

Analysis of materials from Besshatyr

Analysis of materials allows to date Besshatyr by V-IV century B.C.

Besshatyr cemetery covers an area of 2 square km. However, monuments connected with Besshatyr mounds are spread much wider the area of repository. On the dais there are six enclosures, similar in shape and design of the fences of Besshatyr mounds. About 3km to the west of mounds are the same four fences. Still further, about 10 km to the west is a large chain of 45 fences, elongated by snake from south to north.

The location of these constructions in the vicinity of the burial ground, their appearance, the similarity of designs and sizes suggest that they are on-time with Besshatyr burials and associated with them. Besshatyr complex was memorial of Semirechie Saki, who lived in the valley of the Ili River. Saki for centuries came to worship, brought large numbers of victims, made funeral feast and various religious ceremonies, and organized a wake on the area, where there are vast royal burial Besshatyr mounds. Places of religious celebrations and ceremonies were marked by grandiose construction of fences from menhirs and boulders.

Mound of Besshatyr burial of all mounds consist of stone and, large crushed stone; the top is flat (in the section — a trapezoid), the stones at the base are tightly packed. Design feature of the large mounds are deep hollows on the slopes of mounds. Apparently hollows define the entrance to the underground of burial mounds. Most likely, sometime after the rite of burial and mound construction the entrance to the cave was open for memorial services, worship and sacrifice, and then closed by the collapse of the embankment of the mound, located at the entrance.

Each Besshatyr mound as an architectural complex consists of two types of structures: the external and internal. External construction is a conical mound with a flat top, standing on the pedestal as if from a tightly packed stones and chains of menhirs and boulder around the mound.

All this suggests that the Saki tribes before the construction of Besshatyr places of worship were elaborated architectural and construction skills in the construction of monumental buildings of rectangular and circular in plan, method of setting of stones, wood processing skills and the construction from the tree, the ability to use and combine wood, cane, stone in the construction.

For the construction only the mound “Big Mound” was used more than fifty thousand cubic meters of earth, stone, gravel, and in addition, from nearby mountains, located in 3 km from cemetery, was brought about thousands of stone slabs and boulders.

The design of each mound was previously thought. Multilayering of mounds served for creation the microclimate inside the mound, conservation of construction and preservation the form of barrow-memorial monument to the ancestors.

Burial grounds are divided into high, medium and small-sized mounds. These three groups of mounds correspond to different forms of burial constructions: large and medium correspond to log-house shrines. Small grave groups are characterized by yurt-shaped tomb, dirt pit (sometimes with a stone box). Tent yurtshaped tomb from mound of “14” has no analogues.

The logs are necessary for the construction the tombs of Besshatyr facilities, stocked at about 200-250 km from the location of the mounds on the opposite bank of the Ili River in the spurs of the Zailiysky Alatau. There, in the place of felling cut down branches and twigs and done the eye on the logs, and then dragged them by dragged to the river, ferrying by floats to the right side and

delivered to the site of the construction. In this case were used the hair arcane and ropes, woven from plant chiy fibers.

The materials of excavations of Besshatyr mounds enrich understanding of the Semirechye Saki culture. They suggest that long-term experience has been gained not only in the construction of the burial tombs, but during the construction of dwellings. It follows that Semirechye Saks were not “pure” nomads.

One of them wandered, but the winter spent on the wintering stationary. Another part was engaged in agriculture and lived in settlements along with transhumant pastoralists.

K. M. Baipakov, “*Saki of Zhetysu-Semirechye*”