

THE METAL AGES AND MEDIEVAL PERIOD

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**PAZYRYK BURIAL AT KHANKARINSKY DOL  
IN THE NORTHWESTERN ALTAI\***

*The paper presents the results of studies conducted at the Pazyryk burial mound at the Khankarinsky Dol burial ground in the Northwestern Altai. Based on the burial rite, grave goods and results of radiocarbon analysis, this site is attributed to the 4th–3rd centuries BC. The paper focuses on an analysis of the burial rite and a reconstruction of a unique female headdress which is decorated with zoomorphic appliquéd ornaments and tops. These findings considerably increase our knowledge of the nomadic costume of Central Asia during the Scythian-Saka period.*

**Keywords:** Burial rite, nomads, Pazyryk culture, reconstruction, headdress.

**Introduction**

From 2001 onwards, the Krasnoschekovskiy Archaeological Expedition of Altai State University headed by P.K. Dashkovskiy has been carrying out archaeological investigations in the vicinity of the village of Chineta, Krasnoschekovskiy Region, Altai Territory (Fig. 1). More than 40 sites attributable to the Pazyryk, Turkic, Srostki, and Kyrgyz cultures have been excavated within this archaeological microregion. Upper Paleolithic sites have also been recorded in the area (Dashkovskiy, Kungurov, 2003). The Khankarinsky Dol burial ground is located on the second terrace of the left bank of the Inya River (the left tributary of the Charysh River), 1.2 km to the south–



Fig. 1. Map showing the location of the Khankarinsky Dol burial ground in the Altai Territory.

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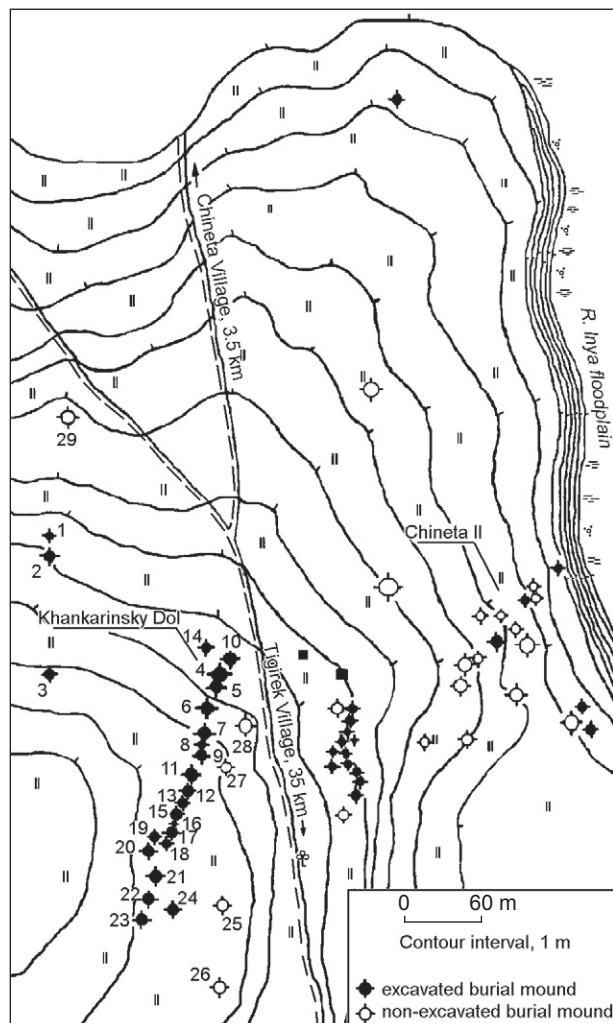


Fig. 2. Plan of the Khankarinsky Dol and Chineta II burial grounds.

southeast of Chineta (Fig. 2). The burial mounds form two chains oriented along a N–S line with minor deviations (Fig. 3). Currently, 29 mounds have been recorded at the site. The actual number of mounds located here may be even greater, but because of the thick humus layer, these can be recognized only by rod probing or through the complete excavation of large areas. This technique was used in the study of the Pazyryk burial mounds. Results of the excavations have been partially published (Dashkovskiy, Tishkin, Tur, 2005; Dashkovskiy, Tishkin, 2006; and others). Burial mound 15 excavated in 2008 is of particular interest.

#### Analysis of the burial rite and grave goods

Burial mound 15 is located in the central part of the necropolis. The mound is encircled by a stone



Fig. 3. The Khankarinsky Dol burial ground after the removal of mounds.



Fig. 4. Mounds 15 and 16.

kripidoma. Its diameter is 14 m from north to south and 14.25 m from east to west. The mound made of one to four stone layers is 0.75 m high. A structure covers its southern portion (Fig. 4).

A sub-rectangular grave pit with its long axis oriented along the WNW–ESE line was discovered under the stone mound. The pit measures  $3.85 \times 3.05 \times 2.4$  m. The grave contained the remains of a wooden construction (possibly a frame) covered with long wooden boards. A floor was located inside the pit.

The skeleton of a 35–40 year old woman\* (Fig. 5) was found on the wooden floor near the southern wall of what is supposed to be a frame. The flexed body was placed in the grave on its right side with the head directed to the east–south–east. The skeleton of a horse was discovered at the northern wall of the frame. The horse was placed lying

\*The sex and age were estimated by S.S. Tur.

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