

УДК 739.5; 902/904
ББК 85.125; 63.3(0)31
DOI 10.18688/aa2414-1-1

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Drawing the Beasts: Animal Depiction on Caucasian Bronze Belts

This paper focuses on the representation and imagery of animals depicted on bronze belts from the ancient Caucasus region. These artifacts were primarily created by the local cultures of the Southern Caucasus during the Late Bronze to Early Iron Age, approximately between the 13th and 8th centuries B.C.

The representations of animals have always been a typical pattern within ancient art, albeit with marked differences: Hellenic and later Roman art generally employed animals for enriching a human-centered representations, whereas Near Eastern art primarily focused on a few selected animals — such as the lion and the bulls — or merged part of them for creating fantastic creatures, often with a religious value.

Representing animals, on the contrary, was the main — and often the sole — artistic expression for centuries for the nomadic peoples roaming the Eurasian steppes in the 1st millennium B.C., which resulted in a specific style that has been labeled in 1922 by M. Rostovtzeff [32] as “Animal Style.” He coined the term to define that variegated set of objects, especially metalwork, which decoration was characterized by peculiar representations of animals, and which became one of the distinctive elements of the population of the Eurasian steppes in the 1st millennium B.C. [36]. He elaborated this definition mainly to separate it from the Hellenic-made/inspired objects found within the Scythian burial mounds of Ukraine and southern Russia. Although the label “Animal Style” was initially confined to defining the finds from the northern part of the Black Sea, it was later used to embrace most of the artistic production of the Eurasian steppe. It, therefore, became an essential part of new studies on the antiquities of the Eurasian nomadic peoples.

As archaeological research broadened and intensified in the Soviet Union, it became clear how the nomads of the steppes were the creators of an intense artistic production whose origins had to be found in the earliest finds in the areas of the innermost regions of Central Asia, including the Altai Mountains, Siberian forest-steppe belt, and the Kazakh and Mongolian steppes. Such a broad geographical and chronological range led to a better understanding and definition of the “Animal style,” considered as an expression of the Scythian–Siberian world.

Such a vast amount of evidence was long limited within the academic soviet circles, which produced an incredible number of remarkable studies [2]. Still, decades after the Second World War, extensive studies have spread knowledge of the Scythian–Siberian world and its art in the West [4, 5, 23, 34].

The “Animal Style” is not just a random representation of animal depiction but a complex artistic expression whose distinctive characteristics are manifold. The decorative patterns are based upon a rich combination of specific elements. It favors theriomorphic motifs, real or

fantastic creatures, heraldic scenes, fighting, hunting, and processions but often employs isolated creatures. Animals or their parts are used primarily to decorate bronze objects, incised on their surface, or as protomes to decorate their ending parts.

Notable features involve the transformation of an animal's body, highlighting the extension and elongation of its limbs. This often results in designs that are purely ornamental and highly stylized. Additionally, truncated or partial depictions are employed to suggest the entirety of the animal. Other characteristics include portraying animals in motion, focusing on muscular definition or typical postures, particularly in the case of running deer. Common themes may also include animals engaged in combat or hunting. Furthermore, the artwork frequently fills the entire pictorial field, reflecting a tendency toward *horror vacui*, or the aversion to empty spaces¹.

The “Animal Style” rapidly spread throughout the Eurasian steppes and its frontiers, where it met and partially joined other rich-artistic traditions. One of the areas of such encounter is the Caucasus region, where Scythian-related tribes dwelled from the 7th century onwards [22; 28; 29]. They launched several raids in the Near East from their bases along the northern foothills of the main Caucasus range. They erected large kurgans which rich funerary goods have been partially recovered (e.g. [17], see also the complete survey of evidence in [22]). Therefore, in the Caucasus region, the Scythians interacted not only with the native populations but also with Assyria, Urartu, and the various polities of the Iranian plateau. The results of these encounters were the creation of a peculiar syncretism, which impacted their artistic production. Finds from Scythian kurgans have revealed remarkable metalwork, often in gold, showing influences — and even imports — from Near Eastern cultures [26] and from the native populations, where a rich bronzeworking tradition was present, especially that of the local Koban culture in the northern foothills [31].

The representation of animals was not limited to the 1st millennium B.C. or to the nomadic groups of the Eurasian steppe. During the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, depictions of animals were also found in the Caucasus, though they typically provide a limited range of evidence and show influences from Mesopotamia. From the Late Bronze Age onwards — thus before the Urartian or Scythian appearance in the region in the 8th–7th century B.C. — the whole Caucasus region witnessed several remarkable innovations, from settlement patterns to funerary contexts. One of them also concerned the emergence of a large, documented, and peculiar art, expressed mainly by metalwork².

Relations between Caucasian art with neighboring cultures were first outlined by Hančar [20; 21], who highlighted the similarities with the art of the Iranian region of Luristan [19]. A few decades later, Carter [6, pp. 115–127] and Jettmar [23, pp. 48–50], in their summary of the Eurasian animal style, inserted short contributions of the general features of the art of Caucasian populations, highlighting similarities and differences, although Carter had already pointed out that Caucasian art was not altogether connected to the Asian style, rather affiliated more strongly with Mesopotamian art [6, p. 125].

During the Soviet period and especially in the decades after the Second World War, numerous archaeological projects deeply investigated the Caucasus region, providing an invaluable and enormous amount of evidence [27, pp. 8–176]. It became clear that from the Late Bronze

¹ The literature on the subject is very vast. For recent studies, see [1; 25].

² Despite the richness of the evidence, a detailed and recent study of metallurgical production still needs to be carried out. A good synthesis and additional references are provided by Curtis and Kruszyński [13].

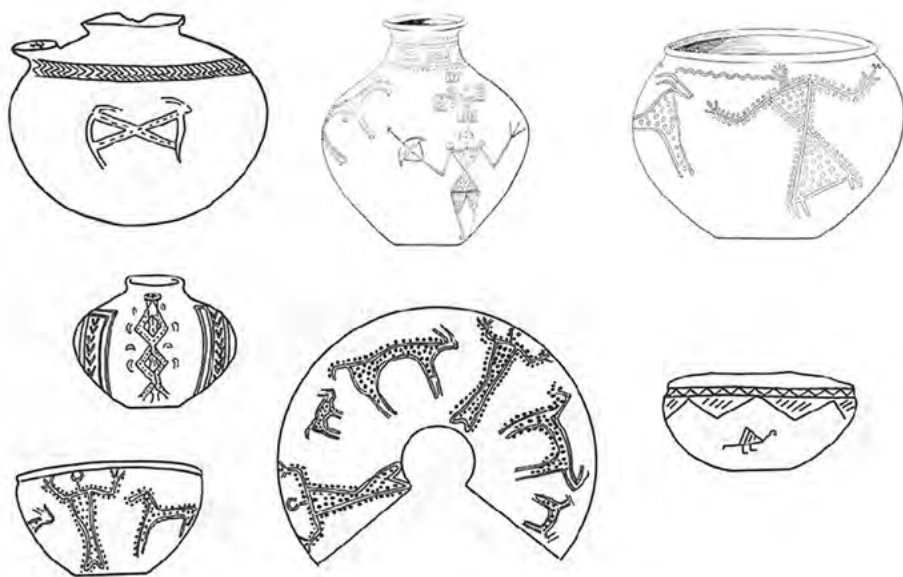


Fig. 1. A: Decoration on pottery from Western Azerbaijan [9, fig. 3]

Age — around the second half of the 2nd millennium — up to the Late Iron Age, thus roughly to the advent of the Achaemenid Empire, the Caucasus region was one of the main bronze-working centers of Western Asia where high-quality metalwork was mass-produced.

The use of precious metals was scarce (as opposed to the rich productions of the Middle Bronze Age), and most objects were made of bronze, where local artisans covered all classes of objects, from weapons to jewelry.

On the contrary, the pottery exhibits few decorations, mainly simple geometric lines engraved on the surface, whether stylized images of animals are uncommon (Fig. 1a). Another interesting source is rock carvings as petroglyphs are attested in several sites throughout the Caucasus, the most important of which is the world-famous Gobustan Rock Art Cultural Landscape in Azerbaijan [16]. They date from the 5th millennium to the Iron Age and portray many figures, including numerous animals like deer, goats, birds, felines, etc. Human figures are also present, often engaged in hunting.

Metalwork, therefore, represented the primary means by which the local population expressed their art. Geometric and figurative designs were used to decorate swords, axes, vases, brooches, buckles, pendants, and many other objects, but the limited available space prevented the representation of complex designs, being the figurative decoration mainly expressed by one animal only or part of it used as terminals (Fig. 1b).

A remarkable and distinguished type of metalwork largely widespread in the Caucasus is metal belts, whose surfaces often bear complex geometric and figurative designs (Ill. 1).

They are made of a single metal sheet, about one–two mm thick and rectangular; the sizes vary depending on the fragments. Regarding height, it may vary from four to twenty cm, with an average of around ten. Determining the actual length is more complicated because few



Fig. 1. B: Metalwork with animal decoration [10, pls. 3, 6, 8]

specimens are entirely preserved. However, based on known examples, estimating an average size between 80 and 90 cm is possible.

They are made of bronze, in which the percentages of other metals alloyed with copper can be highly variable. Two main techniques are used to decorate the belts: engraving and repoussé (Ill. 2). Hundreds of them have been found [7], primarily within funerary contexts, where they were placed on the waist or nearby the deceased (Fig. 2), indicating how they were probably worn in life and perhaps even suggesting the social role of the owner. Tens of them bear intricate figurative decorations.

The present contribution summarizes belt decorations and their expression of animal designs.

The Figures

Figurative representations are usually displaced horizontally along most of the surface of the metal sheet and can be organized usually into one or, rarely, two or three overlapping registers; in other cases, all the figures are depicted chaotically on the surface of the belt (Fig. 3). Geometric patterns are used as borders along the edges and for separating the figurative registers.

The size of the figures is usually the same or with slight differences, and they show the tendency to keep the body proportions; therefore, smaller animals such as snakes and birds are mainly used to fill the space between the main creatures.

The repertoire consists mainly of real animals of the surrounding landscapes; depictions of fantastic creatures are almost absent as artistic influences from Mesopotamia and Urartu are essentially non-existence. This absence further strengthens the independent artistic production of the population of the Caucasus.

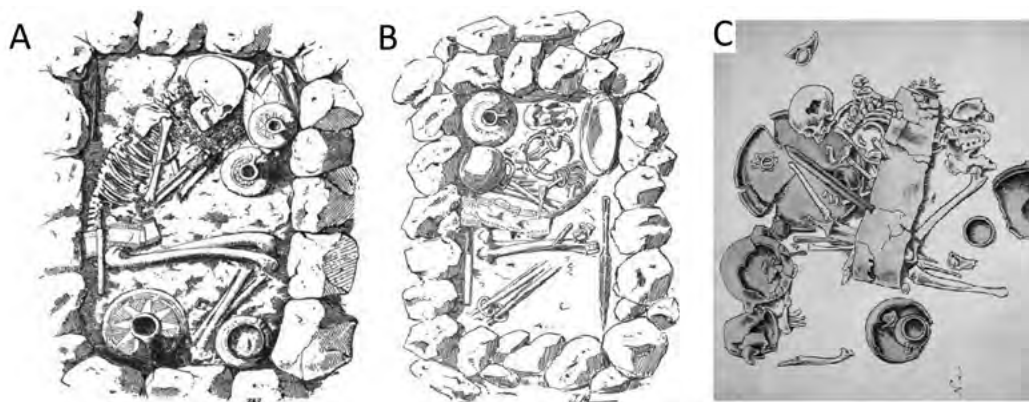


Fig. 2. Graves with metal belts [14, figs. 17, 27; 24, p. 327, fig. 3.1]

All the typical animals of a mountain landscape are portrayed: deer, goats, wolves, felines, birds, snakes, and fishes; moreover, horses and *Bovinae* are also widely depicted, along with minor and more scarce representations of pigs, wild boar, rabbits, peacocks, and other animals. It is interesting to note how most of the main animals of the Caucasus are represented, but the bear is practically the only one not to be portrayed. This follows an interesting trend in the Eurasian world, where the bear is generally barely depicted [18].

The style of depiction is highly variable. Sometimes it shows considerable realism in reproducing an animal's shape and proportions. In contrast, in other cases the subjects are transformed into unnatural forms through the stretching and distortion of limbs, horns, and antlers, but this rarely reaches the levels found in the Scythian–Siberian world, characterized by an extreme elongation of the body. Additionally, in many instances, the animal figures are adorned or filled with ornamental details, primarily geometric motifs such as circles, triangles, ovals, and rosette-like designs, which do not appear to represent any anatomical features but rather enhance the decorative layer.

Animals represent the main figurative pattern but are often part of a complex composition in which human figures are frequently depicted. They usually carry weapons, especially archery bows and quivers, and may be shown as fighting or hunting. In a few cases, the human figure is further sexually characterized through the depiction of the male member; in no known case is a figure unmistakably female.

Scenes

In most of the compositions, it is impossible to identify any specific scene or situation; the figures are placed side by side, overlapping, with no direct interrelationship, nor are they shown in the classic heraldic position. Generally, the animals are not depicted interacting with one another. However, several belts show the figures (primarily animals with few human figures) placed horizontally in a row, as if to express a procession of creatures. In one of these cases, it is tempting to interpret the composition as a ritual/funeral procession [8, pp. 135–137].

Other representations focus on the situation: occasionally, different animals are shown running or fleeing from a hunter, whereas in two cases, deer are illustrated grazing grass or eating tree shoots (Fig. 4e).

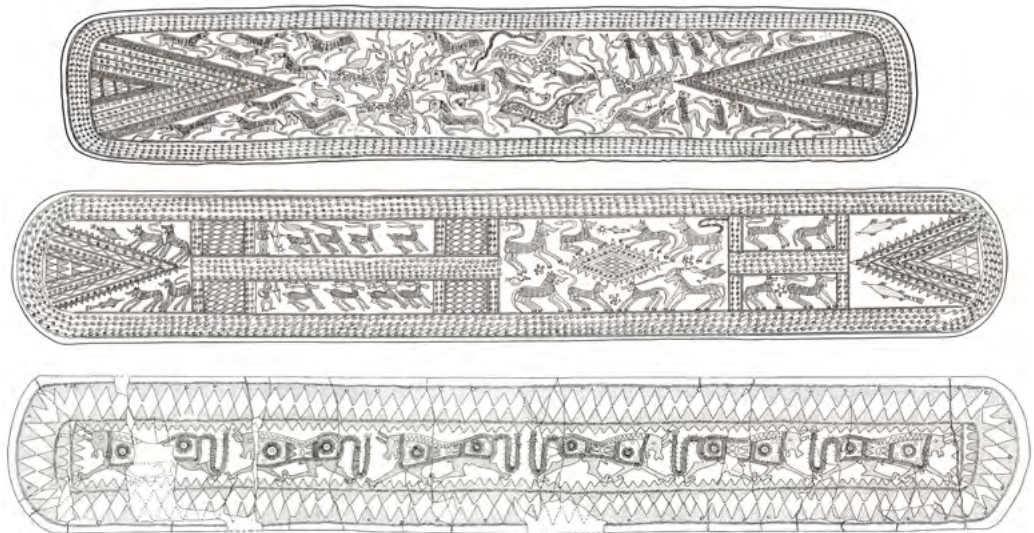


Fig. 3. Examples of metal belts [7: Nabagrebi, p. 221, n. 305; Samtavro, p. 224, n. 315; Tli. p. 213, n. 293]

Scenes of fighting or hunting between animals alone are not depicted, neither fighting scenes between humans and animals. The absence of such scenes, so typical of the nomadic world, is a critical point separating the Caucasian from the Scythian-Siberian style. It is a notable difference since fighting animals are depicted in many different contexts; for example, the fight between a lion and a bull or a lion and a deer/goat is also a recurrent theme in Near Eastern and Iranian art. The struggle between a lion and a griffin against a horned animal, usually a deer or a bull, is also prevalent. Various fighting scenes between animals or human-animals (such as the Master of Animals) are highly depicted in Mesopotamian, Iranian, and Greek³ art but are absent from the Caucasian tradition.

However, a typical common feature between the classic “Animal Style” and the Caucasian one is the representation of a predator: it is usually made with open jaws, marked claws, and a tongue out.

Animals

As already exposed above, the repertoire of animals comprises the typical mountain and forest landscape fauna. There are, however, remarkable differences in animal depictions, their role, and recurrence.

The most important is the deer, which comprises a large family of even-toed ruminants equipped with antlers and bony structures that are renewed annually. Antlers are generally only grown by males, but in the case of reindeer, this trait may also occur in females. The characteristic shape of their antlers may identify different species; since these are usually confined to males, the identification of female animals is problematic. The landscape of the Caucasus, rich with forests and meadows, offers ideal habitats for deer. It is thus not surprising that they are often depicted on belts; indeed, they are the most frequently depicted animal.

³ Among the vast literature on the subject, see, for example, [12; 35].

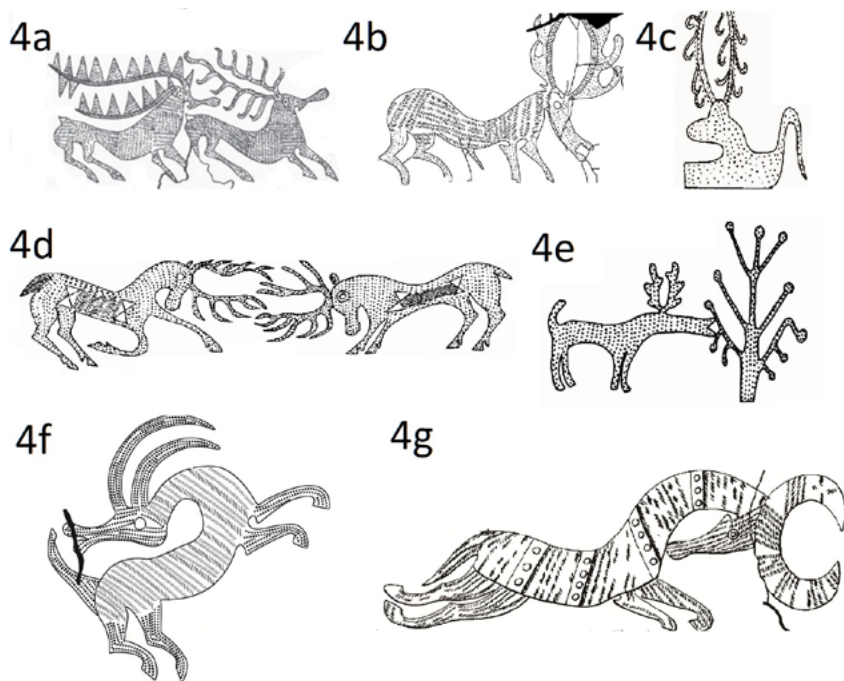


Fig. 4. Examples of animal representations. A: Kalakent; B: Akhtala; C: Lčašen; D: Samtavro; E: Samtavro; F: Mouçî-yéri; G: Lorut [7, p. 47–55]

They are represented differently: alone, arranged in rows, in combat, or while being hunted. Numerous deer species were present in the Caucasus, but it is hard to identify them in depictions, with only few details available to help with identification of some species. The antlers' presence and the shape of an animal's muzzle are the only parameters that may be used to distinguish between different species.

As seen on a belt found in Kalakent, in Western Azerbaijan, where two deer are shown side by side, the craftsman intended to depict two different animals by characterization of their features: the morphology of the body is the same: long muzzle and short tail, the head turned back with the antlers lying parallel to the animal's back (Fig. 4a). It is precisely the latter that permits a clear differentiation between the two kinds of deer. That on the right has a tapered stem from which radiates a series of points; the main beam of the second has the same shape, but the prongs are numerous and much broader, triangular in shape. This convention of portraying the antlers with wide triangular prongs is also seen on other belts.

The common deer or red deer is easily recognizable in a wide range of different belts. However, it stands out for the quality and precision of the artistic depiction of its antlers, with a tapered main stem and a series of tips projecting from it, sometimes rather numerous.

In some rare cases, the presence of some specific feature would suggest the presence of other members of the vast deer family. On a belt from Akhtala, present-day Armenia, a deer is shown with large, slightly curved antlers with three broad points, it has an exceptionally long muzzle which resembles that of a moose (Fig. 4b). The red deer's role in the decorative scheme

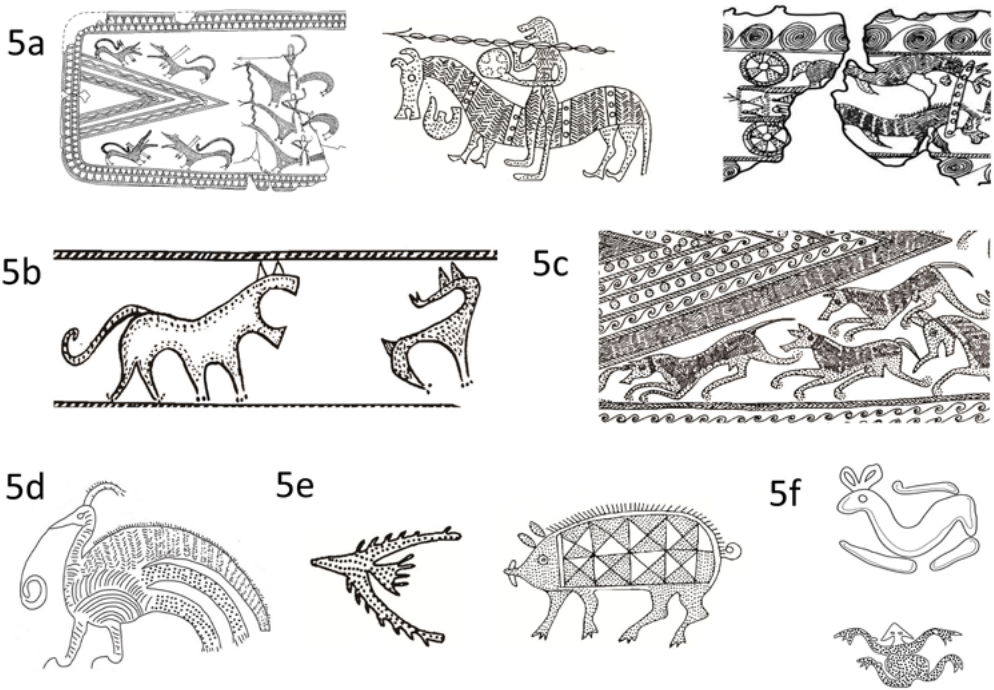


Fig. 5. Examples of animal and human representations. A: Odzun, Astchi blur, Chačbulag [7, p. 70, fig. 103c, p. 68, fig. 100a, p. 81, fig. 130]; B: Astchi blur [7, p. 59, fig. 79]; C: Mtskheta [7, p. 221, n. 305]; D: Kedabek [7, p. 63, fig. 86]; E: Treli, Sagaredžo [7, p. 63, fig. 88a; p. 66, fig. 95c]; F: Kislovodsk, Mingēcaur [7, p. 67, fig. 98]

of the belt varies. Sometimes they are inserted without any obvious purpose or apparent link with the overall decorative system of the belt. In several cases, however, they are part of an animal procession. The craftsman wanted to illustrate the animal's movement or vitality in rare compositions. In two belts from Armenia, the animals are shown at rest (Fig. 4c). A belt found in Georgia features a struggle between two deer where the antlers of the two animals are interlocked in a typical mating season contest (Fig. 4d). In contrast, another from the same necropolis shows an animal eating shoots from a tree (Fig. 4e).

While in the previous examples, there is a certain precision in the portrayal of the animals, in other cases, the representations show a greater degree of stylization. This may involve elongating and transforming body parts, such as limbs, muzzle, and antlers, or constitute a simple sketch synthesizing morphological characteristics.

Another frequently depicted animal is a goat, which representations can be divided into two categories based on the shape of its horns. Animals belonging to the first group may be identified as wild goats or mountain ibex. The horns are long, narrow, and backward-sloping (Fig. 4f). The second group comprises animals with large horns that are not very long and curved into circles, which may extend forwards and backward. The presence of a slender body, with a long neck and muzzle, would still suggest considering them as belonging to the genus *Ovis* (Fig. 4g); thus, they are probably some mouflon or other wild sheep. It is interesting to note that such depictions come from belts found in north-eastern Armenia.

They are generally depicted alone, disconnected from the rest of the decoration. There are no hunting scenes, nor are they shown in association with humans.

Another important animal is a horse, the only non-wild specie to be frequently depicted.

Generally, they have a slender body with short legs, a relatively long neck, two long ears with the points curved towards one another, one eye in profile, and a long snout on which the mouth is shown, sometimes open. Horses are depicted in various situations: standing alone, driving chariots, or being mounted during hunting and warfare scenes (Fig. 5a).

Other interesting representations regard wolves, dogs, and felines. These images, often highly stylized, only sometimes allow easy attribution, as the somatic characters between these species can be similar. However, there are some examples where this differentiation can be established, especially between felines and wolves. A clear representation of both is depicted on a belt from Astchi blur in Armenia. It is possible to make out some graphic conventions used by the artisans to represent the two types. The wolf is portrayed with an elongated snout and pointed ears (Fig. 5b). Other distinguishing features are comprehensive: open jaws with clearly visible teeth and a long raised tail. The feline will be discussed in detail below. Other belts show typical features of depicting wolves: the body is heavily stylized and lengthened, filled with closely-spaced engraved dots; it is also demonstrated with open jaws, and the depiction of claws, teeth, and tongue, and the male member and both eyes are usually positioned to the front. Observing the general pattern of the decorations, it is possible to see how wolves usually appear relatively isolated compared to the other figures. Wolves are not portrayed in packs and not even in the act of attacking humans or animals. It is worth noting that they are often shown being hunted by archers on horseback.

Felines can be discerned by the form of the snout of felines, usually less elongated, and the head, in general, is more compact and squatter in profile. Felines also have a long tail, which extends to the rear and downwards rather than upwards, as in wolves. Some stylized images still present peculiarities, such as ears, teeth, and claws (Fig. 5b).

There are only two representations of a dog. On a belt from Mtskheta in Georgia, the animals are shown running in packs. Their depiction reflects the natural shape and proportions of the animal, with rounded ears and a small-sized tail (Fig. 5c). Another depiction of a dog is on the belt from Georgia, where a puppy is shown together with a human figure.

Birds are also one of the most commonly occurring animals on belts, and, in many respects, they are also particularly complicated to define. The small size of the representations, stylization, a lack of particular attributes, and — above all — the large number of possible species belonging to this group are all variables that make a correct interpretation of the various types represented complicated. They generally have short legs, in many cases three toes, a stocky body, and a small head. Wings are seldom shown; when they are, they are relatively small, and some plumage may be indicated. The tail is also depicted as short but wide and composed of several feathers. The beak is usually small in size. There are some portrays worthy of note. On a belt from Kedabek, Azerbaijan, the plumage on the head and the tail would suggest identifying the bird as a peacock (Fig. 5d). Other birds seem to belong to the stork family. The characteristics of this group are their large size, long feet suitable for walking in shallow water, long and strong necks, and large, sharp beaks. Moreover, there is also a representation of possible birds of prey, as it is depicted with long wings and a specific tail (Fig. 5e).

The depiction of birds on the belts is widespread, but their role is rarely primary. They have been used more as merely decorative elements accompanying the main figurative scene or to

fill empty spaces between the more prominent figures. There are instances where more complex interactions are suggested, as shown by a belt from Sanain [7, p. 201, n. 267], where a bird is depicted seated on the back of a horse.

Fishes, much in the same way as birds, are used solely to outline the main decoration. They are depicted individually, usually near larger animals, but seem to have no connection with them. Given the considerable distance from the sea of the area under consideration, the fish depicted are freshwater species.

Another large-size animal often depicted is harder to identify. It has semicircular horns and a thicker body; the muzzle is more flattened, and the long tail hangs downwards. It is plausible that these are part of the Bovidae family, thus being bulls, cattle, or even a wild bison, as there was, however, also a Caucasian subspecies (*Bison bonasus caucasicus*), extinct in the early 1900s. On a belt from Chodžali, it is clearly shown that the animal is charging a human who seeks protection.

Occasionally, on other belts, there are isolated representations of other animals, such as wild boars, frogs, turtles, and rabbits (Fig. 5f).

Symbolism

Such variety in animal representation is difficult to correctly interpret as bearing some religious meaning. Several scholars have, however, proposed spiritual or magical-symbolic importance of the images represented on the belts. So, human figures have been seen as priestesses, deities, heroes, and gods, and they have been somehow even linked with local and later Caucasian folk [11, p. 358]. Moreover, geometric decorations could also be imbued with symbolic functions: the spiral, the cross, and the guilloche might be solar symbols of fertility or linked to worshipping the sun, fertility, and the sky [15, pp. 123–132].

Furthermore, it is hard to establish if a possible sacred role was covered only by some species rather than by others. Deer, horses, wolves, snakes, and felines are all creatures that fulfill cultic roles in many cultures. Other animals, on the other hand, raise more than one doubt: goats, for example, are widely represented, but it is difficult to find a well-defined cultic role. Even for birds, the situation is ambiguous. The eagle and the griffin can be considered “noble” animals, but for ducks, peacocks, pheasants, crows, and herons, it is more singular to see a religious role. The same goes for many other mammals, such as the pig, the frog, and the rabbit, which do not seem part of some cosmological space.

Therefore, a possible sacred role cannot be hypothesized for any given animal. Indeed, there is a numerical prominence of some species: cervids, goats, horses, and felines are depicted mostly. The deer deserves further thought. Its totemic role as a guide animal or guardian spirit of the forest is universally known. In the world of steppe peoples, it is one of the cornerstones of artistic expression, so well codified in his slender pose, with the head tilted backward and the stage parallel to the back. This subject is perhaps the representation canonical of the Scythian–Siberian world, so widespread that representations of it can be found from Hungary to the Altai [3].

It is interesting to note how a possible sacred role of the deer finds a good parallel in one remarkable and unique discovery. Within a Late Bronze Age kurgan excavated in the mountainous region of western Azerbaijan [8], a male deceased was placed on top of the remains of a wooden cart. On the side of the yoke are two skeletons of deer, with the stage decorated with small semiprecious stones. The whole assemblage assumes the ideal representation of a religious conception in which the deer towed the deceased to the afterlife.

However, proposing a solid interpretation for the compositions represented on metal belts is impossible. The main problem concerns the lack of knowledge about the religiosity of these populations. There are no written sources, neither own nor external, and there are too few cases of excavated sanctuaries, often not fully published [30, pp. 88–105].

In general, it would be problematic to link the Caucasian context too closely to the cults of the Scythian–Siberian populations, given the remarkable differences between the two areas.

In conclusion, it can be said that the artistic production in the Caucasus, especially in its southern regions, so well expressed by representations on the bronzes, presents characterizing and exclusive peculiarities that distinguish it clearly from the influences of Assyria, the Kingdom of Urartu, the cultures of northern Iran, and the population of the Eurasian steppes. I personally do not see a significant influence of Southern Caucasian cultures on Scythian art during the 7th to 5th centuries B.C. Instead, their artistic expression appears to be more closely aligned with the Northern Caucasian milieu, including the Maeotian and Koban cultures [24], and later, Greek influences.

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Title. Drawing the Beast: Animal Depiction on Caucasian Bronze Belts

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Abstract. Before the influence of Greek art in the Hellenistic period, peoples of the Caucasus region mostly expressed their art and beliefs by focusing on animal depictions. During the Early and Middle Bronze Ages, representations of animals appeared especially on objects of precious metals, such as jewelry or silver goblets. Their style showed foreign influences from Mesopotamia. Towards the end of the 2nd millennium B.C., the Caucasus region witnessed remarkable transformations, encompassing all human-related spheres: landscape, settlement patterns, material culture, and art. One of the most distinctive features of this period is a dramatic increase in metalwork production. Several metal objects have incised decorations, whereas others are made of animal shapes. The largest category of objects with artistic representation is bronze belts, and thin metal plaques, primarily found in graves. The artistic repertoire is vast, with a strong focus on representations of real animals of the surrounding landscapes. They are realized according to a local style, where Mesopotamian, Anatolian, or Iranian influences are practically absent.

This paper aims to offer a deeper insight into the animal representations on bronze belts and to track the possible symbolic significance of its figures and compositions. It focuses on specific features of the representa-

tion, the scenes, the imagery, and highlights influences and connections with other cultural and historical contexts of the Caucasus and neighboring regions.

Keywords: belt, metalwork, Caucasus, Late Bronze Age, Iron Age, animal style

Название статьи. Образы животных на бронзовых поясах Кавказа

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Аннотация. До усиления греческого влияния в эпоху эллинизма художественные вкусы и верования населения Кавказа выражались через изображения животных. В периоды ранней и средней бронзы образы животных появлялись на предметах из драгоценных металлов, например, на ювелирных украшениях и чашах. Стиль этих произведений находился под месопотамским влиянием.

Ближе к концу II тыс. до н.э., в регионе Кавказа произошли значительные изменения, затрагивающие все сферы: ландшафт, поселения, материальную культуру, искусство. Одним из отличительных признаков этой эпохи стал рост производства металлических изделий.

Предметы могли получить гравированный декор или иметь форму животных. Самую большую группу с изобразительным элементом составляют бронзовые пояса и тонкие металлические пластины, происходящие преимущественно из захоронений. Художественный репертуар широк, но в фокусе находятся животные, обитающие в этих краях. Изображения выполнены в характерном местном стиле, в котором практически отсутствуют следы влияния Месопотамии, Анатолии или Ирана.

В данной статье проводится комплексный анализ изображений животных на бронзовых поясах. Предпринята и попытка проследить символическое значение отдельных образов и композиций. Внимание уделено стилю изображений, типам сцен. Выявлены связи между разными культурами Кавказа и сопредельных регионов.

Ключевые слова: пояса, металлообработка, Кавказ, поздний бронзовый век, железный век, звериный стиль



III. 1. Metal belt. Photo: Manuel Castelluccia; @Musée d'Archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye



III. 2. Detail of decorations. Photo: Manuel Castelluccia; @Musée d'Archéologie nationale, Saint-Germain-en-Laye