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# Studies in Memory of V. M. Masson

edited by M. J. Olbrycht and J. D. Lerner

in collaboration with V. P. Nikonorov





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**Vadim A. Alëkshin** (Saint Petersburg, Russia)

**VADIM MIKHAILOVICH MASSON  
AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF CENTRAL ASIA<sup>1</sup>**

**Keywords:** V.M. Masson, archaeology, Central Asia, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

One of the most prominent researchers of the antiquities of Central Asia, Vadim Mikhailovich Masson, was born on May 3, 1929 in the city of Samarkand, which was then the capital of the Uzbek SSR (now the administrative centre of the Samarkand viloyat of the Republic of Uzbekistan).

Vadim Mikhailovich's father, Mikhail Evgen'evich Masson, descended from the social estate of Honourable Citizen, abolished in 1917.<sup>2</sup> By the time of his son's birth he was the head of the Archaeological Department of the Uzbek Committee for Activities of Museums and Protection of the Monuments of Antiquity and Art in Tashkent. In 1936, he was placed at the head of the Chair of Archaeology at the Central Asian State University in Tashkent. In 1940, he became a university professor. His academic career was crowned in 1951 by election to the Academy of Sciences of the Turkmen SSR. Vadim Masson's mother, Kseniia Ivanovna Masson, born in the Kopytovski family in Samarkand, served in various Soviet institutions.<sup>3</sup>

Soon after his birth, Masson's parents took him to Tashkent – the city where he spent his childhood and younger years. In 1937, he entered Tashkent secondary school no. 80, and in 1945, having passed exams for his school-leaving certificate as an external student, he entered the Chair of Archaeology of Central Asia at the Historical Faculty of the Central Asian State University.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> A comprehensive bibliography of the articles, books, reviews, etc., compiled by Lev M. Vsevirov (Saint Petersburg), is available on the *Anabasis* website as a pdf. It includes 627 entries.

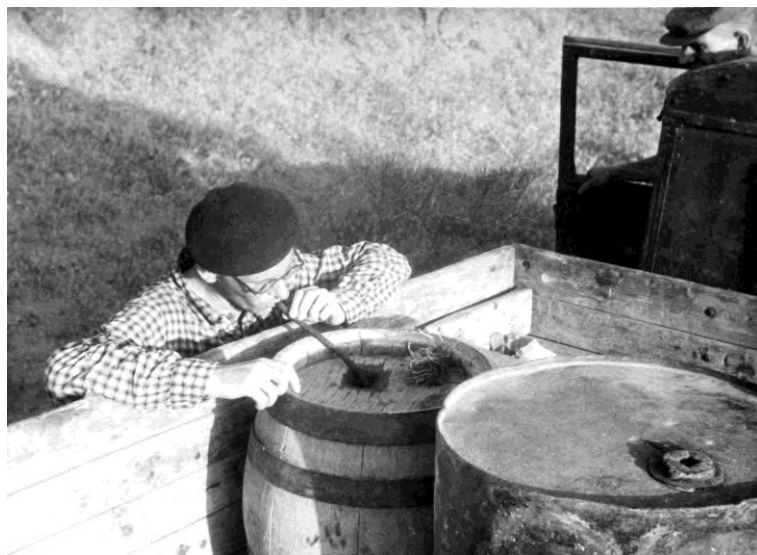
<sup>2</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 1, 115.

<sup>3</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 115.

<sup>4</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 3.



**Fig. 1.** Postgraduate student V.M. Masson. 1950. Photo from the private archives of V.M. Masson (RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 1).



**Fig. 2.** Masson in the field camp of the Kara-Kum Detachment of LOHMK AS USSR (excavation of the Neolithic site of Jeitun), (PhA, 02634/12).



**Fig. 3. Masson (lying) and V.I. Sarianidi during excavations of the Eneolithic site of Geoksiur 1 (1956), (PhA, 02634/45).**



**Fig. 4. Masson, 1960 (PhA, sheet 1942).**

From 1946, the student Vadim Masson participated in the field investigations of the South Turkmenistan Archaeological Interdisciplinary Expedition (hereafter referred to as IuTAKE) directed by his father. Throughout the years of his education in the university, the younger Masson conducted archaeological surveys along the routes of Ashkhabad–Kyzyl–Arvat and in the surroundings of Merv. He was also included in the team which carried out excavations at the townsite of Staraia (Old) Nisa near Ashkhabad.<sup>5</sup>

According to Masson, he started his scientific explorations in 1947; moreover, in 1948–1950, as the president of a student scientific archaeological circle, he delivered a number of lectures at the sessions of the Chair of Archaeology and student scientific conferences.<sup>6</sup>

In 1950, Masson successfully completed his university education in Tashkent with a major in archaeology, receiving a diploma with honours and a recommendation for a postgraduate course at the Turkmen Branch of AS USSR.<sup>7</sup> However, he passed his postgraduate exams in Leningrad.

<sup>5</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 3.

<sup>6</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 3, 6.

<sup>7</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 1, 6, 7.

On October 9, Masson passed the examination in English (mark “satisfactory”). On October 13, the exam in the speciality “History and archaeology of Central Asia” took place. His competence was tried by an authoritative commission including A.I. Iakubovskii (corresponding member of the AS USSR), K.V. Trever (corresponding member of the AS USSR), M.M. D’iakonov (doctor of history), and E.V. Skrzhinskaia (doctoral candidate in History). Masson’s answers were rewarded with an excellent mark. In addition, the applicant successfully passed trials in the language of his speciality (Persian). In this subject he was examined by a commission composed of M.M. D’iakonov, A.M. Belenitskii (doctoral candidate in History) and E.V. Skrzhinskaia.<sup>8</sup>

Following the results of the postgraduate examinations, Vadim Masson was accepted on November 1, 1950, with a half-year probation term, as a postgraduate student of the Turkmen Branch of the AS USSR in the speciality of archaeology of Central Asia. Furthermore, the Turkmen academic centre immediately applied to the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture (further on LOIIMK) with a request for his attachment to the latter institution for the entire term of his postgraduate education.<sup>9</sup> On April 1, 1952, he was transferred from the graduate course at the Academy of Sciences of the Turkmen SSR to that at LOIIMK AS USSR, which he completed on April 1, 1954.<sup>10</sup>

The choice of the scientific centre used for training was evidently determined by the fact that the authority of the departments of LOIIMK concerned with oriental archaeology was always high in the national republics of Central Asia and Kazakhstan. Soon after the Second World War, it was to none other than the LOIIMK Department of Archaeology of Central Asia that the director of the Chair of Archaeology of the Central Asian State University in Tashkent, Prof. M.E. Masson, applied for support, intending to organise the Southern Turkmen Archaeological Expedition (IuTAKE). In late December 1945, having heard Masson’s report, the Department approved all the organisational activities of the Institute of History, Language and Literature, the Turkmen Branch of AS USSR, which initiated the foundation of the IuTAKE. The Department stressed that the basic archaeological problems which the IuTAKE envisaged solving (investigation of the archaeological sites of the Palaeolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze Ages and those of the antique period in Turkmenistan) were not only of “national Soviet” but also of worldwide importance. In its resolution,

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<sup>8</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 11, 13, 15. On October 5, 1950, Masson gained a “distinction” in passing the exam in a course on “The fundamentals of Marxism-Leninism”, which was of essential importance in that period.

<sup>9</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 10, 17–19.

<sup>10</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 36, 39.

the Department expressed a desire to help the initiatives of the IuTAKE in the sphere of field and laboratory studies, as well as in personnel and financing (Alëkshin 2007, 47).

Besides, for M.E. Masson as a native of Saint Petersburg, it was probably impossible to overlook the “Northern Palmyra” as a city where his son would perfect his competence in the sphere of oriental archaeology.

Prof. M.M. D’iakonov (doctor of history)<sup>11</sup> was appointed the primary supervisor of the new postgraduate student. Originally, the subject of Masson’s candidate thesis was defined as “The ancient cultures of the Meshedi-Misrian region (in connection with the construction of the Main Turkmen channel)”<sup>12</sup>

During the years of the postgraduate course, Masson obtained solid scientific training, as suggested by the marks he was awarded in his graduate examinations: “History of Central Asia” – “excellent” (April 14, 1952), French – “good” (November 14, 1952), “Archaeology of Middle Asia” – “excellent” (March 4, 1953). The examination on the history of Middle Asia was conducted by Trever (the corresponding member of the AS USSR), D’iakonov, Belenitskii, and Skrzhinskaia, while that on the archaeology of Central Asia was conducted by Belenitskii, D’iakonov, and Skrzhinskaia.<sup>13</sup> The sphere of the field graduate student’s investigations was also expanding. In 1951–1953, in addition to the direction of the 10th detachment of IuTAKE, Masson also participated in explorations of the Sogdian-Tajik (Tajik since 1952) Archaeological Expedition of LOIIMK AS USSR, which until 1952 was directed by Iakubovskii and, in 1953, by D’iakonov.<sup>14</sup>

Upon completion of his postgraduate course on April 1, 1954, and presentation of the candidate thesis, Masson, as a promising researcher, was accepted into the staff of the LOIIMK as a scientific associate without an academic degree at the Department of Archaeology of Central Asia and the Caucasus.<sup>15</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The Russian “doktor nauk”, translated as “Doctor of Sciences”, is a higher doctoral degree, the second and higher postgraduate academic degree in the Soviet Union, Russia, and many post-Soviet states.

<sup>12</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 19, 22.

<sup>13</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 27, 31 rev., 33, 34, 49.

<sup>14</sup> Alëkshin 2007, 47, 51; Masson M. 1956, 9; Masson 1956, 388; RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 29, 31 rev., 33, 34, 49. It is to be noted that Masson was intensely occupied with public-political activities, without which at the time nobody was able to build a successful scientific career. It was precisely because of this fact that, in 1951 and 1952, the young postgraduate student was the secretary of a cell of the All-Union Lenin Communist League of Young People in LOIIMK AS USSR, the labour union organiser at the Department of Central Asia and the Caucasus and the assistant secretary of the united Komsomol organisation of LOIIMK and the Department of Manuscripts of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies AS USSR. See RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 26 rev., 40, 61.

<sup>15</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 55, 58.



**Fig. 5. Masson and L.B. Kircho in the field camp of the Kara-Kum Expedition of LOIA AS USSR (Excavation of the settlement site of Altyn-Depe of the Neolithic Epoch and Bronze Age, 1974). Photo from the private archives of L. B. Kircho.**



**Fig. 6. Masson (sitting in the second row, sixth from the right) among the team of the assistants of the Kara-Kum Expedition of LOIA AS USSR (Excavation of Altyn-Depe, 1979). Photo from the private archives of V.A. AlĚkshin.**



**Fig. 7. Masson (standing in the third row, fourth from the left) among the participants of the 2nd Soviet-American Symposium on the Problems of Archaeology of Central Asia and Near East (Samarkand, 1983). Photo from the private archive of V.A. Alëkshin.**



**Fig. 8. Masson (Uzgen, Southern Kirgizia, 1999). Photo from the private archives of I.G. Kutimov.**

On April 21 of the same year, Masson defended his Candidate History<sup>16</sup> thesis, which in the new formulation was entitled “The Ancient Culture of Dakhistan (Historico-Archaeological Review)”. The formal opponents of the thesis were B.B. Piotrovskii (doctor of history), and A.M. Belenitskii (candidate of history).<sup>17</sup> The main results of the presented qualification study, based on the field explorations of the 10th Detachment of the IuTAKE, were published in the 7th volume of the transactions of this expedition (Masson 1956). In the work mentioned, the materials of excavations of two settlement sites in the Misrian plain in south-western Turkmenia (Izat-Kuli and Madau-Depe) were published. Through analysis of the ceramic complexes of these sites, Masson arrived at the conclusion that the early agricultural culture of Archaic Dakhistan in Caspian Turkmenistan had genetic links with the culture of the Astrabad Bronze Age (sites of Shah-Tepe and Tureng-Tepe in Iran), although the former is dated from a later period. The author dated the Caspian sites which he investigated generally to the second half of the 2nd millennium BC and the first third of the 1st millennium BC, i.e. to the Late Bronze Age and the Early Iron Age.

In the same volume of papers of the IuTAKE, the young researcher published two more large articles. One (Masson 1956a) was devoted to a description of the clay pottery of the Anau culture widely distributed in the foothill plain of the Kopet-Dagh during the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages. This ceramic assemblage was obtained due to the efforts of Prof. B.A. Kuftin, who headed the 14th detachment of the IuTAKE in 1952. The main task of the latter included surveys and excavations of the early agricultural sites located south-east of Ashkhabad (Kuftin 1956). Only a single field season of investigations resulted in the development by this researcher of an essentially new system of periodisation of the Anau culture on the basis of stratigraphic studies of Namazga-Depe – one of the largest primordial sites, not only in the Turkmen SSR but also throughout the whole of Central Asia. Kuftin subdivided the levels of cultural deposits at the site into six cultural and chronological periods (Namazga I to Namazga VI).

The untimely death of the professor on August 2, 1953 shattered his plans to publish the results of his studies. In consideration of the fact that Kuftin’s excavations in the piedmont plain of Turkmenia were of principal importance for the archaeology of Central Asia, it was decided to present to the public the most numerous category of finds (pottery collections) obtained by the deceased professor. V.M. Masson was charged with the treatment and preparation of these artefacts for publication. The young scientist proved up to the task. He not only published the complexes under consideration, but also identified synchronous

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<sup>16</sup> The Candidate of Sciences (Russian “kandidat nauk”) was the first postgraduate scientific degree in the Soviet Union and Russia.

<sup>17</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 57.



materials yielded by excavations in a number of early agricultural settlements of Northern Iran (Sialk, Hissar, Shah-Tepe, Giyan-Tepe), as well as outlining, on the basis of the information then available, the absolute chronology of the cultural stages marked out by Kuftin.

Masson's other work, also published in the 7th volume of the papers of the IuTAKE (Masson 1956b), was a section of the chapter "*Pervobytno-obshchinniy stroi*" (Primordial Social System) which he wrote for the first volume of *Istoriia Turkmenskoï SSR* (History of the Turkmen SSR) (Masson 1956, 10). This paper was based entirely on the archaeological finds from excavations of sites of the early agrarian culture in the foothill plain of the Kopet-Dagh piedmont which existed in the given region from the Neolithic Epoch until the Early Iron Age.

Works on all the subjects mentioned above determined Masson's final choice of archaeological speciality, as he received his Candidate History diploma on October 4, 1954.<sup>18</sup> Secondly, it induced him to start, in 1954, at the Department of Central Asia and the Caucasus of LOIIMK, the development of a new scientific school concerned with investigations of early agrarian sites in Central Asia.<sup>19</sup> The excavations at the early agricultural site of Luka Vrublevetskaïa in Ukraine (1946–1948, 1951, 1953) were thematically close to this direction, although they were conducted prior to the publication of Masson's works. However, they were realised by S.N. Bibikov, an assistant of the Department of Palaeolithic Studies of LOIIMK and, besides, they were not continued at the Institute, whereas Masson, who from 1955 headed the Kara-Kum Detachment of the LOIIMK, until the beginning of the present century continued the studies of early agrarian sites of the Neolithic and Eneolithic Ages in the south of Turkmenia.

Masson's investigations in the foothills of Kopet-Dagh in the second half of the 1950s and early 1960s are marked primarily by the systematic excavations of the Neolithic settlement of Jeitun (1955–1959, 1962, 1963). These excavations were the first studies that really put forward the problem of the spread of the food-producing economy in Central Asia. First, preliminary results of the excavation of this site were published (Masson 1960), followed subsequently by a summarising monograph (Masson 1971), where the Jeitun culture was tied to the context of the early agrarian cultures of the Near and Middle East. The earliest cultural deposits of Jeitun indicate that at the turn of the 6th millennium BC, tribes spread in the foothill plain of Kopet-Dagh, which possessed the skills of clay pottery-making. Studies of this settlement allowed Masson to propose the hypothesis on the South-Turkmen centre of early agrarian cultures, later con-

<sup>18</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 66.

<sup>19</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 60.

firmed due to many years of research by Masson, I.N. Khlopin and V.I. Sarianidi in the south of the Turkmen SSR.

Simultaneously with the excavations at Jeitun, Masson investigated the large Eneolithic site of Kara-Depe (1955–1957, 1960, 1961, 1963). The studies of this settlement indicated (Masson 1960a, 1962) that, during the Eneolithic epoch, cultural standards were formed that predetermined the peak of the Bronze Age civilisation in the piedmont plain of the Kopet-Dagh.

Noteworthy too are V.M. Masson's pioneering studies in the delta of the Murghab River in the south-east of the Turkmen SSR. During three field seasons (1954–1956), the young scientist conducted excavations of settlement sites of the late Bronze Age (Takhirbaī 3 and Auchin-Depe) and Iron Age (Īaz-Depe). In the course of these studies, Masson established that the sites of the late Bronze Age discovered by him belonged to the Murghab variant of the cultural and chronological period of Namazga-VI marked out by Kuftin in the piedmont plain of the Kopet-Dagh. At the settlement of Īaz-Depe dated from the Iron Age, the researcher identified three cultural and chronological periods (Īaz I–III, the first dated to the 9th–7th centuries BC, and the last to the 5th–4th centuries BC. The artefacts which Masson retrieved during the excavations of these sites were presented to the scientific community and compared with all the supposable analogues from the neighbouring regions of Central Asia, the Middle East and the steppe zone of Eurasia (Masson 1959).

A summarising analysis of all Masson's abovementioned field projects was presented in his doctoral dissertation "The Earliest Past of Central Asia (since the Appearance of Agriculture until the Campaign of Alexander of Macedon)", which he defended in March 1963 at a meeting of the Scientific Council of the Leningrad State University (hereafter LGU). On September 14 of the same year, the scholar was handed a Doctor of Historical Sciences,<sup>20</sup> and on March 6, 1964, he was elected a Senior Scientific Assistant of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology AS USSR (hereafter LOIA AS USSR).<sup>21</sup>

Masson's doctoral dissertation was soon published under the title "*Sredniāia Aziā i Drevnīi Vostok*" ("Central Asia and the Ancient East", Masson 1964). In this monograph, a detailed characterisation of the Neolithic and Eneolithic sites of southern Turkmenia at the north-eastern fringe of the early agrarian *oikoumene* was first proposed within the context of the archaeology of the Near and Middle East. This work is distinguished by the wide scope of the problems, the novelty of the conclusions and the richness of the illustrative materials. The solidity of this fundamental study meant that for a long time it became a desk

<sup>20</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 106, 118.

<sup>21</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 108.

book for different researchers, including those who are not immediately concerned with the oriental archaeology to which the monograph was actually devoted.

In 1965, Masson started to realise the main project of his life – excavations of Altyn-Depe, a long-lived settlement of the Eneolithic epoch and Bronze Age in the south-east of Turkmenistan. These excavations would continue until 2001.

Studies of the stratigraphy of the site and excavations of its upper cultural levels dated to the end of the Early and Middle Bronze Age (last third of the 3rd–early 2nd millennia BC) yielded a comprehensive description of the material and spiritual culture of this very important centre of the early agrarian civilisation, which effected a significant influence upon its neighbours in the northern and eastern parts of the Central Asiatic region.

The field investigations at Altyn-Depe resulted in the discovery of the central entrance to the settlement. On both sides of the latter were two narrow passages for pedestrians. One of the hillocks at the site concealed the ruins of a cult structure adjoined by a well-preserved architectural complex composed of a suite of rooms. After its abandonment, the house was employed for burials. Unique finds from one of the rooms of the enfilade (the gold heads of a bull and a wolf, a small inlaid stone plaque with representations of a cross and a crescent, a stone seal with a representation of a swastika, a stone column and a staff, beads from lapis-lazuli, cornelian and gold) suggest that the inside of the house at some point evidently served for interring priests.

The types of the multi-chambered dwelling houses and the grave goods from collective burials at Altyn-Depe suggest the presence of at least three groups of population differing in their material prosperity. The artefacts uncovered at the site indicate a high level of development of local manufacture of handicraft. This fact is confirmed by finds of earthenware produced with a rapid-rotation potter's wheel and baked in kilns at a temperature of up to 1000°C, stone vessels, metal objects (knives, cosmetic rods and seals), as well as diverse ceramic plastics, primarily terracottas representing women. Copious evidence has been discovered of contacts of the population of Altyn-Depe with the early agrarian communities of Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan and India. Stratigraphic studies of the deposits of the Late Eneolithic epoch and Early Bronze Age have enabled the process of formation of the early urban civilisation of Altyn-Depe to be traced.

The excavations of this site have demonstrated that the territory in which it is located was the northern fringe of a large agricultural *oikoumene* comprising certain regions of the Middle East and Southern Asia. The civilisations of the settled population established in this vast area in the 4th–early 2nd millennia BC were evidently interrelated through common origins and had constant cultural contacts. The results of excavations at Altyn-Depe were presented in a summaris-

ing monograph (Masson 1981), for the publication of which in 1989 Masson was awarded a State Prize of the Turkmen SSR.<sup>22</sup>

From 1985, V.M. Masson, along with the continuation of excavations at Altyn-Depe, started systematic investigations of the Eneolithic site of Ilgynly-Depe located nearby. Excavations of this site, uninterrupted until 1991, as well as those of 1993–1995, 1997 and 1999, have yielded magnificent examples of ancient architecture (dwelling rooms, sanctuaries) and art (anthropomorphic ceramic and stone sculptures) of the early agriculturalists of Central Asia. New materials characterising the spiritual culture of the populaces of the Copper/Stone Age could thus be discovered.

The sanctuaries of Ilgynly-Depe are marked by a rich and diversified interior (painted floors, wooden and clay benches covered with ochre; relief and painted patterns on the walls), specific layout and abundant precious finds uncommon for such an early period (metal tools, ritual vessels and anthropomorphic statuettes from stone and clay). These ceremonious chambers may have been periodically used both as ritual and dwelling rooms.

During the excavations, material traces of the rituals accompanying the abandoning of the ceremonial halls were also revealed. Rites of such a type were first recorded at early agricultural sites in the south of Central Asia.

At Ilgynly-Depe, a wall painting was discovered with a scene representing a tree and a mythological character standing nearby on two limbs combining anthropo- and zoomorphic features. In terms of its significance, this painting is comparable only with those revealed at the Neolithic settlement of Çatal Hüyük in Asia Minor. Properly speaking, Ilgynly-Depe, with its system of ceremonious rooms – presumably sanctuaries, is a Central Asian analogue of Çatal Hüyük (Turkey).

All the abovementioned field projects and the scientific results gained during their course demonstrate the considerable contribution Masson made to the development of the primordial archaeology of Central Asia and the Near and Middle East. When analysing the extremely rich archaeological collections which he recovered during excavations of ancient agricultural sites dated to the period from the Neolithic Epoch to the Early Iron Age, Masson considered the fundamental problems of the formation of the food-producing economy and development of complex societies of Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in Central Asia and regions adjoining it. His excavations added a vivid page to the advancement of oriental archaeology, particularly in studies of the social system of the early agricultural tribes (Masson 1976) and problems of cultural genesis (Masson 1989, 2006). Masson's achievements were honoured by the Academy of Sciences and the Government of the

<sup>22</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 250.

Turkmen SSR. In 1978, he was elected a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Sciences of the Turkmen SSR, and, in May the next year, he was awarded the title of an Honoured Science Worker of the Turkmen SSR.<sup>23</sup>

V.M. Masson was a brilliant scientific leader. From November 1, 1968 until March 31, 2003 he headed the Sector (as of 1986 Department) of Archaeology of Middle / Central Asia at the LOIA AS USSR (Institute of the History of Material Culture RAS – hereafter IIMK RAS). From January 4, 1982 until May 12, 1998 he directed the LOIA AS USSR / IIMK RAS).<sup>24</sup> In the 1970s and 1980s, Masson headed the Inter-Republic Scientific Council on the Archaeology of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, which organised regional sessions on urgent problems of archaeology of that vast area. To a great extent owing to Masson, in 1991 the LOIA AS USSR was transformed into an independent institution (IIMK RAS).

By the beginning of the 1980s, the advance in archaeological knowledge of Central Asia, to which Masson so much contributed, was estimated at its true worth at many foreign scientific centres concerned with studies of early agrarian cultures of the period from the Neolithic Epoch to the Iron Age in the Middle East and Hindustan. Through the efforts of scholars from different countries, the diverse cultural links between the civilisations of all these vast regions has been studied. Therefore, it is not surprising that, precisely in those years, the necessity arose to exchange information on the routes of evolution of complex societies, the historical sites of which have turned out to be located in areas now divided by national borders. For this reason, a number of bilateral symposia were held (Soviet-French in 1982, 1985, 1987; Soviet-American in 1981, 1983, 1986; Soviet-Indian in 1984). Masson played a significant role in their organisation (Alëkshin 2007, 65, 66). At these scientific forums, such vital problems of the archaeology of Central Asia, the Near East, Afghanistan and Hindustan were discussed as the cultural transformations and appearance of handicrafts, ancient trade, cultural ties, social and economic processes in the period of the formation of states and ecological aspects of the cultural transitions.

In addition to his dealing with the proto- and prehistoric archaeology covering the Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Asia and Iran, from the earliest stage of his scholarly career and for the whole period of his life Masson was greatly interested in the study of the antique civilisations within these territories.<sup>25</sup> He headed excavations that were conducted by expeditions of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR at ancient sites containing cultural layers dated to Hellenistic times through Late Antiquity in Southern Turkmenistan (Old Nisa in 1982–

<sup>23</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 183, 183 rev.

<sup>24</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheets 129, 223, 242.

<sup>25</sup> This paragraph was written by V.P. Nikonorov.

1986 and Old Merv in 1992) and Southern Uzbekistan (Zartepa in 1972–1986 and Kampyrtepa in 1988–1991). Masson was one of the organisers of the International Merv Project, within which a joint team composed of archaeologists from Turkmenistan, the United Kingdom and Russia excavated the Old Merv sites in 1992 to 2000. The materials obtained from all these sites contributed very much to our understanding of the history and culture of the southern regions of western Central Asia during the Hellenistic, Arsacid and Kushan periods. Masson also published many works devoted to the archaeology, history, culture and numismatics of Bactria, Parthiene, Margiana, Chorasnia and Hyrcania, as well as general studies on the remote past, including the antique epoch, of western Central Asia, Iran and Afghanistan.<sup>26</sup>

Masson's scientific-pedagogical activities were also very extensive. From 1957, he delivered a course of lectures entitled "Archaeology of Central Asia" for archaeology students at the Faculty of History at the Leningrad State University,<sup>27</sup> and afterwards the course "Archaeology of the Ancient East". In the late 1960s and early 1970s, Masson led the student East Seminar at the Chair of Archaeology of LGU.

During the numerous years of his educational activities, Masson nurtured several generations of disciples. Under his guidance, postgraduate students and trainees from different archaeological centres of the USSR (Armenia, Kazakhstan, Kirgizia, Moldavia, the Russian Federative Republic, and foreign countries (Vietnam, Republic of Korea, Syria) were educated in Saint Petersburg. The Central Asiatic group of the assistants of the Department now is composed, almost without exception, of Masson's disciples. For the successful training of scientific personnel, on August 7, 1973 Masson was conferred the title of professor with the speciality of "Archaeology".<sup>28</sup>

Masson's achievements in the field of archaeology were honoured by the award of a number of scientific titles. He was elected an Academician of the Russian Federation, Academician of Turkmenistan, Academician of the National Academy of Kyrgyzstan, an Honoured Science Worker of the Russian Federation, and an Honoured and Full Member of several foreign academies and institutes (Great Britain, Germany, Denmark, Italy, Romania).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> These publications are listed in: V.P. Nikonorov, "70 let posle 'Politicheskoi istorii Parfii' N.K. Dibvoiza: Bibliografiia rabot po istorii, kul'ture i sotsial'no-ekonomicheskoi zhizni Parfianskogo gosudarstva i sopredel'nykh s nim territorii (1938–2008)", in N. C. Debevoise [N.K. Dibvoiz], *Politicheskaiia istoriia Parfii*, St. Petersburg 2008, 277–278, 353, 403, 459, 525–527, 636–637, 711, 743.

<sup>27</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 112 rev.

<sup>28</sup> RA, Reg. no. 6610, sheet 142. V.M. Masson succeeded in training 40 Candidates Phil. and 11 Doctors Phil.

<sup>29</sup> Masson 2000, 21–22.

From April 1, 2003 until his death on February 19, 2010, V.M. Masson was a Senior Scientific Assistant of the Department of Archaeology of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the IIMK RAS. Until his very last days he did not abandon his active scientific activity.

Assessing Masson's scientific life, we must pay the tribute to the firmness of purpose with which for over half a century he explored the antiquities of Central Asia, his amazing capacity for work and the acuteness of his analytical intellect due to which his scientific heritage will long retain its relevance for subsequent generations of archaeologists.

V.M. Masson left a distinct trace in archaeology having exposed to the scientific community and everybody interested in the earliest past of the East the brilliant inflorescence of ancient agrarian cultures of Central Asia which laid the foundations of the ancient civilisations of this huge historico-cultural region. From time immemorial, this region was a connecting link between the early urban centres of the Middle East and the world of the "barbarians" who settled the "Great Zone" of the steppes of Eurasia.

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### Abbreviations

- ZIIMK – *Zapiski Instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury RAN* (Papers of the Institute of the History of Material Culture RAS), St. Petersburg.
- IIMK RAS – *Institut istorii material'noi kul'tury RAN* (Institute of the History of Material Culture RAS).
- LGU – *Leningradskii gosudarstvennyi universitet* (Leningrad State University).
- LOIA – *Leningradskoe otdelenie Instituta arkheologii* (Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology).
- LOIIMK – *Leningradskoe otdelenie Instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury* (Leningrad Branch of the Institute of the History of Material Culture).
- RA – *Rukopisnyi arkhiv IIMK RAN* (Manuscript Archives of IIMK RAS)
- SAI – *Svod arkheologicheskikh istochnikov* (Corpus of Archaeological Sources), Moscow/Leningrad.
- IuTAKE – *Iuzhno-Turkmenistsanskaia arkheologicheskaiia kompleksnaia ekspeditsiia* (South Turkmenistan Archaeological Interdisciplinary Expedition).
- PhA – Photo archives of IIMK RAS.

### Abstract

Vadim Mikhailovich Masson (1929–2010) was one of the outstanding researchers of the antiquities of Central Asia. Vadim Mikhailovich's father, Mikhail Evgenevich Masson, was an archaeologist active in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan, while his mother, Kseniia Ivanovna Masson (de domo Kopytovski) served in various Soviet institutions. In addition to his dealing with the proto- and prehistoric archaeology covering the Neolithic, Eneolithic, Bronze and Early Iron Ages of Central Asia and Iran, Masson was interested in the study of the antique civilizations of Central Asia. He headed a number of archaeological expeditions of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR at ancient sites in Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.





Han Jianye (Beijing, China)

## “THE PAINTED POTTERY ROAD” AND EARLY SINO-WESTERN CULTURAL EXCHANGES\*

**Keywords:** Painted Pottery Road, Sino-Western Cultural Exchanges, North Road, South Road

“The Painted Pottery Road” as a concept was first proposed by Li Ji (李济) in 1960<sup>1</sup> and was used to sum up Johan Gunnar Andersson’s theory that “the Yangshao culture came from the West;” in other words, painted pottery is essentially western in origin.<sup>2</sup> In actually, Li Ji doubted that the direction of “the Painted Pottery Road” ran from west to east.<sup>3</sup> Pei Wenzhong (裴文中, while also doubting “the theory that painted pottery came from the West,” indicated as early as 1942 that the painted pottery of Xinjiang originated later than that found in the Yellow River Valley.<sup>4</sup> From this analysis, he further proposed that the Silk Road came into existence in the prehistoric period.<sup>5</sup> In 1965 Su Bingqi (苏秉琦) argued that the movement of the painted pottery of the Yangshao culture, including that of the Majiayao, had been from east to west rather than in the opposite direction.<sup>6</sup> In 1978 Yan Wenming (严文明) published an article entitled “The origin of painted potteries from Gansu,” in which he identi-

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\* The National Social Science Fund Project, the Funding Project for Academic Human Resources Development in Institutions of Higher Learning under the Jurisdiction of the Beijing Municipality.

<sup>1</sup> Li Ji (Li 1996, 57–60) notes that “some believed that there was a painted pottery road in advance of the silk road. Others undertook great effort to compare the discoveries of Chinese painted pottery cultures with similar discoveries in the Eastern Europe.” In the article, “some” and “others” may refer to the Swedish archaeologists J. G. Andersson among others.

<sup>2</sup> Andersson 1923; Andersson 1925.

<sup>3</sup> Li Ji 1927.

<sup>4</sup> Pei Wenzhong 1942, 34–39.

<sup>5</sup> Pei Wenzhong 1987, 256–273.

<sup>6</sup> Su Bingqi 1965, 51–82.

fied the source, evolution, and direction of the painted pottery of Gansu and showed that painted pottery gradually expanded east to west, while also demonstrating that the western origins of the Yangshao culture is unfounded.<sup>7</sup> In 1982 Chen Ge (陈戈) pointed out that since there was more painted pottery from Xinjiang in the east than in the west, it had thus originated in the east. He concluded that the direction of painted pottery went from east to west, and not in the opposite direction.<sup>8</sup> In recent years, the idea of “the Painted Pottery Road” has come to refer to the westward route by which early Chinese culture traveled as detected by painted pottery, while western culture was brought to China along this same route.<sup>9</sup>

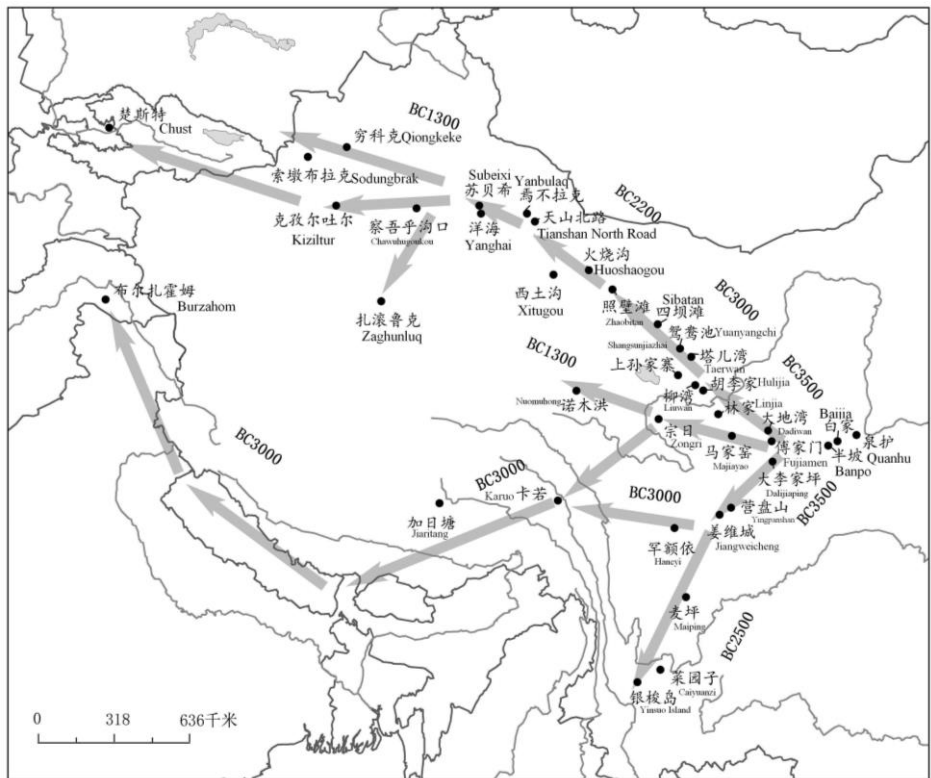


Fig. 1. “The Painted Pottery Road”. Sketch Map

<sup>7</sup> Yan Wenming 1978, 62–76.

<sup>8</sup> Chen Ge 1982, 77–103.

<sup>9</sup> In 2005 we argued that “the Sino-Western cultural passage might well be called ‘The Bronze and Iron Age Road’, or ‘The Sheep and Horse Road’, or even ‘The Painted Pottery Road.’ Regardless of the term that one chooses, this road was the precursor of the Silk Road that began in the Han Dynasty, and had a more profound and lasting influence on the development of civilization both East and the West.” See Han Jianye 2005b, 91.

In this article the term “early Sino-Western cultural exchange,” refers to the cultural communication between “early China,” or “the early Chinese cultural sphere” and Western culture. The upper limit of this period is c. 6000 BC after “the early Chinese cultural sphere” had taken shape<sup>10</sup> whose deeper origins perhaps began with migrations in the Paleolithic Period, while its lower limit ended with the formal opening of the Silk Road in the first centuries A.D. The high and steep Tibetan Plateau caused early Sino-Western cultural exchanges to occur around it with the southern route becoming the South Road and the northern route the North Road. Naturally, these designations are intended as convenient references as both routes in reality contained numerous branches (Fig. 1). This paper will present a concise chronological analysis of the route by which Chinese painted pottery was transmitted from east to west beginning in the Shaanxi-Gansu area of China and will also discuss the nature of early Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

## I

The long-distance migration of people in the Paleolithic Period is the most exciting chapter in the early in the history of cultural interaction as it established basic settlement patterns and cultural distributions that are still in existence. Following the Neolithic Period, large-scale migrations and cultural exchanges continued, whereby the pottery of early Chinese culture, as seen in the Shaanxi-Gansu region, was transmitted from east to west, while Western culture penetrated China along this same route.

The earliest evidence of painted pottery in China is associated with the Baijia culture<sup>11</sup> located in the Shaanxi-Gansu region along the Wei River and on the upper reaches of Han River. Chronologically, the Baijia culture ranges from c. 5800 BC to c. 5000 BC and extends as far west as the central region of Gansu.<sup>12</sup> The pottery, some of it painted a simple red, was produced by an agriculturally oriented people. This was followed by the Lingkou and Banpo type of pottery of the Yangshao culture which subsequently developed between 5000 BC and 4200 BC, when straight-line geometric and fish patterns in black were popular. The distribution range was limited to Shaanxi and thus did not travel as far west as the pottery of the Baijia culture. About 4200 BC, Yangshao culture developed a late form of the Banpo phase called Shijia, characterized by new elements, such as the dotted and hook-like leaf pattern in the shaped as triangles and a bean-pod

<sup>10</sup> Han Jianye 2005a, 65–71.

<sup>11</sup> Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1994.

<sup>12</sup> Gansu sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2006.

pattern among others. The Banpo phase expanded westward into central and southern Gansu, southwest to Sichuan on the Shaanxi-Gansu border, and perhaps to the northwest corridor of Hexi.<sup>13</sup> In c. 4000 BC the Yangshao culture developed the Quanhu phase, while the western extent of this pottery remained limited to central and southern Gansu.<sup>14</sup>

## II

The first significant stage of the westward expansion of a painted pottery by an agricultural people was the Quanhu phase in c. 3500 BC which succeeded the earlier Yangshao culture following the formation of Shilingxia pottery of the Majiayao culture. From its inception, this pottery diffused along different branches of the northern and southern routes.

**The North Road:** the later period of the Quanhu type was confined to the northwest in the regions of Minhe, Huzhu, and Xunhua in eastern Qinghai, represented by the remains of Hulijia<sup>15</sup> and Yangwapo<sup>16</sup> at Minhe. The pottery was painted black and rarely red or reddish-brown, although some contain a red or orange-yellow ceramic coating. The designs include curved triangles, dotted and hooked leaves, arcs, and frequently grids or nets, and groups of lines that may or may not have been serrated to form an “X”-shaped pattern. The basic subject matter and composition, although largely unchanged from the past, tend to be more complex and intricate and thus closer to the succeeding Shilingxia style.

**The South Road:** the later period of the Quanhu and Shilingxia phase was confined in the southwest to the Upper Reaches of the Minjiang River and the Bailongjiang River, represented by the sites of Boxi<sup>17</sup> and Yingpanshan<sup>18</sup> in Mao County and by the site of Jiangweicheng<sup>19</sup> at Wenchuan in northwestern Sichuan. These painted potteries were primarily composed in black with complex designs like curved triangles, parallel lines, ripples, swirls, and grids or nets.

<sup>13</sup> The region extends to the southwest where it reaches Longnan (southern Gansu), e.g., Dajiaping Period I. See Beijing Daxue kaoguxue Xi, *Gansu sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo* 2000, 1–36.

<sup>14</sup> Han Jianye 2008.

<sup>15</sup> *Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Ganqing Gongzuodui*, Qinghai sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2001, 40–58.

<sup>16</sup> Qinghai Sheng Wenwu Kaogudui 1984, 15–20.

<sup>17</sup> Chengdushi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 2006, 1–12.

<sup>18</sup> Chengdushi Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 2002, 1–77.

<sup>19</sup> Sichuan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo deng 2006, 3–14.

Regardless of the road, the style of painted pottery at this time differed from that on the central Shaanxi plain: most notably there is a marked trend toward more complex designs constituting a sharp contrast to the otherwise simple and declining style current in the eastern Shaanxi plain. There are three reasons for this change: (i) the Miaodigou phase of Yangshao culture in the core area of the central plains (i.e., those of southern Shanxi and western Henan) was in decline, and consequently with a weakening of Yangshao unity, it was impossible to exert any noticeable influence on the surrounding region; (ii) Qinghai and Sichuan were too far from the central plains to remain in continuous contact; (iii) there may have existed among the local cultures in the hunting and gathering economy of the “Mesolithic Period” a merging of indigenous cultures with the painted pottery culture and thereby promoted variation.<sup>20</sup>

### III

The second stage of the western expansion by an agricultural people is represented by painted pottery that originated in c. 3000 BC upon the formation of the Majiayao phase of the Majiayao culture. It, too, followed the north and south road with the latter subdivided into two separate branches.

**The North Road:** the Majiayao phase of Majiayao culture expanded considerably far from central Gansu to northeastern Qinghai and the Hexi Corridor, including the sites of Shangsunjiashai at Datong in Qinghai<sup>21</sup>, Ta'erwan at Wuwei<sup>22</sup>, and Zhaobitan at Jiuquan<sup>23</sup> in Gansu. The pottery was primarily painted black both inside and outside the vessel and are decorated with complex compositions, notably flowing lines. The popular patterns include groups of arcs or straight lines, concentric circles, ripples, whirls, and grids or nets along with illustrations of numerous dancers. After 2500 BC, the Banshan phase of Majiayao culture emerged in this region, such as the Liuwan “Banshan type of tomb remains” at Ledu<sup>24</sup> and the Yuanyangchi early tomb remains at Yongchang<sup>25</sup>, which are similar to remains in central Gansu.

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<sup>20</sup> On the second and third explanations, see the reasoned opinions of Yan Wenming 1978, 62–76.

<sup>21</sup> Qinghai Sheng Wenwu Guanlichu Kaogudui 1978, 48–49.

<sup>22</sup> Gansu Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2004, 8–11.

<sup>23</sup> Li Shuicheng 2001, 121–135.

<sup>24</sup> Qinghai Sheng Wenwu Guanlichu Kaogudui, Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1984.

<sup>25</sup> Gansu Sheng Bowuguan Wenwu Gongzuodui *et al.* 1982, 199–228.

**The Northern Branch of the South Road:** the Majiayao phase of Majiayao culture expanded into the Gonghe basin in eastern Qinghai Province, perhaps having merged with local indigenous culture that had lacked a pottery tradition and thereby formed the Zongri phase of Majiayao culture as represented by the remains of Zongri period I.<sup>26</sup> The pottery can be divided into two categories. The first is a fine clay terracotta, ornamented in an exquisitely crafted color of black. The class, style, and motifs generally resemble the painted pottery of the Majiayao culture in central Gansu; in addition, there were also found basins containing the design of numerous dancers or porters. The second category is demarcated by a coarse sandy-brown pottery, some of which were painted a purplish red, with designs such as birds, triangles with folded tips, and straight or bent lines, which might have derived from the indigenous component. The Gonghe basin still formed part of the Zongri phase of Majiayao culture after the formation of the Banshan phase, but it is clear that both ceramics belong to one of these two categories.

**The Southern Branch of the South Road:** in northwestern Sichuan at the sites of Boxi and Yingpanshan in Mao County along with the site of Jiangweicheng in Wenchuan, the distinctive Majiayao phase of Majiayao culture has been excavated, revealing a continuation of the earlier local Shilingxia phase of Majiayao culture. There must have been close contact with the south-central region of Gansu. After c. 2500 BC the culture in central Gansu gave way to the Banshan phase and expanded into the northwest, while the Majiayao phase in northwestern Sichuan and its successors continued to spread to the southwest along the western border of the Sichuan basin into north-central Yunnan. Among the Maiping remains at Hanyuan in Sichuan,<sup>27</sup> the Caiyuanzi remains at Yongren,<sup>28</sup> and the Yinsuodao Period 1 remains at Dali<sup>29</sup> in Yunnan and elsewhere are an array of objects, such as jars, bottles, and bowls exhibiting the distinct designs of marks made by rope and lace, as well as stone knives with holes (some of which have two holes and a concaved back), long adzes and chisels related to the Majiayao phase of Majiayao culture. Naturally, there were also ubiquitous features like engravings, and stamped and geometric patterns testifying to the prevalence of local tastes. Since Yunnan and other areas do not contain evidence of painted pottery at this time, they can only be regarded as having developed painted pottery as the result of cultural influence.

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<sup>26</sup> Qinghai Sheng Wenwu Guanlichu, Hainan Zhou Minzu Bowuguan 1998, 1–14; Ge Sangben, Chen Honghai 1999.

<sup>27</sup> Sichuan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 2008, 11–19.

<sup>28</sup> Yunnan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo, Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Yunnan Gongzuodui *et al.* 2003, 263–296.

<sup>29</sup> Yunnan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 2009, 23–41.

## IV

The most noticeable feature of the western expansion of the farming culture that produced painted pottery during the second stage of this westward expansion is its far-flung penetration along the South Road into Tibet and even Kashmir.

The Karuo culture represented by the Karuo remains at Changdu<sup>30</sup> in Tibet dates to an upper limit of c. 3000 BC.<sup>31</sup> The early assemblage characterized by jars with high necks and open mouthed basins are similar in shape to those of the early Zongri phase of Majiayao culture, replete with the popular false ring foot and the use of a small amount of black color on which folded lines, grids or nets, and numerous other decorations are frequently found. In addition, other items, including polished stone implements such as knives bearing a hole (some made with a concaved back), long adzes and chisels, as well as semi-subterranean houses and domesticated pigs and crops, like millet, are similar to both. These cultural characteristics also exhibit similarities with the Majiayao phase of Majiayao culture in northwestern Sichuan.<sup>32</sup> Possibly, the Karuo culture was the result of the merging of Majiayao culture in eastern Qinghai and northwestern Sichuan with a local culture that lacked a ceramic tradition during the westward expansion of this painted pottery.<sup>33</sup> It cannot be dismissed that the Karuo culture or a similar culture by this time might have spread over the southeastern region of Tibet near Lhasa and even Sikkim. The engravings, stamps, and numerous other decorations were excavated at Jiaritang in Damxung where stone knives, long stone adzes and chisels, and pottery shards<sup>34</sup> were found, while stone knives, long stone adzes and chisels, and pottery shards were likewise discovered in Linzhi and Motuo,<sup>35</sup> all of which share close affinities with Karuo culture. The same holds true further south in northern Sikkim, where discoveries of polished stone implements, including knives, adzes and chisels have been made.<sup>36</sup>

<sup>30</sup> Xizang Zizhiqū wénwù guānlǐwéiyuánhùi *et al.* 1985.

<sup>31</sup> There were 41 <sup>14</sup>C data for the Karuo culture, resulting in the corrected date of c. 3200–2000 BC. See Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1991, 243–250.

<sup>32</sup> This link must have been realized in western Sichuan. Among the remains of Haneyi Period I at Danba in Sichuan, there were recorded flat-bottom bottle-like vessels, black painted pottery, stone knives with one or more holes, and stone adzes, which were either contemporary with or later than the Majiayao phase of late Majiayao culture. Sichuan Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 1998, 59–77.

<sup>33</sup> If Majiayao culture was earlier than Di and Qiang culture, then Karuo culture was an “aboriginal that developed from the absorption of Di and Qiang culture in the northwest” (Xizang Zizhiqū Wenwu guānlǐwéiyuánhùi *et al.* 1985, 153–156).

<sup>34</sup> Xizang Zizhiqū Wenwù, Sichuāndaxué Kaogùxí, Shaanxi Sheng Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2005.

<sup>35</sup> Wang Hengjie 1975, 310–315; Shang Jian, Jiang Hua, Zhao Lin 1978, 136–137.

<sup>36</sup> Dani, Masson (eds.) 1992.

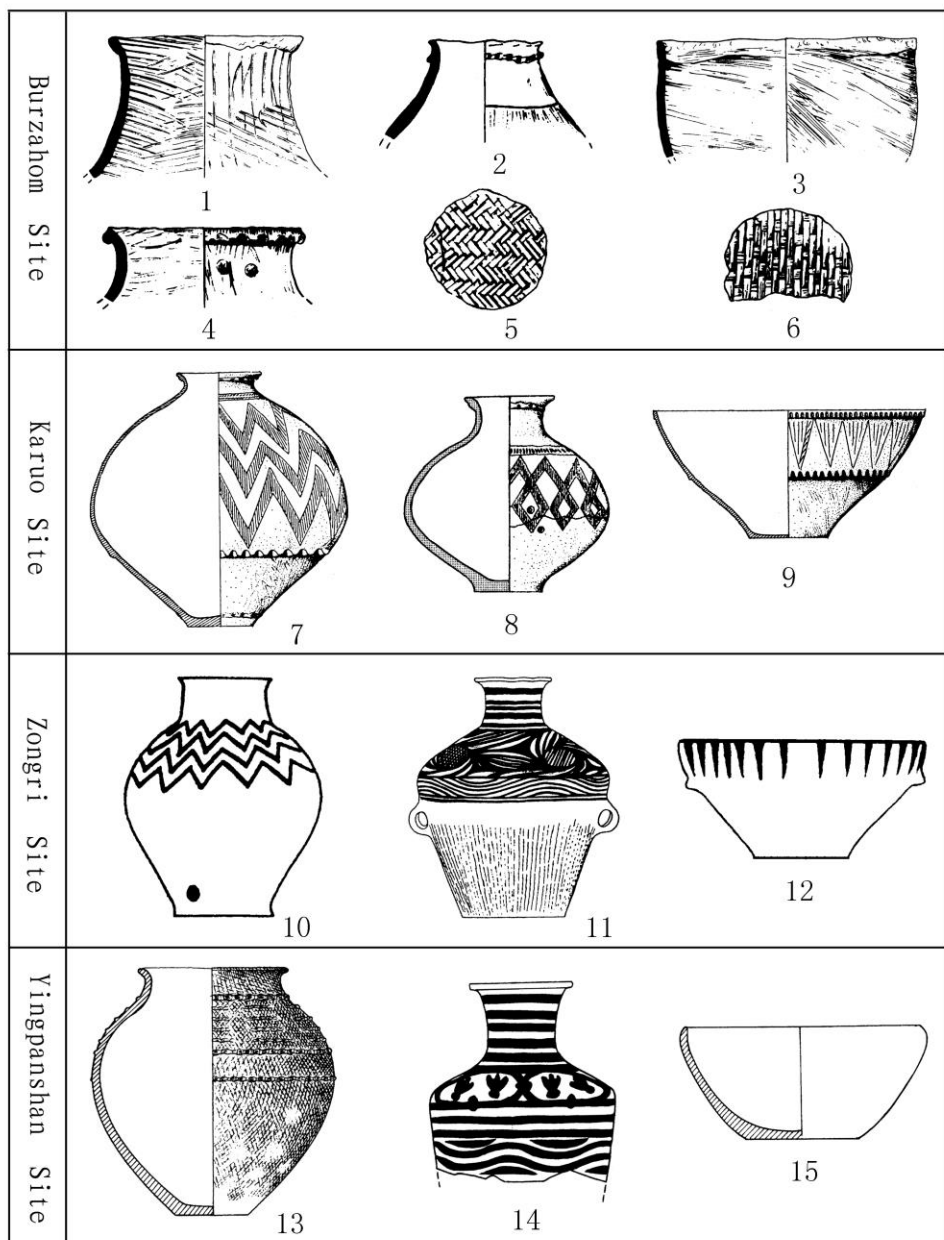
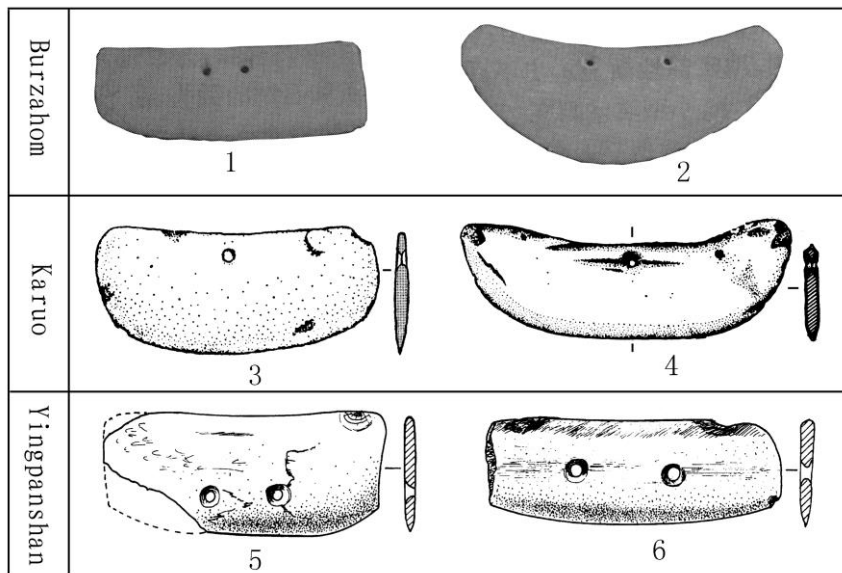


Fig. 2. Potteries from Burzahom site in Kashmir, Karuo, Zongri and Yingpanshan site in China





**Fig. 3. Stone knives with a concave back from Burzahom site in Kashmir, Karuo and Yingpanshan site in China**

Surprisingly, the Burzahom period I B remains in Kashmir share a great many similarities with the Karuo culture.<sup>37</sup> Both were basically composed of coarse gray ceramics made from a clay-strip forming technique, although some brown ceramics are also known; the pottery is characterized by small mouthed, high necked jars and pots and flat bottomed basins and bowls; other notable features are an out turned lip, an elaborately decorated neck and body, a false ring foot, and the same textile used to make imprints on the bottom (fig. 2); both were popular appearing alongside stone knives with one or two holes, polished long stone axes, adzes, and chisels among other tools, particularly stone knives with a concave back made with a great deal of skill (fig. 3); both cultures had subterranean houses with wooden pillars supporting the roof. There are so many similarities between both cultures that they cannot be the result of coincidence. Since these factors abruptly emerge in Burzahom period I B and its date cannot be earlier than the Karuo culture,<sup>38</sup> the

<sup>37</sup> In 1972 according to the similarities between the Burzahom culture in Kashmir and the Yellow River Valley culture in China, Mughal and Halim argued for the westward transmission of the Yangshao culture (Mughal, Halim 1972, 33–110). In 1982 Dikshit argued that such a similarity was the result of the southward transmission of the Longshan culture and that the transmission route might in fact have been a series of mountain passes that linked the Gilgit River with Xinjiang (Dikshit 1982, 30). Huo Wei thought it was closer to the Karuo culture (Huo Wei 1990, 101–107).

<sup>38</sup> The absolute chronology of Burzahom Period I A, B, and C are 3000–2850 BC, 2850–2550 BC, and 2550–1700 BC, respectively (Dani, Masson (eds) 1992).

only explanation can be that it is associated with the long distance westward penetration of the Karuo culture along the southern foothills of the Himalayas. Naturally, there are also a number of differences. For example, the pottery of Burzahom period I B is generally has a plain surface, houses were constructed in deep underground caverns, sheep were raised and wheat was farmed, while the pottery of the Karuo culture regularly sports complex engravings, stamps, and geometrical patterns, the houses were built in shallow pits using rocks, and pigs were the primary livestock animal and millet was grown. It is thus clear that the Karuo culture influenced the Burzahom culture to a limited extent.

Although the early cultural exchanges along the South Road were primarily oriented westward, it is possible that some cultural elements spread eastward on it. For example, the dance pattern of the Majiayao and Zongri culture,<sup>39</sup> the bronze knife of the Majiayao phase from the site of Linjia in the Dongxiang county of Gansu,<sup>40</sup> the domesticated sheep of the Shilingxia and Majiayao phases,<sup>41</sup> had perhaps originated in the west. One possible route used for the eastward transmission of Sino-Western cultural exchanges was the South Road.

## V

The third stage of the westward expansion of an agriculturally based culture represented by its painted pottery began in c. 2200 BC after the formation of the Machang phase of Majiayao culture, which expanded westward along the North Road and Hexi Corridor. With respect to the Qijia culture east of the Hexi Corridor, there is a small amount of painted pottery similar to that of the Machang phase.

The Banshan phase of Majiayao culture arrived in the western end of Jiuquan, during the Machang phase from where it subsequently advanced to Dunhuang. Remains of the Machang phase at the western end of the Hexi Corridor were later than the remains found in the east, which can be divided into two periods. The earliest was the Machang phase, while the remains of Zhaobitan at Jiuquan and Xitugou at Dunhuan<sup>42</sup> constitute the later period, of which there are

<sup>39</sup> Similar themes appear in the Near East and southeastern Europe between 9000 and 6000 BC.

<sup>40</sup> Gansu Sheng Wenwu Gongzuodui, Linxia huizuzhizhou Wenhuaaju, Dongxiangzuzuzhixian Wenhuaquan 1984, 111–161.

<sup>41</sup> Many oracle sheep bones of the Shilingxia phase of Majiayao culture have been discovered at the site of Fujiamen in Gansu. The custom of accompanying sheep shoulder blades with the dead have been detected in the tombs at Shizhaocun Period 5 in Tianshui and are dated to more than 5000 years ago. In south-central Gansu, people not only raised sheep, but also used them as part of their religious worship. Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo Ganqing Gongzuodui. 1995, 289–296; Zhongguo Shehuikexueyuan Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1999, 50–71.

<sup>42</sup> Xibeidaxue Kaogu Xi *et al.* 2004, 3–7.

few examples of painted pottery with distinctive designs. Instead most contain nets or grids composed of straight lines and have no color inside the vessel.<sup>43</sup> The later period was discovered at the sites of Ganguya and Xihetan at Jiuquan<sup>44</sup> and are classed as a “transitional phase,”<sup>45</sup> as they seem to belong to the later period of the Machang phase; the painted pottery is ornamented with such patterns as lattices and inverted triangular nets or grids on the neck, vertical bands and groups of bent lines adorn the belly. The remains of both periods contain a preponderance of indigenous characteristics, which must have resulted from the influence of the Hehuang area based on the local Banshan phase. It is worth noticing that at this time the Machang phase might have reached eastern Xinjiang, because among the remains at Tianshanbeilu in Hami there are double-handled jars with a painted lattice pattern and other designs reminiscent of the painted pottery associated with the Machang phase.<sup>46</sup>

After about 1900 BC, in the midwestern section of the Hexi Corridor and in eastern Xinjiang, the Siba culture and the Tianshanbeilu culture at Hami suddenly began producing similar pottery. The Siba culture is represented by Sibatan remains in the Shandan county of Gansu,<sup>47</sup> including Huoshaogou in Yumen and Ganguya in Jiuquan<sup>48</sup> among other sites. The painted pottery of these cultures basically consists of colored decorations which were painted after the vessels had been fired. Generally there is a thick black overlay on a purplish-red base with designs of parallel horizontal lines, arc patterns, lattice and checkered patterns, triangles, nets or grids, vertical patterns, puffy clouds, frets, arcs, dots, varying lizard patterns, and handprints among others. There were also human figures with inverted triangular torsos, which may have been a derivative from the Machang phase.<sup>49</sup> The Tianshanbeilu culture is best represented by the remains from the Tianshanbeilu tomb in Hami<sup>50</sup>, testifying to the development of a local brand of pottery painted in black, consisting of various patterns, like nets or grids, lattices, vertical patterns, a “Z” shape, handprints and leaf veins, and peculiarly there are also male and female figures. Most of the pottery consist of single or double-handled jars with vertical bands, nets or grids, lattices, and handprints in black, sharing similar characteristics to the pottery of the Siba culture and appearing to have originated from the Hexi Corridor.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Li Shuicheng 2005, 239–278.

<sup>44</sup> Gansu Sheng Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2005, 44–48.

<sup>45</sup> Li Shuicheng 2001, 121 – 135.

<sup>46</sup> Shui Tao 1993, 447 – 490.

<sup>47</sup> An Zhimin 1959, 7–16.

<sup>48</sup> Li Shuicheng 1993, 80–121.

<sup>49</sup> Yan Wenming 1978, 62–76.

<sup>50</sup> Lü Enguo, Chang Xien, Wang Binghua 2001, 179 – 184.

<sup>51</sup> Li Shuicheng 1999, 53 – 65.

During this stage of the westward expansion of the painted pottery culture, it is clear that numerous elements of western origin were simultaneously being brought eastward. Characteristic of Siba culture and the Tianshanbeilu culture in Hami is a rich variety of bronze wares, such as arc-backed knives, swords, lances, dagger axes, adzes, chisels, awls, arrowheads, spears, mirrors, earrings, bracelets, cauldrons (鑊), bells, tablets, buttons, beads, pipes, pins, and found only in the Tianshanbeilu culture of Hami, jars with handles decorated with horizontal and vertical lines, all of which are of a western origin. Western culture also penetrated further east and played a significant role in the emergence of bronze ware and in the subsequent development of the agricultural and pastoral character of the Qijia, Zhukaigou, and Xiajiadianxiaceng cultures, as well as the emergence of the Erlitou culture,<sup>52</sup> the birthplace of Bronze Age civilization in China.

## VI

The fourth stage of the westward expansion of painted pottery was transmitted along the North Road beginning in c. 1300 BC with the formation of Yanbulaq culture. In terms of the Xindian, Kayue, Siwa, Shajing, and Nuomuhong cultures in Gansu and the Qinghai provinces, these painted potteries developed from that of the Majiayao and Qijia cultures with the exception of the Nuomuhong culture which expanded to the Qaidam Basin<sup>53</sup> and not much beyond.

The Yanbulaq culture was situated in the Hami basin and Barkol grasslands of eastern Xinjiang as represented by the remains of Yanbulaq in Hami.<sup>54</sup> The most characteristic painted pottery designs are in black with a coating of red and include ripples, vertical bands, multi-scale patterns, an “S” and “C” shape, and an arc pattern, among others. This culture developed from the Tianshanbeilu culture in Hami as well as from others. The Yanbulaq culture was most responsible for the formation in the southern and northern Tianshan of the “High-Neck Kettle cultural tradition.” From here pottery shapes, like the long-necked pot, the belly cup and belly bowl, the *dou* (a type of tray with a ringed foot, 豆), and the cylindrical cup and jar were gradually transmitted to the west, leading to the formation of a series of painted pottery cultures, including the Subeixi,<sup>55</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Fitzgerald-Huber 1995, 17–67; Han Jianye 2009, 37–47.

<sup>53</sup> Qinghai Sheng Wenguanhui *et al.* 1963, 17–44.

<sup>54</sup> Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Wenhuating Wenwuchu *et al.* 1989, 325–362.

<sup>55</sup> Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo *et al.* 2002, 42–57; Xinjiang Tulufanxue Yanjiusuo, Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2011, 1–22.

the Chawuhugoukou,<sup>56</sup> the Yili River valley culture,<sup>57</sup> and from east to west in Xinjiang, the Chawuhugoukou culture which later expanded southward to the edge of the Tarim Basin.<sup>58</sup> These cultures were in many ways similar to one another, but they also had their differences. For example, the pottery of the Subeixi and Yanbulaq cultures were painted black on a red base, while the pottery of the Chawuhugoukou culture employed a red overlay on a white base, unlike the pottery of the Yili river valley culture which was painted black or red.

There is a noticeable relationship between the Chawuhugoukou culture and that of the Chust. The Chust culture began in the Ferghana basin near the end of the second and the beginning of the first millennium BC.<sup>59</sup> It produced a painted pottery of red on red with such designs as nets or grids, lattices, checkered patterns, triangles, and created earthenware like bowls, single handled cups and jars, as well as two handled jars, all resembling those fashioned by the Chawuhugoukou culture. The Chust culture's painted pottery assemblage does not include any influence from the earlier Namazga I-III culture, but the Chawuhugoukou culture followed the Gansu-Qinghai cultural tradition, which contains a complete evolutionary sequence. The implication, then, is that the Chawuhugoukou culture had exerted a considerable amount of influence on the Chust culture.

Along with further westward expansion of the painted culture at this time, there was a greater variety of bronze tools, weapons, horse gear and decorations, and even a small amount of ironware, such as knives, swords, and arrowheads that were introduced into Xinjiang from the west, which then penetrated the western region of China including Qinghai and Gansu. Consequently, the early Iron Age in western China began prior to 1000 BC.<sup>60</sup>

## VII

Since the discovery ninety years ago of the Yangshao culture, people have been attracted by its beautiful painted pottery, which gave birth to the name, “Painted Pottery Culture.” Later as the number of archaeological discoveries throughout China were made, many other cultures with painted pottery have been

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<sup>56</sup> Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1999b; Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2002b, 14–29.

<sup>57</sup> Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 1999a, 59–66; Xinjiang Wenwu Kaogu Yanjiusuo 2002a, 13–53.

<sup>58</sup> Xinjiang Weiwuer Zizhiqu Bowuguan *et al.* 2003, 89–136.

<sup>59</sup> Dani, Masson (eds.) 1992.

<sup>60</sup> Han Jianye 2007.

found, but the Yangshao culture remains the most representative of this type. The Yangshao culture was located in the central region of China. The early period of this culture, in which painted pottery lasted some 1,500 years (c. 5000–3500 B.C.), is now recognized as the core of the “cultural circle of early China” or the “cultural center of early China.”<sup>61</sup> Moreover, the painted pottery culture of western China – Gansu, Qinghai, Sichuan, Xinjiang and even Tibet – had its roots in Yangshao culture. In this sense, the westward transmission of painted pottery is the earliest attested movement of Chinese culture to the west.

Yangshao culture and other painted pottery cultures were situated on the loess plateau, which created a dry farming culture commonly referred to as “children of the yellow earth.”<sup>62</sup> Only a highly advanced agricultural society could invest the resources and time necessary for the creation of a painted pottery and provide the stability required for its use and storage. Throughout its westward expansion, painted pottery always retained its fundamental agricultural features, even as herding and hunting and even nomadic elements were added to it. In this sense, the westward transmission of painted pottery was in actuality an early westward transmission of Chinese culture, which reflects a process by which migrating farmers remembered the “yellow earth” from where they came even as they sought a new homeland. If in fact the painted pottery culture of the Shaanxi and Gansu regions were inhabited by the Qiang, then it was the Qiang who must have played a very important role in early Sino-Western cultural exchanges.

In general, the “Painted Pottery Road” ran from east to west, expanding and transmitting early Chinese culture in Shaanxi and Gansu, but it also allowed for western culture to enter China. This road lasted from the fourth to the first millennium BC, during which time there were four remarkable stages – c. 3500 BC, 3000 BC, 2200 BC and 1300 BC – of the western expansion of painted pottery. Although there were numerous routes, generally they can be grouped into either the North Road or the South Road that encircled the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau. Along these roads, the factors that allowed for dry farming cultures to flourish also enabled painted pottery to originate in central China and gradually to move westward, while from the West wheat, sheep, horses, carriages, bronze and iron smelting technologies were gradually introduced into China, further deepening Sino-Western exchanges of goods and ideas and people. In short, the “Painted Pottery Road” serves as the primary conduit of early Sino-Western cultural exchanges, and thus the precursor of the “Silk Road,” which would come to play such an important role in the civilizations of China and the West.

<sup>61</sup> Han Jianye 2004, 59–64.

<sup>62</sup> Andersson 1934.

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## Abstract

“The Painted Pottery Road” as a concept was first proposed by Li Ji (李济) in 1960 and was used to sum up Johan Gunnar Andersson’s theory that “the Yangshao culture came from the West;” in other words, painted pottery is essentially western in origin. The “Painted Pottery Road” signifies the expansion and transmission of early Chinese culture, manifested in the form of painted pottery, westward from Shaanxi and Gansu, as well as the eastward movement of western culture. “The Painted Pottery Road” lasted from the fourth to the first millennium BC, during which four periods – c. 3500, c. 3000, c. 2200, and c. 1300 BC – characterize the westward expansion of painted pottery. Although numerous routes were used for its transmission, generally speaking they are grouped around the Qinghai-Tibetan Plateau as the North Road and the South Road, respectively. “The Painted Pottery Road” was thus the primary route of early Sino-Western cultural exchanges, serving as the precursor of “the Silk Road,” which subsequently exerted a great deal of influence on the formation and development of Chinese and Western civilization.



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## CENTRAL ASIAN SOLDIERS IN ACHAEMENID BABYLONIA

**Keywords:** Chorasmians, Sakai, Arumāya, Achaemenid Babylonia

The Persian state of the Achaemenid period was the first world empire. It was founded between 550 and 510 B.C., and its borders stretched from Egypt to Central Asia and north-western India. Intensive processes of syncretism of cultures and religious ideas of many various nations were characteristic for this period. The Persian state administration established in many countries military colonies which included representatives of various nations of the empire. In particular, we know about these processes from Babylonian administrative and economic documents where many individuals from various parts of the empire, including Central Asian immigrants, are referred to. The Persian administration not infrequently appointed to the administrative apparatus individuals who were not indigenous inhabitants of the country.

After the capture of Babylonia by the Persians, this fertile country became more accessible to immigrants and besides the state administration established there military colonies consisting of Persians, Medes, Lydians, Carians and other ethnic groups, including also inhabitants from Central Asia. It would be appropriate to begin this survey from Chorasmians.

A Chorasmian<sup>1</sup> Dadaparna' by name is referred to in a document drafted in the fifth regnal year of the Persian king Cyrus, i.e. 534 B.C. (UCP 9/II, 38:7). The same Chorasmian is mentioned also in UCP 9/II, 39. These texts have been studied by Zadok.<sup>2</sup> Both documents have been discovered at Uruk and probably belonged to the archives of the Eanna temple which was located there. As seen

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<sup>1</sup> [Hur-zi]-ma-a-a (see UCP 9/II, 38:7). Cf. Old Persian Uvārazmī- and Humarizmu- ("Chorasmia") in the Babylonian version of the Behistun inscription.

<sup>2</sup> Zadok 1976, 214; 1981, 658.

from them, Dadaparna' was a messenger sent by the royal administration in order to take care of some property which belonged to the state.

According to another document from the Eanna archives, in 527 B.C. the administration of the same temple was ordered to send fifty temple slaves in order to serve as archers at the disposal of a Chorasmian<sup>3</sup> who was a superior of a fortified outpost located near Uruk and one more individual who was a Babylonian. The name of this Chorasmian is broken off. Another document from the reign of Cyrus or Cambyses (the date is destroyed) mentions a Chorasmian (Hur-zi-ma-a-a) Ukiriia by name who served as the manager of the palm grove belonging to the royal manor in Amanu, near Uruk.<sup>4</sup> Finally, a Chorasmian (Hur-zi-ma-a-a) by the name Ubaratta is referred to among several witnesses of a promissory note drafted in Babylon in 505 B.C.<sup>5</sup>

Babylonian documents of the Achaemenid period contain much more information about Sakai. As known, the Persians called all the Scythian tribes Sakai. They and Persians spoke closely related languages and could understand each other without translators. They, along with the Persians, Medes and Bactrians constituted the nuclear of the Achaemenid army. The Babylonian texts call the Sakai "Cimmerians" (Gimirrāja) using the name of the tribes that penetrated the Near East from the Black Sea region in the eighth and seventh centuries B.C. In the Persian and Elamite versions of the Achaemenid inscriptions, the Scythian tribes are designated as Sakai, while in the Babylonian versions of the same inscriptions they are called Cimmerians using archaic ethnic nomenclature. The only Babylonian text which refers to Sakai is *CT* 55, No. 93 (line 9) written in Sippar during the reign of Darius I. In this text a certain Dēmishi bears the ethnic name Sakai. The Sakai tribes supplied the Achaemenid army with a substantial number of mounted bowmen who were accustomed to permanent military life and who served in the Persian garrisons in Babylonia, Egypt and other countries. The Persian administration created military colonies out of representatives of various peoples in Babylonia and other countries. The colonists were distributed among the military districts and received allotments of land. For instance, in 529 B.C. the Persian governor of Babylonia, Gubāru (Gobrias) ordered to transfer for use to the "Cimmerians" and "Subareans" a canal for the irrigation of their fields (*BE* 8, No. 80). According to another document which was drafted in Babylon in 505 B.C. a "Cimmerian" named Sakita together with a Chorasmian and some other individuals are mentioned as witnesses of a business transaction.<sup>6</sup> Also it can be mentioned

<sup>3</sup> *YOS* 7, No. 154:11: URU Hur-zi-ma-a-a

<sup>4</sup> Moore 1939, 89,51.

<sup>5</sup> Strassmeier 1897, 458, 14.

<sup>6</sup> Strassmeier 1897, 458.

here a document from the city of Dilbat drafted in 489 B.C. where a field belonging to a “Cimmerian” is referred to.<sup>7</sup>

Gimirrāja (i.e. Sakai) are also mentioned frequently in Babylonian administrative and business documents of the Achaemenid period as royal soldiers who were members of the military colonies established by the Persian administration. Documents from the archive of the Murashu business house contain many references to the “Cimmerians” (Gimirrāja), who judging by the parallel Old Persian and Elamite versions of the trilingual Achaemenid inscriptions, were the Sakai. For instance, as seen from the document *BE* 10, No. 97 drafted in Nippur in 420 B.C. Rimut-Ninurta who was a member of the business house of Murashu paid to the “foreman of the Cimmerians” Taddannu, son of Tīrijama, as royal taxes two minas of silver and some products (beer, flour, barley, etc.) as a one year rent from bow fiefs which were rented out to the Murashu firm. Taddannu is a Semitic name, but his father Tīrijama bore an Iranian name. As seen from another document the house of Murashu paid the royal tax for rented land to Tīribazu, son of Humata and brother of Tīriparna, the chief of “Cimmerians” (they both are Iranian names). They apparently were representatives of Central Asian Sakai of the Haumavarga or Tigrakhauda, from whom the Persian administration had established military colonies near Nippur. In 417 B.C. some “Cimmerians” paid two minas forty shekels of silver as royal tax on grain fields from seven bow fiefs located near Nippur.<sup>8</sup> Thus, military colonies of “Cimmerians” existed around Nippur in the second half of the fifth century B.C. Sometimes the “Cimmerians” rented out their fiefs to the Murashu business house, which paid rent to the holders of these fiefs and taxes in grain, beer, sheep, etc. as well as money destined for the king. By the fifth century B.C. these Sakai had adapted themselves to local customs and even often gave their children Babylonian names.

As known, Sakai served in the army mainly as equestrian archers. Besides, one document from Uruk dated to the sixth regnal year of Cambyses (524 B.C.) indicates that some Sakai also served in Babylonia as sailors (*VAS* 20, No. 49). As seen from this text, 60 liters of flour were issued to the “Cimmerians” Ushukaja and Tattakkaja who were in charge of ships. Their names are Iranian. Thus some of the Sakai soldiers in Babylonia took care of boats which carried loads at the order of the royal administration. This document was discovered in Uruk during archaeological excavations. In this connection can be mentioned Herodotus’ (7.96) statement that during the Persian invasion into Greece on their ships were, along with Persians and Medes, also Sakai.

In some Babylonian documents we also encounter the ethnic designation Arumāja (LÚ Ar-ú-ma-a-a) which designated soldiers from some part of Central

<sup>7</sup> See Roth 1989/1990:55 with reference to BM 92799:16.

<sup>8</sup> Krückmann 1933, No. 189.

Asia (*BE* 9, No. 74:8; 10:111:7, etc.). All references to them are in the Murashu documents from Nippur of the second half of the fifth century B.C. They were military colonists, mainly holders of bow fiefs which were located in five settlements in the Nippur region. According to one document from 425 B.C. eight “Cimmerian” colonists received rent (two minas of silver, three sheep, etc.) for their bow fields, which had been let out to the house of Murashu (*BE* 9, No. 74). Almost all their names were Iranian (Baga, Ispataru, Tīridata, Patishtana, Bagadāta, etc.), as were as their patronymics (Aturamanu, Ahratush, Ushtabazanu, etc.). Among them Baga, Tīridata and Bagadāta again received a rental payment from the house of Murashu for their allotments after a period of seven years (*PBS* II/1, No. 122). One of the chiefs of this ethnic group was Bel-iddin (a Babylonian name), the son of Bagadāta (Iranian name). Often they rented out their allotments of land to the Murashu business house.

For many years scholars considered that this ethnic name denoted inhabitants of the country Aria, or Areia (the Old Persian Harāiva-, Avestan Harōiva, etc.). The Greek authors called them Areioi or Arioi. Harāiva lay to the east of Parthia, on the territory of Herat in modern Afghanistan. But now the opinion that Arumāja was the name of the inhabitants of Haraiva is considered to be insolvent or at least doubtful since in the Babylonian versions of the Achaemenid inscriptions the Old Persian Haraiva is transcribed as Ar-ri-e-mu and not Areia<sup>9</sup>. Therefore so far it is difficult to identify Arumāja with confidence with any ethnic group, but nevertheless it is apparent that they belonged to the group of the eastern Iranian tribes.

## Abbreviations

- AfO* *Archiv für Orientforschung*  
*BE* *The Babylonian Expedition of the University of Pennsylvania, Series A: Cuneiform Texts* (Philadelphia).  
*BM* *Tablets in the collection of the British Museum*  
*CT* *Cuneiform Texts from Babylonian Tablets in the British Museum*  
*PBS* *University of Pennsylvania. The Museum, Publications of the Babylonian Section.*  
*UCP* *University of California Publications in Semitic Philology* (Berkeley, California).  
*VAS* *Vorderasiatische Schriftdenkmäler* (Berlin).  
*YOS* *Yale Oriental Series, Babylonian Texts.*

<sup>9</sup> See Stolper 1985, 72; Schmitt 1994, 98; Tavernier 2007, 287.

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## Abstract

This paper contains information on the military service of Central Asian soldiers in Babylonia during 539–331 B.C., when this country was a satrapy of the Achaemenid Persian empire. Among these soldiers were Chorasmians, Sakai and warriors from Arumāja. These soldiers were settled mainly in the region of Nippur allotting for their service parcels of land which were called “fiefs of the bow” for which they had to perform military service.







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## ΣΚΥΘΙΣΤΙ ΧΕΙΡΟΜΑΚΤΡΟΝ: SOPHOCLES' RECORD OF THE EXTRAVAGANT SCYTHIAN CUSTOM

**Keywords:** Hellenes, Scythians, perception of barbarians, Athenaeus, Sophocles, Herodotus, Greek myth, Oenomaus, Pelops, nomadic neighbours, *cheiromaktron*, scalp, scalping

The age-long contacts between the Aegean Greeks and barbarians of the north-eastern margins of the populated universe undoubtedly influenced all the “actors” of these reciprocal relations. The Greek culture absorbed elements of foreign cultures. This process of assimilation exerted a strong influence on ancient Greek art (especially iconography), language and literature. The examples of such acquisitions are numerous. The most significant ones have already been examined by Classical scholarship.<sup>1</sup> However, many of them remain disputable. I will focus on the records offered by the Classical Greek drama concerning a unique phenomenon of barbarian Scythian culture: “scalp-towels” – *cheiromaktrons*.

### I

Europe learned about scalping in the modern age after America had been discovered.<sup>2</sup> This cruel custom, which was practised by certain tribes of the North

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. Zahn 1896; Waiß 1903; Jüthner 1923; Bacon 1961; Grecs et barbares 1962; Bengtson 1974; Raeck 1981; Long 1986; Nippel 1990; Hall 1991; Skrzhinskaia 1991; 1998; 2010; Romilly 1993; Dihle 1994; Detel 1995; Bäbler 1998; Harrison 2002; Savostina 2004; 2011; Pallantza 2005, esp. 297–310; Mitchell 2007; Sinitsyn 2008a, 279 ff.; 2011a, 626 ff.; 2011b; 2011c; Kuznetsova 2011; Zavoikin 2011. See also the articles in the new collection *Antichnoe nasledie Kubani* 2010–2012.

<sup>2</sup> On scalping practised by peoples in America and Eurasia see the classical work by Friederici 1906. Of new research: Larsen 1997; Borodovskii, Tabarev 2001; 2005 (with literature); Murphy, Gokhman, Chistov, Barkova 2002; Smith 1995; Pererva, Luk'iashko 2011, 378–380; see the articles in the collection: Chacon, Dye 2007 and other works listed below in notes 4–5.

American continent,<sup>3</sup> deeply affected the first colonists from Spain, England and France. One may well imagine how shocked the civilised Europe was when it heard the stories told about the savage ways of the Natives of the New World. It is also known that it was the European invaders themselves (the English and the French), who encouraged the Indians to tear scalps by paying bounties for them.

The term “scalping” must have come into use at the beginning of the 18th century, and subsequently it was adopted by many European languages. The words *scalping*, *scalp* (*skalpieren*, *Skalp* – German; *scalper*, *scalpe/scalp* – French; *scalpo* – Italian; *escalpar* – Spanish; *skalpere/skalpera*, *scalp* – Danish, Swedish; *скальпировать*, *скальп* – Russian) denote the removal of all or part of the scalp, with hair attached, from an enemy’s head. Initially, the European conquistadors had no words to describe this “barbaric” rite and the “trophy” itself. It should be emphasised that with the discovery of America, when the Old World learned about scalping *again*, these terms came to signify one of the ancient military customs already known to many nations.

Owing to archaeological discoveries made in various parts of the Eurasian continent over the last decades, contemporary science has learnt much about the habit of scalping in Europe and Asia, which was practised by various tribes and nations from the Neolithic period to the Middle Ages.<sup>4</sup> As is well known, this rite was also common to the Scythian tribes, which inhabited a vast territory between eastern Europe and southern Siberia as well as Central Asia.<sup>5</sup> Narrative sources speak of the scalping of slain enemies, of various objects made of human skin and scalps procured by the Scythian warriors. These war “trophies” – heads, scalps, jaws, skin of the (right) hand and the like – ranked among special military “honourable distinctions” and served as adornments for the clothes of the “steppe horsemen” and for the harness of their horses (saddle and breast pendants).<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Scalping of enemies has also been observed among certain tribes of South America (e.g. in Paraguay, Argentina); see: Friederici 1906, 30 ff.; Klein 1961, 107 f. (with examples of similar customs practised by other peoples in different parts of the world); Owsley, Berryman 1975; Williams 1991; Miller 1994.

<sup>4</sup> See Klein 1961; Dieck 1969; Anger, Dieck 1978; Borodovskii 1997; Ortner, Ribas. 1997; Mednikova, Lebedinskaia 1999; Knauer 2001a; Knauer 2001b; Mednikova 2000; 2001; 2003; Borodovskii, Tabarev 2001; 2005; Karacharov, Razhev 2002; Murphy, Gokhman, Chistov, Barkova 2002; Pererva 2005a; 2005b; Chacon, Dye 2007; Ortner, Frohlich 2008; Razhev, Poshekhnova 2009; Pererva, Luk’iashko 2011.

<sup>5</sup> About this: Rudenko 1948, 53 ff.; 1949, 100, 108; 1951, 81 ff.; 1952, 134 ff.; 1953, 264; 1970, 221; Müller 1972, 101–131; El’nitskii 1977, 230; Dumézil 1978, 253 s.; Hartog 1980, 173 ff.; Rolle 1980, 91, 93 f., 117; 1991, 115 f.; Mednikova 2000, 59, 60, 64–65; Murphy, Gokhman, Chistov, Barkova 2002; Pererva 2005b, 41 ff.; Parzinger 2007, 49, 105.

<sup>6</sup> See e.g.: Meliukova 1964, 32–34; Stepanov 1973; Rolle 1979, 86. Anm. 133; 1980, 89 (ill.), 90, 91, 93–94; Riedlberger 1996; Khlobystina 1999; Bergeman 2001, 122, 124, 130; Ol’khovskii

The Hellenes must have been aware of the scalping of enemies, the rite common to the barbarians, since their first clashes with the “uncivilised” peoples which inhabited the areas lying to the north of the Aegean. The Pontus region colonists must have had first-hand knowledge of it; some of them fell victim to their bellicose neighbours, and the nomads of the steppe took pride in parading with the scalps as war trophies, which they won in their frequent “intercultural conflicts” with the warriors from Greek settlements. The relations between the Pontic Hellenes and the various barbaric tribes were close, but partly hostile.<sup>7</sup> Iu.A. Vinogradov paints the following picture of “the Graeco-barbarian co-existence” in the northern Black Sea Region: “During the Greek colonisation of the northern shore of the Black Sea, it was Scythians who ruled in the steppes [...] these bellicose nomads were a constant threat to the settlers, their bands would rush out of the steppe, sack the settlements of land tenants and retreat into the vastness of the steppe”.<sup>8</sup> After successful raids, dashing horsemen would return with many spoils, the most valuable being heads and scalps. Herodotus (4.64–66) testifies to the Scythian practice of chopping off enemies’ heads, which they took to deliver to their king. These “trophies” ensured that the warriors would get their share of the spoils of war (Hdt. 4.64.1) and a seat of honour at the tribal feast for the distinguished warriors (ibid. 4.66).

The barbarian rite of beheading and scalping of vanquished enemies must have shocked sedentary settlers and given rise to rumours of how savage their Scythian neighbours were. Such were the stories about the steppe nomads that Greek merchants and travellers brought to the poleis of Asia Minor and the Balkans from the Pontic colonies to satiate the interest of their compatriots in barbarian wonders. The Hellenic world, long before the Scythians reached it, had spawned legends of their savagery and ruthlessness; it was here that the *xenomyth* of their blood-thirstiness was born.

The Great Greek colonisation established close contacts between the inhabitants of continental Greece and the people of the north-eastern periphery of the populated universe, thereby opening up the barbarian *terra incognita* for Western civilisation. This is shown by narrative records, epigraphic evidence and archae-

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2001, 154–155, 160 (ill.); Knauer 2001a; Knauer 2001b, 287 ff. (in both articles Elfriede R. Knauer provided a review of sources and literature and a judicious selection of illustrations on the topic); Pererva 2005b, 41–44; Raev 2007, 378; Parzinger 2007, 105 f.; Corcella 2007, 628–629; Pererva, Luk’iashko 2011, 386 ff., 393 ff. (this work analyses the rite of scalping performed by ancient peoples as described in numerous narrative sources and corroborated by many archaeological finds, the latest discoveries included).

<sup>7</sup> Of the new research, meticulously and vividly: Vinogradov, Goroncharovskii 2009, 14 ff., 17, 25 ff., 31, 33, 46 ff. et al. (with a list of literature for the topic). See also: Tolstikov 2011.

<sup>8</sup> Vinogradov, Goroncharovskii 2009, 17.

ological finds – mainly, the mass import of Attic ceramics in the 6th–5th centuries BC, accounting for the development of trade between Athens and the North Black Sea Region.<sup>9</sup>

In the mid–5th century BC, the notorious Scythian ways became proverbial: for one, the phrase “get scythed” (σκυθίζειν / ἐπισκυθίζειν), meaning “get drunk the Scythian way”, i.e. “drink undiluted wine” or “drink heavily”.<sup>10</sup> While relating the legend about the Spartan King Cleomenes I’s propensity for drinking the way the Scythians did (6.84.1,3), Herodotus says that having adopted the Scythian fashion, the king went out of his mind, and since then, the Spartans, when feeling like partaking of fortified wine, would say, “pour out the wine the Scythian way” (ἐπισκύθισον).<sup>11</sup>

It is noteworthy that the ancient Greeks related the rite of scalping to a particular ethnos, namely, the Scythians.<sup>12</sup> In Old Greek, this is demonstrated by derivatives of the root σκυθ-. For example, the forms of the verbs σκυθίζειν, ἀποσκυθίζειν and περισκυθίζειν in the active and middle voices mean to “scythe” or “get scythed”, or the even more emphatic (with the prefix ἀπο-) “scythe off”, i.e. “remove (= cut off, rip off) the hair from the human head together with the skin”, “to scalp”; these verbs can take passive forms – “to be scythed” by somebody, that is, “to be shorn”, “deprived of hair”, “scalped”.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Of the extensive research into the topic, see: Grakov 1939, 231–315 (a review of the narrative sources), 174–181 (review of epigraphic evidence), esp. 231–233; 290 ff., 293, 306 et al.; Brashinskii 1963, 35–48, 56 ff., 86; Skrzhinskaia 1986; Bouzek 1990; Bähler 1998, 163–174; Boardman 1999; Savostina 2004; Braund 2004. See also the articles in the collection *Scythians and Greeks* 2005 and the multi-author book *Greki i varvary* 2005.

<sup>10</sup> Anacreon *fr.* 11b, 1–5 *PMG*, Page = Athen. 10.427a–b; Achaeus *fr.* 9 *TGF*, Snell = Athen. 10.427c; Hieronym. *fr.* 2 Hiller = Athen. 11.499f (καὶ τὸ μεθύσαι σκυθίσαι); Plato *Leg.* 637e; Athen. 10.428d–e; 438a; Latyshev 1900, 361, 626–627. See: Pape 1908, I, 980, s.v. ἐπισκυθίζω; Liddell, Scott 1996, 657, s.v. ἐπισκυθίζω; 1616, s.v. Σκυθίζω (1), and literature: How, Wells 1912, II, 97–98, ad loc. 6.84.2,3; Lissarrague 1990a; 1990b, 146 ss.; Scott 2005, 310, ad loc. Hdt. 6.84.3 (“drink neat wine”).

<sup>11</sup> Hdt. 6.84.3; cf.: Chamaeleon *fr.* 10, Wehrli = Athen. 10.427b–c; 436e–f; Ael. *Var. Hist.* 2.41. See: Stein 1896, III, 183, ad loc. Hdt. 6.84; Macan 1895, 341, ad loc. Hdt. 6.84; Hartog 1980, 176 ss.; Lissarrague 1990b, 146 ss.; Braund 2004, 38; Scott 2005, 309 f.; Welwei 2007, 50 f.

<sup>12</sup> Stein 1896, 64, ad loc. Hdt. 4.64.2; Klein 1961, 107; Dovatur, Kallistov, Shishova 1982, 302–303, note 408 (with reference to H. Stein); Rolle 1980, 93 f.; 1991, 115; Skrzhinskaia 1985, 144; Riedlberger 1996, 53, 56; Murphy, Gokhman, Chistov, Barkova 2002, 8; cf.: Sinitsyn 2008a, 281 f.; 2011a, 629 ff.

<sup>13</sup> See the following entries: Pape 1908, I, 325, s.v. ἀποσκυθίζω: “nach Scythen Art die Kopfhaut mit dem Haare abziehen”; II, 591, s.v. περισκυθίζω: “die Haut des Hirschschädels nach skythischer Art abziehen, scalpieren, τινά, übh. die Haut abziehen, entblößen”; II, 906, s.v. Σκυθίζω: “das Haar nach skythischer Sitte beschneiden, es glatt wegscheeren”; Passow 1993, I.1, 358, s.v. ἀποσκυθίζω: “die Kopfhaut mit dem Haare nach skythischer Sitte abziehen, scalpieren, bis auf die Haut kahl scheeren”; II.1, 872, s.v. περισκυθίζω: “die Haut des Hirschschädels nach skythischer Art abziehen, scalpieren” and “die Haut oder das Fell abziehen, entblößen”; II.2, 1469, s.v. σκυθίζω (c):

The extant corpus of works by the Attic tragedians contains two instances of these forms referring to the ferocious Scythian manners, namely, those of Euripides.<sup>14</sup> Numerous post-ancient and medieval lexicons have preserved this specific meaning of “ethnically” marked verbs.<sup>15</sup>

The colonists in the Black Sea region, who maintained close contacts with their nomadic neighbours, and the Hellenes from mainland Greece, were impressed by the stories of outrageous barbarian ways, and as a result started to refer to the terrifying Scythian “trophies” as χειρόμακτρον.<sup>16</sup> In Old Greek this was a common word which meant “towel”, “hand wiping cloth” (the first stem being χεῖρ – “hand”, so, more adequately, a “hand towel”), as well as “kerchief”, “head-scarf”.<sup>17</sup> The literary sources from the archaic and classical periods normally use the word without any exotic and ethnic connotations,<sup>18</sup> but by the mid-5th century BC this word had acquired this specific connotation.

## II

The earliest sources in which the word χειρόμακτρον occurs to denote the Scythian scalping is the fourth book of the *History* by Herodotus and Sophocles' tragedy *Oenomaus*. The former gives a detailed, expert account of this military custom (Hdt. 4.64), the other (Soph. *fr.* 473 *TGF*, Radt) merely ‘alludes’ to it,

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“das Haar nach skythischer Sitte beschneiden, d.i. es glatt wegscheeren”; Liddell, Scott 1996, 218, s.v. ἀποσκυθίζω (1): “scalp [as the Scythians did]”; 1386, s.v. περισκυθίζω (1): “scalp in Scythian fashion”; 1616, s.v. Σκυθίζω (2): “from the Scythian practice of scalping slain enemies”. Also literature: Hudson-Williams 1912, 122; Hartog 1980, 173; Dovatur, Kallistov, Shishova 1982, 302 f.; Rolle 1991, 115 f.; Riedlberger 1996, 55 ff.; Corcella 2007, 629: “to remove the scalp”.

<sup>14</sup> Eur. *El.* 241: καὶ κράτα πλόκαμόν τ' ἔσκυθισμένον ξυρῶ (“Both the head and the locks had she shorn the Scythian way”); Eur. *Tr.* 1026: κράτ' ἀπεσκυθισμένην (“...the Scythian way deprived of her hair”); see Skrzhinskaia 1985, 144; 1998, 149; Rolle 1991, 115; Riedlberger 1996, 55 f.; Sinitsyn 2008, 281.

<sup>15</sup> E.g.: Ael. Herodian. *De prosod. cathol.* 62, 13 Lentz; Hesych. *Lex.* A 6638; Σ 1157 Schmidt; Steph. Byz. *Ethn.* 578, 16 Meineke; Phot. *Lex.* A 2658 Theodoridis; Suda. A 3062; 3533; Π 1287 Adler; Mich. Psell. *Poem.* 6.292 Westerink; *Etym. Magn.* 125, 55–57 Gaisford.

<sup>16</sup> P. Riedlberger tried to show that χειρόμακτρον means not a “napkin” (as this word is usually interpreted by the authors of dictionaries, translators and commentators), but an “ornamental cloth” used by the Scythians to decorate their horses (Riedlberger 1996, 60: “dieses Wort nicht als ‘Handtuch’ wiederzugeben ist, sondern man es als ‘Schmucktuch’ auffassen sollte”).

<sup>17</sup> See: Mau 1899; Pottier 1904; Pape 1908, II, 1346, s.v.; Passow 1993, II.2, 2438, s.v.; Liddell, Scott 1996, 1985, s.v.; Riedlberger 1996, 54, 55–56; Hurschmann 1999.

<sup>18</sup> Examples: Sappho. *fr.* 44 *PLG*, Bergk = Athen. 9.410e; Hecat. *fr.* 358 *FGrH* 1 Jacoby = Athen. 9.410e; Hdt. 2.122.1 = Athen. 9.410e–f; Aristoph. *fr.* 502 *CAF*, Kock = Athen. 9.410b; Xen. *Cyr.* 1.3.5 = Athen. 9.410c.

but it must have been the same rite. "The Father of History" describes abhorring military customs performed by Scythians as yet another oddity with an abundance of sickening details:

Hdt. 4.64: (1) τὰ δ' ἐς πόλεμον ἔχοντα ὧδέ σφι (sc. Σκύθαι) διακέεται· ἐπεὰν τὸν πρῶτον ἄνδρα καταβάλλῃ ἀνὴρ Σκύθης, τοῦ αἵματος ἐμπίνει· ὅσους δ' ἂν φονεύσῃ ἐν τῇ μάχῃ, τούτων τὰς κεφαλὰς ἀποφέρει τῷ βασιλεί· ἀπενείκας μὲν γὰρ κεφαλὴν τῆς λήϊης μεταλαμβάνει, τὴν ἂν λάβωσι, μὴ ἐνείκας δὲ οὐ. (2) ἀποδείρει δὲ αὐτὴν τρόπῳ τοιῷδε· περιταμῶν κύκλῳ περὶ τὰ ὦτα καὶ λαβόμενος τῆς κεφαλῆς ἐκσεῖει, μετὰ δὲ σαρκίσσας βοῶς πλευρῇ δέψει τῆσι χερσί, οργάσας δὲ αὐτὸ ἅτε χειρόμακτρον (corr. χειρώμακτρον<sup>19</sup>) ἔκπηται, ἐκ δὲ χαλινῶν τοῦ ἵππου, τὸν αὐτὸς ἐλαύνει, ἐκ τούτου ἐξάπτει καὶ ἀγάλλεται· ὅς γὰρ ἂν πλείστα χειρόμακτρα (corr. χειρώμακτρα) ἔχη, ἀνὴρ ἄριστος οὗτος κέκριται.<sup>20</sup>

“(1) As to war, these are their customs. A Scythian drinks the blood of the first man whom he has overthrown. He carries to his king the heads of all whom he has slain in the battle; for he receives a share of the booty taken if he brings a head, but not otherwise. (2) He scalps the head by making a cut round it by the ears, then grasping the scalp and shaking the head out. Then he scrapes out the flesh with the rib of an ox, and kneads the skin with his hands, and having made it supple he keeps it for a napkin, fastening it to the bridle of the horse which he himself rides, and taking pride in it; for he is judged the best man who has most scalps for napkins”.<sup>21</sup>

Herodotus describes the scalping of a dead man, the fleshing, the tanning of human skin, and the making of *cheiromaktrons*.<sup>22</sup> The contemporary historian was never an eye-witness either to the production of such articles, or to “towels” made of human scalps suspended from the harness. The first European “ethnographer”, Herodotus, learned about this particular custom, and the other Scythian ones, second-hand. Aldo Corcella, the author of a commentary on Book IV by Herodotus, notes, “perhaps Herodotus is recording the impression of the witness

<sup>19</sup> On variants of the word χειρόμακτρον / χειρώμακτρον see: Hoffmann 1898, 365, and cf. Frisk 1960, II, 1083–1084.

<sup>20</sup> The text of the source is cited from the last Teubner edition by H.B. Rosén (*Herodotus* 1987, 386).

<sup>21</sup> Translated by A.D. Godley (*Herodotus* 1928, 261, 263).

<sup>22</sup> I will not dwell on either the semantic meaning of this word or the military custom performed by the Scythians. Contemporary scholars tend to relate the sources and the meaning of scalping to the initiation rite common to ancient warring societies. This custom is considered to reflect the archetypical ideas of the magic power of head/hair (see: Friederici 1907; Mednikova 2000; Chacon, Dye 2007; Pererva, Luk'iashko 2011).

who said that he had seen the skin".<sup>23</sup> D.S. Raevskii, a Russian Scythologist, regards this Scythian account of Herodotus as "deriving from the Scythian folk tradition proper".<sup>24</sup>

The modern literature regards Herodotus' story about the Scythians making peculiar hand-towels from scalps as the first evidence of military trophies of such kind. In 1996, the *Klio* journal published an article "Skalpieren bei den Skythen" by Pieter Riedlberger (as far as I know, this is the latest research paper devoted to Herodotus' description of this Scythian custom). The author leaves no doubt that Sophocles relied on the historian's ethnographical knowledge. Riedlberger's argument runs as follows: any attempt to date Sophocles' *Oenomaus* is doomed to failure, so, if to consider the dating of these two pieces of evidence of scalps, "auch ohne es an der Zeitfolge beweisen zu können, leuchtet es ein, daß hier eher der Dramatiker vom Ethnographen Einzelheiten übernommen hat als umgekehrt".<sup>25</sup> Moreover, the German researcher argues that the evidence provided by the "Father of History" actually became the ultimate source for all the post-Herodotean ancient writers who referred to scalping as the Scythian custom (*sic!*). Riedlberger arrives at the conclusion that «die Sitte des Skalpierens wird den Skythen *zum ersten Mal* in Herodots Skythenlogos (Hdt. IV,64) zugeschrieben; alle weiteren Erwähnungen *hängen wohl von ihm ab*. Auch die σκυθίζω-Bildungen mit der Bedeutung "dem Kopf die Haare nehmen" *tauchen erst nach der Publikation der Historien auf*» (emphasis added. – A.S.).<sup>26</sup>

A similar opinion can also be found in dozens of works written by philologists, historians, archeologists, and anthropologists, as well as other experts in the studies of the Ancient World and the Scythians.<sup>27</sup> This viewpoint is

<sup>23</sup> Corcella 2007, 629, ad loc. Hdt. 4.64.2–4.

<sup>24</sup> Raevskii 2006, 350. See also: Dovatur 1957; Zuev 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Riedlberger 1996, 55.

<sup>26</sup> Riedlberger 1996, 60.

<sup>27</sup> See, e.g.: Stein 1896, 64, ad loc. Hdt. 4.64.2 («ἄτε ("als") χειρόμακτρον (in this passage of Herodotus. – A.S.): hiernach wahrscheinlich Soph[okles]»), with reference to the verse of the drama *Oenomaus*); Rasch 1912, 21 sq.; 1913, 20–22, 123; Höfer 1929, 168; Zelinskii 1914, 256; Sophocles 2009, II, 127; Lattimore 1958, 77; Bacon 1961, 77–78, 80; *TGF*, Radt, 382; Kiso 1984, 53–54; Skrzhinskaia 1985, 144; 1991, 118 сл.; 1998, 141 сл.; Rolle 1991, 115; Miller 1994, 211; Riedlberger 1996, 53, 54, Anm. 15, 55, 60; Mednikova 2000, 59, 60; Murphy, Gokhman, Chistov, Barkova 2002, 5, 8; Pererva 2005, 41; Corcella 2007, 629, ad loc. Hdt. 4.64.2–4. The authors of contemporary lexicons frequently collate these two pieces of evidence of Scythian *heiomaktrons*: Pape 1908, II, 1346, s.v. χειρόμακτρον (1); Passow 1993, II.2, 2438, s.v. χειρόμακτρον (1); Liddell, Scott 1996, 1616, s.v. Σκυθιστί (IV. 1): with reference to our sources. In another entry in the dictionary H.G. Liddell and R. Scott directly relate the two references to *heiomaktrons* and point to their interdependence: "the Scythians used scalps as χειρόμακτρα, Hdt. (4.64); hence Σκυθιστί χειρόμακτρον ἑκκεκαρμένος, Soph. Frag. 473" (Liddell, Scott 1996, 1985, s.v. χειρόμακτρον (I)).

based on the conviction that Sophocles borrowed many subjects, realities and terms of ethnological character from Herodotus' *History*,<sup>28</sup> in particular, from Book IV – "The Scythian Logos".

There is no doubt about it, that the influence of Herodotus' historical and ethnographic stories on the Athenian historiography and culture and the Greek literature was very meaningful. Yet, it is hardly proper to speak about "orientomania" of the Athenians only because of their knowledge of the work written by the explorer from Halicarnassus. Here I would like to refer to the opinion of V.G. Borukhovich, who observed that "infatuation with the oriental exotica and, especially, with the oriental cults was quite common in the Athens of the classic age".<sup>29</sup>

In several articles on this topic<sup>30</sup> I tried to contest certain "parallel passages" and cast doubt on the assertion that the coincidence of lexical and phraseological texts can be interpreted as a topos of loaned words and idioms, especially for direct citations. I also do not agree that Sophocles learned about barbarian eccentricities from Herodotus. It goes without doubt that the Greeks had known about the Scythians long before Herodotus from different sources. The evidence of their amazing customs could have come with merchants and explorers who had frequented the Pontic lands.

<sup>28</sup> Proceeding from the fact that the works of Sophocles and Herodotus are abundant in parallel passages (indeed there are many of them; see, e.g.: *Tabula locorum* in Rasch 1913, 124; cf. my set of coincidences most frequently referred to: Sinitsyn 2008b, 158–159; 2008c, 377–378), most of my colleagues uphold the hypothesis that the relations between them were close. They usually argue that both writers belonged to the "Pericles' circle", or they refer to a dubious anonymous verse somehow occurring in Plutarch (*Moral.* 785b), or (*nota bene!*) they find similarities in the world outlooks of the playwright and the historian, who were "like-minded representatives of the Old-Greek culture". The number of published works upholding this viewpoint is legion. The most essential literature illustrative of the problem is: Gomperz 1898; How, Wells 1912, I, 7, 70; Zelinskii 1912; Rasch 1912; 1913 (with a critical review of the previous research into the problem, esp. pp. 1–6, 125 sq.); Jacoby 1913, 232–237; Fohl 1913, 1 ff.; Zelinskii 1914a, LII ff.; Wells 1923, 181, 183 f., 186; Schmid, Stählin 1934, 317 ff., 569 ff.; Perrota 1935, 25 f.; Lur'ie 1947a, 19 ff., 23; 1947b, 100, 113 f.; Ehrenberg 1956, 35 f., 68 f., 70 f., 169 f., 195; Egermann 1957, 37 ff., 70 ff.; 1962; Strasburger 1962, 575; Riemann 1967, 2 ff.; Lesky 1971, 314, 323, 349; Diller 1979, 51 f., 69; Hart 1982, 31 ff, 159, 168, 175, 190, 205, 207; Ostwald 1991, 143 f., 145, 146 f.; 1992, 333 ff.; Müller 1996; Nielsen 1997, 46–49; Zellner 1997; Gimadeev 1999; West 1999; Dorati 2000, 19; Bichler, Rollinger 2001, 112 f.; Saïd 2002, 117 ff.; Surikov 2002, 143, 242; 2007, 163; 2008a, 34; 2008b, 376; 2009, 160–161, 211, 344; 2010a; 2010b, 78; 2010c; 2011a, 59; 2011b, 45 f., 101, 152, 173 f., 220, 249 f., 259, 336–361, 395, 409, 437; Dewald, Kitzinger 2006; Griffin 2006; Hornblower 2006, 306 f.; Pozdnev 2010, 153; Strogetskii 2009, 348 f.; 2010, 111, 122, 139 f.; Lombardi 2010, 133.

<sup>29</sup> Borukhovich 1972, 29; cf. Borukhovich 1974; Long 1986; Hall 1991.

<sup>30</sup> Sinitsyn 2006; 2008a; 2008b; 2008c.



In my article on Sophocles and Herodotus' "Scythian Logos"<sup>31</sup> I put forward a hypothesis that it was not Herodotus who referred to the scalps-cheiromaktrons for the first time ever, but that it was Sophocles in his *Oenomaus*. Drawing on the hypothesis of W.M. Calder who argued that the Sophoclean drama was written much earlier than usually held, I substantiated the idea with additional arguments. In my opinion the drama was composed during the early period of Sophocles' life, in the second half of the 460s BC when the young playwright set out on his theatrical journey. The public readings of selected passages from his works in Athens are usually dated in the mid-440 BC. The Athenian tragedian and his countrymen must have heard of the stories about the Scythians long before Herodotus.<sup>32</sup>

I.E. Surikov supported the hypothesis of an earlier date for Sophocles' *Oenomaus*. In his paper<sup>33</sup> Surikov agreed with my assertion that Herodotus' and Sophocles' references to *cheiromaktrons* do not show any trace of mutual exchange. Surikov referred, the author's choice of the subject for his tragedy to the political events in Elis at the turn of the 470–460s BC, and argued in favour of an earlier date of Sophocles' play about Pelops and Oenomaus.<sup>34</sup> In spite of many essential differences in our opinions, I agree with Surikov in general terms.

Athenaeus, the author flourishing in the 2nd–3rd centuries AD, was the first to collate the evidence of the eccentric *cheiromaktron* provided by Sophocles and Herodotus. Elaborating on the washing and drying of hands, and Greek words for napkins and towels, Athenaeus cited a line from Sophocles' lost drama to illustrate the word χειρόμακτρον meaning "hand towel", "napkin":

Athen. 9.410b, c: χειρόμακτρον δὲ καλεῖται ὃ τὰς χεῖρας ἀπεμάττοντο ὠμολίνῳ... <...> Σοφοκλῆς Οἰνομάῳ· Σκυθιστὶ χειρόμακτρον ἐκκεκαρμένως<sup>35</sup>. καὶ Ἡρόδοτος ἐν δευτέρῳ.<sup>36</sup>

The author of *The Deipnosophists (The Learned Banqueters)* must have missed the point, since the word χειρόμακτρον used by both the playwright and the historian means a special kind of "towel". Thus, the scrupulous erudite grammarian somehow disregarded both the unique pieces of evidence of Scythi-

<sup>31</sup> Sinitsyn 2008a.

<sup>32</sup> See Sinitsyn 2008a, 271–279; 2011a (examination of the literary evidence of Scythians in Athens in the 5th century BC).

<sup>33</sup> Surikov 2010; 2011b, 341–346.

<sup>34</sup> Surikov 2010, 136 f; 2011b, 342 ff.

<sup>35</sup> Corr. Σκυθιστὶ χειρόμακτρον ἐκδεδαρμένως: Herwerden 1862, 21; after it: *TGF*, Nauck, 234–235; Blaydes 1894, 51, 284; Höfer 1929, 168. Remarks: Sophocles 2009, 127; *TGF* Radt, 382 sq. ad Soph. Frag. 473, 473a.

<sup>36</sup> The text is cited from the edition by G. Kaibel: Athenaeus 1985, 394.

an *cheiromaktrons*, vaguely referring to Herodotus' *History*.<sup>37</sup> Athenaeus (or the fellow banqueters in his writing) must have been engrossed in particular culinary and hygienic topics – words and phrases denoting various ways of washing and drying hands before (or after?) a meal quoted from literary sources; or he missed the specific connotation of the word *χειρόμακτρον* adduced by Sophocles and Herodotus (?). The author of the *Deipnosophists* did not apparently understand the word properly and misused *χειρόμακτρον*. However, he was right in collating the word's connotations, which he found in both texts. It is noteworthy that Athenaeus cited the unique verse from Sophocles' tragedy, and corroborated it with the reference to Herodotus.

### III

Sophocles was the first Greek author to mention the Scythian “hand-towels” (on the stage of the Athenian theatre). What did he want to illustrate by referring to the weird, awful and abhorrent (not only for the civilised Hellenes) phenomenon of the barbarian culture? Why did he use the simile *σκυθιστί*, “the Scythian way”? Let us examine the content of the extant verse from *Oenomaus* and a possible context which may hint at the Scythian scalping.<sup>38</sup>

It is evident from many narrative sources and pieces of art that the myth of Oenomaus, his daughter Hippodameia and Tantalus' son Pelops, was a popular subject in ancient literary accounts and works of art.<sup>39</sup> Pelops appears in Homer's *Iliad*, where he is called “the horse tamer” (*πλήξιππος*, II.104); the legend about the valiant charioteer is related by Pindar in the first *Olympic Ode* (and the scholia). Apollonius of Rhodes, Apollodorus, Hyginus, Diodorus of Sicily, Pausanias and many others retell the “biographies” of Oenomaus and Pelops.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Herodotus speaks of the scalps-hand-towels in Book 4, the so-called “Scythian Logos”, and not in Book 2, as pointed out by Athanaeus, for “The Egyptian Logos” speaks about the golden towel given to Rhampsinitus by Demeter: Hdt. 2.122.1. See Casaubonus, Schweighaeuser 1804, 279.

<sup>38</sup> See comments on this fragment: Casaubonus, Schweighaeuser 1804, 278 sq.; *TGF*, Nauck, 234 sq.; Sophocles 2009, II, 127; *TGF*, Radt, 382 sq. (with reference to *Lexicon* of Hesychius; see below); discussion: Welcker 1839, 354; Ribbeck 1875, 438; Rasch 1912, 21 sq.; 1913, 20 sqq., 123; Robert 1919, 386 f.; Höfer 1929, 168; Riedlberger 1996, 55.

<sup>39</sup> They are assembled in the fundamental edition of *LIMC*: Triantis 1999a, 7.1, 19–23; 7.2, 17 f.; 1999b, 7.1, 282–287; 7.2, 219–223; see entries in the classical lexicon by W. Roscher: Höfer. 1884–1890; Weizsäcker 1897–1902; Bloch 1897–1902.

<sup>40</sup> Apoll. Rhod. 1.752 and Schol. ad loc.; Apollod. *Epit.* 2.3–9; Lycophr. *Alex.* 154 sqq.; Hyg. *Fab.* 84; Diod. 4.73; Paus. 5.1.6–7; 5.10.6–7; 5.13.1–7; 5.14.6–7; 5.17.7; 5.20.6–8; 6.20.17–19; 6.21.6–22.1; 8.14.10–12; Philostr. *Imag.* 1.17.

It is next to impossible to reconstruct the myth of Pelops and Oenomaus in Sophocles' drama, because the play has been poorly preserved; only seven excerpts – 17 incomplete lines – have reached us through several “mediators”.<sup>41</sup> Some classical philologists have ventured to reconstruct the plot and structure of the tragedy *Oenomaus*.<sup>42</sup> It is highly possible that the love story of Pelops and Hippodameia was one of the plots, of which the largest passage is extant – *fr.* 474 *TGF*, Radt and, possibly, two other small passages *fr.* 475 and 477. Unfortunately nothing seems to allude to the theme of this heroic tale – the contention between Oenomaus and Pelops.

It is hard to judge what Sophocles actually knew about the exotic *cheiromaktrons*. The verse cited by Athenaeus must have been the only reference to the playwright's knowledge of this ghastly Scythian rite.<sup>43</sup> It is interesting to notice that the term χερρόμακτρον denoting the Scythian trophy is referred to as ἄπαξ in all the ancient verses. The word χερρόμακτρον, in its usual meaning of “towel” or with its ethnic connotation of “scalp towel”, was regarded as unsuitable for the language and style of the art of tragedy. In Classical drama, the word occurs in the passage of Aristophanes' lost comedy the *Tagenistai* (*Masters of the Frying-pan*). For the Athenian comedy dramatist, the word χερρόμακτρον meant “a hand towel” used as intended, to wipe one's hands after washing (after a meal):

φῆρε, παῖ, ταχέως κατὰ χεῖρὸς ὕδωρ, // παράπεμπε τὸ χερρόμακτρον.<sup>44</sup>  
 “Here, slave, water over the hand, and quickly! // Bring along the towel”.<sup>45</sup>

The passage drawn from Sophocles' *Oenomaus* presents certain difficulties and seems rather unclear.<sup>46</sup>

In the old French edition J.-B. Lefebvre de Villebrune (1789) left the word χερρόμακτρον without translation: «Sophocle dit, dans son *Oenomaüs*: “C'est un cheiromactre, car il est rasé comme un Scythe”». <sup>47</sup> It is possible that Lefebvre de Villebrune either wanted to show that χερρόμακτρον was a Greek term that conveyed the Scythian realia, or he missed the specifically “ethnic” meaning of the word χερρόμακτρον, which related to the barbarian military practice (?). The latter is more likely: the French translator used the participle “rasé” (from the verb “raser” – “shave”, “shave off”, “shear”), such was his understanding of

<sup>41</sup> Soph. *fr.* 471–477 *TGF*, Radt, 380–385.

<sup>42</sup> E.g. Welcker 1839, 352–357 (§ 62); Ribbeck 1875, 431–444; Calder 1974, 205–211.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Ellendt 1872, 783, s.v. Χερρόμακτρον.

<sup>44</sup> Athen. 9.410b = Aristoph. *fr.* 502 *CAF*, Kock.

<sup>45</sup> Translated by C.B. Gulick: Athenaeus 1969, 357.

<sup>46</sup> I cite the available translations.

<sup>47</sup> Athénée 1789, 559.

Sophocles' phrase: "shaven-headed like a Scythian", and he adds the following explanation: "Ceci est dit d'un homme rasé si près, que sa peau paroît aussi lisse qu'un fin lin".<sup>48</sup> In the Latin version of this passage cited by Athénée in the edition by I. Casaubonus and I. Schweighaeuser, the polysemic word χειρόμακτρον is rendered as "towel" (mantile),<sup>49</sup> and the participle ἐκκεκαρμένος is rendered as "shorn" (*detonsus*): «Sophocles, Oenomaos: «Scythico more detonsus, mantilis vice fungens»». <sup>50</sup> It is obvious that the authors of these translations do not take into consideration that these words refer to the scalping and the use of trophies-*cheiromaktrons* by the Scythian nomads. Some researchers in the 19th – early 20th centuries questioned the credibility of Herodotus' accounts of the Scythian practice of scalping.<sup>51</sup>

V.V. Latyshev (1900) translated the following line from the Sophoclean drama, cited by Athenaeus: "Остриженный по-скифски, как ручник (?)" ("Cropped in the Scythian way, like a hand-towel"),<sup>52</sup> and put a question mark there (*sic!*). It is hard to say what puzzled Latyshev; the sentence seems clear if collated with Herodotus' evidence of *cheiromaktrons*<sup>53</sup> (this is exactly what the author of *The Deipnosophists* did). N.T. Golinkevich's translation of this verse by Sophocles, published in the new Russian edition of Athenaeus (2010), defies all grammar and logic: "По-скифски полотенце обкорнав" ("Having cropped the towel in the Scythian way").<sup>54</sup> Firstly, ἐκκεκαρμένος is rendered as the participle in the active voice and agrees with χειρόμακτρον, which is wrong. Secondly, the translator interprets this verse in the way that allows us to conclude that Sophocles' play spoke about "cropped towels": somebody behaved like a Scythian "having trimmed" ("cropped", "shortened") a towel (?). Golinkevich added a note which puts everything in a total mess: "That is, close to the skin" (*sic!* – *A.S.*).<sup>55</sup> This translation and the related note mean that it was the Scythian custom to crop towels, that is, to make them (or something else) "closely shorn". This is an absurd rendering.

<sup>48</sup> Athénée 1789, 559, note (\*\*). On other occasions J.-B. Lefebvre de Villebrune translates the term χειρόμακτρον as 'hand-towel', 'napkin' ('essuie-mains', 'serviette'), see *ibidem*, 558 ss.

<sup>49</sup> F. Ellendt in his *Sophocles' Lexicon* treats this word as monosemantic: *mantile* (Ellendt 1872, 783, s.v. Χειρόμακτρον).

<sup>50</sup> Athenaeus 1803, 519; see commentary by I. Schweighaeuser: "Appellat χειρόμακτρον, *hominem propius cutem detonsum*; quae dicebatur *Scythica tonsura* vel *Thracica*" (Casaubonus, Schweighaeuser 1804, 278).

<sup>51</sup> Weiss 1860, 553 ("...vielleicht deshalb von Hdt IV, 64 irrthuemlich als aus gegerbter Menschenhaut verfertigt, bezeichnet"); see Klein 1961, 107, note 16: with references to A. Hansen 1844, H. Weiss 1860 and Dissertation A. Grassl 1904 (*non vidi*).

<sup>52</sup> Latyshev 1900, 626 = Latyshev 1948, 290 (V.V. Latyshev's emphasis).

<sup>53</sup> Hdt. 4.64 (see above); cf.: Latyshev 1890, 27.

<sup>54</sup> Afinei 2010, 62.

<sup>55</sup> Afinei 2010, 448, note 136.

In the classical English translation of *The Deipnosophists* done over one and a half centuries ago, C.D. Yonge (1854) interprets this passage in the following way: "Sophocles, in his *Oenomaus*, says – 'Shaved in the Scythian manner, while his hair // Served for a towel, and to wipe his hands in'".<sup>56</sup> I think that the translation of this verse, which appears in the third volume of the *Complete Works of Sophocles*, compiled by Th. Zelinskii a century ago (1914), offers a better reading. Likewise C.D. Yonge, the Russian philologist understands ἐκκεκαρμένους as "cut", "cut off", "trim" hair,<sup>57</sup> but Zelinskii's translation is undoubtedly more accurate, concise and poetic: "По-скифски волосы содрав у них // На утиральники" ("The Scythian way, having ripped off their hair // for towels").<sup>58</sup>

A similar translation appeared in a recent edition of Sophocles' passages published in *The Loeb Classical Library* (1996). However, its translator Lloyd-Jones simplified the meaning: he used the past participle passive of the verb "scalp", thereby making the phrase clear, unambiguous, but, in my opinion, the original meaning is more sophisticated than it was suggested by Lloyd-Jones' rendering: "...scalped for a napkin in Scythian fashion".<sup>59</sup> In a new English edition published in the same series *Loeb*, S.D. Olson (2008) completely ignored the problem in his translation χειρόμακτρον: "With his head sheared so that it looked like a *cheiromaktron*, Scythian style".<sup>60</sup> The same series of editions of classical sources features the translation of this passage by Ch.B. Gullick (1930): «Sophocles in *Oenomaus*: "With head shorn in Scythian fashion to make a towel"». <sup>61</sup>

The English publisher and commentator of Sophocles' passages, A.C. Pearson (1917) gave a word for word translation of this line: "shorn for a napkin in the Scythian fashion".<sup>62</sup> Another interpretation of Sophocles' passage can be found in R. Lattimore's work *The Poetry of Greek Tragedy*: «handkerchief of skin, Scythian-fashion»,<sup>63</sup> – the translation is not literal, it points to the Scythian custom Sophocles referred to (according to Lattimore, the playwright had

<sup>56</sup> Athenaeus 1854, 647.

<sup>57</sup> τρίχες, κεφαλή, τρίχες κεφαλῆς, etc. – the Classical literature is abundant of such examples, see: Liddell, Scott 1996, 935, s.v. κείρω.

<sup>58</sup> Zelinskii 1914b, 256.

<sup>59</sup> Sophocles 1996, 245; the note *a* to this verse from the *Oenomaus* offers a mistaken reference to the passage in Herodotus' Book IV – 4.52 instead of 4.64 and ibidem, 244 equally mistaken reference to Athen. 9.410c.

<sup>60</sup> Athenaeus 2008, 419.

<sup>61</sup> Athenaeus 1969, 359.

<sup>62</sup> Sophocles 2009, II, 127, ad loc. *Soph. fr.* 473.

<sup>63</sup> Lattimore 1958, 77, note 29.

learned this from Herodotus<sup>64</sup>). C. Friedrich in the German version of *The Deipnosophists* (1999) chose to give up a poetic translation in favour of the semantic accuracy: ‘Sophokles im “Oinomaos”’: “Ein Handwischtuch aus abgeschornem Kopfhair nach der Skythen Art”’.<sup>65</sup>

The masculine form of the participle ἐκκεκαρμένος does not agree with the noun of neutral gender in this phrase χειρόμακτρον. I believe the last word here can be regarded as the *accusativus respectivus*, so the state expressed by the perfect participle relates to the logical subject. While ἐκκεκαρμένος is a form of *participium perfecti passivi* (here it is rather the passive than the medial voice) of the verb ἐκκείρω should be rendered as "shorn", "deprived of hair" (somebody by somebody), or even have this word in quotes – "shorn", as it was done by W. Willige (1966) in the German version: "Skythisch “geschoren”, gab sein Haupt ein Handtuch ab”,<sup>66</sup> is not suggestive of the cutting of hair in its direct sense, but of the Scythian fashion of scalping the vanquished. And the *cheiromaktron* is surely the connotation of a "hand-towel".

The above-cited Herodotus’ story about the Scythians who made and used the "hand-towels" (4.64) can help us to understand the meaning of the Sophoclean’ verse. Hesychius’ Lexicon offers a description of the specific "*Scythian cheiromaktrons*":

οἱ Σκύθαι τῶν λαμβανομένων πολεμίων τὰς κεφαλὰς ἐκδέροντες [ῆσαν] ἀντὶ χειρομάκτρων ἐχρῶντο.<sup>67</sup>

“Scythians ripped off the skin (together with the hair) of the heads of their enemies’ and used it as a hand-towel”.

Hesychius, who found it difficult to interpret a rarely used phrase σκυθιστὶ χειρόμακτρον, adduced a popular "bogey-story" about the morals of the Scythians. The meaning of Sophocles’ line becomes clear: it refers to a man (clearly, a dead man), whose head was scalped to make a "hand-towel", as was the fashion with the Scythian warriors; or it speaks about the head of a scalped man or about the *scalp-cheiromaktron* used in the Scythian way.

The ambiguous verse from *Oenomaus* can be rendered as "the Scythian way for a hand-towel shorn". The unfortunate suitor of Hippodameia’s, whose head was "shorn" and whose hair and skin was next used as a *cheiromaktron* must have been the logical subject. Thus, according to Sophocles, Oenomaus took trophies of scalps of those who failed to win.

<sup>64</sup> See above note 28.

<sup>65</sup> Athenaios 1999, 230.

<sup>66</sup> Sophokles 1966, 331.

<sup>67</sup> Hesych. *Lex.* Σ 1157, 1–2 Schmidt.

Speaking about somebody "shorn for a hand-towel", the playwright realizes that scalping a victim is the phenomenon of Scythian culture, so to characterize the phenomenon he knows of he uses an adverb σκυθιστί.<sup>68</sup> It should be noted that this word does not occur in any other extant verses of Sophocles. σκυθιστί occurs three times in the "Scythian Logos" by Herodotus<sup>69</sup> and in all its occurrences it appears only as an adverbial modifier "the Scythian way" = "in Scythian".<sup>70</sup>

The "Father of History" did not call the custom of using enemies' heads and scalps as trophies Scythian, and probably did not regard it as singularly Scythian. In the passage on the Issedones, he tells of the operations performed on the skulls of the dead: they are stripped of skin, gilded and kept as a sacred objects (Hdt. 4.26). Yet, if we can believe Herodotus, the purport of the rite was different: the relatives of the diseased act in this way to show their piety.

#### IV

Oriental novelties introduced into Athens served as "a special device enhancing the attractiveness of this, still new, art" in the Athenian drama of the 5th century BC.<sup>71</sup> The extant passages of Sophocles' plays are full of evidence of barbarian realities and customs (Egyptian, Carian, Lydian, Persian, Scythian, Thracian, etc).<sup>72</sup> From all appearances, this evidence in Sophocles' works was meant not as an interesting digression capable of attracting the audience, but as a building material for his plots.<sup>73</sup>

Now, let us apply the following logic: the Athenian playwright related scalping to the particular ethnos, so the Athenians (and not only) who watched Sophocles' *Oenomaus* performed on the Athenian stage should have taken it in the same way. Sophocles wanted to arrest the audience's attention by referring to this barbarian rite. The playwright, a participant of the *agon*, anticipated the response of the audience. Otherwise, why should he have cited this seemingly irrelevant

<sup>68</sup> Cf.: Ellendt 1872, 687, s.v. σκυθιστί: 'Scytharum more'.

<sup>69</sup> Hdt. 4.27; 52.3; 59.2.

<sup>70</sup> Powell 1977, 334, s.v. σκυθιστί: "in Scythian"; Pape 1908, II.2, 906, s.v. σκυθιστί: "in scythischer Sprache" (with examples from Herodotus).

<sup>71</sup> Borukhovich 1972, 24.

<sup>72</sup> As H. Bacon noted, "Sophocles' fragments provide more information about objects of foreign use than all the foreign plays of Aeschylus put together" (Bacon 1961, 78). Skrzhinskaia's article is devoted to Sophocles and the North Black Sea Region (Skrzhinskaia 1985); also: Kiso 1984, 53 f.; Skrzhinskaia 1991, 118 f.; Hall 1991, 166–170; Sinitsyn 2011b; 2011c; 2012.

<sup>73</sup> See Bacon 1961, 79.

comparison? Only a familiar phenomenon can excite emotions. It was crucial for Sophocles to consider the awareness and ability of the audience to respond. Otherwise, his hint at scalping practiced by the Scythians would not have worked if it had been unknown to the audience.<sup>74</sup>

What was the meaning of Sophocles' words? In my opinion the Scythians could not have exerted any influence either on Sophocles' tragedy or on the myth of Pelops. Pelops of Lydia, the son of Tantalus was a single foreigner in the story of Oenomaus, the king of Elis. I think, however, that Sophocles must have had in mind a different "*xenomorth*".

The ancient literary sources describe the mythic king of Pisa as a ruthless and violent person. Oenomaus used to cut off the heads of his daughter's suitors, if they lost the race. He also used to exhibit the heads of his victims on the façade of his palace. In this way Oenomaus got rid of the twelve suitors.<sup>75</sup>

Pelops, who came to ask for Hippodameia's hand, was provided with Poseidon's winged chariot. He also had to rival Oenomaus in the deadly chariot contest and he defeated the haughty sovereign and got Hippodameia and the kingdom. According to the Elean legend,<sup>76</sup> Pelops raised a mound to commemorate all his predecessors, Hippodameia's suitors, and established the practice of annual sacrifice rites. The myth of Pelops, a foreigner from Asia Minor, and Oenomaus the king of Elis became a foundation myth for the Olympic Games.<sup>77</sup>

The reference to σκυθιστὶ χειρόμακτρον in the tragedy implies that Sophocles substituted the scalps, the fatal "hand-towels, for Oenomaus" "trophies", which were skulls or heads of the slain either (other authors featured κρανίου or κεφαλή). It can be noticed that the playwright "refreshed" some elements of the traditional version of the original story (both in the literature and folk tale). No one except for Sophocles tells the story of Oenomaus and his terrifying collection of human skulls.<sup>78</sup>

<sup>74</sup> On psychology of classical art see a new thorough work: Pozdnev 2010.

<sup>75</sup> Apollodorus speaks of 12 suitors (*Epit.* 2.5); other sources point out that before Pelops they had been 13 (Pind. *Ol.* 1.79; cf.: idem. *fr.* 135.1 Snell–Maehler; Philostr. *Imag.* 1.17.4); Pausanias (6.21.7, 10–11) gives the names of 18 suitors).

<sup>76</sup> This legend is retold by Pausanias (6.21.9, 11).

<sup>77</sup> Literature: Berger 1935; Lacroix 1976; Burkert 1983, 93–103; O'Brien 1988; Brulotte 1994; Instone 2007, 76; Ekroth 2007, 109 ff.

<sup>78</sup> Pearson's commentary: "Sophocles appears to be the only authority who asserts that Oenomaus scalped his daughter's suitor" (Sophocles 2009, II, 127, ad loc. *Soph. fr.* 473). Cf. Zelinskii's note: "On scalps of the slain suitors, which the barbarian king used to wipe his hands with. These scalps, by the way, (instead of the traditional heads) constituted the novelty Sophocles introduced clearly under the influence of Herodotus IV.64" (Zelinskii 1914b, 256).



## Conclusion

The terrifying Scythian ritual referred to in the *Oenomaus* of Sophocles emphasised the king's primitive and brutal character. The simile σκυθιστί seems to equal the ethical condemnation of Oenomaus' wild and cruel behaviour.<sup>79</sup> The audience of Sophocles was expected to compare the way of life of the savage Scythians with that of the civilised Greeks. Oenomaus became illustrative of the Scythian barbarity.

If I am right, the Sophoclean quotation is not baseless. The sense of the words must have been clear to Sophocles himself and to his Attic audience, which must have heard about the Scythian scalps. This corroborates my thesis that the popular Scythian “*xenomyth*” emerged in the first half of the 5th century BC.<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> See Sinit syn 2012.

<sup>80</sup> This article is an offshoot of the research into the problem of Sophocles and “Scythian Logos” by Herodotus (Sinit syn 2008a). Various aspects of the problem were presented in reports made at the international conference “The Word and the Artifact: Interdisciplinary approaches to the study of Ancient History” held in 2008 at Saratov State University, at the conference in Staraja Ladoga (“Ladoga and Northern Eurasia”, 2010) and in 2011 at the international conference “The Bosporan Phenomenon: Population, Languages, and Contacts” (St. Petersburg, The Institute of History of Material Culture and the State Hermitage) (see Sinit syn 2011a). I express my gratitude for consultations given to me during the work on this article and useful criticism to V.A. Lopatin, N.M. Malov, V.N. Parfenov (Saratov, Russia), Z.A. Barzakh, D.A. Machinskii, D.A. Shcheglov, A.Ia. Tyzhov (St. Petersburg, Russia), A.V. Mosolkin, A.V. Podossinov, I.E. Surikov (Moscow, Russia), T. Polański (Kielce, Poland), M.V. Skrzhinskaia (Kiev, Ukraine), Harijs Tumans (Riga, Latvia). I am very grateful to R.V. Lapyrenok (Bonn, Germany), V.P. Nikonorov (St. Petersburg) and M.J. Olbrycht (Rzeszow, Poland) for providing me with literature on this topic.

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## Abstract

The barbarian custom of beheading and scalping vanquished enemies must have looked awesome to the civilized colonists in the North Black Sea Region. Greek merchants and travellers brought horrible stories about steppe nomads to poleis of Asia Minor and the Balkans to satiate the interest of their countrymen in tales of foreign oddities. It was here that legends of savage and unbridled barbarians were born; here the "*xenomyth*" of the bloodthirsty ferocity emerged. The Greeks related the scalping – removal of skin together with hair from heads of slain enemies – to a particular ethnos, namely, the Scythians. The extravagant "trophies" taken by Scythian warriors were called χερρόμακτρον. In Athens in the 5th century BC, they were so well aware of Scythians that the words of the σκυθ- root became part of the Attic language and permeated the poetry. The earliest literary record of the Scythian custom of scalping slain enemies and turning the ripped off scalps into peculiar "hand-towels" must be attributed not to the shocking story told by Herodotus (4.64.2) but to a fragment from Sophocles' tragedy *Oenomaus*, referred to by Athenaeus (*Soph. fr.* 473 *TGF*, Radt = *Athen.* 9.410c) (see Sinitsyn 2008a): "*the Scythian way for a hand-towel shorn*". The reference in *Oenomaus* to σκυθιστὶ χερρόμακτρον proves that the playwright replaced Oenomaus' "trophies", which hitherto were either skulls, or heads of slain rivals, by outlandish and awesome "hand-towels" – *cheiromaktrons-scalps*. Referring to this barbarian phenomenon Sophocles wanted to arrest attention of his audience. The Scythian eccentricity exhibited in *Oenomaus* emphasized the ferocity of the main hero of the tragedy, who had gone to far in his "merrymaking". By σκυθιστὶ Sophocles shows that Oenomaus' conduct was unworthy of Hellenes; the acts he performs testify to his "barbarity", to his being a true "Scythian". In no way does Sophocles' reference to the extravagant Scythian custom look absurd and far-fetched.





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## PTOLEMAIOS UND DIE ERINNERUNG AN HEPHAISTION

Für Marek Jan Olbrycht

**Key words:** Alexander the Great; Hephaestion; Ptolemy; Indian Campaign; Clitarchus

### Einleitung

Hephaestion machte unter Alexanders Herrschaft eine bemerkenswerte Karriere.<sup>1</sup> Er gehörte zur Führungsspitze, war einer der sieben hochrangigen *somatophylakes* (Leibwächter), Hipparch und Chiliarch.<sup>2</sup> Kurz vor Hephaestions frühem Tod im Herbst 324 v. Chr. band Alexander ihn in Susa zudem dynastisch an sich, indem er ihn zu seinem Schwager machte.<sup>3</sup> Trotz dieses steilen Aufstiegs zu einem der bedeutendsten Offiziere im Alexanderreich ist Hephaestion als historische Person kaum fassbar. Bezüglich seines Nachlebens ereilte ihn ein vergleichbares Schicksal wie Alexander, dessen *memoria* schon bald nach seinem Tod in vielfältiger Weise geformt, mythisiert, verfremdet und entrealisiert wurde.<sup>4</sup> Auch von Hephaestion entstanden in der antiken Überlieferung verschiedene, teilweise inkompatible Bilder. Sie stellen mehr einen Gradmesser der Haltung des jeweiligen Autors und seiner Quellen zu Alexander dar als authentische Informationen zu Hephaestion.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Zu Hephaestion vgl. Müller 2014; 2012a; 2011a; 2011b; 2003, 217–221; Heckel 2009, 133–137; 1992, 65–90; Olbrycht 2010, 360; 2004, 47, 54, 338–340; Ogden 2012, 157–167; 2009, 211–212; Badian 1994; Reames 2010; 1999; 1998; Wirth 1964; Berve 1926, 169–175.

<sup>2</sup> Arr. an. 6,28,4; 3,27,4; 7,14,10; Diod. 18,48,4.

<sup>3</sup> Arr. an. 7,4,5. Vgl. Wirth 1967, 1023. Er gab ihm in Susa Drypetis, die Schwester seiner achaimenidischen Ehefrau Stateira, Tochter Dareios' III., zur Frau. Laut Arrian wollte er, dass ihre künftigen Kinder Cousins wären.

<sup>4</sup> Vgl. Wirth 1993b; 1990; 1989.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 453–454.

Keiner von Alexanders Offizieren wird so wenig als autonome Persönlichkeit dargestellt wie Hephaistion. Er figuriert stets nur in engster Verbindung mit Alexander. Dies ist nicht nur für die antike Überlieferung zu konstatieren, sondern auch für die moderne Forschung. Lange dominierte das auf einem fiktiven Psychogramm beruhende Urteil, er sei ein opportunistischer, arroganter, streitsüchtiger und unfähiger Emporkömmling gewesen, der seine – völlig unverdiente – Karriere nur seinem guten Aussehen und Alexanders Schwäche für ihn zu verdanken gehabt habe.<sup>6</sup> Dabei war nur umstritten, inwieweit Hephaistion ein „gehässiger Intrigant“<sup>7</sup> gewesen sei, der aus eigenem Antrieb Konkurrenz und Kritiker zu Fall gebracht habe,<sup>8</sup> oder lediglich Alexanders devot-höriger Handlanger, der alles getan habe, was von ihm verlangt worden sei.<sup>9</sup> Hinter dem harschen Urteil stehen deutlich die Zeugnisse von Curtius und Justin: Curtius beschreibt – ebenso anschaulich wie historisch höchst problematisch – eine parallel zu Alexanders vermeintlichem Sit-tenverfall verlaufende Depravationsgeschichte Hephaistions;<sup>10</sup> Justin erwähnt Hephaistion nur ein einziges Mal: nicht als Militär, sondern in päderastischer Terminologie als Alexanders blutjungen, hübschen Favoriten.<sup>11</sup>

Zur Dekonstruktion dieser artifiziellen Images von Hephaistion scheint wichtig, Ptolemaios' Informationen zu ihm in den Fragmenten seiner Alexander-geschichte zu untersuchen. Ptolemaios, ebenso wie er ein Mitglied von Alexan-

<sup>6</sup> Vgl. Heckel 2009, 134; 2003, 220; 1992, 71–72, 83; Wirth 1993a, 345–346; Badian 1998, 350; 1960, 336–337; Carney 1975, 221; Green 1970, 253; Berve 1926, 173. Dagegen sehr neutral: Olbrycht 2004, 54, 338–340; Bosworth 1988b, 164–165; Wirth 1964.

<sup>7</sup> Badian 1998, 350.

<sup>8</sup> Vgl. Heckel 1992, 72–73, 83; Hamilton 1969, 131; Berve 1926, 173.

<sup>9</sup> Vgl. Schachermeyr 1973, 511–512 (indes mit der Einschränkung, dass Alexander ihm genauso hörig gewesen sei); Berve 1926, 169–170. Da Green 1970, 253 Hephaistion als „fundamentally stupid“ charakterisiert, ist davon auszugehen, dass er ihn auch eher als Alexanders Instrument betrachtet.

<sup>10</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 445–448.

<sup>11</sup> Just. 12,12,11: „... unus ex amicis eius Hephaestion decessit, dotibus primo formae pueritiaeque, mox obsequiis regi percarus.“ („... einer von seinen Freunden, Hephaistion, starb, der zuerst durch die Gaben der Schönheit und des Knabenalters, dann durch die willige Dienstbarkeit dem König auf das Höchste lieb geworden war“). Zum implizierten sexuellen Charakter dieser Dienstbarkeit vgl. Ogden 2009, 211. Trogus geht anscheinend gemäß des klassisch griechisch-päderastischen *eromenos*-Modells von Hephaistion als einer wesentlich jüngeren Person aus, da er von *puer* (Knabe) spricht, nicht einmal von *juvenis*. Ebenso bezeichnet ihn Ael. VH 7,8 als *μειράκιον*, somit als Jugendlichen zwischen circa vierzehn und zwanzig Jahren. In Makedonien galt indes wohl dieses päderastische Modell so gar nicht: Viele männliche Paare bestanden anscheinend aus Gleichaltrigen oder zwei Erwachsenen (Arr. an. 4,13,3; Curt. 6,7,2–3; 8,6,8; Just. 8,6,4–6; Diod. 16,93,3–4). Vgl. Ogden 2009, 212; Reames 1999, 87–88. Interessanterweise scheint Trogus-Justin auch den Mörder Philipps II., Pausanias, seinen ehemaligen Geliebten, zum Zeitpunkt seiner durch Attalos veranlassten Vergewaltigung als (Just. 9,6) besonders jung charakterisiert zu haben, was chronologisch nicht unbedingt als wasserfest erscheint.

ders *inner circle*, hatte gleichzeitig mit ihm die Karriereleiter erklommen und die Strapazen der Feldzüge durchgestanden. Sie hatten Alexanders Politik offenbar in allen Phasen mitgetragen, sich als seine Vertrauten etabliert und waren besonders im Indienfeldzug zu seinen wichtigsten Feldherren geworden. Von Konkurrenz untereinander lässt sich nichts erkennen.

Im Folgenden werden Ptolemaios' Darstellung von Hephaistion analysiert und seine möglichen Beweggründe erörtert. Dabei wird zu zeigen sein, dass Ptolemaios Hephaistion offenbar im Vergleich zu anderen Mitoffizieren eine positive Sonderbehandlung angedeihen ließ. Aufgrund seiner Tendenz zur legitimatorischen Selbststilisierung in seiner Alexandergeschichte besaß zwar die Betonung von Ptolemaios' eigenen Leistungen Priorität, wie schon Curtius zu Recht feststellt.<sup>12</sup> Ptolemaios scheint sich und Hephaistion indes als Alexanders *zwei* wichtigste Männer darzustellen – wenngleich mit einer deutlich stärkeren Betonung der eigenen militärischen Befähigung. Da er aber offenbar sich *und* Hephaistion gegen mögliche Vorwürfe der Unfähigkeit als Berater und Kommandeur in Schutz zu nehmen versuchte, entsteht der Eindruck einer gewissen Einheit der beiden.

## Hephaistions literarische Stilisierung zu Alexanders Alter Ego, *eromenos* und Patroklos

Von Hephaistions familiärem Hintergrund ist nur bekannt, dass er aus der argeadischen Residenzstadt Pella kam und Sohn eines Amyntor war.<sup>13</sup> Ob es sich dabei um jenen inschriftlich bezeugten Amyntor, Sohn des Demetrios, handelt, der auf Antrag des Demades 334 v. Chr. das attische Bürgerrecht für sich und seine Nachkommen erhielt,<sup>14</sup> ist ungewiss. Zu welchem Zeitpunkt Hephaistion an den argeadischen Hof und in Alexanders Kreise gelangte, liegt im Dunkeln. Die Tradition, sie seien als Gleichaltrige miteinander aufgewachsen und von Kindesbeinen an befreundet, findet sich erst in späteren, teilweise höchst problematischen Quellen.<sup>15</sup> Die Vorstellung, sie seien zusammen von Aristoteles in

<sup>12</sup> Curt. 9,5,21: „... scilicet gloriae suae non refragatus“ („Er neigte nicht dazu, seinen Ruhm zu verdunkeln“).

<sup>13</sup> Arr. an. 6,28,4; Ind. 18,3. Heckel 1992, 66, A. 37 weist darauf hin, dass nicht einmal gewiss sei, ob Pella auch sein Geburtsort gewesen sei. Es hieße nur, dass er dort eine Zeitlang gelebt habe.

<sup>14</sup> IG II<sup>2</sup> 405. Vgl. Heckel 1992, 66, A. 37, 70; 1991, 39–41.

<sup>15</sup> Ps-Kall. 1,18; Jul. Val. 1,10. Ausgerechnet Onesikritos, der sich vermutlich als einziger der Alexanderhistoriographen ausführlicher mit Alexanders Kindheit und Jugend beschäftigte, scheint Hephaistion nicht an der Seite des jungen Alexanders erwähnt zu haben. Dies erschließt sich indirekt aus Plutarchs Passagen über Alexanders Jugend, für die er sich wahrscheinlich auf Onesikritos' Werk bezog. Vgl. Müller 2011c, 57–58; Hammond 1993, 58.

Mieza unterrichtet worden, ist sogar nur indirekt durch eine anfechtbare Passage bei Diogenes Laertios belegt.<sup>16</sup> Von den Alexanderhistoriographen spricht einzig Curtius von einer Jugendfreundschaft.<sup>17</sup> Allerdings ist dieser Beleg sehr kritisch zu sehen: Er steht im Kontext der sicherlich unhistorischen Szene nach der Schlacht von Issos, in der die gefangene Mutter Dareios' III. Hephaestion mit Alexander verwechselt und Alexander ihn daraufhin als sein Alter Ego anerkennt.<sup>18</sup> Curtius legt an dieser Stelle die Basis, um Hephaestion als Alexanders Doppelgänger zu etablieren, der im Folgenden eine spiegelbildliche Negativentwicklung durchmacht. Während Alexander sich vom gemäßigten Philosophenschüler und vorbildlichen Freund zum haltlosen Tyrannen verwandelt, wie Curtius an dieser Stelle schon ankündigt,<sup>19</sup> wird sein Mitschüler und Musterfreund Hephaestion zu einem skrupellosen Intriganten und seinem Lustknaben.<sup>20</sup> Da Curtius die gemeinsame Jugend von Hephaestion und Alexander als fundierendes Schlüsselement des Alter Ego-Motivs nimmt, um eine doppelte Depravationsgeschichte zu erzählen und mit diesem literarischen Mittel Alexanders Negativentwicklung zu unterstreichen,<sup>21</sup> ist der Wahrheitsgehalt kritisch zu sehen.<sup>22</sup> Curtius war indes nicht der Urheber des Doppelgängermo-

<sup>16</sup> Diog. Laert. 5,27. Er bezeugt keinen gemeinsamen Unterricht der beiden bei Aristoteles, sondern listet unter Briefen des Aristoteles auch einen Brief an Hephaestion auf. Daraus wurde geschlossen, dass Hephaestion sein Schüler gewesen war. Vgl. Heckel 1992, 66, m. A. 39; Berve 1926, 169. Indes finden sich auf der Liste, wenn sie überhaupt authentisch war, auch Briefe an Verwandte Alexanders (etwa an Olympias) und Personen aus seinem Umkreis, die nicht mit ihm in Mieza unterrichtet worden waren.

<sup>17</sup> Curt. 3,12,16.

<sup>18</sup> Curt. 3,12,15–26; Diod. 17,37,5–38,2; 114,2 (mit identischer Quelle wie Curtius); Arr. an. 2,12,5–8. Vgl. Val. Max. 4,7ext. 2a; Suda s.v. Hephaestion (ε 660 Adler). Vgl. Spencer 2002, 174; Bosworth 1980a, 222. Dagegen bezeugen Ptolemaios und Aristobulos nur den Besuch des *somato-phylax* Leonnatos am Tag zuvor, vermutlich auf Basis von Kallisthenes' offizieller Version (Arr. an. 2,12,5). Vgl. Müller 2011a, 436–437; Bosworth 1980, 220; Baynham 1998, 60.

<sup>19</sup> Curt. 3,12,18–22.

<sup>20</sup> Curt. 6,11,10; 7,9,19. Interessant scheint, dass Curtius den Hinweis auf die Schönheit, die Hephaestion neben der Körpergröße von Alexander unterschieden und Sisygambis zur Verwechslung der beiden veranlasst habe, in der Zeltszene, als er noch den „guten“ Hephaestion vorstellt, weglässt (vgl. dagegen Diod. 17,37,5–6. 114,2). Hephaestions gutes Aussehen erwähnt Curtius wesentlich später in einem wenig positiven Kontext, als die parallele Depravation schon im vollen Gang ist: Er bezeichnet Hephaestions Schönheit als eine der Qualitäten, die ihn für Alexander wichtig gemacht hätten (vgl. Just.12,12,11). Die päderastische Terminologie („qui cum specie corporis aequaret Hephaestionem, ei lepore haud sane virili par non erat“, „der an körperlicher Schönheit Hephaestion gleichkam, wenn er ihm auch nicht in punkto männlicher Ausstrahlung glich“) deutet auf eine sexuelle Beziehung hin, vgl. Ogdon 2009, 210–211, m. A. 59.

<sup>21</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 445–448; 2011b, 117–123.

<sup>22</sup> Gegen die Historizität der Jugendfreundschaft argumentiert auch Wirth 1993a, 345, A. 298. Gegen Ameling 1988, 667. Es ist auch nicht sicher, ob sie gleichaltrig waren.

tivs, er gestaltete es nur aus. Der eigentliche Ursprung ist wohl kurz nach Alexanders Tod zu verorten. Er starb nur wenige Monate nach Hephaistion; der Eindruck einer schicksalhaften Fügung wurde durch Gerüchte und literarische Stilisierung noch verstärkt.<sup>23</sup> In der Überlieferung sind die beiden Todesfälle spiegelbildlich so aneinander angeglichen, dass es schwierig ist, hinter den Schichten der Mythisierung auszumachen, woran Hephaistion tatsächlich starb und welche der geschilderten Maßnahmen zu seinem Gedenken als authentisch zu bewerten sind.<sup>24</sup> Zu dieser Stilisierung von Hephaistions Tod als Vorzeichen und Vorform von Alexanders Ableben wird Ehippos von Olynth mit seiner Schrift „Über den Tod/die Bestattung von Alexander und Hephaistion“<sup>25</sup> beigetragen haben. Seine Version ist verloren. Anhand der feindseligen Tendenz der Fragmente, in denen Ehippos den Makedonen grobe Unmäßigkeit im Trunk bescheinigt und Alexander als mordlüsternen Tyrannen östlicher Prägung darstellt,<sup>26</sup> wird jedoch angenommen, dass er „barbarische“ Alkoholexzesse als Todesursache nannte und dabei nicht verhehlte, dass es ihnen ganz recht geschehen sei.<sup>27</sup> Lionel Pearson vermutet in ihm einen „disgruntled Olynthian“.<sup>28</sup> Vor dem Hintergrund des Lamischen Kriegs habe er ein makedonenfeindliches griechisches Publikum ansprechen wollen, insbesondere vielleicht Olynther und Thebaner. Daher habe er die beiden Todesfälle als späte Rache des Dionysos für Theben dargestellt: Hephaistion und Alexander seien an ihrer Unmäßigkeit bezüglich Dionysos’ Geschenk an die Menschheit, dem Wein,<sup>29</sup> zugrunde gegangen.<sup>30</sup> Insofern wäre die negative Konnotation des Doppelgängermotivs schon bei Ehippos zu vermuten.

Eine umfassendere Ausformung mag das Alter-Ego-Motiv durch Kleitarchos erfahren haben.<sup>31</sup> Vermutlich fand sich bei ihm jedoch nicht die negative Wen-

<sup>23</sup> Vgl. McKechnie 1995, 418–432. Der Seher Peithagoras soll sich damit gerühmt haben, anhand eines identischen Zeichens, des fehlenden Leberlappens beim Opfertier, ihrer beider Tod vorausgesagt zu haben (Arr. an. 7,18,1–6; Plut. Alex. 73,2 (Pythagoras); App. BC 2,152). Vgl. Heckel 2009, 40–41, 194; Mederer 1936, 124–126.

<sup>24</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 448–451; 2011b, 123–124.

<sup>25</sup> Athen. 4,146 C-D; 10,434 A-B; 12,537 D.

<sup>26</sup> Athen. 3,120 C-D; 12,538 A.

<sup>27</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 449–450; 2009, 218–219; Heckel 1992, 88; Wirth 1989, 199–200, m. A. 27; Bosworth 1988b, 173–184; Mederer 1936, 138.

<sup>28</sup> Pearson 1960, 64. Vgl. Heckel 2009, 118.

<sup>29</sup> Eur. Bacch. 178–181; 699–713; Athen. 15,675 A.

<sup>30</sup> Vgl. Pearson 1960, 67. So schon Mossman 1988, 91; Mederer 1936, 97–98, 137–138, 162. Das Motiv des dionysischen Zorns findet sich bei Plut. Alex. 11, 5–6; 13,5–6; mor. 181 B. 221 A. Es würde umso stimmiger für Hephaistions Tod sein, wenn er tatsächlich im Zuge der Dionysien erkrankt und gestorben wäre, wie Wirth 1967, 1023 vermutet. Zur Stimmung in Hellas zu Ende des Lamischen Kriegs: Hyp. 6,10; 16; 20.

<sup>31</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 445; 2011b, 120, 124, 138; McKechnie 2005, 420, 431.

derung der doppelten Entartung, sondern eine positive Darstellung im Sinne der griechischen Freundschaftslehre.<sup>32</sup> Kleitarchos schrieb unter Ptolemaios in Alexandria.<sup>33</sup> Auch wenn seine Tendenzen zum Ausschmücken, Fabulieren und Mythisieren Ptolemaios' eigenem historiographischen Stil nicht entsprachen – Ptolemaios betrieb eine andere Art von Stilisierung und Idealisierung –, ist anzunehmen, dass Kleitarchos nichts geschrieben hätte, was Ptolemaios' Sprachregelung diametral entgegengestanden hätte.<sup>34</sup> Die indirekte Überlieferung seines Werks durch spätere Autoren aus anderen kulturellen Kontexten – gerade von römischer Seite –<sup>35</sup> wird den Blick auf Kleitarchos' Inhalte vielfach verstellt und verfremdet haben. So war die tragende panhellenische Rolle, die er Thaïs, Ptolemaios' langjähriger athenischer Geliebter, vielleicht sogar Frau, und Mutter drei seiner Kinder,<sup>36</sup> beim Brand von Persepolis verleiht,<sup>37</sup> vermutlich als ehrende Erwähnung gemeint.<sup>38</sup> Sollte er zum Zeitpunkt von Ptolemaios' Helaskampagne geschrieben haben, wie Elizabeth Baynham vermutet,<sup>39</sup> würde dies umso mehr Sinn ergeben. Ähnlich ist anzunehmen, dass Kleitarchos davon ausgeht, die Darstellung von Hephästion als Alexanders Alter Ego sei in Ptolemaios' Sinn. Zwar lässt sich das Motiv weder in den Spuren von Alexanders eigener Propaganda noch bei Ptolemaios finden, lief seiner Sprachregelung zu Hephästion aber kaum prinzipiell zuwider.

<sup>32</sup> Diog. Laert. 5,20; Aristot. Eth. Nic. 1156 B, 1157 B, 1159 B. Vgl. Plut. mor. 93 E- 94 A. Curtius' negativer Twist mag von Pompeius Trogus kommen.

<sup>33</sup> Plin. NH 3,57–58. Vgl. Will 2009, 11; Zambrini 2007, 216; Baynham 2003, 11; Wirth 1993a, 202; Hammond 1983, 84. Die neuere Spätdatierung des Kleitarchos ist problematisch.

<sup>34</sup> Siehe auch Heckel 1992, 224, A. 48.

<sup>35</sup> Alexander erfuhr eine ambivalente Rezeption im kulturellen Gedächtnis des römischen Reichs. Einerseits galt er in militärischer Hinsicht als Eroberer für Feldherren und Kaisern, die Ostfeldzüge unternahmen, als imitierenswertes Vorbild (vgl. Kühnen 2008, 33–205; Spencer 2002, 9–11, 37–38). Andererseits war er als rhetorisches Exempel für die Korruption durch Fortuna, die zu Hybris und Tyrannenverhalten geführt habe, zum abschreckenden Negativbeispiel stilisiert worden. Gerade dieses Zerrbild war in der römischen Literatur sehr präsent. Vgl. Spencer 2002, 83–118.

<sup>36</sup> Athen. 13,536 D-E; Just. 15,2,7. Die Kinder hießen Lagos, Leontiskos und Eirene und wurden vom Vater offenbar anerkannt. Vgl. Heckel 2009, 262; Müller 2009, 22; Berve 1926, 175.

<sup>37</sup> Curt. 5,7,3–7; Plut. Alex. 38,1; Diod. 17,72,1–2; Strab. 15,3,6. Die Dekadenztopik, die jene Szene prägt (Trunksucht, Irrationalität, Unsittlichkeit), stammt wohl nicht von Kleitarchos, der vermutlich den panhellenischen Aspekt betonte, sondern wird von späteren alexanderfeindlichen Autoren kommen, eventuell vor allem von römischer Seite.

<sup>38</sup> Auch wenn Ptolemaios Thaïs nicht erwähnt, da er wohl der offiziellen Version folgt (Arr. an. 3,18,11–12). Diese Diskrepanz ist jedoch kein Grund, um Kleitarchos und Ptolemaios auseinanderzuidividieren. Zudem ist ungewiss, ob der Verweis auf Thaïs, von der Ptolemaios zwei Söhne hatte, zum Zeitpunkt der Abfassung seiner Alexandergeschichte noch opportun war. Sollte er damit auch beabsichtigt haben, die Nachfolge seines Sohns von Berenike zu legitimieren, wäre es nur verständlich, dass er zu Thaïs schwieg und nicht noch ihr symbolisches Kapital erhöhte. Wenn Kleitarchos um 310/08 v. Chr. schrieb, war Ptolemaios' Nachfolge noch kein Thema.

<sup>39</sup> Vgl. Baynham 2003, 11.



Zum persönlichen Patroklos des neuen makedonischen Achilles wurde Hephaistion vielleicht erst recht spät in der Überlieferung. Soweit man es nachvollziehen kann, lässt sich in den kargen Spuren von Alexanders Selbstdarstellung kein Hinweis darauf finden, dass er ihm eine solche Rolle zugeordnet hätte. Überdies ist Waldemar Heckel zuzustimmen, dass die Annahme einer systematischen politischen Achillesimitatio Alexanders ein Forschungsmythos ist; Alexanders Bezug zu Achilles stand im Kontext der Verehrung eines prestigieösen Ahnherrn.<sup>40</sup>

Obwohl Kleitarchos mit dem Doppelgängerthema operiert, ist es schwierig, ihm auch das Motiv der Achilles-Patroklos-Parallele zuzuordnen. Wann es in der Literatur zu Alexander aufkam, ist somit nicht zu sagen; eine Elaboration findet sich aber bei Arrian. Zu diesem Zweck weicht er eigens von seinen Hauptquellen, Ptolemaios und Aristobulos, ab.<sup>41</sup> Philip Stadter vermutet plausibel, dass Arrian bei dieser Romantisierung das Vorbild von Hadrian und Antinoos im Hinterkopf hatte.<sup>42</sup> Arrians Lehrer Epiktetos vertrat hingegen eine andere Linie der Hephaistion-Rezeption: Demnach war Hephaistion als Alexanders *eromenos* ein Symptom von dessen Depravation und stand synonym für Alexanders Unmäßigkeit in der Liebe.<sup>43</sup>

Jenseits der späteren Stilisierung zu Alexanders Jugendfreund, Doppelgänger, Patroklos und *eromenos* ist die Möglichkeit einzuräumen, dass Hephaistion möglicherweise erst 334 v. Chr., zu Beginn des Feldzugs, in Alexanders Kreise kam. Dies muss jedoch ungewiss bleiben. Den Krieg machte er wohl von Beginn an mit, ebenso wie Ptolemaios.<sup>44</sup> Zum Karrieresprung kam es für sie jedoch erst

<sup>40</sup> Vgl. Heckel 2012: „... if he chose to publicize his own emulation of a Greek hero, that hero was Heracles and not Achilles“. Ein Beleg sei auch Achilles' Fehlen in Alexanders Münzprogramm. Gegen Ameling 1988, 657–692.

<sup>41</sup> Arr. an. 1,12,6 (parallele Bekräftigung der Gräber von Achilles und Patroklos in Ilion); 7,14,4 (Vergleich zwischen Alexanders Trauer um Hephaistion und Achilles' Trauer um Patroklos). In 7,23,6 betont Arrian noch einmal, dass er persönlich Alexanders Freundesliebe für den toten Hephaistion sehr schätzte.

<sup>42</sup> Vgl. Stadter 1980, 39, 169. Akzeptiert von Müller 2011a, 452, 2011b, 121–122. Gegen Kühnen 2008, 173.

<sup>43</sup> Epiktet. 2,22,17. (Siehe auch Luk. DM 14,4; Calumn. 17). Dagegen wendet sich Arrian, ohne jedoch Epiktetos' Namen zu nennen (Arr. an. 7,14,5). Arrian bezeichnet Hephaistion an keiner Stelle als Alexanders *eromenos*. Es ist dennoch zu vermuten, dass er sie für ein Liebespaar hielt, da die Achilles-Patroklos-Parallele noch zu seiner Zeit diese Konnotation hatte (vgl. Arr. Per. 23,4). Vgl. Stadter 1980, 38–39. Arrian sah diese Beziehung aber nicht als Symptom von Alexanders Maßlosigkeit an, sondern rechtfertigte ihn noch (an. 7,14,5–6). Weitere spätere Zeugnisse zu Hephaistion als Alexanders *eromenos*: Diogenes Sinopensis Epistulae 24,1 (Hercher); Ael. VH 12,7; Luk. DM 14,4. Vgl. Ogden 2009, 211, A. 59; Reames 1999, 94; 1998, 139, 169.

<sup>44</sup> 333/32 soll Hephaistion den neuen Herrscher von Sidon eingesetzt haben. Allerdings sind die Berichte von mythischen Elementen überlagert und variieren bezüglich ihrer geographischen und zeitlichen Verortung (Curt. 4,1,15–26; Just. 11,10,9; Plut. mor. 340 C-D: Paphos; Diod. 17,47,1–4: Tyros). Vgl. Müller 2011a, 437; Atkinson 1980, 278–283. 332 soll Hephaistion den

ab 330, als Alexander sich mit dem Sturz von Parmenion und Philotas freie Hand verschafft hatte, um seine eigenen Vertrauensleute auf die hohen Posten zu setzen. Ptolemaios erhielt den frei gewordenen Posten des verdächtig gewordenen *somatophylax* Demetrios, eine Spitzenstellung im makedonischen *cursus honorum*.<sup>45</sup> Hephaistion wurde Philotas' Nachfolger als Hipparch, doch nicht allein, sondern mit Kleitos zusammen ernannt.<sup>46</sup> Durch die Teilung des Amts und der Berufung des alt gedienten Offiziers zu seinem Kollegen wollte Alexander vermutlich verhindern, dass Hephaistion, in führenden Militärposten noch unerfahren, Autoritätsprobleme mit den Elitetruppen bekam, die aufgrund des Todes von Philotas und Parmenion ohnehin in Unruhe waren.<sup>47</sup> Wann Hephaistion das Prestigeamt des Leibwächters bekam, das Arrian erst für das Jahr 325 erwähnt,<sup>48</sup> ist ebenso umstritten wie Datum und Kompetenz des von Alexander neu etablierten Chiliarchenpostens.<sup>49</sup> Abgesehen von Arrians Mitteilung, dass Hephaistions Chiliarchie mit seiner Hipparchieabteilung verknüpft war, die auch seinen Namen trug,<sup>50</sup> schweigen die Quellen dazu. Aktuell geht die Tendenz der Forschung dahin, das Amt als primär militärisch zu bewerten und in die Spanne zwischen den Neubesetzungen und Reorganisationen der Hipparchie 330–328 zu datieren.<sup>51</sup> Im Indienfeldzug entwickelte sich Hephaistion zu Alexanders größter Stütze und wurde immer öfter mit dem Kommando über den Hauptteil des Heers betraut.<sup>52</sup> Als er im Spätherbst 324 in Ekbatana starb,<sup>53</sup> hinterließ er eine klaffende Lücke in Alexanders Personalstrukturen.

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Transfer von Flotte und Belagerungswaffen nach Gaza überwacht haben (Curt. 4,5,10). 331 soll Demosthenes seinen jungen Freund Aristeion zu ihm gesandt haben, damit er eine Versöhnung mit Alexander vermittelte (Marsyas von Pella, FGrHist 135, F2). 331 bei Gaugamela wurde Hephaistion verwundet (Curt. 4,16,32; Arr. an. 3,15,2; Diod. 17,61,3). Als Arrians Gewährsmann gilt hier Ptolemaios, vgl. Errington 1969, 233–242; Bosworth 1980a, 311–312; Atkinson 1980, 454. Hephaistion kommandierte die Hypaspisten, vgl. Heckel 2009, 133.

<sup>45</sup> Arr. an. 6,28,3–4. Vgl. Heckel 1992, 70–71. Auch führte er ab 329 drei Hipparchien der Hetairenreiterei und Philotas' Pezhetairentaxis an. Vgl. Berve 1926, 330.

<sup>46</sup> Arr. an. 3,27,4.

<sup>47</sup> Diod. 17,80,4; 118,1–2; Curt. 7,1,1–4. 2,35–36; 10,1,6; Just. 12,5,4–8; Plut. Alex. 49,8; Polyain. 4,3,19.

<sup>48</sup> Arr. an. 6,28,4.

<sup>49</sup> Erwähnt bei Arr. an. 7,14,10; Diod. 18,48,4. Zu einem Überblick über die Positionen vgl. Meeus 2009, 302–303. Zum Terminus vgl. Collins 2001, 259–260.

<sup>50</sup> Arr. an. 7,14,10. Es handelt sich wohl um ein anderes Chiliarchenamt als das in Curt. 5,2,3 erwähnte.

<sup>51</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011a, 440–441; Briant 2010, 74; Meeus 2009, 303, 308, 310; Bosworth 1980b, 5, A. 34, 14.

<sup>52</sup> Curt. 8,14,15. 9,1,35; Arr. an. 5,12,2. 21,5; 29,3; 6,2,2; 5,5; 13,1. 17,4. 18,1. 20,1. 21,3. 21,5. 22,3. 28,7; 7,4,5. 5,4; Ind. 19,1,3; Diod. 17,21,3. 21,5. 22,3. 28,7. 91,1. 93,1; 96,1. Vgl. Berve 1926, 172.

<sup>53</sup> Diod. 17,110,7–8; Arr. an. 7,14,1. 4; Polyain. 4,3,31; Plut. Alex. 72,1–2.

## Ptolemaios als Historiograph

Während die Datierung von Ptolemaios' Alexandergeschichte einen Streitpunkt in der Forschung darstellt, herrscht Einigkeit über ihre politisch-legitimatorischen Tendenzen. Ptolemaios verfasste seine Schrift laut Arrian als *basileus*, somit nach 306/5 v. Chr.<sup>54</sup> Im Fall eines frühen Publikationsdatums<sup>55</sup> wird dies Teil der Legitimation seiner Herrschaft gewesen sein, für die er seine tatkräftige Teilnahme an Alexanders Eroberungszügen und Nähe zum Herrscher beschwor. Sollte er gegen Lebensende geschrieben haben,<sup>56</sup> kam wohl der Wunsch nach der Legitimation seines Nachfolgers hinzu: ein literarisches Mittel, um seinem Sohn den Weg in der besonders heiklen Transferphase eines Reichs von der Gründergeneration zur Erbgeneration zu ebnen.<sup>57</sup>

Ptolemaios' literarische Überhöhung Alexanders führte zur lebensfernen Kunstfigur des großartigen, tugendhaften, göttergeschützten Feldherrn in Superlativen.<sup>58</sup> Problematische Episoden, die im Widerspruch zu diesem Idealbild gestanden hätten, wurden retuschiert; im Fall der umstrittenen Beseitigung von Führungspersonen und militärischen Rückschlägen bekamen andere die Schuld.<sup>59</sup> Dieser Stilisierung Alexanders zum überlebensgroßen Erobererideal entsprach auch Ptolemaios' Politik der Erinnerung an ihn durch die Bestattung seiner eigens geraubten Mumie in Ägypten und die Pflege eines Alexanderkults und seines *ktistes*-Kults in Alexandria.<sup>60</sup> Nachhall findet dieses Gedenken etwa in der glorifizierenden Darstellung Alexanders in der höfischen Dichtung, wenn Theokritos ihn als Herakles' Tischgenosse im Olymp oder Poseidippos ihn als haushoch überlegenen Sieger über heillos flüchtende Perser mit homerischem Feuer im Blick beschreibt.<sup>61</sup>

Die wichtigste Person nach Alexander in Ptolemaios' Schrift war er selbst. Auch wenn der Philosophenschüler Arrian verkündet, dass ein König nicht lügen

<sup>54</sup> Arr. an. 1 Prooemium. Vgl. Berve 1926, 334–335.

<sup>55</sup> Vgl. Errington 1969, 241.

<sup>56</sup> Wann Ptolemaios indes mit dem Schreiben begann, muss ungeklärt bleiben. Zur Übersicht über Positionen der jüngeren und älteren Forschung vgl. Zambrini 2006, 217; Ellis 2002, 17; Pearson 1960, 193.

<sup>57</sup> Der nach dem Vorbild der Argeaden polygam lebende Ptolemaios I. hatte noch andere Söhne, so dass sein Wunschkandidat, der spätere Ptolemaios II., mit der Konkurrenz seiner Halbbrüder zu rechnen hatte (Diog. Laert. 5,78–79; Paus. 1,7,1). Vgl. Müller 2009, 29–32, 105–111; Hölbl 1994, 26.

<sup>58</sup> Erkennbar bei Arr. an. 7,28,1–4.

<sup>59</sup> Vgl. Zambrini 2007, 217; Ellis 2002, 17; Pearson 1960, 210. Philotas und Parmenion: Arr. an. 3,26,1–4; Kallisthenes: Arr. an. 4,14,1–3; Mallerstadt: Arr. an. 6,9–10.

<sup>60</sup> Vgl. Müller 2009, 247–248; Hölbl 1994, 87.

<sup>61</sup> Theokrit. 17,15–20; Pos. Ep. 65 AB.

dürfe.<sup>62</sup> Es liegt nah, dass ein Herrscher, dessen Reich aus Brüchen politischer Kontinuität hervorgegangen war, bei einem Schriftwerk über die Hauptelemente seiner Legitimation die eigenen Interessen verfolgte.<sup>63</sup>

Es erscheint daher nur konsequent, dass Ptolemaios offenbar wenig daran lag, Leistungen und familiären Hintergrund seiner einstigen Mitoffiziere und späteren Gegner oder Verbündeten in den Diadochenkriegen zu erwähnen.<sup>64</sup> So entsteht – ob nun intendiert oder nicht – der Eindruck, Seleukos, Lysimachos und Antigonos seien der Obskurität entstiegen und hätten unter Alexander nichts Erinnerungswürdiges vollbracht – im Gegensatz zu Ptolemaios. Eine Ausnahme stellt Perdikkas dar, den Ptolemaios an mehreren Passagen mehr oder weniger explizit als wenig fähigen Kommandeur darstellt, der Alexanders Befehle nicht einhält und nicht in der Lage ist, seine Truppen zu disziplinieren.<sup>65</sup>

Sich selbst beschrieb Ptolemaios bei einschneidenden Etappen des Alexanderzugs in tragender Rolle: Er war demnach einer der Verantwortlichen für das gelungene Manöver an den Persischen Pässen,<sup>66</sup> führte Bessos' Gefangennahme durch,<sup>67</sup> meldete Alexander am Oxos den Fund einer Ölquelle,<sup>68</sup> informierte ihn über das von Hermolaos geplante Attentat,<sup>69</sup> bezwang bei den indischen Aspasiern eine auf einen Hügel geflüchtete Gruppe ganz allein, indem er ihren Anführer im tapferen Zweikampf besiegte,<sup>70</sup> erwies sich bei Arigaion als kluger Kundschafter,

<sup>62</sup> Arr. an. 1 Prooemium. Vgl. Arr. an. 7,5,2–3. Es ist ungewiss, ob er dies selbst glaubte, den Wahrheitsgehalt seiner Hauptquelle damit strategisch unterstreichen wollte oder ob diese Vorstellung Teil des Kaiserideals war, das er vertrat.

<sup>63</sup> So schon Berve 1926, 335. Zur Ideologie und Legitimationssituation der Diadochen vgl. Wheatley 2009, 60–61.

<sup>64</sup> Vgl. Bosworth 1995, 281.

<sup>65</sup> Arr. an. 1,8,1 (Perdikkas missachtet vor Theben Alexanders Befehl); 1,21,1–3 (Soldaten aus Perdikkas' Truppe attackieren Halikarnassos im betrunkenen Zustand); 6,6,4–6,9,2 (Perdikkas vor der Mallerstadt; seine Soldaten sind nicht ausreichend vorbereitet für den Angriff und agieren zu langsam). Allgemein zu Ptolemaios' tendenziöser Darstellung von Perdikkas vgl. Bosworth 1980, 311–312; Atkinson 1980, 454; Errington 1969, 237–242; Berve 1926, 335. Dagegen vgl. Roisman 1984. Ptolemaios' Bild des Krateros scheint auch nicht das eines glänzenden Offiziers gewesen zu sein. Leonnatos bleibt schattenhaft.

<sup>66</sup> Arr. an. 3,18,9. Im Gegensatz zur Version bei Polyain. 4,3,27 mit Hephästion und Philotas im Fokus. Vgl. Heckel 2009, 236, 336, A. 643; Bosworth 1980, 328.

<sup>67</sup> Bessos: Arr. an. 3,29,7–30,5 (im leichten Gegensatz zu Aristobulos' Version). Vgl. Heckel 2009, 236; Ellis 2002, 11.

<sup>68</sup> Arr. an. 4,15,7–8. Vgl. Müller 2012b.

<sup>69</sup> Arr. an. 4,13,7. Im Unterschied zu Curt. 8,6,22. Heckel 1992, 225, m. A. 51 vermutet, Ptolemaios habe Leonnatos bewusst weggelassen. Zu Leonnatos vgl. Wheatley 2009, 60; Heckel 2009, 147–151; Berve 1926, 232–235.

<sup>70</sup> Arr. an. 4,24,3–5. Bosworth 1996, 47 konstatiert homerische Anleihen (Il. 16,308) und vermutet eine Herabsetzung von Hephästion: „Ptolemy deliberately portrayed himself as a second Patroclus, comparable in military valor and in intimacy with his royal master (...) He rather than Hephästion (so the narrative implied) should be considered the favourite of the Macedonian

der mit Eigeninitiative bei Alexander punkten und einen Sieg vorbereiten konnte,<sup>71</sup> und war maßgeblich an der Erstürmung des Aornos-Felsens beteiligt.<sup>72</sup> Er stilisierte sich somit zu Alexanders rechter Hand und zeichnete eine Entwicklungsgeschichte vom fähigen Offizier zum prädestinierten Nachfolger nach.<sup>73</sup>

## Ptolemaios und Hephaistion: Stets zusammen abwesend?

So wie Ptolemaios gemäß eigener Darstellung bei einigen Ereignissen präsent ist, für die andere Quellen dies nicht bezeugen, gibt es auch Fälle, in denen er über seine Anwesenheit schweigt oder sie – im Widerspruch zur parallelen Überlieferung – bestreitet. Bei der Betrachtung der Episoden, in denen sich Ptolemaios anscheinend nicht erwähnt, fällt auf, dass es sich entweder um militärische oder innenpolitische Problemsituationen handelt, in denen etwas aus dem Ruder lief: der Sturz von Philotas und Parmenion, der Mord an Kleitos, Alexanders Hochzeit mit Roxane, das Debakel bei der Stadt der Malloi und der Zug durch die Gedrosische Wüste. Dies lässt vermuten, dass es zu Ptolemaios' Selbststilisierung gehörte, stets dann, wenn etwas in Schiefelage geriet oder zumindest Konfliktpotential barg, nicht dabei gewesen sein zu wollen. Offenbar wollte er nicht in den Verdacht kommen, ein schlechter Ratgeber und Kommandant gewesen zu sein. Beim Vorfall mit Kleitos bezeugt Aristobulos Ptolemaios' Anwesenheit,<sup>74</sup> bei der Belagerung der Mallerstadt sprechen andere Quellen davon.<sup>75</sup> In der Forschung wird teilweise vermutet, dass Ptolemaios auch beim Zug durch die Gedrosische Wüste dabei war.<sup>76</sup> Dies ist ebenso für Alexanders Hochzeit mit Roxane anzunehmen.

Nun ist von Interesse, dass Ptolemaios offenbar nicht nur sich selbst, sondern auch Hephaistion in diesen Situationen nicht erwähnt und damit jegli-

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Achilles“. Ähnlich: Howe 2008, 225. Diese These hängt jedoch von der fraglichen Prämisse ab, dass die Achilles-Patroklos-Parallele unter Ptolemaios bereits Thema war. Zudem ist nicht erkennbar, dass Ptolemaios Hephaistions persönliche Bedeutung für Alexander schmälerte.

<sup>71</sup> Arr. an. 4,24,8–25,4.

<sup>72</sup> Arr. an. 4,29. Vgl. Howe 2008, 227–228; Ellis 2002, 12.

<sup>73</sup> Vgl. Howe 2008, 215–216.

<sup>74</sup> Arr. an. 4,8,9. Siehe auch Curt. 7,1,45–46. Er figuriert sogar ziemlich prominent und versucht, zur Deeskalation der Lage beizutragen. Vgl. Berve 1926, 331. Da Arrian neben Ptolemaios auch Perdikkas als kurzfristigen Streitschlichter nennt, ist es unwahrscheinlich, dass er sich dabei auch auf Ptolemaios bezieht. Vgl. Heckel 2009, 236; 1992, 224, m. A. 48; Seibert 1969, 19; Errington 1969, 238–239.

<sup>75</sup> Arr. an. 6,11,8; Curt. 9,5,21. Er gilt teilweise sogar als Alexanders Retter in der Not. Anscheinend war es Ptolemaios aber wichtiger, überhaupt nicht mit den Vorfällen in Verbindung gebracht zu werden.

<sup>76</sup> Vgl. Ellis 2002, 13.

cher Verantwortung entzieht.<sup>77</sup> Aus seinen Fragmenten gewinnt man den Eindruck, sie seien immer dann, wenn irgendeine Misere eintrat, beide abwesend gewesen. Eventuell steckt die Sprachregelung dahinter, dass es zu diesen Misere kam, *weil* sie nicht da gewesen waren, um sie zu verhindern. Zumeist handelt es sich dabei um Situationen, in denen das Fehlen von Alexanders zwei führenden Feldherren und Vertrauten zumindest verwunderlich erscheint.<sup>78</sup>

Im Fall der Gedrosischen Wüste war Hephaistion einer der Kommandanten,<sup>79</sup> doch Ptolemaios verliert offenbar kein Wort über seine Rolle beim problematischen Zug.<sup>80</sup> Bezüglich der innenpolitischen Konfliktsituation mit Philotas, den Hephaistion als unmittelbarer Nutznießer in seinem Hipparchenamt beerbte, hält Ptolemaios sich wohl an die offizielle Version: Er lässt sich auf keinerlei Spekulationen über eine mögliche Intrige *gegen* Philotas ein,<sup>81</sup> spricht von eindeutigen Beweisen für seine Schuld und Philotas' Überführung im Prozess und macht klar, dass Alexander die Hipparchie einzig aufgrund der schlechten Erfahrung mit Philotas – so wie dessen Verhalten offiziell dargestellt wurde – teilte,<sup>82</sup> nicht etwa wegen Hephaistions Unerfahrenheit, fehlender Autorität oder mangelnden Qualifikationen.

Besonders aufschlussreich für Ptolemaios' literarisches Stilmittel der Abwesenheit zur rechten Zeit erscheint seine Aussage im Widerspruch zu anderen Quellen, bei dem Desaster vor der Mallerstadt nicht dabei gewesen zu sein. Grund sei gewesen, dass er „eine eigene Heeresgruppe angeführt habe, mit der er gegen andere Barbaren gekämpft habe.“<sup>83</sup> Die vage Angabe erscheint untypisch für Ptolemaios; üblicherweise benannte er Einheiten, Aufträge und Operationsorte genauer, besonders, wenn er selbst involviert war.<sup>84</sup> So könnte man auch denken, dass es sich um eine spätere Ausrede handelt, um sich von dem militärischen Debakel zu distanzieren.<sup>85</sup> Arrian berichtet zudem zuvor, dass Hephaistion, der zu der Zeit den

<sup>77</sup> Vgl. Müller 2011b, 444.

<sup>78</sup> Zur Philotasaffäre vgl. Bosworth 1988b, 102–104. Ptolemaios soll involviert gewesen sein, siehe auch Atkinson 1994, 215, 241. Zu Kleitos vgl. Badian 1997, 350; Bosworth 1995, 113; Errington 1969, 238.

<sup>79</sup> Arr. an. 6,22,3.

<sup>80</sup> Vgl. Heckel 1992, 82.

<sup>81</sup> Diese Gerüchte mögen im Lager kursiert sein. Die literarische Überlieferung dazu ist jedoch stark durch Tyrannentopik verzerrt: Curt. 6,7–11; Plut. mor. 65 D; Alex. 48,1–49,7; Just. 12,5,1–3; Diod. 17,79–80.

<sup>82</sup> Arr. an. 3,26,1–3. 27,4. Zudem war Ptolemaios offenbar bemüht, seinen eigenen Profit zu kaschieren. Während Curt. 6,11,35–38 Demetrios' Hinrichtung als Teil der Philotas-Affäre erwähnt, ist sie bei Arr. an. 3,27,5 zeitlich vom Kernbericht getrennt nachgeschoben.

<sup>83</sup> Arr. an. 6,11,8; Curt. 9,5,21: „Er sei auf eine Mission geschickt worden.“ („... missum in expeditionem“).

<sup>84</sup> Vgl. Pearson 1960, 191.

<sup>85</sup> Vgl. Müller 2003, 191–192.

größten Teil des Heeres anführte,<sup>86</sup> vom Sammlungspunkt an der Akesinesmündung aus fünf Tagesmärsche vorauszog und Ptolemaios mit seinen Truppen drei Tage nach ihm, um mögliche flüchtende Malloi abfangen zu können.<sup>87</sup> Die Notwendigkeit, ausgerechnet die beiden führenden Offiziere für eine solche Aufgabe einzusetzen und nicht zur eigentlichen Belagerung mitzunehmen, wird in der Forschung teilweise auch nicht ganz eingesehen. So vermutet Gerhard Wirth, dass tatsächlich Hephaistion für das misslungene Unternehmen vor der Mallerstadt verantwortlich gewesen sei.<sup>88</sup> Ebenso mag Ptolemaios in einer leitenden Position gewesen sein. Sollte dies zutreffen, wäre es eine Erklärung für den unspezifischen, vagen Zug seines Berichts über die Belagerung der Mallerstadt, auf den Lionel Pearson hinweist.<sup>89</sup> Auffällig an Arrians Version ist zudem, wer für das Debakel verantwortlich zu sein scheint: Nicht der heldenhaft agierende, tapfere Alexander, sondern Perdikkas, der als leitender Offizier genannt wird.<sup>90</sup> Als das Unheil seinen Lauf nimmt, sind Perdikkas' Truppen zu langsam und mangelhaft ausgerüstet.<sup>91</sup> Schon im Kontext des Berichts über die Eroberung der ionischen Städte hatte Ptolemaios anklingen lassen, dass es Perdikkas nicht gelang, innerhalb seiner Truppen Disziplin und Ordnung zu halten.<sup>92</sup> Daher ist zu vermuten, dass auch Arrians diesbezügliche Passagen über die Mallerstadt von Ptolemaios stammen.<sup>93</sup> Eventuell wollte er retuschieren, dass tatsächlich andere die Verantwortung gehabt hatten.

## Ptolemaios' Gedenken an Hephaistion

Wie ausgeführt war Ptolemaios offenbar – neben der Glorifizierung seines Legitimationsgenerators Alexander und seiner Selbstprofilierung – daran gelegen, Hephaistion ein positives Denkmal zu setzen. Er stellte ihn als Alexanders zuverlässigen Vertrauten dar und nahm ihn gegen Vorwürfe in Schutz, indem er ihn aus prekären Situationen ausblendete.

Es stellt sich die Frage nach Ptolemaios' Beweggründen. Sicherlich war Hephaistions Verbindung zu Alexander zu bekannt, um ihn zu übergehen. Doch Ptolemaios begnügte sich nicht mit dem Hinweis auf ihre Freundschaft, sondern ging darüber hinaus. Gewiss gereichte es Hephaistion zum Vorteil, dass er durch seinen frühen Tod 324 v. Chr. nie zu Ptolemaios' Rivalen in den

<sup>86</sup> Vgl. Berve 1926, 172. Inklusiv der Kriegselefanten.

<sup>87</sup> Arr. an. 6,5,5–7.

<sup>88</sup> Vgl. Wirth 1993a, 346, A. 300.

<sup>89</sup> Vgl. Pearson 1960, 208. Unter anderem habe er die Einheiten nicht klar benannt.

<sup>90</sup> Arr. an. 6,6,4–6. 9,1–2.

<sup>91</sup> Arr. an. 6,9,2.

<sup>92</sup> Arr. an. 1,21,1–3.

<sup>93</sup> Ebenso: Errington 1969, 239.

Diadochenkämpfen geworden war. Zugleich lag darin aber auch ein Nachteil: Politisch-propagandistisch besaß seine *memoria* nur dann einen Wert, wenn sie eigens dafür instrumentalisiert wurde. Dieser Wert wird zudem gering gewesen sein, da keinerlei wie auch immer gearteten Herrschaftsansprüche mit Hephais-tions Gedenken verbunden waren: Er war kein Satrap gewesen, kinderlos gestorben und seine achaimenidische Frau war nach Alexanders Tod umgebracht worden.<sup>94</sup>

Eine Erklärung könnte sein, dass Ptolemaios mit dem positiven Gedenken an Hephais-tion zugleich Alexander vor dem Vorwurf bewahrte, in seiner Personalpolitik willkürlich vorgegangen zu sein und statt der Qualifiziertesten die besten Freunde eingesetzt zu haben. Dies hätte positiv auf sein eigenes Bild abgestrahlt.

Eventuell spielten aber auch jenseits aller Stilisierung persönliche Motive eine Rolle. Ptolemaios kann wirklich mit Hephais-tion sehr gut befreundet gewesen sein. Deswegen mag er Wert darauf gelegt haben, ihm noch eine letzte Ehre zu erweisen.<sup>95</sup> Ihre Karriere verlief ähnlich, sie hatten viel gemeinsam durchgestanden, das sie zusammengeschweißt haben mochte. Indes ging Ptolemaios auch nicht so weit, Hephais-tions Stern heller als seinen eigenen strahlen zu lassen. Vielmehr scheint er – wahrscheinlich nicht unbedingt historisch korrekt – eine Art Kompetenzteilung beschrieben zu haben: Hephais-tion mehr als Alexanders rechte Hand im Bereich Diplomatie, Logistik und Organisation,<sup>96</sup>

<sup>94</sup> Plut. Alex. 77,4–5.

<sup>95</sup> In diesem Zusammenhang stellt sich die viel diskutierte Frage, ob Arrian Alexanders in seiner Authentizität umstrittenen Brief an Kleomenes bezüglich der Einrichtung des Heroenkults für Hephais-tion und des Baus von Heroa in Alexandria und auf der Insel Pharos von Ptolemaios übernahm (an. 7,23,6–8). Vgl. Burstein 2007, 189 (nur die Negativwertung des Kleomenes stamme von Ptolemaios); Reames 1998, 208 (authentisch); Hölbl 1994, 85; Pearson 1954, 449–450 (eine Fälschung von Ptolemaios); Berve 1926, 174, 210–211 (authentisch). Ptolemaios hätte wohl kein Problem mit dem Gedenken an Hephais-tion gehabt, aber mit Kleomenes, den er töten ließ (Paus. 1,6,3). Leider gibt es indes keine Spuren von Hephais-tions Heroenkult in Ägypten, nur aus Pella (Bull. Ép. 1992, no. 309, zwischen 325–300 datiert) und eventuell indirekt für Athen (Hyp. 6,21). In onomastischer Hinsicht erscheint interessant, dass der ungewöhnliche Name Hephais-tion im ptolemäischen und nachptolemäischen Ägypten offenbar noch lange Zeit in der Bevölkerung kursierte (Sel. Pap. I 97 (ein ptolemäischer Soldat 168 v. Chr., vgl. Merkelbach 1994, 294–296); der *epistrategos* von Theben Hephais-tion unter Ptolemaios XI.; der alexandrinische Hephais-tion des 2. Jh. n. Chr.; der Astrologe Hephais-tion aus Theben im 4. Jh. n. Chr.; Ptolemaios Chennos/Ptolemaios Hephais-tion aus Alexandria aus dem 1. Jh. n. Chr., dessen Vater auch den Namen Hephais-tion getragen haben soll. Allerdings spricht Luc. Pro Im. 27 von Hephais-tion als einem häufigen Namen in seiner Zeit. Indes ist dies schwer zu belegen, zumal Lukian es im Kontext seiner spöttischen Kritik an menschlichen Ambitionen erwähnt, an die Götter erinnernde Namen zu tragen.

<sup>96</sup> Curt. 8,14,15. 9,1,35; Arr. an. 5,12,2. 21,5; 29,3; 6,2,2; 5,5; 13,1. 17,4. 18,1. 20,1. 21,3. 21,5. 22,3. 28,7; 7,4,5. 5,4; Ind. 19,1,3; Diod. 17,21,3. 21,5. 22,3. 28,7. 91,1. 93,1; 96,1. Daher



Ptolemaios vorrangig im kämpferisch-militärischen Ressort.<sup>97</sup> Für sein Publikum war letzteres die „königlichere“ Qualität.<sup>98</sup>

## Fazit

Auf der problematischen Spurensuche nach dem historischen Hephaistion erscheint Ptolemaios' fragmentarisches Zeugnis als besonders beachtenswert. Einschränkungen sind vermutlich bezüglich der Darstellung seiner und Ptolemaios' gemeinsamen Abwesenheit in prekären Situationen zu machen. Man könnte zu dem Schluss gelangen, dass es eine Strategie von Ptolemaios gewesen sein könnte, die Fragen, wie es zu den Problemsituationen hatte kommen können, in dem Sinne zu beantworten, dass Hephaistion und er nicht da gewesen waren, um sie zu verhindern. Auch hat Ptolemaios offenbar zugunsten der Darstellung der eigenen kriegerischen Leistungen Hephaistions militärische Funktionen kaum behandelt. Dennoch ist zu konstatieren, dass ihm daran gelegen war, Hephaistion in positiver Erinnerung zu behalten.

So scheint seinem Hephaistionbild vielleicht eine für seine Schrift spezifische Sicht zugrunde zu liegen: Hephaistion als *Ptolemaios'* Freund und Kampfgefährte.

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leitet sich auch das Urteil ab, dafür sei er am meisten begabt gewesen, vgl. Reames 1998, 100–124. Indes würde eine bewusste Stilisierung durch Ptolemaios in dieser Hinsicht auch erklären, warum er über Hephaistions Aufgaben als Chiliarch und Hipparch offenbar so wenig schreibt.

<sup>97</sup> Siehe etwa Arr. an. 3,18,9; 4,24,3–25,4. 29.

<sup>98</sup> Erkennbar etwa anhand von Pos. Ep. 35 AB, 65 AB.

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## Abstract

Although Hephaestion launched a remarkable career under the reign of Alexander, as a historical person, he is rather obscure. The evidence on him is either biased or romanticized. Therefore, it is especially important to analyze his portrait in the fragments of the *History of Alexander* written by his fellow officer and presumable close friend Ptolemy. He treats Hephaestion in a different way than his other fellow officers. While he tends to be silent about the achievements of Antigonos, Lysimachos, and Seleucos, and does not treat Perdikkas favourably he memorizes Hephaestion and his role in Alexander's empire trying to protect him against any reproaches. This paper examines Ptolemy's image of Hephaestion and its probable background.





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## THE PTOLEMAIC GUARD CAVALRY REGIMENT \*

**Keywords:** Ptolemaic Egypt, cavalry, Macedonians, Hellenistic warfare.

Following the death of Ptolemy Philopator (204 BC), his chief minister Agathokles wished to prolong his power by ensure his guardianship over his successor, the boy-king Ptolemy Epiphanes. The events surrounding this series of historical incidents provide us with a detailed account of the Ptolemaic royal court and the troops responsible for guarding it.

Agathokles first summoned “the *hypaspistai* and the *therapeia* as well as the officers of the foot and horse” (Polyb. 15.25.3). It would be extremely useful for our purposes to examine what precisely Polybius has in mind when he speaks of these groups of individuals.

I agree with Walbank’s interpretation of the role and function of the *hypaspistai*. “The hypaspists are most likely the equivalent of Alexander’s personal staff, as the were in the Antigonid court, a small group of individuals employed on special tasks”.<sup>1</sup> Ptolemaic *hypaspistai* are again referred to by Polybius at 18.53.5 in another passage concerning Ptolemaic affairs.

I cannot agree with Walbank’s conclusion as to the precise meaning of *therapeia* in this context, however, stating that the meaning in Polybius “is probably the royal bodyguard than the court”.<sup>2</sup> Polybius (15.25.17) later states that Agathokles intended to re-model “the household and the guard about the court” (θεραπεία καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν αὐλὴν φυλακεῖα) with replacements which he was to recruit in Greece. In this case it is evident that Polybius contrasts the *therapeia* to troops who were meant to guard them.

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\* A shorter version of the main text of this article, without the full academic apparatus, has appeared before in the popular journal *Ancient Warfare* V, 2 (2011) 14-19.

<sup>1</sup> Walbank 1967, 482. For the Antigonid army, see Sekunda 2010, 459 and Sekunda 2012, 8.

<sup>2</sup> Walbank 1967, 482.

By “the officers of the foot and horse” Walbank believes that Polybius means “the officers of the ‘Macedonians’, foot and horse”.<sup>3</sup> This is likely, but it is possible that the assembly also included the officers of “the other regiments” which Polybius makes mention of at a later stage in drama unfolding in the Ptolemaic Court – Agathokles, he states, summoned a meeting of “the Macedonians” (15.26.1) and then (15.26.9) a meeting of the other regiments (συστήματα).

Events reached their bloody climax when Agathokles arrested one Moiragenes, one of the *sōmatophylakes* (15.27.6), literally “bodyguards”. Polybius, at a later point during the course of his narrative (15.32.6) mentions another one of these *sōmatophylakes* in Ptolemaic service, the younger Sosibios. They comprised the staff who administered the army. In the reign of Alexander there were seven, later eight of them, and they are found in the Seleucid and Antigonid armies.<sup>4</sup>

Agathokles had had Moiragenes arrested with the intention of torturing him, but Moiragenes escaped from the palace, and ran to a tent of the Macedonians not far from the palace (15.28.4). Moiragenes urged the Macedonians who were in the tent to help, and they in turn visited the tents of the other Macedonians, and then those of the other soldiers which were all close together (15.29.1).<sup>5</sup>

All modern historians are unanimous in their conclusion that by “the Macedonians” Polybius “seems here to mean the guard”.<sup>6</sup> The conclusion seems inevitable, that at this period at least, the regiments of the guard, both foot and horse, were largely composed of native Macedonians and their descendants.

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Ptolemy son of Lagos was presumably in Egypt for the first time as a general accompanying Alexander the Great. After the death of Alexander in 323 BC he received Egypt as a province in “the division of spoils” that took place. There could have been next to no Macedonians in the country at this time. According to Diodorus (18.14.1) Ptolemy soon after taking over Egypt “finding 8,000 talents in the treasury, began to collect mercenaries and to form an army. A multitude of his friends also gathered about him on account of his fairness”. It was presumably from these “friends” that Ptolemy formed his first élite cavalry formation.

We have some details of the army which Ptolemy led out of Alexandria in 312 BC to the battle fought against Demetrius Poliorketes at Gaza. According

<sup>3</sup> Walbank 1967, 482.

<sup>4</sup> Polyb. 8.20.8 and *ad loc.* Walbank 1967, 95. For the Antigonid army, see Sekunda 2010, 459 and Sekunda 2012, 7.

<sup>5</sup> Launey 1950, 695, n. 3; endorsed by Walbank 1967, 489.

<sup>6</sup> Walbank 1967, 448; cf. Griffith 1935, 129; Lesquier 1911, 3, n. 5 «le mot Μακεδόνες ne désigne alors que les réguliers de la garde. C’est dans ce sens qu’il est employé ... par Polybe».

to Diodorus (19.80.4). It consisted of 18,000 foot and 4,000 horse. “Of his army some were Macedonians and some were mercenaries, but a great number were Egyptians”. Ptolemy, and Seleucus who was fighting at his side at this battle, drew up 3,000 of what Diodorus (19.82.3) describes as the “strongest” of their cavalry, along with whom they themselves had decided to fight. During this battle, it is to be noted, that the “Companions”, who there were 800 present at the battle (19.82.3), still fought on the Antigonid side. Also on his left wing Demetrius drew up 200 picked “personal” cavalrymen (τούς περι αὐτὸν ἰππεῖς ἐπιλέκτους). These are presumably an élite squadron within the Companions, and are described as consisting of all the other “friends” of Demetrius.

After the series of wars following the death of Alexander the Great, the monarchs of the newly-formed Hellenistic world turned their thoughts to forming manpower recruiting bases within their various kingdoms. The system which obtained in Ptolemaic Egypt was the so-called “cleruch” system. By this word was meant a system by which, in return for being settled on a *klēros*, or “allotment” of various sizes, the settler, or “cleruch” was liable to mobilization in time of war.<sup>7</sup> The size of the allotment varied according to the status of the grantee, which mainly depended on his nationality, or “pseudo-nationality”, and on his branch of service: for instance cavalrymen were settled on larger plots. In the third century cavalry and infantry of the guard were generally settled on plots of a hundred “arouras”.<sup>8</sup> The system was established during the reign of Ptolemy I Soter, and was especially developed from the reign of Ptolemy II Philadelphos onwards. “Ptolemy Soter’s original Macedonians, comparatively small though they can have been, may have formed the nucleus of the cleruch system”.<sup>9</sup>

At first, for example during the Third Syrian War, the system seems to have worked reasonably well, but by the end of the third century the system was already beginning to malfunction. In the preparations for the battle of Raphia (217 BC) Polybius (5.65.5) mentions that Polykrates of Argos undertook the training of “The Cavalry about the Court” (τούς ἰππεῖς τοὺς μὲν περι τὴν αὐλήν) about 700 strong. Walbank noted that “there is no evidence elsewhere for household cavalry cleruchs, but their mention along with Libyan and Egyptian cavalry suggests they were regulars and not mercenaries”.<sup>10</sup> By ‘regulars’ in fact, Walbank means reservist ‘cleruchs’ which had been mobilized for the campaign.

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<sup>7</sup> On the cleruchic system see Crawford 1971, 55-85. For a complete bibliography see Van’t Dack 1977, 80-1.

<sup>8</sup> Lesquier 1911, 291 seq.

<sup>9</sup> Griffith 1935, 116.

<sup>10</sup> Walbank 1957, 591.

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It is difficult to decide whether or not “The Cavalry about the Court” (οἱ περὶ τὴν ἄσλὴν ἱππεῖς) might have been the official title of this regiment or not. The term is used elsewhere, seemingly in a general sense, by Polybius (4.67.6) of the élite Antigonid cavalry regiment.<sup>11</sup> It is true that Polybius, in a passage we have discussed already (15.25.17), refers to “the household and the guard about the court” (θεραπεία καὶ τὰ περὶ τὴν ἀσλὴν φυλακεῖα) which Agathokles intended to replace with his own men, but this usage, too, could have a general meaning, and so is not to be treated as a precise regimental title.

Epigraphic evidence does little to help resolve the problem of what the official regimental title was. Fraser noted “that the Macedonian household troops are not recorded after the end of the third century, and that some time in the second century their place seems to have been by troops of varied provenance”. In this context he goes on to discuss an inscription recording a dedication by “The mass of the cavalry of the household in Alexandria” (τὸ πλῆθος τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ ἱππέων τῆς θεραπείας). “The fact that these troops are not described by an ethnic connotation, such as was normal in military groups in this period is good reason for supposing that they were a racially mixed body”.<sup>12</sup> This inscription is late, dated as it is by a regnal year, to either 108/7 or 72/1 BC. The official title of the élite cavalry regiment of the guard could have changed from what it had been earlier on in the Ptolemaic period.

Two further inscriptions are also relevant to the problem. The inscriptions come from Paphos in Cyprus, and are both dated to the year 154 BC by their publisher Mitford.<sup>13</sup> In the first inscription one Kallikles, son of Kallikles, an Alexandrian is mentioned as being “in command of the cavalry in Alexandria” ([ἐπι] τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρεῖαι ἱππέων), and in the second he is called “squadron commander of the cavalry stationed in Alexandria” (ἐπι τῶν ἐν Ἀλεξανδρείᾳ τεταγμένων ἱππέων). In addition Kallikles holds an assortment of other titles, but during the course of this article my discussion will be confined to those he holds as a commander of the élite cavalry of Alexandria.<sup>14</sup> In his article Mitford simply drew attention to the reference in Polybius to “The Cavalry about the Court”, but in Mooren Kallikles has become “head of the περὶ τὴν ἄσλὴν ἱππεῖς” which is inaccurate to say the least.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Sekunda 2012, 11.

<sup>12</sup> *SEG* viii 532; Fraser 1972, II 168, n. 339, for the meaning of πλῆθος see Fraser 1972, II 232, n. 303 and quotation from Fraser 1972, I 88.

<sup>13</sup> Mitford 1961, 20-22, nos. 53-4.

<sup>14</sup> For a discussion of his other titles see Mitford 1961, 20-22 and Sekunda 2001, 59-60.

<sup>15</sup> Mooren 1975, 21.



A papyrus in Milan (P. Med. Inv. 69.65) preserves a list of eight cavalrymen. At least the two first persons to appear on the list are designated as being “hundred aroura men” (ἑκατοντάρουροι). If the second time this word occurs on the list it is to be read in the plural, then the third person to appear on the list, or all eight indeed, are “hundred aroura men”. In my own opinion this is the most likely option, that the scribe tired of listing all people on the list as being “hundred aroura men” after listing the first two individuals as such. The fourth and fifth cavalrymen to appear on the list, are additionally designated as serving “in the royal squadron” (ἐν τῇ βασιλικῇ ἕλι). Each of the cavalrymen appearing on the list is accompanied by at least one other person who is designated as a “boy” (παῖς – or rather “page”) and in the case of the first person to appear on the list a groom (ἵπποκόμος). It is a matter of dispute, which, fortunately, does not concern us in this paper, whether these are of servile status or not. It is probable that they are not of servile status, however, as Heinen has pointed out that the normal word used in the papyri for slave is *akolouthos*.<sup>16</sup>

In my opinion it is probable that all eight cavalrymen appearing on the list belong to the Guard Cavalry Regiment, which, if Mooren’s conjecture is correct, may have been officially designated “The Cavalry about the Court” (οἱ περὶ τὴν αὐλὴν ἵππεις), while only the fourth and fifth persons on the list served in the royal squadron, which was an élite subunit within this élite regiment. This is, however, uncertain. The Milan papyrus seemingly confirms the Ptolemaic guard cavalry regiment was composed of cleruchs.

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Despite the uncertainty which surrounds the correct regimental title, the dress of the élite cavalry regiment is easy to establish. In my first book on ancient military uniform, I established, on the basis of an analysis of the painted figures on the Alexander Sarcophagus, that the Companion Cavalry Regiment of Alexander the Great’s army, wore saffron-yellow cloaks with a sea-purple border.<sup>17</sup> This is supported by a reference in Diodorus (17.77.5) that after the death of Darius Alexander distributed Persian cloaks with purple borders to the Companions. The emphasis in this reference should be on the word Persian cloaks.

<sup>16</sup> Geraci 1979; Heinen 1983 (at p. 136); Straus 1983.

<sup>17</sup> Sekunda, McBride 1984, 17. More than a quarter of a century ago the possibilities of publishing in colour were much more limited, and therefore the range of comparable examples colour in clothing published in colour were then not available. Furthermore, the pigments with which the marble of the Alexander Sarcophagus had faded over the ages, to leave a colour in which the blue hue predominates. This misled me in the reconstruction of the hue of sea-purple in the plates. This can now be corrected to a redder hue with the range of reproductions of ancient art that we have available nowadays.

This act was an early step in Alexander's attempt to create a dual Macedonian-Persian *archē*.

The Ptolemaic élite cavalry regiment, composed of Macedonians, were distinguished with saffron-yellow cloaks with purple borders just like their forerunners in the Companion Cavalry regiment. True 'sea-purple', extracted from the murex shell, was the most expensive dye known in Antiquity, and even the less expensive substitute purples were still costly. Its value led the Persian King to hoard purple cloth and to distribute it munificently as a mark of his power. Plutarch (*Alex.* 36.2) tells us that Alexander captured 5,000 talents' weight of purple from Hermione in the Royal Treasury at Susa, which had still kept its colour despite being stored there for 190 years. A talent weighed something over fifty pounds. Alexander, however, proved to be even more prodigal in his distribution of purple cloth, and some time later he was forced to write to the cities of Ionia, and first of all to the Chians, directing them to send purple dye to him, for he wanted to dress all his "Companions" in sea-purple clothes (Athen. 12.539f-540a). The Athenian comic writer Menander, in a fragment preserved in Athenaeus (11.484 D) has a mercenary boast of his loot, including gold seized from the treasury at Kyinda in 318, and Persian purple cloaks laid up in store.

After purple, the most valuable luxury dye in Antiquity was saffron. Saffron is harvested by hand from the three rusty-red pistils inside the petals of the crocus blossom. These then have to be carefully toasted dry: the saffron reducing to a fifth of its original weight in the process. Properly dried saffron will keep for a century. Although estimates vary from area to area, at least 20,000 blossoms have to be stripped to yield a single kilogram of dry saffron. In an hour a skilled female worker could separate 60 grams of stigmata from their blossoms. The crocus occurs spontaneously in Iran, and its cultivation is recorded in past times in a number of Iranian provinces, including Media.<sup>18</sup>

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The following gives a catalogue of representations of cavalymen in Ptolemaic service wearing saffron-yellow cloaks, on some of which are visible sea-purple borders. The bibliography prior to the catalogue of Blanche Brown (1957) is not cited – it has been supplemented by later published examples that have come to the attention of the author. I have not had the opportunity to see any of the representations with my own eyes, and so the descriptions given below are compiled from the descriptions of others, together with my own observation of published illustrations. The representations are given in what I believe to be their (approximate) chronological order.

<sup>18</sup> Robert 1963, 181-4 with references.

(1) Stele of [Philo]xenos the Macedonian.



Figures 1-3. Alexandria, Greco-Roman Museum no. 10228. Found 1904 in the Sciathi cemetery (Brown 1957, no. 21, p. 26, pl xi).

There is sufficient space for approximately four letters in the space before the letters which have been preserved, which render the personal name [...]ξενος [Μακε]δών. There are many possibilities, but a restoration of [Φι]λοξενος [Μακε]δών seems probable from the traces of letters preserved on the stone. The personal name Philoxenos is attested reasonably frequently (five times) among the community of Macedonians later settled in Egypt.<sup>19</sup> Any one of these individuals could have been homonymous descendents of the Philoxenos attested at the Sciathi cemetery. It is important that the inscription confirms the nationality of Philoxenos as a Macedonian, thereby confirming that, as a cavalryman, he belonged to the guard cavalry regiment.

The most detailed description of figures painted on the stele is given by Rostovtzeff,<sup>20</sup> based on his personal autopsy of the stele. The background of the stele is of a pinkish colour. The rider wears a saffron-yellow cloak with a purple border of a dark reddish hue. He is bareheaded, and dressed in what Rostovtzeff describes as a white chiton. The area of the stele around the torso of the figure is heavily damaged, and it is consequently difficult to decide whether he is armed with a composite cuirass or a muscle cuirass. Rostovtzeff, however, describes it as “a fine bronze cuirass” and from this description we conclude that the latter option is the more probable. Indeed, I believe traces of the musculature can be made out in the painting preserved on the front of the chest of the figure, but without personal autopsy it is impossible to be sure. Rostovtzeff confirms that the cuirass is furnished with shoulder-straps. The area of the upper arm is also heavily damaged, making observation difficult, but it seems that the cuirass is not equipped with a fringe of *pteruges* at the shoulder. It is certainly fitted with a double row of *pteruges* at the waist. These are possibly of bronze, but are more likely to be of yellow-coloured leather. The area of the upper thigh is also heavily damaged, making it difficult to decide whether a line of the white chiton is left showing beneath the *pteruges* of the cuirass. On his feet he wears medium brown boots of an indeterminate shape reaching to mid calf.

He is armed with a long spear which he carries in his right hand, and a sword which he wears on his left side, presumably slung on a baldric. The hilt seems to be of cruciform shape, although the details are difficult to establish. The pommel appears to be bronze and round in shape, the hand-grip itself appears to be modeled in two shades of grey, and the guard to be of white metal (presumably iron). The scabbard is of black leather, but white at its mouth presumably meant to represent bone. The chape is cannot be made out.

<sup>19</sup> La’da 2002, E1554, E1646, E1647, E1786; cf. *SB* 1106; *LGN* IV 348, no. 13.

<sup>20</sup> Rostovtzeff 1941, Vol. I, 150, pl. XIX, 1.



(Fig. 4) Limestone form for the serial production of Boeotian helmets for the Ptolemaic cavalry, found at Memphis. It is currently in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam.



(Fig. 5) Limestone helmet model from Mit-Rahineh/Memphis now in the Louvre.

The horse, a chestnut-coloured stallion, is shown in a rearing posture. Its horse furniture is of a medium tan leather, almost purplish-red in hue, consisting of a bridle with an iron bit, and a T-shaped breast band with the tine of the T passing between the front legs of the horse. The saddle-cloth is purple of a dark reddish hue, with a scalloped lower border and a rear border with longer flame-shaped projections.

A figure of probably what is best interpreted as a servant or groom runs behind (to the right of) the horseman. With his right hand he is holding on to the horse's tail, and in his left hand he is holding Philoxenos' helmet. The paint in this region is badly damaged, but the helmet appears to be bronze and of Boeotian type. The servant is bareheaded and barefooted, and he is wearing a tunic which is described as "yellowish" by Brown.

The Sciatbi cemetery is the earliest at Alexandria, dating to the last quarter of the fourth century. This would conform well with Philoxenos' Boeotian helmet. This form of helmet was at the height of its popularity during the second half of the fourth century, then went out of favour, enjoying a brief revival of popularity in Roman Republican times, at the turn of the second and first centuries BC.

A limestone form for the serial production of Boeotian helmets for the Ptolemaic cavalry was found at Memphis (Figure 4), and probably dates to the last quarter of the fourth century, like the stele from the Sciatbi cemetery. It is currently in the Allard Pierson Museum, Amsterdam (*APM* 7864).<sup>21</sup> A second limestone form for the production of Boeotian helmets, coming from Mit-Rahineh (Memphis) and now in the Louvre (Figure 5), is of the same shape, but, in contrast to the first example, richly decorated.<sup>22</sup> The two limestone forms used in helmet production come originally from the same centre of production in Memphis. Memphis was a satrapal production centre in Achaemenid times, for vessels made of bronze and more precious metals, as is evident from the Tomb of Petesiris. Two of the walls of this tomb are decorated with paintings showing Petesiris inspecting a number of satrapal workshops producing goods in a mixed Egypto-Achaemenid style.<sup>23</sup> The Tomb of Petesiris, indeed, may be early Ptolemaic in date rather than late Achaemenid. Some scholars would ascribe it a date as late as the last decade of the fourth century.<sup>24</sup> Presumably the production of metal objects for state use continued at Memphis for several years, possibly even decades, before production was switched to Alexandria. Presumably the plain Boeotian helmet model was used in the production of helmets for the use of cav-

<sup>21</sup> Ponger 1942, 87, nr. 179, pl. XL; Sekunda and McBride 1984, 20; Dintsis 1986, 18, 29, 172 n. 26, 200 cat. no. 5, pl. 3.6, suppl. 1.15; Moorman 2000, 192, no. 258, pl 90c.

<sup>22</sup> Gagsteiger 1993, 27 fig 21.

<sup>23</sup> Lefebvre 1924, pls.vii-viii.

<sup>24</sup> Muscarella in Levine, Young (eds.) 1977, 193-4 n. 100.

alry units of the line, while the richly decorated example was used in the production of Boeotian helmets used by the Ptolemaic Guard Cavalry regiment.

## (2) Anepigraphic Painted Grave-Stele from Hadra.



Figure 6. Alexandria Greco-Roman Museum no. 22116. Found 1925-26 in the Hadra cemetery (Brown 1957, no. 16, p. 24-5, pl. x).

The horseman is bareheaded. According to Brown “He seems also to wear a bowl-shaped head covering”, brown in colour. If Brown is correct, this will be a felt cap-comforter, but it might be simply a representation of his hair. He wears a saffron-yellow cloak, possibly with a purple border, but the details are difficult to

make out. Perhaps it is shown beneath the right arm of the horseman. According to Brown “the chlamys is brown-red”. He wears a muscle-cuirass which is described as “blue” in Brown’s description. It is probably iron or perhaps even silvered. It is difficult to decide whether the cuirass has shoulder straps or not.

Beneath his cuirass he either wears a dark red tunic, or a row of brown leather *pteruges* are shown. It is also hard to decide whether a dark red tunic is shown at the shoulder. According to Brown “The horseman’s tunic is dull yellow”.

He takes a helmet from his servant. According to Brown “The helmet is brown”. However, while brown lines are visible, and the inside of the helmet is brown, the brown lines seem to be dividing up areas of white. It is therefore possible that the helmet is silvered. The servant’s tunic is described as “yellowish” or off-white.

### (3) The Mustafa Pasha Tomb I.



**Figure 7. Mustafa Pasha Tomb I, doorway lintel above peristyle court leading to the burial chamber, horseman shown to the right (Brown 1957, no. 34, p. 52-3, pl. xxiv, 1).**



The original colours were very faded when the tomb was discovered. It has been repainted relatively recently. Illustrations reconstructing the lintel in colour are also available.<sup>25</sup>

There are three horsemen shown on the lintel. The horseman who interests us is on the right. I quote from the description of Brown. “The horse on the right is red-brown tending toward violet. The flesh of the rider is lighter red-brown. His cuirass was perhaps yellow originally. His long-sleeved tunic is red-violet and his chlamys yellow”.

The boots are a dark colour either dark brown or black. Again, if the saffron-yellow cloak originally possessed a sea-purple border, it has not been noticed, and therefore not been mentioned in any descriptions. It is also possible that the cloak worn by the elite regiment of the Ptolemaic army at some point in time lost its sea-purple border, but retained its basic colour of saffron-yellow.

#### (4) Cuirassed Cavalryman from “The Barberini Mosaic”.



Figure 8. The Nilotic mosaic from Praeneste called “The Barberini Mosaic”.

<sup>25</sup> Eg. that of Günter Grimm 1998, 95, abb. 93e.

A great amount of uncertainty surrounds the way in which the Nilotic mosaic from Praeneste, known as the “Barberini Mosaic” should be interpreted. As well as the Nilotic scenes themselves, a group of soldiers are also shown at a temple. Dates as far apart as *circa* 280 BC, the date of the expedition down the Nile sent by Ptolemy II Philadelphos under his general Pythagoras, and AD 131, the date of Hadrian’s visit to Elephantine.<sup>26</sup> Furthermore, the mosaic has been repaired repeatedly over the centuries since its discovery between the years 1588 and 1607, so one cannot be certain if any particular scene is original, or if it has suffered from inappropriate restoration. One thing of which we can be certain, however, is that the soldiers shown on the mosaic are Greek and not Roman. For the cavalymen wear Greek style cavalry boots, not Roman ones.<sup>27</sup> I would not bring the date as far forward as *circa* 280 BC, however, because the first and third figure from the right (with scorpion devices on their square shields) are cavalymen to judge by their boots, and according to current orthodoxy Greek cavalry did not start to use shields before the Galatian invasions which started in 279 BC.

The figure third from the right in the group of soldiers wears an elaborate pair of cavalry boots, seemingly grey in colour and with ornamental lappets. He wears a white tunic and over it a muscle-cuirass of white metal, presumably silvered. He wears a baldric slung at his left side. On his head he wears a wide-brimmed helmet, again of white metal presumably silvered, with a white plume. He probably carries a round shield in his left arm, a dark red-brown in colour, though it is difficult to make out in detail. He wears a saffron-yellow cloak but without a sea-purple border.

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The date of these three last representatione are all later than the first: the painted grave stele of [Philo]xenos from the Sciatbi cemetery, dating to the last two decades of the fourth century. All the figures still wear a muscle cuirass, though in at least two cases, possibly all three, the cuirass appears to have been silvered or tinned, as does the helmet. The helmet also seems to be of a completely different shape than the Boeotian helmet on the grave stele of [Philo]xenos, closely fitted to the head, with a nape-piece and projecting visor and a comb-crest. Therefore it seems safe to conclude that the type of helmet has been replaced.

<sup>26</sup> Steinmeyer-Schareika 1978, 96

<sup>27</sup> Goette 1988, 451, fig. 35b.

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## Abstract

The guard cavalry regiment of the Ptolemaic army, at least in its earlier existence was composed of ethnic Macedonians. It is not known for sure what the title of this regiment was. It might have been 'The Cavalry about the Court' (οἱ περὶ τὴν ἄσλὴν ἱππεῖς), but this is uncertain. At the battle of Raphia in 217 BC the regiment numbered about 700 men. It was organized into squadrons (*ilai*) of which the elite squadron was entitled 'the royal squadron' (ἡ βασιλικὴ ἴλη). The regiment was formed of cleruchs. The soldiers of this regiment were distinguished by their saffron-yellow cloaks with sea-purple borders, as were their predecessors in the Companion cavalry regiment under Alexander. It was a heavy cavalry regiment, wearing cuirasses and helmets, and, in its later stages shields. At the end of the fourth century the helmets were of the Boeotian type, but later on these at first replaced by a type of comb-crested close helmet.



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## REMARKS ON THE MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE AKHAL AREA IN THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD

**Keywords:** Archaeology, Central Asia, Parthia, Turkmenistan, Hellenism, ceramic complexes

In this paper Akhal is defined as the north-western part of the Kopetdag piedmont over a long distance from Gyaurs to Kyzyl-Arvat (Serdar).<sup>1</sup> It should be noted immediately that the largest cluster of ancient sites here falls within the Ashkhabad and Geok-Tepe (Gökdepe) districts, irrigated by considerable water flows: the Keltechinar, the Karasu, the Firyuzinka, the Alty-yab, and the Sakkyz-yab.

With the relative abundance of archaeological sites bearing evidence of the active development of the province in all phases of history, there are problems with discovery – or more properly identification – of the sites belonging to the Hellenistic period – the last third of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. This could be explained by the poor archaeological exploration of this region, but in the neighbouring Etek area (in the south-eastern part of the Kopetdag piedmont), which is located in the same natural and climatic zone and explored by archaeologists with just about the same regularity, the sites of the Hellenistic time have been recognised quite clearly and in a relatively great number.

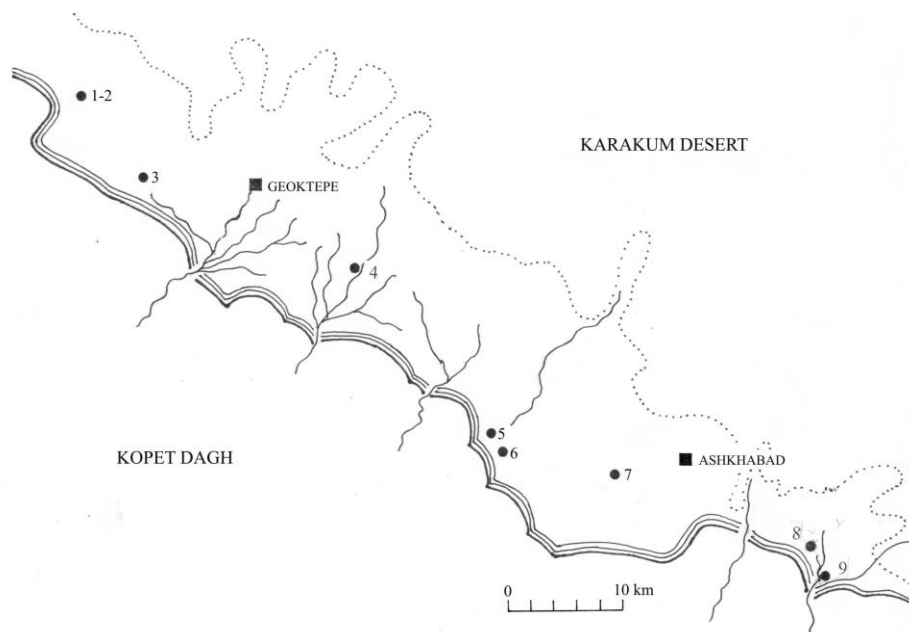
In the southern agricultural provinces of Central Asia, identification of the sites of the Hellenistic period has been carried out predominantly on the basis of the presence of ceramics in the investigated complex, evidently reflecting the influence of a proper Greek ceramic tradition.<sup>2</sup> This is expressed in imitating some specific Greek forms (phiale, fish plate, different kinds of bowls with com-

<sup>1</sup> In this article, place names of the Soviet period are used for toponyms in Turkmenistan.

<sup>2</sup> Gardin 1973; Shishkina 1975; Sedov 1984; Filanovich 1989; Lyonnet 2000; Gaibov 2004; Lyonnet 1997.

plex-shaped rims, craters, oenochoes etc.),<sup>3</sup> in using separate morphologic elements and techniques, not attested in the local pottery production of the preceding period.

In Akhal, one encounters serious problems with identification of such pottery complexes, reflecting Greek influence and with certainty dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The case is worsened by the fact that we do not know any multi-level sites at which the expected Hellenistic levels are unambiguously identifiable between the deposits of the Achaemenid and Early Arsacid periods.



**Fig. 1. Preliminary map of archaeological sites in Akhal, which were likely inhabited in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The object numbers correspond to those in Appendix 1.**

Identification difficulties of the Hellenistic time complexes are also caused by the uncertainty of the dating problem in the case of the so-called “transition complexes”. This is a separate problem, so in this study I will confine myself to a brief remark on this subject. In my early publications, dealing with the corresponding materials from the Akhal area,<sup>4</sup> the turn of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC was recognised as a hypothetical limit to which the tradition of manufacturing cylinder-conical ware shapes had survived. However, the works in neighbouring Etek<sup>5</sup> and other regions

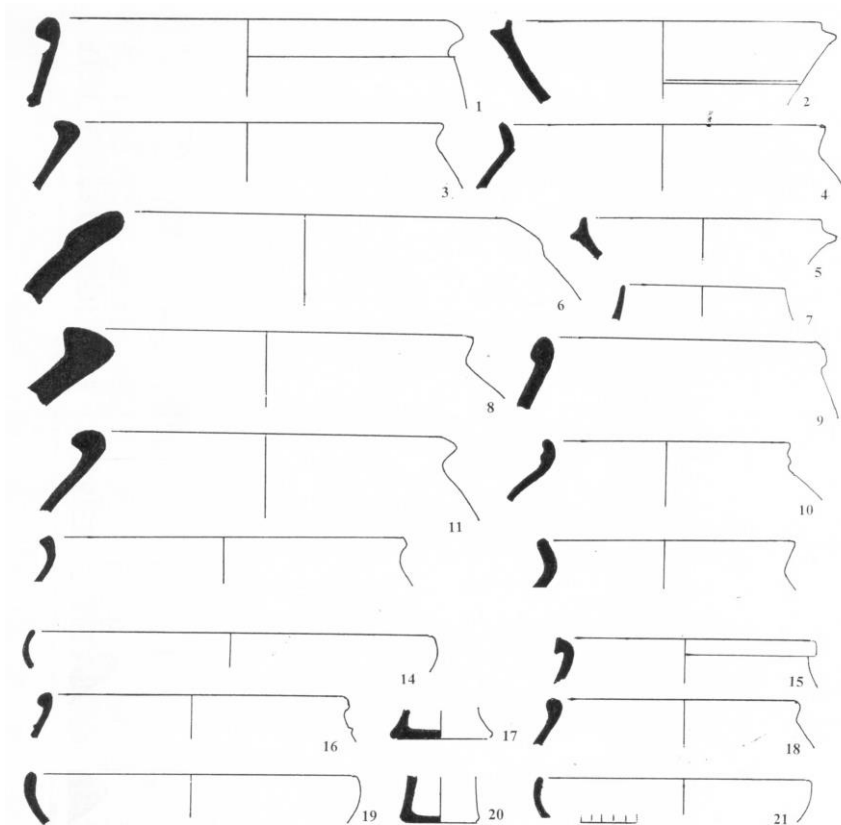
<sup>3</sup> See in more detail: Abdullaev 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Pilipko 1984; 1986; 2005.

<sup>5</sup> Pilipko 1987; 1990.

of Central Asia<sup>6</sup> allow us to suggest that the manufacture of cylinder-conical shapes, as well as the presence of spear-shaped and cuff-shaped rims of large pots, were continued in most districts of Central Asia into the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. This conclusion may evidently also be applied to Akhal.

In particular, one may assume that the final desolation of the Khyrly-depe settlement near Geok-Tepe (Fig. 1) took place exactly in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Its top layer shows an evident difference from the “classic Achaemenid complex” with its prevalence in the cylinder-conical shapes and cuff-shaped rims.<sup>7</sup> It no longer contained the big cylinder-conical “jars”, while the biconic supports and the small cylinder-conical goblets lost their conical “shore” and the cuff-shaped rims of large pots become rare (Fig. 2: 17, 20).



**Fig. 2. Archaeological complex Khyrly IV. Presumable dating: end of the 4<sup>th</sup>–first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.**

<sup>6</sup> Usmanova, Filanovich, Koshelenko 1985; Gaibov 2004; Lerner 2005; 2010.

From the multilevel sites of Akhal, which were subjected to a stratigraphical study, the presence of the 3<sup>rd</sup>-century BC layers may be confidently supposed only on three sites. These are the Anau settlement, Yanyk-depe, and Mound 7 at the settlement of Garry Kyariz.

At the Anau settlement,<sup>78</sup> some fragments of large pots typical of the Achaemenid time were found in the lower layer (Fig. 3: 6), and in the overlying layer was found a bronze arrowhead, general dating of which does not go beyond the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC. By the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, the inhabitants of the Kopetdag piedmont were no longer using bronze arrowheads. Correspondingly, the lower layer of Mound 3 of the Anau settlement may be dated within the limits of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC/the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century; a dating to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC appears to be the most likely.

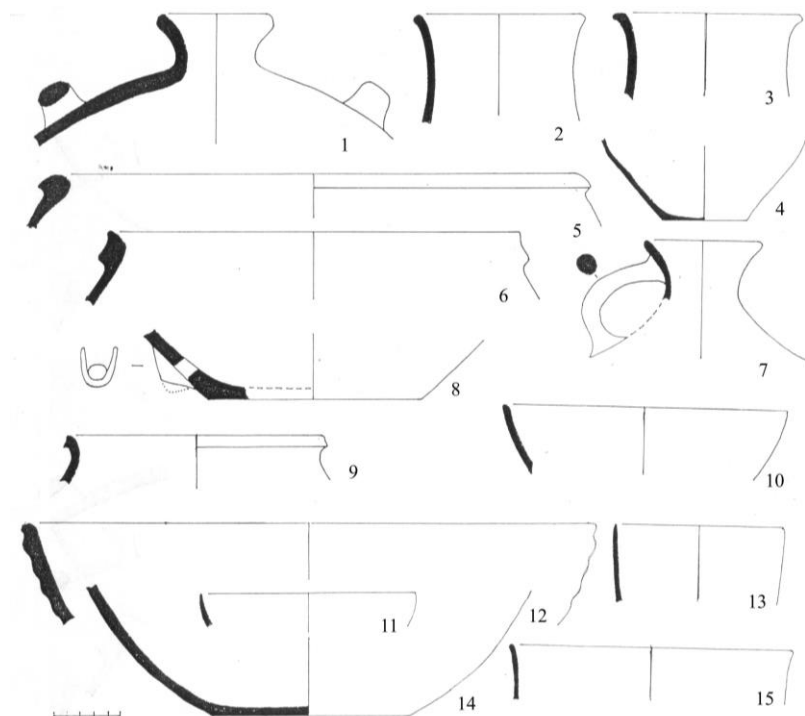


Fig. 3. Anau settlement. Pottery from the lower cultural layer.

The settlement of Yanyk-depe, situated in the Geok-Tepe district, was functioning for a long timespan.<sup>8</sup> At least five building horizons have been excavated

<sup>7</sup> Pilipko 2000.

<sup>8</sup> Pilipko 2001b.



there, represented by the remains of residential dwellings. The uppermost layer may be dated around the beginning of the Christian era. The materials from the lowermost layer (Fig. 1: 4) demonstrate a difference from the relatively well studied complexes of the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC. Thus, the stratigraphic placement and pottery complexes from the lowermost layer point to the dating of the Yanyk-depe settlement to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

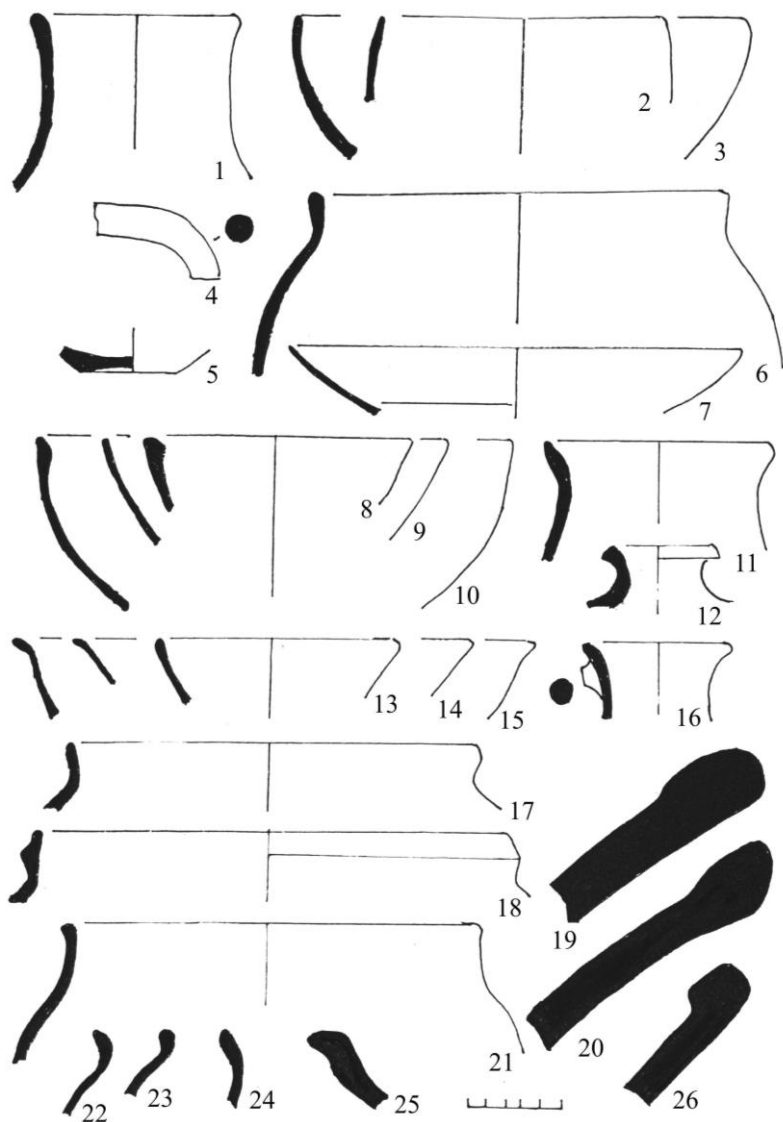


Fig. 4. Yanyk-depe. Pottery from the lower cultural layer.

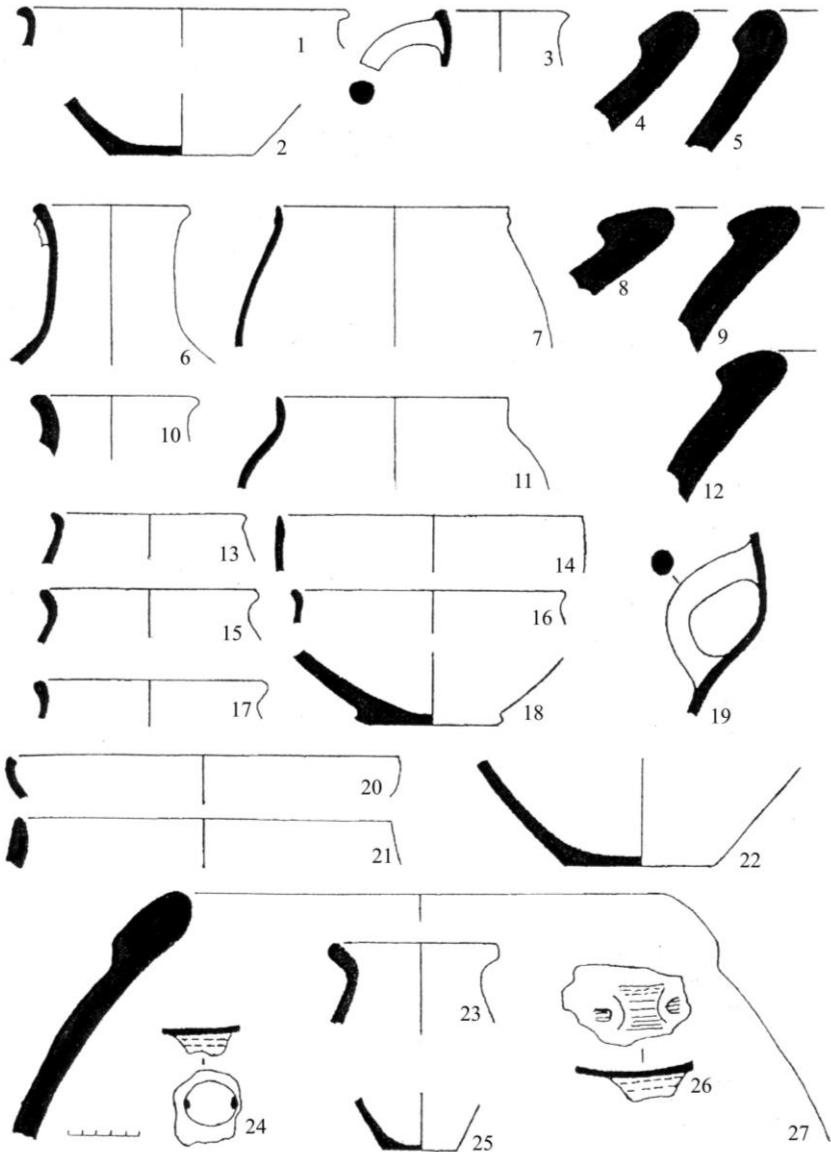


Fig. 5. Garry Kyariz. Mound 7. Pottery from the lower cultural layer.

Another site which should be supposed to have layers of the 3rd century BC is Mound 7 at the Garry Kyariz settlement.<sup>9</sup> The stratigraphical investigations have shown that by itself it represents the remains of four successively existing buildings

<sup>9</sup> Pilipko 1975.

made of rammed earth (paskha) or bricks. On the upper laps of the contents of the third horizon,<sup>10</sup> a coin hoard was discovered which had been buried presumably in the 120s BC. The third horizon is thus chronologically definitely connected with the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. The bottomset layers of the second horizon through thickness exceed almost twice the beds of the third horizon. They represent the remains of a permanent building. For these reasons it is possible to suggest that the inhabiting timespan of this building was longer than that of the buildings of the third building horizon and in total the layers of these two horizons cover the whole 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. Possibly, this period goes even beyond the limits of the 2nd century, but it is hardly possible to determine the exact dates due to the scarcity of available materials. Correspondingly, for the first – the earliest horizon – one can suppose a general dating somewhere within the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>11</sup> It may relate to the middle or even the end of that century. The dating to the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC appears to be improbable – there are no signs of its connection to the complexes of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. The approximate nature of datings is worsened by the extreme scarcity of archaeological finds (Fig. 5).

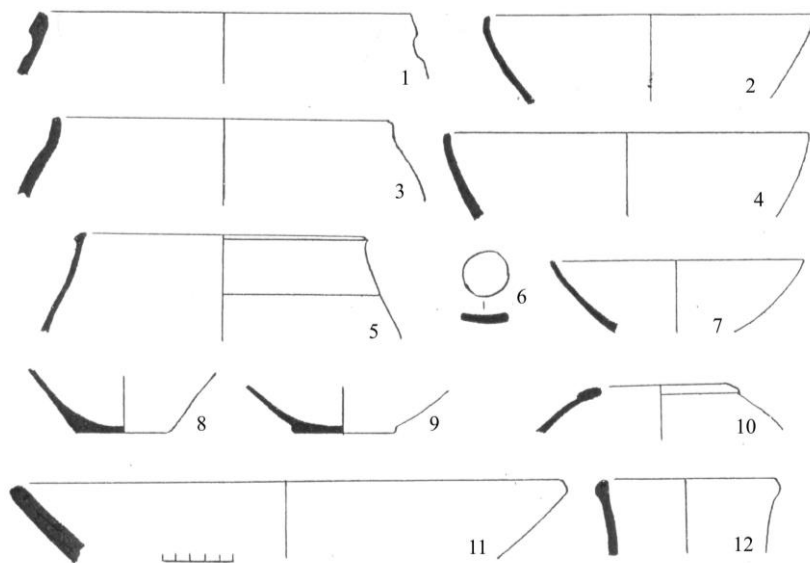


Fig. 6. Finds from the settlement at the mouth of the Keltechinar gorge.

All three identified complexes are not sizeable in amount, and do not give a clear idea of the specific features of local pottery of the period under investiga-

<sup>10</sup> Enumeration of the stratigraphical horizons is bottom-up.

<sup>11</sup> Pilipko 1977.

tion. The fact that it is to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC that they belong is established not by some kind of morphological or technological features, but by their stratigraphical position. In other archaeological circumstances – for example, during examination of the surface pottery finds – such sets of wares simply lose their chronological integrity; such wares may be defined partly as belonging to the Achaemenid time, and partly as representing the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC artefacts.

The stratigraphical situation, recognised at the Anau settlement, shows that in the lower stratum we definitely have a combination of two traditions – “the Achaemenid” one – marked by the appearance of the cuff-shaped rims of large pots, and the pottery showing some innovations of the Hellenistic period, while the cylinder-conical shapes, characteristic of the Achaemenid time, are missing. The presence of such “retrograded” pottery elements typical of Achaemenid times (in this case the use of large pots with cuff-shaped rims, but now without a conical “shore” in the bottom part of a vessel) is also documented in a number of other archaeological complexes of Akhal. In particular, this phenomenon is recorded at a small settlement at the mouth of the Keltechinar gorge (Fig. 6: 1). Later variants of these large pots at the settlements of Garry Kyariz and Yanyk are present even in the layers of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC,<sup>12</sup> but this is already an extremely rare shape for this period.

Examination of materials from the abovementioned sites shows that these complexes on the one hand demonstrate archaic features, going back to the Achaemenid period, and on the other hand show the almost total absence of Greek influence (fig. 7, 8), which clearly enough appears in the material culture of the neighbouring Etek area. Moreover, an influence of the Hyrcanian culture can be traced here.

If this preliminary conclusion, based on relatively small actual material, is true, then it implies some very essential historical reasoning. Thus, the culture of the central part of the Kopetdag piedmont in the Hellenistic period was notable for almost the complete lack of traces of Greek influence, which is in contrast with the observations concerning the neighbouring Etek area. A reason for that might have been the weak Greek colonisation of this province or the complete absence of Greek settlements.

A comparison with Etek also shows that the settled population of Akhal was relatively inconsiderable in number. At the same time there are no natural factors determining the low population density of this province. Correspondingly, it is more likely that the reasons for this phenomenon were of a social character. It is not improbable that this was caused by the influence of nomads, living in the neighbouring desert and trying to get the agricultural population of the Kopetdag piedmont under their power. By further following this line of reasoning in a certain

<sup>12</sup> Pilipko 1975, Fig. 35: pots, type 7; Pilipko 2001b, Fig. 11:17, Fig. 14:1

logical sequence we may reach the conclusion that for some reasons Akhal was beyond the scope of Greek influence and the local settled population mostly depended upon the nomads living in the Balkhan and the Uzboi regions, who, as narrated by Strabo, by long marches crossed a desert and raided the plains of the Parthians.

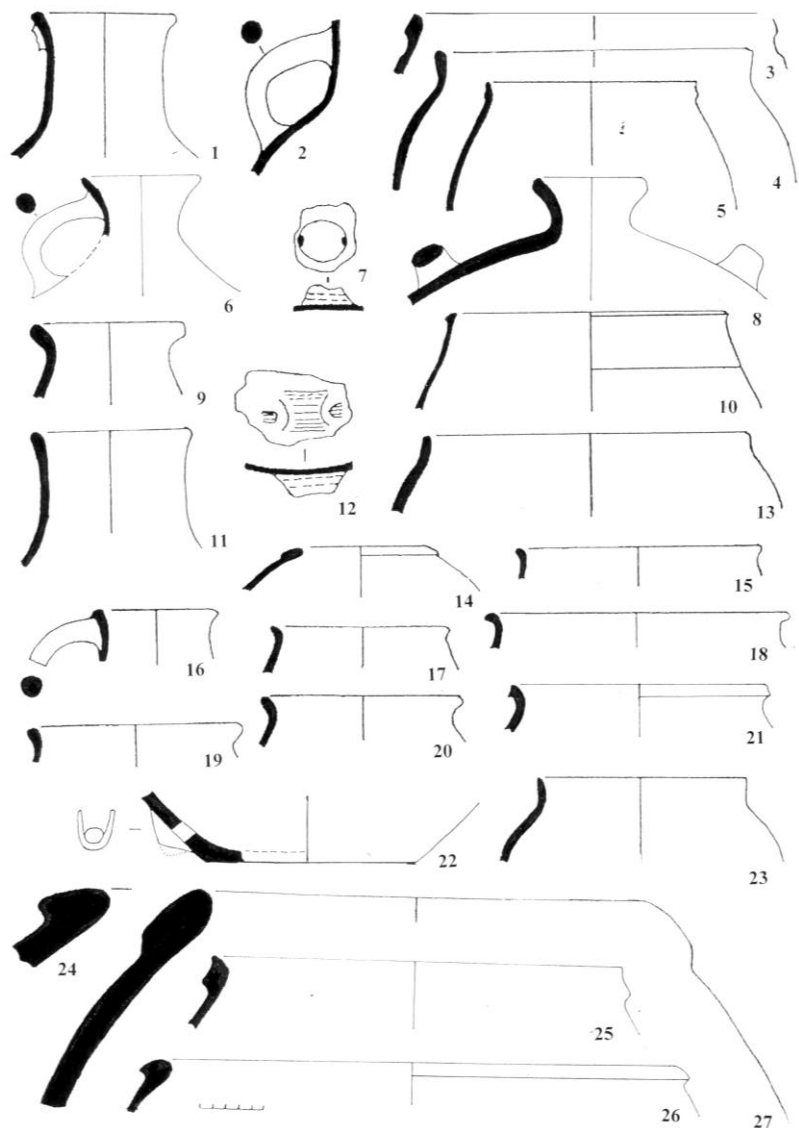
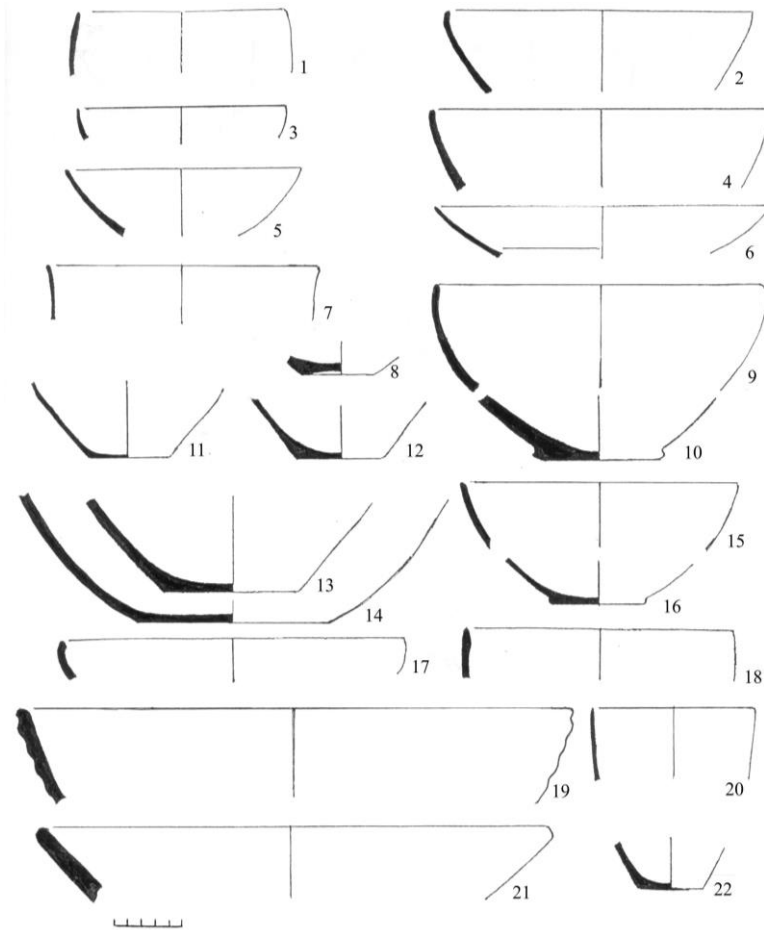


Fig. 7. Summary table. Archaeological complex of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.  
Closed forms.



**Fig. 8. Summary table. Archaeological complex of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. Open forms.**

In the circumstances, whereby we do not have enough available materials directly from Akhal, of significant importance is the pattern which may be observed in the neighbouring regions. A question about the termination of the manufacture of cylinder-conical shapes, characteristic of the Achaemenid period, is among a number of unsolved archaeological problems of Central Asia which have already been under discussion for many decades. Differences in dating this process reach 200 years, from the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC<sup>13</sup> to the turn of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.<sup>14</sup> At present the discussion on this subject is still continuing.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>13</sup> Vorob'eva 1959; 1973; Sagdullayev 1978.

<sup>14</sup> Usmanova 1963; 1969.

My own excavations held in Etek allow me to suggest that here the complexes of the “Achaemenid type” in their classical variant had been surviving to the turn of the 4<sup>th</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> centuries BC, and the so-called “transition complexes” had been in usage in the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

If we expand these conclusions to the territory of Akhal, then all the early complexes from the Anau settlement discussed above, Yanyk-depe and Garry Kyariz 7 (lower part), should be connected with the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. And for the first half of that century we may suggest a presence of the “transition” complexes, which mainly still follow the traditions of Achaemenid times. In Akhal the finds from the upper, fourth layer of a stratigraphical dig at the settlement of Khyrly-depe (Fig. 2) may be regarded as examples of the complexes of this time.

On the other hand, the material culture of Akhal in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC had its peculiarities mentioned previously – preservation of local culture and the practical absence of Greek influence on it. The latter used to appear only in an indirect form. In the building practices there was a change to the format of mud bricks. Instead of rectangular blocks, the manufacturing of square shape blocks was growing. In pottery manufacturing, a rejection from forming vessels with the help of bowl-shaped supports was under way.

In the morphological repertoire, ceramics evolved significantly, while the development occurred by means of transformation of the traditional shapes of the Achaemenid time. The strictly cylinder-conical jars (actually in Akhal they were relatively few in number) had been changed to biconical large pots as early as the Achaemenid period, the upper part of which took a hemispheric shape over the course of time. In the period under consideration the large pots steadily lost their brace and the cuff-shaped rim; the latter was changed to a slightly thickened rim.

The goblets (goblet-shaped cups) with a cylinder-conical or ovoid profile were shaped on the basis of the cylinder-conical jars of medium sizes and cups with the vertical upturned rim. The early examples of these artefacts, belonging precisely to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC, had an exclusively flat bottom (fig. 8). The development of this shape was more clearly traced in the materials of Margiana and Etek, while their presence in the complexes of Akhal was limited. The predominant shapes of the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC was large storage jars (khums), pots, and jugs.<sup>16</sup> The open shapes were still few in number. The flasks and frying pans (roasters) used for breadmaking should be considered as new shapes of this period.

<sup>15</sup> Sverchkov 2006; 2007; Lerner 2010.

<sup>16</sup> In some research on the Central Asian ceramics of the Hellenistic period jugs [kuvshiny] are considered to be a shape borrowed from the Greeks. As for Akhal, however, one can surely insist on their Hyrcanian origin. Moreover, they were originally characterised here by the unified type of the handles – “slouching” and round in section.

It is important to note that the degree of the Hellenistic influence in the ceramics of Akhal increased in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC, while by formal logical evidence it should rather decrease in connection with the emergence of political independence by Parthia and the expulsion of the majority of ethnic Greeks from its boundaries.

This may be explained in the following way. Originally after attainment of independence the anti-Hellenistic spirits in Parthia, including Akhal, possibly increased still greater. However after transformation of the Arsacid state into an empire the situation changed. Having achieved a military victory over the Greeks, the Parthian kings were interested in cooperation with them in the established peaceful period. Mithridates I proclaimed a policy of philhellenism. In exchange for loyalty, the Greeks preserved the internal self-administration in their cities (poleis) and obtained liberty for economic activity throughout the whole empire. The achievements of the Greeks in different fields started to be recognised as models to be imitated.

The provincial northern part of Parthia-Parthava, named in the current research as Akhal, thanks to the appearance in its boundaries of an important Arsacid political centre – Mithridatkirt (in archaeological literature – the site of Nisa), in the 2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC began to play a significant part in the lives of the state, and essentially increased its external relations.

The Greeks appeared again (and maybe for the first time) in its capital centre. The native inhabitants of Parthia, participating in conquering campaigns and in administration over the newly gained lands, became familiar with the achievements of other peoples and introduced them into their life. Parthava (including Akhal), coming out from isolation, actively absorbed the cultural and technical achievements of a new epoch. The general level of Hellenisation of the local population considerably increased, even in comparison with the period of the Greeks' political domination.

One of the reasons for the new wave of Hellenisation might be the influx to Parthava of a dependent labour force from the newly conquered provinces, which gained significant achievements in the sphere of Hellenisation, such as Bactria, Margiana, Media, and Mesopotamia.

## Appendix 1

### List of archaeological sites of Akhal, presumably functioning in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC

#### 1. Khyrly-depe

Situated within the modern village of Isbirden, about 9 km to the west of the railway station of Geok-Tepe. The site is a big mound-settlement that arose in the 8<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> centuries BC and functioned continuously (?) approximately until the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. It is represented by complexes from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC and the first half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.



In the 20<sup>th</sup> century the remains of the settlement suffered from a strong deformation. The checking stratigraphic studies were carried out in 1983 by the Parthian expedition of the Institute of History of Academy of Sciences of the Turkmen SSR (V.N. Pilipko). The results of the excavations were published (Pilipko 2005).

## 2. The settlement of Garry Kyariz, Mound No. 7

Situated at the 17th km north-west of the railway station of Geok-Tepe. It is very likely that it was an original nucleus of an eventually expanded Parthian settlement. The lower building horizon of this site presumably dates to the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The site was excavated by the Parthian expedition in 1968–1972. Publications: Pilipko 1975; 1977.

## 3. The settlement of Garry Kyariz, Mound No. 15

A small mound (diameter 20–30 m), representing the remains of a separately built dwelling house. In 1970 a small complex of ceramics was obtained from a trial trench (Fig. 9). Initially the building was dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Pilipko 1975, 44). In the light of the most recent opinions it is possible to give it a later dating – the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

## 4. Yanyk-depe

Mound-settlement. Situated at the 11th km south-east of the railway station of Geok-Tepe. In the 1980s the site incurred significant damage during agricultural work. This served as a reason for the site to be used to carry out trial archaeological excavations (Parthian expedition, V.N. Pilipko), during which its stratigraphy was specified. Its lower occupation layers presumably come from the second half of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The site was abandoned around the beginning of the Christian era (Pilipko 2001b).

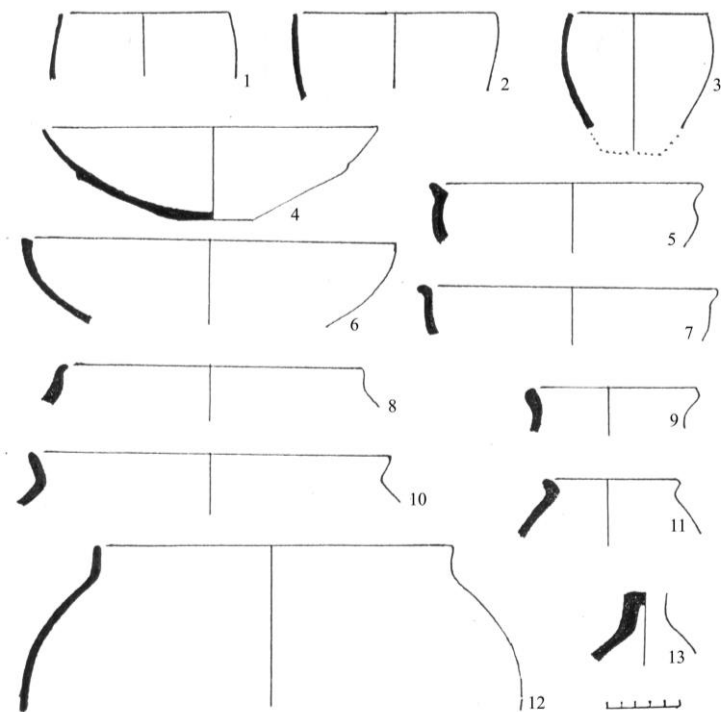
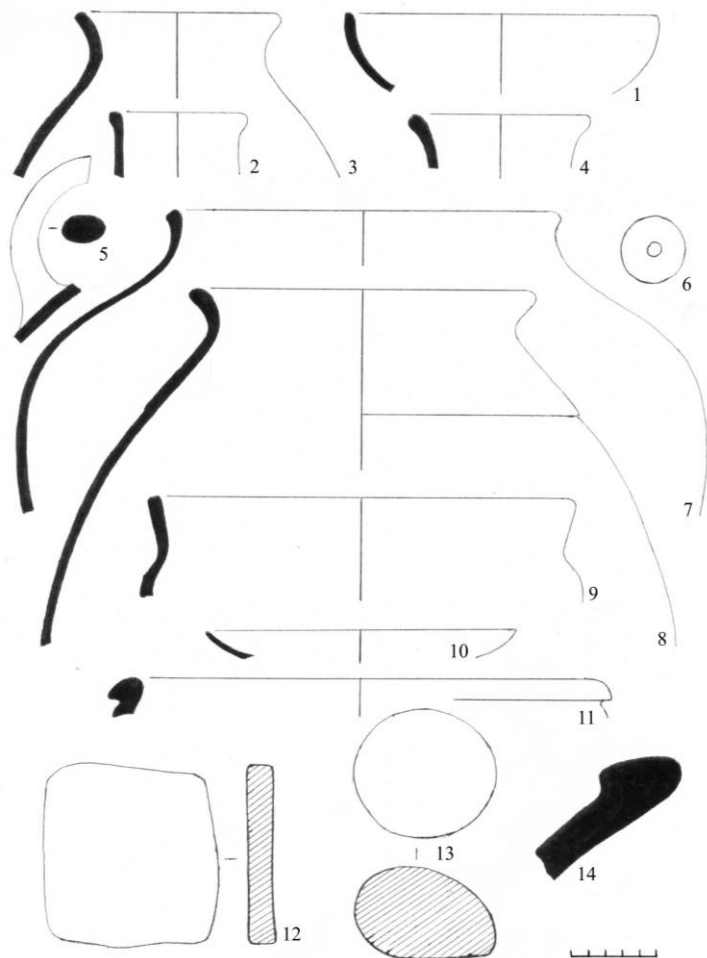


Fig. 9. Garry Kyariz. Mound 15.



**Fig. 10. Finds from the settlement of Bekrova.**

### **5. New Nisa**

Urban settlement. This site is situated 18 km to the west of the railway station of Ashkhabad. It is the biggest site of the urban type within the province of Akhal.

The first work devoted to clarifying the stratigraphy of New Nisa was conducted as early as the 1930s (Marushchenko 1949). New attempts were repeatedly made, but to date there have been no clear ideas as to the occupation period of this site, especially at early stages (Pilipko 2010). The question of when the city was established (under Alexander, the Seleucids or the Arsacids) still remains a subject of heated debate. As yet, there is no reliable data to solve this question. By and large, most scholars believe that the city was founded in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

### **6. Old Nisa**

An archaeological site known worldwide. It is situated 16 km to the west of the railway terminal of Ashkhabad. It has been actively investigated, beginning in 1930 (Pilipko 2001). With the long history of exploration, the earlier layers of the fortress have remained practically unexcavated. For this

reason no reliable data is available about the foundation time of the fortress. It is determined relying on a general evaluation of the historical situation of that time. Earlier on it was suggested that the fortress actually came into being together with the emergence of the Parthian state, and that it was here that the burials of the early Arsacids were placed (Masson 1949). After an ostrakon was found informing that in ancient times the fortress's name had been Mihrdatkirt (Mithridatkirt), the prevailing opinion has been that it was founded in the period of Mithradates I (circa 171–138 BC).

The available archaeological data does not give any possibility of specifying a date of the fortress foundation within the period 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC—first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC.

### 7. Bekrova

A village near the western outskirts of Ashkhabad. Now it belongs to “The Greater Ashkhabad”. At the north-eastern edge of this village near a bus station earlier there was a small mound (diameter circa 20 m, height 3 m). Until the moment of its examination in the middle of the 1980s it was already represented by a shapeless butte in the break of which, however, one could find the rare fragments of ancient ceramics. Clearing a part of the break did not show up any specific cultural depositions, while some amount of ceramics was obtained (Fig. 10). The profiles and fabric of some artefacts allows us to suggest that on the place of this earth mound earlier there may have been situated a small settlement of the 3<sup>rd</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BC.

### 8. Anau settlement

It was situated 3.5 km south-east of the railway station of Anau on the edge of a central farm of the kolkhoz named after Makhtumkuli. Now it is totally destroyed. A settlement of the scattered type, belonging to the early Arsacid period (2<sup>nd</sup>–1<sup>st</sup> centuries BC). The lower cultural layer of the largest south-western mound of this settlement may be dated to a time around the middle of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Pilipko 2000).

### 9. A nameless mound-settlement at the mouth of the Keltechinargorge

This small mound with a diameter of about 15 m and height about 2 m undoubtedly represented the remains of a detached house. The presence among the finds of several cuff-shaped rims from large pots close to the complex of the early Arsacid period allows us to suggest the occupation of this site in the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC (Fig. 6). It should be noted that the remains of a settlement of the Achaemenid period are located in the direct vicinity of this mound (Pilipko 2000).

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## Abstract

This article deals with the archaeological sites of a central part of the Kopetdag piedmont (in the medieval period this territory was called “province of Nisa”, in the 19<sup>th</sup> century “Akhal”), presumably dated to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC. The author gives an explanation of a possible slight influence of Greek culture on the material culture of this region.





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## THE VULTURE ON THE BONE PLAQUE FROM THE ORLAT CEMETERY

Among the most interesting artefacts found in the last century from archaeological excavations in Uzbekistan are Orlat bone plaques which were used as decorative belt buckles by K'ang-chü nomads, who lived along the borders of Sogdiana in the 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> century A.D. They were recovered by the Uzbekistan Art History Expedition of the Khamza Institute of Art Studies under the direction of Galina A. Pugachenkova in 1981 during the excavation of Barrow no. 2 at the Orlat burial ground, situated about 50 km north-west of Samarqand.<sup>1</sup>

It must be noted that we are here dealing with two large plates and three smaller ones. Taken together they constitute a set in which both large plaques served as belt buckles, while the smaller pieces acted as pendants at the ends of hanging straps. The two larger plaques are decorated with splendid, multi-figured compositions: a bloody battle of heavily armed warriors on horse back or on foot appears on the left plate and on the right mounted hunters pursue wild rams, onagers and deer. On the three small shield-like plaques, there are depicted a single combat between two warriors on foot, two Bactrian camels engaged in combat, and a vulture, respectively.

Most of the scholarly interest in these pieces has focused on scenes depicting battles or hunting, such as military equipment or horse gear. Dozens of publications are devoted to these studies<sup>2</sup>, including the camels in combat.<sup>3</sup> On the other

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<sup>1</sup> Pugachenkova 1984, 481–482; Pugachenkova 1987, 56–65; Pugachenkova 1989a, 122–154; Pugachenkova 1989b, 96–110.

<sup>2</sup> Since the bibliography of the Orlat plaques is fairly extensive, in addition to the abovementioned fundamental studies of G. A. Pugachenkova, only a few other works are here indicated: Brentjes 1989; Brentjes 1990; Tanabe 1990; Abdullaev 1995; Ilyasov, Rusanov 1998; Maslov 1999 (in Russian); Nikonorov, Khudiakov 1999 (in Russian); Iatsenko 2000 (in Russian); Litvinsky 2001; Litvinskii 2002 (in Russian); Ilyasov 2003; Mode 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Korolkova 1999, 80, 89, 91, fig. 1: 4.

hand, the representation of the vulture that appears on one of the small plaques has largely been ignored by researchers. The purpose of the present article is to correct this oversight.

The fairly rare, if not altogether unique, representation of the vulture on the small Orlat plaque allows us to examine in greater detail the role that this bird played in the beliefs of many ancient peoples, notwithstanding its generally negative associations today.



Fig. 1.

One of the smaller plaques is decorated with the representation of a bird of prey placed in the right field of the composition. By contrast to the two other shield-like plaques, the image here is neither paired nor symmetrical, the bird is turned with its right side to the viewer and assumes the characteristic pose of a predatory bird pecking at its prey (Fig. 1). Much of the image is worn away through wear and tear of the belt. No traces of the engraving are discernible in the left field of the plaque so that it is impossible to discern whether there had



been another bird that had long ago disappeared through continuous use (as supposed by G. A. Pugachenkova). As a result, we are unable to decide whether we have an incomplete work, or whether the craftsman in fact made only a single bird. One cannot also exclude the possibility that the master himself removed the image. There is no trace of the depiction of the “prey”.

In spite of a certain conventionality, the skilfully executed representation allows us easily to recognize this image as a vulture. Although Galina Pugachenkova has correctly identified this species, neither she nor any other scholar of the Orlat plaques has examined this image in detail. It should also be noted that this realistic depiction of a vulture is a phenomenon unique in the early art of Central Asia.

Before we begin with an analysis of the representation and its semantics, it is necessary to address some points of terminology. V. D. Kubarev and D. V. Cheremisin, in their study devoted to the image of birds in the art of the early nomads of the Altai, rightly point out that there is general confusion in distinguishing eagles, vultures, and gryphons and this naturally leads to a number of terminological problems with respect to their identification.<sup>4</sup> Accordingly, we note that the morphology of an image plays a significant role in understanding the semantics. In other words, the identification of an image must be the primary issue. Only after having made the proper identification of the bird which has been portrayed, can one then deal effectively with the issue of semantics. A typical example of the confusion that has been wrought is the term ‘eagle-vulture’ employed by V. E. Maslov for the bird image from Orlat.<sup>5</sup> In scientific literature, the term ‘griffon’ often implies birds of prey with ears and crests that are not based on reality or are purely polymorphic mythical creatures<sup>6</sup>, which from an art historical point of view are usually called an eagle-gryphon or an eagle-headed gryphon.<sup>7</sup> In the present article, the term of ‘vulture’ is restricted to real birds or their representation, while the depiction of birds of prey possessing ears and a crest will be understood as a ‘mythical vulture’.

The distinguishing features of the vulture are a large ‘bald’ head, a powerful, massive beak, a long neck with a ‘collar’ of feathers, and strong clawed feet, of which according to ornithologists there are twelve species in the Old World.<sup>8</sup>

In Central Asia, five species of vultures are found. Two of these – the Egyptian vulture and the Bearded vulture (or Lammergeier) – in view of their

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<sup>4</sup> Kubarev, Cheremisin 1984, 88.

<sup>5</sup> Maslov 1999, 229.

<sup>6</sup> Rudenko 1960, 285–291 (in Russian), fig. 145, 146; Artamonov 1973, 128–130, 134, 142, 143, 150, 153, 154, 156, 158, 160, 164, 166 (in Russian); Piankov 1976 (in Russian); Zaporozhchenko, Cheremisin 1997 (in Russian); on the origin of this name in the European languages, see also: Wild 1963.

<sup>7</sup> Barkova 1987.

<sup>8</sup> Ferguson-Lees, Christie 2009, 122–131.

appearance, do not correspond with our representation. The rest are the Black vulture (*Aegypius monachus*), the Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*), and the Himalayan or Snow griffon vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*). Black vultures (Fig. 2), according to ornithologists, in the territory of Uzbekistan make their nests in the mountains of Bukantau and Tamdytau of the central Qizilqum region, the mountain ranges of Pskem, Qurama, Ugam, and Chatkal in the Western Tien-Shan, in the Zaamin State Reserve and the mountains of Kugitangtau (Kuh-i Tang) and Babatag. The largest concentration is found in the Nuratau Mountains. The Griffon vulture (Fig. 3) inhabits approximately the same regions as the Black vulture. The Himalayan or Snow vulture, however, is much rarer in Uzbekistan as its habitat lies elsewhere: in the high mountainous regions of the Tien-Shan and Pamirs in the west, from the Nan-Shan to Tibet in the east, and the Himalayas in the south.<sup>9</sup>



Fig. 2.



Fig. 3.

It is difficult to identify accurately to which species of these three vultures the bird depicted on the Orlat plaque belongs. If, on the other hand, the proportions of the body are any indication, particularly the large head, then we have here a depiction of a Black vulture.

<sup>9</sup> Bogdanov 1992, 195–196, 199–201, 205.



Fig. 4.

Evidently, the painted pottery uncovered during excavations at the site of Kara-Depe near the Artyk railroad station in Southern Turkmenia bore the earliest representations of vultures in Central Asia. Here, in levels belonging to the Namazga III period (late Eneolithic: late 4<sup>th</sup> – first third of the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC), vessels were found decorated with representations of large birds in heraldic pose: their wings spread broadly and their head turned in profile (Fig. 4). In the majority of publications concerned with the excavations at Kara-Depe, these birds are called ‘eagles’.<sup>10</sup> In this connection, it is necessary to note that most of the depictions of birds of prey in ancient art are impossible to attribute, since only the most general characteristics are rendered. This is why predatory birds are simply labelled ‘eagles’ (see, for instance, the series of depictions in the works of V. D. Kubarev and D. V. Cheremisin<sup>11</sup>). The notion that the Kara-Depe birds more closely resemble vultures and not eagles is not an exceptional point of view. It is quite probable that the zoologist I. B. Shishkin is absolutely right when he writes:

“Although the bird is arbitrarily called an eagle by archaeologists, in reality it merely represents some sort of large bird of prey. Eagles for their part are universally regarded as most impressive. Examining the images on Kara-Depe pottery, one can think of the heraldry of Mediaeval Europe: on Kara-Depe ware there is a heraldic eagle. Nevertheless, these images remarkably resemble other birds – such as vultures with their long, bare, and occasionally slightly dropped necks. It must be remembered that vultures, especially in southern Turkmenia where the Black vulture and Griffon vulture are widespread, were commonly found near settlements where they fed on carrion so that they were an-indispensable part of landscape. It is impossible, however, to attribute what kind of particular bird is represented in the Kara-Depe artwork”.<sup>12</sup>

Although the ‘heraldic pose’ is performed by many species of birds of prey, it is most characteristic of vultures (Fig. 5). The well-known naturalist I. I. Akimushkin thus wrote:

<sup>10</sup> Masson 1960, 359, fig. 19, pl. XXI: 9–11; Masson 1982, 42, 62, pl. XXI: 29; Sarianidi, Koshelenko 1966, 47, 50.

<sup>11</sup> Kubarev, Cheremisin 1984, fig. 1, 2.

<sup>12</sup> Shishkin 1977, 115.

“Using the ultraviolet light of the sun’s rays to kill microbes, vultures disinfect their feathers, ruffling them with wings half spread, exposing one side now the other. A special commanding pose impels all the birds in a flock to bath thusly in the sun. It takes only one vulture to fluff out its feathers, raising ever so slightly its wings, immediately followed by others that observe this visual cue”.<sup>13</sup>



Fig. 5.

In terms of the depictions of these birds, it is noteworthy that in all of Central Asia (I mean here Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tadjikistan, and Kyrgyzstan) we have only Kara-Depe pottery and the Orlat plaque. However, in the adjoining territories, numerous depictions of vultures have been found, some of which are listed below.

According to T. Kawami, the gold vessel dated to the 12<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century BC from northwestern Iran – now part of the Miho Museum collection in Japan – depicts vultures, not eagles as others have argued, attacking gazelles.<sup>14</sup> She bases her identification on the length of the birds’ necks.

The vultures depicted while feasting appear on a gold beaker dated to the second half of the 8<sup>th</sup> or 7<sup>th</sup> century BC (or possibly to the 9<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> century) from Marlik. The vessel is decorated with a representation of the so-called ‘Goat Story’ where the fate of the animal from its birth to its death is depicted (Fig. 6). V. G. Lukonin considers this piece a vivid example of Iranian pictorial art that was created from a repertory of established artistic traditions from Assyria, Urartu, and other early Oriental centers. The motif of vultures pecking at their ‘prey’ first occur on Kassite cylinder seals of the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century BC and appear on numerous objects,

<sup>13</sup> Akimushkin 1973, 147.

<sup>14</sup> Schätze 1999, 46–47, № 13.

including Hittite reliefs and silver plates of the 12<sup>th</sup>–11<sup>th</sup> century from Iran. In conjunction with E. Porada, V. G. Lukonin<sup>15</sup> maintains that these representations symbolize a military victory, which explains why they accompany representations of warriors. One further example is the depiction of a vulture on an Assyrian relief portraying a battle scene from the palace of Tiglathpileser III in Nimrud,<sup>16</sup> and now in the collection of the British Museum (Fig. 7).

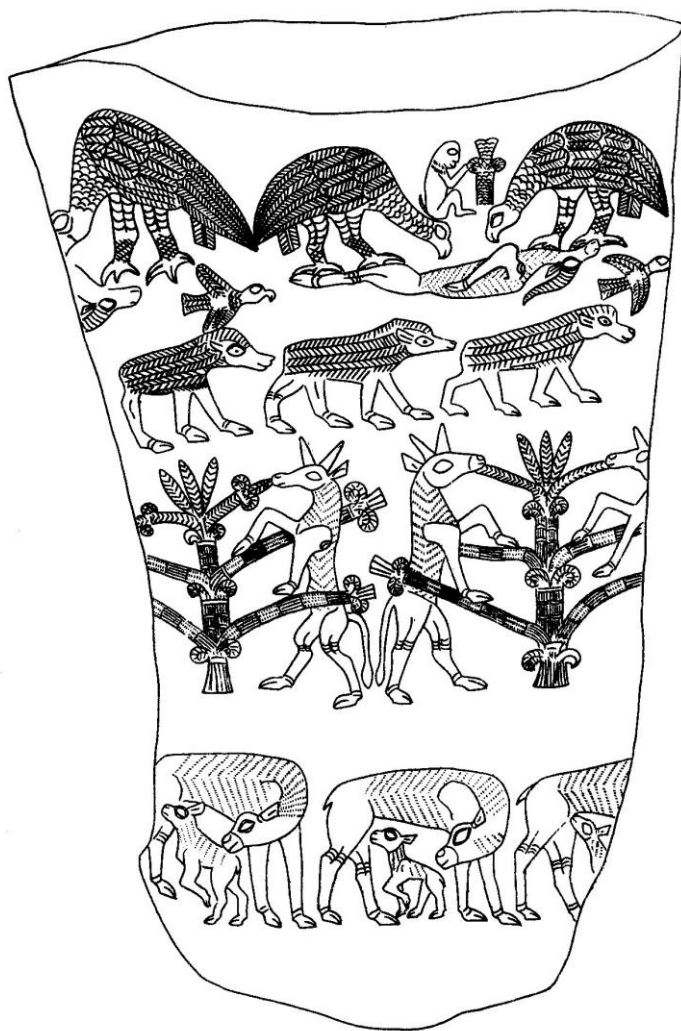


Fig. 6.

<sup>15</sup> Lukonin 1987a, 226; Lukonin 1987b, 67–69; Lukonin, Iwanow 1996, 11–12.

<sup>16</sup> Ivantchik 2001, fig. 132: 1.



Fig. 7.

It is worth noting that G. N. Kurochkin has argued for an earlier date for the Marlik vessel: the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC. He further proposed that the spread of similar iconographic schemes and motifs moved not only from Western Asia to Iran and Afghanistan, as supposed by V. G. Lukonin and E. Porada, but they also circulated in the reverse direction. He contends that there are quite a number of representations of herbivores being torn in pieces by a pair of birds of prey (or rather, depictions of vultures tearing at the flesh of a herbivore), such as those depicted on a Kassite seal of the 14<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> century BC and on a Late-Hittite stone relief from Kara-Tepe of the early 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC to name but a few. The earliest of these compositions is found on a gold ‘teapot’ from the Astrabad hoard in northeastern Iran; the vessel dates from the 3<sup>rd</sup> or first third of the 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC so that the representation under consideration chronologically precedes the Kassite, Hittite, and other variations that originated in the western regions of Western Asia (Fig. 8).<sup>17</sup> Here, one can also name the famous Stele of the Vultures, a Sumerian monument of the 25<sup>th</sup> century BC, celebrating a victory of the city-state of Lagash over its neighbour Umma. The stele is named after the vultures that can be seen in one of the depicted scenes: the birds devour corpses of the enemies of Lagash.

<sup>17</sup> Kurochkin 1990, 47–49, fig. 3.

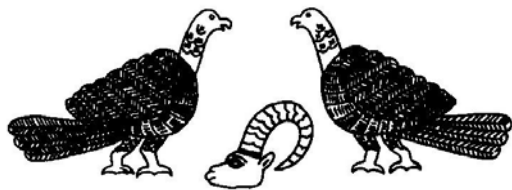


Fig. 8.



Fig. 9.

A number of objects depicting the small head of a bird of prey, identified V. G. Lukonin as a vulture, are dated to the 7<sup>th</sup> century BC thus marking the formative period of Iranian (a silver disc from Ziweh) and Scythian (a gold sword scabbard from a Kelermes barrow) art styles.<sup>18</sup> In addition to the representation of the small vulture heads on the sword sheath, Kelermes Kurgan 1 also yielded a gold diadem decorated with figures of ‘predatory birds’ standing with their wings spread or with their heads turned backward.<sup>19</sup>

On objects of the so-called ‘Scytho-Siberian animal style’, images of vulture-like birds, especially their heads, are quite numerous. For instance, they are found on grave goods from Saka burials of the 7<sup>th</sup>–6<sup>th</sup> centuries BC at the Uygarak cemetery. In Kurgans 33, 39, 69 and 83 various bronze parts of horse harnesses formed in the shape of birds or ornamented with small bird heads in the animal style were uncovered (Fig. 9). Moreover, a bronze dagger and bimetallic pickaxe decorated with a bird head were also found in Kurgans 25 and 84.<sup>20</sup> O. A. Vishnevskaja calls these representations ‘birds of prey’ without elaborating any further.<sup>21</sup> For my part, I propose that these birds, characteristically portrayed in profile, with large round eyes and a powerful beak with a prominent cere, represent heavily stylized vultures.

Similar depictions are found among the Saka tribes, such as on the bronze plaques of the Tasmola culture in central Kazakhstan and on the gold plaques of the Chilikta culture in eastern Kazakhstan.<sup>22</sup> The openwork gold plaques found in the Chilikta barrows were regarded by S. S. Chernikov as depictions of eagles with a wing raised above their head, whereas I regard them as vivid images of griffons sitting in their characteristically “hunched” posture with their head turned backward (Fig. 10).

<sup>18</sup> Lukonin 1977, 20, 24–25, 30, 31, 35, ill. on p. 23, 27.

<sup>19</sup> Galanina 1997, 102, 134, pl. 7: 1 (a, c), pl. 8, 28, 29.

<sup>20</sup> Vishnevskaja 1973, 21, 29, 34, 53, 57, 59, pl. VII: 1, IX: 9, XIII: 2, XVIII: 20, XIX: 5, 6, XX: 1; XXVII: 1–7.

<sup>21</sup> Vishnevskaja 1973, 112–114.

<sup>22</sup> Kadyrbaev 1966, 400, fig. 65; Chernikov 1965, 33–34, pl. XIII, XIV, XXIII: 2.



**Fig. 10.**

The small head of a vulture decorates the hilt of a bronze single-bladed knife found in the kishlak (village) of Turbat in southern Kazakhstan and now housed in the Hermitage, St. Petersburg (Inv. no. SA-12209). B. Ia. Staviskii dated the piece to the 6<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup> century BC and associated it with the Sakas of Chach.<sup>23</sup>

There is yet another abundant classification of art objects of the Scythian/Sauromatian/Sakan type depicting ‘carnivorous birds’ or ‘eagles’ which, in my opinion, may be justly considered as vultures (it must be noted that when compared to actual birds – eagles and vultures – these images with their round heads, voluminous beaks, and large round eyes correspond exactly to vultures).

Other examples include finds from Kurgan 2 near the village of Zhabotin on the Middle Dnieper. There are birds of prey engraved on horn plaques. According to M. I. Viazmitina, they resemble vultures (Fig. 11). Other objects found were a pair of horn cheek-pieces with the head of an ‘eagle’<sup>24</sup> carved on one of the ends, the famous gold ‘eagles’ from the Mel’gunov Kurgan of the 7<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> century BC,<sup>25</sup> a bronze Scythian pommel from the Ramenshchina Kurgans in the form of a bird’s head with a huge beak and a ‘collar’ around the neck, the head

<sup>23</sup> Staviskii 1955, 125–126, 128, fig. 54: 1.

<sup>24</sup> Viazmitina 1963, 161, 163, fig. 2, 3, 5.

<sup>25</sup> Scythian art 1986, No. 19.



of a carnivorous bird engraved on a bronze mirror from the farmstead of Gerasimovka, as well as numerous other objects of gold, silver, bronze, and bone uncovered in various Scythian kurgans dated from the 7<sup>th</sup> to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC,<sup>26</sup> all of which contain features of vultures.

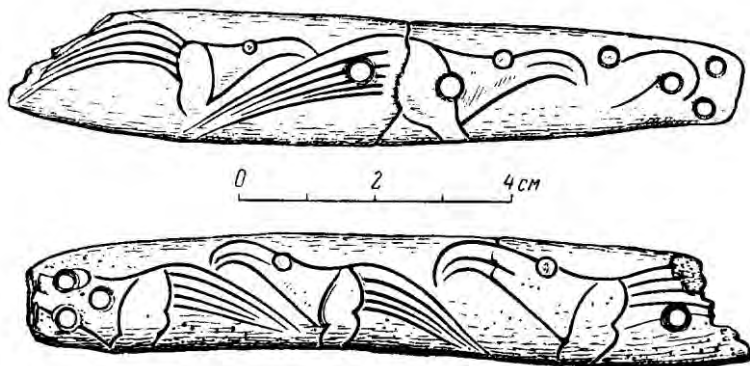


Fig. 11.

Representations of ‘eagles’ or other ‘predatory birds’ are found among the items in Sarmatian funerary complexes of the late 6<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>27</sup>

The eastern area of the Scythian, Saka, and Siberian cultures has also yielded numerous representations of vulture-like birds. One such example is the gold quiver clasp with two heads of vultures found in the famous Arzhan Kurgan 2 (Fig. 12) dated to the late 7<sup>th</sup> century BC.<sup>28</sup> Researchers note that the magnificent assemblage of art wrought in the ‘animal style’ uncovered in the double ‘royal’ burial of tomb no. 5 manifests no traces of foreign influence. It seems that it contains only the figures of real animals: deer, horses, mountain rams and goats, wild boars, camels, antelope (goitered gazelles or saigas), panthers, and tigers.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>26</sup> Scythian art 1986, Nos. 58, 91, 95, 96, 99; Stepi evropejskoī chasti 1989, 298, 299, pl. 37: 9, pl. 38: 1, 3, 6, 40, 42, pl. 39: 44, 49, 63, pl. 45: 1.

<sup>27</sup> Smirnov 1964, 216–223, 244–245, fig. 11B: 23, fig. 16: 1a, 1b, fig. 19: 5a, fig. 21: 1r, 1s, fig. 27: 9, fig. 77; Kadyrbaev 1984, fig. 1: 1, 6, 10–13, 23.

<sup>28</sup> Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2003, 137, Abb. 25; Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2006, 125, Taf. 36.

<sup>29</sup> Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2003, 158; Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2006, Taf. 5–7, 11–14, 19, 24, 25, 30, 38, 40, 43, 45, 50, 55, 60, 65, 67, 69, 72. In their publications, the authors have traditionally considered the depictions of predatory birds from burial 5 as griffon heads (Greifenköpfe), cf. the above-mentioned clasp and ornaments of the quiver strap (Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2003, 137; Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2006, 125, Taf. 36, 37), although these depictions bear no particular traits of a griffon. Regarding the four images of horses with which the head-dress of the ‘prince’ was decorated, the authors write: “On the backs of the horses, small curved protrusions are discernible. Since the clearly articulated manes of the horses end slightly before



Fig. 12.



Fig. 13.

Likewise in Tuva, vultures appear on gold objects called ‘cockades’. The images of three heads of birds of prey were found in Kurgan 2 from the burial ground of Duzherlig-Hovuzu I, as well as wooden figure of a ‘fantastic animal with the head of a bird of prey and the body of a snake’ from Kurgan 1 at the cemetery of Sagly-Bazhi II.<sup>30</sup> Both burial grounds are dated to the 5<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

These images greatly resemble birds of prey that appear on bronze knives, *chekans* (pickaxes), celts, and other artefacts from the Tagar culture of the Scythian type located in the Khakass-Minusinsk Basin in the 7<sup>th</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.<sup>31</sup>

An early figure of a vulture from the eastern borderland of the Scytho-Siberian world seems to be represented on a bronze clasp dated to the 9<sup>th</sup>–7<sup>th</sup>

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these protrusions, it is reasonable to consider the latter not as curved locks of the manes but as small wings” (Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2006, 114). However, in my opinion, we are strictly dealing with a lock that was left from when the mane near the withers of the horse was trimmed. These locks probably served to make mounting easier; they are known through quite a number of ancient representations. This opinion is confirmed by the images of the other two horses decorating the headdress of the ‘princess’ in which the manes are shown as gently passing into locks that protrude over the withers (Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2006, 127, Taf. 45, 48). In other words, it must be stressed that in the animal art from the Arzhan 2 kurgan, no fantastic polymorphic creatures are depicted (cf. the same opinion in the final publication of the Arzhan 2 excavation results: Čugunov, Parzinger, Nagler 2010, 31).

<sup>30</sup> Grach 1980, 81, 112, 118–119, figs. 43, 68.

<sup>31</sup> Zavitukhina 1983, 18–19, 80–91, 170, 172–184.

century BC and now housed in the University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology (Fig. 13).<sup>32</sup>

Similar to the small Saka vulture heads from Uigarak noted above is a bird of prey portrayed on the unique woollen tapestry from the Shampula (Sampul) burial ground, 30 km south-east of Hotan (Hetian) in the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region of China, excavated in the 1980s and 1990s. The vulture is part of a composition depicting a mounted archer hunting a fantastic animal which is described as a ‘winged goat with a horned human head’. The bird is shown flying over the horse’s rump and possesses the characteristic profile of a round head, a huge curved beak, and a large round eye (Fig. 14). Although E. Bunker believes that it is a hunting bird during a hunt in reality it is a typical vulture of the Scytho-Sarmatian type. One of the textiles from Shampula containing the same scene as described above and in the Swiss Abegg-Stiftung in Riggisberg has a radiocarbon date of 8 BC – 234 AD. It is presumed that Shampula was composed of descendants from the Sakas who had settled in the small oasis sometime between the first century BC and the first centuries AD whereupon they became preoccupied with goat-breeding and weaving.<sup>33</sup>



Fig. 14.

Although many other examples can be easily cited, those that have already been mentioned suffice. It must be stressed that it is not my intention to assert that birds of prey on objects created in -the ‘Scytho-Siberian animal style’ are to be understood as vultures. Nonetheless, many of them can be considered as such, because they resemble Gyps vultures.

<sup>32</sup> Mounted Nomads 1997, 56, No. 95.

<sup>33</sup> Bunker 2001, 20, 25–26, 38–45, figs. 7, 8.

It is evident that the presence of vultures in Iranian, Scythian, Sarmatian, and Sakan art is due to the shared notion among Iranian-speaking peoples of how to render these representatives of the feathery world.

Possibly, the special treatment of the vulture was related to the bird's role in the tradition of exposing the dead that was practiced by many Central-Asiatic peoples. It is this custom that became the basis of Zoroastrian funeral rites.

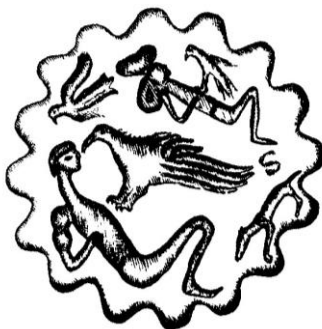


Fig. 15.

The copper-bronze seal from Bactria (most likely the result of clandestine excavations in northern Afghanistan) published by V.I. Sarianidi probably dates to the Bronze Age (Fig. 15). The piece is an excellent illustration of the ritual of exposing corpses with a dog, a vulture, and some smaller birds (kites?) about to begin devouring them. In the opinion of this scholar, some of the finds from the necropolis of Gonur “suggest the acquaintance by the ancient Margushians of the tradition of exposing the dead. However, it seems that this was practiced only by the royal family and, perhaps, by the aristocracy”.<sup>34</sup>

Below is some information from the accounts of ancient authors. Strabo (1<sup>st</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD) mentions the following in his ‘Geography’: “Caspian kill by starvation people over 70 years old and place their bodies out in the desert; then they watch them from afar: if they see them dragged from their biers by birds, they regard the dead as blessed, if this is done by wild beasts or dogs, less so, but if no animal drags them away, they consider the dead cursed’ (Strab. 11.11.8).

<sup>34</sup> Sarianidi 2006, 64, 65, ill. 11 (in Russian). Among the arguments enumerated by Sarianidi in favour of the practice of cleaning the skeletal remains, he includes the discovery of a burial in a large pithos containing an adolescent of 12–13 years of age whose skull and long arm bones were dyed black, “moreover, an outline of hair was clearly drawn on his cranium. This could have only been done after the skull had been completely cleaned. In addition, at the necropolis of Gonur were found the so-called fractional interments in the form of simple pits filled with carefully stacked long bones with a skull placed on the top of them” (Sarianidi 2006, 64, in Russian).

In the epitome of Pompeius Trogus as retold by Justin, we read of the Parthians: “They commonly dispose of corpses by leaving them to be torn apart by birds or dogs and only bury in the earth the bare bones” (Justin 41.3.5).

According to the Zoroastrian *Videvdāt*, the dead were supposed to be exposed “in the highest places where it was believed (that there were) dogs and birds devouring corpses” or in specially built structures called ‘*dakhmas*’ where their flesh was consumed by carnivorous birds and dogs specially bred for this procedure”.<sup>35</sup> In the third *fargard* of the *Videvdāt*, which is concerned with the strict cleansing measures applied to a person who alone has handled a corpse (an act that was considered one of the greatest sins), it instructs him to dispose of it in the following manner: (20) “And when he has grown old or decrepit... then the Mazdayasnians shall send some of the strongest, most vigorous and skilful in order, on the top of the mountain, to cut his head at the base; and they shall throw out the corpse to the vultures, the most greediest corpse-eating creatures of the Holy Spirit, with these words: ‘In this act this man here has repented all his evil thoughts, evil words, evil deeds’. (21) If any other evil deeds have been committed by him then this punishment is the expiation of them, but if no other evil deeds have been perpetrated then he is absolved by his repentance, for ever and ever”.<sup>36</sup> Thus, after the ritual killing of the sinner, it is the vultures that complete the process of purification. Having atoned through death for his sin, the violator of the ritual *immaculatio*, as suggested by the parting words that end this cruel rite, receives a postmortem forgiveness.

The practice of exposing corpses and the religious notions connected with it have been brilliantly analysed by Iu. A. Rapoport who examined the texts of the *Avesta* and other Zoroastrian writings, the accounts of Roman and Byzantine authors, as well as the ethnographic evidence.<sup>37</sup> For our purpose, some of his conclusions are important: it is not entirely correct to suppose that an exclusively mechanical function was assigned to dogs and birds in the funerary rite; i.e., their only purpose was the annihilation of the ‘unclean’ soft tissues. This supposition is inconsistent with the information we have about the relatives of the deceased who “were far from indifferent to what animals were involved and how soon they ate the corpse” as is clearly indicated by Strabo’s statement noted above. The dogs and birds, to which the corpses were exposed, may have been considered totem animals so that by consuming the deceased they provided, to some extent, they provided continuity of the process which, according to totemistic notions, comprised the following: 1) the birth of a child is explained through the introduction of a totem into the body of a woman; and 2) death is considered the

<sup>35</sup> Kriukova 1994, 239, 242, 245, 249.

<sup>36</sup> *Avesta* 1998, 89; see also: Kriukova 1997, 198; Kriukova 2000, 125.

<sup>37</sup> Rapoport 1971, 23–37.

vehicle by which one is converted into a totem animal (i.e., the conversion, in this case, is realized through the ingestion of the corpse).<sup>38</sup>

There is no doubt that the primary role in consuming the exposed corpses was fulfilled by the largest of the scavenging birds. These were vultures which even have their own peculiar specialization: some eat primarily muscles and skin (genus *Aegyptius*), while others prefer to regale themselves on viscera (genus *Gyps*).<sup>39</sup>



Fig. 16.

In India, for instance, where the Parsee communities still practise exposing corpses in *dakhmas*, the Gyps vultures are considered the main participants of the ‘ceremony’ (Fig. 16). A. Wadia, an architect who is a Parsee, has written on ‘silence towers’ or *dakhmas*. She noted that a positive feature of these birds is that, due to their physical features, they are unable to carry parts of the deceased in their beaks or claws, so consume everything on the spot.<sup>40</sup> This has given cre-

<sup>38</sup> Rapoport 1971, 26, 27.

<sup>39</sup> Kashkarov 1931, 413, 414, 415; Meklenburtsev 1982, 26; Bogdanov 1992, 203; Ptitsy 1999, 168.

<sup>40</sup> Wadia 2002, 335, note 2.

dence to the notion that during the ‘disposal’ of the corpses by the vultures, there is no defilement of the sacred substances (earth and water). The probability of such an occurrence would be considerable if the remains were dragged helter-skelter. Possibly, similar notions strengthened a positive affinity for vultures in Zoroastrianism. Nevertheless, it must be noted that in the fifth *fargard* of the *Videvdāt* there is the following special stipulation:

(1) “There dies a man in the depths of the vale: a bird takes flight from the top of the mountain down into the depths of the vale, and it feeds on the corpse of the dead man there: then, up it flies from the depths of the vale to the top of the mountain: it flies to some one of the trees there, of the hard-wooded or the soft-wooded, and upon that tree it vomits and deposits dung”.<sup>41</sup>

(2) “Now, lo! Here is a man coming up from the depths of the vale to the top of the mountain; he comes to the tree whereon the bird is sitting; from that tree he intends to take wood for the fire. He fells the tree, he hews the tree, he splits it into logs, and then he lights it in the fire, the son of Ahura Mazda. What is the penalty he shall pay?”

(3) “Ahura Mazda answered: There is no sin upon a man for any Nasu (carion) that has been brought by dogs, by birds, by wolves, by winds, or by flies”.<sup>42</sup>

The activities of different species of vulture were fairly effective. As O. P. Bogdanov, Doctor of Biological Sciences wrote, a few Himalayan griffon vultures ingest a human corpse in half an hour and that of a yak in two hours.<sup>43</sup> According to V. V. Ivanitskii, Doctor of Biological Sciences, six vultures had once in only a few hours time ingested a boar’s corpse weighing 50 kg, “leaving behind a cleaned hide and skeleton”.<sup>44</sup> It was probably the speed and the efficiency at which vultures consumed a corpse that led believers to hold them in high regard and to view them positively. Pious Zoroastrians share a similar attitude of respect for dogs who also participate in this process.

It is noteworthy that in the context of the Zoroastrian funerary rite there is a further example is found in which a dog or bird may be substituted for one another. It is known that after the death of a human, a ritual called *sagdid* (‘glance of the dog’) was performed “during which a dog by its stare must drive away the demon of the corpse’s putrefaction” (Fig. 16). At the same time, “equivalent to dog’s stare in its effectiveness is the shadow cast by birds when they fly over the corpse”.<sup>45</sup> Unfortunately, V. Iu. Kriukova does not define more precisely which

<sup>41</sup> Translator’s note: Here and below, excerpts from *Fargard* 5 of the *Avesta* are quoted from the translation of James Darmesteter, *The Zend-Avesta, Part I*, Oxford 1880.

<sup>42</sup> Kriukova 2005, 253–254.

<sup>43</sup> Bogdanov 1992, 205.

<sup>44</sup> Ptitsy 1999, 168.

<sup>45</sup> Kriukova 1997, 181.

birds were responsible for this act (possibly, her source lacked exact information). Listed below is a collection of some of the popular beliefs held by adherents who regard as a positive sign the shadow cast by a vulture.

It is easily imaginable that, in antiquity, people were highly impressed by the very arrival of vultures as if from nowhere, because these birds hover in search of 'prey' at a height of 3–4 km and thereby are undetectable at such a distance. Having caught sight of its prey, the vulture speedily dives with half-folded wings emitting a trembling noise. Immediately afterward, other vultures appear because while searching for prey they also observe one another.<sup>46</sup> From a religious standpoint, one can easily imagine that these huge birds descend onto the earth directly from the 'Upper World' in order to help the deceased to ascend to the Heavenly Abode. These birds acted as mediators linking the Lower and Upper Worlds, and thus the world of man with the other world. In this connection, B. I. Marshak's analysis is particularly apt for he mused that the well-known Sassanian silver dish depicting a bird of prey carrying a woman in its talons<sup>47</sup> represents an ascending soul.<sup>48</sup>

Echoes of the veneration of vultures are found in the Zoroastrian text, the *Bundahishn* ('Primal Creation'), which contains references to the lost Avestan work, the *Damdad Nask*. It offers information on the creation of vultures along with all other creatures and explanations about their purpose:<sup>49</sup> "The Kahrkas, which is the vulture, is created for devouring dead matter; so also are the raven and the mountain kite...". Concerning the vulture it is stated "that, even from his highest flight, he sees a prey the size of a fist on the ground...". In addition, in the *Bundahishn* there is tale about the first humans, Mashye and Mashyane. They performed the first sacrifice: "and they made a roast of the sheep. And they dropped three handfuls of the meat into the fire, and said: 'This is the share of the fire'. One piece of the rest they tossed to the sky, and said: 'This is the share of the gods'. A bird, the vulture, advanced and carried some of it away from before them, as a dog ate the first meat".<sup>50</sup> It is remarkable, that here again, we encounter the vulture and dog as a pair which are now seen not within the context of the funerary rite but as consumers of the sacrificial meat, i.e. in the role of the gods' representatives.

<sup>46</sup> Kashkarov 1931, 415; Bogdanov 1992, 205; Ptitsy 1999, 168–169.

<sup>47</sup> Trever, Lukonin 1987, 89–90, 113–114, 126, pls. 57, 58.

<sup>48</sup> Marshak 2002, 144–146, fig. 13.

<sup>49</sup> Translator's note: A slight alteration (e.g. 'crow' replaced by 'raven') was made to coincide with the Russian translation as cited by the author. The English translation of the Avestan fragments is based on: E.W. West, *The Bundahis, Bahman yast, and Shâyast Lâ-Shâyast*, Oxford 1880.

<sup>50</sup> Chunakova 1997, 285.



Most probably, the representation of the vulture under consideration, found in a nomadic kurgan with inhumations, was not linked directly with Zoroastrian beliefs (although other hypotheses are possible: for instance, if one supposes that the Orlat belt was ornamented by a Sogdian master for a nomad, then the appearance of a vulture may well have been connected with Zoroastrianism). However, as noted by Iu. A. Rapoport, the earliest Central Asian example of the rite of exposure is Strabo's account of the Massagetae (exposure was practised also by the Magians, Caspians, Hyrcanians, Parthians, Bactrians, and Sogdians).<sup>51</sup> Strabo's information was based on the report of Hecateus of Miletus (end of the 6<sup>th</sup>, beginning of the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC). Thus literary sources and the presence of images of vultures on a variety of objects created in the Scytho-Siberian animal style, indicate that the ideas connected with these birds existed not only in Zoroastrianism, but also among the Saka and Massagetan tribes, descendants of which in our opinion were the nomads responsible for the Orlat cemetery.<sup>52</sup> Apparently, the worship of the vulture by nomads speaking East-Iranian languages and burying their dead in kurgans derived from Iranian religious notions.

It must be emphasized that the worship of the vulture as it related to the funerary cult was neither a prerogative of Iranian-speaking peoples nor of Zoroastrianism. In this connection, it is important to keep in mind the remains of an early date that originated from Turkey. The materials concerned are those from the excavations of the famous Neolithic settlement of Çatal Hüyük. Here J. Mellaart uncovered sanctuaries from the 7<sup>th</sup> millennium BC decorated with wall paintings depicting huge vultures attacking much smaller decapitated human figures (Figs. 17 and 18). Beneath the floors of the dwellings and inside the *sufas* were found burials of human bones. Mellaart concluded that they had been cleaned of their flesh, probably by vultures.<sup>53</sup> He wrote that the Mother-Goddess of Çatal in her incarnation as death was associated with the vulture-scavenger, the 'cleaner' who carries a person into the other world and where she ensures his continued existence. The function of vultures as indispensable 'agents' providing the transition from death to life explains the symbolism on the wall reliefs found at Çatal Hüyük of female breasts with skulls of vultures inside of them with their beaks protruding instead of nipples.<sup>54</sup> Mellaart sees in these reliefs the manifes-

<sup>51</sup> Rapoport 1971, 24–25.

<sup>52</sup> Ilyasov, Rusanov 1998, 131.

<sup>53</sup> Mellaart 1982, 87, 92, 94, Fig. 35; Antonova 1990, 61, 63–64, Fig. 4. (in Russian). Ian Hodder argues against this supposition. He writes that the remains of the interred excavated on platforms at Çatal Hüyük do not prove the preliminary act of cleaning the bones (Hodder 2006, 125).

<sup>54</sup> K. Schmidt expresses doubts that we are dealing with representations of female breasts (Schmidt 2006, 197). However, none of the researchers doubt that vultures are depicted in sanctuaries or, according to a recent interpretation, in dwelling houses.

tation of the symbols of life and death. All these facts clearly indicate the especial importance that was attributed to the vulture about an otherworldly existence by ancient agriculturalists of Anatolia.

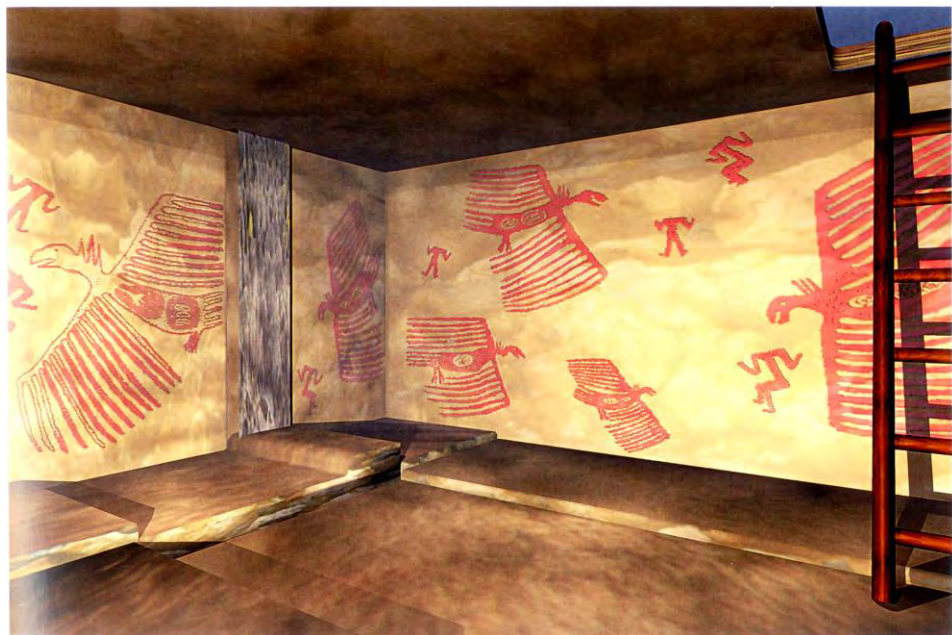


Fig. 17.



Fig. 18.



**Fig. 19.**

The antiquity of similar notions appears in the region we are considering as corroborated by the discovery of objects that are even earlier than those of Çatal Hüyük made at the site of Göbekli Tepe. Under the direction of the German archaeologist Klaus Schmidt, the oldest known temple installations were found dating to about 9600–8800 BC, perhaps coinciding with the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period.<sup>55</sup> On one of the T-shaped supporting pillars, cut from limestone and covered with reliefs, there is the representation of a vulture in a “sitting position”

<sup>55</sup> Schmidt 2006.

with its wings spread (Fig. 19). The image from Göbekli Tepe is perhaps the earliest depiction of this bird.<sup>56</sup> At the site of Nemrik in northern Iraq, in levels dated to 7800–6500 BC, were found stone figurines shaped like rods crowned with the heads of predatory birds and other animals. The researcher who published them has no doubts that they portray various household gods, perhaps personal divinities of the heads of the families.<sup>57</sup> The Polish archaeologist S. K. Kozłowski considered one of these sculptures as a vulture, while he regards others as the depictions of a bird's skull, an eagle, and some sort of bird of prey. I surmise that the latter are images of idolized vultures (Fig. 20).

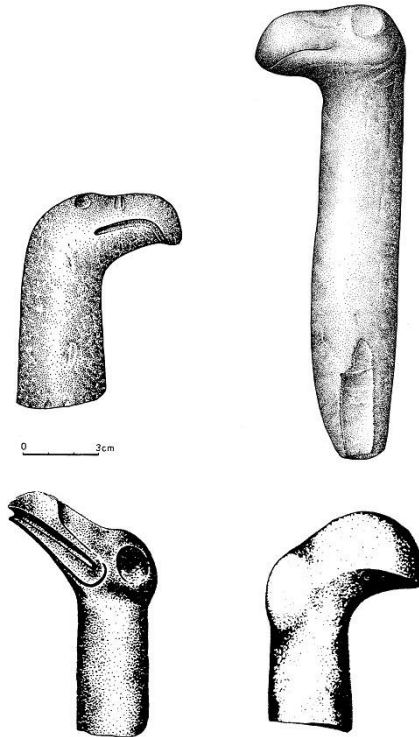


Fig. 20.

Another example of the role of vultures in funerary rites (a practice still extant) is found in Tibet.<sup>58</sup> The Russian Orientalist G. Ts. Tsybikov, who visited Tibet in 1899–1902, wrote thus: “In a mountain gorge, north of a monastery,

<sup>56</sup> Zick 2008, 15–17.

<sup>57</sup> Kozłowski 1997, 33–36.

<sup>58</sup> David-Neel 1991, 26.

there is a kind of a monastic cemetery where the dead are given over to vultures. The relatives or acquaintances of the deceased carry the corpse here and lay it on a special platform. Immediately, huge vultures and lammergeyers, greedy and accustomed to human flesh, come flying and start pecking at the corpse. To speed up its annihilation, the flesh of the deceased is cut into small pieces and its bones are pounded on rocks. All this is quickly consumed by the birds. Only the corpses of those without kith or kin are placed here intact and are turned into skeletons by the birds”.<sup>59</sup>

The journalist V. V. Ovchinnikov, who visited Tibet in the first half of the 1950s, describes the same ritual (according to the recollections of a hunter named Zedeng, whom he met in the mountains, about the ‘funerals’ of his father): “Lamas lay the dead body on poles... and depart to the summit of the sacred mountain. There nobody dares to hunt or to gather medicinal herbs. On an horizontal platform procession is stopped. At its center is a white oblong flat stone covered with Buddhist sayings. The barrow is put down onto it. Several times, the blade of a long sword flashes in the sun and the corpse is cut into pieces. The lamas strike gongs. Suddenly, Zedeng saw gigantic grey vultures. Attracted by the familiar sounds, the birds spiral downward and, having surrounded the stone, began pecking at the corpse. The lamas promptly completed the ritual: they pounded the bones with stones and mixed them with specially prepared paste. After a few minutes, the sacred birds, flapping their wings, rose into the sky. The stone is empty. He breathed a sigh of relief: heaven had accepted the body of his father”.<sup>60</sup>

The epithet ‘sacred’ employed by V. V. Ovchinnikov for the birds is quite relevant not only to the ceremony described, which was of a Lamaistic character, but it probably has pre-Buddhist origins. In Tibetan mythology, the vulture appears as a symbol of the pre-Buddhist Bon deities.<sup>61</sup>

The Black vulture, as opposed to the Griffon vulture and the Himalayan or Snow griffon vulture due to its dark-brown feathering and the presence of a ‘cap’ of fine feathers on its head,<sup>62</sup> is in Central Asia called either *tasqara* (by Uzbeks, Kazakhs and Kirghiz)<sup>63</sup> or *ghajir*. *Tasqara* is a common term in the Turko-Mongol languages, because the Mongol variant – *khar-tas* – means ‘black *tas*’, which has the same meaning in Turkic languages. The name *ghajir*, as our inquiries have shown, is used, for instance, in the Urgut district of the Samarqand Province and in the southernmost Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan where in the Baysun district there is a mountain called *Ghajirqiya* (or ‘Vulture Slope’).

<sup>59</sup> Tsybikov 1981, 53.

<sup>60</sup> Ovchinnikov 1957, 33.

<sup>61</sup> Mify narodov mira 1992, 311, 510, 622.

<sup>62</sup> Bogdanov 1992, 193–198.

<sup>63</sup> Kashkarov 1931, 65; Moiseev, Kashkarov 1980, 43.

A variant of the latter name is *kachyr* which carries the meaning of ‘a kind of eagle – a fabulous bird believed to live 1000 years and feed on corpses’. This noun is adduced by L. Budagov in his glossary of Turkic dialects.<sup>64</sup> The Persian-Tajik name for the Black vulture is *kargas* (or *kalāg karkas*),<sup>65</sup> or *kerkes* as it appears in Turkic languages. It connotes ‘a fabulous bird feeding on corpses’ and by implication eagles.<sup>66</sup> “Karkas (*Pehl.* kargas, *Avest.* *kahrkasa-*, literally ‘hen-eater’) with a ‘gold necklace’ appears as the name for a vulture in the *Bundahishn*”.<sup>67</sup> The gold necklace apparently implies the collar of feathers on the lower part of the neck which has a hygienic purpose: “it keeps the blood from flowing down the neck”.<sup>68</sup>

The Griffon vulture (*Gyps fulvus*) and the Himalayan or Snow griffon vulture (*Gyps himalayensis*) have a pale brown color and their head and neck are covered with white down causing them to appear very similar to one another. The latter, larger in size, is known in Central Asia as *qumoy*, *qumay*, *ghummay*, and in the Pamirs as *ak-koljir*, or ‘White vulture’ (possibly a variant of *kachyr* or *gadzhir*).<sup>69</sup> Because of their similar appearances, the local inhabitants apparently did not distinguish between the Himalayan or Snow griffon vulture and the Griffon vulture calling them both *qumay*. This term accepted in Uzbek and Kirghiz is probably derived from the Persian *khoma* (*khumo*), or *khomay* (*khumay*),<sup>70</sup> which means, according to dictionaries, “a fabulous bird, eagle of the highest breed, phoenix, paradise bird (it is believed that it never descends to the earth, constantly hovering in the upper layers of the atmosphere; if it casts its shadow onto someone’s head, that person will become a king, a fortunate man); the *Khomayun*, i.e. made happy, blessed, august, was the epithet of the Turkish sultans, emperors”.<sup>71</sup> It also means “1) Phoenix (a fabulous bird which, according to popular belief, brings happiness to him upon whom its shadow falls); 2) Lammergeier”.<sup>72</sup>

An example of the use of identical names for real and mythical (‘fabulous’) birds is observable in the name of *Simurgh* denoting, according to different glossaries, “a fabulous bird, large eagle, phoenix, griffon”,<sup>73</sup> “a fairy-tale bird, griffon, phoenix, lammergeier”,<sup>74</sup> “griffon, lammergeier, fairy-tale bird”.<sup>75</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Budagov 1871, 7.

<sup>65</sup> Bertel's 1949, 120; Miller 1953, 398.

<sup>66</sup> Budagov 1871, 123.

<sup>67</sup> Chunakova 1997, 283, 292; Chunakova 2004, 89, 133.

<sup>68</sup> Akimushkin 1973, 147.

<sup>69</sup> Bogdanov 1992, 198–205.

<sup>70</sup> Simakov 1998, 8, 124, 189.

<sup>71</sup> Budagov 1871, 315.

<sup>72</sup> Miller 1953, 594; Starikov 1957, 621.

<sup>73</sup> Budagov 1869, 657.

<sup>74</sup> Iagello 1910, 881.

In Central Asiatic folklore, other ‘fabulous’ birds are known, yet through the “mythical looking-glass” real species – vultures – are discernible. An example is the fairy-tale *alp karakush* (‘a powerful black bird’) that is said to live for a 1000 years and feeds on cadavers.<sup>76</sup> This phenomenon reflects the ancient cult of birds of prey; the names of real birds over time became the names of miraculous and mythical birds and *visa versa*.

Echoes of the worship of vultures in Central Asia and Kazakhstan are traceable through ethnography and folklore. The ethnographer G. N. Simakov, who published a special monograph devoted to hunting with trained birds of prey, believes that analysis of field materials and literary information – in one way or another connected with birds of prey and falconry – imply the presence of a cult of predatory birds in the region, such as eagles, hawks, falcons, kites, vultures, etc. Vultures, along with other birds of prey, were considered totem animals.<sup>77</sup> G. N. Simakov writes that one of the characteristic features of totemism – communion with the meat of a totem – is preserved in “substantially altered form, having moved from the sphere of the totemic cult to a branch of traditional medicine”. He mentions with a reference to N. A. Zarudnyi that in Central Asia the cooked meat of the smallest species of vulture – Egyptian vulture – was used to treat women for infertility, while meat and viscera were used to treat indigestion.<sup>78</sup>

The *Kumay* (*Khumay*, *Khubay*) is connected with a number of characters in Turkic mythology and epic: the dog *Khubay-khus* (‘*Khubay*-bird’) begotten by a vulture and the winged hound of epic hero *Manas* called *Kumaiyk* from which no beast is able to escape.<sup>79</sup> In the opinion of some scholars, it is even possible to trace the genetic ties of the Turkic goddess *Umay* to the Iranian mythological bird *Khumay*.<sup>80</sup>

V. D. Kubarev and D. V. Cheremisin connect semantically the wolf/dog and vulture with the mythical vultures of the Altaic (Pazyryk) animal style. They accounted for this connection by the circumstance that the cry of the vulture was believed to resemble the barking of a dog, as well as by the fact that the images of wolves and dogs, as eaters of carrion, possessed a chthonic character that led to the emergence of the semantic series of ‘wolf – vulture’.<sup>81</sup> The last supposition is acceptable, the more so, because, as mentioned above, there are examples where we find the established pair ‘vulture – dog’.

<sup>75</sup> Miller 1953, 301.

<sup>76</sup> Simakov 1998, 191.

<sup>77</sup> Simakov 1998, 22, 55, 268.

<sup>78</sup> Simakov 1998, 54 (in Russian). According to A. Brehm, the Sudanese ascribe medicinal properties to a vulture’s liver (Brem 1958, 509, in Russian).

<sup>79</sup> Borgoiakov 1980, 276; Kubarev, Cheremisin 1984, 93; Mify narodov mira 1992, 98.

<sup>80</sup> Borgoiakov 1980, 275; Sagalaev 1991, 76–77; Mify narodov mira 1992, 547.

<sup>81</sup> Kubarev, Cheremisin 1984, 93–95, fig. 3.

The merging of functional and semantic features, as well as the laws of mythological thinking, according to which a supernatural creature, in this case a mythical vulture must possess uncommon external marks, apparently contributed to the emergence and use, along with realistic images, of the image of a vulture with ears and crested neck, widely known on Pazyryk works of art, items from the Siberian collection of Peter the Great, and other objects of the Scytho-Siberian animal style.

It is, however, impossible to accept the conclusion of Kubarev and Cheremisin about the opposition of the images of the soaring eagle and the scavenger vulture in the art and ideas of the early nomads of the Altay. These authors allege that the epithet 'soaring' is not applicable to vultures. They also argue that head dresses were ornamented with eagle figurines while vulture figurines were restricted to adorn horse gear.<sup>82</sup> In their article, however, we can easily discern that many figures identified as eagles are in fact vultures which appear on many diverse objects. As to the image of a bird of prey soaring, if we are to trust to ornithologists, vultures surpass eagles and all other predatory birds.<sup>83</sup>

It seems more correct to speak not about the opposition between the eagle and the vulture, but about each kind of bird represented in the animal style and, accordingly, in the ideology of ancient nomads, had its own sphere of mythological responsibility. Moreover, some of the characteristics of different types of birds of prey could duplicate each other (for example, both the eagle and the vulture are associated with heaven and royal authority). In the light of all that is mentioned above, there are doubts concerning the supposition of M. I. Borgoiakov that, due to the movements of the population and contacts in the Eurasian steppe, the earliest image of waterfowl (ducks, swans, etc.) had evolved into figures with eagle-like heads.<sup>84</sup> This author does not oppose the images of birds, like Kubarev and Cheremisin, but, on the contrary, he derives some images from other ones. It must be repeated that, most probably, each bird (or avian species) had its own role in the mythological picture of the universe so that it is senseless to consider the worship of predatory birds as a result of a transformation of the representation of waterfowl.

Today, it is extremely difficult to detect traces of beliefs related to vultures. As our inquiries among the population have shown, even in the rural regions of Uzbekistan, people are often quite vague about the identity of a particular bird. Nevertheless, we have succeeded in collecting some information which we present below.

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<sup>82</sup> Kubarev, Cheremisin 1984, 95.

<sup>83</sup> Ptitsy 1999, 168–169.

<sup>84</sup> Borgoiakov 1980, 275.



1. It is believed that a person who catches sight of the Himalayan or griffon vulture, sometimes called ‘*davlat-ghumoy*’, will acquire some benefit: power, wealth, etc. (informant – Abdulmannon Ruziev, b. 1965, native of the mountain kishlak of Vandob, Sherabad district of the Surkhandarya region). The Arabic word ‘*davlat*’ meaning ‘power’ and ‘state’, in Tajik and Uzbek languages has the same meaning of ‘wealth’, cf. ‘*davlatmand*’, ‘*badavlat*’ – ‘rich’.

2. There is the popular belief that the place where some animal has died is then seen by a vulture (*ghajir*) in his dreams; that is why, very early in the morning, the vulture flies in the right direction (informant – Uktam Bazarov, b. 1956, a native of the kishlak of Pashkhurt situated in the foothills of the Kugitang, Sherabad district of the Surkhandarya region).

3. Bones from vulture wings were used in manufacturing high quality flutes (*nay*). For this purpose the wings had to be placed for 40 days in marshy soil (*balchiq*), evidently to cleanse the bones of muscles and veins (informant – Kholbay Samadov, b. 1958, a native of the mountain kishlak of Yukori Machay, Baysun district of the Surkhandarya region).

4. Allegedly, the vulture is able to swallow stones smeared with blood. To catch it hunters employed the following ruse: after setting a lure in a selected spot, they placed the bait next to stones that are dipped in blood. After swallowing a quantity of stones, the bird is unable to fly and is easily caught. In this way, vultures were procured from which their wing bones were used for making flutes (informant – A. Ruziev).

Some of this evidence corresponds to information which can be gleaned from musicological literature. For instance, in his book about Uzbek instrumental music, F. Karomatov discusses a special type of long flute widespread in the mountainous districts of the southern regions of Uzbekistan and made from wing bones of the steppe eagle, although the very name of this musical instrument as cited by him – ‘*ghajir-nay*’ – speaks for itself.<sup>85</sup> Apparently, the decision about using of a vulture’s bones for making *gajir-nays* rested on its functional requirements, i.e., satisfactory length and strength. At the same time, it must be remembered that music and musical instruments have always been associated with the ritual and ceremonial side of life of ancient peoples. To some extent, this can have been reflected in the choice of materials for making different musical instruments. Thus one of the first researchers of the musical culture of the peoples of Central Asia V. Belyaev wrote: “... musical pipes originate from pipes made from animal and human bones. In this fact we... are dealing with religious links since pipes made from animal bones have a direct connection with totemic cults”.<sup>86</sup>

<sup>85</sup> Karomatov 1972, 57; see also Abdullaev 2001, 39.

<sup>86</sup> Beliaev 1933, 106.

It is here relevant to consult once again the study by F. Karomatov, who notes that the *ghajir-nay* (another name is ‘*cho’pon-nay*’, or ‘shepherd’s flute’) is called the ‘Mother of all the musical instruments’ and is regarded as a holy instrument.<sup>87</sup> Possibly, we are justified in supposing that the origin of the *ghajir-nay* and the ideas connected with it, as they are echoed in the popular expressions cited above, have ancient roots. It is probably just a coincidence, but one of the earliest instruments in the world, dated to the Upper Paleolithic some 35,000 years ago, is a flute found by German archaeologists in the cave of Fels (Baden-Württemberg, Germany) which is also made from a bone taken from the wing of a Griffon vulture (Gänsegeier).<sup>88</sup> Apparently, in the choice of material, its strength and dimensions proved to be of paramount importance.



Fig. 21.

Returning to the mythical Khumay (= *ghumoy*, *qumoy*), one of its important functions must be mentioned, namely its role as protector and bestower of royal power. In this connection, there is another interesting parallel that comes to mind, albeit remote in time and space from Central Asia, like the Anatolian vultures. In ancient Egypt, the goddess Nekhbet was worshipped as the patroness of the Upper (Southern) Egypt and the goddess of royal power.<sup>89</sup> The vulture was her sacred symbol, and it was in this image that she was often represented with wings spread over a Pharaoh (Fig. 21).<sup>90</sup> In many Russian publications, for an

<sup>87</sup> Karomatov 1972, 67.

<sup>88</sup> Eiszeit 2009, 324.

<sup>89</sup> Mify narodov mira 1992, 214; Dictionary 1995, 143.

<sup>90</sup> Karter 1959, pls. 18–20, 67: Б, 72; Piotrovskii 1973, No. 5.

unknown reason, the kite is considered as Nekhbet's symbol,<sup>91</sup> although the image of the bird often depicted on diverse objects and amulets, including the magnificent pieces from the tomb of Pharaoh Tutankhamen (ca. 1342 BC), leave no doubt that we are dealing with some variety of vulture.<sup>92</sup> Possibly, this was the result of an inaccurate translation from English. Yet another instance of confusion is the above mentioned Sumerian 'Stele of the Vultures', or 'Geierstele' as it is rendered in German, which is called 'Stele of the Kites' in Russian. Possibly, we are dealing with an even deeper terminological mess of some (or many?) Indo-European languages that arose at different periods of time. Thus, the aforementioned designation of the vulture in middle- and neo-Persian languages – 'karkas' or 'kargas' – is translated as 'hen-eater', a quality that is completely inadequate for vultures, although it is one of the most characteristic behavioural features of kites and hawks when hunting different gallinaceous birds.

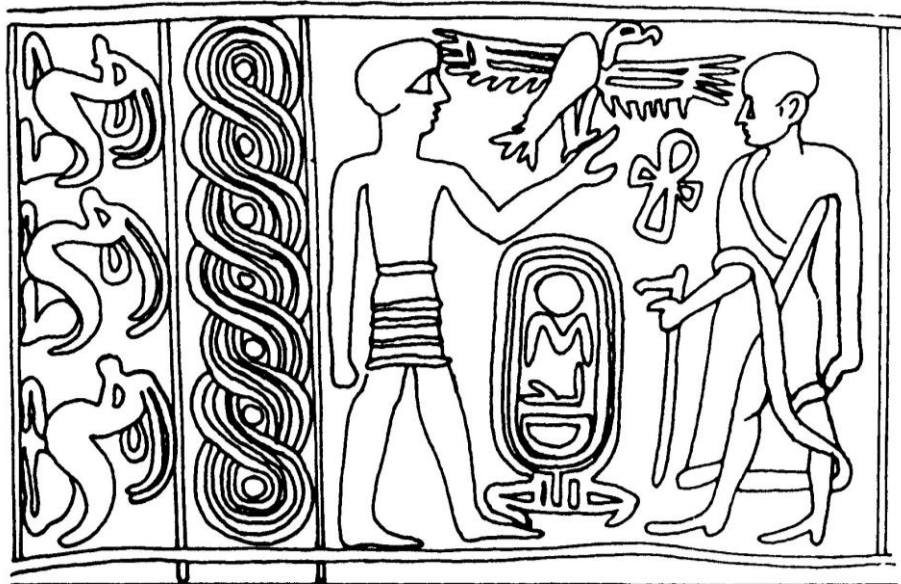


Fig. 22.

The head of a vulture (= goddess Nekhbet) often decorated the headdress of the pharaohs, the so-called crown of united Egypt, symbolized by a cobra representing Lower Egypt, and a vulture for Upper Egypt. Together they personified the protection of the gods of imperial authority. A similar ornament may be seen,

<sup>91</sup> Karter 1959, 157, 165, 171, 172, 179, 229, pls. 94, 95; G; Piotrovskii 1973, 11, No. 17; Mify narodov mira 1991, 440; Mify narodov mira 1992, 214.

<sup>92</sup> Karter 1959, pls. 79, 83–86, 94–99, 110; Piotrovskii 1973, Nos. 12–14, 28, 34.

for instance, on the famous gold mask of Tutankhamen.<sup>93</sup> Vultures with wings spread over various characters are represented on Syrian and Palestinian cylindrical seals of the second millennium BC<sup>94</sup> (Fig. 22).

The parallelism of ideas linking the vulture with royal authority, suggests that, in Central Asia, these notions possibly are rooted in antiquity. Naturally, it is difficult now to explain their origins. It cannot be excluded, however, that the royal status was conferred on to the vulture owing to its impressive size; in such cases, the dimensions are of significance. Indeed, all three types of vulture that inhabit Central Asia have a wingspread measuring two and one half to three meters making them the largest birds of prey in the entire Old World. There is certain logic to the fact that royal power was patronized by the largest feathered creature of heaven, although it does not possess the look of ‘royalty’ from the point of view of modern man.<sup>95</sup>

In summing up our analysis of the representations of the vulture on one of the small Orlat plates and the possible motives of this image on the ceremonial belt, several conclusions may be proposed:

1) judging by the abundance of representations on objects in the Scytho-Siberian animal style, the vulture occupied an important place in the religious and ritual traditions of the Scytho-Sarmatian and Saka tribes;

2) apparently, the vulture symbolized the idea of death and the other world and was considered a mediator between the upper and lower worlds, between the real world and the one beyond, between life and death;

3) the presence of a vulture on one of the small Orlat plaques indicates that such views, albeit not directly connected with their funerary rites, in all probabil-

<sup>93</sup> Karter 1959, pl. 88; Piotrovskii 1973, No. 17.

<sup>94</sup> Collon 1995, fig. 19; Keel 1995, fig. 17.

<sup>95</sup> Tangentially, it is worth noting that there is additional evidence concerning the existence of the cult of birds of prey among Sako-Sarmatian tribes. N.Ia. Bichurin described a popular belief according to which: “the *byurgut*, or *berkut* in Russian, is a black eagle two to three feet in height; it has extremely strong wings; this species of eagle is found in the remote mountains of Turkestan. Beyond Badakhshan in the west, these black eagles are still larger and fiercer when attacking. ... They are found in the mountains and sometimes are the same size as a camel. When this bird flies, people hide in their houses; not infrequently it steals horses and cattle. Feathers fall from its wings measuring eight to ten feet long” (cited in Simakov 1998, 188, in Russian). In connection with this impressive description, one of the most famous finds attributed to the Alans by the archaeologist E. I. Bospalyi comes to mind. This concerns a magnificent ceremonial dagger from a hiding place in Kurgan 1 at the cemetery of ‘Dachi’. The scabbard and hilt of the dagger are ornamented with splendid scenes of a huge eagle and a camel in combat (Bospalyi 1992, 185–187, figs. 2, 11, 12, in Russian; Korolkova 1999, 89, fig. 1: 5, in Russian; L’Or des Amazones 2001, 214–217; Gabuev 2005, 15, in Russian). It seems that this is a depiction of the same eagle described as a ‘*byurgut*’ – it is as large as a camel and is easily able to carry horses and cows in its talons. It is thus possible, that beliefs similar to those described by N.Ia. Bichurin were widespread among the Sarmatians and Alans in the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.

ity, are preserved in the more recent period by the descendants of the Sakas – nomads who inhabited the northern edge of Samarqand Sogd in first centuries A.D. and who were responsible for the Orlat burials;

4) the appearance of the vulture connected with notions of death and the other world on the belt with depictions of heroic scenes of warriors and hunters (from a heroic epic?) is possibly due to the fact that the intention is to glorify not only the life of a hero(s), but also the end of life, here symbolized by the image of the vulture;

5) if we follow another explanation of the semantics of the Orlat representations (that is, if we assume that we are dealing with the adventures of a hero(s) in the afterlife (or the other world), then there is no better symbol for the latter than a vulture.

In conclusion, the study of the semantics of one of the representations on a plaque from an Orlat belt allows us to glean insight about the profound religious and ritual notions of the early peoples of Central Asia which long ago vanished, although vestiges of them are still discernible in popular beliefs<sup>96</sup>.

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## WHEN DID THE GREEKS ABANDON AĪ KHANOUM?

**Keywords:** Aī Khanoum, Bactria, Numismatics, Eucratides

Over the past thirty years or so, most scholars have accepted the numismatic and epigraphic evidence for dating the end of Greek rule at Aī Khanoum during or immediately after the reign of Eucratides I (ca. 170–145 BCE), as proposed by the excavators.<sup>1</sup> This consensus, however, is not absolute and it remains desirable that all archaeological data be reassessed from time to time in the interests of scientific progress. Thus, Awadh K. Narain has tentatively offered a dissenting view that could possibly date the abandonment of Aī Khanoum as many as fourteen years later (ca. 131 BCE).<sup>2</sup> Recently, Jeffrey Lerner has argued for a more radical chronological shift that would place the end of Greek control over Aī Khanoum almost a century later (ca. 50 BCE).<sup>3</sup> As I have noted elsewhere, Lerner's theory poses a fascinating challenge to the status quo and warrants a close testing of the author's thesis and methodology.<sup>4</sup> The following analysis, which focuses on the numismatic arguments presented by Lerner and to some extent by Narain as well, is offered here as a tribute to our mutual friend Dr. Vadim M. Masson, accomplished numismatist and distinguished Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences.<sup>5</sup> Professor Masson always paid close attention to coin finds and their chronological implications, so this paper contributes to one of his key areas of interest.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, Bernard 1985, 97–105; Rapin 1992, 292.

<sup>2</sup> Narain 2003, 421 (epigraphic) and 292, n. 159 (numismatic).

<sup>3</sup> Lerner 2010, 69–72, and more fully in Lerner 2011, 103–147.

<sup>4</sup> Holt 2012b, 257, n. 88.

<sup>5</sup> Some of Masson's representative numismatic contributions are listed below in the bibliography.

## Categories of Relevant Data

The study of ancient Central Asia relies heavily upon numismatics to help organize the otherwise loosely articulated archaeological sequences discovered there.<sup>6</sup> Fortunately, numismatic data are relatively abundant across the region; regrettably, this rich supply of evidence often reaches the expert in a less than ideal state. Despoiled hoards, looted sites, forged coins, plundered museums, and many other hazards compromise the survival and assessment of our numismatic sources. Scholars know to be cautious when weighing the reliability of one piece of evidence against another, privileging artifacts that have a firmly attested provenance over those whose testimony may have been undermined along the way. For instance, the so-called Bukhara Hoard of fifty tetradrachms representing the Diodotids, Euthydemus I, and Agathocles was found hidden in a pot near Taxmac-Tepe in 1983 and fully published.<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, this ‘intact’ find was not made in a closed archaeological context, for the pot had apparently been transferred and dumped with a truckload of dirt from a neighboring construction site. Were the contents of this single jar the entire hoard, or were there other associated vessels separated from it by the earth-moving operation? How much contextual evidence was lost? Assailed constantly by such apprehensions, archaeologists and numismatists must favor the least ambiguous evidence available to resolve their questions about chronology and culture. All data are important, but not all data are equal.

For convenience and clarity, let us classify into four categories the coins that might establish a date for the cessation of Greek rule at Ai Khanoum: (A) coins excavated as stray finds at the site, (B) coins excavated as the contents of hoards at or near the site, (C) coins that may have been among the contents of hoards discovered/despoiled at or near the site, and (D) coins assumed to have been warehoused at some time in the Ai Khanoum treasury based on the labels inked onto recovered storage jars. Of the 274 coins in category A, fifty cannot be properly identified due to their poor condition.<sup>8</sup> The remaining 224 stray finds include 31 silver specimens and one gold stater; the preponderance of bronze examples is typical for excavated coins randomly lost around a town or city. This contrasts, of course, with the precious metal issues hoarded at or relatively near Ai Khanoum in categories B and C. The three pertinent hoards forming category B are quite dissimilar to each other. Ai Khanoum Hoard I, excavated in 1970 within the palace complex, provides 677 punch-marked Indian coins, plus six

<sup>6</sup> Cribb 2007, 333–375; Masson 1955, 37–47; Masson 1956, 63–75; Masson 1957, 109–114.

<sup>7</sup> Rtveldze 1984, 61–68.

<sup>8</sup> Bernard 1985, 5. This figure does not include ten unstruck bronze flans excavated at the site.

Indo-Greek drachms of King Agathocles.<sup>9</sup> Aī Khanoum Hoard II, discovered in 1973 within a dwelling outside the city walls, contains 63 Greek tetradrachms.<sup>10</sup> A third relevant find, not from Aī Khanoum but rather from Khisht Tepe, yields 627 coins, mostly tetradrachms but including 17 drachms and 5 extraordinary double-decadrachms.<sup>11</sup> Like the excavated stray finds, these hoarded coins have been reliably recovered and documented, making these nearly 1600 artifacts from categories A and B the most trustworthy numismatic evidence currently available for calculating the end of Greek sovereignty at Aī Khanoum. Even so, as will be shown, some care must be exercised in analyzing the distribution of coins that were disturbed when the city was abandoned, for some coins in category A almost certainly derive from categories B and D, and they must be understood in that larger context.

Alongside the securely provenanced 1597 coins in categories A and B can also be studied, though at much greater risk, the tens of thousands of coins conjectured to exist in categories C and D. Category C includes several hoards containing altogether perhaps 2300–2400 coins. Only one of these hoards (the so-called Aī Khanoum Hoard III) has been published in any detail, based on some photographs and a series of contradictory inventories compiled from 1974 to 1977.<sup>12</sup> One or more additional hoards, identified collectively as Aī Khanoum Hoard IV, has been partially described as containing gold, silver, and bronze issues of Eucratides I and his predecessors.<sup>13</sup> A large hoard from Kuliab has been partially published.<sup>14</sup> Composed of tetradrachms, drachms, hemidrachms, and obols, this hoard included coins ranging from Alexander the Great through – but not beyond – the reign of Eucratides the Great. In category D, marked storage jars in the Aī Khanoum treasury once held various kinds and amounts of coins, although none of these deposits survived intact; the smashed containers and some loose coins were found scattered around the treasury, with one significant fragmentary vessel recovered from a post-Greek stratum in the main temple.<sup>15</sup> The large sums recorded (up to 10,000 coins per transaction) and the assortment of coinages handled (perhaps Greek, Indo-Greek, and Indian) might afford some chronological relevance to this jumble of data if it can be correctly interpreted.

While much other numismatic evidence exists for the study of ancient Central Asia as a whole, including hoards and stray finds of many kinds, the coins

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<sup>9</sup> Audouin, Bernard 1973, 238–289; Audouin, Bernard 1974, 7–41.

<sup>10</sup> Petitot-Biehler 1975, 23–57; Bernard 1975, 58–69.

<sup>11</sup> The so-called Qunduz Hoard: Curiel, Fussman 1965; Masson 1971, 29–34.

<sup>12</sup> Holt 1981, 7–44.

<sup>13</sup> Bopearachchi 1999, 110–111.

<sup>14</sup> Bopearachchi 1999/2000, 34–53 and 59–60.

<sup>15</sup> Rapin 1992, 95–115; Canali de Rossi 2004, 207–214; Lerner 2011, Appendix.

accounted for in these categories A-D constitute the key testimony for resolving the question of when the Greeks abandoned Aī Khanoum. From this material Lerner, like all scholars, has selected and freighted with meaning the data he deems most compelling. The novelty of his revised chronology arises not from the emphasis placed heretofore by experts upon what is grouped above in categories A and B, but rather from Lerner's accentuation of certain evidence drawn from categories C and D. Let us examine these choices carefully, and then return later to the merits of the status quo ante based on categories A and B.

### Selecting Evidence from Category C

From Gades to the Ganges, the rediscovery of ancient hoards favors the farmer's plow and the metal-detectorist's pickax over the archaeologist's tiny trowel. As of 1973, only about 8% of all recorded Hellenistic hoards derived from archaeological excavations.<sup>16</sup> Most coin hoards, then, are poorly recorded and never studied in any scientific way. Of the Hellenistic caches that happen to be enumerated in the numismatic literature, many bear such laconic memoranda as melted down, stolen, or sold. Not counting these, 50% of those found in the Levant, 39% of those from Egypt, and 30% of those recorded further east are described simply as dispersed or disposition unknown.<sup>17</sup> Even those hoards that find safe haven in a museum might eventually be "lost in war" as has been the fate of 20% of Hellenistic hoards from south Russia; one large find from Greece was later lost in transit, sunk by a submarine.<sup>18</sup>

Central Asia, of course, has not been immune from the despoliation, destruction, and dispersion of countless coin hoards, including some of the largest ever known.<sup>19</sup> In fact, all of the ancient Greek coins ever found in all the recorded hoards scattered from the Adriatic to the Indus would cumulatively not approach in number those dredged from a single well in a tiny Afghan village. These hundreds of thousands of coins from Mir Zakah, some excavated, some looted, have all been scattered to the winds.<sup>20</sup> Yet, numismatists remain determined to salvage as much data as possible from such hoards, taking all due precautions to respect the inherent limitations of this imperfect evidence. This explains the rise of 'rescue numismatics' as a means to document, even if feebly, troves like the Kuliab

<sup>16</sup> Based on data compiled from Thompson, Mørkholm, Kraay 1973. In subsequent volumes of the periodical *Coin Hoards*, this dismal percentage has actually worsened in recent decades.

<sup>17</sup> Statistics derived from Thompson, Mørkholm, Kraay 1973.

<sup>18</sup> Thompson, Mørkholm, Kraay 1973, 93 and 138–149.

<sup>19</sup> Holt 2012a, 138–148.

<sup>20</sup> Bopearachchi 2011, 33–73.

Hoard and Aï Khanoum Hoards III and IV that relate to the chronological issue at hand.<sup>21</sup>

Lerner's prerogative is to treat these hoards from category C quite differently from each other. Only about half of the approximately 1500 coins in Aï Khanoum Hoard IV and only about a fourth of the 800 or more coins in the Kuliab Hoard were examined by a competent expert, who found therein one salient though not iron-clad 'fact': None of the specimens he saw post-dated the reign of Eucratides I.<sup>22</sup> This chronological range is consistent with the numismatic data in the archaeologically-derived categories A and B. Lerner does not find this observation very compelling, however, for he makes no mention of Kuliab and he tosses out Aï Khanoum Hoard IV "as the total number of coins varies from one informer to the next."<sup>23</sup> Notwithstanding Lerner's remonstrance about a hoard whose contents keep changing, he gives some credence to the fluctuating Aï Khanoum Hoard III, trusting in particular that it contained a drachm of King Lysias "whose reign is thought to have ended around 110 B.C.E."<sup>24</sup> In this way, Lerner finds support for the view that the Greeks occupied Aï Khanoum beyond the reign of Eucratides I.

This Lysias drachm provides an interesting methodological crux. It certainly exists in the numismatic record, and it is probably genuine, but how much interpretive weight should it bear as a possible component of a hoard in category C? As the numismatist Margaret Thompson once advised:

"Inherent in all hoards, except those uncovered by scientific excavation, is the possibility of falsification in modern times. Extraneous material may be added to make the collection more attractive or to dispose of items of small value; integral material may be withheld to take advantage of a broader market or to obtain a greater profit on choice pieces. A dispersed hoard can often be reconstituted and infiltrations can usually be detected, but unless there is some certainty that the hoard record is accurate and complete, we cannot safely draw firm deductions from it."<sup>25</sup>

The "possibility of falsification" referenced by Thompson is a certainty in the case of Aï Khanoum Hoard III. This marketed assemblage undeniably suffered adulteration in both ways possible: extraction and intrusion. Some high-value coins were culled from the lot by dealers, and at least one extraneous coin (a Doson forgery) was added. The final publication of the hoard therefore

<sup>21</sup> Holt 2012b, deals at length with the promise and pitfalls associated with 'Rescue Numismatics'.

<sup>22</sup> Bopearachchi 1999, 110–111.

<sup>23</sup> Lerner 2011, 120, n. 65.

<sup>24</sup> Lerner 2010, 71.

<sup>25</sup> Thompson 1962, 308.

stressed the provisional nature of the inventory since “it can be demonstrated that its composition has been changed a number of times.”<sup>26</sup> Reconstituting Aī Khanoum Hoard III under these circumstances, the possible infiltrations were duly noted – including the Lysias drachm.<sup>27</sup> This is the normal procedure, as explained so clearly by Thompson.

Narain has found no reason to agree with the exclusion of the Lysias drachm from the hoard, and Lerner characterizes its dismissal as “too rash.”<sup>28</sup> Why, then, was this small coin ever singled out as an intrusion in Aī Khanoum Hoard III? Was it, as Lerner claims, “simply because it does not conform to a paradigm which itself stems from an incomplete archaeological record,” namely that Eucratides I was the last Greek to govern Aī Khanoum? The answer, quite honestly, is ‘yes’. For exactly the same reason that Lerner would like to grant it significance as the one Aī Khanoum coin among thousands that dates long after Eucratides’ reign, other scholars would dismiss it as a likely infiltration tossed (along with a modern forgery) into the unsettled contents of a traveling hoard. The incompleteness of the archaeological and numismatic record, cited by both Narain and Lerner, is no excuse for an inconsistent methodology that trusts one hoard in category C but not the others, or that elevates one coin from category C above everything in categories A and B. Granted, the 1597 coins in A and B may represent an “incomplete archaeological record,” but C (whether 2300–2400 coins or, by Lerner’s reckoning, only about 140) represents an incomplete record with no archaeological basis whatever. Thus, if Lerner is indeed troubled by “the lack of a trustworthy inventory of objects recovered from clandestine excavation at Aī Khanoum,” then he ought to ignore everything in category C, including of course the Lysias drachm. If he opts to include category C, then he may only do so governed by the full testimony of the category subject to the more reliable context of A and B, where the inventory is far more trustworthy. Good methodology seems not to privilege the Lysias drachm above all else.

To his credit, Lerner employs the correct methodology in a related discussion of coins and chronology, this time involving the site of Afrasiab.<sup>29</sup> The case at Afrasiab hinges on two obols of Eucratides I, used by Lyonnet to date the Bactrian king’s alleged reconquest of Marakanda. Lerner argues that just two coins whose “provenance remains speculative” cannot bear the chronological burden placed upon them by Lyonnet.<sup>30</sup> Lerner concludes: “As matters stand, we are compelled to dismiss the value of these coins altogether for they obfuscate rather

<sup>26</sup> Holt 1981, 8.

<sup>27</sup> Holt 1981, 11, 17, and 28.

<sup>28</sup> Narain 2003, 292, n. 159; Lerner 2011, 123.

<sup>29</sup> Lerner 2010, 58–79.

<sup>30</sup> Lerner 2010, 61.

than illuminate the chronology of Afrasiab II.”<sup>31</sup> But for the fact that in this case there are two coins, not one, and the site itself is different, this quotation works equally well for the Lysias drachm alleged to be from Ai Khanoum. Only the Lysias drachm obfuscates the numismatic chronology of the site and, since it certainly has a questionable provenance, we are compelled to dismiss its value as a counterweight to everything else known from categories A-C.

### The Dilemma of Category D

By incorporating into the chronological discussion the coins intimated in category D, Lerner advances well beyond the tentative remarks first made by Narain about the contested Lysias drachm. Lerner proposes that epigraphic evidence from Ai Khanoum supports the notion that a bilingual Indo-Greek drachm such as Lysias’ would be perfectly at home in the city’s economy at the time of the Greek abandonment: “The insight provided by these labels about the monetary circulation of the city is that Indo-Greek coins were in the process of replacing or had already replaced Greek Bactrian coins.”<sup>32</sup> This statement, however, is not at all true, for it means something quite different from Lerner’s more accurate observation that “the city’s treasury was increasingly dominated by the influx of smaller denominations of a non-Attic standard minted south of the Hindu Kush, *visa vie* [sic] Indo-Greek drachmas and Indian punch-marked coins.”<sup>33</sup> It is a fundamental mistake to reconstruct and quantify the circulation of coinages around the city based on what was stockpiled in the treasury.

The argument offered by Lerner rests on two claims. First, he posits that at the time of the city’s abandonment, Attic-standard Greek drachms, Indo-Greek drachms, and Indian-standard punch-marked coins were all treated as equivalent currencies, accepted as interchangeable in spite of their varying weight standards. He next argues that Greek drachms were a tiny fraction of this currency, “composing a mere 0.88% of all the coins registered in the surviving documents from the treasury.”<sup>34</sup> In conjunction with the 70,000 non-Greek Bactrian denominations mentioned in the storage texts, the second-largest group of non-hoarded coins at Ai Khanoum consisted of Indian punch-marked silver, and the largest portion of the hoards accepted by Lerner (Ai Khanoum Hoards I-III) consisted also of non-Greek Bactrian coinages.<sup>35</sup> Hence, Lerner’s view of categories A-D

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<sup>31</sup> Lerner 2010, 64.

<sup>32</sup> Lerner 2011, 115.

<sup>33</sup> Lerner 2011, 125.

<sup>34</sup> Lerner 2011, 124.

<sup>35</sup> Lerner 2011, 120.

suggests that “in the years leading up to the city’s abandonment silver locally produced in Bactria was fast disappearing from the market place and was in the process of being replaced by Indo-Greek and Indian punch-marked silver from regions south of the Hindu Kush.”<sup>36</sup> In other words, whether we examine coins that were warehoused in the treasury, saved/secreted as hoards beyond the treasury, or lost in everyday use about the city, the Indian and Indo-Greek varieties dominated the final days of the Greek city, perhaps long after the Greek money of Eucratides and his contemporaries had been eclipsed. Does this quantification hold up to scrutiny?

The enabling claim that very different silver coinages had come to be treated as equivalent, regardless of actual weight standards, rests on Lerner’s interpretation of a single pot originating from the Aī Khanoum palace treasury: “The distinction between the value of Greek Bactrian and Indo-Greek silver based solely on weight is, however, contradicted by the vessel containing texts nos. 1a-c, in which both currencies were mixed in the same receptacle, even though they were deposited by different individuals at different times.”<sup>37</sup> The texts are taken to mean that to a jar already containing 500 (Greek Bactrian) drachms was added a batch of (Indo-Greek) taxaena and then 10,000 kashapana taxaena, followed perhaps by another deposit of some sort (text 1d). Because none of the texts is erased, the assumption is that the coinages were mixed as obvious equivalents, recorded by number and not by weight. Unfortunately for us all, this container was not found with its contents in situ; in fact, although it clearly originated in the palace treasury, the fragments of the jar (AK P.O. Inventory 2752) were recovered from the post-Greek levels of habitation A south of the temple of the indented niches, where the pot had apparently been carried as loot during the despoliation of the city.<sup>38</sup> By Lerner’s reckoning, the plundered vessel contained a mixture of all the coinages labeled on it: 500 Greek drachms plus 10,000 kashapana plus X taxaena (not counting whatever was meant in the fourth text). Since non-Greek Bactrian coins of various kinds (Lerner identifies four designations) normally appear in the Aī Khanoum treasury labels in lots of 10,000, we must consider that this jar 41 cm tall with a capacity of 8.31 liters held a minimum of 20,500 silver coins weighing about 51 kg (112 lbs). This seems a tremendous cumulative burden for a single ceramic vase, one that would be difficult to manhandle in the palace treasury much less haul away as plunder. The more likely explanation is that this jar was used to hold these deposits seriatim, the operative label being easily identifiable by its position and personnel tag without bothering to erase defunct ones (as may have been necessary on jars

<sup>36</sup> Lerner 2011, 114.

<sup>37</sup> Lerner 2011, 115, cf. 125–127.

<sup>38</sup> Rapin 1983, 324–329 and 351; Canali de Rossi 2004, 207–209 and 211.



used more than once in a given administrative period employing the same set of personnel). If modern scholars, including Lerner, can readily discern that the deposits were made in a particular order at different times by different workers, then surely those in charge of the treasury would know the current, latest contents of the vessel.

In any case, even had all types of silver coinage been stored cumulatively in the same vase, this would not mean that the contents were regarded as currency to be used thereabouts as legal tender. A different treasury text references “legal silver” that has been verified by a dokimastes.<sup>39</sup> These latter coins one would naturally assume were usable for circulation, if required.<sup>40</sup> This designation does not apply to the contents of the supposedly mixed jar, nor to any of the vessels holding other deposits of kashapana coins. If the 500 drachms in the mixed jar were still there when the kashapana coins from India were dumped upon them, this does not mean that the later coins were added as equivalents – one Greek drachm of 4.3 g valued the same as one Taxilan kashapana of 2.45 g. This is counter-intuitive, and it would furthermore obviate the notable care taken by the depositors to distinguish at least three kinds of allegedly interchangeable money. Instead, a mixing would indicate that the contents were for some reason treated likewise as so many units of silver, although obviously not the *same* units of silver. This metal might later be sorted and reused to strike legal tender. Why, then, not store it all by weight rather than count? The routine in the treasury was obviously to count everything made of silver, and to deposit it under rubrics that would indicate the appropriate weights – hence the ubiquitous need to identify different coinages by kind and, if possible, origin (Taxila, Nanda). Palace archives might reckon weight and other pertinent details that were superfluous on the storage jars themselves.<sup>41</sup> It is an overreach of the available evidence in category D to claim that very different silver coinages had come to be treated as equivalent by the time the city was abandoned.

There remains, however, the observation that there was a huge amount of this non-Greek silver coinage stockpiled in the treasury, and that it appears in meaningful quantities “found in and around Aī Khanoum.”<sup>42</sup> This, Lerner insists, shows that Indo-Greek and Indian punch-marked coins were replacing Greek currency in the market place of the city. Not so. The palace treasury, assuredly, held a great deal of coinage from south of the Hindu Kush, along with other valuables taken in war or trade from India.<sup>43</sup> This wealth, generally associated under

<sup>39</sup> Lerner 2011, 114–115.

<sup>40</sup> Rapin 1983, 338.

<sup>41</sup> Rapin 1983, 351.

<sup>42</sup> Lerner 2011, 114.

<sup>43</sup> Rapin 1996.

the established chronology with the bellicose career of Eucratides, tells us very little about the market economy of the city or about the kinds and quantities of money circulating there. Category D is evidence of a very specific set of thesaural coinages, not of the circulating currency typical of the city's daily use by merchants and farmers. The evidence from categories A-C does not change this fact. Aī Khanoum Hoard I does not reflect the hoarding of Indo-Greek and punch-marked silver beyond the palace; it is simply loot from the treasury that never even made it outside the palace itself. There is no chance that these coins were hoarded over time from the local economy of Bactria, for they form a close-knit group from Taxila that came in one transfer to Aī Khanoum and never left the palace.<sup>44</sup> It means nothing that the Indian coins in Aī Khanoum Hoard I exceed in number the Greek Bactrian coins in Aī Khanoum Hoards II and III; the latter were probably drawn from circulation, whereas the context of Hoard I cannot be separated from the specialized, non-market environment of category D, whence it came.

As for non-hoard stray finds excavated around the city, Lerner notes that the second largest group is composed of Indian punch-marked silver.<sup>45</sup> This might seem significant as an indicator of coinage being used by the populace. The number of specimens given, 28, is correct but quite misleading. Of these finds, 24 actually came from within the palace treasury itself!<sup>46</sup> These were immediately recognized as more contents of the plundered jars constituting category D, and these tell us nothing about the circulation of such coins in the market. This leaves only four kashapana coins lost about the city out of the 70,000 or so assumed to have been at the site. I have noted elsewhere that these four Indian coins might be sufficient proof that a few such pieces passed in trade before the abandonment of the city, but this is not a strong number and it may only reflect again the pillage that overtook the treasury.<sup>47</sup> This certainly does not validate the argument that Indo-Greek and Indian punch-marked silver coins were replacing or had already displaced the use of Bactrian Greek coins in the local economy of Aī Khanoum.

## The Status Quo Ante

This long but necessary exercise in methodology brings us back to the question of the chronological limits for the Greek abandonment of Aī Khanoum.

<sup>44</sup> Audouin, Bernard 1973, 238–289; Audouin, Bernard 1974, 7–41.

<sup>45</sup> Lerner 2011, 120.

<sup>46</sup> Bernard 1985, 5.

<sup>47</sup> Holt 2012b, 188–189.

A fair reading of the evidence provided by categories A-D gives little credence to the recent attempt to date this event, or rather process, long after the reign of Eucratides I. Whatever the merits of other kinds of evidence, numismatic data sets that limit around the middle of the second – not first – century BCE. Thus, the status quo ante prevails: If Eucratides I was not the last Greek king to govern the city, one of his near contemporaries surely was.

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## Abstract

Over the past thirty years or so, most scholars have accepted the numismatic and epigraphic evidence for dating the end of Greek rule at Aï Khanoum during or immediately after the reign of Eucratides I (ca. 170–145 BCE). This consensus, however, is not absolute and it remains desirable that all archaeological data be reassessed from time to time in the interests of scientific progress. Thus, Awadh K. Narain has tentatively offered a dissenting view that could possibly date the abandonment of Aï Khanoum as many as fourteen years later (ca. 131 BCE). Recently, Jeffrey Lerner has argued for a more radical chronological shift that would place the end of Greek control over Aï Khanoum almost a century later (ca. 50 BCE). As I have noted elsewhere, Lerner's theory poses a fascinating challenge to the status quo and warrants a close testing of the author's thesis and methodology. The following analysis, which focuses on the numismatic arguments presented by Lerner and to some extent by Narain as well, is offered here as a tribute to our mutual friend Dr. Vadim M. Masson, accomplished numismatist and distinguished Academician of the Russian Academy of Sciences. Professor Masson always paid close attention to coin finds and their chronological implications, so this paper contributes to one of his key areas of interest. Whatever the merits of other kinds of evidence, numismatic data sets the chronological limits for the Greek abandonment of Aï Khanoum around the middle of the second century BCE. Thus, the status quo ante prevails: If Eucratides I was not the last Greek king to govern the city, one of his near contemporaries surely was.



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## THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF GORDYENE. PART 1: CLASSICAL SOURCES\*

**Keywords:** Karduchoi, Gordyene, Gorduene, Corduena, Xenophon, Strabo

In recent decades it has been easy to notice growing scholarly interest in the history and culture of the frontier area between the Roman Empire and Parthia and their successors, Byzantium and the Sasanians. This interest is not limited only to the two important political players, but also concerns a number of smaller geopolitical and political entities in this area, sometimes labelled as *regna minora*, which existed for centuries, tucked between rival empires from the East and the West, and frequently featured highly interesting local culture. At the same time, while there have recently been a number of publications on countries such as Kommagene, Palmyra, Edessa or Hatra,<sup>1</sup> other *regna minora* still lack proper attention from scholars. One such kingdom is the ancient *Gordyene*,<sup>2</sup> whose his-

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□ This is the first paper out of five (and the concluding monograph) planned by the author's research project financed by the National Science Centre in Poland and devoted to three *regna minora* of Northern Mesopotamia – Sophene, Gordyene and Adiabene (DEC–2011/03/N/HS3/01159). The project is being conducted at the University of Rzeszów under the supervision of Prof. M.J. Olbrycht. Special thanks are due to Prof. Erich Kettenhofen (Universität Trier) who provided me with meticulous feedback. I also want to thank an anonymous reviewer who suggested valuable bibliographical references. The sole responsibility for this paper is of course mine alone.

<sup>1</sup> Schottky 1989 (Media-Atropatene and Armenia); Hauser 1998 (Hatra); Dirven 1999 (Dura-Europos and Palmyra); Schuol 2000 (Charakene); Kaizer 2002 (Palmyra); Sommer 2005 (Palmyra, Edessa, Dura-Europos and Hatra); Facella 2006 (Kommagene); Gawlikowski 2010 (Palmyra).

<sup>2</sup> The terms Gordyene and Gordyaeans are used throughout the paper as the broadest *English* designations of the country and the people under discussion. However, since there is considerable linguistic variety in the original forms, esp. in Greek and Armenian, such forms are always given in brackets or italicized in the main text. Indeed, some Armenian forms will be rejected in the course of our discussion as relevant to the topic in question.

tory and culture appears to a great extent to be a *terra incognita* of modern scholarship.<sup>3</sup>

One of first questions which naturally comes to one's mind, when tempted to learn about an ancient enigmatic kingdom like Gordyene, is to ask about its location – where was ancient Gordyene located? Therefore, the aim of this paper is to take a look at the historical geography of Gordyene, that is, to determine its territory and regional geopolitical developments over the course of time. To achieve this task, I will examine ancient texts containing geographical and ethnographical information. Fortunately, ancient writers like Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy left us a number of references to Gordyene in their writings frequently classified as “ethnographies”,<sup>4</sup> that is literature focused on “the land, the history, the marvels and the customs of a people”.<sup>5</sup> What is more, useful information of a geographical and ethnographical character can sometimes be gleaned from historiographical accounts<sup>6</sup> – here we also possess a few ancient sources which will be relevant to our interests, especially Plutarch and Ammianus Marcellinus. Lastly, Jewish Post-Biblical, Syriac and Armenian sources should also be given proper attention as to the geographical and ethnographical information on Gordyene they might contain.

The task of looking at the historical geography of Gordyene is all the more important as its results will influence the choice of archaeological sites relative to any future study of archaeological data from Gordyene. Furthermore, it is hoped that dealing with ancient geographical and ethnographical texts may

<sup>3</sup> Bearing in mind that there has never been a monographic study on any of these kingdoms, a few publications devoted to at least some aspects of these *regna minora* can still be named. First, one can always consult encyclopedia entries, esp. Weissbach 1927b and Kessler 2001 (Sophene); Baumgartner 1912 and Wiesehöfer 1998 (Gordyene); Sellwood 1985 and Hansman 1987 (Adiabene). Basic information can also be found in “classics” like Kahrstedt 1950, 58–70; Dillemann 1962, 110–112, 116–121 and Syme 1995, 51–57; as well as Sullivan 1990: 105–112. Noteworthy are the publications of Robert Hewsen, who touches on Sophene and Gordyene in the context of Armenia: see Hewsen's remarks on Gordyene in the following publications: Hewsen 1983, esp. 128, 131, 133, n. 21, 138–139; Hewsen 1984, esp. 354–355; Hewsen 1985, 74; Hewsen 1988–1989, 280–295 (being the most important). See also a short paper by Frankfort 1963 about Sophene in the context of Rome's imperial policy. As for Adiabene, there is some, and still growing, literature about this country in the context of its 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE royal converts to Judaism, including two dissertations: Barish 1983 and Marciak 2012. For the state of research on Adiabene in this respect, see Marciak 2011a, 63–64, nn. 1–3 and Marciak 2011b, 8–10. Considerably less attention has been paid to Adiabene in its material and political environment. Noteworthy exceptions are Delitzsch 1877; Eiland 1998; Reade 1998; Reade 2001; Marciak 2011b. See also the following publications of Jacob Neusner: Neusner 1964a; Neusner 1964b; Neusner 1966; Neusner 1969, 61–73.

<sup>4</sup> For this term see Sterling 1992, 20–102 and Murphy 2004, 77–128 (esp. 77–87).

<sup>5</sup> Sterling 1992, 53.

<sup>6</sup> On the difference between ancient ethnographies on the one hand, and historiographical accounts containing relevant data on the other see Murphy 2004, 79–80; Lerouge 2007, 39.

give us a primary insight into the material and political environment of Gordyene.

### Xenophon's Karduchoi

The first important text to take a look at is Xenophon's *Anabasis*, which describes the march of the Greek army of "the Ten Thousand" under Cyrus the Younger to seize the Persian throne from his brother, Artaxerxes II. The part of this march which is most relevant to our interests is the withdrawal of the Greek army of "the Ten Thousand" from Persia to the Black Sea. After the battle at Cunaxa in 401 BCE the Greeks started their march north-west alongside the Tigris. At some point of their route along the Tigris, the Greeks left the open Tigris valley and continued more directly north, marching into the country of the Καρδοῦχοι (*Anabasis* 4.1.1.–4.3.2; see also 3.5.15).

Where exactly did the route of the "Ten Thousand" lead through the land of Karduchoi? The exit point from the land of the Karduchoi (ἡ χώρα τῶν Καρδούχων) is put unequivocally by Xenophon in *Anab.* 4.3.1 – it is the Kentrites River (Κεντρίτης) which Xenophon calls the border between the land of Karduchoi and Armenia. Indeed, the name Κεντρίτης corresponds to the Armenian word *krič* (*divider*), from *ktrel* meaning *cut off*,<sup>7</sup> and as such expresses the function of this river as a territorial and cultural border.<sup>8</sup> The Kentrites is widely identified with the modern Bohtan River, a tributary of the Tigris south of the city Siirt in today's south-eastern Turkey.<sup>9</sup> This identification rests on geographical grounds and consequently, like many other toponyms in Xenophon, is dependent on the identification of a preceding reference point on the route of the Greek army, and in this particular case depends on the identification of the entry point into the land of Karduchoi.

<sup>7</sup> Markwart 1930: 340; Hewsens 1983: 128, n. 12.

<sup>8</sup> A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004: 52.

<sup>9</sup> Eckhardt 1910b: 202–203; Weissbach 1921: 181; Lendle 1995, 207; Syme 1995: 31; Hewsens 2001, 29 who even writes: "all scholars agree on the route as far as the Eastern Tigris (Kentrites, Bohtan Su)"; Waterfield 2006: 135. By contrast, see Sagona 2004: 299–328 (esp. 299–304) and A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004: 51–52, who identify the Kentrites as the Aras River, much to the north of the Bohtan River. Consequently, the land of the Karduchoi is located directly south of the modern Erzurum. This identification is, however, more assumed than argued. While Sagona's interpretation of the route of the "Ten Thousand" through Armenia could make some sense, his choice to place the crossroads not around Cizre but further to the north is completely arbitrary, since he has not dealt with topographical and geographical evidence from Books 1–3 at all. In other words, we do not learn from Sagona how the "Ten Thousand" got to the crossroads and where e.g. Larisa and Mespila were located.

The identification of the entry point must be based on the context of Xenophon's narrative. The Greeks marched alongside the Tigris until they reached a dead end (see *Anab.* 3.5.7–18).<sup>10</sup> Namely, to the north there was a high mountain range and to the west the Greeks had the Tigris, which was at this point impassable.<sup>11</sup> Moving south or east would mean turning back towards the heartland of the Persian Empire.<sup>12</sup> In this situation, the Greeks decided to head north into the country of the Karduchoi. The last three recognizable landmarks on their route alongside the Tigris before they reached a dead end were the *Ζαπάτας*, *Λάρισα*, *Μέσπιλα* (*Anab.* 3.4.7–9 and 3.4.10–12).

The *Ζαπάτας* is widely identified as the Great Zab.<sup>13</sup> This identification can be argued on geographical grounds, but there is also a strong linguistic connection.<sup>14</sup> The core *Ζαπ-* corresponds very well to the Semitic names of the two rivers called Zab (also frequently mentioned in Greek sources as *Λύκος* and *Κάπρος*): *Zabu elu* (*the upper Zab*) and *Zabu shupalu* (*the lower Zab*) in Assyrian texts, *Ζάβας* or *Ζαβᾶς* (sometimes with the additions of *ὁ μέγας* or *ὁ μικρός* or *ὁ ἕτερος*) in Byzantine sources, as well as *Zaba* and *Zav* in Syriac and Later Armenian.<sup>15</sup> There can be no doubt that Xenophon's Zapatas is the Great Zab.<sup>16</sup>

The case of Xenophon's Larisa and Mespila is more problematic. Both are widely identified as Nimrud and Nineveh respectively, although there is no fully convincing explanation for Xenophon's names.<sup>17</sup> Barnett suggests that Xenophon misunderstood the Akkadian *āl-šarrūti* meaning *royal city*,<sup>18</sup> while according to

<sup>10</sup> Waterfield 2006: 124–135, 130.

<sup>11</sup> Waterfield 2006, 130; Lee 2007, 27 and n. 53. It is not clear whether the river was only temporarily impassable, or if the river bed was perhaps naturally too deep at this point. What is more, the Greeks could already see the Persian cavalry expecting them on the west bank of the Tigris. Furthermore, the plain terrain on the west bank would certainly suit the cavalry more than the Greek hoplites, and there was a risk that no stocks of supplies could be found on the west side of the Tigris since the Persians could implement a scorched-earth policy. See Waterfield 2006: 124–135 (esp. 130).

<sup>12</sup> Waterfield 2006: 124–135 (esp. 130).

<sup>13</sup> Weissbach 1919a, 1921; Weissbach 1927a, 2391–2392; Hansman 1987, 277; Lendle 1995, 122–123; Kessler 1999a, 265; Kessler 1999b, 575; Bosworth 2002, 366; Marciak 2011b: 185–186.

<sup>14</sup> Marciak 2011b: 185–186.

<sup>15</sup> Weissbach 1919a, 1921; Weissbach 1927a, 2391–2392; Bosworth 2002, 366.

<sup>16</sup> This does not mean that there are no problems with Xenophon's description of the Zapatas. He recalls the river, but he does not say how a river of such considerable dimensions was crossed by the Greeks (see Tuplin 1991: 45). One of the possible explanations is that the Great Zab hit its annual low in September–October and consequently was easily fordable. For this interpretation, see Lee 2007: 27 and n. 54; and for the geographical data from Iraq, see Beaumont, Blake, Wagstaff 1988, 355–359 (esp. 356–357).

<sup>17</sup> Weissbach 1924, 873; Weissbach 1931, 1164; Hewsens 1988–1989, 278; Reade 1998: 65; Tuplin 2003, 370.

<sup>18</sup> But naming Nimrud as a royal city could only be accepted as an expression of local nostalgia, since technically Nimrud lost this status after ca. 707 BCE (Dalley 1993, 144; Tuplin 2003, 371).



Dalley, Larisa corresponds to the Akkadian Kar-Mulissi (modern Keremleis).<sup>19</sup> The problem is that Λάρισα is a Greek name held by many ancient Greek cities,<sup>20</sup> and one would have to assume that Xenophon put a genuine Greek toponym on a local name of Nimrud whose sound seemed to him to be similar, although he did not do the same for Nineveh. Namely, many scholars suggest that Xenophon's Mespila reproduces a local name of Nineveh directly. The first option is that Mespila could come from a Semitic root denoting an area of low-lying terrain:<sup>21</sup> the Akkadian *mušpalu*<sup>22</sup> (used for the description of Nineveh's surroundings in Sennacherib's inscriptions 8.27<sup>23</sup>), or the Aramaic *mšpyl'*,<sup>24</sup> or *mašp<sup>e</sup>lah* (*the fallen one*).<sup>25</sup> Other scholars point to Semitic names that could express Nineveh's state of destruction after 612 BCE<sup>26</sup> – Kiepert suggests that Xenophon's interpreter misconstrued the Semitic word meaning *Ruine*, e.g. the Hebrew *mappêla*;<sup>27</sup> Gemoll in turn maintains that Xenophon's Mespila may echo the Hebrew *mašpil*, meaning *devastatus*.<sup>28</sup> Other scholars instead see a connection between Nineveh and Mossul<sup>29</sup> – according to Herzfeld, Mespila may be a corrupted form of Mawšil, a city-name of modern Mossul.<sup>30</sup> Mespila has also been suggested to come from \*mušpelu, meaning *Muschelkalk*, *Kalkstein*,<sup>31</sup> to be a malformation of μεσ-πύλαι allegedly meaning *central gates* (that is, being midway between the Persian Gulf, Euxine, Caspian and Mediterranean),<sup>32</sup> or possi-

<sup>19</sup> Dalley 1993, 144: "since the names sound similar".

<sup>20</sup> See the entry *Larisa* in *RE* 23, 840–873 and Zgusta, 1984, 331.

<sup>21</sup> This option is called into question by Tuplin 2003, 372, who points out that it does not really match the topography of Nineveh – first, much of Nineveh can be considered as low-lying, but only with regard to the city walls and two particular hills – Kuyunjik and Nebi Yunus; second, the fact that the city looks low-lying from the perspective of the city walls is not only characteristic of Nineveh.

<sup>22</sup> K.M. Streck 1916, CDXXVI, n.1; Reade 1998, 65.

<sup>23</sup> Luckenbill 1924: 114.

<sup>24</sup> Reade 1998, 65.

<sup>25</sup> Machinist 1997, 190.

<sup>26</sup> It should, however, be noted that neither Xenophon himself (whose text is problematic) nor archaeological data necessarily suggest a total lack of inhabitation in Nineveh in 401 BCE. See Tuplin 2003, 370–371 and 387–389.

<sup>27</sup> Kiepert 1878, 152.

<sup>28</sup> Gemoll 1899, 298. By contrast, Weissbach 1931, 1164 rightly remarks that *mašpil* can mean only *erniedrigend*, *niedrig-machend*, and not *verwüstet* (*devastatus*). Indeed, the hiphil form, *mašpil* is an active form.

<sup>29</sup> The problem with this hypothesis is that Mossul lies on the west bank of the Tigris and not on the east bank, where the ancient Nineveh was located and where the route of "Ten Thousand" led. See Weissbach 1931, 1164 and Tuplin 2003, 372.

<sup>30</sup> Sarre, Herzfeld 1920, 207.

<sup>31</sup> Tuplin 2003, 372, who quotes this explanation but does not name his source of information.

<sup>32</sup> F. Jones 1854, 332. This option is deemed "absurd" by Tuplin 2003: 372.

bly to be connected with the Greek *Μεσπίλη*, denoting *medlar tree*, that could possibly be planted in this area.<sup>33</sup>

Although there is no fully satisfactory explanation for Xenophon's names, the identification of Larisa and Mespila as Nimrud and Nineveh is very likely on geographical and topographical grounds.<sup>34</sup> Namely, both cities are characterized as neglected<sup>35</sup> but once great and politically important metropolises of the Median kingdom located on the Tigris.<sup>36</sup> Xenophon stresses their massive proportions – Larisa is said to have a wall twenty-five feet in breadth and a hundred in height. The circuit of its wall was two parasangs long. Furthermore, Xenophon writes of a large structure (a plethrum in breadth and two plethra in height) which he himself calls a *πυραμῖς*, located next to Mespila, where nearby villagers took refuge from the oncoming Greek troops. In turn, Mespila is described as once a stronghold (*τείχος*) with foundations fifty feet in breadth and fifty in height. The wall was again fifty feet in breadth and a hundred in height, and its circuit was six parasangs. If we compare Xenophon's descriptions with the available archaeological data from Nimrud and Nineveh, the conclusion emerges that Xenophon's description of Nimrud makes "reasonable sense, with no more than modest allowance for inexactitude of observation and/or report",<sup>37</sup> and his description of Nineveh is "perhaps marginally less satisfactory than that of Nimrud".<sup>38</sup> And yet the fact remains that, except for Nimrud and Nineveh, we do not know of any other cities of such proportions and assumed political significance on the Tigris and north-west of the Great Zab in Xenophon's times.

If Larisa and Mespila can be identified as Nimrud and Nineveh, then we get an additional argument in identifying the entry point of the Greek army into the mountains of the Karduchoi. North of the route alongside the Tigris and past the Great Zab, Nimrud and Nineveh is the Tauros mountain range, and the first point when both the Tigris and the Tauros cross each other is the area around the modern city of Cizre.<sup>39</sup> This is the most likely area where the "Ten Thousand" were

<sup>33</sup> Tuplin 2003, 372. This is an extremely speculative idea.

<sup>34</sup> Tuplin 2003, 370: "beyond doubts".

<sup>35</sup> See Tuplin 2003, 370–371 and 387–389 that Xenophon's use of *ἐρήμη* (with regard to Larisa itself and Mespila's outer walls) does not necessarily mean that a city lies in ruins and has no population at all. What is more, Mespila is also named by Xenophon a *πόλις*.

<sup>36</sup> In accordance with Xenophon's peculiar view on the extent of ancient Media. See Tuplin 2003, esp. 364.

<sup>37</sup> Tuplin 2003, 376.

<sup>38</sup> Tuplin 2003, 378.

<sup>39</sup> The terrain north-west of the Great Zab is an "easy country until one reaches the range south of Zakhō". The modern Zakhō is located c. 59 km south-east of Cizre. However, after leaving the defile of Zakhō, one again walks onto an extensive plain until Cizre. See Lendle 1995, 192; Tuplin 2003: 361–362 and n. 25; Lee 2007, 28, n. 58.

really forced to make a decision – either to cross the Tigris to the west or to abandon their route alongside the Tigris and head north into the mountains.<sup>40</sup> In turn, the next major river stream north of the Tigris at Cizre is indeed the modern Bohtan River. To sum up, it is most likely that Xenophon's land of the Karduchoi can be located in the mountains north of the modern Turkish city Cizre and south of the Bohtan River.<sup>41</sup>

Xenophon presents the country of the Karduchoi (ἡ χώρα τῶν Καρδούχων) as a mountainous region (τά Καρδούχεια ὄρη). More precisely, the Karduchoi are said to live in villages (κώμαι) located in small valleys between the mountains and in nooks in the mountains (ἐν τοῖς ἀγχεσί τε καὶ μυχοῖς τῶν ὀρέων) and have moved upwards into the mountains (ἐπὶ τὰ ὄρη) only to find shelter (*Anab.* 4.1.7–8). This description means that the pattern of settlement of the Karduchoi was essentially twofold.<sup>42</sup> First, in the hollows there were villages in clusters (*Anab.* 4.22.2–3; 4.3.1), perhaps numbering one or two hundred houses apiece, if modern comparisons can be any guide to us.<sup>43</sup> To reach these settlements, the Greeks frequently needed to step aside slightly from their route. Second, the folds of the surrounding slopes could house small hamlets of houses, and this settlement could scatter linearly along a road or track (*Anab.* 4.1.7).<sup>44</sup>

The villages were rich in supplies of food,<sup>45</sup> and the Karduchoi used bronze vessels (χάλκωμα) for its storage (*Anab.* 4.1.8).<sup>46</sup> The Karduchoi also cultivated wine (οἶνος), sometimes in large quantities,<sup>47</sup> and stored it in plastered cisterns (ἐν λάκκοις κονιατοῖς, *Anab.* 4.2.22). Given the fact that in Hellas wine was

<sup>40</sup> Lendle 1995, 192.

<sup>41</sup> Lee 2007, 28, n. 58.

<sup>42</sup> By contrast, see Syme 1995, 54 who plays on the contrast between the mountainous land of the Karduchoi and Gordyene of Strabo 16.1.24 as a very rich country. It should, however, be noted that such a contrast is exaggerated – some Karduchoi lived in valleys and their land was rich in food supplies (likewise Eckhardt 1910b, 201, n. 3).

<sup>43</sup> Lee 2007: 32–33.

<sup>44</sup> Lee 2007: 33.

<sup>45</sup> The Greek language does not make it precise what kind of food accounted for the basic diet of the Karduchoi. Wiesehöfer 2012 writes about “Ackerbau, Weinbau und Viehzucht”. Agriculture and animal husbandry are of course most likely as indispensable elements of every diet. It seems that the mountains of the land of the Karduchoi could indeed be a good environment for some types of husbandry, and the location of villages in the hollows allowed agriculture. Further, the possession of fine bows by the Karduchoi implies the existence of at least basic crafts among them (see Wiesehöfer 2012: “handwerkliche Tätigkeiten”).

<sup>46</sup> Lendle 1995, 192: “die Metallgefäße, die in dieser Gegend auch heute noch vielfach anstatt irdenem Geschirr in Gebrauch sind...”.

<sup>47</sup> Note that we have two more detailed descriptions of provisions found by the Greeks in Karduchian villages (*Anab.* 4.1.8 and 4.2.22) – both included food and wine, but their abundance is more accentuated only in the second description (*Anab.* 4.2.22). Apparently, there was some economic diversity in this region.

stored in plastered cisterns only in taverns (see Aristophanes, *Ekklesiazousai* 154), their use in private areas in Karduchia shows the relative wealth of some Karduchian areas.<sup>48</sup>

Xenophon's description of weather conditions the Greeks encountered in Karduchia gives the impression of a rainy and misty country. One should, however, note that if the Greeks left Babylonia in early spring (in February or, less likely, in April), they reached the mountains of the Karduchoi in early autumn (likely in mid-October).<sup>49</sup> This means that their arrival coincided with the beginning of the autumn weather marked by an increasing appearance of rainfalls and mists, as well as by a considerable drop in the daytime temperature in the region.<sup>50</sup>

The Karduchoi, being lightly armed, did not dare to face the Greeks in hand-to-hand combat.<sup>51</sup> They instead evacuated their settlements and conducted guerrilla warfare by attacking the Greeks with arrows, stones and blocked defiles.<sup>52</sup> This tactic was in perfect fitting with the natural conditions of the terrain<sup>53</sup> – the folds of the Karduchia Mountains were precipitous wooded and cut only by narrow gorges and streamlets, and this meant that only narrow paths and canyons were accessible to the Greeks.<sup>54</sup> Consequently, blocking such passages and occupying higher ground along the path by the Karduchoi was a major obstacle to the Greeks.<sup>55</sup> In addition to the simple tactic of rolling boulders at the Greeks,<sup>56</sup> the Karduchoi made their mark as skillful bowmen – their bows were so powerful that they could penetrate the Greek armor.<sup>57</sup> Their efficiency was due to their size – they were much longer than Greek bows (3 cubits for a bow and 2 cubits for an arrow); in fact they were so long that the Greeks, having captured them, recycled them as javelins.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>48</sup> Lendle 1995, 205.

<sup>49</sup> Lee 2007, 19 and 26.

<sup>50</sup> Lee 2007, 30.

<sup>51</sup> Waterfield 2006, 138; Lee 2007, 106.

<sup>52</sup> Lee 2007: 34, 106.

<sup>53</sup> On the topography of this region, see Shiel 1838, 80–82; Pollington 1840, 449–450; Naval Intelligence Division 1942–1943, 174–176; Lee 2007, 28–35.

<sup>54</sup> Naval Intelligence Division 1942–1943, 174; Lee 2007, 28.

<sup>55</sup> This tactic has a very high reputation in modern scholarship: Waterfield 2006, 129: “places so wild that an entire Persian army could vanish without trace, as was rumored to have happened in the Karduchian mountains”; Lee 2007: 26: “nobody got out of this mountainous land alive”.

<sup>56</sup> Waterfield 2006, 134; Lendle 2007, 201.

<sup>57</sup> Olbrycht 2004, 82–83; Waterfield 2006, 132; Lendle 2007, 197 and 206–205. See also *Zabdiceni sagittarii* in *Amm. Marc.* 20.7.1. On Zabdicene and its relation to Gordyene see below.

<sup>58</sup> Olbrycht 2004, 82–83; Waterfield 2006, 132; Lendle 2007, 197 and 206–205. Xenophon only stresses the efficiency of the Karduchian bowmen but does not describe the use of their bows in any detail, but one can get some idea of how they may have worked on the basis of other

Xenophon also recalls the intelligence on the Karduchoi the Greeks had received from captured prisoners before they entered their country – the Karduchoi were not subjects of the Persian kings, though they made a treaty with “the satrap in the plain”, and had some dealings with Persian authorities (*Anab.* 3.5.16). This statement of Xenophon has been taken literally by many scholars, who consequently describe the Karduchoi “as independent of Persian control (albeit while living in the very heart of the empire)”.<sup>59</sup> At the same time, some scholars see such statements as simplifications, and rightly remark that in the light of our knowledge on the policy of the Persian court towards various mountain peoples in the empire, such a relationship must have been more of a balance between autonomy and oversight.<sup>60</sup> On the one hand, the Karduchoi enjoyed a great deal of autonomy and received occasional gifts from the Persian court; on the other hand, they acknowledged the authority of the Persian king by paying tributes and enlisting in military service.<sup>61</sup>

### Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy

The three most important ancient writings which contribute to our knowledge on the geography and ethnography of Gordyene are Strabo’s *Geographika* (created during the last decades of Strabo’s life, which ended shortly after 24 CE<sup>62</sup>), Pliny the Elder’s *Historia Naturalis* (written by 79 CE<sup>63</sup>), and Ptolemy’s *Geographike Hyphegesis* (which is said to reflect the state of Roman knowledge about the geography of the inhabited world from the first decade of the 2<sup>nd</sup> c. CE).<sup>64</sup>

In Strabo’s *Geographika* we can find many brief references to Gordyene (*Geog.* 2.1.26; 11.12.4; 11.14.2; 11.14.8; 16.1.1; 16.1.8; 16.1.21; 16.2.5), as well as one excursus directly focusing on Gordyene which is perhaps the most exten-

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Oriental parallels that attracted the attentions of the Greek observers. Most likely, bowmen placed the bows on the ground, set their foot against them and shot by first drawing the bowstring back and then releasing it. See Diodor Sik. 3.8.4 and Arrian, *Ind.* 16.6. A similar bow, though dated only to the 1<sup>st</sup>–3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE, was discovered in Baghouz/Yrzi, ca. 40 km south-east of Dura Europos; its longitude is 1.47 m (see Olbrycht 2004, 83).

<sup>59</sup> Hewsen 2001, 30. Likewise Hewsen 1983, 131; Syme 1995, 30; A. Sagona, C. Sagona 2004, 52 and many others.

<sup>60</sup> Wiesehöfer 2012: Reziprozitätsverhältnis: “(Geschenke/Gegengeschenke; Anerkennung von Autonomie/Loyalität und Heeresfolge)”. Likewise Briant 2002, 730–731.

<sup>61</sup> Briant 2002, 730–731; Wiesehöfer 2012.

<sup>62</sup> Drijvers 1998, 279.

<sup>63</sup> Keyser 1999, 235–242; Murphy 2004, 4.

<sup>64</sup> Berggren, Jones 2000, 23–24.

sive account about this country in all ancient literature – *Geog.* 16.1.24–25 (16.2.5 briefly repeats one aspect of Gordyene’s *Siedlungslegende*)<sup>65</sup>.

The brief references are made only in the context of very general descriptions of large geographical areas. In such descriptions, the location of Gordyene is given only in relation to other geographical or ethnographical entities. As a result, we rather get only a general impression as to where Gordyene was located. For instance, in *Geog.* 16.1.8 Strabo describes the borders of Babylonia, and does so by enumerating Babylonia’s neighbors including Gordyene. To be more precise, the country of the Babylonians is said to be surrounded “on the west by the Arabians called Scenitae, as far as Adiabene and Gordyaea (μέρχι τῆς Ἀδιαβηνῆς καὶ τῆς Γορδοαΐας), and on the north by the Armenians and the Medes as far as the Zagros”. In turn, in *Geog.* 16.1.1 Strabo refers to the borders of the country of the Assyrians (understood in a very broad sense as much of Mesopotamia<sup>66</sup>) and enumerates many countries around it in a fairly long line, among others – “Dolomene and Kalachene and Chazene and Adiabene, the tribes of Mesopotamia in the neighborhood of the Gordyaeans (περὶ Γορδοαΐους), and the Mygdonians in the neighborhood of Nisibis”. Some toponyms recalled by Strabo are easier to identify than others. The northern border of Strabo’s Adiabene definitely falls on the Lykos River, unambiguously identified as the Great Zab,<sup>67</sup> and Mygdonia was located on the plain to the south of the mountain region of Tūr ‘Abdīn, with its main city, Nisibis on the modern Görgarbonizra Çayı River (the Mygdonios of classical sources).<sup>68</sup> In turn, the Arabian Scenitae and the tribes of Mesopotamia cannot really be ascribed to a particular region – the name *Scenitae* is not an ethnicon, but a designation of a way of life (“one who dwells in a tent”).<sup>69</sup> Thus, the Arabian Scenitae and the tribes of Mesopotamia were nomadic tribes that could be found in many places in the Mesopotamian desert living on pasture and booty, but also on tolls taken from travelers.<sup>70</sup>

<sup>65</sup> All citations are taken from the Loeb Classical Library. However, readings of proper names are sometimes corrected in the text of citations by the author, and so can depart from the LCL translation. Strabo’s text quoted here is that of Jones 1928 and 1930. See also Radt 2004, 2005, 2008 and 2009.

<sup>66</sup> Note that many ancient sources have two notions of Assyria – as a fairly specific country and in a broad sense as much of the Mesopotamian region – see Nöldeke 1871, 443–468; Herzfeld 1968, 306–308; de Jonge 1980: 263, n. “a”; den Boeft/Drijvers/den Hengst/Teitler 1998, 30–31, n. 2.7 and 148, n. 6.15.

<sup>67</sup> Marciaak 2011b, 181–188.

<sup>68</sup> Honigmann, Bosworth 2012. On the two different Nisibis in Mesopotamia, see Sturm 1936, 714–757; Pigulevskaja 1963, 49–59; Kessler 2000, 962–963; Oppenheimer 1983, 319–334 (a basic collection of sources on Nisibis); Oppenheimer 1993, 313–333.

<sup>69</sup> Shahīd 1984, 243–244; Sartre 2007, 239; Myers 2010, 16–17.

<sup>70</sup> Shahīd 1984, 243–244; Sartre 2007, 239; Myers 2010, 16–17.

Generally speaking, in *Geog.* 16.1.1 and 16.1.6 Adiabene clearly stands out as a reference point to Gordyene, but there is also a clear connection between Gordyene and cultural elements (Mygdonia, nomads of Mesopotamia including some Arabian tribes) that belong to the upper Mesopotamian valley marked by the *west* bank of the Tigris and the *east* bank of the Euphrates. In other words, Strabo's Gordyene has clearly passed by the "Armenian Mountains" (see below) and tends towards the Mesopotamian valley.

In *Geog.* 2.1.26, Strabo estimates distances of parallels and meridians passing through the Mesopotamian region and in writing about meridians from Armenia to Babylonia recalls Gordyene twice. More precisely, in drawing the line from Babylon northwards, Strabo says that "the stadia have been measured up to the Armenian Gates and amount to about one thousand one hundred; whereas the stadia through Gordyene (διὰ Γορδυαίων) and Armenia are still unmeasured" (*Geog.* 2.1.26). Likewise, in briefly describing the course of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers in *Geog.* 2.1.26, Strabo reckons that they "flow from Armenia southwards; and then, as soon as they pass the mountains of Gordyene (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων ὄρη), they describe a great circle and enclose a considerable territory, Mesopotamia; and then they turn toward the winter rising of the sun and the south, but more so the Euphrates; and the Euphrates, after becoming ever nearer to the Tigris in the neighborhood of the Wall of Semiramis and a village called Opis (from which village the Euphrates was distant only about two hundred stadia), and, after flowing through Babylon, empties into the Persian Gulf" (*Geog.* 2.1.26). *Geog.* 2.1.26 gives us only a general location of Gordyene, but a few interesting details still emerge. On the one hand, Gordyene is a distinctive region; on the other, it is always coupled with Armenia, and since Strabo's Gordyene in *Geog.* 2.1.26 appears to be a mountainous region (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων ὄρη) and *Armenian* gates (that is mountain breaches which provide a way through – such passages were of strategic importance and consequently often fortified<sup>71</sup>) open access to *Gordyene* too, the Gordyaeon mountains are located within the geographical realm of the Armenian Mountains.<sup>72</sup> Further, the relation between the mountains of Gordyene and the course of the Tigris is also important. In *Geog.* 2.1.26 the Gordyaeon mountains are located alongside the Tigris, but before the Tigris makes a bend to form the upper Tigris valley.

In *Geog.* 11.14.2 Strabo again describes the course of the Euphrates, and in doing so, he enumerates mountain ranges and peaks along its course (Taurus, Antitaurus, Mt. Μασίων and Mt. Νιφάτης), as well as many countries such

<sup>71</sup> Syme 1995, 42.

<sup>72</sup> Another issue is that Strabo probably mistook the Armenian Gates for the Armenian Mountains. See Syme 1995, 39–45.

as Cappadocia, Kommagene, Sophene, Armenia and Gordyene whose borders are marked by these natural formations. In particular, Gordyene is briefly mentioned with regard to two mountains – Mt. Μασίον and Mt. Νιφάτης: “above Mt. Μασίον, far towards the east opposite Gordyene (κατὰ τὴν Γορδυνην), lies Mt. Νιφάτης. Thus, Gordyene is located between Mt. Masion and Mt. Niphates on the south-west-north-east line. Where can these two mountains be located?

Mt. Masion is mentioned not only by Strabo (*Geog.* 11.5.6, 11.12.4, 11.14.2, 16.1.23) but also by Ptolemy (*Geog.* 5.17.2),<sup>73</sup> but the evidence as to its location is not clear-cut. That is to say, the sources give two different locations – while Strabo 11.12.4, 11.14.2, 16.1.23 and Ptolemy 5.17.2 put it west of the Tigris in Mesopotamia, Strabo 11.5.6 (and this is by far the most extensive description of this mountain) clearly speaks of Mt. Masion as part of the Armenian Mountains, which implies a location east of the Tigris.<sup>74</sup>

This problem could be solved if we accept Syme’s observation that Strabo in fact knew only one mountain range between Armenia and Mesopotamia, that is the Tauros.<sup>75</sup> Indeed, there is a world of difference between the Tauros, a huge mountain massif, and the mountains west of the Tigris near Nisibis, the latter being “a series of undulations rather than a mountain chain”.<sup>76</sup> Strabo’s *Geog.* 11.12.4 clearly shows that even if he locates Mt. Masion close to Nisibis (and so in the mountain region of Ṭūr ‘Abdīn), he considers this mountain to be part of the Tauros (and the Tauros is in fact located east of the Tigris). What is more, Strabo’s detailed description of winter conditions on Mt. Masion (regular and heavy snowfalls and the use of skis) does not fit the mountain region of Ṭūr ‘Abdīn at all; it does, however, correspond perfectly to the winter conditions of the Tauros east of the Tigris.<sup>77</sup> Thus, it follows that there could also be a mountain range east of the Tigris which, in some cases, could correspond with Strabo’s Masion. As for possible identification of Mt. Masion on the east bank of the Tigris, according to Syme, Mt. Masion could perhaps be identified as the Sasun Dağı, since Strabo points to Mt. Masion as a landmark dividing the territory of Sophene from that of Gordyene, and the Sasun Dağı separates the Muş plain from the Upper Tigris valley.<sup>78</sup> However, it is apparent that in the light of lack of precise clues in ancient sources, all identifications of Mt. Masion must remain tentative.

<sup>73</sup> Weissbach 1930a, 2068–2069.

<sup>74</sup> Weissbach 1930a, 2068–2069; Syme 1995, 29–30, 46–49.

<sup>75</sup> Syme 1995, 47–49.

<sup>76</sup> Syme 1995, 47.

<sup>77</sup> Syme 1995, 48–49; Sinclair 1989, 362.

<sup>78</sup> Markwart 1930, 14.



There is a more serious problem with the identification of the Niphates. The name could perhaps be understood by the Greeks as a malformation of the Greek νιφάς meaning *snow*.<sup>79</sup> However, it has a good parallel in the Armenian *Npat*, which itself could be derived from the Iranian *Apām Napāt* and would mean a dwelling place of a *Wassergenius*.<sup>80</sup> Alternatively, it could go back to the Iranian \**ni-pāta* (*beschützt*) or *ni-pātar* (nom. –*nipātā*, *Beschützer*) and would be an allusion to the snow cover on the mountain.<sup>81</sup> Lastly, Niphates could also be “a by-form of Nibarus” (attested also as Βάρις in Nikolaos Damaskenos apud Josephus, *Ant.* 1.95) and would take its name from the description of Noah’s Ark (supposed to have rested on this mountain) as a βάρις, that is, a “cumbrous craft used for inland navigation”.<sup>82</sup>

Mt. Niphates is mentioned by many ancient sources,<sup>83</sup> which associate it with either Mt. Masion (and the Gordyaeen Mountains (Γορδυαῖα ὄρη)<sup>84</sup>, west of the Tigris – Str. 11.12.4) or the Gordyaeen Mountains (here apparently east of the Tigris, Plutarch, *Alex.* 31.10), or the Tauros (Pliny *HN*, 5.27; Pomponius Mela 1.15.81; Pisander apud Stephanus Byzantinus, sub verbo) or with Armenia in general (Ptol. *Geog.* 6.1.1; Amm. Marc. 23.6.13; Josephus, *Ant.* 18.51).<sup>85</sup> Thus, while all sources but Str. *Geog.* 11.12.4 clearly put the location of Mt. Niphates east of the Tigris, its location is given only in general terms and varies from more southern locations (Plutarch, *Alex.* 31.10: close to the upper Tigris valley near Gaugamela) to the highest points of the Armenian Tauros (e.g. Pisander apud Stephanus Byzantinus 477). Several identifications have been suggested on geographical grounds – the Ala Dağı (north-west of Lake Van),<sup>86</sup> the Ararat<sup>87</sup> or the Cudi Dağı<sup>88</sup> – but it

<sup>79</sup> Weidner 1936, 706.

<sup>80</sup> Bartholomae 1904, 1039; Markwart 1930, 3–4; Markwart 1938, 128.

<sup>81</sup> Markwart 1896, 186. By contrast, see Syme 1995, 36, who observes that this etymology is impossible to maintain since Niphates is also attested as a personal name in Arrian, *Anab.* 1.12.8 and 1.16.3. It is likewise rejected by Hübschmann 1904, 457 who instead connects Niphates with the Old Armenian \*Niptāt or \*Nupāt. See also Garsoïan 1989, 484.

<sup>82</sup> Syme 1995, 36.

<sup>83</sup> The theme of Mt. Niphates made its way into Latin poetry (Horatius, *Carmina* 2.9.20; Vergilius, *Georgica* 3.30), for which see Weidner 1936, 707; Durrett 1930, 503; Syme 1995, 29, 36–38.

<sup>84</sup> See also Lasserre 1975, 107: some codices contain the following readings: Γορδυαῖα ὄρη and Γορδυαῖα ἔθνη.

<sup>85</sup> Weidner 1936, 706–707; Syme 1995, 31–33.

<sup>86</sup> Markwart 1930, 3–4.

<sup>87</sup> Herzfeld 1907, 220.

<sup>88</sup> Syme 1995, 32. But this identification is possible only if Mt. Niphates is identified with the Mt. Nipur known from Assyrian sources. Mt. Nipur is unequivocally identified due to the discovery of an Assyrian commemoration plaque on the Cudi Dağı. For the inscription, see Luckenbill 1924, 63–66 and Luckenbill 1927, 139–140 (no. 296).

may not be possible to pin down its location, since the ancient sources themselves did not have a very clear idea as to its location.<sup>89</sup>

In *Geog.* 11.14.8 and 16.1.21 Gordyene is again mentioned by Strabo in relation to the course of the Tigris. In *Geog.* 16.1.21 it is said that the Tigris “flows through the middle of Lake Thopitis ... and, after traversing it to the opposite shore, it sinks underground with upward blasts and a loud noise; and having flowed for a considerable distance invisible, it rises again not far away from Gordyaea (Γορδυαία)...”. In turn, in *Geog.* 11.14.8 the Tigris is said to “... flow down towards Opis and the wall of Semiramis, as it is called, leaving the Gordyaeans and the whole of Mesopotamia on the right (τοὺς Γορδυαίους ἐν δεξιᾷ ἄφεις ...), while the Euphrates, on the contrary, has the same country on the left, having approached one another and formed Mesopotamia, the former flows through Seleukeia to the Persian Gulf and the latter through Babylon...”. Thanks to both texts, we not only locate Gordyene *alongside* the course of the Tigris, but we learn that it was located *south* (as Strabo apparently believes that the Tigris flows north-south until its bend, after which the Tigris, together with the Euphrates, marks the Mesopotamian region) of two other landmarks: Lake Θωσπίτις and the wall of Semiramis. Lake Thospitis has been identified as Lake Van or Lake Gölcük/Hazar, since both lakes had local non-Greek names that could be rendered with the Greek Thospitis.<sup>90</sup> Namely, the ancient Urartian name of Lake Van is Tušpas (and Armenian *Tosp*),<sup>91</sup> while Lake Gölcük was known in Armenian as Covk’, which could also yield the Greek θωψία and this sound turn into θωσπία.<sup>92</sup> The first option is more likely for geographical reasons (as other sources indicate the general vicinity of Lake Van). In turn, the Wall of Semiramis (also called the Wall of Media) is known from an-

<sup>89</sup> The identification with the Ala Dağı (north-west of Lake Van) or the Ararat can be maintained only if one focuses on the connection between the Niphates and the sources of the Tigris (Strabo *Geog.* 11.12.4). In turn, Syme’s identification with the Cudi Dağı can be maintained only through Strabo’s references to the Niphates *and* the Gordyaeon Mountains (Str., *Geog.* 11.12.4; Plutarch, *Alex.* 31), but then one has to disregard the connection to the sources of the Tigris. In contrast to Syme (Strabo’s texts show that the Niphates was located in the Gordyaeon Mountains), we must stress that although such a location can be argued indirectly on the basis of 11.12.4 (Tauros proper can also be called the Gordyaeon Mountains, and at some point “the Tauros rises higher and bears the name Niphates”, thus the Niphates is located in the Tauros and the Tauros equals the Gordyaeon Mountains), further east the Tauros is also said by Strabo to “form the Zagros”. All this could simply mean that different parts of Strabo’s Tauros have local names, and not that the Niphates is located in Gordyene). In 11.14.2 Strabo does not really locate the Niphates in Gordyene, but rather mentions Gordyene as a reference point to the Niphates, which in fact suggests that they only border each other, but not that one includes the other.

<sup>90</sup> Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsens 1982, 136; Hewsens 1985, 74. For a full list of references to this lake and its different spellings, see Weissbach 1936b, 349–350 (and also Weissbach 1936a, 349).

<sup>91</sup> Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsens 1982, 136; Hewsens 1985, 74; Syme 1995, 32.

<sup>92</sup> Markwart 1930, 30–31; Hewsens 1982, 136; Hewsens 1985, 74.

cient literature as one of the city walls of Babylon which was believed to have been built by Queen Semiramis.<sup>93</sup> The location of Opis is not exactly known, but the context makes it clear that it should be looked for in Babylonia (see also Strabo 16.1.9, where Opis together with Seleukeia are the limit of navigability on the Tigris).<sup>94</sup> Despite difficulties in suggesting a precise identification for either landmark, the very idea of these two toponyms being located in Babylonia throws up a serious problem for Strabo's location of Gordyene in 11.14.8. Not only does Gordyene lie on the west bank of the Tigris, but it is put in connection with most southern landmarks of the Tigris in Babylonia.<sup>95</sup> This interpretation has been widely considered a mistake on the part of Strabo, and the source of this mistake could be conceivably explained only if we assume that Strabo mistook the Tigris for one of its eastern tributaries (e.g. the Diyala, if so, then Opis could be located in the vicinity of the confluence of the Tigris and the Diyala).<sup>96</sup> What is more, since this passage resembles *Geog.* 2.1.26 in that Opis and the Wall of Semiramis are mentioned in both accounts as landmarks marking the southern course of the Tigris (although Gordyene in *Geog.* 2.1.26 seems to be located a little more to the north, before the bend of the Tigris), where Strabo has explicitly acknowledged his source of information – Eratosthenes – it is precisely Eratosthenes who may be considered to be responsible for the picture of Gordyene located west of the Tigris and close to Babylonia.<sup>97</sup>

Of special importance is Strabo's *Geog.* 16.1.24–25, where Gordyene, with its inhabitants, natural resources and culture, comes directly to the fore:

*Near the Tigris (πρὸς δὲ τῷ Τίγγει) lie the places belonging to the Gordyaeans (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων χωρία), whom the ancients called Karduchoi (Καρδοῦχοι); and their cities are named Sareisa and Satalka and Pinaka, a very powerful fortress, with three citadels, each enclosed by a separate fortification of its own, so that they constitute, as it were, a triple city. But still it not only was held in subjection by the king of the Armenians, but the Romans took it by force, although the Gordyaeans (οἱ Γορδυαῖοι) had an exceptional repute as master-builders and as experts in the construction of siege engines; and it was for this reason that Tigranes used them in such work. But also the rest of Mesopotamia became subject to the Romans. Pompey assigned to Tigranes most of the places in this country, I mean all that are worth mentioning; for the country is rich in pasturage, and so rich in plants that it also produces the evergreens and a spice-plant called amomum; and it is a feeding-ground for*

<sup>93</sup> Sayce 1888, 104–113 (esp. 111); Barnett 1963, 19.

<sup>94</sup> Luckenbill 1924, 148–151; Barnett 1963, 18–20.

<sup>95</sup> Syme 1995, 33.

<sup>96</sup> Markwart 1930, 6–9; Honigmann 1936, 1011; Syme 1995, 33.

<sup>97</sup> Syme 1995, 33, 44.

*lions; and it also produces naphtha and the stone called gangitis, which is avoided by reptiles. Gordys, the son of Triptolemos, is said to have taken up his abode in Gordyene (Γορδοηνή), and later also the Eretrians, who were carried off by the Persians. Of Triptolemos, however, I shall soon give a clear account in my description of the Syrians.*

This is one of two ancient texts that make an explicit and direct connection between the Karduchoi (Καρδοῦχοι known to us from Xenophon) and the Gordyaeans (Γορδυαῖοι) and their country (τὰ τῶν Γορδυαίων χωρία); the other will be Pliny, *HN* 6.44 (see below). What is more, there is a long scholarly and non-scholarly tradition which would add another ethnonym into this group and treat it as a synonym – the *Kurds*. Namely, some scholars see the *Karduchoi* as ancestors of the modern *Kurds*.<sup>98</sup> For instance, some authors of the *Cambridge History of Iran* speak about “the Ten Thousand” marching through the land of the *Kurds* (or *Kurdestan*), and not the land of the Karduchoi.<sup>99</sup> To others, Gordyene was “an apparently Kurdish or proto-Kurdish state”.<sup>100</sup> This identification is, however, rejected by many scholars on phonetic and historical grounds.<sup>101</sup> In terms of linguistic connections, it seems that the form *Kurd-* is not akin to *Kardū-*, but to *Kurt-*.<sup>102</sup> Therefore, if any ancient people could be suggested as possible ancestors of the *Kurds*,<sup>103</sup> they are the Κύρτιοι (the Greek Κύρτιοι attested in Polyb. 5.52.5 and Strabo 11.13.3, 15.3.1, and the Latin *Cyrtii* or *Cyrtaei* known from Liv., 37.40.9 and 42.58.13)<sup>104</sup>. The Κύρτιοι were a warlike nomadic people living in the Zagros Mountains who appear in sources as mercenary slingers – in the service of the Median governor, Molon against Antiochos III, but with Antiochos III against the Romans at Magnesia in 190 BC, and again hired by Eumenes, king of Pergamon at Kallinikos (171 BC).<sup>105</sup>

Attempts have also been made to find older attestations of the Karduchoi than Xenophon’s *Anabasis* by pointing to the *kardakes* known from Achaemenid

<sup>98</sup> Weissbach 1919b, 1933–1934; Driver 1921, 563–572; Driver 1923, 393–403; Cook 1985, 257, n. 1; and many others.

<sup>99</sup> Burn 1985, 354.

<sup>100</sup> Hewsens 1988–1989, 281.

<sup>101</sup> Hartmann 1897, 90–105; Nöldeke 1898, 78–81; Hübschmann 1904, 334; Minorsky 1940, 143–152; MacKenzie 1961, 68–69; Asatrian 2001, 51; Asatrian 2009, 25–26; Schmitt 2011.

<sup>102</sup> Nöldeke 1898, 78–81; Asatrian 2009, 25–26.

<sup>103</sup> For a good review of all ancient “candidates” for the ancestors of the *Kurds*, see Nikitine 1956, 1–22.

<sup>104</sup> Nöldeke 1898, 78; Hübschmann 1904, 334; Minorsky 1940, 150; MacKenzie 1961, 68; Asatrian 2009, 26; Schmitt 2011; Wiesehöfer 2012.

<sup>105</sup> Reinach 1909, 115–119; Launey 1949, 581; Bar-Kochva 1976, 48–53; Wiesehöfer 2004, 11–23; Schmitt 2011; Brentjes 2012.

records.<sup>106</sup> It seems, however, that the *kardakes* were an elite corps in the Persian army, and consequently this term does not convey any ethnicity<sup>107</sup> – the *kardakes* cannot be seen as the “ancestors” of the Karduchoi.

Of what origin, then, were the Karduchoi (and consequently the Gordyaeans)?<sup>108</sup> Xenophon’s description of the border area between Armenia and the land of the Karduchoi clearly shows that the Kentrites functioned not only as a territorial but also as a cultural border.<sup>109</sup> Therefore, the Karduchoi were not of Armenian origin.<sup>110</sup> Another option is that the Karduchoi could be of Semitic origin.<sup>111</sup> First, the name of the Karduchoi has good Semitic analogies (in Akkadian: *qardu* meaning *strong, hero* and *qarādū* meaning *to be strong*),<sup>112</sup> and a great deal of people in Mesopotamia were Aramaic-speakers and, most likely, of Semitic origin. However, there is no direct evidence to definitively prove this hypothesis. For instance, the only two personal names of Gordyaeans known to us are Zarbienos (Plut. *Luc.* 21.2, 29.6: Ζαρβηνός) and *Iovinianus*, rulers of that country (Amm. Marc. 18.6.20, see below).<sup>113</sup> The first name has been suggested to be Iranian,<sup>114</sup> and the second one of Armenian origin.<sup>115</sup> This evidence is, however, slim, and could rather reflect the Iranization and Armenization of Gordyene’s elites as cultural and political processes well known to us from other

<sup>106</sup> Olmstead 1948, 241; Launey 1949, 486.

<sup>107</sup> Briant 2002, 1036–1037; Olbrycht 2004, 82.

<sup>108</sup> See a concise presentation of the problem by Minorsky 1987, 1133.

<sup>109</sup> By contrast, note that according to some scholars (Nöldeke 1898, 74; Minorsky 1940, 143) the suffix *-χοι* has Armenian character. Yet this could simply mean that the Greeks learned the name of Karduchoi from the Armenians (Minorsky 1987, 1133). All available linguistic data shows that the root of the terms under discussion is Qardū, and therefore the question of what the origin of suffix might be is irrelevant.

<sup>110</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 239; Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 323; Minorsky 1987, 1133 and many others. Of course, one has to take account of the persistence of Armenian sources to see the prince of *Korduk* ‘as one of the Armenian nobles (generally speaking, created from the 5<sup>th</sup> c. CE on), but this attitude can more easily be explained by the influence of the Armenian culture in Gordyene (attested in neighboring countries too) than by the Armenian origin of Gordyene.

<sup>111</sup> Sinclair 1989, 360–361.

<sup>112</sup> Minorsky 1987, 1133.

<sup>113</sup> Some scholars (e.g. Justi 1963, 191; Teixidor 1964) know of another king of Gordyene, Μανίσαρος (Cass. Dio 68.22.1). However, Cass. Dio does not say what country Manisaros was the king of. Indeed, his troops were sent to support the king of Adiabene, and this implies a country neighboring Adiabene, but at that time there were several countries which could belong to this category (e.g. Singara, as suggested by Trimmingham 1979, 32). What is more, it seems that at the time of Trajan’s invasion of Parthia, the territory of Gordyene belonged to Adiabene, and therefore there was no king of Gordyene (see Kahrstedt 1950, 66; Marciak 2011b, 192–193 on the basis of Jos. *Ant.* 20.24 and 195 concluding from Cass. Dio, 68.26.1–4). See also the doubts raised from the context of Trajan’s campaigns by Langdon 1931, 12 n.1 and Lepper 1948, 8 n. 1.

<sup>114</sup> Justi 1963, 381.

<sup>115</sup> Hewsens 1988–1989, 284.

neighboring countries. The last option is that the Karduchoi were remnants of Urartian tribes. Namely, according to Minorsky, there is “a certain consonantal resemblance with the name of a people, *Khaldir*”,<sup>116</sup> and historically speaking, there is indeed some evidence that upon the arrival of the Armenians some Urartian tribes dispersed over the region.<sup>117</sup>

Strabo 16.1.24–25 also conveys two interesting episodes about the Greeks and Gordyene. First, Strabo’s remarks on Gordys (the same in 16.2.5) come from a literary tradition about the Argonautic expedition (Jason and his companions (the Argonauts) went to far-away Kolchis to retrieve the Golden Fleece) which Strabo recalls in a few places of his opus. In writing that Jason’s companions settled in these lands – Armenos in Armenia, Arbelos in Arbela, and Gordys in Gordyene – Strabo in fact conveys a *Siedlungslegende* for these countries: each of these countries has a mythic Greek ancestor who settled in these lands and apparently started their civilization, or at least brought the first spread of Greek culture.<sup>118</sup> The very existence of such legends implies the Greeks’ contact with and knowledge about these lands, perhaps even the Greek presence there, since such interpretations of local places (“interpretatio graeca”<sup>119</sup>) are supposed to come from the Greek inhabitants in the first place.<sup>120</sup> At first glance, the case of the Eretrians seems to be similar to that of the Argonauts.<sup>121</sup> However, the deportation of the Eretrians into Persia is also reported by Herodotus, *Hist.* 6.101–119, and finds many parallels in the policy of the Achaemenids.<sup>122</sup> Thus, although the deportation of the Eretrians later developed into a literary theme (see e.g. *Vita Apol.* 1.23–24),<sup>123</sup> the story may contain a historical kernel and should be treated as historically reliable.<sup>124</sup> Either way, like the story about Gordys, Strabo’s remarks on the Eretrians in Gordyene again suggest that the material and intellectual culture of Gordyene included some Greek elements.

Strabo’s Gordyaeans in 16.1.24–25, like Xenophon’s Karduchoi, still appear to be in demand as mercenaries, but their range of military expertise

<sup>116</sup> Minorsky 1987, 1133.

<sup>117</sup> Minorsky 1987, 1133.

<sup>118</sup> On such Greek *Siedlungsgeschichten*, see Markwart 1928, 213–215; Kahrstedt 1950, 59, n. 7; Syme 1995, 29; Marciak 2011b, 181. By contrast, see Dillemann’s critical remarks (Dillemann 1962, 118).

<sup>119</sup> See Tcherikover 1959, 20–36, esp. 24; Hengel 1973, 23–27 and 464–486; Hengel 1976, 73–93.

<sup>120</sup> Marciak 2011b, 181.

<sup>121</sup> For such a critical approach, see Penella 1974, 295–300 (esp. 296–297 and n. 6).

<sup>122</sup> Briant 2002, 505–506; Biffi 2002, 168.

<sup>123</sup> Penella 1974, 295–300; Biffi 2002, 168.

<sup>124</sup> Briant 2002, 505–506, 955–956.

changed or enlarged from being excellent bowmen into being good engineers skilled in the construction of siege engines. This new skill is clearly connected with the fact that Strabo's Gordyene is an urbanized country, and especially the period of the decline of the Seleucid state may be seen as the time when this kind of military ability could be developed. Besides this, the country of the Gordyaeans is presented by Strabo as a resourceful land: on the one hand, pasturage and evergreen plants; on the other, resources of hydrocarbons – naphtha and *gangitis* (the latter perhaps being a kind of bitumen).<sup>125</sup> Above all, Strabo speaks of *amomum*, which is directly associated with Gordyene in ancient literature (Philargyrius apud Sallustius, *Historiae*, 4.72; Josephus, *Ant.* 20.25; and perhaps Dioskurides 1.15 under Armenia), and so perhaps the most characteristic product of this country.<sup>126</sup>

Strabo's Gordyene is clearly located alongside the Tigris, and its main three cities are explicitly said to lie on the bank of this river. However, out of the three main cities of Gordyene mentioned by Strabo, only Pinaka can be safely identified. For a long time, Pinaka (Πίνακα) has been widely identified as the modern Finik (Fenek/Fenik) based exclusively on linguistic terms,<sup>127</sup> but there is nowadays archaeological evidence which may support this identification.<sup>128</sup> Recent excavations near the villages of Eski Yaptı (Fenik/Fenek/Finik) on the east bank and Eski Hendek on the west bank of the Tigris, some 13 km north of Cizre, have revealed massive fortifications on both sides of the Tigris that are identified as an usually large 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE Roman castellum.<sup>129</sup> What is more, there is an abundance of Hellenistic and typically Parthian pottery on the east bank portion of the settlement (at Finik), which shows that the Roman fortress was a continuation of earlier settlements.<sup>130</sup> The Parthian occupation in this area is also confirmed by the presence of two monumental rock reliefs in Parthian style in the nearest proximity of Finik:<sup>131</sup> both are worn-out, but one of them is in a better condition and has been dated variously from the 1<sup>st</sup> c. CE to the early 3<sup>rd</sup> c. CE.<sup>132</sup> Furthermore, in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE Ammianus claimed that the ancient name of the fortress Bezabde was *Phaenica*. However, the idea that Ammianus' Phaenica/Bezabde could be identified with Finik was rejected

<sup>125</sup> Biffi 2002, 167; Radt 2009, 280. Γάγγιτις is likely to be emendated into either ἐγγαγίς known from Nikander, *Theriaca* 37 or Γαγάτης known from Isidor, *Origenes*, 16.4.3. The latter is a kind of bitumen.

<sup>126</sup> Note that, among others, this fact helped to identify Josephus' Καρπῶν in *Ant.* 20.25 as Gordyene (Barish 1983, 69–70 and Marciak 2011b, 192, n. 84).

<sup>127</sup> Weissbach 1920, 2497; Markwart 1930, 9–10; Dillemann 1962, 111.

<sup>128</sup> Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

<sup>129</sup> Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

<sup>130</sup> Algaze 1989, 248–252; Algaze, Breuninger, Lightfoot, Rosenberg 1991, 191–192.

<sup>131</sup> Mathiesen 1992, 185 (nos. 145–146).

<sup>132</sup> Debevoise 1942, 103; Nogaret 1984, 263; Mathiesen 1992, 185 (no. 145).

by Bell and Dillemann.<sup>133</sup> The excavators at Eski Hendek, however, suggest that the Roman castellum could well match Ammianus' data on Bezabde/Phaenica, and consequently the linguistic form, *Phaenica*, could be a missing link between Strabo's *Pinaka* and the modern *Finik*.<sup>134</sup>

We are much less fortunate with the identification of the two other cities mentioned by Strabo. According to Kiepert's map, Strabo's Σάρεισα could be identified with Šareš (located in the Tūr 'Abdīn region west of the Tigris).<sup>135</sup> Sachau in turn suggests that Strabo's *Sareisa* is identical to Ši-ri-eš-še, mentioned in Assyrian records commemorating Tiglatpileser I's victory over his enemies – Kumuḫ and Kur-ṭi-e<sup>136</sup> – and can perhaps be identified with a small village called Šariš or Šiērš (sic) located on the east bank of the Tigris.<sup>137</sup> Modern assyriologists, however, differ from Sachau in the identification of the toponyms mentioned in Assyrian annals – first, they do distinguish two cities bearing a similar name – Šarišša and Šērišša – both located in Central Anatolia;<sup>138</sup> secondly, they locate Kumuḫ on the west bank of the upper Euphrates and see it as a predecessor of Kommagene.<sup>139</sup> Thus, the geographical context set by the modern interpretation of Assyrian toponyms is remote from Sachau's suggestion – that is, there is no unambiguous evidence for Strabo's *Sareisa* or any of its equivalents in Assyrian texts. Again, according to Sinclair, Strabo's *Sareisa* is the modern Shakh located north-east of Cizre on the southern slopes of the Cudi Dağı.<sup>140</sup> There is, however, no archaeological or epigraphical data from this area to back up this suggestion, and the linguistic similarity does not really seem to be close at all.

As far as Strabo's Σάταλκα is concerned, Dillemann suggests the modern Chattakh, a settlement located on the Bohtan River.<sup>141</sup> The location itself is possible only if we accept Syme's observation – which seems to be likely – that Strabo does not know the west Tigris and to him this river starts as either the

<sup>133</sup> Bell 1911, 299; Dillemann 1962, 84, 111. Consequently, Bezabde was thought to be located not at Eski Hendek but under Cizre in the Turkish–Syrian border area. For a concise overview of possible locations of Bezabde, see Lightfoot 1983: 189–204.

<sup>134</sup> Algaze 1989, 248–252. Also already Hartmann 1897, 98 with some caution.

<sup>135</sup> This is accepted by Hübschmann 1904, 334, n. 2; Dillemann 1962, 111. Weissbach 1920, 2497 also speaks of Šariš, “das freilich nicht am Tigris, sondern an einem von rechts kommenden Nebenfluß liegt“.

<sup>136</sup> Sachau 1897, 51–52. This identification was already called into question by Langdon, Gardiner 1920, 196.

<sup>137</sup> Sachau 1883, 416. Markwart 1930, 9–10 also prefers the east bank of the Tigris as the location of Sareisa, but considers the west bank “nicht unwahrscheinlich”.

<sup>138</sup> Del Monte, Tischler 1978, 360–361; Forlanini 1998, 221; Wilhelm 2009, 61–62.

<sup>139</sup> Hawkins 1980–83, 338–340.

<sup>140</sup> Sinclair 1989, 359.

<sup>141</sup> Dillemann 1962, 111.



Bitilis or the Bohtan River.<sup>142</sup> Lastly, Sinclair suggested the modern Eskieruh (formerly called Sedukh) as Strabo's *Satalka*.<sup>143</sup> Eskieruh is located north-east of Cizre on the southern slopes of the Cudi Dağ.<sup>144</sup> In either case, the identification rests on the *alleged* similarity of names, and there is no archaeological data like in Finik to reinforce these suggestions.

We hear of Gordyene twice in Book 6 of Pliny's *Historia Naturalis*<sup>145</sup>. Like in Strabo's long enumeration of geographical and ethnographical entities, Gordyene is only mentioned briefly. In *HN* 6.43–44, while sketching the map of Asia, Pliny's look at this part of the world moves from Media to the Caspian Sea. At some point, he states that “joining on to the Adiabeni are the people formerly called the Carduchi (*Carduchi*) and now the Cordueni (*Cordueni*), past whom flows the river Tigris, and adjoining these are the ‘Roadside’ *Pratitae*, as they are called, who hold the Caspian Gates”. In turn, in *HN* 6.129 Gordyene appears in the context of the course of the Tigris, which after receiving as tributaries from Armenia the *Parthenias* and the *Nikephorion*, “makes a frontier between the Arab tribes of the Orroei and Adiabeni and forms the region of Mesopotamia mentioned above; it then traverses the mountains of the Gurdiaei (*montes Gurdiaeorum*), flowing round Apamea, a town belonging to Mesene, and 125 miles short of Babylonian Seleucia splits into two channels ...”.

Pliny's *Pratitae* are hard to identify. Solinus, Pliny's 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE interpreter,<sup>146</sup> calls the *Pratitae* a Median tribe.<sup>147</sup> Pliny's nickname, *παρ' ὁδὸν*, indicates that they were a nomadic tribe and as such could frequently change the place of settlement. In Pliny's *HN* 6.43–44, their location is connected with the access to a travel and trade route whose control (tolls taken from travelers) enabled them to make a living. In turn, the interpretation of the *Caspian Gates* constitutes a notorious problem as ancient sources do not use this term with much consistency – at least three passes could be called by this name: first, the *Caspian Gates* proper, a set of defiles between Media and Parthia (east of Tehran); second, the pass of Darial through the central Caucasus; third and lastly, the pass of Darband between the Caucasus and the Caspian Sea.<sup>148</sup> It seems that the most tangible clue given by Pliny in *HN* 6.43–44 is his reference to the Adiabeni, located along the western frontier of the Zagros. This connection could suggest that the *Caspian Gates* in *HN* 6.43–44 are confused

<sup>142</sup> Syme 1995, 28–29.

<sup>143</sup> Sinclair 1989, 359.

<sup>144</sup> Sinclair 1989, 359.

<sup>145</sup> Pliny's text used here is that of Rackham 1942.

<sup>146</sup> Brodersen 2011, 64–65, 70.

<sup>147</sup> Brodersen 2011, 81.

<sup>148</sup> See Anderson 1928, 130–163 (esp. 130–131); Kettenhofen 1994, 13–19 (esp. 13–14).

with the Median Gates that open access to Media (especially Ecbatana) across the Zagros.<sup>149</sup>

As for *HN* 6.129, Pliny's Orroei (see also *HN* 6.117) are widely acknowledged as the people of Osrhoene (later Edessa),<sup>150</sup> but the fact that he puts them next to the Adiabeni is seen as an exaggeration, since such a territorial extent of Osrhoene to the east would ignore other ethno-geographical entities between Osrhoene and Adiabeni – e.g. Rhesaina, Nisibis, Singara.<sup>151</sup> As for the Parthenias River, the Greek Παρθενιάς (clearly corresponding to the Greek παρθένος, but, like all river names in Greek, being masculine<sup>152</sup>) has been suggested to correspond to the Syriac *Kallpa* meaning *a bride*, the latter also being called *νυμφίος* (*a bridegroom*) in Latin sources,<sup>153</sup> and is widely identified as the modern Batman River.<sup>154</sup> The identification of the *Nikephorion* is not clear at all. This river is also mentioned by Tacitus, *Ann.* 15.4 in his description of Tigranokerta (a part of its walls is said to be encircled by the *Nicephorius*), and as the identification of this city is a notorious problem, the more so is Tacitus' reference to the *Nikephorion/Nicephorius* whose identification depends on that of the site of Tigranokerta.<sup>155</sup> The most frequently suggested identification is either the Garzan River or one of the tributaries of the Batman River.<sup>156</sup> Lastly, the fact that Pliny puts the mountains of Gordyene after the Mesopotamia region and next to Apamea in Babylonia reminds us of some traditions present in Strabo which are apparently derived from Eratosthenes and indeed located Gordyene in the most southern areas of the Fertile Crescent.

In Ptolemy's *Geographika* we find two brief references to Gordyene.<sup>157</sup> Chapter 13 of Book 5 is devoted to the description of Greater Armenia, and in this context, in *Geog.* 5.13.5 Ptolemy mentions the mountains of Gordyene (τὰ

<sup>149</sup> Syme 1995, 45. By contrast, Anderson 1928, 130–131 considers Pliny's Caspian Gates in *HN* 6.43–44 to be the Caspian Gates proper.

<sup>150</sup> H.J.W. Drijvers 1977, 866; Millar 1993, 456–457; Ross 2001, 22–23; Sartre 2005, 239; Edwell 2008, 11.

<sup>151</sup> Ross 2001, 22–23.

<sup>152</sup> Different translations have been suggested for the masculine παρθενιάς – *der Jungfräuliche* (Suerbaum 1981, 1245, n. 176 with caution) or *a son of a concubine* (*LSJ* 1339b).

<sup>153</sup> Brockelmann 1928, 326–327: *Kallpa*; Markwart 1930, 82: *Kallap*; Sokoloff 2009, 628: *Kallpa*. For the etymology of Parthenias and Nymphios and their use as a cognomen in ancient literature and Latin inscriptions, see Suerbaum 1981, 1244–1245 and nn. 175–176; Kittel, Friedrich, Bromiley 1985, 657; Noy 1993, 203.

<sup>154</sup> Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 82, 121; Honigmann 1935, 5; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Blockley 1984, 31–32; Wheeler 1991, 506; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

<sup>155</sup> Markwart 1930, 82–83; Sinclair 1994–95, 203.

<sup>156</sup> See Eckhardt 1909, 409; Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 120–121; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

<sup>157</sup> The translation used here is that of Hewsens 1982, 148–150. The Greek text is that of Stückelberger, Graßhoff 2006, 548 and 554.

Γορδυαῖα ὄρη) and categorizes them as one of the ranges belonging to the mountains of Armenia (notably, the same in Ptolemy refers to the Zagros Mountains). Ptolemy locates the middle of the Gordyene Mountains at 75° 39' 40". Likewise in *Geog.* 5.13.20 Ptolemy states that “towards the East extending from the sources of the Tigris River is Bagrauandene and, below it, Gordyene (Γορδυηνή), east of which is Kotaia and, below it, the Mardoï.<sup>158</sup>

Ptolemy's ethnonyms are not easy to identify. His *Bagrauandēnē* may correspond to the name of a province known from Armenian sources: *Bagrewand*, located on the modern Ağri plain.<sup>159</sup> It has been suggested that this name derives from either the Old Iranian \**bāya.raivanta*, meaning *rhubarb garden*<sup>160</sup>, or the Iranian, *baga-raēvanta*- meaning *des reichen Spenders (Mithra)*.<sup>161</sup> In Russell's opinion, only the second etymology is correct, but should be translated as *of the bounteous God (Ahura Mazda)* as the epithet *raēvant*- is characteristic of *Ahura Mazda* in Zoroastrian texts.<sup>162</sup> Kotaia has likewise been suggested to correspond to Armenian toponyms, that is to \*Kortaia preserved in the Armenian as Korčayk', and consequently to match the Armenian territory of Korčayk' or one of its subdivisions.<sup>163</sup> The identification of the *Mardoï* is problematic, since ancient sources mention *Mardoï* (and *Amardoï*) in different locations of the Middle East (the eastern shore of the Black Sea, Armenia, Media, and Persia).<sup>164</sup> As Pliny's general description takes the sources of the Tigris as a starting point and then moves east and south-east, the Mardi in Armenia are most likely meant in *Geog.* 5.12.9.<sup>165</sup> The Armenian *Mardoï* also appear in Xen., *Anab.* 4.3.4, Str. *Geog.* 11.13.3, Plutarch, *Ant.* 41–48, Tac. *Ann.* 14.23.<sup>166</sup> Especially Plutarch, *Ant.* 41–48 and Tac. *Ann.* 14.23 give more precise clues as to the location of the Armenian *Mardoï* – in Plutarch, *Ant.* 41–48 the *Mardoï* are described as harassing Mark Antony's troops during their withdrawal after the unsuccessful siege of Phraaspa; in Tac. *Ann.* 14.23 we hear of Corbulo's troops marching from Artaxata down to Tigranokerta and being attacked by the *Mardoï*. Generally speaking, both actions can be located in the modern region of Vaspurakan, north-east of Lake Van.<sup>167</sup> This location could be enhanced by the fact that the name of a later Armenian province, *Mardastan*, is derived from the Greek ethnonym

<sup>158</sup> Hewsens 1982, 150.

<sup>159</sup> Markwart 1930, \*11; Russell 1985, 452–453; Howard-Johnston 2006, X.

<sup>160</sup> Minorsky 1965, 149.

<sup>161</sup> Markwart 1930, \*11.

<sup>162</sup> Russell 1985, 453.

<sup>163</sup> Minorsky 1940, 150; Hewsens 1982, 115.

<sup>164</sup> Andreas 1894, 1729–1733; Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651.

<sup>165</sup> Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651.

<sup>166</sup> Weissbach 1930b, 1648–1651; Syme 1995, 31, n. 25.

<sup>167</sup> Syme 1995, 31.

Μάρδοι, and this province was located east of Lake Van.<sup>168</sup> To conclude, Ptolemy's Gordyene lies south of the sources of the Tigris and south of Lake Van.



Sketch map of the Upper Tigris region.

Data gleaned from the geographical and ethnographical accounts of Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy allows us to approximately sketch the location of ancient Gordyene. In the most general terms, the Gordyaeans were settled alongside the Tigris and south of Lake Van (Str. 11.14.8, 16.1.21; Pliny *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129; Ptolemy 5.12.19). To be more precise, the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were located alongside the Tigris and before its bend marking the beginning of the Upper Mesopotamia valley (Str. 2.1.26). This means that the mountains north of modern Cizre suit this data best (Str. 2.1.26 and Xen. *Anab.* 3.4.10–12; 3.5.13–16; 4.1.1–9). Although the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were located south of Armenia proper, they could also be categorized as belonging to the massif of the Armenian Mountains in general (Str. 2.1.26 and Ptol. 5.12.2). The country of the Gordyaeans (not exclusively the mountains) can also be located alongside the course of the Tigris (Str. *Geog.* 16.1.24), but more down the river course, so that the Gordyaeans were neighbored by the Adiabeni (Str. *Geog.* 16.1.1 and 16.1.8; Pliny, *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129) and exposed to the nomadic tribes of the Upper Mesopotamian valley (Str. *Geog.* 16.1.1 and 16.1.8; Pliny *HN* 6.43–44, 6.129). Especially because of the fact the Gordyaeans had contact with Mes-

<sup>168</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 207, 239, n.2 and 343–344.

opotamian nomadic tribes, which would apparently cross the Tigris seasonally into the Gordyaeans territory for pasture, some ancient writers (Eratosthenes and Strabo, see Str. 11.14.8, 2.1.26) associated Gordyene, exaggeratedly and wrongly, with territories far to the south of the Fertile Crescent.

## Historiographical accounts

Some data concerning the territory of Gordyene can also be obtained through a critical reading of historiographical accounts. First and foremost, the topic of Gordyene appears prominently in ancient accounts in the context of the Mithridatic Wars (Plutarch, *Luc.* 21–36, *Pomp.* 30–36; Diodorus 40.1; Appian, *Mithr.* 105; Dio Cass. 37.5.3–4), especially with regard to Lucullus' and Pompey's campaigns during the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mithidatic War (74 or 73–63 BCE) against Tigranes the Great, who conquered Gordyene and killed its king, Zarbienes (after Zarbienes attempted to switch the sides by aligning himself with Rome).<sup>169</sup> Of special importance here for the historical geography of Gordyene is Plutarch's *Lucullus* 29–30, which describes the wintering of Roman legions in the region. Specifically, after the capture of Tigranokerta Lucullus let his troops winter in Gordyene before they set out for the campaign in the heart of the Armenian kingdom. Two details are particularly revealing in Plutarch's text. First, he stresses that the Roman soldiers found an abundance of supplies in Gordyene. This tallies perfectly with Strabo's general tendency to praise Gordyene's natural wealth. Secondly, the Romans came to Gordyene from Tigranokerta, and after the winter camp made their way to the Armenian capital, Artashat.<sup>170</sup> Provided that Tigranokerta can be located east of the Batman River, perhaps in Arzan,<sup>171</sup> which seems to be the most likely option in the present state of research,<sup>172</sup> the nearest area where Lucullus' troops could find rest is located east of the Garzan River and on the east bank of the Tigris (note that at this point Nisibis still had an Armenian garrison).<sup>173</sup> This in turn raises the question as to whether we should not see the territory of Gordyene as expanded east over the Bohtan River into the territory of what later became known as Arzanene (for Arzanene, see below). If this is the case, we can also attempt to determine Lucullus' route to the Armenian

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<sup>169</sup> For the historical context, see Holmes 1923, 192–200, 204–212; Magie 1950, 321–365, 1203–1231; Olbrycht 2009, 168–175 (and nn. 63 and 66 on p. 183), Olbrycht 2011: 276.

<sup>170</sup> Syme 1995, 55.

<sup>171</sup> On Lucullus' route from the Euphrates crossing at Tomisa to Tigranocerta, see Eckhardt 1910a, 82–89. On the Upper Euphrates frontier in general, see also Mitford 1989 and Wheeler 1991.

<sup>172</sup> Hewsen 2001, 56; Plontke-Lüning 2012.

<sup>173</sup> Eckhardt 1910a, 113–114; Eckhardt 1910b, 202–203.

capital the following spring. Namely, Lucullus could choose between three possible routes from Gordyene to reach Artashat – through the pass of Bitlis or another route around the southern rim of Lake Van into the Bayazid valley.<sup>174</sup> It seems that the Bitlis route is shorter and perhaps more convenient for larger groups; what is more, it offered more off-branches along the course, which could be vital if the Armenians tried to block any canyon.<sup>175</sup> If so, then the most probable location of the winter camp of the Roman legion under Lucullus is the territory of Gordyene, understood as the valley on the east bank of the Tigris marked by the Batman or the Garzan River to the west.<sup>176</sup> It is not entirely clear where the eastern frontier of this valley could be located, the first candidate as a natural border is the Assyrian Khabur River in the south-east.<sup>177</sup>

Another important topic concerning the historical geography of Gordyene which features predominantly in historiographical accounts is that of the Gordyaeen Mountains. In view of the above-mentioned Greek and Latin ethnographies (Str. 2.1.26; Ptol. 5.12.2, as well as Xen. *Anab.* 3.4.10–12; 3.5.13–16; 4.1.1–9), the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans can most likely be identified as a mountain range north of modern Cizre (stretching till the Bohtan River). In turn, in historiographical accounts the Gordyaeen Mountains are recalled on the occasion of the crossing of the Tigris by foreign armies – Alexander the Great against Dareios III of Persia in 331 BCE and Trajan against Parthia in 115 CE. According to Arrian (*Anab.* 3.7.7), when Alexander’s troops crossed the Tigris and marched into Assyria, they had the mountains of the Gordyaeans (τὰ Γορδυνηῶν ὄρη) on their left hand. In turn, Trajan’s troops advanced from Nisibis towards the Tigris and crossed the “stream opposite the Gordyaeen Mountains” (κατὰ τὸ Καρδύηνον ὄρος in Dio 68.26.1–2)<sup>178</sup>. Both historical accounts are of great importance for identifying the mountains of Gordyene. Taking a route in ancient times was not only a matter of personal preference, but depended on the natural environment, and the Mesopotamian region allowed only a limited number of routes which were accessible to merchants, travelers and ancient armies. In the case of the upper Tigris, there seem to be two major crossings in the

<sup>174</sup> Eckhardt 1910b, 202–203.

<sup>175</sup> Eckhardt 1910b, 202–206; Syme 1995, 55. The route located east of Lake Van could have been taken by the Romans on their way back from Armenia to Nisibis, see Eckhardt 1910b, 227–231.

<sup>176</sup> The question is whether the territory between the Batman River and the Bohtan River (which later became known as Arzanene) can be seen as a scion of Sophene or that of Gordyene. On the one hand, ethnographical and geographical texts rather locate the core of Gordyene east and south of the Bohtan River. On the other hand, Plutarch’s description could speak in favor of Gordyene as stretching further west over the Bohtan River at the time of the Third Mithridatic War.

<sup>177</sup> This is the eastern border of the territory of Gordyene according to Hartmann 1897, 91; Nöldeke 1898, 73.

<sup>178</sup> The text and translation used here is that of Cary 1925.

region in the Hellenistic and early Roman period – one in the neighborhood of Eski Yapt (Finik)/Eski Hendek and/or Cizre and another further to the south-east – at Nimrud.<sup>179</sup> The first crossing point was closer to Nisibis, and so it must have been used by Trajan's troops. This must also have been the same place where "the Ten Thousand" decided not to cross the river, but to head north into the mountains of Karduchoi (as they passed by the first crossing at Larisa/Nimrud). It is less clear, however, whether Alexander the Great used either the first or the second crossing.<sup>180</sup> All in all, given the fact that the Gordyean Mountains are frequently recalled in historical accounts with regard to invading armies taking convenient routes of trade and war, their location can be taken as a fixed point – they stood "in full sight" of the crossing of Tigris at Bezabde (modern Eski Yapt/Eski Hendek or, less likely, Cizre).<sup>181</sup>

Gordyene again appears in the context of the Roman-Persian wars in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE, when the territory of Northern Mesopotamia changed hands several times between the two empires. To be precise, it appears in the 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE Ammianus' *Historia Romana*, where we can find three references to *Corduena* – 18.6.20, 23.3.5 and 25.7.8–9 – all made by Ammianus as an eye-witness to Roman-Persian military campaigns in the 360s; the people of *Karduene* are also mentioned by Petros Patrikios, who retrospectively wrote in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. CE about the main points of the 298 CE Roman-Persian peace treaty.

The backdrop of Ammianus' report in 18.6.20 is connected with Ammianus' scouting mission, which took place on the eve of the Persian invasion in 359 CE which reached the Roman fortress Amida.<sup>182</sup> As Roman commanders wanted to know the route of the Persian invasion, and the intelligence they had received was not clear-cut, they sent Ammianus on a scouting mission to the satrapy of Corduena, gained by the Romans in 298 but lost to the Persians during the first stage of the war.<sup>183</sup> In 18.6.20 we read that Ammianus went to *Iovinianus*, the satrap in "...*Corduena*, which was subject to the Persian power...". Ammianus says that he reached *Iovinianus* "over pathless mountains and through steep defiles". After the first meeting *Iovinianus* supplied Ammianus with an attendant who knew the country and sent them to "some lofty cliffs a long distance from there, from which, unless one's eyesight was impaired, even the smallest object was visible at a distance of fifty miles". From this location Ammianus was able to secretly observe the march of the Persian army which crossed the *Anzaba* (Great Zab) and went past Nineveh (18.7.1).

<sup>179</sup> Syme 1995, 30–31.

<sup>180</sup> Syme 1995, 30–31. See also Reade 1999 and Fig. 5.

<sup>181</sup> Syme 1995, 30–31.

<sup>182</sup> Matthews 1989, 42–44. Ammianus' text used here is that of Rolfe 1935.

<sup>183</sup> De Jonge 1980, 206; Matthews 1989, 42–44.

Where exactly could Ammianus have been located to offer such a good and informative view? On the one hand, we must observe that “we cannot expect to know exactly where Ammianus stood to get his view”, as “a glance a relief map will show that in every sector of their northern and eastern limits these wide plains are overlooked by such commanding vantage points”.<sup>184</sup> On the other, some mountain ridges are located closer to Nineveh and the Great Zab than others – especially the mountains of the Zakhō north-east of Nineveh could be a vantage point from where one could easily survey the valley around Nineveh and the Great Zab.<sup>185</sup>

In turn, in 23.3.5 Ammianus recalls *Corduena* while reporting on the early days of Caesar Julian’s invasion of the Sasanian territory in 363 CE. Namely, Julian decided to divide his forces and to send part of his troops under the generals Procopius and Sebastianus to join the Armenian king, Arsaces in engaging the Persians in northern Mesopotamia.<sup>186</sup> The forces were expected to march through *Corduena*, *Moxoena* and Median *Chiliocomum* before meeting Julian’s troops in Assyria. The opinions on the identification of *Chiliocomum* (meaning *thousand villages*<sup>187</sup>) differ considerably among scholars<sup>188</sup>: not in Media but south of Corduena in Assyria<sup>189</sup>; north of Corduena<sup>190</sup>; in Armenia<sup>191</sup>; in the upper Zab basin,<sup>192</sup> in the plain of Salmas north of the Lake Urmia.<sup>193</sup> If Moxoena is to be located north(east) of Corduena (which can also be argued on other grounds – see below), then the area between Lake Van and Lake Urmia, especially the plain of Salmas, could be a likely option.<sup>194</sup> If this identification is correct, *Chiliocomum* would indeed be located in Media Atropatene (as Ammianus calls it, unlike scholars who correct his expression as “Assyria”) and on the outskirts of the two other regions: Armenia and Assyria, which would make some sense in terms of the Roman strategy in 363 CE.<sup>195</sup>

<sup>184</sup> Matthews 1989, 48.

<sup>185</sup> Matthews 1989, 50.

<sup>186</sup> Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 41–42.

<sup>187</sup> See Dillemann’s suggestion (Dillemann 1962, 301 relying on Markwart 1930, 396–397) for the Iranian origin of *chiliocomum*.

<sup>188</sup> See Tomaschek 1899, 2278; Hübschmann 1904, 250, 338; Dillemann 1962, 300–301; den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44; den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 2002, 221–222, 229–231; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 130, n. 563.

<sup>189</sup> Rolfe 1956, 322, n. 3; Brok 1959, 59.

<sup>190</sup> Seyfarth 1970, 222, n. 23; Dignas, Winter, 132, n. 66.

<sup>191</sup> Thesaurus Linguae Latinae ad locum.

<sup>192</sup> Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58.

<sup>193</sup> Dillemann 1962, 301.

<sup>194</sup> Dillemann 1962, 301; Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58; Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44.

<sup>195</sup> Fontaine 1977b, 29, n. 58; Den Boeft, Drijvers, den Hengst, Teitler 1998, 44.



Lastly, in 25.7.9 Ammianus describes territorial negotiations in 363 CE between Emperor Jovian and the Persians after the death of the Roman Emperor Julian<sup>196</sup>. Ammianus recalls that the Persians demanded that the Romans hand over five Roman *Transtigritane* (“on the far side of the Tigris”) regions: *Arzanena*, *Moxoena*, *Zabdicensa*, *Rehimena* and *Corduena* with fifteen fortresses,<sup>197</sup> as well as *Nisibis*, *Singara*, and *Castra Maurorum*. What is more, Ammianus bitterly remarks that instead of dispatching envoys to the king of Persia, Iovianus could have reached the protection of Corduena (*praesidia Corduena*), a rich region (*uber regio*) which would have given him ground in opposing the Persian advance. Ammianus’ list of regions lost by Rome to the Persians is partly parallel to Petros Patrikios’ list that names territories gained by the Romans from the Persians in 298 CE: Intelene, Sophene, Arzanene, [the territories] of the *Karduonon* and *Zabdikene* (τὴν Ἰντηληνὴν μετὰ Σοφηνῆς καὶ Ἀρζανηνὴν μετὰ Καρδουνηῶν καὶ Ζαβδικηνῆς).<sup>198</sup> What is more, another parallel list appears in the acts of the council of the Assyrian Church at Seleukeia-Ktesiphon in 410 CE (Canon XXI) where the bishops of *Arzanene*, *Karduene*, *Zabdikene*, *Rehimene* and *Moxoene* were subjected to the church metropolis of Nisibis.<sup>199</sup>

The connection between the list handed down by Ammianus and that of Petros Patrikios is problematic. Some scholars assume that the lists should match up, that is, the territories gained by the Romans in 298 should again be listed among Roman losses in 363 CE.<sup>200</sup> This does not have to be the case, however, as the Romans apparently kept Ingilene and Sophene after 363 CE.<sup>201</sup> Thus, the parallel material in both lists in fact starts (looking from north-west to south-east down the Tigris) after Sophene, that is, most likely east of the Batman River (see below). However, there is still another problem: the territories that do appear in both lists and were apparently located east of Sophene are different – in Ammianus and in the Acts of the Seleukeia-Ktesiphon Council we find *Moxoena/Moxoene* and *Rehimena/Rehimene*, which are not listed in Petros Patrikios. The appearance of new entities east of the Batman River in the 363 CE peace treaty, *Moxoena* and *Rehimena* (and later in the council acts), could perhaps be

<sup>196</sup> Ammianus’ text used here is that of Rolfe 1940.

<sup>197</sup> It is not entirely clear whether these fortresses were located in all five provinces (Blockley 1984, 44, n. 41) or only in Corduene (Toumanoff 1963, 181).

<sup>198</sup> *Intelene* must be emendated into *Ingilene*. In turn, the preposition μετὰ has been interpreted by some scholars as an indication of a higher status of *Ingilene* towards *Sophene* and *Arzanene* towards *Karduene* with *Zabdikene* (Toumanoff 1963, 175; Winter 1989, 556). However, μετὰ functions in this context rather as a geographically orientated link (Blockley 1984, 32; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 138).

<sup>199</sup> Mosig-Walburg 2009, 128.

<sup>200</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 220, n. 3; Winter 1989, 555–557.

<sup>201</sup> Blockley 1984, 28–49; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 135–136.

explained by the fact that they were subsumed in 298 CE under a larger ethnogeographical or/and political entity, especially under Corduena.<sup>202</sup> Indeed, Petros Patrikios uses the plural Καρδοσηνῶν, which can be seen as the plural genitive and consequently translated as “of the *Karduanoi*”. Thus, Petros literally speaks of [the territories] inhabited (or politically dependent on) by the *Karduanoi*, which could include a number of various territories (under different names), e.g. Moxoena and Rehimena.<sup>203</sup>

Remarkable is the terminology used by the sources for the aforementioned territories. Ammianus speaks about *Transtigritanae regiones* (*regions beyond the Tigris*) but not *provinciae* (likewise Festus 25.3); he (Amm. Marc. 18.9.2) and some later commentators (Festus 14.5; Zosimos 3.31.1) also use the terms *gentes* and ἔθνη for the *Transtigritanae*. Furthermore, *Iovinianus*, the ruler of Corduena is called a satrap by Ammianus,<sup>204</sup> and he is also said to have lived in Rome as a hostage. Since it was customary to send only members of local elites and royal families to Rome as hostages, *Iovinianus* can at least be seen as a member of local elites,<sup>205</sup> but it is very likely that he indeed inherited his post from his ancestors. All this suggests that the upper Tigris territories contested between Rome and Persia were distinctive regions with local elites which were highly autonomous (not subsumed into Roman provinces<sup>206</sup>) and the local population could also be ethnically distinctive.<sup>207</sup>

What can be said about the locations of Ammianus’ and Petros Patrikios’ toponyms and ethnonyms east of the Batman River? Precisely in Amm. Marc. 25.7.9 the toponym *Arzanena* appears for the first time in ancient sources.<sup>208</sup> However, it

<sup>202</sup> Syme 1995, 56, n. 42; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 136–137.

<sup>203</sup> Blockley 1984, 41, n. 19; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 125. Note that Blockley 1984, 41, n. 19 proposes that Moxoene could indeed be included under Petros’ *Karduanoi*, but also be later incorporated into it as the Armenian frontier started to fall apart.

<sup>204</sup> Accordingly, Adontz, Garsoïan 1970, 25 (likewise Winter 1989, 560) call all *Transtigritanae* regions “satrapies” (esp. based on Prokopios, *Aed.* 3.1.24). This is possible, although we do not know if all *Transtigritanae* regions had the same status; the only satrapy which is explicitly attested (Ammianus 18.6.20) is Corduene (similarly Blockley 1984, 40, n. 7; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–142).

<sup>205</sup> On sending sons of local elites to Rome as hostages see Dąbrowa 1987, 63–71 (for the Parthians); Lee 1991, 366–374, esp. 371–372 (for the Sasanian period).

<sup>206</sup> See Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–147, esp. 145: “Rechtlich dem römischen Reich zugerechnet, jedoch nicht als unmittelbares Reichsgebiet betrachtet, standen sie außerhalb der römischen Provinzialverwaltung und organisierten eigenständig ihre zivile wie auch ihre Militärverwaltung”.

<sup>207</sup> Likewise (to some extent) Winter 1989, 561; Mosig-Walburg 2009, 141–148.

<sup>208</sup> Dillemann 1962, 121. Unless Pliny’s *Archene* (*HN* 6.128) or the Assyrian *Alzi* (*Chaldean Alzis*) can be associated with Arzanene. However, both identifications are not very likely (see Baumgartner 1896, 1948; Hübschmann 1904, 248–249).

is later mentioned in Byzantine and Armenian sources,<sup>209</sup> for instance, according to Prokopios of Caesarea, Arzanena was located east of the *Nymphios* River, which accounted for the border between Rome and Persia in the 6<sup>th</sup> c. CE.<sup>210</sup> In turn, Armenian sources know both the province *Aldznikh* (the Greek Ἀρζωνική and Latin *Arzanena*) and the smaller district *Arzn* (within *Aldznikh*) with its main city, *Arzen*.<sup>211</sup> If the *Nymphios* can be identified, as frequently suggested, with the Batman River,<sup>212</sup> then Arzanene can be located east of this river.<sup>213</sup> Like Arzanene, Moxoena does not appear for the first time until Ammianus (Amm. Marc. 23.3.5 and 25.7.9), but it is well-known to Armenian sources as the province *Mokkh* located east of Arzanene in the Tauros Mountains.<sup>214</sup> Hübschmann suggests that the name of the ancient *Mokkh* is preserved in the name of a modern village, Möks on the Möks River, a northern tributary of the Bohtan River.<sup>215</sup> This would suggest the location of Moxoena in the mountainous region north of the Bohtan River.<sup>216</sup>

The location of Zabdikene in general can be deduced due to Ammianus' references to its main city, Bezabde, located on the Tigris. This is because Ammianus (20.7.1–16) tells us that this city was called *Phaenica* in the past. This 'double' identity could suggest that the 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE Bezabde was a continuation of Strabo's Pinaka,<sup>217</sup> which can most likely be identified as the modern Finik on the east side of the Tigris (see also above).<sup>218</sup> Thus, generally speaking, the province of Zabdikene could be located at least around the modern Eski Yaptı and Eski Hendek. Lastly, it has been noted that the name Zabdikene is of Semitic origin,<sup>219</sup> and since ancient sources also used the ethnonym *Zabdiceni* (Amm. Marc. 20.7.1); this could suggest that the local population was largely Semitic in

<sup>209</sup> Baumgartner 1896, 1498; Dillemann 1962, 121–123.

<sup>210</sup> For Arzanene in the late sixth century, see Whitby 1983, 205–218.

<sup>211</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 248–251 (esp. 250), 305–306, 310–312.

<sup>212</sup> Lehmann-Haupt 1926, 400; Markwart 1930, 82; Honigmann 1935, 5; Dillemann 1962, 48–49, 253–254; Blockley 1984, 31–32; Wheeler 1991, 506; Talbert 2000, 1277; Kaegi 2003, 131.

<sup>213</sup> Dillemann 1962, 121–123; Syme 1995, 56.

<sup>214</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 254–255.

<sup>215</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 255.

<sup>216</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 255.

<sup>217</sup> Although the relation between Eski Yaptı (on the east side of the Tigris) and Eski Hendek (on the west side) is not entirely clear. It could be the case that Ammianus' "references to Bezabde as Phaenica were influenced by the existence of the larger and older settlement of Pinaka on the other side of the river" – Söylemez, Lightfoot 1991, 319. If so, Eski Yaptı can be identified with Strabo's Pinaka and Eski Hendek with Ammianus' Bezabde, but Bezabde would not necessarily be a continuation of Pinaka.

<sup>218</sup> Algaze 1989, 251–252. Otherwise, Bezabde has frequently been identified with the modern Cizre (see Fraenkel 1897, 378–379; M. Streck 1903, 250; Lightfoot 1983; Dignas, Winter 2007, 127, map 8).

<sup>219</sup> Hartmann 1897, 101–102; Dillemann 1962, 110.

character.<sup>220</sup> The location of Rehimena remains an enigma.<sup>221</sup> It is attested elsewhere only in Zosimos (3.31.1 as Ῥημηνῶν), but his text does not provide any new clues. It has been suggested that it must have been part of Corduene<sup>222</sup> or Zabdikene,<sup>223</sup> the former option is more likely, since the expression Petros Patrikios uses, Καρδοσηνῶν, allows such an interpretation. Lastly, *Corduena* is the Latin equivalent of the Greek Γορδοσηνή, used most frequently for the country under discussion. However, the question arises as to exactly which territory east of the Tigris is meant by Corduena by both Petros Patrikios and Ammianus. As noted, Petros Patrikios's use of Καρδοσηνῶν may include a number of principalities, e.g. Moxoena and Rehimena, and as such may be a large territorial entity. In this light, Ammianus' Corduena can be understood in a similar way – a large entity including *Moxoene* and *Rehimene*. Yet in both lists (Petros Patrikios and Ammianus), Corduena functions next to Zabdikene, and the question arises as to which of these two principalities was located on the easternmost border of the Roman Empire. Was it *Zabdikene*, as Petros Patrikios' list suggests, or was this role played by *Corduena*, as Ammianus indicates? Many scholars put Zabdikene as the easternmost region of the Transtigritanae under Roman auspices.<sup>224</sup> However, Ammianus' report on his scouting mission to *Corduena* suggests that it was *Corduena* that directly bordered on Adiabene.<sup>225</sup> Namely, Ammianus was hosted within the satrapy of *Corduena* as he went up to a vantage point from which we could see Nineveh described as one of the main cities of Adiabene.<sup>226</sup> Attempts to locate *Zabdikene* on the west bank of the Tigris<sup>227</sup> and so apparently

<sup>220</sup> Likewise Dillemann 1962, 110.

<sup>221</sup> Hewsen 1988–1989, 295 n. 56 writes “Mygdonia-Rehimēnē (the district of Nisibis)”. In turn, Hewsen 1992, 344 reports Sinclair's private communication - noting that the Armenian sound for the English ‘j’ and the French ‘dj’ “causes a problem in Classical languages, he suggests that the River Jerm, which gave its name to the district of Jermajor, and which gave Pliny (VI.30.118) his *Zerbis and Agathias* (IV.29.8) his Zirma, might also have produced a basic form ‘ERM’ upon which Syrian Beth Rehime and GK Rehim-ene (both for the district) might have been based”. According to Hewsen 1992, 344, if Sinclair's suggestion is correct, Rehimene could be located not in the valley of the Jerm (see also Hübschmann 1994, 931) but in the valley of the Zerva which includes a village called *Rehina*. Either way, the idea of placing Rehimene to the north corresponds well with the identification of Moxoena as located north of the Bohtan River, that is, they are two neighboring districts located on the northern frontier of Gordyene.

<sup>222</sup> Dillemann 1962, 210–211.

<sup>223</sup> Toumanoff 1963, 166, n. 63.

<sup>224</sup> Dodgeon, Lieu 1991, 58, 377 nn. 48–49; Dignas, Winter 2007, 31, map. 3; Hauser 2012.

<sup>225</sup> Mosig-Walburg 2009, 139.

<sup>226</sup> Dillemann 1962, 110 attempts to elevate the problem by suggesting that Zabdikene was a canton located in the interior of the satrapy of Gordyene. Both regions, though, are recalled as separate entities by Petros Patrikios and Ammianus alike.

<sup>227</sup> Hübschmann 1904, 321.

“make enough space” for *Corduena* on the east bank are not fully satisfactory either, as, first, *Zabdikene* is explicitly counted among *Transtigritanae* regions (that is, east of the Tigris).<sup>228</sup> All in all, there seems to be no fully satisfactory answer to the problem of the location of *Zabdikene* in relation to *Corduena*.<sup>229</sup>

To summarize, historiographical accounts confirm or supplement our data gained from geographical and ethnographical sources. First, the mountains inhabited by the Gordyaeans were indeed located in the area north of Cizre. Secondly, Plutarch’s report on the Roman army under Lucullus shows that not only did the territory of Gordyene include the valley on the east bank of the Tigris marked by the Bohtan River to the west and perhaps by the Assyrian Khabur River to the south-east (as in Xenophon, Strabo, Pliny and Ptolemy), but the Gordyaeans also expanded west of the Bohtan River. Thirdly, especially Petros Patrikios and Ammianus, are of paramount importance in highlighting geopolitical developments in the region in the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> century CE. First and foremost, *Corduena* stands out among other *Transtigritanae* regions in that it had its own hereditary ruler and could subdue other neighboring *Transtigritanae* regions politically, or influence them by way of migration of its population. It was also distinctive culturally and ethnically. However, its territorial extent is not entirely clear. On the one hand, the Bohtan River was its western border (Arzanene seems to be distinctive from *Corduena* or [the territories] of “of the *Karduenoi*” in the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE) and the mountainous region of Moxoena bordered *Corduena* in the north, setting the Bohtan River as *Corduena*’s northern border. However, Moxoena could at times be politically dependent on *Corduena*, and subject to the colonization of the people of *Corduena*. The issue of the eastern frontier of *Corduena* is not clear, due to uncertainties as to the location of *Zabdikene*. Based on other sources like Strabo and Plutarch, the Assyrian Khabur River could be suggested as a dividing line, but the border could also be more fluid and depend on the political constellation.

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<sup>228</sup> Perhaps this problem could be alleviated if we assume that *Zabdikene* straddled the Tigris (see Blockley 1984, 35).

<sup>229</sup> Likewise Nogaret 1984, 259 and n. 10. But see Blockley’s idea in the footnote above.

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## Abstract

Ancient Gordyene originated as the country of the Karduchoi who lived in the mountains north of modern Cizre and south of the Bohtan River (see Xenophon’s description of the march of the Greek army of “the Ten Thousand”). The origin of the Karduchoi is not entirely certain: they were either remnants of Urartian tribes or of Semitic origin. It is most likely due to the migration that after Xenophon’s times (401 BCE) the Karduchoi expanded into the Upper Tigris valley as marked by the Assyrian Khabur to the east. To the west, Gordyene likely expanded beyond the Bohtan River into the territory later known as that of Arzanene (before the time of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Mithidatic War – 74 or 73–63 BCE). Likewise, Gordyene expanded north of the Bohtan River – in the sources from the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> c. CE one can see traces of the political influence of Corduena (and/or of the human migration of its people) over the Bohtan into Moxoena and Rehimena. Gordyene was an urbanized and wealthy country throughout its history due to natural resources such as naphtha, bitumen, amomum, wine and corn. What is more, ancient Gordyene owed its political importance to its strategic location on the course of the upper Tigris. Not surprisingly, the most important cities in Gordyene were located on the Tigris, and apparently their primary function was to guard important river crossings and access points to mountain passes.





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## THE POLITICAL-MILITARY STRATEGY OF ARTABANOS/ARDAWĀN II IN AD 34–37<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** Artabanos/Ardawān, Parthia, Arsacids, Iran, strategy.

### Introduction

Artabanos (in Parthian Ardawān) II, king of Parthia (ca. AD 8/9–39/40), has had quite a number of studies devoted to him, but in spite of this his achievements and assessment still arouse controversy.<sup>2</sup> In this paper I intend to analyse the policies Artabanos II pursued circa AD 34–37. Germanicus' intervention in Armenia in AD 18 led to the conclusion of a compromise settlement between Rome and the Parthians that secured over a decade of peace between the two empires. According to the settlement, Zeno/Artaxias III, elevated to the throne of Armenia by Artabanos II in 15, was confirmed by Germanicus in 18. Moreover Rome revoked its support of Vonones' claim to the throne of Parthia and Germanicus even had him interned. Thereby the Roman Empire recognised Artabanos as ruler of Parthia.<sup>3</sup> Artabanos now obtained an opportunity to consolidate his authority in Parthia, in which several political factions were struggling for power.<sup>4</sup> One of the factions

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<sup>2</sup> On Artabanos II's reign, see: Kahrstedt 1950; Koshelenko 1963; Dąbrowa 1983; 1989; Schottky 1991; Olbrycht 1998, 138–156; 2013b.

<sup>3</sup> On the settlement between Germanicus and Artabanos, see Ziegler 1964, 58; Olbrycht 2013b (with new assessment).

<sup>4</sup> These factions are defined in Olbrycht 1997, 81–82, 96–98; 1998, 138–145; 2013b (with new insights).

(which may be termed the "Phraatids") comprised the Sūrēn and the Kārin clans, who for a long time after the death of Orodes III endeavoured to restore Phraates IV's elder offspring (Vonones I, Phraates, Tiridates II) to the throne of Parthia, and for this cause went so far as connivance with Rome. The second faction (the Hyrcanian-Dahaeen) consisted of grandees who were adherents of the Arsacid line presumably descended from Mithradates II (122–87 BC). Its chief centers were located in Hyrcania, Parthia proper, and Dahestan. Another group was linked to Media Atropatene.

In view of the strength of some of the regional rulers and clans Artabanos' task was not easy. His success in this respect was incomplete, as evidenced by the emergence of an effectively independent Jewish dominion in Babylonia under the brothers Asinaios and Anilaios (Ios. *ant.* 18.311–370).<sup>5</sup> They rebelled against the Arsacid rule, rallied a bunch of desperadoes to their cause, raised a stronghold, and exacted tribute from the inhabitants of Babylonia. In view of the difficulties in crushing separatism and the hostility of some of his vassals and clans, Artabanos decided to reinforce his position not so much by removing his rivals in Parthia itself, for which he did not have sufficient resources, but rather by scoring victories in wars with neighboring enemies. Foreign wars were means whereby he could engage even those factions which were not enthusiastic supporters of his rule in Parthia – conquest and spoils were a common interest.

Following the treaty with Germanicus (AD 18–19) Artabanos was free to focus his attention on the eastern and north-eastern marches of the Parthian Empire. Tacitus' account leaves no doubt as to his doings – Artabanos was victorious in wars with neighbouring peoples.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately the Roman sources provide no concrete data, but on the basis of a few hints we may draw some conclusions about his actions. One of the objects of Artabanos' interests appears to have been Chorasmia/Khwarezm. Artabanos was most probably active in Bactria as well, at least in its western part, which had been in the Parthian sphere of influence and power for at least two centuries. An important factor were the changes in eastern Iran and Afghanistan, where the opportunity created by the domestic squabbles in Parthia after the death of Phraates IV was seized to obtain independence. It is certainly no co-incidence that in about 20 a ruler called Gondophares emerged there and set up a strong Indo-Parthian state with its nerve centre in Sakastan and Arachosia, lands which had belonged to the Parthian Empire still in the reign of Phraates IV (38/7 – 3 BC).<sup>7</sup> Most probably Artabanos and Gondophares reached a compromise whereby the Indo-Parthians promised not to interfere in the affairs of western Parthia; from

<sup>5</sup> Goodblatt 1987; Fowler 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Tac. *ann.* 6.31.1: *fretus bellis, quae secunda adversum circumiectas nationes exercuerat* (...).

<sup>7</sup> As confirmed by Isidoros of Charax in his *Stathmoi Parthikoi*.



the outset their area of interest had been the territories of southern Afghanistan, Kabulistan and the Valley of the Indus.<sup>8</sup>

### Artabanos' demands on Rome

On the death of Artaxias III, king of Armenia (ca. 34), Artabanos sent an army into Transcaucasia and set his son Arsakes on the Armenian throne (Tac. *ann.* 6.31.1).<sup>9</sup> The Romans were quick to respond and there was a drastic deterioration in relations between the two powers.<sup>10</sup>

On conquering Armenia Artabanos sent an embassy to Rome to represent Parthia's demands to Tiberius. The Parthians wanted the return of Vonones' treasury, which was in Syria and Cilicia.<sup>11</sup> Perhaps Artabanos thought that the elderly Tiberius was not fit enough to conduct a war (Tac. *ann.* 6.31.1):

*[sc. Artabanus] metu Germanici fidus Romanis, aequabilis in suos, mox superbiam in nos, saevitiam in popularis sumpsit, fretus bellis quae secunda adversum circumiectas nationes exercuerat, et senectutem Tiberii ut inermem despiciens avidusque Armeniae, cui defuncto rege Artaxia Arsacen liberorum suorum veterrimum imposuit, addita contumelia et missis qui gazam a Vonone relictam in Syria Ciliciaque reposcerent; simul veteres Persarum ac Macedonum terminos seque invasurum possessa Cyro et post Alexandro per vaniloquentiam ac minas iaciebat.*

Artabanos' threats of attack on Roman territories were exceptionally aggressive. The grounds for his claims went back to Alexander and the Achaemenids. Artabanos' strategic goal was offensive in character, since according to Dio (58.26.1) after invading Armenia he intended to attack Roman Cappadocia. Many historians have overlooked this aspect. There is nothing in Artabanos' embassy about a demand the Romans return specific territories. What he was threatening them with was an attack on lands controlled by Rome to the west of the Euphrates. Having a strong army at the time, Artabanos could expect to come out victorious

<sup>8</sup> On Artabanos' activities in Chorasmia, Bactria and eastern Iran, see Olbrycht 1998, 144–145; 212–220; 2000. On Parthian-Bactrian relations, see Rtveldzde 1995; 2000. On Parthian-Chorasmian cultural links, see Kidd/Betts 2010, 637–686; Kidd 2011.

<sup>9</sup> To that Arsakes may relate a note in Philostratus, *Vita Apollonii* 2.2. The installation of Arsakes must have been implemented shortly before the arrival of Parthian envoys to Rome, placed by Dio 58.26.1–2 in the year 35. Artaxias III probably died a year or so earlier. Tacitus' account of Artabanos' offensive in Armenia, the Parthian delegation in Rome and Roman actions supporting Phraates and Tiridates (*ann.* 6.31–37) belongs to the year 35 (Martin 2001, 20), but reports the events of two years (*ann.* 6.38.1).

<sup>10</sup> On the 34–37 struggles on Armenia, see: Chaumont 1976, 88–91; 1987, 423; Dąbrowa 1983, 108–109; 1989, 316–317; Ash 1999.

<sup>11</sup> Tacitus uses for a treasury the Iranian term *gaza* (see also *ann.* 6.37.3 and Suet. *Tib.* 49.2), a fact attesting his good knowledge of the realia. For *gaza* / *gazan-*, see Boyce 2000. The term *gaza* is also used by Curt. 3.13.5.

from a confrontation with Rome. The reference to the borders in the times of Cyrus and Alexander was a propaganda ploy and it was obvious that their restoration was not what he had on his mind, but rather to show that the Arsacids had a better right than Rome to rule in Asia. Perhaps Tacitus mentions Syria and Cilicia, and Dio adds Cappadocia, for a good reason. These regions had been in the Parthian sphere of interest and expansion ever since Mithradates II.<sup>12</sup> Significantly, in 37 Artabanos threatened to attack Syria, and the Romans took his threat as a real danger. Perhaps, then, in 34–36 Artabanos' strategic aim was to take the borderlands along the Euphrates, pushing the Romans away from the river and therefore also out of Armenia and Mesopotamia, in order to secure a good bargaining position for subsequent negotiations. His main objective was Armenia and what he sought was Rome's recognition of Parthian power in that country.

Most historians who discuss Tac. *ann.* 6.31.1 concentrate on the reference to the Achaemenid tradition, which indeed the Parthians used on many occasions.<sup>13</sup> However, it should be observed that alongside the Persians Tacitus also enumerates Alexander and the Macedonians. Perhaps this double declaration may be attributed especially to the political tradition of Media Atropatene, which Artabanos ruled before he won the throne of Parthia. He was a relative, or at least a kinsman, of the Atropatids, the reigning dynasty in Atropatene for three centuries until the times of Phraates IV.<sup>14</sup> This house owed its origin to Atropates, a loyal satrap of Darius III (336–330 BC), later Alexander's faithful governor and general. Atropates' daughter married Perdikkas, who became regent on Alexander's death. Thus already Atropates, the founder of the dynasty, combined both the Iranian and Macedonian political and cultural traditions.<sup>15</sup> This episode shows that Alexander's image in Parthian Iran was not simply negative, but that there were also groups who saw him as one of the great rulers of Iran who could be referred to in situations of conflict with Rome – a foreign power.<sup>16</sup>

Artabanos' claim to the throne of Parthia was disputed, and this challenge is reflected in the Roman sources, largely on the inspiration of the sons and grandsons of Phraates IV. They had been living in Rome since 10 BC<sup>17</sup> and since the times of Vonones I, with the support of Rome, endeavoured to regain the Parthian throne.<sup>18</sup> Characteristically, in his claims against Rome and the pro-Roman Parthian usurpers Artabanos never referred to the legitimacy of his reign, since presumably for him there was no doubt that he was a member of the Arsacid

<sup>12</sup> Olbrycht 2009; 2011.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Wolski 1976, 204–205; Wiesehöfer 1986, 177–185; Olbrycht 1997a, 42–44.

<sup>14</sup> On Media Atropatene, see Pani 1972; Schottky 1989; Aliev 1989.

<sup>15</sup> Heckel 2006, s.v. Atropates; Olbrycht 2013, 160–161, 171.

<sup>16</sup> Olbrycht 2010, 368.

<sup>17</sup> Dąbrowa 1987.

<sup>18</sup> Details in Olbrycht 2013a.

family. It is probably no coincidence that his eldest son was named Arsakes, after the founder of the dynasty. On the other hand he did make reference to the Achaemenids and to Alexander, familiar figures in Rome and associated with the power and wealth of Asia. At any rate the image of Alexander served as a model for Roman generals like Pompey and emperors like Caligula.<sup>19</sup>

Writing about Artabanos' letter to Tiberius, Suetonius (*Tib.* 66) uses loftier language than Tacitus and relates that Artabanos apparently reminded Tiberius of his crimes and suggested he commit suicide.

*Quin et Artabani Parthorum regis laceratus est litteris parricidia et caedes et ignaviam et luxuriam obicientis monentisque, ut voluntaria morte maximo iustissimoque civium odio quam primum satis faceret.*

Many historians have cast doubt on the letter's authenticity.<sup>20</sup> Actually Suetonius' account confirms that Artabanos did not mince words with Tiberius. The charge Suetonius brings against Tiberius is specific: *parricidia et caedes*. *Parricidium*, parricide, need not only have meant the killing of one's parents, but also of other members of one's family. *Caedes* meant "crime" or "atrocities" in general. Applied to Tiberius, the accusation of murdering his relatives seems self-evident: his reign entailed a long series of murders of dignitaries and his close relatives. In view of the special respect the King of Parthia had for Germanicus it would be quite natural to conjecture that he made his accusation chiefly in connection with one of the biggest scandals of Tiberius' reign – the mysterious death of Germanicus and the slaughter of his sons Nero Iulius Caesar and Drusus. Tiberius was notorious for his cruelty and crimes. A distinctly political purpose may be detected in Artabanos II's accusations: he wanted to blacken Tiberius' name in Roman eyes, and at the same time to express his support for Germanicus' sole surviving son, Caligula, who was still in jeopardy of oppressive measures from Tiberius. Artabanos II did not mince his words, and they could well have been read by Tiberius' enemies in Rome as a signal that the time had come to assassinate the old Emperor. This interpretation is to some extent speculative, but fairly realistic in view of the situation in Rome at the time. Although Tiberius' political and military counter-offensive of the years 35–36 was successful initially, Artabanos recovered Armenia still in 36 and was soon threatening Rome with war again.

## The Sūrēn clan and Phraates the Pretender

Artabanos overestimated his chances of resolving the domestic conflicts in the Parthian Empire on the strength of his military victories in 20–34. The old

<sup>19</sup> Malloch 2001; Kühnen 2008.

<sup>20</sup> Ziegler 1964, 60, n. 109.

conflicts revived with their full force and with Roman connivance. The chief agency in the attempts to weaken his position was the Sūrēn clan. When tension again flared up between Parthia and Rome, the supporters of the Phraatids, who had been debilitated for some time and with no chance of success, again lifted up their heads, sensing an opportunity for a successful rebellion backed by Rome.

A delegation of the Parthian Sūrēn clan arrived in secret in Rome to fetch prince Phraates, son of Phraates IV, thereby once more making the Phraatid party a hostage to Roman policy. Adherents of Phraates' line preferred to precipitate a foreign intervention rather than acknowledge Artabanos as monarch (Tac. *ann.* 6.31.1–2; Dio 58.26.1–2). The leaders of this faction were Sinnakes, a member of the wealthy Sūrēn clan, and a eunuch named Abdus. Their envoys made telling representations. They claimed that Artabanos was not the legitimate king, that he had killed many of the Arsacids, while others were still too young. Two expressions denoting lawful descent from the Arsacids occur in Tacitus' account: *gens Arsacidarum* and *genus Arsacis*. What the Phraatid envoys really meant was a descendant of Phraates IV. In his assessment Tacitus is explicit about the humiliation of the Parthians and the prevalence of Rome: the Phraatid envoys said that all they wanted from Rome was "only a name (...) and an authority; only, in fact, that, with Caesar's consent, a scion of the house of Arsaces should show himself on the banks of the Euphrates" (*nomine tantum et auctore opus, sponte Caesaris ut genus Arsacis ripam apud Euphratis cerneretur* – *ann.* 6.31.2).

### Rome's counteraction and Artabanos' retreat

Tiberius turned out to be a more formidable adversary than Artabanos had expected. At the outset the situation for Rome was difficult, but Tiberius made skilful use of the domestic tensions in Parthia. He appointed Lucius Vitellius governor of Syria.<sup>21</sup> His real mission was to conduct the principal actions against Artabanos while at the same time leading negotiations with him. Tiberius ordered Vitellius to take hostages from Artabanos, in particular his son. The Romans induced the Iberians, Albanians and Sarmatians to join the campaign in Armenia against Artabanos and Arsakes.<sup>22</sup> Rome's trump card in this game was the Phraatid faction, led by the Sūrēn, whose activities were a major obstacle on Artabanos' path. The extent of his debility and helplessness with respect to the Sūrēn is evidenced by his reaction to news of the conspiracy. Artabanos managed

<sup>21</sup> Dabrowa 1998, 39–40; Seager 2005, 203.

<sup>22</sup> On the situation in Transcaucasia, see Gagoshidze 2008, 14.

to have the eunuch Abdus poisoned, but all he could do about Sinnakes was to “delay him with deception and gifts” and “keep him occupied”.<sup>23</sup>

Tiberius provided Phraates with money and sent him out to Syria.<sup>24</sup> The usurper tried to acquire Parthian manners but probably sustained an accident while riding or during a hunt; Tacitus writes that he was carried off by a disease (*ann.* 6.32.1–3; Dio 58.26.2 does not give the cause of Phraates’ death). Thereupon Tiberius ordered Tiridates, a grandson of Phraates IV, to set out for Syria (*Tac. ann.* 6.37.3; Dio 58.26.2). The date of Phraates’ death was probably 35, while Tiridates’ expedition was launched in late 35 or in 36.<sup>25</sup>

The general picture was as follows: Tiberius gave his support successively to two candidates to the throne of Parthia: Phraates and Tiridates. The Alans, Iberians, and Albanians defeated the Parthians in Transcaucasia. The opposition party to Artabanos raised its head and the king had to retreat to Hyrcania, Dahestan, and Khorasan. Thus the war was waged on a vast territory, from Syria and Transcaucasia to the Transcaspian steppes, and from the Caucasus to Babylonia.

### Parthian defeat in Transcaucasia

The key role in the Roman plan was ascribed to Iberia, where the reigning monarch was Pharasmanes, who was in conflict with his brother Mithridates. Tiberius sent a letter to Pharasmanes, reconciled the brothers, and ordered Mithridates to seize control of Armenia.<sup>26</sup> Large amounts of money induced not only the Iberians, but also the Albanians to join in the fighting against Parthia. In addition the Iberians brought nomadic troops into Armenia (*Tac. ann.* 6.32.3–4; *Ios. ant.* 18.96–97; Dio 58.26.2–4). Whereas the Iberians were pro-Roman on a fairly regular basis, the Albanians, who were often at odds with the Iberians (see *Tac. ann.* 12.45.1), frequently sided with Parthia. However, sometimes under pressure from Rome and the Iberians they could be compelled to turn against the Arsacids.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>23</sup> *Tac. ann.* 6.32.1–2: *Valuit tamen utilitas, ut Abdum specie amicitiae vocatum ad epulas lento veneno inligaret, Sinnacen dissimulatione ac donis, simul per negotia moraretur.* It is worth pointing out that Tacitus (*ann.* 6.32.4) praises Vitellius’ conduct as legate of Syria. It reflects well on Tiberius’ handling of policy as well. *Ios. ant.* 18.96–100 gives an account of Tiberius’ counter-strike, but does not mention the usurpers sponsored by Rome.

<sup>24</sup> *Tac. ann.* 6.32.3; Dio 58.26.2. Cf. Ziegler 1964, 60.

<sup>25</sup> Olbrycht 2013b.

<sup>26</sup> *Tac. ann.* 6.32; Dio 58.26.4. Cf. Braund 1994, 219.

<sup>27</sup> *Tac. ann.* 4.5.2 lists Albania and Iberia as lands in the Roman sphere. On Albania, see Aliev 1992; Bais 2001.

Arsakes was not to rule for long in Armenia. Mithridates and Pharasmanes managed to bribe some people from his court who had him poisoned. Thereupon Iberian forces invaded Armenia and took Artaxata.<sup>28</sup> These events probably occurred in 36. Artabanos sent another of his sons, Orodes, into Armenia with Parthian troops, and he also despatched envoys to hire mercenary troops (*auxilia mercede facerent*). Tacitus does not make it clear who the addressees were, but the subsequent events make it quite plain that Parthian ambassadors were sent to the Sarmatian tribes north of the Caucasus, most probably to the Aorsoi and Sirakoi.<sup>29</sup> Pharasmanes of Iberia also took the trouble to engage the services of Sarmatians. Tacitus gives an apposite description of the situation: the Sarmatian chiefs, referred to as *sceptuchi* in compliance with the reality, backed both sides (Tac. *ann.* 6.33.2: *quorum sceptuchi (...) more gentico diversa induere*). In other words, the steppe peoples were divided over the issue. Tacitus applies the name *Sarmatae*, which was a label for specific peoples, to the Alans, Aorsoi, and Sirakoi as well. Josephus (*ant.* 18.97–98) stresses the crucial role played by the Alans, who were the ones that defeated the Parthians.<sup>30</sup>

Both the Parthians and the Iberians acquired Sarmatian allies, but what turned out to be the key factor now was control of the passes across the Caucasus from the steppes into Transcaucasia. Pharasmanes of Iberia, who controlled the main routes through the Central Caucasus, allowed only his allies into Armenia, along a route called the *Via Caspia* in Tacitus, and the *Κάσπιαι θύραι* in Josephus. Most probably they mean the renowned route through the Darial Gorge. In addition Tacitus mentions a pass between the sea and the Albanian Mountains, which clearly refers to the Darband road (Derbent in modern Dagestan), leading into Albania. This route happened to be water-logged by the sea at the time: in summer the water level rose and fell in winter (Tac. *ann.* 6.33.3; Ios. *ant.* 18.97). The Sarmatian allies of the Parthians were prevented from entering Transcaucasia owing to the blockade of the pass into Iberia and the impassable Darband route.

Deprived of its Sarmatian allies, Orodes' army was far weaker than the combined Iberian, Albanian, and Alan forces. The two armies clashed in close combat, as described by Tacitus (6.34–35).<sup>31</sup> Orodes was injured by a blow to his helmet (*galea*). A rumour that Orodes had been killed made the Parthians retreat. They incurred heavy losses. Perhaps Orodes died later of his injuries. Josephus

<sup>28</sup> Tac. *ann.* 6.33.1; Ios. *ant.* 18.97; Moses of Chorene 2.46 gives an account of these developments, emphasising the "treacherous" nature of the Iberians.

<sup>29</sup> On the Sarmatians in Ciscaucasia, see Olbrycht 2001; 2001a.

<sup>30</sup> Olbrycht 1998, 147–148. Braund 1994, 219, n. 85, who calls Josephus' account "simplistic", incorrectly dates the appearance of the Alans in the Caucasus region at the end of the 1st century AD.

<sup>31</sup> Ash 1999.

(*ant.* 18.98) speaks of his death along with “tens of thousands of soldiers.” Josephus’ account implies that the Alans made the major contribution to the victory.

Orodes’ defeat in Armenia was a heavy blow to Artabanos. But it did not make him give up: he entered Armenia with a new force to fight the Iberians. It was not Iberian resistance that made him withdraw, but a subterfuge employed by Vitellius, who now arrived at the Euphrates with a Roman army and threatened to attack Parthian Mesopotamia.<sup>32</sup> Moreover, the Romans had supporters in Artabanos’ entourage, among his *philoī* and *syngeneis*. Josephus speaks of bribery (*ant.* 18.99), but what really proved fatal was not Roman gold but the treachery of turncoats among the Parthian officials. The principal Iranian clans openly rebelled against Artabanos and his arch-enemy Sinnakes won over his father Abdagases to his side (*Tac. ann.* 6.36.2).<sup>33</sup> Both were members of the Sūrēn clan. When Artabanos was forced to retreat from Transcaucasia and deal with the rebellion supported by Rome he was incapable of launching any kind of offensive action. He therefore chose to retreat to the eastern regions of Parthia, viz. Hyrcania and the Dahaeen territories. Meanwhile Tiridates entered Parthian Mesopotamia and Babylonia and was crowned by Abdagases (*Tac. ann.* 6.42.4).

### Divisions in the Parthian elite

The rebellion of the aristocratic *philoī* and *syngeneis* in Artabanos’ entourage is a significant phenomenon, for it illustrates the degree to which the rulers of the Parthian Empire were dependent on the great clans,<sup>34</sup> and the deep divisions within the Parthian elite. They were divided on the succession issue, but there was no consistent line within individual clans, such as the Sūrēn, either. For a time the leaders of the Sūrēn stood by Artabanos and had their part in his successes, but when an occasion came to depose him they triggered a rebellion. Josephus writes of the vacillating attitude of the Parthian elite in his account of Anilaios and Asinaios. A conflict arose between the brothers, who led the Jewish rebellion in Babylonia, and Artabanos’ governor Abdagases, whose official title was στρατοπεδάρχης. Artabanos decided to put up with the military action sparked and protracted by the Jewish rebels in order to neutralise Abdagases’ power (*Ios. ant.* 18.332–339, especially 18.333). This Abdagases must have been

<sup>32</sup> *Tac. ann.* 6.36.1: *Mox Artabanus tota mole regni ultum iit. peritia locorum ab Hiberis melius pugnatum; nec ideo abscedebat, ni contractis legionibus Vitellius et subdito rumore, tamquam Mesopotamiam invasurus, metum Romani belli fecisset.*

<sup>33</sup> His name in Tacitus is rendered as *Abdagases*, but on Indo-Parthian coins as ΑΒΔΑΓΑΣΟΥ (in gen.).

<sup>34</sup> On the Parthian grandees, see Wolski 1989; Olbrycht 2003. On the status of the King of Kings, see Fowler 2010.

the head of the Sūrēn clan, the same one who came out in open mutiny in 36. The satrapies of the Parthian empire tended to be governed by representatives of the principal clans. Artabanos intended to utilise the force of the rebellious Jews of Babylonia to secure the loyalty of his satrapies, for some of them were in a state of sedition while others were on the verge of mutiny. At the same time he was anxious that Asinaios and Anilaios should not become too powerful (*ant.* 18.330–331). Another example is his alliance with Izates of Adiabene, against a rebellion of satraps and aristocrats.<sup>35</sup> Thus Artabanos was obliged to adopt a strategy at home of sitting on the fence and pitting his vassals and their clans one against another.

### Artabanos' safe haven and operating bases in the Transcaspiian area and northeast Iran

After Orodes' defeat and the loss of Armenia, and also due to the uprisings in western Parthia, Artabanos withdrew to north-eastern Iran and the Transcaspiian area, viz. Hyrcania, Parthiēne (Parthyaia) and Dahestan. Josephus (*ant.* 18.100) speaks of the Upper Satrapies; Tacitus says that the king "hastened his flight into the remote country on the borders of Scythia in the hope of aid, as he was connected by marriage alliances with the Hyrcanians and Carmanians" (*In longinqua et contermina Scythiae fugam maturavit, spe auxilii, quia Hyrcanis Carmaniisque per adfinitatem innexus erat* – Tac. *ann.* 6.36.4).

Tacitus' story of Artabanos' flight contains some romantic embellishments<sup>36</sup> like that in the statement that the king was "covered with filth and procuring sustenance with his bow" (*ann.* 6.43). Another phrase says that "wishing to attract popular sympathy" Artabanos "did not even cast off his miserable garb" (*ann.* 6.44). In reality it was probably a case of adopting the attire typical of some nomadic hunters, which the western Parthians had long since cast off. Tacitus' account is also replete with references to the situation in Rome. This is manifest in the description of Artabanos' bodyguard, which resembles the bodyguard of the Roman emperors.<sup>37</sup> Nevertheless, Tacitus' relation is essentially true to the course of events, the details to which are filled in by Josephus' and Dio's accounts. The *externi custodes*, drawn from many peoples, constituted the back-

<sup>35</sup> *Ios. ant.* 20.54–68. Cf. Marciak 2012, 19. On Parthian Adiabene, see also Marciak 2011.

<sup>36</sup> Koestermann 1965, 344.

<sup>37</sup> Koestermann 1965, 328 rightly emphasizes: "Wenn Tacitus sagt, der König habe sich nur noch auf seine fremden Leibwächter verlassen können, die, ihrer Heimat verlustig, sich um Gut oder Böse nicht kümmern, sondern gegen Lohn zu allen Freveltaten bereit waren, so dachte er an die Verhältnisse in Rom, wo die *externi custodes* auch die sicherste Stütze eines pessimus princeps waren". Cf. Bellen 1981.



bone of Artabanos' army. He enjoyed the support of the Dahae, Hyrcanians, Carmanians, and Sakas, which must have had strings tied to it in the shape of political concessions. A few years later the mighty figure of Gotarzes II, prince of Hyrcania, was to emerge on the political scene of Iran. Gotarzes must have been one of the chief allies of Artabanos, who adopted and elevated him to the status of his royal son.<sup>38</sup> The Dahae had played a key role in Artabanos' career. He had grown up among them, as Tacitus writes (2.3.1: *apud Dahas adultus*), elsewhere calling them "Scythians" (6.41.2: *Scythas inter eductum*). We hear of the Dahae serving right until the beginning of the reign of Vologases I (52) as the force of resistance applied by the Dahae and Hyrcanian party in the contention with the Atropatenian faction (*Ios. ant.* 20.87). The Dahae held the territory from the Caspian Sea to the Valley of the Amu-Darya and the borders of Chorasmia.<sup>39</sup> Generally speaking, the Upper Satrapies had a vast economic and military potential at their disposal. Artabanos had no trouble at all in recruiting a powerful army there. To do this he needed a large amount of money. No wonder the Iranian minting-houses were busy in his reign. In connection with the expenditure for the wars counterstriking predecessors' coins became widespread.<sup>40</sup> Artabanos' main reasons for withdrawing to eastern Parthia were his military plans and the region's potential for warfare. After his setbacks in the west what Artabanos needed most was a large army, and that he could muster in the eastern satrapies, where he enjoyed excellent relations.

### Coronation of the usurper Tiridates (36)

Meanwhile the usurper Tiridates, supported by Vitellius, arrived at the Euphrates. The Romans built a bridge over the river and Tiridates' troops crossed. They received assistance from Ornospades, satrap of Mesopotamia, who had earlier been in the service of Tiberius and earned a reputation during the Dalmatian war.<sup>41</sup> He was even rewarded with Roman citizenship for his achievements. Later Ornospades won the confidence of Artabanos, eventually to betray his king. He commanded an army of "many thousands of cavalrymen." Other units were under the leadership of Sinnakes, whose father Abdagases offered Tiridates the royal treasury and insignia (*Tac. ann.* 6.37.1–4). The cities of Mesopotamia, both Greek and Parthian, sided with the usurper; here Tacitus cites Artabanos'

<sup>38</sup> Gotarzes II: Olbrycht 1997; Boyce 2000.

<sup>39</sup> Olbrycht 1998, 154.

<sup>40</sup> This is attested in Sellwood 1980, type 63 issues. A detailed analysis offers Nikitin 1988, 82–87. Later Gotarzes II and Vardanes continued the practice.

<sup>41</sup> Koestermann 1965, 330; Karras-Klapproth 1988, 99–100.

alleged cruelty (*saevitia* – 6.38.2). Seleukeia on the Tigris, the metropolis of Babylonia and one of the largest cities in the world at the time, also came out in support of Tiridates as it rose up against Artabanos.<sup>42</sup> The revolt started in 35 when the people (*populus*) of the city decided to support the pro-Roman Phraatids (Tac. *ann.* 6.42). According to Tacitus (*ann.* 11.9.4) the rebellion went on for 7 years, therefore it ended in 41, when the city surrendered to Vardanes, whose first tetradrachms were issued in Seleukeia in the autumn of 41.<sup>43</sup>

Having taken Ktesiphon Tiridates II planned a crowning ceremony. However, Phraates and Hiero, two of the principal satraps (*qui validissimas praefecturas obtinebant*: Tac. *ann.* 6.42.4), while formally supporting Tiridates, delayed their arrival. Most probably Phraates governed Susa<sup>44</sup> and Hiero ruled in Carmania. This is indicated by the fact that it was Hiero who went on an embassy to Artabanos in Hyrcania, summoning him to launch an offensive against the usurper, which suggests that he could not have had far to travel. Carmania neighboured on Parthia proper (Parthyaia) and the distance to Hyrcania was fairly short. Hiero's mission reached Artabanos in Hyrcania. The satrap drew Artabanos' attention to Tiridates' frail position and the might of the Sūrēn (Tac. *ann.* 6.43.1–3).

Tiridates was crowned by the head of the Sūrēn clan, as Tacitus aptly relates: *Surena patrio more Tiridaten insigni regio evinxit* (*ann.* 6.42.4). The temporary reinforcement of the Sūrēn might have been due to support from the Indo-Parthians, who in the reign of Gondophares (ca. 20–50 AD) were increasing their status in Sakastan, Arachosia, and parts of India. Tiridates' troops laid siege to the fortress (*castellum*) in which Artabanos had stowed his treasury and his harem (Tac. *ann.* 6.43.1).

### Artabanos' counteroffensive (36)

Artabanos did not tarry for long in the east: his withdrawal into Hyrcania and Dahestan as well as his victorious counteroffensive all occurred within the space of AD 36, which is the dating inferred on the basis of the chronology in Book VI of Tacitus' *Annals*.<sup>45</sup>

Artabanos and the best units of his army were at the gates of Seleukeia on the Tigris in no time at all. Tiridates' forces evaded battle, while Abdagases, their real commander, recommended withdrawing into Mesopotamia, counting

<sup>42</sup> Seleukeia's rebellion: Dąbrowa 1983, 81–86.

<sup>43</sup> Type 64.1 (according to Sellwood 1980), month Dios (October), year 353 of the Seleucid era (Macedonian style).

<sup>44</sup> Cumont 1932, 249–250; Debevoise 1938, 161.

<sup>45</sup> Cassius Dio (58.26.1–4) presses the events of the years 34–36 under the year 35.

on the assistance of Armenia, the Elymaians, Arabs, and other peoples, not forgetting the Roman legions. Tiridates' retreat turned into a rout. His Arab allies deserted him and many of his people went over to Artabanos. Stripped of their support, the usurper fled to Syria (Tac. *ann.* 6.44). Unfortunately the details of the rest of the story are unknown, as Book VII of Tacitus' *Annals* has not survived. Tiridates' army did not venture on open confrontation with Artabanos' forces.

It is worthwhile taking a look at the kind of forces Artabanos had at his disposal. The records make it absolutely plain: the overwhelming part of his army was composed of nomads, described either as Scythians (*Scytharum auxilia* – Tac. *ann.* 6.44.1; *Skythai* – Dio 58.26.3), or more accurately elsewhere as Dahae and Sakas.<sup>46</sup> Apart from nomads, Artabanos appears to have had Hyrcanians in his army, for of course he had lived in their country; probably he also had contingents from Carmania and Media Atropatene. In addition some of the satraps, such as Phraates, and vassals like Adiabene came out in support of their king.

After expelling Tiridates Artabanos occupied Armenia without encountering much resistance. The Parthian occupation of Armenia is attested to by Dio 59.27.3 who maintains that the Roman governor of Syria Vitellius forestalled Artabanos, who was planning an attack on Syria, "since he had suffered no punishment for his invasion of Armenia".<sup>47</sup>

The events of Artabanos' campaign show that his withdrawal from Armenia into Hyrcania and Dahestan had not been a panic-driven stampede, but a well-planned manoeuvre, a kind of dodge out of the enemy's range. It was a strategic recoil, which handed the initiative to his adversary, but afforded him the opportunity to gather his strength and embark on a counter-attack. Artabanos carried out the offensive with mastery and recouped the western territories of Parthia.<sup>48</sup> But not everything could be settled in one fell swoop.

## Artabanos II's treaty with Vitellius

The turbulent events of 36 concluded with Artabanos' triumph and the restoration of his control over the Parthian Empire. In the spring of 37 he reached a compromise settlement with Rome, the power which had tried to depose him. Artabanos decided on a personal meeting with Lucius Vitellius, Roman governor

<sup>46</sup> Ios. *ant.* 18.100: καὶ πολλὴν μετὰ ταῦτα στρατιᾶν ἀθροίσας Δαῶν τε καὶ Σακῶν καὶ πολεμήσας τοὺς ἀνθεστηκότας κατέσχε τὴν ἀρχήν.

<sup>47</sup> καὶ τὸν Ἀρτάβανον καὶ ἐκείνη ἐπιβουλεύοντα, ἐπειδὴ μηδεμίαν τιμωρίαν ἐπὶ τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ ἐδεδώκει, κατέπληξέ τε ἀπαντήσας αὐτῷ ἐξαπιναιῶς περὶ τὸν Εὐφράτην ἤδη ὄντι (...).

<sup>48</sup> Olbrycht 1998a.

of Syria.<sup>49</sup> How did developments lead up to this conference, and what was its importance for both parties?

According to Josephus' account the meeting between Artabanos and Vitellius was a Roman initiative: "it was Tiberius who took steps to make friends with Artabanos. When the offer was made, the Parthian was delighted to discuss the matter. Artabanos and Vitellius met on the Euphrates" (*ant.* 18.101).<sup>50</sup>

Dio 59.27.3 maintains that Vitellius "terrified the Parthian by coming upon him suddenly when he was already close to the Euphrates, and then induced him to come to a conference, compelled him to sacrifice to the images of Augustus and Gaius, and made a peace with him that was advantageous to the Romans, even securing his sons as hostages."<sup>51</sup> He does not record any of the points of the agreement that was reached and concentrates on the ceremonials, but even he admits that the meeting was the initiative of Rome. A similar passage offers Suet. *Vit.* 2.4 but no emperor is named there. Suetonius claims that Vitellius "not only induced Artabanos, king of the Parthians, to hold a conference with him, but even to do obeisance to the standards of the legion". Flavius Josephus' version (*ant.* 18.101–103) implies that the Romans were the ones who felt threatened and wanted to reach a compromise. His relation contains interesting details: the conference was organised by the tetrarch Herod Antipas, and only one hostage, Artabanos' son Darius,<sup>52</sup> is named. But Josephus does not give the conditions of the treaty, either.

Scholars disagree whether Vitellius' meeting with Artabanos occurred during the reign of Tiberius or at the start of Caligula's.<sup>53</sup> The ancient accounts give different dates. We have to bear in mind that Tiberius died on 16<sup>th</sup> March 37, and two days later at Misenum Caligula was declared emperor, taking control of Rome on 28<sup>th</sup> March.<sup>54</sup>

In the winter of 36/37 Vitellius took part in Herod Antipas' expedition against the Nabataeans leading two legions and *auxilia*.<sup>55</sup> He was in Palestine

<sup>49</sup> *Ios. ant.* 18.101–103; Suet. *Vitellius* 2.4; *Caligula* 14.3; Dio 59.27.3.

<sup>50</sup> Ταῦτα ἀκούσας ὁ Τιβερίσιος ἤξιον φιλιάν αὐτῷ γενέσθαι πρὸς τὸν Ἀρτάβανον, ἐπεὶ δὲ κἀκεῖνος προκληθεὶς ἄσμενος ἐδέχετο τὸν περὶ αὐτῶν λόγον, ἐπὶ τὸν Εὐφράτην παρήσαν ὁ τε Ἀρτάβανος καὶ Οὐιτέλλιος.

<sup>51</sup> [sc. Οὐιτέλλιος ὁ Λούκιος] τὸν Ἀρτάβανον καὶ ἐκείνην ἐπιβουλεύοντα, ἐπειδὴ μηδεμίαν τιμωρίαν ἐπὶ τῇ Ἀρμενίᾳ ἐδεδώκει, κατέπληξέ τε ἀπαντήσας αὐτῷ ἑξαπιναιῶς περὶ τὸν Εὐφράτην ἦδη ὄντι, καὶ ἔς τε λόγους αὐτὸν ὑπεγάγετο καὶ θῦσαι ταῖς τοῦ Αὐγούστου τοῦ τε Γαίου εἰκόσιν ἠνάγκασε, σπονδὰς τε αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸ τῶν Ῥωμαίων σύμφορον δούς καὶ προσ ἐτι καὶ παῖδας αὐτοῦ ὀμήρους λαβῶν.

<sup>52</sup> Darius appears during Caligula's stunt at Baiae, see Malloch 2001.

<sup>53</sup> Täubler 1904, 39ff., Garzetti 1956, Ziegler 1964, 62, and Schottky 1991, 83 date the meeting at Tiberius' reign. Caligula's period prefers Dąbrowa 1983, 111–112; 1998, 39.

<sup>54</sup> Winterling 2003, 49–50.

<sup>55</sup> *Ios. ant.* 18.120–126. The wintertime for the Nabataean campaign of Vitellius is mentioned in *ant.* 18.124.

when news of Tiberius' death (16<sup>th</sup> March 37) reached him (*Ios. ant.* 18.124). This must have been around the beginning of April. If in the winter of 36/37 Vitellius decided to set out on a war against the Nabataeans, he must have considered the border along the Euphrates sufficiently secured.<sup>56</sup> Therefore his meeting with Artabanos must have occurred after he cut short the expedition against Aretas of Nabataea, that is, definitely in the reign of Caligula. Meanwhile the preparations for the meeting, including the building of a bridge over the Euphrates, must have taken several weeks at least.

It is not very likely that the conference took place in Tiberius' reign, as given by Josephus (*ant.* 18.101–103), in view of Artabanos' well-known aversion to Tiberius. However, we may assume that Tiberius initiated the negotiations to avoid open war with the Parthians. The actual meeting was held in the reign of Caligula (*Suet. Cal.* 14.3; *Dio* 59.27.3), whose accession to the throne was of paramount importance for the reaching of the compromise.<sup>57</sup> To Tiberius some negotiations with Artabanos following the Parthian counter-offensive in 36 were forced steps to avoid a large-scale military confrontation in Syria and to cause Artabanos to relax his vigilance with respect to Armenia; Caligula, on the contrary, was eager to conclude a treaty on conditions strategically advantageous to Parthia. The meeting on the Euphrates including Artabanos and Vitellius is being focalised differently through the participants and the agendas of the sources. It will be instructive to quote Suetonius (*Caligula* 14.3), who underscores that Artabanos, who "was always outspoken in his hatred and contempt for Tiberius, voluntarily sought Caligula's friendship and came to a conference with the consular governor; then crossing the Euphrates, he paid homage to the Roman eagles and standards and to the statues of the Caesars."

*Namque Artabanus Parthorum rex, odium semper contemptumque Tiberi prae se ferens, amicitiam huius ultro petiit venitque ad colloquium legati consularis et transgressus Euphraten aquilas et signa Romana Caesarumque imagines adoravit.*

It is strange that none of the sources give the particulars of the decisions reached at the conference. The very fact suggests that the Roman authors could not have found the agreement very laudable, and that is why they focused on the honorifics, which concealed the nitty-gritty of the decisions, very likely to the advantage of Parthia.<sup>58</sup> However, the majority of scholars think that Artabanos

<sup>56</sup> It seems clear that Vitellius did not expect a rapid and successful counteroffensive of Artabanos within the year 36 and this is why he took part in the Nabataean expedition in the winter of 36/37. Parthia was to be controlled by the pro-Roman usurper Tiridates. Artabanos' invasion of Armenia and the pressure on Roman Syria were unexpected developments which forced Vitellius to institute negotiations with Parthia in the name of Tiberius.

<sup>57</sup> Balsdon 1934, 198 rightly stresses that Artabanos eagerly concluded a treaty with Caligula.

<sup>58</sup> A similar approach in the Roman sources is observable in the accounts concerning the Roman failure in Armenia under Nero. see Wolski 1987; 1999.

assumed a humble attitude with respect to Rome. For example, K.-H. Ziegler claims that the Parthians backed out of their intervention in Armenia, that the borders were endorsed, and that Rome recognised Parthian sovereignty.<sup>59</sup> His first two conclusions are wrong. Armenia became Parthian and there is nothing to suggest that Artabanos withdrew. On the contrary, the Romans did not recover Armenia until the reign of Claudius. Thus Artabanos forced Rome to climb down on the most important issue. Mithridates was recalled from Iberia and imprisoned in Rome.<sup>60</sup> Rome recognised Artabanos, stopped supporting the Phraatids, while the border along the Euphrates was indisputable. We may therefore speak of a great success for Artabanos.

Some scholars maintain that the concession of Armenia was granted by Rome to Parthia.<sup>61</sup> But Rome was not in the habit of making such gestures at the expense of its own interests. Mithridates' removal from Transcaucasia was probably a condition imposed by Artabanos.<sup>62</sup> If we consider the situation in Armenia around 41–42, when Claudius decided to recover it, then according to Tacitus it was in Parthian hands at that time, and it was only thanks to the disunity of the Parthians that the Romans and Iberians managed to mount a successful intervention. Moreover, the Roman-Iberian forces defeated Demonax the satrap (Tac. *ann.* 11.8–9), probably appointed by the Parthians. Thus there can be no doubt at all that the whole of Armenia belonged to Parthia at the time. Later, in circa 42, Claudius restored Mithridates<sup>63</sup> who governed Armenia until 51, when he was murdered by his nephew Rhadamistos of Iberia (Tac. *ann.* 12.44–45).

<sup>59</sup> Ziegler 1964, 63. Likewise Marek 2010, 411 claims that Artabanos gave up Armenia ("Die Ambitionen auf Armenien indessen waren ihm vergangen").

<sup>60</sup> Sen. *Dial.* 9.11.12; Dio 60.8.1; Tac. *ann.* 6.32ff.; 11.8.1; Cf. Chaumont 1987, 423; Wardle 1992, 440–443..

<sup>61</sup> Balsdon 1934, 199–200 rightly assumes that the Romans left Armenia in 38 or 39, and did not restore Mithridates until 43. However, he is wrong in his opinion that "the concession of Armenia was certainly granted by Rome, and not enforced by Parthia" (200).

<sup>62</sup> Wardle 1992, 442 is against this view, but he puts forward a flimsy argument, that there is nothing in the sources on such a settlement. However, since Armenia was the main issue in the dispute between Rome and Parthia, and Caligula recalled Mithridates from Transcaucasia, then an inevitable conclusion may be drawn from these facts – Mithridates' removal must have been one of the points in Artabanos' arrangement with Vitellius. Seneca's comparison of what befell Mithridates with the fate of Ptolemy of Mauretania (in addition Jugurtha is thrown in in the same passage!) says nothing about the date of Mithridates' incarceration. The argument that this was a "punishment of Mithridates for not preserving the territorial integrity of Armenia, since Artabanos had been able to promise to Izates of Adiabene the territory of Nisibis" is not convincing. If this were so, Caligula would have been "punishing" himself and the empire, for he had lost Armenia. Wardle does not mention the Parthian satrap Demonax, whom the Romans had to oust from Armenia in the reign of Claudius.

<sup>63</sup> 'Who showed more cruelty than was wise in a new ruler' (Tac. *ann.* 11.9.1). It is a common topos that eastern rulers were savage.

Further evidence of the status of Armenia is provided by Josephus. Towards the end of his life, certainly after his pact with Rome in 37, Artabanos bestowed the city of Nisibis with its district on Izates of Adiabene. This territory was split off from the dominions of the king of Armenia (*ant.* 20.68).<sup>64</sup> If so, then Armenia must have belonged to Artabanos, otherwise he would not have been able to grant any part of it to a vassal. Here the expression “king of the Armenians” means either that the territory in question was part of the kingdom of Armenia, or refers to a Parthian appointee who was Artabanos’ vassal exercising power in Armenia.

### Consequences of Artabanos’ success in the Imperium Parthicum and Rome

In conclusion we may outline the situation and the meeting itself in the following way: in 36 Artabanos vanquished Tiridates and regained control of Babylonia, Mesopotamia and Ktesiphon. As he had a large army, he attacked Armenia and occupied the country. In the spring of 37 Artabanos appeared on the banks of the Euphrates and was planning to invade Syria, with the intention of putting pressure on the Romans. Tiberius became anxious, and anticipating a large-scale military offensive started negotiations probably still in the winter of 36/37, following the Parthian attack on Armenia. Artabanos agreed to the talks, but the event which determined his personal participation in them was the accession of Caligula, son of Germanicus, whom Artabanos had respected. Other factors which might have prompted Artabanos to take part personally in the meeting with Vitellius could have been some of Caligula’s decisions, perhaps including his consent to have Mithridates officially recalled from Transcaucasia. That is when the meeting between Artabanos and Vitellius, now as Caligula’s representative, must have taken place. Their meeting in the reign of Caligula heralded a spell of good relations for both powers.<sup>65</sup>

Tiberius suffered defeat in his Parthian policy, with a consequent loss of authority. Caligula ruthlessly took advantage of the old Emperor’s weak points and maybe instigated his assassination. Most Romans were pleased to learn of the death of Tiberius and openly displayed their satisfaction.<sup>66</sup> The Emperor Gaius now embarked on measures which were exceptionally amicable and auspicious for Artabanos. The first was to make Mithridates, the Iberian prince banished from Armenia, a prisoner in Rome. We can hardly fail to acknowledge this move as the new

<sup>64</sup> ἔδωκεν δὲ καὶ χρόαν πολλὴν αὐτῷ κάγαθὴν τοῦ τῶν Ἀρμενίων βασιλέως ἀποτεμόμενος, Νίσιβις δὲ ἔστιν ὄνομα τῆ γῆ.

<sup>65</sup> Wardle 1992, 441.

<sup>66</sup> See Seager 2005, 206–207.

Emperor's gesture of good will to Artabanos. It was also an expression of Caligula's gratitude for Artabanos' remembrance of Germanicus and support in the struggle against Tiberius. In Palestine Caligula expressed support for his favourite, Herod Agrippa, who could be regarded as an ally of Artabanos.<sup>67</sup> Significantly, towards the end of Tiberius' life Herod Agrippa had fallen out of favour with the old Emperor and in 36 was even imprisoned, after having voiced a death-wish for Tiberius.<sup>68</sup> This episode seems to be associated with the repercussions of Artabanos' embassy to Rome, which had expressed similar sentiments. There was also the question of the Nabataeans, whose prince had won Caligula's support. The Nabataeans appear to have enjoyed special relations with the Parthians. These facts show that Gaius was carefully following the situation along the Parthian border, and that he was taking Artabanos' position into consideration. Hence it is not at all surprising that Artabanos paid tribute to the portraits of Gaius and the Emperor Augustus during his meeting with Vitellius on the Euphrates. A period of very good relations ensued between Rome and Parthia.

The restoration of the kingdom of Kommagene might also have been connected with the change of orientation in Rome's policy on Parthia. It will be expedient here to consider the situation in Kommagene. Very early on in his reign, still in 37, Caligula gave the kingdom back to Antiochos IV who was the legitimate heir to the Kommagenian throne after his father's death in AD 17.<sup>69</sup> In addition Antiochos, who was a close friend of Caligula's, received 100 million sesterces, and his dominions were extended including Cilicia Trachaea and Lykaonia.<sup>70</sup> Kommagene controlled the strategic crossing over the Euphrates at Samosata and due to its location and culture came under Parthian influence. Caligula's restoration of the kingdom of Kommagene could have been effected about the same time that Mithridates was recalled from Transcaucasia. It may have also been connected with the arrangements for peace with the Parthians, albeit the sources say nothing about this. It cannot be ruled out that Antiochos, a generally loyal vassal of Rome, made efforts to secure a compromise between the Parthians and Rome. The ruler of a borderland country, he could not have failed to be aware of the situation in Parthia. For comparison, on the Parthian side we may consider Izates of Adiabene, who was a faithful vassal of the Arsacids (Artabanos and Gotarzes II), nonetheless he sent his brothers as hostages both to Artabanos and to the Roman emperor.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> That is what Balsdon 1934, 197 calls him.

<sup>68</sup> Barrett 2001, 37.

<sup>69</sup> Facella 2006, 318–319.

<sup>70</sup> Suet. *Cal.* 16.3; Dio 59.8.2. In Nero's times Antiochos was regarded as the wealthiest client-king (Tac. *Hist.* 2.81).

<sup>71</sup> Whom Josephus (*ant.* 20.37) identifies as Claudius, which is hard to reconcile with the time span of Artabanos II; it must have been either Tiberius or Caligula.



Artabanos' success brought salient consequences for the domestic situation in the Parthian Empire. In the context of his triumph a compromise with the traitor Abdagases was no longer on the cards. However, the Sūrēn clan was still very powerful and the fight against it was certainly not easy. After their débâcle of 36 the Sūrēn must have forfeited many of their privileges in Parthia. In 49, when uprisings sponsored by the Romans broke out afresh in Parthia, the clan that assumed the lead in the opposition forces were the Kārin; we do not hear of the Sūrēn again. This could not have been a coincidence. The Phraatids and their sympathisers were crushed in the reigns of Artabanos, Vardanes, and Gotarzes II; later, under Vologases I and Pakoros II (51 – 110) the Parthian Empire became more consolidated on the domestic scene.<sup>72</sup> Perhaps some of the Sūrēn fled to their ancestral home in Sakastan and Arachosia, which were ruled by the Indo-Parthians, beyond the range of Artabanos' power. Two Indo-Parthian rulers bore the name Abdagases.<sup>73</sup> From about 50 the successor to the Indo-Parthian Gondophares in Paropamisadai and Jammu was a certain Abdagases I, viz. he carried the same name as the chief of the Sūrēn clan who had attempted to oust Artabanos. Monetary evidence shows that this Indo-Parthian prince was a fraternal nephew of Gondophares. Abdagases II reigned in Sistan and Arachosia towards AD 100 and is called "King of Kings, King's Sanabares son" (*'bdgšy MLKYN MLK' BRY S'nbry MLK'*)<sup>74</sup>. The identical name does not mean that we are dealing with the same individual, of course, albeit no other person called Abdagases is recorded in the history of Parthia except for the leader of the Sūrēn; however, the name does suggest that the Indo-Parthian Abdagases was a member of the Sūrēn clan.

## Conclusion

From his accession the legitimacy of Artabanos II's reign was challenged by the Phraatid faction, which was supported by Rome. Artabanos did not manage to eradicate all the deep divisions lacerating Parthia, but he did achieve a substantial degree of success, eliminating the opposition of the powerful Sūrēn clan. His greatest achievement was the conquest of Armenia.

The patent improvement in Parthia's relations with Rome during Caligula's reign may have to some extent been due to Artabanos' respect for the new emperor, the son of Germanicus. The gauge of Parthian-Roman relations was the situation in Armenia. Caligula recalled Mithridates, the pro-Roman ruler of Ar-

<sup>72</sup> Olbrycht 1998b.

<sup>73</sup> NPIIN, nos. 1142, 1147.

<sup>74</sup> Grenet/Bopearachchi 1996, 219–31; Grenet 1999, 73–82.

menia, who was imprisoned in Rome. This must certainly have occurred at the beginning of Caligula's reign.

Nonetheless some scholars have misgivings as to how an allegedly feeble Parthia could have won such extensive concessions from Rome. There is a great deal of confusion on the balance of power in Parthia in the late phase of Artabanos' reign and the country's military potential. It should be borne in mind that when Parthia achieved stability under Vologases I (51–79) she was capable of mustering a mighty army and beating Rome in many years of fighting for Armenia, crushing the main Roman force at Rhandaia (62).<sup>75</sup> Ever since the great confrontation at Carrhae (53 BC), the invasions of Pakoros (40–38 BC) and Marcus Antonius (36 BC), Parthia and Rome had for a long time (about a hundred years) been avoiding a direct, large-scale clash. There were several invasions of Armenia by the forces of both powers, and their allies often engaged in skirmishes with each other, but the main armies steered clear of war on a large scale. The Parthians held Rome in respect, while the Romans did not underrate the power of the Parthians. This respect should be taken into consideration in the assessment of Roman policy. The Romans were wary of the potential of a stable Parthia, and that is why they endeavoured to debilitate their rival through intrigues, avoiding open confrontation. Against such a background Caligula's decision to relinquish Armenia to avoid an open war with Parthia is not at all surprising.

The last years of the reign of Artabanos II show that he was able to prevail in the face of great adversity. Furthermore, he managed to obtain considerable concessions from Rome. His dynastic line remained on the throne and ruled the Parthian Empire until the end of its existence.

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<sup>75</sup> For Parthian strategy, see some remarks in Olbrycht 1998a.

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## Abstract

Artabanos (in Parthian Ardawān) II, king of Parthia, has had quite a number of studies devoted to him, but in spite of this his achievements and assessment still arouse controversy. Germanicus' intervention in Armenia in AD 18 led to the conclusion of a compromise settlement between Rome and the Parthians that secured over a decade of peace between the two empires. From his accession the legitimacy of Artabanos II's reign was challenged by the Phraetid faction, which was supported by Rome. Artabanos did not manage to eradicate all the deep divisions lacerating Parthia, but he did achieve a substantial degree of success, eliminating the opposition of the powerful Sūrēn clan. The patent improvement in Parthia's relations with Rome during Caligula's reign may have to some extent been due to Artabanos' respect for the new emperor, the son of Germanicus.





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## VORARBEITEN ZU EINER KÖNIGSLISTE KAUKASISCH-IBERIENS 1. ANFÄNGE DER PHARNABAZIDEN

**Keywords:** Arsacids, Caucasian history, Georgia (Caucasus), Iberia (Caucasus), Pharnabazids

### Definitiorische Vorbemerkung

Das Gebiet, dessen Herrschaftsgeschichte auf den folgenden Seiten näher beleuchtet werden soll, hat im Laufe der Jahrtausende sehr unterschiedliche Namen getragen. Von ihnen ist die einheimische Bezeichnung *Kartli* international kaum bekannt. Die griechisch-römischen Autoren sprachen von *Iberia* und den *Iberern*. Um jede Verwechslung mit der spanisch-portugiesischen Halbinsel auszuschließen, sei bereits hier festgehalten, dass die betreffenden Ethnika im Folgenden ausschließlich auf das kaukasische Volk und dessen Siedlungsgebiet angewandt werden. Ebenso sollte wohl nicht ausdrücklich darauf hingewiesen werden müssen, dass mit Georgien (international: *Georgia*) die frühere Sowjet-, bzw. GUS-Republik im Kaukasus gemeint ist – niemals der Bundesstaat der USA. Auch die Nachbarn der Iberer, die am Südufer der unteren Kyros lebenden *Albaner*, hatten bereits in der Antike in den illyrischen Albanoi ihre Doppelgänger, nach denen der heutige Balkanstaat (das „Land der Skipetaren“), benannt ist.

### Sinn und Zweck einer iberischen Königsliste

In den griechisch-römischen Quellen werden vom 1. Jh. v. Chr. bis zum 6. Jh. n. Chr. immer wieder Könige der Iberer genannt, die mit Römern, Parthern und Sasaniden zu tun hatten. Es könnte sich daher lohnen, schon um einen Über-

blick über sechshundert Jahre iberischer Geschichte zu gewinnen, die überlieferten Namen in einer Liste zusammenzustellen. Dies ist merkwürdigerweise bisher kaum geschehen. Selbst das Buch von David Braund, *das* Standardwerk zum Thema, enthält keinerlei Regentenverzeichnisse.<sup>1</sup> Vor ihm hatte nur Richard D. Sullivan für eine Teilepoche der iberischen Geschichte eine Stammtafel erstellt, die in der Forschung nicht ganz unbeachtet blieb.<sup>2</sup>

## Vorhandene iberische Königslisten

Es fehlt andererseits nicht an Regentenverzeichnissen Georgiens, die selbst die vorgeblichen antiken Vorgänger der mittelalterlichen Machthaber nennen. Sie präsentieren auf diese Weise scheinbar eine lückenlose Herrscherfolge vom Hellenismus bis zum Mongoleneinbruch. Wir sprechen von der Chronikensammlung *Das Leben Georgiens (Kartlis Tskhovreba)*, in der die Fürsten von der Begründung des Königiums bis zu Georg II., dem Vorgänger Davids des Erbauers, sogar in einer Reihe nummeriert werden. Das Inhaltsverzeichnis der Sammlung stellt gewissermaßen das Original der iberischen Königsliste dar.<sup>3</sup>

Ein entscheidendes Kriterium für den Wert der Überlieferung ist ihr Alter, das leider nicht mit hinreichender Genauigkeit festgelegt werden kann. Die Sammlung wurde wohl relativ zeitnah ins Armenische übersetzt, wahrscheinlich während des 13. Jhs.<sup>4</sup> Diese Epoche ist der spätest mögliche *terminus ante quem* für die Zusammenfassung der einzelnen Chroniken.<sup>5</sup> Heute wird angenommen, dass die kulturelle Blüte unter David dem Erbauer (reg. 1089–1125) die günstigsten Voraussetzungen für die Entwicklung der georgischen Geschichtsschreibung bot.<sup>6</sup> Dem steht nicht entgegen, dass einzelne Autoren, soweit sie individuell fassbar sind, schon früher gelebt haben mögen. So wird Leonti Mroweli,<sup>7</sup> der

<sup>1</sup> Braund 1994, der auch Colchis/Lazika behandelt, nennt die iberischen Herrscher (manchmal nur beiläufig) im Rahmen der Darstellung. Aus seinen Angaben ließe sich freilich nur mit Mühe ein zusammenhängendes Verzeichnis erarbeiten. Vgl. Gagoshidze 2008, 1–40.

<sup>2</sup> Sullivan 1977, 939: Stammtafel IBERIA (das 1. u. 2. Jh. n. Chr. umfassend). Die Tafel ist (unter Hinweis auf die Autorschaft Sullivans) nachgedruckt bei Schottky 1994, 225, Abb. 3 und Meißner 2000, 191. Braund 1994, 343 (Bibliography) verwendet spätere ANRW-Beiträge Sullivans, hat aber denjenigen, der die Stammtafel IBERIA enthält, anscheinend übersehen.

<sup>3</sup> Pätsch 1985, 493–496. Bis zur Aufhebung des Königiums im 6. Jh. werden achtunddreißig Herrschaftsperioden gezählt.

<sup>4</sup> Meißner 2000, 193.

<sup>5</sup> Vgl. Nikuradse 1942, 163, der das Chronikenwerk im 13. Jh. als abgeschlossen betrachtet.

<sup>6</sup> So Fähnrich 1996, 591. Er behandelt *das Leben Georgiens* in dem Abschnitt *Die weltliche Literatur Georgiens seit dem 12. Jahrhundert* (591f.). Diesem Zeitansatz sind wir unlängst (Schottky 2010, 220ff.) gefolgt.

<sup>7</sup> Bei der Umschrift der georgischen Namen folgen wie Pätsch 1985.



Verfasser des die Herrschaft von dreißig Königen enthaltenden Anfangsteiles, häufig mit dem Bischof oder Erzbischof Leonti von Ruisi identifiziert, der durch eine Inschrift aus dem Jahre 1066 belegt ist.<sup>8</sup>

Es ist demnach diese Überlieferung, die in der nationalen georgischen Geschichtsschreibung bis heute die Grundlage für jede Beschäftigung mit der iberischen Herrscherfolge bildet. Die griechisch-römischen Nachrichten werden entweder ignoriert oder allenfalls zur Ergänzung herangezogen.<sup>9</sup> Das vorerst letzte Beispiel für diese Arbeitsmethode ist wohl eine inzwischen über vierzig Jahre alte Abhandlung Cyril Toumanoffs. Ihr Verfasser bemüht sich scheinbar ernsthaft um eine objektive Behandlung der Herrschaftsgeschichte im antiken Ostgeorgien.<sup>10</sup> Die einheimische Tradition gilt jedoch im wesentlichen als unantastbar. Wenn westliche Nachrichten ihr widersprechen, wird meist versucht, die verschiedenen Überlieferungen, so gut es eben geht, miteinander zu vereinigen. Nicht ganz selten sind jedoch auch Fälle, in denen eine Information eines griechischen oder römischen Autors als offensichtlich falsch zurückgewiesen wird.

Damit kommen wir zu dem Verfahren, das auf den folgenden Seiten angewandt werden soll: Zunächst wollen wir versuchen, aus den Angaben der klassischen Autoren und, in seltenen Fällen, aus dem zeitgenössischen primären Material die Namen und die Regierungszeit der iberischen Herrscher zu erschließen. Wenn diese in etwa feststehen, wird überprüft, was in der mittelalterlichen georgischen Tradition dazu ausgesagt wird. Zunächst aber ist noch einmal der von den verschiedenen Überlieferungssträngen sehr unterschiedlich beantworteten Frage nachzugehen, von welchem Zeitpunkt an es Könige der Iberer gab.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Die Gleichsetzung des (Erz-)Bischofs der Inschrift mit dem Chronisten hat besonders Lang 1973, 420, 463 und 589 (Zeittafel) vertreten. Vgl. aber schon Nikuradse 1942, 163 (oben). Der Versuch von Toumanoff 1969, 1f., Anm. 3, Leonti Mroweli als Autor des 8. Jhs. anzusehen, hat offenbar keine Nachfolger gefunden.

<sup>9</sup> Nikuradse 1942, 61 hat die traditionelle Arbeitsweise mit Worten beschrieben, wie sie in dieser Offenheit heute wohl nicht mehr verwendet würden: „So wichtig die Nachrichten der ausländischen Schriftsteller auch sein mögen, die feste Grundlage, auf der die Geschichte Kaukasiens aufgebaut werden kann und muß, bilden die einheimischen kaukasischen, hauptsächlich georgische und armenische, Quellen.“ Noch 1985 äußerte sich aber Pätsch 1985, 19 zur Herrscherliste von Kartli, die „im großen und ganzen als zuverlässig erscheint“.

<sup>10</sup> Toumanoff 1969. Die auf ihre Art wichtige Arbeit hat noch Eingang in die Darstellung bei Braund 1994 gefunden, ist aber von Meißner 2000 nicht mehr berücksichtigt worden. Leider nicht zugänglich sind uns derzeit die beiden neueren, seine Forschungen zusammenfassenden genealogischen Nachschlagewerke Toumanoff 1976/78 und Toumanoff 1990.

<sup>11</sup> Die betreffende Diskrepanz kann gar nicht deutlich genug hervorgehoben werden: Wenn die griechisch-römischen Autoren das (politisch unabhängige) Volk selbst seit der Epoche Alexanders d. Gr. wahrnahmen, Könige aber erst seit der ersten Hälfte des 1. Jh. v. Chr. nannten, spricht dies eher nicht für eine seit den ältesten Zeiten bestehende monarchische Tradition.

## Die Entstehung des iberischen Königiums

Nur vereinzelt wird angenommen, dass die Ausbildung monarchischer Strukturen im Osten Georgiens bereits in achaimenidischer oder gar vorpersischer Zeit erfolgt sei.<sup>12</sup> Die Tendenz der georgischen wie der internationalen Forschung geht gewöhnlich dahin, die im *Leben Georgiens* gemachten Angaben möglichst wörtlich zu nehmen. Erzählt wird dort, wie Alexander d. Gr. das Land unterwarf und einen gewissen Ason<sup>13</sup> als Statthalter einsetzte. Im Kampf gegen ihn habe Parnawas das Königium von Kartli begründet.<sup>14</sup> Seine traditionelle Herrschaftsdauer wird mit 299–234 v. Chr. angegeben.<sup>15</sup> Die Chronologie mag in Einzelfällen leichten Modifikationen zu unterwerfen sein.<sup>16</sup> An der Historizität des Parnawas selbst aber bestehe kein Zweifel, ebenso wenig an der seiner Nachfolger Ssaumag und Mirwan.<sup>17</sup> Wir müssen hier davon absehen, die Darstellung der iberischen Geschichte in der hellenistischen Zeit, wie sie von den einheimischen Chroniken geboten wird, etwa Punkt für Punkt zu widerlegen.<sup>18</sup> Stattdessen soll anhand von exemplarischen Einzelfällen die weitgehende Unvereinbarkeit der georgischen mit der griechisch-römischen Tradition aufgezeigt werden. Zu den auffälligsten Vorgängen im frühen 2. Jh. gehört die schnelle Ausbreitung der beiden Reiche Sophene und Ostarmenien nach der Schlacht bei Magnesia und dem Frieden von Apameia. Strabon 11.14.5 berichtet, wie die dortigen Herrscher Zariadris und Artaxias die Oberhoheit Antiochos des Großen abwarfen und an den Außengrenzen ihrer Länder liegende Gebiete eroberten:

<sup>12</sup> So schreibt Abfalg 1989, 1283: „... in *Ostgeorgien* (Iberia/Kartli) entstand ab etwa 400 v. Chr. ein iber[isches] K[öni]gr[reich], ...“. Man darf vielleicht vermuten, dass sich der Verfasser in einem Überblicksartikel, der hauptsächlich das mittelalterliche Georgien behandelt, um ein Jahrhundert geirrt haben könnte. Worauf Ter-Martirosov 2000, bes. 245f. genau hinauswill, hat sich uns nicht ganz erschlossen (seine These von einem vom 7. bis 5. Jh. v. Chr. bestehenden kachetischen Königreich *Kambečiani* bezeichnet Furtwängler 2000, 276 als „äußerst spekulativ“). Andererseits spricht auch Ter-Martirosov 2000, 246 von einem Erstarken des (mit *Kambečiani* in Kachetien nicht identischen) Königreiches Kartli im 3. Jh. v. Chr. Zur Abgrenzung Kachetiens von Kartli vgl. z.B. die (Verhältnisse des 9. Jhs. n. Chr. wiedergebende) Karte 8 bei Nikuradse 1942, 109.

<sup>13</sup> Dieser mag seinen Namen dem mythischen Kommandanten der Argo verdanken, der sein anlaufendes Iota verloren hatte: Lang 1973, 393 (unten).

<sup>14</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 66–77).

<sup>15</sup> Toumanoff 1969, 8.

<sup>16</sup> Lordkipanidze 2000, 11 setzt die Gründung des iberischen Staates in die 280er bis 270er Jahre, 13 mit Anm. 77 wird der Regierungsantritt des Parnawas auf 284 v. Chr. datiert.

<sup>17</sup> Lordkipanidze 2000, 13: „Parnavaz, whose historicity causes no doubt, ...“ und 16 zu dessen Nachfolgern.

<sup>18</sup> Vgl. hierzu grundlegend Meißner 2000, bes. 193–202 (Abschnitt V, ‘Early Iberian Kingdom in the Georgian Chronicles’).

... ἐκ Μήδων μὲν τὴν τε Κασπιανὴν καὶ Φαυνίτιν καὶ Βασοροπέδαν, Ἰβήρων δὲ τὴν τε παρῶρειαν τοῦ Παρυάδρου καὶ τὴν Χορζηνὴν καὶ Γωγαρηνὴν, πέραν οὖσαν τοῦ Κύρου, Χαλύβων δὲ καὶ Μοσυνοίκων Καρηνίτιν καὶ Ξερξηγῆν, ... Καταόνων δὲ Ἀκιλισηνὴν καὶ τὴν περὶ τὸν Ἀντίταυρον, Σύρων δὲ Ταρωνίτιν, ...

Leider enthält die Aufzählung Strabons keine Hinweise darauf, welche Herrschaftsform bei den jeweils um Teile ihres Siedlungsgebietes beraubten Völkern bestand. Zwei von ihnen, „Meder“ (aus dem nordmedischen Reich Atropatene) und „Syrer“ (Seleukiden) hatten eigene Könige. Dagegen werden bei den Chalybern, Mosynoikern und Kataonern<sup>19</sup> wohl allenfalls Stammesfürsten geboten haben. Die Iberer nehmen eine etwas unklare Zwischenstellung ein. Sie werden direkt nach den Medern erwähnt und verloren wie diese drei namentlich genannte Distrikte. Dies kann nun entweder bedeuten, dass Artaxias einen eventuellen iberischen Monarchen zur offiziellen Abtretung dreier Provinzen seines Reiches zwang. Es ist jedoch ebenso möglich, dass Iberer, die in den betreffenden Gegenden lebten, aber noch kaum politisch organisiert waren, von Artaxias vertrieben oder unterworfen wurden – etwa in der Weise, wie Zariadris anscheinend mit den Kataonern umging.

Zu einer Entscheidung in dieser Frage kann überraschenderweise das *Leben Georgiens* einiges beitragen.<sup>20</sup> Die einheimische Chronik ist für die betreffende Epoche erst beim zweiten König Ssaurmag angekommen, der fünfundsiebzig Jahre (!), 234–159 v. Chr. regiert haben soll.<sup>21</sup> Man sollte annehmen, dass die empfindliche Gebietseinbuße, die Iberien durch Artaxias erlitten hatte, auf irgendeine Weise in der georgischen Überlieferung thematisiert worden wäre. Dies kann z.B. dadurch geschehen, dass für das nationale Selbstverständnis unerträgliche Vorgänge bestritten oder zumindest stillschweigend zurückgewiesen werden, indem man etwa die angeblich stets unverletzte Integrität des Staatsgebietes von Kartli zur Zeit seines zweiten Königs behauptet. Das Lebensbild des Ssaurmag, wie es von Leonti Mroweli gestaltet wurde, verrät indessen nicht die

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<sup>19</sup> Die Erwähnung der Kataoner gibt uns die Gelegenheit, eine (an sich gar nicht bestehende) Unklarheit zu beseitigen. Strabon erwähnt nicht im einzelnen, welches Gebiet von welchem Machthaber gewonnen wurde. Es erscheint jedoch nachvollziehbar, dass die meisten der genannten Landstriche (darunter alle diejenigen, die den Iberern entrissen wurden), Artaxias anheimfielen. Zariadris konnte anscheinend nur die Akilisene und die Gegend um den Antitauros erwerben, die beide den Kataonern gehört hatten. So bereits Hewsen 1984, 350f., ihm folgend Schottky 1989, 175. Anders Meißner 2000, 187, nach dem Zariadres (sic) das Land südlich des Kyros erobert habe.

<sup>20</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 77ff.).

<sup>21</sup> Zu den traditionellen Regierungsdaten siehe wiederum Toumanoff 1969, 9. Auffällig ist immerhin, dass Ssaurmags Tod zeitlich ungefähr mit dem des Artaxias zusammenfällt, der zuletzt 162 v. Chr. erwähnt wird (Diod. 31.27a, vgl. Schottky 1989, 202).

geringste Kenntnis dessen, was sich in der ersten Hälfte des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. im kaukasischen Umfeld zugetragen hat: Alles, was über den angeblichen zweiten Herrscher von Kartli berichtet wird, ist offensichtlich frei erfunden.<sup>22</sup> Dies führt zu dem Schluss, dass die Existenz eines iberischen Königiums im frühen 2. Jh. v. Chr. äußerst unwahrscheinlich ist.<sup>23</sup> Damit kommen nur noch zwei Perioden in Betracht, in denen dieses entstanden sein kann: Einerseits das Zeitalter der parthischen Westausdehnung von Mithradates I. bis zu Mithradates II., andererseits die Epoche des pontischen Mithradates, an deren Ende erstmals ein iberischer Herrscher von mehreren griechisch-römischen Quellen namentlich genannt wird.

Jeder, der uns bisher gefolgt ist oder die Akten des internationalen Symposiums in T'bilisi vom Herbst 1997 rezipiert hat,<sup>24</sup> kann sich vorstellen, worauf die Sache hinausläuft. Wenn wir im vorliegenden Zusammenhang trotzdem noch einmal auf die frühparthische Expansion eingehen, dann aus folgendem Grund: Die Arsakiden (das Herrscherhaus der Parther) spielen eine wichtige Rolle in der traditionellen Königsliste von Kartli. Bei mehreren Gelegenheiten sollen Angehörige dieser Dynastie in die der Iberer eingeheiratet haben. Auf diese Weise seien die späteren Könige sowohl Arsakiden als auch (in der weiblichen Linie) Pharnabaziden gewesen. Man könnte sich demnach vorstellen, dass die Parther im Verlauf des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. die Oberhoheit über die Iberer gewonnen und diese durch die Einsetzung einer arsakidischen Nebenlinie ausgeübt haben könnten. Eine derartige Möglichkeit, so plausibel sie sich zunächst anhören mag, besteht indessen nicht. Der Beliebtheit der Arsakiden in der georgischen Chronistik steht eine weitgehende Unkenntnis über deren tatsächliche Rolle in der Geschichte gegenüber. Ein besonders augenfälliges Beispiel hierfür ist die Art, wie Leonti Mroweli über die Gründung des Partherreiches (der Name *Parther* als solcher fällt nicht) berichtet, und vor allem, wann diese stattgefunden haben soll.<sup>25</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Dies gilt jedoch nicht für seinen Namen, der von einem König des 3. Jhs. n. Chr. auf ihn übertragen wurde. Vgl. *DNP* 12/2 (Nachträge) s.v. Sauromakes, 1093.

<sup>23</sup> Meißner 2000, 187 nimmt allerdings an, dass in dem iberischen Restgebiet schon damals erste monarchische Strukturen entstanden sein könnten.

<sup>24</sup> Sie bilden den wesentlichen Inhalt des *AMIT*-Bandes 32, 2000 und umfassen u.a. die hier herangezogenen Beiträge von Otar Lordkipanidze, Burkhard Meißner, Felix I. Ter-Martirosov und Andreas E. Furtwängler.

<sup>25</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 100): *Während der Herrschaft Aderkis* [trad. 1–58 n.Chr.] *erhob sich von neuem das Königtum der Perser. Nachdem Alexander in Persien eingedrungen war und es vernichtet hatte, war bis zur Stunde kein König in Persien eingesetzt worden, so daß die persischen Eristaws* [sonst „Herzöge“, hier etwa: Teilfürsten] *jeweils an den einzelnen Orten geboten. Da versammelten sich die persischen Eristaws und setzten Ashgalan den Weisen als König ein. Darauf wurden die Armenier und Kartweler Ashgalan, dem König der Perser, untertan, ...* In diese Schilderung sind spätere persische Vorstellungen von der Partherzeit als einer Epoche der Teilkönige eingegangen. In der Gründung des Reiches durch Ashgalan den Weisen mag andererseits eine Erinnerung an die Machtübernahme der jüngeren (weiblichen) Arsakidenlinie in der

Dagegen werden die Arsakiden als ein bereits während der hellenistischen Zeit in Armenien herrschendes Haus gekennzeichnet. Dies ergibt sich aus der Erwähnung eines armenischen Königs *Arschak* zur Zeit des dritten iberischen Herrschers Mirwan.<sup>26</sup> Es ist einleuchtend, dass derartige Nachrichten aus der armenischen Geschichtsschreibung stammen. In ihr wird erzählt, wie der Großkönig Arshak seinen Sohn Arshak den Jüngeren nach dem endgültigen Sieg über die Seleukiden zum König von Armenien machte.<sup>27</sup> Er oder eventuell sein Sohn, der wiederum Arshak geheißen haben soll,<sup>28</sup> mag das Vorbild für den armenischen König Arschak der Zeit Mirwans gewesen sein.<sup>29</sup> Arschaks gleichnamiger Sohn soll dann im Kampf gegen seinen Schwager, Mirwans Sohn Parnadshom, die Krone Kartlis gewonnen haben.<sup>30</sup>

Bevor wir uns im Gespinnst der iranisch-armenisch-georgischen Verwandtschaftsbeziehungen verlieren, muss an einen Umstand erinnert werden, der die ganze phantasievolle Konstruktion hinfällig werden lässt: Es ist richtig, dass der Großkönig Mithradates II. einige Jahre nach dem Ende des Antiochos Sidetes Armenien angriff (Justinus 42.2.6: *Ad postremum Artoasdi, Armeniorum regi, bellum intulit*) und einen Sieg errang. Sein Erfolg führte jedoch keineswegs zur Einsetzung einer arsakidischen Nebenlinie. Vielmehr bestand die von Artaxias begründete Dynastie noch bis zur Zeitwende. Wenn aber schon in Armenien keine Arsakiden herrschten, ist es schwer vorstellbar, wie diese dann von dort aus den (hypothetischen) iberischen Thron gewonnen haben sollen.<sup>31</sup> Auch im

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Person des Artabanos II. (10/11 – nach 39 n. Chr.) überlebt haben, siehe *DNP* 2 s.v. Artabanos 5, 42f. Trotz des Namensbestandteiles *Ashg-* erscheint es fraglich, ob die Chronisten Ashgalan und seine Nachkommen überhaupt als Arsakiden betrachteten.

<sup>26</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 81f.). Die fünfzigjährige Herrschaft Mirwans wird traditionell auf 159 bis 109 v. Chr. angesetzt: Toumanoff 1969, 10.

<sup>27</sup> Der früheste Beleg für diese Tradition ist die wohl aus dem 7. Jh. n. Chr. stammende, international *Primary History* genannte (*Armenische*) *Urgeschichte*, die hier in der Übersetzung von Thomson 1980, 357–367 verwendet wird. Die Einsetzung Arshaks d. J. wird in *Urgeschichte* (Thomson 1980, 365) geschildert.

<sup>28</sup> Thomson 1980, 366. Movsês Xorenac'i (spätes 8. Jh.) nennt den ersten armenischen Arsakiden Valarshak, dem dann ebenfalls ein Arshak folgte (*M.X.* 2.3, 2.9 in Thomson 1980, 132–133, 145).

<sup>29</sup> In der georgischen Geschichtsschreibung hat sich noch eine Erinnerung daran erhalten, dass die Machtübernahme Arschaks in Armenien zur Zeit des Endes der seleukidischen Herrschaft über Iran stattgefunden haben soll, vgl. Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 80): *Zu der Zeit ging die Herrschaft des Antiochos an Babylon über. Und zu derselben Zeit wurde in Armenien ein gewisser Arschak König. Mirwan beriet sich mit Arschak, und er gab seine Tochter Arschak, dem Sohn Arschaks, zur Frau. Und Mirwan starb, und König wurde an seiner Statt sein Sohn Parnadshom.*

<sup>30</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 80ff.).

<sup>31</sup> Gewagt erscheint der Versuch von Toumanoff 1969, 11, den Bericht über die Machtübernahme eines armenischen Prinzen in Iberien dadurch zu retten, dass er „Arsakiden“ einfach durch „Artaxiaden“ ersetzt.

weiteren Verlauf des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. bleiben demnach Belege für die Existenz eines Königiums bei den Iberern aus. Mit dem Krieg des Parthers Mithradates II. gegen Armenien, den dieser um 120 v. Chr. geführt haben dürfte, sind wir bereits im Zeitalter eines anderen Mithradates, dem des bekannten Königs von Pontos, angekommen. In dieser Epoche ist nach der Ansicht Burkhard Meißners das iberische Königium entstanden.<sup>32</sup> Da wir dieser Erkenntnis im wesentlichen zustimmen, bleibt im Rahmen der vorliegenden Überlegungen insbesondere zu klären, von wem die Monarchie begründet wurde, d.h., wer an den Anfang der iberischen Königsliste zu setzen ist.

Im Jahre 65 v. Chr. neigte sich die Herrschaft Mithradates' VI. ihrem Ende zu. Bei seiner Verfolgung kam Cn. Pompeius Magnus als erster Römer in direkten Kontakt mit den Iberern. In diesem Zusammenhang wird in den griechisch-römischen Quellen erstmals ein Herrscher genannt: Ἀρτόκης (*Artoces*).<sup>33</sup> Ebenso kennt die georgische Chronistik einen *Artag*.<sup>34</sup> Man könnte deshalb darüber nachdenken, ob das iberische Königium vielleicht von Artokes selbst begründet wurde. Er mag bei seiner Thronbesteigung ein relativ junger Mann gewesen sein, um dann im fortgeschrittenen Alter mit Pompeius aneinander zu geraten und in diesem Zusammenhang erstmals in westlichen Berichten zu erscheinen.

Dass wir diese Überlegung nicht weiterverfolgen wollen, mögen aufmerksame Leser bereits dem Untertitel des vorliegenden Beitrages entnommen haben, in dem von den „Anfängen der Pharnabaziden“ die Rede ist. Das soll heißen, dass wir – in diesem Punkt auf einer Linie mit der georgischen Geschichtsschreibung – die ersten iberischen Herrscher als Abkömmlinge eines Parnawas, griech. Φαρνάβαζος betrachten. Ein König mit diesem Namen taucht eine knappe Generation nach Artokes in einer Quelle auf. Cassius Dio 49.24.1 berichtet aus dem Consulatsjahr des Gellius und Nerva (36 v. Chr.):

Πούπλιος Κανίδιος Κράσσοσ ἐπὶ Ἰβηρας τοὺς ταῦτη στρατεύσας μάχη τε τὸν βασιλέα αὐτῶν Φαρνάβαζον ἐνίκησε καὶ ἐς συμμαχίαν προσηγάγετο, ...

Erstaunlicherweise hat die einheimische Tradition die Erinnerung an diesen König, der den Namen des vorgebliehen Dynastiegründers trug, unterdrückt. Als

<sup>32</sup> An der Wende vom 2. zum 1. Jh. v. Chr.: Meißner 2000, bes. 188 und 202. Dazu nicht ablehnend („erwägenswerte Argumente“) Furtwängler 2000, 275.

<sup>33</sup> Der Name erscheint in z.T. unterschiedlicher Schreibweise bei Diod. 40.4.1; App. *Mithr.* 103, 117; Flor. 3.5 (= 1.40.28); Cass. Dio 37.1–2; Eutr. 6.14; Fest. 16; Oros. 6.4.8.

<sup>34</sup> Seine traditionell fünfzehnjährige Herrschaft (78–63 v. Chr., Toumanoff 1969, 11) entspricht offensichtlich nicht demjenigen Überlieferungsstrang, der Eingang in das „Leben Georgiens“ gefunden hat. Über Artag, der ein Sohn des im Kampf gegen Parnadshom an die Macht gelangten Arschak und damit auch selbst Arsakide gewesen sein soll, berichtet Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 82): *Arschak starb, und König wurde sein Sohn Artag. Und dieser König Artag regierte nur zwei Jahre, ...*

Nachfolger Artags erscheint dort sein Sohn Bartom, der später Parnadshoms Sohn Mirwan II. erlag.<sup>35</sup> Angesichts dieser Überlieferungslage gibt es zwei Möglichkeiten. Die Bezeichnung „Pharnabaziden“ könnte sich auf den für 36 v. Chr. belegten Pharnabazos beziehen, der sehr wahrscheinlich der Stammvater der späteren iberischen Könige bis zum 2. Jh. n. Chr. war. Ungeklärt bliebe dann allerdings, weshalb die Chronisten Pharnabazos und nicht den älteren und durch eine Vielzahl von Zeugnissen bekannten Artokes zum Dynastiegründer erklärten. Es scheint daher, als sei bereits der Pharnabazos der Ära des zweiten Triumvirats nach einem älteren Namensträger benannt worden. Neben der direkten Benennung eines Sohnes nach dem Vater ist die Namenspatenschaft von Großvätern und Onkeln besonders beliebt. Im vorliegenden Fall könnte das bedeuten, dass Dios Pharnabazos der Sohn des Artokes und der Enkel eines älteren Pharnabazos war, der das iberische Königtum begründete. Pharnabazos II., wie wir ihn von jetzt an nennen wollen, wäre dann vielleicht aus der Tradition ausgeschieden worden, um jede Verwechslung mit seinem bedeutenderen Ahnherrn zu verhindern.<sup>36</sup>

Am Ende unserer Überlegungen soll zumindest überprüft werden, ob sich nicht noch etwas Licht in die näheren Umstände der Entstehung der iberischen Monarchie bringen lässt. Die Tatsache, dass diese tatsächlich in die Epoche Mithradates' VI. fällt, sagt noch nichts über die Art der Beziehungen zwischen dem Pontiker und den Iberern aus. Ob Artokes ein Bundesgenosse des Mithradates war, ist zweifelhaft.<sup>37</sup> Eine Generation vorher, vor Ausbruch des ersten mithradatischen Krieges, bestanden dagegen Bündnisse zwischen Pontos und einigen seiner Nachbarländer, unter denen auch Iberien erscheint. Memnon von Herakleia (*FGrH* 434, Fr. 22.4) sagt von Mithradates:

... συμμάχους δὲ Πάρθους καὶ Μήδους καὶ Τιγράνην Ἄρμενιον καὶ τοὺς Φρυγῶν βασιλεῖς καὶ τὸν Ἴβηρα προσηταιρίζετο.

Bei dem kurz als „Iberer“ bezeichneten Mann handelt es sich ohne Zweifel um den damaligen Landesfürsten. Das Memnon-Fragment stellt demnach den frühesten Beleg für ein iberisches Königtum in einer griechischen Quelle dar, auch wenn noch kein Herrschernamen genannt wird. Ähnlich wie es bei den Opfern der armenischen Expansion im frühen 2. Jh. v. Chr. zu beobachten war, werden in

<sup>35</sup> Leonti Mroweli (Pätsch 1985, 83–85).

<sup>36</sup> Ob der Bartom der Überlieferung einfach mit Pharnabazos II. gleichgesetzt werden darf (so Toumanoff 1969, 11) erscheint sehr fraglich. Die in Anm. 55 niedergelegte Überlegung Toumanoffs „It is difficult to see any connection between this King's two names, but this kind of polyonymy is not uncommon in Iberian history.“ lässt eher auf Ratlosigkeit schließen.

<sup>37</sup> Der beiläufigen Bemerkung bei Plut. *Pomp.* 34, die Iberer hätten, um Mithradates gefällig zu sein, Pompeius Widerstand geleistet, widerspricht klar die Aussage bei App. *Mithr.* 101, der Pontiker sei anlässlich seiner Flucht von Armenien nach Kolchis von Iberern angegriffen worden. Siehe hierzu insbesondere Braund 1994, 165 mit Anm. 64.

einem Satz staatlich sehr unterschiedlich organisierte Gebilde zusammengefasst. Von ihnen können die Phryger im vorliegenden Zusammenhang ganz vernachlässigt werden, da bei ihnen kein Königtum (mehr) bestand. Die „Könige“ mögen lokale Potentaten gewesen sein, die die Oberherrschaft des Mithradates anerkannt hatten.<sup>38</sup> Somit bleiben Parther, Meder, Armenier (unter Tigranes) und Iberer als Bündnispartner übrig. Hierbei ist wiederum die Rolle der Meder ein wenig unklar. Man könnte vermuten, dass Memnon den klassischen Ausdruck „Meder und Perser“ im Kopf hatte und ihn zu „Parther und Meder“ umformte. Wahrscheinlicher ist aber, dass wie bei Strab. 11.14.5 das Königreich von Media Atropatene gemeint war. Von Mithradates, dem dortigen Landesherrn im Jahre 67 v. Chr., ist bekannt, dass er ein Schwiegersohn des armenischen Tigranes war und zusammen mit ihm und Mithradates von Pontos gegen die Römer kämpfte.<sup>39</sup> Nach Ausscheidung der phrygischen *reguli* und der Verschiebung der Meder an deren Stelle ergibt sich demnach folgendes Bild: Memnon wollte sagen, dass Mithradates einerseits ein Bündnis mit den Parthern schloss, andererseits eines mit Tigranes von Armenien und dessen nachrangigen Bundesgenossen, von denen die Meder und der Fürst der Iberer genannt werden.<sup>40</sup>

Demnach bleibt festzuhalten, dass es anscheinend zu keinem Zeitpunkt direkte („bilaterale“) Beziehungen zwischen Pontos und Iberien gab. Vielmehr nahmen die Iberer ausschließlich als Verbündete Armeniens an den Kämpfen gegen die Römer teil.<sup>41</sup> Es sieht daher so aus, als ob die Entstehung des Königtums bei den Iberern in ursächlichem Zusammenhang steht mit der Machtausdehnung Armeniens in den frühen Herrscherjahren Tigranes' II.<sup>42</sup> Dieser wird den Iberern nicht nur seine Oberhoheit aufgezwungen, sondern auch einen Satrapen einheimischer Herkunft eingesetzt haben, der von ihm aus gern als König auftreten durfte.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>38</sup> Braund 1994, 165 spricht von „Phrygian rulers“.

<sup>39</sup> Cass. Dio 36.14.2. Siehe dazu z.B. *DNP* 8 s.v. Mithradates 21, 283.

<sup>40</sup> Die von Memnon überlieferte Nachricht entspricht damit nahezu wörtlich der kurzen Bemerkung gegen Ende von App. *Mithr.* 15, wonach Tigranes von Armenien der Schwiegersohn und der Partherkönig ein Verbündeter des Mithradates sei. Offenbar gehen beide Berichte auf eine gemeinsame Quelle zurück. Bei Memnon, der auch die armenischen Vasallen nennt, ist eine vollständigere Fassung erhalten, deren Aussagekraft allerdings durch die Einfügung der mysteriösen Phrygerkönige gemindert worden ist.

<sup>41</sup> Plut. *Luc.* 26 und 31. Vgl. dazu wiederum Braund 165.

<sup>42</sup> Die Unterwerfung der Iberer durch Tigranes wird in den noch vorhandenen Quellen nicht ausdrücklich erwähnt. Nach Olshausen, Wagner 1981 soll ihr Siedlungsgebiet zwischen 87 und 84 v. Chr. armenisch geworden sein. Dem widerspricht aber, dass Memnon den „Iberer“ bereits in der Zeit vor dem 89 v. Chr. ausgebrochenen 1. Mithradatischen Krieg unter den Verbündeten von Pontos (*recte* Armenios) nennt.

<sup>43</sup> Eine derartige Handlungsweise ist nicht so irrational, wie sie uns heute erscheinen mag. Tigranes hatte den sonst den Parthern vorbehaltenen Titel „König der Könige“ angenommen (App.



Wir möchten demnach folgendes Szenario zur Diskussion stellen: Weder im 3., noch im 2. Jh. v. Chr. existierte ein Königreich der Iberer. Nach 190/88 v. Chr. mussten diese sogar empfindliche Gebietsverluste hinnehmen, als Artaxias von Armenien drei iberisch besiedelte Landstriche seinem Reich eingliederte. Das Schicksal der Nation schien besiegelt, als Artaxias' Urenkel Tigranes II. auch das iberische Restgebiet seiner Botmäßigkeit unterstellte. Gerade die armenische Herrschaft führte jedoch zur Entstehung monarchischer Strukturen im Lande selbst. Hier scheint ein gewisser Pharnabazos (georgisch *Parnawas*) ein Herrscherhaus begründet zu haben, das lange Bestand hatte. Der Machtverlust Armeniens nach 65 v. Chr. führte trotz der (vorübergehenden) Unterwerfung von Pharnabazos' Sohn Artokes und dessen Sohn Pharnabazos II. durch römische Feldherren zur faktischen Unabhängigkeit Iberiens am Ende der hellenistischen Epoche. Wie sich die Herrschaft der Pharnabaziden während der römischen Kaiserzeit entwickelte, soll in einem weiteren Beitrag untersucht werden.

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*Syr.* 48; *Plut. Luc.* 14), ließ sich von „vielen“ Königen begleiten und behandelte speziell vier von ihnen wie Lakaien (*Plut. Luc.* 21). Er mag es daher als weiteren Beitrag zur eigenen Größe betrachtet haben, sich Oberherr eines „Königs der Iberer“ nennen zu können.

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## Abstract

### Prolegomena to a King List of Caucasian Iberia

#### 1. Pharnabazid Beginnings

Medieval Georgian historiography connects the rise of an Iberian kingdom with Alexander the Great. On the other hand, Iberian rulers are mentioned in classical sources only since late-Hellenistic times. This is a strong argument for the opinion of Meißner (2000) to date the emergence of Iberian kingship not before the epoch of Mithradates VI of Pontus. The genesis was nevertheless not due to Mithradates himself. It was his ally and son-in-law Tigranes II of Armenia, who was able to subjugate the Iberians soon after his own accession (95 BC). He installed a governor, who was (more or less tacitly) allowed to call himself "king", like other vassals of the king of kings Tigranes. This ruler was perhaps called Pharnabazus, in Georgian *Parnawas* (transliterated also *P'arnawaz*), what was the name of the legendary first Iberian king in the time after Alexander. With the decline of the Pontic-Armenian alliance, the first name of a king appears in classical sources: in 65 BC Pompey subdued a certain Artoces. In 36 BC we hear of Pharnabazus (II), who was very probably Artoces' son and a grandson of his name-sake, the founder of the dynasty. So, at the turning point from Hellenism to the Roman Empire, Pharnabazid rule was firmly established in Iberia.



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## THE DATING OF NOGAĪCHIK BARROW AND THE CULTURAL IDENTITY OF THE ELITE BURIALS OF THE NORTH PONTIC REGION

**Keywords:** cultural identity, ethnicity, elite graves, North Pontic region

The dating of the Nogaĭchik Barrow has for many years been a subject of heated debate and discussion.<sup>1</sup> In the burial, artefacts were found which are particularly characteristic of the Late Hellenistic period, such as a fusiform unguentarium, a ceramic jug of North Caucasian provenance, a glass *millefiori* cup, some specific forms of jewellery etc.; some of these items cannot be regarded as having been in use for a long time (the unguentarium). All this suggests a date for the burial not later than the 1st century BC. This is confirmed by the recent statistical comparison of the calibrated dates obtained by determining the age of wooden and bone material from the grave, carried out using the program OxCal. The data received correlate this burial with the highest percentage of probability with the specified temporal interval (112 calBC – 20 calAD).<sup>2</sup>

### The Nogaĭchik Barrow and the explanatory models of the Sarmatian culture

Even at the time of its first publication, the Nogaĭchik Barrow could be well dated to the Late Hellenistic period. However, at that time a much later date was supposed, namely the second half of the 1st/early 2nd century AD.<sup>3</sup> This later

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<sup>1</sup> Simonenko 1993; Ščepinskij 1994; Treister 1997; Mordvintseva, Zaitsev 2003; Zaitsev, Mordvintseva 2007.

<sup>2</sup> Zaitsev, Mordvintseva, Hellström 2013.

<sup>3</sup> Simonenko 1993, 117.

date is still popular, and used by some archaeologists.<sup>4</sup> For some reason it seems to be very hard to accept the true earlier date. This interesting phenomenon does not just entail ignoring of the other point of view. It appears that the chronological attribution of the Nogaĭchik barrow is deeply connected with the interpretation model of the Sarmatian archaeological culture (the “Sarmatian paradigm”<sup>5</sup>) which was developed in the 1980s and 1990s in the Soviet academic literature under the influence of the historical concept of Michael Rostovtzeff.

According to his “concept of the long-distance migration from the East”,<sup>6</sup> the steppes of the North Pontic region were periodically invaded by new groups of Iranian-speaking nomads. Their movements are marked in the material culture by definite artefacts (silver phalerae of horse harness, gold polychrome brooches, objects of Animal Style), which are found in the burial complexes of the social elites.<sup>7</sup> Furthermore, Rostovtzeff mentioned that the distribution of the Animal Style items in the Sarmatian complexes coincides with the appearance of the Alanian tribe in the North Pontic region according to the classical writings.<sup>8</sup>

In the 1940s and ‘50s, Rostovtzeff’s historical model was replaced by the “concept of short-distance migration from the East”. In accordance with this concept, the “motherland” of the Sarmatians was the steppe of the Lower Volga and Ural. From this region the Sarmatian culture spread in various directions – westwards and eastwards.<sup>9</sup> These movements could be traced in the material culture by means of identifying special features of the “ethnographic complex” of the Sarmatian culture.<sup>10</sup> Any of its constituents (e.g. the orientation of the dead to the south, special forms of graves – niche-graves and catacombs; round-bottom hand-formed ceramic vessels etc.) found in the burial structures outside the Volga-Ural region was interpreted as a sign of the “Sarmatisation” of this territory, i.e. the physical presence of the “carriers” of the Sarmatian archaeological culture of the Volga-Ural area. In contrast to Rostovtzeff’s method, which interpreted elements of “elite complexes” as ethnic features, in this case the elements of the “mass culture” were considered as “ethnic” marks.

The discovery of the royal tombs of Tillya-tepe in Northern Afghanistan in 1978, revealing a large amount of gold jewellery with polychrome inlays and representations of animals, led to the revival of Rostovtzeff’s historical model. Thousands of items of golden jewellery with turquoise inlays were brought into

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<sup>4</sup> Simonenko 2008, 14.

<sup>5</sup> Mordvintseva 2008.

<sup>6</sup> Mordvintseva 2013.

<sup>7</sup> Rostovtzeff 1929, 45, 67–68, 93–94.

<sup>8</sup> Rostovtzeff 1922, 116.

<sup>9</sup> Rau 1929; Grakov 1947; Smirnov 1957, 18; 1964, 287–288.

<sup>10</sup> Smirnov 1964, 191, 196.

the State Hermitage for the restoration, and made a sensation in academic circles, so impressive was their similarity to the objects from the Khokhlach Barrow and the Siberian collection of Peter I. Again, the question arose as to the origin of the Sarmatian Animal Style. Works appeared devoted to the analysis of the Animal style objects and to interpretation of the complexes in which they were found.<sup>11</sup> Most systematically, a new version of the concept of the long-distance migration from the East is described in Boris Raev's book on the Roman imports in the burials of the Lower Don.<sup>12</sup>

According to his point of view, the burial complexes of the Sarmatian elite appeared on the Lower Don suddenly, and not earlier than the mid-1st century AD.<sup>13</sup> He dated the similar burials of the Lower Volga area, without a detailed analysis, to slightly earlier, and the complexes from the territory of Ukraine and Moldova to a slightly later period.<sup>14</sup> The contents of all these graves are similar and homogeneous. They are associated with the nobility of one nomadic tribe, which first lived in the steppe east of the Volga and then moved to the steppe of the North Caucasus and then to the Lower Don. In the 1st century AD such a tribe could only have been the Alans, who appeared in the North Pontic region from the depths of Asia. The appearance of the rich burials in the Lower Don area in the mid-1st century AD corresponds to the data offered by classical authors, because the earliest information about the Alans belongs to the third quarter of the 1<sup>st</sup> century AD.<sup>15</sup> In the previous period, without doubt neither at the Lower Don, nor in any other area related to the Sarmatians, were there any similar complexes.<sup>16</sup> Precisely by the appearance of the Alans Roman and provincial-Roman imports were spread in the steppes of Eastern Europe. The expensive Roman silver- and bronzeware was not found in the cities of the Bosporan kingdom and other North Pontic cites that acted as intermediaries in the trade with barbarians. Hence, one can presume that direct contacts took place between the Sarmatians and the Romans. And this could only have occurred after the mid-1st century AD, when the Roman Empire began its active policy in the North Pontic region. With other nomadic tribes (Aorsoi), Rome had friendly relations, therefore it did not make sense to grant them expensive gifts. The Alans, in contrast, were always regarded as the enemies of the Empire, which meant that their leaders had to be bribed.<sup>17</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> Zasetskaia 1980; 1989; Raev 1984; Raev 1986.

<sup>12</sup> Raev 1986.

<sup>13</sup> Raev 1986, 56, 58.

<sup>14</sup> Raev 1986, 58.

<sup>15</sup> Raev 1986, 59.

<sup>16</sup> Raev 1986, 63.

<sup>17</sup> Raev 1986, 65–66.



**Fig. 1. Nogaichik Barrow. Photo (after Ščepinskij 1994).**

This historical model was maintained and developed by many researchers; additional arguments were expressed to support the idea connecting all the elite burials of the North Pontic region with the Alans.<sup>18</sup> In particular, A.S. Skripkin expressed the statement that in the 1st century AD female burials of high social status, similar to those of Tillya-tepe, first appeared in the steppes of Eastern Europe.<sup>19</sup> This meant a “revival of the gynaikocratic features”,<sup>20</sup> which the classical authors ascribed to the Sauromatian and Massagetic societies<sup>21</sup> (note that Ammianus considered the Alans as former Massagetae).

<sup>18</sup> Skripkin 1990, 206–209; 1997, 23–24; Zhdanovskii 1987; Maksimenko 1998; Simonenko 2008, 11, 50; Marčenko, Limberis 2008, 324–326.

<sup>19</sup> Skripkin 1990, 209, 215; 1997, 24, 71, 93.

<sup>20</sup> Special features of martial art for women.

<sup>21</sup> Skripkin 1997, 24.

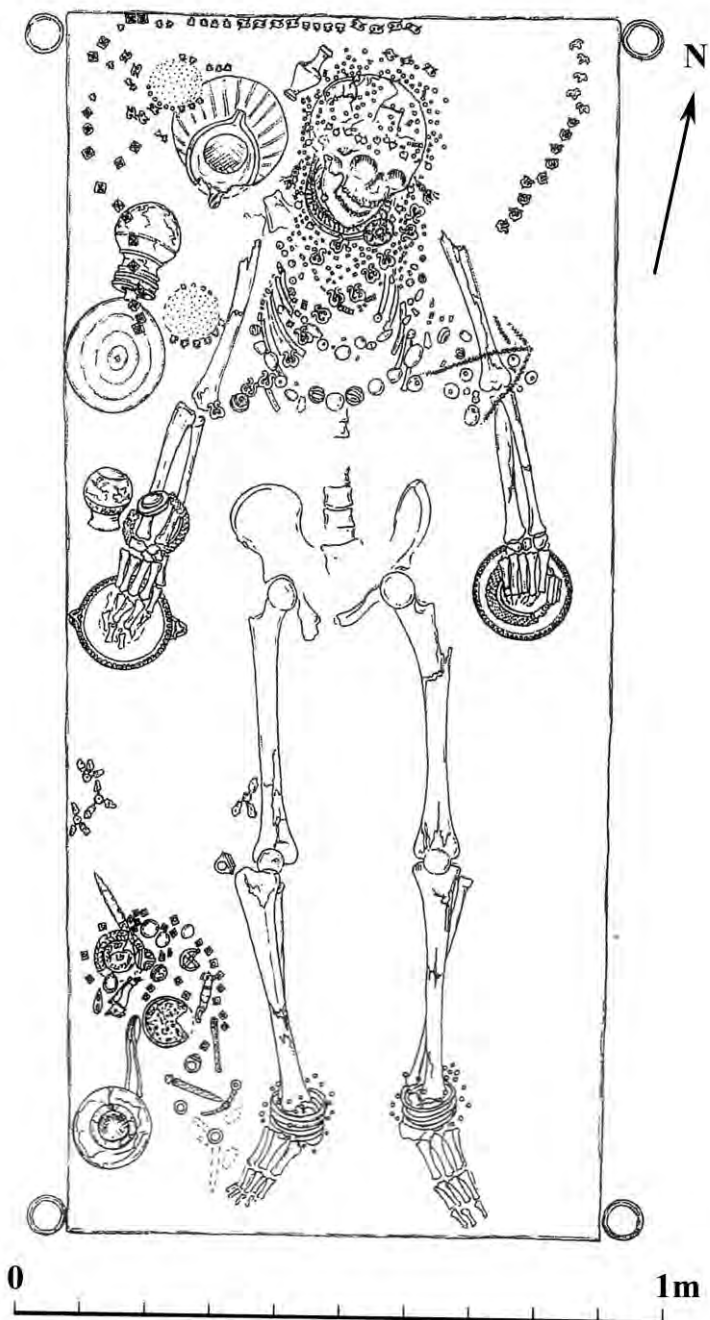


Fig. 2. Nogaichik Barrow. Plan of the burial (after Mordvintseva, Zaitsev 2003).

Applying the discussed explanatory model, the Nogāichik Barrow must be dated to the late 1st/early 2nd century AD. The grave was found to the south-west of the Lower Don, hence it should be slightly later than the Don complexes. It is a rich female burial containing Animal Style objects; therefore it should belong to the Alans.

The important positive result of the cited works is the statement that the elite burial complexes, similar in composition, appeared simultaneously in quite a wide area. Their common features were pointed out, namely the silver- and bronzeware of Roman and provincial Roman provenance and imports of Eastern origin (Chinese mirrors, military equipment, Animal Style objects etc.). Still, the correlation of all these burial assemblages with one specific ethnic group (Alans) is only one possible interpretation, which is rather poorly supported by the available evidence.

### Group identities and material culture

Ethnicity is a form of self-identification. In the Greek language, the expression “*ta ethnê*”, originally applied to a group of people or animal united by any feature, in one sense began to be used in relation to non-Greeks, to identify groups of peoples that are different from “us”. In Latin the word “*natio*” signified “other” people in contrast to “*populus*”, the people of Rome.<sup>22</sup> The majority of early endonyms are translated as “people” or “real/genuine people”,<sup>23</sup> a notion that served to separate this group from other human communities. The term “ethnicity”, used in modern anthropological/ethnological and archaeological literature, is a relatively late semantic construct, partly imposed upon the historical reality, and established for the purpose of classification of groups of peoples recognising their common origin and having a set of similar features in their culture.<sup>24</sup> Ethnicity in the modern sense of this term is a sort of “imagined community”,<sup>25</sup> a product of the industrial society that gave rise to such institutions as the population census, map and museum,<sup>26</sup> whose aim, ultimately, is the economic (tax collection, etc.) and political benefit of the state.

Group identities can be distinguished on the basis of their formation as (1) biological (gender, race), (2) social (family, sex, age, religious-ideological, linguistic, ethnic, caste, production, etc.), (3) geographical (territorial, landscape). In any of these cases the self-identification of a group of people occurs, especially on the

<sup>22</sup> Tishkov 2003, 97–98.

<sup>23</sup> Tishkov 2003, 63.

<sup>24</sup> Bromlei 1983; Kozlov 1995, 152–155; Tishkov 2003, 115.

<sup>25</sup> Anderson 1991, 26.

<sup>26</sup> Anderson 1991.



basis of stating its non-similarity with other groups. These group identities by the duration of their functioning may be permanent (i.e. operating throughout the life of the individual included in them, such as a gender group or a peer group), temporal (the union for a period of fighting against a common enemy, the holiday etc.), and situational/random. At the same time, the identity can be realised (perceived) when the uniting signs have not yet been realised by its potential members. But under certain conditions this unity can be found meaningful and become a reality. Such a phenomenon may occur, for example, by the classification of groups of people from an outside observer. The behaviour of an individual as a subject, belonging simultaneously to different groups (ethnic, social, political, religious, etc.), is situational, and in each case is determined in harmony with the ethics accepted in the society and his personal benefits.

A specific association of people, whether they realise their unity or not, may be reflected as common elements in the material culture. The material culture is understood in the ethnographic literature as a set of all material objects of a particular society created by human labour in their functional relationship, and is seen as a mechanism for adaptation of *socium* to the conditions of the natural and social environment.<sup>27</sup> The material culture of the past represented in the archaeological remains fragmentary, because of its partial loss and/or evolution, in a physical as well as metaphysical sense.<sup>28</sup> This it is why the correlation of the material remains of the ancient cultures with a certain type of human communities is so complicated. To a lesser extent, it concerns the economic-cultural types, which are closely linked with the landscape and other natural living conditions of human groups (climate, the presence of minerals, etc.). More problematic is the ethnic attribution of specific archaeological realities, since the essence of ethnic differences is in the mental, not physical sphere.

Any form of identity can be manifested in the archaeologised remains of the material culture: altogether and individually. The problem is that they are usually presented in an undivided form. It is difficult to make an unambiguous correlation between different material manifestations of culture and specific forms of identity. Moreover, it is not always possible to determine whether we are dealing with the realised (conscious) identity, or with the potential (unconscious), which is rather a fruit of the researcher's work. The differences between the material manifestations of culture once gave rise to the term "archaeological culture", based on the difference between a specific set of material remains from other sets. As is the case with other forms of identity, this peculiar "archaeological identity" is determined, first of all, by its dissimilarity to other "archaeological identities". It appears, in general, in the form of organisation and the use of space for the purpose of settlement and

<sup>27</sup> Arutiunov 1989, 5–6.

<sup>28</sup> Klein 1986, 211.

residence, including specific categories and shapes of objects and material realisation of taphological concepts. The specifics of a particular culture are usually defined by researchers by manifestation of its most recognisable feature, often taken out of context, that appears in the nomenclature (the Catacomb Culture, the Urnenfeld Culture, etc.). By doing so, the researcher, apparently, aspires to certainty, clarity of the historical model, to the construction of firm boundaries and schemes, without which it is difficult to imagine a positive cognition of the world. This is likely to be the reason that different cultures were identified in due time on the basis of different principles, and are a phenomenon of a different order, which caused and continues to cause debates of a methodical character.

Apparently, different kinds of archaeological monuments are informative in varying degrees to various forms of group identities. Burial structures reflect the social and biological forms of identities in the best way; among them may be the ethnic identity as well. One can consider which forms of identity it is possible to identify by analysing the elite burials.

### **Elite burials: dynamics of their emerging and disappearance**

*Burials of elites are a specific type of archaeological sources. The “elite” is commonly understood as meaning the individuals and groups of people occupying a leading position in various spheres of human activity (political, ideological, economic, cultural, etc.).<sup>29</sup> Elites of different origins played the most active role in the political life of the society, regardless of the specific social system. Nobles, military leaders, “bigmen”, tribal chiefs, and kings signed and dissolved military alliances’ their functions incorporated receiving and redistribution of the surplus product, and the control over the external exchange and trade, crafts and technologies relevant to the economy. They personified their people in domestic and foreign politics.<sup>30</sup>*

On the one hand, the social elite united people regardless of their racial, ethnic, linguistic, religious and other affiliations. On the other hand, such a group is opposed to the social groups of lower rank, which in other circumstances could be considered as a single unit with the elite. The socio-political nature of the funeral of a noble suggests that this identity can be classified as “realised”, i.e. perceived by the representatives of the group, as well as by other segments of the society. During the funeral, a demonstration took place of the high social status not so much of the deceased but of his close relatives and the clan, and the posi-

<sup>29</sup> Pershits, Treide 1986, 224.

<sup>30</sup> Kradin 2001, 68–69, 90–108.

tion of the whole society to the neighbouring and even very distant social communities. The funeral of a nobleman was also a kind of propaganda action of his successor. When a chieftain buried his dead predecessor, in the eyes of his audience he legitimised his claim to power by exhibiting rich burial offerings, delivering a funeral feast, and distributing gifts.<sup>31</sup>

Questions related to the ethno-cultural changes in the society and to migrations and conquests cannot be solved solely on the materials of the rich burial complexes. The burials of the elites of the same type of society and of the same chronological period have, as a rule, very much in common, especially among the accompanying burial goods.<sup>32</sup> This is due primarily to the exponential nature of the funeral of the elites. Therefore, the assignment of all rich burials of the specific chronological period to the Alans, even if they appeared “suddenly and simultaneously”, is not convincing. Such a “sudden appearance” of a number of rich burials may have been caused by other reasons.

The question of why rich burials appeared in a particular culture is answered on either an economic<sup>33</sup> or a social basis.<sup>34</sup> E. Antonova and D. Raevskii also emphasised the role of the ideological factor in the emergence of the social elite in the society.<sup>35</sup> However, all these explanatory models do not take into account the dynamic model of the sudden appearance and equally sudden disappearance of the burials with rituals and funerary gifts of unusual splendour.

Such dynamics could be explained differently. Some researchers suggest that the emergence of particularly rich burials in complex structured communities with the supreme central authority should reflect an unstable balance of political forces, a crisis situation in the society.<sup>36</sup> On the other hand, lavishly furnished burials could appear as a result of the concentration of political power in the hands of one group or individual.<sup>37</sup> The centralisation of power was especially intensive in societies contacting cultures which were more outstanding in a technical and organisational sense.<sup>38</sup> Such “high” cultures provided not only economic or social impulses but also new military strategies, which could lead to an apparent increase in the centres of power concentration.<sup>39</sup> The culture of the higher social classes was also changed through trade, prestigious exchange, and related foreign contacts.

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<sup>31</sup> Egg 2009, 41.

<sup>32</sup> Kossack 1974, 4.

<sup>33</sup> Guliaev 1976, 226–227.

<sup>34</sup> Masson 1976, 158–159.

<sup>35</sup> Antonova, Raevskii 1984, 158.

<sup>36</sup> Kossack 1974, 31–32; Schier 1998, 493–494; Huth 2003, 260–261.

<sup>37</sup> Egg 2009.

<sup>38</sup> Kossack 1974, 31–32.

<sup>39</sup> Egg 2009, 48.

The concentration of power, privileges and wealth in the same hands was risky, and resulted in a struggle for power, which affected the unstable situation. Unless special institutions were created to stabilise it, crisis was inevitable. Thus, the decline of the elites was inextricably linked to their rise.<sup>40</sup>

Taking into account this feature of “elite” burials, the comparison of the burial complexes discovered at a sufficiently large territory can provide invaluable information about the connections and relations between different societies themselves, and also with neighbouring and even remote regions.

### **The Nogaichik Barrow in the context of other elite burials of the North Pontic region**

The Nogaichik Barrow is not the only elite burial complex of the North Pontic region, which is dated to the Late Hellenistic period. To the same chronological horizon belong several intact rich female burials found in the steppes of the Lower Don, Kuban and Lower Volga: Maierovskiĭ-III, kurgan 4 grave 3B,<sup>41</sup> Alitub, kurgan 20 “Krestovyĭ”,<sup>42</sup> Alitub, kurgan 26,<sup>43</sup> Peschanyĭ, kurgan 1 grave 10,<sup>44</sup> Vorontsovskaiā, kurgan 3 grave 1,<sup>45</sup> Kalininskaiā, kurgan 1 grave 16,<sup>46</sup> Malai, “Oval Barrow” grave 15,<sup>47</sup> Novokubansk, kurgan 5 grave 5,<sup>48</sup> etc. They are dated from the second half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC to the turn of the era. This group of elite burials is not homogeneous. There are features that unite them (the abundance of high-quality jewellery, mirrors, precious drinking vessels), and on which they differ (the shape and construction of burial structures, the presence/absence of animal food in the grave, etc.).

The local isolation of the Nogaichik Barrow from other burial sites (the burials of the Sarmatian period were not found close to this kurgan) means that it cannot be correlated with a specific archaeological culture. At the same time, some specific features of the burial rite (the concentration of grave goods arranged along the right side of the body, the hands in the bowls) and some burial goods (a ceramic jug, zoomorphic pendants, a torque, a brooch-pin, bracelets on the feet), indicate the similarity of this grave to some burial structures of the Kuban region in the

<sup>40</sup> Egg 2009, 49.

<sup>41</sup> Skvortsov, Skripkin 2008.

<sup>42</sup> Shilov 1975, 141.

<sup>43</sup> Raev 1986, 42–44.

<sup>44</sup> Zhdanovskii 1990; Marčenko, Limberis 2008, 338 Kat. Nr. 12.

<sup>45</sup> Raev, Bspalyi 1998, 129–148.

<sup>46</sup> Marchenko 1996, 181: Complex 5.

<sup>47</sup> Marchenko 1996, Complex 226.

<sup>48</sup> Shevchenko 2004.

Hellenistic period, first of all to the Peschanyĭ Barrow (Fig. 3). The absence of the Roman imported silver and bronze vessels which are so characteristic of the elite burials of the 1st century AD, considered by Raev (1986), is an additional argument in favour of its dating to a previous time, i.e. earlier than the middle of the 1st century BC.



**Fig. 3. Peschanyĭ Barrow. Photo (after Zhdanovskii 1980).**

The appearance of particularly rich burials in the archaeological cultures of the Lower Volga, the Lower Don and the Kuban in the 1st century BC could be connected with the increased activity and centralisation of social elites, partly under the influence of the foreign policy of the King of Pontus Mithradates VI Eupator, who regarded attracting the Barbarians of the North Pontic region to his side as one of the most effective means in the fight against Rome.

The inclusion of the North Pontic territories into the sphere of interests of Mithradates VI Eupator changed the political balance of power in the region. He engaged in his policy the Scythian kings of the Kuban, which is bound to affect the neighbouring tribes. Evidently the numerous diplomatic gifts, dynastic marriages and other political actions affected the consolidation of the barbaric world of the eastern part of the North Black Sea region that contributed to the creation of the new centres of power, which brought together different groups of peoples. This led to the emergence of princely burial complexes accompanied by particularly magnificent funeral gifts, such as Nogaĭchik Barrow.

After the fall of Mithradates Eupator, the North Black Sea region got into the circle of interests of the Roman foreign policy, accompanied by the interference in the internal affairs of the Greek cities, direct and indirect bribery of the barbarian kinglets, keeping them thirsty for luxury etc. Since that time the burials of elite in the whole North Pontic region look very similar. Everywhere among the burial goods one can see such prestigious objects as silver and bronze vessels of Roman and provincial Roman provenance: oinochoe, pateras, ladles, drinking cups, etc. All areas of the North Pontic Barbaricum became more or less politically and economically dependent on the centres of ancient civilisation – the Greek cities of the North Black Sea and the Roman Empire. In this sense, the similarity of the elite burials of the 1<sup>st</sup> and the first half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD throughout the whole Barbaricum around the Roman Empire is very significant, a phenomenon which has often been already noted<sup>49</sup>.

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<sup>49</sup> Quast 2009, 110.

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## Abstract

The dating of the Nogaichik Barrow for many years is the subject of debates and discussion. Some scholars date it to the late 1<sup>st</sup>– early second 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD. However, the burial contained



objects which are characteristic for the Late Hellenistic period, mainly for the 1<sup>st</sup> c. BC. The recently undertaken dendrochronological analysis of a wooden stand from the burial and the <sup>14</sup>C analysis of the bones of the dead also provide the same date.

To the same chronological period belong some other female ostentatious burials from the Lower Volga, Lower Don and the Kuban. This group is not homogeneous. There are features that unite them (a number of gold jewellery, precious drinking vessels, mirrors) and on which they differ (form and construction of the burial constructions; presence or absence of the animal bones in the grave, etc.).

The local isolation of the Nogaĭchik Barrow from any burial ground does not allow one to correlate it reliably with any particular culture. At the same time, some specific features of the burial rite (concentration of grave goods on the right side along the body, hands were put in bowls) and specific types of burial goods (a ceramic jug, zoomorphic pendants, torque, brooch-pin, foot-rings), indicate its proximity with the archaeological culture of the Kuban region of the Hellenistic period.

The appearance of particularly rich burials in the archaeological cultures of the Lower Volga, the Lower Don and the Kuban in the I c. BC could be associated with the increased centralization of social elites, partly as a result of the foreign policy of King of Pontus Mithradates the VI Eupator.





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## EMBROIDERIES ON GARMENTS FROM KURGAN 20 OF THE NOIN-ULA BURIAL GROUND

**Keywords:** Mongolia, Xiongnu, Noin-Ula burial ground, kurgan 20, clothing fragments, embroideries, human depictions

Archaeological materials from kurgan 20 of the Noin-Ula burial ground in Northern Mongolia were studied in 2006 by members of the Joint Russian-Mongolian Expedition whose results were published in a book entitled, *The 20th Kurgan of Noin-Ula*.<sup>1</sup> However, many textile items were not included as they will be published in a separate monograph. Some of the most remarkable artifacts were published in separate papers.<sup>2</sup> The present paper focuses on Kurgan 20 that has yielded pieces of outer garments (Pl. I) and many other unique items. The textiles were recovered from the bottom of the looted burial chamber embedded in water-saturated clay. These pieces represent considerably large parts of the flaps of a garment. Presently, it is impossible to determine whether it was the short jacket of a horseman or a long outer garment (*kaftan*), or if it was the garment for a man or a woman. The basic textile was a thin, dense, sand-colored silk. The silk base was coated with ornately embroidered wool and silk fabrics lined with silk wadding. The sides and the bottom of the garment are edged with duplicated light beige silk bands decorated with repeated woven red motifs. The garment is also edged with fur, most likely sable. All the fabrics used in fashioning this garment are of great interest (Fig. 1).

**The decorative motif on the edges of this outer garment is unique.** The light beige silk bands bear the images of animals (dragon and tortoise), birds (phoenix), a man and a repeated hieroglyphic symbol woven with red threads (Pl. IIA). Traditionally, the images of an “azure dragon” (the symbol of the East),

<sup>1</sup> Polosmak, Bogdanov, Tseveendorzh 2011.

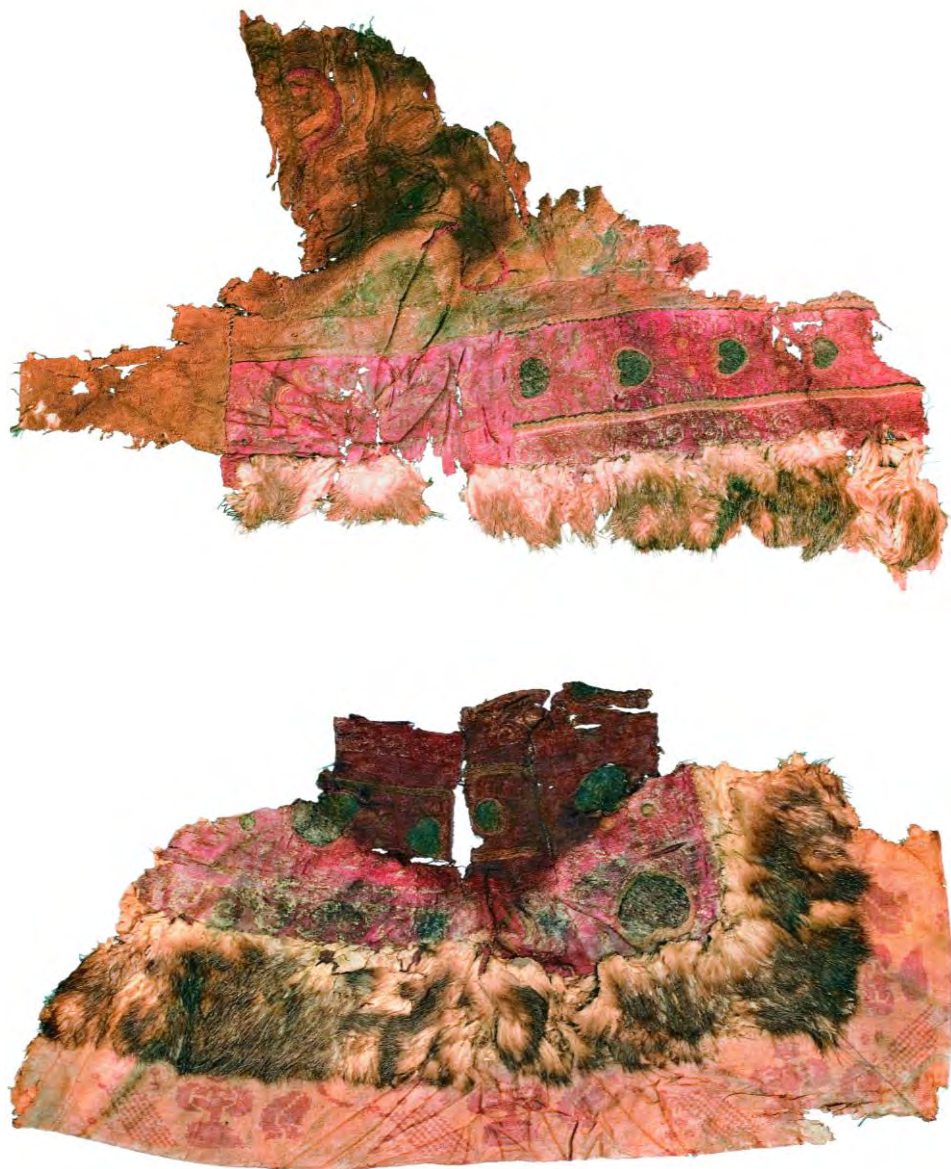
<sup>2</sup> Polosmak 2011, 112–133; 2013, 352–366; Polosmak, Chistiakova 2011, 97–100.

a white tiger (the symbol of the West), a cinnabar bird (the symbol of the South) and a black tortoise twisted by a snake (the symbol of the North) represent the four spirit-patrons. This combination of images was usually represented on tiles, mirrors, burial murals and coffins in China during the Han period.<sup>3</sup> The fabric from the tomb shows the images of all these spirit-patrons excluding that of the tiger. These animals are associated with the Daoist Realm of Immortals that was traditionally associated with mountains. It is not without reason that the character *xian* 仙 consists of two graphemes “man” and “mountain”. The ancient character *hua* 華 consists of two characters: 華 – *hua*, meaning “flourishing” and “prosperous” and 山 – *shan* meaning “mountain” (Pl. IIA, Fig. 2). Representation of this hieroglyphic character on textile does not completely coincide with the written character, because it was woven and it looks slightly different. It should be noted that the Chinese language is characterized by homonymy: the interchangeability of characters with a common sound but represented differently in writing. The character discussed here has several meanings: a) a mountain; b) the Hua Shan Mountain (the Flourishing Mountain); and c) the family hieroglyphic character *Hua*. The Hua Shan Mountain is one of the five Sacred Mountains of Daoism in China. We believe that this connotation serves as the best explanation for the composition of the woven images (the interpretation of the hieroglyphic characters was made by Dr. A.N. Chistiakova).

The image of a man with snake-like legs seems to be the most interesting in this magical, celestial composition (Pl. IIA, Fig. 2). Four parallel lines are shown over his folded arms. This image can be interpreted as a portrait of Fu Xi, one of the five perfect sovereigns and legendary rulers of the antiquity. He taught people how to hunt, fish, make fire, and was very popular during the Han period. His major contribution is the creation of eight trigrams composed of three straight lines and three that are discreet (a straight line represents Yang, while a discreet line signifies Yin). One account has it that these trigrams appeared to him in the form of the motifs that covered the shell of a magic tortoise that emerged from the Loshui River, while another purports that they appeared as the curly hair on the back of a Dragon-horse that came out of the Hwang Ho River. In this case, the woven motifs illustrate the latter version of the legend about the trigrams, i.e. Fu Xi saw these images in the curly hair on the Dragon-horse’s back. These trigrams were used to decode the secrets of natural and social phenomena and aided in fortune-telling, medicine, and geomancy.<sup>4</sup> These trigrams served as the hexagrams used in *I Ching* (or *Yi Jing*), an ancient Chinese text used for divination.

<sup>3</sup> Loewe 2005, 128.

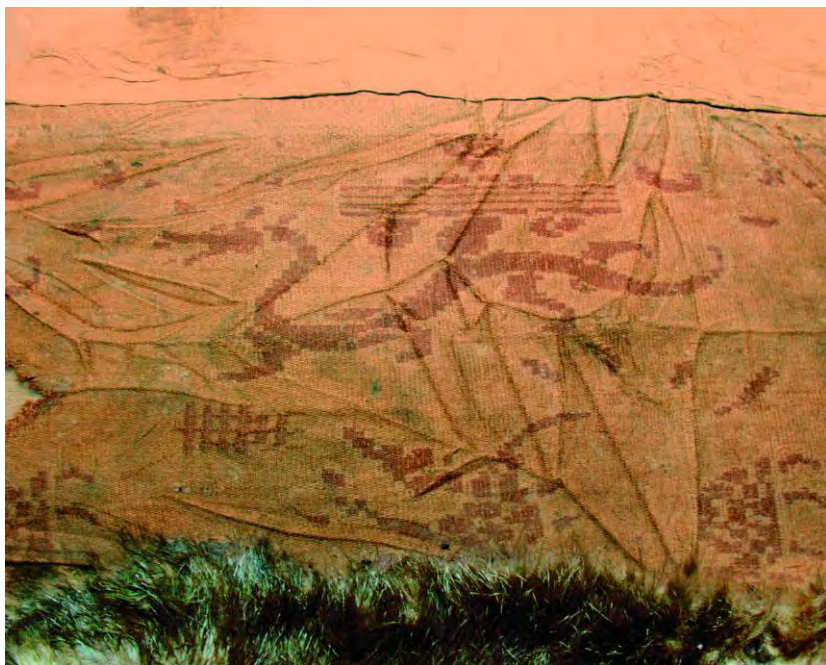
<sup>4</sup> Ermakov 2008, 35–36.



**Pl. I (A, B):** Fragments of the outer garment flap (wool, silk, fur) from Noin-Ula burial mound 20.



Fig. 1. Traces of the embroidered images from silk (above) and woolen (below) fragments of the outer garment from Noin-Ula kurgan 20. Sketch by E.V. Shumakova.



Pl. II (A, B): Fragments of the silk edging bearing a dragon and *Fuxi* images and the images of dancing man and woman.

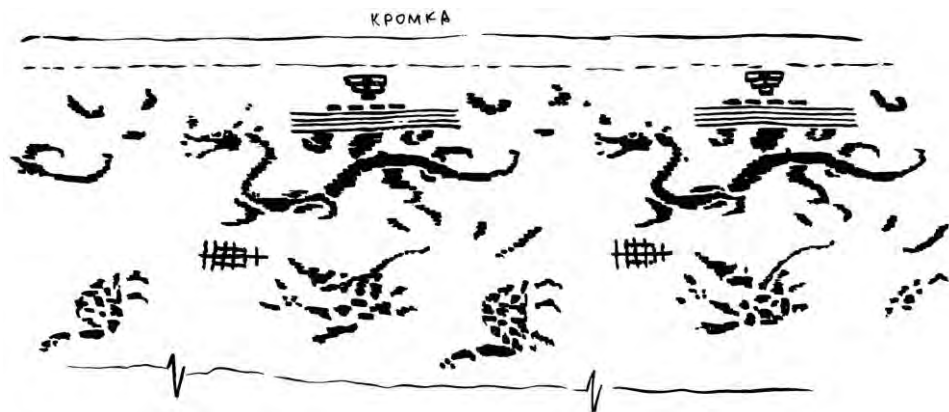


Fig. 2. Traces of the motifs from the silk edging. Sketch by E.V. Shumakova.

The hands of the woven image of the celestial ruler bear four lines instead of three. We suggest the following explanation for this fact. Confucians adopted the *I Ching* philosophy of their teacher many years after his death (according to Iu.K. Shutskii, the most prominent Russian scholar of this text, who dates the adoption between 213 and 163 BC). The disciples did not only study the *Book of Changes*, but sometimes imitated it, such was the case with the *Book of the Great Secret* (*Tai Xuan Qin*) by Yan Xiung. This text also contains some symbolic linear images accompanied by aphorisms that occur in the *Book of Changes*. The images from the *Book of the Great Secret* are composed of four lines which consist of three different types: straight, discreet, and those that appear as two dashes.<sup>5</sup> It is exactly this symbolic combination of linear images that appear in the hands of the woven image of the divine ancestor.

The images of dancing men and women represent another interesting composition woven in the fabric (Pl. IIB). Dances were performed at important ritual festivities in ancient China. The dancing rituals emerged from shamanism.<sup>6</sup> Usually, the séance began with an ecstatic dance, which made the performing “shaman-woman” fall into a trance. The character “shaman-woman” in its oldest form denotes a dance or ritual movements.<sup>7</sup> The woven image of the male figure with four eyes can be identified as that of *fangxiangshi*, a pathogenic and evil ghost, or an exorcist wearing a mask with four golden eyes.<sup>8</sup> Huangdi, a major hero among the Five Sovereigns and emperors of antiquity, also had four eyes<sup>9</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Shutskii 1997, 222.

<sup>6</sup> Vasilev 2001, 164–165.

<sup>7</sup> Ermakov 2008, 72.

<sup>8</sup> Ermakov 2008, 74.

<sup>9</sup> Ermakov 2008, 40.



The silk piece that was used in decoration of the festive garment of a nomad represents a unique specimen of fabric from the Han period.<sup>10</sup>

**Pieces of woolen fabric** used in garment manufacturing were of various sizes sewn together. These pieces possibly are the remnants of some worn out goods (Fig. 1). Judging by the preserved embroidery, they possibly had been part of some woolen rug or drapery, similar to those recovered from Noin-Ula kurgan 6 by the expedition headed by P.K. Kozlov<sup>11</sup> and probably derived from goods imported from Parthia. The rugs from Kozlov's collection show a repeated motif of a band of spirals and a cordiform flower as the most characteristic image. The same motifs have been noted on the woolen pieces under discussion. S.I. Rudenko identified this flower as a cordiform, while E.A. Koroliuk, a botanist, interpreted this embroidered image as a tuber of a bulbotuberiferous plant, like that of a cyclamen or a tulip. The cordiform then is perhaps of the tuber family used here as a decorative motif. It should be noted that flowers with a blossom, stem, leaves, and roots were often employed as decorative motifs on medieval fabrics from Iran.<sup>12</sup>

The secondary usage of the embroidered woolen fabric for decorating the outer garment of a high-ranking individual suggests that it was greatly valued and, when worn out, pieces were reused to create a new item. Pieces and patches of valuable and imported fabrics were often recycled for decorating garments of simple or home-made fabrics in many ancient, medieval and traditional cultures. Patchwork goods were often regarded as amulets.<sup>13</sup>

The upper portion of the recovered piece of the garment represents a patchwork of silk pieces. This section possibly represents a special cut of the garment.<sup>14</sup> These small embroidered fragments represent thin and delicate silk pieces that are severely decayed.

**Embroidery on silk fabric** presents considerable interest. The embroidered images might have represented a complete composition, but the recovered fragments do not reveal its original form. The embroidered images are

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<sup>10</sup> Kurgan 20, like all the other excavated mounds, yielded the most precious and fine Chinese silk fabrics from the Han period. K. Riboud and E.I. Lubo-Lesnichenko regarded the Chinese textiles from the Noin-Ula tombs as fabrics of the highest quality, which have no counterpart in any collection from sites where textiles from the Han period have been found. This can be explained by the fact that only high-ranking members of the Xiongnu were interred in the Noin-Ula tombs. The textiles found in them had been gifts produced in the emperor's workshops (Riboud, Lubo-Lesnichenko 1973, 278).

<sup>11</sup> Rudenko 1962, 99–105.

<sup>12</sup> Vishnevskaja 2007, 19.

<sup>13</sup> Lobacheva 1989, 29; Fielstrup 2002, 61.

<sup>14</sup> The style of the silk robe from the Noin-Ula burial mound 6 shows small, narrow wedge-shaped sections in the lower part of the robe (Rudenko 1962, fig. 37).

very small and extremely decomposed, although it is still possible to discern some of the images, which have been recorded in photo-format and are available for analysis.

The silk fabric bears images of warriors and hunters, imaginary and real animals in association with various signs and symbols. All the images were embroidered with silk threads.

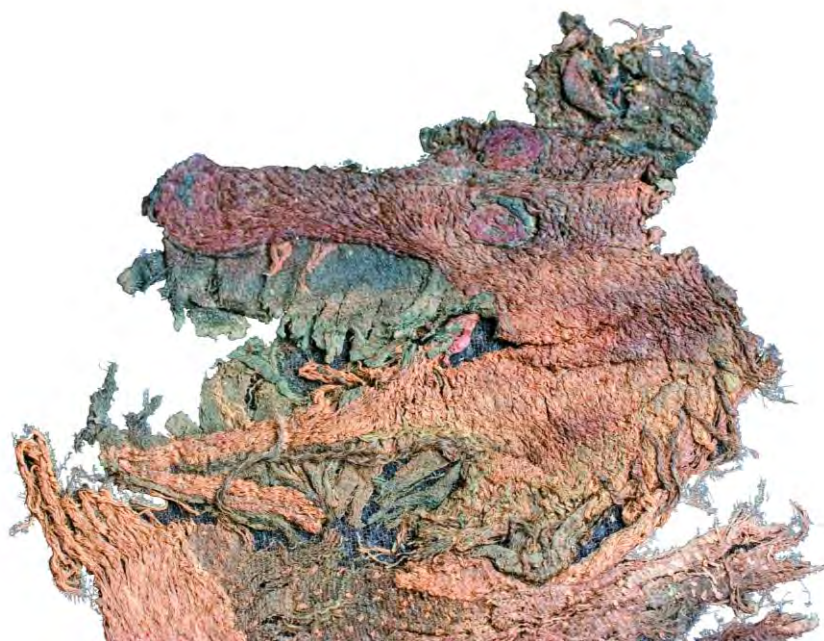
**Descriptions of the images embroidered on silk pieces.** In total five male images have been detected including two which exhibit Asian facial features and three with European facial features. In this section, the images of these male figures will collectively be referred to as "Heroes".

**Hero 1 (Pl. IIIA)** is shown facing left. He has an expressive, round face with thick lips, a thick, round nose that is slightly up-turned, a low forehead, his eye is semi-closed and drawn to the temple with a thin, long eye-brow, a short, thick neck that hardly appears, and a small, narrow beard. The beard issues from the lower lip, while the round chin is clearly prominent. The hair style can not be detected in full, yet there is a characteristic high temple suggesting that it is arranged in a ponytail. The figure's dark hair is combed behind the ear. He wears a garment without a cut in the front with long sleeves widening at the ends, a hallmark of Han attire. The neck of the garment is edged with a wide band of different color and texture. A similar horizontal band appears on the upper portion of the sleeve. The figure holds some sort of object resembling a bifurcated stick in his right hand drawn in front of him. There is an image of a dragon-like creature embroidered in front of him toward which he seems to draw his right hand.

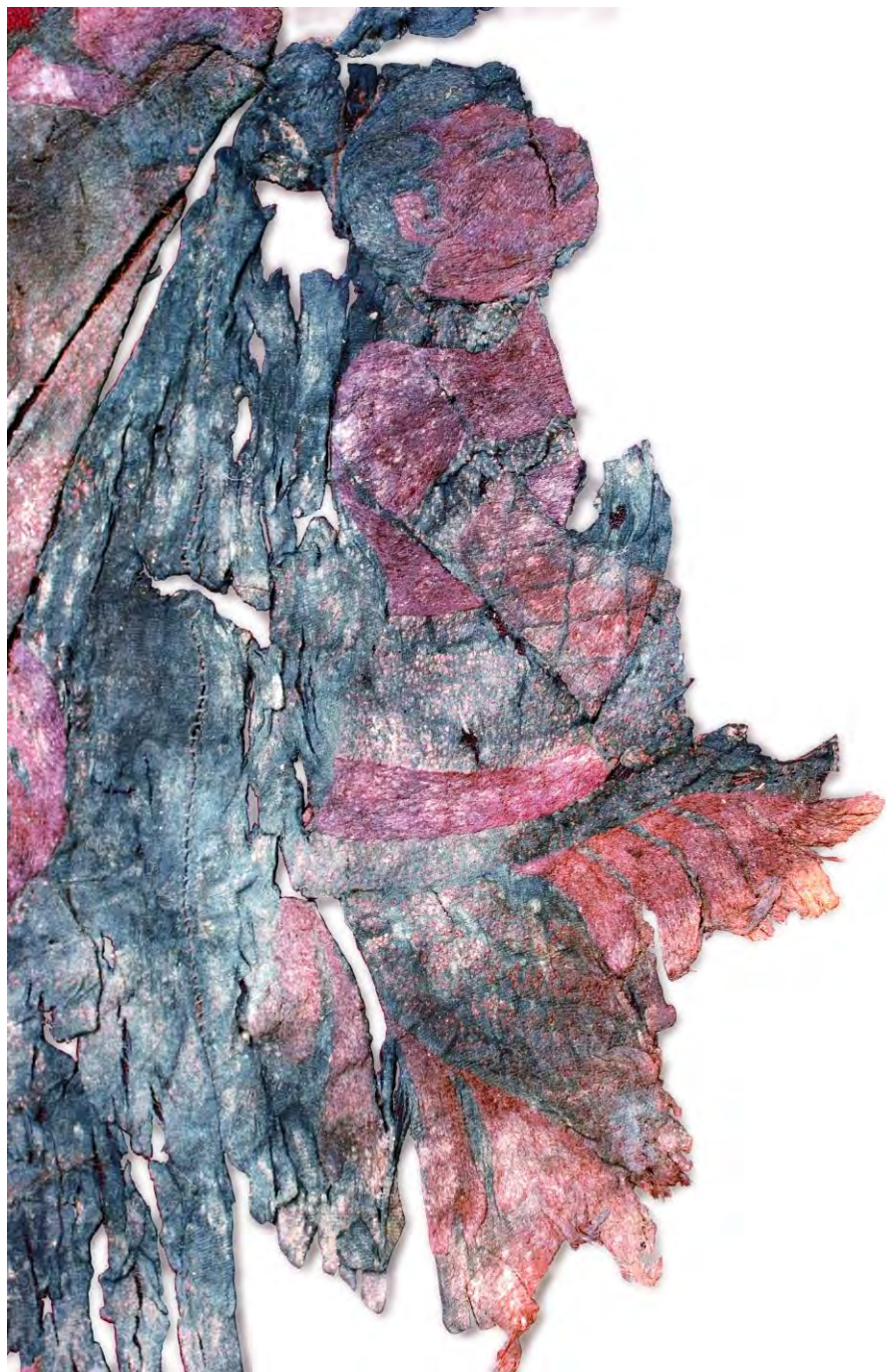
Only the long muzzle with the open mouth with bared teeth, round eyes and embroidered pupils set close to one another is preserved (Pl. IIIB). This image is quite typical of the Dragon-horse in Han art. The Dragon-horse is regarded as a lively spirit of river water in ancient China. This mythical creature was believed to have a long neck, round eyes, its body covered with scales, and two wings on either side of its body. It was thought to walk on water and was considered to be a good prognostic for the emperor.<sup>15</sup> Sacred and immortal gods were thought to ride such wild Dragon-horses. The association of Dragon-horses with the West emerged around the second century BC and is associated with the Han emperor Wudi (147–86 BC). His ardent desire was to possess a team of celestial horses that were capable of bringing him to Heaven.<sup>16</sup> An embroidered spiral turning to the right appears over the dark silk fabric between the animal's muzzle and the male figure's right hand.

<sup>15</sup> Fisser 2008, 59–60.

<sup>16</sup> Schafer 1981, 89.



**Pl. III (A, B):** Fragments of silk fabric with embroidered images of Hero 1 and horse-dragon muzzle.



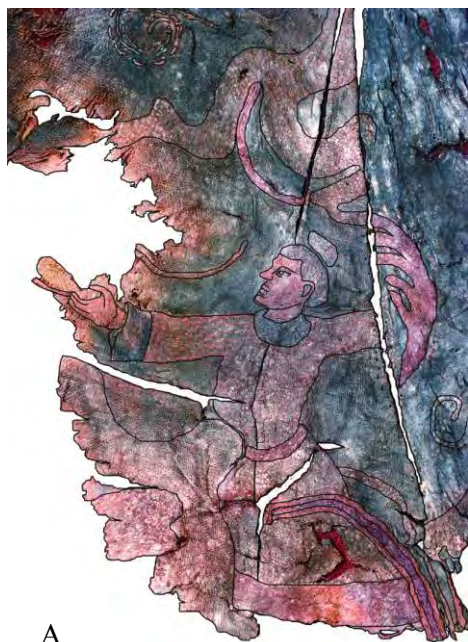
Pl. IV: Fragment of silk fabric with the image of Hero 2 (tracing on silk).

**Hero 2 (Pl. IV)** is shown facing right. The figure has a round face, a very short neck (if it is indeed represented), and has black thick hair with high temples. The hair is tied into a knot high on the crown of the head. A long hairpin, embroidered with brown thread, holds the hair in place. The narrow shape of the eye and a thin eyebrow drawn to the temple are noteworthy. The figure gazes upward. The small nose forms a single line with a low, retreating forehead. The narrow line of the moustache seems to be shown over the full lips. The figure wears a garment without a cut in the front, narrowing at the waist, reaching the hips. The round neck is edged with a wide band of a different color and texture. A similar band appears on the upper portion of the right sleeve widening at the end where it rests on the figure's chest. The wide cuff and the lower part of the garment and the pants are made from the same fabric, while the lower edge of the jacket has a band composed of different fabric. The garment is perhaps made from a combination of materials, like leather and a textile. Leather might have been seen through a satin stitch of sandy-brown threads, while the bands on the neck and the cuffs represent a textile. It should be noted that the shoulder portion of the wide sleeve of the outer garment is appears through slanting checks. Rectangular checks usually represent armor consisting of closely connected metal plates, such as those in the Khalchayan sculpture, on Indo-Parthian coins portraying a king and others. The figure is mounted on an imaginary animal, a Dragon-horse. The preserved part of the animal's back bears the motif of parallel lines and resembles a tiger's coat.

Lee Bo describes Dragon-horses as:

"The family of celestial horses emerged from the caves in Yuezhi Country,  
*Their backs are patterned like those of a tiger,*  
And the body has the wings like those of a dragon."

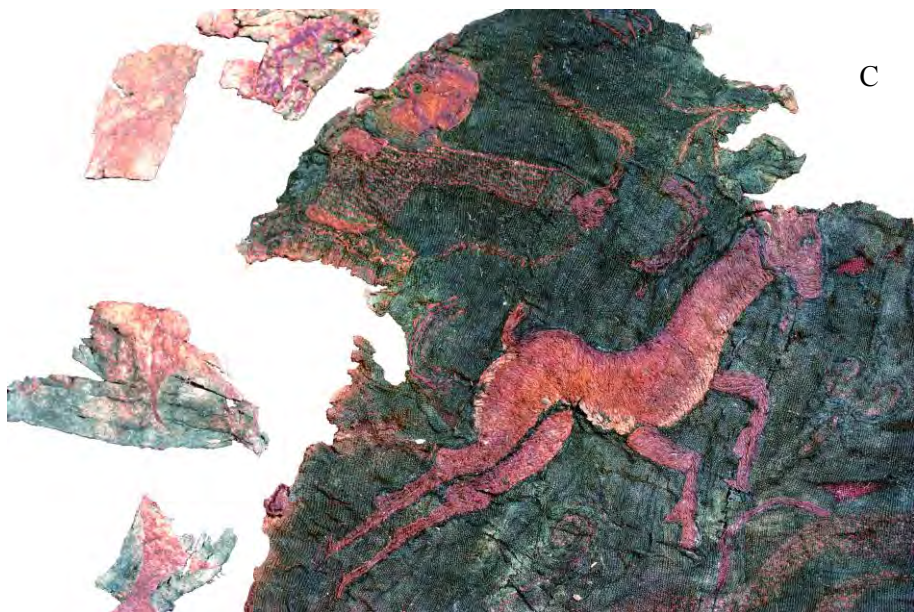
The closest analogy to this figure can be found among the images of the horsemen in the act of hunting depicted on the ivory plate from Takhti-Sangin (Fig. 3 shows one of the horsemen). The images, as with our figure, are portrayed in profile with broad faces and round heads, but there are also significant differences. For instance, we are not sure whether our embroidered horseman sports a moustache. Also, the images from these two sources have a seemingly common hair style with high temples and their hair top knotted, although the knots are different. The embroidered image shows the hair tied in a loose round knot with a long hairpin high on the crown of the head, while the Takhti-Sangin images show the hair styled in a rather small "cylindrically-shaped" protrusion low on the back of the head. The Takhti-Sangin horsemen are shown in typical Iranian garments, like girdled short jackets opened to the chest bare. The boots and pants are likewise similar.



A



B



C

Pl. V (A, B, C): Fragments of silk fabric with the images of Hero 3, 4 and 5 (tracing on silk).



**Fig. 3. Traces of images from the Takhti-Sangin plate (after B.A. Litvinskii).**

B.A. Litvinskii argued that these images from the Takhti-Sangin Temple illustrate the real hunting practices of the Bactrian nobility. He attributed the Takhti-Sangin and Orlat plates to the third century AD and suggested that they were influenced by Sasanian iconography.<sup>17</sup> His view has found support from other scholars.<sup>18</sup> B.A. Litvinskii initially dated the Takhti-Sangin plate to the second – first centuries BC or to the first century BC – first century AD. G.A. Pugachenkova argued that the plate belongs to the beginning of a new era for the representation of warriors and hunters.<sup>19</sup> We believe that Pugachenkova's attribution is safely supported by the discovery of the silk garment bearing the embroidered horseman from Noin-Ula kurgan 20.<sup>20</sup> The amazing similarity of the figures on these two very different artifacts, one of which is an engraved bone plate, the other is embroidery on silk, should be noted.

**Hero 3 (Pl. VA)** is shown in his left side view. The figure has a thin, long face. The hair is styled in a large, oval-shaped top knot high on the crown of the head and he has high temples. The large nose is straight, the eye is almond-shaped, the forehead is low, and the eyebrows are protruding. The figure looks slightly upwards. He wears the same garment as the other figures in this composition: a girdled, unopened coat (it does, however, contain a seam on the fabric). His right arm is extended with the palm placed upward. The left arm extends backward; it is shown up to the elbow where it is cut off by a seam that separates the image from another motif that is not related to our discussion. A preserved rear part of some imaginary zoomorphic creature with a twisted body and long tail appears above this figure. An ornate volute is shown next to it; several others appear in connection with other images on this textile.

<sup>17</sup> Litvinskii 2002, 201.

<sup>18</sup> See in detail Litvinskii 2002, 181–201; 2010, 335–356.

<sup>19</sup> Pugachenkova 1989, 99, 101–103.

<sup>20</sup> Chistiakova 2009; Miniaev, Elikhina 2010.

**Hero 4** is shown in three quarter view and appears to exhibit European facial features (Pl. VB). The figure has large eyes and bulbous nose. He holds in his right hand a long sword overhead in a striking position. The pommel at the end of the sword's hilt is a T-shaped. The figure holds the sword handle close to the hilt, which seems to be straight. Unfortunately, any distinguishing characteristic of the hilt remains undetectable due to the small size of the embroidery. The left hand is extended backwards, and a wide cuff is shown. Some part of the body and possibly a muzzle of some imaginary beast seem to be behind him.

**Hero 5 (Pls. VC-VI)** is a hunter. The European round face is young, the forehead is low, the almond-shaped eyes are shown below the straight line of the eyebrows. The hair style is the same as that of the other heroes in this composition: the hair is combed back revealing high temples. It seems that he wears the same top knot and garment as the other heroes. He is in the act of drawing a bow as he aims at a roe deer leaping in front of him. The animal is shown in detail. The embroidery stresses the summer red color of the light and slender body of the antlerless doe. Its abdomen is shown with a lighter color; a white "mirror" is shown below its short tail. Roe deer run with their tail up shown on the embroidery.<sup>21</sup> The depiction of a sika deer (*Cervus* [*Pseudaxis*] *sica*) appeared in Chinese art as early as the Zhou period. This is a large animal with spotted, chestnut-colored summer hair. The White Deer is a character of Daoist mythology representing a riding animal and accompanying the immortal heroes *xian*.<sup>22</sup>



**Fig. 4. Spirit-guardians and spirit-patrons. Traces from the lacquer images on the black background from Lady Dai sarcophagus 2, Mawangdui (168 BC).**

<sup>21</sup> Roe deer or wild goat inhabit vast regions of Europe, western Middle Asia, the Caucasus, Central Asia as well as the mountains in the southern part of Siberia, Mongolia and the Far East (see *BE* 23, 2006, 529–530).

<sup>22</sup> Kravtsova 2004, 416–417.

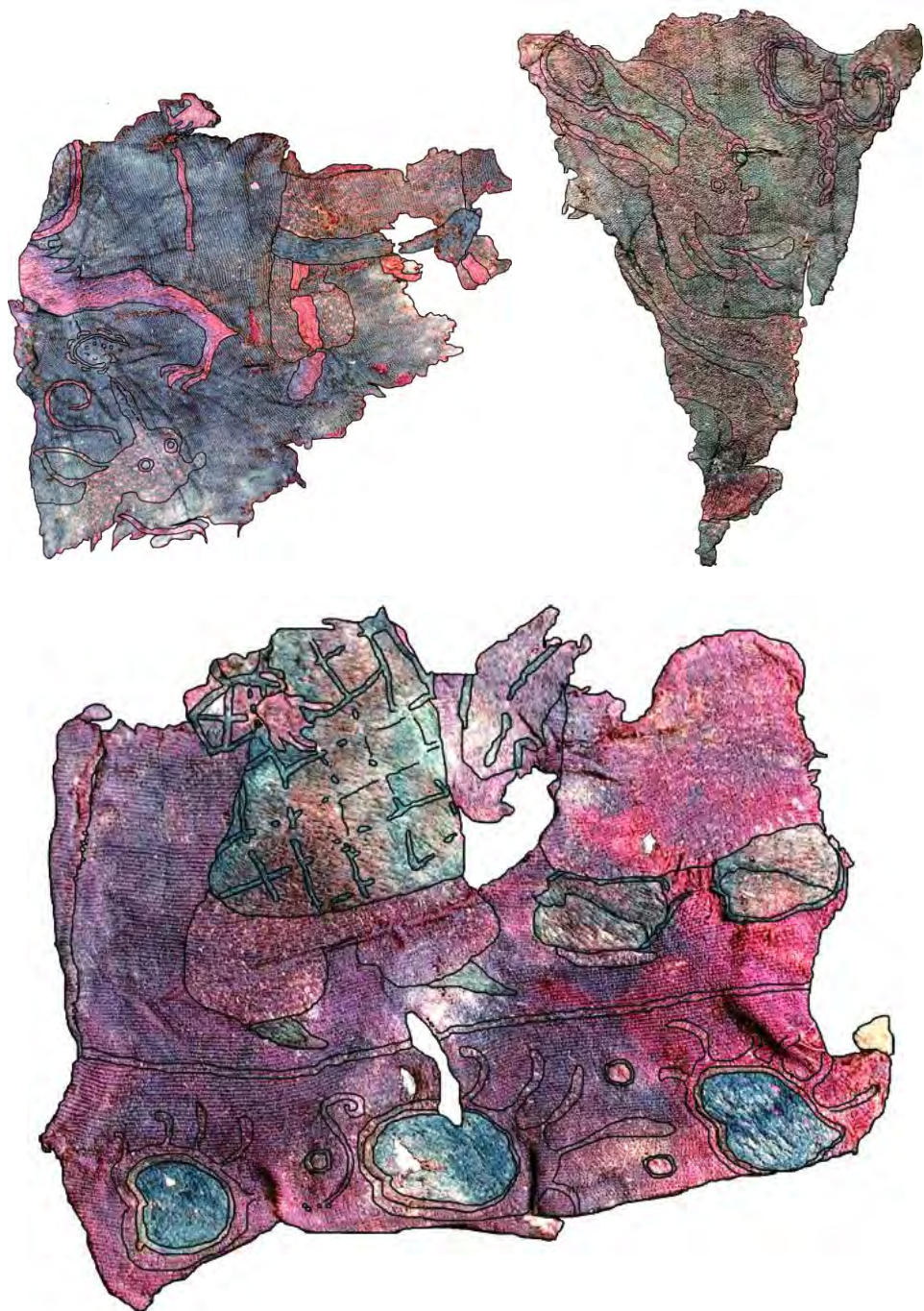


The image of a roe deer has not yet been found in Chinese art. The roe deer from this composition embroidered on silk possibly represents a real hunting scene in the mountains in Mongolia. The composite bow is the same as that shown on the Takhti-Sangin plate. The hunter's left hand draws the bow at the level of his chest, unlike the Takhti-Sangin images in which the hunters draw their bows to their neck. The image of the spirit-guardian from sarcophagus 2 of the tomb of Lady Dai at Mawangdui 1 (168 BC) kneels on one knee and draws his bow in the similar fashion (Fig. 4). The area surrounding the hunter and roe deer is filled with symbols. An S-shaped configuration is embroidered below the roe deer. Three twigs are shown above the animal and a predator's paw with claws is above it. A monogram or a flower is depicted in front of the deer as is and some sort of imaginary creature that is fleeing before it. The imaginary animal seen in profile seems to have a wing, two legs each with three toes and a long bare tail with a switch at the end (the head is not preserved) (Pl. VI). This dragon-like creature on the embroidery resembles the images on sarcophagus 2 of Lady Dai (Mawangdui 1) (Fig. 4). Some researchers<sup>23</sup> believe that the images from sarcophagus 2 illustrate the transition of the deceased into an otherworldly existence where she encounters zoomorphic spirit-guardians in the guise of warrior and spirit-patrons.



Pl. VI: Fragment of silk fabric with the image of Hero 5 (tracing on silk).

<sup>23</sup> Kriukov, Perelomov, Safronov, Cheboksarov 1983, 260–261.



Pl. VII (A, B, C): Fragments of silk fabric with embroidered images (tracing on silk).



Fig. 5. Images of divine dragons. Traces with the feather on silk, Mawangdui, Lady Dai tomb.

Along with fragments of human faces and body parts, the embroidered composition also contains images of legs without faces or bodies. For instance, a slender foot in a soft shoe and wide trousers with a vertical decorated band (Pl. VB) appears above the hilt of the sword that the male figure wields over his head. Two legs clad in a similar looking pair of wide trousers with a vertically decorated band on each trouser, wearing a pair of soft shoes appear on another fragment of fabric (Pl. VIIA). The figure wears a knee-length, garment with a broad decorated edge covering its legs. Another remain of this figure is a right hand holding some object. This individual seems to be depicted in the act of pursuing some imaginary beast that is fleeing from him. Only a large bird's leg with three claws and feathers in the upper part of the fragment has been preserved. Another dragon-like monster with round eyes, horns, a wide-opened mouth and a long, narrow tongue is embroidered below (Pl. VIIA). A similar creature appears on another textile fragment (Pl. VIIB). A series of S-shaped symbols are embroidered above the muzzle of this image. These creatures are quite similar to the divine dragons that are drawn on a silk picture from Mawangdui 1 (Fig. 5).

A fragment of woolen fabric from the same garment shows the partial remains of an embroidered image. The figure's legs wear a pair of wide trousers ruffled at the ankles. Over the trousers, long (metal?) greaves composed of square plates are shown. The right hand of this figure is also preserved (Pl. VIIC).

**Interpretation of the images.** The discovery of the garment is important because it originates from the well-dated burial mound. The tomb has been attributed to the beginning of the 1st century AD, and belongs most likely to the first decade.<sup>24</sup> The most important questions about this garment that need to be resolved are: Who embroidered these images? When were they made? Who and what are portrayed on these textiles?

<sup>24</sup> Chistiakova 2009, 59–68; Miniaev, Elikhina 2010, 169–181.



- Pl. VIII: A. The embroidered face image from the curtain from Noin-Ula burial mound 31;  
 B. The man's face (Hero 1) image embroidered on silk from Noin-Ula kurgan 20;  
 C. The embroidered image of a foot in soft shoe and wide trousers with the vertical decoration band (a detail of the embroidered, woolen curtain from Noin-Ula kurgan 20);  
 D. The embroidered image of the feet (a detail of an embroidered image on a fragment of a silk fabric from Noin-Ula kurgan 20).

The embroidery on silk is identical to that on woolen fabric from the Noin-Ula burial mounds in terms of the techniques used to reproduce the human faces

and the garment.<sup>25</sup> A comparison of the face of the male figure on the woolen curtain from Noin-Ula burial mound 31 (Pl. VIIIA), with those on the silk fabric from Noin-Ula Kurgan 20 (Pl. VIIIB) show that the same embroidery technique was used in outlining facial features with threads of various colors. Both fragments reveal that at first the images were drawn on fabric and only afterward were they embroidered. However, the size of images on silk is smaller than those on wool. The size of images on wool reaches 9 cm, while the largest male head (hero 1) on silk does not exceed 3 cm, while all the others are not larger than 1.5 cm. The fine and dense decorative motifs both embroidered and woven are characteristic of ancient Chinese textile production. During the Tang period, it was prohibited to produce multicolored ornate fabrics (AD 771), because laborious work proved too unhealthy for female artisans.<sup>26</sup>

The embroideries show the otherworld inhabited by traditional Chinese zoomorphic spirit-guardians and spirit-patrons, dragons, Dragon-horses, and S-shaped symbols. Warriors and hunters are surrounded by these creatures and represent semi-mythological heroes. The embroidery represents a typical Chinese illustration of the otherworld in the Han period with “intrusive” and unusual masculine images.<sup>27</sup> It is most likely that the embroidery on the remains of garments worn by the interred found in Noin-Ula burial mound 20 was made by Chinese female artisans. Chinese art in antiquity adopted many foreign traditions. This is true of textile manufacturing. During the Han period, fabrics were decorated with motifs that originated from the Middle East. These include images of heroes in a “flying” gallop with their heads turned backwards among others.<sup>28</sup> During the Tang period, China produced beautiful silk fabrics with the woven images and motifs that were characteristic of Sasanian Iran.<sup>29</sup> It is known that tapestry and rugs from Parthia and rugs and blankets from Syria made their way into China at this time.<sup>30</sup> Such items were often recovered from sites along the Silk Road and burial sites of the Xiongnu elite, finds that are supported by literary sources. Embroidered images on woolen fabric served as models that were then imitated.

The male figures portrayed on the silk embroidery share certain features. All of them are shown with the same hair style in the form of a round top knot likely fixed with a long pin, revealing high temples. The hair style seems to have Chinese analogues. The Chinese of the Han period did not cut their hair, but styled it

<sup>25</sup> Rudenko 1962, 105–107, pls. LX–LVII, Polosmak 2011.

<sup>26</sup> Schafer 1981, 263.

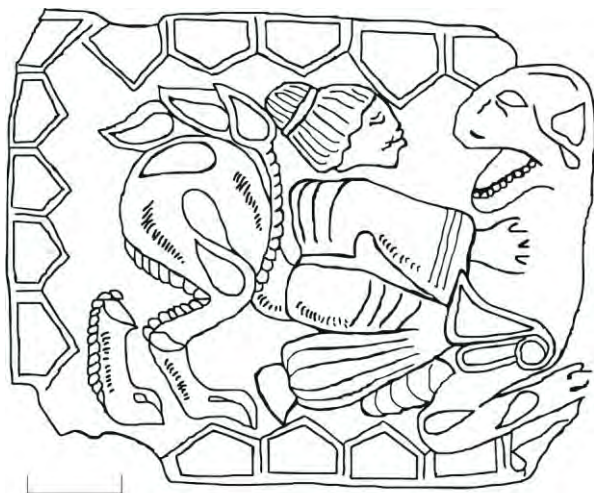
<sup>27</sup> See, e.g., Birrel 2005.

<sup>28</sup> Lubo-Lesnichenko 1994, 192.

<sup>29</sup> Schafer 1981, 263.

<sup>30</sup> Lubo-Lesnichenko 1994, 248–249.

using pins.<sup>31</sup> For instance, certain figurines in Shi Huangdi's terracotta army also exhibit a similar hair style with the sleek top knot, the majority of which have it shifted slightly to the right. Some Dien bronze images contain a similar hair style. The plate from Kochkovatka (Fig. 6)<sup>32</sup> displays the image of a male figure whose hair is likewise styled in the same manner. Mordvintseva has argued that the top knot on the Kochkovatka image resembles certain images from Gandhara.<sup>33</sup>



**Fig. 6. Traces of the images from the Kochkovatka plate (Mordvintseva 2003, Fig. 22, catalogue 57).**

The male garments are specific. These are neither robes, nor nomads' jackets, nor armor that are typically depicted in ancient pictures. The garment is simple, yet no direct analogy can be suggested. The lower part of the garment consists of wide trousers ruffled at the ankles with a vertical decorative band and soft shoes with flat sole. It is analogous to that worn by the male figures embroidered on the woolen curtain found in the Noin-Ula burial mounds (e. g., Pl. VIII C).<sup>34</sup> In general, the embroidered garments are quite original.

The embroidered human faces portray individuals of various ethnic types. People of various ethnicities might have represented the real social situation in the Steppe community. Weapons, like the composite bow and the sword without

<sup>31</sup> Kriukov, Perelomov, Sofronov, Cheboksarov 1983, 198.

<sup>32</sup> Mordvintseva 2003, 34, 87, fig. 22.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibidem*.

<sup>34</sup> Rudenko 1962, Polosmak 2011. We are here comparing only embroidered ancient textile items.

a metal pommel, are attributable to eastern weaponry types. Such weaponry was broadly used by Eurasian nomads.

Whose images then are embroidered on this ancient silk fabric? The garment, which was sewn using different pieces of fabric, was recovered from the tomb of a high-ranking Xiongnu individual and it might have been tailored to fit his taste. If it had been a ready-made garment by Han artisans that had been gifted to the *shaniuy*, then it should not have been made from silk pieces that were afterward embroidered and wool pieces that were not used by Chinese in manufacturing their garments at this time. The combination of Chinese and barbarian (Iranian in this context) features in the garment and hair style of the images suggests that the women-embroiders portrayed real people, possibly certain high-ranking Xiongnu. Robes and silk and woolen trousers were recovered among other grave goods from Noin-Ula burial mound 6 where a high ranking Xiongnu nobleman was buried. According to the written sources, gifts from the Han court include silk fabric and wadding together with ready-made clothes. Garments worn by high ranking Xiongnu noblemen consisted of pieces of attire of Chinese origin. Xiongnu attire also includes clothes received from the subordinate tribes, like the U-huan (women of this tribe were known for their skill in garment making) and western tribes, possibly nomads of Iranian origin.

The information concerning relations between the Xiongnu and the West is scarce in written records. It is for this reason that archaeological remains provide an insight into these matters. It is likely that Chinese female artisans produced the garments from various pieces of fabric and embroidered it with traditional Chinese motifs using the same artistic and technical methods employed by western masters. Thus, the recovered garment pieces represent unique objects of ancient art portraying the “Lords of the Steppe”.

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## Abstract

Kurgan 20 was excavated by the Russian-Mongolian expedition in 2006 in the Xiongnu burial ground called Noin-Ula (Mongolia). It contained fragments of embroidered clothing. The present article deals with miniature representations of warriors and fantastic creatures embroidered in silk by Chinese craftswomen. They must have worked at the *shaniuy*'s headquarters and have been well-acquainted with western embroideries on wool, judging by the finds from other kurgans in Noin-Ula.





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## ON THE PROBLEM OF THE “HUNS-SARMATIANS”<sup>1</sup>

**Keywords:** Sarmatians, Alans, Huns, Xiongnu, Pazyryk, China, Silk Road, culture, genesis

Academic discussion is necessary and commendable, as it stimulates further studies and shows the progress of scholarly research. In particular, this applies to the discussion on the genesis of Sarmatian culture, in which new perspectives should be welcome. Recently, Sergei Botalov and his co-authors proposed the hypothesis that the Late Sarmatian sites of the Ural steppes and Kazakhstan dated to the 2nd–4th c. AD and belonged to an ethnos which they named the “Huns-Sarmatians”.<sup>2</sup> This hypothesis has been strongly criticised by archaeologists of the Moscow School;<sup>3</sup> Marina Moshkova, Vladimir Malashev and Sergei Bolelov – based on a detailed analysis of the historical and archaeological evidence concerning the “Hunnish-Sarmatian” group – have already discussed the weak aspects of this hypothesis. While I agree with many of their remarks, including criticism of some methodological breaches and stylistic mistakes, we should accept at least the novelty of Botalov’s approach, which in my opinion is not as useless as it appears to be to some scholars. Although some criticism of opponents is well-grounded, he addressed, albeit in a disputable and imperfect form,

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<sup>1</sup> This article is part of the author’s project in the Institute for the Study of Ancient World of New York University (NYC).

<sup>2</sup> Botalov 1993; 1996; 2003; Botalov, Polushkin 1996; Botalov, Gutsalov 2000; Botalov, Kostiuikov, Iaminov 2006.

<sup>3</sup> Moshkova 2007; Malashev 2007; Moshkova, Malashev, Bolelov 2007.

the well-known fact of the cultural proximity of the Sarmatians and the cultures of the Xiongnu, China and the herdsmen of Southern Siberia (Pazyryk, Tashtyk, Sargatka) since the 2nd c. BC. This proximity, already noted by Michael Rostovtzeff,<sup>4</sup> has indeed, until now, had no satisfactory explanation. The Hunnic and Chinese elements of the Sarmatian culture used to be mainly explained by trade or cultural ties.<sup>5</sup> Meanwhile, the so-called northern branch of the Silk Road, which was the real mechanism of these ties, has never been seriously taken into consideration. Evgenii Lubo-Lesnichenko and the supporters of his point of view (Nikolai Berlizov, Andrei Bezrukov and others) believe that the Sarmatians were directly involved in trade with Chinese merchants. According to Berlizov, these trade relations either resulted in an exchange of goods or were established as a kind of payment to Sarmatians for their services escorting and passing caravans through their land. Berlizov distinguished two chronological stages of these trade relations: 1) late 1st c. BC–early 1st c. AD and 2) end of the 1st–beginning of the 2nd c. AD.<sup>6</sup>

The question arises, however, as to why the Chinese offered a rather peculiar set of merchandise (apart from silk) to the northern barbarians. I am referring here to swords with jade ornaments and to bronze mirrors, which were, in different periods, forbidden to be exported from China,<sup>7</sup> or to ritual marble and alabaster vessels with Lunar rabbit-shaped handles. It is not determined through exactly which kind of cultural ties some elements of the Xiongnu culture were embedded in the Sarmatian culture. Should we speak about marriage ties, alliances, military links? As examples I can list the bows with bone stiffening laths and lamellar armour, the ceremonial belts with double buckles decorated in Ordos Animal Style and the models of cauldrons. There is also no coherent explanation as to how the Chinese dragon, the “twisted crupper” of Pazyryk style, and the Xiongnu “bilateral” position (a decorative device applied in the art) were incorporated into the Sarmatian iconography.

Although these questions have so far had no clear answers, they remain in the focus of scholarly interest. It was Boris Raev<sup>8</sup> who first noted the affinity of the Pazyryk and Alanic cultures. Sergei Iatsenko constructed an extensive list of the Central Asian and Chinese elements found in the culture of the Alans, offering his own version of their origin.<sup>9</sup> The problem of the Sarmatian-Chinese ties formed the key question of the work of Anatolii Skripkin. He has discussed in a

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<sup>4</sup> Rostovtsev 1929.

<sup>5</sup> Bezrukov 2000, 150–151.

<sup>6</sup> Berlizov 1993, 34.

<sup>7</sup> Yü 1967, 129, 130.

<sup>8</sup> Raev 1984; 1989.

<sup>9</sup> Iatsenko 1993.

series of papers<sup>10</sup> the Chinese and Central Asian elements of the Sarmatian culture of the 2nd and 1st centuries BC. Skripkin showed the ambiguity of the Sino-Sarmatian ties in different times. In his view, the appearance of these elements in the Sarmatian culture can be seen as the result of political and ethnic movements at the turn of the 2nd c. BC, in connection with the fall of Graeco-Bactria and the victories of the Xiongnu over the Yuezhi and Wusun. According to him, these nomads have moved to the west, to Central Asia, and it was through them that the Chinese objects reached Sarmatians.<sup>11</sup> A weak point in this scheme is, however, the fact that in the Central Asian sites, which (very conditionally!) can be attributed to the Yuezhi and Wusun, the contribution of the Chinese and Inner Asian cultural elements is less discernible than in Sarmatian graves of the same period.

The relationship between the Sarmatian, Chinese and Central Asian ethnic and cultural traditions can be seen once more in the relics of the Middle Sarmatian period. The unity of these cultural traditions appears more clearly in the elite culture, the identification of which with the Alans there seems to be no objection. We will discuss below some comparable elements of the Alan culture in the second half of the 1st–early 2nd c. AD and of the cultures of Inner Asia. The majority of the similar features of these cultures are already listed by Sergei Iatsenko. It should be noted that, despite in fact using the same material, we came to slightly differing conclusions.

### The Pazyryk culture

At the head of the wooden sarcophagus from the “royal” Sarmatian burial of the late 1st c. AD near Porohi village (Ukraine), a round hole 22 cm in diameter was made and plugged with an accurately adjusted spigot.<sup>12</sup> The only parallel to this feature in the cultures of the Scythian and Sarmatian world is the similarly placed holes of approximately the same diameter from the Pazyryk cemeteries Ak-Alakha and Iustyd, which are also plugged by spigots.<sup>13</sup>

Well known are the gold plates with four projections, covering the scabbards of daggers, discovered in the “royal” graves of Dachi and Tillya-tepe cemeteries and dated to the 1st century AD. A scabbard of the same construction was found in the synchronous grave of the nobleman of the Sargat culture near Isakovka (Western Siberia). Some finds demonstrate that Sarmatian ordinary wooden

<sup>10</sup> Skripkin 1993; 1996; 1996a; 1998; 2000; 2000a.

<sup>11</sup> Skripkin 2000, 27.

<sup>12</sup> Simonenko, Lobai 1991, 7.

<sup>13</sup> Mylnikov 2000, 133–134.

scabbards had the same construction as the elite's weapons. The prototypes of this original scheme, including wooden models of scabbards, are known mostly in the burial grounds of Pazyryk culture (Iustyd, Borotal, Ulandryk, Barbugazy, Ak-Alakha).<sup>14</sup> These sites are dated to the 3rd and 2nd centuries BC. It is interesting to note that similar scabbards (doubtless of Alanian origin) are depicted on the Bosporan gravestones of the 1st c. AD.

The same Bosporan gravestones display bow-cases of a special type – with two cylindrical pockets for arrows and a narrow case for the bow.<sup>15</sup> According to scholars' *communis opinio*, the Bosporan cavalry of the first centuries of the Christian Era were armed and equipped in the Alanian way. Identical bow-cases are represented on the belt clasps from the Siberian collection and Alanian Orlat cemetery in Uzbekistan.<sup>16</sup> Bow-cases of a similar type were found in the Pazyryk burial mounds Verkh-Kaldīn-2 and Ak-Alakha and in the famous tombs with mummies on the Tarim river in Xinjiang.<sup>17</sup>

Scholars working in this field have already noted the stylistic similarity between the Pazyryk images and the objects in the Sarmatian “gold-turquoise” Animal Style. Most spectacular in this respect is the original iconographic manner of so-called “twisted crupper”. The next common element in the art of Pazyryk and Alanian cultures is the wood and horn vessels with zoomorphic handles. They are known in the Pazyryk culture, and were reproduced in silver and gold in the Alanian milieu. This kind of artistic ideas could hardly be borrowed through the inter-ethnic communication; rather they were transmitted from generation to generation as part of the mentality.

## The Xiongnu

Besides this Pazyryk component, the Sarmatian “golden-turquoise” Animal Style displays one more set of features that may be conditionally called an Ordos-Xiongnu component. On the cast bronze and gold buckles from Ordos, Mongolia and South Siberia we find in their iconography all the main devices, motifs and subjects of the Sarmatian Animal Style. Among them one of the most characteristic is the manner of showing the animal body in profile with a head full face over the central part of a body (“bilateral position”). The panther on the clasps of the sword-belt from Porohi and the deer on the gold chape of a Sarmatian sword from Roshava Dragana are depicted exactly in this way. This position

<sup>14</sup> Kubarev 1987, 58–63; Polosmak 2001, 60, fig. 38.

<sup>15</sup> Goroncharovskii 2003, 74, fig. 23.

<sup>16</sup> Ilyasov, Rusanov 1998, 120–121.

<sup>17</sup> Polosmak 2001, 174–181.

is a specific representational device of Xiongnu applied art, present on the bronze clasps from Noin-Ula, the Dyrestuī cemetery, Kosogol'skiī hoard and some Ordos finds without known provenance.

Doubtless, there was a direct connection between the Alanian and Xiongnu ceremonial belts. First of all, they have principally the same construction – a belt with a pair of symmetric clasps, one of which has a rectangular slit and a little peg-fixture, with applied plaques and suspended belts with metal finials. The Xiongnu preferred open-work rectangular, B-shaped and oval bronze and gold clasps. Alans often used the same forms but different techniques – the core was made of iron and covered by a gold sheet with relief images often inlaid with turquoise, beads or glass.

I am convinced that Alanian belts are genetically connected with those of the Xiongnu. Also the Sarmatian “golden-turquoise” Animal Style – its images, motifs, subjects, iconography – based on the South Siberian style, was apparently formed in close contact with and under the strong impact of the Ordos applied arts. To illustrate this point, one just has to compare the polychrome items from the Siberian collection (most of which appear to have been from Sargatka culture graves) as well as Xiongnu and Sarmatian cultures. This kind of similarity is possible only if both people had protracted and immediate contact, in other words they lived together.

Far to the west, in the graves dated to the late 1st c. AD, a type of weapons was found which had been used only by Xiongnu and their close neighbours. In the 1st c. AD the remains of composite bows of the “Hunnic” type, which began to be used by Sarmatians, appear in their graves. The not numerous finds of the bone reinforcing plates allow us to connect the appearance of the so-called “Hunnic” bow with a migration of the Alans in the second half of the 1st c. AD. The Xiongnu began to use composite bows as soon as the 2nd c. BC.

To the unique finds belong three-blade arrow-heads of the Xiongnu type from the Porohi “royal” grave in West Ukraine and Bitak cemetery in the Crimea. The thousand kilometres between Mongolia and Ukraine would be too long a way for these objects to come through hand-to-hand exchange: such small and utilitarian items would be simply shot out and lost for us. Yet here we have whole sets of them. Thus, it seems that the unique finds of Xiongnu arrow-heads from the Ukrainian sites of Porohi and Bitak result from a migration of their owners from distant Inner Asian lands to the North Pontic area.

Some Alanian graves of the late 1st/late 2nd c. AD in Volga and Kuban regions yielded the remains of iron lamellar armor. All of them have parallels in the armor types of Sargatka culture, Xiongnu, and China.<sup>18</sup> It looks as if this

<sup>18</sup> Retz, Yüi Su-hua 1999, 49, figs. 2:6; 4:3,4.

armor was brought directly from Inner Asia by its owners and users in the mid-1st c. AD.

Specific tamga-signs similar to the Sarmatian (Alanian) tamgas of the 1st c. AD are registered on the rocks of Western Mongolia and in the Baity sanctuary on the Ustyurt plateau near the Aral Sea. An impressive set of objects with such tamgas was found in the “royal” grave near Porohi. Here, tamga-signs similar to the Mongolian ones were placed on sacral objects like the torque, ritual cup, sword and belts. Tamga-signs of the same type are known from the pommel of a Sarmatian sword found in the Roshava Dragana barrow in Bulgaria.

## China

The Chinese objects in the Sarmatian graves of the 1st/early 2nd c. AD are not very numerous, but still they deserve attention as essential items showing far-reaching connections. First of all, these are bronze mirrors thoroughly studied by Vladimir Guguev and Mikhail Treister.<sup>19</sup> Some thoughts about them have been provided by other authors.<sup>20</sup> In the publications of Russian scholars, Chinese mirrors from Sarmatian burials are dated in general as belonging to the Western Han epoch (209 BC – AD 9). In modern Chinese literature<sup>21</sup> the parallels to these mirrors have rather more exact dates: the mirrors of the *ssu-ju ssu-hui* type<sup>22</sup> are dated to the 1st c. BC according to Ann Bulling,<sup>23</sup> items of the *ching-pai* type belong – in the view of Robert Swallow – to the late 1st c. BC/beginning of the 1st c. AD;<sup>24</sup> mirrors of the *ming-kuang* type Swallow dates to the end of the 1st c. BC.<sup>25</sup> Chinese parallels for the mirrors from Late Sarmatian burials are usually dated slightly later: objects of *presentation* type after Swallow or *ching-pai/ming-kuang* type after Bulling to the middle of the second half of the 1st c. AD;<sup>26</sup> and those of *TLV* type to the early 1st c. AD.<sup>27</sup>

Strikingly, the mirrors dated to the 1st c. BC were found in the burials of the second half of the 1st/beginning of the 2nd c. AD and later. Thus, the Chinese mirrors appear from 70 to 100 years “later” in the Sarmatian sites of South-Eastern Europe. It is to be noted that the presence of Chinese mirrors, and even

<sup>19</sup> Guguev, Treister 1995, 147–148.

<sup>20</sup> Berlizov, Kaminskii 1993, 105; Simonenko 2001, 54–57; Li Dzi Yn 2009, 193–197.

<sup>21</sup> I sincerely thank S. Miniaev for information and reading the Chinese texts.

<sup>22</sup> There are many typological schemes of Chinese mirrors, which are not always compatible.

<sup>23</sup> Zhongguo 1997, 247.

<sup>24</sup> Zhongguo 1997, 231.

<sup>25</sup> Zhongguo 1997, 233–235.

<sup>26</sup> Zhongguo 1997, 368.

<sup>27</sup> Zhongguo 1997, 309.

of fragments of them, in noble graves, and the appearance of imitations of them shows the high prestige attached to these items in the Sarmatian milieu.

All these circumstances substantially weaken the position of the supporters of the idea that the Silk Route trade was the way by which Chinese mirrors appeared in the Sarmatian culture.<sup>28</sup> A. Skripkin maintains that the cause of the appearance of these objects in the South-Eastern European Sarmatian context was not the contacts of Sarmatians and Chinese merchants, but rather the westward migration of the Alans, who carried these items from their original motherland.<sup>29</sup> The rather accurate chronological and cultural context of the burials with the Chinese mirrors (the graves of the Alanian nobility belong to the second half of the 1st – beginning of the 2nd c. AD) certainly confirms this idea.

One more type of Chinese objects in Sarmatian culture, which is usually also considered one of the categories of Silk Route merchandise, is jade ornaments of swords (hilts), of their scabbards and scabbard slides. These things, perfectly well known in the Chinese finds, are very rare west of China. Let us take a closer look at the related finds.

A sword placed in the Chinese lacquered scabbard with a jade slide (representing the Grain Class, according to William Trousdale) was found in the aforementioned burial of a noble warrior of Sargat culture near Isakovka in Western Siberia.<sup>30</sup> The short scabbard slide dates to the Western Han epoch. A similar sword with a short non-ornamented jade scabbard slide (Geometric Class according to Trousdale) was discovered in a Sargatka culture grave in the vicinity of Isakovka near Sidorovka village.<sup>31</sup> Most likely, both burials date to the 1st c. AD; they contain no objects later than the 1st c. AD.

A dagger with a jade hilt and a scabbard slide of the Geometric Class by Trousdale was found at the Orlat cemetery in Uzbekistan. This cemetery probably dates to the 1st c. AD.<sup>32</sup> It is interesting that here the jade details were re-used – the hilt is too narrow for the blade,<sup>33</sup> and the scabbard slide was broken long ago and then restored. In addition, it is necessary to note that in China jade scabbard slides were used only for swords.

The several undecorated slides of the Geometric Class (206 BC–AD 220) were found in Alanian burials of the late 2nd/early 3rd c. AD in the South Ural region, Lower Volga and Don basins. Notably, only two swords from them can

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<sup>28</sup> Thus, e.g., according to Michael Raschke (referenced by Guguev, Treister 1995, 153) these mirrors like other Chinese objects went to the West by such various tribal relations as war, exchange, marriage, gifts etc.

<sup>29</sup> Skripkin 1994, 33; 1994a, 11.

<sup>30</sup> Pogodin 1998, 30–33.

<sup>31</sup> *Drevnie sokrovishcha* 1988, 12.

<sup>32</sup> Ilyasov, Rusanov 1997/98, 130; Maslov 1999, 229.

<sup>33</sup> *DluU* 1991, cat. nos. 244–245.

be considered of Chinese origin; the remaining weapons with jade scabbard slides and hilts belong to the Sarmatian armor, with re-used jade elements.

A very interesting sword was discovered in the Roshava Dragana barrow in Bulgaria, in the grave of a Thracian nobleman in the Roman military service. This Sarmatian sword was probably a trophy or a gift. Its gold pommel bears Alanian tamga-signs. A jade slide of the Hydra Class, characteristic of the Western Han period, as well as four silver plates with tamgas, have been attached to the scabbard. The gold polychrome chape was decorated by a stag figure depicted according to the typical Xiongnu composition – with profile body and front head. The burial is dated to the late 1st c. AD.<sup>34</sup> Even if this sword has Chinese origin, its pommel and chape were replaced by Sarmatians. The Chinese scabbard with a jade slide was additionally decorated by plates with tamgas or vice versa – the early Chinese slide was attached to the Sarmatian scabbard in the 1st c. AD.

The tamgas from Roshava Dragana and from Porohei are of very close similarity. I even cannot rule out the possibility that this sword, before coming to the Thracian nobleman, belonged to the person buried in the Porohei barrow. In any case, it could also be included in the assemblage of Chinese items brought to the North Pontic region by their Alanian owners.

It is noteworthy that on the scabbards of swords of the 1st c. AD, early Western Han slides were used. It seems that the Chinese jade elements of swords like the mirrors were used by their Alanian owners for a long time before being deposited in the graves of South-Eastern Europe. Ying-shih Yü cites Han documents according to which the weapons were prohibited for export from China. Swords with jade scabbard slides came to the northern barbarians (which may have included the ancestors of the Alans) by smuggling<sup>35</sup> or as trophies. I therefore doubt whether they are in any way related to trade on the Silk Road.

One of the indicators of the Middle Sarmatian culture of the 1st and early 2nd c. AD is the cast bronze cauldrons with spherical body, sometimes with spout as well as zoomorphic and loop-handles. According to recent data, such cauldrons only became widespread in the steppes from the second half of the 1st c. AD.<sup>36</sup> Skripkin included them in the list of innovations in the Middle Sarmatian culture which coincide with the appearance of the Alans in written sources.<sup>37</sup> He also rightly compared these vessels with Chinese prototypes<sup>38</sup> similar to those found in the kurgans of the Sargatka culture.

<sup>34</sup> Buiukliev 1995, 45, fig. 1–3.

<sup>35</sup> Yü 1967, 129–130.

<sup>36</sup> Demidenko 1997, 137.

<sup>37</sup> Skripkin 1992, 19–20.

<sup>38</sup> Skripkin 2000a, 97–98.



In my opinion, alabaster vessels with zoomorphic handles belong to the category of Chinese elements in the Sarmatian culture. They greatly resemble Chinese stone and alabaster objects of the same type. Remarkable marble and alabaster mortars were discovered in the graves of noble Sarmatians in Ukraine and in the Lower Volga region. They are decorated by Chinese meander. A Sarmatian vessel from Ukraine has two hare-shaped handles. This mortar is associated with the Chinese myth about the hare, sitting on the Moon and preparing in a mortar the elixir of immortality for Siwang-mu – Mistress of the beasts. According to the myth, Siwang-mu gave this elixir to the archer E, but his wife, the Moon Goddess Chang-e, had drunk it without permission and turned into a frog.<sup>39</sup>

One more argument in support of the Alanian migration theory is the lack of Chinese objects along the alleged Northern Route of the Silk Road, in the vast lands between China and the Volga. Material evidence of such a flourishing Silk Road trade in the Sarmatian period, the supporters of this hypothesis believe, should have been much more numerous.

By and large, the conclusion is inevitable that the Alanian culture was formed in the close proximity, direct contact and even co-operation with the Xiongnu culture and under strong Chinese impact. At the same time, the Pazyryk link is distinctly visible. What kind of cultural interaction can explain all these links? I am afraid that the final solution of this problem lies beyond the possibilities of archaeology. However, I can, relying on archaeological data, the information of the Chinese written sources and ethnographic analogies, offer the following hypothesis.

The Pazyryk culture ceased to exist in the 2nd c. BC. Leaving aside the problem of its possible identification with Yuezhi and of their westward movement under this name,<sup>40</sup> I would like to take a risk and suggest that some part of the Pazyryk population was pushed by the Xiongnu into the steppe according to the well-known nomadic migration model in Central Asia. It cannot be ruled out that the Pazyryk tribes came under the direct influence, or even political domination, of the strong Xiongnu. They lived among the Xiongnu as a separate group, preserving their language, but experiencing the permanent cultural pressing of the Xiongnu and China. In that way the original Sarmatian-Xiongnu culture of the Alans – descendants of Pazyryk tribes – was formed. After the division of the Xiongnu into the “southern” and “northern” branches in 48 BC the former became the vassals of China and permanently fought with the latter. During the 1st c. AD, the “northern” Xiongnu gradually moved westward. The Alans may have been part of one of these hordes and continued their move up to the Danube.

<sup>39</sup> Zavalov 2006, 89.

<sup>40</sup> Polosmak 2000, 30.

Thus, the terms “Huns-Sarmatians”, “Hunnic-Sarmatian time”, and “Hunnic-Sarmatian culture” are not so unconvincing as some scholars believe. Certainly from the point of view of scientific correctness one should use these designations with caution – at least because of the failure to prove the continuity of the Xiongnu of Han times and the early Medieval Huns in the Caspian-Pontic steppes. Botalov, who correctly sees the fundamental connection of the Sarmatian culture and the cultures of Inner Asian nomads, fails – in my view – to demonstrate the historical background of this connection. Beyond doubt the Late Sarmatian culture of the South Ural area and Kazakhstan steppes shows a slightly different shape from that of the Volga and Don regions, but both belong to the same cultural community. One cannot rule out the possibility that this included the Huns (if they were living there). However, the archaeological culture of the Xiongnu (Botalov’s “Hunnic historical and cultural complex”)<sup>41</sup> bears no relation to the Late Sarmatian (Botalov’s “Hunnic-Sarmatian”) culture. The Xiongnu became one of the cultural and genetic components of another people, viz. the Alans.

## Conclusion

Some scholars use the term “Huns-Sarmatians” or “Hunnic-Sarmatian time” for the Late Sarmatian period (second half of the 2nd–4th c. AD). Indeed, in the culture of the Sarmatians from the 2nd c. BC till the early 2nd c. AD we can discern some cultural features that are similar to the South Siberian Pazyryk, Xiongnu and Chinese cultures. Elements of these cultures found in the areas occupied by the Sarmatians are usually explained by trading and cultural links along the Great Silk Road, without any special exploration of the concrete mechanism of these links.

The Pazyryk features in the Alanian culture can be observed in the characteristic images of the Sarmatian Animal Style, construction of dagger scabbards and bow-cases, and the decoration of horse harnesses, among others. Ceremonial belts with gold plates in the Ordos Animal Style, composite bows, and lamellar armor came to the Alans from the Xiongnu. The remains of silk clothing, jade sword-hilts and scabbard slides, bronze mirrors, and marble and alabaster ritual vessels represent the Chinese influence. Alanian art also absorbed the image of the Chinese dragon, as well as some stylistic methods of Xiongnu art. The integration of all these elements into the culture and art of the Alans could hardly be connected with the trade along the Great Silk Road – such objects were not traded. Rather, it appears that the Alans lived in close contact with the Xiongnu and

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<sup>41</sup> Botalov 2003, 108–109, 114–117, figs. 1; 5; 6.

Chinese for a long time, and in this way their culture was enriched with the borrowings listed above.

All these innovations appeared simultaneously in Eastern Europe in the middle of the 1st century AD in the archaeological area identified as Alanian. Analysis of this material allows us to consider that the Alans acquired Chinese and Xiongnu items while still in their more easterly homeland, a location that, until now, had not been unequivocally determined. The Pazyryk, Chinese and Xiongnu elements in the Alanian culture also allow us to assume that the Alans were the successors of the Pazyryk people who lived among the Xiongnu or in the near vicinity for a long time and, as well as of the Xiongnu, experienced the strong influence of Chinese culture. This was most likely somewhere in the territory of modern Western Mongolia or Xingjian. In the middle of the 1st century AD the Alans moved westward and very quickly reached the Sarmatian lands in Eastern Europe. According to written sources, they established political domination over the rest of the Sarmatian tribes and, as usually happens, the cultural stratum of the Alanian nobility ruled over the cultural taste of Sarmatian aristocracy.

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## Abstract

In the culture of the Sarmatians from the 2nd c. BC till the early 2nd c. AD we can discern some cultural features that are similar to the South Siberian Pazyryk, Xiongnu and Chinese cultures. Elements of these cultures found in the areas occupied by the Sarmatians are usually explained by trading and cultural links along the Great Silk Road, without any special exploration of the concrete mechanism of these links. The integration of all these elements into the culture and art of the Alans could hardly be connected with the trade along the Great Silk Road – such objects were not traded. Rather, it appears that the Alans lived in close contact with the Xiongnu and Chinese for a long time, and in this way their culture was enriched with the borrowings listed above. All these innovations appeared simultaneously in Eastern Europe in the middle of the 1st century AD in the archaeological area identified as Alanian. Analysis of this material allows us to consider that the Alans acquired Chinese and Xiongnu items while still in their more easterly homeland, a location that, until now, had not been unequivocally determined. The Pazyryk, Chinese and Xiongnu elements in the Alanian culture also allow us to assume that the Alans were the successors of the Pazyryk people who lived among the Xiongnu or in the near vicinity for a long time and, as well as Xiongnu, experienced the strong influence of Chinese culture. This was most likely somewhere in the territory of modern Western Mongolia or Xingjian. In the middle of the 1st century AD the Alans moved westward and very quickly reached the Sarmatian lands in Eastern Europe.





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## EXCAVATIONS AT WADI HAJRYA ON SOQOTRA ISLAND (YEMEN)

**Keywords:** South Arabia, Soqotra, ancient settlements, Nestorian Church

The island of Soqotra is located in the north-western part of the Indian Ocean. It lies directly on the sea route from the Red Sea to India and can be regarded as a good place to provide information on ancient and medieval trade in the Indian Ocean.<sup>1</sup> Investigations carried out there by the Russian Archaeological Mission to the Republic of Yemen have brought to light unexpected and extraordinary results.<sup>2</sup>

The northern part of the island is the most populated area, and it is here that Hadibo, the capital of Soqotra, is situated. The main area of our archaeological exploration was Wadi Hajrya, which runs to the sea at the very eastern end of the Hadibo plane. Several archaeological sites are located here, four of which were investigated.

The main site is Hajrya IV, located on the right bank of Wadi Hajrya. This settlement was discovered by V. Naumkin and A. Sedov in 1985.<sup>3</sup> Naumkin identified it as a political and trade centre of Soqotra.<sup>4</sup> Indeed, the size of the site is unusually large for the island – about 130×100 m (fig. 1). On its two sides (the north and the east) it is surrounded by a defensive wall.

All this area within the rampart is clearly divided into two parts: the western one is occupied with dwelling structures, and the eastern one with a vast cemetery. The grave structures are well visible on the surface, they come practically right up to the buildings. As a rule, graves form chains running from north to

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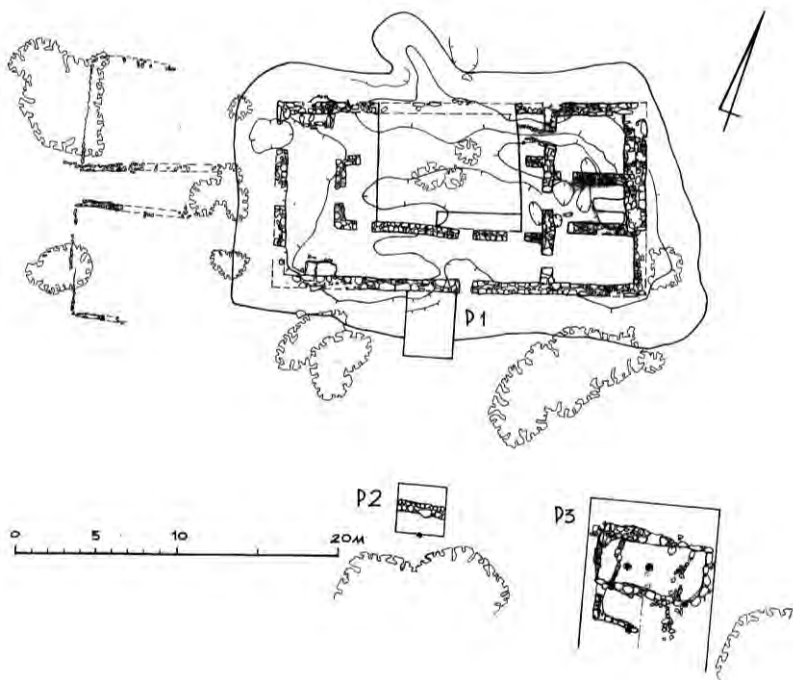
<sup>1</sup> See Shinnie 1960; Naumkin 1988; Doe 1992.

<sup>2</sup> Naumkin 1989; Vinogradov et al. 2011.

<sup>3</sup> Naumkin, Sedov 1993, 600–605; 1995, 224–229.

<sup>4</sup> Naumkin 1989, 160.

south. A large building, rectangular in plan, is located in the south-western corner of the settlement. The walls have been preserved until today up to one metre in height, but 20 years ago they were higher.



**Fig. 1. Hajrya IV. Site's general plan.**

In 1985 and 1987 Sedov made some soundings and excavated three graves at the site. The graves are typically Soqotrian. The burial chambers are of the “stone-case” type, and the walls are lined with stone masonry in one row.

The materials excavated in the soundings and discovered on the surface of the settlement led us to two basic conclusions:

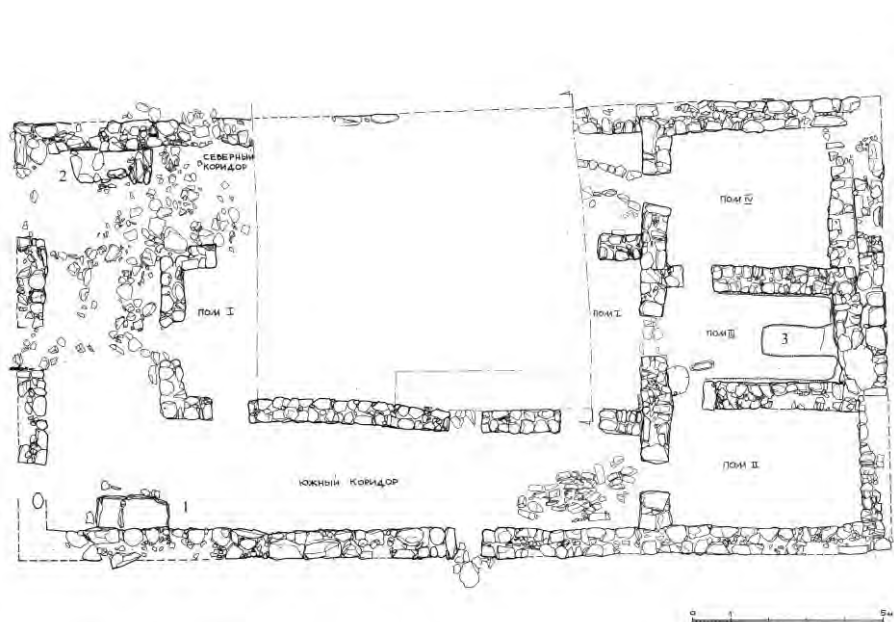
1. The settlement of Hajrya IV emerged in the early centuries AD.
2. Life in this settlement must have ended in the 12<sup>th</sup>–13<sup>th</sup> centuries AD.<sup>5</sup>

Of course, it was necessary to verify these basic conclusions, and this was undertaken during the 2008-2010 field works at three trenches.<sup>6</sup> Firstly, part of the fence which surrounded the settlement was explored (Fig. 1, P1). The foundation of this wall has a width of 0.65 m, and is built of undressed stones held together with clay mortar.

<sup>5</sup> Naumkin, Sedov 1993, 605; 1995, 229

<sup>6</sup> Vinogradov et al. 2011, 156–157





**Fig. 2. The main building of the site. Plan.**

Part of the large construction in the south-western corner of the site played an important role in our excavations (Fig. 1, P2), as it was identified as the settlement's main building (Fig. 2). Its walls are made of undressed stones. The interior of the house is largely filled with stones that have fallen from the walls. The size of the building was  $23 \times 11.5$  m, and the construction was oriented along a west-east axis. The interior parts of the wall remains are still covered with white calcareous plaster. The many fragments of such plaster found at the side clearly indicate that the walls and the roof of the building were plastered.

On the western wall, there were three entries to the house. Behind the wall was a courtyard ( $10 \times 3$  m), from which the central part of the building can be accessed (Room 1). There were two anomalous constructions in the court, situated symmetrically near the southern and northern walls. Both are made of stones and slabs standing vertically, and very similar with graves. The southern construction was excavated, but it turned out to be empty. However, it is still interesting that its clay filling included lime powder.

Only a small part of Room 1 was excavated. It probably continues eastwards until the eastern rooms of the building. Near the northern and southern sides of Room 1 there were long corridors. The southern corridor of the building was completely excavated (Fig. 3). Its size is  $12.5 \times 2.4-2.8$  m. There were three

asymmetrically situated entries from this corridor into Room 1. The northern corridor probably followed the same plan.

Three rooms (2–4) are situated in the eastern part of the building. Room 2 was located close to the southern corridor (Fig. 3), leading to Room 3. The size of this room is 5×3 m. Two levels of the floor were investigated there. On the higher level, the later floor, the millstone was found, while on the lower, the earlier floor, in the north-eastern and south-eastern corners two ceramic vessels were found lying upside-down. The finds of cooking pots were especially characteristic of this room. It can possibly be identified as a kitchen of the house.



**Fig. 3. The Room 2 and the southern corridor of the main building. View from east.**

The function of Room 4 (4.20×3.50 m) is still unclear; the excavations here were stopped at the latest floor. The investigations of the central Room 3 (4.50×2.40 m) were carried out completely. Four levels of floors were fixed here. The very important part of the main design of the building was found on the earliest one. It was a foundation of the rectangular altar made of clay and covered with plaster (Fig. 4). The size of the altar is 1.98×0.83 m, and the height of the construction is only 0.16 m.



**Fig. 4. The altar in Room 3 of the main building. View from west.**

The main part of the archaeological finds from all parts of the building includes the pottery of local production (Fig. 5). These are fragments of round-bottomed handmade vessels which sometimes have a thin carved ornament. The shape, ornamentation and mode of the manufacture of these pots suggest the traditional vessels of the modern Soqotrians. Some fragments belong to the imported vessels (Fig. 6), and there are also fragments of the Chinese celadon (Fig. 6, 5). These finds suggest that the building was built in the Middle Ages. In addition to pottery finds, many iron nails were found here (Fig. 7, 7–12), but the most remarkable objects are fragments of the small round-bottomed bronze vessels (fig. 7, 1–5).

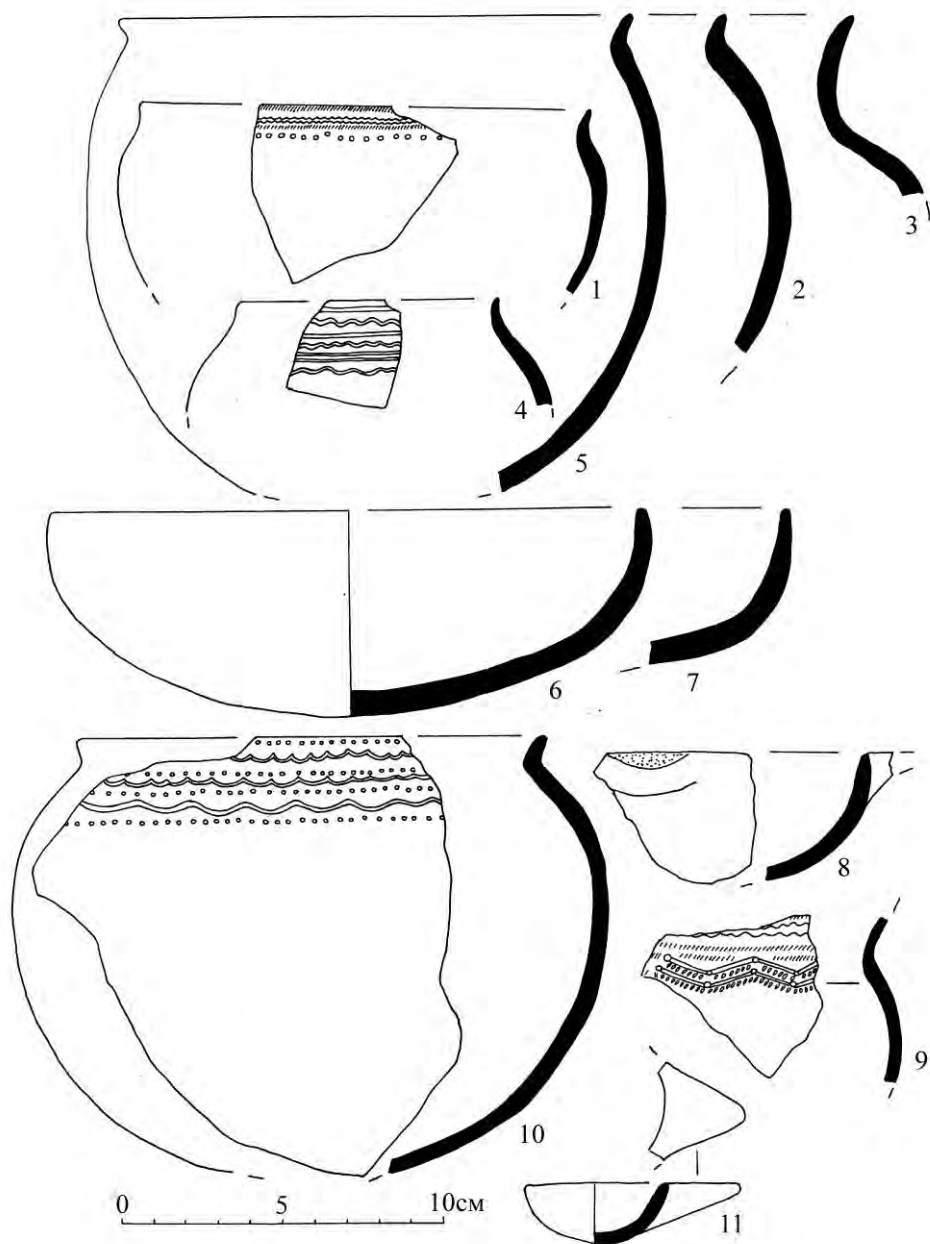


Fig. 5. Finds of local pottery from the main building.

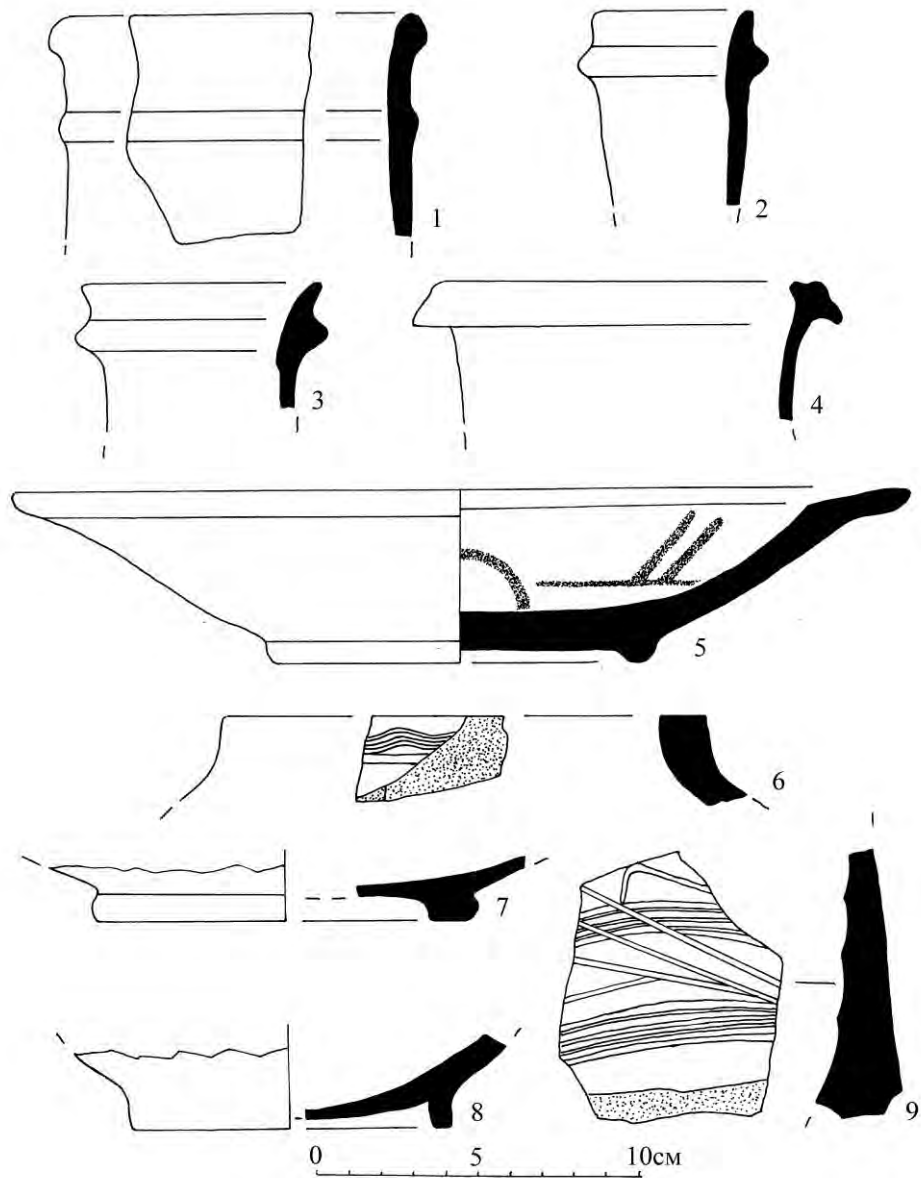


Fig. 6. Finds of imported pottery from the main building.

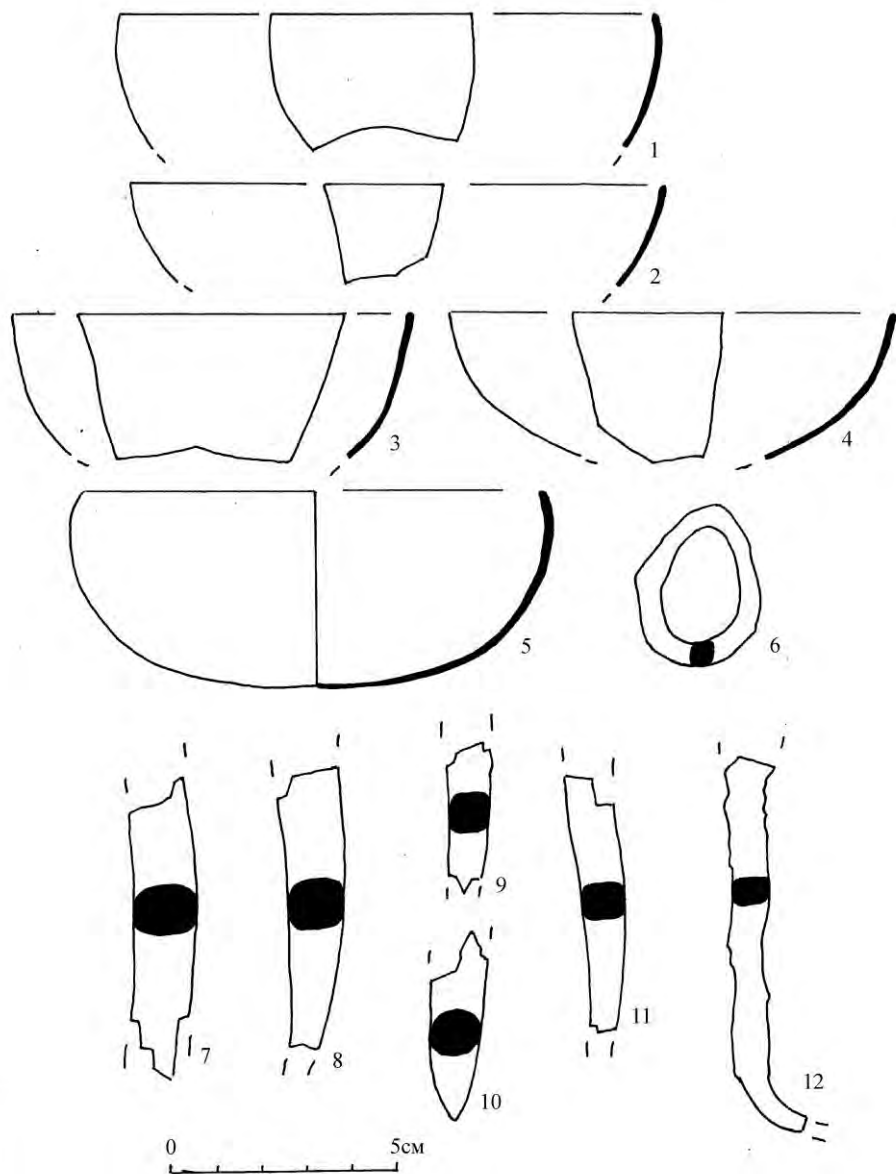


Fig. 7. Metal finds from the main building (1–5 – bronze, 6–12 – iron).

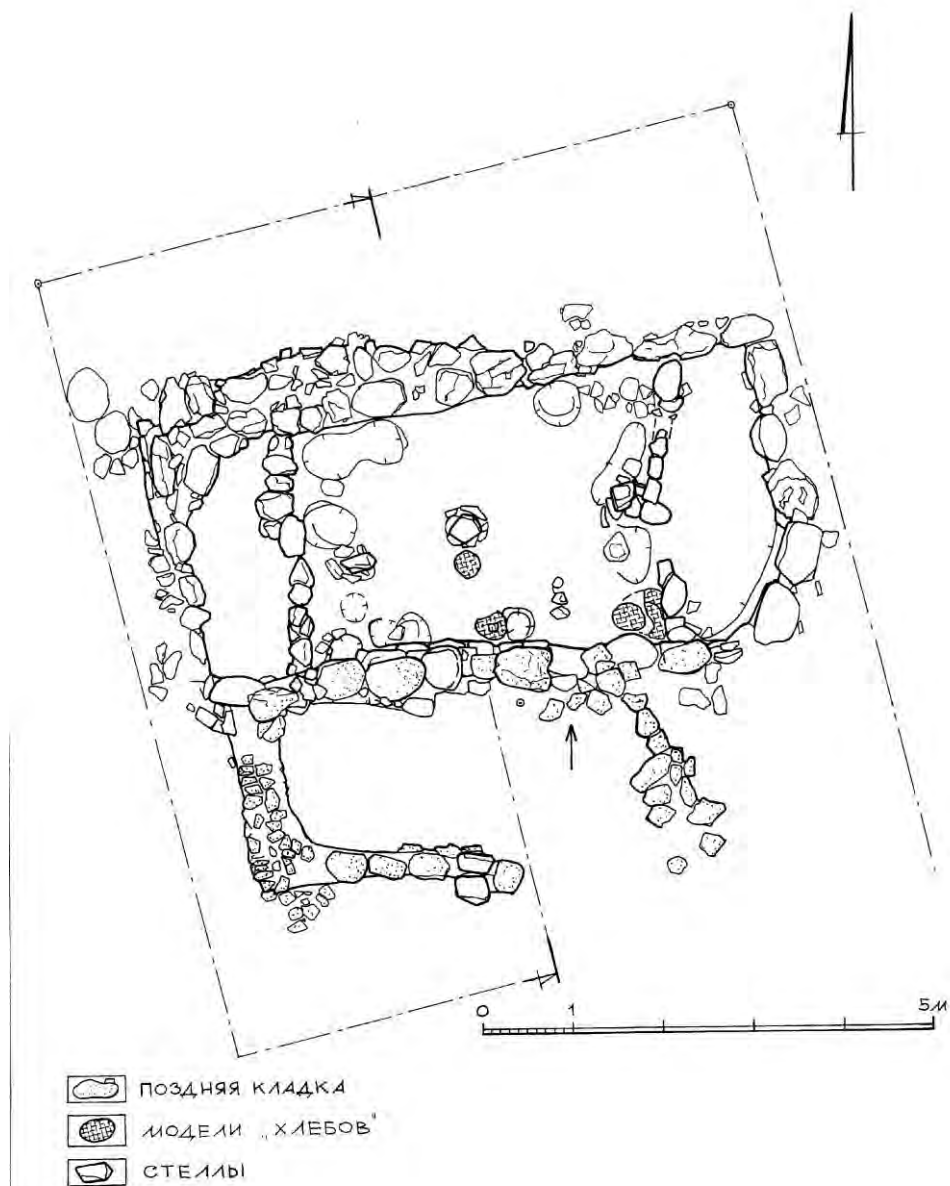


Fig. 8. The building in trench 3. Plan.



**Fig. 9.** The building in trench 3. View from east.





**Fig. 10.** The building in trench 3. View from west.

The results of the radiocarbon dating samples from Room 3 are very interesting:

Le 9440 – the layer of destruction:  $1020 \pm 150$  AD

Le 9441 – first (upper) floor:  $1370 \pm 250$  AD

Le 9442 – second floor:  $860 \pm 80$  AD

Le 9443 – fourth (earliest) floor:  $890 \pm 100$  AD.

From these results we can conclude that the building started to function in the 9<sup>th</sup> century AD. Because of the large size and the high quality of its construction (plastered walls, for example) we can assume that it was a public building. But what kind? A mosque or a church, or something else? We cannot see any signs of Islamic architecture there. No Christian cross was found here either, but the foundation of the altar seems to be typically Christian. Plans of similar designs were studied during investigations of Nestorian churches in the region of the Persian (Arabian) Gulf.<sup>7</sup> It is well known that various forms of Christianity spread throughout the Arabian Peninsula,<sup>8</sup> but it was Nestorians who inhabited Soqotra in the Middle Ages,<sup>9</sup> and from these facts we can assume that the main building of the Hajrya IV settlement was the Nestorian church; however, this conclusion must be verified by future excavations.

An interesting construction, situated to the south-east of the main building, was excavated completely (Fig. 1, P3). Before our investigations started, it looked like a big heap of ash. These ash layers covered a building of rectangular form (7×3 m) with slightly curved angles (Fig. 8–10). The walls are built of large, undressed stones. The construction is divided into three parts by two lower parallel walls. Three stelae made of large undressed stones were dug in its floor. A building following a similar plan was investigated in another part of Soqotra,<sup>10</sup> and we can assume that this planning of stone constructions was rather typical of Soqotra.

Four unusual objects made of white unburned clay were found on the floor. These flat objects (2 cm thick) have a round (0.28 and 0.33 m in diameter) or oval form (0.16×0.18 and 0.33×0.27 m), and they may have been connected with the cult sphere as votive breads or something similar. This building was probably used as a sanctuary. However, the bulk of finds is very typical of the sites of Soqotra (Fig. 11): fragments of handmade pottery of local production (Fig. 11, 1–10), rare fragments of imported vessels (Fig. 11, 11–12), small pieces of animals' bones and so on. Some fragments of Chinese celadon and glass were found too.

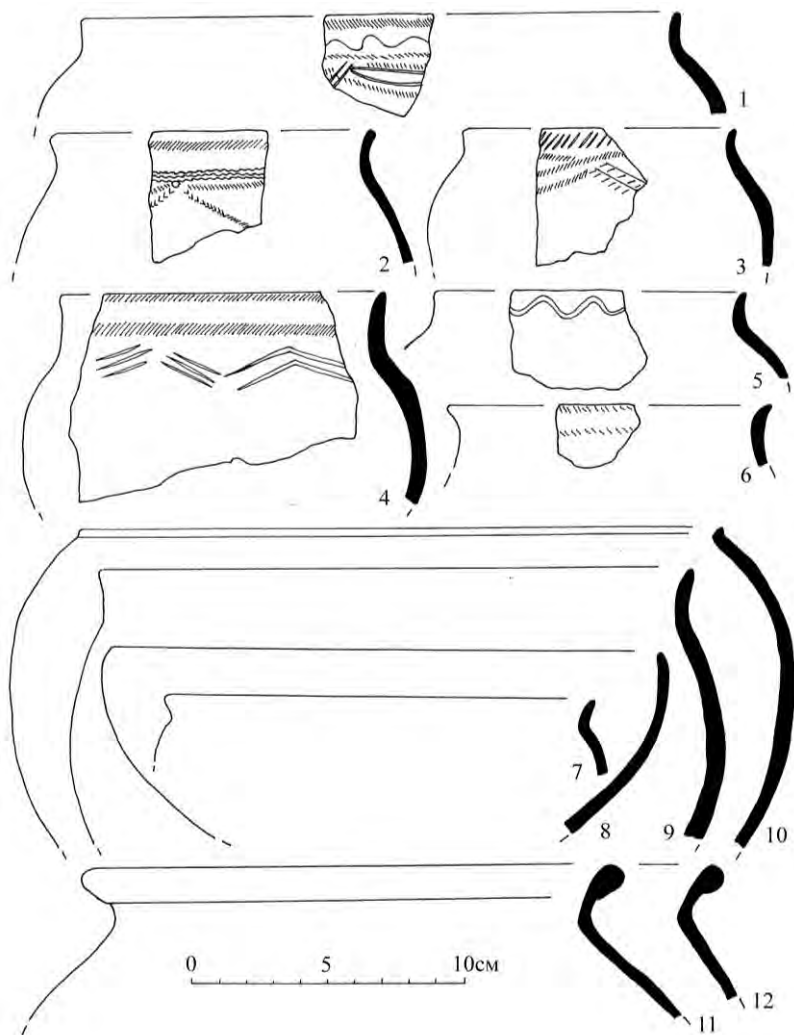
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<sup>7</sup> Fiey [1959], Pl. II, VI–X; Whitehouse, Williamson 1973, 42; Bernard., Salles 1991, 12; Bernard et al. 1991, 145–181; Potts 1994, 61–65; Langfeld 1994, 32–60; Dunlop et al. 1994, 69–70; Elders 2001, 47–57; 2003, 230–236; Carter 2008, 71–108

<sup>8</sup> Finster 2010, 70

<sup>9</sup> Naumkin 1988, 29

<sup>10</sup> Weeks et al. 2002, 104–105, Fig. 8



**Fig. 11. Pottery finds from the building in trench 3.**

The radio-carbon analyses give us three calibrated dates from this building:

DIN-14-120:  $650 \pm 100$  AD

DIN-14-121:  $570 \pm 70$  AD

DIN-14-122:  $790 \pm 100$  AD.

These dates are earlier than those of the main building, and we can assume that a local sanctuary was situated at the site in the 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. In the 9<sup>th</sup> century the Nestorian church was erected here.

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## Abstract

This paper presents the results of the archaeological excavations of the Russian team on Soqotra, in the Wadi Hajrya region. At the Hajrya IV site the remains of the local sanctuary of the 6<sup>th</sup>–8<sup>th</sup> centuries AD were investigated. The Nestorian church was erected here in the 9<sup>th</sup> century.



**Alireza Qaderi, Farhang Khademi Nadooshan,  
Mehdi Mousavi Kouhpar, Javad Neyestani, Nozar Haidari (Iran)<sup>1</sup>**

## **HORMOZ: A SITE BELONGING TO THE PARTHIAN TO ISLAMIC PERIODS IN KHĀSH COUNTY**

**Keywords:** Hormoz, Iran, archaeology, Partho-Sasanian period

### **Introduction**

Geographically, Khāsh County is located at W 61° 12' and N 28° 13', south of Mount Taftan (Fig. 1). This region is situated at an altitude of 1415 metres above sea level, about 185 km south of Zahedan on the Zahedan-Iranshahr road. This county has a moderate climate tending to warmth and drought. Agriculture is not very developed in the area, due to specific environmental conditions such as the shortage of water and inappropriate land for agriculture. Rainfed agriculture is scarcely performed because of low precipitation. Ranching has long been common in this region, and as provender, hays and weeds have compensated for the weak flora of the region. In addition, the southern and western hillsides provide a rich place for grassing. Because of its location at a higher altitude compared to other cities situated in the vicinity of Taftān Mount, Khāsh has a pleasant climate; hence it has attracted inhabitants. From the viewpoint of archaeological investigation, Khāsh is an enigmatic area.

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## Survey method and results

The archaeological survey of Khāsh County was performed during a two-month period between late December 2009 and mid-February 2010. A simple and compressed field survey method was applied to identify sites. Different data were recorded during the survey, including GPS location, dimension of sites, local natural and geographical data such as flora and landscape, and any information such as local alternative names of the place. GPS locations were measured in the approximate centre of each site and site positioning was performed using maps with 1/25000 and 1/50000 scales as well as aerial photographs and satellite pictures. Photographs of the site were taken by a digital camera with 10 megapixel resolution. To illustrate the location of the site relative to the nearest habitat (villages, city etc.), we used the satellite pictures as templates to draw a plan of the site. The surface data were collected using the random sampling method and the dating was performed based on the surface data taken from the sites. The most observed object was pottery, and in rare cases stone objects and other data were also obtained.



Figure 1. Geographical position of Khāsh County, Iran.

For the pottery gathered during the investigation, a specific code was assigned to all data in the following format: the letters Kh (the two beginning letters of Khāsh), survey year (1388), design number. Identified relics and sites were specified with their local name, numerical relic code e.g. *Kh010*, etc.

During the survey, a total of 213 sites from the Bronze Age until the late Islamic period were identified, and different types of sites including single-period or multi-period site, cemetery, castle and rock shelter were recorded. In this paper, we intend to demonstrate one of the identified sites – viz. Hormoz.

### Location of the site

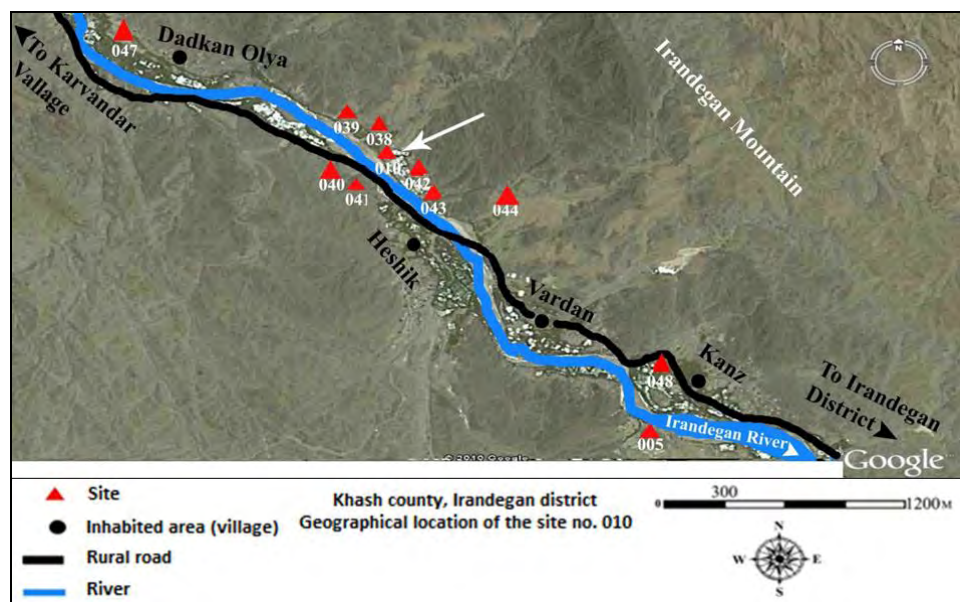


Figure 2. Aerial photograph of the Hormoz site (*Kh010*).

The Hormoz site is located at the E 60 38 35 longitude and N 27 35 38 latitude, at an altitude of 1177 metres above sea level on the northern side of Irandegan river (Fig. 2). This site is 400 metres north of Hashik village in Irandegan District of Khāsh County. With dimensions of about 120×100 m, the site is composed of four linked hills (Fig. 3, 4). Hill no. 1 is the north-western one in this collection. On the western surface of this hill, a 3×4 m enclosure has been built by rubble around a soil pile 0.5 m in height. A small section of the eastern side of this hill has been graded by local inhabitants and is used as a stack place. On the southern side, signs of a pit related to an unauthorized excavation

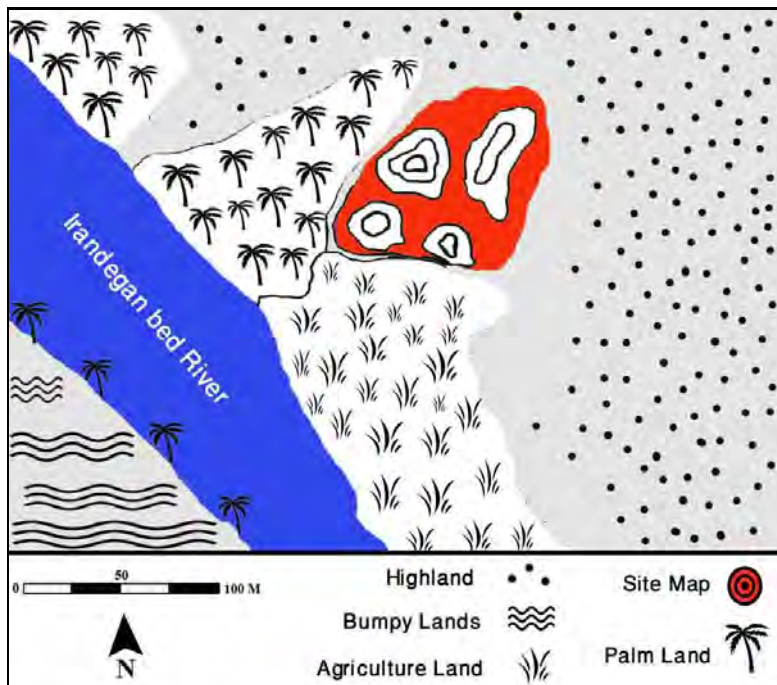


Figure 3. Location plan of Tepe Hormoz.

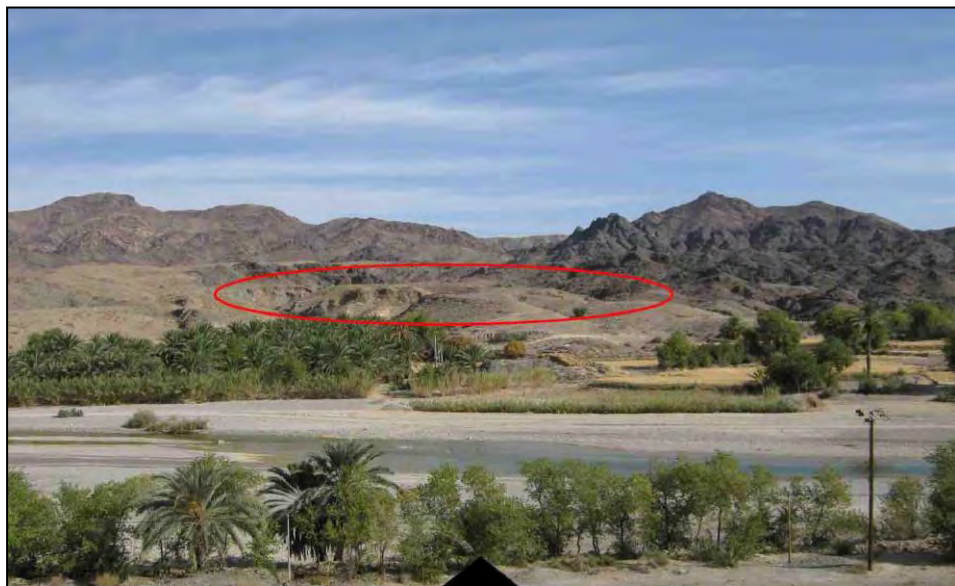


Figure 4. Hormoz site, viewed from the southwest.



with 1×1 m dimensions were observed. Hill no. 2 is located to the northeast, and shows relics of a stone wall built without mortar 55 metres in length; its preserved height reaches 30 cm. On the northern side of this hill, a completely plain surface with 20×15 m dimensions is observed with a lighter soil in comparison with other parts of the hill. The top of this area is also used as a stack place. Hill no. 3 is to the southwest, and is higher than other hills in the site. The southern part of this hill has been widely excavated, and the soil colour in the excavated parts is much lighter than that on the hill surface. On the south-eastern side of the site is located hill no. 4. This hill is a completely plain surface with dimensions of 10×10 m, and has also been graded as a stack place. On hill no. 1, relics from the Islamic period can be found, while the other hills hold relics from the early historical and Islamic periods.

### Description of findings

#### Pottery

Pottery is the only movable cultural data which remained within this site. It shows a high degree of diversity and density. Based on their coating, potteries can be divided into two types: glazed potteries and non-glazed potteries with clay slip. Among glazed potteries, single-colour ones in dark blue and brown, those with patterns cut out under the glaze in green, and those with paintings under the glaze could be identified (Fig. 5, 6).



Figure 5. Potteries obtained from the Hormoz site.

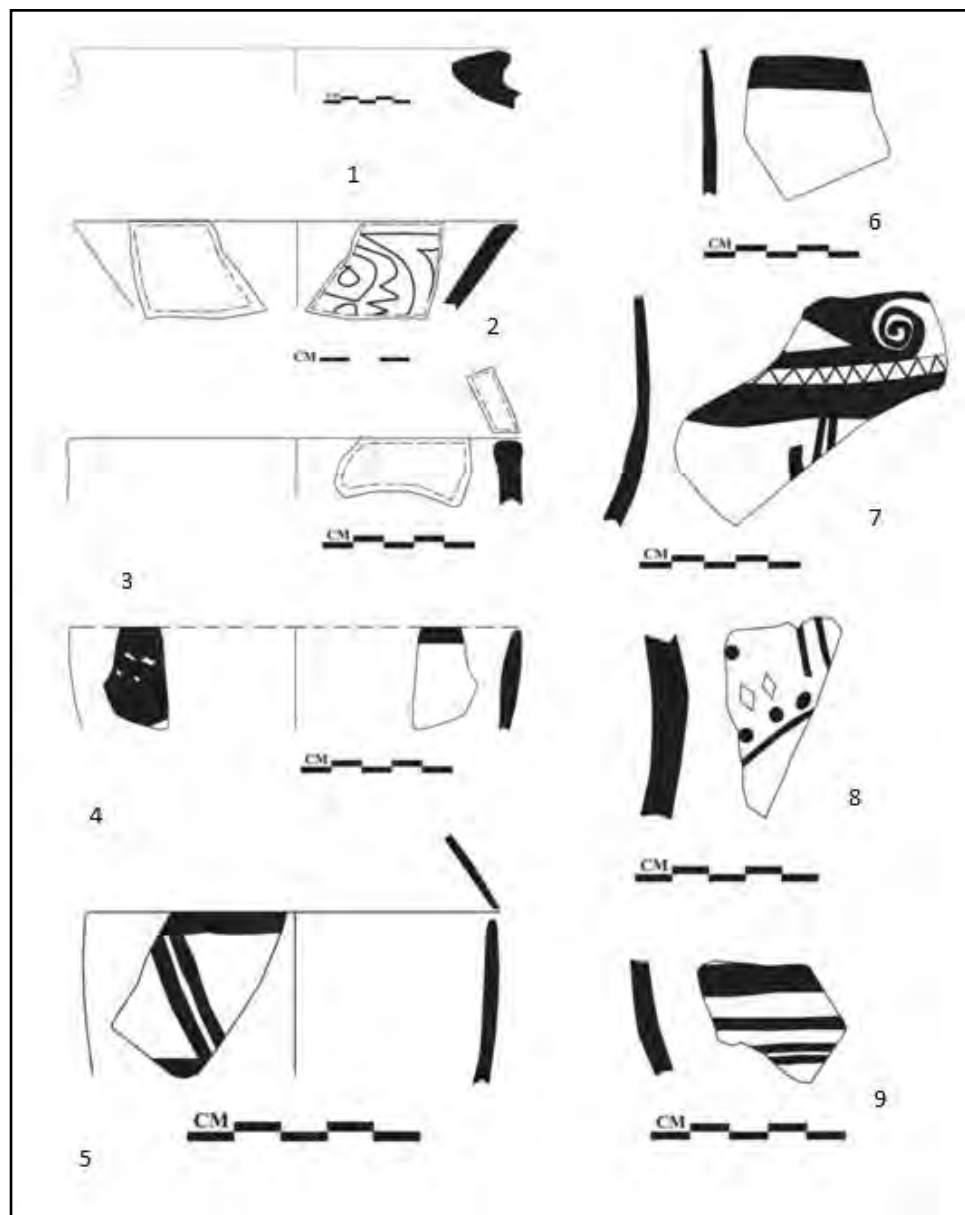


Figure 6. Sketch of the potteries from Hormoz site.

**Table 1: Catalogue of potteries**

<i>Tell- Hormoz (Kh010)</i>											
Labelno	Form	Manufacture	Production quality	Firing	Decoration	Texture	Interior Cover	Exterior Cover	Temper	Chronology	Parallels
1	Rim	Wheel	<i>Medium</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Plain</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Islamic	Kāmbakhsh Fard(1379; 2000)
2	Rim	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Ingrave under Glaze</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Green</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Islamic	Karimi & Kiāni(1364; 1985)
3	Rim	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Plain</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Blue</i>	<i>Blue</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Islamic	Kāmbakhsh Fard(1379; 2000)
4	Rim	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Painted</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Historic (Parthian)	Haerinck,1983
5	Rim	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Painted</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Historic (Parthian)	Haerinck,1983
6	Rim	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Painted</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Historic (Parthian)	Haerinck,1983
7	Body	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Painted</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Historic (Parthian)	Haerinck,1983
8	Body	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Moulded</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Islamic	Karimi & Kiāni(1364; 1985)
9	Body	Wheel	<i>Fine</i>	<i>Well Fired</i>	<i>Moulded</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Orange</i>	<i>Sand</i>	Islamic	Karimi & Kiāni(1364; 1985)

Non-glazed potteries are all wheel-thrown; their paste is brick red and is adequately annealed to provide the required density and strength. Based on their embellishment, these can be divided into two groups: potteries with colour pattern embellishment and potteries with moulded embellishment. The latter type is wholly different from other pottery in the non-glazed group, and belongs to the Islamic period. The potteries embellished with colour patterns have brown or cherry red patterns on their surface. One of the most significant of these potteries is that of the "londo" type with inverse wave patterns drawn in black on the outer surface of the pottery, which is the typical pottery of the Seleucid and Parthian periods in the south-east of Iran (Fig. 5, 6).

## Conclusion

One of the important factors in the formation, dynamics and broadness of a settlement pattern in each region is its ecology and geomorphology (the appearance of the natural geography). For instance, from a logical and scientific viewpoint, formation of a developed civilisation with one or a few large central sites and places is unexpected, though possible. This is because the geomorphologic mountainous context of the area does not allow populations to concentrate, thereby prohibiting the development and growth of establishments. On the other hand, it would be logical to expect vibrant and significant relics and sites from the oldest periods till now in regions with appropriate geographic and living conditions like plain land and water resources.

In the archaeological survey of Irandegan District of Khāsh County, a total of 63 sites were identified, most of which belong to Islamic and then historical ages, with a great difference from other periods, and a few relics belong to pre-historical periods. Almost 70 percent of the registered sites are located along the Irandegan River. Regarding the obtained pottery data from the Hormoz site, we can suggest that the establishment history in this site could be traced to the Parthian age and the settlement would continue its existence until the late centuries of the Islamic period.

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## Abstract

Essential factors in the formation, dynamics and broadness of settlement patterns are ecology and geomorphology. These elements have been taken into account in the archaeological surveys of Irandegan District of Khāsh County. A total of 63 sites were identified, most of which belong to Islamic and pre-Islamic historical ages. A few relics are datable to the pre-historical periods. Almost 70 percent of the registered sites are located along the Irandegan River. Regarding the obtained pottery data from the Hormoz site, we can suggest that the settlement history in this site could be traced back to the Parthian age and the settlement would continue its existence until the late centuries of the Islamic era.



# REVIEWS







**Martin Schottky**

**URSULA HACKL, BRUNO JACOBS, DIETER WEBER  
(HRSG.), QUELLEN ZUR GESCHICHTE DES  
PARTHERREICHES. TEXTSAMMLUNG MIT  
ÜBERSETZUNGEN UND KOMMENTAREN (NOVUM  
TESTAMENTUM ET ORBIS ANTIQVUS / STUDIEN ZUR  
UMWELT DES NEUEN TESTAMENTS – 83–85),  
GÖTTINGEN: VANDENHOECK & RUPRECHT, 2010.  
(3 BDE.; ISBN 978-3-525-53386-4; 978-3-525-53387-1;  
978-3-525-53388-8)**

Mit dem Erscheinen der vorliegenden Quellensammlung zur Geschichte des Arsakidenreiches wird eine schon fast schmerzlich empfundene Lücke in der altertumswissenschaftlichen Literatur geschlossen. Die drei Herausgeber des Gesamtwerkes, Dr. Ursula Hackl, emeritierte Professorin für Alte Geschichte an der Universität Basel, Dr. Bruno Jacobs, Professor für Vorderasiatische Altertumswissenschaft ebendort und Dr. Dieter Weber vom Institut für Iranistik der FU Berlin sind zugleich die Verfasser des ersten Bandes (CXLIII und 240 S., XIV Tafeln), der „Prolegomena, Abkürzungen, Bibliographie, Einleitung, Indices, Karten, Tafeln“ enthält. Hier ist zunächst auf die ausführliche Inhaltsübersicht aller drei Bände (S. VII – XLV) hinzuweisen. Nach einem Abkürzungsverzeichnis (S. LIII – LIX) folgt S. LXI – CXLIII eine Gesamtbibliographie, die aus den Angaben der einzelnen Beitragsverfasser zusammengeführt wurde. In ihr treten einige Doppelnennungen auf. Der *RE*-Artikel ‘Parthamaspatēs’ von Rudolf Hanslik erscheint zweimal, der *RE*-Artikel ‘Parthia II’ ist in voller Spaltenlänge einmal unter Peter Julius Junge, einmal unter Werner Schur verzeichnet. Auch andere Irrtümer konnten nicht ganz vermieden werden: S. XCV ist der Autorenname HULTGÅRD, A. an das Ende der unmittelbar vorher aufgelisteten Veröffentlichung von A.F.P. HULSEWÉ gerückt, S. C oben fehlt die Verfasse-

rangabe (KHLOPIN, I.N.) ganz. Józef Wolskis Aufsatz 'L'origine de la relation d'Arrien sur la paire des frères Arsacides, Arsace et Tiridate' ist 1978 in den *Studies in the Sources on the History of Pre-Islamic Central Asia* erschienen, nicht 1979 in den entsprechenden *Prolegomena*. Abgesehen von diesen einzelnen Versehen stellt das Literaturverzeichnis eine wahre Fundgrube an weiterführenden Informationen dar, die die künftige Beschäftigung mit der Geschichte der Parther allen Interessierten erleichtern werden.

Der Rest des ersten Bandes zerfällt oberflächlich in eine „Einleitung“ (S. 1 – 30) und eine Darstellung („Das Partherreich im Spiegel der Schriftquellen“, S. 31–181). Nachdem Bruno Jacobs aber noch S. 129 von „dieser Einleitung“ spricht, wird man nicht fehlgehen, den gesamten arabisch paginierten Textteil des Buches als eine die Sammlung einleitende, kurzgefasste systematische Darstellung zu betrachten. Ursula Hackl hat hierzu Beiträge zur hellenistischen Zeit (S. 7–20), zu den Schriftquellen (S. 21–30), zu den parthisch-römischen Beziehungen (S. 56–77), zu Handel und Wirtschaft (S. 111–124), zur Gesellschaft (S. 124–129), zur kulturellen Vielfalt und zum Kulturaustausch (S. 135–145) beigesteuert und eine Art Schlusswort verfasst: „Das Partherreich im Spannungsfeld zwischen griechisch-römischer und orientalischer Kultur“ (S. 174–181).

In diesen einleitenden Abschnitten sind Frau Hackl einige wenige Irrtümer unterlaufen, auf die zumindest aufmerksam gemacht werden soll. So wird S. 14, Ende 2. Abs. die 276 v. Chr. erfolgte „Entstehung des keltischen Königreiches Galatien“ erwähnt. Tatsächlich kann jedoch von einem Königtum bei den in drei Stämme geteilten Galatern zunächst keine Rede sein. Erst der von Cicero anwaltlich vertretene Deiotarus nahm den Titel an. Eine terminologische Ungenauigkeit liegt vor, wenn S. 29, Ende 3. Abs. gesagt wird, Armenien sei zeitweise von einer vom Partherkönig eingesetzten Sekundogenitur regiert worden. Nur das Gebiet, mit dem ein zweitgeborener Prinz und seine Nachkommen ausgestattet werden, heißt *Sekundogenitur*, das Herrscherhaus selbst wird als *Nebenlinie* bezeichnet (dass S. 178, Ende 1. Abs. gar von „Sekundogenitoren“ die Rede ist, mag auf einem Druckfehler beruhen). S. 57 u. wird behauptet, Mithradates VI. von Pontos habe die römischen Klientelstaaten „Nikomedien, Paphlagonien und Kappadokien“ angegriffen. Bei dem erstgenannten (sonst unbekanntem) Reich hatte Frau Hackl offenbar Bithynien im Auge, das von 149 bis 74 v. Chr. von Königen mit dem Namen Nikomedes und von der Hauptstadt Nikomedeia aus regiert wurde. S. 59, Anm. 163 wird der (in der Gesamtbibliographie nicht erscheinende) *RE*-Artikel 'Tigranes' zitiert und als dessen Verfasser „W. ENSSLIN“ angegeben. Von dem genannten Spätantike-Spezialisten stammt indessen nur der kurze Beitrag über einen angeblichen Herrscher des 4. Jhs., während alle anderen armenischen Könige, insbesondere Tigranes II., um den es hier geht, von Fritz Geyer bearbeitet wurden (so richtig Bd. 2, S. 34 in der

letzten Zeile des Kommentars zu Ampelius). S. 61, 2. Abs. mit Anm. 169 und S. 115, 2. Abs. wird die Sophene genannt, die römisches Klientelkönigtum geworden sei. Tatsächlich treffen die jeweils gemachten Angaben allein auf Kleinarmenien zu (vgl. zur Lage beider Gebiete S. 234, Karte IV: Armenien zur Zeit seiner größten Ausdehnung unter Tigranes II.). Schließlich wird S. 75, 3. Abs. der letzte Parther zweimal als „Artabanos V.“ bezeichnet, obwohl er erst der vierte regierende Herrscher dieses Namens war, und obwohl der Namensträger der Zeit des Tiberius S. 181, 2. Abs. richtig „A. II.“ genannt wird.

Von Bruno Jacobs stammen einführende Abschnitte über die historische Geographie (S. 1–7), über die frühparthische Zeit (S. 31–56), über Herrscherhaus, Hof und Verwaltung (S. 77–100), das Militärwesen (S. 104–111), über Architektur und Kunst (S. 129–135), zur Religion der Parther (S. 145–154) sowie ein abschließender Beitrag „Das Ende der Arsakidenherrschaft“, S. 168–173. Auch dazu seien einige Bemerkungen gestattet. Wie bei Frau Hackl ist die Zählweise der parthischen Artabanoi nicht einheitlich. Während der letzte Parther richtig „A. IV.“ genannt wird (S. 110 und 169), tritt der Zeitgenosse des Tiberius S. 147 falsch als „A. III.“, kurz danach (S. 152) richtig als „A. II.“ auf. Zumindest ein Missverständnis liegt S. 150 vor, wenn im 2. Abs. behauptet wird, Tiridates I., der Begründer der armenischen Nebenlinie, sei bereits 61 n. Chr. nach Rom gereist (recte 66).

In den von Jacobs bearbeiteten Abschnitten finden sich andererseits einige beachtenswerte Überlegungen, auf die kurz hinzuweisen ist. In der bisherigen Forschung wurde mehrfach die Ansicht vertreten, dass bei Arsakiden und Sasaniden noch mancherlei achaimenidische Traditionen lebendig gewesen seien. Soweit derartiges in den klassischen Quellen für die Parther behauptet wird, hält Jacobs (S. 85) jedoch „importiertes Wissen“ oder gar eine Fiktion der griechisch-römischen Autoren für denkbar. S. 93 und 172f. werden dann die Kenntnisse altpersischer Verhältnisse bei den Nachfolgern der Arsakiden behandelt. Auch in diesem Fall vermutet Jacobs, dass das betreffende Wissen den Sasaniden von westlichen Besuchern vermittelt wurde.

Kürzer, aber deswegen nicht weniger gewichtig sind die sprachwissenschaftlichen Beiträge von Dieter Weber. S. 100–104 werden „Einige Titel“ aufgelistet, S. 154–164 „Theophore Namen bei den Parthern“, im Anschluss (S. 166ff.) folgt noch eine Liste der parthischen Lehnwörter in semitischen Sprachen. Den Textteilen des ersten Bandes schließt sich ein Anhang an, der verschiedene Indices (S. 184–228), fünf Karten (S. 230–235) sowie vierzehn Tafeln enthält.

Mit X und 639 S. ist der zweite Band der umfangreichste des Gesamtwerkes. Er umfasst „Griechische und lateinische Texte, Parthische Texte, Numismatische Evidenz“, wobei die von Lukas Thommen bearbeiteten griechischen und lateinischen Zeugnisse den Hauptinhalt bilden. Geboten werden zunächst aus-

gewählte literarische Textabschnitte (S. 1–434), die von Agathias bis Zosimos alphabetisch geordnet, übersetzt und kommentiert sind. Es folgen lateinische und insbesondere griechische Inschriften, Pergamente und Papyri (S. 435–491). Angesichts einiger Jahrhunderte philologischer Forschung dürfte es hinsichtlich der Texte selbst und ihrer Übersetzung kaum mehr größere Meinungsunterschiede geben. Dagegen ist die Interpretation der von den Autoren überlieferten Nachrichten zuweilen höchst diskutabel.

Dies beginnt bereits mit Agathias, der 2.26.1 (griech. und dt. zit. S. 22f.) berichtet, nach dem Ende der Parther habe das Geschlecht des Chosroes καθ' ἡμῶν mit der königlichen Herrschaft begonnen. Thommen (Komm. S. 23) bezieht diese Nachricht, auch unter Hinweis auf einen *DNP*- (nicht *NP*!) Artikel des Rezensenten, auf den in der einheimischen Überlieferung *Chosroes* genannten armenischen König Tiridates II., in dessen lange Regierungszeit der Untergang der parthischen Hauptlinie fällt. Der aus Myrina in Westkleinasien stammende Agathias hatte aber wohl kaum armenische Verhältnisse im Auge. Vielmehr ist davon auszugehen, dass der Autor des 6. Jhs., der sich stark auf orientalisches Material stützte, den Ausdruck „bei uns“ mechanisch von einem seiner einheimischen Gewährsleute übernahm. Mit dem „Geschlecht des Chosroes“ sind demnach die Sasaniden gemeint, aus denen seit der Zeit des Agathias Herrscher dieses Namens hervorgingen, und die in der späteren persisch-arabischen Überlieferung gern „Chosroen“ genannt werden. Auffällig ist noch, dass der letzte Parther im vorliegenden Zusammenhang innerhalb weniger Zeilen einmal „Artabanos IV.“, dann wieder „A. V.“ heißt.

Auch bei anderen Herrschern ist die Zählweise z.T. uneinheitlich. Wenn S. 48 u. (zu Athenaios) gesagt wird, Phraates „III.“ (statt „II.“) habe Antiochos VII. besiegt, mag dies ein Druckfehler sein. Unzutreffend ist ebenso die S. 52, Komm. zu *Res gestae (divi Augusti)* vorgebrachte Behauptung, der zu Augustus geflohene König Phraates, Sohn des Königs Phraates, sei nicht sicher zu identifizieren. In Betracht kommt allein der in den literarischen Quellen *Phraatakes* genannte Phraates V. S. 51, am Ende des Kommentars zu *RG* 29, findet sich eine der wenigen Stellen, an denen die Herrscher mit dem Namen Tigranes falsch gezählt werden: 20 v. Chr. wurde nicht der bereits um 55 v. Chr. hochbetagt verstorbene Tigranes II. eingesetzt, sondern sein Enkel T. III. Dass besagter Tigranes, ein Sohn Artavasdes' II. von Armenien, S. 52, Komm. zu *RG* 32 irrtümlich als Sohn des *Mederkönigs* Artavasdes bezeichnet wird, mag auf das gleichzeitige Auftreten von gleichnamigen atropatenischen und armenischen Herrschern zurückzuführen sein.

Cassius Dio ist der Autor, der am ausführlichsten zu Wort kommt (S. 53–140). Dies hat zur Folge, dass in den Kommentaren zu den einzelnen Textabschnitten relativ häufig Ansichten vertreten werden, die zumindest diskutiert

werden sollten. Wir wollen mit der Inhaltübersicht beginnen, in der am Anfang von S. 55 innerhalb von fünf Zeilen zweimal ein Tiridates von einem römischen Kaiser zum armenischen König ernannt wird. Bei dem 35 n. Chr. von Tiberius nominierten Namensträger (Cass. Dio 58.26.1–4) handelt es sich indessen um einen Anwärter auf den Großkönigsthron, der mit Armenien nichts zu tun hatte. Eine weitere Verwirrung hinsichtlich der parthischen Königsliste ist S. 111, Komm. zu Cass. Dio 68.17.2 festzustellen. Pakoros, Osroes und Vologaises werden als Prätendenten bezeichnet, die gleichzeitig um die Krone konkurrierten, wobei Traian den letztgenannten als seinen Gegner betrachtet habe. Es erscheint jedoch sehr fraglich, ob Traian besagten Vologaises überhaupt zur Kenntnis genommen hat: Cass. Dio 68.26.4<sup>2</sup> (griech. und dt. zit. S. 117f.) spricht nur allgemein von Bürgerkriegen bei den Parthern. Aber auch von einem gleichzeitigen Auftreten von Pakoros und Vologaises kann keine Rede sein. Der Großkönig Pakoros verschwindet um 110 aus der Überlieferung, während Vologaises seit 111/2 gegen Osroes opponierte. Dies hat dazu geführt, dass er heute als Sohn des Pakoros betrachtet wird, der dessen Thronanspruch gegen den Usurpator Osroes (seinen Onkel) geerbt hatte. Letzterer war Traians Gegner.

Der Partherkrieg Traians führte bekanntlich zu einer vorübergehenden Provinzialisierung Groß-Armeniens. Der Name des Provinzstatthalters ist mehrere Jahrzehnte lang aufgrund des Zustandes der Inschriften, die ihn nennen, falsch gelesen worden. Dieser Forschungsstand liegt noch S. 115, Komm. zu Cass. Dio 68.18.3b vor, wo von einem „C. Atilius“ die Rede ist (so auch S. 154, Komm. zu Eutr. 8.3.2). S. 121, Komm. zu Cass. Dio 75.9.6 begegnet dagegen die richtige Namensform „L. Catilius Severus“. S. 125, Komm. zu Cass. Dio 71.1.1<sup>2</sup>, wird behauptet, Marc Aurels Mitherrscher L. Verus sei 138 von diesem adoptiert worden. Die Adoption wurde jedoch bereits von Antoninus Pius vorgenommen.

Im Zusammenhang mit Caracallas Partherkrieg findet sich bei Cass. Dio 79.1.2 die Nachricht, der Kaiser habe die Gräber der *parthischen* Könige in Arbela geschändet. Es soll ausdrücklich hervorgehoben werden, dass Thommen (S. 135, Komm.) diese noch in der neueren Forschung häufig unreflektiert übernommene Mitteilung richtigstellt. Bei in Arbela befindlichen Herrschergrabstätten kann es sich nur um die der Könige von Adiabene gehandelt haben.

Zu den wichtigsten Quellen der früh-parthischen Zeit gehört die Weltgeschichte des Pompeius Trogus. Dass sie, abgesehen von den Inhaltsangaben der einzelnen Bücher, nur im Auszug des Justin erhalten blieb, ist an sich schon bedauerlich. Auf die Fahrlässigkeit des Epitomators geht anscheinend auch eine Lücke im Erzählduktus zurück, aufgrund der Mithradates II. (124/3–88/7) und M. III. (um 57–55) nicht mehr unterschieden werden. Erstaunlich ist dabei, dass dieser Ausfall, der der älteren Forschung stets präsent war, gerade zeitgenössischen Kollegen aus dem Bewusstsein geschwunden zu sein scheint. Dies ergibt

sich im Falle Thommens aus seinem Kommentar zu Iust. 42.4.1 (S. 268), wo er sich zu einer Erklärung der Angabe veranlasst sieht, M. III. sei nach einem Armenierkrieg vertrieben worden. Der Hinweis auf ein 66 v. Chr. erfolgtes Eingreifen Phraates' III. in dem Gebirgsland geht ins Leere. Vielmehr war das letzte, was Iustin über einen Partherkönig berichtet hatte, der armenische Krieg Mithradates' II. um 120 v. Chr. (Iust. 42.2.6). An diesen Vorgang schließt er 42.4.1 direkt an.

Im Zusammenhang mit Plutarch sind zwei Druckfehler richtigzustellen: Der S. 339 am Ende des Kommentarteils erwähnte Phraates war der vierte seines Namens (nicht „V.“). In der ersten Zeile des Textes Plut. *Pomp.* 39.4 (S. 342) muss es ἐλευθέρου heißen, nicht ἠλευθέρου.

Eher mechanisch mag ein Irrtum am Ende des Kommentarteils zu *Scriptores Historiae Augustae, Verus* 7.8 zustande gekommen sein. Nach der Literaturangabe TILLMANN 1997 würde man in der Bibliographie vergeblich suchen. Gemeint ist vielmehr die Monographie über die römische Außenpolitik des 2. Jhs. n. Chr. von M. T[illmann] SCHMITT.

Auch im Kontext der angeführten Tacitus-Stellen sind nur einige wenige Einzelheiten zu monieren: Der Name eines S. 392, Komm. zu Tac. *Ann.* 2.1.2 erwähnten parthischen Prinzen ist zu „Seraspandes“ verkürzt worden (recte *Seraspadanes, Inscriptiones Latinae Selectae* 842, S. 436). S. 414, Komm. zu Tac. *Ann.* 13.7.1 wird behauptet, der von Nero zum König der Sophene ernannte Sohaemus sei nicht weiter bekannt. Dies würde jedoch nur zutreffen, wenn seine Identität mit dem gleichnamigen und gleichzeitigen emesenischen Stadtkönig völlig auszuschließen wäre.

Wie schon erwähnt wurde, hat Lukas Thommen nicht nur die literarischen Zeugnisse, sondern auch das relevante epigraphische Material in griechischer und lateinischer Sprache bearbeitet. Man findet hier u.a. die griechische Version der Bilingue auf dem Bronze-Herakles von Mesene, die Avroman-Pergamente I und II, die in die parthische Zeit gehörenden griechischen Inschriften von Bisutun und den Brief Artabanos' II. an die Kommune Susa. Im Zusammenhang mit dem letztgenannten Dokument (S. 489, Komm. zu Inschriftzeile 2) findet sich erstmals ein Hinweis darauf, dass einem der Mitarbeiter die Verwirrung der Zählweise der Artabanoi aufgefallen ist. Thommen bemerkt richtig, dass der Absender des Briefes, der Zeitgenosse des Tiberius, als „A. II.“ gezählt werden muss, nachdem er ihn allerdings S. 440 (Komm. zu ILS 843) auch einmal falsch „A. III.“ genannt hatte. In ähnlicher Weise ist auf S. 471, Komm. zu Avroman I, Z. 3–4 als eine der Stellen hinzuweisen, an denen Tigranes II. von Armenien fälschlich „T. I.“ genannt wird (man sollte die Nummerierung nicht einfach aus der Sekundärliteratur übernehmen, sondern von Fall zu Fall überprüfen, welcher Herrscher gemeint ist). Ein sachlicher Irrtum, der ebenfalls auf einer veralteten

Forschungsmeinung beruht, findet sich im Komm. zu Z. 2 von Avroman II (S. 475), wo Thommen von dem Herausgeber E.H. Minns die Überlegung übernimmt, die im Text erwähnte königliche Gemahlin Kleopatra sei „möglicherweise die letzte griechische Frau eines parthischen Königs“. Es darf an die *paelix Graeca* Vonones' II., die Mutter Vologaises' I. (Tac. *Ann.* 12.44) erinnert werden. In denselben Zusammenhang gehört die herabsetzende Bemerkung bei Plut. *Crass.* 32.6 (griech. und dt. zit. S. 336 und 338), dass „viele“ parthische Könige von milesischen und ionischen Hetären geboren worden seien.

Der Mit-Herausgeber Dieter Weber ist der Bearbeiter der parthischen Texte (S. 492–588). Ihren Hauptteil nehmen die bekannten Nisa-Dokumente ein, von denen S. 495–552 eine systematisierte Auswahl vorgelegt wird. Dabei sind die an den Anfang gesetzten Texte zur Chronologie besonders interessant, die Aufschlüsse über die Genealogie der frühen Arsakiden geben. S. 569–572 folgen die parthische Version der Herakles-Bilingue und eine Inschrift Artabanos' IV. Weber nummeriert den letzten Parther nicht nur richtig, sondern gibt auch (S. 572, Anm. 51) einen Hinweis auf die bis in die rezente Literatur hinein verwirrte Zählweise.

Einen besonders wertvollen Teil der angeführten parthischen Dokumente bildet die Inschrift Saporis I. an der Ka'ba-ye Zardušt (S. 573–583). Der Tatenbericht, der wenige Jahrzehnte nach dem Ende des Partherreiches entstand, macht deutlich, wie sehr die Sasaniden von Anfang an darauf abzielten, die Erinnerung ihre Vorgänger zu verdunkeln. Konkret heißt das: Selbst in der *parthischen* Version der *Res Gestae Divi Saporis* ist von den Parthern oder deren Königen niemals die Rede.

Den Schlussteil des Bandes bildet die von Daniel Keller bearbeitete „Numismatische Evidenz“, die sich auf römische (S. 589–612) und arsakidische Münzen (S. 613–632) bezieht. Mit „Iranica auf arsakidischen Münzen“ folgt S. 633–639 ein weiterer Beitrag Dieter Webers. Aus Platzgründen kann leider nicht auf alle, für gewöhnlich zutreffenden Bemerkungen Kellers eingegangen werden. Richtig beobachtet ist insbesondere S. 595f., dass es sich bei dem auf Münzen Traians bittflehend dargestellten Partherkönig nicht um den vom Kaiser abgesetzten (und alsbald beseitigten) Parthamasiris handeln kann, da dieser einzig die armenische Krone beanspruchte. S. 615 zeigt der Bearbeiter dann eine gesunde Skepsis gegenüber Theorien, die arsakidische Münzprägung direkt auf achaimenidische Vorbilder zurückzuführen. Auch in dieser Hinsicht sind wohl zwischen 330 und 248 v. Chr. die meisten Traditionsfäden gerissen, und die parthischen Münzen entwickelten sich nach dem Vorbild der seleukidischen Emissionen und in der Auseinandersetzung mit ihnen.

Der dritte Band (VIII und 512 S.) enthält „Keilschriftliche Texte, Aramäische Texte, Armenische Texte, Arabische Texte, Chinesische Texte“. Barbara

Böck hat sich des keilschriftlichen Materials angenommen, dessen Hauptmasse, nach einer ausführlichen Einleitung (S. 1–44), die astronomischen Tagebücher ausmachen (S. 45–127). Es folgen Rechts- und Verwaltungsurkunden aus Uruk, Larsa und Babylon (S. 128–174). Dabei erscheint es ein wenig übertrieben, von „keilschriftlichen Texten aus Larsa“ zu sprechen. S. 142ff. wird ein einzelnes aus Larsa stammendes Dokument vorgestellt, dessen Datierung in die Partherzeit nicht unumstritten ist. Kritisch bemerkt werden muss auch, dass der Beitrag von Frau Böck einen Höhepunkt in der Verwirrung der Zählweise der parthischen Artabanoi darstellt. In einer Übersicht derjenigen Arsakiden, in deren Namen Urkunden ausgestellt wurden, wird der von 127 bis 124/3 v. Chr. regierende Herrscher S. 11 noch richtig „A. I.“ genannt. Im Rahmen derselben Liste (S. 26) erscheint der Zeitgenosse des Tiberius dann als „A. II. (III.)“. Der König des 2. Jhs. v. Chr. wird von da an mehrfach fälschlich „A. II.“ genannt (S. 85, 88, 94, 96), um schließlich S. 147 (Komm.) wieder richtig als erster seines Namens zu erscheinen. Ein Missverständnis liegt anscheinend vor, wenn in der besagten Übersicht (S. 27) eine Urkunde von 61/2 n. Chr. noch dem im Sommer 45 ermordeten König Vardanes zugewiesen wird. Möglicherweise war sie in früheren Editionen mit dessen Sohn, dem *filius Vardanis* (Tac. *Ann.* 13.7.2) in Verbindung gebracht worden, der in der Literatur häufig als „Vardanes II.“, Sohn des Vologais I., erscheint.

Abgesehen von einzelnen Versehen sind die Erkenntnisse, die sich aus dem keilschriftlichen Material gewinnen lassen, bedeutend. In einem Text, der Ereignisse vom Januar 140 v. Chr. zum Inhalt hat (S. 50f.), begegnet erstmals der Titel König der Könige: LUGAL LUG[AL MEŠ]. Hieraus ergibt sich, dass die erweiterte königliche Titulatur tatsächlich bereits von Mithradates I. angenommen worden war. Andere Dokumente liefern genealogische Informationen, die schwer mit der sonstigen Überlieferung in Einklang zu bringen sind. In einem im Namen Mithradates' II. ausgestellten Text von Oktober / Anfang November 119 v. Chr. (S. 95) bezeichnet dieser seinen Vorgänger *Artabana* als „Bruder“. Da Artabanos I. nach der literarischen Überlieferung ein jüngerer Bruder Mithradates' I. und der Vater Mithradates' II. war, mag hier ein Irrtum des Schreibers vorliegen. Weniger einfach scheint das Problem zu lösen, dass sich aus einem Dokument ergibt, das von Ereignissen Ende 91 bis Anfang 90 berichtet und als amtierenden Großkönig *Gutarza* (Gotarzes I.) nennt (S. 112ff.). In ihm erwähnt der Herrscher den Tod des eigenen Vaters, der nur mit seinem Thronnamen *ar-ša-ka-a* (Arsakes) benannt ist. Die Ansicht, Gotarzes habe seinen damals noch lebenden Bruder Mithradates II. als „verstorbenen Vater“ bezeichnet (so Frau Böck S. 114, Komm.) ist nicht überzeugend. Anscheinend bezog sich Gotarzes, als er sich 91 gegen Mithradates erhob, auf seinen Vater Artabanos I. und versuchte, sich als dessen legitimer Nachfolger auszugeben.



Hochinteressant sind einige Texte, die von armenischen Angelegenheiten handeln (S. 109f.). Anscheinend fällt der Tod Tigranes' I. schon in die ersten Monate des Jahres 96, da er zwischen dem 27.3. und dem 24.4. im parthischen Baylonien bekannt wurde. Was die Regierungsübernahme des Nachfolgers *Tigranu* betrifft, besteht dennoch kein Anlass, von dem traditionellen Regierungsbeginn (95 v. Chr., vgl. Plut. *Luc.* 21) abzugehen. Die Dokumente machen deutlich, dass sich Mithradates II. mit der Entlassung des bei ihm vergeißelten Sohnes in dessen ererbtes Königreich nicht gerade beeilte.

Den Hauptteil des dritten Bandes machen die von Markus Zehnder bearbeiteten aramäischen Texte aus (S. 175–401). Nach einer Einleitung (S. 175–183) wird zunächst auf die Nachrichten über die Parther in einigen mittelalterlichen Geschichtswerken eingegangen, nämlich in der edessenischen Chronik sowie in den Chroniken des Jakob von Edessa, des Pseudo-Dionysius von Tell-Mahre, des Elia von Nisibis, des Michael Syrus, des Gregor Abu al-Farağ („Barhebraeus“) sowie der *Doctrina Addae* (S. 184–218).

Einen Sonderfall stellt die einem Messias-Zacha zugeschriebene sog. *Chronik von Arbela* dar (S. 218–236). Nur kurz weist Zehnder S. 219 auf die Möglichkeit hin, dass es sich um eine Fälschung „aus der Hand Minganas“ handeln könnte. Da weitere bibliographische Angaben zur Erstausgabe nicht gemacht werden, sei dies hier nachgetragen: A. Mingana (ed.) 1907: *Mšiha Zkha* (*Sources syriaques* I), Leipzig. Die ausgewählten Textabschnitte verraten, z.B. was die Zählweise der Könige mit dem Namen Vologaises betrifft, einen Kenntnis-, bzw. Forschungsstand, wie man ihn am Anfang des 20. Jhs. erwarten würde. Hinzu treten einige eher verdächtig wirkende Einzelheiten, die sich von der sonstigen Überlieferung her nicht bestätigen, freilich genauso wenig widerlegen lassen.

Der zweite Teil der literarischen aramäischen Texte wird von den *Thomasakten* mit dem darin enthalteten *Perlenlied* sowie dem *Buch der Gesetze der Länder* gebildet (S. 237–269). Dass das *Lied von der Perle*, eine kurze, parabelhafte Dichtung, keine neuen Erkenntnisse zur parthischen Ereignisgeschichte liefert, sollte sich von selbst verstehen. Es gehört deswegen in den vorliegenden Rahmen, weil die an sich überzeitliche Handlung in einer Gegend spielt, über die „die Könige und Fürsten von Parthien“ (Vers 38) herrschen, wobei als Kerngebiet des Reiches konkret Hyrkanien bezeichnet wird (Vers 73). Hingewiesen werden muss noch auf einen bösen Fehler, den Zehnder zwar nicht selbst verschuldet, aber unreflektiert aus einer Abhandlung von A. Adam (*BZNW* 14, 1959) übernommen hat. S. 239 u. bis 240 o. wird angegeben, der „parthische“ (gemeint ist: arsakidische) König von Armenien habe 66 die berühmte Reise nach Rom „zusammen mit Vologeses, Pakoros und Monobazos“ gemacht. Die Teilnahme des parthischen Großkönigs (!) sowie der Unterkönige von Media

Atropatene und Adiabene an der Huldigungsreise des Tiridates zu Nero wäre uns jedoch neu und, wenn sie denn belegt werden könnte, sensationell.

Als letzte Gruppe literarischer Textbeispiele folgen ausgewählte Abschnitte aus Talmud und Midrasch (S. 269–288). In ihnen zeigt sich Zehnder ebenfalls als jemand, der die Zählweise der parthischen Artabanoi noch nicht ganz verinnerlicht hat. Während der letzte Parther S. 232 u. mit Anm. 214 noch richtig „A. IV.“ genannt wird, tritt er S. 272 m. plötzlich als „A. V.“ auf. Der Zeitgenosse des Tiberius wurde schon S. 270 zweimal fälschlich als „A. III.“ bezeichnet. Eher Verwirrung mag auch die Tatsache auslösen, dass kurz hintereinander (S. 282f. und 286) ein identischer Abschnitt aus dem babylonischen Talmud (bT *Gittin* 14b) zitiert und übersetzt wird. Hier dürfte es sich um ein Versehen handeln.

Die zweite tragende Säule der aramäischen Überlieferung bildet das in dieser Sprache erhaltene epigraphische Material (S. 289–401). Angeführt werden ausgewählte Texte aus Hatra, Assur, Edessa, Dura-Europos und Palmyra. Von den Inschriften aus Hatra verlangt nur die letzte im vorliegenden Rahmen gebotene (H 1039, S. 340f.) nach ein paar Bemerkungen. In ihr wird Z. 5 berichtet, dass TYRDT krnyt' (der Heerführer Tiridates) nach Hatra gekommen sei. Zehnder datiert das Ereignis unter Bezugnahme auf Cass. Dio 63.1–5 auf ca. 66 n. Chr. Er nimmt demnach (ohne dass der Landesname *Armenien* ausdrücklich fällt) an, Tiridates habe auf seiner Romreise Hatra passiert und sei anlässlich seines Besuches durch eine Inschrift geehrt worden. Diese Interpretation ist indessen ähnlich abwegig wie die oben erwähnte angebliche Teilnahme des parthischen Großkönigs an der Huldigungsreise. In der betreffenden Passage Cassius Dios wird Hatra gar nicht genannt. Darüber hinaus erscheint es unmöglich, dass der designierte, bzw. soeben bestätigte König von Armenien, der Halbbruder des Großkönigs, in einer offiziellen Verlautbarung nur als *Heerführer* bezeichnet worden sein sollte. Der erwähnte Tiridates mag ein sonst unbekannter hoher Offizier gewesen sein, wobei selbst seine Zugehörigkeit zum Arsakidenhaus fraglich ist. Wie wenig angemessen es sein dürfte, in Inschriften genannte Individuen ohne hinreichende Indizien mit aus den literarischen Quellen bekannten Personen gleichzusetzen, ergibt sich insbesondere aus einigen wenige Seiten später (S. 354–358; Nr. 14, 18, 23, 24) angeführten edessenischen Inschriften aus der zweiten Hälfte des 2. Jhs. n. Chr. In ihnen treten gleich zwei Funktionsträger namens Tiridates auf. Die Namen ihrer Väter (*Adona* und *'Absamiya*) zeigen deutlich, dass es sich um sonst unbekannte Einheimische gehandelt haben muss.

Giusto Traina hat sich den Spuren der Parther in den armenischen Geschichtswerken angenommen (S. 402–454). Angeführt ist zunächst der Bericht des armenischen Agathangelos (Agat'angelos) über den Untergang des Arsakidenreiches (S. 408–414). Es folgen Nachrichten über die parthische Hauptlinie, die sich den Werken des Moses von Chorene (Movsês Xorenac'i, S. 419–444)

und der bei Sebêos überlieferten, sog. *Primary History* (*Armenische Urgeschichte*, S. 446–454) entnehmen lassen. Im Zusammenhang mit Moses ist zunächst zu bemerken, dass Traina keine Textausgabe angibt. Eine auf S. 418 (2. Abs.) gemachte Bemerkung lässt aber erkennen, dass er folgende Edition verwendete: A. Abelean, S. Yarowt'iwnean (eds.) 1913: *Movsês Xorenac'i, Patmowt'iw'n Hayoc'*, T'bilissi. Dass die bei Moses zu findenden Informationen problematisch sind, ist Traina bewusst. Seine Absicht geht demnach dahin, das in dem Werk verwendete System zu – wie er es ausdrückt – „dekodieren“ (so z.B. S. 418, 4. Abs.). Dies ist ein Vorhaben, das wir, bei allen Unterschieden in der Auffassung, durchaus nachvollziehen können. Hierzu nur ein Beispiel: S. 418, Ende 4. Abs. und S. 427, Komm. zu *M.X.* 2.1.4 bemerkt Traina, dass sich von dem hier bereits mehrfach erwähnten Tiridates I. keine Spur im Werk des Moses finde. Es kann jedoch kein Zweifel daran bestehen, dass der die Kapitel 2.37–60 beherrschende Artashês zum Großteil nach dem Vorbild Tiridates' I. gestaltet worden ist. Dies wird, wenn man ein wenig zwischen den Zeilen zu lesen versteht (also im Sinne Trainas „dekodiert“) deutlich genug.

Mit den von Gudrun Schubert bearbeiteten arabischen Texten (S. 455–481) steht es in mancher Hinsicht ähnlich wie mit den armenischen. Drei Autoren kommen zu Wort: Tabari, Ta'alibi und Biruni (Frau Schubert und andere Arabisten mögen es uns nachsehen, wenn wir uns mit diakritischen Zeichen etwas zurückhalten). Von Ta'alibi ist S. 467–471 die Erzählung angeführt, in der berichtet wird, wie Ardašir I. am Hofe Artabans IV. als Page und Stallknecht mancherlei auszuhalten hatte, bis er dank der Hilfe einer Sklavin des Großkönigs eher zufällig zur Macht gelangte. Angesichts der Beliebtheit dieses novelistischen Stoffes in der iranischen Tradition sei der Hinweis darauf gestattet, dass es keine ernst zu nehmenden Indizien dafür gibt, „Ardawân“ und Ardašir könnten sich jemals persönlich begegnet sein, bevor sie sich auf dem Schlachtfeld von Hormizdâgan gegenüberstanden.

Tabari (S. 459–466) und Biruni (S. 472–481) haben es wie Moses von Chorene und der Verfasser der Urgeschichte unternommen, möglichst vollständige Herrscherlisten der parthischen Arsakidenlinie zu erstellen. Diese Versuche der beiden bedeutenden Gelehrten mussten jedoch schon vom Ansatz her scheitern, da Anzahl und Regierungszeiten der Partherkönige von der offiziellen Historiographie der Sasaniden stark zusammengestrichen worden waren. Biruni, dem das schließlich klar geworden ist, weist in einer resignierenden Schlussbemerkung auf diesen Tatbestand hin. Wir wollen sie, in der Übersetzung von Frau Schubert (S. 481), dem Leser nicht vorenthalten:

„Es ist uns sogar nicht möglich, durch Analogieschluss die Zeitspanne festzustellen, die jeder einzelne der Aškâniyân regiert hat ... und auch nicht die Zahl der Personen, die die Herrschaft innehatten“.

Mit den von Uta Golze und Karin Storm bearbeiteten chinesischen Quellen zum Partherreich (*Anxi*, sprich: „Anshi“) findet das umfangreiche Werk seinen Abschluss (S. 482–512). Gegeben werden zunächst ausgewählte Abschnitte aus den Dynastiegeschichten *Shiji*, *Hanshu*, *Hou Hanshu* und *Jinshu* (S. 488–503). Dem schließen sich Informationen an, die dem *Weilüe*, dem *Hanji* und dem *Hou Hanji* entnommen sind (S. 503–510). Den Abschluss (S. 510 u.) bildet eine kurze Mitteilung aus der Biographie eines Antong im *Weishu*, dessen Vorfahr An Shigao als Geisel des parthischen Großkönigs ins Land gekommen sein soll.

Es wäre vermessen, wenn der der Alten Geschichte und ihren griechisch-römischen Quellen verpflichtete Rezensent Sachkenntnis bezüglich chinesischer Zeugnisse beanspruchen wollte. So fällt es uns insbesondere nicht leicht, in dem erwähnten *Antong* keinen *Antonius* zu sehen. Dies scheint jedoch allein schon deswegen unmöglich zu sein, weil der Mann als Iraner bezeichnet wird. Daher müssen wir uns darauf beschränken, der Hoffnung Ausdruck zu geben, dass die ostasiatische Überlieferung ebenso wie die Tradition des vorderen Orients in künftigen Arbeiten über die Parther noch stärker berücksichtigt werden möge.

Auf den vorangegangenen Seiten hat sich nicht selten die Notwendigkeit ergeben, auf Formalien einzugehen. Die Fälle, in denen ein (wohl vom Textverarbeitungsprogramm geschützter) Trennstrich unmotiviert in der Mitte der Zeile zu finden ist, können gar nicht einzeln aufgelistet werden. Nun ist es aber eigentlich nicht die Aufgabe der Rezensenten, zu lektorieren oder Korrektur zu lesen. Daher empfehlen wir, das Werk vor einer eventuellen Neuauflage noch einmal einer gründlichen Revision zu unterziehen. Erst wenn die z. T. sinnentstellenden formalen Irrtümer beseitigt sind, wird der hohe Informationsgehalt dieser Quellensammlung in aller Klarheit erkennbar.



**Michał Marciak**

**BENJAMIN ISAAC, YUVAL SHAHAR (EDS.),  
*JUDAEA-PALAESTINA, BABYLON AND ROME: JEWS IN  
ANTIQUITY (TEXTS AND STUDIES IN ANCIENT  
JUDAISM 147)*, TÜBINGEN: MOHR SIEBECK, 2012.  
(PP. IX, 324 PAGES; ISBN 978-3-16-151697-9)**

The book under review contains 17 contributions, most of which originated as papers read at a conference held in Tel Aviv in 2009 in honor of Prof. Aharon Oppenheimer, a distinguished Israeli scholar perhaps best known for his scholarship on Jewish Babylonia.

The main thematic thread behind all papers is, generally speaking, that about Jewish identity in the Roman Period – a topic that has in recent decades enjoyed growing interest in scholarship. Accordingly, the papers were divided into three main parts. Part 1 is entitled “The Image of Jews among Non-Jews,” Part 2 collects papers focused on “The Image of Non-Jews among Jews,” Part 3 is devoted to select issues of Jewish “Social History” (predominantly in the Greco-Roman period), while Part 4 concerns some important methodological “Issues in Modern Scholarship.” The volume includes a Preface and Introduction by Benjamin Isaac and Yuval Shahar, and is rounded off by an index of Aharon Oppenheimer’s publications.

Part 1 opens with Albert Baumgarten’s paper (“The ‘Outreach’ Campaign of the Ancient Pharisees: There is no such thing as a Free Lunch”), which goes back to a long-debated issue of Jewish missionary activity, focusing specifically on the picture of the Pharisees in three passages from the gospel of Luke: 14:1–9; 7:36–39; 11:37–41. Baumgarten proposes to read the passages in a double context – “one ancient, the other in the light of modern social science” (which he also calls “the ‘double filter’ reading”, pp. 13 and 27). According to Baumgarten, the aim of Luke’s passages was to show that the Pharisaic claim of moderation, flexibility and outreach to the larger world was not genuine; quite to the contrary,

Luke's Pharisees are shown to be "hypercritical, unwilling to tolerate any deviation from their demands, and utterly disdainful of their non-Pharisaic neighbours". At the same time, Baumgarten suggests that it is perhaps possible to say something about historical Pharisees (or at least about the historical writer of Luke and his audience) by using methods of socio-historical reflection – in his view, the Pharisees attempted to gain social importance by building a network of subtle social connections – e.g. by inviting someone socially important for dinner and then expecting a return invitation. In turn, Shaye Cohen ("Dancing, Clapping, Meditating: Jewish and Christian Observance of the Sabbath in Pseudo-Ignatius") presents how a passage from the 4<sup>th</sup>-c. CE pseudo-Ignatius understands the contrast between the Christian and Jewish observance of the Sabbath – while the Jewish way is more carnal (focused on physical relaxation, food, drinking and joy – dancing and clapping), the Christian is more spiritual (mediation). Remarkably, Cohen asserts that (setting aside pseudo-Ignatius' negative comments), this description probably reflects reality well.

In Part 2, in his paper ("How Jewish to be Jewish? Self-Identity and Jewish Christians in First Century CE Palestine") Joshua Schwartz brings up the topic of the relationship between Jews and Jewish Christians in the context of the discussion as to how much diversity there was in Judaism in the early Roman period. In Schwartz's view, there was nothing inherent in Jewish identity within the Second Temple Judaism that would inevitably have led to the two groups parting ways. Schwartz suggests that it was politics which drove these groups apart. Likewise, Günter Stemberger ("The *birkat ha-minim* and the separation of Christians and Jews") takes issue with a common claim that the late-1<sup>st</sup>-c. CE *birkat ha-minim* was formulated with the explicit purpose of excluding Jewish-Christians from synagogue services. Firstly, Stemberger claims, it is not certain that the text referred exclusively to Christians; secondly, the application of this restriction did not have to have been widespread, since its promulgator, Rabban Gamaliel, did not necessarily enjoy such wide esteem at his time as is commonly assumed in modern scholarship. In turn, in her paper ("Another Look at the Rabbinic Conception of Gentiles from the Perspective of Impurity Laws") Vered Noam brings up the question of gentile impurity in Talmudic literature, arguing that according to tannaitic traditions gentiles cannot become impure by corpse impurity since they do not fall under the rubric of the Hebrew *'adam* and consequently can neither contract corpse impurity nor be purified. Next, in his paper entitled "The Evil Eye in Rabbinic Literature of Late Antiquity," Richard Kalmin offers an overview of diversified views of Talmudic traditions on the evil eye. In short, while Palestinian rabbis saw the evil eye as a non-Jewish and negative phenomenon, Babylonian rabbis "domesticated it" – it also belonged to the world of the Jews and rabbis and could be used by Jews and lesser rabbis among

each other. Next, Peter Schäfer (“Jesus’ Origin, Birth, and Childhood according to the Toledot Yeshu and the Talmud”) analyzes the Jewish medieval traditions on the origin of Jesus and accentuates that Miriam, Jesus’ mother (perhaps in contrast to what is commonly believed) is presented without hostility – only as a victim of rape, as someone not to be blamed for what happened, even as the carrying mother.

Part 3 starts with Tessa Rajak’s paper (“Reflections on Jewish Resistance and the Discourse of Martyrdom in Josephus”), which gives a brief overview of Jewish ideology on martyrdom in the Greco-Roman period, especially in Josephus. This paper shows that (perhaps in contrast to popular views on Judaism) we can find a well-developed tradition of martyrdom in Jewish literature of the Greco-Roman period. Next, Martin Goodman devotes his paper (“Titus, Berenice and Agrippa: the Last Days of the Temple in Jerusalem”) to a small number of Jewish elites (Agrippa II, Berenice and Tiberius Julius Alexander) who were allied with the Romans during the Jewish-Roman conflict of 66–70 CE and speculates as to how these individuals, on the eve of the destruction of the Jerusalem temple, struggled with their loyalty to their Roman friends and the commitment to the Jewish people. In turn, Yuval Shahar (“Why a quarter? The *Siqariqon* ruling and Roman Law”) deals with the *Siqariqon* ruling (which allowed a Jew in Eretz Israel to buy a field which had earlier been confiscated from another Jew) and especially focuses on one aspect of this law – why a quarter had to be given to the original owner. According to Shahar, the origin of this ruling can be attributed to the influence of the Roman law of succession and its implementation aimed at reducing the difference between Jewish and Roman legal traditions in Roman Palestine. Another paper in Part 3, by Susan Weingarten, is devoted to the origins of *haroset* (one of the traditional Jewish foods served at Passover), and concludes that it probably took its origin from a Greco-Roman dipping sauces which served to counter bitterness and/or the ill effects of lettuce and endives. In turn, Jonathan Price (“The Necropolis at Jaffa and its Relation to Beth She‘arim”) presents and compares two contemporary Jewish necropoleis in the Roman Period – in Jaffa and Beth Shearim. One of the interesting things shown by Price is that in both locations there is a considerable number of epitaphs indicating the origin of the deceased outside the Land of Israel (in the case of Jaffa – esp. Egypt, in Beth-Shearim – various locations in the Near East). This data indeed gives “a lively impression of the mobility of Jews in the Near East under Roman rule” (p. 6). In his paper entitled “Captives and Redeeming Captives: the Law and the Community,” Youval Rotman contrasts Roman and Jewish-Christian approaches towards ransoming captives. While the Romans considered ransoming as shameful (at least after Cannae in 216 BCE), the Jews and Christians practiced it and considered as a moral and

religious obligation. The last paper of Part 3 (“The Jewish Community in Cologne from Roman Times to the Early Middle Age”), by Werner Eck, presents the evidence for a Jewish presence in the Roman period in Cologne, the German city with which Prof. Oppenheimer has strong academic connections.

Part 4 (“Issues in Modern Scholarship”) contains three papers. First, David Goodblatt surveys the limited evidence for a Jewish presence in the Parthian kingdom (“The Jews in the Parthian Empire: What We Don’t Know”). Next, Yoram Tsafrir (“The Finds in Cave 2001–2002 and Burial at Masada”) takes on a subject of long-debated controversy – the identification of human skeletons uncovered in Cave no. 2001–2002 (and another skeleton from Cave 2051) on the southern slope of Masada. In Tsafrir’s view, the remains belonged to Jews (and not to Roman soldiers) and the caves were used by Jewish fighters during the siege as a “temporary place of rest for the deceased” (p. 292). Lastly, in his paper entitled “Will the ‘Real’ Rabbis Please Stand Up: On the Repackaging of the Rabbinic Model in Modern Times,” Isaiah Gafni surveys scholarly views on the role and position of the rabbis in “the post-Temple Judaism” (p. 295) from the 19<sup>th</sup> c. until now, and shows not only how different these views were but how deeply they were affected by contemporary ideological tendencies.

Let me focus in more detail on Goodblatt’s paper, which particularly caught my eye. It tersely comments on limited evidence for the presence of Jews in the Parthian kingdom. The evidence is discussed in two groups – evidence for the presence of Jews in Babylonia (esp. Josephus on Zamaris, Asinaios and Anilaios; rabbinic sources on Hillel, Nehardea, Hananyah, the nephew of Rabbi Yehoshu’a, the Babylonian Exilarchate) and outside Babylonia (the Book of Tobit, Acts 2:9 and rabbinic references on Jews from Media; Josephus’ Ant. 18 and rabbinic references to Nisibis (or to Rabbi Judah, son of Batera), sources regarding Trajan’s campaign (Eusebius and Dio Cassius), the Syriac Doctrine of Addai, funerary inscriptions from the vicinity of Edessa, Josephus’ remarks on the dynasty of royal converts from Adiabene). In all these cases, Goodblatt notes gaps in the evidence, points to the lack of certainty as to the dating of Rabbinic traditions, raises doubts about identifications of toponyms and protagonists, and, generally speaking, shows how meager our evidence frequently is. In particular, Goodblatt stresses that the modern approach became more critical towards the historical value of Rabbinic sources and consequently limited our use of them in the reconstruction of Jewish history in the Parthian kingdom. All of this is, generally speaking, true, and not new to scholars – we do not know much about the Jews in the Parthian kingdom.

One may wonder, however, if Goodblatt’s approach (marked by his negative statement: what we *don’t* know) does not additionally enhance this negative picture of the state of research. Does it make a difference if one assumes a slight-



ly more positive approach? By contrast, let us assume that “even as our sources are meager and the potential significance of each source is thereby enhanced, it is incumbent upon the historian to carefully appraise the quality of each and every source”.<sup>1</sup> If we follow this kind of approach and reconsider Goodblatt’s discussion of the evidence for 1<sup>st</sup>-c. CE Adiabene, there indeed appears to be a difference.

Let us give a few examples. According to Goodblatt, all Josephus’ references to specific Adiabeneans concern only members of the royal family and consequently “we know nothing about a Jewish community there beyond the palace.”<sup>2</sup> However, there should no doubt that another Adiabenean, Chagiras, the son of Nabataios, who belonged to Simon’s radical group of insurgents in 66–70 CE Jerusalem, was not of royal background (Bell. 5.474). Likewise, in Goodblatt’s view, the reference in Bell. 1.6 “to ‘our *homophulon* beyond the Euphrates and the inhabitants of Adiabene’ can be interpreted to exclude the Adiabeniens from the *homophulon*.” Indeed, the sentence in Bell. 1.6 is grammatically difficult, especially the relationship between the Greek *καί* and *τέ*. Yet, if we understand the particle *καί* as conjunctive, and *τέ* as adjunctive, then “*καί* introduces something new under the same aspect yet as an external addition, whereas *τέ* marks it as having an inner connection with what precedes.”<sup>3</sup> Accordingly, we can translate Bell. 1.6 as follows: “the Parthians and (*καί*) the Babylonians with the Arabs (*τέ*), and (*καί*) our kinsmen beyond the Euphrates with (*τέ*) the Adiabeneans.”<sup>4</sup> In this light, the Adiabeneans appear to be a distinctive Jewish group among all other Jews east of the Euphrates. What’s more, this particular understanding is further corroborated by Bell. 2.388 (not quoted by Goodblatt) where Josephus explicitly speaks (through the mouth of King Agrippa II) about “your kinsmen from Adiabene” (τοὺς ἐκ τῆς Ἀδιαβηνῆς ὁμοφύλους).

Lastly, let us turn our attention to Ant. 20.17–96, where we read that Helena converted in Adiabene (Ant. 20.35), and that she enjoyed the practice of Jewish customs so much that it inspired Izates to undergo circumcision (Ant. 20.38). How could “a certain Jew” have access to Helena (being the Queen of Adia-

<sup>1</sup> G. Herman, ‘The Jews of Parthian Babylonia’ in P. Wick, M. Zehnder (Hrsg.): *The Parthian Empire and its Religions. Studies in the Dynamics of Religious Diversity. Das Partherreich und seine Religionen*. Studien zu Dynamiken religiöser Pluralität (= Pietas 5). Gutenberg: Computus 2012, 141.

<sup>2</sup> Let me add, to avoid misconstruing the author’s thoughts, that in footnote 26 (in referring to Josephus’ *De Bello Judaico*) Goodblatt says, “Admittedly, 5, 474 may be an exception.”

<sup>3</sup> J.H. Thayer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament Being Grimm’s Wilke’s Clavis Novi Testamenti: Numerically Coded to Strong’s Exhaustive Concordance*, Grand Rapids, MI, 1979, 616.

<sup>4</sup> M. Marciak, *Izates and Helena of Adiabene. A Study on Literary Traditions and History*, Proefschrift Universiteit Leiden, Leiden 2012, 211.

bene!) if he had been a complete stranger in Adiabene and Jewish customs had previously been unknown in Adiabene? How could Helena practice and enjoy Jewish customs without any Jewish environment around her in Adiabene? It seems first that the above-mentioned sources indirectly show that there must have been a Jewish presence in Adiabene prior to the conversion of its royal house. Secondly, although we can precisely estimate neither its size nor character, it could not have been completely insignificant, since its members had access to members of the royal dynasty.<sup>5</sup> Thus, although our evidence on the Jews in the Parthian kingdom is scant, as Goodblatt rightly remarks, we can learn much more from it if only we have a more positive attitude.

To sum up, this book is certainly an interesting publication worthy of recommendation to all interested in the problem of Jewish identity (especially in the Roman period).

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<sup>5</sup> M. Marciak, *Izates and Helena of Adiabene*, 203.



Robert S. Wójcikowski

NEILSON C. DEBEVOISE, *POLITICHESKAĪIA ISTORIĪA  
PARFII [A POLITICAL HISTORY OF PARTHIA],  
TRANSLATION, EDITORSHIP  
AND A BIBLIOGRAPHICAL SUPPLEMENT  
BY V.P. NIKONOROV, SANKT-PETERSBURG:  
ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY. FACULTY OF  
PHILOLOGY AND ARTS (HISTORICAL LIBRARY), 2008.*

N.C. Debevoise's *A Political History of Parthia*, first published in 1938, is still perceived as one of the most significant books on the Parthians. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century it was the first monograph devoted to Arsacid Iran, following such publications as: G. Rawlinson: *The Sixth Great Oriental Monarchy: or the Geography, History, and Antiquities of Parthia, collected and illustrated from Ancient and Modern sources*, London 1873 and A. von Gutschmid, *Geschichte Irans und seiner Nachbarländer von Alexander dem Grossen bis zum Untergang der Arsaciden*, Tübingen 1888. At present, the book by Debevoise, reprinted in 1970, remains a fundamental treatment of the Parthians next to such studies as A.D.H. Bivar, 'The Political History of Iran under the Arsacids' in E. Yarshater (ed.), *Cambridge History of Iran*, 3.1, Cambridge 1983, 21–99; M.A.R. Colledge, *Parthians*, London 1967; R. Ghirshman, *Iran, Parthians and Sassanians*, Paris 1962; J. Wolski, *L'Empire des Arsacides (Acta Iranica 32)*, Lovanii 1993.

The author uses a vast range of sources, encompassing historical data, archaeological research as well as epigraphic and numismatic studies. This was a new approach in historical research, which at the time drew notably from literary evidence. Debevoise's new approach introduced a fresh perspective on the history and culture of Parthian Iran and opened a new chapter in the Iranian studies. The interdisciplinary attitude of Debevoise was quickly noticed and appreciated.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> See the review by W.W. Tarn, 'A Political History of Parthia by N. C. Debevoise' *JRS* 30, 1940, 110–112.

First chapter is devoted to the beginnings of Parthian history, perceived as a controversial issue till nowadays. Chronological and genealogical schemata presented by American scholar – including the list of the first Parthian kings – did not survive the test of time while confronted with modern research. New archeological excavations in Iran and Central Asia after the WWII allowed many previous hypothesis to be verified. New archaeological data proved the existence of Arsaces I, the founder of Arsacid Parthia, as was explored by J. Wolski, Polish scholar and the author of the first major study devoted to this ruler.<sup>2</sup>

The following two chapters of Debevoise's study focus on the geopolitical location of the Parthian kingdom and its dynamic relations with neighbours. The Arsacid monarchy was founded on Seleucid territories as a result of military conquest. Its borders stretched from the Seleucid state in the west to the confines of Bactria. Due to Parthian flexibility and diplomatic skills, the new Arsacid kingdom managed to survive several attempts of Seleucids retaking their lost provinces. The Parthian kingdom, robustly growing in the 2nd century BC under Mithradates I and II, expanded its borders and become a powerful empire, that was able to stop the Roman conquests in Asia in the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC.

The Parthian empire is perceived by antique sources – concentrating on wars between the Parthians and Seleucids and later with Rome – as well by Eurocentric western scholars as a semi-Hellenized, barbarian rival of the Roman Empire. Such a perspective did not allow them to fully recognise geopolitical conditions in which the Parthian kingdom developed. Debevoise's study was the first to notice the importance of Central Asian peoples in Arsacid politics.

Not only did Parthians find assistance within Central Asian steppes but they had to deal with their dangers as well. It was necessary to cope with nomadic tribes arriving in waves in those areas. Graeco-Bactria was the victim of such attack which led to its fall around 130 BC. Two Arsacid monarchs Phraates II and Artabanos I lost their lives in combat with the nomads.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>2</sup> J. Wolski, 'Arsaces I, założyciel państwa partyjskiego' ['Arsaces I, the founder of the Parthian state'] *Eos* 38, 1937, 492–513; *Eos* 39, 1938, 244–266 (= 'Arsace Ier, fondateur de l'État parthe' in *Commémoration Cyrus. Actes du congrès de Shiraz 1971 et autres études. Hommage universel* (Acta Iranica 3), Téhéran 1974, 159–199.

<sup>3</sup> More about Parthian Iran and Central Asia relations: M.J. Olbrycht, 'Die Kultur der Steppegebiete und die Beziehungen zwischen Nomaden und der sesshaften Bevölkerung (Der Arsacidische Iran und Nomadenvölker)' in J. Wischöfer (ed.) *Das Partherreich und seine Zeugnisse, Beiträge des Internationalen Colloquiums*, Eutin (27–30. Juni 1996) (Historia. Einzelschriften. Heft 122) Stuttgart 1998, 11–43; idem, *Parthia et ulteriores gentes. Die politischen Beziehungen zwischen dem arsakidischen Iran und den Nomaden der eurasischen Steppen*, München 1998; (2000): idem, 'Central Asia and the Arsacid Kingdom' in I.E. Berezkin (ed.): *Vzaimodistvie kultur i tsivilizatsii. V chest jubileia V. M. Massona*, St. Petersburg 2000, 177–193; idem, 'Parthia and Nomads of Central Asia. Elements of Steppe Origin in the Social and Military Developments of

Most part of the book concentrates on the Roman-Arsakid relations. Characteristic titles of the following chapters (*Antony and Armenia*, *Corbulo's campaign*, or *Trajan in Armenia and Mesopotamia*) suggest unequivocally that the author describes the centuries-long struggle between both powers in the Near East from the Roman perspective. As a result, while narrating Roman defeat in Carrhae in 53 BC, the author fails to mention the significance of this event for the Parthian internal affairs.<sup>4</sup> Hence, information about sentencing to death victorious general from the Sūren family, undoubtedly a politically risky step, is not placed in the book. One may not read about effects of the general's execution as well.

The chapter about Corbulo's campaign is also written from the Roman point of view. The struggle for Armenia ended in a military and political triumph of the Parthians over the Romans and allowed them to establish their rule over the kingdom. However, the author does not decidedly evaluate the Roman defeat. He concentrates more on the account of Parthian diplomatic efforts and the description of the Tiridates's coronation by Nero. He fails to notice that Roman invasion came to a halt in AD 117 after its failure in the siege of Hatra and seems to favour the opinion that Roman triumphs came to an end only after Traian's death. Actually, fast ceasing of military actions by next emperor Hadrian points to something entirely different: the war exhausted Rome and Hadrian was aware of an upcoming failure.

The last chapter is devoted to the fall of the Arsakids in Iran. The author overestimates the significance of the Caracalla's war against Parthia, launched in 217 and finished with a great Parthian victory over Rome at Nisibis (218). This victorious battle was the proof of Arsakid power. Debevoise leaves only short remarks concerning Arsakid overthrown in Iran – he mentions the war between Artabanos IV (213–224), or as the author calls him Artabanos V, and Ardashīr (224–241). Up to present times the exact circumstances of Sasanians' successful revolt and overthrowing Parthians have been difficult to reconstruct due to the scarcity of historical sources. Nowadays scholars assume that Ardashīr was able to gain the throne and maintain the power thanks to the support he received from the Iranian aristocracy, including powerful Parthian houses.

Examples given above concentrate on Debevoise's research, parts of which however expired due to the development of recent historical studies. Nonetheless, the American author cannot be denied erudition and skills in using diverse sources. Many of opinions presented in the book are still valid nowadays. Therefore Debevoise's work has remained the fundamental treatment of Parthian history.

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Arsacid Iran' in I. Schneider (ed.), *Mitteilungen des SFB "Differenz und Integration" 5: Militär und Staatlichkeit*, Halle/Saale 2003, 69–109.

<sup>4</sup> See now Giusto Traina, *La resa di Roma. Battaglia a Carre, 9 giugno 53 a.C.*, Rome – Bari 2010; French edition: *Carrhes, 9 juin 53 av. J.-C.*, avec une préface de Giovanni Brizzi, Les Belles Lettres, Paris 2011.

The exceptionally meticulous Russian edition of Debevoise's work, published by Fakultet filologii i iskusstv Sankt-Petersburskogo gasudarstvennogo Universiteta in 'Historical Library Series' requires a separate description. V.P. Nikonorov, an outstanding Russian historian and archaeologist, specializing in Iran and Central Asia history, has been the book's Russian translator. The Russian edition is opened by an introduction provided by M.J. Olbrycht and V.P. Nikonorov, showing the meaning of the book for the history of research into Arsakid Iran. It is worth noticing that the Russian edition was partly supported by a grant from Polish Ministry of Science managed by M.J. Olbrycht. Both scholars point out Debevoise's scientific attitude, who was unable to fully break up with "western" view of the history, dominant at the time in historical science. Apart from observations concerning Debevoise's work, the introduction also focuses on his research and provides his fascinating biography prepared by M.J. Olbrycht, V.P. Nikonorov and L.V. Shadrichev. Debevoise resigned from his scholarly career during the WWII and his biography until his death in 1992 is known only on random basis.

To the new edition Nikonorov added many illustrations. Next to maps and black and white photographs, one must point out numerous colourful pictures, made available to the publication by K.M. Lizunov, M.J. Olbrycht, and R.G. Muradov. Pictorial material allows to familiarize with the look of specific monuments, what seems to be particularly important in a work largely based on archaeological sources.

The true value and uniqueness of the book under review, however, lies in its impressive, huge bibliography, compiled by V.P. Nikonorov. All the latest publications about history, culture and social and economic issues of Parthia and the neighbouring countries are mentioned. As a result the volume of the bibliography is bigger than the book itself (sic!), totaling at 516 pages. The bibliography is divided into several sections. Its first part encompasses publications about Iranian borderland: Transcaucasia, Western Mesopotamia and Adiabene. It needs to be emphasized that the notion of Iranian borderland is understood very broadly: not only as territories close to Iran, but such far destinations as northwest China or area in the Don River basin as well. All mentioned places were however connected by cultural and economical ties to Iran.

The Russian edition of the book by Debevoise constitutes due to Nikonorov's efforts one of the most important publications devoted to the Arsakids of the recent decades. The Debevoise's treatment has thus far endured the test of time and remains one of the leading handbooks on Parthian history, and I have no doubt that it will continue to do so for many years to come. The new bibliography compiled by Nikonorov is now an excellent device in researching Parthian and Hellenistic history.



Marek Jan Olbrycht

**IU. A. VINOGRADOV, V.A. GORONCHAROVSKII,  
VOENNAĬA ISTORIĬA I VOENNOĬE DELO BOSPORA  
KIMMERIĬSKOGO (VI V. DO N.E. – SEREDINA III V. N.E.)  
[MILITARY HISTORY AND WARFARE  
OF THE CIMMERIAN BOSPOROS (6TH CENTURY BC –  
MID-3<sup>RD</sup> CENTURY AD)], ST. PETERSBURG:  
ST. PETERSBURG STATE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF  
PHILOLOGY AND ARTS, NESTOR-HISTORY, 2009  
(RUSSIAN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES. INSTITUTE OF THE  
HISTORY OF MATERIAL CULTURE, PROCEEDINGS,  
VOL. XXV; SERIES HISTORIA MILITARIS)**

The Bosporan kingdom comprised of the territories located in eastern Crimea (now Ukraine) and the Taman Peninsula (Russia), both regions divided (or connected) by the Strait of Kerch (the Cimmerian Bosporos). Both authors, Iu.A. Vinogradov (not to be confused with the epigraphist Iu.G. Vinogradov) and V.A. Goroncharovskii have themselves been active in research in this region for several decades. Both have been engaged in research abroad, Vinogradov in Yemen (see his contribution in this volume), and Goroncharovskii in Cyprus. In view of the fact that the Bosporos lay along the border with territories inhabited by steppe-land nomads, an account of the region's military arts calls for a comprehensive discussion of the military affairs of the steppe peoples (chiefly Scythian and Sarmatian tribes).

The book under review consist of two parts. Part I is by Vinogradov and relates to the period of Greek colonisation towards the close of the reign of Mithradates VI Eupator (ca. 600–63 BC). Goroncharovskii is the author of Part II, which covers the period from Pharnakes to the Gothic invasions (63 BC – ca. AD 280), i.e. the period of Roman domination. The key components contributing to

the development of military affairs in the Bosporan kingdom were the Greek element and – as of the first century BC – the Roman influence. Moreover, Scythian and Sarmatian factors are to be mentioned. Due to their geographical location the cities along the Bosporos were prone to attacks by steppe peoples and the settled neighbours including Maiotians and Sindoi.

Vinogradov's part of the book is composed of five chapters. His principal concern is with the political and military history, but he gives only fragmented and cursory attention to weaponry. In Chapter 1 he sets out to describe the Bosporos in the period of Greek colonisation. However, its actual content does not fully comply with this heading, and presents a subchapter on Scythian warfare (pp. 17ff.), which deserves a separate chapter of its own. The next subchapter is headed "Greeks in the Bosporos: first steps" (pp. 26ff.) and deals with several issues relating to the Greek art of war. In Chapter 2, "The Bosporos in the fight against Scythian aggression" (pp. 46ff.) Vinogradov gives an account of the period from ca. 500 to 438 BC. Contrary to what we might expect on the basis of the chapter's title, one of the subchapters is devoted to the warfare of the Maiotians and Sindoi, who were not Scythian peoples. Chapter 3 describes the Bosporos under the early Spartokids (pp. 71ff.), with a separate section on the Spartokid army alongside an account of the political history. Chapter 4 discusses the Bosporos between the Scythians and Sarmatians (pp. 100ff.). This is the phase when the Celts appear in the area of the Black Sea; Vinogradov mentions them in the text, but no reference is made to Celts in the heading of either the chapter or its sections. Chapter 5 (pp. 129ff.) presents the Bosporos under Mithradates VI Eupator. This is the least substantial part: the written sources have been given insufficient coverage although for this period they are exceptionally abundant; and the archaeological material has been handled more as an illustration of the political history rather than as the foundation for a discussion of the weaponry.

Part II (pp. 149ff.), on the period of Roman domination, makes copious reference to the archaeological materials and has a well-defined structure. Goroncharovskii discusses the organisation of the army and its system of recruitment. He treats the cavalry and infantry separately. He also analyses the arms and armor used. The next chapter discusses the campaigns conducted by the Bosporan army (pp. 207ff.). One of its sections addresses the subject of battle scenes in the Bosporan painting. The next chapter describes the kingdom's system of defence. Goroncharovskii gives prominence to the part played by the fortress at Iluraton, where he spent many years on research. The two following chapters relate the history of the wars from Pharnakes to the close of the third century (pp. 242–288). The map on p. 285 contains some errors, including the false location of Trapezus.



The book contains over 130 illustrations, but many of them are of poor quality and need to be improved. The diagrams and maps are often not very clear, either. Recently some studies have been published which supplement the book under review and should be taken into consideration. These are: M. Treister, 'Weaponry in the Bosporos in the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> c. AD', in *Drevnosti Bospora* 14, Moscow 2010, 484-561; A.S. Simonenko, *Rimskii import u sarmatov Severnogo Prichernomor'ia*, Sankt-Petersburg 2011; Idem, *Sarmatskie vsadniki Severnogo Prichernomor'ia*, Sankt-Petersburg 2010; A.V. Simonenko / I. I. Marčenko / N. Ju. Limberis, *Römische Importe in sarmatischen und maiotischen Gräbern zwischen Unterer Donau und Kuban*, Mainz 2008.

To sum up, the book under review is an essential overview of Bosporan warfare and military history. Some chapters call for amendment, a different structure and supplementation to give a more coherent account of the military history and weapons. By and large, however, the book is a very successful combination of written evidence and archaeological data, which culminate in a profound research.





Sławomir Jędraszek

**BARRY KEMP, *THE CITY OF AKHENATEN  
AND NEFERTITI: AMARNA AND ITS PEOPLE*, LONDON:  
THAMES & HUDSON LTD., 2012  
(320PP. ISBN 978-0-500-05173-3)**

This book will without doubt be added to the bibliography of canonic items addressed to all who are interested in the history and archaeology of ancient Egypt, particularly, however, in the New Kingdom. Barry Kemp CBE, Emeritus Professor of Egyptology at Cambridge University has been conducting research and excavations at Amarna since 1977. Among his many monographs are: *A Survey of the Ancient City of El-'Amarna* (with S. Garfi), the multi-volume *Amarna Reports*, *The Ancient Textile Industry at Amarna* (together with G. Vogel-sang-Eastwood) and *The Main Chapel at the Amarna Workmen's Village and its Wall Paintings* (with F. Weatherhead), as well as the standard introduction, *Ancient Egypt: Anatomy of a Civilization*, as well as *100 Hieroglyphs*, *Think Like an Egyptian* and *The Egyptian Book of the Dead*.

The work is addressed equally to specialists and to all who are interested in the history and archaeology of the Amarna period. It displays high standards of publication, containing 287 illustrations in all, 53 of which are in colour. *The book also* deserves high praise because of its broad scope - it is not only about the site of Tell el Amarna itself, but also about the whole government system and background of the 'heretical' King Akhenaten and his intriguing consort Nefertiti.

The short-lived capital of ancient Egypt was totally abandoned after the death of Akhenaten (who died in the seventeenth year of his reign and was at first buried in a royal tomb at Amarna), and this is why the site lends itself exceptionally well to the study of contemporary court life, the lives of its prominent citizens (such as the high priest Panehsy and the vezir Nakht/Nakhtpaaten, the general Ramosse or Paatenemheb and the sculptor Thutmose whose painted

bust of Nefertiti was found on 6 December 1912 at Amarna by the *Deutsche Orient-Gesellschaft* expedition led by the German archaeologist Ludwig Borchard, and even the daily lives of the people building the tombs for the elite. Special attention in this book is given by Kemp to the organization of the city planning (especially concerning the palace and the city areas). Needless to say, because both areas have been excavated, we have now an exceptional opportunity to learn about the contemporary lives of the townspeople of Akhetaten.

The new capital of king Akhenaten was completely abandoned perhaps three or four years after his death, and its ruins have in general lain undisturbed for more than 3,200 years. Paradoxically, therefore, thanks to these circumstances, today we are given an exceptional overview of the life and organization of one of the greatest capital cities of the ancient world, which functioned for only sixteen or seventeen years all told. Professor Barry Kemp, who has been directing excavations at Amarna for more than thirty years, is currently without doubt one of the leading experts on the history and archaeology of the Amarna period.

The successive works of Kemp thus far constitute a series of detailed and competent presentations of a whole host of questions concerning the functioning of the city itself in the economic, social and religious spheres. They provide the reader with unusually interesting information concerning not only the person of Akhenaten himself, but also the contemporary elite, and in addition to that, the author outlines the lives of the common people living in the capital city of those days.

The book starts with a *Prologue, Acknowledgments, and Explanatory Notes*, in which, among other things, the numeration system used for the buildings at Amarna and all the abbreviations used in the classification of the archaeological material are explained. This part of the book also contains useful information concerning the types of stone and metal which occurred in common use at el-Amarna. In the part of the book that bears the title *The Cast of Characters*, short biographical notes are presented on Amenhotep III, Queen Tiye, Akhenaten; Nefertiti; Meryetaten and 'Her Sisters', Kiya (a secondary wife of Akhenaten), and also Ankhkheperure (with the second cartouche name, or *nomen*, Nefernefruatn or Smenkhkare); Tutenkhamun, Ay, and Horemheb.

In the Introduction: *The City of The Horizon* (pp. 17-22), Kemp sets the scene (p. 17): *Some thirty-three centuries ago, perhaps 20,000 Egyptians, or maybe twice that number, followed their king to what was then an empty stretch of desert beside the Nile and built a city. To their king, Akhenaten, the land was part of a sacred territory called 'The Horizon of the Sun's Disc (or Akhetaten). We know it as Tell el-Amarna (or more simply El-Amarna or Amarna). Within twenty years, following his death and that of at least one short-lived successor, they were never to return. Gangs of workmen systematically dismantled the stone temples and transported the blocks away for re-use elsewhere.* The main body of

the book is organized into nine chapters (Chapter One. *Building a Vision*: pp. 23-46; Chapter Two. *Akhenaten's Resources*: pp. 47-78; Chapter Three. *The City of The Sun-God*: pp. 79-122; Chapter Four. *The Apartments of Pharaoh*: pp. 123-154; Chapter Five. *City of People*: pp. 155-196; Chapter Six. *The Quality of Life*: pp. 197-230; Chapter Seven. *Spiritual Life at Amarna*: pp. 231-264; Chapter Eight. *What Kind of City?*: pp. 265-300; Chapter Nine. *An End and a Beginning*: pp. 301-303).

The book concludes with the following addenda: *Visiting Amarna*; *Chronology*; *Abbreviations* (of works cited more than once in the notes and captions); *Notes*; *Further Reading*, and also a list of the sources used for the illustrations and an Index.

The work under review engages the reader in a wide scope of problems ranging from clothing (not only everyday and functional dress, but also elite forms of attire) to types of palace apartments or houses. Special attention is given by Kemp to the house of the chariot officer Ranefer (pp. 182-183, ills. 5.20, 5.21).<sup>1</sup> Daily life, centered around 'The Stone Village' (158, 190, ills. 5.4; 5.32) or 'The Workmen's Village' is also briefly sketched (pp. 190-194, ill. 5.30). Furthermore, the study contains information concerning the sacred space of Akhenaten, especially focusing on 'The Great Aten Temple' (pp. 87-117), 'The Small Aten Temple' (pp. 79-80, 86-87), the spiritual life of the city (see Chapter Seven pp. 231-264)<sup>2</sup>, and the cemetery of the citizens ('South Tomb Cemetery').

In Chapter Four: *The Apartments of the Pharaoh* (pp. 123-154) the author answers such questions as: what was the palace and what function did it fulfill? (pp. 124-125), relying on the Hellenistic instances to furnish comparative material, above all on that remarkable palace builder, King Herod in Palestine (p. 124).

Chapter Six, *The Quality of Life* (pp. 197-230) contains information on the use of bronze: *Excavation at Amarna has produced sufficient bronze articles to show the range of things that were made in this material (e.g. 3.19-321), but it will never be possible to know if one kind was more common than another, or if certain utensils were more likely to occur in kitchens or bakeries or temples than others* (p. 197). The author then presents problems associated with the contemporary diet (pp. 218-221) and dress (see: *Looking your Best*, p. 226), not avoiding questions associated with mortality and disease effecting the contemporary inhabitants of Amarna, including child hypoplasia: Kemp cites the evidence derived from the anthropolog-

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<sup>1</sup> See also B.J. Kemp, A. Stevens, *Busy Lives at Amarna: Excavations in the Main City (Grid 12 and House of Ranefer, N49.18) Vol. I: The Excavations, Architecture and Environmental Remains*, (Cambridge 2010); B. Kemp, A. Stevens, *Busy Lives at Amarna, Excavations in the House of Ranefer, N49.18), Vol. II: The Object*, Cambridge 2010.

<sup>2</sup> See also J. van Dijk, 'Tombs and Funerary Beliefs at Amarna' in I. Shaw (ed.), *The Oxford History of Ancient Egypt*, Oxford 2003, 276-278.

ical examination of skeletal material (see: 'A Dark Side', pp. 227-229): *In a sample of 232 individuals whose ages have been ascertained, 70 per cent had died before reaching the age of 35 [6.33]. Many people thus had a much shorter lifespan in which to accumulate possessions and experience than is common today, and many of the scribes, guards, women of the house and people engaged in manufacture will have been in their teens* (p. 228).

Chapter Eight. *What Kind of City?* (pp. 265-300) contains an interesting discussion concerning the terminology which should be applied to a town as a politico-social organism. In this part of the book the author subjects to critical examination a whole series of elements constituting the formula of a 'town' and analyses the architectural space in terms of use, whether religious or social.<sup>3</sup> In this section Kemp draws on the work of the American sociologist Gideon Sjober.<sup>4</sup> In the same chapter Kemp also raises the problem of the presence of foreigners in Akhetaton, and also supplies an answer to the question of who might have been found living in the particular households built in the city (pp. 268-271). This chapter offers data relevant to calculating the total number of inhabitants of the city, the diversity of its accommodation complexes, also making mention of its workshops, including those producing pottery and faience (p. 281, see also pp. 283- 292). The production as well as the economy of the city of Akhetaton are treated with an unusual breadth of detail.<sup>5</sup>

Thanks to the multi-faceted approach to the presentation of the whole city (whose degree of urban planning had not been great, and in principle limited to the royal constructions situated along the straight avenue, the so-called Royal Road, linking its northern periphery (northern city) with the town centre), the reader receives an accurate and coherent overview of the everyday life of this short-lived capital city and cult-centre of the sun-god Aten. The picture of Amarna sketched out by Professor Kemp is realistic and convincing, although in the whole history of Pharaonic Egypt the figure of the very ruler Amenhotep IV remains provocative and enshrouded in mystery, even down to the present day generating a huge amount of controversy, much of it overstated, especially with reference to the radical religious changes introduced by the king. The book under review contains numerous illustrations placed throughout the whole monograph including models, visualisations and reconstructions (for example: The Royal Tomb (XLIII); Part of the Central City (3.1); Part of the city of Amarna, showing

<sup>3</sup> See also M. Bietak, E. Czerny, I. Forstner-Müller (eds.), *Cities and Urbanism in Ancient Egypt, Papers from a Workshop in November 2006 at the Austrian Academy of Science*, Wien 2010.

<sup>4</sup> G. Sjober, *The Preindustrial City, Past and Present*, Glencoe, IL, New York, London 1960.

<sup>5</sup> See A.J. Shortland, *Vitreous Materials at Amarna: The Production of Glass and Faience in 18th Dynasty Egypt*, Oxford 2000; B.J. Kemp, G. Vogelsang-Eastwood, *The Ancient Textile Industry at Amarna*, London 2001.

the houses within the Main City (5.23); Model of the main part of the “House of Aten” (XXXVI); The North Palace (XXXVIII); The Workmen’s Village (XLII); The Grid 12 houses 5.17; reconstruction of the wall painting in the King’s House XX; reconstruction of the wall painting from the North Harem XXIV; etc. ) as well as plans of the main buildings of the city, i.e. the temples, the palaces or the office buildings of the Central City (4.1) at Amarna, or on its peripheries. Thus the reader is provided with the means to imagine the pride of el-Amarna at the times of its fame as the capital city of Akhenaten.

Since Kemp concentrates above all on the numerous aspects concerned with the functioning of the capital of Akhenaten, the reader expecting a ‘lecture’ on the history and the government of the king, or a deep discussion concerning his reforms, will not find a great amount of information in this volume. This having been said, it is nevertheless necessary to note that the author does not avoid many questions concerned with either politics or religion, wisely weaving them into the main themes with which he is currently engaged. This allows him to engage in the question of the religious ‘revolution’, and, thanks to the presentation of a broad spectrum of the relevant source material, to overturn some of the myths bound up with this issue. The dominant view is that Akhenaten was a monotheist, generally not tolerating gods other than Aton (and particularly other solar deities such as Re). Kemp demonstrates that old established gods, especially those with an apotropaic character associated with the household, such as Bes or Taweret, but also Hathor (pp. 208, 224, 236, 239-244, ills. 7.11-7.15) were still worshipped at Amarna.<sup>6</sup> Kemp even mentions an object bearing a prayer to Amun-Re (p. 236).

The latest work of Kemp is worth recommending to all who take an interest in the Amarna Period or everyday life in ancient times, whether they be historians or archaeologists. It is a valuable study, encompassing a wide range of source material, which the author takes easily, and eruditely, in his stride. There remain a host of questions not asked or answered. Kemp, however, in an effective way criticizes many common stereotypes concerning the king and his times and his revolution: *Since his rediscovery in the nineteenth century, Akhenaten has intrigued people, at the very least because he was a rebel on a grand scale. Rebels are interesting. What to make of his vision, as viewed from a modern standpoint, is more complicated. Nowadays, we are unable to view what Akhenaten did free from the idea – which developed long afterwards – that promotion of a particular version of god or the giving of spiritual guidance has to have the familiar shape of a religion, perhaps one that we can call Atenism. So, following a variety*

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<sup>6</sup> See also A. Stevens, *Private Religion at Amarna. The material evidence*, BAR International Series 1587, Oxford 2006; K. Bosse-Griffiths, 'A Beset Amulet from the Amarna Period', *JEA* 63, 1977, 98-106.

*of modern ideas, he has been recruited to monotheism, to cults of the forces of nature or to more mystic interpretations of what governs the universe, even to notions of Aryan superiority. Although he was a teacher, I do not see [B.K.] that it was Akhenaten's intention to create a self-conscious community of followers or believers (...) A modern Atenism has to be an invention. But so what? The validity of religious experience is not to be overturned by arguments from history (pp. 302-303).*

*The City of Akhenaten and Nefertiti: Amarna and Its People* will certainly become yet another classic in the already rich list of titles written by this author. Through his latest book Barry Kemp gives his audience a good chance to see Amarna come alive.





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## ABBREVIATIONS

The abbreviations of periodicals adhere here to *L'Année Philologique*. In addition, the following abbreviations are used:

AAE	Arabian Archaeology and Epigraphy
AAntASH	<i>Acta Antiqua Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> .
AArchASH	<i>Acta Archaeologica Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> .
ACSS	<i>Ancient civilizations from Scythia to Siberia</i> .
AE	<i>L'année épigraphique</i> .
AEAE	<i>Arkheologiia, etnografiia i anthropologiia Evrazii</i> , Novosibirsk.
AMA	<i>Antichnyi mir i archeologiia</i> , Saratov.
AMI	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran</i> .
AMIT	<i>Archäologische Mitteilungen aus Iran und Turan</i> .
ANRW	H. Temporini, W. Haase (eds.), <i>Aufstieg und Niedergang der Römischen Welt</i> (Berlin 1970-).
AOASH	<i>Acta Orientalia Academiae Scientiarum Hungaricae</i> .
ASGE	<i>Arkheologicheskii sbornik gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha</i> .
AVES	<i>Arkheologiia Vostochno-Evropēiskoī stepi</i> , Saratov.
BAI	<i>Bulletin of the Asia Institute. New Series</i> .
BARIS	<i>British Archaeological Reports. International Series</i> .
BE	<i>Bol'shaia Entsiklopediia v 62 tomakh</i> , Moskva.
BÉFEO	<i>Bulletin de l'École française d'Extrême-Orient</i> .
BF	<i>Bosporskiī fenomen: Naselenie, iazyki, kontakty: Materialy mezhdunarodnoi naučhnoi konferenzii (Sankt Petersburg, 22–25 nojabrīa 2011)</i> , Sankt-Peterburg.
BSOAS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental and African Studies</i> .
BSOS	<i>Bulletin of the School of Oriental Studies</i> .
CAH	<i>The Cambridge Ancient History</i> .
CAJ	<i>Central Asiatic Journal</i> .
CHI	<i>The Cambridge History of Iran</i> .
CIG	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Graecarum</i> .
CIL	<i>Corpus Inscriptionum Latinarum</i> .
CIQ	<i>Classical Quarterly</i> .
CIRev	<i>Classical Review</i> .
CRAI	<i>Comptes rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-Lettres</i> .

- CSCO *Corpus scriptorium Christianorum Orientalium.*
- CSEL *Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum Latinorum.*
- CW *Classical World.*
- DluU G.A. Pugachenkova, E.V. Rtveladze, K. Kato (eds.), *Drevnosti Iuzhnogo Uzbekistana* (Tashkent 1991).
- DNP *Der neue Pauly. Enzyklopädie der Antike*, H. Cancik und H. Schneider (Hrsg.), (Stuttgart, Weimar).
- EncIr *Encyclopaedia Iranica.*
- ESA *Eurasia Septentrionalis Antiqua.*
- EV *Epigrafika Vostoka.*
- EW *East and West. New Series.*
- FAKh *Fouilles d'Ar Khanoum.*
- FGrH *Die Fragmente der griechischen Historiker*, ed. F. Jacoby.
- FHG *Fragmenta Historicorum Graecorum.* Collegit, disposuit, notis et prolegomenis illustravit C. Müllerus. Vol. I-V (Parisii 1868-1884).
- HdA *Handbuch der Altertumswissenschaft.*
- HGM *Historici Graeci Minores.* Ed. L. Dindorfius, vol. I-II (Lipsiae 1870-1871).
- ICS *Illinois Classical Studies.*
- IG *Inscriptiones graecae* (Berlin, 1913-).
- IIMK Institut istorii material'noĭ kul'tury.
- IMKU *Istorīa material'noĭ kul'tury Uzbekistana.*
- JA *Journal Asiatique.*
- JRAS *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland.*
- KIDU K.A. Abdullaev, G.V. Shishkina, E.V. Rtveladze (eds.), *Kul'tura i iskusstvo drevnego Uzbekistana. Katalog vystavki. Kniga 1* (Moskva 1991).
- KSIA *Kratkie soobsheniia Instituta archeologii AN SSSR.*
- KSIMK *Kratkie soobsheniia Instituta istorii material'noĭ kul'tury ANSSSR.*
- LexMA *Lexikon des Mittelalters.*
- LGRM *Ausführliches Lexikon der griechischen und römischen Mythologie*, W.H. Roscher (Hrsg.), Leipzig.
- LIMC *Lexicon iconographicum mythologiae classicae* (Zürich – München -Düsseldorf 1981-1999).
- LSJ *A Greek-English Lexicon*, H.G. Liddell/R. Scott/H.S. Jones/R. McKenzie, rev. and augm. throughout (Oxford - New York 1996).
- MDAFA *Mémoires de la délégation archéologique française en Afghanistan.*
- MGHAA *Monumenta Germaniae historica. Auctores antiquissimi.*
- MIA *Materialy i issledovaniia po archeologii SSSR.*
- MMAI *Mémoires de la Mission Archéologique en Iran.*
- MTE *Materialy Tokharistanskoĭ ekspeditsii.*
- NAV *Nizhnevolzhskĭ arkheologicheskĭ vestnik.*
- NC *Numismatic Chronicle. New Series.*
- NizPR *Nauka iz pervykh ruk* (Novosibirsk).
- NTsA *Numizmatika Tsentral'noĭ Azii.*
- NAV *Nizhnevolzhskĭ arkheologicheskĭ vestnik.*
- ONU *Obshchestvennye nauki v Uzbekistane.*
- PAV *Sankt-Peterburgskĭ arkheologicheskĭ vestnik.*
- PBA *Proceedings of the British Academy.*
- PG *Patrologiae cursus completus: Patrologia Graeca.* Accurante J.-P. Migne.

<i>PIFK</i>	<i>Problemy istorii, filologii i kul'tury</i> (Magnitogorsk).
<i>PIR</i> <sup>2</sup>	E. Groag, A. Stein et al., <i>Prosopographia Imperii Romani saec. I.II.III. Editio altera</i> (Berlin 1933).
<i>PL</i>	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: Patrologia Latina</i> . Accurante J.-P. Migne.
<i>PSAS</i>	<i>Proceedings of the Seminar for Arab Studies</i> .
<i>PZ</i>	<i>Prehistorische Zeitschrift</i> .
<i>RA</i>	<i>Rossiiskaia arkheologiia</i> .
<i>RAN</i>	<i>Rossiiskaia akademiia nauk</i> .
<i>RE</i>	<i>Realencyclopädie der classischen Altertumswissenschaft</i> .
<i>REArm</i>	<i>Revue des Études Arméniennes, Nouvelle Série</i> .
<i>RÉG</i>	<i>Revue des Études Grecques</i> .
<i>RhM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum für Philologie</i> .
<i>RIC</i>	H. Mattingly, E.A. Sydenham et al., <i>The Roman Imperial Coinage</i> London 1923-1994).
<i>RIZh</i>	<i>Rossiiskii istoricheskii zhurnal</i> .
<i>RN</i>	<i>Revue Numismatique</i> .
<i>RA</i>	<i>Rossiiskaia arkheologiia</i>
<i>SA</i>	<i>Sovetskaia arkheologiia</i> .
<i>SE</i>	<i>Sovetskaia etnografiia</i> .
<i>SEG</i>	<i>Supplementum Epigraphicum Graecum</i>
<i>SGE</i>	<i>Soobshcheniia Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha</i> .
<i>SRAA</i>	<i>Silk Road Art and Archaeology</i> .
<i>TAVO</i>	<i>Tübinger Atlas des Vorderen Orients</i> .
<i>TGE</i>	<i>Trudy gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha</i> .
<i>TluTAKE</i>	<i>Trudy Īuzhno-Turkmenistanskoĭ arkheologicheskoi kompleksnoi ekspeditsii</i> (Ashkhabad).
<i>TKhAEE</i>	<i>Trudu Khorezmskoĭ arkheologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii</i> (Moskva).
<i>VAAE</i>	<i>Vestnik arkheologii, antropologii i etnografii</i> (Tūmen).
<i>VDI</i>	<i>Vestnik drevnei istorii</i> .
<i>VolGU</i>	<i>Volgogradskii gosudarstvennyi universitet</i> .
<i>WUNT</i>	<i>Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament</i> (Tübingen).
<i>ZOrA</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Orient-Archäologie</i> .
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i> .
<i>ZVORAO</i>	<i>Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniia Rossiiskogo arkheologicheskogo obshchestva. Novaia seriia</i> (Sankt-Petersburg).



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