

The first Scythian complex was excavated in the North Black Sea region more than 260 years ago, and since then, a massive amount of literature has been devoted to Scythian culture. However, the difference in understanding the fundamental questions of Scythology is more significant than ever. At first, the researchers' question of meaning arrived when they understood that the Forest-Steppe population in Scythia could not be ethnic Scythians. Thus, the term Scythian culture was not fair to them. Then, the question of Early Scythian monuments, the Asian monuments in the Altai mountains, etc., arose. Many researchers used the terms "early Scythian culture", "Scythian animal style", and the like without referring to the actual Scythian ethnicity. So, in essence, the scholars recognised the lack of alternatives to this term. As some have already noted, no quotation marks near the word "Scythian" and no additional reservations about the need to distinguish between "ethnic" Scythians and "archaeological" Scythians will save neither authors nor readers from unintentional confusion in understanding these concepts. Archaeological cultures named after people known from written sources, willingly or unwillingly, carry the corresponding ethnic "colouring". Some specialists in the eastern territories of the Eurasian steppe use the term "Scythian-Saka time", but even such a more neutral formulation is not gaining popularity. It is especially noticeable in articles on STEM research. Thus, in the obligatory historical reference at the beginning of such works, the authors may indicate (but not always) that they understand the ethnic heterogeneity of the analysed cultures, but still, "for simplicity", use the term Scythians about all nomads of Eurasia of the Iron Age. The titles and conclusions of such articles are very loud, but this loudness is mainly the result of the simplification of terms and not the uniqueness of the knowledge obtained.

351. GOLD, FIRE AND SCYTHIAN "ROYAL" TOMBS IN THE WESTERN PART OF THE PONTIC STEPPE

Contribution format: Oral

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The most original feature of the funeral rite of the Scythian communities in the western part of the Eurasian steppe is the burned wooden tombs under the barrows. Most of them are connected to the Dniester River, such as the Dubăsari burial ground. Based on the available data, burned wooden tombs appeared among the Scythians of the northwestern Pontic region during the Middle Scythian period. This practice continued until the end of the Classical period, but there is a notable chronological gap between these two phases. Most of the early burned tombs date back to around the mid-6th century BC. Later burned tombs among the Scythians of the northwestern Black Sea region do not appear until the late 5th century BC, with the majority dating to the second quarter of the 4th century BC. Based on satellite imaging data, another presumed Scythian mound with a diameter of more than 100 m has been identified. Satellite images clearly show three artificially created circles in a field adjacent to the northeastern outskirts of the village of Lărguța, in the Cantemir district of the Republic of Moldova. If our assumptions are at least partially confirmed, the mound near Lărguța could become one of the first excavated mounds of the Scythian high nobility west of the Southern Bug, in an area traditionally considered to be on the periphery of Scythian culture. In addition, as experience shows, the most significant cultural interactions occur at borderlands, so the potential "royal" mound situated at the intersection of the Scythian and Thracian worlds could represent a unique discovery in the entire history of Scythian archaeology.

2201. THE MALYI VYSTOROP HILLFORT: ON THE QUESTION OF THE ROLE AND FUNCTION OF CERTAIN FORTIFICATIONS OF THE SCYTHIAN PERIOD

Contribution format: Oral

Contribution authors: Oleh Bilynskyi (National University of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy)

The hillfort near the village of Malyi Vystorop (Sumy region, Ukraine) has been actively researched over the past two years. During this time, the internal layout system has been traced, and a number of structures and artifacts have been discovered. Based on Greek amphorae, the site is dated to the transition between the 6th and 5th centuries BC. The most intriguing structure is a building that was likely used for production purposes. Inside and around it, materials have been found that indicate the development of metallurgy at the site and possibly jewelry-making. The hillfort is sparsely populated but features a powerful fortification system. The available materials suggest a relatively high standard of living for its inhabitants. These factors, combined with a high level of production, may indicate that the site functioned as a fortified workshop. Such settlements with a clear specialization are characteristic of early urbanism, raising the question of the existence of similar sites in Forest-Steppe Scythia.

1988. SCYTHIAN PERIOD PINS OF THE SEYM REGION

Contribution format: Oral

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The Seym Region, located at the northern border of Forest-Steppe Scythia, extends further north into the territories of forest cultures, earning it the designation of a "borderland zone." This region is characterized not only

by its proximity to forest cultures but also by a narrow chronology of sites, minimal influence from nomads, and the absence of burial sites. The source base for this research comprises 52 metal pins, exclusively originating from published settlement sites dated to the Scythian period. The study utilizes the typology developed by V.G. Petrenko, based on three primary characteristics (head shape, shaft cross-section, and neck shape) and additional features (material and ornamentation). The research identified 11 types of metal pins from the Sejm Region and three unique forms that have no parallels within Scythia. Among these are a shield-shaped pin, a stylus-shaped pin with twisted ornamentation, and a pin with a bifurcated shaft. This study aims to expand knowledge about the material culture of the Sejm Region by emphasizing the unique characteristics of these artifacts, their manufacturing technologies, and the influences of neighbouring cultures. At the same time, it highlights the need to move beyond typological classifications and recognize ornaments as works of art, reflecting the imagination and experimentation of their creators. The proximity to forest cultures, as previously mentioned, may have inspired some artisans to imitate or incorporate creative elements into their designs.

674. GREEK ARMOUR IN THE SCYTHIAN CULTURE: ORIGIN, SYMBOLIC MEANING AND PRACTICAL USAGE

Contribution format: Oral

Contribution authors: Oleksandr Shelekhan (Institute of Archaeology, National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine)

Starting from the 7th c. BC, Eastern Europe became an area of mobile horse riders known as the Scythians. At the same time, the northern shores of the Black Sea appeared to be the northernmost area of Greek colonisation. Tracing the exchange of military technology shows examples of cross-cultural interaction while Greek armour is considered to be evidence of changes in the non-Greek communities. In total, 69 Scythian sites with Greek helmets and greaves are known. Two helmets were chance finds, while the rest of the artefacts were grave goods. The main area of their dissemination lay near the Lower Dnieper course, where the main kurgans of the Royal Scythians were erected. For sure, the foreign weapons had additional value after appeared in the hands of the Scythians. But the bright evidence of everyday use and numerous modifications testify to quite a pragmatic attitude. The Scythians didn't elaborate their own type of quasi-Antique armour or parade derivatives of it like Thracians and Maeotians did. As a rule, they just used products available to them, sometimes making them lighter for horse riding. The earliest finds belong to the 5th c. BC. But the majority of them were gained in the 4th c. BC, during the Spartocid's expansion when nomads stood as allies or mercenaries. Therefore, they can be considered not as spoils of war, but as diplomatic gifts received during successful campaigns. It was the period when panoply in the Mediterranean also became lighter, together with an increasing part played by mercenaries in the armies. So while providing armour to the Scythians, the Bosporan Greeks achieved two goals: to enlist the support of an ally and at the same time get rid of outdated armour, the need for which gradually decreased.

2259. THE CAUCASUS AT THE CROSSROADS OF EURASIAN HORSE RIDERS

Contribution format: Oral

Contribution authors: Sabine Reinhold (Eurasia-Department German Archaeological Institute)

The first millennium BCE in the Eurasian steppe is considered to be the millennium of the first mobile horse nomads. Based on Ancient Oriental, Greek and Roman historiography, for the first time names of certain tribes appear on its western edge; an early history of the steppe peoples seems within reach. However, the ethno-historical interpretation of archaeological materials in the orbit of ancient literate cultures has created numerous problems. This becomes particularly evident when looking at the Caucasus. The role of the interaction between Caucasian groups and mobile Eurasian ones is pivotal and objects, like cultural practices, were circulating in the regions north of the Caucasus, the Crimea and the Black Sea region from the 9th century BCE onwards at the latest – but maybe everything started much earlier? Recent bioarchaeological evidence suggests a sporadic presence of individuals with Central Asian connections at the start of the first millennium BCE. Among them is an individual who consumed horse milk and dates to the early 9th millennium cal. BCE from a site in the North Caucasian foothills (Scott et al. 2022). In this talk, I will critically review the interaction between local Caucasian populations and mobile groups, considering the latest bioarchaeological research. These new indications challenge paradigms, but also offer an opportunity to re-evaluate the significance of the mutual interaction.

810. PRE-SCYTHIAN HORSE HARNESSSES IN THE KOBAN NECROPOLIS

Contribution format: Oral

Contribution authors: Sergey Makhortykh (Institute of Archaeology Ukrainian Academy of Sciences) – Nadiia Kotova (Institute of Archaeology Ukrainian Academy of Science)

Horse equipment is one of the most important and vivid categories of the material culture in the 9th-7th centuries BC. It is essential for chronological reconstructions and the study of cultural contacts between different regions in antiquity. The aim of the present paper is to provide a general overview followed by a discussion of