

In his excavation report, the excavator makes a number of interesting observations:

1) the occurrence of 29% of the finds do not distinguish between male or female although females may have 2x or 3x the quantity of such goods.

2) there is a set of goods specifically associated with females, e.g., silver vessels, gold beads, cosmetic sticks, etc.

3) there is also a set of goods associated with males, e.g., stone vessels, weapons, columnis, etc.

4) Gonur society was organized into three social groups (elite-5%, wealthy (75%), poor (20%) who were each interred within a different mortuary structure (chamber, shaft, pit-grave):

Preliminary results

At present analysis is still ongoing and only several preliminary results can be suggested:

1. Some of the correlations between artifact and gender suggested by the excavator cannot be statistically demonstrated to exist due to the small number of finds from the in situ sample

2. Although a series of goods have been identified by the excavator as not distinguished between males and females, many of these goods are actually not randomly distributed but correlate significantly with one gender (usually female) or the other.

3. Goods that are actually "neutral" between males and females are quite rare. The data from Gonur highlights one of the more significant problems in employing statistical techniques to reconstruct social organization from mortuary evidence.

4. In terms of gender and age, one may propose that Gonur society recognized at least three, possibly four, age grades that coincided with different stages of social gendering. These stages are: I (0-7rs), II (13 yrs), III (19-21 yrs) and (if not identical with III) a IV (23-33 yrs).

ARCHITECTURE OF ANCIENT MARGIANA

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1. While comparing remains of the Bronze epoch architectural structures, which have been found during archaeological excavations in the Murgab delta in Margiana and in the territory of Bactria neighboring thereto with a similar architecture of the ancient oriental world other regions, we may put forward and scientifically justify a supposition on a specific Bactrian-Margianian architectural school, which has existed in the second millennium B.C., and trace a further development thereof.

Having studied a great number of the Bronze epoch Central-Asian objects, we may conclude that the architectural-lay out principles, which exerted a great influence on the architectural concept development in this region within the next historical

epochs, have appeared and got a creative re-interpretation just in the Bactrian-Margianian building culture of that epoch.

2. "A square hall bypassed with corridors" layout scheme, being typical for Zoroastrian temples, is quite common for the Ancient Margiana architectural complexes excavated; most of researchers also identify them as the temples where certain cult rites occurred. Particularly, this scheme may be seen in the central sacral part of temple complexes of the Margiana monuments' Togolok group (Togolok-1 and 21) and in the religious chambers of the Gonur-1 palace complex. The availability of "a square hall bypassed with corridors" layout scheme in Zoroastrian temples of further historical periods once again certifies architectural traditions' succession, as well as gives one more argument in favor of supposition, which has been firstly brought by V.V.Strouve on the basis of linguistic data and further supported by V.I.Sarianidi archaeological material, that the Zoroastrian religion might have been originated in the territory of ancient Margiana. In any case, the fact of many layout components typical for the ancient Margiana religious architecture is being clearly traced in the temples related to the Zoroastrian religion. Such succession proves a functional proximity of those devotions, which have occurred in the Zoroastrian temples of Achaemenian and ancient period and in the earlier religious structures of Ancient Margiana.

3. The origination of well-defined geometric forms in the Ancient Margiana and Bactria architecture has not yet been thoroughly studied. Examining the round layout of the Dashly-3 ancient Bactrian temple, some researchers consider Mesopotamia building traditions to have made impact on that geometric form forthcoming in Bactrian architecture, with "a round house" at Tepe Gavra as an example. However, archaeological excavations, which have been lately carried out at Gonur-depe, have also brought to light remains of wall, which surrounded the palace complex with a big ring, logically proving a traditional town-planning layout scheme, which has existed in Bactria and Margiana. Moreover, round-shaped towers (Togolok complexes, Gonur-depe "temenos") have been widely spread in the Ancient Margiana architecture. These towers are available only at the Bactria monuments (Dashly-1, Tillya-depe).

The Ancient Margiana round-shaped towers are likely to have originated from the late Eneolithic epoch monuments in the territory of Southern Turkmenistan. Lots of researchers have already stated the Ancient Margiana historical and cultural relations with the Late Eneolithic epoch cultures of fore-Kopetdag plain in Turkmenistan. Remains of settlements, which are typical for their complicated configuration fencing wall with round "towers" at fractures, have been found at Yalangach and Mullali-depe, the late Eneolithic Epoch monuments of Geoksyur oasis.