

1

I

N.Fettich: Bronzeguss und Nomadenkunst auf grund der Ungarlandischen Denkmaler mit einem Anhang von L.Bartucz uber die anthropologischen Ergebnisse der Ausgrabungen von Mosonszentjanos, Ungarn. "Seminarium Kondakovianum ",

2, Prague, 1929, 4, pp.96, XVII tables and 16 illustrations in the text.

The Byzantological Institute " Seminarium Kondakovianum ", headed by the noted archaeologist Professor A.P.Kalitinsky, has began since 1929 to issue a series , dedicated to the study of Scythian and other antiquities left behind by the various nomad tribes of the Eurasian steppe country. The first volume of this series was contributed by Professor M.I. Rostovtzeff, the founder of this new branch of archaeological science. The second volume is due to Dr.N.Fettich, author of numerous important publications on the nomad antiquities of Hungary. The volume contains a detailed study of bronze-cast objects found in Hungarian barrows, as well as a stylistic study of their relationship to the antiquities of South Russia, Siberia, Central Asia and Mongolia. The Hungarian barrow finds are unusually rich and of a very high workmanship, showing a definite artistic style, closely related to the great nomad art of Central Asia. Most of the archaeological material comes from barrows, which are usually found to be situated in large groups or cemeteries. The author gives a list of these cemeteries, and points out the different characteristics of the several groups of barrows.

Some of the groups can be fairly well dated, others need further investigations. The author's researches have definitely demonstrated the the Hungarian bronze-cast objects were left behind by a nomad tribe of a turkish-mongol character, and that the constructive elements of this art had come from the great nomad lands of Central Asia. Some of the barrow groups can be definitely ascribed to a nomad race of horsemen. Others again are characterized by an apparent absence of side-arms and horse-trappings. The author shows that some of the puzzling metal objects found in the barrows, are nothing but bronze plaque ornaments of saddles and bridles. In some of the graves, the horse skeleton is absent, and the author justly points out / p.14/ that very often the saddle and bridle replaced the horse. We find similar usages in the barrows of Mongolia. The author mentions the find of numerous iron arrow-heads, and it would be highly interesting to draw parallels in the light of the investigations recently conducted by Dr. Paul Rau in the lower Volga region / Cf. Paul Rau: Die Graber der fruhen Eisenzeit im unteren Wolgagebiet. Mitteilungen des Zentralmuseums, Jahrgang 4, Heft I, Pokrowsk, 1929 /.

Most of the discovered bronze-cast objects represent belt buckles, and bronze plaques used as belt ornaments. The two fundamental motifs of this art seem to be the motif of fighting animals, and the foliate ornament, which often

degenerates into a geometric composition. According to the author the motif of fantastic animals has probably some mythological significance /p.37/. He draws attention to the striking similarity which exists between the bronze-cast plaques with human figures of the Hungarian barrows / 2nd group of barrows / and the plaques with human figures found in the neighborhood of the village Redikor, District Cerdyn, Province of Perm in NE Russia, as well as with some of the finds of the Caucasian and South Russian barrows. Similar to other branches of the great Central Asian nomad art, the art of Hungarian barrows is characterized by the tendency to avoid empty spaces in compositions, which are usually filled with foliate or floral ornament, or the animal figures ornamentally arranged.

On p. 50 the author makes the interesting statement that the bronze casting form had probably a woodcut model, and that the various bronze-cast objects bear traces of a wood-cutting technic. This important conclusion is not confirmed by actual finds, for the author says:-

" Im Zusammenhang mit unseren Bronzegüssen muss ich noch erwähnen, dass im ganzen ungarlandischen Material weder eine einzige hiehergehörige Gussform, noch ein zur Herstellung der Gussform dienendes Holzmodell gefunden wurden auch hat man von Goldschmiedewerkstätten oder Siedlungen bisher keine Spur entdeckt"

/p.53/

Many of the Hungarian bronze-cast objects are gilded and silvered.

In ch. III, the author endeavours to find place for the bronze-cast culture of the Hungarian barrows among the different provinces of the South Russian and Central Asiatic nomad art. He justly points out that the art of the Hungarian barrows had been brought to the Hungarian plains from afar, and that among the motifs met with on the Hungarian bronze-cast objects we never find ornamental motifs current in contemporary Medieval Europe. The author finds numerous parallels in style and technic with the bronze-cast antiquities of Minussinsk in Southern Siberia, the finds of Kockar in the Semirecye Province, and even with the discoveries of the Japanese archaeologists in Korea. Some of the Hungarian bronze-cast objects / Komitat Moson, VII, 14-19 / bear traces of an Iranian influence, and may have come from the Oxus region in Turkestan.

We may add that the bronze-cast buckle and belt-ornaments of the Hungarian finds bear a distant resemblance to those of East Tibetan belts, and that the foliate ornament of Hungarian bronze plaques may have originated from the same source as the floral ornaments of the scabbards of Tibetan swords.

The excavations and anthropological investigations of the group of barrows at Mosonszentjanos / Komitat Moson/ have clearly shown that the barrows belong to a nomad tribe of Mongol race, and that the artistic productions of this tribe

tribe were closely akin to those of other nomad tribes of the Asiatic steppe country.

Dr. Ludwig Bartucz contributes an enlightened study of the anthropological material of the Mosonszentjanos barrows. According to him :- " Halte ich es fur wahrscheinlich, dass die Leute von Mosonszentjanos in ethnischer Hinsicht avarisch waren, und an ihrem Volkstume, an den Sitten ihrer Ahnen auch wahrend ihres langen Verbleibens treu festhielten und sich von jeglicher Rassenvermischung streng abgeschlossen haben. Jedoch hat dieses avarische Ethnikum eine betrachtliche hunnische Komponente enthalten, mit welcher es sich wahrscheinlich nicht in Ungarn sondern bereits im Osten verschmolzen hat "

/ p. 95 /.

Let us hope that Dr. H. Fettich will soon give us a complete inventory of the Hungarian finds which will, no doubt, throw a new light on the problems of the archaeology of nomad tribes.

G. de R.