



# POTTERY MAKING TRADITIONS IN THE VILLAGES OF THE KESH OASIS IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES (ON THE EXAMPLE OF TURTKULTEPA)

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## ABSTRACT

*This article analyzes small pottery with a single cane found during archeological excavations at the first medieval Turtkultepa monument in Yakkabag district of Kashkadarya region.*

**KEYWORDS:** *South Sughd, Nakhshab, Kesh, Afrosiab, Kesh Archaeological and Topographic Expedition (KATE), Qovunchi culture, jetisar culture, pottery, mug, small jug, clay, bowl, angob-paint.*

## DISCUSSION

During the early Middle Ages, the pottery of the two neighboring oases of South Sughd - Nakhshab and Kesh provinces - differed sharply from each other. Nakhchivan has its own independent pottery traditions, while the Kesh oasis is close to the Samarkand oasis in many respects. Potters from Bactria, Sughd, Fergana, Khorezm, Ustrushna, Chach and other historical and geographical regions in the early Middle Ages they produced a large variety of large and small pots, jugs, double-walled pots, jugs, mustachora (flyaga), jugs, handmade pots, and such methods of production were peculiar to the whole of Central Asia. In this regard, the analysis of each form does not include the analysis of all Central Asian pottery. We also found it necessary to compare it with artifacts found in the monuments of historical and geographical lands.

A whole set of mugs was found in Turtkultepa, and so many and varied mugs have never been found in any other monument in Sughd. This type of pottery is also relatively rare in the monuments of the Kesh oasis. The only mug kept intact was found in Hovuztepa<sup>1</sup>. The reason why mugs are rarely found in the monuments of the Kesh oasis is that no monument of this oasis dating back to the V-VI centuries has been excavated by extensive archeological excavations such as Turtkultepa. The Kesh Archaeological and Topographic Expedition (KATE) of the Department of Central Asian

Archeology of Tashkent State University, which has been working in this oasis for many years, has not acquired entire complexes of pottery due to its archeological intelligence and small-scale archeological excavations.

The Turtkultepa pottery complex shows that for the first time in the history of this oasis pottery was also produced in large quantities. The mugs are marked in Afrosiyab pottery<sup>2</sup>. In the ruins of a castle near Kofirqala in Samarkand, a piece of a mug decorated with angob-paint was found<sup>3</sup>. According to the researcher of this monument, the mug, which is the only one among a large number of pottery vessels, pointed out that the production of this type of pottery is only a picture. Although this type of vessel is rarely found in Panjakent, it has not yet been reflected in the scientific literature. But among the pottery vessels of the VII-VIII centuries of Panjakent, mugs occupy a significant place. Mugs were not produced in Nakhchivan and Bukhara during this period. There was no need for these dishes, as the dwarf "Nakhshab jugs" performed the function of the mugs in Nakhshab. But even among the pottery vessels of Nakhshab from the VII-VIII centuries, mugs like in Panjakent are common<sup>4</sup>. Mugs began to

<sup>2</sup> Lebedeva T.I. Keramika Afrasiaba V-VI vv. IMKU, vip. 23, Tashkent, 1990.str. 163.ris.2,2.

<sup>3</sup> Shishkina G.V. Rannesrednevekovayaselskaya usadba pod Samarkandom // IMKU. Vip. 2. – Tashkent: Fan, 1961, – str.210.ris.10,4.

<sup>4</sup> Turebekov M., Raskopki bastiona vnutrenney krepostnoy steni Yerkurgana // Vip. 16. – Tashkent: Fan, 1981, - str.41.ris.3.

<sup>1</sup> Kabanov S.K. Arxeologicheskiye razvedki v verxney chasti dolini Kashkadari. Trudi Instituta istorii i arxeologii. Vip. 7, Tashkent, 1955.str. 94.



appear in such monuments as Kuchuktepa, Kuyovkurgan in the territory of Tokharistan in the second half of the V century AD from the first half of the VI century<sup>5</sup>.

As mentioned above, the mugs are mainly found in the layers of monuments in Sughd dating back to the VII-VIII centuries. If we are interested in the process of the appearance of these vessels in the Sughd region, mugs are not found in the monuments of the more ancient times of this country. This type of pottery is mostly found in hand-made monuments in the monuments of the Tashkent oasis and the Middle Syrdarya region, which were mainly influenced by the Kovunchi and Jetiasar cultures. Many mugs were also found in the monuments of the Jetiasar culture of the Jetiasar I period (I-IV centuries AD or I - III centuries BC)<sup>6</sup>. Cups have been very popular in the monuments of the Tashkent oasis since the time of Qovunchi I. Their production will continue in the Qovunchi II and Qovunchi III periods. Experts note that in the following centuries in the cities and villages of the Tashkent oasis began to make them on pottery wheels. However, the failure to produce mugs in Nakhshab, where the influence of the Qovunchi and Jetiasar cultures was stronger, was due to the very high quality "Nakhshab jugs" widely produced in the region since the 3rd century AD. In our opinion, the relatively slightly rougher mugs could not compete with the local "Nakhshab glasses", which are designed to perform the exact same function as them, are very delicate, beautiful and of high quality. It is probable that this variety of mugs originated in the Kesh oasis under the influence of the Jetiasar and Qovunchi cultures, which also have their ancient roots.

Several types of single-barreled mugs have been found in Tortkoltepa, which have been used in household use of liquid products such as water, milk, and oil. A characteristic feature of this type of vessel is that the noxious body expands upwards for easy and targeted flow of liquid. Although these types of vessels are often found in the monuments of other regions of Sughd, none of them is found as a whole complex, as in Turtkultepa. No such vessels were produced in Nakhshab, and there was no need for these vessels, as their function was performed by the dwarf "Nakhshab jugs". Samples of vessels close in shape to these vessels are found in Jangaltepa in the

Chimkurgan Reservoir<sup>7</sup>, in Panjakent in the Bukhara V strata in Bukhara<sup>8</sup>.

In the ruins of the castle near Kofirqala in Samarkand, a vessel similar to one of the vessels in Turtkultepa was found<sup>9</sup>. These vessels are also found mainly in the layers of monuments in Sughd dating from the V-VI centuries. In terms of shape, this type of pottery is especially common in monuments under the influence of the Qovunchi culture, and most of them are handmade. This type of jug was first widely used in the monuments of the Tashkent oasis during the Qovunchi I period. Their production does not stop during the Qovunchi II and Qovunchi III periods<sup>10</sup>. This type of mug-shaped vessels was also found in the lower layers of the "Big House" belonging to the Jetiasar №3 monuments on the banks of the Syrdarya River, dating to the I-IV centuries AD (or III century BC)<sup>11</sup>. It is also likely that these types of vessels originated in the Kesh oasis under the influence of the Jetiasar and Qovunchi cultures, which have their ancient roots.

Single-headed jugs of this type began to appear in the territory of Tokharistan in the late IV-early AD and early V centuries. In one of these jugs, two twins are mounted in a vertical position, designed to lift the container with two fingers. Similar double-headed mugs began to appear in monuments such as Kuchuktepa, Kuyavkurgan in the territory of Tokharistan in the second half of the V century AD from the first half of the VI century<sup>12</sup>.

However, in Nakhshab, where the influence of the Qovunchi and Jetiasar cultures is stronger, the reason for not producing such jars as mugs is, as mentioned above, high-quality Nakhshab jugs, which have been widely produced in the region since the 3rd century AD. As mentioned above, these single-barreled mugs, like mugs, could not compete with the local "Nakhshab jugs" which are very thin, beautiful and of high quality.

A large collection of small jugs has been obtained at Tortkoltepa, and their forms resemble those of large vessels. Small-sized, wide-necked, single-plate thin-walled goggles were widely produced in all regions of Central Asia in the early

<sup>5</sup> Annayev T.Dj. Rannesrednevekoviye poseleniya Severnogo Toxaristana. Tashkent, 1988. tabl. XIII a, 44-45, 47.

<sup>6</sup> Levina L.M. Keramika nijney i sredney Sirdari v I tisyachiletii n.e., M., 1971. ris.3, 74-81; ris.15, 80-122.

<sup>7</sup> Kabanov S.K. Kultura selskix poseleniy Yujnogo Sogda II-VI vv. Tashkent, 1981. s 24, ris.15,9,19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Marshak B.I. Otchet o rabotax na obyekte XII za 1955-1960 gg. MIA, vip.124, M-L.1964.ris.21,4.

<sup>9</sup> Shishkina G.V. Rannesrednevekovayaselskaya usadba pod Samarkandom // IMKU. Vip. 2. – Tashkent: Fan, 1961, – S.210.ris.10,4.

<sup>10</sup> Levina L.M. Keramika nijney i sredney Sirdari v I tisyachiletii n.e., M., 1971. ris.29, 23-29; ris.32, 70-75, 100-105;

<sup>11</sup> Levina L.M. Keramika nijney i sredney Sirdari... S.16, ris.3, 23

<sup>12</sup> Annayev T.Dj. Rannesrednevekoviye poseleniya Severnogo Toxaristana. Tashkent, 1988.XIVa, 44-45, 47.



Middle Ages, and their shapes do not show specificity for any region.

A large collection of pottery obtained as a result of large-scale archeological excavations in Tortkoltepa reflects the main features of Kesh pottery of the V-VI centuries and the main forms of pottery produced in the upper oasis of South Sughd during this period. This is the first time that such a large collection of pottery has been obtained, and the inclusion of this collection in the scope of research and study is of extraordinary importance in the study of the history of early medieval Kesh pottery.

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