

Emergence Of Silk Industry In Fergana Valley

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Annotation. The article covers the history of ancient weaving in the Fergana Valley, including the formation and use of silk, based on archaeological data. The role of the Fergana Valley in the development of silk weaving, the methods used in silk weaving are studied, and a lot of information is included in scientific circulation.

Key words: Ferghana Valley, weaving, silk production, silk fabrics, cotton production, archaeological data, rituals.

Аннотация: В статье на основе археологических данных освещается история древнего текстиля в Ферганской долине, в том числе формирование шелкового производства и его использования. Изучена роль Ферганской долины в развитии производства шелка, способы шелкоткачества, и введено много информации в научный оборот.

Ключевые слова: Ферганское долина, ткачество, шёлковая промышленность, шёлковые ткани, хлопководство, археологические данные, церемонии.

INTRODUCTION.

The Fergana Valley has been one of the centers of silk production since ancient times. However, since it was difficult for silk fabrics to reach us, there were only various assumptions about the time and place of their origin. Therefore, the idea that “in large areas of Central Asia ... the population wore clothes made of cotton fabrics” was widespread. Because in the 60s and 70s of the 20th century, E.D. Saltovskaya, during archaeological excavations in the northwestern part of the Fergana Valley, found cotton seeds in layers dating back to the first centuries AD. This fact is, of course, very important, as she found important evidence proving that the people of Turkestan knew how to directly plant cotton and make various fabrics from its harvest from the first centuries AD.

We can only learn about the oldest fabrics from archaeological materials, that is, we can learn what

the fabrics were like from the traces left on pottery objects. Because the oldest pottery objects were made not on a pottery wheel, but by hand. First, clay was applied around the fabric filled with sand, and the prepared vessel was dried in the sun. After that, the sand was poured out, and the fabric was separated from the dried vessel. Traces of ancient fabrics remained mostly on the inner surface of the pottery objects. Judging by the traces left on the oldest vessels, it is clear that they were very coarse, mostly woven from wool, stems of various plants, and cotton. Fragments of pottery vessels with traces of similar fabrics were found in large numbers in the Chimkurgan reservoir zone of the Kashka River, dating back to the Late Bronze Age, as well as in the ancient layers of archaeological monuments of the Fergana Valley. Therefore, in Central Asia, including the Fergana Valley, there is evidence that cotton was the main source of raw material for textile production. Therefore, it is

evident that various fabrics were made from cotton and various clothes were sewn from it. However, in addition to cotton, various fabrics were also woven from hemp, wool, and silk.

Of course, since cotton is a seed crop, its fiber has decayed and disappeared, but the seed itself has often been preserved. That is why cotton seeds can be seen in a number of archaeological sites.

But when it comes to silk products, the situation is completely different. Because if silk fibers remain in architectural monuments made of clay and soil, they often rot and disappear. However, due to lucky coincidences, they have been preserved in various regions of Central Asia, often in tombs. In particular, most scholars believe that the development of sericulture spread from China to other countries due to the Great Silk Road, and that the Sogdians acted as intermediaries in this trade route.

The oldest traces of silk fabric found in Central Asia that were found in the layers of the Sopolitepa dating back to the 10th-14th centuries BC. Although not from such ancient times in the Fergana Valley, silk remains were also found in the Karabulak burial mound dating back to the 2nd - 1st centuries BC.

True, the oldest silk sample in Central Asia was found at the Sopollitepa monument (X, VIII - XVI centuries BC) in the Muzrabod district of the Surkhandarya region during excavations led by academician A.A. Askarov. However, this find remains unique to this day. Recently, new information has been obtained about silk and its origin in the Fergana Valley. In particular, the oldest silk sample in the valley from an archaeological point of view (II - IV centuries) was found in the Karabulak tomb in South Fergana. It was determined that two-thirds of the textile products found in the tombs here were silk. These silk fabrics

were of at least four types, and very beautiful kimkhob and embroidery were made from them. The image of women holding mythical dragons in both hands is especially important for studying. Because the image of female goddesses holding a snake-like creature or a fish in their hands is widespread in the East and is especially common in ancient Indian art. The origin of some images on Karabulak silk fabrics goes back to the art of Southeast Asian embroidery. Silk fabrics found in the Karabulak monument show that in ancient times, women were tried to wear their most expensive clothes before they went to the next world. In particular, they had to wear a headscarf made of silk or a scarf covering their face. Because two-thirds of the fabrics found in the Karabulak cemetery were silk fabrics, and almost all of them covered the women's faces. This shows that the custom of covering the face of any woman going to the afterlife with a silk scarf was traditional and it seems that everyone strictly adhered to this tradition. Of course, silk fabric was not a product that everyone could afford, because it was an expensive product. We can draw two conclusions from this situation. First, among the inhabitants of South-West Fergana, the tradition of covering the face of women with a silk scarf during religious burials in the 2nd - 1st centuries BC and 2nd centuries AD was prevalent. Second, it is evident that almost a third of those buried in the Karabulak cemetery, as in all societies, constituted a relatively poor segment of society. That is why about 30 percent of the fabrics found here are not silk products, but other, cheaper fabrics. The remaining 70 percent of the fabrics were all made of silk. Therefore, the presence of silk products in a grave is one of the signs indicating the property hierarchy of that society.

Silk materials discovered in Karabulak were used as a special veil covering the faces of the deceased, as blindfolds, as "bags", "flags" and for making

clothing. The purpose of the items given in the coffin and why they were placed in the graves is unknown, they may have served certain religious beliefs during the funeral ceremony. The custom of "grave veils" - veils and blindfolds - is naturally of interest to many... This custom in the funeral ceremony was also discovered in the graves of the Munchoktepa cemetery in the Pop district of the Namangan region (V - VIII centuries) and is of great importance in the study of religious beliefs. First of all, it should be noted that almost all of the textiles in the Munchoktepa graves were made of silk. According to experts, Munchoktepa silks - mainly belong to the local type of silk. This silk is of medium quality, so some fabrics woven from it were rough. The deceased were buried with their headgear, items they used in life, food, and even money (coins). "Musician," "bootmaker," "hunter," and "weaver" coffins are known. Musical instruments (khosnay, trumpet), shoe molds, and leather-cutting knives, bows and whips, spears, and silk fabrics were found in these. Samples of fabrics made of silk, cotton, and wool were found in reed coffins. Silk fabrics are very well preserved. Clothing, headgear, and "ceremonial pillows" were made from silk. The Munchoktepa collection of headgear includes a shirt, a dress resembling a women's robe, and a children's shirt. From one of the coffins, two clothes and a robe were taken out and repaired.

The finds from the Munchoktepa monument near Pop play an invaluable role in the study of silk weaving in the Fergana Valley in the early Middle Ages. One of the interesting customs discovered by archaeologists is associated with silk and its veneration... Many silk fabrics were noted on the heads of some deceased people. Some of them even slightly covered the face of the deceased and were well preserved. They were rectangular in shape,

measuring 23-25x35-37 centimeters, and were made of very thin, delicate silk.

Scientists have come to the following conclusion: although the practice of placing items made of silk fabrics in the form of spectacles, which initially covered the face, forehead and eyes, in the grave, first appeared in the Karabulak and Borkorbaz monuments, it is known that later this custom was widespread in Munchoktepa and Xinjiang (China). According to Lubo-Lesnichenko, who studied silk fabrics from Xinjiang, the custom of covering the face with a veil in Xinjiang spread from the Karabulak monument to other regions, including China.

finds in East Turkestan, sinologist E. I. Lubo-Lesnichenko rightly concluded that the veils spread to other places from Central Asia. However, the veils in East Turkestan, unlike those on the Munchak hill, are found together with veils-eyeshades. Eyeshades were found in the Karabulak tomb in Fergana, only in Karabulak small pillows of silk fabric were glued instead of eyes. The veils are found together with eyeshades in Karabulak. In addition, in Karabulak the faces of some deceased were covered with veils made of red silk. In Astana and Karabulak, the middle part of the veils was made of silk of different colors, and around it was a strip of silk of the same color.

Based on the above, it can be concluded that silk was considered sacred in Fergana, and therefore some of the deceased were covered with expensive silk fabric. In this regard, the Russian Philip Nazarov, who visited the Kokand Khanate at the beginning of the 19th century, told a legend about Margilan. According to him, a red silk flag was kept in a building in the center of the city, and the people of Margilan considered it divine and worshiped it.

Thus, the centers of silk fabrics, Andijan, Namangan, Margilan, and Kokand weaving

schools, did not arise out of nowhere. The discovery of a rich collection of silk materials in Munchoktepa and Karabulak, and the fact that they were woven using advanced Chinese traditions, shows how deep the roots of the history of valley sericulture are. After all, the Fergana Valley was the closest country to China, the homeland of silk. Therefore, silk must have entered this region much earlier. The reason is that silk entered the territory of Central Asia through East Turkestan from the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. After that, silk products spread in the markets of these places, and by the end of the 2nd century BC, according to sources, the markets were filled with Chinese products. However, the technology of silk production was kept secret in China for a long time, and it was not allowed to spread to other regions. Taking into account these circumstances, it can be said that silk entered the Fergana weaving industry at the beginning of our era. Therefore, it is likely that at the same time as Sogd, or perhaps even earlier, in the III-IV centuries, there was a silk production center in Fergana. This center, of course, was formed on the basis of ancient weaving traditions and the experience of the ancestors of many weaving masters. All this indicates the high level of the ancient Fergana weaving school .

According to experts, the silk cloth covering the face and eyes served two purposes: 1) It was intended for a divine purpose, and after the face and eyes were covered with a veil, they believed that the blind person would not return to the world of the living because the eyes of the deceased were covered. 2) It was intended for a social purpose, and it was a sign that the deceased's position in society was important or not .

Numerous fragments of fabric found in the ruins of the Mozarkurgan on the Mugh Mountain about a quarter of a century ago give a certain idea of the silk fabrics and weaving in Sogd, Fergana and other

regions of Central Asia. These samples indicate that the quality of silk production was high even in those times. The fabrics were found to be of the Jujuncha and Kamchat varieties. They were distinguished by the colorfulness of their dyes. Along with the colored fabrics, there were also colored sidir gha fabrics. The silk was cooked and woven into canvas, in stripes. The decorations were also diverse: in sidir gha fabrics, the decoration was created by combining different colored silks. The decoration on the silk fabrics found in Mugh mainly consists of rhombuses, circles and other geometric shapes. Similar small samples are available in museums in Europe, particularly in the Museum of the History of Textiles in Lyon and in the collections of the Cluny Museum in Paris .

Thus, silk and clothes made of silk were highly valued in Turkestan. Therefore, interest in it, promotion of silk products, production of silk fabrics and its large-scale sale have been a tradition that has been going on since ancient times. Silk weaving in Turkestan, especially in the Fergana Valley, is not a thing of the past, but is one of the traditional crafts that has been going on since ancient times and has become deeply ingrained in the people's blood.

Due to the ancient existence of silk weaving in the Fergana Valley, several weaving methods were created and perfected by several ancestors of weavers. Weavers wove atlas, adras, kanoviz, bekasam, parpasha and several other types of silk fabrics. These fabrics are considered the national and spiritual heritage of our people. Like the Japanese kimono, Indian sari, Azerbaijani arkhaliq, and Arabic kabas, Uzbek national clothes have survived for centuries and help us understand the identity and past of our people.

The 2nd - 1st centuries BC and from the Munchoktepa monument dating back to the 2nd - 4th centuries BC. Analysis of these silk fabrics

showed that during this period (i.e., the early 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD) silk was considered sacred in the Fergana Valley and had a special significance in funeral ceremonies.

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