

*Denis S. Grechko\****On the relations between burial types and a level of development of the society**

There are main forms of the funeral ceremony of indigenous population of Central and East European Forest-Steppe of the Bronze Age and the Scythian period which have been marked out in the article. The ways of treating the dead were different. The body could be buried in the ground and burial mounds within the territory of settlements (in household buildings and special graves). The bones of dead could be left in the settlement area on exposure. The forest-steppe population followed a tradition of forefathers which was expressed in worship of human remains.

KEY WORDS: East European Forest-Steppe, Bronze Age, Scythian period, funeral ceremony, human burials, exposure

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The dependence of the funeral rite (in particular, secondary burial) of the primitive communities from the economic-cultural type is not tracked (S. Schroeder 2001, p. 88–90). In addition, Ū.A. Smirnov said that “odni i te že formy pogrebenij vstrečaũtsã v raznye istoričeskie periody ili v predelah odnoj epohi, no u paznoetničeskogo i/ili paznokul’turnogo nasieleniã; chodnye formy obšestvennyh otnošenij poroždaũt različnye formy pogrebenij, i naoborot, za odnimi i temi že formami pogrebenij skryvaũtsã raznyje formy obšestvennyh otnošenij” (1997, p. 13).

This subject is very extensive and I will try to formulate in general a few observations that accumulated during the study of funerary rites of the population of south Eastern Europe at Scythian time.

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V.A. Alekšii submitted that localization of the necropolises within or outside the settlements does not depend on the nature of the social structure of early agricultural societies. However, at Neolithic time (period of archaic economy of generating type), it was submitted the prevalence the burial on the territory of the settlement, including dwellings. Later, in 5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> millennium BC (period of a developed economy of the generating type), necropolis and settlement burials coexist. In the Craft period (3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC) there are buried mostly children on the territory of the settlement (V.A. Alekšii 1986, p. 17–40, 76–118, 151–161).

Tradition of the human burials on the territory of the settlement existed in the Middle Paleolithic. We will consider its characteristics since Late Bronze Age. On the territory of Usovovo Ozero settlement (Srybnaya culture, Severskij Donets riv-

er) fixed six ground burial (fig. 1:1–6). Moreover, burials into area of Srubnaya culture monuments researched at Šul’govka village and Velikoe Kpzyriše village (Dnipropetrovsk reg.), Osipovka on the Oreľ river and on the Mosolovskoe settlement on the Don river (see more: S.S. Berezanskaã 1990, p. 89–91). Some burials known also on the other settlement of Severskij Donets river in Final Bronze Age (Červonyj Šlãh-1, Šossejnoe, Zlivki, Raj-Starodubovka (V.A. Romaško 2013, p. 160). In the dwelling 5 of Šossejnoe settlement there was stacked in a pile of long bones in the pit, under that located woman skull of middle age (A.S. Smirnov, A.N. Sorokin 1984, p. 140). During the research of Glubokaã Balka-2 settlement of Late Bronze Age, on the floor of dwelling 1, there was found incomplete skeleton covered with several layers of shells of turtles (Å.P. Gerškovič and other 2005, p. 95–96). On the Kostãnec settlement of Volyn group of Tshinetskaya culture, in the dwelling 1, there was found burial where a skull lying in front of dead body (Ī.K. Svěšnikov 1947, p. 10, 14). On the Mošny settlement of Late Tshinetska culture, at the bottom of the pit there was found children skeleton (S.D. Lysenko 2002, p. 90–91). On the south sanctuary of Bezymennoe-2 settlement at the wall of object 1 there was discover burial of child 3–4 year, which accompanied by a pot, which was located in the front of the face (fig. 1:7) (V.N. Gorbov, R.A. Mimohod 1999, p. 35).

Several burials found under the ashpan of Sabatinovskaya culture (A.I. Melũkova 1961, p. 9; G.N. Tošev, I.T. Černãkov 1986, p. 123–124) and on the territory of the sanctuary on the Dikij Sad settlement in Nikolaev (Ū.S. Grebennikov 1994, p. 28–29). A significant number of graves within the Late Bronze Age settlements well known in the Urals (I.A. Fajzullin 2012, p. 226–230) and in the Volga region (see more A.S. Smirnov, A.N. Sorokin 1984, p. 141).

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\* Department of Archaeology of Early Iron Age IA NASU, e-mail: ukrspadshina@ukr.net

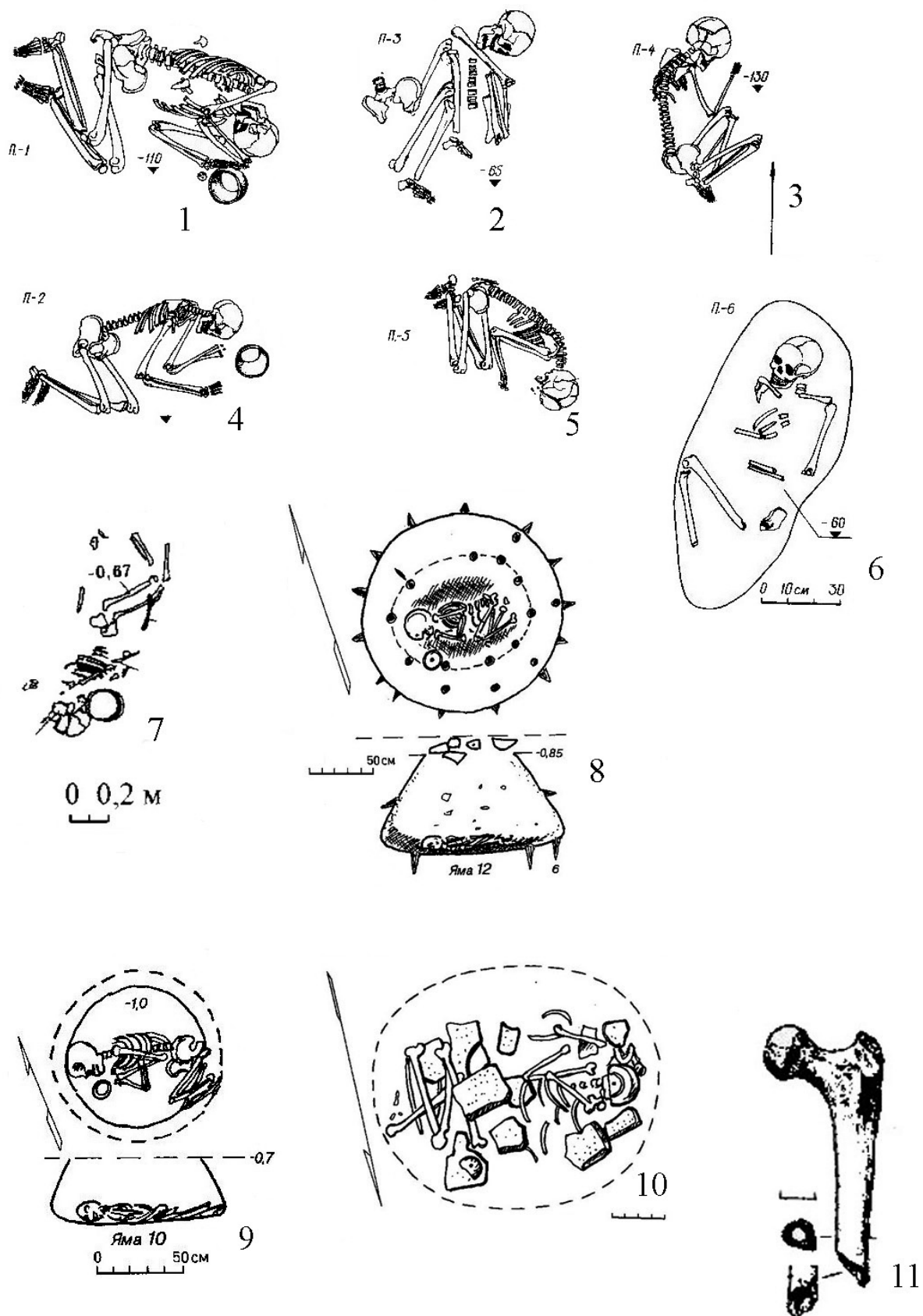


Fig. 1. Burials in the settlements of the Late Bronze Age and Scythian period. 1–6 – Usovo Ozero; 7 – Bezimmenoe 2; 8–9 – Neporotov II; 10 – Lomachyntsi; 11 – Vinogradniy Sad (1–6 – after S.S. Berezanskaâ 1990b; 7 – after V.N. Gorbov, R.A. Mimohod 1999; 8–10 – after L.I. Krušel'nic'ka 1998; 11 – after Fomenko et al. 2005)

Ryc. 1. Groby na osadach z późnej epoki brązu i okresu scytyjskiego. 1–6 – Usovo Ozero; 7 – Bezimmenoe 2; 8–9 – Neporotov II; 10 – Lomachyntsi; 11 – Vinogradniy Sad (1–6 – wg S.S. Berezanskaâ 1990b; 7 – wg V.N. Gorbov, R.A. Mimohod 1999; 8–10 – wg L.I. Krušel'nic'ka 1998; 11 – wg Fomenko et al. 2005)

Burial of the dead well known on the settlements of Sakhar-na culture in the Middle Dnestr region (type II.3, by M. Kašuba). Among the burials of this culture, there are 12–29 % of burial offset (or dismemberment and co-burial). M. Kašuba collected numerous data on the deposit of human skeletons within the settlements and the hillforts of Central Europe of period HaB, which showed the widespread of this phenomenon (M. Kašuba 2008).

Burial of a teenager at the bottom of the pit well known at the Tâcminskoe settlement of Chernoleskaya culture (A.I. Terenožkin 1961, p. 43). Burials in the pits founded at the Neporotov and Lomačincy villages that also belonged to the Chernoleskaya culture on the Dnestr river (fig. 1:8–10) (L.I. Krušel'nic'ka 1998, p. 32–34, 39–40). Some burials founded in the dwellings 4a and in the pit 7 (dig 8) of Subbotovskoe settlement (V.I. Kločko, M.M. Kovalůh, Ī. Motzenbekker 1998, p. 96; S.D. Lisenko 2002, p. 90–91; 2004, p. 263–264). On the Dolinány settlement there was found dismembered man and woman skeletons with three children in the household pits (G.I. Smirnova 1981, p. 44–46). Burial on the territory of settlements and hillforts well known in the Geto-Dacian in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC – 1<sup>st</sup> century AD (V. Sirbu 2008, p. 71–90).

Inhumation burial mounds distributed widely among the inhabitants of Yukhnovskaya culture. D.V. Karavajko notes that these complexes are made with partial compliance of the rules of the funeral rites and it are not related to the main method of burial of this population but it are related to certain categories of people (possibly “dangerous dead”) (2012, p. 46–74).

Researchers associated such burials with the similarity of semiotic contexts of dwellings and burial chamber. R.A. Mimohod connects them with the ritual of leaving home (1997, p. 112–114)<sup>1</sup>. These burials can be attribute to the archaic tradition of burying people in their homes. A similar custom of Zyráne assumed by V.P. Nalimov, which provides some information that burial made near the dwelling or into the floor at the first time, but not in the necropolis as the latest time (V.P. Nalimov 1907, p. 1–2). Interestingly that among the chosen complex group some children burial are present but are not dominate. Many researchers suggest that the bone of people were sacrifices on the settlement (S.S. Bessonova, S.A. Skoryj 2001, p. 8), or belonged to the deceased with the unnatural death, etc. In general, similar complexes can be link to the sacralization of living space and the transformation of chaos into cosmos. Perhaps the burial of the dead in the settlements established communication with the ancestors, under the spiritual protection under which are the descendants.

It can be assume that part of buried in the settlement could die in epidemics. M. Mončinska admits that the fact of prevalence of the burial in necropolis where the dead lie face-to-ground (burial of Motroninskoe settlement) can tell about the massive loss of life during the plague (1997, p. 210).

Such complexes are different from the Celts sacrificial pit created as a communication space with the underworld by the sacrifices by the lack of all sorts of offerings to the chthonic gods and layering filling, which would according to the frequency of ritual action (K. Pieta, J. Moravčzik 1980, p. 245–280).

<sup>1</sup> Sacrifices, which was buried into the bottom of the floor, can be related with the sanctuary practice that was belonged to the time of its functionary (V.N. Gorbov, R.A. Mimohod 1999, p. 25).

It should be noted unlike the burials of this type from the burial places of the victims of war or other emergencies (Semilukskoe hillfort, Kolomakskoe hillfort, Olbian extraurban territory, etc.) (fig. 2:3–4). Similar burial different by mass character and by the location in the existing building or location of the skeleton or parts of them in unnatural positions in the stratum. Selection of the characteristic features of these graves is the subject of a separate paper.

**Dismemberment.** Homo erectus firstly dismembered of dead body at 500–300 thousand years ago (H. Ullrich 1986, p. 227–236). Dismemberment was found in the complexes of Yamnaya CHC (local feature of the monuments of Danube and Dniester region) (S.M. Agul'nikov, S. S. Popovič 2010), in Catacomb (S. Ž. Pustovalov 2005, p. 92) and Belozerskaya cultures of Bronze Age (S.M. Agul'nikov 2010). Interests that this tradition is unknown in the funeral ceremony of Noua-Sabatinovka (S.M. Agul'nikov 2010, p. 187–188). S.D. Lysenko considered burials in many ways of dismemberment in Late Bronze Age of Middle Dnieper (2003, p. 53–62). The ritual dismemberment of the dead known in tribes of Sabatinovka culture (see more: A.N. Usačuk *et al.* 2010, p. 197–198).

Based on materials from Western Siberia, O. Zaitseva said that the highest percentage of burials with impaired anatomical integrity (secondary, partitioned, dismembered) are in the Neolithic and Early Bronze Age and later is a significant reduction, with some growth in the Late Bronze Age. Then comes the extinction of these traditions. It is noted that to the North the manipulation with remains continued until the Middle Ages (O.V. Zajceva 2005).

**Exposure.** Preservation of the bit of parent bone in the home or on the territory of the settlement are manifestations of the cult of ancestors, which includes the respect to their remains<sup>2</sup>. This burial method belongs to exposure class. In this method of manipulation with body, there is no isolate the remains from the social environment (Ū.A. Smirnov 1997, p. 14, 24–27).

Edward Taylor exactly wrote about the forms of fetishism in the cult: “... one of the most natural cases of fetishism is the belief that the soul resides temporarily or permanently in the mortal remains of his former body. Supposed connection between the dead man and his remains is very clear by the very simple association of ideas. Therefore, we read that Mandanskian women annually bring food to skulls of their relatives, and for hours together talking and joking in gentlest way with the remains of their husbands and children. Guinean negros preserving bones of relatives in boxes, from time to time go to talk with them in small huts that serve as their tombs. Thus, from the savage preserving the bleached bones of their fathers and transporting them from place to place with their household goods, and to the members of our modern society, come to mourn their loved ones to their graves, imagination permanently links the person of murder with his mortal remains” (Ě.B. Tajlor 1989, p. 335).

V.A. Romaško rightly points out that a significant number of human bones in the Pavlograd and Boguslav 1 settlements of Boguslavsko-Belozerskaya culture of Final Bronze Age, suggests that the inhabitants of the settlements did not bury the

<sup>2</sup> Cult of remains is a respect to the human remains that can be had a wonderful power; represented in all religions (Ū.A. Smirnov 1997, p. 186).

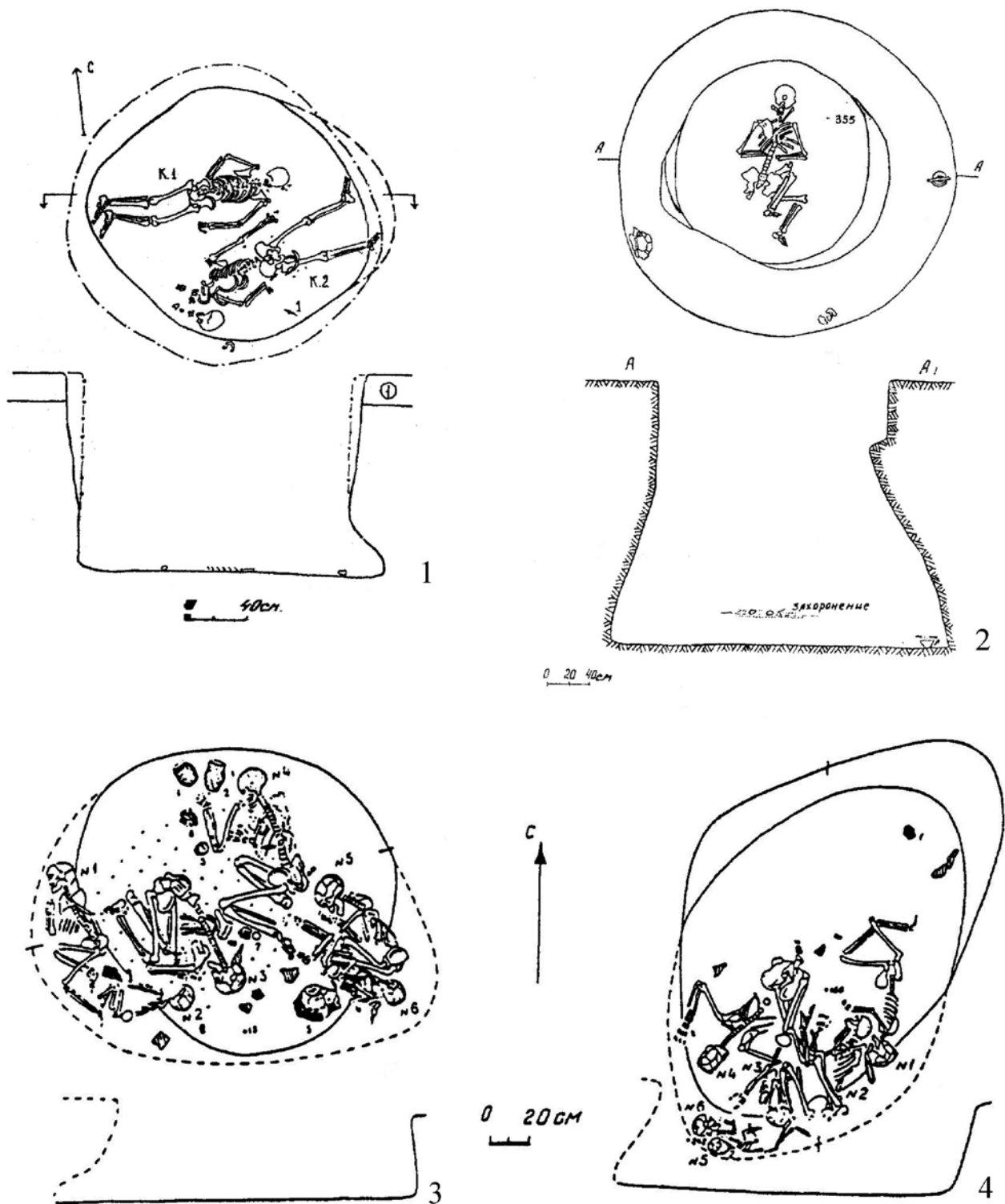


Fig. 2. Burials in pits on the Motronenske (1-2) and Semilukskoe (3-4) hillforts (1-2 – after S.S. Bessonova, S.A. Skoryj 2001; 3-4 – after A.D. Prâhin, Ū.D. Razuvaev 1993)

Ryc. 2. Pochówki w jamach na grodziskach w Motronenskie (1-2) i Semilukskoe (3-4) (1-2 – wg S.S. Bessonova, S.A. Skoryj 2001; 3-4 – wg A.D. Prâhin, Ū.D. Razuvaev 1993)

remains of the dead into the ground (2013, p. 169). The researcher points out an important issue for the moment – human bones often found in the settlements of those cultures, where funeral ceremony are little known (*ibidem*).

Scattered human bones that have long remained in the open air, found in the in-depth construction of Volkovka set-

tlement of Belogrudovsko-Chernolesskaya culture (S.D. Lisenko 2002, p. 90-91). In the study of Subbotovskoe hillfort there was found some fragments of femoral bones in a dugout 6, pit 2, dig 8 (2 specimens) and in the stratum (2 specimens). In addition, in the dig 8 were found the skull without the lower jaw (pit 2), humerus (pit 9), thigh bone (pit 9), tibia and fibula

(pit 7, dig 3), a fragment of adult skull (pit 12, dig 12). S. Lysenko said that human bones are concentrated in the north-western part of the Bolšoj Gorodok, opposite the pit, and in six cases related to the bell-form pits. Researcher gently suggests a connection of concentration of human remains with the metallurgical production in this part of the fortifications. At the same time, with reference to the ethnographic data, it is possible that it was ancestor's bones, which could remain in the home a certain time (S.D. Lysenko 2004, p. 262–264). Human remains maybe buried in the home before leaving, after which it would be taboo. In the Middle Dnieper, according to the S.D. Lysenko, there are fixed the prevalence of the use of leg bones and skulls for ritual purposes (Subbotov; burial of leg bones with skulls or its fragments in the Malopoloveckij necropolis) (*ibidem*).

In the study of Dikij Sad settlement of Belozerskaya culture in Nikolaev, in the pits (3 / "CK", 8 / "posad") and in the rooms (1 / "CK", 2 / "A") there was found near ten skulls, two lower jaws and a phalanx of person. Among the complexes, there are the most indicative following. In the pit 20 under the stones there were founded three skulls without the lower jaws (K.V. Gorbenko 2007, p. 9). In the room 4 (section "A") under the fireplace, in the pit, there was found a skull on the layer of sand, and under it – the lower jaw of another person. In the room 7 on the floor were found two skulls, fragments of the tortoise shell and "stone phallus", wolverine skull (?) with traces of processing and one human bone (*ibidem* 2000, p. 54). K.V. Gorbenko links these finds with the cult of ancestors (2000, p. 53–54; 2007, p. 9; K.V. Gorbenko A.I. Smirnov 2008, p. 388, 390). In the room 11 of Baj-Kiât settlements in the Northwest Crimea, there was founded two skulls without the lower jaw (V.A. Kolotuhin 2003, p. 46). Skull fragment founded also on Žabotinskoe settlement (M.N. Daragan 2011, p. 84).

There are numerous ethnographic data about the ritual exhibition with using of human bones. Depending on the climate, destruction of soft tissue could occur in the natural environment (for example, leaving the corpse in the water or in the air to complete decomposition), or a body given to food to animals-necrophagia: fish, birds, or dogs (Strabo XI: 11,3).

Bones can be used also as magic items. For example, the sorcerers of the Karnai tribe from Australia used the bones of the hands as a magic item, and the natives from Lepers Island made his arrowheads from the bones of relatives (L.Â. Šternberg 1936, p. 201). Yukagirs reveal shaman's body after his death, clean the bones and give it to relatives, which wear on it whole life as a talisman. Lamaites have beads and belts made from the bones of boys and girls who have not reached puberty (*ibidem* 1936, p. 301). In Northern Buddhism, bones of boys and girls under the age of sixteen are powerful guardian spirits of the monks (L.Â. Šternberg 1936, p. 168). Caribs believed that the deceased soul lives in one of his bones, and such bone taken from the grave, served as an oracle. Peruvians believed the bones of their dead are oracles too (*ibidem* 1936, p. 301, 302). Human bones as an insignia used by the Maya (V.I. Gulâev 1979, p. 160).

Remains of exposure stored and buried not in the closed storage («towers of silence» ossuaries), and had a contact with the ground, so a direct link with the classical Zoroastrian rites cannot be traced. Although, in the "pagan times," the Iranians after the exhibition and destruction of soft tissues, buried it bones in the ground (M. Bojs 1988, p. 24).

The origins of the rite of exposure (exhibiting) and storing of the bones in the territory of a settlement in the forest-steppe aboriginal of Early Iron Age can be found in the traditions of the people of the Late Bronze Age and Pre-Scythian time (Sabatinovskaya, Belozerskaya, Chernoleskaya cultures) of south Eastern Europe.

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Funeral rites of the tribes of Forest zone, the foundation of the economy of which was hunting and fishing in the beginning of the Early Iron Age, but of course, was known the cattle-breeding and simplest forms of agriculture (A.P. Medvedev 1999, p. 46)<sup>3</sup>, fixed faint archaeologically (Gorodetskaya and Dyakovskaya cultures). Funeral constructions<sup>4</sup> known in the settlements of Dyakovskaya culture such as Bereznâki and Savvino-Storoževskoe (P.N. Treťâkov 1941; Ū.A. Krasnov, N.A. Krasnov 1978, p. 140). The funeral rite of this culture is small known that finds parallels with the funeral monuments of farmers of Steppe at Scythian time. On the Bereznâki hillfort there are founded the room in which fixed cremated remains of a 5–6 man (P.N. Treťâkov 1941). Another "House of the Dead" recorded in Moscow during excavations of the ancient settlement at Savvino-Storoževskij monastery. Within the room, there are founded remains of at least 24 burial complexes that were present by accumulations of debris or almost safe vessels and calcified bones (fig. 3). K. Smirnov suggested that these facilities were functioning when the hillforts has been left by the inhabitants (K.A. Smirnov 1990, p. 51–53). This assumption does not contradict the detection of such complexes outside settlements (A. N. Bašen'kin 1996, p. 141). However, at the end of the last century there are recorded the remains of cremations with the inventory which lies in the stratum on the Ratkovskoe hillfort (V. I. Višnevskij, N.A. Kir'anova, M.V. Kozlovskaa 2007, p. 158–165). These complexes belong to the late stage of Dyakovskaya culture (mid. – third quarter of 1<sup>st</sup> millennium AD) (K. V. Svirin 2008, p. 139–140). It is noted that on the Nastas'ino hillfort (7<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC – 1<sup>st</sup>–2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD), in the floors of some builds there are found the remains of cremations committed on the side (A.V. Êngovatova 2004, p. 151–152). Such deepening with the central pillar and with the remains of nine cremations ("House of the Dead"?) recorded in the 70 meters from the shaft of Gorkinskoe hillfort in the Middle Desna (A.V. Grigor'ev 1981, p. 254–255). In addition, in the stratum of early D'âkovo hillforts (Staršee Kaširsko, Mutenkovsoe *et al.*) there are founded some human bones. K.M. Svirin suggests that "the hillfort compulsory is a socially significant organized space, which depending on the circumstances, has different functions – a settlement and production center, a sanctuary, a place of burial of the dead. Mainly in the settlement its utilitarian idea of protection from danger, perhaps, often combined and can be superseded by the abstract idea of a conditional symbolic border separating ourselves from strangers, the development of the undeveloped,

<sup>3</sup> There was fixing obvious regress of generating economy compare to Late Bronze Age in the south of Forest zone. It can be linked to the climate changes at this time.

<sup>4</sup> Principled important is a location such objects on the territory of living hillfort.

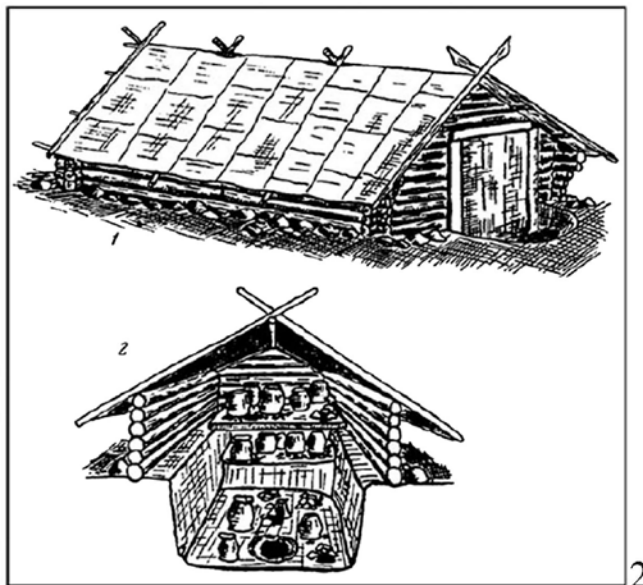
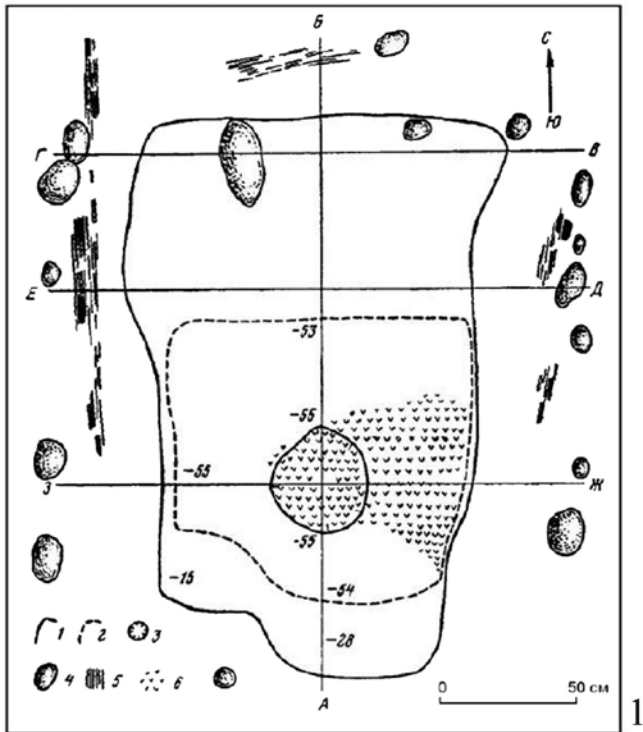


Fig. 3. "House of the Dead" of the Dyakovo culture of the Savvino-Storozhevskoe hillfort (after *Ū.A. Krasnov, N.A. Krasnov 1978*)

Ryc. 3. „Dom zmarłych” kultury diakowskiej z grodziska Savvino-Storozhevskoe (wg *Ū.A. Krasnov, N.A. Krasnov 1978*)

the sacred from the secular” (K.M. Svirin 2008, p. 140). Interestingly that in cultures where most likely the cremations of the dead are dominated (for example, Yukhnovskaya culture), there are separate bones of people are almost unknown in the stratum of hillforts<sup>5</sup>.

<sup>5</sup> Thank D.V. Karavajko for the consultations. Researcher also cannot see the arguments of the existence the exhibition among the people of the Yukhnovskaya culture (D.V. Karavajko 2012, p. 74).

Probably, in the Forest zone there are cremation and storage of remains in the “Houses of the Dead” were prevailed on the territory of the hillforts and outside them<sup>6</sup>, and, possibly, practice the exhibiting of dead bodies.

To the south, the forest-steppe settled population actually continued to exist in conditions of late primitive system with preserved the egalitarian internal structure (A.P. Medvedev 1999, p. 123–124). According to F. Engels’ classification, we can be accurately attributed this tribes to the level of middle-upper stage of barbarism<sup>7</sup> (F. Engel’s 1974, p. 23–27). In the forest-steppe late primitive population with advanced productive economy which based on agriculture and cattle breeding, there are recorded various forms of burials (inhumation, cremation, exhibition, *et al.*).

In the Steppe, especially in 5<sup>th</sup>–4<sup>th</sup> centuries BC, the Scythians with their developed social stratification have almost all burial made as inhumation in special necropolis without post-mortem manipulation with remains. Although, according to S. Bessonova, non-marking rites existed in Scythia in the 8<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC (S.S. Bessonova 1990, p. 17–40). This fact may to explain the singly of burials of women and children at this time. Researchers complemented this by data of Eusebius: “The Scythians did not eat people already ... do not throw out the dead relatives to the dogs and birds of prey, do not eat the meat of their loved dead in their old custom...” (SC. I, 662) and by the popularity of such rites in Dyakovskaya culture. An interesting conclusion is that “all cases of traces of these graves are not associated with Scythian territories, but took place in contact zones, often in the final phase of the existence of this practice”. In addition, the researchers suggest that “in the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC, and probably earlier, in some Bosphorian cities there are lived barbarian groups that had the same burial rites like to the steppe Scythians in 7<sup>th</sup>–5<sup>th</sup> centuries BC” (N.P. Sorokina, N.I. Sudarev 2001, p. 377–381).

There are traced the trend to the predominance of undisturbed burial in special cemeteries outside the settlements, in parallel with the development of society. Noticeable changes in funeral rites in considering of cultures of the population of various natural areas of Eastern Europe from north to south, from the most archaic to the development society of barbaric population. Different ethnicity tribes played an importance role here. This way of research is promising.

Exposure (exhibiting) rites are characteristic of primitive tribes. With the advent of the state and class society, it disappear in a pure form, preserved in a different kind of customs. It is well-known exposure of bones in niches arranged in the walls of Romanesque churches in Catalonia (F. Ar’ès 1992, p. 322) and Mount Athos ritual of burial of monks, where a body for three or five years are buried in the ground, and then dig up the bones, wash up and exhibiting. At the same time, in some skull-cellar it was indicate of the name and dates of life and death of the former owner (S. Berg, H. Rolle, H. Seeman 1981, p. 81–83). There are the bones of people seen as a medical prevention in Europe of the 17<sup>th</sup> century. It was useful to wear them on the neck or sewn into clothing (F. Ar’ès 1992, p. 305).

<sup>6</sup> Burying of the ashes after cremation was no widespread.

<sup>7</sup> There are mass using of iron, that characterizing the upper stage, but there are no iron plough, without that it was no possible a wide agriculture, in particular, to plough of heavy black soil.

It is interestingly conclusion of the researchers that “the tradition of the full preservation of the deceased body steadily transformed into a funeral ceremony, and the partial preservation – in various magical rituals and practices, such as religious cult of holy relics” (A.S. Syrovatko, M.V. Kozlovskaâ 2004, p. 230).

In general, it is can be noting that cult of ancestors and the funeral rite are enough for the continuity of generations in primitive communities. Young people, paying tribute to dead relatives and taking part in funeral ceremonies, held some initiation. In this way, the society integrates and recover themselves (M. Burkert 2000, p. 434).

Translated by V.V. Kotenko

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## **O relacjach między typem grobu a poziomem rozwoju społeczeństwa**

### *Streszczenie*

W artykule zaprezentowano główne cechy obrządku pogrzebowego ludności z leśno-stepowej strefy centralnej i wschodniej Europy w epoce brązu i okresie scytyjskim. Zwyczaje pogrzebowe były bardzo zróżnicowane. Szczątki mogły być deponowane w płaskich bądź kurhanowych grobach, jak również na

terenie osad (w obiektach gospodarczych lub mieszkalnych, w specjalnych mogiłach). W społeczeństwach tych mocno rozwinięty był kult przodków przejawiający się szczególnym poszanowaniem ich szczątków.

