

УДК 902/904

## Graphic Materials of Tashtyk Culture in Tepsey Archaeological Complex

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Received 18.10.2014, received in revised form 31.01.2015, accepted 14.02.2015

*Tepsey archaeological complex provides different information about the people who lived in Minusinsk Basin. Tashtyk culture is presented by the unique excavation materials (ceramics, animal bones, bronze and iron rings, buckles, knives, remnants of wooden and birch-bark utensils, horse-heads, mortuary masks etc.). Plaques and images on the hearse give us information about artistic materials of the Tashtyk epoch in Tepsey. Specific artistic materials are astragals of roe-deer with drilled holes carved with signs-images. Petroglyphs of this period were depicted on Tepsey mountain and Tagar mounds (kurgans). They were performed in different techniques. The petroglyphic images of the Tashtyk epoch in Tepsey are varied (elks, deer, oxen, anthropomorphic images etc.). Analysis of these images discovers the new sides of world outlook of their creators and gives the whole picture about this culture.*

*Keywords: Tepsey archaeological complex, petroglyphs, Tashtyk culture.*

*The work was made on assignment № 2014/64 to perform public works in the field of scientific activity.*

*Research area: history.*

Tepsey archaeological complex (Krasnoyarsk Krai) is a unique object for archeologists. Numerous archaeological and artistic materials (ceramics, hardware, wooden things, images on plaques and astragals, rock art and petroglyphs on kurgan stones etc.) are concentrated in this place. Excavations at settlements and particularly burial grounds undertaken by the 1960s – 1970s Krasnoyarsk expedition headed by M. P. Griaznov (Leningrad Division of the Institute of Archaeology of the USSR Academy of Science) revealed the materials of particular importance because of their originality and research

potential. This complex allows retracing the history of Minusinsk Basin development from Afanasyevo to ethnographical time (Griaznov, 1979: 4).

Tashtyk materials represent particular importance. Archaeological materials from this culture were mostly discovered during excavations at Tepsey III, IV, XIX, XX sites. These materials are very different and original. Studies of Tepsey III and IV, where researchers unearthed 4 crypts (2 big and 2 small ones), revealed individual graves, mainly children's, and some sections with commemoratives (Ibid: 89). Burial traditions of earlier epochs are

known to have been rather unified. Since middle Tagar epoch burial rites became more varied for different categories of the dead. Some were buried in vast individual graves topped with complex constructions of soil and stones, others were buried in smaller and less complex tombs, a third category was buried in small family crypts, a fourth – within enclosures of family crypts etc. (Ibid: 142). Crypt cameras of the Tashtyk culture differ in size and complexity. A low log construction was placed into small crypts, the crypts' walls were covered with stone slabs. A high log construction was placed into big crypts, its outer part was tightly pressed to enclosure kerbs. Sometimes benches were built along the walls of large cameras to place the deceased bodies, though in most cases they were put just on the floor. The walls and the floor of the enclosure, the logs and the wooden roof were covered with a few layers of birch-bark (Vadetskaia, 1986: 131–132). The artefacts discovered within burial constructions are: ceramics, animal bones, bronze and iron rings, buckles, knives, remnants of wooden and birch-bark utensils etc. (Griaznov, 1979: 89–142). Excavations unearthed a lot of figures representing horse-heads turned at opposing directions that usually came in pairs (Fig. 1.4). E. B. Vadetskaia suggested that those were male amulets (Vadetskaia, 2009: 143), while D. G. Savinov believed that such artefacts were especially made for burial rites and should be attributed to the characters of the “lower world” (Savinov, 1985: 130).

Mortuary masks are very interesting findings which were discovered in Tashtyk crypts. More than 120 masks survived in barrows, of which more than 30 were partly reconstructed, and are now kept in the Hermitage (Vadetskaia, 2009: 142). Amazing findings are wooden plaques from Crypt 2 in Tepsey III (Griaznov, 1979: 97–104) (Fig. 1.5). The artistic manner and stylistic features of the images on Tepsey miniature

pictures allowed dating a series of similar images on the rocks of Minusinsk Basin as belonging to Tashtyk culture (Pankova, Arkhipov, 2004 et al.). One plaque survived completely and six more – fragmentarily, with poly-figure narrative compositions carved on them. The contours of the figures and some of their parts were cut as thin lines with knife tips. Plaques usually show two scenes: animals' run on the one side and battle scenes on the other. M. P. Griaznov expounded those images as narratives of some events, historic or legendary, but not mythological. “These should have been illustrations to some historic tales stories, legends that were popular at that time, or probably historic songs. It is even more likely that those were just stories of picture representations of the most interesting pieces of folklore or legends” (Griaznov, 1971: 94–106). During excavations of Crypt 2 in Tepsey III, Krasnoyarsk expedition also discovered and image on the hearse in a child's grave. On the side wall of the hearse, the picture of “a warrior” was cut in broad lines, in the same style as the plaques (Fig. 1.18). When publishing the materials of the excavation M. P. Griaznov mentioned this image and attributed it as “a warrior”, but never published it (Griaznov, 1979: 145). The image was published by E. B. Vadetskaia, who described it as follow: “This is an image of a 16.5 cm tall man dressed in a long shirt-dress and wide trousers. A small sack ornamented with 6 lateral lines is hanging on long stripes on his chest. The left arm is bent in the elbow, the hand is not visible, as if he is hiding something behind his back. The right arm is raised straight up, the hand is destroyed”. Unlike M. P. Griaznov, she attributed that image as shaman (Vadetskaia, 2000: 16).

Artistic materials of the Tashtyk epoch in Tepsey archaeological complex are not limited only to plaques and images on the hearse. Specific artistic materials are astragals of roe-deer with drilled holes carved with signs-images, which were

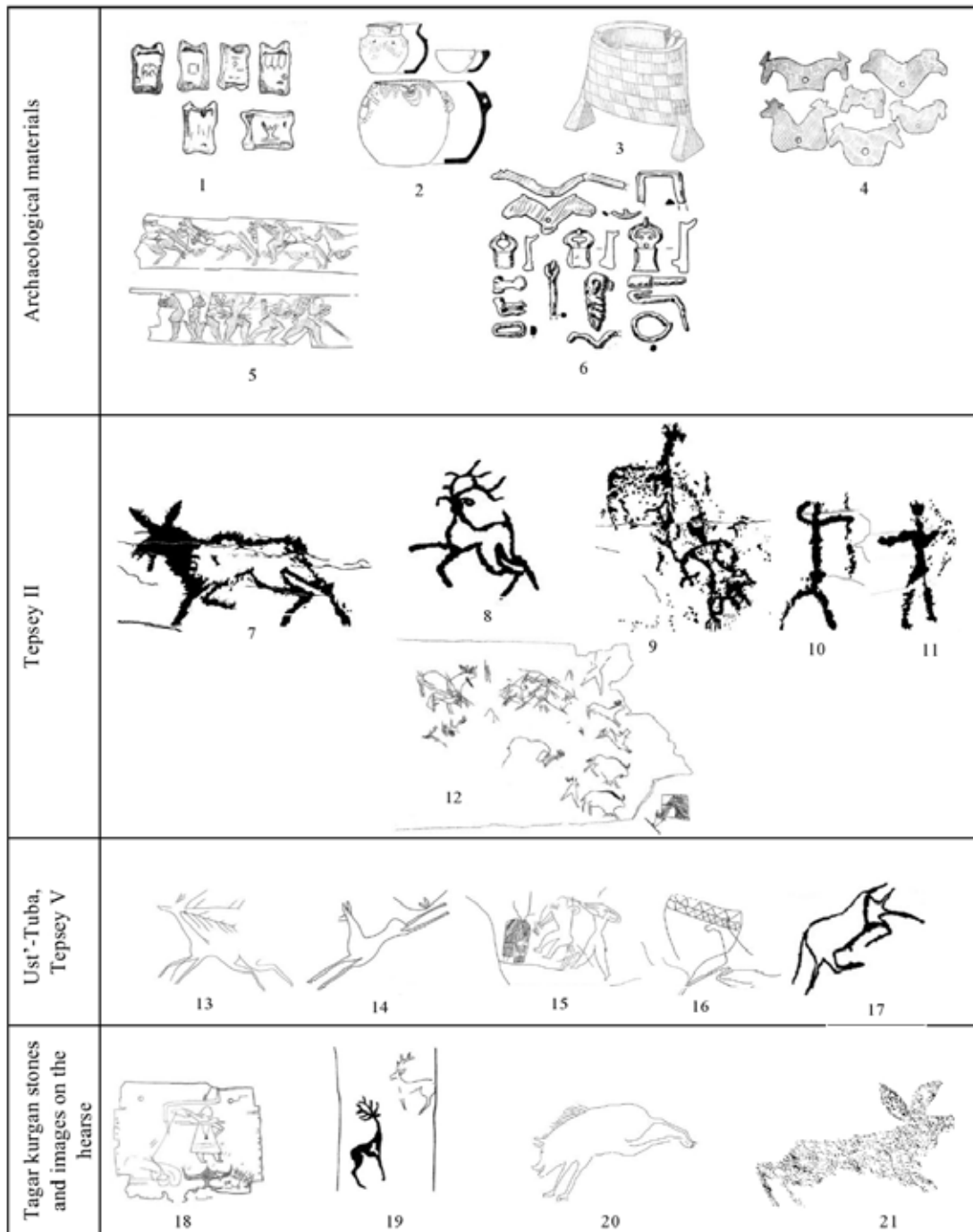


Fig. 1. Materials of the Tashtyk epoch in Tepsey: 1-6(Griaznov, 1979); 7-9 (Blednova, 1995); 10-11 (copies of the author); 12 (Pankova, 2004); 13-16 (Kyzlasov, 2012); 17 (Blednova, 1995); 18 (Vadetskaia, 2000); 19 (Savinov, 1976); 20-21 (copies of the author). The scale is different

frequently discovered in Tashtyk crypts (Fig. 1.1) Griaznov suggested that they were symbolic units of scarifying animals during the funeral feasts, that were later put in the crypt of the deceased person (Griaznov, 1979: 143). It is curious that the signs are found exclusively on astragals of roe-deer, which was proved by the studies by the zoologist N. M. Ermolova (Vadetskaia, 1999: 78). The images on Tepsey astragals were crossed circles, diamonds, schematics images of birds etc. (Ibid: 115). Vadetskaia refers the astragals to ritual artefacts (Ibid: 41). S. V. Kiselev and L. R. Kyzlasov performed comparative analysis of tamgs on astragals from crypts with Turcic signs (Vadetskaia, 1999: 198).

Petroglyphs of Tashtyk culture from rocks and kurgans by Tepsey require special attention. When studying Tepsey rock panels for the first time in the 1960s, Ya. A. Sher noted, that it was rather difficult to connect them with Tashtyk epoch (Sher et al., 1969: 181), but later at different sites of Tepsey, both on the Yenisei and the Tuba sides, some images performed with pecking and engraving techniques were discovered. Those are images of deer discovered at Tepsey II that stylistically correspond to those depicted on the plaques (Blednova et al., 1995, pl. 17 – 19.2, 20.1; 32, Fig. 9 – 1, 2), and images of fighters discovered at the same site (Sovetova, 1995, Fig. 2 – 14). Some similar figures were discovered at Ust'-Tuba V (Blednova et al., 1995, pl. 75 – 29.1, 29.6, 29.7). Researchers also discovered an image of elk performed in the characteristic stylistic manner. Besides, some pictures from kurgan stones, including those of Tashtyk culture, have been published. Thus, in 1976 D. G. Savinov published a number of Tepsey figures, and dated one of the scenes to Tashtyk culture. It was an image of 2 deer with branching horns (one is a pecking, the other – an engraving (Savinov, 1976, Fig. 3.4). He suggested that the engraved deer could have been copied the pecked Tagar deer

next to it (Savinov, 1976: 62). We found that stone in 2014. It is located in Malinovy Catchment a few kilometers from the foot of Tepsey mountain. Speaking of the engravings on rock panels, scientists had believed for a long time that there were no Tashtyk engravings by Tepsey at all. As the source base was enlarged, this opinion was proved false. Tashtyk engravings by Tepsey are mostly known from works of S. V. Pankova and I. L. Kyzlasov. S. V. Pankova copied and published one of the most vivid scenes in the Wolf Catchment (Tepsey II), which contained pictures of animals and people (Pankova, 2004: 52 – 60; Fig. 2). We found fragments of new animal figures during a careful study of the composition (significant magnification in digital photography). I. L. Kyzlasov published the petroglyphs which he had copied at the top of the mountain (Tepsey V). They were figures of animals, fighters, Tashtyk vessels etc. (Kyzlasov, 2012: 103 – 108; Fig. I – IX). S. V. Pankova reports that some engraving were also recorded by N. V. Leontiev at one of Tepsey “teeth” (Pankova, 2004: 52).

During field seasons of 2012-2014, Tepsey squad of Kemerovo State University headed by Prof. O.S. Sovetova discovered some new petroglyphs of Tashtyk epoch. Those are mainly engraved images. A completely new discovery was that of an anthropomorphic image, supposedly a skier or a man in a boat (?) at one of the rock panels of Tepsey II. Unfortunately most engraved images weather-beaten and their recording requires long industrious work. We should note that most Tashtyk petroglyphs are found in the beginning of Wolf Catchment (Tepsey II), with only some of them located in its central part. The latter are images of archers in certain positions (Fig. 1.10, 1.11) and some palimpsests where Tagar figures are covered with Tashtyk images (horses show a peculiarly bent leg) (Fig. 1.9).

New petroglyphs of Tashtyk time were found on stones of Tagar kurgans. Those stones

were frequently used in later epochs as panels for new images, including those of Tashtyk culture (Pankova, 2013: 125-159). We found new petroglyphs after cleaning the stones from lichens predominantly in Tepsey VIII. They are mostly engravings, but some pecked images as well. A figure of the elk was found on one of the sides of Tepsey VIII burial enclosure (Fig. 1.21). It was performed in the pecking technique, similar to the images on the plaques (Griaznov, 1979: 99, Fig. 59). The pecking is very shallow, it can hardly be seen and can only be discerned in certain light. We also discovered some engraved lines on the same stone, but they do not constitute an image yet. We suppose that another very vivid scene can be attributed to Tashtyk epoch. It was engraved on a low stone of Podgornovo stage at the same site and reveals figures of running wild boars (bears? syncretistic animals?) and an ox (Fig. 1.20). They were depicted in Tashtyk style, but the ensemble of images raises some questions as boars were not characteristic of Tashtyk art. It should be noted that the wild boars are depicted with claws and show jaws, which to some extent resembles the figure of the bear from the plaques (Griaznov, 1979: 99, Fig. 59), and the figure of the ox finds analogies with images on kurgan stones by Podkamen' village (Pankova, 2013: Fig.15). Apart from the images described above, some traced lines, not constituting any particular image and requiring further study and work, can also be seen on kurgan stones. Undoubtedly, carving images on kurgan stones had some semantic meaning. It was not in vain that people

depicted images not far from burial sites. It could have been a part of the funeral rite, during which Tashtyks depicted oblatinal or sacred animals. The study of engraving continues and is rather promising, as some of the images have not been attributed properly.

Thus, for a long time only a part of artistic materials of Tashtyk epoch, discovered during archaeological research by Tepsey mountain, was known. Those were wooden plaques, some images on kurgan stones, tamgs on animal astragals, ornaments on ceramics, birch-bark utensils etc. as well as some petroglyphs on rock panels and Tagar kurgan stones. By now, the source base has been enlarged significantly, and new materials emerge every year. Today it has become absolutely evident that Tashtyk people actively used rock panels and kurgan stones, apart from birch-bark, bones and wood, to create the images that were very important for them. Perfecting the methods of recording engravings (taking pictures of the images with high-quality digital cameras and their further computer processing) broadens the researchers' perspective of discovering new Tashtyk images, and thus contributes to a deeper penetration into the Tashtyks' artistic world and worldview. These images are an important historical source that allow not only to reconstructing the image of those who created the them depicted at most significant moments: war, hunt. They also allow penetrating the world of significant zoomorphic characters, that were depicted in scenes both on perishable materials and on rock panels.

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## **Изобразительные материалы таштыкской культуры археологического комплекса Тепсей**

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*Статья посвящена анализу изобразительных материалов таштыкской культуры археологического комплекса Тепсей. Материалы из раскопок этого периода многочисленны и разнообразны (погребальные маски, керамика, металлические и деревянные предметы, кости животных с тамгами и т.д.). Уникальной находкой являются деревянные плакетки, дающие исследователям информацию о таштыкском искусстве и позволяющие датировать таштыкским временем целый ряд наскальных изображений. Изобразительные материалы дополняют петроглифы на скалах и курганных камнях, источниковая база которых с каждым годом пополняется. Петроглифы выполнены различными техническими приемами: выбивка, гравировки. Встречаются изображения оленей, лосей, кабанов, быков, антропоморфных фигур и т.д. Гравированные изображения наиболее многочисленны и требуют дальнейшего более тщательного изучения. В целом изобразительные материалы таштыкской культуры дают нам новую и интересную информацию о населении, проживавшем на территории Минусинской котловины: их быте, культуре и мировоззрении.*

*Ключевые слова: археологический комплекс Тепсей, таштыкская культура, петроглифы.*

*Работа выполнена по заданию № 2014/64 на выполнение государственных работ в сфере научной деятельности.*

*Научная специальность: 07.00.00 – исторические науки.*

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