The Southern Migration of the Sayan Archaeological Complex

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The present article covers the problem of the origin of innovations in the material complex of Harappa in terms of Northern influences. The Sayan complex of archaeological cultures of the Early Bronze Age, composed mainly of descendants of the Afanasyevo and Okunevo tribes, formed a single archaeological entity which migrated southwards to the upper reaches of the Indus River and further westwards to eastern Anatolia. The spread of the influence of the Sayan complex over vast regions was based not only on the technologies new for that period but also on its powerful ideological impact on the local population. We can select a set of the most important evidence, which accompanied the “Sayan Archaeological Complex”: 1-images of horned deities; 2-ceramics with basal motifs; 3- chariots and methods of horse harnessing; 4- Okunevo petroglyphs found along the Karakorum high road not far from Harappa; 5- some common features in material culture such as types of knives, pottery, burials in stone cists. During the movement ethnic groups of different origin flowed into the migration stream. The Okunevo population dominated this complex of people, providing an ideological influence on others and uniting all into one super-ethnos, under a single ethnonym – Arya.

The history of the studies of Indo-European antiquities reaches back more than one and a half centuries. During this period, a huge amount of material evidence has been accumulated concerning the most important issues of the scientific spheres of linguistics, archaeology, epigraphy, history, palaeozoology, etc. Particular attention has been given to the numerous mutually exclusive theories proposed concerning the origin and direction of migrations of Aryan tribes. However, the only solid evidence on the Aryan migration to northern India is found in the Vedas, of which the most
ancient text is the Rigveda – an anthology of sacred hymns composed not later than the 10th century BC – and which reflects notions concerning the northern land of the ancestors of the Aryans.

Figure 1: 1) migration of the Sayan complex from the Minusinsk Basin to the south; 1, a-d - Minusinsk Basin; 2, a-c - Tuva; 3, a-b - Altay; 4, a-d - Karakorum; 5, a-d - Harappa; 6, a-b - Mohenjo-Daro; 7 - Gegam mountains; 8 - Anatolia
Migration

As often occurs in science, substantial evidence on the migration of the northern complex to India was long ago discovered and published, but for unknown (or unclear) reasons this evidence has not evoked an adequate response in the appropriate fields of studies.

Twenty-five years ago, in 1987, Karl Jettmar published the results of the research of a German-Pakistani expedition in the Karakorum mountains in the upper reaches of the Indus Valley. This work was aimed at the discovery and analysis of petroglyphs cut into the rocks along an ancient road along the banks of the Indus River (Figure 1). The striking discovery was that some of the petroglyphs belonged to the Okunevo artistic tradition of the 3rd millennium BC. Fortunately, the Okunevo iconography is so idiosyncratic that problems with its interpretation usually do not arise. The Okunevo culture was identified in the Minusinsk Basin on the middle reaches of the Yenisei River. Notwithstanding the fact that the distance between the upper reaches of the Indus and Yenisei exceeds 2.5 thousand kilometers, the discovery of these petroglyphs are recognized as proof of a very long migration in this very early period (Figure 1, 4: a-d).

Three masks with a diagonal segmentation of the face can also be accepted as authentic Okunevo iconography. One mask has two eyes, small horns, and a projection above the forehead (Figure 1, 4: 5); the second mask is also two-eyed but with a single horn (Figure 1, 4:a), and the third has three small rays and the middle of the face marked with four dots (Figure 1, 4: c).

However, the German-Pakistani expedition determined that not only masks divided by a slanting cross, as is usual for the Okunevo iconography, but also the entire figure of another type fell within the Okunevo tradition (Jettmar 1987, photo. 4, 44) (Figure 1, 4: d). This figure represents a deity sitting with crossed legs and arms stretched wide apart. The face, rendered as a rectangle inside a trapezoidal head, is divided by diagonals into four sectors with four dots near the inner corner; eleven radial lines extend from the head. The arms, legs, and a triangle beneath the face (beard?) are rendered with solid fill and the body is divided into separate parts by several lines.
Notwithstanding certain differences, these images are undoubtedly executed in a common tradition. The first three masks evidently were drawn by Okunevo migrants “of the first wave” and have very close parallels in the Minusinsk, Tuva, and Altai iconographic traditions (Figure 1: 1, 2, 3). The full-figure represents a combination of both iconographic traditions – Okunevo and local Harappan (Figure 1, 5: d; 6-a).

Between the Karakorum and the Yenisei Valley stretches a chain of sites from the 3rd millennium BC where similar petroglyphs have been discovered. These are from the Mugur-Sargol valley in Tuva (Figure 1, 2: a-c according to M. A. Devlet [Devlet 1980] and the cemeteries near the Karakol River (pl. 1, 3; a b according to V. D. Kubarev [Kubarev 2009]).

All these images are united through specific features characteristic of the Okunevo tradition – horned tiaras on the heads, horizontal or diagonal strips on the masks; often the images depict the third eye and a “bioma” (an image with plant elements) between the horns in different variants. The appearance of images of the Okunevo type in these localities is undoubtedly related to the advancement of some group of Okunevo people to the south.

With the extent of their migration, the Okunevo people, no doubt, came into contact with local populations. As a result, the Okunevo complex was transformed and supplemented with new elements, enabling us to distinguish the “cultures of the Okunevo type” in Tuva (Chaakhol’skaya) and the Altai (Karakol’skaya).

These are united by a similarity (but not identical) in ceramics, tools, burials, and iconography of images (Figure 1). However, the greatest influence on the Okunevo complex was made by its neighbors in the Minusinsk Basin – the Afanasyevo people with whom the Okunevo tribes lived together in a single territory and left hybrid funerary complexes with corresponding artifacts (Lipsky and Vadetskaya 2006; Sokolova 2008). Due to their distinctive artistic traditions, the Okunevo culture is more easily distinguishable although the Afanasyevo complex also is manifested in ceramics, anthropology, and, perhaps, in language.
The author suggests the name of this group as the “Sayan Complex”, because the initial and the main impulse for migration was given at the end of 3rd millennium BC from the foothills of the Sayan mountains.

**Indications of the coexistence**

The Karakorum petroglyphs testify to the development of the original image within the foreign cultural media where the Okunevo deity acquires details specific to local deities. Thus there appears the possibility of distinguishing in the local pantheon figures marked with traits of Okunevo origin.

In this connection, one is reminded at once of the seals from Mohenjo-daro in which the “Bull-God” sits on a throne in a yoga pose with the arms set apart. This pose is the same as the Karakorum figure. The image has also a number of external features of the Okunevo deity – a horned tiara with a *bioma* in the center and animal ears (Figure 1, 6: b). However, contrary to the Okunevo deity – a female – here we are dealing with a male deity in the ithyphallic state. Nevertheless, on a series of Harappan seals, the original image of the horned goddess is preserved (Figure 1, 5:d).

It is rather difficult to identify the similarities between these images, because the Okunevo figures are 2 to 5-meter stone effigies, whereas the Harappan are representations on seals measuring only several centimetres. Therefore, analysis is based on individual characteristics and their combinations in a single image.

The Okunevo steles have no clearly interpretable scenes so that one is able to judge the original mythology only through the mutual occurrence of certain details in the representations. In the advanced period (chronological group II), Okunevo steles commonly bear solar signs which sometimes profusely cover the entire surface of the sculptures. On the steles, the relation of the goddess-matriarch with the Cosmos is most distinctly shown through a solar sign, as well as through a beast attacking the symbol (Figure 1, 1-a; Figure 2: 6, 7). Sometimes the solar sign is put on the forehead as the so-called “third eye” and on the lateral sides of the statues. In addition, on the forehead oblique cross lines are represented, which in turn, form a substitute for the solar sign, thus...
demonstrating the cosmic nature of the beast itself.

Figure 2: 11-17 - the four chronological groups of the Okunevo iconographic tradition; 18-20 - signs of the Harappan culture

The steles are occasionally crowned with a realistic representation of a human face (Figure 1: 1-a; Figure 2: 7), although the representations of rams are more typical (Figure 2: 5). That image symbolizes a purification sacrifice and also corresponds to the sacrificial offerings as an indispensable condition for accomplishment of the divine
will as treated in the Rigveda.

It must be noted that the so-called “third eye” appears primarily on the Okunevo steles long before the iconography of the “solar sign” was established (Figure 2: 1). Among the synchronous Indian materials, the “solar sign” also occurs although, strange as it is, without any relation with the cosmic iconography but as decorative ivory inserts for utilitarian wooden objects (Figure 2: 18). Something resembling a “solar sign” may be guessed on the ribbons of the “priest” from Mohenjo-daro (Figure 1: 6-a), as well as in a symbol, which may be treated as a “solar” sign because of its position above the heads of the deities, but representing a wheel with spokes (Figure 2: 19). Perhaps it was in the Minusinsk Valley that the replacement of a “solar sign” with the sign of the wheel began (Fig.2: 11).

The final stage (IV) of the Okunevo iconography is marked by a loss of the anthropomorphic character and, in general, its external outlines. For some reason, the most ancient feature - a horizontal strip on the masks – acquired a special importance and was repeated on one and the same image. Apparently, this feature became a sign of a deity while its multiplication could symbolize multiple prayers or plurality of incarnations of the deity (Figure 2: 12-17). Among the Indian materials, exactly the same “schemes of divinity” appeared on the reverse sides of seals. It seems that the Harappan craftsmen did not understand the meaning of this symbol but still put it on the seals (Figure 2: 19).

The representations of deities in horned tiaras appeared in the Harappan centers in the form of small ceramic *maskoids*. On a mask from Harappa, a specific combination of features is noteworthy – bull’s horns and ears, the accentuated Mongoloid eyes extending toward the temples, a large mouth and a short beard rendered by short strokes on the lower part of the face (Figure 1: 5-a). Moreover, a number of other fragmentary horned Harappan *maskoids* with more realistically rendered Mongoloid traits are reported (Figure 1: 5-b).

The well known image of a “priest” from Mohenjo-daro, made from steatite, is very realistic (Figure 1: 6-b). It has accentuated long narrow eyes with heavy upper eyelids, strait hair and a fairly broad and thick beard. On the
forehead there is a band/diadem with a circle in the middle resembling (or imitating) the “third eye.” An identical band with a circle is on the right forearm. A fairly interesting detail is seen from behind – above the ribbon tied in a knot there is a round even area to which some part, now lost, was once fixed. As Indian colleagues believe, it is possible, that this was a horned tiara. Another “priest’s head” is noteworthy through the fact that it also distinctly stresses the Mongoloid face features (Figure 1: 5-c).

The aggregate of all these indications strongly suggests that the religious sphere during the Harappan period was occupied by foreigners with a Mongoloid appearance.

Ernest Mackay, who published the mask from Harappa and the “priest” figure from Mohenjo-daro, pointed out that they in no way correspond to the local small plastic art traditions and held them as imports. Of the Harappan terracottas proper, a minutely developed canon is characteristic: these are female statuettes with luxuriant locks and round eyes rendered with appliqués or pits. Against such a background, the maskoids and “priests” are noteworthy precisely because of their peculiarity. According to Mackay, these statuettes are of a distinctly Mongoloid appearance and differ sharply in their facial type from the ordinary examples. They were retrieved from one of the lowest strata of the city and suggest that its population may have had an admixture of Mongoloid blood introduced, possibly, by newcomers from the North-West, or perhaps from the Iranian Plateau where, during excavations in Tepe Hissar, several very ancient Mongoloid skulls were found (Mackay 1951:133).

At the same time, Mackay stresses that deities in the human shape with horns are encountered neither in modern Indian mythology nor during the entire historical period; it seems, that we may be certain that these were introduced by people of the Harappan culture and vanished together with them (Mackay 1951: 70).

In this connection, it should be recalled that the anthropological type of the Okunevo people combines peculiarly Mongoloid and European features. Among these traits, researchers lay stress on the massive facial skeleton, brachycrania and, simultaneously, a fairly sharp profile of the face (Figure 5: 4) (Gromov 1997). The anthropological
type of the figures represented on the *maskoids* and sculptures of priests, as it seems, also displays a European-Mongoloid crossbreeding, since the presence of thick beards speaks against a purely Mongoloid populace (Figure 5: 5, 6).

*Figure 3:* 1) typology of Okunevo ceramics; 2) technology of Okunevo pottery; 3) Okunevo pots from different sites; 4) Sari Khola - handmade wares with mat-pressed bases (after Halim).
Figure 4: the typology and chronology of Okunevo burial sites.
To the category of imports, Mackay also attributed the pottery with decorative rosettes on the bottom made with a stamp on the raw clay (basal motifs) while the Indian ceramics proper from the very ancient period were.
manufactured on a potter’s wheel and painted with dyes. Of special note are dark-ware handmade vessels from Sarai Khola which are simple jar-like shapes with decorations on the base. This ware is a direct indication of the penetration of foreign-cultural traditions into the Indus Valley (Figure 3: 4).

Formal logic suggests that it is unreasonable to decorate the part of an object which is invisible when in use. Only the history of the Okunevo pottery-production can explain this tradition. Indeed, this system of ornamentation had been established in the preceding Neolithic period when round-bottomed vessels were modelled over a wattle framework, bottom upwards. The Okunevo people developed this tradition but used solid substrates (Figure 3: 2). With time, the flat-bottomed ware ousted the round-bottomed pottery (Figure 3: 1). During modelling, the bottom was on the top and decoration was started from the base subsequently covering the entire surface of the vessel (Fig 3, 2, 3). Among the Okunevo population, this procedure evidently was associated with cosmic notions, because on the bottoms, solar compositions were often depicted (Figure 3: 3). In the Okunevo complex there are only a few vessels without basal motifs. Later, vessels with basal motifs are widely spread in time and space (Jones-Bley 2003) and became ritual vessels, perhaps, just because this design was invisible, and thus sacred.

The Okunevo pottery was normally fired under reducing conditions in pits without access to oxygen, thus acquiring the dark color. This technique of firing was widespread over the entirety of Northern Eurasia, because it produces a small percentage of rejects. In this connection, it seems appropriate to recall the Rigveda hymns describing the similar manufacture of handmade ritual pottery decorated using a stick (Elizarenkova 1990).

Burial rite

The Okunevo funerary tradition changed considerably during its development from single flat graves (Figure 4; 5, I-a) to megalithic kurgan cemeteries (Figure 4; 5, II-a, b) and, still later, to individual stone cists (Fig.4; 5, II-e). The Okunevo people were the first in the Minusinsk Valley to erect mounds inside square stone fences with high corner blocks (Figure 4). Later, this type
Figure 5: 1) types of graves in the Okunevo cultural complex; 2) Taz Hazaa, burial 2 (after Lipsky and Vadetskaya 2006); 3) Loenbanr, Swat: Gandhara grave burial (after Antonini and Stacul 1972); 4) Reconstruction of Okunevo face after the figure from a grave at Askiz; 5) sculptural portrait of a man from the village of Uzhur (Khakasia, photo by A. Lipsky); 6) relief image of a face from the tomb of Kamyshta, grave 1 (after A. Lipsky); 7) red painted skull from Lebyazhye, tomb 3, grave 1 (after Miklashevich 2003).
of kurgan was borrowed during the Scythian period and evolved up to the early Middle Ages. It seems that the corner stone blocks in the fences were shaped as statuary representations of gods. Later, these statues were extracted and moved to kurgans in subsequent epochs.

The Okunevo burial rite evolved together with the entire cultural complex (Figure 4). Overtime, different variants of flat graves were supplemented [supplanted?] by stone structures (Figure 5, 1). Ultimately, stone cists came to be the standard type of burial. Originally these were constructed in deep graves (Figure 5, II-c), but later the grave pits became ever more shallow (Figure 5, II-d) and, finally, the stone roofs of the cists were installed at the same level as the buried soil (Figure 5, II-e). Evidently, this tradition was connected with the practice of manipulating the skulls of the deceased as skulls were removed for some rituals from the graves after the flesh had decayed. Often, in the graves, skeletons have been excavated without skulls and, occasionally, in a single grave, several isolated skulls have been uncovered. Furthermore, skulls that had been painted after their extraction have been recorded (Figure 5: 7).

The funerary complex discovered in northern India, in the Swat Valley, or the so-called “Gandhara grave culture” has turned out to be the closest in terms of its rite to the burials of the Sayan complex. Here, not only peculiar burials were uncovered with the deceased lying crouched on its back, but also circular fences around the graves (Antonini and Stacul 1972). Circular fences are characteristic of the Afanasyevo funerary tradition in contrast to the square Okunevo fences. (Figure 5: 3).

Social structure

At the Okunev-Afanasyevo burial kurgan of Tas-Khazaa, a double grave with antlers of red deer was found (Lipsky and Vadetskaya 2006). Judging by their arrangement in the grave pit, the antlers were attached to some organic base and put on the head of the deceased man. The individuals interred in these graves undoubtedly were connected with the cult of the horned deity. This suggests that in the ritual sphere, the same symbolic code was developed as the one realized in the artistic tradition.
The very existence of the Okunevo creative phenomenon and its evolution over a long period suggests this logical conclusion. The necessity for such a large and complex work could only arise in a society with a complex social structure. The supreme authority, it seems, exerted a strong ideological influence over the population and employed its influence to direct the public labor in order to create the establishment of the religious sphere. We are, therefore, possibly dealing with a theocratic structure that greatly influenced the formation of the funerary religious rite and artistic canon.

**Wheeled transport and horses**

The traditional Okunevo graves are of such small dimensions that they manifestly were not intended to include large grave goods, such as chariots or large animal parts. Nevertheless, horse bones are repeatedly found in the mounds as the remains of funerary feasts. Furthermore, some remains of bulls and horses were arranged in circles in the special round pits near the burial mounds, but unfortunately they have not been studied. Our main source of information about the life of the Okunevo people is in their drawings on the walls of funerary stone cists, engravings on the steles, and petroglyphs. It is from these drawings that we can establish that the Okunevo people had wheeled transport.

Two types of vehicles are represented in the drawings: four-wheeled wagons with a covered box and disc wheels (Figure 6, 1: 14, 16, 18) and two-wheeled carts with spoked wheels (Figure 6, 1: 15). The funerary wagons and carts were drawn by bulls (oxen), probably of a special very sinewy breed, which are often shown in a headlong gallop. Nevertheless, figures of bulls with massive bodies and short legs also occur (Figure 6, 2: 3). All the bulls are harnessed with a loop passing through the nose (Figure 6, 2: 1, 2). This type of harness is recorded on reliefs in Anatolia (Figure 6, 3:1) and is widespread in different countries of Eastern Asia (Figure 6, 2: 3).
Figure 6: 1 (1-10) - images of horses and chariots (11-16) on slabs from Okunevo cemeteries; 17-18 - varieties of reconstructions; 2) (1-2) - 'loops' in the noses of Okunevo oxen harnessed to chariots, (3) modern version; 3) (1-3) rings in the noses of equids harnessed to chariots on a seal from Kultepe, Anatolia.
It is noteworthy that the wagon representations are considerably less numerous than those of harnessed bulls. The quality of the drawings also differs: the bulls are rendered with distinct deep lines, whereas the 2-wheeled carts are hardly recognizable schematic dashes (Figure 6, 1:13, 15). It seems that the Okunevo people did not pay much attention to the vehicles, but by contrast the bulls were sacrificial animals as suggested by signs on their bodies (Figure 6, 1: 15; 6, 2: 1).

As compared with the number of bull representations, the horse figures are fairly rare. In the engraved images of harnessed horses, several variants of harness are shown. It seems that horses were first harnessed similarly to oxen, with a loop run through the nose (Figure 6, 1: 3, 4). This method was not successful because it would have been painful for the horse who would naturally not obey a man. A similar method of harnessing is represented on seals from Kul-Tepes (Anatolia), where chariots are drawn probably either by some other type of equid or onager (Figure 6, 3: 2, 3).

Judging from the drawings (Figure 6, 1: 1, 2) an attempt at controlling horses by means of a collar was undertaken. Moreover, drawings (Figures 6, 1:2 and 6, 1:4) come from a closed association of kurgan 2 at the cemetery of Lebyazhye, and that fact suggests the two variants of harness were used simultaneously (Miklashevich 2006). Eventually the Okunevo drivers found the optimum type of harness – the strapped headband (Figure 6, 1: 7, 8).

As one can see in the drawings presented, the Okunevo people bred horses with different constructions of bridle. The horses from Lebyazhye, as well as those from a Sulek rock engraving (Figure 6, 1:5), have a short bristled mane like that of the Przewalski horse. At the same time, the two horses both have long hair in the tail running from its buttocks. These features suggest that we see a kind of hybrid of wild horses subjected to only the initial stage of domestication. Another indication of hybridization – thick forelocks – is found in the petroglyph at Izirykh-Tas (Figure 6, 1:10). Here a horse is depicted with long legs, small head, and curved neck, which distinguishes it advantageously from neighboring figures. Possibly, this is an example of successful further
domestication of these animals (Figure 6,1:10) (Miklashevich 2006).

Artifacts

The creativity of the Okunevo complex is its most distinctive feature. Along with sculptures, the Okunevo people manufactured entire series of unusual representations carved out of bone, steatite, and semi-precious stones. Among the artifacts, of special note are copper and bronze knives unique to the Harappan and Okunevo complexes. These do not simply resemble each other but belong to a single type. The knives are double sided leaf-shaped with an accentuated tang (Figure 7: 2-4, 11-14). It must be noted, however, that this type of early knife is also represented in the Early Bronze Age cultures in Anatolia and Central Asia, as well as in the South-Russian steppe. The cause of such a uniformity of this early type of knife is so far unclear. In the Okunevo complex, these objects appear in the most ancient kurgans in the early 3rd millennium BC; they are also present in the mixed Okunevo-Afanasyevo complexes (Figure 7: 1, 2, 5). Both complexes are marked with earrings in the form of penannular rings – this type also is widespread in the archaeology of the Bronze Age of Eurasia (Figure 7: 8, 17). The characteristic artifacts of the Okunevo complex include marble balls of various sizes (Figure 7: 6). The purpose of these balls is unclear and different hypotheses have been proposed ranging from symbols of authority to the utilitarian use as clothes-clasps. Similar stone balls have been recorded for the Harappan culture (Figure 15, 16). Other stone objects are also very similar in the two cultures – arrowheads, bracelets, and adzes (Figure 7).

Chronology

The problem of the chronology of the Sayan complex cannot yet be considered solved. The most representative summary of 14C dates for the Afanasyevo and Okunevo cultures is published in Radiocarbon, Vol. 51, No. 1 (Svyatko et al., 2009. P. 249, 250, 267). Furthermore, no early complexes and complexes containing both Okunevo and Afanasyevo materials have been taken into consideration (Tas-Khazaa, Kamyshta BK, Afanasyeva gora-6, Beltyry etc.).
As a result, an artificial picture has been created of the consecutive settlement in the Minusinsk Basin in the Early Bronze Age, without the possibility of the coexistence of the Okunevo and Afanasyevo cultures.

Problems of the studies

The history of the study of the Okunevo archaeological culture is fairly paradoxical. The cult steles, which are 1 to 5m high with a very complex iconography, have long been known, but they have been attributed to
different archaeological cultures. The Okunevo culture was identified by Gleb A. Maksimenkov (Maksimenkov 1975) as the last in the series of the Minusinsk archaeological cultures. At the cemetery of Chernovaya VIII, this author found numerous images, and thus the Okunevo iconography at last acquired its cultural attribution.

However, during preliminary analysis, G. A. Maksimenkov made some mistakes, the consequences of which have not been corrected until now.

1. The date of the culture was established through evidence from the late period cemetery of Chernovaya VIII that comprised mostly late burials.
2. The features of the early burial traditions identified by M. N. Komarova were not taken into account while the early cemeteries simply were entered into the general register of Okunevo sites.
3. Relations with the nearest neighbors – Afanasyevo tribes – were examined only through the younger complexes which overlaid the Afanasyevo graves. Those complexes where both Okunevo and Afanasyevo burials were found with their funerary offerings together in single graves (Tas-Khazaa, Kamyshta BK, Afanasyeva gora: grave 6) were dismissed as the mistaken interpretations of archaeologists.
4. G. A. Maksimenkov himself wrote that the Okunevo culture originated from the Ust-Belsky Neolithic cultural complex. Nonetheless, he dated the Okunevo to the period later than that of the Afanasyevo culture which came from the Altai in the Early Bronze Age. This created a controversy that was explained by him through the so-called “reconquista” – the Afanasyevo tribes allegedly had ousted the Okunevo tribes from the Minusinsk Basin, but the latter later returned and, in turn, drove out the “invaders.” Meanwhile, G. A. Maksimenkov disregarded the real facts of the coexistence of the two complexes.
5. As a consequence, the Okunevo culture was dated to the middle and even second half of the 2nd millennium BC. Only with the emergence of radiocarbon dates has it been proved that this culture had been developing throughout the entire 3rd millennium BC and continued until the Andronovo culture as late derivatives of the once greater culture.
Detailed analysis of funerary sites, iconography, and assemblages of artifacts have identified four stages of the development of the culture and defined the logic of its evolution and decline (Sokolova 2011a).

Because of the effects of incorrect dating of the Okunevo culture, its contribution to the development of world culture was minimised, so that until now it remains little known in world archaeology.

Conclusions

Summing up, the Sayan complex of archaeological cultures of the Early Bronze Age, composed mainly of descendents of the Afanasyevo and Okunevo tribes, proved to have been a single archaeological formation for which there is convincing evidence that it migrated southwards to the upper reaches of the Indus River and further westwards to eastern Anatolia. There is rich evidence for the coexistence of the migrants with the local population, and we are only now beginning to understand the pre-conditions of such a successful movement and development of this cultural complex into new territories. The spread of the influence of the Sayan complex over vast regions was based not only on the technologies new for that period but also on the powerful ideological impact on the local population. The newcomers, it seems, were amazing in their extremely complex and minutely developed rituals accompanied by highly expressive texts, as suggested by the deeply elaborate iconographic canons. The iconography itself was employed as an illustration of the religious texts and rituals, reflecting the very profound level of thought of the Okunevo elites. It must be recognized, however, that after leaving the original motherland, the system of reproduction of new generations of artists and sculptors collapsed. In the new motherland, all the imagery, except for petroglyphs, was created by local artisans who worked in the manner more familiar to them, mostly on seals, the ritual activities and myths of the Sayan people.

Based on the above, we can identify a set of the most important evidence, which moved with the Sayan Archaeological Complex: 1-images of horned deities; 2-ceramics with basal motifs; 3-chariots and methods of
horse harnessing.

That migration moved south to escape from the harsh cold and aridity. During the movement ethnic groups of different origin flowed into that migration stream. The Okunevo dominated among the mass of people, providing an ideological influence on others and united all into one super-ethnos under a single ethnonym – Arya.

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