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BURIAL GROUNDS AND GRAVES IN MEDIEVAL KIEV (9TH TO 13TH CENTURY)

Abstract. *Burial grounds and graves in medieval Kiev (9th to 13th century).* Analysis of the characteristics of the funeral rite indicates continuity of the burial tradition of the people of Kiev during the entire 10th-13th c. One reason for this was that the Christian rite started having a marked influence on the worldview of the townspeople of Kiev long before the official adoption of Christianity in Rus', and on the other hand, elements of the pagan continued to linger even after conversion to the new religion. Despite vigorous efforts taken by the princely authorities Christianity penetrated slowly and met with opposition of the people. This is documented clearly by elements of the burial tradition, the most conservative and directly related to ancestor worship. In its struggle against paganism the Church was forced to make concessions, to ignore ancient customs even if they went against its teaching. Thus, the Orthodox Church absorbed the pagan elements and folk rituals.

Eastern Slav tribes followed in their development the same general model of historical and cultural processes which had affected all the peoples of medieval Europe. During the 8th-10th centuries perceptible improvements in economy and society were taking place among the inhabitants of the lands on the Middle Dnieper. This was the result of active contact with the people of the Danubian region and the Balkans, nomad groups of the Northern Black Sea region and the lands on river Don, Slav tribes of Great Moravia and the tribes of the Baltic Sea region.

In agriculture the coming into use of a scratch plough with a wider cultivation point and cutter led to the cultivation of a vaster area of land. A transition to the two-field system was taking effect. The assortment of cereal plants expanded to include strains which were easier to mill. The result was increased productivity in agriculture. Progress was observed also in the development of crafts. Because of the connection with the population of the Saltovo-Maiatskii Culture metal-working rose to a new technological level. During the 9th and the 10th century wheel-made vessels gradually replaced hand-modelled pottery. International trade was revived. A system of economic ties consolidated Eastern Slavs with Great Moravia, Bulgaria, the Khazar state and countries of the East. Trade expanded with the appearance on the Middle Dnieper of groups of warrior-merchants – the Varangian-Rus'. This is evidenced particularly by numerous finds of silver Arab dirhams – the main currency of that time.

Slav settlements increased in size, the small family group became the main productive unit. The progress of arable agriculture, the development of crafts and trade favoured the formation of territorial-neighbourhood communities, its transformation into a peasant community.

Intensification of material production led to the regular appearance of a *surplus* which caused social stratification. The early tribal society was transformed into a tribal society led by chieftains. One of the main catalysts in the development of statehood on Eastern Slav territory which can be indicated was the ethnically

mixed formation of the warrior-merchants – the Rus' – with Riurik and his family members at its head. Having at their disposal a powerful military force and economic potential accumulated during military operations and trade expeditions the military union of the Rus', the Druzhina, or the prince's armed retinue, became the bare bones of the future state. State-building impulses also came from the powerful states of that time – the Byzantine Empire and the Khazar Khaganate.

Further development of the state body was obstructed by Slav paganism which upheld tribal separatism which, in its turn, complicated the relations with monotheistic countries. The necessity of changing the faith was understood well by the elite ruling clique of Rus' who since after 850 tried to introduce Christianity on the territory under their control. In this way the upper class of the early Rus' society made use of the church institutions to consolidate the new relations advantageous for them. Christianization was convenient both under the conditions of trans-Eurasian trade exchange in which the Rus' state was taking an active part. The gradual spread of Christianity was facilitated from above, and from below by individual conversion of a part of the population to the new faith.

Written accounts originating from the Byzantine Empire, Arab and European countries inform about the Christianization of Kievan Rus' (or at least a part of it) during the 9th century. Byzantine authors of 9th-10th note that after their raid on Constantinople (860) the people of Rus' changed their earlier Hellene and evil beliefs for the pure and sincere Christian faith (see Photius, col. 736-737). Persian and Arabian historians of late 9th-10th century (ibn Khurradadhbih, Al-Masudi and Habash al-Hasib al-Marwazi), report the presence of Christians among the people of Rus'. At the same time, information about the Christianization of Kievan Rus' around the year 988 is completely absent from foreign sources. The only exception is the testimony of Thietmar of Merseburg who nevertheless tells of the personal baptism of Vladimir the Saint soon to marry a Byzantine princess without mentioning the change of religion in Early Rus' (cf. Thietmar VII.72., p. 432 [Latin], 433 [German]). M. Braychevskiy supposed that in the 860s a considerable part of the Early Rus' feudal upper class had taken baptism and Vladimir's conversion only consolidated the victory of Christianity in Kiev. This the reason why foreign sources do not mention the Christianization of Kievan Rus' as a state at the end of the 10th century. For the neighbouring countries Kievan Rus' had been a Christian country for more than a century (on the question of the Conversion of Rus' see Podskalsky 1982, 11-24; Poppe 1982, 1997, 2007; Braychevskiy 1988, 37-38; Franklin, Shepard 1996, 54-55, 161-166). Information in Rus' chronicles is the result of new local version of history made in *Povest' Vremennikh Let (The Primary Chronicle)*. The story of "Vladimir's baptism" (so-called Chersonian legend) was inserted into the chronicles at the end of the 11th century and based on propaganda works written in the 1040's aiming to prove independence of the Rus' church from Constantinople (Poppe 1987; 1988/1989; Yakovenko 2005, 47). This assumption is supported both by a series of purely biblical stereotypes used by the chronicler to in describing the events connected with the rule of Vladimir Sviatoslavich (the profligate and idolater has himself baptized, pulls down pagan temples, builds churches, etc.; cf. Richka 2005, 44-85). It is obvious that in the 9th-10th century a part of the people of Kiev accepted Christianity in this or other form. A. Musin admits the possibility that the Rus' had mainly accepted only *prima signatio* well known from Scandinavian sagas sources as so-called "partial baptism" which was in fact the catechism ceremony as first part of Christian Baptism ritual (Musin 2002, 66-67).

Changes in the religious worldview of the people of Kiev and social and economic change in the city (cf. Fig 1 – plan of medieval town) itself are clearly reflected by peculiar features of the funerary rite observed in burials from the 9th and 10th century.

Medieval burial grounds occupy an important place in the historical-topographical outlook of the city. Their beginning and use is closely related to the development of Kiev. The burial-grounds of the 9th-10th century were outside the city. We recognize M. Karger's classification into two great burial-grounds as fair (necropolises I and II), but some corrections are needed (Karger 1958, 134-135).

Necropolis I was on the Starokievsky Plateau and evidently had been abandoned by the population of Podil. However, it was not only a one huge grave field, it was divided into groups of family mound burials depending on the features of topography (Fig. 2). We count six groups of such kurgans, most of which occupied the highest points of the Starokievsky Plateau. These groups are: in the area of the Church of the Tithes (Desyatinnaya Church [1]), the district between Volodimirsky Street and Graet Zhitomirska Street (2), Mikhaylovsky hill (Saint Michael's Mount [3]), area of Saint Sophia Cathedral (4), area near the Golden Gates of Kiev (5) and area of the Church of Saint Eirene (Irininskaya Church [6]). The kurgans in Groups 1 and

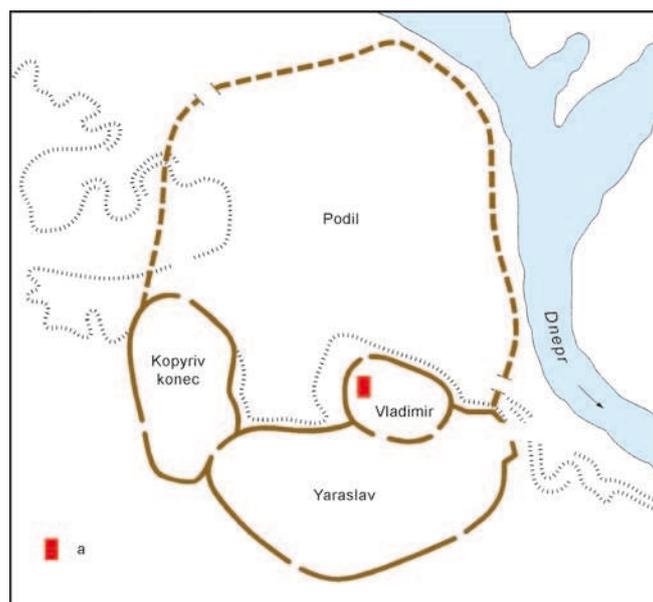


Fig. 1. Kiev, Ukraine. Plan of medieval town; drawn by I. Jordan.
a – Church of the Desyatinnaya (Tithes) Church.

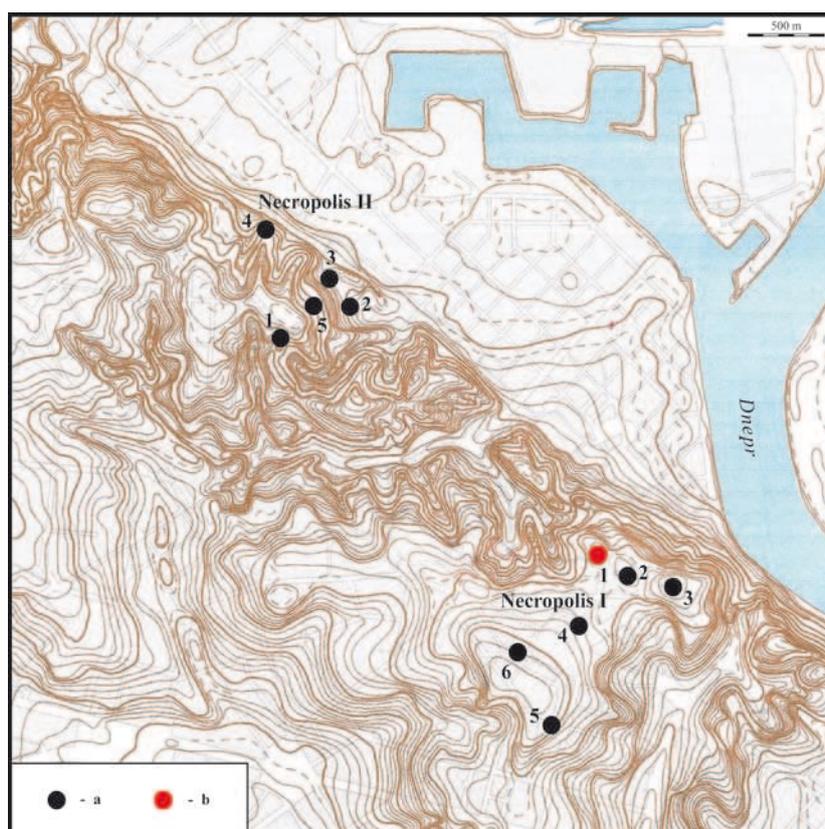


Fig. 2. Kiev, Ukraine. Modern geodetic map of the city (showing modern buildup) with the kourgan groups of 10th century; drawn by V. Ivakin.

Necropolis I. Kourgan groups: 1. the area of the Church of the Desyatinnaya (Tithes) Church; 2. the district between Volodimirskaya Street and Great Zhitomirskya Street; 3. Mikhaylovskiy hill (Saint Michael's Mount); 4. the area of Saint Sophia Cathedral; 5. the area near the Golden Gates of Kiev; 6. the area of the Church of Saint Eirene (Irininskaya Church).

Necropolis II. Kourgan groups: 1. Nizhnoyurkivskaya Street, No. 4-6; 2. Frunze Street, No. 35; 3. Frunze Street, No. 43-47; 4. Frunze Street, No. 53-59; 5. Yurkovytsa hill.

a – Kourgan group; b – church graveyard in the area of the Church of the Desyatinnaya [Tithes] Church.

2 are the best well studied due to the continued interest of archaeologists in the Kievan Detinets (acropolis – protected upper town).

Necropolis II occupied the upper flood terrace and upland above the modern Frunze Street. Most probably it belonged to a separated medieval settlement in the area of Yurkovytsa hill. It includes the following kurgan groups: Nizhnoyurkivska Street, No. 4-6 (1), Frunze Street, No. 35 (2), No. 43-47 (3), No. 53-59 (4), Yurkovytsa hill (5). There were two more groups of kurgans (6, 7) abandoned by the inhabitants of separated settlements in the area of Dorogozhichi known from the chronicles (not mapped). There is a strong possibility that the kurgan groups of interest were also organised on the principle of kinship but we have no evidence as yet to confirm this view (Ivakin 2009, 6).

Changes which took place in the worldview of the townspeople of Kiev reflect in a strikingly manner the evolution of the funerary tradition. Cremation, the rite dominant among Eastern Slavs for a millennium is supplanted by inhumation. In the burial-grounds of Kiev these two rites continue to exist side by side until the end of the 10th century. Currently we have evidence on 168 graves from the 9th-10th century, 154 of inhumation and 14 of cremation type. If we assume that originally the number of cremations was several times higher (a most part of the cremation graves was destroyed by town development, 11th to 20th century) we would have to suppose that the two traditions had the same number of followers. This is confirmed also by evidence from annalistic sources (the Rus'-Byzantine Treaty of 944; PVL, 6453 (945), p. 35, 36, 39, 232, 235, 236; *cf.* also *Primary...*, 6453 (945), p. 159-164). It is notable that the richest burials from this period are inhumations.

Burial grounds and grave goods from Kiev dated to the 9th-10th century testify to a substantial social and economic stratification of its population.

The Kievan elite buried their dead in chamber-graves made of wood (22 burial complexes; *cf.* Fig. 3). Their construction details imitate the building traditions of the forest and the forest-steppe zone of medieval Europe (the log house and frame-posted structures). Basing on materials from the grave-field at Shestovitsa D. Blifeld distinguished four types of chamber-graves in Middle Dnepr area: a male weapon burial, a male

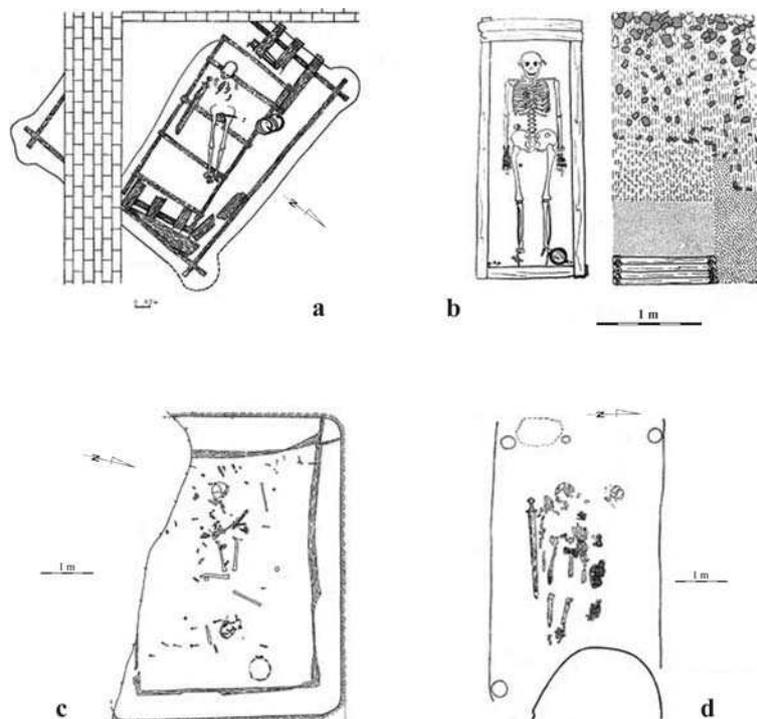


Fig. 3. Kiev, Ukraine. Examples of chamber graves of 10th century.

- a – chamber graves with wooden construction under the 19th century church of St. Alexander Nevsky at Great Zhitomirskaya street, No. 2, excavation of Institute of Archaeology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (2002), after I. Movchan *et al.* (2002); b – chamber grave with wooden construction No. 123, after M. Karger (1958, Fig. 44); c – chamber grave at the territory of St. Michael monastery near entrance gate church, excavation of Institute of Archaeology of National Academy of Sciences of Ukraine (1999), after G. Ivakin (2005, Fig. 2); d – chamber grave No. 114, after M. Karger (1958, Fig. 34).

weapon burial with a horse, a male weapon burial with a woman, a male weapon burial with a woman and horse (Blifel'd 1977, 92-94). To these we can add a richly furnished female burial. All five types are recorded in Kiev (Fig. 4). Chamber-grave burials differ from other burials by their rich inventories – weapons and horse-trappings in male graves, jewellery and dress accessories. There is no doubt the chamber-graves belong to the wealthiest members of the princ's aristocracy. Chamber-graves are a type of burial structure which in e.g., Scandinavia appears simultaneously as the process of Christianization (Gräslund 1980, 36-38, 46-47). This connection is supported by finds of objects associated with Christian worship such as cross pendants, seal icons, etc. (Fig. 5).

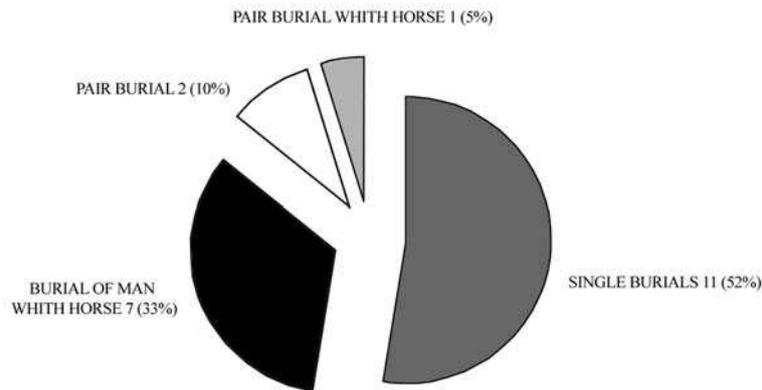


Fig. 4. Kiev, Ukraine. Quantitative distribution of different types of Kiev's chamber graves of 10th century.

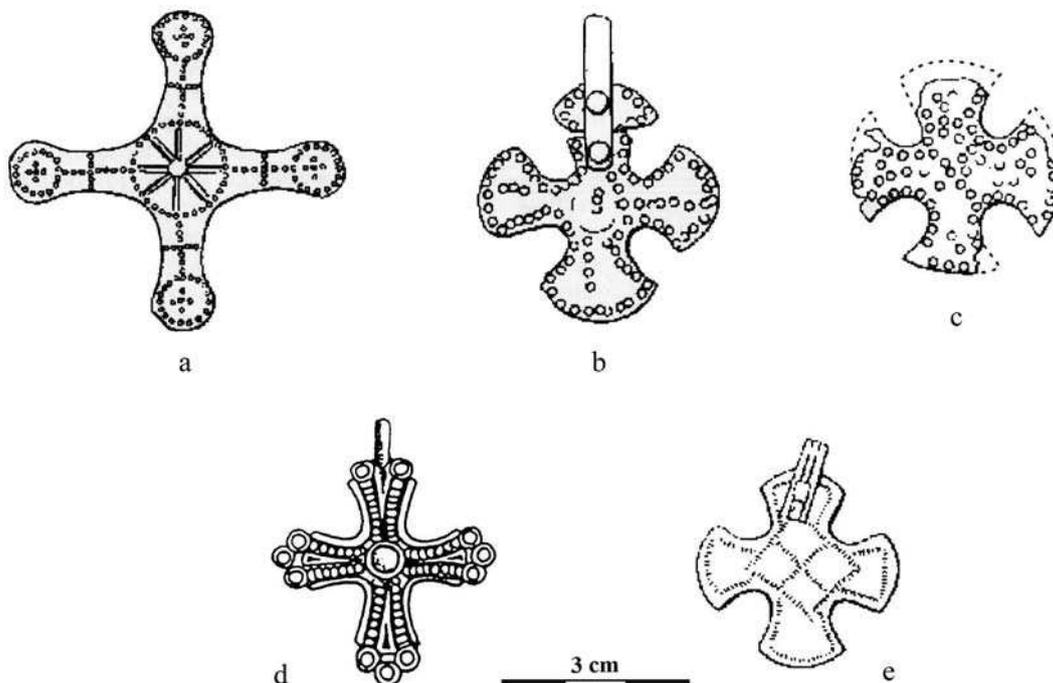


Fig. 5. Kiev, Ukraine. Crosse-pendants from graves of 10th century
 a – grave No. 110 at the territory of Desyatinnaya (Tithe) Church, excavation by the Imperial Archaeological Commission (1909), drawing after M. Karger (1958, Pl.XVI:11); b, c – grave No. 125, Frunze Street, No. 53-59, excavation at the propriety of Marr (1876), drawing after M. Karger (1956, Pl. XXIX); d – chamber grave No. 13 at the territory of St. Michael monastery, excavation of G. Ivakin (1997), after G. Ivakin (2005, Fig. 9:20); e – grave No. 124, Frunze Street, No. 35, excavation at the propriety of Rickert (1890s) drawing after M. Karger (1958, Pl. XXVIII).

During the next period most part of Kievans buried their dead in wooden coffins and in grave pits. Grave goods in these graves are as a rule poor and not numerous. A great number of burials were without any grave goods. As regards the main categories of the burial customs (East-West orientation, presence of coffin, position of the skeleton and its hands), these burials differ little from those of the 12th-13th century ones.

Features of the funerary customs observed in 9th-10th century burials in Kiev suggest an ethnically mixed population. We see here elements characteristic for Slav, Scandinavian and Finno-Ugrian tradition.

We may say that between the 9th and early 11th century the Rus' warriors, merchants and rulers was subject to a complex change of ideology and religious traditions connected directly with the spread of Christianity. Ideological change was closely connected to social, economic and state-building processes taking place on Eastern Slav territory: disintegration of a tribal and emergence of an early feudal society, of formation of the early Rus' state. Changes in worldview started with the elite who were in search of a new ideological background, better suited to new social relationships. The Christian religion became this foundation. However, during the first stage the culture of newly converted was syncretic in character where Christian content sometimes was hidden by a pagan form. These process are reflected in the burial ceremony of the people of Kiev during the 9th-10th century.

The process of conversion of the people of Kiev was complete with the official Baptism of Rus'. In 988 Vladimir the Saint adopted Byzantine Orthodox Christianity and it became the official state religion. Thanks to this historic event Kievan Rus' entered into the sphere of European Christian countries. Its Church was organized on the Byzantine model. At its head was the Metropolitan of the city of Kiev, appointed by a synod of patriarchs or in several cases by the Grand Prince followed by the election of bishops. Introduction of Church institutions helped to consolidate the early Rus' state and added power to the new feudal regime, endorsed monogamy, was against custom of blood feud, assisted the development of the written language, literature, art and monumental architecture. At the same time, the official Christianization of Kievan Rus' was not a one-moment act but only a stage in the spread of the new religion on the territory controlled by the prince and representatives of the Church. Despite vigorous action taken by the prince Christianity penetrated very slowly and met with resistance of the people. Apparently, even Kiev, despite its long familiarity with the new religion and presence of a large Christian community, was not an exception. And so, the Church in its struggle against paganism was forced to make certain concessions and to turn a blind eye to ancient customs. For its part, the Church absorbed elements of pre-Christian culture and folk-ritualism. This explains why changes in funerary ritual during the late 10th-early 11th century are not confirmed by archeology. The chamber-grave burials under mounds on Mikhaylovski hill dated to late 10th-onset of the 11th century confirm this lack of change. Noticeable innovations in the burial ceremony take place only during the reign of Yaroslav the Wise. After the death of his brother Mstislav Vladimirovich in 1036 all of the early Rus' territories are united under the rule of one man. With the introduction of "Russkaya Pravda", first Russian codex of written law, the laws of the preceding period lost their power. Kiev was expanding, absorbing the old burial-grounds. Stone and wooden churches were erected. The same period sees the founding in Kiev of its first monasteries.

Rapid development of Kiev created a new topography of the burial sites of the Christian period. Now cemeteries are established inside the city attached to the churches (Fig. 6). Nevertheless, such places were not selected by accident.

The site of the 9th-10th century necropolis with kurgan groups (1-6) in the Upper Town was later occupied by church and monastery buildings. Pagan sacred sites and burial places gave way to Christian structures. It is also possible that some churches were built over the first Christian cemeteries with the graves of the converted Kievans. This was a widespread practice everywhere in Europe and based on an early Christian tradition. On the same time, raising religious buildings over pagan burial sites was against Church rules of that age. The fear of the "the evil dead" is confirmed by ethnographic research on the Eastern Slav territory.

Neither of the above theories has sufficient evidence to be supported; future archeological discoveries may help identify the real cause of this phenomenon. For the present we can only confirm the connection between the kurgan burials sites of the 9th-10th century and churchyards.

Obviously, during this period burial mounds disappear from the city cemeteries. Unfortunately identifying burial mound remains is complicated by later urban buildings so we can only make assumptions. It is quite possible that Kievan graves continued to have small mounds raised over them. In general the disappearance of the tradition of raising kurgans in the city cemeteries was not dictated by Christian tenets but simply by

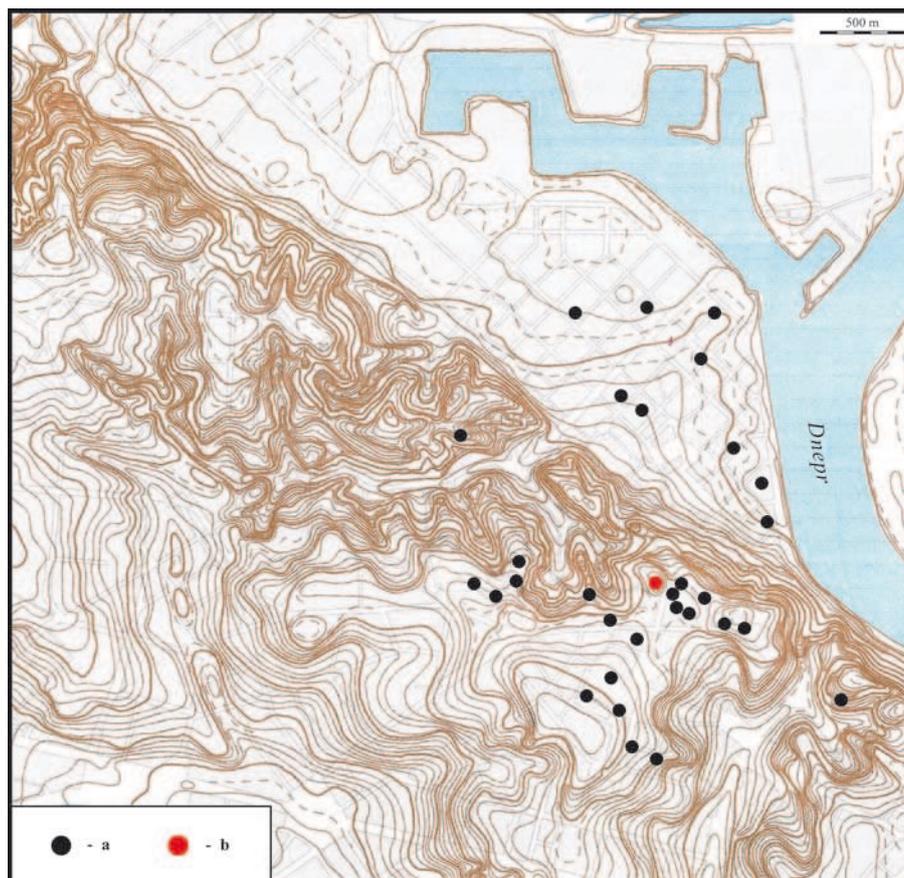


Fig. 6. Kiev, Ukraine. Modern geodetic map of the city (showing modern buildup) with the church graveyards of 11th-13th century; drawn by V. Ivakin.
a – church graveyard; b – church graveyard in the area of the Church of the Desyatinnaya [Tithes] Church.

the shortage of space within the city walls. This is confirmed by the presence of burial mounds dating from 10th-12th century in the burial ground at Kitaevo, the functioning during the 10th-12th century of city graveyards with mound burials in Chernigov, Pskov, Ryazan, Suzdal, Pereyaslav (now Pereiaslav-Khmelnytskyi; cf. Movchan 1993, 199-204; Panova 2004, 22-25).

Archaeological investigation of many years duration identified close to 1000 kurgans complexes in Kiev dated to 11th-13th century. Their vast majority can be linked into 40 burial-grounds found next to a church. A small number of burials are not associated with any town cemetery. They are not typical for the rituals of early Rus' Kiev and were discovered on town property. Most of them were burials of people who could not be interred in a Christian cemetery – heathens, suicides, sorcerers. Together with Christianity from Byzantium the tradition of cave monasticism was brought to the land of Rus' with its distinct burial customs. Cave burials in recesses – *loculi*, and crypts, were discovered in Pecherski, Zverinetski and Hnyletski monasteries at Kiev. This rite appeared strange to Rus' mentality and was not popular outside princely monasteries. Mass burials on the city limits – “skudelnitsy” (places for burial of poor and strangers) could be also the result of great epidemics. To prevent the spread of the disease the plague victims were taken out of the town and buried in a communal pit or burnt. Communal graves of Kievans who perished in 1240 are place in a separate category.

Noticeable changes took place also in the burial ritual of the townspeople of Kiev. The tradition of chamber-grave burial is replaced for good by a Byzantine tradition of burial in a sarcophagus. Shrines of saints and tombs of the clergy and prince-founders, wealthy aristocracy start to appear in the churches. The stone sarcophagus becomes an element of the interior of the Old Rus' church. Basing on their material Kievan sarcophagi may be divided provisionally into four main types: marble, slate, wood and Greek brick (*plinpha*; cf. Fig. 7). As a rule the sarcophagi were placed in churches in the narthex, aisles or in special burial annexes. Often the sarcophagi appear in arcosolia – special arched recesses (Ivakin 2008, 119-126).



a



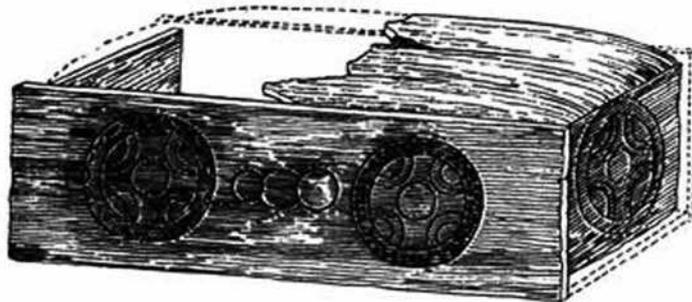
b



c



d



e

Fig. 7. Kiev, Ukraine. Typology of sarcophagus of elite burials, 11th-13th century.

a – marble sarcophagus, so-called sarcophagus of the prince Yaroslav the Wise, St. Sophia cathedral karger, after V. Ivakin (2008, Fig 10); b – slate sarcophagus, so-called sarcophagus of the prince Olga, Desyatinnaya (Tithe) church, after V. Ivakin (2008, Fig.2), excavation by the Imperial Archaeological Commission (1909); c – slate sarcophagus No.1 from the church of Dormition of Mother of God in Kiev Pecherskiy (Caves) monastery, investigations by V. Kharlamov (1982) and S. Balakin (1998), after V. Ivakin (2008, Fig. 42); d – double brick sarcophagus in the monastery of Klov, Kiev (Szovkovichna street, No. 25), excavation by P. Tolochko (1963), after V. Ivakin (2008, Fig. 26); e – wooden sarcophagus, Kiev, Podol, Khoriva street, No. 40, excavation of M. Sagajdak (1984), after V. (Ivakin 2008, Fig. 43).

Average Kievans buried their relatives in wooden coffins and grave pits. The appearance of the cemetery had not changed in comparison to the preceding period but the character of its structures had become much more varied (*cf.* Fig. 8). The poorest inhabitants of the city were provided with a shroud and buried directly in a grave pit.

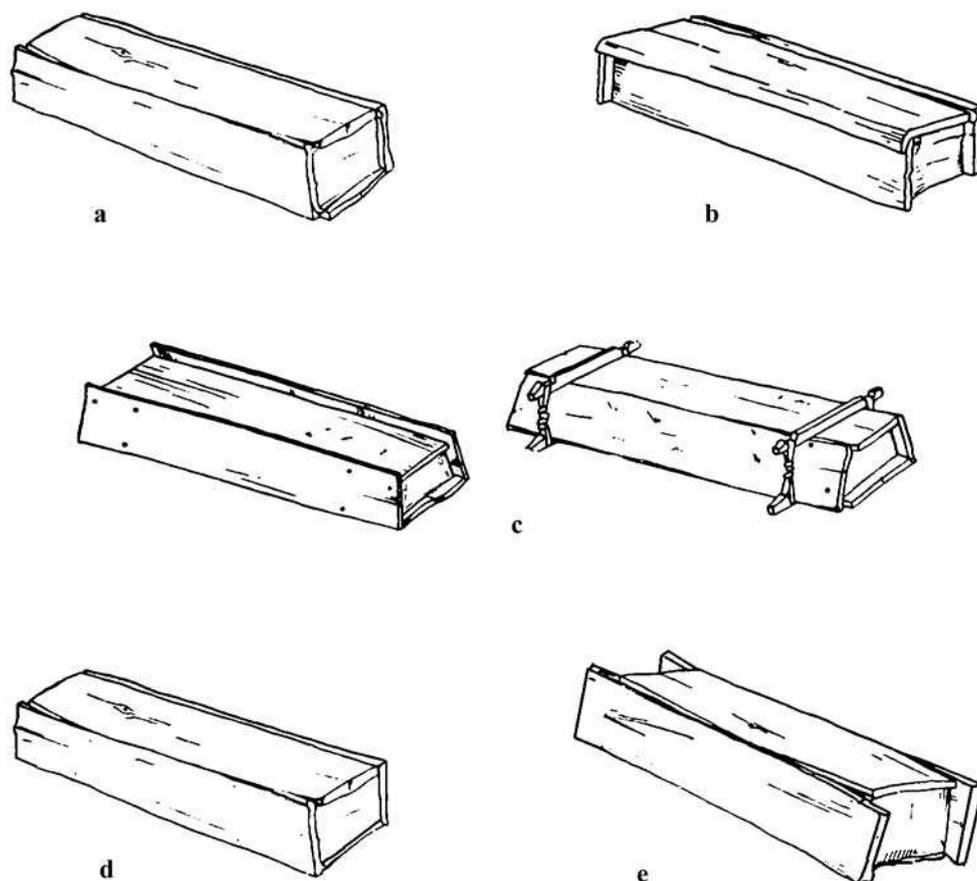


Fig. 8. Kiev, Ukraine. Typology of coffins from cemeteries of 11th-13th century (according M. Sagajdak 1991).
a – type I (А); b – type II (Б); c – type III (Б; 2 sub-types); d – type IV (Г); e – type V (Д).

In Kievan graves we now find “stone pillows” characteristic for monastic burial. Finds of cross pendants appear very seldom. Evidently this burial tradition only took form after the Mongol invasion. Lingering of paganism is document best by the presence of grave goods. These elements of the grave inventory are noticeably reduced but did not disappear altogether. Their categories are mostly the same as during the 9th-10th century. The only exception are weapons. Just two cases of weapon deposition in aristocratic burials are recorded in Kiev. I believe that this tradition continued, only these aristocratic burials mostly do not survived to our time. Standing with the church or in an arcosolium, sarcophagi holding burials of the Kievan elite were easy to plunder. Weapons in burials of the aristocracy emphasized the high status of the deceased and this is why this tradition outlived the introduction of Christianity. It is obvious that the presence of implements in graves from the Christian period are not so much a sign of pagan mentality but of the social status of the dead individual (Kirpichnikov 1966, 49-51). The tradition of the funeral meals (*trizna*) remained unchanged. Grave goods continued to be placed in graves until 1240 although we have to note that in general in cemeteries of Kiev Christian norms and regulations were followed more strictly than in cemeteries of any other town in Rus’ of the time. The key factor was presence of the Metropolitan and monasteries.

After Kiev was annihilated in 1240 its population was greatly reduced and most of its churches and monasteries ceased to exist. The destruction of the city’s economic base led to the ruin of its churches which did not have sufficient economic support. The only survivors were those churches which had strong economic

support from the Orthodox Metropolitan and the city, and the richer monasteries. Kievans continued to be buried in the churchyards of the surviving churches. The presence of these cemeteries shows that life in the city went on. The population of Kiev had decreased but continued the earlier biritual burial tradition.

The comparative analysis of inhumation burial complexes dating from the 9th-10th century and those of 10th-13th century helps to document the continuity of the burial tradition among the Kievan population in the period between 9th and the 13th century. We propose that this is explained by the influence of Christian culture. Differences in the burial rite during the two periods named earlier were dictated by the evolution of tradition in direction of reduction of the pagan features. The change of the burial rites on the turn of the millennium would be associated with the spread of Christian faith in Eastern Slav territory which coincided with the disintegration of the tribal order and formation of the early feudal state. Nevertheless the new religion could not take root once the period of Christianization lasted for over two centuries. The process could not be closed even after the official baptism in 988. Pagan beliefs and customs which had formed in the course of centuries could not disappear without a trace once the new faith had been accepted. The elements of the pagan tradition in Kiev were so strong for western European authors to claim that Rus' had accepted Christianity in name only.

The Bishop of Cracow Matthew, in his letter to Bernard of Clairvaux written around mid-12th century, claimed that the people of Rus' were under various delusions and were steeped in pagan depravity from the time of their conversion, Christ was acknowledged in name only but was rejected in essence at heart. The people do not wish to be one either with the Greek or the Latin Church, but to be different from either and not to share the sacraments with them (*cf. Kodeks...*, No. 17, p. 43-46; *Urkundenbuch*, No. 11, p. 8-9; see also for Russian translation: Shchavelova 1976, 114-115). O. Rapov was right to observe that the Orthodox Church had absorbed those components of paganism which did not impede the progress of development of the feudal system but opposed strongly traditions which could cause losses for the feudal class (ritual manslaughter, polygamy, private war; *cf. Rapov 1988, 405*). Burial traditions do not belong to this list. Also, not by accident they are considered to be the most conservative, connected with ancestor worship and kinship ties. The Church found it the most difficult to fight against burial customs. This explains the presence of pagan elements in the funerary tradition documented in Kiev of the 12th-13th century.

During the period of early statehood 11th-13th the Church was unable to achieve strict adherence to the rules of Christian burial. This is testified by the presence of mound burials, non-adherence to the prescribed East-West orientation of the graves, absence of strict regulations on the position of the hands of the body, presence of grave goods and absence of objects associated with Christian worship (crosses, icons). Never mind that Kiev was the religious capital, a centre for the conversion of all the Eastern Slav lands between the 11th and 13th century and a few centuries after the Batu Khan's invasion. After 1240 the Church remains the only surviving organized institution to act on the awareness conscience of the people of Rus' devastated by the scale of the disaster which had befallen them. Only then we see the disappearance of the main lingering elements of paganism in the burial tradition of the people living on the Middle Dnepr, although their distant echoes altered across the ages have reached our time.

Резюме. *Погребальные памятники древнерусского Киева X-XIII вв.* Ограниченность сведений письменных памятников превращает данные археологии в важнейший источник информации, позволяющей изучать процессы христианизации населения раннесредневекового Киева. Наиболее информативными являются погребальные комплексы. На сегодняшний день на территории древнерусского города зафиксировано более 1000 погребальных комплексов. При этом 167 погребальных комплексов относятся к X в., что соответствует переходному периоду от язычества к христианству, и 967 захоронений датируются XI-XIII вв., когда христианство уже было господствующей религией. Анализ особенностей погребального обряда свидетельствует о наличии континуитета погребальной традиции населения Киева в течение всей древнерусской эпохи (X-XIII вв.). Это объясняется как существенным влиянием христианской обрядности на мировоззрение киевлян еще до официального принятия христианства, так и языческими реминисценциями в период господства церковного мировоззрения. В особенной степени язычество отразилось в погребальных традициях, наиболее консервативных и непосредственно связанных с культом предков. В своей борьбе с язычеством Церковь была вынуждена не замечать древние обычаи, которые противоречили ее канонам. Одновременно она «впитывала» языческие элементы и народную обрядность. Изменения в древнерусском погребальном обряде X-XIII вв. продиктованы эволюцией традиции в сторону трансформации языческих черт и их поглощения христианским мировосприятием. Так, инвентарь в захоронениях христианской эпохи утрачивает свое сакральное значение и превращается в новую социальную (феодалную) символику, подчеркивающую общественный статус погребенного человека. Окончательную победу христианства над язычеством принято связывать с XIV-XV вв., когда Церковь, являясь единственной консолидирующей силой и институтом на землях Украины, распространила свое влияния на все сферы человеческой жизни.

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