

## **Berel mounds**

Berel burial mounds are closely located to the high plateau Ukok, Mongolian Altai and Xinjiang.

Necessity of studying the barrows with permafrost in the region has been dictated by the necessity of working out actual problems of national archeology connected with the reconstruction of life, religious beliefs, economic-social system, ethnic social cultural processes which occurred in the early Iron Age in studied region and in whole, in Central Asia, also in determination of the degree of continuity between ancient ethnos and modern Kazakh population, along with traditional, modern natural scientific methods, including given molecular biological data, and others, on a new methodological basis.

Under the stone structure of Berel burial mounds thermal conditions of sediments are very different from the natural environment. It includes the rise of conditions conducive to deep seasonal frost and even the formation of passing the times thin arrays eternal (years) of permafrost, which is usually called as permafrost barrows. The presence of large burial mounds, the relationship with other necropolises of Altai which contain "royal" burial, suggest that there throughout the I millennium BC and, especially, in the second half there was only one of the major centers, a peculiar heros of ancient nomadic people, identified by many researchers with Herodotus vultures, «that keep the gold,» «arimasps» and others.

Especially it should be noted that the overwhelming majority of costume decoration, horse outfit and weapons are presented as real and fantastic animals. With help of images of certain animals different religious views and outlooks were passed. These images served as the quintessential of mythopoetic views, unique codes, which helped to pass the concept, innermost thoughts and knowledge.

In 1998-2011 twenty four mounds were excavated, the vast majority of which belongs to the era of ancient nomads, and some part belongs to the period of ancient Turks.

Berel burial mounds in the context of the commemoration ceremonies of Kazakh Altai ancient nomads. The cemetery Berel is located on the Katonkaragay territory of East region of Kazakhstan Republic, 7 kilometers southwest from the same name village, on the third terrace of the cycle Bukhtarma river and bounded on the north by the confluence of Ak Berel river and Bukhtarma river, from the south – mountain river Kandysi (Bulanty). The absolute height above sea level is 1120 meters.

According to ancient mythology, mountain endowed with *bpceiai* meaning, as their peaks were inhabited by the Gods, the soul of ancestors departed to the upper world. Location of mounds in the mountains, which are a variant of the World Tree, on the bank of a mountain river, connecting the upper and lower worlds is highly deep symbolic.

In ancient rimes to restore the broken harmony and the elimination of chaos, advancing with the death of the leader, it was needed the construction of burial structure, filled with religions and mythological content, and perform a set of actions associated with the ritual of its transition to another form of existence, the

unknown realm (in a transcendental space. That happened on the border of the worlds, most point sacralized space and time: may he at certain times of the year - on the harder of the change of natural cycles, and in a specific (sacred) place. Self-burial structure sacraled playing the role of the church and at the same time was perceived as structured according to religious norms, housing: funerary ternary was also the embodiment of universal model of a ternary ordered world.

The Necropolis consists of more than 70 mounds and fences of early nomad's epoch and the ancient time, divided into four groups of mounds and funeral objects of various sizes.

The bulk of the mounds are concentrated on two areas of a triangular terrace-platform on the central section (I-III groups) and in the far west (IV group).

It is entirely possible that each range or group of mounds mark the dynastic identity of the buried people here, the various tribal (family clan) units inhabited sub-region in the second half –at the end of 1<sup>st</sup> millennium BC.

The first three groups of mounds include large and small objects, while the fourth one located on the western edge of the grave remote field consists of only small objects, which contained the burial with a horse and common for the nobility set of inventory.

It is noted that two mounds located on the key points of the grave area some isolated, can be attributed to the so-called “royal” in size and complexity of terrestrial and the inside grave design, the amount of co-buried horses( 13-17, approximately), the presence of indicated things to idolized people – the earth lords (e.g. standard in the form of a griffin sculptures), etc.

Indeed, the higher social rank of the deceased suggests an adequate number and quality of the burial of symbols compared to the other members of society (Smith, 2002, p. 50).

If the horse is one of the main indicators of social rank, Berel burial mounds will be found in more beneficial position as compared with the monuments of the Pazyryk time in Central and Eastern Altai, as well as Ukok.

The common for most Berel mounds is that the dead were laid on the backs, on the bottom of deep burial chamber in the sarcophagus enclosed in log cabins or wooden frames (1-3 rims), their heads were accompanied by one to 17 horses, funeral food, things for armaments and the household. A log cabin with sarcophagus inside is usually closely located to the southern wall, and so-called horse compartment is located on the north side of log cabin, near the northern wall of the burial chamber.

**Zainolla Samashev, Berel, Almaty, “Taimas” publishing house, 2011.**