

RELIGIOUS IDEAS OF THE KOBAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL CULTURE TRIBES IN THE LIGHT OF PETROGLYPHS

The article examines the religious ideas of the ancient tribes — bearers of the Koban archaeological culture based on the interpretation of the semantics of ancient symbols, reflected in bronze sculpture and petroglyphs of that era. The rich archaeological material (settlements, burial grounds, numerous figurines of people and animals, religious objects) makes it possible to objectively reconstruct the spiritual culture of the population of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages of the northern Caucasus. The work presents a petroglyph found near the Kharkaroy village, located in the southeast of Chechnya. A copy of this petroglyph was first published in a somewhat distorted form by V. P. Kobychev in 1973 without explanation or comment. Its complex plot composition based on two swastikas, allows us to significantly expand the understanding of the spiritual culture of the Koban tribes. The swastika is interpreted by the author as a model of the universe in the beliefs of the population of the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Based on his interpretation of the religious views of the “Koban people,” he argues they are more complex than considered before. The abundance of solar symbols in the Koban culture suggests the central role of the sun cult in the system of beliefs of the Koban tribes, just like in the later population of the North Caucasus. The study is methodologically based on general historical, ethnographic and archaeological methods, adequate for the studied material.

Keywords: *Koban archaeological culture, religion, cults, structure of the universe, petroglyphs, amulets, solar symbols, bronze figurines, swastika, Chechens*

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