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**THE BOZOK SETTLEMENT IN THE SYSTEM
OF CULT OBJECTS OF THE STEPPE EURASIA**

In the article we describe the history of the research of the memorial complexes of the steppe Eurasia. The most striking are the ancient Turkic memorial temples of Central Asia and Southern Siberia (Kultegin, Bilge-kagan, Bugut, Saryg-Bulun). Among these architectural objects are the monumental square forms of «hillforts», explored in the western part of the Eurasian steppe (Glodosy, Voznesenka, Pereshchepino). In their design are recorded details known from written evidence: quadrangular shape, wall-shaft, moat, traces of pillars from internal structures, specially designed entrance, single artifacts left from the offerings. However, there are no traces of permanent habitation in the form of dwellings, fireplaces, household pits. The first excavations of «square hillforts», carried out in the 30s of the XX century, caused difficulties in interpreting of their functional purpose and dating. Like everything mysterious in archeology they were categorized as cult memorials of the early Middle Ages. At present, we can assert that these complexes as places of ritual ceremonies and rites have been confirmed in the materials of the Bozok archaeological microdistrict.

Key words: Bozok, Cult Center, Ancient Turks, Rite, Memorial Temple.

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**Бозок қалашығы далалық Еуразияның
ғұрыптық нысандары жүйесінде**

Мақалада далалық Еуразияның мемориалды кешендері тарихы баяндалған. Ең танымалдары – бұл Орталық Азия мен Оңтүстік Сібірдің ежелгі түркі (Күлтегиннің, Білге қағанның, Бұғұт, Сарығ-бұлун) ғұрыптық ғибадатханалары. Мұндай архитектуралық нысандардың қатарына Еуразия даласының батыс бөлігінде зерттелген квадратты монументалды (Глодосы, Вознесенка, Перещепино) «қалашықтары» жатады. Олардың құрылысында жазба деректерден белгілі: квадратты форма, қабырға-үйінді, ор, ішкі құрылыстардың бағаналардың іздері, арнайы жасалған кіреберіс, сыйға тартылған өзге елдерден әкелінген бірегей артефактілер тіркелген. Алайда тұрғын үйлер, ошақтар, шаруашылық шұңқырлар түріндегі тұрақты түрде мекен ету іздері жоқ. XX ғасырдың 30-шы жылдарында басталған «квадратты қалашықтардың» алғашқы зерттеулердің өзінде-ақ олардың функционалдық маңызы мен мерзімделуін түсіндіруде қиындықтар туғызды. Археологиядағы барлық жұмбақ нысандар ретінде – олар ерте орта ғасырдың ғұрыптық мемориалдары қатарына жатқызылды. Бүгінгі күні бұл кешендер ғұрыптық шаралар мен рәсімдерді өткізетін орын ретінде бозок археологиялық шағын ауданының материалдарымен расталды.

Түйін сөздер: Бозок, ғұрыптық орталық, көне түркілер, ғұрып, ғұрыпты ғибадатханалар.

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Городище Бозок в системе культовых объектов степной Евразии

В статье изложена история исследований мемориальных комплексов степной Евразии. Наиболее яркие – это древнетюркские поминальные храмы Центральной Азии и Южной Сибири (Культегина, Бильге-кагана, Бугут, Сарыг-Булун). К числу этих архитектурных объектов

принадлежат монументальные квадратной формы «городища», исследованные в западной части евразийской степи (Глodosы, Вознесенка, Перещеино). В конструкции их зафиксированы детали, известные по письменным свидетельствам: четырехугольная форма, стена-вал, ров, следы столбов от внутренних строений, специально оформленный вход, единичные артефакты, оставшиеся от приношений. Однако нет следов постоянного обитания в виде жилищ, очагов, хозяйственных ям. Уже первые раскопки «квадратных городищ», осуществленные в 30-е годы XX в., вызвали затруднения в трактовке их функционального назначения и датировки. Как и все загадочное в археологии, они были отнесены к категории культовых мемориалов раннего средневековья. В настоящее время можно утверждать, что эти комплексы как места ритуальных обрядов и церемоний получили подтверждение в материалах Бозокского археологического микрорайона.

Ключевые слова: Бозок, культовый центр, древние тюрки, обряд, поминальные храмы.

Introduction

The study of archaeological monuments of Turkic culture is of great importance for the reconstruction of historical processes during the early Middle Ages.

A special place in the archeology of the Turks, along with the burial mounds, is occupied by cult-memorial complexes. Researchers regard them as the memorial monuments, similar in designation to temples. Such complexes include the settlement of Bozok, functioning as a sanctuary temple at the initial stage of its history (VII-VIII centuries). Architectural composition of the Bozok settlement finds the most striking similarity in the religious-memorial complex of ancient Turks (YI-YIII centuries) (Khabdulina 2016: 57). This type of monuments that was discovered in the Central Asia is princely memorial temples. And also in the Eastern Europe there are monuments of «Pereshchepino-Voznesensk» type (Ambroz 1981: 14). The original idea belongs to the princely memorial temples of ancient Turks. There are simple structures as rectangular mounds among them. Sometimes there are stone walls on the inside of the area (Voitov 1996: 74-75); and also the Khagan's temples like monuments to KulTegin and Bilge Khagan. There are alley of sculptures and balbals and the stone turtles around it. The area of distribution of the khagan memorial temples reaches the Upper Irtysh in the west. Archaeologists found here the ruins of such complexes and the stone sculpture on the sitting men (Arslanova 1974: 227).

The Main Part

In 1889 N.M. Yadrintsev opened the largest complexes with runic inscriptions and memorial structures during the expedition along the Orkhon valley in the central part of Mongolia. Their presentation to the world community became the basis and the

beginning of the growing scientific interest to the region and the designated theme. Since then, studies of the Turkic monuments have not ceased for almost 140 years, although they are held in different years with varying intensity.

In 1958, the Mongolian-Czechoslovak joint expedition unearthed the complexes of the Turkic military commander Kul-tegin on Husho Tsaidam, the Somon Hashaat of the Arkhangai Aimak. They are classic samples of the Turkic «elite» complex.

The memorial complex is located in the steppe spaces on the left bank of the Orkhon River, 45 km north of the ancient city of Karakorum, 400 km south-west of the present Mongolian capital Ulan Bator.

The memorial has a classical form of an elongated from east to west rectangle with rounded corners. It is surrounded by a moat and a rampart, and its dimensions together with the outer moat are 82.4 x 48 m. The ground platform occupies an internal space of 70x35 m (Zholdasbekov, 2006: 120).

Excavations have aroused the interest of scientists from different countries. The complex is surrounded by walls measuring 67 x 29 m; in the center is an earthen mound with a temple above it (10.25 x 10.25 m). From the complex to the east stretched for three kilometers 169 balbals (three balbals with human faces). A few stone statues on the square in the wall are badly damaged. In addition, after excavating the temple, the scientists found inside the head of the ruler Kul-tegin and his wife.

500 meters south of the Kul-tegin complex is the Bilge Kagan Memorial. The general structure of both monuments is similar. The size of the Bilge Khagan memorial, oriented around the world, is 150 x 110 m. The entrance to it from the east. The outer border of the complex is a moat (bypass moat). Its width is 2.5 m, along the inner perimeter of the moat is a rampart 0.65 m wide. Three kilometers to the east stretched a row of 230 balbalov. This row, devi-

ating to the north, completes the composition of the monument (Zholdasbekov, 2006: 220).

In 1891, during the excavation of the monument to Bilge Kagan V.V. Radlov and P.M. Melioransky did not find signs of a person's funeral. On the basis of this they made a very important conclusion that this object is not a tomb of Bilge Khagan, but is designed as a place for his remembrance and realization of ritual ceremonies (Radlov, 1897: 7).

In general, a large number of memorials of the Turkic nobility were found on the territory of Mongolia, all of them in one way or another correspond with the complexes considered above. It is established that they are not funerary objects, but are ritual-memorial (cult-memorial) buildings for the implementation of complex rituals for the deceased.

Among the nomads of Central Asia, the Turks were especially distinguished by the traditional ritual ceremony. Prior to the Turkic states and after them only the Kipchaks left special ritual-memorial complexes in the steppes of Kazakhstan – the dyng – for their deceased separate from their graves.

The next feature of the elements of the ritual structures of the Turks are stone or wooden pillars in the central parts of these structures. They are called *sergae*. *Sergae* or vertical *stelae* are often found in the graves, ritual structures of the ancient nomads of Eurasia and the researchers described them from many sides. For example, they were interpreted as a horse standing pillars, as a world tree. Hence it is noted that the ancient nomads had certain concepts about the other world. It's clear that this tradition was borrowed from them by the Turks (Iderkhangay, 2017).

On the basis of the ritual structures studied in the Mongolian Altai, fixed the tradition of installing sculptures, balbals, and also stone or wooden pillars in the center of the fence. Such ritual ceremonies were carried out not only in Mongolia, but in other regions. In the center of the northern area was cleared circular ditch of diameter 7 m. The ditch had a width of 1.0-1.3 m, depth of 0.2 m. The outlines of the ditch surrounded with postholes, in some of them preserved the base of wooden pillars. In the north-eastern side of the annular ditch is fixed a gap. At 2 m from it was cleared a large pillar of a diameter 0.5 m, that has repeatedly been repaired – around was dug additionally more four pillars (Hodder 1978: 62). The repeated restoration and repair of this pillar speaks of its importance, which, first of all, we associate with its use in rituals.

Soviet and Russian researchers considered them to be the trees of light, ritual pillars and models of the world (Voitov 1996: 117; Kubarev 2001: 36-

45). Therefore, this ritual rite can be considered as an installation or imitation of the «world tree» (Iderkhangay, 2017).

The ditch described above, surrounded by pillars, is similar to the base of the yurt-shaped building. Such a construction suggests the search for analogies of the settlement of Bozok in the memorial monument Saryg-Bulun in Tuva. In total, in the south-western and south-eastern Tuva, four complex memorial constructions of the highest nobility of the Eastern Turkic Kaganate were opened. One of them, located on the southwestern outskirts of the village of Saryg-Bulun (Erzin), was excavated by L.R. Kyzlasov in 1955. It was a blurred quadrangular shaft (36X29 m) with rounded corners, whose sides are oriented to the sides of the world with a slight deviation. Inside the shaft beyond a shallow moat is a quadrangular mound of sand (16X15 m) with a projecting platform from the west. On the eastern side of the embankment and in the moat were figures of two people carved from gray granite, sitting on the fore-toed legs, as well as two small images of lions. Excavations of this whole structure did not show any traces of burial and proved its exceptionally funeral purpose. Under the west-facing platform, there was a «temple» for sacrifices to the deceased during the wake. In the middle of it a peg was hammered into the ground, near which lay a pile of charcoal. Around were scattered fragments of the jaws of the horse, the horns of the roe deer, the teeth of the cow and the iron lining, that is the same remains of the offerings as in the ordinary memorial fences (Kyzlasov, 1969).

The author of the excavations notes that the excavated «temple» turned out to be not a tomb with walls made of raw bricks and a tiled roof, similar to the construction of Chinese in the memorial buildings of the Khagans and their relatives in Mongolia, not a sacrificial fence, in the form of an ornamental «sarcophagus» (on monuments of the highest nobility), and not by simple sacrificial fencing of ordinary soldiers, but by a wooden octagonal yurt.

The basis of the yurt was 13 pillars, deeply buried in the ground and forming an octahedron.

The walls and rafters were wooden, and the roof was obviously covered with layers of larch bark, which were pressed down on top by the heavy boulders found here. The remains of this yurt-sanctuary have been preserved to us because the yurt was burned, probably after the last wake, so that the soul of the deceased could finally ascend to the sky together with the smoke.

We believe that the memorial temple of Saryg-Bulun is a vivid monument of the early Turkic era.

This discovery aroused great interest among turkology scientists. Saryg-Bulun construction prompted another major researcher Kyzlasov I.L. more closely consider the ancient Turkic memorial complexes. He notes that at the early Bugut and Ider funeral memorials in Mongolia, the remains of the pillared temple buildings were also discovered, but they were covered with tiles, that is, they experienced foreign influence (Kyzlasov L., 1969). It is believed that these were pavilions devoid of walls. Unfortunately, due to the lack of excavation area, the form of the buildings was not traced (Voitov 1996: 104-105). For us it is especially important that, unlike of Saryg-Bulun, on these early monuments, as well as on other similar, memorial temples did not replace ordinary stone square fences, but were placed before them, to the east, covering the place where in the traditional rite there was an image of the deceased. To the same version of the rite also belong paired fences, the eastern of which (replacing the temple) contains images of the deceased (Voitov, 1996: 51).

The preservation of square fences within the ovalized platforms of aristocratic memorial complexes, as well as the inclusion of the first stones of the balbal rows (Kyzlasov L. 1969), points to the original unity of the cult arrangement of the ancient Turkic memorials – both those now considered ordinary and privileged.

Huns' annular settlements of II-I centuries in South Siberia are also the sacred places in archaeological terms (Kyzlasov, 2008: 108-135). They are surrounded by powerful mud walls and deep moats. There is no cultural layer on the inner platform.

Now surrounded by very low blurred shafts and barely noticeable shallow ditches, these uncomplicated monuments with completely flat, almost devoid of cultural layer sites turned out to be complex in terms of semantic content. Excavations revealed huge ditches, 6 m wide and 3 m deep, filled with once-destroyed and thrown there deliberately dug up mighty adobe walls. The walls of these walls also reached a width of 6 m, and their height in the old days was, apparently, close to 3 m. The most significant finding were numerous fragments of unfired bricks, also filling ditches. Originally, the walls were walled with regular masonry, probably, their top was laid out of the bricks (Kyzlasov, 2011: 6).

The study of the inner sites of the settlements showed not their residential but their cult character. The same can be judged by observations on the nature and orientation of the entrances to these heavily fortified monuments. When taking into account the local line of the horizon, the axis of the gate of the annular settlements turned out to be oriented at the

time of sunset on the days of the winter and summer solstices. The author of the study is inclined to think that these monuments served as sanctuaries, and their architectural form corresponded to the religious canon (Kyzlasov I., 2008: 134).

When the research eye is turned to the southern outskirts of the range of the Turkic tribes, the buildings of the Chondobo burial ground located on the shore of the same high mountain lake on the Tien Shan ridge on the territory of the Republic of Kyrgyzstan.

The monument is located on 2 km from north-east of the lake's shoreline. It is the largest burial ground of the Sonkul valley, containing Sako-Usun burial mounds and cromlechs (VII-V centuries BC), catacomb burials (I-V centuries), burials of a man with a horse, memorial fences and stone statues of ancient Turks (VI-X centuries) (Sulaimanova, 2005:11).

The most interesting is the object 24 of this burial ground. Before the excavation was a rounded hill, with a lot of stones on the surface (pavement -?), circled at the foot of a wide ditch 0.5 m deep from the level of the surface.

After removal of the sod layer, the walls of the structures became visible – two rectangular fences of vertically dug-in plates. The fences are oriented at angles to the sides of the world and are located 1 m apart.

Only this object 24 has external design features that distinguish it from the general series of Sonkul valley fences – large dimensions, wooden pillars, the presence of a rounded moat surrounding the central mound, and so on. The ditch surrounded, as noted above, two fences of different sizes (Sulaimanova, 2005: 12).

As described above, the Chondobo object 24 differs in a number of parameters from both the investigated fences of the Tien Shan and from most fences in adjacent territories: a round ditch, the size of the «main» fence, and so on. The totality of these parameters allows us to consider it «princely».

Among the Turkic memorial princely complexes of Mongolia V.E. Voitov suggested distinguishing four types. But only the Sevzhuul complex (Central aimak, somon Ugtal-Tsaidam), referred to the first type, is distinguished by rounded in terms walls and moats (diameter about 22 m). In the center of this monument is arranged a squat in plan construction (9 x 9 m) from vertically placed plates, from the eastern wall of which a row of balbals (Voitov 1996: 27). Thus, the monument Sevzhuul in general outlines is the only typologically close analogue of the Sonkul object 24.

Another interesting fact of the Sonkul object 24 is the presence of the remains of two wooden pillars found near the northwest and southwest walls of the main fence (24-B). Similar elements were noted in many ancient Turkic memorials of Altai and Mongolia.

The remains of the pillars, standing both in the center and corners, and along the sides of the Kagan-princely fences and boxes, were also noted in the memorial monuments of Mongolia (Khusho-Tsaidam II and III, Bugut, Ungetu II, Erdenamandal IV, Gin-din-Bulak II and other) (Voitov, 1996: 115–116).

Cult memorials of the Turks are found in Eastern Europe. The most famous monument of them is located near the village of Voznesenka (now the territory of the city of Zaporozhye). It was investigated and published by V.A. Grinchenko. The interpretation proposed by V.A. Grinchenko: a shaft of earth and stone, enclosing a rectangular area of 62×31 m (the dimensions of the structure along with the shafts of 82×51 m) «at the highest point of a large plateau from which you can inspect a terrain in a radius of about 15 km, it was probably built as a strengthening of the central command headquarters of the military detachment» (Grichenko 1950).

When the comparing the published V.A. Grinchenko facts, it is difficult to agree that the Voznesenka fortification was a temporary military camp. Its shaft was built not from improvised materials that were in place, but with a wide use of imported stone. But there are no traces of prolonged use as a fortress on the monument, although the area inside and around the fortification has been thoroughly investigated (Ambroz, 1982: 82).

Among a completely empty courtyard was once piled a ring of stones of «average size» on the surface. By the time of excavation, the stones had plunged into the soil to a level of 25-35 cm and lay in one layer. The width of the laying reached up to six stones in some places. By the plan the diameter of the ring is not less than 8-9 m. Dimensions of 29 m in Grinchenko's research probably refer not to the area, but to the circumference of the ring. Исследователь считал, что это было основание шатра. There are no finds or traces of the fire are associated with it (Ambroz, 1982: 41).

The researcher comes to the conclusion that the Voznesenka settlement has no analogies among the fortification objects of that time in Eastern Europe and neighboring territories (Ambroz, 1982: 82).

One more interesting find is in Ukraine, in Glodosy, which is always compared with Voznesenka. In Glodosy there is a double ditch, adjoining to the

ends of two ravines, protects an elongated rectangular area on the slope of the river bank. The lower part of the site is now flooded with a reservoir, so the search for the same ditches down the slope is impossible. The maximum depth of the ditch does not exceed 1.2 and 0.8 m, width – 2.8 and 1.3 m. The place is chosen so that this structure is oriented along the line south-west – north-east, like the temples considered above. In the opinion of A.T. Smilenko, because of the weakness of the fortifications and the location in the uninhabited territory in that time, the monument «makes an impression of a short-term shelter, where the detachment, less numerous than in Voznesenka, was forced to» stop after the death of the leader» (Smilenko, 1965: 13).

By now, we already have enough arguments to disagree with the opinion of Smilenko. We can refer the he studied monument to the category of cult-memorial complexes of ancient Turks.

Complexes from Pereshchepino, Glodosy and Voznesenka form a typological series within the second half of the VII and the first half of the VIII centuries. Same rectangular, as Voznesenskoye, relatively poorly fortified structures are known only in the eastern Turks of the period of their Second Kaganate (680-745) in the territory of modern Mongolia. They are also built in an open space and have roughly the same dimensions and orientation along the line north-east – south-west and east-west. On them there are no traces of living, except for the obligatory two or three holes and one small equilateral structure in the middle of the yard. These are the memorial temples of the Turkic kings, very standard in design. L. Jisl unearthed one of them – the temple of the prince Kul-Tegin, built in 732 (Ambroz, 1982: 82).

All these memorial temples of noble and ordinary Turks, like the Voznesenka settlement, are oriented to the east with slight deviations towards the sunrise: «at the place where the sun rose in the morning during the burial». According to the inscriptions, the temples of Kul-Tegin and Bilge Kagan were consecrated in the summer, the next year after the death of those who were commemorated. Their orientation corresponds to this (Ambroz, 1982: 82, 220).

The author of the study emphasizes that we must not forget about the great territorial distance of the Voznesenka settlement from the area of the distribution of the East Turkic temples, In addition, the participation of the Tang masters was reflected in their construction. Common to them are not so much details as the main idea of the memorial complex, perhaps explained not by one direct influence from

the center of the Turkic Kaganate, but also by the ancient proximity of beliefs of different branches of Asian nomads (Ambroz, 1982: 82).

Conclusion

So we consider the statement of Ambroz absolutely appropriate. We support his view on the originality of the idea of cult-memorial complexes from older beliefs common to the entire nomadic world of Eurasia. Considering the chronological proximity of the eastern complexes of Mongolia and Tuva and the

western «Pereshchepino-Voznesenka» monuments, and also located exactly in the middle of the virtual axis between them, the site of the town of Bozok, it is more correct to look for answers precisely in common origins. Perhaps their archaeological origins should be sought in Altai, which is the birthplace of the Turkic world. We believe that researchers can also refer to materials from an earlier period. Many researchers consider the burial mounds of Saka tribes not only funerary monuments, but also temples-sanctuaries, which were used to hold memorial rituals.

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