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FARḠĀNA I. IN THE PRE-ISLAMIC PERIOD

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Under its present name, Farḡāna is first mentioned in written sources only in the 5th century C.E. However, several settlements of the chalcolithic period have been discovered there. There are also some chance finds of Early and Middle Bronze Age objects, even if no burials or settlements from that period have been discovered there.

In the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age, the waterless steppes of Farḡāna were inhabited by cattle-breeders and by agricultural tribes. Thus, two different cultural patterns emerged in Farḡāna—that of an agricultural population inhabiting the oases of Farḡāna and that of cattle-breeders (some of them gradually becoming nomads) who lived in the desert, in the central part of the valley, and in the mountains surrounding it. Agriculture was well developed in the valley by the Bronze Age as branches of the mountain streams flowing into the valley were turned into irrigation canals. The culture of the agrarian inhabitants appears to be related to the circle of the “Steppe Bronze” cultures of the second half of the second millennium B.C.E. to the first third of the first millennium B.C.E. (i.e., the Kairak Kum [Qayraq Qum] culture of western Farḡāna investigated by B. A. Litvinskiĭ). It finds close parallels in Chorasmia (q.v.) and in the Zarafšān valley. The main occupation of the people of the Chust culture, who lived in fortified settlements such as that at Dal’verzin Tepe

(q.v.), was agriculture. Some of the Chust pottery was decorated with patterns characteristic of the settled cultures of Central Asia of the Chalcolythic and the Bronze Age periods. The material remains of Chust culture are very archaic in appearance: its pottery was handmade, and the people lived mainly in earthen huts though they were already familiar with mud brick structures.

In the second third of the first millennium the difference between the western part of Central Asia, which in the 6th century B.C.E. was adjoined to the Achaemenid empire (Parthia, Chorasmia, Sogdia, Bactria), and the independent territories of the East became more evident. By the 7th-6th century B.C.E. the western lands had developed a more or less uniform civilization, while the eastern lands (Čāč, the oasis of Tashkent, and Farḡāna) remained in their old traditional ways. The heritage of the Chust culture, even if subject to some changes, continued in Farḡāna until the 2nd century B.C.E. (the Ejlatan or Ejlatan-Aktam culture). At that time, mud brick structures with many rooms were built along with ground huts, and wheel-made pottery was produced along with handmade ware. The nomadic culture of Farḡāna at that time represented a variation of the Saka culture. It is noteworthy that the nomads used pottery manufactured by the settled population.

From the 2nd century B.C.E. we have detailed evidence on an area known as Ta-Yüan, which had a developed city-culture and was occupied by the Chinese in 104-101 (Hirth, 1917, p. 94-116). Like many modern scholars, the early medieval Chinese historians considered that the land known as Ta-Yüan under the Han dynasty had been Farḡāna. It is, however, also possible that this name referred to the dominion of the Tokharians (*Taxwar) in Sogdiana, before the Tokharian invasion into Bactria in the middle of the 2nd century B.C.E. or even at a later time (Pulleyblank, 1966, pp. 22-25).

Unlike Sogdia, ancient Farḡāna had no coinage of its own. Finds of Chinese coins, mirrors, and textiles are more frequent in Farḡāna than in the neighboring lands. This testifies to its well-established links with China. After the beginning of the C.E. the influence of other Central Asian cultures on Farḡāna became markedly stronger. Vast burial-grounds of nomadic cattle-breeders include burials of various kinds: catacombs, burial pits with side niches (the type widespread in other regions of Central Asia), and tombs constructed of stones or mud bricks. The variety of burial customs probably reflects the co-existence of several different ethnic groups of nomads and semi–nomads, the tribes of the so-called Kaunchi culture. These originated most probably from Čāč and later gradually penetrated into the Farḡāna

valley. In general, however, the culture of Farḡāna still preserved at that time many of its original features. Several local variants of this culture can be distinguished. Fortified rural estates, “castles” with bastions and arrow slits, are characteristic of this period. Oftren they are surrounded with a settlement. The cities of that time have not been investigated (unlike the urban settlements of the earlier period). The architecture of the fortified buildings finds very close parallels in Sogdia and in Persia. At the same time local pottery with carved decorations over red slip is noticeably different from Sogdian pottery.

In the 5th-6th century, the number of settlements in Farḡāna decreased. Pottery of that time is more crude, becoming more like the Kaunchi ware. Like many other Central Asian lands in the 6th-7th century, Farḡāna was included into the Turkish kaghanate Its population was still mainly Eastern Iranian, though many Turks settled there at that time. So far, however, there are not many Turkish burials discovered there or elsewhere in Transoxiana. Some of the 8th century rulers of Farḡāna were of Turkish origin.

According to Chinese pilgrims, the population of Farḡāna spoke its own dialect in the early medieval period. At the same time archaeological sites of the 7th-8th century reflect the spread of Sogdian culture and language; local coins, in particular, have Sogdian legends. Sogdian customs, such as ossuary burials, were also accepted in Farḡāna. In artificial caves near the village of Pap an ancient city necropolis was discovered, with burials in reed coffins set one upon the other in several rows. The same necropolis revealed also a ceramic ossuary of the 8th century Sogdian type.

In the suburbs of Kuva, several houses and a temple dating to the 7th-early 8th century have been discovered. The architecture, pottery, and the clay sculpture of Kuva are very close to Sogdian patterns. The temple was first thought to be a Buddhist shrine since the iconography of its sculpture revealed distinct Indian features. Similar features, however, are present in the iconography of the native Sogdian gods. According to Markus Mode (pp. 183, 185, 187, fig. 5b), the temple was dedicated most probably to the Sogdian deity *ʾδβγ* (Ahura Mazda) represented as the Indian god Indra.

Both written sources and coins found in Kuva (Beal, 1906, pp. 30–31) prove that Farḡāna was divided into several dominions since at least the 3rd to 4th centuries C.E., even if there was some supreme ruler there, titled “the King of Farḡāna” as mentioned in one of the Sogdian documents from Mt. Mug as well

as in the chronicles of the Arab conquest (see below, Farḡāna in the Islamic Period).

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