

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 Thus, in the obligatory historical reference at the beginning of such works, the authors may indicate (but not always) that they understand the ethnic heterogeneity of the analysed cultures, but still,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

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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