



## ON THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL STUDY OF KAVAT-KALI AND ITS DOMAINS

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**Annotation:** The article summarizes the results of many years of archaeological research in Kavatkala and its surrounding area. The history of the study is mainly divided into four stages. Each stage is characterized separately, and the main conclusions are highlighted. Located on the right bank, the Kavatkalinsk oasis intrigued 20th-century archaeologists as a well-developed region with a developed irrigation system. It primarily describes the results of archaeological research in the modern era. Analysis of the materials is provided and compared with other artifacts and published materials.

**Keywords:** History, archaeology, research, results, Kavat-Kala, oasis, settlement, medieval period, castles, estates.

In the context of the development of world historical science, a large number of archaeological, ethnographic, and written sources containing information on the socio-economic and ethnopolitical history of the peoples of Central Asia as a whole have accumulated in the territory of Karakalpakstan. In this regard, the archaeological study of the Kavatkalinsk oasis is of great importance. Currently, the archaeological sites of this region, especially its ancient and medieval periods, have been purposefully studied and continue to be studied (Report on Arch. iss. 2024. p. 6). In this article, we will attempt to summarize the archaeological research of Kavatkala and its surrounding area.



@@0 The Kavatkalinsk oasis is located on the right bank of the Amu Darya. Archaeological monuments of the 12th - early 13th centuries in the Kavatkalin oasis are located on a vast territory stretching along the ancient Gavkhor irrigation system. The total area of the oasis, covered with fields, reaches 35 km<sup>2</sup>. According to B. Andrianov's research, over 140 households covering an area of 14 km<sup>2</sup> were registered in the central part adjacent to Qovotqal'a (Andrianov, 1956, p. 146).

In the second half of the 20th century, during the development of lands for agricultural needs, the Kavatkalinsk oasis suffered greatly.

many ruins of castles, estates, and remnants of irrigation networks. Currently, this oasis has been transformed into a large settlement.

Almost all other archaeological sites in Qovotqal'a have been destroyed due to extensive agricultural land.

Qovot-qal'a is located in the Qovot-qal'a village of Ellikqal'a district, Republic of Karakalpakstan (coordinates: N41°51'14.90" E60°54'41.50") (Arch. 2024. p.6). The monument is one of the centers of urban and rural culture of medieval Khorezm. In the 11th - early 13th centuries Qovotqal'a was the center of the Qovotqal'a oasis.

@@0 The \*qavat-qal'a\* is rectangular, with long sides oriented from north to south, measuring 160 x 190 meters. Currently, the area around Qovotqo'la is surrounded by a modern cultural zone. Certain sections of the fortress walls have been well preserved, reaching approximately 5-6 meters in height. Traces of repairs are clearly visible on the fortress walls. Sand dunes up to 5 meters thick have accumulated and completely occupied the northern part of the monument. Ceramic fragments, characteristically belonging to the Khwarazmian period, are scattered on the monument's modern surface.

The fortress walls of the monument are reinforced with towers, some of which are semicircular and well-preserved. The fortress walls were also



reinforced with towers. There was a construction of such towers. It was widespread in the cities and castles of Khwarazm during the 12th - early 13th centuries.

Khorezmshahov-Anushteginidov Researchers note that the fortification of fortress walls with towers appeared in Khwarazm in the 12th century (Khojaniyazov, 2013. p. 76). Perhaps these towers were built later on Qovotqal'a to strengthen the defense and it's no coincidence that Qovotqal'a flourished.

dates back to the 12th century. In general, a detailed description of the Kavatkali fortification requires detailed research.

приходится на XII в. В целом подробное описание фортификации Кават-калы требует детального исследования.

@@@ Information about the numerous cities and castles of medieval Khwarazm has been preserved in Arab-Persian written sources dating back to the 9th-11th centuries. Yaqut al-Hamawi, who visited Khwarazm in 1219, writes the following: "I have never seen a more populated region than it (Khwarazm)... The continuous settlement, the proximity of villages, the abundance of separate houses and castles in its steppes, rarely brings your gaze to an uncultivated land in its volosts (rustak) " (Tolstov, 1948, p. 156). We can observe Yakut's descriptions of "close settlements, many separate houses and castles" specifically in the Kavatkalin Dead Oasis; such a cultural oasis of that period is absent in other regions of Khwarazm. Thus, it is not excluded that Yaqut al-Hamawi, in his information, referred to the Kavatkalin oasis. However, there is currently no direct information about Qavotqal'a in Arabic-Persian written sources.

Archaeological research in the Kavatkalin oasis can be conditionally divided into four stages, which will be further examined in detail in future research.

@@@ 1. The pre-war period, when the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition was established. The initial stage of studying the oasis



dates back to 1938-1939. By the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition under the leadership of S.P. Tolstov (Tolstov, 1948, pp. 156-164). In 1940, when the entire Kavatkalsk oasis was surveyed, reconnaissance excavations were conducted at Kavatkalsk (Tolstov, 1946, pp. 83-88). However, during this time, the main excavation work was carried out on the estates surrounding the monument.

2. After a long interruption, archaeological research resumed in 1956 due to the approach of the cultural zone and the possible subsequent destruction of monuments. During the research conducted that year, the plan of the monument was drawn up, as well as

archaeological excavations have been carried out in the southern part of the monument.

bug're. Researchers have identified two construction horizons, relatively close in time. As a result of clearing the upper construction horizon, several rooms of the building, suggested by researchers as a huge palace, were discovered. Based on archaeological and numismatic materials, the existence of this monument has been determined.

during the Khwarazmian period (12th - early 13th centuries). (Vakturskaya, Vishnevskaya, 1959, p. 161).

In 1956, B. V. Andrianov's archaeological and topographical team investigated the irrigation system of Gavkhore, while also examining the topography of the estates and castles around Kavatkalsk (Andrianov, 1959, pp. 146-150).

@@@ 3. In the 1970s, archaeologists at the Karakalpak Art Museum (now named after I.V. Savitsky) conducted archaeological excavations.

in the Kavatkalsk oasis. The research was conducted on the estates No. 5, 9, 41.

43 Kavatkalsk oasis and on Kavatkalsk itself (Nerazik, Manilov, Savitskiy, 1974, pp. 64-69; Kurochkin, Gultov, Deyanova, 1975, p. 502;





Kurochkin, Nerazik, 1976, pp. 529-530 Kurochkin, 1977, pp. 530-531). Archaeological excavations at Qovotqal'a were carried out in the southern part of the monument, on the territory excavated by the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition in 1956, and were excavated a second time, revealing additional architectural details. Two large halls were opened. Also, during the excavations, in addition to two large halls, several other residential buildings were discovered. Two large halls represent a single monumental building. Researchers suggest that this monumental building, based on two large halls, represents a mosque of the 12th-13th centuries. Also, as a result of recent research, researchers have concluded that the monument had two restoration periods, not two construction horizons, as previously considered (Dospanov, 2013, p. 128).

@@@ 4. This stage is connected with the modern study of the Kavatkalsinsk oasis. The KKNIGN archaeological team began excavations in 2024 at a site near the northeastern corner of the monument. Each section of the excavation was numbered; such an approach was not intended. Excavator I. The total excavation area was 12x12 meters. The excavation area was divided into 36 squares. Squares were denoted by through numbering. Brushes 1 m wide were left. The elevation marks of the structures, structures, and findings were taken from benchmark No. 1, conventionally installed above the southern fortress wall of the monument (Report on the Arch. 2024. p.10).

The excavation site in 2024 was covered with a sand barchan, with the sand's height around 1.5 meters above the surface. The excavation work began with cleaning the sand from the surface. After removing the surface layers, traces of buildings and structures became visible.

As a result of the excavations, four rooms dating back to the Khwarazmian period were uncovered, revealing two floors.

@@@ Room No. 1 is located in the northwestern part of the excavation. The walls of the rooms are made using a combined method of adobe brick and adobe.



The dimensions of the bricks are different, 25 x 25, 22 x 22, 20 x 18 cm, but it is difficult to determine the thickness of the bricks. The northern wall is 4.14 x 68 m long, with a retained height of 30 cm. The western wall is 4.84 x 74 m long, with a height of 30 cm. The southern wall is 4.66 x 72 m long, with a height of 88 cm. The eastern wall is 4.64 x 54 m long, with a height of 38 cm. The entrance to the room is located on the western wall, with a passageway width of 70 cm. A thin layer of clay coating is observed on some sections of the floor. A pile of burnt brick structures, a ceramic stove, and a partition were discovered on the later floor of the room. A collapse of fired brick structures was discovered in a room near the south wall. The size of the bricks is 27 x 27 x 4 cm, 25 x 25 x 4 cm, but they are similar to the bricks of the Khorezmshah period (12th century). Tashnau, found in rooms No. 2 and No. 4, has bricks with the same opening (Report on Arch. 2024. p.13).

A ceramic hearth, 42 cm in diameter and 40 cm deep, was discovered in the northwest corner of the room. The hearth was built into a platform measuring 1.90 x 1.30 m. During the cleaning of the platform below, burnt bricks were found.

placed vertically along the edge, measuring 18 x 17 cm. The platform's base lies in an early field. Perhaps, in the early stages of the revival in this room, it functioned as a sufa.

@@0 Excavations have uncovered intact vessels and fragments of irrigated and non-irrigated ceramics dating back to the 12th - early 13th centuries. Some household ceramics are found in other monuments of the Khwarazmian period (Vakturskaya, 1959, pp. 303-304; Iskanderova, 2016, pp. 28-30 Saypov, 2022, p. 78).

In addition to ceramic finds, several metal objects were discovered. One of them is a fragment of a sickle-shaped iron object. The preserved part is 24 cm long and 4 cm wide. It may be a serpent or a special grape knife. Similar serrated items were also found in the rural settlements of the Daryolik-Kul settlement in the 12th - early 13th centuries (Nerazik, 1976, p. 112).





One of the rooms unearthed a circular column base, one part of which is broken, with a diameter of 39 cm. Such column bases were previously discovered in Kavat-qal'a (Vakturskaya, Vishnevskaya, 1956, p. 152). Similar columns are found in Kunya-Urgench (Kdirniyazov, 2015, p. 231).

Overall, recent archaeological research shows that, in terms of the construction of the structures and the artifacts found, almost all of them are similar in shape to other artifacts from the Khwarazmian period.

Three pits were drilled to determine the stratigraphy of the monument. All of them were excavated continents. The stratigraphic picture of the pits consists of a clay layer and a slag layer mixed with ash. Among the materials obtained from a single pit, ceramics from the ancient period predominate. This, in turn, serves as evidence for the hypothesis that Qovotqal'a was built on the site of an early ancient settlement.

@@@ Based on the structures located in the aforementioned premises, they can be considered household structures. Especially room No. 2 differs slightly from others. In this room, in addition to household structures and constructions, numerous finds used for household purposes have been discovered. Rooms No. 1 and No. 3, possibly

In the early stages of existence, they were used as dwellings. In these premises, in the early field, no structures were found.

structures used for economic purposes (Report on arch. iss. 2024. p.21).

As researchers who conducted excavations at Kavat-qal'a note, two construction horizons, quite close in time, have been uncovered at the monument.

and possibly related to the Khwarazmian period (Vakturskaya, Vishnevskaya, 1956, p. 161). Scientists who have conducted research on the monument in recent years have confidently noted that these are not two construction horizons, but two periods of restoration (Dospanov, 2013, p. 128). However, research in 2024 showed that the repair marks on the monument are



clearly visible, and it can be confidently stated that the monument has been repaired several times. In some excavations, traces of fire can be seen, likely related to the Mongol invasion.

It should be noted here that it is difficult to draw a definitive conclusion about the period when Qovot-qal'a was built. According to researchers, the monument was built on the site of an early ancient settlement (Vakturskaya, Vishnevskaya, 1956, p. 161). Research conducted in 2024 confirms this.

@@@ Thus, modern research of the monument has shown that the site underwent fundamental reconstruction in the 11th-12th centuries and ultimately acquired the appearance characteristic of the Khwarazmian period. Traces of ancient construction are not clearly visible on the territory of the last excavation, but a significant amount of ceramics from the ancient Khorezmian period has been discovered. This means that the settlement emerged in antiquity as a settlement and gradually transformed into a large city in the Middle Ages, serving as a center of crafts and trade throughout the Kavatkalin oasis.

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