

**THE ALEXANDROVKA BARROW.
THE BURIAL SITE OF THE USATOVO CULTURE ELITE**

Vladimir PETRENKO, V. BEJLEKCHY

In 1993 we had researched of one barrow which was situated on the plateau nearby Alexandrovka village at Odessa suburb. Its mound 3.5 m high is one of most interesting and informative grave sites dated from the Aeneolithic – Bronze Age of the steppe Black Sea littoral. The grandiose complex of the Usatovo culture in the base of this barrow was bound. The second burials of the Postmariupol's type, the Yamna culture, the Catacomb and the KMK (Poly-ridged Pottery culture) ones were placed in the mound overlapping layers with well-defined fixed stratigraphic sequence.

The 6 graves, one of these a double burial, a shallow ditch with orthostats and two ritual pits are belong to the Usatovo culture. A stone-earthen barrow is constituted of the cairn 2 m high, diameter of 8 m and three massive domed cairns, divided with the successive pourings. Originally, this barrow had its height of 4 m and diameter of 30 – 35 m. Our barrow construction analogous to a burial mound one at Usatovo village (barrow No. I – 11), but is most sizable structure.

Also worthy of attention are the two graves from Alexandrovka barrow: a central one of male and child's burial. These no equal of riches equipment even in the eponymous necropolises of Usatovo. So, besides ceramics, in a central burial the personal adornments had been found: the beads, silver temporal rings, ceremonial horn hammer, ring of the horn, geometrical microliths, stone pestle, a part of sheep's carcass laid upon the wooden dish with a bronze knife alongside. Also a set of bronze artifacts: a massive cast axe (it is the first find of this kind of article from the Usatovo complex), two adzes, knife, chisel and two awls (the Usatovo type) were located here. A rich child's burial funeral gifts were: the ceramic vessels, anthropomorphic statuettes, pair of the silver temporal rings, necklace of the black (jet) and white (coral) beads, which were a string of beads of three lines alternated with the white and black ones, armring of the similar beads and a silver ring on the middle finger of right arm, breast amulet made of alabaster and two anklets of the deer's teeth.

The all features of funeral rites which can be typical for the Usatovo culture are presents in Alexandrovka barrow: the near-rectangular grave pits, crouched skeleton on its left side, the eastern orientation, ritual skull painting, and the funerary equipment in the most burials. At the same time, presence among the grave gifts of the particular valuable artifacts (e.g. axe, some specimens of adornments, and so on) and the monumental architecture, allow to attributes the Alexandrovka barrow to the burial sites by a social elite of highest rank of the Usatovo culture. Through the ceramics typology it is the early site (elder stage of Usatovo according to our division into periods).

At the present time it is possible to assign of the two regions, where burials of the Usatovo nobility are concentrates: the Odessa estuaries region (Usatovo, Alexandrovka) and the Lower Dniester right bank (Purkary, Tudorovo, Sadovoje). The first from these are older than a second group, which represents, on the whole, by the Usatovo burials of junior stage. Nevertheless, the elite burials of these regions have a common and contentedly stable indications (e.g. resembling tomb constructions and rituals of the "chief" burials taking place at different

times in Alexandrovka and Purkary). We can assume on that these barrows belonged to one elite clan, a single "dynasty" with the certain subculture. The other way round, ordinary burial grounds shows the more significant variety and some "mosaic" structure of the ritual features (e.g. Mayaky).

The Usatovo culture society type is determined as the war democracy (it seems to us, the first who did supposed it was I.T.Chernyakov). By our opinion, more adequate conceives the social models of early all-embracing societies (by V.M. Masson). We can define the two strati — the ranked aristocracy and so called plebs through the comparison and analysis of the Usatovo sites. The monumental centers of the Usatovo and Alexandrovka types gives to us reason to suppose about contentedly high degree of the sacral power, its institutions and hereditary character. Also the important showings of the production level are determines these (e.g. the centralized manufacture of ceramics some kinds and types). The eponymous Usatovo in defines structural as the chief centre. However, the Alexandrovka barrow proves on existence of the higher rank centres and accordingly, the higher level of social organization by the Usatovo culture bearers, which weren't of the common chieftaincies totality.