

## Botay – the most ancient culture of Kazakhstan's horse-breeders

Horse's important role in the world history is undeniable; horse domestication marked the beginning of fundamentally new, highly dynamic horse communication, compared with pedestrian, in the history of mankind. According to Archaeological and Paleozoological sciences, this process began in the late Neolithic-Eneolithic on the territory of Eurasia. Scientists have been disputing about the place, period and principles of domestication, as well as about the main morphological differences between domestic and wild horse and remote ancestors of modern horses, for more than hundred years.

In 1980 in Northern Kazakhstan, near Ishim not far from Botay aul Seibert V.F. discovered the Botay settlement dated Eneolithic period. He discovered the unique habitat of global importance, having an area of 20 hectares with a well-preserved cultural layer, investigation of which allowed analyzing of a wide range of information about the ancient culture, including housebuilding, economic and production activity of Botay people.

Along with 300 thousand well-preserved artifacts rich anthropological and osteological material was obtained. 99% of animal bones (over 10 tonnes) were horse bones. Complex Archeological and Paleogeographical excavations were organized at the unique facility. Scientists from Kazakhstan, USA, Germany, England and Russia were involved in these studies. All-Union field workshop was held in 1983 and «Early horse-breeders of Eurasia» international symposium in 1995 was attended by 80 scientists from the CIS countries and 16 states of the far abroad.

The research program during 30 years consisted of the following directions

1. Excavations of cultural layer using new technologies.
2. Searching and discovering of similar to Botay objects and their investigation (Krasniy Yar, Vasilkovka IV, Roschinskoe, Bolandino and Sergeyevka).
3. Detection of cultural and historical belonging of Botay type monuments, as well as relative and absolute chronology.
4. Reconstruction and modeling of Botay people's economy, social structure and outlook.
5. Origin and evolution of steppe architecture in Eneolithic period and the Early Bronze Age.
6. History of the rise, stages, principles and technologies of the early horse-breeding in Kazakhstan during Eneolithic period.
7. Investigation and reconstruction of environment in the steppe zone of Central and Northern Kazakhstan.
8. Modeling of diversified economy with the dominance of horse-breeding in a year calendar cycle.

Results of analysis of blurring of horse teeth, morphological correlation between limb parts and presence of attributes of horse harness (psaliya, fasteners of two-leg and three-leg horse hobbles tripod and other bone elements, and whole archaeological context) are the proof of domestication of Botay horse.

In 2008 new sensational results, which will be announced in my report, were obtained at biochemical laboratories of Bristol and Exeter Universities (UK).

Research results in the field of early horse-breeding in Kazakhstan will be very useful for professionals engaged in the history of the horse-breeding.

**Seibert V.F.**

**Kovalevskaya V.B. Horse and rider (Ways and destinies). Concluding remarks of Merpert N.Ya., Moscow, main editorial office of Eastern literature, publishing house «Nauka», 1977, 152 (Ковалевская В.Б. Конь и всадник (Пути и судьбы). Послесловие Н.Я. Мерперта. М., главная редакция восточной литературы издательства «Наука», 1977, 152 с.)**