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### **ANALYSIS OF SOURCES ON ANCIENT MIGRATION PROCESSES (USING THE EXAMPLE OF CENTRAL ASIA)**

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#### **Abstract**

This article provides information on migration processes and related sources, which are considered an important phenomenon in the millennia-long history of human society. Furthermore, when covering migrations (displacements) in the Central Asian region during the ancient and early medieval periods, as well as these processes in the region, reports will be presented on the analysis of written sources in Western (Greek, Roman) and Eastern (Armenian, Chinese, Arabic, and Persian) languages.

**Keywords:** Egyptian hieroglyphs, Avesta, Videvdat, fragard (chapter), Clio, Melpomene, Thalia, stades, Wei Shu, Sui Shu, Tang Shu, Bei Shi, Shiji, Sogdiana, Arab Caliphate, Turkic runic inscriptions.

#### **Introduction**

We know that written sources are an important tool and assistant in shedding light on the past of humanity, the history of a tribe, people, nation or state. Among the earliest written sources are Egyptian hieroglyphs, Babylonian cuneiform, Chinese hieroglyphs, Indian, Aramaic texts: Parthian, Sogdian, Khorezmian and Bokhtar written monuments are recognized as the ancient writings of humanity.

We can also find unique information about the ancient ancestors of the peoples of Central Asia, their economy, settlements, customs and rituals, and way of life



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in the sacred book of the Zoroastrian religion, the Avesta. The Avesta contains information about the way of life of the Turanian tribes. In particular, the first, second, and third fragards (parts) of the book “Videvdot” (The Law Against the Giants – Vi daevu-dato) provide information about the climate, positive and negative aspects of the natural conditions of the area inhabited at that time, the economic lifestyle, settlements, mutual relations, legislation, attitude to religious beliefs, and types of punishment for crimes of the population living in this area. For example, the following sentences are found in the first fragard: “If I had created every place favorable for the peoples in it, people from all places would have flocked to it ...”[1]. According to the content of this sentence, people regularly migrated to areas that were convenient for them. In addition, almost all paragraphs of the 2nd fragment contain an encouragement to fill the areas to which people migrated with livestock, engage in farming, accumulate food reserves, and be economical in their attitude towards the environment. In the 3rd fragment (part), “Words to the Earth”, Ahura Mazda’s answer to the question of the prophet Zoroaster is given: “The place where a believing man builds a house is happy. If the fire burns in the house, if the milk is abundant, if the wives, children, and sons are happy, if the herds are abundant, such a place is the most joyful place”[1].

The works of ancient Greek and Roman historians and geographers contain a lot of information about the peoples of Central Asia. In particular, in the first book of Herodotus's "History" - "Clio", it is stated that in the first half of the 1st millennium BC. the Scythians, who lived in the steppes of Eurasia, came into conflict with the Cimmerians, who lived on the eastern shores of the Black Sea. As a result, according to researchers, the Cimmerians forced the Scythians out of their territory and forced them to move south through the Caucasus into the territories of Asia Minor. It was these Scythians who invaded the territories of the



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ancient Median state[2]. The reason for such political migrations was military conflicts.

Herodotus, who reported on the campaigns of the Achaemenid rulers Cyrus II and Darius I into the territories of Turon, mentions that the lands of Turon were on the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea, where the nomadic and semi-sedentary Massagets lived, led by a female king, Tomaris. In terms of religion, the Massagets worshipped the sun. They even sacrificed horses to it. According to Herodotus, the Massagets did not eat bread, but ate livestock products and fish, and drank milk[2]. This information shows that agriculture did not play an important role in the lives of the Massagets, who were forced to move from one place to another. Agricultural products were obtained by neighboring peoples through trade relations with the Khorezmians, Sakas, and Dakhs. In the 4th book of the work "History", "Melpomene", information about the campaign of Darius I against the Scythians is recorded. In particular, this information states that the main type of economy of the Scythians was not agriculture, but rather animal husbandry. At the same time, Herodotus's information notes that they also grew their own wheat, onions, garlic, and peas, which they consumed. Sometimes, the surplus of these products was used in exchange with neighboring tribes.[2]

Another aspect that should be noted is that since ancient times, nomadic tribes in the steppes did not raise or consume pigs as livestock[2]. At the same time, it is also noted that although the Persians considered the Sakas to be their "slaves", these nomadic Sakas did not always obey them, and that they were warlike, free-spirited tribes. The most important aspect is that Targatai, the ancestor of the Scythians (Saks), is shown to be related to the Greeks in some respects[2]. It is possible that there was a tradition of intermarriage between the Greeks who established their settlements on the Black Sea coast and the Scythians who lived in this area since ancient times. Researchers have even analyzed information



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about the mutual relations of the Scythians in the city of Olbia and the surrounding areas[3]. Therefore, the Scythians attributed one branch of their origin to the Greeks. There is also a work by Herodotus "Scythians", in which the life of the Scythians is described in more detail. This work is told in a more artistic style, in the form of stories. Therefore, the scientific significance of this work was not at the level of the work "History". Herodotus left information not only about the Scythians, but also about other tribes of Europe, Asia and Africa [3].

Another ancient author, Diodorus (c. 1st century BC), in Book XVII of his Historical Library, chapters 69-97, contains information about Alexander the Great's campaigns against Bactria and Sogdiana. Historical evidence suggests that many chapters of Diodorus' work have been lost. Most of the events in the 28 chapters of the work take place in Sogdiana and neighboring countries.[3] Another author, Polyaeus (2nd century BC), in his 8-book Strategem,[4] contains information not only about the history of Macedonia, Greece, and Rome, but also about the history of Iran and Turon. Six of the works are devoted to the history of the Greeks, seven to the military campaigns of the Achaemenids and the history of other peoples living in Asia, and the last eight to the history of ancient Rome and great women. Polyaeus' work also contains information about the entrepreneurial nature of the Scythians and Scythian tribes living in Turon. In particular, Polyaeus cites the legend of "Shirak" (Sirak) in his work [3]. This information indicates that the Scythians lived precisely on the northeastern borders of the Achaemenid state.

One of the ancient Armenian-language sources, Kirakos Gandzaketsi's "History of Armenia" (История Армении)[5], analyzes the relations between the Hephthalites and Byzantium, and provides information about the Hephthalites' departure to Byzantium (Asia Minor) as a result of military operations. Ter-Mkrtchyan L.Kh., who studied and analyzed Armenian sources covering the



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history of Central Asia from the 5th to the 7th centuries, analyzed the above source and a number of other sources in his work "Армянские источники о Средней Азии. 5-7th centuries"[6].

The work "History" (Istoria) by the Byzantine writer and historian Theophylact Simicatta, who lived at the beginning of the 7th century, is a Greek-language work that provides information about the history, customs and traditions of ancient peoples. This work also touches on the political processes that took place in the regions of Asia Minor, as well as the issues of migration of peoples from one region to another. In addition, the work contains information about the relations of the Hephthalites with the peoples of Asia Minor[7]. According to Tabari, the troops of the Arab Caliphate clashed with the Turkish troops in the territories that were part of the Turkic Khaganate. That is, it proves that during the Khaganate period, the Turkic tribes lived a sedentary and semi-sedentary life in most of Khorasan and Transoxiana, while at the same time the Turks and Sogdians fought against the troops of the Caliphate. In addition, during this period, the majority of the population of Balkh, Badghis, Khuttalon, Chaghaniyan, Chach, Ustrushana and Sughd was made up of warlike Turks[8]. Along with Tabari, historians of his time such as Gardizi, Narshahi, Kashgari also provided information about migration processes in their works. In general, the weight of written sources on the subject is large, covering the period from the 1st millennium BC to the 8th-9th centuries AD. The authors of this period described the migration processes that took place in the region in their works in the periods of antiquity, antiquity and the early Middle Ages.

In conclusion, written sources provide detailed information about population migration. This written information sheds light on the reasons for the movement of the peoples of the region from one territory to another from ancient times to the Middle Ages and the consequences that arose from it. In particular, the



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analysis of sources in Old Persian, Avestan, Sogdian, Chinese, Arabic, Persian, and local languages serves to shed light on the nature of migration processes. It is necessary to objectively interpret the information in the sources, taking into account that these sources were written under the influence of political systems and certain rulers.

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