

Archaeological monuments of Sakas, Wusuns and Kanguis

Zhetytobe burial ground is in 15 km to the east of Taraz, on northern slopes of Kirgiz Alatau. It was revealed by P.I.Lerkh in 1867; later surveyed and partially excavated by E.F.Kal. In 80s of XX century, archaeological expedition of the Code of monuments led by K.M.Baipakov worked here.

The sepulchral field is extended in meridian direction on the distance about 1,5 km, a strip in width is 0,3-0,4 km. the monument is formed by two-parallel one-row chains of barrows. Each chain includes 7 barrow embankments with diameter from 60 to 90-95, height 5,7-8m barrows are surrounded by rings in diameter of 120-125 m from 2-3 rows of stones or inserted in sub-square fences in the sizes 75x80 and 80x80m. Large stones are surrounded by small stone rings-laying-outs.

The western chain consists of 17 barrows, roundish stone fences and several tens of small masonry. Barrows of this part of a burial ground are presented by embankments of the small and average sizes: in diameter 8-40 m, height is 0,4 -3 m.

It was noticed in the excavated barrows, that the majority of them is one-sepulchral, there are two tombs in one of them and no burials in three of them. There is a round ring fencing around embankments of uninvestigated barrow. The human bones met in a number of burial places allow considering that the ceremony of funeral ritual dead body positioning was practiced, but judging by results of E.F.Kal's excavation, cremation of the dead men also took place.

Despite the level of tomb destruction by robbers, it is possible to assume that at construction of burial designs, the tree (its pieces met in filling of some holes), a reed (cane) and stone was used widely.

Burial inventory that remained safe after robbery is presented by fragments of easel and sometimes modelled ceramics covered with reddish engobe; two glass beads, fragments of the handle of the iron knife, two round small semispherical gold pendants and a gold pendant made of a thin foil with the imprinted image of a dog-bird. The burial ground can roughly be dated by V century BC and is related to a circle of Saka funeral monuments.

Betkainar burial ground at Kurdai pass is a barrow burial ground that received its name based on the Betkainar spring located near it. The burial ground has 16 barrows and is located in 0,5 km to the south of Alga settlement center low hillocks of the Kolguty River left side – right tributary of the Shu River.

The burial ground consists of two small barrow groups located in 150 m between each other. West group contains 11 barrows; each group contains 5 barrows. The structural bases for west group are 5 large embankments located in chain pattern with diameter from 18 to 25 meters and height from 1,5 to 2,5 meters.

During the field season in 1996, the largest barrows of the burial ground were investigated. K.M.Baipakov, M.S.Kasenov and R.I.Ismagilov participated in the works. Barrows have been robbed but scientists managed to get a view on burial structure. People of that time buried the dead in the burial holes with the size of 3 x 1,5 meters and depth of 5-6 meters. The deceased were put into a hole through a corridor – dromos with 5-6meter length.

The interesting materials were received during the excavations of a barrow #12. The diameter of its embankment was 22 meters; its height is 1,53 meter. Stone coating of embankment was registered and its diameter was about 18,5 meters. The initial coating of embankment of the barrow probably reached 2,2,5 meters.

A barrow hole oriented along the south-south-east-north-north-west was found in the central part of the barrow. That hole had a rectangular form of 4,3x1,5 meters size and depth of 2,1 meters.

In the bottom part of the hole, at the same level as floor has, there are two narrow low niches intended probably for installation of funeral inventory in them.

In the center of a long east-north-east wall right above the niche in the subsoil, there is a rough cut out bas-relief image of the person's face with 0,9x0,6-0,65 meters size. There are many details, but the hair (or the headdress), round flat face, low wide nose and the upper part of neck can be seen very distinctly.

In the opposite – west-south-west – long wall, closer to the north-west corner of the wall, there is a dromos – underground corridor leading from burial to the south-west direction and followed within 1,35 meters.

The burial was robbed, but its south-east part has untouched men bones-people were laying straight on their backs and their heads were directed to the north - north-west. The east bones were laying exactly at the center of the hole, west one is partially put into niche.

Inventory found in the burial is presented by four clay bowls made at the potter's wheel; by two small bronze crafts like cramps and silver ring. The ring was found in the central part of the hole. Its belonging to east or west bones was not established for sure. The ring's cover is roundish and covered by thin gold plate with bended edges. Ring's cover contoured with toothed relief ornament has an image of a person turned right and wearing armor – Greek helmet and coat of mail ornamented with slanting cuts. His face has a straight 'Greek' nose and massive square jaw. In his right hand, there is a lotus bud; with his left hand he was holding an object reminding a warder.

In search for analogies to image on the ring from the barrow, we turn to coins and their imitations minted in Greek-Bactrian state separated from state of Selevkidians, which, in turn, emerged on the ruins of the Empire of Alexander Macedonian.

In the middle of III century BC, during the internecine war between Selevk II and Antiokh Gisaraks for the power in Selevkidian State, Parfia and Bactria separated from it.

However, even now we can suppose that its prototypes are most probably, clay and alabaster sculpture of main halls in palaces of Greek-Bactrian governors.

Probably, the person who made the molding on a wall of the burial hole saw the sculptures of Bactrian palaces and temples and made something similar for under-barrow burial based on their sample.

Thus, thanks to findings in Betkainar at Kurdai, we can state the existence of connections between Saka and Wusun world of Zhetysu and culture of Greek-Bactria.

Berkkara burial ground is located in 85 kilometers to the west from Taraz, on the north slope of Berkkara gorge. The main number of barrows is located opposite to the Berkkara gorge. 457 barrows and ring stacking were registered and described in this place. The burial ground represents numerous chains located in parallel to each other and extended from south to north.

All tomb constructions can be broken into 31 groups, each contains approximately from 5 to 20 barrows (in one or several chains parallel to each other). The barrows can be divided into 3 groups based on the size of embankments.

Embankments consisting of nothing but chip, flagstone and stone have a flat or round top. Barrows of this group are often accompanied with additional stacking in the form of rings around embankment or near it, in the shape of crescent or roads, and sometimes in the form of rectangular stacking.

Last type includes barrows without embankment, which are noticeable only by accumulation of stone or chip and located by a wide belt in the shape of a ring.

The burials are mostly similar, but sometimes there paired ones; two youngsters or a woman with her child.

The barrows were robbed but even the remained inventory gave evidence of their wealth. Products of Chinese origin (nephrite cup, fragment of Chinese mirror) can be seen in burials which evidences relatively developed trade relations of the population that left the burial ground. However, standard barrows are not completely similar. Observations prove that barrows of a bigger size are men's barrows, especially barrows of warriors, where in addition to ceramics, there are armor objects were found: swords, arrows and quiver hooks.

Ceramics and adornments were found in the women's burial grounds. Children were buried in the separate graves and under separate embankment. Their graves were usually located near the chains of medium-sized barrows. Children's burial grounds did not have any inventory except ceramics.

Barrows with the average embankment located outside the chain represent a special interest. They were comparatively safe and contained burials of the adults, without traces of robbery and without any inventory in them.

Burial inventory extracted during excavations was very diverse in spite of small amount. The weapons like swords, knives and arrow tips were found there.

The most popular finding was ceramics. Those are bowls, round-bottom teapot-type vessels, sometimes molded kernels on their sides, pots with discharge and asymmetric vessels of pear shapes.

Comparing ceramics of Berkkara burial ground and ceramics of early nomads of Saka and Wusun periods from excavations in Shu and Ili valleys, in the Issyk Kul, forms can be marked out that relate to V-III centuries BC. Those are mainly vessels molded without pattern: deep bowls, jug-shaped mugs with handle. At the same time, there are vessels with discharge and spout which continue to be used in late Wusun period. Both are rather typical for Semirechye of Saka-Wusun period.

Bowls of various sizes with spherical bottom typical for Wusuns appeared: jar-shape vessels with extended shape and narrow neck, often without handles; pots with discharge and spout remain. There are vessels with flatten bottom. Technique of ceramic manufacturing improved significantly: homogeneity of the paste, complete burning and fabric patten was applied. The latter is especially typical: ceramics with imprinting of tissue on the internal surface of bottom can be found in all Wusun complexes.

Adornments found during excavations were rather diverse: golden and bronze earrings, paste and glass beads, bronze pins, pendants, buttons, belt pendant and gold stamped pendants. Particular attention is paid to gold earrings found in barrows.

Bronze earrings with kernel were widespread in Mongolia, in Semirechye, they existed in Altai up to V-VI century.

Important element was a bronze belt pendant with an image of a lion holding a bird similar to swan in his mouth. The head of the animal is very realistic and allows speaking about the continuation of traditions of Saka animal style and dating the pendant with the time not later than IV-III century BC.

The funeral inventory allows making a conclusion that the most early burials of the burial ground were dated by IV-III centuries BC, later by period of II century BC- I century AD.

One of the wells-studied burial grounds is Karasha I – a burial ground of Wusun period. It is located in 8 km to the south-east of Aksholak station, in the foothills of Kyrgyz Ala Tau mountain ridge, on the left coast of unnamed river. It consists of 95 barrows. In total, 8 individual graves were excavated – 5 of them were adult graves and 3 children ones. Niches were found in the south-west corner in the most burial holes. The buried were lying in a straight position on their backs, heads directed to the west.

The inventory was poor: 3 clay vessels, piece of silver foil and a clay stamp with relief. Burial ground related to Wusun period and was dated by III B.C. – II century A.D.

Choltobe and Kzyl-Kainartobe settlements. Interesting materials were obtained during excavations of Kongui settlements with temple complexes.

Choltobe is located in 45 km to the east of Taraz, near Ak-Chulak station. It is located in the bend of two 'sai' in the foothills of North Slope of Kyrgyz ridge, in 12-15 km to the north from foothill. Before excavations, Choltobe was looking like a gentle round in layout knoll with size of 80x100 meters and height about 3 meters.

After conducted excavations, it was revealed that its high part were the remains of architectural complex with sides of about 40m. Along all sides, there were narrow long premises like corridors with arch overlapping from large trapezium-shaped mudbrick. Those premises closed the internal yard of the complex. There was a cross-shaped premise located in the south-east part of the yard.

Three premises were found in the layer of its stacking. One of them was round and narrow, other two were small and almost square in the layout.

Kzyl-Kainartobe settlement is located in 25 km to the east Taraz, on the left coast of small Kzyl-Kainar 'sai' near Zhibek-Zholy aul. It represents a hillock with a height of 5,5 meters and diameter about 100 m. It consists of elevated part of hillock and feeble lowered part adjoining it from the south. Its west slope had a significant cut.

The most elevated place at Kzyl-Kainartobe settlement, as in Chol-tobe was its south-east part. During excavations it was revealed that there was a monumental construction of the settlement. It is in the shape of four-leaf rosette in the layout and resembles a temple construction of Chol-tobe. From the external side, only one east leaf is contoured; other two adjoining it (north one and south one) were opened only partially. Leaves represent a solid stacking, lower one is made of 'pakhsa' blocks, upper one is made of mudbricks.

In the layer of stacking of this construction there are two parallel premises like arch corridors. In their length they are extended from the south-west to north-east and therefore, are oriented in some other way than the premises of rectangular building.

Premises were revealed partially; there are 2-3 small prospect holes in them. As it was mentioned, in the west premise at a significantly large section there is an arch remained. The section is filled with friable drifted and deposited particles and blockage layers in some places.

Hole is made in the prospect in the north part of west premise at a depth of 3m from the surface, a burial was found – conditionally it was called as 'warrior's burial'. Although, by the time of burying premise semi-covered parts looking like gaping emptiness, still some of these have the arch above. In one of such emptiness which externally is similar to catacomb the burial was performed.

The skeleton was lying along the longitudinal axis of the camera, in extended position, on its back, his head was turned to the north-east and hands were stretched along the body.

According to the definition of anthropologist O.I. Ismagulov, a man of 50-55 years had been buried there. The deceased belonged to a mixed racial type (European with Mongolian mixture). His skull had traces of artificial deformation.

There were various objects near the buried. There was gold adornment temporal earring (of oval shape and size of 2.5x3.5 decorated with granules and cherry semi-precious stone inserts near the skull).

Neck of the deceased was decorated with gold chain made of several thin golden threads with length of 35 cm and thickness of 4-5 mm.

A roundish bone plate of 4.6x3.5 cm size and 1-3 mm with was found at the shoulder. There was a reach-through hole with diameter of about 1 cm in the center of the plate; there was one more reach-through hole with 2 mm diameter at the same level from both sides, near the plate edge. Probably it was a covering for sword or dagger handle.

Waist of the dead man had a leather belt, the external side of which is decorated with thin bronze nails. The belt was fastened with bronze pendant with movable catch. There was an iron one-blade dagger above the belt, crosswise to body. With its handle it was turned to the left hand. The length of dagger was 28 cm. One of the blade sides close to blunt part. Handle have remains of two iron dowels – probably they were used for fastening of bone or wooden covers. Both sides of blade have imprinting of wood from scabbard.

8 iron arrow tips were found below the belt, on the left side. All of them were three-feathered, petiolar with identical length – 6.5-7 cm. at the level of hips, there were bone plates – facings of a wooden part of the bow.

Below the belt, parallel to the right foot, there was an iron sword in length (not including the handle length) of 74 cm. Handle length had remained only in 2cm. Maximum width of the blade close to the handle was 4.5 cm.

At the same level, on the right side of a skeleton, there was a subject from the gold foil looking like the front part of a horse figure. According to through apertures, this fragment was attached to other part of a horse, apparently made from the wood which did not remain.

Presence of the horse figure in warrior's burial was connected with a ritual of horse burying, but it relates to the time when the horse could already be replaced by its image.

The closest analogue of burial is the burial place of V century AD in a dome premise of Aktobe 2 settlement. It had also been made during desolation of the settlement and had been greatly destroyed. Full similarity and sometimes identity was observed in subjects of the funeral stock: iron arrows tips, dagger and sword, bone overlays of bows, ornaments and other things. It allows dating a burial place in deposit hole on Kzyl-Kainartobe settlement by IV-V centuries AD. Based on bone overlays for bow and temporal ornament manufactured in 'polychromic style', it can be said that the burial of the warrior belonged to Hunnu.

Choon Kapka I burial ground. The gorge through which the Talas River passes the Kyrgyz ridge and escapes to steppe open spaces, it called 'Choon Kapka' – 'The Big Gate'. It divides a watercourse into two parts – mountain and steppe. Current Talas river irrigated agricultural grounds of numerous medieval cities and settlements (Taraz ancient city was the largest of them) and further was lost in sands. In the mountain zone of watercourse, some medieval cities were also known and on flocs of the flood plain of the Talas River and its inflows catacomb burial grounds were known since the last century. Questions of their origin and ethnic belonging worried researchers for many years.

Catacomb burial grounds Choon Kapka I and Kara_bura were investigated near the entry to Choon-Kapka gorge.

Kara-Bura is located in the flood plain of the left inflow of the Talas River. Choon-Kapka burial ground was located on the left coast of the Talas River, on the slope of the rocky massif covered with 3-4 meter layer of loess in which burial ground catacomb were arranged. Fine panorama on the valley of Talas River can be seemed from there. A bit higher along the current and lower to the flood plain, on one of terraces , there is a known medieval settlement – Sadyr-Kurgan was identified with the center of Sheldzhi medieval district.

In the second half of 70th of XX century, the powerful dam had been built in Choon-Kapka gorge and a narrow flood plain of the Talas River. Archaeological monuments of that part of that part of the valley also got under water, in particular, a part of Sadyr barrow ancient settlement.

Annual regular filling and water dump accompanied by regular considerable fluctuation of the water level, washed off the wood which had led to partial destruction of the burial ground. The surf waves washed chambers and dromos of the funeral constructions away. The top parts of stone plates with exits from dromos to the funeral chamber were closed from project on the surface. The part of catacombs located in the lowermost part of the slope, obviously had been washed away up to its basis and disappeared completely. The topography of the east slope allows concluding that the most part of the burial ground located above on the slope nevertheless had not been damaged.

As a result of excavation in 1988-1990 (M.F.Tur, K.M.Baipakov, Y.A.Smagulov) 46 catacombs had been revealed on a washed site of the burial ground. Funeral constructions are of one type and relate to the catacombs consisting of two basic constructive parts: long dromos (corridor) and the vaulted funeral chamber. Dromos were long, the remained pieces in length of 5-8m were fixed. Floors of dromos are horizontal, their width in the bottom part is 0.5-0.9 m with extension towards the funeral chamber.

The funeral chamber is located in a long axis perpendicularly to the axis of dromos. Usually it looks like a slightly extended oval or a rectangle with the rounded corners. Overlapping had ‘vaulted’ shape, if to judge based on inclination of chamber walls in the cases, when they had remained in sufficient height. The sizes of the funeral chamber vary. Inputs in the chamber have different but close sizes: height – 0.8-0.9 m, width – 0,5-0,65 m.

After the burial, the input was covered by flat stone plates from the dromos side. Dromos probably was covered by the ground which was previously taken.

Orientation of the funeral construction had been caused by topographical features, which are slope orientation in which burials were arranged. As the slope was turned to the east with its lower side, it is natural that catacomb dromos in the form of a narrow trench are oriented in the direction from the east to the west. The funeral chamber was located in long axis perpendicularly to dromos (from the north to the south). The buried were mainly oriented to the south with their heads. In one case, two skeletons had their heads directed into opposite sides in a catacomb N10. Skeletons in catacombs #18, 23 and 29 had their heads oriented to the north.

Dromos reached the middle of east side of the funeral chamber. As an exception, it was possible to consider cases, when the input in the funeral chamber was arranged in a southern site of east wall of the chamber (catacomb #5), thus the chamber of the south side was as continuation of the southern wall of dromos.

Arrangement of catacombs on a slope did not allow tracking the presence of tomb constructions. However, the ring stacking made of stone can be seen on the slope top where the surface was a bit

flattening. Probably, such ring stacking and small barrow embankment were once placed over the catacombs located lower on the slope.

As it is known, burial places in catacombs under earthen embankments, embankments from earth and rubble, from earth and stones make large – up to several hundred barrows – burial grounds located in the Talas Valley. For the first time, they were investigated in 1898 by H.Geikel, on Karbus, Koen-Tokoi, Dzhoon-Tobe, Chikka Kenkol burial grounds, which have provided interesting materials. Then, in 1936-1938, Kenkol burial ground was investigated by professor A.N.Bernshtam and in 80s of XX century by I.K.Kozhamberdiyev. He excavated Tash-Tyube, Tash Bashat, Chesh-Tyube, Kzyly-Sai, Kulan-Sai necropolises.

All catacomb burials have typical construction of embankment and sepulchral construction in the form of the catacomb and dromos located perpendicularly or in rare instances bin-angled to a long axis of catacomb. The registered length of dromos is from 2 to 8m, the input in a catacomb was closed by stone plates, wooden blocks and mudbricks. Thus, in the structure of their catacombs Choon-Kapka I and Karabura I burial grounds were included to the listed number of necropolises and the most northwest in the mountain part of Talas valley.

46 catacombs were revealed in Choon-Kapka burial ground. Here is the characteristic of one of them:

Catacomb I. The sepulchral chamber was located across the slope, on north-south axis; bottom of the chamber was 2,1x1,45 m, the height was possible to be registered up to 0,8 m. Input from east side, in the center was closed from the dromos side by two tile stones.

Skeleton of the child of 8-10 years was laid at input in the chamber. Behind it, there was a skeleton of the elderly man and there was a skeleton of the young woman at the wall. The woman's feet were in a half bent state. Skeletons were directed to the south with their heads. All skulls were deformed.

There were three flat-bottomed jugs, three mugs and one bowl in a southern part of the chamber, on the floor closer to the heads of the child and the man – all made of well-burned clay with impurity from gross and sand. Ware was made by hand moulding. One of mugs had a heavily smoked side.

The headdress of the cone-shaped form was reconstructed on the child's head, based on arrangement of beads. It was decorated by glass beads, stone, corals and bone. Probably, the round copper pendants had been attached to it.

There was grivna in the form of a lump weaved of thin copper wires on the child's right shoulder. The grivna ends were decorated with dragon heads stamped from two halves of sheet copper and fastened by the soldering. Also there were two horseshoe –shaped copper earrings – exaggerated, filled with white4 paste. There was a thread of beads made from pink coral, glass and stones in the area of the neck. Two beads among them were made from multi-colored glass with the mask image. Wrists of both hands of the child had threads from beads in the form of bracelets made of glass, stone and tubular bone, which in the course of time had turned to the dust. Probably, the same beads were used for sheathing of sleeve cuffs.

There was a small one-blade iron-knife on the floor, between heads of the child and the man, closer to a bowl. There were large beads from glass and stone on the man's skeleton in the area of cervical vertebrae and clavicle. There was a part of copper hairpin on the left shoulder of the woman.

The bottom of the chamber around skeletons and under them had been covered by a light grey layer in 1-1,5 cm, probably, it was a mat and clothes decay.

As a result of excavation, the collection of clay vessels had been collected: jugs, mugs with handles in the form of animals (mostly rams) and a bowl. Bronze mirrors, iron knives, temporal pendants from gold,

beads, coins had been found. The date of burials in the investigated part of Choon-Kapka burial ground is specified by coins found in the catacomb #10. The copper coin related to minting of one of the last Kushan tsars – Vasudeva. There was a tsar before fire altar on its averse and there was an image of Visha (Shiva) goddess near a sacred bull on its backspacing. Ruling of Vasudeva depending on ‘initial date of Kanishka’ lasted from II century to IV century.

The silver coin related to the minting of Sasanidian tsar Hormizd II. Its backspacing was completely under corrosion and there was a portrait of the governor in a crown with the wings, turned his face to the right on its averse. Above his head, there was a partially remained legend, which is as follows: ‘lord Hormizd worshipping to Mazda, the tsar of tsars’. That coin did not have a full conformity with the known mints of Hormizd II in its typological signs, which is coordinated with V.G.Lukonina’s remark on heterogeneity of style and image manner on coins of this Sasanidian governor.

Kara-Bura burial ground. The necropolis is on the flat terrace of the right slope of gorge in which the Karabura river flows. In 1990, the barrow had been casually destroyed during civil work; later it became the object of excavation of archaeologists (M.F.Tur, K.M.Baipakov) and four catacombs had been opened.

Catacomb 1. The funeral chamber by a long axis is oriented to east-west line, the size is 2.5x0.9 m, height is 0.85m. the chamber floor is in the depth of 3m from level of day surface. Dromos was registered which is oriented to the east from the chamber, its length is 1m, width is 0.6 m. The burial was made in the wooden batten coffin, the skeleton laid on its back in the stretched position, his hand were stretched along the body and head was directed to the southeast. The skeleton belonged to a young woman. Based on the remained fragments, it was possible to define that the coffin bottom was covered with felt, the grass bunch had been put under her head.

Her clothes were made of silk fabric (in the area of clavicle, there was a fragment of red silk fabric and a silk cord with thickness of 1mm, which probably had beads on it). There was a stuck fragment of silk fabric, probably from a cape or a dress on one of coffin plates.

The coffin had the following design: four racks were connected on a long axis by four bars from thin trucks of ‘archa’ and fastened to racks with spikes. In turn, the rack had lugs, where spikes were inserted. In each bar from two sides in 1 cm from an edge, there were grooves with depth to 1.5 cm and width to 1 cm for tabbing of cross-section thin (with thickness of 1-1,5 cm) plates-bars. The apertures were drilled in connection of spikes with lug and the wooden dowel was driven for durability.

The coffin box in its headboard was wider and higher, whereas in feet direction it became narrower and lower. Its sizes were: the length – 1.8, width in the headboard – 0.48, in feet – 0.28m, the height – 0.31 m and 0.22 m.

The necklace with 25 beads from transparent glass of the roundish form in diameter from 3 to 5 mm was revealed at clearing of skeleton in the area of cervical vertebrae; two beads were exaggerated with gilding, other two were from rock crystal, they had roundish form; three of them were ten-hedral, made of cornelian; three beads were roundish; one bead in the form of cube, one was made from dark blue glass. The cylindrical bead and ten-hedral bead were made of green transparent glass. One spherical bead made from glass with strips of brown, white and black colors had been decorated with white and dark blue circles; each circle had 5 red points inside. One of circles with a white circle and dark blue circles and a red point were framed by ‘eyelashes’ from yellow glass. Two more large beads from livid glass with white mugs or with a yellow point framed by red strip of glass with vague-white and black ‘eyelashes’.

The bead in a form of crescent made of pale bluish glass round with the pressed strips on its surface is very interesting. Two beads were made of yellow glass. There were two spherical copper pendants among

the beads. Also there were two temporal pendants of the semi-lunar form made of gold with the size of 4x3.5cm in the area of a skull. In the center, there was insert from the transparent dark red cornelian framed with granules framework. The insert was surrounded with 12 triangles; each of them consisted of 6 balls of granules. The framework in turn was framed by 19 large balls soldered to cylindrical legs and they were soldered to the central framework. Balls and cylinders-legs were made of gold. Each ball had 4 balls-granules soldered with pyramid shape. Handles of pendant did not remain.

There was a round iron buckle with a catch in the area of pelvic bones.

A ceramic flat-bottomed jar with loop-like handle was on the camera floor near the head of the deceased, from the right side of coffin. A wooden mug and wooden subject with 60 cm length and 5 cm in diameter were located near it. Its thick end had a knife cut, probably for fastening. The subject got narrower in direction to its other end.

Catacomb 2 was found 8-10 m higher than the first one, at the same slope. The burial was single. The deceased was put with his head to south-east. His skull and most of the skeleton were destroyed. The fragments (bottom and parts of trunk) of the flat-bottomed hand-molded jar were found near the head of the deceased during the cleaning of the camera floor.

Catacomb 3 was located to the south of Burial #1. Sizes of camera were not determined. The skeleton laid on his back, hands were straight along the body; head was oriented to the south-east. The burial was single and belonged to a man. The fragments of ceramic jar made on potter's wheel were found in the area of bones of the right shoulder. There was a comb ornament in the middle of jar trunk between two pressed stripes. The same ornament was in the beginning of jar neck.

13 copper silvered pendants from belt were found below waist.

Catacomb 4 was located in 30 m to the south-east of the burial #1. Dromos entry was in the south side corner, with sizes 0.7x0,8 m and it was closed with flat stones. The camera had an oval layout shape, extended in the north-west and south-east lines. A woman's skeleton was located closer to the east side. The skull was destroyed; from its right side there was a ceramic vessel of jar shape and ceramic mug with handle. There was a narrow-neck jar with handle near the feet, close to entry. First two ceramic vessels were made of hand moulding. The large jar was made on a potter's wheel. The side of large jar was sheared off and that aperture was used to put the child inside. Then the sheared part was put on its place. The child's skeleton got completely decayed.

Beads of glass (one bead is 'eyed'), cornelian and rock-crystal and one of the amber were found in the area of neck vertebrae of the female skeleton. The mug had a ceramic fence with shaft remained inside of it.

The most interesting of the described catacombs of Karabura burial ground is burial 1. A wooden coffin made of 'archa' in detail reproduces the coffins found in Kenkol and other burial grounds. Wooden coffins of lattice type or as in Karabura, lattice-batten type, golden buckles decorated with glass inserts and granules were spread widely from Tien-Shan to Danube. Large series of them originated from Talas Valley, in particular, in the burial at Kzyl-Kanartobe settlement. As for Ili Valley, fine examples of it were published in series of publications. The issue of dating of crafts in polychromic style remains debatable, but most of researchers relate them to IV-V centuries.

Beads are interesting, especially those that can be used for chronology determination. Thus, the beads decorated with 'eyes' and 'eyelashes' are dated by researchers by II-IV centuries and the pendants with crescent shape from yellow-green glass are dated by III century. Thus, the burial 1 can be dated by III-IV centuries. As for materials from other burials based on pendants from belt set from Burial 3 of Karabura burial ground that have analogies with materials from Borizhara burial ground, they can be dated by III-

VII centuries. Most probably, Burial 4 relates to the same period. Grivnas with dragons and other animals' heads on their ends analogical to grivna from catacomb of Choon-Kapka as other things with granules and incrustation can be met in complexes of IV-V centuries.

As it was already mentioned, Choon-Kapka and Karabura burial grounds relate to the group of catacomb burials. Firstly discovered in Talas, they were revealed on a wide territory from Tien-Shan to the Syrdarya. First, they were identified as belonging to Hunnu.

There is another opinion – that catacomb burials of Talas, Chatkal are now connected with Kanguis. According to L.M.Levina, the valley of upper Talas, Chatkal and Ketmen-tobe in I-V centuries was occupied by version of Kaunchin culture. According to her, at the same time Otrar-Karatau culture, these were Otrar oasis, north and south slopes of Karatau.

Due to it, it would be correct to not talk about different (although close) cultures – Kaunchin, Otrar-Karatau and Dzhetyasar – but about one culture and its versions. Probably, it would be fair to call this culture as the Syrdarya culture and relate it with Kangui in the political sense which destinies were largely influenced firstly by Hunnu and then by Sogdians and Turks.

The role of Sogdians was significant in the regions of spread of Kaunchin version, role of Turks was important in Otrar-Karatau and Dzhetyasar version of the Syrdarya cultures.

Used material:

1. Treasure of ancient and medieval Taraz and Zhambyl region / K. M. Baipakov, G. A. Kapekova, D. A. Voyakin, A. N. Maryashev.