

"Karakalpak yurt"

Qanatova Asel Quat qizi
KSU after named Berdakh

Annotation: The question of the origin of a nation has always been a topical one in science. Year after year, thanks to conducted researches, this question has been replenished with scientifically grounded facts. In this article we have considered questions about the dwellings and settlements of Karakalpaks.

Key words: ethnographic, Karakalpak, Khorezm, research, yurts, archeology, Amu Darya.

Introduction: An ethnographic study of Karakalpak settlements and dwellings has been carried out since the 1920s. The materials and observations of A. S. Morozova on this topic are summarized in her PhD thesis on the everyday life of Karakalpaks in the early 20th century. Information on the history of dwellings accumulated during the work of the Karakalpak ethnographic team of the Khorezm expedition was reflected in the works of T. A. Zhdanko, S. K. Kamalov, R. K. Kosbergenov, U. H. Shalekenov and other staff of the team.

Materials and methods: Conducted in 1971-1975, field ethnographic research gives an opportunity to add to this complex of materials, especially in the study of Karakalpak yurts. In addition to the yurts they had Karakalpak settlements, in which settlements were of sedentary and semi-sedentary type.

According to written historical sources, archaeology and ethnography, the Karakalpaks have long been characterized by a semi-nomadic way of life and an economy combining farming, cattle breeding and fishing. The presence of herds of cattle and their need for pasture, as well as constant flooding and changes in the channels of the lower Syr Darya and Amu Darya, where Karakalpaks lived, forced them to frequently change their habitat and move to neighbouring, non-waterlogged areas. The Karakalpak economy and semi-nomadic way of life have led to the formation of various kinds of temporary and permanent dwellings, different in construction materials, layout and technical methods of construction, in addition to the basic dwelling yurt. The features of these dwellings depended to a large extent on local natural and economic conditions.

Results and discussions: Until 20-30-ies of our century, traditional-type dwellings of Karakalpak people were used in northern and central regions of Karakalpakstan where people were engaged in cattle-breeding and fishery along with agriculture. The dwellings of Karakalpaks in the southern farming regions of the country did not differ much from Uzbek dwellings. There were no compact settlements of the land-tilling type, and farmstead settlements prevailed. A distinctive feature of Khorezm "khutors", located on agricultural plots, was the placement of all household buildings inside the hovla houses, surrounded by high walls. They looked like impregnable fortresses with large gates on the front.

In the northern areas the villages were small, and sometimes larger, villages inhabited by members of certain tribal groups and located along the banks of the Amu Darya streams, canals or along roads. The houses and yurts were aligned in a single line (koshe), with the yurts usually oriented with their entrance to the south. To many pre-revolutionary authors, settlements of Karakalpaks located in the lower delta and on the coast of the Aral Sea were presented as a "reed kingdom" because all the buildings in them (outbuildings and fences around yards) were built from reed, while yurts here were often covered with mats instead of rugs.

The settlements were often temporary because of the instability of the whole life, depending on the regime of the Amu Darya, which often forced Karakalpaks to change their plots of land and pasture and leave their villages.

The tradition of Karakalpaks moving for the summer time closer to pastures, from kyslau (wintering) to zhazlau (letovka) was reflected in the appearance of summer auls where there were no permanent constructions at all, even economic ones.

Conclusions: Thus, in the north, north-west and north-east of Karakalpakstan till the revolution remained a semi-nomadic aul, while the main type of housing - yurt, which had not yet completely lost its significance in the life of the people. At the same time, the predominance of the yurt as the main dwelling of Karakalpaks does not at all indicate a pastoral nomadic type of economy. As mentioned above, the Karakalpak people have long been characterized by a complex economy with a combination of agriculture, cattle breeding and fishery. The unsustainability of agriculture and the large role of cattle-raising in the lower delta of the Amu Darya were probably the main factors contributing to the preservation of the yurt as the main form of the Karakalpak people's dwelling.

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