

wrought metal were used as finials on the four poles bearing the baldachin stretched over the body of a dead prince, and afterwards buried with him in his tomb.

The use of pole-tops was indigenous to the entire Steppe circle. Rostovtzeff believes, however, that they were unknown to the Sarmatians, the successors of the Scythians in Southern Russia (5). But they are found in the Ural (6), in the vicinity of Lake Baikal (unpublished), and, as we shall see, are very numerous at Minussinsk, that is to say in a locality where much was adopted from the Sarmatians.

The most simple form of pole-top is the animal head. In the vicinity of the Black Sea we find, among others, the bird of prey of Ul'ski Aul and the roe of Kelermes (7). An example of the latter left Russia with the Massonneau collection and is now in the Bliss collection. (Pl. V no. 1). It is a typical example of the way in which the Scythians combined stylization with naturalism. The main characteristics are seemingly modeled from life, expressive in form and design, but hardened into formulas. The process by which nature became standardised and was transformed into ornamentation is particularly apparent in the lanceolate drawing of the ears. The Kelermes roe head is treated in exactly this way. The only different detail is the ring below the head from which fluttering ribbons of felt or straw were probably hung. This piece, lacking though it is in archeological data, is placed historically at the beginning of the Scythian period, that is in the VII or VI century because of its artistic character and its identification with a sure discovery.

Although this same object is quite often found in the extreme southeastern sections of the Steppes, yet no specimen from this region can be given a date near to that of the Scythians. Here, the ornamentation of the object borrowed from the Scythians never has a Scythian appearance. As to the decoration of Chinese frontier examples, we must rather turn to the Jenissei valley, at Minussinsk. There, in the Kurgan period, the preference seemed to be above all for the representation on pole-tops of soliped animals. The species that inhabits the mountains has its "true to nature" aspect emphasised, by being placed upon a half-egg shaped base (Pl. III, line no. IV, 2, no. 82) which makes the animal appear to be standing upon a hilltop. The extent to which artists of the Jenissei valley were moved to represent realistically a specific animal is shown in the example from this famous group of excavations (Pl. V no. 2). The body is a rattle. This transformation of animal bodies into rattles was known in the most ancient Scythian art (8). The base, slit in four places, differs from the usual crested type from the Jenissei valley. The head, the most important part, has very distinctly the characteristics of the Saiga antelope, one of the favourite game-animals of southern Siberia. A comparison with the zoological description of this animal will show us how amazing is the accuracy of the artist's percep-