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The results of new research on the medieval urban sites of Aspara and Sharuashylyk in 2021–2023*

The article summarizes the results of a comprehensive study of the late medieval urban culture of South Kazakhstan on the example of such town-sites as Aspara in the middle reaches of the Shu river and Sharuashylyk in the delta of the Talas river in 2021–2023. First of all, on the basis of written data and folklore sources on the historical geography of the region, the macrotoponyms "Zhetysu" and "Semirechye" were studied, the extended geographical interpretation of which appeared in Soviet times as a result of incorrect word usage, suggested the inclusion of the Shu-Talas interfluve as "South-Western Zhetysu / Semirechye. In fact, this region belongs to South Kazakhstan and cannot be considered as part of Zhetysu or Semirechye. Excavations at the citadel of Aspara town-site (excavation area 2 and 2a) uncovered a site of urban development of the 13th –14th centuries: the complex of residential and outbuildings on the construction remains of the previous Karakhanid period. From different building horizons, five radiocarbon dates were obtained, which correlate with artifact assemblages of the 11th – 12th centuries and 13th – the end of the 14th century. From the surface of the town-site and the excavation area, a collection of coins of various issues was obtained: the Turkic-Sogdian coin of the 8th century, the Karakhanids, the Samanids, the late Tang, the Northern Sun, the Chagataids and Emir Timur, as well as a small coin of the Kokand coinage. Excavations have been carried out for the first time at Sharuashylyk town-site. From stratigraphic trench 1 and excavation area 1 and 1a, a large collection of ceramic pottery (hand-made painted and decorated with a stamp, glazed easel), as well as three radiocarbon dates within the third quarter of the 14th century – the first quarter of the 15th century were obtained. In excavation area 1 and trench 2, glazed ceramics of the 12th – early 13th centuries were found, which is consistent with the finds of coins of the Western Karakhanid coinage at the town-site. New data determine the time of existence of Sharuashylyk ancient settlement in the interval of the 12th – early 15th centuries.

Keywords: Shu-Talas interfluve, town-site, Aspara, Sharuashylyk, late Middle Ages, numismatics, Chagataids, emir Timur

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Аспара және Шаруашылық ортағасырлық қалаларындағы 2021–2023 жж. жаңа зерттеулердің нәтижелері

Мақалада 2021-2023 жж. Талас өзені атырабындағы Шаруашылық және Шу өзенінің орта ағысындағы Аспара қалалары мысалында кейінгі ортағасырлық қала мәдениетін кешенді зерттеу нәтижелері көрсетілген. Ең алдымен, аумақтың тарихи географиясы бойынша жазба мәліметтер және фольклорлық деректер негізінде

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«Жетісу» және «Семиречье» макротопонимдері зерттеліп, сөзді қате қолдану нәтижесінде кеңес кезеңінде Шу-Талас өзенаралығының «оңтүстік-батыс Жетісу/Семиречья» ретінде қарастырылуы географиялық тұрғыдан кеңінен түсіндірілді. Шындығында бұл аймақ Оңтүстік Қазақстанға жатады және «Жетісу» мен «Семиречье» бөлігі ретінде қарастырыла алмайды. Аспара қаласының цитаделінде жүргізілген қазбалар (2 және 2а қазбалар) нәтижесінде алдыңғы қарахан уақытының құрылыс қалдықтары орнында тұрғызылған қала құрылысының XIII–XIV ғғ. жататын тұрғынжай және шаруашылық кешендері ашылды. Әртүрлі құрылыс қабаттарының XI–XII ғғ. және XIII–XIV ғ. соңына жататын заттай кешендерінен бес радиокарбонды мерзімдеу алынды. Қаланың беткі қабатынан VII ғ. түркі-соғды теңгесі, қарахандық, саманилік, кейінгі Таң, солтүстік Сун, шағатайлық, әмір Темір және қоқандық ұсақ теңгелер сынды әртүрлі эмиссиялы теңгелер жиынтығы табылды. Шаруашылық қаласында қазба жұмыстары алғаш рет жүргізілді. 1 стратиграфиялық шурф пен 1 және 1а қазбасынан керамикалық ыдыстардың үлкен жиынтығы (жабыстырмалы және қалыппен безендірілген, шарықта жасалып сырланған) табылды, сонымен қатар XIV ғ. төртінші ширегі мен XV ғ. алғашқы ширегі шегіндегі үш радиокарбондық мерзімдеу алынды. 1 қазба мен 2 шурфтан қаладан табылған батыс қарахан теңгелерімен мерзімдес XII–XIII ғ. басына жататын сырлы керамика табылды. Жаңа мәліметтер негізінде Шаруашылық қаласының мерзімі XII –XV ғ. басы аралығына жатады.

Ключевые слова: Шу-Талас өзенаралығы, қала, Аспара, Шаруашылық, кейінгі ортағасыр, нумизматика, шағатайлықтар, әмір Темір

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Итоги новых исследований средневековых городищ Аспара и Шаруашылык в 2021–2023 гг.

В статье подводятся итоги комплексного изучения в 2021–2023 гг. позднесредневековой городской культуры Южного Казахстана на примере городищ Аспара в среднем течении р. Шу и Шаруашылык в дельте р. Талас. Прежде всего, на основе письменных данных и фольклорных источников по исторической географии региона исследованы макротопонимы «Жетысу» и «Семиречье», расширенное географическое толкование которых, появившееся в советское время в результате некорректного словоупотребления, предполагало включение Шу-Таласского междуречья как «Юго-Западного Жетысу / Семиречья». В действительности этот регион относится к Южному Казахстану и не может рассматриваться как часть «Жетысу» или «Семиречья». Раскопками на цитадели городища Аспара (раскопы 2 и 2а) вскрыт участок городской застройки XIII–XIV веков: комплекс жилых и хозяйственных построек, возведенных на строительных остатках предшествующего караханидского времени. Из разных строительных горизонтов получены пять радиокарбоновых дат, коррелирующихся с вещевыми комплексами XI–XII вв. и XIII – конца XIV в. С поверхности городища и из раскопов получена коллекция монет разных эмиссий: тюрко-согдийская монета VIII в., Караханиды, Саманиды, поздняя Тан, Северная Сун, Чагатаиды и эмир Тимур, а также мелкая монета кокандского чекана. На городище Шаруашылык раскопки произведены впервые. Из стратиграфического шурфа 1 и раскопов 1 и 1а получена большая коллекция керамической посуды (лепная расписная и декорированная штампом, глазурованная станковая), а также три радиокарбоновые даты в пределах третьей четверти XIV в. – первой четверти XV в. В раскопе 1 и шурфе 2 обнаружена глазурованная керамика XII – начала XIII в., что согласуется с находками на городище монет западно-караханидского чекана. Новые данные определяют время существования городища Шаруашылык в интервале XII – начала XV в.

Ключевые слова: Шу-Таласское междуречье, городище, Аспара, Шаруашылык, позднее средневековье, нумизматика, Чагатаиды, эмир Тимур

During 2021–2023, within the framework of grant funding from the Committee of Science of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan under project IRN AP09260802 (project author was A.A. Nurzhanov (1957–2021), after whose untimely death the project was led by A.E. Rogozhinskiy), the research team consisting of authors and researchers of the Margulan Institute of Archaeology of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan implemented a program for the comprehensive study of

the late medieval urban culture of Southern Kazakhstan, focusing on the Aspara urban site in the middle reaches of the Chu (Shu) River and the Sharuashylyk urban site in the delta of the Talas River. Some preliminary results, goals, tasks, and methodology of the comprehensive study of the sites have already been discussed in recent publications [Buranbayev 2021; 2023; Rogozhinskiy, Kamaldinov 2022; Shagirbayev, Buranbayev 2022]; below, we summarize the general results of the conducted research.

1. *Historical Toponymy.* Alongside field archaeological research, the project's program included the collection of folklore sources on the history of Southeast Kazakhstan and discourse analysis of the macro-toponyms "Jetysu" and "Semirechye" in the contexts of social scientific disciplines (primarily archaeology and the history of Kazakhstan), as well as Kazakh folk culture from the 19th to the early 20th century. The origin and evolution of the semantic meanings of the macro-toponym "Semirechye" have previously been established by A.E. Rogozhinskiy [Rogozhinskiy 2019; 2020]. The collection and analysis of Kazakh folklore materials characterizing the semantic-geographical meanings of "Jetysu" were carried out within the project by G.A. Kaldybayeva. The results of the joint research are published in a special article [Rogozhinskiy, Kaldybayeva 2024], where the main conclusions are briefly outlined.

The term "Jetysu" was recorded in the late 18th to early 19th centuries in the north and southeast of Kazakhstan, where it initially did not have a toponymic meaning but denoted impassable sections of caravan routes (in the interfluve of the Turgai and Ishim rivers – seven parallel wide erosion valleys with fresh springs and rivers along the trade route from Amankaragai to Naurzum; in Southern Balkhash – crossings over seven rivers: Lepsy, Baskan, Sarkan, Aksu, Buyen, Karatal, and Koksu), along which international trade between Russia, Middle Asia, and China was conducted. As a linguistic calque, the toponym "Jetysu", underwent affixation and word formation in Russian (Sem' rek – Semirek – Semiretsky/Semirechensky – Semirechye) and appeared around 1825, but already as a geographical name of the region, initially within Southern Balkhash and after the formation of the Semirechye region (1867) – within its administrative-territorial boundaries. In the latter sense, the toponym was used in scientific literature from the late 19th century until the mid-1930s when A.N. Bernshtam, interrupting the historiographical tradition (V.V. Bartold, N.A. Aristov), groundlessly introduced the "extended interpretation" of the term "Semirechye," arbitrarily adding the Chu-Talas interfluve to it. This caused confusion in the toponymic lexicon and led to a shift in spatial representations associated with the course of historical processes in the south and southeast of Kazakhstan and in the Tian Shan. Despite fair criticism [Petrov 1980: 61-62], the revision of the historical and geographical content of the macro-toponym "Semirechye" found followers among some Soviet archaeologists and orientalists, who, in turn, had to introduce clarifying indexes for macro-toponyms: "Western", "Southwest", "Southern", "Northern", "Northeastern", and even "Central Jetysu/Semirechye". Finally, in recent times, there has been a negative tendency in domestic historiography and journalism to replace the macro-toponym "Semirechye" allegedly with the synonymous "Jetysu", although both terms lack a universally accepted territorial definition.

There is no reliable data on the use of the toponym "Jetysu" by the Kazakhs of Southern Balkhash in the second half of the 18th to the mid-19th century. The term "Jetysu" is not found in the epistolary heritage of the rulers of the Senior and Middle Zhuzes, who had their residences in the "Semi rek" area. Additionally, the term is not encountered in the scientific works and letters of Chokan Valikhanov, with only the toponym "Semirechye" being used exclusively for denoting the region [Rogozhinskiy 2019]. In Kazakh folklore, the toponym "Jetysu" is recorded no earlier than the last third of the 19th century, i.e., only after the formation of the Semirechye region in 1867. Poets of the pre-revolutionary and early Soviet period, such as Birzhan Kozhagululy (1834–1897), Baluan Sholak (1864–1919), Zhambyl Zhabayuly (1846–1945), Kenen Azerbayev (1884–1976), and Ilyas Jansugurov (1894–1938), interpret the territorial boundaries of "Jetysu" differently, generally staying within the Chu-Ili mountains, the watersheds of the Northern Tian Shan, and the Jungar (Jetysu) Alatau, i.e., the main geographical landmarks of "Semirechye" as a region of the Lake Balkhash watershed basin in the southeastern part of Kazakhstan, which, in administrative-territorial terms, corresponds to the Jetysu Region (1922–1924; governorates – in 1924–1928), and geographically to Southeast Kazakhstan.

Thus, the "extended interpretation" of the macro-toponyms "Semirechye" and "Jetysu" is the result of careless word usage and a misunderstanding in the historiography of the Soviet period, which should be abandoned. Primarily, it is necessary to exclude the application of the quasi-toponym "Southwest Semirechye/Jetysu" to the territory of the Chu-Talas interfluve, covering areas of Kyrgyzstan, and in the lower reaches of the Chu and Talas rivers – a part of the territory of Southern Kazakhstan. Accordingly, it is not in the "Southwest Semirechye/Jetysu" but within Southern Kazakhstan, the Chu-Talas interfluve, where, alongside

other known sites, medieval urban sites such as Aspara and Sharuashylyk are located, the study of which in 2021–2023 served as a reason for an in-depth examination of the historical toponymy of the region (Fig. 1).

2. *Research at the Aspara urban site.* Field exploration and aerial photography of the Aspara urban site in 2021, based on which an updated detailed plan of the site was developed (Fig. 2), allowed for refining the general parameters of the city's central ruins and identifying additional features of urban planning and fortifications.

The central ruins of the Aspara urban site have a roughly rectangular shape in plan and are delimited by ramparts on a 300×240 m elevation, oriented with sides aligned to the cardinal directions with a deviation of 20–25°. Two main structural elements of the urban site are distinguished: a divided citadel and a shakhristan. The citadel is the highest part of the urban site (up to 17 m above the surrounding terrain) and has the form of an irregular quadrilateral surrounded by ramparts (105×125×115×130 m) with an adjoining lower rectangular platform to the southwest (100×50 m). Entrances to the upper platform of the citadel are traceable in the northern and southern walls. A depression is observed in the relief of the inner part of the citadel between the two entrances, forming a conditional axis of fortification, with the surface rising noticeably to the east and west of it; it is possible that opposing entrances of the citadel were connected by a central street. Along the inner line of fortifications on the southern and eastern sides, a depression in the surface is traced, with a width of up to 2-3 m and a depth of approximately 1 m. As indicated by the results of L.B. Yerzakovich's excavations in 1964-1965 and our observations in excavation 2 in 2021, there was a wide passage between the defensive wall and the residential development of the citadel, presumably necessary for the defenders' free movement along the fortifications. The citadel occupies a natural loess elevation covering an area of over 20 000 m^2, along the southern and western slopes of which runs the bed of a stream fed by springs. Currently, the floodplain of the streamis very swampy.

There is a shakhristan to the east of the bipartite citadel, the lowest part of the urban site, surrounded by fortification walls, which has the following dimensions along the perimeter: northern wall – 200 m, eastern – 230 m, southern – 130 m. A deep moatwas laid along the base of the eastern wall of the citadel, separating it

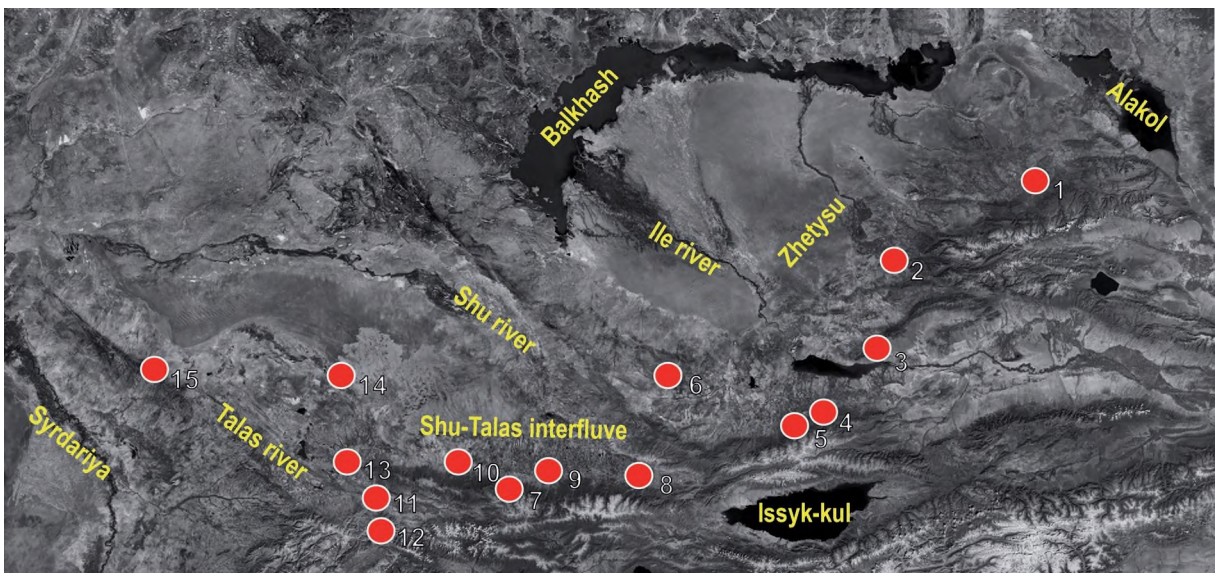


Fig. 1. Map-scheme of the localization of archaeological sites on the Zhetysu territory and Shu-Talas interfluve: 1 – Kayalyk, 2 – Eshkiolmes, 3 – Besshatyr, 4 – Issyk, 5 – Talgar, 6 – Tamgaly, 7 – «sanctuary» of Merke, 8 – Akbeshim, 9 – Aspara, 10 – Kulan, 11 – Sadyr-Kurgan, 12 – Zhaltyraktash, 13 – Taraz, 14 – Sharuashylyk, 15 – Arpaozen

1-сур. Жетісу және Шу-Талас өзендері аумағындағы ескерткіштер локализациясының карта-сызбасы: 1 – Қаялық, 2 – Ешкіөлмес, 3 – Бесшатыр, 4 – Есік, 5 – Талғар, 6 – Таңбалы, 7 – Мерке «ғибадатханасы», 8 – Ақбешім, 9 – Аспара, 10 – Құлан, 11 – Садыр Қорған, 12 – Жалтырақташ, 13 – Тараз, 14 – Шаруашылық, 15 – Арпаөзен

Рис. 1. Карта-схема локализации памятников на территории Жетысу и Шу-Таласского междуречья: 1 – Каялык, 2 – Ешкиолмес, 3 –, Бесшатыр, 4 – Иссык, 5 – Талгар, 6 – Тамгалы, 7 – «святилище» Мерке, 8 – Акбешим, 9 – Аспара, 10 – Кулан, 11 – Садыр-Курган, 12 – Жалтыракташ, 13 – Тараз, 14 – Шаруашылык, 15 – Арпаозен

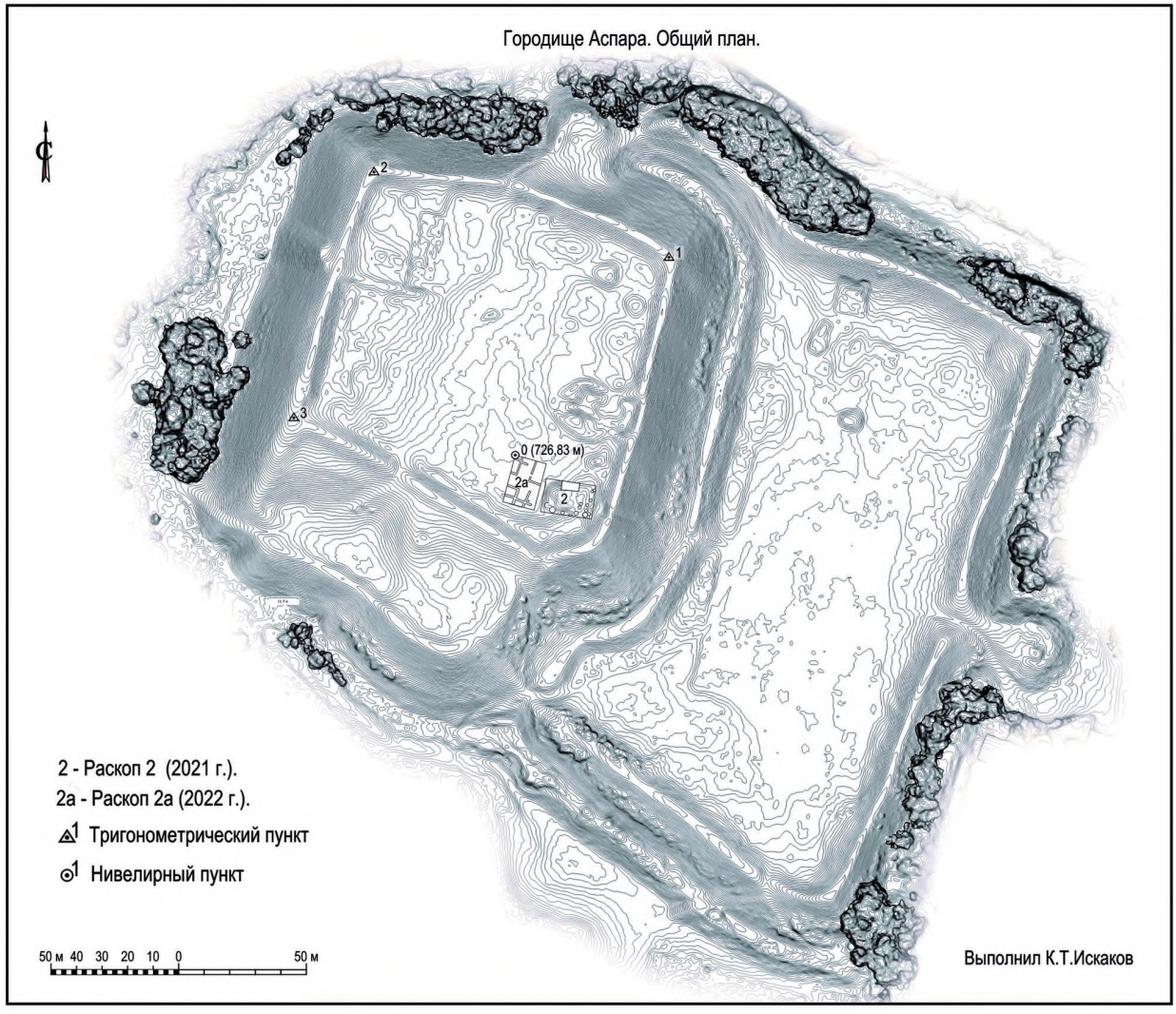


Fig. 2. The Aspara urban site. The plan of the citadel and shahristan
2-сур. Аспара қаласы. Цитадель мен шахристан жоспары
Рис. 2. Городище Аспара. План цитадели и шахристана

from the shakhristan. The surface of the central part of the shakhristan was leveled in the 1960s–1970s using tractor equipment when there was a rural football field here. Only areas adjacent to the fortification walls from the north and south were not leveled, where traces of individual ruins are preserved in the relief. In addition to the main line of fortifications around the citadel and shakhristan, there were additional fortification structures. For example, in the middle part of the eastern wall of the shakhristan, an outwardly protruding round tower with a diameter of about 15 m adjoins it. Another tower (25×20 m), located beyond the line of fortifications, is situated near the northern wall of the citadel in its middle part. The entire territory of the urban site is surrounded by a moat, currently with a depth of about 3–5 m and a width of up to 10–12 m.

Traces of archaeological excavations, conducted by various researchers in preceding periods, are preserved within the territory of the citadel and shakhristan of the Aspara urban site. The locations of the excavations by L.B. Yerzakovich (1964-1965), E.S. Akymbek, and A.A. Nurzhanov (2012, 2014) are indicated on the detailed plan. Unfortunately, the spoil heaps of old excavations cover significant areas of unexplored surface around them and on the outer side of the fortress walls. In 2021, previously overlooked fragments of glazed pottery and

metal artifacts were recovered from the spoil heaps.

In 2021, excavations by the Shu-Talas archaeological team in the southeastern sector of the Aspara citadel concluded the investigation of excavation 2 (A.A. Nurzhanov, 2012) on an area of 11×16 m, west of which an adjacent area of construction was additionally explored in excavation 2a (10×15 m) in 2022. Both excavations are located 25 m south of L.B. Yerzakovich's excavation and also reveal elements of the layout structure of two late medieval building periods of the urban site from the 13th to the 15th centuries, beneath which lies a layer from the Karakhanid period of the 11th-12th centuries. In the profile of the baulk separating excavations 2 and 2a, the contour of an exploratory trench, 5 m wide and reaching a depth of 0.4 m, is recorded, apparently made by L.B. Yerzakovich's expedition.

The upper construction period is represented solely by a group of refuse pits, the mouths of which were detected at a depth of 0.4 meters from the contemporary surface. Located without a specific order and intermittently cutting through raw material walls and clay floors of structures from the lower construction period, these pits are concentrated in the northern half of excavation 2a. The dating of the upper construction horizon is established based on finds in the layer of three silver coins of Emir Timur and his co-ruler Khan Suyurgatmish (1370–1388). In addition, above one of the pits, a fragment of facing brick with bright blue slip from the Timurid period was found. The abandonment of the southeastern corner section of the citadel corresponds to the functioning of the nearby residential complex, excavated by L.B. Yerzakovich and also dated by the discovery of a coin of Emir Timur and Khan Mahmud in 1392/1393 [Yerzakovich 1968: 86–88, 92].

In the layout of the lower construction period, a complex of residential and economic structures erected on the remains of the preceding Karakhanid period (objects 1 and 2 in excavation 2a) was identified, along with an undeveloped area with a narrow unpaved passage along the inner side of the fortress fortifications (excavation 2). The passage surface is punctuated by shallow pits (up to 0.15 m), containing fragments of raw bricks, clumps of kneaded clay, and a water-bearing vessel without a neck; this area adjacent to the citadel wall may have been used for storing construction materials. From the level of the passage to a low platform (up to 0.7 m) with remnants of structures along the southern edge of excavation 2 rises a narrow ramp, the surface of which is heavily trampled and covered with debris from raw materials; beneath the debris, a layer of ash and coal is noted, which uniformly covered a wide area in the middle of the platform and was, in turn, covered by a dense clayey surface layer. The radiocarbon date of the fire layer FTMC-UD18, 803±27 BP with calibrated values of 1225–1261 AD (68.3%) and 1211–1278 AD (94.8%), establishes the likely age of the event within the second to third quarter of the 13th century. Along with ceramics from the same period, the debris above the ramp contains redeposited materials from an earlier period: fragments of glazed Karakhanid pottery, a bronze ornamented sheet-metal washer (Fig. 3, 15), a stone sculpture (found in 2012), and a copper coin with a square hole. According to A.M. Kamyshev's determination, the coin from the Northern Song dynasty (960–1127) contains the reign motto of Yuan Fu (1098–1100).

In excavation 2a, the remains of two multi-room structures of the second construction horizon have been identified, between which there is a passageway (street) – a vacant area with a width of 2.5–3.0 m. The street is planned in the latitudinal direction, starting from the edge of the platform and could have connected with the central street of the citadel. The surface of the street is unpaved, occasionally compact and heavily trampled, covered with small carbonate inclusions. In the eastern part of the street, remnants of an ash and coal layer were revealed at a depth of 1.1 m, identified in excavation 2.

The complex of premises to the south of the street (object 1) consists of six rooms (rooms 2, 4, and 6 partially excavated), interconnected by passages. The walls of the premises are preserved to a height of up to 0.8–1.0 m, built of raw bricks of various sizes: 35×25×6 cm, 30×30×5 cm, 28×15.5×5.5 cm; the walls are laid in 1.5 bricks. In room 1, beneath the rubble of collapsed brick and plaster walls, a complex of intact pottery (tagora, pot, and jug with a drain hole on the body) and two tandoors, built into the northern wall adjacent to the street, were discovered on the floor. In the southeast corner of the room, there was a utility pit containing animal bones and fragments of glazed and unglazed pottery. Radiocarbon dating for this complex, based on bones from the pit, yielded a date within the last quarter of the 13th century to the first quarter of the 14th century. Similar dating results were obtained for room 4 of object 2 – another multi-room structure located opposite on the north side of the street. It is worth noting that the floors of the post-Mongol period in objects 1 and 2 are cut into layers of earlier construction, dated by finds of Karakhanid glazed pottery, coins, and radiocarbon dates within the late 10th to mid-12th centuries. Fragments of such pottery and Karakhanid coins were also found on the surface of the street.

During the research in 2021-2022 on the territory of the central ruins of the Aspara urban site, a systematic collection of numismatic materials was conducted. The

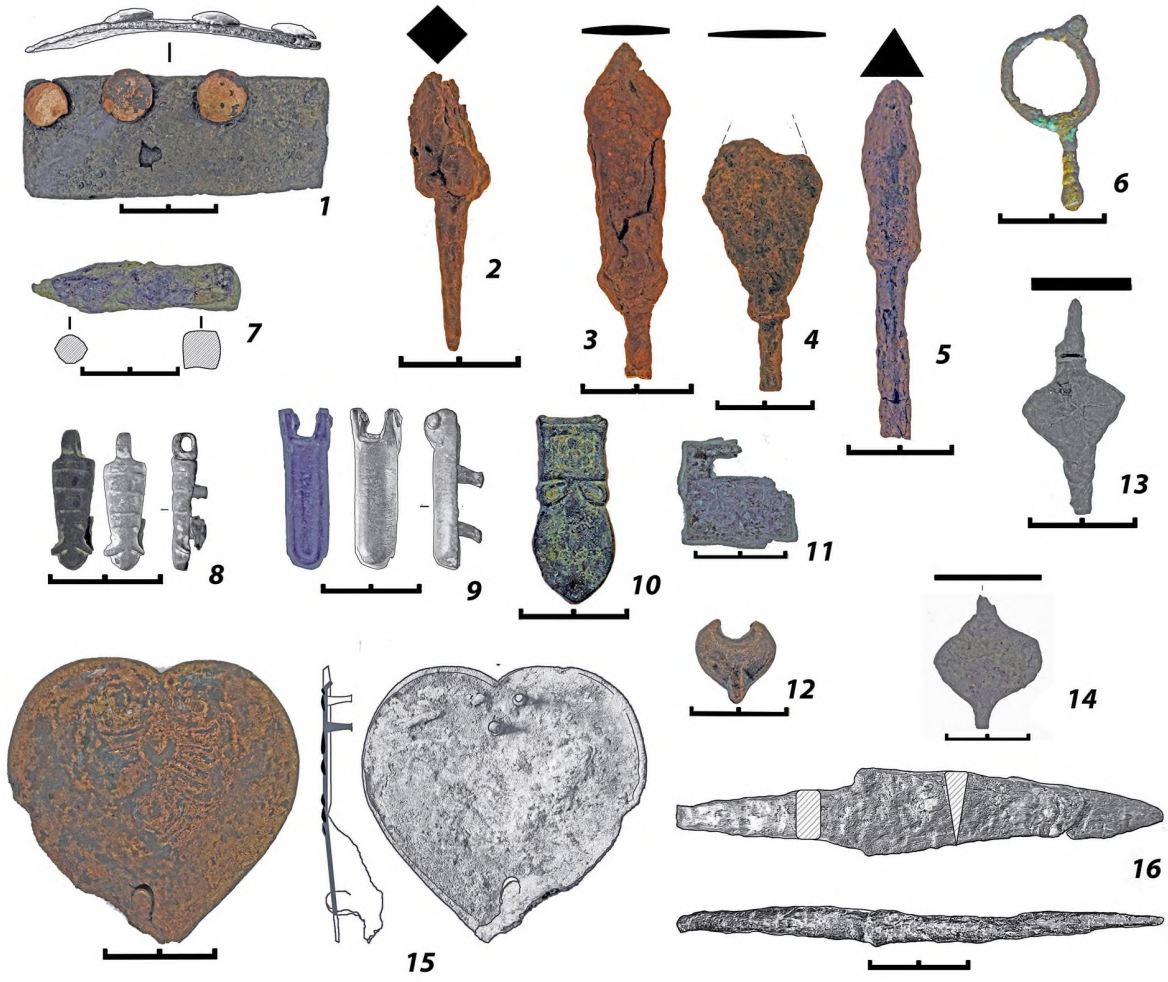


Fig. 3. The Aspara urban site. Finds from excavation trenches 2 and 2a; 6, 7 – accidental finds
3-сур. Аспара қаласы. № 2 және № 2а қазбаларынан табылған заттар; 6, 7 – кездейсоқ табылған заттар
Рис. 3. Городище Аспара. Находки из раскопов 2 и 2а; 6, 7 – случайные находки

collection of coin finds comprises 37 units, including 10 coins from excavations 2 and 2a. For the first time at the site, fragments of a Turko-Sogdian coin from the 8th century and small coins of Kokand mint were found. Among the finds at the citadel of the urban site, there are coins from various emissions (Karakhanids, Samanids, late Tans, Northern Song, Chagataids, and Emir Timur), which overall determine the period of its functioning from the 10th century to the beginning of the 15th century.

An important result of the conducted research is also the series of radiocarbon dates obtained from different construction horizons of the citadel, which lays the foundation for the absolute chronology of the monument's history, correlated with material complexes, numismatic data, and information from written sources.

3. Research at the Sharuashylyk site. The monument was first surveyed by L.I. Rempel in 1949, but the instrumental mapping of the site and the first excavations were only carried out in 2021-2022 by the Shu-Talas archaeological team under the direction of A.A. Nurzhanov, followed by A.E. Rogozhinskiy. The detailed plan of the site, developed by K.T. Iskakov, and the field survey of the ruins allow for a more precise description of the topography of the site.

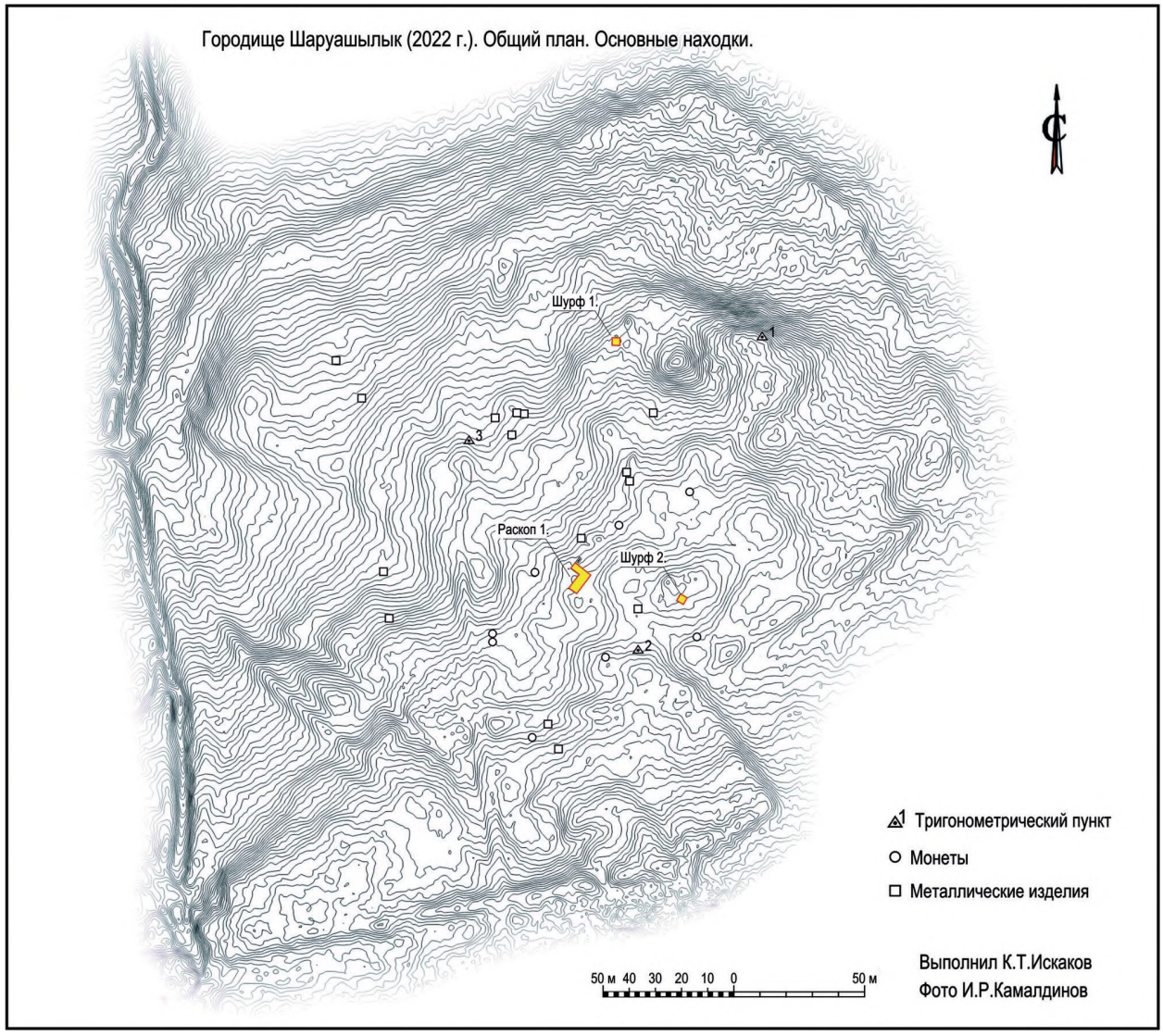


Fig. 4. Sharuashylyk urban site. The plan of the citadel and Shahristan
4-сур. Шаруашылық қаласы. Цитадель мен шахристан жоспары
Рис. 4. Городище Шаруашылык. План цитадели и шахристана

The Sharuashylyk site is located in the lower reaches of the Talas River delta, at the southern edge of the Moynkum Desert. Situated on the right bank of the paleo-channel, it occupies the northern portion of an ancient river terrace, rising 3–5 meters above the surrounding plain. To the south of the site, the contours of an ancient channel can be seen, connecting with the ancient bed of the Talas River, from which the monument is 10 km east.

The site represents a low elevation of irregular shape, stretching from east to southwest for 400 meters and 320 meters wide (Fig. 4). To the south, east, and north, the elevation is bounded by an earthen rampart, reaching a height of 2-3 meters in the southern part. On the remaining parts of the perimeter of the site, remnants of the rampart are preserved to a height of up to 0.5 meters and are weakly pronounced in relief. The line of fortifications on the western side has an extensive gap in the central part. The relatively good preservation of the southern rampart, despite its actual absence along the rest of the perimeter of the site, likely indicates the destruction of fortress fortifications during the Mongol period.



Fig. 5. Sharuashylyk urban site. Numismatic finds from Aspara (1–5) and Sharuashylyk (6–9) urban sites
5-сур. Шаруашылық қаласы. Аспара (1–5) және Шаруашылық (6–9) қалаларынан табылған нумизматикалық заттар
Рис. 5. Городище Шаруашылык. Нумизматические находки с городищ Аспара (1–5) и Шаруашылык (6–9)

The relief of the site clearly distinguishes two levels of the surface ("terraces") with traces of construction: the lower one, with numerous small elevations located at intervals of 10–15 meters from each other, covered with scattered fragments of glazed and unglazed pottery, and the upper one, which constitutes the central part of the site (100×100 meters). Here, there are about 10 swollen hills, also covered with pottery, representing the ruins of individual structures. In the northeastern part of this elevation, there is a deep depression (45×30 m, depth 2 m), to the north of which is a hill up to 2 m high and measuring 40×30 m; finds of pottery on the surface of the hill are rare. Apparently, the depression and the hill nearby on the leeward side (from the Moynkum side) are of very recent origin and, by the type of dune urban site, served as recent livestock pens" [Rempel, 1956: 68]. The site contains a large amount of pottery, stone artifacts, and 8 coins of various types (Fig. 5, 6–9).

Excavations at the Sharuashylyk site were conducted in three areas. In 2021, stratigraphic trenches measuring 4×4 m were laid out on one of the hills of the upper "terrace" of the site (trench 1) and on the edge of the lower "terrace" in the southeast sector of the site, near the earthen rampart – trench 2. In the southern part of the site, where a large amount of various pottery, fragments of burnt brick, metal, and stone artifacts are concentrated on the elevated surface, excavation 1 was planned, measuring 5×10 m. In 2022, excavations continued at trench 1 (adjacent to it, trench 1a was passed for control, depth 3 m), and the main excavation was expanded to the north – excavation 1a (8×11 m).

In the stratigraphic trench 1/1a, three construction layers were identified, and for the lower layer, where remnants of raw constructions, tandyrs, and household pits were found, a radiocarbon date within the third quarter of the 14th century was obtained. From the main excavation 1/1a, which exposed areas of two upper construction periods with remnants of raw structures, two radiocarbon dates were obtained from two household pits: one from the 14th century and the other from the late 14th to the early 15th century. In the dated contexts, representative artifact assemblages were obtained, including samples of wheel-thrown and molded pottery, glazed and painted pottery of various forms, as well as metal artifacts. It is worth noting that alongside late medieval materials, pottery from the 12th to early 13th century was discovered in excavation 1 and trench 2, which corresponds to the findings of coins of the Western Karakhanid mint (tentative identification by P.N. Petrov). Thus, the newly obtained data delineate the period of existence of the Sharuashylyk site to at least the interval from the 12th to the early 15th century.

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