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Metal Age Hoards on the Middle Yenisei

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I. INTRODUCTION

Informative archaeological and historical sources. It contains the complex of articles intentionally hidden into the ground after the appointed process of its collecting. Investigation of such finds is one of the actual problems in the world and home archaeology.

On the territory of South Siberia, the buried treasures (or the so-called «caches») appeared as long ago as the Mesolithic Epoch. However, they contained complexes of various kinds of articles and were widespread in the Metals Epoch, especially in the period of the Early Iron Age [Tallgren, 1917]. On the vast spaces, from the Middle Yenisey River to the Upper Ob River, quite a number of hidden treasures have been discovered. Among them – the Iyus and Kosogolsk caches, Znamensk, Novoobintsevsk, Burbinsk and a series of the other ones [Naschekin, 1967; Martynov, 1973; Stepnaya polosa..., 1992; Vadetskaya, 1999; Borodovskij, Larichev, 2013; Makarov, 2013; Borodovskij, Oborin, 2018].

II. RESEARCH RESULTS INTO THE ITEMS AND DISCUSSION

The Iyus buried treasure was found by Semion Alekseevich Fefelov, a worker of the Iyus State agricultural farm («sovkhoz») of Khakassia. It happened when he made machine processing of the field near not great Saratsk Lake in Khakassia in the middle 70-s of the last century. As a rule, discoveries are usually accomplished by those who are able to see something unusual in that which is habitual and daily. When, in a few days after this

peculiar event in his life, they asked S.A. Fefelov about what made him come up to the place, where (as it turned out soon) the buried treasure («cache») was found, the unexpected answer followed without any delay: «the birch bark». However, there was something in it that made us be surprised. The field is situated in 30 kms from the Iyus Settlement. It was ploughed for many years. When the plough-share, drawn by the «Kirovets» of Fefelov's son Vladimir, had turned (inside) out something bulky (the massive plough-share of the tractor had cut through one of the sides of metallic cauldron), Semion Alekseevich Fefelov, whose tractor was going behind, at first, did not pay attention to it. He thought: «Probably, that was a detail left in the field after repair and then ploughed into the earth». Suddenly scraps of dazedly white birch bark struck him. The scraps were scattered in the fan-shaped manner on the turned out strata of black earth. «Where did the birch bark appear here from? Here, in the open steppe?». Fefelov, the elder, stopped his tractor close by the queer find. He came down from the «Kirovets», grasped the massive bow-shaped handles, sticking out from the earth, and pulled out a large cauldron made of red bronze.

In the cauldron 271 articles of different kinds were placed. Most of them were those of bronze. In this collection articles made of organic materials, such as skin and birch bark, horn, as well as 150 glassware (beads) and 2 whetstones were present too.

The complex of articles of the Iyus buried treasure is of a special interest since it is a rare case when the whole contents of the collection of such type is intelligible for research work practically in its initial acquisition.

The examined hidden cache contains 3 receptacles: (those of birch bark, metal and skin), as well as their contents which include different categories of articles: adornments (beads, pendants, name-plates, ear-rings and the ones with perforated holes); details of waist-belt set (belt-buckles, spoon-shaped hasps, cartridge-clips, open-worked and zoomorphic blades); whetstones; looking-glasses (functional, votive); covers (the upper and lower ones).

A special attention the complete set and safe keeping of articles attract. This collection consists of solitary and serial articles (belt-buckles, blades, hasps); sheaves of things (belt-buckles, beads, rings, name-plates), as well as separate fragments of articles, especially open-worked blades.

The consistency of appearance of components in the examined set of articles and safe keeping of the latter is well traced on the zoomorphic and open-worked bronze name-plates which were fastened by the Huns to waist-belts.

The completeness and safe keeping of the examined articles are represented in the most consecutive order by the zoomorphic ones and the open-worked bronze waist-belt name-plates of the Hun time. Among such articles, the intact, as well as broken half-and-half and fragmental ones were met.

The outer surfaces of many articles of the Iyus cache are greatly smoothed out; and images depicted on the metal goods became in some cases partly wiped off. These peculiarities of the outer surfaces of many things are, probably, connected with their long and intensive utilization. Such wearing out allows to suppose sufficiently long existence of the articles which later on formed the collection of the Iyus hidden treasures.

The birch bark capacity («tooyes» or pail) of rather large dimensions is the first (outer) receptacle into which the bronze cauldron on a tray was put. The birch bark utensils, those stitched by ribbon of birch bark over the upper edge on each side, were preserved fragmentarily. Analogous capacities of birch bark, those of smaller dimensions, are known on the Middle

Yenisey (Barsuchikha-1), in Tuva (Aimyrlyg, Kokel).

The largest specimen of the birch bark pail (26 cm × 23 cm) of the Early Iron Age was discovered in the Bidin Cave (the Cis-Olkhon Area).

One of the most important circumstances for ascertainment of the time of concealment of treasures is dating of their receptacles. A special meaning the material which forms the cover of the hidden treasures has too. Organics, as compared with the other raw materials (metal, clay) of receptacles, has more limited period of utilization which can be, as much as possible, similar to the time of burial of the Iyus treasure. However, taking into consideration the consequence of episodic safe keeping of the birch bark capacities of the Early Iron Age, one may date them from the time period not earlier than the end of the Ist millennium B.C. – the beginning of the IInd millennium A.D.

The bronze cauldron of the Saxon type, on a tray, with smooth horseshoe-shaped handles is the second (middle) receptacle decorated over the upper edge by two lines of relief (tight) plait-shaped rollers closed in arch on one side of the article. One may consider that such cache dates from the second half of the Ist millennium B.C.. On the territory of West Siberia a bronze cauldron was a part of the Kholmogorsk cache.

One more inner receptacle of the Iyus cache – the leathern ware which was sewn at the bottom by the relief seam over its edge. Comparatively small dimensions (17 cm × 1,5 cm) of the ware are, probably, bound up with the fact that inside of the bronze cauldron a part of things, together with the other ones was put.

For some varieties of serial things of the Iyus cache (mirrors, waist-belt name-plates, belt-buckles, spoon-shaped pendants, rings) rather close similarity with other cult complexes is observed. For example, press-button mirrors were met not only in the Iyus cache but also in the Burbinsk one, as well as in the Aidashinsk Cave. The presence of bronze belt-cartridges with cuts (slits) in the Iyus cache is also typical of the Novoobintsevsk one on the Upper Ob.

Considerable number of bronze rings is typical of both, the Iyus cache and the Aidashinsk Cave. We ought to emphasize especially that the Iyus cache contains the most numerous for South Siberia series of articles found out in one and the same complex – spoon-shaped hasps and belt-plates with images of 2 bulls or 1 dragon.

It must be also noted that in burial places of the Early Iron Age of this region similar articles are found relatively seldom and at best in one or two specimens. Such similarity in complexes of articles of quite a number of caches of South Siberia is stipulated by a number of factors. Among the latter – epoch-making discoveries, social and cultural significance, as well as ritual symbolism of the articles which formed the collection of the examined cache. As a whole dating of articles from the collection of the Iyus cache keeps within the chronological period of time from the VIIIth – Ist centuries B.C. to the beginning of the Ist millennium A.D.

Some varieties of bronze-ware form a part of the Iyus cache. The other part of articles from the same collection (the cauldron, mirrors, upper and lower coverings), as well as from other analogous complexes applies to the so-called «Tagar bronzes». In the first half of the Ist millennium B.C., in the Middle Yenisey Valley, within the limits of existence of the Tagar Culture, the powerful bronze-casting centre was formed. Of high quality Tagar bronzes (cauldrons, knives, daggers, pendants, mirrors) in the Early Iron Age were widely spread all over the territory of Siberia, including the northern taiga areas. However, in the main, concentration of such bronze articles was the greatest one only in the basin of the Chulym River and that was the consequence of existence here in antiquity of the natural exchange of commodities way which bound different territories from the Middle Yenisey to the Upper Ob River. But considerable number of metallic articles of the Iyus cache is represented by the Hun artistic bronzes. Judging by the results of spectral analysis of the Kosogolsk cache, this ware was made of local raw on the base of copying the original Hun specimens. For this reason carrying out analyses of chemical composition of metal of the Iyus cache is a special

and extremely important theme of the independent researches.

In connection with this one ought to pay attention to the silver article in collection of the Iyus cache. It is a semi-spherical silver plate. Such articles were current till the IInd century B.C.–the Ist century A.D.

In Siberian caches articles of precious metals (gold, silver) represent themselves most frequently as single finds. For example, in the collection of the Kholmogorsk cache (which is rich in finds) there is only 1 silver plaque. The X-ray spectral analysis of the silver belt-plaque from the Iyus cache allowed to determine its chemical composition (Cu-1,993%; Zn-0,004%); Au-0,0015%; Pb-0,003%; Ag-96,683%; Hg-0,013%). The article applies to the group of those which contain Ag-Cu with rather high content of silver. Most probable, this article, as well as all those manufactured before the first half of the Ist millennium A.D., was made of native silver. Such production was connected with definite historical standard of methods of this metal treatment. The composite study of the Kholmogorsk cache is also indicative of the fact that the formulas of alloys used in the process of casting the articles of this collection reflect the definite stage in the prehistory of methods of colour treatment in non-ferrous metallurgy of the West-Siberian Region from the boundary of the epochs to the middle of the Ist millennium A.D.. Such peculiarity of chemical composition of metal in articles of the cache has its own rational explanation: it is so because the process itself of purposeful replenishment of the collection of any cache with metal goods in definite chronological period creates by natural way the necessary and sufficient conditions for forming of very authentic and representative excerpt of articles characterizing the concrete stage of working of metal.

For all incredible good luck of finding the Iyus cache the latter was extracted from not an accidental place. In the eastern outskirts of the Saratsk Mountain one of the rocky astrosanctuaries is placed. The latter is known as the Saratsk «Sunduk». All through the

neighborhood of the mountain (which is surrounded by the right bank of a very steep bend of the White Iyus River) is satiated with a number of various relics of the past – burial grounds, rock-drawings, petroglyphs, menhirs, «places of funeral rites», astral observation posts. The Saratsk Mountain itself is a part of the peculiar natural region – «Sunduki» («Chests»). This region is situated at the frontier of the mountain-taiga zone of the Kuznetsk Ala-Tau and steppes, as well as of swampy bogs and lakes of the country between two rivers – the valley of the Iyus and Yenisey Rivers. Judging from the numerous Alpine sanctuaries discovered in the zone of «Sunduki», as well as from the pictorial rocky temples of the valley of the White and Black Iyus Rivers in the region of departure of the both rivers from gorges of mountain ridges of the Kuznetsk Ala-Tau, one, evidently, ought to apprehend this region as the most important cultural and religious centre of the north of Khakassia from the Early Bronze Age to the final stage of the Tagar Epoch (of the second half of the Ist millennium B.C.).

The correlation of the cache with diverse cult objects may be versatile. The concealment itself of the complex of things into the earth is closely connected with funeral and ritual practice in ancient times. The composition of articles in caches (arms, adornments, waist-belt-set) and the character of their burial ‘allows’ interpreting these complexes as the material of burials. For example, the Kholmogorsk cache seems to us as remains of ritual burial of several posthumous images of the dead ones. Complex of articles of the Burbinsk cache is interpreted by T.N. Troitskaya as inventory of pillaged burial mound. Indeed, the case of location of the cache into the funeral complex of the Early Iron Age was fixed by archaeologists in the Znamensk cache (Khakassia). The collection of the Huno-Sarmatian time consists of gold ware, beads, silver plaques and silver half-finished products (small metal twigs – pivots, pieces of crumpled foil). All this was found near the lower edge of a slab of the Tagar burial mound. The finds were covered with a fragment of a side of ceramic vessel. In respect of the Kholmogorsk and

Burbinsk caches the funeral “interpretation” will be, nevertheless, the hypothetical one, since it is based on reconstruction or relative correlation of composition of articles in the burial place and in the cache. The authenticity of such point of view raises substantial doubts, even if it is because there is a certain extent of redundancy of articles for the one separately taken interment. This peculiarity attracted attention to itself when interpreting of the famous Amu-Daryanian cache was carried out; discussions apropos of this cache do not cease in the scientific environment already more than 150 years.

Nevertheless, any cache, first of all, is not only valuable articles but also their rather considerable number, in one moment concealed and subsequently extracted from earth. The number of metallic articles from a single ten (the Burbinsk cache – 12 things) and to more than one hundred (the Kholmogorsk cache – 193 things) does not correspond to the «standard» set of articles even to that of the richest burials of their time in Siberia. Moreover, a number of «symbolic» things in such caches represents itself a series of articles. In particular, 4 bronze mirrors of the Scythian time, with press-button handles, form a part of the Burbinsk cache, whereas in all burials of the middle of the Ist millennium B.C., those investigated by archaeologists in South Siberia (Chulytkov Ravine-1, burial № 35), such mirrors are represented by 1 specimen in each burial. The plenty and serial production of the complex of articles of the ancient caches of West Siberia do not allow to consider them to be those having a single meaning. It is no mere chance that the Kholmogorsk cache is connected with not the usual but the ritual burial which is more similar (by the chemical composition of articles in its collection) to the cult burial complexes. Just in them deliberately (for the limited or broader time period) the appointed categories of articles were put. In the south of West Siberia, the Aidashinsk Cave and the Sarovsk cult place were such objects.

The Iyus cache, as well as the other ones of the Cis-Chulym Area, was formed to appear as complete set of ritual attributes from the second half of the Ist millennium B.C. till the period of the active Hun influence on the Yenisey River in the

end of the Ist millennium B.C. The bronze plates with bulls and dragons, spoon-shaped hasps and the belts-buckles with immovable tongue testify to this time. The artistic bronzes of the Huns represented themselves the all-round social and cultural phenomenon. They could belong to both, the Huns and the people, which circulated the Huns' influence among the local population whose culture was similar to that of the Huns. The nearest territorial analogies of the most part of the Hun artistic bronzes of the Iyus cache are not among the accompanying inventory of the Tesinsk subsoil sepulchres (Chornoye ozero I, Yesino III). This fact might, quite possibly, be connected with cultural affiliation of the cache, so far as for the Tagar funeral rite not full-scale ware, made according to the Hun specimens, but their miniature copies were typical. Obviously, we may consider the boundary of the Ist millennium B.C. – the beginning of the Ist millennium A.D. to be the time of burial of the Iyus cache. Three-layered receptacle of the Iyus buried treasure has definite parallels in wrapping of the most significant articles well-known in the folk-lore tradition. Such peculiarity once again emphasizes the inordinateness of the complex of articles of the Iyus cache and its ritual character.

Spatial systematization of location of troves and hiding places containing iron tools in the Middle Yenisei region is possible also within the framework of two contexts – hydrographic and orographic (Fig. 1). The hydrographic context implies characterization of location of any trove (hiding place) next to different water basins (rivers, lakes) of arterial or basinal character (rivers and their tributaries). The orographic context is represented by location of any trove (hiding place) within the boundaries of a certain mountainous landscape (mountain peaks, slopes, mound feet, mountain gorges, and valleys). Based on these criteria, from the territorial point of view, the Middle Yenisei troves and hiding places belonging to the Hun–Sarmatian time can be divided into two groups. Those troves and hiding places related to the hydrographic character of occurrence include the following: Kasangolskii, Sagarkhaiskii, Uibatskii, Ust–Kamyshtinskii, 1st and 2nd Askizskii and Dzhirimskii. The discovered

sets of iron tools (different axes, ice breaks and iron breakers, stone hammers, adzes) allow not only correlating and synchronizing a whole array of the Middle Yenisei troves but also significantly elaborating interpretation thereof within the framework of their functional purpose, specialization and ritual application. It is also noteworthy that a number of troves containing iron tools were located by adjacent small hiding places with similar sets of iron tools.

III. CONCLUSIONS

Summarizing the results of discussion of the Middle Yenisei troves and hiding places containing different sets of iron tools, one should take into account several conclusions on these archeological complexes (Fig. 2). First, based on the combination of several object complexes belonging to different periods of existence, i.e. the Tagar time, the Hun time, and the Bronze Age, and sets of various iron tools, one can reasonably assume that such peculiarities of different object collections can be used to determine a relative chronological distribution of troves. Secondly, it is discovered that a number of the Middle Yenisei troves containing iron tools were located in close vicinity to the similar sets of tools (hiding places). This peculiarity is quite common for the Middle Yenisei troves as it has been consistently registered for an array thereof (the Iyusskii trove, i.e. the trove located next to the town of Krasny Iyuss; the 1st and 2nd Kosogolskii Troves). Thirdly, the presence of iron tools and sets thereof inside the trove or an associated hiding place can be directly related to a character of its production specialization (a caster's trove or a set of tools meant for mining activities). On the whole, identification and study of troves and hiding places containing sets of various iron tools opens new perspectives for relative dating, interpretation and systematization of such object complexes.

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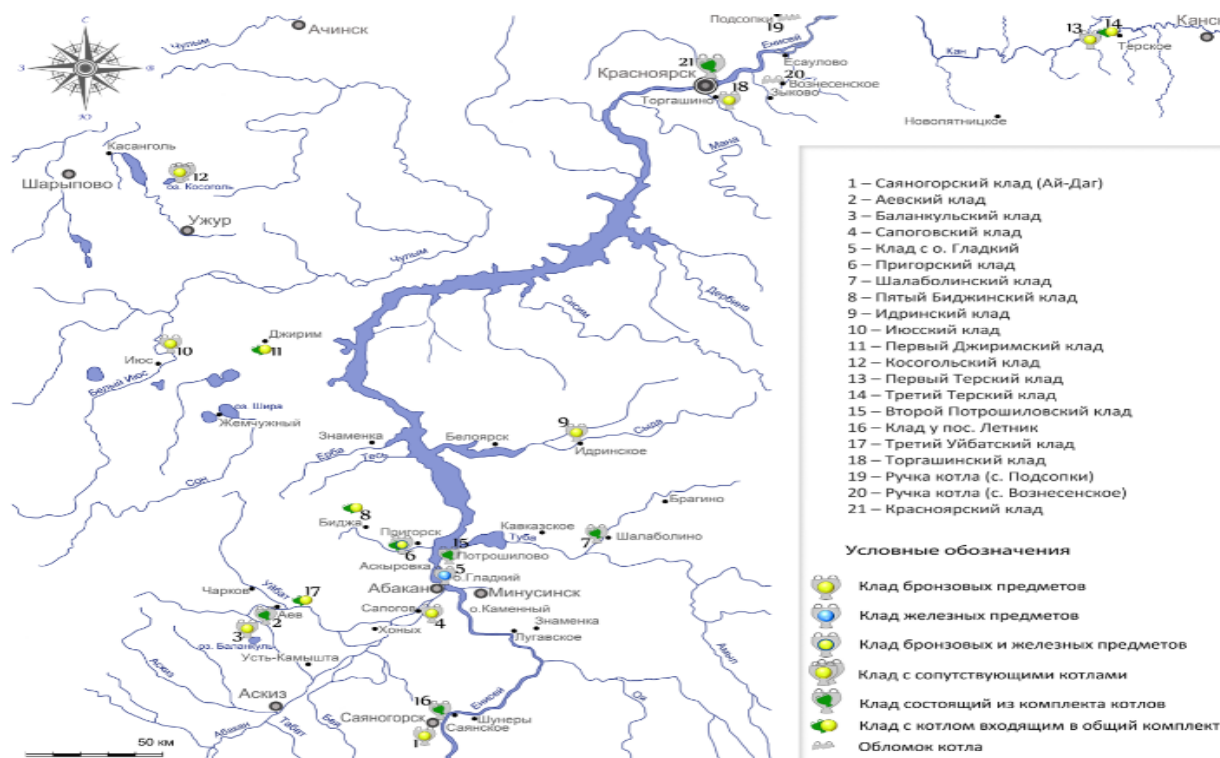


Fig. 1: Cartography of cauldrons and treasures of the Early Iron Age in the Middle Yenisei. 1 – Sayanogorsk treasure (Ay-Dag); 2 – Aevsky treasure; 3 – Balankul treasure; 4 – Sapogovsky treasure; 5 – Treasure from about. Smooth; 6 – Prigor sky treasure; 7 – Shalabolinsky treasure; 8 – Fifth Bidzhinsky treasure; 9 – Idrinsky treasure; 10 – Iyus sky treasure; 11 – First Djirim treasure; 12 – Kosogolsky treasure; 13 – First Tersk treasure; 14 – Third Tersk treasure; 15 – Second Gotroshilovsky treasure; 16 - Treasure at the village. Letnik; 17 - Third Uybat treasure; 18 – Torgashinsky treasure; 19 – Boiler handle (p. Podopki); 20 – Boiler handle (Voznesenskoe village); 21 – Krasnoyarsk treasure.



Fig. 2: Synchronization of a number of warehouses in boilers.

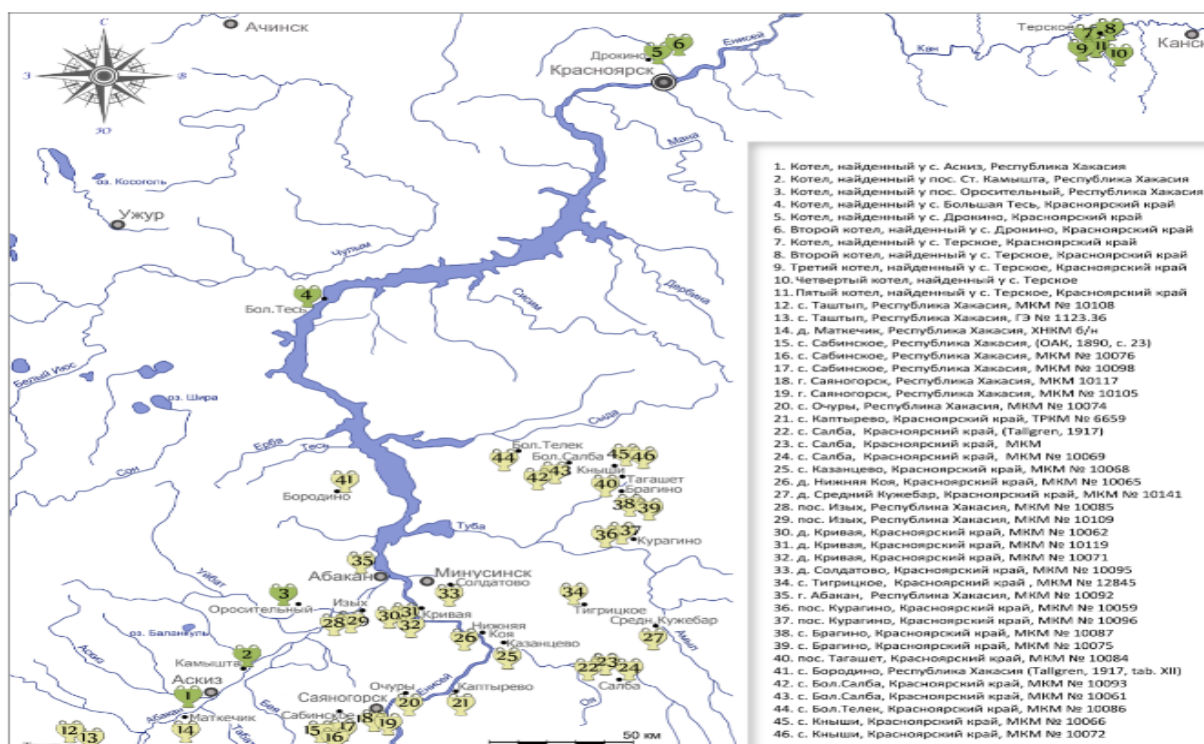


Fig. 3: Random finds of metal cauldrons of the early iron age on the Middle Yenisei. 1 – Boiler found near the village of Askiz, Askizsky district of the Republic of Khakassia; 2 – Boiler found near the village. Kamyshta station, Askizsky district of the Republic of Khakassia; 3 – Boiler found near the

village. Irrigation, Ust-Abakan district of the Republic of Khakassia; 4 – Boiler, found in 1994 in s Bolshaya TES, novoselovskiy rayon of Krasnoyarsk Krai; 5 – Boiler, was found at C. Trocino, Emelyanovsky district of Krasnoyarsk Krai; 6 – Second boiler, was found at C. Trocino, yemelyanovsky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 7 – Boiler, was found at p Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 8 –the Second boiler was found in C. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 9 – the Third boiler was found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory; 10 – Fourth cauldron which was found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 11 – the Fifth pot found in S. Terek, Kansky district of the Krasnoyarsk region; 12 – S. Tashtyp, Tashtypskiy district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10108; 13 – S. Tashtyp, Tashtypskiy district of the Republic of Khakassia, GE No. 1123.36; 14 – D. Marketic, Beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, HNCM n/a; 15 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia (KLA, 1890, p. 23); 16 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10076; 17 – S. Sabinsky, beysky district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10098; 18 g. Sayanogorsk, Republic of Khakassia, 10117 MM; 19 – the city of Sayanogorsk, Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10105; 20 – C. Ocuri, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10074; 21 – S. Kaptyrevo Shushenskiy district of Krasnoyarsk region, TRKM No. 6659; 22 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of the Krasnoyarsk territory (Tallgren, 1917); 23 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM b/n; 24 – S. Salba, ermakovskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10069; 25 – S. Kazantsevo, Shushensky district of Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10068; 26 – D. the lower Koya, Shushenskiy district of Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10065; 27 – D. Sredny Kuzhebar, Karatuzsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No. 10141; 28-village. IZH, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MCM No. 10085; 29-POS. Izykh, Altai district of the Republic of Khakassia, MKM No.10109; 30- Krivaya, Minusinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10062; 31 – Krivaya, Minusinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10119; 32 – Curve, Minusinsk district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MM No. 10071; 33 – D. soldatovo soldatovo district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10095; 34 – S. Chriscoe, Minusinsk district of Krasnoyarsk Krai , MM No. 12845; 35-the city of Abakan, Republic of Khakassia, MCM No.10092; 36 –POS. Kuragino, Kuraginsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10059; 37-village. Kuragino, Kuragino in Krasnoyarsk region, MM No. 10096; 38 – S. Bragino, kuraginskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10087; 39-S. Bragino, kuraginskiy district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MCM No. 10075; 40 – POS. Tagset, Kuraginsky district of Krasnoyarsk Krai, MM No. 10084; 41-Borodino village, Bogradsky district of the Republic of Khakassia (Tallgren, 1917, tab. XII); 42 – S. Bol.Salba, Idrinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10093; 43 –bol.Salba, Idrinsky district of the Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10061; 44-bol village.Telek, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10086; 45 –Knyshy village, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10066; 46 – p. Knyshy, Idrinsky district of Krasnoyarsk territory, MKM No.10072