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ANCIENT INHABITANTS OF KAZAKHSTAN IN THE EARLY IRON AGE (general review)

The Saka-Savromat world (a vast territory, its common values, landmarks, etc.), as an important component of the world cultural and historical process, provided constant trade and cultural ties between the civilizations of the East (China of the Qin and Han era, cattle breeders of Ordos) and the West (Scythians and Greeks of the Black Sea region). Each world existed with its own economic structure, economy, material, cultural and spiritual values.

During the climate aridification of Kazakhstan, significant climatic changes occurred, close to modern ones. A new form of economic activity led to significant changes in almost all areas of material and spiritual life. From the beginning of the 1st millennium BC, in the steppe belt of Eurasia, new cultures are being formed.

The article considers the “royal” mounds and shrines of the ancient inhabitants of Kazakhstan, their design features, monumentality and the subject complex. Graves with large mounds marked the political centers of large associations. In the concept of ancient nomads, mounds are the place of a person’s transition to a different being. Items of jewelry art is an indicator of the level of technological development and the welfare of society, and each animal-style item carries a certain semantic load, a zoomorphic code.

Based on the analysis of new research materials on the early Iron Age of Kazakhstan, the article gives a general overview of the level of development of construction work by the ancient inhabitants, their relationship to the issue of life and death, the complexity of ritual-ritual practice.

Key words: Saka-Savromat world, “royal” mounds, shrines, ancient inhabitants.

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Ерте темір дәуіріндегі Қазақстанның ежелгі тұрғындары (жалпы шолу)

Сақ-савромат әлемі (ауқымды жері, өзіндік ортақ құндылығы, бағдары т.б.) әлемдік мәдени-тарихи үрдістердің маңызды құрамдас бөлігі ретінде Шығыс (Цинь және Хань әулеті билік құрғандағы Қытай, Ордостың малшылары) пен Батыс (Қаратеңіз маңындағы скифтер мен гректер) өркениеттері арасындағы тұрақты сауда және мәдени байланыстарды қамтамасыз етті. Әр әлем өзіндік шаруашылық құрылыммен, экономикамен, заттай, мәдени және рухани құндылықтармен тіршілік етті.

Қазақстан климатының құрғақшылыққа ұшырауы кезеңінде қазіргі заманға ұқсайтын табиғи-климаттық елеулі өзгерістер орын алды. Шаруашылық жүргізудің жаңа түрі заттық және рухани өмірдің барлық салаларына айтарлықтай өзгерістер әкелді. I мыңжылдықтың басынан бастап Еуразияның далалық белдеуінде жаңа мәдениеттер қалыптаса бастады.

Мақалада Қазақстанның ежелгі тұрғындарының «патшалық» обалары мен ғибадатханалары, олардың құрылымдық ерекшеліктері, монументальдығы мен заттар кешені қарастырылды. Ірі обалы қорымдар ірі қоғамдық құрылымдардың саяси орталығын белгілеп берді. Мұнда қорымда тұрғызылған обалар адамның о дүниеге өтер уақытша тұрағы саналады. Зергерлік өнер туындылары қоғамның технологиялық жетістіктерінің деңгей көрсеткіші, ал аң стилінде жасалған әр бұйым құпияға толы.

Сонымен қатар мақалада Қазақстанның ерте темір дәуіріне қатысты жаңа зерттеулерді талдай отырып, ежелгі тұрғындардың құрылыс ісінің даму деңгейі, олардың өмір мен өлім жайлы түсініктері және әдет-ғұрыптарының күрделілігіне жалпы шолу берілген.

Түйін сөздер: Сақ-савромат әлемі, «патшалық» обалар, ғибадатханалар, ежелгі тұрғындар.

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**Древние насельники Казахстана в раннем железном веке
(общий обзор)**

Сако-савроматский мир (огромная территория, свои единые ценности, ориентиры и т.д.), как важная составляющая мирового культурно-исторического процесса, обеспечивал постоянные торговые и культурные связи между цивилизациями Востока (Китай эпохи Цинь и Хань, скотоводы Ордоса) и Запада (скифы и греки Причерноморья). Каждый мир существовал со своим хозяйственным укладом, экономикой, материальными, культурными и духовными ценностями.

В период аридизации климата Казахстана произошли существенные природно-климатические изменения, близкие к современным. Новая форма хозяйственной деятельности обусловила существенные изменения почти во всех сферах материальной и духовной жизни. С начала I тыс. до н.э. в степном поясе Евразии формируются новые культуры.

В статье рассматриваются «царские» курганы и святилища древних насельников Казахстана, их конструктивные особенности, монументальность и предметный комплекс. Могильники с большими курганами маркировали политические центры крупных объединений. Курганы в понятии древних кочевников являются местом перехода человека в инобытие. Предметы ювелирного искусства – это показатель уровня технологического развития и благосостояния общества, а каждый предмет звериного стиля несет определенную смысловую нагрузку, зооморфный код.

В статье на основе анализа материалов новых исследований по раннему железному веку Казахстана дан общий обзор уровня развития строительного дела у древних насельников, их отношения к вопросу жизни и смерти, сложность ритуально-обрядовой практики.

Ключевые слова: Сако-савроматский мир, «царские» курганы, святилища, древние насельники.

Introduction

Kazakhstan is a country of the Great Steppe that located in the center of the Eurasian continent and has an area of 2724.9 thousand km². The territory of the country stretches from the lower reaches of the Volga in the west to Altai, in the east by almost 3,000 km and from the West Siberian Plain to the Tien Shan Mountains in the south by 1,650 km.

On the vast territory of Kazakhstan, you can meet a variety of natural conditions – from the mountain tundra to dry subtropics. The endless plains interrupted in Central Kazakhstan by isolated low-mountain massifs occupy the bulk of the territory of Kazakhstan, and only in the east and southeast the Tien Shan mountains rise (Peak of Khan Tengri, 6995 m – it is the highest point of Kazakhstan), Altai (Belukha Mountain, 4506 m) and Zhetysu (Dzhungar) Alatau (Besbakan Mountain, 4622 m). The deepest hollow – Karakia (132 m) is located in the west of the republic (Mangystau peninsula). A significant part of the Caspian lowland also lies below the ocean level.

The territory of Kazakhstan has different natural zones (steppe, forests, forest-steppe, deserts, semi-deserts, mountains). For a long time, each of the natural zones was characterized by its own characteristics of the use of natural resources and

farming. They were reflected in the formation and development of economic and cultural types.

Kazakhstan is located at the crossroads of the most ancient civilizations of the world, at the intersection of transport arteries, social and economic, cultural and ideological ties between East and West, South and North. For example, the population of the late Bronze Age of central Kazakhstan, engaged in cattle breeding, controlled the production and sale of tin, participating in trading activities and intermediary operations on the Great Trans-Eurasian “tin” route (Varfolomeev et al., 2017: 76-80). On the territory of Kazakhstan, proto-cities of the Late Bronze Age were discovered, such as the city of Kent (area – 30 ha); Akkezen city (area – 45 ha, about 60 buildings) in East Saryarka; Semiyarsk settlement (area – 45 ha) on the right bank of the Irtysh river, etc. The distribution area of these settlements coincides with the Kazakhstan metallurgical center, in which a huge amount of metal was produced.

At the turn of the 2nd millennium, BC climate aridization of Kazakhstan began and at the beginning of 1st millennium, BC significant climatic changes occurred, close to modern. Arid climate created favorable conditions for livestock breeding. A new form of economic activity led to significant changes in almost all areas of material and spiritual life, which can be traced at that time within the

entire steppe belt of Eurasia. As in other parts of it, new cultures are forming in the territory under consideration (Samašev, Onggar., 2013). The first bearers of this new culture were the elite of society.

According to paleoanthropological data, in the first half of 1st millennium BC, on the territory of Kazakhstan there lived inhabitants with a Caucasoid racial type and their population-genetic continuity with the inhabitants of the Bronze Age was clearly manifested. From the second half of 1st millennium BC, there is a process of racial mixing with immigrants with Mongoloid features (Ismagulov, Ismagulova, 2017: 105–108, 131; Kitov, Mamedov, 2014: 160–178).

A new form of farming and increased mobility led to tribal movements, the rapid accumulation of wealth in private hands, social stratification, the development of a power structure and the establishment of diverse contacts, which contributed to the rapid dissemination and assimilation of proven innovations in large areas. From the 8th century BC, active intercultural contacts are beginning to develop closely, thereby creating a single system of relations in the space of Eurasia.

In the 8th – 2nd centuries BC, in the vastness of the country of the Great Steppe there was an early state association and a complex social stratification of society. At the head of the “state” was the supreme ruler, who ruled “according to the will of the gods” and at the same time playing the role of the military commander and high priest. Sakas had their own written language, this is evidenced by an unread inscription of 26 characters on the bottom of the silver bowl of the Esik (Issyk) mound and inscriptions on ceramic vessels of Shirikrabat.

The Saka-Savromat world (a vast territory, its common values, landmarks, etc.), as an important component of the world cultural and historical process, provided constant trade and cultural ties between the civilizations of the East and the West.

Contacts and connections between the worlds of ancient civilizations were carried out in different ways. Each world existed with its own economic structure, economy, material, cultural and spiritual values. Therefore, when studying the components of these civilizations, it is necessary to focus not on the influence or dominance of any cultures, but on the relations between them. From the 5th century BC, in trade relations between peoples and cultures, the “steppe” path regularly functioned. “The steppe path” according to Herodotus, that went from the Black Sea to Altai. On these trade routes of the Eurasian path from the 2nd century BC, the Silk Road began to operate. Trade routes never acted in

one direction, there were multiple trade routes along the steppe belt of Eurasia. This is evidenced by the discovery of imported items in the burials of various social layers of the population of the early Iron Age of Kazakhstan.

The hillforts and settlements of the early Iron Age of Kazakhstan were discovered relatively recently, in the last half century. The Aktau ancient settlement dating back to the 5th – 3rd centuries BC, in the forest-steppe zone of Northern Kazakhstan, has been completely studied. The basis of the planigraphy of the village was the defensive structures, consisting of a rampart wall and a moat. Log houses, land-type (Khabdulina, 1994) and 50 wintering settlements were discovered and explored in East Saryarka (Karkaraly district). The settlement consists of a few stone houses with wide and low stone walls and probably flat ceilings (Beisenov, Loman, 2009). Saryarka settlements are distinguished by size into large, consisting of 10–40 structures (Taskora, Taskora 1) and small camps, on the territory of which 3–4 buildings are fixed. Early Saka time is characterized by land-type dwellings with an area of 20–40 m². Early Saka tableware of cans and pots like forms, flat-bottomed. Unoriented vessels and vessels decorated with one row of pits or “pearls” predominate. The massive category of finds are stone hoes, pestles, axes. Near the city of Almaty, about 40 settlements of Sakas and Usuns of Zhetysu were discovered and partially studied the settlements of Tuzusay and Tsyganka, which functioned from the Early Saka to Usun time (Baypakov, 2007: 81–83). Since 2017, joint Kazakh-Chinese excavation work has begun on the Saka settlement of Rakhat. These settlements are located in a complex with burial grounds of the same time.

From the late stage of the Bronze Age (the 9th century BC), “royal” mounds appear in Kazakhstan, located at the beginning of the chain or in the center of the burial ground. Graves with numerous large mounds marked the political centers of large associations. One of the features of the latest research of the early Iron Age of Kazakhstan is the study of the “royal” mounds. The concept of “royal” mounds implies funerary monuments of the rulers of the state, leaders of the union of tribes, individual clans, representatives of the military aristocracy, priests, etc. (Onggaruly, 2003: 12–16).

The climatic and landscape features of the regions played a special role in the location of the burial mounds (Onggar, 2002: 345–347). Two methods of organizing sacred space are known: straightforward (chain from north to south) and circular (mounds are located around the dominant mound).

The emergence of chains of mounds and the increase in the size of ground structures are probably associated with the increasingly manifest property differentiation of society, as a result of which there is a branched megastructure of burial complexes belonging to the ruling dynasties, large tribal structures. The place of burial of each person in the system of the burial ground was determined by his social status, family-kinship relations, etc.

In the concept of ancient nomads, barrows are the place of a person's transition to a different being, and for relatives, the venue for various rituals, ritual and ceremonial mysteries related to communication with spirits and higher deities.

The degree of knowledge of the funerary monuments of the Saka-Massaget and Savromat-Sarmatian circles is not the same. Nevertheless, in Kazakhstan over the past two decades, numerous funerary structures of the upper and middle social strata of the population of the early Iron Age have been studied. These include the mounds of the burial ground Zhuantobe, Oyzhailau, Ulzhan, Karkara, Kaspan, Katartobe (Zhetysu), Berel, Mayemer, Shilikti, Aksuat (Tarbagatai), Nurken-2, Taldy-2, Nazar, Akbeyit (Saryarka), Kyrykoba, Yesen-Amantau, Sapibulak, Tortoba (Western Kazakhstan), etc.

Ground structures of elite complexes were built in several stages. This is traced by the stratigraphy of the mounds. At each construction stage of the burial structure, the ancients performed some rituals associated with the cult of Fire and the Sun, as well as worship of the spirits of their ancestors.

The ground structure of the early Sakas was pyramidal (Shilikti, Zhuantobe, Besshatyr) or round (dome-shaped or yurt-like) shape (Zheldiozek, Eleke sazy, mound 4, Karkara, Maiemer). During the construction of land facilities, stones, mud bricks or pakhs, soil blocks and pieces of turf were actively used.

There are several types of gravestones of the 8th – 5th centuries BC, in Kazakhstan: complex buildings in the form of a cage, log house and tent, stone, stone-earthen crypts. On the territory of Western Kazakhstan at the end of the 6th – 5th centuries BC, wooden structures were most often immediately set on fire during ritual activities associated with the cult of Fire. Another feature of the mounds of the above period is the presence of dromos from the eastern, southeast and south sides.

The large Shilikti mounds of the 8th – 7th centuries BC, East Kazakhstan consists of the following architectural elements: a wooden-stone structure of a sub-square shape is built on the ancient surface, reinforced and covered with layers

of turf, loess, gravel and clay, and in its final form it had the shape of a truncated pyramid. On the east side of the structure is a dromos filled with stone and earth. Mounds along the edges are necessarily contoured by a stone fence. A stele may have been placed on the top of the mound (Chernikov, 1965; Toleubaev, 2013). A feature of the elite Beshatyr mounds of Zhetysu dating from the 6th – 5th centuries BC. (Akishev, Kushaev, 1963; Culture of the early nomads of Kazakhstan ..., 2009) are ground wooden structures: a corridor – a pre-door structure (dromos) – a burial chamber (doorways with thresholds) and underground catacombs; tomb with a sub-square base and a rounded roof. The mounds consist of three to sixteen layers (alternating ground with crushed stone and stone).

In mound 1 of the burial ground Nurken-2 (Central Kazakhstan), the funeral sub-square chamber and dromos were covered with masonry and a structure of adobe blocks from above (Beisenov, 2007). In burial mound 2 of the same burial ground, a stone tomb, folded by the false arch method using a solution, was fixed under thick clay masonry. These mounds are tentatively dated to the 7th – 6th centuries BC. In the Taldy-2 burial ground, mounds with stone boxes in a pit and a dromos were uncovered, as well as a burial on an ancient horizon with pillar pits around the deceased (Beisenov, 2011: 14–20). The above-ground construction of the mound also consists of adobe and stonework.

At an early stage (The 8th – 6th centuries BC), a person was buried at the level of an ancient surface or in stone boxes arranged in shallow pits. Mostly practiced one-time, single burials under the mounds.

An interesting tradition that existed among the representatives of the elite at the early stage of the Tasmola culture is the trepanation of skulls. Mostly, trepanation openings of 13 cases were found on the skulls of men and were performed posthumously (Beisenov, Kitov, 2014). Post-mortem trepanation by the Tasmola was done with the aim of preserving the body until the moment of burial. And in the mound № 4 of the Eleke sazy-2 burial ground (East Kazakhstan), the humerus of the buried was drilled (possibly with embalming).

The edges of the ground structure are usually surrounded by a ring-fence. Probably, in this way, it marked the boundary that separates the world of the dead from the world of the living. Also around some Beshatyr mounds there are menhir structures and stone ritual fences – places for lighting bonfires to cleanse people who entered the sacred territory. To the non-burial constructions of funerary monuments of the 8th – 7th centuries BC, Northern Kazakhstan

includes circular annular ditches around earthen mounds, as well as stone ridges of mounds with a “mustache”. Traces of ritual actions associated with fire are recorded in burial chambers and embankments (Khabdulina, 1994).

From the second half of the 1st millennium BC, a certain tradition is formed in the structure and location of the mounds. The ground structures, erected from several stages, at the end acquire a pyramidal Katartobe, Baiterek, Zhuantobe, Turgen and a round shape. At each stage, a dense layer of clay was poured, on top of which one or two rows of river boulders were laid or again coated with clay. Buried one or more individuals in one or more rectangular pits with rounded corners under one embankment.

The ground structures of Berel’s stone mounds were constructed from the edge of the gravel pit using the method of scale-like and horizontal masonry. A false vault may have been erected above the grave pit. The edges of the embankment are fenced with creped slabs. At the last stage, the mound is covered with a shell layer consisting of small tiles of mountain slate and river gravel.

A special type of monuments of the ancient nomads of Kazakhstan – temples-sanctuaries, which characterize many aspects of the worldview and religious beliefs of ancient inhabitants who lived in the steppes between the Aral and Caspian seas.

The study of the cult complexes of the early Iron Age of Ustyurt and Mangystau began in the mid-80s of the last century. To date, about sixty sanctuaries are known, more than 15 m in size.

The sanctuary consists of a central element – a temple, round on the outside, made of stone blocks faced with large slabs. Temples are one or multi-stage (multi-level) architectural structures. The main religious building and the center of the entire sanctuary was undoubtedly a stone structure in the form of a ring wall or two concentric walls. In all known cases, the inner part of the structure, bounded by a circular or cruciform wall, was apparently initially almost empty: in some sanctuaries, a stone altar of a round or square shape was located in the center. Altars were used for libations, kindling fires, and various sacrifices.

Obviously, the sanctuaries were created for the administration of rituals associated with the cult of heroized ancestors, heroic ancestors. The most characteristic element that sharply distinguishes the sanctuaries is the anthropomorphic sculpture, which is not represented in single copies. Around such structures, sculptures carved from stone were installed, depicting well-armed warriors (obviously

heroized ancestors). The number of statues on the sanctuary varies from 2-3 to 30-32; Obviously, it depended on the duration of the functioning, the degree of significance of the sanctuary, the number of the collective that created and maintained the sanctuary. The vast majority of the sculptures are of the same type; they reproduce a standing male figure with his right hand lowered and his left hand pressed to his stomach. The fact that the sculptures were not installed on a burial mound, and no burials were recorded in the immediate vicinity of them, testifies in favor of the non-burial purpose of these statues. The rather strictly consistent iconographic canon, the arrangement of the statues in groups, their orientation to the northern sector – all this testifies in favor of the sacred and memorial purpose of the sculptures. So, it is no coincidence that the front face of the statues is oriented to the north (with deviations) – the side identified in many mythological systems with the country of cold, darkness or the dead located in that direction. This fact confirms precisely the cult purpose of the sanctuaries, namely, their connection with the complex of ideas about the afterlife, the cultural hero and his “living” incarnations, the possible connection between “that” and “this” worlds.

The stone sculptures absolutely unknown in the early period of work now already act as an important category of sources. At present, about 20 sculptures dating to the 7th – 5th centuries BC, have been discovered in Saryarka. According to their semantics, stone statues testify to the status of heroized ancestors and occupy an important place in the study of the worldview of the ancient Sakas. One of the signs of the sculptures of Central Kazakhstan is the presence of a kind of hairstyle with a “pine cone”. The indicated types of hairstyles are known among the Kazakhs and are childish (Beisenov, Ermolenko, 2014; Kurmankulov, Ermolenko, 2014: 9–19.).

It should be noted that near the large mounds there were places of sacrifice with traces of bonfires and funeral feasts, as well as cult attributes. The ancient inhabitants of Kazakhstan had certain prohibitions, rules and norms of behavior associated with visiting the necropolises as sacred places. During the excavations of burials, as well as in random circumstances, often find whole treasures of highly artistic products: bronze cauldrons, sacrificial tables and incense burners (Dzhumabekova G.S., Bazarbaeva G.A., 2013). All cult attributes made of bronze were especially left nested one to the other or upside down in grave pits during a funeral or shallow pit after performing certain rituals near large mounds.

The territory of Kazakhstan since ancient times has been the largest center of metallurgy of bronze and art casting. Sakas very well mastered the technique of smelting and casting copper and bronze, the technique of manufacturing sheet gold. Warm, soft metal, the color of the sun – gold was mined and developed in eastern, central and southeastern Kazakhstan. The earliest of them date back to the Bronze Age. Only some gold products could be imported or made from gold obtained through exchange. The creation of one small gold item is a real art, which required great skill, considerable labor and time from the jeweler. All these efforts were made in order to exalt their “king”, and the attributes were to symbolize power and wealth (Samashev, Dzhumabekova, Bazarbaeva, Onggar, 2007).

A whole historical era, more than a thousand years long in the life of many people of Eurasia is characterized by the dominance of the so-called “**Scythian-Siberian animal style**” in their fine art.

The jewelry art is an indicator of the level of technological development and the welfare of society. Each animal style item carries a certain semantic load, zoomorphic code. Among the zoomorphic images of Sakas art, herbivores, predators wild boar, camel, bird, fish, syncretic creatures are noted. Of particular interest are gold items from the mounds of the Taldy-2 necropolis in Central Kazakhstan (Beisenov, 2013: 595–608) and the mound of the Eleke Sazy-2 burial ground in Eastern Kazakhstan (Samashev, Onggar, Chotbaev, etc., 2018). They have something in common with products from Arzhan-2 in Tuva and Shilikti in East Kazakhstan, which dates from the Early Saka time, as well as the Maymemer mounds.

The appearance of the Sakas is displayed on stone sculptures (Samashev, Kuserbaev, Amanshaev, Astafiev, 2007), petroglyphs (Samashev, 2013), censers (Samashev, Grigoryev, Zhumabekova, 2005: 37–55.) and an armament complex.

The suit contained information about the ethnic, social, gender and age and other affiliation of a person. The decor of the headdresses of the early nomads of Altai and Zhetysu, undoubtedly dictated not only by ethnographic principles but also by common ideological and ideological attitudes, has much in common. The most important element of the costume was an inlaid belt. Burials with belts were discovered in Taldy 2, Tegiszhol in East Saryarka. A gold earring, hryvnia, a sword and a dagger in a sheath made the image of a warrior complete. A characteristic item for the early Saka period of the Saryarka is cone-shaped earrings decorated with the grain and ring-shaped earrings.

An analysis of objects made of gold in chronological terms shows that in the early Saka time the main form of ceremonial attire was made more from solid objects and gold, as a material, was used quite freely and widely.

The first place in society was given to the military estates, whose main occupation was war. **The military factor** led to a clash between ethnic groups, the development of social processes, as well as the strengthening of the role of military commanders and social stratification of society. Among the population, military valor was considered the main advantage, and the social position of the individual was determined by military merits (Herodotus, 1972). The army primarily defended its land and made long-range military campaigns to obtain prey, the subjugation of new lands. During the period of the Greco-Persian wars, they fought on one or the other side, receiving rewards in the form of precious metals.

During this period, the role of the rider in society intensifies. The weapon played an important role in the life of a warrior-rider. The armaments of the Saka elite were mainly decorated with images of predatory and mythical creatures, mainly precious metals and stones were used. Weapons and tactics of warfare, as well as equipment of a faithful companion of a warrior – a horse were constantly improved.

The armament of the warrior in the 1st millennium BC, was made up of a complex bow with arrows, a blade melee weapon — a sword and a dagger, as well as an axe, a slinger, and armor. Combat and harness belts, helmets were made of leather. On the left side, the warrior hung a heavy fire with a bow, an arrow and a sword was located in the front, and a dagger in a scabbard was tied to the right with straps. In the burials of the Sarmatian warriors of Western Kazakhstan, often there are whole quiver sets in the amount of 10 to 300 bronze arrowheads. Mostly, images of predatory animals were used to decorate weapons, and images of herbivores (deer, horse, mountain goats, argali, etc.) were used to decorate military equipment (Chotbaev, 2013: 127–131). In the 4th – 2nd centuries BC, there is a change in the military tactics of the nomads of Western Kazakhstan, in which short chopping *akina*s are replaced by chopping swords. The number of swords in burials increases compared to daggers. During this period, there is a standardization of cultures: the shape of swords, daggers and arrowheads is simplified. The number of arrows in quivers increases sharply (Moshkova, 1974; Tairov, 2005; Zhelezchikov, 1980). The Sarmatians were the innovators of many innovations in military affairs, for

example, they played a significant role in creating the legendary heavily armed cavalry – cataphracts and became famous in history as magnificent warriors.

The image of a horse in a system of ideological representations of the ancient nomads occupied by special place. The role of the horse and the cults associated with it are considered in the writings of many researchers. It is believed that the meaning of this image is polysemantic. The function of the horse, as the main vehicle in everyday life, is also reflected in the rituals associated with the funeral rite. This is illustrated especially vividly by Berel riding horses from the leader's grave.

The horse harness included two-piece bits, cheekpiece, saddle pillows. The horse harness included two-piece bits, psalms, saddle pillows. The armaments and horse harness, depending on the social status of the owner, were decorated with images in the “Scythian-Siberian animal style”. The images and themes of the animal style on the above objects form a sign system, which reflected the ideas of ancient nomads about the structure of the world, their worldview, value orientations, and aesthetic norms.

Excellent safety and amazing finds from mounds with permafrost Berel, provided a unique opportunity to reconstruct the ceremonial equipment of horses.

Horses with masks were killed during the ritual from being struck by a warpick.

Conclusion

In conclusion, I would like to note that the “royal” mounds and shrines of the ancient inhabitants of Kazakhstan, their design features, monumentality and the subject complex show the level of development of construction work among the ancient inhabitants, their attitude to the issue of life and death, the complexity of ritual and ceremonial practice. In addition, the fundamental similarity of some of the structural characteristics of the funeral structures of Kazakhstan indicates the deep connections of the population of the era of the early nomads, the unity of religious and ideological attitudes. For example, in terms of the composition of finds and territorially, Taldi-2 is without a doubt included in the circle of Early Saka monuments such as Shilikti, Eleke Sazi, Zhalaui in eastern and southeastern Kazakhstan and is close to Arzhan-2 in Tuva.

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