

“ZOROASTRIAN” (= “SOGDIAN”?) BURIALS OF THE CHUI VALLEY

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Abstract

Migration and infiltration are forms of mobility. They are manifested as a movement of a group of people, and/or ideas and cultural standards. In relation to the Medieval Central Asia, there is a long-standing question of "Sogdian colonization" that has a particular relevance to the Chui Valley. The question was addressed in different ways: from the theory of migration (the resettlement of large groups of people and establishment of cities by them in the Chui Valley), to the theory of infiltration (the entry of small groups of Sogdians into local communities, which led to the adoption of "Sogdian cultural standards" locally). One of the indicators of the presence of the Sogdians is considered to be the spread of Zoroastrian funeral rituals. "Zoroastrian" burials were recorded in the Chui valley by various researchers, but there is no summarising work on this topic. Our report provides a historiographical overview of all the "Zoroastrian" burials of the Chui Valley, noted in publications for more than a century. An analysis of factual evidence brought together made it possible to create a typology of such burials. The proportion of "Zoroastrian" burials among the totality of studied medieval burials of the settled population of the Chui Valley was also determined. The next stage is a comparison of data on "Zoroastrian" burials in the Chui valley and in Sogd proper. The result of the comparison gives grounds for conclusions about the "Sogdian" nature of the settled population of the Chui valley.