

**SOME REMARKS ON THE RESULTS OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON  
ANCIENT POPULATION STRUCTURES IN THE LOWER AMU DARYA  
ECONOMIC-GEOGRAPHICAL REGION***Abdalov Umidbek Matniyazovich**Ph.D. Associate Professor of Mamun University**[umid\\_abdalov@mail.ru](mailto:umid_abdalov@mail.ru)*

**Annotation:** The article outlines the history of archaeological studies on the burial structures of the ancient inhabitants of the South Aral Bay region.

**Keywords:** Lower Amu Daria, Sarikamish, Davdan, Kalaliqir-1, Quyqirilangkala.

**Introduction**

The article examines the history of burial structures used by settled populations on both the right and left banks of the Amu Darya River, spanning from the end of the 5th century BC to the 3rd century AD. It analyzes the construction of these burial structures from the Stone Age through the rise of urbanism, considering the traditions associated with placing the deceased within them and highlighting the significant technological differences observed over time.

**Analysis of literature on the topic.** The geographical landscape of the Khorezm oasis plain is shaped by the Amu Darya River, which divides the area into right and left bank territories. This region has been a plain for the past 25 to 10 million years and was formed through geological processes that occurred up to 500,000 years ago<sup>1</sup>. The Great Tatis glacier covered the region from 500,000 to 10,000 years ago, as recorded in archaeological literature<sup>2</sup>.

By 9,000 BC, the northward movement of the Great Tatis Glacier transformed the Khorezm region into a plain, which was reflected in the formation of water basins. By 8,000 to 7,000 BC, the rapid flow of the Amu Darya River brought about significant changes in both the geographical and anthropogenic landscapes. This plain became suitable for human settlement, allowing people to utilize natural resources for their benefit and carry out their daily activities<sup>3</sup>.

Archaeological research findings indicate that Neolithic clan communities buried their deceased on their backs in semi-basement-shaped graves, with their arms positioned alongside their bodies<sup>4</sup>. In the Akcha daria basin, the clan communities of Jonbos-4, Jonbos-5, and Tolstov may have placed their deceased comrades in graves, but researcher A.V. Vinogradov's work does not reveal information about their religious beliefs<sup>5</sup>.

Researcher M.A. Itina conducted a study in the South Akcha Daria region, where 74 graves were excavated at the Kukcha-3 site. The deceased were positioned on their sides with

<sup>1</sup> Виноградов А.В., Итина М.А., Кесь А.С., Мамедов Е.Д. Палеогеографическая обусловленность расселения древнего человека в пустынях Средней Азии//Первобытный человек, его материальная культура и природная среда в плейстоцене и голоцене/. М., Наука, 1974., С. 290-291; Баратов П., Маматкулов М., Рафиков А. Ўрта Осиё табиий географияси. Тошкент, «Ўқитувчи» 2002, -С. 283

<sup>2</sup> Кабиров Ж, Сагдуллаев А.С. Ўрта Осиё археологияси. Тошкент, 1990, С. 14; Ибрагимов Р.З. Ўрта Осиё археологияси. Тошкент. 2020. -Б. 13.

<sup>3</sup> Кесь А.С. Антропогенное воздействие на формирование аллювиально-дельтовых равнин Амударьи //Культура и искусстве древнего Хорезма- М.:Наука, 1981. – С. 72-80.

<sup>4</sup> Вайнберг Б.И. Памятники Куюсайской культуры /// ТХАЭЭ. Т. XI. — М.: 1979. – С. 27.

<sup>5</sup> Виноградов А.В. Древние охотники и рыболовы Среднеазиатского междуречья. / Тр. ХАЭЭ. М.: 1981. №.XIII. -С. 176.

their knees bent, oriented from west to east. The graves featured a semi-circular shape and included a basement<sup>6</sup>.

According to archaeological literature, the inhabitants of Yakkaparsan-2 in the southern Akchadarya region, as well as those at the Odaytepa settlement on the left bank of the middle Amu Darya River, placed their deceased in burial structures that were semi-basement-shaped. There is evidence to suggest that the bodies may have been cremated<sup>7</sup>.

The excavations conducted by the Khorezm expedition at the Kalalykyr-1 monument, located in the northern part of the Davdon tributary of the Amu Darya in the Sarikamysh basin, revealed vessels that contained the bones of deceased individuals. These vessels were found placed on the shelves of the wall in room number 10. Additionally, the excavation study included rectangular, circular, domed, and square ossuaries made from stone, clay, and pottery, which were examined in various rooms of the monument<sup>8</sup>.



#### Archaeological excavations at the Kalalykyr monument

As a result of the Khorezm expedition, it was found that among the funerary structures of the inhabitants of the Kalalykyr-1 monument (left bank region, late 5th - early 4th centuries BC), burials in ossuaries predominated. According to the information provided by the researchers, in the 4th-3rd centuries BC, in order to preserve the purity of the soil, our ancestors mastered the art of making ossuaries from various clays with a high aesthetic taste. The clay ossuaries around the fortified citadel have distinctive structural features. For example, a statue of a man sitting reverently on the lid of one ossuary attracts attention. The short beard, mustache, and headdress depicted on this statue are reminiscent of the customs of the people of Khorezm. The depiction of a horse in the ossuaries is also a noteworthy find. At the same time, craftsmen gave the ossuaries a barrel-shaped, cylindrical, or rectangular shape, with a rounded lid and a bird

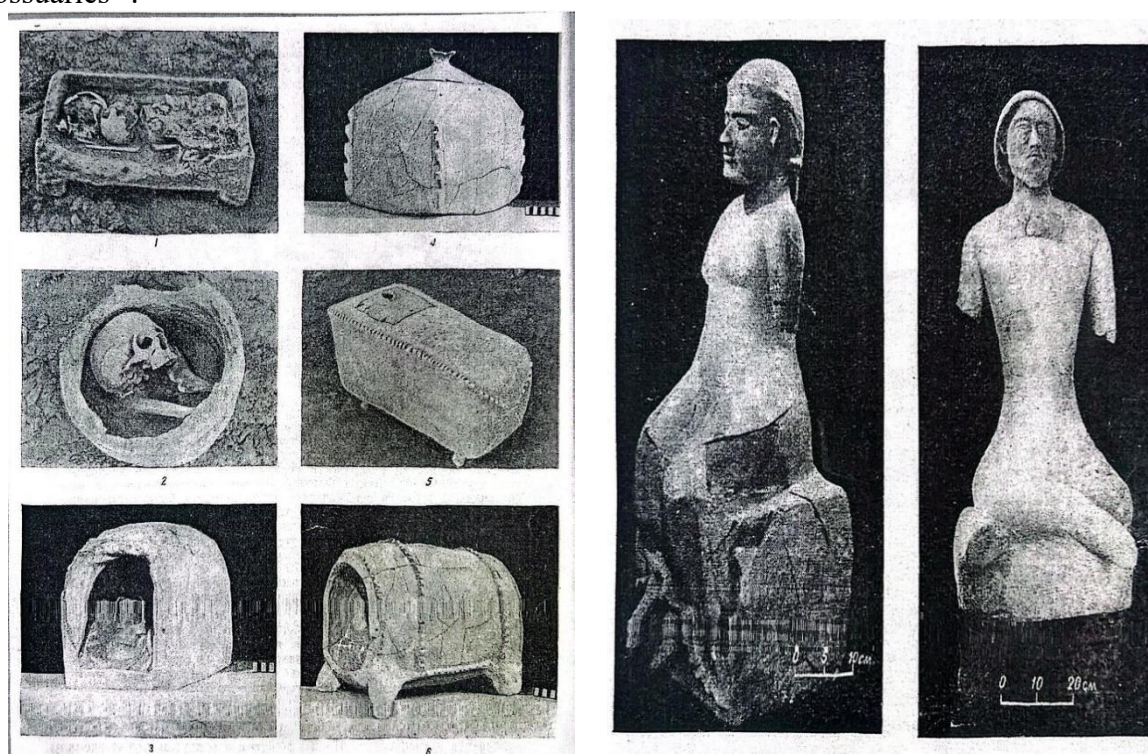
<sup>6</sup> Итина М.А. Раскопки могильника тазабагыбской культуры Кокча-3. // МХЭ. М.: 1961. Вып. 5. -С. 107-129.

<sup>7</sup> Итина М.А. Поселение Якке - Парсан-2 (Раскопки 1958 – 1959 гг). МХЭ – М.: “Наука”, 1963. Вып 6. – С.107-129; Пилипко В.Н. Раскопки в Дейнауском районе Чарджоуской области //АО 1974 – М. “Наука”, 1975. – С. 76-77.

<sup>8</sup> С.П. Толстов По древним дельтам Окса и Яксарта. // М.: Изд-во восточной лит-ры. 1962. – С. 116.

depicted on the top. The Khorezm expedition revealed notable findings regarding the funerary structures at the Kalalykyr-1 monument, which dates back to the late 5th to early 4th centuries BC. The predominant burial method observed was in ossuaries. Researchers noted that during the 4th to 3rd centuries BC, in an effort to maintain soil purity, our ancestors developed the craftsmanship of creating aesthetically pleasing ossuaries from various clays.

The clay ossuaries found around the fortified citadel exhibit distinct structural characteristics. One particularly striking piece features a statue of a man sitting reverently on the lid of the ossuary. The statue is characterized by a short beard, a mustache, and a headdress that reflect the traditions of the people of Khorezm. Additionally, the depiction of a horse on the ossuaries is a remarkable find. The craftsmen also created ossuaries in various shapes, including barrel-shaped, cylindrical, and rectangular, often with a rounded lid topped by the image of a bird<sup>9</sup>. Its construction demonstrates a high level of expertise in funerary structures made of clay. Researcher Gudkova conducted excavations in Tokkala and studied the remains of clay ossuaries<sup>10</sup>.



Types of ossuaries found at the Koykirlingalkala and Qal'aliqir monuments.

Kalaliky-2 is situated 6 km northeast of Kozaliky, in the northern part of Yassykyr. The structure features a nearly equilateral triangular shape, with the eastern wall measuring 192 meters and the western wall measuring 202 meters. It has an arched base, and on the northern side, there is an entrance complex consisting of quadrangles connected to the main gate<sup>11</sup>. In front of them stood a wall facing the center of the main complex, which housed a building

<sup>9</sup> Кой-Крылган-кала — Памятник культуры древнего Хорезма IV в. до н.э. — IV в. н.э. Труды Хорезмской археолого-этнографической экспедиции. - М.-Л., Т-V. 1967. — С. 232 рис. 89-90.

<sup>10</sup> Гудкова А.В. Ток-кала. // Ташкент: 1964. — С. 5-22.

<sup>11</sup> Калалы-гыр 2. Культурный центр в Древнем Хорезме IV-II вв. до н.э. // М.: Вост. лит. 2004. 16 рис. 2/4.



featuring a circular passage. During the excavation of this structure, fragments of polychrome wall paintings were discovered.

In the western part of the main complex, there is a circular temple with a diameter of 24 meters, built on a 2-meter-high filled foundation. The temple has openings in its outer walls, an oval minaret at the entrance, and interior chord walls that create rooms surrounding a central hall arranged in quadrangles. More than 20 rooms associated with its economic activities and ceremonial practices have been studied around the temple.

Kalaliky-2 was destroyed by fire. Excavations at this site unearthed numerous ceramic vessels produced by local craftsmen, as well as imports. Among these were rhytons and relief vessels depicting scenes related to the mythology of the Indo-Aryan peoples, including images such as a camel rider in front of a tree, a duel between a hero and a fantastic beast, and a deer growing from a tree branch. Additionally, the site yielded terracotta figurines, molds for baking ceremonial bread, ceramic fragments inscribed primarily in the ancient Khorezmian language, and remnants of documents related to trade relations<sup>12</sup>.

**The research methodology was chosen as follows.**

Scientific objectivity, historical-chronological interpretation, theoretical-comparative analysis, discussion, justification, generalization, final conclusion, results of archeology, geography, anthropology were used.

**The analysis and results are explained as follows.**

The history of burial structures for our ancestors, spanning from the 9th century BC to the 1st century AD, has been analyzed based on logical conclusions drawn from the theoretical and comparative study of historical data published by the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition.

**The research resulted in the following scientific breakthroughs.**

- The study summarizes historical data from archaeological literature regarding the development and improvement of burial structures from the Stone Age to the 1st century BC.
- During this period, our ancestors, following the Zoroastrian religion, created various types of ossuaries made from clay, stone, and ceramics. This practice was part of their belief in keeping the earth clean, as these ossuaries housed the deceased and served as eternal resting places.

**Conclusions and suggestions on the research.**

Since the end of the 5th century BC, researchers have noted various differences in burial practices between those in the Khorezm oasis and adjacent territories to the south. For example, the graves from the Neolithic, Bronze, and Iron Ages—found in the Shurakhon and Sultan Uvays mountains, as well as in Pitnak within the Khorezm region and extending to the southwestern coast of the Aral Sea—have not yet been archaeologically studied.

On the southern border of the Khorezm oasis, north of the middle reaches of the Davdon River, burial structures from the late 6th century BC were identified at Kalaliky-1. These included clay, stone, and ceramic ossuaries. Some of the ossuaries featured slightly protruding legs, while others were circular with no legs, and a few were designed in the shapes of barrels and cylinders. This method of placing the bones of the deceased aligns with the Zoroastrian doctrine of keeping the earth clean.

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<sup>12</sup> <https://bigenc.ru/c/kalaly-gyr-2-345117> (электрон манба).

During the 4th and 3rd centuries BC, our ancestors living in settlements along the right bank of the Amu Darya developed the practice of creating ossuaries with the deceased positioned seated on clay lids. Evidence suggests that these ossuaries continued to be used as burial structures until the 3rd century AD.

It is crucial to study how our ancestors placed their deceased in burial structures and to understand how their historical practices influence contemporary society.

We aim to educate modern students about the historical periods during which the burial structures evolved from simplicity to sophistication.

Furthermore, it is our responsibility to visit the cemeteries where our ancestors and great-grandfathers are laid to rest and to undertake renovation work as part of our daily activities.

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