

AN ARTICLE ON DISCOVERY OF EPIGRAPHIC INSCRIPTIONS ON OLD TERMEZ AND CHAGHANYAN GLAZED DISHES

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Annotation: The article is to discuss about the history, development and importance of glazed dishes found in archeological monuments in the Surkhandarya Oasis.

Key words: Northern Bactria-Tokhariston, Khosiyattepa, Ayritom, ancient monument related antique period such as Nisa in Parthia, cave – shaped structures around the tomb of Al-Hakim at-Termizi

From time immemorial, the pottery industry has been constantly developing and evolving. In the route that connected East and West, silk, many precious stones, handicrafts along with elegantly glazed dishes played an important role. The method of glazing vessels entered Central Asia through Iran in the second half of VIII century and the beginning of the IX century. Glazed vessels found in Old Termez and Chaghaniyan can be observed as a proof.

Initially, the method of varnishing in the field of pottery was developed in ancient Egypt in IV millennium B.C and Mesopotamia in IX millennium B.C. The art of making and glazing pottery products continued until antique period in Middle East. Another territory for the production of varnished dishes was located in the Far East, glazed dishes produced in the epoch of Han in China reached Western countries through Great Silk Road.

However, varnishing method in pottery was implemented relatively late in Central Asia. Although samples of glazed vessels were found in the monuments in classical age such as Ayritom in Northern Bactria, Nisa in Parthia, they have not been scientifically proven that they were domestically made.

According to many researchers, the production of glazed dishes in Central Asia dates back to the second half of the VIII century and the beginning of the IX century. The emergence of Central Asian glazed dishes were initiated by A.Terenojkin and I.A.Suharev. The guidebook about Movaraunnahr glazing art in pottery was created by O.Bolshakov.

There has been many discussions ongoing among scientists regarding the initial art of glazing vessels in Central Asia. Some researchers are prone to relate this to the epoch of Kushan's Empire, others state that one part of Central Asia was under Parthia and the art of varnishing the dishes was widely used in Europe. The rest dates back to the first half of VI-VIII centuries concerning the initial glazing art¹ in Central Asia. The consequence of the trade relations and recent archeological excavations shows its wide production in the beginning of VIII and IX centuries. Archeologists find difficult to periodize chronologically due to the lack of numismatic and other related materials. In

¹ А.Г.Брусенко.Глазурованная керамика Чача IX-XII веков. Стр-36-37.

case of periodizing and documenting the numismatic materials typologically, they can be reliable sources. There was no scientifically proven date which ceramic dishes were produced in VI-VIII centuries and it led I.A.Suharev to start his research. Most researchers have accepted his hypothesis about alkaline-mixed vessels as in the most ancient periods, until now. From the beginning of 1940, I.A.Suharev revealed the initial secrets of glazing. I.A. Terenokhin who conducted research on the first group of glazed dishes of Sogdia accepted the proposal, which N.N. Vakturskaya had in 1953 about the classification of pottery industry based on Khorezm materials. Consequently, its development was distinguished into three stages:

1. IX-XI centuries
2. XII-XIV centuries
3. XV-XVIII centuries

It has become clear that one group of pottery products in a chronological group of IX-XI centuries was improbable. N.N.Vakturskaya and O.Bolshakov worked on the classification of Central Asian pottery varnished dishes and determining their periodization up to the beginning of the XII-XVI centuries. Having analyzed the method of glazing and their ornaments, the periodization was done. They had to create chronological scale because of non-available resources about relative archeological data, the types of ceramics existed up to those periods.

Great works of E.V. Sayko, a scientist who studied all the processes of the production of varnished vessels was dedicated to Iran ceramic products and it played important role in shaping the views on development of local pottery influencing Central Asia in term of extending pottery. The chronological – methodological classification of Central Asian pottery influenced M.Pesar to write “Ancient Islamic Ceramic and its history”. The study on epigraphic ornaments was carried out by S.Flyuri.

Monography of Scientist F.Zarre on glazed dishes did not attract the central Asian researchers. However, it was likely an essential resource to discover the field of pottery². The periodicity and generalized classification of pottery in “The study on Persian art” published by A. Leyn and M.Dimand was proposed. Its effects on pottery in Central Asia. In those studies, the type of Samarkand pottery schools is distinguished by the place of origin, its peculiarities. For the first time, Ch.Vilkinson successfully distinguished Iran (Nishapur) and Sogdia (Afrosiab) glaze pottery art, he could compare the versions that were unfamiliar to Nishapur but in Maraqand³.

Thus, in the IX century, Termez potters mastered method of making glazed vessels, and later glazing technology was improved and developed.

Among many artifacts in Termez Archeological Museum, glazed bowl with Arabic inscriptions is of great importance. Only a part of the artifact (received under the number (KII-3648)) was preserved. The finding from Dabilkurgan, Sherabad district dates back to the X-XI centuries. Originally, it was a plate in brown color with Arabic inscription; however, a piece of the plate was preserved.

Although the plate was fully found, there are following Arabic letters preserved

² F.Sarre. die ceramic von Samarra. Berlin 1925

³ Ch.Wilkinson. the glazed pottery of Nishapur and Samarkand. The Metropolitan museum of art. Bulletin vol. XX November, 1962.

“al”, “lom”, “kof”, “ba”, “vov”, “lom”, “xe”, “mim”, “ba”, “kof”.

In addition, there are many glazed dishes with Arabic inscriptions in the museum fund. One of them was found from Old Termez, dates back to X-XI centuries and it is being kept in the museum under the number of (KП)-34399 in the museum collection book. The walls of the plate is thin, the flange of the plate is in gold color with the inscriptions stated that “It is better for me to make their words beautiful” The color of the inscription is in white and gold colors, with white circular lines near the flange part. The picture of various flowering plants in white and dark brown colors was depicted in the middle of the plate. The size of the item is 14x8sm; a piece of the plate was preserved.

SVAM 3418, INV 1333 being preserved in the collection of Termez Archeological museum.

Glazed bowl – dates back to XIV-XV centuries, found in Old Termez. The size: 8,5x17,5x7sm. Archeologically fully preserved, in the medium condition. The method of the potter: made on pottery wheel. The shape of the bowl is circular. One side of the flange is broken. The remaining part of the bowl is slightly eroded. The flower shapes were depicted in the inside of the bowl, glazed with white initially, then light blue and black colors.

It is also possible that و sign gave the sound of vov according to the alphabet of Arabic language.

On the walls of the vessel, there are three black and three blue letters inscribed. The bottom of the plate is flat disc-shaped.

SVAM 32478 Glazed bowl found in Old Termez. Dates back to XI-XII centuries. The size: 4.5x5.5 sm. Not fully archeologically preserved. Made on potters' wheel. The material: ceramic. The inside of the bowl is painted white on a background with Arabic inscriptions depicted vertically. A piece of the bowl is preserved from the flange to bottom. Inner part of the bottom side is decorated with pepper-shaped pattern with a brown color. In the middle of the bowl, the word اجابہ “ajaballah” in Arabic and Persian languages, was written, the meaning is “from the mountain”, “mountain man”. The artifact is being kept in “The middle ages” hall of Termez Archeological museum.

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