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Abstract: The Khalchayan Palace is one of the prominent monuments of Greco-Bactrian and Kushan period culture. Its architecture, murals, and sculptures provide valuable insights into the social and military life of that era. The coins, statues, and various artifacts discovered at the palace reveal the economic and cultural development level of the region's inhabitants.

Keywords: Khalchayan, Greco-Bactria, Kushan period, architecture, murals, Geray, coins

Intoduction

The history of palaces holds a significant place in world architecture, representing the intricate architectural ensembles of rulers, religious leaders, and the elite. Palaces in Egypt, Mesopotamia, Babylon, Arab countries, and Asia were distinguished by luxurious courtyards and hanging gardens. In medieval Europe, palaces of administrators and clergy became social and political centers of cities. Central Asian palace architecture stood out with its unique national style, showcasing local artisans' decorative artistry. Examples like the Khalchayan Palace, Bukhara Ark, Kokand Palace, and Amir Timur's palaces in Uzbekistan exemplify a blend of national and European styles.

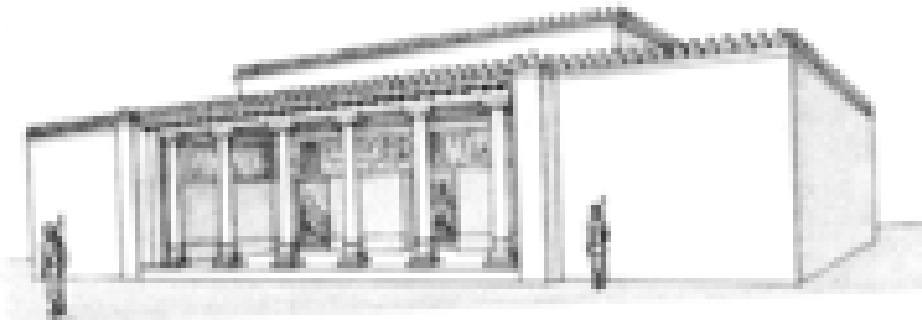
Main part

The Khalchayan archaeological complex (4th century BCE - 5th century CE) belongs to the culture of the Greco-Bactrian and Kushan periods. It is situated in Denau District, Surkhandarya Region, Uzbekistan. The complex comprises several mounds (Khonaqohtepa, Qaraboqtepa, Maslahattepa, etc.) and was thoroughly studied from 1959 to 1963 by an archaeological and art expedition led by G.A. Pugachenkova under the Institute of Art Studies.

The Ruler's Palace Discovered at Khonaqohtepa: One of the key findings is the remains of the ruler's palace at Khonaqohtepa, dating to the 2nd-1st centuries BCE. This palace is a rectangular structure measuring 35?26 meters, featuring a central open courtyard (16.5?7 m) supported by four wooden columns placed on limestone bases. This courtyard leads to the grand hall (17.6?6.1 m), with wide platforms along the walls, adding to its grandeur.

The foundation of the building was constructed from square-shaped adobe bricks imprinted with various symbols. The single-story structure had flat roofs, with walls ranging from 2.2 to 4 meters thick. Traces of murals were found on the lower parts of the walls, while the upper parts were adorned with sculptures.

According to G.A. Pugachenkova, this palace served as the headquarters of Geray, a chieftain of one of the Yuezhi tribes.



1-image: Khalchayan Palace (Based on G.A. Pugachenkova)

The Qaraboqtepa mound, part of the complex, was fortified with defensive walls up to 8 meters thick, indicating active life until the early 3rd century CE.

The murals of Khalchayan are unique, depicting clusters of grapes, leaves, circular fruits, various flowers, and human figures in harmonious compositions. Among them, impressive portraits of Greco-Bactrian rulers stand out.

Sculptures from the grand hall include a relief frieze portraying figures associated with Geray and his lineage, emphasizing the Yuezhi's military and economic power.

One notable mural on the southern wall depicts six galloping horses with riders, painted in red, white, and black. Other sculptures represent armored horses, indicating the presence of both light and heavy cavalry. These depictions also appear on Vasudeva I coins, providing insights into the Kushan military organization.

Conclusion

The Khalchayan Palace and its artifacts reflect the rich cultural heritage of the Greco-Bactrian and Kushan periods. Its intricate architecture, murals, and sculptures serve as a mirror of the cultural life of that era. The interactions between the Yuezhi and local populations, alongside depictions of cavalry and artifacts, illustrate the military and social advancements of the Kushan state. Coins discovered at Khalchayan highlight the region's economic connections and trade routes.

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