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**HORSE BITS AND HARNESS OF THE HUNS AND TURKIC PEOPLES  
OF THE URAL-KAZAKHSTAN STEPPES**

The period of the Huns and early Turkic peoples is a rather difficult stage in the history of the population of the steppes of Western Asia and East Europe. Our understanding of relevant cultural genesis processes is very complicated. It is explained by a comparatively small number and cultural variety of nomadic complexes of the Volga and Ural-Kazakhstan steppes in the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries. There are two crucial problems in present-day studies of the nomads of the late antiquity and Early Middle Ages. They are connected with the fact that modern authors do not have at their disposal any precise representations of cultural genesis and transition from the Sarmatian to the Hun, and from the Hun to the Turkic epochs. As a result, the Hun epoch is visible in only a limited number of monuments (simple barrows and non-barrow tombs with northern orientation of skeletons, coffins, skulls and deformation of skulls; barrows and tombs with horses or skin horses and east orientation of skeletons; barrows-fires, probably evidence of cremation<sup>1</sup>). Besides, the early Turkic monuments have often disappeared without trace or remain scattered over the immense area of the Central Eurasian Steppe.

The historical reconstruction which was undertaken by the author of the present paper in the last years<sup>2</sup> will allow scholars to reach a certain conceptual understanding of historical and cultural processes regarding the Huns and early Turkic peoples living within the limits of the Ural-Kazakhstan and Volga-Don steppes. The basic components of this concept are as follows:

- There is an indissoluble historical and cultural communication between the Huns of Central Asia and European Huns;

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<sup>1</sup> I. P. Zasetkaya, *Nekotorye itogi izucheniya khronologii kochevnikov gunnskoj epokhi v yuzhnorusskikh stepyakh* „Arkheologicheskiy Sbornik Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha”, vol. 27, 1986. Leningrad 1986; I. Zasetkaya, *Kul'tura kochevnikov yuzhnorusskikh stepey v gunnskuu epohu konec IV-V vv.*, 1994.

<sup>2</sup> S. G. Botalov, S. Y. Gutsalov, *Gunno-sarmaty uralo-kazakhstanskikh stepey*, Chelabinsk 2000; S. G. Botalov, *Pozdnaya drevnost' i srednevekov'ye* [in:] *Drevnaya istoriya Yuzhnogo Zaurala*, IV, Chelabinsk 2000.

- The late Sarmatian stage of the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries was connected with the period of Hun-Sarmatian cultural genesis in the huge territory from the Irtish to the Danube;

- The late Sarmatian historical and cultural transformations began in the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes, where unexpectedly, at the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century, there appeared monuments of Hun-Sarmatian culture;

- The monuments of Huns-Sarmatians were tombs of men-horsemen and women with characteristic structure of the bannerol ritual and material marking the late Sarmatian epoch (individual barrows, with barrow-crypts, northern orientation, presence of coffins and deformation of skulls, characteristic warfare artifacts: swords without crosses but with round sections, decorative onions and bronze boilers, mirrors - suspension brackets and Chinese mirrors, characteristic ceramics);

- Further a variety of migrations of Huns-Sarmatians in the west of Eastern Europe (gradual migrations and single roads) can be observed;

- Gradually, in different territories, the Sarmatian features become deformed and disappear and new Huns-Sarmatians appear. The cultural innovations reach the Steppe and woodland of the Danube zone in the 3<sup>rd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The creation of a uniform Hun union, based on the Hun-Sarmatian nomadic population of Eastern Europe, took place during the final cultural leveling and ethnopolitical consolidation under the leading eastern clans, living in the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes up to second half of the 4<sup>th</sup> century.

The final, brightest and shortest stage falls on the actual Hun period of the end of the 4<sup>th</sup>-the middle of the 5<sup>th</sup> centuries AD. Carefully examined, the monuments of this stage bear the basic features of the Hun-Sarmatian style. However, some of them already show some traces of non-Hun cultural innovations. Their orientation changes and the northern sector is gradually replaced by a north-eastern or eastern section. Obviously, some new cultural components of the ritual are visible in the tomb, the skin or the whole skeleton.

The early Turkic epoch of Eastern Europe begins in the second half of the 5<sup>th</sup> century with the penetration

of the Northern Caucasus and the Black Sea by a part of the Turkic-Telesc tribes, who formed the basis of a Proto-Bulgarian population (the Saveers, Utreigurs, Cutrigurs)<sup>3</sup>. Most probably, the following complexes can be attributed to them: Belyus, Engels (barrow 36, tomb 2), Selenokumsk, Bereznovka (barrow III, tomb 1), Kubey. The tombs had eastern orientation, horses or skins of horses, and also barrow-fires: Novogrigorievra (barrows VII-IX), Ostrogolovka (18, 19), Rovnoe (barrows 42, 47); Visokoe (E7), Pokrovsk (barrows 2, 3, 11), Borodaevka (barrow 5) and others.

The tradition of barrow-fires underwent a particularly bright development in the complexes of the so-called "selentash type" in the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes. They are submitted barrows with a "moustache" or ridges. Both the stone roads and fencings show traces of fire. In a number of cases, cremation remnants, burial places of horses, their skins or breadboard models, as well as warfare material, located on an ancient surface inside the paving and fencing, were found.

There are more than 300 complexes, and also some less numerous tombs with eastern orientation, skins or skeletons of horses (Egis-Koytas, Chilicte, Semiozerno). They are monuments of the early Turkic peoples of the 5<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup>-century stage of the Ural-Kazakhstan steppes.

The chronology of the Huns and early Turkic peoples includes the following stages:

1. Huns-Sarmatians: the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries ;
2. Huns: the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> – the mid-5<sup>th</sup> centuries;
3. Early Turkic peoples (post-Huns): the end of the 5<sup>th</sup> – the 8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

The second name of the last stage, post-Huns, results from the fact that after part of the Huns had left Central Europe, Turkic peoples arrived in the region. Part of the Hun-Sarmatian population stayed near the territories where they used to live before the migration and mixed with the local population, leaving specific monuments continuing to bear features of Hun historical and cultural complexes. Such monuments are to be found in Malkovo and Bairamgulovo, Southern Transural; in Southern Ural - barrows of the Turbasle culture; and in Kama. There are cemeteries in Kominternovskiy and, finally, in Dagestan – monuments connected with the population of Kaspiy Huns.

The character of the Huns-Turkic cultural transformation is to be seen not only in a cardinal change of the funeral ritual, but also in a change of war goods.

The early Turkic epoch was marked by the occurrence of new kinds of war goods, which originated in opposition to the Huns and were connected with other territories of occurrence.

In the present paper, we shall try to look for evidence of a transition from the Hun to the Turkic epoch, using the example of horse harness.

The reconstruction is based on the finds of fragments of Hun-Turkic riding harness, which are mostly metal details of the bridle found in burials. The presence of horse harness in a tomb has been assumed to be characteristic of a Hun complex. It distinguishes them from the Turkic tradition, where a horse or its skin was buried. Skeletons of horses or their bones in Turkic tombs reflect the same cult function in a different way - in his future life a horseman should be accompanied by a fast horse.

As a rule, in Hun-Sarmatian and Hun barrows, the remains of horse harness are to be found lying at the feet of the deceased person, near one of the walls of the hole. Parts of a bridle were placed near the head only in one case (Sheepovo, barrow 3).

The characteristic complex artifacts, parts of Hun-Sarmatian and Hun bridles are made from sets of straps. Improved bridle sets consisting of iron rings are observed. They required Hun fished, overlays, rectangular in form, of metal ends for mobile fastenings of fished, tips of Leo straps, overlays - clips with rings, suspension brackets, spherical and figured overlays with fixing pins for fastenings of cross belts, and also buckles with segmented frameworks and mobile dashboards of various forms (rectangular, oval, figured, segmented etc.), as well as large segments or rectangular iron saddle-girth buckles. Parts of harness ornamentation are made of metal (bronze, silver, bronze or iron with gold boil). They are large, round or rhomboidal in shape. Decorations overlaid with glass or tanga are known from forehead and cheek straps, and rectangular or figurative overlays and falars were used in breast straps and others.

Reconstruction of Hun riding harness on the basis of the functional purpose of the various metal details found in Hun-Sarmatian and late Sarmatian horsemen's tombs dating from the 2<sup>nd</sup>-4<sup>th</sup> centuries, leads us to believe that in the 2<sup>nd</sup> century AD, in the Eurasian Steppe, there was an essentially new type of horse harness. Its characteristic feature becomes the "trensel" bridle, made from a set of fished rings and a halter. The number of small metal buckles and suspension brackets with strap tips suggests that the halter included a belt bridge for the nose and forehead and two cheek straps decorated with spherical or prismatic round overlays.

Besides, the presence of large, rectangular overlays and buckles, which in tombs were usually placed some distance from the parts of the bridle, may mean that

<sup>3</sup> S. G. Klyashtorniy, D. G. Savinov, *Stepnye imperii Eurazii*, Sankt-Petersburg 1994, p. 63; A. B. Gadlo, *Etnicheskaya istoriya Severnogo Kavkaza IV-X vv.*, Leningrad 1979, pp. 58-59; D. M. Iskhakov, I. L. Izmailov, *Etnopoliticheskaya istoriya tatar*, Kazan' 2000, pp. 14-15.

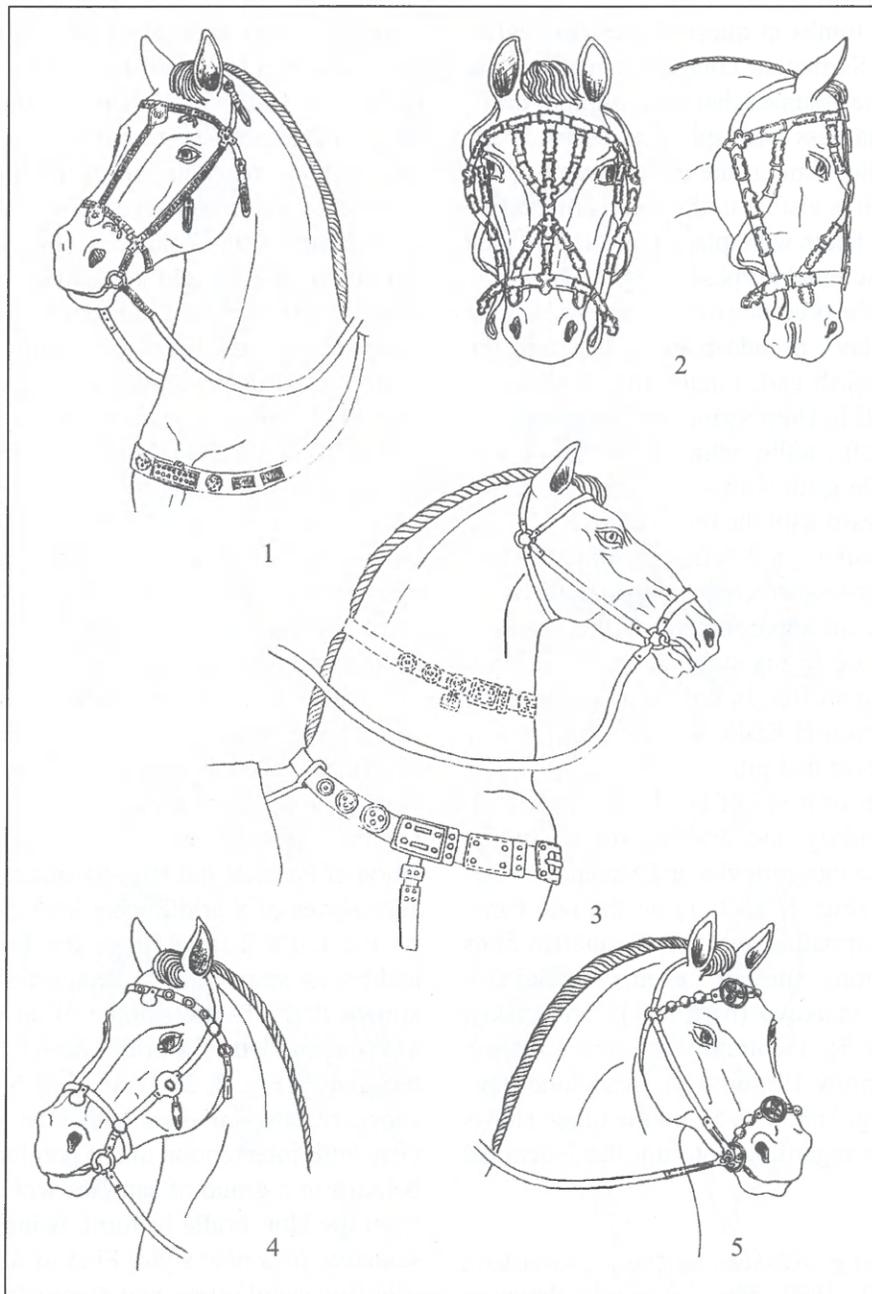


Fig.1. Reconstruction of a horses bit dating from Hun-Sarmatian and Turkic times  
 1 – Sheepovo 3, Vladimirovka; 2 – Pokrovka 2, barrow 9; 3 – Bairamgulovo, barrow 2; 4 – Tsentralniy, barrow 16, tomb 8 (reconstruction by S.I. Besuglov).

they were the breast strap ornamentation. In most cases, in a complete set, the central overlay was a pseudo-buckle with two horizontal parallel openings (Bairamgulovo, barrow 2; Tselinniy; Pokrovka 2, barrow 9). Probably, it is a part of a fastening connecting the breast strap to the saddle-girths. The breast strap was decorated with rectangular or round figural buckles (Pokrovka, barrow 2, Tselinniy I, barrow 6; Bairamgulovo, barrow 2; Lebedevka VI, p.2, 3; 1, 3). In one case (Pokrovka 2, barrow 9) on the breast strap, the figural rectangular overlays with fish clines and two parts of the horse's chest had a square falara with tangs visible as marks. All of them were made from wood and fitted

with gold foil<sup>4</sup> (Fig. 1: 2). Round, metal falars covered in gold were found in late Sarmatian tombs of horsemen dating back to the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> centuries, discovered in the Don region (Kobyakovo, barrow 5; Tsentralniy VI, barrow 16)<sup>5</sup>. In spite of the fact that the forms of

<sup>4</sup> L. T. Yablonskiy, J. Davis-Kimball, Y. V. Demidenko, *Excavations of Pokrovka 1 and Pokrovka 2 barrow burial complexes in 1994. The mounds of the left bank of the Ilek river*, M. – P. 1995, pp. 44-45, Fig. 40-70.

<sup>5</sup> V. K. Guguev, S. I. Besuglov, *Vsadnicheskiye pogrebeniya pervykh vekov nashey ery iz kurgannogo*

bridles found in the tombs in question are identical to the ones from Hun-Sarmatian complexes in Ural and Kazakhstan, it may be assumed that the custom of decorating smart horse harness with spherical falars developed here at an earlier time in the environment of the Alan population, as it is visible in the reconstruction by S. Besuglov<sup>6</sup>. These falars were placed on straps which did not have any functional purposes (Fig. 1: 4).

Most probably, the presence of the breast strap with a characteristic overlay – pseudo-buckles, fastening the strap to the saddle-girth and, finally, the presence of the saddle-girth itself in Hun-Sarmatian harness means the presence of a soft saddle, which from below was attached to the saddle-girth with a strap and prevented from slipping backward with the breast strap.

Thus, the functional and fixing qualities of the type of bridle and harness which developed in the Hun-Sarmatian epoch in the environment of the nomadic population, were close to the stage of the occurrence of a rigid saddle and stirrup. In our opinion, the basic components of the trensel bridle did not undergo any fundamental changes at that time.

The comparison of a set of bridles reconstructed using the 5th-6th-century and 8th-9th-century material coming from the Novogrigorievka and Sheepovo (barrow 3) complexes<sup>7</sup> (Fig. 1: 1; 2: 1) on the one hand, and both the Hun-Sarmatian and Late Sarmatian finds from the 2nd-5th-century sites in Lebedevka, Bairamgulovo (barrow 2), Malkovo (barrow 1), Drugenskiy, Kobyakovo (barrow 5), Tsentralniy (barrow 16, tomb 8), Sladkovskiy (barrow 19, tomb 1), Vesochino (barrow 12, tomb 1)<sup>8</sup> (Fig. 1: 3; 2: 3-5), on the other, shows that they are similar regarding not only the functional

features of a given kind of bridle, but their traditional ornamentation (overlaid foreheads, overlays and clips rectangular or round in shape, arranged along or across the straps, as well as strap tips). A specific similarity is seen in the ornamentation of the Sheepovo bridle and a set of overlays and accessories from Hun-Sarmatian tomb 2 barrow 9 in Pokrovka<sup>9</sup> (Fig. 1: 1, 2). A combination of rectangular and large square overlays in an imprinted pattern incised in bronze and fitted with gold is observed here too. Finally, one more example of a richly decorated horse bridle with a polychrome of gold overlays found in the barrow in Chaoshe (north-western part of the Black Sea) should be quoted here. It belongs to the Late Sarmatian culture and is dated to the turn of the 3rd century AD<sup>10</sup>. In the After-Hun - Early Turkic epoch, special components of horse harness were in use. Judging by the finds of Early Turkic bridles, it had a number of characteristics. First, the application of fittings and ornamentation on bridle straps in the form of small, metal buckles, overlays, clips and strap tips seems to be typical of the Turkic-Teles population of the Altai. In the majority of cases, saddle-girth buckles, bone psalies, bone chumbur blocks and bastenings for hobbles<sup>11</sup> are used. It reflects the traditions of the population of Paserek and Hun-Sarmatian times, when bone accessories of a bridle were known at the early stage. At the Early Turkic stage, the bridle ornamentation and breast straps almost disappear. There is only one known Early Turkic sample of an ornamented bridle, a reconstruction of a bridle from Chater tomb VI-VII, the Altai<sup>12</sup> (Fig. 2: 2). Despite its bronze overlays (anchors, rectangular ones with interception, rectangular ones with interception and a pointed basis), this bridle belongs to a group of samples which are quite distinct from the Hun bridle in form, being most likely representative of a new style. First of all, rigid saddles are used and saddle-trees and pommels are decorated with

*nekropolya Kobyakova gorodishcha na Donu*, „Sovetskaya Arkheologiya”, № 2, 1990, Fig. 2,3; S. I. Besuglov, *Pozndesarmatskoye pogrebeniye znatnogo voina v stepnom Podon'ye*, „Sovetskaya Arkheologiya”, № 4, 1988, Fig. 2-5.

<sup>6</sup> S. I. Besuglov, op.cit., Fig. 5.

<sup>7</sup> I. P. Zasetkaya, *Kul'tura kochevnikov...*, Fig. 7, 8.

<sup>8</sup> M. G. Moshkova, *Pozdesarmatskaya kul'tura* [in:] *Stepi evropeyskoy chasti SSSR v skifo-sarmatskoye vremya*, Moskva 1989, Fig. 81,43; S. G. Botalov, N. A. Polushkin, *Gunno-sarmatskiye pamyatniki Yuzhnogo Zaural'ya III-V vv.*, [in:] *Novoye v arkheologii Yuzhnogo Urala*, Chelabinsk 1996, p. 187, Fig.4; p. 191, Fig.7; V. K. Guguev, S. I. Besuglov, op cit., Fig. 2; S. I. Besuglov, *Pozndesarmatskoye pogrebeniye...*, Fig. 2:16, 19, 20-25; 3, 4, 5; L. G. Shepko, *Pozndesarmatskiye kurgany v Severnom Priazov'ye*, „Sovetskaya Arkheologiya”, № 4, 1987, Fig 2; V. E. Maksimenko, S. I. Besuglov, *Pozndesarmatskoye pogrebeniya v kurganach na reke Bystroy*, „Sovetskaya Arkheologiya”, № 1, 1987, Fig. 2; S. I. Besuglov, *Voinskoye pozndesarmatskoye pogrebeniye bliz Azova*, [in:] *Istoriko-arkheologicheskiye issledovaniya na Nizhnem Donu v 1994 g.*, 14, 1997, Fig. 1: 2-5; 2: 9-12; 15-21.

<sup>9</sup> L. T. Yablonskiy, J. Davis-Kimball, Y. V. Demidenko, *Excavations of Pokrovka 1 and Pokrovka 2 barrow burial complexes in 1994. The mounds of the left bank of the Ilek river*, M. – P. 1995, pp. 44-45, Fig. 64-70.

<sup>10</sup> M. M. Fokeev, *Tipy sarmatskikh mogilnikov v Budzhakskoy stepi*, [in:] *Issledovaniya no arkheologiy Severo-Zapadnogo Prichernomor'ya*, Kiyev 1986, p. 160; M. M. Fokeev, *Pamyatniki pervykh vekov nashey ery v Budzhaksoy stepi* [in:] *Dnestro-Dunayskoye mezhdureche v I – nach. II tys. n. e.*, Kiyev 1987, p. 21.

<sup>11</sup> V. A. Mogilnikov, *Tyurki* [in:] *Stepi Evraziy v epokhu srednevekov'ya*, Moskva 1981, Fig. 19:17-19, 25, 26; B. B. Ovchinnikova, *Tyurkskiye drevnosti Sayano-Atalya v VI-X vv.*, Sverdlovsk 1990, Fig. 43, 48, 50, 51.

<sup>12</sup> Y. A. Khudyakov, V. A. Kocheev, *Chutyrskaya mumiya* [in:] *Arkheologiya, etnografiya i antropologiya Evraziy*, № 3. Novosibirsk 2000, pp. 113-114, Fig. 3,4.

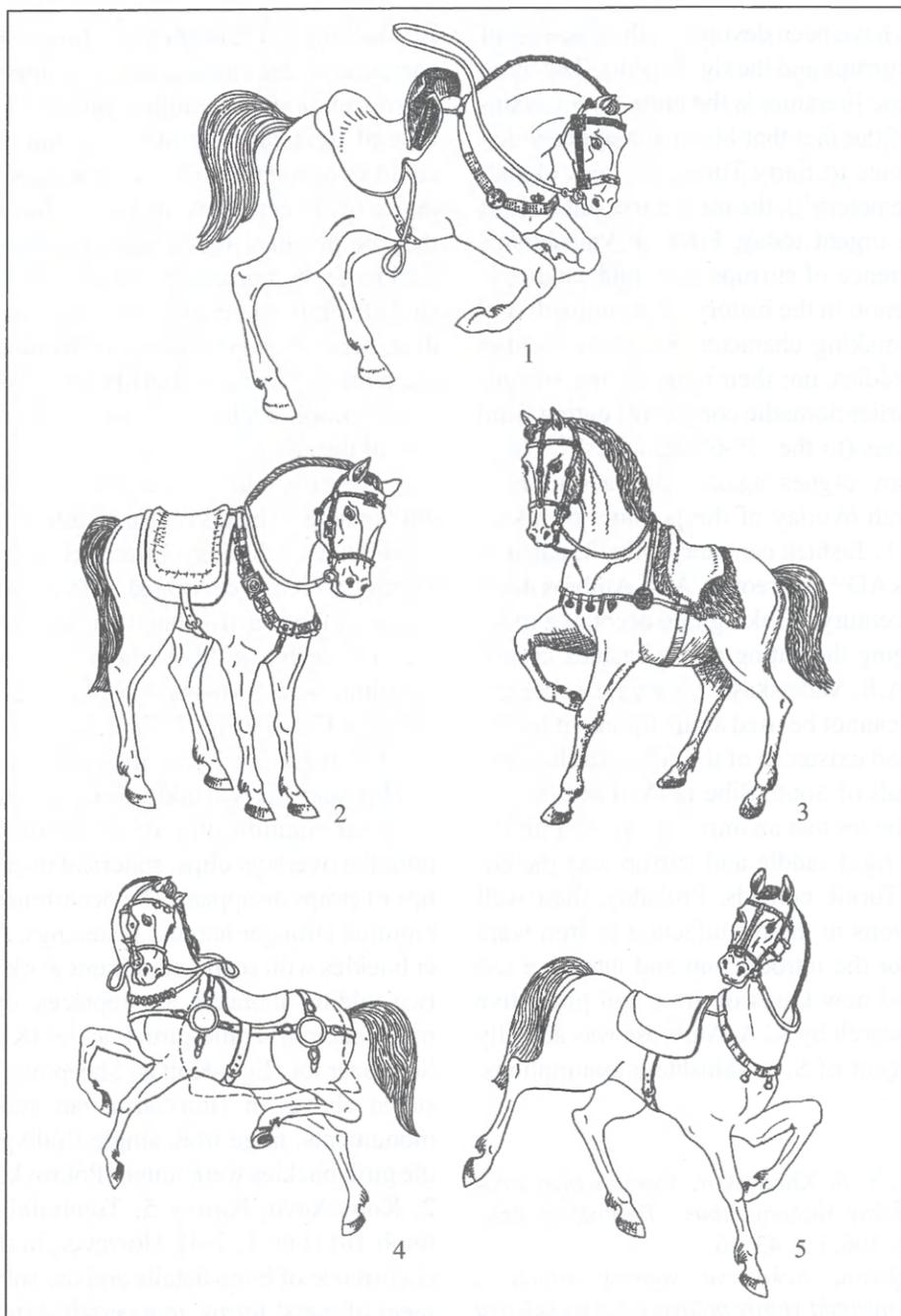


Fig.2. Reconstruction of parts of a horse bit dating from Hun-Sarmatian and Turkic times. 1 – Novogrigorievka, barrows VII-IX (reconstruction by I.P. Zasetzkaya with additions by the author); 2, 3 – Chater tomb (reconstruction by Y.S. Hudyakov, B.A. Kocheev); 3, 5 – Lebedevka (reconstruction by M.G. Moshkova); 4 – Drugenskyi.

gold overlays. The characteristic parts of ornamentation include round or rectangular overlays with an image of a mask (typically with Mongolian features)<sup>13</sup>. Most probably, the source and the territories of the formation of these cultural innovations are areas of the early Turkic population (the Altai, Minus, Eastern Turkestan).

The earliest rigid saddles in the nomadic environment are found in the Altai, in the kudearga of Turkic complexes dating back to the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, and also in Minus, in Tashtek crypts and in the images of Tashtek and early Turkic horsemen of Southern Siberia<sup>14</sup>.

<sup>13</sup> I. P. Zasetzkaya, *Kul'tura kochevnikov...*, Tabl. 2, 7, 10 concern; 4: 14, 15; 6: 3, 4; 7: 3, 9; 19: 13-16; 22: 15; 30: 2; 31: 5, 16; 32: 9; 35: 9, 13; 41: 48; 47: 9.

<sup>14</sup> A. A. Gavrilova, *Mogilnik Kudyrge kak istochnik po istoriy altayskikh plemen*, Moskva-Leningrad 1965, pp. 84-85, Fig. 17, Tabl. XV, 12; S. V. Kisilev, *Drevnaya istoriya Yuzhnoy Sibiri*, „Materialy i issledovaniya po arkheologii SSSR”,

A lot of works have been devoted to the question of the occurrence of stirrups and the rigid saddle. The basic example of the home literature is the book by S.I. Vainshtein<sup>15</sup>. In spite of the fact that his vision appears disputable (the reference to Early Turkic samples of saddles from Kokal cemetery<sup>16</sup>), the most basic rules of his researches remain urgent today. First, in Vainshtein's opinion, the occurrence of stirrups and rigid saddles is a historic phenomenon in the history of the nomads and reveals an epoch-making character. Secondly, neither samples of rigid saddles, nor their remains, nor stirrups are known from earlier nomadic complexes dating from Hun-Sarmatian times (to the 5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries)<sup>17</sup>. However, L.R. Keslasov argues against this assumption, pointing to the birch overlay of the pommel of a saddle found in crypt 1, Tashtek cemetery Uibat I, dated to the 1<sup>st</sup>-2<sup>nd</sup> centuries AD<sup>18</sup>. Moreover, A.K. Ambros dates this find to the 7<sup>th</sup> century<sup>19</sup>. Taking into account a modern line and changing the dating of the Tashtek crypts, as in the work by A.B. Vadetskaya<sup>20</sup>, we tend to believe that the Uibat find cannot be used as an argument for the early occurrence and existence of the rigid saddle in the world of the nomads of South Siberia. And last but not least, Vainstein believes that an important reason for the occurrence of the rigid saddle and stirrup was the environment of the Turkic nomads. Probably, their well known high traditions in the manufacture of iron were the basic reason for the introduction and intensive use of iron stirrups and new kinds of arms and protective armour<sup>21</sup>. Later research by K. A. Ambrose was actually a logical development of S. I. Vainshtein assumptions.

№ 9, 1951, p. 434; Y. S. Khudyakov, *Vooruzheniye srednevekovykh kochevnikov Yuzhnoy Sibiri i Tsentralnoy Azii*, Novosibirsk 1986, p. 106, Fig. 43, 46.

<sup>15</sup> S. I. Vainshtein, *Nekotorye voprosy istorii...*; S. I. Vainshtein, *Pamyatniki vtoroy poloviny I tysecheletiya v Zapadnoy Tuve*, [in:] *Trudy Tuvinskoy kompleksnoy arkheologicheskoy i etnograficheskoy ekspeditsiy v Zapadnoy Tuve*, Moskva-Leningrad 1966; S. I. Vainshtein, *Istoricheskaya etnografiya tuvintsev*, Moskva 1972.

<sup>16</sup> A.K. Ambroz, *Stremenaisedlarannegosrednevekov'ya kak khronologicheskyy pokazatel' (IV-VIII vv.)*, „Sovetskaya Arkheologiya”, № 4 (1973), p. 94; L. R. Kyzlasov, *Drevnaya Tuva*, Moskva 1979, p. 135.

<sup>17</sup> S. I. Vainshtein, *Nekotorye voprosy...*, pp. 64-72.

<sup>18</sup> L. R. Kyzlasov, *Tuva v period. Tyurskogo kaganata (VI-VIII vv.)*, „Vestnik MGU”, ser. IX, Istoriya, № 1 (1960), p. 140; L. R. Kyzlasov, *Drevnaya Tuva*, Moskva 1979, pp. 135-138.

<sup>19</sup> A. K. Ambroz, op. cit., Fig. 2, 21.

<sup>20</sup> E. B. Vadetskaya, *Tashtyksaya kul'tura*, Sankt-Peterburg 1999.

<sup>21</sup> S. I. Vainshtein, *Nekotorye voprosy istorii drevneyturskoy kul'tury*, „Sovetskaya Etnografiya”, № 3, 1966, pp. 66, 74.

By showing Far Eastern and Chinese sources of the occurrence of the rigid saddle and metal stirrups in the 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> centuries, the author points to the fact that the type of rigid saddle which is found in nomadic tombs could have been introduced in North-Chinese provinces in the 6<sup>th</sup>-7<sup>th</sup> centuries, in Vay or Tan times<sup>22</sup>. Hence, it may be assumed that a rigid saddle was first used by Turkic heavy horsemen. Most probably, from this period onwards, there appeared a tradition that whole saddles, separate bones or metal overlays were placed in the tombs of nomads. In B.B. Ovchinnikova's opinion, this tradition is characteristics of the nomadic population of the Altai Mountains<sup>23</sup>.

The early custom of decorating the bridle of a horse with images of heads is also visible in the Altai material. A well known find is a bridle set from the first Paserek barrow, which is decorated with wooden overlays with images of bearded Mongolian faces<sup>24</sup>. Similar images are to be seen in gold overlays in after-Hun monuments (Vladimirovka, Voshod, Novogrigorievra, Pokrovsk, barrows 17, 18) (Fig. 2: 1).

On the other hand, the changes in horse harness in Hun and Early Turkic times go in the direction of a greater simplification of details of bridle ornamentation: the overlays-clips, spherical overlays, and pendant tips of straps disappear. The occurrence of a rigid saddle required stronger harness fastenings. As a result, weaker buckles with segmented framework and mobile, easy, two-folding thoraxes are replaced by larger bone or metal integral saddle-girth buckles (Kannatas, Borovoe, Semiozerno, Egis-Koitas, Sheepovo, Arkaim). As was stated above, in Hun-Sarmatian and Late Sarmatian monuments, large iron, single-folding, segmented saddle girth buckles were found (Pokrovka, barrow 9, tomb. 2; Kobyakovo, barrow 5; Tsentralniy VI, barrow 16, tomb 18) (Fig. 1: 2-4). However, in the beginning, the occurrence of bone details and the subsequent development of metal forms, to a certain extent, suggests Altai influences on this line of development of horse harness, particularly where the basic forms of bone bridle accessories of the earliest period are concerned. The occurrence of specific subjects of ornamentation, decorative onions and saddle-trees of a rigid saddle, and finally, the occurrence of metal stirrups resulted in final additions to the horseback harness of the Steppe nomads in the Early Turkic period.

Thus, during the Hun-Sarmatian and Hun stage, which lasted from the 2<sup>nd</sup> to the mid-5<sup>th</sup> century, and in the After-Hun and Early Turkic period, the end of the 5<sup>th</sup>- the

<sup>22</sup> A. K. Ambroz, op. cit., pp. 96-97.

<sup>23</sup> B. B. Ovchinnikova, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>24</sup> S. G. Klyashtorniy, D. G. Savinov, op. cit., pp. 170-171.

8<sup>th</sup> centuries, some epoch-making, evolutionary changes in horse harness occurred. During the former stage, the trenzel bridle with iron ring bits and a system of fastening the saddle including the saddle-girth and breast straps appeared and were widely introduced. The latter stage was marked by the occurrence of a rigid saddle with characteristic decorative overlays with onions,

saddle trees, large gold and silver rectangular overlays with polychromes with images of Mongolian faces or a pattern. In the environment of the nomads of Eurasia, the final innovation of the introduction of horse harness with a rigid saddle was the appearance of metal stirrups. The earliest finds come from the Ural-Kazakhstan region and have been dated to the 7<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> centuries.

