



ANALYSIS OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL RELATIONS IN THE SURKHAN OASIS IN THE EPOCHE OF BRONZE AND EARLY IRON

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ABSTRACT

In this article, the author covered the issues of economic and cultural deception of ancient Bactrian-Surkhan Oasis in the Bronze and early Iron Age. The article provides a comparative-scientific analysis of a large amount of archaeological data on this topic, and gives scientific conclusions about the interaction of the population of Surkhan Oasis with Iran, India, Afghanistan and Pakistan in the Bronze and early Iron Age, migration processes in the regions, the exchange of cultures.

KEYWORDS: *Bronze and early Iron Age monuments belonging to Surkhan Oasis, stone and ceramic seals, jewelry items, archaeological data, economic and cultural relations, Kulli culture in the south of Beluzhistan, bronze windows, Shortokay monument, Harappan culture.*

1. INTRODUCTION

As a result of the study of Bronze Age monuments in Surkhan Oasis, the boundaries of the location of the agricultural population with a common material culture in the regions of Southern Turkmenistan (Копетдоғ олди, Murgab Oasis), Northern Afghanistan and Southern Uzbekistan were determined. It is natural that the representatives of the communities that formed the basis of this culture did not develop separately from one another; and in various studies the study of the main causes, factors and features of ancient economic-cultural relations became an important task.

The theme of the economic and cultural relations of Surkhan Oasis in the bronze and early Iron Age were enlightened in the publications of A.A. Asqarov, T.Sh. Shirinov, U.V. Rakhmonov, B.N.Y. Abdullaev, E.V. Rtveldze, A.S. Sagdullaev, Sh.B. Shaydullaev, D. Khuff and N.A. Avanesova[1].

In their research, U.M. Mavlonov, D. Makhkamov, B.J. Eshov widely used the archaeological sources belonging to Surkhan Oasis and related to the current subject[2].

Initially, in his monograph published in 1973, A.A. Askarov compared bronze, stone and ceramic seals found in Sopollitepa, bronze vessels, windows and jewelry found in North-East Iran, South Afghanistan, Pakistan monuments (Khisortepa, Shahtepa, Mundigak, Shakhri Sokhta)[3]. The prevalence of similar items in a wide range of

Regions is evidenced by the wide development of economic and cultural relations between different elates and tribes. The wide prevalence of findings similar to items of Sopol culture in Iran, Southern Turkmenistan and Pakistan, the study of the causes and factors of this process on the basis of archaeological materials was of great importance[4]. At the same time, in the Bronze Age monuments of Southern Uzbekistan and Southern Tajikistan, ceramic vessels and bronze items belonging to the culture of the cattle breeding steppe tribes have been found, the issue of directions of economic and cultural relations is included in the science work.

2. THEORY

In the articles written by E.V. Rtveldze and A.S. Sagdullaev in the 70-80-ies of the XX century, it was noted that the problem of Surkhon Oasis in domestic and foreign economic and cultural relations, the role of ancient Bactria in general, the problem of trade routes of the bronze and early Iron Age were not sufficiently studied [5]. The main reasons for these cases are connected with the fact that the written sources were not known and the existing archaeological materials were not used.

In his further research, A.S. Sagdullaev specially analyzed the topic of the formation and development of the most ancient ways of communication in the south of Central Asia, making the following conclusions:



- In the Eneolithic and Bronze Age, observe the expenditure of inhabiting lands for dervishes, farmers and herdsmen and the location of the population in the oases of various rivers were observed;

- Ancient roads passed through the rivers, the mountains, steppes and deserts;

- These roads were used in the development of water resources, irrigated lands, springs, natural resources – copper, tin and lead deposits[6].

In A.A. Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov's monograph, the issue of trade turnover and the most ancient ways of communication in Central Asia was considered[7]. The researchers noted that the following factors were important in the formation of continuous economic relations and trade and exchange routes between the tribes:

1. Specialization of farming and livestock farms;

2. The separation of craftsmanship from farming;

3. Growth in production and the emergence of additional products;

4. Desire to increase of material wealth (jewelry);

5. The process of deep social stratification in society;

6. Availability of rare mineral resources in some regions[8].

In our opinion, factors such as the process of deep social stratification and the pursuit of material wealth in the above-mentioned society did not initially play an important role in the formation of turnover and economic communication paths. Even in the history of primitive society, where strong social stratification did not develop, the emergence of turnover and first contact roads was associated with the need to meet the economic needs of communities, to possess food, water resources and raw materials[9].

A.A. Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov compared the seals made of stone and metal found in Sopollitepa and Zharkutan with the seals of the culture of Elam and Harappa, concluding that the inhabitants of the Bronze Age Surkhan Oasis established trade relations with far regions[10].

V.M. Masson drew his attention to the findings of bronze-to-glass in the archaeological complexes of the Kullian culture of the Bronze Age in the south of Belarus. Such windows are also found in Sopol and jargon. According to the researcher, the production centers of these items of craftsmanship are located in Bactria[11].

T.Sh. Shirinov noted that the interaction of Sopol and Kharappa culture is evidenced by items made of ivory found in the monuments of southern Uzbekistan[12].

A.S. In an article by sagdullaev on the topic "Central Asia and India: formation and development

of the ways of the first historical – cultural relations", two directions have been shown that lead from India to the regions of northern Afghanistan and southern Uzbekistan. According to the researcher, one of them went from the shores of the Arabian Sea To The Indian River, the city of Rahmon Dheri, which is located at the top of this river. In this place, a second road was added to it, passing from the Gang Valley to the city of Harappa. The Indian road through the mountains of the Hindu Kush led to the shorthand, steppe and Sopolli[13].

To a certain extent, researchers conducted research on the ways of cultural relations, trade links, including those that existed in Central Asia during the Bronze Age, linking them with India[14].

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

On the basis of archaeological materials, the cultural ties of Harappan culture with Bactria are widely covered. The study of the Shurtukai monument on the territory of Bactria served as the basis of this topic[15].

The monument of Shortokai is located on the left bank, on the upper reaches of the Amudarya. According to **A.P.Frankfore**, the Shortokai monument was the northern trading hub of Harappan culture, which served as the main base for the deposits of lapis lazuli.

Archaeological materials found in the Shortokai serve as a source not only for cultural relations, but also for resolving the issue of ethnic processes. **A.P.Francophore** wrote about the role of local Bactrian culture in the emergence of the Shortokai[16], associated with the origin of seals found in the Shortokai and the images expressed in it and P. Supported the theory of Ame – the cultural influence of Alam[17]. It is known that such seals were also found in the Bronze Age monuments of the Surkhan Oasis. V.M. Masson analyzed the theory of the spread of the Elam language from Turkmenistan to the Indian Valley in the III millennium BC, and the linguists D. MAK Alpine and I.M. Dyakonov supported his thoughts[18].

4. DISCUSSION

As a result of the new research carried out in Zharkutan in recent years, new data on cultural relations between Bactria and Harappa have been collected. A.A. Askarov and T.Sh. Shirinov, along with Sh.B. Shaydullaev also drew their attention to this topic[19].

As a result of the research carried out in the Zharkutan, two ivory sticks in the form of square were found on the top №5. On the surface of the two pieces nine ornaments of a circle shape were drawn, which were located in three rows three per each[20].

Items made of the same ivory are widely distributed in the monuments of Harappan culture.



They are also found in the Mesopotamian regions, where researchers consider these items to have been brought from Harappa and Mohenjo daro. This item made of ivory is most often found in the Bronze Age monuments of Central Asia[21]. The distribution areas of these findings are very extensive and include the southern regions of India, Mesopotamia, Iran, Central Asia. The researchers consider this finding to be a "children's toy" [22]. In our opinion, the fact that this find is made of ivory itself is an indication that it is valuable. This finding served as a means of payment in the regions that were within the influence of Harappan culture. As proof of this opinion, Sh.B. Shaydullaev recalled the finding made of ivory in the form of 11 squares, 2 circles and 8 sticks in a single ceramic vessel found in Altin Depe[23]. These findings differ in the number of "decorations" in the shape of the circle expressed on the surface. Another noteworthy aspect, as Sh.B. Shaydullaev writes, is that in the center of these items there is one large circle. In addition, the circumference of the circle is filled with rhombus-shaped parallel lines. According to the researchers, the number of circles expressed the value of the present invention, indicating the number of dots expressed in this ancient Oriental inscription – hieroglyphics, in a circle[24]. These items made of ivory are not likely to have performed a means of payment in trade in areas that were under the influence of Harappan culture.

With the means of payment in trade. V. M. Masson said that gold, silver, precious stones - fulfilled the means of payment with lapis lazuli, and stated that the mutual exchange took the lead role in the trade[25].

The discovery of a ceramic figurine with an image of an elephant at the Zharkutan monument serves as a source of knowledge, confirming that this place had an inseparable cultural connection with Harappan culture[26]. The style of production of this statuette is characteristic of Zharkutan ceramics. In addition, the elephant is not peculiar to the animal world of Central Asia. In the monument, two astragals, made of ivory and black stone, characteristic of ancient Eastern civilizations, were also found[27].

According to T.SH. Shirinov, The discovery of ceramic dishes characteristic of Sopolli culture in the Bronze Age monuments of Northern Iran or the settlement of Representatives of Harappan culture to the Shortukay and the establishment of mutual trade and cultural relations, the discovery of numerous seals confirming the cultural connection of the population of Bactria with the Hettites through Iran prove that economic-cultural relations of the population of Sopolli and Zharkutan implemented in a wide range of Regions[28].

V.I. Sarianidi and G. Herman revealed the importance of Bactrian lapis lazuli in the art of ancient Eastern jewelry, concluding that the "Great

lapis lazuli Road" testifies to a long trade relationship[29].

In our opinion, the establishment of ancient economic relations allowed the development of the production of various crafts items. Depending on the quality of the handicraft items of Sopolli culture, they can be described as items produced for trade[30]. Based on archaeological data, the Bronze Age economic and cultural relations of the population of Southern Uzbekistan were carried out in the following directions: Belarus, India, Southern Afghanistan, South Turkmenistan, Iran and Western Asia.

The achievements of the population of Sopolli culture in the fields of farming, crafts and trade are one of the main factors in the formation of the culture of the first cities and statehood.

The research carried out at the Bronze Age monuments of the Surkhan Oasis and the archaeological materials found made it possible to enrich it with new information to explore the links between the farmer and cattle breeding steppe tribes. It is known that in the Zharkutan ceramic vessels, the surface of which was manually covered with geometrical engraving patterns were found[31]. These dishes are similar to dishes of Andronovo culture, spread in the steppes of West Siberian and Kazakhstan. In the literature, there is enough research on the influence of Andronovo culture on the traditions of farmers culture ceramics[32], and on its influence on the pottery of pastoral cultures[33]. Even at the Zharkutan monument, the establishment of cultural relations with the pastoral tribes was proved on the basis of archaeological sources. It is noted that these ties belong to the last stages of Sopolli culture[34].

Thanks to the research conducted in the 90s of the XX century in the cemetery of Buston VI V.A. Avanesova studied here the burning of corpses – the remains of "crematoria" [35]. The researcher wrote that from the layers of ash the remains of the burnt bones of man, fragments of Andronovo culture ceramics were also found along with ceramic dishes of the last stage of Sopolli culture. The emergence of the tradition of burning a corpse in Sopolli culture can be regarded as the impact of Andronovo culture.

In the monuments of the Bronze Age of Central Asia, the occurrence of ceramics characteristic of the Andronovo culture indicates the location of the pastoral tribes due to migrations in different regions of the region.

In archeology, archaeological research carried out in Zarafshan Oasis in the field of cultural relations between the cattle-breeders and the farmers is noteworthy. As a result of the study of monuments of Zarcha Klifa, Dashti Qozi, Tokayli, Zhom, Zarafshan Oasis was concluded as "economic and cultural communication area" of cattle-breeder and sedentary tribes[36].



It should be noted that in the Bronze Age monuments, which were found in Southern Tajikistan, the traditions peculiar to the culture of steppe cattle – breeders were identified, along with them ceramic vessels and metal objects characteristic of peasant culture were found in various monuments (Wakhsh 1, **Tigrovaya balka**, Aykul, Jarkul cemetery-fortresses). B.A. Litvinsky initially connected the history of their origins with the valley of Vakhsh and the Bronze-Age farmers who moved from Southern Turkmenistan[37]. Thus, in the mentioned process, migrations were of great importance in relation to cultural and economic relations.

As a result of archaeological research carried out in the 70-80-ies of the last century, Bronze Age settlements such as Kangurtut, Tegozak and Daxana were found and investigated in Southern Tajikistan[38]. In the pottery **charh** ceramic dishes, metal items and peasant stone weapons found in these monuments belong to the Mullali period of Sopolli culture; and as L.T. Pyankova noted that they emerged in the result of migrations of the Bronze age population of Southern Uzbekistan in Kafirnikhan and Vakhsh Plains[39]. This evidence can be based on the idea of the migration of the inhabitants of the Bulali and the Zharkutan in Surkhan Oasis to the regions of Southern Tajikistan during the late Bronze Age, on newly assimilated lands, the engagement with lapis lazuli, cattle breeding and farming. Such evidence is not the only one. In this regard, the issue of cultural-economic relations and the combination of migrations is of great importance for researchers.

In 2005, Shagim cemetery-fortification related to the Bronze Age was discovered around Uzgen (Ush region) and investigated [40]. Among found items in this monument, there were bronze pins, mirrors, daggers and other items. The researchers note that these findings belong to the material culture of the Bronze Age Of Northern Bactria and belong to the first phase of Sopol culture[41]. Khak, Afлотun treasure items and Chust culture in Fergana Valley testify to the fact that the external cultural and economic relations of the local ancient population have developed since the Bronze age[42]. The findings of Shagim cemetery–fort confirm the existence of such relations between the inhabitants of Surkhan Oasis and Fergana Valley.

L.M. Sverchkov and N. Boroffka, comparing the archaeological materials of Bandikhan 1 (Maydatepa) from ceramic vessels and stones found in the Bronze Age Sintala and Kuhu cemetery–fortifications in Tarim Oasis (**Shinjiang**), revealed the issues of the population migrating from Tarim Oasis to Surkhan Oasis because of climate change [43]. However, the researchers did not clearly reveal the reasons for the migration of tribes from Shinjiang to Surkhan Oasis. In our opinion, in different regions, the exchange of dishes and weapons, close to each

other in terms of patterns and shapes, can also spread due to economic ties.

As a result of the study of archaeological materials of monuments such as Sopolli, Zharkutan in Surkhan Oasis, Dashtli in Northern Afghanistan, the subject of economic and cultural relations was reflected in a number of foreign studies, including the issues of relations between the sedentary and nomadic pastoral tribes. In this regard the articles such as K. Lamberg-Karlovsky's "The Bronze Age of Bactria" [44], **P. Ame's** "Elam and Bactria" [45], M. Tozi's "the Origin of the First Civilization in Bactria" [46] are from among these.

K. Lamberg-Karlovsky describes that in the development of Bactrian culture, the cultural ties of the cattle breeding and peasant tribes were important.

P. Ame believes that farming and livestock population contributed greatly to the emergence of Bronze Age cultures in ancient Bactrian territories, including Southern Uzbekistan[47].

M. Tozi writes that livestock and farming in Central Asia developed harmoniously, economic and commercial relations coordinated them; and the presence of rich materials in the tombs of Sopolitepa was a custom peculiar to pastoral tribes[48].

In our opinion, the ancient Eastern countries (India, Elam, Sumer) played an important role in the first economic and cultural ties of Bactria, relations with cattle breeding steppe tribes widely developed in the second half of the II millennium BC as a result of their migration to the southern regions of these tribes. On this basis, the process of ethnocultural synthesis – the process of joining occurred.

In relation to the Bronze Age, the problems of economic and cultural relations of the early Iron Age of Surkhan Oasis were not adequately covered. This issue was analyzed mainly in connection with the problems of origin and spread of the archaeological finds of the Kuchuk I, II and Kizil I, II[49]. At the same time, because of socio – economic changes in southern Uzbekistan, it was noted that communication and trade routes and economic and cultural relations develop on new grounds [50]. This issue was analyzed as a result of the comparison of the archaeological materials of Bactria, Margyona, Sogdia, Chach and Fergana[51].

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the study results on the topic of economic–cultural relations, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. This topic was originally covered in the literature of the 70 – ies of the XX century on the basis of archaeological data of the Bronze Age of Surkhan Oasis, and the materials of Sopol culture were compared with items found in the Bronze Age monuments of Iran, South Turkmenistan, South Afghanistan and Pakistan;



2. In the articles published in 80 – ies, the issue of Surkhan Oasis in domestic and foreign economic and cultural relations, the role and importance of the ancient Bactria in general was revealed, and the problems of the Bronze and Iron Age trade and communication ways were analyzed;

3. In the 90-ies of the last century, in the publications of the researchers, based on new archaeological data, the external relations of the Bronze Age farmers of Southern Uzbekistan were connected with the directions of Belujistan, India, South Afghanistan, South Turkmenistan, Iran and Western Asia;

4. Various data confirm that the economic and cultural relations of the ancient population of Surkhan Oasis cover a wide range of territories and demonstrate the existence of long trade relations;

5. In the literature of the beginning of the XXI century, in the Bronze Age monuments of Southern Uzbekistan, the discovery of ceramic vessels and metal objects characteristic of the Andronovo culture was interpreted in connection with the migration processes of the cattle breeding steppe tribes. At the same time, the discovery and investigation of Sopol culture items in the regions of Southern Tajikistan, Zarafshan Oasis, Fergana Valley (Uzgan) allows to study the directions of migrations of agricultural tribes. In this regard, the issue of the transfer of economic and cultural relations and the combination of migrations is of great importance for researchers.

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