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On the History of Military Weapons of the Fergana Valley (7 th Century BC – 7 th Century AD)

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Abstract:

Weapons and military affairs play an important role in society. Especially, ancient periods are represented only by weapons found in archaeological complexes. It should be noted that the issues of weapons and military affairs of the Ferghana Valley have been poorly studied. The article explores new materials from Dilkushod and the burial ground of Munchaktepa. They are divided into three groups: ranged weapons, close range weapons, defensive weapons. According to the author's conclusion, the weaponry in the studied period of Ferghana developed at the same level as in other regions.

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There is very little information about weaponry, weapons and their types in the Fergana Valley in ancient and medieval times. There are several reasons for this. The most important of them is the rare occurrence of weapon finds in archaeological complexes. Moreover, there are no objects that could depict them among the archaeological findings of the Fergana Valley. For example, coins, wall paintings(?), small figurines, etc. found since the end of the early Middle Ages do not show weapons.

However, the study of the history of weapons has seen some changes in recent times. New information on the history of ancient and medieval weaponry in the valley began to appear. More than 20 remains of weapons were found in the Early Iron Age bronze treasure (11 items) found in the village of Dilkushod, Khojabad district, Andijan region, and Munchogtepa city cemetery (necropolis) dating to the early Middle Ages near the town of Pop, Namangan region.

Some military items of the Early Iron Age found in Dilkushod, which have not been found before in the Fergana Valley, are important for the history of the nomadic population of Central Asia. They consist of a smoker (clevets, axe), water pipe (psalie), two Celtic shovels («celt shovels»), a bronze buckle (plate), 6 head accessories (furniture). The fact that the site was seriously disturbed and the presence of small human bones around the finds allows us to say that the grave goods and the bronze items could be part of the treasure. A horse skeleton was also found on the north side of the graves of this period (24, p. 48-50), and in some cases, a horse skull can also be found separately. It was determined that the bronze objects in Dilkushod can be dated to the VII-VI centuries BC by comparing them with the materials of other nomads. In particular, according to experts, this form of water is not found in Eurasian regions after the mentioned period [24, p.47-48]. This finding may shed some light on the issue of Sakas in the valley. First, it shows the time of appearance of these Saka tribes in the mountainous valleys and mountain zones, and secondly, the geography of their distribution. Because complexes related to the Sakas were found in the valley, but they were found outside the complexes, all of them were found by chance [25, p.137]. Until now, finds belonging to the Saka culture were known in three places from this area: a bronze dagger (akinak) [Shilyagai village, Pakhtabad district, Andijan province]; bronze cauldron with legs [Tuyachi village, Izboskan district, Andijan region]; knives with a round handle between the villages of Lugumbek and Tuyachi. Now the 11 findings of the Sakan culture that we have presented increase the number of such complexes. The first discovery of the saxophone (psalie) and the battle ax (klevets, chekan) from the three Sakas (Sakskaya triad) in the Fergana valley enriches the history of this nomadic people with new information.

The finds in Dilkushod and between Karadarya-Norin are of great importance. In particular, three out of four finds show that another small farming settlement was formed in the Moylisoy adak area, with the center of Eilaton, and some Sak tribes lived there. These were the signs that the Saks in this part of the valley had switched to agriculture and the first elements of the symbiosis of settled farmers and nomadic herders [25, p.140-141].

Among the materials of Fergana, there is also a sandstone mold for casting a spearhead belonging to the Chust culture (found at the confluence of the Kurshob and Yassi rivers into the Kampirravot (Andijan) reservoir), and a spearhead identified from the Dalvarzin cultural layer. Several bronze, iron, and bone coins were recorded from the monuments of the Chust and Eilaton cultures [23, p. 225, appendices].

It is worth noting that some images of armed people can be found in the rock paintings (petroglyphs). As a result of the archeological work carried out in Balandtepa and Munchogtepa in Northern Fergana, well-preserved samples of weapons were found. In particular, among the materials of the ancient cemetery of Munchaktepa, the following group of weapons was identified: 1) a bow and its arrow bow (paykon) intended for fighting at a certain distance, 2) knives, daggers used in close-range combat, and 3) samples of parts of iron armor aimed at protection were recorded. Iron parts were found only in Balandtepa*.

Compound bow and its parts. Bows (also called bows, rainbows) are rarely preserved in archeological

* We will not dwell on daggers, knives, iron weapons, as they are the subject of a separate study.

monuments. They are mainly found in parts, steps made of bone. Therefore, in the conditions of the Fergana Valley, the bow preserved at one level or another is of great importance. Because the archeological monuments of the early Middle Ages in the valley differ from the monuments of Sughd, Bactria-Taharistan, and East Turkestan, there are no artworks, murals, or coins with the image of a bow. True, there is an image of a bow in Fergana's rock paintings [3; 18, 5-7, fig. 11]. However, it is difficult to get complete information about the structure of the bow based on the image on them, besides, the chronology of the pictures on the rocks with the image of the bow is very broad - from the III millennium BC to the late Middle Ages.

In Fergana, the first full bow was found in the Karabulok tomb. Kazhishma is the author of Y.D. According to Baruzdin's conclusion, four bows and their parts were identified in the graves opened in Karabulok [5, p. 43-81].

The bow and its arrows found in Munchagtepa enriches the existing information and is considered an important piece in the history of the development of Central Asian weaponry [10]. The bow and related bow and arrow parts were recorded in four reed coffins (numbers of reed coffins B-1, B-6, B-7, V-5) of the 5th century. Men aged 30-50 were buried in the coffins. Among them, bows in B-6 and V-5 are relatively well preserved. They were placed on top of the deceased in the coffin, in one case the shin bones (V-5) and in the other case the pelvic bones (B-6) rested almost entirely on the bow.

According to the structure of the bows found in the 5th saghana, the core consists of a wooden base and bone staves attached to it. The wooden base is preserved in small pieces. A large wooden base stands out among them. On the reverse side, the bone was scratched in a grid pattern to attach the protrusions. There are five well-preserved bone structures in Munchagtepa. Both sides or reverse sides of all bony projections are scratched into a mesh. The reason for this is that the wooden base is supposed to hold the glue well when joined, the lengths are 16.2-21.5 cm; width 2.5-3.2 cm). The frontally fused bony projections are mirror-smooth from the facial side. The reverse side is scratched and meshed (length 13.5-14 cm, width 1.1 and 1.3 cm). No attachments for fastening the bow string (rope) were found inside the bow items of Munchagtepa. It can be interpreted in two ways. It was not preserved or they were joined to a wooden base as short wooden extensions, such a situation can be observed in bows found in other lands [6, p.87-88]. So, even in this case, the wooden parts were not preserved, because wood is poorly preserved compared to bone. Here are the details of the parts of the bows :

Bow parts Coffins	Wooden base	Bone grafts _ _ _	
		On the side	On the front side
B-5	2	2	2
B-6	2	1	1

According to this table, the smaller parts of the canal do not freeze due to the flowing water, and it is possible for the frozen parts to be broken due to the pressure of the ice. However, based on the discovered parts of the canal, it is possible to clear the Munchoqtep canal. Another Fergana canal - the Korabulok canal, is very frightening, meaning that the number of dams and gates is the same. In both Munchoqtep and Korabulok, many water gates are connected on the basis of dam foundations. However, there are also certain differences between them. For example, the length of the water gates in the left and middle parts of Munchoqtep (up to 22 cm) was lower than that of Korabulok (up to 26 cm). Therefore, the Munchoqtep canal was smaller than Korabulok. According to researchers, the

length of the Korabulok canal was 140-165 cm [5, p.61-62, fig.11]. In turn, during the Turkic period, it is possible to say that the length of other canals was 120-140 cm around Munchoqtep [6, p.31; 12, p.36; 16, p.139-143].

Of course, all the features are added to the complex composition of Munchaktepa bows with all their components. These bows were widely used in Central Asia during this period and were shaped as weapons of war in our era [9, pp. 51-69]. These are called «Huns' bows». It is known that the «Huns' bow» had seven components, including seven bones and tendons. They were combined into two on each side and three in the middle [14, p.21]. Several types of these bows have been identified. In the early Middle Ages, the size of these bows decreased, but their combat effectiveness did not diminish [15, p.35; 6, p.87]. It is also possible to explain the decrease in the size of Munchaktepa bows with this.

The Munchaktepa bows were composed of various components, including fighter paycons and arrow-bow wood and cane stalks. There were six paycons, all made of iron, with one being three-edged, two being four-sided, and three being three-hairy. The stalks of the paycons were made of wood and reeds, with six pieces being pencil-shaped and round after processing. The emphasis was on the rare storage of the paykon stalks as a whole, as they were usually found in small pieces in Munchaghtepa findings. However, there was one case where a whole payton wood stalk was saved, providing an opportunity for full recovery of the bow and arrow. Additionally, the «tail» part of the arrow consisted of seven pieces, which were sometimes made of wood and used as the shootable part of the bow arrows.

The tail part of the bow arrow is made of wood in a short pencil-like shape. One end is slightly raised and given the shape of a «snake's head», 1-1.5 cm long. A transverse cut is made where the bow string falls. The second side is pointed and made to enter the reed. They are very beautifully made and made with passion. Some of them have red and black striped borders. Painting the tail part of the paykon arrow or the parts of the wooden shaft of the paykon is considered a custom known in the ancient and early middle ages [15, p.42; 1, p.366-368]. There are different opinions among researchers about the «tail» part of these bow arrows being painted. Some see it as a simple decoration, others see it as a sample of arrows used in religious ceremonies, and another group consider it a special symbol. That is, during the battle, it is considered necessary for the soldier to get the bullet from the gun without error [12, p.40]. In our opinion, the presence of bow arrows with such markings is a sign that the arrow (bow) was closed in Fergana. There is no information about the shape of the bow used in Fergana and how it was hung. We thought as an assumption, get rid of [16, p.150]. During this period, in Central Asia, bows and arrows were stored in separate special cases (naluche, kolchan). The bow was carried on the right side, and the arrow was carried on the left side [17, p.167]. Feathers used to produce sound on bow arrows are also not preserved. Taking into account the properties of bow arrows [20], we will show them the following two types:

1st type (type). It consists of an iron peg and a wooden handle attached to it.

2nd type (type). It consists of an iron stake with a reed stalk attached to it and a wooden «tail» inserted into it. In addition to these, we believe that there must have been reed shaft arrows attached to the paycon. Because such arrows are known from the monuments of the early Middle Ages [13, p.73-74].

The length of the Munchaktepa bows with paycons is estimated to be about one meter (taking into account such findings in certain areas) [5, p.62; 3, p.124; 8, p.37; 13, p.73]. When measured with

paycons, the length of the bow is likely to be 75-85 cm. These types of bows were widely used in the early and middle centuries and were distinguished by their precise targeting [11, p.49-53].

A bone plane and a B-6 cane stalk with a paycon were found together. The plane was used to smooth the cane stalks for the bow arrows [11, p.50. Table XI]. The following can be said about the situation and how to use the bow arrows mentioned above. That is, *the first type* (made of wood), in our opinion, was used during military operations. Making them is a lot of work, but it has one important aspect, which is that it hits the target. *The second type* and it is not difficult to prepare it, which is mainly used in hunting. Amish arrows are among the types of weapons that have been used for a long time in Central Asia [15, p.42]. But reed arrows also have weaknesses. The reason is that it is difficult to accurately reach the target due to the imbalance in the weight of the cane stalk with the target. Thus, warriors and hunters were buried in reed coffins B-6, V-5. This is also proved by the grave goods found next to them. The bows and arrows from Munchagtepa are well-preserved military equipment found after Karabulok. They report on the main weapons available in Fergana in the early Middle Ages [21]. In addition, the information given in the written sources is directly confirmed. As written in the source: «Weapons consist of bows and arrows and spears. They (Fergunians – M.B) are good at shooting on horseback» [2, p.149].

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