



**К 100-ЛЕТИЮ ОТЕЧЕСТВЕННОЙ АКАДЕМИЧЕСКОЙ АРХЕОЛОГИИ  
TO THE CENTENNIAL OF THE RUSSIAN ACADEMIC ARCHAEOLOGY**

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**Древности Восточной Европы,  
Центральной Азии и Южной Сибири  
в контексте связей и взаимодействий  
в евразийском культурном пространстве  
(новые данные и концепции)**

**Antiquities of East Europe, South Asia  
and South Siberia in the context  
of connections and interactions within  
the Eurasian cultural space  
(new data and concepts)**

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**I. ДРЕВНЯЯ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНАЯ АЗИЯ В КОНТЕКСТЕ ЕВРАЗИЙСКОГО  
КУЛЬТУРНОГО ПРОСТРАНСТВА (НОВЫЕ ДАННЫЕ И КОНЦЕПЦИИ)**

**ANCIENT CENTRAL ASIA IN THE EURASIAN CULTURAL CONTEXT  
(NEW DATA AND CONCEPTS)**

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## ON THE PROBLEM OF THE ORIGINS AND CHRONOLOGY OF THE URBANIZED CULTURE OF THE CHORASMIAN OASIS

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**Keywords:** *Early Iron Age, Chorasmian oasis, urbanized culture.*

The paper deals with new results of archaeological research obtained during the excavations of a *dahma* of the first period at the settlement of Khumbuztepa in Chorasmia. The excavated materials indicate that the emergence of monumental religious structures associated with Zoroastrian funeral rituals and practices (*dahma* and *kata*) on the territory of the Chorasmian oasis occurred in the 8<sup>th</sup> century BC. The archaeological complexes of Khumbuztepa illustrate that the emergence of an urbanized culture in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya took place at the beginning of the Yaz 2 period. The early complexes of the settlement show that the urban culture of Chorasmia was genetically related to the ancient agricultural regions of the lower Tedzhen-Herirud, the Serakhs oasis and the north-eastern ridges of the Kopet Dagh of the Yaz 1 period, from the territory of which the urbanized culture of ancient Chorasmia had originated.

## GLOBALIZED POTTERY IN BACTRIA? WAS THE LOCAL POTTERY PRODUCTION IN BACTRIA HIGHLY INFLUENCED BY GREEK CERAMICS DURING THE HELLENISTIC PERIOD?

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**Keywords:** *pottery, ceramics, Greek influence, Bactria, Hellenistic East, fish plate, Megarian bowl, Bactrian cup, Gray are.*

It is well known that after the conquest of Alexander the Great Bactria (located in the modern states of Afghanistan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan) became part of the Hellenistic world. The political and economic integration initiated a phase of immigration from the Mediterranean to the Near East and up to Bactria, which resulted in an impact on local cultures. During this phase a new material culture was formed, which is best visible in Ai Khanoum. Here, architecture and building types, as well as Greek motives and iconography, but also Greek inscriptions prove a strong Mediterranean influence. Subsequently the same process was assumed to have highly affected the local ceramic production. But is this actually proven by the ceramic finds from several sites in Bactria? Is a strong dependence between the Mediterranean pottery and the Bactrian production

observable? Was the influence more or less centered in urban settlements? And did political events have an impact on the ceramic development at all?

In general the Bactrian pottery production should be divided into three Hellenistic phases.

The first phase is connected to innovations that led to a change of the local pottery production. Different plate and bowl shapes were made for the first time and some tableware vessels were covered with a red slip. One of these shapes is often referred to as “fish plate”. This vessel type — with a hanging rim and a depression on its inner surface — was known in the Mediterranean world from the 5<sup>th</sup> century BCE. Because of the depicted marine animals these plates were first named fish plates by archaeologists, even though later examples were only black glazed. In Bactria there are up to three different vessel shapes (rim types, with or without depression) that are referred to as “fish plate”, although all of these do not correspond with the Attic type. Therefore one has to assume, that the Bactrian “fish plate” types were only used as a cultural marker of the settlers from the West, who were living in Bactria during the early Hellenistic phase. But did these Greeks have an impact on the pottery production of the early phase? Most of the new developed shapes — like the assumed fish plate — cannot be clearly associated with Greek vessels and should only be seen as an innovation that indicates a change in the dining traditions.

Similar developments have been observed in Hellenistic Mesopotamia, but in contrast to Bactria some Attic vessel types were found, that can be clearly linked to Greek settlers: kantharoi, ungentaria and lopades. The latter, in particular, serves as an identification marker, which can show differences between local and foreign cooking traditions within the archaeological records. If there had been a formative influence on the Bactrian pottery by the Greek settlers, Greek drinking vessels or cooking pots would have to be expected in the early Hellenistic phase.



**Fig. 1.** The pottery repertoire of the rural sanctuary of Torbulok (South Tajikistan, left) consist mostly of local shapes, predominantly by the Bactrian cup (bottom right) and of a lower degree by “newly” developed vessels shapes (upper right)

But up to now they are completely missing. Instead the repertoire of the early phase consists mostly of local vessel types, which were already produced and used in pre-Hellenistic times: Beside the cooking pots, the most important one is the Bactrian cup, which was made in different types until the Kushan era. And even though some vessels were now covered with a red slip, the potters used the same, pre-Hellenistic techniques to prepare the clay and to fire the vessel — not depending of its shape.

During the second phase the reducing atmosphere was first used to fire tableware shapes. As a result these vessels have a grayish body and are in general covered with a black slip. A similar change of production can be observed in the Hellenistic Near East, where these vessels are usually interpreted as an imitation of Attic black glazed pottery. However, that interpretation is far from certain. In Bactria this change could have been also affected by the Greco-Bactrian conquest of the territories south of the Hindu Kush, resulting in an exchange of knowledge and techniques, as well as moving of people and objects. Gray ware tableware was already produced long before and could have been brought to Bactria, which then caused the production of local Gray ware vessels.

Not until the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BCE — or even later — shapes were produced in Bactria, which can be compared with vessels of the Hellenistic Mediterranean world (third phase). These include, in particular, the Megarian bowl, which was first made in Athens at the end of the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BCE and was later produced in Asia Minor, the Levant and probably also in southern Mesopotamia from the 1st half of the 2<sup>nd</sup> century BC. In Bactria very few Megarian bowls are known, coming from few sites. Obviously these vessels were made by specialized potters, who imitated Greek (clay and metal?) vessels that were brought to Bactria via (sea) trade. Thus this vessel type cannot be assigned to any identity, but rather should be understood as an expression of a philhellene way of life, in which only a small group of the population was interested.

**ГЛОБАЛИЗИРОВАННАЯ КЕРАМИКА В БАКТРИИ?  
ОКАЗАЛА ЛИ ГРЕЧЕСКАЯ КЕРАМИКА  
СИЛЬНОЕ ВЛИЯНИЕ НА МЕСТНОЕ КЕРАМИЧЕСКОЕ  
ПРОИЗВОДСТВО В БАКТРИИ В ЭЛЛИНИСТИЧЕСКИЙ ПЕРИОД?**

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*Keywords: керамика, греческое влияние, Бактрия, эллинистический Восток, рыбные блюда, мегарские чаши, бактрийские чаши, серая посуда.*

На протяжении раннего эллинистического периода в производство бактрийской керамики были внедрены новые формы сосудов и технические приемы. Однако эти новые формы, часто упоминаемые как «греческие сосуды», лишь поверхностно связаны с греческими образцами. Их следует скорее интерпретировать как свидетельство глобализованного эллинистического мира, где идеи и знания были очень мобильными. Однако наиболее часто встречающиеся типы сосудов относятся к местной традиции, подобно так называемым бактрийским чашам, и свидетельствуют о истинном характере бактрийской глиняной посуды, а также о незначительном влиянии привнесенных форм в раннеэллинистическое время. Только с появлением греко-бактрийской династии греческое влияние на производство керамики, по-видимому, становится заметным на некоторых поселениях Бактрии. Таким образом, лишь немногие средиземноморские керамические формы были адаптированы в Бактрии, и предполагаемое сильное греческое влияние на бактрийскую керамику не может считаться доказанным.