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NEW RESEARCH RESULTS OF TURGAY NOMADS' CULTURE*

The article presents the brief results of field research conducted in 2015. The purpose of this work was to obtain new data on Turgay nomadic culture from the early Iron Age and to the time of the ethnographic present. The work was done by two teams. As a result, the first (under the guidance of A.Z. Beisenov) revealed monuments of religious architecture of the Kazakhs. Preliminary analysis of the epitaphs on kulpytas (read by A.Z. Beisenov) can be considered as an informative source for the further studies of the written traditions of the Turgay Kazakhs [Beisenov, Jumabekova, Bazarbayeva, 2015a]. Turgay kulpytas as a historical source, as monuments of folk culture, need protecting. The main task of the second group was to study the burial ground of Tasmola culture located near the Ashutasty village in the Arkalyk district of the Kostanay region. Architectural features of the ground constructions, elements of funeral rites as well as analysis of the obtained findings allow us to refer the investigated subject to 7–6 cc. BC. Along with the excavation of the kurgan №10 reconnaissance study of another burial ground Ashutasty-2 of Tasmola culture took place. The complex includes an object with stone ridges and several kurgans, elongated into the chain on the north-south line. A specific feature of this monument is the discovery in the ridge of statuary monuments, made of stone: sculpture and anthropomorphic stele.

Key words: Turgay, Saka, the Kazakhs, culture, funeral rites.

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Introduction

In the field season of 2015 two teams of prehistoric archaeology department of A.Kh. Margulan Archaeology Institute conducted research and stationary works in Turgay.

The research work on the ethnoarcheology was done by first Turgay team (under the guidance of A.Z. Beisenov). In the course of exploration work in south Turgay kulpytas was studied which was available in the cemeteries of the 19th – early 20th centuries. The preliminary analysis of the epitaphs gives very interesting results. In particular, the nature of gravestone inscriptions can clearly show that there are three traditions. They mark periods of the Kazakh history is associated with the ritual of constructing kulpytas with certain inscriptions. In the first tradition the epitaph was made only in Arabic script (The inscriptions were read by A.Z. Beisenov). In the second tradition the inscriptions were made in Arabic script and the Cyrillic alphabet. The third tradition depicts only the Cyrillic alphabet. The analysis of such small nuances depicts a relatively short period of time associated with the transformation of the written traditions of the Turgay Kazakhs [Beisenov, Jumabekova, Bazarbayeva, 2015a]. Turgay kulpytas as a historical source and monuments of national culture requires preservation.

According to A.Z. Beisenov' epitaphs' analysis connects the population of Turgay with such regions as Karkaraly, Bayanaul, Ulytau, Semey. The same tradition is fixed on the memorials of all Kazakh Upland. The similarities with the Central Kazakh tradition in the analysis of features of Mazar architecture is especially clearly seen. Fine lines, traced in the decoration of bricks have direct analogies in the monuments of Central Kazakhstan [Beisenov, Jumabekova, Bazarbayeva, 2015a].

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The Burial Ground Ashutasty-1, kurgan №10

In 2015 the monuments of the Early Iron Age and the Middle Ages were researched. A stationary object for studying by Turgay second team was scheduled (under the guidance of G.A. Bazarbayeva), whose main task was to study the monument of Tasmola culture located near the village Ashutasty (Fig. 1; 2) in the Arkalyk district of Kostanay region [Beisenov, Jumabekova, Bazarbayeva, 2015b]. The doctoral student of L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University R.J. Baidaly and 3rd year student of Kostanay State Pedagogical Institute A.V. Ionenko took part in the excavation.



Fig. 1. Location of the burial grounds Ashutasty-1 and Ashutasty-2 near the village with the same name. Done by S. Ishangali



Fig. 2. The burial ground Ashutasty-1

The object studied in 2015 (kurgan №10) is located near one of the five large burial grounds, forming the core of the monument. The complex includes constructions with stone ridges which are known in science as kurgans “with a moustache”. This type of monument is distinguished by M.K. Kadyrbayev as one of the benchmark features of Tasmola culture [Kadyrbayev, 1966]. The kurgan, studied mainly due to excavation work, is an integral part of a system of burial and memorial constructions of the burial ground Ashutasty-1.

The object was heavily sodden before the research works. After removing the eolian layer the following parameters of the kurgan were designated: diameter – 16,5 m, height – 1 m (Fig. 3). The ground part of the kurgan is a shell of carefully laid stones of small, medium and large sizes. At the base of the mound the crepidoma built of massive sparry stones was revealed. There are several stages of monument construction. Initially, an area occupying about 227 square meters has been prepared. In the center of it an oval grave was dug oriented along the northwest-southeast line, its dimensions are 1,95 × 2,45 m (Fig. 4; 5; 6). The grave is full of stones of various sizes, reaching the depth of 1,6 m, in dense ground of dark brown color with gray (gold) and black mixture. Stones in the graves were neatly stacked on each other forming layers. Stones were laid over the grave during the burial ritual and building a construction. Judging by some of the surviving in situ human bones, the buried was laid with his head oriented to the north-west. At the bottom the grave was blocked by a tree across the long axis.



Fig. 3. Burial ground Ashutasy-1, kurgan №10 after erasing eolian deposit



Fig. 4. Burial ground Ashutasy-1, kurgan №10 after removing “shell”.
Taken from the north side



Fig. 5. Burial ground Ashutasty-1, kurgan №10 after removing “shell”.
Taken from the west side. In the foreground there is a stela

Another interesting thing about the burial construction is recess in the mechanical parts of the grave as well as in the walls and in the bottom. The mechanical recesses in the wall of the grave have one small stone each. The depth of the pits in the bottom of the end walls is 0,13 and 0,2 m; their diameter is 0,45 and 0,5 m. The grave parameters at the bottom make $2,9 \times 1,9$ m depth – 1,8 m (Fig. 7).

One of the final stages of a long funeral ritual was crepidoma around the grave. From the outside, it traced a series of vertically mounted sparry large stones and plates. They were supported by sparry stones or plates. At the heart of crepidoma there are sparry large stones arranged along the circumference from the middle of the slope of the kurgan. Several radially extended sparry large stones were fixed. First, inner circle is an even row laid out in a number of the larger stones or plates put at the distance of about 5 meters from the grave (up to 80 cm in length). Setting of plates put on the top of each other is traced (4–5 layers). Perhaps,



Fig. 6. Burial ground Ashutasty-1, kurgan №10. Stelae



Fig. 7. Burial ground Ashutasty-1, kurgan №10. Chamber

in addition to practical, constructive purpose, it served as a kind of boundary between the worlds of the living and the world of the dead. The next step was building of a ground-based construction. When building allegedly earthen blocks of turf and soil excavated from the grave were used. In the filling of the grave there are traces of fire exposure, which are reflected by the presence of layers of ash in the touchline. The anthropomorphic stone stele was found in the south-west sector.

Despite the fact that the grave was robbed in the ancient times, it was possible to receive several findings. These are zoomorphic images made of foil (Fig. 8.-1) and a bronze arrowhead (Fig. 8.-2). Unfortunately, no remains of the skull were found, mainly because of the robbery. However, some teeth were found. According to Ye.P. Kitov, teeth may have fallen from the skull during the robbery.

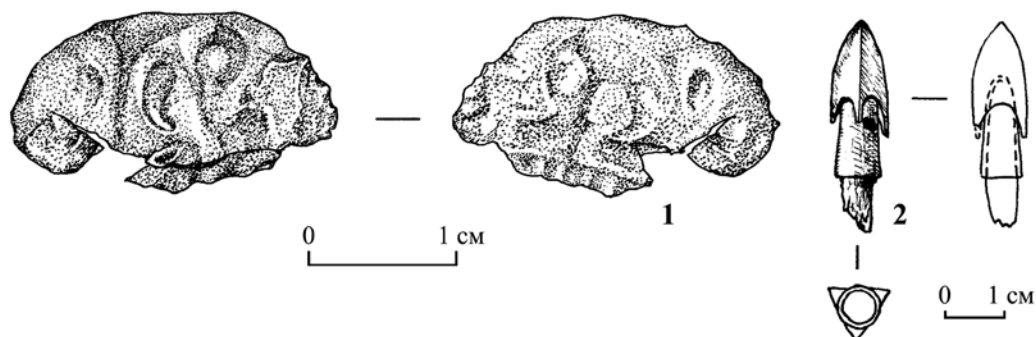


Fig. 8. Burial ground Ashutasty-1, kurgan №10. Findings:
1 – zoomorphic image; 2 – arrowhead

It is possible to give cultural and chronological definition of the monument due to the features of burial structure of the kurgan (Fig. 2; 3) and arrowheads (Fig. 4.-2). This type of surface structures was recorded during the excavations in East Saryarka. The arrowhead

is made of bronze, triangular, notched at the base of the faces forming nip with protruding hub. The conclusions made by I.N. Medvedskaya [1972] about the monuments of Central Asia and Kazakhstan say that the petiolate complexes in the absence of three-blade socketed arrowheads belong to the 7 c. BC. Triangular tips with a hidden hub are common for late Aldybel monuments of Tyva. In Uyuk-Sagly quivers of the end of the 6th–4th cc. BC stemmed arrowheads dominated. A socketed group of arrows is represented by a small percentage of triangular forms. Their presence indicates early (within that period) date of the complex. Accordingly, the general trend of arrow set development in the Scythian time on the territory of Tuva is aimed at a gradual reduction in the percentage of socketed arrows.

A set of arrows from Arjan-1 socketed group and the absence of stemmed arrowheads suggests the emergence of the latter in Tuva in the mid – 8 century BC.

In one of the Saka reference monuments – kurgan Arjan-2 in Tyva two arrows were found, which can be compared with the small set from Kyuzeli-Gyr and a quiver from the kurgan №53 of South Tagisken. This is a three-blade socketed arrowhead with aquifolium head from grave 26 (type 1D1) and trihedral-three-blade with a triangular head and a long hub from the quiver 1, grave 25 (type 1E1). The latter sample is unique, as it has simulated casting spikes under the base of the blades. Except for this detail, it reminds the arrows of VI-B type by K.F. Smirnov's classification [Smirnov, 1961], which date back to the 6th c. BC. A three-blade arrowhead from grave 26 has a hub that extends to the tip. This feature is considered to be an early one. A.I. Melyukova [1964] marked the emergence of a form of arrows with aquifolium pen in Scythian complexes in the second half of the 7th century BC. Recent developments made for a series of arrowheads from the monuments of the western periphery of the steppe world, also indicate early emergence of this type of arrows based on Central European chronological scale. The researchers ascertain the presence of a significant percentage of three-blade with aquifolium head shape found in the death layers of the Hallstatt period settlement Ha C2/D1 along with two blade ones.

All the arrowheads having analogs from the kurgan Arjan-2 can be dated within the 8th–6th centuries BC. Some types of them are found in the early Uyuk-Sagly complexes in the 6th–5th BC, but they may have an earlier start date [Chugunov, 2011].

M.K. Kadyrbayev [1966] indicates that Tasmola monuments of the 5th–3th cc. BC can be characterized by, among other things, the most widely used standard format of bronze socketed triangular arrowheads.

L.T. Yablonsky among socketed triangular arrowheads distinguishes: Division C. Type 1 – with a slightly arched shaped head and a protruding hub. Subtype 1 – with a long hub and unallocated base faces (Uigarak №6) [Yablonsky, 2006]. Subtype 2 – with a short hub and lowered ends of the base faces (Uigarak №7, 8; Kyuzeli-gyr №33) [Yablonsky, 2006]. Type 2 – with a vaulted head and shorter projecting hub, roller along the entire length of the head and a dedicated base faces (Sakar-Chaga №25) [Yablonsky, 2006]. Type 3 – with asymmetrically-rhombic or domed head, with a hidden hub and drooping ends of faces (South Tagisken №24) [Yablonsky, 2006].

The approximate dates of the arrowheads of this type fits into the framework of the 8th c. BC. to the first half of the the 5th century BC.

In general, given the characteristics of the architecture of ground constructions, burial rite, the studied kurgan №10 in the burial ground Ashutasty-1 should be referred to the 7th–6th centuries BC.

At the same time the reconnaissance study of another burial belonging to Tasmola culture (Ashutasty-2) located near the village Ashutasty was carried out (Fig. 1). The complex includes an object with stone ridges and several mounds, which are elongated into the chain on the north-south line. A specific feature of this monument is two statues in the ridges (Fig. 9; 10). The statue, identified in the north stone ridges is pretty sketchy. However very



Fig. 9. Burial ground Ashutasty-2, kurgan №3A. Statue



Fig. 10. Burial ground Ashutasty-2, kurgan №3A. Anthropomorphic stelae

clear traces of undermining its ancient stonecutter are fixed: the neck and the outline of the head are depicted. Many details of the statue of the south stone ridges were revealed. Eyes, nose, ears, and “weapon” (?) are clearly seen on the head. Details are not worked by deep grooves. The preliminary analysis of the sculptures allows synchronizing them with the well-known iconic monuments of Tasmola culture area. In East Saryarka in recent years there has been a breakthrough in relation to the fact that the number of sources allowed identifying with certainty the sculptures of the Saka range [Kurmankulov, Ermolenko, 2014; Ermolenko, Kurmankulov, Khasenova, 2015].

Discussion

In the context of the analysis of sculpture monuments special attention should be paid to the results of excavations conducted by Kostanay archaeologists in the field season 2013 on the kurgan Ashutasty-30 [Shevnina, Seitov, 2014]. I.V. Shevnina and A.M. Seitov studied objects belonging to the Early Iron Age, which contained the child burial. According to pa-

leoanthropological definition, the deceased is 1,5 years old [Shevnina, Seitov, 2014, p. 274]. The peculiar feature of this monument is the complete lack of clothing items from the accompanying complex. The archaeologists from Kostanay note the burial of the child was accompanied by individual fragments of the sheep skeleton located at the feet of the deceased [Shevnina, Seitov, 2014, p. 274]. The archaeozoologist P.A. Kosintsev thinks that the animal is about 2 years old [Shevnina, Seitov, 2014, p. 274]. Perhaps the lack of accompanying objects of the complex is due to the age of the child. We can assume that he has not reached the stage when one can wear jewelry, amulets made of more durable material. It is possible that charms could be available in the burial. However, made of organic material, they have not survived.

The analysis of the accompanying meat from the kurgan Ashutasty-30 allows drawing analogies fixed in the culture of the Kazakh food tradition. The meal intended for children – “Bala tabak” (“bala” – in Kazakh is “child”; “tabak” – is “dish”) usually included the pieces of meat from the loin of the animal – “bel omyrtka”, tibia – “asykty jilik” [Beisenov, Bazarbaeva, Duisenbay, 2017]. Only a shoulder bone is not in that list. Although the materials of Tasmola culture show the presence of the right shoulder bone of an animal which was a widespread phenomenon [Kadyrbayev, 1966].

Another very interesting element of the ritual of the kurgan Ashutasty-30 is a stone stela, which was found on the west side. According to I.V. Shevnina and A.M. Seitov the presence of a stela in a child burial emphasizes the particular attitude towards him [Shevnina, Seitov, 2014].

The stela excavated by us and a similar finding from the kurgan Ashutasty-30 prove the fact that the kurgan Ashutasty-30 belongs to Tasmola culture. The scope of its existence, according to A.Z. Beisenov [2015], quite clearly fits into the gap between the 8 and 5 centuries BC.

Conclusion

The research results received in 2015 prove the necessity of studying the region and monuments of the nomad culture from the early Iron Age to the ethnographic present.

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РЕЗУЛЬТАТЫ НОВЫХ ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ КУЛЬТУРЫ КОЧЕВНИКОВ ТУРГАЯ

Изложены краткие результаты полевых исследований 2015 г. Целью проведенных работ было получение новых данных о культуре кочевников Тургая, начиная от эпохи раннего железного века и завершая временем этнографической современности. Работы проводились силами двух отрядов. В результате исследований первого отряда (рук. А.З. Бейсенов) выявлены памятники культовой архитектуры казахов. Предварительный анализ эпитафий на кулпытасах [прочтены А.З. Бейсеновым] позволяет рассматривать их как информативный источник для изучения письменной традиции казахов Тургая. Тургайские кулпытасы как исторический источник, как памятники народной культуры, требуют их сохранения. Основной задачей второго отряда было изучение кургана на могильнике тасмолинской культуры, расположенного близ с. Ашутасты в Аркалыкском районе Костанайской области. Особенности архитектуры наземного сооружения, элементы погребального обряда, а также анализ полученных находок позволяют датировать исследованный объект VII–VI вв. до н.э. Одновременно с раскопками кургана №10 выполнялось рекогносцировочное исследование еще одного могильника тасмолинской культуры – Ашутасты-2. Данный комплекс включает в себя объект с каменными грядами и несколько курганов, вытянутых в цепочку по линии Ю–С. Особенностью данного памятника является обнаружение в грядах статуарных памятников, изготовленных из камня, – изваяния и антропоморфной стелы.

Ключевые слова: Тургай, саки, казахи, культура, погребальный обряд.