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INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOLOGY OF IAȘI

LEONID R. KYZLASOV

*The Urban Civilization
of Northern and Innermost Asia*

Historical and Archaeological Research



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Leonid R. Kyzlasov (1924-2007)

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LEONID R. KYZLASOV: WELL KNOWN SCIENTIST OF SIBIRIAN, CENTRAL AND MIDDLE ASIAN STUDIES

Professor L.R. Kyzlasov (1924-2007) was one of the leading Russian Orientalists, a rare expert in the history and archaeology of Siberia, Central and Middle Asia.

He belonged to the few indigenous people of the Sayan-Altai mountain country - Khakassess. Kyzlasov was born on the taiga river Ninia in the Sinyavino village situated in the Abakan River basin, the left tributary of the Yenisei. His parents were actively involved in the cultural revolution of 1920s in Siberia, his father was a victim of Stalin's purges in 1937, his mother has died at the age of 39.

In 1942-1945 L.R. Kyzlasov participated in the Second World War, paying with his own blood for the victory over fascism. In 1945 he was enrolled in the Archaeology Department of the History Faculty at the "M. V. Lomonosov" State University in Moscow, so that the rest of his life and scientific activity was connected with this domain.

L.R. Kyzlasov was the first Khakass who rose to the level of world science and has reached the supreme scientific degree of Professor Doctor and the title of professor in the Soviet period. In the university, he became a disciple of the outstanding researcher of Siberia and Central Asia, S. Kiselyev, and after a few years substituted his teacher. In 1949, after graduating the university course (Diploma Essay: "Altai in the fifth-tenth centuries"), LR Kyzlasov defended in 1953 his the 'candidate's thesis' (PhD) – "Tashtyk Epoch (the first century B.C.-fifth century A.D.) in the history of the Khakass-Minusinsk Basin" and in 1966 - his the 'doctoral dissertation' (habilitation work) on "The history of Tuva in the Middle Ages". L.R. Kyzlasov taught in the Department of Archaeology until his death.

Talent of a field researcher and the broad historical view on the archacological materials of L.R. Kyzlasov revealed very early. Already the excavations that he conducted in 1953-54 years at Ak-Beshim (Kyrgyzstan), brought him worldwide fame: among numerous mounds of the huge site, the 29-year-old archaeologist, has managed to find and excavate during two seasons the remains of the earliest in Central Asia Buddhist temple, the first Christian church, a Manichaean cemetery and dakhma tower that had the form of a castle. The archacological date of the Ak-Beshim determined in a very exact way made possible the identification of the remains of the early medieval town Suyab. At the same time, the Buddhist temple dedicated to the Maitreya is still the only known complex of Dayun (The Great Cloud) monasteries, once constructed by the edict of the Chinese Empress Wu Zhao. The methodology developed by L.R. Kyzlasov at those excavations significantly enriched the archacological techniques and are still used in Central Asia. Beside other studies of the Ak-Beshim he shown for the first time the official application of the Turkic Khaganate and of the Sogdian script and language on its coins. The results of excavations in the Ak-Beshim, were published, excepting the USSR, in England, France, India and China. The author himself also has returned to them in his latest book of his life, published by us in English today.

L.R. Kyzlasov has excavated and explored from 1946 to 1991 in Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tuva, Khakassia, Krasnoyarsk, Baikal and Primorye Regions, as well as in European Russia. He has discovered and studied hundreds of monuments of local cultures, has created the fundamental basis for a new phase of the archaeological study of Siberia. It is also undeniable Professor Kyzlasov's contribution to the recreation of the most important steps of the history of Siberia and Central Asia that was unknown before. In our time of narrow specialization, he was able to broaden the scope of his scientific work, and with the same depth and accuracy to cover both the primitive and the state periods of the development of the huge and multi-tribal region. L.R. Kyzlasov's elaborations create the bases of all modern studies of the Siberian Middle Ages.

The most important scientific achievements of the scientist include: the creation of a continuous scale of ancient and medieval cultures of Tuva, which corresponds to the antiquities of Khakassia, Altai and Mongolia; the elaboration of methods of Siberian and Central Asian antiquities ethnic determination; the discovery of the Uighur Khaganate antiquities; actual opening of the Ancient Khakass State - one of the most advanced of the medieval powers in Eurasia; and the establishment of the historical role of his aristocratic clan *Kyrgyz*, the determination of the time of existence of the Yenisei runic writing and the establishment of the Tamgas learning. Professor Kyzlasov was the first who carried out the collection and compilation chronicles about Southern Siberia and Central Asia (Chinese, Persian, Arab, Turkic, Greek, Western, Russian).

Special merit L.R. Kyzlasov became the rehabilitation of the ancient

and medieval history of the two, more recently unwritten, South Siberian peoples: Tuvinian and Khakass. He made a significant contribution for the knowledge of the history of the Northern and Southern Altaians, Shors, Chulym, Tofalars, Khanty and Mansi, Selkups, Uighurs, Kirghiz, Kazakhs, Yakuts, Buryats, Mongols and other inhabitants of Siberia and Central Asia. He also advanced significantly the study of some ancient peoples of Central Asia – first of all of the Saks, Turgesh and Karluks.

Only L.R. Kyzlasov's archaeological work was enough to completely break down the old ideas about the eternal cultural underdevelopment of the indigenous peoples of Siberia. The numerous and indisputable facts of high art and craft, i.e. economic and social development, was complemented triumphantly by the discovery and study of the ancient and medieval towns, fortresses and monumental temples. One man has found and examined 17 cities from the eighth and ninth centuries, 2 cities from the eighth-thirteenth centuries and 6 cities from the thirteenth-fourteenth centuries on the territory of Tuva and Khakassia, and 2 temples from the second and first centuries B.C. and up to 12 temples and shrines from the eighth-twelfth centuries on the lands of Khakassia. In this way it was realized the discovery of ancient and medieval urban civilization of South Siberia

Among the most important discoveries of L.R. Kyzlasov are monuments of high spiritual culture: the first and earliest Buddhist temple from the seventh century and the first Nestorian church in Middle Asia (Ak-Beshim), the first and perhaps the only archaeologically investigated Manichaean temples (Khakassia), Buddhist temples and Muslim cemeteries from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in Tuva, Lamaist shrine of the seventeenth century in Khakassia. In recent years the works of L.R. Kyzlasov proved the regular occurrence of the mountain-steppe, forest-steppe and taiga of Northern Asia in the area of world religions no later than the eighth century. The distribution of the northern variety of Manichaeism on the territory of Siberia, Kazakhstan and Middle Asia was a major discovery of L.R. Kyzlasov in the field of Oriental Studies.

L.R. Kyzlasov was encyclopedically educated scholar and a brilliant teacher. He had taught in different times courses with a huge space-time coverage: "Fundamentals of Archaeology" and "Archaeology of the USSR", "Archaeology of Kazakhstan and Kyrgyzstan (the Stone Age - Early Middle Ages)", "Neolithic and Chalcolithic Siberia and the Far East", "The Bronze Age of Siberia", "The Early Iron Age of Siberia", "Medieval Archaeology of Siberia", "Written tidings of the ancient cities of Siberia."

L.R. Kyzlasov prepared more than 70 specialists, under his supervision 40 persons defended their the 'candidate's thesis' (PhD), 15 people - the 'doctoral dissertation' (habilitation work), and 9 of them became professors. His students have worked and currently work in Russia, Ukraine, Moldova,

Hungary, Germany, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Vietnam, South Korea, and Mongolia.

L.R Kyzlasov is the author of more than 340 scientific publications, including 17 monographs and textbooks and 12 books, written in collaboration. Many of them were innovative: “Ancient Tuva”, “History of Tuva in the Middle Ages”, “History of Southern Siberia in the Middle Ages”, “Ancient Khakassia” and the first academically reinstated “History of Khakassia since ancient times until 1917”.

The present book is a re-publication with additions from Russian into English of monograph: Л.Р. Кызласов, *Городская цивилизация Срединной и Северной Азии: исторические и археологические исследования*, - Москва: Издательская фирма “Восточная литература” РАН, 2006, - 360 стр. This publication was made possible with the goodwill of passed-away professor L. R. Kyzlasov, with the important contribution of his son, Pr.D. Igor L. Kyzlasov, which made available all the necessary materials and coordinated the translation of the text into English.

Gheorghe Postică

PREFACE

The Moscow school of archaeology, which I belong to both in terms of my academic career and my research activities, is quite possibly most distinctive in its study of Asia. Professor Sergey Vladimirovich Kiselyev, a major representative of this school and my research supervisor, conducted in-depth studies of ancient artifacts together with the relevant historical processes starting from the Neolithic Age up to the end of the Middle Ages all across the entire Old World; the same approach valid for both the university lecture theater and the page of a research publication. I imbibed my professor's approach to the study of the past especially when I succeeded him as chair of archaeology department with Moscow State University in the Autumn of 1952. The same was required by the traditional syllabuses because the department of archaeology aimed at promoting a comprehensive approach to historical sources both in the students and the faculty.

The goal of piecing together the ancient and medieval history of the indigenous peoples of Southern Siberia (the Khakasses, the Altaians, the Shors, the Tuvinians, etc.) successfully pioneered in Russia by S.V. Kiselyev called for both a further expansion and intensification of archaeological and historical research while the very nature of the historical processes that were subsequently brought to light created the need to focus our research on the vast territories of Middle and Central Asia.

One thing stands out in the wide range of my activities including both field studies and desk research - my effort in tracing and recording the largely unknown history of the two sister peoples of Siberia united by the waters of the mighty Yenisei, namely the Khakasses and the Tuvinians. As it happens the research in this field has helped to trace the trajectory of the ethnic development of other indigenous peoples of Southern Siberia, primarily those who settled in the Sayan-Altai uplands.

However, political history that eludes archaeological study does not often help to reveal the social levers that have always played a major role in any large-scale activity and triggered important events. Traditionally for Russia the economies of the past civilizations have always been in the focus of archaeological study together with the problems of the

ethnogenesis of the peoples of Siberia and entire Northern Asia which are closely related to much more large-scale processes occurring in the history of Eurasia.

There is also another, a third aspect of studying the past. Here I mean researching the culture of the bygone peoples and countries we take origin from. For a variety of reasons this vast field of research found itself outside the scope of interest of international science studying the history of Inner and Northern Asia, the huge and fertile landmass which constitutes the largest part of contemporary Russia. However, the archaeologist-orientalist might have a clearer idea compared to other historians that in the ancient world and in the Middle Ages Siberia also had a distinctive mainland civilization of the same level of development as found in other active centers of historical advancement of peoples on the continent. Conclusions like this especially important to the inquiring mind come natural and visible in Khakassia and Tuva where the mighty monumental sites going back into the depth of time are common and form an intrinsic feature of the local landscape.

As I chose to pursue a career in the search for and study of antiquities I realized early on that the local Siberian history could not have been developing differently from the course any civilized part of the world followed, namely, the foundation of settlements and towns. As written records were scarce we could only rely on archaeological evidence. I was first exposed to ancient city ruins as a student during the excavations of the palace of the Hunnic governor Li Ling in the vicinity of the modern Abakan in 1946 and also as a member of the exploratory expedition of 1946-1947 in Khakassia and in Tuva with the team headed by S.V. Kiselyev and L.A. Evtyukhova. In the summer of 1948 I participated in some field work in the steppes and deserts of Central Kazakhstan. My first independent effort to conduct excavations focused on the huge dead city of Ak-Beshim (ancient Suyab) on the Chu River in Kirghizia in 1953-1954 which enabled me to master the area of archaeological science and field work methodology which concentrates on the study of city life in the history of Asia. In the course of my subsequent archaeological expeditions I was fortunate to discover the cities of ancient Uighurs, Khakasses and Mongols in those regions of Southern Siberia which had been considered areas of purely nomadic habitation before that. It is the subject of city life that I have chosen now for my jubilee publication¹.

As it has already become obvious to the reader the choice was made for a number of purely personal reasons. I do not doubt that the results of my personal research effort are also meaningful for the society in general because they help to radically reassess the former understanding of the life of the Siberian peoples and reestablish an important historical truth. I am sure that the awareness of the true cultural greatness of their forefathers will strengthen the morale of the indigenous peoples of Inner and Northern Asia and will also help to give a new more enlightened turn to the way of thinking of the truly Russian descendants of the cheldons of Siberia (cheldons – a popular word for the first Russian settlers of Western Siberia – tr.) and many other settlers new to Siberia; of all those people who see Northern Asia as their motherland and, consequently, are the

1 The Russian edition of this book was dedicated to the 80th anniversary of L.R. Kyzlasov – editors.

PREFACE

true contemporary heirs of the ancient local civilization and its best achievements.

At the same time we need to realize that this book is not a popular account of my achievements, it is a research publication. When we follow the facts in our efforts to recreate the true course of history of Inner and Northern Asia we need to influence the way the broad historical periods of the development of the Eurasian continent are seen by the scholars who specialize in archaeology and history. It is these specialists that will have to carry on and advance the search for the foundations of the cultural achievements of the past.

In my career of a university professor of many years I have been carefully choosing new well-studied materials for this book. They are important for the advancement of the academic science and also useful for the development of lecture courses providing a variety of material for focused research seminars in the area of comprehensive historical and especially archaeological study of sources.

The accounts that form the first part of this book were previously published as research articles in such periodicals as (the "Vestnik") as well as in Moscow University publications and in 1993 they were published in a book form under the title "Written records of ancient Siberian cities". It was published as a course book by Moscow University and was hardly available to the general public. We surely understand that this kind of material can always be supplemented with new things provided that systematic and carefully targeted work continuous to be done, but this edition was revolutionary in terms of being the first publication of written records on the subject in the Russian language. For the first time ever it drew the reader's attention to various traditional cultural practices of the indigenous peoples of Siberia that are still reflected in their language and their folklore and provide important evidence of their historical development. This subject still requires a lot of careful study.

The second part of this book looks at the evidence from archaeological research. Here we make a conscious effort to put together and publish inside one book cover the results of our excavations aiming at establishing material proof of the foundation and development of monumental architecture and city life in Inner and Northern Asia. All of them were previously published in assorted articles or as part of other works. Put together now they enable us to form a new comprehensive understanding of this phenomenon at large but not of some isolated sites or historical periods as used to be the case in the previously published works.

The available archaeological evidence is so plentiful that it is impossible to be incorporated in just one book, however selective and concise we try to be. This is why the pages the reader is looking at right now only make up the first volume. Its second part deals with archaeological findings and only looks at earlier sites characterizing the beginnings and development of the Siberian settled city life in its variety of forms and also highlighting some particular ancient artifacts that support the relevant chapters of the first part of the book that concentrates on written records.

Thus, the chapter about the first cities of Siberia reveals the depth and breadth of the historical process which was in its latest manifestation marked for the Mansi and

the Khanty by medieval Russian written records. In the parts of the book concerning the Hunnic cities early Chinese written records complement the Western and Western Asiatic chronicles which make up the first part of the volume and also demonstrate the link between some particular features of their urbanization with a consistent government policy. It is difficult to find a better example than the splendid palace of governor Li Ling to illustrate how the official architecture of the early states relied on a wide variety of architectural techniques of the time instead of just following the limited number of the traditional construction canons of their own ethnic community. The palace's religious significance indicates a certain spiritual development in the city life which goes beyond the boundaries of house-temple phenomenon as proved by archaeological material from the early medieval city of Ak-Beshim. It was in the Semirechye that apart from the architectural evidence of coexistence in the capital city of several world religions of the time (Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism) we first acquired there, we were also able to research the subject of the distinct sacred space of the city outskirts in the history of Middle Asia.

The archaeological findings from the medieval period which I acquired through many years of excavating cities and architectural sites of the Uighur Khaganate, the ancient Khakass and Mongol states and their historical descendants are especially numerous and varied. They are to constitute a distinct second volume of the series of books I have in mind and it is not actually important when and how it is going to be published. I believe that the main thing is that it should be and can be written now. To be able to solve this new task, all the required sites have been found and excavated, their background carefully documented and preserved and thus made accessible to anyone who is prepared to accept the new facts.

Some of my early ideas expressed in my research publications now need to be specified. However, it does not mean that the evidence I used and the assumptions I proceeded from have become dated, they need to be specified because at the time of their publication they provided an effective and timely incentive to carry more research in the same direction. They gave the impetus to many other archaeologists, which led to the acquisition of new facts over the previous years adding color and detail to the already recreated picture. For this reason, which I see as a very important one, I believe that it is worth its while and probably even absolutely necessary to publish a new account of my former discoveries in a book that could be accessible to a wider circle of educated readers than before.

We all know that science is individual effort; but it is just a starting point which requires a specific environment of like-minded people and coworkers to successfully solve serious issues. Oriental science supported by archaeology is to no lesser degree than other areas of knowledge the result of a collective effort. The aim of this book is to initiate new and even more extensive research of the subject under study which is of great interest and of critical importance for the recreation of the true history of the material and spiritual development of a vast part of Eurasia and, consequently, of my own Motherland.

Part I.

WRITTEN RECORDS OF ANCIENT SIBERIAN CITIES

ГУК РХ "Национальная
библиотека
им. Н.Г. Доможакова"

The ruins of the destroyed cities
of the savage Tataria deserve
to be examined. They lie
deserted by people.

Nicolaes Witsen, 1710.

INTRODUCTION

This part of the book contains information about those numerous ancient cities of Inner and Northern Asia which were only mentioned in passing and very briefly in written records, historical accounts by the indigenous peoples of Siberia or in the vocabulary of their languages.

In the following second part of this book I will concentrate on cities with no name that never featured in any records and it seemed their memory was blotted out from the historical records of the past. Thanks to good luck, the success of archaeologists and as a result of lengthy and laborious exploratory work and painstaking excavations of many years they have now been restored to science. Thus, the history of ancient and medieval cities of Inner and Northern Asia and the issue of the birth of the city civilization and its role in the development of the indigenous peoples is becoming a topical subject of archaeological research. Some recent discoveries have shown that all across Siberia with the only possible exception of a narrow strip in the tundra zone there used to exist distinctive city centers in pre-historic times or in the early Middle Ages.

Still "The early cities of Siberia" is an unusual subject for research. Up till recently neither historians nor archaeologists were eager to look for early Siberian cities. The historical science was dominated by traditional rigid beliefs holding that the indigenous peoples of Siberia were characterized by a very stagnant, archaic and conservative type of socio-economic relationships.

At the basis of these views lies an old Eurocentric theory of "non-historic" peoples and the "savage Tataria". The proponents of this theory did not doubt that the vast spaces of Northern Asia were inhabited by half-civilized peoples since times immemorial. Proof was found for the theory that east of the Urals there only lived itinerant forest hunters, fishermen whose only staple food was fish, and deer breeders as well as some steppe nomadic cattle-breeders who had no settled economy and did not engage in farming. This theory claimed that such tribes never developed beyond the barrier between

the stagnant primitive communal system and the civilized class society; a barrier that was deemed impassable for these peoples.

This view bred another widespread belief especially among those historians and writers who promoted Eurocentric ideas that Siberia by definition could not have had any national states with a city type civilization; a view both unjust and biased. It is amazing that such a faulty assumption that distorted the historic past of a vast region of Northern Asia proved to be so persistent.

It is traditional to start the history of Siberia with the time of its subjugation and Russian colonization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries that is when this vast land started to be gradually incorporated into the Russian state. We know that in the eighteenth century in the first ever "History of Siberia" by G.F. Miller the author "expressed his attitude to the Siberian peoples as 'non-historic' who were destined to forever remain in a stagnant condition. According to Miller's view Siberia only started its historical development and became a subject of research since the time of its exploration and settlement by the Russians"¹. This view became firmly established in Russian historiography. A hundred years later in the 1830s P.A. Slovtsov put forward arguments in favor of the same idea, "the history of Siberia only emerged from the depth of oblivion when 'the turban of Kuchum Khan fell off his head'"². As a result researchers did not focus on the history of the pre-Russian Siberia and it remained unstudied up to the Soviet period.

The first researcher to break free from these constraints was professor V.I. Ogorodnikov from the University of Irkutsk, the author of "History of pre-Russian Siberia" published in 1920³. But it was archaeologists not historians who dispelled the myth of "non historic" peoples inhabiting the pre-historic and medieval Siberia. Thanks to their research the indigenous peoples of Siberia and their history were brought to light. Here we mean in the first place the widely known research publications by S.A. Teplovukhov, S.V. Kiselyev, M.P. Gryaznov, S.I. Rudenko, G.P. Sosnovskiy, M.M. Gerasimov, A.P. Okladnikov, L.A. Evtukhova, V.P. Levashova, V.I. Matyushchenko, M.F. Kosaryev, and the author of this book among other scholars.

From among notable historians only S.V. Bakhrushin wrote in 1928, "of paramount importance here is of course the study of the history of the local peoples of Siberia. Now that they have acquired an equal status with the Russians for the first time in history and are free to pursue their national identity the peoples of Siberia have every right to strive to find out about their past and the challenge of building the future of Siberia justifies this desire"⁴.

But the mainstream Soviet historiography still under the influence of the traditional views continued to belittle the level of socio-economic development

1 Mirzoev. 1963: 148; Miller, 1937 (1999); 1941 (2000); 2005.

2 Slovtsov, 1886: XX.

3 Ogorodnikov, 1920.

4 Bakhrushin, 1955b: 258.

of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and to look down upon their complex historical development. When in the Soviet time the first ever "History of Siberia" in five volumes was being prepared for publication V.I. Shunkov who belonged to the academic circles of that time and was a specialist on Russian history of the period of feudalism wrote about the deep-rooted stagnancy and backwardness of the social order of the indigenous Siberians. In his many works he repeatedly put forward the same idea, "we can hardly doubt that the primitive communal system was a domineering social order for the majority of peoples of Siberia up to the end of the sixteenth century".

Without so much as taking the trouble of researching the controversial history of the forefathers of the indigenous peoples of Siberia starting from *Homo erectus* and *Homo neanderthalensis* up till the Russian colonization of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries V.I. Shunkov was sometimes even more precise. In one of his reports he stated, "...the best definition for the social order of Siberia at the time it joined Russia would be clan relations at the stage of their disintegration and for some ethnic groups that would be the latest stage of disintegration". The following words by V.I. Shunkov help to reveal the reason for such a twisted view on the history of the indigenous peoples of Siberia, "the understanding of the comparative results of the historical development of the peoples of Siberia and of the Russians as well as the identification of causes of the slow development pace of the social and economic life of the Siberian peoples is important for the study of Siberia's further history especially for the correct assessment of its incorporation into Russia"⁵.

Here we see this "correct assessment", "Siberia is an inseparable part of the Russian territory sharing the same historical development and largely inhabited by Russian people since the eighteenth century. The medieval Rus determined the development of feudalism in Siberia; the growth of Russian capitalism meant the involvement of Siberia into the capitalist social order; the victory of the Great October Socialist Revolution in Russia was also the victory of the revolution in Siberia. Including Siberia into the areas of Great Russia means that it is not only a part of Russia but is also Russian in character"⁶.

With this approach neither the indigenous peoples of Siberia nor their history are of any interest, everything is dwarfed by the history of Russia and Russian people. The voluminous "History of Siberia" fully reflected this so called "scientific methodology" of studying a multinational empire when biased allusions to the "favorable outcomes" of the historical development were resorted to, which was quite characteristic of Stalinist historians. V.I. Shinkov was a member of the editorial board for the publication and the editor of the volume of "Siberia as part of Russia in the period of feudalism"⁷.

5 Shunkov, 1969: 251-252; 1974: 225, 229, 252.

6 Shunkov, 1974: 223-224.

7 Istoriya Sibiri, 1968b: 9-22, 25, 26 ff.

It is amazing how unprincipled some authors of this research publication were. They went as far as accusing of aggression (in the seventeenth century, to think of it!) the local "Kirghiz and Buryat princes" instead of the tsarist voivodes and soldiers invading and plundering the homeland of the Siberian peoples, even though it was those same "chieftains" that resisted the invaders as best they could and did not submit to the ill will of the tsarist satraps⁸.

One of the co-authors of the same publication the historiographer of Siberia V.G. Mirzoyev wrote in 1970 that the Russian people starting the settlement of "one of the greatest countries ever colonized by man through the whole history of mankind..." came across "...harsh and sometimes *pernicious* climate, immeasurable *deserted spaces*, sparse *primeval inhabitants*"⁹! (italics by L.K.).

However, we need to give credit to some of the authors of the publication, mostly archaeologists and ethnographers (as well as A.P. Okladnikov, the editor of the volume of "Ancient Siberia") because the first volume of "History of Siberia" contains chapters that feature, possibly not very consistently, the history of medieval feudal states of the Turkic and the Tungus peoples of Siberia and the Far East in the sixth-twelfth centuries¹⁰.

The biased views of mainstream historians left an imprint on the patterns of thinking of scholars representing related fields of study. For example, the geographer L.A. Nikolskaya writes without a second thought when looking at the pre-Russian medieval Siberia, "the Siberia of that time was an economic wilderness..."¹¹.

Specialists in architecture in their attempts to belittle the importance of the newly discovered sites featuring evidence of settled architecture in the steppes came up with a nondescript tag "nomadic architecture". It is amazing how skillfully evasive D.N. Tkachev sounded, "In nomadic feudalism whose spiky development of falls and rises amounted to some relatively advanced forms of economy as early as during the pre-Mongol period there was no contradiction between some mobile and stationary forms of organizing the living environment which taken together constituted nomadic architecture"¹².

Unfortunately, many authors contracted the virus of nonobjectiveness and tendentiousness in dealing with the history of the indigenous peoples of Siberia and it does not seem worthwhile to give more examples now. Let me only say that some specialists in the history of the Russian cities of Siberia of the end of the sixteenth-eighteenth centuries still see no problem saying "that the urban development of the most part of Siberia started from scratch

8 Istoriya Sibiri, 1968b: 44.

9 Mirzoev, 1970: 3.

10 Istoriya Sibiri, 1968a: 266-352.

11 Nikol'skaya, 1968: 63.

12 Tkachev, 1983: 44.

because this country did not have such forms of human habitation as cities before the advent of the Russians”¹³.

All the above mentioned was either an example of evident or willful misrepresentation which caused historians to ignore certain indisputable facts proving that the indigenous peoples of Siberia had city life. This explains why this subject remained outside the scope of interest of Russian science before it was undertaken by the author of this book.

But there was some local research of this subject in the areas neighboring Siberia. As early as in 1947-57 S.V. Kiselyev started work aiming at discovering the ancient cities of Central Asia¹⁴. In 1965 a group of authors including S.V. Kiselyev, L.A. Evtyukhova, L.R. Kyzlasov, N.Ya. Merpert and V.P. Levashova summarized the results of their research in the book called “Early Mongolian cities”. In 1950 A.Kh. Margulan had an overview published which featured the early cities of Kazakhstan but unfortunately only its southern regions¹⁵. B.E. Kumekov acquired new data on the cities of the Kimak on the Irtysh River and in eastern Kazakhstan¹⁶. Later on a summarizing monograph by V.L. Egorov was published¹⁷. This publication featured the results of long-term efforts to recreate the full list of Mongol cities of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries in the Black Sea region, Northern Caucuses, the Volga region and partly in Siberia.

Up till recently such were the main results of the study of ancient cities in the vast territories adjacent to Siberia even though the geographical notion of Siberia has always included the northern stretch of the steppes of Kazakhstan which merge with the West Siberian plain along its southern borders and the Sayan-Altai uplands in the east.

The historical and archaeological search for pre-Russian fortified settlements in Siberia started during the lifetime of G.F. Miller but intensified at the end of the nineteenth century. Evidence of ancient and medieval cities of Siberia dated with the twelfth-eighteenth centuries from Russian sources was previously summed up by L.R. Kyzlasov in some of his articles¹⁸. It is looked at in more detail in the respective chapter of this book.

As for the archaeological excavations of sites going back to the Bronze, early Iron Age or the medieval period the mere enumeration of these would require too much book space. Not only have the materials from these numerous excavations remained unpublished, they have not even been properly studied. They have not been given enough attention when

13 Rezun, 1989: 44.

14 Kiselyev, 1947; 1957.

15 Margulan, 1950.

16 Kumekov, 1969; 1972.

17 Egorov, 1985.

18 Kyzlasov L.R., 1986a; 1995; 1997; 1999a.

mentioned in research outlines¹⁹ and their specialized thematic study and historical evaluation still remain to be done.

However, we should mention some preliminary studies of the acquired data. These are in the first place the remains of the cities of the Khanate of Sibir (Sibir Yurt), the most notable of these being Isker or Kashlyq (1400-1582)²⁰, the settlements in the Ob valley in its middle and upper course²¹, Cisbaikalia²², Transbaikalia and Tuva²³ going back to different periods of history. We need to look more closely at the latter two areas.

They are important not only because the ancient and medieval cities in these territories proved to be better studied but also because it was there that researchers first realized the need to develop the subject of "ancient and medieval cities of Southern Siberia" which was bound to be expanded later into "ancient cities of Siberia"²⁴.

The first ever excavations of a number of settlements on the territory of Tuva were carried out in 1956-1962 by L.R. Kyzlasov. Cities from two distinct historical periods were discovered: the Uighur khaganate fortresses from the eighth and ninth centuries (17 rectangular and square cities with daub walls and 2 daub bastions)²⁵ as well as 6 early Mongol cities from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries²⁶. In 1957 and 1959 S.V. Kiselyev and L.A. Evtukhova excavated two early Mongol cities in eastern Transbaikalia, the Chirchira and Kondui sites²⁷. In 1959 and 1971 L.R. Kyzlasov discovered some ancient and medieval cities of Khakassia²⁸ whose research by L.R. Kyzlasov and I.L. Kyzlasov began from 1972 and continued (intermittently) till 2002²⁹. Parallel to that and starting as early as 1958 the stone fortress shelters in the mountains of Khakassia were also studied³⁰.

In 1959, 1983, 1988, 1991 we also excavated the Znamenskoe and Troitskoe circular fortress-sites (with deep ditches and cob brick walls) located on the left bank of the Erba and Tes Rivers in Khakassia and dating from the period

19 Chernetsov, Moshinskaya, Talitskaya, 1953; Kosarev, 1984; Baraba..., 1988; Arheologiya SSSR, 1987.

20 Pignatti, 1915; Levasheva, 1950; Zykov, 1989.

21 Troitskaja, Molodin, Sobolev, 1980; Umanskiy, 1972.

22 Rygdylon, 1955.

23 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959a.

24 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959a; 1987; 1989; Kiselev, Evtukhova, Kyzlasov i dr., 1965.

25 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959a; 1981a; Kyzlasov I.L., 1979: fig. 4.

26 Kiselev, Evtukhova, Kyzlasov i dr., 1965; Kyzlasov L.R., 1975a.

27 Kiselev, Evtukhova, Kyzlasov i dr., 1965.

28 Kyzlasov L.R., 1963; 1972a: 296.

29 Kyzlasov L.R., Kyzlasov I.L., 1973; 1974; 1975; 1976; 1977; 1978; 1979; 1980; 1981, 1983; Kyzlasov L.R., 1975b.

30 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960a; 1963a; 1969a; Kyzlasov L.R., Kyzlasov I.L., 1986.

INTRODUCTION

of the invasion by the Central Asiatic Huns (the second and first centuries B.C.)³¹. The Hunnic cities proper which also existed during the pre-medieval period are discussed in the second part of this book.

Any issue needs to be looked at from a variety of perspectives in order to be able to identify and establish the truth or at least to approach it. That is why parallel to the field research of the cities of the indigenous peoples of Southern Siberia we searched for, accumulated and studied written records in various languages, collected ethnographic folklore and linguistic evidence of the early and medieval cities of Siberia from the local people³². This part of the book is in itself a collection of data obtained from written sources and it is followed by a second part dedicated to the same subject but based entirely on archaeological evidence.

Not only should the story of the native cities of pre-Russian Siberia be fully revealed, it should also be studied in a variety of its aspects. The study of the ancient cities, the stages in their birth and development, the reasons behind their existence and the very essence of this existence, their geographic location and other important historical features and details of their daily life will bring forward the time when the true and unbiased history of the peoples of Siberia from the ancient times up to the present day will be recreated.

The current volume is based on the lectures the author delivered in the course of many years at the History Department of Moscow University³³.

31 Kyzlasov L.R., 1963; Kyzlasov L.R., Kyzlasov I.L., 1985; 1990.

32 Kyzlasov L.R., 1985; 1986a; 1987; 1989; 1990; 1991.

33 Kyzlasov L.R., 1992a.

Chapter 1. CONCEPT OF “CITY” IN THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL TIMES

So shall the favor of God shine upon them
that on this spot a great city shall arise,
and God shall erect many churches therein.
Apostle Andrew,
“Primary Chronicle”, the twelfth century¹.

Initially there was no concept of “city” in the history of mankind but it appeared in pre-historic times. The term for the concept also came into various languages at the same time. However, the meaning of the word and its connotations were different for every particular era and for various peoples. When looking at phenomena from a historical perspective researchers should constantly bear in mind this fact in order to avoid the involuntary modernization of the term.

The physical reality of the city as well as the social, historical, cultural, philosophical and religious nature of the concept changed according to the specific historical characteristics of its location and lifetime. It seems that the birth of individual cities started in Western Asia as early as the Neolithic period (Jericho, the seventh millennium B.C.), when the early farming communities started to encircle their sprawling settlements by stone walls with battlements. During the Eneolithic period and the early Bronze Age (end of fourth – beginning of third millennium B.C.) in Sumer and Egypt there existed early city civilizations and states rising from the depth of the slaveholding system. In India and China settlements surrounded by walls and first cities also appeared as early as the middle and second half of the third millennium B.C. and became

¹ Zenkovsky, 1974; Selections..., 1930.

especially widespread at the beginning of the second millennium B.C.; that is in the farming communities of the Bronze Age.

We all know that the major characteristics of a typical early class society of the ancient East are: a complex economic and administrative machinery incompatible with the clan system; the birth of written languages arising from the need to control the economic activities of the population; the rise of cities as administrative, religious and trade centers; the construction of imperial tombs.

Gordon V. Childe wrote, "The term *civilized* is reserved, in conformity with the word's derivation, for people who dwell in cities; and a *city* must possess not only a certain size, but accommodate a substantial minority at least of persons who derive their livelihood not directly from hunting, fishing or farming, but from secondary industry, trade and other professions. In archaeology it is convenient to take the discovery of inscribed objects, and so the use of *writing*, or literacy, as a criterion of civilization. Barbarian villages or townships may be comparable in area to cities; they may have housed an appreciable number, albeit always a small minority, of craftsmen like smiths, carpenters and even potters; imported materials and manufactures may be collected from their ruins, but such will seldom have been indispensable to the average townsman save for arms. To decide when the quantitative expansion of population and multiplication of craftsmen and merchants has produced a qualitatively new entity, the city, writing is a good test. (In *Man Makes Himself* I have explained how writing was necessitated by economic developments and is generally connected with the change from a kinship to a territorial basis of social organization)"² (italics by the author – L.K.).

The belief that civilization is determined by three major characteristics, namely monumental architecture, cities and written language became established at a later point.

It is obvious that the inhabitants of such cities did not farm land. The city could not survive without a supply of food from elsewhere³. But when farming and cattle-breeding were advanced and created sustainable surpluses and when craftsmanship and trade flourished the surpluses accumulated and were channeled to cities. The concentration of people and surpluses in cities led to the formation of markets. Cities saw a new class of people not employed in spheres of material production, there was a growing distinction between non-manual and manual work as well as an advancement of knowledge and a development of culture and ideology. Cities became centers of progressive development of social institutions.

Ibn-Khaldun, a great Arab philosopher (1332-1406) wrote, "It should be known that the sciences with which people concern themselves in cities and

2 Childe, 1945: 8, 9, 11. V.: Gorod..., 1995.

3 Gulyaev, 1969; Belenitskiy, Bentovich, Bolshakov, 1973.

which they acquire and pass on through instruction, are of two kinds: one that is natural to man and to which he is guided by his own ability to think, and a traditional kind that he learns from those who invented it"⁴.

However, we do not doubt that in the long course of the cultural development of mankind the phenomenon of the city was many-faceted and marked by distinctive local characteristics. For example, it is commonly believed that fortifications are an intrinsic part of a city but we have historical evidence to prove that when a state had a strong army the cities were not fortified. Such were the cities built by the Mongols at the time of the empire and some of the medieval cities of Middle Asia⁵.

Even though the early cities may have had a large area they may not have had a regular lay-out (e.g. in Mesopotamia, etc.). Many cities of Middle Asia (especially in the Semirechye) had citadels (housing palaces of the rulers), shakhristans – densely built up residential quarters (with narrow streets, markets, temples, official buildings and workshops), rabads – city outskirts (inhabited by artisans, inn keepers and having temples and burial grounds) with outlying agricultural areas of ploughfields, orchards, mansions and castles of rich land owners all encircled by long walls. The land owners also had private houses inside the city centers (the shakhristans)⁶. Some of the artisans worked land as well. In the west similar city outskirts surrounded by walls were common for the cities of the First Bulgarian Empire, the Volga and Danube regions (Pliska, Preslav etc.)

Medieval cities, some of which had mighty fortifications, did not always have a regular lay-out with clearly identified districts reflecting their purpose. The concentration of population and money, various buildings erected to meet the administrative and religious needs and promote the development of craftsmanship and trade all led to the expansion of the cities. To ensure basic sanitation such utilities as water supply systems and sewers were built. Monumental constructions such as palaces, temples, official building, tombs of rulers and the nobility promoted the development of architecture, painting, sculpture and plastic art.

When excavating cities, archaeologists find personal belongings (stamps, tamgas, treasures, coins and so on), various luxury items, religious attributes (from sanctuaries and temples), material tokens of power (steles with inscriptions, scepters, diadems), etc. Specific remains of local workshops in various forms of slag, faulty or unfinished goods are sometimes found.

It is obvious that the city is a complex cultural phenomenon. When it appeared, the city in its turn influenced the development of new cultural patterns, promoted changes in the ideology of communities inhabiting all the continents of

4 Abd Ar Rahman bin Muhammed ibn Khaldun. The Muqaddimah translated by Franz Rosenthal. Chapter 6, Part 9; Ibn Chaldun. Vvedenie, 1961: 622.

5 Concepts of "Middle Asia" and "Central Asia" are used according to Russian geographical tradition in this book. Cf. "Srednyaya Azia" and "Tsentral'naya Asia" in Russian – ed.

6 Belenitskiy, Bentovich, Bolshakov, 1973; Kozhemyako, 1959.

our planet. What was the ancient people's philosophy of the first cities?

It is a fact that the mythological picture of the world pre-historic man had was formed during a special period of the development of culture as well as of art (architecture, painting, sculpture, etc.). Researchers point out that during this period of time people saw themselves as part of nature but distinct from its other parts and anthropomorphized the forces of nature in their myths. It was formed during the period of transition to productive economy when the impact of man on nature was still very limited but already obvious.

According to the Arab philosopher of the ninth century Al-Farabi "the functioning of an ideal city is similar to the functioning of a healthy human body"⁷. This kind of imaginary goes back to ancient times and to even earlier beliefs of the peoples of the ancient world. In the philology research of the classics we see that for the culture of ancient Greece it was typical to represent "heroes of tragedies as former mythological personifications of 'cities' and the life stories of those heroes were the stories of the cities' destruction and creation... Cities, lands, rivers, air and stars heed to the characters of tragedies, which proves that the 'city' was one of the elements..."⁸.

Similar beliefs must have served as a foundation for the allegoric image of the city of Babylon in the form of a woman, "the Whore of Babylon", arising in one of the oldest texts, in the Bible, "And the woman which thou sawest is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth"⁹. The same idea is reflected in the prophecy of Isaiah, "And I will return My hand upon you and purge away your dross as with lye, and remove all your tin. And I will restore your judges as at first and your counselors as in the beginning; afterwards you shall be called City of Righteousness, Faithful City"¹⁰. The nature of the image becomes clearer when we take into account that the word "city" in Hebrew is feminine in gender which makes the comparison of a city with a whore possible¹¹.

It has been often mentioned that the religion of early Christians incorporated many beliefs held by people previously. In the early Gospel according to Thomas we find, "Jesus said, 'A city built on a high hill and fortified cannot fall, nor can it be hidden'"¹². It is true that "Truth did not come into the world naked, but it came in types and images"¹³.

The view of the city became close to the way people saw their dwellings. Researchers have long observed that different peoples including

7 Grigor'yan, 1960.

8 Freidenberg, 1978: 361.

9 The Book of the Revelation of John, Bible, King James Version, Rev. 17 [18].

10 Book of Isaiah, Chapter 1:25-26.

11 Shifman, 1987: 48.

12 The "Scholars' Translation" of the Gospel of Thomas by Stephen Patterson and Marvin Meyer, 32.

13 Apokrifiy.... 1989: 254, 284..

the Slavs had the same words to denote body parts and parts of a dwelling: forehead, face, widow (eye), moustache, mouth (lips), brow, legs, and bottom. Thus, a dwelling was likened to a human body in ancient times. Let us recall that in the past when a woman was in difficult labor people always opened the door of the house as well as the gate¹⁴.

Researchers of mythology and old texts specify, "...to open the gate is to give birth and the gate symbolizes a woman's child bearing organ. The mother's womb in child birth is the opening gate of heaven and to go through the gate or door is to be saved or born. But this semantics is characteristic of the period when people started to farm land. Before that there was a period when the city gate (fence, boundary, stone and any border line) was seen as the gate of heaven... The sun rising at dawn was born anew, passed through the city gate upwards, as if climbing a hill and leaving the dark underworld, and entered the heavenly city up in the sky (hence the image of 'heavenly Jerusalem'). The coming of the Sun deity into the heavenly city meant the salvation of the city, the deliverance from the dark, from the death and was ritualized... The Sun itself in a colorful procession entered the gate, passed through the city on the way to its temple..., and the temple itself was the house of God, the very place where God is, that is heaven". "Entering the city (the temple – the God's dwelling) is a metaphoric coming from the dead..."¹⁵.

So, in the early systems of beliefs a walled settlement or city took on anthropomorphic shapes or transformed into the images of the forces of nature or were seen as cosmic bodies and symbols of the universe (the heavenly city as the abode of the Sun God or its antipode, the city of the dead in the other world). Cosmos was always opposed to chaos. Many peoples saw their worlds as bounded by chains of sacred mountains¹⁶. "City walls arranged in a square facing the cardinal points were also associated with the boundaries of the world which was seen as a unity of city constructions and its people"¹⁷. That is why the walls of cities, city outskirts and the long walls of oases enclosing "our world" symbolized mountains. The Great Wall (Changcheng) marked a border of the chaotic space peopled by "barbarians" and the orderly world of the Chinese – the "Middle Kingdom" (Zhongguo) under the heavens (Tianxia). For Muslims the long walls they believed to have been built in the mountains somewhere North by Alexander the Great meant similar protection from the fierce hordes of Yajuj and Majuj. There was a belief that when those walls fell and the other-worldly evil and insensate creatures were set free and destroyed mankind the end of the world would come. Chaos would triumph over cosmos.

14 Baiburin, 1979: 159.

15 Freidenberg, 1978: 497, 498, 524.

16 Kyzlasov I.L., 1989a.

17 Ibid.: 209.

We know that for Russian peasants the concept of “mir” (world) meant community; “our world” meant the village whose fields were surrounded with fenced grazing grounds; “their world”, “the strange world”, meant either a neighboring village or sometimes a walled and fortified city (hence, e.g. Mirgorod (mir – world, gorod – city); the phrase “to see the world” referred to a perilous trip to the uyezd (district – tr.) town; the fairytale “strange world” referred to the familiar “grad (city) on the island of Buyan” and so on. Apparently, “world” or “city” meant the “whole universe” (compare the line from a Russian folk song “I have traveled around the universe...”). Here we clearly see the model of the universe in the mind of the land-working people.

When Russian people in the Middle Ages referred to a “Great city” (either the “Great city of Kiev”, or the “Great city of Novgorod” or the “Great city of the Bulgar”, or the “Great city” in the upper course of the Ob, etc.) they did not mean its size or degree of its political or administrative influence in its respective land. “Great” was used by common people to denote a city which similar to the envisioned “model of the world” reached “with God’s help” the likeness of the Great Universe, as they saw it. Consequently, it was something like universal holy greatness.

The same is proved in the legend about the foundation of Kiev recorded in “The tale of bygone years” (“Primary Chronicle”, the twelfth century) which says, Saint Andrew “thus went to the mouth of the Dnieper. Thence he ascended the river, and by chance he halted beneath the hills upon the shore. Upon arising in the morning, he observed to the disciples who were with him: “See ye these hills? So shall the favor of God shine upon them that on this spot a great city shall arise, and God shall erect many churches therein”¹⁸. The same source establishes Kiev’s greatness again, “6545 (1037) Yaroslav built the great citadel at Kiev, near which stand the Golden Gates. He founded there also the metropolitan Church of St. Sophia, the Church of the Annunciation by the Golden Gates, and also the Monastery of Sts. George and Irene”¹⁹. According to his hagiology St. Andrew the First Called also visited Novgorod the Great, where the Church of St. Sophia was also erected.

We cannot fail to see a connection with the Holy Scriptures in these ideas of the early Russians. Here we quote, “And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that Great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God”²⁰. Apparently, people saw as “great” a city created by God and given to them as a gift.

The city surrounded by walls and ditches in its initial semantics was perceived by its builders and inhabitants as an earthly projection of the

18 Rasskazy..., 1966: 27.

19 Ibid.: 92.

20 Book of the Revelation of John. Bible, King James Version, Rev. 21 [10].

cosmic world order they knew. A citadel (castle, kremlin) with the ruler's palace, a ziggurat or a cathedral (church or mosque with minarets) rising above the city almost always placed at the top of a natural elevation or hill is nothing else but the vertical axis of the universe. Right in the middle of it there was the palace of a tsar or ruler who thought himself equal to the divine beings and a temple, the obvious dwelling (Dom, Domus) of the heavenly deity. With this view each church, temple or mosque with a minaret was seen as the vertical axis of the Universe.

We know of two major lay-outs for city planning, a circle (oval) and a square (rectangle). Even though there were a few exceptions the ancient and medieval cities of the east (Egypt, Mesopotamia, India, Middle Asia and China) were square, while in the west (ancient Greece, Western and Eastern Europe, etc.) the cities were circular²¹. Those countries that experienced active interaction between Western and Eastern philosophies (e.g. the Roman Empire or Middle Asia) saw various forms of city lay-outs at different periods of history. In the beliefs of the inhabitants of the respective countries this was exactly the image of the organized cosmos, the Universe. In semiotics "the square is linked to certain ideas that are prompted by its geometry as, for example, the number 4, the absolute, the equal, simplicity, directness, uniformity, order, righteousness, truth, justice, wisdom, honor, land. The square or rectangle as well as the juxtaposed circle, form the horizontal plain for the Tree of Life where angles and points in the middle of each side are especially prominent and mark the four or eight main directions... The square served as a model for many religious buildings (ziggurat, pyramid, pagoda, church, chum (tents of skins or bark - tr.), etc.) which in their turn were seen as symbols of the world. The square in its distinct symbolic function often determined the shape of a settlement which in itself was seen as a model of cosmos, a "smaller" world. The so called "square" settlements were often opposed to the "circular" ones. The opposition of the square and the circle is one of the most meaningful and widely spread ones and it determines structure at a variety of levels, from the way cosmos is built (compare the belief expressed in the "Classic of Rites" (Liki or Liji,), an old Chinese text, that the sky is circular while the land is square) to the major divisions in the human community (the square is male, the circle is female)"²².

As for the circle it mostly stresses the idea of "unity, infinity and completeness, absolute perfection... The circle is a universal projection of a sphere, an acknowledged ideal solid... many traditional beliefs see cosmos as a sphere... When these mythological ideas of space and cosmos are applied

21 Savarenskaya, 1984; Gurevich L.L., 1990; Koshelenko, 1975.

22 Toporov, 1987: 630.

to the social sphere we might see the circle in the widespread approach to the representation of the structure of marriage classes as well as in the structure of archaic settlements" and so on²³.

It is no coincidence that in Plato (428-347 B.C.) the ideal city form is the circle and according to his contemporary counterpart from ancient China, the philosopher Meng Zi (372-289 B.C.), it is a square²⁴. During the entire Middle Ages western architects considered as a model the idealized image of the holy city of Jerusalem, circular with a cross-like inner division and in China up till recently it was a square city (cheng) with the same cross-like partition. In their capitals the central yard of the "forbidden city" symbolized for the Chinese the center of the universe²⁵.

We do not doubt that the city is a complex historical phenomenon which calls for extensive research in the framework of various fields of science and culture. We should not disregard that while studying the ancient and medieval cities of Inner and Northern Asia.

23 Toporov, Meylakh, 1988: 18, 19; Rosenau, 1986.

24 Savarenskaya, 1984: 50, 79.

25 Ibid.: 209.

Chapter 2. ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL EASTERN TEXTS

2.1. Role of the classical tradition in forming the image of the blessed city in the center of Asia

However unusual it may seem in our study of records of the unknown ancient cities of Siberia we should first go back to the classical tradition originating immediately in the culture of the ancient world. Any reference to the classics typically means the study of the great works by Homer and Hesiod. It is in Homer that we find a vivid story of how Hephaestus worked a richly decorated shield for Achilles; the shield which represented the model of the world having the whole of the universe depicted on it,

“Then first he form’d the immense and solid shield;
Rich various artifice emblaz’d the field;
Its utmost verge a threefold circle bound;
A silver chain suspends the massy round;
Five ample plates the broad expanse compose,
And godlike labours on the surface rose.
There shone the image of the master-mind:
There earth, there heaven, there ocean he design’d;
The unwearied sun, the moon completely round:
The starry lights that heaven’s high convex crown’d;
The Pleiads, Hyads, with the northern team;
And great Orion’s more refulgent beam;
To which, around the axle of the sky,
The Bear, revolving, points his golden eye,
Still shines exalted on the ethereal plain,
Nor bathes his blazing forehead in the main”¹

¹ The Iliad of Homer translated by Alexander Pope with notes by the Rev. Theodore Alois Buckley, M.A., F.S.A. and Flaxman’s Designs, 1899.

Further in the text it is mentioned that in the splendid universe on Achilles' shield,

"Two cities radiant on the shield appear,
The image one of peace, and one of war"²

Apparently, the two opposing cities of Good and Evil placed together against the background of the universe represented cosmic symbols. "In his 'Works and Days' Hesiod also compares two city-states: in one there is the rule of law which brings prosperity, there are no wars, the land is fertile and its progeny abound; in the other state where the tsar and law are unjust there is famine and pestilence, no children are born, the warriors are killed, the walls of their cities are ruined and their ships sink".

In the philology research of the classics it is pointed out that "recurrent all through the genre of Greek tragedy is the motif of a 'godly city' which is unfailingly prosperous. This kind of city normally has an equally 'righteous tsar' who personifies it"³.

The culmination of the ancient tradition characterized by the ever present vision of a "godly city" is reached in the works by Plato (428-347 B.C.) and Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), the great philosophers of ancient Greece. In his "The Republic" and "The Laws" Plato recreated the image of an ideal, perfect, just city-state whose rulers are philosophically educated. Everything is well-ordered in this polis (city) of concentric regular circles in construction. The population is stable⁴. In a dictionary by Plato's pupils there is a general definition of city, "The city is a place inhabited by many people who abide by common rules; they follow the same law"⁵.

Aristotle put forward a more flexible lay-out of the residential quarters for his ideal city which was more suited to human habitation. He designed its interior structure based on a broad esthetic theory which originated from a philosophical evaluation of life around him and a place of the "godly city" in the surrounding world⁶.

This ancient tradition and especially its utopian aspect greatly influenced the subsequent development of the views of medieval scholars on the ideal city as the model of the world. Following Alexander the Great campaigns in Asia when he reached India and created the Hellenistic civilization, the location of the utopian godly city shifted to the north.

Here we need to point out that the utopian views and dreams of the ideal world where various fruit were abundant and were equally and fairly distributed

2 Ibid.

3 Freidenberg, 1978: 225-247, 361, 564.

4 Platon, 1971: 89-454.

5 Platon, 1986: 434.

6 Aristotel', 1984; Koshelenko, 1975. Cf.: Rosenau, 1986.

were born together with man himself. Proof of this is found in ancient myths that followed the oral folklore tradition.

Some ancient fairytales are good examples. Thus, the early Egyptian "Tale of the shipwrecked sailor" written between the twentieth and seventeenth centuries B.C. tells of an Egyptian who survived a shipwreck and found himself on an island where he discovered some figs and grapes and other wonderful vegetables and "there was no viand not to be found there". This abundance in the strange land was miraculous – it was not manmade and when the mariner left the island it was devoured by waters⁷.

For the people of Mesopotamia Utopia, the perfect paradise, was located on the island of Bahrain in the Persian Gulf. The island was called the country of Dilmun in Sumerian. This is the way it is described in the Sumerian myth "Enki and Ninhursag",

"In Dilmun the raven was not yet cawing, the partridge not cackling. The lion did not slay, the wolf was not carrying off lambs, the dog had not been taught to make kids curl up, and the pig had not learned that grain was to be eaten. When a widow had spread malt on the roof, the birds did not yet eat that malt up there. The pigeon then did not tuck its head under its wing. No eye-diseases said there, "I am the eye disease". No headache said there, "I am the headache". No old woman belonging to it said there, "I am an old woman". No old man belonging to it said there, "I am an old man". No maiden in her unwashed state resided in the city. No man dredging a river said there, "It is getting dark". No herald made the rounds in his border district. No singer sang an elulam there. No wailings were wailed in the city's outskirts there"⁸.

The ancient oriental tales were later used in classical mythology. "In a myth Oedipus finds his death in the kingdom of tombs called Kurgan. It is a godly land, with good horses, always flourishing, with no winds and winters; abounding in blossoms, greenery, the fruits of its orchards, with sweet songs by nightingales and never-ending flow of its rivers and pure rains... We have no doubt what country this is; it is the utopian land of plenty, of bliss and beauty, just as paradise is depicted in myth"⁹.

7 Svetsitskaya, 1989: 34; Skazki..., 1959: 16, 17, 19.

8 *Enki and Ninhursag* Prof. Stephen Hagin, Symbolic Connections in WL, 12th edition, Kennesaw State University. Cf.: Gutorov, 1989" 56, 57.

9 Freidenberg, 1978: 350.

The same ancient folklore lay at the foundation of the utopian dreams of the early Christians of the ideal life on earth in the future. The Christian author Saint Irenaeus in his "Against Heresies" alluded to the story by the missionary Papias of paradise on earth and the abundance it would bring, "The days will come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand branches, and in each branch ten thousand twigs, and in each true twig ten thousand shoots, and in each one of the shoots ten thousand clusters, and on every one of the clusters ten thousand grapes, and every grape when pressed will give five and twenty metretres of wine. And when any one of the saints shall lay hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, "I am a better cluster, take me; bless the Lord through me". In like manner [the Lord declared] that a grain of wheat would produce ten thousand ears, and that every ear should have ten thousand grains, and every grain would yield ten pounds ... of clear, pure, fine flour; and that all other fruit-bearing trees, and seeds and grass, would produce in similar proportions. ...; and that all animals feeding [only] on the productions of the earth, should [in those days] become peaceful and harmonious among each other, and be in perfect subjection to man"¹⁰.

It is amazing how similar are the Sumerian ideas to the inspired prophecies of the Bible, "And a wolf shall live with a lamb, and a leopard shall lie with a kid; and a calf and a lion cub and a fatling [shall lie] together, and a small child shall lead them. And a cow and a bear shall graze together, their children shall lie; and a lion, like cattle, shall eat straw. And an infant shall play over the hole of an old snake and over the eyeball of an adder, a weaned child shall stretch forth his hand"¹¹. "And he shall judge between the nations and reprove many peoples, and they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift the sword against nation, neither shall they learn war anymore"¹².

Literary critics believe that "the Greek myth about the land of bliss lying far away in the north retained the original locality but was enriched by new color turning into Christian paradise beyond the ocean"¹³.

Later on during the Middle Ages the philosophers of West and East all based their theories on one and the same rich source of ancient philosophy and, above all, the ideas and works by Plato. They were brought to different parts of the world in their Latin translation and also due to the rapid development of Arab culture which utilized the classical inheritance and transferred it to other peoples of Europe and Asia.

Of paramount importance was the work of Al-Kindi (801-866) and Al-Farabi (873-950), the founders of Arab philosophy, who translated and interpreted Plato and Aristotle but were also original philosophers in their own right and creators of a complete medieval Arab system of philosophy¹⁴.

10 Against Heresies. Book V, Chapter 33 -3.

11 Book of Isaiah. Chapter 11:6-8.

12 Ibid., Chapter 2:4.

13 Alekseev M.P., 1932: XXVII.

14 Shaimukhambetova, 1979; Al-Farabi, 1970.

In "The Ideas of the Citizens of the Virtuous City" Al-Farabi offered detailed commentary on Plato's social utopia and adapted it to his own time. Al-Farabi wrote that "the functioning of a city or a house is similar to the functioning of a human body" but he also warned against the literal understanding of this analogy¹⁵.

The study of works by medieval philosophers reveals that the classical idea acquired some physical geographic shapes of the contemporary world in the view of the scholars of that time. The world expanded in the Middle Ages. This was the time when the mysterious nearly unknown vast areas of Asia caused a lot of interest, especially Northern Asia all of which is occupied by the mighty Siberia. This land stirred the imagination of the inhabitants of more southern areas. Vicariously through trade Siberia supplied the world with invaluable furs, gold, silver, precious stones and gems as well as the tusks of pre-historic mammoths.

We do not have enough book space to deal with the issue in much detail. In view of the subject of this book it seems worthwhile to compare the accounts of two contemporaries, both great writers from the twelfth century, one living in the west, another in the east. Thus, the famous Azeri poet Nezami (Nezāmi-ye) Ganjavi in his poem *Eskandar-nameh* described a city, "similar to paradise" and a blessed "country of Khirkhis" in the Far North in the upper course of the Yenisei and endowed it with the features of a utopian state of prosperity, equality, fraternity and happiness for all,

"He rode past vast meadows,
And orchards and winding streams,
And he saw the city of that wonderful land.
It was a city of plenty – like a paradise.
The tsar rode up to the city entrance but found no gate or signs of it.
He saw gay market stalls with no locks on the doors.
"It must be a local habit", he assumed.
The city people came forward to welcome the tsar with respect
And smiled to greet the Ruler of the world.
And took the royal wanderer to
The palace of turquoise as vast as the skies
And they offered him a great feast
and stood by the table glistening with vessels"

According to Nezami, in the "country of Khirkhis" in Siberia there existed an ideal community with a perfect moral, cultural and social order. The "eternal wanderer" *Eskandar* was amazed to see it having traveled around the whole world and only finding the truth of righteous life in this remote northern land in his declining years,

15 Shaimukhambetova, 1979: 98-127; Grigor'yan, 1960: 157.

"The world has righteousness in it. You should treasure it.
It comes to the world from these people...
If they are righteous, you must see your own falseness!
If they are called "people", should we be called the same?
If I had known of this wonderful world,
I would not have wandered the land in vain...
I would have adopted the ways of these wise men.
I would live in peace and cherish worthy ideas"¹⁶.

It turned out that the strength of the utopian city and of the country of ancient Khakassia did not lie in their faith prophesied by Eskandar but in the new social ethics and a specific social set-up of their life. They did not have a tsar, or rulers, or violence, or slavery, or private property, or wardens, or thieves. The people of this happy country were all equal in their rights and had equal wealth. Their society was based on collective work leading to universal prosperity. They had communal ploughfields and tools. The relationships between the members of this ideal community were based on brotherly cooperation, fulfilling a duty, the love of the truth and a total absence of deceit and lies¹⁷.

Apparently, the allusion to the same initial source makes Nezāmi-ye's utopia so close to the view of his distant contemporary, the scholar and poet Snorri Sturluson (1179-1241) from Iceland.

Snorri Sturluson divides the world into three parts: Africa, Europe and Asia. His description of Asia reveals a thorough knowledge of factual geography and the author is very close to Nezāmi-ye, "From the north around the east region, and all to the south, that is called Asia. In that part of the world all is beauty and pomp, and wealth of the earth's products, gold and precious stones. There is also the mid-world, and as the earth there is fairer and of a better quality than elsewhere, so are also the people there most richly endowed with all gifts, with wisdom and strength, with beauty and with all knowledge. Near the middle of the world was built the house and inn, the most famous that has been made..."¹⁸. It is hardly a coincidence that the medieval maps of Scandinavia as well as the Anglo-Saxon and Western European maps had their upper edge turned to the east where paradise lay according to the beliefs of the contemporary geographers¹⁹.

The civilized world also expressed a lot of interest in the "center of the world", the center of Asia, during the later periods of time. We know that in the thirteenth-fifteenth centuries such European travelers as John of Plano Carpini, William of Rubruck, Marco Polo, Giovanni da Montecorvino, Giovanni da Marignolli, Jordan de Severac, Afanasy Nikitin and many more visited Central and Middle Asia, China and India.

16 V.: Russian editon: Nizami, 1953: 670-675.

17 Kyzlasov L.R., 1968.

18 The Younger Edda translated by Rasmus B. Anderson.

19 Chekin, 2001: 57, fig. 1. 2 ff.

The center of Asia seen as a wonderful land of perfect people and its eternal city of wise men was a utopian myth that challenged the minds for a long time. The blessed country was sometimes placed in Southern Siberia, sometimes in India, sometimes in between. The most wonderful people in the world living in Southern Siberia featured in the writing by the Egyptian geographer Al-Omari in the fourteenth century who relied on the accounts of Muslim merchants ("... there is no one handsomer or of a more perfect fair complexion. Their bodies are perfection itself in their beauty, fairness and amazing loveliness; their eyes are blue") and in the works by the scholar Badr ad-Din who lived in India ("People there are agile, handsome and beautiful")²⁰. Giovanni da Marignolli, who visited China and India in the middle of the fourteenth century, described the paradise he claimed to have discovered on the island of Ceylon²¹.

In the fifteenth century the utopian philosophy penetrates early Rus. "The Tale of the Rohmanis and their wonderful life", a literary record from that time, is dedicated to India. It tells of a wonderful human community, "...they do not know greed. They do not have temples or priestly vestments, gold or silver, meat or wine or salt, a tsar or trade or dissent, any fights or envy or noblemen, theft or plunder or any glut".²²

In the seventeenth century the scholars educated in the European tradition that visited China and contributed a lot to the establishment of direct links between west and east highlighted the special role and significance of Asia. For example, the famous Moldavian scholar Nicolae Milescu who was a Russian diplomat and the ambassador of Russia to the Chinese capital of Beijing in 1675-1676 wrote, "...it is not only in its size that Asia is larger than the other parts of the world, it also abounds in all that man needs but above all it is the most ancient part because paradise was created by God in Asia and our primeval ancestors Adam and Eve were also created here and their progeny lived here till the flood. And after the flood all the languages and all the peoples came from Asia to settle in the other parts of the world. Faith, social traditions, city building, writing and learning all came from Asia ... and so by every right Asia is the noblest part of the world..."²³.

As we see it, the author pointed out the "Asian nature" of city construction. It is interesting to note that the center of Asia remained of interest for a long time. It was reflected in the search for a blessed country of Belogorye by Russian old believers in the Sayan-Altai uplands, Transbaikalia and as far as the "Five Waters" region in Tungpei; in the expeditions of N.K. Rerikh to the vast areas stretching from the Altai to the Himalaya; in N.K. Rerikh's dreams of Shambhala, the symbolic city-state with its temple of happiness and wisdom. In addition to that in the city of Kyzyl, the capital of Tuva, on the bank of the Yenisei (Ulug-Khem) at

20 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 5.

21 Posle Marko Polo, 1968: 200.

22 Pamyatniki..., 1982: 175.

23 Milesku Spafariy, 1960; Ursul, 1986: 162.

the confluence of the Kaa-Khem and Biy-Khem Rivers stands a symbolic obelisk with the "center of Asia" inscribed on it.

The wonderful utopia by the great Nezāmi-ye is of particular importance for the subject of this book because, as we know, it incorporated centuries-old dreams of mankind expressed by philosophers of the ancient world. Nezāmi-ye was familiar with both the initial assumption of this philosophy and also relied on his thorough knowledge of the geography of the entire East including the landscape features of Southern Siberia and Central Asia. This fact was observed by V.V. Grigoryev, one of the first researchers of Nezāmi-ye's legacy, in 1835, "However imaginary may Nezāmi-ye's tale seems at first there is also a lot of historical reality in it"²⁴.

Even though Siberia never had a "golden age" the chapters of Nezāmi-ye's poem featuring the "country of Khirkhis" in the upper course of the Yenisei are full of such details that the researchers of Siberia have every right to look at the poem as a historical source²⁵. We can hardly doubt that Nezāmi-ye was familiar with the particulars of the contemporary cities of Southern Siberia. It was possibly the capital city of the "country of Khirkhis" (Ordu-Baliq) that the poet idealized and proclaimed to be similar to paradise on earth.

In this way the real-life knowledge medieval scholars had of the contemporary cities of the remote Southern Siberia was joined with the ancient tradition and the folklore and literary dreams of mankind of a blessed peaceful city inhabited by just, wise and happy people living in complete social harmony in the free and prosperous Asia.

This proves that beginning from the ancient times cultural achievements and spiritual values were transferred across huge distances from some tribes and peoples to others as well as from ancestors to descendants. The tiny springs of knowledge joining together form the stream of human culture. Undoubtedly, the historical development of mankind and its culture is one inseparable process.

2.2. Cities of Northern Asia as seen by medieval geographers of the east

"Then, we approached the cities in ruins and continued our way through them for the next 20 days. We inquired into the cause of the cities' poor state and were told that they were seized and destroyed by Yajuj and Majuj".

Salam At-Tardjuman, 847.

In Southern Siberia and Central Asia cities and city culture existed as early as during the time of the Turkic khaganates of the sixth-eighth centuries.

²⁴ (Grigor'ev V.V.), 1835: 287.

²⁵ Kyzlasov L.R., 1968.

The famous early Turkic "runic" inscriptions on the Orkhon River (the epitaphs of Kül Tigin, Bilgä Khağan and Tonyukuk) contain Turkic words proper: balyq – "city", balyqdaqy – "citizen" and barq – "building". The chronicles of the Tang dynasty feature some Turkic temples (684) and the capital city of Heishacheng ("The City of Black Sands", 682), which might have been called Karakum Balyq in Turkic. There is no evidence of city construction on the Yenisei from that time but we have no doubt that settled habitation already existed²⁶. The wide spread implementation of city culture was undertaken by the rulers of the Uighur khaganate (the eighth and the ninth centuries). The ancient Uighurs of Central Asia built the cities of Ordu-Balyq, Khatun Balyq, Bay Balyq and some others on the Orkhon and Selenga Rivers. The large-scale construction of cities, fortresses and fortifications in the form of long daub walls which was started under khagan Moyun-čur (Boyan-čor) in 750-752 in the region of the upper Yenisei was also continued after the Uighur-Khakass war of 758. Some information about the cities of the Uighurs is contained in the runic inscriptions in honor of the early Uighur khagans and noblemen. As early as in 750, according to the inscription on his tomb, the Uighur khagan Moyun-čur "ordered to put up his white camp and palace with the throne and to build fortress walls..."²⁷ in the conquered land of the Chicks (čiks), that is in the present-day Tuva.

Arab and Persian sources from the ninth-fourteenth centuries also mention medieval cities along the Yenisei and in Western Siberia. The earliest record of "the city of the tsar of the Kimaks" on the Irtysh and of the capital city and the villages of the Uighurs of Central Asia is contained in the travel account of the Arab Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai of his journey from the city of Taraz on the Talas River to Ordu-Balyq on Orkhon, the capital city of the Uighurs.

The traveler's route probably led from the lower course of the Talas and the Chu Rivers via the Moyun-Kum and the Betpak-Dala deserts to the upper course of the Ishim and the Irtysh Rivers. The western boundary of the Uighur khaganate in the eighth and the ninth centuries lay in the upper course of the Irtysh. Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai undertook his trip at the end of the eighth and beginning of the ninth centuries, prior to 820; the exact date is still unknown²⁸.

Interestingly enough Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai recorded that somewhere in south-western Altai in the vicinity of Lake Zaysan he "saw *remains of an ancient city* (italics by L.K.). I did not find anyone among the Turks who knew who built it, who its inhabitants were and when it was destroyed..." This seems to be the earliest written record of ancient cities of Southern Siberia which ceased to exist as early as the ninth century.

26 Bichurin, 1950: 233, 266; Liu Mau-tsai, 1958: 162, 461; Malov, 1959: 92.

27 Malov, 1958: 40-43.

28 Minorsky, 1948; Kumekov, 1971; 1972: 48, 49; 1981.

Further in the text Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai writes that having traveled for 40 days after leaving Taraz "...he arrived in the city of the tsar. He said that the city was big, fortified and had well-ploughed fields and villages around it. There were 12 huge iron gates to the city. It was densely populated and crowded, there were many bazaars and goods mostly belonging to nonbelievers (zendiks)" that is non-Muslims. Also "he said that before he arrived in the city (of the tsar) at a distance of 5 parasangs (a historical Iranian unit of itinerant distance – tr.) he could see the tsar's tent of gold. The roof of his palace could accommodate 100 people".

At the same time the author writes that "the donkey route from Taraz" was such that it led to "two villages, inhabited and prospering, in the location called Kawakib lying at a distance of 7 parasangs from Taraz". From this place to the city of the tsar of the Kimaks (on the Irtysh River – L.K.) it would take 80 days for a quick horseman to deliver food supplies".

In order to assess the level of cultural development of the Central Asian Uighur state from the eighth and ninth centuries it is important to consider Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai's observation that "he set off for the country of the khagan of the Tokuz-Oguzes (that is the khagane of the Uighur – L.K.) by stage-horses given to him by the khagan of the Tokuz-Oguzes. He covered three marches during one day and one night (three changes of horses – L.K.) at the fastest pace and traveled 20 days across the steppe and in the steppe there were water springs and grazing grounds but not a village nor a city apart from those people who maintained the roads and lived in tents"²⁹.

As we see from these accounts the Uighur khaganate from the eighth and the ninth centuries had state high roads with a well-developed network of stages and a regular service of relay horses with alternating drivers. Consequently, long before the arrival of the Mongols the inhabitants of the state had to perform obligatory stage coach service.

Here we should not fail to mention a legendary medieval Arab tradition that featured in the accounts of the remote north. It penetrated the Quran and became canonized. We mean the accounts of the scary peoples of Yajuj and Majuj (the Biblical Gog and Magog) whose image in the minds of Arab scholars arose partly from Hebrew literature and partly from semi-historical novels about Alexander the Great from the Hellenistic Egypt³⁰.

In the Arab geography texts the legend became localized; the fierce Yajuj and Majuj were thought to be living in the Far North between the Urals and the Altai all the way to "the Sea of Darkness", the Arctic Ocean. In the Quran (Chapters XVI, XVIII, XXI) Yajuj and Majuj lived somewhere Far North beyond the high mountains in the "seventh climate".

"In another legend familiar from Titus Flavius Josephus and pseudo-Callisthenes which merged with the first legend and also got mentioned in

29 Minorsky, 1948: Kumekov, 1972: 1981.

30 Alekseev M.P., 1932: XXXI; cf. Obratsov, 1988.

the Quran they are kept there as if in prison beyond a strong wall with an iron gate built by Zul-Quarnain, that is Alexander the Great, in order to protect the people of other countries from their devastating invasions. They are trying to destroy the wall and break free but they are meant to stay there till God wills to let them out before the end of the world... Yajuj and Majuj have four eyes, two in the forehead and two in the chest, their bodies are covered with fur, some have ears hanging down to the shoulders, they do not speak but produce with their voices sounds that are like hissing of snakes and whistling of birds at the same time”³¹.

Following this tradition the Arab geographers of later years recorded in the north of Western Siberia sometimes a “great fortress” and sometimes a “tower”. For example, the traveler Masalak Al-Absara wrote, “From this country merchants enter Yugra which lies in the Far North. Beyond it there are no signs of settlement apart from the great fortress built by Alexander and behind there is only darkness”. The Egyptian geographer Al-Omari (the fourteenth century) observed, “... the Chulyman merchants travel as far as the Yugra lands which are at the outer limits of the north. Beyond them there are no settlements apart from a big tower built by Eskandar (Alexander) in the shape of a tall lighthouse, beyond it there is no way and there are only dark lands”³².

Some ancient towns “lying in ruins were seen in Western Siberia (probably in southern Trans-Urals) by the Arab traveler Salam At-Tardjuman who passed through Tiflis – Alania – Khazaria – Western Siberia and possibly Altai on his way to Tuva during the time of caliph Al-Vasik (842-847). From there he returned to Iraq via Eastern Turkistan – Samarkand – Bukhara – Termiz – Nisabur – Rey. The trip took 28 months and several days and brought such amazing results that the recorded details of this expedition have not yet fully been interpreted.

Here is some of the text from a book by the famous geographer Ibn Khordadbeh (circa 820-890/912?) who wrote down the story by Salam the Traveler, “We stayed with the Khazar ruler for one day for him to spare 5 guides for us. From their place we traveled 26 days and reached some black land that smelled bad. Before entering this (land) we had prepared a supply of vinegar and smelt it to remove the foul smell and followed (this way) for 10 days. Then we reached some cities (lying) in ruins and traveled across those lands for 20 days more. We inquired about the reasons for such devastation and were told that those were the cities (once) invaded by Yajuj and Majuj.

Then we reached some fortresses (built) next to a hill in whose gorges there ran a wall. In these fortresses (live) people who speak Arab and Persian.

31 Alekseev M.P., 1932: XXXI.

32 Ibid.: 44-45.

They asked us where we came from. We told them that we were envoys of the emir of the believers. They came closer (to us) and were amazed (at what they heard) and asked (again). 'The emir of the believers?' We said 'Yes'. Then they asked. 'Is he old or young?' We said. 'Young'. They were very surprised again and asked. "Where does he live?" we said 'In Iraq, in a city called Surra man ra'a (i.e. Samarra – tr.). They said. 'We have never heard of it'.

(The distance) between each of these fortresses is from one to two parasangs more or less... then we reached another city called Ika. It takes an area equal (to a square) with each side of 10 parasangs. (The city) has an iron gate with ploughlands around it and inside the city there are mills. This is the very city where Zul-Quamain settled with his army. Between (the city) and the wall the journey takes three days. (All along the way from the city) to the wall which one can reach on the third day there are fortresses and villages. (This wall is like) a mountain of a rounded shape. They say that Yajuj and Majuj live here. They are of two kinds. They say (also) that Yajuj are taller than Majuj with the difference from 1 to 1.5 ells, more or less.

Then we reached a high hill at the top of which towered a fortress and a wall built by Zul-Quamain. There between two mountains there is a gorge whose width is 200 ells. The gorge is the road along which passed and spread across the land (Yajuj and Majuj). The foundation for the wall was placed at the depth of 30 ells with iron and copper and (erected it) in such a way till leveled with the ground. Then, they put two supports on either side of the gorge, each support 25 ells wide and 50 ells high. The whole construction is made up of iron sheets covered with copper. (The size) of each sheet is 1.5 ells. The thickness of the sheet is the same as of four fingers put together. Between these two supports lies an iron ledge of 120 ells in length, 10 ells in thickness and 5 ells in width: it rests on both supports.

Above the ledge is a building of the same iron sheets covered with copper that tower at the top of the mountain whose height is as far as your eye can reach. This building rises above the ledge to about 60 ells. Above (the building) there are iron terraces. At the edges of each terrace are two horns whose curves meet. The length of each terrace is 5 ells, the width is 4 ells. Above the ledge there are 37 terraces.

The iron gate has two attached (to it) leaves. Each leaf is 50 ells wide, 75 ells high and 5 ells thick. Both posts when rotated are the same size with the ledge. (This construction is built so) that the wind cannot get in either through the gate or from the mountains; it is as if created by nature itself. The gate has a lock of 7 ells long and 1 *ba'a* (about 3 m – tr.) in girth. Two people could not embrace it and it is 25 ells above the ground. Five ells above the lock is the bolt which is longer than the lock. Each of the two bolts (in the lock) is 2 ells. This key in the lock is 1.5 ells long. (This key) has 12 notches each one like a pestle in a mortar. The girth of the key is 4 span, it is attached to a chain welded to the door. The length of the chain is 8 ells and it is 4 span

in girth. The ring fixing the chain to the door is like the ring of a catapult. The doorstep without the parts concealed by the two frames is 10 ells wide and 100 ells long. The protruding part (of the door) is 5 ells.

All (the dimensions) "zira" are measured (by the measurement) called "zira as-sauda". Beside the gate there are two fortresses each 200 square ells in area. At the gates of these two fortresses two trees grow. Between the two fortresses there is a fresh water spring. In one of the fortresses (remained) the tools used for the construction of the wall including some iron cauldrons and iron scoops. On each tripod are placed four cauldrons similar to the cauldrons for (making) soap. There are some remains of the iron bricks (of which) the wall was made. Because of the rusting they got stuck together. The superintendent (rais) of these fortresses rides his horse (to the iron gate) every Monday and Thursday. They (the raises) inherit their gates like the caliphs inherit their caliphates.

He rides (to the gate) together with three companions each with a pestle (hanging) around his neck. A ladder (is placed) against the gate. He climbs to the top rung and hits the lock once at the dawn and they hear a sound similar to (droning) of a disturbed beehive. And then (the sound) fades away. At midday they hit the lock another time. (The rais) puts his ear to the gate; the second sound turns out stronger than the first one. Then the sounds (fade away) again. In the afternoon they hit another time. The same sound is heard. He stays here till sunset and only then leaves.

The purpose of hitting the lock is for him (the rais) to hear if there is anyone behind the gate and (if there is someone) for them to know that the guards are here. And also so that (the people in the fortress as well) knew that those would not undertake any actions against the gate.

Not far from that place is a large fortress of 10 x 10 parasangs in size, that is 100 square parasangs in area.

Salam said, "And I asked one of the inhabitants of the fortress who was around 'Does this gate have any fault?' They said, 'None, apart from this crack. The crack runs cross-wise like a thin thread'. I asked, 'Do you have (at least) any concerns about the gate?' They said, 'No! This gate is 5 ells thick measured in Al-Eskandar's elbows and one Al-Eskandar's elbow is 1.5 as-sauda elbows'.

And said (Salam), "I came up to (the gate), took out a knife from my boot and scraped the place where the crack was and pulled out a piece of half dirhem in size, wrapped it in cloth in order to show it to Al-Vasik bi-llah. On the right-hand leaf of the gate at the top there is a writing in an ancient language and iron letters, 'And when comes my God's promise he will turn it powder; my God's promise is the truth' (a truly Manichaeian saying – LK)".

We looked around the building most of which was in stripes, one yellow stripe made of brass, another black made of iron. At the mountain top a pit was dug for smelting gates, a place for the cauldron for mixing copper and a place to smelt tin and copper. These cauldrons are of brass. Each cauldron

has three handles. There are chains and hooks used for lifting the copper to the top of the wall. We asked the people there, 'Have you seen a single Yajuj or Majuj?' They recollected that once they saw a few of them at the mountain. (At that time) a strong wind blew up and pushed (Yajuj and Majuj) towards them. They looked a span and a half tall. The mountain on the outside does not have a plain or a slope; there is no grass, no trees, nothing on it. The mountain is tall and it stands all smooth and white"³³.

Such was the description of the fortresses and the unusual, especially for the ninth century, engineering construction of an iron and copper wall with a gate blocking the passage through the gorge between two mountains. It is most likely that all this was seen by the translator Salam, who knew 30 languages³⁴, in Southern Siberia and, in our opinion, specifically in the territories of the present-day Tuva and in the south of Khakassia where the Yenisei flows from the Sayan Mountains³⁵.

This assumption needs to be further studied in a separate piece of research including the critical analysis of Salam's story. We should point out that the folklore of the Sayan-Altai peoples features iron palaces and houses (dwellings), iron or bronze bridges, pillars, tethering posts, cauldrons and bowls of iron, bronze and copper and in the legends of the Shors an entire iron city is mentioned.

Now let us address the accounts by Arab and Persian travelers, geographers and scholars of the tenth-seventeenth centuries. Compared to Ibn Khordadbeh who directly pointed out that "Salam At-Tardjuman told me this story in general and then dictated it to me from the letter that was written for Al-Vasik bi-llah"³⁶, the scholars of the later times only retold it in several versions. The wonderful journey of Salam featured in the writings of Ibn Rustah, Al-Muqaddasi, Al Idrisi, Al-Gharnati, Al-Kazvini, Ibn Al-Wardi, Yaqut, Al-Nuwayri and others.

According to Al Idrisi (the twelfth century) "The Bald land" (Bilad al-Kharab) with its remains of ruined cities also mentioned by Salam lay to the west and north-west of the lands inhabited by the Kipchaks, that is in Western Siberia (to the west and north-west of the upper course of the Ishym and the Tobol Rivers)³⁷. The same was recorded by Ibn-Khaldun in the fourteenth century³⁸.

Even before the above mentioned authors the Arab traveler Abu Dulaf (942) wrote that together with his companions he "traveled across the land (of the Khirkhis) for a month, in peace and quite". In the middle course of the Yenisei River

33 Ibn Khordadbekh, 1986: 43-46, 129-133.

34 Ibid.: 129.

35 Cf. Kyzlasov L.R., 1968; 1981a; 1981b; Kyzlasov I.L., 1979.

36 Ibn Khordadbekh, 1986: 133.

37 Kumekov, 1987a: 15.

38 Kumekov, 1987b: 95, 96.

they went to pray to a large temple. In the contemporary Persian text of the tenth century *Hudud Al-Alam*, whose author is unknown, we read about the boundaries "of the Toguzguz's and Khyrkhyz's cities" on the Yenisei and that "in each region (of these countries) there are many cities" and in the land of the Khyrkhyz "there is a city called Kamijket (that is "the Yenisei city" – L.K.) where the Khyrkhyz khagan lives". It is also mentioned in the text that the city of Penchul belongs to the Khyrkhyzes and the Kimaks also have one city on the Irtysh River.

Al-Makdisi, another tenth century author, subdivided the Turkic peoples into nomadic and settled ones. As settled he classified "the people of Khirkhiz" in Siberia as they "have ploughlands and trees" (obviously, fruit trees). Mahmud Al-Kashgari (the eleventh century) recorded, "For several years I visited the cities, winter and summer settlements of the Turks, Turkmen, Oghuz Turks, Chigils, Yagmas and Kyrgyzes..."³⁹. According to the same author, "city" sounds as "balyq" or "kend" in Turkic.

The most detailed account of the cities of the peoples of Southern Siberia is given by the Spanish geographer of Arab descent Al Idrisi (the twelfth century), "All the cities of the land of the Kirgiz lie within the territory whose area is measured in three days of journey. There are four big cities surrounded by walls and fortifications and inhabited by hard working, brave and steadfast peoples who have to beware of the ingenious king of the Kimaks especially". The map drawn by Al Idrisi features five cities bearing the names of Khakan Khirkhir, Darand Khirkhir, Nashran, Khirkhir (two times). They all are situated along two rivers (possibly, the Abakan and the Yenisei) that join and flow into the "Sea of Darkness". According to Al Idrisi, "the city where the Kirgiz ruler lives is strongly fortified and surrounded by walls, ditches and trenches"⁴⁰.

The same author reported 16 well-fortified cities of the Kimaks, the central part of their land being the upper Irtysh. The city of the "Kimak khakan" was encircled by a wall with an iron gate. Inside there were temples and bazaars. In the mountains there were the Kimak castle-fortresses surrounded by ditches filled with water⁴¹.

The great poet Nezami Ganjavi (the twelfth century) in his poem "Eskandar-nameh" when describing a blessed "country of Khirkhiz" on the upper Yenisei mentioned the capital "city of the wonderful land. Plentiful and beautiful like paradise"⁴². According to Nezāmi-ye, whose story correlates with Salam's one, in the same "distant northern land" Alexander the Great put up a long "amazing mound" to keep off Yajuj.

39 Grigor'ev, 1872: 34; Materialy..., 1973: 37, 39, 41, 43, 44; Beilis, 1969: 306; Khasanov, 1961: 92.

40 Kumekov, 1971; 1972: 121; Géographie..., 1836.

41 Kumekov, 1971; 1972: 98-108; Géographie..., 1836.

42 Nizami, 1963: 670.

We also need to look at the accounts of the twelfth century Arab author Tahir Al-Marwazi who left a record of the cities and city quarters in the land of the "shore people" living along the Siberian coast of the Arctic Ocean. These people are referred to in the text, "Beyond the (country of) Yura (live) the shore people, they go to sea with no need or purpose but merely to cover themselves in glory..."⁴³. Yura or Yugra were the names for the Ob Ugrians who inhabited the lower Ob regions and were trading partners to Arab and Persian merchants the latter profiting from "silent" exchange of goods.

According to Rashīd Al-Dīn, in the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries in the areas along the upper and middle course of the Yenisei lay "many cities and villages" and at the place of the confluence of the Angara and the Yenisei was the northernmost city of Kikas that "... belonged to the land of the Kirgiz"⁴⁴. The same author relates that in the thirteenth century in the valley of the Selenga River (in Western Transbaikalia) there were two fortresses of the Merkits with the Turkic names of Daykal-Kurgan and Karaun-Kapchal and that Jochi Khan founded the capital of the western ulus on the Irtysh and that in 1235 the Great Ögedei Khan "sent princess and emirs to Dasht-i-Kipchak (which included the southern part of Western Siberia - L.K.), Machin and other areas and ordered them to have tall buildings constructed similar to those in the cities and in the kushks (castles in Middle Asia - tr.)"⁴⁵. Rashīd Al-Dīn has numerous references to "the region of Ibir-Sibir" to the west of the Yenisei⁴⁶.

Having at his disposal a large body of Arab and Persian sources that also included the works by Rashīd Al-Dīn the famous of the seventeenth century historian and the Khan of Khiva Abul Ghazi (1603-1664) wrote about the medieval cities of Siberia. In an early translation of his works into Russian by D. Yazykov (St. Petersburg, 1825) we find reference to "the Kergiz" of the Yenisei who submitted to Chingis-Han, "they had two cities of Kamkamchut at a short distance from one another between two big rivers, the Selenga and the Ikran-Muran and two more cities at the country's borders both called Apruchir; their lands were separated by the latter river from one Tartar tribe and on the death of Genghis Khan they passed to his younger son Toulai"⁴⁷ (i.e. Tolui).

At some other point in the text Abul Ghazi observes that the river "Aikara-Muran flows through the Kirgiz lands... At the mouth of the river, on the sea shore is a big city with many villages around it and numerous flocks and herds of grazing cattle... This city is called Alakchin. In the

43 Zakhoder, 1967: 68.

44 Rashid-ad-din, 1952: 102, 150.

45 Rashid-ad-din, 1952b: 149; 1960: 35, 78.

46 Rashid-ad-din, 1952a: 73, 50.

47 Puteshestviya k tataram. 1825: 287, note 73.

vicinity of it there are silver mines: the local people have cauldrons, cups and bowls all made of silver"⁴⁸.

Abul Ghazi also knew that long before the Mongols the territory of Mongolia was inhabited by the ancient Turkic Uighurs who built a city civilization in Central Asia. He wrote, "In one location among these mountains ten rivers flow, in another there are nine, they are all big rivers. Along the rivers there used to be dwellings of ancient Uighurs, those ones living on the ten rivers were called Un-Uighurs, while the ones living on the nine rivers were called Tukuz-Uighurs. They had many cities, villages and ploughlands all in all there were 120 volosts (districts – tr.)"⁴⁹.

Among the Far Eastern written records two texts are important for the subject of this book, they are "Travels to the West of Qiu Chang Chun" ("Xiyouji", 1228) and History of Yuan Dynasty (Yuanshi) which have rich evidence of the cities built by the Mongols in the thirteenth century in Eastern Altai (maybe in Tuva) and in the Tuva hollow. The "Travels to the West of Qiu Chang Chun" feature "Zhenhai balgasun", "the city of Chinhai" built after 1211 somewhere in Eastern Altai and settled by 10 000 young Chinese, both men and women, who engaged in crafts and landfarming. "People working at the stages related that in the northern parts of these snow covered mountains is Balgasun Tian Zhenhai; Balgasun means city in our language; it has shops selling bread, so it is also called Cang Tou (shop – L.K.). On the 25th day of the 7th Moon (the year of Xinsi) (August 14, 1221 – L.K.) all the Chinese artisans and workers living in the city crowded to meet the teacher; they were all happy, they cheered him and bowed low to him and walked in front of him with colorful holy banners, bright parasols and sweet smelling flowers". On the next day Chinhai himself, the governor of the city and a follower of Chingis-Han visited the teacher⁵⁰.

The same city features in Yuanshi as well: Chinhai "was ordered to have the land tilled with the help of the settlers in Aluhuan and to found (there) the city of Zhenhai and to guard it"⁵¹.

In addition, also in Yuan shi in the story of five administrative regions set up by the Mongol authorities on the Yenisei in the thirteenth century and governed by the Kyrgyz princes there is a reference to the cities of Kian ("Yeniseian (city)" – L.K.) and Yilan ("Snaky" – L.K.) which were the centers of the Kianzhou prefecture on the Yenisei (Ulug-Khem) and the Ilantchou prefecture on the Elegeist River. It is stated that Kiantchou derived from the name of the Kian River (that is Kem – Yenisei – L.K.) and that it is inhabited

48 Abul'-Gazi, 1906: 40.

49 Ibid.: 36.

50 "Si yu tsi", 1866: 293, 294.

51 Munkuev, 1963: 159.

by several thousand families of the Mongols and the Uighurs. There are several artisans' workshops of the descendants of the Chinese relocated to the Yenisei at the time of the start of the Mongol dynasty⁵².

When Kublai Khan appointed the official Liu Haoli as governor of the 5 Kyrgyz areas in 1270 the latter set up his residence in the city of Yilan on the Elegest River. It was at that time that warehouses and granaries were built, stages were set up and official services were introduced. It was then that a new wave of prisoner-craftsmen were brought over to teach the local inhabitants of both prefectures of the central part of the Tuva hollow how to "make pottery, to smelt metals, to build boats" and so on⁵³ (possibly, following Chinese patterns and techniques). This is what we know of the early and medieval cities of Siberia⁵⁴ from the eastern sources that survived to this day.

As for Northern Asia, its first and most ancient cities were located along waterways. The mighty rivers that rushed through the dense forests and swamps served as navigable routes in the early times. Besides, the rivers ensured plentiful supplies of fresh fish and the forests along their banks abounded in various game and fur-bearing animals – the main source of valuable furs for the subsistence hunters and traders later on.

52 Schott, 1865: 437.

53 Kychanov, 1963: 60, 61.

54 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984.

Chapter 3. MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN SOURCES

3.1. Distinctive cities and fortresses of Siberia as recorded in Russian sources of the twelfth-seventeenth centuries

Along those rivers are many cities of stone and grand chambers
in the steppes areas, and they all are empty and some have crumbled
from old age, and what happened to the people nobody knows...

Chronicle, not earlier than 1645

Russian people had had a keen interest in the neighboring vast, rich and unknown eastern territory, its inhabitants and opportunities for trading and cultural exchange long before Siberia joined the Russian state and prior to the time when the very term "Siberia" first featured in Russian records. We know that the Russian Primary Chronicle in the entry for the year 1096 has a story by the Novgorod citizen Gyuryata Rogovich about the people of "Yugra" who lived in the Ural Mountains and were in need of iron. According to the chronicler, this people was driven "into the dark lands of the high mountains" by Alexander the Great. There is a vivid description of a silent exchange of iron for furs which the chronicler believes to have occurred through a "small window" carved in the mountain¹. Gyuryata Rogovich said, "I sent my messenger to Pechora land, to the people who pay tax to Novgorod. After that he went to the Yugra land where the people speak incomprehensible language and in the North their neighbors are Samoyeds" (Laurentian Codex, sheet 85a).

By the twelfth century the Russians had already become familiar with the Ugra-Yugra from the Urals and also established links with them and even

¹ PSRL, 1848: 224, 225; 1962.

intermingled. There is direct evidence to prove that the emerging North-Eastern Rus or the independent Rostov-Suzdal principality was being formed as a multiethnic state according to the policies of the Russian princes. In order to establish a strong center to counterbalance Kiev the princes recruited support from the surrounding non-Russian peoples including some relatively distant peoples of the Volga Turkic Bulgars, the Finish Mordvinians and the Ural-Siberian Ugrians.

So, in the manuscript of the Russian Academy of Sciences (collection 17, file 17, sheet 11) we find, "the Grand Prince Yuri the son of Volodimir (Dolgorukiy, 1125-1157 – L.K.) came to Suzdal and saw that he was deprived of the Russian lands and started in his territories the cities of Yuriev in the fields, Pereyasavl by Klyushin (Kleshin) lake, Volodimir on the Klyasma and many towns with the same names as existed in Rus to find comfort in this as the Rus were losing power and started to settle those cities calling people from other lands and supporting them and many Bulgars, Mordvinians and Ugrians came and settled in his cities"².

This source is of critical importance. We know that the Volga Bulgars and the Mordvinians of the twelfth century as well as the Russians lived under the feudal system and had a considerable experience of city life in their own relatively developed towns. It is more likely that as the founder of new cities the prince invited to settle there craftsmen and artisans but not some nomadic forest hunters and fishermen as the medieval Ugrians of Siberia are still seen by some researchers. Apparently the twelfth century "Yugra" were quite prepared for city construction and lifestyle in terms of their socio-economic development and production skills, the same is true of the Bulgars and the Mordvinians. Thanks to long-term links and contacts with the peoples living west of the Urals, the Ugrians of the twelfth century formed a fully-developed segment of the economic life of Eastern Europe.

As they entered some economic and political agreements with the Russian prince "the numerous Yugra" apparently acquired rightful citizenship in the Rosrov-Suzdal principality. That is why Prince Yuri gave them money loans not only to build houses and yards but also to buy the necessary household things. All this suggests that there were cities in the land of the Yugra as well. It is proved by evidence from many records.

Since the end of the twelfth century the feudal Novgorod with its veche (popular assembly – tr.) started to explore eastern and north-eastern lands. The Novgorod voivodes (military commanders – tr.) delegated to subjugate the rich lands of the Yugra and collect tribute were able to see on many occasions that the twelfth century Yugra had a strong army. For instance, in 1187 the tribute-paying Pechora and Ugrians killed 100 distinguished Novgorod warriors when defending their lands³. It was a crushing defeat in those times. In another recorded story we

2 V.: Nasonov, 1924: 4, note 1.

3 Novgorodskaya pervaya letopis', 1950: 229.

read that when the Novgorod army started a military campaign against Yugra in 1193 they faced organized resistance, "in the same summer an army under the voivode Yadrei went from Novgorod to Yugra, it reached Yugra and captured the city and marched on to another city whose inhabitants concealed behind its walls and the army lay in wait there for 5 weeks..." Here we find the first reference to "the prince of Yugra" who resorted to cunning and military skill ("stole out of the city and cut up all") and defeated the Novgorod army; "remained of them 80 men". For 1194 the record is, "and came from Yugra those who remained alive" to the city of Novgorod⁴.

These are the first records of Siberian cities proper in Russian sources. Even though the records of the thirteenth century referred to "the volost of Yugra" as one of the territories "belonging" to Novgorod punitive⁵ expeditions to Siberia still continued. In the only available record of the Novgorod campaign to the Ob in 1364 we do not find any detailed information. It only says, "That winter the Novgorodians came from Yugra, among them the sons of the boyars and young people and the voivodes Alexander Abakunovich and Stepan Lyapa who fought on the Ob River and as far as the sea while the other half of the army fought at the upper Ob"⁶. Thus, during nearly 300 years Novgorod did not manage to conquer the Yugra principality.

The Novgorod cycle of initial records of Siberia included into the Nikonovskaya, Ipatevskaya and the Forth Novgorodskaya (and partly the First) chronicles culminates in the outstanding literary work "Of people unknown in the Eastern Land and of tongues various". It is indicative that the author of this text that dates from the fourteenth century did not yet know the name Siberia and called it Eastern country. Nevertheless, he was familiar with the names for the waterways and distinctive landscape features; he provided accounts of goods and trade with the peoples of Western Siberia. D.N. Anuchin who studied this manuscript quite rightly referred to it as "something like a short guidebook"⁷.

These invaluable stories were told to the Russians by the Samoyeds. They also featured a trade route leading from the north to Southern Siberia. It turned out there was a big city on the upper Ob which was the centre of a trading settlement of that time. Anything could be bought there, anything one could wish for. Apparently, the Samoyeds went on trading expeditions far south. The ancient text goes, "Up that same river the great Ob there are people who walk under the land along one river a day and a night with light. They come to a lake and the lake is lit by the light of great wonder. And the city is great but has no settlement around. And that one who comes to the city hears a great noise in that city like other cities have. And when one comes inside there are no people and no sound is heard. No signs of any life.

4 Ibid.: 40, 41, 232-234.

5 Gramoty..., 1949: 9.

6 PSRL., 1848: 64, 65.

7 Anuchin, 1890: 234, 235.

The yards all have viands and drinks of all kinds and goods are plentiful. Whatever one wants. And one pays what is asked and takes what is needed and walks away. And one who does not pay the price but takes what he wants and goes away he loses what he got and it is again found at its old place. And when one leaves the city the noise is heard again like in other cities..."

The seemingly fairytale-like narration in fact refers to some details of real life. According to D.N. Anuchin, the text possibly features Lake Kolyvanskoe and the mines of Altai where "minors work under the earth with lanterns". Obviously, this great trading city was situated in the Sayan-Altai uplands and was the hub of the trade of the Samoyeds from the remote north with some steppe peoples of Southern Siberia. Who the city belonged to is still a mystery.

In the fifteenth century the Moscow principality also tried to conquer Yugra. In 1467 the Pelym (Mansi) Grand Prince Asyka was captured and brought to Vyatka city. In 1483 the Moscow army first crossed the Urals and fought the "Yugra" and "Konda" princes and captured the Grand Prince Moldan of Yugra and "prince Ekmychei's two sons". The army marched forward as far as the Irtysh and traveled down the Irtysh in boats and got into the Ob River. The next large campaign of 1499-1500 was headed by princes Peter Ushatyi and Semyon Kurbskiy. They led an army of more than 4000 warriors. According to their reports, they crossed "Kamen (rock ridge – tr.) (i.e. the Ural mountain ridge – L.K.) through a gorge, the Kamen is as tall as the clouds, when it is windy the clouds are torn by it and the length of it is from sea to sea. On the Kamen the voivodes killed 50 Samoyeds and captured 200 deer. From Kamen it is a week's journey to the first town of Lyapin. From Lyapin came the Obdors (inhabitants of the area in the Ob mouth – tr.) on deer and the army in dog pulled sleighs. Lyapin was captured together with 33 other towns... Also Vasilii Brazhnik captured 50 cities..."⁸. Fifty-eight local princes were captured.

It seems quite likely that here they do not mean cities proper but also "small walled towns" as they were called in Russian sources. These were fortresses strengthened by ditches, mounds and wooden palisades of stone walls. The indigenous peoples of Siberia normally chose for their construction some places that were difficult of access: river promontories, islands or hills. These well-fortified towns were administrative centers for the locals and provided shelter in the case of a military threat. Nearly all of them were also centers of local crafts and economic activity.

We find more evidence of Siberian cities dating from the beginning of the sixteenth century in the book "*Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*" (Notes on Muscovite Affairs – tr.) by the Austrian ambassador baron Sigismund von Herberstein who borrowed it from the "Russian itinerary" and included it into his own book. Sigismund von Herberstein visited Moscow twice in 1517 and 1526 and his book was published in Vienna in 1549.

8 V.: Zamylovskiy, 1884: 137, 138, 434-436.

This author cites the Russian definition of the word "city": "anything that is surrounded by a wall has battlements or is encircled in any other manner is called city by them"⁹.

Sigismund von Herberstein translated and included in his "Notes" a unique "Russian itinerary" describing the route from Moscow to the northern lands of Pomorye and to the Pechora River and further on to the "Samoyadi" beyond "the Land or Stone belt" (as the Ural Mountains were called at that period of time) and to the Ob River. The word "Siberia" does not feature in the itinerary, thus, it probably originated in the fourteenth century. In the other parts of the book on four occasions Sigismund von Herberstein himself mentions "the area of Siberia" where the Yaik River" takes its source (that is the Ural River). According to the author apart from "the area of Siberia" ruled by the Nogai prince Shihmamai there was also "the kingdom of Tyumen whose ruler was a Tatar called tsar of Tyumen in their language"¹⁰. It is possible that at the beginning of the sixteenth century by the area of Siberia the Russians only meant Southern Urals but not the entire territory of the future Siberian kingdom.

Siberia in the present-day meaning of the word features in the itinerary like this, "the ascent to the Kamen mountain takes three days; when you go down the mountain you reach the Artavisha River and then to the Sibut River, then to the fortress of Lyapin, and from Lyapin to the Sosva River. People living along this river are called the Voguls. Traveling away from the Sosva River and leaving it on the right you reach the Ob River which takes source in Chinese lake. It took them one day of quick riding to cross this river, so wide it is that it stretches nearly 80 versts (old Russian measure of distance equal to 3500 feet or 1.6 km – tr.). Along it also live the Voguls (Vogulici) and the Yugra. The journey from the Ob fortress up the Ob River and to the mouth of the Irtysh which is joined by the Sosva River takes three months. In these regions there are two fortresses, Yerom and Tyumen which belong to the Yugra princes who pay tribute to the Grand Prince (of Moscow), they say. The regions are rich in beasts and a lot of furs are taken.

From the mouth of the Irtysh to the Grustina fortress is two months of journey; from there to Chinese lake along the Ob which, as I said, takes its source from the lake is more than three months of journey. From that lake quite many black people come who do not speak any intelligible language; they bring various goods to be bought by the Grustintzi and the Serponovtzi. The latter got their name from the fortress of Serponov in Lukomorye lying in the mountains beyond the Ob River. They say that the people from Lukomorye experience some wonderful and unbelievable (transformations) very similar to what happens in fables; they

⁹ Godovikova, 1986: 71.

¹⁰ Gerbershtein, 1988: 128, 162, 163, 179 (cf.: Zamyslovskiy, 1884).

say that every year and exactly on November 27, the day when the Russians honor St. George, they all die and the next spring (most often) on April 24 they come back to life again, like frogs. The inhabitants of Grustina and Serponov trade with them in a way that is unusual and unknown anywhere else.

When the time comes for them to die or go to sleep they store their goods in a separate place; the Grustintzi and the Serponovtzi take them away leaving their own goods in fair exchange. If those upon coming back to life see that the goods were taken away at unfair prices they (demand them back. Because of this) there spring up frequent quarrels and wars.

Down the Ob River along its left bank live the people of Kalym who came to settle it from Obiova and Pogoza. On the lower Ob before Zolotaya Starukha where the Ob flows into the ocean there are the rivers of Sosva, Berezva and Nadym which all start in the mountains of the Big Belt of Kamen and other rocks next to it. All the peoples inhabiting the areas from these rivers to Zolotaya Starukha (Gold Old Woman – tr.) pay tribute to the Moscow ruler. Zolotaya Baba that is Zolotaya Starukha is an idol that stands at the mouth of the Ob in the Obdora area on the other bank. Along the banks of the Ob and the neighboring rivers there are many fortresses whose rulers, they say, are all subjects to the Moscow ruler. They say or, to be more precise, they gossip that the idol of Zolotaya Starukha is a statue depicting an old woman holding her son in her lap and she is pregnant with another child who is said to be her grandson. More over, they say that she put there some instruments that make a constant sound like pipes. If this is so, I believe the cause is the strong and never stopping wind blowing at the instruments.

The Cossin River flows from the Lukomorye hills and at its mouth is the fortress of Cossin which used to belong to prince Ventzi and now to his sons”.

In conclusion Sigismund von Herberstein wrote, “Everything that I related before was translated by me word for word from the ‘Russian itinerary’ at my disposal. Even though it seems there are some imaginary and highly unlikely facts about, for example, the silent people who die and come back to life, about Zolotaya Starukha and about people of monstrous looks and a man-like fish and even though I tried to make inquiries about all this and never learnt anything from any person who might have seen these things with his own eyes (with the common belief that everything was exactly as described), still I did not want to omit anything so that other people were free to interpret these things themselves. (That is why I used the same place names as are common for the Russians)”¹¹.

The information from the “Russian itinerary” recreates the picture in quite accurate detail (provided we disregard some of the fictional ideas such as the Ob River taking source in Chinese lake) of the same meridional trade route linking the Samoyed-Ugrian north with the remote south along the Ob River.

11 V. Zamyslovskiy, 1884; Gerbershtein, 1988: 157-160.

This record comes very close to that in the earlier Russian itinerary "Of people unknown in the Eastern Land and of tongues various". But instead of one "Grand city" serving as a major intermediary center of trade between the peoples of that time this text features two centers of Southern Siberia, Grustina and Serponov.

So, according to the "Russian itinerary", to the north of the Sosva as far as the mouth of the Irtysh along the eastern slope of the Ural Mountains and on the Ob River lay the Yugra land with its many "cities". Among those the itinerary focuses on the fortresses and cities of Lyapin, Cossin, Obskaya, Yerom and Tyumen. These cities feature on the map in the appendix to the book by Sigismund von Herberstein. This map among many others was thoroughly studied by academician B.A. Rybakov¹². In the Yugra land, as the itinerary highlights, there are plenty of beasts and a lot of furs are taken. To the north of it live the "Kalam" and Obdors in whose land at the "mouth of the Ob" stands a mysterious idol of the people of Northern Siberia at that time, the so called Zolotaya Starukha or Baba. An idol representing a female figure with a spear is also drawn on the map in Sigismund von Herberstein's book.

The Ob River, whose width according to the source was "stretching for nearly 80 versts", was similar to a sea bay to the people of that time. It was drawn on maps of the same width from source to mouth by foreign geographers as well. That is why "Lukomor'ye" in the views of the Russian people of that time lay not along the shore of the Arctic ocean but along the right bank of the Ob which is much further south. As for the Lukomor'ye hills they are a latitudinal upland now known as the Siberian Uvals. There are no other hills along the right bank of the Ob or the Gulf of Ob. It is here that the Ob is joined by its right tributary the Kazym River (Kasym in the language of the Mansi) which is called Kassima in Sigismund von Herberstein¹³. At the mouth of the Kazym opposite from Berezhva stood the fortress of Kazym (Kossin) belonging to prince Ventzi. The Kazym (Kasym) and the Nadym (Kassima) rivers flow into the Gulf of Ob from the same location and the right hand tributaries of the Ob the Trom-Yugan and the Pim flow from the south.

The city of Serponov is not marked on Sigismund von Herberstein's map but according to its description "the fortress of Serponov (located - L.K.) in Lukomor'ye which lies in the hills beyond the Ob River", that is somewhere in the Siberian Uvals but not in the tundra along the ocean coast. The city of Grustina is marked on the map in the uppermost course of the Ob on its right bank. On the edge of the map is written, "The area of Khumbalyq in China" and on the big lake where the Ob takes its source there is an inscription (in Latin) "Chinese lake"¹⁴.

It is likely that the place name of Khumbalyq was rightly interpreted as Khaanbalyq (the Great Kublai Khan's capital built at the site of the present-day

12 Rybakov, 1974: 83.

13 Atlas SSSR, 1954: 59, 60; cf.: Balandin, Vahrusheva, 1958: 35.

14 Rybakov, 1974: 93.

Beijing)¹⁵. Sigismund von Herberstein's map erroneously placed Khaanbalyq close to the sources of the Ob flowing from the mythical Chinese lake.

After this map was published in 1549 the above mentioned cities continued to find their way into many foreign maps up to the very end of the seventeenth century. Thus, the map by Gerhardus Mercator (1595) has the cities of Grustin and Serponov marked on it. Grustin is placed on the lake shore in the upper course of the Ob. On the map by Jodocus Hondius (1606) the cities of Serponov, Grustina and Khambalyq further upstream are marked on the Ob. On the map by G. Kavtelli (1683) the banks of the lakes and rivers of Siberia feature many cities. On the map by Nicolas Sanson (1688) Serponov is marked on the middle Ob and Grustina is placed close to the mouth of the Tom River while in Nicolaes Witsen (1687) Grustina is located on the right bank of the Katun River close to its mouth¹⁶.

Judging by the early cartography the large trading settlement of Grustina (also referred to as "the Grand city" in the "Of people unknown in the Eastern Land and of tongues various") was located either in the uppermost areas of the Ob where the Katun and Biya join together (it is a fact that the Biya River flows from Teletskoye Lake) or on the Chulym River to the west of the mouth of the Tom. Some other sources we are going to look at later give evidence in favor of the second location and enable us to conclude that Grustina was located in the middle course of the Ob above its confluence with the Chulym River¹⁷ and approximately at latitude 57°. As for Serponov, it stood on the northern slope of the broad span of the Siberian Uvals ("the Lukomorye hills") close to the confluence of the Ob and the Kazym (Kasym in Mansi) that is at latitude 63°. The main route between Grustina and Serponov lay along the Ob.

Merchants from Grustina and Serponov engaged in trade with dark skinned strangers "not knowing any intelligible tongue" who came to the upper Ob from the remote and mysterious Chinese lake. We side with the assumption by B.A. Rybakov who writes, "Precious gems, pearls and the dark skin color of the strangers suggest the idea that they might have been Indian merchants who had an interest in northern furs and ivory from mammoths"¹⁸. However, later in the text we are going to prove that this information can be substantially specified¹⁹.

Penetrating further north the merchants from Grustina and Serponov traded with the northern Samoyeds of Lukomorye in "a way unknown to other

15 Zamyslovskiy, 1884: 85, 420.

16 Rozen, 1980.

17 Kyzlasov L.R., 1994.

18 Zamyslovskiy, 1884: 419, note 8, 420, 518, 519; Rybakov, 1974: 79. The "Delhi-Indian" trading people traveled in Siberia as early as the beginning of the eighteenth century (Kyzlasov L.R., 1983: 46, 92-95). Some Indian merchants were members of the diplomatic mission of F.I. Baikov to China in 1654-1657 (v.: Demidova, Myasnikov, 1966).

19 The author dedicated a separate article to the subject dealt with below. V.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1995; 1997.

countries" as the itinerary relates. That was a non-monetary exchange of goods as the northerners did not have commodity-money relations. As we read in the earlier Russian records ("Of people unknown in the Eastern Land and of tongues various" and the story by Gyuryata Rogovich) the silent exchange with northerners was a common and old tradition.

Here we need to go back to an earlier record by the Khwarezm scholar of the end of the tenth - beginning of the eleventh centuries Al-Biruni of the trade of the Volga Bulgars merchants with those same peoples of the northern Ob regions, "the way the Yura people trade is that they leave their goods at the border of their country and go away as they are wild and fear other people"²⁰.

The cities of Grustina and Serponov are still covered in mystery. It is necessary to study their names from the perspectives of the languages of various peoples, above all the Samoyed, Ugrian and Turkic languages.

The source was interpreted differently by the Western European followers of Sigismund von Herberstein 100-150 years later. For example, Jacob Reutenfels (1672-1673) wrote, "(the reader) should continue the list of the above mentioned areas with another one, Lukomorye, at the border of which the inhabitants of Grustina and Serponov live that are friendly to the Russians and that live close to Chinese lake in which the Ob River takes its source and across which the Indians bring various goods and precious stones to sell. The people of Lukomorye similar to the Samoyeds go under the ground to spend the winter and come back into the sunlight in early spring..."²¹.

Some authors assumed that Grustintzi were the same as the Gaustintzi (Yaushtintzi) who lived near Tomsk according to Philip Johan von Strahlenberg who traveled in Siberia in 1721. He refers to them several times in his travel journal as well as in his book published in Stockholm in 1730²². The translation of this book done by V.N. Tatishchev soon after its publication features both the "Gaustintzi" or the "Gaushtu" or the "Gaushtintzi". The text goes, "...these remaining Gaushtin peoples live in several kubitkas near Tomsk and they are about 200 or 300 people in number, they worship idols and use the same tambourines drums as the Lapps and Ostyaks. I was told that they are long-time Siberian inhabitants..."²³.

This small Turkic ethnic group survived among the "Tomsk Tatars" to the present day under the name of Iaushtalar (Eushtintzi in Russian)²⁴. Due to the development of their language the omission of the initial "g" sound in the local pronunciation is quite logical as well as the change of "s" into "sh". The point is that now the eastern Turkic peoples have no words starting with the "g" sound.

In the discussion of the evidence from the "Yugra itinerary" August Christian Lehrberg at the beginning of the nineteenth century relying on

20 V. Belenitskiy, 1949: 210.

21 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 24.

22 Messerschmidt, 1962: 83, 93, 152, 357; Strahlenberg, 1730.

23 Zapiski kapitana..., 1985: 45, 164; cf.: Andreev, 1965: 42, 43.

24 Boyarshinova, 1950: 34, 116, 200; cf.: Tomilov, 1981: 183-201.

Strahlenberg's reference to the "Gaustintzi" and G.F. Miller's reference to the "Evshtintzi" was one of the first researchers to observe, "we believe that these Eushtintzi or Gaustintzi are Grustintzi which is proved by the fact that here we deal with such an area used to be highly esteemed not only in Siberia but also across Southern Asia based on the prosperity of its people"²⁵. Even though 175 years passed since that time we consider August Christian Lehrberg's opinion to be highly convincing²⁶ if not the most accurate.

In the course of our research we think that it is quite promising and timely to draw the attention of historians to the local name of the southernmost city of the oases of Eastern Turkistan, namely Khotan. It was inhabited by Indo-Europeans since early times and they initially called it Gostana, which meant "the Breast of the earth". Living close to India the people of Khotan converted to Buddhism early on and judging by a number of Buddhist records in Sanskrit they started to call their land Gaustana with the same meaning of "the Breast of the earth"²⁷. Apparently, it was the Khotan merchants (including some Indians) who as early as in the eighth-tenth centuries at the lifetime of the late Khotan-Sakian language established direct and constant trade links with Southern Siberia.

The then powerful early Khakass state dominated the entire Southern Siberia including the area around the Chulym River and also led a military campaign in 841-842 against the Uighurs and invaded Eastern Turkistan and in March 843 captured the cities of Beshbalyq and Kucha and reached Kashgar²⁸.

We assume that the Khotan Indo-European merchants ("dark skinned people not knowing any intelligible tongue") and the Turkic rulers of the Khakass built a large trading settlement locating it at the important crossroads of the river and land routes at the site where the bends of the Tom and the Chulym Rivers met together not far from the Ob. The Khotan merchants called the new trading fortress "Gaustana" in memory of their native land and this name was changed to "Gaustina" and "Grustina" in later sources. This was how the south of Siberia acquired its own "Khotan", a center of trade between peoples and a transit point for the curious southern goods which were exchanged for the valuable furs, ivory from mammoths, musk and other goods²⁹.

This picture is supported by a large number of early Khakass burial mounds from the tenth-fourteenth and later centuries at the Chulym bend discovered by the Tomsk archaeologists. The precise location is in the areas at the mouths of the Chulym's left-hand tributaries flowing from Khakassia, namely, the Yaya, Kiya and Chet Rivers³⁰. This kind of large-scale and long-term burial grounds was formed around major medieval settlements of city type. Right around the present-day

25 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 109.

26 Gerbershtein, 1988: 335, note 554.

27 Vostochnyi Turkestan..., 1992: 41, 42.

28 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 74, 75.

29 Kyzlasov L.R., 1969b: 119-121; 1984: 109-116.

30 Belikova, 1992: 13-19; 1996. Hillforts and settlements should be looked for and studied.

Tomsk there are some even more ancient early Khakass graves of the ninth and tenth centuries (Arkhiereyskaya zaimka and so on)³¹. Undoubtedly, a large group of medieval Khakasses lived between the middle course of the Chulym and the lower course of the Tom for several centuries. Apparently, these traders, warriors and farmers maintained the northern stretch of the international trade route providing security and administrative management for the whole region.

In the Chinese chronicles of the tenth and eleventh centuries it is directly stated that the Khakass patrols constantly accompanied the trading caravans of merchants from Middle Asia, Eastern Turkistan and Tibet in their long journeys to the Yenisei. The caravans from Khotan were met by Khakass warriors in Semirechye (the land of the Karluks)³². From there the merchant caravans were accompanied by military units possibly as far as Gaustina itself.

The present-day Tatar-Gaustintzi (Yaushtintzi) from Tomsk are possibly descendants of the subjects of Gaustina of the past. As early as the beginning of the seventeenth century their "prince Toyon with all of his subjects" continued to pay tribute to the Khakass princes of the Khyrgyz family. The Gaustintzi were "the best serfs" to the Kyrgyz. This was related by prince Toyon himself who arrived in Moscow at the end of the winter of 1603 when he was received by Tsar Boris Godunov in January 1604. Concerned about the weakness of his military power Toyon asked the tsar humbly to "order him to be his vassal and to cause a city to be built in his land of Tom. The place in Tom was nice and could accommodate ploughmen and he himself had 300 people under him who paid him tribute. And when the city was built his vassals would become the tsar's vassals and would pay tribute to him"³³.

One curious coincidence deserves the readers' attention. In the journals by a Mongol ambassador of the mid thirteenth century it is recorded that the Kyrgyz on the Yenisei use sleighs drawn by dogs to travel on the snow³⁴. This possibly refers to the northern areas of the early Khakass state where the tribute collectors (alban) or trading people had to travel in winter when roads were impassable. But A.F. Middendorff wrote at the beginning of the eighteenth century that "even along the major high road near Tomsk people rode horses in summer and used sleighs drawn by dogs in winter"³⁵. Now we find out that the Yaushtintzi have preserved the habit of using skis padded with fur as well as sleighs pulled by dogs in winter³⁶.

We could come up with more evidence to support our assumption of the true location of "the fortress of Grustina"; we could look in more detail at the importance of Gaustina as a major trading settlement of the indigenous peoples of Siberia along the Great Fur Road leading to Central

31 Pletneva, 1987: 99; 1994: 169.

32 Kyuner, 1951: 11; Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 109-116.

33 Bakhrushin, 1955c: 180; Boyarshinova, Golisheva, 1970: 202-209.

34 Kyuner, 1954: 137; Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 154.

35 Middendorff, 1869: 534.

36 Tomilov, 1980; 53-55.

Asia, Iran, Eastern Turkistan, India and China. Surely, we should write about the archaeological evidence of the traditional import of goods from Eastern Turkistan brought to Siberia beginning with the Scythian times. But all this is a subject for further individual research.

We need to try to find out the meaning of the name of the second city mentioned in the "Yugra itinerary" together with Grustina, "the fortress of Serponov". In the text above we read that the Serponovtzi "got their name from the fortress of Serponov in Lukomorje lying in the mountains beyond the Ob River".

A certain variance in the understanding of the word Lukomorje by scholars studying Sigismund von Herberstein's text of the "Yugra itinerary" arises from the fact that when translating the local place name the author did not fully understand the meaning implied by the Samoyedic and Ugrian peoples of the north when referring to local geography. The point is that the Khanty and Mansi refer to this sea as As (As³⁷). They use the same word As for the Gulf of Ob and for the Ob River itself. This term incorporates the idea of a "big river", "big water"³⁷. At the same time the Samoyeds (Nenets) in their language use the word "yam" for both the sea and the entire Ob. The Nenets call any big river Yam. For example, the Nadym River is Nati-yam in the language of the Nenets³⁸. This highlights how difficult it was for a Russian traveler from the twelfth-fifteenth centuries to see where in the language of the Siberian peoples the bank of "the big river" finished and "Lukomorje" started. This explains why the location of the northernmost trading settlement was indicated very vaguely in the "Yugra itinerary", "the fortress of Serponov in Lukomorje lying in the mountains beyond the Ob River".

So, the visiting merchants, "the Grustintzi and Serponovtzi" having bought in Gaustina-Grustina the goods brought over by the "dark skinned people" of the remote south traveled far north into the country of the Samoyeds where on the right bank of the Ob the city of Serponov lay among the hills. There they bought the best and most important goods, the valuable furs, so rare in the southern land.

The unclear name of the northern trading settlement could possibly be deciphered with the help of the Samoyed language itself which was used for communication among themselves by the inhabitants of the right bank of the lower Ob since ancient times. It seems this language provides a solution to the problem.

In Samoyed the word "serpons" means "white stranger" (ser - white, pons - strange, alien, new, and foreign)³⁹. Consequently, the local people called the fortified trading settlement built by the newcomers "the fortress of the white strangers" which was transformed by the Russians into the fortress of Serponov. We know that to the northerners as well as to the southerners in the Middle Ages "white strangers" were the inhabitants of the early Khakass state. For example,

37 Pallas, 1790: 109; Ahlqvist, 1890: 66. Cf.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 168. 169.

38 Matveev, 1994: 104.

39 Janhunen, 1977: 40, 127, 138.

the Arab geographer of the beginning of the fourteenth century Al-Omari based on the first-hand experience of the merchants writes about the people living "in the lands of Siberia and Chulyman (i.e. area around the Chulyman River – L.K.)", "no one ... is more handsome in figure and fairer in complexion. Their bodies are perfection itself in beauty, fairness and loveliness; their eyes are blue". Prior to Al-Omari the unusually fair complexion of the inhabitants of the early Khakass state was recorded by Chinese chronicles and Persian geographers⁴⁰.

This Egyptian geographer and historian was perfectly familiar with the internal Siberian trade of his time. The information recorded by Al-Omari in his text "Observations of different countries" totally coincides with the observations from the Russian "Yugra itinerary". He writes, "The merchants from our countries do not travel any further than the city of Bulgar; but the Bulgar merchants go as far as Chulyman (i.e. area around the Chulyman River – L.K.) and the Chulyman merchants travel as far as Yugra in the far reaches of the North"⁴¹. Here it is not only the accounts of the trips of the Volga Bulgar merchants'⁴² caravans to the Chulyman that are of importance but mostly the regular trips of the merchants of the Chulyman region (Khakass) to Yugra, "the far reaches of the North". Here the author adds, "Beyond Chulyman the borders of Siberia and Ibir run along the Hatay lands", that is China.

We do not doubt that "the Chulyman merchants" featuring in the text are the same Khakass Gaustintzi and Serponovtzi who maintained regular contacts between them. However, Al-Omari's records go back to the beginning of the fourteenth century (he died in Damascus in 1348)⁴³ and, consequently, they are either of the same time as the "Yugra itinerary" (where the word "Siberia" is not found) or the "Russian itinerary" supports and develops the records of a long-time route of trade between different peoples lying along the Ob meridian. Quite naturally after the Mongols conquered the Volga-Kama Bulgar state in 1236 and founded the Golden Horde the trips of Bulgar merchants to Gaustina for the goods from the south became less frequent and the importance of the latitudinal trading route from Western Europe across the land of the Khakass to China, which featured in Al-Omari, decreased⁴⁴.

We need to add that the medieval Khakasses had other trading cities at the edge of the taiga where trade with northern peoples of forest hunters and fishermen was developed. The rich city of Kikas located on the Yenisei at its confluence with the Angara River was the closest to Gaustina. It features in the writing by the famous fourteenth century historian Rashid Al-Din "the Angara flows near the city of Kikas and at the point where it joins the Kem River. The

40 For the information on the physical features of the population see Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 140.

41 Tizengauzen, 1884: 215, 236, 238. Cf.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 121, 152.

42 Bulgarian goods including silverware are now found in large numbers in archaeological research in the lower Ob. V. for example: Sokrovishcha Priob'ya, 2003

43 Tizengauzen, 1884: 236-240.

44 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 117-121.

city is in the land of the Kirgiz... Everywhere (there) is silver... All the tools and wares (that people have) are of silver"⁴⁵.

Apparently, even during the time of the Mongol dominance in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries the Mongol rulers, each in his turn, never prevented the Khakass trading people from building mutually beneficial trade relationships with both northern and southern countries⁴⁶.

Now the Siberian archaeologists face a challenging and complex task of finding and researching the remains of the medieval trading centers of Gaustina, Serponov and Kikas we looked at in this part of the book.

In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries Grustina and Serponov were major trading towns of the Turkic peoples of Southern Siberia and played an outstanding role in maintaining the meridional trading route linking the hunters and deer-breeders of the northern areas of the lower Ob with the remote civilizations of India, Middle Asia and Eastern Turkistan.

It is no coincidence that the same two trading cities on the Ob featured in the story "the Buryat Kushtak" told Ivan Petlin, the first Russian ambassador to China, in 1618, "the Karatal River there is great... the same Karatal flows into that Ob that is also great... From the Karatal along that very river two stone cities stand with villages of the Buryat with people in them and lower along the river are the Buryat nomadic uluses also. And from beyond that great river come over mantsy (foreign people – L.K.) with various goods and exchange our clothes of deer and elk hides and sable and beaver furs for silks with patterns and black silks and velvets and taffeta and go back across the river. I heard from my Buryat people that a boat came, big at the bottom, and above it something white was seen (sails? – L.K.) and it ran ashore and it broke in the sand and never had we seen such a grand and good boat on that river and never had we heard of such one and we do not know where the boat was traveling to, to China or some other land..."⁴⁷.

Even though we still do not know which of the major tributaries of the Ob was called the Karatal⁴⁸ at that time and why Ivan Petlin referred to the settlements of the Turkic (Buryat at that time?) kyshtyms on the Ob as Buryat, this record proves the existence for nearly a hundred years of the major trading centers of Grustina and Serponov in Southern Siberia. At the same time it supports the fact of the existence of the centuries-old traditional trade between the northern peoples and the inhabitants of the southern lands lying along one and the same Ob meridian. Undoubtedly, this trade promoted mutual cultural exchange and interaction enriching the inhabitants of Northern Asia in terms of their spiritual, philosophical and material development.

45 Rashid-ad-din, 1952a: 102.

46 Kyzlasov L.R., 1963b; 1984: 112-123.

47 Materialy..., 1959: 86; Demidova, Myasnikov, 1966: 54, 55, 62-64.

48 Nowadays the Karatal (Turkic for "black willow") is the name of two rivers: a southern tributary of Lake Balkhash and a left-bank tributary of the Cherny Irtysh.

There was even more trade and cultural exchange between Siberia and Eastern Europe that is in the latitudinal direction. The archaeological research of recent years suggests that the Moscow state followed here an ancient Eurasian international tradition established all across the territories of early medieval Southern Siberia to the pre-Mongol Rus and the Volga Bulgaria⁴⁹.

The first Russian account of the sources of the Ob River dates from the end of the fifteenth century, "the Ob is a great river and it flows through the Chinese lands from Lake Bolvanniky"⁵⁰. The fifteenth century and the first half of the sixteenth century saw the most intensive development of trade between Russia and Siberia. Important evidence of this is found in one of the tsar's charters from the end of the sixteenth century which reads, "*before this* (italics by L.K.) came to all *Siberian cities* from Rus many trading people from Perm, Vyatka, the Vym, Pustoozersk, Ustyug, Usolye, Vazh, Kargopol, Vologda and from all Moscow cities the merchants with many goods and traded with the Tatars, Ostyaks, Voguls and Samoyeds all across Siberia visiting *cities*, *volosts*, *yurtas* and *forests*"⁵¹.

This text definitely proves the existence of extensive trading routes and links between Russia and Siberia established long before the latter was conquered. The geographical scope of this trade is amazing; it spanned both the cities of the Russian north including those of the Moscow principedom and all the ethnic groups of the indigenous Siberian peoples, all the truly Siberian cities, fortresses and settlements.

During this turbulent time full of constant military clashes nearly all the ethnic groups of the Siberian population (possibly apart from the inhabitants of the Eastern Siberian taiga) had fortified cities and fortresses.

In the "Kniga Bol'shomu Chertezhu" ("Big Book of Drawings" – tr.) which is largely based on the sources from the middle of the sixteenth century we find that up the Ob from the mouth lie the "Obdora cities", further upstream are "the Yugra cities" and beyond "the Yugra cities" is "Siber". "And the cities on the Sysva and on the Sosva are Yugra". The "Kniga Bol'shomu Chertezhu" featured more than 90 cities in the north-west of Siberia all belonging to the local peoples⁵². In the sixteenth century the Mansi city of Chingen was founded.

Considering the large network of settlements and cities in Western Siberia of the time and the pre-history of trade between its peoples starting from the eleventh century we may conclude that by the sixteenth century Siberia had established stable internal economic links between its regions. Its territories that were mutually interested in conducting commodity exchange were connected through the network of internal trading routes existing from ancient times and linking together the

49 V. Kyzlasov I.L., 1997: 380-386; 2001a.

50 Pliguzov, 1987: 49, note 51.

51 Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov. Sibirskiy prikaz. Book 1, sheet 103 back. Cf.: Boyarshinova, 1957: 148.

52 Kniga Bol'shomu Chertezhu, 1950: 158-168.

different ethnic states or principalities as they feature in the Russian records of the twelfth-fifteenth centuries. The sustainability of the economic links between the Siberian regions was utilized by the newcomer merchants flocking there to make a profit from the valuable furs. It has been pointed out that those were traders from Southern Siberia, Middle Asia and more remote southern areas as far as Iran, India, Arab caliphate and also trading people from the Russian state. Thus, the meridional trading route crossed the latitudinal route in Western Siberia.

Apparently the growth of domestic and international trade in Siberian peoples promoted the birth and development of the commodity-money exchange and the establishment of an all-Siberian market and encouraged the economies of the indigenous peoples. All this prompted the rise and development of the trading and production centers in Siberia in the twelfth-sixteenth centuries and also the construction of strongholds and sentry fortresses and trading settlements for the local people along the old trading routes.

The Russians never had any doubts that there were ancient cities in Siberia long before the advent of the Tatars of the Khanate of Sibir (the Sibir Yurt). As early as in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries they believed that the initial population of ancient Siberia was the mythical and highly advanced people of the Chud. The Chud as they thought all perished and with it was lost all the cultural inheritance of the ancient Siberians including the old city culture. The legend of the disappearance of the people of the Chud had already formed by the seventeenth century and the early Russian Siberian records were quite straight-forward about it, "Those Siberian cities had names unknown and there is none to tell as the Chud of yesteryears of Siberia are no more and nothing written remained"⁵³. In the same chronicles we find, "of the beginnings of the Siberian kingdom we do not know where it came from and what it was; the Chud lived there"⁵⁴.

Judging by archaeological evidence the first Turkic peoples of Western Siberia arrived there long before the Mongol invasion; earlier than the ninth and tenth centuries in the Baraba steppe and in the tenth-twelfth centuries on the Ishim and the Tobol Rivers⁵⁵. It is possible that the Turkic ancestors of the Siberian Tatars settled on the Tura River at the same time⁵⁶. They led a settled lifestyle and for that were called "Turalyg" by their neighbors, which is Turalintzy in Russian, meaning city (settled) inhabitants (tura in Turkic – log house, city). The Turalintzy-Tatars were able to build cities and by the thirteenth century their river got the name of Tura in reference to their building skills. In the valley of this river the cities of Yepanchin and Chingi-Tura were located in the ancient times⁵⁷.

53 PSRL, 1987: 32, 38.

54 Ibid.: 178.

55 Gening, Ovchinnikova, 1969; Nesterov, 1988.

56 Mogil'nikov, 1968: 291.

57 Ogorodnikov, 1920: 218-220; 1924.

The history of the incorporation of Western Siberia into several successive feudal states that formed on the territory of the former ulus of Jochi Khan before and after the death of this son Batu Khan has not been studied yet⁵⁸. We know that in the thirteenth – first half of the fourteenth century southern Trans-Urals and a part of Western Siberia (the area of Ibir-Sibir) by decree of the Mongol khans were joined to the realm of the descendants of Togha Timur, the son of Jochi Khan.

By the end of the fourteenth century the state of the Sibir Yurt with the capital of Chingi-Tura (Chingiden in Russian) on the Tura River had been formed. This state was ruled by the Shaybanids (Shibanids), the descendants of Shayban, the fifth son of Jochi Khan. Its heyday was in the fifteenth century. The uezd (district – tr.) towns were Kyzyl-Tura (at the confluence of the Ishim and the Irtysh) and Zhangji-Tura (the capital of the Yurt Chingi-Tura later began to be called Tyumen). Russian people referred to the Sibir Yurt under the Shaybanids (circa 1448 – circa 1505) as the Tyumen khanate. It had its own coinage with coins minted in cities.

In 1495 the Taibugid state (1495 – circa 1563) with its center in Kyzyl-Tura was formed in the southern part of the Sibir Yurt. It was a federation of Siberian Tatars and Yugra princes. Mamet Khan “destroyed Chingiden” and soon moved the capital to the former Yugra fortress of Siberia (Kashlyk or Isker in Tatar). Mamet captured all the lands of the Tyumen khanate⁵⁹. However, in the south of Middle Asia there lived the Uzbek branch of the Shaybanids that separated from the Siberian branch in 1446 and left Chingi-Tura for the city of Sygnak on the Syr Darya River⁶⁰. At times they recollected their native Siberian lands and raided them in search of tribute and furs.

In the middle of the sixteenth century the Uzbek Shaybanids conquered the Sibir Yurt (1563-1582) and appointed Kuchum Khan to rule it (the last Siberian khan). The Shaybanids now looked at this land as the northern territories of their domain. The city of Isker or Kashlyk (the former city of Siberia) still remained the capital of the Yurt but it was rebuilt following the patterns of Middle Asian cities. The Siberian khanate was a feudal confederation. It consisted of three Tatar uluses, the Ishim, Baraba and Jalayir, and also the Ugrian principalities, the Koda principality of the Khanty and the Pelym principality of the Mansi. The Koda principality developed into the feudal realm of the Alachev princes by the beginning of the seventeenth century. Such was the political picture of Western Siberia before Yermak’s campaign⁶¹.

A lot of information about Siberian cities and fortresses is contained in the historical records and research dedicated to the Russian conquest of Siberia.

Let us look at the Tatar cities. During his dashing expedition beginning on September 1, 1582 Yermak first faced resistance by the Tatars who lived “in small

58 Nesterov, 1988; 2003: 109-121.

59 Boyarshinova, 1957: 153.

60 Akhmedov, 1965.

61 Nesterov, 1988; Boyarshinova, 1957; cf.: Bakhrushin, 1955a; Kyzlasov L.R., 2005a: 50-69.

fortresses along the Tura River" and on October 26 Isker, the capital of the khanate, was already captured. Nowadays it is an established fact that in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, that is at the time of the Golden Horde, there existed such major cities in Siberia as Chingi-Tura (Tyumen), Kyzyl-Tura, Zhangi-Tura, Sibir (or Isker) and Ton-Tura on the Om River in the Baraba steppe. During the archaeological excavations of the two latter cities considerable occupational layers of up to 2 m in thickness were discovered as well as various objects from the time of the Golden Horde⁶². These cities lying at a certain distance away from their contemporary counterparts had fundamental constructions erected by qualified architects. We know that from an observation by academician I. P. Falk who examined the site on the Irtysh 20 versts downstream from the Ishim mouth and who found there "the remains of a destroyed mosque tower and a large stone building". Similar remains of stone constructions were on many occasions observed by travelers at a variety of Siberian *gorodishches*⁶³ (ruins of a fortified settlement – tr.). I. P. Falk also discovered "stone constructions" at the Ton-Tura site⁶⁴.

Thus, by the time of Yermak the Tatar cities of Siberia had already existed for more than 200 years. As of today archaeological research has been conducted at over 20 settlements of the Sibir Yurt including 6 large cities: Isker, Ton-Tura, Kuchum-Gora, Ananievskoe *gorodishche*, Nikolskoe I and Golaya Sopka⁶⁵. At several sites not only wooden log houses, walls and towers were excavated but also some half dugouts with daub stoves were uncovered. Some stone and brick buildings with windows of slate were excavated. On the bank of the Uy, the left-bank tributary of the Tobol, some stairs of brick steps leading to the water were discovered. At the Isker (Kashlyk) site a solid 2 m-thick occupational layer containing fragments of fundamental construction was found. Archaeologists came across many land-working tools: iron ploughshares from ploughs (of the Tatar *saban* type), sickles, scythes and stone hand grinders⁶⁶. It was recorded that in 1598 the city of Kuchum was moved from the Kulunda to the Ob River, "where it had corn fields sown"⁶⁷. At the Isker site on the citadel on an elevation where the khans' palaces were located there were found fragments of imported objects (including Chinese porcelain and glass vessels) and silver coins with Arabic inscriptions. There were many findings proving that Isker was not just a military fortress, that it included an outlying settlement and that it was a city of developed trade⁶⁸.

We should note that landfarming and cattle-breeding were typical activities of both the settled Tatar population and of some Mansi groups (the Voguls of the

62 Egorov, 1985: 128.

63 Ibid.: *Polnoe sobranie*.... 1824: 395, 396.

64 *Polnoe sobranie*.... 1824: 432.

65 Nesterov, 1988: 8-12; Levasheva, 1950; Talitskaya, 1953: 273; Mogil'nikov, 1968.

66 Levasheva, 1950; Talitskaya, 1953; Pignatti, 1915; Sobolev, 1988.

67 Bakhrushin, 1955d: 154.

68 Pignatti, 1915; Sobolev, 1988.

Epanchin yurt, the Tabara Voguls on the Tavda River and so on). At the end of the sixteenth – beginning of the seventeenth century the Verkhotur'ye and Kosva Mansi kept horses and cows and had their own meadows for making hay. The Tabara "Voguls" bred horses and used them for ploughing land. At a later time, in 1628-1629 in Tabara 70 Mansi people ploughed land⁶⁹. According to Siberian chronicles, in the 1580s Yermak collected the tribute of wheat from the Ugrian inhabitants of the lands along the Tavda River. It seems the northernmost pre-Russian agriculture in Siberia was discovered in 1582 by Yermak's follower ataman Bryazga who came across "the Tatar ploughlands" 50 versts north of the Tobol mouth that is at parallel 59⁷⁰. All this contradicts the common view of the indigenous population of Western Siberia of the pre-Russian time as primitive, uncultured and nomadic people.

The cities of the Sibir Yurt had predominantly wooden constructions similar to most cities of Eastern and Northern Europe of the same time (the fourteenth-sixteenth centuries). Cities were built of wood in most areas where the forests were not yet cut down. That is why the Russian people from the twelfth-seventeenth centuries when referring to "Siberian cities" or "walled towns" in their records regarded them as similar to the cities of Rus.

However, the cities of the Sibir Yurt acquired a certain similarity with the cities of the east because they were inhabited by many people from Middle Asia and because the Manichaean religion was dominant there and later on Islam that was brought by Kuchum who came from the south from the Bukhara oasis. The arched stone or brick mosques, minarets and mausoleums for Muslim saints (tyurbe and mazars) were built. For example, under Kuchum the mausoleums of Isker were also built of cob bricks. They had circular vaulted ceilings similar to Middle Asian gumbes. The mausoleum of Sheikh Aikani was the most famous. Miller reported vaults also made of flamed bricks. In the Siberian-Tatar sources 39 most sacred kubbas were mentioned. Most often they were made of wood and looked like a log palisade with a small low tower⁷¹. Khans were buried at the Sauskan graveyard on the right bank of the Irtysh.

Very little remained of the log city walls, towers, bridges and dwellings after the numerous devastations and fires. That is why we are not likely to find out the exact number of such Tatar cities, especially smaller ones. The Russian sources only feature those cities of the Sibir Yurt that were located on the banks of large rivers and came into contact with the invading Cossacks. Nobody ever considered making a detailed description of the pre-Russian Siberian cities. However, it is a fact that in deep provinces and in the outlying bordering areas even the cattle-breeders built some kind of wooden cities with lived-in walls. At the beginning of 1601 one of such cities was described as, "their log houses

69 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 88, 98, 99.

70 Boyarshinova, 1950: 45, 101, 215; Levasheva, 1950: 344.

71 Nesterov, 1988: 10.

stand in a circle attached to the wall and number 35 (the original text refers to an old Russian unit of measurement that corresponds to 35 – tr.); the houses are propped by their large nomadic carts to strengthen them from raids”⁷².

This kind of temporary settlement of prince Alei features in the letter of Tsar Feodor Ioanovich in 1595, “Alei called one hundred and fifty Tatars from Oyalym volost and took them up the Irtysh to Cherny Island and there on Cherny Island they made a settlement where they wintered”⁷³.

The chronicles say that Kuchum Khan rebuilt the old strongholds and forts and set up new ones to strengthen his state. We know of such Siberian Tatar cities as Suzgun-Tura, Bitsik-Tura, Yavlu-Tura, Kizil-Tura, Kysym-Tura, Tunus, Chuvash, Krachin, Tashatkan, Abalak, “the city of Kuchum’s brother”, Zubar-Tura, “the dangerous city” of the captain Alyshay, the city of Changula mirza, Tarkhan-Kalga (the city of Tarkhan), Tsytyrly, Yalym, Aktsybar-Kale, the ancient city of Chubar-Tura on the Nitsa River (in 1624 referred to as “Chubarovo gorodishche”) and so on. The records also feature such forts and fortresses as Attika, Aty mirza’s, “prince’s stronghold”, “the picket fort on Yatman hill”, the Makhmetkul’s city, Kinyr city on the upper Tura, Lenskyi (Ilenskyi?), Chernoyarskyi, Katargulov, Malyi town, “strong Tatar walled town” on the Aremzyanka River, captured by Yermak’s Cossacks after a fight⁷⁴, Obukhov fortress⁷⁵, Cherny stronghold and so on. The “Kuchum’s dangerous borderline city of Kullary” was a powerful fortress at the steppe border protecting from “the Kalmyks”. The mention of it is quite straightforward, “it is the strongest along the upper Irtysh”⁷⁶. Yermak himself had proof of this because his Cossacks (i.e. warriors – tr.) attacked it for five days to no avail. Suffering considerable losses Yermak had to give up and retreat⁷⁷.

We need to point out that by the end of the sixteenth – beginning of the seventeenth centuries some of the old cities had been deserted, for example, “Tsarevo gorodishche” on the Tobol, Begishevo gorodishche, Tebendi gorodishche, the above mentioned Chubarovo gorodishche and so on.

Other Tatar cities and fortresses from the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries have yet to be discovered in all kinds of sources and studied by historians. Undoubtedly, this subject deserves special attention.

We already mentioned above that other members of the Siberian Yurt confederation were the “Pelym state” of the Mansi and “Koda state” of the Khanty. At the end of the sixteenth century the latter became the feudal principality of the Alachev Khanty princes who swore allegiance to the Grand Prince of Moscow.

72 Miller, 1941: 167.

73 Miller, 1937: 367.

74 Skrynnikov, 1982: 166. V.: Miller, 1937; 1941.

75 Miller, 1941: 511.

76 Boyarshinova, 1950; Levasheva, 1950; Skrynnikov, 1982: 113, 188, 198, 199, 217.

77 Skrynnikov, 1982: 200.

We also wrote above that the Ugrians had their own cities as early as the twelfth century. According to the "Russian itinerary" of the fourteenth-beginning of the fifteenth centuries published by Sigismund von Herberstein along the eastern slope of the Urals and on the Ob River lay the Yugra land with its numerous cities "ruled by Yugra princes who, they say, pay tribute to the Grand Prince (of Moscow)". The cities of Lyapin, Yerom, Tyumen and the fortress of Cossin are mentioned and also "many strongholds on the Ob and the neighboring rivers"⁷⁸.

In the first half of 1557 Ivan IV ordered to collect tribute in the Yugra land. His charter says that the Yugra princes should accompany Russian tribute collectors "from city to city, from one community to another and to provide security for the tribute collectors as prescribed and as before"⁷⁹. We see from this text that the Russians had managed to collect tribute here even earlier and were obviously familiar with the Yugra cities and the number of their population.

Records referring to the Ostyak and the Vogul principalities of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were studied by S.V. Bakhrushin. He came to the conclusion that the disintegration of the clan system in the Khanty society started, it seems, even before they joined Russia. As early as in the fifteenth century they subdivided into small tribal principalities headed by "small princes". But "the first basic signs of feudalism" are found by Bakhrushin in the "Yugra Khanty" as early as in the twelfth century when in the entry for 1193 a certain "Yugra prince" is mentioned⁸⁰. In the fifteenth century the population and the army of the Ob Ugrians were subdivided into territorial military units of 10, 100 and 1000 warriors headed by their own commanders⁸¹. At the top of the hierarchy of the early Ugrian society were the princes who inherited their titles which could not be attained by any commoners. The records do not have any references to the division of the Ob Ugrians into tribes nor do they mention any tribal names.

It is important that Russian records refer to the Khanty and Mansi principalities as "states", "the Koda Khanty state" and the "Pelym Mansi state". The higher princes of these strong states are called Grand Princes in Russian records because Russian authors likened them to the Grand Prince of Moscow in importance and power. In the second half of the fifteenth century Koda was ruled by the Grand Prince Moldan who sealed a peace agreement with the Russians in 1485 and in the middle of the sixteenth century Pevgei was the Grand Prince of Koda⁸². In Pelym the Grand Princes were Asyka and his son Yumshan (second half of the fifteenth century). The hierarchy of princely power and the military, administrative and territorial structure that is found in the indigenous peoples of

78 Gerbershtein, 1988: 160.

79 Miller, 1937: 331.

80 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 103, 104, 110, 112.

81 Pliguzov, 1987: 47.

82 Ogorodnikov, 1920: 201-203.

Western Siberia contradict the view of them as living in a clan or tribal society. Thus, we have every ground to say that the Siberian peoples had a well-established feudal system at the time of Yermak's campaign.

This is proved by the Russian sources of the fifteenth-seventeenth centuries⁸³. The fact that the Ob Ugrians were subdivided into the territorial groups of the Por and Mos which was discovered by ethnographers reflects the military and administrative system of their society. It is similar to the left-wing and right-wing military formation for the population and the army practiced by the Turkic and Mongolian peoples in the Middle Ages. The same kind of military administrative organization apart from the Mongol Tatars from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries was also characteristic of the Kazan khanate and its dependent peoples of the Volga region (the Mari and the Chuvash) and for the Sibir Yurt of the time of Kuchum. These, no doubt, were all feudal states.

In the "Siberian corpus of chronicles" there is a special story "About fighting the Ostyak cities down the Irtysh and the Ob". There we find that Yermak "conquered many cities and uluses on the Irtysh and the great Ob Rivers and the Narym city of the Ostyak also captured with its prince and the great wealth. And he came back to the city of Sibir with great rejoicing and wonderful riches"⁸⁴. According to the text of the Ambassador board in Moscow (Posol'skiy prikaz) right after the conquest of some part of Western Siberia at the end of the 1580s the Russian tsar "levied tribute on the Siberian kingdom and on the Big Konda and on the Small Konda, and the Pelym state, and the Tura River, and the Irtysh River and the Irgiz state and on the Piebald Kalmyks and the great Ob and all the Ob settlements on 94 cities (italics by L.K.); to get every year 5040 sables, 10 000 silver foxes and 500 000 squirrels of both the Siberian and summer varieties"⁸⁵.

Apart from the important record of 94 Ob cities this text is of interest because of the fact that the Russian diplomats referred to the Pelym and Irgiz principalities of the Ostyaks as states. It is important that those Siberian cities that lay in the land along the lower course of the Irtysh and the Ob and already paid tribute to the tsar before 1586 were not mentioned in the text⁸⁶.

Now let us look at the Khanty cities. According to some written sources, S.V. Bakhrushin refers to the city of Pulnovat-Vash (Nosovoi) as the capital of the *Obdora principality* situated at the Ob mouth. The Russians built their own Obdorsk walled town at the site of the Obdora capital. The city of Voikar (Nochnoi), where "along the newly formed winter way the Beresov and Pustozero Samoyeds come to the tribute paying Ostyaks" was an important site of an annual trading fair⁸⁷. This was a fortified trading settlement, 90 sazhen (measure of length = 2.34 meters – tr.) around protected by a mound of 5 sazhen

83 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 100-102.

84 PSRL, 1987: 362, 363.

85 Skrynnikov, 1982: 207, 208.

86 Ibid.: 208.

87 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 94, 133.

in height. The cities of Urkar (Bely) and Kameny are also mentioned.

In the *Khanty principality of Lyapin* situated on the Sygva (Lyapina), Sosva and the Kunovat rivers (the right-bank tributary of the Ob), the records feature 6 cities, namely, Kunovat (Kun-aut-vash), Ilchma, Lyapin (Lopyng-ush), Munkom (Munkes), Yuil (Sek-telek-ush), Sugmut-vosh (Berezovy city)⁸⁸.

In the *Khanty principality of Koda* (whose Grand Prince Alach was very influential at the end of the sixteenth century, "in all the cities found glory"⁸⁹) there were 13 walled towns each with its own tamga (heraldic mark – tr.), 3 of the cities had tamgas depicting birds, others depicted deer, arrows and so on⁹⁰. The names of the cities were Kodsky, Nargakor, Nizansky, Karmysh-Yugan, Shorkar, Kaldyasan, Chemashev, Narykor, Vezhakor, Vonzhakor, Karymkar, Bolshoi Atlym, Malyi Atlym⁹¹.

The Koda fortress which served together with Shorkar as a capital residence of the Khanty Alachev princes was a big city. This is proved, for example, by the fact that when they converted to Christianity in 1600 the princes built in Koda the church of the Life Giving Trinity with St. Nicolas chapel and another church in honor of the Solovki saints. In the first of these churches there were services and the knight's weapons (40 coats of mail, 4 bows from Bukhara and 5 arrows) and also other valuables were stored.

These were, for example, "ceremonial silver vessels", gospels and crosses "set with pearls and precious stones" and a whole library of religious books⁹². The Koda fortress also had the prince's storehouse, a barn with the Alachev treasury. Apart from the money the treasury also contained valuable furs and silverware granted to them as gifts by the Russian Tsar Feodor and others (800 gilded silver vessels, 2 drinking cups, 6 bowls and so on)⁹³.

This was the residence of the Khanty feudal lords for whom Koda was "their native land". When the Koda princes swore allegiance to the Russian tsar they did him a great service assisting him in conquering the peoples of Siberia with the help of their military units. They took part in the subjugation of the Pelym and Obdora principalities and the so called Piebald Horde and they fought the "Tungus" and the traitor Evenki on the Yenisei (1627-1630) and traveled to Yamysh Lake to bring back salt as part of their tribute.

Another important duty they performed was to assist the Russians in the construction of stockaded towns. They built Berezov (1593), Surgut (1594), the city of Tomsk (1604), the stockaded towns of Makovsk (1618) and Yeniseisk (1619) and, possibly, Narym (1598) and Ketsk (1605). During their Yenisei campaign the

88 Miller, 1937: 344.

89 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 115

90 Skrynnikov, 1982: 171.

91 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 116, 131.

92 Ibid.: 95, 128.

93 Ibid.: 127, 128.

Khanty warriors built large sea-going row boats and smaller vessels, transported the tsar's sables and performed other duties delegated by Russian voivodes.

It is only natural that the Moscow rulers granted favors to the Koda princes and their warriors, for example, provided them with payments in yearly supplies of wheat. When in 1643 the Russian tsars put an end to Koda they summoned the last prince of Koda Dmitri Alachev and granted him the title of a Moscow nobleman with a living and offered him many gifts. Instead of Koda he was given lands at Vychegda, "the volost called Lena close to the Yeren walled town". Later on he performed honorary duties equal to Russian nobility at the tsar's court.

The Russian rulers patronized the descendants of the Khanty princes later on in recognition of their princely claims. Thus, a hundred years later, in 1767 Catherine II granted the title of noblemen to the family of the Taishins, the descendants of the famous Obdora prince Vasiliy, executed in 1607, and also conferred all the "privileges" their ancestors enjoyed under the former rulers of Russia⁹⁴.

The Mansi princes were also in favor. In 1624 the descendants of the Koda and Pelym princes lived in the Pelym city and had status equal to the local "sons of the boyars" (old Russian title – tr.). The son of prince Andrey of Pelym Semen Andreyevich recognized as the Pelym boyar son since 1642 was also created the Verkhotur'ye "son of boyar" in 1654 with a rich living. The children of princes Stepan and Yakov had the status of boyar sons at Verkhotur'ye at the end of the seventeenth century and their grandsons Ivan and Vasiliy were created Siberian noblemen and rose to the position of a lieutenant and titular counselor respectively.

When in 1842 a humble teacher from the Tura uezd school Alexander Ivanovich Satygin, the Russified great grandson of prince Satyga of Koda (the beginning of the eighteenth century), suddenly remembered the titles of his Mansi ancestors and applied for his own establishment in the princely title, the Russian government recognized this claim and Satygin was granted the title of a prince!⁹⁵

It seems no other descendant of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries princes of the indigenous peoples of the conquered Siberia was ever granted such favors. This is more proof of the fully formed feudal status of the princes and principalities of the Ob Ugrians in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries and of a long-time attitude of respect to them on behalf of the Russian court.

Let us revisit the issue of the pre-Russian Khanty cities. The *Kazym Khanty principality* lay on the right-bank tributary of the Ob of the same name and had three cities: Kazym (at the mouth of the Kazym River), Kinchikor or Kelchikar (40 versts away) and Cherikor. According to B.O. Dolgikh in 1642 the Kazym principality only had 10 fortresses⁹⁶.

94 Ibid.: 130-135.

95 Ibid.: 145, 148-151.

96 Dolgikh, 1960: 76. Cf. also: Dmitrieva, 1955: 62-64.

The *Sosva-Khanty principality* was the religious center of the Khanty of the lower Ob and it had numerous cities: Iskar, Tapsy, Nyachin, Zaglei, Voronei, Khyulikar or Lyulikar (Yeli-ush). Priests were at the top of the hierarchy of this Khanty state.

The small *Belogorye Khanty principality* located at the confluence of the Irtysh and the Ob was also known for its sanctuaries and oracles. In its temples treasures were stored for centuries; they included coats of mail and weapons. The "Belogorye shaitan" received a gift of a coat of mail seized from Yermak in August 1585. The principality was based upon and built around the city-fortress which was "dug out in high mountains" and was a heavily fortified and nearly inaccessible stronghold. We know that nine lesser princes headed by prince Samara of Belogorye bravely fought the Cossacks by its walls. After the death of the prince the Russian sources referred to the city as the Samarov fortalice. Later on the Russian Samarov yam was built at the site of the ruins of the Khanty fortress⁹⁷.

Two other *Khanty principalities* of the sixteenth century were located in the valley of the *Demjanka River* flowing into the Irtysh below the Tobol mouth. One of them was ruled by prince Boyan who submitted to Yermak. His city was later called "the Demjan fortress". The other principality was ruled by "Grand Prince" Nimyuyan, also Demjan in Russian. His city, according to records, was "big and strong" and Yermak's Cossacks only managed to capture it after three days of continuous attack and investing a lot of effort. In the same area later known as the Tobol okrug (region – tr.), there were two more Khanty cities of Nary and Nazym. Nazym was the first city of the Ostyaks on Yermak's way and it stuck in the memory of his Cossacks. It is no coincidence that in the general report of the conquered cities of Western Siberia Nazym is mentioned on its own in the Sinodic (list of names of dead and sick persons to be prayed for – tr.) for Yermak's Cossacks, "...fought on the Irtysh and the great Ob to capture the pagan uluses and walled towns of the Tatars and the Ostyaks as far as Nazym and the Nazym town of the Ostyaks captured with their prince and many of his people were taken prisoner"⁹⁸.

Several *Khanty principalities* also existed in the pre-Russian period on the *middle Ob*. At the end of the sixteenth century in the area of Surgut where the Trem-Yugan River joins the Ob there was a town ruled by prince Bardak. The Samoyeds living in the upper course of the Pur River were also his subjects⁹⁹. The Khanty from the Mualym fortress at the mouth of the Irtysh paid tribute to Surgut in 1610¹⁰⁰. Also at the mouth of the Irtysh was another city of Gulang-vash (Eastern city)¹⁰¹.

97 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 138-140.

98 Skrynnikov, 1982: 162, 165.

99 Ibid.: 140-142.

100 Miller, 1937: 432.

101 Ibid.: 267.

The records also feature another Khanty city-sanctuary on the Racha River which was captured by the Cossacks¹⁰² and was later known as the Racha gorodishche¹⁰³.

As for the *Mansi cities* we need to start with the *Pelym "state"* located on the Konda, the Pelym and the lower course of the Sosva and the Tavda Rivers. It was formed under the strong Tatar influence, utilized Turkic titles and names of princes and was known to the Russians from the middle of the fifteenth century. The Pelym princes referred to in Russian sources as Grand Princes were related to the Koda and Yugra royal families. The princely residence was in the city of Pelym at the confluence of the Pelma and the Tavda. Near the city grew a sacred larch tree on which they hung hides of horses they sacrificed to the spirits. There was also a sacred town with a temple with idols, barns and yurtas and where the sacred weapons (spears and arrows) were kept.

The Pelym "state" included also the principalities of the Mansi on the Konda River. Konda with the princely residence in the Karta-uzh stronghold had a storing place for its valuables. Around it in the impenetrable swampy lands there were the Mansi pagan shrines with numerous offerings of many years. Another component of the "state" was the Tabara principality lying along the river of the same name, a tributary of the Tavda; they had a city at the Tabara mouth. On the Tavda there were also the Mansi cities of princes Labuta and Kashuka, and the city of Chandyr. They were all captured by Yermak¹⁰⁴. The Mansi living north along the Lozva River had their own city of Nerom-Kar.

The Pelym "state" was defeated by the Russians in 1594. In the records of 1622 it is referred to the "Pelym old gorodishche"¹⁰⁵.

The available Russian records from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries do not feature all the cities of the local Ob Ugrian inhabitants of Western Siberia. Only some of them are mentioned due to some political or fiscal events. Obviously, nobody aimed at providing their full description (dimensions, set-up, construction techniques, building materials, lay-out, function, population and so on).

Based on the scanty data we can conclude that among the fortified settlements there were both big cities and fortress-outposts. It is likely that they did not look very different from the wooden cities and towns of Eastern Europe familiar to the Russian people. According to S.V. Bakhrushin, the strongholds of the Ob Ugrians had public and private buildings and were fortified with mounds and palisades¹⁰⁶. They sat at the top of hills or mountains with natural steep slopes and cliffs. Quite often they were surrounded by ravines and marshes.

102 Skrynnikov, 1982: 169.

103 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 109.

104 Skrynnikov, 1982: 185; PSRL, 1987: 88.

105 Miller, 1941: 283.

106 Bakhrushin, 1955e: 112; Ogorodnikov, 1920: 208, 209.

Sometimes the source would be very direct, "the city is grand and strong" and rises over a "mighty mountain". For example, the city of prince Demjan when captured by Yermak easily accommodated the whole of his army and they spent the winter there waiting for the Irtysh to break free from the ice. Another impressive account is that in the so called Koda fortress there was enough space and need to have two Christian churches built, not just one, each with a chapel and, consequently, a parish.

The description of the Voikar city on the Obdora is also vivid; there annual international fairs (in modern terminology) were held where "along the newly formed winter way the Beresov and Pustozero Samoyeds come to the tribute paying Ostyaks"¹⁰⁷. The Khanty sold dried fish and fish oil and deer to the Nenets and in exchange bought furs and, possibly, goods from sea fisheries. It was also visited by Russian merchants and officials on their way to Siberia and back via the Obdora and they purchased valuable furs, fish oil and other goods in exchange for axes, cauldrons, fabrics, money and wheat¹⁰⁸.

Summing up the scanty evidence from written sources we might say that cities performed the following functions in the life of the Ob Ugrians serving as: 1. administrative centers; 2. religious centers; 3. storage places for the valuables of the state; 4. places of trade and exchange; 5. military centers and arsenals for weapons; 6. fortresses proving shelter for the inhabitants of the local villages; 7. centers of handicrafts (mostly weapons and protective gear). To some extent these features are typical of all cities known in the ancient and medieval history of mankind. Unfortunately, the written records are so restricted that they do not enable us to form a comprehensive idea of the Ob Ugrian cities proper. We only hope that further explorations and mainly specialized archaeological excavations will reveal a fuller picture of their life¹⁰⁹.

Apparently, each subsequent culture actively erases the preceding one. The indigenous peoples of Siberia met the same fate. Besides, there are very few places favorable for human habitation in the world. The open, windswept, elevated places in river valleys with some natural defenses are at a premium. It was such places that were chosen by the indigenous peoples of Siberia for the construction of their defense fortresses and cities since ancient times. But newcomers also built their own towns in the same places.

Thus, at the site of the old Yugra fortresses of Chingiden and Sibir which had an advantageous location the Tatar cities of Chingi-Tura and Kashlyk (Isker) were built at the end of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. Later on Chingi-Tura, renamed as Tyumen, was destroyed by Mamet Khan and in 1586 the Russian city of Tyumen was built on its ruins.

At the sites of the captured towns of the Khanty and the Mansi Russians built their own cities and stockaded towns. On the ruins of Pulnovat-vasha they

¹⁰⁷ Bakhrushin, 1955e: 94.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Mogil'nikov, 1968.

built the Obdorsky outpost, at the site of Sugmut-vosha (Birch city) – the Russian Berezov (Birch city in Russian – tr.), on Kun-aut-vash – the Russian Kunavat, instead of the old town of the Ostyaks on the Pelym – the Russian Pelym, Surgut (1593) was built at the site of a fortified Khanty settlement, Verkhoturys (1598) – on the ruins of the Mansi city of Nerom-Kar, Turinsk – at the site of the former Yepanchin fortress and so on. This was how many ancient Siberian cities of the indigenous peoples were razed to the ground.

The incorporation of Western Siberia into Russia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries made many Russian people aware of the new, vast and rich country with its population of many ethnic groups, its variety of settlements, forts and towns with its pre-historic remains in the form of the numerous gorodishches, tumuli, ancient mines and cave paintings (carvings).

In their “reports” and “inquiry notes” the tsar voivodes and boyar sons who led the units of Cossacks and soldiers that advanced further across Siberia to the east and the Pacific Ocean recorded many unusual ancient and contemporary architectural constructions they saw. They also featured in the writings by the first tsar envoys to Mongolia and China and in the records by Siberian “chroniclers” and cartographers.

Nobody has undertaken to estimate the total number of the cities and fortified towns that existed in Siberia in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. However, the list of geographical names alone in the appendix to the first volume of G.F. Miller’s “History of Siberia” features 88 cities and the appendix to the second volume contains 25 cities¹¹⁰. Hundreds of cities and walled towns belonged to the Khanty and Mansi of the lower Ob and the Trans-Urals but other peoples also had dozens of their own cities, for example, the middle Ob Selkups, the Baraba steppe, Tomsk, Chat (upper Ob) and Chulym Tatars, the Altai Teleuts and Telengits, the Yenisei Kyrgyz-Khakasses, Kalmyks, Buryats and many others. In 1619 the Samoyed fort of Orlov further north was ordered to pay tribute by Mangazeya¹¹¹.

When Russian soldiers started their advance from Western Siberia further east they were sure that they would come across towns and forts of the locals in Eastern Siberia as well. Evidence of this is found, for example, in the written order of Tsar Boris Feodorovich of 1601 to prince Vasiliy Masalskiy and to Savluk Pushkin who led an army from Berezov via Mangazeya to the Yenisei, “inquire from the Mangazeya and Yenisei Samoyeds how many cities and volosts (castles – tr.) they have in Mangazeya and on the Yenisei and how many people in those cities and volosts live and cause the people in Mangazeya and the Yenisei cities, volosts and settlements along the rivers to be counted and recorded, the names of the best people in the cities, volosts and settlements to

110 Miller, 1937; 1941.

111 Miller, 1941: 25, 587.

be taken down so that it is clear how many people live there"¹¹². Moscow tsars wanted to plunder all Siberian hunters...

Chronicles record that in the area of Yeniseisk in the Markovo gorodishche there lived the Ket smiths¹¹³. In the tsar's charter of 1602 we read about a Selkup town taken by the Cossacks, "they were in our service in the Piebald Horde and took a fortress"¹¹⁴. In several documents of 1604-1605 in connection with the foundation of the city of Tomsk there is a reference to "the nomadic volosts of those outposts" of the Turkic Chats and Teleuts, to the walled towns of the Tomsk Tatars and to the fact that "the Chulym and Kirgiz and Meles towns and volosts before that (before the foundation of Tomsk – L.K.), to the Kungopsky stockaded town of the tsar brought tribute..." and that "the Chulyn towns and volosts came closer... to the Tomsk city" in their location than to the Ketsk stockaded town¹¹⁵. The records of 1616, the time when the Cossacks fought Southern Siberia, feature some forts of Kuznetsk Tatars-Abintzi (Aba) and Kyrgyz-Khakasses taken by the Russians, "...fought the Kuznetsk-Aba ulus, took their fortresses and captured their princes and best people". The Tomsk Cossack Bogdan Terskoy reports to Tsar Michail Feodorovich, "...and myself, your humble servant, went on a campaign and served you and flogged three Kirgiz, Kyzyl and Bugasar cities and their wives and children took prisoner and I, your humble servant, in this did my duty to you and killed one man and captured another"¹¹⁶.

Besides these three cities the Kyrgyz-Khakass also had a central Bely (White) stone city on the Bely Iyus River. It was the residence of the "Grand Kyrgyz", that is the capital of Khakassia from the seventeenth century¹¹⁷. In the inquiry notes we also find, "from the Bely Iyus to Kalnikov fortress past Balyklykul..."¹¹⁸. Besides, we know of "a stone outpost downstream from the Syda River", "an fort on the Yenik River" in the Kyzyl land: on Tagar Island on the Yenisei, "a small Kirgiz stockaded town" close to Krasnoyarsk and the fortress of "Lozanovy osady" at the point where the Yenisei flows out of the Sayan Mountains¹¹⁹.

In the "Behest of the Tom voivodes" of 1611 several walled towns of the Tomsk Tatars are enumerated: Toyan on an island on the Tom River, Yevagin, Askineyev at the Tom mouth, an outpost on the Ob in Krivaya luka¹²⁰. The strongholds were called after the ruling princes as was also common for the Turkic Chat living further

112 Miller, 1937: 396.

113 PSRL, 1987: 190.

114 Miller, 1937: 409.

115 Ibid.: 412-414; Boyarshinova, 1950: 78, 116.

116 Miller, 1937: 325, 442-444.

117 The Samoyeds told about this Bely city to J. Logan, J. Milton also wrote about it (see part 2). Kyzlasov L.R., 1992a: 80, 81.

118 Abdykalykov, 1968; cf.: Vatin, 1913: 17.

119 Abdykalykov, 1968: 8, 9, 50, 69; Materialy..., 1974: 134, 381, 383, 384, 427.

120 Miller, 1941: 92, 220; Boyarshinova, 1950: 34, 112.

upstream on the Ob. The Chats (at one time Kuchum's allies) all lived in walled towns as they did not have unfortified settlements at all. According to B. O. Dolgikh, the Chats had four strongholds in the seventeenth century¹²¹. "The Chat and Murzin fortresses" were central settlements¹²². The Chat outpost was located at the mouth of the Chik River at the site of the present-day Kolyvan¹²³. It was a strong fortress that withstood a severe siege in 1617 when two taishas (head of an administrative area and army commander – tr.) with a thousand Kalmyk warriors attacked it for three weeks but never took it¹²⁴. The fortress secured Tomsk from the Kalmyk raids.

A report from 1624 goes, "the Chat fort is built anew and is strong, and the ditches are dug and the patrols are good day and night"¹²⁵. It is clear that in the first half of the seventeenth century the Chat princes continued to restore and build anew their military fortresses. In 1630 Tarlav mirza was forced to abandon his residence of the Chat walled town and crossed the Chingis River where he built a new earthen settlement. At the end of the winter of 1631 it was besieged, stormed and taken by the Tomsk military commander Yakov Tukhachevsky¹²⁶. There were also reports that as early as in 1621 "some of the taishas and the Black Kalmyks all came to the Ob River... to the Chumysh mouth and put up an outpost..."¹²⁷.

A few miles downstream of the Chat walled town on the Ob there stood Murzin, the fortified settlement belonging to two Chat murzas (princes – tr.), Kislán (Kyzlán) and Burlak (the 1620s-1630s). In the spring of 1630 during the feudal fights of the Chat and Teleut princes "the Murzin stronghold, where some Chat Tatars of the people of Kislán and Burlak threshed wheat, was attacked. The Tatars were killed and the wheat was burnt"¹²⁸. This proves the fact that the walled towns were used as storage places for wheat supplies of the Chat land farmers. In the letter by the Tomsk voivodes of 1630 to Moscow Murzin is sometimes referred to as an fortress sometimes as a stockaded city, obviously, at the top of the earthen fortified walls and ditches there were wooden walls with a palisade which explains the phrase "the stockaded town was burnt down and the wheat as well"¹²⁹.

Not far away from Murzin there was Nandrin fortified town¹³⁰. In the Russian records of the seventeenth century we find some information about the Teleut fortresses at the foothills of the Altai, of the defeat of the Altai Teleses fort (1642), of the walled town of the Kyrgyz prince Talai on the Ulala River

121 Dolgikh, 1960: 101.

122 Boyarshinova, 1950: 35, 36, 112; Umanskiy, 1980.

123 Sinyaev, 1951: 146, 153.

124 Miller, 1941: 91, 96, 97.

125 Ibid.: 310, 583.

126 Ibid.: 583.

127 Ibid.: 272; Umanskiy, 1972: 57.

128 Miller, 1941: 90-101.

129 Ibid.: 360, 369.

130 Ibid.: 364.

(1634), at the site of the present-day city of Gorno-Altai¹³¹. At the same time the "special gorodishche shelters" of the Khakass-Kach (Kachintsy in Russian) on the Yenisei were discovered and in 1643 some Buryat strongholds with stone walls were observed¹³². About 1665 there was a report that in the land of the Buryats on the Selenga River there was a "stone city" of Tushetu Khan¹³³.

A report dating from 1651 has it that even around the Kolyma River on the Alazeya River there was a wooden stockaded city of the Yukaghirs which "stands strong and on both sides good soldiers shoot their bows skillfully and... the Yukaghirs there are two hundred in number apart from the young ones and their deer are all in the same stockaded town..."¹³⁴. In 1676 the Russian ore prospectors reported from the Argun River, "around those locations and in 30 days of journey from the Nerchinsk stockaded town there are cities and yurtas and many dwellings and stone mills and grinders and earthen mounds in many places". They asked the locals, "What kind of people lived in the same places before them and what cities and production they had" but the Tungus said, "They did not know and did not hear from anyone"¹³⁵.

Moving further to the Far East the tsar voivodes got more information of the local cities from soldiers and Cossacks. In the written order of 1652 the Yakutsk voivode demanded, for example, that N. Prokopyev, who was setting off for the Amur, should "inquire from the Daur people as best he could whether the Daur land had many cities, what those cities were, where they were and on what rivers"¹³⁶. The famous Vasiliy Poyarkov upon reaching the Zeya River wrote about the Khan who "has a horde and his city is made of logs and surrounded by an earthen mound and they fight with bows and have firearms and many big guns and the name of it is Barba..."¹³⁷. Later on he also discovered the Daursky stockaded town¹³⁸.

According to B.O. Dolgikh, in 1651 E.P. Khabarov found the following Daur walled townes on the Amur River: Albazin, Atuyev, Tolgin, four nameless ones, Kokurev opposite the Zeya mouth and Achansky beyond the Sungar mouth. In 1665 at the site of the Daur fortress of Albazin the Russian stockaded town of Albazinsky was built¹³⁹. The Russian Cossacks discovered on the Amur River such walled towns as Lavkaev, Dosulaev, Goygudarov, Banbulayev, Chipin, Gildegi, Dasaulov, the small stockaded town of Duva¹⁴⁰ and others.

131 Materialy..., 1959: 228, 230; Umanskiy, 1972: 1980: 54, 121, 292.

132 Okladnikov, 1937: 300, 338.

133 Zalkind, 1958: 50.

134 Arkhiv (Archives) Leningradskogo Otdeleniya Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR, collection 160, file 284, sheet 7.

135 Radlov, 1891: supplement. Cf.: Kuzin, 1961: 98, 109, 110.

136 Lebedev, 1949: 81.

137 Ibid.: 84, 85.

138 Dolgikh, 1960: 582.

139 Ibid.: 579, 580.

140 Ibid.: 586, 587.

Besides, the soldiers were told by the Tungus that they believed that on the Selenga River "was a Chinese borderline city"¹⁴¹ and some facts of Mongolian cities were also discovered.

Some miscellaneous information of the ruined ancient and medieval cities of Siberia (gorodishches) and of the towns of the indigenous peoples features in a variety of reports from Siberian offices of the state and in accounts by the tsar's envoys to the seventeenth century Mongolia and China.

The observant Russian envoys V. Tyumenets and I. Petrov, who in 1616 traveled from the Tomsk stockaded town via Khakassia, the Sayan ridge and Tuva to visit the Western Mongolian Altyn Khan on Uvs Nuur Lake, wrote in their Moscow "inquiry notes" in 1617 about the ruins of ancient buildings they saw in the upper course of the Yenisei. "We traveled 10 days among rocky hills from the Kirgiz there used to be chambers but now there are none. We asked about those palaces and chambers from the old people of the Zolotoy tsar (Altyn Khan – tr.). And they told of those palaces and chambers that the Zolotoy tsar's people used to live there". Judging by the route of his journey the ataman V. Tyumenets and the unit leader I. Petrov saw the remains of the Uighur bastion and fortresses of the eighth and ninth centuries while they traveled along the valleys of the Manchurek, Ak-Sug and Khemchik Rivers¹⁴².

An unknown seventeenth century Russian author of several interesting articles about Siberia described Southern Siberia, "along the rivers there stand many stone cities and grand chambers in the steppes and they are all empty, some have crumbled from old age and what happened of the people nobody knows..."¹⁴³.

In 1670 the Siberian state office informed Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich that "not far from the Irtysh River on the Siberian side is a city with great stone towers and stone chambers. To this city the Bashkirs have come for many years to offer their prayers... a Bashkir called Bataiko said that in the Irtysh inlet on an island he saw a city built of natural stone with a stone ditch close to the city; in that city he found an ancient smelting furnace and the slag from the melted ore. That city was about 50 sazhen wide or more and a river flowed past it..."¹⁴⁴. According to other estimates, the city measured 213,36 x 106,68 m¹⁴⁵.

As early as at the beginning of the seventeenth century the Russian authorities knew that there were numerous remains of ancient cities and settlements in Siberia. In 1630 the tsar passed a decree about utilizing them for the needs of the state. It was ordered to undertake to find "old gorodishches and

141 Lebedev, 1949: 89.

142 Materialy..., 1959: 58; Kyzlasov L.R., 1969b: 5, 59-63.

143 Okladnikov, 1937: 52.

144 Radlov, 1891: 22; Pekarskiy, 1865: 38-40.

145 Radlov, 1891; Kuzin, 1961: 98.

settlements" whose "land could be used for saltpeter production" and to start "making saltpeter" in the Tobol, Tomsk and other uyezds of Siberia¹⁴⁶.

In the seventeenth century Kalmyk cities, Lamaist monasteries and administrative centers were actively built in Southern Siberia. They feature in the same Russian sources. A report of 1616 features a city on the upper Irtysh called "Sem Palat" by the Russians (i.e. Seven Chambers). The main building of the city was made of stone with walls made of slabs fixed with mortar; the other constructions were made of cob. Some of them were whitewashed and had columns and wall paintings¹⁴⁷. In 1620 the Kalmyks built an outpost on the Ob at the mouth of its tributary, the Chumysh¹⁴⁸. In the letters by the Tobol voivodes of 1638, 1644 and 1649 we read that the Kalmyks had "an outpost made of stone... and in the walls of that outpost lived-in labaist (lamaist – L.K.) cabins were built in and also a stone kitchen. And the four sides of the outpost were 50 sazhen each and 2 sazhen high".

The same fortress features in some detail in the letter by the Tobol voivode Pronskiy, "the taisha and his subordinate Kalmyks built a stone outpost beyond Yamysh Lake in the Kubak-Sar hollow. In the walls of that settlement cabins are built in. All the four sides of the settlement are 50 sazhen each and 2 sazhen tall. It was built, they say, by Chinese and Mungal people. That outpost also has iron canons".

Another document refers to the Kalmyk huntaisha (hongtaiji, a descendant of Genghis Khan with a fief or a prince in Western Mongolia – tr.) Batur who "camps at Sarykobyak at the city where he has ploughlands". Further in the text it is specified that he now camps by his cities at Kubak and the Konda taisha has 3 cities of bricks; one is white and a fourth city is starting anew. And from city to city it is a day's journey. And in those cities his laba (lamas – L.K.) and his ploughmen live. And he, the contaisha, camps around these cities of his". All the four cities were located at the foothills of South-Western Altai¹⁴⁹.

There is interesting information in the "Stateiny spisok" (a form of official documentation on a separate question in Russia at the end of the fifteenth – beginning of the eighteenth centuries – tr.) of the ambassadorial mission of Feodor Isakovich Baikov in China. The trip was made in 1654-1658 and the journey started with the marches up the Irtysh valley as far as its upper course. In the lands of the Kalmyk taishi Ablai the Russian mission arrived at the enclosure of "Kabalgasun in Kalmyk and a palace in the Russian language made of flamed bricks, old and empty"¹⁵⁰.

146 Ogloblin, 1893: 119.

147 Chernikov, 1960: 129.

148 Miller, 1941: 272; Materialy 1959: 112.

149 Materialy..., 1974: 149, 150, 234, 239, 416; v. also: Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv drevnikh aktov. Sibirskiy prikaz. Column 83, sheet 152-153.

150 Materialy ..., 1974: 401; Demidova, Myasnikov, 1966: 116, 150.

This medieval construction was marked on later maps by S.U. Remezov (1696) and in the atlas of the Russian Academy of Sciences (1745) with an inscription, “mosque, enclosure, Kaban-Gasun empty” or “Kalbasun tower”. A drawing and a description of this pre-Kalmyk Tatar mosque provided by the expedition of G.F. Miller in 1734 are also available¹⁵¹. Unfortunately, the dating of this monumental architectural construction is unclear. For F.I. Baikov it was “an old time” building.

Further up the Irtysh the mission observed an walled town of a Kalmyk lama, “two burkhan chambers (i.e. temple with Buddhist sculptures – tr.) of flamed bricks coated with lime; the fields of that lama are ploughed by the Bukhara people, they grow wheat, barley, millet and peas... The cabins of the Bukhara ploughmen are of clay... between the ploughlands flows a small river called the Karbuga... Mills are built on that River, they grind in the spring”. After 12 days of journey the mission arrived at the Beshka River where “taisha Ablai is building two palaces of flamed bricks”. This city was later called Abلائكيت. It was famous for its Buddhist temple¹⁵².

Having traveled for 14 days the caravan of the expedition reached the third city of the Kalmyks on the Irtysh some distance off Zaysan Lake. This was the seat of the hongtaiji, “the city made of clay and inside two palaces of flamed bricks. The city stands in a low place between mountains and in this city there live the Kalmyk lamas, priests in Russian”¹⁵³. Taking into account that the inaccurate view of the Kalmyks leading a mostly nomadic lifestyle is predominant in research literature we cannot help citing here a rare piece of evidence of some Kalmyks engaged in irrigated landfarming. The article by the seventeenth century Siberian scholar S.U. Remezov “About the Kalmyks as a well-know Siberian people” written in 1696 goes, “wheat is sown along the rivers, on slopes and flood meadows. Because rains are rare in that hot climate the rivers are sometimes dammed and keep the water there; when it is very dry that water is directed to the ploughfields through the small and many channels that they make and thus the fields have enough water. Their grains are mostly spring crops. They do not have winter crops. They mostly grow barley, millet, emmer wheat, wheat, oats, peas and hemp. Their vegetables are: radishes, turnips, carrots, cucumbers, melons, water melons and beans”¹⁵⁴.

Another Russian ambassador to China Nicolae Milescu, who crossed Siberia in 1675 by a different route (via the cities of Yeniseisk and Nerchinsk), mentions in his book the Koshelyovskoye and Rachevskoye gorodishches on the Irtysh, the outpost of the Ostyak prince Samara, “the dugout settlements” of the Baraba Tatars, “the empty fort and shantises of Kuchum” on the Sibirka

151 Chertezhnaya kniga..., 1882: 22; Atlas, 1745: tabl. C, 15; Radlov, 1894: 57.

152 Chernikov, 1960; Materialy..., 1974: 401, 402; Demidova, Myasnikov, 1966: 116, 117, 119, 151, 152.

153 Demidova, Myasnikov, 1966: 120.

154 Gol'denberg, 1976: 231.

River where the Tobol Tatars "are redecorating" their mosque, the Urlyukovo site on the Ket River, the Markovo site on the left bank of the Yenisei (where "the Tungus used to live"). In Transbaikalia by lake Dalai Nicolae Miclescu saw "a grand city of stone with many buildings and palaces of white stone and heard that in that city a scourge killed all the people and their possessions were left behind and strangers do not dare to go into the city and look from a distance and others say that everything was devastated in a war". Having crossed the Terbul River Nicolae Miclescu found another city "in the steppe also earthen with four gates to ride through" and wrote that there were many such deserted settlements scattered around in the steppe.

Nicolae Miclescu was familiar with F.I. Baikov's route and offered the same descriptions of the Kalmyk cities and their farming habits. "at Kontaishi all kinds of spring wheat is grown and all the vegetable as in Russia". His account of a fair at Yamyshevo Lake is of interest. "...there are three lakes near the Irtysh River, two on the right and the third one on the left, and they are all salty. Yamyshevo Lake is famous among the Tatars and here the Siberian kingdom ends and on those lakes every year from Tobolsk and Tomsk and other Siberian cities from 30 to 40 small boats come for salt and the salt is collected into these boats from the lakes at the time of the fast of our Lady's Dormition. Yamyshevo Lake is 5 versts from the Irtysh River and there is a spring from the Irtysh to the lake. At the time when Russian people extract salt from the lake there are fairs. Thousands of people come, the Kalmyks, the Bukhar people and the Tatars and they trade with the Russians and they sell horses and yasyr (prisoners - L.K.) and some Chinese goods. The fair lasts from 2 to 3 weeks and Russian people take salt and trade and go back to Tobolsk and the Kalmyks and others to their uluses and the place is deserted again but a stockaded town could be built at this location by the Irtysh or by the lake"¹⁵⁵.

We see from this record that by the end of the seventeenth century the former Southern Siberian trading centers lost their economic significance, nobody reported them and the center of trade shifted to the north close to the new boundaries of the Russian state in Siberia.

The third Russian ambassador to China (1692-1695) Izbrant Ides recollects the remains of ancient cities with stone walls he examined on his way from Nerchinsk to the Argun River, where "the Tungus lived" (that is the Evenks). In a special section of his book he writes, "There are many old destroyed fortifications in the Tungus valleys. In many places here and there along the valleys I discovered hundreds of old and partly ruined fortifications made of fragments of rocks put together. As the Tungus told me, they were built by skilled warriors many years before when the Mongols and the southern Tatars united and invaded the country of Nyuchzhu" (that is the Jurchens)¹⁵⁶.

155 Puteshestvie chrez Sibir' ..., 1882: 34, 36, 40, 45, 78, 143-145; cf.: Milesku Spafariy, 1960.

156 Ides, Brant, 1967: 160, 307.

A number of ancient cities and remains of monumental constructions were marked on the drawings of Siberia compiled at the end of the seventeenth century by S.U. Remezov, a famous cartographer and historian of Siberia and the Tobolsk son of a boyar. He marked "remains of ancient cities or constructions: a 'deserted city' on the right bank of the Karatal River, the right-bank tributary of the Turgai" (page 22); a "stone city" on the left bank of the Ishim between the Tesir-gor and Tylkara Rivers (page 22); a "mosque with no name" and "the mosque of Bulganan" and the "mosque of Talmasat" on the Sary-su River (page 22); the "mosque of the Kabal-gasun enclosure" on the Irtysh (page 22) and a "stone city" between the Cherny and Bely Iyus Rivers: "an old stone city with two walls intact and two ruined and what was the city no one knows" on the upper course of the Yenisei (page 17)¹⁵⁷.

On the "Drawing of the land of the dry and challenging Stone steppe" between the Abakan River and Teletskoye Lake S.U. Remezov made an inscription "the Altyrsko kingdom" and close to the mouth of the "Chyulushman River" he put a symbol for a city (page 22). It is likely that this city was the seat of princes of the Altyr-Khakass principality at the end of the seventeenth century.

When S.U. Remezov was set to compile the map of the Tobolsk uезд as the decree of 1696 ordered he aimed to mark on it "the dwellings, prayer grounds, gorodishches, fortresses and tumuli of the ancient Chud and Kuchum"¹⁵⁸. Sure enough, his drawings feature isolated gorodishches, for example, the Urukovo at the border of the Zarymsk and Ketsk uездs, the Orlovo in the Yenisei uезд and the gorodishches along the mountain path across the Urals at the site of Suskara (Rogovoy town) and so on¹⁵⁹.

Here we would like to refer to the conclusion by the famous Dutch scholar Nicolaes Witsen which he drew on the basis of the many drawings and records provided to him by Russian noblemen. N. Witsen visited Russia in 1664-1665 and by 1687 had compiled a map which was published in Holland in the same year. He was the first to point out based on his Russian sources of information that the Ob flew from Teletskoye Lake and put an end to the legend of the "vast Chinese lake"¹⁶⁰.

In his book about Siberia called "Tataria or Tataria Magna" (Tartary or Great Tartary) which was published in 1692, 1705 and 1785 N. Witsen reported the ruins of cities on the Irtysh (Sem Palat and Ablait) and in some other places: the information based on Russian sources. Thus he wrote: "They say that in some parts of Siberia one could see the remains of the old walls, cities and different historical sites. It proves that in the earlier periods of time this land was inhabited by people more advanced in their development than those living there these days

157 Chertezhnaya kniga..., 1882: Zhurnal..., 1883: 318. Andreev, 1960: 193, 316-319.

158 Chertezhnaya kniga..., 1882: 7

159 Bakhrushin, 1955f.: 225.

160 Rozen, 1976.

as such constructions are not presently common. The Siberians say that the people that had once built those cities and houses had moved south-east". In one of his letter Nicolaes Witsen wrote, "The ruins of the destroyed cities of the savage Tartaria deserve to be examined. They lie deserted by people"¹⁶¹.

This task delegated to us by the scholars of the seventeenth century actually sums up the story of medieval cities of Siberia which Russian people learnt about gradually in the course of the twelfth-seventeenth centuries.

3.2. Siberia and its old cities as seen by Western European travelers from the thirteenth-seventeenth centuries

I can point out in Siberia some remain of entire cities and constructions in remote areas where there are now no people, no houses and only wild beast and deserted fragments of buildings are seen.

N. Witsen, circa 1710

Western European travelers and writers did not know much of the ancient cities of Siberia. That is why the current part of our book is going to be brief.

The European envoys to the Mongol Khan in the thirteenth century, the monks John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck did not themselves visit Siberia but they conveyed all they heard about this country. John of Plano Carpini, for example, was the first to describe the Mongol campaign against the Samoyeds, "...to the Samogeds, and these people only live by hunting; their tents and their clothes are also made of animal hides entirely. Having left them and going further they came to the land above the ocean where they found some monsters who as we were assured were human-like but their feet were like bull's and the head was human but the face like a dog's"¹⁶².

When describing the cities destroyed by the Mongol conquerors in Middle Asia and other lands John of Plano Carpini also mentioned on three occasions that Ögedei Khan "built a city which he called 'Omyl'"¹⁶³. Apparently, it stood on the Emel River in the present-day Dzungaria. The same Khan built and fortified the capital city of Karakorum.

William of Rubruck writes, "from the great Bulgaria and Paskatir that is great Hungary, from Kerkis (all these countries lie to the north and are full of forests) and from many countries in the north which are under them

161 Radlov. 1891, supplement: 58, 61, 129; Zinner. 1968: 32.

162 Puteshestviya..., 1957: 48.

163 Ibid.: 38, 39, 78.

(under the Mongols – L.K.) valuable furs of all kinds are brought which I had never seen in our countries and which they wear in the winter”¹⁶⁴. Also in the same text by William of Rubruck we find, “the language of Paskatir (Bashkir – L.K.) and Hungarians is the same; they are shepherds who have not a single city; their country borders the great Bulgaria in the west. From this land to the east along the northern side we have mentioned there are no other cities. That is why the great Bulgaria is the last country with a city”¹⁶⁵.

Concerning Siberia as such William of Rubruck writes, “To the north there are no cities either and the people that live there breed cattle and are called the Kerkis (that is Kyrgyz-Khakass on the Yenisei and Abakan – L.K.). Also there live the Orengai (that is the forest Uriankhai – L.K.) who tie polished bones to their feet (skis – L.K.) and move with their help on the frozen snow or ice so fast that they catch birds and animals. Also many other poor peoples live in the northern land as frosts permit them; in the west they border on the land of Paskatir and this in the Great Hungary... The limits of the northern corner are unexplored because of severe frosts. And there lie the eternal ice and snow. I inquired about the monsters or monstrous people... The Tatars told me that they had never heard of such that is why we wondered whether it was true”¹⁶⁶.

On his way back from the city of Karakorum to the new city of Sarai built by Batu Khan on the eastern bank of the Volga William of Rubruck traveled along the northern stretch of the present-day Kasakh steppes, “the journey to Batu took 2 months and 10 days, during this time we never saw a city or any remains of some building apart from tombs, there was just one small village where people did not eat bread”¹⁶⁷.

It seems, the envoys of the pope and the king, the Italian and French monks John of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck, who ventured on wonderful and dangerous journeys from Rome and Paris to remote Karakorum and back were supplied with very traditional for Europeans information about the northern land which we now call Siberia.

The adventures of Nikolai, Matvei and Marko Polo who visited Mongolia and Northern China and stayed there for some time under Kublai Khan feature in the famous book by Marco Polo written in 1298. It relies on stories by some well-informed people and relates of Western Siberia as well, which according to the author, was at that time part of the domain of Konchi Khan, the great grandson of Jochi Khan. That country had “neither cities nor castles” but there was much cattle and many fur-bearing animals. The book tells of the habit of riding sleighs pulled by dogs and of the organized way of traveling by relay dog-drawn sleighs with drivers.

“They cover the sleighs with bear hides and a messenger gets in there;

164 Ibid.: 96.

165 Ibid.: 122, 123.

166 Ibid.: 154.

167 Ibid.: 183.

the sleighs are pulled by six big dogs and the dogs take the sleighs right to the station, never lose their way on the ice and in the mud; and this way they travel from one station to another. The one who guards the station gets into the sleigh and drives the dogs and takes the best and the shortest route. At the other station when they arrive the dogs and sleighs are ready and so they travel further; and those dogs that brought the sleigh there go back and people travel in dog-drawn sleighs every day.

Those who live here in the mountains and in the valleys are great hunters; they trap many valuable animals whose price is high and make a huge profit and benefit from it; they trap ermines, sables, squirrels, silver foxes and many other animals; from their furs they make expensive coats of high prices... because of the great cold here their dwellings are under the ground but sometimes they also live above ground... To the north of this country lies a dark land; it is always dark, there is no sun, no moon, no stars; it is dark here like at twilight in our country...

The neighboring peoples from those countries where there is light buy furs here; furs are delivered to a place where there is light and are sold there; and the merchants that buy the furs make a lot of profit and benefit greatly. These people, I must say, are tall and well-built; they are fair and do not have high color"¹⁶⁸.

Other Western European travelers of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries who visited Mongolia, Northern China and India later did not know much of Siberia either. They used the name of "Great Tataria" to refer to the Yuan Empire founded by the great Kublai Khan¹⁶⁹ but not to Siberia.

The map drawn in 1367 by the Italian merchants Francesco and Marco Pizigano is of special importance in terms of providing information about Siberia. It features the territory of the Golden Horde from its western to its eastern boundaries and includes Kwarezm, the Urals and Siberia. Out of the 40 cities of the Golden Horde the city of Sebur that is Sibir (the Isker site on the Irtysh close to the present-day Tobolsk) was marked on the map as the easternmost city of Western Siberia. South of Sebur on the map there was marked a city with a flag flying over its towers, possibly, Tyumen. At the end of the fourteenth century the city was called Chingi-Tura. It was the administrative and political center of the vast Sibir ulus-yurt and this was highlighted by the flag flying over the city.

On the same map beyond the Yaik (Ural) River was marked a nameless city and another one north of it. Judging by the large size of the drawing of its towers and the flag flying over them this nameless city was a second large economic and administrative center of southern Trans-Urals and also part of Siberia¹⁷⁰.

¹⁶⁸ Kniga Marko Polo, 1956: 225, 226.

¹⁶⁹ Posle Marko Polo, 1968.

¹⁷⁰ Egorov, 1985: 130-134.

Some authors believe that the name “Sibir” (the country of Sebur) first featured in the famous Catalan atlas (1375)¹⁷¹. Other scholars think that the name “Sibir” – “Wissibur” was first mentioned in Western European literature in the “Reisebuch” written by the German soldier Johann Schiltberger in 1427 who was prisoner in the Golden Horde. About 1410 he was an immediate participant of one of the raids of Siberia by Edigu Khan to where they traveled for 2 months from the Volga region. “I myself visited this country, took part in all the events and saw everything with my own eyes”, Johann Schiltberger writes. Obviously, he was one of the first Western Europeans to actually visit Siberia which makes his records especially valuable.

“In this country there is a mountain called Arbus (the Urals? – L.K.) and it takes 32 days to walk along it; the people who live there believe that beyond the mountain is a desert (apparently, the tundra – L.K.) reaching to the end of the earth; no one can cross the desert or live in it because of the wild beasts and serpents (that live there). On the above mentioned mountain there live savage people who do not have permanent dwellings, whose bodies apart from the hands and the face are covered in hair; similar to other animals they roam the mountain and feed on leaves and grass and anything they can find”¹⁷². While this part of the story quite possibly contains the traditional mythological view of the “end of the earth” the rest of Johann Schiltberger’s story seems to us fully reliable as a first-hand account, “in the above mentioned country of Siberia there are also dogs that are harnessed into carts and in winter into sleighs; they deliver loads across the country and they are as big as donkeys and they (inhabitants – L.K.) also eat dogs. It is also of interest that the people of this land worship Jesus Christ like the three kings who came to Bethlehem to offer him their gifts and found him lying in the manger; that is why in their temples one can see the images of Christ (icons? – L.K.) depicted as the three kings saw him and to these images they offer gifts and pray. The followers of this faith are called Uighurs (Uygiur); there are many people of this faith in Tataria... In this land they only sow millet and they do not eat bread at all”¹⁷³.

It is clear that at the beginning of the fifteenth century Johann Schiltberger witnessed a developed culture of Uighur Christians who came to Western Siberia with the Mongols and although he gave no direct reference to cities he mentioned Christian churches that no one would have ever built on their own amidst the steppe or in the forest.

Another European record from the same fifteenth century by the Italian Julius Pomponius Laetus (circa 1480) goes, “near the shores of the Arctic

171 Alekseev M.P. 1932 : 54

172 Ibid.: 52.

173 Ibid.: 53. Quite possibly, the German author took for Christians the Manichaean Uighurs whose faith was dubbed “Christian heresy” by western Christians (Smagina, 1998: 44).

Ocean there live forest people called the Yugras; they are surely Scythians very remote from other people. They do not know either gold or silver or other metals; they exchange goods with the closest neighboring peoples and also with the inhabitants of Zavolochie. This was told by people living at the source of the Tanais (i.e. Don River – tr.)¹⁷⁴. And further on, “Beyond the Riphean Mountains (the Urals – L.K.) starts India (Laetus calls Siberia this way – L.K.). However, we should also note: in Scythia and Sarmatia there are very few cities but enumerable settlements”. Here Laetus also uses the place name of “Sibarina” possibly to refer to the city of Sibir¹⁷⁵.

Numerous Western European authors of the sixteenth centuries when giving various records of the Ural Mountains and of Siberia do not give enough information about the cities of the indigenous peoples. In view of our subject the “*Rerum Moscoviticarum Commentarii*” (Notes on Muscovite Affairs) by the Austrian ambassador baron Sigismund von Herberstein who visited Moscow in 1517 and 1526 and had his book published in Vienna in 1549 are of crucial importance¹⁷⁶. The description of Siberia according to the author himself is based on the “Russian itinerary” which he translated, that is why it was looked at in the chapter dedicated to Russian sources.

Here we can only say that according to Sigismund von Herberstein “the area of Sibir” (Sibier) at the beginning of the sixteenth century was just a part of southern Trans-Urals under the Nogai ruler Shikhmamai, “the area of Sibir borders with Permiya and Vyatka; I do not know for sure if they have any fortresses or cities. In this area the Yaik (Ural – L.K.) River takes its source and flows into the Caspian Sea”¹⁷⁷. But on the map attached to Sigismund von Herberstein’s book (1549) at the mouth of the Sosva River the town of Obeakas (the Ob fortress) is located, to the south of it are marked the cities of Terom (Ierom) and Tumen; and in the uppermost course of the Ob on the right bank is marked the city of Grustina¹⁷⁸ and the text also features the city of Serponov and other ones. The maps by German geographers Antonius Wied (1542) and Sebastian Münster (1544) represent the Ob as a sea bay of up to 120 versts wide and mark the city of Sibir (Sybur) on its left bank. The city of Sibir (Siber) is marked at the same location on the map by the English geographer Anthony Jenkinson (1562). The map drawn by Abraham Ortelius (1570) features three cities: Kingola, Sibir and Krustina¹⁷⁹. On the map by Gerhardus Mercator (1595) in the upper course of the Ob the city of Grustina is marked and in its

174 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 68.

175 Ibid.: 69.

176 Ibid.: 100; Gerbershtein, 1988.

177 Gerbershtein, 1988: 163, 164.

178 Vorobyova, Maloletko, Rosen, 1980: fig. 3.

179 Ibid.: 5-15, fig. 2, 4, 6.

middle course is the city of Serponov, that is the same cities featuring in the "Russian itinerary" published by Sigismund von Herberstein¹⁸⁰.

The Western European views of the cities of Siberia probably reflect the task delegated to the English seafarers Arthur Pet and Charles Jackman who were going to set off in 1580 to "discover China" via Siberia, "if you have to winter in this manner we would like you to make discoveries the following summer along the Ob River in as vast an area as possible. If you discover that this river which, they say, is very wide is really navigable and suited to a long-distance journey into the depth of the country you might, perhaps, reach the city of Sibir or some other populated city on the Ob bank or close to it and then you might want to spend there another winter; in that case act on your own discretion"¹⁸¹. But their voyage was never made.

Another Englishman, Antony Marsch, was more successful. Thanks to the Russian sailors he hired on the Pechora River, he reached the mouth of the Ob in 1584 but he did not venture to go upstream. At his request some experienced Russian people wrote directions for him, "We need to go past five cities on the Ob, the first is called Tazovsky town and stands in the mouth of the Pada River. The second settlement of the Nosovoy fort stands on the very bank of the Ob. The third is called Necheiour-goskoy. The fourth is called Charedmala. The fifth is Nadezhnaya, meaning the fortress of peace and trust. It stands on the river below the other fortresses and is closest to the sea. Some time ago your people (that is Englishmen – L.K.) already reached the Ob on board of a ship which was wrecked and your people were killed by the Samoyeds who thought they had come to plunder them"¹⁸².

According to the English trading agent and diplomat Jerome Horsey (who lived in Russia for nearly 20 years, intermittently) he heard in Moscow in 1586 from a captured Siberian prince (Mametkul? brought to Moscow in 1585) that "in his land there live several Englishmen or at least some people looking like me who were taken together with their ship, canons, gunpowder and other stores and who tried to sail on the Ob to find a north-eastern route to China two years before that (1583? – L.K.)"¹⁸³.

A map by an unknown geographer featuring a river flowing out of "Lake China" also dates from the second half of the sixteenth century. On the right bank of the river on the map is marked the city of Grustana and across from it close to the mouth of that river's left-bank tributary stands a city with the inscription of "Terou" (Tura? – L.K.)¹⁸⁴.

Sigismund von Herberstein's records of Siberia were often reproduced in Europe in the second half of the sixteenth and in the seventeenth centuries (see

180 Ibid.: 15-17, fig. 7.

181 *Angliyskie puteshestvenniki...*, 1937: 133; Gorsei Dzherom, 1990.

182 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 187.

183 Gorsei Dzherom, 1990: 106, 107.

184 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 133, fig. 19.

Alessandro Guagnini, 1578)¹⁸⁵. Cartographers relied on his records till the end of the seventeenth century. Thus, the map by Jodocus Hondius (1606) features the cities of Serponov, Grustina and Kambalyk;¹⁸⁶ on the map by Kanteli da Vignola (Rome, 1683) several cities are marked, some scholars believe they are "imaginary"¹⁸⁷; the map by Nicolas Sanson (Rome, 1688) features the cities of Grustina, Serponov, Sakhadrug and Arzha in the upper and middle course of the Ob¹⁸⁸. Even the map by the Dutch scholar N. Witsen (1687) who had a thorough knowledge of the Russian maps of that time features the city of Katunaon (Katynskiy? – L.K.) on the right bank of the Biya River and the same city of Grustina on the right bank of the Katun near its mouth¹⁸⁹.

The conclusion by the Dutch scholar N. Witsen (1641-1717), who specially collected a variety of information on Siberia when he visited Russia, is very important for the development of historical science, "They say that in some parts of Siberia one could see the remains of the old walls, cities and different historical sites. It proves that in the earlier periods of time this land was inhabited by people more advanced in their development than those living there these days as such constructions are not presently common. The Siberians say that the people that had once built those cities and houses had moved south-east"¹⁹⁰.

In February 1612 an English merchant and sailor Josias Logan recorded many curious facts about Siberia from the stories of Russian and Zyrian trading people when he visited the city of Pustozersk in the Russian north. For example, the Nosovoy fort on the Ob is mentioned. The stories also refer to the Yenisei. "The local people insist that up the river course and to the south there live the Tatars (that is Turkic people – L.K.) who ride horses. He (the Russian who provided the information – L.K.) claims that there were found parts of ploughs brought from the mountain tops by the melting ice that flooded the valley"¹⁹¹. It is possible that they mean the Kachintzy who were land farmers living at the beginning of the seventeenth century in the middle course of the Yenisei and ruled by prince Tulka or Tülgü-pig. The same records also contain important information about the Bely (White) stone city on the Yenisei, "Besides, beyond the Taz there flows a big river called the Yenisei which is said to be wider and deeper than the Ob. No one knows how far it flows though people sail 14 days up its course. Neither can we learn it from the local people who are known as the Tungus and form a separate nation. The Samoyeds say that they have seen a white city that, as it seemed, was made of stone but they did not dare to come closer to it; and they also learnt that they (the inhabitants of the city – L.K.) had animals, possibly, horses with long manes and

185 Ibid.: 150-153.

186 Gerbershtein, 1988: fig. 5.

187 Vorobyova, Maloletko, Rosen, 1980: 18, 19, fig. 9.

188 Ibid.: 20, 21, fig. 10.

189 Ibid.: 29, 30, fig. 13.

190 Zinner, 1968: 32.

191 Alekseev M.P., 1932: 210.

tails without horns and with rounded and not cloven hooves as deer have.

Further on they relate that there came out people all made of iron; I assume, these people wore coats of mail. They say that 200 of such men could conquer their whole state, so we can conclude that they live not far from China and Hina. So, I revealed the biggest secret and what, as far as I know, is closets to the truth¹⁹².

Apparently, this secret short way to China became known to the English poet John Milton (1649-1652) who writes, "Some of those Samoeds, about the year 1610, traveled so far till they came in view of a white city, and heard a great din of bells, and report there came to them men all armed in iron from head to foot"¹⁹³.

The latter stories surely featured the Yenisei Kyrgyz, Khakasses and their Bely city which as we have pointed out in part I was also known from the Russian sources of the seventeenth century. It stood on the Bely Iyus River. Another Western European record of the Kyrgyz belongs to an unknown German author who visited Siberia and whose records date from 1666, "there are also people called the Kirgiz; they are pagans; they live on the Ob on the way to China; they wear strange clothes, in winter they are dressed in rough robes of deer hides with the fur upwards (that is fur coats – L.K.). Their women wear some headdress of tree bark; it is wide and round like a sieve and they wrap it in cloth. These people eat both meat and fish raw"¹⁹⁴.

To sum up, we need to mention another foreign map by the Swedish artillery sergeant I.G. Renat. As a prisoner of war after the Battle of Poltava of 1709 he was sent to Siberia to a settlement and he served in the famous expedition by Ivan Dmitrievich Buchholz and in the winter of 1715-1716 he became prisoner again, captured by the Kalmyks on the Irtysh. He smelted iron ore in the Dzungaria and cast canon barrels and bombs. It was only in 1733 that he managed to return to his native country. I.G. Renat had a good knowledge of both the locality and the Kalmyk cartography. His map followed the Kalmyk map he knew. We find two inscriptions on the map by I.G. Renat of special interest. One is marked to the north of Lake Zaysan and reads "the Bruss live here and they have iron workshops", the other to the north of the Bukhtarma River reads "iron workshop"¹⁹⁵. Apparently, the mysterious Bruss (could be Biryusy, that is Biryusintzi) mined and smelted iron ores with probably an industrial technique in the areas around the upper course of the Irtysh at the beginning of the eighteenth century. The northern edge of the map running along the right bank of the Katun features the inscription of Tomtura, that is the city of Tomsk¹⁹⁶.

These are the available records from Western European sources concerning the ancient and medieval cities of the indigenous peoples of Siberia. Some of them are based on facts acquired by foreigners from well-informed Russian people.

192 Ibid.: 211-213.

193 Ibid.: 298.

194 Ibid.: 336, 357.

195 Vorobyova, Maloletko, Rosen, 1980: 32-34; Karta Dzhungarii... 1888.

196 Karta Dzhungarii... 1888.

Chapter 4. EVIDENCE HELD IN THE MEMORY OF THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES OF SIBERIA AND RECORDED BY SCIENCE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES

4.1. Ancient cities as reflected in the ethnography, language and folklore of the indigenous peoples of Siberia

In this country it seems there used
to be a city of the Chud people.
A Khakass tale, 1896

Did the indigenous people of Siberia know about their ancient cities? Yes, they did. Not only because these remains of city fortifications, dwellings and workshops, however transformed with time, quite often represented the intrinsic features of their native landscape. In the ruins of those cities among the fragments of bricks, coals and pieces of slag people sometimes found remains of old broken pottery, rusted tools and weapons and crushed bones.

We know that many Russian soldiers and officials, hunters and traders, researchers, travelers and peasants often discovered remains of ancient cities (gorodishche), villages (selishche), fortresses (gorodki) in Siberia from the seventeenth-twenty centuries based on the directions given by the indigenous people. We have already mentioned this in the part of the book dedicated to Russian records. In our search for the location of the former cities the Russian place names that often contain words gorodishe, gorodok, palaty, etc. can be of some help.

Philologists and folklorists have observed a widespread circulation of stories and individual references to the distinctive Siberian or foreign cities in the oral heroic tales, historical legends, epic tales and folk stories of the majority of the indigenous peoples of Siberia all speaking different

languages. The compilation of a database of this information is an enormous task that cannot be undertaken by a non-specialist, even more so, because the oral folklore tales are all recorded in the native languages of every individual Siberian people. Unfortunately, the folklorists have never concentrated on the subject of city life and that explains why there are no comprehensive publications dedicated to this issue.

In the beliefs of the Russian people from the seventeenth-nineteenth centuries in the steppes of Siberia during the pre-Russian period there lived a numerous people of Chud. The Russians brought these historical and mythical ideas with them from the Trans-Urals and they ascribed all the remains of ancient cultures they found to the Chud including the ancient tumuli and the ruins of unknown cities. The chronicles wrote, "Those Siberian cities had names unknown and there is none to tell as the Chud of yesteryears of Siberia are no more and nothing written remained"¹.

According to a Russian Siberian legend the proud Chud when they learnt from their priests that their country would soon be conquered by the people of Bely (White) tsar preferred to die rather than to be captured. The people made deep dugouts and entered them. Then the men cut down the piles that supported the roofs covered with earth and buried themselves there together with the women and children. Thus, the Chud people disappeared from earth and with them was lost their ancient culture in Siberia. Only the "Chud tumuli" with their graves under the mounds remained. The legend of the Chud burying themselves was recorded in Western Siberia as early as in the second half of the seventeenth century² and was later spread by the Russian people among the native Siberians. It was from the literate Russian people that the Khakass also learnt about the Chud. They referred to the Chud as "akh kharakhtyg chony", meaning people with white eyes.

The famous turkologist and ethnographer and a born Khakass N.F. Katanov who made a research field trip to the left bank of the Abakan (the Appak ulus) in 1896 recorded a text that supported the belief of the local Khakass that the unknown people of the Chud inhabited the Abakan valley before them. The text also mentions in passing, "it seems there used to be a Chud city in this country" ("Chüüt chonnynj kooroda polgan")³. So the Khakass people at the end of the nineteenth century still retained memories of the ancient city that existed in their lands which they innocently believed was the city of the "Chud".

Similar references to cities occur in the folklore of the indigenous peoples of Siberia that have their own words to denote the concept of "city". For example, in the eighteenth century the Ket speaking neighbors of the Khakass had a variety of words meaning "city" that differed from dialect to dialect but had the same

1 PSRL, 1987: 32.

2 Schmidt, 1927: 49-54.

3 Katanov, 1854: 5.

sense (koleda, kelet, kolede)⁴. The Khaidintzy called a "city" tolu⁵, the Kots – pachura, the Nenets – mar, the Ob Ugrians – vash, vach (vosh, voch), the Komi-Perm people – kar (kor), the Mansi – used uus (ush) for a city and uusike for an fort⁶; the Selkups – keotti and so on.

In the heroic legends of the Shors we find references to a world which rises like "a black city" fenced by an iron wall with an iron gate, "inside the black city that lies around the land 90 smiths forge"⁷. The folklore tradition features a story that the dead Selkups "were sent" across the sea of the dead beyond which somewhere in the Far North was the city of the dead – "lattyryl katty"⁸. F. Belyavsky, who visited the Ob Ugrians, reports an interesting fact – according to the Ostyaks, "the places where their princes and rulers used to live were called cities and (they) were marked by... rich fishing grounds"⁹. The same places were considered sacred.

S.K. Patkanov lists the names of the Ostyak cities featuring in the legends and tales of the Khanty: Taparvosh (in the vicinity of the Tsingalin yurts); Karypospaturdash-vosh – "a mighty city by the Sterlyazhie stream" in the lower course of the Konda; Amdar-vosh – near Amderskaya in the Berezov district; Nan-khush-vosh and Son-khush-vosh in the lower course of the Ob; Khut-vosh on the Irtysh; Tun-pokh-vosh on the Irtysh; Rush-vosh and others. The common people lived in unfortified settlements called "pugosh" which grouped around the cities of the nobility and in the case of a military attack by their enemies the inhabitants of the "pugosh" found shelter in the city fortress¹⁰. Legends also feature "the city head" (voch-ukh or vochum-vortiga), rich and poor people, male and female slaves serving the warriors.

In Gorno Altai the place names of Ier-Balyq (Earthen city) and Ai-Balyq (the Moon city) were registered. These place names possibly prove that in the times of the ancient Turks there were cities in the Kurai steppe ("balyq" means city in Old Turkic)¹¹. Their remains should be looked for by archaeologists.

The word "city" survived in the Khakass language in two forms, the new and the old one. Tura (city) is the generic word in all Western Siberian Turkic languages from the Tobol to the Yenisei. In the sense of fortress it is registered in the dictionary of Old Turkic¹². Aba-Tura is the Khakass name for the city of

4 Dul'zon, 1961: 163.

5 Dialekty..., 1973: 125.

6 Tereshchenko, 1965; Bol'dt, 1989.

7 Dyrenkova, 1940: 96, 97, 134-137.

8 Prokof'eva, 1961: 59.

9 Belyavskiy F., 1833: 52.

10 Patkanov, 1891: 100.

11 Molchanova, 1979: 181.

12 Old Turkic dictionary, 1969: 587. For the detailed lexical correlations of cities, settlements, houses, fortresses and their parts in Turkic languages v.: Sravnitel'no-istoricheskaya grammatika..., 1997: 485-530.

Kuznetsk, Tom-Tura for Tomsk. Khyzylchar-Tura for Krasnoyarsk and so on¹³. "Fortress" is sivee or sve in the Khakass language (compare the Altaic shibe, Tuvinian shivee and the Mongol shivee having the same meaning).

An even earlier word "saar" denoting "city" features in the Khakass folklore and the local place names. Saar in Khakass is exactly the same as shaar in modern Kirgiz and the language of Eastern Turkistan meaning "city". This is a contracted form of the Persian shahar (city) which is typical of the languages of the Eastern Turkic peoples¹⁴. Eastern Turkistan in the nineteenth century was referred to by the local Turks as either "Altyshaar" (six cities) or "Iattishaar" (seven cities). Many heroic legends of the Khakass feature "Akh Saar" – "Bely city" (more precisely "Fair city"), often found in the exposition to the setting of a story¹⁵, "On the bank of the White Great River a fair city stood".

It is interesting to note that the place name "Saar" was registered on the same bank of the Abakan River where N.F. Katanov recorded the legends of "the city of the Chud people" more than 90 years ago. This coincidence, it seems, proves that there really used to be a city. Nowadays "Saar" is the name for a mountain chain stretching between the two left-bank tributaries of the Abakan, the Askiz (Askhys in Khakass) and the Kamysheta (Khamystyg Öök in Khakass). Among these hills lies a beautiful enclosure of Saar isty ("inside the Saar") where there are many springs, streams and which is inhabited now by cattle-breeders.

As if a continuation of the Saar chain another one, called Sakhsaar by the Khakass (possibly meaning a "military city"¹⁶), stretches from the left bank of the Kamysheta to the Uibat River. Among the hills there is another enclosure with streams of spring water. At the top of the main peak of Sakhsaar sits a fortress—"sve" surrounded by stone walls built of broken rocks. But this fortress is a medieval shelter, not a city.

The remains of a large capital city were found by L.R. Kyzlasov in 1959 in the steppe close to the mouth of the Uibat River that joins the Abakan River 15 km (9.32 miles) east of the Sakhsaar chain. In 1974 the excavations of this city were started and they are going to be looked at further in the text.

It seems worthwhile to identify in the vocabulary of the languages of the indigenous peoples of Siberia those local terms and concepts that prove their being familiar with construction techniques, the relevant tools and architectural elements of wooden, cob, daub and stone buildings. The glossaries that might be compiled as a result of this work should prove that the indigenous people had distinctive architecture and constructions. Unfortunately, this kind of factual material has not yet been collected.

13 Khakassko-russkiy slovar', 1953: 240.

14 Yudakhin. 1965: 894.

15 Dobrov. 1969: 12, 118.

16 Khakassko-russkiy slovar', 1953: 176.

As an example of a first attempt of this kind we would like to cite some folklore and vocabulary of the Turkic peoples of Southern Siberia. In the Altai and Khakass legends of the nineteenth century there often occur golden (fair) palaces, red and black cities, golden, iron or silver bridges, golden doors, iron fences, iron pillars and columns¹⁷.

A palace, castle – örgöö or ug-tura (big house), as “tura” does not only mean “city” but also a “log cabin”; a stone house – tas tura¹⁸; house – üge (beltir in Khakass); construction (building) – püdirig (in Khakass); prison – kharib (in Khakass); a four-corner cabin – charcha (in Khakass); roof – chabyg (in Khakass), dabu (in the Altaic language); tie beam (beam) of a house – arkhy (in Khakass), toormosh (in the Altaic); column (support pillar) – teek (in Khakass) (Altyn Teek – Gold column – the folklore personal name¹⁹); window – közinek (in Khakass), köznök (in the Altaic); glass – kugan (in the Shor language), süley (in the northern variant of the Altaic language), shili (in the Altaic), süleike, südie (in Khakass); floor – saltym (in the Shor language), takta (in Altaic, Khakass); cellar (under the floor) – ora (in Khakass); threshold – irkin (in Khakass), bozogo (in Altaic); bed – organ, ortykh, ontykh (in Khakass), oryn (in Altaic); stove – kebege (in Shor), kemege (in the northern variant of the Altaic language), kamaga (in the Chulym language), kimaga (in the language of the Siberian Tatars), kamin – sool (in Khakass), shaal (in the Shor language), chool (in Altaic), tsual (in the language of the Siberian Tatars).

Construction – püdirig (in Khakass), tudar, бүдүрер, ader (in Altaic); builder – püdirigchi (in Khakass); plaster – sybandy (in Khakass), shybanty (in Altaic); plasterer – sybachan kizi (in Khakass), shybachy (in Altaic); nail – katyg, pozyg (in Shor), kadu (in the northern variant of the Altaic language), bozy, pozyg (in Khakass); gate – khalkha, izik (in Khakass); fence – khana, siden (in Khakass); well – khutuk (in Khakass), kutuk (in Altaic), kuduk (in Tuvinian); staircase – makysh (Shor), paskhys (in Khakass), tepkish (in Altaic), baskysh (in Tuvinian), paskysh (in the northern variant of the Altaic language)²⁰. Mound (raised mass of earth) – üöldire yrgan chir (in Khakass), kyree (in Altaic).

It is not altogether out of place to recollect here an old Altaic riddle, “a wooden casket around – a blue field in the middle”, which means a window in the wall of a house²¹. In the folklore of southern Siberian Turks buildings with 40 corners, palaces with 90 or 100 facets, iron palaces and palisades as well as iron cities are mentioned. In one Khakass story we read about a 40-corner house inside which “40 men forge hammers, 40 men make saws and files and 40 men

17 Katanov, 1907: 301-425; Surazakov, 1985; Chispiyakov, 1987.

18 Katanov, 1907; Surazakov, 1985.

19 Katanov, 1888: 13.

20 Khakassko-russkiy slovar', 1953; Dobrov, 1969; Katanov, 1888; 1907; Surazakov, 1985; Chispiyakov, 1987.

21 Traditsionnoe mirovozzrenie..., 1988: 152.

make pliers..."²². In a Shor legend, "inside the black city that lies around the land 90 smiths forge". Forging furnaces, pliers, hammers, "a copper barn", "a black palace" and so on also feature²³.

Surely, these are all random examples from the folklore and vocabulary of the Turkic peoples of Southern Siberia but they illustrate a possibility to further develop the subject of our work through folklore and linguistic research.

As for ethnographers, some of them had enough insight to sense a huge influence of the city civilizations of the past on the material and spiritual culture of the indigenous peoples. Thus, for example, S.V. Ivanov, who carefully studied the tambourines of the Khakass shamans and the colorful drawings on them, pointed out, "the easy and simple initial subjects related to the practice of game driving and going back to the ancient times got enriched with a complex fabric of beliefs whose contents and character prove that they were formed under the influence of the feudal system and *city* culture of some central or eastern Asiatic states to whom the Turks, Samoyeds and Kets used to be vassals. A major role here might have been played by the Yenisei Kyrgyz who built a strong state as early as the sixth century A.D."²⁴ (italics by L.K.).

Clearly, S.V. Ivanov was very close to the solution of the mystery of the local Yenisei states that existed in the Middle Ages. We would also like to add that in the subjects and semantics of the drawings on the tambourines of the peoples of the Sayan-Altai uplands S.V. Ivanov also saw a reflection of these peoples' ideas of "many-chamber stone palaces, khans and prisons", of palaces with walls, bridges, staircases, books and other things that are all elements of city culture²⁵.

We should also cite V.P. Dyakonova's conclusion, "a well known phenomenon in the religious practice of the Turkic peoples of Sayan-Altai was offering sacrifices to the heavens by the Khakass which is reported by N.F. Katanov and S.D. Mainagashev who referred to it as "tigir taikh". The veneration of the heavens of this kind is not recorded or found in any other ethnographic group of people of Sayan-Altai"²⁶. The uniqueness of this religious practice possibly points to it developing from that medieval religion which flourished in the temples and sanctuaries in the cities of the ancient Khakass people. Soviet ethnographers were not aware of the triumphant conversion of nearly all the peoples of Northern Asia by Manichaeism missionaries of the past. Our excavations of medieval Manichaean temples in Khakassia provided proof that starting with the eighth century the medieval Khakass people began to espouse one of the world religions of that time, namely, Manichaeism which was adopted by all the peoples of Siberia²⁷. The Khakass sacrificial offerings to

22 Katanov, 1907: 219; Surazakov, 1985.

23 Dyrenkova, 1940: 97, 133-137.

24 Ivanov, 1955: 220-222.

25 Ibid.: 259-261.

26 Dyakonova, 1977: 176.

27 Kyzlasov L.R., 1998a; 2001a; 2005b: 450-463.

the Manichaeen God Khudai (Kudai) began at the time of the spring holiday of Bema which in Turkic is tigr taiany "a sacrifice to the heavens".

The above cited data, even though incomplete, were acquired through ethnographic research and the study of folklore, language and place names and serve as objective evidence of early Siberian cities and testify to the fact that native Siberians have retained a historic memory of a distinctive city civilization of bygone days. These data were the precursors of the archaeological excavations in the Siberian land aimed at finding the remains of its ancient and medieval cities.

4.2. Ancient Siberian cities as seen by the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries historians

A city of stone stands near Iredyash Lake
and around it a great wild forest has grown.
That city has many stone chambers...

*From a report to Tsar Peter I,
beginning of the eighteenth century*

The Russian historical science originated in the eighteenth century. Its founding fathers were such major researchers and enlighteners as M.V. Lomonosov, V.N. Tatishchev and G.F. Miller. They all made a contribution to the study of Siberian history²⁸. Their predecessors were the first Siberian historian and cartographer and a citizen of Tobolsk S.U. Remezov as well as travelers and scholars D.G. Messerschmidt and F.I. Stralenberg²⁹, who visited Siberia at the beginning of the eighteenth century; their followers were I.I. Lepekhin, I.P. Falk, I.G. Georgi, P.S. Pallas, A.N. Radishchev and others³⁰.

All these researchers were informed about the ancient and medieval cities of Siberia left behind, as they believed, by the ancient legendary people of Chud, the Tatars, the Kalmyks or other unknown peoples. The map drawn by S.U. Remezov in 1701 features two cities marked in the upper course of the Irtysh; on the Beshka River, the tributary of the Irtysh, is depicted a semicircular wall with the inscription of "Bulagana" and to the south of it "the city of Kalmak Tologay" with "nomadic camps of Ablai" to the west³¹.

A letter that is kept in the "cabinet papers of Peter the Great" and that dates from the beginning of the eighteenth century reads that in the mountains between the sources of the Ufa and Ural rivers is the "place where the Siberian Tatars extracted ore and smelted silver and gold since the early times. A city

28 Mirzoyev, 1963: 56-80, 107-163, 212-222, 1970.

29 Mirzoyev, 1970: 31-36, 48, 49.

30 Mirzoyev, 1963: 34-40, 223-253.

31 Chertezhnaya kniga..., 1882.

of stone stands near Iredyash Lake and around it a great wild forest has grown. That city has many stone chambers... And to that city the Bashkir come to pray every year. And all the Bashkirs have vowed to keep the ore and that city secret. And they keep their vow so that neither the Russian emperors nor Kyzylbash (Persian – L.K.) shah learn about it”³².

In 1718 Russian soldiers built on the upper Irtysh the fortress of Semipalatnaya called so after the ancient constructions that were discovered there at the beginning of the seventeenth century and were popularly called “Sem Palat” (seven chambers – tr.). Another document dating from 1801 reads, “This city got its name from seven chambers or ancient stone constructions by believers of another faith that used to stand at the same location and whose ruins are still found in the fortress itself. In them many manuscripts in the Tangut language were found in 1654 and were sent to Moscow directly”³³.

The English John Bell, who was in the Russian service and participated in L.V. Izmailov’s ambassadorial mission to China and visited Tobolsk in 1718, referred to some remains of old monumental constructions of an ancient city, “After the Irtysh hath run for many miles through a hilly country covered with wood, it passes through a fine faithful plain, inhabited by the Kalmucks, till it comes to a house called Sedmy-Palaty, or the Seven Rooms, situated to the right in coming down the river. It is surprising to find such a regular edifice in the middle of a desert. Some of the Tartars say it was built by Tamerlane, called by the Tartars Temyr-Ak-Sack or Lame-Temyr; others by Gingeez-Chan. The building according to the best information I could obtain, is of brick or stone, well finished, and continues still entire. It consists of seven apartments under one roof, from whence it has the name of Seven Palaces. Several of these rooms are filled with scrolls of glazed paper, fairly wrote, and many of them in gilt character. Some of the scrolls are black, but the greatest part white. The language in which they are written is that of the Tonguts, or the Kalmucks. While I was at Tobolsky, I met with a soldier in the street with a bundle of these papers in his hand. He asked me to buy them, which I did for a small sum. I kept them till my arrival in England, where I distributed them among my friends, particularly to that learned antiquarian Sir Hans Sloane who valued them at a high rate, and gave them a place in his celebrated museum. Two of these scrolls were sent, by order of the Emperor, Peter the First, to the Royal Academy at Paris. The Academy returned a translation, which I saw in the rarity-chamber at St. Petersburg.

One of them contained a commission to a lama or priest, and the other a form of prayer to the Diety. Whether this interpretation may be dependent on, I shall not determine. The Tartars esteem them all sacred writings, as appears from the care they take to preserve them. Perhaps they may contain some curious pieces of antiquity, particularly of ancient history. Above the Sedmy Palaty, towards the

32 Starinnoe izvestie.... 1865: 256, 257; Opisanie.... 1982: 234.

33 Spitsyn. 1906a: 316.

source of the Irtysh, upon the hills and valleys, grows the best rhubarb in world without, the least culture"³⁴. Further in the text we read, "In a several days' journey away from Sem Palat, down the Irtysh River, on its western bank there is an old tower known as the Kalbasun tower"³⁵.

The Kalbasun tower and Sem Palat feature in specialized research records by G.F. Miller who visited the remains of Sem Palat in 1734 and commissioned the draughtsman Lyursenius to study and draw the Kalbasun tower. All the drawings of the buildings were published³⁶. According to G.F. Miller, "the so called 'Sem Palat' lie on the eastern bank of the Irtysh... The Kalmyks refer to it as Darkhan-Zordzhin-Kit and say that the constructions were built by some priest Darkhan-Zordzhi who also lived in them. They do not know when it was. In the oldest Siberian city of Tyumen I found in the archives a letter by Tsar Michail Feodorovich from October 25, 1616 in which these buildings were called "stone mosques". Probably, they go back to this time. Judging by the construction material of which they were made they can hardly be any older... I think that these buildings were destroyed about 1660-1670 when, as I learnt from the Siberian archives, the devastating feuds caused many defeats to the Kalmyk dominance. Since then on many occasions the Russians entered the plundered temples and carried away some manuscripts and idols that were plentiful there... Before the campaign by Buchholz (the first attempt to conquer Bukhara in 1714 – L.K.) nothing was known of them and nobody mentioned the unfamiliar manuscripts found in Siberia. The ones that a Siberian voivode presented to Peter the Great are believed to have been removed from there. I will report all that I will see when I reach these mins upon leaving the Semipalatnaya fortress"³⁷.

According to F.G. Miller and his companion I.G. Gmelin, the walled town contained six buildings. But as one of them included two rooms sharing one wall, the Russian people visiting the ruins counted seven chambers. All the buildings were made of cob bricks and only one of them in the center was two-storied with the lower floor made of stone slabs.

Inside some buildings there was preserved the alabaster whitewashing on the walls and some remaining wall paintings which "depicted people, some standing, some sitting, animals, dragons, birds and mostly flowers". In three buildings there were fallen wooden columns with floral ornaments at places with wooden figures of lions and dragons that served as capitals. Here and there lay torn manuscripts. The doors of the buildings faced the river³⁸.

In the same text Miller writes that he saw ruins of similar buildings (that is an identical walled town) 20 versts from Sem Palat on the same bank of the

34 John Bell, John Lynn Stevenson. A journey from St. Petersburg to Pekin, 1719-22. Edinburg U.P., 1966.

35 Radlov. 1891, supplement: 51; 1894; cf.: Zinner. 1968: 50, 51.

36 Radlov, 1894: 57-60; v. also: Miller, 1937; 1941; 2005; Elert. 1990.

37 Radlov, 1894, supplement: 58.

38 Ibid.: 58, 59.

Irtysh and in 37 versts from the Semipalatnaya fortress on the way to the Ust-Kamenogorskaya fortress. In those locations some irrigating channels and remains of deserted ploughfields were found around the buildings. Let us compare this record to an earlier one dating from the seventeenth century we find in N. Witsen, "from those buildings (that is from Sem Palat – L.K.) up the Irtysh there lives a Kalmyk priest who built himself two rather big brick houses coated with lime on the outside. He has some Bukhara people with him and he lives by ploughing land. They grow wheat, barley, peas and other grains"³⁹. In 1734 the land surveyor Ivan Shishkov visited Sem Palat and left a description of it⁴⁰.

Thus, having summed up the above mentioned information we may conclude that at the beginning and in the first half of the seventeenth century on the upper Irtysh there existed some Kalmyk cities mostly built around a temple. They were inhabited by Buddhist lama monks as well as by Middle Asian artisans, ploughmen and lay brothers. Quite often near the monasteries were located the headquarters of a khan or another dignitary with his officials, soldiers and craftsmen to repair and produce tackle and weapons. Merchant caravans came here, trade flourished and lively religious festivals (tsam) were held.

The most familiar accounts are the detailed descriptions by Miller of the remains of the city Ablainkit ("Ablaykit is called a city by the Siberians because it is surrounded by walls"⁴¹) which he himself did not visit in person even though he visited the Ust-Kamenogorsk fortress on August 11, 1734. Ablainkhiyd, as it was called by the Kalmyks, was located 60 km (37.28 miles) south of Ust-Kamenogorsk in the Kalbin hills in the upper course of the Sebinka River (Oblaketka), the right-bank tributary of the Irtysh⁴².

This city monastery was first examined in 1720 by an expedition headed by Major I.M. Likharev. The expedition was sent by Peter I to "discover routes" to Eastern Turkistan and to strengthen Russian borders in Trans Altai.

The expedition started with a construction of the Ust-Kamenogorsk military fortress in the autumn of 1719. In the exploratory trips of 1720 they discovered a monastery deserted by the Kalmyks, collected the Tibetan manuscripts in the temples and made a drawing called the "plan of the Ablaitkit chambers" which has survived till our time. It features a one-storey temple with a three-tiered roof surrounded by a wall and located at the top of a hill⁴³. In 1721 the Academy of Sciences had a wooden scale model of the Ablainkit temple made⁴⁴.

39 Ibid.: 60.

40 Ibid.: 142.

41 Ibid.: 61.

42 Chernikov, 1960 (information by an archaeologist who examined the remains of Ablainkit).

43 Knyazhetskaya, 1989: fig. 1; Spitsyn, 1906a: 241.

44 Radlov, 1894: 140; Spitsyn, 1906a.

This discovery became widely known⁴⁵. Philip Johan von Strahlenberg relates in his book (*History of Russia and Tartary* – tr) which was published in Stockholm in 1730, “in the year 1720, some Russian regiments being sent from Tobolsk, the capital of Siberia, up the river Irtysh, to the great plains, or deserts, found in the tumuli there many ornamental antiquities, as they likewise did on the western boundary of the dessert, between the rivers Tobol and Ischim”⁴⁶ “(that is not visited by many people) as I was told by the Tobol Tatars and Russians, the Russian regiments came across numerous figures of men and animals made of stone; in those steppes there are found the ruins of different cities”⁴⁷.

We now know that the city of Ablainkit was founded in 1654 by Ablai-taiji, the khan of the western Oirats from the tribe of Khoshout. The khan's headquarters were near the monastery. Here foreign merchants traded and around it were ploughfields and vegetable gardens.

In 1654 and 1657 Ablainkit was visited by the first Russian ambassador to China F.I. Baikov. In 1671 Ablainkit was captured by the Dzungar ruler Galdan-Boshugtu and the defeated Ablai together with his Khoshouts retreated to the Ural River. Since then the temple city was in decline.

In 1737 the land surveyor Vasiliy Shishkov made the first description of Ablainkit and attached to it the drawings of the temple (still intact), a second building and their architectural elements; his drawings are still kept in the regional archives in the city of Yekaterinburg⁴⁸. They were first published by G.F. Miller⁴⁹. In 1735 Ablainkit was visited by V.I. Gennin, the head of the metallurgic plants of the Urals. He examined the site and collected the remaining Tibetan manuscripts; he is also responsible for an important archaeological discovery. V.I. Gennin uncovered a human grave by the wall of the temple city, the body lay “... on a thin plate of gold and the clothes were covered with thin gold sheets as thick as paper, the weight of all this gold was about 1 pood (16.8 kg – tr.)”⁵⁰. Gennin made a drawing of the unusual grave⁵¹. Then he also visited the old “Sem Palat” monastery.

In the course of the eighteenth century both Russian travelers and foreign scholars in the Russian service (I.G. Gmelin, G.F. Miller, P.S. Pallas) as well as foreign geographers and linguists (N. Witsen, brothers Fourmont, T.Z. Bayer, the Mongol lama Aghvanpuntsok Dorje, I.B. Menke, M.V. de La Croze and others) collected information on Ablainkit, studied and translated its Tibetan manuscripts and looked for historical records of its existence⁵².

45 Spitsyn, 1906a: 241.

46 Archaeologia, or. Miscellaneous tracts relating to antiquity, volume 2, London, 1773.

47 Radlov, 1894, supplement: 24.

48 Ibid.: 141; Chernikov, 1960.

49 Radlov, 1894, supplement: 61-65.

50 Knyazhetskaya, 1989: 23, 32.

51 Gennin, 1937.

52 Knyazhetskaya, 1989: 19-26.

The study of Ablainkit and Sem Palat continued in the 19th-20th centuries. In 1900-1901 excavations were conducted there by V. Nikitin, in 1928 by A.A. Adrianov, in 1935 and 1937 by the archaeologist S.S. Chernikov who drew the plans of the ruined constructions and of the whole city with their detailed dimensions and specifications and photofixation and so on and also did some small-scale excavations of the sites⁵³. He came to a justifiable conclusion that “we can be absolutely sure that none of the ancient remains in Kazakhstan enjoyed such wide popularity among scholars... Ablainkit is one of the few sites where we can trace all the stages of its successive decline observed by a variety of researchers in the course of more than 200 years”⁵⁴.

Some information about the ancient cities of Siberia was collected by D.G. Messerschmidt who traveled around its vast spaces in 1720-1726. In 1720-1721 he was accompanied by Philip Johan von Strahlenbeg. This was the first research expedition to study Siberia. Its task was to compile an encyclopedic record of the vast and unknown country and to collect information about its ancient constructions or their ruins⁵⁵. Unfortunately, the archive materials from D.G. Messerschmidt's expedition have not yet been fully studied and have remained unpublished, which explains why his discoveries and observations are not widely known.

D.G. Messerschmidt discovered the ruins of a fortress on the Urulengui River that flows into the Argun and learnt from the stories of the Cossacks from Krasnoyarsk about some ancient chambers on the banks of the Tes-Khem River in southern Tuva⁵⁶.

At the end of the 1730s V.N. Tatishchev conducted a poll when he collected information about the past of Siberia. Among the many questions on his program there was, “103. Do you know of any signs or traces in your uezd of some cities or important constructions that before now there stood and do you know their names and when and who by they were destroyed?”⁵⁷ It was V.N. Tatishchev who delegated the land surveyor Vasilii Shishkov to Southern Siberia in 1735 to examine those locations and draw a map and especially to inquire about the ancient remains and to “record their features and mark them on the map, if possible”. We know that V. Shishkov “very diligently described and made drawings of places of curious sites”⁵⁸.

As stated above, V. Shishkov examined, drew and made exact plans of the ancient cities of Ablainkit and Sem Palat. Apart from maps and architectural dimensional plans of the constructions he also registered the types of building materials and techniques and did several watercolor paintings of the Buddhist images and reliquaries⁵⁹.

53 Chernikov, 1960.

54 Ibid.: 125.

55 Mirzoyev, 1963: 15, 16.

56 Radlov, 1894, supplement: 80, 81, 84, 90.

57 Ibid.: 141.

58 Ibid.: 140.

59 Cf.: Mirzoyev, 1963: 71.

All in all V.N. Tatishchev sent 8 land surveyors to Siberia. One of them, "lieutenant of geodesy" Ivan Shishkov, carried out a detailed survey of the Tomsk and Kuznetsk uezds in 1739-1743. Answering question 103 from Tatishchev's program he reported, "103. According to the information by the Tomsk office, the uezd has no signs or traces of some cities or important constructions that there used to be but upon surveying the Tomsk uezd in various locations were discovered ruins of small settlements both round and square encircled by ditches and small mounds and pits inside them and they looked similar to the constructions of foreigners here who have earthen yurtas; in some places, they say, there used to live the Tatars and Kyrgystsy because in the so called Kyrgyz steppe and other places many hillocks and old graves are found, to find out what people used to live there is impossible and nobody knows of them; those hillocks were dug up and plundered by the Russians".

Ivan Shishkov reports on the historical remains in the Kuznetsk uezd, "103. In this uezds the signs of small towns that used to be are found in many places, however, it is obvious that some of them were not important because they were small, also in the steppes many old graves are found but the names for those places are unknown and when and who by they were devastated there is no information"⁶⁰.

It is clear that in the first half of the eighteenth century the geodesists Shishkovs recorded some late Kalmyk cities and monasteries and also managed to see some surviving remains of the ancient fortress towns of the indigenous peoples of Southern Siberia.

In order to understand at what stage of development the historical science of the time was we should look at V.N. Tatishchev's classification of the history of Siberia into three main periods: 1. Sarmatian – 1st millennium B.C. (the author considered the ancient constructions of Sem Palat on the Irtysh which he identified with the city of Isedon, mentioned by Ptolemy as the earliest remains from that time); 2. The Tatar from the fifteenth century (the Tatars built their cities on the Ob, the Irtysh, the Tobol. V.N. Tatishchev believed that approximately a hundred years before the arrival of Yermak Mahomet Khan built the city of Sibir on the Irtysh that gave name to the whole country); 3. The last period was the Russian one, beginning at the end of the sixteenth century⁶¹.

V.N. Tatishchev highlighted the importance of a historical study of place names especially those that survived from the ancient "Sarmatian languages who have ancient legends of where their former dwellings were and also keep in memory the knowledge of towns, rivers, lakes which from their language in those lands survived and especially when this is mentioned"⁶². Clearly V.N. Tatishchev had no doubts of the existence of indigenous Siberian cities in the ancient times.

The "Lexicon of the Russian..." compiled by V.N. Tatishchev in 1745 reflects what exactly this major scholar of the first half of the eighteenth century understood

60 Radlov, 1894: 142-145.

61 Mirzoyev, 1963: 67-76; 1970: 64.

62 Mirzoyev, 1963: 78.

by the terms “city” and “gorodishche”, “city or grad (Slavic) is a place with or without fortifications, with houses belonging to different officials, both military and civil, to merchants, artisans and common people collectively called citizens and is headed by a governor. But we only call this place a city that is the center of an uezd and others are either fortresses or suburbs or stockaded towns”; “gorodishe is the place where there used to be a city and which is devastated of which in the Russian empire there are many and not only in the steppes or deserts but also between villages; their names are mostly unknown”⁶³. Two separate articles of the “Lexicon” feature *Ablaikit*⁶⁴.

In view of the fact that V.N. Tatishchev was especially interested in the “remains of cities and other important cities” among other archaeological objects his archive contains important information about the ancient cities of Siberia which has not yet been studied or assessed by historians.

M.V. Lomonosov was one of the first scholars to realize the need of using archaeological and ethnographic sources in the study of the ancient periods of the history of the Russian state when he started work on his history of Russia. About 1760 he circulated a special questionnaire to a variety of provinces through the office of the Academy of Sciences. Among the questions was the following, “26. Record the remains of ancient cities or gorodishches, in what condition they are, what features they have and what they are called”⁶⁵.

Undoubtedly, it was G.F. Miller who should be given most credit for the study of the cities of the indigenous peoples of Siberia in the pre-Russian period and for the identification of their history in the course of more than 130 years when Siberia was part of the Russian Empire. This outstanding scholar is by right considered to be the founding father of Siberian history because he was the first to write a truly professional “History of Siberia” based on a thorough study of Russian manuscripts collected by the author himself in many provincial, uezd and city archives of Siberia during his ten-year-long visit there in 1733-1743. G.F. Miller’s work was duly appreciated in Siberian historiography⁶⁶.

It is interesting to note that the Academy of Sciences when delegating the second expedition of Vitus Bering to Kamchatka in 1733 (both G.F. Miller and I.G. Gmelin were members of this expedition) provided the participants with a direct description of their responsibilities. In § 9 of the instructions we read, “all kinds of standing stones or ruined buildings or chambers, old coffins or graveyards, statues, vessels... idols... and other objects should be carefully drawn...”⁶⁷. It goes without saying that G.F. Miller followed the academic instruction carefully because they fully coincided with his own research interests.

63 Tatishchev, 1979: 242.

64 Ibid.: 153, 328.

65 Gurvich, 1951: 119; cf., Belyavskiy M.T., 1986: 75.

66 Mirzoyev, 1963; 1970; Radlov, 1894, supplement; Andreev A.I., 1965; Elert, 1990.

67 Radlov, 1894, supplement: 55.

This becomes clear from the study of another document, the instruction by G.F. Miller himself, very detailed and compiled by him for junior assistant I.E. Fischer who later on was going to undertake another trip to Siberia. The first ten items on the instruction are dedicated to cities and fortress towns in the steppes and in the valleys of the Ob, the Irtysh and the Argun belonging to the Kuchum Tatars, the Ostyaks, the Vaguls and especially "Sem Palat and Ablait". Item 9 goes, "in the upper Ob on the Bashkir boarder (? – L.K.) is an old half-ruined building the time of whose construction I do not know"; item 12 points out "in the Nerchinsk steppe an earthen mound can be seen which, they say, stretches directly from Mongolia through the Argun to the Amur"⁶⁸.

G.F. Miller, who was very observant, reported that he saw some Tatar burial constructions on the Irtysh, "which were lined with cob bricks on the inside forming a vaulted ceiling and from my inquiries I learnt that there occurred other underground burial vaults made of flamed bricks..."⁶⁹. These might be referred to in another record by G.F. Miller, "at the Sayskan promontory of the eastern bank of the Irtysh a few versts below the city of Sibir there is a very old Tatar graveyard in which, they say, the khans of the old days had the dead of their families buried"⁷⁰.

G.F. Miller also attempted to collect information through questionnaires which he sent over to all the cities. Here is what he wanted to find out in the questionnaire from the Pelym city, "When was Pelym started, in what year and by whom was it built, what was the city before Pelym on the Lozva River and in what place or enclosure? When was the Lozva city built and since what year and why was it deserted and are there at the Lozva gorodishe any remains or signs that in the old times there used to be a city and what could be asked from the inhabitants of Pelym both Russians and non-Russians? Are there in any other places any signs which could tell that in the ancient times there was a Russian or Zyrian settlement or stockaded towns or any fortresses?"

Where, in what places and which enclosures are there the old Vogul and Ostyak strongholds and villages on elevations, mountains or hills? Do any of these hills look as if they were made by man? Are there remains of mounds and ditches around these forts or some traces of stockades or was it only the high location that protected them?"⁷¹.

Clearly, having at his disposal written sources G.F. Miller did not doubt that before the arrival of the Russians the Zyrians, the Voguls and the Ostyaks built cities and fortresses in the Trans-Urals and that the local city culture used to be a familiar and rightful pattern of life to the peoples of Siberia.

We wrote above that as early as the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries the old culture of native cities, fortresses, temples and sanctuaries was being ousted by the new western Orthodox culture; the majority of the first Russian cities and stockaded towns were built right at the sites of the medieval cities of the local

68 Ibid.: 107, 108.

69 Ibid.: 110.

70 Ibid.: note 1.

71 V. Elert, 1990: 66.

indigenous population. At first the Christian conquerors of Siberia from Moscow Rus on many occasions manifested intolerance towards the alien Muslim religion practiced in the Sibir Yurt and towards the pagan “shamanistic” religion of the Siberian peoples. The latter was dubbed as “evil faith”, “worship of idols” and “godless idolatry” (G. Navitskiy, 1715). However, the Russian authorities showed considerable tolerance to the Manichaeic religion of native Siberians which was closer to them. The Manichaeic religion had the Cross as a symbol⁷².

In the 1730s G.F. Miller himself witnessed these manifestations of intolerance of the conquerors to the local culture. He made an attempt to discover the native cities and temples of pre-Russian Siberia but even those that were not yet built over lay in ruins, that is were subjects of archaeological interest. Unfortunately, archaeology as a science did not exist at the time and there were no specialist techniques for scientific reconstructions of the initial image of the studied objects and for their assessment. Most often their location was pointed out by Russian Siberians or by the “non-Russians”. His personal experience led Miller to realize the need to register the sites he examined. G.F. Miller compiled careful records, documented the sites and sometimes carried out excavations. He made drawings of the findings, took down the plans of the ancient fortifications, gorodishches and their constructions⁷³. But G.F. Miller did not have enough time and could not spare enough effort to research even the most significant ruins.

Some conclusions made by G.F. Miller based on his exploratory work are of great interest. Thus, G.F. Miller examined the “Kuchum gorodishche” where “remains of stone buildings could not be seen. The inhabitants of Kuchum city must have lived in wooden cabins”⁷⁴. This assumption is not exactly true as the researcher did not correlate his conclusion with his own observations of the Tatar burial grounds where the vaults were made of cob or flamed bricks. However, even referring to Isker he writes that the dwellings there could have been made “following the Bukhara tradition of unflamed bricks as no traces of them were left”⁷⁵.

Based on the examination of just one citadel among the remains of the Kuchum capital, the Isker gorodishche, he was unable to recreate the lay-out and the size of the entire city and he only made a tentative conclusion, “it could have been inhabited by only a few noble Tatars unless we assume that the place at that time was much bigger”⁷⁶. Having examined the remains of the stronghold of prince Samara on the Irtysh G.F. Miller was able to form an opinion about some Ostyak fortresses as well: his study of the remains of one of the Tatar walled towns on the Irtysh prompted a clever assumption concerning the reasons why this city featured as a stockaded town in some Russian documents and so on. His professional approach

72 Miller, 1937; Novitskiy, 1941. Kyzlasov L.R., 2005a: 50-69.

73 Mirzoyev, 1963: 138

74 Ibid.: 116; Radlov, 1894: 56, 117; Miller, 1937: 232-237.

75 Miller, 1937: 233.

76 Ibid.: 232, 233.; Radlov, 1894: 117.

of a historian to the objects he studied aided G.F. Miller in his research, "G.F. Miller realized that time could obliterate any material traces of the past only leaving some in legends and chronicles. G.F. Miller did not find the location of the Turtas gorodishche which was mentioned in the inserts into 'Remezov's history' but still did not doubt its existence"⁷⁷. He wondered "how many traces of fortresses in various places of the steppe are not seen"⁷⁸. G.F. Miller was right in assuming, "the houses of Siberian Tatars were commonly built either of wood or according to the Bukhara tradition, of unflamed bricks, that is why they all perished since the old days".

G.F. Miller attempted to identify the location of those ancient cities that he knew of from written records, "at the settlement called the Orlovo gorodishche on the Ishim River some clear remains and traces of an ancient city are seen"; "Tyumen. The remains of the former Tatar capital are seen here and there and some are in the form of a small fortification between two the gullies of the Tumenka River which flows through the city into the Tura River... Learned from the local Tatars that they call the old Tatar fortress Chimgi or Tsymgi-Tura"; "on Panin hillock (opposite Tobolsk) no remains of the former city (Bitsyk-Tura) are seen any more"; "the Tarkhan fort or stockaded town (Tapkhan-Kala in Tatar) at a short distance up the mouth of the Tura River close to the Tobol River"; "the Karachin walled town ... on the right bank of the Tobol about 16 versts from its confluence with the Irtysh"; "Abalak or Yebalak in Tatar, a former Tatar fortress on the high eastern bank of the Irtysh 5 versts upstream from the khans' capital city of Sibir... Yavlu-Tura, a Tatar walled town used to stand near the Tobol River where in subsequent years the Yalutorovsk stockaded town was built"⁷⁹.

His journals also feature other Tatar cities of the former Sibir Yurt: two cities of the same name of Kysym-Tura (Devichiy gorod in Russian). The first one was "near the mouth of the Vagay River where the Irtysh flows eastwards..." the other one was on "the high eastern bank of the Irtysh 2 versts upstream from the old city of Sibir"⁸⁰; Cherny gorod (Chernoye gorodishche in Russian) "to the east on the high bank of the Irtysh is a spot that is 40 versts belowstream from the Chemolutsk sloboda"; "beyond Begishev Lake (on the eastern bank of the Irtysh) on a hill... was a Tatar stronghold whose remains are still seen"; "Kullara (once a small Tatar fortress) on the western bank of the Irtysh close to Ausaklu Lake where now is a Tatar winter village of Kullar-Aul"⁸¹; "Zubar-Tura or the Chubarov gorodishche, a small Tatar fortress on the southern bank of the Nitsa 68 versts from its confluence with the Tobol River"⁸²; "I heard of an old Tatar fortress located 6 versts from the Isetsk stockaded town up the Iset by the Yurum River. I set off there on October 2 (1741) but did not find anything

77 Mirzoyev, 1963: 142; Radlov, 1894: 117; Miller, 1937: 241, 246, 295..

78 Radlov, 1894: 115, 117.

79 Ibid.: 116

80 Ibid.: 118.

81 Ibid.: 119.

82 Ibid.: 120.

special there... the spot had some natural defenses and was partly protected on the accessible side by a mound and a ditch”⁸³.

G.F. Miller also looked for the Ostyaks cities of which he wrote, “on the Ob and the Irtysh where they are joined by other rivers on some high grounds the Ostyaks and Vaguls also had many old fortifications that served as shelters to these people during the enemy raids by the Tatars and the Samoyeds”. Also in his records we find, “down the Irtysh and by the Ob River there are many old forts (of the Ostyaks)”; the Obdorsk fortress, an old Ostyak place, is now a Russian stockaded town in the Berezov uезд not far from the mouth of the Ob”; “the Tabarin fort at the mouth of the Ikksa River”; “the Chandyr fort. Now this name refers to the most remote village in the Kashuts volost”; “the former Demjan fortress. The Ostyaks call this place Chukas... the Ostyak spot of the Racha gorodishche where stood the famous Racha idol whose name it bears”. Also mentioned are: the Tsyngal gorodishche, the Kolpukhov fort, “all the Koda walled towns and volosts on the Ob River”, the Kazym fortress (Kazym gorodishche in Russian), the city of Nazym or Yang-vash (the Klin fort in Russian), the Labutin fort, Gulang-vash (Vostochnyi gorodok in Russian); “Voi-Karra (located on the left bank of the Ob 18 versts below stream from As-Pugl)”; the Ostyak fortress of Mualym at the mouth of the Irtysh; Kynyrskiy by the Tura River and so on⁸⁴.

The records also feature the walled towns of the Tomsk Tatars and the upper Ob Chats (Toyanov, Yevachin, Ishkenev, Bezymyannyi, Chatskiy and Murzin). On the Ket “Umulovo or Urlyukovo or Orlikovo gorodishche” is recorded, as well as “a gorodishche on the eastern bank of the Yenisei, 26 versts upstream from Yeniseisk. Could be the Markovo gorodishche?”⁸⁵

G.F. Miller indicated the detailed location of the former cities and fortresses of the Voguls: Kun-Aut-vash (the Kunovat old gorodishche in Russian), Lopyng-ush (Lyapin in Russian), Yulsk gorodki (there were two of them – the Vogul on the Sigva River and the Ostyak on the Kazym River), Yeli-ush on the Sozva River; Berezov gorodok or Khal-ush in the language of the Voguls, Sugmut-vash in the language of the Ostyaks (both meaning Berezovyi in Russian⁸⁶).

G.F. Miller distinguished between the lay-outs of forest-steppe cities and fortresses and the steppe ones, in some locations, especially in the steppes, there are old fortifications surrounded by earthen mounds. “Some of them are rectangular, others are circular and some form an arch towards the elevation with some natural defenses”.

Apart from Sem Palat. Ablainkit and two deserted Kalmyk monasteries G.F. Miller also recorded data acquired from the Krasnoyarsk Cossacks about several destroyed constructions with manuscripts they found in 1711 on the Tes-

83 Ibid.: 101.

84 Ibid.: 107, 116-119.

85 Ibid.: 120.

86 Ibid.: 119.

Khem River at the boarder of the present-day Tuva and Mongolia. The Cossacks referred to these three buildings as the Lozanovy chambers and related that they were built of "raw bricks" (one of them was two-storied). On the beams of these buildings that were lacquered there were painted images and on some boards there were "likenesses of people", probably the depictions of the Buddhas. The Mongols called this city Loozankit after one of Altyn khans who ruled in Tuva and north-western Mongolia from 1660 to 1680⁸⁷.

Some ancient cities and fortresses were also found, documented and preserved in drawings by G.F. Miller and I.G. Gmelin in eastern Transbaikalia on the Argun River. There were four cities surrounded on the four sides by mounds with bastions, ditches and with citadels in the middle⁸⁸.

The travelers examined an interesting "ancient fortification" on "Uniuk" hill on the eastern bank of the Yenisei on September 29, 1739, "ten versts from Abakansk the Syda River flows into the Yenisei from the east. The old fortification which stands on it consists of a double ditch and an earthen mound; the inner mound starts close to the Yenisei at the top of the hill on the side of Abakansk and joins the Yenisei in a semicircle on the side where the hill is sloping in the direction of the Syda at the foot of the hill; the outer mound stretches about 50 sazhen east of the first from the hill top directly down to its foot. The inner mound is as tall as a person, the outer mound is lower. The ditches run beside the mounds on the outer or the dry side and the earth from them is piled on the mounds. At the hill top there is good steppe soil so it is likely that the Cossacks (i.e. warriors – ed.) of this fortification found protection there at wartimes together with their cattle"⁸⁹.

G.F. Miller's companion I.G. Gmelin sometimes made individual trips and also kept a journal. He documented two distinctive fortifications. One was a "square elevation of 70 paces a side surrounded by a ditch, now absolutely overgrown" on the Khashtat River; "in the corner, which is formed by the western and northern sides of the elevation, remains of a smelting furnace are visible, that is bricks and slag. Here and there were seen some indentations where, it seems, there used to be some buildings". The other one was on the Uyen River (close to the Abakan winter settlement on the Ob), "the remains of an old fortification... The remains form an oblong rectangle... On the southern side there is a steep slope while round the other three sides facing the river runs a ditch... about 1 arshin (= 0.71 m) deep. The eastern and western sides, in addition, are surrounded by another ditch of 0.5 arshin deep, which is a little wider than the inner ditch... Inside the space encircled by the inner ditch there are remains of 8 buildings..."⁹⁰.

87 Ibid.: 75-81; Elert. 1990: 48.

88 Radlov, 1894: 81-84, 90, 91; Mirzoyev, 1963: 117. Plan of the cities v.: Miller, 1937: fig. 28.

89 Radlov, 1894: 98, note 4.

90 Ibid.: 105. Page 106 features the plan drawn by I.G. Gmelin.

G.F. Miller collected information about other “Daur cities and stockaded towns”⁹¹. The majority of written records of the ancient and medieval cities of Siberia are included by G.F. Miller in his works and especially in the “History of Siberia”⁹². G.F. Miller’s follower, a participant of the same expedition and the then student S.P. Krasheninnikov writes in his accounts of Kamchatka that its inhabitants (the Itelmens – L.K.) still live in small “ostrozhki” (small stockaded towns), that is fortified settlements.

S.V. Bakhrushin in his assessment of the works by G.F. Miller and I.G. Gmelin and their followers wrote, “the outcomes of the expedition of the Academy were significant... The topography of the Khanty and Mansi walled towns at the time of the arrival of the Russians was carefully recreated and the most important Khanty and Mansi gorodishches were documented, for example, the Samarovo, Kunovatskoe gorodishches, Gulang-vash near Obdorsk, Bardak gorodishche and others. The Evenk Urlyukovo or Orlikovo gorodishche and so on”⁹³. As for the results of the trip of Miller’s follower and the junior assistant of the Academy of Sciences I.E. Fischer to Siberia in 1734-1747, we only know that in his report he mentioned the ancient cities by Bely Lake (obviously, Belyo Lake) in the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow⁹⁴. As a convinced Eurocentrist I.E. Fischer rather shortsightedly and arrogantly concluded that “nomadic peoples never applied themselves to the construction of cities or fortified places”⁹⁵.

Some brief information about the cities of Siberia was collected by researchers traveling there later, in 1771-1772. Thus, academician I.I. Lepekhin in his records pointed out that nearly all Mansi who were almost Russified still continued to live in “the so called Vogul fort 25 versts off the Taraban sloboda where the Vogul and Russian peasants have the lifestyle and use the tools that do not differ”⁹⁶. Some archaeological sites were examined by Doctor I.P. Falk. He examined a gorodishche on the Irtys 20 versts downstream from the mouth of the Ishim where he observed “the ruins of a destroyed mosque tower and a large stone building”⁹⁷, that is fundamental constructions erected by skilled architects.

Academician P.S. Pallas also studied the remains of ancient cities and documented three old fortifications that he examined in the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow. One was located 7 versts from the village of Kaptyrevo on the “Malyi Shuner River which is formed by two other rivers before it flows into the Yenisei.

91 Mirzoyev, 1963: 120.

92 Miller, 1937.

93 Bakhrushin, 1955f: 226, 227.

94 Mirzoyev, 1963: 163-178

95 Fischer, 1774: 54, 55

96 Mirzoyev, 1963: 35

97 Ibid.: 38; Polnoe sobranie..., 1824: 394-396.

At the promontory between the two joining rivers there is an overgrown mound across it and a ditch with a passageway". Another one was "in half a versta from the village of Shusha (now the settlement of Shushinskoye – L.K.), "is visible a square overgrown gorodishche in a flat place, a thousand paces around and with a passage from only the north-western corner. It seems that it was formed by two big mounds with deep ditches in between".

The third one from those observed by P.S. Pallas was the famous borderline wall, a fortification of the Zhiksra River (that is Golubaya River), which he examined when he traveled to "the gorodishche which for some reason peasants nicknamed the Loginova osada 1 versta from the Zhyksra River and the Tatars call it as well as the hills there and the Sayanskiy stockaded town Omai-Tura (the fortress of Omai – L.K.). The Loginova osada lies in the very corner at the spot where the mountains terminate in a cliff over the Yenisei and block the passage behind the osada. Here on the hill with some broad leaved trees here and there, from the cliff to the buried channel of the Yenisei where the water only flows when the river is very full, there is built a big mound of earth and stones but with no ditch, it runs across the hill several hundred sazhen and as the signs prove has a gate"⁹⁸.

The outcomes of the Siberian expeditions of the eighteenth century were widely used in their works by the Russian and European scholars of the time, even though there were not many of them. In 1791-1796 these materials were used by A.N. Radishchev who was exiled to Ilimsk. He wrote a historical treatise "Notes on a Journey to Siberia" in which the history of Siberia is first offered to the reader in the form of a story of its peoples and its pre-Russian past.

Through this A.N. Radishchev did a great service to all Russian and Siberian historiography. With a lot of foresight he subdivided the history of the autochthonous peoples into several successive periods. According to A.N. Radishchev, the earliest period of human life in Siberia was the time when "sharp and strong stones" were used "to serve as axes and knives", that is the very same time we now call the Stone Age. The next period was marked by some remains of material culture discovered in the vicinity of the Ust-Kamenogorsk and Semipalatinsk fortresses where some ruins of buildings were examined. With the same group A.N. Radishchev classified burial mounds and stones on the upper Yenisei and the other rivers close by". They belonged to the peoples "to whom copper and silver production was known". So here the Copper Age is meant. Thus, A.N. Radishchev was the first to highlight the importance of the primeval stage in the development of human history in Siberia going far beyond the contemporary historical science of his time⁹⁹.

Also deserve our attention some 18th century documents from the archive of the Zlatoust mines, "the year of 1775. № 82. In the Nizhni-Uvel sloboda on the

98 Pallas, 1788: 541-546; Mirzoyev, 1970: 51, 52.

99 Mirzoyev, 1963; 1970.

Sinarka River... were found the remains of an ancient stone fortress of the Chud in the forest". And another one, "the year of 1775. № 83. Between the Uvel and the Sanarsk fortresses of the Cossacks on the Kamennaya River flowing in the Sanara River 2 versts upstream from the mouth near the Chud outpost of ancient mines"¹⁰⁰.

Concluding the story of the ancient cities of Siberia that became known to science in the eighteenth century we need to point out that all the researchers of that time examined the gorodishches but not the cities of the indigenous people, that is they studied the dead archaeological remains of the former thriving cities and fortresses many of which were inhabited even in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries. Thus, the city civilization of the autochthonous Siberian population, which according to archaeological data originated as early as in the Bronze Age (in any case, in the middle of the second millennium B.C., see Part 2, Chapter 1 of this book), continued to exist up to the Russian conquest and its final stage is reflected in the evidence from the seventeenth century.

By the beginning of the eighteenth century the truly Siberian autochthonous cities had ceased to exist. That was the price fully paid by the indigenous Siberians for the forced introduction of them to European culture brought from the west and imposed on them by the imperial autocracy of the "White (Bely) tsar".

Here we would like to offer the reader a brief outline of the limited sources from the nineteenth century that develop our subject. They have not yet been fully studied.

We have already cited a document from 1801 which explains the origin of the name of the city of Semipalatinsk. It says that the ruins of Sem Palat "still exist around the fortress itself". Clearly, this ancient walled town was visited at the beginning of the nineteenth century. It goes without saying that Sem Palat and Ablainkit were of interest to Russian researchers for a long time. They were studied and written about by G.I. Spassky (1811) who published a drawing of the ruins done on locations: K.F. Ledebur (1826), P.A. Chikhachyov (1843), Vlangali (1851), V.V. Radlov (1865) and others.

G.I. Spassky stated that "the ancient remains that survived till our time prove that the former inhabitants of Siberia had a higher level of education compared to the peoples of today". Among the "most important remains" he singled out "the gorodishches and ruins of several constructions"¹⁰¹. G.I. Spasskyi documented (based on G.F. Miller) the Kalbazin tower (Jalin-obo in Kalmyk) and also the ancient buildings of Central Kazakhstan¹⁰². He was one of the first to report the ancient remains of eastern Transbaikalia and of a long mound stretching for many kilometers from Dalai Lake down the Argun River and even "crossing it". In the same area he also registered three square

100 Talitskaya, 1953: 291, 292.

101 Spasskiy, 1857: 114

102 Spasskiy, 1818.

fortresses and the ruins of two ancient cities on the Kyrkyr and Kondui Rivers where traces of some buildings of the old days were discovered: bricks, tiles, stone foundations and sculptures of dragons. He also singled out a stone stele "by the Kyrkirin ruins" with an oldest known Mongolian inscription referring to Genghis-Khagan¹⁰³. Today this stele is kept in the Hermitage.

From among the remains in the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow G.I. Spassky singles out the fortress of Omaitura "of which only a long mound built across the hill is visible"¹⁰⁴.

In 1873 N.I. Popov published an article dedicated specifically to "the Chud forts" and mines of the Minusinsk area. Unfortunately, the work was mostly a compilation. Based on the records from other authors N.I. Popov described several of the gorodishches ("the most widely known"), the Zmeinoe (the "Kachinsky walled town") on the right bank of the Yenisei across from the city of Krasnoyarsk; the "Sydinskoe fortification" on Unyuk hill; "Gorodok" on the left bank of the Tuba River; the fortress of Shusha and the "ancient fortification beyond the Golubaya River" (based on P.S. Palls); the "ancient Tatar fortress in the hills by Bely Lake" (based on I.E. Fischer).

N.I. Popov's article was one of the first regional records of the early Siberian gorodishches. Apparently, by the 1870s there had arisen a need in research publications of summary works of this kind.

However, the author of this article was openly biased. He wrote, "still everything proves that the peoples inhabiting these lands were nomads who, as the climate was favorable, were content with just having a felt yurta and judging by their lifestyle did not wish for any solid constructions for living or praying even though it is clear that they stayed at one location for a more or less lengthy period of time.

None of the remains testifies to their settled habitation; there are no significant ruins similar to the ancient Bulgaria, Issyk Kul, Semipalatinsk, Ablaikit and Kondui: the few mounds and ditches provide insignificant proof of some rudimentary communal life. It is these places that are known locally under the common name of the Chud strongholds and gorodishches borrowed later on by several settlements"¹⁰⁵.

As for N.I. Popov's views he expressed on the subject of the history of "nomadic peoples", it gives credit to Russian science that far from all researchers supported the Eurocentric theory. Thus, the famous champion of Siberia N.G. Potanin was quite right when he observed, "the disregard of the researchers of the nomadic peoples hinders the progress of science. We are prevented from forming correct opinions about the role of these barbarians and about the history of spiritual and cultural borrowings by our Aryan arrogance and a false historical perspective..."¹⁰⁶.

103 Spasskiy, 1819a: 114-123.

104 Spasskiy, 1819b: 135. It was mentioned above that the same mound was observed by P.S. Palass 46 years before G.I. Spasskiy.

105 Popov, 1873: 43, 44.

106 Potanin, 1899: 856.

I.Ya. Slovtsov in the "Archaeological remains in the Tobolsk province" (1887) documented nearly 90 gorodishches on the lower Ob and its tributaries. Similar records were compiled in the nineteenth century by other local historians¹⁰⁷. S.K. Patkanov in the Tobolsk okrug registered 60 Ugrian walled towns and N.A. Abramov in the Berezov okrug found over 40¹⁰⁸. In the "Chronicles of the Tobolsk Museum for 1898" it is registered that 40 versts of the city of Tary "by the Uy River there are ruins of an ancient fortress. Legend has it that the city that used to stand there was destroyed by Yemak. The local people say that many old things are found in that location... On the high bank of the river there is a gorodishche with brick steps leading to the water".¹⁰⁹

Accounts of ancient cities in the southern stretch of the Siberian steppes bordering on the steppes of Kazakhstan are found in the works by the Russian officer of a Cossack descent Ch.Ch. Valikhanov (1835-1865), "in the Kyrgyz steppe (in Kazakhstan – L.K.) there are very many ruins: remains of cities, mosques, so called bastions, scattered along the rivers of the southern and western parts of the steppe and the cities are considered to belong to the Nagais; ... in the eastern (part)... several lamaist shrines"¹¹⁰.

V.I. Ogorodnikov in his "History of pre-Russian Siberia" comes up with a summary of the nineteenth century research of our subject. The author does not doubt that the ancient Uighurs, Mongols, Kipchaks, Khakasses had their own cities; that the Ostyaks had cities and forts in the pre-Russian time; the Tatars of the Sibir Yurt and the peoples of the Amur had "true cities" and the Kamchatka indigenous people lived in forts and stockaded towns. Speaking of the "Turkic-Tatar tribes" of Siberia V.I. Ogorodnikov highlights, "some of them (the Turalintzy and the Tobol-Irtysh Tatars) had a relatively advanced land-farming and city culture"¹¹¹.

Clearly, it was traditional for the best representatives of the Russian historical science of the nineteenth century to rely on the available sources and fully acknowledge the fact of the existence of ancient and medieval cities and fortresses of the autochthonous peoples of Siberia which survived up to the conquest of this land by the Russian Empire.

107 Talitskaya, 1953; Spitsyn, 1906b.

108 Istoriya Sibiri, 1968a: 365; Talitskaya, 1953; Potanin, 1891: 97; Abramov, 1857: 388-397.

109 Talitskaya, 1953: 273.

110 Valikhanov, 1986: 260.

111 Ogorodnikov, 1920; 1924: 138, 140, 167, 192-199, 218-229, 264, 265, 280-282.

CONCLUSION

Our remote ancestors and forefathers had no way of knowing that their vast and flourishing Siberian motherland abounding in natural resources, and in valuable furs above all, with human settlements all across it, would later on be considered not only the “dark backwoods” but also become the destination of exiles for many generations of rebels cast out by the society for either their revolutionary thoughts or criminal offenses. Nor did they know that the blessed Siberia of ancient man would become the land of prison settlements and concentration camps.

The historical development of the indigenous peoples of Siberia followed the normal course of progress since remote antiquity. There is no evidence of any lagging behind compared to the level of development of the European and Asian tribes of the long era of the primitive communal system¹. If that was not so, how would the first groups of these ancient Siberians been able to cross over to the uninhabited continent of the new world along the then existing causeway across the Bering Sea about 20 000 years ago? And most importantly how would they have been able to give rise to the progressive development of human cultures that spread overtime across the vast areas of both North and South America?²

Their remote descendants inhabiting Mesoamerica and South America created flourishing ancient cultures and distinctive cities across the vast areas of these lands. It has also been proved that the ancient Siberians apart from giving rise to the indigenous peoples of the New World were also the forefathers of the first settlers of the many islands in the Pacific Ocean neighboring with Siberia, the islands of Japan, the Kuril and the Aleutian islands above all.

It has been shown in the course of archaeological studies that the indigenous peoples of Siberia followed the same progressive and dynamic course of economic, social and technological development as the people of the other regions of the Old World during the Bronze and early Iron Ages with the countries of the so called Ancient East being more advanced. No lagging behind or regression was discovered in the

1 Istoriya Sibiri, 1968a.

2 Ibid.: 93, 151.

relevant periods of history in such unfavorable for human development geographical areas as the vast spaces of the “dark” taiga of Eastern Siberia were traditionally seen or the boundless tundra bordering the icy shores of the Arctic Ocean³.

Surely, there were some discrepancies of historical development between individual regions of Northern Asia but there had never been any dead end geographical niches dominated by social stagnation and economic backwardness with the neighboring ethnic groups enjoying the rapid development. All the social entities were participants of regular interaction which promoted the spread of incentives for continuous advancement.

In the second part of the book we are going to deal with the recently excavated ancient Siberian cities and fortresses of the Bronze Age dating from the time when Petrovka-Sintashta culture flourished. They were built and inhabited in the remote twelfth-sixteenth centuries B.C. In the northern stretch of the steppes of Kazakhstan which cannot be separated from Siberia there were discovered the so called “proto-cities” going back to the later Bronze Age. The area of these settlements was from 5 to 10 or 15 hectares (50 000 to 10 000 or 150 000 square meters) (for example the Kent site). They were surrounded by small “village” settlements. According to archaeologists, “as early as at the end of the Bronze Age numerous strong earthen fortifications with a ditch, a mound and a wooden palisade, the so called ‘gorodishche’, sprang up along the major Western Siberia rivers of the taiga zone, the Ob, the Irtysh, the Tom and so on”⁴.

Fortified fortress towns were widely spread all across Siberia in the early Iron Age and later during the Middle Ages, “the entire Western Siberia becomes dotted with fortress or walled towns that serve as centers of social and political entities, shelters in times of danger and storage places for the accumulated wealth”⁵.

The continuous development of the local art of building fortifications and the monumental architecture of cities over centuries created the foundation for the advancement of the civilizations of Siberian peoples in the Middle Ages. Undoubtedly, this process was historically preconditioned by the constant influence of the social and economic progress. The trading and cultural links with the ancient civilizations of the Middle Asia, Iran and China that had existed since remote antiquity, considerably strengthened.

Consequently, the cities of the indigenous peoples of Siberia have their own history which deserves to be in the focus of specialized research aiming at the identification of the dynamics and peculiarities of their development both chronological and spatial and reflecting the diversity of this vast country’s geography.

So, now you have read the text in which we attempted to include the written records from different epochs and by different people all relevant to

3 AO 1984 goda. M., 1986: 12, 13, 32, 196, 208 ff.

4 Kosarev, 1984: 154.

5 Ibid.

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the study of our subject. The historian of Siberia, we hope, will note several important discoveries when analyzing the provided information. First of all, these materials have fully proved that in the course of the Middle Ages and during the earlier times many peoples and ethnic groups of Siberia had their own cities whose birth was a legitimate outcome of the mature social relationships and economic needs.

It is highly indicative that a variety of authors, contemporaries who had first-hand experience, travelers and traders, scholars who came to Northern Asia from the countries of the east (Arabs, Persians, Uighurs, Indians, Chinese and others), from Western Europe (Austrians, Germans, Dutch, English, French, Italian, Sweeds, etc.) and Eastern Europe (Russians, Moldovians, Komi-Zyrians and others) all used in their native languages the word "city" to refer to large settlements of the indigenous peoples of Siberia in their records of the local settlements and fortresses.

Each of the authors writing in their own time without hesitation or doubt correlated Siberian cities with the cities of their own country. The word "city" which sounded differently in different language groups fitted the common concept of the time. This highly important circumstance proves that the concept of "city" was the same in the languages of the medieval people of the Old World and that the cities of the autochthonous people of Siberia of the time fully fitted the diverse range of ideas the peoples of Europe and Asia had about the meaning and content of the word. This fact highlights the historical nature of the term. Obviously, we should not apply the modern concept of "city" to the medieval and especially ancient cities without qualification.

Historians might also be interested to discover the body of individual words for "city" and "fortress" which exists in the vocabulary and folklore of the Turkic, Ugrian, Samoyed and other indigenous Siberian peoples. Undoubtedly, a distinctive term only appears in the language as a result of a continuous and stable exposure of native speakers to a certain phenomenon or object.

Some early medieval records by foreign travelers featuring deserted city ruins that they eye-witnessed in Siberia will surely help to significantly review the attitudes to Siberia as a historically backward country in terms of its social, economic and cultural development. Even during the earliest period of its development this country had populated cities.

Earlier in the text we alluded to the Arab traveler Tamim ibn Bahr Al-Mutavai who saw at the beginning of the ninth century (before 820) the "remains of an ancient city" in the south-western foothills of the Altai. Another Arab traveler (in the 840s) discovered several ruined cities in the south of Western Siberia; he (Salam At-Tardjuman) traveled past them for a full 20 days. The Arab geographers of a later time (for example, Al-Idrisi, the twelfth century), even 300 years later referred to this land of ruined cities lying in southern Trans-Urals as "Bilad al-Kharab", "the devastated land".

It is not unlikely that in the latter case the Arab travelers discovered the ruins of the earliest Siberian cities of the Bronze Age belonging to the Petrovka-Sintashta culture (the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries B.C.). It was these cities that were surrounded by daub (pakhsa) and cob brick walls familiar to the Arabs. The ruins of these cities have now been excavated exactly between the Tobol (on its left-bank tributary, the Sintashta) and the Ural (on its left-bank tributary, the Bolshaya Karaganka) Rivers⁶. There are no other ruined cities of identical nature in the area.

As for the Russian sources, throughout the entire seventeenth century they featured reports of ancient ruined constructions and cities found in various locations. Among them the Uighur fortresses going back to the eighth and the ninth centuries in the form of the deserted "chambers and palaces" discovered by the tsar's envoys V.Tyumenets and I.Petrov at the southern foothills of Western Sayan in 1616 are the most ancient in our view⁷.

The first part of this book featured a considerable volume of factual information about ancient cities with monumental constructions and fortifications built by skilled architects and craftsmen. These very cities are described in the Russian sources in a regrettably laconic way as "numerous cities of stone and great chambers".

Kashlyk (Sibir), the capital city of Kuchum Khan, which was captured by Yermak's Cossacks on October 26, 1582 was in poor repair neglected by its former inhabitants but its major constructions remained intact. They were also weathered with time because the Irtysh flooded the high bank on whose promontory the citadel of the khan's city stood. Merely a hundred years later in 1675 according to Nicolae Milescu in the deserted capital on the Sibirka River the Tobol Tatars still "redecorated their mosque", that is did some repairs and strengthened their old sacred buildings. It was 150 years after the defeat of the city that the natural landslides of the river bank and the fact that the old stones were used for new construction in the Russian Tobolsk caused the dramatic change to the site and made the area of the ruined city considerably smaller. The "living quarters", that is the city proper, were totally destroyed.

In 1735 G.F. Miller examined the "Kuchum gorodishche" and wrote, "The remains of stone buildings could not be seen. The inhabitants of the Kuchum city must have lived in wooden cabins". As the area of the city citadel had become considerably smaller due to a variety of reasons over 150 years the noted scholar, who was not an archaeologist, failed to recreate the true dimensions of the buildings as well as the area and the greatness of the ancient city itself. Consequently, he came to an erroneous conclusion, "only a few noble Tatars could have lived there"⁸. At the present time, about 430 years after

6 Zdanovich, 1989.

7 Kyzlasov L.R., 1969b: 5.

8 Miller, 1937: 232, 233, 476.

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the conquest by Yermak, only a small area of a dug-up occupational layer has remained at the site of the former Isker (Kashlyk) gorodishche⁹.

History proves that periods of successful development of even the most advanced societies are often followed by times of decline and regression especially if disrupted by feudal discord, wars or devastating invasions by foreign conquerors.

The heyday of the Siberian cities of the eighth-sixteenth centuries was followed by the disintegration of the local civilization of the indigenous peoples. By the beginning of the eighteenth century it had ceased to exist. It was substituted by the new city culture of the Russian colonists.

The tsar's decrees to Siberian voivodes and the voivodes orders to the Cossacks contained very precise instructions, "if some tribute paying people do not wish to be under the tsar's will" "pray to God for mercy... and fight them as long as merciful God gives help to make them obey the tsar and to stay his serfs forever". Those who would decline to become the tsar's subjects and to pay tribute were threatened with a "sharp sword" and the tsar ordered the Cossacks "to take a canon" and "to crush the disobeying strangers"¹⁰.

The conquest of Siberia interrupted the process of the historical development of the indigenous peoples and ethnic groups. It led to a complex transformation of the social and economic structure of the local population and to the changes in the distribution of the ethnic groups in the country together with the rise of new social and interethnic relationships. The life and especially the economy of the peoples of Siberia were restructured to serve the interests of the Russian feudal state. The tsarist regime turned the wonderful free country into a "severe and dark land". It turned the flourishing and nearly virgin Siberia into the scary land of exile and forced labor, a country of eternal horror for the civilized world.

The tsarist regime apparently started to exile rebels, outlaws and thieves to Siberia even before the death of Kuchum Khan in 1600. Initially, military personnel and European prisoners of war were sent to Siberia. They were made to participate in the military campaigns at their peril. Later on under Tsar Aleksei Mikhailovich the "Sobornoye ulozhenie" (code of laws – tr.) of 1649 included the order to penalize for offenses with a "severe punishment", namely, flogging and exile to Siberia to the Lena River¹¹. Beginning in 1653 they started to exile to the Yenisei when an order was passed to send to Siberia the thieves and outlaws and previously to cut off a finger on the left hand. Directly exiles were ordered in 1679 by the "kind" Tsar Feodor Alekseyevich, "If any thieves appear... those thieves are to be sent to Siberia for life to plough land but without punishing them further with cutting off their hands, feet or two fingers..."¹².

9 Zikov, 1989: 145, 146.

10 Lebedev, 1949: 79, 80.

11 Klyuchevskiy, 1988: 136.

12 Andreev, 1938: 61.

Since then it became an established practice – the European Russia under all its regimes sent to Siberia the dregs of society. And we all know that the criminals and the “dissipated” people did not even think to become peasants and plough land there. It was them that the Russian Siberians referred to as *varnaki*. For 400 years the never ending stream of hardened and immoral criminals and exiled people from Europe caused constant concern and anguish to the indigenous peoples of Siberia and the naturalized Russian Siberians. The violence and duress caused resistance, mistrust and fear.

The newcomers from Europe brought with them new diseases which often led to epidemics sweeping whole *volosts* (districts) and villages of the tribute paying peoples. Invasive species of birds and animals were brought to Siberia (for example, sparrows, hooded crows, rats and so on) as well as parasitic insects.

The indigenous people got accustomed to drinking Russian vodka and tobacco smoking was also spread. All this was accompanied by a devastating and painful loss of old links and networks and of material culture, the obliteration of the previous types of the former social identity and morals, outlooks and centuries-old religious beliefs.

In spite of the fact that Manichaeism which in many respects was close to Christianity was widely spread in Siberia since the early ages¹³, the forced conversion of the indigenous people into Christianity was very painful¹⁴. The new religion brought from Europe was not absolutely alien to the autochthonous peoples of Siberia, but it did not incorporate (in contrast to Manichaeism) the veneration of nature by the locals who did not separate themselves from the mysterious powers of the natural world. Shamanism proved to be so natural in context of Siberia that even Russian Christians sometimes appealed to the shamans for help. There are accounts that not only Russian soldiers of the seventeenth century but also the *voivodes* who were good Christians also believed the shamans; the same is true of the peasants of the nineteenth century¹⁵.

Starting with the end of the sixteenth century the indigenous people witnessed the unprecedented plundering of the natural resources of their land. In the “Historical account of the conquest of Siberia” we find, “since then the true conquest of Siberia started and in the subsequent years mostly individual people came driven by greed to acquire wealth”¹⁶. The eternal source of food for the Siberians, the taiga, was devastated especially quickly. Individual entrepreneurs who came from Russia started to hunt such fur-bearing animals (as sables, beavers, otters, squirrels, martens, gluttons, foxes, lynxes, wolves, bears and so on) so aggressively, at such a large scale and in such great numbers that during

13 Kyzlasov L.R., 1998a; 1999b; 2001a; 2005a; Kyzlasov I.L., 2001b; 2001c; 2003a; 2003b.

14 Novitskiy, 1941: 62-99.

15 *Zhitie...*, 1979: 40; *Yadrintsev*, 1874: 326.

16 *Opisanie...*, 1982.

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the first 50 years the taiga was nearly emptied¹⁷. By the middle of the seventeenth century the tsarist government was obliged to ban the taking of sables in most uezds of Western Siberia¹⁸. Even in Yakutia in the 1640s the tribute in sables was substituted by a tribute in foxes because the sables had nearly all been killed¹⁹. The Surgut Khanty were forced to travel from the Ob to the "Yenisei and the Taz to the remote hunting grounds" to be able to pay tribute²⁰. The fur hunters often trespassed on the hunting grounds of the local tribute paying people and caused a lot of damage²¹. Shops of the local inhabitants were plundered more frequently. This led to violent armed clashes²². Unmarried fur traders "captured" local women or coerced them into "relationships" and sometimes sold them to each other²³. The victims were many, the grievances and offenses were numerous...

Apparently, we are just starting out on a long journey of researching the subject of "City civilizations of the indigenous peoples of Siberia" which is crucially important for the understanding of the history of the peoples of Russia. Materials from many archives the most important of which are the collections of the Siberian and Posolskyi prikaz that are stored in the Central State Archive of Old Records should be researched in order to fully assess the available sources. However, we have come to certain conclusions based on the facts incorporated in this book.

The Siberia of the indigenous peoples stretching from the Arctic Ocean in the north to the Sayan-Altai foothills in the south in the course of the twelfth-seventeenth centuries was seen by foreign soldiers and traders as a land of administrative and trading cities, as a continent of fortress and sanctuaries, villages and settlements. It is important that in the Middle Ages cities and strongholds were common for northern Samoyed deer-breeders and hunters traveling in dog-drawn sleighs, for the Ugrian peoples of the Ob and the Urals who were hunters and fishermen also engaging in cattle-breeding and sometimes landfarming, for the Siberian Tatars who bred cattle and ploughed land, for the Turkic group of ore prospectors and metal workers and merchants of Southern Siberia as well as for the nomadic Kalmyks and Turks, Mongols and Tungus of Eastern Siberia and the Amur region.

Even though they all had different levels of social and economic development they actively participated in exchanges and trade with the civilized countries of the remote south. The Siberian trading settlements along the meridional trading route which also served as stopping points were powerful facilitators.

It is impossible to identify the level of social and economic development of the indigenous peoples and ethnic groups of Siberia at a given period of

17 Pavlov, 1972: 105, 114, 135, 139, 346.

18 Ibid.: 139.

19 Pavlov, 1974: 10.

20 Ibid.: 30.

21 Ibid.: 35.

22 Ibid.: 35, 39, 40.

23 Ibid.: 94, 95.

history without taking into account the civilizing role of the cities which served as centers of people's advancement.

Up till recently the level of independent development of the indigenous peoples of Siberia has been unjustly underestimated in research literature. The opinion that since times immemorial east of the Urals there only lived some nomadic forest hunters, fishermen and deer-breeders and also the steppe cattle-breeding nomads who were unfamiliar with any form of settled life or city culture should now be discarded and forgotten.

Particular attention should be paid to the study of the records of the remains and ruins of the ancient and medieval cities of Siberia which could be correlated with the information from written western and eastern sources as well as with the archaeological discoveries of unknown city civilizations made in the last 25 years in Southern and Western Siberia. Unfortunately, most of these materials remain unpublished.

The corpus of comprehensive sources on ancient and medieval cities will shed new light on the history of the peoples of Siberia and will facilitate the reconstruction of the true characteristics of the stages of their complex history.

PART 2.
ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH

Chapter 1. BEGINNINGS OF FIRST CITIES IN SIBERIA. BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGES

There are not as many places on the Earth as it may seem that are suitable and comfortable for permanent human habitation. In this respect the reutilization of the remains of old temporary camps and settlements by the new generations and migrants is common and economically viable. Archaeologists who scrupulously investigate the occupational layers that formed and accumulated at the sites of ancient villages and cities know more about it than other people. Scientists research the complex stratigraphy of building structures going back to different periods and record the use of the same old house walls, the remaining pits and foundations by the following generations¹.

Prehistoric peoples first settled on the virgin territories of Siberia and chose high windswept terraces alongside lakes and major rivers that were free from the ubiquitous blood-sucking insects, gadflies and mosquitoes. They preferred inaccessible hollows surrounded by deep gullies, promontories at river confluences and sometimes islands. Of tremendous value were those raised spots that were at least partially surrounded by rivers and lakes but not eaten away at the times of spring floods. Ancient people tried to protect their dwellings not only from wild beasts but from the sudden intrusions of enemies as well as their importunate neighbors and relatives².

We should note that in the late Neolithic period, characterized by the move from hunter-gatherer towards production economy, people developed a marked mythological mentality. They saw themselves as part of nature different from its

1 Blavatskiy, 1967; Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b; 2002.

2 There is a saying common among the Yakuts living on the Vilyuy River who are known for their love of freedom and intolerance of bothersome nagging which goes, "The best place to settle is by the water and away from relatives!"

other parts. At that period of time man anthropomorphized the forces of nature³. According to some research publications, “any territory occupied with a view to settle and use it as a ‘living space’ was first transformed from chaos into cosmos”⁴.

Consequently, any territory chosen for settlement was organized in accordance with the primary natural reference points and existing beliefs: it was first turned into cosmos and then made comfortable to lead a peaceful life in. It was believed that the “good” space (“our world”) should be closed and therefore safe for man, while the open space was considered to be foreign and even hostile. A very old proverb says, “At home even the walls help.”

We can say that the development of cities everywhere followed one and the same pattern: staking out the territory – enclosing it with walls – city. For ancient people a walled-in sacred space represented organized cosmos on earth. In heathen times and later the path to the temple which was the house of a god could only have led into a sacred place.

At the turn of the Stone Age and the Bronze Ages the promontory settlements of Western Siberia with their permanent warm half dugouts were additionally fortified, walled in, by their inhabitants. They were first fortified by cutting off the slopes of ravines and steep slopes, followed by digging deep ditches across the promontories and making walls of turf around them. With time the walls slid down and gained the form of earthen mounds⁵.

Later, such strongholds were surrounded by wooden stockades, bridgeheads and watchtowers. The remains of such fortifications were called “gorodische” (site or fortified settlement – tr.) in the Russian folk language meaning abandoned or ruined ancient fortresses and cities⁶.

1.1. Neolithic period

Among historians studying the permanent settlements and the beginnings of the first cities⁷ of Western Siberia, V. A. Borzunov, a researcher from Yekaterinburg, is highly regarded. Based on the works by E.M. Bers published in the 1950-1960s he succeeded in finding “the world’s new northernmost area of fortified settlements in the forests of the Trans-Urals and Western Siberia found between 56 and 64 degrees north latitude and between 60 and 76 degrees east longitude. It is possible that the area occupied by the fortified settlements

3 Kyzlasov L.R., 1986b: 191.

4 Eliade, 1949; 1987: 36.

5 Fol’klor i etnografiya, 1984: 178; Kovaleva, 1989: 20-52; Kerner, 1989; Ocherki kul’turogeneza..., 1994.

6 V. Tatishchev, 1979: 242; Gryaznov, 1929: 724.

7 By the beginnings of the first cities we mean archaeological sites that are cradles of future cities as the Slavic languages define the word (Kyzlasov L.R., 1999a: 96-129).

was bigger and expanded into the Tomsk-Narymsk Trans-Ob Region with the adjacent taiga. More than 70 archaeological sites of this area fall within the last 5.5 thousand years or so. There are two types of sites: the first – a detached dwelling (a dugout, half dugout or an above-ground house) enclosed in wooden walls or paling; the second – a massive one or two-storey log cabin with an area from 60 to 600 square meters (270 square meters on average) surrounded by a ditch. These cabins located near some naturally fortified places, on the promontories and at the edges of rock-terraces, had ditches which made them different from the big unfortified detached houses that had been built in the taiga since the Neolithic and Encolithic period”⁸.

According to V.A. Borzunov, the Amnya I site (located on the left-bank tributary of the Kazym River that in its turn flows into the Ob River from the right-bank side) stands out among the others. “The Amnya I site is the world’s northernmost Neolithic settlement that represents the first type of ancient sites”, he wrote. Besides, the author states that this special type of settlement in the Ural-Siberian region and in Siberia in general originated absolutely independently from the rest of the world (that is in my opinion doubtful) and “it was for the first time in history that hunter-gatherer communities created fortifications.” In his other work V.A. Borzunov rightly calls the people living in highly fortified settlements “settled forest hunters”⁹. So, we can conclude that the indigenous population of the taiga zone of Siberia even in the Neolithic period was developing much faster than the population of Eastern Europe.

It is generally known that since the Neolithic period precious furs were the main resource for the people of Siberia and were used as a unique universal equivalent in all exchanges of goods. Numerous dramatic and tragic moments in the history of the region were caused by the newcomers’ unquenchable thirst for the “soft gold”. As early as in the Neolithic period the Siberians were the first to realize that it was not only game hunting that began in the taiga but mostly tracking the hunters themselves; the people who used to be masters of the wonderful green kingdom, their Homeland. That is why fortresses and castles were built in the taiga.

Quite early on together with the fortified promontory sites special fortified house-fortresses appeared in the inner taiga. “These fortified dwellings were inhabited by reasonably small communes (from 15 to 60 people) grouping one or several big families and consisting of the settlement proper and a fortified social and production center”, writes V.A. Borzunov¹⁰. This is possible but, to my mind, these early Siberian “burgs” resembled the stone towers the people of Northern Caucasus erected up till recently to protect their families, cattle and possessions from their foes.

8 Borzunov, 1997: 224-236; 2002: 79-97 ff.

9 Borzunov, 1997: 229, 230; Borzunov, Lipskiy, 1984: 103.

10 Borzunov, 1997: 232.

High mountains alone were not enough to protect the skillful and strong horsemen from the raids of plunderers; they were shielded by the high towers of stone built by their grandfathers. The pile frame two-storey towers with barns and two log walls that were built in the thick of the taiga and were surrounded by ditches, paling, abates, stone walls could not always secure the safety of the rich possessions of strong fur-trapping families from the fighting squads that made their way through the thick taiga to collect princely taxes ("polyudie"). Bands of hostile forest-steppe neighbors and even hordes of steppe people living far away from there headed for Western Siberia.

Polyudie, kyshtymstvo (*kyshtym* is the old Turkish term for the dependant tribes of Siberia— tr.) and open plunder existed long before the beginnings of any state and as early as at the time of primitive societies. It was not before the birth of the state that they acquired a formalized character similar to piracy condoned by European kings or the Viking raids of rich lands. However, even these days out-and-out plunder is not uncommon in the Siberian taiga among other places.

1.2. "Lived-in walls" of Bronze Age

Owing to the discoveries of V.T. Kovaleva (Yurovskaya), an archaeologist from Yekaterinburg, it was established that at the turn of the III and II millenniums B.C. the ancient indigenous people of Western Siberia also used another more rational type of construction when building their first fortresses. It was found that the early cities of Siberia were in themselves circular fortresses enclosed by the wooden walls of lived-in above-ground houses.

Evidence of that was found during the excavations of the Tashkovo II settlement on the Iset River, the left-bank tributary of the Tobol River, carried out by V.T. Kovaleva in 1984-1986. The settlement dates from the very beginning of the Bronze Age. It was dated to 1830 B.C by means of a radiocarbon analysis. It was discovered that there used to exist a whole culture, the so called Tashkovo culture, with concentrically planned wooden fortresses of the same kind in the Tobol River valley¹¹; three of them located on the left bank and one on the right bank of the Tobol River¹².

The early city of the Tashkovo II, or to be more exact, the proto-city consisted of 11 square-like log cabins with the area from 28 to 47.5 square meters each. All the log cabins were imbedded in foundation pits from 0.4 to 0.5 meters deep. It is likely that the houses had ridge roofs. All the houses

11 Kovaleva, 1988: 29, 47, fig. 3-5.

12 Kovaleva, 1997: fig. 1-5; Ryzhkova. Prikhodchenko, 1994: 123-125 (17 houses built in the form of a circle with a temple inside with posts and fire sites of 5 x 2 x 0.19 m.).

BEGINNINGS OF FIRST CITIES IN SIBERIA

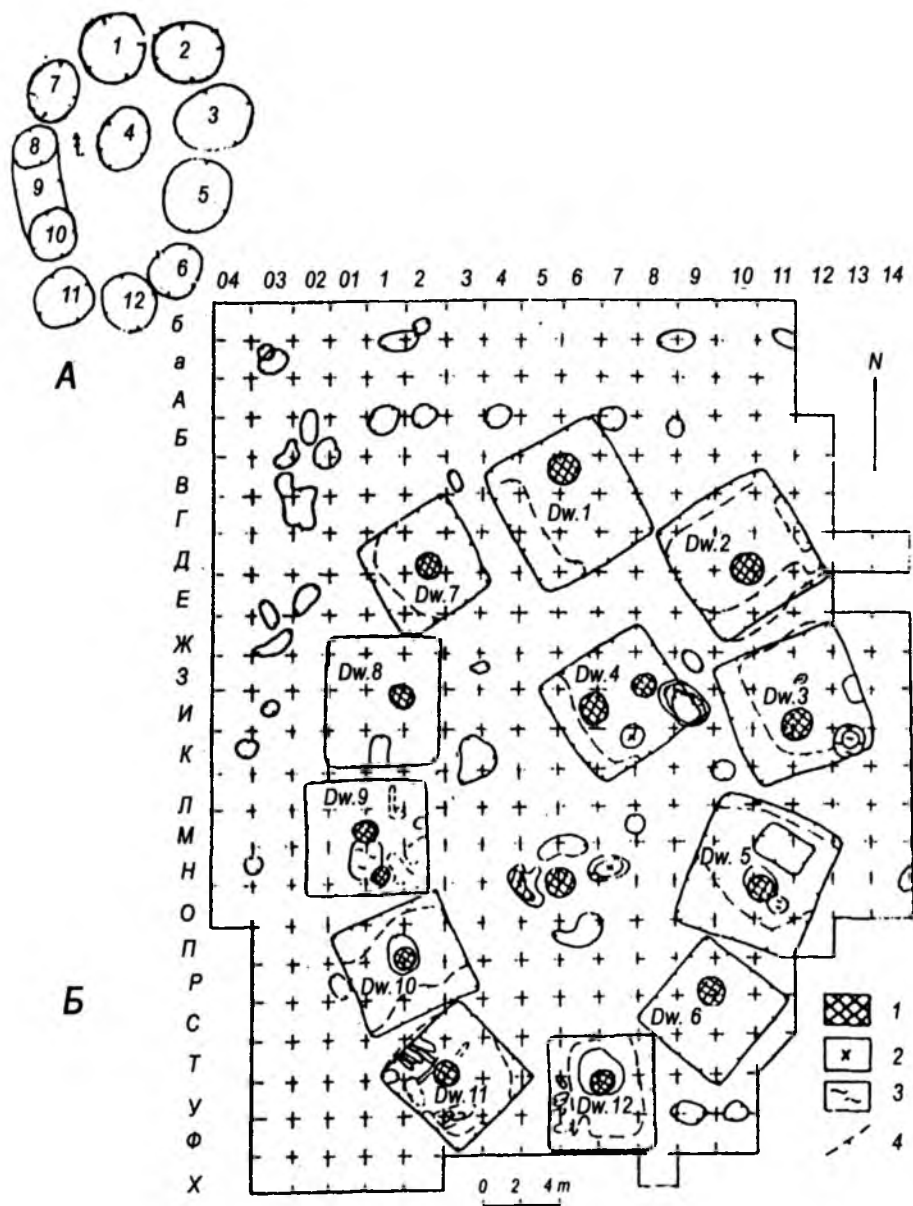


Figure 1. General archaeological plan of the Tashkovo-II settlement.
By V.T. Kovaleva

According to the head of the excavations the open space between the walls of the houses was additionally fortified by heaps of short logs. "Then the settlement was turned into an original wooden fortress with its walls being at the same time the walls of lived-in houses; construction of such fortifications required huge workforce though it was technically possible", reasonably concludes V.T. Kovaleva¹³.

It is important to note that in the enclosed city of Tashkovo II there was one more "dwelling" within the fortress, the 12th log cabin (the 4th according to the author) located close to the entrance (Figure 1). We think (based on what we know about the beliefs and outlooks of the people living in the period of a gradual transition from hunter-gatherer to production economy) that the only construction that could be located inside a sacred place was a temple. The city entrance was located at the north-west as that was the shortest way to the temple.

The inner construction of the sacred temple was different from the other houses. All the 11 buildings had one hearth each while the sanctuary had three. Apparently, the small hearth (the southern) was an everyday hearth serving the needs of the priests; the other two big hearths were sacrificial: the eastern one was used to worship the rising Sun while the western one with a stock of charcoal along the wall was used to worship the rising Moon. A long deep sacrificial pit stretched from the eastern hearth to the south-western corner (2.4 x 1.3 x 0.8 m). Fragments of pots for sacrificial food and libation, parts of flint and clay tools for hunting and fishing offered to the gods as well as the remains of a copper smelting bowl were unearthed in the pit¹⁴.

Obviously, the early Siberian cities planned like the typical Tashkovo II settlement had their own temples of Fire, personifying the Gods of the Sun and the Moon. We side with V.T. Kovaleva in her hypothesis that "the Tashkovo II settlement was constructed in accordance with a carefully developed plan", that there were priests living in the settlement, that, probably, the inhabitants of the central building were "keepers of the sacred fire" and that the Tashkovo sites are much older than the Sintashta sites¹⁵.

We should also take into consideration that in the Tobol River valley in the previous Eneolithic period there were circular sanctuaries surrounded by round ditches with wooden posts and fires at the bottom and edges of the gullies. Researchers link these sanctuaries to astral cults¹⁶.

When analyzing such findings obtained in the course of excavations of ancient sites archaeologists realize that the material evidence itself cannot say anything, so it is fallacious to conclude that the log settlements of the Tashkovo culture which existed 4 thousand years ago were constructed by "the alien steppe

13 Kovaleva, 1988: 34.

14 Cf. Kyzlasov L.R., 1986b: 172, 173; 1992b.

15 Kovaleva, 1997: 70.

16 Potemkina, 1995; Potemkina, Gusakov, 1987.

people (the Iranian group of languages)"¹⁷. However, the obtained data prove the normal progressive development of the indigenous people of Siberia in prehistoric times as well as the occasional ideological and material influence of the developed southern centers on northern people. There are some grounds to believe that Siberian tribes and peoples in their turn ventured to migrate to distant southern countries.

In recent years some new archaeological findings proved that on the threshold of the Bronze Age southern Trans-Urals and Western Siberia might have been cradles of Zoroastrism, one of the main religious beliefs of the Ancient World.

This takes the archaeology of Siberia and its history back to the problem of the origin of the Aryans and their ancient culture¹⁸.

It should be born in mind that sites with lived-in house walls were first mentioned by S.P. Tolstov 50 years ago; in his works he alluded to Avesta and the ruins of the big cities of Khorezm going back, in his opinion, to the Achaemenid Persian Empire. Further excavations of the Khorezm site did not prove his initial assumptions, though¹⁹.

However, if wooden sites with lived-in house walls are indeed typical of the ancient Aryans, they might have lived exactly in the Trans-Urals, the territories lying in the interfluges of the Ural (flowing to the south) and the Tobol (running to the north) in Siberia²⁰. There is evidence that wooden cities with lived-in house walls were typical of Siberia, the land of vast forests and the boundless taiga. Hardly could fortifications of this type be restricted to any particular period of time, ethnos or language of the indigenous people.

I would like to come up with just one example. Such fortifications were successfully used by the Siberian tartars that fought in the army of Kuchum khan in the sixteenth century. The Russian documents of that time prove the fact. The deed by Tzar Feodor Ivanovich of 1595 refers to the fortress of the Kuchum prince Aleya. "Prince Aleya gathered 150 tartars of the Oyalymskaya volost and led them up the Irtysh River to Chernyi island where they settled and stayed for the winter." One of such settlements is described in a document dated 1601. "They built about 35 log cabins closely fit together in the form of a circle and piled with turf to protect the fortress from invasions."²¹ (The original text uses an old Russian unit of measurement that corresponds to 35 – tr.) So, a round lived-in wall of the tartar fortress was composed of 35 log cabins closely fit together. From 4 to 5 warriors lived in every log cabin.

So it is obvious that for 3600 years in Siberia there simultaneously existed three main types of fortifications or strongholds typical of the Bronze, early and

17 Kovaleva, 1997: 70.

18 Steblin-Kamenskiy, 1995: 166-168; Malyutina, Zdanovich, 1995: 100-106; Kovaleva, 1995: 69-72.

19 Tolstov, 1948: 77-82; Cf.: Vishnevskaya, Rapport, 1997. V. also: Malyutina, 2004: 71-79.

20 Kyzlasov L.R., 1994b: 7.

21 Miller, 1937: 367; 1941: 167; Cf.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1992a: 50

late Iron Ages, which sometimes developed into cities. These were: promontory fortresses with additional fortifications (mounds, ditches and wooden palings), fortified family homes of hunters and wooden circular early cities with lived-in walls. Archaeologists do not often unearth wooden circular early cities due to their poor state of preservation, but neither should their role in the past be underestimated nor should they be neglected. They should be looked for and studied.

1.3. Daub houses of proto-cities

It seems that the initial layer of the Loginovskoye site on the Ishim River and the Chernoozerie VI settlement in the middle course of the Irtysh River surrounded by a ditch might go back to the early Bronze Age²². The constructions and pens of the Inberen X settlement were also enclosed by a small ditch²³. The following abstract from a paper on the Botay settlements on the Ishim River dated from the beginning of the III millennium B.C. could not be neglected. "The use of wattle and daub technology in house construction speaks for the appearance of the southern (Middle Asian) component in the Eneolithic period"²⁴. Bearing in mind the above mentioned Eneolithic sanctuaries (of the Savin sanctuary type) on the Tobol River we should not fail to take into consideration this early influence of the Middle Asian and more developed southern cultural centers on the Urals and Western Siberia. Quite early on archaeologists without any further explanations stated the fact that the local people made and used cob bricks and clay bricks (sometimes of oval-flattened shape, 40-50 x 60-80 mm) in the construction of stoves and hearths in hollows in the lived-in houses of the early Bronze Age²⁵.

It was K. V. Salnikov, the "grandfather" of the current archaeology of the Urals, who discovered "small stoves with hemispherical arched roofs made of perfect flamed bricks in the dwellings of the Andronovo Kipelskoe settlement. We can be absolutely sure that these bricks were made by women as there were found deepenings left by small fingers on the surface of the bricks"²⁶. There were also discovered some other types of first bricks without any distinct form; mostly tetrahedral though some trihedral and pentahedral bricks were also uncovered.

It is likely that such construction materials as bricks were invented by the people of the Andronovo culture not exclusively for the construction of stoves and hearths, though, heating equipment was extremely important

22 Gening, Gusentsova i dr., 1970.

23 Stefanova, 1988: 54, 55.

24 Zeibert, 1985: 15.

25 Kosinskaya, 1984; Stefanov, Korochkova, 1984: 47, 80.

26 Sal'nikov, 1967: 247, 248.

in the Siberian climate. This suggests the presence of some neighboring city civilization with its positive influence on the country tribes in Siberia and the Urals during the Bronze Age.

Sure enough, a city civilization was unearthed in 1970-1980 in the interfluves of the Ural and Tobol Rivers, running in different directions to the south and to the north along the front Siberian part of the Ural Mountains.

Here we refer to the incredible sites of the so called Petrovka-Sintashta culture (the seventeenth and sixteenth centuries B.C.) that have been studied in the interfluves of the Tobol and Ishim Rivers since 1960s. The birth of the true early cities fenced by a closed line of fortified clay mounds with wooden stockades and ditches between the inner and outer mounds is associated with the Petrovka-Sintashta culture. The ditches were 1.5 to 2.5 m deep and 3.5 m wide. The system of ditches typically formed a rectangular fortress with the main living space inside. Another type of dwelling was a fortified settlement on a naturally protected promontory. However, even the promontory settlements were also protected by straight or bent stretches of mounds and ditches. These settlements usually had a living area of 10 000 to 30 000 square meters.

Defense systems were of crucial importance and traces of numerous renovations of ditches can be seen. Sturdy above-ground cabins (with the area of 130 to 150 square meters) with log walls, flamed clay brick walls and cob brick walls sometimes had second floors. Such houses formed densely built blocks. The central streets were drained by means of side gutters and efficient slope-ramps that ran to waterways²⁷. The following features of city plans stand out: counterforts, rounded protuberances or "towers", ditch branches close to passages (Figure 2), pugged ditch bottoms, heaths and their imitations. Sacrificial sites with the remains of domestic animals (whole carcasses or parts) and pots with food were excavated.

The rounded concentric daub fortification of the Sintashta settlement that was partly washed away by the river turned out to be quite unusual²⁸. It was surrounded by a ditch of 4.5 to 5.5 meters wide. On the inner side of the ditch the remains of a wall (up to 4 meters wide) were discovered. The wall was composed of log cabin-barns of 3 x 4 m joined together and stuffed with clay. The top of the wall was fortified with wooden paling. An outer ring of fortifications surrounded the settlement with the area up to 15 thousand square meters. Further excavations in the Sintashta site uncovered lived-in houses enclosed in 16-18 m wide ring formed by two daub walls made of wood and flamed clay blocks. Identical radial walls split the ring into standard sections where dwellings were located (Figure 3). Most of the dwellings were two-storey or had lightweight constructions on their roofs.

27 V. Zdanovich, 1983; Kyzlasov L.R., 1991b.

28 Gening V.F., Zdanovich, Gening V.V., 1992.

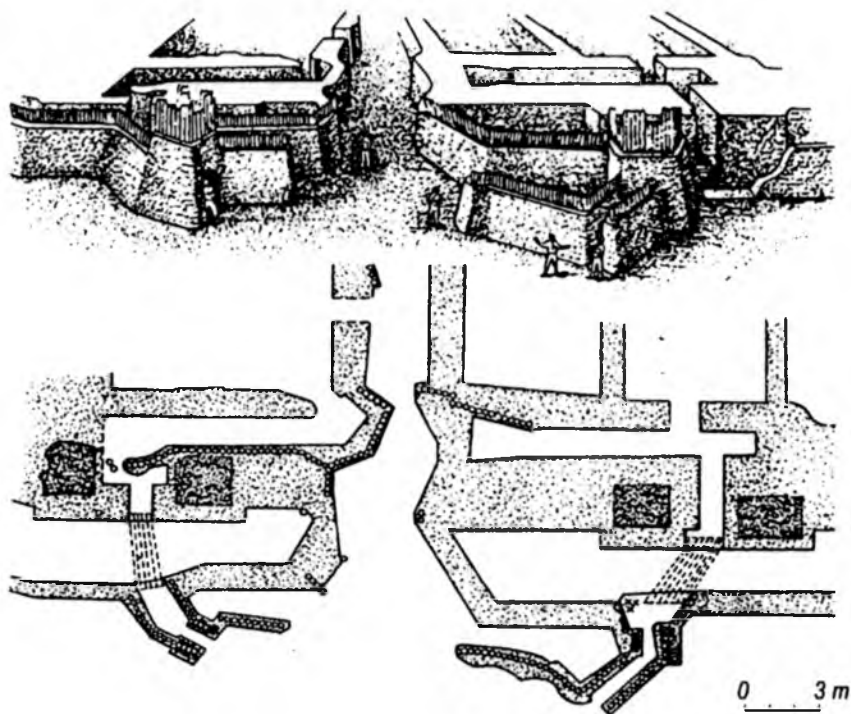


Figure 2. Plan and reconstruction of the southern gate of the Sintashta fortress. By V.F. Gening

The fortress blocks of the Petrovka-Sintashta culture were made up of above-ground rectangular houses with an entrance tambour in the middle of the end wall. The log walls as well as the floors of these houses were pugged. Based on the cleaned flamed coating remains we can assume that the stoves and fireplaces were made of stone and clay.

Underground daub and cob vaults additionally paneled with boards were found in the nearby burial grounds. Sometimes, inside the cob coating of the tombs there were low log foundation frames. Apparently, the overhead cover had the form of a terraced arch made up of overlapping pakhsy (pressed clay used in house construction in Middle Asia – tr.) blocks and cob bricks along the tops of the walls of the burial chamber. The floors of the burial places were covered with clay mixed with sand; and there were clay platforms between the tombs at the horizon (Figure 4).

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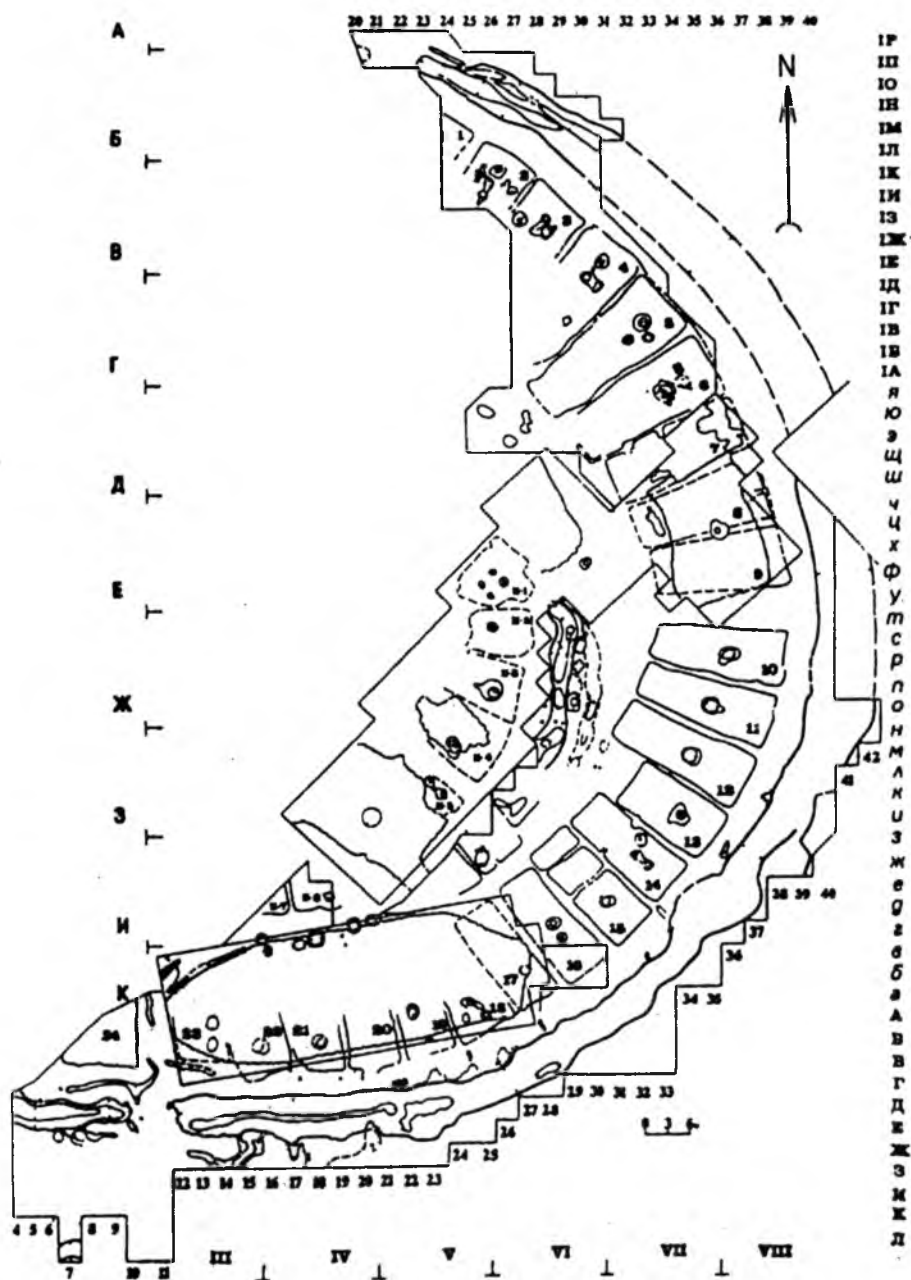


Figure 3. Excavation plan of the east part of the Sintashta site; excavation plan.
By V.F. Gening

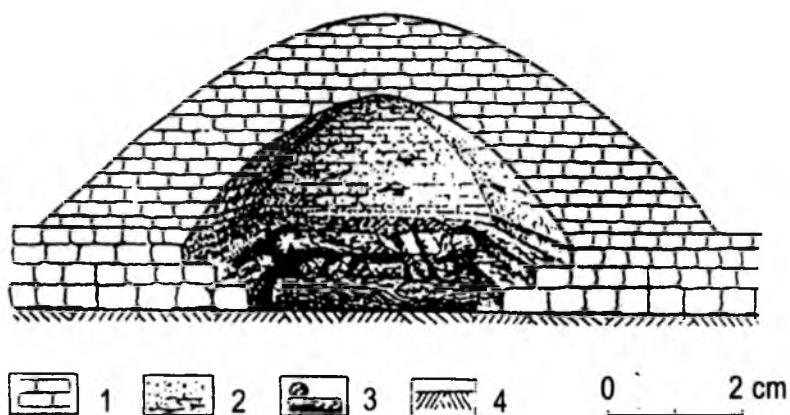


Figure 4. The site of Sintashta; reconstruction of a tomb chamber.
By V.F. Gening

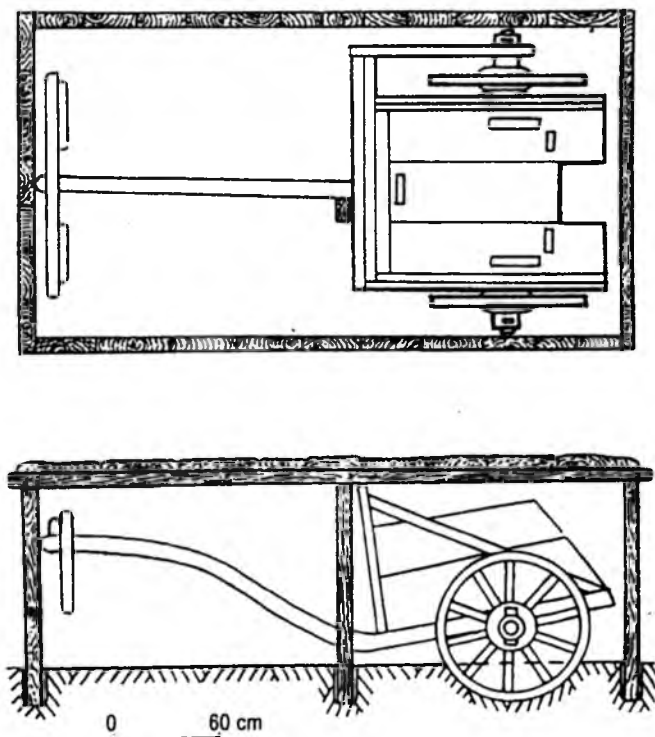


Figure 5. Reconstruction of the battle chariot at the tomb 19.
By V.F. Gening

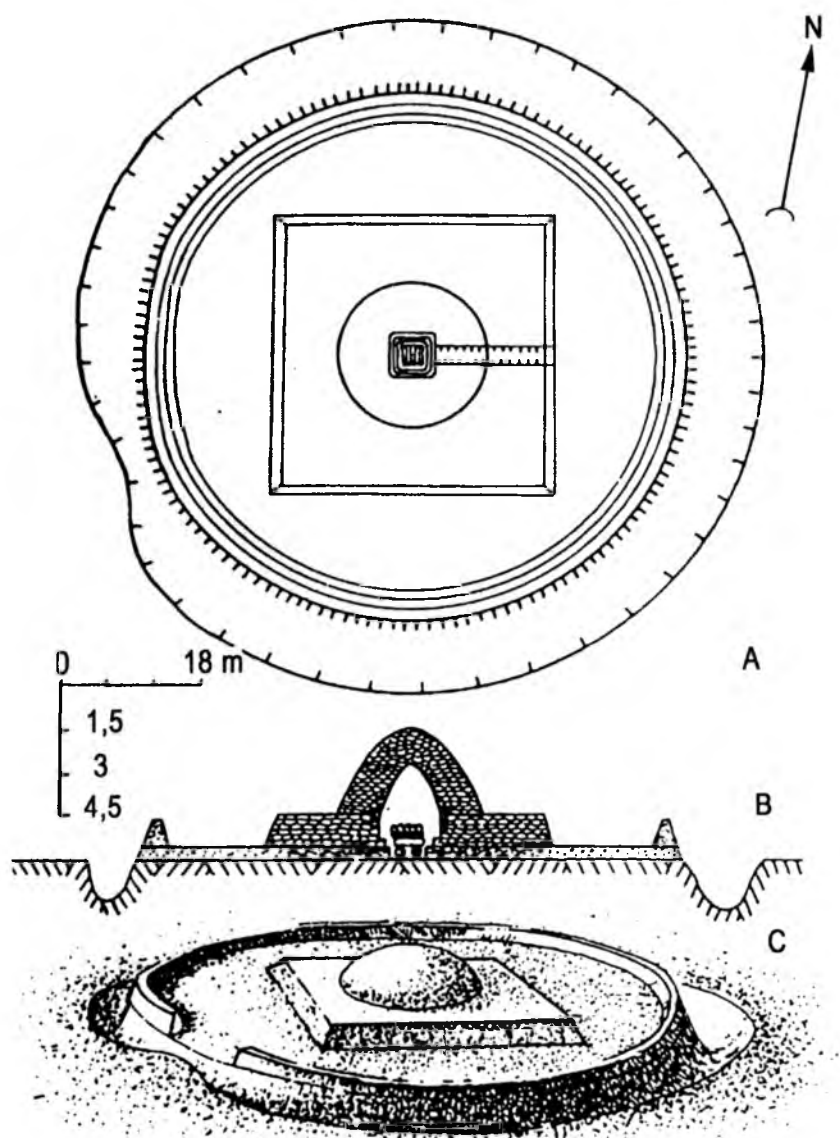


Figure 6. The site of Sintashta: plan and reconstruction of a tumulus.
By V.F. Gening

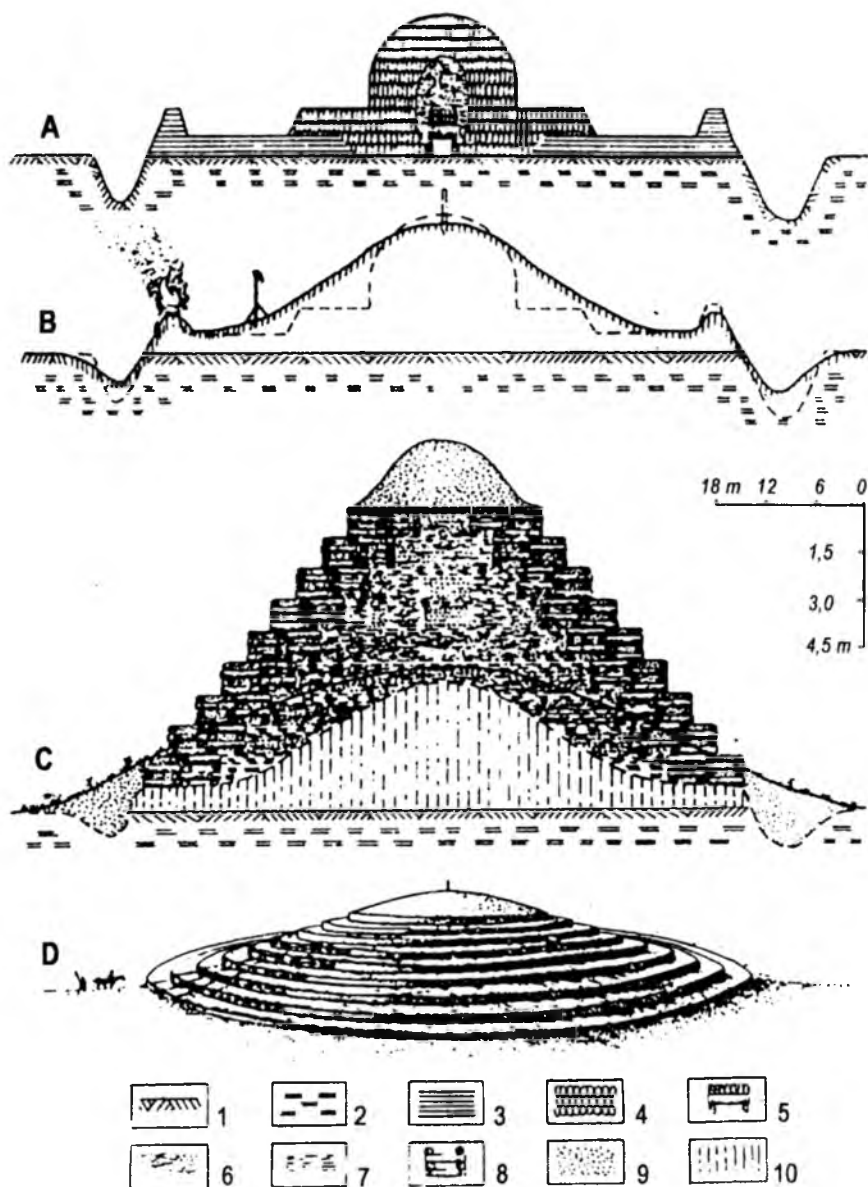


Figure 7. Reconstruction of the Sintashta "temple" stages.

By V.F. Gening

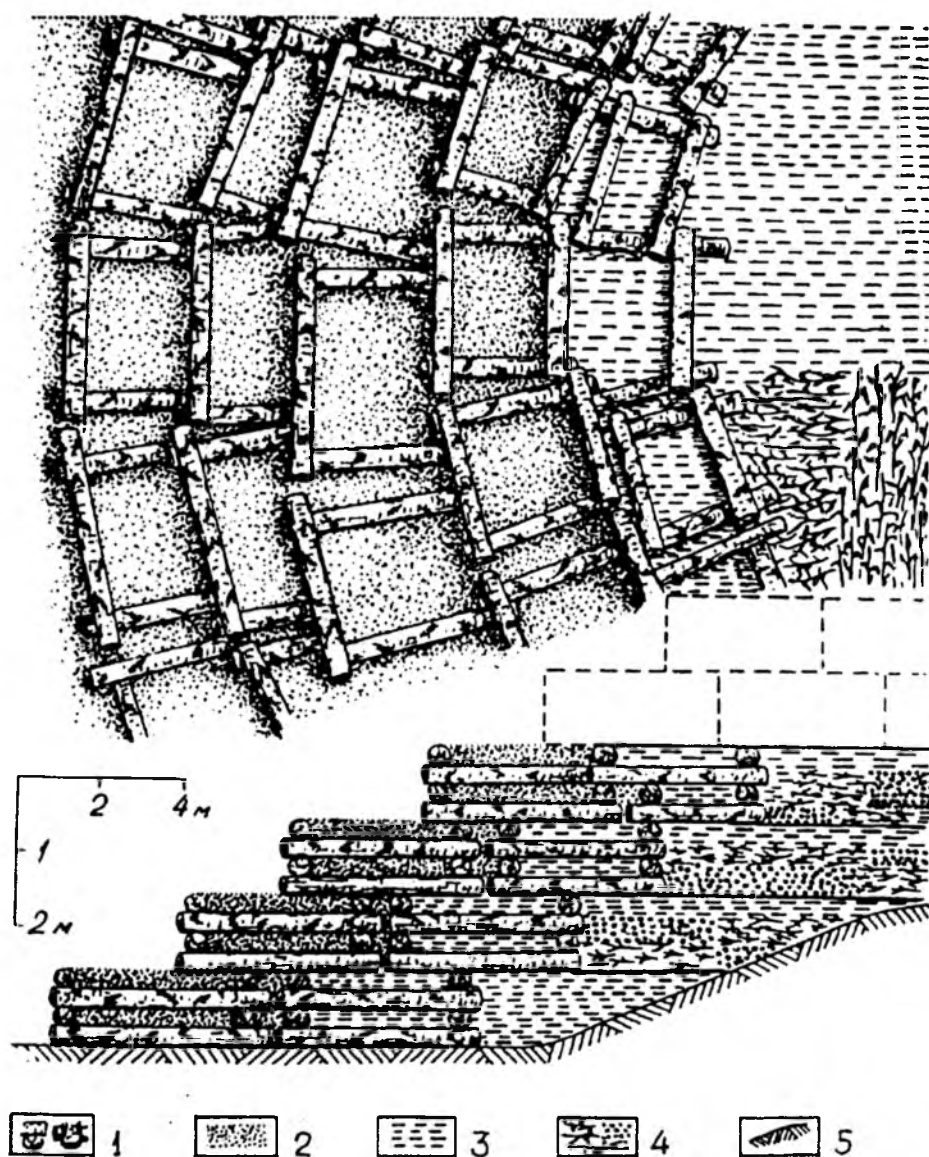


Figure 8. Joining together log cabins stuffed with ballast which played the role of indestructible fortification walls of the Sintashta city.

By V.F. Gening

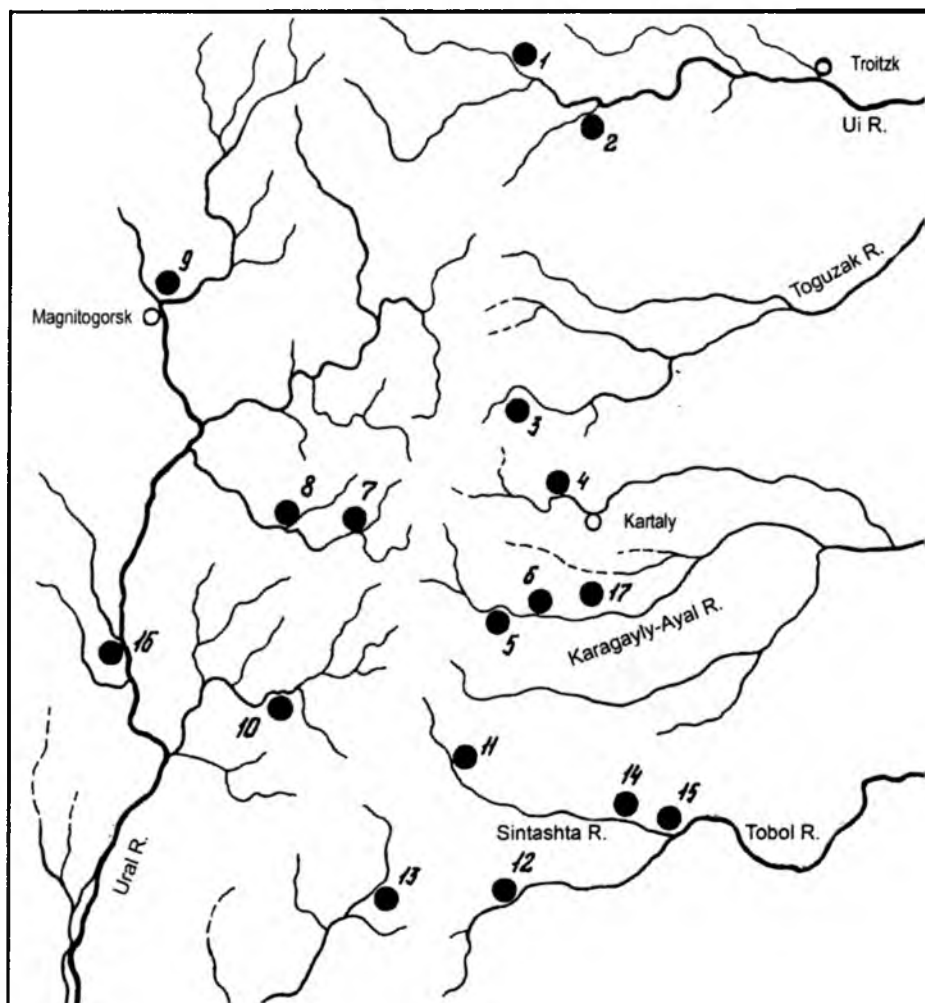


Figure 9. Map of "the country of cities"
(8 – Kuisak, 10 – Arkaim, 11 – Sintashta). By G.B. Zdanovich

The tombs of priests and man-warriors stand out from the other graves. Two-wheeled battle chariots (Figure 5) were put into the tombs with two killed harnessed horses placed on the sides of the graves. Splendid sets of copper and bronze tools, weapons, harnesses and jewelry were put in the tombs²⁹.

The vaults of the noblest men were covered with oval flattened "valki" similar to the famous Middle Asian "guvalyaki" (rough shapeless clay bricks - (Figure 6) tr.)

²⁹ Zdanovich, 1983.



Figure 10. Air photograph of the Arkaim site, showing the beginning of excavations. By G.B. Zdanovich

that formed dome-shaped tholoses. The departed were not buried in the ground but were laid on the soil layers, as it was done in interring the priests of Zoroastrism. Remains of a grand temple of Fire representing a nine-terraced tiered pyramid originally made up of log cabin-barns with 23 rows of beams (Figure 7) were discovered in the Sintashta burial ground.

The complex structures of the Sintashta-Arkaim early cities utilized the same pattern of joining together log cabins stuffed with puddle or ballast which played the role of indestructible fortification walls resembling the lived-in walls of the oval Tashkovo strongholds (Figure 8). The log structures of the barns radially narrowing to the centre which belong to the Arzhan barrow (Sak culture, the seventh century B.C.) also originate from the lived-in walls of the oval Tashkovo fortresses³⁰. As the Arzhan tumulus is "the city of the dead", the fortress was constructed to protect the eternal rest of the departed ruler and his companions in the other world. The sizes of the Arkaim diameter (145 m) and the Arzhan diameter (126 m) are comparable.

30 Gryaznov, 1980: fig. 3, 4, 19; Kyzlasov I.R., 1977.

We should not fail to say that the common architectural characteristics of the design of the fortifications used in the ancient Siberian cities were utilized in the years to come. But could their distinct architecture be seen as a key to the language these builders spoke and the ethnos they belonged to?

So the most important result of the recent excavations was the discovery of round and square-like early cities surrounded by strong walls and deep ditches. They were also located in the same interfluves of the Ural and Tobol Rivers (Figure 9). Originally, 21 cities were found due to the use of aero photography with 5 to 6 oval, 6 round and about 10 being square cities. Then, by means of aero photography as well, some other 30 fortified settlements dating from the eighteenth-sixteenth centuries B.C. and spreading across the area of about 350 km (217.5 miles) in the Kazakh steppes were discovered to the north of the Uya River, the left-bank tributary of the Tobol River. The earliest of them were oval in shape. Aero photography showed that quite often round fortresses are superimposed on the oval ones, co-existing together with the square sites or the younger rectangular ones (Figure 10).

So far archaeologists have been excavating the Sintashta, Kuysak and Arkaim early cities. As it was mentioned above, the Sintashta settlement had been partially washed away by the spring floods, while the Arkaim site survived to the present days and was unearthed in 1987 on the Bolshaya Karaganka River, the left-bank tributary of the Ural, 50 km (31.07 miles) west of the Sintashta settlement. Since the Arkaim site (Figure 10) has not been completely excavated yet the received data is provisional.

Still it is possible to conclude that the Sintashta-Arkaim early cities "have all the features of rising cities. They have developed fortifications and monumental constructions. The settlements were built in accordance with a plan and a model that were made in advance. A well-planned system of streets and passages helped to connect blocks separated by the fortification walls and gave access to the central square and the four entrances. No doubt, the settlement was surrounded by agricultural (stock-raising and farming) lands. The lay-out of the site speaks for its prominent ideological and cultural role"³¹.

The basis of the plan of the Arkaim site (total area of 20 000 square meters) was formed by two concentric circles of fortifications, the inner and the outer circles of houses and a rectangular central square (about 30 x 40 m) (Figure 11). The wall surrounding the settlement had 160 m in diameter, the width of the foundation was 4 m; it was made of log frames of barns 3 x 4 m stuffed with specially treated dense soil mixed with lime. From the outside it was coated with cob blocks right from the bottom of the ditch up to the very top of the wall (with the depth of the ditch being 1.5 to 2 m and the height of the soil wall being, as estimated, 2.5 to 3 m).

31 Zdanovich, 1989: 149.

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The top of the wall was reinforced by two parallel rows of wooden paling and the gaps were filled with layers of turf. The end walls of the houses closely approached the inner side of the fortified wall thus forming a strong bond with it, the true lived-in walls.

The long sides of the houses were radial to the curve of the fortifications. The houses' entrances faced the only circular street that ran through the whole settlement parallel to the inner ditch and the citadel wall.

A ditch coated with wood ran through the center of the circular street and served as a well-designed drainage and sewage system with settling tanks and treatment facilities.

The citadel wall had the same construction as the wall surrounding the city, but was a little bit smaller in size. The end sides of the second inner ring of dwellings were built into the citadel wall. All the houses were trapeziform with a radial location and an entrance facing the central square with a distinct flamed earthen surface.

All the houses' axis lines, the streets and the main gate were also facing the centre, the square inside the citadel.

The main city entrance was located in the south-west with a street running from it to the central square. There were four gates with radial streets leading from them. Each house had from 8 to 12 rooms, a big room with a well and an ice-house to preserve the food in. The latter had air ducts connected to a cool well (Figure 11).

The trapeziform houses were supported by framed piles. The daub walls of these houses (up to 3 meters high) were coated with boards. There were pots along the walls. The outer end wall of the same height was coated with yellow daub blocks. The roof was thin and pugged. The drainage consisted of wooden grooves located on rooftops; while the roofs themselves were inhabited.

The wells in the houses had imitations of arches and served as ice-houses. The bottom of a well was strengthened by pegs braided with wattle. Metallurgic furnaces with chimneys were located close to the wells. Extensive air draught for melting metal came from the well. Some evidence of sacrifices, namely some burned horse skulls, was uncovered around the furnaces. Tombs of children were unearthed under the clay floors of the houses.

Though the houses had no connecting passages between each other, they were abandoned by their inhabitants at the same time without panic and the city was burnt by the leaving citizens. Only those things that had been left behind accidentally remained for archaeologists. A lot of partially burnt wooden constructions were found in all the ditches and there were burnt piles in the houses.

Some metallurgic and pottery furnaces that had clearly been operated were excavated along the inner ditch. The radial walls of the houses served as streets and it was common that the lower street "dove under" the upper one.

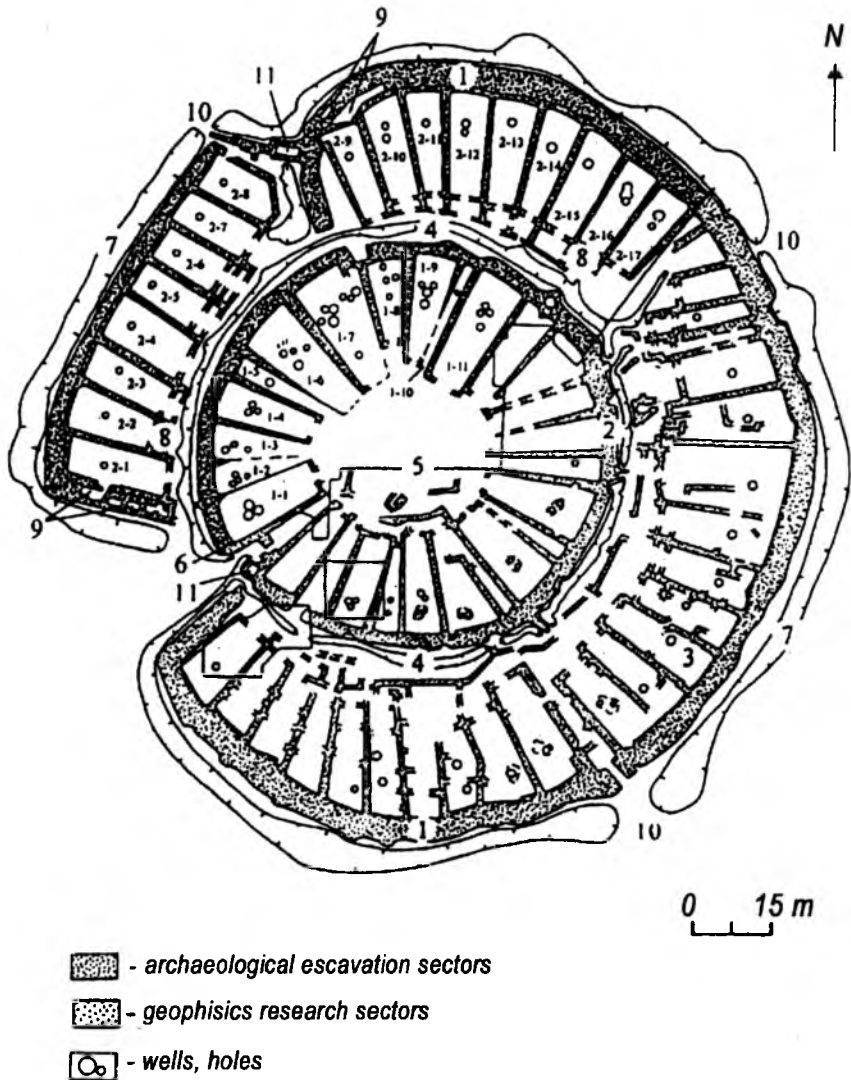


Figure 11. General plan of the Arkaim city. By G.B. Zdanovich

The three small settlements from 5 to 6 km (from 3.11 to 3.73 miles) away from the Arkaim site were part of the agricultural lands belonging to the city. Probably, the inhabitants practiced basin irrigation by means of small dams or water lifters.

From 4 to 5 types of cob bricks, blocks and different valki-guvalayki were used for the construction of houses. Manure or lime were added to clay and sludge, while layers of turf and swamp muck were also used. During the

excavations many things were unearthed, among them casting moulds for the production of sickles, maces, stone hammers and hacks, flint arrowheads, a stone axe with a lug and clay cereal "plates". A stone sculpture (a granite head of a man and remains of a camel head) were accidentally found³².

A single nephrite bead, obviously brought from the Baikal region via the Great Nephrite Route³³, was found in one of the Arkaim burial grounds. The results of 30 datings obtained by means of isotope C¹⁴ helped date the bead back to the twenty one-seventeenth centuries B.C. It seems that G.B.Zdanovich, one of the leading researchers of the Arkaim site, correctly connected the culture he discovered in southern Trans-Urals to the ancient history of the Indo-Iranian tribes before they left their ancestral home in Siberia for the southern Iran and India.

"The Petrovka-Sintashta sites can be dated thanks to sets of metal tools and bone psalia characteristic to the seventeenth-sixteenth centuries B.C. The dating corresponds to the time of Troy VI in the north-western part of Asia Minor, to the end of the Middle Helladic – Early Mycenaean period of continental Greece, to the last stages of the Middle Bronze Age of Thrace, to the early horizons of the Dashly and Sappali type in Northern Afghanistan and Southern Turkmenistan."³⁴

It is highly likely that these ancient cities, fortresses, ritual and burial constructions, plough fields and grazing grounds were left in the south of Western Siberia by the avant-garde masses of those Indo-European tribes which still obviously retained close links with their distant Western Asian early ancestral home³⁵. It is in Syria, Anatolia and the Balkans that similar more ancient structures have been found, namely, circular cities with diagonal trapeziform dwellings facing the centre with the end walls adjacent to the circular fortified wall³⁶ (Figure 12). Evidence of contacts and ways of life in the Petrovka-Sintashta culture suggests a direct meridional link of Western Siberia with the early farming civilizations of further south and testifies to a high level of social and technological development of Siberia in the Bronze Age.

It is a fact that ancient mythological and epic tales of the peoples of India and Iran contain information about distant northern lands that can lead to an assumption that the ancestral home of the forefathers of Iranians and Indians, the so called Aryans, lay if not beyond the Arctic circle, but surely in the parts of Northern Siberia adjacent to the Urals³⁷. As early as in the eleventh century A. Biruni, a versatile noted scholar from Khorezm, highlighted this thought³⁸. The Aryan

32 Zdanovich, 1992: 79-84; Gutkov, Rusanov, 1995.

33 Kyzlasov L.R., 1991b: 66-69.

34 Zdanovich, 1989.

35 Gamkrelidze, Ivanov, 1984.

36 Grigor'ev S.A., 1996: fig. 2; Merpert, 1995: 116-119.

37 Bonghard-Levin. Granovskiy, 1974.

38 Biruni, 1963.

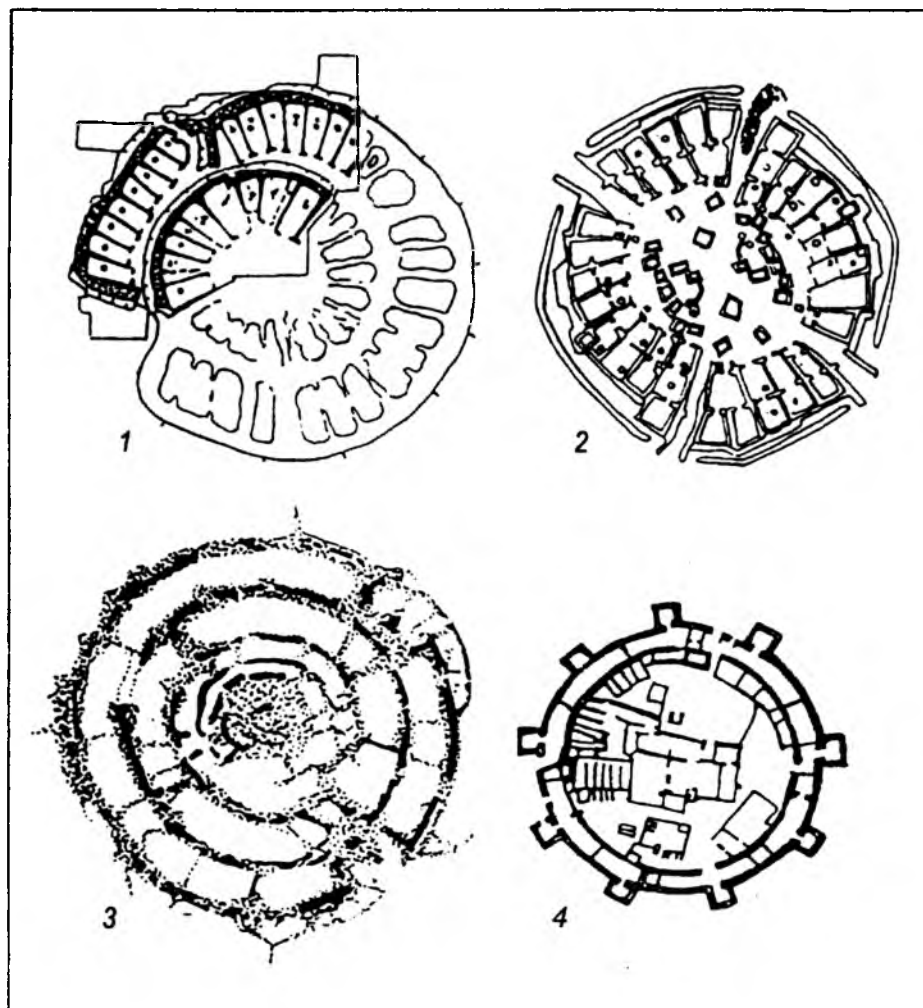


Figure 12. Circular cities with diagonal trapeziform dwellings facing the centre:
 1 – Arkaim, 2 – Demirchiuyuk (Anatolia, Turkey), 3 – Rojem Khiri (Syria),
 4 – Dashli-3 (Northern Afghanistan). By V.I. Sarianidi

sacred hymns were a feature of their ancient written scriptures, namely the Indian Vedas and the Iranian Avesta.

The ancient authors Aristeas (the seventh century B.C.) and Herodotus (the fifth century B.C.) also knew about northern countries. They wrote about the lands of the Scythians and the Sauromatai who spoke Iranian as well as the neighboring northern tribes of the Arimaspians, the “vultures” and the

Hyperboreans that lived by "a Northern sea" at the foot of the high Riphean (Ural) Mountains. According to Herodotus, "their land and the air there are full of feathers... constant snowfalls, surely not as much in the summer than in the winter... because of such severe winters these northern territories of the world are uninhabited." In Herodotus there are some inhabitants of the north "that hibernate for 6 months a year" etc.³⁹

In Mahabharata there is a mention of "a land of blissful and happy people" (the Hyperboreans in the ancient tradition) lying between the Meru Mountains and the Arctic ocean. In Avesta the sacred mountains of the north were called Hara Berezaity (the Tall Hara). It was believed that in Hara Ahura Mazda, the creator of the Universe, erected a palace for Mithra, the Great God, and a house with a thousand of columns for a god called Sraosha. It was around these holy dwellings of their deities that the first Aryan heroes and earthly kings offered their sacrifices. That was what is meant by the "centre of the earth"⁴⁰.

We believe that the epic tales of ancient Indo-Iranians and Greeks about the Meru, Hara, or Rip mountains can only refer to the northern part of the Urals Mountain chain. Following a number of other scholars we can assume that "the happy country", the ancestral home of the ancient Aryans, once indeed lay on the Siberian slopes of the Urals in the valleys of the Ural and Tobol Rivers exactly on the territories that feature a whole network of prehistoric beginnings of the first cities of Siberia existing in the middle of the II millennium B.C.

1.4. Beginnings of cities in Northern and Central Kazakhstan

As early as in 1970 V.F. Gening discovered that the fortified settlement-sites with ditches and mounds (Chernoozerie I, Inberen IV and Inberen VI) in the middle course of the Irtysh River originated "during the Bronze Age not earlier than the middle of the II millennium B.C."⁴¹ These sites include among others the first of the best known fortifications of the Andronovo (Fedorovo) culture⁴². The prehistoric sites uncovered in the vicinity of Surgut in the middle course of the Ob River⁴³ and the well fortified sites of the Irmen culture on the upper Ob⁴⁴ can also be classified as the late Bronze Age settlements. There is a hypothesis which requires further investigation that states that the time of the Okunev culture (the

39 Herodotus, 1972: 189, 194.

40 V.: Bonghard-Levin, Granovskiy, 1974.

41 Gening, 1974: 4, 9.

42 Viktorov, Borzunov, 1974.

43 El'kina, Fedorova, Chemyakin, 1975.

44 V.: Troitskaya, Molodin, Sobolev, 1980.

twenty one-seventeenth centuries B.C.) saw the appearance of the first small-size fortresses with walls made of stone slabs on the Yenisei River⁴⁵. "A settlement of city type, 8 ha (80 000 square meters – tr.)" with a fortified citadel excavated in the Baraba steppe goes back to the turn of the Bronze and Iron Ages (the ninth and eighth centuries B.C.)⁴⁶.

Archaeologists also unearthed large Bronze Age settlements in the northern steppes of Kazakhstan bordering on Siberia for which they suggested such terms as "proto-cities" and "settlements claiming city status" that we do not find very suitable. These were unfenced settlements spanning unusually large areas from 5 to 10, 15 and 30 ha (from 50 000 to 100 000, 150 000 and 300 000 square meters – tr.); Kent – 30 ha, Buguly I – 11 ha, Myrzhik – 3 ha. Within 5 km (3.11 miles) around the Kent settlement there were the "villages" of Bajshura, Akim-bek, Domalaktas, Najza, Narbas, Kzylta, etc. totaling 5000 square meters in area.

It seems likely that Kent was not only a place for storage, processing and distribution of agricultural produce; it was also a religious centre. A stone sanctuary of 84 x 46 m ("The Big Stockade") was excavated.

"The Kent settlement might have been a political and economic centre to which smaller settlements gravitated. A similar layout is also typical of the culture of grey decorated ceramics of Hindustan where the growing towns were surrounded by smaller settlements. The settlement of Kent was of major importance as a centre of intercultural exchange"⁴⁷.

Other major settlements like Atasu I, Myrzhik, Shortandy-Bulak existed in Central Kazakhstan at the same time. These proto-cities served as major specialized centers for metallurgic and pottery production. For instance, in the centre of the Atasu I settlement, which was surrounded by an oval of closely set dwellings, six copper-smelting facilities and pottery furnaces were uncovered. The large rectangular dwellings on piles had complex and multifunctional systems with fire chambers and long smoke ducts under the floor. The smoke ducts had the form of grooves with stone or clay surface and ran from the fire chamber along the walls of the dwelling.

In the Myrzhik settlement a rectangular construction featured "long walls of the dwelling propped vertically with dug-in stone blocks. Inside the dwelling along its perimeter under some stone slabs there was a groove which was part of an underfloor heating system... An area with a metallurgical furnace adjoined the dwelling's south-eastern side"⁴⁸.

Evidence from the early cities proves that they were centers of metallurgic industry and, *therefore, that craftsmanship became distinct from agricultural*

45 V.: Vadetskaya, 1986: 28.

46 Molodin i dr., 2001.

47 Varfolomeev, Rudkovskiy, 1987; Varfolomeev, 1991; 1992.

48 Kadyrbaev, 1983.

production in the steppes of Siberia and Kazakhstan as earlier as in the Bronze Age. The presence of specialized heat engineering facilities for charcoal burning, raw ore roasting, roasted ore and black copper smelting with further refining in bowls, clay pottery burning, etc. testifies to strong production based connection of craftsmen with these means of productions.

It is important to note another key feature of the early cities in Central Kazakhstan. Their inhabitants *were the first to invent and utilize a system of underfloor heating relying on smoke ducts and tall stacks.* It was the expertise and experience of the Bronze Age metallurgists and smelters who constructed pit furnaces for ore smelting with channels for air heaving and for discharge of liquid metals and gases that prompted the idea to use heating tunnels under the floor. The same kind of heating appeared in the countries of Western Asia at the same time which is dealt with in the second part of Chapter 3 of this book.

1.5. Early Iron Age

In the consecutive era of the early Iron Age the pace of the historical development of Siberia predetermined a growth in the number of large-scale fortifications as well as a significant expansion of their geography. Fortresses with bastion-tower defense architecture were built not only in the steppes or forest-steppes zones but also in the taiga. M.F. Kosarev, one of the scholars researching the archaeological sites of Western Siberia, states, “as early as at the end of the early Bronze Age along the major rivers of Western Siberia running through the taiga zone, the Ob, the Irtysh, the Tom, etc. grand earthen fortifications with a ditch, a mound and a wooden stockade come to appear; they are the so called gorodischa. All across Western Siberia city-fortresses spring up and become centers of socio-political entities, shelters in times of trouble and storehouses for the accumulated wealth”⁴⁹.

The cities were located where there was a strategic need coupled with economic viability. They grew along trade routes next to ancient sanctuaries, residences of rulers, fortified shelters and also in the vicinity of river crossings. Unfortunately, a comprehensive identification, dating, and preliminary classification together with initial data processing concerning the many cities all across Siberia is still needed. However, there have been published a number of regional research results studying the so called gorodischa from the early Iron Age up to the Middle Ages.

According to V.E. Stoyanov, the author of the first classification of archaeological sites from the late Bronze Age to the thirteenth and the fourteenth

⁴⁹ Kosarev, 1984: 154; cf.: Borzunov, 1998.

centuries A.D. in Western Siberia, all the sites can be classified into gorodischa and settlements with gorodischa consisting of two parts: a fortified part (gorodische) and one without fortifications (village).

Gorodischa can differ according to their area shape. The first group of the classification includes fortifications located on promontories and surrounded with mounds and ditches running across the promontory on one side. They can be single-area (1), double-area (2) and triple-area (3) sites. All of them with the exception of triple area sites fall into three categories: A – having one mound and one ditch; B- having one mound with tower-like ledges and a ditch; C- having two mounds and a ditch. Group two is composed of sites located on unbroken terraced areas and surrounded by solid lines of mounds and ditches (forming a rectangle, a circle, or an oval). The subgroups include: 1 – single-area sites, 2 – double-area sites with two overlapping areas, 3 – double-area sites with adjacent areas and areas whose outer sides may merge at some point, 4 – triple-area sites. Categories: A – having one mound and one ditch, B – one mound with ledges and a ditch, C – two mounds and a ditch, D – two mounds with tower-like ledges and a ditch. Sites of subgroups 2-4 are characterized by large areas (they are 2 to 4 times larger in size than the sites of group 1)⁵⁰.

Archaeological sites of the first group all go back to the early Iron Age. Subgroups 11B, 12B and 13A (single-area, double-area and triple-area sites with tower-like ledges) existed at the end of the early Iron age as fully formed settlements.

Group two of V.E. Stoyanov's classification is composed of sites from the beginning of the Iron Age to the thirteenth and the fourteenth centuries A.D. Their foundation areas were still used for human dwellings as late as in the late Iron Age. The author does not see any evidence to prove the existence of the beginnings of city planning with complex fortifications in Eastern Urals and hopes these could be found further south around the Aral Sea. It is obvious that the influx of population from the south continued.

V.E. Stoyanov's classification was used as a basis for further summary research on the subject of early cities in Eastern Urals and Western Siberia⁵¹.

In the earliest Iron Age cities of Eastern Urals dating from the seventh-fifth century B.C. the remains of production facilities proving the existence of the rapidly developing crafts and rudimentary metallurgic production were studied. For instance, the Irtyash and Bolshaya Nanoga sites featured Catalan furnaces used in prehistoric iron working⁵². The sites around Lake Itkul were better studied.

50 Stoyanov, 1969: fig. 25.

51 Ocherki kul'turogeneza..., 1994; Borzunov, 2002.

52 Bel'tikova, 1989: 63-79; Sal'nikov, 1952: 105, 124, 126.

BEGINNINGS OF FIRST CITIES IN SIBERIA

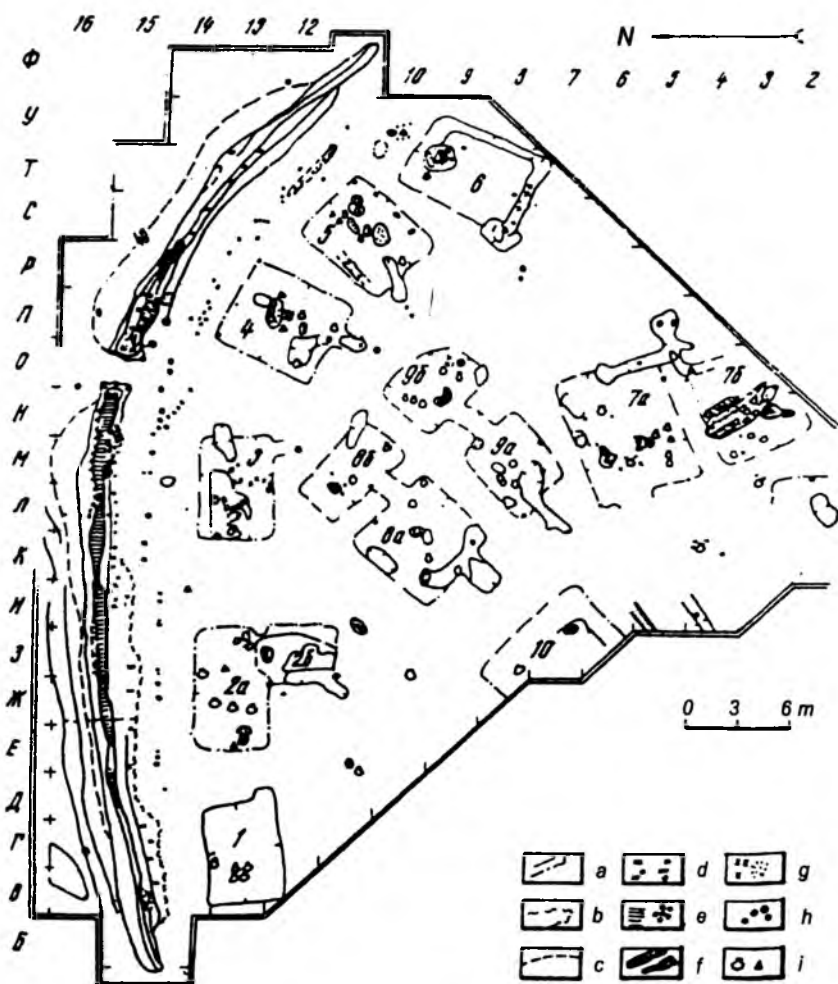


Figure 13. Excavated part of the Ak-Tau site in the middle course of the Ishim River. By M.K. Khabdulina

To the east and north-east of the above-ground dwellings in the Itkul I site there were found remains of an iron-working mill consisting of 22 smelting and forging furnaces with half-ruined clay walls and arches, a significant number of broken nozzles, bowls, some copper (malachite) and iron (bog

iron) ore, slag, broken stone hammers, pic-axes, pestels, moulds and cullage, etc.⁵³ The Krasny Kamen settlement also featured a prehistoric workshop with clay blast furnace⁵⁴. The Dumnaya Gora site featuring 7 copper-smelting furnaces was also an iron production centre⁵⁵.

There was also developed a classification of archaeological sites belonging to the Gamayunovo, Itkul, Vorobyovo and Gorohovo cultures of Eastern Urals going back to the early Iron Age⁵⁶. Certain features were observed like the strengthening of the outer slopes of some cities with logs, stones and slabs of stones, the escapement of river terrace slopes, the construction of towers or tower-like ledges, entrances in the shape of arched towers or corridors of log walls. Most cities of this type were not only centers of developed specialized crafts, they also served as tribal religious centers, storage places for the accumulated wealth, centers of administrative and hereditary princely power, shelters for the taxpaying village population in the case of a military threat and so on⁵⁷.

Similar in type but stronger and better planed sites built from clay and logs and belonging to the rich Sargatka culture were discovered on the Tobol, the Ishim and the middle course of the Irtysh Rivers (Figure 13). Their design bears traces of the circular constructions of the Petrovka-Sintashta cities and suggests that their builders had some knowledge of the fortified construction of Middle Asia. The most impressive among them all is the city-castle of Ak-Tau in the middle course of the Ishim⁵⁸ (Figure 14). A variety of sites were also found in the Surgut region on the Ob⁵⁹.

In the lower course of the Ob River the early Iron Age settlements make up 50% of all currently identified sites⁶⁰. Settlements going back to the same time were also excavated in the Tyumen Region⁶¹. In the upper Ob regions along the Biya, Katun, Charysh, Anui and Ob Rivers there were unearthed sites belonging to the Bolshaya Rechka culture (the seventh-third centuries B.C.) to the foreign Ryolka culture (the third century B.C. – the second century A.D.) and the indigenous Odintsovo culture⁶².

53 Bel'tikova, 1981; 1993.

54 Borzunov, 1981: 112-115, fig. 16.

55 Bel'tikova, Stoyanov, 1984.

56 Borzunov, Stoyanov, 1981.

57 Borzunov, Novichenkov, 1988.

58 Cf.: Koryakova, 1984; Khabdulina, 1993.

59 Morozov, Parkhimovich, 1984; El'kina, 1977; Borzunov, Bel'tikova, 1989.

60 Morozov, 1986: 106;

61 Romanova, Sukhina, 1974; Stoyanov, 1975.

62 Mogil'nikov, 1988; Troitskaya, Molodin, Sobolev, 1980.

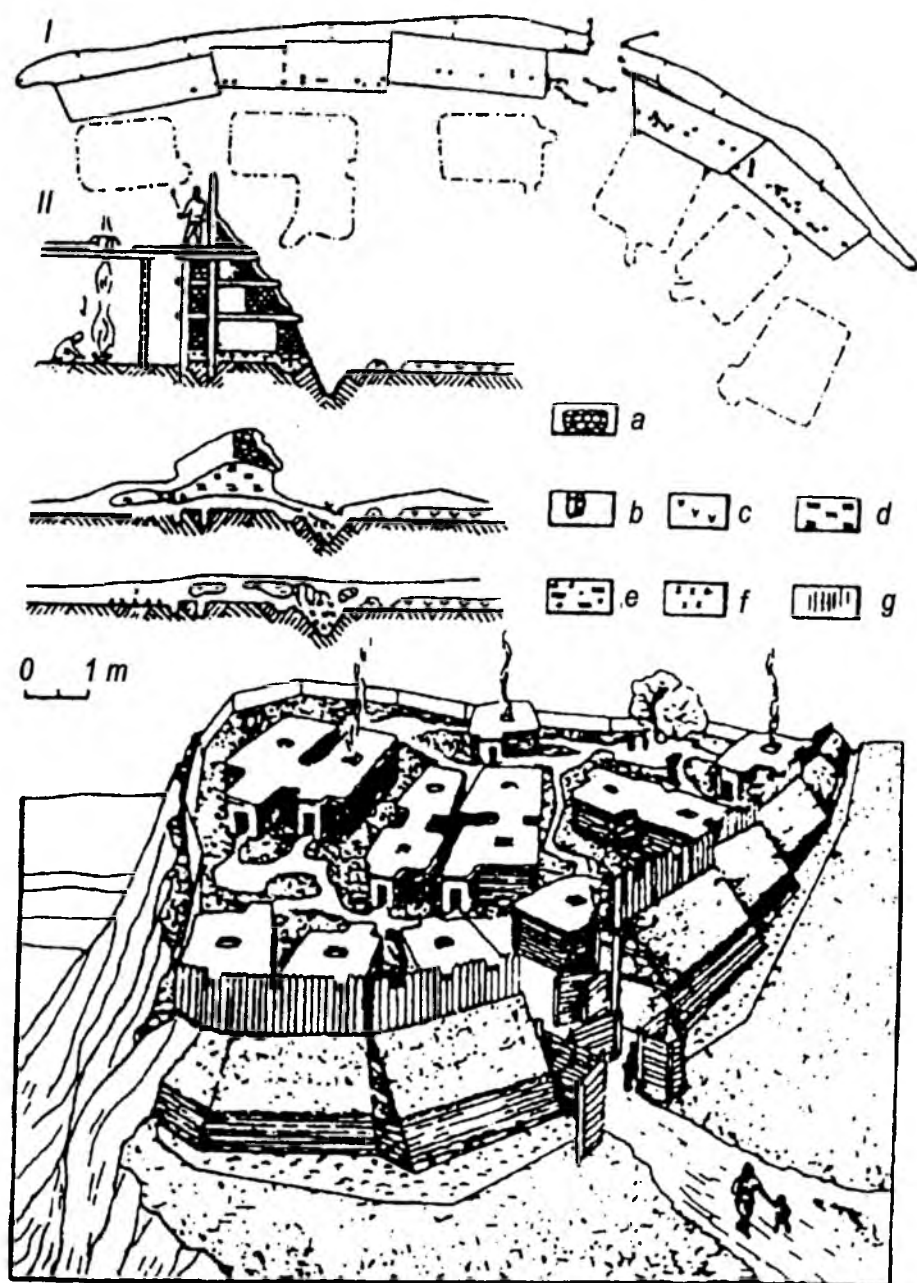


Figure 14. Reconstruction of the Ak-Tau fortress. By M.K. Khabdulina

As stated above settlements with unbroken lines of mounds and ditches were discovered in Eastern Urals. Sometimes there were citadels inside. A second range of cities was discovered in the middle course of the Ob and belongs to the Kulaika culture⁶³. From the end of the second millennium B.C. up to the first millennium A.D. a different type of settlement appeared in the middle course of the Ob that featured tower-like ledges, foregate constructions and other new elements for their defense⁶⁴.

We should note that the system of underfloor heating of dwellings that originated in Central Kazakhstan during the Bronze Age obviously took root in the Ob region. It was used in the taiga around the Ob River. In any case, some medieval dwellings with a system of underfloor heating going back to the sixth-ninth centuries A.D. were excavated on the banks of the Ob River in its middle course⁶⁵.

In the valleys along the upper and middle course of the Yenisei where in the the seventh-third centuries B.C. there existed large cultural entities known to archaeologists as the Ujuk and Tagar cultures there is strong evidence of the early class-conscious independent states⁶⁶. These powerful military centers located in the steppe lowlands and shielded on all sides with high mountain ridges do not seem to have needed any fencing for their cities or any truly fortified strongholds. Cities and temples not surrounded by any walls are known to have existed there since the the second century B.C.⁶⁷

The winter dwellings of the time utilized by the peoples of the Sayan-Altai uplands were mostly log cabins. It was common to bury the deceased in log frames in pits. We should note that the notches and joints in the logs of the burial chambers were always covered in clay. This was common for the people of the Pazyryk culture in Gomo-Altai and the people of the Ujuk and Tagar cultures along the Yenisei River.

It is obvious that, when used in dwellings, this type of clay covering protected the construction from winter colds and piercing winds. If we compare evidence from the early Iron Age with data from the previous Bronze Age we will see that the practice of building cities by the indigenous peoples of Siberia continued to progress. The city centers that sprang up along the water ways and caravan routes spread out into the taiga zone reaching the northern tundra.

Unfortunately, some of the regions of the vast Siberian expanses have not been studied thoroughly enough. In many areas there are still undiscovered settlements. The gaps in archaeological maps prevent us from piecing together the true picture of the early city life in Northern Asia during one of the most interesting times in the history of human development.

63 Chindina. 1984; *Ocherki kul'turogeneza...*, 1994.

64 Roslyakov, 1991: 106.

65 Chindina, 1985: 24.

66 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 7-9.

67 Kyzlasov L.R., 1992c: 45-61, 83-88, 97-107, 127-133, 163-177, 207-221; cf.: Martynov, Absalyamov, 1988.

1.6. "The country of cities" and written sources

When analyzing the Bronze and Early Iron Age relics of monumental architecture in ancient Siberia attention should be paid to sequentially located early cities of Tashkovo and Petrovka-Sintashta cultures dating from the eighteenth-sixteenth centuries B.C. The territory, which is called "the country of cities"⁶⁸, stretches 400 km (248.55 miles) from north to south and 150 km (93.21 miles) from west to east right along the Siberian Eastern flank of the Urals mountain range and largely occupies the interfluves of the Ural, Tobol and Irtysh Rivers that flow in different directions to the south and to the north. It is possible to assume based on all the existing archaeological evidence that it is there that Zoroaster (Zarathustra), the founder and prophet of one of the oldest world religions, was born, lived and preached.

Researchers of Zoroastrism believe that "in fact, Zoroaster was a priest and lived in the Asian steppes to the north of the Volga River among the Proto-Iranians of Northern Kazakhstan"⁶⁹. It is obvious that the roots of Zoroastrism as well as the origins of Indo-Aryan beliefs go back to the beginning of the 2 millennium B.C. or the time of the existence of the early Siberian cities.

The early cities the Urals were engraved in historic memory for a long time. They need to be discussed here if only in brief.

An Arab Salam At-Tardjuman traveling across Western Siberia in the reign of caliph Al-Vasik (842-847) saw devastated ancient cities, probably located in southern Trans-Urals. Salam at-Tardjuman wrote that he had been traveling for 26 days to the north from the Khazar capital city (obviously, from Itil in the delta of the Volga River). "Then, we approached the cities in ruins and continued our way (with a caravan – L.K.) through these areas for the next 20 days", he wrote. "We inquired into the cause of the cities' poor state and were told that they had been seized and destroyed by Yajuj and Majuj"⁷⁰.

This territory with the remains of monumental structures of the old clay cities (no other existed along Salam's route) was called "the country of cities" by contemporary archaeologists and known as Bilad al-Kharab ("the devastated land") to the inquisitive Arab merchants and scouts who followed in Tardjuman's footsteps in their trips across Siberia in the ninth-fourteenth centuries. This very land with its remains of ancient cities seen from afar across the flat steppe was described in the records by a famous geographer Ibn Khordadbeh, as well as by Ibn Rusta, Al-Moqaddasi, Al-Ghamati, Zakaria Al-Qazvini, Ibn Al-Wardi, Jacut, Al-Nuvairi, etc. According to Al-Idrisi (the twelfth century), the ruined

68 Zdanovich, Batanina, 1995: 54.

69 Bois, 1994: 5-13.

70 Kyzlasov L.R., 1992a: 26.

cities of Bilad al-Kharab lay to the west of the lands inhabited by the Kipchaks (that is from the Ishim to the Tobol). The same can be found in Ibn Khaldun (the fourteenth century). The Russian chronicles of the sixteenth century also record, "this Bald land has no forest"⁷¹.

Thus, the country of cities that is in the focus of interest of contemporary archaeology was discovered and described by Arab travelers as early as the eleventh century ago, but only now are we learning about it in more detail due to extensive research by Russian scholars⁷².

71 Ibid.: 30; cf.: Cf. Ibn Khordadbekh, 1986: 130; Titov, 1890: 5 (in Arabian *ballad* is "city, district").

72 Kyzlasov L. R., 1999a: 96-129.

Chapter 2. CITIES OF THE HUNS

“The neglect of the steppe peoples by researchers slows down the development of science. Our characteristic Aryan arrogance and a false historical perspective hinder the establishment of a correct understanding of the role of these “barbarians” and the history of spiritual and cultural borrowings.” This was written by G.N. Potanin at the end of the nineteenth century¹. Over the last hundred years there has been no dramatic change in scholarly approaches to this subject. Even today the deeply rooted ideas quite often prevent us from adequately assessing the available evidence and sometimes make us ignore the data that are not in keeping with traditional theories. Researchers are still not prepared psychologically to look for and analyze the phenomena that remained unnoticed in the course of the previous research. “Our Aryan arrogance” found its way into the academic circles of Siberian researchers and has now acquired even more twisted forms than at the time of G.N. Potanin².

However, more and more facts are brought to light that contradict the prevailing doctrine of the perpetuity of the so called “nomadic spirit” which is believed to be an intrinsic part of the identity of the indigenous peoples of prehistoric and medieval Siberia and Central Asia. New interpretations of written records in a variety of languages and excavations of archaeological sites belonging to different periods of history provide unquestionable evidence of a large-scale development of the economy of settled farming and the beginnings of distinct city culture. Below we cite some data on the cities of the Huns whose culture has always been seen as an example of a purely nomadic one.

1 Potanin, 1899.

2 V. for example: Khudyakov, 1994.

2.1. Hunnic cities of Central Asia

One of the earliest known written records concerning the populations of southern Siberia and north-western territories of Central Asia goes back to the end of the third century B.C. The “Record of the Historian” by the Chinese historian Sima Qian tells about the successful military campaigns aimed at the expansion of the state by shanyu (high ruler – tr.) Maodun who ascended the throne of the Huns (Xiongnu) of Central Asia in 209 B.C. The eastern boundaries of the state soon reached Korea and in the west it stretched up to the modern territory of Xinjiang. The source claims, “under Maodun the Xiongnu became extremely powerful and subjugated all the northern barbarians, while in the south they formed a state equal in its influence to Zhongguo”, meaning Middle Country (that is China). Around 201 B.C. Maodun “subjugated the lands of the Hunyu, the Qushe, the Dingling, the Gegun and the Xinli in the north and all the noblemen and officials of the Huns submitted to him and called him Maodun the Wise”³.

By that time Maodun had completed another military campaign against the western Yuezhi and his troops on their way back home marched from west to east across the northern stretch of Central Asia. According to archaeological evidence the Huns conquered the alien for the steppe people mountainous regions of the Sayan-Altai uplands, Northern Mongolia and territories south-west of Baikal, which enables us to believe that the subjugated territories mentioned in the “Historical Records” (Shiji) coincide with the five major historic-archaeological entities that lay in the above mentioned areas. Archaeologists identified them by certain accepted names of cultures.

In this case the name Hunyu might refer to the early peoples of the Pazyryk culture of Gorno-Altai (we now know them as the ancient Samoyed people), the name Dingling - to the tribes of the Tagar culture inhabiting the territories from Kuznetskiy Alatau in the west to Lake Baikal in the east. The name Qushe might refer to the early people of the Ujuk culture, living along the upper Yenisei (Tuva) and in the lowlands around the Great lakes in Mongolia (they might have been ruled by the Sak aristocracy). The name Gegun (Kyrghyz) might denote the then inhabitants of the south-eastern parts of North-Western Mongolia (south of Khirgis Nur Lake). The people of Xinli were also involved in war; they are known by the slab-grave culture spread across the vast territories of Eastern Mongolia and south of Baikal.

Shanyu Maodun was truly wise and, consequently, very successful. In a very short time his army managed to conquer and subjugate vast territories rich in enumerable natural resources. The ancestral lands of the Huns in the plains of Ordos, in the Gobi Desert and in the semi-deserts of the flatlands of Central Asia, which they

3 Bichurin, 1950: 48, 50; Taskin, 1968: 39, 41.

inhabited before their military campaigns, were very poor in mineral resources, which greatly limited the potential for economic development in their countries⁴.

In every northern territory conquered by the Huns archaeologists found distinct traces of Hunnic influence on the local tribes as well as characteristic remains of Hunnic material culture itself. The latter evidence suggests that immediately after the conquests of new lands the Hunnic craftsmen started mining the rich ore beds. In order to supply Hunnic miners with the clay pottery they were accustomed to, the Huns built efficient pottery furnaces in Gorno-Altai. These pottery remains were also found at the first graves of the Huns in the new lands. Some pottery remains characteristic of the Hunnic culture were also found in the quarries of prehistoric mines along the Kaa-Khem River in Tuva⁵.

As seen from their excavations the Ivolga site and the Duryony settlement on the Selenga and Chikoe Rivers were settlements of Hunnic metalworkers, smelters, blacksmiths and other craftsmen who provided their state with the necessary weapons, horse harness, domestic tools and instruments⁶. These discoveries shed light on the economic reasons causing the Huns to lead massive military campaigns and to annex the rich regions of the Sayan-Altai uplands, Northern Mongolia and territories south-west of Baikal inhabited by skillful local miners, ironworkers and smiths. Part of the wisdom of shanyu Maodun and his advisors lay in the fact that to be able to fight the China of the Han Dynasty and other external enemies the Huns needed both some peaceful northern rear territories and, above all, a permanent mining, metallurgical and craftsmanship foundation for the provision of their troops with weapons and field equipment.

It was at that time that most Hunnic settlements of artisans and grain-growing farmers together with fortresses and cities were established in Central Asia⁷. We currently know of more than 10 square Hunnic cities fortified with clay walls, mounds, ditches, stockades and more than 20 unfortified settlements of artisans and grain growing peasants⁸. The Hunnic sites were discovered by archaeologists to the south of the Gobi Desert on the territory of Ordos⁹. Researchers got access to an increasing number of material and written records that proved that the Huns had a complex cattle-raising and grain-growing economy and they also developed mining, metalworking and other crafts.

Until recently many researchers believed that the Huns (Xiongnu) were true nomads. This view was based on the early Chinese historical tradition that was intentionally biased and claimed that the barbarous Huns "wandered from place to place in search of water and grass lands and even though they

4 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 10, 11.

5 Kubarev, Zhuravleva, 1986; Kyzlasov L.R., 1979: 79-84.

6 Davydova, 1956; 1978; 1985.

7 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 9-15.

8 Perlee, 1957; Maydar, 1970; Davydova, 1978.

9 Vasil'ev, 1959.

neither had cities with inner or outer walls nor permanent settlements, nor did they plough lands, they still, each of them, had an allotment of land"¹⁰. For example, in a comprehensive book by A.N. Bernshtam on the history of the Huns there is no mention of their cities whatsoever¹¹.

However, new archaeological evidence and a careful study of the written records from the Han period prove that not only did the Huns themselves but also their forefathers built fortified cities. There is, for example, such a line, "the Yiju barbarian people learnt to build cities for self-defense that were fortified with inner and outer walls but the Qin (empire) gradually captured them. In the time of Hui-wang 25 Yiju cities were captured"¹².

Written records quite often refer to the Huns being engaged in farming. It was known from the old translations of the Han chronicles published by N.Ya. Bichurin as early as in the middle of the nineteenth century¹³. V.S. Taskin, who undertook to perform a new translation of the numerous sources on the history of the Huns, came to the conclusion that "records carry conclusive evidence of farming in the Xiongnu communities"¹⁴. According to archaeological evidence, the Huns plowed with cast iron ploughshares¹⁵.

Obviously, one part of the Hunnic population lived in settlements and was engaged in construction, mining, crafts, farming, free-range and domestic dairy farming. They mostly raised cattle and pigs. In the cattle farming practices of the other part of the Hunnic population cattle herd husbandry predominated, but it was intensive in character and included breeding donkeys and camels, as well as hinnies, mules and ponies¹⁶.

In 82 B.C. a prince of the Dingling Wei Lü, who was advisor to the young shanyu Huyanti, recommended him, "to dig out wells, build walled cities, put up tower granaries and defend the cities together with the Qin people...; and a few hundred wells were dug out and several thousand trees were cut down"¹⁷.

The city of Longcheng ("The Emperor's city" or Shanyu's city) was the summer capital of the Huns, while the city of Dailing served them as the winter capital. The "Historical Records" read, "at the time of the fifth Moon there is a big assembly in Longcheng where sacrifices are offered to the forefathers, the skies, the lands, the spirits of people and the heavenly spirits. In the autumn when the horses are fat there is a big assembly in Dailing where the horses and domestic animals are counted and checked."¹⁸

10 Taskin, 1968: 34.

11 Bernshtam, 1951a.

12 Taskin, 1968: 37.

13 Bichurin. 1950: 76, 83, 106.

14 Taskin, 1968: 31; 1973.

15 Davydova, Shilov, 1953.

16 Taskin, 1964; 1968: 4, 34.

17 Taskin, 1973: 23, 24.

18 Taskin. 1968: 40, 79, 81, 91, 165.



Figure 15. A Hunnic site of Mongolia; the likeness of a guarding demon moulded in clay depicts in a schematic form a Europeoid face. By M. Gabori

Based on this text we can see that Longcheng was both the imperial seat of the Huns and their religious centre, while Dailing performed the function of the economic center of the Hunnic state. There is also a reference to a storage facility constructed by the Huns, namely the city of Zhaoxincheng by the mountain of Tianyanshan (the southern tip of the Khangay ridge). Inside the fortified walls of this city-fortress were central depositories for the national grain reserves and, possibly, other valuables and goods.

Records do not only refer to the capital city of Longcheng but also provide evidence that the Hunnic shanyu-rulers built temples, prayer houses and also palaces in other places (Figure 15). To protect their lands the Huns dug deep ditches to stop the enemy, hundreds of wells and dig-out dwellings for the border patrol¹⁹. The latter may suggest that the Huns were able to permanently guard the borders of their lands at a number of problem territories.

It is also known that the rebellious shanyu Zhizhi had a great palace built in the form of a square fortress in Semirechye. We can judge about the type of the Hunnic fortification methods by the description of this city. Shanyu "sent people to erect the city wall, each day 500 people worked

¹⁹ Bichurin, 1950: 76, 78; Taskin. 1968: 91, 165; 1973: 22, 23, 70, 73, 83, 112, 137.

completing the construction in 2 years". Further in the text we read, "in front of the earthen wall there was a double wooden stockade..." There is a further reference saying that the city was protected with "five rows of fortifications"²⁰ and "the walls of the shanyu city had five-color flags flying and housed several hundreds of people wearing armor. Besides, over a hundred horsemen rode out of the city gate to ride back and forth around the wall and more than 100 foot soldiers marched out to build a fish-scale formation and to have a drill in weapon use"²¹.

When in 36 B.C. a huge Chinese army of 40 thousand soldiers led by the experienced military commander Chen Tang surrounded and besieged the square fortress it took more than twenty-four hours of continuous fighting to finally break down the resistance of the besieged. In the course of the fighting 1518 people were killed, the shanyu himself, his family members and princes of the court among them. "One hundred and forty-five armed soldiers were captured and over one thousand surrendered"²².

So, the shanyu's headquarters, his palace and the entire city were protected by a well-armed army contingency totaling about 3000 warriors, both horsemen and foot soldiers. It should be noted that those were not ordinary foot soldiers, they were able to form a "fish-scale formation" that was obviously a square, a phalanx protected by shields on all sides and from above. This formation of armor-clad foot soldiers before battle was only used by the Roman legions during the same period of history²³ (the Roman "tortoise" – tr.).

Could it be possible that some Roman legions penetrated territories so far away in the east in the first century B.C.? As far away as the depth of Asia along the Dulai (Talas) River in the center of Semirechye? Could it be possible for the Romans to fight the armies of the even more distant China on the side of the Hunnic hordes of shanyu Zhizhi who was only supported at that time by the army of the local Kang state (Kangju in the Chinese chronicle)? What kind of hope could the mighty Rome invest in the fragmented tribes of the Huns of ancient Asia?

Having analyzed this brief and isolated reference, however, some scholars believe that this text is the only indication of a unique case of direct conflict of the military powers of the two mighty empires of the Ancient World, of China of the Han Dynasty and the Roman Empire²⁴. These two forces were brought together by representatives of that special people who earned glory in the early Middle Ages through their unstoppable and swift conquests of vast territories, the so called the Great Transmigration of Peoples. In Central Asia these tribes were called Xiongnu (or Hongnu),

20 Taskin, 1973: 126, 129, 131, 164.

21 Ibid.: 128.

22 Ibid.: 126-129.

23 Zuev, 1957.

24 Debs, 1946.

while in Central Europe they were known as the Huns. They were the forefathers of those famous European Huns that spearheaded the decline of the old Roman Empire and faced the crushing attack of the joined peoples of Europe in the battle of Catalaunian fields in 451²⁵.

The Hunnic – Xiongnu mystery is enhanced by the fact that they were the last remnants of a once major ethnic group whose language upon the fall of the Huns remained unknown to contemporary science²⁶.

Based on some of the records we can conclude that the above mentioned Longcheng, the capital city of the Huns, was situated in the south of their lands, most likely in Ordos, shaped by the bend of the Huanghe River. This kind of assumption can be made, for example, from the phrase Tuntuhe, the shanyu of the south, in A.D. 88, “I have already given the order to all nomads to provide warriors and horses so that at the time of the ninth Moon during the sacrifice in Longcheng they are all present on the bank of the Huanghe”²⁷. The same thing is verified by the fact of the retreat to the south from the Gobi Desert of the Chinese commander Li Ling “along the old road to Longcheng”²⁸.

However, there was one more capital city, the city of Beiting, which served as an administrative and political center to the northern Huns. It is mentioned in the History of the Late Han Dynasty, “a decree allows the shanyu of the south to settle in Yunzhung which is 3000 li (traditional Chinese unit of measurement which varied considerably over time – tr.) from Beiting”. Further in the text, “in the first year of “Zhanghe” the Xianbi invaded Zuodi (possibly the land along the left bank – L.K.), attacked the northern Xiongnu and shattered them. There was chaos in Beiting”²⁹. According to the Chinese historian Liang Yuandong the name Beiting (“the northern headquarters”) originated from joining together the words Bei Xiongnu (“northern Xiongnu”) and Shanyuting (“shanyu’s headquarter and palace”). In “Xiongnu zhuan” we see that the name Shanyuting was often substituted by Longting (“the headquarters of the emperor”)³⁰. At the height of the Hunnic state shanyu was often equaled to the emperor of China.

The peoples of Central Asia preserved memories about the cities of the Huns and their locations for a long time. The names of the cities where the Xiongnu lived in the ancient times were later mentioned, for example, in the Qidan record of the Liao Dynasty. They state that when Emperor Taizu started his first campaign to the Orkhon River “he captured a Uighur city (that is Ordubalyq – L.K.) and the city of Shanyucheng”³¹. According to Tangshu it was there that at the end of the 640s

25 Maenchen-Helfen, 1973.

26 Doerfer, 1973.

27 Taskin, 1973: 83.

28 Ibid.: 112.

29 Kyzlasov L.R., 1984: 13.

30 Liang Yuandong, 1955: 20.

31 Malyavkin, 1974: 85.

the shanyu rule was established³². In the History of the Liao there is such a phrase, "in the first year of "Kaitai" (1012 – L.K.) the Shilie military commander Alidi killed his jiedushi and fled to the west to the city of Woluduo which was known in the ancient times as Longting Shanyucheng". Soon the Zubu tribe rebelled. They surrounded Tuyu in Keduncheng. The attack was very strong. Tuyu ordered the army to shoot and repelled them. He set up camp in Woluduo". According to this record the eleventh century Woluduo was located at the site of the capital city of the northern Huns "the shanyu's city of Longting" (the same as Beitin) in the vicinity of the Qidan city of Heduncheng. It is stated in the History of the Liao Dynasty, "Heduncheng is more appropriately the Uighur city of Huotun (that is Khatunbalyq – the residence of the wife of the Uighur khagan – L.K.) erroneously called Hedun"³³. Khatunbalyq was located 15 km (9.32 miles) south of the capital and the headquarters of the Uighur khagans, the city of Ordubalyq in the upper course of the Orkhon at its confluence with its left-bank tributary the Balyqlyq (literally the abounding in fish). Later on the Qidan built Heduncheng at its site, where the Kereid and later the Mongols built Karakorum (Helincheng in the Chinese tradition).

Based on these data the city of Beiting (or Longting, or Shanyucheng) was also located in the Orkhon valley. Thus the Huns were the first masters of Central Asia and they chose for their rulers' headquarters and for their capital city a site in the valley of the river that later on became widely known in the history of the peoples of Central Asia. The Han chronicles speak of such cities of the Huns lying to the north of the Gobi Desert as Fanfuren and "the fortification of Tiewu Xiang"³⁴. The historian Fang Xuanling who studied the Jin Dynasty rule (265-420) and the invasion of the Xiongnu armies in China in the course of which they captured the capital city of Chang'an in 316 also wrote that the Xiongnu "built palaces instead of their felt huts" at that time of history. V.S. Taskin highlights that "the Xiongnu began to build, decorate and fortify cities and set up capitals"³⁵.

Besides, in Jinshu (History of the Jin Dynasty) we read about the fortified city of Gaijiang (Gujiang) and learn that "the city was built by the Xiongnu people". In the Old History of the Tang Dynasty (Jiu Tanshu) there is a direct reference, "the original name in the Xiongnu language is the city of Gaijiang"³⁶. Consequently, the very place name which was later turned by the Chinese into Gujiang is of Hunnic origin. It is a fact that the later Huns did not give up their tradition and continued to build cities in Inner Mongolia. For example, Helian Bobo, a leader of the Huns, had a city of Tangwan built at the end of the fourth century to the north of the Shuofang River; later on the city was known as Xiazhou³⁷.

32 Bichurin, 1950: 264.

33 Liang Yuandong, 1955: 20.

34 Taskin, 1973: 21, 136.

35 Taskin, 1989: 26, 27.

36 Malyavkin, 1981: 35, 138, note 159.

37 Ibid.: 67.

None of the historians and chroniclers of the Medieval Chinese school had any doubts that the Huns had building skills. The chronicles of the origins of the Uighurs' forefathers recorded in Weishu (the sixth century) say that the Hunnic shanyu once "constructed a splendid tall house in an uninhabited area to the north of the capital (the capital of the Huns – L.K.)" for his two daughters³⁸.

All the above given evidence confirms the fact that it was the Huns who introduced the culture of town building in Central Asia and Southern Siberia.

2.2. Towns and settlements of the Huns in Transbaikalia

The cities and settlements of the Huns in Siberia have no names. Archaeologists normally invent new names for them. From among the cities and settlements of the mighty Huns across Siberia those to the south-west of Baikal are best studied. The Hunnic burial grounds were close to their cities. Having conquered new lands in 201 B.C. the Huns settled in the rich valleys of the Selenga and its tributaries such as the Djida, Chikoe, Hilok, Temnik, and Uda Rivers.

According to A.P. Okladnikov, some of the local population representing the so called slab-grave culture was driven by the Huns to the shores of Baikal and most likely into the areas further north³⁹. The remaining indigenous people posed a constant threat to the invaders. That is why the first cities of the Huns were well fortified. These are the well-known Ivolga site and the ruins of the Darestui Fortress-Castle (Bayan-Under) on the left bank of the Djida River which we examined in 1983⁴⁰. At the same time we also examined two unfortified settlements of the Huns; one was a settlement in the vicinity of the village of Enkhor on the high right bank of the Djida River discovered by archaeologists from Buryatia and the other one, a famous settlement by the village of Duryony on the left bank of the Chikoe River⁴¹ (Figure 17).

The **Ivolga site (gorodische)** is located on the left bank of the Selenga River below the point of its confluence with the Ivolga. It was studied by G.P. Sosnovsky in 1928-1929, by V.P. Shilov in 1949-1950 and by A.V. Davydova in 1955-1974⁴². Initially, the Hunnic city at the Ivolga site might have been a strong fortress of a square-like form 340 x 340 m in size. Its four walls faced the four cardinal points and the total area of the city was about 11.5 ha (115 000 square meters).

38 Bichurin, 1950: 214.

39 Okladnikov, 1955: 193-196.

40 Kyzlasov L.R., Kyzlasov I.L., 1985: 220.

41 Sosnovskiy, 1947; Davydova, Minyaev, 2003.

42 Sosnovskiy, 1934; Davydova. 1956; 1985.

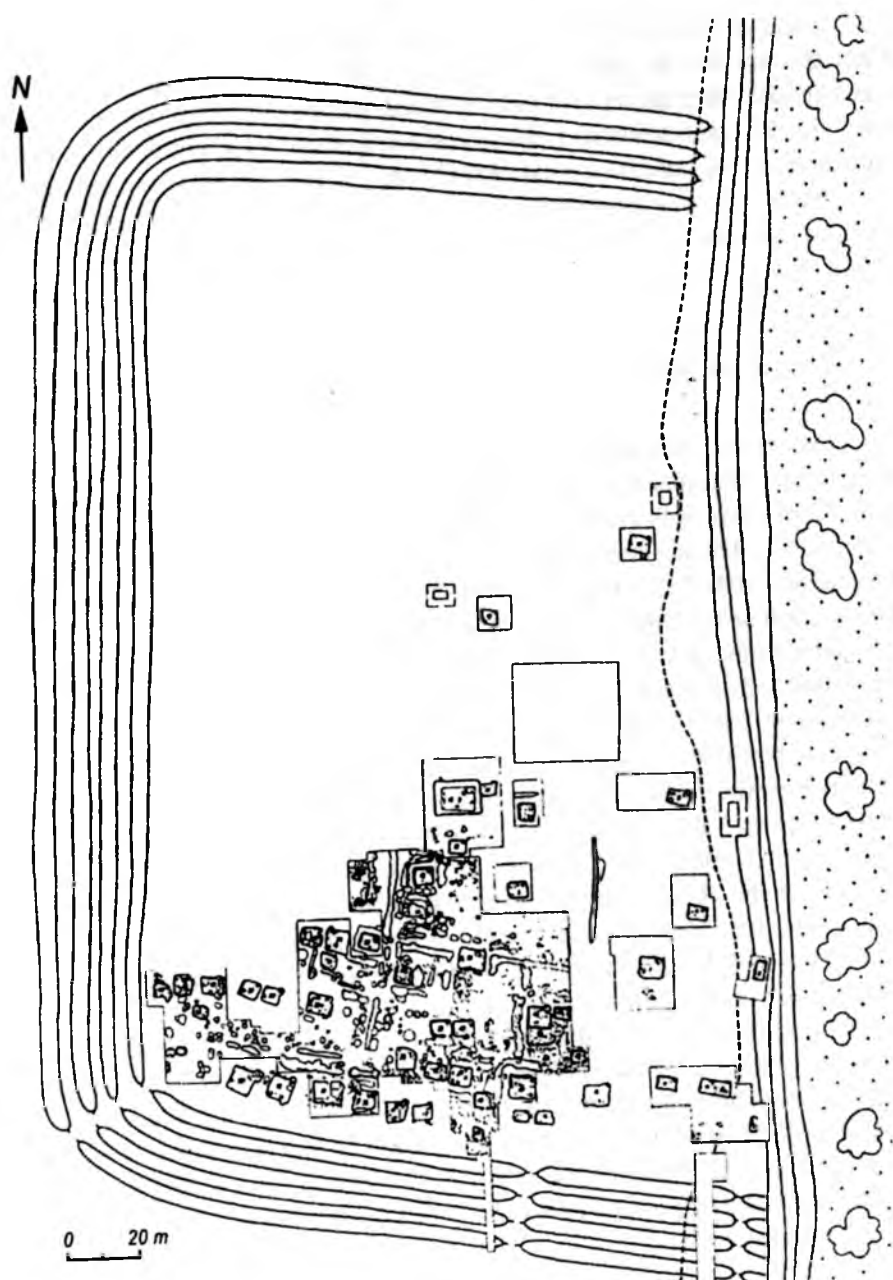


Figure 16. General plan of the Ivovga gorodishche showing the sites excavated.
By A.V. Davydova

Later on the capricious Selenga washed away part of the left hand terrace above the floodplain and destroyed a third of the fortress but after a while retreated leaving behind the old dried up river bed⁴³. The archaeologists that examined the site described it as the ruins of an irregular rectangle (with sides of 348 m from north to south and 194-216 m from west to east) with mounds and ditches on three sides and adjacent to the old river bed in the east (Figure 16). However, this refers to the remaining 7 ha (70 000 square meters) of the former area of the settlement. Now we know that all the better preserved cities of the Huns excavated in the neighboring Mongolia were square-like in form⁴⁴.

The walls of the square-like fortress on the Selenga River were made up of four fortified lines of which only the mounds and ditches remained. The published lay-out⁴⁵ (Figure 16) features the city with two tall gates in the middle of the southern side of fortifications; and the remains of ditches in the south-east indicate that the eastern part of the stronghold was washed away by the river in ancient times. The wash away line ran through the centre of the former northern gate of the fortress. The plan also shows another pseudo-gap of the mounds right along the cross section of the south-western angle of the square. However, in our field studies we discovered the remains of a cart road that flattened the mound's side in more recent history. That is way this gap should not be taken into account when we discuss the architecture of the fortified cities of the Huns.

Archaeological data prove that the fortified city walls were complex in structure. Each of them consisted of five lines of obstacles for external enemies. Based on the technology and construction methods utilized by the Huns in building cities and mansions in other parts of Central Asia and in the Yenisei valley the setting up of fortifications of the Ivolga site looks as follows.

The first step was to dig out three ditches along the perimeter of the square-like fortress with 3-4 meters in between. The ditches were from 1.13 to 2.1 m deep and from 3.5 to 5.5 m wide. Next, in front of the ditches at the field side walls of "pebble-concrete" were put up. These were made by pouring into wooden frames layers of fine construction clay with mixed in river pebbles and a share of washed sand. Layer upon dried layer was poured forming a cemented body of the wall 1.5-2 meters in height. According to A.V. Davydova, "at the tops of the mounds" sat wooden palings of 1.6-1.8 meters in height and the very tops of the "mounds" were strengthened with huge rocks⁴⁶.

Obviously, there were solid wooden fences buried in the "pebble-concrete" walls and strengthened at the base with rows of stones⁴⁷.

43 Davydova, 1956: fig. 1.

44 Perlee, 1957; Shavkunov, 1973; cf.: Volkov, Novgorodova, 1976.

45 Davydova, 1956: fig. 1; 1985: fig. II.

46 Davydova, 1985: 12, 13.

47 Davydova, 1956: 296, 297.

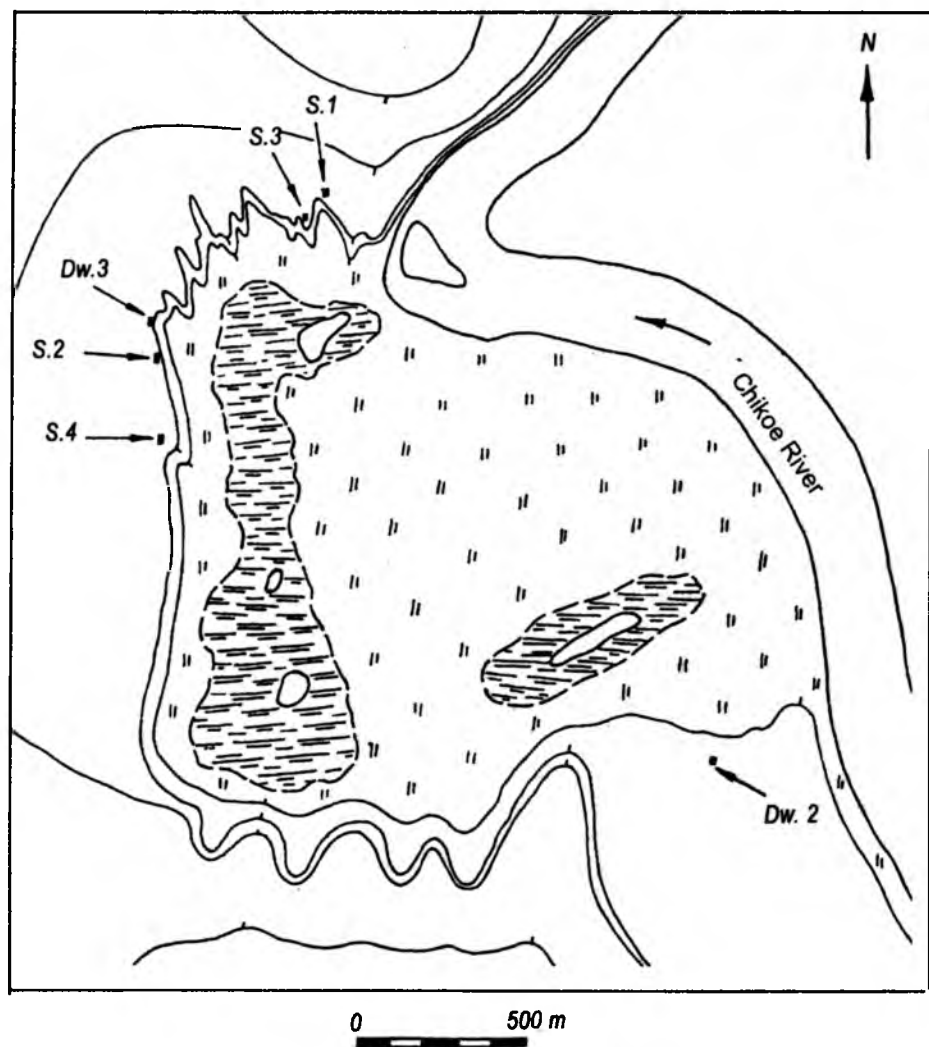


Figure 17. Sketch map of the Duryony site. By A.V. Davydova

The ditches between the walls were 4.5-5 meters deep. And finally, at the inner side of the forth line of defense the remains of a fifth wall made of wood supported by heavy piles (25-26 cm in diameter) were excavated. It seems likely that this defense structure was paneled on the inside with thick planks of wood whose ends were fitted into the notches in the massive pillar supports.

This was a complex system of fortifications of walls of the Ivolga fortress which was also supplemented with strong wooden gates blocking the entrances.

That was characteristic of the truly Hunnic city architecture. In any case a similar picture arises from the ancient Chinese chronicles which describe the construction of a four-walled city fortress in the conquered Semirechye by the Hunnic shanyu Zhizhi at the end of the first century B.C. The shanyu "sent people to erect the city wall, each day 500 people worked completing the construction in 2 years"⁴⁸. Further in the text we read, "in front of the earthen wall there was a double wooden stockade..." Another reference is that the city was protected "by five rows of fortifications" that is absolutely in the same manner as the Ivolga city⁴⁹.

Thus, the Ivolga settlement is an example of standardized architecture for defense fortresses constructed on the alien territories of the lands the Huns conquered. Looking at its lay-out it is possible to visualize the fortress erected for shanyu Zhizhi by the Hunnic builders in Semirechye two thousand years ago.

Even though a small area was only excavated in the south-western corner of the Ivolga fortress together with a fragment of the space around the gate along the southern wall⁵⁰ (Figure 16) it was still possible to identify the four-way lay-out of the residential and workshop quarters. Initially they were divided into squares formed by sewage and drainage sluiceways. In the course of time some of the streets were blocked with new dwellings and formed dead ends.

On the whole the four-way lay-out of the inner area of the city corresponds to the directions of the outer walls of a square-like fortress, which in its turn is in keeping with the general architectural canons for building small square-like cities in Middle and Central Asia of the late Middle Ages. It is obvious that the cities of the Huns are their forerunners.

The existence of the five rows of defensive walls made of special "pebble-cement" and wooden constructions reflect the specific uniqueness of the city architecture of the Huns which apart from the square-like pattern and the four-way development had no parallels either in the steppes of Eurasia or in the China of the Hans.

While we are looking at the lay-out of the Ivolga settlement we should note that even though the residential building blocks look linear stretching from east to west they in fact form quarters. Inside the quarters, complexes of 2-3 dwellings stand out which might have been rebuilt in the course of time. Some were obviously destroyed by recurrent fires.

These residential complexes included numerous utility facilities like cellars, half-houses, pig sties, pottery and iron working floors, granaries, wells and so on. No large-scale pens for farm animals were discovered inside the city.

Most residential buildings had a square-like form. First, a square pit was made measuring from 3 x 3 to 7 x 7 m and from 0.6 to 1 m in depth. The walls and the floor were coated with clay. Around the sides of the pits (and

48 Taskin, 1973: 126-129.

49 Ibid.: 126-129, 131.

50 Davydova, 1985: fig. II, III.

obviously with the use of wooden frames) layer upon layer of clay was poured to form walls with supporting piles buried in them to prop the rafters of the frame construction of the house with a ridge roof. The entrance to the dwelling was in the south side close to the south-eastern corner; it looked like an outside extension in the form of a corridor (dromos) with a sloping floor⁵¹.

Two of the buildings were above ground and still preserved the clay walls (up to 1.3-1.4 m deep) that were smoothed down to form hill-like elevations.

The inner lay-out of the winter insulated dwellings is of the same pattern: opposite the entrance in the north-eastern corner was a stove made of stone slabs with a smoke duct of flagstone running from it along the northern and then western walls above the floor and heating the house in the winter. In the south-western corner was a chimney stack (35 cm in diameter) which was probably made from the trunk of the Selenga abele split lengthwise and hollowed. Cellars were dug out and storage spacing consisted of vessels embedded in the floor. There were two graves of babies unearthed under the floors in clay vessels.

The roofing was multi-layered, pugged with clay, with middle layers of twigs, sticks, birch bark, straw and ashes. Plank beds were made of boards and rested on piles above the heating duct described earlier. On the pugged floor surface were sometimes found burnt patches from fire baskets which might have been used for additional heating in severe freezing weather.

In the centre of the city a raised ground was studied under which a blast furnace for iron smelting was uncovered⁵². It was clearly the site of a metallurgic workshop with clay walls.

A specific feature of the Ivolga city of the Huns is that at a distance of a hundred meters south at the edge of that very same river terrace were found the remains of the Maloe settlement, more than half of which had been washed away by the river in the ancient times⁵³. Initially, it was also a square stronghold (145 x 145 m) with an area 2 ha (20 000 square meters) and a clay wall with a ditch inside running around it. This coincides with the characteristic defense lines of the Ivolga city.

The Maloe site provides evidence of the consistent commitment of the Hunnic builders to their specific traditional architectural canons in setting up their characteristic monumental structures⁵⁴. The Maloe site does not have either an occupational layer or any remains of houses. But

51 Ibid.: fig. III. The scale models of the Hun half-dugouts by A.V. Davydova representing them as primitive constructions without any walls rising over the pits (Davydova, 1956: tabl. 52, 86) were accepted by researchers (v. for example: *Istoriko-kul'turnyi atlas Buryatii*, 2001: 116; Dashibalov, 2005: fig. 8) even though they are absolutely incorrect. When rafters are placed directly on the sides of the pit it is impossible to use the warm benches (kang).

52 Davydova, 1956: fig. 7.

53 Ibid.: fig. 1.

54 Proskuryakova, 1990: 44, 45.

the wooden constructions and their fences might as well have disappeared without traces in the course of time.

Based on the discovery of several bone fragments of domestic animals in the exploring shafts this could have been a guarded and fortified pen with log partitions for the communal herd of farm animals. Livestock, small cattle and horses were kept there.

Four hundred and forty meters north-east of the city there was a graveyard for its inhabitants, the so called Ivolga burial ground. Two hundred and sixteen graves were excavated there with skeletal remains of 244 people⁵⁵.

The Darestui fortress-castle (Bayan Under) is located about 20 km (12.43 miles) south-west of the railway station of Djida, inside the sharp bend of the Djida River. Its graveyard known as the Darestui burial ground is located at the same site⁵⁶. Thirty kilometers (18.64 miles) downstream from the river bend (also know as the Darestui kultuk) the Djida joins the Selenga River. North of the castle 1.5 km (0.93 miles) away lies a small low ridge perpendicular to the flow of the river, beyond which downstream and on the left bank of the Djida are located the Darestui burial grounds stretching from south to north.

The Darestuis fortress-castle similar to the Ivolga city was built according to a regular plan and its walls faced the four cardinal points. The square-like fortress (120 x 119 m) had a square citadel (40 x 40 m) inside. The gate was at the south side that was facing the river. The outer walls were made of clay which are now flattened mounds about 6 m wide. The tops of the walls were initially strengthened with a solid stone ridge made of sharp stone splinters (the stones ran along the main axis of all the mounds). It seems highly likely that initially there were wooden fences strengthened with huge rocks. The southern gate of the fortress was about 18 m wide. At the south-eastern corner in the eastern wall there was a small pass door. South of the gate at the distance of 10 m there is some raised ground (up to 1 m high and 10.5 x 10.5 m in size). The walls of the inner citadel were encircled by a ditch and were located at a distance of 26.5 m from its eastern wall, 24.5 m from its northern wall and 22.5 m from its western wall. In the north-eastern corner of the citadel a truncated pyramid of a square raised ground 15 x 15 m in size and 1.5 in height is located.

A team of explorers of the Khakass expedition in 1983 together with N.V. Imenokhoyev collected some evidence at the site of the ruined Darestui fortress-castle, namely, fragments of red rectangular flamed bricks (12.5 x 7 cm in size) as well as fragments of characteristic grey circular vessels of the Huns: vase-like "barrels", side-frames decorated with coils of

55 Davydova, 1996.

56 Sosnovskiy, 1935.

clay and so on. The findings were donated to the Archaeology department of Buryatia Institute of Social Sciences with the Siberian Department of the Soviet Academy of Sciences whose research personnel are now involved in the study of the Darestui fortress-castle remains.

In 1988-1989 an archaeologist from Buryatia S.V. Danilov carried out excavations of a site which he called Bayan Under⁵⁷ after the name of the hollow where the settlement was located. The eastern mound of the citadel and the eastern outer mound of the settlement were cut crosswise by trenches. The excavations confirmed the previous studies. It was found out that in place of the mounds and quite typically for the Huns there were initially solid walls of puddle constructed by pouring layer upon layer of fine clay with additions of gruss and breakstone in wooden frames. Initially along the ridge of the wall there were jagged rock splinters embedded in clay which got smoothed by the weather and precipitation over the two thousand years of their history and were in the state of terminated excavations. The ditch running around the inner citadel was initially about 3.3 m wide and 1.6 m deep. The ditch below the wall had a sheer face and consequently increased the total height of the citadel wall.

S.V. Danilov discovered that on the inside the citadel wall was joined by a lived-in "area", a level surface like a clay platform with fragments of stone tiles that quite likely have been used in the heating ducts. The foundation of one of the walls of the dwelling was lined with a slab 1.6 x 0.5 m long fixed on its side. Small fragments of Hunnic vessels were also collected.

The **Enkhor settlement** is on the right bank of the Djida River across from the Darestui fortress-castle. It is 10 km (6.21 miles) south-west of the Darestui kultuk. The settlement sits at the top of a high terrace towering 35-40 m above the overflow land where the village of Enkhor is situated. A road leading to the settlement Tsagan-Usun cut through the terrace 350 m away from the village.

The settlement was discovered by A.D. Tsybiktarov in 1981⁵⁸. The thickness of the occupational layer varied from 20-40 to 80 cm. The settlement sprawled 350 m along the edge of the terrace. When the Khakass expedition arrived at the site in 1983 the remainder of the hill with the settlement at the top had been removed by bulldozers. In the middle of the site there was a deep dent which obviously served as a dwelling dug out in the ground. On the cliff run offs we picked up numerous fragments of black Hunnic vessels with the characteristic spaced vertical glossing; fragments of a stone grain grinder, a piece of metal ploughshare, part of a flat ring of white stone and mother-of-

57 Danilov, 1993; 1998; Danilov, Zhavoronkova, 1995. Here we keep the former name of the site because it reflects its link with the Darestui burial ground (Kyzlasov L.R., 1998b: 47-64; 1999c: 195-205).

58 Tsybiktarov, 1986.

pearl pieces. Stone tiles were also found; they were commonly used by the Huns to construct warming plank beds with heating ducts in dwellings.

On a raised ground five hundred meters east of the settlement the archaeologists from Buryatia discovered a burial ground partially unearthed by the winds with shallow ancient graves, possibly, a graveyard for the Huns of this settlement. In 1983 we also observed at one location the bare lower limb bones of a young man lying flat on the back the head pointing to the north-east.

The settlement of **the village of Duryony** is located 35 km (21.75 miles) east from the town of Kyakhta inside the bend of the old river bed on the left bank of the Chikoe River. Not far from the site the Chikoe River, the right bank tributary of the Selenga, crosses the border with Mongolian People's Republic and flows northwards⁵⁹.

"The settlement sits on the edge of a terrace above the overflow land and forms a horseshoe-like shape inside the bend of the Chikoe River. The settlement sprawls for about 5 km (3.11 miles). In all its parts massive areas of an intact occupational layer with a thickness of up to 90 cm were recorded (three times thicker than in the Ivolga site)"⁶⁰ (Figure 17). We can assume that the major part of the settlement was washed away by the Chikoe as it formed its bend. It is possible that during the times of the Huns in the bend of the left bank which was later washed away by the river there lay a fortified city. The remains of the trading quarter of this city are now taken for a separate settlement sprawling for some mysterious reason for 5 km (3.11 miles) along the bend of the old river bed.

In different parts of the settlement there were excavated many utility pits and about a dozen dwellings which looked exactly the same as the ones described above, namely the half embedded in the ground houses of the Ivolga Huns with the same L-shaped heating smoke ducts. There were also found small heaps of unused ore, a lot of slag and other wastes of iron production, iron and bronze handicrafts. While the Ivolga site boasted only two iron ploughshares, the Duryony settlement had 21. Even though the researchers examined only a small area the evidence proves that Duryony was a city the majority of whose inhabitants were artisans who also did some farming. The economic potential of this sprawling center of crafts was obviously very high.

The settlement of Duryony II in the village of Duryony was discovered by A.V. Davydova and S.S. Minyaev in 1983 to the north of the first settlement in the neighboring land of the left bank of the Chikoe. This site is characterized by many layers (from the Bronze Age to the Middle Ages). Layers from 5 to 7 can be dated to the Hun period according to the type of

59 Sosnovskiy, 1947.

60 Davydova, 1978.

the ceramics discovered there. The non-Hunnic items of pottery found in the same layers for the first time are very interesting⁶¹.

So, in the areas south-west of Baikal 5 sites featuring cities and settlements of the Huns are so far known. Undoubtedly, the acquired data prove that some of the Huns inhabited fortified cities or settlements and were engaged mostly in farming but also in skilled crafts. Their fortified cities were not only military strongholds but also served as centers of spiritual and religious life of the Huns as well as depositories for their valuables, products of their craftsmanship and farming and, surely, as trading centers. It is highly likely that trade brought many forest hunters, nomad cattle-breeders and foreign merchants to these cities.

In order to get a more detailed picture of the history of the mysterious people of the Huns (Xiongnu) in Transbaikalia we need to study the already known sites of the settled Huns in more detail and also look for the new undiscovered ones.

2.3. Chronological dating of the Hunnic sites

We need to give credit to A.V. Davydova for her work of many years dedicated to the study of the sites of the settled Huns in Transbaikalia. Unfortunately, the lengthy procedure of the dating of the Ivolga complex (the settlement and the burial ground) slowed down the development of research. That is why in 1953-1960 in our own research we believed, proceeding from the evidence available at that time, that the Ivolga complex and some of the graves from some other burial grounds go back to the second and first centuries B.C. while others date from the first century B.C. and the first century A.D.⁶². Later on we published a concise periodization of the sites of the Hunnic culture into two stages. The dating of the stages remained the same⁶³.

A.V. Davydova responded in an unexpected manner. In 1985 she fully accepted the periodization of the Ivolga complex (the second and first centuries B.C.) that was suggested by me in 1953 and was repeatedly discussed during the direct encounters in the 1950s. A.V. Davydova finally admitted the existence of many similarities between the Hunnic material evidence and the findings from the transition stage of the Tagar-Tashtyk period on the Yenisei (the second and first centuries B.C.)⁶⁴ that were later called the Tes' period by M.P. Gryaznov based on some new data.

At the same time A.V. Davydova denounced the classification suggested by L.R. Kyzlasov as not reflecting the true course of the development of Hunnic

61 Davydova, Minyaev, 2003.

62 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 85, 86, 126, 163, 164.

63 Kyzlasov L.R., 1969c: 118.

64 Davydova, 1985: 46, 48, 49, 66, 67; 1996: 25.

society. She blamed the mix up on the chronological stages, as “*all* the currently known burial mounds were categorized as belonging to a later period” (according to A.V. Davydova, they were remains of the nomadic peoples), while the sites of “the settled Huns” were classified as belonging to an earlier period. She also claimed that “similar items were *typical of absolutely all Hunnic sites*” and consequently they all go back to the second and first centuries B.C.⁶⁵

In order to prove this fanciful and farfetched assumption A.V. Davydova manipulates facts; she uses a quoted citation from a published text by L.R. Kyzlasov but takes out from the earliest Darestui period a most important site which I classified as belonging to this period, namely the Darestui burial ground⁶⁶. Then A.V. Davydova criticizes the text which she herself distorted. This does not seem logical. We were also surprised to find out that specialists on the Hunnic archaeology have no idea, for instance, that in mound № 6 of the Noin Ula burial ground was found a Chinese lacquer cup with its date of manufacture at the bottom (2 B.C.). Consequently, the mound itself was not built before the first century A.D.⁶⁷ Another odd thing the opponents do (A.V. Davydova and S.S. Minyaev) is that they do not a priori believe that in one burial mound there could be graves from different periods. Without having classified the types of items found in the graves my colleagues fail to observe the differences in the types of the burial constructions and of the particulars of the burial rites. As a result, in the opinion of my opponents, the culture of the Huns of Central Asia made so little progress over 300 years that its evidence even escaped the notice by specialists.

In fact, in the areas along the Middle course of the Yenisei River all the sites that have any degree of connection with the Huns fall into two distinct periods: the early Tagar-Tashtyk culture (Tes') (the second and first centuries B.C.) and a later Izykh stage of the Tashtyk era (the first century B.C.-the first century A.D.). These very dates have now been confirmed for the periods of the development of Hunnic culture in Transbaikalia⁶⁸.

This is the way our classification, which we expanded in 1979, reached its approval⁶⁹. We also believe that the discovery of new data will help to improve and clarify any classification in the future.

The offered overview of written sources removes any doubt that archaeologists are bound to find and study both early and late cities of the Huns. Currently one of them could be the Darestui fortress-castle (Bayan Under) whose excavation has just started.

A comparative study of the available written records and archaeological evidence makes us believe that the geo-political location of the Hunnic state in

65 Davydova, 1985: 36, 37.

66 Kyzlasov L.R., 1969c: 118; cf.: Davydova, 1985: 36.

67 V. Trever, 1932: 48, pl. 29.2, 30.1.

68 Arheologiya SSSR, 1992: 224-246, 254-260, tabl. 94-100, 105-108.

69 Kyzlasov L.R., 1979: 82.

Central Asia between the cultural centers of the western (Middle Asia) and eastern (China) worlds formed both the spiritual and the material cultures of the Huns.

Academician N.E. Conrad was absolutely right when he singled out together with the Chinese "historical circle of lands" another center of historical activity among peoples which was formed in Central Asia at the time of the consolidation of the Hunnic power. "This new centre, he wrote, was meant to act as a link between the East Asian centre of World history and its Middle Asian one"⁷⁰. It should be also said that the basis of the Hunnic culture was still formed in the cultural circle of the Far East even though the material culture of the Huns incorporated many elements characteristic of the neighboring western cultures (bow and arrow, horse harness, bronze cauldrons, animalistic style and so on). This is especially vividly reflected in the architecture of the cities (chengs), in the dwellings with the under-floor heating systems of ducts, in the predominance of vase-like vessels, in the form of agricultural tools (ploughshares, sickles, spade bindings, etc.), household articles (nephrite, umbrellas, lacquer, chopsticks, coins, mirrors), etc. More over, the Huns (Xiongnu) used hieroglyphics, a written language that was common for the entire Far Eastern circle of cultures (for more details see part 2 of chapter 3). It was the Huns that were the first to take this written language away with them in their movement further west.

⁷⁰ Konrad, 1972: 459-463.

Chapter 3. CITY AND PALACE OF THE HUNNIC RULER OF THE SAYAN-ALTAI UPLANDS

In the first half of the first century B.C. on the Tasheba in Khakassia there existed a town which must have developed around the residence of the Duwei (similar to governor – tr.) of the Hunnic shanyu of the entire Sayan-Altai uplands¹. It took the Siberian archaeologists V.P. Levashova, L.A. Evtyukhova and S.V. Kiselyev four field seasons (1940, 1941, 1945 and 1946) to excavate the remains of the palace. They did the diggings in two hills² (Figure 18). The results and their assessment were published in 2001³. In 1987 we carried out additional work which helped to prove the existence of a wooden town with clay fortified walls surrounding the mansion (Figure 19).

On the whole a definite picture arises from the work of archaeologists on the Tasheba River. But its specific features are still of particular interest today not only because there is no other Hunnic palatial construction known to science. The Tasheba palace proved to be a unique construction incorporating in its building techniques and architectural image a harmonious confluence of diverse cultural traditions that were formed in Eastern, Middle and Western Asia⁴. This explains why our research should not be limited to manifestations of just Hunnic or Chinese cultures but should include evidence from civilizations of Western Asia if necessary.

1 In the neighboring China in the first millennium B.C. cities were formed specifically as political strongholds. V.: Kryukov, Perelomov, Sofronov, Cheboksarov, 1983: 168 ff.

2 The third knoll was excavated in 1946 and turned out to be an early Tagar burial ground.

3 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b. V. also the short and detailed publications by researchers who investigated the site: Levasheva, 1940; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 72-84; 1946b: 573, 574; Evtyukhova, 1946: 107-111; 1947: 79-85; 1954: 202-206; Kiselyev, 1946; 1949: 268-272; 1951: 479-484; 1959: 162, 163.

4 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b.

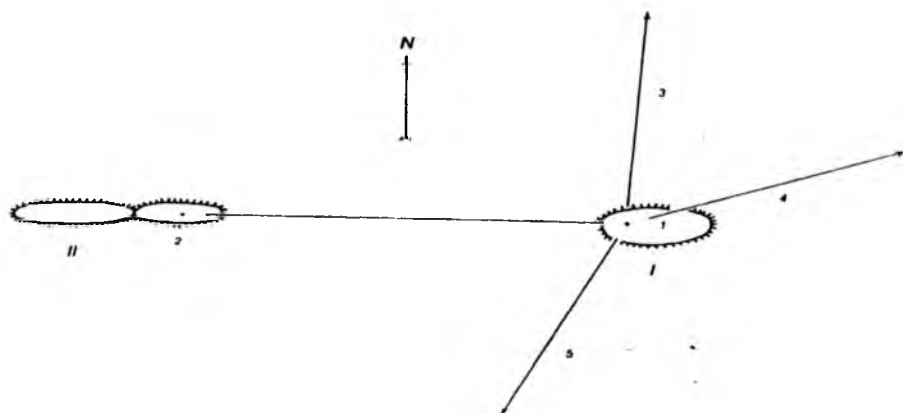


Figure 18. Sketch drawing of the Tasheba ruins location made in 1946. I – site I (palace), II – объект II (walls), 1 – point K 19, 2 – point K 5 (v. figures 20.1 and 24), the distance between point 1 and point 2 was 391,5 m (A° about 271°), 3-5 – directions of mountains on the Yenisei and Abakan Rivers: 3 – Kunya, 4 – Samokhval, 5 – Izykh

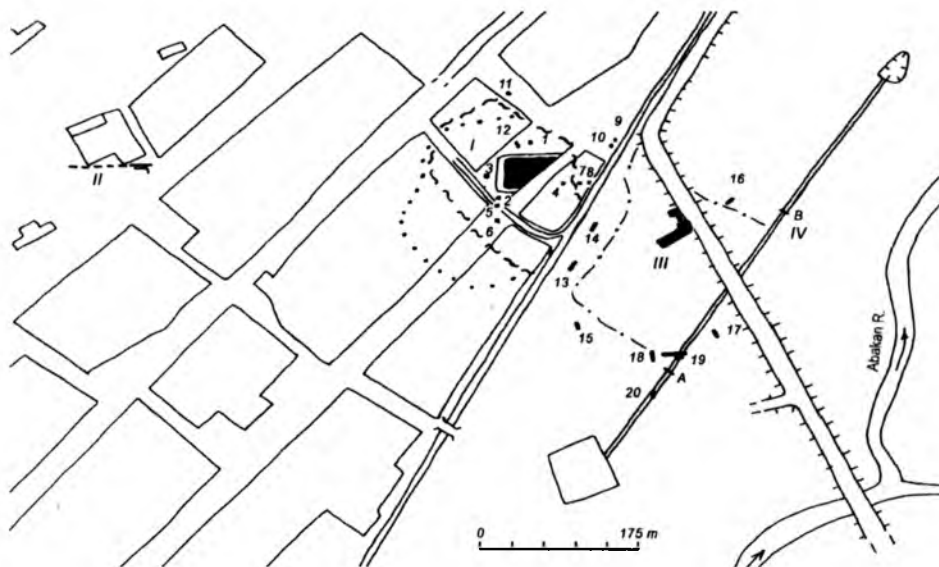


Figure 19. Sketch plan of the village of Chapaevo and principal sites excavated at the Tasheba city. I – palace (1940-1946), II – street walls (1946), III – log dwellings (site III, 1987), IV – outer wall (1987). 1-8 – shafts of 1940, 9-20 – shafts and excavation pits of 1987, A, B – stratigraphic cuts (1987)

The initial construction on the level plain between the small lakes, old river beds and channels of the Abakan and Tasheba Rivers was an unusual palatial building (site 1) on whose two sides there were beginnings of clay walls. The south-eastern wall ran along the outer circle (Figure 19.IV) and, it seems, was later supplemented with a fence of vertically placed pointed logs, while its western wall consisted of two inner walls which possibly separated the city quarters (site 2, Figures 18.II, 19.II, 21.1). The log houses were situated inside the walls around the central mansion.

The ruins of the palace that used to occupy the northern part of the modern settlement of Chapayevo have now been destroyed by the local authorities as the site was built up by a private developer. The local authorities and many of the racially mixed population of the region still regard the ancient sites of Khakassia as just an unfortunate barrier to their personal well-being. In the 1990s, even though the site was on the list of protected areas, the territory of the Tagar-Tashtyk and later early Tashtyk settlements adjacent to the palace in the east and south-east was developed. Thus, our contemporaries have razed to the ground the site which housed the capital of Khakassia in the Hunnic period of its historical development.

3.1. Tasheba town

In 1940 V.P. Levashova started eight shafts of 2 x 2 m running along the axis of the cardinal points (Figures 19.1 – 19.8) around the knoll concealing the ruins of the palace (site I). Shafts 1, 3, 6 and 8 did not lead to any occupational layer. Some remains relating to the palace were only found to the south and east of the palace itself: some broken tiles were found and in some locations (shafts 2, 5 and 7) there were animal bones. The occupational layer was traced for 40 m (shafts 2, 5 and 6) to the south and for 30 m to the east of the excavation site.

Site II was located 390 m west of the palace and looked like a narrow low hillock (Figures 18.II, 19.II)⁵. The shafting done there in 1941 produced an occupational layer with fragments of tiles. The excavations of the hillock were done in July 1946 by L.R. Kyzlasov, then a student of Moscow University, and spanned the territory of 280 square meters⁶ (Figure 20.1). Two parallel walls that were found there had fragments of broad trays of tiles scattered around it which were the same as the ones found around the palace. It seems likely that it was initially used to line the tops of walls and gates.

5 The previously published neat copy of the drawing from the 1946 (Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: fig. 2) where site II is located north of site I proved to be out of keeping with both the text of the publication (Evtyukhova, 1947: 82) and the plan made on location (AIA RAN. collection 12, file 20) (Figure 18).

6 Evtyukhova, 1947: 79, note 2.

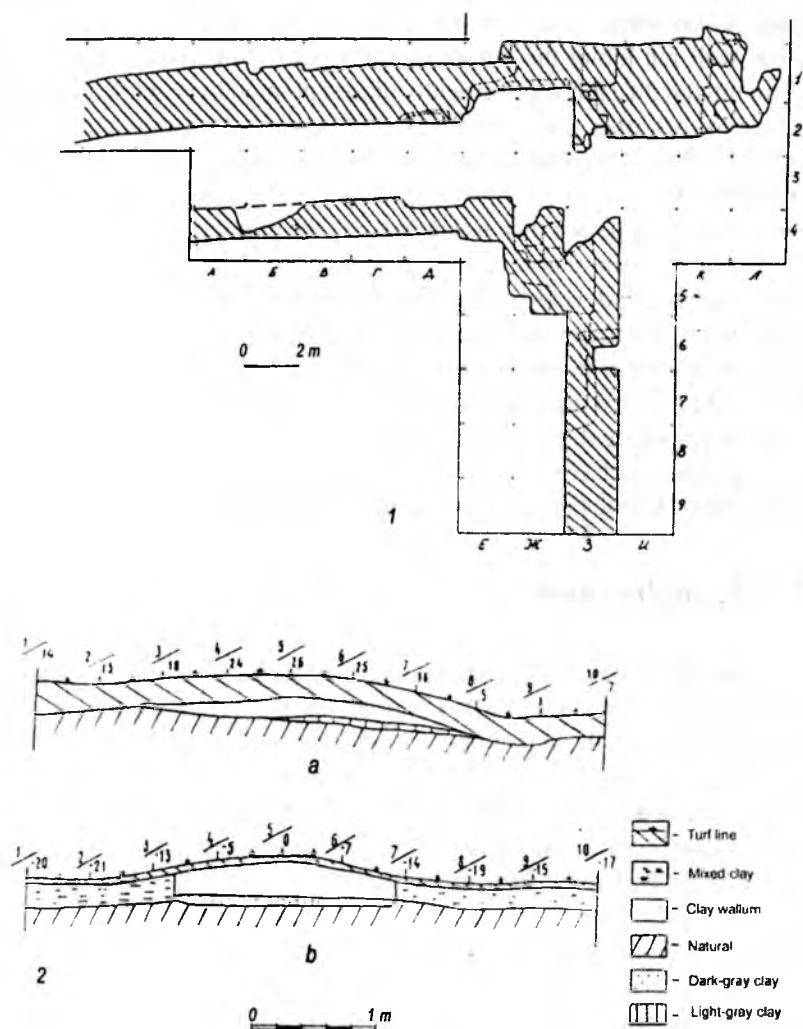


Figure 20. Clay fortifications of the Tasheba city: 1 – plan of two parallel walls (site II, 1946); 2 – sections through the south-east outer wall (site IV, 1987), *a* – south-western part, *b* – north-eastern part of the wall

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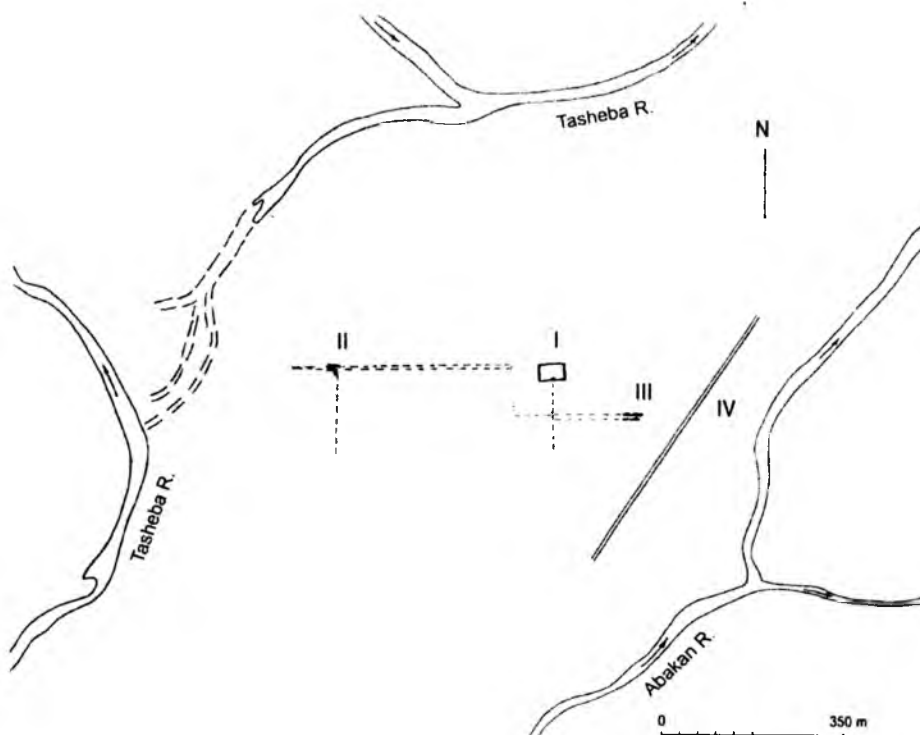


Figure 21. The elements of regular lay-out of the Tasheba city discovered by excavations

The existence of the latter was suggested by the findings of some fragments of terracotta tiles with a herring bone pattern as such elements were used to decorate facades of buildings. It is important to note that those found at site II corresponded to the similar decorative elements of the main building. The excavated walls were stratified lengthwise. That is they were made of pakhsa (tamped clay – tr.) as well as the palace building itself. We should also mention the occasional findings of some fragments of the smooth pottery of three types whose appearance and clay composition were characteristic of the transitional Tagar-Tashtyk period (the second and first centuries B.C.). These findings no doubt establish a direct link between sites I and II and place them chronologically at the same time.

In the same layer there were also found: a horse's phalange with cut out symbols on it, a few smooth river pebbles with some rough notches (these could have been toys), and fragments of crashed animal bones (including some burnt ram bones), charcoal and ash from a small fire (15 cm in diameter). At the southern end of the walls there were found some ram and cow jaws, teeth and a fragment of a horse's

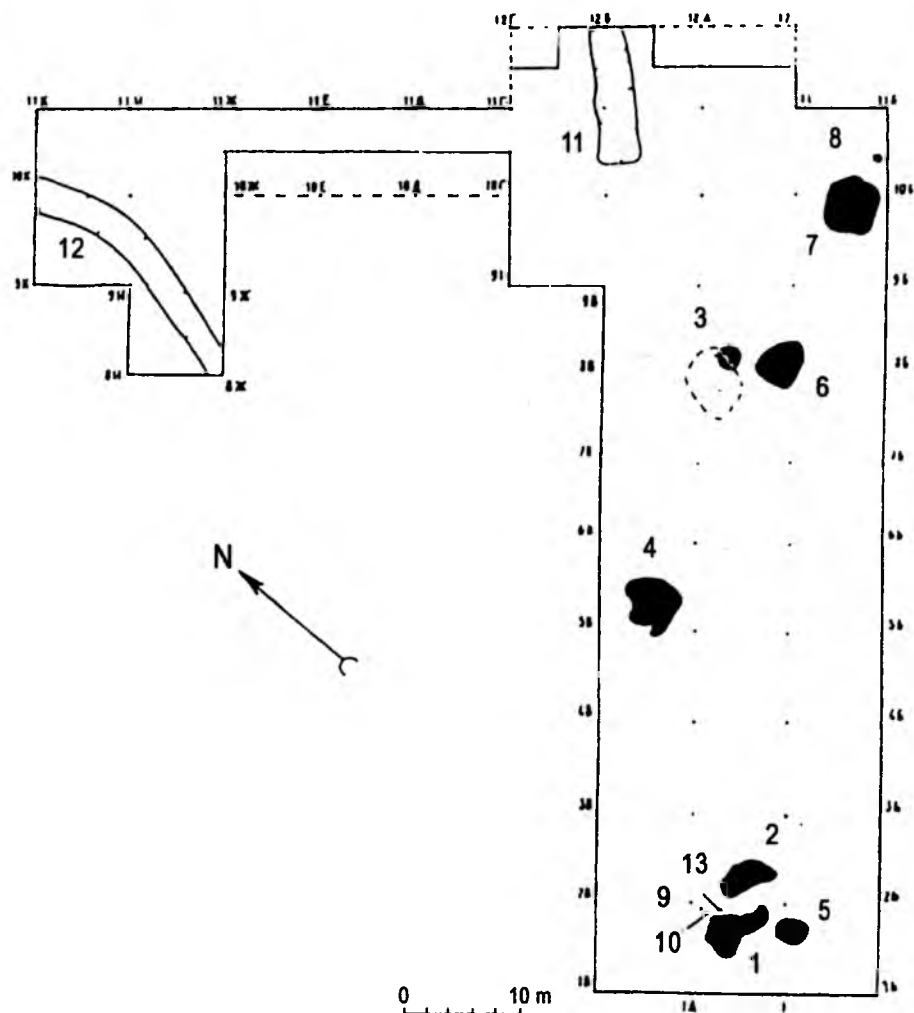


Figure 22. Plan of the site III (1987), cellar pits from each log cabin show axis of the street parallel to the Tasheba palace

caxal bone as well as a dog's jaw fragment and some bird bones. We also excavated a fragment of an ox hip with the epiphysis.

The half-ruined northern wall of site II (26 meters of the wall were uncovered – Figure 20.1) was 2 meters wide and terminated 75 m west where now is a vegetable garden. Its eastern end formed a higher tower-like platform which obviously, had not been built up to its full height. At the

time of the excavations its height was about 1.5-1.8 m. The parallel southern wall was narrower (1.2-1.3 m) and shorter (about 16.5 m). At its eastern end it formed the right angle to the south. The distance between the two walls running from east to west was 2.7 m.

It seems likely that the rectangular ledges and notches that were found facing each other next to the corner in both walls stretching latitudewise suggest the existence of a gate that blocked the passage between the fences. A similar notch was also found in the southern wall which pointed to the existence of a second similar gate. Judging by the findings at site II the exterior decorations of the street gates could have taken their origins from the Han architectural traditions. At the same time we should note that in the China of that period of history the gates of fenced city quarters were not located at the crossroads.

The excavations at site II possibly disclosed the remains of the south-western part of a crossroads of city streets separating the western residential quarters surrounded by clay walls⁷. A number of facts prove this assumption. In view of their different widths it is quite likely that the northern and southern walls at site II belonged to two different constructions. It is difficult to imagine walls of this length going towards the palace unless they were part of the city laid out in quarters. The outer side of the northern wall of site II nearly coincides with the boundary of the back facade of the palace (it does not stick out more than 1 m with the tower ledge being 2 m to the north) which speaks for the unified city lay-out rather than for the location of the gate. Consequently, the whole of site II could not have been a surrounding wall around the yard of the palace. If we take into consideration the latitudinal rows of the residential construction in the south-western part of the Tasheba town discovered in 1987 (excavation site III) and discussed further in the text (Figure 22), the gap between the double walls of site II can quite likely be looked upon as a part of a walled street running in the same direction.

The above given data proves that the part of site II wall stretching south verifies the existence of regularly planned perpendicular streets. The most important fact is that it corresponds to the southern direction of the palace entrance. That is characteristic of the regularly planed main axes of the Tasheba city whose streets ran from west to east and from south to north (Figure 21).

7 It was initially believed that these were the remains of the tall ride-through gate in the wall around the palace itself which was protected by a tower and the double wall of the entrance (Evtukhova, 1947: 87; Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 117). If that was so the dimensions of the resulting area of the palace would be too grand and compatible with the most grandiose palace of Parthian Hatra (the first-third centuries) inside whose walls (456-442 x 320-311 m) "an entire city could be located" (Voronina, 1971a: 320, fig. 27, 31).



Figure 23. Stationary dwellings depicted among petroglyphs of the Boyary ridge (Khakassia, the second and first centuries B.C.): 1 – details of the Malaya Boyarskaya painting, 2 – details of the Bolshaya Boyarskaya painting.

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Based on the position of the construction debris around the palace that was uncovered during the shafting (Figure 19) the main building was located inside the free area of the yard. The wide radios at which the tile fragments were found can be explained not only by the collapse of the roof of the palace but also by the decay of the tiled walls enclosing the mansion. If this is true the main building could have been in the center of the yard with a distance of up to 70 m north and south from the facade and the distances at the sides of about 50 m. Judging by the boundaries inside the building remains which were registered in aero photography (Figure 19) the palace could have been located 1/3 of the center of the yard to the north. As the dimensions of the building itself from south to north are 35 m and from west to east 45 m it is clear that the estimated area of the palace complex could not have been bigger than 175 x 145 m, that is no more than 25.375 m², about 2.5 ha.

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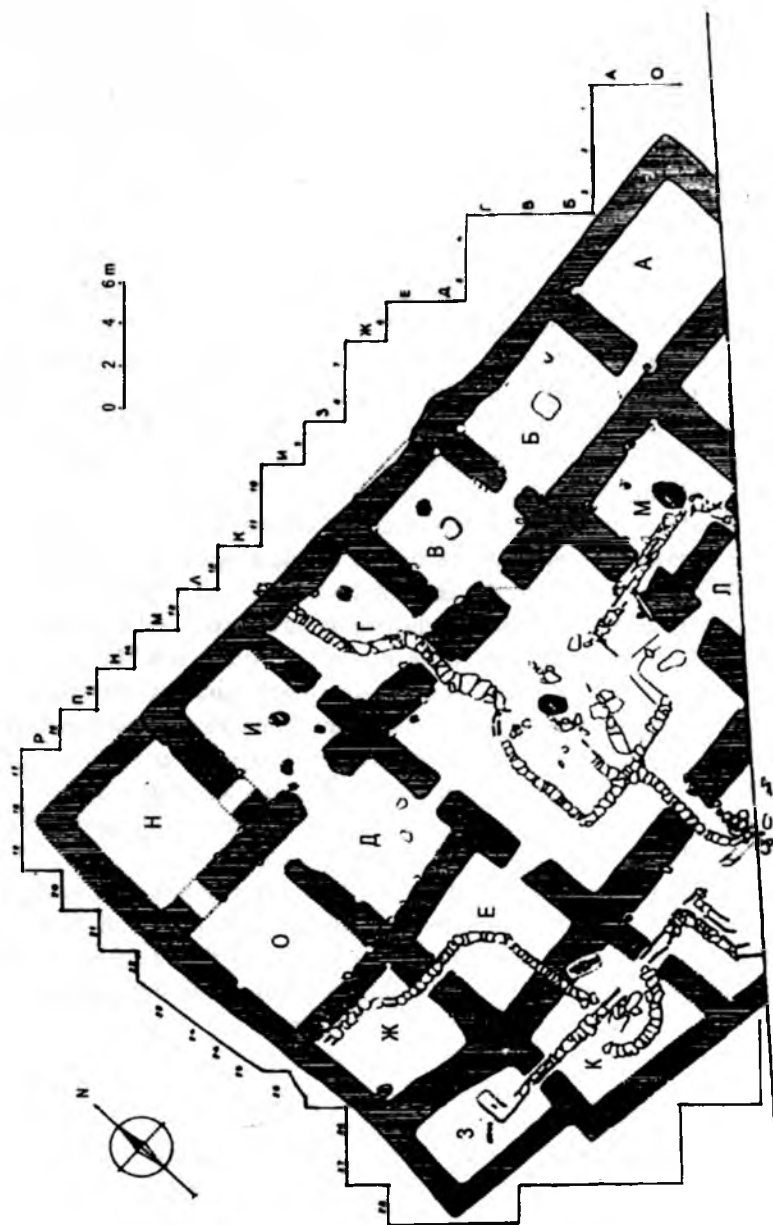


Figure 24. Plan of the Tasheba palace. By L. A. Evtyukhova. 1946

The central axis of the monumental ensemble was coordinated with the direction of the palace entrance, that is, ran from south to north. In this respect it is compatible with the palatial and monumental burial complexes of ancient China. A similar lay-out was also a typical feature of the construction of the Efanggong complex (212-207 B.C.) in Xianyang the capital of the Qin Empire. However, during the Hun period such a direction of the main axis was not yet compulsory and is not found, for example, in the two main palatial complexes of Chang'an⁸. We can only try to guess whether the Tasheba palace incorporated this kind of city planning axis. However, the very direction of its gate points to the fact that the area of the palace yard could have had its own fencing with the main entrance in the south. In the north behind the solid back wall of the building the fence could have been either solid or with a small gate. It is still unknown whether any wide road led to the gate of the palace. If the Huns had followed the ancient patterns of town building common in the Far East⁹ this road should have been wider than the crosswise streets (compare at site II the tower-like ledge of the northern wall facing the east and a wider street running south which was not fully excavated – Figure 20.1)

We cannot judge with any degree of certainty whether the palace complex was located in the geometrical center of the capital of the Hunnic province. Two circumstances might disprove that. The direction of the double walls of site II proves that there was a built-up area 500 m away from the palace but does not make it unlikely that the western outer boundary of the settlement did not lie further away (Figure 21). Had the palace been in the center of the square plan (which was generally common for Hunnic cities, see chapter 2 above) the western boundary of the town moved further along this axis at a corresponding distance would have reached one of the channels of the Abakan River. The clay south-eastern outer wall of the city excavated in 1987 was much closer to the palace. Thus, it is highly likely that the palace was situated in the western part of the center of the capital.

We should note that the regular lay-out of the central square was already common in Chinese cities at the time of history under study but even there it was not yet consistently symmetrical¹⁰. In the Chang'an of the Hans imperial palaces were located in various parts of the city, the administrative buildings of

8 Glukhareva, 1970: 424, 434, 435.

9 Cf. the specific features of city planning in the China of the third – sixteenth centuries A.D.: Dubovskiy, 1971: fig. 52.

10 The rectangular form of the cities with its sides facing the cardinal points became common in China by the end of the eighth century B.C. (Vasil'ev, 1998: 89). According to a source from the the third century B.C. the city of Luoyi the capital of the Zhao Dynasty (770-256 B.C.) was square in form (each side of 9 li, about 2.25 km – 1.4 miles) with three gates in each wall with 9 latitudinal and 9 meridional streets (as wide as 9 war chariot axes, 23 meters). The ruler's palace was in the center of the city (Glukhareva, 1970: 422, 435). Before and during the period of the Tasheba palace the regular rectangular Hippodamus' plan of the city lay-out in quarters was typical of the Greek buildings as well as of the Hellenistic cities of Western Asia (Voronina, 1971a: 315, 318, fig. 29; 1971b: 366; Pugachenkova, 1971: 352, 353).

local centers more often than not shared one of their walls with the city walls, the southern and northern gates were not necessarily built along one axis and, consequently, were not joined by a direct main street. Even though the direction of the central street from south to north is a feature of the city of Handang the capital of Zhao empire (as early as the fifth-third centuries B.C.)¹¹ sinologists record the beginnings of the central meridional axis with the construction of the palace in the center in the planning of the city of Ye, the capital of the Wei empire (the fourth century). For a long time the key feature of the Chinese city plan was a street running through its center from west to east and determining the location of the facade wall of the forbidden part¹².

It seems that it is not by accident that the southern side of the Hunnic town faced the Abakan River. It is interesting to correlate the orientation of both the Tasheba settlement and its palace with the system of feng shui ("wind-water") that gained popularity during the Han times and which dictated that there should be a river in front of a house, a city, or a burial place and a mountain behind it. However, there are no mountains in this Khakassian valley and the town sits between two rivers. As for taking into account the direction of the winds which was also required by the teaching we see some initial neglect of it which is obvious from the fact that the exhaust stack of the heating system of the palace was later on removed from the western end wall to the northern side (Figure 24). Judging by the Tasheba city we might conclude that the feng shui system did not take root in the Hunnic society. The same is proved by the fact that the Ivolga Hunnic settlement in the Trans-Baikal region was located to the west, not to the north of the Selenga River¹³.

The exact correlation of the streets in the Tasheba city with the cardinal point was proved during the excavations of 1987 when some remains of a latitudinal street were unearthed in excavation site III (Figure 22). When we study the general city lay-out from the first century B.C. we should note that the streets that ran from west to east were typical of the Ivolga site from the second and first centuries B.C. as well. Inside this fortress the dwellings had entrances looking to the south. The main entrance to the city was also in the south and had no less than two gates, while there was just one gate in the north (Figure 16). The regular type of city lay-out in quarters found in the Ivolga Hunnic settlement is also very meaningful. Allotments around the mansions were marked by ditches along the streets, which makes it possible now to trace the planning of the excavated part of the site. Judging by the uncovered area the mansions and quarters there had a square form (with the sides of 34-36 m) which was different from the rectangular Chinese city quarters (li) from

11 Glukhareva, 1970: 423.

12 Glukhareva, 1971a: fig. 1; Dubovskiy, 1971: fig. 52.1-52.2; Kryukov, Perelomov, Sofronov, Cheboksarov, 1983: 168-170; Kryukov, Malyavin, Sofronov, 1979: 116-120, fig. 2, 14, 15.

13 Cf. the location of the capitals in the Qin Empire to the north and of the Western to the south of the Weihe (Glukhareva, 1970: 425, 430, fig. 4).

the same period that stretched from south to north¹⁴. Based on the published lay-out of the Wujizhen site (the Hebei province) the size of a quarter of a small Han town was about 20 x 9 m¹⁵. In the contemporary China the dimensions of the rectangular mansions constituting city quarters could have been 23-25 x 25-27 and 15 x 50-60 m, with the depth of up to 60-80 meters in southern regions. The latitudinal residential quarters were 60-50 m apart and not more than 4 m wide¹⁶.

From the above mentioned comparison we see that by the time of the Tasheba town construction a regular lay-out of cities square in form and divided into quarters became a characteristic feature of the Hunnic city building tradition. Even if we see some traces of the Chinese city building tradition here the influence occurred long before the captured Chinese military commander Li Ling who initiated the construction of the Tasheba palace came to the banks of the Abakan.

The material evidence from the Ivolga site supports the current theory of site II with both the data referring to its general planning and to some particular parts of it. The twin ditches running alongside the streets of this Hunnic fortress make it possible to estimate their width. Taken at three locations (Figure 16) (at the western end of the southern street and at the end of the street running north from it) the width between parallel edges of the ditches along the street is just 2-2.3 m, while between the lengthwise axes it is 3-3.8 m.¹⁷ In the Han settlement in the vicinity of Wujizhen the streets perpendicular to the main one were 2.5 m¹⁸. It is obvious that these measurements are exactly the same as the width of the gap between the clay walls of site II on the Tasheba River (Figure 20.I).

The outer daub wall was discovered by the Khakass expedition of Moscow

14 This form of lay-out in quarters existed for a long time, it seems. It was also typical of the lay-out of the residential part of Luoyang in the fifth century (Glukhareva, 1971a: fig. 1). In the later periods the quarters sprawled latitudinally (Dubovskiy, 1971; Lazarev, 1971: fig. 64, 102.2). We have other examples from the classical Antiquity and the Hellenistic period (which would be interesting to compare with the sizes of Hunnic developments). In Miletus which was designed in the fifth century B.C. by Hippodamus, the proportions of quarters were 7:6 and 7:4 while in Priene (the fourth century B.C.) they were 3:4 (35.4 x 47.2 m) and in eastern Hellenistic cities they were 1:2 (Dura-Europos – 70.5 x 35.2 m; Antioch on the Orontes, Beroya, Damascus) (Savarenskaya, 1984: 67, 82, 86, fig. 69, 70, 87, 92).

15 Kryukov, Malyavin, Sofronov, 1979: fig. 2. In the Han capital of Chang'an the quarters (li) were much larger. Square quarters of relatively the same sizes were also typical of Chang'an of the sixth and seventh centuries (Glukhareva, 1971b: 349, 350, fig. 13). In Penjakent of the seventh and eighth centuries there were households of 740-2100 square meters (Raspopova, 1990: 171).

16 Lazarev, 1971: 426, 429, fig. 92, 95.

17 Davydova, 1985: fig. III.

18 Kryukov, Malyavin, Sofronov, 1979: fig. 2. The width of the streets in the early Medieval Yar-Khoto (Eastern Turkestan) was "5-6 arsheens narrower" (Litvinskiy, 2000: 141) that is did not exceed 3.5-4.3 m. Let us look at the width of the side streets of the ancient cities built according to the Hippodamus design: Miletus – about 3.5 m, Priene – 3-4.4 m, Dura-Europos – up to 8.45 m, Pergamum – about 10 m, Roman cities – 4 m according to the Roman sources of the the second century and in Pompeii – 3-4.4 m (Savarenskaya, 1984: 68, 82, 86, 88, 98, 122).

State University and Archaeology Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1987. The fragment of the wall runs directly from south-south-west to north-north-east. It is heavily eroded and smoothed down and only 584.56 m long (Figure 19.IV). The height of the foundation of the pakhsa wall over the contemporary ground level was only 0.31 m; it seems the defense lines were not completely built. The width of the wall was 3 m. It was flanked on both sides with smoothed down narrow ditches. The width of the northern ditch was 1-1.2 m and of the southern ditch 0.8-1.2 m. In total the obstacle zone was 3.7-4.4 m wide (Figure 20.2).

This wall separated the south-eastern side of the city from the channels of the Abakan River and performed a defense function at its time which was aided by a wooden stockade that might have run along its top. Here we need to think back to the city fortress which was built by shanyu Zhizhi in two years (38-36 B.C.) on the Talas River and had a "double wooden stockade" in front of its "earthen wall"¹⁹. It is impossible to find out the design of the other defense lines of the Tasheba city as well as its form and dimensions because of the new dams and village constructions.

The lay-out of the Tasheba city. The dwellings around the palace were not preserved because contrary to the Hunnic half-dugouts with their bed stoves (kangs) they were of a local type; they were above ground and made of wood. At excavation site III, started in 1987, there only remained some big cellar pits from each log cabin (Figure 22). A common occupational layer was found between the cellars and it featured fragments of clay vessels, bones of farm animals used as food: mostly pigs and sheep and occasionally cows and horses. The bones of the latter were used for handicrafts and phalanges were used in games.

Judging by the character of the findings in the pits, the analysis of the ceramics and its decorations researchers concluded that there were two occupational layers. The earlier log dwellings turned out to correspond in time to the Tasheba palace. The pottery items from the palace had all the characteristics of the transitional period of the Tagar-Tashtyk culture. The shapes of the discovered items, mostly stone arrowheads, prove the same.

From the excavations and shafting we see that the south-eastern quarters of the city occupied a territory of about 3 ha (30 000 square meters) (210 x 140 m) (Figure 19). It is possible that the constructions there were of the same type that was depicted in the paintings of the Boyary ridge, on the left bank of the Yenisei River (Figure 23). Both the Malaya and the Bolshaya Boyarskaya paintings belong to the same transitional period of the Tagar-Tashtyk culture (the second and third centuries B.C.)²⁰ as the settlement under study.

The newly discovered fact that the wooden city was built according to a common plan with the residence of the province ruler is of great significance. The residential dwellings sprawled along the west to east line and ran parallel to the frontal

19 Taskin, 1973: 129.

20 Devlet, 1976: 9; Kyzlasov L.R., 1992d: 19, fig. 13; Kyzlasov I.L., 2005a: 25, 26, 42-47.

(southern) wall of the palace. It is clear that this kind of design for the wooden city could only be done by some builder who either copied the building of the palace previously constructed 100 m north or, which seems most likely, carried out a standard plan of design from the very start under which the ruler's residence and the residential quarter existed together. This way or that, in the construction of the wooden city the builders intentionally left a free area of the city square in front of the palace. Based on the regular lay-out of the excavated part of the city we can assume that the city consisted of rectangular quarters separated by parallel streets and perpendicular side streets.

In the excavation site of 1987 axes of two rows of dwellings could be traced (Figure 22). They were 20 meters apart. We should note that in the above cited example of the Ivolga site (Figure 16) the dwellings separated by the street are also 12 or 18 meters apart (№ 21, 22 – 19, 20; 41 – 42; 30 – 34, etc.) and the sizes of the two excavated square mansions bounded by street ditches are close to 34-36 x 34-36 m (№ 76 – 205, 149 – 175, 256; 16 – 364, 76 – 398)²¹. For sure the Selenga and the Tasheba sites do not provide enough evidence for the identification of city building standards common for the Huns but having significant similarities in this respect (the same width of their streets) they make it possible to suppose that the quarter mansions separated by streets were about 40 meters in size. Having worked out a provisional module for the city development we can estimate that the corner of the double wall of site II (hypothetically, the crossroads of the walled city quarters) was located at a distance of 10 such units from the palace.

Of course we cannot insist that our supposition concerning the sizes of the quarter mansions is absolutely true, but it can serve as a starting point for future investigations of the city planning of the Tasheba center and other similar archaeological sites.

But still the measurements of the total sizes of the city area at the Tasheba revealed that the archaeological elements were spread from west (site II) to east (excavation site III) over the distance of 665 m. The fragment of wall 4 opposing site II was 882 m away. The southern end of the same outer wall and the northern facade of the palace were about 400 meters apart (350 meters from the entrance). If we superimposed this wall on the meridional city axis we would get a 500 meter line which would extend 105 m beyond the northern wall of the palace. Thus, if we assume that the initial form of the city of the Hunnic ruler was a regular square or rectangle (which is suggested by the discovered regular planning (Figure 21) and a corresponding lay-out of the discovered Hunnic and Chinese cities from the same period) the sides of this formation should have been no smaller than 600 and no bigger than 800 meters.

We do not mean that all of this estimated area of the Tasheba city was actually populated. We have discovered that none of the excavated walls

21 Davydova, 1985: fig. III.

was fully built. Proceeding from the assumption that the pre-planned cities of ancient China grew from the periphery of the walled territory towards the center²² we might suppose that the Hunnic city under study was settled in a similar manner. It is highly likely that within the span of history it was meant to exist it had never been completely built up.

Besides, all the estimations only look good on paper. The specific features of the local landscape would have made it impossible to build such a large square of the city around the palace; its south-eastern corner would have stretched beyond one of the channels of the Abakan River. The direction of the south-eastern outer wall of the settlement also contradicts the speculative design. However, these snags might have led to the rejection of any further reconstruction of the city lay-out and they help to reveal a parallel with the Han sites of the same period that might have not been accidental. Thus, the general lay-out of Chang'an which served as the capital of the dynasty from 202 B.C. to 8 A.D. is broadly similar to the discovered design of the Tasheba town including the slant of the city wall in Chang'an in the south-east²³. It might not be a mere coincidence that the relief and the landscape of the chosen site and the estimated general design of the headquarters of the Hunnic rulers are compatible with the specific features of the Chinese imperial capital so familiar to the former Han nobleman Li Ling who commissioned the Tasheba palace and the town itself.

Still we should assume that the Tasheba city had a regular lay-out for all its parts but was not square in form and the palace was not located in its center. The archaeologists only discovered construction reflecting the cardinal points to the south-east of the palace and presumably to the west of it. The residential development of the present day village of Chapayevo located around the former palace buried the major part of the ancient city. The inhabitants of the village commonly find fragments of ancient pottery, slag, animal bones and coals in their vegetable gardens. Now it is impossible to get a comprehensive picture of the lay-out of the Hunnic city and the spread of its population.

We need to discuss and highlight another specific feature of the city development identified in the course of the 1987 excavations. At the small area we uncovered there were no traces of either the characteristic Hunnic dwellings or of any fragments of material culture of the Huns of Central Asia themselves. Thus, it is obvious that in the middle of the first century B.C. the south-eastern part of the town was settled by the indigenous people of Southern Siberia whose archaeological artifacts totally fit in with the characteristics of the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period.

22 Ashchepkov, 1959: 72.

23 It is believed that the walls were constructed in 195-188 B.C. (Glukhareva, 1970: 430, fig. 4).

This part of the site also had a more recent layer²⁴. It was left by a settlement from the early Tashtyk period which also consisted of wooden log cabins. It is important to note that as far as we can judge by the excavated part, the development continued to follow the city planning started during the Hunnic period. It is likely that this settlement started after the destruction of the palace as early as the second half of the first century B.C. It is proved by the fact that in the upper layer around the remains of the houses there were found fragments of tiles from the palace (including fragments of potter's wheels with remains of some hieroglyphic inscriptions). The tiles must have been brought by the people of the Tashtyk culture from the already deserted ruins of the palace. This fact as well as the stratification of the Tasheba settlement serves as important evidence of the palace being lived-in only during the pre-Tashtyk period.

It is obvious that during the Tashtyk period the wooden town was inhabited by the people who had already got free of the Huns and who continued the local tradition of building and settlement. These people still looked at it as a memorial site which is proved by the graves for multiple burials in the palatial hill from the same period of history²⁵. The administrative center of the country might have been moved elsewhere by that time. Thus, 5-6 km (3.11-3.73 miles) below the Tasheba city on the left bank of the Abakan River there were found traces of an other settlement from the early Tashtyk period that is now inside the city of Abakan in Kanskaya street. There were remains of burnt down log houses with exceptionally rich raised décor of the interior chambers. This might have been the new capital²⁶.

3.2. Palace

The Russian archaeological stock does not include many sites of monumental architecture going back to ancient history. Among those the ruins of the ancient palaces excavated far beyond the areas of earlier seaside civilizations in the continental Asian part of the country are of the greatest significance. In June 1940 during the construction of the Abakan – Askiz motorway the south-eastern corner of an earthen hill was cut up. In the earthen bank were found fragments of clay roof tiles that looked unusual and were finely made. This is how a ruined Hunnic palace was discovered. The excavations were started by V.P. Levashova.

24 Kyzlasovy I.L. and L.R., 1987. The stratigraphy of the settlement was duly reflected in the preliminary report (Kyzlasov I.L., 1989b) and it was only developed after the cameralistic analysis of the finds.

25 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 19-32.

26 Ibid.: 154-158.



Figure 25. Palace walls, regular horizontal layers of clay they were made of;
view from the east



Figure 26. Room E (with pit) and room B (with stone slab) beyond the passage;
view from the east-south-east

Based on the results of the first short-term expedition she was able to accurately date the unusual construction and to establish its links with the history of the local Central Asian and Far Eastern cultures and also correlate it with the known political events of the first century B.C. All the later research was more or less concerned with the detailization, expanding and specifying the propositions she put forward in her brief newspaper publication, the field report and an explanatory note to it.

The building was rectangular with its sides facing the cardinal points (Figure 24). It was obviously erected by skilled architects and master builders according to a predesigned plan or an architectural scale model. The main building material was clay; it was used in making the roof tiles and decorative facade tiles as well as for building the walls and the floor of the palace. The supporting piles, rafters and tie beams, ceilings, ledges and doors of the gates and the palace rooms were made of wood. Stone was used to support inner piles and to make the heating ducts in the palace and quite likely the open fires which looked like huge slabs in rooms E and B.

The walls rose from a leveled platform which did not have any previous occupational layers. Two building techniques might have been used in the construction of the walls. When the side surfaces were scraped inside the cuts through the inner and outer walls of the buildings it was discovered that the clay they were made of was placed in regular horizontal layers of 4 to 6 cm thick. Each layer of clay was of different color and composition (Figures 25, 26). The layers were being made close to the walls and then placed so that the wall thickness increased by one solid layer (*pakhsa*) (Figures 25, 26). The ideally vertical side surfaces suggest that the clay layers were put on top of one another using a plumb²⁷. The walls of the inner quadrangle of the central room were cast in grey clay containing cement with mixed up gruss and stone (similar to clay-cement) without any interlayer. Obviously, they were built in a wooden frame at one go. Not before that, it seems, were other chambers of the building started. The walls of the construction were very strong and they proved very difficult to dismantle with the help of a hack and a crowbar.

The height and the thickness of the walls varied. The tallest ones of up to 1.5 m and the thickest ones of up to 2 m formed the central part of the construction (with the area of 132 square meters). In the eastern part of the building the walls were cut to the level of 0.4 m. In the north they were 1.05 m high and 1.5-1.7 thick. The western and the adjacent part of the southern wall were in the worst state of preservation. Practically nothing remained from the north-western outer corner of the construction; it could only be traced by the marks of clay on the ground. The common thickness of the inside walls of the construction was 1.4 meters. No window openings were found. Presumably they used to be located along the facades at a height which was above the preserved fragments of the walls. This view is supported by numerous leftovers

27 The techniques of *pakhsa* work are described by specialists on the architecture of Middle Asia (Voronina, 1949: 103-109; 1953: 118).

of food found beyond the outer northern wall; they might have been thrown into the back yard out of the windows of the northern enfilade of rooms.

The materials and construction techniques found at the Tasheba palace are important for its accurate cultural and historic identification. From the very start of the excavations the predominant view in research papers was that its architectural features and construction techniques were of Chinese origin. It was even believed that the palace was built by the Han masters. However, we know that beginning from the Bronze Age (the Yin time) constructions in China were built on a stylobate, "a raised clay platform became a key feature of a dwelling". As for the walls the Han masters did not use daub for their construction they used rammed earth²⁸. Both these critically important features disprove the idea of the Tasheba palace being of Chinese architecture. Consequently, the palace walls were built by western masters because they were placed right on the ground and made from pakhsa as was an ancient tradition in Middle Asia. As it was observed in the sites of ancient Khorezm the use of daub layered masonry was not typical of the early Iron Age and pakhsa became common in the last centuries B.C. and in the first centuries A.D.²⁹

While in European constructions the roof rested on the walls and supports, in China the ceiling was supported by a frame-pile construction with a wooden cornice (dougong). The roof of the Tasheba palace is devoid of such a cornice that is it could not have been "flying" (as a ceiling with raised edges is called), because the rafting and the tie beams of the roof rested mostly on its pakhsa walls. This peculiarity which escaped the attention of the researchers³⁰ is structurally very different from the pile system of the Han constructions. Consequently, this feature of design also indicates the fact that the building was not constructed by followers of the Far Eastern tradition.

The wooden support piles were sometimes placed along the walls or in the room corners (Figures 27, 32). Their function was to support the beams of the wooden ceilings and to serve as door cases. To make sure that the lower ends of the piles (which were covered in birch bark to prevent rotting) did not sag they were placed in holes of 0.2-0.8 m deep whose bottom was lined with stone tiles (sizes from 16 x 14 up to 40 x 30 cm). The piles were 25-62 cm in diameter. The technique of putting stone tiles under the piles was considered an ancient Chinese tradition by researchers but this method was also known as a local feature of constructing buildings in Southern Siberia, especially common for the late Tagar dwellings³¹, major barrows of the transitional period and later on for the central piles in the Tashtyk vaults³².

28 Ashchepkov, 1959; Kryukov, Sofronov, Cheboksarov, 1978: 259, 260.

29 Voronina, 1952: 89, 92.

30 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946: 74.

31 Absalyamov, 1977: 39.

32 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 11, 12 (note 1), 20, 22, 26. Cf.: Ashchepkov, 1959: 34.

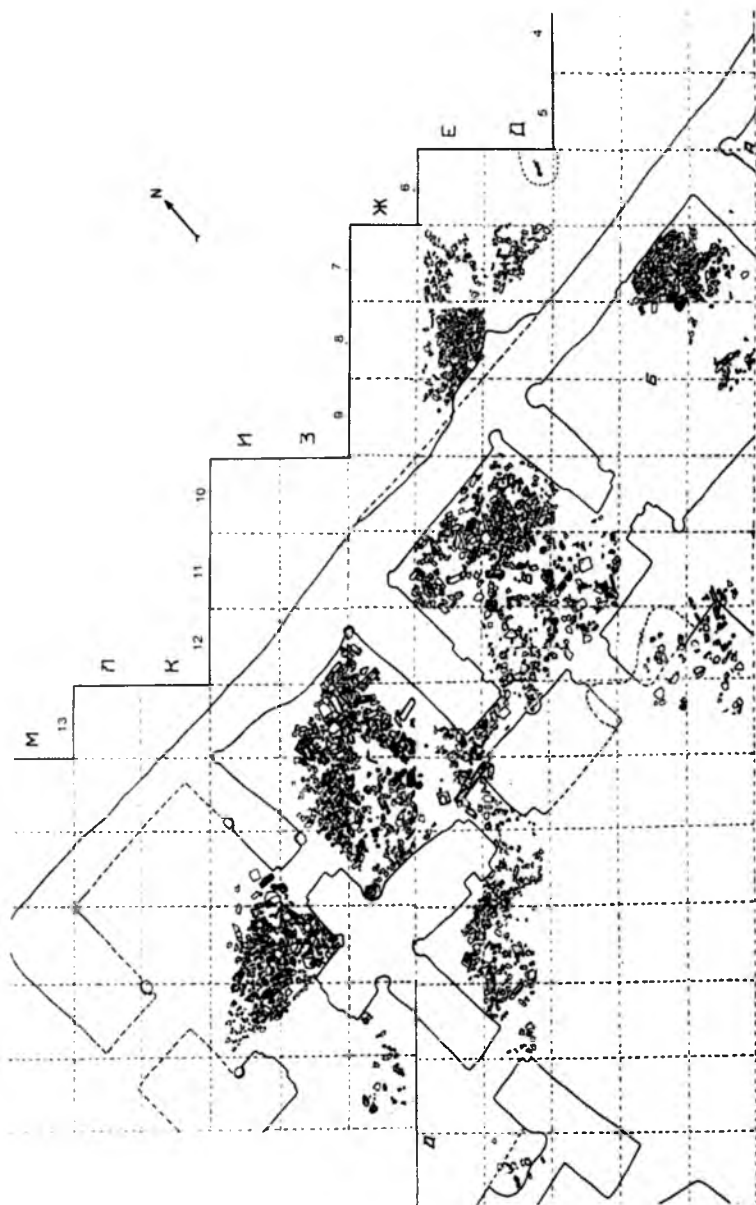


Figure 27. Example of the tile fragments location (in the central chamber corner, northern rooms and beyond the outer walls of the palace)

It is clear that such features of the design as the location and the method of wall building and roof fastening prove that the Tasheba palace was built neither by the Chinese nor the Huns but by some newcomer masters from Middle Asia (who might have commissioned some local builders as well). It is not unlikely that they were recruited from the prisoners captured by the Huns in their western campaigns against the Yuezhi (Kushans) in 211 – 168 B.C. and later.

The roof of the house was heavy and covered with tiles, which was typical of the entire South-Eastern Asia (China, Korea, the Russian Primorye, Japan, Vietnam and Burma). The excavations identified two zones of the tile fragments location (around the central chamber and beyond the outer walls of the palace – Figure 27), which prompted the idea that the roof was pyramidal and two-tiered. Proof was found in the illustrations of the ancient Chinese architecture from the Han period. Based on the findings it was possible to recreate the position of the tiles on the roof. However we should note that two-tiered roofs were typical not only of the Han architecture but also of the construction techniques of a much older Front Eastern building tradition and this can explain the confluence of various architectural traditions of Eastern and Western Asia in the design of the Tasheba palace. The same system is seen, for example, in the architectural scale model of the Sumerian city-state Mari existing till the eighteenth century B.C.³³ It is clear that the Sumerian dwellings had two roofs, a broad one around the first floor and a second (smaller one) just over the central room covering the narrow upper floor.

Initially the rafters of the Tasheba palace were joined together with the help of beams that had sufficient grillage. On it from bottom to top layer upon layer broad tiled trays were put raised side down with the top layer overlapping over the bottom layer. They were fixed with iron spikes (through the round holes made in the tiles before flaming). Two tray sizes were discovered (58 x 40 and 57 x 42 cm). This suggests that there were two teams to produce them. Non-solid trays of 60 x 40 x 2 cm were also found (Figure 28). Some long (62 x 18 cm) half-cylinder tiles covered the side joints of the broad trays raised side up (Figure 28). Every half cylinder had a narrow neck at one end which was covered by the next tile. This was how rainwater could easily run off a roof built in this way. The ridge of the roof was possibly covered by wider half cylinders (62 x 25 x 1 cm).

Every row of half cylinders at the edge of the roof terminated in a ceramic disc (19.3 cm in diameter). It covered the lower hole of the row and the end of the wooden beam under the roof (Figure 28). Such discs ran along the facade of the building every 60 cm (their estimated number was above 400) and created the impression of the finality and rhythm in the tiled roof highlighting the transition to the vertical planes of the finely pargeted daub walls. Every clay disc had hieroglyphic inscriptions made on it at moulding (Figure 28). There were several wooden stamps: the inscriptions were standard but some of stamps for the hieroglyphics were differently carved, we see two epigraphic types.

33 Parrot, 1956: 296, fig. VIII. Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: fig. 31-36.

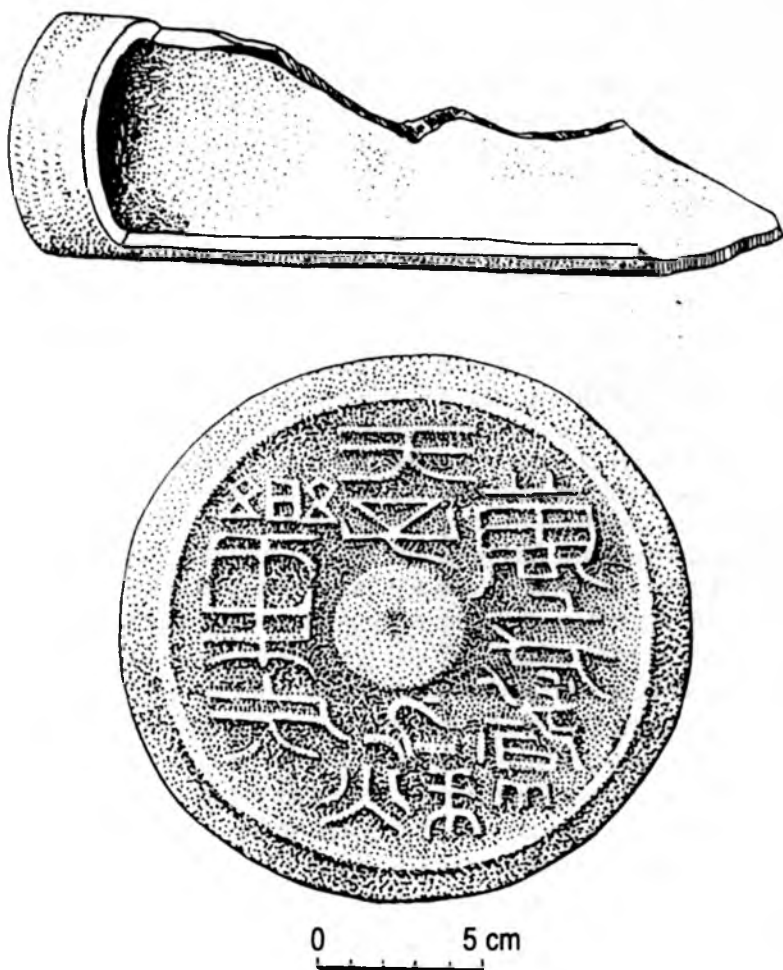


Figure 28. Half cylinder fragment and a ceramic disc with hieroglyphic inscriptions

The sizes of the symbols are also different. It means they were drawn and carved by different people who knew Chinese. The owner of the residence under construction might have also taken part in drawing these hieroglyphics.

Every disc had ten hieroglyphics carved on it. Academician V.M. Alekseev interpreted the phrase in 1940 as follows: Tian zi wan sui chang // Qian cu le wei yang – “to the Son of the heavens (i.e. Emperor) 10 000 years of peace and her who we offer our wishes to (i.e. Empress)

1 000 autumns of happiness without grief"³⁴. Judging by the manner the hieroglyphics were drawn the revered sinologist dated the inscription as made at the beginning of the Han period (the second and first centuries B.C.)³⁵. Later on M.V. Kryukov suggested another interpretation, "to the Son of the heavens 1000 autumns and 10 000 years of eternal happiness without grief". He dated it as "possibly done not earlier than 9 A.D. and not later than 23 A.D."³⁶. Further on we are going to discuss the inconsistency of this suggested dating with the historical situation.

The tiles for the multi-ton roof obviously took a long time to produce and were surely made on location. All the tiles were made from fine grey clay possibly with the addition of ferrous silt. The incurved wide trays might have been formed on special wooden matrixes. The narrow circular ones were made on the potter's wheel (which was commonly used by the Huns) constructed from coils of clay in the form of pipes. They were cut lengthwise and then flamed in furnaces. The raised side of the tiles before the flaming was roughened with the help of stamps and rubbing in order to prevent the sliding of the trays on top of one another. Besides, some patterns were often embossed or etched on the inner side.

Even though the roof tiles looked Chinese they were made by local, not foreign masters. This was proved by 27 marks left by their producers on the inner side of the tiles. They were etched on the wet clay (Figure 29). S.V. Kiselyev, who published the representations of four such marks, wrote, "The marks on the tiles that anticipated the Orkhon ones are of great interest."³⁷ The same was observed by other researchers of the Tasheba palace who noticed that the marks on the tiles were "possibly numerical... very closely resembled the letters of the Orkhon alphabet... The presence of the similar marks on the tiles is another important argument in favor of the incorporation into the Orkhon alphabet the symbols that were used on the Yenisei in the earlier times, close to the beginning of the Common Era"³⁸, "it is likely that these symbols were partly used to form the Orkhon-Yenisei alphabet"³⁹. In our view these researchers were mistaken when they correlated the symbols with the runic alphabet later used in Central Asia. However, the local character of the marks on the tiles is undisputable. Thus, one of them (which looks like a slightly bent hook) comes up three times, possibly, as a decorative element on a fragment of a vessel discovered

34 Karal'kin, 1941; Evtyukhova, 1946: 109, fig. 3; 1947: 83; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a; 1946b; Kiselyov, 1951: 479.

35 Alekseev V.M., 1958: 21, 22; cf.: AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 5.

36 Vainshtein, Kryukov, 1976: 145, 146.

37 Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLV.1, XLV.2, XLV.4, XLV.5; 1951: 480, tabl. XLV.1, XLV.2, XLV.4, XLV.5.

38 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 76, 77.

39 Evtyukhova, 1946: 109.

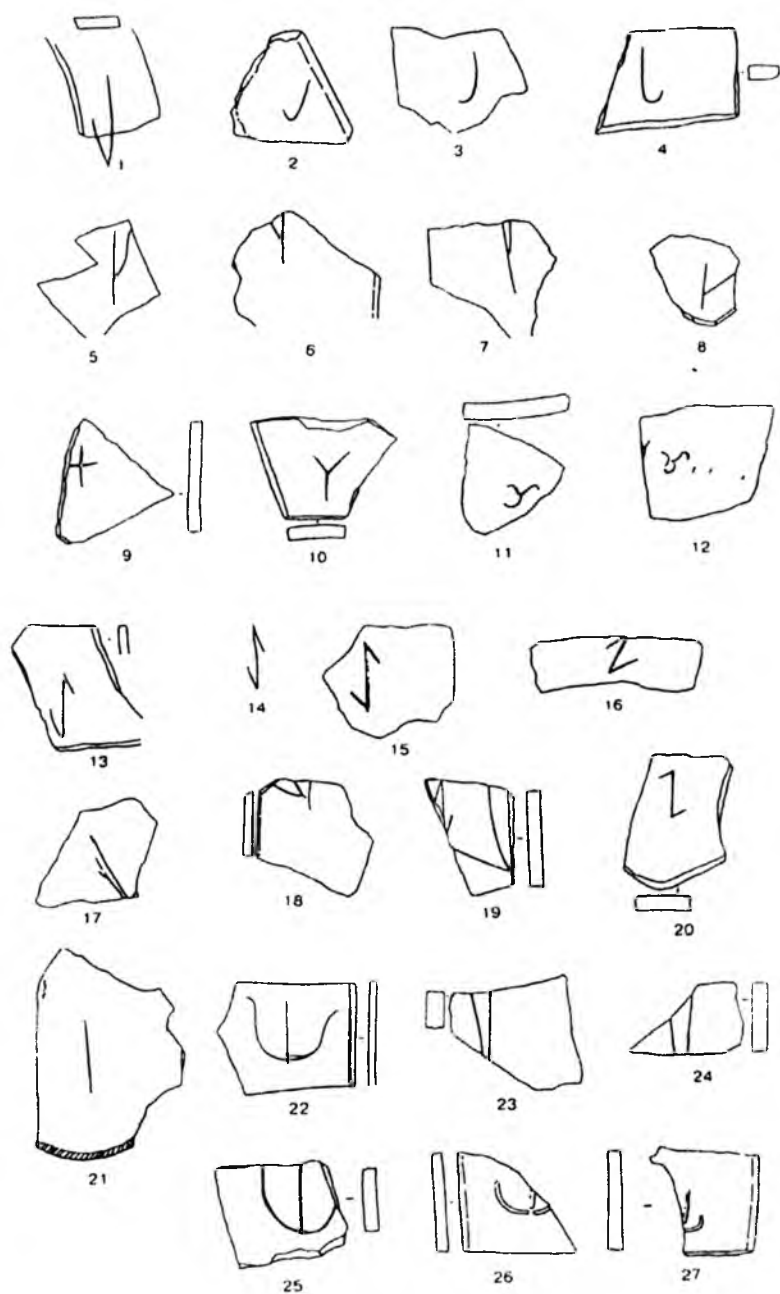


Figure 29. Marks left by local masters on the inner side of the tiles

in the funereal pit at a graveyard from the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period close to the village of Kaly⁴⁰. The marks on the tiles bear the greatest resemblance to the Tashtyk symbols discovered on sheep shoulder-blades and astragals found in the vaults⁴¹. The position and function of such symbols remains a mystery. The fact that they were located on the tiles of the palace going back to the first half of the first century B.C. as well as on the artifacts from the second and third centuries proves that an established system of symbols existed along the middle course of the Yenisei for a long time. However, we can side with the epigraphist-runologist who writes that “the etchings on the dice (alchiki) of the Tashtyk culture of the first century B.C. – fifth century A.D. or the symbols marked on the still wet Hunnic tiles from the first century B.C. have nothing to do with written alphabet either”⁴².

The above said does not mean we do not need to study this system of symbols. Even earlier during the Tagar period there were also certain systems of putting symbolic marks by master craftsmen on items of material culture. Those on bronze tools were different from those on the Tasheba tiles. Some researchers and especially Yu.S. Grishin, who studied the technology of the Tagar tools production, believe that the marks served a decorative function⁴³. It is recorded that a Tagar vessel was found that had four etched symbols close to the bottom⁴⁴. It is obvious that it was not the Dingling (Tagar people) who made the palace tiles.

Within the boundaries of the early Iron Age the symbols on the tiles bear the most similarity and sometimes totally coincide with the identical system of symbols in the Pazyryk culture of Gorno-Altai⁴⁵. At an even earlier time on the vessels from the Eneolithic period and the Bronze Age similar symbols were common in various countries of the Old World. They were found on the early Chinese ceramics beginning from the Neolithic period. But there too they “are not hieroglyphics and have no connection with them. The earliest ones are pictograms not ideograms”⁴⁶.

Among other construction details we should single out the terracotta decorative slabs that, judging by the location of their excavation, might have framed the door and window casings as well as the frieze of the building (Figure 30). Some conclusive correlations of this style of decoration were found in the Han architecture⁴⁷. The wall tiles of the palace were either rectangular or square

40 Kuz'min, 1988: fig. 17.12.

41 Evtukhova, 1946: 109, note 1; Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: fig. 53.4, 53.7, 53.9; 1996: fig. 2.

42 Kyzlasov I.L., 1998a: 73.

43 Grishin, 1960: 178, 179, map III.

44 Bokovenko. Kuzmin i dr., 1988: 221

45 Poltoratskaya, 1962a; 1962b.

46 Gao Min, 1989: 299-333.

47 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946: 80; Evtukhova, 1947: 83; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLV.9, XLV.12, XLVI.4, XLVI.6; 1951: 480, tabl. XLV.9, XLV.12, XLVI.4, XLVI.6.

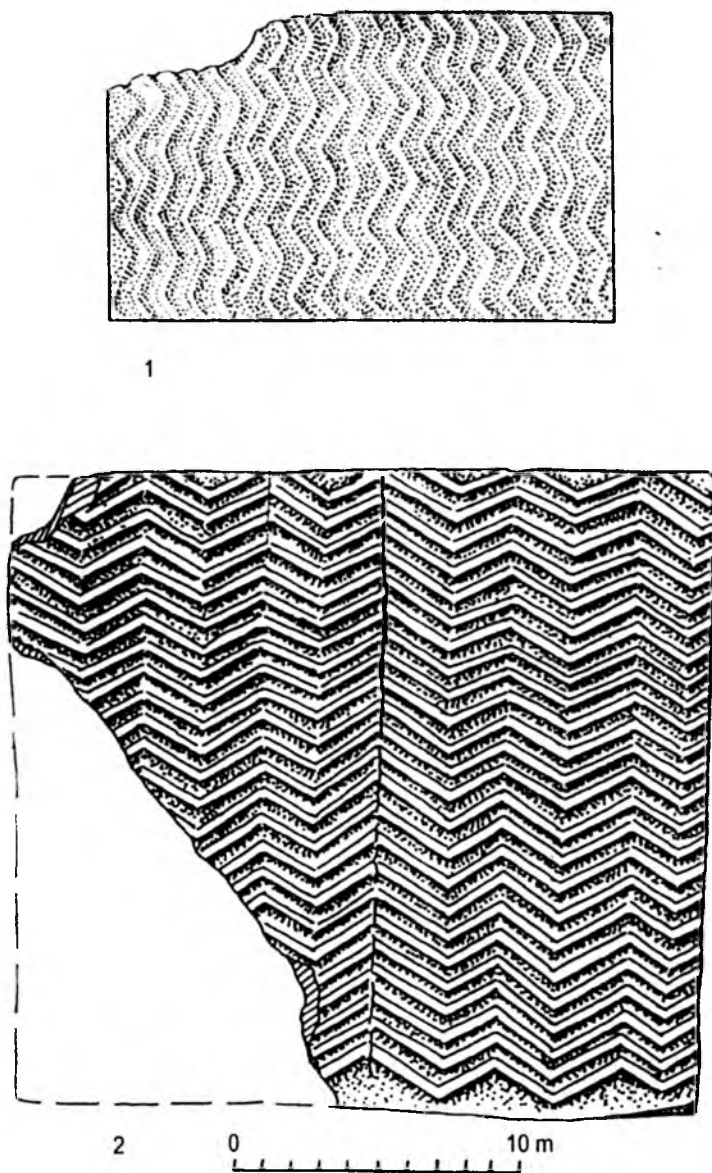


Figure 30. Patterns of the terracotta decorative slabs that might have framed the doors.
Objects are housed in the museum of Krasnoyarsk (1 - without scale)

in form (24 x 24 x 2 cm), had the same deep herring-bone pattern and were made using two matrixes (24 x 12 cm each). It is interesting to note that these tiles were used to decorate both the interior and the exterior of the palace⁴⁸.

The tiled roof, the form of the tiles and hieroglyphic symbols on the facade discs, the Han parallels with the decorative terracotta tiles all convinced the researchers that the excavated building was of Chinese origin and the time of its construction, based on other findings as well, was identified as the era of the "Han dynasty that is the Tashtyk period"⁴⁹. Now we need to clarify both these conclusions.

It is evident that with the identification of the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period in the history of the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow⁵⁰ the identity of the local artifacts should also be classified as belonging to an earlier pre-Tashtyk time which is also proved by the stratification of the site. It is also confirmed that the technology of the Tasheba palace construction cannot be defined as Chinese. We know that in the Han architectural tradition the ornamental tiles were only used in the decoration of the facade but not in the interior chambers as was the case in the central room of the palace. Still bearing in mind all these specific features of the palace we need to look at other peculiarities of this unique archaeological site.

The heating system of the Tasheba palace proved to be the most unexpected discovery. It was very well traced but only briefly described by the excavation team. It is marked on the drawings and the general plan of the palace. However, this crucial, highly efficient feature of the construction whose appearance in Siberia is still unexplained deserves our close attention. Beginning with the field expeditions of 1941 and later in the field reports and consequent publications researchers have referred to it as kang and believed it to be purely Chinese. But contrary to this opinion such kind of heating system was unknown in either ancient China or to the Huns of Central Asia⁵¹. The Far Eastern kang was an above floor heating system not an under floor one as is the case in the palace.

Under the floor of the building at a depth of 30-35 to 60 cm channels-smoke ducts were built. They were mostly rectangular in cross section (50-60 cm wide) and tightly sealed, lined on both sides and at the top by perfectly fitting stone tiles (Figure 31). The side tiles were chosen and fixed so that their top edge was even. In the southern part of the palace the walls of the channels widened towards the outside. Here the height of the heat vents was close to 30-35 cm. The 20-25 cm thick daub floor covered these channels but in some places the covering slabs were leveled with the surface. In the journal from 1941 it is recorded that in the sunken parts of the channels there were often found fragments of roof tiles (30 items in total) which fell there as the building collapsed⁵².

48 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1947: 80.

49 Kiselyev, 1949: 270; 1951: 482.

50 Kyzlasov L.R., 1953a; 1960b.

51 Kyzlasov L.R., 1992c: 47-49.

52 AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 50.



Figure 31. Channel-smoke duct under the floor of the palace. Channel was tightly sealed, lined on both sides and at the top by perfectly fitting stone tiles (photo, 1945)

CITY AND PALACE OF THE HUNNIC RULER

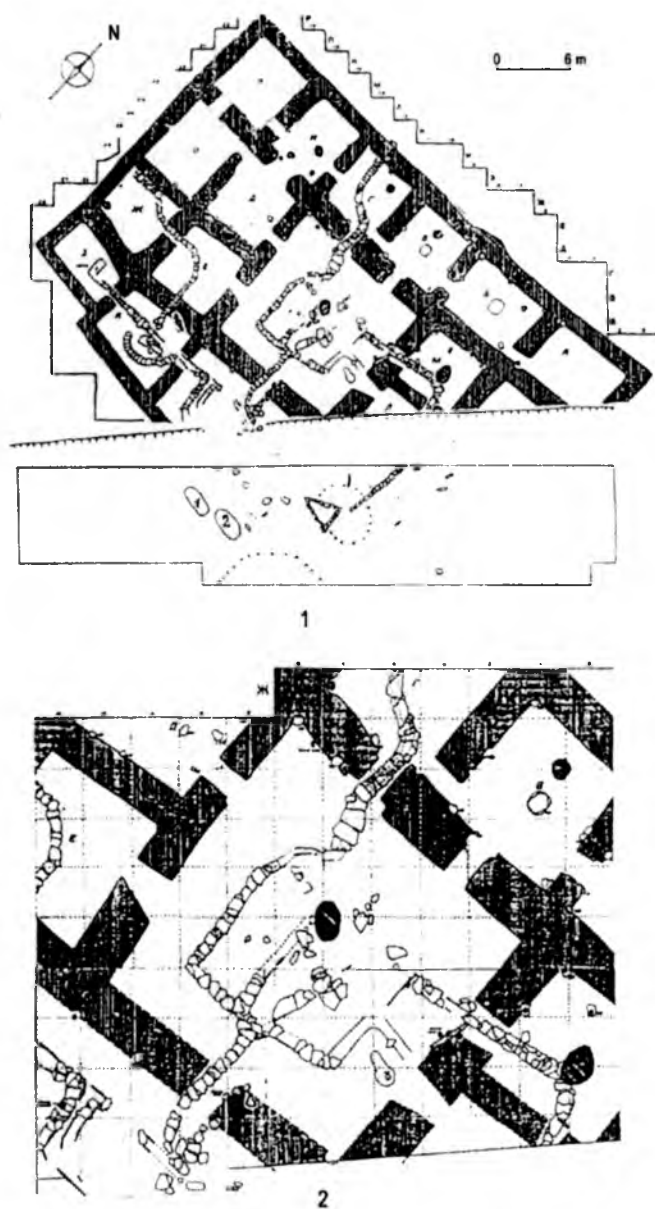


Figure 32. 1 – Combinatorial excavation plan of the palace (1940-1946). By V.P. Levasheva's and L.A. Evtyukhova's drawings; 2 – Plan of the central chamber, showing traces of the redesigning of the heating system

It is obvious that the heating system was built in after the walls of the palace had been put up⁵³. It was not accidental that the channels ran under the door casings. If we follow this regularity these channels can now point to the location of the passages that were not discovered during the excavations (from room K to room E, Figures 24, 32) or to the existence of doors where the building walls were not at all traced (at excavation site I). Thus, a heat channel was unearthed to the south of the current motorway which on the drawing made up an isosceles triangle with the sides of 3.6 m and the base of 3 m facing west-south-west (Figure 32.1). It could have been a stove from the eastern branch of the heating system. There was a well-preserved direct sleeve running north of it as long as 4-5 meters. Considering the position of the building we may assume that there used to be a door connecting the southern room C (under reconstruction) with room JI (Figure 31.1). Both these assumptions support each other; the enhanced heating occurred in two symmetrically located chambers of the southern enfilade of the palace (rooms C and K). Another channel sleeve in a much worse state of preservation ran from the triangular shape in the direction of the entrance hall. The form of the heat channel in the western room Ж where it followed the inner line of the wall (Figure 24) was also important for the understanding of the sequence of the wall construction and the installation of the heating ducts.

The heating system was overhauled twice. Initially a short southern branch was constructed under the floor of the entrance hall which possibly had a stove and ran into the western room K which was well heated by a circular system. Then, the channel went north into room E (under the door casing) into the western room Ж where this branch extended under the outer western wall. Thus, the initial position of the exhaust stack was outside the palace by its western wall. This was a planning mistake because the winds being predominantly western the smoke from the chimney even though it was tall went into the end side of the palace and wrapped around it which made for poor draught because the poor hot air and smoke blocked the heat channels. Somehow at that stage of the palace development the central chamber was also heated from under the floor; the channel remains that crossed the room in the meridional direction and possibly led to the entrance hall and the room JI which was identified during the excavations (Figures 24, 32). There was more evidence of the reconstruction of the heating system in the main building of the palace, namely a broken part of the channel which used to lead north from the center (section 15-B) and a pit for the supporting slab of a new pile. Another trace of the reconstruction or repair of the heating system could have been a reach-through rectangular hole (62 x 62 cm) made right under the floor in the western side of the entrance hall (in section 19-X) and refilled with clay later.

53 Evtyukhova, 1947: 81.

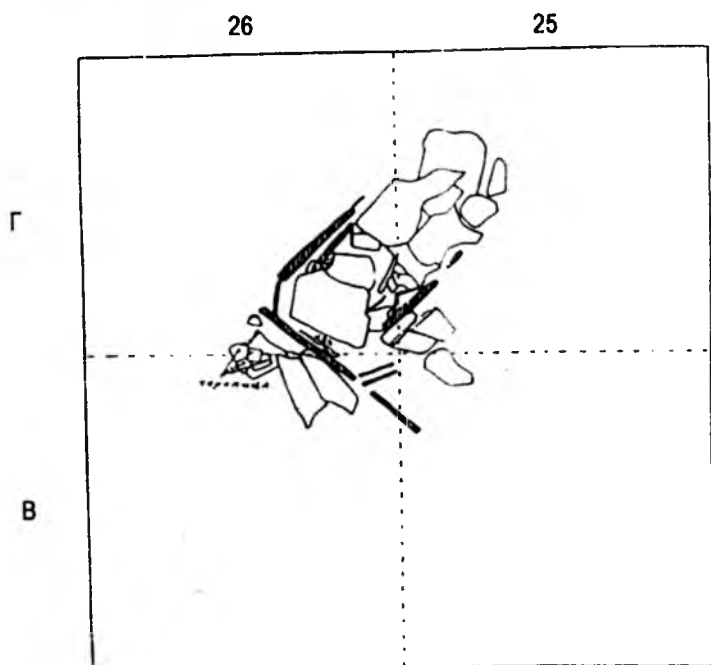
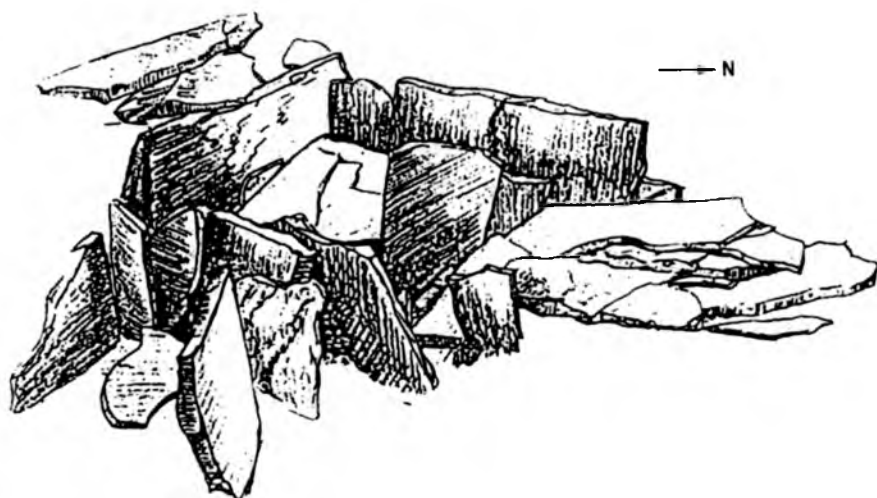


Figure 33. A rectangular stove made of slabs of sandstone; room 3. View from the north-east; drawing and plan by L. A. Evtyukhova

It seems some faulty position of a pipe and only a partial heating of the palace in severe Siberian winters forced the constructors to overhaul the initial heating system of the Tasheba palace. Instead of the localized southern branch was built an efficient centralized complex system. Across the south-western room 3 in a pit below the floor level a rectangular stove was constructed. Its side walls were made of vertically embedded slabs of sandstone (median sizes of 50 x 70 and 50 x 60 cm – Figure 33). In the middle in the southern part of the stove an additional slab was buried to support the cover. The stove had no northern wall. There a sliding slope led to the fire chamber starting from the floor of the room and reaching the level of the stove's bottom. Its inner walls bear traces from extreme heat of constant strong fire. As the stove was relatively small (2.8 x 1.6 m) it became clear at the time of the excavation "that however hot this stove was its heat was not enough to warm such a grand building... It is highly likely that the palace contained several of such stoves located in the southern part of the house"⁵⁴. Indeed we observed that the heating channels led from the southern rooms. In 1940 the same was proved for the south-eastern part of the building.

From the south-eastern corner of the above mentioned stove in room 3 a heat channel led to the east into the entrance hall and ran directly under the doors of room 3 and the adjacent room K via the remains of the former heating line (Figure 24). It served for the delivery of hot air into the frontal southern part of the building. The carefully planned heating of the entrance hall (where the new heating channel ran along the old one) as well as the adjacent rooms suggests that the palace was inhabited. This part of the building was possibly used as rooms for the guards.

The channel formed a half circle around the center of the entrance hall and subdivided into two. One channel led into the central chamber and the other ran into the eastern room C (destroyed during the motorway construction) and at some point before it reached the south-eastern room T (lost before the start of the excavations) it turned north and through the rooms JI and M entered the central chamber inside which the channels formed a gapped square. Another interpretation of the branching out of the channels found in the remaining parts in the entrance hall seems more likely. It is clear that the stove that was placed in the entrance hall at the first stage of the construction was operative after the reconstruction as well. We believe that it was this stove that sent heat to rooms C, JI, M and the central chamber sequentially. This supposition would explain the existence of another stove in room 3; it helped to increase the delivery of heat the adequate amount of which could not have been provided previously by the single stove in the entrance hall. From the north-western corner of the central chamber the final stretch of the heating system led into the northern room Г and extending beyond the outer wall stuck out just 50 cm. Here the channel possibly terminated into a tall (not less than 10 m) exhaust

54 AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 170 back.

stack. It was most likely made of wood. The tree trunk was cut lengthwise and the halves were hollowed using controlled fires and joined into a single pipe with iron braces⁵⁵.

It is hard to date the construction of the stretch of the heating system that was traced in the cut-off south-eastern part of the palace by V.P. Levashova in 1940. It is complicated by the fact that the channels of both heating systems went through room JI. The southern enfilade of the palace might have had a regular layout: room K, better heated by the bend of the channels, adjoined the left side of the entrance hall, while the reconstructed room C with an identical bend bordered on the hall's right side. If that system had not been part of a unified plan we would have to admit that the heated rooms on the sides of the entrance hall were successively built at different stages of the life time of the palace and room C was used later than room K to perform the same functions.

Thus, the entrance hall, one of the adjacent rooms and the central chamber turned out to be the best heated rooms of the palace. Despite the redesigning and numerous repairs of the heat channels (the floor of the channel in quadrangle X-21 of the entrance hall was repaired with tiles) about a fourth of the rooms had no traces of under-floor heating (A, Б, В, Д, И, Н, О and possibly two or three rooms to the south of room A – Figure 32.1). It does not mean that these rooms were not used during the winter. The floors in the center of the four rooms in the northern enfilade (Б, В, Г, И) had oval marks from constant burning by strong fires in movable fire baskets filled with coals. Similar traces were found in the middle of the central chamber and the adjacent eastern room M⁵⁶. Apparently in most other rooms the fire baskets rested upon tripods that left no traces on the clay floor.

The under-floor heating system, which is undoubtedly not of a Hunnic or Chinese (or not even of Far Eastern) origin, accentuates the advanced character of the western construction culture observed in the only known Hunnic palace in Siberia. The earliest known examples of this type of heating system were discovered in the temple of Ishtar and the Sumerian palace of Mari going back to the eighteenth century B.C. The Mari palace had under-floor heating channels (square in cross section) made of square ceramic slabs. Like in the temple of Ishtar these channels were covered with identical slabs at the top and went under the door casings from one room to another⁵⁷. Parthian baths similar to those of the early eastern tradition were found in Dura-Europos; they underwent reconstruction and were equipped with a water conduit in the Roman times. The Roman under-floor heating system (a hypocaust), which is known to have been used as early as the

55 A century before the people of Khakassia used *Populus alba* tree trunks to make dugout canoes, troughs for cattle and wooden chests (troughs) for burying the dead (v.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1992c: 90-97).

56 A century before the people of Khakassia used *Populus alba* tree trunks to make dugout canoes, troughs for cattle and wooden chests (troughs) for burying the dead (v.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1992c: 90-97).

57 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 74-76; Evtyukhova, 1946: 108, 109; 1947: 81.

first century B.C., was spread across the Mediterranean and was preserved in the Byzantine Empire. There are buildings with under-floor heating in Afghanistan known as *tabakhana*. Baths with under-floor heating (the Arab for it is *'hamam'*) became widely spread in the East and some parts of Europe in the Middle Ages. They were found in Middle Asia, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, the Crimea, Moldavia, in the lower course of the Volga River, in the pre-Mongol cities of the Volga Bulgaria and even in early Kiev⁵⁸. Up till recently in some houses of Samarkand there were used "sandali with heat channels that warmed the part of the floor under the people sitting near it... The heat channels were covered with bricks put flat level with the brick floor; these bricks were warmed by the hot air going into the heat channels from the *aloukhana* via the passages"⁵⁹.

Apart from the Tasheba palace (from the beginning of the first century B.C.) dwellings with under-floor heating in Siberia are known to have existed in the taiga Ryolka culture of the sixth-ninth centuries in the middle course of the Ob River⁶⁰. The oldest dwellings in Northern Eurasia with under-floor heating and channels covered with stone slabs were uncovered in Central Kazakhstan. They date from as early as the Bronze Age (the Alakul culture, the fifteenth and fourteenth centuries B.C.); a complex system consisting of a fire chamber with long smoke ducts running along the perimeter of the walls in the form of tunnels with a stone-clay coating was found in the big rectangular dwellings of the Myrzhik and Atasu I settlements (in the upper course of the Atasu River)⁶¹.

These examples prove that the system of under-floor heating of the Tasheba palace as well as of the taiga dwellings and the above mentioned baths in the early Middle Ages is connected with the unique development of a special heating system, western in origin, which was used since ancient times in two spheres of architecture, in the construction of houses in Northern Eurasia and of public baths in the south. The under-floor heating systems emerged nearly simultaneously in Central Kazakhstan in the north and in the Mesopotamia in the south. The heat channels first appeared during the Bronze Age and were prompted by the metallurgic principles and practices in which pit ore smelting furnaces with ducts for feeding air and blowing off gases as well as other heating systems were used.

Some time later, in the early Iron Age, a new system of heating houses appeared in the Far East (in Outer Manchuria, i.e. Priamurye and Primorye, in Northern China and in Korea); it relied on *kangs* – benches raised above the floor and running along the walls with heating channels

58 Heinrich, 1982: abb. 201, 208; Parrot, 1958: fig. 44, 45, 47, 54, 55, 314.

59 Voronina, 1951; 1983; Buryakova, 1986; Man'kovskaya, 1979: 45; Khalpakhch'yan, 1960; Muskhelishvili, 1940; Jacobson, 1946; Khovanskaya, 1954; Matveeva, Kochkina, 1998; Zilivinskaya, 1989; Georgiev, 1981.

60 Pisarchik, 1982: 98.

61 Chindina, 1985: 24 (type IA).

inside. Kangs running along one of the walls or more often along two of the walls of ordinary houses were also built by the Huns in Transbaikalia and Mongolia which is known from the excavations of the Ivolga site on the Selenga River and the Duryony settlement on the Chikoe⁶². This heating system later spread across Northern China and was brought by the Mongols to Middle Asia and Eastern Europe in the thirteenth century⁶³. The fact that the kang system is very different from the under-floor heating of the Tasheba palace was not only observed but also highlighted by its researchers even though the palace was a priori considered to be an example of Chinese architecture⁶⁴. In the Medieval times only the Koreans had a system of under-floor heating ("ondol") different from the wall-side kangs which was most likely brought by the invading western tribes⁶⁵.

It is evident from the analysis of the Tasheba palace heating system along with its design and construction techniques that the building was not set up by Chinese or Hunnic masters. In all probability foreign craftsmen and masters brought an ancient western Asiatic system of heating to Southern Siberia. Another important conclusion that can be drawn based on the traces of reconstruction and repairs of the heating channels is that these masters did not just do a one-off job but upon the completion of the palace construction continued to live at Tasheba and do maintenance work on the palace heating system.

Due to the many years of field research **the palace plan** was recreated⁶⁶. Its walls faced the four cardinal points. The palace was 35 m long from north to south and 45 m long from west to east with the total rectangular area of 1575 square meters. Despite the destruction of its south-eastern corner the complete plan of the palace could be graphically recreated due to the regular systemic lay-out of the rooms (Figure 34). The results of such a reconstruction are of great interest⁶⁷.

In the palace there were 20 rooms connected by passages: the central chamber surrounded by enfilades of 18 rooms and an entrance hall that was the only way to access the palace from its southern part. Along the northern wall there were six rooms adjacent to the central chamber: four rooms and the entrance hall were located along the southern wall with four rooms along the eastern and western walls respectively. The rooms were approximately 28-32 square meters in size.

62 Kadyrbaev, 1983: 137; Kurmankulov, 1986.

63 Davydova, 1985.

64 Kyzlasov L.R., 1975c; Brodyanskiy, Okladnikov, 1984.

65 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946b: 573 ("An under-floor heating system of a more ancient type than the newer system of kang-bed stoves").

66 Dzharlygasinova, 1979: 220, 221.

67 Evtukhova, 1947: 79, fig. 25; Kiselyev, 1949: tabl. XLV.7; 1951: tabl. XLV.7.

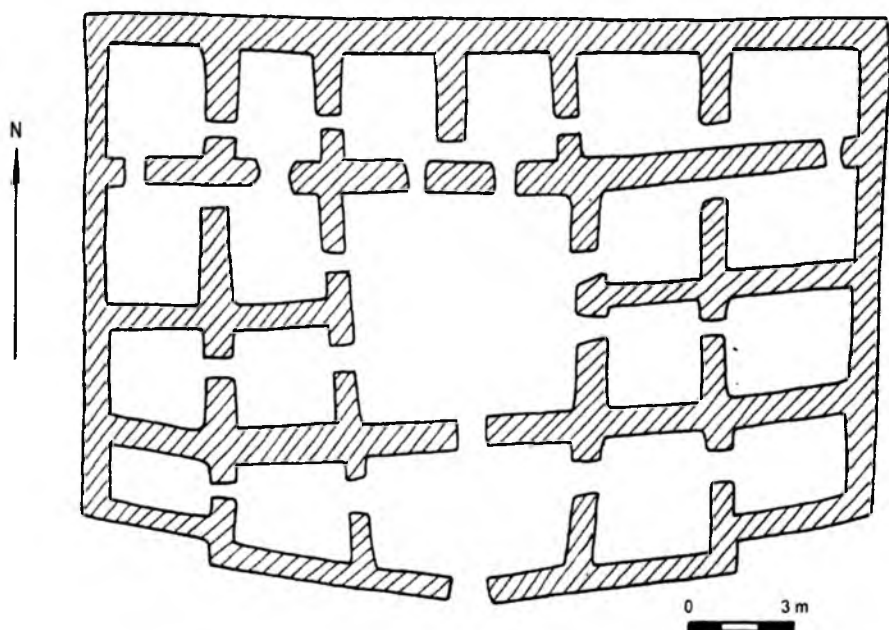


Figure 34. Plan of the Tasheba palace reconstructed by the author

The doorways were 1 to 1.25 m wide but the passage from room Г into room И was 0.75 m wide while the one between room И and Д was 2.1 m wide. In some walls there were found hollows for the wooden door cases. Some of the doors were bricked up in the course of later renovations. While the entrance hall had four doors (one in each wall) including the ones leading to the central chamber and to the reconstructed rooms, in the central square chamber itself there were two doors in each wall apart from the southern wall with the entrance. These doors led to the surrounding enfilades of rooms. Based on the form of the doorways all of them had wings of doors on the side of the chamber. The only exception to the rule was one of the northern doors leading to room B whose doorpost was located on the side of the room. Some of the entrances to the central chamber were not rectangular but trapezoidal enlarging from 1 to 1.5 meters. Such doorways led to rooms E, И, M and, possibly, to the entrance hall (Figure 34).

In the southern corner of the excavation pit of 1940 (quarter 11) were uncovered the remains of a wooden pile (about 30 cm in diameter) that stood on a sandstone slab foundation similar to the vertical interior supports. Based on the measurements taken this pile appears to have been located outside the palace to the north of the western break jamb and about 7 m from the entrance. It is possible that there was a half-house

running from the entrance. It was probably there that the tethering posts were located as in the lower occupational layer that was left untouched by the construction of the motorway “were found remains of logs dug in vertically as well as lying horizontally or obliquely”⁶⁸.

As far as we know the plan of the Tasheba palace has no direct analogies either in the synchronous period or in the ancient architecture of Siberia, Central Asia and the Far East. It has western roots. It goes back to the architecture of ancient Mesopotamia and the whole of Western Asia via Middle Asia, Afghanistan and Iran. The dimensional design of the southern Siberian house is compatible to the lay-out of the personal chambers of the palaces and houses of the nobility round the temples of Ishtar and Nini-zaza in the Sumerian city-state of Mari that were mentioned above in connection with the system of under-floor heating and the two-tiered roof of the Tasheba building. The Sumerians built residential complexes with enfilades of one or two rows of rooms that surrounded a quadrangle chamber with 7-8 doors in it (with each wall having 2 doors) (Figure 35.1).

In Mari there was found a ceramic architectural scale model of a two-tiered house with a raised central part. The round house was displayed without a roof. In the house there were a central square chamber and eight rooms surrounding it. The latter were grouped together by means of cleverly placed doors to form, in modern terminology, three separate two-room apartments. Adjacent to the entrance hall to the left of the door a separate room was located. All the four walls of the chamber had doorways cut in them⁶⁹.

The Sumerian mausoleums of the tsars of the Third Dynasty of Ur that were built adjacent to each other also had quadrangle chambers connected with 7-8 passages with enfilades of rooms (Figure 35.2). The buildings with such a lay-out are especially numerous among the palaces and private houses in the mansions and city quarters of Ur⁷⁰ (Figure 35.3). According to L. Woolley, “Ur was, in fact, a typical Middle Eastern town... We were greatly struck by the discovery that all the houses at Ur of the Isin-Larsa Period are built on the same lines. No two are exactly alike; the architect had to accommodate his groundplan to building-plots of very different size and often of irregular shape, but he always kept before him an ideal type approved by experience and suited to local conditions and approximated to it as closely as he could. The type is that of a house build round a central court- yard on to which all the rooms open.”⁷¹

68 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 87-94, fig. 47.

69 AIA RAN, collection 12. file 16, sheet 2 back.

70 Parrot, 1956: fig. VIII; 1958: fig. 44, 45, 47, 54, 55, 314; 1967: fig. 14, 310, 312, 313; Heinrich, 1982: abb. 201, 208; Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: fig. 36. Wooden and clay architectural scale models of houses were common in China and other countries of Eurasia beginning from the ancient times.

71 Woolley, 1965: fig. 10, 12, 13, 21, 22.

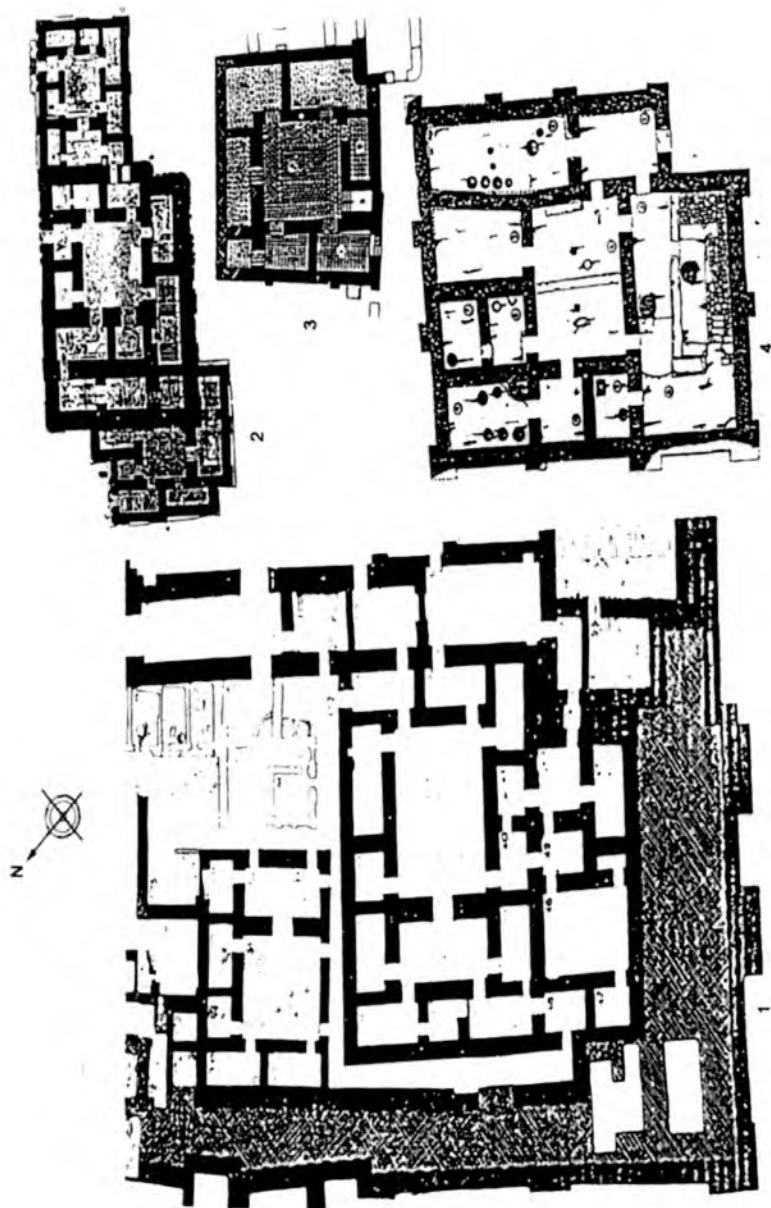


Figure 35. Plans of the Middle Eastern buildings: 1 – the personal chambers of the palace in the city-state of Mari (the second millennium B.C.), 2 – the mausoleums of the Third Dynasty of Ur, 3 – a private house in Ur (beginning of the second millennium B.C.), 4 – a homestead in Argishtihmili (Uratu, the eighth and seventh centuries B.C.)

Houses in the ancient eastern state of Urartu (the eighth-sixth centuries B.C.) had the same lay-out as the Tasheba palace. For instance, in Argishtihinili "the homesteads had numerous rooms (up to 20) with the total area of 700 square meters. The big quadrangle chamber served as the nucleus of the house. There was a hearth in the center of the chamber and a special place to perform religious ceremonies. The chamber was surrounded by living quarters, kitchens and storerooms, etc". The chamber had 77 square meters in area. It is interesting to note that the central chamber in the houses of the Ur nobility also had six entrances connecting it to the rooms on all the four sides of it⁷² (Figure 35.4). In the Near East at the beginning of Common Era a homestead was usually made up of a square yard and living quarters on all the four sides of it. It was not uncommon for the entrance to the yard to be through the hall. It was exactly in this standard type of house that both the Christian house church and the synagogue existed in Mesopotamia, in Dura-Europos in the second and third centuries A.D.⁷³

The tradition of setting up houses similar in lay-out was long-lasting and spread to the north-east as early as in the ancient times, possibly, by means of architectural scale models. For example, at the time of the early Achaemenid Empire in Bactria there became known "winter palaces" square in plan with rooms separated from the central quadrangle chamber by a ring passage. In the first and second centuries in the Kushan period in Northern Bactria the affluent inhabitants of the cities constructed similar houses with porticoes running to the central chamber; numerous rooms and passages were located around the chamber⁷⁴. During the same period of time and later in Khorezm the lived-in towers of the wealthy nobility (inside the fortified walls) were also symmetrical around the central axis with enfilades of rooms around the quadrangle chamber⁷⁵.

Later on in Middle Asia public buildings (madrasahs, caravansaries, inns and even mausoleums) were constructed likewise⁷⁶. When coming to Middle Asia the specialists on the architecture of Mesopotamia were astonished by the similarity in building structures and the role of the ancient traditions that have lived up to the present day⁷⁷. In Khorezm there emerged a unique type of covered court; in the Arab countries (Syria and Egypt) houses had staterooms in the middle with domes or flat roofs which were surrounded by other rooms on all the four sides⁷⁸. It was not uncommon that house temples and prayer houses were placed in these chambers. That was typical of the Sogdians of Middle Asia. For example, a palace with a chamber housing a temple was uncovered in

72 Woolly, 1965: 177, 178, 180, fig. 12; Vulli, 1961: 184-186, 173.

73 Vigin, 1984: 192; Martirosyan, 1974: 107-109, fig. 41, 57.

74 Shishova, 1962: 361, 363; Masson, 1986: 48-50, fig. 9.

75 Kruglikova, Sarianidi, 1976: 11, fig. 7; Pugachenkova, Rtveladze, 1978: fig. 15, 25, 26.

76 Tolstov, 1948: fig. 70, 81, 82, 98, 103, tabl. 40.

77 Pugachenkova, 1976: 70, 92; Man'kovskaya, Bulatova, 1978: fig. 58, 59; Bulatov, 1988: fig. 31, 53, 88, 153, 155.

78 Piotrovskiy, 1995: 133.

Panjakent⁷⁹. Similar but more complicated lay-outs were found in Middle Asia and in later monasteries of the Khisht Tepe type⁸⁰.

It should not be left out that a similar lay-out was spread from the ancient east not only further east but also to the west across the Mediterranean. In Mycenaean Greece (on Pylos island) the newcomers from Asia Minor built a palace (destroyed about 1200 B.C.) with the main chamber of 13 x 11 m surrounded by living quarters, storerooms and passages. The entrance to the chamber was via a portico and a hall from the south-eastern side. According to Herodotus, the Etruscans moved from Lydia to Italy in the eighth century B.C. For many years now in the place of Marzabotto to the south of Bologna an Etruscan city is being excavated that was founded in the sixth century B.C. Its "stone houses had a central chamber with a heath (atrium) around which the other rooms were located"⁸¹. The Romans, in their turn, borrowed this type of lay-out from the Etruscans.

As we can see, in the design and planning of the Tasheba many-room mansion the special features of architecture characteristic of house construction techniques of both western Asian and European cultures prevail. Consequently, the architect of the palace could not have been either a Chinese, or a Hun, or a Tagar Dingling, or a newcomer Gegun (Kyrgyz). It is highly likely that it could have been a master builder from Middle Asia driven there by the Huns among the captured Yuezhi. The Chinese called the Massageteans-Kushans and their huge state "Yuezhi". The Hunnic raids started in 211 B.C. in the reign of shanyu Tuman. They were continued in 206 B.C. under Maodun, the founder of the powerful Hunnic state, who was taken hostage in his early years by the Yuezhi⁸². The Huns proceeded with the attacks on the Kushans up to 186 B.C.

The way the palace was used discloses some information on the purposes it served. The palace on the Tasheba existed for quite a long period of time. The excavations revealed both the reconstruction and repairs of the heating system and also traces of renovations of the inner walls (in rooms B, Г, Ж and 3) and the outer surface of the northern facade (Figure 24). Some parts of the floor were additionally covered with clay several times. It is interesting that in the newer coating of the floor in room M (section 11-O) there were found isolated fragments of tiles⁸³. At some point during the lifetime of the palace in a number of rooms in the corners and along the perimeter there were added supporting piles (resting on stone bases or without them). There was no need to support the roof with piles everywhere; it was mostly required along the inner sides of the entire northern enfilade and the middle part of the southern one and the north-western corner of the central chamber. The repair purpose of these

79 Voronina, 1982: 59, 60, fig. 3.

80 Marshak, 1989.

81 Staviskiy, 1998: 92, fig. 68.

82 Mongait, 1974: 45, 165.

83 Taskin, 1968: 38, 39. V. also: Zeimal', 1968.

piles became evident when they were uncovered in the doorways of rooms A – E and M – chamber, where the piles were alien to the general principles of the plan (the same idea was expressed by the archaeologists who excavated this site⁸⁴). At one point a new pile that was placed on top of an embedded stone slab destroyed the former heating channel inside the central chamber. Some rubble left over from construction work, like fragments of tiles and inscribed disks, was also found in the pit⁸⁵. The support piles inside the palace were dug in to different depths, which probably verifies the fact that they were erected during different periods of time. It is highly unlikely that the difference in depth could have been possible under a standardized plan. The recorded differences in the form of the central chamber door cases did not escape our attention either. It is still unclear whether such a variance was pre-planned. The reconstruction of the heating channels referred to above together with the large amount of kitchen wastes of animal bones found outside the building all speak for the fact that the palace had been in use for a long period of time.

The small number of pottery remains found at the excavation site differentiated the palace from ordinary residential buildings. This fact led to the conclusion that the palace belonged to a person of high rank. The palace was kept perfectly clean. According to L.A. Evtukhova, the huge stone slabs uncovered in the middle of the adjoining northern rooms E and B were the bottoms of stoves that were used for food preparation. However, according to the 1945 report, in the middle of room E what was discovered was not a slab but a square (120 x 120 cm or 100 x 110), 50 (or 40) cm deep pit facing the cardinal points that might have been used for a fire basket on a tripod or as a store room of some kind. The slab in room E was sunk in a 20 cm-deep circular pit (about 1 m in diameter)⁸⁶. The fact that the rooms of the northern enfilade served some utility purposes was proved by the large number of split animal bones, clearly leftovers, found outside by the northern wall⁸⁷. The cesspits were also located there. The numerous leftovers of feasts effectively prove the social nature of life in the palace and the fact that people lived in this unusual residential place for a long time. Beneath the layer of tiles whose sheets had slid off the collapsing roof and sloped by the walls from the outside there was uncovered an occupational layer. In it there were nails, staples and other iron objects. Occasional small fragments of animal bones (sheep, cow, but mostly horse bones) were found at different locations.

The heating system proves that the building was inhabited. The warmest were the following three rooms: the southern entrance hall, one of the rooms adjacent to the hall (first it was room K, then room C) and the central chamber of

84 AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 64.

85 Ibid.: file 19, sheet 101.

86 Evtukhova, 1947: 81; AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 148, 151 back.

87 Evtukhova, 1947: 81.

the palace. A possible explanation is that the entrance hall was intensely heated to prevent the cold air from getting into it when opening the front door in winter time, while the central chamber was heavily heated because of its size. At the same time, the square with the side of 6 m formed by the heat channels in the central part of the chamber indicates that it must have been the most important place in the room. Consequently, it was there that people spent most of their time. The same is proved by a piece of charred floor in the northern area bounded by the heating channels, right where the fourth side of the heating square was missing. These traces of a fire basket or a burner with a sacred fire inside indicated the low mobility of people in the chamber. It is highly likely that the owner of the Tasheba palace stayed in the middle of the central chamber in the course of certain ceremonies.⁸⁸ The fact that the building belonged to a man of high rank is also proved by the wishes to the ruler of the Hunnic state and his wife inscribed on the end sides of the tiled discs. Only high officials could afford to have such inscriptions.

Based on the numerous parallels to the plan of the palace mentioned above we can assume that the central chamber of the Siberian palace was also used as a prayer house with the sacrificial altar placed in the center of it⁸⁸ (Figure 32). The sacrificial nature of the chamber is possibly proved by the findings of objects symbolic in shape. At the northern, eastern and southern walls leading to rooms Г, М and the entrance hall there were found massive bronze mascarons door handles (Figure 36). In 1946 between rooms Д and И there was discovered a fourth such handle (Figure 37), that was evidently brought there by accident during the later period of desolation. The mascarons had special openings and were attached to the doors by means of iron nails (Figure 37). One mascarons had the remains of nails fixed to it. Each of the bronze handles (25 x 20 cm), whose drawings and photos⁸⁹ were published later, was cast in an individual mould and represented the likeness of a horned guarding spirit with deeply sunk eyes, the upper teeth born, a long twisted moustach and curled sidewhiskers. Beneath the bull's horns there were pointed ears and three "tongues of fire" over the brow. A movable ring pierced its hooked nose, which points to both the religious and utilitarian use of it as a door handle (Figures 36, 37). These days the likenesses from the Tasheba palace are housed, one in each, in the local history museums of Krasnoyarsk (KKM), Minusinsk (MM), Abakan and the State Historical Museum in Moscow (SHM further in the text).

88 Speaking of the Far East there is some very early evidence of this kind of use for the central chamber. In "Lüshi Chunqui" (the Springs and Autumns (i.e. Annals) by Lü), a written record from the Late Zhao Dynasty period (the third century B.C.), we find, "The ancient wāngs determined the centre of Tianxia, of everything under Heaven, and built a palace and they determined the centre of the palace and in it erected a temple" (Vasil'ev, 1998: 88).

89 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: fig. 33; Evtukhova, 1946: fig. 1, 2; Kiselyev, 1949: tabl. XLVI.1, XLVI.2; 1951: tabl. XLVI.1, XLVI.2; Vainshtein, Kryukov, 1976: fig. 5; Kyzlasov L.R., 1992d: fig. 19; 2001b: fig. 50-52.



Figure 36. Bronze mascaron door handles of the central chamber: 1, 3 – eastern door to the room M (1941, KKM), 2 – southern door to the hall (1941, MM)



Figure 37. Bronze mascaron handle of the northern door from the central chamber to the room Г (the Khakass Local Museum)

Bronze maskoids are very rare findings for Siberia. But there are grounds to side with V.P. Levashova, L.A. Evtyukhova and S.V. Kiselyev who believe they were made locally. We are talking about the physical features the image incorporates. If we removed the horns, ears and "tongues of fire" from the masks there we would find quite a true-to-life wrinkled face of an aged Europeoid with an oversized hooked nose (this peculiarity was so important that it was specially highlighted by the researchers). When analyzing the anthropological data of that period it is hard to overlook the fact that this mythologized image correlates with the physical features of the people living in the middle course of the Yenisei River; a local sculptor, one of those who, according to the common custom, made funeral masks for his Dingling kinsmen⁹⁰, created for the metallurgist the mask of someone he might have known personally⁹¹.

Even though the idea of creating door handles in the form of guarding spirits can possibly reflect the influence of the Han tradition⁹², there is nothing specifically Chinese in the image of the Tasheba findings. In similar cases the Hans did not recreate a person's face but the likeness of a spirit in the form of a fantastic and scary animal that was called "ye-shou" literally meaning "wild beast". Moreover, no Chinese could say exactly which animal was portrayed. M.V. Kryukov, for instance, drew parallels between the Chinese ye-shou and the Tasheba images but failed to observe that the very comparison between the muzzles of "wild beasts" and human likenesses brought forward the intrinsic differences of their prototypes⁹³. Besides, the Chinese ye-shou were never depicted with bull's horns.

It should be noted that in one of the Hunnic sites of Mongolia was unearthed a hornless likeness moulded in clay. This likeness of a guarding demon depicts in a schematic form a Europeoid face with big eyes and a massive nose. It also has moustaches, born teeth and a stick-on clay ring that imitates a door handle. Above the bushy eyebrows on the forehead there is a raised "tiara" made of three diverging roll mouldings⁹⁴. While the local descendants of the Tagars (compare the funeral masks⁹⁵) might have been prototypes for the hooked-nose Europeoids of the Tasheba palace, the prototype for the artifact from Mongolia was an imaginary Europeoid (Figure 15). Even though the above cited examples are few they still make it possible to conclude that the Mongoloid Huns saw the "devils" as Europeoids whom they faced not only in Southern Siberia but in Semirechye and in Middle Asia. Written sources of that epoch mention such hostility towards people of

90 Martynov, 1974: 231-244; Pshenitsyna, 1975: 44-49.

91 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: fig. 56.2.

92 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946: 80-82; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, 272; 1951: 482, 484.

93 Kryukov, 1980.

94 Gabori, 1960: 84, photo 1.

95 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: fig. 56.2.

a different race. They tell of pointed genocide of "barbarians"-Europeoids in the Chinese state of Later Zhao in 349⁹⁶.

One more sufficient difference between our findings and their Han counterparts deals with the use of the mascaron door handles. In China such mascot handles were attached from the outside on the doors of buildings or on the mansion gates as well as on the entrances to vaults⁹⁷. In the Tasheba palace they were used inside the building in the décor of its central square chamber with one likeness on each of the four walls. It is interesting to note that the walls of the chamber in accordance with the whole setting of the palace symbolized the four cardinal points. The heavenly guardians did not look outside onto the Outer Wild World but all fixed their gaze on a single object in the northern part of the central area of the chamber. It is there that the charred part of the floor is marked on the plan. As was mentioned above, practically in the middle of the chamber there stood a wooden supporting pillar on a slab (Figure 32). It is possible that these images of spirits were supposed to magically protect the central chamber from evil spirits; that is they made it sacrally pure and suitable for praying and establishing direct contact with the deity. It should be noted that such pillars in the houses and temples of traditional societies are usually associated with Axis mundi, cosmic support and the Tree of Life. At the foot of the pillar there were offered sacrifices to the superior heavenly Being. It is probable that the charred area in the floor of the Tasheba palace was marked by the altar (fire basket) where offerings were burnt. It is not unlikely that the upper roof hanging over the central chamber symbolized the vault of heaven while the floor stood for the Earth and the walls for the four cardinal points of the cosmic space. So, the design of the chamber might have corresponded to the cosmogonical beliefs of that period of time⁹⁸.

So, if the central chamber of the Tasheba palace was used as a prayer house then judging by the remaining features of its design the main ritual performed here might have been incense burning in a movable altar and worshipping the sacred fire.

It is common knowledge that Fire was divine and sacred for the majority of peoples of Eurasia in the Scythian-Sakian and Hunnic-Sarmatian periods of time. The Zoroastrians of Iran and Middle Asia also worshiped Fire. In the Tasheba palace period, no doubt, the Huns also worshiped Fire as the agent of the Sun on earth⁹⁹. As known to archaeology, the Turkish speaking Kian-kuns (Khyrgyzs) that fled from the south to the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow in the second and first centuries B.C. burnt their dead;

96 Kryukov, Malyavin, Sofronov. 1979: 255, 256.

97 Kiselyev, 1949: 270, 272; 1951: 482, 484.

98 Eliade. 1994: 29-31, 37, 40-45.

99 Taskin. 1973: 40.

that is they also worshiped Fire¹⁰⁰. The inhabitants of Khakassia continued to venerate Fire long after that time. According to "Hudud ul-'alam", a Persian source from the tenth century, "they worship Fire and burn the dead"¹⁰¹. The latter was practiced by the Khakasses up to the nineteenth century¹⁰². It is possible that the images of a bull-headed man on the sacral mascarons of Tasheba should be correlated to the mythical primogenitor of the Kian-kuns, the son of God and a cow¹⁰³; even if the principal owner of the house was a Han still there are no similar chambers in China. We all remember that the Minotaur in Greek mythology was a bull-headed man called Asterion ("celestial") the grandson of the God of the Sun, Helios.

The fate of the palace is unknown. It is obvious that it was abandoned but not devastated. Even the wooden parts of the interior survived at their original places until the walls collapsed. Probably, strangers found their way into the palace. Occasional animal bones that were found in some places on the floor must have been leftovers from their meals. The way the roof tiles lay in excavation sites (both on the outside and the inside of the outer walls) prove that the building collapsed because of the natural causes (Figure 27). No traces of plunder were found. The doors of the central chamber decayed on the spot which is proved by the location of their bronze handles (the first handle was discovered on the remains of a plank of wood, possibly once part of a door leaf¹⁰⁴). The very massive handles made of precious metal were not stolen. This evidence is especially meaningful if we take into account the fact that for a long period of time from the beginning of the first century B.C. to the first century A.D. there was a settlement surrounding the remains of the old palatial complex. It is absolutely clear that even the abandoned palace was revered by the locals till its very last days. These circumstances support our assumption about the double role of the Tasheba palace which was not only a place to live but also a temple. As the excavation team found, the construction was ruined through natural causes, the overflows of the Tasheba and Abakan Rivers among them¹⁰⁵. Only when the palace turned into a grassy hillock during the Tashtyk period was it used as a burial ground. As the surrounding country was a wet riverside plain there were no other elevations.

100 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 162.

101 Materialy..., 1973: 41.

102 Kyzlasov L.R., 1975d: 205-207.

103 The legend was taken down by Chinese chroniclers according to the Gegun (Kyrgyz) (Shefer, 1981: 107).

104 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 74.

105 Ibid.: 72, 73.

3.3. Dating the palace. The owner of the complex

The entire **occupational layer** of the palace that was examined in the course of excavations was dated to the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period (the second and the middle of the first centuries B.C.). The stratification was unquestionable as most deposits were interspersed with layers of roof tiles sometimes in solid sheets of 25 cm (Figure 27). The bottom line was the daub floor of the building. The objects found during the excavations were not numerous but they were quite significant and characteristic of their time as well of the multi-ethnic groups that inhabited the palace.

In the course of the excavations on the daub floor there were uncovered some pottery remains, objects that were lost and trampled upon, some tools half worn down with use and fragments of animal bones. It should be taken into account that the abandoned rooms had been “explored” by someone and things were frequently scattered around on the floor. These visits are of no importance for the chronology of the palace as they happened soon after its desolation. During the excavation seasons of 1941 and 1945 a large number of iron objects were found in two of the palace rooms, in the entrance hall and the central chamber. By the time of the excavations of the Tasheba palace archaeologists had not yet discovered any antiquities of the Hunnic period in the history of Khakassia, in other words, of the Tagar-Tashtyk (also known as the Tes’ period¹⁰⁶) transitional period (the second century – the beginning of the first century B.C.) which was the foundation time for the new Tashtyk culture and its peoples. We did that in 1953 and published the results of our findings in 1960¹⁰⁷. In 1940-1946 the culture of this period and the characteristics of its artifacts were new to the researchers of this unique palace which sometimes led to erroneous dating of some of its archaeological evidence. The findings of the Tasheba palace were divided into three groups: 1. local objects and tools; 2. Hunnic objects and pottery; 3. objects of the Far Eastern origin¹⁰⁸. This division proved effective and is used in the analytical and descriptive parts of this book.

106 The term Tes’ for this period of history is indeed erroneous. According to M.P. Gryaznov and then M.N. Pshenitsyna, the *Tes’ period* coincided with the late period of the *Tagar culture* and, consequently, they took into consideration only the vestiges of the Tagar culture and their sites. M.P. Gryaznov never offered any substantiation for the singling out and dating of the period. Beyond this period there have always remained numerous artifacts of non-Tagar origin that are so characteristic of and important for the reconstruction of the complete cultural picture of the valley of the middle course of the Yenisei in the second and the first centuries B.C. and that are fully included into the concept of Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period that was singled out in 1953. This approach proves, for instance, that Leningrad authors neglect the Tasheba palace, the sacrificial treasures and similar sites that incorporate many different traditions of this period. These days the concept “the Tes’ period of the Tagar culture” has become obsolete in the academic circles.

107 Kyzlasov L.R., 1953a: 3, 4, 11, 1960b: 83-86, 110, 115, 147, 148, 162-164, fig. 29.

108 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 163, 164.

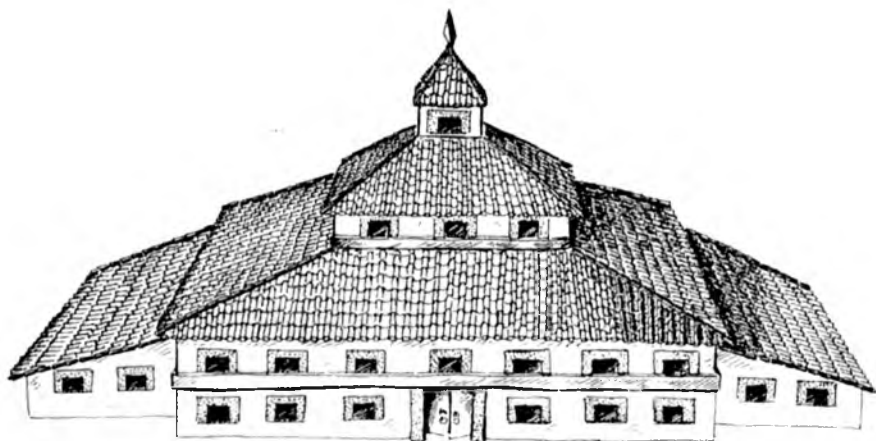


Figure 38. Experimental reconstruction of the Tasheba palace made in the Minusinsk museum by N.V. Leont'ev (with correction by L.R. Kyzlasov)

Some of the findings were only mentioned in the diaries and hand-written reports. We cannot get any impression of the look of an iron spearhead attached to a stick that was found in 1940 in the south-eastern part of the excavation site I (section 49) which was probably inside the building: of the fragments of ceramics from the cesspit discovered when the motorway surface was examined as well as of the remains of the clay vessel handle uncovered from the floor in the doorway of the building in 1941; of a fragment of broken crockery removed from the daub wall (section 18-X); of a piece of "thick sheet bronze (from a cauldron ?)" that was uncovered in the same 1941 at the depth of 64 m from the surface (section 20-X), the only representation of which is a pencil sketch of its contour; of a small half-circle bronze pendant that was found near the floor level in the entrance hall (section 19-Y).

Local objects and tools from the Tagar-Tashtyk period are still quite rare as the settlements of that period have not been fully studied. However, in the course of the palace excavations there were found quite a lot of local objects: 11 iron and 1 stone items as well as a few fragments of clay vessels¹⁰⁹.

An axe-like *iron hammer* for chopping and crushing (17 cm long) with a loop and a massive pulled-off butt end (5 cm wide) and a rounded beat-off tip without a bit (Figure 39.1). It was found in section 17 of the central chamber.

109 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 37-45.

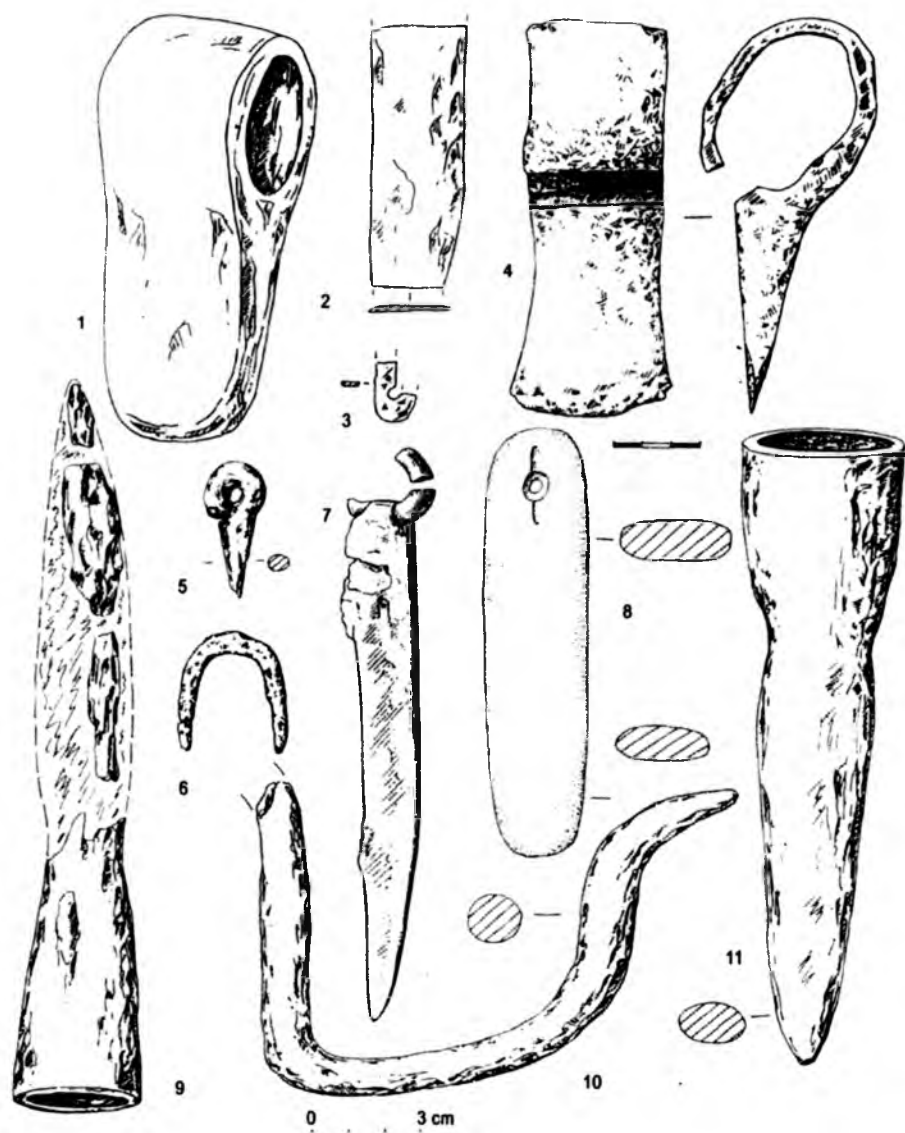


Figure 39. Local objects and tools from the palace (the second century – the first half of the first century B.C.). 1 – an axe-like hammer, 2 – a fragment of a dagger flat blade, 3 – the fragment of an buckle, 4 – a loop axe from room B, 5 – a ring punch, 6 – a staple, 7 – a knife, 8 – a sharpener. 9 – a head of a hub-like spear, 10 – a forged hook, 11 – a hub-like ice pick.
8 – stone, 1-7, 9-11 – iron

An iron *loop axe* similar to a splitting axe without a bit but with an extending welded edge was discovered in the pit in the center of room Б (Figure 39.4). The loop of the axe forged from a separate sheet of metal was welded to a narrow chopping axe cutting wedge that had been hammered beforehand. The axe was subjected to comparative typological analysis¹¹⁰. Another “loop axe with a narrow edge and a branching piece in the upper butt end” was uncovered in the north-eastern part of excavation site I in the lower part of the occupational layer. Small ceremonial bronze and iron loop axes without bits were used in the Tagar culture from the sixth century B.C.¹¹¹ The Minusinsk Museum houses such axes without loops: an iron one from Lugavskoe (MM, inventory № 6825; 7 cm in length) and one of solid cast made of red bronze (№ 456). However all the three axe-like tools from the Tashcha palace are especially characteristic of the second – beginning of the first centuries B.C. Similar iron axes were found in the Askvovka (11 items) and the Potroshilovo (3 items) treasures dating from the same period¹¹². The axes from the Minusinsk Museum (№ 7906), the Krasnoyarsk Museum (№ 131/44, Krivinskoe village; № 738, Khakassia) compliment the collection of similar tools.

An *iron knife* with a ring-pommel (Figure 39.7) was constantly referred to to help solve the problem of dating the site¹¹³. This tool was discovered on the floor close to the southern wall door of the central chamber which led to the entrance hall (section 18-O) and is typical of most sites of Southern Siberia dating from the second and the first centuries B.C. as well as of Western Kazakhstan. This form of knife discovered on the Ob and in the middle course of the Yenisei Rivers is undoubtedly local reproducing in iron the typically Tagar bronze knives with rings¹¹⁴. Later on, during the Han period, knives of this kind spread across Transbaikalia and further east as far as Port Arthur and Central China¹¹⁵.

Other iron tools unearthed in the palace are known exclusively from the drawings by L.A.Evtyukhova. Among them is the *iron hub-like ice pick* (Figure 39.11) found in the doorway between the central chamber and room M (before that the Tagar ice picks were made of bronze¹¹⁶);

110 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 163.

111 Kyzlasov L.R., 1948; 1992d: fig. 9.

112 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 163, note 12; 1992d: 53, fig. 21; 2001b: fig. 15-22.

113 Evtyukhova, 1946: 111; 1947: 83, 84; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 82, fig. 41.a; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLV.10; 1951: 480, tabl. XLV.10; Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 163; 1992d: 51, fig. 20.1.

114 Kiselyev, 1951: tabl. XXIII.12, XXIII.25; Pshenitsyna, 1975: fig. 3; Gryaznov, 1956: 96, 97, tabl. XXIV.5, XXIV.6, XXVI.12, XXVI.13; Marsadolov, 1997: fig. 6.2; Gladilin, 1978: 210-214; Kushaev, 1978: fig. 3.14.

115 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 82; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLV.11; 1951: 480, tabl. XLV.11; Davydova, 1996: tabl. 50, fig. 80; tabl. 70, fig. 20, 21; Kononov, 1989: 15; Kryukov, Perelomov, Sofronov, Cheboksarov, 1983: 237, 238, fig. 55.

116 Levasheva, 1939, tabl. VII.6.

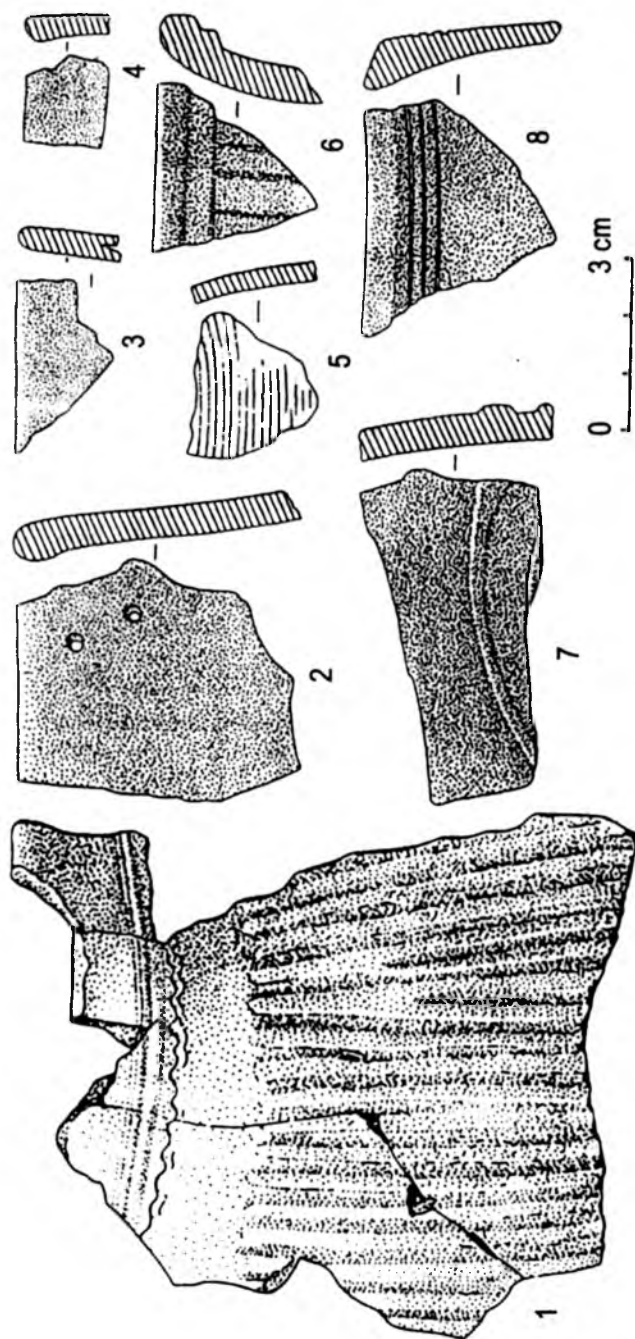


Figure 40. Fragments of vessels from the palace: 1, 5 – Hunnic pottery, 2, 4, 7, 8 — local pottery of Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period; 3 – Far East pottery; 6 – a bit of Central Asian vase

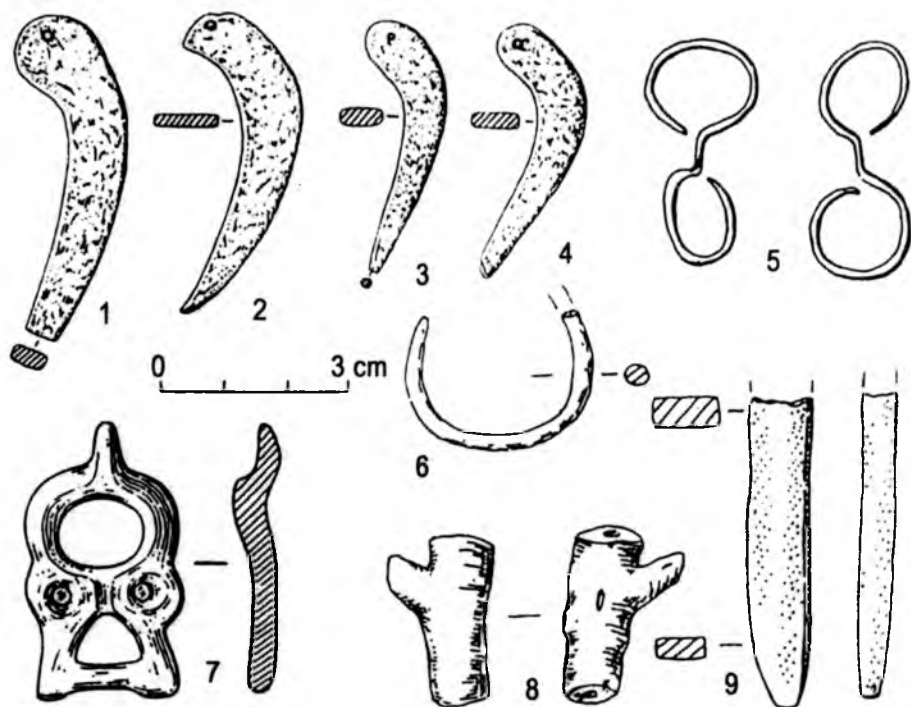


Figure 41. Hunnic objects from the palace: 4 – a claw-like pendant. 5 – a gold earring. 6 – half of a bronze wire temple ring. 7 – a bronze buckle. 8 – a bead made of a drilled piece of pinkish-red coral. 9 – the lower part of the green nephrite pendant. Accidental findings discovered on the middle Yenisei: 1-2 – from the village of Klyuchi, white nephrite, 3 – from the village of Beya, chalcedonic (MM: № 45, 49, 50)

the head of a hub-like spear with a flat piercing point (Figure 39.9) discovered in the north-western corner of the central chamber (section 17-Д; three identical spears and a faceted pike have now been uncovered in the Potrosilovo treasure¹¹⁷); a ring punch (Figure 39.5) was found in the central chamber and a forged hook for hanging animal carcasses (Figure 39.10) (room B). A fragment of a dagger flat blade (Figure 39.2) is housed in the SHM (it was possibly found in the north-eastern corner of the chamber). The location of the fragment of what is considered to have been an iron buckle is presently unknown (Figure 39.3). The iron staple that was discovered in room Ж (Figure 39.6) as well as the sharpener made of pebbles (Figure 39.8) are housed in the SHM. The latter object was found outside by the northern wall of the palace at the depth of 80 cm (section 8-E). Such touchstones

117 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: fig. 20.

were unearthed in the Karasuk, Tagar and Tashtyk graves¹¹⁸ and they were also used in the Tagar-Tashtyk time. There was found in room B half of a bronze *temple ring* made of wire (Figure 41.6). The bronze door handles-maskoids that were discussed in the part of the book dealing with the role of the palace fall into a separate group of local objects.

The *local pottery* which was discovered in the south-western corner of room 3 and especially among the construction waste outside the south-western corner of the building under the remains of the collapsed tiled roof helped to date and identify the culture of the site most accurately¹¹⁹. The erroneous assumption formed in the 1940s that the vessel fragments were of Tashtyk origin¹²⁰ could be accounted for by the fact that the knowledge of Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period pottery was gained later. The new analysis of all the known evidence revealed the fact that no Tashtyk clay pottery whatsoever was found in the occupational layer of the palace¹²¹. The fragments of the narrow neck Central Asian (it was not Hunnic!) vase made of gray amorphous clay (Figure 40.6) and the late Tagar *jar vessel* with an outer bevelled upper edge that was discovered on the floor of the building turned out to be Tagar-Tashtyk (Figure 40.8). The form and the pottery technique helped to identify the gray jar vessels with rounded slightly beveled whisks and pasted coils (Figures 40.2, 40.3, 40.4, 40.7) as belonging to the same period. Similar vessels and vases were unearthed in the graves from the transitional period (2nd - 1st centuries B.C.)¹²².

Hunnic objects and fragments of typically Hunnic *vessels* were discovered in the palace as well. Among them were fragments of a pot with a curved pattern around the neck and a characteristic vertical grooved design going from top to bottom of its body (Figure 40.1; 26 fragments were found in the doorway between the central chamber and room B); a cask-like vessel with a curved pattern across the body (Figure 42.3) and one with an entirely shaded body (Figure 40.5)¹²³. The vessel with a curved pattern was discovered in the area damaged during the motorway construction in the layer higher than grave № 1 (cutting into the natural ground), that is, it obviously originated from the entrance hall of the palace¹²⁴. The above mentioned findings were used in the substantiation of the dating and origins of the palace both in field reports and in published research¹²⁵. However, only the remains of the first

118 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164.

119 Evtyukhova, 1947: 84.

120 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946b: 574; Evtyukhova, 1947: 84.

121 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 53, 54.

122 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164, note 2, fig. 15.1, 15.2; Pshenitsyna, 1975: fig. 4.10, 4.13; 1992: fig. 47.1.

123 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164.

124 Cf.: *Archaeologiya SSSR*..., 1992: tabl. 79.13, 112.22.

125 AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 154; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946b: 574; Evtyukhova, 1947: 84.

vessel were ever published in the form of a drawing¹²⁶. These findings are fully identical to some ancient Hunnic vessels from the burial grounds of Transbaikalia and Mongolia¹²⁷.

A white nephrite *claw-like pendant* (Figure 41.4) which was discovered at the horizon behind the northern wall of the Tasheba palace (section 7-Г) is typically Hunnic. Similar objects have now been found in the excavations in Transbaikalia¹²⁸. They were also discovered in the barrows of Khakass-Minusinsk hollow¹²⁹ or were accidentally found there (MM: two of them came from the village of Klyuchi, another one from Beya was chalcedonic – Figures 41.1-41.3) and in Tuva¹³⁰. Two of them were part of the Znamenka treasure (Hermitage).

Considering where it was manufactured, the *bronze buckle* with a protruding immovable pin and two round deepenings at the edges was also Hunnic (Figure 41.7); it was erroneously considered by the researchers at the excavation site to be of the local Yenisei origin¹³¹. The buckle was uncovered close to the floor level in the north-western part of the corner room A among the fragments of tiles. This type of buckle was the final result of the development of prehistoric craftsmanship and depicted two mountain goats with their horns tangled together that was indeed typical of the early Huns from the second and the first centuries B.C.¹³² A broken iron *arrowhead*, a bronze *head*, a gold *earring* in the figure of eight form (Figure 41.5) that was once trampled in the daub floor in the center near the northern partition wall in room Д must also be Hunnic. Similar earrings were also unearthed in the Hunnic Darestui¹³³. We should also class some *remains of objects* made of bronze wire and iron into the Hunnic group. “Half of a bronze wire temple ring” found in room B is one of them (Figure 41.6).

The Far Eastern objects found in the palace include: a *head-pendant* made of a branch of pinkish-red coral, a *head* made of a drilled piece of the same kind of coral¹³⁴ (Figure 41.8) (the latter was found in 1941 in sections 14-X or 14-O close to the south-eastern corner of the central chamber); the remains of *mother-of-pearl seashells* (found near the southern doors of the chamber); fragments of perfectly flamed *vessels* made of fine clay on a potter's wheel¹³⁵ (Figure 42.2):

126 Evtukhova, 1947: fig. 27; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLV.6; 1951: 482, tabl. XLV.6; v. also: Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 54, fig. 22.1.

127 Davydova, 1996: tabl. 5.23, 47.16; Rudenko, 1962: fig. 31.e; Kononov, 1976: tabl. XXV.1-XXV.6.

128 Davydova, 1968: fig. 18.38-43; 1996: tabl. 1.18, 29.16, 29.31, 73.1, 73.3.

129 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164, note 13.

130 Kyzlasov L.R., 1969c: 118, fig. 1.

131 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 82, fig. 39; Evtukhova, 1946: 111; 1947: 84; Kiselyev, 1949: tabl. XLV.8; 1951: tabl. XLV.8; v. also: Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 54, fig. 20.3.

132 Davydova, 1996: tabl. 1.8, 47.10, 72.29.

133 Tal'ko-Gryntsevich, 1902: tabl. III.1.

134 Evtukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 82; Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 54.

135 Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 54, 55.

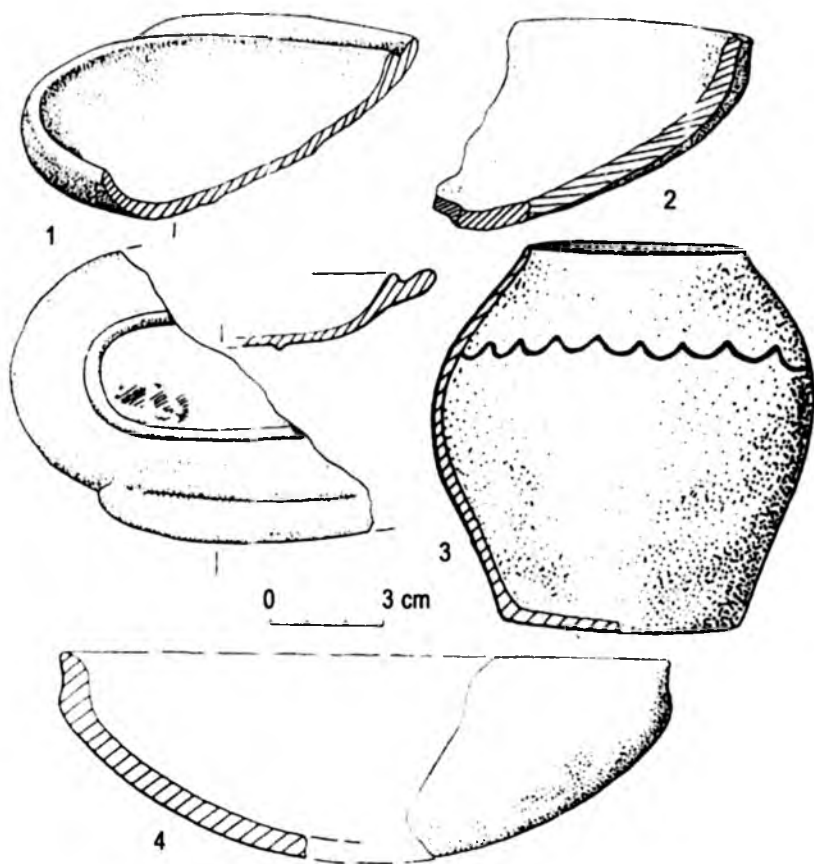


Figure 42. Far Eastern objects from the Tasheba palace: 1 – small oval vase with a handle on one of its long sides carved in light-green nephrite, 2, 4 – fragments of elegant cups with rounded bottoms. Hunnic clay vessel (3), without scale

fragments of elegant *cups with rounded bottoms* made in accordance with the same technique (Figure 42.4), one of which was found in the stove in room 3¹³⁶ while the other one was quite likely found near the southern wall of the central chamber. One of the splendid table decorations was a small *oval vase* with a handle on one of its long sides (Figure 42.1). It was carved in light-green nephrite in the form similar to that of the lacquer wine cups from the Han period¹³⁷. The

136 Evtyukhova, 1947: 84.

137 Evtyukhova, 1946: 111; 1947: 84; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 81, fig. 41.6; Kiselyev, 1949: 270, tabl. XLVI.7; 1951: 480, tabl. XLVI.7; Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164; 1992d: 55, fig. 20.2. Cf.: Trever, 1932: pl. 29, 30; Davydova, 1956: fig. 24 (stone).

vase was discovered at the northern wall of the entrance hall to the west of the passage to the central chamber. The lower part of the green nephrite *pendant* was found behind the northern wall of the house (Figure 41.9). Researchers likened it to the Hunnic claw-like pendants¹³⁸. In the floor of the central chamber of the palace there were uncovered pieces of bluish and red lacquer.

The Far Eastern objects were probably the remains of the foreign Chinese goods widespread among the Hunnic nobility that were acquired through trade or as presents to ambassadors and to the Hunnic shanyus on their visits to China as well as the ones that were sometimes obtained through marriage into the Chinese ruling dynasty. Archaeologists have uncovered a lot of fabrics and luxury things (lacquer cups and umbrellas) brought over from China. They were unearthed in the excavations of the barrows of the Hunnic nobles in the Noin Ula Mountains of Mongolia¹³⁹.

The problem of **dating the palace** should be looked at more closely. According to the archaeologists excavating the palace, "there is one peculiar thing in the history of Khyagyas that makes you invest a special interest in the ruins of a building close to the "Sila" collective farm" (i.e. the village of Chapayevo)¹⁴⁰. This historical fact is extremely important for the understanding of the special features of the medieval development of Southern Siberia (studied in the second half of my book published in 2001)¹⁴¹ and it drew special attention to the purely archaeological problem of dating the Tasheba palace. It stirred up heated discussion right after the first publication dealing with this unique site¹⁴². The critical remarks offered by the team excavating the palace proved unprofessional. This kind of approach is unfortunately not uncommon even today in the attempts to change the archaeological assessment of the Tasheba materials and we are bound to mention it in our book.

The time of the construction and use of the Tasheba palace can be accurately identified based on a whole body of data from various branches of archaeology and thus independent from each other and consequently allowing a comparison of the obtained results. Here, as it was mentioned in this book, we should look at the stratigraphic analysis (the reutilization of the Tasheba palace ruins during the early Tashtyk period, as well as the sequence of layers of the surrounding settlement), the comparative-typological analysis (of the objects of local origin from the palace dating from the Tagar-Tashtyk transitional period, as well as of the Hunnic and Han Chinese items), the analysis of the construction materials used (first of all the form of the tiles) and the epigraphic conclusions (both palaeographical

138 AIA RAN, collection 12, file 16, sheet 142 back, 152 back.

139 Trever, 1932.

140 Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946a: 83.

141 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 126-145.

142 Bernshtam, 1946: 1951a; Evtyukhova, Levasheva, 1946b; Evtyukhova, 1947: 83, 84.

and linguistic). The date of the palace construction determined by means of the above mentioned methods (the beginning and the first quarter of the first century B.C. but not later than the first half of the first century B.C. when with the fall of the Huns there started a new Tashtyk period) coincided with the time of the Hun dominance in the Sayan-Altai uplands as well as with the time of the Hunnic governor Li Ling who settled in the Yenisei river valley. The presence of the remains of Hunnic pottery proper in the palace that have never been found at local sites and whose presence across Southern Siberia relates to the presence of the Huns themselves is especially indicative. That is why archaeologists L.A. Evtyukhova, V.P. Levashova, S.V. Kiselyev along with L.R. Kyzlasov had all the necessary grounds to believe the palace was specially constructed for Li Ling¹⁴³. The sinologists studying the Han epoch (V.M. Alekseyev and L.Z. Eidlin)¹⁴⁴ supported this assumption though there is no direct written evidence to point to the exact place of residence of Li Ling in Southern Siberia. However, nothing is known of any other Hunnic governors residing in the Yenisei basin at that time.

It is here that we have to digress from the subject under study. The fact is that we by no means can accept¹⁴⁵ the evaluation of the palace that appeared in different publications¹⁴⁶. The article by S.I. Vainshtein and M.V. Kryukov is written in harsh words and is neither convincing nor historically true. The site was assessed without any connection to the local culture. No analysis of the architecture and the most important findings (pottery and other objects) was done; the stratigraphic evidence was neither studied nor taken into account. Consequently, the authors did not manage to disprove the archaeological date of the palace construction. When analyzing the written signs on the Tasheba clay discs it would have been relevant, in the case of referring to a Chinese territory, to cite the decree passed by emperor Wang Mang to change the way one of the hieroglyphics in the name of the Chinese capital city of that time should be written ("the city of Chang'an and in the names of some other official positions"). But the palace on the Abakan River was located "10 000 li" away from Chang'an in the north-western outlying territories of the Hunnic state that had never been under Wang Mang's jurisdiction. Besides, we know that the Hunnic shanyu Wuzhuliu rejected the authority of the usurper Wang Mang and started a military campaign against China¹⁴⁷. Besides, the researchers, who reconsidered the paleographic dating of the Southern Siberian palatial inscriptions, did not take into consideration all the available epigraphical sources. It should be

143 Evtyukhova, Levashova, 1946a: 83, 84; Evtyukhova, 1946: 111, note 2; 1947: 84, 85; Kiselyev, 1949: 268; 1951: 479; Kyzlasov L.R., 1960b: 164.

144 Alekseev V.M., 1958: 22.

145 Kyzlasov L.R., 1992d: 45-64.

146 Vainshtein, Kryukov, 1976.

147 Bichurin, 1950: 106-112.

taken into account that in China long before the reign of Wang Mang at the time of emperor Wudi (in the Tasheba palace period, that is 140-87 B.C.) the same way of writing the hieroglyphic for the word *chan* was used in the inscription made by prince Liu An in memory of his father Liu Chang. That was pointed out by S.V. Kiselyev as well¹⁴⁸. Consequently, the epigraphic argument in favor of the authors' supposition should be declined.

The statement made by S.I. Vainshtein and M.V. Kryukov that "one thousand years later the authors of Tangshu a Chinese dynastic history recalled Li Ling in the part devoted to the Khiagiassi tribe" causes bewilderment. Nothing could be recalled after one thousand years' time, there could only be written records of events. There are no grounds to say that the authors of Tangshu and other records had no available written sources that might have been later lost. It was not by chance that Li Ling was remembered not only by Chinese historians but also by the ruling dynasty of the early Khakass state in the ninth century. It was improper of the authors of the article to even imply that such an honored academician as N.Ya. Bichurin could have been careless and being misled by Tangshu translated it into the Russian language.

There are no grounds to believe that on the roof tiles of the palace there were stamped hieroglyphics meaning "best wishes to the Chinese emperor". According to M.V. Kryukov, the hieroglyphics said, "to Majesty Son of heaven one thousand autumns and ten thousand years of eternal happiness without grief". First of all, the above cited translation into Russian is incorrect. Neither in Russian nor in Chinese is it possible to wish one and the same person in one and the same sentence both *one thousand autumns* and *ten thousand years* of "eternal happiness without grief". V.M. Alekseyev correctly interpreted the meaning of the phrase and restored a missing reference to another person in it. The emperor of China is not mentioned in it either. Hieroglyphics were commonly used at that period of time not only in the Far East but also in the country of the Huns. Many of the Huns used hieroglyphics and some of them (like Wei Liu) were educated by the Hans. Archaeologists know that quite often the inscribed signs and stamped individual hieroglyphics could be found on Hunnic clay vessels proper that were manufactured according to the ancient Hunnic tradition as well as on some household things that were uncovered during the excavations of the Hunnic sites and grave fields¹⁴⁹. Consequently, the Huns used hieroglyphics for the internal needs of their own state. Based on the numerous findings of the Han coins with hieroglyphics it is possible to assume that they were in use in the state of the Huns. The same written language was used by the shanyus in their diplomatic correspondence with the Han court¹⁵⁰. Such

148 Kiselyev, 1960: 312, note 9.

149 Davydova, 1956: fig. 13, 25.1.

150 Based on the findings of hieroglyphics on domestic items it was first considered in research papers that the Hunnic settlements were constructed by the Chinese; this misconception

cases are not uncommon in the history of different cultures. It is known that the Mongols and the Kipchaks of the Golden Horde only used the Persian written language in decorating their buildings while the Tajiks and the Uzbeks only used the Arab language. In Europe the common language of architecture has always been Latin. According to a written source, the Juan-juan (the fourth and fifth centuries) "gradually familiarized themselves with the written language (hieroglyphics – L.K.) and presently there are many scholars among them"¹⁵¹. Similarly, the Huns used the hieroglyphic system common all across south-eastern Asia in the décor of their buildings: the hieroglyphics being officially introduced in the Hunnic state. The Huns were responsible for the spread of this system of writing further West¹⁵².

It should also be considered that it was not only the Huns who called their emperor the "Majesty Son of heaven" which is more commonly known; but it was also the name given by the Huns to their ruler "the great shanyu" which is a less familiar fact. However, if the official historian Sima Qian even wrote that the Huns under Maodun "built a state that was equal in power to the Middle Country" and emperor Xiaowen (Emperor Wendi of Han) (in 162 B.C.) in his letter to the Hunnic shanyu underlined that "the Han and Xiongnu are equally powerful neighboring states" what might the Huns themselves thought about it? The letters from the shanyus to the Han emperors started as follows, "born by heaven and Earth, appointed by the Sun and the Moon, the Great shanyu of Xiongnu ..." In 89 B.C. in his letter shanyu Hulagu writes to emperor Wudi, "the great Han state is in the south and in the north there are the powerful Hus (the Huns – L.K.); the Hus are the favorite sons of heaven that is why I do not observe minor proprieties". According to the Han historian Ban Gu, "shanyu means 'vast' and it shows that the bearer of the title is as 'spacious' as the sky" (in the translation by N.Ya. Bichurin, "shanyu means the greatest that is as great as heaven"). It is assumed that shanyu's rule embraces the earth like heaven does. The Chinese author of Hanshu was astonished by the fact that the Huns called their shanyu "Majesty Son of heaven" and wrote down the following words from the Hunnic language, "Shanyu comes from the Liuandi family. He is called 'Chengli gudu shanyu' in his state. The Xiongnu call the sky chengli

was quickly revealed by S.V. Kiselyev (1957: 92), and A.V. Davydova admitted her mistake.

151 Taskin, 1984: 289, 404.

152 Based on the published sketch depicting two horsemen found on a funeral Sarmatian stele in the Crimea (the second and the third centuries) (Choref, Shul'ts, 1972: 137, fig. 3, 5) the British linguist G. Clauson defined the vertical line that ran below the relief as a hieroglyphic inscription which read as follows, "two on horseback". At the same time in his personal letter to me the linguist pointed out that the Chinese hieroglyphics were written in the Dazhuan script (the Large or Great Seal script) and dated from the Han period. I invited the sinologists S.E. Yakhontov, K.V. Vasil'ev and L.N. Men'shikov to discuss the problem and they sided with G. Clauson. Now I believe that this inscription was made by a Hun not by a Chinese as it was only the Huns who used the Han writing style in the Crimea.

and a son gudu"¹⁵³. That is not the only case of using this title in the history of the steppe peoples. As soon as the Gaoju ruler declared himself sovereign at the end of the fifth century his noblemen started calling him the "Great Son of the heaven" though there was little ground for that compared to the Hunnic shanyu.

Consequently, the signs stamped on the roof tiles of the Tasheba palace in 98 B.C. which could not have been visited either by the emperor of the Celestial Empire (Tianxia) or any Han ambassadors or even any Chinese hoping to return to their homeland afterwards must have been wishes to the Hunnic ruler referred to as the "Majesty Son of heaven". They were expressed in a traditional form of wishes to the emperor. This underlined the fact that the Hunnic shanyu was equal to the Han emperor. The inscriptions as well as the entire Tasheba palace were probably created by the Huns who knew the Chinese written language (or by people residing in the Hun state commissioned by the Huns) and for the Huns.

In the Han China as we have seen this way of construction was not used and inscriptions of this kind, which is especially important for our case, were not made in this manner. S.V. Kiselyev, who specially studied pre-historic tiles in many museums of China, in his attempt to clarify some of the conclusions made by the palace excavation team, which they based on recorded data, specially highlighted, "I have never come across hieroglyphics encircling the central raised part, as it was done on the discs from the house excavated in the vicinity of the Abakan"¹⁵⁴. The Tasheba inscriptions were meant to be read by the visiting Hunnic dignitaries and, probably, the shanyu himself. Consequently, they reflected the social and hierarchical status of the owner in the Hunnic state. In his translation, which we cited above, V.M. Alekseyev quite cleverly guessed the presence of two people to whom the good wishes were addressed: a man and a woman, a royal couple, even though for some reason the very title of the empress was omitted from the inscription. Based on his accurate philological insight the versatile orientalist V.M. Alekseyev restored the missing part of the ancient text in parentheses, "(and she who we wish) a thousand autumns of happiness without grief".

We believe that the stamped symbol multiplied on over 400 discs around the roof of the palace erected in the city of a governor (Figure 38) refers to the Hunnic shanyu and his wife, the first yanzhi. The author of the text was bound to mention the royal spouse but he was so politically correct that even without the direct mentioning of her title her presence was clearly implied. Apparently, the printed material had a powerful influence in

153 Taskin, 1968: 32, 45, 48, 128, 133; Bichurin, 1950: 58, 113, 217. Cf. the later Turkic-Mongolian mythology: Potanin, 1916.

154 Kiselyev, 1960: 312.

the Hunnic state. The direct meaning of the given text for the Huns and all their subjects across Southern Siberia must have been as follows, “wishes of 10 000 years of peace to the Great shanyu. And to his yanzhi 1 000 autumns of happiness without grief”.

Having undertaken a critical analysis of the original sources we gave more credulity to the fact that the Tasheba palace belonged to Li Ling. Before that, the assumption was based on the idea that the palace reflected Hunnic and Chinese cultures and on its archaeological dating; both were in keeping with the main stages in the general's biography. Now some facts of his life in Central Asia also help to explain the peculiarities of the Tasheba hieroglyphics¹⁵⁵. The same is also proved by all written original sources from the following period of the Tang dynasty.

Little remains to be said concerning the dating of the Tasheba mansion. The assumption by the authors of the article “‘The Palace of Li Ling’ or end of legend” who believe that the palace on the Abakan was built for Yimo, the wife of Xubu Dang, the governor of the province, has no proof because the sources do not refer to the country where the royal couple lived. Besides, their lifetime (the first century A.D.) does not coincide with the archaeological date of the palace construction. We should clearly realize that it is suppositions like that not supported by either any factual material or thorough analysis of the sources (both recorded and archaeological) that promote legends that have nothing to do with science.

The Chinese researcher Zhou Liangkuan, who had no archaeological data at his disposal either, erroneously dated the palace to the first century A.D. While the author was right in assuming that judging by its architecture the palace was built by the “Dingling craftsmen” and not by the Chinese, he still put forward the idea that it could have belonged to Yun, the daughter of the Hunnic shanyu and a Chinese Zhaojun¹⁵⁶. However, this hypothesis does not stand criticism either. The beautiful Zhaojun was a concubine of Emperor Yuandi who offered her as a gift to the shanyu of southern Huns Huhanye in 33 B.C. She had two sons by the shanyu. After the death of shanyu Huhanye in 31 B.C. Zhaojun had to marry the new shanyu Fuzhulei. She had two daughters by him, the elder of whom was Yun. Initially shanyu Wuzhuliu in 1 B.C. sent Yun “to court to wait on the dowager empress”, that is to the capital of China where she stayed for a while but in 13 A.D. Yun married the Hunnic general Xubu Dang. Together with her husband she took part in the political events in the southern Hunnic lands bordering on China and in the capital city of Chang'an. In 23 A.D. the rebellious people killed

155 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 109-113.

156 Zhou Liangkuan, 1956: 55-66.

the usurping emperor Wang Mang and Yun and her son were also killed¹⁵⁷. There is absolutely no evidence of Yun ever living in the remote Yenisei area or of her activities among the northern Huns.

The Tasheba palace must have belonged to the person who is featured both in Han and later recorded sources and whose lifetime and biography are in keeping with the epigraphic and archaeological data obtained during the excavations. Based on the data from chronicles the outstanding sinologist of the nineteenth century N. Ya. Bichurin wrote, "Li Ling stayed with the Huns and got Khyagyas into his possession and his descendants ruled there nearly up to the time of Genghis Khan. The shanyu treated Li Ling with due respect and gave him his daughter in marriage"¹⁵⁸. It is quite significant that the time of Li Ling's rule as the Hunnic governor on the Abakan and the Yenisei is exactly the same, and archaeology proves that, as the time of the use of the Tasheba palace whose construction was initiated by the Hunnic authorities¹⁵⁹.

The study of the archaeological evidence made it possible to identify the cultural background of the palace and to quite accurately pinpoint the time of its use and, as a consequence of all this, to revisit the issue of who lived there. Following my predecessors who excavated the palace I believe that the unusual construction on the Tasheba belonged to the Han general Li Ling who upon being captured became a Hunnic dignitary and governed the entire Southern Siberia. Putting together the available Chinese records of Li Ling and a comparative analysis of the Han and the Tang chronicles quite legitimately poses a new question for Siberian history; that is how the early Kyrgyz-Gegun developed their own dynastic tradition¹⁶⁰. The linear genealogy of the subsequent rulers of the Khakass-Minusinsk hollow that goes back to the Hunnic time and to Li Ling himself was used by the ruling Kyrgyz clan to justify their claims for the possession of the entire Sayan-Altai uplands through nearly 20 centuries and was accepted by the multi ethnic local population up to the eighteenth century.

157 Taskin, 1973: 39, 43, 44, 52, 60-63, 69, 70.

158 Bichurin, 1950: 73

159 When we studied the fragment of a stone sculpture, a horse head, found in the vicinity of the palace and now stored in the Minusinsk Museum (№ 18), we very cautiously suggested that Li Ling's tomb could be in the same location (Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 123-125). N.V. Leontiev was wrong when he classified this sculpture as an early sculpture from the "Okunevo culture" even though he had not carried out a comprehensive stylistic and comparative typological analysis (Leont'ev, Kapel'ko, 2002: 97, taf. 120.300; Leont'ev, Kapel'ko, Esin, 2006: 103, 227, № 300).

160 Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: 126-145.

Chapter 4. TURKIC-SOGDIAN CITY OF SUYAB – THE CAPITAL OF THE WESTERN TURKIC KHAGANATE

In Northern Kyrgyzia in the valley of the Chu River 8 km (4.97 miles) to the south-west of the town of Tokmak (42°50' N. 75°30' E.) lies a big site of Ak-Beshim¹. The remains of the once big town with a set up typical of the early medieval towns of Middle Asia were chosen for a large scale examination by the Chu Archaeological Department of the Kirghiz Composite Archaeological-Ethnographical Expedition of the Soviet Academy of Sciences in 1953-54 which was headed by the author of this book. The team was mostly made up of the faculty and students of Moscow University and was headed by a 29 years-old senior lecturer with the department of archaeology².

4.1. Archaeological grounds for believing that Ak-Beshim is the same as Suyab

The Ak-Beshim site has long been known to orientalists and archaeologists of Middle Asia. V.V. Bartold who visited it in 1894 assumed that the settlement was the medieval city of Balasagun, the capital of the Karakhanid khanate of the eleventh and twelfth centuries that featured in written records. However, V.V. Bartold also made it clear that “we

1 I chose the name based on the current Kirghis pronunciation and the official sources from the time of the excavations. Before that researchers referred to it as Ak-Pishin.

2 The main results of this work were published and formed the basis of the current chapter. V.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1957: 88-96; 1958: 152-161. 1959b: 155-241 (for staff of the expedition v.: 1959b: 157, note 6). Preliminary published reports covered the excavation season of 1953. V.: Kyzlasov L.R.. 1953b: 159, 160; EO. 1954, № 3: 90; Okladnikov, 1954a: 50-55; 1954b: 153-155.

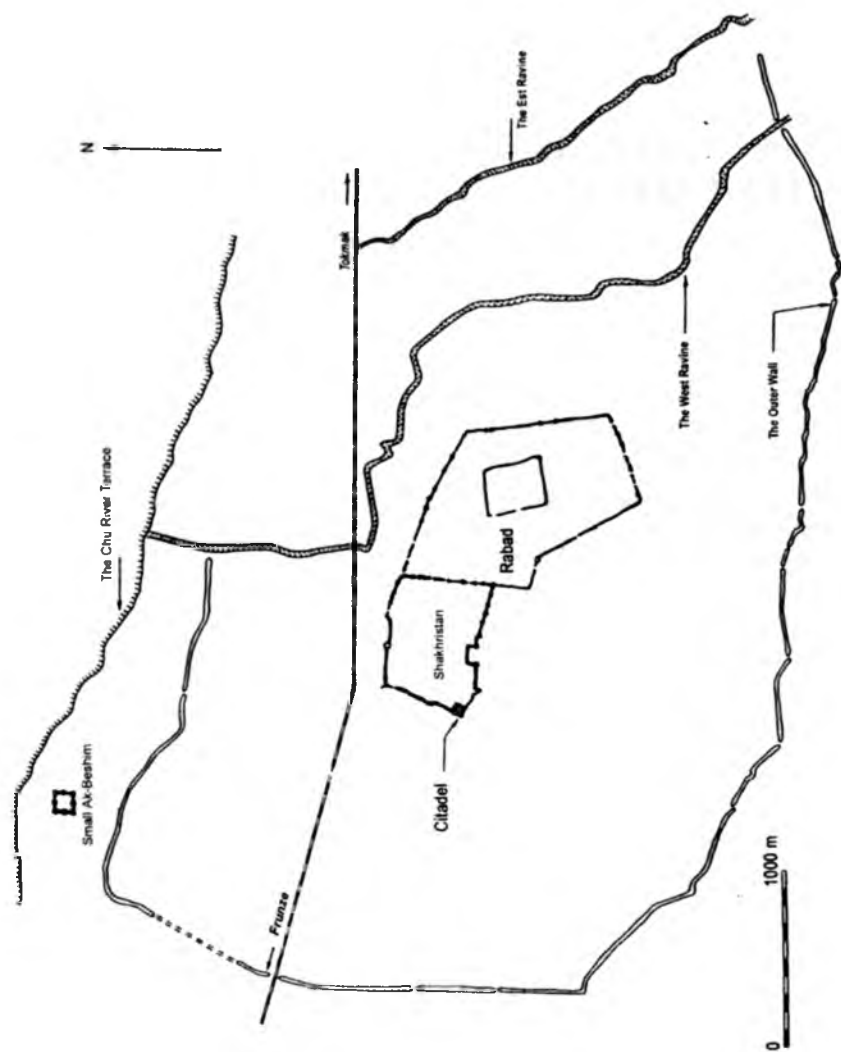


Figure 43. Sketch plan of the Ak-Beshim city site by P.N. Kozhemyako

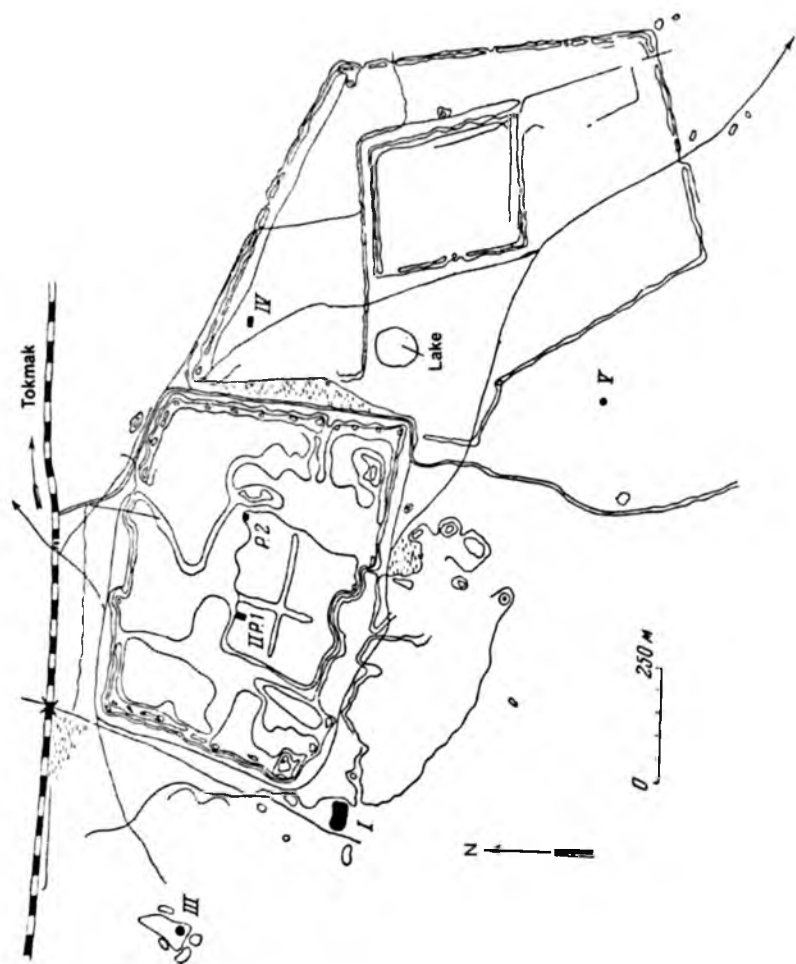


Figure 44. Plan of Ak-Beshim, showing the sites excavated in 1953-1954

do not have enough data for the final solution of the issue of Balasagun: we only wanted to highlight that judging by the available data Balasagun was more likely located in the Chu valley than in Eastern Turkestan. *There is no doubt that provided new and more accurate facts of Balasagun become available we might reach a very different solution*"³ (italics by L.K.). In 1927 the city was examined by M.E. Masson who made a general drawing of the site⁴. In 1929 the site was visited by A.I. Terenozhkin who carried out exploratory work in the Chu valley. He made a full account of the Turt-Kul near the site of Ak-Beshim and published its plan⁵. In 1938-1939 the Semirechye expedition of the Institute for the History of Material Culture headed by A.N. Bernshtam carried out exploratory shafting of the settlement together with small-scale excavations outside the walls of the shakhristan (the territory of the medieval city in Middle Asia – tr.). Based on the modest number of archaeological materials uncovered during this excavation A.N. Bernshtam also claimed that the Ak-Beshim settlement was actually ancient Balasagun: an assumption as erroneous as that by V.V. Bartold but expressed in a more straightforward manner⁶.

When I first set out to explore the Chu valley in 1953 and made my choice in favor of the Ak-Beshim settlement, which was the largest one, I only had at my disposal facts from research papers and also assumed following my predecessors in this area of research that the Ak-Beshim site could conceal the ruins of Balasagun⁷. However, the results of the excavations carried out by our team proved different (Figure 44). The main conclusions we made at that time were as follows.

All the examined areas lay within the main parts of the Ak-Beshim settlement (Figure 44) but no residential buildings dating from after the tenth century, no occupational layers from the same time, no dwellings made of flamed bricks were found. In this respect the results of the examination of the stratified pit in the center of the shakhristan were most indicative.

All this makes us conclude that the city existed between the fifth-tenth centuries after which due to a number of reasons the city itself and the outlying areas were no longer inhabited. In the eleventh and the twelfth centuries during the Karakhanid period the city lay in ruins but was not yet completely deserted. It is highly likely that around the city some farming settlements continued to exist whose inhabitants might have visited the city ruins. This is proved by the findings in the upper layers (but across all the site) of occasional Karakhanid coins and especially of a hidden treasure of 76 coins (inside a leather purse in a specially dug out pit on the hill top of site I) as well as of a few fragments of a glazed cup of the Karakhanid period. In the layers corresponding to the lifetime

3 Bartold. 1897: 39, 40; 1926: 36.

4 Izvestiya Sredazkomstarisa, 1928: 271.

5 Terenozhkin, 1935: 148, 149, fig. 20.

6 The expedition results see: Trudy..., 1950a; preliminary publication v.: Bernshtam. 1941.

7 Kyzlasov L.R., 1953b.

of the settlement 177 coins and their fragments were found. Among them there were a large number of pre-Karakhanid Turgesh coins and other coin types also belonging to the Turgesh circulation with legend in the Sogdian language as well as some Chinese coins of the Tang Dynasty⁸. These coins support the dating of the settlement sites that was obtained from archaeological evidence.

Here we should note that both Turgesh coins and other coin types of the Turgesh circulation have legends in Sogdian, not in Turkic as A.N. Bernshtam assumed⁹. This significant fact was first established by O.E. Smirnova who studied and interpreted them¹⁰.

The above said led us to believe that we could not agree to identify the Ak-Beshim settlement with ancient Balasagun, the assumption put forward by V.V. Bartold and supported by A.N. Bernshtam (who alluded to pseudo Karakhanid materials he claimed to have found in the excavation of 1940 in the rabad (artisans quarters – tr.)¹¹). We should look elsewhere for ancient Balasagun (the splendid capital of the Karakhanids in the eleventh and twelfth centuries which, according to written records, existed up to the fourteenth century). The Arab authors as-Samani (the twelfth century), Ibn Al-Athir (the twelfth and thirteenth centuries), Abul-Feda (the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries) believed Balasagun was located “in the vicinity of Kashgar beyond the Seikhun River”¹². According to Yu. Mukhlisov, who specially studied the relevant sources, Balasagun was located 50 km (31.07 miles) to the south-east of Kashgar¹³.

Here we need to mention the Burana site situated 5 km (3.11 miles) south-east of Ak-Beshim. It got its name from the eleventh century Karakhanid

8 Appendix 1 has the list of coins with their basic facts. These findings were submitted to the Numismatics Department of the Hermitage. The coins were evaluated by O.I. Smirnova, B.I. Pankratov and E.A. Davydovich. For new numismatic evidence from the site v.: Kamyshev, 2002: 157-166 (the author arbitrarily ignores the possibility of a later circulation for earlier minted coins); Livshits, 2002: 167-169.

9 Bernshtam, 1940; 1951b.

10 Kyzlasov L.R., Smirnova, Sheherbak, 1958: 514-561; Smirnova, 1963: 163; 1981: 398-405. Detailed research v.: Kyzlasov L.R., 2004.

11 A review of the materials from a Buddhist temple and “monastery” excavated by A.N. Bernshtam and dated by him to the twelfth century proved that these buildings were not created later than the tenth century, which is true for the rest of the items from Ak-Beshim. The Karakhanid coins and pottery found at the site only mean that the ruined walls were in use at a later time, but the core materials go back to the same date as the Turgesh coins found at the same city-site. As for the Chinese type tiles, they belonged to the Tang period and their fragments were uncovered in sites I, II, IV excavated by us in the layers dating from the eighth, eighth-ninth and tenth centuries. See 8th century tiles from the commemorative “temples” of the Turkic khagans and dignitaries in Mongolia (Severnaya Mongoliya, 1927: 39-41, 78, fig. 10). In one of his latest articles A.N. Bernshtam himself dated the Buddhist temple to the ninth and tenth centuries (Po sledam..., 1954: 295).

12 Volin, 1960.

13 Mukhlisov, 1971: 72.

minaret (the Burana tower) finely built from square flamed bricks and preserved up to these days. This small Karakhanid town with the ruined mosque and a few other buildings, which we examined in 1953-54, was founded by the Karakhanid Turks in the vicinity of the ruins of the city of Suyab possibly destroyed by these same Turks¹⁴. The construction of the new town could not have been the "relocation" of the old one which was the case with other cities (i.e. Afrasiab – Samarkand, etc.). It could not have been Balasagun recreated at a new location because, firstly, the Burana site does not have layers from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries; secondly, it is too small to have been the Balasagun of the 11th-14th centuries, a vast city it emerges from written records. Let me cite one fact to prove this. In 1210 the city of Balasagun fortified with strong walls was besieged by a great army of Khara-Khitans (Qidans) for 16 days to be later plundered for three more days with a loss of 47 000 Muslim inhabitants of the city¹⁵. An event of this kind cannot be linked with the Burana site with its weak fortifications and small area, the absence of residential buildings that should have accommodated a lot more than 47 000 people¹⁶.

Thus, neither the Ak-Beshim nor the Burana sites can be linked with ancient Balasagun. The very first examination of the numerous valuable archaeological data uncovered in the excavations of 1953 made it possible to conclude that the early feudal city whose remains are known by the Kirghis name of Ak-Beshim used to be a major center of trade, craftsmanship, farming and culture of the Chu valley of the time (Figure 43). Founded in the fifth century, possibly, by Sogdian settlers (judging by the inscriptions on coins, stamps, by the pottery type and other archaeological evidence) its population was multi-

14 Compare the opinion of A. Yu. Yakubovskiy (1940: 17) about the Karakhanids, "*their invasion at the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries was at first for some cities, especially small ones, a total catastrophe. Samarqand and Bukhara must have gone through a very hard time*" (italics by L.K.).

15 Bartold, 1943: 38.

16 This conclusion is still being questioned by archaeologists and historians from Kyrgyzstan, even though they have not offered any serious arguments against it over the last 50 years. The epigraphist V.N. Nastich, whose authoritarian statements together with B.D. Kochnev's numismatic evidence promoted the acceptance of the theory of identification of Burana as Balasagun by S.G. Agadzhanov (1991: 243, note 80), which I contest, did not rely on the indication of the location of the city in question on a series of kairaks (tomb stones – tr.) from the Burana tower but only used the inscription on the tomb stone of sheikh Fatih Mehmet (died circa 1311/1312) which was later quoted in a written source of the sixteenth century. But his nisba (Balasakuni) only points to his origins but not to his place of rest. Neither could we relate to Burana with any degree of certainty those "roofs of tall buildings: minarets, palaces, madrasah arches" which emerged "from under the sand" in "some locality" in the seventeenth century (which, according to Ibn Vali, the inhabitants related to the former Balsagun). The Karakhanid coins studied by V.D. Kochnev were minted in the eleventh century in Balasagun (also known as Quz Ordu) but the fact of their discovery at the Ak-Beshim and Burana sites should not necessarily be linked with the possibility of them having been minted there (V. Nastich, 1989: 159, 167, 168, 175, 176; Kochnev, 1989: 144-158).

ethnic. Not only the Sogdians but also the Turks and occasionally the Syrians and at times even the Chinese lived there. The city was an important point along the Great Silk Road and it had close commercial and cultural links with both the central areas of Middle Asia and with Eastern Turkistan. Communities of different religious beliefs like Buddhists and Christians, Middle Asian Zoroastrians and Turkic Manicheans all lived in the city. Chinese sources state that the famous medieval poet Li Bo (701-762) was born in Suyab.

The city had its own ruler who had coins minted on behalf of Turkic khagans (with his name and tamga (family heraldic sign – tr.) on them)¹⁷. Today, compared to the time of the excavations, we do not have to assume that the ruler of the city was a Sogdian just because the coins minted there had legends in the Sogdian language. Today we have no doubts that the Sogdian alphabet and language were official in the First Turkic khaganate (552-603) and the following Western Turkic khaganate (603-630) and Turgesh khaganate (699-766)¹⁸. No small contribution to the establishment of this highly important historical and cultural fact highlighting the continuity and interaction between the early medieval political systems of Middle Asia was made by our team who among the results of the excavation of the Ak-Beshim site produced important evidence: above all a series of Turgesh coins and other coin types of the Turgesh circulation and carried out their analysis.

The hope expressed in our early publications that new facts of this city's history would be discovered was soon and fully realized when a detailed study of the archaeological evidence from the site was conducted. As early as 1960 the British orientalist G. Clauson identified the city's name and delivered a special report at the 25th International Congress of Orientalists. The researcher relied on the assumption by Édouard Chavannes expressed in 1900 as a result of the analysis of written sources featuring the Turks in which he located the capital of the Western Turkic khaganate in the seventh and eighth centuries at the site of the modern Tokmak. This ancient city was called Su-ye or Sui-ye in Chinese records and Suyab in Arabian sources. The excavations carried by the Chu Archaeological Detachment proved that quite in keeping with G. Clauson only the big Ak-Beshim settlement fitted both the timeframe of Suyab and its major urban components featuring in written sources (i.e. a Buddhist monastery comparable to the Dayun monastery). "The history of Ak Beshim as reconstructed by the archaeologists is exactly that of the famous city of Suyab as recorded by the historians, and my suggestion, quite simply, is that Ak Beshim is Suyab", summed up G. Clauson¹⁹. Now this fact is indisputable.

Thus, thanks to the tactics of field work by the Chu Archaeological

17 Xuan Jiang (the Chinese traveler visiting Tian Shan in the seventh century) reports that in Chu valley there were "a few dozens of cities each under its own ruler but all subject to the Turks" (Bartold, 1943: 17).

18 Kyzlasov L.R., 2004.

19 Clauson, 1961: 4.

Detachment that concentrated on one of the largest sites of the Chu valley for their research of the early medieval culture the formerly unknown ruins of the capital city of the Western Turkic khaganate were discovered. The city of Suyab was no longer just a name mentioned in early written sources; the main features of its long-term economic and cultural, social and ethnic development as well as its rich architectural characteristics became an accessible object of archaeological study.

4.2. City and its excavation

Prior to the excavations at the Ak-Beshim site we explored some routes along the Chu valley and the northern slope of the Kyrgyz mountain range and also, in 1953-1954, the northern bank of Lake Issyk-Kul²⁰. Of special interest were the estuaries and gorges of mountain streams flowing into the Chu River: Kyzyl-Su, Shamsi, Kegety, and Issikata. With the assistance of the Assessment and Control Department of State Farms around the town of Tokmak we identified the scale of seasonal variations in the water discharge from those streams that irrigate the areas of the left bank of the Chu in the part of the valley closest to the excavation site. This enabled us to visualize a comprehensive and quite realistic picture of medieval farming in a wider area around the Ak-Beshim and Burana sites.

During these exploratory field trips our attention was attracted by an exceptionally pure underwater stream taking its source as far away as in the Shamsi gorge and tumbling down into a small lake on the left bank of the Chu River at about 1.5-2 km (0.62-1.24 miles) west-north-west of the Ak-Beshim ruins. This reservoir of filtered mineral water served as a major source of water supply for the inhabitants of the medieval Suyab. Apparently, the contemporary underwater stream was just the end point of the medieval man-made water tunnels (*kariz*) utilized by the farmers of the Chu valley. There are grounds to believe that it was constructed as early as in the fifth century before the foundation of the Suyab city because the existence of the system suggests an etymological explanation for the name of the city. It is highly likely that this underground *kariz* stream had a Turkic-Sogdian name of Suyab because *su* is water (in Turkic) and *yab* is channel in Iranian-Sogdian. The new city was called after the stream supplying it with water. In this respect the new selection from Chinese sources about Suyab recently compiled and translated into Russian by Yu.A. Zuev is especially important. This specialist on China and the Turkic peoples refers to "several travel accounts pointing to Suyab which make it possible to assume that it was situated in the basin of the Chu River also known to Chinese and Arabian authors as 'Suyab'"²¹.

²⁰ Kyzlasov L.R., 1972b: 102-107.

²¹ Zuev, 2002: 262-277.

Similar two-syllable place names that originated in the Turkic-Sogdian culture are quite common. Let us look at a distant, in terms of geography, example; Kamijket “the Yenisei city” featuring in *Hudūd Al-Ālam* (the tenth century) and lying in the upper course of the Yenisei. In this place name the Turkic *Kām* “Yenisei” joined the Sogdian *ket* “city”²².

Undoubtedly, the successive Turkic rulers of these lands quite accurately assessed the economic potential of Suyab’s location and turned it into the capital of the Western Turkic, Turgesh and later Karluk khaganates²³. It is also known that the Chinese kingdoms of the seventh-tenth centuries claimed supremacy over this city on the Great Silk Road.

The center of the city was made up of a densely built shakhristan totaling about 35 ha (350 000 square meters) in area and enclosed within strong rectangular walls with overhanging fortification towers (Figure 44). In the southwestern corner of the shakhristan there was a tall citadel of which fragments of four major towers have remained at the corners.

The eastern side of the shakhristan was adjoined by a walled area of over 60 hectares, the remains of the rabad (Figures 43, 44), inside which there were isolated free-standing houses with neither unbroken quarters typical of feudal rabads nor any homogeneous occupational layers. Apparently, the rabad, which had a small lake with drinking water, soon became one of the stations along the Great Silk Road and was used as a stop-over by caravans.

Around the fortified and walled city center there lay the city outskirts bounded on the east and south-east by a deep and wide ravine nearly always full of either spring melt-water or the discharged water surpluses from the irrigation ditches. The three-kilometer-long ravine starts in the vicinity of a small contemporary settlement housing an orphanage (1953-1960) and runs into the flood plain of the Chu River cutting through an old high terrace along its way (Figure 43). The old terrace of the left bank of the Chu above its flood plain (which is now some distance to the north of the old river bed) provided reliable natural protection from the north for the city oasis. It is no coincidence that 1.5 km (0.62 miles) away from the ravine and at the top of the terrace sits a strong Turt-Kul (127 x 125 m) that is the remains of an ancient sentry fortress whose walls and towers ensured a long unbroken view of the Chu valley around (Figure 43). The western and southern boundaries of the city outskirts were formed by a line of strong walls made from pakhsa and cob bricks. The walls ran in a semicircle (with the radii of above 1.5 km) and enclosed a large area around the shakhristan beginning from the sentry

22 Kyzlasov L.R., 2004.

23 We should note that among the first records of the headquarters of the Western Turkic khaganate was an account by the Buddhist pilgrim-monk Xuan Jiang who visited the site of Suyab construction at about 630 while traveling along the Great Silk Route from Lake Issik-Kul along the Chu valley (Tugusheva, 1991: 3-7).

fortress and up to the present day Chu orphanage where they met the ravine. Inside the entire enclosed area of the city outskirts there are half-ploughed hills scattered at a different distance from one another some of which could be the remains of several pre-historic farming settlements and some, a lesser number, of cob brick burial sites remaining from the old city (Figure 44).

The academic goals of the Kyrghyz archaeological and ethnographical expedition of the Soviet Academy of Sciences determined both the choice of the largest and most important city site in the Chu valley and the preference given among the numerous smoothed down mounds of the site to those ones that were able to provide most evidence to characterize the special cultural features of the medieval city. At the planning stage of the expedition we had to bear in mind the limited time for the field work of the team; we only had two field seasons at our disposal. Due to these reasons together with the need to provide academic training for archaeology and architecture students, who were in charge of some of the excavations and laboratory work, we designed a new technique for the excavation aiming at a better investigation of the architectural peculiarities of all the uncovered heterogeneous artifacts (which were later used in their recreation) and obtaining as a result a complete archaeological source.

We should note that this technique of excavating large sites implemented by our team had never been used in Kirghizia before apart from the excavations near the village Sretenki in May 1953 carried out by P.N. Kozhemyako, another member of our detachment²⁴.

Prior to our expedition archaeologists in Middle Asia and Eastern Turkestan resorted to a technique of uncovering residential and sacred buildings room after room which was first used in the nineteenth century. The main aim was to discover large-scale remains of the interior and ancient written records that might have been able to survive in the dry climate. We introduced a new technique of examining buildings, namely, the system of screens that is a combination of lengthwise sections and crosscuts in every cob brick or daub construction under study. This created favorable conditions for a detailed study of the stratigraphy of the chronological layers. As a result we were able to accurately identify the stages at which each section was founded, used, reconstructed, subsequently used and destroyed. A variety of different conditions reflected in the vertical screens and determined by the history of the sites were recorded and complimented with instrumental surveying of intermittent plains from every period of the site's lifetime. A careful correlation of the uncovered findings with these data enabled us to come up with accurate dating for each of the subsequent stages of either man-made or natural transformation of the architectural sites.

24 Okladnikov, 1954a: 50-52.

Thanks to the efficient technique and management of field work we were able to assess the results within a short period of time and as early as in 1959 a full account of the Chu Archaeological Detachment excavations was published²⁵. Following this publication our excavation technique for the medieval cob brick and daub buildings became a standard procedure and was implemented into field research by other archaeological expeditions studying the ruined cities of Asia.

The work of the Chu Archaeological Detachment led to the discovery of numerous facts which were of crucial importance for the history of the culture of eastern Middle Asia and became widely known. As early as in 1956 when the world marked the 2500s anniversary of Gautama Buddha my research article dedicated to the studies of the first Buddhist temple in the Soviet Middle Asia was presented to Jawaharlal Nehru and published in Delhi in English and 12 languages of India. The Ak-Beshim research was highly estimated and closely reported in 1960-1961 in British and French oriental science. With time the same was done by German and Italian researchers. Up till now there have been discussions of our research in China and Japan²⁶. The Buddhist temple materials attract the most attention. As for Russia appreciation has taken longer to be earned²⁷.

In 1953-54 the Chu Archaeological Detachment excavated five sites at various locations in Ak-Beshim (Figure 44).

In 1953 we identified two key sites for investigation (Figure 44), namely, a big elongated hill to the south-west of the city citadel outside the walls of the central part of the city (site I) and the central part of the settlement, the shakhristan (site II). The excavations of these sites carried on into 1954. In addition, in order to implement the accepted plan during the second year of the excavations three other sites were uncovered (site III and V to the south-east of the shakhristan wall and also site IV inside the rabad) (Figure 44).

25 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 155-241.

26 See G. Clauson's report at the 25th International Congress of Orientalists (*Problemy vostokovedeniya*, 1960, № 5: 212); Clauson, 1961; Hambis, 1962; Gabain, 1973: 241, 242; 1979: 48, 84, 149; Forte, 1994; Akebieximu Chengzhi, 1984: 3, 4.

27 The breakthrough nature of the Ak-Beshim excavations is being hashed up even now. V., for example: Baipakov, Goryacheva, 1999. B.A. Litvinskiy's recent appreciation of my report of 1954 is especially important to me. "I remember the young Kyzlasov's report about the excavations of Ak-Beshim. A new chapter in the Middle Asiatic archaeology was started, namely, a study of Buddhist antiquities and Buddhist art. I was astounded" (Litvinskiy, 2004: 23). This appreciation has nothing to do with my jubilee. Compare. "L. Kyzlasov uncovered the first Buddhist monastery in Ak-Beshim in 1953-54. Having carried out the archaeological excavation at the highest possible level L. Kyzlasov examined all the materials with his usual thoroughness and came to the conclusion that the temple dated from the very end of the seventh - beginning of the eighth century" (Litvinskiy, 1996: 192).

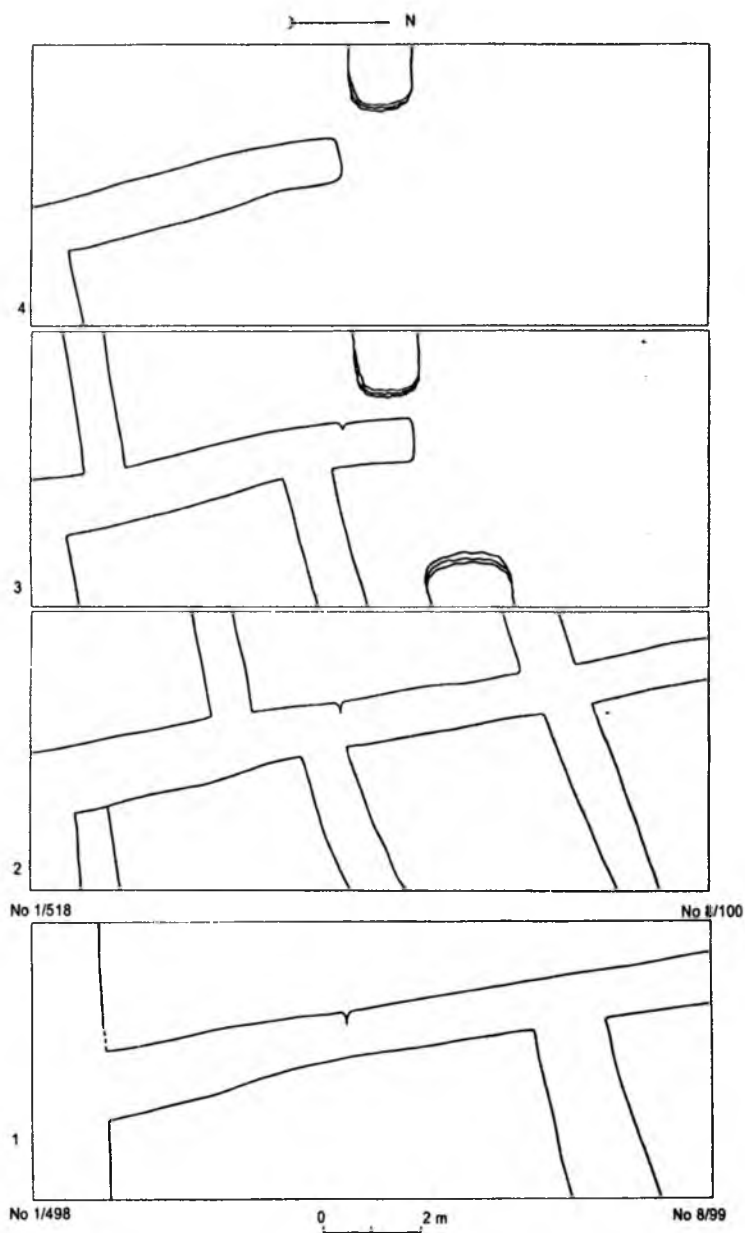


Figure 45. Stratigraphic excavation pit № 1 situated in the center of the shakhristan's site II; plans of dwelling-buildings of the four construction layers are numbered in chronological order

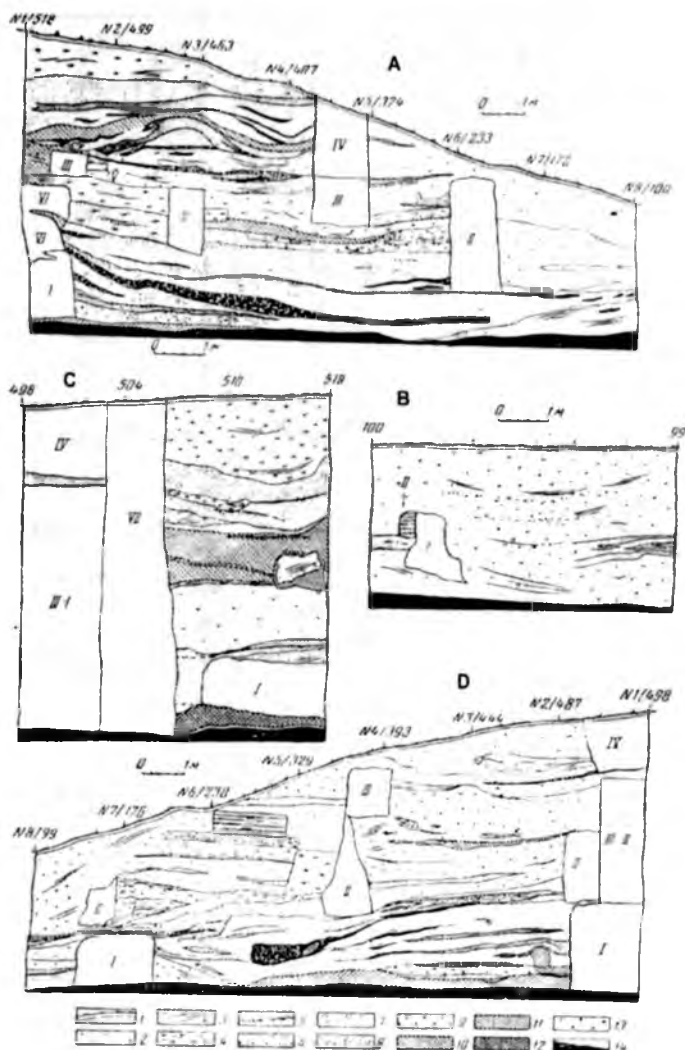


Figure 46. Western (A), northern (B), southern (C) and eastern (D) sections of the stratigraphic excavation pit in shakhristan's site II. 1 – turf line, 2 – dense clay, 3 – clay layers, 4 – friable clay, 5 – cindery layers, 6 – layered clay, 7 – fragments of cob bricks, 8 – pebble, 9 – green clay, 10 – red clay, 11 – yellow clay, 12 – brown clay, 13 – sand, 14 – natural; I – wall of the first construction layer, II – wall of the second construction layer, III – wall of the third construction layer, IV – wall of the fourth construction layer, V – bricks, VI – clay daub. VII – longitudinal wall which were built on in the first and fourth construction layers

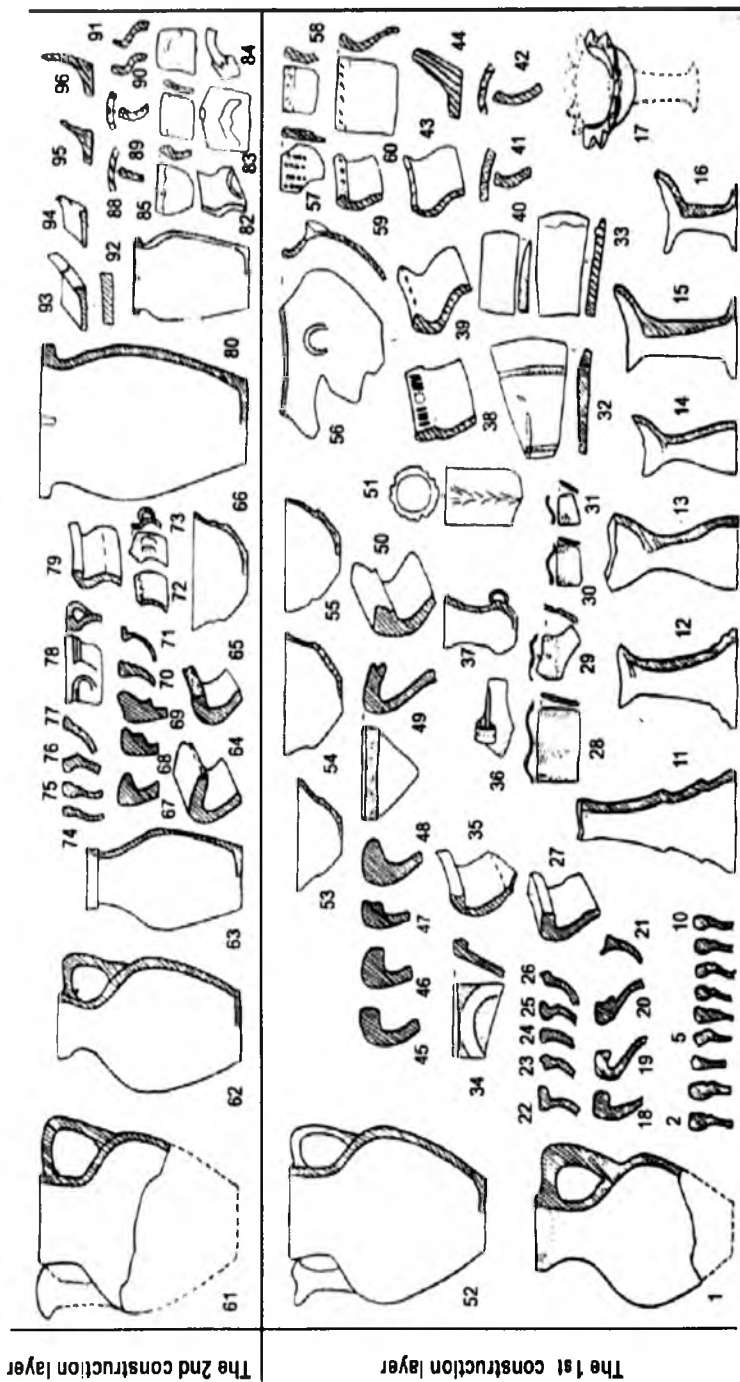


Figure 47. Stratigraphic excavation pit in shakhristan's site II; pottery samples of the first and the second construction layers



Figure 48. Stratigraphic excavation pit in shakhristan's site II; pottery samples of the third and the fourth construction layers

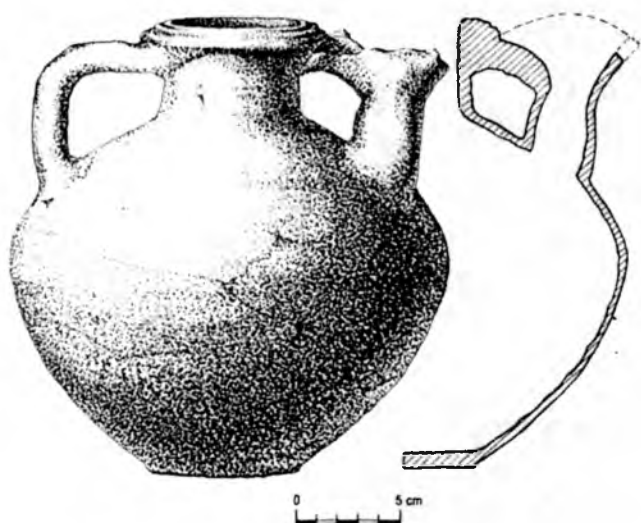


Figure 49. A vessel of the second construction layer excavated in shakhristan

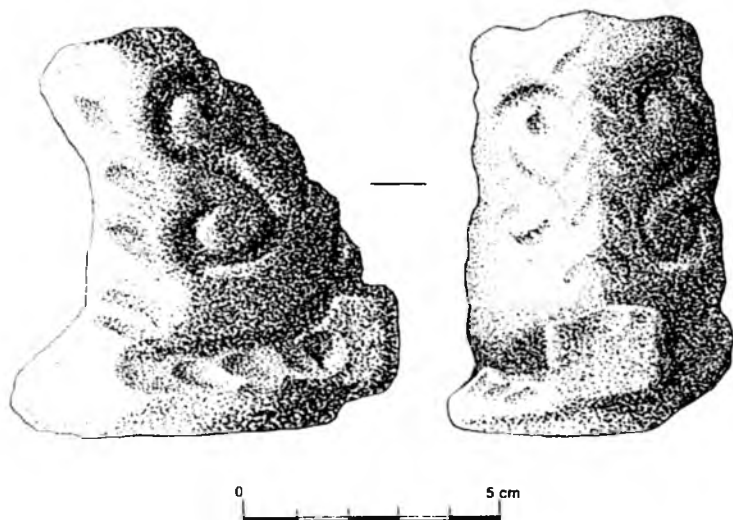


Figure 50. Ceramic support for a copper excavated in shakhristan: upper construction layer

As a result, during the two field seasons at the Ak-Beshim settlement a unified technique was used to examine the first Buddhist temple and monastery in Middle Asia (site I) and the earliest Christian church (site IV), two Manichaean burial complexes in the form of naus (non-Muslim burial construction – tr.) (site III) and a tower similar to a castle (site V) that were discovered for the first time in history.

As it was critically important to identify the name of the ancient city, its lifespan, the religious affiliation of its inhabitants and their ethnicity we decided to start with digging downwards through the entire depth of the construction layers built up in the shakhristan over time. In 1953-54 we examined stratigraphic excavation pit № 1 (14 x 6 m) situated on the tall plateau in the center of the shakhristan's site II (Figure 44). The pit enabled us to identify the thickness of the occupational layer in the center of the settlement, which reached 7.5 m, and the digging terminated at the depth of 8.5 m inside the undisturbed natural ground. It was discovered that the shakhristan was made up of large quarters full of numerous dwellings as was the case in other early medieval cities of Middle Asia as well. The excavations identified four construction layers, the massive cob brick walls of each new layer were placed on top of the previous walls now used as the foundation (Figures 45, 46). Only the walls of the first layer were entirely tamped clay, not cob brick.

Judging by the findings and first of all by the pottery (Figures 47-50) the early constructions at the shakhristan (layer 1) date from the fifth and sixth centuries. The final date can be better identified because a Chinese coin (Dali yuanbao) from the Tang Dynasty minted in 769 was found on the floor of the top building. This circumstance and above all a complete identity of the pottery findings from the top layer of the shakhristan (pits 1 and 2) with the pottery from the residential rooms of the second "Karluk" layer of the first Buddhist temple (site I)²⁸ helped to determine the final date in the lifetime of the later constructions of the city as the ninth and the tenth centuries A.D. (Figure 50). Life at the shakhristan as well as at site I was terminated at the same time which is obviously explained by the invasion in the Chu valley of the "wild" Turkic people of Yagma in the middle of the tenth century and by the continuous feuding common at that time in the Chu valley²⁹.

In order to check the date of the collapse of the city at the corner of the shakhristan plateau east of stratigraphic excavation site 1 a shallow exploratory pit № 2 (3 x 3 m) was dug out for the study of the upper layers (Figure 44). In it there were also found some remains of cob brick constructions, some pottery dating from the ninth and tenth centuries and Chinese coins of the Tang Dynasty. As for the findings in excavation site 1,

28 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 213-227.

29 Belenitskiy, Bentovich, Bol'shakov, 1973: 12, 120, 123, 209.

they were represented by a large number of pottery, the Turgesh coins and coins of the Turgesh circulation, as well as isolated items supporting the dating of the occupational layer as that from the fifth-tenth centuries.

4.3. Excavation of the Buddhist temple (site I)

Site I denotes the excavation area of a mound stretching exactly from west to east beyond the boundaries of the shakhristan 100 m south-west of the citadel (Figures 44, 51). This hill used to be at the end of a group of "outlying settlement mounds" outside the city wall, the elevations that stretched to the south-east along the southern wall of the shakhristan up to the rabad.

This particular hill attracted our attention because of its peculiar relief features. It had a mostly rectangular shape with softened and smoothed down lines stretching directly from west to east (about 85 m with an average width of 35 m). The top of the mound was located at its western end where it reached 4.2 m in height from the contemporary ground level; when measured from the ground level at its eastern tip the height reached 8 meters. To the east of the top over the steep slope there was a narrow platform stretching crosswise with a deepening in the middle similar to a chamber and beyond in the eastern part of the hill the slope leveled to form a platform of about 3 m in height on average when measured from the present-day level of the ground at the eastern tip of the hill (Figure 51). The second platform ran up to the eastern tip of the hill and had a deep lengthwise indentation of 35 x 16 m in size. It looked like a large yard surrounded by walls.

This kind of relief, the look and the position of the hill resembled the Sogdian temples of Panjakent excavated in the previous years by the Tajik archaeological expedition³⁰. This prompted the idea that the hill might have concealed the remains of a temple built according to Sogdian architectural canons. This assumption seemed legitimate as we knew that the Chu valley in the sixth-eighth centuries A.D. was colonized by the Sogdians. When the building was fully uncovered in the course of the excavations our assumption was largely proved accurate.

In order to make sure that the stratification of such a large construction was better studied its excavation was conducted as follows. At first the mound was divided into two halves by a central lengthwise axis from west to east. Each half was divided into 13 adjacent excavation pits of 6 meters wide along the lengthwise axis. The length of the pits was determined by the length of the hill slopes, that is the width of each half of the hill. The pits were separated from one another by crosswise axes with leveling stakes placed at every two meters as was done along the lengthwise axis as well.

30 V.: Trudy..., 1950b; 1953; v. also: Zhivopis'..., 1954.

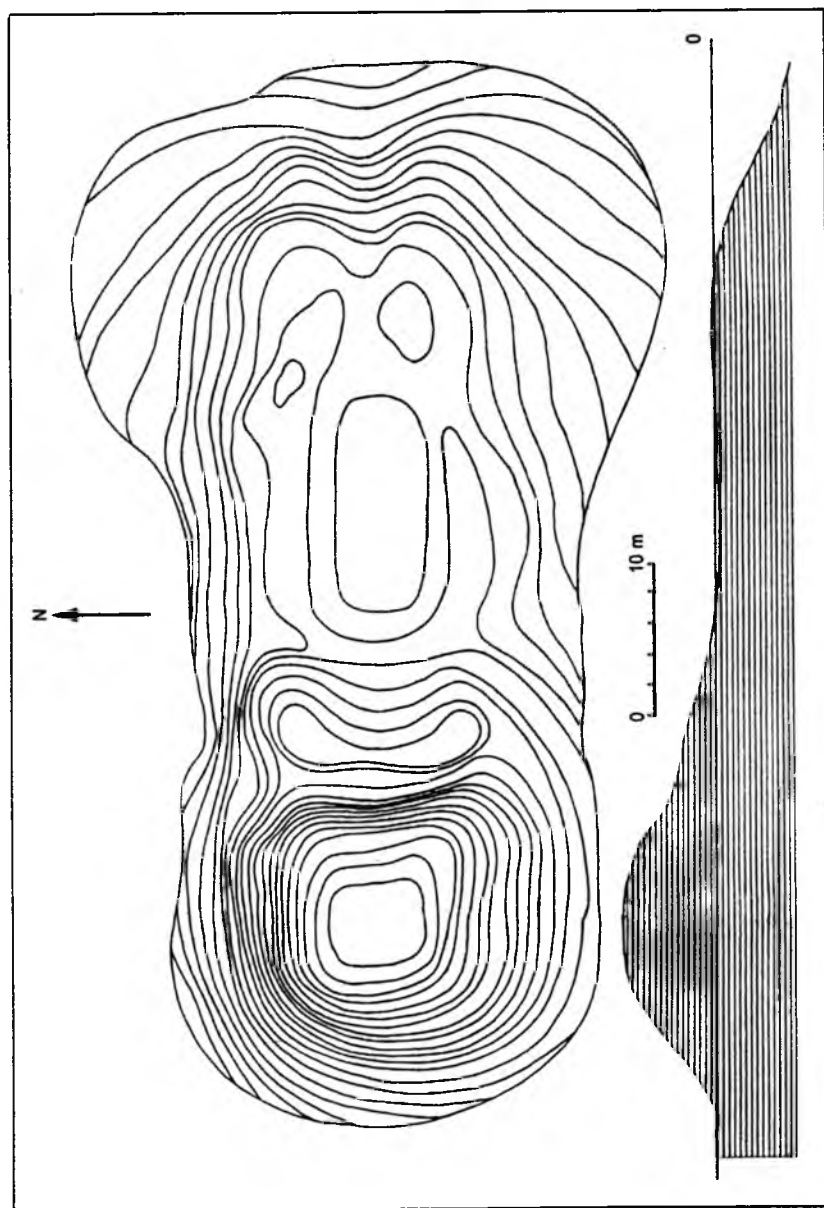


Figure 51. Plan of the mound of the site I

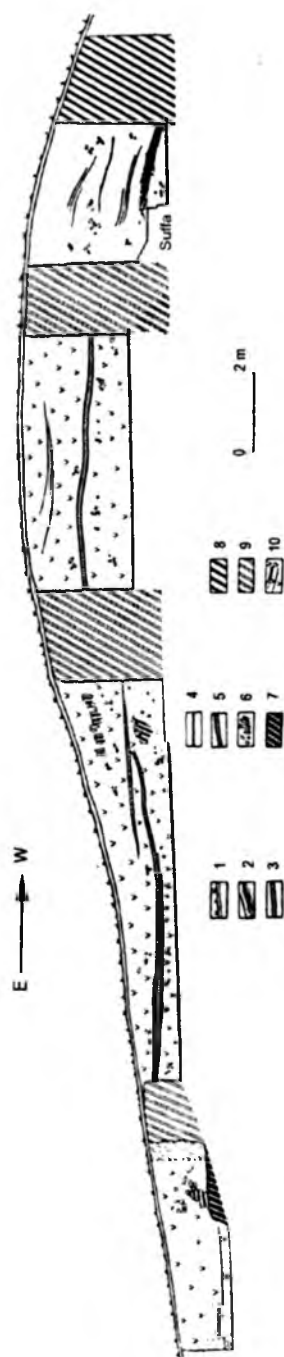


Figure 52. Western part of the central lengthwise section of the site. 1 - turf line, 2 - cindery layer, 3 - yellow clay, 4 - floor, 5 - sand, 6 - fragments of cob bricks, 7 - dense dark clay, 8 - outer wall of the temple, 9 - inner wall of the temple, 10 - clay



Figure 53. Crosswise sections of the site 1: pit 2 (a), pit 3 (b) and pit 4 (c).
 1 - outer wall of the temple, 2 - inner wall of the temple, 3 - cindery layer, 4 - yellow clay,
 5 - dense dark clay, 6 - sand, 7 - fragments of cob bricks, 8 - floor, 9 - natural

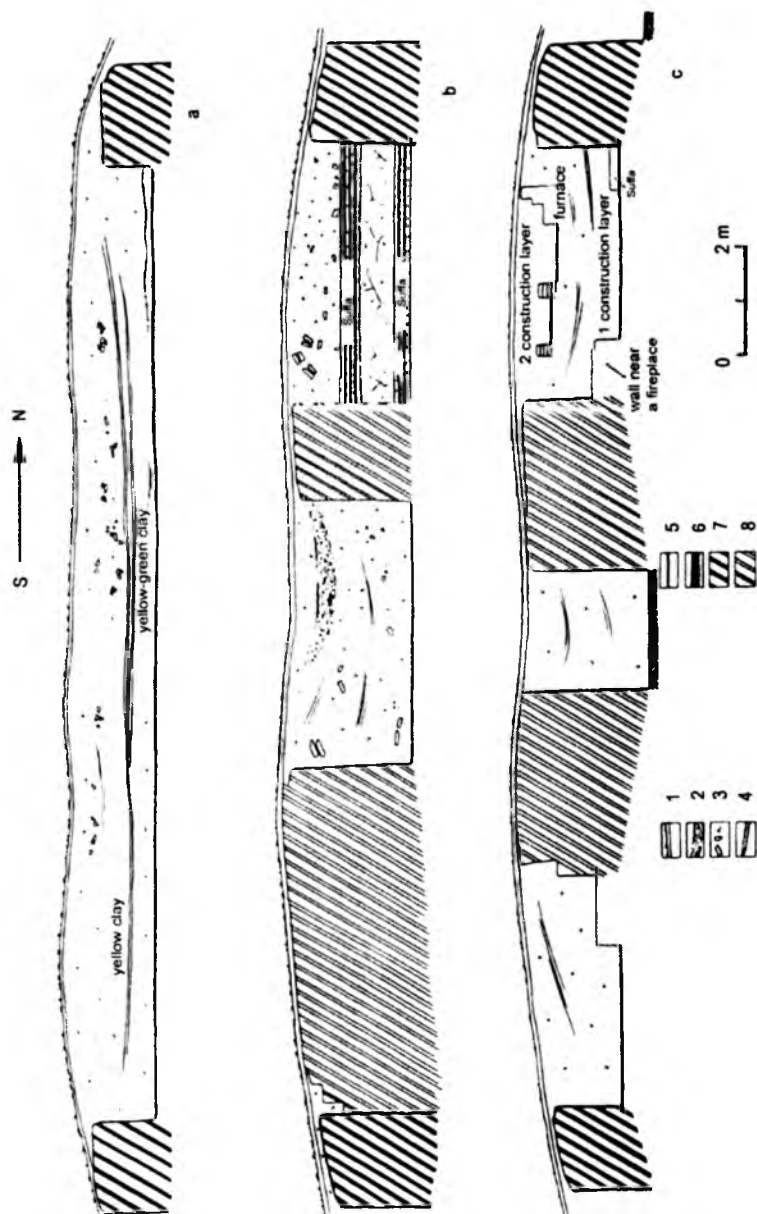


Figure 54. Crosswise sections of the site I: pit 52 (a), pit 12 (b) and pit 13 (c).

1 – turf line, 2 – cindery layer, 3 – fragments of cob bricks, 4 – sand, 5 – floor, 6 – natural, 7 – outer wall of the temple, 8 – inner wall of the temple

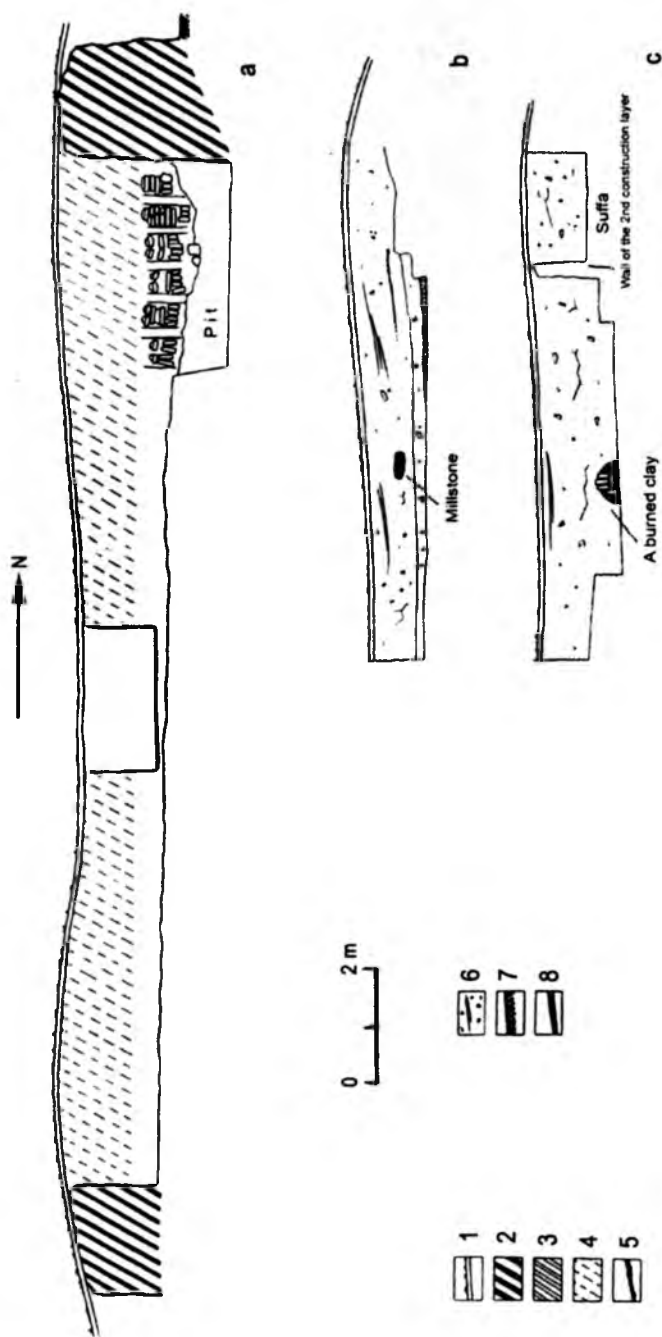


Figure 55. Crosswise sections of the site I: pit 6 (a), pit 10 (b) and pit 11 (c). 1 – turf line, 2 – outer wall of the temple, 3 – inner wall of the temple, 4 – ruined pakhsa wall, 5 – cinderly layer, 6 – clay and fragments of cob bricks, 7 – natural, 8 – clay with organic remainders

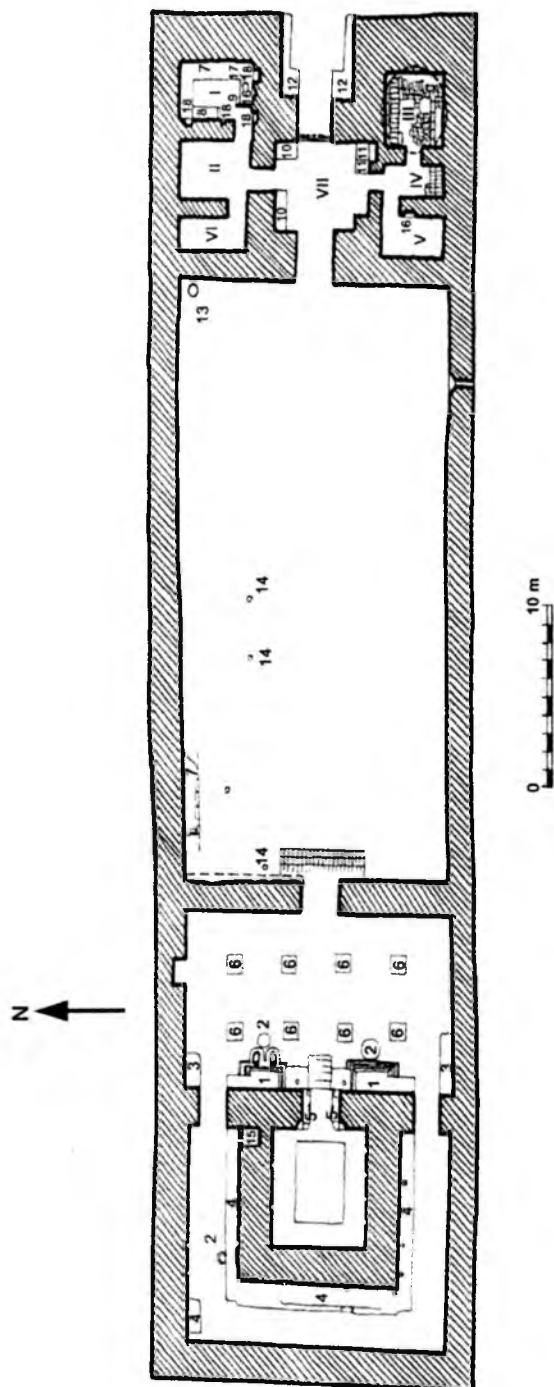


Figure 56. Plan of the Buddhist temple (site I) of the first period of its function: 1 – pedestals for the gigantic statues of Buddha; 2 – circles for sacrifices covered in alabaster; 3 – suffas for statues in the chamber; 4 – suffas of the gallery; 5 – doorway of the sanctuary with the granite foot of doors; 6 – foundations of the columns; 7 – suffas of the dwelling rooms; 8 – bench with a circular sausage headrest; 9 – wall protected the fireplace; 10 – suffas of the hall; 11 – staircase; 12 – suffas of the gate; 13 – batrab; 14 – iwan pillars' round pits; 15 – niche in the wall; I-VII – buildings at the gate

The pits were numbered from west to east. The pits in the northern half of the mound were numbered from 1 to 13, those in the southern half from 1a to 13a respectively. When all the axes were leveled and the plan of the hill was drawn (Figure 51) the screens-edges were placed along the axes to trace the stratigraphic layers of the building (Figures 52-55). In 1953 pits 1-5 and 1a-5a spanning the hilltop and the provisional chamber (Figure 51) were excavated as well as the easternmost boundary of the mound where the temple entrance was marked by an indentation (pits 12-13 and 12a-13a). In the same year in the yard pits 6, 6a, 8, 10 and 11 were just started. Pits 1-6 and 1a-6a were completely excavated during 1953 and the remaining ones including the new pits (7, 9 and 7a-11a) were fully studied in 1954 (Figure 56).

In the course of the excavations of site 1 during the two field seasons 5000 cubic meters of earth was removed. A bulldozer and a scraper were used to remove the rubble and cut the hill at its foot outside the outer walls of the building. Prior to that the hill had been cut at its foot manually at several locations by lengthwise trenches which exposed the surfaces of the outer walls and helped to prove that the areas of the hill at the foot only consisted of the smoothed down upper parts of the walls and did not contain occupational layers. To uncover the inner rooms spades and more often knives and brushes were used because there was a constant need to carefully assess the structure of cob brick rubble and apart from the cob brick walls to look for fragments of clay statues, frescoes, architectural and decorative elements of the walls and especially fragments of ceilings from the temple³¹.

4.3.1. Architecture of the temple

*The building's lay-out and construction materials*³². The excavations identified that under the hill were buried well-preserved remains of a Buddhist temple dating from the very end of the seventh – beginning of the eighth century with the total length of 76 m and width of 22 m. The temple

31 The present publication does not include the numerous photographs that accompanied the published report with its descriptions and drawings of the architectural sites, their features and sketches of our findings. V.: Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b.

32 The text includes the outline of the author's historical and cultural understanding of the recreated image of the excavated temple in terms of its design, function, architecture and construction which enabled the classification of it as an example of early medieval Buddhist architecture and identification of its role in the history of Buddhist architecture. The technical drawings of the materials and structural characteristics of the religious complex which were used in the reconstruction of the image of the temple were made by students of architecture from the excavation team (S.G. Khmel'niyskiy and N.P. Krasnov) under my supervision. Ph.D. of architecture Veronika Leonidovna Voronina, who specially visited the Ak-Beshim site, offered valuable comments. She also reviewed and improved on the final results which we submitted for publication together with the archaeological report (v.: Khmel'niyskiy, 1959: 243-265).

was rectangular in shape and was elongated exactly along the west-east axis. The building was constructed at the top of a natural elevation ("mane") along the same axis; its western part was higher than its eastern one. This peculiarity of the natural pedestal was used in the terraced construction of the whole building; the frontal part of the temple and its yard lay lower than the floor of the central chamber and above the chamber lay the floor surface of the sanctuary (Figure 57).

The building had strong 2 m-thick walls while the walls of the sanctuary that supported the heavy dome and the gallery arches were 2.5 m wide. The eastern wall with the entrance in it was especially strong. It was 3 meters thick.

The walls of every part of the building were constructed of long cob breaks of the Sogdian sizes; 44 x 22 x 8, 45 x 23 x 9 and (most often) 48 x 24 x 9 cm. To ensure a better grip with the mortar the bricks had 4-5 lengthwise grooves at the bottom finger marked in wet clay. Two of the bricks had dog paw imprints. In the broken bricks were found imprints of straw and cereal grains (barley?) mixed in with the straw.

The wall foundation (base) was nearly always made of cut blocks of daub (pakhsa) 90-80 x 60-50 cm in size whose thickness corresponded to the wall thickness in the given location (Figure 58). The block surface was perfectly smooth; the cuts were made with a very sharp metal tool and were quite deep. The block sizes were the same everywhere (Figure 59) apart from the outer basement blocks of the chamber which reached 97 x 77 cm in size because the stylobate in the side walls was buried a little deeper than the leveled ancient platform of the chamber floor.

The entrance and buildings at the gate. The entrance to the temple located at the eastern side had the form of a ramp with narrow suffas (a bench made of clay or cob bricks – tr.) at the sides. The portal walls used to be richly decorated with moulded clay bas-relief depicting plants, often tied in bunches like sheaves. They were all painted blue. Beyond the ramp was a doorway (2.15 m wide) with a cob brick doorstep spanning the full width of the doorway. At the eastern side of the doorway there used to be a massive wooden door of which remained a wooden doorstep on a cobblestone lining and small cobblestone foot-bearings with traces of wear (Figure 56).

The entrance led into a small hall (room VII) with six rooms joined by arched passages to the left and to the right of it (Figures 56.I-56.VI). To be more precise, there were six initial rooms but during the lifetime of the building their number and lay-out changed.

Thus, initially an arched passage led from the entrance hall to the north and into **room II** that communicated through other arched passages with rooms I and VI in the east and west respectively. All the three rooms were small and rectangular and they were lived-in but room VI which was narrow and small and was bricked over at an early stage might have served as a pantry. In room II there was a suffa and a small niche in the wall. The walls were plastered and whitewashed with alabaster.

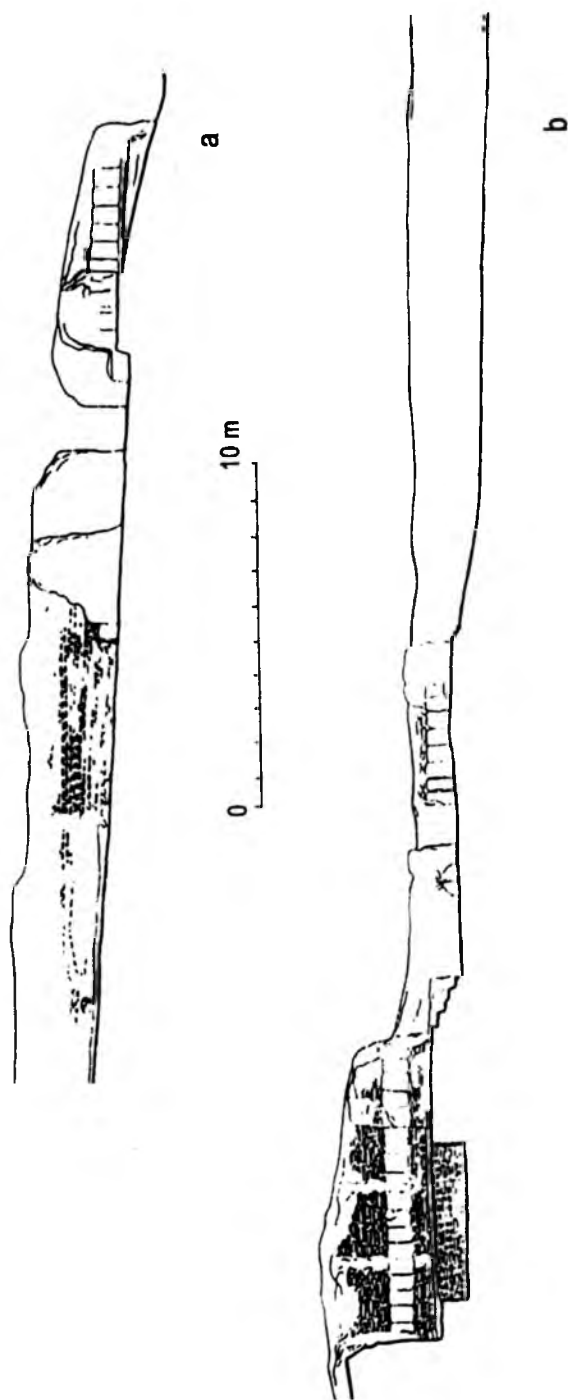


Figure 57. Lengthwise section of the Buddhist temple (site I): eastern part (a) and western part (b).

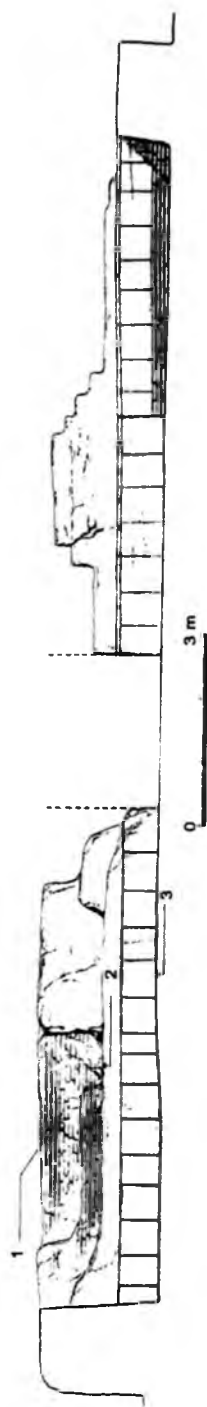


Figure 58. Eastern wall of the temple; view from the west: 1 – wall of the second construction layer;
2 – floor of the second construction layer; 3 – floor of the first construction layer

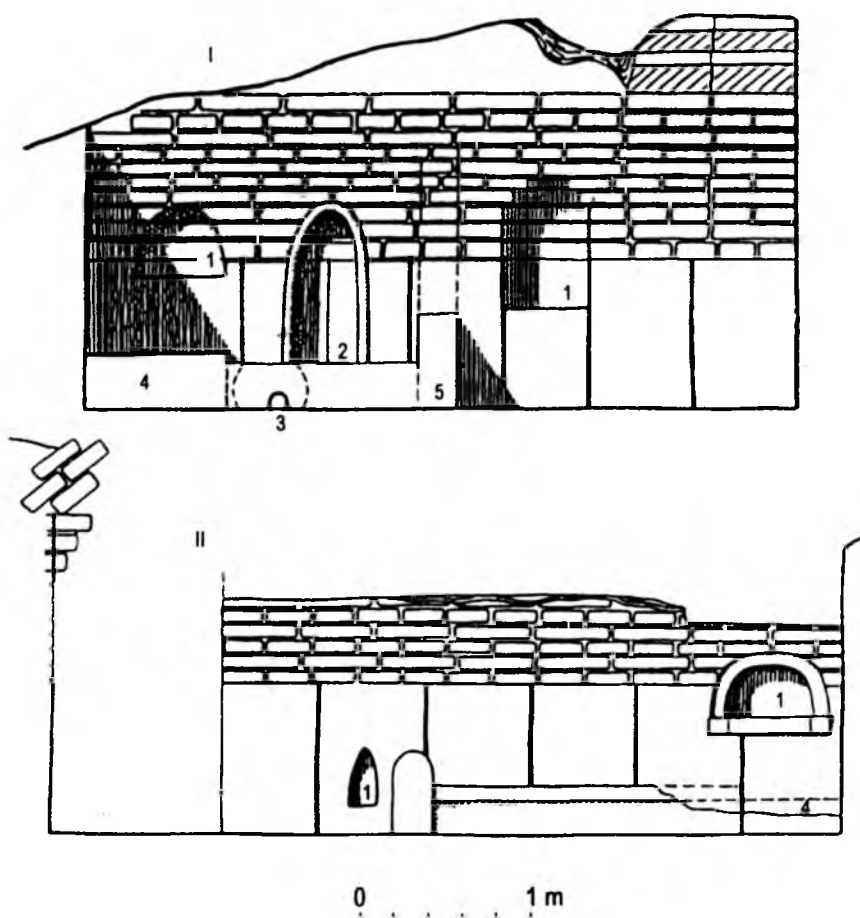


Figure 59. Southern (I) and western (II) walls of the room I:
 1 – niches; 2 – fireplace; 3 – tandoor; 4 – suffas; 5 – wall protected
 the fireplace

The most interesting room in terms of being characteristic of the living quarters of the time was *room I* which we called “the doorman’s room” (Figures 56, 59, 60.1). Its walls were carefully plastered and whitewashed with alabaster. Along the eastern and western walls ran a long suffa. In the southern wall there were two niches for utility purposes and a tall fireplace without a flue (Figure 59.I). Judging by the blackened walls over the fireplace the smoke must have escaped through the hole in the ceiling above and there might have been a chimney leading from the hole. In front of the fireplace there was a cob brick platform with a small tandoor

(cylindrical stove – tr.) (33 cm in diameter) carved in it for baking flat bread for one person, it seems. The fire chamber was at the side of the tandoor and it was filled with fine cinders which possibly remained after burning plants (Figures 59.I.3, 60.2). As the stove was located close to the door it was shielded by a tall narrow wall (one brick thick) forming a small tambour at the entrance in order to protect the fire from strong currents of air when the door was opened or closed (Figure 60.1).

In the western wall of the room there was an arched door of which the skewback of a rising arch remained (Figures 59.1, 60.1) together with two small niches and a narrow (2.25 x 0.65 m) bench built into the wall with a circular sausage headrest made of cob bricks and clay (Figures 60.1 – 60.2).

This small room (about 13 square meters in area) did not seem to have had any furniture apart from the suffa and the bench but thanks to the carefully plastered and ramped clay floor and walls (and possibly ceilings?) whitewashed with alabaster was clean and cozy.

To the south of the entrance hall behind the passage with a well-preserved arch lay three more rooms (III-V) also joined to each other by arched passages (Figures 60.3, 61-64)³³.

Room III was initially square in shape and had a dome-shaped roof whose drum was supported by four trumpet arches (only two of which survived) (Figures 56, 64. 2- 3). The examination of this room and the objects found on the lower floor (initially the floor was tiled with cob bricks 48 x 24 x 8 cm in size and covered with coating)³⁴ (e.g. a monk's clay prayer beads (Figures 89.5 – 89.6) and a bronze badge with Buddha's likeness on it (Figure 86.2)) suggest that it initially served as a Buddhist prayer room which is in keeping with the architectural design of this domed room.

Room IV, which was narrow and rectangular (Figures 60.3, 60.4, 64.2), was initially a passage (Figure 56). It had arched doorways leading to the prayer room (room III) and room V. This passage was of interest because it used to have an arched ceiling some parts of which were preserved (Figure 64.2). The arch was lined with cross section lengths. The initial floor of room V was tiled with cob bricks of the same size as in room III (Figure 56). Here on the floor a second bronze badge with Buddha's likeness was found (Figure 86.3), possibly thrown away from room III.

33 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 16.

34 Later on (we are going to discuss it further in the text) this room was lived-in during a lengthy period of time which accounts for the fact that the floors were coated several times. Figure 64.3 looks at the level of the topmost floor.

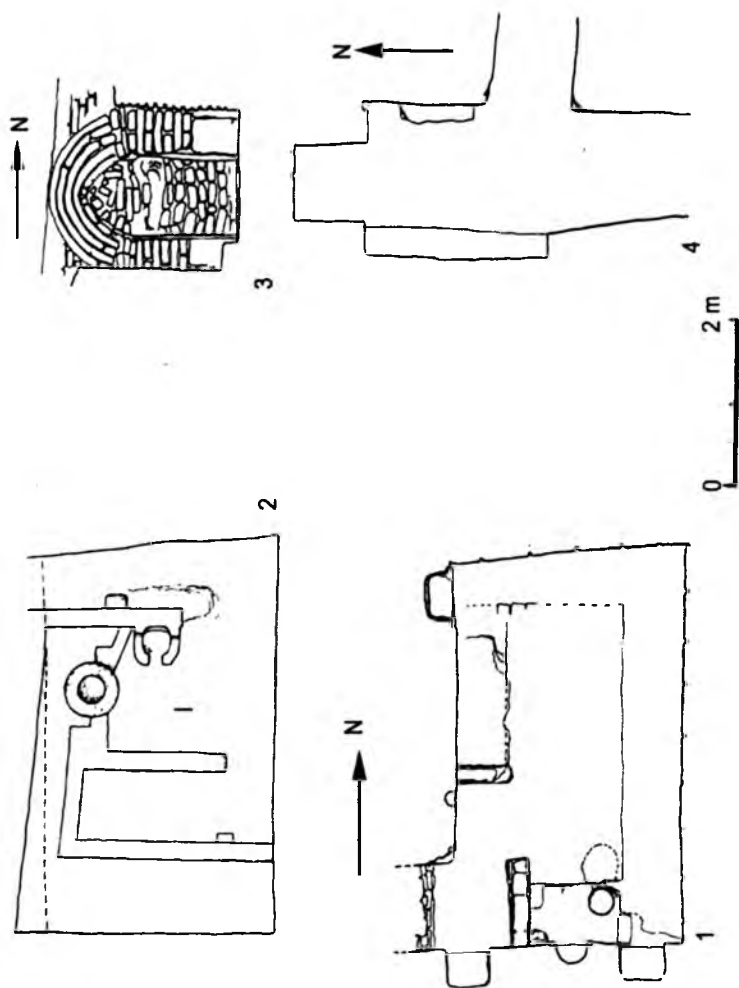


Figure 60. Buildings I and IV: 1 – plan of the room I; lower construction layer; 2 – plan of the building I of the second construction layer (above the room I); 3 – northern wall of the building IV with the arched door which was bricked over with comb; 4 – plan of the building IV in the period of nomad existence

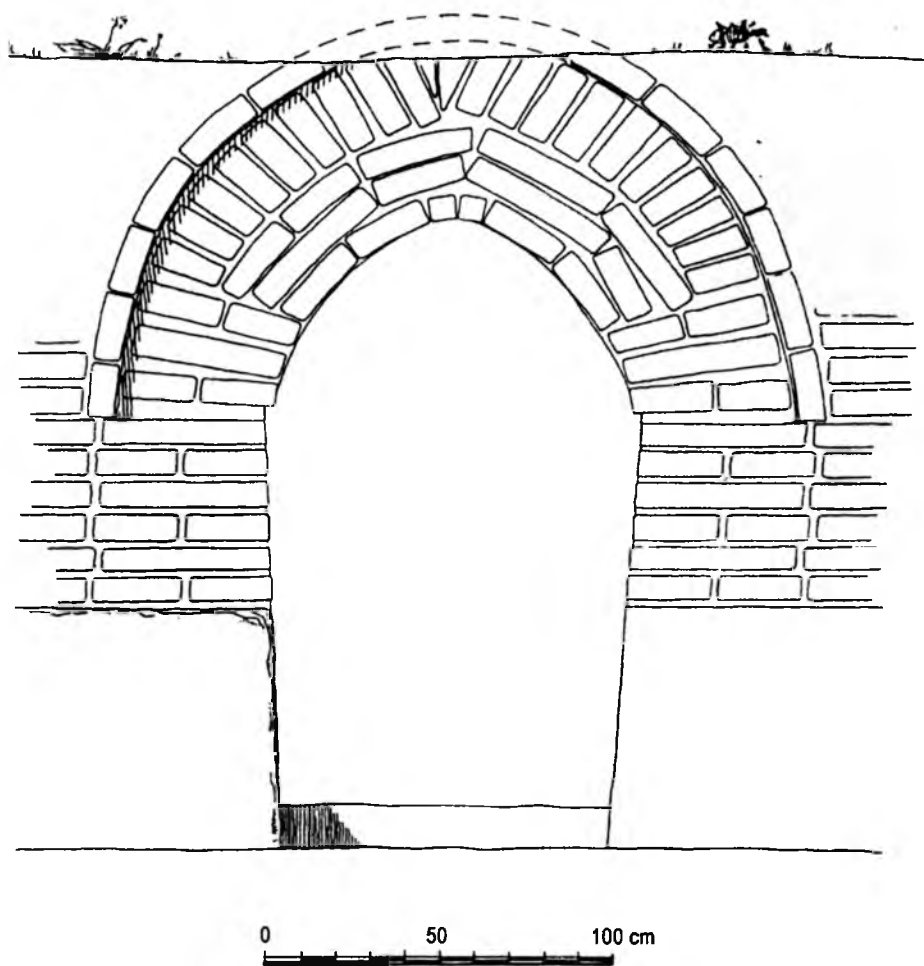


Figure 61. An arch in the eastern part of the temple.
View from the north

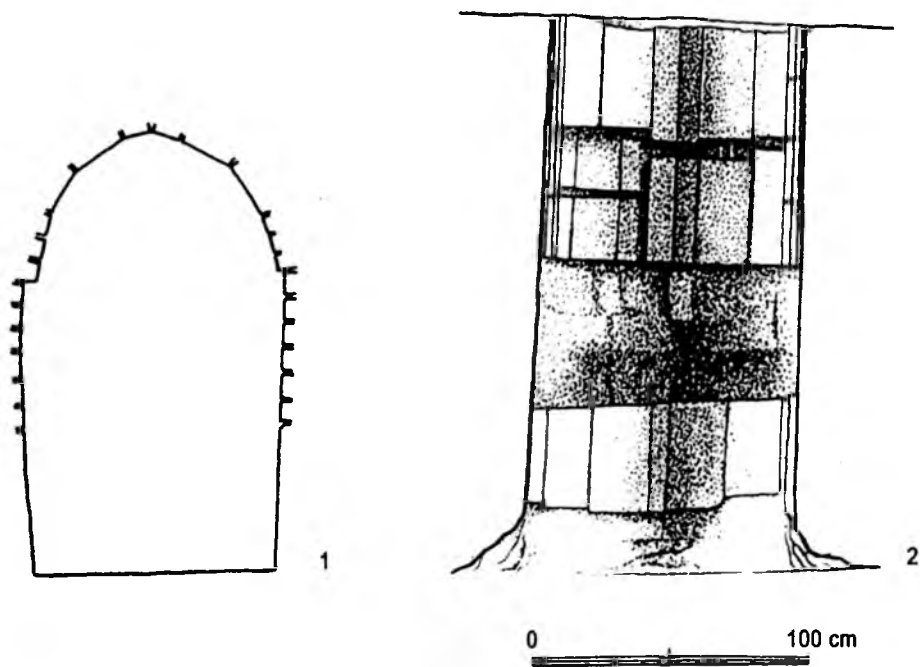


Figure 62. An arch in the eastern part of the temple; section (1) and plan of the vault (2)

Room V was small and rectangular and did not have any traces left from the ceiling, which might have been flat. A doorway with some remains of a rising arch led to it from passage IV (Figures 65; 64.2; 65). In the eastern wall of room V was a fireplace whose top was bricked over at some point later (Figure 65.A). Even though it had a fireplace, the room did not look as if it could have been inhabited because it had no suffa. Judging by the findings (a fragment of an alabaster mould for modeling terracotta statuettes of Buddha (Figure 90.1), a clay casting ladle, etc.) the room was used as a workshop for making sacred objects, mostly Buddhist icons.

Let us go back to the **entrance hall**. It was nearly square in form, about 5 x 5 m in size, and had 4 passages, each in the middle of its respective door. Two of them, as we pointed out above, led to the rooms at the sides of the entrance hall. In the north-eastern corner of the entrance hall was discovered a small suffa or pedestal whose top was in poor condition. A similar suffa was located in the north-western corner of the entrance hall, while the south-western corner had a staircase of three steps leading to the dome of room III, possibly to be able to see the visitor knocking at the temple door (Figures 56.11; 63).

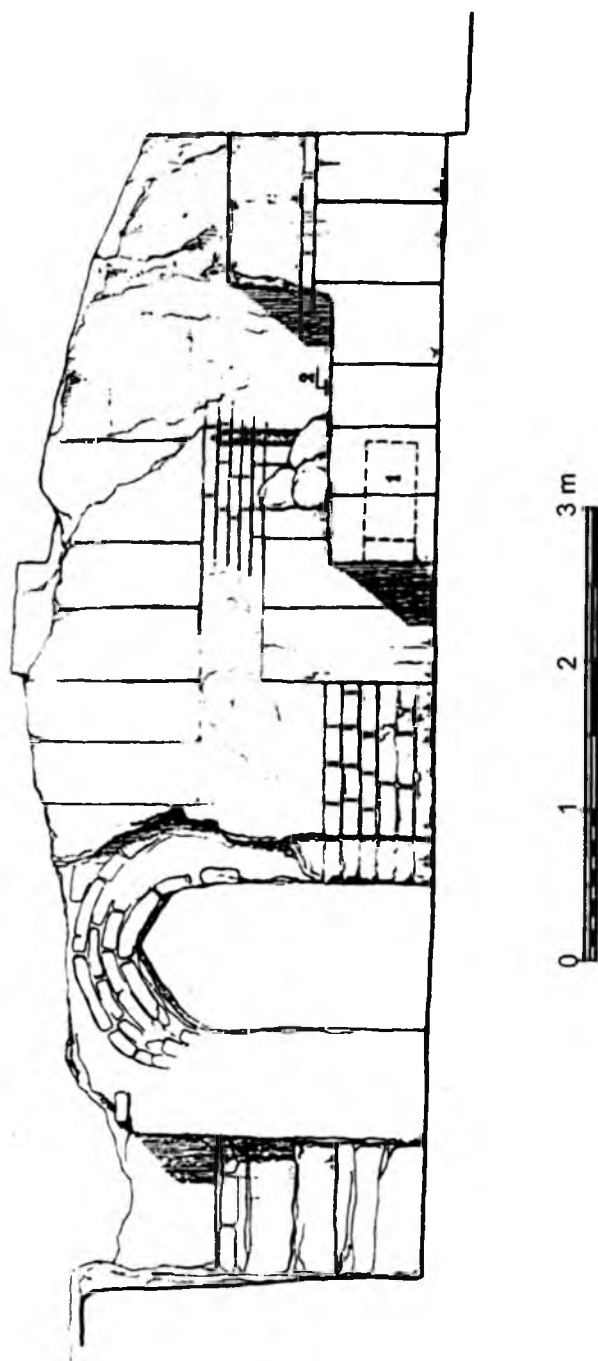


Figure 63. Southern wall of the entrance hall (building VII) with the arched door. The right side of the drawing shows late nomadic bench (kang) with heating smoke duct (1) and the level of this bench (2)

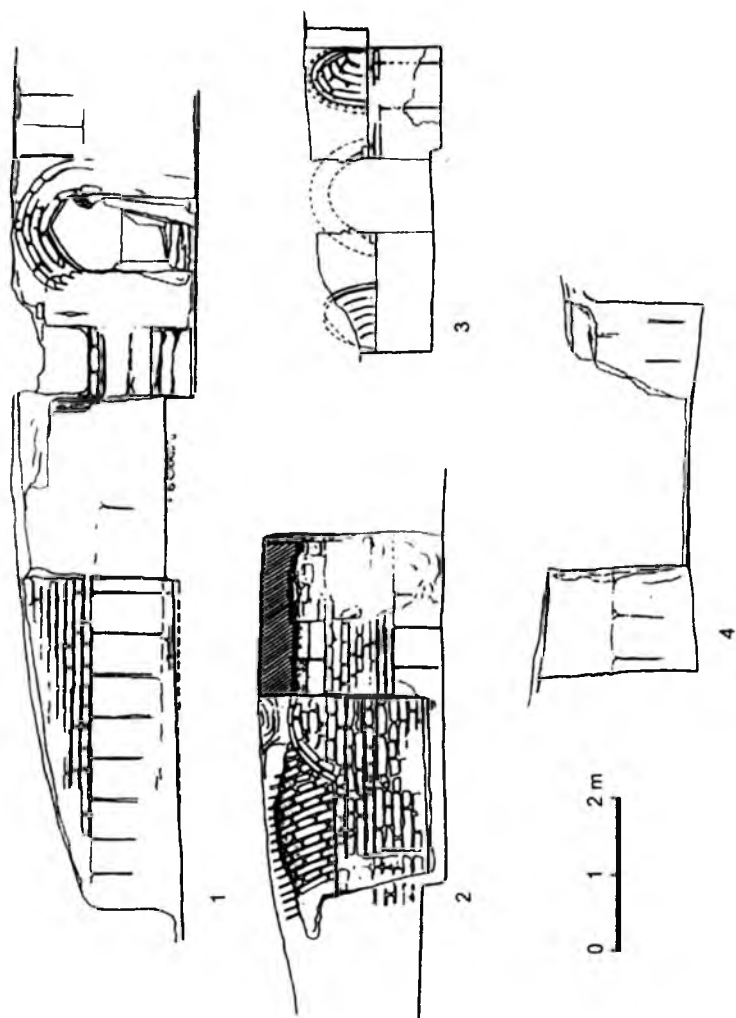


Figure 64. Doorways of the temple: 1 - main entrance in the southern wall; 2 - the arch IV in the corridor; 3 - section of the arched door; 4 - the temple entrance; view from the east

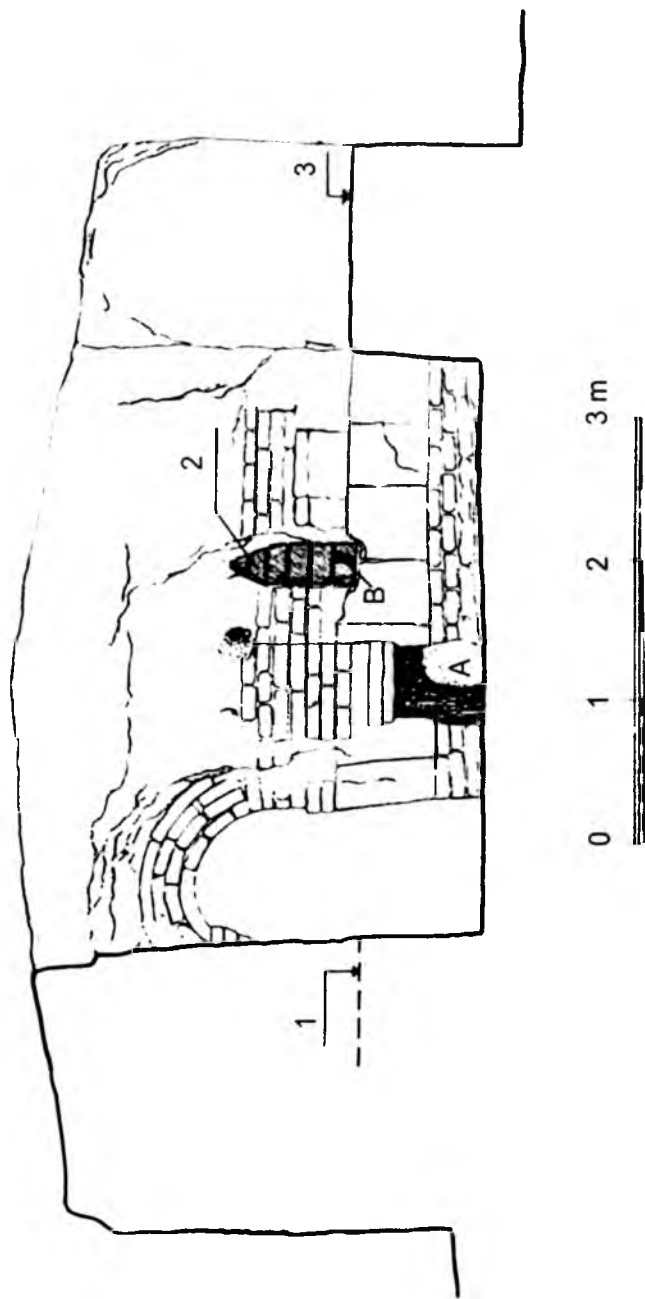


Figure 65. Eastern wall of the building V. A – fireplace of the first construction layer;
 B – fireplace of the second construction layer; 1 – the second construction layer floor;
 2 – flamed bricks; 3 – the second construction layer entrance floor

The yard. The passage from the entrance hall to the west led into a large unroofed rectangular inner yard of 32 m in length and 18 m in width, that is with an area of 576 square meters (Figure 56). This yard, whose walls at the time of the excavations were 3 m high measuring from the level of its earliest floor, might have had iwans (vaulted space walled on three sides with one entirely open side – tr.) at the sides propped by wooden pillars of which there were left some occasional round pits³⁵ (Figure 56.14). Under the iwans there might have been suffa along the walls. A fragment of such a bench (made of cob bricks with clay filling inside) was recovered in the north-western corner of the yard. In the north-eastern corner of the yard was found a deep pear-shaped pit of an ancient batrab (latrine – tr.) (2.33 m deep with the neck diameter of 55 cm; Figure 66.1) while in its southern wall, close to the entrance, there was unearthed a sewer in the shape of a funnel-like hole with a clay pipe at the end and extending beyond the wall of the temple.

The yard was used as a resting place by pilgrims and, probably, as a place for conducting commercial and money-landing transactions as well as legal business by the Buddhist community of the temple. Some evidence in support of this was found on the ancient floor, namely, four clay hanging seals for documents³⁶ with the imprint of an elephant (that is Buddha's symbol) and a Sogdian inscription³⁷, a bronze weigher tray (Figure 81.2), iron cubic weights, coins of the Turgesh circulation with legends in the Sogdian language and so on.

In the western part of the yard the floor raised forming a small ramp to a staircase made of cob bricks leading to the rooms that were immediately used for religious services. The staircase was in poor condition but it was possible to identify that it used to have a three step flight, each of the steps consisting of two rows of bricks on top of each other (Figures 56, 67).

The chamber. The crosswall forming the end of the yard in the west had a 2.4 meter wide door frame in the middle which used to lead into the huge chamber of the temple (Figure 67). Inside the chamber the main religious ceremonies were conducted. This room was 18 x 10 m in size and stretched from south to north across the temple along the long axis. Its two-meter thick walls were about 1 m high at the time of the excavations³⁸. The chamber used to have a flat ceiling made of reeds resting on wooden beams which in their turn were supported by pillars.

This is proved by a layer of charred reeds evenly spread across the entire floor (evidence of a fire) and the remains of the beams. When the solid daub floor was cleared there were also discovered foundations of 8 columns placed in two rows at a symmetrical distance from one another and according to an exact plan (Figure 56.6). The remaining parts of these columns were squares of 1 x 1 m embedded in the floor at the depth of 10 cm³⁹. These square indentations were used for fixing wooden foundations;

35 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 20.6.

36 Ibid.: fig. 22.

37 For a possible interpretation of the word "master" see below in the part "Findings".

38 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 23.2.

39 Ibid.: fig. 24.3, 24.8.

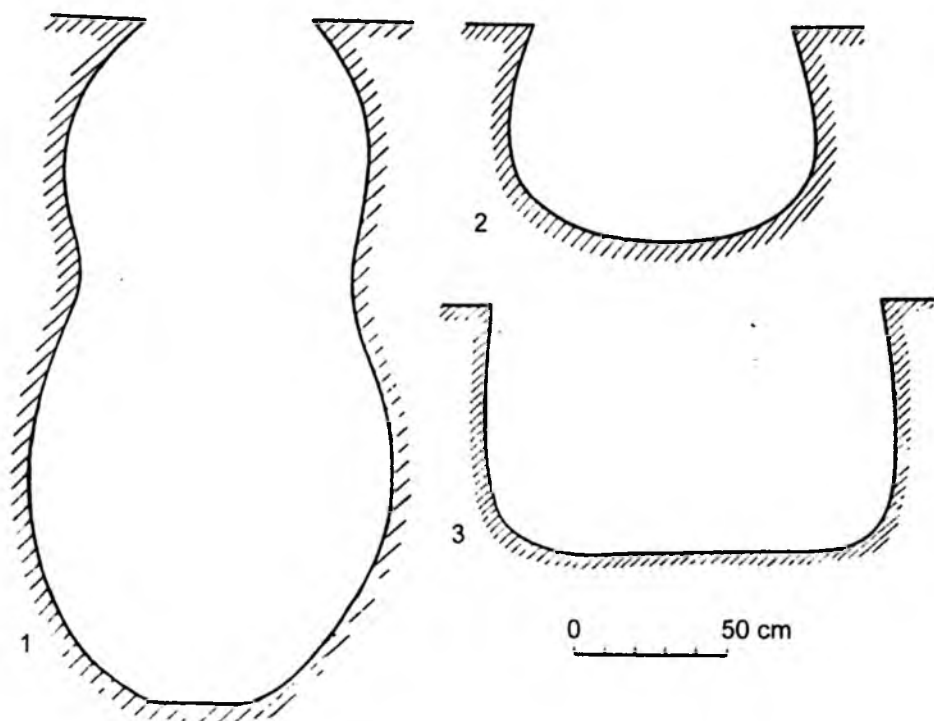


Figure 66. Sections of the nomads' pits for supplies dug from in northern part of gallery (2, 3) and batrab (1)

some half-rotten beams of 10 cm wide were found in two of these pits⁴⁰. Due to the fact that there were some cavities in the ruins of the temple it was possible to find out that the foundations of the columns had the form of a truncated pyramid of 40 cm high. Inside these wooden pyramids round logs were vertically fixed to form the columns themselves. The wooden columns might have initially been coated with a clay "shell" covered with moulded decorations painted blue with the occasional gilding. Fragments of such plaster moulding were not discovered anywhere else apart from the foundations of all the columns (Figures 80.1, 80.3).

The northern wall of the chamber had a small niche of 1.20 m in width and 80 cm in depth. Inside the niche were found a large number of moulded ornaments and fragments of statuettes (rosettes, plaques, coils, ears, etc. Figure 68), cob bricks obviously rounded for sculpturing (Figure 68.4) and clay pipes with grass inside. The most important finding there was a broken clay dragon of fine craftsmanship (Figure 68.1, 68.2). Even though all these fragments looked

⁴⁰ Ibid.: fig. 24.8.

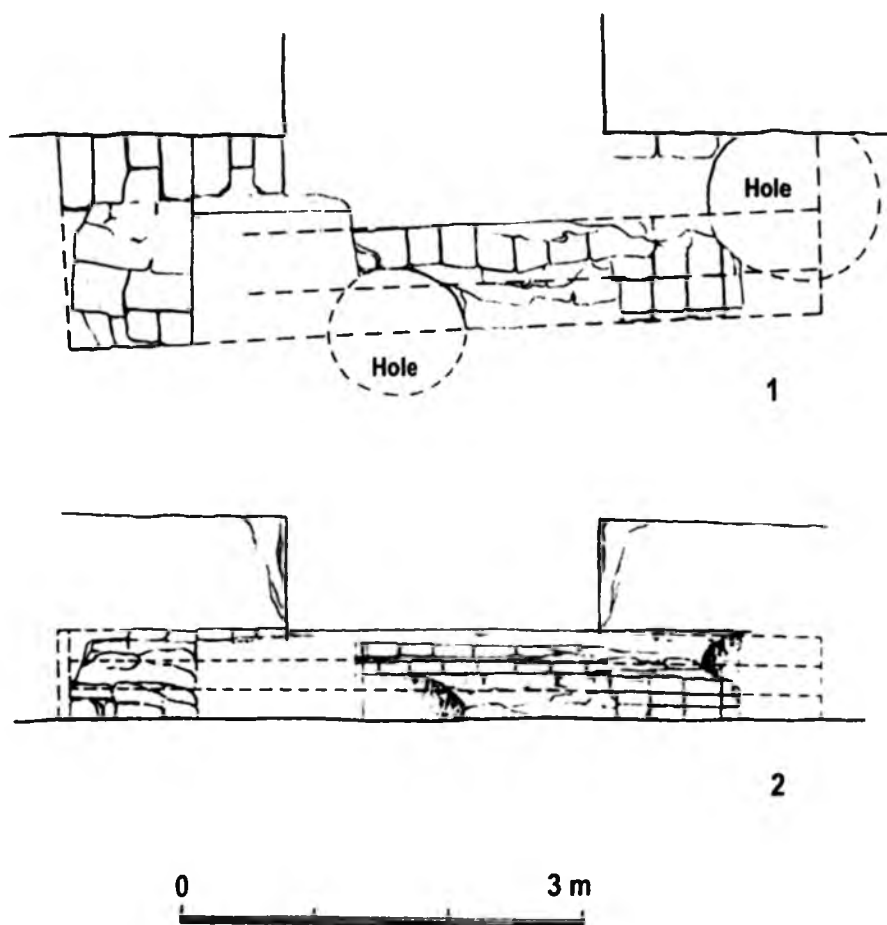


Figure 67. Doorway from the yard to the temple chamber. Remains of the staircase made of cob bricks: 1 – plan, 2 – front view

as if they were heaped in the niche in a haphazard manner we do not rule out the possibility of them being the remains of a once destroyed sculptural group.

Initially the central hall was decorated in grand style. The entire coating of the walls was covered with a thin layer of alabaster serving as priming color for the wall paintings. Less commonly the painting was done on the finely smoothed surface of the clay plaster which was mostly used on the parts of the ceiling between the columns⁴¹ and around the skylight between the four central columns⁴².

41 Ibid.: fig. 36.

42 The evidence of the skylight is, in the first place, a complete absence of windows and also the erosion of the floor in the center of the chamber caused by rain.

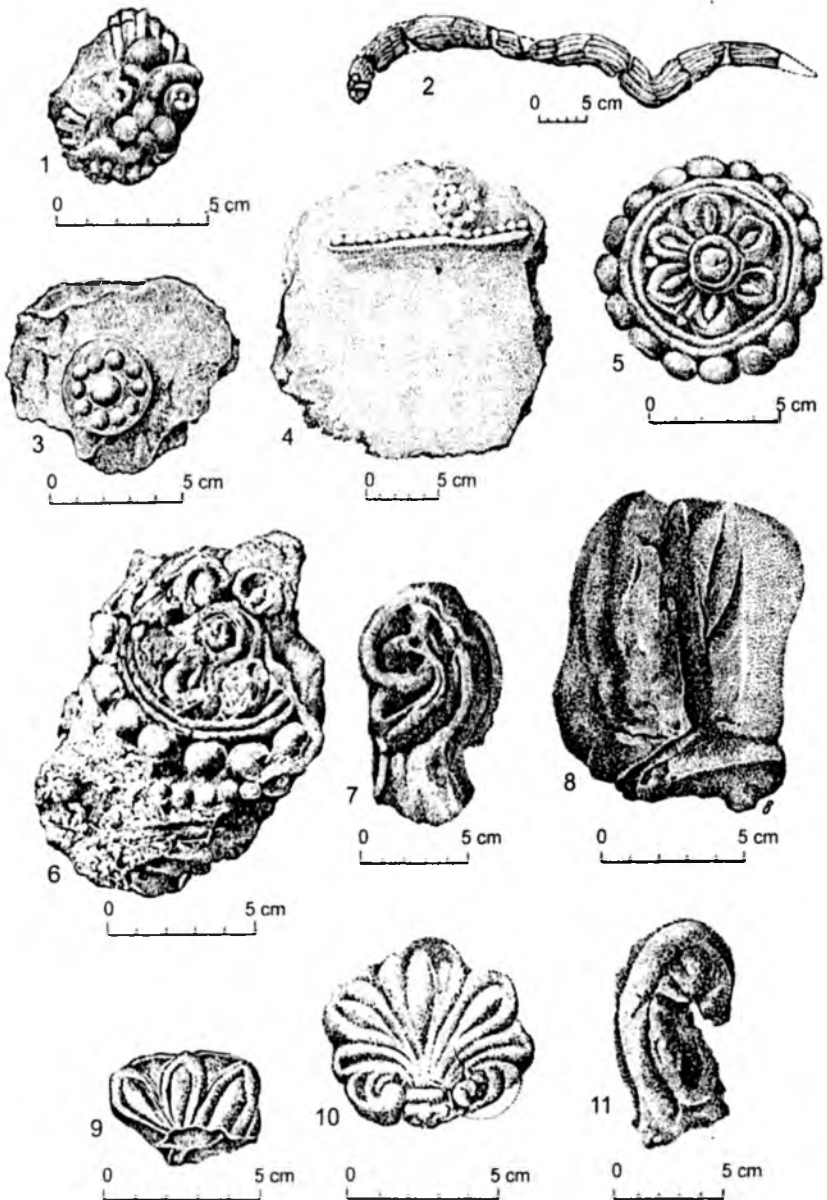


Figure 68. Fragments of statuettes found in the niche of the chamber. 1 – dragon face, 2 – clay dragon, 3 – moulded ornaments rosette, 4 – brick with moulded ornaments, 5-6 – rosettes, 7, 11 – ears of statuettes, 8 – leg of statuette, 9, 10 – plaques

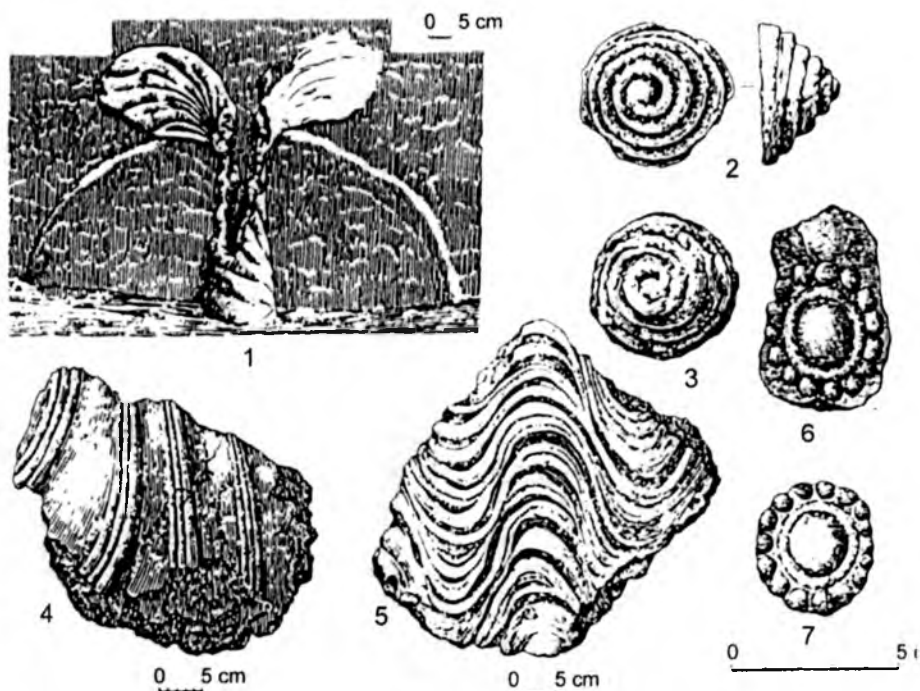


Figure 69. Sculpture fragments: 1 – “palm tree” on the northern wall of the chamber; 2-3 – clay coils, i.e. Buddha’s hair; 4-5 – remains of Buddha Maitreya’s clothes and hair; 6-7 – clay pasted-on raised bands of Buddha Maitreya’s legs

Besides the paintings the walls were also decorated with moulded clay bas-reliefs, for example, the excavated lower part of a decorative “palm tree” which might have represented the sacred Buddhist tree of bodhi which according to the Buddhist religion is the last to disappear at the end of the world and the first to appear at its creation⁴³. It represents a small twisted clay wall column with two broad sprawling leaves at the sides. Unfortunately, the top of the column must have been lost as the wall had been severely damaged (Figure 69.1).

Besides, the hall had four clay statues of Buddha on tall pedestals, they were only found in fragments. They used to line the western wall opposite the entrance to the chamber (Figure 70). The wall had three doors. The central door had steps leading to the sanctuary, the two side ones led into the ring gallery encircling the sanctuary.

⁴³ Minaev, 1896: 215.

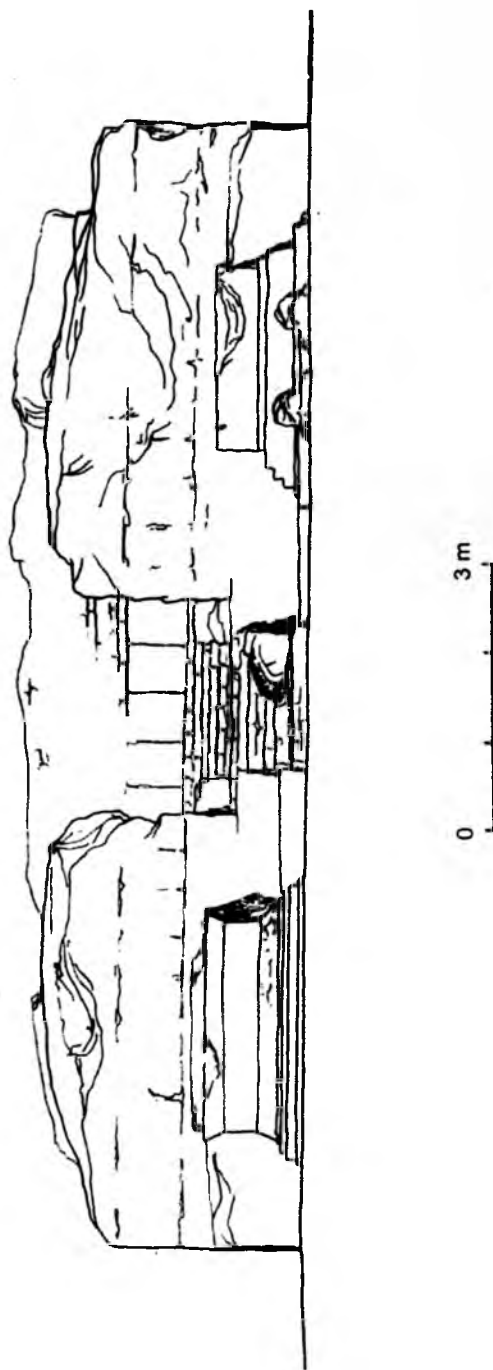


Figure 70. Western wall of the temple chamber. Southern and northern pedestals for the statues.
Remains of Buddha Maitreya's legs are near the northern pedestal

By the two stretches of the western wall between these doors there were found tall (1.44 and 1.12 m) stepped pedestals in good condition⁴⁴ (Figures 56.1, 70).

On the northern pedestal there was a huge four-meter high seated clay statue of Buddha Maitreya with both his feet on the ground⁴⁵. Pieces of the statue's torso, hair, lower legs and feet resting on two lotus-like supports were found during the excavations (Figure 70)⁴⁶. The feet were 80 cm long and 40 cm wide⁴⁷. The legs were covered with a thin layer of alabaster and beautifully painted (as well as the whole statue) and around the feet and ankles there were clay pasted-on raised bands joined together by oval buckles trimmed with lines of beads (Figures 69.7, 69.8, 70). In front of the statue's feet there was a daub circle for sacrifices covered in alabaster and slightly raised above the floor level⁴⁸. Its diameter was 0.85 m (Figure 56.2). In the center of the circle were found the remains of a sacrificial altar in the form of a small indentation filled with coals. The temple excavated by our team in Suyab was apparently dedicated to Buddha Maitreya.

The southern pedestal was architecturally different from the northern one. Right in front on the floor there also was a circle for sacrifices with the diameter of 1.16 m and raised 2-3 cm above the floor level. Judging by the fact that the circle was placed very closely to the pedestal we may conclude that it was used for another statue of Buddha sitting cross-legged⁴⁹ (Figure 70). Pieces of the statue's torso, head with pasted clay coils painted blue and representing Buddha's hair were found on the floor (Figures 69.2, 69.3). It seems most likely that the pedestal supported the statue of the same Buddha who was depicted on the badge of gilded cast bronze with turquoise inlay which was found on the floor by the southern wall of the chamber and the same as on many other badges recovered from different other parts of the temple (Figures 82, 84, 85).

Here follows a description of the reconstruction of the general image of the Suyab temple chamber which, unfortunately, remained incomplete (Figure 71).

The two other bench pedestals were located in the south-western and north-western corners of the chamber close to the two entrances to the ring gallery⁵⁰ (Figure 56.3). They were found empty but we have no doubts that they used to support clay statues. The south-western pedestal measured 3.46 x 0.87 x 0.55 m with the dimensions of the north-western one being 1.84 x 1.1 x 0.87 m.

44 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 24.5, 24.6.

45 Cf.: Wegner, 1929: 252 ff.

46 It was only Maitreya who beginning from the sixth century was depicted with his feet on the floor (v., for example: Stein, 1921, vol. II: pl. 208). A stone statue of Maitreya from Khotan whose feet also rest on two lotus-like supports is similar to the above described statue (Ol'denburg, 1900: 0106, 0107).

47 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 24.1, 24.2, 24.7.

48 Ibid.: fig. 24.2, 24.5, 24.7.

49 Ibid.: fig. 24.6.

50 Ibid.: fig. 27.5, 27.6.

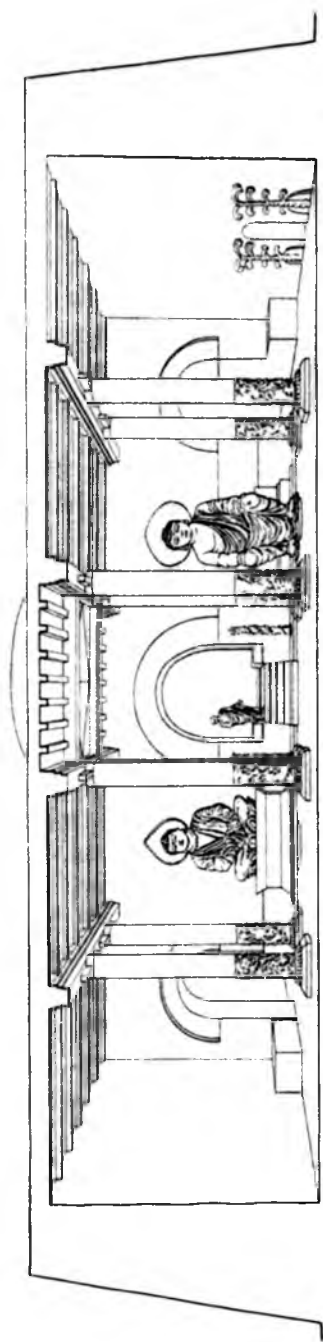


Figure 71. The Buddhist temple camber general view. Reconstruction drawing
by S.G. Khmelnitskiy

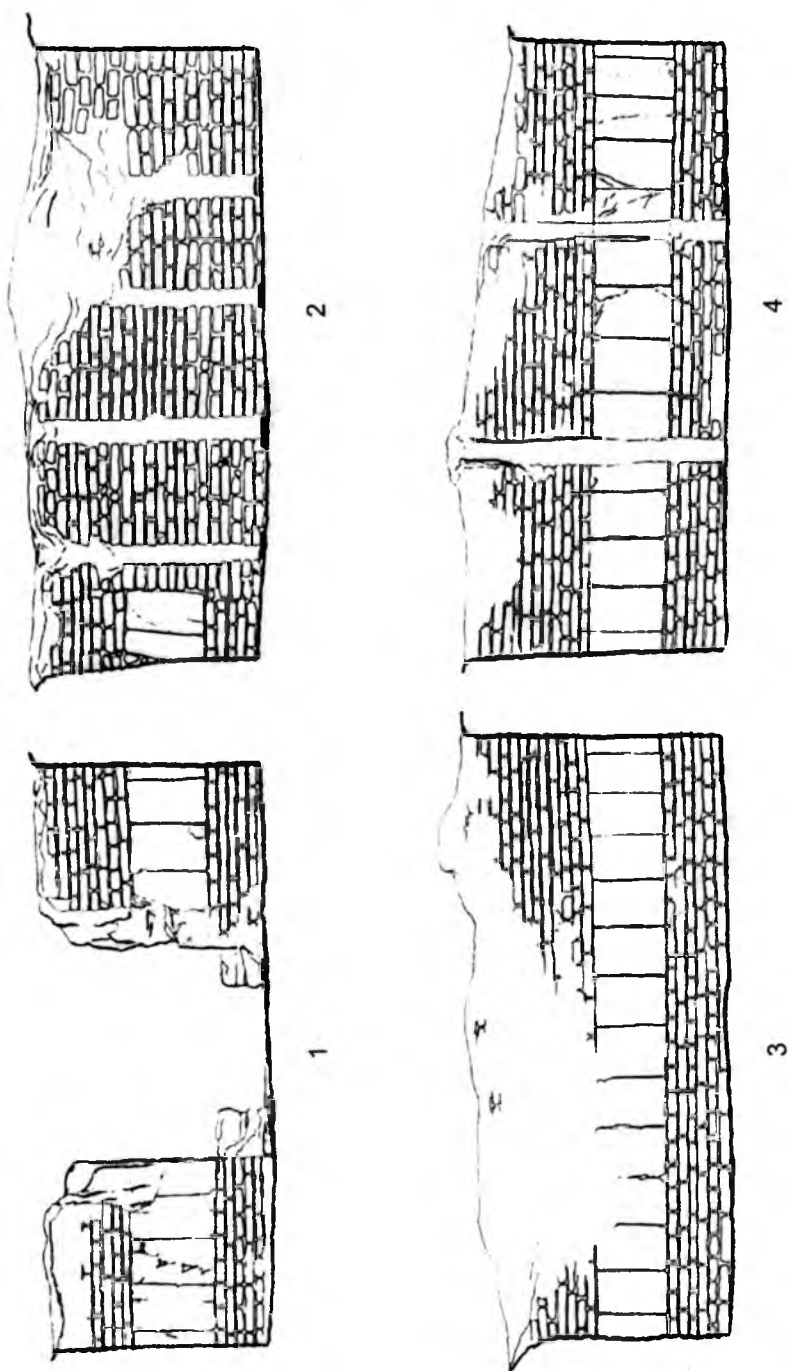


Figure 72. Inner walls of the temple sanctuary: 1 - eastern wall, 2 - southern wall,
3 - western wall, 4 - northern wall

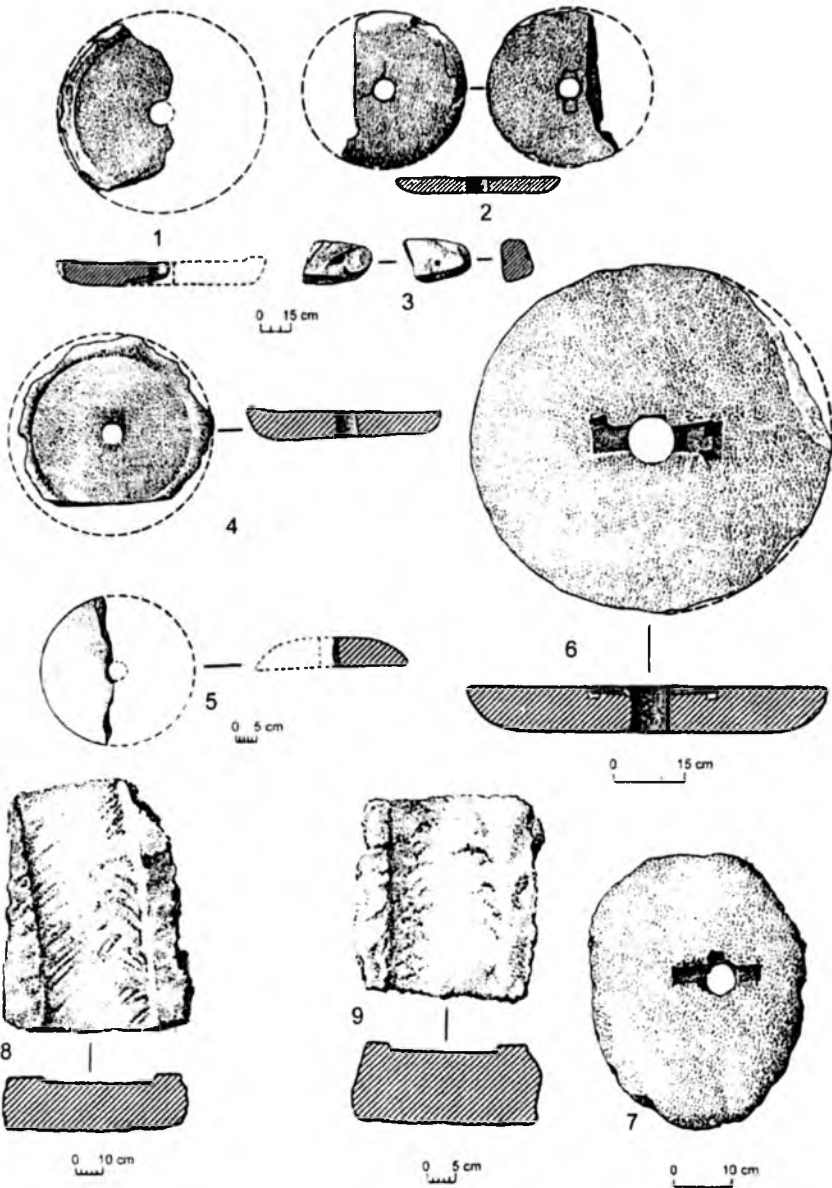


Figure 73. Stone objects, found in the temple yard:
 1, 2, 4-7 – fragments of the millstones, 3 – beetle to ram the clay,
 8, 9 – granite trays. 1-3, 6-9 – the first construction layer
 (the eighth century), 4, 5 – the second construction layer
 (the ninth and the tenth centuries)

Among other decorative elements of special interest were small wooden columns along the western wall lining the staircase leading to the sanctuary. Their only traces were pits with remains of wood in them (Figure 56). A pair of similar wooden columns used to be placed at the sides of the doorway leading to the sanctuary.

The sanctuary. The staircase leading to the sanctuary was made of long bricks of the same size as all across the temple and its flight had five steps and a platform at the top. The length of the whole construction was 1.85 m with the width of 1.5 m. The width of the doorway of the sanctuary was 2.4 m (Figure 72.1). At its sides were small low "benches"⁵¹ whose eastern ends supported the above mentioned columns and whose western ends supported the doors, of which only the gray granite foot bearing made from the same broken old grinder⁵² (Figures 73.1, 73.2) remained. In the walls there were indentations for fixing the doors.

The sanctuary itself was square (6.33 x 6.38 m) with an area of about 40 square meters (Figure 56). In the center of this room was found a rectangular pit (4.58 x 3.43 x 1 m) elongated from east to west with the walls lined with cob bricks. It is likely that at the western end wall of this pit there once stood the main statue of Buddha (similar to statues in the sanctuaries of some temples in Eastern Turkistan) though it was not of clay but of bronze. The only remains of it were a few pieces of bronze possibly ripped off by some robbers while taking the statue out of the temple (Figure 88). Among these fragments of special interest was a badge depicting a curl from either a beard or a moustache⁵³ absolutely identical in its form to similar beard curls in the clay statues of the temples of Eastern Turkistan⁵⁴.

In the sanctuary there were found 12 open-work bronze Buddhist badges lying together at the same location (Figures 82, 83)⁵⁵. We cannot say with any degree of certainty what the rectangular pit in the floor was used for. Here we possibly see some rudimental Zoroastrian sacred element (i.e. "Fire temple" Djanbas-Kala⁵⁶ and a pit in the Sassanid temple excavated in Shapur⁵⁷) or it could have been a representation of a holy pond in which Buddha stood on top of a lotus similar to a fresco image of a fish pond on the floor of the sanctuary of temple № 1 in Sengim-Agyz⁵⁸.

As for the type of ceiling the sanctuary had, we can assume based on a variety of evidence (its square form, the floor thickness over 2 meters, the fact

51 Ibid.: fig. 28.2, 28.3.

52 Ibid.: fig. 28.6, 28.8, 28.9.

53 Ibid.: fig. 29.1.

54 Ol'denburg, 1914: 19, fig.8, 9. However, similar curls also symbolized hair. See, for example, the Hinduist statues of the ninth-twelfth centuries from Bengal as well as the terracotta from Khotan in the Hermitage (the Oriental Department, IA-683).

55 V. Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 29.5, 38.6.

56 Tolstov, 1948: 97, fig. 33.

57 Ghirshman, 1938.

58 Ol'denburg, 1914: 37, 38.

that the room was filled with bricks obviously fallen from a height, the way the fallen bricks formed a fan-like curve in the cut) that it used to be covered with a dome. Similar domes covering large rooms occurred in the Kazakh gumbes of the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries in which the domes once built of cob bricks transformed into a solid construction.

As for other construction elements of this room we need to highlight that two walls had fitted in wooden posts resting on thick granite foundations also made from fragments of old grinders⁵⁹ (Figures 72.2, 72.4, 73.4, 73.5). These long log posts fixed in special pits were concealed under the coating that covered the total wall surface. Supporting posts of this kind carrying a certain load were only found in the two opposing walls of the sanctuary but their number differed from wall to wall. The southern wall had four posts while the northern one only had two (Figures 72.2, 72.4). It is most likely that these supporting posts propped the beams of the ceiling whose remains were found. Dome constructions were discovered in the temples of Xinjiang from the same period of history and the very techniques of placing wooden posts in cob brick and daub walls was characteristic of the architecture of early Buddhist temples of China⁶⁰.

The gallery. The square sanctuary was encircled on three sides by a ring gallery whose walls at the time of the excavation rose 3.5 meter above the floor level (Figures 74 - 76). The gallery had two passages leading to the central chamber. The entrances to the gallery (1.7 and 1.75 m wide) and to the sanctuary used to have arches whose lower parts were excavated⁶¹ and the gallery itself had a vaulted ceiling that continued from the arched entrances. The gallery was 3.3 m wide and 41.37 m long in total (the northern stretch was 11.9 m, the western – 17.35 m and the southern – 12.12 m). Along the entire gallery attached to the wall of the sanctuary ran a long suffa made of cob bricks⁶² (Figure 56.4). At the southern and northern ends of the gallery its width reached 82 cm. There it was comparatively low and its top was in very poor condition. It was only in the western passage of the gallery that the suffa reached 1.18 m in height and it looked architecturally different resembling a huge pedestal (Figure 75.1). Along the entire gallery the suffas had once had statues and even sculptured compositions. A large number of their remains were discovered in the rubble on the gallery floor and in the south-eastern corner of the northern wing of the gallery a foundation of some sculpture was found⁶³ (Figure 74.1). The walls and ceilings had paintings on them⁶⁴.

59 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 28.1, 28.4, 28.5.

60 Wenwu cankao ziliao. 1954: 55, fig. 14; cf. Li Ling's palace (1st century B.C.) in Khakassia: Evtukhova, 1946: 107; Kyzlasov L.R., 2001b: fig. 1, 31.2, 33.1.

61 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 27.1, 27.3, 27.9.

62 Ibid.: fig. 27.1-27.3.

63 Ibid.: fig. 27.7.

64 Ibid.: fig. 35, 36.

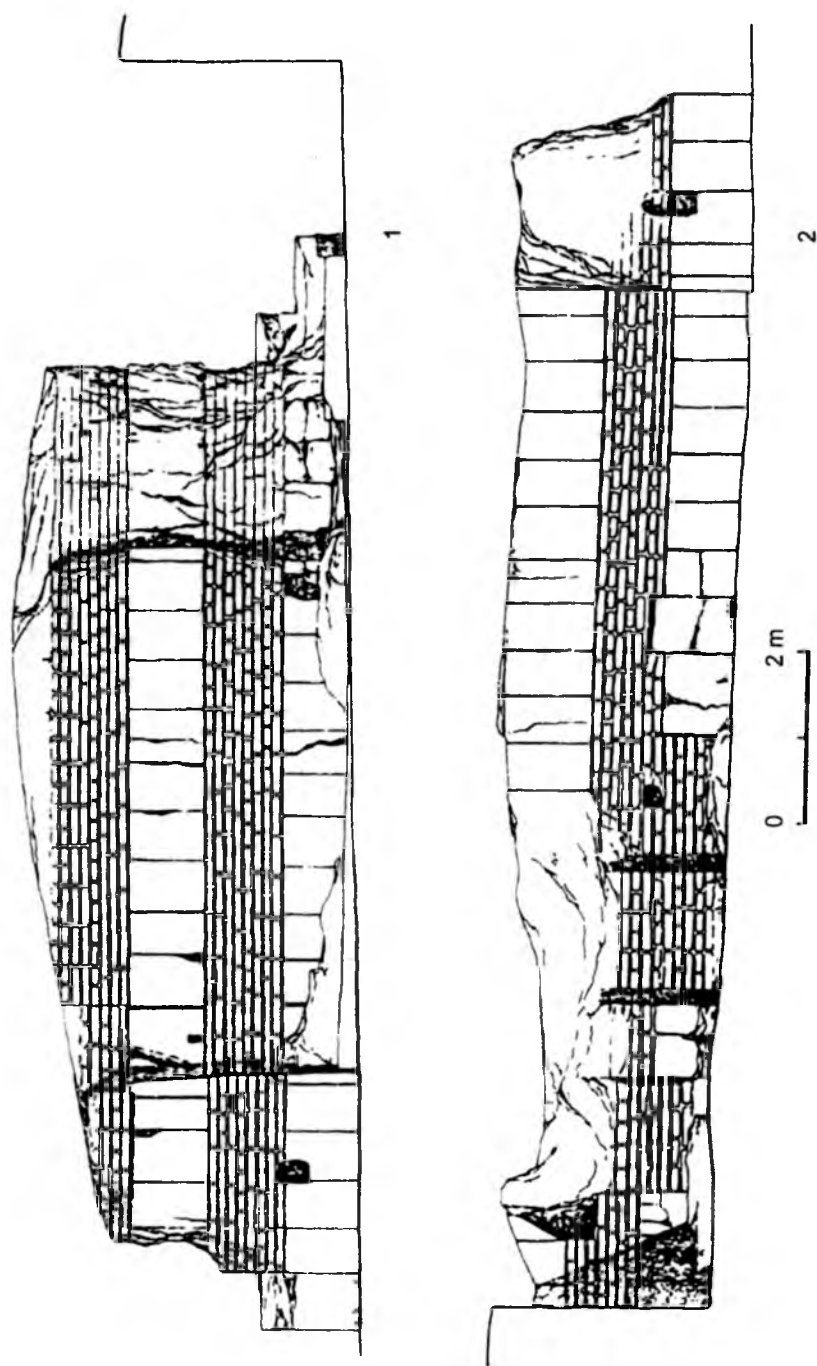


Figure 74. Northern stretch of the temple gallery; facades of the southern (1) и northern (2) walls

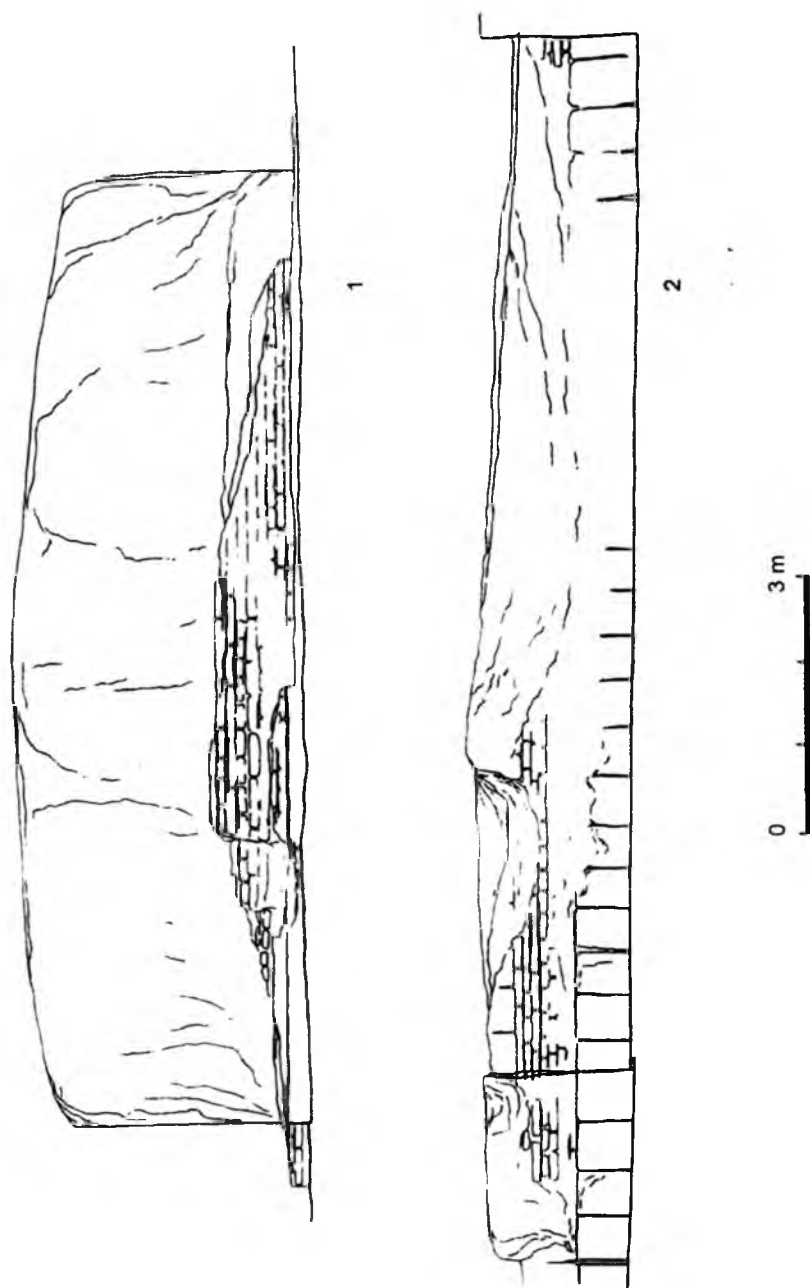


Figure 75. Facades of the eastern wall of the western stretch (1) and the southern wall of the southern stretch of the gallery (2)

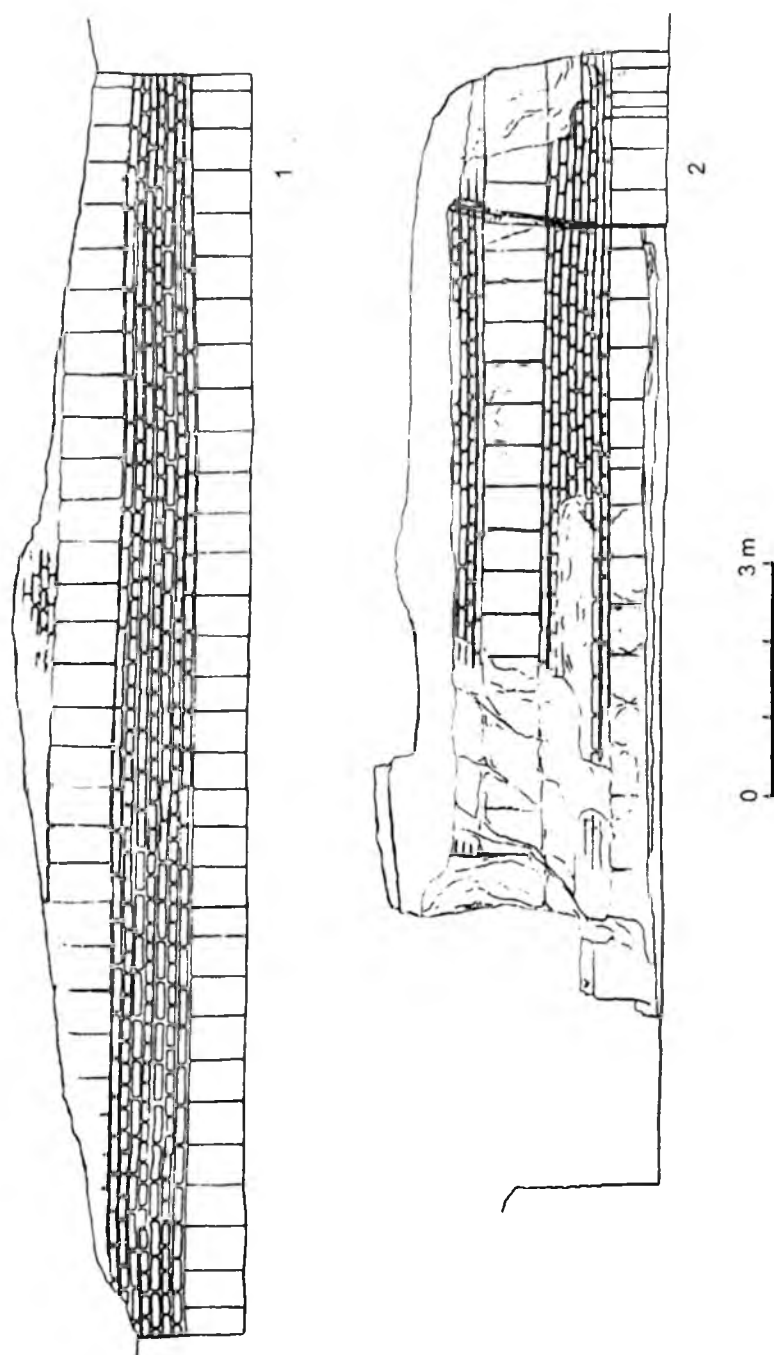


Figure 76. Facades of the western wall of the western stretch (1) and the northern wall of the southern stretch of the gallery (2)

We need to highlight the fact that the suffas along the gallery walls also had supporting posts and small wooden columns (Figure 56). Inside the outer wall of the gallery there were only two supporting posts in the northern passage; they were built into the wall similar to the posts in the walls of the sanctuary (Figure 74.2).

We should also mention that in the north-western corner of the gallery there was found a small pedestal that also used to support a statue. In the northern wing of the gallery on the floor in front of the suffa was uncovered a slightly raised alabaster circle for sacrifices identical to the ones discovered in the chamber in front of the statues of Buddha.

More remarks on the architecture of the temple. The building must have served as a temple for about 50-60 years. It is only natural that over this length of time some things in it should have changed compared to its initial lay-out described above. These alterations were minor but we need to mention them to highlight the history of the building. First of all, we should mention that the rooms immediately used for religious services (the chamber, sanctuary and gallery) did not undergo any major alterations apart from some repairs of the daub floors due to their wear. These rooms were well kept and nobody lived in them, which explains the absence of any additional layers.

The picture for the yard and the entrance rooms was different. Since the yard had no roof and was often visited by a large number of people, who spent considerable time there because it was likely to have been a kind of business center for the community, a small layer of 15-20 cm had been formed there over time. Besides, the members of the community and the monks needed a supply of fresh running water and they had an aryk (a small channel – tr.) dug across the yard (about 90 cm wide and 20-30 cm deep), whose edges were leveled with the surface of the above mentioned layer (Figure 77.15). We conducted the grading of the aryk bed and found out that beginning from the southern wall of the yard the level of the bed dropped 1 cm within every meter that is the water flowed in it quite slowly from south to north.

Coming from the fields that lay to the south of the temple the aryk dove under the southern wall of the yard inside a specially made channel⁶⁵, crossed the yard and dove into another channel under the northern wall of the yard (Figure 77.15) to later on flow down a natural slope past the citadel. During the excavations we discovered that the walls of the aryk entry point in the southern wall of the yard were protected from erosion and carefully strengthened on both sides with two rows of seven overlapping halves of huge grinders (Figures 73.6, 73.7) the same as the ones mentioned above as well as with large cobblestones. On top of the grinders lay wooden beams placed across the aryk that supported the bulk of the cob brick wall.

65 Ibid.: fig. 20.2.

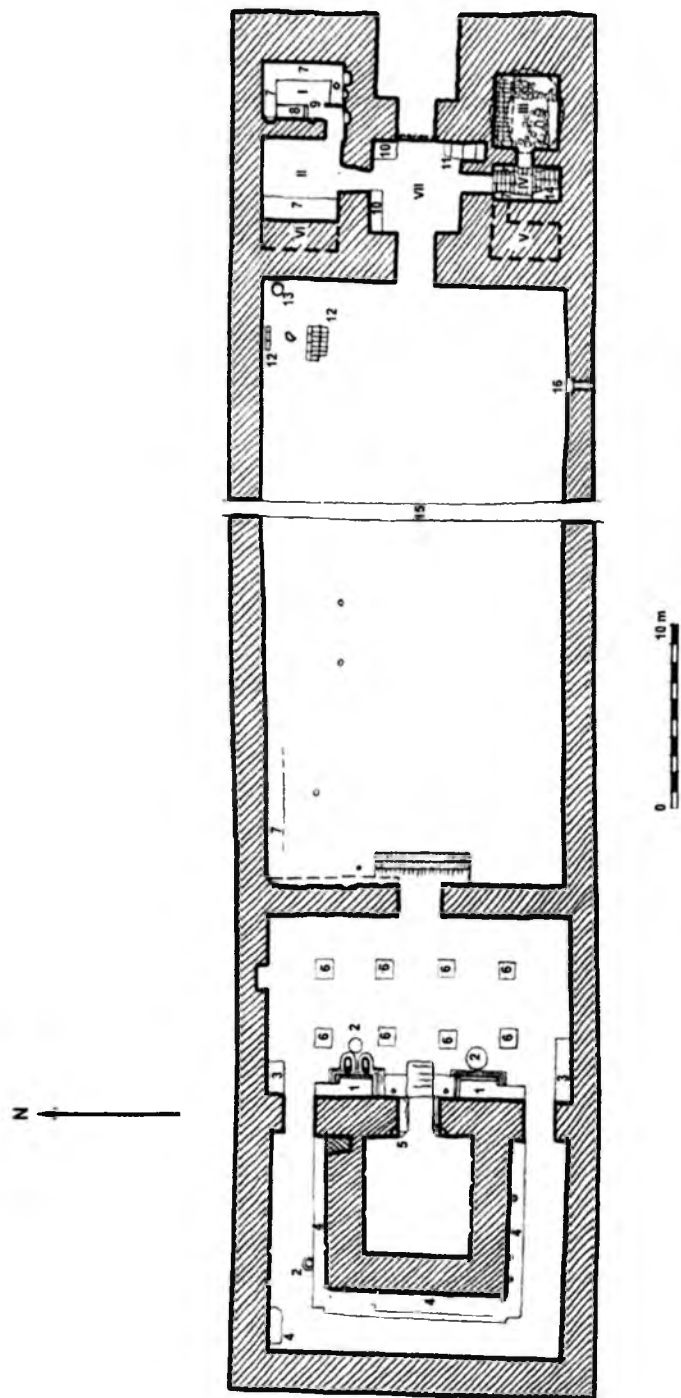


Figure 77. Plan of the Buddhist temple (site I) of the second period of its function: 1 – pedestals for the gigantic statues of Buddha; 2 – circles for sacrifices covered in alabaster; 3 – suffas for statues in the chamber; 4 – suffas of the gallery; 5 – doorway of the sanctuary with the foot of doors; 6 – foundations of the columns; 7 – suffas of the dwelling rooms; 8 – bench with a circular sausage headrest; 9 – wall protected the fireplace; 10 – suffas of the hall; 11 – reconstruction staircase; 12 – comb bricks laid in the yard; 13 – batrab; 14 – buttress; 15 – aryk; 16 – drain for a sewage; I-VII – buildings at the gate

The bed of the aryk was easy to trace because it was filled with fine sand brought by the water which was clearly seen when the upper layers of loessial alluviations and formations had been removed. The channel under the northern wall was blocked due to the heavy sagging of the brickwork of the wall over it. In general, closer to the northern wall the aryk might have often burst its banks and ran along the wall to the east gradually destroying the yard wall itself.

Here we saw rather deep traces of the washing away of the ground surface of the yard; the resulting pit was filled with river pebbles that must have been brought from afar (from some place 3-4 km (1.86-2.49 miles) away) because such pebbles do not occur in the vicinity of the town.

Because of the flooding of the lower parts of the wall the brickwork of its sides used to crumble and the wall of the yard was repaired; the ruined part was bricked anew using cob bricks of a regular size (48 x 24 x 9 cm), the new brickwork covered the remaining thickness of the main wall like a shell⁶⁶. A causeway made from broken grinders and large cobblestones discovered in the yard to the east of the aryk bed and small areas of lining from cob bricks in the north-eastern corner also belonged to the same period of time.

We should point out that among the stones that filled in the pot holes in the yard surface there were two skillfully made granite trays whose purpose we could not identify (Figures 73.8, 73.9) and a workpiece for a stone beetle to ram the clay in the pakhsa wall construction (Figure 73.3). It was discarded because the hole for the handle could not have been made the way they started to do it without the exact calculations.

We should say that the walls of the yard bear traces of numerous alterations and resurfacing but the bulk of their thickness was always intact. It is not surprising because the walls of the yard in contrast to those of other rooms did not support any solid roofs.

By that same time out of the six rooms lining the entrance hall only four remained (I-IV). Room V and the arched passage leading to it from corridor IV were bricked over because its eastern wall which, it seems, was not correctly built, started to lean (Figures 77, 64.2, 65). The excavations disclosed that there had been attempts to secure it with a one-brick thick shell-like walling which did not work and the whole room was bricked over. The same was done to store room VI which was also bricked over but the top of its eastern wall was taken down turning it into the suffa from room II which made the room itself somewhat wider. At the same time the arch of the passage to the southern wall of the entrance hall⁶⁷ that led to room IV was lengthened which required two steps to be added to the staircase leading to the roof.

66 Ibid.: fig. 20.4.

67 Ibid.: fig. 16.3.

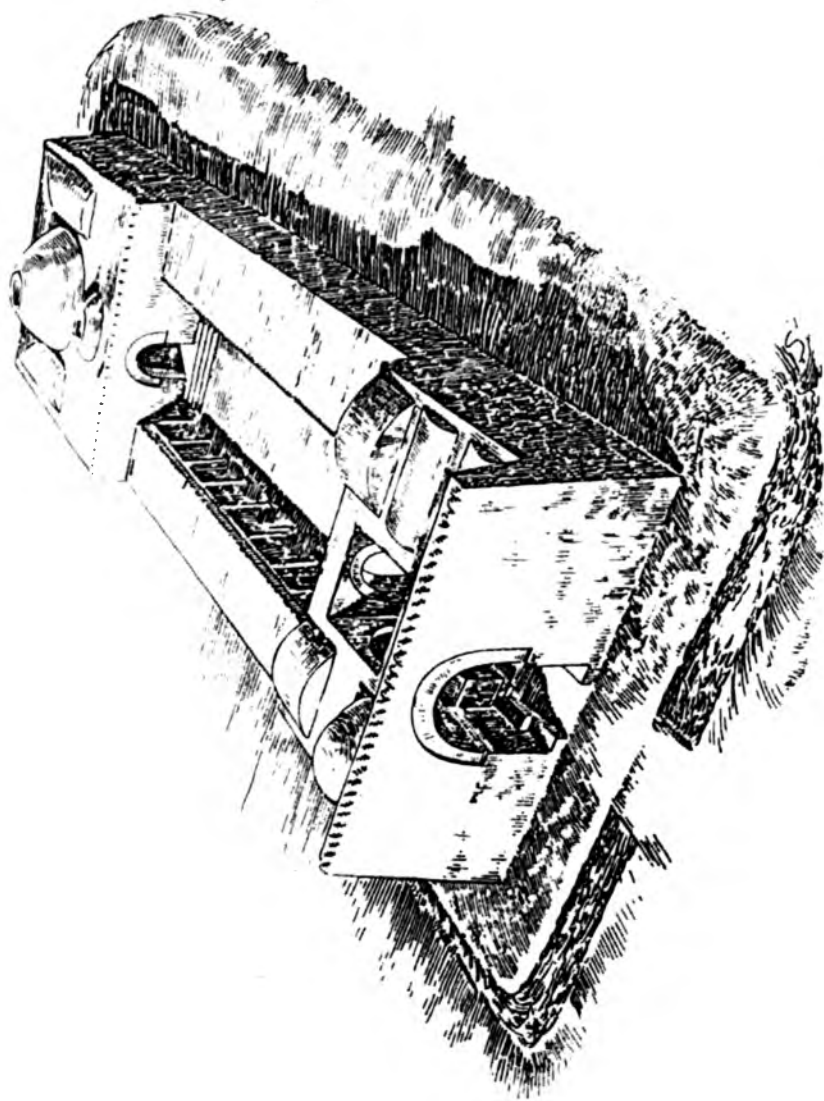


Figure 78. Reconstruction of the Buddhist temple by L.R. Kyzlasov at participation S.G. Khmel'nitskiy and V.L. Voronina's consultations. Drawing by S.G. Khmel'nitskiy

No other repairs were made during the time this construction was used as a temple (Figure 77).

Architectural parallels and conclusions. In view of the limited space for a detailed discussion of the architectural peculiarities of the building we can only offer the brief conclusions which we have come up with up to now (Figures 56, 77, 78). First of all there is quite obvious syncretism in the architectural elements of the construction. Two tendencies can be seen through the very lay-out of the building.

The first principle (the core of the temple: the chamber, the sanctuary and the ring gallery) suggests direct parallels to the lay-out of ancient above-ground temples of Eastern Turkistan and above all the temples of Shik Shin in the vicinity of Karasahr (the ruins of the Ming-uy monastery)⁶⁸ as well as to some temples of Dandan-uiliq in the oasis of Khotan⁶⁹ and Bezeklik in the Turfan Depression⁷⁰. Judging by the drawing published by S.F. Oldenburg there were 11 temples among the ruins of the Ming-uy monastery in Shik Shin, all with ring galleries around a square sanctuary exactly like in the Ak-Beshim temple⁷¹. But when compared to the lay-outs of the ancient temples of Eastern Turkistan it becomes obvious that they did not have a yard and entrance rooms, they had a different longitudinal axis and entrance (mostly from north-east and north), as well as the size of cob bricks⁷² and some other different elements.

Another principle of the lay-out of the Ak-Beshim Buddhist temple is of Middle Asian origin. Here we mean the western part of the building that is the open yard with iwans. Here we cannot neglect some striking similarities with the lay-out of temple I uncovered in Panjakent (Sogdiana)⁷³ where there was initially a sanctuary, a central chamber with a ring gallery around it which was later rebuilt. Besides, it also had an open walled court with the entrance in the east. The Ak-Beshim temple is not only similar to the temples of Panjakent in its lay-out but also in being oriented along the cardinal points, namely, the direction of its longitudinal axis from east to west with the entrance in the east. Some construction techniques were also similar, i.e. the wall foundations from cut pakhsa blocks, the size of the cob bricks (48 x 24 x 9, 44 x 22 x 8 cm) and the brick bond pattern absolutely similar to the English cross bond brickwork⁷⁴, the use of alabaster priming

68 Ol'denburg, 1914: 4-5 (plan of the Ming-uy monastery); cf.: Dudin, 1916: 7, 11; Stein, 1921, vol. III: pl. 52, 53.

69 Stein, 1907: pl. XXV, XXVI.

70 Ol'denburg, 1914: 45; cf.: Le Coq, 1913: 14, 15.

71 Ol'denburg, 1914: plan between p. 4 and 5.

72 S.M. Dudin (1916: 8) points out that the most commonly found size of cob bricks in the buildings of Shik Shin was 35 x 18 x 7.5 cm.

73 Materialy..., 1953: 28.; Voronina, 1953: 125.

74 "English" cross bond brickwork was used in Shik Shin as well (Dudin, 1916: 9).

for the wall paintings⁷⁵, the truncated pyramid-shape of the wooden basis for some columns⁷⁶, etc.

The only thing we have not yet found parallels to is the very construction of the Buddhist temple walls. Normally the walls were built as follows. Upon the blocks of pakhsa stylobates all across their width 7 or 8 rows of cob bricks were fixed with clay mortar in "English" cross bond brickwork then another layer of pakhsa in the form of blocks of the same size was put on top of the bricks to be followed by another layer of bricks (Figures 58, 64, 74-76).

It is interesting to note that some other architectural elements and details of the Ak-Beshim temple have counterparts in Middle Asian constructions of the seventh and eighth centuries as was observed in a summary review by V.L. Voronina⁷⁷. In this connection we should look at the regular "English" cross bond brickwork characteristic of the Sogdian sites from the same period of time (Penjakent, the castle on Mug Mountain, the Hisorak site), the brick size (Tali-Barzu, Penjakent and Ak-tepe in the vicinity of Tashkent), the construction of the vaults and the square room with a dome resting on trumpet arches with the dome diameter exceeding the size across the square foundation⁷⁸ (Ak-tepe in the vicinity of Tashkent and Afrasiab), the construction of arches using flat brickwork when the bricks lined the curve of the arch with their edges and not with their flat sides (Figure 62) (Ak-tepe).

Here we need to mention the fact that even though stepped pedestals for statues absolutely identical to those found in Ak-Beshim temple (Figures 70, 71) were also observed in Eastern Turkistan especially in the Buddhist cave temples of Qianfodong in Dunhuang⁷⁹ such pedestals were also common in Middle Asia at a much earlier time judging by an identical one discovered in Khwarezm (Kalaly-Ghir № 1).

Thus, the above mentioned architectural specifics of the Ak-Beshim temple with their obvious syncretism disprove the assumption that it was constructed by builders from Eastern Turkistan. A more likely assumption would be that its talented master builders were well versed in the construction techniques of both the central regions of Middle Asia (Sogdiana and Chach) and Eastern Turkistan as well.

People of this kind in the seventh and eighth centuries (that is at the time we should date the Buddhist temple of Ak-Beshim to based on its architectural parallels alone) could have been the Sogdians who as we know migrated into

75 The same was done in Shik Shin (Dudin, 1916: 13, 26).

76 Belenitskiy, 1953: 28; Voronina, 1953a: 125.

77 Voronina, 1953b: 3-35. The author keeps in grateful memory the consultations by V.L. Voronina, the outstanding historian of architecture, both on location at the Ak-Beshim site and upon the completion of our field work (about V.L. Voronina see Miliband, 1995: 254).

78 The reconstruction of the excavated Buddhist temple of Ak-Beshim suggested by S.Ya. Peregodova (Goryacheva, Peregodova, 1996: fig. 2.a) does not reflect the architectural specifics of the object, i.e. she erroneously places the eastern dome over the central room while it should be over corner room III (Figures 56, 78).

79 Stein, 1921, vol. II: pl. 201, 207, 208.

Semirechye and Eastern Turkistan and settled there⁸⁰. The Sogdians living in Eastern Turkistan and in Sogdiana itself together with the people of the Chu valley sandwiched between them maintained close links thanks to vigorous trade they engaged in. The Sogdians living in all these territories practiced various religious beliefs, such as Manichaeism, Christianity as well as Buddhism⁸¹. It is only natural that the Buddhist temple of Ak-Beshim could have been built by Sogdian architects who must have visited Eastern Turkistan.

However, we need to specify here that the Buddhist community of the temple must have included apart from the Sogdians (which is proved by a careful study of a variety of archaeological evidence found in the first layer of the temple, i.e. pottery, clay hanging seals with Sogdian inscriptions, household items, etc.), some local people including people of the Turkic tribes that dominated Semirechye in the seventh and the eighth centuries⁸².

The latter is proved by some indirect evidence from the temple, namely, some copper coins (with square holes) of two types of the so called "Turgesh circulation" minted according to the Chinese pattern and dating from the seventh and eighth centuries with inscriptions in Sogdian and not in Turkic on them⁸³. The interpretation of these coin legends (as well as those on the Turgesh coins proper with the tamga in the shape of a bow) by A.N. Bernshtam as Turkic⁸⁴ is erroneous and is not supported by turcologists (A.M. Shcherbak) because all the coins minted on behalf of the Turkish khagan had inscriptions in Sogdian and the interpretation of their legends did not pose any difficulty for O.I. Smirnova.

The researchers of Penjakent (A.Yu. Yakubovskiy and A.M. Belenitskiy) in their early publications stressed the absence of architectural parallels in the temples they excavated at that site⁸⁵. Now the situation has changed. We assume that in spite of all the uniqueness of temple I in Penjakent it now has a counterpart in the Buddhist temple of Ak-Beshim. I believe that A.M. Belenitskiy was wrong thinking that the initial lay-out of temple I in Penjakent with its ring gallery was the same as the lay-out of temple II where the gallery was substituted with the iwans⁸⁶. We now have evidence that enables us to state that some more ancient temples in the neighboring countries and above all in Western Asia, Iran and Afghanistan were laid out with a ring gallery around a sanctuary.

We should analyze the development of the architecture of both Zoroastrian temples starting with the earliest ones and Buddhist temples in order to trace the origins

80 Bartold, 1922; 1926; D'yakonov, 1954.

81 Bartold, 1928: 9; Kyzlasov L.R., 2004.

82 Bartold, 1943.

83 Kyzlasov L.R., Smirnova, Shcherbak, 1958.

84 Bernshtam, 1940; 1951b.

85 Yakubovskiy, 1953: 12; Belenitskiy, 1953: 58.

86 Belenitskiy, 1953: 57, 58.

of the design of the above mentioned sacred buildings of Sogdiana, Kyrghyzia and Eastern Turkistan. The most ancient temple with a ring gallery around the rectangular sanctuary is the Achaemenid temple of Fire in Susa (the fourth century B.C.)⁸⁷; later on we find ring passages around square sanctuaries in the Sassanid Zoroastrian temples of Fire in Hatra⁸⁸ and in Shapur (the third century A.D.)⁸⁹.

On the same list is the Nabataean temple from Ba'al Shamin whose layout with a square sanctuary (with four columns inside) and a covered ring gallery around⁹⁰ is directly analogous to the western part of the Ak-Beshim temple and to the Buddhists temples of Eastern Turkistan (Shik Shin and so on)⁹¹.

Based on the offered comparisons Monneret de Villard drew a reasonable conclusion that the temples of Eastern Turkistan (of Turfan in particular) which are of much later construction reflect in their design "the influence of Iranian culture upon Buddhist culture"⁹². We agree with this conclusion but we should qualify the term "Iranian culture" and point out that it should be taken in a broader sense including the culture of the Iranian speaking peoples of Middle Asia not all of whose ancient temples have been discovered yet.

More proof of the idea of the western influence on the architecture of Eastern Turkistan of the sixth-tenth centuries was provided by a small temple in the vicinity of Surkh Kotal in Afghanistan excavated in 1952 (by a French archaeological expedition under Daniel Schlumberger)⁹³. According to Daniel Schlumberger, he excavated a small late Hellenic temple of Fire from the Kushan period (the second and third centuries A.D.); the date was identified based on the found Kushan coins, Kushan pottery and Greek inscriptions. The researcher found that the temple directly featured Iranian architectural traditions and believed that its analogue and prototype was the above mentioned Achaemenid temple in Susa. But its direct analogue is not the temple of Susa but the temple of Ba'al Shamin built practically at the same time as the temple in Surkh Kotal.

It is these two temples built at the beginning of the Common Era that the layouts of the temples of the seventh and eighth centuries in Penjakent, Ak-Beshim and Eastern Turkistan go back to; the closest analogue being preserved in the layout of the Buddhists temples of Eastern Turkistan and in some temples of China which have survived to this day (even though there are no ancient temples of this type in China)⁹⁴.

87 Monneret de Villard, 1936: 179, fig. 4.

88 Ibid.: 179, fig. 2.

89 Ghirshman, 1938: 13, tabl. X.

90 Monneret de Villard, 1936: 178, fig. 3.

91 D'yakonova, 1995: tabl. 6.A2, 22.C4, 23.C5B, 30, 33.r, 43.K10, 43.13.

92 Monneret de Villard, 1936: 179; cf.: Erdmann, 1941.

93 Schlumberger, 1952: 433-453; 1953.

94 However, it is possible that other early temples of the type will be discovered in the future in Middle Asia as well.

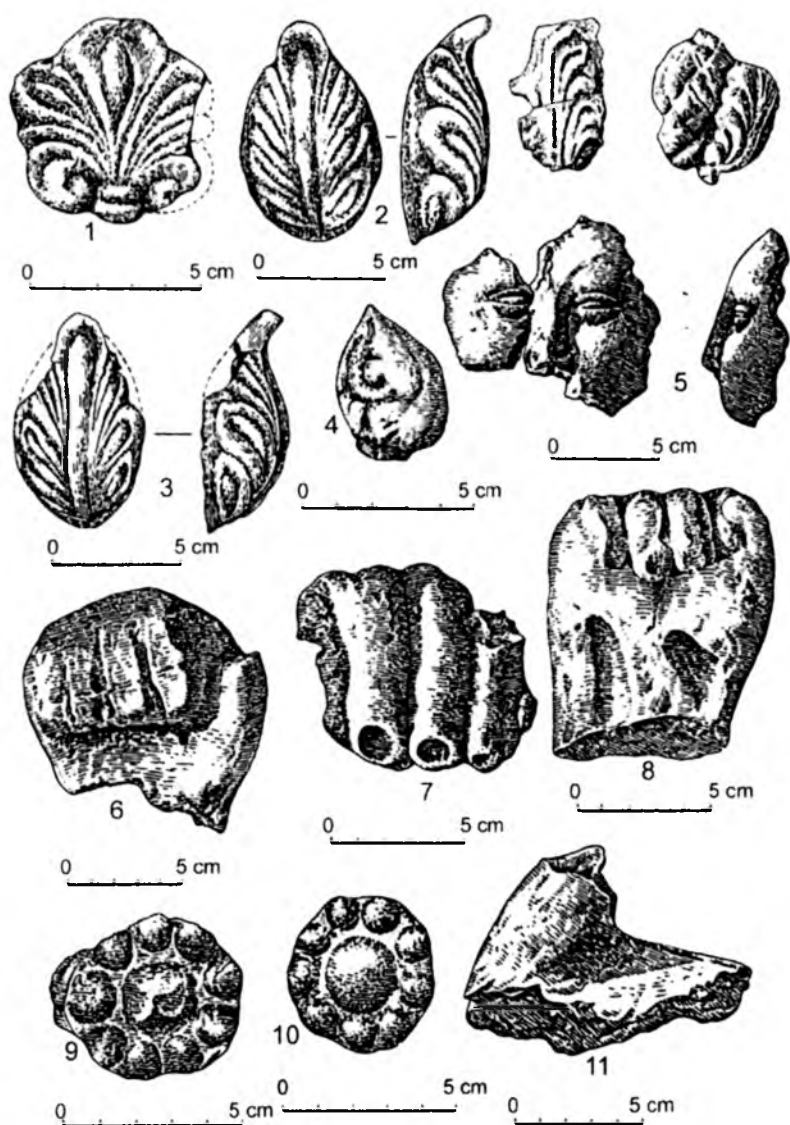


Figure 79. Remains of clay sculptures and elements of the décor found in the sanctuary (1), chamber of the temple (2, 3, 4, 7, 8), western stretch of the gallery (5, 6, 9, 10) and northern stretch of the gallery (11)

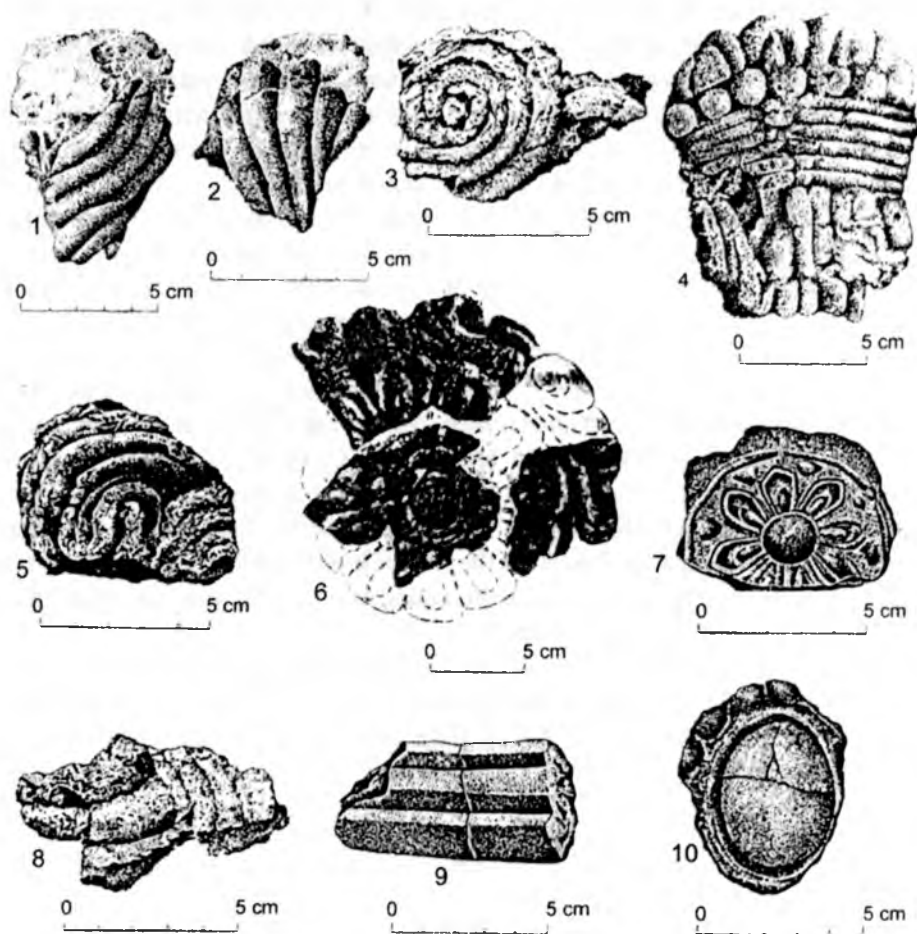


Figure 80. Remains of clay decorations: 1, 2, 3, 5, 8 – fragments of the chamber column décor painted blue tone; 4, 6, 9, 10 – elements of wall décor; 7 – rosette from the western stretch of the gallery

In the latter case we mean the temple of the city of Pinyao in the Shanxi province which is built on a square platform, has an entrance from the eastern side with an open platform in front of it, the daub walls of the ring gallery around the square sanctuary with embedded wooden posts as well as four columns in the sanctuary⁹⁵.

This is an ancient temple but the exact date of its construction is unknown. We only know from the inscription on the beam under the ceiling that it was "restored in the third year of the Dading rule" that is in 1163. In all its above mentioned particulars it is analogous to the temple in Surkh Kotal. The latter also stands on a cob platform, has a square shape and a square sanctuary with four columns inside and the entrance on the east⁹⁶. It is interesting to note that inside the cob brick walls of its sanctuary there were found wooden posts sitting in stone bases⁹⁷ exactly as in the sanctuary of the Ak-Beshim temple.

Finally, we need to point out that in Middle Asia even during the Muslim times there were sacred buildings with similar lay-outs. An example of this was building № 1 discovered in 1927 in Termez by V.L. Vyatkin and B.N. Zasyarkin who conducted trial excavations⁹⁸. The walls of the building were of cob bricks tiled on the inside and the outside with flamed bricks, "the central part was bounded by a regular square beyond the four sides of which lay a corridor", the walls had religious inscriptions in calligraphic style naskh; the site dates from after the eleventh and twelfth centuries⁹⁹.

B.N. Zasyarkin was right when he assumed that this was the case when an old Buddhist building was turned into a Muslim one, even more so because some traces of Buddhism in the form of some fragments of stone statues of Buddha and a cob stupa were uncovered in Termez in the same year¹⁰⁰.

4.3.2. Sculpture and painting

Together with qualified architects talented sculptors and painters took part in the decoration of the temple.

Unfortunately, only fragments of the sculptures and paintings survived till the time of the excavation. The building was severely damaged by the nomads who captured the whole city, presumably, in the second half of the eighth century. All the numerous clay sculptures were broken and their remains were found under the primary rubble. During the excavations we found feet, clenched fists, fragments of heads (faces, ears and so on), parts of torsos with folds of clothes and moulded

95 Wenwu cankao ziliao, 1954: 54, 55, plan 14.

96 Schlumberger, 1952.

97 Schlumberger, 1953: fig. 7, 8.

98 Zasyarkin, 1928: 277, 278. Unfortunately, the plan was not published.

99 Ibid.

100 Ibid.: 282.

relief decorations of statues (clay rosette, coils, medallions and badges in the form of multi-petal rosettes, etc.), fragments of a dragon, twisted clay ornaments for wooden columns and floral mouldings (Figures 68, 69, 79, 80)¹⁰¹.

The statues of deities and other sculptures were made of clay using frames of reeds or wood similar to the sculptures of Penjakent and Eastern Turkistan as well as the Buddhists sculptures of Tepe Marenjap near Kabul¹⁰². All of them as well as large-scale moulded ornaments were covered in a thin layer of alabaster which was later painted blue, yellow, red and black of pure tone. As for secondary colors, orange, reddish-brown and light yellow were used. The same color scheme was present in the fragments of the wall paintings and paintings on the ceilings.

The artistic interpretation of the sculptured images, the style of creating a portrait in sculpture, elements of the décor of sculptured figures (folds of clothes, "belts", rosettes, "medallions" and so on) all corresponded totally and fully to the canonized art of the temples of Eastern Turkistan from the same period of time¹⁰³. For example, absolutely identical rosettes on "belts" and "medallions" with "pearls" (Figures 68.3, 68.6, 68.9, 69.7, 69.8, 80.7, 80.10) decorated the statues of Shik Shin¹⁰⁴; "medallions" were also often pasted on vessels in Eastern Turkistan¹⁰⁵ and were also carved in wooden crafts¹⁰⁶ and so on. Clay palmettes similar to those of Ak-Beshim are also known (Figures 68.10, 79.1) (the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, FA-2104).

As for the blue clay coils (Figures 69.2, 69.3) found in the central chamber by the southern pedestal both on the fragments of the head of the statue of Buddha and on the isolated fragments, the way hair is represented is canonical and typical of a number of Buddhist sculptures of Eastern Turkistan¹⁰⁷ where moulds for the imprinting of such coils were even found¹⁰⁸.

We should also point out that in Shik Shin there was found a figure of Buddha with hair represented in the same way as the folding hair of Maitreya from the Ak-Beshim temple (Figure 69.5)¹⁰⁹.

101 The remains of clay sculptures were only found in the central hall and in the ring gallery. Besides, in 1954 during the excavations of the ramp by the main entrance to the temple there were found fragments of clay bas-relief that used to decorate the pylons at the entrance. We need to note that these were only floral bas-reliefs depicting, for example, tied sheafs and so on.

102 Hackinet, Bruhl, 1934 : 116-119, tabl. XXXVII.

103 The parallels were also found in Afghanistan in the above mentioned Tepe Marenjap (moulded "belts", rosettes and so on).

104 Ol'denburg, 1914: tabl. VII; Stein, 1921, vol. IV: tabl. CXXIX, CXXXIII, CXXXIV; D'yakonova, 1995: tabl. Б.1, Б.2, Б.4, Б.5, Б.7, Б.7, XLV, XLVI; the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, III-478, III-297, KY-263, KY-264.

105 Stein, 1921, vol. IV: tabl. IV; the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, FA-51 (3036-28) and others.

106 Le Coq, 1913: abb. 57.

107 The Hermitage, the Oriental Department, KY-145; cf.: Stein, 1921, vol. IV: pl. XLVI.

108 Stein, 1921, vol. II: pl. XVI.

109 Ol'denburg, 1914: tabl. XIV.

However, there were a number of elements from the clay decorations (i.e. opening buds (Figures 79.2-79.4) and so on) whose analogues were not found. Together with the serpent-like dragon and other elements they suggest a distinctive trend in the work of the local sculptors who reinterpreted the compulsory sacred décor of the Buddhist temple. The above mentioned dragon found in the niche of the central chamber had a crimped curving body and the original head with fangs bared and with a "pearl" in the brow (Figures 68.1, 68.2). This representation of the dragon is quite distinctive.

However, the observed peculiarities of the décor do not only reflect links with Eastern Turkistan but also with the central regions of Middle Asia and above all with Sogdiana in whose art from the same period we find similar multi-petal rosettes and "medallions", trimmed with "pearls" (Figures 68.3, 68.6, 68.9, 79.9-79.10). Ornamental components similar to those from Ak-Beshim were found on some pottery, for instance, on vessels made by skilled potters living in the seventh and the eighth centuries in the city whose remains are now known as the Kafir Kala settlement¹¹⁰ and also in Tali-Barzu¹¹¹.

There is a lot of evidence to prove that the walls of the central chamber and the gallery, their vaults and ceilings were densely covered in paintings. The sanctuary, the yard and the outer rooms did not have wall paintings.

Unfortunately, at some point all the paintings were destroyed and mostly lost. However, among the debris of mostly crushed pieces on the floor and in the rubble we managed to uncover some relatively small sheets of plaster with fragments of paintings in good condition. It seems that arabesques of two types with geometric and floral patterns were predominant. But we also have evidence that the temple had paintings depicting scenes from Buddha's life. By the western wall of the gallery we discovered a fragment with a delicately painted miniature of Buddha's head¹¹².

There is evidence of the paintings having been renovated and repainted at one point. The old wall paintings were covered with a layer of alabaster and the new painting was done on top of the new priming. The peculiarities of style, the type of images and the manner of painting all have direct parallels in the paintings of the above ground and cave temples of Eastern Turkistan. The paintings on the ceiling in the chamber of the Ak-Beshim temple¹¹³ are closest in composition and artistic elements to the paintings on the plafond in temple № 10 in Sengim-Agyz¹¹⁴.

110 The Hermitage, the Oriental Department, CA-66816 CA-66516 CA-7526.

111 Ibid.: CA-6256.

112 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 35.7.

113 Ibid.: fig. 36.

114 Ol'denburg, 1914: tabl. XXXVIII-XL.

4.3.4. Findings

Among the findings that were discovered in the excavated building and that go back to the first stage in its lifetime the most important are the objects that prove that in the Chu valley of the time there was a comparatively developed system of farming based on field irrigation. Thus, when the walls of the construction were examined, in the foundation of one of the corners there was found a very rare and important object, a wooden plough of the eighth century. It was an old well-used plough made of *archi* (sort of *Kyrghyz buursun*)¹¹⁵. It was built into the wall during its construction to ensure a better grip in the corner (Figure 81.1). The plough used to have an iron ploughshare and the marks from its hub were left on its body. As the plough was bent at the right angle its ploughshare sliced the ground horizontally and cut the weed's roots, released a strip of sod which could not be done with an ard that only scratches the ground without raising the earth.

Besides, two pieces of one and the same large (1.5 m in diameter) lower grinder¹¹⁶ were used to make foot-bearings for the doors of the sanctuary and parts of similar grinders formed basis for the supporting posts in the walls of the sanctuary¹¹⁷. An unbroken upper grinder (1.5 m in diameter) was found by the very door to the temple (Figure 73.7). An especially large number (more than 10) of such big old grinders, both intact and in fragments, were discovered in the yard where they were used for paving the potholes and the washed away areas of the yard (Figures 73. 1, 73.2, 73. 4)¹¹⁸. Grinders of such a big size made from slabs of gray granite were apparently used in water mills set up along the major *aryks* and rivers. Water mills of the kind also appeared in Sogdiana in the eighth century¹¹⁹.

We mentioned above that inside the cob bricks of the temple there were found imprints of straw and cereal grains (barley?). Besides, when the batrap pit in the yard was excavated there were found some grains of wheat.

All these findings and especially the evidence proving the existence of a number of major water mills testify to one important fact that is of a developed commercial production of wheat in the Chu valley in the seventh and eighth centuries; they also suggest that the Buddhist community of the temple was mostly composed of farmers who baked bread and kept caravanserais.

115 Ploughs of the same kind were used by the Mongols in north-western Mongolia (Potanin, 1881: 111) and the Tuvinians in Tuva (an identical wooden plough is housed in the Kyzyl museum).

116 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 28.6.

117 Ibid.: fig. 28.5.

118 Similar grinders are familiar from accidental findings in Altai (the Bashkaus River). V.: *Drevnosti*, 1886: tabl. V, fig. 16. 17

119 Terenozhkin, 1950: 168.

Apricot stones and dried seeds of pumpkins, melons and watermelons prove that they also had orchards and gourd fields irrigated by an extensive network of aryks. The very fact that we discovered an aryk in the yard of the temple serves as direct prove of their existence elsewhere.

Other findings pertaining to the period of the use of the building as a temple were in the first place sacrificial Buddhists objects. These were the unique open-work bronze badges often with hot gilding. There were 17 unbroken ones found and some fragments of another one. Twelve of them were found together in the sanctuary at the westernmost wall at a level slightly higher than the floor (Figures 82-84)¹²⁰. They could have been hanging on the wall fixed with studs on either leather or thin board covered with white cotton cloth (some of the cloth was found on several studs of the badges) forming a sort of a Buddhist "iconostasis". Initially the openings in the massive yellow badges looked white because of the background cloth. When the beams of the ceiling collapsed as a result of a fire the "iconostasis" still remained on the wall and when it finally fell it ended up on a layer of rubble and not on the floor.

The other five badges of the same kind were found right on the floor; two of them in the western part of the ring gallery (Figures 85, 86.1), one in the chamber by the southern wall (Figure 87.2), one in the sanctuary (room 3) (Figure 86.2) and one in the corridor 4 (Figure 86.3). The fragments of the last (the eighteenth) badge were found in the yard.

Besides, in the western corridor of the gallery we discovered a gilded badge with similar studs which might have hung above the other "icons" in this kind of "iconostasis" (Figure 87.1). In the yard we also found a bent thin gilded setting with sockets for precious stones that could have been part of the decorations of the bronze statue of Buddha that used to be in the sanctuary and was later taken away from it (Figure 88).

We do not know of any badges identical to those we found in the temple but the fact that the Buddhists of Eastern Turkistan had open-work bronze badges (depicting flowers but not Buddha) was established by Albert von Le Coq during the excavations of temple № 10 in Sengim¹²¹. We also know of the so called "iconostasis" in the paintings of Qianfodong in which a bigger image of Buddha is surrounded by smaller Buddhas¹²². Besides, in the Khotan oasis there was found kind of bronze Buddhist "iconostasis" in the form of a roof-shaped cover with a hub above which on top of seven sprouts with lotuses sat Buddha and six Bodhisattvas¹²³.

120 V. also: Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 38.6.

121 Le Coq, 1913: taf. 58.

122 Stein, 1921, vol. II: pl. 209, 211.

123 Kizeritskiy, 1886: 185, fig. 25.

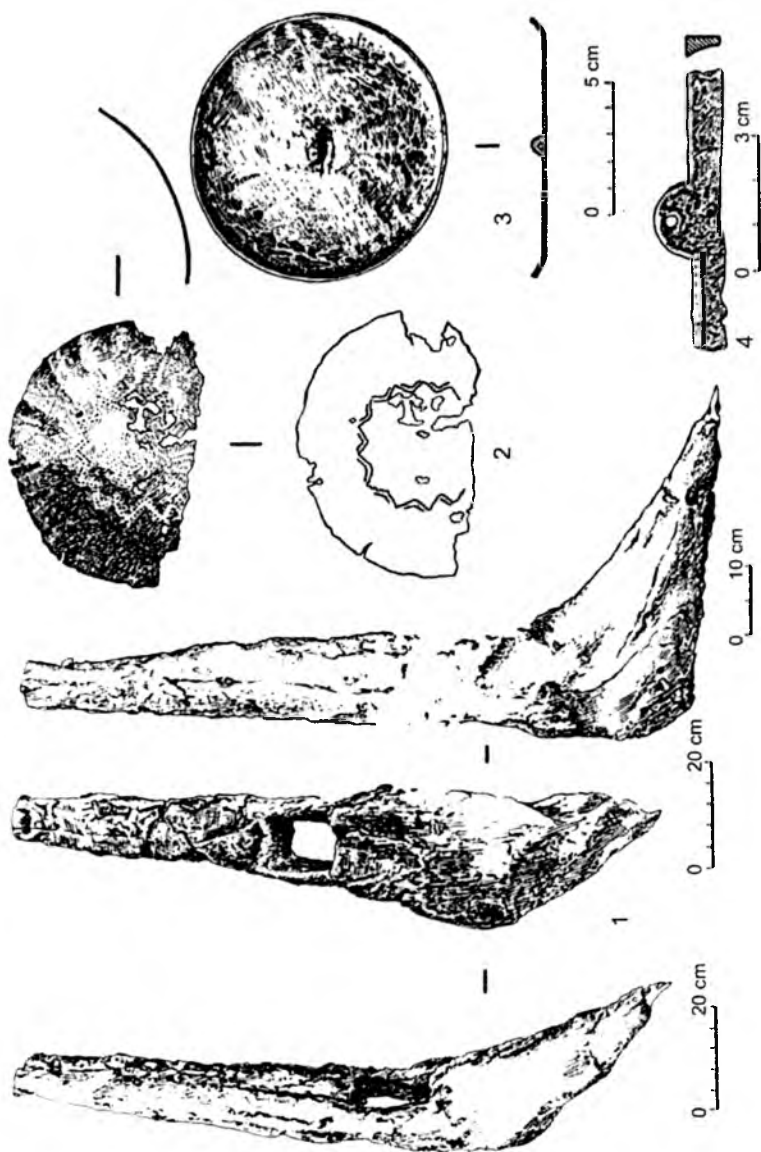


Figure 81. Findings from the temple: 1 - plough made of archi, 2 - tray from a weaver, 3 - mirror, 4 - clasp from a purse; 2-4 - bronze

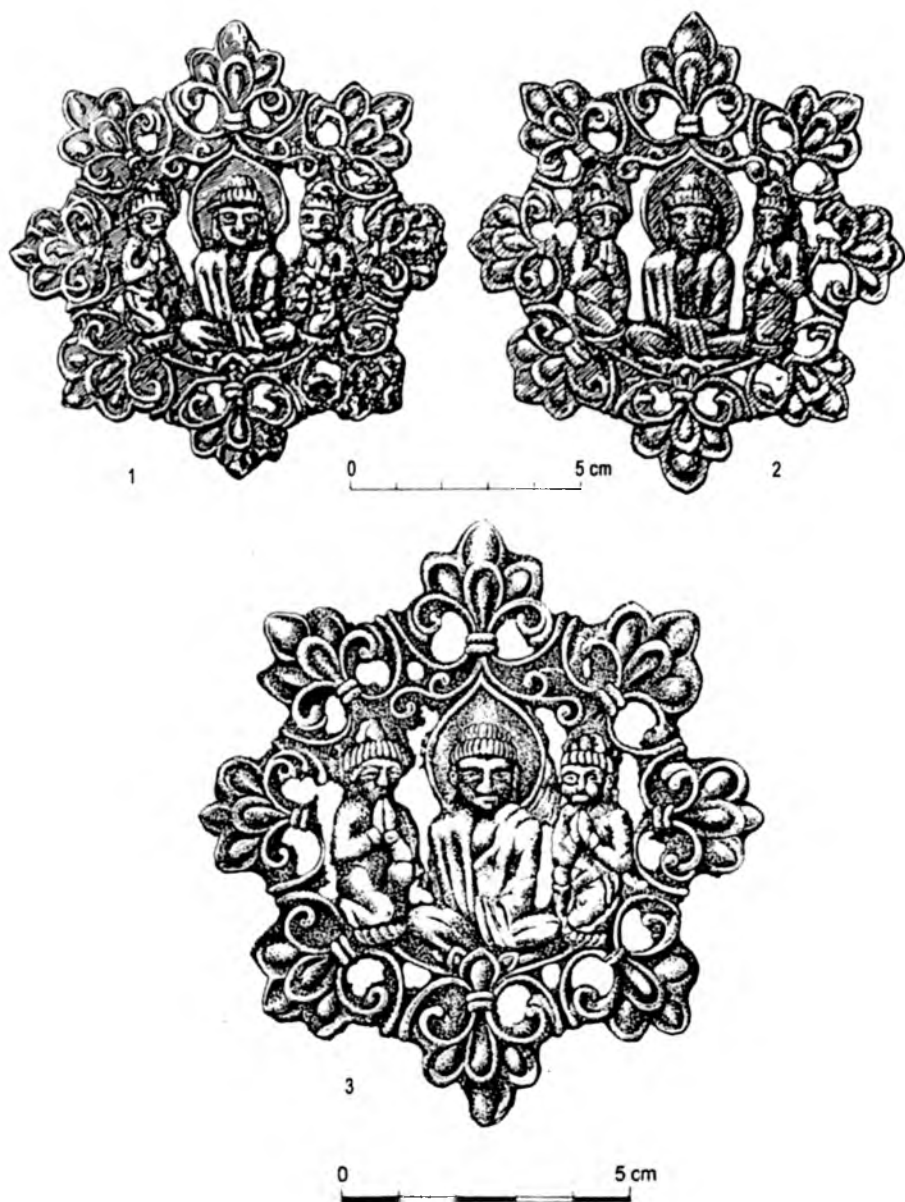


Figure 82. Open-work bronze badges depicting Buddha with Bodhisattvas, found in the sanctuary of the temple

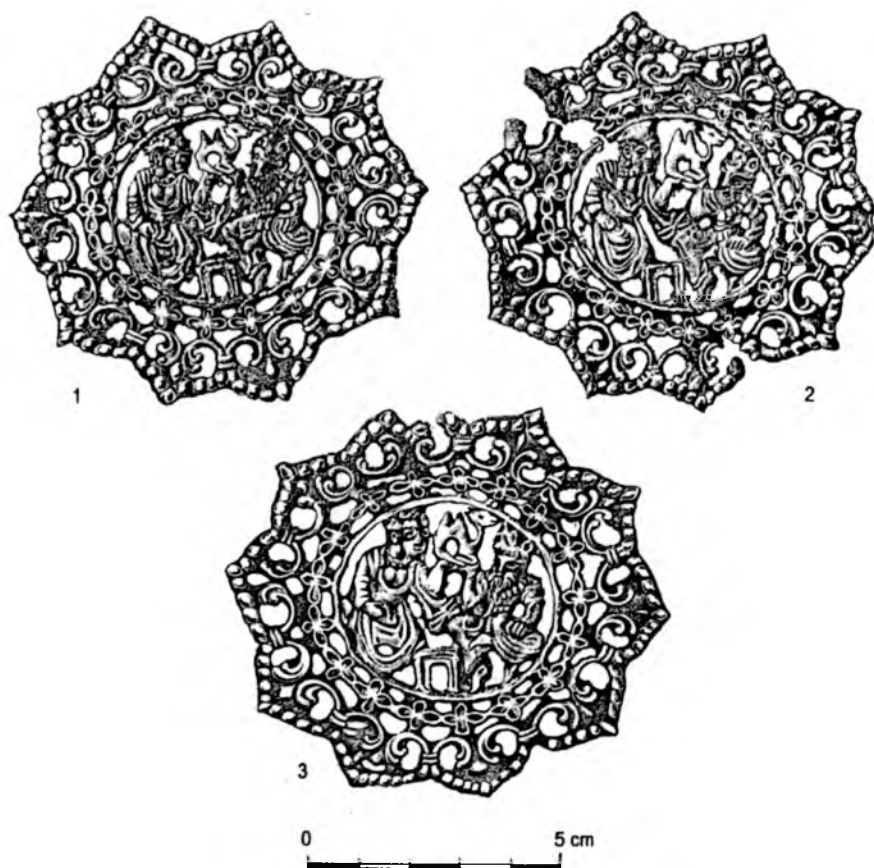


Figure 83. Open-work bronze badges with hot gilding depicting a male and a female deities holding a small camel

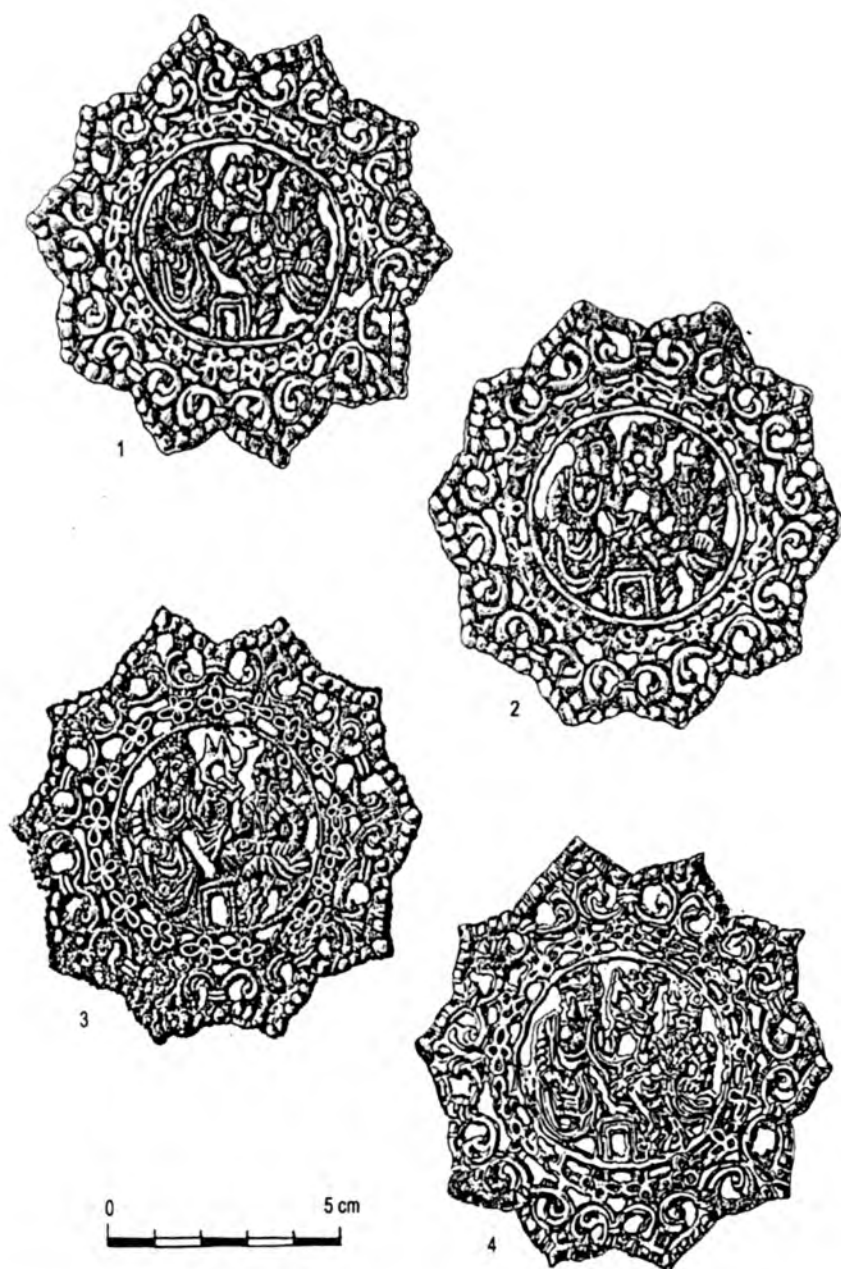


Figure 84. Gilded bronze badges formed a sort of a Buddhist "iconostasis" in the sanctuary of the temple



Figure 85. A gilded bronze Buddhist badge from the sanctuary of the temple

The open-work badges depicting Buddhist deities we found fall into six groups.

1. A large gilded badge depicting Buddha sitting cross-legged on a lotus with a halo over his head. By the sides of Buddha also on lotuses kneeling on one knee and clasping their hands at the chest in prayer sit two Bodhisattvas (or disciples?). The whole scene is framed by a rich palmette ornament whose style goes back to the eighth century (Figure 85); one item.

2. The same image of Buddha with Bodhisattvas surrounding him but framed by a simpler style of ornament (Figure 82; one in fragments) and five absolutely identical badges cast in the same mould¹²⁴.

3. The same central scene depicting Buddha and Bodhisattvas but framed with a border of four-petal rosettes and trimmed with lotus leaves; one item¹²⁵.

124 V. photograph: Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig.29.5.

125 Ibid.: fig. 38.6.

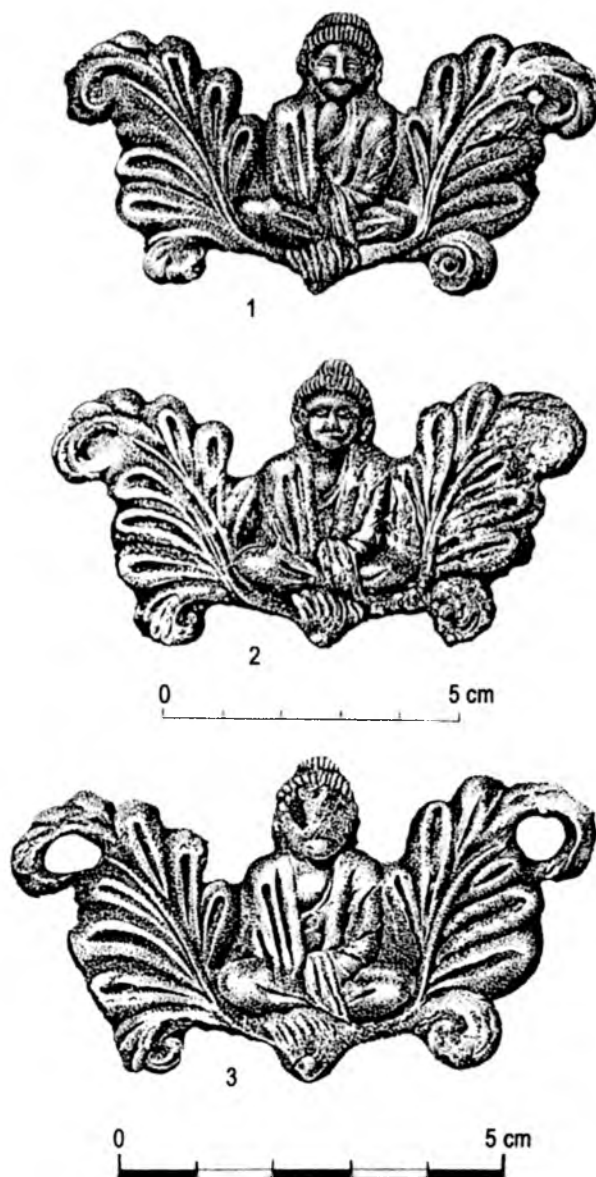


Figure 86. Bronze Buddhist badges, found in the western stretch of the gallery (1), room III, or sanctuary III (2) and room IV (3). 1 - gilded badge



1



2



Figure 87. Gilded bronze Buddhist badges found in the western stretch of the gallery (1) and central chamber (2). 2 – bronze and turquoise as insert

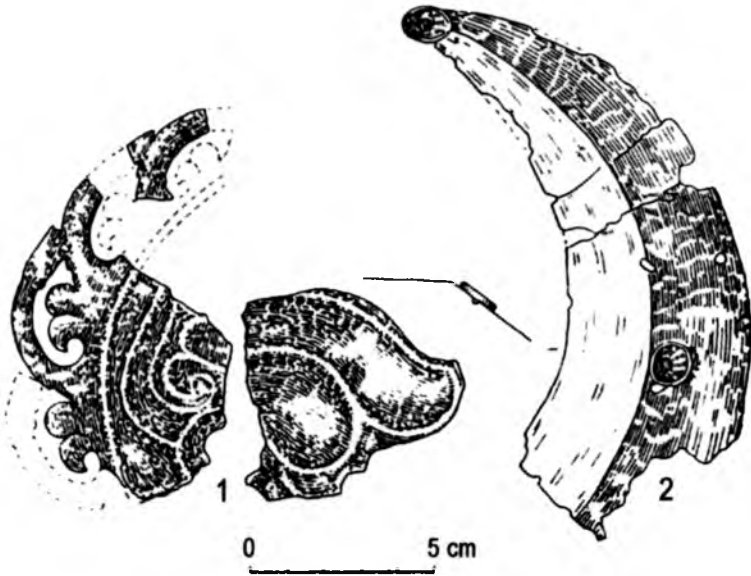


Figure 88. Thin gilded setting with sockets for precious stones that could have been part of the decorations of the bronze statue of Buddha. They were found in the temple yard

4. The same image of Buddha but alone (without a halo and a lotus) sitting between two leaves (Figure 86); three items of which just one is gilded¹²⁶.

5. An original gilded badge with the same image of Buddha sitting on a lotus in the center; the halo has floral curves on it. The central circle in which Buddha sits and the wreath are decorated with six nests, two of which have blue turquoise inclusions (Figure 87.2); one item.

Judging by the details all these five badge types have the same image of Buddha. An unusual detail in his image is that both his arms are covered by the folds of his dress flowing from his shoulders and so that even the hands are concealed.

We believe that the Buddhas in this kind of attire even though different from the Ak-Beshim Buddhas in other respects, are typical of only the medieval Buddhist temples of Eastern Turkistan where they were portrayed both in the wall paintings¹²⁷ and in terracotta¹²⁸. At an earlier time the same way of depiction of

126 Ibid.: fig. 29.2, 29.3 (photographs).

127 Le Coq, 1913: taf. 59.

128 Stein, 1921, vol. IV: pl. CXXXII; the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, III-462 – III-465, ГА-654, ГА-666, ГА-667.

Buddha and the Bodhisattvas was common in Gandhara¹²⁹.

6. Gilded badges depicting two deities in the central circle; they are a male and a female deity quite unique in terms of their iconography and with no parallels in the Buddhist pantheon (Figures 83, 84). They do not look similar to any deities from other religions typical of Middle Asia with the exception of the deities of the early medieval Sogdiana (to be discussed below). Seven identical items were found in the sanctuary as part of the above mentioned "iconostasis".

The figures of the deities do not look canonical and because of the many everyday details are close to the realistic depictions of people. The woman sitting with her legs bent under her is in the left-hand corner, she is wearing a long dress with folds flowing downwards; one of her feet is seen from behind, heel upwards. Her low-cut dress reveals her breast with a necklace of round beads; it is not clear what kind of headdress she is wearing; her face with her big bulging eyes and a straight nose is depicted at a three quarter angle and looks quite Europeoid; there is an earring with a big round pendant in her right ear; a scarf (?) flows down from her shoulder and its end lies in folds on the knee of the man sitting beside. The man is wearing long clothes with a narrow waste with a sash around it (possibly composite), his face is Europeoid with a large nose deeply set eyes and a big beard. It is unclear what kind of headdress he is wearing, it looks that an animal ear is depicted on the man's head; from his shoulders to his chest there hangs a necklace of the barma type. He is sitting with his right leg down and his left leg under him and his left hand resting on it. Between the deities in the foreground is a small table on legs (or altar). The man and the woman are linked together by both of them holding a small camel sitting on their palms (on his right palm and on her left palm). The circle with this scene inside is bordered by the same kind of four-petal rosettes like the trim on the third type of badge with the Buddha described above¹³⁰ while the edge trim is original.

The badges of this type are only similar to the depictions of Buddhist deities (and these badges are surely Buddhist as they originate from the same "iconostasis") in the way the male deity sits (with one leg down, the other bent) which is a canonical posture (the so called "lalitāsana") of the good Buddhist deities from the depictions of the solar deities of Gandhara¹³¹ up to the most recent "buddhas"¹³².

Currently it does not seem possible to find out what kind of Great deities they are and what the semantics of the whole scene with the camel is. However, the general appearance of the deities, their dress and the decorative details are most likely of the local Middle Asian origin, Sogdian, to be precise.

As for the image of the man some bearded deities with deep set eyes are familiar from the terracotta figures from the Chu valley in the publications by A.N.

129 Foucher, 1805 : fig. 145, 242, 247.

130 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 38.6.

131 Foucher, 1805 : fig. 83.

132 Materialy..., 1896: 167, 168, fig. 44, 45.

Bernshtam¹³³ as well as from the wall paintings recently discovered in Penjakent by the Tajik expedition. Besides, in B.N. Kastalskiy's collection there are some terracotta heads of people wearing similar headdress with identical animal ears (the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, CA-105).

The female deity with the characteristic folding dress revealing the breast and a necklace might be likened to the terracotta figure of a woman (unfortunately broken) holding a lamb in her hands from the same collection (the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, CA-570). Besides, the scarf flowing down her shoulder is depicted in the Iranian tradition (in the broader sense we imply).

The above mentioned elements as well as the growing awareness of the role of the camel in the religious beliefs of the people of the central regions of Middle Asia convince us that the Ak-Beshim badges feature some local Turkic-Sogdian deities that found their way into the Buddhist pantheon in the Chu valley in the eighth century¹³⁴. It is only logical because, firstly, there were many Sogdians in the Buddhist community of the temple and, secondly, we know that Buddhism readily incorporated and internalized local cultures¹³⁵. We believe that this divine couple were the guarding deities of the Suyab inhabitants who were mostly the Turks and the Sogdians of Semirechye.

It is possible to look at the divine couple as belonging to the pantheon of the Turkic-Sogdian deities rather than purely Sogdian ones in view of the development of their images. Both male and female figures occur in early sacred paintings in Sogdiana on their own (according to B.I. Marshak, they can be correlated with the male and female hypostases of victory and luck of any kind, namely the Sogdian Vashagn (the Avestian Verethragna) and with a smaller degree of certainty Vaninda). The early tradition in the Sogdian iconography was to depict isolated figures of deities. In the wall paintings of Afrasiab and Penjakent a god and goddess sitting together on one throne and joined together by a common attribute (the figure of a camel)¹³⁶ quite possibly originate at the time of the Turkic supremacy and under the influence of the Turkic cosmogony. From times immemorial the Turkic cosmogony featured a characteristic divine married couple of Tengri and Umay who ruled the world and whose agents on earth were the ruling couple of the khagan and the khatun.

133 Bernshtam, 1948: 61-65.

134 Some images of a divine couple, occasionally with a camel figure, were discovered in the wall paintings of house temples and palace sanctuaries of Penjakent. In their studies researchers often refer to the Ak-Beshim badges which, as it is generally accepted as an established fact, have recognized similarities with some earlier sources in the Buddhist-Iranian iconographic tradition (Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 208-209; Belenickij, 1968: 140, abb. 66; Shkoda, 1980: fig. 1.1, 1.4, 1.5; Marshak, 1999: 182).

135 Grünwedel, 1900: 158, 178.

136 Marshak, 1999: 182.

The sacred unity of this couple in the traditional beliefs of the Turks was reflected in ceremonial official artifacts of some regions of Middle Asia that were under the influence of the First Turkic khaganate. The most obvious among them were locally minted coins that bore double portraits of the supreme ruler and his wife on the same side of the coin, never known in the numismatic history before¹³⁷. It is highly likely that in its turn the iconography of the Sogdian deities influenced the way Tengri and Umay were depicted in the Turkic world¹³⁸.

This way or that, the double images on the badges from the Ak-Beshim temple and in the above mentioned peculiarities of its architecture, sculptures and paintings reveal the syncretic nature of the culture of the Chu valley cities in the seventh-tenth centuries.

There were found other sacred object, for example, clay prayer beads (Figures 89.3, 89.4) from sanctuary III (room III); an alabaster mould for impressing terracotta heads of Buddha (room V, Figures 90.1, 90.2), a flat iron decorative spear from a Buddhist banner (Figure 89.1; southern corridor of the ring gallery), a bronze amulet in the form of a galloping horse with a hole inside (Figure 89.2)¹³⁹, miniature clay cups and a miniature lantern (Figures 89.5-89.7).

Other objects belonging to the time the building functioned as a temple are not very numerous. There were mostly found iron nails, dognails and staples remaining after the wooden constructions had burnt down¹⁴⁰. Some bronze nails were also found.

The most significant findings were discovered in the lower layer of the yard. They were four absolutely identical clay seals from documents found at different locations (similar to those discovered on documents in the Sogdian castle on the Mug Mountain)¹⁴¹ with an elephant image and a brief Sogdian inscription¹⁴². At the time of the publication of the core research papers on the excavations of 1959 this inscription remained undeciphered. Later on O.I. Smirnova interpreted it as "master" and V.A. Livshits a lot later told me that it meant "elephant"¹⁴³.

We also found a bronze tray from a weigher with some pattern of stars at the bottom (Figure 81.2), two cubic metal weights with the sides of 1.3 and 1.5 cm and four coins of the Turgesh circulation with Sogdian legends. We should point out that one of the coins was found under the aryk when its bed was removed; a coin-like Chinese amulet with a circular hole in the middle was uncovered at the same place.

137 Smirnova, 1981: 53-56, 359-370, № 1482-1497, tabl. XL, LV.1-LV.4, LV.6, LVI.1, LVI.2, LXXXI; Zeimal', 1999: tabl. 121.6, 121.7, 123.9, 123.12, 123.15, 123.18, 123.21, 123.23.

138 Kyzlasov I.L., 1998b.

139 Identical hanging amulets of bronze depicting camels, animals and jugs were found in Eastern Turkistan (v.: Kizeritskiy, 1886: 189, fig. 32-34).

140 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 37.5, 37.6.

141 Freiman, 1933.

142 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 22.

143 However, he also suggested another interpretation (*prn* "divine grace") (Livshits, 1989: 80).

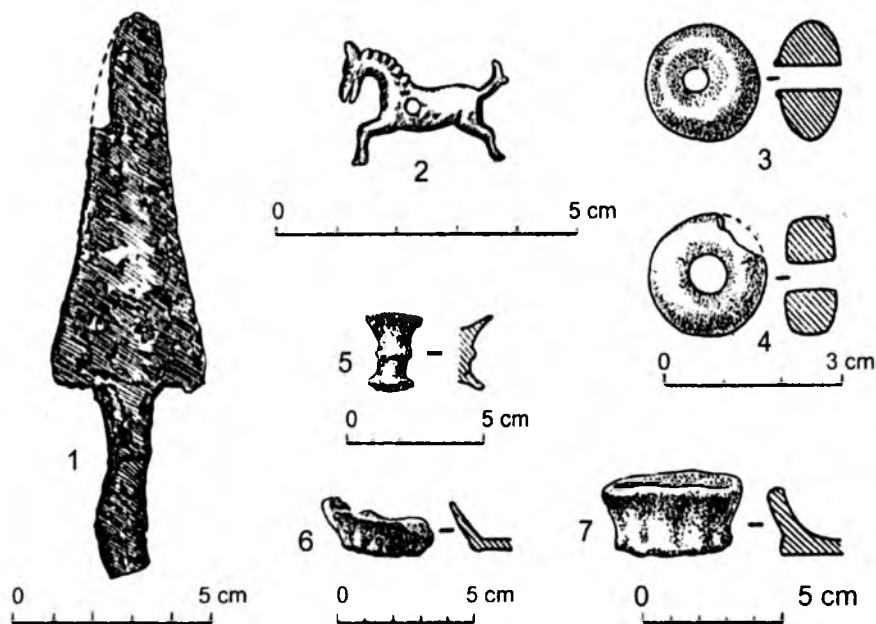


Figure 89. Sacred Buddhist objects: 1 – iron decorative spear from a banner; 2 – bronze amulet in the form of a horse; 3, 4 – clay prayer beads; 5 – miniature clay lantern; 6, 7 – miniature clay cups

We need to specially highlight the fact that the lower layers of the temple only contained small coins of the Turgesh circulation with tamgas in the form of tridents and with legends in Sogdian (minted by the local rulers of the city), but not the Turgesh coins proper dating from the eighth century with the tamga in the shape of a bow found in the layers above (Figure 91). This circumstance enables us to assume that the coins of the Turgesh circulation were minted before the Turgesh coins proper, “obviously at the end of the seventh century (the time of the temple construction) and the beginning of the eighth century when the temple continued to exist”¹⁴⁴. Neither the discovered objects nor the architectural and other analogues contradict this dating.

It is important that apart from the yard the same coins of the Turgesh circulation were discovered under the wooden beam of the column foundation in the central chamber (1 item), on the floor of the chamber (2 items), on the sanctuary floor (1 item), on the floor of the northern corridor of the gallery (1 item) and, most significantly, in the split pakhsa block (1 item) of the sanctuary wall (room III).

144 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 210.



Figure 90. An alabaster mould for impressing terracotta heads of Buddha (1) and modern impression (2)

The latter discovery convinced us that it was these coins that were in circulation at the time when the main walls of the temple were constructed. The same is proved by the fact that coins were found in the earlier surfaces of the temple rooms and under the column in the chamber.

Among other household items of special interest is a round bronze mirror with curved edges and a loop in the center found in the chamber (Figure 81.3). It is significant that the mirror is not Chinese but Middle Asian and it is absolutely identical to the one found in temple I in Penjakent¹⁴⁵ which once again proves the existence of close links between Suyab and Sogdiana of the time. Some fragments of a glass bottle were also found. There were some personal items, for example, a pendant of polished stone (Figure 92.2), some blue round and flat paste buttons (Figures 92.1, 92.3), beads of paste and glass: fluted with a blue surface (Figures 92.16-92.19)¹⁴⁶, white spherical ones (Figures 92.13-92.15), spotted ones (Figures 92.4-92.9) and cylindrical ones made of paste (Figures 92.10, 92.12). Eight of them (Figures 92.4-92.10) were found in the pakhsa block of room III together with the above mentioned coin of the Turgesh circulation and a bronze pendant in the shape of a half-bell (Figure 92.11).

No truly Chinese objects or coins were found in the temple. From among other objects we should single out a fragment of a knife and a stone polisher for pottery that were uncovered in the batrap pit along with some grains of wheat, coals, pumpkin seeds and animal bones and also a bronze clasp from a purse (room V, Figure 81.4) and shells from chicken eggs at a variety of locations.

145 Belenitskiy, 1953.

146 Similar beads were discovered in Penjakent (Belenitskiy, 1954: 39, fig. 5-11) and at the Kafir-Kala site (the seventh and eighth centuries) (the Hermitage, the Oriental Department, CA-7491).

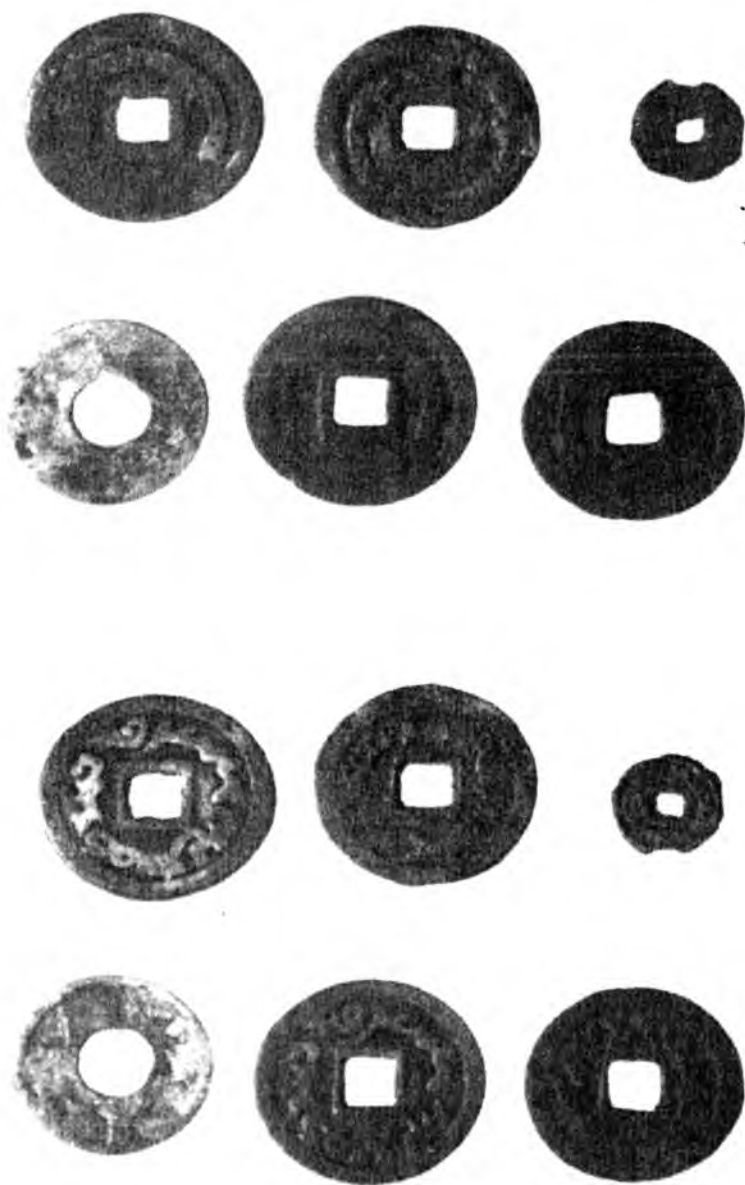


Figure 91. Examples of the bronze Turgesh coins, found in the Buddhist temple;
face sides (left columns) and back sides (right columns)

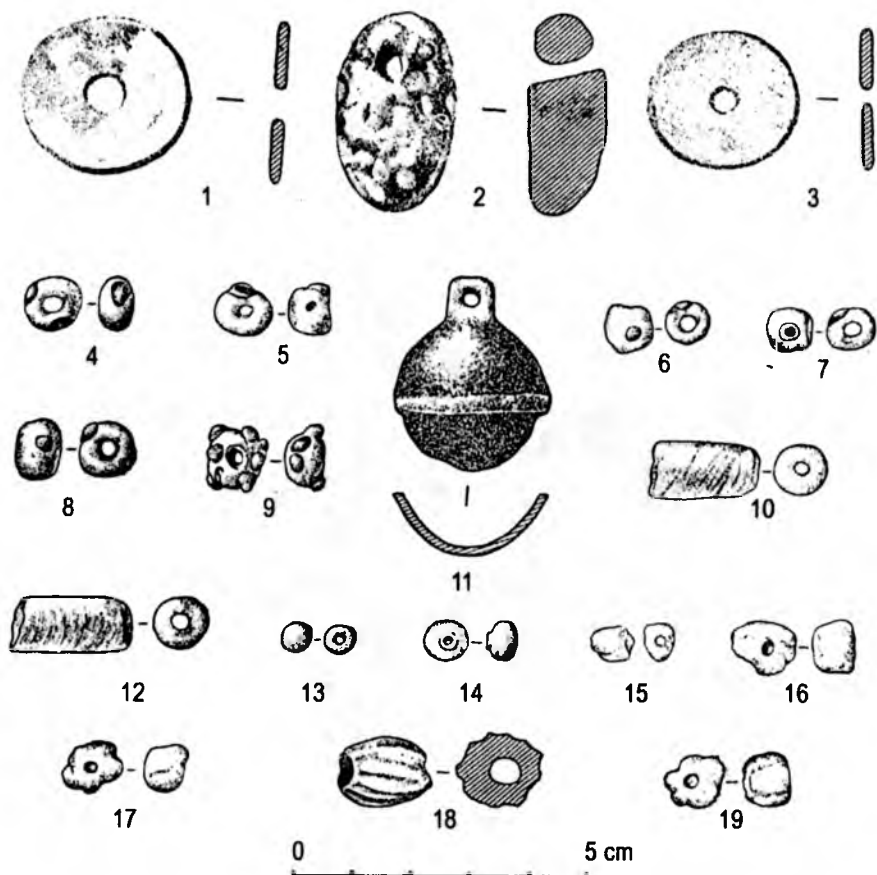


Figure 92. Small findings. 1, 3 – blue round and flat paste buttons (room I); 2 – pendant of polished stone (room I); beads of paste and glass: 4 – black with red eyes, 5 – white with red eyes, 6, 7 – green with red eyes, 8 – yellow with red eyes, 9 – brown with red eyes, 10, 12 – green ones made of paste, 13-15 – white, 16-19 – fluted with a blue surface; 11 – bronze. 4-11 – from the pakhsa block of room III, 12-17 – from the room III, 18-19 – from the yard

As for the pottery from site I it requires a special publication. The stages of the temple's life and alterations were reflected in several distinct pottery groups (Figure 93). Here we are only going to look at several items from the lower layer. These are miniature cup-lanterns (Figures 89.8, 89.9, 94.3, 94.4), a miniature lantern (Figure 89.7), narrow mouthed jugs with a spout and a twisted handle covered in white engobe, and also mugs imitating the Turkic silver tankards in form familiar from accidental findings

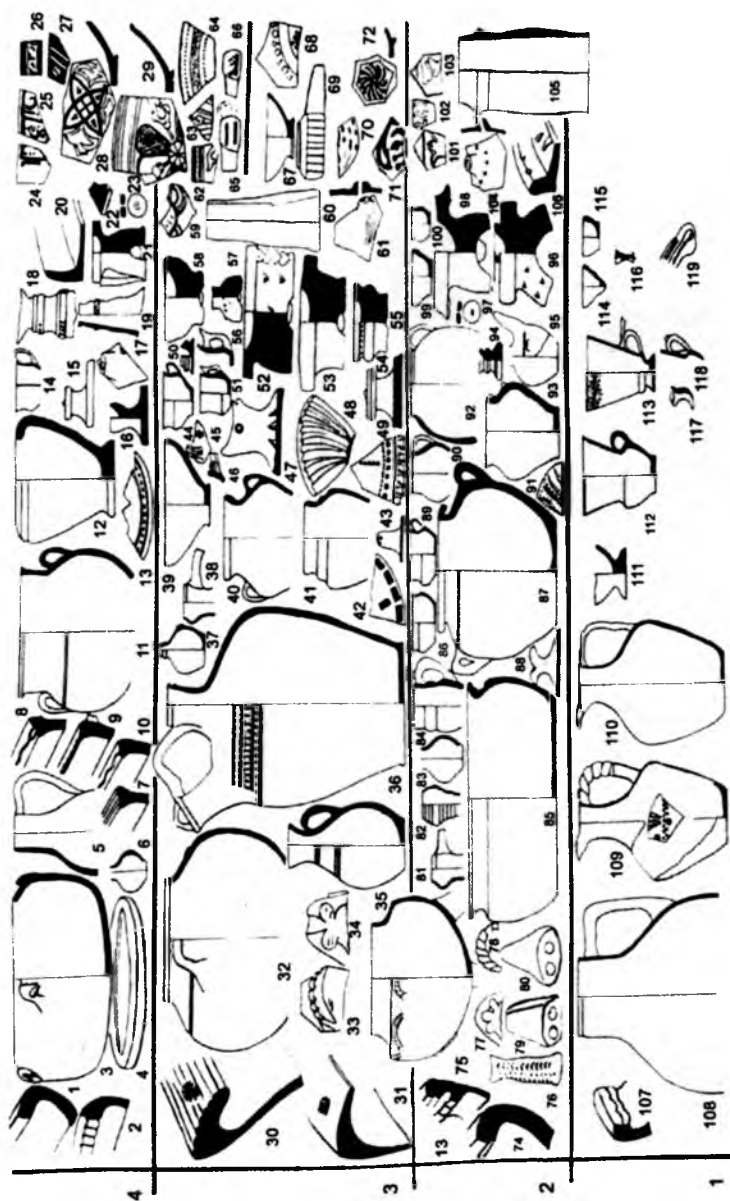


Figure 93. Typical pottery of the site I. 1 – temple function period (the first construction layer), first half of the eighth century; 2 – period of nomads used the temple ruins, second half of the eighth – beginning of the ninth century; 3 – dwellings of the second construction layer, middle of the ninth – tenth century; 4 – layer without dwellings, the tenth and eleventh centuries

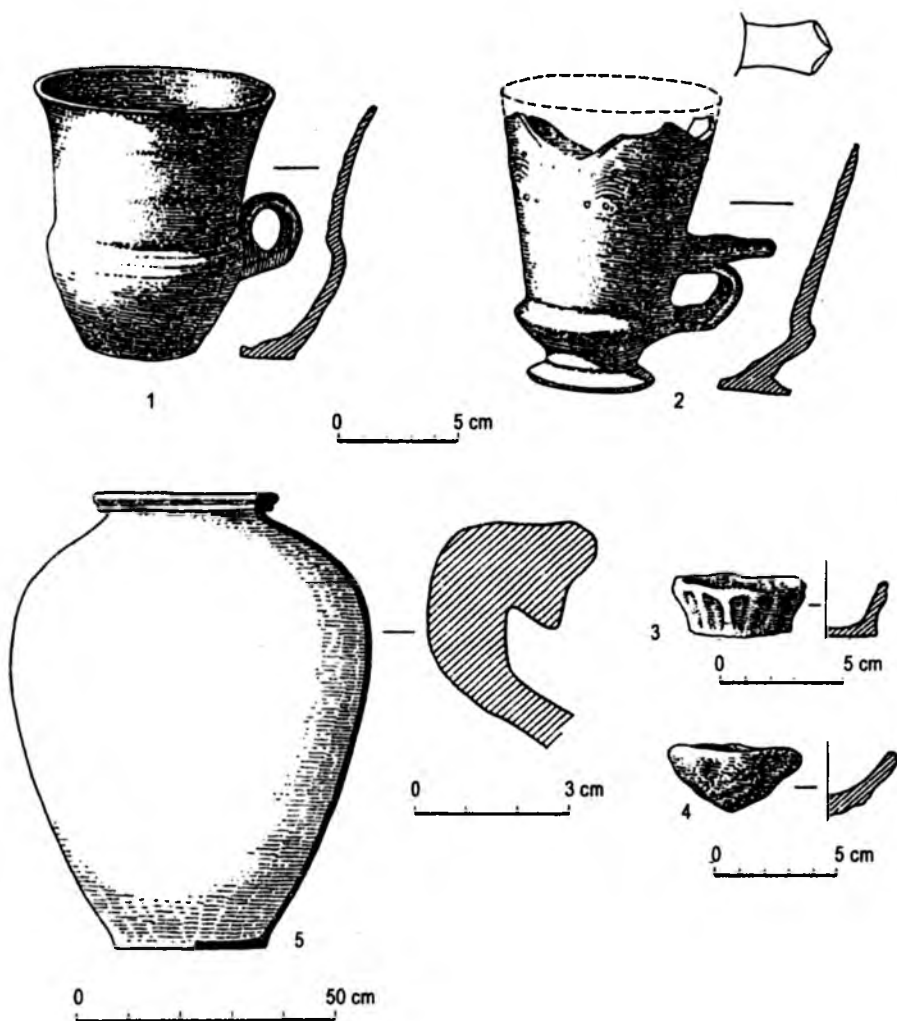


Figure 94. Lower layers pottery of the site I: 1, 2 – mugs;
3, 4 – miniature cup-lanterns (the first construction layer);
5 – hum found in the yard (the second construction layer)

(the Hermitage, the Oriental Department) (Figures 94.1, 94.2). Most of the pottery was made from fine clay on potter's wheel or was hand built similar to some pottery of Sogdiana and Chach but different from the pottery of Eastern Turkistan and China.

4.3.5. Great Cloud Temple

Having identified the Ak-Beshim site with the ruined city of Suyab G. Clauson took into consideration the archaeological dating of the excavated monastery construction to put forward an assumption in 1960 that it was the very Buddhist Great Cloud Temple which was erected by general Wang Zhengxian in 748 at the place where princess Jiaohé¹⁴⁷ lived. Being convinced of the accuracy of his assumption Sir Gerard Clauson suggested that we should change the dating of the earliest layer of site I in favor of the eighth century¹⁴⁸.

Indeed, this hypothesis is not totally in keeping with the archaeological dating. We have illustrated that the materials obtained by the expedition make it possible to identify the time of the temple construction as an earlier period than the middle of the eighth century, namely, the very end of the seventh – beginning of the eighth century.¹⁴⁹ New comparative studies of Chinese sources prompted by our excavations and conducted in 1979 by the Beijing historian Zhang Guangda and later supplemented and specified by A. Forte helped to resolve the issue.

The Italian explorer who studied the state monasteries of China of the seventh and eighth centuries had his research results published in Japan in 1992 and in Europe in 1994 in the form of a special article dedicated to the monastery of Ak-Beshim. He cited the Chinese text with its English translation from the report by the eighth century author Du Huan who visited Suyab in about 750, “there is also the walled city of Suiye. In the seventh year of Tianbao (748) Wang Zhengjian, the Military Commissioner of Beiting (Beshbaliq), attacked it [therefore] the walls of the city are destroyed and the dwellings of the village(s) are in ruin. At the place where Princess Jiache in the past had lived the Dayun Monastery was erected which still exists”¹⁵⁰. The study of this seemingly clear

147 Clauson, 1961: 8. Now Yu.A. Zuev also interprets the text in the same way.

148 Clauson, 1961: 11.

149 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 210.

150 Forte, 1994: 42 ff. Russian translations of the English version (without A. Forte's interpretations) were published. See Litvinskiy, 1996: 190; Lubo-Lesnichenko, 2002: 118. Compare the translation of this part of the source text by Yu.A. Zuev (2002: 271, 272) who offered his own independent interpretation to include it into the collection of Chinese sources on Syab, “There is also the city of Suayb. When in the seventh year of Tianbao rule (748) the Beiting governor Wang Zhengxian set off on a punitive expedition [to western regions] the city walls were destroyed [by

fragment led to the refusal by the researcher to accept 748 as the date of the monastery construction.

It was discovered that "the edict instituting the Dayun monasteries was issued in December 5, 690 and it was in force only during the Zhou Dynasty from 690 to 705". On December 8, 692 Suyab was included in the list of the so called Four Garrisons (Kucha, Kashgar, Khotan and Suyab) to be restored after the Chinese military campaigns. Consequently, the Suyab monastery of Dayun (Great Cloud) could only have been founded between 692 (693) and 705. This timeframe explains the phrase "still exists" written in about 750 by Du Huan in his reference to the monastery, which would have been illogical if the date of its construction had been 748¹⁵¹. All the Dayun monasteries in the capitals and prefectures of the empire were built at the end of the seventh - beginning of the eighth century. Further research enabled A. Forte to clarify the meaning of the final phrases of the source through changing their punctuation, "it is the place, where Princess Jiache in the past had lived. The Dayun Monastery which had been erected [at Suiye by the Chinese] still exists"¹⁵².

As far as we can judge by the available literature the Buddhist monastery excavated at Ak-Beshim so far proved to be the only discovered and studied monastery from the serious of religious complexes which the above mentioned edict of 690 ordered to be set up. Empress Wu Zhao who believed she was an incarnation of Maitreya and followed the sutra of the Great Cloud dedicated all the monasteries of Dayun to this Bodhisattva of the future of the universe. The fragments of gigantic sculptures of Maitreya and Shakyamuni found at site I at Ak-Beshim also proved its identification as the monastery of the Great Cloud (Figure 71).

This outline of the research efforts very clearly demonstrates the independence of archaeological science which became an exact science by the middle of the twentieth century. When archaeology is applied the results of its findings can sway the ideas of historians and encourage them to rethink some of their statements which are derived from sometimes seemingly clear written records like the report by Du Huan. Our case prompted a conclusion by B.A. Litvinskiy which is impeccable from the point of view of methodology, "archaeological sites should be dated first and foremost based on the materials they provide (above all archaeological and numismatic), on the stratigraphy and architectural observations and typology. External sources, in particular, written records, should be resorted to in the process of dating specific sites only when they have been critically assessed and preferably in those cases when they contain unquestionable references to the given construction, which is seldom the case"¹⁵³.

him?]) and the settlements declined. At the place where princess Jiaoh-kongchui used to live he erected a Buddhist temple of Dayun-si which exists up to now".

151 Forte, 1994: 42, 43, 50.

152 Ibid.: 53.

153 Litvinskiy, 1996: 191, 192. We regret to have to say that both the concrete historical

In the case of our excavations archaeology provides concrete data about the process of the monastery construction which is seen by historians nearly as a Chinese undertaking. The construction materials and techniques, the peculiarities of the general lay-out and individual details, the general architectural image of the site all remove any doubts of its closeness to the traditions of religious architecture in Eastern Turkistan and prove that Sogdian masters and builders were directly involved in the process¹⁵⁴ (Figure 78). The Sogdian characteristics of the Buddhist faith are reflected in the excavated religious objects while the household items prove the presence of the Sogdians themselves in the temple.

However, we do not reject the idea that some Chinese monks could have lived in the temple of the Great Cloud at its very beginning, even though this was not proved by any conclusive evidence during the excavations. The direct evidence of the Chinese presence was found in the vicinity of the Great Cloud monastery ruins at the end of the twentieth century, for example a fragment of a tomb stone with an inscription, a pedestal for a statue of Buddha with dedication by Du Huaibao (created between 682 and 709) and a stele depicting Buddha, the Bodhisattvas, lions and donators¹⁵⁵.

4.3.6. Evidence of the destruction of the temple and the presence of nomads

Numerous archaeological facts prove that in the second half of the eighth century the temple was burnt and half ruined by some Turkic tribes, possibly, the Karluks who lived in rooms of the temple at the end of the eighth – beginning of the ninth centuries.

In the central chamber and the other rooms of the temple there were clear traces of a fire, for example charred ceilings of reed lying on the floor, cinders, coals and some remains of charred beams on the floor in the ring gallery and the sanctuary; even the supporting posts in the walls were burnt down. The nomads smashed the statues venerated by the Buddhists, broke off the wall paintings and stole the religious objects. For a while they used the walls and the remaining ceilings as shelters. The fact that they lived in the temple is supported by some remains of bonfire sites in the ring gallery (circles of coals and cinders 10 cm thick) in a relatively thin layer of the initial rubble (from the deliberate destruction of the walls, paintings, statues as well as from the fire), remains of a hearth built from cob brick fragments in the sanctuary, bonfire sites

and cultural discoveries as well as the new archaeological methodology of the excavations at Ak-Beshim conducted over 50 years ago have not yet been adequately represented in the Russian research publications.

154 Apart from the above said see specific observations: Khmel'nitskiy, 1959.

155 Lubo-Iesnichenko, 2002: 119-127, fig. 1-5.

and hearths on the floor of the same central chamber as well as rough hearths for cauldrons carved in the walls of the once splendid central chamber (Figure 74). One hearth with the diameter of about 75 cm, for the insertion of a big round cauldron carved in the northern suffa was of special interest¹⁵⁶ (Figure 67.1). The pits dug in the rubble destroyed the staircases¹⁵⁷ (Figure 67.1).

The daub floors of the gallery and the chamber were covered in round barrow-like pits in which the nomads mostly stored meat¹⁵⁸ (Figures 66.2, 66.3). In these pits there were found bones of farm animals and some articles the nomads used. In the seven pits of the western wing of the gallery (three of which were carved in the former suffa) only farm animal bones and a button cut from a vessel wall were found (Figure 95.26); in the pits in the central chamber (the latest of which destroyed the stairs leading to the sanctuary) were found: in first one – bones of cows, horses and a ram's skull, pottery fragments, an astragal amulet with two holes drilled in it, two iron belt buckles (Figures 95.1, 95.7), a square bronze badge from a composite belt (Figure 95.5), an iron plate and a piece of a touchstone; in the second one – a few bones, a gaming astragal amulet with a polished side, pottery fragments and a small iron nail. The other pits were either empty or had a few bones.

In the yard at different locations in the layer from the time of the nomads there were found hearths built of stones, fragments of old grinders and flamed bricks (with the sizes of 29 x 16 x 4, 26 x 15 x 3, 30 x 15 x 4.5 cm) as well as bonfire sites. By one of such stone hearths there was found a large flat pebble with a scene depicting a dog chasing a mountain goat chiseled on one of its sides and done in the characteristic Turkic style¹⁵⁹ (Figure 96.5).

Apart from this pebble drawing many other findings of objects (from the layer left by the Turk presence) of the nomadic use and characteristic of the Turks specifically also prove that the temple was destroyed by nomadic cattle farmers of Turkic origin who later lived inside its walls. Among these findings were various and numerous buckles (Figures 95.1, 95.3, 95.6, 95.7, 95.13, 95.16, 95.17, 95.25, 95.29), badges from composite belts (square and oval with holes and also heart-shaped, Figures 95.2, 95.5, 95.10-95.12), belt tips (Figures 95.14, 95.18, 95.19) and the characteristic Turkic belt pendants with heart-shaped holes (Figures 95. 8, 95.15), bangles from horse bridles, cross-like badges from horse harness with two overlapping holes for fastening the belts at intersection points (Figures 95.4, 95.9, 96.2-96.4), a fragment of a bone buckle from a saddle girth (Figure 95.25), three blade arrowheads (Figures 96.8, 96.9), iron plates from a coat of mail, gaming astragal amulets (with holes and polished sides), some knives, touchstones, ram's shoulder-blades with holes for fortune telling, an earring typical of nomadic cultures of the eighth century (Figure 95.24) as well as buttons from walls of vessels and beads (Figures 95.20-95.23, 95.26-95.28).

156 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 27.6, 43.1.

157 Ibid.: fig. 24.1, 24.3.

158 Ibid.: fig. 27.1, 27.3, 43.

159 Brykina, 1959: 112-114.

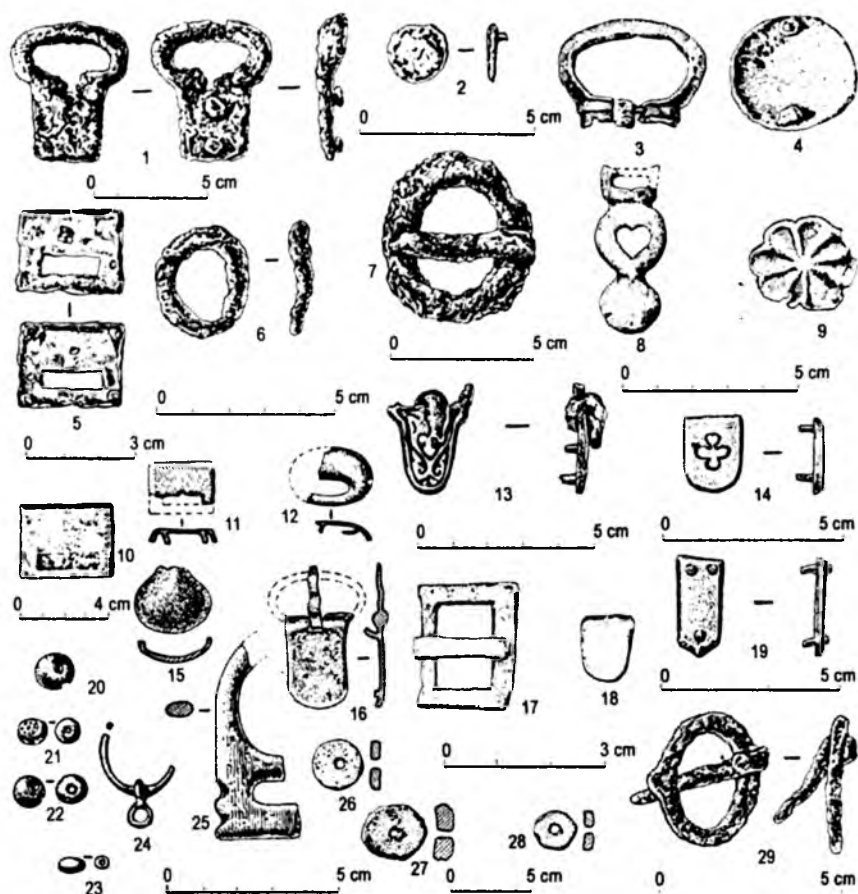


Figure 95. Objects of the nomadic use (the eighth and ninth centuries):
 1, 3, 6, 7, 13, 16, 17, 25, 29 – buckles; 2, 5, 10-12 – badges from composite belts; 14, 18, 19 – belt tips; 4, 9 – banges from horse bridles; 8, 15 – belt pendants; 24 – earring; 26-28 – buttons; beads: 20 – white, 21 – green with white eyes, 22 – orange, 23 – blue. 1, 6, 7, 29 – iron; 2-5, 8-12, 14-19, 24 – bronze; 13 – bronze and iron; 25 – bone; 26-28 – clay; 20-23 – glass

All these were objects dating from the eighth and the ninth centuries. In the same layer there were found some coins of the Turgesh circulation and some Turgesh coins proper with the tamga in the shape of a bow which were minted in the eighth century and were in circulation even in the ninth century. An important discovery for the dating of the site was the "treasure" of bits buried by the nomads. The treasure was discovered in a small pit hollowed out in the ruined eastern wall of the temple (the wall of "the doorman's room"). In the pit we found an iron binding for a spade and a few double bits with two twisted fixed rings and a third flexible ring dating from the first half of the ninth century (Figures 96.6, 96.7). The date is confirmed by the S-shaped psalium ending in a "boot" and a spatula (Figure 95.6). The bits and psalia of the kind were the first to be ever discovered in Kirghizia.

The S-shaped stem with the head of the mountain goat (teke) at the end of fine metalwork was especially unusual (Figure 96.1)¹⁶⁰. At first I mistook it for a fragment of a psalium¹⁶¹ but after a publication in 1985 featuring an intact object with similar goat heads at the ends that was accidentally found in a cave in Kuhi Surh in Tajikistan its purpose became clear. "The knob of the rod", as this item was called in the publication¹⁶², had a flat base in the form of triangular plate with a hole for a fastening in the middle with three gently curved stems coming up from it. In contrast to the Ak-Beshim they are twisted and the goat heads do not have loops under the chins but they are fitted with notched horns (Figure 97). It was dated by researchers within a broad timeframe (the fifth-eighth centuries) and it can now be specified through reference to the Ak-Beshim find. But similar objects might have been in use for a long time. We can better understand the way they were used through a direct parallel from the description of Herat by the Ming envoys in 1414-1415, "also [they] take lard, mix [it] with cotton, form balls, put [them] into an iron basket fixed to an iron stick which they carry in etheir hand while they move and stick into the ground when they stop. [Such torches] are safe from both the wind and the rain"¹⁶³. I believe that the item from Kuhi Surh is this same "iron basket", while the Ak-Beshim find is a part of a torch.

The so called "cereal of the nomads", the millet, found in the chamber was also part of the layer formed after the destruction of the temple. During the period when the ceilings and vaults of the gallery and the sanctuary were falling down and the wall surfaces were crumbling forming a lot of rubble on the floor of the rooms and concealing fragments of statues, wall paintings and some objects, major changes also occurred in the outer rooms.

160 The rectangular loop was broken but there were some traces of it. The stem was four-faceted.

161 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 217.

162 Drevnosti Tadjikistana, 1989: 248, 249, № 587. V. also: Material'naya kul'tura Tadjikistana, 1987.

163 Opisaniye..., 1989: 111.

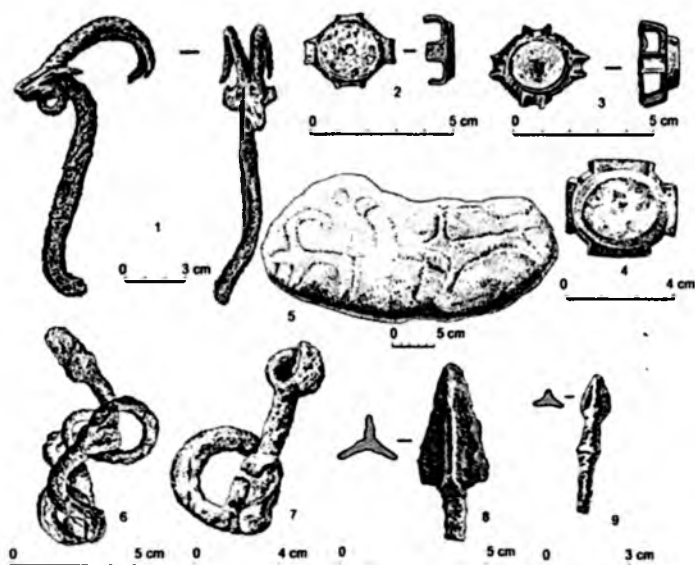


Figure 96. Objects of the nomadic use (the eighth and ninth centuries):
 1 – part of a torch with the head of the mountain goat; 2-4 – cross-like
 badges from horse harness; 5 – pebble with a scene depicting a dog chasing
 a mountain goat; 6 – bits and S-shaped psalium; 7 – half of bits; 8, 9
 – arrowheads. 1, 6-9 – iron, 2-4 – bronze, 5 – stone



Figure 97. The knob of a torch from
 the cave Kuhi Surh, Tadzikistan

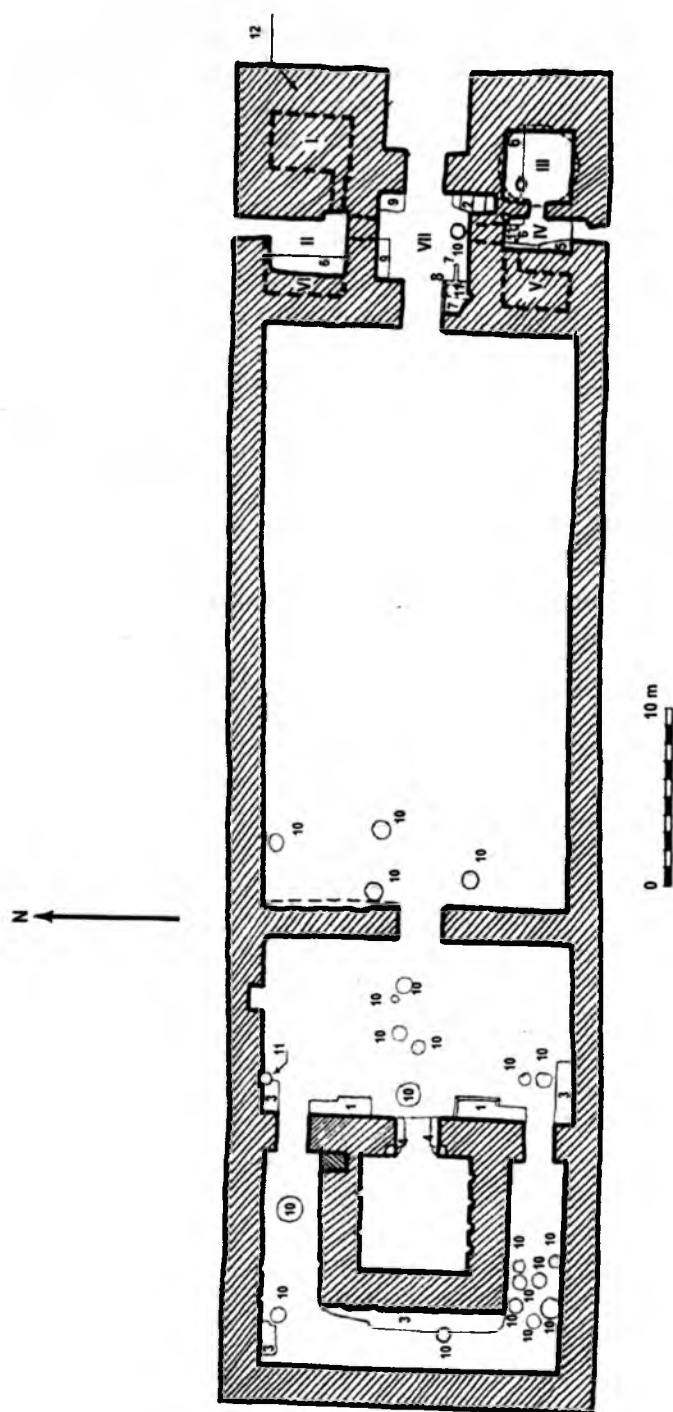


Figure 98. Plan of the Buddhist temple (site I) of the period of nomads used its ruins: *I* – pedestals for the statues of Buddha; *2* – staircase; *3* – suffas for statues; *4* – doorway of the sanctuary with the foot of doors; *5* – buttress; *6* – suffas of the dwelling rooms; *7* – bench; *8* – wall protected the fireplace; *9* – suffas of the hall; wall protected the fireplace; *10* – pits for supplies; *11* – fireplaces; *12* – “treasure” of bits; *I-VII* – buildings at the gate

Room I was also buried under the remains of the broken eastern wall. After that a new entrance was made in the northern wall of room II and the passage to the entrance hall was bricked over. Thus, a completely isolated dwelling was built. Rooms III and IV also became separated. The arched passage leading from the entrance hall to room IV was also blocked using the bricks from the crumbling walls of the temple¹⁶⁴ (Figures 60.3, 98). A new entrance to room IV was carved in the southern wall of the temple (Figure 98) and in its north-eastern corner a hearth with a narrow flue was carved out (Figure 60.4) which caused severe blackening of the ceiling in this room. The sanctuary (room III) where the dome was still preserved was turned into a residential room: a *suffa* was added along its northern wall and some fireplaces and a vertical tandoor (a stove for making flat bread) were also installed. This room continued to be linked to room IV which was a walk-through room (Figure 98). And finally, a part of the southern pylon in the entrance hall was cut off and a rectangular kang bed was installed: it was open to the east from which side under the bed was fixed a fire chamber with a flue in the wall (Figures 63.3, 98). In front of the bricked over arch a barrow-like storage pit was dug out.

4.3.7. Evidence from the last settled inhabitants

The second construction layer dates from the ninth and tenth centuries; it was made up of living quarters built at the eastern tip of the temple over the leveled down outer rooms of the first layer and the partly buried yard (Figures 53, 54).

The walls of these rooms in contrast to the first construction layer had careless rough brickwork made of long bricks from the ruined temple walls. Occasionally, the remaining taller parts of the temple walls were used and sometimes walls and passages for the rooms of the second layer were simply carved in the rubble. That is why some of these rooms in the yard could not have been identified during the excavations because their walls had long been smoothed down (Figure 99).

In the upper parts of the gallery corresponding to the second construction layer there were found striations of rammed clay with bonfire sites, pottery and animal bones. The same kind of "floor" with coals on it and cinder patches was found in the sanctuary. Initially, it seems, some people lived in the chamber which is proved by the bonfire sites, some pottery and animal bones, but we believe that it was soon turned into a stable or a pen for the cattle because nearly across the whole floor we found a thick yellow layer of organic remains, obviously, of manure. In this layer there were traces of straw and animal bones (a horse's hoof, some cow teeth, a ram's jaw and so on). The objects found included a small iron tap (Figure 100.16)¹⁶⁵, an arrowhead (Figure 101.4), a nail and a string of beads.

164 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 16.2, 16.4.

165 An absolutely identical tap (from a boot?) was found in Munchak-Tepe (layer dating from

On the surface of the second construction layer in the yard (excavation sites 7a, 8a) there were discovered two large hums (traditional big Middle Asian clay vessels for storing water, grains, etc. – tr.) (Figures 94.5, 99.6) embedded in the ground and a whole skeleton of a donkey nearby (Figure 99). A rectangular pit (2.3 x 3.8 m) of unclear use and carved in the rubble dating from the same time was excavated in the north-western corner of the yard (Figures 55a, 99.3). Its walls were covered with flamed coating. At the bottom of the pit there was an ashy layer with coal patches and the filling was of half-flamed and flamed bricks of 29 x 14 x 4.5 cm in size and pottery slag. When the coating was removed we discovered that the western and eastern walls of the pit had sockets carved in the slag inside which was some kind of cob brickwork¹⁶⁶ (Figure 55a). As these sockets were located directly opposite each other we assume that there might have been arches from cob bricks across the pit. It could have been a furnace for brick flaming.

Along the northern wall of the yard in the excavation pits 7 and 8 some kind of upper rooms might have existed but their walls were then smoothed down. There were discovered pits filled with coals as well as remains of heaths, a fragment of a stone grinder from a hand mill (Figure 55b), animal bones, fragments of vessels and a leg from a clay dastarkhan (Figure 102.5).

The seven rooms of the second layer at the eastern tip of the former temple were in the best condition: five rooms (I, II, V, VI, VII) along the northern wall above the old rooms of the first layer (I, II, VI) and above the north-eastern corner of the yard (Figure 99) and two other ones (III, IV) on the southern side. One of two rooms of the southern side with the southern entrance was above the old room V with the northern, eastern and southern walls being the same (Figure 99) and the western wall although built above the old one was shifted to the west a great deal making the room a lot more spacious.

Finally, in room III by the time of the new construction the dome had already collapsed but it was being used and a new flat ceiling was likely to have been built. As the old room IV with its collapsed vaulted ceiling was by that time buried under the rubble the entrance to room III was made in the southern wall and in the same wall there were made two niches with bottoms of burnt brick (30 x 26 x 4, 29 x 15 x 4, 26 x 4 x 3.5 cm in size)¹⁶⁷ (Figures 55c, 99). A pit was made in the wall and it had evidence of two hums (Figure 99) fixed in it. We should note that square burnt bricks (32 x 10 x 4, 20 x 13 x 4-6 cm) were also found in some other rooms of the second construction layer, for instance, it was used for making fireplaces (Figure 54c).

the ninth-eleventh centuries) and is housed in the Hermitage.

166 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 55.1, 55.2.

167 Ibid.: fig. 50.3.

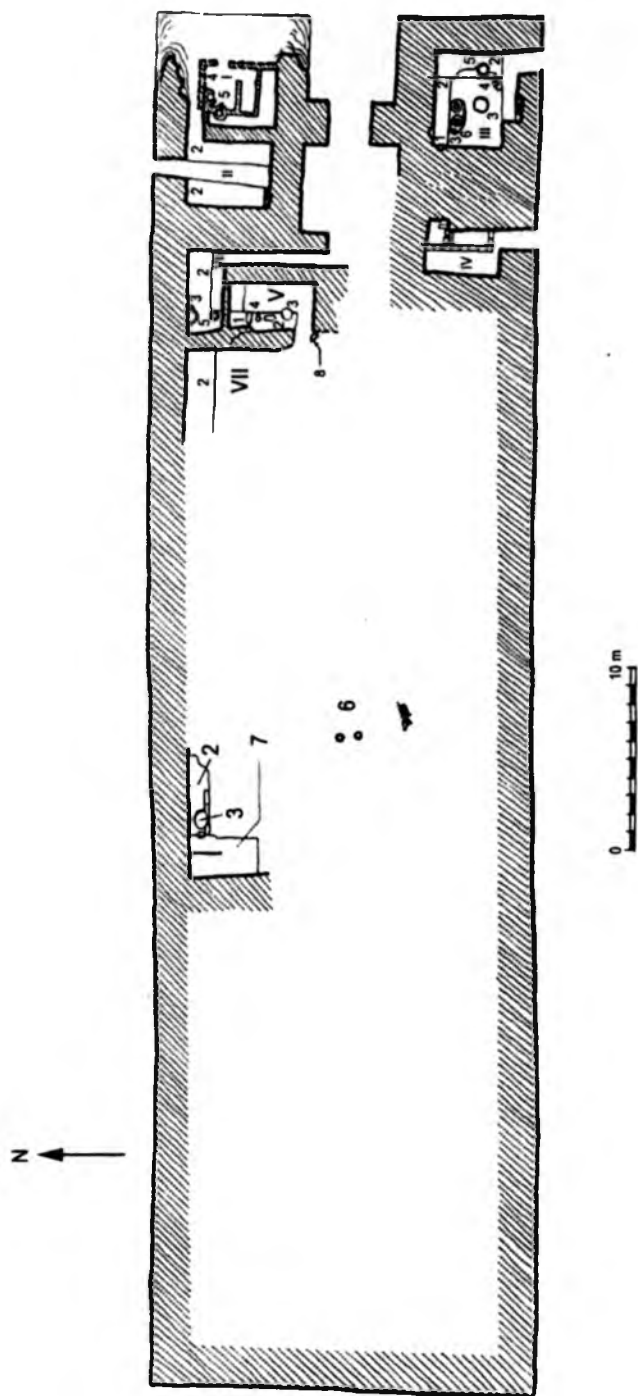


Figure 99. Site I. Plan of the second dwellings layer above the Buddhist temple ruins:
 I - fireplaces; 2 - suffas; 3 - pits; 4 - stoves; 5 - tandoors; 6 - hums; 7 - pit with clay
 plaster; 8 - fragment of millstone; I-VII - buildings at the gate

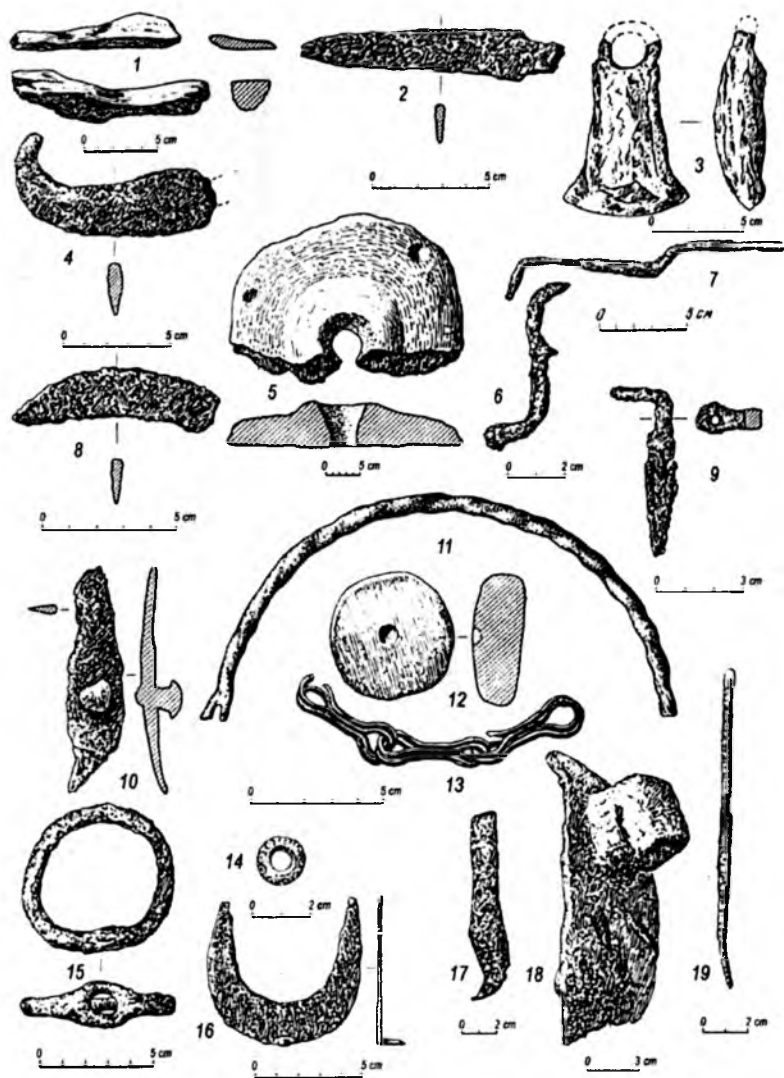


Figure 100. Findings from dwellings of the second layer (the ninth and tenth centuries): 1 – touchstone, 2 – knife, 3 – hoe, 4 – knife for cutting hides, 5 – hand mill grinder, 6 – miniature S-shaped psalium (?), 7 – key, 8, 10 – fragments of sickles, 9 – lock, 11 – bail from bucket, 12 – workpiece for a spinning wheel, 13 – chain, 14 – button, 15 – rotating ring, 16 – small tap, 17 – chisel, 18 – piece of cauldron, 19 – saddlemaker's needle. 1, 5, 12 – stone. 2-4, 6-11, 13, 15-19 – iron, 14 – bone

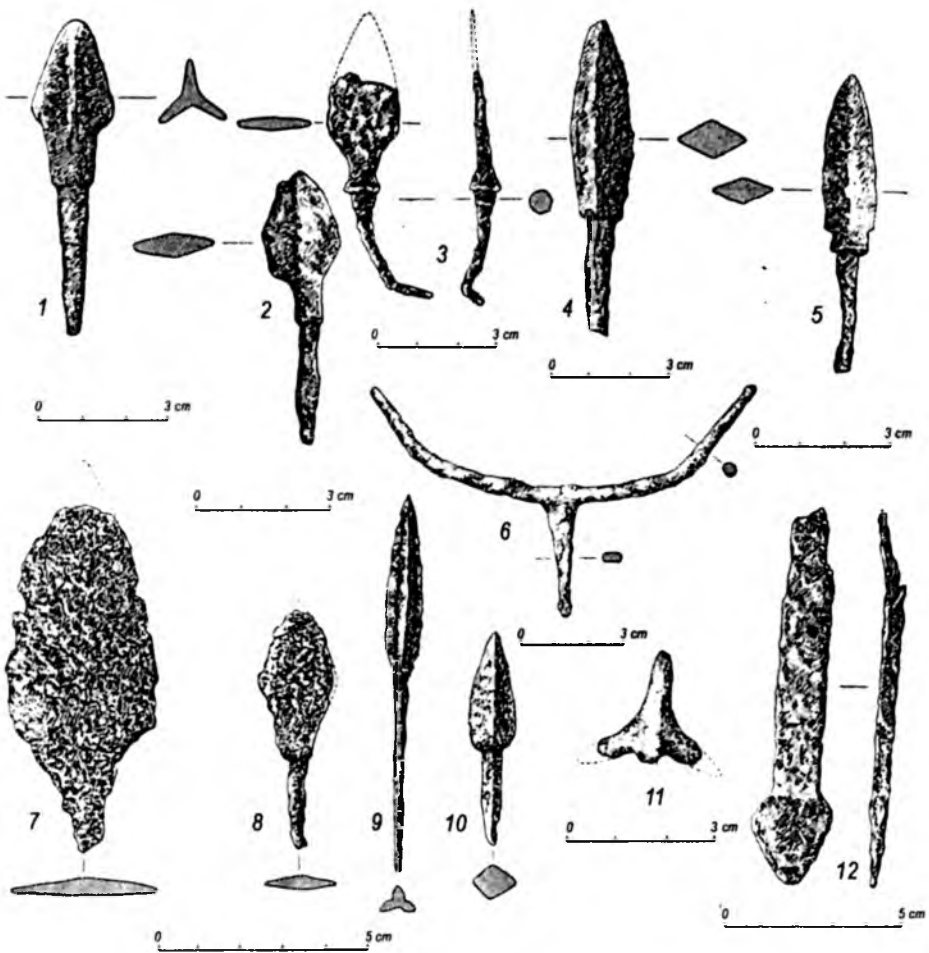


Figure 101. Objects of the Karakhanid Turks who destroyed dwellings of the second layer (the tenth and eleventh centuries): 1-5, 7-10 – arrowheads; 6 – spur; 11 – “garlic” with four spikes; 12 – nose protection of a helmet. 1-10, 12 – iron, 11 – bronze

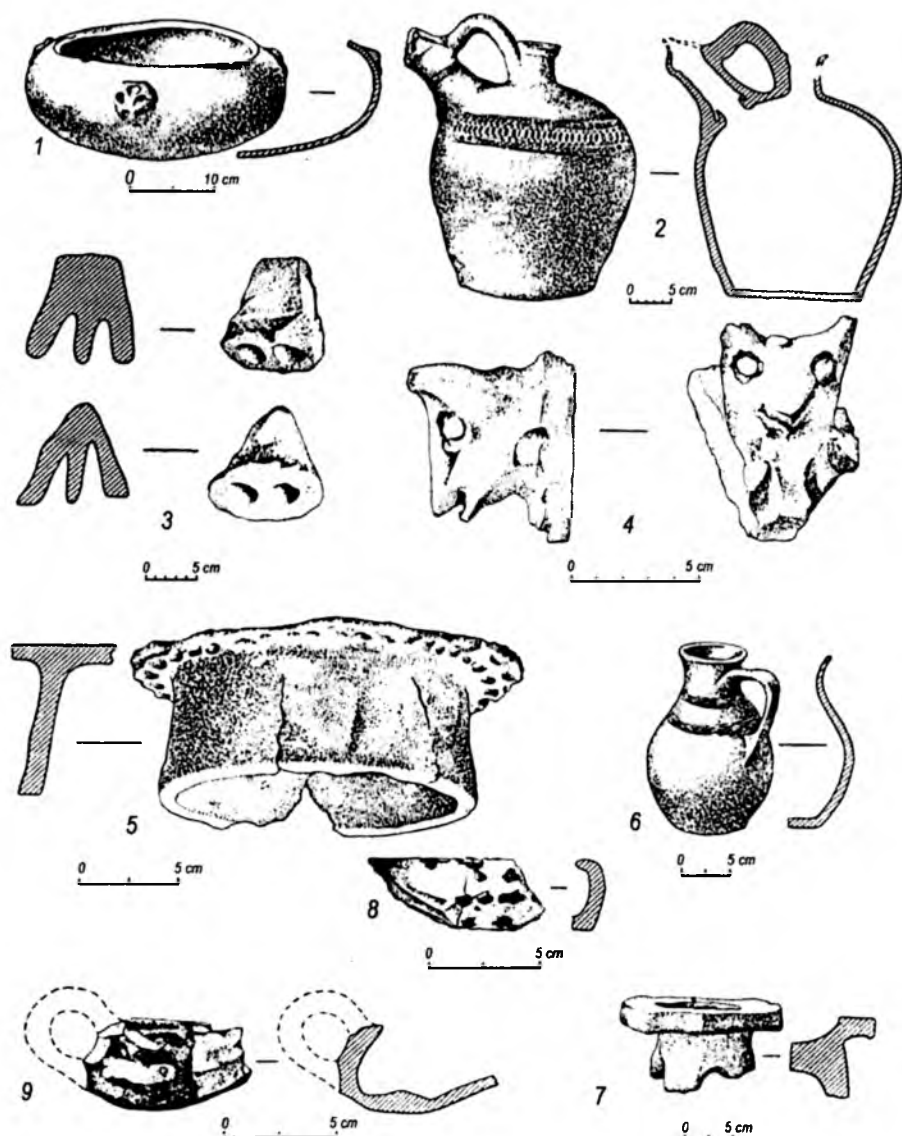


Figure 102. Pottery from dwellings of the second layer (the ninth and tenth centuries): 1 – clay cauldron, 2 – red polish vessel for wine, 3 – supports for clay cauldrons, 4 – handle of a cover in the form of a head of a mythical animal with three eyes, 5 – leg of a dish, 6 – jug, 7 – lantern with three legs, 8, 9 – lanterns

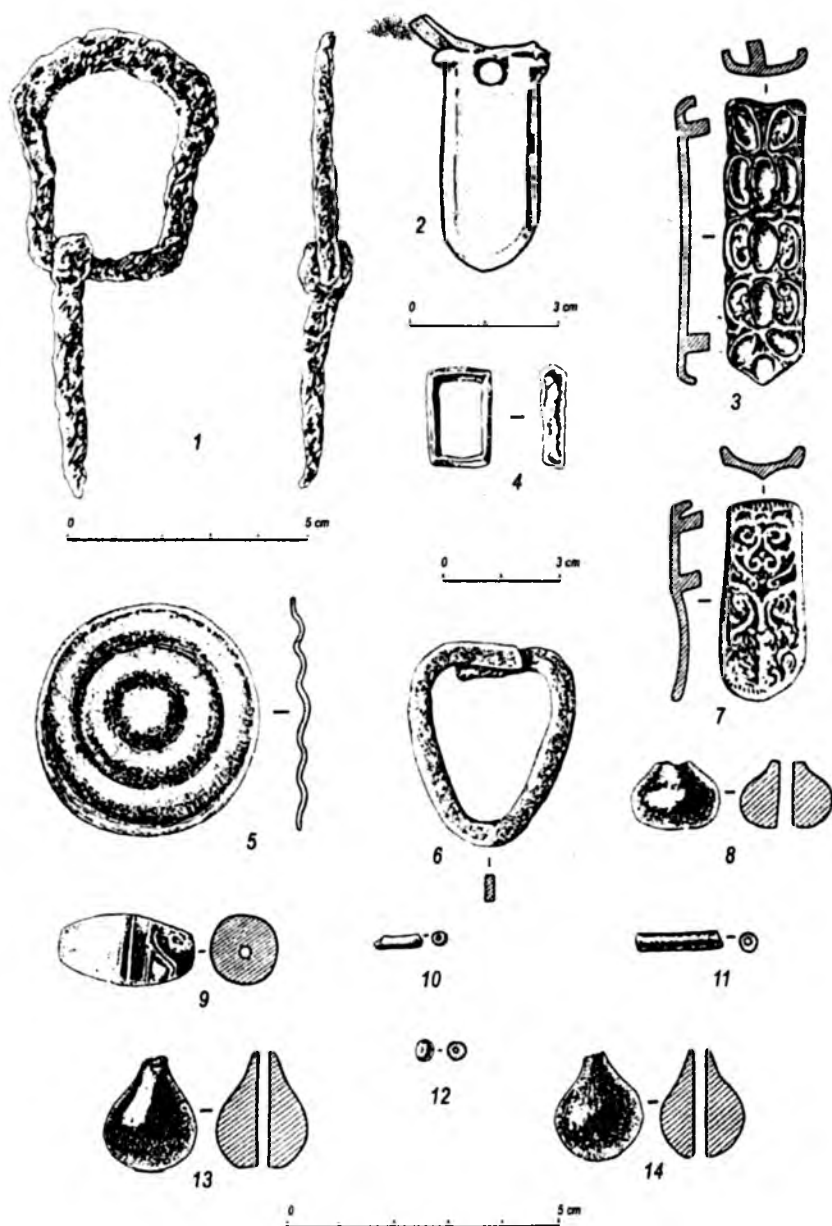


Figure 103. Objects from dwellings of the second layer (the ninth and tenth centuries): 1, 2, 6 – buckles, 3, 7 – belt tips, 4 – belt holder, 5 – chiseled badge, 8-14 – beads. 1-6 – iron, 2-4, 7 – bronze, 5 – horn, 8, 13, 14 – black paste, 9 – agate, 10-12 – blue glass

Room I above the former “room of the doorman” was divided into a kitchen with a stove for a cauldron (33 cm in diameter, 31 cm in height with 13 cm-thick walls) and tandoor (84 cm in diameter, 73 cm in height with 14 cm-thick walls)¹⁶⁸ (Figures 99.4, 99.5) and a store room. These rooms communicated through a special passage with the lived-in room II that had two suffas across a narrow aisle (1.1 m wide) (Figures 54b, 99).

All the rooms under study had suffas, large vertical tandoors (in room IV the tandoor was made from a hum with a broken off bottom)¹⁶⁹ (Figure 99), fireplaces and numerous heaths for kettles similar in form to fireplaces¹⁷⁰ (Figure 63). The ethnographic characteristics of the dwellings are obvious; they were the winter living quarters of the ordinary Turks settling for the cold period of time.

The land working character of the occupation of the inhabitants is suggested by the finding of stone hand mills of double grinders (Figures 73.4, 73.5, 100.5), fragments of iron sickle (Figures 100.8, 100.10)¹⁷¹ (room III), an iron hoe of the *chota* type (Figure 100.3), apricot stones, pumpkin seeds and grains of wheat in the latest layer of the rough coating of the walls in room III (second construction layer). The fact that the inhabitants of the later dwelling of the temple had cattle is proved by both the presence of a large number of bones of farming animals (according to V.I. Tsalkin, there were found bones of cattle, camels, horses, donkeys and dogs and a pen for the farm animals (Figure 99) in the central chamber (the upper layer). Besides, there were also found some bones of koulans, saigas, deer, foxes and also fish and bird bones¹⁷² which suggest that hunting and fishing were also practiced on the site. Besides, the tools mentioned above there were some specially curved iron knives for cutting hides (Figure 100.4), a saddlemaker’s iron needle (Figure 100.19), stone punchers from animal bones as well as fragments of iron axes similar to splitting axes, an iron chisel for wood cutting (possibly for making kitchen wares) (Figure 100.17), simple iron knives with handles (Figure 100.2) and slate touchstones (Figure 100.1).

Among other domestic items of interest were an insert from a lock of a common medieval type (which is a rare find) (Figure 100.9), an iron key

168 Ibid.: fig. 43.4, 43.5. The tandoor was built of clay with inclusions of small pebbles and had closely spaced notches in its inner coating for a better grip of the row flatbread. Its fire chamber (16 cm in diameter) was at the bottom on the eastern side.

169 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: fig. 50.5.

170 Ibid.: fig. 43.4, 43.5, 50.4.

171 Compare the sickles of the ninth and tenth centuries from the Yenisei area (Evtukhova, 1948: 83, fig. 167).

172 The osteological materials from the excavations of 1953-54 were studied by V.I. Tsalkin. We remember V.I. Tsalkin with a lot of gratitude.

(Figure 100.7), fragments of a chain with big iron links (Figure 100.13), a stone workpiece for a spinning wheel (Figure 100.12), numerous iron nails, staples and dog nails. We also found fragments of a glass mirror with silver amalgam and pieces of glass vessels. There was much pottery, for example, conical supports for clay cauldrons (Figures 102.1, 102.3), lanterns (Figures 102.8, 102.9), various vessels both hand built and made on a potter's wheel (round bottomed cauldrons were especially numerous), lids and glazed wares (*charag*) of the ninth and tenth centuries (Figures 102.1, 102.9). Besides, pieces of iron cauldrons were also found, one with massive hooks for hanging over the hearth (Figure 100.18) and twisted metal bails from either cauldrons or buckets (Figure 100.11).

The personal items typical of the ninth and tenth centuries were iron and bronze belt buckles (Figures 103.1, 103.2, 103.6), iron and bronze belt tips (the latter richly decorated with a floral pattern) (Figures 103.3, 103.7), bronze bands (Figure 103.4), buttons of chiseled bone and clay (Figure 100.14) as well as various beads of glass, paste and agate and small glass beads (Figures 103.10-103.12) among which of special interest were black pear-shaped pendant beads of paste (Figures 103.8, 103.9, 103.13, 103.14). A finely chiseled badge made of horn was a very interesting find (Figure 103.5).

Horse harness items were only represented by a miniature S-shaped psalium, a rotating ring and small iron rings (Figures 100.6, 100.15).

In addition to these objects which together with stratigraphic information enabled us to date the site (the construction of dwellings on the layers from the eighth and ninth centuries) we might also mention that the second construction layer contained some Turgesh coins which were in circulation in the ninth century as well.

The numerous findings dating from the tenth century (in the layers that bear evidence of the beginning decay of the second layer dwellings) were iron arrowheads (Figures 101.1-101.5, 101.7-101.10), iron plates from a coat of mail, nose protection of a helmet (Figure 101.12), an iron spur (Figure 101.6)¹⁷³, a narrow hub spearhead and an object used in fighting horsemen, the so called "garlic" of bronze with four spikes (Figure 101.11). As for the metal arrowheads they are of the type characteristic of the ninth-eleventh centuries. They are arrowheads with a stopper (a shoulder separating the head from the stick) on sticks, narrow and long four-faceted ones with a rhombic section, three-faceted ones (triangular in section), simplified leaf-shaped and nearly rhombic ones and an arrowhead with three vanes at the top of the tip (Figures 101.1-101.5, 101.7-101.10).

In the eleventh century following the destruction of the second layer

173 Compare with the spur from the tenth century complex (Gurevich F.D., 1951: fig. 42).

structures in a military attack, which is proved by the above mentioned findings of war items, there were no other constructions on the excavated hill. Just in one location in a tub-like indentation in the smoothed down yard there was some waste: cinders and fragments of glazed pottery from the Karakhanid period and a treasure of a leather purse with 76 ilek copper coins from the second quarter- middle of the eleventh century¹⁷⁴. This treasure was discovered during the excavations right under the thin turf layer of the hill in the excavation pit № 10 (close to the northern wall of the former yard). By that time the hill had already acquired its general shape we observed before its excavation (Figure 51). Surely, some pottery and isolated objects found their way onto the hill at some later points, for example, fragments of a ploughshare from a modern plough also found under turf layer.

4.4. Manichaeian burial complex (site III)

This complex is formed by an isolated group of hillocks 400 m west from the wall of the shakhristan and at the same distance to the north-west from the Buddhist temple (Figure 44). There in 1954 in the center of the group of hillocks a small elevation (of about 20 m in diameter) was excavated (Figure 104).

Under the hillock was a burial complex from the seventh and eighth centuries. We uncovered a flat and slightly raised platform of cob bricks (48-44-42 x 24 x 8 cm in size) with a pit in the middle (Figure 104.I) on top of which possibly on a wooden flooring bodies were laid to have the flesh separated from the bones of the skeleton. Around the edges of the platform and encircling the central pit were found ten graves with bones in hums, covered with lids or flat pebbles (Figures 105. I, 106). In one of these graves (a child's) the remains were put in a clay cauldron with a round bottom decorated with two imitation handles of split pasted rolls. In two graves (№ 3 and 12) the bones without the flesh were buried in some natural pits without any urns (Figure 105.I). In one of these graves (№ 3) located in a narrow corridor of unclear use (Figure 105.I) was found a jug on which a cross with "arms" of equal length that broadened from the center was scratched right after the flaming possibly at the time of the burial (Figure 105.II).

At the south-eastern side of the platform there was uncovered a rectangular burial chamber level with the ground and made of pakhsa blocks that initially might have had a vaulted ceiling and an entrance in its eastern side (where the remains of a low wall were found) where there were 8 graves of human bones without flesh (Figures 104.I, 104.II, 105.I, 105.II).

174 The date of the treasure was identified by the numismatist E.A. Davidovich. A few Karakhanid coins were found at some other locations in the excavated hill (V: Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: appendix I; Davidovich, 1959: 242).

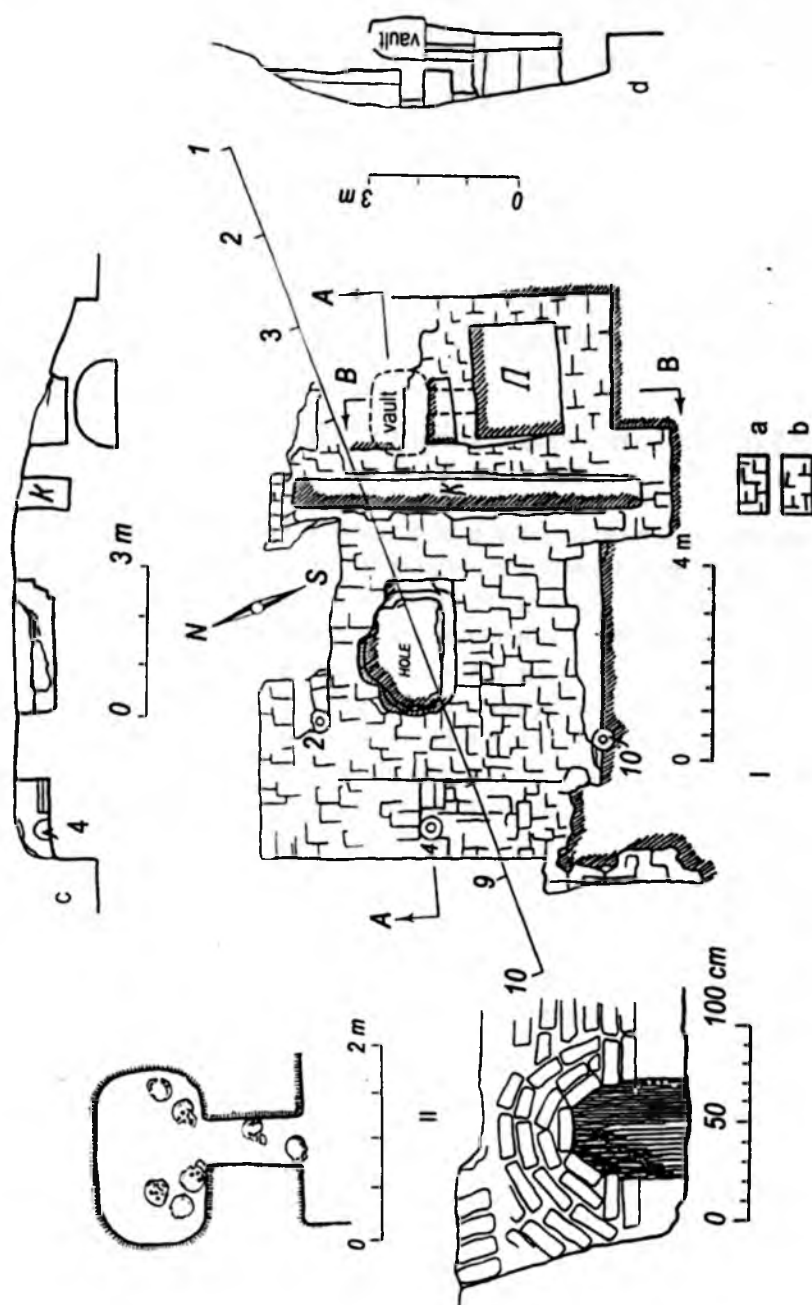


Figure 104. Site III. Plan and sections of the burial complex (I), plan of the vault and entrance to it (II). *a* – com bricks, *b* – pakhsa, *c* – section A-A, *d* – section B-B.

2, 4, 10 – vessels with human bones, *K* – «corridor», *П* – burial chamber

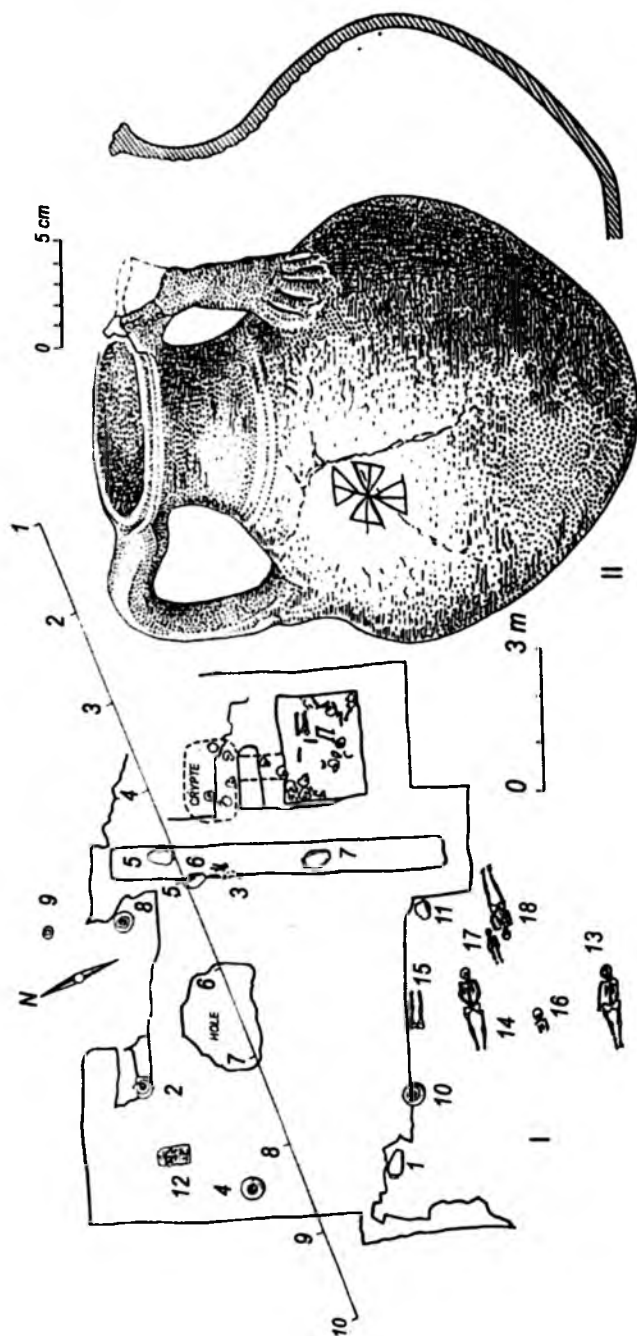


Figure 105. Site III. Plan of the burial building (I): 1, 2, 4-8, 10, 11 - burials in hums,
9 - burial of a child in a clay cauldron, 3, 12 - human bones without any urns,
13-18 - skeletons; II - jug from the burial 3

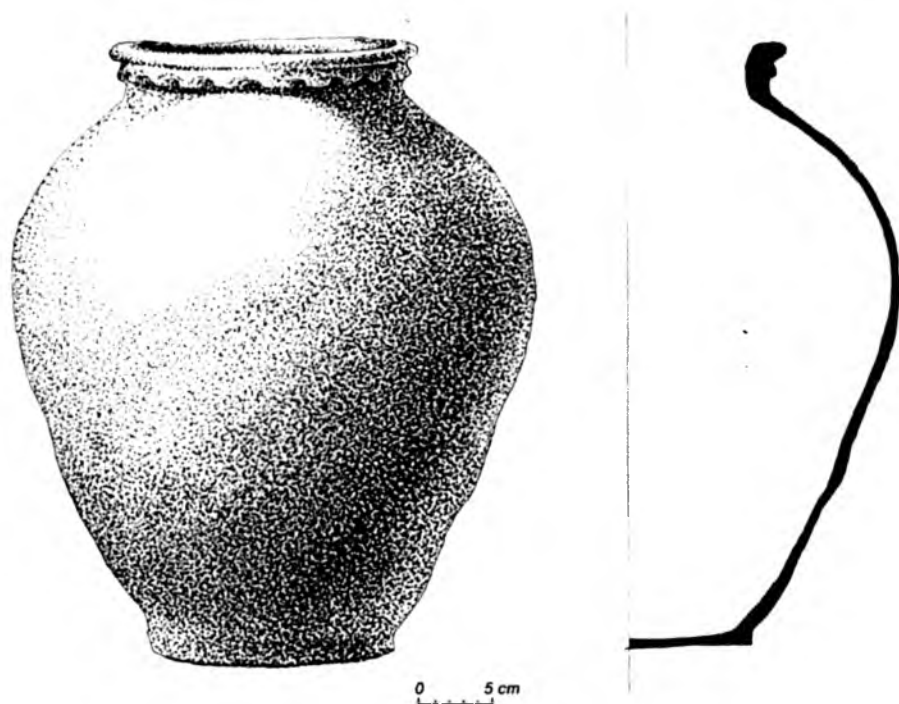


Figure 106. Example of vessel (hum) used as a burial urn at the site III

In the north-eastern wall of this obviously much more recent chamber we found an entrance to an oval vault with seven graves (Figures 104.I, 104.II, 105.I); the entrance and the vaulted ceiling were lined with cob bricks and the vault itself was below the ground surface. At the south-western side of the platform there were graves of deads interned according to the practice of inhumation (during an epidemic?). The skeletons without burial goods were lying flat on their backs, four of them with their heads to the east and two stretched to the west (Figure 105.I). The study of the skulls proved that the deads inside this hill were obviously those of Manichaeans and were of the Europeoid type. No coins were found at site III.

The Manichaean identity of the site established right after the completion of the excavations was based above all on the form of the cross scratched on the burial vessel (Figure 105.II). This form was alien to the Nestorian Christianity which was widely spread among the peoples of Semirechye as early as at the turn of the fifth and sixth centuries. The differences are obvious because in the course of the excavations we also discovered other symbols from the same time and the same city. We only need to compare the above mention cross with the bronze baptismal cross of the eighth century hanging around the neck of one of the deads buried beside the

Christian church of Ak-Beshim (site IV) to realize that the Manichaean and Christian crosses are absolutely dissimilar, the Nestorian cross having an elongated stem. The importance of this difference is significant when we look at other Nestorian crosses of the eighth century (the stele of Xianfu) and of the ninth and tenth centuries¹⁷⁵, as well as the crosses later chiseled on the kairaks of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries¹⁷⁶ and observe that they all have an elongated vertical stem. Consequently, the four-pointed cross with the rounded or broadening arms and a long stem was a distinctive symbol of the Nestorian Christianity all through the course of its existence. In contrast the Manichaean cross is equilateral with all of its arms broadening from the center.

Our conclusion about the existence of a distinctive Manichaean cross was later supported with more evidence. Thus, a similar equilateral cross growing from inside a lotus flower was depicted on a Manichaean tombstone at Quanzhou in the Fujian province of China. Yu. A. Zuev used it in a publication as an illustration of a Manichaean cross¹⁷⁷. Unfortunately, it was the erroneous identification of the equilateral Manichaean crosses (with their characteristic four broadening arms) as Nestorian that prevented researchers from correctly interpreting the Sogdian inscriptions on rocks chiseled next to such crosses that were discovered in the upper course of the Indus. It was no accident that on the stone surfaces “there was not found a single Christian name” but the name chiseled there could be “interpreted as Manichaean (𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥𐭥 presumably meaning “servant of the Book”)”. It is also quite logical that another inscription № 4 consisting of only one word contains an undoubtedly Manichaean name (sr'wšty'n) “the grace of Sroshart (deity)”. Sroshart is a Sogdian name for “the Tower of Victory”. Inscription № 2 was dated according to the Yazdgerd era accepted by the Manicheans. The date is the ninth century¹⁷⁸.

Another Manichaean cross chiseled before the text on one of the boulders with an epitaph from Kirghizia and executed in the Talas runic style (the so called 10th monument – T 10)¹⁷⁹ goes back to approximately the same time. Here we should mention that this artifact proves the undoubted links of the Talas runic writing style with the Manichaean religion of the Turkic peoples of the early Middle Ages. The same was recently illustrated in the runic inscriptions on rocks done in the Talas alphabet¹⁸⁰. It is important that

175 Darkevich, Marshak, 1974: 215, 221, fig. 1 (left).

176 V., for example: Kokovtsov, 1909; Dzhumagulov, 1987: 38-58, tabl. 1-14; Kol'chenko, 2003.

177 Zuev, 2002: 192, fig. 2.

178 Sims-Vil'yams, 1995: 61-66, 62 (photograph). Cf.: Klimkeit, 1979: 99-115, taf. 10.

179 Dzhumagulov, 1963: 28, 29, fig. 13, 14; 1982: 15, 16, tabl. III, fig. 1.3; Batmanov, 1971: 22, fig. 16, 17. It is significant that our classification of the cross on T 10 totally coincides with the independent opinion of Yu. A. Zuev (2002: 201).

180 Kyzlasov I.L., 2005b. [This sentence and the allusion in it did not feature in the original book by I.R. Kyzlasov and are introduced here based on a later posthumous article (Kyzlasov I.R., 2008: 42) – ed.].

the Manichaean identity was also established for other Asiatic runic writings, for example, the Orkhon manuscripts of Eastern Turkistan¹⁸¹ and the Yenisei system of writing in Southern Siberia¹⁸². The spread of Manichaeism from the Sayan-Altai region back to Western Middle Asia where it originated in its new Turkic “runic” form could not have happened later than the ninth and tenth centuries¹⁸³.

Our account is incomplete without evidence from some written sources, among them History by Theophylact Simocatta written between 628 and 638 that is in the pre-Arab period in the history of Middle Asia¹⁸⁴. When writing about the military support that the Byzantine Christians provided to the Persian king Khosrau at the time the “Scythians” and the Parthians invaded Babylonia the author reports that Khosrau “having learnt that some of the prisoners of war were Turks, he sent them to emperor Mauricius as his first victory offerings in order to celebrate the power of the Romie. 14. The prisoners had a symbol of God’s passions carved on their forehead. Those who espouse Christianity call it a cross. The emperor began questioning the barbarians about the meaning of this symbol 15. They replied that they got it from their mothers: when the plague killed a lot of people living in the east some of them drew this symbol on boys’ foreheads with sharp blades as it was strongly advised to them by some Christians. As the barbarians followed this advice they were spared by the plague”¹⁸⁵. However, it is not likely that the Turks of the sixth and seventh centuries who were rulers of the lands all along the right bank of the Amu Darya and the lands of the entire Semirechye and who as we now know were mostly Manicheans in their beliefs which is also proved by the Ak-Beshim evidence could have had their young children’s foreheads tattooed with anything but the most discrete equilateral crosses characteristic for their faith.

It is a fact that the Manichaean religion was often considered “world heresy” and “Christians called it Christian heresy”¹⁸⁶. The syncretism of Manichaeism indeed manifested itself in the belief that Mani himself recreated the original true faith that was imparted by God to the first of people while all known religions as he believed contained a grain of true church. Obviously, in Manichaeism “the head of the church and its heavenly forefather is Jesus the Splendor” with the equilateral cross as a symbol¹⁸⁷.

181 Gaben, 1986: 170, 171.

182 Kyzlasov I.L., 2001b.

183 Rogozhinskiy, Kyzlasov I.L., 2004; Kyzlasov I.L., 2005b.

184 Feofilakt Simokatta, 1957: 13, 20.

185 Ibid.: 130, 131; v. also: Kyzlasov L.R., 2004.

186 Kefalaya, 1998: 43, 44.

187 Ibid.: 469, 471, 485 (v.: “Крест”).

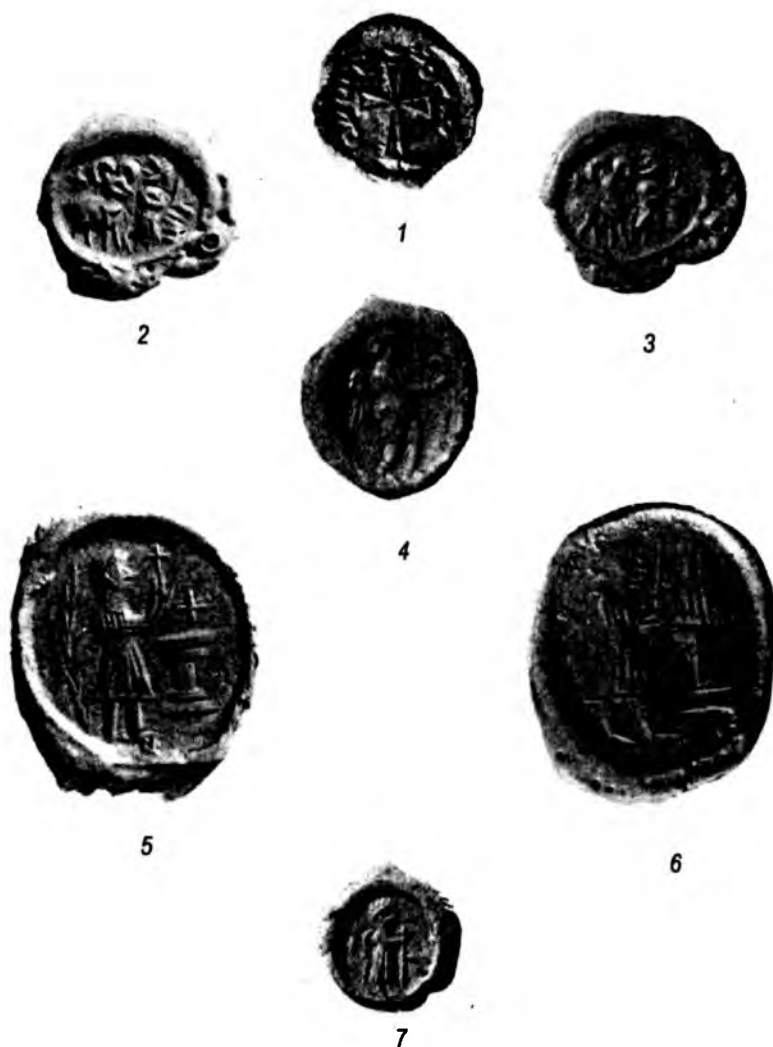


Figure 107. Sassanid carved stones (magnified) with Nestorian cross (1) and Manichaean crosses (2, 3, 5, 7), which were included in the Zoroastrian religious scenes (4, 6).

By A. Ja. Borisov

The fact that the Manicheans had their equilateral crosses painted on their bodies was familiar from other sources from different periods of history. For example, William of Rubruck who traveled from Palestine to the city of Karakorum on the Orkhon River, the capital of the Mongols in the middle of the thirteenth century, often met Manicheans during his journey and visited their shrines¹⁸⁸. Thus, on arrival to Eastern Turkistan in the land of Manichaean Uighurs (Uguhrs) in the town of Kailiq he discovered three shrine temples dedicated to different religions. According to William of Rubruck, "in the first one I came across a man with a cross on his hand drawn in ink (obviously a tattoo – L.K.)... Because of it I asked him, 'Why then you do not have a cross and an image of Jesus Christ here (in the shrines – L.K.)?' and he replied 'It is not our custom'."¹⁸⁹. Obviously, this conversation occurred in a Manichaean not a Christian church.

Nowadays our conclusion about the Manichaean identity of some sites of Ak-Beshim is also supported with data from written records featuring a school ("a hundred") of young Manichaean lay brothers in the city of Suyab itself, which was pointed out by Yu.A. Zuev¹⁹⁰.

Now that we have found Manichaean crosses beyond the initial Manichaean territories it might be timely to look at the former Sassanid areas and sources of this religion. A.Ya. Borisov, who used to work for the Hermitage, classified a small series of Iranian carved stones as "Sassanid-Christian". In contrast to the ones with Nestorian crosses and Pahlavi inscriptions¹⁹¹ all other stones have undoubtedly Zoroastrian religious scenes, such as the sacrificial offering of a goat and the veneration of Fire as well as an image of the winged spirit of Sraosha (Serosha). But, in spite of all this they have small equilateral crosses (Figures 107.2, 107.3, 107.5, 107.7). It was these crosses that were seen by researchers as Christian, as transitional signs of the naturalization and internalization of earlier sacred images in a new light. However, the scene "was only slightly reinterpreted and its Zoroastrian origins remained absolutely unquestioned" (Figures 107.4, 107.6). Based on this view, A.Ya. Borisov came to the conclusion that these artifacts "have close links with Zoroastrian glyptics and were mostly made by 'Zoroastrian craftsmen'"¹⁹². These observations are very important now. In the conclusion of his article the researcher writes, "in my opinion, only the Sassanid-Manichaean glyptics, the existence of which we need to admit a priori, is still completely untraced". We have to assume that as the Manicheans were persecuted by the Zoroastrian clergy they left their native Iranian lands to migrate further east towards the borders of the Sassanid state and further beyond, their glyptics found its way into many "Eastern-Iranian" stones still inadequately studied and normally without legends".

Now we have all the necessary grounds to believe that it was A.Ya. Borisov

188 Puteshestviya..., 1957: 157, 171, 239, 260.

189 Ibid.: 127.

190 Zuev, 2002: 204, 206, 208, 209.

191 Borisov, 1939: 235-240, tabl. VI.1.

192 Ibid.: 240-242, tabl. VI.2, VI.3, VI.5, VI.7.

who proved to be the very specialist who was the first to identify not only the artifacts of Sassanid-Christian glyptics (marked by long-stemmed Nestorian crosses, Figure 107.1) but also those of Sassanid-Manichaean glyptics (marked by the equilateral Manichaean crosses) even though he only anticipated it. We do not attempt to offer exact dates for the above mentioned carved stones but we must point out that they provide evidence of some very early Manichaean crosses from the time the Manicheans were present in the Sassanid state before the sixth century. It was Manichaeism and not Christianity that was destined all along its history to wear guises of other religions which was the case very early on at the time of the conflict with the state Zoroastrian religion of the Sassanids as was pointed out by A.Ya. Borisov. We do not have any doubts either that the form of the Manichaean cross originated as a result of the early contact of the Manichaean church with eastern Christianity (compare the Manichaean cross with the so called Greek Christian cross).

The Manichaean identity of the graveyard of Ak-Beshim excavated as site III which earned recognition with time makes it possible to come up with some definite ideas about the nature of the burial rites that related to it. The bones of the dead with flesh removed from them were put in burial vessels (hums) or in ossuaries and left in daub or cob brick vaults constructed above ground. This is where lies the solution to the old Middle Asian mystery of having human bones buried in hums¹⁹³; they are obviously Manichaean practices that similar to the sacred scenes in Zoroastrian glyptics incorporated the earlier burial rites of ancient Iranians. The Manichaean vaults as well as their Zoroastrian prototypes had cob *supurgans* and "Towers of Silence" for the removal from the skeleton bones of the sinful human flesh which according to the Manichaean canons should not have been allowed to desecrate the sacred place.

All the above said leads to the reassessment of site V excavated at Ak-Beshim because its decorative circular bricks also have equilateral Manichaean cross stamped on them and the burial grounds contain the bare bones of dismembered bodies (Figure 114).

4.5. Christian church and graveyard (site IV)

The excavated mound used to lie in the north-western part of the rabad 165 m to the east from the shakhristan wall (Figure 44). It was excavated in 1954 and proved to be a Christian church of the eighth century¹⁹⁴ with a Christian graveyard (Figures 108-110). The total length of the building which stretched from west

193 Kozenkova, 1961: 251-260.

194 I have only known of one attempt over recent years to suggest a different date for this church which was not supported by any serious evidence (Vysotskiy, 1983: 25, 26). The date we suggested has been accepted by researchers of Middle Asia of the early Middle Ages (v., for example: Darkevich, Marshak, 1974: 219; Semyenov, 2002: 107).

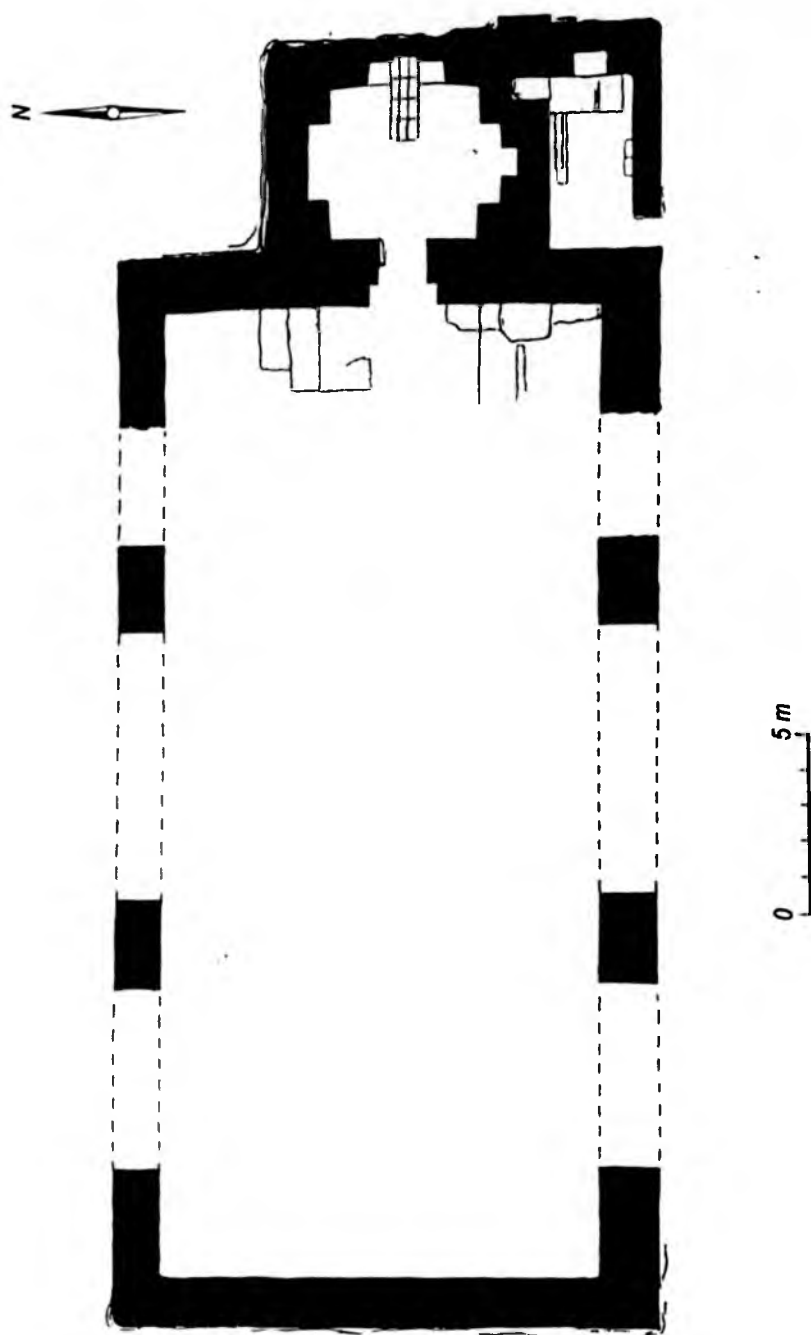


Figure 108. Plan of the Christian church of the eighth century (site IV), showing unexcavated parts of the yard walls

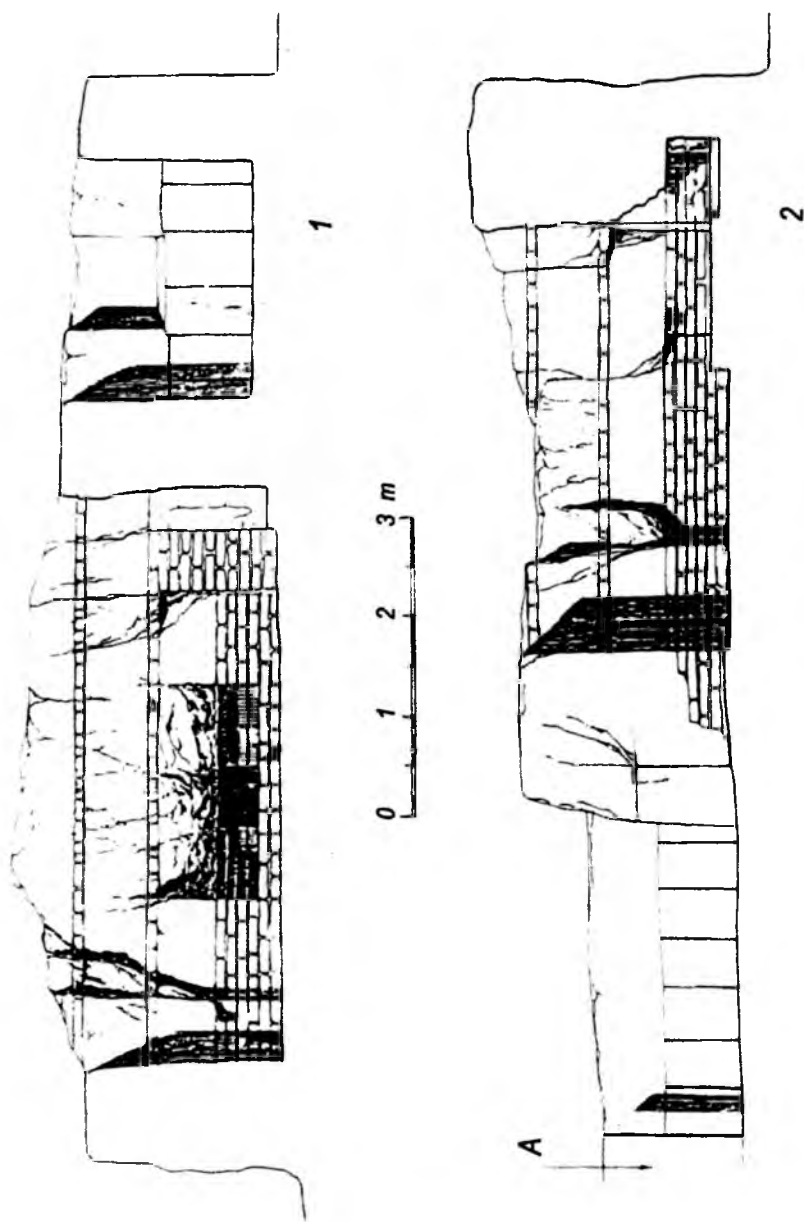


Figure 109. Sections of the site IV: 1 - church and baptistery (from the north to the south); 2 - church and part of the yard wall (from the west to the east)

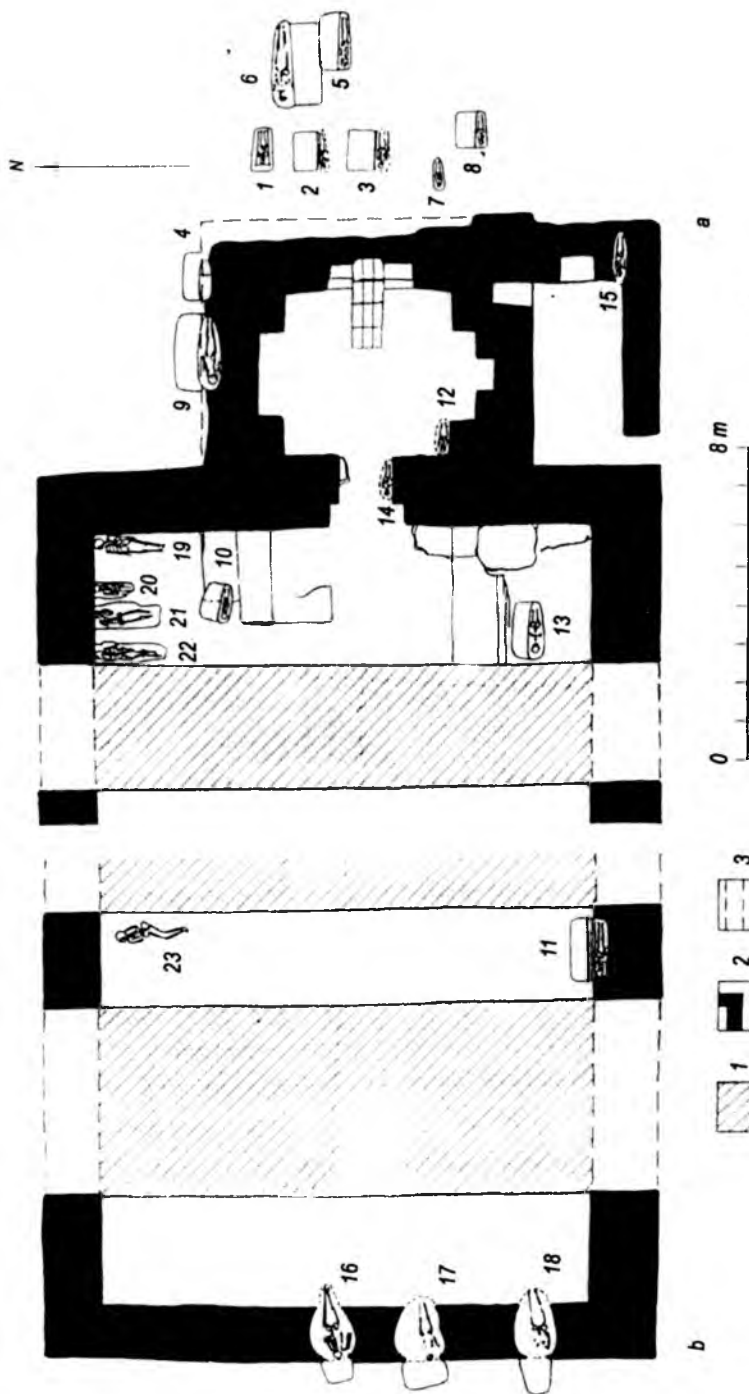


Figure 110. Plan of the burials location: *a* – eastern part of the church, *b* – western part of the church. 1 – unexcavated parts of the yard, 2 – walls, 3 – unexcavated parts of the walls; 1–18 – Christian burials, 19–23 – late Moslem burials

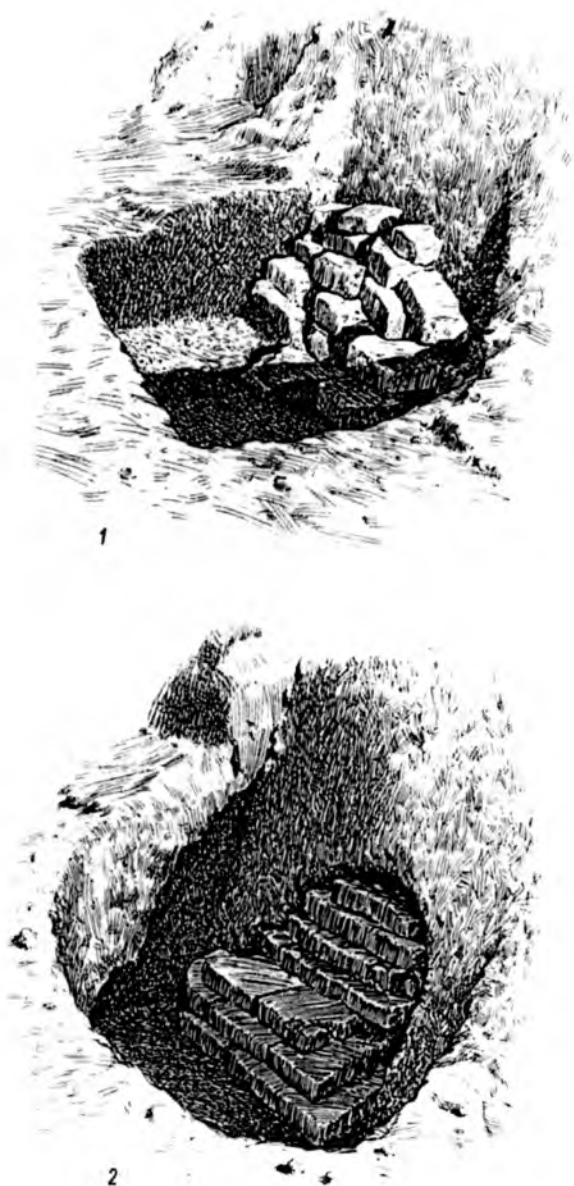


Figure 111. Christian graves' entrances bricked over with cob.
Grave 17 (1) and grave 18 (2) cut under the western church wall



Figure 112. Site IV. Vessels for funeral repast

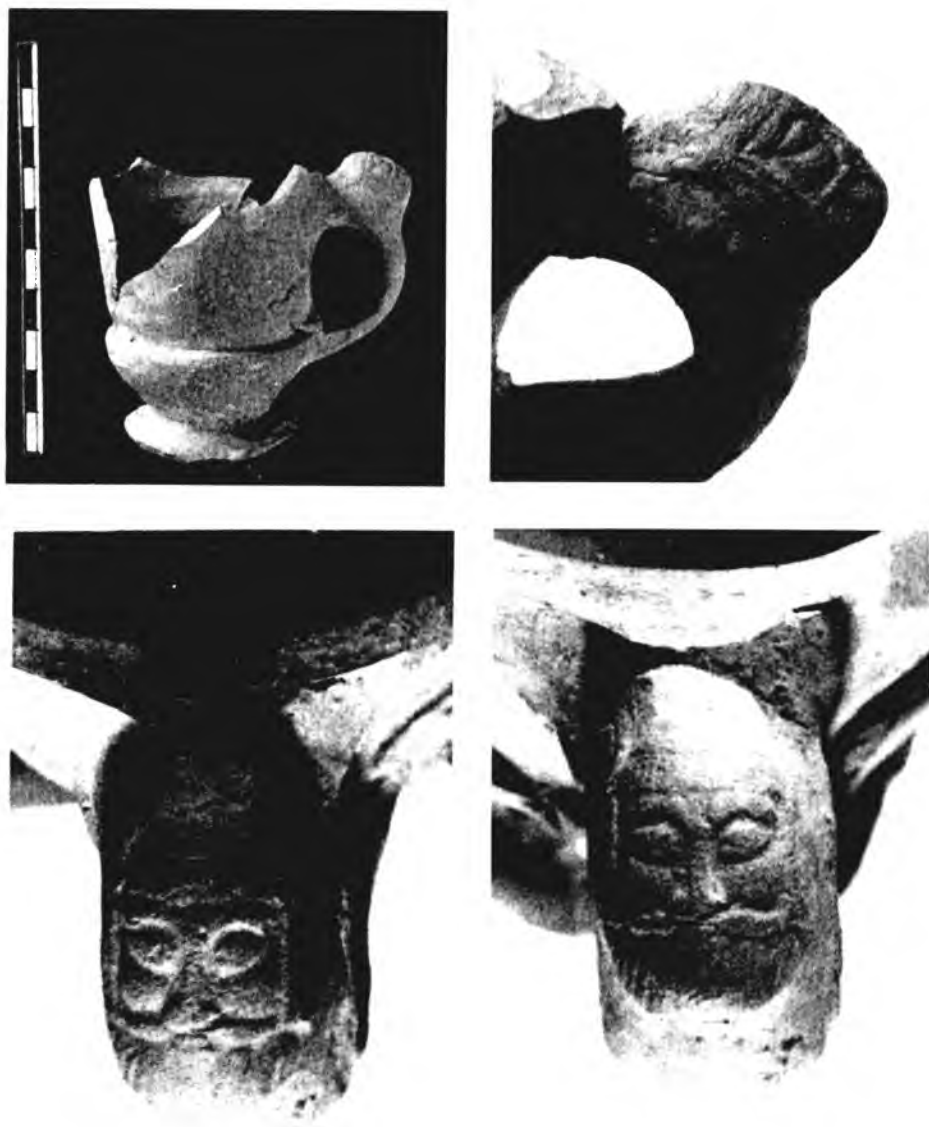


Figure 113. Site IV. Clay mug with a pasted ornament on the handle

to east was 36 m with the width of up to 15 m. At its western side there was a large open rectangular yard (27 x 12 m in size) with walls made of pakhsa blocks. Initially, along the yard walls there must have been some roofing providing shade. From the eastern side the yard was adjoined by the central building of the church which had a single entrance from the yard in the west (Figures 108-110). The central room had pakhsa walls and, it seems, had an imitation vaulted ceiling of intermittent layers of pakhsa and cob bricks. The small pieces of alabaster plaster fallen from the walls had traces of bright colors from the frescos that used to decorate the walls. The central room of the church (5.3 x 4.8 m in size) was laid out in the form of a cross (the so called "exposed cross" lay-out, Figures 108, 110) which has counterparts in the churches of the seventh and eighth centuries built according to the Greek-cross plan in Asia Minor and Armenia taking their roots in Syrian church designs of the fourth-sixth centuries¹⁹⁵.

On the southern side of the central room of the church there was a second isolated rectangular room (4.5 x 2.25 m) possibly a baptistery with its own entrance from the south (Figures 108, 109.1). In both rooms of the church various findings were made including some Turgesh coins and pottery.

Around the church mostly under its walls and also inside the yard many Christian graves from the same period of time were uncovered (Figure 110). According to their lay-out they fall into three groups: 1. a pit with the walls lined with cob bricks covered with a ridge roof of the same bricks; 2. a pit undercut from the southern side; 3. a small pit cut under the church wall located to the east of the entrance pit so that the body had to be put into this vault feet first. Later on the undercut entrance was bricked over with cob (Figure 111). All the deads lay on their backs with their heads westwards most often without any burial goods. In several instances the deads had: a bronze baptismal cross, nephrite earrings in the form of flat rings hanging from bronze wire ringlets and spotted glass beads typical of the seventh and eighth centuries. There were no coins in the graves. The deads were of Europeoid type¹⁹⁶.

Some evidence of funeral repast was found at the burial ground, for example, a spout of a narrow mouthed jug with a handle (Figure 112.2), an intact jug (Figure 112.3) and two drinking vessels with chipped mounths (Figures 112.1, 113). All the vessels were made on a potter's wheel. One of the mugs on a curved tray had a pasted ornament on the handle: the face of a bearded man with a moustache in a shapeless cap with ears (Figure 113). The face features with large slightly slanted eyes and high cheekbones betray a diluted Mongoloid type, that is someone of Turkic background.

We should mention that along the northern wall of the church yard in the upper layer were discovered five other graves for multiple burials of Muslim origin. All the skeletons there lay with their heads northwards (Figure 110).

The above described Christian graveyards from site IV excavated by the Chu

195 Strzygowski, 1903: 132; 1919: 51-77; cf.: Brunov, 1935: 484-487; Yaralov, 1947: 14, fig. 11.

196 All the paleoantropological materials from the excavations of 1953-54 were studied by the anthropologist N.N. Miklashevskaya.

Archaeological Detachment in 1954 have remained as far, as we know, the earliest known Christian burial grounds in Middle Asia. In any case before we conducted our excavations in the Chu valley there had only been two burial grounds of the Nestorian Christians from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries with the epitaphs in Syrian, Turkic and Armenian. They were discovered in 1885, one in the vicinity of the modern Bishkek and the other 5 km (3.11 miles) to the south-east of the Ak-Beshim settlement close to the Burana site.

Our discovery supports the data from early written sources about the early arrival of Syrian Christians in Middle Asia. In the architecture of the Ak-Beshim church the cultural syncretism combines the Syrian tradition of building churches according to the Greek-cross plan with the typically Middle Asian open yard with the iwans around the walls. It is highly likely that the origins of the lay-outs of more recent Muslim mosques and mausoleums which often had in the foundation of their design "the exposed cross" absolutely identical to the Ak-Beshim church of the eighth century should be looked for in Christian church architecture brought over to Middle Asia by the Syrians long before the Arabs reached these lands, that is starting in the fourth and fifth centuries. We all know that the Arabs invading Middle Asia often turned Christian churches into mosques¹⁹⁷ without changing their lay-out and consequently Christian architectural elements became more familiar to Muslims who later on incorporated these elements into their own religious constructions.

4.6. Ruins of the Tower of Silence of the sixth and seventh centuries (site V)

The Tower of Silence, whose purpose was to ensure that the bodies were relieved of the flesh and the bones were isolated for the burial, was located to the south-east of the shakhristan walls on the territory of the city outskirts not far from the south-western long wall of the rabad¹⁹⁸ (Figure 44). The tower remains before the excavations looked like a circular (25-26 m in diameter) hill with gently sloping sides and a plowed surface. As the landscape around sloped from south to north the height of the hill above the surrounding ground level varied: 1.58 m in the south and 2.2 m in the north. The western part of the hill foot was cut off by a plough and formed a ledge 0.8 m deep (Figure 114).

In spite of the poor condition of the site we still carried out its excavations. The decision was taken when three decorative bricks made of flamed clay of a rare form of circles or low cylinders with deep impressions of cross-like patterns similar to the shape of the Manichaean cross were found on this hill (Figure 115.1)¹⁹⁹.

197 Bartold, 1900: 109; 1927: 70.

198 In my early publications I referred to this site as the remains of a residential castle (Kyzlasov L.R., 1957; 1958; 1959b). Now the study of the Manichaean materials helped to identify the funereal use of this tower.

199 Cf.: Terenozhkin, 1950: 166, fig. 72.2.

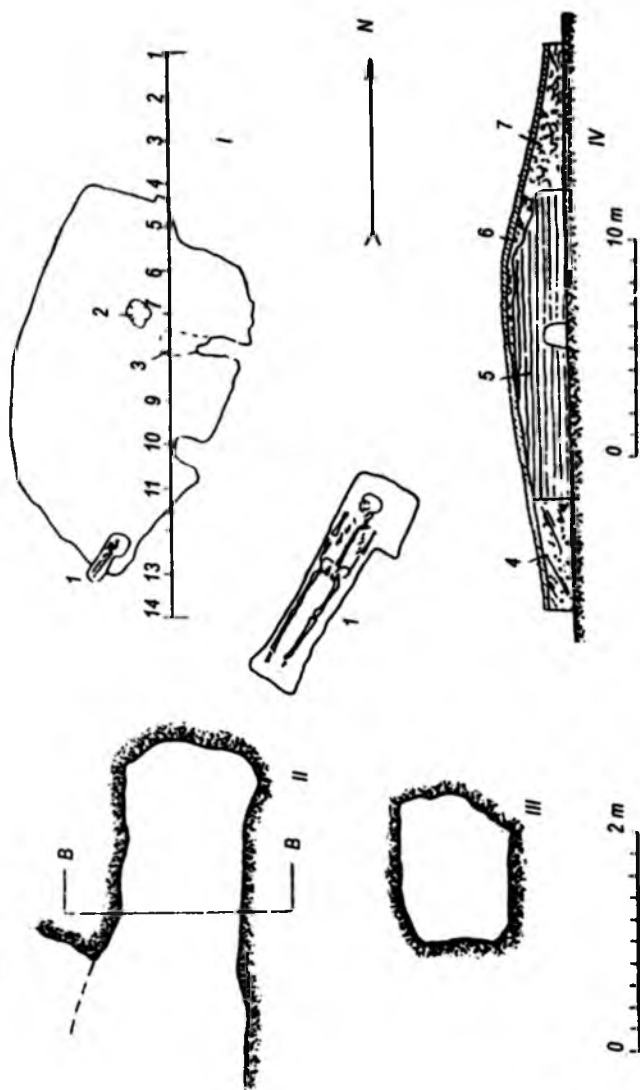


Figure 114. Ruins of the Tower of Silence of the sixth and seventh centuries (site V): I, IV - plan and section, II, III - sections of the vault: 1 - grave № 1, 2 - pit with an ossuary, 3 - vault, 4 - clay with fragments of comb bricks, 5 - pakhsa, 6 - pakhsa layer, 7 - fallen comb brick

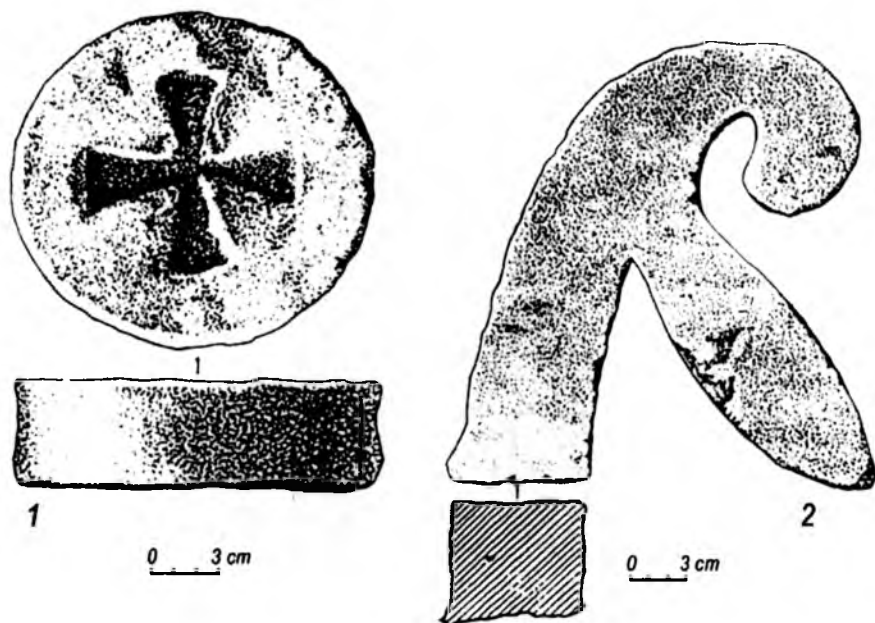


Figure 115. Site V. Flamed circular brick with cross-like deep impression (1) and decorative flamed brick of another type (2)

Very little remained from the tower. The excavations revealed the remains of pakhsa stylobate 15 x 10 m in size and 2.5 in height which seemed to have been rectangular in form and quite heavy (Figure 114). Initially the stylobate had a larger area. Even though it was very carefully uncovered we did not manage to find any intact parts of the outer surface of the stylobate that is why we have no information about the look of its outer facade surfaces. The upper surface of the stylobate which was relatively smooth and even and revealed a pattern of complex and irregular cracks that might have been formed while the different layers of pakhsa were dried.

The examination of the stylobate proved that it was constructed on the natural ground of small shingles by building up vertical layers of crushed clay across the whole surface. The cross section of the stylobate thickness revealed that the pakhsa layers were 0.4 m thick (with just one layer being 0.52 m thick) with six layers all in all. Here we need to highlight the fact that the boundaries between the layers separating them from one another were not always clearly seen as the heavy ramming of the clay sometimes led to their fusion. So, a very strong solid pakhsa platform was built to serve as a foundation for the tower which probably looked like a castle built largely of cob bricks.



Figure 116. Site V. Flamed notched brick

Some small fragments of cob bricks covered the top of the stylobate and also formed large heaps of rubble on its sides; as a result before the excavation the construction looked like a rounded hill. The fact that the number of cob brick²⁰⁰ remains was very large - and we believe that initially there were many more of them (we need to remember that bricks were destroyed or stolen both in the ancient times after the destruction of the castle and later when the area was ploughed many times) - suggests that the tower that was once erected on the stylobate platform must have been rather tall and might have looked like a two-storey castle similar to the one depicted on a famous silver dish from Bolshaya Anikova²⁰¹ and was decorated in a style similar to that of the Ak-Tepe castle in the vicinity of Tashkent²⁰².

Another piece of evidence in favor of the comparison with the above mentioned castles is a large number of fragments and some intact decorative flamed bricks found at different levels of the cob rubble heaps. The set of decorative bricks consisted of three repeated types. In the first place, they were the above mentioned round bricks for tiling with cross-like notches in

200 Unfortunately, because of the fact that the cob brick fragments were mostly smashed we could not identify their initial dimensions.

201 Orbeli, Trever, 1935: tabl. 20; Voronina, 1947: 42, fig. 6.

202 Terenozhkin, 1948.

the center²⁰³. Their diameter was 15-16 cm (mostly 16 cm) with the width 5-7.5 cm (mostly 6 cm). The cross-like indentations went deep in the brick body but to a different depth (from 2 to 4.5 cm) and in a few cases only there were round holes in the center of the crosses, possibly for fixing them on wooden pins driven into the cob walls. The second type of brick had the form of the letter Y turned upside down (Figure 115.2)²⁰⁴. Bricks of the third type were notched (Figure 116)²⁰⁵, with a height of 25 cm, a width of 22 cm at the bottom and the size of the notches at the bottom of 6.5 x 6.5 cm; the topmost notch was of the same size at the cross section. Bricks of the fourth type found there were ordinary rectangular flamed bricks of 34 x 17.5 x 4.5(5) cm or 34 x 16 x 3.5 cm in size²⁰⁶.

All the four flamed brick types were not building elements for the construction, which was made of pakhsa and cob, but were only used as decorative elements for the exterior facade of the castle and decorated the vertical plains of the cob walls and the friezes of its two floors similar to the way it was depicted on the famous relief from the Anikova dish.

The decorative bricks all had traces of cob on the side that touched it while their side surfaces retained a thin grey layer of dried mortar. Notably, the back surfaces of three types of decorative bricks that touched the walls were not even polished and the round stick-on bricks had cross-like rhombic or irregular triangular indentations on the back surface to ensure a better grip with the cob.

There have been many accounts in history research publications with detailed descriptions of the Sogdian castle from the sixth and seventh centuries on the Anikova dish. Here we will only highlight the facts that escaped other authors' attention prior to our excavations; the set of the decorative elements from burnt clay apart from the three types of the above mentioned decorative bricks included some rectangular flamed bricks also found in the ruins of the Ak-Beshim tower. They were apparently used in the friezes of the first and second storeys of the castle

203 There were over 27 items both intact and broken.

204 Thirteen items (including fragments) were found. The height of this brick (when placed with both legs down) was 25-26 cm, with the width at the base of 23 cm; the legs in cross section were 7 x 6.4, 7 x 7, 6.5 x 6.5 cm; the thickness of the upper curve was 6 cm.

205 Seven items (together with fragments) were found.

206 There were found two intact bricks and fragments of several others with the dimensions of (not including the length) 16 x 4.5 cm, 15.5 x 3.5 cm, 16 x 4 cm. We should mention that in among them there was a fragment of gray brick with two impressions of a net-like stamp on one surface (the length of the impression was 16 cm, the widest part was 4.5 cm but the side edges were chipped). A set of decorative bricks of these four types from site V was submitted by the author to be stored in the Oriental Department of the Hermitage. It was also exhibited by the museum.

in belt-like patterns of sidelong bricks below the row of notched bricks crowning the walls.

Some rectangular flamed bricks of the same size that were absolutely identical to the ones in the remains of the Ak-Beshim tower were found in the Ak-Tepe castle in the vicinity of Tashkent (the sixth and seventh centuries)²⁰⁷ together with other three types (notched, circular with cross-like holes and Y-shaped)²⁰⁸. The same three decorative brick types were discovered as early as in 1927 by M.E. Masson in the excavations of a building of the sixth and seventh centuries at the shakhristan of ancient Taraz (Jambul) in Southern Kazakhstan²⁰⁹.

All the specified architectural parallels provide enough ground for the conclusion that the castle-tower excavated at Ak-Beshim was constructed and used in the fifth-seventh centuries. There is other evidence to support this dating. That is stratigraphic data, in the first place. Inside the hill there were excavated graves for multiple burials performed after the castle was ruined and acquired the form of a hill.

Grave № 1 was characterized by the dead lying on his back with the head to the north-east without burial goods. The pit was at the southern foot of the hill (Figure 114) and it undercut the pakhsa stylobate a little²¹⁰.

While grave № 1 (whose dating could be some time after the eighth century) does not help to identify the time of the castle destruction the ossuary grave № 2 for multiple burials discovered in the northern half of the hill is crucial in this respect. When the ploughing layer was removed we discovered a square-form pit of 0.95 x 0.9 m undercutting the pakhsa stylobate in such a way that the bottom of the pit lay at the depth of 0.9 m from the closest topmost point of the hill (mark 7). In the pit there were fragments of rectangular and oval ossuaries and human bones in poor condition. The upper parts of the ossuary had been removed by the tractor ploughshare during the tilling and the lower parts were mixed up. On one of the side walls of the rectangular ossuary there was preserved an image of "a tree", drawn with a stick on the wet clay of the ossuary (Figure 117).

Identical oval ossuaries also originating from graves for multiple burials were found at the site when the railroad from Frunze – Rybachye was constructed because it ran along the northern wall of the shakhristan in Ak-Beshim²¹¹.

207 Terenozhkin, 1948: 119.

208 Terenozhkin, 1948: fig. 20, 22, 23; 1950: fig. 69, 79.9, tabl. XXI. 18, XXI.19, XXI.20; cf.: Voronina, 1947: fig. 7. These bricks sizes are similar to Ak-Beshim items.

209 Masson. Pugachenkova, 1950; Senigova, 1968.

210 According to N.N. Mikloshevskaya, it was the skeleton of an old man of 60-70 of a mixed racial type with Mongoloid and Europeoid features, the Mongoloid features prevailing.

211 Bernshtam, 1950: 110.

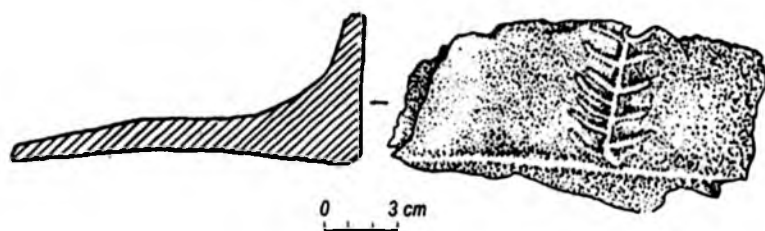


Figure 117. Fragments of rectangular clay ossuary from burial № 2 undercutting the pakhsa stylobate

At some other locations in the Chu valley, for example, similar ossuaries with a tree-like pattern were discovered by the Semirechye expedition during the excavation of some graves in the yard of a mansion of the fifth-seventh centuries at the neighboring Krasnaya Rechka site²¹². A. N. Bernshtam dated both the rectangular and the oval ossuaries found in the Chu valley to the fifth-seventh centuries²¹³ pointing out, however, that the rectangular ones should have preceded the oval ossuaries²¹⁴. He also underlined the fact that no ossuaries belonged to the so called Karluk period of the eighth-tenth centuries as they were substituted by the practice of burying the bones in hums²¹⁵.

According to B. Ya. Stavisky, who studied the ossuary burial rites in Middle Asia using the materials from the necropolis of ancient Penjakent, the rectangular ossuaries of Sogdiana, Chach and Semirechye go back to the fifth and sixth centuries while the oval ones date from the seventh - no later than the first half of the eighth century²¹⁶.

Considering the two viewpoints discussed above and the obvious fact that the Karluk dominance in Northern Kirghizia started in 766 we should assume that the ossuary burial discovered at Ak-Beshim should be dated to no later than the first half of the eighth century while the destruction of the tower-castle happened at the end of the seventh century, because a substantial time was required for the ruins of the tower to form a neglected hill where deads were buried later.

212 Ibid.: 15, 28, 30-32, 73, 81, tabl. XIV.1, XIX.3, XIV.4, cf.: tabl. 62.1, 62.4, 62.5.

213 Ibid.: 29, 36. Compare the date of the sixth-eighth centuries with the title of the table 62 on page 156. For the first found rectangular ossuary in the Chu valley see Bartold, 1922: tabl. III.

214 Trudy..., 1950a: 31.

215 Ibid.: 129, cf.: 32, 33.

216 Staviskiy, Bol'shakov, Monchadskaya, 1953: 95; Staviskiy, 1954: 13.



Figure 118. Findings from the site V. 1, 2 – bronze,
3, 5 – iron, 4 – glass

Thus, the stratigraphic data also confirm the timeframe for the tower (the fifth-seventh centuries) which was initially suggested by the architectural parallels. This dating is supported by the limited number of objects we found during the excavation of this site.

At different locations in the hill in the rubble among the fragments of cob bricks several objects were found. Four of them were made of iron; two fragments of curved plates and two four-faceted blades of unclear use (Figures 118.3, 118.5). There were also found a barrel-shaped bead of white glass-like paste with green patches (Figure 118.4), a small belt tip of bronze with two studs and a broken backplate (Figure 118.2), a bronze earring with a sharp side notch and a ring for attaching a pendant (Figure 118.1). The last two findings give good evidence in favor of the proposed dating because they are typical items of Turkic grave goods of the sixth- beginning of the seventh centuries in the Altai region²¹⁷.

Here we need to look at the findings from the so called vault. When the pakhsa stylobate was cleared at the eastern side of it at the level of the natural ground of shingles was found a blocked channel leading under the stylobate. When the blockage was removed we found a long straight shaft leading from east to west (4 m long, 0.7-1.2 m wide, 1.2 m high). It was carved in the daub mass of the stylobate, so it was made after the completion of the construction of the tower itself (Figures 114.I – 114. IV).

²¹⁷ Evtyukhova, Kiselyev, 1940: 33, fig. 11; 1941: fig. 17, tabl. III.E.



Figure 119. Fragments of clay ossuaries from the vault:
1 – upper part, 2, 3– sidewalls

The walls of the undercut cavity were uneven because the daub mass was carved out in entire “blocks”. The latter circumstance proves first that the stylobate had completely dried at that time, second that the mining of the shaft was done with a chipping tool similar to a handpick but not with a cutting tool. The ceiling of the cavity was more even than its walls. This is because the level of the ceiling met the border line of two horizontal layers of the pakhsa stylobate.

These findings suggest that the cavity was used as a family vault. In the rubble inside at different levels and locations there were scattered fragments of three oval ossuaries and their lids (Figure 119), small fragments of human bones, two nearly intact skulls²¹⁸ with fragments of another one, a small jug, fragments of three other vessels, a piece of lid from a vessel (Figure 120), two fragments of curved iron plates and a piece of a flat bronze circle with a hole in the middle.

218 N.N. Mikloshevskaia identified one of the skulls as belonging to a man of 35-40 of a mixed racial type.

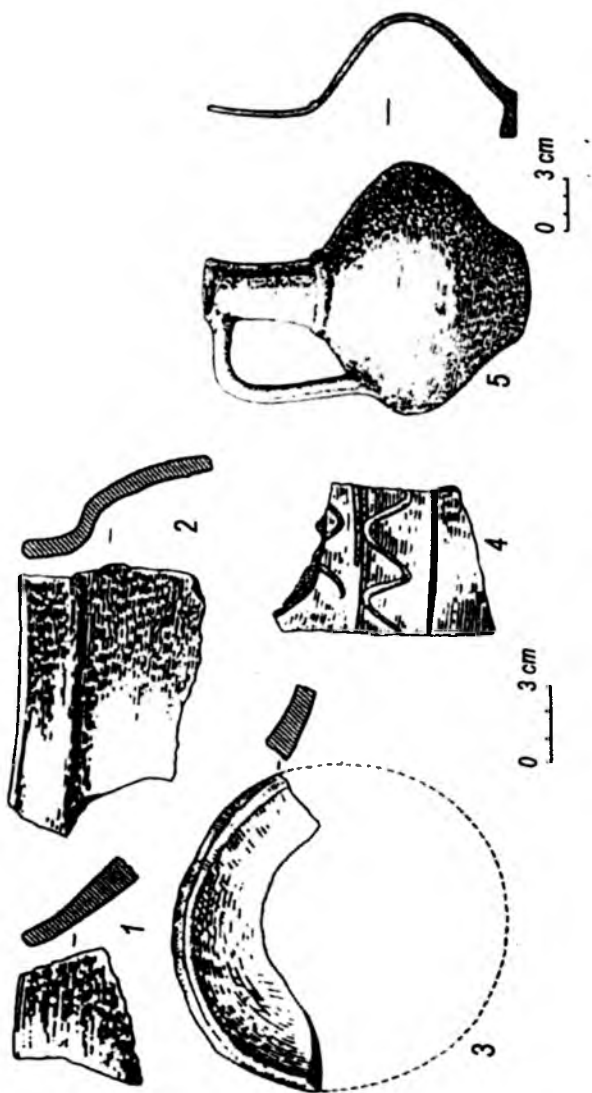


Figure 120. Pottery from the vault

The vault had obviously been plundered and partially damaged

(some of the ceiling above the entrance had caved in), it seems, right after the destruction of the tower because in the undercut cavity and even in its western end there were found decorative bricks and their fragments brought there at some point; two intact circular bricks with crosses, two fragments of the same brick type, one intact notched brick (Figure 116) and a piece of the tip of one of the notched bricks.

At the same time we need to remember that entry to the vault was only possible before the time the construction was buried under the hill as the collapsing walls of the tower formed thick heaps of cob brick rubble over the door. Thus, the ossuary burials in the vault obviously go back to a much earlier time than the upper grave for multiple burial dug out in the hill, that is the vault was constructed before the collapse of the tower when for some reason such a "family vault" became needed²¹⁹.

If we proceed from the assumption that the destruction of the tower took place in the second half or at the end of the seventh century, by which time the vault had been already plundered, we might date the construction of the vault not to the sixth century but to the first half of the seventh century. This timeframe for the vault construction is also proved by the findings inside, the oval ossuaries in the first place that based on the above mentioned evidence and stratigraphic data go back to the first half of the seventh century which is in keeping with the accepted date. The ossuaries were oval with bulging sides and slanted towards the insight upper edges which supported raised lids covering these vessels for storing bones²²⁰.

The sidewalls were 23-24 and 30 cm high. One ossuary was only decorated with a stick-on roll with small raised joined pyramids cut on it with a knife (Figure 119.1). Another one had a stick-on pattern of raised notches with triangles below them enclosed by bands of parallel lines and forming, it seems, a Π-shaped pattern (Figure 119.2). Finally, the third ossuary had a horizontal row of raised notches (with triangles cut in them) continuing into a stick-on roll with dents on the surface going down from it and lined on both sides with fragments of two-stars with cut-through rays (Figure 119.3) of which there might have been eight.

We are not familiar with any ossuaries with decorations of this kind on

219 A similar family grave in the yard of the castle of the fifth-seventh centuries was discovered by A.N. Bernshtam at the Krasnaya Rechka site. Cf.: *Trudy...*, 1950a: 15, 16, 30-32, 35, 36, 73.

220 Only isolated fragments of lids (6) and sides (8) from three ossuaries remained. All the ossuaries were hand built, the bottom being formed on a layer of sand and the walls of broad coils (4 cm wide) being put on top of one another in a spiral fashion in up to six loops. The quality of the flaming was good; the clay at the fracture was red with mixed in small pebbles and sand. The surface was covered with white or yellowish engobe. Judging by their fragments the lids were elongated and oval with the ends cut in a straight line (at the right angle to the lengthwise axis of the oval); one fragment had traces of a handle though the handles themselves we not found.

the territory of Semirechye. The closest counterparts are the ossuaries of the seventh and eighth centuries from the burial ground of Penjakent (Sogdiana) some of which are decorated with horizontally raised stick-on elements with cut notches²²¹ and cut stars with eight rays²²². It is interesting to note that the trimming of the ossuary walls with sticking out notched band is probably evidence of them going back to an earlier date because in Semirechye a similar pattern was only observed in a rectangular ossuary of the fifth and sixth centuries accidentally found on the Alamedin River by the city of Bishkek²²³ and in Sogdiana the pattern was discovered on the ossuaries of similar shape from Biyanaiman²²⁴. Thus, the Ak-Beshim ossuaries are some of the earliest known oval vessels probably dating from the first half of the seventh century²²⁵.

In the excavated vault vessels with food and drink might have been left at the time of the burial. Only some isolated fragments and one intact small jar made on a potter's wheel survived till the time of the excavations (Figure 120.5). Notably, the very choice of vessels is identical to those found in nauses of the ancient Penjakent²²⁶. We also discovered a crown fragment of a cup, a side piece of the jug-like vessel with a line-and-curve pattern scratched on the surface (Figure 120.4), a fragment of clay cauldron with a raised shoulder (Figure 120.2) and a piece of a convex-concave lid from a vessel formed on a sand bed (Figure 120.3) all made on a potter's wheel. All these fragments have direct parallels in the Sogdian pottery of the sixth and seventh centuries from Penjakent and the Ak-Tepe castle near Tashkent²²⁷. The only exception is a narrow mouthed jug with no identified counterparts (Figure 120.5)²²⁸. It falls under the complex dating to the sixth and seventh centuries.

The tower under study was erected at the end of the fifth – beginning of the sixth centuries and belongs to the group of the early constructions in the Chu valley prompted by the growth of the first cities in this part of Semirechye. The construction techniques, the decorative bricks and the family vault with bones in the oval ossuaries,

221 Staviskiy, Bol'shakov, Monchadskaya, 1953: 82, fig. 15.

222 Ibid.: 75, fig. 10.

223 Bartold, 1922: tabl. III.

224 Borisov, 1940: 40, tabl. I. III.

225 The ossuaries with tree like patterns found at the Krasnaya Rechka site (Trudy..., 1950a: tabl. XIV. LXII) and in the above mentioned upper grave for multiple burials date from a later time (second half of the seventh – beginning of the eighth century).

226 Staviskiy, Bol'shakov, Monchadskaya, 1953: 84.

227 Ibid.: 71, fig. 5, tabl. IX.4; Terenozhkin, 1948: 116, fig. 18, 19.6. The fragments of the vessels we found had yellowish-reddish clay at the fracture (with gravel inclusions) and were covered in yellow engobe.

228 Its surface was covered in yellow engobe, its mouth was well polished from top to bottom, the clay was of yellowish-brown color at the fracture. There were inclusions of gray gravel in the clay and the walls at the bottom were cut with a knife.

the characteristic pottery, all suggest that the building was constructed by Sogdians arriving there from the central areas of Middle Asia in the first wave of the Sogdian colonization of Semirechye in the fifth and sixth centuries.

We should highlight the fact that the Sogdians obviously migrated here not from Sogdiana itself (which could not be completely denied) but mostly from Chach (around modern Tashkent), whose culture in the sixth-eighth centuries “developed under the direct influence of Sogdiana and acquired a Sogdian character”, according to A.I. Terenozhkin²²⁹. We came to this conclusion because both in Sogdiana and in other areas of Middle Asia as well as in the neighboring territories there were no castles of the type with the same complete set of decorative bricks which have only been found in Chach (the Ak-Tepe castle) and in Semirechye (Taraz, Suyab/Ak-Beshim). Thus, the new evidence we uncovered supports the conclusion by A.I. Terenozhkin who pointed out that at that period of time “the strong Sogdian colonization wave swept into Central Asia *via Chach and Taraz* (italics by L.K.)”²³⁰.

This conclusion proves right for the Chu valley and especially for the city of Suyab now known as the Ak-Beshim site because it is supported by the results of the research of the castle together with the studies of the lower construction layer of the shakhristan of this settlement lying at the depth of 7.5 m and featuring the pottery identical to that of Chach of the fifth and sixth centuries. We were going to deal with this evidence in a separate research article²³¹.

We also need to look at one particular issue, namely the origins of the famous Anikova dish which was interpreted differently by various researchers. It has now been proved that this splendid artifact does not originate from the Iran of the time of the Sassanid era as it was traditionally believed²³² but has Middle Asian roots²³³.

At the same time it was unclear where exactly in Middle Asia the unknown toreutics master created the Anikova dish. A.I. Terenozhkin and S.P. Tolstov believed that the bowl was made in Kwarezm²³⁴ while other researchers, for example, V.L. Voronina doubted this view especially because decorative bricks were found in Ak-

229 Terenozhkin, 1950: 162. In Chach at the same time local coins with inscriptions in Sogdian were already minted.

230 Ibid.: 161.

231 However, the subsequent research in another direction prevented us from fulfilling our plans. The functional categories of the pottery were looked at in a published graduation paper by an active and talented young participant of our expedition – cf.: Raspopova, 1960: 138-163. The chronological pottery scale of Ak-Beshim compiled based on the stratigraphic data is presented in the table above together with the description of sites I and II (Figures 47, 48, 93).

232 Orbeli, Trever, 1935.

233 Trever, 1952: 283. The new point of view holds that the bowl was made by the Karluk converted into Christianity (Darkevich, Marshak, 1974).

234 Terenozhkin, 1939: 12-126; Tolstov, 1948: 198, 205.

Tepe near Tashkent²³⁵ and another group of authors, above all M.E. Masson and G.A. Pugachenkova²³⁶, believed the bowl was an example of Sogdian toreutics. They were in total agreement only concerning the dating of the artifact to the sixth and seventh centuries. However, this was later reconsidered. V.P. Darkevich and B.I. Marshak believe it was cast much later, namely, in the ninth and tenth centuries following the prototype of the eighth century²³⁷.

Fifty years ago we mostly relied on the evaluation of the architectural elements of the castle depicted on the Anikova dish in the identification of the place of its origin²³⁸. My opinion has not changed since then because we looked at the whole body of the architectural evidence and not just its elements. It is not enough to allude only to the stylobate from pakhsa and the corrugated walls it supported which were later proved to be also typical of early medieval architecture of Khwarezm and of entire Middle Asia²³⁹; it is not enough to point out the crowning notched bricks in the castle walls because they were widely spread in the sixth and seventh centuries both across Middle Asia²⁴⁰ and in the neighboring territories, from the Sassanid fortress constructions in the west²⁴¹ to the religious complexes of Eastern Turkistan in the east²⁴².

As soon as we pose the question of where exactly the whole complex of architectural elements found in the castle on the Ak-Beshim bowl was common we are bound to discover a clearly defined area of the Chach-Semirechye region (Tashkent, Jambul, Tokmak) which had close geographical and historical links with the Western Turkic khaganate of which it even formed part in the sixth and seventh centuries. It was only in this geographical area that at three different sites remains of castles were discovered featuring a *complete set* of the four distinctive types of flamed decorative bricks which are so prominent on the façade of the two-storey tower on the Anikova dish. The Chach-Semirechye region seems to have been the very place where the skilled local Sogdian²⁴³ toreutics master created the wonderful artifact²⁴⁴.

235 Voronina, 1947: 42, 43.

236 Masson, Pugachenkova, 1950: 99. Cf.: D'yakonov, 1954: 139.

237 Darkevich, Marshak, 1974: 216-220; Marschak, 1986: 322; Marshak, 1996: 10.

238 Kyzlasov L.R., 1958: 160, 161.

239 Voronina, 1947: 43 ff.

240 As for Sogdiana this is proved by images of notched walls in the wall paintings of Penjakent (Zhirovits'..., 1954: tabl. XIX, XX, XXIV) and by notched bricks found in Samarkand. Cf.: Terenozhkin, 1947: 131.

241 Pakhomov, 1933: 45 (fig.). Crowning notched bricks were used in Iran since the Achaemenid period and were found in a temple dating from the second-the third centuries in Afghanistan (cf.: Shchlumberger, 1952: 448).

242 Compare depictions of walls in wall painting: Ol'denburg, 1914.

243 "Sogdian" because castles of this type in the Chach-Semirechye region of the sixth and seventh centuries were built by local people speaking the Sogdian language.

244 In his research paper B.I. Marshak sides with our assumption in believing that the Anikova dish was created in Semirechye based on additional detailed study of the technique and the type of decoration used in the making of the bowl.

which enables us to imagine what the initial tower at one of the ancient sites of the Chu valley looked like 13 centuries ago.

Some Manichaean studies conducted in the recent years in view of the reassessment of some specific features of site III at Ak-Beshim have brought about a new understanding of some distinctive components of site V. The impressions of Manichaean crosses on circular bricks and the use of stylobate for the secondary ossuary burials led us to believe that the studied site had never been a residential castle but it was a burial “Tower of silence” of the fifth and sixth centuries built on the Chu River by the first wave of the Sogdians even before they founded the city of Suyab when they settled Semirechye via Chach and Taraz. This assumption is supported by an established theory of ancient burial towers that existed in Middle Asia²⁴⁵. They might have looked similar to castles.

Another construction that supports the theory of the use of site V was examined by G.V. Shishkina and featured in her publication. The burial Dakhma excavated on the outskirts of Samarkand was in use for a long time and experienced 9 stages of construction. The timeframe of the tower’s use is identified by the researcher as the second half of the seventh century – the first half of the eighth century and the look of the tower is compared to architectural traditions of fortress and castle construction. Initially, the upper part of the building was decorated with the same type of decorative brick as site V at Ak-Beshim²⁴⁶.

It is difficult to deny that both bowls of the Anikova type from Siberia feature dead bodies (one body lying at the entrance and another hanging over the parapet head down and arms limp).

Nowadays when it is becoming clear that the Anikova dish proved to be a sample of an object common in eastern Middle Asia (compare its production by using the imprint from the original and the discovery of a second copy in the Ob area)²⁴⁷ it is obvious that the scene on the bowl could have been popular with the Manicheans of Siberia. The same might be proved by a combination of different styles from different cultural and ideological centers (Buddhist, Christian and, I believe, Manichaean) that was observed by many specialists. Similarly, the early religious tower constructions like the one we excavated in Ak-Beshim could have spanned the same wide range of historical and cultural traditions of the religiously and ethnically mixed communities of Semirechye.

245 Rapoport, Lapirov-Skoblo, 1968: 147-156.

246 Shishkina, 2005: 755-775; Galieva, Inevatkina, 2005: 289, fig. 8.2-8.4; Kurkina, 2005. [This paragraph of text and the allusions to publications did not feature in the original book by L.R. Kyzlasov and are introduced here based on a later posthumous article (Kyzlasov L.R., 2008: 45) – ed.].

247 Marshak, 1996: 10; Gemuev, 1988. The author of this book ventures to assume that the Turkic speaking Manicheans of Western Siberia built wooden two-storey “Towers of Silence” in their graveyards as late as in the sixteenth century. It is these towers that were obviously depicted in S.U. Remezov’s drawing of the Begishevo cemetery where Yermak was buried (Kyzlasov L.R., 2005a: 60, fig. 2; cf.: Kyzlasov L.R., 2006: 138-150).

4.7. Sacred Space of the City of Suyab

At the time of the excavations neither myself, nor any of the experts involved in the study of the Ak-Beshim settlement and its variety of materials for the past half a century or so had any clear idea about whether there existed in the early medieval Suyab a clearly laid out sacred space surrounding the densely populated shakhristan, a conclusion which to the best of my knowledge could not have been drawn based on the published plan of 1953-1954 (Figure 44) either. That is what motivates me now to revisit the data obtained from the field work in Kirghizia²⁴⁸.

Our excavations were the only ones to clearly reveal that the inhabitants of Suyab, also living in close quarters of the fortified walls of the rectangular shakhristan, were split up into communities of followers of four world religions: Buddhism, Christianity, Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. This conclusion was further supported by subsequent studies by L.P. Zyablin, who excavated a second Buddhist temple in 1955-1958, and by G.L. Semyonov and his Kyrgyz colleagues who discovered another Christian church complex in 1996-1998.

These now known religious sites differed from each other not only in their characteristic features of sacred architecture but also just like the graveyards attached to them they were clearly separated from one another (Figure 121). It turned out that each faith had a separate space and occupied outside the town shakhristan the areas associated with each particular cardinal point.

The sacred space of the Buddhists of Suyab stretched along the *southern* fortified wall of the shakhristan on the outside. It was there that both Buddhist temples were examined (I and II - sites I and VI). The first one - the largest monastery-temple, was located near the south-western corner of the shakhristan, the second one was located 250 meters to the east of the first and only 100 meters to the south of the shakhristan wall²⁴⁹ (Figure 121). Along the southern wall of the shakhristan in subsequent years there were accidentally discovered by local residents some of the above mentioned remains of stone steles with fragments of hieroglyphic funeral and dedicational texts²⁵⁰. For sure, a medieval Buddhist graveyard was disturbed to the east of the temples and to the south of the shakhristan.

The Manichaean cemetery we examined in 1954 contained a supurgan platform and above-ground vaults as well as graves of bleached bones in hums

248 This part of the text has undergone some small revision to correspond to the posthumous article (Kyzlasov L.R., 2008). Figure 121 has also been added – ed.

249 Zyablin, 1961.

250 Lubo-Lesnichenko, 2002: 119-127.

and cauldrons, and even bodies left behind on the ground (the “open-air burial”) and was located *west* of the city walls (site III, Figures 44, 121).

The Christian church and its graveyard, examined in 1954, were located at the opposite side of the town’s fortifications 165 meters *east* of the shakhristan wall (site IV, Figures 44, 121). It is no coincidence that a most interesting Nestorian church complex was also located in the eastern part of the center of Ak-Beshim (site VIII, Figure 121), which unfortunately had not fully been studied over the years and as a result was lost to science. Judging by the publication featuring the excavated part, it was a very rare building of a Nestorian cathedral or monastery which consisted of at least three churches²⁵¹. No similar monument has yet been registered or described in the history of Eastern religious architecture.

Unfortunately, a plot of land located north of the Ak-Beshim shakhristan remained unexplored as the railway had long destroyed the ancient remains (Figures 44, 121). However, A.N. Bernshtam, who visited the Chu valley in 1939-1940, said that “directly at the north wall” of Ak-Beshim the railway construction cut through the graveyard of flat mounds with no masonry. “At the level of the surface there were ossuaries, sometimes hums with bones, i.e. bone depositaries associated with the Zoroastrian cult.”²⁵² Relying on the archaeological data provided by A.N. Bernshtam we have good reason to conclude that on the *northern* side of the Suyab shakhristan the Zoroastrians buried their deads. Zoroastrianism in those days was the state religion of the Sasanian Iran. Obviously, in Suyab at that time also lived Iranian merchants who preserved their faith.

Thus, the Ak-Beshim site as a whole is a striking example of the open “moving apart” of the world’s religions from each other as it reveals the way each of the religions designated special sacred spaces for worship around the shakhristan walls inside which they lived. A look at the overall plan of the graveyards and temples (Figures 44, 121) is enough to realize how precious was the ritual seclusion of the members of each of the religious communities living in the same city in those days.

Differences in ideas of adherents of different religions about the afterworld, and about the ways the souls of believers entered it were of course extremely peculiar. There was no chance to see the consecrated ground of another faith. It is particularly significant that this planigraphic division persisted until the beginning of a complete desolation of the neighborhoods up to the turn of the tenth and eleventh centuries.

The sacred areas of Suyab, which were first identified by the author, and the peculiarities of their divisions do not only illustrate the cult alienation of the world religions and their distinct bearing to the cardinal points.

251 Semyenov, 2002: 44-114, fig. 1-72.

252 Bernshtam, 1950: 110.

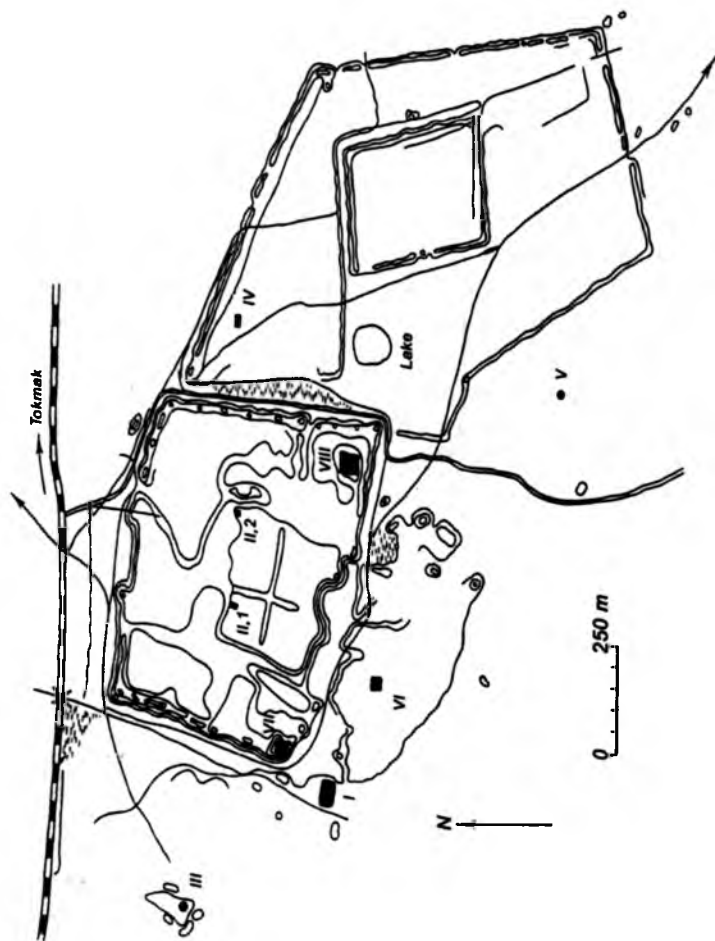


Figure 121. General plan of the Ak-Beshim, showing the sites excavated in 1953-1998.
 I – First Buddhist Temple, II (1 and 2) – stratigraphical excavations, III – Manichaean cemetery, IV – Christian church, V – funeral dakhma, VI – Second Buddhist Temple, VII – excavation at citadel, VIII – Christian cathedral

No less significant is the apparent delegation of the Buddhist, Manichaean, Christian and Zoroastrian sacred sites (the four denominations alien to the area of the Chu River) to the areas outside the city shakhristan. The latter circumstance probably indicates that medieval religious tolerance to the mixed population of the city did not extend over the heavenly protection of the walled city center - it remained under the protection of other local deities. Given the history of Suyab we traced above, it is possible to conclude that the occupational layers of the shakhristan of the Ak-Beshim settlement still not subjected to archaeological research conceal some Sogdian temples of the fifth and sixth centuries and of later times. The materials from the 1953-1954 excavations may perhaps enable us to guess what gods these inner city temples were dedicated to. Judging by the findings of distinctive religious badges, featuring in site I (Figures 83, 84), we can expect that the patron saints of Suyab were the divine couple whose symbol was a two-humped camel.

Some 50 years ago an expedition from Moscow State University identified that in Ak-Beshim "the most recent buildings of the shakhristan dated from the ninth and tenth centuries and life on the shakhristan, as well as in site I, stopped at the same time". The main conclusion was published in the summary, "the city existed between the fifth-tenth centuries. And then, for several reasons, life inside the city walls and beyond came to a standstill. In the eleventh and twelfth centuries, in the Karakhanid period, the city lay in ruins"²⁵³. Of course, the subsequent generations of people regularly visited the smoothed down ancient ruins; in the surface layers there were some Karakhanid coins, even a treasure of a leather pouch with 76 coins minted in middle of the eleventh century and in the 1060s was found (Appendix 1)²⁵⁴.

The excavations of 1996-1998 showed that in the ninth and tenth centuries the sacred area of Suyab on the eastern Christian side started to actively expand into the city quarters as new Christian churches were built directly on the eastern edge of city on top of the buildings of the previous construction horizon. This shift of the sacred space into the city marked the beginning of its downfall. Apparently, there were no Buddhists or Manicheans left in the city by that time. At the end of the tenth century Nestorian Christians fled Suyab, too. The life of the once flourishing city was over.

This is so far the only example of the archaeological study of an unsettled area around the city which clearly revealed its highly sacred nature, characteristic of the cities of Middle Asia. Historians and archaeologists were now able to get first-hand knowledge of the ideological confrontation of world religions in their coexistence in the early Turkic-Sogdian interaction in the sixth-tenth centuries.

253 Kyzlasov L.R., 1959b: 227, 235.

254 Davidovich, 1959: 242.

In conclusion, we should note a special attitude of the local Kyrghyz population of the left bank of the Chu River to the remains of a squar-like settlement high above the river valley.

Since ancient times the Kyrghyz peoples have called it Ak-Beshim. Collegiate Dictionary by Professor K.K. Yudakhin interprets the special meaning of the name. According to it, "ak" means "truth, truly," (even "god") and "Beshim" means "the noon prayer."²⁵⁵ That is to say in Russian the name of the ruins means "True noon prayer", in other words, "the noon prayer to the True God". It must be assumed that the Kyrghyz considered this settlement a sacred place, either in memory of the former local temples, or because they themselves offered their noon prayers at the ruins. We should note that the same dictionary gives the Kyrghyz "Kuday" for the word "God" and explains it as a borrowing from the Iranian language²⁵⁶. This term is pre-Islamic, Manichaean. Early on it was borrowed by many Turkic peoples and is linked with the spread of Manichaeism among them in the early Middle Ages²⁵⁷. This belief was carried further east by Iranian and Sogdians preachers. One of the religious centers involved in this process was as we now know the Sogdian-Turkic city of Suyab.

255 Yudakhin, 1965: 37, 133.

256 Ibid.: 436, 437.

257 Kyzlasov L.R., 2004: 3-13; 2005b.

Appendix 1.

Ak-Beshim coin-list¹

Consecutive number	Inventory number	Archaeological date	Coin type	Note
Site I. Buddhist temple, year 1953				
1	4	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	on the floor in the gallery
2	5	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	three fragments (ibid.)
3	12	the 11 century	Karakhanid	the upper layer
4	72	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in the sanctuary on the floor
5	87	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation (?)	fragments (ibid.)
6	103	the 11 century	Karakhanid	the upper layer
7	117	the 8 century	type not defined	in fragments, with the square hole
8	172	not dated	type not defined	the upper layer
9	173	not dated	Karakhanid	in three fragments, in the hall
10	176	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	on the floor in the hall
11	257	the 8-9 centuries	Turgesh	fragment
12	258	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	on the floor in the hall
13	276	not dated	Karakhanid	the upper layer
14	277	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	out of layer
15	316	the 11 century	Karakhanid	the upper layer
16-91	317-392	the second quarter and the middle of the 11 century	Karakhanid	the treasure (76 items), from the upper layer
92	393	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	the treasure (76 items), from the upper layer
93	394	the 11 century	Karakhanid	the treasure (76 items), from the upper layer
94	395	not dated	Karakhanid	the treasure (76 items), from the upper layer
95	418	the 8-9 centuries (?)	type not defined	poorly preserved, with the square hole
96	419	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
97	420	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall

¹ The determination of the coins is given as of 1958. The coins were defined by O.I. Smirnova, B.I. Pankratov and E.A. Davidovich. This collection housed in the Hermitage.

98	421	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
99	422	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
100	423	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
101	424	the 8-9 centuries (?)	of Turgesh circulation	2 fragments
102	425	the 8-9 centuries (?)	of Turgesh circulation	
103	426	the 8-9 centuries	type not defined	in fragments, Chinese sample
104	427	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	2/3 of the coin, in the arch bricked over in the room IV
105	479	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
106	503	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
107	504	not dated	Karakhanid	the upper layer
108	534	the end of the 7 - the the the the beginning of the 8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	under the column in the hall
109	538	not dated	Karakhanid	the upper layer

Site I. Buddhist temple, year 1954

110	1	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
111	2	not dated	type not defined	in fallen wall
112	3	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
113	4	the 11 century	Karakhanid	the upper layer
114	5	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	the upper layer
115	6	the 7-8 centuries	Chinese coin (?)	poorly preserved
116	7	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
117	8	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	fragments of the 2 coins
118	9	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
119	10	the 9-10 centuries	Turgesh	in fallen wall
120	11	the 7-8 centuries	type not defined	Chinese sample without the legends, the lower layer of the yard
121	12	the 8-9 centuries	Turgesh	in fallen wall
122	13	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
123	14	not dated	Karakhanid	the upper layer
124	15	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
125	16	the 11 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
126	17	the 8-9 centuries	type not defined	Chinese sample
127	18	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
128	19	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
129	20	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
130	21	the 9 century (?)	type not defined	in fallen wall
131	22	the 9 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
132	23	the 9 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
133	24	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
134	25	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	from the block of the room III
135	26	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	broken
136	27	the 9 century	of Turgesh circulation	in small fragments
137	28	the 8-9 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
138	29	the 9 century	Turgesh	fragment

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139	83	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	in small fragments
140	117	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
141	130	the 7-8 centuries	of Turgesh circulation	half of the coin from the lower layer of the yard

Site II. Stratigraphic excavation at shakhristan, pit 1, year 1953

142	1	the 9-10 centuries	Chinese coin of the Tang Dynasty, issued in 769	Dali yuanbao
143	2	not dated	Turgesh	in fallen wall
144	3	not dated	Turgesh (?)	in fragments
145	4	not dated	type not defined	fragment
146	5	not dated	type not defined	in fallen wall
147	6	not dated	Turgesh	in fragments
148	7	not dated	Karakhanid	the upper layer
149	8	not dated	Turgesh	in fallen wall
150	9	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
151	10	not dated	type not defined	fragment
152	12	not dated	type not defined	in fragments, Chinese sample
153	13	not dated	type not defined	in fallen wall

Site II. Stratigraphic excavation at shakhristan, pit 2, year 1953

154	11	the 9-10 centuries	Chinese coin of the Tang Dynasty	Kaiyuan tangbao

Site II. Shakhristan's plateau. Coins found on the surface, year 1953

155	55	not dated	Turgesh	in fallen wall
156	56	not dated	Turgesh (?)	a new type with four Chinese hieroglyphs on the one side and Turgesh legend on the other side

Site II. Stratigraphic excavation at shakhristan, pit 1, year 1954

157	57	not dated	Turgesh	in fallen wall
158	58	not dated	Chinese coin of the Tang Dynasty	Kaiyuan tangbao (618-626)
159	59	not dated	Turgesh	in fallen wall
160	60	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
161	61	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
162	62	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample
163	63	not dated	of Turgesh type	in fallen wall
164	64	not dated	type not defined	in fragments, Chinese sample
165	65	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fragments, Chinese sample

166	66	not dated	type not defined	in fragments, Chinese sample
167	67	not dated	Turgesh	in fragments, Chinese sample
168	68	not dated	of Turgesh circulation	in fragments, Chinese sample
169	69	not dated	Turgesh	in fragments, Chinese sample

Site IV. Church, year 1954

170	1	the 8 century	type not defined	Chinese sample, without the legends
171	2	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
172	3	the 8 century	of Turgesh circulation	in fallen wall
173	4	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
174	5	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
175	6	not dated	Chinese coin of the Tang dynasty	the upper layer, Canyon zhongbao (758-760)
176	7	the 8 century	Turgesh	in fallen wall
177	8	not dated	type not defined	Chinese sample

CONCLUSION

This book is correctly titled as its subject has long needed to be clearly defined in Russian science. I mean both historical and archaeological science. But it is impossible to fully embrace such a significant historical issue in one volume. The book jacket does not even include the cities of all countries and peoples of the Middle Ages discovered and studied by one archaeologist. There are, for example, no results of my excavations and reassessment of the cities of the Uyghur khaganate of the eighth and ninth centuries, the Ancient Khakass state of the eighth-twelfth century and the Mongol Empire of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.

However, the structure of the book and the choice of material for it were selected deliberately. There are two reasons for that.

At one time, long ago the author of this text in the written sources from various periods came across numerous references to cities which once existed in Siberia and clearly realized that we know about them much less than the travelers and scholars from the distant past did. The pride of a born Siberian urged me to put this right. The archaeological science could help it more than any other discipline. Consequently, it meant the necessity to study its search methodology, to master the methods of excavation, i.e. to trace the laws of the natural transformation of human creations into inert objects of nature, to study the mechanisms of finding a niche for each of these objects in the cultural development of mankind and wherever something of the above-mentioned was missing to be able to create new, effective ways of searching for ruins of cities and methods of their study.

The structure of this book follows the way my professional consciousness was born and formed. I very much hope that there is a reader who inspired by the facts of the first part of this publication will not only consistently perceive the archaeological chapters, but will also see his own destiny in the further development of their problems. And the example of the establishment of a new excavation method in the hills of Ak-Beshim, one of my earliest city sites, will lead to the understanding of the main thing in

field work, the need to think not only about the results of the excavations, but above all to concentrate on the expedition site itself.

For the same reason the book starts with these written records of the ancient cities of Siberia and the main results of their review. The accumulation of knowledge about the huge area slowly took place starting with the beginning of the European civilization and its progress reflects the peculiarities of the Russian historiography. It also reflects its present state. It is sad to realize that nowadays research and publications of special studies are still required to just lay the foundations of scientific research and to generate its starting points that can trigger the process and persuade contemporary researchers in the long-term existence of cities in Northern Asia. You need to become convinced that historic remains from these territories are not part of a list of curiosities of the barbarian world but are important for the recognition of the ways of human civilization. Contrary to the many new publications concerning the history of city life in Northern Asia it did not begin with the Russian stockaded towns from the seventeenth century. The written, archaeological, linguistic data of the early cities of Western and Eastern Siberia, northern Kazakhstan and the neighboring countries should be sought and accumulated for they had long existed in the culture of the indigenous population.

It is necessary to accept perhaps another disappointing conclusion of the initial part of the book. The European historical and geographical science is not the earliest but the latest manifestation of research aimed at the understanding of the civilizations of Northern Asia. In the core of its perception of the subject of this book European research is still lagging behind other centers of knowledge, even quite old ones, for instance, the early Arab-Iranian geography literature which regarding Northern Asia still does not only provide concrete evidence of the past, but also gives an example of a more productive attitude to the comprehension of the realities of the previously unknown *oicumene*.

I see my conclusion as part of our infinite thirst for knowledge of ourselves. It stimulates further development of European thought, which has been enriching itself for centuries through concentrated mental effort. Being advanced in methods of research the European humanities should now discard old-fashioned approaches to the subject under study. For obvious reasons, I invest hope in Russian science.

Archaeology proved that people first created a mental model that was later realized in practice, which was the case even at the stage of a flint axe. Since the Neolithic Age the cities of Northern Asia had been constructed according to a unified pre-designed plan that did not recreate any local specifics. The evolution of fortified settlements registered by the archaeological data was recorded in the late Stone Age. The continuity of the cities' development is reflected in the written sources telling about the subsequent stages of local history, up to the Russian manuscripts and references to the indigenous Siberian cities and towns.

The well-known fortified settlements turned out to be surprisingly diverse.

CONCLUSION

The taiga, mixed steppe and steppe cultures of North and Inner Asia gave rise to residential fortress of different types with large and small communities living in them, castles belonging to the wealthy families and isolated dungeons of military commanders. The increasing complexity of social life led to the formation of cities enclosed in walls, self-sufficient administrative, religious and production centers. These cities substantially increased the pace of social progress.

In the ancient times everywhere, and in the taiga longer than in other areas, until the arrival of the Russians, the inhabitants of proto-cities were monoethnic and the city location reflected both the distribution of the particular people and the internal administrative system of their country.

In the steppe region at the turn of the Common Era, during the Hunnic reign, we encounter an obviously different picture. Here fortified towns appear created to promote the economic development of the occupied territories. Thus, the cities become part of a carefully planned long-term policy of the state. This is indicated by such specialized settlements of colonists, as the Ivolga and Duryeny sites. Were they monoethnic? The answer to this question will be given by further archaeological research. But these days they are seen as examples of not only their distinct identity, but also of the unified character of Hunnic city planning and building: the consistent design and orientation towards the cardinal points, the controlled type of development and standardized construction patterns for the houses and their interior. All this should take its prominent part in the world history of monumental architecture and urban planning.

The major administrative centers that were created anew within the growing Hunnic state were multiethnic. The excavation of the Tasheba town left no doubt concerning this. Among its inhabitants there were different peoples including the newly conquered local tribes. This is verified not only by the uncovered remains of the above-ground houses but also by household items. The Tasheba palace itself, built at the beginning of the first century B.C., combined several construction and architectural traditions, namely the Western, Eastern and Central Asiatic ones. Let us look at any other epoch and geographical region of Northern and Inner Asia. It would be difficult to come up with any other example of such cultural confluence as found in Tasheba especially as a result of the joined first-hand effort by the native representatives of each tradition.

I think that the reader will find an analogy in the early history of the cultural development of the West, namely the city life of the people of the Hellenic period and of the Roman Empire. In the above cited cases, the reason for the creative syncretism seems quite obvious. It is explained by their economic and political power which led to the formation of global multinational empires. I find no reason to deny that the same reasons lay behind the phenomenon of urban life of the Hunnic state illustrated in this book.

Moreover, it should be mentioned that the appearance of constructions similar to the Tasheba palace occurred only when the old ideology was

replaced with a new one. The ideology of any empire destroys tribal and national barriers. This type of government ideology unprecedented for ancient history and arising with the foundation of each new empire made all its multiracial inhabitants its subjects to only promote the cosmopolitan rule and the syncretism of the official culture. In the framework of our subject an indication of such historical changes is provided by cities that were homes to many different people of various backgrounds.

The next stage in the internationalization of city culture was revealed by the archaeological excavations of Suyab (the Ak-Beshim site), one of the major centers on the Great Silk Road connecting Asia and Europe. The capital of the Western Turkic khaganate united within its city walls both its multiethnic population and the major religions of its time. It even incorporated them in its specific city lay-out. Around the densely populated city center a special sacred area was formed which was common for the entire city but separate for each religion. This new feature of city architecture was expressed in the concentration of each religion with its temples and burial grounds in their respective parts of Suyab each firmly linked to the bearings of the cardinal points. The Zoroastrians utilized the northern part of the city outskirts while the Buddhists used the southern one, the Christians – the eastern one and the Manicheans – the western one.

This was the historic pattern of the development of city culture of Northern and Inner Asia which grew more complex with time and which we have recreated through archaeology and based on written evidence. The cities here followed a long way from community centers to hubs of universal culture.

This unique generalized trajectory of the unified process of urbanization, to be outlined in this book for the first time, spans the major part of the Eurasians continent. The specific details characteristic of certain epochs, areas and countries should be further studied. It should also be correlated with specific trajectories in the development of other parts of the civilized world. This is how a difficult undertaking expands to become a joined effort.

My teachers were researchers but not just followers and that is why we also made a lot of new discoveries. Now the situation in Russian science has started to change, we only hope that more change is ahead.

This explains why this book was written; it is not a mere summary, it is a trajectory for many years of further research.

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ABBREVIATION

- AIA RAN – Arhiv Instituta arheologii Rossiyskoi akademii nauk
AO – Arheologicheskie otkrytiya.
EO – Etnograficheskoe obozrenie.
IAN – Izvestiya Akademii nauk SSSR. Seriya istorii i filosofii.
JA – Journal Asiatique. Paris.
KKM – Krasnoyarskiy kraevoi muzei (the Krasnoyarsk museum)
Kn. – Kniga KSIA - Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta arheologii Akademii nauk SSSR / Rossiyskoi akademii nauk. M.
KSIIMK – Kratkie soobshcheniya Instituta istorii material'noi kul'tury Akademii nauk SSSR
M. – Moskva (Moscow).
MIA – Materialy i issledovaniya po arheologii SSSR.
MM – Minusinskiy muzei (the Minusinsk museum)
PIDO – Problemy istorii dokapitalisticheskikh obschestv. Leningrad.
PSRL – Polnoe sobranie russkikh letopisei.
RA — Rossiyskaya arheologiya
SA – Sovetskaya arheologiya.
SE – Sovetskaya etnografiya
SHM – The State Historical Museum (Moscow)
SPb – Sankt-Peterburg
T. – Tom
TKKAE – Trudy Kirgizskoi kompleksnoi arkheologo-etnograficheskoi ekspeditsii. M.
TsGADA – Tsentral'nyi gosudarstvennyi arhiv drevnikh aktov. Moskva.
VAU – Voprosy arheologii Urala.
VDI – Vestnik drevnei istorii. M.
VIA – Vseobshaya istoriya arkhitektury v 12 tomakh.
VMU – Vestnik Moskovskogo universiteta
Vyp. – Vypusk
ZVORAO – Zapiski Vostochnogo otdeleniya Russkogo arheologicheskogo obshchestva. St.-Peterburg.

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