ASIAN INFLUENCE ON EUROPEAN SCYTHIA

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The present stage of archaeological research on European Scythia testifies to the complicated and versatile character of the processes going on there in the 1st mill. B.C. One of the most acute problems, which brought forth many contradictory opinions, is the problem of the origin of the peoples mentioned by ancient authors, of their location and of their connection with certain archaeological cultures.

At present there are no less than three principal theories explaining the origin of the Scythians (the Northern-Black-Sea coast, the Near Eastern and the Central Asian one) and at least six versions of ethnic maps suggested by Russian scholars only. As for the accuracy of identification of certain ethnic groups with archaeological cultures, hardly any comments are needed: so far no reliable method has been developed in this field.

The traditional point of view on the origin of the European Scythians is present, with some modifications, in many works treating this subject. It identifies the Cimmerians with the people inhabiting the southern steppes of Russia in the Late Bronze Age period, 9th-beginning of the 7th cent. B.C., i.e. with the later stages of the Log-hut culture (the Chernogorovo and the Novocherkassk stages), while the appearance of the Scythians and the beginning of the Scythian period is dated to the 7th cent. B.C. In this case different ethnic groups and the archaeological cultures attributed to them seem to belong to distinct periods within the chronological scheme suggested for the Northern-Black-Sea coast area: the Cimmerians are confined within the Late Bronze Age, while the appearance of the Scythians signify the beginning of a new period. Many scholars trace certain genetic continuity between the two ethno-cultural blocks and mark the similarity of the two material cultures: the presence of mounted warrior-

3 A.I. Terenozhkin, Kimmerijtsy (Kiev: 1976).
complexes is characteristic of both of them.\textsuperscript{4} In this case, however, it is not clear what criteria were accepted to enable the division of these complexes within the suggested chronological scheme. It appears to be in some contradiction with the demand for a dialectic division of material: connections between the complexes belonging to a definite archaeological stage are expected to be stronger than those between complexes attributed to different stages or periods. Thus A.I. Terenozhkin, a prominent investigator of the Scythian culture, was stating on the one hand that “the Chernogorovo stage is marked with a complete, or almost complete disappearance of the whole complex of bronze objects and of other objects characteristic of the time, which were dominant at the Belozersk stage” (i.e., at an earlier stage corresponding to the Late Bronze Age—N.B.). On the other hand he attributed Chernogorovo and Novocherkassk monuments to the final stage of the Log-hut culture of the Late Bronze Age, in spite of their mounted warrior-complex features.\textsuperscript{5} Similar contradictions are inherent in other chronological schemes suggested for the Scythian period by different authors. Later O.R. Dubovskaya distinguished within the Chernogorovo culture three different layers of cultural components which, from her point of view, had been of different origin: purely Chernogorovo, of the Late Log-hut culture and imported. Proving the autochtonous (i.e., from the Late Log-hut culture) origin of the Chernogorovo culture Dubovskaya at the same time demonstrated that the principal mounted warrior-complexes were concentrated in the north-eastern part of the Northern-Black-Sea region, within the Don basin and along the middle course of the Volga.\textsuperscript{6} Thus the suggestion, concerning certain impulses from the East in the pre-Scythian period (10th-9th centuries) made by Terenozhkin and then developed by V.I. Klochko and V.Yu. Murzin,\textsuperscript{7} come to be confirmed by new arguments.

Literary sources also do not make it possible to attribute the Cimmerians and the Scythians to different periods. Herodotus is speaking about Scythians who follow the Cimmerians being pressed by the Massagetae (I, 15; IV, 11; VII, 6),

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  \item[A.I. Terenozhkin, “Kimmerijtsy . . .” 186, 207.
  \item[O.R. Dubovskaya, Voprosy slozheniya inventarnogo kompleksa Chernogorovskoj Kul’tury. Arkheologicheskij al’manah (Donetsk: 1993) fig. 72-73.