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CONTENT

A.A.Максүтова <u>“TARIKH-I RASHIDI” AS A SOURCE ON THE HISTORY OF JOCHI ULUS (THE GOLDEN HORDE).....</u>	<u>4</u>
A.A.Nuskabay, B.B.Besetayev NEW STUDIED RITUAL FENCES OF THE TURKIC ERA IN ZHETYSU.....	13
Ә.М.Ташқараева <u>ТҮРКІ ХАЛЫҚТАРЫНЫҢ РУХАНИ МӘДЕНИЕТІНДЕГІ ДӘСТҮРЛЕР САБАҚТАСТЫҒЫ («ШАДЖАРА-И-ТАРАКИМЕ» ДЕРЕКТЕРІ БОЙЫНША).....</u>	<u>21</u>
A.S.Shakiyeva THE CONTRIBUTION OF TATAR SCIENTISTS TO THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF JUCHI ULUS.....	32

NEW STUDIED RITUAL FENCES OF THE TURKIC ERA IN ZHETYSU

A.A.Nuskabay, * B.B.Besetayev

L.N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, Nur-Sultan, Republic of Kazakhstan

E-mail: abdinur82@mail.ru

**Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan*

E-mail: bessetayev.b@kaznu.kz

Abstract. The article is devoted to the introduction of new data of the early medieval ritual fences from Ulken Kakpak burial ground into the scientific circulation, which have been studied in Zhetysu region in recent years. The ritual fences and stone statues are relatively little studied in Zhetysu region – the center of the Western Turkic Khaganate, so the archaeological studies in this direction are relevant. The research work was carried out using the method of analysis, comparing with sites of this type, studied in neighboring regions.

Key words: Zhetysu, Western Turkic Khaganate, Old Turkic period, Ulken Kakpak, ritual fence, stone pillar.

INTRODUCTION

The ritual fences with stone statues are the legacy of the indigenous Turkic tribes that spread in the Eurasian steppes. The stone statues, set in traditional fences, are an integral part of the fences. However, the attention was not paid to the study of fences until later times and much attention was given to the study of statues. To date, the study of ritual fences, characteristic of the ancient Turkic period, is one of the urgent tasks facing scientists. The traditional fences have several different types depending on the structural features. There are single, pair and chain types of fences. The object finds are not often discovered in the ritual fences.

Zhetysu region was the center of the Western Turkic Khaganate in the Early Middle Ages. There are many archaeological sites in the mentioned region, which are real data for studying the history of the Turkic tribes who founded the Khaganate. In spite of the studied material is not enough for making a scientific opinions, anyway it became the basis for studying the archaeological sites of the Turkic period. The study of the ancient Turkic period sites in the region makes it possible to accurately study the ethnocultural trends of that period, as well as to compile a database.

The ritual fences occupy a special place in the tradition of commemorating and memorial dinner for the ancestors of the ancient Turks of Zhetysu territory and the rituals of commemoration of spirits were performed inside the fences that was made by lying flat stone slabs on their sides. As we mentioned above, in the region under consideration, the stone statues that are an integral part of ritual sites, were well studied, but little attention has been paid to the study of ritual fences. There are the scientific data on the existence of fences near stone statues in research works of the late 19th c. and middle 20th c. [1; 2; 3].

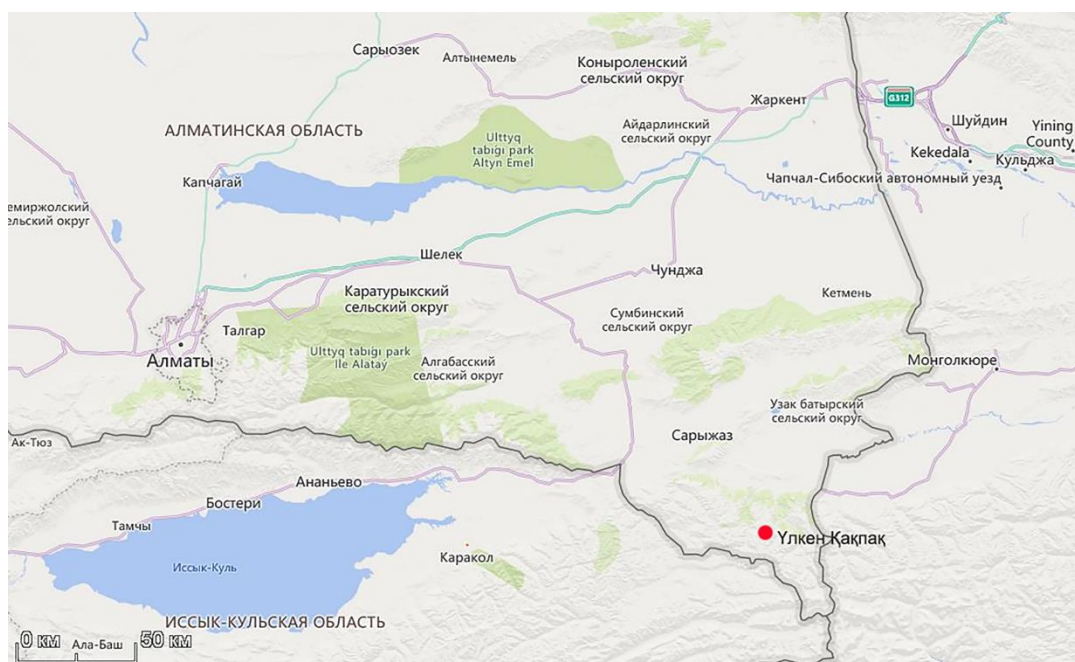
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DATA SOURCES

The materials collected during excavations of ancient Turkic ritual fences were taken as a data source. The methods of archaeological exploration and excavation are used among the research methods. In addition, the work was conducted on the principles of historicity and objectivity. In the course of a comparative study of data sources related to the history of the formation of spiritual and material values of the early medieval period and with the use of written data, cartographic, planigraphic and stratigraphic observations related to traditional archaeological methods, classification of finds complex, method of analogy, formal comparative and typological analysis, statistical elements and methods, complex of retrospective methods were carried out. The materials of ritual fences were widely used in the theoretical study of the religious and worldview values of the native Turks of Central Asia.

SITE DESCRIPTION

The ritual fences typical for the Early Middle Ages, are considered as an archaeological site, discovered in Ulken Kakpak burial ground as a result of conducted archaeological research in Zhetysu region in 2014 [4, p. 38]. The traditional fences and burials are concentrated on a terrace on the left bank of the Ulken Kakpak River, 9 km south of the village of Kakpak, Raimbek district of Almaty region (Fig. 1). At a distance of about 15 m to the south of the chain of fences, four burial grounds with a diameter of 6–8 m are located in an uneven position.

In the field summer season of 2015, within the framework of the grant project of the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan “The cultural horizon of the Saka-Savromats in the Kazakh steppe: the study of issues of mutual cultural ties in historical diachrony” (project leader: Ongaruly A.), a group of the Karkara detachment conducted archaeological excavations in the ritual fences of the indigenous Turkic era in Ulken Kakpak burial ground. The traditional fences are located close to each other, in a chain from east to west. Before the excavations, only the upper parts of flat stone slabs and pillar stones were visible, which were installed vertically on the walls of fences. The archaeological excavations began with the clearing of sod layer of the site. The fence at the eastern end of the chain of fences was marked No.1 and the fence at the western end – No.2. The total size of archaeological excavations carried out in a chain of fences – 10x7 m (Fig. 2).



The size of the ritual fence No.: 3.3×3.8 m. The pillar (stele) is installed on the outside of the northern wall of the traditional fence. The total length of the pillar stone is 1 m, the width is 0.3 m. The pillar stone, installed in front of the traditional fence, has a length of 0.5 m. In particular, the top of the stone is processed by chipping and the presence of strips is noticeable which look like the traces of comb. The walls of the traditional fence are made of flat stones 0.8 m long, 0.4 m high and 0.1 m thick. Four flat stones have been preserved, installed on the eastern wall of ritual fence No.1. It turned out that four flat stones were preserved in the southern wall. Five flat stones were placed on the western side wall and preserved in their place. It turned out that three flat stones were preserved in the northern wall and the last stones placed on the wall were removed. The inside of the fence are filled with large and small stones. It can be seen that all flat stone slabs placed on the walls of the fence are tilted outward. The weight of the stones placed inside the fence could have dislodged it. When clearing the sod layer of the fence in the central part among the stones, the fragments of the femurs of cattle were found. After clearing the sod layer of the fence, a plan was drawn and photographed. The stones inside the traditional fence were completely removed and research work was carried out. As a result of archaeological excavations, no material data from the fence were found.

The size of the ritual fence No.2: 3.5×4 m. A stone column 1.4 m long and 0.4 m wide was found in a collapsed state in the south-eastern part of the ritual fence. The size of the largest of flat stones, installed vertically on the walls of a traditional fence, is approximately $1 \times 0.5 \times 0.15$ m. Five flat stones were placed on the eastern wall of the traditional fence and kept in place. Five flat stones, placed on the southern wall, were also preserved in their place. It turned out that only one flat stone remained on the western wall and the rest of the stones placed on the wall were removed from their place. In their place, only three flat stones were preserved, placed on the northern wall of a traditional fence. The inner part of the fence is filled with large and small stones. Due to the weight of the stones, which are placed inside the fence, it is clear that the flat stones placed on the walls of the fence are tilted outwards. During the clearing of the sod layer

of the fence, the fragments of a ceramic vessels were found from the outside of the eastern corner of the southern wall of the fence No. 2.

After clearing the sod layer, a schematic plan of the fence was drawn up and photographed. In order to check whether any objects were placed in the traditional fence, the stones inside the fence were completely removed. As a result, the location of a stone pile with a length of 1.2 m and width of 0.5 m was determined at the level of the ancient earth layer. Although it looks like a stone burial pit, no evidence of a burial pit was found during the excavations. The presence of a stone pile similar to a burial pit under the stones inside the fence, indicates the originality of the site.

TECHNICAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL EXPERTISE

The fragments of pottery were processed by Kaliyeva Zh.S. at the laboratory of the primary processing of archaeological materials of the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan. 16 fragments of pottery were studied. In the course of the study, photographing of fragments, processing of photographic material, macro photography of traces associated with assembly, ornamentation, methods of its firing, surface processing, features of primary plastic raw materials, technical and technological research methods of ceramics and etc. were carried out. The expertise was conducted within the framework of the historical and cultural approach to the study of ancient ceramics based on binocular microscopy, traceology and physical modeling, developed by Bobrinsky [5].

Based on the preliminary examination and binocular microscopy, samples with preserved traces of molding and surface processing, as well as the adhesive of tapes during the construction of the hollow body, were recorded. The analysis of pottery was divided into the following stages: stage 1 – preparation, identification (selection of raw materials, manufacturing, processing, molding); Stage 2 - creativity (structural design, hollowing, shaping, vessel surface processing); stage 3 – fixing (strengthening vessel, principles of eliminating moisture permeability, making of shaped parts and decoration with patterns).



The researcher classifies the ceramic fragments into three groups, taking into account the peculiarities of their structure: group 1 includes fragments of two pottery vessels, 2 to 6 cm in size, with a wall thickness of 7–8 mm (Fig. 3, 1). The vessels are clay, dense quartz with a volume of 1–2 mm, glazed with organic oily additives. The surface of the vessel is covered with a thin salt shell. There are no ornaments. It was fired in a blazing fire. The fragments of two vessels of group 2 – 4 to 6 cm in size, with a wall thickness of 1 cm (Fig. 3, 2). Clay, quartz with a volume of 1–2 mm, mica with a volume of 0.1–0.2 mm, organic substances, burnt amorphous substances with size of 2–3 mm. The surface of the vessel is smoothed with solid matter. The inside is gray and the outside is brown. There are no ornaments. It was fired in a neutral flame. The group 3 includes the fragments of the remaining twelve pottery vessels. Their size is from 2 cm to 6 cm, thickness is 5–6 mm (Fig. 3, 3). The composition of ceramics is clay, rounded quartz with a size of 1–2 mm, pebble with a size of 1 mm, organic matter, fired amorphous substance with a size of 2–3 mm. The surface of the vessel has traces of smoothing with grass, as well as the traces of soot are also visible. Fired in a blazing fire. There is no special pattern.

ANALYSIS

The ritual fences characteristic of the early Middle Ages have been relatively little studied in Kazakhstan, so it is necessary to compare materials obtained from sites, studied in neighboring regions and territories, inhabited by native Turkic tribes. The structural features of the ritual fences of the ancient Turkic tribes of the Altai Mountains are classified in the work of Kubarev V.D. The scientist divided the ritual fences of ancient Turkic tribes studied in Altai into five main types: kudygerlik, yakonurlyk, ayutindyk, yustdytyk and ulandyryktyk [6, p. 148]. The ritual fences of the Turkic tribes located on the territory of Ulken Kakpak meadow are similar in their structure to the Kudyr type fences. But the fences with common walls were not discovered on this site.

Despite the fact that as a result of the excavations of the ritual fences of the ancient Turkic period, the object artifacts have not been found, the research in this direction is of great scientific importance. As a result of the study of sites of this type, their structural features are determined and the data on the rituals are collected. Thus, the researchers note that the establishment of a pillar stone in the center of fences, located in chains, is associated with the concept of a pedigree tree (stump) [7, p. 145]. The ritual fences are filled with the presence of a special tradition in coarse-grained stones filled inside. The Kazakh people preserved the ritual of throwing a handful of soil during the funeral. Probably, in ancient Turkic times the people laid a stone in the ritual fence to honor the memory of the deceased.

In the studied ritual fences of the Inner Tien Shan, the pillar stones and stone statues were located outside the western and northwestern walls of the fence. In the ritual fence examined in Ulken Kakpak, the pillar stone was also installed outside the northern wall of the fence. The chain of stones and female statues were not found in ritual fences of the Inner Tien Shan [8, p. 70-82]. The stone statues or pillar stone were often installed outside the eastern wall of the fence in the ritual fences, studied in other regions [9, pp. 41-44]. The pillar stone was installed outside the northern wall of the fence, examined in the pasture of Ulken Kakpak. A similar regularity is observed in the ritual fence of Araltobe 1 in the Merke temple. The pillar stone was installed outside the north-western wall of the ritual fences [10, pp. 42-44]. This structural similarity indicates a spiritual connection between the tribes.

CONCLUSION

As a result of excavations carried out in the traditional fences, new data on the cultural heritage of the ancient Turkic tribes that lived in the Zhetysu region in the Early Middle Ages, was obtained. The study of archaeological sites which are a material manifestation of the spiritual culture of the ancient Turkic tribes that formed the basis of the peoples of the Western Turkic Khaganate, is a real material for studying the similarity or originality of their religious and ideological outlook with other regions. The study of the architectural structure of traditional fences in comparison with the traditional fences of the ancient Turkic period, studied in other regions, is the basis for studying the ethnocultural trends of that period. The sequence of ritual fences, studied in other regions, stretching from south to north, is preserved in most sites, since this is a pattern that was established at that time in the construction of cult monuments. The chains of ritual fences that we have studied, are located from east to west. In the ritual fences explored in other regions, a stone statue was placed on the eastern side of fence and a pillar stone with a carved roof was installed in front of the northern wall of Ulken Kakpak ritual fence.

As a result of a comparative study of the design features it was revealed that the site dates from the 8th-9th centuries.

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ЖЕТИСУ ӨңІРІНДЕГІ ЖАҢАДАН ЗЕРТТЕЛГЕН ТҮРКІ ДӘУІРІНІҢ ҒҰРЫПТЫҚ ҚОРШАУЛАРЫ

Аңдатпа. Мақала Жетісу өңірінде кейінгі жылдары зерттелген Үлкен Қақпак қорымындағы ерте ортағасырлық ғұрыптық қоршаулардың тың материалдарын ғылыми айналымға енгізуге арналған. Батыс Түрік қағанатының орталығы болған Жетісу аймағында ғұрыптық қоршаулар және тас мүсіндер салыстырмалы түрде аз зерттелгендіктен осы бағыттағы археологиялық зерттеулер өзекті болып табылады. Зерттеу жұмысы көршілес аймақтарда зерттелген осы типтес ескерткіштермен салыстыра отырып талдау жасау әдісі арқылы жүргізілді.

Кілт сөздер: Жетісу, Батыс Түрік қағанаты, көне түркі кезеңі, Үлкен Қақпак, ғұрыптық қоршау, баған тас.

НОВОИССЛЕДОВАННЫЕ РИТУАЛЬНЫЕ ОГРАДЫ ТЮРКСКОЙ ЭПОХИ В ЖЕТИСУ

Аннотация. Статья посвящена раннесредневековым ритуальным ограждениям из кургана Улкен Какпак, исследованных в Жетысу в последние годы. Проведение археологических исследований в этом направлении в Жетысу, который был центром Западно-Тюркского каганата, являются актуальными, поскольку ритуальные ограждения и каменные изваяния плохо изучены. Исследовательская работа проводилась методом сравнительного анализа с памятниками этого типа, изученными в соседних регионах.

Ключевые слова: Жетысу, Западно-Тюркский каганат, древнетюркский период, Улкен Какпак, ритуальная ограда, камни похожие на столбы.

Автор туралы мәлімет: Ә.А. Нұсқабай Л.Н. Гумилев атындағы Еуразия ұлттық университеті, Нұр-Сұлтан, Қазақстан Республикасы, (E-mail: abdinur82@mail.ru)

*Б.Б. Бесетаев әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы, (E-mail: bessetaev.b@kaznu.kz)

Сведение об авторе: Нускабай А.А. Евразийский национальный университет им. Л.Н. Гумилева, Нур-Султан, Республика Казахстан, (E-mail: abdinur82@mail.ru)

* Бесетаев Б.Б. Казахский национальный университет им. Аль-Фараби, Алматы, Республика Казахстан, (E-mail: bessetaev.b@kaznu.kz)