



The medieval town Kyshkala (Kyshtobe) – Barshynkent (Barshynly): archaeological research, localization and dating

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Keywords: archaeology, Altyn Orda, Syrdarya, Barshynkent, Kyshkala, town, excavation, mausoleum, burial places

Түйін сөздер: археология, Алтын Орда, Сырдария, Баршынкент, Қышқала, қала, қазба, кесене, жерлеу орындары

Ключевые слова: археология, Золотая Орда, Сырдарья, Баршынкент, Кышкала, город, раскопки, мавзолей, захоронения

Dokey Taleev¹ and Arhad Moldakhmet^{2*}

¹Candidate of Historical Sciences, Leading Researcher, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Kazakhstan. E-mail: doc19_59@mail.ru

^{2*}Corresponding author, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, Almaty, Kazakhstan. E-mail: arhadkz@mail.ru

A significant number of cult objects of the Golden Horde era are concentrated on the territory of Kazakhstan: mausoleums, madrassas, underground graves, memorial structures such as cities, towns, fortresses and caravanserais. Currently, archaeological research of these monuments and their integration into scientific discourse is one of the most important works. Concurrently, one of the most pressing issues is the formation of cities and settlements of the Jochi Ulus and the assessment of its development process. Identifying specific features in the history of individual cities and determining their relationship with other cities requires comprehensive scientific inquiry. The vast majority of the cities of the Golden Horde era are concentrated along the old riverbeds of the Syrdarya River, along the rivers Inkardarya, Zhanadarya, Kuandarya and near the Aral Sea. This region held immense social, political, and cultural significance for people throughout various historical epochs. When exploring the region's history, the Golden Horde-era monuments take precedence. In the era of the Golden Horde, one of the largest cultural and spiritual centers was the medieval city of Kyshkala (Kyshtobe) – Barshynkent (Barshynlyk). After many years of research in Kyshkala, two mausoleums were discovered, the remains of an octagonal structure (Zaviya) primarily constructed using fired bricks, along with the locations where these bricks were produced (kilns), simple burials, residential complexes, and sites dedicated to rituals and commemorative purposes.

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**Докей Әбдікерімұлы Талеев¹,
Архад Айтжанұлы Молдахмет^{2*}**

¹тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, жетекші ғылыми қызметкер, Ә.Х. Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты, Алматы қ. Қазақстан

^{2*} корреспондент-автор, әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті, Алматы қ., Қазақстан

**Докей Абдикеримович Талеев¹,
Архад Айтжанұлы Молдахмет^{2*}**

¹кандидат исторических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник, Институт археологии имени А.Х. Маргулана, г. Алматы, Казахстан

^{2*}автор-корреспондент, Казахский национальный университет им. аль Фараби, г. Алматы, Казахстан



**Ортағасырлық Қышқала қаласы (Қыштөбе) –
Баршынкент (Баршынлы):
археологиялық зерттеулер, локализация
және мерзімдеу**

Қазақстан территориясында Алтын Орда дәуірінің культтік нысандар: кесенелер, медреселер, жер асты жерлеу орындары; мемориалдық құрлыстар: қалалар, елді мекендер, бекіністер, керуен сарайлар өте көп шоғырланған. Қазіргі күнде осы ескерткіштерді археологиялық тұрғыдан зерттеу және оны ғылыми айналымға енгізу аса маңызды жұмыстардың бірі. Сонымен қатар Жошы ұлысындағы қалалар мен елді мекендерінің қалыптасуы және оның даму үдерісін бағамдау өте өзекті мәселе болып табылады. Жекелеген қалалардың тарихындағы өзіндік ерекшеліктерін анықтау және олардың басқа қалалармен өзара арақатынасын айқындау кешенді ғылыми зерттеулерді қажет етеді. Алтын Орда дәуіріндегі қалалардың басым көпшілігі Сырдария өзенінің ескі арналары Іңкәрдария, Жаңадария, Қуандария бойында және Арал теңізі маңында шоғырланған. Бұл аймақ әрқилы тарихи кезеңдердегі халықтар үшін әлеуметтік маңызы жоғары, саяси және мәдени орталықтардың бірі болды. Өлке тарихын зерттеуде ең алдымен Алтын Орда дәуірі ескерткіштері назарға алынады. Алтын Орда дәуірі кезінде ірі мәдени және рухани орталықтардың бірі болған – ортағасырлық Қышқала (Қыштөбе) Баршынкент (Баршынлық) қаласы. Ортағасырлық Қышқала қаласына бірнеше жыл бойы жүргізілген зерттеулер нәтижесі құрылыс материалы ретінде негізінен қыш кірпіштер қолданылған екі кесене, сегіз қырлы ғимарат (Завия) орны және оның кірпішін дайындауға арналған орын (пеш), қарапайым жерлеу орындары, тұрғын үй кешендері мен ғұрыптық-мемориалдық құрылыс нысандарының орындары ашылды.

Қаржыландыру көзі: Мақала ҚР ҒЖБМ Ғылым комитетінің нысаналы қаржыландыру бағдарламасы 2023–2025, ЖТН BR20280993 аясында даярланды.

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**Средневековый город Кышкала (Кыштөбе) –
Баршынкент (Баршынлы):
археологические исследования, локализация
и датировка**

На территории Казахстана сосредоточено большое количество культовых объектов эпохи Золотой Орды: мавзолеев, медресе, подземных захоронений; мемориальных сооружений: городов, посёлков, крепостей, караван-сараяв. В настоящее время археологические исследования этих памятников и их введение в научный оборот являются одной из важнейших работ. Вместе с тем, одним из наиболее актуальных вопросов является формирование городов и населённых пунктов Улуса Джучи и оценка процесса его развития. Выявление специфических особенностей в истории отдельных городов и определение их взаимосвязи с другими городами требует комплексных научных исследований. Подавляющее большинство городов эпохи Золотой Орды сосредоточено по старым руслам реки Сырдарья, вдоль рек Инкардарья, Жанадарья, Куандарья и вблизи Аральского моря. Этот район был одним из самых социально значимых, политических и культурных центров для народов разных исторических периодов. При изучении истории края в первую очередь принимаются во внимание памятники эпохи Золотой Орды. В эпоху Золотой Орды одним из крупнейших культурных и духовных центров был средневековый город Кышкала (Кыштөбе) – Баршынкент (Баршынлык). В результате многолетних исследований средневекового города Кышкала были открыты два мавзолея, место восьмиугольного здания (Завия), в качестве строительного материала которого в основном использовались жжённые кирпичи, и места его изготовления (печи), простых захоронений, жилых комплексов и ритуально-мемориальных строительных объектов.

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1 Introduction (Taleev D., Moldakhmet A.)

The ancient town Kyshkala (Kyshtobe), 2 km south of the Kogalykol village, 30 km to the southwest of Kyzylorda, has been known to researchers since the second half of the 19th century. The first information about Kyshkala was given in the article of V. Kallaur, the prominent member of the Turkestan archaeological



society. V. Kallaur indicated the location of Kysh-Kala (Gysh-Kala) on the left bank of the Syrdarya near Tomarotkel, 25–30 km from the town of Perovsk in his article “The ancient towns of Sagnak (Sunak), Ashnas or Eshnas (Asanas) and others in the Perovsky district, destroyed by Genghis Khan in 1219” and suggested looking for location of the town of Zhent in this vicinity [Каллаур 2011: 211].

Despite a thorough survey of the territory by S.P. Tolstov, the head of the Khorezm archaeological-ethnographic expedition (KhAEE), we cannot find any mention about Kyshkala in his reports and works. Only B.V. Andryanov indicated the place of Kyshkala as Kysh tobe (*Kysh hill*) on the map about archaeological sites between Amudarya and Syrdarya. A. Kh. Margulan wrote, “Barchinkent (Barchinlykent) is one of the largest site in the lower reaches of the Syrdarya. It may have been a fortified town of considerable size defending the route of Zhent and Zhankent from the Mongols. The place of ancient Barchynkent today is located between Kyzylorda and Shieli and it is called as Kyz-kala” [Маргулан 1950: 76–78]. The town was indicated as ruins of separate buildings 25 km southwest of Kyzylorda under the name Kyzkala in the “Archaeological Map of Kazakhstan” published by K.A. Akishev in 1960 [AKK 1960: 225, № 3318].

In 1960, the well-known writer A. Konyratbayev together with G. Musabayev conducted monitoring work in Kyshkala. After A. Konyratbayev wrote the next: “Kyshkala is a small palace (orda) built of clay <...>, we dug up several meters of land and found a finger-sized painted pot made of burnt bricks. It contains 25 grams of water, the handle is broken. A silver coin was found under this hill. There, I found a gold coin on the surface” [Қоңыратбаев 1987: 336; 2004: 151]. In addition, A. Konyratbayev referred that the bones of a man, a horse, and fragments of painted pot were found in the grave in Kyshkala: “But there is no trace of a castle here (referring to Kyshkala – author’s note) <...> The name “Kyshkala” is probably a word in the oral speech of the people. There is no name of such a town along the Syrdarya” [Қоңыратбаев 1987: 336]. According to the elder Islambek, a resident of Kogalykol village near Kyshtobe, A.Kh. Margulan returned there with Konyratbayev in 1976. During that trip, a small vase with copper coins was found. A. Kh. Margulan took the vase with him. However, the academician did not give any written information about that trip. Apparently, his manuscript was not published.

In 1990, the first archaeological excavations were carried out on the Kyshkala by Kyzylorda State Pedagogical Institute teacher T. Mamiyev with the group of students led by M. Eleuov and with the participation of D. Taleev specially invited from Al-Farabi Kazakh National University [Мәмиев 1999: 27]. On the course of excavations carried out in Kyshkala in the 1990s, information about discovered structure, archaeological finds were briefly written in T. Mamiev’s dissertation work for the candidate of historical sciences on the topic “Towns of the Aral Region in the Late Middle Ages (13th–18th centuries)” [Мәмиев 2000: 64–69].

When carrying out archaeological work on Kyshkala located 2 km southeast of Kogalykol village, T. Mamiev paid attention to the ruins of religious, public and civil buildings consisting of round hills. The following dimensions of the ruins he documented in his report: the diameter of the first hill is 200 m, the height is 2 m, the diameter of the second hill is 300 m, the height is 2.5 m, the diameter of the third hill is 300 m, the height is 3 m, the diameter of the fourth hill is 500 m, the height is 5 m. The dimensions of the clay bricks found in them are 25×7×12 cm, 25×6×27 cm. In 1992, he conducted archaeological excavations in the mosque and residential complexes on the central street running from north to south. There were fragments of plates with Arab graphic patterns, painted with blue and light colors. Many glazed and unglazed vessel fragments, glass vessel fragments, and fragments of beads were found during the excavation [Мәмиев 2000: 52].

According to the results of the stratigraphic excavation carried out at that time, the construction layer consists of a depth of 60 cm. Its upper 10 cm consists of a dense layer, 7 cm of a mixed layer of wood



and reed ash, 20 cm of reed, 3.5 cm of a loose layer mixed with pieces. Comparing the topography of the house structures uncovered during the excavation and the complex of finds with the materials of the city of Otyrar, the author concluded that the town was built in the 13th–18th centuries. R.Z. Burnasheva and S. Yusupova, specialists of the Margulan Institute of Archaeology, conducted a laboratory examination of copper bucket finds. Mamiev's report on the excavation conducted in Kyshkala contains pictures of the town, the project of the excavation and the artifacts found during the works [Мәмиев 2000: 64–68].

According to local residents, archaeologists visited Kyshkala several times and excavated the trench, but there is no official information about this. Kyshkala was indicated in “Archaeological map of Kazakhstan” in 1960, but has not yet been included in the collection of monuments of Kyzylorda region.

2 Research methods and materials (*Taleev D., Moldakhmet A.*)

2.1 Research methodology

All traditional methods of archaeological and historical research were used in the process of preparing the article. The main part of the materials was taken from the excavations, the second part was made on the basis of interdisciplinary research (radiocarbon and anthropological analysis, numismatic materials). During the excavations, which have been carried out for several years, a number of architectural structures discovered that informs about the socio-economic and spiritual life of the town, about the life of the town residents. Samples were taken from a specially constructed stratigraphic section and sent for examination to foreign laboratories. The chronological age of the settlement was determined on the basis of a comparison of materials found in the excavation, the determination of the time of minting of coins and the conclusion of examinations conducted on samples. Attempts to determine the historical name of the town were made by the location of the town, by the toponymic, hydronymic names given in written sources and by the results of excavations. The article is aimed at substantiating the conclusions based on material data and recorded data obtained during the study of the town to the scientific community.

2.2 Characteristics of the material

The research was conducted on the basis of the analysis and examination of public, social and architectural objects and archaeological artifacts discovered during archaeological excavations of the town-site of Kyshkala, located along the Zhanadarya in old riverbed of the Syrdarya river. During excavations in the town, 1 copper dirham and 4 coins of the Golden Horde era (1330–1380) were found. It was known that one of these coins was minted in Khorezim, and three in Barshin. Found in 2022, Chinese coins from the 11th century and copper vase from 1250 in Limoges (France) are valuable evidence of well-developed cultural and trading life of Kyshkala. Analysis and identification of written data on historical events about towns in the middle and lower reaches of the Syrdarya and archaeological artifacts found during archaeological works in Kyshkala give reason to assume that Kyshkala is the town of Barchyn (Barshynkent), founded in the Golden Horde era. In the main part of the article, an attempt was made to prove this assumption on the basis of archaeological materials.

3 Results and discussion (*Taleev D., Moldakhmet A.*)

During the excavation in Kyshkala in 2018–2020, several buildings of public and social significance were discovered. The first of them was an excavation trench (trench I) of an unknown building located on the territory of the city cemetery in the northwestern part of the town. The building was originally built of burnt bricks. The slopes formed on the site of the destroyed building have turned into a natural hill. Most



of the building materials piled up around are burnt bricks and their fragments. Among them, there are many square baked clay plates with a pattern carved on the face with a sharp tool and fragments of colorful mosaic patterns (fig. 1).

The size of the rectangular main room of the building facing northwest is 11×11 m (*counting from the outside of the wall*), size of the second room built in the middle part of its back (*on the south-western edge*) is 7×7 m, the thickness of the walls is 2 m. The original plan of the mausoleum and its architectural characteristics were determined by the traces of pits dug to build its foundation. The result of excavation and clearing the site of the destroyed building, collecting and examining the intact building materials, comparing the unique design of the building with similar monuments showed that there was a mausoleum built in the Islamic style [Талеев және т. б. 2018: 265–266].

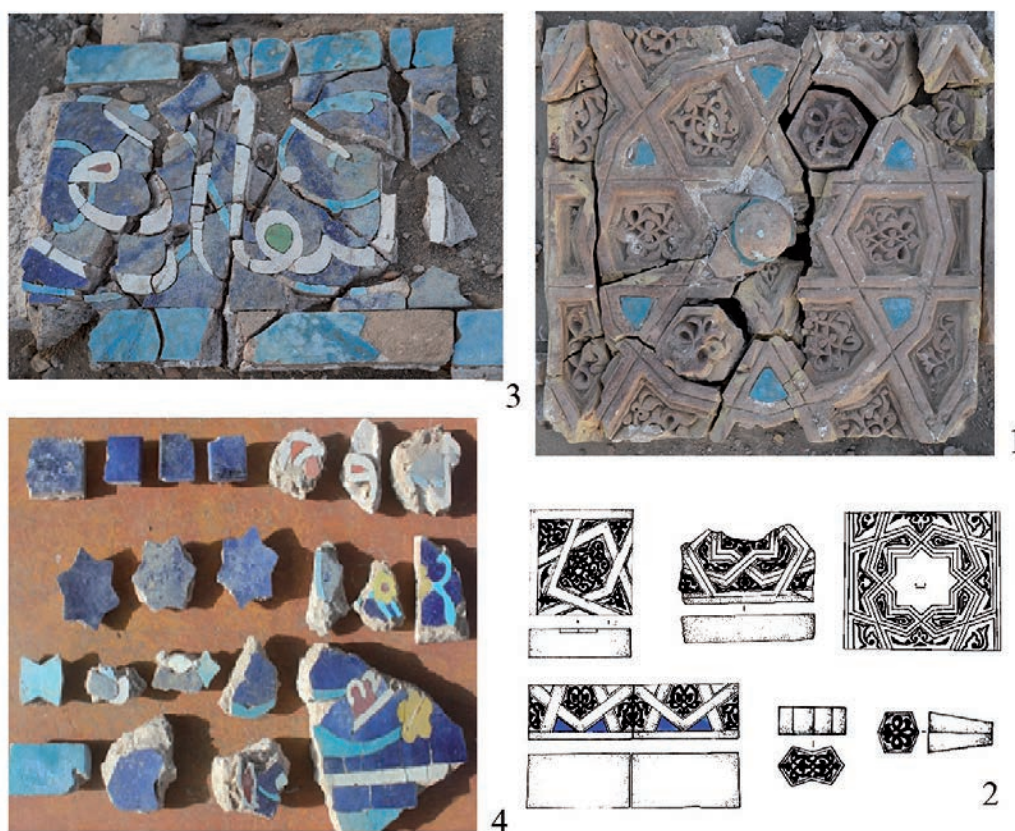


Fig. 1. Kyshkala, mausoleum 1. The colorful mosaic patterns: 1 – slab with a carved ornament;
2 – slabs with carved ornaments, graphics; 3 – mosaic with Arabic graphics; 4 – multi-colored mosaics.
Photo by Dokey Taleev

1-сур. Қышқала, 1-кесене. Мозаика өрнектері: 1 – ойып салынған өрнегімен қыш тақта
2 – ойып салынған өрнегімен қыш тақта, сызба; 3 – арабша жазуы бар мозаика; 4 – түрлі-түсті мозаикалар.
Сурет Дөкей Талеевтікі

Рис. 1. Кышқала, мавзолей 1. Мозаичные узоры: 1 – плита с вырезанным орнаментом;
2 – плиты с вырезанным орнаментом, графика; 3 – мозаика с арабским шрифтом; 4 – разноцветные
мозаики. Фото Дөкея Талеева



Mausoleums of similar topographic design and architectural type were found and excavated in different regions of the CIS and Kazakhstan. One of them was the Zhanibek-Shalkar mausoleum, 100 km south of Astana, discovered by archaeologists of the Eurasian National University (M.K. Khabdulina) in 2010 [Ученые предполагают...]. Mausoleum dates from the 14th–15th centuries. Tiles with patterns on the outer side of the Kerderi mausoleum, found on the bottom of the Aral Sea, are also very similar to the carved tiles of the Kyshkala mausoleum. Experts date the Kerderi mausoleum from the 13th–14th centuries according to the found archaeological materials. The architectural features of the mausoleum of the Golden Horde era (Kyzyloba) discovered and excavated in the Sh. Valikhanov district of the North Kazakhstan region are similar to design of mentioned mausoleums. According to the well-known numismatist P. Petrov's description, the two silver coins found in one of the burial graves of the mausoleum dates from the 14th century. It was minted in the capital of the Golden Horde (Sarai al-Makhrusa). On one of the coins, the date 737 Hijri, that is, 1337 AD is well read [Алтын Орда құпиясы].

The mosaic decoration of the Golden Horde era mosque excavated in the town of Konskie Gory in the Zaporozhye region of Ukraine exactly replicates the mausoleum mosaic in Kyshkala. The above-mentioned mausoleums are very similar in size and shape of bricks of different sizes and shapes, mosaic decorations used for decoration, patterns of outer covering panels, design of mausoleums, architectural character and dates to the same time. All of them belong to the era of the Golden Horde. Even looking at the way they were decorated, you might think that one carpenter (master) made them.

Two more structures similar to discovered mausoleum (trench I) are being excavated. Dozens of mounds similar to the one excavated were discovered during exploration and monitoring near the town. Their diameter (20–26 m) and height (1.5–2 m) are similar. The fragments of baked pottery and colorful glazed pottery similar to the pottery found during excavations of the mausoleum were found. This may indicate that the mausoleums built in the Islamic style date to the same time as the object excavated by us. Thus, the mausoleums built on the graves may show that the buried belong to the same social group, who professed Islam during the Golden Horde time.

In the second excavation trench (trench II), the remains of an octagonal building with external walls made of burnt bricks were discovered. The external structure of the opened object consists of four towers and eight walls of different length. Bottom were built with burnt bricks of size 27×27×6; 26×26×5 cm, the width of external walls are 1 m and preserved height is between 10–60 cm.

The inner-outer edges of all the walls of the building are made of whole burnt bricks, and the center is filled with a mixture of clay fragments and thick mud (fig. 2).

The building has 1.6–1.9 m round and semi-walled towers built from the four corners. The outer edges of all towers were made of specially prepared 20×20×10 cm, semi-bent burnt bricks, and the center was filled with brick fragments. Specially prepared bricks were molded in a triangular shape and with one side arched, making it convenient to weave a circular structure.

The northern and southern walls of the building had sloping gates facing each other. In the interior, the design of several rooms located radially along the walls has been preserved. The floors of the rooms are covered with burnt clay. There is a specially cleaning corner, a wash basin in the middle of each room. In the center of the building, there is an octagonal square area of about 12×12 m and an octagonal floor with an area of 2.5×2.5 m of burnt bricks, corresponding to the construction of this square. There is a tashnau cavity in the center of the floor. There was defined a special hollow with the depth of 1.3 m, width of 1 m culvert (tashnau) made of burnt bricks. At the four corners of the square, there can be seen the remains of four columns supporting the roof of the building. Specialists assumed that it could be a madrasah based

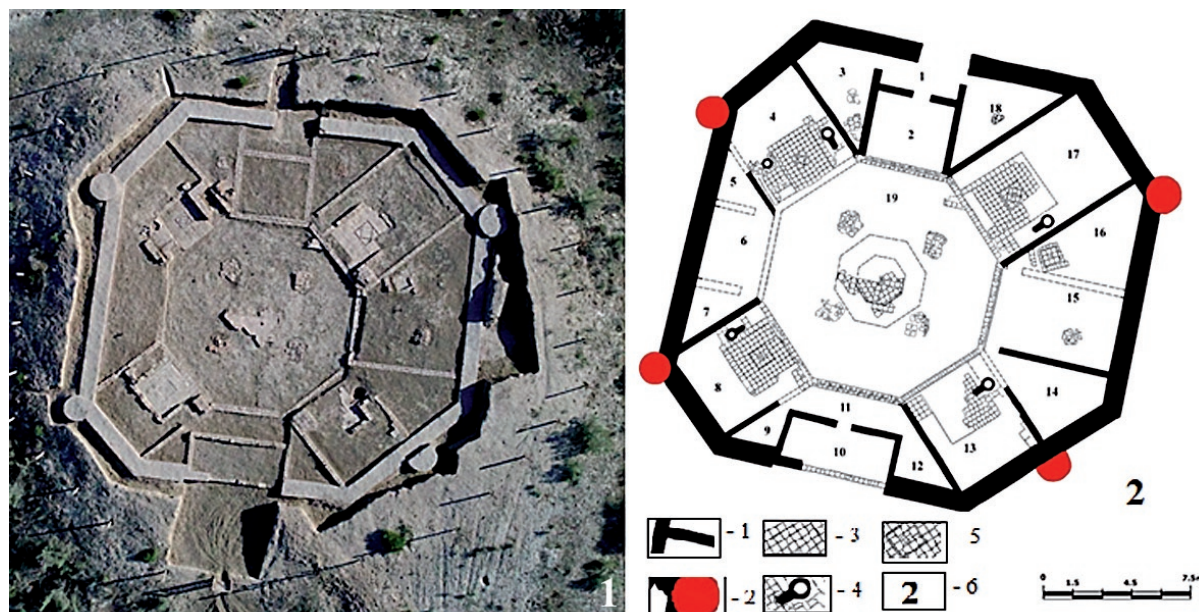


Fig. 2. Kyshkala. Photo (1) and plan (2) of an octagonal structure. Symbols: 1 – wall; 2 – tower; 3 – brick floor; 4 – hearth; 5 – tashnau; 6 – serial numbers of rooms. Photo by Dokey Taleev

2-сур. Қышқала. Серіз бұрышты құрылыс суреті (1) мен сызбасы (2). Шартты белгілер:
1 – қабырға; 2 – мұнара; 3 – кірпіш еден; 4 – ошақ; 5 – ташнау; 6 – бөлмелердің реттік саны.
Сурет Дөкей Тәлеевтікі

Рис. 2. Кышкала. Фото (1) и чертеж восьмиугольной конструкции (2). Условные обозначения:
1 – стена; 2 – башня; 3 – кирпичный пол; 4 – очаг; 5 – ташнау; 6 – порядковые номера комнат.
Фото Дөкея Тәлеева

on some unique features [Елеуов, Есен 2020: 67–69]. In our opinion, it is still too early to say what kind of construction the building is. After summarizing the results of excavations conducted in recent years, it may be possible to make a decision.

In 2019, there were discovered several rooms and 8 graves made of burnt bricks in trench IV, 50 m to the east of trench II. The Russian anthropologist Alexey Nechvaloda examined the skulls of the corpses from the graves № 1–2 and determined the gender of the deceased. After restoring the skulls, the ethnicity of buried was determined (Table 1).

Excavations in Kyshkala carried out in 2021–2022. The results of the excavation showed that there was a magnificent mausoleum under the place excavated in 2018, the architecture of which was popular in the near and far regions (fig. 3).

The project of the discovered building and the painted and unpainted brick materials collected during the excavation show that the facade and interior of the domed mausoleum were decorated in the Islamic style. The facade of the mausoleum and the frames of the main gate are decorated with clay slabs with beautiful incised patterns and colorful mosaics. The size of the mausoleum is 11×11 m consists of the main hall and the size of tomb 7×7 m located behind it. The main hall and the tomb are covered with a dome. Their walls and domes are decorated with special carvings and bricks of different sizes. The design of the mausoleum repeats the exterior of Akhmet Yasawi mausoleum in Turkestan. All this may testify the

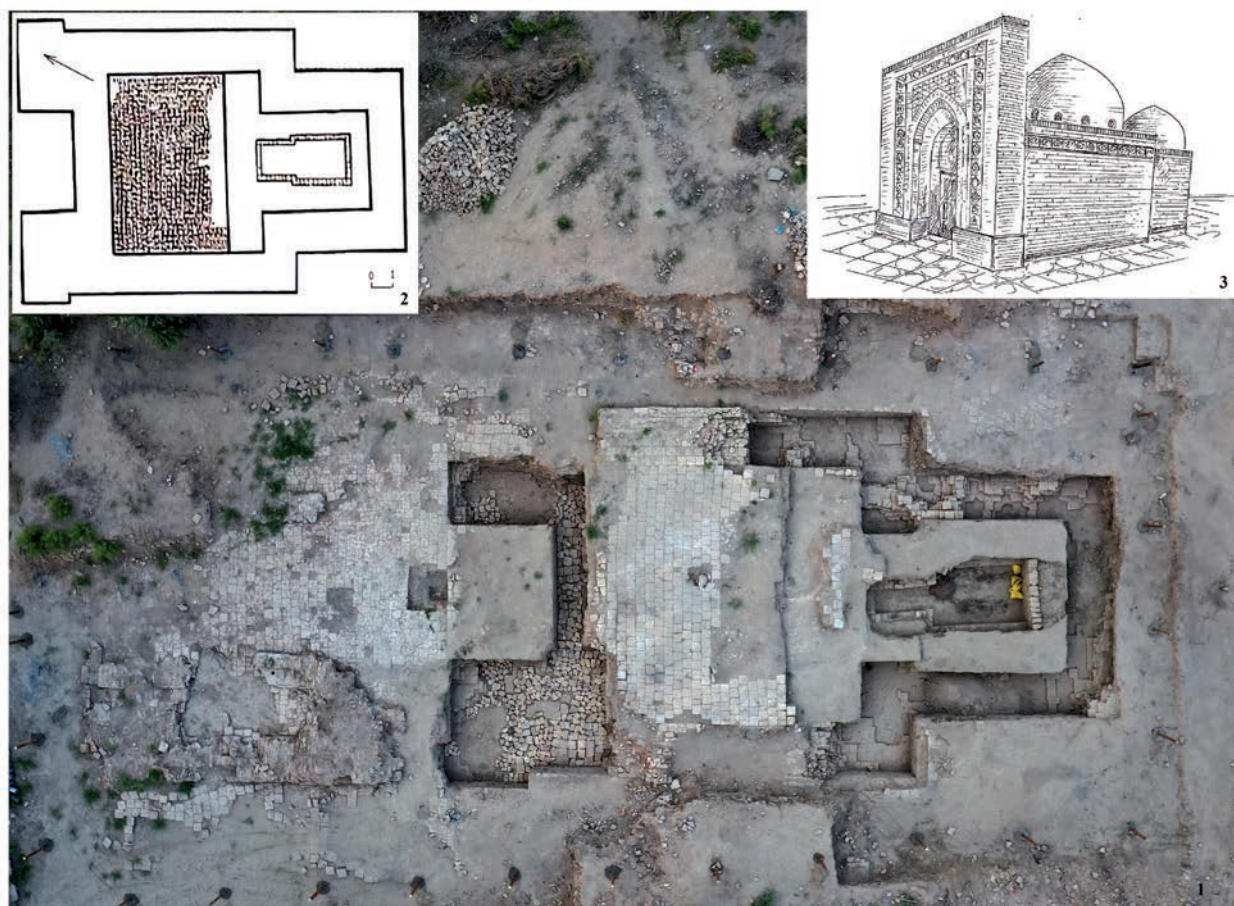


Fig. 3. Kyshkala, mausoleum 1. Aerial view (1), plan (2) and reconstruction (3). Photo by Dokey Taleev
3-сур. Қышқала, 1-кесене. Әуеден түсірілген сурет (1), жоба (2) және реконструкция (3).
Сурет Дөкей Тәлеевтікі

Рис. 3. Кышкала, мавзолей 1. Аэрофотоснимок (1), план (2) и реконструкция (3). Фото Докея Талеева

cultural and social identity of the person buried in the mausoleum. Due to the reasons mentioned above, the cemetery under the destroyed mausoleum is partially preserved. Although the upper part was destroyed, two skeletons in the grave turned out to be safe. Both bodies were sent abroad for professional laboratory examination.

A stratigraphic section was built in the middle of the town in 2021. The purpose of this work was to determine the absolute dating of the town. Coal samples taken from a layer 9.8 m long, the width of 2 m, the depth of 4 m, 4 m of cut and the depth of 2.3 m were sent to the laboratory of Herzen St. Petersburg Pedagogical University for radiocarbon determination, including calibration of absolute age. According to the results of the examination of the sent coal, the lower layer of the town dates from the 11th century. The sample taken from a depth of 2.3 m did not give the correct result. On the contrary, in 2022 coin and a bronze kuty (bottle) found in the 11th trench in the upper layer indicates the last period of the town's life. According to Russian numismatist P.N. Petrov copper coins found in the trench, (the size is 18.92×18.47



mm, weight is 1.26 g, thickness is 0.73 mm) date back to 768–769 AD. It was minted during the reign of Mubarak Khan. There is a mark of the Tuka-Temir Khan dynasty on the surface. In the 8th room of this excavated area, an unknown bronze object with a pattern and an inscription on the surface was found. At first, it was assumed that this is a women's jewelry (bracelet). When we saw a similar object with a known place of origin and time of manufacture on the Internet, we were able to identify found item as a casket without preserved upper and lower parts. According to the information shown on the Internet, this work of art, called Spirit, turned out to be a religious ritual object made of copper in the shape of a cone was *kuty* (bottle) [Pyx]. It has the inscription IHS (Jesus) within a circle on its outer wall and conical lid. Circles are repeated twice on the wall and lid of the item. There was made incrustation with white and blue colors around the text. The outer side of the circle is decorated with floral motifs. Gold-plated paint is applied to the surfaces of the patterns and inscriptions. It is recorded that this *kuty*, which was used for religious purposes was made in Limoges, France in 1250. This *kuty* named Spirit is kept in the collegium of the famous American philanthropist Michael Friedsam (1860–1931) [Pyx]. The item found by us is similar to mentioned *kuty*. The dimensions and external pattern, design and paint are also similar. There is only a slight difference in the material. Bronze predominates in the composition of casket found in Kyshkala (fig. 4).



Fig. 4. Kyshkala. Part of the casket found during excavations (1) and its analogy (2).
Photo by Dokey Taleev (1)

4-сур. Қышқала. Қазбадан табылған қобдиша бөлігі (1) мен оның баламасы (2).
Сурет Дөкей Тәлеевтікі (1)

Рис. 4. Кышкала. Часть шкатулки, найденной при раскопках (1), и аналогия
предмету (2). Фото Дюкея Талеева (1)

The result of radiocarbon examination of a coal sample taken from the lowest layer of a stratigraphic section in Kyshkala in 2021 showed its absolute age – 947 ± 30 years, that is, 10th century (the table is shown below). Coins and copper casket and painted vessels found on the surface of the town in 2022 belong to the 14th century. In conclusion, the town was formed at the end of the Oghuz era and developed during the Golden Horde. For some reason, it ceased to exist during the White Horde. Determination of its causes will be one of the main goals of further research.



Table 1 – Kyshkala, mausoleum 1. Graphic portrait of men found in the burial. Reconstruction by anthropologist Alexey Nechvaloda

1-кесте – Қышқала, 1-кесене. Ер адам бейнесінің графикалық реконструкциясы. Антрополог Алексей Нечвалоданың реконструкциясы

Таблица 1 – Кышкала, мавзолей 1. Графическая реконструкция облика мужчины. Реконструкция антрополога Алексея Нечвалоды

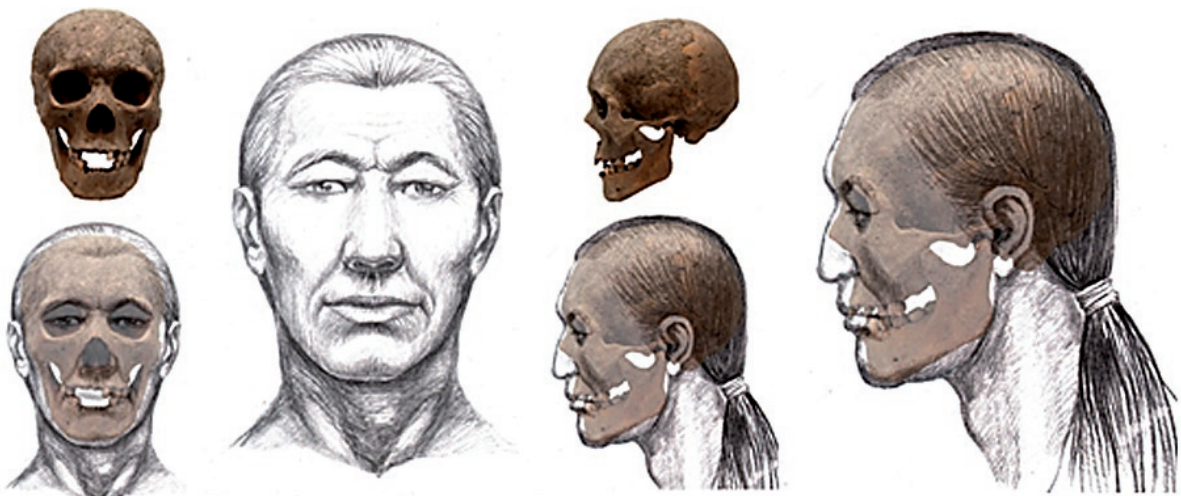


Table 2 – Results of determination of the absolute age of the sample of Kyshkala

Кесте 2 – Қышқаладан алынған үлгіден оның абсолютті жасын анықтау нәтижелері

Таблица 2 – Результаты определения абсолютного возраста образца из Кышкала

Sample identifier (Customer)	Sample Code (Contractor)	Absolute age, VR	Calibrated age (2σ) calAD
KiSKALASTRAAt. 4 m, Kyshkala (coal)	SPb_3768	974±30	999–1159

4 On the identification of the town's name according to historical written sources (Taleev D., Moldakhmet A.)

The first information about Barchilykent appeared in a letter from the Gurid ruler of al-Bagdadi, ad-Din Tekesh, to the palace secretary in May 1182. There was said that the eldest son of Tekesh, Malik Shah Zhend was the ruler of Rabat, Syganak and Barchiglykent [Ахинжанов 1995: 214]. In the report of the ambassador Karpini, sent by Pope Inokenti IV to Mongolia in 1246, the following important information about Barshynken was given: “from the land of Kangyt, we entered the land of Biserman. These people, spoke the Coman language, still speak, follow the Saracen law. Here we came across countless destroyed towns, demolished fortresses and many destroyed villages. There is one large river, the name of which is unknown to us; the town called Yankint (Zhankent) stands on it, the second is called Barkhin, and the third is called Ornas, and there were many names unknown to us. There was a master of this land called the Byik-Sultan; he was killed by the Tatars along with all his descendants” [Иоанн 1911: 51]. In another



place, the traveler wrote that “the town put up fierce resistance to the Mongols, dug huge ditches around the town, covered its face, the enemies who rushed into the town fell into the ditches, because of which they could not take the town until the ditches were full. Hearing this, the people of the town named Iankint came out in front of them and voluntarily gave the town, from which the town was not destroyed, killed most of the people, the rest of people displaced, plundered the town and filled it with other people” [Иоанн 1911: 24]. At the next place, Barshynkent is mentioned as Parchin in the story of the Armenian historian Kirakos Gandzakets about the visit of the Armenian king Hetum to Karakorum in 1247. It was said that the embassy visited Parchin while returning from Mongolia in 1255 [Киракос 1976: 224].

More complete information about Barshynkent is given in Zhamal Karshi's work. The local sheikh Husam ad-dina stayed in the town for a year (1273–1274), when he went to receive lectures from Barchinligi. As well as, Zhamal Karshi also reports that the town of Barchkad was one of the largest religious centers of the Golden Horde. In written works of famous religious, Arabic traveler Ibn Battuta mentioned that the zaviyas (hotel) of the sufism community were in every town of the Golden Horde. During his trip to Central Asia, he widely used the hospitality of representatives of the Ahi community. He gives interesting information about how sufism zaviyas in the towns of the Golden Horde perceive themselves and who took care and gave food, as well as, the number of sufism zaviyas in Central Asia [Ибрагимов 1988: 41–60]. According to experts, there were usually many zaviyas in places where local saints were buried. The above-mentioned octagonal object, in terms of its architectural character and internal construction features is similar to the sufism zawiya described by Ibn Battuta.

A well-known Kazakh scientist A.Kh. Margulan was the first scholar who connected Barshynkent with the name of Gulbarshin from the Alpamys hero poem and expressed the opinion that the location of the town might be Kyshkala [Маргулан 1950: 76–78]. Famous Soviet linguist V.M. Zhirmunskiy taking as a basis of V.A. Kallaur's assumptions, supporting the opinion that the old riverbed of the Syrdarya Ogyzsai may have been called Barshyndarya in ancient times and concluded that Barshynkent was along the same Barshyndarya [Жирмунский 1951: 101–102]. These predictions coincide with the area where Kyshkala is located today. That is, it confirms the assumption that Kyshkala is the place of the town of Barshynkent. The written data about the town and the results of archaeological research are the basis for making such a conclusion. Copper coins minted in Barshynkent that found during the excavations from the cultural layer of the town are proof of this.

5 Conclusion (*Taleev D., Moldakhmet A.*)

The results of the excavations carried out in the medieval town of Kyshkala since 2018 with information related to the Syrdarya river region in the written sources give every reason to confirm that the town-site is the historical town of Barshynkent. The architecture and splendor of the ritual and public buildings, the features of the construction discovered during the excavations on the territory of the town, showed that the town was one of the centers of the Islamic religion and many representatives of the religion lived in the town. The expert results of samples from stratigraphic excavations and the comparative description of the physical data found revealed that the town was formed in the 11th century and became a large cultural, trade, economic and spiritual center in the Golden Horde era. And the cessation of town life coincides with the end of the 14th century. It is not known whether the life of the town immediately collapsed and stopped. Research is ongoing to determine its causes.

The main goal of archaeology is to excavate such urban sites and reveal unknown pages of the history of our country and people based on the information obtained. The physical relics found during the



excavation are being held to the museum funds. Some of them are shown to the public in daily expositions with the aim of increasing the historical knowledge of the general public. As well as, organization of special exhibitions serves to increase the spiritual wealth of ordinary people. However, many of the exhibits remain outside of such measures as restoration, laboratory examination, their storage and scientific analysis. Many important objects that have been excavated are in need of further measures of protection, scientific use, such as restoration, inclusion in tourist programs, and are being destroyed over the years due to natural and physical impact. The implementation of these tasks is our main weakness.

We think that the mentioned issues are sacred arrangements that are waiting for help from state institutions, local administration, and professionals. We think that our scientific direction is directed towards this goal.

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