

UDC/ЭОЖ/УДК 902(4/9)
СІССТІ/FTAMP/МРНТИ 03.41.91

Sacred space of the Jochid Ulus: Saraychik and Barchinkent¹

Dokei A. Taleev

Candidate of History, Leading Researcher, Margulan Institute of Archeology, Almaty, Qazaqstan.

E-mail: doc19_59@mail.ru

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-1694-3762>

Keywords: Jochid Ulus; Golden Horde; Saraychik; Barchinkent; Kyshqala; written sources; archaeological research

Тірек сөздер: Жошы ұлысы; Алтын Орда; Сарайшық; Барчинкент; Қышқала; жазбаша деректер; археологиялық зерттеулер

Ключевые слова: Улус Джучи; Золотая Орда; Сарайчик; Барчинкент; Кышқала; письменные источники; археологические исследования

The study of the history of the emergence and development of medieval cities in Kazakhstan remains one of the most difficult and important tasks of modern research. A comprehensive study of hillforts allows us to determine both the general features of urban development and the peculiarities of the formation of individual urban settlements. The cities of Saraychik on the Ural (Zhaiq) River and Barchinkent in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya River were not only large commercial and economic, but also spiritual centers of the Jochid Ulus. Having developed as cities during the Mongol period, they played an important role in the political life of the Golden Horde. The fate of Saraychik and Barchinkent is closely connected with the general course of the history of this state. Written sources and materials from many years of archaeological research indicate that the heyday of both cities coincides with the time of rising, and the beginning of decline and desolation – with the beginning of the collapse of the Golden Horde. The enthronement of khans of Berke, Janibek and other representatives of Juchids in Saraychik, and then the emergence of a necropolis where the remains of several rulers of the Golden Horde had been buried, led to the beginning of the sacralization of the place. By the 14th century, Barchinkent became famous as a city where many preachers of Islam and Sharia scholars lived, who played a significant role in spreading Islam among the population of the Jochid Ulus. Excavations in Saraychik and Barchinkent (Kyshqala hillfort) made it possible to identify the location and historical names of cities, the time of their origin and growth, as well as to determine the features of functioning as centers of international trade, crafts and culture.

For citation: Taleev Dokei A. 2024. Sacred space of the Jochid Ulus: Saraychik and Barchinkent. *Qazaq Historical Review*, 2 (1), 48–59. DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69567/3007-0236.2024.1.48.59>

Жошы ұлысының киелі мекендері: Сарайшық және Баршынкент

Докей Ә. Талеев

тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, жетекші ғылыми қызметкер, Әлкей Х. Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты, Алматы, Қазақстан

Қазақстанның ортағасырлық қалаларының пайда болу және даму тарихын зерделеу қазіргі заманғы зерттеулердің ең күрделі және маңызды міндеттерінің бірі болып қала береді. Ескерткіштерді кешенді зерттеу қалалардың дамуының жалпы ерекшеліктерін де, жекелеген қалалық елді мекендердің қалыптасу ерекшеліктерін де анықтауға мүмкіндік береді. Сырдарияның төменгі ағысындағы Баршынкент және Жайық өзендеріндегі Сарайшық қалалары Жошы ұлысының ірі сауда-экономикалық қана емес, рухани орталықтары болды. Моңғол кезеңінде қала ретінде қалыптасқан осы қалалар Алтын Орданың саяси өмірінде маңызды рөл атқарды. Сарайшық және Барчинкент қалаларының тағдыры осы мемлекет тарихының жалпы бағытымен тығыз байланысты. Жазба деректері мен көпжылдық археологиялық зерттеулердің материалдары екі қаланың да гүлденуі уақыты мен құлдырау тағдыры Алтын Орданың құрылу және ыдырай тарихымен сәйкес келетінін көрсетеді. Берке, Жәнібек және басқа да Жошы ұлысы хандарының Сарайшықта таққа отыруы, және Алтын Орданың бірқатар билеушілерінің мазары орналасқан

¹ Translation into English: Zarine A. Dzhandosova, Candidate of History, Associate Professor, Head of the Department of Central Asia and Caucasus, St. Petersburg State University.

қорымның пайда болуы қаланың киелі мекенге айналуына себеп болды. Барчинкент XIV ғасырда исламды уағызшы және шарифат таратушы көптеген білгірлер өмір сүрген қала ретінде танымал болды. Олар Жошы ұлысының халқы арасында мұсылман дінінің таралуында маңызды рөл атқарды. Сарайшық пен Қышқаладағы (Барчинкент) қазба жұмыстары қалалардың орналасқан жері мен тарихи атауларын, олардың пайда болу және даму уақытын анықтауға, сондай-ақ халықаралық сауда, қолөнер және мәдениет орталықтары болғандығын анықтауға мүмкіндік берді.

Сілтеме жасау үшін: Талеев Д.Ә. Жошы ұлысының киелі мекендері: Сарайшық және Баршынкент. *Qazaq Historical Review*. 2024. Т. 2. № 1. 48–59-бб. (ағылшынша). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69567/3007-0236.2024.1.48.59>

Сакральное пространство Улуса Джучи: Сарайшык и Баршынкент

Докей А. Талеев

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

Изучение истории возникновения и развития средневековых городов Казахстана остается одной из наиболее сложных и важных задач современных исследований. Комплексное изучение памятников позволяет определить как общие черты развития городов, так и особенности формирования отдельных городских поселений. Города Сарайчик на реке Жайык и Барчинкент в низовьях Сырдарьи являлись не только крупными торгово-экономическими, но и духовными центрами Улуса Джучи. Сложившись как города в монгольский период, они сыграли важную роль в политической жизни Золотой Орды. Судьба городов Сарайчик и Барчинкент тесно связана с общим ходом истории этого государства. Данные письменных источников и материалы многолетних археологических исследований свидетельствуют, что расцвет обоих городов совпадает со временем подъема, а начало упадка и запустения – с началом распада Золотой Орды. Интронизация в Сарайчике ханов Берке, Жанибека и других Джучидов, а затем возникновение некрополя, где упокоены останки ряда правителей Золотой Орды, обусловили начало сакрализации места. Барчинкент к XIV в. приобрел известность как город, где проживали многие проповедники ислама и знатоки шариата, сыгравшие заметную роль в распространении мусульманской религии среди населения Улуса Джучи. Раскопки в Сарайчике и городище Кышкале (Барчинкент) позволили идентифицировать местонахождение и исторические названия городов, время их возникновения и роста, а также определить особенности функционирования как центров международной торговли, ремесла и культуры.

Для цитирования: Талеев Д.А. Сакральное пространство Улуса Джучи: Сарайшык и Баршынкент. *Qazaq Historical Review*. 2024. Т. 2. № 1. 48–59 (на англ. яз.). DOI: <https://doi.org/10.69567/3007-0236.2024.1.48.59>

Introduction

The historical literature says that the invasion of Genghis Khan's army into the territory of Central Asia and Qazaqstan not only led to political and economic decline, but also stopped the cultural, social and ethnic development of many peoples of the region for long years [Qozybaev 1998: 89; Qozybaev 1993]. Urban centers were destroyed, and urban life came to a standstill for some time. However, if we look at the information from written sources and the results of archaeological research, the cities destroyed on the territory of Qazaqstan were restored after a short time, and very soon turned not only into larger political-economic centers, but also into commercial and cultural ones. Among them are Otyrar, Sayram, Sutkent, Arkuk, Sozaq and Sygnaq.

To date, the Golden Horde cultural layer of these urban centers has not been thoroughly studied. Several cities that were part of the Jochid Ulus were quickly relocated and rebuilt. The location of medieval cities such as Sauran, Sozaq, Sutkent, and Arkuk during the Mongol invasion and the Golden Horde period was different, as demonstrated by recent archaeological studies. Thus, Sauran, destroyed by the Mongols, was located on the site of Qaratobe. The 13th century marked the end of intensive urban life here, according to archaeological research at this site. Whereas the cultural layer of the Sauran settlement, located near Qaratobe, coincides with the eras of the Golden Horde and the Qazaq Khanate [Smagulov 2010: 7–11].

The same picture is observed in Sozaq, located in the northern foothills of Qaratau. If in the pre-Mongol period this city was located on the Tarsatobe site on the northeastern outskirts of the present-day village of Sozaq, then in the Golden Horde and the Qazaq Khanate eras it was relocated to the southern outskirts of the present-day Orkakpa village [Taleev 2021: 33, 39]. It also became known that the cities Sutkent and Arkuk in the middle reaches of the Syr Darya changed their location three times in their two-thousand-year history. During the Golden Horde period they were localized in different places. The cultural layers studied here reach several meters [Taleev 2022: 61–62, 65–66]. Even though the Mongol invasion in this region slowed down the urban development, their subsequent inclusion in the empire contributed to their revival and new progress. Along with those numerous cities on the territory of Qazaqstan, which, having become part of the Jochid Ulus, changed their location and began to develop rapidly, new cities were founded, which soon turned into large trading and cultural centers. Saraychik and Barchinkent are cities that could be considered among them. These cities, which arose after the founding of the Jochid Ulus, in a short time became the major trade and cultural centers of the new state and played an important role in its history.

Our article is intended to demonstrate the significance of these two cities in the development of the Golden Horde and their role in its history. The information and results presented in the article are based on a study of primary and secondary written sources and archaeological materials on the history of Qazaqstan and the Golden Horde.

Methods

To write an article on this topic, we have collected and analyzed some written sources. For the scientific analysis of the results of studies of medieval cities and burial places in their environs, the localization of mausoleums, their descriptions and chronology, we used comparative historical methods. When determining the locations of cities, we used information extracted from written sources. To determine the age of the medieval settlement of Qyshqala/Kyshkala (Barchinkent), archaeological excavations were carried out in 2018–23 and a special stratigraphic section was made. The use of methods included conducting archaeological exploration, recording and mapping sites, clarifying geographical coordinates, and preparing scientific photographic documentation.

Materials

In preparing the material base of the article, a special role has been assigned to written sources. For this purpose, we divided the data from sources related to Saraychik and Barchinkent into two categories.

The first group of sources. Ibn Battuta (1304-1369), Mirza Muhammad Haydar (1499-1551), Ótemish Hajji (1st half of the 16th century), Qadyrgali-bek Zhalaiyr (ca. 1530-1605), Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur (1603-64), and others wrote about medieval Saraychik. Ótemish Hajji linked important political events in Ulug Ulus' history with Saraychik, such as the arrival of Berke Khan (1257-66) in the city [Utemish-khadzhi 1992: 97]. According to Mirza Muhammad Haydar:

Buryndyq Khan lived at Saraychuk, and Qasim Khan, wishing to be far away from him, moved to the frontiers of Moghulistan. He made Qaratal his winter quarters, and, early in the spring, chose to return to his original area [Dulati 1999: 324].

Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur wrote more about the role of medieval Saraychik. Describing the reign of Berke Khan, he says:

Berke Khan, now a khan, arranged a grand feast, gave out many gifts, and approved the inheritances that Batu Khan had given to all his older and younger brothers. He sent great gifts to Qaan. After this, one day the Almighty God put love for Islam in the heart of Berke Khan, and he learned that his faith was untrue. It was like this: at one time Berke Khan went to the city

of Saraychik, founded by his elder brother. Here he saw a large caravan arriving from Bukhara [Abilgazy 1992: 115; Abul Ghazi Baghdadur Khan 1996: 99].

Here we see that the city was presumed to be founded by Batu Khan (1209-55), and Saraychik was linked with the adoption of Islam by Berke Khan. Further, the author supplements the history of the city during the reign of the khans Toqtagu (Toqta, 1291-1312), Janibek (1342-57), and Berdibek (1357-59).

Second group of sources. This group contains primary sources written directly during the Golden Horde period of the existence of the cities in the lower reaches of the Syr Darya River and reporting on their location, names, and socio-political state. The source base of this article is supplemented by information from the description of Plano Carpini (1182-1252)'s journey to the Mongols in his work "History of the Mongols" [Shastina 1993: 41], as well as some data from Jamal al-Qarshi (1230-1315)'s work, who specially arrived in this region in 1273-74 to describe the history of Syr Darya cities and the local population [Jamal al-Qarshi 2005: 155], and also data from Rashid ad-Din (1247-1318), a historian of the early 14th century, about the territorial proximity of Barchanligkent and Jand [Rashid-ad-din 1952].

Results

Saraychik (Small Saray). This is the only medieval site that has retained its original name to this day. The village of Sarayshyq is currently located on the place of its ruins (Fig. 1). The background of this city, which was constructed during Jochid Ulus' rule and became its main commercial and economic hub, is complex. There is a reason for this. In the 1940s, most of the city ruins were washed away by the waters of the Zhaiyq River. In the 1950s, Alkey Marghulan (1904-85) was the first archaeologist to conduct excavations in Saraychik, and even then, he recorded that only 1/3 of the settlement remained untouched by water and the central part of the cultural layer of the settlement was destroyed.

There are different opinions about the time when the city was founded. At one time, Sergey Tolstov (1907-76), who had once visited Saraychik, wrote that it was possible that Saksin, the capital of the Khazars, was located there. [Tolstov 1953: 304]. Alkey Marghulan also assumed that the city arose before the Mongol invasion [Zhumabaeva 2015: 15]. But no archaeological materials dating back to before the 13th century were found during excavations on the part of the settlement not destroyed by water. Thus, the opinion about the emergence of the city before the Mongol invasion was not confirmed.

In various sources the city is mentioned under the names Sarayjuk, Sarajuk, Saradzhik. According to Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur, the city was founded by Batu Khan's brother Berke Khan (1257-1266) [Abilgazy 1992: 115; Abul Ghazi 1996: 99].

The transcontinental caravan road connecting the West and the East passed through this city. Notes from traders and travelers about the direction of this road, a description of the goods transported and their price, and methods of transportation have been preserved to this day. For example, Hamdallah Qazwini (1281-ca.1350)'s travel notes show distances in farsakhs leading to individual points. Similar information may be found in the work of the Arab author al-Umari (1301-49) [Samashev, Kozhakov, Taleev 1998: 240].

The first mention of Saraychik is contained in the work of the Arab trader and traveler Ibn Battuta. Heading to Central Asia via Saray and Saraychik, he brought valuable information about the city. He wrote that in 'Sarayjuk' there were a bazaar, and a *zawiya* (dervish residence or "abode") for Sufi brothers, and that this city was located on the banks of the Great River (Zhaiyq), across which a pontoon bridge of boats was built, just like in Baghdad:

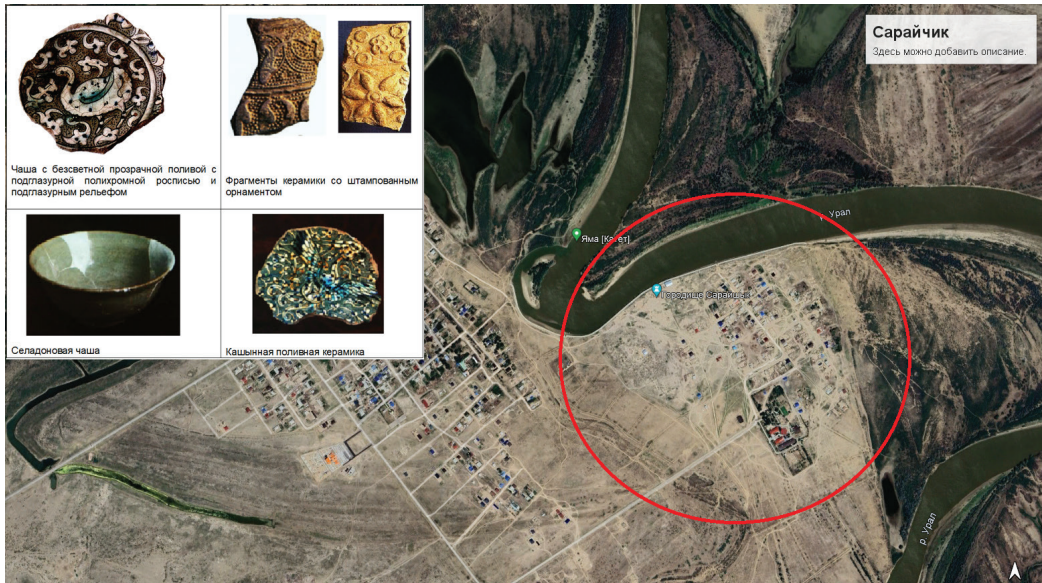


Fig. 1. Saraychik Site
1-сур. Сарайшық қалашығы
Рис. 1. Городище Сарайчик

In this city there is a zawiya of a righteous Turkic elder, who is called ata, which means “father.” He entertained us in the zawiya and blessed us. We were also received by the Qadi of this city, whose name I no longer remember [Ibragimov 1988: 73].

A Florentine merchant and politician, Francesco Pegolotti (1290–1347), in his work “Practica della mercatura” (‘Trading Practice’), written in 1338–42, reports that the journey from Saray to Saraychik by sea or river takes 8 days² [Zhumabaeva 2015: 18].

From its very foundation, Saraychik was at the epicenter of domestic and international events. Several khans of the Golden Horde were enthroned here. Berke Khan and his younger brother Tuqa Timur (13th century) made a great contribution to the rapid development of the city, especially to the increase in the number of public buildings. The active penetration of Islam, which began with the voluntary adoption of this religion by Berke Khan, during the reign of Uzbek Khan (1313–41) made Islam the state religion of the Golden Horde. This fact contributed to the spread of Muslim culture in the Qypchaq Steppe. Ötemish Hajji and Abu al-Ghazi Bahadur report that these events took place in Saraychik [Abul Ghazi 1996; Utemish-khadzhi 1992]. Here, in Saraychik, Janibek and Berke were proclaimed the khans of the Golden Horde. Information about the ruins of Saraychik can be found in the works of Johann Gustav Gerber (1690–1734), Peter Simon Pallas (1741–1811), Friedemann Göbel (1794–1851), Alexey Lyovshin (1798–1879) [Zhumabaeva 2015]. Russian historian and ethnographer Pyotr Rychkov (1712–77) writes about the burials of famous people in Saraychik:

² For relevant text fragments and a modern translation into Russian of the “Book of Description of Lands and Trade Measures” («Libro di divisamenti di paesi e di misure di mercatantie») or “Trading Practice” («La Pratica della Mercatura») by Francesco Balducci Pegolotti, see: Hautala, R. 2019. *V zemljah «Severnoj Tartarii»: Svedenija latinskih istochnikov o Zolotoj Orde v pravlenie hana Uzbeka (1313–1341) [In the Lands of “Northern Tartary”: Information from Latin Sources about the Golden Horde during the Reign of Uzbek Khan (1313–1341)].* Kazan: Marjani Institute of History of Tatarstan Academy of Sciences, 864–897 (in Russian). – (Editor’s note).

Saraychik is the ghost of a majestic city on the Yaik River, 50 miles before reaching Guryev. There are still many tents (buildings) in the ground there to this day. There are also many tombs of famous people [Rychkov 1759: 513].

Some Nogai beks and murzas were buried in Saraychik, as per popular folk stories and legends. According to one of the versions of the Edige epic, Toqtamysh Khan's head was buried there. The fact of the famous Qazaq khan Qasim to be buried in Saraychik is reported in the book of Qadyrgali-bek Zhalaiyr [Zhalaiyr 1997: 121]. However, the mausoleums of the khans have not survived to the day. According to Alexey Lyovshin and Nikolai Karamzin (1766-1826), in 1580, Russian Cossacks arrived in Saraychik along the Zhaiyq River, slaughtered the population of the city, plundered and destroyed the khan's graves with vandalism, and scattered bones:

Could a place so favorable for robberies fail to lure the Cossacks? They went up the Urals in their boats, quickly attacked Saraichik, burned it down and in a frenzy not only tormented the living inhabitants, but even, tearing up the graves, stripped off the dead. This happened in 1580.

This was the first feat of the Cossacks on the banks of the Urals! The time and description of this case is in diplomatic acts [Levshin 1823: 10].

The Don Cossacks committed villainy on all roads, on all transport routes; in a quick raid they even took the capital of Nogai, the city of Saraichik, left no stone unturned there and came out with noble booty, digging up the very graves, exposing the dead [Karamzin 1842–1843: 224].

The fact that Saraychik was a political and craft center is evidenced by numerous archaeological finds of coins and ceramic dishes. The first coin was minted in Saraychik in 761 AH/1359-60 with the name of Khizr Khan (1360-61). In total, during the excavations, which have continued since 1996, 702 coins have been found there. 647 of them have been identified. Chronologically, the earliest coin belongs to Mengu Timur Khan (1266–82) and is available in a single copy. Most of the coins found in Saraychik date back to the 14th century. The latest coins belong to Toqtamysh Khan (1376–95). These coins were minted in 94 different mints, 10 coins were minted in Saraychik [Samashev, Burnasheva, Bazykhan, Plakhov, 2006: 88–89].

As a result of archaeological research in 1996–97 in the Saraichik settlement, numerous samples of glazed and unglazed ceramics of both local and imported origin were obtained. Among them there are genuine masterpieces of pottery art, decorated with rich floral and zoomorphic ornaments and gold painting. There are fragments of glazed ceramics with inscriptions of religious or other content. The most popular among decorations on glazed ceramics is the waterfowl motif [Samashev 1998: 139; Samashev, Kuznetsova, Plakhov 2008].

Coins and ceramics found during excavations indicate that Saraychik was a developed city in the mid-13th–14th centuries.

Some researchers have expressed the opinion that Saraychik was founded in the 11th century. Alkey Marghulan was one of the first to express this opinion [Margulan 1950: 3] which was supported by the head of the Chorasman archaeological and ethnographic expedition Sergey Tolstov:

The most interesting of the results of the Ural route is the result of a survey of the Saraychik Settlement located in the lower reaches of the Ural River. This settlement is mentioned in sources of the Mongolian period and was usually attributed by researchers to the Mongolian, Golden Horde time. However, our work in 1950 showed that the lower layer of the Saraychik Settlement is pre-Mongol and that, in terms of the nature of the archaeological material, this layer does not differ significantly from the Chorasman sites of the 11th century AD. We now have every reason to believe that the name Saraychik assigned to this site is not its original name; it is possible that this hillfort corresponds to the early medieval Saksin. The city was apparently built in the 11th century, and perhaps even in the 10th century, by Chorasman colonists in the lower Urals, on the way to the Lower Volga region [Tolstov 1953: 304].

However, modern archaeological excavations at the site of the ancient settlement have not found materials confirming this opinion. The head of the West Qazaqstan archaeological expedition of 1996–2000, Zainolla Samashev, based on the results obtained during the work, divided the historical development of the city into three stages:

The first period occurs at the beginning of its construction, from the middle of the 13th century to the beginning of Uzbek Khan's reign in 1312. ... The second chronological stage of the city's life is calculated from the second quarter of the 14th century. This is the time of greatest stability and prosperity of the empire. The struggle for the throne was the focus of civil strife during the third chronological period of the city's life from 1360 to 70. ... The fourth stage... falls on the 15th–16th centuries. During this period, residential areas along Zhaiyq became empty, and the population began to concentrate on the southern part of the city, along the now dry bed of the Sorochinka River [Samashev, Burnasheva, Bazykhan, Plakhov, 2006: 12–21].

The information from written sources and the results of archaeological excavations at the site allow us to conclude that Saraychik was a sacred place (pantheon) of the Golden Horde khans. This opinion was first expressed by Zainolla Samashev, the head of the West Qazaqstan archaeological expedition [Samashev, Kozhakov, Taleev 1998: 241]. This opinion is confirmed by the results of the ongoing archaeological excavations at the Saraychik site [Plakhov, Kalmenov, Abdigaliyev 2021; Akhmetova, Turaruly, Zhumabaev 2022].

Barchinkent (Qyshqala). The ruins of the medieval settlement of Qyshqala are located 30 km southwest of Qyzylorda. The settlement has been known to researchers since the end of the 19th century (Fig. 2). The names of historical places Barkhim, Parchin, Barchinkent, Barchkand mentioned in written sources were one of the first to be identified with the Qyshqala Settlement by Alkey Marghulan [Margulan 1950: 76–78]. Archaeological excavations carried out at the Qyshqala Site since 2018 confirm the opinion that the city of Barchinkent was located here. It was established that most of the copper and silver coins found during the excavations were minted in

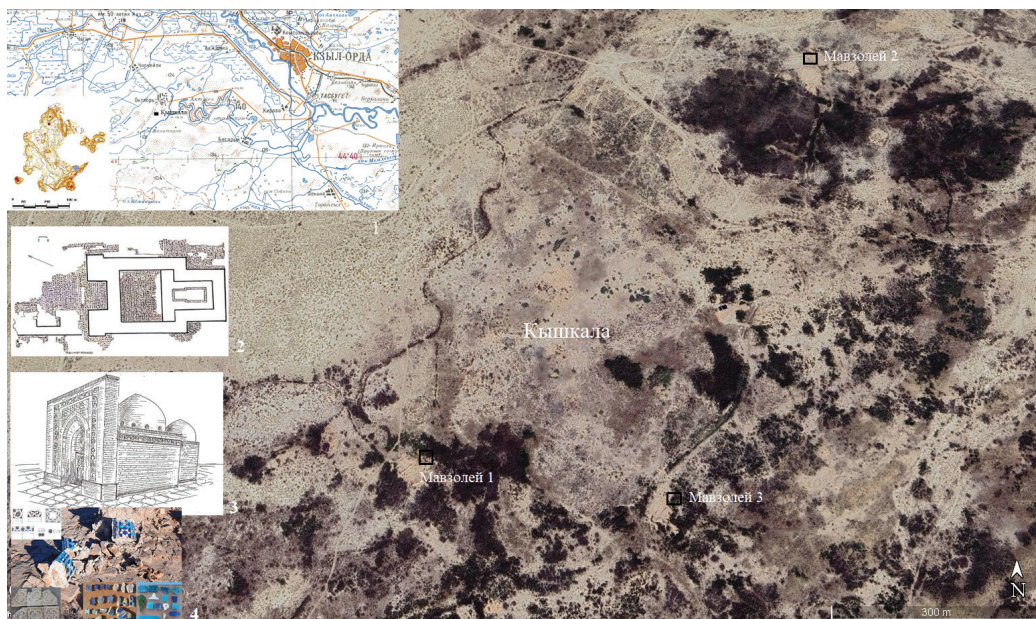


Fig. 2. Qyshqala (Kyshkala) Settlement
2-сур. Қышқала қалшығы
Рис. 2. Городище Кышкала



Barchinkent and this confirms that the city of Barchinkent was located on the site of the Qyshqala Settlement [Eleuov, Petrov, Taleev, Moldakhmet, 2023: 184–187].

The development of Barchinkent as a center of urban culture was facilitated by the spread of Islam throughout the Golden Horde. As noted above, Islam established itself as the state religion in the Golden Horde under Uzbek Khan. The anonymous author of the “Supplement to of the Collection of Chronicles” of Rashid ad-Din, describes this ruler as follows:

Uzbek became sovereign on the throne of the kingdom of Jochi Khan and became a powerful ruler. Uzbek was a prince who combined all the perfections in terms of external beauty, morality and religiosity, the strengthening of Islam and a thorough knowledge of good [Tizenhausen 1941: 141].

According to medieval records, many khans from the Golden Horde converted to Islam due to the influence of Sufi sheikhs. For example, the mentioned Berke Khan accepted Islam from the Sufi sheikh Sayf ad-Din al-Baharzi (1190-1261), and Uzbek Khan adopted Islam under the influence of the Yasaviya sheikh Sayyid Ata (14th century) from Turkestan [Saifetdinova 2012: 240–241].

The formation of a local community of theologians in Saray has been influenced significantly by traditional centers of Muslim education located south of Saray, as spoken by Qazaq orientalist Ashirbek Muminov. In the conditions of the temporary decline of Bukhara and Samarqand in the 13th–14th centuries, three such regions stand out noticeably: 1) the cities in the basin of the middle reaches of the Syr Darya on the territory of the present-day Qazaqstan (Sairam, Farab, Zarnuk, Itkan (Ikan), Sulkhan, Uzgend, Arkuk, Sygnaq, Barchinkand (Barchinligent), Jand, etc.), 2) Chorasmia (Khorezm), and 3) Khorasan. According to the Russian scholar Mark Kramarovsky, it was the influence of Islamic beliefs in Central Asia that played a decisive role in the spread of Islam among the Qypchaqs of the Golden Horde. Sufi sheikhs played a major role in this process. The spiritual teachings of Islam were conveyed to people by them [Petrov, Uskenbay, 2010: 12].

The city of Barchinkent, spelled Barchin, is mentioned twice in the work of Plano Carpini, the Pope’s ambassador to the court of the Great Khan of the Mongol Empire in 1245 [Shastina 1993: 41]. Also, ‘Parchin’ is mentioned in the records of the embassy of the Armenian king Hethum I (1226-70), who visited the capital of the Mongol Empire Qaraqorum in 1253 [Eleuov 2005: 13; Gandzaketsi 1976: 224]. A description of the city is contained in a separate chapter of “Al-Mulhaqat bi-s-Surah” (“The Supplement to the ‘Surah’”) by the 14th century Muslim scholar Jamal al-Qarshi:

I arrived in Barskand to study with al-Allama, sadr of the sadrs, the moon in the darkness, rare among people, especially in sermons and teaching speeches, Shaykh-al-Islam Husam al-milla wa-d-din Abu-l-Mahamid Hamid ibn Asim al-Asimi al-Barchinligi, may Allah have mercy on him, and he is a great sadr and an outstanding scholar, the like of whom no one has ever seen and will never see, even if he lives forever [Jamal al-Qarshi 2005: 155].

In 1924, during a survey of the Eski-Yurt (Eski-Zhurt) tract near Bakhchisaray in Crimea, a tombstone in the form of a high, long and narrow box (“sanduq”) with a gable high lancet top was found. On both end sides of the box there were inscriptions in Arabic, which Russian experts Evgeniy Goncharov and Ilya Zaytsev read as follows: “[This is the grave of] the late Mevlana Ahmad ibn Mahmud of Barjinlik” [Goncharov, Zaytsev 2014: 176–177]. This inscription indicates that the grave contains the remains of a learned representative of the Muslim philosophical and religious order Mavlaviya, who, judging by his nisba, came from the city of Barjin (Barchinkent).

It was already mentioned above that in every city of the Golden Horde there were special dervish residences — the so called zawiyas of Sufi orders. The famous Arab traveler Ibn Battuta wrote about this with warmth. During his travels, he widely enjoyed the hospitality of the Ahi order, staying in zawiyas, where travelers were provided with free food and shelter. Often, city rulers sent him gifts and food, considering this a “charitable deed.” Ibn Battuta each time used to

indicate which of the Sufi zawiyas he was staying at, how he was received and who sent food for “feeding”; he gives interesting evidence about the number of Sufi zawiyas in Central Asia [Ibragimov 1988: 41, 60].

During excavations at Qyshqala Site, which have been ongoing for several years, the ruins of several religious and public buildings were examined. One of them is located on the northwestern outskirts of the settlement, on a separate hill. This is Excavation 1. The remains of an unknown structure have been examined here. Apparently, it was originally built from baked bricks. A hill of sand and building materials (burnt bricks and their fragments, decorative tiles, mosaics) was formed because of the collapse of walls. Among the finds there are many rectangular fired clay slabs with patterns on the front side, and fragments of colored mosaics. The size of the main room of the building, oriented with its front part to the north-west, is 11x11 m (along the outer edge). The size of the second room, adjacent to the central part of the main room on the rear south-west side, is 7x7 m. The width of the walls is 2 m. Its plan and the basis of the architectural structure (foundation) were established during the excavation of traces of recesses. As a result of excavations of the ruins of the entire structure, the cleaning, collection and analysis of the surviving materials of the structure, comparison of the building plan with similar plans of other regions, it was established that earlier on this site there was a mausoleum (kesene), built in Muslim traditions [Taleev, Eleuov, Esenov 2018: 265–266]. Judging by the plan of the mausoleum and the found fragments of bricks, decorative tiles and colored mosaics, the mausoleum was erected over the grave of a famous representative of the Golden Horde society, perhaps an influential person or even several influential persons.

The excavated site has similar characteristics (chronology, topographic plan, architectural appearance) with other mausoleums discovered and studied in the CIS and Qazaqstan. One of these analogues is the remains of the Zhanibek-Shalqar Mausoleum (Zhanibek-Shalqar), located 100 km south of Astana and explored in 2010 by the Eurasian National University archaeological expedition led by Maral Khabdulina [Agubaeva 2020]. The mausoleum dates to the 14th–15th centuries. The similarity of his facing materials with ours is so great that it seems they were made by the same master. Similarities with the facing materials of the mausoleum at the Qyshqala Settlement are also found in the decoration of the Kerderi Mausoleum, found at the bottom of the dried-up Aral Sea. Archaeological materials found at the site of the Kerderi Mausoleum allowed to date it to the 13th–14th centuries. Qzylyoba, the Golden Horde era mausoleum in the Shokan Ualikhanov district (North Qazaqstan Region), also has a plan and architectural style like the mentioned monuments. Two silver coins were found in one of the burials of this mausoleum. According to the famous numismatist Pavel Petrov, these coins date back to the 14th century and were minted in the capital of the Golden Horde, the city of Saray al-Makhrus. On one of the coins the date, 737 AH/1336-37, is clearly readable [Berezhnaya 2022]. The mosaic design of the Golden Horde era mosque at the Konskoye Settlement (in Russian documents called Horse Waters, on Arabic maps — the Dead City, in Italian sources — Seven Mosques) near the village of Yurkovka, Zaporozhye Region of Ukraine, exactly repeats the mosaic of the mausoleum at the Qyshqala Settlement [Dombrovskii 2011].

The dimensions of the mausoleum bricks described above, of various volumes and different shapes, the mosaic decoration used for decoration, the ornament of the external facing tiles, the plan of the mausoleums, and the architectural style, all of them are very similar in the listed mausoleums and, in addition, coincide chronologically. All of them date back to the era of the Golden Horde. The decoration methods used in the design of all these mausoleums do not exclude the possibility that they were made by the same master.

Conclusion

The material sources collected during the research in Saraychik, the identification and analysis of the coins found, allow us to conclude that this city functioned for a century and a half during the

era of the Jochid Ulus, i.e., in the first half of the 13th–early 15th centuries. There is information about the continued functioning of the settlement in the 15th–16th centuries, but the city was no longer the same as before. At the beginning of the 16th century, Saraychik was for some time the western capital of the Qazaq Khanate; the subsequent fate of the city is related to the history of the Nogai Horde.

During the excavations at the Qyshqala Site, two more mausoleums built in the Muslim style were unearthed. In size and architectural style, they are also not inferior to the previous one. Without a doubt, some Muslim nobles of the Golden Horde were buried there. During the research work (reconnaissance) carried out, several similar hills were identified in the vicinity of the ancient settlement. They have a similar diameter (20–26 m) and height (1.5–2 m). Building materials, burnt bricks and fragments of colored decorated bricks were also scattered on the surface. We suggest that there were also other Muslim mausoleums in the area, similar to the excavated earlier. Thus, we see that this the site is a group of mausoleums built over the graves of noble people of the Golden Horde era, famous in society, and professing Islam. This gives us reason to assume that the site of Qyshqala (Barchinkent) was a sacred place (pantheon) for the burial of the Golden Horde nobility and clergy. We are confident that our future excavations at the site will confirm this assumption.

Thus, if Saraychik was a sacred land (pantheon) for the khans of the Golden Horde, then Barchinkent can be considered a sacred land (pantheon) for the Muslim nobility and clergy of the Golden Horde.

References

- Abilgazy. 1992. *Turik shezhiresi [Turkish Chronicle]*. Almaty: Ana tili (in Qazaq).
- Abul Ghazi Baghdadur Khan. 1996. *Rodoslovnœ drevo tjurkov [Genealogy of the Turks]*. Translation by G.Sablukov. Moscow; Tashkent; Bishkek: International Publishing House “Turkestan” (in Russian).
- Agubaeva, G. 2020. «Uchenye predpolagajut, artefakty podtverzhajut» (ob issledovanii Mavzoleja odnogo iz osnovatelej Kazahskogo hanstva Zhanibek hana) [“Scientists suggest, artifacts confirm” (about the study of the Mausoleum of one of the founders of the Kazakh Khanate, Zhanibek Khan)]. URL: <https://akmomuzey.kz/kz/pages/ns7.html> (accessed: 31.01.2024) (in Russian).
- Akhmetova, U., Turaruly, A., Zhumabaev, A. 2022. 2021 zh. ortagasyrlyq Sarajshyq qalasynda zhyrgizilgen arheologijalyq qazba zhumystary [Arheologicheskie raskopki srednevekovogo gorodishha Sarajshyk [Archaeological excavations in the medieval city of Saraishyk in 2021]. In: *Kazakhstan Archeology*, 2 (16), 111–120 (in Qazaq).
- Berezhnaya, E. 2022. *Altyn Ordanyñ qupijalary: arheologtar ezhelgi kesenenin ornyn tapy [Secrets of the Golden Horde: archaeologists discovered the site of an ancient mausoleum]*. URL: <https://sputnik.kz/20201026/Altyn-Orda-arkheologtar-15298830.html> (accessed: 31.01.2024) (in Qazaq).
- Dombrovskii, A. 2011. *Gorodishhe Konskoe (Konskie Vody), Mertvyj gorod, Sem' mechetej [Settlement Konskoe (Horse Waters), Dead City, Seven Mosques]*. URL: <https://www.shukach.com/ru/node/525> (accessed: 31.01.2024) (in Russian).
- Dulati, Muhammad Haydar. 1999. *Tarih-i Rashidi [Rashid's story]*. Almaty: Sanat (in Russian).
- Eleuov, M. (ed.) 2005. *Iz vlecheniya iz pis'mennyh istochnikov o srednevekovyh gorodah Sauran i Syganak [Extracts from written sources about the medieval cities of Sauran and Syganak]*. Turkestan: International Qazaq-Turkish University (in Russian).
- Eleuov, M., Petrov, P., Taleev, D., Moldakhmet, A. 2023. Numizmaticheskie nahodki na gorodishhe Kyshkala [Numismatic finds at the site of Qyshkala]. In: *Stratum plus*, 6, 183–192 (in Russian).

- Gandzaketsi, Kyrakos. 1976. *Istorija Armenii [History of Armenia]*. Translation from ancient Armenian, preface and comments by L.A. Khanlaryan. Moscow: Science, Main Editorial Office of Oriental Literature (in Russian).
- Goncharov E., Zaytsev, I. 2014. Iz Bardzhinlyka v Jeski-Jurt: mevljana Ahmad bin Mahmud al-Bardzhinlygi [From Barjinlyk to Eski-Yurt: Mevlâna Ahmad ibn Mahmud al-Barjinlygi]. In: *Zolotoordinskaja civilizacija [Golden Horde Civilization]*, 7, 176–181 (in Russian).
- Ibragimov, N. 1988. *Ibn Batuta i ego puteshestvija po Srednej Azii [Ibn Batuta and his travels in Central Asia]*. Moscow: Nauka (in Russian).
- Jamal al-Qarshi. 2005. *al-Mulhakat bi-s-Surah*. Introduction, translation from Arabic and Persian, comments, text, facsimile by Shodmon Vohidov, Babour Aminov. Almaty: Dyke-Press, 2005 (in Russian).
- Karamzin, N. 1842–1843. *Istorija gosudarstva Rossijskogo [History of the Russian state]*. Vol. 9. St. Petersburg: Published I.Einerling (in Russian).
- Levshin, A. 1823. *Istoricheskoe i statisticheskoe obozrenie ural'skih kazakov [Historical and statistical review of the Ural Cossacks]*. St. Petersburg: Military Printing House (in Russian).
- Margulan, A. 1950. *Iz istorii gorodov i stroitel'nogo iskusstva drevnego Kazahstana [From the history of cities and construction art of ancient Qazaqstan]*. Almaty: Nauka (in Russian).
- Petrov, P., Uskenbay, Q. 2010. Voprosy islamizacii ulusa Dzhuchidov i veroispovedanie hana Tokty (690/1291–712/1312–1313 gody) [Issues of Islamization of the Juchid ulus and the religion of Khan Toqta (690/1291–712/1312–1313)]. In: *Voprosy istorii i arheologii Zapadnogo Kazahstana [Issues of history and archeology of Western Qazaqstan]*, 1, 10–55 (in Russian).
- Plakhov, V., Kalmenov, M., Abdigaliyev, M. 2021. Nekotorye rezul'taty arheologicheskogo issledovanie na gorodishhe Sarajchik v 2019 godu [Some results of archaeological research at the Saraichik settlement in 2019]. In: *Margulanovskie chtenija – 2021 [Margulan readings – 2021]*. Vol. 2. Алматы, 108–120 (in Russian).
- Qozybaev, M. et al. (eds.). 1998. *Istorija Kazahstana (s drevnejshih vremen do nashih dnei) [History of Qazaqstan (from ancient times to the present day)]*. In five vol. Vol. 2. Almaty: Atamura (in Russian).
- Qozybaev, M. et al. (eds.). 1993. *Istorija Kazahstana. Ocherk [History of Qazaqstan. Sketch]*. Almaty: Dayir (in Russian).
- Rashid-ad-din. 1952. *Sbornik letopisej [Collection of chronicles]*. Vol. 1. Part 1. Translation from Persian by Lev Khetagurov. Moscow; Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences (in Russian).
- Rychkov, P. 1759. *Istorija Orenburgskaja po uchrezhdenii Orenburgskoj komissii [History of Orenburg on the establishment of the Orenburg Commission]*. St. Petersburg: Imperial Academy of Sciences (in Russian).
- Saifetdinova, E. 2012. Differenciacija sufizma v Zolotoj Orde (na primere proizvedenija Mahmuda al-Bulgari «Nahdzh al-Faradis») [Differentiation of Sufism in the Golden Horde (using the example of Mahmud al-Bulgari's work “Nahj al-Faradis”)]. In: Mirgaleev, I., Sayfetdinova, E. (eds.). *Islam i vlast' v Zolotoj Orde [Islam and power in the Golden Horde]*. Kazan: Marjani Institute of History (in Russian).
- Samashev, Z. 1998. Issledovanie zolotoordynskogo goroda Sarajchik [Study of the Golden Horde city of Saraichik]. In: Toleubaev, A. (ed.). *Problemy izuchenija i sohraneniya istoricheskogo nasledija [Problems of studying and preserving historical heritage]*. Almaty: Al-Farabi Qazaq State National University, 137–158 (in Russian).
- Samashev, Z., Burnasheva, R., Bazylkhan, N., Plakhov, V. 2006. *Monety Sarajchika [Coins of Sarajchik]*. Almaty: LLP “Archeology” (in Russian).
- Samashev, Z., Kozhakov, D., Taleev, D. 1998. Sarajchik: problemy issledovanie velikogo goroda [Saraichik: problems of studying a great city]. In: Toleubaev, A. (ed.). *Problemy izuchenija i*

- sohranenija istoricheskogo nasledija [Problems of studying and preserving historical heritage].* Almaty: Al-Farabi Qazaq State National University, 240–245 (in Russian).
- Samashev, Z., Kuznetsova, O., Plakhov, V. 2008. *Keramika Sarajchika [Ceramics of Saraichik].* Almaty: Archeology LLP (in Russian).
- Shastina N. (ed.). 1993. *Puteshestvija v vostochnye strany Plano Karpini i Gil'oma de Rubruka [The journey of Plano Carpini and William of Rubruck to the eastern parts of the world].* Almaty: Gylym (in Russian).
- Smagulov, E. 2010. *Drevnij Sauran [Ancient Sauran].* Almaty: ABDI Company (in Russian).
- Taleev, D. 2021. Qarataudyn teriskej betindegi ortagasyrlyq qalalardyn arheologijalyq zerttelu maselesi [The problem of archaeological study of medieval cities on the northern slopes of Karatau]. In: *Kazakhstan Archeology*, 2 (12), 29–42 (in Qazaq).
- Taleev, D. 2022. Syrdarijanyn sol zhagalauyndagy qalalardyn arheologijalyq shezhiresi: Sutkent zhane Arkuk [Archaeological chronicle of the left-bank cities of the Syr Darya: Sutkent and Arkuk]. In: *Kazakhstan Archeology*, 1 (15), 57–69 (in Qazaq).
- Taleev, D., Eleuov, M., Esenov, S. 2018. Tağdyry jūmbaq Qyşqala [Mysterious history of Kyshkala]. In: *Kazakhstan Archeology*, 1–2, 259–271 (in Qazaq).
- Tizenhausen, G. 1941. *Sbornik materialov, odnosjashihhsja k istorii Zolotoj Ordy [Collection of materials related to the history of the Golden Horde].* Vol. 2. Moscow; Leningrad: Publishing House of the USSR Academy of Sciences (in Russian).
- Tolstov, S. 1953. Horezmskaja arheologo-jetnograficheskaja jekspedicija Akademii nauk 1950 godu [Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition of the Academy of Sciences in 1950]. In: *Sovetskaja arheologija [Soviet Archaeology]*, 18, 301–325 (in Russian).
- Utemish-khadzhi (Otemish Hajji). 1992. *Chingiz-name [Genghis name].* Facsimile, translation, transcription, textual notes, research by Veniamin Iudin. Almaty: Gylym (in Russian).
- Zhalaiyr, Qadyrgali. 1997. *Şejireler jinağy (Collection of chronicles).* Almaty: Qazaqstan (in Qazaq).
- Zhumabaeva, Zh. (ed.). 2015. *Saraişyq – babalar mürasy. Saraişyq qalaşyğynyñ tarihy turaly derekközder [The Saraychik is the heritage of our ancestors. Sources about the history of Saraychik town].* Atyrau: Ağatai (in Qazaq).

Disclosure of conflict of interest information. The author claims no conflict of interest / Мүдделер қақтығысы туралы ақпаратты ашу. Автор мүдделер қақтығысының жоқтығын мәлімдейді / Раскрытие информации о конфликте интересов. Автор заявляет об отсутствии конфликта интересов

Information about the article / Мақала туралы ақпарат / Информация о статье

Entered the editorial office / Редакцияға түсті / Поступила в редакцию: 01.02.2024

Approved by reviewers / Рецензенттер мақұлдаған / Одобрено рецензентами: 20.02.2024

Accepted for publication / Жариялауға қабылданды / Принята к публикации: 01.03.2024

