A Study on the Scythian Gold Plaques

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Abstract

According to Scythian tradition, many burials contained numerous artifacts, from weapons and harness to everyday objects and a multiplicity of personal adornments. Most valuable of all is the Scythian Gold often lavishly decorated with precious stones. The detailed images on these pieces make it possible for us to picture the appearance of the Scythians, their clothes and weapons.

Scythian Gold Plaques were attached to the fabric in such a way that when they moved with each movement of the wearer it created what must have been a dazzling sight in bright daylight.

Scythian Gold Plaques were divided into several types according to the shape, animal style (curved beast shape, profile shape, head reversed over its back shape), round shape, quadrilateral form, star shape, flower shape, crescent shape, bundle shape, human appearance. Through the antique tombs bequests of Three Kingdom States hereby describe the original forms of their source of Baekje gold plaque were influenced by Scythe style.

Like nearly all Scythian ornaments, such gold pieces were designed to maximize various magical powers and to signify the owner's importance relative to his fellow tribesmen.

Key words: animal shape, curved beast shape, gold plaque, profile shape, quadrilateral form, scythian,

I. Introduction

The Scythians were powerful nomads, who spoke a language from the Persian family. Following the written tradition of antiquity it may be confidently stated that from the end of the 7th century to the 3rd century B.C. the Scythians occupied the steppe expanses of the north Black Sea area, from the Don in the east to the Danube in the west. Herodotus stresses the unity of this whole Scythian world in this territory and distinguishes the Scythian from their neighboring tribes. But in the literature of antiquity, particularly that dating to the Hellenistic period, there existed another conception of Scythia. Not only the tribes of the north Black Sea area, but others living far beyond in the forest-steppe and even in the forest zone of Eastern Europe, and also in Asia were often thought to be Scythians.\(^1\)

According to Scythian tradition, alongside a dead chief the tribe buried his wives, servants, armour-bearers, grooms and horses, and these burials thus contain numerous artifacts, from weapons and harness to everyday objects and a multiplicity of personal adornments. Most valuable of all is the Scythian Gold often lavishly decorated with precious stones.

No less remarkable are the articles from the
burial mounds of Scythian chiefs (5th to 4th centuries BC), executed in the Greco-Scythian style and decorated with scenes from a Scythian heroic epic.

All these objects were lavishly decorated, though the finest ornamentation was carried out on valuable metal vessels, articles of personal adornment and the gold plaques intended as dress trimming, as well as on weapons and horse trappings. The detailed images on these pieces make it possible for us to picture the appearance of the Scythians, their clothes and weapons.

Men wore trousers tucked into soft boots. In fighting, the Scythes used bows and arrows from horseback, and followed the guerrilla tactics typical of central Asian nomads. Whether of their own manufacturer, or the work of Greek craftsmen, Scythian gold ornaments attest to what an ancient Roman author calls the "Scythian lust for gold." Later tombs dated from the sixth century BC include the Sarmatians as well as the Scythians.

Since Scythians on the whole were not a settled people they did not leave their art in architecture or on monuments. Their art is primarily ornamental. In a nomadic society where wealth must be easily portable the craftsman's efforts were put into small items such as gold jewelry, bridle ornaments, horse gear, hand mirrors, arrow cases, swords and battle axes.

Many Royal Scyths wore bronze helmets and chain-mail jerkins of the Greek type, lined with red felt. Their shields were generally round and made of leather, wood, or iron, and were often decorated with a central gold ornament in the form of an animal, but other tribesmen carried square or rectangular ones.

Scythian clothing was often decorated with many small wafer thin gold plaques chased with geometric or animal shapes. They were attached to the fabric in such a way that when they moved with each movement of the wearer it created what must have been a dazzling sight in bright daylight.

The purpose of this study is reviewing and researching the symbolic meaning and classifying the types of the art style of the Gold Plaques from the burial mounds of Scythian chiefs.

The method of this research is through the antique records and tombs bequests hereby deals with the characteristics of Scythian Gold Plaques was divided into the types according to the shapes.

II. Scythian Gold Plaque culture

The tombs of the Scythian kings and chiefs have long been famous in archaeology. In construction they have much in common with the far older barrows of the Kuban, while in contents they show an analogous mixture of northern and Near Eastern objects and styles. This continuity in idea cannot be traced on the steppes, and should probably be sought in Western Asia, which now provides a new impulse.

The most notable groups of tombs are in the Kuban basin, often in the same places as the first great barrows, in the Taman Peninsula, in the Crimea, and on the Dnieper where they extend to the neighbourhood of Kiev. Other burials occur in the Danubian plain, and outlying single graves even in North Germany; there are more on the Don and Donetz and farther east by the Volga to the Urals.

The Scythians had a veritable passion for