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## On the origin of the animal style in the Kazakh steppe

The Scythian-Saka animal style, its bizarre, phantasmagoric images and their territorial distribution in synchronous monuments on the vast territory of the Eurasian continent are clear evidence of the developed trans-continental visual, and in fact, symbolic and figurative communications of the Early nomads during this period. The phenomenon of the origin of this style and its geographical distribution, the decoding of images and communicative messages obviously finds its origins in Kazakh figurative monuments, clearly demonstrating its continuity, originality and origins in the local pictorial traditions of the Bronze Age.

*Keywords:* petroglyphs, statuary sculptures, Deer stones, horses in masks with horns, Shan Rong, wolf-dragons, Betpakdala, Karasuk Pictorial Tradition, Begazy-Dandybaev Culture.

### *Introduction*

Bright artifacts made in the famous Scythian-Siberian animal style, found in large quantities throughout the archaeological sites of the Great Belt of the Eurasian Steppes, convincingly prove the existence of trans-continental pictorial communications that allowed clans of Early nomads of different languages and ethnic origins to communicate with each other, trade, exchange goods, ideas, information, their cultural achievements and find a common visual language, successfully develop, including through visual animalistic images that were understandable to them.

Obviously, the mythological content of these universal images, their secret meaning, were well understood by all steppe dwellers, both in the West and in the East, regardless of their ethnic origin and the language they spoke. Along with petroglyphs, this pictorial style is represented by decorative objects [1; 389–404] from burial mounds excavated everywhere, numerous finds of *Golden people* with a complex sets of weapons, jewelry and ceremonial horses, as well as megalithic statuary monuments — in the form of classical Deer stones of different types mainly in the East of the Kazakh steppe in the foothill regions of Altai; and also in the form of statuary anthropomorphic sculptures — *balbals* — in the steppe regions, up to the early Sarmatian sanctuary of Bayte III on the Ustyurt Plateau (Mangyshlak Peninsula, Caspian Sea) in the West of Kazakhstan.

The priority in nomadic societies of the verbal and visual (pictorial) communicative tradition, as opposed to the written one, is also explained by the mobile way of everyday life, despite the fact that quite complex examples of sign communication already existed. Thus, the writing of the Early nomads (the Issyk script) is recorded in the Saka monuments of Zhetysu — on the bottom of a silver bowl from the Issyk burial mound [2, 3], primitive signs of communication appear on objects from the Begazy-Dandybayev proto-city Kent.

### *Research methods*

To analyze and copy images, was used a method for processing digital photographs, recognition and 3D computer modeling of images. This method is used along with other traditional methods of archaeological research used for dating, classification and typology of artifacts, searching for systemic analogies and determining the cultural affiliation of the objects under study.

In addition, we classify pictorial, figurative (statuary), ornamental and megalithic traditions in space and time as pictorial, visual communications associated with the identity of their authors, according to the postulates of communication theory. These visual traditions have become an important means of internal and external activity of local groups, which are recorded by archaeological methods in the form of identified archaeological cultures and cultural-historical communities. They have become a reliable indicator of the self-

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identification of these communities (clans), and their study and analysis make it possible to clarify many controversial issues of ethnocultural history.

This study also uses the method of scientific reconstruction, computer modeling, based on a comprehensive analysis of materials and ancient technologies, developed in the restoration laboratory *Kyrym's Island* and protected by Copyright Certificates of the Republic of Kazakhstan [4].

### Results

The Rock Art of Early nomads in the Kazakh steppes (contrast to the southern foothills) is very rare, in comparison with the petroglyphs of the Bronze Age, well known in other synchronous pictorial monuments of Eurasia, or similar representative series of Saka petroglyphs of the same period in Sayan-Altai or Xinjiang [5–10]. Some researchers explain this by the lithological conditions of the Kazakh Uplands, when the flat and smooth surfaces of rocks suitable for applying images were already occupied by petroglyphs of the Bronze Age.

In addition, the environmental (climatic) factor played a significant role. For the population of Central Kazakhstan in the early Saka period there were fewer opportunities for conducting complex forms of economy and the established rhythms of animal husbandry in a certain way influenced the culture as a whole and ancient art [11; 55]. Indeed, there were clearly not enough convenient stone slabs — surfaces located in the right places of the steppe for ancient artists at that time in comparison with the foothill and mountainous southern regions, to which they were forced to migrate from the steppe to the *zhailau* — to the fertile highland valleys, including because the climate in the steppe became more arid and already sharply continental. As a result of these processes, the clans — the bearers of this pictorial tradition were forced to leave the steppe for new, water- and grass-rich nomadic camps (*zhailau*) in the southern and eastern foothill and mountainous regions bordering Saryarka: Tarbagatai, Zhetysu, in the foothills of the Zailiysky Alatau, or further and further to the West — in the foothills of the Urals, mastering new steppe spaces in search of a better life for themselves and succulent feed for their domestic animals.

Significant changes in the iconography of old images of the Bronze Age in this period and stratigraphic observations allow to confidently speak about the formation of the early stage and some canons of the emerging Scythian-Saka animal style in the pictorial monuments of Saryarka, Tarbagatai and Zhetysu, to attribute this region to one of the centers of the emergence of the Scythian-Saka animal style. This was specifically reflected in the iconography and repertoire of local petroglyphs and the artistic creativity of the aboriginal population.

The species composition of animals depicted on the rocks of Saryarka in the Scythian-Saka style is limited and is presented mainly in a naturalistic and partly in an abstract, very early manner. The Scythian-Saka pictorial tradition is associated with the third layer of images identified in the Baikonur petroglyphs by the stratigraphic method, which is represented by animals in the already formed Scythian-Saka animal style, whose legs are bent to the body, and the animals themselves are depicted in a dynamic pose [12; 15].

The image of a deer with a unique interpretation of the muzzle in the form of a bird's beak from Terekty Aulie is also attributed to this layer [13; 105, fig. 34]; a horse in a mask and with a horn on its head (Konyrzhon, surface 5); various predators; saigas; antelopes; wild boars and scenes of predators attacking a bull — scenes of torment (Baikonur III, surface 16). Also dating is the scene with two opposite camels (Baikonur II, surface 3), which finds direct analogies with the Sarmatian plaque from the burial ground Pyatimary I with a similar plot and absolutely coincides with the same scene on the rocks of the Karatau ridge [14; 209, fig. 108], [15; 4–52, fig. 14].

The repertoire of the Scythian-Saka pictorial tradition of Saryarka widely includes images of predatory animals, wild boars, fantastic predators, as well as deer with branched horns, mountain sheep, argali, and scenes of torment, typical for that time.

The Konyrzhon petroglyphs (Fig. 1) present a unique image of a horse in a ritual mask with horns on its head [16], similar to the Saka horse burials found in the Berel mounds in the Kazakh Altai [17], in the Pazyryk and Tuekty mounds [18], [19; 4].



Fig. 1. 1 — Central Kazakhstan. Saryarka. Besoba plain. Image of a horse in a horned mask. Konyrzhon Petroglyphs. General view of the surface with petroglyphs and details. Photo by the author. 2 — Eastern Kazakhstan. Berel. Reconstructions by Kyrym Altynbekov [4].

Similar petroglyphs of horses with horns were found on the southern border of the Kazakh Upland, in the Chu-Ili Mountains, on the territory of the Zhambyl region, in the Ankeldy [20; 86-87] in combination with the image of a quadriga chariot (Fig. 2).



Fig. 2. Southern Kazakhstan. Ankeldy Petroglyphs. General view of the surface with *horned* horse and quadriga. Photo by the author.

A horse in a mask with horns, depicted on a rock in the vicinity of the village of Besoba, similar to the horses found buried in the Altai burial mounds of the Pazyryk period (the burial grounds of Berel, Pazyryk, Tuekta, etc.) is a striking fact proving the transformation of the former images of the Bronze Age and the formation of a new mythology and traditions. The canon of the image, be it a totem animal or a scene, a style or a chosen plot, and in this case — the image of a horse in a ritual mask, begins to acquire at this time a new regulatory and obvious magical power. The above-mentioned third layer of Baikonur petroglyphs, identified on the basis of stratigraphic observations, fully corresponds to the new canons of the Scythian-Saka animal style, new realities in society and is clearly associated with the period of the second and third waves of trans-continental migration of Early nomads, dating back to the 8th–6th cent. BC [21–23].

The new pictorial tradition associated with the clans of the Yuezhi, direct, in our opinion, descendants of the Tokhars, identified within the final stage of the existence of the Scythian-Saka animal style, testifies to a profound transformation and artistic rethinking of old images and the birth of new realities and cults in the steppe [24; 109–125; 20]. Despite the fact that the images and legends of the distant ancestors of the Yuezhi — the Tokhars are carefully preserved and processed by their descendants in the early nomadic environment, finding their new embodiment in the pictorial monuments of Kazakhstan of this period.

The new period in the history of the Early nomads and their art is undoubtedly associated with the waves of migration to these lands starting from the 4th century BC other elite clans — the Savirs-Huns-Xiongnu, who initiated a new tectonic shift, led to another movement of all the aboriginal inhabitants of the steppe and contributed to the formation of Korgantas-type monuments here [25; 179–191] and the probable appearance of bearers of the unique pictorial style of the Yuezhi in rock and applied art, and also led to the creation of new unions and associations of nomads within the framework of the global *Great Migration of Peoples*. Gradually, these changes led to the strengthening and rise of the Western Turkic clans and the formation of a new, Turkic pictorial tradition.

Local nomadic clans developed a megalithic statue tradition in their societies, accumulating local folklore and pictorial experience. As a result, it began to acquire new forms over time — known as Deer stones (Fig. 3), menhirs, kulpytases, koytases or *stone women-balbals* [26].





Fig. 3. Eastern Kazakhstan. Deer stones. Zhartas and Oishilik [13; 44–46].

The movement of Deer stones and statuary sculptures recorded by archaeologists in the Era of Early nomads from East to West, from Ordos and Mongolia to the Black Sea steppes, as an integral and important part — the animal style in the *Scythian triad* is considered by many researchers as evidence of the origin of the Scythians from the depths of Central Asia (Dzungaria) and, accordingly, was called *the Dzungarian hypothesis* [20], [27; 171–193], [28–29], [30–31], [32; 133–139].

The number of such monuments already amounts to several hundred and they are territorially located in the steppe regions of Northern China, Mongolia, the foothills of the Sayan-Altai and in the eastern limits of Saryarka. The Karasuk dating of these stones does not raise any particular doubts among researchers, since the status belts with a sword and weapons suspended from them depicted on them find exact analogies in well-dated archaeological materials of the Karasuk culture [33–35]. This type of pictorial sources can be considered as a kind of ethnic indicator.

The geographical distribution of such anthropomorphic steles far to the West of the continent maps the advancement of the bearers of this tradition themselves [36; 138–180], [37; 160–166]. There have been numerous attempts to classify the Deer stones of Central Asia [34], [38], [39; 125–127], [40–42], [43; 99–105].

Two original traditions of their production have been identified, including the Mongolian-Transbaikal and Sayan-Altai [36; 165–173] and the original regions of their origin have been determined, from where they began to spread to the West of the continent and to Saryarka [12; 288–295]; [27; 171–193]. The study of the origins of this tradition led to the conclusion about the significant iconographic similarity between the Chemurchek statues and the Scythian anthropomorphs [32, 44–45].

The analysis of the military attributes and decorations depicted on the Deer stones revealed many similarities during the comparison of the Yuhuangmiao burial rite with the images on the Deer stones of the Mongol-Transbaikal type, originating from the Uushkiin-uver area on the left bank of the Mongolian Muren River [33], [46–47], [48; 426–427], [49].

In the ears of the warriors from Yuhuangmiao, as well as on these Deer stones, ring-shaped earrings characteristic of the Transbaikal materials were recorded. At the same time, turquoise bead pendants were attached to them, which are not found in the cultures of Southern Siberia and have not yet been found in Mongolia [37; 162], [40; 107]. On the necks of warriors there were necklaces of beads, usually not falling

below the collarbones. There were also pectorals or neck plaques in the form of a horse or a tiger that replaced them [33; 82–48, 426].

In addition, the set and arrangement of weapons characteristic of the early stages of Yuhuangmiao completely coincide: axes (klevtsy, celts) were on the right, and daggers on the left; daggers and knives were in pairs; gorytes (quivers) were often found together with axes. An analysis of weapons in burials and on Deer stones led to the conclusion that among the founders of the Yuhuangmiao culture there was a significant number of people from the nomadic environment of the eastern part of Mongolia and Transbaikalia, where Deer stones of the Mongolian-Transbaikal type and northern three-sided-three-bladed arrowheads were widespread.

Let's also add the striking repetition of images of weapons of the previously identified chariot armament complex on the entire series of known Deer stones, and especially specific chariot belt plaques in the form of double hooks, analogies to which are known precisely in the Karasuk graves, where they were found on the belts of buried charioteers *in situ* [12, 30, 35, 38, 50–54].

Regarding the typology of the considered Deer stones of the Mongol-Transbaikal type, the collection of sculptures from the Uushkin-uver area is also a reference [33; 78–83]. It is quite obvious that typologically, this series is distinguished by Deer stones made of granite blocks, strict geometric shapes with images applied to their edges, which compositionally, by images strictly located in specific zones, corresponding to the head and ears of a person, decorated with earrings, by pectoral necklaces or a belt with different types of weapons suspended from it, sometimes with a shield, symbolize the human figure quite abstractly.

At the same time, this complex also contains a completely realistic, statuesque sculpture of a person (stele № . 14), whose head is designed as a sculptural portrait — a relief elongated face, with wide and strongly protruding cheekbones, powerful, heavy eyebrows and a long, narrow nose. The sharply outlined lips protrude forward, the ears are conveyed by a relief ridge with earrings hanging from them [33; 82–83], [34; 78–84].

Field studies revealed new steles buried here, confirmed the ritual nature of the stone structures erected around them, rare finds and special catacombs, and most importantly, proved the assumption about the use of these complexes as cenotaphs erected in memory of warriors who died in foreign lands. In a number of cases, ritual burials of the statues themselves were discovered here, replacing and symbolizing these deceased warriors [54; 90–91].

In general, it was the Karasuk-type tribes and their derivatives that actively developed the statuary megalithic tradition of installing anthropomorphic stone sculptures of these two types: realistic statuary and stylized anthropomorphic, Deer stones, peculiar cult cenotaphs — complexes of veneration of warrior-charioteers — *the ancestors-aruakhs*. The idea of these complexes as cenotaphs, already expressed by researchers, obviously most closely corresponds to historical reality [54; 82–92].

Later, during the time of the Early nomads, and in the Turkic period, such statuary monuments performed an important function of commemorating and venerating their ancestors, including those who died during long and, judging by everything, numerous military campaigns of their noble warrior-leaders.

In recent years, manifestations of this megalithic statuary tradition have been increasingly found in the steppe expanses of the Kazakh steppe, precisely in the two lines of development mentioned above. In the steppe foothills of Altai, in Tarbagatai, near the villages of Zhartas and Oishilik, classical Deer stones of a stylized anthropomorphic type with an image of a charioteer's belt plaque were discovered [13; 44–46], [27; 171–179], and in the Tasmola monuments, steles (menhirs) are known, found in the embankments of burial mounds of the early stage (Nurken 2, Taldy 2, Tandayly 2). Tasmolinsky burial mound altars, sculptures, cult stones in the form of menhirs and steles are genetically linked to the monuments of the preceding Begazy-Dandybaev culture of Central Kazakhstan [55; 35].

In Saryarka, there are also about 20 sculptures of Early nomads of the statuary-realistic type; another six such statuary sculptures have been published [56; 7–16], [57], [58; 372–375].

Now we can say that the Saryarka stone sculptures are very close to the iconography of some Chemurchek sculptures and sculptures from the Mangyshlak early Sarmatian sanctuary of Bayte III in a special manner of depicting rounded eyes, mouth and head. These sculptures clearly testify to the high status of the ancestors embodied in them. And this is a fact of their obvious belonging to the single centuries-old statuary tradition considered here, which later continued in the Turkic period. As a result of a detailed study of the iconography of these sculptures, it turns out that one of the important features of the statuary sculptures of Early nomads is the presence of a peculiar hairstyle with *a cone-shaped protrusion*, comparable to a forelock [57; 58].

In the culture of nomadic peoples, this was a common phenomenon. For example, the Kazakhs are known for such hairstyle features as *keqil*, when a strand of hair left on the head falls forward, onto the forehead, and *aydar* — a longer strand of hair falling back, onto the back of the head or to the side. At the same time, *aydar* could be braided, decorated with stones, pieces of colored fabric and, according to folklore, corresponded to the status of noble people in Kazakh society [55; 35].

Thus, initially, within the framework of the Mongolian-Transbaikalian type of Deer stones identified and supported by many researchers, two lines of development are distinguished: abstract-conventional, most fully corresponding to the canons of the animal style, from which menhirs, kulpytases, various types of memorial steles, often without any identification marks, and statuary-realistic, from which statuary relief monuments began to develop in the steppe at this new stage — stone anthropomorphic sculptures (*balbals*). Perhaps such a division of Deer stones into two types testifies to the social status of the hero embodied in it — statuary sculptures were erected exclusively in memory of the most outstanding leaders — the ancestor leaders of these clans.

### *Discussion*

We share the point of view on the origin of the animal style from the Karasuk environment [41; 132–136]. It was during this period that the applied art of the Early nomads was enriched by the artistic achievements of previous societies, including Rock Art, and actively interacted with the Yin and Zhou pictorial traditions, and by the 8th cent. BC it had taken its classical form. The earliest examples of this art are presented in the finds from the Arzhan I mound, possibly dating to the 9th cent. BC [59] based on the stylistic features of the depiction of deer in the so-called *on tiptoe or on the tips of their hooves* pose and with a protrusion on the withers. However, such dating remains controversial.

In Kazakhstani historiography, the question of the origin, distribution and sources of the art of the Scythians and Saka and the so-called *animal style* continues to be relevant. There is an assumption that products from Iranian Luristan influenced this art [60–62]. The origins of animal decor, which find parallels in the steppes of Kazakhstan, go far to the West and East of continent. Abundantly decorated metal, stone or horn (bone) objects have been known since the times of primitiveness, early urban civilization and states in the Middle East. Finds of valuable metal objects with a pronounced symbolic load in cult, temple complexes of the Middle East, in the burials of the elite indicate the social and symbolic aspect of these finds, emphasizing the function of a public leader as a guarantor of well-being and public order, an organizer of rituals and all the most important ceremonies in society.

Konstantin Chugunov suggested that in the area of the Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC) a synthesis of the cultures of sedentary farmers and livestock breeders of the Great Steppe arose as early as the middle of the 2nd mill. BC, which led to the emergence of the animal style in the art of the Early nomads [63; 246]. Supporters of the Central Asian' concept admit a significant influence of the artistic traditions of the civilizations of the Ancient East on the steppe art. This hypothesis also suggests the functioning of earlier transcontinental contacts, which could have been a conductor of these traditions. Population migrations, long-distance movements of militarized communities in the transitional period Late Bronze Age — Early Iron Age, are reflected in the symbolism of chariot and horse harnesses, as well as staffs and other ritual objects, displaying the nature of the complex historical and ethnocultural situation in the Eurasian steppe.

On the other hand, many researchers agree with the hypothesis that the Scythian-Saka animal style originated in the regions of Ordos, Inner Mongolia, and the steppes bordering the Great Chinese Plain [41], [44; 122–131], [64; 62–67], [65; 183, 184], [66], etc. and from where it began to spread along with nomadic clans to the West and South of the continent as an important component of the famous *Scythian triad*.

Scythian-type cultures, recently studied in the territory of western and northern China, are considered by many researchers as an example of the origin of the art of the animal style of Early nomads [44; 122–131], [49]. The earliest materials of these monuments mainly date back to the 9-8th cent. BC and are located to the northeast of the bend of the Yellow River, in Hebei Province and in Chinese historiography are associated with the mountain Rong (Shan Rong). Regardless of which of the proposed hypotheses of the origin of the animal style turns out to be true, it is obvious that the territory of Kazakhstan is key to clarifying this issue and local finds are of great importance in the formation of the pictorial tradition of early nomads.

At the same time, we also assume a polycentric model of the emergence of this style, since its bearers and keepers, the leaders or priests-shamans, who constituted the elite of their clans, who mastered the features of iconography and were initiated into the mystery of its canons. They were important members of the advanced and developed in all respects communities (collectives) of local steppe nomads and were quite ca-

pable of moving quickly in space and subjugating less developed steppe societies, planting in their midst their characteristic artistic canons and mythological ideas as a way of influencing the conquered society and already in new places to create local centers of development of this style.

Such innovations turned out to be understandable to the aboriginal population and obviously did not fundamentally contradict their own mythological ideas, but only required minor adjustments and corrections. It is precisely this feature that is associated with such a rapid, by historical standards, spread of the canons of the animal style throughout the western part of the steppe Eurasia and numerous renovations and corrections of the petroglyphs of the Bronze Age on the rocks in the Asian part of the continent.

Undoubtedly, this was a fairly long-term process, mobile and lengthy, which directly depended on the specific routes of the back-and-forth advancement of some clans of Early nomads to the West and South. In new places and nomadic camps, as a result of active contacts with the local population (in cases where it was not assimilated and was not forced out of the captured territory), a natural transformation and development of the pictorial tradition took place — a local center of its formation arose, which independently developed with its own characteristics in specific regions.

This model does not at all contradict the presence of a single center from which the process was initially initiated. Indeed, this style and the pictorial tradition itself could only have emerged in a place, in an environment and a society where two important conditions were successfully combined: highly developed and traditional skills of artistic wood, stone, bone carving and highly developed metalworking, namely, exquisite bronze casting in stone molds of complex configurations and small parts with a significant content of tin (or lead, or silver or other impurities) as a ligature to increase the fluidity of the metal, and where the society had developed and stable pictorial communications, traditional and complex mythological ideas about specific, sometimes fantastic, images of animals, possible totems — the main motifs of the Scythian-Saka animal style.

But very soon new regional centers for the development of this tradition appeared, which is associated with obvious significant multidirectional and cyclical population movements. In these new centers, the canons of the animal style were creatively developed and reworked according to their own local pictorial traditions and mythological ideas based on stable mythological ideas and paradigms of the local population. Remarkable in this regard is the striking transformation of the main elements of the Indo-European myth of the creation of man and its pictorial series (narrative) with the main images from the mythology of the Rong: a deer, a wolf (or a dog) and some kind of fantastic creature — a curled up predator with the features of both a wolf and a dragon [28–30]; [67; 80–87].

The classical stage in the pictorial tradition under consideration is associated with monuments such as Mayemir and Kelermes and already by the middle of the 7th cent. BC the Scythian-Saka animal style in the art of Early nomads spread in a fairly canonized form and as part of the Scythian triad far to the West and South across the steppe expanses of the Eurasian continent both in the form of highly artistic elite objects — jewelry, ritual vessels and richly decorated weapons, harness, and in the form of megalithic pictorial monuments — rock carvings, Deer stones of various types and statuary anthropomorphic sculptures.

Scythian-type cultures, recently studied in the territory of western and northern China, are considered by many researchers as an example of the origin of the art of the animal style of Early nomads [44; 49]. The earliest materials of these monuments mainly date back to the 8th century BC and are located to the northeast of the bend of the Yellow River, in Hebei Province and in Chinese historiography are associated with the Mountain Rong (Shan-Rong) as well.

### *Conclusions*

Speaking about the cultural and historical situation in Central and Middle Asia, in the steppe Eurasia at the end of the 2nd — beginning of the 1st mill. BC, experts associate the emergence of the Begazy-Dandybaev culture (BDC) phenomenon in Kazakhstan with the migrations of the Karasukoid type population, whose achievements included mastering the techniques of sleeve bronze casting with tin as an additive, the use of battle chariots, etc. Perhaps these tribes are associated with the later Cimmerians and Tours [12; 332], [30], [31].

The result of complex ethnocultural processes was a period of stabilization: the formation of the Scythian, Saka and Tagar cultures [12; 356-357]. The area of BDC includes the territory of the Kazakh steppe (possibly the western spurs of Altai, Zhetysu and the Eastern Aral Sea region) and is perceived as a cultural community of the population of the Final Bronze Age. The culture was based on special type of livestock farming and the development of non-ferrous metal deposits; militarized elite emerged in the society, clans of



blood relatives. The active and effective use of riding horses and battle chariots, the advanced innovations of this period, ensured “the security of the territory and trade routes along which caravans with metal products and other goods received in exchange from remote regions” [68; 458-459, 460-461].

The Begazy-Dandybayev culture is probably associated with the functioning of the so-called *Great Tin Route* in the second half of the 2nd mill. BC. The bearers of the Great Tin Route on the territory of modern Kazakhstan, Altai and Southern Siberia controlled the extraction and export of tin from Kazakh deposits to the west in two directions (through the Middle Urals to the Volga-Kama region and south of the Urals through the Volga steppe region towards the Dnieper). The Andronovo tribes moved along the same trans-Eurasian *steppe corridor* to the West [69] and from the Kazakh steppe to the East, to the territory of the Great Chinese Plain and back [30; 529].

Kazakhstani archaeologists emphasize the proto-urban character of the BDC, with powerful settlements such as Kent or Myrzhik in Saryarka, with developed social differentiation of society, advanced metallurgy and with multidirectional active cultural-historical, trade contacts with large synchronous centers in the West, East and South of Eurasia [70, 71]. The origin of this culture, in which the mass *-folk* component and the purely *elite one* was clearly distinguished, based on the clans — bearers of the traditions of the trans-Eurasian community of multi-roller ceramics cultures, which spread far to the West, on the Karasuk clans from the East (northeast) and on the Southern clans, bearers of the culture of the Bactrian-Margiana Archaeological Complex (BMAC), which disintegrated at that time. In general, the movement of the BDC carriers from Central Kazakhstan to the Irtysh region and the western foothills of Altai at the end of the 2nd mill. BC and the wave of migrants from the interior regions of Central Asia at the beginning of the 1st mill. BC to Kazakhstan and Tuva are reconstructed [22], [23], [68; 461–473], [72–74].

In the second half of the 8th cent. BC, a significant number of carriers of Kazakhstani traditions moved to Tuva, which is confirmed by the spread of tin bronzes from Central and Eastern Kazakhstan; during this period, nomadism was formed throughout the territory of Kazakhstan [21], [22], [23; 66]. Thus, for the territory of modern Kazakhstan and Sayan-Altai, the Begazy-Dandybayev and Central Asian components played a decisive role in the formation of early nomadic cultures [68; 470, 476], with undoubted close contacts of the BDC with the steppe western population of the community of the cultures of multi-roller ceramics of western Eurasia and the northern regions of China.

As for the territory of Eastern Europe, at the beginning of the 8th cent. BC, a significant influx of population from the East is assumed, which actively participated in the formation of local pre-Scythian antiquities and archaeological cultures. The emergence of bearers of new traditions in the Black Sea region in the form of two successive migrations associated with the movements of nomads caused by environmental changes in the eastern regions of the Steppe Belt of the continent [12; 329-330], [21], [30], [63], [66], [68], [75]. The spread of the most advanced ideas and innovations is associated with the movement of Iranian-speaking horsemen from the Kazakh steppes to the territory of the Iranian Plateau at the end of the 2nd mill. BC.

The military campaigns of Early nomads in Western Asia recorded in written sources of the second half of the 8th cent. BC clearly confirm the active contacts of the steppe dwellers with the states of Western Asia and Near East, which facilitated the exchange of goods, art objects, and ideas, which is convincingly confirmed by the parallels identified in the art of Early nomads (for example, the Saka of Zhetysu or the Pazyryk culture of Altai), as well as by finds of objects of Western Asian origin in the burial mounds of Sarmatian tribes in the territory of modern Kazakhstan.

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## Қазақ даласындағы аң стилінің пайда болуы туралы

Скиф-сақ аң стилі, оның таңғажайып, фантазмагориялық бейнелері және олардың Еуразия континентінің кең аумағындағы синхронды ескерткіштерде аумақтық таралуы — осы кезеңдегі ерте көшпенділердің дамыған трансконтинентальды бейнелеу және шын мәнінде бейнелі және көркем байланыстарының айқын дәлелі. Бұл стильдің пайда болу құбылысы және оның географиялық таралуы, бейнелер мен коммуникативтік хабарламалардың түсіндірілуі қазақстандық ескерткіштерде де өз бастауын табады, яғни қола дәуірінің жергілікті бейнелеу дәстүрлерінде өзінің сабақтастығын, өзіндік ерекшелігін және бастауын айқын көрсетеді.

*Кілт сөздер:* петроглифтер, мүсіндік ескерткіштер, бұғы тастары, мүйізді бетперде киген аттар, шан-жундар, қасқыр-айдаһар, Бетпақдала, қарасулық бейнелеу дәстүрі, Бегазы-Дәндібай мәдениеті.

## О происхождении звериного стиля в Казахской степи

Скифо-сакский звериный стиль, его причудливые, фантазмагоричные образы и территориальное распространение в синхронных памятниках на огромной территории Евразийского континента — яркое свидетельство развитых трансконтинентальных изобразительных, а по сути — знаковых и образных коммуникаций ранних кочевников в этот период. Феномен происхождения этого стиля и его географическое распространение, расшифровка образов и коммуникативных посланий, очевидно, берут свое начало в казахстанских памятниках, ярко демонстрируя преемственность, своеобразие и истоки в местных изобразительных традициях эпохи бронзы.

*Ключевые слова:* петроглифы, статуарные изваяния, оленные камни, кони в масках с рогами, шаньжуны, волко-драконы, Бетпақдала, карасукская изобразительная традиция, бегазы-дандыбаевская культура.

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