

“Sunheaded” anthropomorphic personage in petroglyphs of Bronze Age in Central Asia

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In archaeological literature this personage was found not enough explored. In publications we know only one aspect considered in whole, and that is semantic sense of such pictures. (Kubarev, 1988; Maximova, Ermolaeva, Mariashev, 1985; Devlet, 1980).

I supposed that geographical spreading of this figures, united by iconographical resemblance, permits to concretize cattle-breeding groups of population advancement direction on the territory of Central Asia. Such point of view is proved to be correct by fact that location of petroglyphs are fixed and never moved in space in contrast to archaeological things.

There are two iconographical features of anthropomorphic figures marked out:

1. rays, diverging from the head and depicted by full face and side view;
2. Hand fingers, which are intentionally spread-wide or two or three hand fingers, which are showed evidently. Combination of these two attributes permit to mark out from others more or less similar figures, petroglyphs, considered here.

Perhaps, original and well-recognized iconographies of "sunheaded" anthropomorphous creatures in steppe imitative tradition came from head-dress (headgear) or mask made of bird feathers. Headgear of such type is belonged to North-American Indians and some Africa nations.

Bird headed mask is pictured in engravings and murals of anthropomorphic creatures on the gravestones in Tas-Hazaa and Karakol. Birds cult role is noted in 21 Tchernovaya VIII crane's skull (Vadetskaya, Leontiev, Maximenkov, 1980, p, 22-25). Sometimes hats in the form of masks are conic, but always they have a little sprouts (Tas-Hazaa sepulcher, Tchuluut petroglyphs, fig. 1) (Leontiev, 1978, p. 88-118; Novgorodova, 1989, p. 96).

In China province Junan (fig.2) there were found pictures very like Karakol ones. Here, in Kangan borough, many figures in the form of symbols, animals and "sunheaded" are painted on the open rock by red paint (Chen Zhao-fu, 1988, p.100-101, p. 64-69). Such figures are found in Sinchzyan, Altai, Tuva petroglyphs, on Samus YI settlement ceramics and on Angara river vale petroglyphs (fig.3).

The south group of analogies is represented by finds in steppe part of Kazakhstan, in Baikonur river vale, in Tamgala place's altar part, and in Kirgizstan in Saimali-Tash. In these pictures the certain canonization of personage, whose head looks like a child painting, is observed (fig.3; p.24-31).

Numerous pictures of masks, spreaded in petroglyphs of Bronze Age, probably related to "sunheaded" personage by a principle PARS PRO TOTO, represent separate pictures of mask headgear. It is possible to illustrate it by resemblance between Karakol figures and some earlier Afanasiev (Okunev) sculptures. But just only mask pictures suffered considerable stylistic changes during the time of Okunev and later (fig.1:1, 10, 12; 3:1-11). You could form an idea about such stylization by petroglyphs of Mugur-Sargola (Devlet, 1980, p.226, fig.10).

The most ancient pictures of vehicles in South Siberia - a van with the ox harness on the Znamenskaya stella (fig.4) and a wagon, which was found on the gravestone near stanitsa Ust-Bur (Hakasia) - are in neighborhood with mask pictures. "Sunheaded" drivers of carts and wagons, which are analogous to pictures on the Harapp ceramics (Brooks, Wakankar, 1976, p.36), are represented in petroglyphs of Saimali-Tash, on the Eshkialmes rocks. In the murals of Indian grottos Chatur-bhu Nesh and Chibbar-Nala chariot drivers portrayed with rays diverging from the head (Bhatnagar, Chodhary at al., 1977/78).

Anthropomorphic figures engraved on the bronze "models of yoke" of China Central vale In and Chgou time have some resemblances with these figures. These things are interpreted as chariot equipment details (Kogin, 1990, p. 45-56).

The combination of two most ancient personages in such figurative monuments as a cart "sunheaded" creature, testified their mythological propinquity in imagination of Central Asia population.

There are important a coincidence in iconography of anthropomorphic portrays found out in culture monument of Tripolye-Kukuteni and steppe culture came from them, and also in North Caucasus and Crimea.

On the sides of one of the stone boxes of sepulcher near Novosvobodnaya stanitsa (North Caucasus) a polychrome painting was discovered (Rezepkin, 1987, p.26-32). On the white background there are pictured anthropomorphic figure and horses row Hith red and black colors. And also analogous murals made in the same colors are discovered on the walls of Kemi-Ob stone box in Kuiran-Bairam. Monuments of this type are spreaded in Crimea, on the Azov sea coast, under Dnieper River (Tshpinski, 1985, p.334-335). The peculiarity of Kemi-Ob culture monuments is in adoring the sides of stone boxes by different murals and placing Stella in the form of ordinary tombstones or anthropomorphic figures. So, Karnosov idd embodies anthropomorphic Stella, on the front side of which there are sculptured axed things look like a staff, knife, mace etc., and on the foundation there is a horse's raw. On the lateral planes of Stella there are two human figures, one of which is showed with exaggeratedly spread-wide hand fingers.

Tombstone with animal and human pictures was also found out in Ukraine in Usatov sepulcher (Patokova, 1979). On the one of them deer's figure, relief horse's picture and anthropomorphic figure are hewed. Human is portrayed in mask or with colored face in the manner of tattoo. The figure is made in original triangular style, which is typical to Saimali-Tash petroglyphs and Tripoli ceramics pictures. And again as in the case of Kersonov idd, and on the gravestones near Novosvobodnaya stanitsa, the combination of anthropomorphic

figure, which have spread-wide hand-fingers and some horses' figures is observed here. Deer pictures similar to Usatov ones are widely represented in petroglyphs of Tchuluut, in north Mongolia.

Anthropomorphic pictures painted or carved on the Tripoli ceramics have intentionally spread-wide hand fingers (Shukovtchi, Luka-Vrublevskaya, Tirpeshti III and oth.), so as these ones of human figures in Central Asia and Caucasus petroglyphs.

Apparently, west imitative tradition found its subsequent development in the sepulcher walls murals (Karakol, Tas-Hazaa, Tchernovaya VII, etc.) and Central Asia numerous petroglyphs. May be, this tradition is connected to custom of placing anthropomorphic steles in burial monuments in Minusin's valley and deer stones in Mongolia.

Date of considering pictures of Central Asia is determined by finds in relics and monuments of Okunev's period (look Sher debate, 1'380, p. 216-139) and Shan-In monument of "northern complex" in China (Lin Jun, 1986, p.237-173). While the lower boundary of "sunheaded" figures existence, for all that debutantes of this question, corresponds to the second half of III-d thousand years B.C., the upper boundary determined relatively for the present as the middle of the II-d thousand years B.C.

Obviously, the mythological foundation of the "sunheaded" personage is connected to Indio-European (Indo-Iranian) ideas of solar deity.

In Nartov epos the legends about woman-deity are kept, whose arm below elbows are, silver and emit light. They can meet her only when they get lofty in the mountains (Dumezil, 1990, p. 117-130).

Solar deity in Indo-Iranian mythology probably is personified in the Mitra image, one of the main heroes of Rigved and Avesta. It carried role of the nature and social space organizer. In Avesta tradition solar function of Mitra expressed by the same epithets as "sparkle", "light" (Avesta X 7, 44, 143).

Through the Avesta a motif of Mitra and sun contiguity in the time passes: Mitra anticipates sunrise and "passes the Earth in breath after the sunset" (Avesta X 13, 95). Mitra's indispensable attributes are horses and chariot: "he steer a chariot with high wheels" and "heavenly horses, sparking, shining, lighting, white, who has no shadows, entail through the selects space" (Avesta XVIII, 67-68).

In Rigved there is one hymn dedicated to Mitra (III, 59). In Veda tradition more often of all Mitra forms a couple with Varuna, and this couple performs as a single whole. Mitra "fills the air space, holds the sky and the Earth", "summons the sunrise" (III: 59, 1; IV, 13, 2). The sun (Suria) is the Mitra and Varuna's eye (I, 50, 6). The attributes or ties with sun are performed by motives or the sky riding on the chariot (I, 122, 19) and golden throne (I 139, 2). Mitra and Varuna keep an eye to alternation or day and night together, the day belongs to Mitra and night does Varuna.

The main Mitra's function in social space is the people unification (Rigveda, I 115, 5). Mitra performs in a role of friendship deity, who unites people in particular social structure and establishes agreement with them; this agreement corresponds to universal cosmic laws of sun rhythm and movement. Mitra attached to people's Earth, he always accompanied alive beings, and never had ties with Jama's kingdom unlike to Varuna (Rigveda X 14, 7). The fire, which brought together with very different deities, is "metrical" in those services, which it renders to people (Dumezil, 1986, p.55-56).

The image or anthropomorphic solar deity is vividly observed in mythological notions of the Central Asia population. Iconography of this personage suffered certain transformation in these or those sociums - sun-bird-oxheaded creatures (Karakol, Mugur-Sargol, Okunev stels), but undoubtedly, mythological roots have an indivisible foundation under themselves.

And so, geographical spreading of "Sunheaded" personage in figurative relics and monuments and its indivisible iconographical and mythological foundation permits us to suppose about the movement of the Indo-Iranian groups of population from the west to the east during the period of formation of cattle-breeding type of life in the steppe zone of Euro-Asia. "One branch such migration was directed from the Black sea and South Russia steppes to the territory of South Siberia, Mongolia and northern China. Another branch of this movement is oriented to the south, to the territories of northern parts of Indostan, through the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes to the Fergana valley – the region of agricultural civilization (Fig.5). These two powerful impulses became the foundation or subsequent development of Central Asia rock imitative tradition.

May be, some Indo-European population groups, which were obliged to develop new pastures beyond Urals were bearers of this tradition. According to archaeological dates, such production groups are fixed by the monuments and relics of the ancient burial cultural and historical region. The appearance of distinctive Afanasiev, Okunev, Karakol cultures in the north and Zamanbabin's group's monuments (Kuzmina, 1958) in the south is the apparent result of migration from the west. Recent finds of ancient burial grounds beyond Urals (Potemkina, 1985, p.276; Evdokimov, Loman, 1989, p.34-35) permits us to connect to monuments of this type in Central Asia.