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“EGYPTIAN STATUETTE”, REVEALED IN THE SOUTH-EASTERN REGION OF AZERBAIJAN IN THE SYSTEM OF ANCIENT CULTURAL AND TRADE RELATIONS

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Ancient Egypt, being one of the developed centers of the East, had close ties with Western Asia and the South Caucasus, both from a political and commercial point of view. This country, which had not been conquered until the VII century BC, was in the forefront as a political and military power of the period. It was from this viewpoint that many countries sought to establish political union with it, as well as the trade relations. As a result of this relationship, various works of art related to Ancient Egypt also spread to the South Caucasus through the Western Asia. No doubt that Egyptian art items found in Egypt itself are more than samples from other countries where similar finds are common. The paper deals with the archaeological finding – an Egyptian figurine. This artifact, which is so far the only example, found in Azerbaijan, testifies to the existence of ties between the South Caucasus and Egypt. The discovery also contributes to the creation of certain ideas about the small plastic art of that period. It is possible that complex archaeological studies in the region will reveal new artifacts of such art

Keywords: archaeological find, South Caucasus, works of art of Ancient Egypt, sculpture, plastic sample, Iron Age.

«ЕГИПЕТСКАЯ СТАТУЭТКА», НАЙДЕННАЯ В ЮГО-ВОСТОЧНОМ РЕГИОНЕ АЗЕРБАЙДЖАНА В СИСТЕМЕ ДРЕВНИХ КУЛЬТУРНЫХ И ТОРГОВЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ

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Древний Египет, являющийся одним из развитых центров Востока, имел тесные связи с Передней Азией и Южным Кавказом как с политической, так и с торговой точки зрения. Эта страна, не подвергавшаяся никаким завоеваниям до VII века до н.э., находилась в передних рядах, как политическая и военная сила того периода. Именно с этой точки зрения многие страны стремились к политическому союзу с ней, а также к установлению торговых отношений. В результате этих связей, посредством Передней Азии различные произведения искусства, относящиеся к Древнему Египту, распространились также на Южном Кавказе. Несомненно, что найденных египетских произведений искусства в самом Египте больше, чем образцов из других стран, где распространены подобные находки. В статье сообщается об археологической находке египетской статуэтки. Данный артефакт, являющийся пока единственным примером для территории Азербайджана, свидетельствует о наличии связей между Южным Кавказом и Египтом. Находка также способствует созданию определенных представлений об искусстве малой пластики того периода. Не исключено что в результате комплексных археологических исследований в регионе будут выявлены новые артефакты подобного искусства.

Ключевые слова: археологическая находка, Южный Кавказ, произведения искусства Древнего Египта, скульптура, образец пластики, археологическая находка, железный век.

Introduction. As a result of archaeological excavations carried out at different times in the territory of Azerbaijan, findings of Egyptian production or similar to them have been found. Most of the Egyptian examples found in the South Caucasus are known better than the Iron Age graves, which have close ties with Egypt. Along with its ancient production traditions, our country, where ancient Egyptian glazed vessels, the “Pre-Asiatic type” daggers, cylindrical seals,

glass and paste beads (Джафаров 1984, с. 23, 35, 53, 55) have been found, is also rich in examples brought through trade relations. .

Relations of ancient Egypt with the South Caucasus are based more on archaeological facts than on written sources. Relations of Egypt with the South Caucasus during the different dynasties, were not political, but most likely had a commercial purpose. These trade relations were the result of a multi-step exchange.

Description of the find. One of the regions of Azerbaijan rich in archaeological monuments is the south-eastern foothills of the South Caucasus. An example of an Egyptian faience statue with a double human image (inv. No. 41), which is one of the interesting and rare finds discovered in Lankaran district, about which we will talk in this paper, was found by accident from a ruined grave during the farm work in the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age Divalona necropolis in Digah village of the district in 1962 and given to the Lankaran Museum of Local History (Fig. 1-2). We would like to note that this statue along with being the first find in the territory of Azerbaijan is also of great importance in the study of cultural and trade relations between the South Caucasus and Western Asia.

The height of the preserved part of the find is 11 cm, width 10 cm. In this statue, two people, a man and a woman, are depicted side by side. Since the lower part of the archaeological find is broken, we cannot say surely whether the people depicted in the statue are sitting or standing. But if to look closely at the rear part, it is noticeable that they have a tall object to lean against. This is probably the top of the seat. But all the mentioned are suppositions. Also, when it was removed from the ground, the surface of the statue was also damaged and a great number of chippings appeared. Here, the woman's figure is presented in a relatively low position, and the height of her intact part is 7 cm. The woman's facial features are depicted in a manner characteristic of ancient Egyptians, and her chest is prominent. The headgear is typical for Egyptians. Her body is thin and hands are down on the sides. It should be noted that Egyptian women initially wore light clothes without "outer clothing" that covered the whole body (Вардиман 1990, с. 232).

But the man is made bigger than the woman, has an Egyptian headgear that hangs down to the shoulders, and his left hand is folded at the elbow and crossed on his chest. His right hand is hanging to the side. The waist of the statue is divided into parts by 5 vertical and horizontal lines, and it is assumed that there are certain inscriptions there. However, this part was also damaged when it was removed from the soil and the inscriptions were erased. A careful examination of the archaeological find reveals that the people depicted in the statue are seemingly worshipping. In the statue made in a realistic style, the artist has set himself

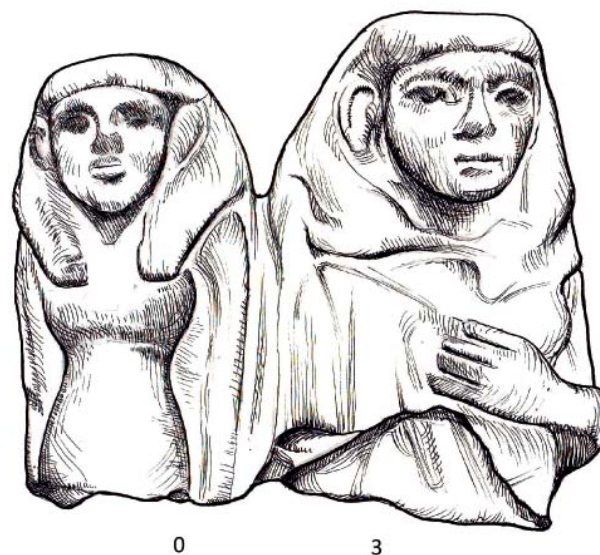


Fig. 1. "Egyptian statuette". Face view (Lankaran Local Lore Museum, inv. No. 41).

Рис. 1. "Египетская статуэтка".

Вид лица (Ленкораньский историко-краеведческий музей, инв. № 41).

the goal of conveying a certain idea with this image.

Along with the statue, six pottery vessels of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age found from the Divalona necropolis were also given to the museum. A pattern encrusted with white clay was applied on four of the vessels. Most likely, these pottery vessels contained burial goods of the grave where the statue was found. They are important in determining its period.

It should be noted that the Divalona necropolis is located at a distance 1.5 km northeast of the Lankaran city, at the end of Digah village, on the right side of the Alat-Astara highway. In 1968,

archaeologist Farman Mahmudov conducted exploratory research in the monument in connection with the archaeological materials found in this necropolis (Махмудов 2008, с. 79). According to him, in the Divalona necropolis there were stone boxes and earthen graves of the Late Bronze - Early Iron Ages, and in the eastern part of the necropolis there were kurgans covered with river stone and earth (Махмудов 2008, с. 79-80). Among the archaeological materials discovered from the necropolis, bronze swords and daggers, horse harnesses, ornamentals and many beads made of Egyptian paste were found (Mahmudov 1968, s. 27).

Similar findings and comparative analyses.

A similar example of a double human figure made of Egyptian faience discovered from the Divalona necropolis is among the gems of the Ancient Egyptian collection. One of such examples is a small statue of the Sheri family, writer in ancient Egypt (3/1). Another similar statue is known found in 1882 from the Tepebag mound in the center of Adana (photo 3/2). This statue was found while building the house of an American missionary by name Montgomery and he took this statue to the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York without showing it to the experts. The person depicted in this statue was Satsneferu, known as a nurse in Ancient Egypt, and belongs to the time of Pharaoh Amenhotep III of the 12th Dynasty. It is not known when the statue was brought to Anatolia. If to accept that this statue was brought during the time of Pharaoh Amenhotep, this will be very important evidence in terms of Anatolian-Egyptian relations (Özkan 2017, s. 89-90).

This black basalt stone statue of a seated woman discovered in the Tepebag mound has certain similar features to the Lankaran find we are talking about. Thus, the fact that the left hand of a person is bent at the elbow and crossed on the chest in both statues gives reason to say this. Besides, the granite statue belonging to the 22nd dynasty of Egypt, found in the Karnak temple in 1905 and kept in the Cairo museum has similar features with the Lankaran find (Legrain 1914, p.92-94). The statue is made of black marble and is a work of art depicting a double human (man and woman) 34 cm in size (Fig. 4). In another image, a person is depicted sitting on a rectangular chair. In this statue, the person has his left hand crossed on his chest as well (Fig. 5).

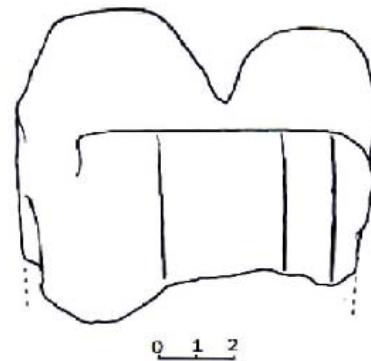


Fig. 2. “Egyptian statuette”. Back view (Lankaran Local Lore Museum, inv. No. 41).

Рис. 2. «Египетская статуэтка». Вид сзади (Ленкораньский историко-краеведческий музей, инв. № 41).

Chronology. The oldest and most interesting maiden example of sculpture related to Egypt in historical sources was found in the Marmariq cemetery dating back to the 5th millennium BC. In this figure, the god is depicted in the image of a woman. Researchers consider this to be the beginning of Egyptian mythology and explain that women have had a superior position in culture (Вардиман 1990, с. 22). The discovery of archaeological artifacts of Egyptian origin in Divalona necropolis was not accidental and indicates the extensive trade relations of the region.

Among the burial goods of the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age monuments of Azerbaijan, beads made of Egyptian faience and paste were discovered sufficiently (Morgan 1896; Mahmudov



Fig. 3. 1 – Sheri family; 2 – Nurse Satsneferu (Özkan 2017).
Рис. 3. 1 – Семья Шери; 2 – Медсестра Сацнеферу (Озкан 2017).



Fig. 4. Man and woman (Legrain 1914, PL.XLVIII-42241).

Рис. 4. Мужчина и женщина (Legrain 1914, PL.XLVIII- 42241)

1968, s.5-8; Kərimov 2006, s.63-64; Ağalarzadə 2017, s.31; Ələkbərov, Mirabdullayev 2017, s.355; Müseyibli, Nəcəfov 2019; Müseyibli, Nəcəfov, Hüseynov 2021). During the archeo-

logical excavations conducted in recent years, new evidence was obtained about the distribution of products of Egyptian origin in a wider area. Thus, Egyptian-style glazed vases and jugs were

also revealed in the investigated Iron Age earthen grave in the Safikurd village of Goranboy district (Hüseynov 2017, s.149-150). All these are facts that reflect the relations of the ancient Azerbaijani tribes with Egypt as a result of a many-branched exchange (Джафаров 1984, с. 23).

It should be noted that in neighboring Anatolia, which had rich trade relations, the first samples of products made of Egyptian faience were distributed starting from the Early Bronze Age. In the Middle Bronze Age of the II millennium BC, their number relatively decreased. Specialists see the reason for this in the development of trade relations with Assyria. But during this period, the Anatolian people had close trade relations with Syria, which was neighboring with Assyria. But their number had increased during the Iron Age. Some researchers also put forward the idea that Egyptian -origin faience products spread to Anatolia and other countries via Syria through Assyrian trade colonists (Özkan 2017, s.89-97). The idea that Egyptian-origin products spread to the territory of Azerbaijan through Assyria can be considered acceptable for now. Because the finding of Assyrian and Egyptian glazed vessels of the same period from the Late Bronze-Early Iron Age monuments of Azerbaijan gives reason to say this, and no doubt, the Anatolia region should be considered a favorable route for the South Caucasus in terms of trade relations.

The tradition of creating double human statues was a characteristic feature of Ancient Egyptian art, and they were mainly made of various types of stone and faience. Most likely, statues of this type were related to a certain religious rite. Since, they are found mostly in temples and grave monuments. It should be noted that during this period art was strongly influenced by religion. These influences further promoted backwardness by suppressing free creativity in painting, sculpture, and architecture (Токарев 1986, с. 318). For the ancient Egyptians, black color indicated grief and this color was given special importance in the funeral process. One of the possible versions is that the black faience statue found in Divalona was intended for burial. It should also be noted that black and blue occupied an important place in the color symbol of the ancient Egyptians, and special attention was paid to these colors during the New Dynasty (Dilek 2022, s. 173-174). Researchers are of the opinion that metal oxides were used in the preparation of various colored faience productions (highly glazed pottery), and



Fig. 5. Sitting human. (Legrain 1914, PL. XIII- 42206).

Рис. 5. Сидящий человек
(Legrain 1914, PL. XIII- 42206).

iron and magnesium were mainly used in black faience productions (Dardeniz, Öztan 2020, s. 859-863).

The presence of sphinx images in ancient Mannaean art proves that Mannaean people were familiar with Egyptian art traditions. During the archaeological excavations conducted in Qalaichi in recent years, which used to be the Mannaean city, the discovery of a large number of glazed brick samples with the image of the sphinx on them also gives reason to say this (Binandeh, Kargar, Khanmohamadi 2017, s. 215-219). So, from the beginning of the Iron Age, Mannaean had certain relations with Egypt, which in turn had had a certain influence on Mannaean art. It

is not an exception that the Egyptian statue found in Divalona necropolis was brought to the south-eastern region of Azerbaijan as a result of certain trade relations. It is possible that these types of statues were mainly used as idols during burials and were placed in the grave chamber after the performance of certain funeral rites. Based on the comparison with other archaeological materials, the Egyptian statue found in Divalona necropolis can be attributed to the 9th-8th centuries BC.

The conclusion. The relations of ancient Egypt with the South Caucasus are determined by the material culture samples found. Such artifacts belonging to the Bronze Age are found mostly in the centers of the coastal regions. No doubt that Egyptian-shaped but Syrian-origin works

were taken to other regions during the time of the Assyrian trade colonists. Especially during the reign of the Hittite, from the time when the first relations with Egypt were established, an independent Egyptian work begins to be seen. During the Iron Age, the number of artifacts brought by trade increased significantly, and especially increased those reflecting religious beliefs. All this indicates that the Egyptian states had relations with the South Caucasus. From here, it can be concluded that the religious beliefs in Egypt were starting to spread through these sculptures, and in a word, their promotion was in the foreground. Undoubtedly, it is not exception that few findings of today with new excavations in the future will increase.

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