

**APPLICATION OF BAIKAL CAVES  
IN HUMAN LIFE**

**ČLOVEK IN JAME V PRIBAJKALJU**

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**Izvleček**

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**A.G. Filippov & O.I. Goryunova & V.M. Vetrov & N.E. Berdnikova: Človek in jame v Pribajkalju**

Človek je v razne namene (zatočišča, skrivališča, pokopališča) uporabljal pribajkalske jame od paleolitika (mousterien) do moderne etnografske dobe (16. - 19. stol.). Avtorji poimensko naštevajo 13 jam, v katerih so odkrili sledi človekovega bivanja ali njegove dejavnosti.

Ključne besede: speleologija, antropospeleologija, arheologija, etnografija, človek in jama

**Abstract**

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**A.G. Filippov & O.I. Goryunova & V.M. Vetrov & N.E. Berdnikova: Application of Baikal caves in human life**

Man used for different purposes (as temporal sites-refuges, caches, burial sites) Baikal caves from the Palaeolithic (Mousterien) to Contemporary Ethnography Period (16 - 19 Cent. A.C.). The authors enumerate 13 caves where the remains of human dwelling or their activities were found

Key words: speleology, anthropospeleology, archaeology, ethnography, man and cave.

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This report is based mostly on materials which were obtained during 1987-1990 by Complex Research Speleological Expedition. This expedition was organized by Dr. A.G. Filippov for research of Pribaikal National Park caves. During 1987-1989 the archaeological groups of the Archaeology and Ethnology Laboratory from Irkutsk University under the leadership of Dr. O.I. Goryunova took part in the expedition. Complementary materials were received as a result of short field investigation in 1991-1993. Among 56 caves which were investigated, only 22 contain archaeological artifacts (fig. 1). Beside our own collections, we analysed collections kept in Irkutsk State Regional Museum and its branch in Khuzhir settlement on Olkhon Island.

The first archaeological findings in Baikal caves were made by Prince P.A. Kropotkin in 1865 and by Polish exile I.D. Tchersky in 1879 and 1880 . In 1913 and 1916 B.E. Petry who was a founder of "Irkutsk archaeological school" discovered two cave archaeological sites of V-X centuries A.C. In the 1920s, archaeologists P.P. Khoroshikh, I.I. Veselov, and G.F. Debets collected floor artifacts and conducted insignificant excavations in caves already known.

In the 1940s and 1950s this century, P.P. Khoroshikh carried out excavations in a number of caves and published the first generalized papers. He also made an attempt to define functional application of caves. In his opinion, in the Neolithic period these caves were used as temporal seasonal dwellings. In later time (in the Iron Age) "some caves which were situated high in the mountains served as sentry posts and were used by ancient peoples for giving of fire and smoke signal" (Khoroshikh, 1955).

Interpretation of most of Baikal cave archaeological materials is mainly based on analogies known from publication on some burial-grounds, multi-layered stratified settlements-site of ancient people. The interpretation becomes complicated due to the absence of distinctive criteria of division of medieval complexes, especially Turkish and Early Mongolian periods (Konovalov, Danilov, 1981; Mandelshtam, 1974). The same sites or similar ones were used for proof of their Early Mongolian (Okladnikov, 1958; Sedyakina, 1965), Early Buryat (Sarkisov, Svinin, 1978) or Turkish (Konstantinov, 1970) origin.

The majority of Baikal caves containing cultural remains are accessible and sufficiently applicable for people staying during for long or short times. Some caves served as caches (e.g., Boro-Khukhan, Kurtun-7, Oktyabrskaya caves) and as burial-grounds (Vsadnik, Shida caves). Archaeological artifacts as a rule are situated in light and dry entrance parts of caves. Korallitovy Hall of

Bolshaya Baydinskaya cave is the only exception as it is sufficiently far from the surface. People repeatedly attended that Hall from Bronze to the transitional period from Late Bronze to Early Iron Ages (VII-V centuries B.C.).

All the "cave-snares" are sterile from the archaeological point of view. Some of them contain human bones (e.g. Vologodskogo and Sluchaynaya caves which entrances are vertical wells). However, the presence of human bones in these caves should be considered perhaps as consequences of accidents.

The traces of the first human use of Baikal caves are related to Musterian Epoch. They were exposed in Kurtun-1 cave situated in rocks of Primorsky ridge. Here there was found remains of a bonfire in the layer of brown clays with carbonate rocks debris at depth of 0.9-1.0 m. Radiocarbon dating on wood coal is 44715+5740 (CO AH 2902). The location of bonfire remains in the low mouth part of the hole, which was used in different times by cave hyena, brown bears, foxes and wolves as a den, allows us to suppose that the fire was used with the aim of hunting predators. Later, the cave was used as

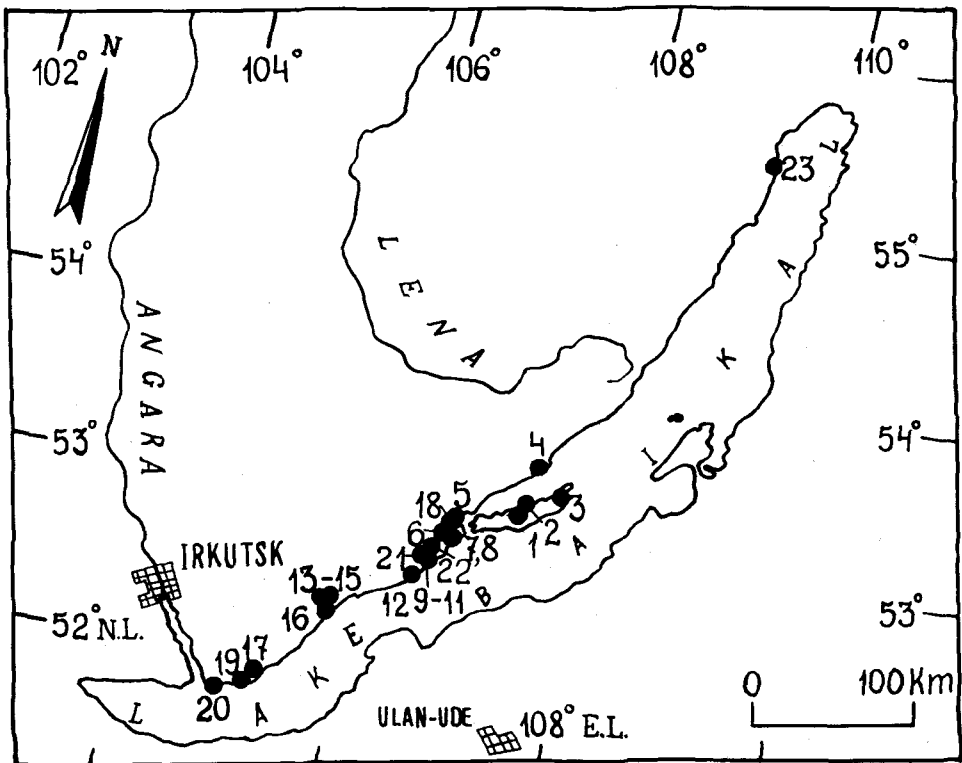


Fig. 1. Cave archaeological sites on the west coast of Baikal. Names of the caves are given on fig. 2.

No	Epoch	Neolithic	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Bronze	Early Iron	Late Iron	Early Iron	Late Iron	Early Iron	Mesolithic	Neolithic	Neolithic
		thousand years B.C.	centuries										
The age		> 40	7-8	2,5-4	XVIII-XBC	VII-V BC	VBC-VAC	V-X AC	XI-XIV AC	XVI-XIX AC			
Name of the caves													
1	Boro-Khukhan			⊙				⊙					
2	Shamanskaya			⊙									⊙
3	Uzur			⊙									⊙
4	Zunduk			⊙									⊙
5	Shida												⊙
6	Khurganskaya				⊙				⊙				⊙
7	Bolshaya Baydinskaya					⊙							⊙
8	Malaya Baydinskaya					⊙							⊙
9	Aya							⊙					⊙
10	Vologodskogo												⊙
11	Oktyabrskaya												⊙
12	Sagan-Zaba												⊙
13	Kurtun-1	⊙						⊙					⊙
14	Kurtun-7												⊙
15	Kurtun-13												⊙
16	Kurta												⊙
17	Kadilinskaya					⊙		⊙					⊙
18	Vsadnik					⊙		⊙					⊙
19	SKriper			⊙		⊙		⊙					⊙
20	Obukheikha			⊙		⊙		⊙					⊙
21	Tonta			⊙		⊙		⊙					⊙
23	Sluchaynaya					⊙		⊙					⊙
23	Bolshaya Ludarskaya	⊙											⊙
Number of the caves		1	1	6	2	5	1	9	5	10			

Fig. 2. Application of Baikal caves.

⊙ functional application of cave is not defined;  
 ⊙ temporal site-refuge; ⊙ seasonal dwelling; ⊙ burial-ground;  
 ⊙ ritual; ⊙ signal and sentry post; ⊙ cache; ⊙ site for treatment;  
 ⊙ site for clay output; ⊙ attendance with hunting aim.

a temporary refuge. Separate articles of bone (harpoon, fish-hook, needle-case, spike, arrow-head) found in this caves preliminary dated to Iron Age, testify to that.

The next traces of human cave use are related to Mezolithic Epoch. Bolshaya Ludarskaya cave to the North of Baikal was used as a temporary refuge 7-8 thousand years ago B.C.

A more widely human exploitation of Baikal caves was related to the Neolithic Age (the middle of III - the end IV-th thousand years B.C.). Shamanskaya, Tonta, Skriper, Obukheikha, Uzur caves looked like temporary refuge-sites, Boro-Khukhan cave was either cache or temporary refuge. Occupations of the caves were sporadic or single. The scanty number of artifacts witnesses to that. Chronological dating material is represented by grinding nephrite axes, fragments of ceramic vessels, bone artifacts. Caves with Neolithic artifacts are distributed in cliffs of Lake Baikal and in two cases on relatively far distance from the shore (Tonta, Boro-Khukhan caves).

Tonta and Bolshaya Baydinskaya caves were periodically used as temporary refuges in the Bronze Age (XVIII-XI centuries B.C.). In Tonta cave there were found a fragment of ceramic vessel and a part of bone spoon. In Korallitovy Hall of Bolshaya Baydinskaya cave there are remains of fire with <sup>14</sup>C dating of 3420±25 B.C.(CO AH 2714). Perhaps, clay for ceramic goods was obtained in this cave because there was found there a bone pick at depth of 20 cm. Cave clays lie immediately below cultural-bearing layer.

Episodic use of caves by ancient people was observed during the transitional period from Bronze to Early Iron Age (VII-V centuries B.C.). Archaeological materials from Kadilinskaya, Malaya Baydinskaya and Skriper caves are represented by single fragments of ceramic vessels. In Korallitovy Hall of Bolshaya Baydinskaya cave there were found pointed larch stakes frozen into the base of ancient "naled" with thickness more than 6 m. Radiocarbon dating obtained on wood is 2710±30 B.C.(CO AH 3047). Later, the entrance to the Hall was filled with thick "naled". The Hall was again opened in 1984 by Irkutsk City Grotto cavers who drove a 14-m tunnel in the ice-body. In Tonta cave numerous fragments of 6 ceramic vessels were found. Perhaps, caves were used as temporary refuge during this period. Tonta cave was used repeatedly.

In Earlier Iron Age, only Tonta cave was used by a man as a temporary refuge. For the first time, on Pribaikal territory Hunna ceramics and a bone clasp have been found in this cave. This fact is evidence that Hunnu people stayed in Pribaikal area. This conclusion changes considerably the old view about northern boundary of Hunnu culture spreading.

More actively, caves were assimilated by Kurikane local people (Turk) in Late Iron Age (V-X centuries A.C.). Kurikane cultural complexes were identified in 9 caves of 23 containing archaeological materials (fig. 2). Large quantities of kitchen waste, numerous remains of bonfire and domestic objects are evidence of more continuous use of caves in the Late Iron Age. Most

likely, caves were used as seasonal dwellings in cold seasons. Some of them (Kadilinskaya and Skriper caves) were used as signal and sentry posts for giving of fire and smoke signals when enemies were approaching. Stone walls - "defensive building" on the surface - are dated the same time too. In Bolshaya Baydinskaya cave there are found four unbroken stratigraphically pure cultural levels. They contain artifacts (fragments of ceramic vessels, iron arrow-heads and knives) and bonfire remains of Late Iron Age.

The most numerous artifact collection, consisting of many hundreds of specimens, was received from Kadilinskaya cave. This fact alongside with rather a large thickness of cultural levels (about 1-1.5 m) rich in bonfire remains testifies to the use of Kadilinskaya cave as a permanent dwelling or to regular seasonal staying in it.

Beginning from Early Mongolian period (XI-XIV centuries-A.C.) to Contemporary Ethnography period (XVI-XIX centuries A.C.), the use of caves changed. Caves were connected with ideas about the other world and were used for burial of people (Shida, Bolshaya Baydinskaya, Tonta, Uzur, Shamanskaya, Kadilinskaya, Khurganskaya, Vsadnik caves). During that period Kurtun-7 cave was used as a cache. Remains of a wooden sledge were found in it.

The legends connected with caves and also numerous coins of XVIII-XX centuries A.C. found in Shamanskaya and Bolshaya Baydinskaya caves testify to ritual (cult) use of these caves. Shamanskaya cave on Olkhon Island was the most revered cave on Baikal. In the XIX century it was used as Buddhist (lamaist) temple. Later, a wooden cross was put above Shamanskaya cave. The icon of St. Nicola-Miracle Man was placed in this cave. An orthodox chapel was built near it on isthmus of Shamansky peninsula. After the October Revolution of 1917, Shamanskaya cave was pillaged, the chapel and the cross were destroyed as were majority of other religious holy things. P.P. Khoroshikh found (1955) a slate plate with carved image of "women-shaman" witnessing about more earlier worship at the cave by Buryats-shamanists.

According to oral Buryat legends noted by P.P.Khoroshikh, the lake water of Bolshaya Baydinskaya cave was salubrious for eye treatment, and many Buryats from far distances came to that cave with the hope of miraculous recovery. Malaya and Bolshaya Baydinskaya caves were considered to be sacred caves for local Buryat-shamanists. Beginning from the second half of the last century, Buddhism began to penetrate into the Priolkhon area. Lamas trying to support this sense of holiness, wrote Buddhist sacred characters above the entrances of those marble caves.

At present, caves are attended by numerous non-organized tourists causing considerable damage to the caves. Only Mechta cave has been used for organized tourism in 20 years.

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## ČLOVEK IN JAME V PRIBAJKALJU

### Povzetek

Najstarejše sledi človekove dejavnosti v pribajkaljskih jamah so iz paleolitika (mousterien - pred več kot 40 000 let B.P., jama Kurtun 1). Jame so bile uporabljane tudi v neolitskem času (konec 3.-4. tisočletja pr. Kr., jame Boro-Khukhan, Shamanskaya, Tonta, Skriper, Obukheikha, Uzurskaya, Ludarskaya, Bolshaya Bajdinskaya). Te jame so bile najbrž občasna zatočišča ali skrivališča (Boro-Khukhan). Občani obiski jam so znani tudi iz bronaste (18. - 11. stol. pr. Kr., jame Tonta in Bolshaya Bajdinskaya) in starejše železne dobe (jama Tonta) ter iz zgodnjega mongolskega obdobja (11. - 14. stol. po Kr., jame Shida, Sagan-Zaba, Tonta). Intenzivneje je človek uporabljal jame v prehodnem času iz mlajše bronaste v starejšo železno dobo (7. - 5. stol. pr. Kr., jame Tonta, Malaya Bajdinskaya, Kadilinskaya, Skriper) in v mlajši železni dobi (5. - 10. stol. po Kr., 9 jam). Velike količine kuhinjskih odpadkov, ognjišča in gospodinjski objekti pričajo o kontinuirani uporabi jam v mlajši železni dobi. Začenši z zgodnjim mongolskim obdobjem pa do moderne etnografske dobe (16. - 19. stol. po Kr.) so jame povezane s pojmom onostranstva in so jih uporabljali za človeške pokope (jame Shida, Tonta, Bolshaya Bajdinskaya, Shamanskaya, Uzurskaya, Kadilinskaya).