

Cultural and ethnic attribution of materials from the Berel mounds

Problems of ethnogenesis of people from ancient Altai and cultural and historical analysis of monuments of the Early Iron Age in Altai, in particular, the Pazyryk culture are still controversial (Molodin, 2000, p. 131-142; Dashkovsky, 2001, p. 82-89; 2004, p. 54-59; Tishkin, 2007, p. 123-157).

Cultural belonging of investigated monuments of the Berel necropolis is considered to be "Pazyryk" culture existed in the 6th – end of the 3rd centuries BC.

Natural habitat of the Pazyryk culture, probably, embraced whole Altai mountain chain with neighboring territories: from the Western side – part of the Kazakh Uplands; from the South – North-Eastern Zhetysu; on the East, perhaps, reaches the deserts of Turfan and Tarim. Anyway they were the part of zone of diffusion and contacts.

Talking about elements in burial practice of horse-breeding tribes of Altai and chain of mountains we should note that they existed there before but in different variations and combinations that is why we should not connect innovations in ceremonies with impulse from Western Asia, and should be searched, first of all, in transformation of ideology and mythological complex of local tribes which were resulted from complicated and varied processes.

It is believed that the formation of the Pazyryk society could be influenced by the events which occurred on the East after the creation of the Achaemenid Empire in 553 (550) BC, situation in ancient Chinese kingdoms being at odds with each other till the establishment of centralized state in 221 BC.

With regard to the influence on Central Asian campaign of Alexander the Great it could take place only after his death in 323 BC from the side of the Graeco-Baktrian Empire and other states of the Middle East. Before the campaign of Alexander the Great different contact of the Pazyryk people could be established with Baktria, Sogd and Khorezm which were nominal satrapy of the Achaemenid Empire.

To examine these questions V.I. Molodin accepted the approach that characterized by comparative investigation of the results of interdisciplinary researches of monument dated back to the Early Iron Age. He reconstructs ethnical and cultural genesis of the Pazyryk people from the Bronze Age to the collapse of the society under the heavy shelling of Huns in the end – beginning of the 2nd century BC as well as the participation of their parts in the creation of the Samoyedic society and their Turkization during the following historical periods. Many aspects of Molodin's hypothesis are perspective in analyzing of ethnogenesis of ancient and modern nations of Siberia and Central Asia.

The question on ethnic attribution of the Berel monuments is still opened.

Reference:

Samashev Z. *Berel, Almaty 2011, 236 p.*