



RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Grave structures of the population of the lower part of the Amudarya in the islamic period (*On the example of archeological monuments of IX-XIII centuries*)

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the burial structures of the Khorezm Muslim population in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya on the basis of archeological research sources. The materials under consideration and data obtained by other researchers (ethnographic data) are important for the generalization of research on the paleodemography of the population of Khorezm, to study the demographic structure of its population in different regions in different historical periods and to gain a closer understanding of many processes in Islam.

**Keywords:** Kalmykkirilgan, Kirontov, Mizdahkon, Ashurmattepa, Tok Qala, Alma-Atishgan, Burial structures.

## Introduction

Ancient Khorezm is one of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, which today includes the Republic of Karakalpakstan, the semi-autonomous region of northwestern Uzbekistan, the Dashoguz region of Turkmenistan and Khorezm region.

## Historical Information

The early period of Islam was an important stage in the history of Khorezm in the fate of the peoples and tribes living in the Khorezm oasis and is characterized by many problems, such as urbanization, development of trade and trade routes, the relationship between housing and the nomadic world.

The geographical location of Khorezm in the center of the Central Asian desert region had led to the oasis (and the state) having a special relationship with neighboring nomads and their associations. The geographical location of

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Therefore, the topography, burial types, and evolution of burial sites are important, and in some cases the only source for studying issues such as family forms cultural, and ethnic ties in ancient and medieval history of Central Asia. In this context, archaeological sources are of particular importance while at the same time creating additional opportunities for the analysis of the problem of the expansion of Islam in Khorezm. Archaeological evidence of burials in the medieval Khorezm and surrounding nomadic Muslim cemeteries was first discovered in the late 1950s by A.V. Gudkova, E.B. Bijanov and M. Mambetullaev in the Tokkala cemetery (Bijanov EB, Mambetullaev MM. 1974. B. 46), Mizdaxkan, Grantov (Khodjaniazov G., Yusupov N., Amirov Sh. 2002. B. 184) and in the monuments of Kalmykkirilgan cemetery (Mambetullaev M. 1984. B. 88) was continued.

## Result

As a result of the research, the main features of Muslim burial ceremonies were identified and a typological, chronological classification of Muslim tomb structures was established. The main features of burial ceremonies in medieval Khorezm According to the classification of tombs studied and documented by Khorezm archeological research, there are four types of burials, two of which are divided into subtypes.

### Type I

Cut rectangles with burials in the pits (Figure 1).

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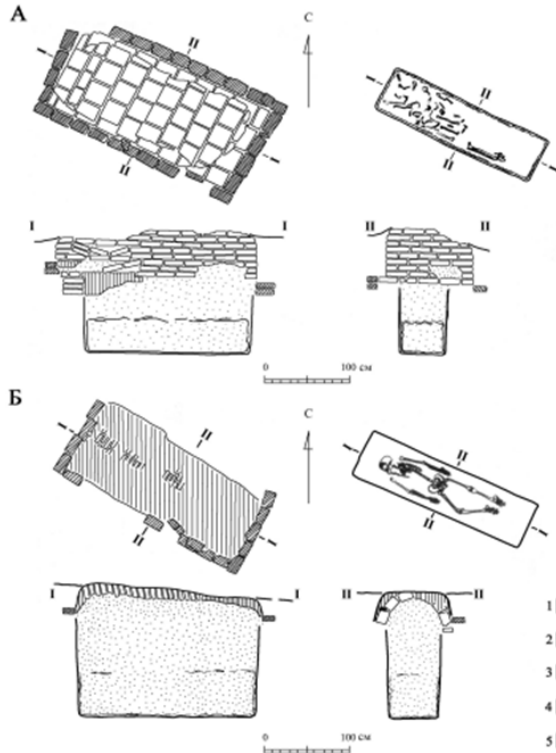


Figure 1: Graves in cut rectangular pits. Yagodin V.N., Khodjayov 1970

**Type II**

It is classified by burying it in a rare underground pit (Figure 2). Graves of this type are divided into 3 groups depending on the method of covering:

- Both surfaces are covered with brick.
- Brick pillars have a flat surface.
- The brick pillars are covered with flat brick tiles.

**Type III**

Burials include burials placed in a narrow burial pit cut directly to the bottom of a wider pit (Figure 3). Depending on the form of covering this type of narrow tomb, we can distinguish 4 types:

- Tombs covered with square mudblocks.
- The rectangles are covered with mudblocks.
- The rectangles are covered with mud blocks, one of which is inclined.
- The tombs are lined with reeds wrapped in wooden sticks.

Remains of a wooden coffin were found in 16 of the 25 documented burials in the Mizdakhn mausoleum (Yagodin V.N, Khodjayov T.K. 1970. p.254).

**Type IV**

Type IV is characterized by a cut chamber (lahad) on the southwest side of the burial pit (Figure 4).

The most common type of tomb in this group is the second type of brick tomb. We can see similar tomb

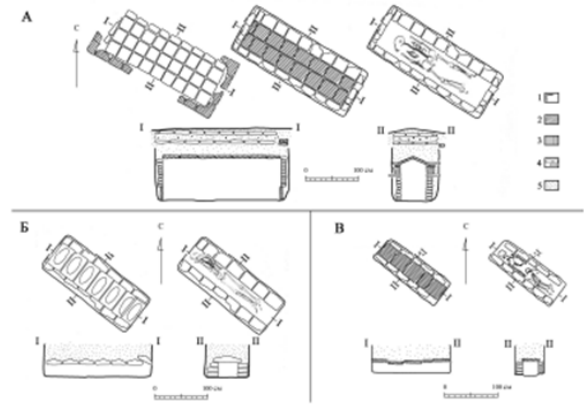


Figure 2: Tombs. Yagodin V.N., Khodjayov 1970

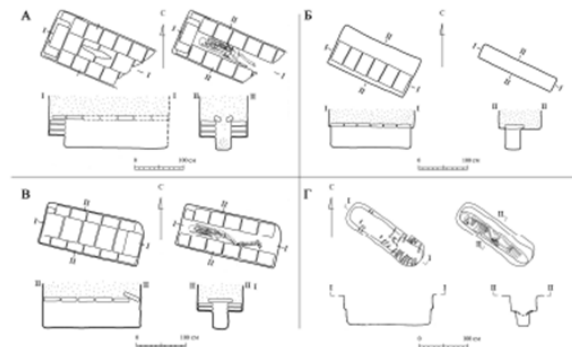


Figure 3: Tombs. Graves placed in a narrow tomb pit cut directly to the bottom of a wider pit

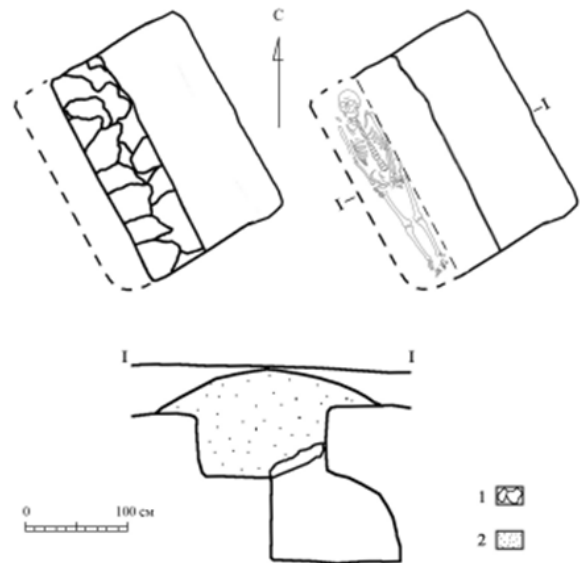


Figure 4: Tombs. A cut-out chamber (lahad) on the southwest side of the burial pit. Krantau necropolis. №19-grave

constructions in other regions of Central Asia during the Middle Ages (Table 1).

The rarest are classified as burials in rectangular pits with vertical walls cut into the ground and simple rectangular,

**Table 1:** Cemetery monuments of the Islamic period of XI-XIII centuries

<i>Types of graves</i>	<i>Mizdakhan necropolis</i>	<i>Toqqal'a necropolis</i>	<i>Kalmikkirilgan cemetery monument</i>	<i>Krantov necropolis</i>	<i>Ashram-mat hill cemetery monument</i>	<i>Olma-otishgan cemetery monument</i>	<i>From the total section</i>
Type 1	25	-	-	-	-	-	25
Type 2	266	9	48	13	-	-	336
Type 3	99	158	10	29	1	1	298
Type 4	2	-	-	1	-	-	3
B-1	-	-	-	8	-	-	8
Total studied	391	167	58	51	1	1	670

chamber (lahad) type tombs cut to the southwest side of the pit.

The oldest type of burial was tombs covered with square mud blocks, which were replaced in the XI century by tombs of the type of underground brick pits, which were rare, and existed in the XII-XIII centuries together with the first and fourth burials.

Right bank Mizdaxkon mausoleum tombs and burial method with flat brick tiles covered with clay bricks (Khodjaniyazov G., Yusupov N., Kdirniyazov M-Sh., Torebekov M., Avizova A., Saypanov B., Bagdasarova N. 1989, No. 3. B. 68). The residue is similar to a scraped burial structure. The method of burial on the right bank Mizdaxkon mausoleum tombs and flat brick tiles covered with clay bricks is similar to the Kalmikkirilgan burial structure (Khodjaniyazov G., Yusupov N., Kdirniyazov M-Sh., Torebekov M., Avizova A., Saypanov B., Bagdasarova N. 1989, No. 3. B. 68). V.N.Yagodin said that these tombs date back to the second half of the VIII-X centuries. Unlike the Mizdakhan, the Kalmikkirilgan ruined tombs were built of baked bricks, not raw bricks (Mambetullaev M. 1984. p.86).

Similarly, apart from the lower reaches of the Amudarya, the burials of the Khorezm Muslim population in stone boxes dating back to the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> centuries are also known from the materials of the Kuva necropolis and the cemetery near Quyriktobe (Bulatova V.A. 1965. pp. 139-146). It can be seen that type 3 burials are also common, and the oldest burial structures of the Muslim population in Khorezm are also graves belonging to this category (Nurmuhambetov B.N. p.92). According to the Mizdakhan necropolis, tombs of this type appeared mainly in the second half of the VIII century and existed until the XI century. However, other cemetery monuments of the Khorezm oasis - in the necropolis of Tuqqala, Kalmikkirilgan, Ashirmat hill, Alma-atyshgan, as well as the necropolis on the mountain Grantau existed until the XI-XIV centuries (Yagodin V.N., Mambetullaev M., Yusupov N. 1973 Page 52).

In graves, regardless of direction, the position of the buried is to the right, and the direction of the facial bones is also more stable. The burials have a south-westerly orientation, with the deceased lying "backwards", some lying sideways, with the head facing "qibla" or upwards. Raw bricks and pieces of soil were placed on the back so that the

deceased, who was placed in a side position, would not turn to the back (Khismatulin, 1997: 77, 79, 89).

From the above, it can be seen that all types of burials in the medieval tombs of the people of the Khorezm oasis are fully consistent with these traditions in terms of the norms set out in the Muslim normative acts regulating funerals.

## Discussion

Khorezm cemeteries amaze with their unique burial structures. A. Khoroshkhin also paid attention to this. During his travels around Khorezm, he describes the surroundings as follows:

"Fields, gardens and extremely unique cemeteries, high monuments rising in the midst of green nature, adorn the road with variety."

In southern Khorezm, burials on the ground are predominant. They differ in terms of their size, structure, plan, building material, surface pressure and are divided into four types (Kirantov, Kalmikkirilgan, Mizdakhan, Ashirmattepa, Olma-otishgan). Graves are intended for single or group burial.

The most common type in Khorezm are tombs of different sizes, which are built of clay, brick (baked and raw), dome-shaped, some of which are flat. Another such type of earthen tomb is of particular interest in the ethnogenesis of the peoples of Central Asia (Snesarev G.P. Urgench., 2018. p. 157). This wooden coffin is made entirely of wood and planks. They are mainly designed for individual burials and they are also divided into two types. The first is a tall and wide wooden box (Mizdakhan), which, when installed in the cemetery, is covered with mud. The second - a thin, narrow and long box (Ashirmattepa, Almaty, Kalmikkirilgan, Kirantov) differs little from the coffin.

The first type is mixed in other cemeteries in large cemeteries. Boxes of this type were mainly used for young children and dignitaries. The second type of narrow, long coffins are mostly found in old cemeteries. These coffins barely stand on the ground. These coffins are very narrow in shape and can be placed on it only when the corpse is lying on its side. The wide and tall chests are its perfected form under the influence of the sagana and nigiris. It was not possible to use nails in the box of either shape. It is attached only by means of wood. In ancient times, chest-

shaped coffins were made of mulberry wood as a sacred tree (Snesarev G.P. Urgench., 2018. p.160).

### Conclusion

At the beginning of the VIII century, the influence of the Arab Caliphate in Khorezm increased, and from this period the interaction of Islamic and local cultures and the process of conversion of the people of Khorezm to Islam began. This had led to changes in the burial arrangements and facilities of the Khorezm population.

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