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Secondary Burials in Sarmat Kurgans in Western Kazakhstan

A large number of Sarmat Kurgans have been explored in Western Kazakhstan starting from the Tsarist Period to the present. As a result, it was understood that in kurgans, individuals were buried in the pit (grave) opened in the first place, as well as in the kurgan pile over time, on the main ground beneath this pile or in the pit grave. The main burial is not found in the pile. As a matter of fact, it is possible to encounter both a main burial and a secondary burial on the ground. Therefore, to better express the secondary burials on the ground, they were evaluated in an integrated manner with the main burials on the ground. In the publications made to date, this subject has received neither detailed consideration nor semantic evaluation. In the article, excavation reports, books and articles related to archaeological studies carried out in Western Kazakhstan were examined. In these sources, secondary burials to the pile, the main floor and the pit grave were identified. Chronological determinations have been made about the location of these burials and also compared with similar burials around Orenburg, Bashkortostan, the Volga, Don rivers. However, a considerable estimate has been made on the meaning of secondary burials within the belief system.

Keywords: Sarmat, Kurgan, West Kazakhstan, secondary burials, Burial Tradition, Cemetery, nomads.

Introduction

The Ural Mountains in the north, Lake Aral in the south, the Khorezm region and the West Kazakhstan region (Figure 1), surrounded by the Caspian Sea in the southwest, have a mild climate, especially the shores of Lake Caspian, although they are continental in terms of climate. While there are many rivers and pasture areas in the City of Oral, located at the northernmost western tip, states, such as Atyrau and Mangystau, which are south of the city in question, are mostly covered with desert sands and plateaus. One of the most important rivers in the region, the Zhayik, is located south of the Ural mountains and flows through the city of Oral and the provinces of Atyrau and empties into the Caspian Sea.

All these geographical features led to the development of animal husbandry in the Iron Age, as well as today. Archaeologists agree that Sarmatians lived in the western region of Kazakhstan from 6 century BC to 4 century¹ [1; 137]. This is evidenced mainly by the kurgans belonging to the Sarmatians, which are located in areas with high humidity and favorable for animal husbandry on the banks of the Zhayik river. These kurgans clearly show that there is a practice of secondary burial in Sarmatians. At this point, it is useful to clarify the definition of secondary burial. For burials in a kurgan pile, on the main ground left under this pile, or in a pit grave opened over time, the definition in the form of “vpusknie pogrebeniya” was used in Russian sources [2; 46, 3; 147]. In English we directly translated as “entering burials”. Thus, it was considered appropriate by us to use the definition of secondary burial (because it was the second burial in kurgan over time) for this burial practice. At this point, the question “how to understand that the burials in a kurgan are the main and secondary burials?” may come to mind. Archaeologists first dismantle the cross-section of the kurgan (usually understood from the kurgan cross-section) to understand that the burial was the main or secondary during the kurgan excavations. That is, taking into account the pits that were opened later in the kurgan section, the layers of soil (that were piled up before and after are clearly visible), the location of the skeletons, the finds next to it, and the burial traditions of the era were determined. There have not been many studies on the burial “tradition” in question. The excavation reports used for this study have been discussed in general in books and articles. Indeed, M.K. Seitkaliev [2; 46], although he published an article about secondary burials identified only in kurgans in the Kirik Oba II cemetery, he did not make any classifications on the subject in this article and did not evaluate it from a semantic point of view. However, regardless of the period, the dead should be buried according to the beliefs of that period with meanings related to the belief in the afterlife. Therefore, it is important to evaluate secondary burials from a semantic point of view, even if it is hypothetical. In this article, Sarmat Kurgan in Western Kazakhstan with excavation reports, books, and

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articles in the light of Sarmat will be classified in the determination of the type of secondary burial and original way to presenting a combination of them, as they arrive at the place is intended for comparison with their counterparts in surrounding areas and semantic evaluation.

Experimental

For these purposes, resources were collected by visiting the M. Otemisulu University library, the Olketanu Museum in West Kazakhstan, and the Margulan Archaeological Institute in Almaty. Archive materials (excavation reports from the Soviet and Independence years) on the excavation of Sarmatian kurgans were provided from the Olketanu Museum of West Kazakhstan and the Margulan Archaeological Institute in Almaty. Books and articles were obtained from the library of Otemisulu University. Then, the kurgans that cost Sarmatians were examined in these sources. As a result, cemeteries were identified in the kurgan pile, on the main floor and in pit graves. Thus, it was understood that the cemeteries were carried out in the kurgan pile, on the main floor under the pile, and in pit graves. Therefore, cemeteries were tried to be sorted and dealt with in an original way in the form of secondary burials made on a pile, on the main floor and in a pit grave. There are no main burials in the pile. In fact, it is possible to find both the main burial and the cemeteries on the ground. For this reason and to better express the cemeteries made on the ground, they were evaluated in an integrated way together with the main burials on the ground. According to our topic, the geographical boundaries of our article are Western Kazakhstan and its historical border in 6 BC — 4 AD, which has been formed for centuries. Therefore, in this study, for a period of about a thousand years (6 BC – 4 AD) the aim is to decipher the framework of cemeteries that were observed in Western Kazakhstan (between the centuries) and generalized under the name of Sarmatian depending on this geographical definition.

The comparison area of our article is wide and includes the Northern Black Sea region, Bashkortostan, Altay region, Khorezm and Fergana Valley. At first, the geographical position of Western Kazakhstan and the emergence of Sarmatians were discussed in detail in the study, and then cemetery forms were studied. Location, Sarmatians and Culture of Western Kazakhstan. The region that forms the geographical boundaries of our topic is located in the western part of Kazakhstan. This region is divided into four provinces: Aktobe, Atyrau, West Kazakhstan (central Oral city), and Mangystau. In the north of these states are the Ural mountains, in the south are Turkmenistan, the Autonomous Republic of Karakalpakstan, and in the west are the Astrakhan and Volgograd provinces [1; 137]. As mentioned in the Introduction, from 6th century BC 4 centuries AD Sarmatians lived in the region. Scientists are trying to prove this within the information provided by Herodotus, as well as in the light of archaeological data. Herodotus said: “The Sarmatians lived in a country east of the Don River which is three days away trip” [4; 116]. Considering these statements, the researchers note that this place corresponds to the southern part of the Ural Mountains and the western part of Kazakhstan. Especially in Western Kazakhstan, Sarmatians preferred grassland areas on the banks of large rivers such as Zhayik, Elek, Zhem, Sagyz to sustain their own lives and livestock. They became neighbors with the Saks in the east, the Scythians in the west, and the Massagets in the south [5; 68]. Considering archaeological data, as well as written sources, scientists have noted that the Sarmatians originated based on the Srubnaya culture near the Itil river and the Andronova cultures near the South Ural and lived in these regions [5; 32]. I. Durmush [6; 43] stated that Sarmatians were initially found in the southern Urals further east, lived in the steppes east of the Zhayik river and the Caspian Sea, and migrated from the north of the Caspian Sea to the west, that is, to the Northern Black Sea, to Eastern Europe, during a certain period of time. This information indicates that it is the Sarmatian cultural region of Western Kazakhstan. Sarmatians, like other steppe communities, adopted a nomadic way of life. That is why they had not left behind many permanent traces, such as a city or a settlement. The most important traces of their existence are the kurgans they created and edited for their members who lost their lives [1; 138]. These kurgans shed light on secondary burials. Below we try to consider this issue in more detail.



Figure 1. Map showing the location of Western Kazakhstan

Cemeteries made in the pile

As the title suggests, in the steppe kurgan culture, the dead were buried in a pile (the soil covering the grave), as well as buried in an earthen grave (the grave) opened from the ground. In the same kurgan, sometimes one or more than one burial [7; 38] can be found (Figure 2). Sarmatians in the early period (6 BC — 4 AD) opened the kurgans of the late Bronze Age and buried their dead on them [8; 75; 9; 165, 10; 53–56, 11; 254]. It dates back to the Middle Sarmatian Period (2 BC — 2 AD), which began to decline towards [5; 77]. It is possible to characterize this application as secondary embeddings in the stack. Secondary burials made in the pile were detected in many kurgans that we had examined. Often these burials belong to children. The skeletons are predominantly turned to the southwest. In addition, some skeletons were deposited in the boarding state (Figure 3), in the position of an attack and a broken knee (Figure 4). To clarify these statements, some burials have been discussed in detail.

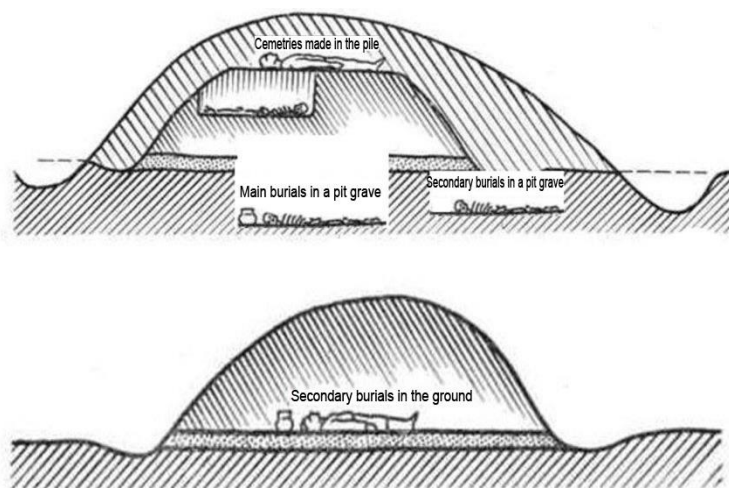


Figure 2. Representative drawing of the burials [3; 147, illustration 46].



Figure 3. Skeleton lying on board
(Karasu Burial No. 7 Kurgan No. 3) [42].



Figure 4. Skeleton lying in attack position
(Kurgan from Alebastrova No. 17) [43].

In 1926, P.S. Rykov uncovered two secondary burials at the Shagan cemetery No. 3, Kurgan. The skeleton, located at a depth of 40 cm from the top point of the 1 m-high kurgan, was turned to the east and its right arm was bent to the left, and its left hand was placed under the pelvis and laid on its back. No finds were recovered, except for one bone object next to it. The second skeleton was found at a depth of 1 m from the upper point of the kurgan. The head of the skeleton, which is understood to belong to the child, was turned to the southwest and laid on its back with an extension. Beads and pottery fragments were recovered at the foot [12; 3]. P.S. Rykov did not specify which period these two burials belong to.

In 1972, G.A. Kushaev and B.F. Zhelezchikov [13; 7] identified 1 cemetery of a child burial in the middle levels of kurgan No. 2 in Barbastau. The persons in question stated that the skeleton was oriented to the southwest and that Sarmatian-type container fragments were recovered with the back foot of the sheep next to it. It is a practice peculiar to Sarmatians to leave the front or back foot of a sheep next to the deceased [8; 10]. Thus, it is possible to cost this burial in the said cavity. In 1977, G.A. Kushaev, uncovered four secondary burials in the kurgan pile in Dongelek cemetery No. 6. Two of these burials belong to the child and the other two belong to the adult. However, only two skeletons were deposited. Belonging to an adult whose form of deposit cannot be determined No. 1 the burial was oriented to the southwest. A sheep bone, a horse hoof, a bone spoon, beads and a spindle were found next to it. However, the other adult No. 3 did not have a single gift left next to the burial, but it was directed to the southwest [14; 7–11].

Another of the burials in the pile is Kusum cemetery No. 3 which was found in Kurganda. The 1st skeleton was laid with a supine extension, directed to the southwest. Three-pointed iron arrowheads with a ring-shaped dagger (Figure 5) (only the handle was preserved) were left next to it, the hilt of which we usually see in ordinary graves [15; 38]. Considering this information, it seems that the gifts left in the graves were used in the burials in the pile.

M.G. Moshkova, B.F. Zhelezchikov, and V.A. Kriger [16; 30–31] unearthed two burials in the kurgan heap No. 27 at the Lebedevka 5 cemetery. The age and gender of the burials identified as 3 and 4 could not be determined. However, while skeleton No. 3 was oriented to the northwest and lay on its back, skeleton No. 4 was oriented to the south and laid in the supine attack position (Figure 4). In addition, a three-winged bronze arrowhead and a three-cornered iron arrowhead were found next to the skeleton No. 3. A crescent-shaped dagger with a hilt was found next to the skeleton No. 4 (Figure 5).

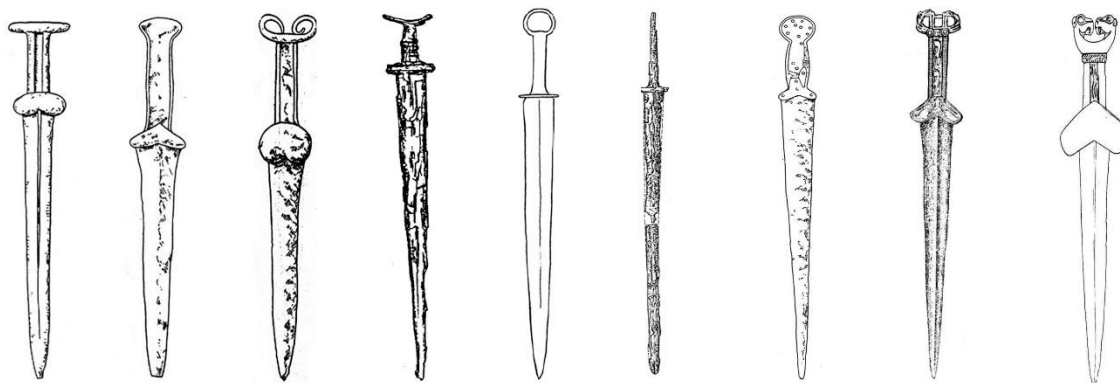


Figure 5. Types of Sarmatian weapons

Dating, comparison and evaluation

G.A. Kushaev dated the burial No. 1 in the cairn No. 6 of the Dongelek cemetery to the Sarmatian period according to criteria such as the direction of the tomb and the burial gifts. Although not a single gift was left next to the burial No. 3, he stated that this burial could be dated to the Sarmatian period since the skeleton was oriented to the southwest [14; 11].

B.F. Zhelezchikov dated Burial No. 1 in the cairn No. 3 in Kushum cemetery to the 3rd — 1st centuries BC by [15; 38] using a ring-shaped dagger with a hilt (Figure 5) (only the handle was preserved) and triangular iron arrowheads. M.G. Moshkova et al. [16; 104] dated burials No. 3 and No. 4 in the cairn No. 27 of the Lebedevka 5 cemetery to the 4th — 3rd centuries BC. Especially the three-winged arrowhead found in burial No. 3 and the crescent-shaped dagger with a hilt found in burial No. 4 (Figure 5) are characteristic for the Mature Sarmatian Period (4th — 2nd centuries BC).

Apart from Western Kazakhstan, such burials were also found in Orenburg, Bashkortostan, Itil and kurgans near the Don river. Such cemeteries as Piyatimar, Tarabulak, Bliznetsi and Uvak, located in the Russian Province of Orenburg, are among the centers where the tradition of burying the dead in a pile is intensively observed. All of the skeletons here were laid on a Bronze Age kurgan with a supine extension and directed to the west with a slight deviation.

Especially in Western Kazakhstan, bronze arrowheads and a sheep skeleton with a missing head were found next to the skeleton in the Uvak cemetery. K.F. Smirnov [10; 22–57] dated the burials in the cemetery in question to the Early Sarmatian Period (6th to 4th centuries BC).

Also, burials in the pile are Kotluban of Volgograd Province [17; 118–136], Khimkombinat [11; 254–259], Korololi [18; 111–112], on the banks of the Itil River, with its cemetery, Krivaya, Astrakhan Province [19; 9–53]. As a matter of fact, the crescent-shaped dagger with the hilt shows that both burials belong to the Mature Sarmatian Period.

Secondary burials in the ground

Another place where the Sarmatians buried their dead was the main floor, that is, the old ground level under the kurgan heap (Figure 2). These burials, which are generally found around the main tomb in the middle, are considered secondary (Figure 6). In secondary burials, no additional arrangement (wooden hut) is usually made. However, a child was buried with a coffin in the cairn No. 8 of the Barbastau 3 cemetery. No burial gifts were found with him [20; 23, 24]. Another burial was unearthed in the Shalkarian cairn. The skeleton in the aforementioned kurgan was laid on its back on the main floor and its head was turned to the south. A sheep's foot and a rimmed altar piece were found next to it [21; 23, 24]. In addition, a child skeleton was found in the cairn No. 5 of the Barbastau 2 cemetery. Although archaeologists stated that the skeleton was turned to the south, they did not give any information about the way it was laid. A Sarmatian type vessel fragment was found next to the skeleton [22; 14].

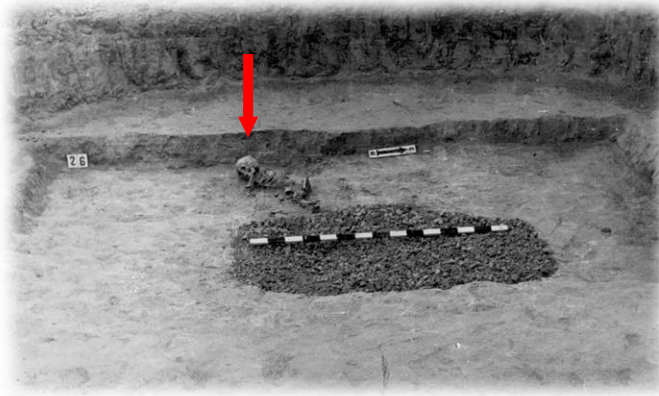


Figure 6. Barbastau cemetery Kurgan No. 26. The main tomb in the middle and on the ground view from the child burial [22].

The burial No. 1 in the cairn No. 4 of the Karasu 1 cemetery was also carried out on the main ground. Since the skeleton here was dispersed by robbers, its condition could not be determined. Besides scattered bones, horse's jaw, rib bone, bottle, bone spoon and sea shell were found [23; 24]. Other secondary burials are Barbastau 3 cemetery burial No. 7 burial No. 3 [22], Karasu 1 cemetery burial No. 4 burial No. 2 [23; 24], Kos Oba cemetery burial No. 7, burial No. 2 [15; 14], and burial No. 5 [15; 24] in Kurgan, No. 13 in Kos Oba Cemetery. All of the skeletons in the aforementioned kurgans were laid on their backs. While the head of the skeletons in burials No. 2 and No. 7 of Kos Oba cemetery were turned to the west, all the skeletons in the other kurgans were turned to the south. Burial No. 7 of Barbastau 3 cemetery has black stone [22], burial No. 7 of Kos Oba cemetery has burial No. 2 horse hoof and bird bone, while burial No. 13 of Kos Oba cemetery has burial No. 5. A pottery was found next to the skeleton in the burial No. 2 [15; 14].

Dating, comparison and evaluation

The findings found in the burial No. 2 [15; 14] in the Shalkar burial, the burial No. 5 in the Barbastau 2 cemetery, the burial No. 4 in the Karasu 1 cemetery and the burial No. 7 in the Kos Oba cemetery show that horse hoof, rimmed altarpiece, bone spoon, and shell) are characteristic of the Sarmatians [14; 7–11, 24; 8–12, 25; 169–170]. Therefore, it is possible to attribute these burials to the Sarmatians. However, the findings found in burial No. 3 in Barbastau 3 cemetery and burial No. 7 and burial No. 5 in Kos Oba cemetery 13 are insufficient for us to speculate about the belonging of the burials. The fact that the burials in question were unearthed in Sarmatian kurgans indicates that these burials may belong to the Sarmatians.

Main Burials in the Ground

In some cases, the main burials were also found on the main floor, but in the center of the cairn. The characteristic feature of such main burials is that a hut-like structure is built with logs on it (Figure 7). This structure is covered flat or sometimes in the form of a roof. In addition, the burial area inside the building is plastered with clay. Burials with this feature are predominant in Aktobe Province on the banks of the Elek river. Another important point to be noted for the main burials is that more than one person was buried inside the building. In such burials, while the skeletons were tilted to form a right angle (orthogonal) to each other, they were sometimes laid side by side. Their heads are mostly turned to the west and south.

In this context, it can be asked when the practice of burial on the surface started at the earliest and lasted until what age. This question is not likely to be answered with the available data. However, when the perspective is expanded and the subject is excluded, the practices that we can describe as different versions of the burial at the surface appear among Turkish communities.

E. Tryjarski [26; 262] defined this practice among Turkish communities as “abandonment”. In particular, the following information given under the heading of “abandonment” is noteworthy. “The Yakuts dress their dead in their best clothes and leave it on the ground, then build a small house on it or cover it with the bark of a beech tree. Over time the dead rot or are eaten by wild animals”. According to this information, it can be thought that a similar practice seen in Sarmatians was continued by Turkish communities until recently.



Figure 7. Besshatyr cemetery. A hut-like structure on the main floor. Reconstruction [34].

However, this idea is problematic as it is based solely on the practice of laying the dead on the surface. Therefore, it would be appropriate to leave this aside and return to the subject again.

Due to the lack of adequate archaeological research in Atyrau and Mangystau Provinces, the main examples of ground burial are the burials unearthed in the city of Oral and Aktobe Province. Especially the examples in Lebedevka 6, Kırık Oba 2 (Oral city), Zhalgyz Oba, Syntas and Bes Oba (Aktobe Province) cemeteries are important for us to better explain our subject as a whole. Therefore, these examples are discussed below.

The skeletal remains of three people were found on the main ground, 2 m north of the cairn 26 of the Lebedevka 6 cemetery in the city of Oral. Unfortunately, from the burial dispersed by the robbers in the early period, only the remains of structures built on the skeletons and burial gifts such as sheep bones, two horses' shoulder blades and three-winged bronze arrowheads with long sleeves remained. In addition, a normal grave was unearthed in the northwest of the kurgan. The skeleton here is laid on its back diagonally. It is understood from this information that burials were made both in a normal pit and on the main floor in a kurgan [27; 26].

Another example unearthed in the city of Oral was found in the burial No. 18 of the Kırık Oba 2 cemetery [2; 46]. A wall measuring 7x11 m was found in the center of the 40 m diameter, 1.6 m high kurgan. An entrance was left in the southwestern part of the building. Archaeologists speculated that after the logs were erected on the inside of the wall, it might have been covered with bark and reed. They showed evidence of burnt earth, wood and wood residues found on the inside of the wall. It was found that chalk was sprinkled on the burial area inside the wall, and then five people were buried there. Unfortunately, as in Lebedevka, the skeletons here were dispersed by robbers. As a matter of fact, based on the in situ preserved legs of a skeleton, M. Sydykov et al. [28; 14, 15] stated that the skeletons may have been turned south. Among the bones, a bronze arrowhead, an altar piece, a T-shaped dagger with a hilt, horse equipment and a red clay pot fragment were found. However, sacrificial pits were found outside the burial area. Horse and sheep bones and vessel fragments were found in the pit. Three bit and wolf shaped objects were found in the pit to the south. In addition, hundreds of black stones and a handmade vessel whose mouth was closed with a horse bone were unearthed in the ditch around the kurgan. All that aside, four human skulls, ribs, spinal bones, iron knife, vessel fragments and altar stone fragments found at a depth of 0.5 m from the surface attracted attention. In particular, archaeologists have tried to associate skulls with human sacrifice².

As mentioned above, one of the regions where surface burial was most common is Aktobe Province. The majority of these burials were unearthed in cemeteries such as Bes Oba, Syntas, and Zhalgyz Oba. These cemeteries are of great importance in terms of reflecting the tradition of burial on the surface more clearly. Therefore, these examples are discussed in detail below.

Zhalgyz Oba kurgan is located 6 km northwest of Khleobodarovka village in Aktobe Province. The diameter of the kurgan is 18 m and the height is 70 cm. A wooden structure with a circular plan was found on the main floor under the kurgan heap, and a total of five skeletons, four inside this structure and one outside. No. 1 of these skeletons is located outside the wooden structure. The head of the skeleton, which was understood to belong to an adult individual, was turned to the south and was laid on its back. Sheep bones were found on the left side, quiver hook and dagger on the right side. M.K. Kadyrbaev stated that the dagger was deliberately broken.

In addition, the heads of the skeletons No. 2 and 3 of the adult individual in the wooden structure were turned to the west and laid on their backs. Three-winged bronze arrowheads, a T-shaped dagger with a hilt and a whetstone were found next to them.

M.K. Kadyrbaev [24; 8–12] identified skeleton No. 4 of the adult individual and skeleton No. 5 of the child as the main burial as very poorly preserved. In other words, due to the fact that the skeletons were scattered, their condition could not be determined. Many findings were found next to the skeleton No. 4. These include a thick bronze bracelet with two ends, biconical glass beads, a rectangular altar stone with a wave-decorated edge, a bronze mirror, a bronze ring, an iron knife and a bone spoon with a deer depiction.

Another example was unearthed in the cairn No. 1 of the Syntas cemetery. This kurgan has a diameter of 26 m and a height of 1.4 m. As in the previous one, a round wooden structure covered with bushes and straw was encountered here. One of the four people inside the building was buried in the 0.5 m deep pit in the center, and the others were buried on the main ground. In other words, the skeleton in the pit was turned to the south and laid in a boarding state. Funeral gifts such as harnesses, 22 anklebones, iron knives, T-shaped daggers with hilts, bronze arrowheads with three wings and bone spoons were left next to him [24; 16].

Two of the other three skeletons on the surface were located on the east and west sides of the pit, while one was located 65 cm north. Although the skeletons on the east and west sides were laid on their backs, the head of the skeleton on the west was turned to the south and the one on the east was turned to the southwest. Next to the western skeleton were found a griffin hook, fox and horse bone, a spherical vessel, a whetstone, a round dagger with a hilt, an iron knife, bronze arrowheads, and an animal-style buckle [24; 18, 19], which depicts the gryphon attacking a herbivorous animal. Near the eastern skeleton, bronze arrowheads, whetstone, quiver hook, bone spoon, griffin hilt dagger and horse equipment were found.

Finally, when we look at the skeleton in the north, it is seen that all parts of it are scattered except for the legs. As a matter of fact, from the legs preserved in situ, it was understood that the skeleton was turned to the west and laid on its back. Only a small vessel and egg-shaped stone were found as burial gifts [24; 20–21].

As a result, it is seen that four people were buried in the Kurgan No. 1 of the Syntas cemetery. The fact that one of them was found in a shallow pit, and especially two on the east and west sides of the pit, demands an explanation as to the intervals at which these skeletons were buried here. Regarding M.K. Kadyrbaev [24; 18] gave two different opinions. He speculates that the skeletons in the pit and on the side may have been buried at the same time, or that the skeleton in the pit was buried first and then the other two skeletons after a while.

Dating, comparison and evaluation

The aforementioned burials are usually found by archaeologists through arrowheads, daggers, mirrors, vessels, harnesses, bone spoons and many ritual remains (sheep's foreleg, headless sheep skeleton, chalk powder, chalk piece, seashell, incense pot).

Although a wooden structure and bronze arrowheads with three wings and long sleeves were found in the burial No. 1 in the kurgan No. 26 of the Lebedevka 6 cemetery, no dating was made for this burial [27; 26].

However, A.I. Melyukova [29; 21] and K.F. Smirnov [30; 44–48] dated the long sleeved bronze arrowheads found in the Northern Black Sea, Southern Ural and Northern Caucasus regions to the 7th–5th centuries BC. Therefore, it is possible to date the burial No. 1 in the Kurgan No. 26 at Lebedevka to the 7th–5th centuries BC. The kurgan No. 18 of the Kırık Oba 2 cemetery is dated to the middle of the 6th century BC and the 5th century BC according to the T-shaped dagger with the hilt (Figure 5) [31; 10].

Zhalgyz Oba cairn and Syntas Cemetery No. 1 cairn; It has been dated to the 6th–5th centuries BC, based on finds such as an altar stone, a T-shaped dagger with a hilt, a bone spoon with wolf relief, and three-winged bronze arrowheads [24; 14].

The burials and material finds discussed above have been found in many cemeteries. Piyatimar 1, Tara Butak, Mechetsay, Uvak cemetery in Orenburg Province [10; 14–148]; Uygarak cemetery in the vicinity of Aral [32; 9]; The Shilikty cemetery [33; 55–57] in East Kazakhstan and the Besshatyr [34] cemetery in Almaty Province are just some of them.

In particular, it is possible to see almost the same practice in the Syntas cemetery No. 1 burial in Piyatimar 1 cemetery No. 8 burial. To put it more clearly, burials were made both in the normal grave and on

the surface inside the rectangular wooden structure in the Piyatimar 1 cemetery No. 8. Therefore, it would be useful to consider this kurgan in detail.

The cairn in question is 28 m in diameter and 3 m in height. Remains of a rectangular wooden structure were found under the kurgan. Two adult and one child skeletons were found scattered in the normal grave in the western half of this building. Bones preserved in situ in the east of the tomb showed that the skeletons may have been oriented south. Three-winged barreled bronze arrowheads, spearheads and well-fired burnished vessel fragments were found in the tomb.

However, two skeletons were found on the main floor in the eastern half of the wooden structure. While one of the skeletons was lying on its back, the arms and legs of the other skeleton were slightly bent. A volute-shaped sword with a hilt, bronze arrowheads, gold earrings, whetstones, horse bones, two front legs of the sheep and dozens of pebbles were left around them. In particular, the five horses laid on their bellies on the southern edge of the wooden structure give this tomb a different meaning [10; 29–31]. Atlara was shot from the same S-shaped ship that we saw in the Syntas cemetery No. 2 [24].

If we leave this aside, it is seen that the Aral region and the West Kazakhstan region have common cultural elements. At the beginning of these elements are the burials made on the surface and wooden structures. All these cultural features, as mentioned above, in the Uygarak cemetery 2–4, 7–9, 14, 15, 17, 18, 50, 51, 52, 55, 56; 25, 26; 37, 39–41, 43, 45, 84; It is possible to follow in many kurgans such as 59, 66, 71, 76, 76a.

In these kurgans, the burial area was usually surrounded by a furrow, sometimes with one or two rows of logs. The surrounding log nests prove this. Later, the burial area was plastered with clay and sometimes covered with organic materials such as bark or reed. In the prepared area, the dead were generally turned to the west and south-west with a deviation, and laid on their backs. In addition, as in Western Kazakhstan, a gray clay vessel, bronze buckle, kurgan (No. 4), horse equipment (kurgan No. 17), three-winged bronze arrowheads (Kurgan No. 14), were placed next to the dead. An iron knife was left among the burial gifts such as a bronze mirror, altar stone (Kurgan No. 51) and the dead food [32; 60–69].

Another example of surface burial is the Baygetobe kurgan of the Shikti Cemetery. A wooden structure was found on the main floor under the cairn with a diameter of 100 m and a height of 8 m. But the structure here is slightly different from those around West Kazakhstan and the Aral. As it will be remembered, the structures in Western Kazakhstan were created by placing a wooden roof over the fence made of clay or by covering the reed and bark on the logs placed vertically at regular intervals. On the other hand, the structure in Baygetobe cairn was built by placing the logs horizontally (the bell technique). As in the others, the deceased was laid on the main floor inside this building. Unfortunately, the skeleton here was completely dispersed by the robbers. As a matter of fact, archaeologists have determined that only one person was buried here. However, many gold artifacts in the form of mountain sheep, leopard, deer and eagle were unearthed in the tomb [35; 59–67].

As a result, it is seen that the surface burial practice spread over a wide area from the Tarbagatai slope in the east to the Aral coast in the south and the Zhayik and Elek rivers in the west. These regions, which are kilometers away from each other, show some differences in terms of surface burial but generally offer the same features. The difference that should be noted here is that wooden structures are built with different methods according to regions. However, these regions show parallels in terms of the orientation of the dead and grave gifts (especially weapons).

Secondary burials in a pit grave

Another area where the Sarmatians carried out secondary burials was the pit graves (graves) dug from the ground. In this type of burial, a separate grave was opened for the dead or the old main grave (grave) was used (Figures 8 and 9). In the meanwhile, old tombs were generally destroyed. One of the mentioned secondary burials was found in the southern half of the cairn 14 of Barbastau 3 cemetery in Oral city. Its excavator determined it as grave No. 2. The length of the tomb is 1.35 m, its width is 0.5 m, and its depth is 0.7 m. A skull fragment belonging to a child was found on the grave floor. Two vessels and sheep bones were found in this tomb [20; 27].

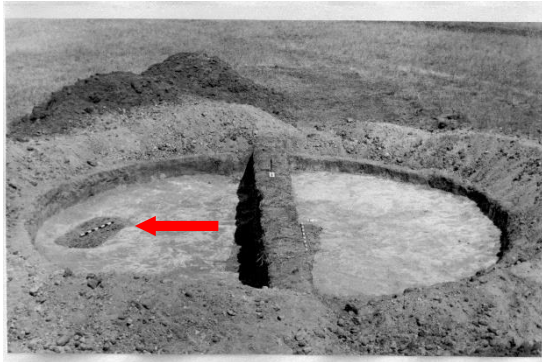


Figure 8. Secondary burial in a pit grave [22].

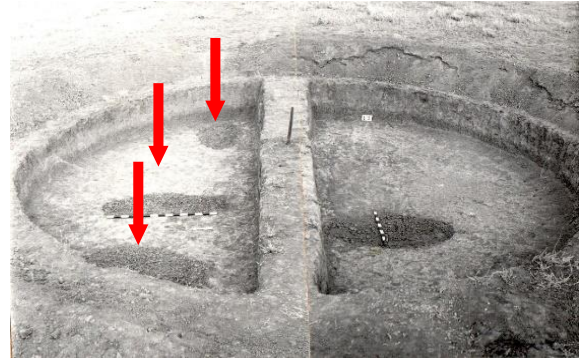


Figure 9. Kos Oba Cemetery No. 11 view from the secondary burials in the kurgan [44].

Another secondary burial in a pit burial was found in the Barbastau 3 cemetery No. 7 burial. G.A. Kushaev and B.F. Zhelezchikov [22; 29] designated it as burial No. 8. The secondary burial No. 8 was found above the main burial No. 9. The burial in question was completely plundered. Human bones and sheep bones were found at depths of 2–2.8 m. A long-necked, egg-shaped vessel with red clay was found here. Sand and stone were added to the dough of the container. Another of the secondary burials was found in burial No. 5 in Kurgan No. 8 on the left bank of the Kürüm river in Oral. The rectangular shaped tomb is 1.54 m long and 1.2 m wide. Human bones were found in the fill. The skeleton of an adult individual was found scattered 1.3 m below the grave. A triangular iron arrowhead was found in the northeastern half of the tomb [14; 24, 25].

A secondary burial belonging to Sarmatians was also found in the burial No. 13 of Shygys Kurayli 1 cemetery in Aktobe province. The excavator designated this tomb as No. 2. The long sides of this tomb are in the southwest-northeast direction. It is 2.1 m long and 0.65 m wide. It partially destroyed the main tomb No. 1 by cutting it at an angle of 30–35° from the east. After chalk dust was sprinkled on the floor of the grave at a depth of 1 m, the adult individual was laid on its back longitudinally, with its head turned to the southwest. Except for two pebbles, no finds were found in the tomb [36; 17].

Dating, comparison and evaluation

G.A. Kushaev and B.F. Zhelezchikov [20; 2] dated tomb No. 2 in cairn No. 14 of cemetery 3 in Barbastau from the 2nd to the 4th of AD. In addition, these two archaeologists stated that the findings found in the burial No. 8 of the burial No. 7 in the cemetery No. 7 in Barbastau and the burial tradition were specific to the Sarmatians, and dated them to the 4th — 1st centuries BC.

He pointed out that the findings and burial customs were similar to those found in Kalinovskii, Karaoba, Korpebay, around the Etil and Zhayik rivers, and in the Novo-Kumak and Mechetsai cemeteries around Southern Ural [22; 29]. G.A. Kushaev, on the other hand, attributed the tomb, which was unearthed on the banks of the Kurum river, to the Sarmatians, within its architectural characteristics and findings [14; 24, 25]. S.Iu. Gutsalov and G.V. Markevich [36; 20] Shygys Kurayli 1 cemetery, burial No. 13, tomb No. 2 was attributed to Sarmatians.

Secondary burials in pit graves were also found in other Sarmatian cultural regions outside of Western Kazakhstan. One of them was unearthed in Kurgan No. 8 in the village of Kotluban in the Volgograd province of Russia. Archaeologists determined the secondary grave in the cairn in question as No. 4. The secondary grave in the center of the kurgan destroyed the main grave No. 3. An individual lying on his back, turned to the north, was found in the grave. Archaeologists stated that the skeleton may have been buried in a wooden coffin due to the wooden pieces found in the tomb. While the forelimb and scapula of the sheep were found next to the pelvis of the skeleton, an iron sword with both faces cut off was found on its right side. The guard of the sword is straight and the hilt is in the shape of a half moon. Such swords are characteristic of the Sarmatians and date back to the 4th century BC. Archaeologists have stated that this kurgan was built in the Bronze Age and that the Sarmatians later buried their relatives there [17; 122].

Another of the secondary burials in the pit burial was found in Kurgan No. 2 in Krasnakholm village of Orinbor province. Archaeologists have determined that tomb No. 1 in the aforementioned kurgan has been completely plundered. Organic materials and ocher were found in the grave. The finds show that this tomb

belongs to the Bronze Age. However, a secondary tomb belonging to the Sarmatians was unearthed in the kurgan.

In this grave, designated as No. 2, two skeletons were found that were turned to the south and laid sideways. Next to the skeletons, two vessels, sheep bones, an altar stone with a diameter of 9 cm, a bronze plate, beads and 65 bronze arrowheads with three wings were found. In addition, there were pieces of wood on the grave, while organic remains were found on the floor of the grave. These show that the tomb was covered with wood and organic mattresses were laid under the skeletons [37; 9].

Conclusions

A kurgan is formed by raising the top with stones or soil after the dead was laid in the grave dug into the ground around the steppe culture. By opening the kurgan, several more tombs were opened and the dead were buried. However, burying the dead in heaps is a different and remarkable practice. It can be questioned whether this practice is seen as strange and whether its purpose is based on belief. Since it is difficult to explain the answers to these questions with today's archaeological data, only guesses can be made about the burial of the dead.

The social structure plays an important role in shaping the customs and traditions of a society. Especially in the steppe geography, the family primarily constitutes the core of the society. After the family, the biggest social union "uruk" or in other words, the family union creates. Families or uruks come together to form the tribe. Therefore, this structure made it necessary to protect all kinds of values of the neck by bringing kinship relations to the forefront. Therefore, each tribe has its own cemetery, pasture area and stamp.

While imprinting the stamp on the rocks and animals where they lived, they buried people who died of their own height in the cemeteries. Thus, an ancestor cemetery was created. Over time, these cemeteries were accepted as sacred and their dead began to be respected in this way. According to the information given by the written documents, it is possible to trace the origin of the respect for the tombs to the Scythians.

O. Belli, citing Herodotus as a source, describes the sacred reverence of the Scythians for their ancestor's tomb as follows: "...Darius wants to fight the Scythians... However, they are withdrawing by applying the steppe war tactic... The Scythians send the following news to the Persians, who want to fight themselves; our ancestors have graves; find them and raise your hand against them and you will see if we will fight for our graves". However, it is known that the uruks of the Caspian king passed by dismounting and bowing in front of his tomb [38; 927]. In addition, the presence of their own cemeteries in today's Kazakh uruks is an indication of how sacred the steppe people continue to regard the grave, with practices such as showing great respect when passing in front of these cemeteries, not extending their hand towards the grave, and sometimes burying small children on their grandfathers. Y. Çoruhlu [39; 57] stated that a kurgan or tomb was considered a sacred place over time, and thus there were burials on top of each other. E. Tryjarski [26; 420] described such burials as "added tombs", stating that this idea arose from the feeling of being close to their deceased ancestors.

Based on this information, it can be assumed that the idea of considering the grave as sacred underlies the practice of burial. There may also be a possibility that the person in the grave and the person buried in the heap were related. In addition to these, it can be thought that people infected with the epidemic may have been hastily buried in the heap for reasons of hygiene and fear. It was determined that the Sarmatians buried their dead at the ground level under the kurgan heap, apart from the main tomb. Although these burials, which are generally found around the main grave in the middle, are considered secondary, they can sometimes be the main burial. More than one skeleton was unearthed, especially in the main burials above the ground. In such burials, while the skeletons were tilted to form a right angle (orthogonal) with each other, they were sometimes laid side by side. Their heads are mostly turned to the west or south. Besides, three-winged bronze arrowheads, T-shaped dagger with hilt, quiver hook, bronze bracelet, rimmed bronze mirror, bone spoon with deer depiction, foreleg of sheep, skeleton of sheep with missing head, chalk powder, chalk piece, sea shell, incense pot and gifts typical of normal earthen tombs, such as altar stones, were left. Such main burials are generally dated to the Early Sarmatian Period.

After these statements, the question of whether the dead were buried on the main ground, depending on what purpose and belief comes to mind. However, it is impossible to fully answer this question. Therefore, this issue has not been discussed much in the literature. It should be emphasized that the ancient sources and descriptions describing the kurgan burial rites do not provide sufficient information on this subject.

E. Tryjarski's [26; 264] comment on a similar practice in his work titled "Turks and Death" answers the question of why the dead were buried on the ground. E. Tryjarski stated that the tradition of leaving the dead

on the ground is completely foreign to the European cultural environment and there may be beliefs such as believing in the supreme god whose country is under the ground, the spirit flying up, and the shamans ascending to the sky. This situation must also be connected with the belief that a happy existence is enjoyed after death, that the spirit realm is “above” and that Tengri is there, bringing abundance and happiness to people. The ancient Turks believed that some of their khans descended from the sky and would return to where they came from after they died [40; 87]. From this point of view, it is seen that there is a belief to bring the holiness of the sky under the burial of the dead to the surface.

On the other hand, E. Tryjarski [26; 264], who took into account the disadvantages of geography and climatic conditions, claimed that the dead were buried on the surface due to the difficulty of digging graves during the winter months. However, in the Khakas-Minusinsk basin, where the surface does not get hot even in summer, this view cannot be accepted as correct since it is buried in the ground. As a matter of fact, numerous earthen tombs are found under the kurgans of the Tagar cultural circle [41; 7]. Therefore, the assumption that the dead may be buried on the surface, depending on the belief that the spirit realm is above and therefore the dead spirits will rise, comes to mind.

Descriptions

1. Archaeologists describe the Sarmatian culture from the Early Sarmatian Period — 6th — 4th centuries BC, Mature Sarmatian Period — 4th — 2nd centuries BC, Middle Sarmatian Period — 2nd — 2nd centuries AD and Late The Sarmatian Period was divided into four as the 2nd — 4th centuries AD. In the article, the aforementioned chronological definition and dating are taken into account.

2. Archaeologists have stated that human sacrifices were made in funeral ceremonies based on the data obtained from some kurgans in Western Kazakhstan. E.g., M.K. Seitkaliev underlined that the hole in the neck of the skeleton found in the secondary burial of the kurgan No. 4 in Kırık Oba 2 cemetery was not likely to have been dug during the military conflict, and underlined that it was opened as a result of a deliberate blow.

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Батыс Қазақстандағы сармат обаларындағы екіншіл жерлеулер

Сармат тайпалары бұрынғы обаларға негізгі жерлеуден кейін де уақыт өте келе қайтыс болған туыстарын жерлеп отырған. Мұндай практика ғылыми әдебиеттерде «екіншіл жерлеу» ретінде сипатталған. Қазақстанда патшалық Ресей кезеңінен бастап бүгінгі күнге дейін көптеген сармат обалары зерттелді. Нәтижесінде қайтыс болған кісілердің негізгі қабірге жерленгенін, сонымен бірге уақыт өте келе оба үйіндісіне, осы үйіндінің астында жатқан негізгі жер бетіне немесе негізгі жерлеу қабірінен кейін аршылған қабірге жерленгендігі анықталды. Оба үйіндісінде негізгі жерлеулер кездеспейді. Де-

генмен, жер бетінде негізгі жерлеумен қатар екіншіл жерлеулерді кездестіруге болады. Аталмыш практика түсінікті болу үшін бұл мақалада жер бетіндегі екіншіл жерлеулердің негізгі жерлеулермен біртұтас қарастырылды. Тақырыпты жүйелі түрде қарастыру үшін сәйкесінше оба үйіндісіндегі екіншіл жерлеулер, негізгі жер бетіндегі екіншіл жерлеулер, содан кейін шұңқыр қабірлердегі екіншіл жерлеулер деген тараушаларға бөлінді. Әрбір тараушадағы обаларға хронологиялық талдау жүргізілді. Мақаланы жазу барысында Батыс Қазақстанда жүргізілген қазба жұмыстарының есептері, археологиялық кітаптар мен мақалалар пайдаланылды. Аталған дереккөздерді сараптау барысында сарматтардың екіншіл жерлеулерді бұрынғы оба үйінділеріне, үйінді астындағы күндізгі жер бетіне және қабірде жүзеге асырғандығы анықталды. Бұл жерлеулерге байланысты хронологиялық талдаулар жүргізілді. Сондай-ақ Орынбор, Башқұртстан, Еділ және Дон өзендері маңындағы аналогтарымен салыстырылды. Ең маңыздысы, мақалада екіншіл жерлеулердің ежелгі наным-сенім жүйесіндегі орны мен семантикасы бойынша болжамды тұжырымдар айтылды.

Кілт сөздер: Батыс Қазақстан, сармат, оба, екіншіл жерлеулер, жерлеу дәстүрі, қорым, көшпелі тайпалар.

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Впускные погребения в сарматских курганах Западного Казахстана

Сарматские племена хоронили умерших родственников в старых курганах даже после основного погребения. Такая практика описана в научной литературе как впускное погребение. Многие сарматские курганы исследовались в Казахстане еще со времен царской России. В результате было установлено, что умерших хоронили в основной могиле, а со временем хоронили в курганные насыпи, на основной поверхности под насыпью или в выкопанной могиле после основного погребения. Основные захоронения в курганной насыпи не встречаются. Однако на поверхности, лежащей под насыпью, наряду с основным погребением, можно встретить и вторичные. Чтобы понять эту практику, авторами настоящей статьи вторичные погребения на поверхности земли рассматриваются вместе с основными погребениями. Для систематического рассмотрения темы они, соответственно, разделили на три главы: вторичные захоронения в курганной насыпи; вторичные захоронения на основной поверхности Земли; а затем вторичные захоронения в ямах. Под каждой главой проводился хронологический анализ, связанный с курганами. При написании статьи использованы отчеты о раскопках в Западном Казахстане, археологические книги и статьи. Изучение этих источников показало, что вторичные погребения сарматы проводили в бывших курганных насыпях, на поверхности земли под насыпью курганами и в могилах. Проведен хронологический анализ этих погребений. Также проведено сравнение с аналогами в Оренбурге, Башкортостане, в районах рек Волга и Дон. В статье были даны прогнозы относительно места и семантики вторичных погребений в древней системе верований.

Ключевые слова: Западный Казахстан, сармат, курган, вторичные погребения, погребальные обряды, могильник, кочевник.

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