

MIGRATION IN THE MIDDLE VOLGA REGION IN THE FIRST CENTURIES B.C.: ARCHAEOLOGICAL EVIDENCES AND ITS ETHNO-SOCIAL INTERPRETATION

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The relevance of the problem under investigation is determined by the significant role of migration in the history of ancient Eurasian societies. In some cases migrations influenced the formation of a new ethno-cultural environment, as was registered by archaeological methods which was reflected in the change of archaeological cultures, the termination of the existence of ones and the formation of new cultures. Very often this fact is explained by migration and the influx of new population replacing the natives. But it is not always possible to fix the starting point of this migration and its features. The article is aimed to examine a single particular archaeological phenomenon, which was identified in the Volga-Ural region in the beginning of I millennium B.C., when a number of burial complexes differed in funeral rites and burial set of implements (especially it concerns weapons, a military costume and some military ceremonies). Geographically, they are concentrated in the lower part of the river Sura, and their origins go back to the Western Kama. The historical and archaeological analysis suggests that it was a region of migration of some military union but not mass migration of people. The major method of research is a comprehensive approach based on the study of archaeological sources, involving Ethnographic and Social Anthropologic data. The study revealed and systematized archaeological sites studied by archaeological excavations, defined their chronology and dynamics of development. Analysis of the funeral rite, weapons and a military costume allowed us to reconstruct the socio-cultural character of the population. A comparison of these data with archaeological materials of Kama region, the Southern Urals and Western Siberia revealed the starting point of this migration, as well as intermediate sites, showing the movement, left them by population. There were analyzed the burial rite and grave implements, built their typology and determined their development dynamics, as well as the nearest analogies. Article submissions may be used in the preparation of generalizing monographs on population history as the Volga-Ural region and the whole of Eurasia, in the teaching practice of universities at the lectures and practical lessons, in the development of specialized courses in archeology in Eastern Europe and the ethno-genesis of the peoples of the Ural-Volga region.

Keywords: The Volga-Ural region, migration, archaeological culture, change of cultures, a social and military organization in early Eastern Europe, military migrations, reconstruction of ethno-cultural history.

INTRODUCTION

The problem of studying the migration processes in the early Iron Age and the early Middle Ages is one of the key concepts for the renovation of the ethno-cultural processes in the Volga-Ural region, as well as in the whole Eurasia. The interest to this issue is not accidental. In some cases migrations influenced the

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formation of a new ethno-cultural environment, which was fixed by archaeological methods and reflected in the change of archaeological cultures, the termination of existence of old cultures and formation of new ones. Archaeologists often fix these cultural changes by analyzing invasions and transmissions, revealing the dramatic changes in the appearance of traditional cultures, the emergence of new cultural elements or even complete cessation of their existence. Very often this fact can be explained by migrations and the appearance of new population replacing the native one. But it is not always possible to fix the starting point of this migration and its features.

The main factors of transformations in the archaeological cultures, all radical internal changes of society, no doubt, are in the sphere of economic dynamics, as well as a variety of innovations in the field of social relations, which are reflected mainly in weapons and military costume (Khazanov, 1971; Khudyakov, 1986; Khudyakov, 1990; Izmailov, 1997; Izmailov, 2000; Zubov, 2007). This special role in the revitalization process of forming a new reality belongs to immigrants or the cultural impulses that they have caused.

Through analysis and synthesis researchers study the archaeological culture based on existent written sources and ethnographic parallels and reconstruct some models of population migrations by identifying the causes of migration. At the same time, the mechanism of the impact of migration on the course and the pace of socio-economic and ethno-cultural changes in ancient societies has not been revealed yet, as well as the degree of influence of various factors on these processes and the nature of migration itself (Titov, 1982; Rouse, 1986; Klein, 1999; Klein, 2013).

The interest to theoretical validity of the previously defined cultural changes as a result of migration significantly decreased in scientific literature of the latest decades. As a result, traditional indigenous hypothesis of formation and development of peoples began dominating, and the role of migration as a basis of cultural changes has been questioned. The archaeological science established the concept of cultural evolution, minimizing the importance of migrations in ancient times (Stepanov, 1980; Vikhlyayev, 2000; Grishakov, 2005).

In the context of a multi-ethnic region, represented by the Volga-Urals region, the analysis of cultural transmissions and migrations is particularly important.

Firstly, it is impossible to understand the process of formation and transformation of complex multicultural and multilingual situation in the Volga-Urals region without different migrations taken into account. Secondly, the problem of migration is related to many questions about emergence of new cultural elements that characterize the social changes primarily affected weapons and a military costume as well as a special military culture, typical for special militarized societies, such as military youth unions in some early societies.

All these problems, despite the large amount of accumulated materials, remained almost unstudied. Meanwhile, the analysis of weapons, military costumes and special types of funerary monuments contains important information on social and military organization of the population of Eastern Europe at the beginning of I millennium B.C.

METHODOLOGY

The methodological basis of the research is a comprehensive approach based on the study of archaeological sources. Theoretical models describing the archaeological signs of migration played an important role in justification of the results (Trigger 1968; Klein 1981; Rouse 1986; Klein 1991; Adams 1991; Klein 1999; Klein 2013).

The archaeological sites of the Volga-Urals region such as the Andreevskiy burial mound, Staroardatovskiy I burial mound, Piseralsky burial mound, Klimkinsky burial mound, Pilninskiy I burial mound, Pilninskiy II burial mound became the basis of studies. They are all located in the lower reaches and near the mouth of the river Sura (Khalikov, 1962; Stepanov, 1964; Stepanov, 1980; Arkhipov & Shadrin 1995; Vikhlyaev, 1999; Grishakov, 2000; Grishakov & Zubov, 2009; Zubov, 2011).

The archaeological sites that provide ethnographic data and evidence of historical sources and information about migration are of great scientific interest (Geddon, 1923; Bogoras-Tan, 1923).

RESULTS

The sites of the first centuries appeared after the classical monuments of Gorodets culture – their textile and pseudo-woven ceramics, and, as now is well-known, the antiquities of Piseraly-Andreevo type, which were discovered in 1958 by Khalikov A.Kh. when studying a small group of burial mounds next to the village of Piseraly of Gornomariyskiy district of the Republic of Mari El (Khalikov, 1962). He has also discovered a group of burial mounds near Klimkin village, which was excavated in 1991 and 1993 by G.A. Arkhipov and A.I. Shadrin (1995). They examined 2 burial mounds with 28 burials (Arkhipov & Shadrin, 1995). Both burial mounds have a number of common features.

The burial mounds were located on the edge of the fluvial terrace of Volga. During the excavation of Piseraly burial mound 5 mounds containing 21 burials were studied. All of them were made after inhumation in groundwater pits or on the surface and covered with a round-shaped mound. Each mound contained one central burial with other burials placed around its perimeter. The burials were made in rectangular or oval pits (dimensions - 180-270 x 50-95 x 15-70 cm). The orientation was revealed in 16 cases (9 – East, 4 - South-East, 3 - South). Almost all the buried lied on a bed made of oak planks or surrounded by them.

Inside the Klimkino burial mound the buried lied in rows, stretched from the East to the West. The orientation was revealed in 12 cases (9 - North-West, the other - West, North).

The majority of the buried were accompanied by various items—pieces of their costume, jewelry and weapons. The pieces of the costume were located on the place of their wear during life. It is interesting to note that some covers (canine form) in female costumes were used as breast elements, and in male ones were the parts of their waist belt. The burial places of men were often contained weapons (swords, spears, arrow heads and details of horse trappings (bar bit).

In 1963-64 in Bolsheignatovsky district of the Republic of Mordovia Stepanov P.D. studied the Andreevo burial mound (Stepanov 1964, Stepanov 1980, Grishakov, Zubov 2009). The mound had a diameter of about 30 m and a height of 0.6 m. In the mound there were 52 burial pits with 59 graves of men, women and children. The specific characteristic of the mound was the presence of central collective burial place and 3 types of entering burials. The contours of the pits were identified in 20 cases, and in 42 the orientation of the buried (in most cases - the north).

The central burial looked like a rectangular pit (6.4 x 2.88 m), the top of which was covered with wooden beams. The burials of the second group were smaller and more simplified versions of the central burial and were placed around it. All of them were oriented to the North-East too. In male graves they found a full set of ornaments and weapons, including swords and spears, and in female - jewelry (temple pendants, necklace beads, clasps and plait decorations). In addition to them the mound had entering burials of various orientation, but similar, with some exceptions, items.

According to the stratigraphic observations, the central grave was made first with a burial mound on it. Later the graves of the second group were made, and then - the entering burials. With all the similarities of orientation and clothing inventory (jewelry, weapons, horse bridle) these groups contained new elements of the ceremony - funeral food, gifts in the form of valuable things, an inverted arrangement of bladed weapons, arrowheads out of the quiver and the pots next to their heads. This clearly indicates that the rite was simplified, in particular, namely people stopped to make mound burials and started to make ground burials.

In 1967 P.D. Stepanov discovered another mound near Ardatovo village of Ardatovskiy district of the Republic of Mordovia, the only burial which he considered to be a ground burial of the Andreevo mound (Zubov, 2013). The burial was found in the center of the mound in a pit (2.6 x 2 m). The head of the buried was oriented to the South-East. The burial contained weapons (a sword, a dagger, two spearheads), and jewelry (necklace beads and a belt).

In 2010 S.E. Zubov and O.A. Radyush found two burials of the first century A.D. on the territory of Pilninsky District of Nizhny Novgorod region (Zubov,

2011). The Pilninsky I burial is located on a rock of the fluvial terrace of the Anda River, the left tributary of the river Pyana. Exploring the pit amale burial place was discovered on the cape-shape spur of the second terrace in 200 meters from the cape, where the Pilninsky I burial mound was located. Its grave items can be compared with the materials of Piseraly-Andreevo type of monuments and dated I-II centuries B.C. These were bone and iron arrowheads, a bronze buckle with an iron tongue and a round bead of dull silver color. The iron sword was placed along the right hip of the buried, it was very poorly preserved. The bones of the buried were also poorly-preserved. Some graves were destroyed by later excavations and such items as weapons and horse equipment, parts of belt sets, clothes decoration and so on are exhibited in local museums.

Today the number of monuments Piseraly-Andreevo type is represented by six burials, four mounds and two ground burials.

The monuments of this type can be characterized by presence of complete sets of weapons, military costumes and horse equipment. It is the most impressive thing in comparison with the complete absence of weapons in preceding archaeological monuments (Khalikov, 1962; Stepanov, 1980; Grishakov, 2000; Grishakov & Zubov, 2009, Zubov, 2011).

The bladed weapons are represented by swords, broadswords and daggers (29 items). The swords (10 items) have straight double-edged blades, and were presented by findings of two types –with straight plated crosshairs and a rod-shaped handle, and with non-metallic crosshairs and a flattened handle. The total length of the swords is 70-90 cm, and the width of the handle is 3-5 cm. The broadswords (13 items) as straight single edged blades are represented by two types of a cross guard shape with straight rod-like crosshairs - with a metal finial in the form of two almost closed arcs and many-sided heads at the ends without metal finials. Often the handle was wrapped with a bronze rod, a leather strap or a thread. The bronze finials remained at the end of some of the blades.

Daggers (6 items) with ring finials and without them were also found.

Spearheads of spears were found in 27 graves and one in a mound. They all had an elongated leaf-shaped wide blade. Some of them had an axial rib at the center of the blade. Their length varied from 24 to 45 cm. Some items from the Andreevskiy mound preserved bronze finials. A separate group of spears is represented by double-spiked darts (leister type).

The parts of horse munitions are presented by bar bits and bridle sets. In total, they were found in 11 male graves (almost 44% of all burials with weapons). All bar bits were two-part with rod cheek-pieces made of iron and in some cases of bronze. The bridle sets were found several times. The most interesting item came from the Andreevskiy mound and consisted of 10 round bronze plate pads (3 cm diameter) with a raised ornament.

Protective weapons were also found inside the Andreevskiy mound. Here two sets of armor contained a rolled chainmail and a helmet of the Spangen helm type laid on it. Similar helmets were known from the Pilninskiy burial place. The armor laid at the head inside the grave. Same helmets appeared in the steppes of Asia and were brought to Europe by the Sarmatian tribes (Hazanov, 1971; Khudyakov, 1986).

The unique items, which can be called “military trophies”, were found in two male burials of the Andreevskiy mound. One of them consisted of five human upper jaws with drilled holes, alternated with bronze round plaques. The other one was a set of four human jaws with two holes, a pendant of two bear tusks, phalanges of human fingers and a bone buckle. Most likely, these trophies were strung on hanging straps.

Numerous decorations of male and female costume were also found in graves. Headdress elements in the form of pendants were found in 10 burials (in five cases they were paired). In most cases, there were bronze or gold round spiral pendants of 3-5 curls. Necklaces (6 items) made of round wire with bracing on the ends were found there too. The most numerous category of jewelry is represented by beads (1400 items). Most of them are made of glass, but rarely stone beads were found too (made of carnelian, rock crystal, amber, bone and 50 bronze beads). They were used as parts of necklaces and female belt sets. Plait decorations were found in two female burials of the Andreevskiy mound. Bronze bracelets were found in seven female burials. Syulgamas and fibulas were used as fasteners. Among fibulas we should distinguish 4 elements of the Aucissa type typical for the Roman culture which is widespread in Central and Eastern Europe (Ambrose, 1966).

The belt set is represented by different types of buckles, pads and pendants. The most typical forms of pads were round, oval, combinations of round metal plates and tusk-shaped plates (“boots”) with a crossbar for threading a belt or with an earlet on the back side.

Ceramic dishes were represented unevenly. In Piseralskiy and Klimkinskiy burials they were not found. In Pilnenskiy burial they were rare. In Andreevskiy mound 34 of them were found in 26 burials, 10 of such burials were female. All dishes were moulded, baked with raised smoothed surface. Metal dishes are represented by a bronze cup made in South Italy (Kropotkin, 1970; Shilov, 1972).

The chronology of these monuments in general does not cause any debates. According to similar monuments these items can be attributed to the I-III centuries B.C. (Zubov, 2013). The items which allow us to establish the date of their origin are weapons - daggers with ring finials (Khazanov, 1971), swords, bridles, necklaces, belt elements, tusks (Sapozhkova), pendants, the Aucissa fibula, and the Italic cup (Shilov, 1972), etc.

On the border of the eras classical monuments of the Gorodets culture with textile and pseudo-textile ceramics ceased to exist in the Volga-Ural region. Researchers did not know the reason for these changes for a long time but associated

it with the events of the Great Migration. Gradually, from 1958 to 2004, a new type monuments was discovered, which is known in modern science as Piseraly-Andreevo type.

The problems of appearance and functioning of monuments of this cultural and chronological phenomenon, the questions on groups which were involved in their formation and their historical fate have not received a clear and unambiguous answer yet. The complexity of these problems is primarily based on the unique character of these necropoleis, since there have not been found any similar archaeological monuments combining a funeral rite and material culture outside of the Sura region. For all researchers one thing is obvious - their appearance is connected with penetration of a foreign population into the local environment (Khalikov, 1962; Khalikov, 1987; Stepanov, 1980; Matveeva, 1986; Grishakov, 2005; Zubov, 2004; Zubov, 2007; Zubov, 2009; Vikhlyaev, 1999; Vikhlyaev 2000).

The comparison of monuments of the "late Gorodets" period with monuments of Piseraly-Andreevo type demonstrates that the relationship between them are traced by researchers in the ceramic complexes of the Andreevskiy mound (Stepanov, 1980; Grishakov, 2005; Vikhlyaev, 1999; Vikhlyaev, 2000), certain categories and types of weapons - tanged arrowheads with thorns and large spearheads (Khalikov, 1962), some categories of clothing ornaments –plaits decorations, syulgamas (Vikhlyaev, 1999; Vikhlyaev, 2000). At the same time, the existence of certain categories of material culture, fundamentally different funeral rites, allow us to consider the population, left the autochthonous Gorodets culture only as a substrate, conquered by the army of aliens and subordinated to them.

Defining the alien component in almost every item of ethnic component the authors accept the existence of Sarmatian influence on Piseraly-Andreevo monuments. Though, each researcher estimates the role of Sarmatian nomads in composition of population in the Middle Volga differently. Arguments of those who support the existence of the Sarmatian component are different, as well as definition of the degree of their participation in formation of the monuments of the Piseraly-Andreevo circle. For example, according to Dr. StepanovL.D., the "Sauromate-Sarmatian" component of the "horsemen - conquerors" is characterized by the rite of burial in deep graves with a mound, existence of military trophies and weapons and presence of slaves (Stepanov, 1980). Dr. KhalikovA.Kh. notes that, despite of the similarity in appearance with the military culture of Sarmatians there are no specific features of Sarmatian culture, such as the diagonal position of the dead in square pits, pits with linings and narrow deep pits, and bowls, pitchers, specific ornaments made with the use of a pottery wheel, etc. Based on this fact, it was concluded that the population of Andreevskiy and Piseralskiy mounds "were in relations with Sarmatians, but they were not Sarmatians" (Khalikov, 1987). He was definitely right that the specific nature of this area has nothing in common

with the culture of Sarmatian tribes. And tracked similarities are military and social rather than ethnic and cultural.

In the context of archaeological science a significant indicator of the level, reached by the society in the military sphere, are weapons found in burials, the combination of their species and types, as well as their quantitative proportions characterizing a complex of weapons (Izmailov, 2000; Zubov, 2011). Namely the complex of weapons should be the first one to be analyzed, as the Andreevskiy mound is a burial complex of military graves.

There is a point of view that connects the Piseraly-Andreevo period with the Pyanoborsk culture. The appeared burial rite of inhumation with mainly northern and eastern orientation, rarely southern, as well as numerous jewelry of Pyanoborsk type in female burials and the similar sets of weapons in male ones prove this fact. The majority of jewels found in burial complexes of the Andreevskiy mound are of Pyanoborsk origin (Khalikov, 1962; Gening, 1970; Gening, 1988; Zubov, 2007). A certain similarity of some elements of the funeral rite of Andreevskiy and Staroardatovskiy mounds, Piseralskiy and Klimkinskiy burials with monuments of Sargat culture of the Trans-Urals and Western Siberia is revealed. Some features of the funeral rite and of Gorokhov and Sargat tribes were studied when defining the ethno-cultural component of the Kipchakovsk I mound (Zubov, 2004).

Thus, we can suggest that it was not migration of all people considering the monuments of Piseraly-Andreevo type as a reflection of migration of some tribes of the Trans-Urals origin. In early societies, eviction of young people due to overpopulation was practiced quite often. Similar male societies, youth associations or communities are well known according to the ethnography of the Polynesians, New Guinea tribes, American red Indians and African tribes (Maasai, Zulu, and others.) (Webster, 1908). Such a group of soldiers, united by a successful and respected leader in a military unit, left to conquest the new territories. According to the observations of Tacitus, ancient German squads were formed in a similar way, they consisted of young people, who were not family members, often of a noble origin, or outcasts who voluntarily or involuntarily left their relatives, dedicated themselves to war and joined a successful, experienced, well-known for his courage warrior (Tacitus, 1993). If they were lucky the squad held a dominant position on the conquered territory. They brought their weapons and traditions of funeral rites; everything else was received from the conquered tribes, including wives and concubines. For example, "The Caribs in the era when America was discovered by Columbus quickly and vigorously conquered the Antilles, moving from South America and destroying Antilles Arawak tribes. After taking the Arawak village, they killed all men, and made young women their concubines, in other words - wives" (Bogoras-Tan, 1923). In this context, we understand the existence of Gorodets elements in the ceramic complex of the Andreevskiy mound. The only argument of the supporters of the autochthonous (Gorodets) component is

the presence of ceramics of local origin in the burial complexes of the Andreevskiy mound, which can be considered as a product of conquest - they used ceramic dishes of local origin for their needs, including funeral rites as they did not take ceramic dishes from their native land. This fact, in particular, proves that in this case we deal with a case of migration not as resettlement of population, but as a conquest by a small militant society.

In other words, this area does not have an ethnic unity, it was rather a migration of some social group occupied a privileged position on a new territory, emphasizing its difference from the local population in the details of their costume, weapons, horse equipment and funerary rites, and to some extent in a female costume. Thus it is not surprising that socially prestigious objects and details of costumes and military equipment were placed in their graves (Izmailov, 2012). A complete coincidence of religious ceremonies (in particular, burial and memorial rites) and material culture and the area fixing them on their new homeland is not necessary, and in reality is extremely rare. Young warriors and their leaders, as a rule, reproduced only some rites traditional for their homeland; and only those ones, which were obviously a part of their habitual routine (for example, the orientation of the dead). The labile elements of the rites and material culture were not saved.

In this sense, the registered archaeological Piseraly-Andreevohorizon can be interpreted in historical terms as a further relocation of a separate group of some tribe (Klein, 1991; Klein, 1999; Klein, 2013). It brought a certain cultural set that has been associated primarily with the military costumes, weapons and a cult of violence and war. Namely these details of culture had an important social value for the community, and they made such elements prestigious in their own environment and did not give any attention to other elements, for example, a ceramic complex, which some Russian archaeologists consider as the most important ethno-cultural component. Therefore, their connection with the land of origin (Trans-Urals and Western Siberia) is fixed only in certain parts (northern orientation of the dead and funeral rites), and new elements were acquired in the process of migration, as the set of socially prestigious objects necessary for funeral rites.

DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

The monuments of the Piseraly-Andreevohorizon were studied since 60-ies of XX century, when the Piseralskiy mounds were discovered by A.Kh.Khalikov and the Andreevskiy and the Staroardatovskiy mounds by P.D. Stepanov. At the time of field studies P.D. Stepanov was interpreting the discovered artifacts (Stepanov, 1964). Even then, P.D. Stepanov noted that the Andreevskiy objects were similar to Piseralskiy findings, which “makes us consider that both monuments entered the circle of the same culture, but with tribal differences ...” (Stepanov, 1964). He dated ground burials by I-II centuries B.C., and the underground ones - before the turn of our era, and proved that monuments contained four ethno-cultural

components– the late Gorodets, Pyanoborsk, Sarmatian and ancient Mordovianones (Stepanov, 1965).

In 1980 a detailed monograph of P.D. Stepanov with an extended interpretive part of Andreevskiy materials was published, there he related construction of the mound and its ground burials with invasion of horsemen conquerors of Sauromate-Sarmatian origin into the local environment. In later burials “...people of Gorodets culture, those who accepted and transformed the cultural elements of Ananyinsk and Pyanoborsk tribes, who were the creators of the ancient Mordovian cultural complex” were buried (Stepanov, 1980).

In the second half of the 80-ies of XX century A.Kh. Khalikov firstly united the Piseralskiy and the Andreevskiy mounds as the same type of monuments and made a new hypothesis of their origin, insisting that the date of their origin was II-III centuries. The starting point of the dissemination of these antiquities, as he considered, were the areas of southern Trans-Urals and north-western Kazakhstan, where, in his opinion, “... a surprising combination of all specific features of the funeral rite of Piseraly-Andreevotype can be observed” (Khalikov, 1987). In this regard, along with the Sarmatian and Pyanoborsk traits he identified a leading South Siberian (Turkic) component in formation of Piseraly-Andreevo antiquities (Khalikov, 1986; Khalikov, 1987). These ethno-cultural objects caused, on the one hand, the objections of a certain number of researchers (Matveev, 1986; Grishakov, 2005), and, on the other hand, found some support from the others (Zubov, 2004; Zubov, 2007; Zubov, 2009).

U.A. Zeleneev (1988) agreed, however, he suggested that the ground burial of the Andreevskiy mound was of Sarmatian origin, complicated by some cultural elements of Pyanoborsk culture. And surface burials of the Andreevskiy mound, in his opinion, had been made by “absolutely new population” (Zeleneev, 1988). G.I. Matveeva suggested that the Andreevskiy mound reflected processes of “... integration of Pyanoborsk and Gorodets tribes with participation of Psheworska and Zarubinet components” (Matveeva, 1986). Developing her idea, she came to the conclusion that the buried in ground graves of Andreevka are connected with latinized cultures of Central and Eastern Europe of the early Roman time with the predominance of Pyanoborsk component (Matveeva, 2003).

S.E. Zubov expressed a new perspective on the conditions and causes of ethnic and cultural interpretation of monuments of Piseraly-Andreevotype. He considers it possible to link their appearance not with migration of some part of the population, but to consider these monuments as a military “splash”, left by a group of soldiers, who were united by a leader into a military squad and went to conquer new territories” (Zubov, 2004; Zubov, 2007). As a hypothesis, he suggested the participation of the main “... Trans-Ural component in composition of population, left the Andreevskiy mound,” noting “the similarity of some elements of funeral rites of the Andreevskiy mound, Piseralsk and

Klimkinskburials with forest-steppe tribes of Sargatsk culture” (Zubov, 2004; Zubov, 2009).

V.V. Grishakov (2005) agreed with the hypothesis of a “military splash”. The analysis of a certain number of materials also allowed him to correct the dates of origin of the Andreevskiy mound. So, the central grave he dated as the middle of I century A.D., the complex of the remaining ground burials - the third quarter of I century A.D. Accordingly, the surface burials can be dated as the last quarter of I century - the beginning of the II century A.D. (Grishakov & Zubov, 2009).

In recent years, V.I. Vikhlyaev pays special attention to the antiquities of the Piseraly-Andreevo type. He distinguished these monuments as a special archaeological culture in the Middle Volga region, and the process of development of it, in his opinion, can be divided into three stages (Vikhlyaev, 1999; Vikhlyaev, 2000). However, the evidences provided by the author are sometimes ill-founded and contradictory.

Thus, all the researchers point to the complexity and heterogeneity of the ethno-cultural composition of population, who left monuments of Piseraly-Andreevotype. But any discussions of the dominant component in the process of composition of population and specific historical events related to their appearance immediately result disagreement. Unfortunately when trying to separate certain ethnic characteristics of monuments of Piseraly-Andreevotype, the authors sometimes do not pay attention to the process of selection of significantly synchronous or chronologically successive complexes, which could have made their findings better-grounded.

The start of a new era was marked by systemic changes in all regions of Northern Eurasia. This period was characterized by a significant ethnic and cultural mobility and, as a consequence, formation of a new historical image of Eastern Europe, a tribal structure and new cultural and linguistic communities of the Volga-Urals region.

The interesting and controversial material obtained during excavations of Andreevskiy, Staroardatovskiy, as well as Piseralskiy and Klimkinskiy mounds and ground Pilninsk burials attracted attention of many researchers that raise questions about the ethnic history of the Volga region and neighboring regions in the early Iron and Middle Ages. Currently, there are several points of view on the origin of the monuments of Piseraly-Andreevotype and, above all, the Andreevskiy mound.

At the turn of the eras the regions of the West Volga were a border territory that predetermined the lack of population. And perhaps precisely because of this reason, the military squads, coming from the forest-steppe areas of Trans-Urals, moved here. It happened, apparently, in the second half of the I century. The type of the Andreevskiy mound burials makes us confident to state that three generations of people were buried there. Moreover, if the funeral rite of the first generation can

be definitely compared with the traditions of the forest-steppe Trans-Urals (Sargatsk monuments), the burials of the other layers and their rites and burial items has simplified “fuzzy” character. So, the process of miscegenation of the local population and newcomers can be identified easily enough.

In other words, we can suggest that it was not migration of peoples, but the migration of some social group of the Trans-Urals origin. In early periods, such evictions of young people due to overpopulation were practiced quite often. Military alliances and unions are well known according to the ethnography of the Polynesians, American red Indians and African tribes. Such a group of soldiers, united by a successful and respected leader into a military unit, left their native land to conquest new territories.

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