

About the “Central Asian Phrygians” (on I. Čašule's hypothesis)

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Abstract

In recent years there has been a wide discussion about the relict language of Burushaski, the reason for which was the hypothesis of Ilija Čašule. The author of the hypothesis defines Burushaski as an Indo-European, ancient Balkan language, very probably Phrygian or related to it, although its contacts with the North Caucasian and Yenisei languages are not denied. Leaving the subject of discussion to the linguists, we would like in this connection to draw attention to the problem of the origin of the repeatedly mentioned anonymous Central Asian donor language and, in addition, cite the data of the genetic study of the Cimmerians, as well as the carriers of the Karasuk and Okunevo cultures. In turn, some insight into the complex historical movements of peoples and their cultural contacts can be given by archaeological materials from Central Asia. In particular, we are talking about a peculiar cultural-historical community that spread from the southern Mongolian steppe belt to the Gansu province, the Tarim basin and further southwest to the Central Asian interfluves inclusively.

Keywords: Burushaski, “Phrygians”, Turan, Tocharians, Yuezhi, Kangju, Samarkand, Ferghana, Handmade Painted Pottery unity.

1. Background: language and genes

In recent years, definitions of “Phrygians”, “Phrygian language” have been increasingly heard in relation to some ancient and modern peoples of Central Asia, their languages or individual linguistic correspondences. It seems that the first person who noticed the Phrygian contribution to the culture and ethnogenesis of Central Asia was S.P. Tolstov, who drew attention to the fact that elements inherent in the Phrygian circle were preserved on the territory of the Amirabad culture for a long time, until the early Middle Ages (Tolstov 1948: 202-203). It is difficult to say what exactly inspired this idea: the name of the founder of the Afrigid dynasty Afrig or “Phrygian caps” on the coin images of the rulers of Khorezm, but the grain of truth in this statement is undoubtedly present.

Another mention of Phrygian belongs not to an archaeologist, but to a whole host of linguists who determined the position of the Tocharian languages in the system of Indo-European relations. Almost everyone agreed on the existence of a long period of particularly close contact between native speakers of Tocharian and Phrygian or Thraco-Phrygian. There are also a number of resemblances to Germanic and Balto-Slavic languages (for a detailed review, see Hackstein 2016).

Strangely, since “the Phrygians” found themselves in the extreme west (Khorezm) and the extreme east (Tarim) of Turkestan, how appropriate is the use of this geographical term in relation to such ancient times. L. S. Klein's recent idea about Phrygians in Pakistan seemed even more curious, according to which the Phrygians (Bhrigs) penetrated from the Middle Danube into the Indus Valley around the XII century BC (Klein 2007: 112-113). No matter how extravagant L. S. Klein's assumption may look, it received unexpected confirmation in the studies of the famous linguist Prof. I. Čašule, although it seems that it has been the latter's conclusions that served as the basis for L. S. Klein's hypothesis.

For the past more than twenty years, I. Čašule has been studying the origin and features of the mysterious Burushaski language. Overall, there are about 90,000 native speakers of this language, who live in the depths of the Karakoram Mountain range in North-Western Pakistan. There are three dialects - in Hunza, in Yasin and in Nagar. Researchers define Burushaski as one of the relict languages of Eurasia of the hypothetical Dene-Caucasian (Sino-Caucasian) macrofamily, as in it were found quite distinct signs of affinity with Yenisei and North Caucasian languages (for a detailed review see: Napol'skih 2022: 74-77). Contrary to the general opinion I. Čašule in a number of works tries to prove the Indo-European basis of Burushaski, moreover defines it as “an Indo-European ancient Balkan language, very probably Phrygian or related to it, which very well preserved the basic vocabulary and most of its grammar and which developed by creolization with the language yet to be revealed” (Čašule 2014). In addition, Burushaski isoglosses with 32 Slavic words are noted. According to the author, this fact indicates borrowings from Burushaski into the Proto-Slavic language and that in the distant past their speakers were in close contact (Čašule 2016: 2017).

In a persistent polemic with adherents of the Dene-Caucasian (Sino-Caucasian) theory of the origin of Burushaski, J. Bengston and V. Blažek (Bengston and Blažek 2011), I. Čašule continues to defend his position, although he does not deny the possibility of Burushaski's contacts with the

North Caucasian and Yeniseian languages (Čašule 2022). Moreover, the genetic research on the Y-chromosome of 20 samples generally indicates in favour of Čašule's version. The Burushaski people are genetically completely different from all four groups of the Pakistani population, only, in contrast to L.S. Klein, the authors link the origin of Burushaski language and genes to the conquest campaign of the Greco-Macedonian army of Alexander (Oefner et al. 2013: 839).

The extreme aggravation of the debate about the origin of the Burushaski language is evidenced by the appearance of a number of publications, in some of which it is considered an extinct North-Western Indo-European language that has undergone creolization (Hamp 2012), in others - a classical linguistic isolate that has absorbed several layers of some unknown Indo-European languages (Huld 2012). Properly, all opinions and arguments in favor of one or another version were considered and were summarized in a recent article by L. Alfieri (Alfieri 2020). Its author doubts the Indo-European origin of Burushaski, but does not exclude the influence of some unknown Indo-European language on it in antiquity and recognizes the fact, "that in Burushaski there seems to be some ancient IE elements, which however are not compatible with any known IE language, therefore they may suggest the existence of an extinct branch of the IE family that preserved the velar stops and the difference between PIE *e, *a, *o in the prehistory of the Karakoram area" (Alfieri 2020: 15-16).

For historians-archaeologists, especially those who work in Central Asia, the discussion about the Burushaski is important since it once again drew attention to a certain "foreign" component that existed in Central Asia in ancient times. In this case, it is even not so important how Burushaski meets the criteria of the Indo-European family. It is much more vital, that owing to the research of I. Čašule, a set of isoglosses, which connects Burushaski with Phrygian and Balto-Slavic languages, was revealed. Something similar has been already said about the Tocharian languages, which makes us see this fact not as an accident, but as a pattern. It seems that the conclusions of linguists show us another manifestation of a mysterious unknown Indo-European language close to Phrygian, which has left its traces in many languages and cultures of Central Asia, and Burushaski is no exception here.

How these so-called "Phrygians" found themselves in the depths of Asia, whether these groups were originally separate, at different times, or all of them fragments of a once single community, the future will show, but

for now in this regard we would like to draw attention to a monumental and extremely interesting study by G. Holzer.

In 1989, the Austrian scientist G. Holzer discovered an ancient Indo-European substratum in the Slavic and Baltic languages, consisting of 45 words and not related to any of the currently known languages (Holzer 1989: 9-12). The author of the study gave it the name “Temematic”, dated the time of contacts of its speakers with the Balto-Slavs around the IX century BC and, accordingly, connected the Temematic language with the historical Cimmerians (Holzer 1989: 177-179, 212-214). Referring to the basic works of famous archaeologists, G. Holzer considers a possible source of the Temematic language: the Srubnaya culture (A. I. Terenozhkin) or the Catacomb culture and its derivatives (M. Gimbutas) (Holzer 1989: 215-216).

F. Kortlandt tried to reconstruct the Temematic language and arrived at a conclusion that it is close to the Greco-Phrygian proto-language, although it is difficult to prove the existence of such language. According to some features, the Temematic language is similar to Tocharian, Italian and Anatolian, in some ways to Germanic. Some features, most probably of later origin, unite it with the Daco-Albanian language. Thus, the author reasonably assumed its early separation from the Indo-European core, immediately after the Italo-Celtic and Germanic. Concerning the position of the Temematic language in the circle of related ones, the author determined its proximity to Phrygian (Kortland 2003: 253, 258-260).

In accordance with the traditions of classical education, when mentioning Phrygians, Thracians, Cimmerians, associations inevitably arise with the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region, the Danube and North Balkan plains. However, as a brief brilliant review by N.A. Nikolaeva (Nikolayeva 2017) shows, there probably nothing is more thankless in the archaeology of Eastern Europe than the problem of the Cimmerians' origin. The situation was aggravated or, conversely, clarified by a recent genetic study of samples from the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron.

Cimmerians, unlike representatives of the Srubnaya and Alakul cultures, contain a Siberian genetic component, in particular, Paleoasiatic and Native Americans, indicating their Eastern origin. In this respect, the Cimmerians are getting closer to the representatives of the Karasuk culture, thereby confirming the opinion expressed in 1972 by N.L. Chlenova about the existence of the Karasuk-Cimmerian cultural and historical community (Krzewińska et al. 2018: 3-6; Chlenova 1972). The same genetic line with a characteristic component of Asian peoples and Native Americans dates

back to the Okunevo culture of the Bronze Age (Allentoft et al. 2015: 169; Unterländer et al. 2017: 4, 8).

The genetic analysis data on the Cimmerians, Karasuk and Okunevo cultures surprisingly coincide with the linguistic data on the Burushaski language. The unique Burushaski language bears signs of contacts with the most diverse languages of the wide range of language families, and correspondingly, the signs of reverse influence should remain in related groups of the ancient and most ancient population of the Middle East and Central Asia. This makes us turn again to the persistently repeated evidence of the presence in Central Asia of a mysterious Indo-European language, revealed by the latest research in the field of comparative linguistics. G. Carling, remarking the established fact of the absence of links between Tocharian and Indo-Iranian, examines the issues of contacts between Tocharian and Indo-Aryan, which probably occurred no later than the II millennium BC. As a result, a number of early borrowings are found in both Proto-Tocharian and Indo-Iranian/Early Indo-Aryan (probably also in Chinese) from the same unknown donor language that once existed in Central Asia (Carling 2005: 52-54, 66).

In the famous discussion of I.M. Dyakonov with T.V. Gamkrelidze and V.V. Ivanov, the Chinese word *lac “milk (cottage cheese, cheese, butter)” is cited, which dates back not to the Tocharian, but to the ancient Indo-European *Grag “dairy product” (Diakonov 1982 (II): 22-23; Gamkrelidze and Ivanov 1984: 120). Probably, the origin of the Chinese word for dairy product should be explained by the influence of this unknown language as well.

Much earlier, T. Burrow, based on studying documents of the III century from the city of Nia, the capital of the state of Krouraina (Loulan), came to the conclusion about the possibility of the existence of some Indo-European language in the southern regions of the Tarim River basin. He conditionally called it the third “Tocharian C language” as it was very close to Tocharian language (Burrow 1935: 675).

V.V. Napol'skih (2022) also reveals the presence of some unknown language, he named “Paratocharian”, justifying this by the fact that in the Uralic languages, after the collapse of the Proto-Uralic and Proto-Finno-Ugric languages. The borrowings are observed (around during the first half of the II millennium), not from the direct ancestor of the known Tocharian languages, and from a language that had not left any direct descendants alive, but was apparently close to Paratocharian in the early stages of its development (Napol'skih 2022: 38).

It is quite possible that the same unknown language left its trace in the history of Middle Asia. The etymology of the names of Kushan rulers of Bactria with a characteristic suffix -šk- remains unclear: Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasishka (see Zakharov 2002). There is no such suffix in the Bactrian language, however there is one in Tocharian, but Iranian etymologies are better suited for the listed names (Ivanov 1992: 19). Studying Chinese written sources about the Kushan-Yuezhi homeland in the city of Zhao’u, Y. Yoshida also speaks some unknown language, as he suggests, Hephthalite (Yoshida 2003: 51-52, 61).

The origin of many geographical names of Central Asia, even such famous ones as Samarkand, Bukhara, Chach (Tashkent), remains unexplained nowadays as well. The attempts that have been made, as a rule, were exclusively related to Iranian or Türk languages, and therefore they were not successful. The origin of the name of Ferghana has not been clarified yet, although V. A. Livshits proposed its reconstruction: “The spelling of βry’n(’)k in Mug texts shows that the ancient form of the name of the region was *Far(a)gana or *Fragana” (Livshits 2008: 93-94). Perhaps specialists should pay attention to the self-designation of Phrygians - Bhryges with the initial aspirated bh (Klein 2007: 110). To what extent does it correspond to Sogdian βry’n’k or βry’nk - Ferghana, Ferghanian (Sogdian documents from Mt. Mugh. III: 103)?

The example of Ferghana generally is very indicative not only from the point of view of linguistics, but also from the standpoint of archaeology. For a long time, the history of the valley was considered as a kind of isolated island with a peculiar culture, in isolation from its southwestern neighbors and, for one reason or another, eastern ones. In the archaeology of the Ferghana Valley, as in a mirror, the main historical pattern of the historical development of Central Asia is reflected, which consists in the symbiosis of two peoples, two cultures and, accordingly, the bipolarity of two economic systems – agricultural and pastoral. In the Late Bronze and Early Iron ages, the agricultural Chust culture and the cattle-breeding Kairakkum culture interacted in Ferghana, around the middle of the I millennium BC – Eilatan and Aktam, then up to the early Middle Ages – Shurabashat and Kugai-Karabulak.

2. History and archaeology

In the era of Late Bronze and Early Iron, a community of handmade painted ceramics cultures spread over a vast area from the Tarim Basin in Xinjiang

to southern Afghanistan and North-Eastern Iran, the so-called “period of barbaric occupation” begins. The name is generally accepted, but extremely poor, since the percentage of painted dishes is usually extremely low (2-3%), on average about 10%, in the Tarim basin its percentage is usually higher. In the Ferghana Valley, as mentioned above, it is the Chust culture; in the Tashkent region – the Burgulyuk culture; in Southern Uzbekistan, Southern Turkmenistan and North-Eastern Iran - the Yaz-I culture; in Central Uzbekistan, in the valleys of the Zarafshan and Kashkadarya rivers - without a name, just “sites of the Yaz-I type”.

In the period between 1500 and 1000 BC, the area of distribution of the community of handmade painted ceramics reached its maximum, occupying in the south the lands that were deserted after the departure of the carriers of the Bactrian-Margian Archaeological Complex (BMAC). Until 1500 BC, the BMAC occupied a relatively narrow latitudinal strip from North-Eastern Iran to Northern Afghanistan, with the northern edge only slightly capturing the southernmost regions of Central Asia. After 1500 BC, the uninhabited expanses of the famous Central Asian deserts, the Great Khorezm and the steppes of Kazakhstan remained the areas not occupied by the cultures of painted ceramics, where the Eastern Iranian post-Andronovo cultures spread at that time. It should be especially emphasized that the commonality of painted handmade ceramics in all respects is fundamentally different from both the northern, steppe cultures, and the southern, Bactrian, which arose on the basis of the Bactrian-Margiana archaeological complex.

Around 1000 BC, the Yaz-I culture rolled back to the north, leaving its villages, followed by the Central Iranian Avestan Yaz-II culture occupying the territory of Afghanistan and the south of Central Asia. In Uzbekistan, the latter is recorded only in the southernmost Surkhandarya region (Sverchkov and Boroffka 2015). The conditional border of the two cultures – Yaz-II and painted ceramics - ran along the spurs of the Hissar ridge, i.e., in the same place where many years later the Graeco-Bactria and then the Kushan Empire bordered Sogdiana. For a long time, the historical rivalry between the two political titans of the Middle East – Iran and Turan - took place around this turn. The memory of a common cultural and historical space called Turan, which existed at that time, has been preserved in the extant early parts of the holy book “Avesta” and the late poetic collection of ancient legends “The Shahnameh” by Ferdowsi.

The Avesta reflects the capture of the entire Aryan country by the king of Turan Frangrasyan (Afrasiab) – “Aryānem Vaējah”, Afrasiab even

carried out construction work in Seistan, including near the legendary Lake Hamun (Litvinsky&Ranov 1998: 243). This is fully confirmed by the data of archeology: both by the geography of the painted ceramics culture, and by Yaz-I materials from the lower layers of the Nadi-Ali settlement in Seistan. It is worth mentioning that Seistan is of a crucial importance in the Zoroastrian tradition, and the ruins of Nadi-Ali near the confluence of the Hilmand River into Lake Hamun are considered the capital center of the “Aryan Lands” (Gnoli 1980: 129-136; 1989: 46). Perhaps, since those times, the name Turan, mentioned in the early Sasanian period, has been preserved in Afghan Baluchistan in the south-east of the Iranian Highlands. In any case, in the famous settlement of Mundigak in Afghan Baluchistan, Yaz-I materials are presented quite well.

The central region of Turan called Kangha or Kang is the Zaravshan Valley, where the main communication hub of Central Asia has been located since ancient times. There are two major sites of the culture of handmade painted ceramics – the ancient settlement of Samarkand Afrasiab (lower layer) and the settlement of Koktepa (lower layers) located 25 km north of Samarkand (Isamiddinov 2010). Out of them, Koktepa with an area of only 17 hectares within the defensive walls can be confidently claimed as the capital of Turan - the city of Kang.

In order to avoid misunderstandings, it should be recalled once again that in the Central Asian interflute, unlike the Kazakh steppes, there has never been anything like the Arzhan and Pazyryk mounds. We can address to Scythian culture on the remote outskirts of Central Asia – in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya (Greater Khorezm) or to the Scythian-Saka materials of the Pamir, close to the Khotan-Saka, however we observe the classical Scythian triad nowhere in Central Asia, but in Kazakhstan.

Around the V century BC, Iran, more precisely, the Achaemenid Empire significantly pushed Turan, capturing all the northern territories up to the Syr Darya. The cultures of handmade painted ceramics remained in the Tashkent region, in the Ferghana Valley and, obviously, in Xinjiang. The capital centers of Koktepa and Afrasiab were conquered and reconstructed and most likely, the new center of Turan was being forcibly moved to the right bank of the Syr Darya, to the territory of Greater Tashkent. Although in 329-328 BC, all the famous sites of the Achaemenid period of Central Asia were brutally destroyed by the Greek-Macedonian troops. Alexander was supported by allies from among the residents of the Yaksart (Syr Darya) regions. This fact is proofed not only by the chaotic data of classical sources, but also by the finds of handmade and painted

vessels of the Ferghana Eilatam-Aktam type in the same layer with Early Hellenistic ceramics (Sverchkov 2013; Sverchkov, Wu Xin and Boroffka 2013; Sverchkov and Wu Xin 2019).

With the end of the Seleucid period around the middle of the III century BC, long before the "Yuezhi assault" of Graeco-Bactria, Eastern Iranian tribes penetrated the central regions of Middle Asia. In the south, they stopped at the line of the spurs of the Hissar ridge, in the Tashkent region, the ancient Burguluk culture is absorbed by the sarmatoidKaunchi culture. Approximately beginning this period of time, the ancient name of the political center of Turan, the Kangha region, was restored that sounded in the Chinese transcription of the II century BC (about 128 BC) as Kangyu or Kangju. Since then and up to the present day, the name Kang in the Chinese tradition is associated exclusively with Samarkand and with the proper names of its natives.

The direct genetic line of Turan was preserved only in the Ferghana Valley with its bipolar system of Shurabashat-Kugai-Karabulak cultures, in Southern Xinjiang, Western Gansu and Northern Qinghai, where, undoubtedly, there was a similar agricultural-pastoral and ethnic symbiosis. If in Tarim basin the Tocharian culture of handmade painted ceramics dominated from ancient times, the foothills of Eastern Tien-Shan in X-II centuries BC were occupied by Barkol culture, confidently identified by Chinese researchers with ethnic Yuezhi (Wei Lanhai, Li Hui and Xu Wenkan 2013: 282-285, Fig. 1).

In the II century BC, a particularly powerful migration wave spilled out of Gansu, involving the Eastern Iranian tribes in the general process, which brought the Yuezhi dynasty to the throne of Kushan Bactria with its non-Tocharian and non-Bactrian unrenderable names Kanishka, Huvishka and Vasishka.

As the last direct descendants of the ancient Turks, the mysteriousKidarites (Xiao Yuezhi), Chionites and Hephthalites can be listed, the next enemies of Iran, only already Sasanian, but this is the topic of a separate study. Later, the Türks took up the slack of the wars with Iran after a short alliance, borrowing in a somewhat distorted form the name of the country Turan and the people who inhabited it, but not the language.

The language of the Turs was not Iranian either: neither the name of the Turs nor the name Frangrasyan (Afrasiab) have an Iranian etymology (Pyankov 2006: 232-233). Judging by the "Hymn of Khvarno" of the Avesta, when the king of Turan Frangrasyan, swearing, switched to his native language, the Arians did not understand anything and perceived his

speech as gibberish (Steblin-Kamensky, Yasht 19, VIII: 138). At the same time, it is impossible to recognize the Turanian language as Tocharian, one can only assume their relatively close relationship. Therefore, in the epic tale “The Shahnameh”, a character named Tochar appears on the side of the Turks. In one part of “The Book of Kings”, he is a cunning adviser to Siavush's son Forud, who led the Turan army against Kei Khosrov, in another Tochar is the ruler of Dehistan (Firdousi II: 388-407; III: 356, 461).

Thus, there is no need to link the appearance of signs of the Phrygian language in Central Asia with the descendants of Alexander's warriors, since these signs are present where even Greek influence has never been. Maybe the theory of a “Temematic” language close to Phrygian looks much more winning, which could serve as an anonymous donor for all its numerous neighbors? Taking into account the vast territory where there are manifestations of contacts with an unknown language, it is likely that we are not even talking about any particular language, but rather about one of the oldest language groups of the Indo-European family. Whether this group can be considered a separate branch of a common family is up to specialists to decide. For archaeologists, it is more important to answer the question of how the so-called “Central Asian Phrygians” managed to acquire such a very specific set of contacts – from North Caucasian peoples to Paleoasiatic, and not only.

From the point of view of Central Asian archaeology, the author's opinion has been already stated: the southwestern impulse, which reached about 2400 BC Southern Siberia, is reflected both in archaeological material and in anthropological, and in remarkable rock paintings of the Okunevo culture (Sverchkov 2011: 178-180, 2012).

The most vital origins are seen in the materials of the excavations of the world's first catacomb burial ground of the Halaf culture, in the depths of which the culture of black and gray ceramics of North-Eastern Iran and South-Western Turkmenistan was born and later formed around the middle of the IV millennium BC. After the name of the famous treasure, it is called Astrabad and has always existed in close alliance with the Anau culture of painted ceramics Namazga III-IV. The bipolar agricultural-pastoral symbiosis inherent in this alliance is most clearly represented on the monuments of Shakhri-Sokhte (Tosi 1971; Biscione 1973) and Akdepe (Sarianidi 1976: 91-92). Especially noteworthy in Shakhri-Sokhte is the combination of raw crypts typical of the Anau culture - cysts and pits with the Astrabad catacombs in the same burial ground (Tosi, Piperno 1975). At the beginning of the III millennium BC, metallurgy of arsenic bronzes

flourished in the settlement by the crucible method, and copper processing was carried out by a more progressive method than anywhere else in the Middle East (Hauptmann, Rehren, Schmitt-Strecker: 2003).

A lot has been said about the closest contacts of the Astrabad culture and the neighboring North Caucasian Kuro-Araks culture, as well as about signs of gradual penetration at first, and at the beginning of the III millennium BC explosive migration in the north-east direction. The emergence in China of the vibrant Longshan culture, the appearance of the rudiments of writing and traditional fortune-telling practice, the sudden flourishing of bronze metallurgy and, most importantly, the emergence of already cultivated wheat and barley, as well as cows, goats and sheeps constitute the direct and vivid reflection of migration.

Against this background, the area of Okunevo culture, like its successor Karasuk culture, is nothing more than the far northern periphery of the common cultural space, the center of which, apparently, was in the already mentioned in connection with Yuezhi Provinces of Gansu and Qinghai. However, the principle of combining cists, though not of raw bricks, but of stone, and catacomb burials in the Okunev culture was strictly observed in burial practice, with catacomb burials predominating in the early stages.

Alongside the easier-going cattle breeders - native speakers of the "unknown language" (or, mostly, a little later), Proto-Tocharian farmers, which chose the Tarim basin in the neighborhood, arrived. Obviously, the annals of Indo-European studies have already included the decision to recognize the Afanasievo culture as Proto-Tocharians, and it would be really delightful to find at least one archaeological confirmation of this¹. However, the forerunner of the cultures of handmade painted ceramics of Xinjiang cannot be observed anywhere else, except the Anau culture of the southwest so far. Moreover, from the late Eneolithic era to the Early Middle Ages, the distinctive feature of the alliance of the Tocharians and the "Central Asian Phrygians" was so closely intertwined that according to written sources it is almost impossible to distinguish one from another. The similar situation arises with Tocharians and Yuezhi as well as with their predecessors, the Turs. Here it can be watched, that the material culture refers indeed to the pre-Tocharian community of handmade painted

¹Recent genetic studies have completely refuted the Afanasyevo presence in the Tarim Basin (see Fan Zhang et al. 2021).

ceramics, while the names and language belong to “Phrygian” or, maybe, to the hypothetical Temematic.

It is highly likely, that due to the “pseudo-Phrygian” language, it will be possible to translate the inscriptions made in “unknown writing”, which were detected in Bactria right after the “Yuezhi assault”, although the oldest sample of this letter is recorded on a silver platter in the famous Issyk mound of the end of the IV century BC (Vertogradova 1995: 33-36). The raw data on the findings of an unknown writing were also received from the Ferghana Valley, but later they (findings) were attributed to Aramaic, then to Kharoshthi, then to Turkic Runic. It is also quite possible that it will finally be feasible to find out the etymology of the names of the Kushan kings and the suffix - sk-, as well as proper names belonging to Kidarites, Chionites and Heptalites.

3. Conclusions

It appears that Burushaski can bear the signs of contacts with the Temematic language identified by G. Holzer, or, more precisely, with one of the representatives of the related languages, which in ancient times constituted the some proto-lingual group and once spread over a vast territory from southern Siberia to the Himalayas, from the Yenisei to the Danube. The set of contacts of this "unknown language" is much more extensive than that of Tocharian, but their ancestors have always and at all times lived in a very close union. According to the archaeology of Central Asia, the origins of their union are seen in North-Eastern Iran and South-Western Turkmenistan, where a kind of fusion of the Anau agricultural and Astrabad cattle-breeding cultures took place.

In the Bronze Age, they remained their coexistence in the close proximity, but for this time in Central Asia and in direct contact with forest hunter-gatherers – native speakers of Paleoasiatic languages. A distinctive set of genes was consistently reflected in the representatives of the Okunevo culture and the Karasuk-Cimmerian community; the linguistic features of the Burushaski indicate the same signs. The core of the “Phrygian” Temematic language was traditionally located together with the Tocharian - in the south of Xinjiang, west of Gansu and north of Qinghai, including the South Mongolian steppe belt in the north, i.e., the ancestral lands of the “Great Yuezhi”.

Here, due to the southwestern impulse, long before the formation of the Andronovo culture, for the first time in the history of Central Asia, the

principle of a cattle-breeding type of economy with its inherent lifestyle, high mobility and militant psychology emerged. This largely predetermined the course of historical processes in Eurasia, accompanied by periodic outbursts from the unstable zone of multilingual tribal groups in the western and southwestern directions. Over time, ethnic groups changed, but the way of life and harsh environmental conditions pushed them to the west, for example, it is enough to recall the Cimmerians, Scythians, Sarmatians, Huns, Türks and Mongols.

In the south-western direction, in Central Asia, the commonality of handmade painted ceramics and its distribution dates back to the time of the existence of the political formation of Turan, where the Tocharo-Turanian symbiosis with the obvious linguistic dominance of the latter was again manifested, judging by the names and toponyms. Certainly, it is incorrect to call the Turanian language “Phrygian”, but it is quite possible to attribute it to the group of hypothetical Temematic. It is significant that a similar situation developed in the Yuezhi-Kushan period, when a country with an Iranian speaking population began to be called Tokharistan, and the owners were Kushans with names of “unknown” origin. It seems that the ethnic Yuezhi of the II century BC were distant descendants of the creators of the Okunevo and Karasuk culture, as, perhaps, the Kidarite-Hephthalite tribes were descendants of the Yuezhi themselves.

From about the II century BC to the V-VII centuries AD the mountain villages of Karakorum, unlike the inhabitants of Nuristan (Kafiristan) in Afghanistan, were by no means isolated from the outside world. At the turn of our era, along the Indus River, including the Burushaski villages, there was a trade route through which goods highly valued in the Roman Empire - silk and the best steel in the known world - arrived from Serindia. Numerous pilgrims and individual embassies and after all, the spread of Buddhism itself into Chinese territory left their incredible traces in the form of rock paintings in North Pakistan (see 1989-2004) and the equally incredible ethnic and genetic diversity of the ancient Ladakh population in North-West India (Rowold et al. 2016).

All of the above applies to no lesser or even greater extent to the territory of the Central Asian interfluves, where since ancient times there have been numerous contacts between representatives of various language families, races, cultures and religions. In a sense, this process continues to this day, reflecting the main pattern of the historical development of Central Asia, no matter what it is called - Turan, Mawarannahr or Turkestan.

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