



SCYTHIAN GOLD FROM MAIKOP. ORNAMENTS FROM THE SILVER
TUNIC AND FROM A CASKET, ABOUT 400 B.C.

far from Mosul in Northern Iraq. Dr. Speiser, field director of the Expedition, has already examined the site and assembled evidence indicating not only that there was a palace of Sennacherib at this spot, but also the presence of settlements of far earlier dates, the oldest of which present close similarities to the earliest periods of civilization in Mesopotamia and Persia. Dr. Speiser's first reports will probably be available for the next issue of the *Bulletin*.

Finally, owing to the generosity of Mr. Eldridge R. Johnson and the courtesy of the Government of the Republic of Guatemala, a major project will begin work about the first of the year at Piedras Negras in Guatemala. This was one of the most important Mayan cities under the so-called Old Empire, which ended about A.D. 600. The Johnson Expedition will work, it is hoped, at least three years and endeavor not only to restore the monuments to be found at Piedras Negras, but also to produce through the excavations evidence that will throw more light on the earlier history of the Mayan peoples.

Other projects sponsored by the Museum will be announced shortly in these pages.

2. *The Maikop
Treasure*

ALTHOUGH the burial mounds or kurgans of South Russia have for many years been yielding interesting treasures in gold ornaments and bronze horse trappings, most of these have gone to the Hermitage Museum, Petrograd,

and very little, until recently, has been seen outside of Russia. Thus, the acquisition of a group of antiquities of this sort from Maikop, in the Kuban region at the eastern end of the Black Sea, is outstanding among the recent accessions to the collections of the Museum.

The cream of the collection is the group of Scythian gold, of the fifth and fourth centuries B.C., and in this group the gold repoussée ornaments from a tunic of cloth of silver are of the greatest interest and artistic value. Fragments of the original tunic were found with the ornaments, although they are now sewn on a similar garment of modern fabric. The ornaments consist of little plaques, beautifully fashioned, representing eagle-headed griffins, elaborately horned stags, palmettes, floral and geometric designs interspersed with small gold buttons. The tunic as a whole is among the most beautiful and interesting objects of Scythian workmanship yet discovered.

In addition to this, there are many other personal ornaments—floral diadems, bracelets, anklets, finger rings and chains. The bracelet ending in a delicate ram's head and the heavy chain of woven gold with three pendants of golden blossoms are of particular beauty. A large fibula of gold over bronze depicts a man holding at arm's length the head of his enemy. In addition to the repoussée work, there are pieces decorated in the granulated technique and others on which are *cloisons* containing fragments of coloured enamels.



GOLDEN ORNAMENTS FROM MAIKOP. SCYTHIAN EARRINGS, SIGNET RING AND BRACELET, 5TH CENTURY B.C. SARMATIAN FIBULA, GOLD OVER BRONZE, 1ST CENTURY A.D.



SCYTHIAN BRONZE ORNAMENTS MAINLY FROM HORSE TRAPPINGS,
ABOUT 400 B.C.

Besides the gold there are various bronze weapons and harness ornaments, together with pins, bracelets, mirrors and objects of undetermined use, as well as Greek vase fragments, Sarmatian beads, and Egyptian scarabs which assist in dating various groups within the collection.

To the archaeologist the Scythian objects in the so-called "Animal Style" present the greatest interest. The animal style especially characteristic of Scythian art is being found to be more and more widely scattered all over the Asiatic continent in various modified forms. It is believed that the animal style had its beginnings before the third millennium. Whatever its original source, it had spread widely before historic times, and finds made on the Volga, in Southern Siberia and in North China show close relationship with these from South Russia. The famous Treasure of the Oxus now in the British Museum had no doubt a common origin. Even ancient Sumerian art seems in some way related, as well as small bronzes from the Caucasus, from Cappadocia, and recent finds from Persia. The style is known even as far west as Bulgaria and Hungary, and some claim its influence in Scandinavia. Thus the latest term applied to it is the "Urasian Animal Art."

However, the region in which this art seems most at home and where it appears in its purest wild and untamed form is that of Siberia and South Russia, where in the Kuban district a flourishing Scythian

kingdom existed from the sixth to the second century B.C., until it was conquered by the Sarmatians.

The Maikop treasure is said to have been found by a Russian farmer in 1912 working on his property near that place. It was taken to Paris in 1914 and there acquired by the late M. Ercole Canessa, from whose estate it was purchased by the Museum through the generosity of W. Hinckle Smith, Esq. It is probable that a collection of similar objects in the Berlin Museum and a smaller group in the Metropolitan Museum both belonged formerly to this same find.

H. E. F.

3. *Four New Geometric Vases*

ONE of the most striking phenomena of Greek decorative art is the appearance in about 1000 B.C. of a style of design generally called geometric. In the bronze-age during the second millennium before Christ, decoration was naturalistic and applied with complete freedom to the surface of the vase. Now in the beginning of the Iron Age, a new style begins. Linear ornaments, closely packed together row on row, supplant the earlier naturalistic style. What caused this sudden change in taste is a question not yet satisfactorily settled. It is often stated that the new style came with the Dorians from the north, but strangely enough it is found at its best in non-Dorian Attica, and inscriptions recently found on geometric vases are not written in the Dorian dialect. Again it has been suggested that geometric decoration developed directly from the stereotyped