

## From the History of the Ossuaries of the Peoples of Central Asia

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### Abstract:

In this article, the history of the ossuaries of the peoples of Central Asia was scientifically studied. In it, the specific characteristics, shape, and decorations of artifacts found in archaeological excavations in different regions of Uzbekistan were studied. The main attention was paid to the history of masters.

**Keywords:** pottery, artefact, archaeology, monument, Zoroastrian religion, ritual, preservation, research, ossuary, Central Asia, area.

It is known that the territory of Uzbekistan was one of the oldest centers of civilization. This region is a country rich in many cultural and spiritual centers, scientific works and historical monuments formed over thousands of years.

The Uzbek people have created rich artistic traditions of practical decorative art for many centuries. They have been inherited from generation to generation and embody a number of historical layers. The basis of the traditional factors of Uzbek applied decorative art, which is a product of national thought, is decoration, conditionality of images, and unique color balance. Pottery is an old and beautiful example of Uzbek folk art. Undoubtedly, folk ceramic art is a special and independent type of creativity, which has its own laws of development and stages of development. In the history of mankind, there has always been an effort to lighten the hard life and add beauty to it. Man has tested many times the viscosity of mud made from earth and its hardening from heat. This in turn led to the development of the first types of artificial ceramics.

As a result of scientific expeditions conducted by archaeologists in our country, many examples of material culture were found. In particular, there are a lot of ceramics in them. In the ruins of places such as Afrosiyab, Varakhsha, Panjikent, Kafirkala, the remains of highly developed examples of Sogdian culture were found. In recent years, the scientific researches carried out by the archaeological, ethnographic, art history scientific investigation expeditions and the achievements in this field are proof of our opinion.

The development of the tradition of making pottery began in the Neolithic period, and then began to improve in Zoroastrian and ancient societies.

Humanity has been paying special attention to death and related rituals since ancient times. According to archeological data, since the Paleolithic period, that is, Neanderthal people buried their loved ones after their death, after performing certain rituals.

The custom of placing various items next to the deceased person, and burying the deceased with the things they used and loved during his lifetime, became more complicated as the society developed. In this way, religious concepts were also formed.

Zoroastrian religion spread widely in Central Asia in the first half of the first millennium BC. The foundations of this religion were created in primitive community conditions, in a time when people deified the surrounding nature. Zoroastrians then worshiped fire (sun), earth, water, moon, and stars and considered them sacred.

In particular, in the 5th-10th centuries, the technique of making ossuaries, a special type of ceramic products, developed. People who lived at that time kept bones in ossuaries because they thought that bones were part of the soul inside a person. Various pictorial themes were widely used in the decoration of ossuaries. In fact, the four sides of the ossuaries have a quadrilateral appearance, and the base is joined together by the master's hand. The triangular toothed cover was often made by hand by the craftsman. In some cases, the lid and four sides are molded. But the master made it by hand in many cases.

An ossuary made of clay was first dried in the sun, then baked in a fire. Because the ossuaries were large and heavy, sheep or camel hair or a plant was used for it. This is clearly visible in the ossuary fragments found in archeology. Masters of that time rarely used angob. Because the liquid angob can have a negative effect on the quality of reliefs in the composition of the fire. An obvious example of this is the ossuary found in the Mullakurgan fortress. The group 5 ossuary found in Ishtikhan is similar. The molds used for these appear to have been used three or four times. That is why only the outline of some ossuaries remains. The master then fixed it by hand and brought it back to normal. The face of the ossuaries found in Mullatepa is completely obliterated. Ishtikhan ossuaries are completely flattened and only slightly protruding areas of the figures remain. Ossuaries should be classified according to the place where they were found.

In the literature devoted to the study of Central Asian ossuaries, scientists Y.A. Rapoport, G.A. Pugachenkova, K.A. Abdullaev mainly focus on the uniqueness of the function of the Ossuary, its types and iconography. These articles explore the source of architectural decorative elements widely used in the decoration of ossuary walls. In the early Middle Ages, the merlon and the antifix were a favorite motif of the Old Masters, and were used in the construction of buildings to emphasize the solemnity and splendor of churches and palaces. In addition, merlons can be seen in ossuaries.

In 1979, the Miankal group of the archaeological expedition of Uzbekistan began to study the archaeological finds. Many ossuaries were found with broken and dislodged bones. Excavations with a depth of up to 1.82 meters were carried out under the leadership of G.A. Pugachenkova. All the found ossuaries were made in the pottery style rich in patterns. Later, when a mound was excavated in the village of Mullo Kurgan, a well-preserved ossuary was found under it. The ossuaries found in the regions from Ishtikhan, Biyanaman, Samarkand to Katta Kurgan are similar to each other, so they are collectively called "Miankal ossuaries".

The common feature that unites different types of ossuaries is the three-part composition. At the bottom of the cabin there is always a detail of some kind of construction or building.

Another important thing in the plots of the ossuaries is that the entrance and door in the building images are decorated with plant branches, flower spikes and plants. For example, in Tashkent ossuaries, the surface is in the form of a two-tiered door (darvoza), which is decorated with four-leaf rosettes (flowers). At the beginning of the last century, many ossuary fragments found by B.V. Kastalsky in the village of Biyanayman near Kattakurgan are notable for being covered with unique relief images. In 1885, N.I. Veselovsky found a ceramic coffin in Afrosiyab for the first time. In 1900, instead of the previously used terms "urn" and "coffin", he was the first to introduce the term "ossuarium"- "ossuary" into the science.

The custom of burying in an ossuary of the peoples of Central Asia dates back to BC. Formed in the first half of the 1st millennium BC. It lasted until the 8th century (until Islamic burial customs were adopted). The ancient Ossuary found in Khorezm was in the form of statues and represented the deification of the dead. Central Asia, Iran, Palestine, Egypt and others. many ossuaries have been found in the area, which were kept on the ground or in nauses. When the religion of Zoroastrianism took shape, this tradition ended. Because if the cremation pollutes the air, the fowl or birds that eat the dead meat will drink water from rivers, streams and ponds and start to cause various infectious diseases. In addition, the "fire" is considered sacred by the Mazdists and should not burn a pure person. As a result, the scholars of this religion, in view of the environment, the purity of water, and the originality of the offspring, introduced to wrap the dead body in a shroud, bury it at a certain depth, and in the poor areas, to keep it in saghanas; special mortuary hygiene has been developed. Ossuaries help to study the most ancient traditions, to identify subtle aspects of the practical art of ancestors.

Scientific investigations show that Koy-kirylan fortress, located in the present-day Karakalpakstan region of the Khorezm region, was built as an exhumation for funeral ceremonies. Its central building is adapted for cremation. Academician S.P. Tolstov was the head of the archeological expedition. Many ossuaries and pottery were found in this fort. Most of the Khorezm ossuaries, including the ossuaries found in the Koy-kirylan fortress, were made of ceramic in the form of human figures. One such statue is 70 cm tall and depicts a standing woman. The head and face of the statue were badly damaged and restored after many difficulties. Her hair was slicked back and her ears were uncovered. The ossuary has a hole in the middle of the ear. On the bottom of the ossuary, the letters MIM of the Aramaic alphabet are made in relief. The front part of the ossuary was made by hand in the style of relief and has come down to us in a broken state. His shirt is sticking out of his palm, which is wrapped in a shroud. The jacket is decorated with triangular patterns. There is an extremity of a red angob, yellow-purple statue with a color image, but it has not come down to us.

The second statue is more complex, a seated male statue. The height of this statue is 85 cm. Placed on top of a round bowl. But the dish is made like a chair. It gives the impression of a person sitting in a chair. An 8-shaped arch is built, the leg ends the composition and resembles the leg of an armchair. A short kaftan is worn and the chest is left exposed. The arms appear to be made separately and then glued on. The head of the statue does not correspond to the proportions of the body, it is made much larger. The head also seems to be made separately and then attached to the body. Parts of the head, eyes, ears, nose, lips, and temples were found, and by combining them, the statue can be reconstructed, i.e. brought to its original state. The circle of the eye is raised in relief. The nose is slightly more curved and has small fine holes, and the beard is located under the thin lips. The headgear reminds of an animal with ears. Such a headdress can be found on many Parthian sculptures. The side of the spine was not found during the excavation, so it was not possible to reconstruct it. Many cremated human bones were found around the ruined fort. It is clear from this that there must have been a specially built cremation ground near the ruined castle. A mask was found 200 meters south of the Koy-kiryan fortress near the time of construction of the Koy-kiryan fortress. It was found on a small earthen mound. The hill appeared as a result of the digging of the channel that flowed through this place. The notions that there was a fire in this place are not very appropriate. Here is the main evidence that there was a special device for cremation. A lot of ossuaries with clay mixed with ash and ashes were found.

Fragments of coffin statues were found in the corridors of the ruins of the ruined castle. When these fragments were collected, it was not possible to completely restore the appearance of the statue, as some parts were missing. This ossuary fragment belongs to earlier antiquity. The more ancient the

statue ossuaries are, the more they are made closer to the human form, the closer they are to us, the more they appear in the form of a round statue. Many masks were also found in this fort. To prove that this is a mask, it is enough that it consists of a very thin relief. There is a round hole in the middle of your mask. These masks are designed to cover the face of the corpse. The sculptural ossuaries, jugs, khums, ossuaries that have come down to us belong to ordinary and middle-class people. For the poor, there were ossuaries made of ordinary clay and dried in the sun.

According to Chinese sources of the 7th century, outside the Samarkand fortress, 200 households took the corpses to the top of the mountain, fed them to the birds, made an ossuary and placed them on the ground. All over Sogdiya and all regions of Central Asia, the bones of the dead were buried in hummocks and pottery boxes. For the corpses of rich and famous people, they made specially large decorated ossuaries. In 1908, the Russian military engineer B. N. Kastalsky discovered a large ossuary tomb in Ishtikhan. These ossuaries were broken into very small pieces. One of the oldest ossuaries. It was a very difficult task to collect them and bring them into a single ossuary. He was unable to restore even a single wall of the ossuary while carrying out restoration work.

Ishtikhan ossuaries are rectangular and measure 50x28x30 cm. The wall thickness is 10-15 mm. The lids of the ossuaries have come down to our time. The method of preparation of Ishtikhan ossuaries was studied by B. N. Kastalsky. According to him, a craftsman made a mold for each wall of the ossuaries, then greased the mold and applied clay to it. After the clay was slightly dry, it was removed from the mold. The base of the ossuary and the toothed lid are made of clay by hand. Then it was put in a pan and cooked on fire.

In short, objects related to religious ceremonies developed mainly in connection with Zoroastrian religion and burial ceremonies in the researched areas. The images in most of them are related to the daily life and customs of the people who lived in that period. The general appearance of the ossuaries found in the Khorezm region is that of a human-shaped statue, while those of Sogd and Bactria are similar to each other, and the general appearance is reminiscent of the architectural buildings of that period. The reason for this is that people of that time thought that ossuaries served as the home of the deceased in the afterlife.

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