

SKETCH MAP OF THE CRIMEA AND THE TAMAN PENINSULA.

1. KERCH (ANCIENT PANTICAPAEUM, BUILT ON THE SLOPES OF MOUNT MITHRIDATES).
2. TEMRUK.
3. TAMAN.
4. ANAPA.
5. SEVEN BROTHERS (MOUNDS).
6. KERCH STRAIT (ANCIENT BOSPORUS CIMMERIUS).
7. PAVLOVSKI BARROW.

SOME ANCIENT GREEK TEXTILES FOUND  
IN SOUTH RUSSIA \*

*Adapted from the German text of LUDOLF STEPHANI,  
with additional notes,  
by EUGENIA TOLMACHOFF*

THE tombs of Kerch in the Crimea have attracted the attention of archæologists ever since the first half of the nineteenth century. Most of these tombs are situated on the northern slope of the Mithridates Mountain,† where the geological structure offered an ideal site for their construction; in many cases these sepulchral chambers communicated with each other, and thus formed in their ensemble a vast necropolis.‡

The special conditions that preserved wooden objects in these Scythian and Bosporan tombs from Kerch to the Caucasus have also resulted in the survival of a few specimens of Greek textiles which are of outstanding interest, for prior to the Christian era little of such material has been found elsewhere.§

In the second half of the nineteenth century excavations in South Russia were conducted by the Imperial Hermitage Museum and by the Russian Archæological Commission. During these years occasional fragments of Greek textiles were found in various tombs until these accumulated pieces

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\* Stephani, Ludolf. Erklärung einiger Kunstwerke der Kaiserlichen Ermitage und Anderer Sammlungen, in *Compte-Rendu de la Commission Impériale Archéologique pour les Années 1878 et 1879*. St. Pétersbourg, 1881. (The text in full, with plates, may be seen in the Library of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.)

† Mithridates VI, King of Pontus, gained suzerainty over these regions just before the Christian era. (Ed.)

‡ These burial grounds are located not only around Kerch but also in the Taman peninsula across the narrow straits from Kerch, in the Kuban province of the north Caucasus, and farther west. They are the graves of the ancient peoples that inhabited these areas, and they are often referred to as Scythian from the nomadic tribes that invaded and conquered the country somewhere about the seventh century B.C. Kerch, which is a seaport at the extreme eastern end of the Crimean peninsula, occupies the site of the former Panticapæum, one of the centres established by the Greeks in their colonization of the shores of the Black Sea. It was a great and prosperous city and, with the territory about it, formed the Kingdom of the Bosphorus. (Ed.)

§ The late Greco-Roman period in Egypt (332 B.C.—638 A.D.), however, produced other examples. (Ed.)

formed eventually a fairly representative series of the art of weaving in ancient Greece. Most of these fragments were discovered in a group of mounds in the Kuban province, known, because of their number, as the "Seven Brothers."

While this material has been mentioned briefly by several authors, it is to Ludolf Stephani that we owe a detailed description of the collection now preserved in the Hermitage Museum in Leningrad. In his work, accompanied by excellent hand-painted plates, the author reproduces and discusses the best examples, prefacing his description with a survey of the representations of textiles in the field of art, particularly in vase-painting.

In his description Stephani himself does not follow any definite plan or classification. In the pieces herein described, therefore, his material has been rearranged and the textiles have been divided into three groups and treated as follows:

- I. Fabrics with Woven Design
- II. Painted Fabrics
- III. Embroidered Fabrics \*

It should be noted that in his description of the materials Stephani is rather vague about the weaves, the stitches of the embroideries, and the technique of the decoration, a feature that has been brought out by Moriz Dreger,† who expresses the opinion that in Stephani's work "the centuries are considerably mixed and the supposed manner of the execution is often apparently misunderstood." Moreover, Dreger says that in his opinion the painted fabrics described by Stephani were done "in 'Batik' manner (a process of covering parts of the pattern in turn with wax); however, Stephani has not recognized it as such."

The Greek inscriptions (names) appearing on the painted sarcophagus cover have been transliterated into English.

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\* The chemical and microscopic analyses were made by C. Bolmer and Dr. J. Biel, chemist.

† Dreger, Moriz: *Künstlerische Entwicklung der Weberei und Stickerei*, Wien, 1904, p. 2.

*These Numbers  
Refer to Stephani's  
Plates*

### I. FABRICS WITH WOVEN DESIGNS

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Map and line drawings by HELEN TOLMACHOFF

### SKETCH MAP OF THE CRIMEA AND THE TAMAN PENINSULA

(Copied from Rostovtsev's *Iranians and Greeks in South Russia*, facing p. 222)

1. Kerch (ancient Panticapaeum, built on the slopes of Mount Mithridates)
2. Temruk
3. Taman
4. Anapa
5. Seven Brothers (mounds)
6. Kerch strait (ancient Bosporus Cimmerius)
7. Pavlovski Barrow

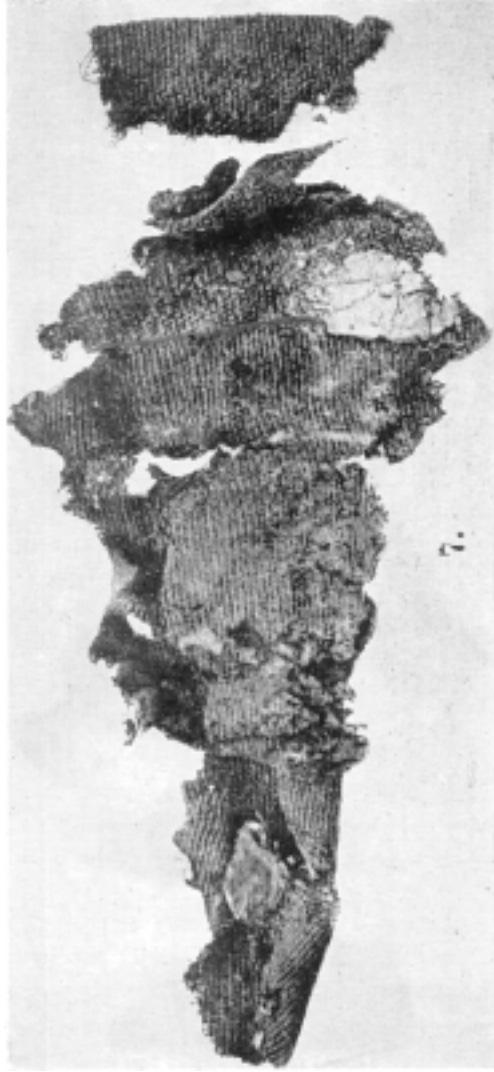


PLATE I.  
PART OF A MAN'S GARMENT.

## I. FABRICS WITH WOVEN DESIGNS

This group is represented by several examples which vary in interest as to design and weave. Out of the seven fragments, six are of wool and one of silk; this latter is the only silk piece in the whole group of fabrics discussed.

### PLATE I.—Garment of a Man, Third Century B.C. S. III, No. 7

The fragments of this garment, two in number, were found in one of a group of seven graves discovered in 1872 on the Mithridates Mountain in the immediate neighborhood of Kerch. These graves date from the third century B.C., and they all belonged to the same family as is proved by the similarity of their construction, by their arrangement, and as well by their contents.

These fragments are woven of a strong woolen yarn in a technique described by Stephani as rep.\* Part of the fabric is a dark brown-purple in color, part is green.

Shown in the illustration is the second fragment woven of colored threads, so carefully selected and combined that the colors blend gradually into each other, changing from purple to green. Through these colors, in the piece illustrated, runs a single, narrow yellow line.

### PLATE II.—Hat of a Man, Fourth Century B.C. S. V, No. 2

The most interesting example in this group of textiles is a piece of woolen material, part of a hat trimmed with fur, found in the Sixth Mound of the Seven Brothers. The material had been made into a hat, though its original shape is no longer recognizable. At first glance the silky lustre of the light brown hair of the trimming looks like velveteen, but Dr. Biel's analyses have proved beyond any doubt that the material in reality is fur.

The pieces that are illustrated show, in slightly reduced size, details of the best preserved fragments. The largest of these represents, against a background of delicate cherry-brown, a pattern of rows of ducks facing in different directions and in natural colors that are still well preserved (Plate II a). In the second and smaller piece there is a fragment of the same duck pattern alternating apparently with rows of inverted stags' heads adorned with short antlers, a pronged line separating the two bands of motives (Plate II b).

The pattern of this fabric recalls certain Greek vase decorations which

\* Tapestry (?). (Ed.)

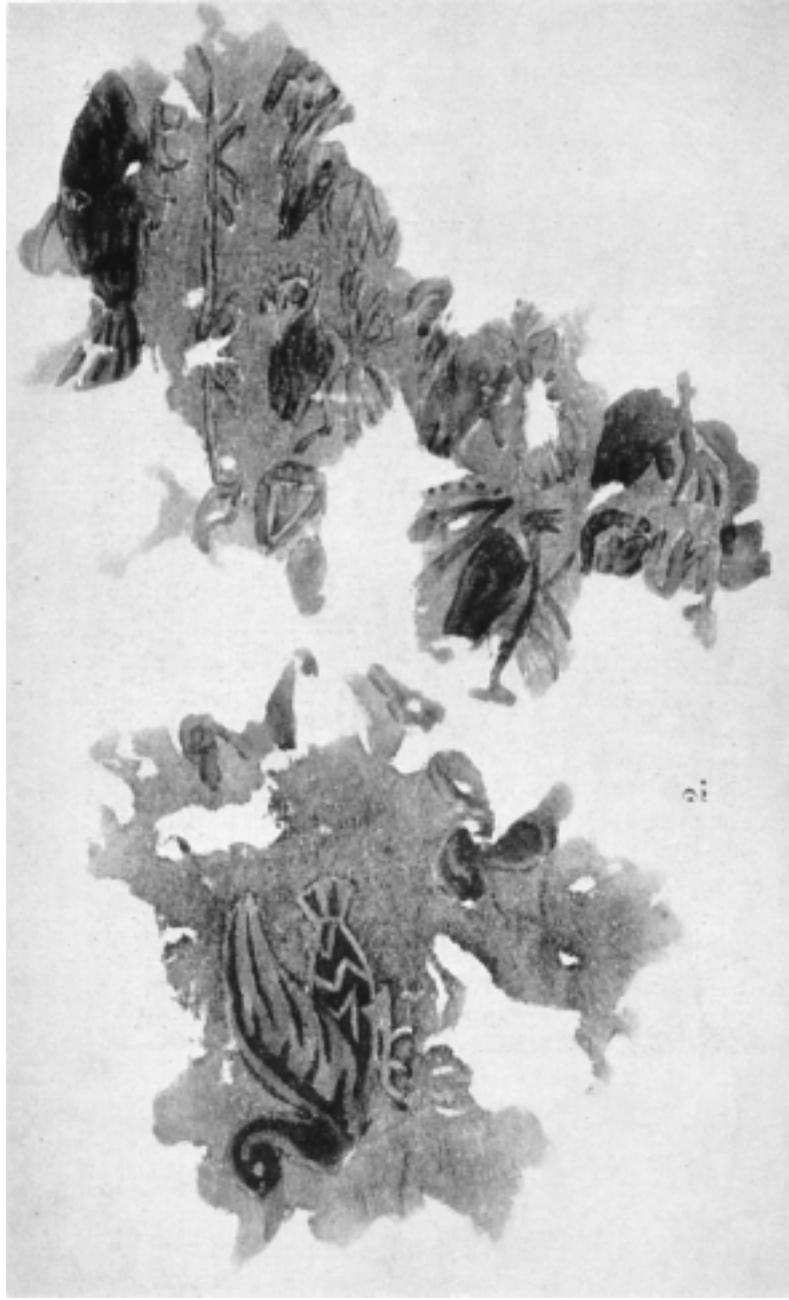


PLATE II (a, b)  
FRAGMENTS OF A MAN'S HAT WITH DESIGN OF DUCKS AND STAGS.



PLATE II (c)  
VASE WITH DUCK AND STAG DESIGN, RHODIAN, VII CENTURY,  
MUSÉE DU LOUVRE, PARIS.



show figures in costumes decorated with rows of swans. It also emphasizes the fact that the duck motive, emblematic of Aphrodite and Eros in Greek art, is of frequent recurrence in feminine ornament. The same is true of the stag, the symbol of longevity, which is frequently encountered, in whole or in part, in various phases of Greek art. (Plate II c).

Stephani states that these fabrics are especially valuable as they show us the technique of Greek textile craft at its highest development when it had achieved a perfection that was attained only centuries later by European weavers.

The technique, according to Stephani, is "rep weave on one side and satin weave on the other, producing exactly the same pattern on both sides, similar to the Gobelin technique." \*

Because of the extremely fine texture of the yarn, the weave can be seen only through a magnifying glass, and then only in the original fabric. The illustration shows it only in certain places, and then again only through a magnifying glass.

PLATE III.—Woolen Fabric of Indefinite Period. S. V, No. 5

This piece of woolen fabric † is woven of a very thick twisted thread, dyed before weaving in black, red-brown, and ochre yellow. The weave is described by Stephani as satin, and he also calls it "Levantine," twilled sarsenet, with a thread count 2-5.‡ The field pattern is a geometric design woven in colored threads, black and red-brown motives alternating on the ochre-yellow ground; the pattern is different on the front and on the reverse. There are several borders, also of geometric design. The piece consists of two widths of the material (only one of which is illustrated), sewed together in the center, each width repeating the same pattern. As neither of these two parts is entirely perfect, it is impossible to estimate accurately the original width of the fabric, but, judging by the pattern, it may be assumed that originally it was approximately 52 cm.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine the exact period to which this fragment belongs, because at the time of the establishment of the New Hermitage Museum (1851) the piece was transferred there from the Kerch Museum without any indication as to its date or provenance.

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\* Paul Schulze (in his work, *Alte Stoffe*, Berlin, 1920, p. 13) points out that this fabric was woven on a loom with vertical warp "such as had been used in weaving the fabrics found in Coptic tombs in Egypt"—a type that is shown on the Greek vase of the fifth century B.C., which represents Penelope at her loom (illustrated by Schulze and other authorities).

† 70 cm. long and 35 cm. wide.

‡ The Oxford Dictionary defines Levantine as a stout, closely woven twilled silk, and sarsenet as a fine, soft silk made in either plain or twilled weave. (Ed.)

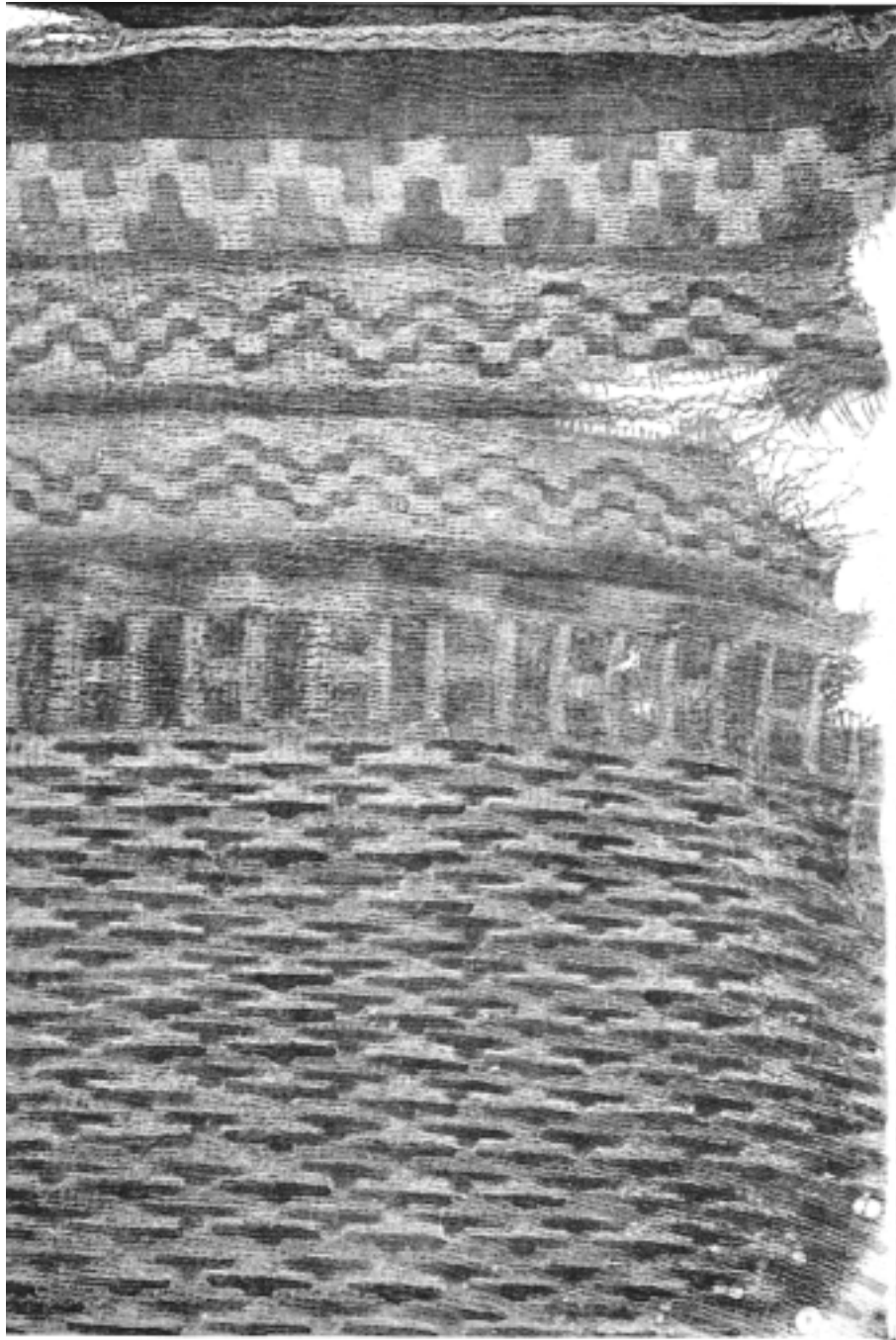


PLATE III.  
WOOLEN FABRIC WOVEN IN GEOMETRIC DESIGN.



PLATE IV.  
MAN'S HAT WITH POLYCHROME BANDS.

PLATE IV.—Pointed Hat of a Man, Third Century B.C. S. VI, No. 2

This pointed hat was taken from a grave discovered in 1872 on the Mithridates Mountain, and belonging to a family of the third century B.C., in which were buried the male members of the family. The hat is made of a woolen fabric, the color of dark leather and trimmed at the top with a tassel of the same material. The yarn is the finest of any found in weaves discovered prior to this date, finer even than the yarn in the fabric of a man's hat shown on Plate II. Referring to this piece, Stephani states that examination of some of the worn places with a magnifying glass shows that the technique of the weave corresponds in every respect to that of velvet.

Along the lower edge of the hat runs a polychrome band, its colors remarkably well preserved and equally clear and well defined on both sides, blending into each other almost imperceptibly. This effect is produced by clever combinations of a number of colored threads. Unfortunately, as Stephani states, no reproduction can give an adequate idea of the delicacy or the clarity of these colors, the softness of the transition, or the fine taste shown in their selection and composition. A similar band runs around the middle of the hat, and a third, much narrower one, around the top. In this latter, however, the colors are very much blurred, so that at present very little of them can be distinguished.

Although the fabric is in a bad state of preservation, necessitating most careful handling, on the whole it has remained reasonably intact. In some places, however, where alien substances adhere firmly to the material, its exact texture cannot be discerned.

PLATE V.—Sarcophagus Cover, ca. Third Century B.C. S. VI, No. 3

Of especial value, in this group, are the pieces of a patterned woolen fabric woven of colored threads, part of a cover in which originally was wrapped a wooden sarcophagus. These fragments were removed from a grave discovered in 1872.

The weave of the material, according to Stephani, is similar to rep, § producing exactly the same pattern on both sides. The small piece shown on the plate represents the plain field of the cover, originally reddish-brown in color. (Stephani calls the field color yellow-brown, but his colored plate definitely shows it as reddish-brown.) The large piece, also shown, apparently formed part of a border ornament.

This border shows five bands of uniform width, three in plain weave, shading delicately from brownish-red into green, alternating with two

§ Tapestry(?). (Ed.)



PLATE V.  
SARCOPHAGUS COVER WITH STYLIZED FLORAL MOTIVES.

patterned with stylized flowers in green and yellow against an even bronze-green background. These flowers, described by Stephani as "flower calyxes" are the same type of floral forms that were employed centuries later in the Empire style.

Unfortunately, the little remaining material found in the same grave is not sufficient to determine more definitely the date of the objects, but the delicate workmanship of these pieces leaves no doubt that they were made at a time when the art of weaving was at its height.

PLATE VI.—Woolen Kerchief of Unknown Date. S. VI, No. 4.

The well-preserved woolen fabric, part of a kerchief, shown on the accompanying plate, apparently is a twilled weave\* in two shades of brown woolen yarn. As the piece shows undamaged selvages on two sides with the other two finished with fringe (not seen on the part illustrated), Stephani is of the opinion that its present measurements constitute its original length and width (50 cm. x 37 cm.).

This interesting piece was found in 1858 in the same grave of the Taman peninsula that yielded a large felt hat, of the type usually described as Scythian, in very good condition. Unfortunately the date of the fabric cannot be determined.

PLATE VII.—Silk Fabric. S. V, No. 3

Of outstanding interest are the two small fragments of a bronze-yellow silk weave, found in 1842, in the vicinity of Kerch.† These fragments are all that remains of a piece of silk in which were wrapped some gold ornaments and ashes of the dead. The fabric, woven with an all-over pattern of detached lozenge-like motives, was so well preserved that the silk even retained its sheen.

These fragments are of exceptional importance, partly because they are the only remnants of a silk fabric found in South Russia,‡ and partly because they are the only examples found in this area of a monochrome façonné weave.§

\* Stephani describes this as "dreibündiger" (three-end) satin, which at present is termed "levantine." He also describes the yarn as "zweidrätigen Fäden," double-fold yarn.

† cf. Note 1, page 55.

‡ According to N. P. Toll (Notes on a Chinese Silk in South Russia, in *Seminarium Kondakovianum*, Vol. 1, Prague, 1927), this is a Chinese silk of the third century A.D. (a translation of this article, which is in Russian, will appear later). Rostovtzeff, M.: *Skythien und der Bosphorus*, Berlin, 1913, p. 208, dates this grave as of the first century A.D. (See preceding article, page 4.)

§ Façonné means a figured or patterned fabric; it is applied also to the type of weave in which the warp, or vertical threads, as well as the weft, or horizontal threads, are used to form the pattern. (Ed.)

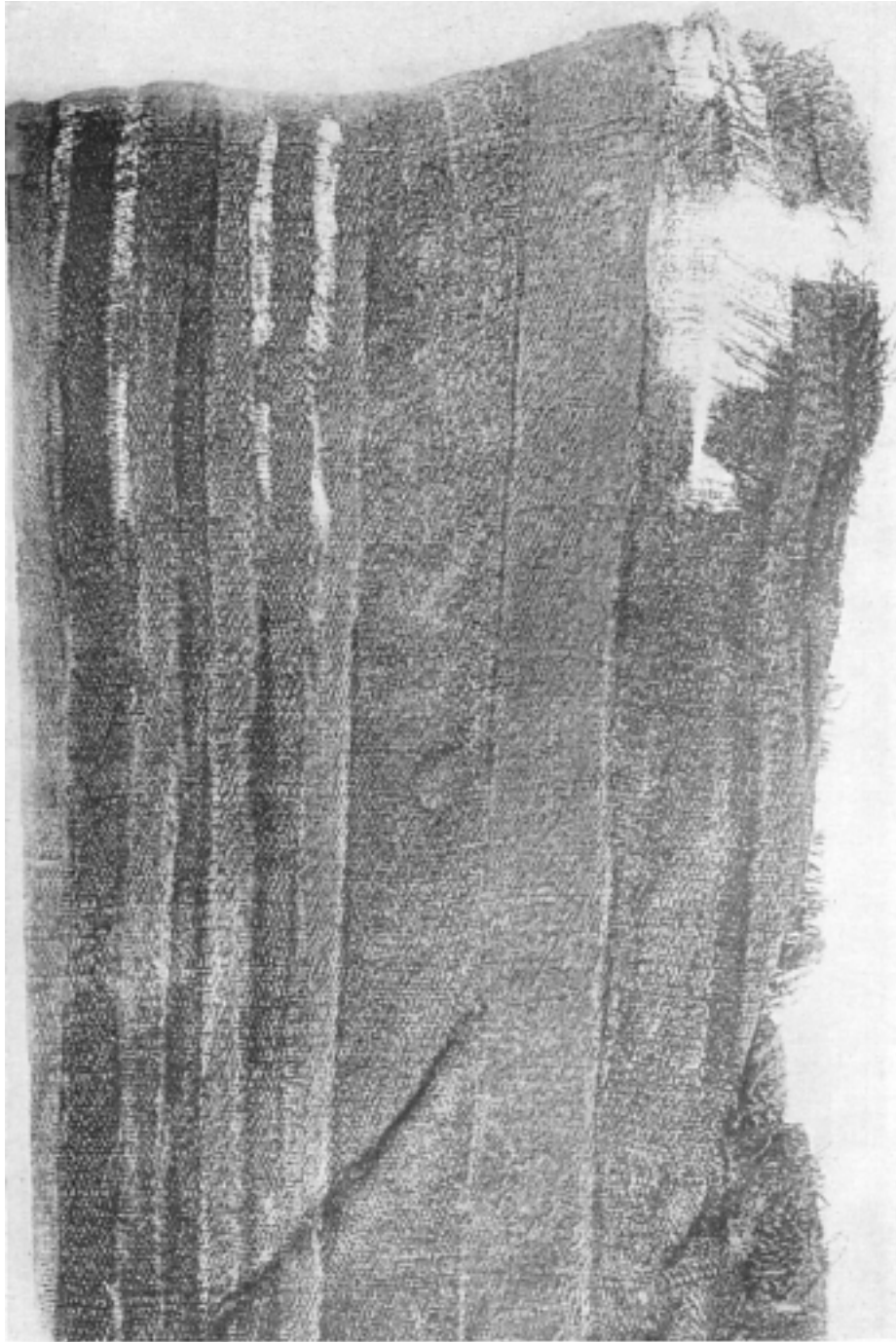


PLATE VI.  
PART OF A WOOLEN KERCHIEF.



PLATE VII.  
SILK FABRIC WITH LOZENGE PATTERN.



## II. PAINTED PATTERNS

PLATES VIII-XIV.—Sarcophagus Cover, Fourth Century B.C. S. IV

This cover, or curtain (*Parapetasma*) was found in the fourth compartment of the principal grave, entirely preserved, of Barrow VI of the Seven Brothers. When found, this cover was spread over the sarcophagus of a warrior of the fourth century B.C., a date established by the age of the other objects found in the same grave. The fabric itself may be even older because a few darned places in the material indicate that it had been used before the burial, and therefore had not been made expressly for this purpose.

The accompanying plates show only fragments of the cover which originally was made up of twelve or more bands of material sewed together, each band approximately 32 cm. wide. In the best preserved sections the original selvages can be clearly seen on both sides. Both the material itself and the thread used to join the bands are of sheep's wool, as has been proved by the chemical and microscopic tests of Dr. J. Biel. The fabric is a simple cloth weave, the count of the yarn\* so small that an object of a lighter color held behind the fabric is more or less visible through the greater part of it.

According to Stephani, who made a close examination of the textile, the undyed material was cut into strips of equal length, each using the full width of the fabric, the strips sewed together lengthwise, and then stretched and painted. This is clearly evident since the painted ornaments often run over a little from one painted band to another, and also because the thread used in sewing the bands together always takes on the color of the changing pattern; Stephani also says that the pattern is absolutely identical on both sides of the finished fabric. The colors used were black, red, and yellow, the yellow being possibly the undyed foundation material, although yellow was used by the ancients.

In describing the process of painting this cover, Stephani states that the black color was applied first, leaving spaces for figures and inscriptions, the former painted mostly in red, leaving a narrow yellow outline between the separate parts. In some instances the figures were reserved † partly in black, in some the red color was left out entirely, while other parts of the pattern, such as the wings of an owl, are done entirely in red with dots showing through in yellow.

Six of these bands were painted with subjects from legends, alternat-

\* Number of threads to the square inch. (Ed.)

† Colored(?). (Ed.)

ing with six others filled with simple plant ornament. The six figure subjects were finished at both top and bottom with ornamental borders, each with its own particular type of design. The bands with the plant ornament, on the other hand, have no borders at all. In the following description the bands with figure subjects are arranged by groups, each according to its own distinctive border.

PLATE VIII.—Border of Foliated Scrolls and Trident Motives.

S. IV, No. 4

On the accompanying plate, four fragments with this border are shown. (a) The first piece shows part of the figure of the goddess *Athena*\* portrayed in upright position, with raised arm reaching toward a snake-edged shield (*ægis*) at her left; an owl (showing only the head and one spread wing) sits at her feet, and above is the inscription *Athena*. (b) On the second fragment appears the name *Eris*,§ but nothing remains here of the goddess herself; there is only part of a snake that might have accompanied her. (c) The third fragment shows, drawn in similar style, a large snake over which a bird is flying. (d) On the fourth and largest fragment the figure of a woman wearing a long undergarment with a tightly fitted cloak and a headkerchief is seen hurrying forward with outstretched arms, the head turned to the left. In front of her may be seen a few leafy twigs. At one side of this figure appears the name *Nice*,† and at the opposite side, near the edge, is the letter “e,” which may be the last letter of a second feminine name. As the figure described above is wingless, it is possible that the single “e” is the last letter of her name, while the name *Nice* may refer to a second female figure which here is missing.

PLATE IX.—Border of Scrolling Ivy Vines. S. IV, No. 4

The second border pattern shows an ivy vine, a familiar type of ornament in Greek vase painting. Only three pieces of this kind have been preserved. (a) The first, which is a very small fragment with only a few twigs and leaves left of the original pattern, nevertheless is important as it bears, clearly visible, the inscription *Iocaste* ‡ indicating that this band portrayed a scene from the Oedipus legend. (b) The second fragment,

\* *cf.* Note 2, page 55.

§ *cf.* Note 3, page 55.

† *cf.* Note 4, page 55.

‡ *cf.* Note 5, page 55.

Line drawings of the Amazon and name of Iocaste taken from illustrations in E. H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, 1913, page 337.

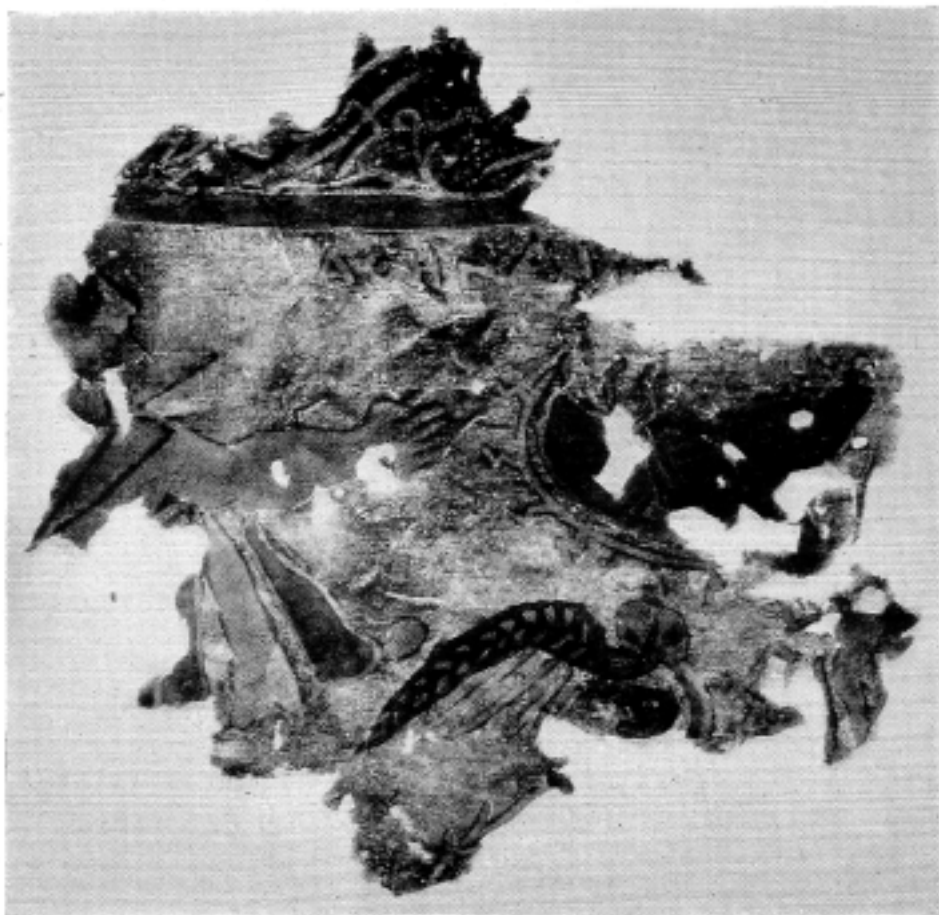


PLATE VIII (a).  
FIGURE OF ATHENA.



PLATE VIII (b).  
THE NAME ERIS.



PLATE VIII (c).  
SNAKE AND BIRD.



PLATE VIII(d).  
FIGURE OF A WOMAN, THE NAME NICE, AND THE LETTER *e*.

which is much larger, shows the lower part of two female figures dressed in long undertunics rushing in opposite directions. Again it is impossible to determine the subject represented. Sewed to this band is a fragment of another showing part of a large rosette motive; only the tips of three leaves can be seen. (c) Of the third piece nothing remains but a small part of the ivy border, but again, sewed to its upper edge, there is part of another band, in a good state of preservation, which shows, inside a double square border, an advancing animal resembling a boar.

PLATE X.—Border with Egg and Tongue Motive. S. IV, No. 4

This border also occurs frequently in vase painting. Three pieces of this kind have been preserved, but only two of them are shown on the plate, the third being too faded and worn to be reproduced.

The first fragment shows part of a pair of horses running impetuously, and two wheels of a chariot, one behind the other, with crosses and cube motives painted between the wheel spokes. The part of the fabric on which the figure of the charioteer must have been represented is missing. In front of the horses and slightly above, may be seen the upper part of a female figure hurrying toward the horse team, the outstretched arm decorated with two bracelets, and presenting a *Taenia* \* or fillet. Immediately below this scene, barely distinguishable, is a large bird, perhaps a swan, standing with upraised wings and facing in the same direction as the horses.

The second fragment of the same band shows a beardless youth with long hair, wearing a short girdled undergarment and a narrow tunic. The head is turned to the left, the outstretched left hand seems to be reaching toward a whip, while the right hand rests on what might have been the front of a chariot. To the left of his head only the last two letters of his name, *on*, can be distinguished.

PLATE XI.—Border of Laurel Leaves. S. IV, No. 4

This border is likewise known from innumerable painted vases. Only one piece of this kind remains. This piece shows the figures of two women, wearing headkerchiefs and long tunics, hurrying in opposite directions with outstretched arms; one of the women holds a garland of leaves. Above these figures appear the names *Eulimene* \*\* and *Phaedra*. † Considering the violent movement of both women, and also the inscrip-

\* *cf.* Note 6, page 55.

\*\* *cf.* Note 7, page 55.

† *cf.* Note 8, page 55.



PLATE IX (a).  
THE NAME IOCASTE.



PLATE IX (b).  
FIGURES OF TWO WOMEN AND PART OF A ROSETTE MOTIVE.



PLATE IX (c).  
IVY BORDER WITH ATTACHED PIECE SHOWING ANIMAL.



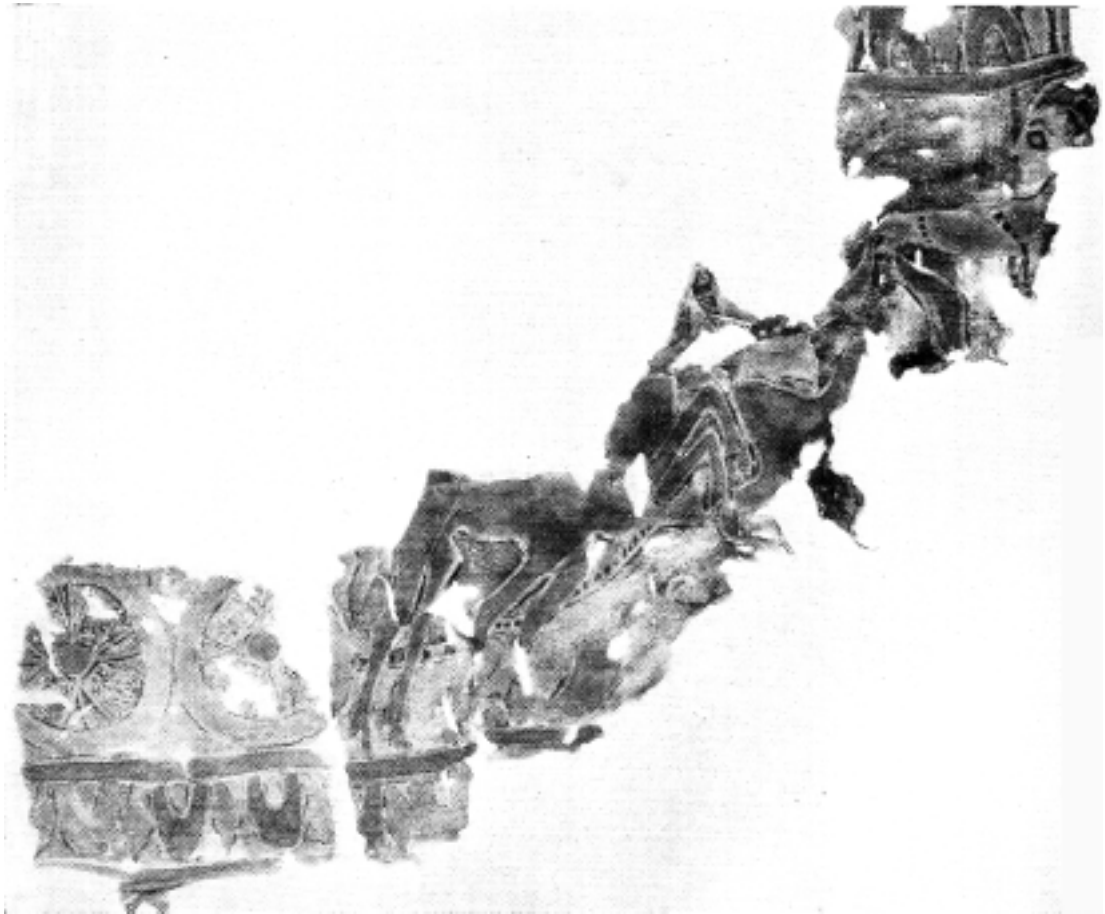


PLATE X(a).  
CHARIOT, HORSES, AND WOMAN WITH TAENIA.

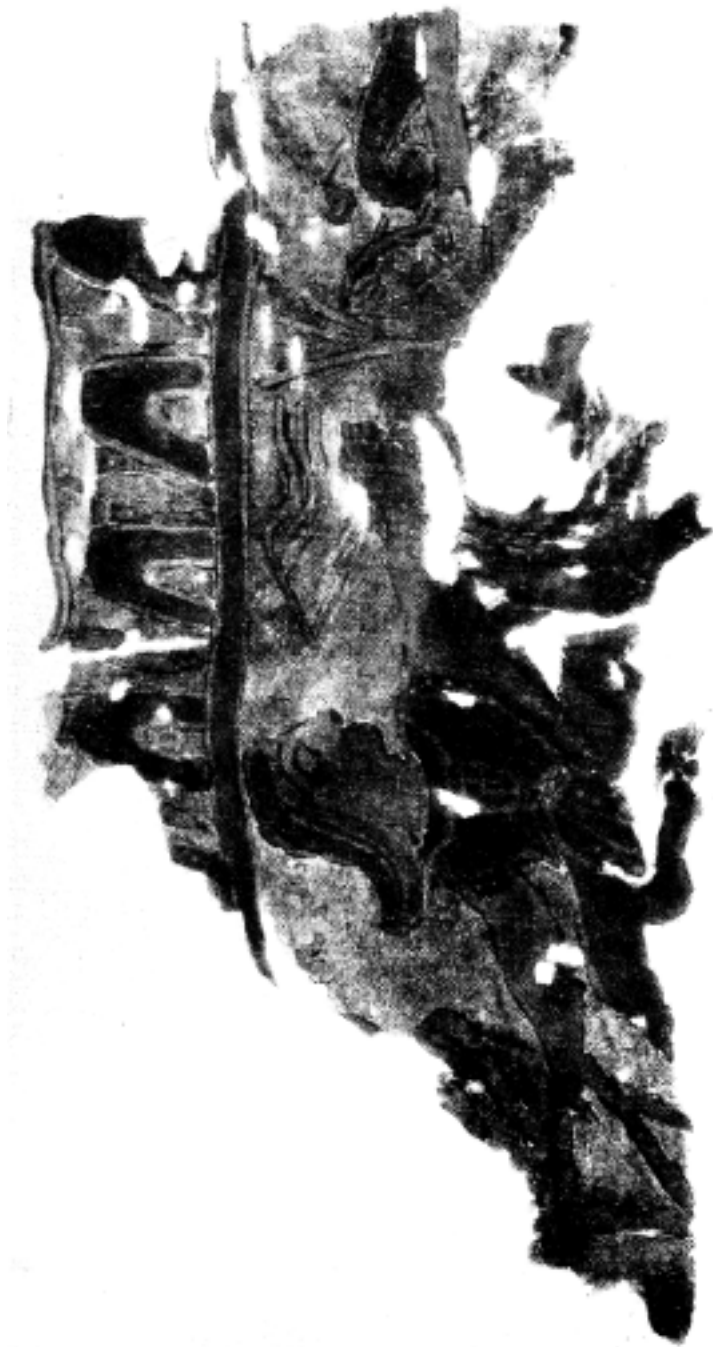


PLATE X (b).  
CHARIOTEER AND THE LETTERS *on*.



PLATE XI.  
FIGURES OF TWO WOMEN AND THE NAMES EULIMENAE AND PHAEDRA.

tion *Eulimeneae*, which is known as the name of one of the nereids, Stephani assumes that the band may perhaps represent the story of *Peleus and Thetis*,‡ especially as there is a very small detached fragment, shown also in the plate, on which the name *Actaea*,§ another nereid, has been preserved.

PLATE XII.—Border with Zigzag and Floral Forms. S. IV, No. 4

Three fragments with this border have been preserved, and they all point to the fact that the band to which they belonged was chiefly decorated with battle scenes. (a) On the largest of these fragments, illustrated in the accompanying plate, there are two warriors with shields and lances fighting each other, while a female figure, only partly visible, offers a victory band (*Taenia*); a small bird (cock?) stands in the foreground. Above the warriors appears the name *Mopsus*.\* (b) On the second fragment part of a battle scene apparently is represented. It shows a branched spear, a shield extended forward, and the last letters of the name . . . *nos*. (c) The third fragment preserves only the name *Hippomedon* † which possibly refers to one of the seven Thebian heroes.

PLATE XIII.—Border of Leaves and Tendrils. S. IV, No. 4

The sixth and last border pattern is preserved only in a single small fragment which shows the head of a panther.

PLATE XIV.—Fragment with No Border. S. IV, No. 4

Of especial value finally is the piece on which no border remains and which, therefore, cannot be assigned to any definite class. The name *Iolaus*,\*\* however, well preserved, indicates that on these important products of the ancient textile craft, the tale of *Heracles* ‖ was represented, and also that these pieces in all probability are the product of the Attic industry.¶

‡ cf. Note 9, page 55.

§ cf. Note 10, page 55.

\* cf. Note 11, page 56.

† cf. Note 12, page 56.

\*\* cf. Note 13, page 56.

‖ cf. Note 14, page 56.

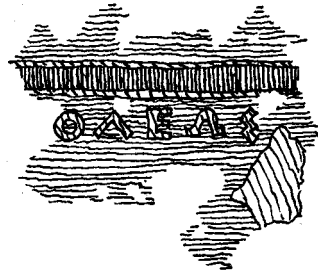
¶ Referring to this cover, Ellis Minns (*Scythians and Greeks*, page 336) says: "The names *Nice*, *Athena*, *Iocaste*, *Iolaus*, *Mopsus*, *Hippomedon*, *Eulimeneae*, *Actaea* and *Phaedra*, which we see on different parts of this sarcophagus cover, show both that various tales were represented and that the dialect of the maker was Ionic. The whole suggests some Ionian form of red-figured vase painting, whereon the traditions of the black-figured technique had survived more than they did at Athens."



PLATE XII.  
(Center) WARRIORS WITH SHIELDS AND LANCES. (*Lower left*) SPEAR, SHIELD, AND THE LETTERS nos.  
(*Upper right*) THE NAME HIPPOMEDON.



PLATE XIII.  
HEAD OF A PANTHER.






-  YELLOW
-  RED-ORANGE
-  BLACK-GREY

PLATE XIV.  
(Left) THE NAME IOLAUS. (Right) LINE DRAWING OF NAME IOLAUS.

PLATE XV.—A Painted Woolen Fabric of the Fifth Century B.C.  
S. V, No. 1

Another type of painted fabric is represented by the few small fragments illustrated on the accompanying plate.

These pieces, dating from the fifth century B.C., were found packed in a flat kettle in the principal grave of the Fourth Mound of the Seven Brothers. They are particularly important, since they represent the oldest products of the Greek textile craftsmanship that have been found in South Russia. Another point of interest is that this painted fabric, in its outstanding qualities, recalls the sarcophagus cover discussed above.

The example, shown in slightly reduced size, and representing approximately one-fourth of these fragments, is an extremely fine and almost transparent woolen fabric in cloth weave. Since every single thread can be clearly followed through its whole course, one can see at first glance that the fabric was painted after it was woven; therefore, the reverse side corresponds to the right side in every detail.

As to the choice of colors, the craftsman who produced this piece follows closely the workman who made the sarcophagus cover described above—he uses ochre-yellow, reddish-yellow, and black, and in essentially the same way.

All the motives, on which the pattern of this piece is based, are those peculiar to Greek art in general, but in particular to Greek textile art, such as several varieties of meander, large crosses, lines with angular drops, and zigzag lines with dots in the corners.

### III. FABRICS WITH EMBROIDERED PATTERNS

Only a few examples of Greek embroidery were found in the mounds near Kerch. They are well preserved, although time, as well as some chemical processes, have affected to some extent the original brightness of the colors.

PLATE XVI.—Garment of a Woman, Fourth-Second Century B.C. S. III,  
Nos. 1 and 2

The fragments of this garment were found in the Pavlovski Barrow (mound), south of Kerch, about 1858, together with the famous vase on which is represented the Rebirth (Palingenesis) of the small Iacchus\* and the Sending Out of Triptolemus.†

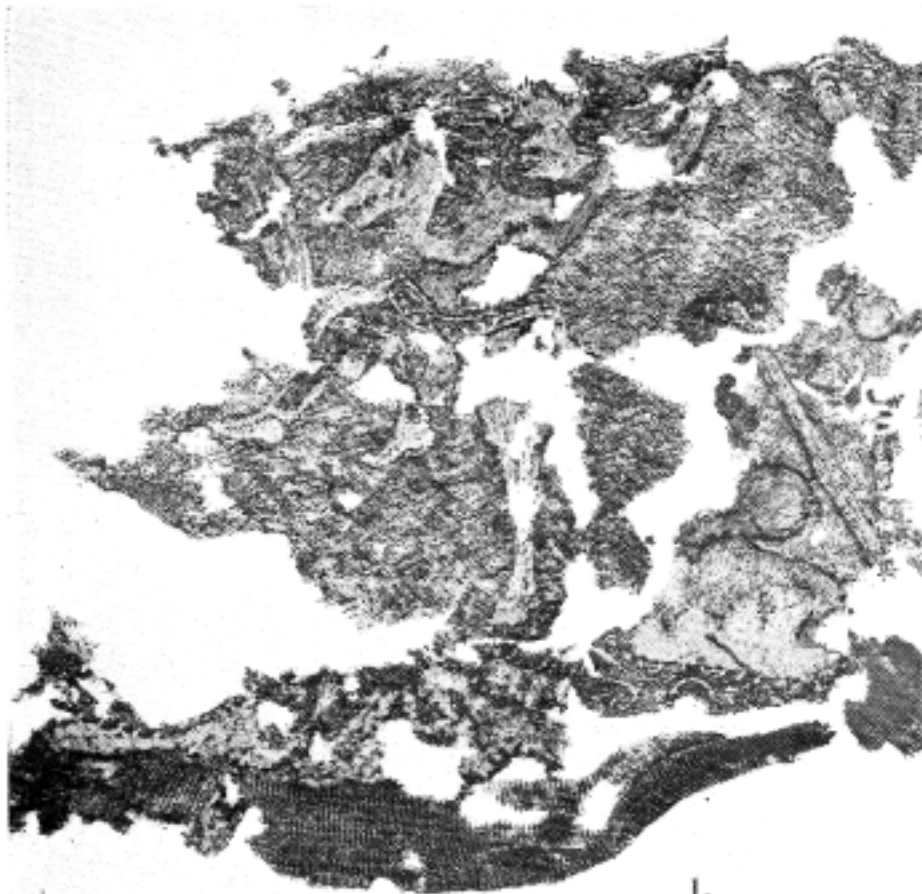
\* *cf.* Note 15, page 56.

† *cf.* Note 16, page 56.



PLATE XV.  
PAINTED WOOLEN WEAVE.





1.

PLATE XVI(a).

FRAGMENT OF EMBROIDERED DRESS WITH DESIGN OF AN AMAZON.



PLATE XVI(b).

LINE DRAWING OF AN AMAZON.

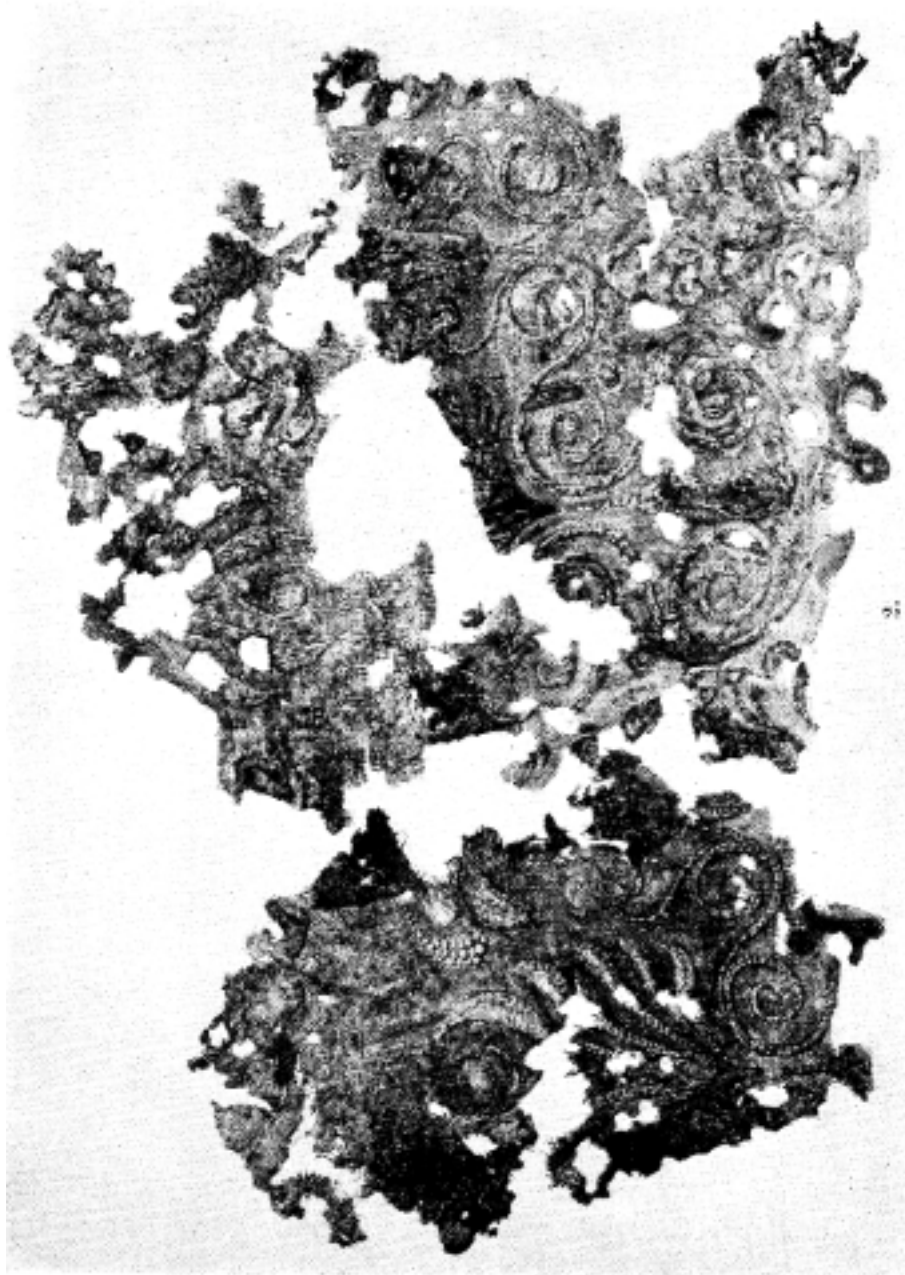


PLATE XVI (c).  
PLANT AND FRUIT DESIGN FROM EMBROIDERED DRESS.

Stephani describes these embroideries as "fragments coming from the dress of a woman initiated into the Eleusinian Mysteries,‡ who lived in the fourth century B.C.," but other authors, who mention these textiles briefly, are more cautious and date them as fourth-second century B.C.§ Two of these embroideries are illustrated here.

These woolen fabrics of cloth weave, embroidered with woolen colored threads, in what seem to be chain stitch and satin stitch, are of a violet-purple color, which has acquired various shades during its long burial in the mound. The embroidery is done in white, green, pinkish-yellow, red, and black.

On Plate XVI (a) is shown the most important of these fragments; this is embroidered with the figure of an amazon dressed in a short green chiton with a green and yellow border, and wearing high shoes. She is mounted on a galloping horse and swings a lance; the eyes are worked in black. Of the figure behind her only a lifted arm can be distinguished. The rest of the pattern consists of spiral tendrils and stalks with palmettes done in pinkish-yellow and green in what, as far as can be distinguished from the plate, seems to be chain stitch. The drawing is very free, considering that part of the design (the amazon and the horse) was to be carried out in satin stitch. The piece is edged with a border of green rep joined by means of a rough seam.

The exceptionally precise execution and a delicate feeling for form are more clearly evident in the second fragment embroidered with ornaments taken from plant life (Plate XVI c). It shows, in addition to the plant decoration seen on the first fragment, a central palmette with branching foliated scrolls and also floral form and grape motives. The material appears to be the same as that described in the piece with the amazon figure, and the embroidery is in the same stitch.

The Stephani illustration gives both the front and back of this piece; our plate gives only the front.

PLATE XVII.—Woolen Fabric with Gold Embroidery, Third Century B.C. S. V, No. 4

The provenance of these fragments, three in number, is not definitely known. Stephani is of the opinion that they probably are the pieces which Anton Ashik, director of the Kerch Museum, found in 1841 in a man's grave, also in the immediate vicinity of Kerch. Judging by the other objects found in the same grave they can be dated about third century B.C.

‡ *cf.* Note 17, page 56.

§ *cf.* Note 18, page 56.



PLATE XVII (a).  
WOOL EMBROIDERED IN GOLD IN VINE AND IVY LEAF DESIGN.



PLATE XVII(b).  
WOOL ORNAMENTED WITH GALLOON.

The material is a woolen fabric of slate color, with a texture similar to rep. The fragments, when discovered, were in such poor condition that they could be saved, and then only to a certain degree, by glueing the best preserved pieces to a sheet of white paper, during which procedure the fabric sustained still more rubbing. In addition, some vegetable fibers, not belonging to the fabric, were mixed with it in such a way that they could not be removed without considerable damage to the piece.

On the other hand, the finely twisted gold threads of the embroidery are very well preserved. The same can be said about all the gold thread found in the mounds of South Russia. It is evident that they had been spun in a combination with other less durable threads, such as wool, silk, flax, etc.\* Unfortunately, in all these cases nothing has been left of this second thread, so that it is not possible to tell what kind of yarn was used by the ancients for this purpose.

Out of these three fragments, two are reproduced here. One of them is embroidered in twisted gold threads in a design of vine garlands and ivy leaves; the other is ornamented with bands of woven or braided gold galloon (Plates XVII a, b). Stephani does not tell us anything about the stitches of the embroidery, and it is impossible to identify them from the plate alone.

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The small assortment of textile fragments in the South Russian mounds, with their representation of Greek textile craft, cover a period from the fifth century B.C. to the time of Roman domination, and they represent a variety of decorative motives and techniques. The patterns show that in the classical period border bands predominated, human figures and animals were portrayed, and geometric motives, such as circles, dots, crosses and lozenges, were used in all-over patterns. Also it seems evident that the Ionian style, or an adaptation of it, survived among the Scythians for centuries.

The Greek colonists in South Russia, in the matter of textiles as well as the finer arts, followed the fashion of their native country, which explains the presence of productions of the Hellenistic period among the Scythians who evidently admired and valued them and used them apparently to a greater degree than fabrics of their own make. "We can well believe," Minns says of the Scythians, "that their tents were spread with carpets of their own make, their garments may have had other decoration than the innumerable gold plates, but of these we have no remains."

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\* In all probability the gold thread was wound originally around a yarn core. (Ed.)

In his description of the fabrics found in South Russia, Ludolf Stephani stresses the point that these fragments give us an idea of the life and fashions of the Greeks of that period. Other authors, however, are more reserved on this subject. Moriz Dreger, for instance (*op. cit.*), considers it premature to draw any general conclusions about the tastes and fashions of the Greeks merely on the basis of the things found in South Russian excavations. He even feels that the woven design of ducks shows traces of Egyptian rather than Greek influence. He also affirms that "we lack every trace of any fabric, weave, or embroidery from which might be discovered the distinguishing marks of the Greek and the Greco-Roman civilizations."

Besides this group of Greek textiles excavated in South Russia, there is only one other piece worth mentioning, a fragment found near the town of Smela (Kiev province), about 1887, by Count Alexis Bobrinskoi (see Reference). Here in mound XXVI of the extensive excavations was found a human skeleton, still wearing the remnants of a woolen garment embroidered with a complicated pattern in polychrome threads and decorated with red, yellow, and blue galloons. No detailed description of this piece is given in Bobrinskoi's work, and, unfortunately, no reproduction of it is available.

Another group of these rare Greek embroideries was found in Noin Ula mounds in Northern Mongolia by the P. K. Kozlov expedition in 1924. They are not discussed here since they do not come under the subject of Greek textiles found in South Russia. It might be of interest, however, to note that, in their material, coloring, weaving technique, and stitches, these fabrics are very similar to the group of textiles just described, although they are of a later date, about second-first century B.C. They have been discussed briefly by Percival Yetts in his article on the Discoveries of the Kozlov expedition, and also by Gregory Borovka (see References), but the most detailed and thorough description is that by Camilla Trever (curator in the Hermitage Museum), recently published under the title *Greco-Bactrian Art Treasures, Moscow and Leningrad, 1940. Illustrated.* (Text in Russian.)

## NOTES

1. *ANTIQUITÉS DU BOSPHORE CIMMÉRIEN*, 1854, Vol. I. Introduction, p. LXXXII: "D. V. Kareisha found (in 1824) a very small bier containing a circular urn with silver lid, wrapped in a purple cover of heavy silk lined with fur. Inside the urn were the ashes of a corpse and some gold ornaments wrapped in a bronze-yellow silk. . . . These fabrics are now in the Hermitage Museum preserved between two glass panels."
2. *ATHENA*. A Greek goddess identified with the Roman Minerva.
3. *ERIS*. The goddess who calls forth war and discord. (Virgil introduces *DISCORDIA* as a being similar to the Homeric *ERIS*.)
4. *NICE*. Goddess of Victory. *NICE* also occurs as a surname of *ATHENA*.
5. *IOCASTE*. Daughter of Menoecus and wife of Laius, by whom she became the mother of Oedipus, whom she later unwillingly married.
6. *TAENIA*. Bandellettes or fillets, used by the Greeks for different purposes: (a) as victory bands offered to heroes; (b) worn around the head or arm, often as a preservative from witchcraft and to that end appearing also on various objects, such as vases, utensils, musical instruments, lances; (c) as funeral garlands; Ellis Minns (*Scythians and Greeks*, 1913, p. 316) describing the wall paintings in the Kerch catacombs, mentions these same objects painted on walls: ". . . these appear to be garlands of a kind or rather bags stuffed with flowers, worn as garlands. This motive occurs in all the late Kerch catacombs and can be paralleled from Sicily and from textiles made in Egypt under Greek influence."
7. *EULIMENAE*. One of the nereids.
8. *PHAEDRA*. A daughter of Minos by Pasiphae and the wife of Theseus. Stepmother of Hippolytus.
9. *PELEUS*. Husband of Antigone and later of the nereid *THETIS*, and father of Achilles. *THETIS*, daughter of Nereus and Doris and mother of Achilles.
10. *ACTAEA*. One of the nereids. A daughter of Nereus and Doris.



11. **MOPSUS.** The name of two Greek seers. One of them was a famous prophet among the Argonauts.
12. **HIPPOMEDON.** Son of Aristomachus, or, according to Sophocles, of Talaus; one of the seven Theban heroes slain during the siege.
13. **IOLAUS.** Son of Iphicles and Automeduse, the half-brother of Hercules and the faithful companion and charioteer of that hero.
14. **HERACLES.** Hercules, son of Zeus and Alcmene. The oldest hero in Greek mythology.
15. **PALINGENESIS OF THE SMALL IACCHUS (Rebirth of Iacchus).** Solemn name of the mystic Bacchus (Dionysus) at Athens and Eleusis. The Frygian Bacchus was looked upon in the Eleusinian Mysteries (see below) as a child, and as such, described as the son of Demeter and Zeus. The child was born after six months, and Zeus accordingly sewed it up in his thigh till ripe for birth. Hence, the rebirth of the small Iacchus.
16. **SENDING OUT OF TRIPTOLEMUS.** Triptolemus, son of Eleusis, a favorite of Demeter who sent him about the world on a car drawn by serpents to extend the cultivation of grain. In the Attic legend of Eleusis he is represented also as a judge of the dead.
17. **ELEUSINIAN MYSTERIES.** Title chiefly applied to a festival held by the Athenians in autumn in honor of Demeter, Persephone and Iacchus, consisting of sacrifices, processions, and certain mystical ceremonies. One of the most important festivals of Greece, dated from earliest times and continued even after living Greece was no more.
18. **I. Tolstoi and N. P. Kondakov.** Russian antiquities, 1889, part I, page 65.  
 Ellis H. Minns, *Scythians and Greeks*, 1913, p. 336.  
 N. N. Sobolev. *Outlines of the history of textile design*, 1934, p. 35.

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