Rock Art Research **2019** - *Volume 36, Number 1, pp. 94-107. V. I. TASHAK and YU. E. ANTONOVA*

KEYWORDS: ***Sanctuary – Spatial organisation – Bronze Age – Early Iron Age – Siberia***

ANCIENT 'SANCTUARIES' OF WEST TRANSBAIKALIA, SIBERIA

V. I. Tashak and Yu. E. Antonova

Abstract. The study of ancient sanctuaries in Transbaikalia began more than a century ago, yet the majority of these ritual structures were identified only by the presence of rock art. The topic of spatial organisation of sanctuaries has not previously been raised, thus the authors propose a typology of sanctuaries based on patterns apparent in their spatial organisation. This typology rests on the degree of anthropogenic impact on the natural landscape when employing it for ritual and other sacred purposes. In western Transbaikalia, we distinguish landscape and landscape-artificial types of sanctuaries. Based on the form of their spatial organisation, the landscape-artificial types of sanctuaries are further subdivided into circular, sectoral and linear. The study of material cultures and individual anthropogenic structures indicates that the initial construction of most landscape-artificial sanctuaries began in the late Bronze Age. Some landscape sanctuaries may be older, dating back to the Neolithic. Almost all sanctuaries continued functioning into the Iron Age and Medieval Period.

1. Introduction

The study of cult sites constitutes a highly specific field of inquiry within archaeology, directed towards understanding the non-empirical, spiritual world of ancient people and their worldviews as they are reflected in ritual-related material objects. Often, the borderline between the secular and the sacred is nearly imperceptible in modern life. In this connection, the problem of the discovery and identification of archaeological complexes and material remains as evidence of ancient ritualistic and cult practices is particularly acute, especially in the pre-Historic period, without the advantage of documentary sources.

In western Transbaikalia, the study of presumed ancient cult sites stretches back more than a century, yet, until recently, research in this field remained episodic. It is worth mentioning that, from the first references to ancient cult sites in Transbaikalia up to the late twentieth century, one of the main criteria by which sanctuaries were identified was rock art. For example, in the mid-eighteenth century, G. F. Miller associated rock art with pagan beliefs of indigenous peoples (Miller 1937: 539). He also initiated excavations of ancient Bronze Age burials belonging to the so-called slab-grave culture. Studying rock paintings and ancient interments in the nineteenth century, D. P. Davydov interpreted slab-grave burials as a type of ritual complex (Davydov 1856).

In the mid-twentieth century, A. P. Okladnikov supervised an extensive study of Transbaikalian rock art. This research resulted in a two-volume publication entitled *Petroglify Zabaikal'ya* (*Rock art Transbaikalia*) (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1969, 1970). In this work, not only did the authors describe the petroglyphs and rock paintings known at that time, but also pointed out the connections between rock art and the worldviews of ancient populations though the postulated reflection of various religious cults in rock paintings and petroglyphs. In addition, these authors proposed that rock art could also be associated with rituals and festivities that were held nearby.

In the 1990s and 2000s, archaeologists periodically addressed the theme of sanctuaries in western Transbaikalia. These were mostly publications of data from newly discovered complexes including, for example, the sanctuaries of Shaman-Gora (Shaman Mountain) — a large rocky mass with several sites of rock paintings — discovered by M. V. Konstantinov (Konstantinov 2002; Konstantinov et al. 2003). In addition, V. I. Tashak explored the sanctuary of Barun-Alan-1 (Tashak 2011, 2013), first posing the question of the existence of spatially organised sanctuaries in Transbaikalia, more complex than the simple combination of rock art and offerings.

In addition, a number of research works focus on sanctuaries as combined settlement-and-sanctuary sites (Dashibalov 1999; Kharinsky 2013), which are loci of human behaviour whose earthworks or ditch fortifications initially allow the recognition of an ancient settlement. Further research showed that such

earthworks and walls were not fortifications and, at such 'ancient settlement sites', there was virtually no archaeological material that usually accompanies settlement complexes. These cumulative data encouraged a new interpretation of these archaeological traces.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, A. V. Tivanenko summarised the existing data on the sanctuaries of eastern Siberia in two monographs (Tivanenko 1989; 1994), and he also considered the ritual/cult sites of the Transbaikal. In the first volume, Tivanenko stated that the origin of ancient cult sites and their constructions had not been investigated and developed an approach to solve these questions (Tivanenko 1989: 4). From our point of view, he accomplished this task only partly. He did not, for example, propose distinct criteria for defining spatial boundaries of sanctuaries; and he included rock art and burial grounds of different periods in one sanctuary without indicating obvious interrelations between elements. Tivanenko's proposed typology of sanctuaries is based on their location relative to other objects (sanctuaries at burial grounds, settlements and near rock art panels). In our opinion, such a subdivision is improper because it denies the possibility of ancient sanctuaries having existed separate from such complexes. Such an approach can only be accepted as part of a larger typological scheme.

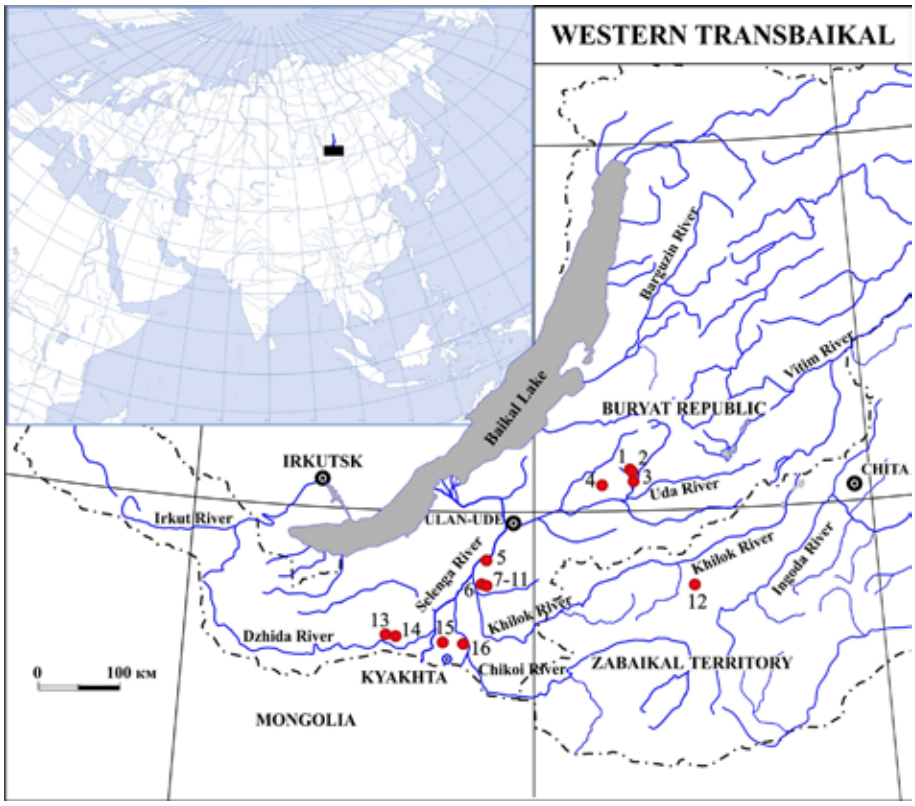

Figure 1. *Map of ancient cult centres in western Transbaikalia described in the text. 1 – Barun-Alan-1, 2 – Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische', 3. Khotogoy-Khabsagay, 4 – Barun-Lamkhe, 5 – Tarbagataysky Wall, 6 – Khiloksky Wall, 7 – Shara-Tebseg, 8 to 11 – Ger-Shuluun-1–4, 12 – Shaman Mountain, 13 – Sarbaduysky Wall, 14 – Sarbaduy Cave, 15 – Under-Ula, 16 – Koz'ya Mountain.*

Thus, until recently, the issues of identification, typology, chronology and cultural affiliation of the sanctuaries of western Transbaikalia remained out of the research focus in regional archaeology. Consequently, without precise cultural and chronological identification of cult objects, that is, without understanding who was responsible for the creation of a particular sacred monument, it is difficult (even pointless) to attempt reconstruction of spiritual beliefs and the worldviews of pre-Historic peoples.

In the course of focused research undertaken in 2011–2017, a new set of data was collected that allows a more substantial approach to the problem of identifying sanctuaries, from alternative perspectives, and with due regard to regionally variable, specific characteristics. This paper does not attempt to characterise all of the cult objects of Transbaikalia; that task would require a monographic study. Here the authors offer their insights into the identification of Transbaikalian sanctuaries based on an understanding of the deep interconnections of ancient sanctuaries in this region with the surrounding landscape. We singled out a number of features to identify particular archaeological characteristics denoting 'sanctuaries'. Yet, unlike previous and some contemporary studies, the vast majority of archaeological complexes interpreted as sanctuaries do not have associated rock paintings or petroglyphs, and not all rock art sites are related to sanctuaries.

Observations of sunsets and sunrises on astronomically important days allow us to associate the construction and functioning of some ancient sanctuaries in accordance with the cycles of sunsets during the autumnal and vernal equinoxes and the summer and winter solstices.

2. Geographical context of the research

All archaeological sites discussed in this paper are located in a sub-region of Siberia known as western Transbaikalia (also called Zabaikal'ya or Dauria), which occupies a vast area of roughly one million square kilometres from the south-western tip of Lake Baikal in the west to the confluence of the Shilka and Argun Rivers in the east and from the south-eastern shore of Lake Baikal in the north to the Russian-Mongolian border in the south (Fig. 1).

The basin of the Selenga River, which flows into

Lake Baikal, as well as the catchments of other rivers entering Baikal from the south occupy most of western Transbaikalia. In the east, western Transbaikalia is confined by the western slopes of the Yablonovy mountain range. Western Transbaikalian topography is typified by mountain ranges dissected by both large and small river valleys.

3. Research material and terminology

There are several approaches to identifying ancient ritual/cult religious complexes. Existing varieties stem from differences in the use of the term 'religion', the degree to which spiritual aspects of life are reflected in material ways, and the possibility to reveal and reconstruct ancient worldviews. In addition, researchers note that the terminology in this field of archaeology has still not been standardised (Insoll 2004; Barrowclough 2007; Rowan 2011, 2016). As is pointed out in reviews of the literature on the archaeology of religion, some authors (principally processual archaeologists) completely reject the archaeologist's capability to detect the reflection of ritual/cult practice in material culture. Another approach considers religion as having determined all aspects of ancient societies' lives, and, consequently, all material residues should be analysed from the perspective of the potential reflection of religious beliefs in such remains (Insoll 2004; Laneri 2015). Critically, N. Laneri emphasises that the sacred 'cannot be separated from the environmental, economic, political and social dimensions of a given social group' (Laneri 2015: 4).

We agree that religion is inseparable from other aspects of human life, and that beliefs can be recorded in material culture directly, unrelated to ritual/cult activity. For example, as T. Insoll has indicated (2004: 71–76), in some circumstances, palaeodiet could have depended on religious commitments, and, with a certain degree of probability, we can deduce such subsistence decisions through the analysis of faunal remains.

However, as C. Renfrew correctly notes, 'archaeologists … cannot observe beliefs: one can only work with material remains, the consequences of actions … which we can plausibly interpret as arising from religious belief' (Renfrew 1985: 12). In other words, while analysing archaeological materials, we necessarily deal with the material aspect of human behaviour. As a first step in investigating early religious practices and beliefs of a given archaeological culture or society (especially in the pre-Historic period), we need to distinguish the material core which constitutes a physical realisation of these beliefs. Recently, researchers have criticised the separation of the material from the spiritual (or ritual from beliefs) (Insoll 2004; Laneri 2015). Nevertheless, only with such a foundation is it possible to further reconstruct human behaviour and attempt to elucidate the religious implications of other aspects of human life in the society under analysis.

From this point of view, the method proposed by Renfrew (1985, 1994) is best suited to identify sites possibly related to ritual/cult activity. Renfrew defines religion following the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* as 'Action or conduct indicating a belief in, or reverence for, and desire to please, a divine ruling power … Recognition on the part of man of some higher unseen power as having control of his destiny, and as being entitled to obedience, reverence and worship' (Renfrew 1985: 11–12). He identifies two categories of data available to archaeologists investigating early religious practices which occurred in non-literate periods. These categories are 'non-verbal records, mainly depictions' and 'material remains of cult practices, including structures and symbolic objects and materials' (ibid: 12). Renfrew deduces a minimum of 16 principal general parameters of religious sites proceeding from four aspects and two essential principles as follows: 'evidence for expressive actions of worship and some indications that a transcendent being is involved' (ibid: 20). Even though Renfrew indicates that he provides a methodological framework for the study of religious sites, not merely a checklist, some authors use it in this way (e.g. Barrowclough 2010). Renfrew himself insists on the necessity of taking into account context in the course of identifying religious sites (Renfrew 1985: 15). In his discourse on perspectives of investigations in this branch of archaeological inquiry, T. Insoll (2004) urges us to consider religion as 'existing in multiple contexts', and to look 'at the overall context and … for the wider contextual associations of shrines plus houses plus funerary practices plus diet plus agricultural practices plus technology plus landscape alteration and perception, and so on' (Insoll 2004: 151). Context is designated as a key concept for identifying and investigating ritual/cult sites, and we agree with that, especially since early religious activity areas in many cultures frequently lack substantial architectural constructs, such as buildings or other permanent structures. Often they are represented by natural forms, such as the sacred groves of Estonia, the rock sanctuaries of southern Arabia etc. (Jung 1988; Jonuks 2007).

This study focuses on the sanctuaries of Transbaikalia. Earlier, we noted the lack of coherence in terminology. In the Russian-language literature, the very term 'sanctuary' and its correlation with the phrase 'cult place' is ambiguous. In publications both terms may be used synonymously or, sometimes, as antonyms based on the duration of an object's use. That is to say, religious sites used during only short time periods are defined as *cult places*, whereas permanent locations of regular worship and sacrifice with an object of worship are classified as *sanctuaries* (Tivanenko 1989; Timoshchuk 1993; Rusanova and Timoshchuk 2007; Svirin 2008; Shelepova 2011; Wang Jianlin and Zabiyako 2012; Zabiyako 2012).

There is a degree of uniformity in the Russian-language literature concerning archaeological traces of sanctuaries. The characteristics most frequently used to identify such a location include: an unusual topographic positioning of a sanctuary; sacrificial content of archaeological finds, traces of rituals and the presence

of a physically demarcated area (sacred boundary). Various researchers have added other attributes to this list, such as the presence of an idol or object of worship; representation of various types of ritual objects; presence of a rock surface with petroglyphs or pictograms; presence of ground markers of important astronomical directions etc. Consequently, we see the use of features Renfrew indicated for *all* types of religious complexes as the principal markers for identifying sanctuaries.

Results of recent work on investigating ancient ritual/cult sites in western Transbaikalia allow us to subdivide ritual/cult sites into *cult places* and *sanctuaries*. A cult place is understood as an area involved in cult/ritual practice and concerned with ancient religious activity and beliefs. Such a place can be designated by some sort of structure, for instance, cult constructions in the form of presumed sacrificial altars, commemorative memorials, ritual hearths, pits, *oboo* (or *ovoo*; a rock cairn typically marking a Buryat place of worship of local guardian spirits) and so on, regardless of how long it functioned. Cult places lacking such designations leave no material traces for archaeological study, except artefacts that could be ritual offerings (which must be falsifiable as such). Cult places may be separate archaeological sites but, at the same time, can be part of stationary sites (e.g. settlements, forts), burials and sanctuaries proper. Here, we follow L. S. Klejn (2004) who, in criticising the common division between cult places and sanctuaries based upon the duration of their use, proposed establishing distinctions based upon dimensions (elementary as opposed to complex). We refer to cult places as elementary, while sanctuaries are multicomponent sites spatially arranged in a particular way, detached from secular, mundane life and dedicated to ritual/cult activity.

We believe that we have identified several ancient sanctuaries in western Transbaikalia with minimal anthropogenic modifications, yet exhibiting distinct spatial organisation and clear boundaries separating the site from its natural surroundings. Considering them from the viewpoint of spatial organisation one should note their connection to the 'sacred landscape' — 'a part of natural environment animated by a god (or deities), involved in sacral worldview-forming and cultic human activity' (Marsadolov 2011: 25; translated from Russian by V. Bashkuev). Presumed sanctuaries in Transbaikalia are spatially organised so that they organically blend into the surrounding landscape (separate elements of which may carry a functional meaning), without disturbing the natural harmony and integrity of the construction spot. In line with the above, one of the main attributes of sanctuaries is, in our view, the context of their spatial organisation: use of natural boundaries or the creation of artificial ones, explicit spatial positioning of an object (e.g. with respect to the cardinal directions) or space within the object in a specific way (e.g. a circular enclosure).

As to the archaeological signature of sanctuaries, we refer to evidence of non-utilitarian use of an object manifest in the relevant (sacrificial) content of archaeological finds or remains of the rituals held. This is the first 'necessary ingredient' according Renfrew (1985: 20). With regard to the second — indications of the presence of supernatural powers, Renfrew himself noted that this aspect is difficult to identify archaeologically. In the case of Transbaikalian 'sanctuaries', first, not every identified religious site contains rock art, which can depict (but is not obliged to depict) worshipped divinities. Identifying them scientifically (falsifiably) is not possible in most cases. Secondly, archaeological materials from sites, where excavations were undertaken, also do not contain depictions of supernatural powers or entities. On the other hand, all analysed sites are situated high in mountains, often associated with huge rock outcrops or prominent mountain peaks. Such locations may have had particular value with respect to metaphorically bearing the sanctuary towards the sky — the upper world, the place where divinities may have been assumed to live. It is worth noting that the origins of Tengrism have already been traced back to the Xiongnu Period in the Early Iron Age (Konovalov 1999: 72). Additionally, it is known that many indigenous ethnic groups of the Transbaikal and neighbouring regions (e.g. the Buryats, Mongols, Khakassians, Yakuts, Altaians and others) worship, ascribe animate characteristics to and deify prominent mountain-tops and peaks, rock crevices and so forth (Kyzlasov 1982; Galdanova 1987; Abaeva 1992). The influence of Bronze Age cultures (e.g. the slab-grave culture and that associated with *khirigsuur/kheregsüür* tumuli) and the Early Iron Age Xiongnu culture on the ethnogenesis of the Mongolian peoples (Konovalov 1999) allows us to detect analogies in beliefs systems and suppose that the mountains themselves, crevices and prominent rocky cliffs are all indicators of supernatural presence.

4. Typology of the sanctuaries of western Transbaikalia

There are few works that study the typology of sanctuaries. The corpus of archaeological literature contains quite a number of previously classified types of sanctuaries for various regions and chronological periods, which frequently reflect local or regional peculiarities. Typologies of sanctuaries are based on diverse attributes: specific features of construction, scale, social significance, topographic location etc.

We propose a typology based on the relationship between presumed ancient cult sites and landscapes, particularly elements of local topographic relief. Landscapes are natural key elements for building ritual/cult sites since their constituent elements arrange and form boundaries of such loci.

On the first level of classification, cult-oriented archaeological sites are subdivided according to the degree of anthropogenic impact on the natural topography. At this stage we distinguish landscape (i.e. natural) from landscape-artificial sanctuaries (Antonova

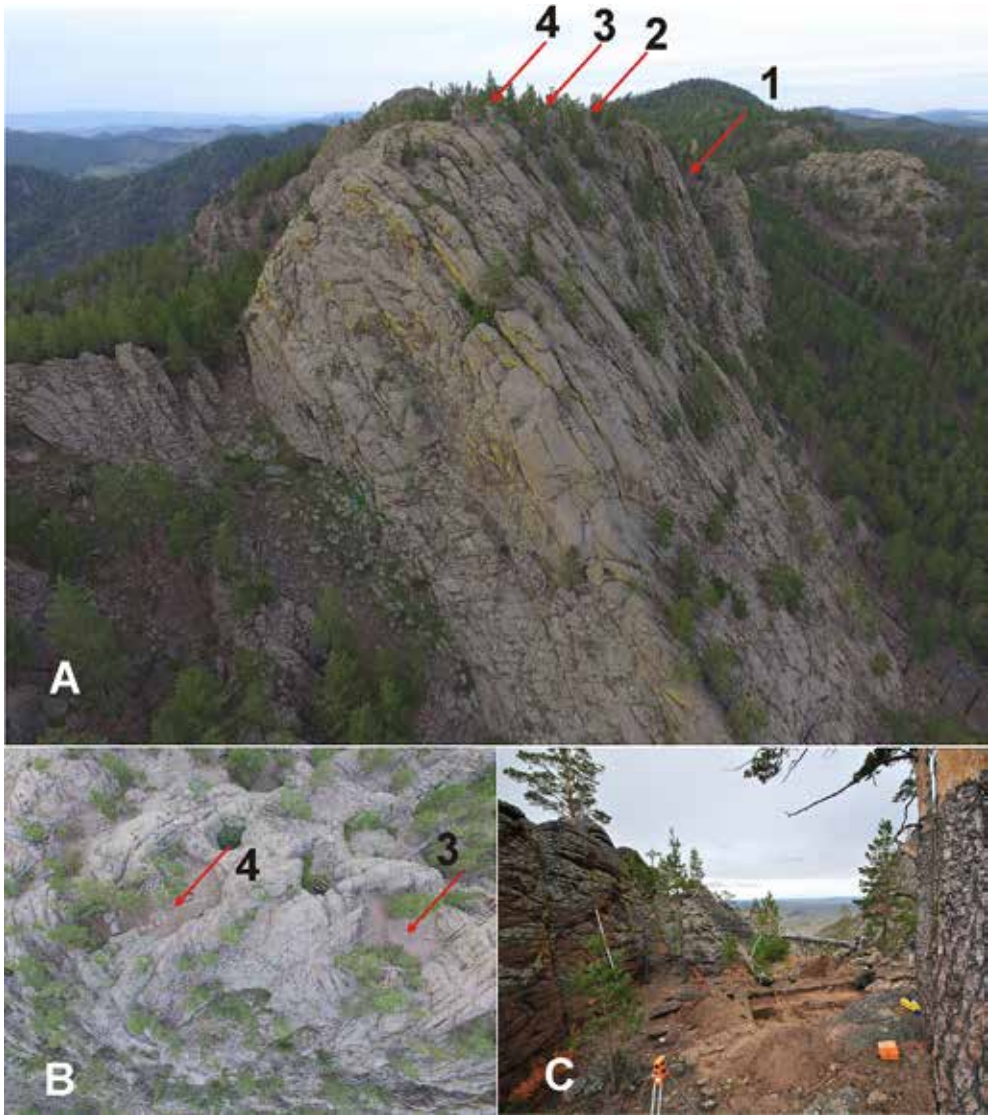

Figure 2. *Ger-Shuluun Mountain with 'landscape sanctuaries'. A – general view of Ger-Shuluun Mountain, numbers of individual sites are marked with numerals; B – aerial view of Ger-Shuluun-3 and -4 'sanctuaries'; C – view of Ger-Shuluun-1 'sanctuary'.*

and Tashak 2014).

Landscape sanctuaries include highly distinct, topographically pronounced natural objects standing out of the terrain. Such locations attracted the attention of ancient and modern people alike due to their position, form or structure. Consequently, such natural features were used by ancient people in their ritual and cult practices and formed a basis for organising a sanctuary. In landscape sanctuaries, the space-structuring element is natural; that is, formed by natural structures and terrain elements. Usually, space is arranged by a boundary defined by a cave roof, steep slopes, cliffs, water barriers etc. Human modification of the natural exterior of such landscape sanctuaries is minimal. Traces of possible rituals, including hearths with burned animal bones, sacrificial contents of archaeological finds and rock art act as archaeological attributes of such sanctuaries. Landscape sanctuaries are often confined to hard-to-reach places and their boundaries are rigidly defined by nature itself.

In western Transbaikalia this type of sanctuary is represented by cult activity areas situated on the rocky top of Ger-Shuluun Mountain, as well as caves and rockshelters with pictograms and traces of presumed ritual and cult activity (e.g. Sarbaduy, Barun-Lamkhe and Shaman-Mountain). The *rock sanctuaries* of Ger Shuluun 1–4 are located on top of a massive rock named Ger-Shuluun (Buryat: 'Stone House') (Tashak and Antonova 2017). Here, a rock monolith approximately 250 m long stretches from NNE to SSW. The distance between the foot of the mountain and the top of the rock bearing the 'sanctuaries' is 250 m (Fig. 2A). Various recesses formed naturally on the broad ridge of this enormous rock.

Ancient people possibly used the deepest cavities with flat bottoms as sanctuaries (Fig. 2B, C). About 80% of each site is enclosed within natural rock walls varying between 2–4 m high. On the southern side of the rock there are no walls. Here, purported ritual loci are confined by steep slopes and rocky cliffs. The dimensions of these sites are small: from 10 × 10 m to 20 × 15 m. At all such sites, surface finds include Bronze and Iron Ages ceramic fragments. A modern *oboo* has been constructed on the area of Ger-Shuluun-4. We hypothesise that, in antiquity, Ger-Shuluun as a whole was a cult centre integrating separate sanctuaries within its rocky body.

Barun-Lamkhe (Antonova and Tashak 2013), Sarbaduy Cave (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1969) and Shaman-Mountain Rockshelter (Konstantonov 2002) represent another type of landscape sanctuary. These sites are situated at topographic highpoints, near or at the top of mountains or ridges. The rock faces at these sites exhibit ochre paintings. Excavations and test pits yielded archaeological materials in front of and inside caves and rockshelters. The boundaries of

these sanctuaries are manifested by natural elements: the rocky walls of the rockshelter and cave roofs associated with steep slopes in pre-entrance areas. The rock art of Barun-Lamkhe and Sarbaduy Caves is typical of the Transbaikalian Bronze Age and includes the anthropomorphous and ornithomorphic figures associated with the slab-graves. Archaeological materials found here are not numerous and include only stone end-scrapers and pottery fragments from Barun-Lamkhe Cave and bones with circular ornamentation from Sarbaduy Cave. Shaman Mountain Rockshelter has yielded an unusually large number of cultural finds from several strata (projectile points and stone inserts. i.e. geometric microliths), and is unique with respect to the content and technique of its pictograms, which include a multitude of contour drawings of 'buffalos' and purported images of shamans.

The boundaries of sanctuaries located in small caves and rockshelters are defined by the confines of the natural features themselves. It should be noted that, although there are several dozen rockshelters and caves with paintings known in Transbaikalia, we studied the spatial organisation of cult centres only at the sites discussed in this paper. In Transbaikalia rock paintings are most often found near the entrances of rockshelters and caves. Less often, rock art is located inside small caves, but always close to the entrance. Examination of some caves has shown that sacrificial offerings (assorted stone and metal tools; end scrapers or arrowheads or knives and so on; decorations from different material; fragments of ceramic vessels, which were, probably, with food or drink) were left both inside and outside of the caverns, but the presumed main sacred territory and the object of worship was the internal cavity of the caves themselves.

In establishing presumed sanctuaries on the summit of Ger-Shuluun Mountain and in various caves and rockshelters, humans did not build any structures but used the convenient natural forms of the topography themselves. All the localities mentioned here are situated high in the mountains, in hidden places, intentionally hard-to-reach and quite far from water and other sources, all of which suggests the non-utilitarian character of these places. The boundaries of these sanctuaries are defined by steep slopes, rocky walls and cave roofs. Artefacts found in the 'sanctuary' areas can be analysed from the viewpoint of their use in ritual practice, including fragments of ceramic vessels, decorations, spindle whorls on ceramic fragments, iron knives, undefinable fragments of bronze and iron items. These presumed sanctuary sites do not yield the abundant kitchen debris characteristic of ancient settlements. In our view, distinctive topographic features, not rock art were the primary determinants of the physical layout of such sanctuaries.

Landscape-artificial sanctuaries presuppose augmentation and 'completion' of existing terrain and accentuation of sanctuary boundaries and/or its spatial organisation through the creation of artificially created

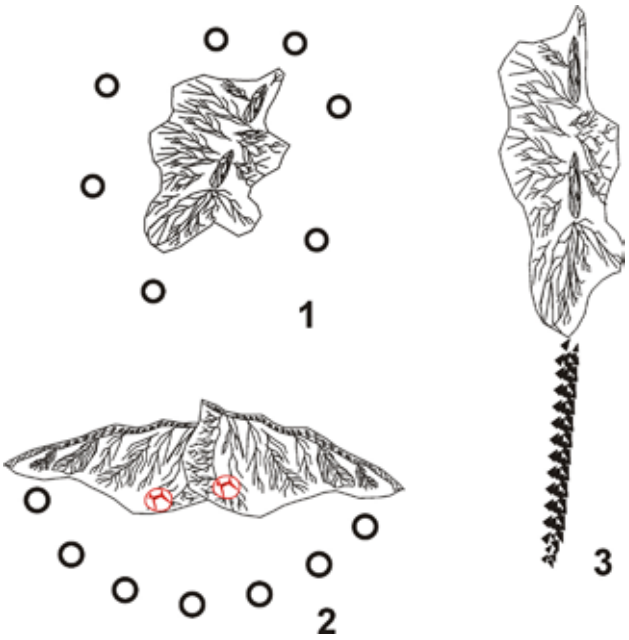

Figure 3. *Layout of landscape-artificial 'sanctuaries' of Transbaikalia. 1 – Scheme of the circular type of sanctuaries, 2 – scheme of the sectoral type, 3 – scheme of the linear type of sanctuaries.*

elements. Bearing in mind, that we primarily regard sanctuaries as features with pronounced spatial organisation, it is the *form* of this spatial organisation that can serve as a distinguishing attribute for the subdivision of sanctuaries into groups or types. Based on geometry and layout, it is possible to distinguish circular (ring), sectoral and linear types of sanctuaries.

The *circular (ring) type* of landscape-artificial sanctuary presupposes separation of a rounded area comprising the sanctuary with a central element (Fig. 3-1), which is the logical dominating feature of the sanctuary and, as such, can be manifested by both natural and artificial elements. According to E. A. Okladnikova '… the axes of symmetry — mountain peaks, massive rock outcrops around which sacred territories are formed — are located in the central part of the sacred expanses of the Asian portion of the Eurasian continent' (Okladnikova 2014: 126). The author refers to such spatial structures as a 'ring layout' of the sacred landscape, which could well have been used for the creation of ancient sanctuaries.

It should be borne in mind that a sanctuary must have a strictly defined territory. If a mountaintop, rock outcrop or cult structure is the centre, then in circular-type sanctuaries the sacred territory is situated in such a way that it surrounds the central element, incorporating it within its space (an entire mountaintop or rock etc.). The area around this element must also be rigidly outlined, and this type of sanctuary has not only sacred, but also material (visible) round or oval boundaries. The boundaries of a sanctuary may be marked by most diverse elements, including earth or stone walls, mounds or so on. We refer to sites on

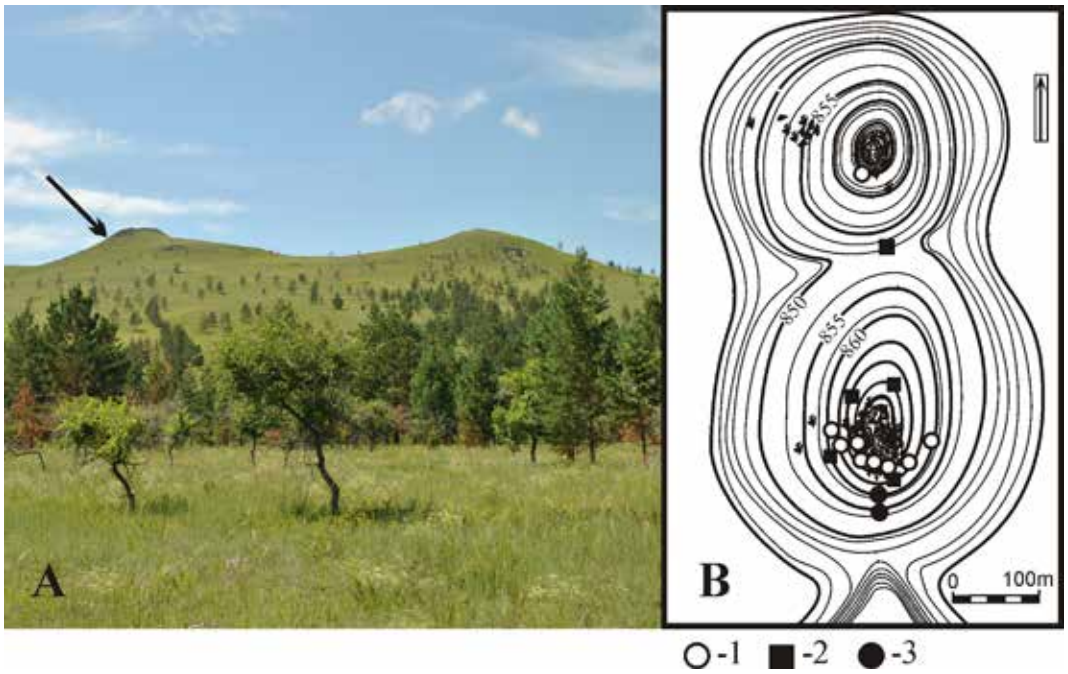

Figure 4. *Circular 'sanctuary' on Koz'ya Mountain. A – General view of Koz'ya Mountain from the east; arrow indicates the level at which the* khirigsuur *mounds are located. B – Plan showing the location of barrows around the top of Koz'ya Mountain. 1 – Mounds without a stone enclosure; 2 – mounds with a rectangular stone enclosure; 3 – mounds with a circular stone enclosure.*

Koz'ya Mountain (Tashak 2014) and on the Subuktuevsky Cape – Under-Ula to the category of circular landscape-artificial sanctuaries.

Under-Ula is an archaeological site examined by the authors in 2012. It was named after the mountaintop, which defines the centre of the site — a landscape-artificial sanctuary. This feature is located on the western edge of a mountainous plateau near the village of Ust'-Kyakhta. J. D. Talko-Gryntsevich, who carried out investigations there in the late nineteenth century, called the western edge of the plateau the Subukuevsky Cape (Talko-Gryntsevich 1900: 69). The same plateau features Bronze Age burials and a large petroglyphic exposure called Tabangut Oboo. Our object of interest is a group of stone *khirigsuur* mounds with rectangular and circular enclosures, located around the peak of Under-Ula Mountain. The artificial constructions at the site include a solitary tomb. Based on the character of its structural elements, this site can be regarded as a burial ground. However, its centre is the oblong peak of Under-Ula Mountain. All mounds surround the peak, including its northern side. At typical Bronze Age burial grounds, tombs and mounds are never located on the northern slope of a mountain. Placement of the mounds on the northern slope or at the foot of the northern slope of a mountain suggests specific and deliberate spatial organisation. By means of such placement of stone mounds, the mountain is enclosed in a ring, just as a *khirigsuur* is surrounded by its stone enclosure, thus making the entire complex looks like a huge *khirigsuur* mound. Based on this observation, we consider the mounds and the mountain peak as a single ritual complex. Today, a modern Buryat place of worship — an *oboo* — defines the top of the mountain. The sanctuary dates back to the Bronze Age based on the age of its constituent *khirigsuurs*, widespread in Transbaikalia in that historical period (Allard and Erdenebaatar 2005; Tsybiktarov 2002, 2003).

Koz'ya Mountain preserves an archaeological complex represented by a large Bronze Age burial. This complex is situated in southwest Transbaikalia, in the Kyakhta district of the Republic of Buryatia. The centre of this complex is defined by a landscape-artificial sanctuary exhibiting a circular spatial organisation. The rocky mountain peak is the centre of the sanctuary. The mountain has a conical shape (Fig. 4A). In the south it adjoins a mountain range through a saddle. The Koz'ya Mountain archaeological complex was examined by V. I. Tashak (2014), who outlined two major parts. The first part consists of four *khirigsuurs* and one slab-grave situated high above the creek valley, but at the base of the peak. The second part consists of a group of stone mounds erected on a steep slope around the rocky peak, including its northern slope (Fig. 4B).

Some stoneworks include *khirigsuur*-like enclosures. Old Mongolian inscriptions were found on one of the rocks on the mountain peak. This complex presumably dates back to the Bronze Age, judging by the age of the associated *khirigsuur* mounds. The Old Mongolian inscription suggests that the local Buryat population considered this mountain a cult centre from the late Medieval Period to the early twentieth century. It is likely that the construction of a geodesic structure terminated the worship activity of the Buryat population.

These examples indicate that circular landscape-ar-

tificial sanctuaries were built around distinct natural topographic features — in this case a mountain peak — dominating the local terrain. The second element of such sanctuaries is formed by artificial stone mounds surrounding the peak along its perimeter, forming boundaries around them and highlighting their dominant position. The mountain-top was chosen as the centre around which stone mounds were erected either for holding religious ceremonies or in the course of religious rituals.

The stone mounds in these circular sanctuaries in Transbaikalia are primarily considered not as funerary structures, but as links in the sacred boundary of the sanctuary. It is worth noting that *khirigsuur* mounds without burials predominate in the Transbaikal region (Danilov and Konovalov 1988) and, consequently, their functional emphasis is not of burial practices. Analysing the lexical meaning of the word '*khirigsuur*' among ethnic groups of the Altaic language family, T. D. Skrynnikova concludes that *khirigsuur* mounds are places of sacrifice and ritual ceremonies related to a solar cult (Skrynnikova 2000, 2008: 86). Okladnikov regarded *khirigsuurs* as a manifestation of the earth and sky cult (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1970: 91). Most *khirigsuurs* in the Transbaikal region and in Mongolia are accompanied by rings made of smaller stones located along the *khirigsuurs'* stone enclosure (these rings are *not* intentionally organised as separate sacrificial complexes). *Khirigsuurs* and the sacrifices associated with them constitute complicated spatially organised cult sites; artificial sanctuaries where the centre is a stone mound. Comparing *khirigsuurs* and deer stone complexes, William Fitzhugh (2009) concludes they exhibit a similar structure and belong to a single ceremonial complex dedicated to honouring departed leaders.

In the sites discussed here, the centre consists of a natural element — the peaks of Koz'ya and Under-Ula Mountains, surrounded by constructed *khirigsuur* mounds. This combination of constituent elements duplicates the organisation of *khirigsuurs*' cult space, in which mountain top replaces the central mound. Mountains in general and prominent peaks, especially, personify the 'World Mountain' (*axis mundi*) model. The articulation of three worlds (upper, middle and lower) is accomplished through mountains (Abaeva 1992: 45–48; Skrynnikova 2013: 162). According to the mythology of ethnically Mongolian peoples, the 'World Mountain' is the locus for making sacrifices dedicated to celestial gods (Abaeva 1992: 47). Thus, we can consider the stone mounds of *khirigsuur* with their small sacrificial mounds and stone rings on the one hand and mountain peaks surrounded by stone mounds on the other as models of the 'World Mountain,' where offerings to the sun or the heavenly deities were made. *Khirigsuurs* mounds in the Transbaikal and in Mongolia are situated on slopes and above the bases of mountains, in mountains and in river valleys. The arrangement of *khirigsuur* around mountain peaks is a rare occurrence occasioned, to our mind, principally by the specifics of local terrain relief.

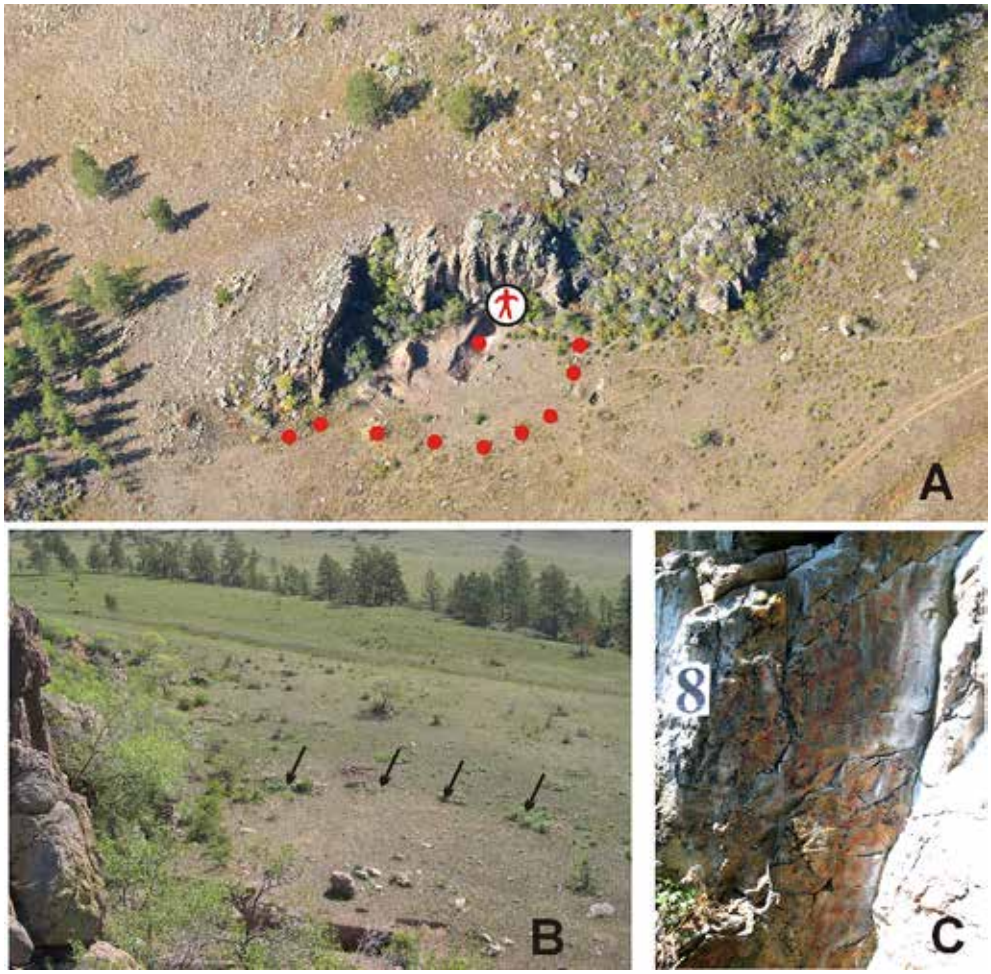

Figure 5. *Sectoral 'sanctuary' at Barun-Alan-1. A – Aerial view of the object. Red circles indicate the position of small stone barrows of the first row delimiting a site under the cliff covered with pictograms. The circle with an anthropomorph indicates the cliff surface with pictograms. B – View of the central site of the sanctuary. Arrows indicate small stone barrows of the first row. C – A group of rock paintings of Barun-Alan-1.*

Figure 6. *Sectoral sanctuary Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische'. A – Aerial view; B – north view from a cliff; C – west view. Arrows indicate a stone wall.*

For example, there are conical or pyramidal mountains in the south-western Transbaikal region and only there do we note mountain peaks with circumferentially situated stone mounds. According to A. D. Tsybiktarov, dealing with archaeological cultures of slab graves and *khirigsuur*-barrows, the unusual positioning of *khirigsuur* mounds near mountain peaks was induced by political considerations. Tsybiktarov suggests the reason was the opposition of slab-grave and *khirigsuur* mound culture bearers. The localisation of mounds near mountain peaks was aimed at physically marking the domination of the *khirigsuur* mound culture in that region (Tsybiktarov 2017: 356). Even if we agree with Tsybiktarov, in our opinion, the status of sites with *khirigsuurs* surrounding mountain-tops is, first of all, cult/ritual in nature.

The sectoral type of sanctuaries differs from the circular (ring) type in the location of the sacred area and in its spatial structuring, which occurs not around a logical dominant topographic feature but, rather, in front of it (Fig. 3-2). The term 'sectoral' is relative as it reflects a model of spatial arrangement of a sanctuary in the form of a small sector (the angle between the radii is less than, or close to, 180°), where the central portion of the sanctuary (an altar?) is the top, and the radii and arc represent the sacred boundary of the sanctuary manifested by natural and/or artificial elements.

'Sanctuaries' located at the foot of cliffs in the Ona and Alan river valleys in the Khorinsky district of the Republic of Buryatia (e.g. Barun-Alan-1, Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' and Khotogoy-Khabsagay) are distinct representatives of the sectoral sanctuary type. These are distinguished by the deliberate delineation of ground space under pictogram-covered rock surfaces. The sacred boundary is marked by various construction elements, such as a bulwark made from randomly piled stones, a stone 'wall' erected from vertically placed stones, and rows of small stone barrows. At Barun-Alan-1 (Fig. 5), the Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' (Fig. 6) and Khotogoy-Khabsagay (Fig. 7), boundaries made of construction elements allocate only the space precisely under the ancient rock paintings-covered panels, leaving the rest of the rock outside the confines of the presumed ritual area. At the Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' site, the ground space under the pictogram panels is limited by a natural rocky structure which is augmented by an artificial wall. Analysis of spatial organisation at this site indicates that the stone wall is built under the rock which itself forms a natural enclosed space (see Fig. 6A). Building an additional wall in such an enclosed space is not rational in terms of economic motivations, for instance the construction of an animal pen. There are a dozen precipitous cliffs like that at Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' on the slopes of Khengerecte Mountain, however, only here and at the bottom of the rock at Barun-Alan-1 site are ritual areas delimited by artificial boundaries. Only these two sites in the Alan River Valley contain presumed Bronze Age rock art.

The Khotogoi-Khabsagai sanctuary in the Ona River Valley is typologically analogous to the Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische', but the boundary here is marked symbolically by stones piled up, in a line along the edge of a small scarp. Such a line adjoining a stone heap at

the bottom of the rock with paintings emphasises the ritual area, but the line would not be a hindrance for people or animals.

Linear-type sanctuaries (Fig. 3-3) have a nominal linear symmetrical axis associated with spatially elongated terrain elements to which a sanctuary is confined (ridges of small local mountain ranges and their spurs, rivers, canyons etc.). It is exactly this terrain element that forms the 'skeleton' of the sanctuary, giving it a spatially elongated form. The currently known linear 'sanctuaries' of western Transbaikalia (e.g. Shara-Tebseg, Khiloksky and the Tarbagataysky Walls) are associated with the ridges of mountain spurs (Tashak and Antonova 2017). The boundaries of the 'sanctuaries' are created by natural steep slopes and the central element (the ridge) is accentuated by a stone wall constructed along its length. These walls are assumed to serve as artificial borders for separate ritual areas.

Thus, the boundaries in these linear 'sanctuaries' are formed by the terrain itself and the artificial wall is a space-structuring element, which delimits the local area and links into a chain of rocks at the mountain-top. It is quite difficult to distinguish the central site that played the role of the main ritual venue in this type of sanctuary. However, on the Shara-Tebseg, Khiloksky and Tarbagataysky walls alike, the number of areas whose size is suitable for this role is strictly limited. Such sites as the Khiloksky and Tarbagataysky walls can be classified as simple; just one wall on a small portion of a slope (the Khiloksky wall) or just one wall at the mountain-top (the Tarbagataysky wall). The Shara-Tebseg sanctuary is a large and intricate complex with some walls made from piled up stones and others made from vertically placed stones and allocated areas on separate rocks (Fig. 8A, B).

Ceramic fragments dating from the Bronze and Iron Ages and fragments of metal were found in excavation pits in the ritual areas of the Khiloksky wall and Shara-Tebseg. It should be noted that at Shara-Tebseg there are traces left by treasure hunters, who specifically sought and, presumably, removed metal artefacts that could have facilitated cultural affiliation of some of these sites.

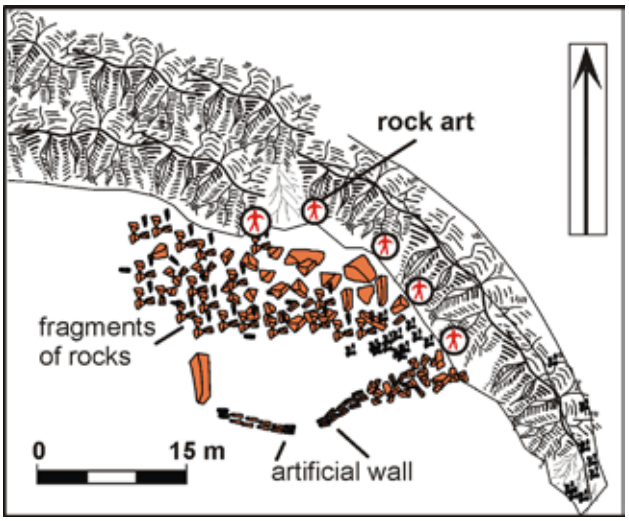

Figure 7. *Scheme of the sectoral 'sanctuary' of Khotogoy-Khabsagay.*

5. Discussion

Undoubtedly, the proposed typology of ancient sanctuaries in Transbaikalia does not account for their full diversity. However, this typology does reflect a number of tendencies that cumulatively point to a connection between such sanctuaries and the landscape, especially elements of local topographic relief. All sanctuaries considered in this paper are naturally inserted into the landscape and they employ, augment and emphasise the morphology of expressive elements of the terrain in each particular locality. Mountainous terrain is characteristic of Transbaikalia and all sacred objects mentioned in this paper are constructed on the mountain-tops, mountain spurs and at the foot of

Figure 8. *The ancient Shara-Tebseg landscape-artificial 'sanctuary' with linear stone constructions. A – view from the south-west. Arrows indicate the location of outermost construction elements. B – part of a wall made from vertically placed stone slabs. C – Transbaikalian Bronze Age slab-grave. The stone wall at Shara-Tebseg was built by the same technique used for constructing slab-grave walls.*

steep cliffs.

Studies of the territorial organisation of ancient cult centres of Transbaikalia using systematic methods began only in 2014–2015. Therefore, at present scientific data on the sanctuaries of Transbaikalia are very sparse. For example, previously there has been no concerted, purposeful dating of Transbaikalian sanctuaries, making it more difficult to assess the age of these presumed cult centres. The mode in which sacred space is organised and the means utilised in landscape-artificial sanctuaries likely represent philosophical considerations as well as technologies traditionally used in those cultures. The latter provides an opportunity to anticipate the age of sanctuaries even in the absence of chronometric dated and dating material. However, in such cases a question is raised whether the various components of the sanctuary are synchronic. From our point of view some sanctuaries were used over long periods of time; then gradually expanded or rebuilt.

In general, landscape sanctuaries, including rock sanctuaries and caves, may be considered as the most asynchronous group. As the simplest variant using natural landscapes without further human modification, such sanctuaries are likely to have been the earliest to emerge. Shaman-Gora can be regarded as the most ancient of the Transbaikalian sanctuaries. Judging from the archaeological remains recovered from excavations as well as analogies among the site's pictograms, it is probably of Neolithic age (Konstantinov 2002). Also, based on excavated archaeological material, the Barun-Lkhame 'sanctuary' can be dated to the late Neolithic to early Bronze Age (Antonova and Tashak 2013). The task of chronometric assignment is somewhat more difficult at Sarbaduy Cave, where finds comprise animal remains, including ornamented bones (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1969). Pictograms in Sarbaduy Cave are thought to date back to the Bronze Age (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1970), but the cave 'sanctuary' was used repeatedly. For instance, a circular ornament appearing on bone items derives from early medieval burials in Cisbaikalia (Dashibalov 2011). Hence, it is likely that Sarbaduy Cave functioned as a sanctuary as late as the Middle Ages.

The landscape sanctuaries of the Ger-Shuluun Mountain are similar and they practically replicate one another. The abundant archaeological material from the Ger-Shuluun-1 site includes ironware and ceramics exhibiting a specific spiralled ornamentation. Artefacts typical of Xiongnu funerary objects (Konovalov 1976), such as glass and boghead (torbanite) mineral beads and fragments of large white stone ring decorations, are present. Radiocarbon dating of bone excavated at the Ger-Shuluun-1 site confirms our opinion that the 'sanctuaries' here began functioning in the late Bronze or early Iron Ages: 2670 ± 180 BP (LU-8742). Based on this, we may assume that all the Ger-Shuluun sanctuaries functioned from the late Bronze Age to the late Medieval Period.

Sectoral 'sanctuaries' in the Ona and Alan valleys (e.g. Barun-Alan-1, Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische', Khotogoy-Khabsagay) began to function in the Bronze Age, as is suggested by the radiocarbon (uncalibrated) dating of a human bone from a damaged tomb immediately beneath a painting-covered rock on the Barun-Alan-1 site: 2650 ± 120 BP (LU-8539). Accordingly, the tomb dates back to the end of the Bronze Age in Transbaikalia. The dates of Ger-Shuluun and Barun-Alan-1 fall within the chronological range of dated rock paintings like those at Barun-Alan-1. According to Okladnikov's studies, the pictograms of Transbaikalia painted with red ochre date within the range from the developed Bronze Age to its end and even up to the beginning of the Iron Age, or from the second half of the second millennium BCE to the second century BCE (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1970: 64–89). The Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' is situated 1600 m southeast of Barun-Alan-1. Stratigraphy of the deposits under the rocks at these sites is very similar (Tashak 2009). Similarity is also observed in the organisation of enclosed areas with pictograms on the three 'sanctuary' sites of Barun-Alan-1, Khenger-Tyn-3 'Svyatilische' and Khotogoy-Khabsagay. It is likely that all three of these 'sanctuaries' were constructed during the developed Bronze Age in the late second and early first millennia BCE. Later, they functioned until the Medieval Period. In the nineteenth century, iron arrowheads were unearthed at the foot of the paintings-covered rock at Khotogoy-Khabsagay (Davydov 1856). Later on Tivanenko regarded the arrowheads found by D. P. Davydov as 'the first material evidence of sacrifices at the foot of the paintings-covered cliffs' (Tivanenko 1989: 11). This conclusion is supported by abundant archaeological materials, such as many arrowheads found in caves and at the foot of rock art cliffs in various regions of Eurasia (Serikov 2009). The Khotogoy-Khabsagay rock with the Bronze Age rock art and the area beneath it served as the sanctuary's base until the Middle Ages.

Linear sanctuaries are difficult to date reliably. There are as yet no radiocarbon dates associated with these structures. Archaeological materials are sparse and generally non-diagnostic. Constructions may be helpful in age assessment. First, of particular interest, are walls constructed from vertically–placed slabs at Shara-Tebseg. This wall construction method is similar to that of Bronze Age slab-graves (Fig. 8C) in Transbaikalia (Tsybiktarov 1998). A Bronze Age burial ground represented by slab-graves is located at the foot of the mountain spur with the Shara-Tebseg structure. In addition, there is a *khirigsuur* mound with a rectangular wall in this interment zone. A peculiar feature of this mound is a long wall made from vertically–placed slabs extending from one corner of the mound's enclosure. Today, the wall is severely damaged, but it is possible to assume that the Shara-Tebseg structure was laid during the Bronze Age. However, the Shara-Tebseg complex is multi-component and it is likely that its

various elements derive from different time periods. This is exactly why the two other sanctuaries in this group are so hard to date, based upon their similarity to Shara-Tebseg. The Khiloksky and Tarbagataysky walls contain only one element similar to Shara-Tebseg — a wall made from uncut piled stones. Meanwhile, the wall made from vertically placed slabs seems to associate Shara-Tebseg with the Bronze Age.

Besides sanctuaries with linear stone structures such as walls delimiting the cult/ritual areas on mountain-tops and at the base of cliffs, in Transbaikalia there are archaeological sites with the same linear stone constructions, but they lack a rigidly allocated space. Here, the stone walls do not function as a barrier separating sacred and secular spaces.

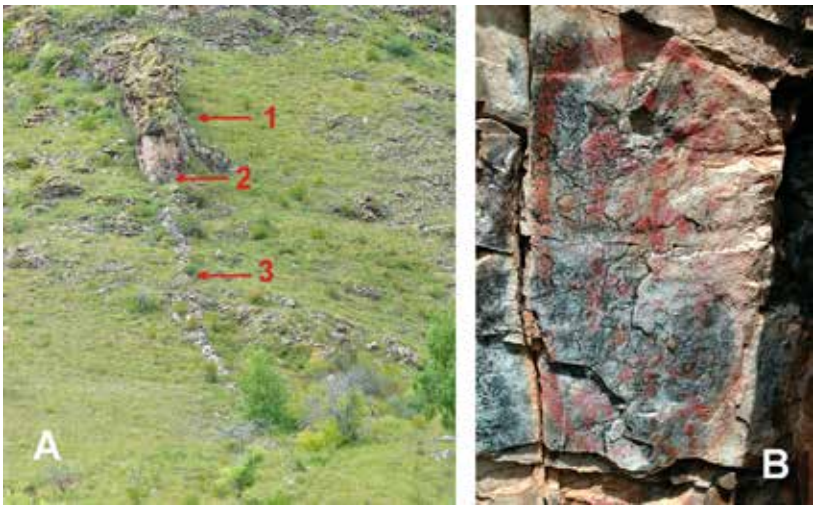

Figure 9. *The Sarbaduysky Wall ancient 'cult site'. A – eastern view of the Sarbaduysky Wall; 1 – cliff, 2 cliff surface with pictograms, 3 – stone wall. B – Pictograms.*

One characteristic structure of this type is the Sarbaduy wall (Tashak and Antonova 2015). Here, a long rock outcrop on a mountain slope stretches along an east-west line, becoming a natural foundation for the cult centre (Fig. 9A). Presumed Bronze Age rock paintings are situated on the eastern edge of the cliff (Fig. 9B). From the foot of the paintings-covered cliff a stone wall runs as a continuation of the natural rock outcrop. In this case, the rock outcrop serves as a natural foundation for the apparent cult structure, but the pictograms are the dominant connecting element.

In order to better understand the purpose of some artificial linear constructs, we applied an archaeoastronomical approach. Multiyear observations of sunsets and sunrises on astronomically important days at the Shara-Tebseg site prompted us to conclude that some structural elements of the site are oriented towards the setting sun during the winter solstice and autumnal and vernal equinoxes.

The Sarbadui wall was probably also constructed taking into account astronomical alignments. The longitudinal axis of the natural long rock covered with pictograms is directed toward the sunset point during the days of the summer solstice, and the form of artificial wall was built factoring in observations of sunsets during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes.

6. Conclusions

We ascribe the initial construction of most of the archaeological sites described in this paper to the second half and the end of the Bronze Age. Some landscape 'sanctuaries' containing rock paintings may even be as early as the late Neolithic or early Bronze Age. In this case, the lower boundary is most likely determinable on the basis of archaeological materials, not rock art. The initiation of all circular and sectoral landscape-artificial 'sanctuaries' seems associated with the developed Bronze Age and its demise. A series of linear 'sanctuaries' marks the early Iron Age, yet the majority was built in places where Bronze Age burial grounds and rock art sites were located, indicating their interrelationships. In some cases, the priority of rock art in the organisational scheme of sanctuaries is not evident. For example, the Sarbaduy wall abuts the rock with pictograms; however, its construction may have been the result of long-term astronomical observations of sunsets during the vernal and autumnal equinoxes.

In this way, a definite connection between the preferred modes of organisation of the sacred space by chronological period may be observed. Most likely, this is a reflection of the cultural affiliation of a particular sanctuary. The landscape 'sanctuaries' of Ger-Shuluun began to function in the Bronze Age, but they were still actively used in the early Iron Age, hundreds of years later.

Sectoral sanctuaries, some linear and one landscape sanctuary, include Selenga-type rock paintings, which researchers associate with the slab-grave culture (Okladnikov and Zaporozhskaya 1970; Tsybiktarov 2003). Ceramics found at the Barun-Alan-1 site exhibit lace-impression ornamentation, which is characteristic of the Late Bronze Age slab-grave culture in Transbaikalia (Tsybiktarov 1998). Such decorated pottery in the Cisbaikal region is associated with Senogdinskaya ceramics dating to the Late Bronze Age and Early Iron Ages (Kharinskiy 2005). It is noteworthy that some slab-grave culture's burial grounds are located near known sectoral 'sanctuaries'. Constructed in the Bronze Age, these were visited long afterwards, attested to by the presence on-site of ceramics from later epochs and other archaeological materials in the upper cultural strata. What is more, these objects continued to play significant ritual/cult roles.

The construction of ring sanctuaries connects them with the *khirigsuur* mound tradition of the Bronze Age. The fact that the mounds themselves, but not other

constructions, create a sanctuary and a sacred landscape with a rigid spatial orientation, not necessarily associated with funerary cults (cults of the dead, ancestor worship etc.), is reported in studies of adjacent territories. For example, L. S. Marsadolov correlated the location of mounds within the limits of burial grounds with the directions of principal astronomical phenomena (Marsadolov 2002).

The landscape 'sanctuaries' of Ger-Shuluun, initiated at the final Bronze Age, continued to be used in the early Iron Age by tribes associated with the Xiongnu alliance. The early Iron Age in Transbaikalia witnessed its rise, florescence and demise (Konovalov 1976). Linear 'sanctuaries', which we consider to be identical in general concept to the landscape 'sanctuaries' of Ger-Shuluun, are also most likely associated with tribes of the Xiongnu alliance.

A distinct geographical clustering of presumed ancient sanctuaries can be observed. For example, circular landscape-artificial sanctuaries are more characteristic of southern Transbaikalia, close to the northern border of Mongolia, where there are many small inselbergs. Sectoral 'sanctuaries' are concentrated in the Uda River Basin. The main artificial element in the organisation of circular 'sanctuaries' were stone cairns typical of the Bronze Age. Rocks with surfaces appropriate for pictograms were an important natural element in the organisation of sectoral 'sanctuaries'. Consequently, pictograms became an important structural part of such places, but not the only one. The construction of the 'sanctuaries' was completed by artificial borders and space-structuring elements such as enclosures, walls or rows of barrows.

Acknowledgments

We are grateful for the generous support our research received from the Ministry of Education and Science of the Russian Federation (Grant N 14.W03.31.0016). We are very grateful to John W. Olsen, Regents' Professor Emeritus of the University of Arizona, Tucson, U.S.A., for English language editing of this paper.

Vasily Ivanovich Tashak
Institute of Mongolian, Buddhist and Tibetan Studies, SB RAS
6, Sakhyanova Street
Ulan-Ude, 670047
Russia
tvi1960@mail.ru

Yuliya Evgen'evna Antonova
Buryat Scientific Centre, SB RAS
8, Sakhyanova Street
Ulan-Ude, 670047
Russia
yulya_an@mail.ru

REFERENCES

Abaeva, L. L. 1992. *The cult of mountains and Buddhism in Buryatia*. Nauka, Moskow (in Russian).

Allard, F. and D. Erdenebaatar 2005. Khirigsuurs, ritual and mobility in the Bronze Age of Mongolia. *Antiquity* 79: 547–563.

Antonova, Yu. E. and V. I. Tashak 2013. Barun-Lamkhe – drevnee svyatilishche v Zapadnom Zabaykal'e. *Integratsiya arkheologicheskikh i etnograficheskikh issledovaniy* 2: 232–235 (in Russian).

Antonova, Yu. E. and V. I. Tashak 2014. Drevnie svyatilishcha Zapadnogo Zabaykal'ya: voprosy definitsiy i tipologii. *Vestnik buryatskogo nauchnogo tsentra SO RAN* 4 (16): 191–200 (in Russian).

Barrowclough, D. A. 2007. Putting cult in context: ritual, religion and cult in Temple Period Malta. In D. A. Barrowclough and C. Malone (eds), *Cult in context: reconsidering ritual in archaeology*, pp. 45–53. Oxbow, Oxford.

Danilov, S. V. and P. B. Konovalov 1988. Novye materialy o kurganah kereksurah Zabaikalya I Mongolii. In P. B. Konovalov and L. G. Ivashina (eds), *Pamyatniki epohi paleometalla v Zabaikalie*, pp. 71–79. Izdatelstvo Buryatskogo filiala Sibirskogo otdeleniya akademii nauk SSSR, Ulan-Ude (in Russian).

Dashibalov, B. B. 1999. Eshche raz o gorodishchakh-svyatilishchakh: kurykane i khori. In I. D. Buraev (ed.), *Sanzheevskie chteniya-4*, pp. 109–111. Izdatel'stvo Buryatskogo Nauchnogo Tsentra, Ulan-Ude. (in Russian).

Dashibalov, B. B. 2011. *Drevnosti khori-mongolov: khunno-syan'biyskoe nasledie Baykal'skoy Sibiri*. Izdatel'stvo Buryatskogo Gosuniversiteta, Ulan-Ude (in Russian).

Davydov, D. 1856. O drevnikh pamyatnikakh i mogil'nykh ostatkakh aborigenov Verkhneudinskogo okruga Zabaykal'skoy oblasti. *Zapiski Sibirskogo Otdeleniya Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva* 2: 89–100 (in Russian)

Fitzhugh, W. 2009. The Mongolian deer stone-khirigsuur complex: dating and organization of a late Bronze Age menagerie. In J. Bemmann, H. Parzinger, E. Pohland and D. Tseveendorj (eds), *Current archaeological research in Mongolia: papers from the First International Conference on Archaeological Research in Mongolia Held in Ulaanbaatar, August 19th-23rd, 2007*, pp. 183–199. University of Bonn, Bonn.

Galdanova, G. R. 1987. *Dolamaistskie verovaniya buryat*. Nauka, Novosibirsk (in Russian).

Insoll, T. 2004. *Archaeology, ritual, religion.* Routledge, London.

Jonuks, T. 2007. Holy groves in Estonian religion. *Estonian Journal of Archaeology* 11(1): 3–35.

Jung, M. 1988. The religious monuments of ancient southern Arabia. A preliminary typological classification. *Annali Dell'Istituto Orientale di Napoli* 48: 177–218.

Kharinskiy, A. V. 2005. Zapadnoe poberezhie ozera Baikal v I tys. do n.e. – I tys. n.e. *Izvestiya laboratorii drevnikh tekhnologii* 3: 198–215 (in Russian).

Kharinskiy, A. V. 2013. Kudinskie gorodishcha-svyatilishcha: planigrafiya i konstruktsiya. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya* 2(22): 133–136 (in Russian).

Klejn L. S. 2004. *Voskreshenie Peruna. K rekonstruktsii vostochno-slavyanskogo yazychestva.* Evrasia, Sankt-Peterburg (in Russian).

Konovalov, P. B. 1976. *Khunnu v Zabaykal'ye (Pogrebal'nye pamyatniki).* Buryatskoe knizhnoe izdatel'stvo, Ulan-Ude (in Russian.

Konovalov P. B. 1999. *Etnicheskie aspekty istorii Tsentral'noi Azii (drevnost' i srednevekov'e).* Izdatelstvo Baikal'skogo nauchnogo tsentra Sibirskogo otdeleniya Rossiiskoi akademii nauk (BNTs SO RAN), UlanUde (in Russian).

Konstantinov, M. V. 2002. Drevnie svyatilishcha Sha-

man-gory (Zabaykal'ye). In S. V. Alkin (ed.), *Istoriya i Kul' tura Vostoka Azii* 2, pp. 83–87. Institut arkheologii i etnografii Sibirskogo Otdeleniya Rossiyskoy Akademii Nauk, Novosibirsk (in Russian).

Konstantinov, M. V., A. V. Konstantinov, S. G. Vasil'ev, L. G. Ekimova and I. I. Razgil'deeva 2003. *Pod pokrovitel'stvom Bol'shogo shamana: arkheologicheskoe puteshestvie po Zabaykal'yu*. Ekspress-tipografiya, Chita (in Russian).

Kyzlasov, I. L. 1982. The mountain–foremother in Khakass' folklore. *Soviet Ethnography* 2C: 83–92 (in Russian).

Laneri, N. 2015. Introduction: investigating archaeological approaches to the study of religious practices and beliefs. In N. Laneri (ed.), *Defining the sacred: approaches to the archaeology of religion in the Near East*, pp. 1–10. Oxbow Books, Oxford and Philadelphia.

Marsadolov, L. S. 2002. Novye issledovaniya na ritual'nom tsentre v doline reki Yustyd (yugo-vostochnyy Altay). In S. V. Alkin (ed.), *Istoriya i Kul'tura Vostoka Azii* 2, pp. 104–108. Institut arkheologii i etnografii Sibirskogo otdeleniya Rossiyskoy akademii nauk, Novosibirsk (in Russian).

Marsadolov, L. S. 2011. Iskustvenno sdublirovannyy sakral'nyy landshaft na kul'tovykh ob'ektakh Sayano-Altaya. In A. A. Tishkin (ed.), *Drevnie i sovremennye kul'tovye mesta Altaya*, pp. 25–29. Arctica, Barnaul (in Russian).

Miller, G. F. 1937. *Istoriya Sibiri. Volume 1.* Izdatel'stvo AN SSSR, Moskva and Leningrad (in Russian).

Okladnikov, A. P. and V. D. Zaporozhskaya 1969. *Petroglify Zabaykal'ya. Volume 1.* Nauka, Leningrad (in Russian).

Okladnikov, A. P. and V. D. Zaporozhskaya 1970. *Petroglify Zabaykal'ya. Volume 2.* Nauka, Leningrad (in Russian).

Okladnikova, E. A. 2014. *Sacred landscape: theory and empirical investigations.* Direct-Media, Moscow (in Russian).

Renfrew, A. C. 1985. *The archaeology of cult: the sanctuary at Phylakopi.* The British School of Archaeology at Athens, suppl. 18, London.

Renfrew, A. C. 1994. The archaeology of religion. In A. C. Renfrew and E. B. W. Zubrow (eds), *The ancient mind: elements of cognitive archaeology*, pp. 47–54. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

Rowan, Y. M. 2011. Beyond belief: the archaeology of religion and ritual. *Archaeological Papers of the American Anthropological Association* 21(1): 1–10.

Rowan, Y. M. 2016. Gods and scholars: archaeologies of religion in the Near East. *Antiquity* 90(353): 1387–1389.

Rusanova, I. P. and B. A. Timoshchuk 2007. *Yazycheskie svyatilishcha drevnikh slavyan.* Ladoga-100, Moskow (in Russian).

Serikov, Y. B. 2009. *Peshchernye sviatilishcha reki Chusovoi*. NTGSPA, Nizhnii Tagil (in Russian).

Shelepova, E. V. 2011. Teoreticheskie aspekty izucheniya pamyatnikov kul'tovoy deyatel'nosti Altaya. In A. A. Tishkin (ed.), *revnie i sovremennye kul'tovye mesta Altaya*, pp. 100–108. Arctica, Barnaul (in Russian).

Skrynnikova, T. D. 2000. Semantika kereksura. In N. N. Kradin, A. A. Krupyanko and V. V. Sovasteev (eds), *Istoriya i arheologiya Dalnego Vostoka: k 70-letiyu E. V. Shavkunova*, pp. 71–79. Dalnauka, Vladivostok (in Russian).

Skrynnikova, T. D. 2008. Proyavlenie kul'ta solntsa u narodov altaiskoi yazykovoy sem'i. In A. A. Tishkin (ed.), *Drevnie i srednevekovye kochevniki Tsentralnoi Azii*, pp. 82–86. Azbuka, Barnaul (in Russian).

Skrynnikova, T. D. 2013. *Kharizma and vlast' v epohu Chingis-Khana*. Evrasia, Sankt-Peterburg (in Russian).

Svirin, K. M. 2008. Gorodishcha d'yakovskoy kul'tury: K voprosu o naznachenii. *Vestnik TvGU. Seriya Istoriya* 1: 124–141 (in Russian).

Talko-Gryntsevich, Yu. D. 1900. Materialy k paleoetnologii Zabaykal'ya. *Trudy Troitskosavsko-Kyakhtinskogo Otdeleniya Priamurskogo Otdela Imperatorskogo Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva 1898* I(3): 35–76. Tovarishchestvo tipografii A. I. Mamontova, Moskow (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. 2009. Stratigrafiya i khronologiya paleoliticheskikh pamyatnikov gory Khengerekte (Zapadnoe Zabaikalie). *Vestnik Novosibirskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Seriya: Istoriya, filologiya* 8(3): 53–62 (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. 2011. Drevnee svyatilishche v doline Alana (Zapadnoe Zabaykal'e). In A. V. Kharinskiy (ed.), *Drevnie kul'tury Mongolii i Baykal'skoy Sibiri*, pp. 251–256. Irkutskiy gosudarstvennyy tekhnologicheskiy universitet, Irkutsk. (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. 2013. Territorial'naya organizatsiya drevnego svyatilishcha Barun-Alan-1 v Zapadnom Zabaykal'ye. *Vestnik Tomskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Istoriya* 3(23): 172–176 (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. 2014. Drevniy kul'tovyy ob'ekt na gore Koz'ey. *Vestnik Buryatskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta. Vostokovedenie* 8(1): 158–162 (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. and Yu. E. Antonova 2015. Lineinye kamennye konstruktsii v drevnikh kultovykh obiektakh Zapadnogo Zabaikaliya. In Tokareva, Ye. P. (ed.), *Drevnie kulty, obryady, ritualy: pamyatniki i praktiki*, pp. 101–111. Zimovnikovskiy kraevedcheskiy muzey, Zimovniki (in Russian).

Tashak, V. I. and Yu. E. Antonova 2017. Svyatilishcha i kul'tovye mesta bronzovogo i zheleznogo vekov zapadnoy chasti Tugnuysko-sulkharinskoy doliny v Zapadnom Zabaykal'ye. *Evraziya v kaynozoe. Stratigrafiya, paleoekologiya, kul'tury* 6: 264–271 (in Russian).

Tivanenko, A. V. 1989. *Drevnie svyatilishcha Vostochnoy Sibiri v epokhu kamnya i bronzy*. Nauka, Novosibirsk (in Russian).

Tivanenko, A. V. 1994. *Drevnie svyatilishcha Vostochnoy Sibiri v epokhu rannego srednevekov'ya*. Nauka, Novosibirsk (in Russian).

Timoshchuk, B. A. 1993. Sakral'nye granitsy yazycheskikh svyatilishch. In A. V. Chernetsov (ed.), *Istoki russkoy kul'tury (arkheologiya i lingvistika). Tezisy dokladov*, pp. 63–65. Institut Arkheologii Rossiyskoy Akademii Nauk, Moscow (in Russian).

Tsybiktarov, A. D. 1998. *Kul'tura plitochnykh mogil Mongolii i Zabaikal'ia*. Nauka, Ulan-Ude (in Russian).

Tsybiktarov, A. D. 2002. Eastern central Asia at the dawn of the Bronze Age: issues in ethno-cultural history of Mongolia and the southern Trans-Baikal region in the late third–early second millennium BC. *Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology of Eurasia* 11: 107–123.

Tsybiktarov, A. D. 2003. Central Asia in the Bronze and Early Iron Ages: problems of ethnocultural history of Mongolia and the southern Transbaikal region in the middle second to early first millennia BC. *Archaeology, Ethnology and Anthropology of Eurasia* 13: 80–97.

Tsybiktarov, A. D. 2017. Diplomacy of the Ancient Nomads of the Late Bronze Age of Central. In *Ancient cultures of Mongolia, Baikal Siberia and Northern China Reports VIII International Scientific Conference*, p. 348–360. Research Center of Chinese Frontier Archaeology of Jilin University, Changchun (in Russian).

Wang Jianlin and A. P. Zabiyako 2012. Petroglify Severo-Vostochnogo Kitaya v kontekste sotsial'noy i religioznoy istorii regiona. *Religiovedenie* 4: 3–19 (in Russian).

Zabiyako, A. P. 2012. Topografiya svyashchennogo. *Evraziya: dukhovnye traditsii narodov* 1: 123–137 (in Russian).

RAR 36-1282