CHANGES IN THE ETHNIC PICTURE AND ITS IMPACT ON THE INTERNAL POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE BOSPORUS AFTER RHESKUPORIS VI

INTRODUCTION

Rheskuporis VI was the last king of the Bosporus kingdom, whose reign has precisely been recorded according to archaeological and numismatic data. The termination of the reign of Rheskuporis VI is also connected with the cessation of coinage in the Bosporus in 341 AD, although we do not have more accurate sources indicating this (FROLOVA, 1975). The next well-known ruler of the Bosporus, who also raises many questions, Diuptun, appeared only at the end of the 5th century AD. An inscription from Kerch, discovered in 1888 (KBN 67), tells about Tsar Diuptune, referring him to the old Bosporan dynasty of Tiberiy-Juliev, the last of which was Rheskuporis VI. Yu.V. Vinogradov (1998), in our opinion, most clearly and reasonably dated this inscription to 483 AD. In this context it turns out that a lacuna was formed between Rheskuporis VI and Diuptun for a century and a half for which we do not know any mention of other Bosporan kings. Indeed, at that moment the Bosporus was in a deep crisis, which could be traced in all spheres of the state. However, according to archaeological data, life did not stop in many Bosporus cities, and a certain economic upturn could be traced on some monuments (AMBROZ, 1971, p. 103). It is difficult to imagine that in such a small, but ancient and stable state, anarchy sets in and the institution of tsarism withers away for a hundred and fifty years. We believe that after Rheskuporis VI the royal power continued to exist in the Bosporus and was usurped by representatives of neighboring barbarian peoples.

RESULTS

The stamping of the Bosporan coin before 341 AD, as well as the use of the phrases “friend of Caesar and the Romans” in official texts, the addition of the dynastic name Tiberius Julius to the name – all of this tells us about the obvious orientation of the Bosporus towards the Roman Empire, its recognition as its patron. Therefore, it is difficult to speak about the death of Rheskuporis VI, although it is not unreasonable. On the territory of the Bosporus, coin troves have been found everywhere, dating back to 20-40 years of the 4th century AD (KHARKO, 1949; GOLENKO; SOKOL’SKIY, 1968; ABRAMZON; FROLOVA, 2008; ABRAMZON; NOVICHIKHIN; SAPRYKINA, 2019; FROLOVA, 2001; SIDORENKO, 2011). M.G. Abramzon connects these treasures with the military activity of the Sarmatian-Alan tribes in the Northern Black Sea region (ABRAMZON; MOLEV, 2016, p. 396; ABRAMZON; SUDAREV, 2018; ABRAMZON; NOVICHIKHIN; SAPRYKINA, 2019). Probably, the nomads made a number of military campaigns against the Bosporus kingdom at this time. On this basis, it can be assumed that as a result of this activity, Rheskuporis VI could have been overthrown, and a king could be put in his place who came from the Sarmatian-Alan nobility.

However, the Bosporan kingdom had known kings before that, whom we can class among the Sarmatians. Radamsad and Fofors - these rulers bore Iranian names and were unlikely to be direct representatives of the Tiberian-Julian dynasty (ZOGRAF, 1951, p. 211), but Rome continued to subsidize the Bosporan coinage, and the rulers used the habitual titles and phrases in official texts. So, what is the connection between Rome and the Bosporan Kingdom after 341 AD? There can be two versions: either the new ruler did not suit the empire, in view of this the subsidies were stopped; or the ruling elite itself refused to call itself Tiberius Julius and was listed as imperial clients. It seems to us that the second option is more preferable. The empire supported the Bosporus, regardless of who was governing, the main thing was that the nobility agreed with the status of the client. If the king refused the status of the client, a war was as a result and Rome overthrew the unwanted and set a loyal ruler. It happened during the Bosporus War of 45-49. AD, when the Romans overthrew Mithridates VIII and put Cotis I on the throne (VINOGRAVOD; GORONCHAROVSKIY, 2008, p. 260-271). However, in middle of the
4th century AD the position of the Roman Empire is known - it was in the same deepest crisis as the Bosporus kingdom. We believe that in the current situation the loss of influence over the devastated Bosporus seems to be smaller problem than those that hung over the empire at that time. Moreover, we know that the empire did not abandon its attempts to improve relations with the Bosporus and incline the state in its behalf. Three silver dishes found in the crypts of Panticapaeum and dated from the time of Emperor Constantius II (337 - 361 AD) (MATSULEVICH, 1926, p. 9; SHKORPIL, 1907, p. 1) were apparently belonged to votive dishes. There is no doubt that these dishes were solemn and diplomatic and were presented to the local elite (ZASETSKAYA, 1993, p. 30-32). It tells about the importance of the Bosporus kingdom for the empire, but also the inability to bring it to submission by force of arms.

In this regard, the question arises why the new Bosporan nobility refuses to focus on Rome? Firstly, the aggressive attitude of the Sarmatian-Alan tribes of the Northern Black Sea region towards the empire is not a secret. Suffice it to recall the campaigns of the Meotian barbarians together with the Bosporan military contingent to Asia Minor and the Danube that took place at the turn of the 3rd - 4th centuries AD and were mentioned in the treatise of Constantine Porphyrogenitus (Const. Porph. De adm. Imp., 53) and the work of Zosimus (Zosim. II, 21). Secondly, we associate this with the active process of political genesis, which can be traced among many nations of the era of the Great Migration. Both settled nations and nomads who was at the tribal level of political development earlier, facing with the civilized states of the Mediterranean, began to form their own proto-states. It is enough to recall the Gothic state of Germanarich among the closest to the Bosporus, which was formed in the Northern Black Sea region in the area of existence of the Chernyakhov culture (ZIN’KOVSKAYA, 2015). The nomadic tribes of the Sarmatian-Alans, which were parasitic societies, sensed the weakening of the empire’s power in the Black Sea region and could seize power in the Bosporus in order to create their own dynasty. Moreover, we know many similar episodes during the period of the Great Migration (SIROTENKO, 1975, p. 211-215). It is important to emphasize that, even considering the increasing number of Iranian names to 40% in the Bosporus by the IV century AD (MASLENNIKOV, 1990, p. 111), the foundation of the state continues to occur the Hellenic population - the Bosporians. First of all, the Sarmato-Alans were the ruling elite and, secondly, the military contingent.

We believe that up to the 80s of the IV century AD the Bosporus kingdom in varying degrees remained under the influence of the Sarmatian-Alanian clans. A.A. Vasiliev suggested that in the period of the 50s - 60s of the IV century AD the Bosporus could be included in the sphere of influence of the Gothic state of Germanarich (VASIL’YEV, 1921, p. 289). This thesis has a right to exist considering the findings of barbarian imitations of Roman coins at the Shum-rechka (SALOV, 1975), near the Raevskoye settlement (ONAYKO, 1967). We have information that the Goths of Germanarich owned vast lands in the region of Meotida, some Meotian barbarians were subordinate to them (Iord. Get., 116-120), they controlled river trade routes in Eastern Europe (WOLFRAM, 2000, p. 86). This version is also supported by the foreign policy situation in the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region, exactly by the appearance at this time of the Hunnic tribes and the beginning of their clashes with the Sarmatian-Alan tribes (Amm., XXII, 8, 38.). There is no doubt that this situation weakened their influence on the Bosporus kingdom and allowed other barbarian groups to join the struggle for control of the state.

However, we believe that a Gothic influence in the Bosporus should truly be counted out from the 80s of the 4th century AD. It is known that from the middle of the 70s of the IV century AD the Huns began to put pressure on the state of Germanarich, which ended with the defeat of the Gothic state (Iord. Get., 129-130; Zosim. IV, 20; Agaf. Mirn. V. 11; Sozom. VI. 37). After that, the Goths were divided into Ostrogoths and Visigoths, and retreated to the west, but some part of the Goths migrated to the Crimea and naturally permeated the Bosporus. This can be traced in a number of findings of the Gothic circle at the monuments of the Kerch Peninsula (KAZANSKIY, 1999, p. 288, 291, 294, 295; SIMONENKO, 2015, p. 226).

There is no doubt that the Gothic refugees were included in the Bosporus kingdom, probably on the rights of federates, considering the military specifics of the male population. At the same time, the internal political situation in the Bosporus, exactly the loss of an ally by the barbarian Bosporan nobility, represented by the Sarmatian-Alan tribes of the Northern Black Sea region, creates a favorable moment for the usurpation of power.
It is likely that the Goths, if not fully, then partially take control of the Bosporus kingdom. It seems quite logical that the Goths, who previously already had their own but rather shaky state formation, when arriving in the weakened but nevertheless having most of the state institutions Bosporus kingdom, tried to establish themselves in power. Our version is supported by the message of John Chrysostom to the Olympiad from 404 AD. It tells about the death of Bishop Unila and a request to send a new bishop to the Bosporus from a certain “rex Gothorum” (CHRYSOSTOM, 1897, p. 637-645).

In the Northern Black Sea region only the Bosporus kingdom had sufficient forces and means to support the diocese. Thus, it turns out that “rex Gothorum” was a native of the Bosporus. We see the “rex Gothorum” as a representative of the Gothic nobility who migrated in the 80s AD of the IV century to the Bosporus and usurped power in the state. Emphasizing their power and identity, in this period of time the Gothic rulers of the Bosporus kingdom could well call themselves not the kings of the Bosporus, but the kings of the Goths.

There was an opinion in historical science that in the 70s - 80s of the IV century AD the Huns marched across the Bosporus with a small part of the horde in addition to the defeat of the Goths (GAYDUKEVICH, 1952, p. 105-127, 133, 134; BLAVATSKIY, 1962, p. 48, 49, 51, 64, 68-77, 84). A.I. Aybabin (1999, p. 73) proposed a quite reasonable hypothesis that the appearance of the Huns in the Bosporus should be attributed to the time no earlier than the turn of the 4th - 5th centuries AD after full affirmation in the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region. In his opinion, the Huns who were heading to the Transcaucasia for a military campaign against Armenia and the eastern provinces of the empire (Prisc. Fr. 11, 595-615) (THOMPSON, 1948, p. 28) and moving south along the Meotida, subjugated the Bosporus. A.K. Ambroz (1971, p. 15-16) believes that the invasion of the Huns and their subsequent protectorate proceeded quite peacefully and did not lead to a crisis in the Bosporus or any destruction.

On the one hand, it can be assumed that it was not profitable for the Huns to destroy such an important trade and craft center in their rear, they preferred to parasitize on it. On the other hand, one may trace the activities of the Goths-refugees from the state of Germanarich in the peaceful existence of the Bosporus kingdom in the realities of the Hunnic protectorate. Suffice it to recall the plot described by Jordan, which mentions that the Ostrogoths, who were enslaved by the Huns, lived peacefully and remained in their own “country”.

They were ruled by their own “king” (regulus), who coordinated all his decisions with the Huns (lond. Get., 125-127, 130, 246-253), which speaks for the wide autonomy granted to the Ostrogoths. It can be assumed that the Goths in the Bosporus, like the Ostrogoths, aware of the ferocity of the Huns, didn’t want to go into confrontation with them, negotiated with the latter, and gained wide autonomy. The Bosporus kingdom fell under the control of the Huns. Probably, it was supposed to pay some kind of tribute to the Huns, as Eastern and Western empires had done in the 5th century AD (MENKHEN-KHELFEN, 2014, p. 26-50), to act as a trade and craft center in the rear of the tribal union (GAYDUKEVICH, 1940, p. 200), to provide the Huns with troops or act as a military reserve for the Hunnic hordes in their numerous campaigns in the Caucasus and Transcaucasia (AMBROZ, 1971, p. 104). At the same time at the beginning of the 5th century AD the desertification of the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region occurs.

Many researchers associate this to the fact that the horde of the Huns in the first decades of the 5th century AD went west and took the local population with it (BUĐANOVA, 2011, p. 194). The nomadic population of the Crimean Peninsula also went to the west and probably took with it majority of the Sarmatian-Alans of the Bosporus. Thus, a favorable situation was created in the Bosporus kingdom for the usurpation of power by the Goths from the state of Germanarich. It turns out that the protectorate of the Hunnic tribal union spread to the territory of the Bosporus and the real power belonged to the barbarian Gothic nobility.

We believe that this internal political situation, to varying degrees, could continue until the beginning of the second half of the 5th century AD, namely the defeat of the Hunnic tribal union at the Battle of Nedao in 454 AD (THOMPSON, 1948, p. 152-153), a series of other defeats of the Huns in 463 AD (Prisc. Fr. 4, 37) and AD 469 (Procop. Bell. Got., VIII. 5), and the migration of the tribes of the Utigur Huns in the steppes of the Northern Black Sea region. The
collapse of the state of Attila naturally led to the independence of all peoples subordinate to the Huns, including the Bosporus kingdom. The appearance of aggressive nomads in the steppes of Tavria created a problem for the Bosporus. However, by all accounts, the Utigur horde was not as strong as the Hun horde. Procopius of Caesarea reported that the Utigurs met with the “Goths-tetraxites” in the Crimea who were ready to fight with the newcomer nomads (Procop. Bell. Got., VIII, 5). Experts localize the place of this confrontation in the area of the Kazantip Bay, not far from the village. Verkhnezamorskoe (YERMOLIN, 2005, 2006). Procopius continued that the Utigurs and Goths negotiated and agreed to move together to the opposite side of the Kerch Strait, where they had to rule together as allies (Procop. Bell. Got., VIII, 5).

The question arises why the Goths left the Bosporus kingdom and moved with the Utigurs to Taman? Even if we do not agree with the position above about the Gothic ruling elite in the Bosporus, the exodus from well-known and ennobled places and joint resettlement with the nomads to new unprepared lands seems to be an unreasonable idea. Undoubtedly, the Utigurs knew who the Goths were. The latter were both part of the Hunnic tribal union (Iord. Get., 250), as well as opposition to it.

The Goths were part of the army that defeated the Huns at Nedao (Iord. Get., 261-262). In this regard, we believe that the negotiations between the Utigurs and the Goths reported by Procopius were not so diplomatic. The Utigurs probably threatened the Goths, and the Goths themselves in this situation were not so much equal allies as hostages. The Utigurs completed two tasks at once by this decision: they included the Goths in their tribal union, thereby strengthening their horde; prepared the ground on the Bosporus to create their own protectorate or unhindered parasitism.

In the period from the last quarter of the 5th to the first quarter of the 6th centuries AD the protectorate of the Utigur Huns extended over the Bosporus, but one couldn’t speak of the complete submission of the Bosporus kingdom. The strength of the Utigurs was insufficient to create a state system similar as Hunnic tribal union. They limited themselves to non-systematic raids on the territory of the Bosporus, actually parasitizing on it. The appearance of an inscription mentioning Tsar Diuptune (KBN 67), dated from 483 AD, indicates a radical change in the internal political situation in the Bosporus kingdom.

The appearance of an inscription mentioning the Bosporus king on the Bosporus for the first time in a century and a half, the use of the generic name Tiberius Julius and the phrase "friend of Caesar and the Romans" in this inscription undoubtedly tells us about the reorientation of the policy of the local nobility towards the Empire. The Bosporan officials and their positions mentioned in the inscription, as well as information about the construction (restoration) of the tower, tell us about the significant role of the Byzantine Empire in the life of the state during the reign of this king.

The posts were clearly copied from the imperial posts, as noted by Yu.V. Vinogradov (1998, p. 246), and construction work in the Bosporus at this time was difficult to imagine without funding from outside. We believe that the exodus of the Goths from the Bosporus in the second quarter of the 5th century AD created a situation within the state in which the barbarian nobility, which opposed the subordination of the empire and prevailed for a century and a half, completely disappeared or completely loses its influence.

The exodus of the Goths also put the kingdom in a difficult foreign policy situation, because a significant military contingent left together with the Goths, realizing the defense of the state. Probably, all the internal reserves of the Bosporus kingdom were exhausted and it could not exist without some kind of patron. In this situation the orientation towards Constantinople seems quite logical. We are not aware of the coins of King Diuptun, which may indicate the refusal of the empire to subsidize the Bosporan coinage or the inability of the Bosporus, in principle, to mint its own coins. It seems to us that both options equally have the right to exist and reflect the situation in the Bosporus at the end of the 5th century AD.
CONCLUSION
Thus, a picture of the internal political situation in the Bosporus emerges, starting from the middle of the 4th century AD up to the first quarter of the VI century AD. We can divide it into several periods:

1. The reign of the Sarmatian-Alan noble families in the Bosporus (mid-IV - 80s of the IV century AD);
2. The reign of the Goto-Alan nobility on the Bosporus (80s of the 4th century AD - the last quarter of the 5th century AD);
3. The infiltration of the Bosporus in the sphere of influence of the Hunnic tribal union on the rights of autonomy under the actual rule of the Gothic nobility (the turn of the 4th - 5th centuries AD - the last quarter of the 5th century AD);
4. Protectorate of the Utigur-Huns tribes in the Bosporus with the orientation of the Bosporan nobility towards the Byzantine Empire (last quarter of the 5th century AD - the first quarter of the 6th century AD).

At the same time, the characteristic features of the power of these barbaric groups remains unclear. This could be a topic for further research.

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Resumo
O artigo examina a influência das mudanças étnicas na região do Mar Negro do Norte, sobre a situação política interna no reino do Bósforo em meados do século VI – o primeiro trimestre do século VI d.C. Os principais grupos étnicos que apareceram no Bósforo no momento especificado, o grau de sua influência sobre as instituições estatais do reino e a natureza das mudanças políticas são determinados. Supõe-se que, como resultado do movimento de grupos bárbaros em toda a região do Mar Negro do Norte, representantes desses grupos tomaram o poder no reino do Bósforo. Podemos nos referir a esses representantes Sarmatian-Alan e nobreza gótica. Com o aparecimento dos hunos na região do Mar Negro do Norte, o Bósforo cai na esfera de influência da união tribal húna, sob o domínio de fato da nobreza gótica. Com a aparição na região do Mar Negro do Norte das tribos dos Huns-Utigurs, o poder no Bósforo retorna às mãos da nobreza pró-romana, à qual o rei Diuptun pode ser atribuído.


Abstract
The article examines the influence of ethnic change in the North Black Sea region on the internal political situation in the Bosphorus kingdom in the mid-6th century – the first quarter of the 6th century AD. The main ethnic groups that appeared in the Bosphorus at the specified time, the degree of their influence on the state institutions of the kingdom and the nature of political changes are determined. It is assumed that, as a result of the movement of barbarian groups throughout the North Black Sea region, representatives of these groups have taken power in the Bosphorus kingdom. We can refer to these Sarmatian-Alan representatives and Gothic nobility. With the appearance of the Huns in the North Black Sea region, the Bosphorus falls into the sphere of influence of the Hun tribal union, under the de facto rule of the Gothic nobility. With the appearance in the Northern Black Sea region of the Huns-Utigur tribes, power in the Bosphorus returns to the hands of the pro-Roman nobility, to which King Diuptun can be assigned.

Keywords: Late antiquity. Bosporan kingdom. Sarmatian-Alans. Goths. Royal power.

Resumen
El artículo examina la influencia de los cambios étnicos en la región del norte del Mar Negro, en la situación política interna en el reino del Bósforo a mediados del 4to – el primer cuarto de los siglos 6 d.C. Se determinan los principales grupos étnicos que aparecieron en el Bósforo en el momento especificado, el grado de su influencia en las instituciones estatales del reino y la naturaleza de los cambios políticos. Se supone que como resultado del movimiento de grupos bárbaros a través de la región norte del Mar Negro, los representantes de estos grupos tomaron el poder en el reino del Bósforo. Podemos referirnos a estos representantes sármatas-alanos y de la nobleza gótica. Con la aparición de los hunos en la región norte del Mar Negro, el Bósforo cae en la esfera de influencia de la unión tribal hunnica, bajo el gobierno de facto de la nobleza gótica. Con la aparición en la región norte del Mar Negro de las tribus de los hunos-utigures, el poder en el Bósforo vuelve a manos de la nobleza prerromana, a la que se puede atribuir al rey Diuptun.