



## **CULT OF THE HORSE**

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**Summary.** The article deals with the ritual role of the horse in the religious beliefs of the Karakalpaks.

**Keywords:** cult of the horse, "agash at", animism, totemism, custom.

### **Introduction**

The appearance of the domestic horse in the arsenal of the means of production of the ancient man turned out to be a significant factor that affected his life: economic, political, ideological. A person has learned to use all the natural qualities of a horse, and the most important of them is "the horse's ability to move quickly and for a long time." It remained the main transport and draft animal for about 5 thousand years. The use of the horse in the war chariot, and then for riding, determined its military importance for a long time. Man, using the horse more and more diversely, at the same time consciously changed it, improving certain qualities through artificial selection, brought out new breeds. "The variety and strength of human contacts with the horse, the depth of experiences associated with it in a variety of circumstances - all this provided the horse with a completely exceptional place in the epic, in painting, sculpture and fiction." The horse played a significant role in the religious beliefs of many peoples of Eurasia, which is usually associated with the cult of the horse. [1,3]

The cult of the horse has been manifested since ancient times in all rituals associated with the main stages of human life: wedding, birth, funeral.

For example, horse harnesses were found not only for men, but also for women in the burials of the Saks of the Aral Sea region of the 7th - 5th centuries BC. [2,70]

Herodotus reports on the special attitude of the Massagetae to horses, according to which "they put on horses copper shells like breastplates. The bridles, bits and shoulder straps are inlaid with gold. [3,215]

He further writes: "The only god they worship is the sun. They sacrifice horses to the sun, the meaning of this sacrifice is that the fastest god needs to be sacrificed the fastest creature in the world. [3,216]

At the same time, Herodotus writes that the Massagetae buried horses with their dead. [3,71-72] The same custom was among the ancient Turks. [4,202-205] Three medieval peoples of the 9th - 13th centuries, who participated in the ethnogenesis of the Karakalpaks - Pechenegs, Torks, Kipchaks, Oguzes, have rich material on the rite of burial with a horse. [5,200-201] Burials of the deceased with a horse are found even in the 18th - 19th centuries among Kazakhs, Altaians. [5,202]

S.P. Tolstov, in his work on ancient Khorezm, further expands the territory of distribution of the custom of burial with a horse, noting in ancient India ritual horse sacrifices - "ashvamedha". [6,207] Despite the fact that this custom existed almost all over the globe, researchers admit that it originally originated in Asia, since the Asian steppes are considered the birthplace of horses. [5,201]

For most of these peoples, the explanation for the purpose of burying a dead person with a horse is the same: service to the owner in the next world. Apparently, the custom of the Karakalpaks to provide each deceased with his "agash at" - a wooden horse, on which they brought the deceased to the cemetery, is genetically related to this idea. In this case, we see



how the ancient custom of supplying the soul of the deceased with a horse gradually almost completely transformed. Only some of its details remained, the term - "agash at", etc. The assumption of T.A. Jdanko, who believes that "agash at" (wooden horse) "... is perhaps a relic of the funeral, characteristic of the Turkic nomads of the early Middle Ages, accompanied by the position in the grave along with the deceased of his horse, killed during the funeral ritual, is fair. at the grave." [7,14]

## Conclusion

It seems to us, these facts prove that the burial rite with a horse is based on totemistic and animistic ideas, since in the examples given, relics of the concept of the relationship of a horse with a person and the sanctity of a horse are traced, at the same time, a horse is considered as a means of traveling in the other world. the world. It is known that, like all rituals, the rite of burial with a horse was gradually transformed. The rite of burial, together with the dead horse and things, was the original form. Then they began to confine themselves to burying only individual parts of the horse, namely the head, legs, skin, tail, and ears. Subsequently, they were limited to the symbolic dedication of the horse to the deceased. One of the relics of these customs is apparently the custom of the Karakalpaks of hanging a tail, skin, horse at the entrance of a mazar, a mosque, the image of a horse's hoof on dowry items, etc.

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