

FROZEN TOMBS OF SIBERIA: THE PAZYRYK BURIALS OF IRON AGE HORSEMEN. By *Sergei I. Rudenko*. Translated, with a preface, by *M. W. Thompson*. Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970. xxxvi, 340 pp. 33 color, 147 black and white plates. \$30.00.

This volume is an English translation of Sergei I. Rudenko's *Kul'tura naseleniia Gornogo Altaia v skifskoe vremia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1953). Here, Rudenko described the barrows at Pazyryk in the Altai Mountains of South Siberia excavated by him in 1929, 1947–48, and 1949. The English version has been made from a text corrected by Rudenko and is revised to include a new introduction by the author, an appended inventory of each Pazyryk barrow with plate numbers of illustrated finds, and selected additional bibliography, prepared by the translator, of references in English, French, and German. Although the Altai burials have been discussed in summary fashion in English-language publications, Rudenko's complete excavation reports were previously not accessible except to readers of Russian. This volume has partly remedied that situation, and perhaps we may anticipate a translation of Rudenko's *Kul'tura naseleniia Tsentral'nogo Altaia v skifskoe vremia* (Moscow and Leningrad, 1960), which reported his excavations of barrows in the Central Altai. Together the two volumes form a record of the native nomadic cultures of the Altai Mountains from the sixth through fourth century B.C., on the basis of the spectacular discoveries of this eminent Russian archaeologist.

Among the Pazyryk barrows were the graves of rulers of the nomadic tribes inhabiting the mountain steppes of the Altai about the middle of the first millennium B.C. Owing to the construction of the barrows and the climatic conditions, the contents of the tombs were permanently refrigerated. Even though the graves had been robbed in antiquity, the finds are surely unparalleled in the variety of materials. Wood objects, leather, fur, textiles, carpets, even the embalmed bodies of the tomb occupants and the carcasses of slain horses buried near the graves—all were preserved. Thus the material culture of these people can be studied in great detail in its own right, or in relation to other nomadic tribes of the Eurasian steppes and to the high civilizations of the Near East and China.

In the first section the physical geography and vegetation of the mountain steppes of the Altai are described in some detail, the freezing of the barrows is discussed, and a detailed analysis of the barrows is given; a chapter on the physical types of the population is also included. The second part treats the economy and way of life mainly as deduced from the archaeological remains, the varieties of clothing and personal adornment, horses and horse gear, and techniques of working various materials. The third part deals with evidence of social structure, based partly on archaeological remains and partly on ancient writings; despite the ideological framework, the author's conclusions seem sound and the evidence is interpreted no further than is justified. Descriptions of the art and religious customs are found in this section. The last chapter is concerned with the chronology established by comparative dating of finds from the barrows. In his new introduction Rudenko supplements his earlier conclusions with C14 dates and dendrochronology, to reinforce his suggestion that the fifth century B.C. was the period of these burials. Some Soviet scholars disagree with Rudenko and suggest later dates, in some cases as late as the time of the Huns. But although the last word has yet to be said on the question of Altai chronology, a time span in the fifth and

fourth centuries B.C. agrees with the results of scientific analyses and cross-cultural comparisons of various finds. That the period of the Pazyryk barrows might have lasted into the fourth century B.C. is indicated by some parallels with Greek art, specifically the forms of griffins. (Cf. Rudenko, pl. 141, and A. Roes, "Achaemenid Influence upon Egyptian and Nomad Art," *Artibus Asiae*, 15, parts 1-2 [Ascona, 1952], pp. 26-27.)

The picture that emerges from Rudenko's writings is that of a tribe of pastoral nomads native to the mountain steppes of South Siberia, not necessarily related linguistically or ethnically to other nomadic tribes inhabiting the Eurasian steppes, but sharing a common steppe culture and way of life. The best known of these steppe nomads are of course the Scythians of the Pontic region, and it is possible to speak of a Scythian culture practiced by many unrelated steppe tribes.

The translator's preface is in some cases oversimplified in the interpretation of Rudenko and the subject in general. For instance, Thompson says (pp. xxix, xxxi) that Rudenko identified the builders of the Pazyryk barrows as Yue-Chi, and that this "seems feasible." As far as I can tell, Rudenko makes no such definite identification here, although he did in an earlier work (*Kultura naseleniia Tsentral'nogo Altaia*, p. 176). In the book under review he merely associates the Altai tribes with various Chinese tribes (pp. 211, 227). Thompson gives a rudimentary explanation of animal-style art (p. xxx) which does not do justice to the complexities of this problem as discussed by Rudenko or to the wide range of opinions held by other scholars. (For a survey of this subject by a Western scholar, one might read K. Jettmar's *Art of the Steppes* [New York, 1967], chap. 8.) There are also a few instances of proper names not translated from the Russian, as Astiag instead of Astyages (p. 225). Finally, the price of the book seems excessive.

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EARLY CHRISTIAN AND BYZANTINE ART. By *Irmgard Hutter*. Foreword by *Otto Demus*. Universe History of Art Series. New York: Universe Books, 1971. 191 pp. 189 plates (49 in color). \$6.95.

This compact, sturdily bound volume offers a concise, well-illustrated introduction to its topic. The book is part of a new series whose texts are being prepared chiefly by German scholars. The author of this book is a member of the Byzantine Institute, University of Vienna. The quality of the binding, paper, and illustrations is excellent, making the book, printed in Germany, a fine pictorial survey of its topic, which includes architecture as well as the other arts. Careless editing, however, has, for example, divided the Roman Empire in 305 with reference to Honorius, made the synagogue at Dura Europos "one of the oldest places of Christian [*sic*] worship," and allowed Julian to reign from 361 to 383—all of these errors are indexed.

The text is too concise for its intended audience. The unending flood of introductory texts has long since created its own abstract, dehydrated vocabulary and phraseology, which pass, as in a litany, from one author to another, drawing sustenance from present-day economics rather than from direct apprehension of those constituent facts which generated or materially affected the works presented. Successive cryptic "headline" sentences, often filled with unexplained terms, can be interpreted or deciphered by the experienced art historian but will leave the neo-