the style and subjects of the latter derive from the culture that spawned the former, so the rock carvings of northern Central Asia promise to offer increasingly useful materials for understanding the origins and possibly the meaning of Scythian visual imagery. The panels from the Altai region with anthropomorphic imagery and the traces of an ancient pre-Turkic epic tradition<sup>1</sup> in Inner Asia, suggest that it is not necessary to construct complex mythic traditions from a variety of Indo-Iranian traditions. We must take into account the fact that the Scythians came into the northern Pontic region as foreigners with their own strong traditions of belief, ornament and ritual. As they moved

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Art.Scy., p.77.

westward out of Central Asia, whether on a southern or northern route around the Caspian Sea, those traditions were invariably modified. Elements were added, lost, or merged into new forms. What results, therefore, is essentially a process of creativity. Ultimately, the cultural authority of any part of the Scythian art must be derived from the combination of elements it represents like the object type, style, function, the technical aspects of its fabrication, all weaving together to form a distinctive whole. Therefore, each object in the Śaka/Scythian repertoire go well beyond simplistic designations as 'Greek' or 'barbarian'.

It may therefore be surmised that

- 1. The Scythian/Śaka art originated in the eastern section, then traversed to the western section. Cross currents are there but isolated developments are also there. The eastern section had its own evolution, developments and continuity with its detours.
- 2. With the later Sakas and later Scythians we find the formation of "states" as in Bactria or India, which were capable of dealing more or less effectively with the nations by which they were threatened or with whom they traded. Not surprisingly, perhaps, the very formation of "statehood" brought an end to the distinctive early nomadic way of life by the 1st century B.C. but art forms, obviously continued.

3. This continuation of art forms oscillated between the 'animal style' and the 'nomadic animal style' and the relationship between these two were quite astute.

The style, technique and character of art of the Śaka/Scythian artifacts in the borderlands of India and India itself have been discussed in the next two chapters.