

**THE SOCIAL STRUCTURE OF POPULATION OF BELOZERKA CULTURE  
OF THE NORTH-WESTERN BLACK SEA REGION**

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The burial sites of Belozerk culture are represented by barrows and ground cemeteries. In the territory of the North-Western Black Sea region were found more than 200 burials of Belozerk culture, half of them were found in barrows. It were excavated 6 Belozerskiy barrows, 4 of them belonged to the barrow cemeteries (Kochkovatoye, Vasilievskoye, Taracliya, Divisiya). Under the burial mounds of Belozerskiy barrows were found stone basis, round and rectangular ditches. 17 of Belozerskiy barrows had from 2 to 5 main burials, which were often situated in 1 or 2 lines. The ground burials were situated in barrows in lines stretched in latitudinal

direction all buried were laid on the right side, rarely on the back or prone. The elbows were folded and the hands were near the face. The age and sex of 71 defuncts buried there were determined. There were 36 men, 20 women and 15 children among them. The women were laid mainly on the left side, the men on the right side. Among these buried were 2 pairs of buried with the separate burials of men and women. In these burials the woman had the subordinate position concerning the man.

The traditional set of implements included 1 or 2 vessels, small bronze decorations, glass beads. There were found rich sets of implements in the large graves of complex construction (8 polished vessels, bronze and iron knives, fibulas, bronze and bone decorations, sets of glass and amber beads). There were found such gold decorations as seal-rings, pendants and spiral beads inside 6 graves.

Barrows and ground cemeteries showed the sharp social differentiation of population of Belozerska culture which was at the final stage of primitive relations.

We can mark out 3 social groups: poor group (approximately 30%), the ordinary one (approximately 52%) and the rich one (approximately 18%), found upon system of signs worked out among the barrows of Belozerka culture. Each of those groups of barrows satisfies the definite types of funeral pits, the quantity and structure of objects.

All the burial grounds contain barrows of whole social groups but their correlations are different in each burial ground. For example, rich barrows contain: in the ground cemetery Budurgele - 7%, in the barrow cemetery Vasilyevskoye - 14%, in the ground cemetery Kasackliya - 16%, in the barrow cemetery Kochkovatoye - 28%. It's testifying about rather considerable section of tribal nobility in Belozerka society. The rich barrows distinguish more sharply from other groups. They are disposed in the special place, generally in the centre of the barrows. They are characterized by large dimensions and complicated structure of the funeral constructions. For example, quantity of labor efforts that were spent on the building of the funeral pit of the rich barrows surpasses 7 times the ordinary group and 15-17 times the group of poor barrows.

There was the special hierarchy among rich barrows: we can mark out 2 groups differed by dimensions of pits and mound graves. The highest place in this hierarchy is occupied by barrows in the pits riveted with boards and with 4 round holes, so called "post holes" by the corners. That was the special standard funeral ceremony of nobility of Belozerka society. There are the standard sets of objects in the stock of those barrows. There are the bronze or iron knife-dagger, glass beads, and ceramics. The remains of meat food (part of animals' carcasses) and tracks of the fire are often found in the funeral ceremony. The highest social rank of that society represents the barrows contained, in addition to above stated, the gold jewelries (Stroumock, Kochkovatoye, Shyrokoye, Khadgilar, Pokhrebya).

The appearance of the rich burials which differed in dimensions of burial constructions and present of armors, gold decorations showed the special social status of tribe nobility and the present of the institution of chiefs in the tribes of Belozerka culture society.