



Pazyryk Tattoo, ca. 400 BCE

The Range of the “Cosmic” Deer

A Web Presentation for
Future Discussions

John C. Huntington

Please note:

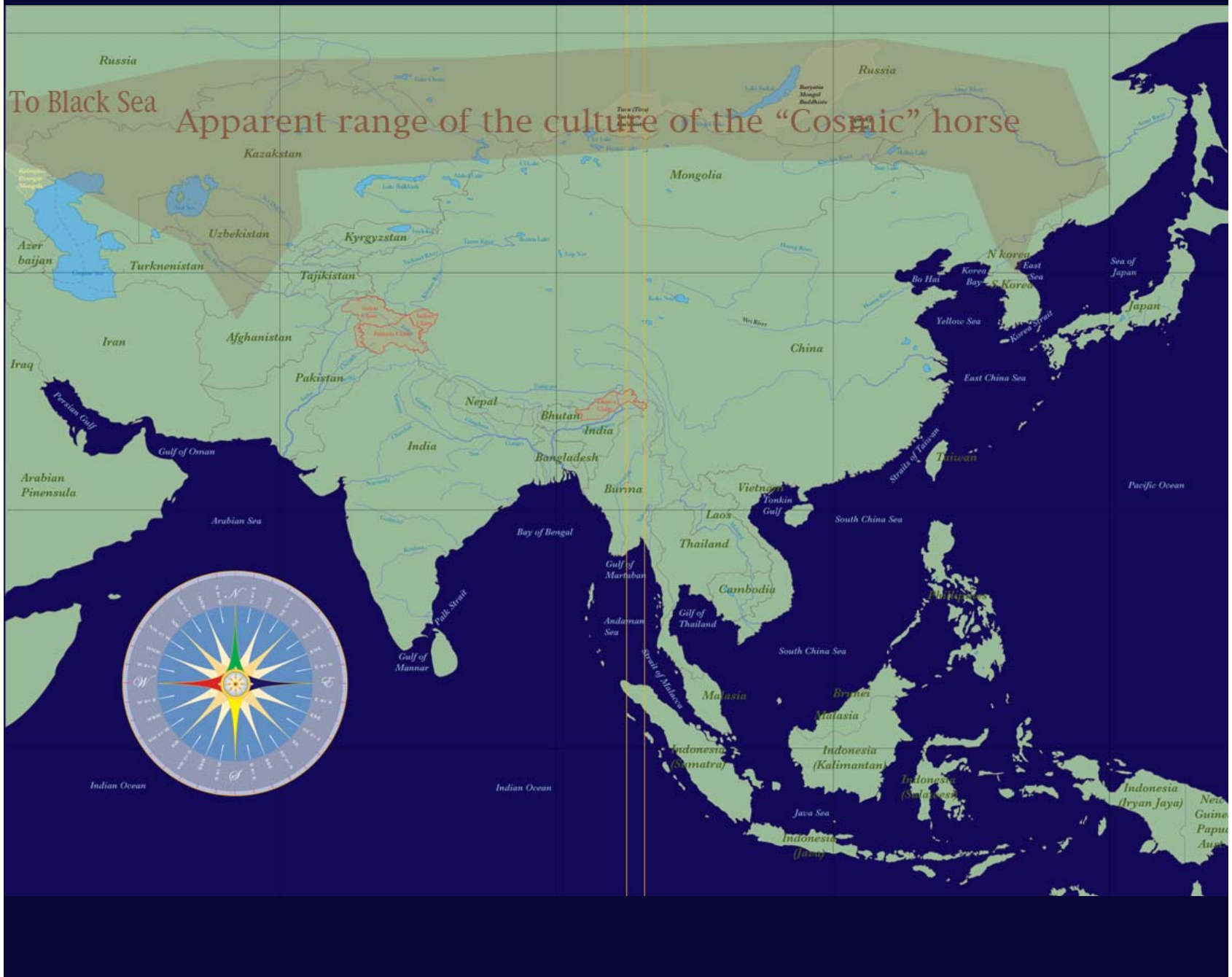
Copyright notice:

Many of images contained in this presentation were photographed, for classroom presentation, out of publications well prior to the advent of the desktop computer, let alone the web.

They are presented here as part of an ongoing academic discussion completely covered by the fair use doctrine.

However, in doing the original photography no records were kept because I never dreamt of the possibility of publishing them on the web. Therefore the usual citations are lacking. If a copyright holder wishes a credit line or to have an image removed, please contact our webmaster, Robert Calhoun calhoun.78@osu.edu.

Comment Page 1 of 2:



Comment Page 1 of 2:

The following somewhat random collection of images of the “cosmic” deer/horse is primarily intended to supply fodder for discussion.

A few very tentative observations:

- 1) The talismanic nature of the deer is relatively obvious from the tattoos and the weapons that carry the deer
- 2) The use as standard finials suggest that the “cosmic” deer is perhaps a totemic or clan emblem for the Scyths (?)
- 3) In the Western Scythic area, felines or gryphons attack the deer, = political symbolism?
- 4) The Parthians seem to use the deer as a sign of stature?
- 5) Shapur kills the “Parthian” deer as a symbol of conquest?

The Deer in Question, Northeast Asia and Altai

In the trans-Altai, the “deer” is almost certainly the “Reindeer” A male caribou, *Rangifer tarandus*. However, the reindeer is the only species of deer in which the female has horns-perhaps to help her compete for scarce food supplies. In other words, the gender of most representations cannot be determined.

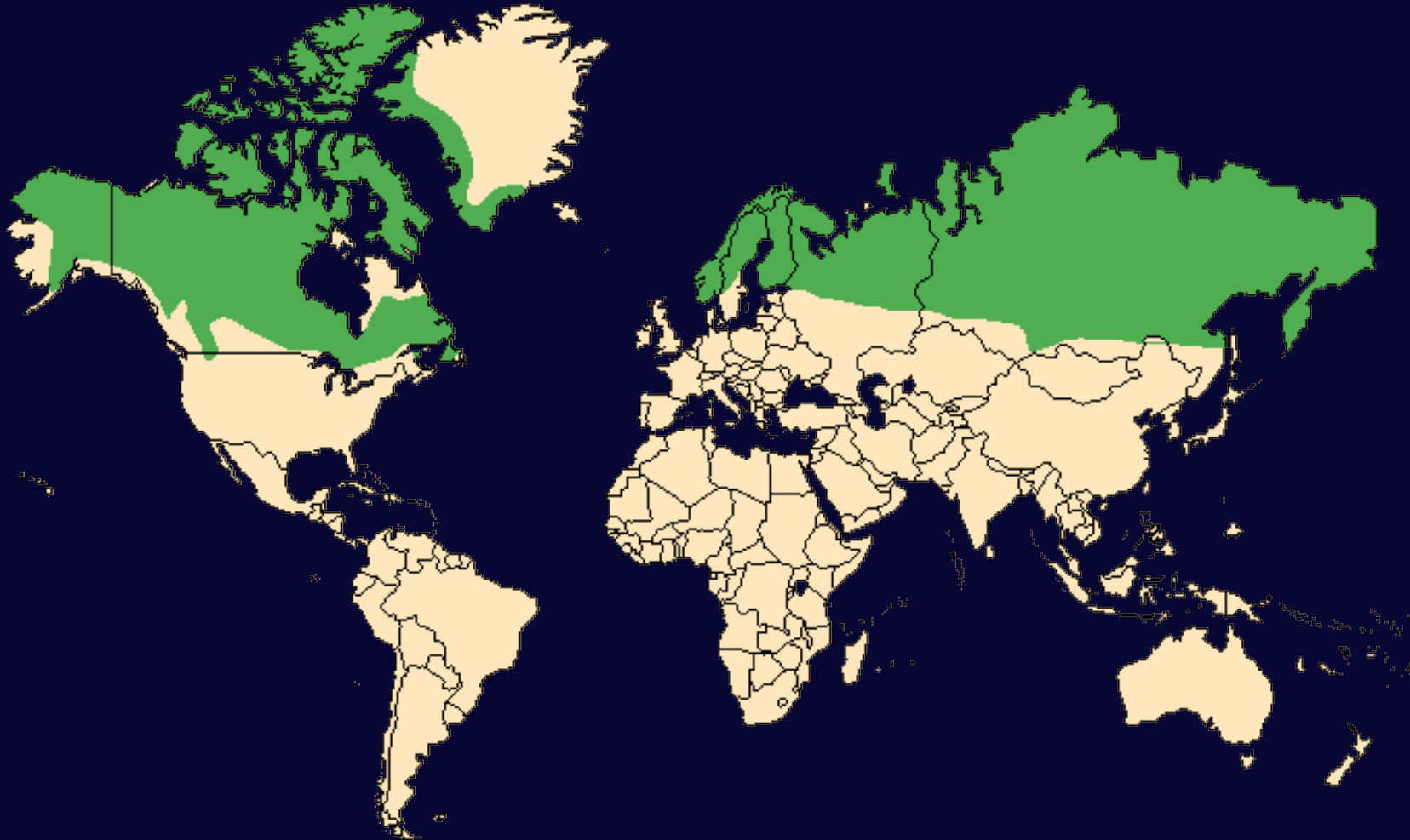


The Deer in Question, Northeast Asia and Altai

Order: [Artiodactyla \(even-toed ungulates\)](#)

Family: [Cervidae \(deer\)](#)

Genus: [Rangifer \(reindeer, caribou\)](#)



The Deer in Question, West Asia

In Persian regions the deer is probably the Persian deer, *Dama dama mesopotamica*, which is subspecies of the Fallow deer *Dama dama dama*, known in Europe (Thanks to Heleanor Feltham)

Male



Female



The Deer in Question, South Asia

Class: Animals with Milk Glands
(Mammalia) Subclass: True Mammals
(Eutheria) Order: Even-toed Mammals
(Artiodactyla) Family: Cervidae.

Axis deer, chital - *CERVUS AXIS*



While its range is currently India and Sri Lanka the Axis Deer of Chital of South Asia may have been a component in Pakistan and Afghanistan.

The “Cosmic” Deer in the East

Amur River culture

Ca. 6000-2000 BCE

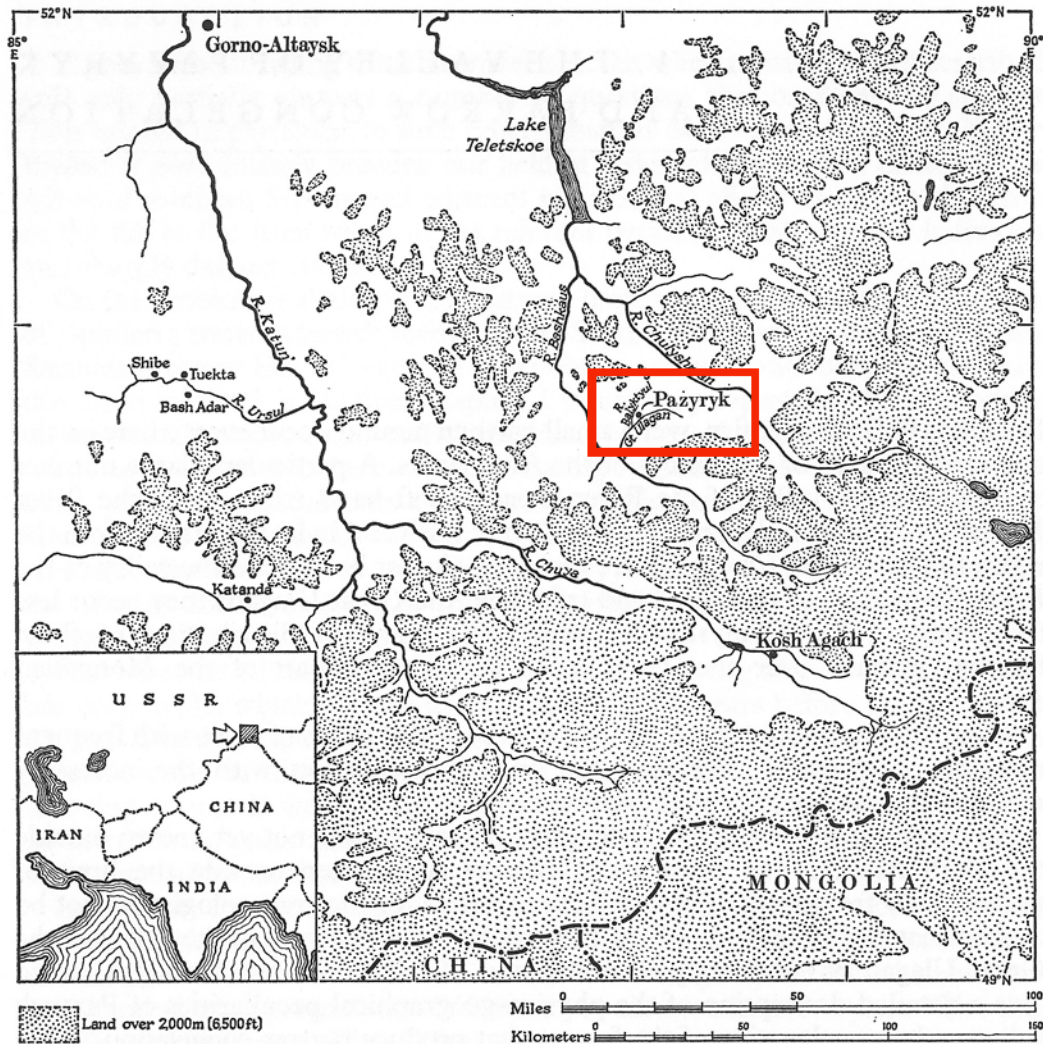


In this, and the following contexts, the “cosmic” deer, seems to be a “stand alone” totem or other symbol of great potency for the persons engaged in producing it.

The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site

Ca. 400 BCE



1. Altai Mountain Province showing position of Pazyryk (drawn by Translator).

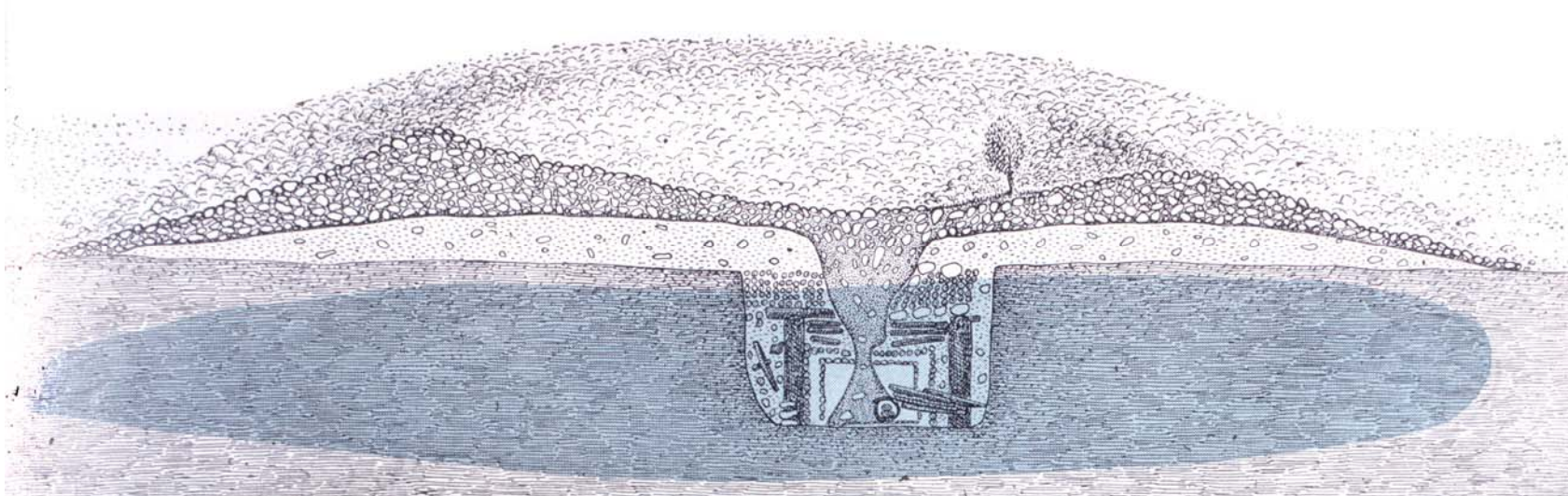
The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site

Ca. 400 BCE

The Ice :”lens” that preserved the ephemera in the tombs.

From a Scientific American article of the early 70s

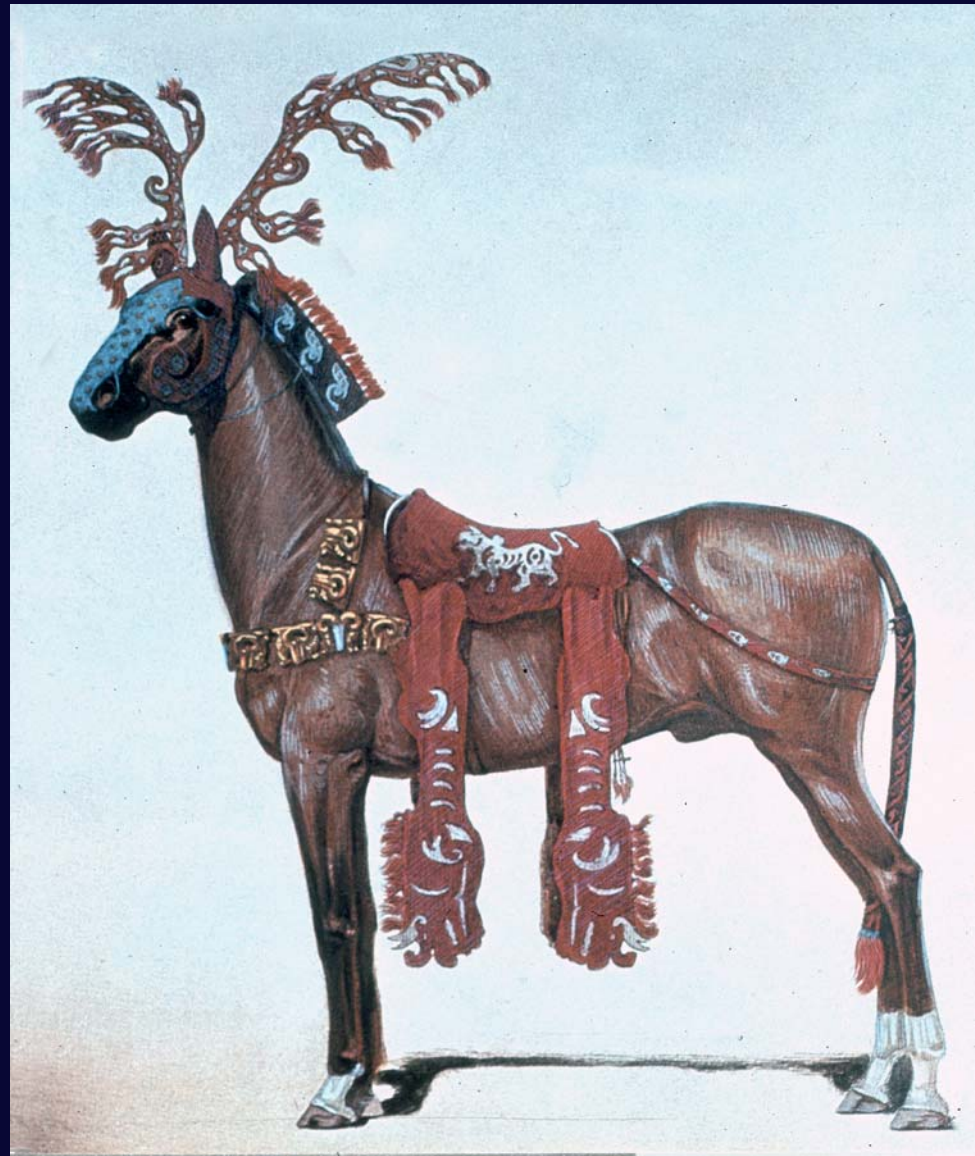


The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 1

Ca. 400 BCE

Horse as deer painting: based on felt artifacts in the tomb.



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 1

Ca. 400 BCE

Leogriff Attacking an Ibex from the saddle



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

Ca. 400 BCE

Staff Finial 1



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

Ca. 400 BCE

Staff Finial 2

Gold leaf over leather



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

Ca. 400 BCE

Staff Finial 3

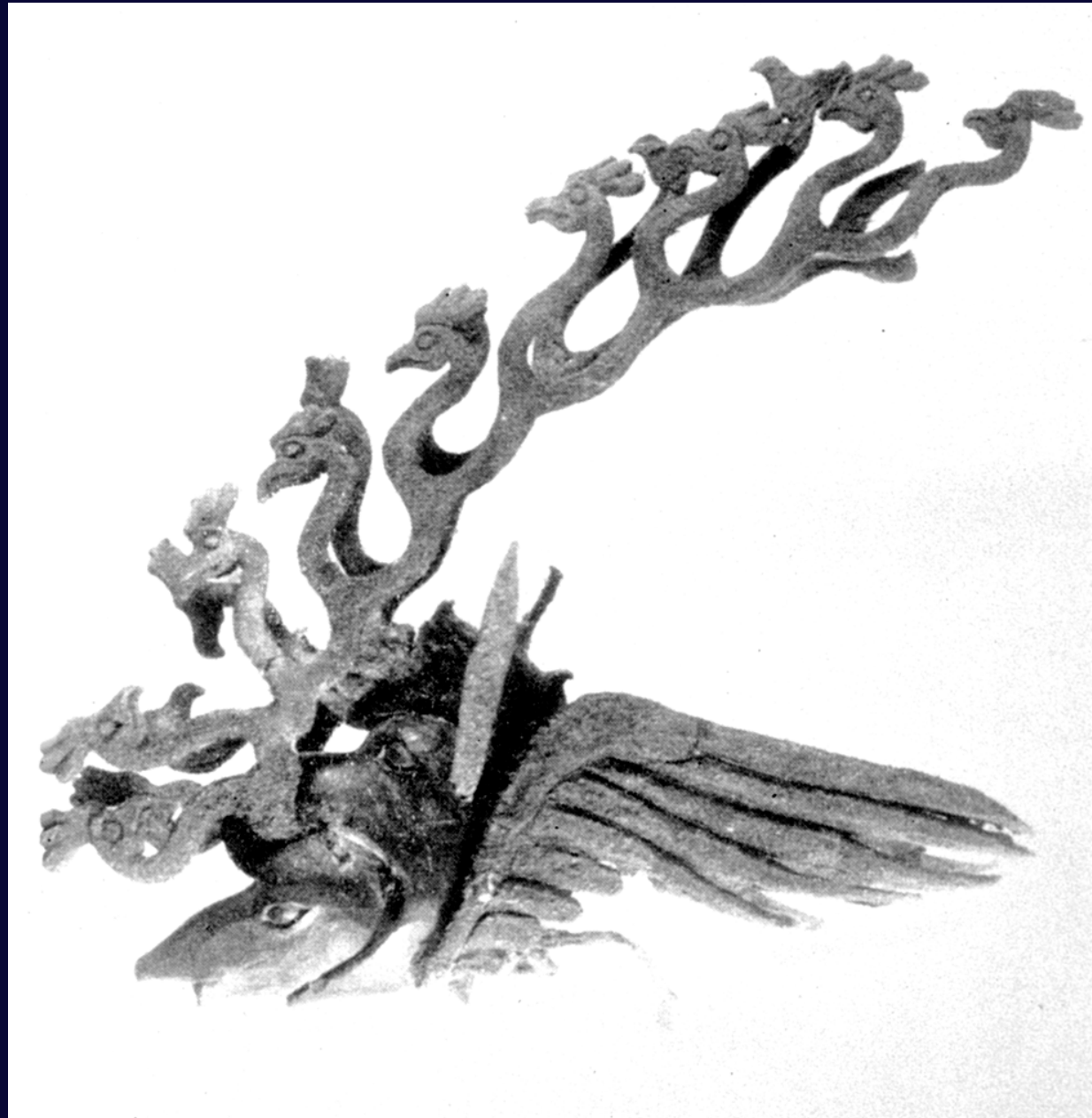
Gryphen with deer head

Emerging from mouth

Wood,

Note that the

Antlers become bird
heads



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

Ca. 400 BCE

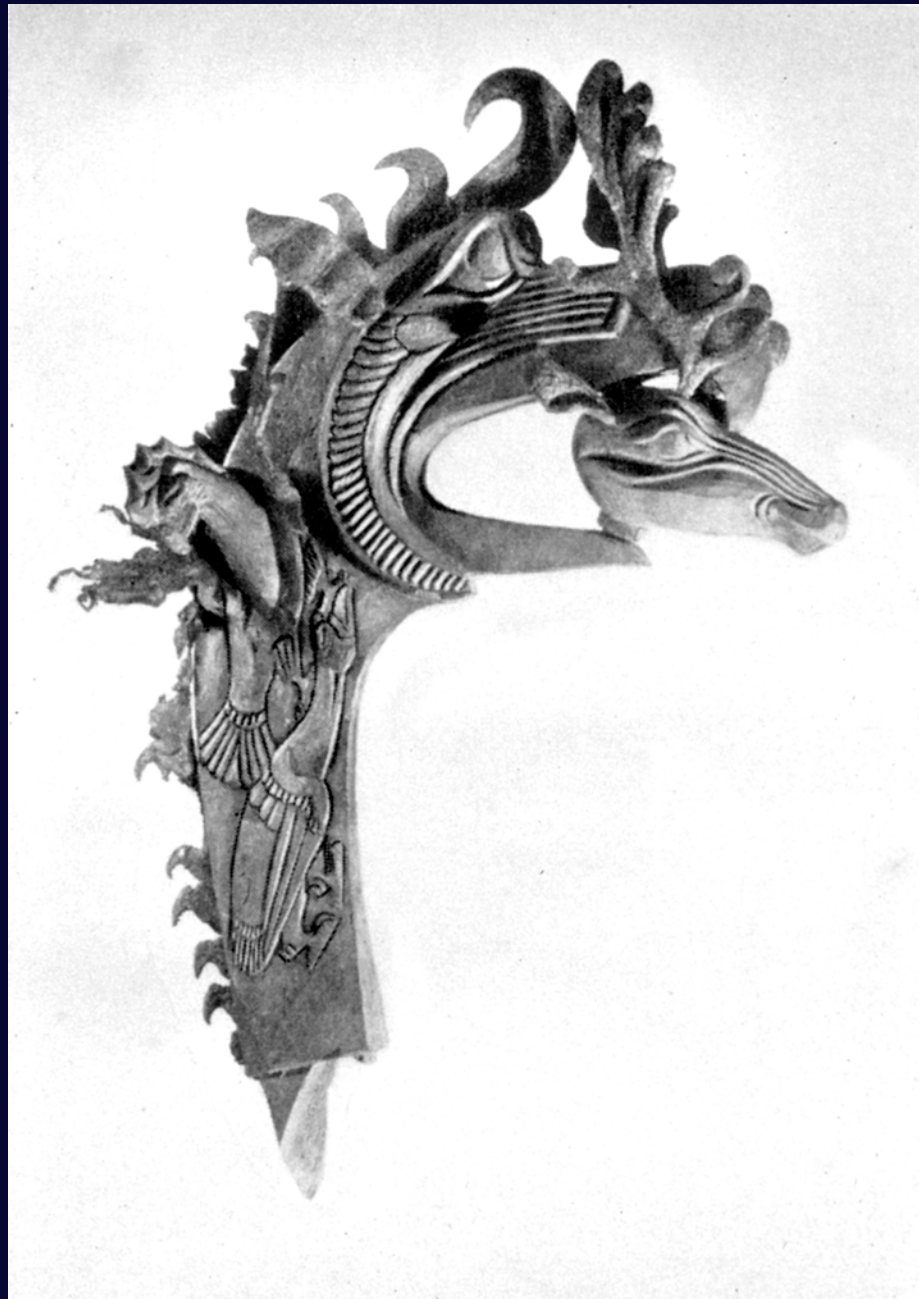
Staff Finial 4

Gryphen with deer head

Emerging from mouth

Wood.

Is the Gryphen
disgorging or devouring
the “Cosmic” deer?



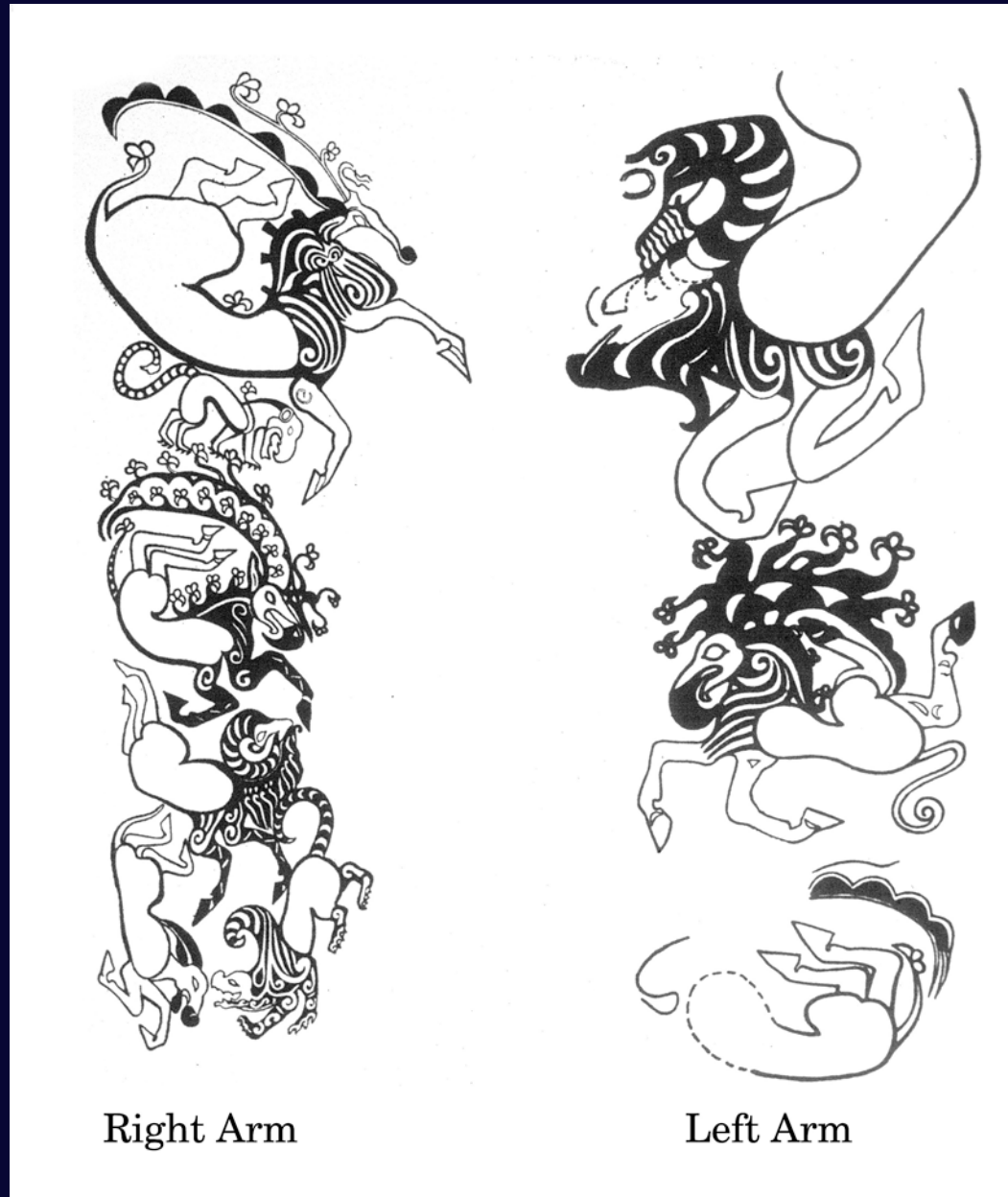
The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

Ca. 400 BCE

Tattoos on arms

These would seem to be talismanic empowerment of the physical being?



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 2

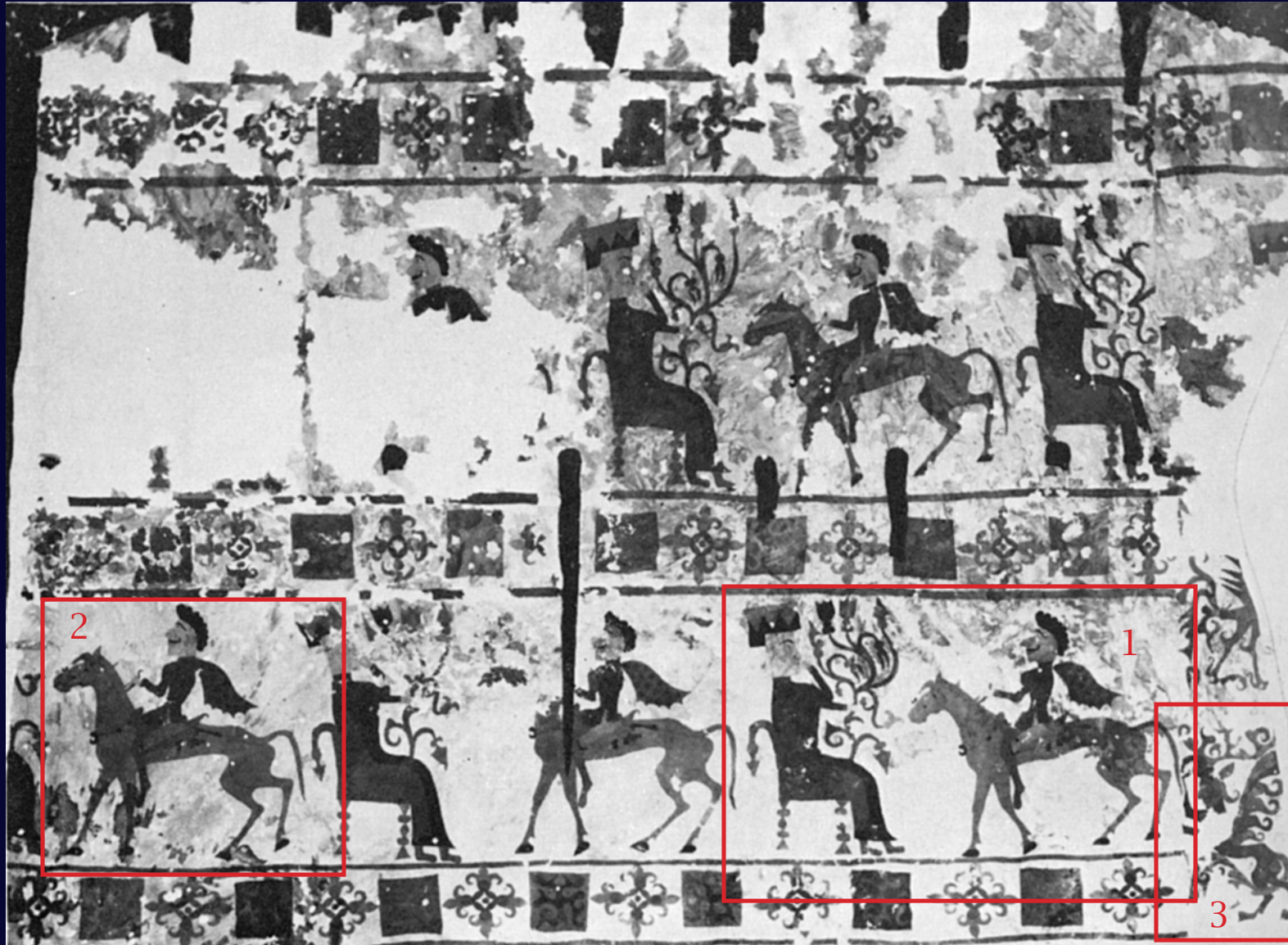
Ca. 400 BCE

Tattoo on right arm



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 5 Ca. 400 BCE wall hanging (identifying the location of three following details)



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 5 Ca. 400 BCE wall hanging: Detail 1: reconstruction painting of the horse rider approaching a goddess holding the tree of life [? JCH]

A scythic rider reporting to the goddess of life upon his death?



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 5 Ca. 400 BCE wall hanging: Detail 2, photo of horse rider



The “Cosmic” Deer in the Altai

Pazyryk Site, Kurgan 5 Ca. 400 BCE wall hanging: Detail 4, photo and reconstruction of complex composite creature, having human face antlers, wings, leonid body, and exotic tail.



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Fragment of Facing from a Goryt Gold; repousse. 40.5x22.2 cm Scythian culture. 7th century BC Kelermess Barrow No. 4 (Excavations of D.G. Shultz), Kuban, Krasnodar Region (formerly Giaghinsky District of Kuban Region) Russia Source of Entry: ʌ Imperial Archaeological Commission, St Petersburg. 1905

From the Hermitage Museum site

<http://tinyurl.com/f54ko>



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Terminal Bronze; cast.
H. 11 cm 7th - 6th
century BC Mongolia
Source of Entry: \wedge from
the collection of
Paskevich. The figure of
the deer is executed in a
realistic manner. The
stylistic peculiarities
testify to the object's
provenance from Middle
Asia

From the Hermitage Museum
site

<http://tinyurl.com/gtj9r>



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Shield Plaque, Kostromskaya tomb ca. 600 BCE

I assume (without much reason) a totemic icon. (see <http://tinyurl.com/f54ko>)



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Ulski tomb, finial 5th 6th cent BCE



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

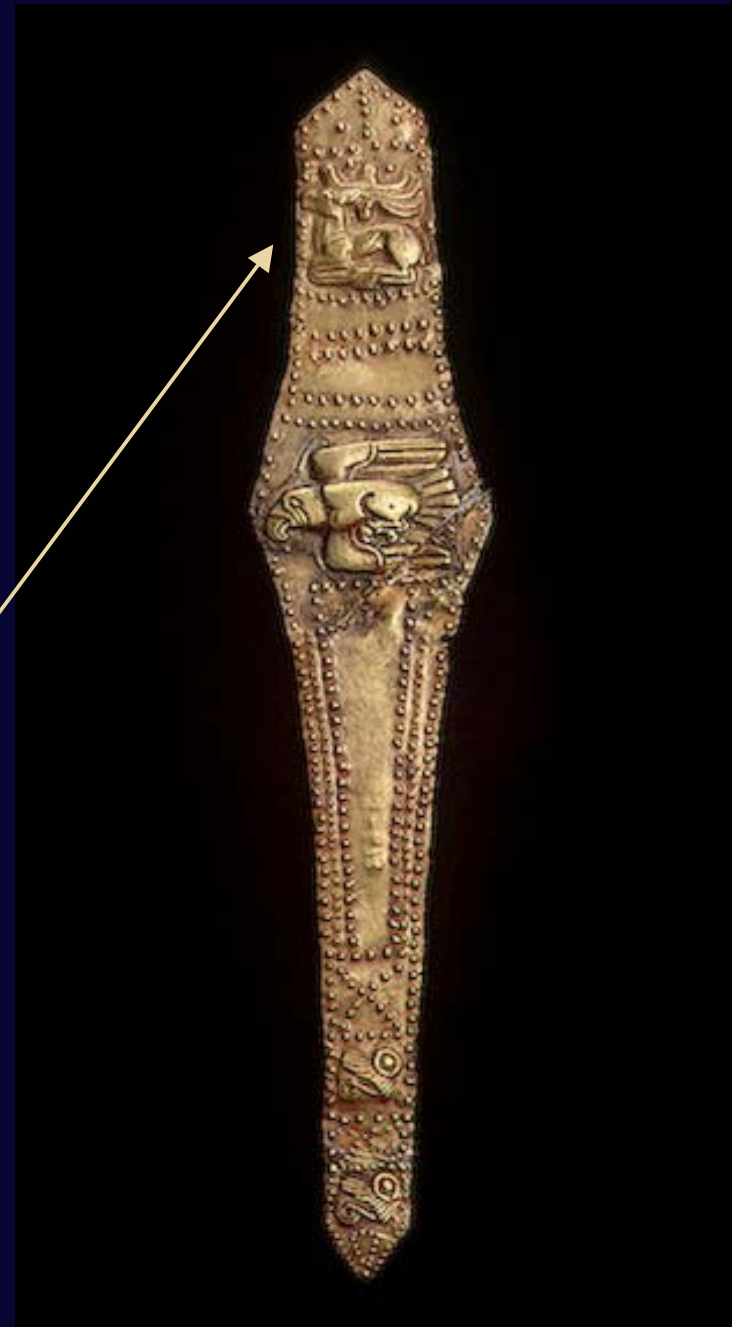
Facing for a Horse's Frontlet

Gold; stamped, chased. L. 24.5 cm Scythian culture. 5th century BC Barrow No. 401, Dnieper Area, Cherkassk Region (formerly Kiev Province), the Village of Zhurovka Russia (now Ukraine) Source of Entry: Imperial Archaeological Commission, St Petersburg. 1904

Hermitage Museum

<http://tinyurl.com/o82bn>

Does this “Deerify” the horse?



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Bratoliubiv'sky tomb, Banner Cap 5th cent BCE (side 1)

At this point in history the deer (and other ungulates) begin to lose to the lions and the gryphons



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Bratoliubivs’ky tomb, Banner Cap 5th cent BCE (side 2)



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Bratoliubiv's'ky tomb, Banner Cap 5th cent BCE (top)



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Kul Oba tomb, polymorphic composite deer 4th cent BCE (top)

Yet, here and in other examples he retains his cosmogenic nature?



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Chertomlyk tomb, Amphora 4th cent BCE (overview)

Position of
Scenes a & b



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Chertomlyk tomb, Amphora 4th cent BCE (Scene a)

In this the horse and the deer seem become conflated?



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Chertomlyk tomb, Amphora 4th cent BCE (Scene b)



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Tomb 30 at Velyka, Sword & Scabbard 4th cent BCE



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Tovsta Mohyla Tom, gorget, 4th cent BCE



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Tovsta Mohyla Tomb, gorget, 4th cent BCE



Horses replace the deer in the attack by the Leogryphs

The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Unknown Tomb, gortyos, 4th cent BCE Overview

For color see Hermitage <http://tinyurl.com/fuekl>



The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

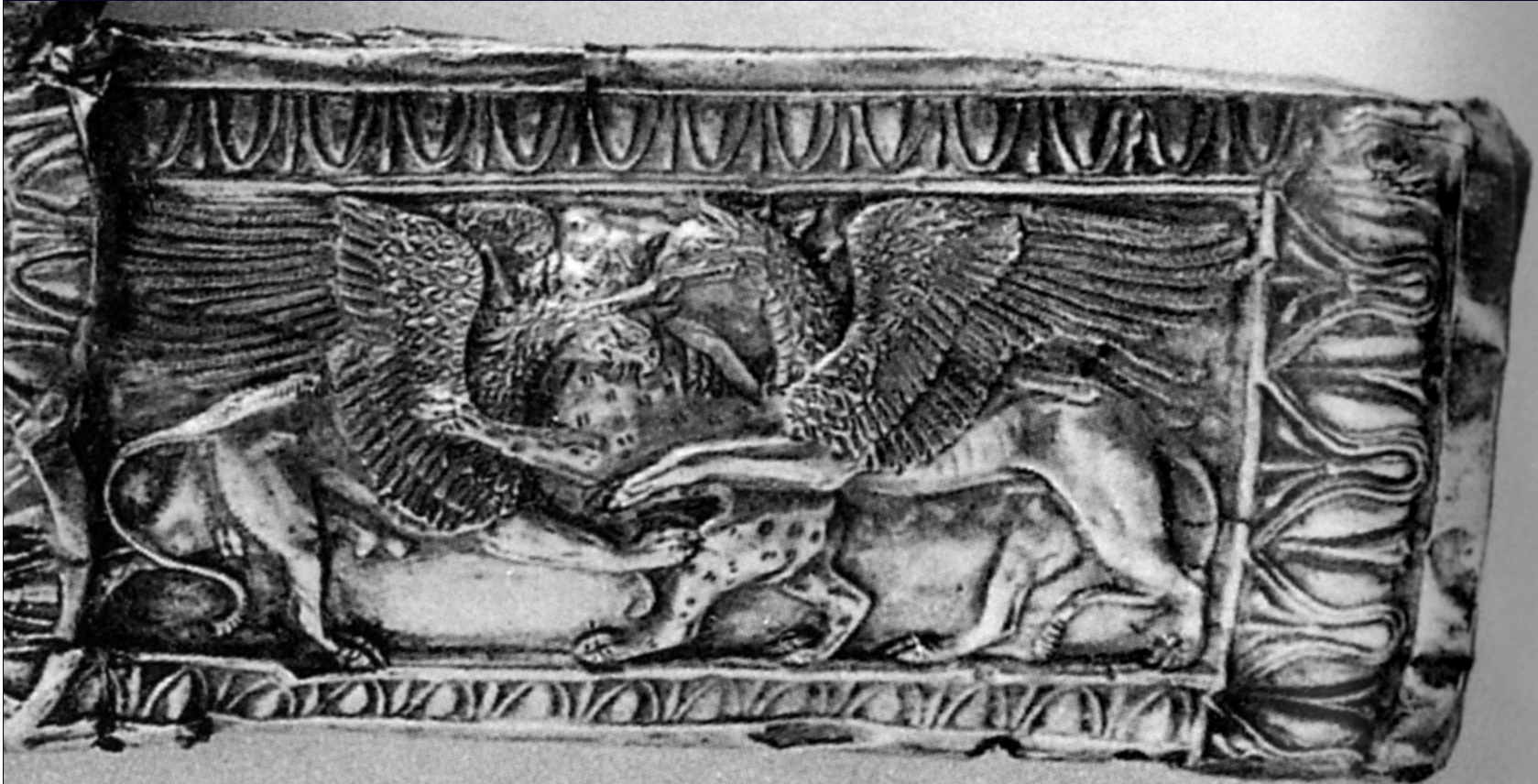
Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Unknown Tomb, gortyos, 3th cent BC, det 1



The deer/horse are totally subjugated by the lions / leopards

The “Cosmic” Deer Western Scyths

Black Sea & Sea of Azov region, Unknown Tomb, gortyos, 3th cent BC, det 2



The Gryphon's now fight against the lions / leopards

The Deer in Parthia

Parthian King Gotarzea I, r.95-90 BCE (Ag, drachm)



It appears to me that he has 8 tiny deer on his crown

The Deer in Sassanian Iran

Shapur I killing deer ca. 4th cent.



The Deer in Sassanian Iran

A drinking cup with a deer in a lotus ca. 6th cent



The Deer in Sassanian Iran

A wine ewer ca. 6-7th C



The End—should we now do the “Cosmic” panther?

Plaque in the Shape of a Panther Gold; soldered, chased, cloisonne enamelling. L. 32.6 cm Scythian culture. 7th century BC Kelermess Barrow No. 1(Excavations of D. G. Shchults), Kuban, Krasnodar Region (formerly Giaghinsky District of Kuban Region) Russia Source of Entry: ʌ Imperial Archaeological Commission, St Petersburg. 1905

From the Hermitage museum <http://tinyurl.com/od2sy>



The “Real” End