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Welcome, [Filiberto Boncompagni](#).

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The Pazyryk rug and Felts

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Virtual Show and Tell Just what the title says it is.



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November 13th, 2014,
10:28 AM

#61

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)

Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 72



Hi guys,

Quote:

And Rich, the red and blue squares on a chain must be the guardborders of the Pazyryk rug.

Yes. I had to crop parts of the article to show Barklova's conclusion in a continuous way. I had to leave out Pict.7, "Detail of the outer border of the Pazyryk rug showing a griffin". What is visible is only the outer guard border.

Regards,
Filiberto



November 13th, 2014,
02:29 PM

#62

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96



Quote:

Originally Posted by **Patrick Weiler**

It may be instructive to consider the tattoo art of this young woman and a nearby male in the context of similarity to the rug and other textiles Rudenko found.

Patrick Weiler

Hi Patrick,

Indeed it is instructive!

The «princess» was found, unless I err, at a place called Ukok in Altai, not far from Pazyryk. One of her tattoo (drawing in FIG 1.4.) features a griffin which style seems truly very similar to several other representations of griffins found in Pazyryk kurgan 5 on felt- and appliqué artifacts. Especially those illustrated in FIG 1.1 and FIG 1.2.

FIG 1 Altai Scythian artifacts



FIG 1.1. Pazyrik. Griffin. Felt.

FIG 1.2. Pazyrik .Griffin. Felt

FIG 1.3. Pazyrik. Sphinx. Appliqué.

FIG 1.4. Ukok. Drawing of the «*Ukok Princess*» tattoo.

FIG 1.5. Griffin. Warriors grave.

FIG 1.6. Pazyrik. Griffin. Pile rug.

FIG 1.7. Pazyrik. Deity and orant. Wall felt .

Griffins can be found in artifacts of a high number of civilizations of the 9th-5th centuries BCE (and well before), including in Greece, Etruria, Persia, Babylonia, Assyria, Urartu etc...Thus the use of this motif alone is not, contrary to Horst's opinion, any safe marker for a given origin, be it even an overstretched Mesopotamian one 🐉👉🙄.

But the griffin- and sphinx motifs were certainly among the five or six favorite ones in Scythian art, together with deer, elks, leopards, lions and eagles. They were not only very commonly used in Crimean artifacts (where Scythian artisans were often influenced by Greek ones), but also in Caucasian- and Kazakstan Scythian ones and of course in Altaic ones.

FIG 2 Scythian griffins and sphinxes



Western Scythians 7-6th BCE



Western Scythians 7-6th BCE



Western Scythians 4th BCE



South-Caucasian Scythians 7th BCE



Central-Asian Scythians 5th BCE



Western Scythians 4th BCE

Please note the great similarity between the griffin featured on the Pazyryk rug and the one in FIG 2.3

Best regards
Pierre

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; December 10th, 2014 at 12:51 PM.



November
17th, 2014,
12:09 PM

#63

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
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Join Date: Oct
2009
Posts: 96



Quote Filiberto: 'By the way, Barkova's and other authors' guess that a region near the Amu-darya would make a good candidate as weaving place of the rug, has nothing to do with the Turkmen people of course: "our" Turkmen were the offspring of Turkic people who still lived in Western Altai and Tian-Shan range by the 8-9th century AD and only penetrated into today's Turkmenistan during the following 2-3 centuries.'

Hi Filiberto,

As you rightly mention, this part of the Achaemenid Empire (roughly the area called home by modern Turkmen) mentioned by several authors as another possible abode for the weaver of the Pazyryk pile rug, was at the time still mainly settled by various population of Indo-European origin.

Some of them generically called «Sakā» (Scythians) by the Persians were purely nomad, like the Tigraxaudas, some others had already in part settled in oasis cities, like the Arians (Haraiva), the Sogdians and the Bactrians. Some cities were heading toward a long and bright future (Areia/Herat, Marakanda/Samarkand, Morou/Margos/Merv, Zariaspa/Balk, Bokhara etc..)

FIG 1 Northeastern part of the Achaemenid Empire (Source: U. Michigan)



As we are looking in this thread for pieces of evidences pointing toward one or another possible origin, it is perhaps interesting to remember the following:

- Most "Achaemenid" rug fragments recently published by Michael Franses (see Martin's post # 12 and link to Franses' podcast <http://podcast.islamicartdoha.org/2011/michael-franses/>) are tentatively attributed to this region too, especially to Northern Afghanistan / Bactria).
- Xing Wu mentions that a fragment of a clay horse unearthed in this region and roughly contemporary with the Pazyryk rug, does feature a saddle rug with a motif identical with the saddle rugs of the Pazyryk horsemen border. (see post # 53, FIG 1).
- The Haraiva (Arians), a semi-settled Indo-European tribe living near the Hari-ruud River, illustrated on the Apadana tribute frieze, are shown wearing a headdress masking the chin, quite similar to the one of the horsemen of the Pazyryk rug (FIG 2, 3, 4). However, they wear a kind of knickerbockers quite fit for horsemen or golfers, but these trousers are not similar to the Scythian panties (tight and decorated) donned by the Pazyryk horsemen. Unlike the Tigraxauda Scythians, their tribute to the Achaemenid King does not consist in horses, textiles and gold bracelets, but in camels, leopard pelts and unidentified products contained in small vases.

FIG 2 Apadana frieze. Persepolis. Arian tribute-bearer. Details.



FIG 3 Apadana frieze. Persepolis. The Arian delegation.

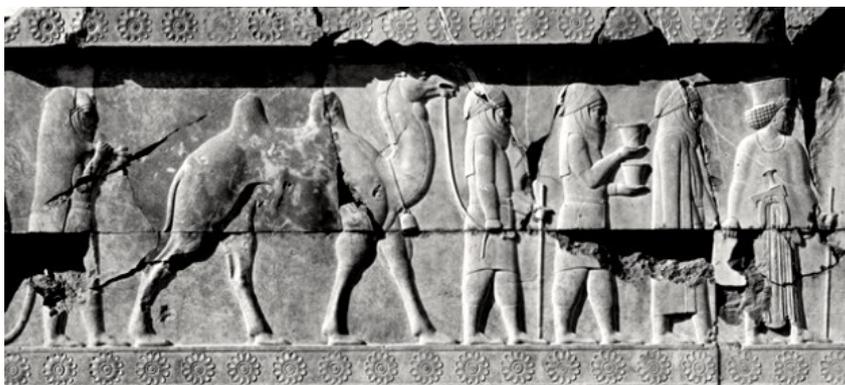


FIG 4 Pazyrik pile rug. The horsemen border



◦ The Arians' western neighbors, the (probably nomad-) Parthians, are described on the Apadana frieze as wearing similar headdresses, similar horsemen trousers and their tribute consisted in camels and small vases too.

◦ The «Treasury of the Oxus», arguably the richest hoard of Achaemenid artifacts found to-date, could be an indication that the region was already wealthy in the 5th century BCE. The fact that Bactria was the apanage of the Crown Prince may be seen as a further proof of it. Thus, the region might be a reasonably credible place for the weaving of a superb artifact like the Pazyrik rug.

Besides, one of the gold plates of the Oxus hoard also shows a gentleman, (perhaps performing a Mazdean ceremony ?) wearing a headdress masking his chin in Pazyrik fashion.

FIG 5. Oxus hoard. Gentleman performing ritual ?



◦ The mixture of urban population and sheep-raising nomads, as well as the unfriendly winter climate of most of these regions makes it quite possible that an advanced pile-rug technology may have been developed there.

◦ The Pazyrik rug borders featuring horsemen, deer (or elks) and griffins and the Persian stylistic influences

seem compatible with the population mix of the region.

Of course, these tidbits do not constitute any kind of proof. At best, only a plausibility check.

Best regards
Pierre

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; November 17th, 2014 at 12:16 PM.



December 10th, 2014,
11:42 AM

#64 □

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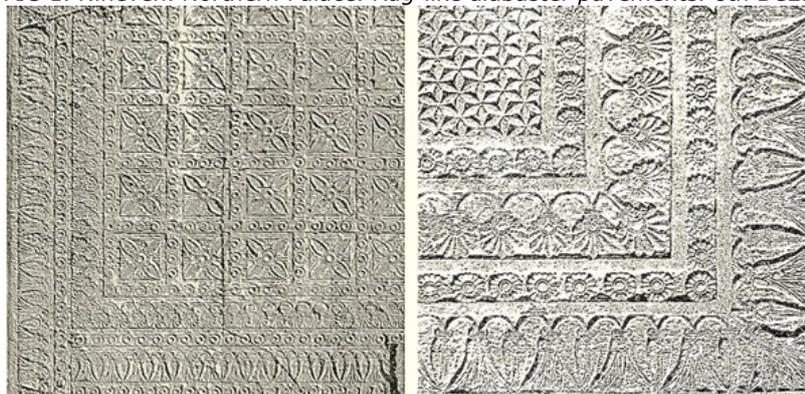
Hi all,

Whoever followed this discussion was probably puzzled (or amused) by the uncanny precision of one of the various locations attributed by Horst Nitz to the Pazyryk rug weaver's abode: «Somewhere between Lake Urmia and Nineveh».

Two Schurmannian- / Nitzian- claims constitute the shaky base of this ukase:

The existence, mentioned in Schurmann's publication (1), of several carpet-like alabaster pavements in the Assyrian Kings' Northern Palace in Nineveh. One of them (now in the MET if I do not err) features a field of eight-pointed stars (or rosettes) similar to the one woven into the Pazyryk pile rug. (1)

FIG 1. Nineveh. Northern Palace. Rug-like alabaster pavements. 8th BCE. Source Schurmann (1)



B. The alleged existence of Sakik/Ziwiye: A «Cimmerian capital», which according to Schurmann (followed by Horst Nitz), was built somewhere between Nineveh and Lake Urmia by the Cimmerian invaders who attacked and looted parts of Urartu between the end of the 7th century BCE and the conquest of this Kingdom by the Medes around the mid 6th BC (2) and was even supposedly the abode of the future resident of the Pazyryk kurgan (sic!) and a possible place for the weaving of the Pazyryk rug as well (1).

Quotes:

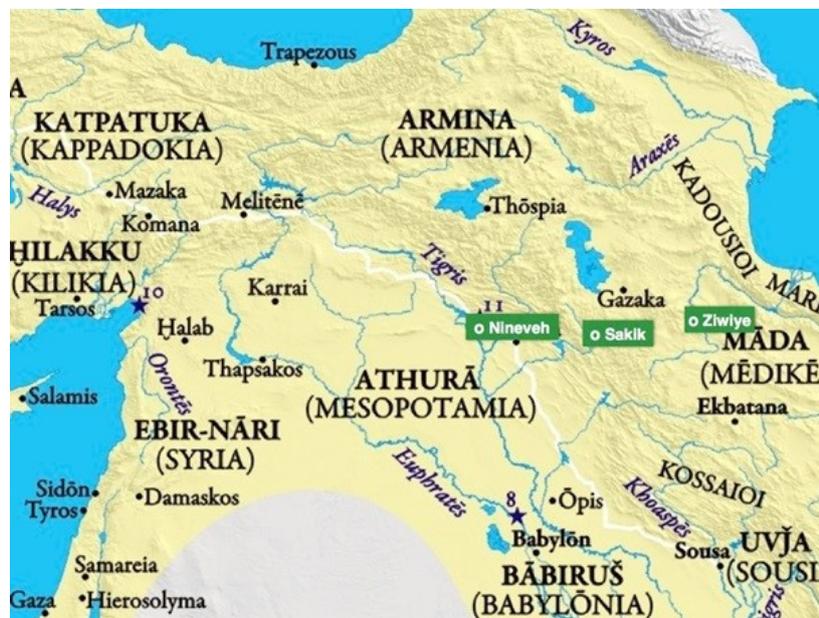
Schurmann dixit (1) «Archaeologists have discovered that the capital of the most western Scythians may have been at that time the town of Sakic. Sakic is situated a little east of Niniveh and it is, therefore, not surprising that the rugs hewn in stone in the palaces in Niniveh have a great resemblance to the center of the Pazyryk rug»

«...At the time of making the Pazyryk rug, end of 5th century B.C.E. Sakic may have well been the abode of the king that was buried in the V. Kurgan in the Altai Mountains ...»

Horst Nitz dixit: «.. An insight into the earliest state of Scythian art in the West can be gained from the treasure find of Ziwiye near Saqqez (the Sakic of Schürmann) dating to the 7th century. (Thread «Pazyryk», Post 33.)

«...The Pazyryk rug was probably made there (Rudenko, Schürmann) trying to be more precise, possibly somewhere between Urmia and ancient Nineveh....» (Thread Sogdian Design. Post 50.)

FIG 2 Map showing alleged situation of Sakik and Ziwiye, according to Schurmann.



Let us now check the substance, assuming there is any, of both these claims:

Was the field motif of the Pazyryk rug copied from the Nineveh alabaster pavement?

Nineveh, Assyria's largest city and royal residence, fell in 612 BCE to the Median army and its occasional Scythian allies. Assur, the Assyrian religious capital, was in Median's hands since 614 BCE. The rest of the empire quickly succumbed too. The Median Empire and Babylon shared the spoils and made the Assyrians pay a very high price indeed for their long rule by terror: Nineveh was looted, **thoroughly destroyed**, its population dispersed (in the best hypothesis) and the city abandoned, **more than a century before the time of the weaving of the Pazyryk rug**. How could the weaver have seen the pavement under the rubbles of the Northern Palace? **Clearly another big anachronism.**

8-point stars or rosettes have always been (still are) quite common religious- and political symbols and were (still are) also frequently used for purely decorative purposes (see for example their importance in Achaemenian- and Islamic art). Besides, nature offers enough models (stars, sun, flowers etc..) to explain also any independent «invention» of that simple motif.

FIG 3, 4 and 5 show a few antique examples of 8-point stars in various civilizations:



FIG 3.1 Greek. Syracuse coin, Magna Grecia. 5th BCE.

FIG 3.2 Sumerian. ca. 21th BCE.

FIG 3.3 Hittite. 13th BCE.

FIG 3.4 Korkira. Ilyrian Greek colony. Coin. 6th-5th BCE.

FIG 3.5 Greek. Corinthian vase. 6th-5th BCE.

FIG 3.6 Greek. Attica. Scythian horseman. 5th BCE.

FIG 3.7 Greek. Scythian warrior. 5th BCE. SMPK Berlin.

FIG 3.8 Greek. Heracles and Lernaia. 5th BCE.



FIG 4.1 Mari civilization. ca. 18th BCE.

FIG 4.2 Palestine. Symbol of goddess Astarte. 16th BCE. British Museum.

FIG 4.3 Luristan. 8th BCE.

FIG 4.4 Achemenian. King Darius' bow bearer. Behistun relief. 5th BCE.

FIG 4.5 Achemenian. King Darius' Palace. Susa. The archer's frieze. 5th BCE.

FIG 4.6 Urartu kingdom. Van. 9th BCE.



FIG 5.1 Western Scythian 7th-6th BCE Kelermes.

FIG 5.2. Western Scythian 4th BCE Kul-Oba.

Even the peculiar type of 8-point stars found on the Pazyryk was not rare at the time, nor was it specific for any upper-Mesopotamian civilization, contrary to Schurmann's and Horst's assertion.



FIG 6.1 Pazyryk star

FIG 6.2 Nineveh star



FIG 7.1 Mycenaean. 12th BCE.

FIG 7.2 Babylonian 9th BCE

FIG 7.3 Luristan ? 9th BCE ?

FIG 7.4 Phrygian tile, 5th BCE (Martin's post #4)

FIG 7.5 Miletus coin, Anatolia. Achaemenian Empire. 5th BCE

FIG 7.6 Miletus coin, Anatolia. Achaemenian Empire. 6th BCE

FIG 6.7 Greek. Crete. Itanos silver stater. 5th BCE.

The hypothesis that the rug-like alabaster pavement of a Mesopotamian palace should ipso-facto prove the existence of a dynamic rug-weaving activity in this region is rather weak too, IMHO. At any rate, it does not seem to be supported by archeology, so far: Cuneiform tablets describing the main textile items supplied to the Neo-Assyrian Palaces and temples suggest, to the contrary, that rug-weaving was, at best, a minor activity (4).

Besides, a design analogy between antique pavements and rugs is nothing exceptional: Many Roman examples of rug-like mosaics are known, but nobody attributes to the Romans any particular competence or interest for pile rug weaving, as far as I know.



As usual, my post is too long sorry for that
See you next post.

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; December 10th, 2014 at 02:08 PM.



December 10th, 2014,
11:48 AM

#65 □

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
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Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96

Second part of post:

Was Sakik / Ziwiye the Scythian melting-pot of civilizations where the Pazyryk was woven?

Sakik is Schurmann's baby, For undefined reasons Horst identifies it with «Ziwiye» (also called Zakkiz), a small village situated south of Lake Urmia, in southern Urartu, near which a treasure hoard of heterogeneous provenance and age (dated ca. 9th to 7th BCE), including some Scythian minor artifacts, was allegedly found in 1947.

A 1963 expedition led by the archeologist R.H. Dyson to Ziwiye had found mostly «scrap» (in Dyson's own words) of Urartian-, Persian- and Scythian origin, but nothing even remotely alluding to a city, not to speak of the « prestigious capital" of the Cimmerian/Scythian invaders.

In 1977, his colleague O.W. Muscarella (3) denounced the fact that none of the items were excavated under archaeological conditions in 1947, that there are no objective sources of information that any of the attributed objects actually were found at Ziwiye (although some might have) and that several «Ziwiye objects» were modern forgeries, much to the displeasure, I guess, of the museums who had bought them and of those «experts» who had swallowed, line and hook, this fairy tale and had written about the « fabulous tomb of lord Ziwiye» .

Sakik (name evidently derived from Saka=Scythian) is a hypothetical capital, its location unknown, any description purely imaginary.

The Scythian/Cimmerian invaders may indeed have built headquarters somewhere in Median- and / or Urartian territory, but even if such a (short-lived) capital existed anywhere outside Schurmann's imagination, it had already returned into Median- (first), then into Achaemenian

power, long before the weaving of the rug.

Schurmann's Sakik is perhaps merely a historical license, but it is surely a large anachronism again in the context of the Pazyryk rug.

Notes:

(1) U. Schurmann. The Pazyryk. Its use and origin. 1982. <http://rbedrosian.com/Classic/Paz/paz1.htm>)

(2) For history-minded readers:

With «Upper Mesopotamia», Horst and Schurmann allude to Assyria and its northern arch-enemy Urartu. This latter kingdom was indeed Schurmann's personal favorite as the rug-weaver's home.

The imperialist Urartian kingdom had its heydays during the 9th-8th centuries BCE, but was forced into the defensive after two successive defeats, in 720 BCE on its northern frontiers against Scythians (probably of the Cimmerians variety), who then kept raiding and looting the country, and in 714 BCE on its southern frontier, against the Assyrian King Sargon, who did boast about an enormous booty (Khorsabad reliefs).

Archeology has shown that by 600 BCE many Urartian fortresses had been destroyed. Even so, the Urartu rulers kept fighting (contrary to Horst assumption, the kingdom was never conquered by the Cimmerians) and even kept building new fortresses, but the kingdom never recovered from these two invasions.

The Cimmerians did invade Urartu's western neighbors as well, apparently settling in Cappadocia and perhaps in part of the Phrygian plains as well. They, or other Scythian nomads, occupied also part of the Median Empire during 28 years (Herodotus dixit).

Allied with the Medes and the Babylonians, they (or still another party of Scythian warriors), also hammered big nails into the coffin of the Assyrian Empire.

As soon as the Medes succeeded in throwing «their» Scythian occupants out of their home country, they turned their attention to Assyria, (destroying this empire) and to whatever was left of Urartu.

It is documented that in 585 BCE their army crossed Urartu en route to trounce the Lydians near River Halys. After this date no Urartian king was mentioned anymore and one can suppose that the Medes had annexed de facto the region.

Around 547 BCE an Armenian satrapy was established in the former Urartian territory by Cyrus, the first Achaemenid king.

(3) O.W. Muscarella. Journal of Field Archaeology, 1977, 4, nr. 2, "Ziwiye and Ziwiye": The Forgery of a Provenience.

(4) M.L. Nosch, H. Koefoed, E. Anderson Strand. «Textile production and consumption in the ancient Near East»:

The authors do mention the important textile production of the Neo-Assyrian Empire. The weavers, organized militarily in cohorts, focused on producing garment, clothing, tents and blankets for the army, palaces and temples. The Assyrian lists of raw fibers especially mention linen, wool being apparently less employed.

Carpet weaving is hardly mentioned anywhere in tablets and was, at best, a secondary activity.

A list (chart 13.2) mentioning the work-quotas of palace weavers, indicates the quantities of wool utilized and shows that its main end-use was for making coats. Less important end-uses were tents, chariot covers and various garments. But the tablet does not mention any rug. In the rare cases in which rugs were mentioned in other tablets, there was no indication about the technique used: pile- rugs? kilims? soumaks? tapestry? appliqué felt? etc...

If all this info is not sufficient for casting doubt on the Mesopotamian origin of the highly sophisticated Pazyryk rug, Nosh and al. also mention the hurrian- or kassite patronymes of many weavers and of their foremen, which indicate that they were probably artisans captured during raids in the Anatolian highlands (Hurrians), in Luristan or in the Zagros range (Kassites). These weavers were not predominantly Assyrians.

Best regards

Pierre

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; December 10th, 2014 at 12:07 PM.



January 4th, 2015, 05:23 PM

#66

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members



Hi all,

Despite all the points discussed so far, we still do not have yet any good reason to eliminate from the list of the potential weavers of the Pazyryk rug, either the Altaic Scythian population themselves (or any other independent Scythian groups), nor the wealthy and technologically

advanced Achaemenid Empire, (whose rulers were documented by several Greek authors, as being quite fond of carpets (1).

Fine, but the latter was a huge ethnic melting-pot of Indo-Europeans, Semitic and Egyptian populations with various nomad- and settled lifestyles (2). It would be nice to reduce further a little bit the number of the Pazyryk rug weaver's probable abodes, if possible.

Well, one could perhaps make the not overly hare-brained hypothesis that since this rug is a technical marvel, the Pazyryk weaver must have inherited from her tribal / ethnic ancestors an ancient expertise in complex textile weaving.

The Apadana Persepolis frieze, describes 23 subject nations of the Empire, all clad in their traditional attire and carrying «regional souvenirs» as tribute to the king. This could perhaps help us in selecting those ethnic groups most likely to be involved in rug-making, based on their apparent reputation as producers of quality textiles, i.e those nations who are shown offering textile gifts to the King.

According to S. Razmjou (3)
 «Medes ... bring long sleeved robes with tunics and trousers as gifts. Cappadocians, Scythians and Sagartians also bring the same dresses. Such gifts were never brought or worn by other people like Egyptians, Ethiopians or Indians»

It appears that Razmjou's list fails to mention three more delegations, being identified as Sogdians, Arabs and Babylonians, who also carry a tribute including textiles.

There was, of course, no delegation of Persians tributaries since they were the ruling tribe. But they shouldn't be excluded a priori from the list of potential Pazyryk weaver. It will remain anybody's guess as to whether they were seen as weavers of high quality textiles by their contemporaries (and therefore were perhaps rug suppliers too).

FIG 2 to 8 show these 7 selected delegations and Fig 1 the geographical situation of each ethnic group.

FIG 1 Map of Achaemenid Empire



FIG 2 Median delegation.



FIG 3 Cappadocian delegation.



FIG 4 Scythians Tigraxauda delegation



FIG 5 Sagarthian delegation



FIG 6 Sogdian delegation



FIG 7 Arabian delegation

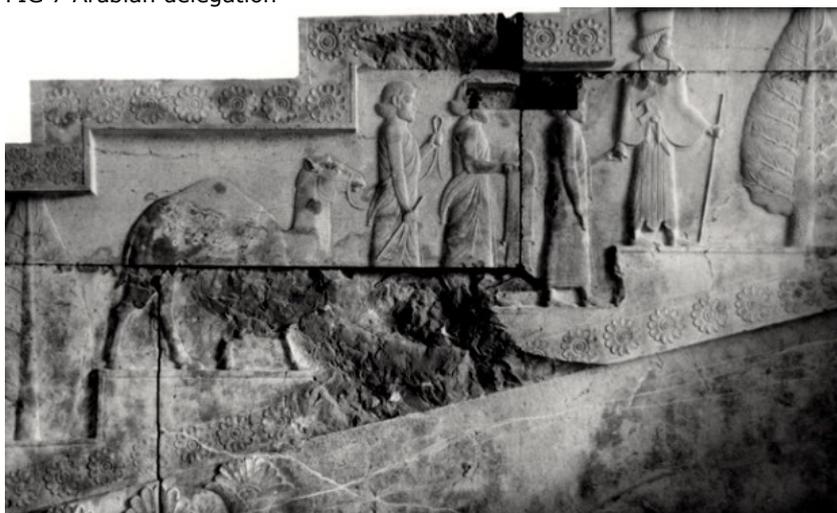


FIG 8 Babylonian delegation



Although none of these seven Apadana delegations carries any identifiable carpet, I'd still bet one Daric dime that the weaver belonged to one of these nationalities . That is, if she was indeed a subject of the Achaemenid King.

Two nations (Tigraxauda Scythians and Sogdians) were geographically close to the Altai. The wealthy future occupant of Pazyryk Kurgan 5, could have bought the rug there or honestly looted it during a raid on his western neighbors.

A third nation (Cappadocians) may have retained some good old Northern Steppe techniques, including perhaps the weaving of warm rugs: Cappadocia was conquered and settled by Cimmerian Scythians a couple of centuries before Pazyryk time only. However, the distance to any Altai rug customer seems a trifle excessive and the looting option rather out of the question. This would be even more the case for any Arabian- or Babylonian source.

According to S. Razmjou (4) the Medes were mentioned in several Darius' inscriptions as being in

charge of various highly qualified artisanal jobs during the construction and decoration of Persepolis and «must have had a high reputation as artisans, at least equal or superior to the Egyptians' and Ionians' one».

Razmlou also notes that*Median art was similar to Scythian's, being part of the larger «Eurasian Steppe Culture». Unlike most other nations of the Empire (including the Persians themselves) they still shared with the Scythians their typical short sword (Akhinakes).

He states that the Median courtiers represented on the Apadana frieze are often wearing richer clothes and jewels than their Persian colleagues, a fact which supports his hypothesis that their arts and crafts were perhaps more developed.

Xenophon, a first-hand connoisseur of late Achaemenid Persia (1) confirmed this hypothesis when he criticized the Medes for their immoderate passion for bling-bling, which he thinks was already noticeable during the rule of Cyrus the Great and later infected the whole Achaemenian elite, which the tough general dismisses as being an effete bunch and no match for Greek hoplites (An opinion which did not pass unnoticed to Alexander the Great).

Interestingly, the Medes were specifically mentioned by Xenophon as being rug weavers (1) and suppliers of the Achaemenid Court.

The Sagarthians were sandwiched between Median- and Persian territory and were apparently absorbed in either one or the other tribe soon after the creation of the Apadana frieze. (Perhaps because their civilization/dialect/art were very similar).

For once, I managed to keep the post inside legal size. This surely deserves a nice beer, right now.

Best regards
Pierre

Notes

1. Xenophon (ca 430-355 BCE), a competent Greek general and prolific historian and writer, fought for Cyrus III in this young prince's failed bid for the Achaemenid throne. Xenophon was familiar with the Achaemenid world and well informed about its recent history. He mentioned, several times, carpets in his *Cyropaedia* (his history of the founder of the Achaemenid dynasty, Cyrus the Great), but unfortunately only once did he note their origin (Median) and he never bothered to describe them, except for a few mentions of their rich red shades,.

2. A not exhaustive list of (predominantly) Indo-European populations of the Achaemenid Empire would start with the ruling group, the Parsa themselves, their close associates (and previous rulers of the Iranian Empire) the Medes, the Arians, Baktrians, Sogdians, Choresmians, Skudrians, Parthians, Sagarthians, Lydians, Carians and Phrygians, the Hurrians from Anatolia uplands, several groups of «tame» Scythians like the Tigraxaudas and (later) the Dahas, as well as the Cimmerians (settled in Cappadocia), Ionian Greeks, Thracians, Gandharis from Afghanistan etc... Among the Semitic ethnic groups of the Empire one can mention the Elamites, Babylonians, Assyrians, Phenicians, and Jews.

3. Shahrokh Razmjou. «In search of the lost Median Art» *Iranica Antiqua*, vol 15, pag. 285 & 296.
<http://www.academia.edu/2390658>
[/ In Search of the Lost Median Art Iranica Antiqua 40 271-314](#)

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; January 4th, 2015 at 05:33 PM.



June 6th, 2015, 04:44 PM

#67

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

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Hi all,

The Eubean 4th BCE pottery illustrated below (FIG 1. Louvres collection) is supposed to show, on the right, a Scythian warrior of the Daha tribe. While I don't know on what basis this Daha identification has been made, I thought it interesting enough to show the vase in this thread :

FIG 1. 4th century BCE Eubean pottery. On the left a Daha? Scythian warrior. Louvre_CA491.



During the 5-4th century BCE, the Daha Scythians lived just East of the Caspian Sea (Western Trans-Caspia, roughly in the territory which Yomud Turkmen called home since roughly the 16th century AD). Like their close eastern neighbors, the Tigraxaudas , the Daha Scythians eventually became tributary of the Achaemenid Empire during the 5-4th centuries BCE. The «arborescence» on the Daha fellow's tunic (FIG 1) is identical with both the motifs on the saddle rugs of the Pazyrik horsemen (FIG 2.1 & 2.2) and with the motif on the saddle rug illustrated on a fragment of pottery found in Trans-Caspia. (FIG 3).

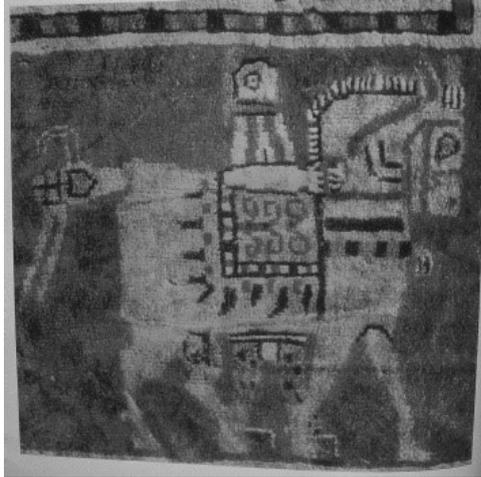
FIG 2.1 Pazyrik rug. Detail of the horsemen border.



FIG 2.2 Pazyrik rug. Drawings of the various saddle rugs of the horsemen frieze. (See Martin's post # 35)



FIG 3 Pazyrik 8. Horse saddle & terracotta from Central Asia. (Source Xing Wu, see post # 53.)



This is obviously no definitive proof for any Scythian- or Trans-Caspian- origin of the Pazyryk rug. It could be a mere coincidence. Or it could indeed be a clue. Your guess, guys.

While I am still cautiously walking on this thin ice, I suppose it would also be OK for me to ask the many Turkmeno-maniacs on board whether they also see a similarity between this «arborescence» motif and a known Turkmen rug motif (FIG 4 for example)

FIG 4 Turkoman. Yomud asmalyk. XVIII. SC.



(I am of course aware that the Turkmen were late 9th century AD Turkik immigrants from the East , while the 5th-4th century BCE Dahas were Indo-European Scythians. I merely wonder whether this motif might have crossed the centuries in Trans-Caspia.)

Some of the drawings illustrated in FIG 2.2 might suggest that the motif shows a vertical pile of

ram's heads. The latter being a frequent motif on rugs of many Asian nomad nations.

Best regards
Pierre



June 6th, 2015, 05:31 PM

#68

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 72



Hi Pierre,

Quote:

This is obviously no definitive proof for any Scythian- or Trans-Caspian- origin of the Pazyryk rug. It could be a mere coincidence. Or it could indeed be a clue. Your guess, guys.

My guess is that it's a fair clue...

Regards,

Filiberto



June 7th, 2015, 01:39 AM

#69

[Rich Larkin](#)
Members

Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 10



Hi Pierre,

It's been a while since agents of Interpol staged a raid on Turkotek hunting sinister forces bent on hijacking the site and renaming it "Baluch-o-tek." This seems like a good opportunity to rekindle those flames. 🐱



Somehow, I thought the tunic on that chap depicted on the Eubean pottery resonated faintly with this balisht face (and thousands of other Baluch weavings). Granted, there are some detail differences, but the Baluch have had 2,500 years to work on the design. Interestingly, the Wikipedia article on the origins of the Baluch suggests that linguistic evidence tends to place them east of the Caspian in early times.

The asmalyk you've illustrated is in the running too.

Rich



June 7th, 2015, 08:44 AM

#70

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96



Oops, sorriiii.



I should have known that the cruel war between Turkmeno-maniacs and Baluchophiles could explode anytime again. Let's hope that the Caucasian terrorists will not move too.



June 7th, 2015, 08:47 AM

#71

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96



Seriously,
Yes Rich,
The motif on the tunic (and on the saddle rugs) could indeed also be a variation on the ubiquitous "tree of life" motif.



June 9th, 2015, 05:03 AM

#72

[Rich Larkin](#)

Members

Join Date: Jun 2008
Location: Massachusetts
Posts: 10



Hi Pierre,

My introducing the "tree of life" motif departs from the chief thrust of the thread. And I'm hardly suggesting a linear connection from fifth century BCE Scythians and late nineteenth century Baluchis. But the one does seem to echo the other. It would be interesting to know whether the Scythians (or other weavers of The Rug) were thinking of trees with those designs. I guess one could take them to be stacked ram's horns, especially as they appear disjointed on some of the saddle liners. Or something else. In any case, some basic designs are remarkably durable.

Rich



June 15th, 2015, 10:43 AM

#73

[Pierre Galafassi](#)

Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96



Hi Rich,

Quote: «It would be interesting to know whether the Scythians (or other weavers of The Rug) were thinking of trees with those designs»

I did follow up on your suggestion, but could find no similar motif in Scythian art. It seems that these fellows weren't particularly inspired by the tree of life as religious symbol. Fig 1 and Fig 2 are the only examples I could find so far and only the first is a typical tree life, the latter could perhaps also represent something else (orants in procession for example?)

FIG 1 Western Scythian 7th-6th BCE, Kelermes.



FIG 2. Scythian Headdress. 5th-4th BCE.



A third artifact (FIG 3) supposedly discovered at Ziwiye (suspect origin, see posts # 64-65), could represent a tree of life too but is more likely to show a decorative tree. Besides, there is no proof of its Scythian origin as Medes and Mannans (Zagros range) were also suggested(1). It has no design analogy with the Pazyryk saddle rugs anyway.

FIG 3. Unknown origin, allegedly found in Ziwiye, 8th-7th century BCE?



Finally the artifact which IMHO shows the best analogy with the motif of the Pazyryk saddle rugs, so far, is a tree of life of Hittite origin (Anatolia, ca 11th-10th century BCE): FIG 4. Note the form of the «palms». This is not really telling us much about the Pazyryk weaver, does it?.



The tree of life symbol probably originated well before the 20 th century BCE, perhaps in southern Mesopotamia (FIG 5) or in Egypt and became very important later for the Hittites, Assyrians, Persians etc.. but had perhaps little or no religious signification for the Scythians.

FIG 5. Ur. 22th BCE. Tree of life with god Enlil and Ur-namma, King of Ur.



Source:
J. Curtis, Ancient Persia. 2000.

Best regards
Pierre

Last edited by Pierre Galafassi; June 15th, 2015 at 10:53 AM.



June 15th, 2015, 04:48
PM

#74

[Dinie Gootjes](#)
Members



Hi Pierre,

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 15

I find this an extremely interesting thread, though it goes way above my head in the necessary

historical background. But now I am afraid I have to step in to prevent a major international blow-up with Korea. Your second picture of a "Scythian headdress" shows in fact Korean National Treasure # 188, a gold crown of the Silla Kingdom found in the heavenly Horse Tomb in Gyeongju, South Korea. I can even, with some difficulty, make out the Korean and Chinese text on the label (nothing more interesting than "gold crown").

There seems to be a definite Scythian connection, with very similar crowns, but as I have that from Wikipedia, I will let that fount of unending knowledge and wisdom speak for itself:

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Crowns_of_Silla

It is interesting that they see the Chinese character for mountain in the top of the crown, while at the same time saying that there is no Chinese influence. Looks like over-interpretation to me. A 'trident without the handle' figure is quite common, without having to be a Chinese character. A bit like a cross figure and the Christian cross, I guess. Lots of other references to lots of possible

symbols, even the world tree of Siberia



Dinie



June 15th, 2015, 06:43 PM

#75

[Filiberto Boncompagni](#)
Administrator

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Cyprus
Posts: 72



Hi Dinie,

Thank you very mach for the correction.

Pierre mix-up has been surely originated by the heat weave that recently has hit Alsace and the bottles of iced *Crémant* consumed in order to fight the unpleasant temperature.



Regards,

Filiberto



June 15th, 2015, 07:52 PM

#76

[Pierre Galafassi](#)
Members

Join Date: Oct 2009
Posts: 96



Hi Dinie,

Thank you very much for correcting my stupid error. The heat wave is no excuse and Alsatian wines are actually excellent for the brain, I'm sure. No, I do fear that irreversible age-related synapse-decay and my messy files are the true causes.

Regards

Pierre.



June 16th, 2015, 05:22 PM

#77

[Dinie Gootjes](#)
Members

Join Date: May 2008
Location: Canada
Posts: 15



Hi Pierre,

I wish I had only even a quarter of your so-called messy files, and the ability to work with them... In this case I simply recognized the crown as Korean, as we have been to the Gyeongju royal burial sites numerous times when we lived in Korea.

Dinie



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