History of studying and characterization of the burial rite of Fedorov tribes of Eastern Kazakhstan

The publication gives history of studying of the burial rite of Fedorov tribes of Eastern Kazakhstan. The first brief information about the monuments of antiquity in Eastern Kazakhstan was reported by travelers and scholars of the 18th century. Systematic archaeological research in the region began in 1935 in connection with the work of the East Kazakhstan archaeological expedition of the Leningrad Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR under the leadership of S.S. Chernikov (the EKAE). In 1971 the archaeological expedition of the Ust-Kamenogorsk Pedagogical Institute and the Shulba expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR began to work in the region. During the period of 1993-1998 field works were conducted by A.A. Tkachev and N.A. Tkacheva. And during 1998-2000 the Markakol archaeological detachment of the Russian-Kazakh expedition examined a group of diverse cultural monuments in the Kurchum district. Characterization and description of the burial rite of the Fedorov tribes of Eastern Kazakhstan on the basis of materials from 20 necropolises (Betkuduk, Kyzyltas, Menovoye IX, Akhmirovo II, Kara-Uzek, Karadzhal, Oblakelta, Semipalatinsk dunes, Maly Koitas, Berezovsky, Marinka, Zevakino, Zhamzhurt, Sarykol I, Sarykol II, Kanai, Zhanazhurt, Sarykol II, Kanai, Zhartas, Belokamenka, Maloe Karasu, Aina Bulak II).

Keywords: East Kazakhstan, history of study, archeology, scientists, burial grounds, burial rite, statistical analysis.

The first brief information about the monuments of antiquity in Eastern Kazakhstan was reported by travelers and scholars of the 18th century. They are F.I. von Stralenberg (1730), G.F. Miller (1750), I.G. Gmelin (1751), P.S. Pallas (1786) and I.P. Falk (1824). The first excavations were carried out by G.F. Miller in 1734 and the botanist I.E. Sivers in 1793. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the same objects were written by M.F. Spassky (1819), A.I. Levshin (1832) and K.F. von Ledebour (1829). In 1903 F. Pedashenko examined three soil graves with accompanying inventory on the burial ground of the Semipalatinsk dunes. Probably V.V. Radlov excavated Andronov's burial here but little earlier. In 1910 the Russian Committee sent an expedition for the Study of Central and East Asia headed by V.I. Kamensky, which examined three Andronovskie cemeteries [1].

The burial ground of Kara-Uzek. It is located 16 km to the north-west from Ust-Kamenogorsk, in the Kara-Uzek tract. It consists of round and rectangular fences. In 1910, V.I. Kamensky unearthed one of them, which contained two earth graves, with cremation and a corpse. The burial ground of Karadzhal. The monument is located in the tract of Karadzhal, 30 km from the village of Kokpekty, north on the road to Ust-Kamenogorsk, in the basin of the Char river. In 1910 V.I. Kamensky excavated two graves with a corpse and clay vessel [2].

The burial ground Maly Koitas. Located on the northern outskirts of the abandoned village of Koitas on the right bank of the Kyzylsu river. The first studies on the monument were held in 1910 by V.I.Kamensky, who excavated here 10 funerary structures [3].

Systematic archaeological research in the region began in 1935 in connection with the work of the East Kazakhstan archaeological expedition of the Leningrad Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR under the leadership of S.S. Chernikov [4].

In 1935, the Mynchukur settlement was discovered by the East Kazakhstan archaeological expedition. It is located 55 km south-west of Ust-K amenogorsk, in the log, east of the southern hills, in the Mynchukur tract. The lifting material was collected in the form of fragments of pottery of developed bronze [1].

In 1947 the exploration squad examined the valleys of the Irtysh river and found the Fedorov settlements on the Semipalatinsk dunes near the villages of Mechet and Malo-Krasnoyarka, with the reconnaissance works at the latter [1].
For a long period of time, local residents of the settlements of Semipalatinsk dunes, 1 and 2 annually collected fragments of ceramics and various kinds of products on the exploded site. In 1947 the EKAE under the leadership of S.S. Chernikov carried out their examination. The monuments are located on the wide and low hills, with significant blowing out basins, which stretch for 5-6 km, parallel to Irtysh. The main finds are confined to the edge of the ancient Irtysh floodplain. A large number of slags of fragments of foundry molds and other implements were discovered, which indicated the presence of metallurgical production [5].

In 1947 the monument to Sarykol I was discovered by the expedition of the Central Museum of Kazakhstan, 12 km east of the Sarykol lake. The funerary field contained 26 structures. L.K. Nifontova unearthed three mounds with fences [5].

In the construction of the Irtysh hydroelectric power station, in 1947, the Oblaketka cemetery was discovered. The burial studied contained human bones and fragments of Andronov ceramics [5].

The East Kazakhstan archaeological expedition led by S.S. Chernikov in 1948 examined the burial ground of Zhanazhurt. The monument was located 1.5 km to the north of the village of Zhanazhurt, it consisted of 15 fences rounded in shape. The researcher investigated the three completely robbed fences and attributed them to the Andronov type.

In 1949 the EKAE continued the research of the Sarykol I burial ground, and 2 more burial mounds were excavated here. The materials found were represented by human bones and fragments of ceramics.

Another construction was excavated at the Sarykol II burial ground, it was located 1 km to the south-west from Sarykol I, on the other bank of the river of Tahtai-Bulak. The funerary field consisted of 14 visible structures in the form of mounds with fences. The discovered materials belonged to the Fedorov culture [1].

The fifties were characterized by a significant intensification of research on the Fedorov monuments of the region. Every year, thanks to the activities of several squads, considerable materials were accumulated.

In 1950 the excavations of the settlement near the village of Kanai were started. It was located on the right bank of the Irtysh river, on the foreland of the deluvial terrace, 0.5 km to the west of the Kanay aul, at the foot of the Narymsky Range. 716 square meters of the cultural layer with a capacity of up to 1.2 m were discovered by the EKAE for several seasons of 1950, 1952-1954 and 1950-1954. In parallel, the eponymous burial ground was studied, which consisted of 23 stone fences. During the period of 1950 to 1953 the EKAE excavated 19 graves [4].

The village of Malo-Krasnoyarka had a multi-layered settlement of the same name, and was located on the right, steep bank of the Irtysh river. It was excavated by the EKAE in 1947, 1950, 1952-1954 and contained layers of the Andronov and late bronze (Sargarin) time [1].

In 1950 E.R. Rygdylon discovered the settlement of Ust-Narym, which was located on the floodplain terrace of the Irtysh river, 3 km north of the village of Ust-Narym. The study was conducted by the EKAE during the period of 1952 to 1956. It was found that the settlement had two layers. The upper Andronov layer extended over an area of 1500 square meters. The remains of the dwelling were studied during the excavations. In 1951 the squad led by B.A. Beloslyudov and A.G. Maksimova started to survey the flown settlement, which was located on the dunes near the resort of Aul. The local residents collected a representative collection of ceramics from the Fedorov time and two bronze arrowheads at this site, along with the Neolithic finds [1].

During several field seasons (1954-1956), the excavations of the Trushnikovo settlement were carried out by the EKAE. It was located at the foot of the low granite off spurs of the Kalbin Ridge, on the left bank of the Irtysh river, 1.5 km to the north-east from the village of Trushnikovo. As a result of the conducted studies, the two-layered nature of the complex was established, which contained, in addition to the Fedorov one, the layer of the Sargarin culture [4].

The large burial cemetery of Ust-Bukon was studied by the EKAE in 1956. The monument was located on the western outskirts of the village of Ust-Bukon, on the flat and treeless terrain and from the north it was bordered by the Bukon river. The burial field consisted of 57 round earth burial mounds, with a diameter of 6 to 30 m. 18 burial mounds were excavated, in three of them the earlier Andronov-Fedorov burials were discovered. Obviously, this Bronze Age burial ground was destroyed by the construction of the later barrows of the 5-4 centuries B.C. The material is represented by fragments of ceramic vessels, in one case a completely looted stone box was preserved.

In 1971, the expedition of the Ust-Kamenogorsk Pedagogical Institute under the direction of F.Kh. Arslanova investigated 6 Fedorov constructions on the cemetery of Zevakino. The monument was on the right bank of the Irtysh river, 5 km to the north-west from the village of Zevakino. The burial field included more than 500 different burial constructions [6; 7].
The studies, undertaken in 1972 on the burial ground of Kyzyltas, which was located on the left bank of the Urunhai river, allowed to identify, in addition to the Fedorov complexes, the construction of the late Bronze Age and the burial mounds of the early nomads [8; 9].

In 1977 and 1982 the Shulbin expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR undertook repeated excavations at the Maly Koitas cemetery. Two stone fences of the Fedorov culture were studied here [3].

During the period of 1977, 1980-1983 and 1988, the Shulbinsk archaeological expedition (led by A.G. Maksimova, S.M. Akhinzhanov in different years) and the East Kazakhstan archaeological expedition of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR (led by Z. Samashev) investigated the burial grounds of Bektuduk, Belokamenka and Zhartas. Their description is given below [3].

Bektuduk burial ground was located on the upper terrace above the floodplain, 3-4 km to the north-north-east from the village of Bektuduk. North-west of the monument there was the Irtysh floodplain, with a width of up to 5 km, covered with colorful motley grass. Planically, the necropolis was divided into the two compact groups. Due to the excavations, several burials in the first group were studied, their burial field contained about 60 structures.

Belokamenka cemetery. It was located on the northern outskirts of the village of the same name, nowadays it is included in the flood zone of the Shulba Reservoir. Only one fence, that contained two burial chambers, was investigated.

The Zhartas burial ground. It was located on the second terrace above the floodplain of the left bank of the Irtysh river. From the south-east the terrace was bounded by the ravine. Its bottom served as a bed of the drying Zhartas river. The monument consisted of two different groups. Due to the excavations 6 Fedorov burials were studied [3].

In 1980-1982 the expedition led by A.S. Ermolaeva excavated 360 sq.m. of the Ayr-Tau settlement area, which contained the layers of the developed and late Bronze Age [8].

The large Fedorov necropolis was discovered in 1989 on the outskirts of the village of Malo Karasu. The monument was located 40 km north of the city of Charsk, between the rivers of Char and Kyzylsu. Both rivers were left tributaries of the Irtysh river. The cemetery field was relatively even, the burials of the Fedorov culture were found there, in pits and a box. The bulk of the burial places belonged to the circle of the Fedorov type, there was also a mound with a diameter of more than 100 m and a height of about 6 m, with a surrounding moat with a width of up to 12 m.

In 1989 and 1992 the new Kyzyltas burial ground excavations were undertaken. In total, during the all years of the study of the monument, 15 structures were excavated, 13 of them belonged to the Fedorov culture and 2 constructions belonged to the Sargarin culture [7].

The exploratory detachment, in 1992, discovered the burial ground of Marinka, which is located 5 km to the west of the village of Zevakino Shemonaikha district of the East Kazakhstan region, on the first terrace above the floodplain of the right bank of the Irtysh. The central part of the funerary site is destroyed by a ravine. The area of the monument is about 9-10 thousand square meters. In 1993, two excavations explored the area of 557.5 square meters, found burial of the Fedorov culture [7].

During the two field seasons (1993-1994) the expedition led by A.A. Tkachev and N.A. Tkacheva studied the settlement of Barashka I, which was discovered in 1950 by the reconnaissance squad of S.S. Chernikov. The monument was located in the bend of the right bank of the Irtysh river, 1 km to the east of the Barashki village. The approximate area was about 7000 square meters. Due to the excavation of 997 sq. km. the remains of the Fedorov dwelling were studied and a two-layered character of the settlement was established.

During the period of 1993-1994, 26 burial constructions were investigated on the Berezovsky burial ground. It was 7 km to the west of the Berezovka village, on the bend of the first above-floodplain terrace of the right bank of the Irtysh river. The cemetery was located in the intermountain valley, bordered by the stream and mountain ranges. The funerary constructions were dotted with three compact groups [7].

In 1994 the reconnaissance squad led by A.A. Tkachev and N.A. Tkacheva discovered the settlements of Zakharihka I-III and Kamyshevka. The lifting materials contained some ceramics of the Fedorov type.

In 1994, during the survey of the left bank of the Irtysh river, the Akhimirovo II burial ground, heavily eroded by anthropogenic activity, was discovered and studied. It was located 1.1 km south-east of the village of Akhimirovo in the Tavricheskaya region of the East Kazakhstan region. The monument was located on the bend of the left bank of the first terrace above the Irtysh river. The funerary field consisted of the structures of the Bronze Age and the burial mounds of the early and medieval nomads. In 1997, the Akhimirov squad of the Upper-Irtysh archaeological expedition of the EKSU conducted a survey of the preserved part of the monument. One fence was excavated [7].
During the three field seasons (1996-1998), the investigations were carried out on the burial ground of Menovoye IX, which was located in the Menovskiy microdistrict, located on the first terrace above the Irtysh river.

In 1998-2000 the Markakol archaeological squad of the Russian-Kazakh expedition explored a group of diverse cultural monuments in the Kurchumsky region of the East Kazakhstan region, among them there was the Aina-Bulak III burial ground. It was fixed to the north-west of the sources of the creek of the same name at the foot of the mountain, next to the farm. It consisted of 13 funerary structures. One mound of the Fedorov culture was investigated. It contained a cyst, with a laid bottom of stone slabs [10].

The ceramic material of the Fedorov monuments of East Kazakhstan had some specificity in comparison with the contiguous regions. Based on this specificity, S.S. Chernikov proposed the new type of periodization, which included four successive stages, namely Ust-Bukon, Kanai, Malokrasnoyarsk and Trushnikov stages. This type of periodization differed from that of K.V. Salnikov [5]. Later A.A. Tkachev and N.A. Tkacheva called the Andronov antiquities of East Kazakhstan as of the Kanai culture. This kind of culture included several chronological types of the ceramics: of the Kanay, Marininsk and Kyzyltas types. A hypothesis about the Upper Irish ancestral home of the Fedorov culture was proposed [7].

The territory of East Kazakhstan, located between the Altai and Semirechye, played an important role in the historical development of the tribes and peoples of the steppe belt of Western Asia in the terms of its position and natural conditions. Beginning with the era of the Upper Paleolith, a large number of the monuments of different historical epochs were noted in this region, which indicated the continuity and intensity of the life here [11].

Geographically, this territory is the forest-steppe and steppe in the north, bordering on South Siberia; valley of the Upper Irtysh with the tributaries (Kurchum, Bukhtarma, Uba, Ulba, etc.); the western spurs of the Altai, including the Kalbinsky, Narymsky, Tarbagatay, Monrak and Saur ranges; the basins of the Zaisan and Ala-Kul lakes; the Chingiz-Tau ridge and feather grass and saline steppes that adjoin the spurs of the Altai and the Dzungar Alatau from the north [1].

Burial grounds. The analysis involved the 20 burials materials, which were located on the territory of East Kazakhstan, namely Betkuduk, Kyzyltas, Menovoye IX, Akhmirovo II, Kara-Uzek, Karadzhal, Oblaketka, Semipalatinsk dunes, Malo Koitas, Berezovsky, Marinka, Zevakino, Zhanazhurt, Sarykol I , Sarykol II, Kanai, Zhartas, Belokamenka, Malouy Karasu, Aina Bulak III [12].

From the position of topographic analysis the funerary fields were mainly located near the rivers, often on the upper above-floodplain terraces (Betkuduk, Zhartas, Maloye Karasu, Malo Koitas, Kyzyltas, etc.) of the Irtysh, Urunkhay, Kyzylsu rivers, etc. In the location of the funerary complexes, the natural desire for the «grouped» type of constructions was noticed, although it was sometimes unsystematic as that of the Betkuduk burial ground. The necropolis consisted mainly of 10-20 constructions. The large monuments were also available, numbering 60 or more constructions of the Fedorov type (Betkuduk).

Above the grave burial structures were divided into several types: fences covered with mounds, fences without mounds and burial places without the surviving signs of grave structures. The most numerous constructions were simple fences, built of stones and slabs, which were folded with the use of the cyst clay type of placing or installed on the edge. 135 such structures were studied in the region. The parameters of the fence ranged from 2 to 10 m, more often from 4 to 5 m.

In one case, a fence with a diameter of 19 m at the burial ground at Betkuduk was investigated, at the moment it is the largest Fedorov funerary structure in the region. The cromlechs had different shapes, round or close to round ones were predominant – 58 (43 %), rectangular ones were much less common - 23 (17 %) and square ones were rare – 10 (7,4 %). From the semantic point of view, the square and rectangular fences could be assigned to the same archetype. In 44 (32,6 %) cases, the form type could not be determined.

A unique construction above the grave in the form of a double concentric fence with a diameter of 4.5 and 3 m was investigated at the Berezovsky burial ground. Mound covered fences were found at the burial grounds of Kyzyltas, Menovoye IX, Berezovsky, Zevakino and Sarykol I. 13 of them were investigated. Sometimes the mounds overlapped several constructions at the same time (Maly Koitas, Menovoye IX). The barrow mounds had a diameter of 5,3 to 13,5 m and a height of 0,2 to 0,7 m. Under them there were fences with a size of 7,5 to 10,8 m, on average they exceeded the parameters of the barren fences, thus marking possibly a higher social status of the buried, although the chronological attribution of the complexes was not excluded.

From the three under mound interments of the Menovoy IX burial ground, in the distal direction there was the continental outflow, which occupied a significant part of the inner-city space. Such a tradition was
noted at the Fedorov burial grounds of the Southern Trans-Urals and, in the opinion of S.A. Grigoriev and V.S. Mosin, it was typical for the carriers of the Sintashta cultural tradition [12], and could be borrowed by the Fedorov population due to the cultural infiltration.

Barrow mounds have a height of 0.2 – 0.6 m, with a ring diameter of 5 - 8 m. Fences, as a rule, have a diameter of 3 to 6, less often 8 to 10 m.

The orientation of the fences was given as the sum of 32 structures. The west-east was the prevailing direction (12), the north-west and south-east were used less often (6) and the rest directions were used as it follows: the north-south – 5 times, the north-east and south-west – 4 times, the west-south-west and east-north-east – 2 times, the south - south-west and north-north-east – 2 times, the north-north-west and south-south-east – 1 time.

Any traces of burial structures were not found over 36 graves. The presence of soil burials was the characteristic feature of the Fedorov culture. In fact, the underground burial grounds were Marinka and Maloye Karasu, with most of the graves of the first one belonged to the children. Soil graves were recorded in the territories of Southern Siberia, the Barabinsk forest-steppe, the Kuznetsk and the Yenisei basins.

Within the outer funerary structure only one grave was located, as an exception sometimes there were several graves, and they had a clear linear structure in the arrangement. In the rectangular fence of the Maly Koitas cemetery five burials, stretched in one line one after another, were found.

A total of 198 graves were investigated. Simple ground burials were predominant (108), accounting for 54,5 % of the total number of the graves in the region. In some cases, a log (Kanay, Zevakino) was preserved. Less common stone boxes of several slabs, which were arranged in a previously dug soil pit were used in 48 cases (24,2 %). A characteristic feature of the burial structures of the Fedorov culture was the presence of cysts, built from the stacked stone tiles and stones (18 burials – 9 %). The specific feature was the existence of the funerary chamber, it was constructed of a combined laying of vertical slabs and flat-laid tiles, a cyst-box (10 cases – 5 %).

Sometimes overlapping of planks, logs or stone slabs (Berezovsky) was arranged over the graves. Some of them had concessions (Berezovsky, Marinka).

At the Aina-Bulak III burial ground, the bottom of the cyst was covered with stone slabs. A similar case was noted at the Kzyzyltas burial ground.

The orientation of the burial chambers was stable, the west-east axis dominated, the same was noted in 101 cases. The following types of the chamber orientation were less common: the south-west-north-east (29 cases), north-west-south-east (24 cases), west-southwest-east-north-east (8 cases), north-south (6 cases), east-south-east-west - north-west (5 cases), south-south-west - north-north-east (3 cases).

The burial ritual of the Fedorov tribes of Eastern Kazakhstan, as well as of the adjacent territories, was assumed to include the presence of the corpse and cremation. The dominant mode of dealing with the body of the deceased was the corpse. It was noted in 180 burials. The corpse was crouched, more often on the left (83), less often on the right (13) side. As an exception the corpses buried on the belly and back were also found.

A specific feature of the Fedorov funeral rites of Eastern Kazakhstan was the low percentage of cremation, which was recorded only in 13 graves, it contained more than 6,7 %.

In one of the 32 burial grounds of Marinka, a double burial place was discovered. In the soil pit, along the southern wall, the child's backbone of the age of up to 6 months was found, lying crouched on the left side, with the head oriented to the north-west. Parallel to this backbone, along the northern wall a cluster of calcified bones belonging to the adult individual was also found.

Two skulls found in the children's burial ground No. 14 of the Marinka burial ground and laid over the buried ones were connected with the cult of the skull.

One skull belonged to a teenager aged 12 to 13 years, the second one - to a woman aged 30-35. A similar rite was recorded on the burial ground of Suhoye ozero I and in the Minusinsk Basin. The burial mound No. 2A contained a cult structure, domed, rounded in shape, made of small piles, 1.2 m in diameter. It was placed to the east of the mound, on its levee. Below the structure there was a triangular chamber of slabs with a human skull in the center [13].

As a rule the burials contained one buried corpse (144 cases), less often two (15 cases) and three (5 cases) ones.

In view of the strong disturbance of the burials, the orientation was determined only in 95 cases. Traditional children's burial places differed in traditional variative scope: the buried ones were oriented practically to all sectors. The main difference of the region was the western orientation of the skeletons (43), which
clearly prevailed over the south-west one (17), which dominated on the territory of Southern Siberia, the Barabinsk forest-steppe, the Kuznetsk and the Yenisei basins and in the Southern Trans-Urals. On the second place in the occurrence was the northern or near-to it orientation, the north-west orientation was determined in 18 cases, the northeast — in 5, the northern — in 2 and the west-north-west — in 3 ones. The east orientation was marked less often — in 7 cases, the west-south-west — in 4 cases and the south-south-west — only once.

The analysis of the categories of the funeral implements placed in the grave made it possible to clarify that only a ceramic vessel was placed in 95 (54 %) burials. In 26 (15.3 %) graves, the inventory consisted of a vessel paired with metal products. Entirely metal products were found in 7 graves, which contained only 4.3 %. The vessel and stone products were noted in 3 (1.8 %) cases. 24.5% (41) of burials contained no inventory at all, however, this number included the burials robbed in the antiquity period. Consequently, it was impossible to make further conclusions on this issue. There are no data on 26 burials. Sometimes the vessels were located on the side of the burials (Menvoye IX, Marinka).

A special role in the funeral practice was played by the fire, which served not only a purifying role, but also liberated the spirit from the body shell. This fact found expression in the cremation of the remains of the deceased. Manifestations of the fire ritual can be divided into direct (traces of fire or bonfires on the walls) and mediated (symbolic remnants of charcoal) ones.

References

А.И. Кукушкин, Я. Мураками, С.У. Жауымбай, Е.А. Дмитриев

Шығыс Қазақстандың федоров тайпаларының жерлеу рэсімін зерттегу таражы мен сипаттамасы

История изучения и характеристика погребального обряда федоровских племен Восточного Казахстана


Ключевые слова: Восточный Казахстан, история изучения, археология, ученые, могильники, погребальный обряд, статистический анализ.

References

10 Yevdokimov, V.V., & Varfolomeyev, V.V. (2002). Epokha bronzy Tsentralnogo i Severnogo Kazakhstana [The Bronze Age of Central and Northern Kazakhstan]. Karaganda [in Russian].