

ETHNIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SEALS OF THE SAPALLI
CULTURE

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Abstract. The pottery culture, whose inhabitants spread across all sectors of the economy, is known to science from the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages of the Ancient Orient . The article discusses the ethnic characteristics of archaeological finds, which are called “seals” or “tamgas”.

Keywords: Sapallitepe, Jarkutan, Bustan, Molali and Tillabulok , Clan mark, seal, artifacts, stone, ceramic, metal, wood , “Compartmented”, star-shaped, rosette-shaped, square.

Introduction . During the years of independence, ample opportunities were created for an objective study of the history of Uzbekistan. In this regard, the use of archaeological data as a historical source, especially taking into account the tasks of accelerating and forming a unified system of regulation of innovation processes in our country¹, stand out for its relevance in enriching historical science with new sources.

In Central Asian archeology, Sapalli is among the most thoroughly studied cultures². Archaeological research conducted at the monuments of Sapallitepa, Jarqutan, Bustan, Molali and Tillabulok confirms that the inhabitants of the Sapalli culture were a generalized community that equally developed all branches of the economy. They introduced symmetry in architecture, a labyrinth system in fortifications, established a system of international communication and trade, cultivated the land using animal power, evolved to the level of building temples in the history of religion, and laid the foundation for the first urban culture and “nom”-type statehood.

The main part. One of the issues widely discussed in Central Asian and foreign scientific literature is the ethnic function of Bactria-Margiana seals. The complexity of the problem is that researchers have not yet reached definitive consensus on the

¹Resolution of the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. PK 8(768) dated February 27, 2017. “On measures to further improve the activities of the Academy of Sciences, the organization, management and financing of scientific and research work”.

²Askarov A.A. Drevnezemledelcheskaya ash tura epoxy bronze yuga Uzbekistan. - Tashkent: Science, 1977. 231 p.

function of this archaeological artifact. In some literature, it is recognized as a seal, in others as a stamp, and in still others as an amulet³.

Indeed, these objects, which is called in the literature a “seal” or “tamga”, have been known to science since the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages of the Ancient Orient, were distributed across various cultures and possessed unique features for each civilization center. The debate about the role, that is, the function, of these archaeological finds in the life of ancient peoples, which are rich sources for glyptics, is extensively discussed in the scientific literature. One of the leading experts in Central Asian archeology, IN Khlopin, defining the term “seal”, points out that it has a social character, is a means of authentication. He acknowledges that this archeological artifact, often referred to as a “seal” in literature, served as an indicator of private property, a tamga, or an amulet⁴.

At this point, it is appropriate to define the word “tamga”. According to Mahmud Kashgari's work “*Diwan Lughat al-Turk*” the term “Tamga” is presented in several contexts: 1. A branch of water flowing into seas, lakes and valleys; 2. A place where a boat stops on a river. “Tamga” II refers to a stamp or seal. Tamgalig-small ewer or special tablecloth for one person. Originally, *tamgalig* meant "sealed." Typically, a ruler would seal his own specific tablecloth and pitcher, containing wine and food intended for one person. Subsequently, every one small pitcher and tablecloth so called “tamgalig” It happened meaning from the king other man from it food not eating for stamp hit tablecloth that means⁵.

Literature analysis and discussion. V.M. Masson compares the Altindepe seals with bullae found at the Shahri Sokhta monument, imprinted on clay, and recognizes them as seals. He suggested that family or community items might have been placed in storehouses and sealed, and he enriches his ideas with ethnographic data recorded in Afghanistan⁶.

According to K. Lamberg-Karlovsky, archaeological artifacts such as seals, which were widespread in the centers of early civilizations, indicated not only the owner but also their homeland and origin. “They served as the main tool for determining, without opening the packaging, which merchant the goods belonged to, where they came from

³ Khlopin I.N. O tak nazivaemyx pechatyax (Indicator sobstvennosti ili stamp a) // Problem a rxeologii . Vyp. II. - L., 1978 . - S. 33-38 ; Frankfurt P.-P. Pechati Oksa: raznoobrazie form i izmenyaemost funktsiyon // VDI. 1997. Vyp.4. - S. 60-71.

⁴ Khlopin I.N. O tak nazivaemyx pechatyax (Indicator sobstvennosti ili stamp a) // Problem a rxeologii . Vyp. II. - L., 1978 . - S. 33-38 .

⁵ Mahmud Koshgari . Devoni dictionary turkish I - roof . To the publication preparer , Salih Mutallibov . – Tashkent , 1960. – P. 479.

⁶ Masson V.M. Altyn-Depe // Tr udy YuTAKE. Volume XVIII. L.: 1981. - S. 98.

and where they were to be sent, that is, their further movement. In short, he believes that "seals determined the ethnic origin of goods and served as an important instrument in regulating trade"⁷.

Seals made of precious materials (such as gold, silver, lapis lazuli) and with images of gods belonged to (were given to) representatives of the upper class of the population and expressed their mythological views. Representatives of this class had cultural contacts with the centers of ancient Eastern cultures. Seals made of bronze and semi-precious stones, in turn, belonged to the city's own craftsmen, farmers and other representatives of various districts⁸.

Certainly, typological studies play an important role in determining the function of this archaeological artifact. As noted above, Bactrian seals were classified by A. Askarov, and Margiana seals by I. S. Klochkov and divided into 13 types⁹. Düring Kaspers, recognizing the diversity of Bactrian and Margiana seals, notes that no other cultural center of the Ancient East has such a variety of seals. Frank-Vogt, on the other hand, has made a table comparing ancient Indian, Iranian, Persian Gulf seals with Bactrian-Margiana seals and recognizes the diversity of Central Asian seals.

In our opinion, the reasons for the diversity of opinions among scientists on the issue of the function of seals are as follows.

First of all, this archaeological artifact appeared at the beginning of human history, that is, in the Eneolithic period, and gradually developed throughout historical development, until by the Bronze Age, the images expressed in them had risen to the level of art.

Secondly, seals are found in a very wide area, in monuments typical of the civilization of the Ancient East, and the seals of each historical region have their own unique aspects.

Thirdly, they are made of various materials (stone, ceramic, metal, wood).

Fourthly, depending on their intended function, not all seals were necessarily pressed into soft materials.

Conclusion. Taking the aforementioned shortcomings into account, first of all, in order to create a comprehensive classification of the seals of the Sapalli culture and determine the function of the seals, each seal was printed on a soft material - plasticine. As a result, it was found that the "compartmented", star-shaped, rosette-shaped, square,

⁷ Lamberg-Karlovsky S.S. Third Millennium Models of Exchange and Models of Production. Ancient Civilizations and Trade. Albuquerque, 1975. - R.362.

⁸Frankfurt A.-P. Pechati Oksa: raznoobrazie form i izmenyaemost funktsiyon // VDI. 1997. Vyp.4. - S. 65.

⁹Klochkov I.S. Glyptika Margiany (Principy description and classification) // VDI, 1997. Vyp .1. - S. 103-121.

and circular seals did not serve as a printing tool - a seal or stamp. They left very rough traces, and especially the “compartmented” seals were not used as a printing tool, since they do not have a surface, but consist of a metal mesh. Most importantly, bullae with such seals imprinted on them have not been found in the monuments of the entire Ancient East. Bullae were printed only using cylindrical seals, and ceramic fragments with cylindrical seal imprints and stamps were also found at the Jarkoton monument.

As a result of this printing experiment, it can be said that very few of these archaeological artifacts, which are called seals, served as seals. Most of them served as amulets, while others served as seals, badges, and symbols. Although the objects belonging to these categories are very similar in their construction and shape, they are completely different in terms of function. Seals and badges are printing devices, while amulets, badges, and symbols are made for the purpose of being worn.

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