

II. The Iron Age and the Medieval Epoch

The history of study of the early stages of the Iron Age of Yakutia.

Judging from many facts, in the middle of the I century B.C., the ancient tribes of Yakutia passed on to treatment of iron. The experience of metallurgy of iron was the autochthonous one. It began in the course of the progressive development of the local culture of the Bronze Age. The undoubted existence of the ancient metallurgy in Yakutia was convincingly proved by the works of the Lena Historical and Archaeological Expedition that in the 1940s discovered several sites of the Early Iron Age on the Middle and Lower Lena. In those years A.P. Okladnikov outlined the chronological range of the epoch and for the first time made some attempts to determine the sequence of stages of the Early Iron Age (Okladnikov A.P., 1945, 1946, 1950, 1955). These discoveries were added by the materials of the Vilyui Archaeological Expedition. Basing on the results of the works of the latter, S.A. Fedoseyeva supports the Okladnikov's opinion about the formation of metallurgy of iron in the Bronze Age Culture. She considers that the complex of the Early Iron Age of the Upper Vilyui was left by the "pedestrian" hunters Evenks represented then the most northern group of the ethnos that spoke the Tungusic language. The next Stage of study of the Iron Epoch is connected with the activities of the Cis-Lena Archaeological Expedition. Its works at the multi-layer(ed) sites of the Aldan River allowed to insert some essential amendments into one's views of the Iron Epoch and to enrich them. The preliminary results of study of these sites were stated in the paper of S.A. Fedoseyeva (1970).

The archaeological materials obtained by the Cis-Lena AE and during the preceding excavations were most completely summarized and analysed in detail in a special monograph of I.V. Konstantinov - "The Early Iron Age of Yakutia" (1978). Having no at his disposal the multi-layer(ed) settlements with distinct stratigraphy and taking into consideration the small number of the pronounced iron artifacts I.V. Konstantinov makes his main conclusions concerning the epoch on the base of the ceramic material. Within the latter he distinguishes three pronounced complexes which differ in their ornamentation. These complexes roughly correspond to the main three groups of ceramics, recognized by A.P. Okladnikov. To the Sumnagin Complex I.V. Konstantinov refers vessels with cut modelled bolsters; to the Ust'-Mil' One - those ornamented mostly with belts made of smooth pressings of different stamps; and to the Dyuktai-Bel'kashi Complex - vessels ornamented with parallel rows of the multipronged stamp. He considers the Sumnagin Complex to be connected with ancestors of the Ukgahirs and the Dyuktai-Bel'kashi One - with the Tungusic ethnical community. The Early Iron Age of Yakutia as a whole I.V. Konstantinov dates by the III century B.C. - the XII century A.D. As the subsequent, investigations

have demonstrated, not all the ceramic groups were singled out by him in the right way. For this reason I.V. Konstantinov's conclusions made on the base of the incorrectly recognized ceramic complexes had not found confirmation in the materials of discoveries of the last years. A.N. Alexeyev examines such materials collected by him at the Kurung II, Molbo and Ulakhan Seghelenn'akh Settlements yielded the "pure", unmixed inventory of the Iron Age of Yakutia.

The general characteristics of the Early Iron Age Culture of Yakutia. Over 60 localities relating to the examined period of time have been discovered. At nine settlements the cultural remains have been fixed *in situ* (unmixed). Seven radiocarbon dates have been obtained on the samples collected in the course of excavations of the latter. These dates witness that the Early Iron Age of Yakutia existed within the interval of 2.500+100 - 1.500+100 years B.P., i.e. in the V century B.C. - the V century A.D. Study of these settlements allowed to distinguish the inventory most typical for the epoch of iron. The stone tools are characterized by the obvious degradation simplification of the technique of production and by the absence of the worked out typological forms. Unlike the stone tools, the bone ones are, as it was previously, widely used. Of bone such artifacts as arrow-heads, perforators, needles, needle-cases, details of the compound bows are made. The stone artifacts are represented by arrow-heads, knives, chain-mail places, fish-hooks, and so on. For instance, the cranked knife from the Dyuktai Cave is made in the traditions of the Bronze Age and the stemmed knives find their analogies in the cultures of the Iron Age of the Cis-Amur Area. The numerous illustrations of the local iron-making as well as the presence of iron wares made in the traditions of the Ust'-Mil' Culture of the Bronze Age and the absence of facts indicative of the considerable ethnical replacement from without allow to consider the experience of obtaining and treatment of iron to be the autochthonous one originated on the base of the progressive development of the local metallurgy of bronze.

Ceramics is the most numerous material of the examined settlements. The smooth-wall vessels and those with their body ornamented by the pressings of ribbed shovel or by the chess-draught ornament (the waffle ceramics) are met here. The artistic ornament of the vessels is rather varied: the cogged-, comb- and hole-stamps were used by the craftsmen. The mouth of such vessels were beautified with belt of thorough holes, "pearls", rows of cut and uncut modelled bolsters and large round hemispherical holes. Study of the ceramics of the Iron Epoch of Yakutia is indicative of the fact that the roots of the main types of ornamentation of vessels are traced in the local Bronze Age. Some elements of ornamentation of the Yakut vessels, for instance, the cogged-stamp, receding comb and smooth stamp find the broad territorial analogies. Ceramics with such ornament is represented in the cultural complexes of the Bronze and Iron Ages of the Cis-Baikal, Trans-Baikal and Cis-Amur Areas.

For study of the Iron Age of Yakutia the materials of the Ulakhan Seghelenn'akh Site seem to be very important. Here, in cultural Layer IV, the types of ceramics singled out by I.V. Konstantinov into the Sumnagin and Dyuktai-Bel'kashi groups, are represented. This allows to insert some correctives into the I.V. Konstantinov's constructions and to revise the conclusions, made by us before investigation of the Ulakhan Seghelenn'akh Site (Alexeyev A.N., 1991). *First of all*, it must be noted that in the light of the facts we have at our disposal some doubts, concerning the singling out of special, of different age ceramic groups of the Iron Epoch, arise. Judging from the situation, at the Ulakhan Seghelenn'akh Site, all the types of ceramics distinguished by I.V. Konstantinov existed within a single chronological and genetical complex. *Secondly*, the ceramics of the Dyuktai-Bel'kachi group as well as the Sumnagin one reflects preservation and further development of the local tradition existed from the Bronze Age. This tradition reveals itself in the presence of the modelled bolsters at the Sumnagin vessels and in the ornamentation made by the cogged-stamp, at the Dyuktai-Bel'kachi vessels. The same way, the ceramics with denticulated ornament is not an introduced element indicative of the cultural influence of the newly come population of another ethnos. Proceeding from this and from the facts, we are not agreed with I.V. Konstantinov's supposition, that ceramics of the Dyuktai-Bel'kachi group is connected with appearance and spreading over Yakutia of the Tungusic ethnical community.

The facts accumulated by the present allow to consider ceramics of the Iron Age to be the autochthonous one. This conclusion is strongly supported by preservation of many archaic traditions in the ornamentics and technology of ceramics of the Iron Age of Yakutia. To the such ones the following peculiarities refer: the flakiness of the ceramic paste, traced from the Late Neolithic, the admixture of vegetable remains in the ceramic paste, the waffle and ribbed technical ornament, belt of through round holes under the side of vessel, the uncut modelled bolsters and the cogged-stamp. From the Bronze Age plates and dishes were adorned with uncut modelled bolsters, "pearls", large round pressings - holes and prints of smooth stamps of different variants. The continuity is also reflected in the shapes of vessel of the Early Iron Age of Yakutia. They continue to be the round-bottomed ones. This feature differs them from the flat-bottomed vessels of the Cis-Amur, Cis- and Trans-Baikal Areas, those dominant in the ceramic complexes of these regions.

A.N. Alexeyev like S.A. Fedoseyeva and I.V. Konstantinov, considers the cranked knife in the inventory of cultural Layer I of the Dyuktai Cave having the close similarity with the knife of the same type found at the Ust'-Mil' Site, in cultural layer dated by the Bronze Epoch to be the obvious manifestation of the local archaic tradition in treatment of metal.

In connection with the analysis of the continuity reflected in the culture of the Early Iron Age of Yakutia it must be noted, that ceramics retains this impor-

tant feature in the much later periods of time. Thus, for instance, vessels of the Culture of "Malykh Domov" (the "Small Houses" Culture of the XIII century) were adorned with the familiar variants of ornament - the modelled bolsters, those cut and uncut; sometimes, from the horizontal bolster-belt downwards, the vertical short bolsters were placed; the mouths were beautified with "pearls". Moreover, for ceramics of the Kulun-Atakh Culture of the XIV - XVI centuries, studied better, than the Culture of "Malykh Domov" (the "Small Houses" One), the traditions of ornamentation of vessels with "pearls", pressings of spherical holes, horizontal rows of the cut and uncut modelled bolsters, short vertical double and single modelled bolsters drawing down on the body of vessel from the lower horizontal modelled bolster as well as with vertical bolsters lying between the horizontal rows of modelled bolsters, like a kind of crosspieces have turned out to be the typical ones too.

The economy of the population of Yakutia of the Early Iron Age continued to be the appropriative one. The osteological material of the settlements is indicative of the predominance of hunting and fishery. All the examined settlements lack any traces of reindeer-breeding. This does not allow to relate distribution of reindeer-breeding in Yakutia to the time earlier, than the end of the I - the beginning of the II millennia A.D. The same is strongly supported by the rock drawings of Yakutia on which the reindeer thematics is absent. The Early Bronze Age of Yakutia can be characterized as the time of formation and development of the culture of the mobile hunters and fishermen of the primitive communal system, those who passed to treatment of iron in the middle of the I millennium B.C. The formation of the culture of the Early Iron Age of Yakutia ought to be, evidently, connected with the Paleoasiatic population among which, possibly, were ancestors of the modern Koryaks, Chukchis, Ukaghirs and some other ancient Paleoasiatic ethnoses, with their ethnonyms being still unknown.

The Medieval Yakutia, or the subsequent stage of its ancient history. The beginning of this stage we connect with the Culture of "Malykh Domov" (the "Small Hoses" One), discovered and investigated in the 1940s by A.P. Okladnikov (1945, 1955), who also gave the name to it, taking into consideration one of the typical peculiarities of the latter - the presence of dwellings-houses with square or round base. This settled culture lacks traces of cattle-breeding, judging from the absence of bones of cattle and horses at the settlements. A.P. Okladnikov considers, the Culture of "Malykh Domov" to be that of the local tribes of the Early Iron Age assimilated by the new-comers from the South. Basing on the materials of the Yakut folk-lore as well as taking into consideration similarity of ornamentation of the ceramics of this culture with the latest one of Yakutia, but mainly proceeding from the conception of the late appearance of the ancestors of the Yakuts (those speaking the Turkic language) on the territory of the Middle Lena Basin,

A.P. Okladnikov dated the Culture of "Malykh Domov" by the XV - XVI centuries A.D.

In the 1970s investigation of the objects of this culture was carried on by I.V. Konstantinov (1978). The latter supports the Okladnikov's opinion, that the Culture of "Malykh Domov" is the transitional one from the Early Iron Age to the Latest Yakut Culture. I.V. Konstantinov considers it possible to date the Culture of "Malykh Domov" by the XIV - XV or even XIII - XIV centuries A.D. (1978, p. 40).

A.N. Alexeyev is also of the opinion, that by "small houses" the culture of the transitional period from the Early Iron Age to the Latest Yakut Culture is represented. This culture, being the independent one, reflects one of the early stages of formation of the Ancient Yakut Culture. It seems, that in their time, A.P. Okladnikov and I.V. Konstantinov succeeded in discovering of the culture, that, with taking into consideration the new materials on the paleoethnographical culture of the Yakuts, can be dated by the XIII century A.D.

A.I. Gogolev has discovered and studied the Kulun-Atakh Culture of the XIV - XVII centuries A.D. He recognizes two stages in the latter one: the early - Kulun-Atakh (the XIV - XV centuries) and the late - Syrdyk (the XV - XVI centuries) ones. Unlike the population of the preceding Culture of "Malykh Domov", the Kulun-Atakh one was engaged in cattle-breeding. They had horses and cows. With the Kulun-Atakh Culture the appearance and development of the appropriative form of the economy in Yakutia is connected. The analysis of the materials of the Kulun-Atakh Complex demonstrates that many elements of the culture have their analogies in the inventory of the archaeological cultures of the Cis-Baikal Area, Southern and Western Siberia dated by the Kurykan-Uiguric Period. At the same time some other elements of this very complex are indicative of the continuity of the traditions of the Early Iron Age of Yakutia (Gogolev A.I., 1990, 1992, 1993).

The materials obtained in the course of excavations of the Ulakhan Seghelenn'akh Settlement demonstrate, that in the VI century A.D., on the territory of Yakutia, groups of Turks from Southern Siberia appeared. The iron arrow-heads found at this settlement are of the obvious Turkic origin. The same can be said about bone plates of the compound bows and a small bone sculpture depicting two horse heads turned to different sides. Such appearance of the Turkic population in the North is also certified by the rock drawings and the runic records. The appearance in the cultural complexes of the Iron Epoch of Yakutia, of the mentioned elements of the material culture of the Turks is a result of the influence of the Kurykans, who spoke the Turkic language and whose culture existed in the Cis-Baikal Area in the VI - X centuries A.D. One can suggest that about the same time, into the territory of Yakutia, peopled by the Paleoasiatic tribes, groups of the unmounted Tunguses had penetrated. With the beginning of spreading of the Turkic and Tungusic cultures and the active drawing of

the ancient tribes of the region into the socio-economical and cultural spheres of Siberia, the Early Iron Age of Yakutia began its transformation into the Medieval Epoch.

"The Paleoethnical Reconstructions".

The Chukchis. They, together with Koryaks and Itel'mens, are the Paleoasiatic peoples of the North-East Asia. Their linguistic, anthropological and ethnographical peculiarities witness this. The ethnogenesis and the ethnical history of the Chukchis are the problems solved by the scientists unsynonymously. Some of them consider the continental regions of the Chukot Peninsula to be the ones of the initial formation of the Chukot ethnos (Vdovin I.S., 1965). The others are of the opinion that the initial origin of Chukchis is connected with the northern part of the littoral of the Sea of Okhotsk, where the Koryaks and Itel'mens were their neighbours. And just by this, some parallels in the cultures of all the three peoples are explained (Levin M.G., 1958; Arutunov S.A., 1983; Kir'yak M.A., 1986, 1987). N.N. Dikov (1979) has voiced the supposition, that the ethnogenesis of the Chukchis, Eskimo people, Ukaghirs and Koryaks is connected with the Ust'-Bel' Culture. But the latter is not the independent one. Judging from all its indicators, it represents a local variant of the Ymyyakhtakh Culture, N.N. Dikov is one of those who consider, that one of the most extreme north-eastern groups of the Ymyyakhtakh people had become the base for origin, in future, of the Chukchi ethnos. Among the most devoted advocates of such view - Chernetsov V.N. (1964), Mochanov Yu.A. (1969), Okladnikov A.P. (1970), Vasil'evskiy R.S. (1971), Fedoseyeva S.A. (1980). Investigation of the archaeological material allows A.N. Alexeyev to join this opinion and to consider, that the Late Paleolithic tribes of the Ymyyakhtakh people took part in genesis of several Paleoasiatic ethnoses of the North-East Asia, including that of Chukchis.

The Ukaghirs. This people numbers 1.100 persons. Study of its culture, unlike those of the Tunguses and Yakuts, began only in the end of the XIX - the beginning of the XX centuries A.D. By this time, the original character of the material and spiritual cultures of the Ukaghirs had been lost in consequence of the century-old contacts with the Evens, Chukchis, Koryaks, Evenks, Yakuts and Russians. This circumstance makes the study of the ethnical history of the Ukaghirs an extremely complicated matter. Up till now this problem remains not quite well solved.

On the base of study of the sources we have at our disposal the picture of ethnogenesis of the Ukaghirs seems to be as follows.

The initial stages of formation of the ancestors of the Ukaghirs took place on the territory of the Taimyr Peninsula, in consequence of interaction of the Ymyyakhtakh Culture with those penetrating there from Western Siberia and the Cis-Baikal Area. From Taimyr the ancient Ukaghirs in the middle of the II mil-

lennium B.C., under the pressure of the people, who spoke the Ketic language, began their spreading to the East. Their route passed mainly within the limits of the first, or "northern", local variant of the Ymyyakhtakh Culture distinguished by A.N. Alexeyev. Just in this area of the Ymyyakhtakh Culture the ancient traces of the bronze casting production have been discovered - Abylaa I (Taimyr), Staryy Sikt'akh (the Lower Lena). Burnigino (the Indigirka River). On the territory of the Chukotka Peninsula the advancement of the Yenisei tribes over Yakutia is documented by the find, in the middle current of the Anadyr' River, of ceramics ornamented with the straightforward zigzaglike pattern, typical for the Khakasso-Minusinsk Depression and the Taiga Zone of the Middle Yenisei. Besides, the indirect evidence of existence of the metallic articles in the Late Neolithic of Chukotka has been obtained at the Rauchuvagytgyn I Site, where some bone artifacts and graphical depictions on stone slabs were made, according to the use-ware analysis, with the help of the metallic instruments. Near the Rauchuvagytgyn Lake the stone plates with depictions indicative of the appearance of the Ukaghirs on the territory of Chukotka not later than the middle of the I millennium B.C. have been found too.

In the first half of the II millennium A.D. the northern Anabaro-Olenyok Tunguses separated the Ukaghirs from the Samodiyans driving the former far to the East, into the right bank of the Lena River. Here the Ukaghirs had turned out to be in a kind of the peculiar ethnical enclave surrounded from the continental borders by the Chukchis, Koryaks, Evens and ancestors of the Yakuts. In the conditions of the enclave the Ukaghirs were subjected to attacks and assimilation from the side of the neighbouring ethnoses. In the second quarter of the XVII century the Russians found the compact groups of Ukaghirs settled in the Cis-Polar Zone, from the right-bank side of the Lena River to the Anadyr' River.

The Evenks and Evens. They are representatives of the parent languages and cultures. Their languages relate to the northern branch of the Tunguso-Manchurian linguistic family. In the historical literature, the Evenks and Evens are known as the Tunguses. In Yakutia 14.428 Evenks and 8.668 Evens live.

The problem of the origin of these peoples and the chronology of peopling of Yakutia by the latter ones is solved by investigators unsynonymously. Some of them consider that the Tunguses lived in Siberia from the Paleolithic or, at least, Neolithic and Bronze Epochs (Okladnikov A.P., 1950, 1955, 1968; Vasilovich G.M., 1958, 1969; Tokarev S.A., 1958, and others). There are also those who see in them the newcomers from Manchuria, spurs of the Great Hingan, the Hwang Ho and Yangtze Basins (Georghi, 1776; Schrenk, 1883; Shirokogorov, 1929; Tugolukov, 1980, 1985, and others). The beginning of the intensive settling of North Asia by the Tunguses these investigators connect with development of the pack-saddle reindeer-breeding and date it by the end of the I - the beginning of the II millennia A.D.

The archaeological materials do not support the fact of the early peopling of Yakutia by the Tunguses. At the neolithic settlements as well as at those of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages no material remains, indicative of the existence of the Tungusic Culture in Yakutia of that time have been found. The rock drawings of Yakutia lack any scenes of reindeer-breeding. This differ them from petroglyphs of the Cis-Amur and Trans-Baikal Areas, where the drawings of the kind are rather numerous and dated by very early time: the Late Neolithic - Bronze Epochs (Masin A.I., 1986).

The analysis of the archaeological and ethnographical materials draws A.N. Alexeyev to the conclusion that the Evenks and Evens came to Yakutia much later. The small groups of the "unmounted" or pedestrian people could penetrate here in the middle - the second half of the I millennium A.D., but the most intensive migrations of the Evenks and Evens took place at the reindeer-breeding stage, in the end of the I - the beginning of the II millennia A.D.

The Yakuts. The most numerous among the aborigines of the North (384.000 of persons) the Yakuts are. Their language relates to the ancient Turkic ones. In the XVII century the Russians having reached the territory of the modern Yakutia, in the course of its joining to the Russian State, noted an once, that, unlike the rest peoples of the North, the Yakuts-Sakha were the settled cattle-breeders, those who bred cattle and horses. Their language and culture were quite different from those of the neighbour peoples and, beginning from the XVIII century, the problem of origin of the Yakut people became the one of the most keen interest. The most solid and argued conceptions of the ethnogenesis of the Yakuts are stated in the works of G.V. Ksenofontov, S.A. Tokarev, A.P. Okladnikov, L.V. Konstantinov, I.E. Zykov and A.I. Gogolev.

On the basis of study of the archaeological and ethnographical materials, A.N. Alexeyev comes to the following ethnogenetical constructions.

In the Early Iron Age on the territory of Yakutia tribes that preserved in their material culture elements of the traditions of the preceding ones of the Late Neolithic and Bronze Epochs dwelt. This continuity is mostly pronounced in the ceramic material. Such preservation of the traditions in its ornamentation for the space of the Late Neolithic, Bronze and Iron Ages witnesses, that during all this period of time on the territory of Yakutia the common in its base ethnical component existed. Being subjected to the demographical pressure from their neighbours and in some extent assimilated, the population of the Late Neolithic of Yakutia, unlike the inhabitants of the region of the preceding epochs, did not migrate, but continued to stay on the traditional territory of their inhabitation, in the course of the progressive socio-economical development, later on, it passed in the consecutive order the stages of the Bronze and Iron Ages.

In the middle and the second half of the I millennium A.D., the local Palearctic tribes were subjected to the influence of the Turko-Mongolian ethnical groups penetrated into Yakutia from the Cis- and, possibly, Trans- Baikal Areas.

In the course of the contacts with the latter ones, gradually the prerequisites for formation in future of the new ethnical community - the Sakha people arose. Some centuries later, as a result of the episodic contacts (at first) and the direct migration of a large group of the Turks from the Cis-Baikal Area (later on), the aboriginal Paleoasiatic tribes of the Lena River had turned out to be entirely turkicized and incorporated by the newcomers. They had perceived the Turkic language, many elements of the material and spiritual cultures and even the ethnonym of the latter. The important factor of the process of assimilation the elitar-ity, or the predominant position of the Turkic groups over the local Paleoasiatic tribes, was. This was caused by the more developed military affair of the Turks. The process of assimilation, especially that of language and culture, was accelerated by the successful adaptation to the conditions of the North of the cattle and horses' the more progressive appropriative form of the economy of those newly come removed hunting and fishery from the dominant position. The terminology of cattle-breeding forces the aborigines to perceive the newcomer's language. In such conditions the language of the local tribes began gradually to lose its actuality. In consequence of the marriage confusions the half-breed anthropological type of the Yakuts had been formed. The further penetration into Yakutia of the Turkic groups had led to creation on its territory, in the XIII century, of the synthesized Paleoasiatico-Kuryhan Culture of "Malykh Domov" (the "Small Houses" One). The latter is the transitional one from the Early Iron Age to the Paleoethnographical Kulun-Atakh Culture of the Yakuts. With the help of the half-breed population of the Culture of "Malykh Domov", that knew quite well the local natural conditions and was on the ethno-related terms with the aborigines of the examined region, the Kulun-Atakh people successfully cultivated cattle-breeding and without great conflicts had occupied the vast territories of the Cis-Lena Area.

Thus, A.N. Alexeyev considers, that the Yakut people had been formed as a result of synthesis of several ethnical groups: the local Paleoasiatic and newly come Turko-Mongolian population. Judging from the archaeological material, the process of the ethnocultural mutual influences of the Turks and Paleoasiatic people had begun from the VI century A.D. and continued up to the end of the XIII century, when the new nation of the North - that of the Yakuts-Sakha had been formed.