

Frozen Tombs of Siberia: The Pazyryk Burials of Iron Age Horsemen. Sergei I. Rudenko (translation and preface by M. W. Thompson). Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1970. xxxvi + 340 pp., 33 color plates, 147 black and white plates, 146 figures, appendix, index. \$30.00 (cloth).

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Of S. I. Rudenko's important contributions to the archaeology of the steppes, two have been translated into German ("Die Sibirische Sammlung Peters I," übersetzung von H. Pollems, O.J., *Archäologie der USSR, Sammlung archäologischer Quellen*; and "Die Kultur der Hsiung-nu und die Hügelgräber von Noin Ula," *Antiquitas* Reihe 3, Band 7, Bonn, 1969), but not so his books on his own fascinating excavations of the "frozen tombs" in the High Altai. For the reader not acquainted with the Russian language, this material was formerly only available through extensive references in works of general orientation, or in a preliminary report of the campaign of 1947, published in East Germany.

Now finally an English edition is available, but this once more does not close the gap. It presents only the kurgans excavated in 1929, 1947, 1948, and 1949, that is, the famous Pazyryk group. A similar volume which appeared in 1960 and included the barrows of Bash Adar and Tuekta, excavated in 1950 and 1954, remains unpublished in a Western language. Hence we still have to go back to one of the original texts.

In this case, however, there is another problem to face. Not only does the English volume have different illustrations (and not the best ones available, which have since appeared in Gryaznov's book on Southern Siberia in "Archeologia Mundi"), but the text too has been changed by Rudenko himself. He gave the book its finishing touches shortly before his death at the age of 84, in 1969. There are not only the three new sections mentioned by the translator, but also omissions of interesting passages, for instance, the polemics against Gryaznov. This is a pity because precisely by these arguments we become aware of Gryaznov's explications, which as far as I can see were well founded. So the scholar has to face the embarrassing situation

that he must quote in some cases two slightly differing books instead of one.

Moreover, Rudenko did not always recognize the critical points of his theories, which were pointed out in the meantime by other authors, including myself. He compared too much to the Altaian tribes which he saw during his early expeditions. It is an open question whether the ruling families of the Scythian period who buried their dead deep in the mountains ever had "a more or less settled way of life" in a "mountain forest landscape." It is more probable that they were nomads in the lowlands, and that they came up to the high meadows only in the summertime just for grazing their cattle and for the burials of the members of the princely families. Such a "final return" into the mountains was by no means uncommon for later nomads. In this case we may suppose that the impressive timberwork of the graves was done by subjugated tribes, hunting and working in the gold mines. This participation of serfs during the construction of the burials would explain the almost immediate pillage of the Tuekta I kurgan clearly observed by Rudenko himself. The nomads returning the next year heaped the mound over an already empty chamber. Accordingly, we may ask what part of the animal style art was produced by such clients, perhaps descendants of the Afanasievo population. This would fit in with Členova's view that South Siberian cultures of Scythian and pre-Scythian character are in fact contemporary.

As for dating, Rudenko was right. This is confirmed by excavations in Tuva. There, carved coffins similar to Figure 136 (pp. 268, 269) were found in the same assemblage as weapons datable to the 4th century B.C. This might have been mentioned in the translator's otherwise excellent preface.

It is something of a tragedy that Rudenko,

who lost years in the purges of the Stalinist period and almost lost his life (he was sent to the camps on the shores of the White Sea), got his chance when he was already 62 years old. As a result his books, which appeared years later, are

full of important information and stimulating ideas, but they are not very clear. On the other hand, he holds to his former views. This refers also to his "finishing touches" here, which in fact were among his last work.