



BRONZE AGE MIGRATIONS IN CENTRAL ASIA

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Abstract: *The Bronze Age history of Central Asia was characterized by the presence of migrations, changes in socio-economic relations, assimilation processes and cultural interactions between different tribes. This article analyzes Bronze Age migrations in Central Asia basis on archaeological sources.*

Keywords: *Bronze Age, migration, Gonur, Dashly, Sapalli, Central Asia, Bactria, Margiana, Khorezm, Sogdiana, Andronovo tribes, ancient settlements, culture, community, assimilation processes.*

INTRODUCTION

The Bronze Age is an important period in the history of Central Asia. There were changes in socio-economic relations and various cultural innovations emerged related to migrations and interactions of various ethnic communities in this time. In the Bronze Age, the foundation was laid for the formation of ancient peoples of the region, whose ethnonyms are reflected in early written sources. The problem of migration, the nature of ethno-cultural processes and the relationship of specific archaeological cultures with one or another ethnos attracted the attention of individual scientists and was discussed at the international symposiums [1].

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

As we know, during the developed Bronze Age, in the foothill belt of the Kopetdag of Southern Turkmenistan, a highly developed culture (Namazga-Tepe, Altyndepe) is formed, which was called the “local civilization of the ancient Eastern type” and “a natural component of the entire ancient Eastern cultural area” [2, p. 129]. In the beginning of the millennium BC this civilization is in decline, along with some of the ancient centers of Iran – Gissar, Tyurengtepa, Shahre-Sukhteh, as well as the Indian civilization – Harappa and Mohenjo-daro. Moreover, it was a gradual desolation, without traces of the destruction of settlements; “The inhabitants left their homes, taking with them property” [2, p. 129-130].



The reasons for the desolation of Altyndepe were associated with the resettlement of the population from the foothills of the Kopetdag to Margiana and Bactria [2, p. 131].

Such a statement of the question is legitimate. As shown by archaeological data, the migration processes in the region were particularly intensive in the era of the Eneolithic and Bronze Age. They were associated not only with the development of new agricultural oases, but also with the search for sources of raw materials for the developing metallurgy (copper, tin, lead). The manifestation of cultural innovations in the south of Turkmenistan and the early agricultural communities of Balochistanis observed in the complexes of the Sarazm settlement in the upper reaches of Zarafshan [3]. As a result of the migration of the early agricultural population of Balochistan, and then of the Indus civilization, new settled settlements are formed in the Panj River basin [4, p. 99-154]. Settlement Shortugay, as suggested - a trading post in the northeastern Afghanistan, is more than 1100 km from Mohenjo-Daro - the center of the Indian civilization [5, p. 95-104]. Ceramics, seals (stamps) and other archaeological finds, witnesses of the Indian civilization [6, p. 29-86]. This settlement acted as a trading post in areas of mining trades. This territory was the eastern part of Bactria, in the mountainous areas of which were known deposits of some rare minerals and metals (lapis lazuli, silver, gold). Necessary for metallurgy and craft sources of raw materials contributed to the development of long-distance trade.

The next period of migration covered the late III - early II millennium BC. It was associated with large-scale development of the lower reaches of the Murgab River (Margiana), the territories of the north and east of Afghanistan, and also of the south of Uzbekistan (Bactria) [7]. By the time the highly developed colonists moved to the lower reaches of the Murgab and the piedmont regions of Bactria, agriculture was not developed here, dozens of settlements were erected on free, uninhabited areas. In conditions of a weak population of territories, an abundance of land and water resources, the aliens (visitant) seemed to have no rivals, nevertheless in an alien local environment the colonists built fortresses (Gonur, Dashly, Sapalli), houses, palaces and temples according to the building canons known in their metropolitan areas.

There was an opinion that the Margian builders, erecting square fortresses whose walls were flanked by towers, took Harappa construction traditions as a model, where many settlements had a square layout and defensive walls reinforced with towers [8, p. 33].



However, there are other hypotheses concerning the origin of the culture of Margiana - Bactria of the Bronze Age, which will be discussed below.

The main causes of the ancient migrations were caused by environmental, economic, social and political factors. This is drought, salting of soil, desertification processes or population growth, limitation cultivated land, water resources and pastures, lack or absence of raw materials, necessary for the development of metallurgy, and finally, the example of civilizations of Mesopotamia is a rivalry, wars between city states for the possession of arable lands and trade routes [9, p. 120]. And it is no accident that the researchers cite the facts of the Sumerian colonization of North-West and South-West Iran, where a material culture identical to that of the Sumerians was discovered [10, p. 167-168].

The numerous ancient settlements of the Bronze Age in Margiana and Bactria testify to the wide nature of migrations. We can assume that at the end of the III - beginning of the II millennium BC as a result of wars and raids that have increased in the Near East, certain communities apparently left their native places and settled in remote, more tranquil eastern regions, while not negating the ecological as well as socio-economic causes of migrations that covered the northeast of Iran and the south Turkmenistan. In any case, the colonists came to Margiana and Bactria with property and livestock. They were farmers, craftsmen and builders, who knew architectural and planning techniques that used geometric systems of architectural proportions in complex defensive structures, as well as in the process of erecting monumental buildings. It was a highly developed, organized society with a management system, as evidenced by the presence in Margiana - Bactria of palace and temple farms.

The culture bearers Gonur, Dashly-Sapalli did not confine themselves to the areas of their initial settlement. They master piedmont oases of Kugitang, Boysun and Southern Tajikistan. In the settlement of Shortugay, the Harappan cultural tradition is replaced by Bactrian innovation [6]. From here, crossing the Hindikush, the colonists reach the Indus Valley [11, p. 99-101]. Complexes of Dashly – Sapalli culture were found in the upper reaches of Zarafshan in the burial ground of ZarchaKhalifa [12], in Eastern Fergana (Shagim burial ground, Kyrgyzstan) [13, p. 256-264]. From the Fergana Valley, migration, apparently, continued to the basin of the river. Tarim (Eastern Turkestan)[14, p.117-118]. However, in Southern Tajikistan, the Zarafshan Valley and Eastern Fergana, settlements such as Gonur



and Jarkutan were not found. Apparently, the construction depended on geographical conditions and the main direction of economic activity.

For example, the lower reaches of Vakhsh and Kizilsu (Southern Tajikistan), where the Bronze Age burial grounds have been studied, are not suitable for grazing cattle. [15, p. 134]. Apparently, the pasture-pastoral cattle breeding, in the course of which several migrations took place, influenced the character of the dwellings. This way of managing the economy does not require the construction of long-term residential buildings. Thus, the features of the natural environment and the way of conducting the economy did not contribute to the introduction here of the developed construction and architectural traditions.

As noted above, the intensive development of long-distance trade in the Bronze Age also contributed to migration processes. In this regard, the conclusion that at the beginning of the second millennium BC deserves attention Assyrian trade caravans were sent for tin to distant sources, believed to be located in Afghanistan [10, p. 167-168]. Findings of ancient products from lapis lazuli in Shortugay shows the development of this mineral in Badakhshan and its delivery to India, as well as to Mesopotamia and Egypt [16, p. 21-57; 17, p. 3-9].

The colonization of Sarazm, apparently, was carried out by the population, who felt the need for metallurgical raw materials, and it is not excluded that living together in one settlement alien ethnic groups of the local population. In this regard, it should be noted the influence of the Bactrian-Margiana archaeological complex on the culture of Zamonbobo in the Bukhara oasis. The resettlement of individual groups of representatives of the population of the southern regions (Bactria-Margiana) coincides with the time of the beginning of the mining of raw materials in the Kyzylkum. The absence in the Bukhara oasis of long-term dwellings of the Bronze Age, built from rammed clay and raw brick, is explained by the specifics of production activities and natural conditions.

An example of the accumulation of values through long-distance trade is the items of the Haksy treasure in Fergana and the Fullolltreasure in Afghanistan. The technique of production and the peculiarities of the ornamentation of the silver and gold bowls of the second treasure find analogies in the handicraft production of Mesopotamia [18, p. 17-19].



It is known that Assyrian merchants in exchange for exported goods acquired gold and silver.

Thus, at the end of the III - beginning of the II millennium BC migration covered a wide area from the Near East to India and Central Asia, and it is not excluded, also the Urals. Attention is drawn to the appearance of chariots (Sintashta) and wheeled carts (Gonur), burial of horses, rounded in terms of settlement of Sintashta's culture - Arkaim and round temple of Dashly 3 in Bactria.

The middle and second half of the II millennium BC is characterized as a new stage of migrations and cultural interactions between tribes with a different economic basis, leading to a significant expansion of the territories of resettlement of farmers and pastoralists.

At this time, the Andronovo tribes from the steppes of the Cisurals and Central Kazakhstan begin to move to the south. It was a gradual, consistent migration. Steppe cattle breeders penetrate into the Semirechye, the Tashkent oasis and the Fergana Valley. Other groups advanced at first to the South Cisurals, from here their path was continued along the channel of Uzboy and the Eastern Caspian region to the south-west of Turkmenistan, and along the left bank of the Amu Darya to Margiana and Bactria. Andronovo tribes will settle in the valleys of Zarafshan and Surkhandarya, as well as in the territory of Southern Tajikistan.

The sites of the Andronovo tribes were initially located at the borders of oases, near the settlements of farmers. Then they settle in the territory that fell into the decline of settlements (Gonur, Jarkutan), where half-dugouts are being built between the walls of abandoned houses. The development by the cattle-breeding tribes of agricultural oases led to the process of ethnocultural assimilation, changes in spiritual and material culture. On this basis in the late II - early I millennium BC in Margiana and Bactria a culture of the type Yaz I is formed, which, along with the manifestation of various innovations (molded painted ceramics, bronze products), reflects the development of local cultural traditions (clay-and-raw housekeeping, the use of a potter's wheel).

During the Yaz I, separate groups of the population of Margiana and Bactria master the lands of the middle part of the Amu Darya, as well as the valleys of Kashkadarya and Zarafshan. Given that at this time the metallurgy of bronze was intensively developing, southern migrants entered Kyzylkum, where the deposits of metal ores and the lower



reaches of the Syr Darya were located. Such an interpretation of the problem (although hypothetical) may explain the question of the cultural affiliation of the Tagisken mausoleums in the lower Syr Darya, which were tombs of the tribal chiefs of cattlemen (IX-VII centuries BC). These mausoleums were undoubtedly built by masters who had practical skills in clay - raw construction and knew the architectural and planning techniques. The tribes who lived at that time in the Eastern and Southern Aral region (Amirabad culture) built simple dwellings - half-dugouts with a frame-and-column structure of the ground part and did not use raw brick in the construction. In all likelihood, the mausoleums of Tagisken were built by settlers from Bactria, who first founded a number of fortified settlements in Sughd (Yerkurgan, Sangirtepa, Koktepa), and then advanced to Kyzylkum. All this indicates that the origin of the Tagisken mausoleums is not a mechanical perception by the steppe cattlemen of the clay-raw construction skills due to cultural interactions, but the result of migration from a more developed historical and cultural area [20, p. 59-60].

The origin of clay-raw architecture in Khorezm is also associated with migration of the population of Margiana and Bactria to the lower Amudarya [20, p. 61]. This is an indicator of the spread of architectural, construction, technological and economic achievements from one area to another, remote to significant distances from the origin of cultural innovation.

CONCLUSION

Thus, the Bronze Age history of Central Asia was characterized by the presence of migrations, assimilation processes and cultural interactions between different tribes. The development of ancient ethnic history followed the line: autochthonous traditions - migration - ethno-cultural synthesis - renewal, again traditions and demonstration of ethno-cultural innovations. On this basis, the formation of ancient peoples of Central Asia - Bactrians, Sogdians, Khorezmians and others took place.

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