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The history of the study of the Turkic monuments of Saryarka

The Early Medieval period is one of the least studied historical periods of Saryarka in archaeological terms. The current situation is aggravated by the lack of direct written information about this rather long period of time, covering an entire millennium. The eventful epoch begins in the middle of the VI century, with the annexation of the lands of Central Kazakhstan, as well as Semirechye and Khorezm to the Turkic Khaganate. The beginning of the research of Early Medieval monuments is associated with the work of the Central Kazakhstan Archaeological expedition, then the study was continued by the Saryarka archaeological expedition and the Karaganda University named after E.A. Buketov. It should be noted that in recent years there has been a positive trend in the study of funerary and memorial early medieval monuments of Central Kazakhstan. However, the accumulated materials are still few and without systematic research, positive changes are not expected in the coming years, and the stage of primary data accumulation may last for more than a decade.

Keywords: Middle Ages, Saryarka, Turks, ritual objects, funeral complexes, stone sculptures, history of study, archeology, horse burial, funeral rite.

Introduction

The study of early medieval monuments began in 1957 by excavations by M.K. Kadyrbayev at the Yegiz-Koytas burial ground. It is located in the tract of the same name, on the right bank of the Tokrau River (Aktogay district, Karaganda region). An ancient Turkic burial was found under the mound of a small (7 m in diameter) stone mound. The deceased was laid on his back in an extended position and oriented with his skull in an easterly direction. The accompanying inventory consisted of fragments of a birch bark quiver, an iron three-bladed petiole arrowhead, a stone object, a quiver ring and remains of a belt with a buckle. Bones of a horse were excavated in the southern half of the grave. The horse was laid on its “belly” with its limbs tucked under its body and its skull pointing in a westerly direction. The horse had been harnessed and in its teeth there were iron bridles, apparently fitted with ringed psaltery. Two iron stirrups with a slit for a puttlch were cleared from the horse's legs. Two bone buckles were fixed on the animal's back [1; 184–186]. Analyzing the material obtained, M.K. Kadyrbayev noted some parallels in the rituals and object complex of Kudyrge burial mound, but suggested that the barrow of Yegiz-Koitas was apparently earlier and dated it to the VI-VII centuries [1; 198–199].

As a result of the activities of the Central Kazakhstan archaeological expedition in Central Kazakhstan it was possible to identify and/or localize more than 60 [2; 4] medieval settlements and fortresses, previously known, in particular, according to written evidence. According to A.Kh. Margulan, most of them originated in the Kipchak period, especially under the rulers of Ak-Orda (XIII-XV centuries) [2; 5].

In 1972, S. Zholdasbayev conducted research of the settlement of Ayakkamyр located on the right bank of the Dzhezdy river (Ulytau district, Karaganda region). The remains of corner towers, as well as numerous fragments of pottery and bones of domestic animals were revealed in the course of the works. The original vessel with the image of humanoid figures confirms the pre-Islamic character of the monument. It should be emphasized that the vessels of the site differ from the ceramics of the Syr Darya cities and are similar to the moulded pottery of the Western Kipchaks and Pechenegs. According to A.Kh. Margulan, the monument can be dated to the VIII-IX centuries [2; 33–36].

Funerary complexes

New data on burial rites were obtained more than 20 years later and are associated with emergency excavations on the left bank of the Nura river (Nura district, Karaganda region), where a partially eroded burial

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in a simple pit was found in a cliff. It contained human remains, laid on their backs, in an extended position. The accompanying inventory, emphasizing the military belonging of the deceased, is represented by an iron sword, daggers, a set of arrowheads and elements of a belt set. Typological analogues of the inventory allowed S.G. Botalov and A.A. Tkachev to date the burial to the VIII-IX centuries, which historically corresponds to the heyday of the Uigur Kaganate [3].

In 1993 during the implementation of protection excavations in Karkaraly district of Karaganda region, near Tokhtar village, in the valley of the river of the same name two ancient Turkic burial mounds in the burial grounds Zharly-1 and Zharly-2 were investigated. The grave structures were a stone embankment and a round-shaped mound up to 6 m in diameter. And after clearing in one case it was possible to reveal a stone circular enclosure under the burial mound.

In the central part of the Zharly-1 barrow, a hole was recorded in which a stone box containing the remains of a child was placed. On the right side of the skeleton were the bones of small cattle, possibly laid down as burial food. Closer to the eastern wall of the stone box, there was a small, moulded, jar-shaped, flat-bottomed vessel.

The Zharly-2 tombs had a more complicated layout — a two-chamber pit with a basement, separated by slabs. Human bones were in the north part of the pit, which was made in the form of a pit. Below that was the skeleton of a horse, with its legs tucked under its belly. To the right of the dorsal vertebrae, at the level of the presumed saddle, was one badly preserved iron stirrup with the top part destroyed. The comparative analysis by A.Z. Beisenov and D.A. Kozhakov of formal-typological features of the funerary architecture, rituals and accompanying equipment allowed to draw parallels with the monuments of Kazakhstan, Central Asia and South Siberia and to date the kurgan of Zharly-1 cemetery by VI-VII centuries, and the structure of Zharly-2 necropolis by VI-VIII centuries [4; 150–153].

Another burial was investigated at the Izhevskiy-2 cemetery (Akmola oblast), located on the right bank of the Ishim River. It was arranged under a stone barrow and represented a ground pit with human remains and bones of two hacked carcasses of animals with missing skulls on a ledge. The accompanying inventory is represented by an iron cinch buckle, four iron plaques of a belt set, a knife, two iron three-blade petiole arrowheads. Probably, a leather quiver with some adornments or reinforcements in the form of thin bone plates was suspended from the belt of the deceased. In A.Z. Beisenov and V.S. Voloshin's opinion, the investigated burial of the burial ground Izhevsky-2 belongs to a warrior and can be dated by the 2nd half of the VII century — the 1st half of the VIII century [5].

A significant series of ancient Turkic and Kipchak statues located in Ulytau district of Karaganda region, was found by Central Kazakhstan Archaeological Expedition in 1947–1957, as reflected in the posthumous volume of A.Kh. Margulan's works [6].

The monograph “Medieval statues of the Kazakh steppes (typology, semantics in the aspect of military ideology and traditional world outlook)” by L.N. Ermolenko, published in 2004, is fundamental in terms of generalization of materials and their analysis [7]. It includes information about 120 statues. 92 of them were introduced into science for the first time. It includes large historiographical sections covering the current cumulative history of the issue. The iconographic appearance of the sculptures was analyzed in detail, allowing to specify the features inherent in the statuary objects of Old Turkic and Kipchak appearance.

Three ancient Turkic complexes were investigated on the left bank of Kumai River, at the foot of Buiratau mountains (Ereymentau district, Akmola oblast). At the Kos Batyr monument a multi-plate and a four-plate fence were excavated, with anthropomorphic belted statues placed next to them. Two signs on one of the slabs of the structure were recorded, possibly being [8; 22–27]. A fragment of horse's jaw was found in the process of excavation of structure 1 [8; 65–67]. Multiplit fence with standing belted anthropomorphic statue was investigated at Karagaily 1 complex [8; 27–31], and two adjacent quadrangular fences, filled with chipped stone and two anthropomorphic statues were investigated at Karagaily 2. In the central part of both constructions stone lining with bones of animals, fragments of wood in an environment of carbonaceous-ash filling were recorded [8; 67–72]. All investigated complexes are dated to VI-VIII centuries [8; 95–96].

In 1982 a chain of ancient Turkic fences of Dau-Kara was excavated. It was located 20 km to the south-east of Kasym Amanzholov settlement (Karkaralinskiy district of Karaganda region). It consisted of two partially demolished fences with two-layer stone grouting. Under it hollows filled with black soil were found. Embers were recorded in one of these. Some of the pits were located outside the structures, so L.N. Yermolenko and V.V. Yevdokimov suggested that these two could have been used to support the pillars of some structure [9; 32–33].

Another excavated complex of three quadrangular fences, located on the Kopa River (Karkaraly district, Karaganda region) is mentioned in the monograph by L.N. Yermolenko [7].

In 2015 an expedition of the Saryarka Archaeological Institute under Ye.A. Buketov KSU conducted research of the Maibulak II burial ground, which is located 4 km south-west of Telmanskoye settlement (Osakarovsky district, Karaganda region). Both structures constituting the necropolis were excavated. Kurgan 1 turned out to be a memorial and/or ritual mound and contained no finds. In barrow 2 east of the centre of the barrow altar consisting of horse limbs and an iron stirrup was excavated. Separate, poorly preserved fragments of human bones were recorded when the grave was excavated. The found striae belong to the type of isolated plate, widely used in the Altai Mountains, Tyva and especially in Khakassia in the VII–IX centuries [10].

Important materials on the Middle Ages should be considered in the study of the Atasui archaeological microdistrict in 2018, namely the Kabantau complex, where a chain of stone fences was studied. The artifacts found in the form of a bronze buckle with an iron tongue, an iron plate with holes and fragmented animal bones [11] significantly expand the typological composition of the object world.

In 2018, the expedition of the Saryarka Archaeological Institute under the auspices of the International Turkic Academy conducted comprehensive studies on two monuments of ancient Turks located in the Eastern part of Saryarka in the Yedrei Mountains (Karkaraly district) [12–13]. At the Ascheken Sorana complex, a chain of 8 fences of various shapes, 6 stone mounds with paired mounds containing sub-square fences, as well as a mound with a stone layout extending eastward were studied by a single excavation. The cult and ritual character of the complex is confirmed by the absence of burials and explains the small number of items found, represented by fragments of bronze clasp, knife and rod-shaped psaltery, as well as an iron arrow-head.

Interesting material was obtained at the second object, the Ketaban burial ground, where two horse burials in fences covered with a paired stone embankment were studied. The ritual inventory consisted of two iron looped stirrups, fragments of bits, a spring buckle, a quiver hook, and an arrow tip.

In 2012–2013 the team of the Institute of Archaeology named after A.Kh. Margulan conducted researches in the valley of the Dagandaly river where, in particular, in Akkoytas IV cemetery (Karkaraly district of Karaganda region) [14; 661–663] 2 ancient Turkic complex: a single fence and a chain of three fences, embedded in stones were excavated. The single fence (No. 1) was a four-plate building with a fallen stele. A cluster of iron arrowheads, duckboards and bronze plaques, made up the belt set, was recorded during excavation of the fence backfill. It was in the ground of white, ashy texture. The chain (No. 2) was multi-plate constructions with a fallen stele [15].

In the cemetery Soran I, located 3 km north-west of Akkoytas mountains, a quadrangular multi-plate fence with a granite stele embedded in the central part and a miniature stone box placed nearby was investigated. The structure contained no finds [15; 635].

Local works have been carried out on the ancient Turkic settlements and fortresses of Baskamyр and Khan-Ordasy, the total area of the excavations is about 1000 sq.m [16; 70–86, 33–34]. The basis of ceramic complexes is moulded vessels (about 90 % of collections of settlements Ajakkamyр and Baskamyр). These are mainly fragments of cauldrons and pots with a convex body. The ornamentation was mainly covered by the upper part of the vessel, which represented indentations of various shapes, garland-like patterns and so on [16; 87–89].

The basis of the ancient Turkic pictorial tradition were images of an armed rider, standard-bearer, “cataphractarii”, scenes of khan's hunting, carts with mysterious riders under the hood [17; 102, 104]. An indicator of a developed system of property ownership and a marker of clan identification are not numerous tamgas [17; 103]. It should be emphasized that the ancient Turkic images do not constitute independent inscriptions and were often added to the petroglyphs of earlier times. One of the few exceptions is the Naizatas petroglyphs, which are located 5.5 km west of the settlement of Toryaigyr (Pavlodar Region), on the southern side of a separate rock, located between streams. It depicts several riders with spears and flags [18; 28, 109–111]. Such locations in Central Kazakhstan as Shunak, Kilybai, Baikonur (group “D”), Konyrjon can also be noted. Images of equestrian lances are known in Pribalkhashie (in the Sarybulak valley), which is reflected in the work of A.G. Medoev [19].

Another chain of ancient Turkic fences was excavated in 2014 at the multi-temporal necropolis Tanabai, located 1.5 km north-east of Tortkol settlement (Bukhar-Zhyrau district, Karaganda region). It consists of three four-plate structures. From some of them an anthropomorphic pectoral statue and balbals “de-part” in a northeasterly direction. According to E.A. Dmitriev and D.S. Zhusupov, it should be taken into

account the small number of excavated in Central Kazakhstan Old Turkic fences and the lack of reliable chronological benchmarks, which does not allow to specify the dating of the complex and makes it reasonable to accept a wide time range: 2nd half of the VI-VIII centuries [20].

The complex of 6 four-slab fences Akbauyr was excavated in 4.5 km to the east-southeast from Baibala settlement (Shetsky district of Karaganda region). All investigated fences are four-slab structures with stone-and-earth filling of the inner space. Structures No. 5 and 6 are adjoining fences, constructions No.1–4 are nearby, i.e. according to V.D. Kubarev are Kudyrghinsk and Yakonur types respectively [21; 50]. The arched arrangement of the complex is similar to the studied “ensemble” of multi-plate fences of Kabantau's Yakonur type. One of the distinctive features of Akbauyr fences is the presence of an above-ground stone box with coal filling in structure No. 3. This has been recorded for the second time in Central Kazakhstan.

The beginning of radiocarbon dating of the Hun's monuments of Central Kazakhstan allows to confirm the time of spread of the ancient Turkic complexes in the region according to the written evidence, which is terminus ante quem lower chronological boundary, and the upper bound is limited by the spread of the Kipchak tribes, i.e. [22; 43].

In 2019, an expedition of the Centre of Archaeological Research named after A.Kh. Margulan at PSU investigated a solitary fence located in the Kalmakyrghan mountain massif (Maysky district, Pavlodar oblast). It was a four-plate complex with a fallen stele and an anthropomorphic statue nearby. A stone hoe was found among the stones that filled the fence. Pits filled with ashy loam and containing animal bones and a copper rivet were examined within the fence itself. Iron nails and an unlocked ring were found not far from the fence. According to V.K. Merts, I.V. Merts and E.D. Demidkova, the investigated fence can be attributed to the VI-VIII centuries at first [23; 492–493].

Conclusions

Summing up, we should note that at the beginning of the 3rd decade of the XXI century archaeological excavations covered 22 ancient Turkic monuments (3 settlement complexes, 19 burial and/or ritual monuments) in Saryarka. Despite this, a total of 39 fences, 8 burials and 7 ritual mounds were investigated. It is a rather limited factual base. It should be noted that in recent years a positive trend in the study of funerary and memorial monuments of early Middle Ages in Central Kazakhstan has been outlined. However, the accumulated materials are still scarce and without systematic research no positive progress can be expected in the coming years, and the stage of initial accumulation of data could last for more than a decade.

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Сарыарқа түркі ескерткіштерін зерттеу тарихы

Ерте ортағасырлар — Сарыарқаның археологиялық тұрғыдан аз зерттелген тарихи кезеңдерінің бірі. Бүкіл мыңжылдықты қамтитын осы ұзақ уақыт аралығы туралы тікелей жазбаша ақпараттың болмауы қазіргі жағдайды қиындатып отыр. Оқиғаларға толы дәуір VI ғ. ортасында, Орталық Қазақстанның, сондай-ақ Жетісу мен Хорезм жерлерінің Түркі қағанатына қосылуынан басталады. Ерте ортағасырлық ескерткіштерді зерттеудің басталуы Орталық Қазақстан археологиялық экспедициясының жұмыстарымен байланысты, одан әрі зерттеуді Сарыарқа археологиялық экспедициясы мен академик Е.А. Бөкетов атындағы Қарағанды университеті жалғастырды. Айта кету керек, соңғы жылдары Орталық Қазақстанның ерте ортағасырлық жерлеу және еске алу ескерткіштерін зерттеу саласында оң үрдіс байқалды. Алайда жинақталған материалдар әлі де аз және оларға жүйелі зерттеулер жүргізілмегендіктен алдағы жылдарда оң өзгерістер күтілмейді, ал бастапқы деректерді жинақтау кезеңі одан да көп ондаған жылдарға созылуы мүмкін.

Кілт сөздер: ортағасырлар, Сарыарқа, түріктер, жерлеу нысандары, жерлеу кешендері, тас мүсіндер, зерттеу тарихы, археология, жылқыны жерлеу, жерлеу рәсімі.

Е.А. Дмитриев, А.И. Кукушкин, А.Б. Макен, А.М. Адильбаев

История изучения тюркских памятников Сарыарки

Раннее средневековье — один из наименее изученных в археологическом плане исторических периодов Сарыарки. Усугубляет сложившуюся ситуацию отсутствие прямых письменных сведений об этом довольно продолжительном промежутке времени, охватывающем целое тысячелетие. Насыщенная событиями эпоха начинается в середине VI в., с присоединения земель Центрального Казахстана, а также Семиречья и Хорезма к Тюркскому каганату. Начало исследований раннесредневековых памятников связано с работами Центрально-Казахстанской археологической экспедиции, далее изучение было продолжено Сарыркинской археологической экспедицией и Карагандинским университетом им. акад. Е.А. Букетова. Необходимо отметить, что в последние годы наметилась положительная тенденция в области изучения погребальных и поминальных раннесредневековых памятников Центрального Казахстана. Однако накопленные материалы все же малочисленны и без систематических исследований позитивных сдвигов в ближайшие годы не предвидится, а этап первичного накопления данных может продлиться еще не одно десятилетие.

Ключевые слова: Средневековье, Сарыарка, тюрки, ритуальные объекты, погребальные комплексы, каменные изваяния, история изучения, археология, захоронение лошади, погребальный обряд.

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