

Analysis of written literature about ancient Bactria

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Abstract. Information on the history and culture of ancient Bactria is reflected in various written sources. This information is found in the works of ancient Greek, Persian, Indian, and Chinese historians. The following is an analysis of information about Bactria in the main written sources. Linguists have noted similarities between the Rigveda, the Avesta, and the languages of some Indo-European peoples. As a result of archaeological research conducted in Eastern Europe, various scientific views have emerged regarding the ethnic origin of the Aryans. The texts of the Rigveda contain some images of the funeral ceremony. According to them, the division of the whole world into three parts is symbolic, and there is information about a chariot drawn by three horses. There are ideas that, during the burial process, the body of the deceased was divided into three parts (head, body, feet). Analyses reveal the presence of Indo-Aryan populations in the region at the end of the Bronze Age, their migration to northern India, and their traces in southern Uzbekistan. Herder migration was also present at the beginning of the Bronze Age. The appearance of ethnocultural elements in archaeological finds is reflected in changes that occurred in Northern Bactria, beginning with the Kozali stage of the Sopolli culture.

Comparative analysis of Avesta information with archaeological sources is of great scientific importance in studying the formation of early states. Greek sources mention the existence of the country of Parataka in Bactria in the early Iron Age. There is evidence that the army of Alexander the Great passed through the territory of Parataka, as well as the lands of Nau-taka and Bubakena, during its march from Marakand to Bactria.[1] Some researchers believe that the "Paradata" mentioned in the Avesta and the Para-taka mentioned in Greek sources were actually a region, representing a political unit of the nomadic type in the territory of Bactria. Recent modern studies have scientifically substantiated the location of Bactria on the banks of the Amu Darya. Bahlika horses are described as strong, hardy, and agile horses.

Keywords: Zoroastrian texts, Bakhdi-Bahlika, Aryans, Rigveda, Zarusht Vishtasp, Animal husbandry

Introduction

The Avesta, the sacred book of Zoroastrianism, describes Bactria as one of the most ancient regions. The Avesta describes the religious and cultural practices in Bactria, as well as the religious beliefs of the people living there.

Before the spread of Islam in our country (8th century AD), Zoroastrianism was one of the most widespread religions among our ancestors.[2] The creation of the Avesta and the era of Zoroastrianism are problematic issues in the system of historical knowledge. Many researchers date the formation of the Avesta to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The region where the Avesta was created is indicated as Khorezm. [3] However, archaeological research has shown that archaeological signs of Zoroastrianism appear in the territory of Khorezm after the 6th century BC. Until then, archaeological evidence was found in archaeological sites in southern Uzbekistan.

There is also scholarly debate about Zoroaster's birthplace. It is believed that he was from the Spitama clan, which lived on the banks of the Zarafshan River. This area

may be associated with the present-day Dargam Canal. Some researchers argue that Zoroaster's homeland may be associated with the territories of Ancient Turan. [4]

In Zoroastrianism, the prophet is depicted as the supreme religious leader of the Zoroastrian order. According to Zoroastrianism, the ruler may have simultaneously exercised religious and secular power. It is recalled that the approval of temples was of great importance in some socio-political structures mentioned in the Avesta. [5] Without the consent of the temple, the daxyupatis (head of the country) and daxyusastis (head of the region) could not exercise power. Because in the socio-political structure of this period, priests and religious leaders were representatives of the upper class.

The vastness of the ancient Bactria territory necessitated governance under a system of satyrs.

In the countries created by the god of goodness Ahuramazda, the council of elders is described as varzana, khanchamana, and a joint general council. These councils were engaged in the distribution of pastures and the management of territories. In the Avesta, members of society of this period are divided into four categories. Priests, warriors-soldiers, herders, and artisans.

The connection between these classes, that is, the separation of social strata, is visible in the development of cities in the Bronze Age. The socio-economic basis of Avestan society reflected the life of pastoral and agricultural communities in the Bronze Age. In ancient agricultural and pastoral regions, priests held an important position in the management system. In addition to conducting religious ceremonies, priests also served as advisors in the life of the community.

They were considered ideological guides for people who owned livestock and pastures, according to A.'s research. Askarov, warrior soldiers - cavalymen- were Aryans, and in terms of property management and social class, they were in a position after the priests.[6] According to the Avesta, livestock was one of the main sources of wealth. Zoroaster emphasizes that livestock needs a good owner. He says that I promise free movement and a free life to livestock owners.

The owners of this free life were the Aryans—the class of herders, priests, and warriors. The wealth of the Aryans was made up of shepherds, people who raised cattle, sheep, and horses. The class of artisans was made up of peasant groups who engaged in labor and military weapons, jewelry, pottery, and weaving without separating them from agriculture; that is, they were engaged in farming. The social stratification of the representatives of the four classes mentioned in the Avesta: priests, warriors, artisans, and herders was also reflected in the development of Bronze Age cities. The Yasna, Yasht, Vispered, and Vendidad parts of the Avesta have survived to us. The book of the Avesta, Videvdat, consists of 22 chapters and is relatively well preserved among the Avesta's parts. In this text, the names of the 16 provinces created by Ahuramazda are as follows: Khvarizam - Khorezm, Gava Suguda - Sughd, Mari - Merv, Bakhdi - Bactria, and other regions. Information is also given about the merits of agriculture and animal husbandry. It is stated that the Avesta society was formed from nmana, vis, zantu, and daxyu.

Methods

Content analysis method

We know that the indigenous peoples of Central Asia lived in the territories of Sogdian, Bactrian, and Khorezm peoples.[7] The period of the Avesta's emergence corresponds to the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages according to archaeological chronology. However, the book's creation is associated with Zoroaster's lifetime. The

period of Zoroaster's life is considered to be the Kavi Vish-asp period, 6-7 centuries BC. The complete genealogy of Vish-asp has not been studied.

There are new ideas in the research on the period of Zoroaster's life. This study describes the existing views on the period of Zoroaster's life. The main economic sector during the period under study was cattle breeding and agriculture. The widespread spread of cattle breeding was associated with the migration of nomadic Aryans. The migration of the Aryans spread to the territory of present-day India, Iran, and Europe. Among the religious texts that emerged from migration processes in the territory of India, the Rigveda occupies a special place. In the land of ancient Turan, the Avesta. These sources reflect the highest expression of spiritual and philosophical economy.

These texts were initially passed down through oral tradition and later written down. In Zoroastrianism, the revelation that came to Zoroaster, the words of Ahuramazda, are manifested by Zoroaster's divine thinking ability. Zoroaster's divine ability may have occurred when his religious world reached a high point of spirituality.

This period is characterized by the disappearance of polytheism in the religious ideological environment, the emergence of monotheistic religious views, and the development of funeral customs. In shedding light on this issue, it is important to observe the changes in the funeral customs of the Sopolli culture.

The basis of Avestan philosophy is the principles of "good word, good deed, good thought". Some similarities are evident in the views of Zoroastrianism and Indian religious traditions. It can be compared to the divine power of Indira in the Rigveda. In the Rigveda, Indira is depicted as a symbol of military power and victory, with warlike qualities. In the Avesta, Mitra is described as the patron of truth and loyalty to the covenant. Vedic texts were distributed in the northwestern regions of India in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC.[8] Some researchers associate the formation of the Vedic culture with the Andronov culture and the monuments of Sintashta and Arkaim. The sacred texts of ancient Indian and Iranian peoples, the Rigveda and Avesta, contain information about the homeland of the Aryans, Ariyanam Vaejah. In these texts, this land is described as a region rich in livestock and pastures. When compared with Ctesias' information, the findings of gold and other precious materials among cultural objects from Bactria are consistent with the archaeological record.

The presence of lapis lazuli and precious stones in the territory of ancient Bactria indicates the development of its cities. To date, more than 250 fortresses and city ruins dating to the first half of the first millennium BC have been discovered and studied in Bactria.

Some researchers believe that in the middle of the second millennium BC, part of the Aryan tribes migrated to the territory of India and Iran. [9]

The issue of the ethnic and linguistic affiliation of the Aryans is one of the controversial issues in historiography. There were ideas that the original homeland of these Iranian-speaking nomads was in Eastern Europe in ancient times. This idea is also expressed in some local literature in Uzbekistan.

Analyzing the above views, A. Askarov emphasizes certain similarities among the material culture, anthropological appearance, and economic lifestyle of the populations of the Eurasian steppe regions during the Rigveda and Avesta periods.[10] He disagrees with the view that pastoral communities in the Altai Mountains spoke Turkic languages, whereas those in neighboring regions spoke Iranian languages. He says that this does not correspond to historical reality.

A. Askarov presents his scientific conclusions based on a comparative analysis of ancient Chinese written sources with rich archaeological materials. The Aryans are

a social stratum that formed under the conditions of nomadic life during the economic rise of the pastoral tribes of the steppe and desert regions of Eurasia, and they constituted the talented, military stratum and the noble part of the pastoralists. Some groups of herders, according to historical linguistic and archaeological analyses, are not actually Iranian speakers but rather speak an ancient Turkic language.

According to analyses of the annals of ancient Chinese dynasties, the peoples who spoke ancient Turkic were nomadic nobles. They initially migrated from the middle of the 2nd millennium BC due to the demands of life, and then settled in large numbers in Central Asia.

Historical genetic analysis

According to the analysis of existing archaeological and written sources, Aryan pastoral peoples penetrated the territories of Iran, Afghanistan, and Northern India in the second half of the second millennium BC. This information is also confirmed by ancient written sources such as the Rigveda and Avesta. However, in terms of language, the Aryans could not change the language of the local population of India, Eastern Khorasan, and Iran; as a result of the policy of domination in Southern Iran-Persia, Aryan culture developed. Later historical developments created ample opportunities for assimilation. In the Rigveda, cremation was used in the funeral rites of these peoples. There was a custom of carrying out funeral practices by burning the body.

Research on the monuments of the Sopolli culture, including the Bostan VI cemetery, indicates the introduction of new ethnocultural elements into the region. Researchers interpret some of the burials in this cemetery as the result of cultural contacts between nomadic pastoralist communities and the local population. These historical processes found their expression in social life and burial rituals. Some researchers associate the Avesta's formation with the Summer I culture. In their opinion, the process of social stratification was quite developed during this period. The archaeological source reflecting the class stratification of the population is compared with the emergence of rulers' arches in monuments. The rulers' arches, surrounded by the first defensive walls, appeared in Central Asia, where the pottery culture was located. Information about the population of society can be found throughout the Avesta.

Results

There is information about the Avestan rulers praying to the god Mithra for help before war. This information indicates that the first states were formed during the Avestan period and that rulers fought battles for political power.

Information about the first Kavi is found in the Yasht part of the Avestan. The issue of the Kavi's country or state was first introduced into scientific discussion by A. Christensen and I.M. Dyakonov. [11] Later, this issue was studied in detail by I.V. Pyankov. According to the scholar's research on the sources of the Avesta and the Shahnameh, the development of the Kavi state is chronologically divided into two periods - the period of the first and the last Kavi.

I.V. According to Pyankov, the founder of the first Kaviy is Kavata. His heir was Kaviy Apivakhu. All four sons of Kaviy Apivakhu also held the title of Kaviy. Among them, his sons Usan and his grandson Khausrav played important roles in the political life of the Kaviy. Kaviy Khausrav divided the state into small kingdoms. At the head of these kingdoms was a kaviy who was subordinate to the rulers. One such ruler was Kaviy Vishtaspa, the ruler of Bactria. I.V. Pyankov considers Usan and Khausrav, kings glorified in the Avesta, to be the first Kaviy rulers of the Kaviy genealogy. According to

the scholar, there are opinions that Zoroaster, unable to find refuge in his homeland, came to Bactria and lived in the Vishtaspa dynasty. From this period, the second stage of the Kavian state's development begins. According to the legend narrated by the great scholar Abu Rayhan Beruni, Zoroaster came to the Bactrian king Vishtaspa and queen Khutaosa and prayed to Ahuramazda to prove the sanctity of his teachings. According to the legend, Zoroaster wanted them to press heated copper on his body. When the fiery copper did not harm his body, Vishtaspa and his wife, and then part of the entire population of Bactria, accepted the Zoroastrian faith. The Avesta consisted of 21 books. Abu Rayhan Beruni's "Monuments of the Ancient Worlds" states that the Avesta was preserved in its entirety in the treasury of Darius's library, written on 12,000 black ox hides. [12]

During Alexander the Great's campaigns in the East, Zoroastrian temples were destroyed on his orders. Two-thirds of the Avesta was burned and sent away. Abu Rayhan Beruni writes that Zoroastrian traditions, called the "pagan religion", existed even before the birth of Zoroaster and his reforms. The Avesta describes the early Kavi, that is, the pre-Zoroastrian Kavi, as "tyrant" Magians. The Avesta is accorded the status of "good Kavi" by rulers who adopted Zoroastrianism.

I.V. Pyankov describes the early Kavi period as 900-775 BC. The scientist bases this chronology on the reign of Kavi Vashtaspa and the information that Zoroastrianism lived in his palace. According to the analysis of scientific literature, rulers and kings who held the title of Kavi were Zoroastrian and embodied both religious and secular power in their own hands.

One of the bulla seals, which indicates the religious and secular power of these rulers, was identified; the results of Nazim Muzrapovich Ikromov (2020) were presented. Information about the periods and regions in which they lived is provided. In the territory of Bactria during the early Iron Age, signs of cremation, incompatible with Zoroastrian traditions, were observed at Pishak Hill. This archaeological source can be associated with the events surrounding Arejataspa, the head of the Hyana clan, who did not accept the Zoroastrianism described in the Avesta and fought with Kavi Vishtaspa. The preservation of the custom of cremation in the territory of Bactria, where Zoroastrianism developed, can be explained by various historical factors. The correspondence of the historical process is consistent with the events of Arejataspa. The scientific interpretations proposed by I.V. Pyankov about the rulers who held the title of Kavi allow us to draw the correct conclusion.

Arrian, the author of the work "The Campaigns of Alexander the Great" (Anabasis Alexandri), when referring to the location of Ancient Bactria, placed the territory of Paritekena between Sogdiana and Bactria. He writes that Bactria was located after Paretekena. Recent archaeological research has advanced views on the exact location of Bactria, showing that rivers did not always serve as natural boundaries. Information about the Aryans from Greek historians is considered one of the closest sources on the issue. The fact that the first Kavis' rule archaeologically coincides with Kuchuk I's period is a poorly studied issue. [13 Analytical observations Central Asia

Discussion

According to the political approach, each agricultural oasis was represented as a territorial state of the "nome" type. The first Kavi mentioned in the Avesta was Usan's grandson Khusrav, who divided the Kavi country into kingdoms. This historical process can be expressed by the emergence of the first territorial states during the Yoz I culture.

I.V. Pyankov emphasizes that the country of Ari-anam Vaejah, located on the banks of the Daitya River, mentioned in the Avesta, was located in the southern part of Bactria, on the left bank of the Amu Darya. Other researchers indicate Khorezm as Ariyanam Vaejah, while a third group of scholars emphasizes that Ariyanam Vaejah should be interpreted as a geographical location, as a large territory.

It is known that Ariyanam Vaejah, as a geographical location, represented vast territories, and this information can be used to support a scientific conclusion. The Avesta Yasht Book contains such country names as Paradata (Paretaka), Atviya, Khyana, Kaviy and Tur. According to scientific analyses, the names of territorial and political units such as (the land of the Aryans) Ariyanam Vaejah, (Sogd) Gava Sogda, Maoru (Margiya), Bakhdi (Bactria), Khoreva (Khwarazm) - the ancient great Khorezm - are found. There may have been religious structures associated with fire even before the activities of the prophet Zoroaster. In his archaeological research, Ahmadali Askarov demonstrated that the Jarqutan temple, built in honor of the Sun God, bears symbolic signs of the five sacred elements in Zoroastrianism. The Jarqutan temple is represented by fire altars, water wells, and stone paths in its courtyard. Since the construction of the temple, the burial of bodies in residential rooms has been stopped, or burial practices have changed. Archaeological data indicate that the organization of rituals related to the burial of community members living in the area in connection with the construction of the Jarqutan temple was in the hands (management) of temple priests and temples.

There is information about Bactria in Indian written sources. The names of Bactria (bahlika, balkh or bahika) are mentioned in the epic sources of Indian culture, the Mahabharata and the Rigveda. These sources indicate that Bactria was a cultural center located in the northwestern region of India and was a neighboring country. The Rigveda texts describe the Bactrian people as pastoralists who raise horses and mules. This written source information is found in the sacred Vedic texts of the early stage of the Harappan civilization between 1500 and 1200 BC. During this period, Indo-Aryan tribes lived in the northwestern part of India. They were people who had mastered the use of horses and oxen as transport. They used chariots and metal weapons. The Rigveda texts contain information about wars, religious rituals, and the forces of nature. The Rigveda mentions the tribes of Anu and Druhyu, as well as the Bahlika people. The tribes that lived in the territory of Bactria, the concept of Sata Sindhu (Land of Seven Rivers), represented the initial areas of distribution of the Indo-Aryan tribes.

Conclusion

Archaeological monuments testifying to the signs of Zoroastrianism in the Bronze Age have been identified and studied in Iran and Turan. Scientific analysis of these monuments shows that the territory of Ancient Bactria played an important role in the initial formation of Zoroastrianism. Scholar Ahmadali Askarov conducted archaeological research at Sopolli Tepe and Jarqutan, both of which are considered important Bronze Age monuments. According to scholarly research, the Jarqutan temple is an important monument of Zoroastrianism.

There is evidence that religious ceremonies were initially held on mountain peaks, near springs and other water sources, and in open areas. Later, as a result of religious reforms associated with Zoroastrianism, the idea of worshiping Ahuramazda was established, and the construction of special temples is considered to have begun. [14] If the construction of the magnificent temples is associated with the name and activities of Zoroaster, then the research shows that the spiritual views of Zoroaster,

according to which he lived in the early 1st millennium BC, in the 7th-6th centuries BC, are unfounded. According to the Avesta texts and ideas, scientific conclusions are drawn that Zoroaster lived in the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. According to archaeological findings, the monumental temples of Ancient Bactria and Margiana were built in the Bronze Age.

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