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SCYTHIANS

SCYTHIANS, a nomadic people of Iranian origin who flourished in the steppe lands north of the Black Sea during the 7th-4th centuries BCE (Figure 1). For related groups in Central Asia and India, see SAKAS IN AFGHANISTAN and INDO-SCYTHIAN DYNASTY. See also ASB ii. AMONG THE SCYTHIANS; CLOTHING vii. OF THE IRANIAN TRIBES ON THE PONTIC STEPPES AND IN THE CAUCASUS; APARNA; APASIACAE; CIMMERIANS; DAHAE; MASSAGETAE; SARMATIANS; SCYTHIAN LANGUAGE.

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BIBLIOGRAPHY

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i. HISTORY

*The name.*The English form *Scythian* is ultimately derived from Greek *Skýthai* via Latin *Scythai.* The name is also attested in Akkadian texts: *Áš-gu-za-a-a, Iš-ku-za(-a-a)* (for sources, see Ivantchik, 1966, pp. 185-86, 212-16, 218-221, 224-26 with references to previous publications) and in the Bible in the form *šknz* (an early corruption from *ʾškwz:* Gen. 10:3; 1 Chr. 1:6; Jer. 51:27). Comparison of the Greek and the Semitic renderings makes it possible to establish the initial form of the ethnonym as **škuδa-* or **skuδa-,* with a voiced interdental rendered by a Greek *theta* and a Semitic *z.* The first vowel in the Semitic form is prosthetic making it possible to avoid a consonant cluster at the beginning. The etymology of the name is unclear. Herodotus also cites the form *Skolotoi* (4.6) as the self-designation of the Scythians, as opposed to the name that the Greeks used for them: *Skýthai*. The name *Skolotoi* is usually interpreted as a dialect form of the same name with the transition *δ* > *l*, which has been recorded in other Scythian words as well and also in certain other Eastern Iranian languages, even if this interpretation causes some difficulties (Ivantchik, 2009, pp. 65-66 with references to previous publications). The last element of the word, -τοι, can represent the plural suffix **-tæ* (**š/skuδa-tæ* > **š/skula-tæ* > *Skolotoi*), which is common in Northeastern Iranian languages (cf. however Tokhtas'ev, pp. 72-84, on the problems connected with this suffix). The Scythian ethnonym has been recorded in the same dialect form in the names of Scythian kings *Skýlēs* (Hdt., 4.78-80), Scolopitus (Just., *Epit*. 2.4.1) < **š/skula-pita(r)-,* "Scythians' father," possibly also *Skílouros* (Strabo, 7.4.3, 6).

The Scythian people. The history of the Scythians is known to us from two groups of sources, which are independent from each other—Akkadian cuneiform texts and Graeco-Roman sources. The first group only relates to the earliest period of Scythian history—the 7th century BCE, while the second covers the whole of it. Greek sources, especially those concerned with the 7th and 6th centuries BCE, are not always reliable. Historical information in them is often mixed with tales drawn from folklore and learned constructs of historians, so that use of such sources required critical analysis.

The earliest well-attested events in the history of the Scythians are their campaigns into the Near East. The Scythians are mentioned for the first time in the Assyrian 'Annals' of Esarhaddon, which tell of the Assyrian rout of the Manneans with their allies, the Scythians, led by Išpakāia. These events date from between 680/79 and 678/7 BCE. In later cuneiform sources the Scythians are mentioned in connection with events in Mannea or Media, that is, on the northeastern and eastern borders of Assyria (for the sources, see Ivantchik,

1996). In approximately 672 BCE the Scythian king Partatua (Protothýēs of Hdt., 1.103) asked for the hand of the daughter of the Assyrian king Esarhaddon (see ASSARHADDON), promising to conclude a treaty of alliance with Assyria. It is probable that this marriage took place and the alliance also came into being (SAA IV, no. 20; Ivantchik, 1993, pp. 93-94; 205-9). The Scythians probably used to make periodic raids from the steppes to the north of the Caucasus, where they dwelt, into Transcaucasia and the territories stretching south as far as Media at least from the early 680s BCE, if not earlier. Yet, by the mid-620s their activities were confined to the territory east of Assyria, and for the Assyrians they remained an insignificant border people, whose might could not possibly be compared to that of the Cimmerians, the other group of nomads from the steppes. In the mid-620s, when Assyria was already finding it difficult to control the remains of its possessions, while the new states of Babylonia and Media had not yet become truly powerful, Scythian bands had gained more freedom of action. They took advantage of the situation to make lengthier campaigns. The Scythians reached the frontiers of Egypt, plundered several cities in Palestine, and routed the Cimmerians.

These events were linked with the name of the Scythian king Madyes, whose father Protothyes/Partatua was perhaps married to an Assyrian princess. In the classical tradition they are reflected as the period of “Scythian Rule over Asia,” the duration of which was defined as 28 years by Herodotus (1.103-6, 130; 4.1-4, 12) and as 8 years by Pompeius Trogus (Just., *Epit.* 2.5.1-7). The importance of this event has been wildly exaggerated in the classical tradition under the influence of Scythian folklore: in reality, this is a question, not of rule, but one or several successful and lengthy raids, during which the Scythians never lost touch with their main territory, the steppes of the North Pontic region and the northern Caucasus (Ivantchik, 1999b; Ivantchik, 2005, pp. 221-24). The fact, however, that the Scythian campaigns in the late-70s and mid-20s of the 7th century were led by a father (Protothyes) and son (Madyes) indicates that there were groups among the Scythians for whom the campaigns into the Near East were a traditional occupation over the course of several decades. According to the classical tradition, the Scythians also subdued Media, which was liberated from them by Cyaxares. He slew the Scythian leaders during a feast in his palace (Hdt., 4.104-6). The veracity of this episode is dubious. The Scythian raids into the Near East ceased in the last decade of the 7th century BCE.

While in the 7th century the Greeks contacted Eurasian nomads (first the

Cimmerians and later also the Scythians) mainly in Asia Minor, in the third quarter of the 7th century BCE (probably near its end) they were founding their first colonies in Scythian territory—settlements on the Black Sea island of Borysthenes (mod. Berezan) and near Taganrog on the Sea of Azov, later at Panticapaeum, Olbia, and elsewhere. From that time onward, they were in constant touch with the Scythians. Throughout the 6th century BCE, relations between the Greek colonies and the Scythians were mainly peaceful (cf. however new data about the possible destruction of Panticapaeum by the Scythians in the mid-6th century BCE: Tolstikov et al., 2017, p. 14). The Greek maintained especially active trading links, not with their closest neighbors, the Scythian nomads of the steppes, but rather with the settled population, which lived further away in the forest steppes. The main routes providing access to the forest steppes were the large rivers, which flowed into the Black Sea.

The best known event in Scythian history of the 6th century BCE was the unsuccessful campaign of Darius I (see DARIUS iii. Darius I the Great). Various dates have been suggested for this event—between 520 and 507 BCE—but the date which appears most likely is 513 BCE (Briant, 2002, pp. 141-46, 904). The objectives and scale of that campaign are also questionable: its importance appears to have been exaggerated by Herodotus. Although the Scythians, after the campaign of Darius (they were probably referred to as *Sakā paradraya*, "overseas Saka," in Darius's DSe and DNa inscriptions) were included in the lists of peoples conquered by the Persians, the campaign—as also borne out in the Classical tradition—ended in failure. The Scythians' victory over the previously undefeated Darius made a deep impression on their contemporaries, as a result of which the Scythians began to be viewed as invincible, a condition that was attributed to their nomadic way of life (Hdt., 4.46; Thuc., 2.97.6). Later, from the time of Ephoros (4th cent. BCE) onwards, the tradition of idealizing the Scythians began to take root in Classical literature, partly in connection with this idea of Scythian invincibility (Ivantchik, 2005, pp. 18-52).

In the 6th century and probably later as well, the Scythians were not united under the rule of one king. Herodotus (4.120) mentions three Scythian kings who ruled during the time of Darius's invasion: Scopasis, Taxakis, and Idanthyrsos; the latter led the united forces of the Scythians and their neighbors. The power of the Scythian kings was hereditary: Herodotus (4.76) informs us of the genealogy of Idanthyrsos, who defeated the Persians: he was the son of Saulios (or rather Sauaios, both forms are attested in the

manuscripts and are equally possible, cf Ivantchik, 2009, 72), grandson of Gnouros, great-grandson of Lykos and great-great-grandson of Spargapeithes. In the same passage Herodotus informs us that the renowned Scythian wise man, Anacharsis, came from the same royal family, being the son of Gnouros and brother of Sauaios/Saulios. Herodotus is the earliest author mentioning Anacharsis. Later he was to become a very popular figure in Greek literature, playing the part of the embodiment of "Barbarian wisdom" and being numbered among the "Seven Sages." Some features of this idea are already to be noted in Herodotus's account (4.46, 76-77), and subsequently his image was used by Ephoros when creating his idealized image of the Scythians; later he was to become a well-loved figure for the Cynics, after he had been definitely transformed into the ideal "man of Nature" or "noble sauvage," The *Letters of Anacharsis*—a Cynic work of the 3rd century BCE—was ascribed to him (Reuters; Praechter; Kindstrand). It is not clear whether there is any historical foundation for the tradition regarding Anacharsis, that is, as to whether there had been a Hellenized Scythian prince by this name: it is quite possible. However, according to Herodotus, in his time the Scythians did not know about Anacharsis. In Olbia the tradition regarding Anacharsis existed in some form in the mid-5th century BCE: it was from there that the story of Anacharsis' murder in Hylaia originated, when he offered a sacrifice to the Mother of the Gods, although the explanation for the murder (Anacharsis was allegedly punished for renouncing Scythian customs in preference for Greek ones) probably stems from Herodotus himself. The fact that an altar to the Mother of the Gods existed in Hylaia was confirmed by a graffito dating from 550-530 BCE (SEG XLII, 710). Yet, even if Prince Anacharsis had existed, virtually all the information provided about him by classical authors relates to the history of Greek literature, not that of Scythian history.

Soon after Darius's campaign, important changes took place in the North Pontic region. There was a marked increase in the number of funerary monuments and a number of new elements appeared in the material culture. This can be explained with reference to the penetration of the North Pontic region by a new group of nomads arriving from the East in the second half of the 6th century BCE (Alekseev, 2003, pp. 168-93). One of the results of this penetration was the intensification of activity and aggressiveness of the Scythians. It is also possible that the need to resist the Persian invasion gave rise to political consolidation. One of the goals of Scythian expansion was Thrace. During one of the raids in the 490s they advanced as far as Thracian Chersonesos (Gallipoli; Hdt., 6.40, 84); however, in Thrace the Scythians came

up against resistance from the Odrysian kingdom. Soon the border between the Scythian and Odrysian kingdoms became established along the Danube, and the relations between the two dynasties were amicable ones giving rise to the arrangement of dynastic marriages (the Scythian king Oktamasades was the son of an Odrysian princess, daughter of Teres). Another direction of Scythian expansion was towards the north and northwest. Several fortified settlements in the forest steppes were destroyed; and the Scythians probably succeeded in asserting their control over their settled population. Simultaneously the Scythians were attempting for the first time to subjugate the Greek colonies of the North Pontic region, with which relations had previously been rather peaceful; there unfortified rural settlements existed around the Greek cities, and many cities had no defensive walls. In the first decades of the 5th century BCE, defensive installations appeared in a number of Greek cities, and at the same time the settlements in their environs (*chorai*) were destroyed or abandoned. In the necropoleis of the Greek cities, burials are found of men who had been killed by arrows with arrowheads of a Scythian type (Vinogradov, 1989, pp. 81-90; Marchenko).

This Scythian expansion had different consequences in various parts of the North Pontic region. The Scythians succeeded in establishing political control over the Greek colonies in the northwestern part of the Pontic region and the western Crimea (Nikonion, Tyras, Olbia, and Kerkinitis). The data provided by Herodotus (4.78-80) testify that the Scythian king Skyles had a residence in Olbia and appeared there every year, while his forces camped outside the city walls. Later on, silver coins were minted in Olbia bearing the name of Eminakos, perhaps borne by a governor of Oktamasades, Skyles' successor, or by the Scythian king who succeeded Oktamasades (Kullanda and Raevskiĭ, pp. 79-95, with references to earlier literature). In nearby Nikonion coins were issued bearing the name of Skyles himself (Karyshkovskiĭ and Zaginaĭlo, pp. 3-15). In the second half of the 5th century BCE the city of Kerkinitis (modern Eupatoria) used to pay tribute to the Scythians; this fact is attested by a direct epigraphic evidence (Vinogradov, 1994, p. 66, no. 3).

The situation which existed in Olbia during the period of Scythian domination is well known to us. In the preceding period the whole of the territory around Olbia was covered with a dense network of non-fortified rural settlements (over 70 such settlements dating from the 6th century BCE have been recorded), where most of the grain was produced which was consumed in Olbia or exported. In the first quarter of the 5th century BCE all these

settlements disappeared and Olbia lost its production base. Nevertheless, there were no signs of decline to be observed in Olbia, but on the contrary economic prosperity; nor was the grain trade in decline. It is possible that during that period grain was being produced not merely in the immediate vicinity of the city but also in the settled communities of the forest steppes, from which it was brought to Olbia by way of the Bug and Dnieper rivers; then the citizens of Olbia would sell it to Greece and receive other commodities there in exchange. Thus, a kind of division of labour emerged: the barbarians of the forest steppes produced grain, while Olbia, and probably other Greek colonies as well, assumed the role of "trading agent," selling it on to gain profit for themselves. The system was subject to the control of the nomadic Scythians, who dwelt in the steppes separating the forest steppes and the coast and dominated over both of these regions (Vinogradov, 1989, pp. 81-109, cf. Marchenko). Thus, the loss of their agricultural hinterland for Olbia, Tyras and Nikonion, which obliged them to specialize in the trades, was the result of the deliberate "economic policy" of the Scythians.

Scythian expansion in the Bosporan region, where there existed a good number of Greek cities, was less successful. Perhaps, they initially succeeded in subjugating Nymphaeum. Other Bosporan cities facing the Scythian threat joined forces in an alliance led by Panticapaeum. In a number of Bosporan cities (Panticapaeum, Myrmekion, Tyritake, Porthmeus) city walls were built or strengthened (Tolstikov). The Bosporan Greeks succeeded in defending their independence and on the basis of this alliance of cities a monarchy soon took shape—the Bosporan kingdom with its capital in Panticapaeum.

In the lower reaches of the Don, where the Greek presence had been weaker, the consequences of Scythian expansion made themselves felt earlier. In the third quarter of the 6th century BCE the Taganrog settlement—the only Greek colony in the area—was destroyed. The Scythians, however, felt the need to continue trading with the Greeks and at the beginning of the 5th century BCE the settlement known as Elizavetovka came into being becoming the main intermediary in trading between the Greeks and the barbarian hinterland in that territory. The population of the Elizavetovka settlement was Scythian, although there may have been a small Greek presence within it (Marchenko, Zhitnikov, and Kopylov). Thus, the existence of a Greek colony was brought to an end as a result of Scythian expansion in this region, and trading with the Greeks now found itself directely in the hands of the Scythians.

From Herodotus' writing (4.76-80) we know the names of several Scythian

kings who reigned in the 5th century BCE: Ariapeithes; Skyles, his son by a Greek woman from Histria, who succeeded him to the throne; and Oktamasades, Ariapeithes' son by the daughter of the Thracian king Teres who ousted Skyles. The third son of Ariapeithes, Orikos, possibly never acceded to the throne. It would appear that this dynasty was not related by family ties to the dynasty of Idanthyrsos. They ruled over those Scythians who were in control of the northwestern part of the Pontic region (from the Danube to Olbia and its environs). It is not known how their domains extended eastwards and whether they ruled over all the Scythians or only some of them.

In the last quarter of the 5th century BCE, the political situation in the North Pontic region changed. The Greek cities were probably not more controlled by Scythians and began to reconstitute their *chorai*. At the end of the 5th century and during the 4th century BCE, Olbia not only re-established control over the rural territory that had belonged to it in the Archaic period, but expanded it; approximately 150 settlements of this period have been recorded (Vinogradov, 1989, pp. 135-50; Kryzhitskiĭ et al., pp. 96-151). At the same time the rural hinterlands of Tyras and Nikonion were also being re-established. This indicates the absence of any major military threat from the Scythian side. At the end of the 5th century the Scythians lost control of Nymphaeum as well; the city was incorporated into the Bosporan kingdom, which in its turn had subjugated a number of barbarian territories on the Asian side of the Bosporus. Archeological data enable us to assume that in the last third of the 5th century BCE there had been some inner conflicts among the Scythians. It is possible also that a new wave of nomads from the East had appeared who intermingled with the other Scythians, thus destabilizing the situation, which, however, soon grew calmer.

The 4th century BCE saw a flowering of Scythian culture; it is precisely from this time that the vast majority of known Scythian monuments dates. Of the 2,300 monuments recorded in the Scythian steppes by the beginning of the 1980s, some 2,000 have been dated to the 4th century BCE (Chernenko et al., 1986, p. 345). The richest 'royal' burials also date from this period. Relations between the Greek colonies and the Scythians were mainly peaceful, and there probably existed dynastic ties between their kings and the rulers of the Bosporan kingdom. In Scythian culture, particularly that of the Scythian élite, rapid and far-reaching Hellenization can be inferred from the Greek influences on the art of this period and from other archeological data (see below, iii).

A large share of the events from the political history of the Scythians in the 4th century BCE known to us are linked with the name of the king Ateas (Just., *Epit.* 9.2; Strabo, 7.3.18; Polyaenus, *Strat*. 7.44; Luc., *Macr*. 10). His activity concerns the southwest of Scythia and Thrace and dates from between the sixties of the 4th century BCE and 339 BCE, when he perished in a battle against Philip of Macedonia aged over 90. Ateas initially waged war successfully against the Triballoi and the Istrianoi. Subsequently he allied himself with the Macedonians and perished in the war, which began after that alliance had been burst asunder. It is not clear whether Ateas was king of the whole of Scythia or merely reigned over the Scythians in the western part of the steppe zone. The latter assumption would seem the more likely (Andrukh, pp. 71-80). His coins have been recorded, which probably were issued in the Greek city of Callatis in the territory of Thrace (Stolyarik, pp. 21-34). This fact and also the relations between Ateas and Philip indicate that he was for a time in control of part of the territories to the south of the Danube, which traditionally were considered to be beyond the borders of Scythia. The Scythians' loss of these territories and possibly part of the territories north of the Danube as well, would appear to be the result of Ateas's defeat and death. Yet a Scythian population did live on below the Danube, in Dobruja, as can be seen from the archeological evidence.

The next known event from Scythian history is the campaign of Alexander the Great's general Zopyrion, which took place in 331/30 BCE and was directed against the Getae and the Scythians (Just., *Epit*., 12.1, 4). The Macedonian army of 30,000 men reached Olbia and laid siege to it, but was unable to take it and was completely routed by the Scythians. Zopyrion himself met his death.

One other Scythian king of the 4th century BCE mentioned in the sources was Agaros, who had probably taken part in the internecine war between the sons of the Bosporan king Pairisades in 310/9 on the side of Satyros II; after his defeat, Satyros's son Pairisades sought refuge with Agaros (Diod. Sic., 20.22-26). He was probably king of those Scythians who dwelt in the Crimean steppes immediately adjacent to the Bosporus.

Scythian culture, as it pertains to the steppes of the North Pontic region, suddenly disappears at the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. The reasons for its demise are unclear and are the subject of discussion. Probably a number of negative factors coincided (climatic changes, an economic crisis resulting from over-grazing of pastures, and so on), and an important role was played by expansion of the Sarmatians—a new wave of nomads coming from the East

(Alekseev, 2003, p. 251; and for a variety of points of view, see the collection of articles in Maksimenko). The 3rd century BCE is the “dark period” of Scythian history. We know neither of any Scythian nor of any Sarmatian monuments in the North Pontic steppes from that time, and to date there is no satisfactory explanation for this. Nevertheless, there are no doubts with regard to the beginning of Sarmatian expansion in the 3rd century BCE. By approximately 280 BCE the Sarmatians were penetrating the Crimea and had even made their way to the environs of Chersonesos, as is borne out by the epigraphic evidence (Vinogradov, 1997).

It would seem that, from the beginning of the 3rd century, the Scythians began their expansion against the Greek settlements in western Crimea, which up to that time had been under the control of Chersonesos. By the mid-3rd century BCE Chersonesos had lost all its possessions in northwestern Crimea, including the cities of Kalos Limen and Kerkinitis, and was only able to hang on to the territories immediately adjacent to it (Shcheglov). In the 2nd century BCE, the presence of the Scythians was only to be found in the territory of the Crimea, the lower reaches of the Dnieper River, and Dobruja, which had come to known as “Scythia Minor.” In the Crimea the Scythians had, to some extent, retained their nomadic way of life, but were adopting a more and more settled existence and intermingling with the local population, particularly the Tauroi, who inhabited the Crimean mountains. The Crimean Scythians were evidently establishing a new kingdom in the mid-2nd century BCE. The city of Scythian Neapolis (on the site of modern Simferopol), which had been founded in the second quarter of the 2nd century BCE, became its capital. Despite the fact that no continuity can be traced archeologically between Late Scythian culture and the Scythian culture of the 4th century BCE (cf. below), it was probably realized at least in the upper strata of society: the kings of Scythian Neapolis called themselves Kings of Scythia (Vinogradov and Zaĭtsev). Both the ancient authors and the Greeks of the North Pontic region regarded them as Scythians.

The new Scythian kingdom was very much Hellenized and was more similar to the Hellenistic monarchies with a dynasty of barbarian origin than to the 4th-century kingdom of Scythian nomads. The Late Scythian kingdom maintained close ties with the Bosporan kingdom, and their ruling dynasties were linked together through marriages. A very important position in this kingdom was occupied by Argotos, whom the Bosporan queen Kamasarye (widow of Pairisades II and mother of Pairisades III) took as her second husband (CIRB, no. 75; cf. the inscription from the mausoleum of Argotos in

Scythian Neapolis: Vinogradov and Zaĭtsev, pp. 44-53 = SEG LIII, no. 775); it is not clear whether he was a Scythian or a Greek. Argotos would appear to have died in approximately 125 BCE. The best known Late Scythian king Skiluros seems to reign in this period. Skiluros controlled not only central and western Crimea (with the exception of Chersonesos), but also a number of territories in the northwestern part of the North Pontic region. Olbia was politically dependent on Skiluros, who issued coins there bearing his name. Skiluros maintained friendly relations with the Bosporus, and one of his daughters was married to one of the members of the Bosporan royal family, who bore the name of Heraclides (SEG XXXVII, no. 674). Skiluros continued to pursue a hostile policy towards Chersonesos. The Scythian kingdom was routed by the forces of the Pontic king Mithradates Eupator led by his general Diophantes. Relying on support from the long-term enemy of the Scythian kingdom, Chersonesos, Diophantes—in the course of three campaigns between 110 and 107 BCE—put to rout the last king of Crimean Scythia, Palakos, son of Skiluros (who had died by then) and seized all the Scythian fortresses, including the capital, Neapolis (IosPE I^2, no. 352). Former Scythian possessions including Olbia now came under the control of Mithradates.

"Scythia Minor," which existed in Dobruja (Andrukh), was of far less significance than the Crimean kingdom. We know of its existence thanks to rare mentions by ancient authors and to inscriptions, and also thanks to the fact that its kings issued their coins in Greek cities in the western part of the Pontic region. From inscriptions and coins we know the names of six Scythian kings from Dobruja: Tanusakos, Kanitos, Sariakos, Akrosakos, Kharaspos and Ailios, who reigned between the second half of the 3rd century and the beginning of the 1st century BCE. "Scythia Minor" in Dobruja, just like the Scythian kingdom in the Crimea ceased to exist as a result of the expansion of Mithradates Eupator.

In the post-Mithradatic period the Scythian population, which by then had completed the transition to a settled way of life, continued to exist both in the Crimea and in the north-western part of the Pontic region (the lower reaches of the Dnieper and Dobruja), and it was gradually being assimilated among other ethnic groups. In the 1st century CE, the Scythians became stronger again, and in the sixties of that century they laid siege to Chersonesos, which was obliged to turn for help to Rome. The governor of the province of Lower Moesia, T. Plautius Silvanus, organized a campaign against them, and the Scythians were defeated; after that, Roman garrisons were stationed in

Chersonesos and also at certain other points. In the sources from that period frequent mention is made of the Tauro-Scythians, which reflects the mixed nature of the Crimean population. According to archeological data (see below), in the second half of the 1st and the first half of the 2nd century CE the Late Scythians had to a significant extent been assimilated by the Sarmatians. Greek sources continue to mention the Scythians for a long time afterwards, until the end of the Byzantine period, but from the 4th century BCE on, this term was often used as a collective name for the northern barbarians and could designate peoples who had nothing to do with the historical Scythians. Byzantine authors, for example, used it to denote Slavs or Turkic nomads. The term “Scythians” was also used in a similar way in a number of sources from the Roman period.

ii. ARCHAEOLOGY

The term ‘Scythian culture’ is used in archeological literature in both a narrow sense and a broad one. Strictly speaking, the Scythian archeological culture was a culture of the steppes and the forest steppes of Eastern Europe (approximately from the Danube to the Don) in the 7th-4th centuries BCE. Some characteristics of this culture (similar, although not identical, shapes for horses’ bridles, weapons, and works of art in the ‘Animal Style’, the so-called ‘Scythian trias’) are close to those of cultures of the same period, which existed in other parts of the Eurasian steppes, even as far away as Mongolia. For this reason, some researchers speak of the ‘Scythian cultures’ of Siberia, the Altai, the Urals region, and so on. This extended use of the term is unfortunate and gives rise to a number of errors. The archeological term ‘Scythian culture,’ even in its narrow sense, is still wider than the concept ‘culture of the historical Scythians.’ The Scythian archeological culture embraces not only the Scythians of the East-European steppes, but also the population of the forest steppes, about whose language and ethnic origins it is difficult to say anything precise, and also the Cimmerians.

Three main stages can be singled out in the development of Scythian culture. The first of these came to be known as Early Scythian culture. In the southern part of Eastern Europe, this culture replaced the so-called sites of the Novocherkassk type. The date of the transition from these to Early Scythian culture is disputed; various dates between the mid-8th and the late 7th century BCE have been proposed. The dating of the emergence of Early Scythian culture to the second half of the 8th century appears to have been most convincingly substantiated (Kossack; Medvedskaya; Polin; Ivantchik, 2001a;

Alekseev, 2003, pp. 129-52). During the incursions into the Near East in the late 8th and 7th centuries BCE, the Cimmerians and Scythians, from an archeological point of view, belonged to the Early Scythian culture, but not to its earliest phase (the nomadic burials in Norşuntepe and Imirler and finds of objects of a 'Scythian' type in the Urartian fortresses at Teišebaini, Bastam, Ayanis-kale, et al., as well as at other sites in Asia Minor and the Near East; Ivantchik, 2001a, pp. 21-96). Early Scythian culture ceased to exist in the second half or at the end of the 6th century BCE.

Early Scythian culture is known mainly from funerary sites, since the Scythians were nomads and did not have permanent settlements. The settlements have been found only in the forest steppes, where the population was settled. The most important Scythian sites of the 7th and 6th century BCE are on the northwestern and southeastern edges of the Scythian territories, in the forest steppes of the Dnieper region and in the Northern Caucasus, while in the steppes separating those two regions only a few Scythian sites have been recorded. This should be explained not by the fact that these steppes were not occupied by Scythians (as is sometimes assumed), but by their burial customs; they used to bury their dead at the edge of the territory they occupied. In the Northern Caucasus, a number of Scythian necropoleis consisting of burial-mounds have been recorded, some of which are distinguished by their great wealth and have been defined as royal or aristocratic ones. The most important of these are near the village of Kelermesskaya (Galanina), near the Krasnoe Znamya farmstead (Petrenko), Novozavedennoe II (Petrenko, Maslov, and Kantorovich), Nartan (Batchaev), near the village of Ulskiy (Ulyap; Ivantchik and Leskov), and the burial-mound near the village of Kostromskaya (Olkhovskiĭ, 1995). The burials were deposited under tumuli, the size of which depended upon the status of the deceased. As a rule the burials were in large rectangular or square pits covered over with wood, or, they were deposited in wooden or stone vaults erected on the ground surface and later covered over by a burial-mound. The deceased were usually laid out in an extended position on their back. The burials were accompanied by horses buried complete with harness, the number of which corresponded to the status of the deceased and could run into tens (Figure 2). In some cases, not only riding-horses have been discovered in burials, but also draught horses together with the remains of chariots. The burial ritual used in the royal tumuli of this period, especially in Kelermes tumuli, corresponds quite precisely to the description of the funeral of Scythian kings provided by Herodotus (4.71-72, Ivantchik, 2011). In some of

the tumuli no burials have been found and these would appear to be not funerary monuments but sanctuaries (some of the Ulskiy tumuli, including the largest with a height of 15 meters, contained skeletons of more than 400 horses: Ivantchik and Leskov). In burial-mounds dating from the 7th century BCE, the same period as the Scythians' incursions into the Near East (the Kelermes and Krasnoznamenskiĭ burial-mounds and some of those from the Nartan burial-ground), objects of Near Eastern origin have been discovered, which had evidently been brought back from those campaigns. Some of them, for example the sword and poleaxe from Kelermes (Figure 3), combine Scythian and Near Eastern features and had probably been made by Near Eastern craftsmen at the behest of Scythian chieftains. In the later burial-mounds (since the last quarter of the 7th century BCE), there were no Near Eastern imports, but objects of Greek production appeared, a development which tied in with the beginning of contacts with Greek colonists.

Another area in which Early Scythian sites were clustered, including some rich ones, were the forest steppes along the Dnieper River. The most important of these was the Litoi (or Melgunov) burial mound, which had been excavated at the end of 1763 on the border between the steppe and forest steppe zones and had contained a 'royal' burial (Pridik). Objects of Near Eastern origin discovered in this burial site were very similar to those found in the Kelermes tumuli. The swords in gold sheaths found in the Melgunov and Kelermes burial mounds had probably been manufactured in one and the same workshop (Chernenko, 1980; Metdepenninghen). The main group of sites was situated further north along both banks of the Dnieper River and its tributaries (Il'inskaya, 1968; idem, 1975; Kovpanenko, 1981; Skoryĭ, 2003). The most important of these were the following burial-mounds: Perepyatikha (Skoryĭ, 1990), Zhabotin 524, Dar'evka (Il'inskaya, 1975, pp. 20, 58-59), Starshaya Mogila, Volkovcy 2/1866, Popovka 8 (Il'inskaya, 1968, pp. 24-26, 45, 59), Steblevo 15 (Klochko and Skoryĭ, pp. 71-84), and, among the later examples, Gulyai Gorod 38, Bobrica 35 (Il'inskaya, 1975, pp. 14-15), Sinyavka 100 (Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, p. 271), Medvin 2/III (Kovpanenko, 1977), Repyakhovataya Mogila (Il'inskaya, Mozolevskiĭ, and Terenozhkin), Solodka 2, Shumeiko, Popovka 3 (Il'inskaya, 1968, pp. 32-33, 43-44, 157-158). The burials under the tumuli were deposited in pits covered over with wood, or in wooden vaults built on the ground surface, or let into the pits. In some cases vaults were set on fire before the tumuli were built. The funerary rite was similar but not identical to the one found at contemporary Scythian sites of the Northern Caucasus.

Apart from funerary sites, numerous settlements, both fortified and non-fortified, have been investigated in the forest steppe zone; the number of the first type so far recorded run into several tens, and there are much more of the second type. The most important sites in the Dnieper region are the city-sites of Trakhtemirovo (600 hects., 7th-6th cent.; Fialko and Boltrik), Motroninskoe (approx. 200 hects., 7th cent.-first quarter of the 5th; Bessonova and Skoryĭ), and Pastyrskoe (approx. 18 hects., 6th-3rd cent. BCE; Yakovenko, 1968). To the east of these on Vorska River, a western tributary of the Dnieper, there is the largest city-site of the forest steppe zone, namely Belskoe (Figure 4), which dates from the 8th-4th centuries BCE. It occupies an area of 4,400 hectares, the length of its outer rampart is over 30 kilometers and inside the rampart there are three acropoleis with additional fortifications occupying 120, 67 and 15 hectares respectively (Shramko). Of particular significance is the Nemirovskoe city-site in the middle reaches of the southern Bug; it dates from the 7th-6th centuries BCE and occupies an area of 100 hectares (Smirnova). A distinctive feature of this site is the presence of a significant amount of imported Greek pottery dating from the last or even the third quarter of the 7th century (Vakhtina), which testifies to active trade links with the first Greek colony in the North Pontic region, founded approximately in 625 BCE on the island of Berezan in the estuary of the Bug River. Early Scythian city-sites in the forest steppes have large dimensions and are surrounded by ramparts and moats; often inside them an area with additional fortifications is set apart, the acropolis. In a number of city-sites traces of metal-working have been recorded. The dwellings have walls of adobe supported on a wooden frame; they are built above the ground or sunk into it. In the large city-sites only a relatively small area of the site is taken up with buildings, and in some cases this only applies to the acropolis. It is possible that the areas without buildings were set aside for the camps of nomadic Scythians, who only seasonally visited the city-sites, and for penning livestock.

A number of important Early Scythian sites have also been recorded in the territories separating the Northern Caucasian and forest steppe groups. The Krivorozhskiĭ burial mound on the eastern bank of the Severskiĭ Donets (Mantscevich, 1958; Alekseev, 2003, pp. 111-13) and the Temir-gora burial-mound in the Crimea (Yakovenko, 1972) both date from the 7th century BCE. Painted Greek vessels found in those tumuli represent the earliest known Greek imports in Scythian burial sites. The first of them contained also the silver head of a bull and a golden hoop of Near Eastern origin.

A similar range of artifacts with minor local variations characterizes Early Scythian sites. A typical horse bridle (Figure 5) consists of a bronze bit with stirrup-shaped ends or an iron bit with looped ends and cheek-pieces joined to these with straps. The cheek-pieces are usually made of iron with three loops and a curved or straight end, or they are made of bone with three holes in and with ends decorated with depictions in Animal Style; less often they are made of bronze and have three holes. Wooden cheek-pieces with bone ends were also used. These bridles also incorporated separators at the points where straps crossed, so that they would not become tangled, and also decorative plaques. Nose-plates were also used in horse harnesses. The most widespread type of weapon was a bow and arrows (Figure 6). Scythian bows were composite ones; they were sigmoid in shape and rather small, which made them convenient to use for mounted warriors. The arrowheads used were of bronze, less frequently of bone and iron. The bronze arrowheads were complete with a socket and bi- or tri-lobate. The shape of the arrowheads changed over time, but the basic structure remained the same. Bronze arrowheads of Scythian shape and also the bow that was used with them were the most advanced types of firing weapon of that time. This is why no later than the end of the 2nd century BCE, they had been adopted by the armies of the Near East, into which the Cimmerians and Scythians used to direct their incursions; soon afterwards, they were to be found everywhere. Gorytoi (quivers with special sections for a bow hanging from the warrior's belt) were used to carry bows and arrows in. Extensive use was made of spears, which were between 1.70 and 2.20 meters in length; the spearheads were made of iron and in the shape of a bay leaf. Sometimes these spears had ferrules at the bottom. Other typical Scythian weapons were iron swords and daggers, so-called *akinakai* (Figure 7) They were mainly short (50-70 cms), but in the Early Scythian period long swords were also used. Both the daggers and the swords had a cross-guard in the shape of a heart or in a similar shape (so called "butterfly" or "kidney"-shaped), and the terminal in the shape of a bar. Sometimes bimetallic pick-axes were used; they had an iron blade and a bronze socket. Other kinds of combat axes were also used. Remains of armor were found even at the most ancient sites; they consisted of bronze and iron plates sewn onto a leather base along the top edge. Helmets of the so-called 'Kuban' type were also used; they were cast of bronze and had an opening for the face (on Scythian weaponry and armor, see Melyukova, 1964; Chernenko, 1968). In Scythian burials, particularly élite ones, terminals are often found in the form of large hollow bells of various shapes with slits in and a small ball inside positioned on a high socket and often crowned with a molded

representation of the head or complete figure of an animal or bird. They were usually made of bronze and, less frequently, of iron. They had a cultic function; in a number of cases they were found with the remains of carts and chariots or with the skeletons of horses, but they were also often found without any of them (Perevodchikova, 1980). One of the typical attributes of Early Scythian culture was the large bronze mirror, on the back of which in the center there would be a handle in the form of a plaque raised on two small posts or in the form of a loop (Kuznetsova). In these burials cast-bronze cauldrons of large dimensions and with a round body on a high foot were also often found. Their vertical handles were arranged on the edge of the vessels and they were sometimes in the shape of animal figures. Anthropomorphic stelae were erected on the top of burial mounds to serve as gravestones (Ol'khovskiĭ and Evdokimov). Various articles found at Scythian sites were decorated with depictions in the Animal Style (Figure 8). Stylistic differences between various local groups of Scythian culture have been noted, but, on the whole, this style is one of the most characteristic features of Early Scythian culture. The origins of Early Scythian culture have not been conclusively identified and are the subject of controversy. A number of its elements are of Central Asian origin, but this culture would appear to have assumed its definitive form within the territory of the North Pontic region, partly under the influence of the cultures of the Northern Caucasus and, to a small extent, that of the Near East. With regard to certain categories of the material, links to pre-Scythian cultures of the North Pontic region can be noted.

Important changes can be detected in the material culture of the Scythians in the second half of the 6th century BCE; then, from the end of the 6th century BCE, a new period begins, which lasts till the end of the 4th or beginning of the 3rd century BCE. Certain scholars regard this as a new stage in the development of Scythian Culture (Classical-Scythian or Mid-Scythian culture), while others refer to it as the emergence of a new archeological culture (Alekseev, 2003, pp. 168-93, with bibliography). As in the preceding period, Scythian culture of this time is represented mainly by funerary sites. The main area of their distribution changes; most of these sites, including the richest ones, are within the territory of the Pontic steppes. The zone where there is a particular concentration of élite burial mounds is within the area of the Dnieper rapids (Mozolevskiĭ, 1986). The Northern Caucasus at that time would appear to have no longer been under the control of the Scythians; the rich burial mounds such as the Seven Brother mounds and those at Elizavetovka or Ulyap, which contain elements of Scythian culture, would

appear to have been of the local population. In the forest steppes, burial mounds of the 5th and 4th century, including 'aristocratic' ones (e.g., Ryzhanovka; see Chochorowski and Skoryĭ), have also been recorded, although they are not as significant as those in the steppes. Among the burial mounds dating from the end of the 6th and 5th century, particularly significant sites are Ostraya Tomakovskaya Mogila (Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, pp. 98, 103), Zavadskaya Mogila 1 (Mozolevskiĭ, 1980, pp. 86-112), Novogrigor'evka 5 (Samokvasov, pp. 121-23), Baby, Raskopana Mogila (Evarnitsckiĭ; Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, pp. 99-101; Alekseev, 1987) in the region of the Dnieper rapids and the Zolotoi (Koltukhov 1999a), and Kulakovskiĭ (Koltukhov, 1998) burial-mounds in the Crimea. Yet the largest and richest burial-mounds denoted as 'royal' date from the 4th century BCE. These are Solokha (Mantsevich, 1987), Bol'shaya Cymbalka (OAK 1867, pp. XII-XVI; Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, p. 149), Chertomlyk (Rolle, Murzin, and Alekseev), Oguz (Fialko), Alexandropol (Lazarevskiĭ; Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, pp. 136-38), and Kozel (Il'inskaya and Terenozhkin, pp. 149-50). The second richest group of burial mounds, which are referred to for the sake of convenience as 'aristocratic,' include the following: Berdyanskiĭ (Boltrik, Fialko, and Cherednichenko), Tolstaya Mogila (Mozolevs'kyi, 1979), Chmyreva Mogila (Alekseev, 1985), Five Brothers 8 (Shilov, p. 150), Melitopol'skiĭ (Terenozhkin and Mozolevskiĭ), Zheltokamenka (Mozolevskiĭ, 1982), Krasnokutskiĭ (Melyukova, 1981). In addition, approximately 3,000 Scythian funerary sites dating from the 4th century BCE have been excavated in the territory of the steppes of the Black Sea region, a quantity that considerably exceeds the total number of Scythian sites from all previous periods. Funerary sites with Scythian features also existed in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE within the territory of certain Greek cities. This applies to a number of rich burials dating from the 5th century BCE in the necropolis at Nymphaeum (Silant'eva) and the extremely rich Kul'-Oba tumulus (Grach) not far from Panticapaeum, a Greek town on the eastern shore of Crimea. These burials were probably those of representatives of the Scythian aristocracy, which enjoyed particularly close ties, perhaps family ties, in the first instance with the élite of Nymphaeum and, in the second instance, with the royal family of the Spartokids or the Bosporan aristocracy.

At the end of the 6th century BCE, a new funerary rite appeared. Together with traditional burials in large pits, there now appeared complex structures, so-called 'catacombs,' consisting of a vertical entrance well and one or more burial chambers branching out from it (Figure 9

Apart from funerary sites, Scythian city-sites from this period have also been discovered. Many of the earlier city-sites from the forest steppes had continued to exist while others were founded, for example, the site at Khotovskoe dating from the end of the 5th or beginning of the 4th century BCE and occupying an area of some 30 hectares. The most prominent city-site from this period, however, was that at Kamenskoe on the Dnieper River in the steppe zone (Grakov; Gavrilyuk, pp. 28-60), which existed from the end of the 5th century BCE to the beginning of the 3rd. The city-site occupied an area of 12 square kilometres and it was protected by the rampart and the waters of the Dnieper and its tributary Konka. The main occupation of the settled population was metal-working. The city-site of Kamenskoe was probably the largest supplier of metal items for nomadic Scythians. Part of the population was probably engaged in agriculture. The dwellings built above ground measured approximately 10 x 20 meters and consisted of several rooms. Oval and rectangular dugouts have also been found. Only a small part of the territory of the city-site was built over. This town was probably not just a center of manufacturing but also a political center of Scythia. The territory, which had not been built up, could have been set aside for the headquarters of the Scythian king and his suite during their seasonal visits to the town. It appears that in the 4th century BCE some of the Scythians were starting to adopt a settled agricultural way of life, which had formerly been typical only for the population of the forest steppes. As a result, in the lower reaches of the Dnieper, apart from the Kamenskoe city-site, a number of fortified and non-fortified settlements grew up, in which the main occupation of the population was agriculture (Gavrilyuk, pp. 28-85, 155-70). Part of the settled population in the *chora* of Olbia was also of Scythian origin.

Major changes took place in the material culture of the Scythians in the 5th and 4th centuries BCE. In the second half of the 6th century BCE, the type of horse bridle used changed completely (Figures 5, 10). Bronze bits with stirrup-shaped ends disappeared and were replaced by iron ones with ends bent to form loops. The cheek-pieces used in conjunction with these were of a new shape; they had not three, but two holes and were not attached to the bit, but inserted into the loops at their ends. The cheek-pieces were made of iron and bronze. In the 5th century BCE, they had been in the shape of the letter S or the L turned over, but in the 4th century BCE these types were replaced by cheek-pieces in the shape of the letter C. Cheek-pieces of this type were also found in the 5th century, but they were less common. Bows and arrows, as before, were the most common weapons (Figure 6). The shape and structure

of the bow remained the same as before, while the shape of the gorytos changed slightly, as did the shape of the arrowheads used. The old types gave way to tri-lobate and three-edged bronze arrowheads of elongated proportions with an inner socket or one that protruded slightly. In the course of time, the shape of these arrowheads changed slightly, but this type remained in use for as long as Scythian culture was in existence. The shape of spearheads also changed; their proportions became significantly more elongated. Iron *akinakai* were still being used, but the forms of their cross-guards and terminals had changed (Figure 7). In the 5th century, cross-guards for swords became thinner and claw-shaped terminals became widespread (in the shape of two claws or horns). In the 4th century BCE, most swords and daggers had a narrow cross-guard in the shape of a triangle with a notch in its lower edge and an oval terminal. Cast helmets of the Kuban type were already no longer used at the beginning of the 6th century BCE. In the second half of the 6th century BCE, scale helmets were being used, which consisted of iron or bronze plates. Helmets of Greek types were still more widely used; those encountered most frequently were Attic ones, but Corinthian, Chalcidic, and Thracian helmets were also used. In the 4th century, besides Greek helmets, wide use was made of Greek greaves (*knemides*). The armor used was, for the most part, local scale armor, consisting of iron or bronze plates. In the 5th and 4th centuries terminals were being used, some of which appeared to be a development of the types from the preceding period. Yet, the most widespread terminals were flat, with depictions of animals, animal-attack scenes and, on rare occasions, with anthropomorphic depictions. Small bells were hung from terminals of this type. In the 5th century BCE, mirrors with a central handle disappeared and were replaced by mirrors with a flat handle at the side, with examples starting from the second half of the 6th century BCE. In the second half of the 6th century BCE, so-called mirrors of an “Olbian type” were used, which had a side handle, the ends of which were decorated with depictions of beasts in the Animal Style. In the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, anthropomorphic sculptures continued to be erected on burial-mounds, but their style had changed somewhat. In the Scythian culture of the 5th and 4th centuries BCE, artifacts in the Animal Style were still widely used, but features of the style were changing; some of the old motifs had disappeared and replaced by new subjects and motifs (Figure 8). This can be explained partly by reference to internal developments and partly to external influences. A strong Greek influence was observed in Scythian art of the 4th century when a significant proportion of the examples of Scythian toreutics found in royal and aristocratic burials had been produced by Greek craftsmen. Some of the

elements in the material culture of the Scythians in the 5th-4th centuries BCE represent the development of objects from Early Scythian culture, but many of them had probably been brought in from the East. The most convincing explanation for this is the assumption that a new wave of Eurasian nomads had come into the North Pontic region in the second half of the 6th century BCE. The nomads of this new wave, after mingling with the local Scythian nomads had, most probably, given rise to this new culture (Alekseev, 2003, pp. 168-93). Closer contacts with the Greek colonies of the North Pontic region (see above) led to ever increasing Hellinization of the Scythian élite, a feature particularly clear in the 4th century.

The last period in the development of Scythian culture, the Late Scythian culture, was the culture, which existed in the territory of the Crimea and the Lower Dnieper, mostly occupied by Scythians, at the end of the 3rd century BCE through to the 3rd century CE. From the archeological point of view, this was a completely new culture that had little in common with the Scythian culture of the 4th century BCE. Late Scythian culture took shape at the end of the 3rd and in the early-2nd century BCE as a fusion of Scythian cultural traditions with the traditions of the local population from the mountains of the Crimea, the Tauroi, and of the Greek population of the coasts. The population of Scythia Minor was settled and its main occupation was stockbreeding, using distant pastures, and agriculture. Trade also played an important role; the Late Scythians acted as intermediaries between the Classical world and the barbarians of the steppes. The most important site in Crimean Scythia was Scythian Neapolis, the capital of the Late Scythian kingdom (Vysotskaya, 1979; Zaĭtsev, 2004), which existed from the end of the first quarter of the 2nd century BCE to the second quarter of the 3rd century CE (Figure 11). Neapolis was fortified with a defensive wall with towers and its terrain contained houses with stone and mud-brick walls. The density of the building varied substantially from one period to another. Building techniques were in general those typical for Greek architecture, although several buildings were constructed carelessly. Dugouts and other structures connected with barbarian traditions have also been found. A royal palace discovered in Scythian Neapolis, which dated from the 2nd century BCE, had been built in accordance with the rules of Greek architecture. In approximately 125 BCE, the mausoleum of Argotos had been erected in front of the palace façade in the form of a building *in antis* of the Doric order and decorated with a *naiskos* with relief and a Greek inscription in verse. There were also statutes of several Greek deities erected here, from which the pedestals had survived

bearing dedications in the Greek language (Solomonik). In approximately 115 BCE, near the central gates of Scythian Neapolis and right up against the outside of the defensive walls, a second monumental mausoleum was built, in which King Skiluros would appear to have been buried; the king's burial has survived (Shul'ts; Zaĭtsev, 2001). After the rout of the Scythian kingdom by Diophantes in the final decade of the 2nd century BCE, the royal palace was not rebuilt and Neapolis lost its metropolitan status but continued to be a major urban center. From the beginning of the 1st century BCE until the end of the existence of Neapolis, there was, however, a complex of stone Greek-type buildings in its northern section. It was interpreted as the "Northern Palace" for the period from the mid-2nd until the first half of the 3rd centuries CE. It is possible that Neapolis remained a political center for at least some of the Late Scythians. In the second half of the 1st and up to the middle of the 2nd century CE, the appearance of the city underwent major change. It had virtually no buildings left in it, although the defensive walls continued to exist and also cultic constructions have been recorded. This was probably connected with the replacement of the settled population by a nomadic one, which was using Neapolis as a fortified camp. This change, together with the replacement of one kind of funerary rite by another and the appearance of new features in the material culture, make it possible to assume that the population had changed and that to some extent the Late Scythians were being assimilated by the Sarmatians; at the same time, there was a certain continuity to be observed from the previous period (Simonenko, pp. 116-17; Zaĭtsev, 2004, p. 38). Between the last quarter of the 2nd and the middle of the 3rd century CE, Scythian Neapolis turned into a non-fortified settlement containing a few chaotically scattered buildings.

Apart from Scythian Neapolis, Late Scythian culture is well-known from the numerous settlements, both fortified and unfortified (more than 100 have been recorded) and the necropoleis that accompany them. Recent excavations at Ak-Kaya/Vishennoe suggest that this site played the role of political center of the Crimean Scythia before Neapolis, in the 3rd–first half of the 2nd centuries BCE. A well-protected fortress was built there, which was constructed like Neapolis in accordance with the rules of Greek fortification (only preliminary reports are published for now, cf. Zaĭtsev, 2015). The Late Scythian sites are to be found in two main zones: in the foothills of the Crimean mountains and the territories immediately adjacent to them and also along the western coast of the Crimea (Smekalova, Koltukhov, and Zaĭtsev). Some of these settlements appeared on the sites of earlier Greek settlements, including the towns of

Kalos Limen and Kerkinitis, and some were built from first principles. Many of the coastal settlements were trading ports. The largest of the Late Scythian settlements in the Crimea after Neapolis and Ak-Kaya/Vishennoe were Bulganak, Ust-Alma, and Kermen-Kyr (Vysotksaya, 1994; Dashevskaya, 1957; Koltukhov, 1999b). Characteristic not only of Neapolis and Ak-Kaya but of these settlements as well was the combination of Greek architectural traditions and local ones. A special group of Late Scythian settlements is that consisting of city-sites situated on both banks of the Lower Dnieper (Pogrebova; Vyaz'mitina; Gavrilyuk, pp. 317-42). Their material culture was close to that of the Late Scythian sites in the Crimea, but they were still more Hellenized and would appear to have been closely linked to Olbia, if not politically dependent on that city. As for "Scythia Minor" in Dobruja its Scythian sites could not be identified.

Late Scythian burials can be divided into two groups: those under burial-mounds and those deposited in flat necropoleis. Stone vaults were erected under burial mounds, in which burials went on taking place over a fairly long period; the number of deceased varied from a handful of individuals to a hundred and more. Burials of this type were widespread in the 2nd century BCE, but in some cases burial-mounds were erected in the 1st and 2nd centuries CE as well (Koltukhov, 2001; Zaĭtsev and Mordvintseva, pp. 174-75). Burials were deposited more frequently, however, in flat-grave necropoleis. Three necropoleis have been investigated in the vicinity of Scythian Neapolis (Babenchikov; Symonovich; Puzdrovskiĭ, 2001); several dozen other necropoleis have also been excavated (Vysotskaya, 1972, pp. 69-102; Puzdrovskiĭ, 2007), the largest of which, that of Ust-Alma, has been investigated most thoroughly (Vysotskaya, 1994; Loboda, Puzdrovskiĭ, and Zaĭtsev; Puzdrovskiĭ and Trufanov). Characteristics of necropoleis dating from between the 2nd century BCE to the 1st century CE are earth vaults, in which burials were deposited on many occasion (they contained up to 40 skeletons). The deceased were laid out on their back in an extended position. In the second half of the 1st and the first half of the 2nd centuries CE, the funerary rite underwent gradual change. Vaults for multiple burials gave way to individual burials in graves with a side-chamber, which appeared in the second half of the 1st century BCE; the burials were also deposited in simple flat graves (Zaĭtsev and Mordvintseva, pp. 176-77).

The material culture of the Late Scythians did not have many distinctive characteristics and was similar to the material culture of the neighboring

Greek cities and settlements (Dashevskaya, 1991; Zaĭtsev and Mordvintseva, pp. 177-88). This has led certain scholars (Gavrilyuk and Krapivina) to regard some of the Late Scythian sites, such as the city-sites of the Lower Dnieper, as having been populated at least partly by Greeks. In addition to Classical elements, others are also to be observed in them, including La Tène and Sarmatian elements.

iii. SPIRITUAL CULTURE, RELIGION, AND ART

The Scythians had no written language, therefore their non-material culture, including their mythology, religion, epics, and so on, can be pieced together only on the basis of indirect data, which vary as regards their veracity and informative possibilities. Data of this kind are gleaned from the writings of Classical authors, from parallels found in other Iranian traditions, onomastic and archeological evidence, and so forth. Herodotus (4.59, cf. 4.127) provides the names of deities venerated by the Scythians and also mentions to which Greek deities they corresponded. He accorded prime status to Tabiti identified with Hestia and then mentioned Papaios (Zeus), Api (Gaia), Goitosyros/Oitosyros (Apollo), Agrimpasa/Artimpasa/Arippasa (Aphrodite) and Thagimasadas (Poseidon). Although he mentioned the worship of Heracles and Ares, he did not include their Scythian names. Most of the names of the Scythian deities could be traced back to Iranian roots, some more convincingly than others. Tabiti is usually regarded as the goddess of fire, Papaios as the ruler of the heavens, Api as the deity of the Waters and the Earth. The images of other deities are less clear and more hypothetical: Argimpasa is usually considered to be the goddess of fertility and is compared with Anāhitā (Anāhid), and Thagimasadas is held to be the god of water and the protector of horses and so compared with the Avestan deity Apąm Napāt. Thagimasadas stands apart in Herodotus' list: while the remaining seven gods are worshipped by all Scythians, Thagimasadas is venerated only by Royal Scythians. The functions of Goitosyros are not clear and he is compared with Iranian Mithra or Vāyu. Heracles would appear to have been regarded as the First Man, the forefather of the Scythians (cf. Hdt., 4.5-10; in the first version of the legend the forefather of the Scythians is referred to as Targitaos and in the second version as Heracles). Ares, the god of war, is also set apart from the rest by Herodotus. According to him, the Scythians did not erect statues or altars or temples for their gods, with the exception of Ares (on Scythian deities see: Bessonova, pp. 25-59). Sanctuaries of Ares were, according to Herodotus (4.62), erected in every district and consisted of a tumulus made of sticks with

a square platform at the top, on which an "ancient iron *akinakes*" was placed, taken to represent Ares. Apart from the sacrifices of sheep or goats or horses usual in the case of other gods, human sacrifices were offered and to him alone. At least one shrine to Ares (which, however, matches Herodotus' description only in part) has been recorded archeologically (Boltrik; cf. Alekseev, 1980). The name of one more Scythian goddess, Dithagoia, is mentioned in the dedication by the daughter of King Skiluros called Senamotis, which was found in Panticapaeum (SEG XXXVII, no. 674).

The Scythians had professional priests, but the question as to whether they constituted a separate hereditary group and, in general, as to what extent the Ancient Iranian system of *pištrā* still existed in Scythian society, remains the subject of debate (Grantovskiĭ; Raevskiĭ, 1977, pp. 145-61; Bessonova, pp. 56-59; Ivantchik, 1999a). Among the priests, there existed a distinct group of transvestites, referred to by Herodotus as *enareës* (ἐνάρεες; 1.105.4; 4.67.2), and more accurately by Pseudo-Hippocrates (*Aër.* 22) as *anarieis* (ἀναριεῖς, from the Iranian **anarya-*, "unmanly"). They are often compared to shamans known among many peoples of Eurasia (Meuli), but there are no grounds for their identification with shamans, despite the fact that they share a number of common characteristics. According to Herodotus (4.60), animals used for sacrifices were usually strangled; sacrifices involving the shedding of blood were only offered to Ares.

In Scythian mythology, an important role was assigned to the myth about the First Man, the origin of men (i.e., Scythians), their kings, and the whole structure of their society. This myth, which echoes in many respects myths of other Iranian peoples, has survived in several versions in the writings of a number of classical authors (Hdt., 4.5-7, 8-10; Diod. Sic., 2.43; Val. Flac. 6.48-68; IG XIV, 1293A, 94-97; Curt. 7.8,17-18); the most complete and least Hellenized version was preserved by Herodotus. Analysis of this legend together with other data (Grantovskiĭ; Raevskiĭ, 1977, pp. 19-80; Ivantchik, 1999a; idem, 2001b) reveals that, in Scythian ideology, considerable importance was attached to the division of society into three hereditary classes or castes (warriors, priest, and producers), which were descended from three brothers, sons of the First Man. Each of the classes was linked with one of three levels in the Cosmos: the class of warriors, which also included kings, was associated with the upper world, the class of priests with the middle level, and that of producers with the lower one. Royal power was considered sacred. The idea of *xwarrah* (*xᵛarənah*FARR[AH]) found in different Iranian traditions, was

very important, including the idea of royal *xwarrah*, the charisma of royalty, which had heavenly and solar origin. Information supplied by a number of Classical authors makes it possible to assume that the Scythians had their own epic legends. Thus, much of the Classical tradition regarding the Scythian rule in Asia can probably be traced back to a Scythian epic (Ivantchik, 1999b; idem, 2005, pp. 162-89, 221-44).

Most of the known objects of Scythian art belong to the sphere of applied art, decoration of various everyday objects (horses' bridles, weapons, vessels, and so on). Scythian art was mainly zoomorphic. It is characterized by a specific style, termed "Animal Style," which is marked by a rather limited range of images (specific animals depicted in specific canonical poses), which changed over time, and also a range of standard techniques for depicting them. The bodies of the animals were usually modeled using large surfaces, which came together at an angle. The most significant parts of animals (horns of ungulates, claws, nostrils, and mouths of beasts of prey, the ears of both groups, the beaks of birds of prey, and the eyes of all three groups of animals) were greatly exaggerated and often stylized. Certain parts were sometimes complete with additional depictions of animals or their parts (e.g., the branches of deer's antlers or the claws of beasts of prey were depicted as the heads of birds of prey with curved beaks), a device known as "zoomorphic transformations" (Kantorovich). Certain parts of animals' bodies (legs or hooves, birds' heads, et al.) were often depicted separately as well. Despite the existence of local variations (see, e.g., Shkurko, 1976; idem, 2000), Scythian Animal Style was a self-contained entity and differed from the Animal Style peculiar to the Eastern regions of Eurasia.

The animals most frequently depicted in this style can be divided into three groups—birds, ungulates, and beasts of prey—and for each of them there are characteristic iconographic patterns. Birds (usually birds of prey) are depicted mainly with outstretched wings, but occasionally with folded ones; their heads are depicted still more frequently, either separately or as elements of "zoomorphic transformations." Ungulates are most frequently depicted with legs bent underneath them and the head stretched forward; the heads of goats and deer are often turned backwards. They are only rarely depicted standing on straight legs. Beasts of prey, usually felines, are often depicted coiled round in a ring, and this constitutes one of the earliest and most typical images of the Animal Style. They can also be found with their legs bent at an obtuse or a right angle. Within these groups it is only seldom possible to distinguish

between species of animals (e.g., wolves from felines, species of felines from each other, species of birds of prey); it is likely that little importance was attached to such distinctions. Ungulates, as a rule, are easier to identify; the most frequent images of them were those of deer, goats, and rams, while other species, including horses and elk—were only rarely depicted. These three groups of animals depicted in Scythian art were probably associated with the three Cosmic horizons; birds with the upper level (that of heavens), ungulates with the middle level (that of the Earth), and beasts of prey, as well as also snakes and fish, which were depicted less often, with the lower level below the earth (Raevskiĭ, 1985; Perevodchikova, 1994).

Images of fantastic creatures are not rare in Scythian Animal Style, but in most cases they have been adopted from elsewhere. The most widespread of these are depictions of eagle-headed griffins. This image would appear to have been adopted in the Near East, and it is found mainly at sites reflecting early contacts with that region (Kelermes); later on, it is seldom found in proper Scythian art and in a distorted form. It appeared again in the 4th century BCE under Greek influence. Lion-headed griffins also appeared at that time. In the Early Scythian culture of the 7th-6th centuries BCE, depictions of griffin-rams were common—the bird of prey with a ram's horn. This image was specifically Scythian and it does not appear to have been encountered outside the range of Scythian culture. It is possibly the depiction of a *xwarrah*.

The Scythian Animal Style appeared in Eastern Europe in a well established form together with Early Scythian archeological culture; none of its elements had been present in pre-Scythian cultures of the region. The question of its origin is the subject of debate. Some scholars believe that it took shape within the territory of Eastern Europe under the influence of the Near East during the Scythian campaigns of the 7th century BCE (Artamonov; Pogrebova and Raevskiĭ, pp. 74-163). Yet the more well-founded hypothesis is the suggestion that it took shape in the eastern part of the Eurasian steppes, partly under the influence of Chinese art. It is borne out by the greater age of the eastern sites containing objects worked in the Animal Style (Arzhan burial mound) in comparison to the East European ones (Jettmar; Kossack; Alekseev, 2003, pp. 55-57, with bibliography). Some scholars try to reconcile these two points of view, suggesting that the Animal Style evolved simultaneously and independently in the West and East of Eurasia under the influence of the Near East and Asia Minor, in the first instance, and, in the second, that of the Karasuk culture and the Ordos bronzes (the "polycentric" theory; see

Perevodchikova, 1994).

Despite the clear anthropomorphism intrinsic to Scythian religion, in Early Scythian art anthropomorphic depictions are only to be found in one group of artifacts, stelae erected over burials (Figure 12

Scythian art was subjected to major external influences at various times. In the 7th century BCE, during Near Eastern campaigns, the main influence had been that of Near Eastern art. The rich burials at Kelermes and in the Litoi burial mound contain, above actual Scythian and Near Eastern artifacts (e.g., bowls and diadems, which were evidently booty or diplomatic gifts), other artifacts that combined Scythian and Near Eastern elements (e.g., swords, axes). Their style and most of the images were not typical for Scythian art, but at the same time they reproduced typical images of the Scythian Animal Style; the shape of the decorated articles is also typically Scythian (Chernenko, 1980; Metdepenninghen; Kisel', 1997; idem, 1998). These objects were probably made by Near Eastern craftsmen for Scythians. While adhering to their own traditions, they have, at the same time, taken into account the requirements of those commissioning their work. A large proportion of the Near Eastern images was not assimilated into Scythian art and not subsequently reproduced. On many occasions, attention has been drawn to the similarities between these finds and a number of artifacts from the so-called "Ziwiye hoard" in Kurdistan (Godard; Ghirshman). Use of these, however, is impeded by the fact that the exact location and circumstances of their discovery are unknown, and it is impossible to be sure, not only whether they were found together, but also whether they all come from one and the same place or even are authentic (Muscarella).

In the 5th century BCE changes took place in the Animal Style, which can partly be explained with reference to growing Greek influence and partly to internal developments. It is possible that some innovations can also be explained by the arrival of a new wave of nomads from the east (see above). The depictions become less schematic and the eyes, ears, and mouths of the animals are portrayed in a more realistic way. The surfaces of the animals' bodies start to be modeled more smoothly. At the same time, certain parts of the bodies of animals and birds are depicted in a still more exaggerated way than before; sometimes they are stylized. The beaks of birds, for instance, are depicted in the shape of a large spiral. More use is made of the technique of "zoomorphic transformations." Depictions of a single leg of an ungulate or beast of prey become more widespread, as do depictions of fish, which had

previously been a rarity. In the forest steppes, depictions of elk become more common. In the Animal Style of the 7th-6th centuries BCE, there were no depictions of scenes (images of that type in the Kelermes burial-mounds were of Near Eastern origin); the animals were depicted in isolation or, less frequently, in antithetical ("heraldic") compositions. From the 5th century BCE onwards, scenes of animals fighting or tearing each other became widespread, probably under the influence of Graeco-Persian art. Greek influence is also likely to have been the reason why plant motifs began to appear in Scythian art.

Changes also took place regarding the stelae erected above graves, which were least subject to Hellenization. The presentation of faces changed, eyes became rounded, mustaches only appeared rarely, while depictions of beards began to appear. The shape of hands changed and also the way they were arranged; left hands would virtually always be holding a rhyton, swords would usually be arranged not in front of figures but at their sides, and gorytos shapes were modified as well.

In the 4th century BCE, there was a particularly marked increase in the influence of Greek art. The Animal Style went on being used, but art objects made either under strong Greek influence or simply by Greek craftsmen for Scythians became widespread. This group included small items such as plaques and also the best-known examples of Scythian toreutics. These objects still incorporated elements of Animal Style, but in the main they exemplified traditions of Greek art. Some of them were depictions of animals, but there was an especially large number of depictions of human beings, including scenes. Usually the figures were Scythians, but in some cases there were purely Greek subjects (for example, the history of Achilles). Some art objects found in Scythian burials were purely Greek, not linked with Scythians, either as regards style or subject matter (e.g., the earrings from Kul'-Oba). Yet, at the same time, anthropomorphic depictions appear, which have clearly been fashioned by Scythians. This applies, for instance, to depictions of the female deity, "Mistress of the Animals," from the Alexandropol burial mound or to the depiction of a griffinomachy on a terminal from Slonovskaya Bliznitsa. Objects made by Greek craftsmen were found in all royal and aristocratic burials of the 4th century BCE. Some examples of Scythian ceremonial weaponry made using a same matrix and virtually identical to each other have been found in several different burial-mounds. They had been made at approximately the same time in a single workshop as special orders for a

number of Scythian dynasts, or for Bosporan kings to be used as diplomatic gifts for Scythians. Gorytoi bearing scenes from the life of Achilles, for example, were found in the Chertomlyk, Melitopol, Five Brothers 8 and Il'intsy burial mounds (Figure 13, Stähler and Nieswandt). Scabbards found in the Chertomlyk and Five Brothers 8 burial mounds and bought by the Metropolitan Museum of Art (assumed to be from the Chayan burial mound) are also virtual copies of each other (Stähler).

Some scenes depicted on Greek metal objects can confidently be interpreted as illustrations of Scythian legends, known to us from written sources. This applies, for example, to depictions on cultic vessels of Greek manufacture from the Chastye burial mounds near Voronezh and from the Kul'-Oba burial mound in the Crimea (Figure 14), which illustrate the legend about the origin of the Scythians and the contest between the three sons of Heracles rendered by Herodotus (IV, 8-10; Raevskiĭ, 1977, pp. 31-36). The frequent depictions of the anguiped goddess, the mother of the three brothers (e.g., at Kul'-Oba, Tsymbalova Mogila, and Bolshaya Bliznitsa) are linked with this same legend. In Graeco-Scythian art of the 4th century BCE, there are also numerous reproductions of certain other scenes, which probably possess religious and mythological significance. They include the depiction of a seated woman (evidently a goddess) with a mirror and that of a man or youth in front of her holding a rhyton (found in the Kul'-Oba, Chertomlyk, Oguz, Verkhnii Rogachik, 1st Mordvinovskii, Melitopol, Nosaki 4 and other tumuli; for possible interpretations, see Raevskiĭ, 1977, pp. 95-100; Bessonova, pp. 98-107). In one case (a plate from Sakhnovka), this pair of figures has been placed in the center of a multi-figure composition, in which there is another pair of figures frequently reproduced, two Scythians drinking out of one and the same rhyton (the so-called fraternity scene). Other scenes as well may often have mythological or epic significance, but their specific interpretation is of a much more hypothetical nature (the comb from Solokha, the bowl from Gaimanova Mogila, the vase from Chertomlyk, et al.).

Anthropomorphic sculpture was the most conservative variety of Scythian art. The vast majority of sculptures from the 4th century BCE was in the Scythian tradition. Yet Greek influence manifests itself most clearly in some sculptures of this period found in the Crimea (Privetnoe, Chernomorskoe). These are sculptures in the round on which garments and armor are detailed to a degree that is uncharacteristic of Scythian sculpture.

Works of Scythian art are held by many museums, both within the territory of

Russia and the Ukraine and beyond. The largest of these collections are in the Hermitage Museum in St. Petersburg (where objects found during excavations of Scythian tumuli in the 19th and early-20th century are housed) and in the Museum of Historical Treasures of the Ukraine in Kiev (which houses most of the Scythian works of art from 20th-century excavations). There are collections of lesser importance in the State Historical Museum and the State Museum of the Art of the Peoples of the East in Moscow, the Institute of Archaeology (Academy of Sciences of the Ukraine), and regional museums such as those of Kharkov, Zaporozhye, Odessa, and Kerch. Small collections of Scythian art are also to be found in various other museums including the Antikensammlung (Berlin), the Louvre (Paris), the Ashmolean Museum (Oxford), the Metropolitan Museum (New York), et al. Works of Scythian art have been published on numerous occasions, including in exhibitions' catalogues (for the finest reproductions, see Amandry and Schiltz; Piotrovsky, Galanina, and Grach; Rolle, Müller-Wille, and Schietzel; Schiltz; Reeder).

Original Scythian art ceased to exist after the Scythian archeological culture disappeared at the beginning of the 3rd century BCE. The art of the Late Scythians was completely Hellenized. Fragments of sculpture and wall paintings found in Scythian Neapolis belong to Greek tradition and probably were created by Greek masters. Yet the tradition of fashioning anthropomorphic gravestones did not disappear in the Late Scythian period; crude anthropomorphic sculptures were often erected in necropoleis. They were significantly cruder than those dating from the 4th century BCE, and the detail would not appear to represent a clear continuation of what had gone before (Voloshinov). Sometimes crude reliefs on tombs were also found, which could be compared with those from the Bosporan Kingdom.

iv.

Abbreviations (classical sources follow *Oxford Classical Dictionary*).

CIRB: *Corpus Inscriptionum Regni Bosporani*, ed. V. Struve, Moscow, 1965.

IG XIV: *Inscriptiones Graecae* XIV: *Inscriptiones Siciliae et Italiae, additis Galliae, Hispaniae, Britanniae, Germaniae inscriptionibus*, ed. by Georg Kaibel, Berlin, 1890.

IosPE: *Inscriptiones antiquae orae septentrionalis Ponti Euxini graecae et latinae*, ed. Basilius [Vasiliĭ] Latyshev, 3 vols., St. Petersburg, 1885-1916.

OAK: *Otchet Imperatorskoĭ arkheologicheskoĭ kommissïi* (St. Petersburg, 1859-1916).

SAA: State Archives of Assyria, Helsinki, 1987- (IV= I. Starr, ed., *Queries to the Sungod: Divination and Politics in Sargonid Assyria*, Helsinki, 1990).

SEG: *Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum*, Leiden, Amsterdam, 1923-

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