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**LIFE IN MOTION: NOMADIC CART CULTURE
AND CART BURIALS OF THE GOLDEN HORDE
(A CASE STUDY FROM BOLSHOI TSARYN I, KALMYKIA)¹**

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This article addresses the topic of nomadic cart culture in the Eurasian Steppe, which developed over the long term and reached its apex with the advent of the imperial Mongols. A range of narrative, archaeological, and visual sources are employed in order to examine how the carts were used, adapted, technologically improved, and ritualized in lives and burials of the imperial Mongol and specifically the Golden Horde nomads. A unique Golden Horde burial with ornamented cart parts from Kalmykia is analyzed. It is argued that this example reveals the inclusivity of the cart culture in Ulus Jochi whereby a wide use of personal carts by nomads of different ages, genders, and states of health encouraged their active participation in the mobile social life of this Steppe Empire.

Keywords: archaeology, Eurasian Nomads, Golden Horde, Burial Carts; Kalmykia.

The unprecedented transcontinental expansion of the Mongol Empire in the 13th c. resulted in the emergence of a new world order that integrated a diverse cultural matrix of nomadic and sedentary communities across Eurasia and created a prosperous economic environment under the political aegis of the Chinggisids. Mobility and transport played an important role in the success of that empire and became a feature of identity for the Mongols and their nomadic elite. When the empire was partitioned into four political entities – one of which was the Golden Horde (Ulus Jochi) – economic and diplomatic connectivity among different parts was maintained (Qui, 2018, p. 43). In Ulus Jochi, where the steppe nomads remained the “main ‘titular’ population” (Bocharov, Yavorskaya, 2019, p. 184), mobility predominated at a ruler’s court, in the military organization, in trade markets, and in nomads’ everyday lives that were based on pastoral economy and exchange. Nomadic lives were constantly in motion, and a great deal of their activities was achieved by means of transport animals and ubiquitous two-wheeled carts. While Eurasian pastoral nomads are often praised for their ‘horse culture,’ carts – though equally important – receive much less attention from

scholars of nomadism. Yet, those nomads can be justifiably called a ‘cart culture’ for their vehicles were a backbone of the growing power in the Steppe.

The Cart Culture of the Eurasian Nomads

Eurasian pastoral nomads used a variety of carts to move their dwellings and store possessions. They used them strategically to create defensive circles in war, to supply provisions, and to transport trade goods and tax revenues. These vehicles (together with draught and riding animals: horses, oxen, and camels) were a social glue that connected nomadic communities with one another and linked them to the outside world. Serving as symbols of mobility, nomads also ritualized their light personal carts in their rites of passage (weddings and funerals), and consequently deposited them in graves of some of their significant deceased. Ostensibly, steppe nomads had an intimate connection with their carts in life and death. And this is understandable, since such vehicles catered to people of all age groups, genders, and conditions. For it was not only young and strong individuals (comfortable in the saddle) who were able to move around; this was also the case for the elderly, the pregnant, the wounded, the sick, and the physically impaired. All

¹ European Research Council (ERC) "Nomadic Empires" Project

were able to continue leading their lives in motion and play important roles in the nomadic migratory milieu. Nomadic culture was a cart culture, whereby the technologically advanced light carts developed by the nomads allowed their communities wider mobility and individual participation that was not always available to sedentary groups in premodern times.

Representations of two-wheeled carts appear in the Steppe already in the Bronze Age (Piggott, 1983). They were perfected over the long term and reached their more or less contemporary form at least by the time the nomadic Xiongnu empire emerged in Mongolia in the 3^d c. BC. The Xiongnu, probably in a similar way to the Scythians in the Western Steppe, used various carts to transport their belongings; and in their tombs, they placed light and “practical” two-wheeled carts (Miller, 2012, p. 30–32). These vehicles (Mongol. *tergen* and Turk. *qanga*, later *araba*) were equally important for the imperial Turk nomads, who came to power in the 6th c. CE, and who are said to have “lived in felt carts” and used various carts for military, trade, and ritual purposes (Andrews, 1999, p. 11–12, 122, 137, 192; Bartold, 1966, p. 407). In some cases, carts defined nomadic peoples’ identities: some groups of T’e-le were called “High Carts” in the 6th-c. Chinese *Wei-shu* because “the wheels of their carts are very large, with very numerous spokes” (in Andrews, 1999, p. 89, 497). The nomadic “Black Cart” Shih-wei people were designated in a similar way. Under the Liao rule (916–1125), they became renowned cartwrights praised by the Song Chinese for their lightly-built A-framed carts that had a long body, narrow front, wide back, and large wheels (Andrews, 1999, p. 256–258). They were also admired in the *Liao-Shi* for their elite carts “decorated with elegant ornaments” and whose “serviceability alone was considered important” (Andrews, 1999, p. 261). The cart culture and identity were also essential for the Oghuz and the Qangli Turks, who migrated westwards after the Uyghurs toppled the Turk Empire

in the 8th c. The Qangli (often denoted as descendants of the “High Carts”) were literally called the “Cart” people (Andrews, 1999, p. 91, 563). Their name was defined by their cart-making skills as portrayed in the popular *Oghuz-name* epic incorporated into the *World History* of Rashid-ad-Din written for the Ilkhanids in the 14th c. In this work, the Qangli joined the Oghuz confederation and taught them how to make carts in order to transport war booty, and for this service the name “possessors of carts” was bestowed on them (Rashid ad-Din, Shukiurova, 1987, p. 29). This episode was illustrated under the title *The Invention of the Two-wheeled Cart* in one of the manuscripts of Rashid ad-Din’s work from ca. 1314 (Fig. 1; Jahn, 1969, p. 13, pl. 7). The Qangli (dressed in elite attire) are shown cutting wood and making a light two-wheeled cart with slightly-converging beams – a trait of earlier A-framed vehicles described above (Andrews, 1999, p. 625). This cart overall resembles the actual slatted carts found in burials from the Qipchaq and the Golden Horde periods (see below). Thus, already in the pre-Mongol period, nomads were praised for their notable and versatile carts, which, in the eyes of sedentary writers, came to define their culture and identity.

Prior to the Mongol conquest, the Western Steppe was dominated by the Qipchaq – the cart people *par excellence* – who were also identified by their carts. In 1237 during the Mongol pursuit of their Khan Bachman near the Volga, traces of broken Qipchaq carts were recognized at a campsite (Juvayni in Andrews, 1999, p. 564). The Qipchaq ousted the Oghuz and came to dominate that strategically important region in the 11th c. Archaeological excavations of Qipchaq kurgan burials (mainly in the Lower Dnieper and Don River basins) revealed that many of their 12th – 13th-c. graves were furnished with carts and their parts attesting to a well-developed cart culture among them (Shalobudov, Lesnichii, 2003). Reconstructions of these carts showed that they



Fig. 1. The Qangli making carts for the Oghuz a.k.a. The Invention of the Two-wheeled Cart from Rashid ad-Din's World History, Tabriz, Ilkhanid Period, ca. 1314. Topkapı Sarayı (H. 1653, Fol.593v) (after Jahn 1969: pl. 7).

Рис. 1. Кангли делают повозки для огузов (Изобретение двухколесной повозки) из всемирной истории Рашид ад-Дина, Тебриз, период Ильханидов, ок. 1314. Топкапы Сарай (H. 1653, Fol.593v) (по Jahn 1969: ил.7).

were relatively standardized two-wheeled vehicles with flat slatted beds about 1.8-2 m long and 0.5–0.8 m wide; the hardwood side beams had transverse slats and side-frames (0.3–0.5 m high) joined to them by mortise and tenon. The carts had a fixed axle. Their wheels (ranging 1.05–1.5 m in diameter) had barrel-shaped or cylindrical hubs and the number of spokes varied from 12 to 16 (Shalobudov, Lesnichii, 2003, p. 198–201). Although the Qipchaq had a variety of vehicles, the configuration of these burial carts resembles those commonly depicted in Ilkhanid miniatures (e.g. Fig. 1), suggesting that they were likely used for light loads and as personal carriages. This is supported by another such miniature showing Isfandiyar slaying the Simurgh from the so-called Small *Shahnama* dated ca. 1330–40 (Fig. 2; Swietochowski, 1994, p. 112–113). It represents a light personal carriage cart with a small tent placed over it and pulled by a horse. These kinds of versatile vehicles for personal conveyance – which have been widely used since the time of the Xiongnu and evolved in the form of small Noghay cart tents (often pictured in early modern European travel accounts (e.g. Olearius, 1647; Fig. 3) – attest to the growing sophistication of cart culture in the Steppe. After the Mongol conquest of the Qipchaq, funerary cart interments continued under the Mongol rule into the Golden Horde period gravitating to the new centers of power in the Lower Volga (Yavorskaya, 2013). The cart technology also reached new heights.

Archaeological reconstruction of well-preserved burial carts from the Golden Horde revealed an important advancement in cart-bearing technology that distinguished them from vehicles of the past. Qipchaq, Xiongnu, and Scythian carts were essentially of the same type – they had a fixed axle and rotation was implemented solely by bushes in the wheels (Shalobudov, Lesnichii, 2003, p. 201). In the 13th – 14th c. a new type of cart emerged in Golden Horde burials that was distinguished by its innovative axle rotation mechanism. In these new carts, bearings were located under the cart bed where the latter was mounted on the axle and secured to it by means of grooves underneath. The cart bed was supported on the axle by its own weight. This allowed for simple deconstruction of the cart, making it more portable during nomadic migrations. In this cart one wheel was fixed to the axle, while the other wheel had a bearing, allowing the wheels to rotate at different speeds when the cart was making turns or traveling over bumpy terrain (Shalobudov, Lesnichii, 2003, p. 201). Thus, archaeological evidence shows that the Mongol-period carts became more durable and maneuverable.

In mortuary rituals of the Golden Horde nomads (just as with the Qipchaq), these carts were probably used as ritual biers and signified prestige. They were usually disassembled or broken down and placed into burials (often as *pars pro toto*) covering bodies or coffins with the bodies of female and male deceased, who were dressed in elite attire typical of the imperial Mongols (e.g., precious silks and jewelry, belts, bo-



Fig. 2. Isfandiyar slays the Simurgh from the Small Shahnama, Isfahan, Ilkhanid Period, 1330-40. The Metropolitan Museum of Art, N.Y. (1974.29.28r) (Swietochowski 1994:112).

Рис. 2. Исфа́нди́яр убивает Симу́рга из Малой Шахнамы, Исфахан, период Ильханидов, 1330-40. Музей Метрополитен, Нью-Йорк (1974.29.28r) (Swietochowski 1994:112).

qta hats, leather boots) and accompanied with items of high rank: weapons, mirrors, saddles, coin purses, etc., and in some cases, sacrificed horses (ibid.; Yavorskaya, 2013; Fedorov-Davydov, 1966). Archaeologists have offered a variety of interpretations for these rituals: carts served as a containment for the dead body, and as a separator between the dead and the living to prevent the deceased from returning and harming them; or carts were a transporter of the deceased to the other world, where a personal vehicle perhaps also represented an item of amenity or necessity to start a new life after death (Yavorskaya, 2013, p. 138–40). No matter how one reads the semantics of these ritual practices, such evidence reveals long-term affinities in nomadic funerary rites from the Xiongnu to the Mongols and highlights the prominent role of the cart (just as well as a horse) in the worldview of those pastoral nomads. This extremely versatile and resilient vehicle – be it a camp cart, a baggage cart, a personal carriage, or a ritual bier – featured widely in narrative sources concerning the imperial Mongols.

The Mongol and the Golden Horde Carts in Narrative Sources

The Mongol Empire connected communities on a transcontinental scale through conquests and commerce which required a reliable communication system.

Fig. 3. Depiction of a small cart tent of the Noghay nomads near Astrakhan in 1636 (from Olearius 1647).

Рис. 3. Изображение небольшой повозки-палатки кочевников ногайцев под Астраханью в 1636 г. (Olearius 1647).

A variety of carts was deployed for local and long-distance mobility involving army supplies, cargo freight, taxes, and transhumance transport. Carts fared poorly in hilly terrain, but they were perfectly suited to the flat steppe (Andrews, 1999, p. 565). Their high wheels were designed to ford streams; and the cart height was adjusted to a draught animal (e.g. camels required a wheel-hub ca. 20–30 cm higher than oxen or steppe horses). Giuseppe Barbaro observed that the carts in the Golden Horde were “taller than ours” and William of Rubruck explained that camel-driven carts had larger wheels “so that they cross rivers” (Andrews, 1999, p. 493–498, 565). Both Rubruck and Marco Polo listed oxen, horses, and camels as draught animals; John of Plano Carpini mainly noted oxen; and Kirakos of Ganjak wrote that nomads of the Batu’s Horde used “carts pulled by long lines of oxen and horses” (Andrews, 1999, p. 494; Gervers, Schlepp, 1997, p. 101, 107). The 14th-c. merchant Francesco Pegolotti who dealt with Ulus Jochi made a list of “freight capacity” specifying that a horse cart could carry ca. 1160 lb, an ox cart 1785 lb, and 3 camels could pull 5357 lb (Andrews, 1999, p. 499–500). Besides being used for moving soldiers, silks, and silver, carts were also indispens-



able for nomadic camps, migrations, and rituals.

Nomads lived in tents, some of which were collapsible (e.g. trellis tents) and some were permanently mounted on carts and used during more frequent migrations (Andrews, 1999, p. 492; Gervers, Schlepp, 1997; Kharuzin, 2011, p. 40–42). Rubruck observed such cart tents during his travels through the Golden Horde in 1253: “The next morning we met Scatatai’s [Chaghatai, a relative of Batu] carts laden with dwellings, and it seemed to me that a great city was approaching” (in Andrews, 1999, p. 499). Rubruck also described bow-top carts made of wooden twigs similar to coffers, which had raised vaults covered with black (waterproof) felt soaked with tallow or ewe’s milk and decorated with multicolored patchwork. Those coffers were used to store household goods, textiles, personal adornments, and valuables. They were never removed from carts, to which they were tightly lashed in order “to enable them to ford rivers” (in Gervers, Schlepp, 1997, p. 106). Women were in charge of such decorated vehicles and of the property stored in them: “The married women make very beautiful carts for themselves... A rich Mongol or Tatar may well have 100 or 200 of such carts with coffers. Batu has 26 wives, and each of these has a large dwelling, not counting the other small ones ... in which the maids live; belonging to each of these dwellings are a good 200 carts... One single woman drives 20 or 30 carts, for the country is flat” (in Andrews, 1999, p. 495–496). Polo also notes that they have “very beautiful carts with only two wheels... [in which] they carry their wives and their children and all the things and food which they need” (in Gervers, Schlepp, 1997, p. 101). Carpini adds that women were responsible for repairing those carts (Andrews, 1999, p. 498). Most accounts concur that rich nomads had numerous carts, which were driven and cared for by women and were probably their property (Andrews, 1999, p. 494–499; Kharuzin, 2011, p. 42; Bartold,

1966, p. 407). This symbolic and practical connection between carts and nomadic women is articulated in legends and rituals: e.g. the Khitan ancestress is portrayed as a “goddess in the form of an old woman on a cart drawn by a grey bovine” (Baldick, 2000, p. 31–2); in the *Secret History*, the divine Mongol ancestress Alan Qo’*a* appears as “a beautiful girl sitting in the front of a black cart,” and the wife of Chinggis Khan Börte escapes in a cart from the Merkit camp (Andrews, 1999, p. 313, 345). The Noghay women beautifully decorated their wedding carts, which they also used as sleeping cabins (Kharuzin, 2011, p. 39–45).

Nomadic carts also figure as carriages for individual conveyance, which were most likely the same light slatted constructions found in the Mongol period graves. Rubruck mentioned a chief wife of Möngke, who used a carriage to travel to the chapel tent in the camp (Andrews, 1999, p. 500). The relative lightness of these carts can be judged by a passage found in the *Altan Tobchi* recounting an episode when Belgütei was captured and held prisoner by the Tayichi’ud, who bound him to a cart, but Belgütei managed to flee at night carrying the cart on his back (Andrews, 1999, p. 346). A range of sources speak of various individuals who used personal carts because they were too sick, elderly, wounded, or heavy to ride (all in Andrews, 1999, p. 311, 564): Juvayni reported that “Qadaq Noyan was taken to Qaraqorum on a cart while feigning illness as a prisoner;” Rashid ad-Din wrote that Noqai also pretended to be ill and was in a cart during his battles with Toqta in the Golden Horde in 1298. This writer also relates that Qonichi (the ruler of the White Horde) used a cart because he was too heavy to ride. The *Sacred History* tells of Tarqutai-Kirilтуq who rode in a cart for the same reason; and it also narrates that Yesü Buqa Tayshi of the Uryanqat resorted to a cart in his old age. These sources clearly manifest that by means of personal carriage carts individual mobil-

ity was maintained no matter the person's condition, gender, or affliction.

Two-wheeled personal carts (*qasaq tergen*) were often used in rites of passage, e.g. weddings, funerals, and as shrine-carts commemorating the dead (Andrews, 1999, p. 347, 500–501). The *Sacred History* narates that they were used to present the Onggirat girls as brides to a Mongol khan (Andrews, 1999). Conceivably, these ritual carts were exquisitely adorned (similarly to those noted above in the Liao and Noghay contexts). Their elaborate decorations had apotropaic and esthetic functions: they were often painted in red and black colors and ornamented with geometric designs, as known from archaeological examples that come from the Golden Horde and the Mongol heartland (see below; also Evarnitsky, 1907; Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, p. 130; Nomguunsüren et al., 2012, p. 347). The same personal carts used in life often served as funerary biers for their deceased owners. Carpini described the funerals of a Mongol nobleman, whose cart “in which he is drawn” was broken up at the place of his burial and interred in the grave together with luxury objects and sacrificed horses (Andrews, 1999, p. 500; Baldick, 2000, p. 99). Ultimately, the ritual significance of these personal carts, and their status as vehicles of prestige, continued when the dead were commemorated as ancestors by the living. During his mission to Möngke, Rubruck observed that many Mongol noblemen (descendants of Chinggis Khan) venerated ancestral cart shrines: “they...make images of their dead out of felt, and clothe them with the most precious materials and place them in one or two carts... [which] nobody dares to touch” (in Andrews, 1999, p. 501). Benedictus Polonus noted a ritual cart with a golden statue of Chinggis Khan placed on it near Batu's tent (Andrews, 1999, p. 502–503). It evokes the famous ritual shrine cart with the relics of Chinggis Khan, which according to the *Altan Tobchi* was used to transport his body (Andrews, 1999, p. 345, 502; Gervers, Schleppe, 1997, p. 114). Archaeological evidence from the

Golden Horde corroborates such narratives revealing the great role of personal carts in lives and burials of the nomads. One such (hitherto unpublished) cart burial from Kalmykia deserves special attention as a striking example of that sophisticated nomadic cart culture and is presented here.

A Golden Horde Burial with Cart Parts from Bolshoi Tsaryn I kurgan 1

In 1977, a team of archaeologists from the Kalmyk branch of the Russian Academy of Sciences led by Dr. Evgenii Tsutskin conducted rescue excavations in the interfluvium of the Volga and its western tributary, the former Sarpa River, in the north of the Republic of Kalmykia. This territory is known for its relatively small kurgan groups dispersed in the flat grassland landscape that was well suited for pastoralism and inhabited by the high-ranking nomadic groups of the Golden Horde. About 18 km SW of the modern settlement of Bolshoi Tsaryn, the team investigated the kurgan group Bolshoi Tsaryn I comprised of two kurgans located 40 m from one another (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 34). Each of the kurgans contained a single interment in the center, and both burials were furnished with items typical of the nomadic elite of the Golden Horde, e.g. silk textiles and objects related to transportation – cart remains in the female burial (k. 1) and a saddle and horse tack in the male one (k. 2). The burial in k. 1 contained a fragment of the same silk found in the k. 2 (Shingiray, 2018) suggesting their chronological proximity. Neither an osteological study nor skeletal remains from either burial are presently available, except a single (hyoid) bone of the female from k. 1 (originally misinterpreted as a child's jawbone placed in the mouth of the deceased (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 37); it yielded a C14 date: 1309–1406 calCE (590±15 BP, PSUAMS-6163).

Kurgan 1 was a circular mound (0.5 m high and 11.4 m in diameter) surrounded by a shallow moat on all sides except to the east. Under the kurgan fill, there was a circular ditch (with a radius of ca. 4 m from the center) dug out at the level of

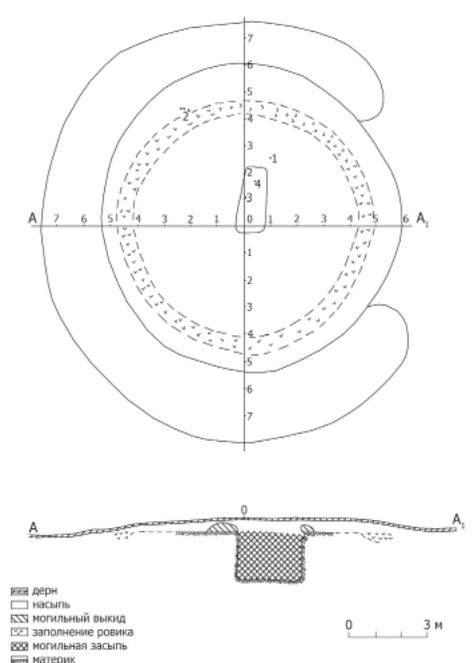


Fig. 4. Plan and Profile views of Kurgan 1 from Bolshoi Tsaryn I (after Tsutskin 1978).

Рис. 4. План и профиль кургана 1 Большого Царына I (по Цуцкину 1978).

the buried soil (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 34–38; Fig. 4). In its NW sector, this ditch contained (unspecified) jawbones and a long bone (no. 2 on the kurgan plan) 0.3 m below the kurgan fill. In the NE sector of the kurgan, there was a bone fragment at a depth of 0.1 m (no. 1). Just above the meridional burial pit (located in the kurgan center), the kurgan fill contained a bone fragment at a depth of 0.3 m (no. 3), and at a depth of 0.4 m there was a fragment of a wooden slat (no. 4) – probably from a wheel spoke of a cart. The burial pit was 2.5 m long and wider at its southern end (1.05 m) than its northern end (0.9 m) (Fig. 5). In the SW part of the grave fill (at a depth of 0.85 m), there was a “subconical wooden wheel hub manufactured by means of a lathe machine [and] placed with its subconical part down” (see grave plan: upper level) (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 35); and in the NW part of the grave pit there was a tilted wood fragment (see grave profile). The grave fill was disturbed: its center contained phalanges and a rib from the skeleton below, and there was a bronze

conical cup (no. 1 on the grave plan: lower level) in its northern part (at a depth of 1.6 m). Still below (at a depth of 1.65 m from the top of the grave fill), there were fragments of a well-built wooden coffin-like construction (see its wood fragments on the grave plan: upper level). Both its “long and short sides were built of vertically placed boards which were secured at the top” with a number of slats (1.5 cm-thick) put transversely on the long sides of the coffin. This slatted top-frame caved down in the center under the weight of the grave fill. The upper surface of the slats “in the northern and southern parts of the grave” was ornamented with “geometric designs which became imprinted on the lumps of the grave fill covering the slats” (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 35). In the northern part, they were ornamented with black and red stripes, while in the southern part, there were “imprints of a mat and leaves next to a geometric pattern” represented by diamonds (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 36; Fig. 6). The bottom of the coffin consisted of several long (3–4 cm

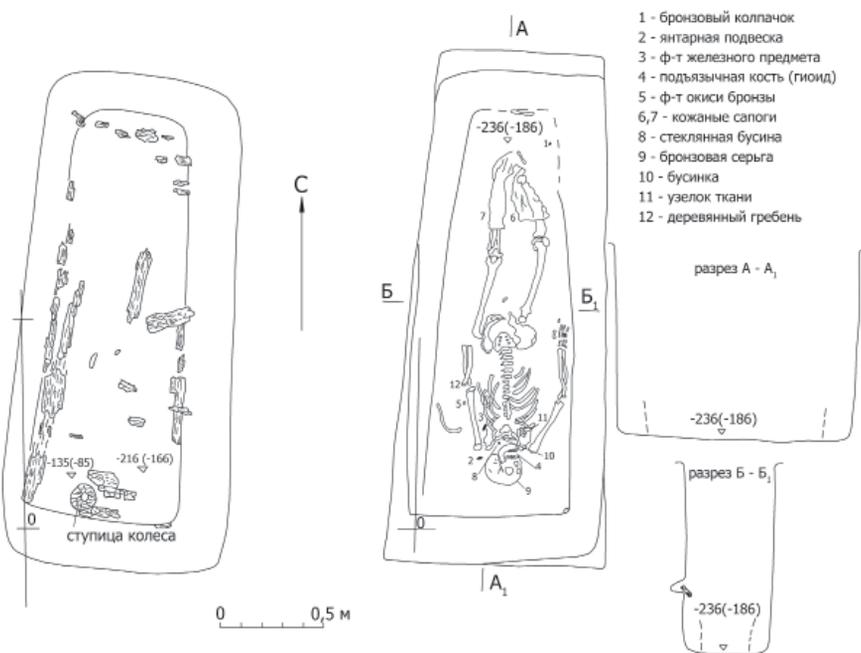


Fig. 5. Plan (at different depths: upper and lower levels) and profile views of burial 1 from kurgan 1 from Bolshoi Tsaryn I (after Tsutskin 1978).

Рис. 5. План (на разных глубинах: верхний и нижний уровни) и профиля погребения 1 из кургана 1 Большого Царына I (по Цуцкину 1978).

thick) slats placed along the length of the grave, under which there were slats placed transversally “at some interval” (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 36). The coffin structure was imprinted in the grave fill (see grave photo, plans, and profiles) and had the following parameters: 1.95 m long; 0.73 m wide at its southern end and 0.45 m at its northern end; and 0.36 m high.

At the bottom of the grave pit (at a depth of 1.84 m), there was a skeleton of a mature woman oriented with her head to the south and her face turned to the right (east) (Fig. 7). Her arms were placed along the body: her right arm was slightly bent at the elbow and her hand (closed in a fist) was slightly away from the body; her left hand was disturbed (some of its phalanges were found in the grave fill above). Her left leg was stretched out, and the right leg was slightly bent at the knee; yet her left leg was shorter than the right one. As noted in the report, the deceased must have undergone a trauma to her femur early in her lifetime,

whereby the femoral head broke off and the leg was “hanging” without being properly joined to the pelvis (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 37). As a result, the pelvis was developed asymmetrically. Moreover, the skull of the deceased was abnormally enlarged (see photo). At the base of its left side, the skull was damaged by a deep sharp-force cut, the impact of which probably caused the left top of her jawbone to break off – a piece of which was found on the left side of the ribcage; the lower left teeth of the deceased were absent; there was a distance between her skull and neck vertebrae; and her atlas bone was not in situ.

As for the grave goods (see grave plans), the woman was buried with an amber pendant (near her head); an oval black-glass bead (between her jaw and a clavicle); another bead wrapped in a textile (under her vertebrae); and a bronze earring (extracted from her skull). At the right side of the skull, there were some remains of a headdress containing a fabric knot (simi-



Fig. 6. Photo of a soil imprint from the surface of the ornamented cart slats from burial 1 kurgan 1 from Bolshoi Tsaryn I (Tsutskin 1978).

Рис. 6. Фотография отпечатка почвы с поверхности орнаментированных плашек повозки из погребения 1 из кургана 1 Большого Царына I (Цуцкин 1978).

lar to that from a silk band found on the skull of a man buried in k. 2); and another fabric knot at the top of the right side of the ribcage. A fragment of a wooden object and some traces of oxidized bronze were found west of the left arm, while east of it, there was a fragment of iron. The deceased was dressed in leather boots. Under her left scapula, she had a wooden comb, fragments of a textile, and a rounded wooden object with dotted ornamentation. Under the right hand and between her skeleton and the coffin-top, there were layers of birchbark. Under the head and around the upper part of her torso, archaeologists found layers of dark organic material – most likely felt (Tsutskin, 1978, p. 38).

In spite of the poor wood preservation in this grave (and its laconic description in the report), this burial is an extraordinary case of Golden Horde graves with wooden constructions made of cart parts. Although these types of burials – (type Ж-I) in a pit-grave with southern head-orientation, in a (type Б-II) slatted coffin-like construction, without a horse sacrifice – are well-known from the territory of the Golden Horde (Fedorov-Davydov, 1966, p. 127, 130–131), graves with cart wheels and ornamented cart parts are rare (Yavorskaya, 2013). Yet it is the context of this burial that makes it special. A mature woman of high rank, whose mobility and health

had been compromised possibly since her childhood, was buried with her typical elite paraphernalia in a wooden construction that was probably made of her personal cart that she could have used during her lifetime. This proposition is strongly supported by the evidence in the narrative sources cited above, which state that people with physical infirmities used carts to move around, and that some nomads were buried with carts which they used during their life. The ornamented slats from the coffin top that was most likely made of a cart frame in this burial are remarkable. The “protective-apotropaic” significance of the repeated geometric patterns such as stripes and diamonds (or squares) executed in contrasting red and black colors – is well documented in studies of traditional

Fig. 7. Photo of the deceased (view from the North) from burial 1 kurgan 1 from Bolshoi Tsaryn I (Tsutskin 1978).

Рис. 7. Фотография погребения 1 (вид с севера) из кургана 1 Большого Царына I (Цуцкин 1978).





Fig. 8. A cart frame decorated with black and red patterns from the 14th-c. grave from Cagaan Chad in Mongolia (after Nomguunsüren et al., 2012, p. 347).

Рис. 8. Рама повозки, орнаментированная черно-красным узором, из могилы XIV в. из Цагаан Хада в Монголии (по Nomguunsüren et al., 2012, p. 347).

Turkic and Mongol ornamentations popular among the Eurasian nomads (Serkina, 1996, p. 236). These patterns were often used by women in decorations pertaining to their bridal attire and transport; and they also had talismanic properties semantically designated by the word 'belt' (*quraq/quruq*) in the sense of a protected border or field (Serkina, 1996, p. 234). Thus, these ornamented slats could have signified a cart's threshold. In the Mongol traditional culture, a threshold was often profusely decorated due to its highly symbolic meaning, and in the Golden Horde context, it was a sign of rank (Andrews, 1999, p. 192). A slatted cart-frame decorated with similar black and red patterns is also known from the 14th-c. grave Cagaan Chad in Mongolia (Fig. 8; Nomguunsüren et al., 2012, p. 328, 347–9).

A close analogy to the wooden construction made of cart parts (and its position in the grave) from Bolshoi Tsaryn 1 can be found in the burial of a young female nomad excavated from kurgan 9 at Voloshino in Ukraine (Suprunenko, Maevskaia, 2010). This girl from Voloshino was also of high rank, in poor health (according

to osteologists), and was buried with her head oriented to the south and her face to the east. She was dressed in silk and leather boots, and her body was shrouded in felt and put into a coffin made of and covered with cart parts. The authors of that publication also suggested that the girl could have used that cart during her lifetime, and that it was later modified into a coffin in which she was buried (Suprunenko, Maevskaia, 2010, p. 302). In the Bolshoi Tsaryn I grave, the coffin construction was topped by a wheel, whose hub and broken spoke fragment were found in the fill. Judging by the vertical position of the hub near the grave-pit wall, the wheel was either broken deliberately before its placement into the grave or was merely represented by its hub (as *pars pro toto*). It has been proposed that a wheel buried in a grave above a coffin and the body of a deceased could have served to demarcate a symbolic boundary between the dead and the living, protecting the latter from the potentially harmful dead (Yavorskaya, 2013, p. 140). It was likely the case in this burial as well. Moreover, the intentional skull injury (evidently performed in a post-skeletonized state) that

broke the deceased woman's jaw, together with other evidence of disturbance in this grave (e.g., displaced left-hand phalanges, disturbed grave fill and grave goods, damaged coffin top) could be potentially linked to the ritual practice known to archaeologists as "maiming of the dead" (Klevnäs, 2016). In any event, whether the Golden Horde nomads who buried her were fearful of this disabled deceased woman or not, in her lifetime she must have been able to cope with her condition by staying mobile and survived to a mature age. Her mobility would hardly have been possible without a personal cart, which she most likely cherished and had decorated, in order to display her rank and at the same time to protect herself and her property from evil.

Archaeological cases like this Golden Horde grave from Bolshoi Tsaryn 1 show the importance of a simple "serviceable" cart in the lives of such nomads, who lived under very challenging physical conditions. This example reveals that in the nomadic milieu of a steppe empire the thriving cart-culture encouraged inclusivity: it was responsible for the physical and social mobilization of its denizens of all genders, ages, and states of health, enabling them to keep active in their migratory lives. All the sources presented here demonstrate that Eurasian nomads crafted, perfected, adapted, and widely used these light, convenient, and resilient carts, which were "the condition of mobility" (Andrews, 1999, p. 4) and the embodiment of imperial power in the Steppe.

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ЖИЗНЬ В ДВИЖЕНИИ: КУЛЬТУРА ПОВОЗОК У КОЧЕВНИКОВ И ПОГРЕБЕНИЯ С ПОВОЗКАМИ ИЗ ЗОЛОТОЙ ОРДЫ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ ИЗ БОЛЬШОГО ЦАРЫНА I, КАЛМЫКИЯ)

Ирина Шингирей

В статье рассматривается тема культуры повозок у кочевников евразийской степи – культуры, которая развивалась в течение длительного времени и достигла своего апогея с появлением монгольской империи. Привлекается ряд нарративных, археологических, и визуальных источников, чтобы проследить как повозки использовались, адаптировались, технологически улучшались, и ритуализировались в жизни и в погребениях кочевников имперской монголии и в особенности Золотой Орды. Проанализировано уникальное золотоордынское погребение с частями орнаментированной повозки из Калмыкии. Его интерпретация демонстрирует инклюзивность культуры повозок в Улусе Джучи, где широкое использование персональных повозок кочевниками разных возрастов, полов и состояний здоровья способствовало их активному участию в мобильной общественной жизни степной империи.

Ключевые слова: археология, Евразийские кочевники, Золотая Орда, погребальные повозки, Калмыкия.

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