

MIGRATIONS IN THE ARMENIAN HIGHLAND (the Mushki Problem)

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Abstract

Any discussion of the ethnic and political history of eastern Asia Minor, particularly the Upper Euphrates area after the disintegration of the Hittite Empire should be studied in close relationship with the Mushki problem. Here this ethnic element was considerably active on both sides of the Euphrates during the XII-VIII centuries BC, which is well traced even in Northern Mesopotamia. In the article is discussed the problem of these tribes, their possible impact on the political and cultural history of Asia Minor and the Armenian Highland. These key problems are of utmost importance for the reconstruction of the history of the region. The Mushki had played the same role here as, for example, the so-called "Dorians" in Homeric and Classical Greece, Aramaeans in Neo-Assyrian Empire, etc., which until now remains fairly underestimated. The wide geographical area where in different sources appears the term Mushki (also in Western Asia Minor and in the Balkans) indicates that we deal with different ethnic groups, though probably related to each other culturally and maybe linguistically.

Keywords: *Mushki, Assyria, Urartu, Phrygia, cuneiform texts, Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions, Elaziğ, handmade burnished ware*

Any discussion of the ethnic and political history of eastern Asia Minor, particularly the Upper Euphrates area after the disintegration of the Hittite Empire should be studied in close relationship with the Mushki problem. Here this ethnic element (better to say group of closely connected tribes) was considerably active on both sides of the Euphrates during the XII-VIII centuries BC, which is well traced even in Northern Mesopotamia. Who were these Mushki, where did they reside before their large-scaled migrations towards the end of the II millennium BC and much later, how can one determine their impact on the political and cultural history of Asia Minor and the Armenian Highland? These key problems are of utmost importance for the reconstruction of the history of the region. The Mushki had played the same role here as, for example, the so-called "Dorians" in Homeric and Classical Greece, Aramaeans in Neo-Assyrian Empire, etc., which until now remains fairly underestimated. Although the ethnic term Mushki is attested to in different written traditions (cuneiform Assyrian and Urartian, Hieroglyphic Luwian, the Bible, Classical Greek), its exact nature appears to be complicated due to several difficulties. The wide geographical area where in

different sources appears the term Mushki (also in Western Asia Minor and in the Balkans) indicates that we deal with different ethnic groups, though probably related to each other culturally and maybe linguistically. Below we shall discuss the main components of the Mushki problem - sources, origins, geography, and their impact upon the area under discussion.

Assyrian texts

The Mushki had been referred to in the texts of several Assyrian kings, of whom the most earlier are those composed by Tiglathpileser I (1114-1077 BC). The reign of this king coincides with the „XII century Near Eastern Crisis“, when widespread migrations were attested throughout the whole Near East and Aegean as well.¹ Tiglathpileser I mentions these Mushki as the most numerous intrusive group of peoples who raided the Assyrian-held areas on the north. Below are the accounts of Assyrian encounters with the Mushki.

„In my accession year: 20,000 Mušku with their five kings, who had held for 50 years the lands Alzu and Purulumzu - bearers of tribute and tithe to the god Ashur my lord - (the Mušku), whom no king had ever repelled in battle, being confident of their strength they came down (and) captured the land Katmuhu. With the support of the god Ashur, my lord, I put my chariotry and army in readiness (and), not waiting for my rear guard, I traversed the rough terrain of Mount Kašiiari. I fought with their 20,000 men-at-arms and five kings in the land Katmuhu. I brought about their defeat. Like a storm demon I piled up the corpses of their warriors on the battlefield (and) made their blood flow into the hollows and plains of the mountains. I cut off their heads (and) stacked them like grain piles around their cities. I brought out their booty, property, (and) possessions without number. I took the remaining 6,000 of their troops who had fled from my weapons (and) submitted to me and regarded them as people of my land“.²

„[...] my father, with the support of the god Aššur, my lord, [I defeated] 12,000 troops of the extensive Mušku. [The remaining] troops I uprooted (and) brought down into my land. (Thus) I became lord of [the entire land of the Mušku] (and) added (it) to the borders of my land“.³

The Mushki advance towards Kadmuhi (to the south of the Taurus mountain system) appears to be only part of a large-scaled migration of several peoples, amongst whom Tiglathpileser I mentions *Kashku* (also known as *Apishlu*) and *Urumu* as well.⁴

¹ For the XII century BC migrations see Barnett 1975: 359ff.; Sandars 1978; Ward and Joukowsky 1992 (eds.), etc.

² Grayson 1991: A.0.87.1, p.14.

³ Grayson 1991: A.0.87.2, p. 33, and also A.0.87.4, p. 42 for the same event.

⁴ In the account of a campaign against Alzi and Purulumzi the Assyrian king mentions his clash with these people: *„As soon as with my valour, by means of which the god Aššur my lord had placed in my hand the strong weapon which subdues the insubmissive, he commanded me to extend the border of his land, 4,000 Kašku (and) Urumu, insubmissive troops of Hatti - who had seized by force the cities of the land Šubartu*

The Mushki are referred to also by Ashshurbelkala (1076-1056), the successor of Tiglathpileser I, under the account of his V or VI year.

„In that year, in the month Tammuz, the city [.....] of the Muš[ku.....]“⁵

The next king who mentions Mushki is Tukulti-Ninurta II (890-884).

„Moving on from [Mag]ar[is]u I pitched camp (and) spent the night in the city Guretu. [Moving on] from [Guretu] I pitched camp (and) spent the night [in the city Ta]bitu. Moving on from Tabitu [I pitched camp (and) spent the night in the city Kahat]. Moving on [from the city] Kahat I pitched camp (and) spent the night in the city Nasipinu. [Moving on from the city Nasipinu] I pitched camp (and) spent the night [in] the city [Hu]zirina. [Moving on] from Huzirina I pitched camp (and) [spent the night in the city ...] which [Tuk]ulti-Ninurta had reorganized. I [approached...] through mountains, difficult terrain, a rough region [...] of the land of the Mušku I marched. On the fourth day the city Pir[u...] their booty, their possessions, their oxen, [their] sheep, [...] conquered. I massacred them without number. I burnt their cities, [I cut down] the harvest of [their] gardens [...]. I allowed them to remain in possession of their cities (but) imposed [upon] them tribute, tax, [(and) corvée]“⁶

This campaign was conducted in 885 BC.

Aššurnasirpal II (883-859) mentions the country of the Mushki next to Kadmuhi, under the year of 883 BC:

„In this same eponymy, on the twenty-fourth day of the month Ab, by the command of Aššur (and) the goddess Ištar, the great gods, my lords, I moved out from the city Nineveh (and) marched to the cities which lie at the foot of Mounts Nipur and Pasate, mighty mountains. I conquered the cities Atkun, Ušhu, Pilazi, (and) 20 cities in their environs. I massacred many of them, carried off prisoners (and) possessions from them, (and) burnt the cities. The troops, as many as had fled from my weapons, came down (and) submitted to me. I imposed upon them corvée. Moving on from the cities which are at the foot of Mounts Nipur and Pasate I crossed the Tigris (and) approached the land Katmuhu. I received the tax (and) tribute of the lands Katmuhu (and) Mušku, bronze casseroles, oxen, sheep, (and) wine“⁷

Apparently, as was indicated in the special literature, the above-mentioned Assyrian texts referred to those Mushki who during the reign of Tiglathpileser I had entered Kadmuhi.⁸ After their defeat in 1114 BC the Mushki had settled down there and were distinguished by Assyrians through 230 years, preserving their ethnic identity.

which were vassals of the god Aššur, my lord - heard of my coming to the land Šubartu. The splendour of my valour overwhelmed them, fearing battle they submitted to me. I took them, together with their property and 120 chariots (and) harnessed horses, and regarded them as people of my land“ (Grayson 1991: A.0.87.1, p.17). The same event is mentioned also in A.0.87.2, p.33; A.0.87.4, p. 42.

⁵ Grayson 1991: A.0.89.7, p. 101.

⁶ Grayson 1991: A.0.100.5, p.177-178.

⁷ Grayson 1991: A.0.101.1, p.198.

⁸ Diakonoff 1968: 151f.

Urartian texts

The only Urartian king who referred to Mushki is Rusa II (685-645), in his inscriptions from *Adilcevaz/Kefkalesi* and the later and fully preserved duplicate of *Ayanis* inscription.⁹

Ayanis, VI 10f.

„I have deported men and women from the hostile country, from Ashshur, from Targuni, from Etiuni, from Tablani, from Qainaru, from Mushki, from Hate, from Halitu, from Siluquni“.

This list of countries from where Urartians had deported people, indeed, could not be regarded as an itinerary, since here figure countries situated on different directions from the core of Urartu.

Of these countries mentioned by Rusa II, *Hate* used to be tentatively identified with the Upper Euphrates country of Melid and *Halitu* with the province *Haltik* of Classical Armenian sources.¹⁰ This indicates on much more northerly localization of this *Mushkini*, than that of the above-mentioned Assyrian *Mushki*, although the reference to *Tablani* (if this is Neo-Hittite Tabal, to the west of Hate-Melid as it is proposed by the M.Salvini) does not rule out the possibility of identification of *Mushkini* with Greater Phrygia in the Sangarius valley. It should be noted also that hardly Rusa II could have had operated in Northern Mesopotamia where to that date Urartu did not experience any political influence.

Scholars had mostly assumed the identity of this *Mushkini* with western Anatolian country of *Mushki* (Greater Phrygia),¹¹ though some had suggested its much eastern localization in the neighborhood of Melid (to the north or north-east).¹² It should be noted that the eastern localization of Urartian *Mushkini* fits better into the political situation in the first half of the VIIc.B.C.

⁹ Melikishvili 1960: No.279, lines 1-4.

¹⁰ First proposed by Diakonoff 1952: 111f.; also Diakonoff and Kashkai 1981: 39; Harouthiounian 1985: 226f.; according to some scholars, the same as *Halyzones* of Homer (van Loon 1966: 82; Çilingiroğlu and Salvini 2001: 20).

¹¹ Melikishvili 1954: 315f. The author assumed that this joint Urartian-Cimmerian campaign of Rusa II was organized in 676 BC, and it should correspond to the information offered by Greek authors who mention the Cimmerian attack on Phrygia, in the course of which the king Midas had find his end. This theses is shared by most scholars (Forrer 1921: 71; Diakonoff 1968: 170f.).

¹² Harouthiounian 1970: 323 n.54; 1985: 226f.; Kosyan 1997b: 255. The location of the „Mushki-country“ in the area of modern Gaziantep-Adiyaman by A.Çilingiroğlu and M.Salvini (2001: 20) seems arbitrary.

Hieroglyphic Luwian inscriptions

Two slightly different ethnic names (or country-names) similar to Mushki are attested to in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription from Kargamis, in Northern Syria. They appear in the inscription of its Luwian king (regent) Yariris (c.800B.C.).

A 6, 2-3:

„The gods caused my name to pass abroad, and on the one hand they heard of me in Egypt, and on the other they heard (of me) in Babylon(?), and on the other they heard of me among the Musa, the Muska, and the Sura“.¹³

The tentative assumption of I.Diakonoff concerning the identification of Musa and Musaka (= Phrygia and Upper Euphrates Mushki correspondingly)¹⁴ shows that to that date two different political entities bear similar designations by their neighbors.

From this point let us discuss the problem of the above-mentioned two groups of ethnic element who are attested to in the sources of the XII-VII centuries BC in the eastern and western Asia Minor, i.e. the „eastern“ and „western“ Mushki.

If one would ignore the somewhat puzzling attestation of a country-name *Ma-sà(URBS)*(previously read *Ma/u-sà-ka-na*), attested to in the Hieroglyphic Luwian inscription of *Kızıldağ IV* (in the Konya Plain - southern Asia Minor),¹⁵ then the earliest reference to „western“ Mushki appears to be that of Sargon II's texts. His inscriptions are full of references to this western Anatolian country which was extremely active in Asia Minor during the 717-713 BC, being one of the main opponents of Assyria in this region.¹⁶ This Mushki has long been identified with the Greater Phrygia, in the Sangarius Valley.¹⁷

The another area where the similar ethnic name is attested to is that mentioned by Herodotus and other Greek authors. They know certain *Moschoi* in the Pontic area (north-eastern Asia Minor), listed also as a group of unidentified peoples of the XIX Persian satrapy.¹⁸

This wide geography of the ethnic name *mušk-mosx* from the Balkans to eastern Asia Minor, along with toponyms like *Mysia* (north-eastern Asia Minor = Lesser Phrygia), *Moesia* (Northern Balkans), ^{KUR}*Mušani* and ^{URU}*Mušuni* of Urartian texts,¹⁹ or Classical Armenian province *Mok-k/Mok-s* (on the southern coasts of Lake Van) lacks satisfactory explanation.

¹³ Hawkins 1975: 152.

¹⁴ Diakonoff 1984: 115ff.

¹⁵ Meriggi 1975: N.17. Later J.D.Hawkins offered a reading *Ma-sà-ka?-na* (Hawkins 1992: 267), but now seems to accept the new reading of M.Poetto - *Ma-sà(REGIO)* „Masa country“ (Poetto 1998: 469f.)(Hawkins 2000: 438, 441).

¹⁶ Parpola 1970: 252-253.

¹⁷ Bittel 1950: 76; Götze 1957: 202; Mellink 1965: 317f.; Roller 1983: 300; Muscarella 1989: 333, etc.

¹⁸ Hecat. Fr.188 apud Steph. Byz., s.v.; Herod. III 94, VII 78.

¹⁹ Melikishvili 1960: No.158, lines 14-15, No.77, line 4; Harouthiounian 2001: 244, line 15, 97, line 4.

DISCUSSION

In the literature figure three contradictory views dealing with the Mushki origins.²⁰

1) The Mushki of Tiglathpileser I were a vanguard group of North Balkanic Indo-European peoples (Thracians or Phrygians) who during the early XII century BC had reached the Upper Euphrates valley, participating along their long march in the destruction of the Hittite Empire.²¹ Several Armenologists had put down a theory according to which these Mushki were the bearers of Proto-Armenian, who after a durative residence in the Upper Euphrates valley and its neighborhood (XII-VIII/VII centuries BC), then had spread eastward, to their historical homeland.²²

2) The „eastern“ Mushki represented the local population of north-eastern Asia Minor, related to Kashkaeans and Pontic Moschoi (ancestors of Kartvelian-Georgian Meschians).²³

3) “Eastern” Mushki are at home in the Armenian Highland (modern eastern Turkey), their migrations being limited to its western and southern parts.²⁴

The problem of the Mushki origins at present lacks several criterias, of which the linguistic one is most striking. Ancient texts did not preserve any proper names, as well as lexics which could be applied to the „eastern“ Mushki. The least can do modern scholar, is to discuss this problem primarily on good archaeological grounds which recently had come up from historical Armenia (= Eastern Anatolia).

The archaeological data from the Upper Euphrates area (to the north of the Taurus range), as well as from different parts of the Armenian Highland now can clear the Mushki problem. Today we have good archaeological evidence for a quite different migration here at approximately the same period as that from the North Balkans to western Anatolia.

In the Upper Euphrates area, from the excavated sites of the modern province of Elâziğ a new type of Early Iron Age pottery was discovered in great number,²⁵ „*which is strikingly different from the preceding Late Bronze Age pottery*“.²⁶

According to archaeologists who deal with the above-mentioned Elâziğ pottery which is dated in earliest to the mid-XII century BC, it has good parallels in the „*Trialeti*“ sites of Transcaucasia (for instance, in *Metsamor* and *Karmir blur*), in north-western Iran (*Geoy Tepe A*), in Erzerum province (*Güzelova* and *Pulur*), on the south-eastern shore

²⁰ For the most recent study of written and archaeological sources regarding the Mushki see Wittke 2004.

²¹ Barnett 1975b: 420f.; Albright 1975: 597; Mallory 1989: 34f.; Diakonoff 1984: 64f., 115ff., etc.

²² Markwart 1928: 211ff.; Eremyan 1958: 59ff.; Diakonoff 1984: 64f., 115ff., etc.

²³ Melikishvili 1954: 106; idem 1990/91: 73; Götze 1957: 185; Barnett 1975b: 420.

²⁴ Sevin 1991: 87ff.; Bartl 1994: 473ff.; Kosyan 1996: 207ff.; 1997a: 186ff.; 1997b: 259ff.

²⁵ Burney 1958: 157ff.; 1980: 157ff.; Hauptmann 1968/69: 21ff.; Loon van 1975-1980; Whallon 1979; Sevin 1991: 87ff.; Bartl 1994: 473ff., etc.

²⁶ Sevin 1991: 87ff.; Yakar 1993: 18.

of Lake Van (*Dilkaya Höyük*),²⁷ and near Adıyaman (*Tille Höyük*). Amongst these sites the Transcaucasian data is regarded as earlier ones; the Elazığ, Erzerum and Iranian pottery is certainly intrusive.

First Ch. Burney had assumed that the Elazığ Early Iron Age pottery could have been ascribed to the Mushki of Tiglathpileser I,²⁸ which now is shared by a number of archaeologists.²⁹

It is worth to say that today the origins of the pottery that appeared during the XII century BC in Elazığ and elsewhere in the Highland has become subject to several contradictory suggestions.

U. Müller thinks that the source of this ware should be looked for in the Upper Euphrates area (İşuwa) and its spread should be the outcome of the migration of some portion of its population.³⁰ According to another version, the geography of the Grooved ware does not coincide with the regions the Mushku tribes referred to by Assyrian sources used to inhabit.³¹

The ascription of the new Elazığ pottery to the Transcaucasian Late Bronze Age culture seems to contradict the Assyrian texts where these newcomers are clearly designated as the people of Hittite-land (see above, texts of Tiglathpileser I). The only plausible assumption which will fit these two sources (textual and archaeological), probably, is a location of the Mushki and other ethnic groups before their migrations in the area which at some earlier date was under Hittite control or its political influence.

Is it possible to locate the primary homeland of the Mushki? That the Mushki of Kadmuhi were only a part of this ethnic group is a fact beyond any doubt. The absence of visible archaeological traces of the pottery similar to that from Elâzığ to the west of the Euphrates should be regarded as a clue against their western localization.

²⁷ Similar pottery types had come up recently from the excavations conducted in 1989 in the pre-Urartian levels of the Van Castle Mound (Sevin 1994: 221ff.). V. Sevin refers to the existence of a considerable number of such pottery in the Archaeological Museum of Van, originating from Patnos and the neighborhood of Mount Ararat (from the Turkish side). Recently V. Sevin had reported on more data from the Iron Age cemetery at the village of *Karagündüz*, 35 km north-east of Van on the shore of *Lake Ercek* (Sevin - Kavakli 1996).

²⁸ Burney 1980: 166.

²⁹ Sevin 1991: 87ff.; Yakar 1993: 18f.; Bartl 1995: 205f. Although until now special studies concerning the date of similar Early Iron Age ware from Transcaucasia are missing, it has been unearthed in large quantities from most of pre-Urartian levels on the Ararat plain and elsewhere, modern Armenia (Dr. Simon Hmayakian, Dr. Pavel Avetisyan, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography, NAS RA - personal communication [early 2000s]). A situation well paralleled with that reported by V. Sevin. Thus, it appears that from at least the XII century BC all Armenian Highland and some areas beyond it had experienced a great influx of migrants from outside, if one have to postulate with the migratory character of this phenomena.

³⁰ Müller 2003: 142.

³¹ Summers 1994: 246-247; Roaf and Schachner 2005: 119, etc.

It seems that in search of the „*Mushki country*“ one have to look to the north or north-east of Elâziğ. Here we have a country „*Mushkini*“ attested to in the inscription of Urartian king Rusa II (see above).

Further on, the reference to Kashku-Apishlu tribes operating in the same area as the Mushki by Tiglathpileser I is of considerable importance. It is well-known that Kashkaeans were the population of north-central Asia Minor.³² One of the most distinguished centers of the Kashka-land was the city *URUTipiya* (also *Tibiya*), on the sources of the Kelkit (Arm. *Gayl-geṭ*).³³ According to the Annals of Mursili II,³⁴ Pihhuniya from Tipiya, was the first among the Kashkaeans to rule as a king. This area later was included in the XIX Achaemenid satrapy, among the peoples of which certain *Tibarenoi* and *Moschoi* are referred to. Classical Greek authors mentioned *Moschoi* in a considerably wide area in north-western Asia Minor. Strabo mentions the „*Moschian mountains*“ (I 61; XI 492ff.) which included also the Pariadres range (Arm. *Parkhar*).³⁵

If the Mushki of cuneiform Assyrian and Urartian sources are to be sought as identical with the Moschoi of Classical tradition, then the „*Mushki-country*“ could be easily located in the north-eastern Asia Minor,³⁶ approximately in the area where the Hittite texts referred to the country of Hayasa-Azzi. Hence, the „*Mushki-country*“ mentioned in the Assyrian texts exclusively designated only the Mushki of Kadmuhi. The tentative assumption to include in the latter also the Upper Euphrates countries of Alzi, Ishuwa, Purulumzi and several political entities of the region³⁷ seems improbable. Here one can speak only about the Mushki enclaves among the local population, since these countries are regularly mentioned by their traditional names. Nothing could be gained from the Assyrian texts to show any sort of political alliance in the Upper Euphrates region during the XII-VIII centuries BC.

The northern localization of the „*Mushki-country*“ opens a door for the discussion of the ethnic affiliation of the Mushki. Two theories are current in the literature:

1) Mushki and Moschoi represented the same Kartvelian ethnic group, whose name was preserved in the designation of later Georgian tribe of *Meschians*.³⁸ This theory is supported by *Hecataeus*, who refers to the latter as a „*Colchian people*“.³⁹

2) Mushki and Moschoi are two distinct peoples.⁴⁰ The „eastern“ Mushki were the bearers of the Indo-European component of Armenians, who had arrived from the west in the XII century BC.⁴¹

³² On Kaskaean see Schuler von 1965.

³³ Schuler von 1965: 26.

³⁴ Keilschrifttexte aus Boğazköi III 4 III 73ff.

³⁵ On the localization of *Moschoi* see Khazaradze 1973: 208f.

³⁶ For this localization see Götze 1957: 185; Mellink 1965: 319; Sarkisyan 1988: 58f.; Kosyan 1991: 77; 1994: 253f.; 1996: 218; Petrosyan 1991: 22ff.

³⁷ Eremyan 1958: 60.

³⁸ Melikishvili 1954: 106; Götze 1957: 185, etc.

³⁹ Hec., Fragm. Hist. Graec. I, 1, fragm. 228.

It should be mentioned that the Kartvelian origins of the Mushki rests primarily on late tradition. The wide geography of the Mushki in eastern Asia Minor and Northern Mesopotamia, as well as the presence of this term in western Asia Minor and in Northern Balkans could not be explained on Kartvelian grounds.⁴²

On the contrary, the Pontic *Moschoi* could have been primarily an Indo-European ethnic group (Thracian or Phrygian), who later were partly Kartvelianized but had preserved their ethnic designation as *Meschians*. The wide geography of this term, as well as that of the Mushki pottery including the whole Armenian Highland, north-western Iran and Northern Mesopotamia, is a strong argument against the Kartvelian theory.

At this point we have to end the discussion of this problem, since the current data is too scanty to go further.

It is worth to mention that, taking into account the good archaeological background which testifies upon local origins of the Mushki ethnic group, the current theory dealing with their Balkanic origin should be rejected. The existence of a migration from Northern Balkans during the XII century BC is a fact not to be doubted. But the traces of this migration are visible only in north-western and west-central Asia Minor. The only site which produces considerable amount of North Balkanic handmade pottery to the east of Halys (Kızılırmak) is *Kaman-Kalehöyük*.⁴³ This pottery type (*Knobbed Ware* = *Buckelkeramik*) is abundantly introduced in the Troad (*Troy VIIb2*), and the Early Iron Age pottery of Gordion (*Yassıhöyük 7B*) has some similarity with the Trojan *Knobbed Ware*.⁴⁴ The North Balkanic or even south-eastern European origins of the *Knobbed Ware* has long been proposed and now is shared by most archaeologists.⁴⁵ Thus, the handmade pottery of Gordion is intrusive and c.1200 BC is to be considered as *terminus post quem* for its appearance.⁴⁶

As to the east of the Sangarius valley, here traces of North Balkanic peoples are yet unattested. Two Post-Hittite levels of Hattusha - *Büyükkaya* and *Büyükkale* are not related neither to Balkanic peoples, nor to the Post-Hittite Early Iron Age people of

⁴⁰ Diakonoff 1968: 58. He thought that the name of the Kartvelian tribe of Meschians resulted from the contamination of the Moschoi by Classical authors. Gr.Kapantsyan suggested the early Armenization of Kartvelian ethnic group Meschians (1948: 146).

⁴¹ Diakonoff 1968: 214ff. and Ch.1, n.9.

⁴² Though some scholars are inclined to look for Kartvelian enclaves in Phrygia (Cavaignac 1953: 132ff.; Khazaradze 1962: 45f.). Worth to mention Diakonoff 1981: 58, where he states that neither in the area of „eastern“ nor the „western“ Mushki could one find traces of Kartvelian population.

⁴³ Mellink 1992: 130.

⁴⁴ Henrickson 1994: 95ff.

⁴⁵ Blegen 1975: 164; Finley 1964: 5; Rutter 1992: 30ff.; Muhly 1992: 12, etc.

⁴⁶ Henrickson 1994: 107.

Gordion.⁴⁷ Further to the east, Malatya and Karahöyük-Elbistan did not suffer visible destructions.⁴⁸ Here the transition from Late Bronze Age to the Early Iron Age was predominantly peaceful process, without cultural break. Hence, the “eastern” Mushki migration should be disassociated from the North Balkanic migrations, the latter having affected only western Asia Minor.

The Mushki impact

The Mushki tribes had entered into the Near Eastern geopolitical space as mobile ethnic groups ready to fill the political and cultural vacuum in once flourishing centers who had experienced total or partial decline. One could hardly speak about large and destructive migration of peoples from Transcaucasian „*Trialeti*“ cultural zone during the XII century BC. Archaeological investigation of the Elâziğ sites (*Norşuntepe, Korucutepe, Tepecik, Değirmen-tepe, Imikuşağı, Dilektepe, Tülintepe, Köşkerbaba, etc.*) shows that traces of fire or destruction here are too scanty to propose a violent attack of the newcomers. Most probably, some of them were abandoned by their population long before the arrival of migrants.⁴⁹ Maybe we encounter with the situation well attested for the XII century BC arrival of the Dorians in Peloponnese, according to recent Mycenological studies.⁵⁰

Though archaeological surveys were conducted primarily in the Elâziğ province, the impact of a new population on the Late Bronze Age centers could be similar in other Upper Euphrates countries as well. The main conclusions concerning the effect of this migration could be illustrated by the next points:

1) Mass influx of a new primitive culture, which is strikingly different from that of the Late Bronze Age.

2) The number of Early Iron Age settlements exceeds the Late Bronze Age sites, but not that of their size and level of cultural development which we see during the Hittite Empire.⁵¹

3) Features of the new culture: a) handmade (or made on a slow wheel) wares, the repertory of wares is restricted in number,⁵² primitive planning of houses and

⁴⁷ Bittel 1970: 137ff. Moreover, now one can state that the XII-IX century BC (Early Iron Age) is to be considered as a political vacuum in Hattuša. Actually all Hittite settlements of Central Anatolia either were depopulated or represent small primitive communities (for Hattuša see Genz 2003: 179; Seeher 2010).

⁴⁸ Bittel 1983: 31.

⁴⁹ Sevin 1991: 87; Yakar 1993: 18f.

⁵⁰ Sandars 1978: 79ff.; Muhly 1992: 11ff.; Rutter 1992: 70ff.; According to calculations, the number of archaeologically fixed settlements, cemeteries and sanctuaries in the XI century BC Balkanic Greece reaches 40, against 130 for the XII century BC and 320 for the XIII century BC (Snodgrass 1971: 304f.). The decrease of the population of Messenia (western Peloponnese) reaches 90%. For the review of current studies see Kosyan 2023 (in press).

⁵¹ Sevin 1991: 87f.

settlements in the whole, the absence of administrative and religious buildings in *Norşuntepe*.⁵³

It should be mentioned that this situation is paralleled by several areas of the Near East and the Aegean. For instance, exactly the same features are at home in the Early Iron Age Gordion (the level *Yassihöyük 7B*),⁵⁴ two Post-Hittite levels of Hattuša (*Büyükkaya* and *Büyükkale*),⁵⁵ *Troy VIIb2* (the mound of *Hissarlık*),⁵⁶ and Post-Mycenaean sites of Peloponnese.⁵⁷ In all these sites one can state the break in the Late Bronze Age cultural tradition (mainly, pottery) and the appearance of a new primitive culture, small rural settlements, low social status of their population. The comparative study of all these features covering almost the whole Near Eastern and Aegean world, shows that we deal with the combination of several destructive tendencies in the development of the Late Bronze Age civilizations: 1) gradual degradation of political and social structure of societies leading to the decline of urban culture, 2) due to this, depopulation of the Late Bronze Age centers (mostly excluding foreign interference).⁵⁸

As to the nature of the Mushki migration, one can hardly speak about a large shift of peoples from Transcaucasian cultural zone or most western point of departure (Hayasa-Azzi). According to Assyrian kings who dealt with the Upper Euphrates and Upper Tigris valleys, here the Mushki, Kashku and Urumu tribes are mentioned only as enclaves in local principalities. Moreover, as a rule, the newcomers and local population are listed by Assyrians as allies who jointly fought against them. This will be easy to illustrate on some texts of Tiglathpileser I.

In the same context where the account of deeds against the Mushki of Kadmuhi is given, Tiglathpileser I describes his victory over its local principality and their allies - the army of neighboring Paphi, the capture of their king Kili-Teshub, son of Kali-Teshub (this person bears a Hurrian name, like his father). As to another important political entity of the area - Alzi, the Assyrian king mentions his successful campaign to this country, where he encountered the locals (they said to have abandoned the practice of paying tribute), as well as 4,000 Kashku and Urumu who had seized by force the cities of Alzi and Purulumzi.⁵⁹

Indeed, it will be difficult to propose the same scenario for the Upper Euphrates Ishuwa (= Elazığ), since, as we have shown above, archaeological surveys had

⁵² Winn 1980: 155.

⁵³ Bartl 1994: 476ff.

⁵⁴ Henrickson 1994: 95ff.

⁵⁵ Bittel 1970: 137ff.

⁵⁶ Blegen 1975: 161ff.

⁵⁷ Desborough 1964: 225ff.

⁵⁸ On local (i.e. internal) factors of the decline of the Late Bronze Age civilizations see Mellaart 1984: 65ff.; Liverani 1987: 66ff.; Singer 1987: 413ff.; Hallo 1992: 1ff.; Kosyan 1998: 117ff.; 1999: 87ff., 134ff.; Seeher 2001; De Martino 2009, etc.

⁵⁹ Grayson 1976: 12, 18.

revealed considerable influx of a new population here. Hence, one may argue in favor of series of Mushki migrations (easy to say, infiltration), rather than a single action. It seems also that the Mushki migrations were more intense to the north of Taurus range, than that to the south. Most probably, Mushki was a collective term designating numerous related tribes who during the XII century BC were gradually infiltrating into different areas of western and south-western parts of the Armenian Highland which had suffered the political vacuum during the disintegration of the Hittite Empire and internal crisis in Assyria, both once active here.⁶⁰

The history of the Mushki ethnic groups in the Upper Euphrates area after the XII-XI century BC, as we have seen above in this chapter („Sources“), is poorly illustrated only by the texts of the Assyrian kings Tukulti-Ninurta II and Aššurnasirpal II (early IX century BC), dealing with the tribute of the Kadmuhean group of Mushki, and the text of Rusa II of Urartu, which, probably, refers to northern Mushki (to the north of Ishuwa). We do not have any written data concerning the political organization of Mushki who certainly should be sought as one of the main ethnic groups in the Upper Euphrates region, primarily to the east of the river (Ishuwa). Unfortunately, the existence of Mushki-ruled political entities today is curtailed by the absence of textual data.

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⁶⁰ I.M.Diakonoff had tentatively proposed that the term „Mushki“ designated Indo-European groups of cattle-breeding - agricultural population of the Near Eastern periphery in the Post-Hittite period (1981: 58).

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ABBREVIATIONS

AnSt - Anatolian Studies (London).

BIOS – Bulletin of the Institute of Oriental Studies (Yerevan).

CAH – Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge).

JHP - Journal of History and Philology (Yerevan).

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