

The First Altars of Central Asia of Bronze Age

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ABSTRACT

It is scientifically illuminated about the Altar, the place of religious ceremonies in the early temples of Bronze Age in Central Asia, and structure of altars of the temples in ancient countries which Margiana and Bactria as well as that in the countries of the Ancient East in this article.

On top of that, it is mentioned about The altars of Altintepa, Dashli, Sarazm, Togolok - 21, Gonur and Djarkutan temples and their similarities which were opened and explored in the areas mentioned in this article by V.M. Masson, I.S. Masimov, A.A. Askarov, V.I. Sarianidi, T. Shirinov.

Apart from this, it is described some opinions which belongs to the construction of religious centers.

KEYWORDS: *temples, altar, religion, Altindepe, Dashli, Sarazm, Togolok-21, Gonur Depe, Djarkutan, walls of defense, monument, sacramental, temple of worship, Aynatepe, Gioksur, four elements, Kuzali, Mulali, double oven with a fire*

During archeological excavations at the monuments of pottery culture, a total of 12 fireplaces and one two-chamber fire-worshiping furnace were found. Eight of them are located in the temple of the Djarkutan monument, and four and two-chamber furnaces are located in the "arc" part of the monument. Fires come in two forms:

- A. circular fires;
- B. square-shaped fires.

Circular hearths range of altar in diameter from 0.90 to 1.6 meters, with a wall thickness of 15–22 cm and a height of 8–10 cm. They are made of special, well-mixed and baked clay, the walls are thinly plastered. The inside of the wall is reddish under the influence of fire, the traces of black dryness are almost imperceptible. They are built on the floor of the room, sometimes on a high platform. A layer of pure ash was observed inside all the altars.

In Central Asian monuments, circular fires have been observed since the Eneolithic period and have been widespread since the Bronze Age. In particular, Aynatepa [17], Changtepa [15], Gioksur 1 [16] in southern Turkmenistan, Sarazm monument in Tajikistan [17] and Tulkhar cemetery [8] circle-shaped fires were studied.

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Altars of this type are found in many monuments of the centers of ancient Eastern culture occurs in millennial monuments, such as Kalibangan of the ancient Indian civilization [2], the monuments of the Kuraaraks culture covering the whole Caucasus [11], the Suza first complex [1] and the monuments of Eastern Anatolia III millennium BC. [11].

The second type of altars was found in Djarkutan with only two and did not spread to the first type of altars.

The dimensions of the first altar are 90x90 cm, the side wall is 18 cm thick and 11 cm high. The altar is located in one of the largest rooms on the farm west of the temple. Its wall is less burnt than other fires, but the layers inside are similar to those of other fires.

Only the remains of the side wall of the second altar were found, and it was not possible to restore its dimensions.

Square-shaped fires are observed in the Bronze Age strata of the Sarazm monument [4], in the Altindepe monument [9] and in the Tulkhar cemetery [7].

The square-shaped fireplaces, which are considered to be the hearth of the fire, are located in the courtyard of the circular Dashli-3 monument [12]. If we

continue the side walls on all four sides of this fire and take into account that their height does not exceed 10-11 cm, they can be considered a fire worship, that is, a sacred furnace. The construction of this type of fire in the Djarkutan temple, on a large platform, indicates that the main place of worship of the temple could be the fire [19]. Another square-shaped fireplace is located in the 12 rooms of the Djarkutan Fire Temple, i.e. on the opposite side of the metal workshop. T.Sh. According to Shirinov, this fireplace could be a room fireplace in a man's metal workshop [18].

A.M. Mandelstam mentions that in the first Tulkhar cemetery of the Bronze Age in southern Tajikistan, a circle was found in a woman's tomb and a rectangular fire in a man's tomb [7]. In addition to the two types of fireplaces mentioned above, it has been found that there are also double-fired furnaces. This double-fired furnace belongs to the Djarkutan stage, its furnaces are rectangular in shape, one of which measures 83x24 and the other 86x33 cm. The walls of the kiln are made of raw bricks, the thickness is 14x16 and the height is 20-22 cm. The kiln has two fireplaces, separated by a brick wall. Its fire chamber was plastered once, making it very thin and smooth with a straw-mixed mud. This type of fire-worshipping furnace is observed for the first time in the monument of Sopolli culture. Double-hearth furnaces have also been found in the Eneolithic period in the Yalongochtepa and Altindepe monuments of the Geoksur oasis [14]. A double-fired furnace is also found at Kelleli VI in the Murgab oasis, and it was built by I.S. Masimov B.C. II determined that the second millennium belonged to their heads [8]. The Dashli-3 temple of the Bronze Age of ancient Bactria has a rectangular two-chamber and even three-chamber furnaces in front of the wall [13].

V.I. Sarianidi also states that the two-chamber furnace in Yalongochtepa was built to worship the sacred fire [15]. Based on the research, it can be concluded that the two-chamber furnace in front of the wall found in the eighth room of the house in the southern part of the Djarkutan "ark" also served as a fire worship. This is evidenced by the fact that this furnace did not have a strong fire, the side walls were not high, and it was not necessary to heat two rooms in one room at a time.

Of course, a natural question arises as to why the fire-worshipping fires were exactly in the form of circles and squares. The circle has been recognized by many researchers as a symbol of the sun [20]. In the mythology of the peoples of the ancient East, the rectangle represented the four elements of the world - "Fire - water - earth - air." The origin of the theory of

these four elements goes back to Zarathustra in the east and to the philosophers Empedocles and Aristotle in the west. This theory called humanity into a solid system, a whole, and united the basic lines of motion of the universe [10]. The secret of the sanctity of the rectangular-shaped fires is hidden in this talisman and embodied in the temples of Djarkutan.

The above data show that in the early stages of Sopolli culture, family fire worship was practiced in the early stages of Sopolli culture, and in the Djarkutan stage, fire worship was performed as a group in a centralized temple, while each patriarchal family also had its own special family fire worship. The last stages of the pottery culture In the Kozali and Molali stages, the people of Djarkutan worshiped fire collectively in the centralized temples.

As a result of excavations at the Djarkutan monument, two fireplaces and a double furnace were opened from the rooms of the arch's multi-room house. Before the walls of the house were opened, fireplaces were opened here. This means that the fireplaces belong to the top layer construction period or it was built to a height. However, it was discovered that a platform made of clean soil was built under the fires found in the arch. In our opinion, the inhabitants of the Bronze Age considered fire sacred because they worshiped fire, and it is evident that they built fireplaces on a platform 50-60 cm high. The fireplace is a circular device, the wall of which consists of a mass reminiscent of raw brick clay from straw clay. The walls of the hearths were built of straw mixed with mud. The floor of the fireplace was plastered with straw mud 3 cm above the floor.

From the above data, it can be concluded that the cult of fire has been deified in Central Asia since the Eneolithic period. An example of this idea is the fires found and studied in the Eneolithic settlements. Mythological and religious imaginations of people have evolved, and their close connection with nature in particular has increased. The sun in the sky and the fire on the ground formed their material attributes as fires. The bonfires were built in the most sacred places.

Although the peoples of Central Asia have not performed their religious customs without fire since ancient times, the practice of worship around special devices dates back to the Eneolithic period, and by the Bronze Age these traditions have spread to large areas.

Research confirm that in the early stages of the Bronze Age, when there was a tradition of family fire worship, by the Middle Bronze Age, fire worship was performed as a group in a centralized temple.

The encounter of the largest fire, 3 meters in diameter, at the Togolok-21 monument in southern Turkmenistan confirms that the entire population worshiped the fire. Double hearths, small fireplaces located in the rooms are designed for the daily ceremonies of family members, while large circle-shaped fireplaces are of a collective nature and are designed for large ceremonies.

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