

THREE LARGEST BARROWS OF SCYTHIA. EXPERIENCE OF HISTORICAL PERSONIFICATION

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A range of burial monuments related to the Scythian tsars and dated the 4th century BC has already been studied and reduced to four barrows, the largest burial structures of Eastern Europe: Solokha (the mound volume is 52,000 m³) Alexandropol (77,500 m³) Chertomlyk (82,400 m³) and Oguz (11,700 m³).

Construction of Solokha (the first quarter of the 4th century BC) was separated from the construction of other tombs by an over fifty-year-long gap which may be attributed to the long period of life of tsar Ateas. If we assume that in Solokha lies the body of Ateas' predecessor, it is quite appropriate to expect that he himself might be buried in one of three largest barrows.

It is necessary to determine the earliest barrow and to take into account that the old age of Ateas had to reason absence of side graves (graves of the next of kin). With allowance for that attribute we must exclude

Oguz from pretenders to Ateas' tomb as it has a side grave that makes the mound higher. Oguz exceeds the mounds of Chertomlyk and Alexandropol by the volume corresponding to mounds of barrows of the next social group (Kozel and Tsimbalka), i.e., had it not been for Sevemaya Moguila (Northern Grave) in Oguz, the volume of its mound would left at the level of 80,000 m³. Chertomlyk and Alexandropol have no side graves. Sevemaya Moguila in Chertomlyk, which was previously considered a separate one as the secondary and main entry to the tsar's chamber. The north-eastern grave in Alexandropol contains interment of a dependent person and is a part of a simultaneous burial ensemble. The three largest barrows have similar underground constructions with long *dromoi*. They are single integral systems formed in the initial period of the barrow erection.

An analysis of indirect data shows Chertomlyk as the earliest of three largest barrows. A. Yu. Alexeev has proved asynchronism of its assemblage of things confirming the long life of their owner. It is worth mentioning the inscription "AATAA" on a silver goblet from Chertomlyk as it may be a variant of spelling the tsar's name.

If we treat Chertomlyk as a sepulcher of Ateas, a question arises: to whom does the Central burial construction of Oguz belong (?) Pompeius Throgus informs that Ateas had an heir (IX, 2, 4), i.e., most probably, his son succeeded that after the death in 339 BC Ateas.

The long-term Ateas' rule induced next gerontocratization of the Scythian succession to the throne. It is demonstrated by the chronological proximity of tsars' barrows of the second half of the 4th century BC. It is also proved by the old age of a person buried in Alexandropol.