

# Some Issues on Studying Material Culture “Ancient Ustrushana”

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**Abstracts:** The following article discusses with individual problems of the development of material culture of the Ustrushana since the epoch of the Early Iron Age, based on generalizations, analysis and systematization of the conclusions of archaeological research. In particular: the issues of the genesis and continuous development of the settled agricultural culture of the peoples of the Ustrushana, starting from the Early Iron Age and its spread throughout the region, as well as the role and place of socio-economic conditions in the formation of the local highly developed material culture are considered. The development of the urbanization process of the region, the origins of the origin and development of artificial irrigation skills are traced, and a range of issues of material culture such as change and development in architecture, handicraft production and others are also considered.

In conclusion, from the analysis of the conducted research, the following conclusions are presented, which allows identifying the main directions in the study of the material culture of Ustrushana. Such as the emergence of early settlements, the area of distribution of local culture, urban planning and urbanization processes, handicraft production and its development, monuments of art, as well as issues of historical topography, political, socio-economic and cultural life of the “ancient ustrushana” territory.

**Keywords:** “Ancient Ustrushana” territory, history of archaeological study of the region, development of urbanization process, handicraft production, the origin and development of artificial irrigation skills, Syrdarya, The River of Sangzar, Basmandasay, Shakhristansay, Khudjamushkentsay, “Eastern Tsao”, “Shaydushana”, “Suydushana”, “Tsebutsuyna” (Tsebudana), “Sudushini”, “Nurtepa culture”, “Kayrak-kum culture”, “Burgulyuk culture”, Castle of Mug, settlement of Nurtepe, Khitaytepe, Saganaktepe, Munchaktepe, Shirin, Urdatepe, Kaliyatepe, Kurgantepe, Shirinsay burial ground.

## Introduction

Central Asia has been the cradle of various peoples and civilizations since ancient times. These cultures developed in separate historical and geographical regions, originating on the basis of ancient agro-irrigation oases. To date, one of the fundamentally important issues in Central Asian (domestic) historiography is to identify the origins, deep roots and processes of cultural development of such historical and geographical areas. One of them is the territory between the left bank of the Syrdarya and the lower reaches of the River of Sangzar, in which the Ustrushana state appeared in the historical arena in the early Middle Ages.

## Materials and Methods

The first reliable information about the territory of Ustrushana is contained in the Greco-Roman sources. In them, along with information on the general history of Central Asia, the “ancient Ustrushana” territory is also noted [7 .1957. – p.161]. More often there is information in the works of ancient Greco-Roman authors in connection with the campaigns of Alexander the Great in Central Asia. The most complete and sufficiently competent work is the “Anabasis of Alexander” by Arrian, which is considered the only detailed source of information on the ancient history of Ustrushana. It was only in the early Middle Ages that new information appeared in such Chinese sources as: “Suishu” by Wei Zhen, “Xin Tang Shu” by Ou Yang Xiu, in the “Historical Notes” by Xuan-Jiang and Hoi Chao. Chinese sources for the first time give the name of an independent region and its geographical location. In “Xin Tang Shu” several of its names are given: “Eastern Cao”, “Shuaidushana”, “Suidushana”, “Jebujuna” (Jebudana), “Sudushini”. [12. 1989, p.220.] The territory of Ustrushana by Xuan-Jiang is described in detail [2. 1950, p.333.] Some information

on the socio-political, economic life of early medieval Ustrushana is provided by the materials of the archive of Panjikent ruler Divashtich from the castle of Mug, which was found in 1932.

Fragmentary, sometimes contradictory information from ancient written sources mainly reflect individual moments of the political history of Ustrushana. Nevertheless, it is possible to extract information from them about the presence of cities and fortified settlements on the “Ancient Ustrushana” territory, about the nature of contacts of its inhabitants with the Zayaksart saks tribes. Early medieval Chinese sources for the first time give names and information about the geographical location of the region. Sogdian documents from the castle of Mug (VIII century) reveal data concerning the social, political and public life of Ustrushana. The most complete historical overview is given by Arabic-speaking geographers and historians of the IX-X centuries. Their data are also used to characterize the early medieval history of the region.

The purpose of the article is to consider separate problems of the development of the material culture of Ustrushana since the epoch of the Early Iron Age, based on generalizations, analysis and systematization of the conclusions of archaeological research. In particular: the issues of the genesis and continuous development of the settled agricultural culture of the peoples of the Ustrushana, starting from the Early Iron Age and its spread throughout the region, as well as the role and place of socio-economic conditions in the formation of the local highly developed material culture are considered.

### **Analysis and Results**

The history of the archaeological study of the region is divided into several periods. The first one includes the period from the second half of the XIX and, to the 30's of the XX centuries. Here, for the first time, the term Ustrushana is introduced into scientific use. The second period begins in connection with the construction of the Farkhad hydroelectric power station, and the archaeological study of Ustrushana starting with the Munchaktepa monument in 1943. The third period covers the 70s of the XX century and up to the beginning of the XI century, when archaeological research of the territory of Ustrushana reached a qualitatively new, higher level. Based on the reconnaissance work carried out during this period, a set of the main archaeological monuments was compiled, as well as stationary studies were carried out on a number of monuments of the ancient period.

From the analysis of the conducted research to date, the following conclusions follow, allowing to identify the main directions in the study of the material culture of Ustrushana.

During the period of the study, a set of more than 800 archaeological monuments was compiled. Of these, 2.4% belong to the ancient, 60-65% - to the early Medieval, and the rest - to the era of the developed Middle Ages. About 40 archaeological sites were subjected to stationary excavation works, 11 of which belong to the ancient, and 26 - to the early medieval periods. Basically, these studies were aimed at studying individual problems of the cultural history of the region. In particular, such as the emergence of early settlements, the area of distribution of local culture, urban planning and urbanization processes, handicraft production and its development, monuments of art, as well as issues of historical topography, political, socio-economic and cultural life [6. 2004. p. 24.].

The zoning and typology of the archaeological sites of the “Ancient Ustrushana” territory shows that the first settlements and cities appeared here in the middle of the I millennium BC, mainly in high-water irrigation areas such as Basmandasay, Shakhristansay, Khujamushkentsay, etc. These oases are a kind of core of the ancient Ustrushana culture. The gradual development of other oases and the increase in the number of monuments indicates the settling of nomadic tribes and the spread of sedentary agricultural culture throughout the region.

The following issues are highlighted in the study of the material culture of the “Ancient Ustrushana” territory: the development of the urbanization process, material culture and architecture, etc. To characterize the development of the material culture of monuments of the ancient and antique periods of the region, the time under consideration is conditionally divided into several stages (VII-IV centuries BC; IV-I centuries BC; I-IV centuries AD).

The material culture of the monuments belonging to the first stage (7 monuments - VII-IV centuries BC) is represented by “Nurtepe culture”, in which the settlement of Nurtepe occupies a central place. During this period, the first settlements and urban-type settlements appeared in the region.

The urbanization process of the second stage (IV-V BC) is associated with the arrival and consequences of the conquest of Alexander the Great and other subsequent historical processes. This stage includes the appearance and development of the main monuments (17 monuments), on the “Ancient Ustrushana” territory, which are characterized by such urban-type settlements as Nurtepe and Khujand, which are considered centers of trade and crafts. Monumental palaces appear, the internal layout becomes more complicated, population growth and the number of rural settlements (Khitaytepe, Saganaktepe) increases [5. 1990, p.24.]. At the turn of our era, urban-type castles with a chain of military strongholds (Munchaktepe, Shirin) appeared in the border areas. Urban-type settlements with broad trade and craft functions (Urdatepe, Kaliyatepe, Kurgantepe) appear on the routes of trade routes based on such castles [9. 1991. p. 64-66.]. The influence of “Nurtepa culture” is spreading and continuing in material culture.

In the I-IV centuries AD, life on the main monuments of the previous stage continues and the number of objects of this period reaches 22. By the end of antiquity (III-IV centuries), a new stage in the urbanization process begins, numerous castles appear in the centers of micro-oases.

The architecture of the ancient Ustrushana is practically unknown. Only two buildings were studied at Munchaktepe settlement. But, firstly, they belong to the very end of the era under consideration, and secondly, their plans and sections have not been published, which naturally makes it extremely difficult to understand them. One of the buildings dates back to the III century. The second refers to IV-V centuries. The latter was located on the citadel and is defined by the author of the excavations as a castle [4. 1947, p.92-109.].

Radical changes in handicraft production on the territory of Ustrushana occur by the middle of the first millennium of BC. Nurtepe ceramics have been studied in more detail [8. 1987. P. 310-330.]. Ceramics of this period are divided into two main groups - molded and made on a potter's wheel. Stucco ceramics are mainly represented by the following forms: pots, bowls, boilers, braziers. Nurtepe stucco ceramics are similar in form and technique to the stucco ceramics of Kayrak-Kum culture of steppe bronze, the ceramics of the Burgulyuk culture and the stucco ceramics of the settlements of Northern Bactria of the same time. Ceramics made on a potter's wheel, as a rule, have the red color of the shard, covered with whitish or pink engobe. Most often there are large forms-huma and humchi. The ceramic complex of ancient Khujand [1. 1978, p.47-48.], somewhat later than Nurtepe complex, is also characterized by a combination of stucco and circular. In general, we can talk about a very large proximity of these complexes, with the exception of two circumstances. Firstly, painted ceramics are represented in the stucco ceramics of Khujand, although in small quantities. Secondly, researchers pay special attention to the proximity of ceramics (especially stucco) of Khujand and Fergana ceramics of the Eilatan period [10. 1994. p. 66-71.]. The ceramics of Nurtepa is closest to the ceramics of Northern Bactria of the same time, there is a great similarity with the ceramic complex YAZ II.

In the materials of the IV-II centuries BC (Mugtepa), containers, kitchen and dining utensils are clearly distinguished. Most of it is made on a potter's wheel. Some of the dishes, mainly containers and kitchen, remain molded. The degree of firing of small and large forms indicates the existence of a two-chamber kiln. The potter's wheel makes it possible to produce more elegant dishes and in larger quantities than hand modeling. Ceramic production is finally separated from the community's economy and, becoming an independent craft, moves to the city. New forms of exchange are emerging.

In the first centuries BC there is a further improvement of production. The ceramic complex of this period has been studied on the basis of excavations of Khujand, Munchaktepe, Kaliyatepe and Shirinsai burial ground. In Ustrushana of this time, both stucco and pottery made on a potter's wheel were used. Stucco ceramics are best represented in the materials of the burial ground. Vessels made of coarse clay with a large number of inclusions predominate. Firing, as a rule, is good, smooth. Most of the vessels are covered with white or red engobe. Engobe is usually, especially red, fragile. Polishing was used quite often. Stucco ceramics does not differ in an abundance of types: there are bowls, jugs, pots. A circle appears for forming volumetric vessels. Pottery made on a potter's wheel also does not differ in a variety of types. Previously unknown vessel shapes appear, for example, cups on a high leg. Most often there are bowls that have a profile of a smooth arc in the section, with the ends facing upwards. Another common type of ceramics is bowls-cups, flat-bottomed, conically tapering downwards, with vertically (or almost vertically) a standing whisk. The third type of ceramics made on a potter's wheel are one-handed jugs, similar in shape and in the nature of the ornament to stucco ones.

In the ceramics of the I-IV centuries, it can be noticed that in the territory of Ustrushana, among the burial equipment, in most cases there are pack water flasks with a flattened side, as evidence of the nomadic lifestyle of the people who left these burial grounds. The flasks are made on a potter's loom and, on the other hand, testify to the close commodity exchange relations of the nomadic and agricultural population.

The origins of the sources and development of the skills of artificial irrigation of the population of "Ancient Ustrushana" territory, probably, as A. Bilalov notes, have their roots in the II-I millennia BC, and by the I millennium BC they are switching to regular artificial irrigation [3.1980, p.191., 11. 1999. p. 226-236.] During this period, the economic life of the population was mainly based on estuary and artificially irrigated agriculture, cattle breeding, as well as the important role of hunting. (Nurtepe, Khantepe). As archaeological research shows, ancient settlements appear for this time, located mainly near water sources. In turn, irrigated agriculture served as a division of labor, the allocation of crafts and trade, which resulted in the emergence of these cities. Probably the "Ancient Ustrushana" territory during this period was part of Sogd, and the social structure of society was at the last stages of the military confederation of tribes. Archaeological research also indicates a high level of construction (Munchaktepe, Nurtepe, Khantepe), ceramic and metalworking industries (Nurtepe, Munchaktepe), weaving and trade relations.

### Conclusions and suggestions

In conclusion, summarizing the main results of the study, the following conclusions on the history of ancient Ustrushana are noted:

1. The development of the region by ancient communities, the appearance of the first rural settlements and cities began from the archaic period. Geographical factors played an important role in these processes: climate, water supply, soil features and terrain of the local network.

2. The generalization of materials on the archaeological monuments and the results of their typology show that the development of the region mainly took place "from top to bottom", that is, first the high-water areas of the mountains and foothills were developed, then the flat parts.

3. The analysis of objects of material culture shows that in the region all spheres of handicraft and industrial activity, including ceramic, jewelry, ironworking, etc. in their development, they were not inferior to the corresponding industries of neighboring regions. The production of everyday objects, their shape and manufacturing technology are identified with the samples of the craft of Sogd, Ferghana, Shash.

4. The research results show that throughout its history, Ustrushana has been a contact zone of settled agricultural and nomadic pastoral tribes. A system of mutual economic and cultural cooperation was formed here, with the gradual settling of nomads, influenced by the sedentary lifestyle and culture of farmers.

5. Based on the research, the dynamics of the development of urbanization processes, the rise of the economy, the growth and specialization of crafts, issues of demography, expansion and development of new lands in the region can be divided into several large stages:

- a) VII-IV centuries BC - the initial, foothill stage, the construction of a number of settlements;
- b) III-I centuries BC - the appearance of plain and steppe villages and cities;
- c) I-IV centuries AD - there are processes of growth of cities and villages, the development of new micro-oases;

On the basis of the available historical and archaeological sources, it follows that the "Ancient Ustrushana" territory occupied its special place and significance in the history of the Central Asian interfluvial and, at the same time, the community of historical roots, events, rich political history, the interconnectedness of the economy and multifaceted culture formed a single whole with the surrounding regions of Samarkand's Sogd, Ferghana and Shash.

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