

THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF URBAN SETTLEMENTS OF MEDIEVAL KHOREZM

Djoldasov Akbar Batirovich

Basic doctoral student of Tashkent University of Architecture and Civil Engineering

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8086750>

***Abstract.** The article summarizes the history of study, the historical and planning design of dwellings on the territory of medieval Khorezm. An attempt is made to trace the stages of the development of house-building, revealing the typology of dwellings of the medieval epoch.*

***Keywords:** aral region, dwelling, quarter, discount, Ustyurt, Amu Darya, periphery, Khalidjan, localization, Karakalpakstan, culture, monument.*

The Lower Amudarya delta region, which is part of the modern borders of the Republic of Karakalpakstan and the northern part of the Tashauz region of Turkmenistan, includes the coastal cultural strips of Jeyhun from the area of the Tuyamuyun reservoir to the Aral Sea, including part of southeastern Ustyurt. One of the physical and geographical features of this region in antiquity was the presence of numerous delta channels, lakes, and most importantly, the aluvial land cover suitable for irrigated agriculture (more than 2 million hectares).

Starting from the 9th-11th centuries, historical and geographical information of Arabic-Persian authors about the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and the adjacent lands of the Aral Sea region appeared. At this time, the culture of Islam was spreading in Central Asia. In the works of Arabic-Persian authors, there are settlements of the oasis, information about the nomadic tribes of the Aral Sea region. Among them, the data of Ibn Rüste, al Istakhri, Ibn Fadlan, al-Maqdisi, the anonymous author of Hudud al Alem, Mahmud of Kashgar and other sources are important. According to the information of these authors, in the 10th century, fortresses (rata) and cities appeared in the Amudarya delta and within the borders of the Aral steppes.

One of the earliest information about the cities and rabats of the Southern Aral Sea region is the data of Ibn Fadlan, a participant in the embassy of the Baghdad caliph Mukhtadir to the Bulgar king Almas in 922. In his "Note" he, passing through Ustyurt, noted the urban settlements of al-Djurdjaniya (Gurganj), Zamdjan and Khababe-Jit (works of Ustyurt) (7).

Some delta sites bordering Ustyurt are also mentioned in other sources. In particular, Ibn Haukal and al-Maqdisi (985) write about the settlement of Jit. Thus, the written sources of the 10th-11th centuries indicate three settlements located along the Ustyurt chink. Historical and comparative analysis of these sources with archaeological research showed that Zamdjan is localized with Shemakha-kala, Git Puljai and Kudjag with Toprak-kala (Kungrad). As can be seen from the analysis, early sources limited themselves to brief information about the monuments of the medieval Aral delta of the Amudarya. Restore the topo-planigraphic situation, the location of urban settlements, historical events of that time, allow mainly archaeological materials.

However, until the middle of the 20th century, the archaeological sites of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya remained unexplored. In the pre-war years (until 1940), the study of this area was not associated with a targeted scientific program, but with passing acquaintance with individual monuments, collecting random artifacts, and was limited to fixing some elements of the material culture of the Ustyurt plateau and the Amudarya delta zone. In 1945, a visiting session of

the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan was held in Nukus. Then the immediate tasks of studying the history and archeology of Karakalpakstan, including the ancient monuments of the Amudarya and Ustyurt deltas, were determined. In 1946, the head of the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition (KHAE) S.P. Tolstov has organized a grandiose air-automobile expeditionary reconnaissance through the desert zones of Karakum, Kyzylkum, along the southeastern cliff of Ustyurt and the delta part of the southern Aral Sea region. The results of the monuments of the study area and their plans, brief information about the artifacts were briefly outlined in the works of the Khorezm archaeological expedition (8). S.P. Tolstov, having examined the region of the southeastern cliff of Ustyurt and the delta zone, subsequently sets the task of conducting a more detailed study and analysis of the history of these monuments. The scientist, the organizer of archaeological science in Karakalpakstan and ancient Khorezm, draws up a detailed plan of work to study the medieval monuments of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and southeastern Ustyurt. In 1948, an employee of the Khorezm archaeological expedition N.N. Vakturskaya, for the first time in the medieval archeology of the Aral Sea region, began excavations at the settlement of Shemakha-kala. Four years later, the results of the study are published in the first volume of the Proceedings of the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition (2). The article provides an analysis of the results of the excavations, clearly characterizes all samples of the material culture of the Golden Horde era and partly during the reign of the Temurids in the Aral Sea region. The characteristic of the quarters of the settlement is given, an attempt is made to localize the monument with the data of medieval sources. N.N. Vakturskaya collected all the information about the finds, any antiquities on the territory of the settlement. Here, her erudition deserves special respect, as the young researcher made discoveries made in the course of archaeological work at the site of Shemakha-kala. In particular, for the first time she succeeded in determining the composition of archaeological artifacts, establishing the area of their distribution, the connections of the cities of the southeastern Aral Sea region with the outside world, and the planigraphy of the medieval peripheral city of Khorezm. Despite the fact that her materials were mostly of a preliminary nature, they provided a wealth of information about this still little-studied medieval monument of Ustyurt. Subsequently, the materials of Shemakha-kala were used in the work of S.P. Tolstov "In the footsteps of the ancient Khorezmian civilization." Then he wrote about the significance of this unique monument: "Probably, staging systematic excavations on a proper scale will enable Shamakhi to take the same place among the medieval monuments of Khorezm as Toprak-kala occupies among the ancient ones." However, it should be noted that in the post-war period, due to the increased scale of field research, the monuments of the urban settlements of the Amudarya delta were often visited, but they did not arouse significant interest among researchers.

This task was partially fulfilled by the staff of the archeology sector of the KK of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR, established in the city of Nukus in 1959. The activities of the sector of archeology in the 60-80s of the XX century are closely connected with the archaeological study of the monuments of the Amudarya delta and southeastern Ustyurt. It is noteworthy that the archaeologists of Karakalpakstan, united by common enthusiasm, discovered previously unknown monuments of the Amudarya delta and the Aral-Caspian intermarium. According to the plan developed by the head of the department of archeology V.N. Yagodin, the researchers of Karakalpakstan identified three areas of archaeological study of the antiquities of the southern Aral Sea region: mounds of ancient and medieval nomadic tribes of the Aral-Caspian

intermarium; monuments of the medieval urban culture of the Amudarya delta, fortress cities, caravanserais of South-Eastern and Central Ustyurt.

In 1958-1959, A.V.Gudkova and V.N.Yagodin organized archaeological surveys in the right-bank part of the Amudarya delta. In the course of reconnaissance work on the site of Tok Kala, Kusxan Hillock, Krantau, Hayvan Kala (Kerder), Kyrk Zhigit Kala, Kurgancha and the site of Baghdad, urban culture monuments dating back to the period from the 9th to the 14th centuries were identified (1). One of the most fruitful works on the study of the urban culture of the Amudarya delta is the work of V.N. Yagodin, who studied the monuments of the left-bank delta. He, in 1960, organized routes, explored the medieval monuments of the left bank of the Aral delta (13). The researchers, based on the analysis of ceramic material from new pits and trenches of monuments on the left bank of the delta, came to the conclusion about the likelihood of the existence of urban settlements of two chronological periods. One of them continued the tradition of the Khorezmshahs of the Mamunids and Anushteginids (IX-XII centuries), the other is represented by the material culture of the Golden Horde era. (XIII-XIV century). According to the researchers, the medieval monuments of this region have a genetic connection with the synchronous material of the monuments of the inner part of the oasis. New materials, coupled with other studies, showed that the settlement of the cities of the Left Bank was more intensive compared to the Right Bank. This is evidenced not only by large areas of settlements, but also by traces of farmland, irrigation facilities and the territory of urban necropolises. The sizes of individual necropolises (in particular, the Pulzhai soil burial ground) allow us to speak about the dynamics of demographic processes in the near-delta zone of the Southern Aral Sea region.

In general, the results of the study of archaeologists of the Karakalapak Association of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan were summarized and published in the "Materials of the Code of Historical and Cultural Monuments of Karakalpakstan" and in the works of individual researchers (6, 13, 14). They contain information about both previously discovered and newly discovered archaeological objects of the urban culture of the Amudarya delta and the Ustyurt chink.

The end of the 20th - the beginning of the 21st century is the time of establishing a free democratic direction in the historical science of Uzbekistan. Practically since that time, stationary excavations began on the medieval settlements of the Amudarya delta. Excavations by M.T.Torebekov at the sites of Toprak-kala Kungradskaya and Bograkhon revealed well-preserved ground traces of defensive structures (walls and gates), remains of public buildings (mosque, minaret of Bograkhon), residential premises, large accumulations of tiled and burnt bricks, glazed ceramics, stone cauldrons, Jochid coins and so on. Some of these monuments, among them a minaret, a mosque, were almost completely excavated by M.T.Torebekov (9, 10, 11, 12). Despite the rather slow introduction of materials into scientific circulation, on the basis of the collected archaeological and historiographic data, one can already speak of the offensive development of the urbanization process in the causal territory of the Amudarya delta. According to scientific literature, a similar situation is observed in western Khorezm (Daudan and Daryalyk delta sites). In recent years, continuing the archaeological research of the Aral delta zone, M.-Sh.Kdyrniya zo v organized excavations at the site of Pulzhai. Research of the site is ongoing (3, 4, 5). Excavations have shown the existence of a large trade and craft city of the era of the Golden Horde. The city of this time has no fortifications. The layout of the city included scattered buildings: residential buildings, caravanserais and industrial complexes. The finds of targets for a series of products

made of iron, bronze, pottery kilns, stone millstones and others characterize the main occupations of the population. The abundance of imported items (celadon, minai, chandelier, polished ceramics, coins) emphasizes the important role of trade in the life of the Pulzhai settlement. The burials of the open mausoleum contained inventory (an iron two-piece bridle). Near the settlement there are burial mounds synchronous to it. In general, the monument is dated to the XII-XIV centuries. (5).

Based on these studies, it can be concluded that the zone adjacent to the settled agricultural culture of the Southern Aral Sea region, even in ancient times, was a buffer territory between various ethno-economic groups, which influenced the activation of ethnic processes in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, the trade exchange of the steppe with the population of the oasis, the emergence new centers of urban culture. However, it should be noted that in the course of studying the medieval monuments of the delta zone of the Aral Sea region and the periphery of the cultural oasis, the complex of material culture remained unexplored. Basically, the preliminary results of archaeological work carried out at various sites were published. The typology of medieval monuments of the Amudarya delta, the classification of various complexes of material culture, some chronological periods of the existence and distribution of artifacts have not been developed. In this regard, we believe that a detailed generalizing work is needed to study the material culture of the medieval monuments of the Amudarya delta adjacent to the Ustyurt plateau.

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