

**SECTION 17. World history. History of science  
and technology.**
**SOME REFLECTIONS ABOUT CULTURE OF NOMADIC CATTLE-  
BREEDERS IN USTRUSHANA**

**Abstract:** In this article some historical retrospectives of the Middle Ages relations between nomads in Ustrushana are considered. Some historical dates are reconstructed also in this article.

**Key words:** the Central Asia region, archeological reconstruction, nomads, Ustrushana, Behistun, Sogd, Zeravshan, Djizak.

**Language:** English

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**Introduction**

In the history Ustrushana was developed as a contact zone between the farming and sedentary tribes of the Central Asia. However, the settled tribes kept the nomadic type of economy mentioned in the written sources. On the Behistun stele and in the Greek historians' works there are enough data about the nomadic cattle-breeders of the Middle Syr Darya, in particular, the Sakas and the Scythians. The written sources of the 6-4<sup>th</sup> centuries BCE mention the population of the region basically as about the cattle-breeders, and the next ones (the 4<sup>th</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE) noted that the Sakas' tribes had the stationary stands and simple houses [1, S. 23]. The Chinese chronicles tell about the Sakas as about founders - of Kang state and residents of wattle and daub houses. These written sources indicate that the nomads lived along with the farming population in this region. It should be noted that this population was strongly influenced by the cattle-breeders like other ancient farming oases of Shash, Fergana and Sogd.

**Materials and Methods**

It is known that in the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 2<sup>nd</sup> centuries BCE the Great migration of peoples resulted in the mass entry and settling of the nomads as new ethnic elements took place. Consequently, the entry of nomads' ethnic groups and transition of some of them into the settled way of life led to the change of types of economy. The cultures of the Andronovo communities of the Bronze Age and the population

of sedentary-agricultural oases stand out much in the history of peoples of the Middle Syr Darya according to the archaeological materials [2, S. 21].

Antiquity of Central Asia is characterised by convergence of the farming and nomadic population's cultures and intensification of processes of the ethnical interaction, although this process started in the late 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BCE in the lower and middle basins of the Syr Darya River connected to the so-called «steppe culture». At the same time, the nomadic tribes began actively settling in Ustrushana, Fergana and Chach. It is retraced in spheres of material and spiritual culture of all regions. The future fortune of the nomadic Sakas' tribes is linked to the history of the Eurasian nomadic tribes, who invaded the Central Asia and were ethnically similar to this population.

Ustrushana from of old had very important strategic significance for Sogd as «East gate». At their time the nomadic tribes from steppes of Shash and Fergana chose two routes for marches toward Sogd: Djizak-Ilonutti into Zeravshan oasis and Djizak-Nurata into Bukhara and Karmana [3, S. 92].

The presence of samples of the Sogdian material culture in Ustrushana is evidence that these cultures had almost the same source of origin. According to G.A. Brykina's point of view, who researched the border areas of Southwest Fergana and Ustrushana, the nomads were frequently influenced by the highly developed farming cultures. The aforesaid is proved by the ceramic products disclosed during researches of the burial mounds in the local-

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ity[4, S. 145]. The main part of ceramics was produced on the potter's wheel and ornamented with the red engobe and incised pattern. However, these handicrafts had some qualitative defects such as a crude treatment, dimness of engobe and frailty of firing. All of this gave G.A. Brykina possibility to conclude that these handicrafts were products of the local recently settled craftsmen imitating the imported goods from the Fergana Valley.

The innovation in the ceramic production was the making of ware with imitation of the wooden and metal vessels. Such handicrafts were quite frequently discovered at sites of Ustrushana. However, it is difficult to tell about an influence of the sedentary cultures on the potter's production of the nomads in Northwest Ustrushana as much as in Fergana. The reason is a particle study of about 800 burial grounds and groups of similar sites fixed in Northwest Ustrushana. And on the territory of Syrdarya Province 17 groups or separate burial grounds are fixed[5, 28. S. 73. Ris. 1]. The ceramic materials found in burial grounds of Ustrushana of Antiquity unlike the similar items of the settled tribes were handmade with rough shape, low-quality raw material such as the fire clay with added gravel and fine sand. In general, the majority of vessels is low pottery with even and wide bottom.

Results of researches of sites in Northwest Ustrushana are evidence of more elements of the steppe culture appeared in the ceramics [6, S. 260]. In the burial mounds there are rare handicrafts of high quality produced on the potter's wheel typical for the urban production. The ceramic jugs found in burial grounds of Gulba 2 and 5 were produced on the wheel of rapid rotation with even firing and the dense clay without foreign admixtures. The surface and bottom of vessels were coated with light brown engobe. The inner part is covered with engobe runs. Shoulders are decorated with a convex band. The rim is slightly slanted out. The diameter of rim is bigger than the bottom, what is typical exactly for vessels of the urban population, whereas the nomads' vessels had different proportions. The analogous vessels dated to Kushan period were discovered in burials in Koktepa site in Samarkand Province [7, fig. 8, 2-3; P. 52, fig. 12]. The vessels with cylinder on shoulders are typical for Babashov burial ground [8, S. 154-155.]. As the further evolution of ceramic production of, e.g. the 5-6<sup>th</sup> centuries is observed, then the items produced on the potter's wheel such as the narrow-necked and big jugs with one handle coated with red engobe and cauldrons with lids originated. Generally, the technique of production and the shape of studied ceramics are closed to the Kaunchin culture.

L. M. Levina identified three stages in development of the Kaunchi and Otrar-Karatag cultures: the first is the 1<sup>st</sup> - the late 3<sup>rd</sup> and the early 4<sup>th</sup> centuries; the second is the 4<sup>th</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> centuries and the third is the 6<sup>th</sup> - the early 8<sup>th</sup> centuries. For the

third stage of the Kaunchin culture the influence of Sogd and Ustrushana on Tashkent oasis is characteristic; the influence of Sogd is revealed in some architectural elements such as terracotta, stamped decoration, and also in the production of ceramics imitating the metal vessels [9, S. 226-227]. According to N.G.Gorbunova's point of view the culture of Northwest Ustrushana looks very much like the culture of Fergana, because the latter one also originated through the synthesis of agricultural and cattle-breeding population. As a result, till the early Middle Age in Fergana there was no monetary circulation, the wall painting, sculptures (besides the crude terracotta) and different ornaments. This region was much closer to the culture of peoples of the Syr Darya basin, than to the farmers of southern Central Asia [10, S. 105].

However, it does not mean that the Fergana variant of a mixed culture prevailed in Ustrushana in the 3<sup>rd</sup> - 4<sup>th</sup> centuries as well. It seems to us that the period of migration of the steppe peoples into the agricultural oases are partially ended by their transition to settled way of life. The latter fact might be explained by special features of the material finds corresponding to the nomads and the sedentary population and location of burial mounds near the farming oases. The military armour such as sword, poniard, knife, bow and arrow, and also the houseware were disclosed near the dead in Gulba burial mounds located in Zaamin region of Djizak Province. These archaeological materials are identical to artifacts of the steppe nomads.

The data on the arms of Ustrushana population of Antiquity and the early Middle Ages are very rare. The lack of researches of this issue might be explained by several reasons. The main reason is, from our point of view, a small number of arms in the archaeological complexes of Ustrushana. As a matter of fact, there are enough bronze and iron arrowheads and the bone pieces of bow. The rest of armour is single. In addition, in Ustrushana there are almost no special works on this issue [11, S. 186-195]. However, there are some publications with collected and interpreted materials of Antiquity.

A complex of arms from Gulba burial ground includes the means of distant fight (arrowheads), infighting (swords, poniards and knives) and defence (armour-clad plates) found only in three burial mounds, but in poor condition. We will describe the arms found in Gulba burial mound below.

The swords (just four specimens) are totally extant, although strongly corroded and deformed. All swords differ a little from each other in shape and method of production. They were placed mainly below the belt crosswise or in parallel to the dead. Such a position of swords is well-known. Swords are straight, iron, double-blade and the crosshair is the widen extension of the blade. The handle is narrow with traces of wooden encasing on some of them.

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The top is formed in the shape of half-arc. The sword is from 64 to 82cm long. The widest part of blade is 2-4cm [12, S. 66-73].

The similar swords were discovered in Tulkhar and Babashev burial grounds of Bishkent Valley dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE, Lyavandak and Akdj atepa burial grounds of Sogd oasis of the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE [13, 2. S. 131. Ris. 8.] and Bishunear burial grounds of South Ural. They are known by finds from Sarmat burials and by arms and armour disclosed at Kanka site of Tashkent oasis. All five specimens of poniard are almost totally extant as well. Traces of wooden encasing and clip-riverts are revealed in handles. The straight double-blade poniards are 16-22cm long. The widest part of blade is 2,5-4cm. The analogues of poniards were found in Tulkhar burial ground of the Bishkent Valley dated to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE [14, S. 14-15. TabI. XXXIX], burial grounds of Tashkent oasis, and in Vorukh, Karamazar, Lyavandak, and Ogalik burial grounds of Sogd oasis in the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE [15, S. 19. TabI. 3,1,3.]. The riverts to fasten the wooden handle to an iron part were found in Achamoyl burial ground of Tashkent oasis. The periodisation of above-mentioned finds is from the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

The knives are generally straight and single-blade, passage from the heft to the blade is smooth. The heft was set symmetrically as extension of the axis of blade. B.A.Litvinskiy attributed such knives to the first section, type I. Our knives are more similar to knives from Vorukh burial ground and Karamazar kurum. The trilobite arrowheads (6 specimens) with heft and straight stings are made of iron. They are 3-5cm long. The spike was coated with a melted material, evidently, during the cremation of the dead. Such finds are commonly dated to the last centuries BCE - the first centuries CE. There are two more arrowheads with heft coated almost totally by the same melted material. All arrows were placed at the belt and a leg. B. A. Litvinskiy noted the wide spread of this type of arrowheads from the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE to the 3<sup>rd</sup>

century CE [16, 2. S. 78-81]. The written sources inform us that the Middle Syr Darya was renowned long since for archers. Indeed, the iron arrowheads prevail in number among other types of arms. Basing on the involved analogues we may preliminarily date them to the 2<sup>nd</sup> - 1<sup>st</sup> centuries BCE and the 1<sup>st</sup> century CE.

The majority of burial mounds in Gulbo is catacombs and related in shape to the so-called Kenkol type such as a catacomb with dromos oriented to the west. There are two versions of origin of the catacomb burials. Yu.A. Zadneprovskiy supposed that the catacomb and similar burials were left by the newcomers, because they were not typical for Central Asia; those tribes lived together with the local population for 600-700 years. According to different point of view it is assumed that they were of local origin [17, S. 39]. The question - whether these sites belonged to the arrived nomads or to the local sedentary population? - is not of less interest<sup>48</sup>. Our materials are evidence that they were left by the nomads, because the material culture had no analogues in the sites of that period.

### Conclusion

Thereby, it is possible to state that the migration of nomads in Antiquity into oases of Northwest Ustrushana strongly influenced on the culture of local population. These tribes occupied the convenient for irrigated agriculture oases around towns and settlements. Frequently, fortresses and castles were erected on plains, and the nomadic population mixed with local population and took part more actively in the social and economic life of the region. As a result, a peculiar culture started forming in the late Antiquity and the early Middle Ages. The construction of different buildings in the oasis was intensified at that time. Undoubtedly, the majority of nomads on territories of Northwestern Ustrushana bordering on the steppe led a nomadic way of life. Generally Ustrushana was their retransmitter of cultural and economic links with the ancient states of Central Asia, in particular, with Sogd.

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