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The local legend about Timur's death in Otrar and modern studies

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of local legends about the death of Timur and the analysis of archaeological materials. In the article, historical-comparative methods and the traditional characteristics of the study of linguistic data were used. Analyzing the results of archaeological excavations can be argued that the written sources in many ways objectively described the events that took place in the last days of Timur's life. As a conclusion, the Otrar legend and data from sources of origin show that Timur spent the last days in the Otrar citadel, in the residence of Berdibek.

Keywords: legend, Berdibek, Otrar, medieval, history.

La leyenda local sobre la muerte de Timur en Otrar y los estudios modernos

Resumen

El artículo está dedicado al estudio de leyendas locales sobre la muerte de Timur y el análisis de materiales arqueológicos. En el artículo, se utilizaron los métodos histórico-comparativos y las características tradicionales del estudio de datos lingüísticos. Analizando los resultados de las excavaciones arqueológicas se puede argumentar que las fuentes escritas en muchos aspectos describieron objetivamente los eventos que tuvieron lugar en los últimos días de la vida de Timur. Como conclusión, la leyenda de Otrar y los datos de las fuentes de origen muestran que Timur pasó los últimos días en la ciudadela Otrar, en la residencia de Berdibek.

Palabras clave: leyenda, Berdibek, Otrar, medieval, historia.

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this work is to familiarize the reader with the history of the famous city which is part of Central Asia, including Kazakhstan. Initial attention was drawn to the history of the city of Otrar and its role in world history. Secondly, local legends were studied, which were changed in the course of human development. The authors also consider in detail the issues of culture and archeology separately in chapters. The medieval town of Otrar was a major center of the historical region of Turkestan, an important link of the Great

Silk Road. Otrar occupied a very advantageous geographical position. Being at the crossroads of the caravan-trade and military-strategic routes, in the border zone between sedentary and nomadic cultures, it reflected a number of important moments of the medieval history of the Central Asia. Monuments of the Otrar Oasis are included in the UNESCO Preliminary World Heritage List. The ruins of Otrar are on the southern outskirts of Talapty village, 11.5 km west of the Timur railway station, near the confluence of the Arys river in the Syrdarya (Kazakhstan, South Kazakhstan region, Otrar district). The central ruins of the town occupy more than 200 hectares (figure 1) (The photo was taken from the Museum of the city Otrar).

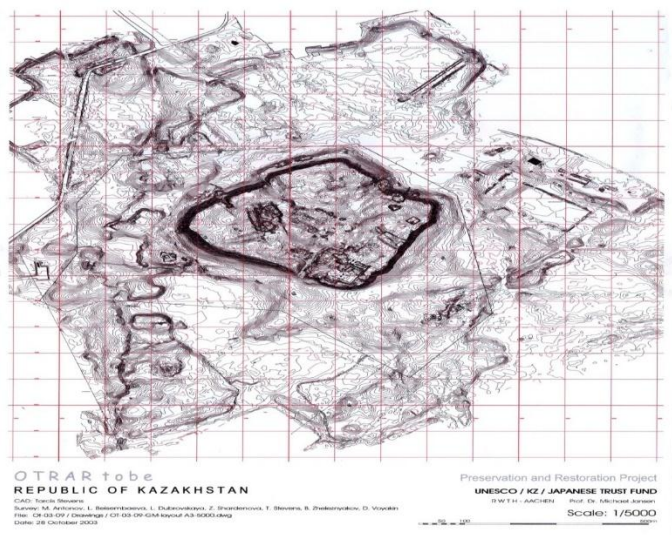


Figure 1. Plan of the central ruins of the Otrar settlement.

The town became famous as the birthplace of the outstanding medieval scientist and encyclopedist Abu Nasr al-Farabi. Here there was the "Otrar disaster", which served as an occasion for Cenghis Khan's invasion to the West. In this town the last days of his life were spent by the famous Timur, who marched to conquer China and reached Otrar only, where he died in February, 1405 (Roux, 2014). In 1899, Lykoshin (1899), who visited the ruins and gathered information about the past of Otrar, noted: "The historical fact alone is well preserved in the nation's memory - it is the death of the great conqueror Timur" (Lykoshin, 1899: 12). However, both in prerevolutionary publications and in modern works of researchers of the medieval town there is no text of the local legend about the death of Timur. The death of Timur in Otrar is transmitted by different types of sources. One of them is a local legend. They gave rise to many versions of the causes of death of the commander. The article considers the legitimacy of these sources. The authors compare narrative sources with archaeological finds. In 1991, we managed to write down the legend about Timur from Narymbetov Mamasadyk (born in 1927), the resident of the Shaulder village (the center of the Otrar district of the South Kazakhstan region of the Republic of Kazakhstan). It is noteworthy that the informant is a direct descendant of the keepers of the Arystanbaba mausoleum, which is 4 km southwest of the central ruins of the town and is repeatedly mentioned by the first

researchers of Otrar. The death of the menacing commander in the Otrar legend is described as follows:

It was a very cold winter. At this time of the year, Timur decided to march. The immediate surroundings suggested postponing the march off for the spring, lamenting the possibility of warriors frostbite in the severe winter. In response, Timur rose to the roof of the arch (i.e., the citadel of Otrar - the authors), called the hairdresser and ordered him in front of everyone to cut his hair, pursuing this act with the goal of raising the spirit of his soldiers (Akishev et al., 1987: 11).

There was a strong wind. Due to the fact that in such bad weather, having wetted his hair with water, he was cut, Timur caught a cold and died. His body was sewn into a leather bag and sent to Samarkand (Kozha, 2014). The informant noted that he was telling the legend, exactly as he had heard from his father Babakhan Narymbetov. Perhaps, this or another version of the local legend was heard by another researcher of Otrar - Poslavsky (1898), who in the publication of 1898 noted very laconically that Tamerlane "catching a cold, died there (underlined by the author) ... The news of the death of the formidable conqueror had so much effect on the townspeople that many of them fled to the mountains from fear" (Zimin, 1914: 9). It is easy to see that the cause of the illness and death of Timur in the legend, mentioned by us and in the publication of Poslavsky (1898), is cold.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

One of the researchers who collected local legends about the death of Timur and their comparison with written sources was (Bartold, 1971). Bartold (1971) in his famous scientific work, "Ulugbek and his time" analyzed the local legends and written sources about Timur's death in Otrar. He was particularly interested in the position and social affiliation of the author of the sources. The next author who studied the last years of Timur's life in Otrar is (Poslavsky, 1898). He was interested in the study of the causes of death of Timur and why collected local legends and myths in the book "Ruins of the town of Otrar" (Poslavsky, 1899). This research work is of great importance in the study of narrative and written sources about the life of Timur in Otrar. In recent years, increases the importance of archaeological materials in the study of this problem. Russian researcher L.B. Yerzakovich (1992) put a huge contribution to the study of the history of Otrar. In 1992 he published his collection of articles "On the periodization of the development of the medieval Otrar" on the history of Otrar Yerzakovich (1992). The scientist there stressed that the popularity of the city is more connected with the death of Timur. Scientists began to compare archaeological finds with written and oral sources. In this direction, a lot of success has achieved a specialist on the topic of Mukhtar Kozha. In the scientific work of Mukhtar Kozha shows the results of archaeological work carried out in the Palace of Timur in the city of Otrar and found materials were compared with written sources of the that time. Another author who has shown unique results in the collection of oral sources (legends)

is (Ibatov, 2016). His collection of materials “Khusrau and Shirin” Ibatov (2016) gave new opportunities to study the history of the city. The French expert Roux (2014) is especially distinguished from foreign researchers on this subject. Roux (2014) in his work “Tamerlano” tries to find the answer to the causes of Timur's death on the basis of a thorough analysis of different sources. His views about the problem are based on his own arguments and judgments. In the knowledge of the life and activity of Timur for the scientific world a huge role plays research work of (Marozzi, 2016). His famous book "Tamerlane: Sword of Islam, Conqueror of the World" is entirely devoted to studying of life Timur (Marozzi, 2016). For us, interest represents his views and approaches concerning Timur's death in Otrar. The English scientist in this question does not differ in the critical look. It has analyzed local legends and written sources support the well-known statement of the scientists on this problem.

Also, it is necessary to emphasize the value of work Nicolle (2015) “The Mongol Warlords: Genghis Khan, Kublai Khan, Hulegu, and Tamerlane”. The researcher in the work noted the origin of written and oral sources giving them the characteristic. However, especially did not mention Timur's death. The work of the famous American anthropologist Lawrence Krader (2016) "Peoples of Central Asia" is a very detailed analysis of the peoples of Central Asia. The following work is a significant contribution to

the study of the history of the Turkic peoples, it was written by Peter Golden (2015) and is called “An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples. Ethnogenesis and State-Formation in Medieval and Early Modern Eurasia and the Middle East”. A detailed study on the historical cities of Kazakhstan is given in the article of the American scientist Sh. Akiner (2017) “Towards a Typology of the historical cities in Kazakhstan”. Very interesting material presented by the researcher M.A. Czaplika (2018) in the book “The Turks of Central Asia in history and at the present day”. This work examines the existence of the Empire in Central Asia in the middle ages. In conclusion, we can say that nowadays have been conducted a significant number of foreign studies in the medieval history of Central Asia.

3. METHODOLOGY

In the article, along with methods of historical-comparative and the traditional characteristics of the study of linguistic data, the following methods were used: component-linguistic analysis, ethno-linguistic, semantic, etymological analysis. Through the comprehensive analysis in depth of content words data with ethno-cultural colors was revealed and they reveal the essence of the material, determine the position of regional speech in the culture of the ethnic group.

4. RESULTS

We have the opportunity to compare Otrar legend with the data of written sources and materials of archaeological research. Information about the last days of Timur, mentioned in a number of works of eastern authors, became available to a wide range of researchers thanks to the article of the orientalist Zimin (1914) "Details of the Timur's death". According to Zafar-nama, Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, Timur, on his way to the conquest of China, arrived in Otrar on January 14, 1405: Having left the shores of the Seykhun, Timur stopped on Wednesday of the 12 Rajab in the Berdibek palace of Otrar. All medieval historians write about the extremely harsh winter of that year, and this, in connection with the advanced age of Timur, could not, of course, but affect his health, Zimin (1914) noted. Thus, the time for marching and the cause of Timur's illness, set out in the Otrar legend and the eastern written sources, find a correspondence. The desire of Timur, mentioned in the Otrar legend, to march off early is confirmed by Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi. The author of Zafar-nama writes that on arrival in Otrar, Timur sent scouts to find out the state of the roads to the east, towards China. Inspection of the bridge showed that "the transition is completely impossible; another was sent to Sairam and to the Kulan mount; returning, he reported that on the mountain there was a snow depth of two peaks" (Zimin, 1914: 8).

According to the legend, the root cause of Timur's illness was the hair cutting with a strong wind on the roof of the citadel in order to encourage the warriors. Most likely, this event was unlikely to take

place in real life. There are no indications in historical works. When studying the skeleton of Timur in May-June 1941, "the scalp retained the hair of the head that has been preserved". Anthropologist M. Gerasimov (1992) came to the conclusion that, contrary to the custom to shave a head, by the time of his death Timur had relatively long hair, on the temples and behind the ears, they reached 3 cm, while at the top of the head were no longer than 1.5 cm. The legend of the causes of the illness of the terrible governor is corrected by medieval sources. According to Ibn Arabshah, Timur, upon arrival in Otrar, demanded wine due to cold. A number of written sources report the abuse of wine by Timur. The historian Hafiz-i Abru writes that Timur, having drunk too much wine upon arrival in Otrar, said that this circumstance, which was the cause of his illness, occurred besides his will, since he had never had in his life a passion for strong drinks (Zimin, 1914). In an even more unattractive light, Timur Mousevi shows us by using his strong drinks:

It was a winter time, when Timur decided to go on a campaign against China and in 12th Rajab, 807, arrived in the city of Otrar. All the nobles, princes and state people who were close (to Timur), wished that he would allow them to have fun again; Timur blazed with a passion for wine and spent three days with it; at the same time he had a desire for vodka; vodka was brought and then for the next three days Timur drank it and did not take any food at all. Finally, the internal heat changed the state of his health; said by surrounding, that this was only a headache after drinking. Timur ordered a few more sips of the drink; when the stomach warmed, the heat intensified, and Timur said the following: (verse) I tried to experience drunkenness; the charms of the world have the power like its

sorrows; who at first is in the grip of sorrows to finish well, and who at the end - to fall into the power of fire (Zimin, 1914: 16).

In the words of Bartold (1964), the immediate cause of Timur's illness and death, apparently, "was the unreasonable use of wine, when he tried to keep warm".

The legend ends with the sending of Timur's body, protected in the leather bag, to Samarkand. According to the London manuscript of Khoja Taj al-Salmani, the coffin with Timur's body was sent to Samarkand on a dark night. The corpse was perfumed with the fragrance. Thus, the historicity of the Otrar legend about Timur's death is obvious. It can be assumed that it originated in the Middle Ages among the inhabitants of Otrar. The death of Timur in Otrar is also noted in the Moghulistani legend, laid down by the famous historian Mirza Muhammad Haydar. He, according to the text of "Tarih-i Rashidi," was told by Mirza Muhammad Haydar's father" after Amir Timur calmed down at the expense of the western and northern regions, he went to the countries of the East, the largest of which is China. ... he marched from Samarkand. That winter he spent in Turkestan. He sent a man to Khizr Khodja Khan, so that if possible, he should make an effort to farm and prepare provisions for the army. I heard more than once from my father that in early spring in Kul Tuba, in the famous area of Moghulistan, the first koumiss appeared, and according to the ancient custom of the Mughuls, that day a feast was held. Emir Khudaidad kept a koumiss cup before the khan, and when one of the noble pillars of the state reported on the arrival of

Ambassador Timur and the contents of the letter brought by the ambassador, the khan said: It is heavy when there is no strength for resistance. We must be freed by paying tribute. Holding the cup of koumiss in his hand, the khan settled down to think. Emir Khudaidad said that at that moment it was necessary to drink a cup of oblectation, and brought the contents of this bay:

Sadness about not coming tomorrow causes me anxiety now,

It is better if I put off tomorrow's business for tomorrow.

He also added:

They say that if an apple is thrown into the sky, before it falls to the ground, the Almighty God will perform a hundred blessings, and until the next year the Almighty will have several thousand benefactions. This moment you must have a fun. Before he could finish his speech, they saw a man in a white dress riding on a black horse from the shore of Keryas. He went to the frontal place - "Jallad Khan". Among the people there was a convention that near this place they descended from horses, and that person galloped by and drove to the meeting where people were sitting. Yasauls from all sides to keep him, and he continued to gallop until he approached the khan and shouted that Amir Timur had died in Otrar. Then he turned back and rode away in the same way. How many people shouted to him: "Stop, tell us in detail". He ignored it and rode away. Many people were sent for him, but matter how much they chased him, he was not caught up. In addition, nothing was known. Forty-five days later, the news came that Amir Timur had died in Otrar. Indeed, it turned out to be true, and the Khan got rid of that sadness and care (about agriculture). ... and this event occurred in 807 (1405) (Haidar, 2014: 46).

Set forth by Mirza Muhammad Haidar (2014) the legend indicates the exact place and year of Timur's death. The time to receive news of the death of the conqueror is early spring, which is quite probable. However, the information about the messenger who reported the news favorable to the Moghuls is somehow mystical (Nicolle, 2015).

In Otrar legend the image of Timur is positive. The old commander, despite the winter and the wind, wanted to inspire his warriors, which led to death. The Moghulistan story showed Timur as a figure who carried the burdens and oppression to the Moghuls. And the death of the menacing conqueror was perceived by them as the beneficence of the God. Analyzing the campaigns of Timur in Moghulistan, orientalist K.A. Pishchulina came to the conclusion that the state of the Moghul khans suffered from Timur's campaigns, the political organization of the local feudal aristocracy was shaken, great damage was done to the economy, the population was reduced, feudal fragmentation intensified (Pischulina, 1977). In contrast to the Moghuls, residents of Otrar and other towns of the Middle Syrdarya did not dislike Timur. According to the researches of the archaeologist L.B. Erzakovich's period of Timur's government is characterized by a powerful take-off of the vital activity of Otrar. The territory of the central part of the town was being rebuilt, activities of workshops, public facilities were being rebuilt at the rabad, farmsteads and an irrigation network in the vicinity of Otrar were being restored. According to Timur's order in Yasy, 70 km from Otrar, on the site of the old mausoleum of the local holy Khoja Ahmed Yassawi, a

grandiose dervish lodge was built (Yerzakovich, 1992). Great interest in the Otrar legend for archeologists is the mention of the word "arch", on the roof of which, according to legend, Timur rose. Despite our request, the informant could not explain what the word means. The narrator M. Narymbetov repeatedly stressed that he repeated the legend heard from his father exactly. As shown by Bartold (1971) in the special study the word "arc" means acropolis, the citadel of the late medieval town of the Central Asia, the place of the residence of the ruler. According to Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, Timur was located in the residence of the ruler of Otrar:

Timur stopped on Wednesday, 12 Rajab, in Berdibek Palace of Otrar; all the princes, emirs, and relatives from the court occupied each separate room. It is amazing that in the palace that served as the place of the sovereign, on the very day of arrival in the corner of the attic, a fire appeared from the smokestack and a fire occurred which was immediately extinguished.... At that time, one of his old servants Karakhodzha came to Timur from Tokhtamysh, who had long been wandering around like a homeless tramp in the steppes of Desht-i-Kipchak. On the same day Timur ceremoniously entered the reception hall and sat on a high throne (Zimin, 1914: 23).

The desire to find the Otrar palace, where the great conqueror spent the last days appeared immediately after the performance of Zimin (1914) with the report "Details of the death of Timur", on March, 17, 1914, at a meeting of the Turkestan circle of amateurs of archeology in Tashkent. The presiding officer of the meeting, recalling the small research of 1904 on the site of the Otrar settlement, who "because of the shortcomings of means prevented the success of the

excavations," expressed the desire for the need to more extensive research to find the remains of the palace in which Timur had died (Poslavsky, 1898). Long-term large-scale archaeological work on the study of the late medieval layers of the Otrar settlement in the second half of the XX century led to the discovery of a part of the large architectural complex of the late XIV - early XV centuries (Akishev et al., 1987). Initially, a monumental mosque with an area of 60 x 22 m was opened in the southern part of the excavation of the IV Shahristan of Otrar. The walls and pillars of the mosque were made of square burnt bricks on a gypsum mortar. Ceramic veneers played an important role in the architectural design of the mosque: colored glazed bricks, polychrome majolica in the form of square and rectangular tiles with ornamental and zoomorphic plots. The windows were decorated with ceramic lattices – panjara (Kozha, 2014).

Excavations, begun in 1995, in 60 m in front of the mosque, opened part of a new monumental building made of burnt bricks. By now, 13 rooms have been cleared and contoured. The building was extended by a long axis along the east-west line, parallel to the previously opened mosque. The premises of the building were arranged in two rows. The rear row of rooms, connected by the angular passages with the front ones, had a flat overlap, as judged by the layout and thickness of the walls. Massive walls of 1.3 m wide say about the arched-domed overlap of the premises of the front row. Judging by the finds in the overlying cultural layers of fragments of majolica, terracotta tiles, colored glazed bricks, the architectural decoration of the northern building had much in common with the decor of the

mosque. Particular mention should be made of the finds of fragments of gilded majolica tiles. Stratigraphy of layers, finds, and architectural decoration date the opened parts of the ensemble by the end of the XIV – beg of the XV centuries. The archaeological research data of the architectural complex allowed to preliminary interpret this monument as the Berdibek palace (Zimin, 1914). Information of written sources about individual parts of the Berdibek palace finds, in our opinion, a correspondence in the architecture of the opened buildings. So, according to "Zafar-nama" Yazdi "all the princes, emirs and relatives from the court occupied each separate room", which corresponds to 13 premises of the partially opened northern building of the ensemble. It is noteworthy that "on the very day of arrival, a fire appeared in the corner of the attic from the smokestack and a fire occurred" (Mankovskaya, 2015: 11). Such a fire is possible in a building where there are flat ceilings made of wood, which also finds correspondence to the premises of the second row of the northern building. Although the mosque is not mentioned in describing the Berdibek palace, it was an indispensable element of the citadel of the medieval town of the Central Asia. According to the above extracts from Zafar-nama, there was also an auditorium in the palace. Perhaps, the reception hall was located 20 meters north-west of the northern building, since there in the 60s the bulldozer was engaged in extortion of burnt bricks from the ruins of Otrar. According to eyewitnesses of the predatory trench, the walls of the ruined monumental construction had a decor in the form of blue lotus flowers (Kopylov, 1992).



Figure 2. Excavated parts of the architectural complex. South-western part of the central hill of Otrar.

Common elements of the Otrar architectural complex can be traced with the medieval palaces of the Central Asia, which were multi-chamber and multifunctional civilian complexes that served as a fortress, residence of the ruler, administrative center, a place of public gatherings and entertainment, the supreme court. Palaces had a yard composition (Linder, 2015). Accounting for the entire complex of findings from the area of the architectural complex allows more reasonable to link the open structures with the palace where Timur spent his last days. Among them, three findings are of particular interest, the description of which is given below. During the clearing of cultural layers in the western part of the corridor of the residential part of the structure, which had been unearthed since 1995, a chess piece carved from ivory was discovered. The finding was transferred to the

Central State Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan in Almaty. The chess piece is a slightly tapering upward cylinder with a height of 3.1 cm, a diameter of 2.8 cm in the bases, and a diameter of 2.7 cm in the top (Figure 3). The upper part of the figure is round, on top of which there is a hemispherical head of 0.25 cm high, 0.5 cm in diameter. The surface of the figure is covered with a carved geometric ornament. Two concentric grooves are located below the head. The head-top and the mentioned grooves are located in the center of the carved twelve-petalled flower covering the upper round part of the chess piece. The cylindrical part of the product is covered with two girdles of ornament. The upper belt, clamped by parallel lines, consists of repeating carved polygons. Most likely, there are given the elements of braids. The lower belt is decorated with vertical dashes located between the drawn parallel lines.



Figure 3. A chess piece. Otrar.

According to the configuration, size and ornamental design of the cutting lines, the Otrar finding has much in common with

cylindrical chess pieces 3 and 4 from the Talgar settlement (Semirechye, Kazakhstan) (Ibatov, 2016). The overall configuration and the head that crowns the figure is an indicator that this figure is either a king or a queen. Kopylov (1992) in his study noted that in the famous miniatures with chess, all figures of kings and queens have a spherical head on top the spherical head-finial is missing from the pieces of the eastern (Arab) type of the VIII-IX centuries, and in the eastern abstract symbolic figure of the piece of the X-XII centuries. Comparison of the Otrar product with other well-known figures of medieval chess: a horse, an elephant, a rook speaks about the great differences between them and gives additional grounds for identifying this figure as a king or queen. It is noteworthy that the chess piece of the queen from the collections of the Kalmyk chess of the late XIX century, kept in the State Museum of Ethnography of the Peoples of the USSR, has an image of a six-petalled flower in the upper part of the figure.

4.1. The author's analysis of the problem

According to archaeological data and references in medieval sources, chess was widespread in the territory of Kazakhstan from the X-XI centuries. In Yusuf Balasagun's "Graceful Knowledge", written in 1069-1070, it is noted that the diplomat is obliged not only to know the rules of the game, but to master them in perfection:

«Both backgammon and chess need to be known, so, your enemy to be dead and defeated by in the game» (History of Kazakhstan in Arab sources, 2015).

Chess (shatranch, shatranj) also spread in the Golden (2015) Horde Timurid period of the history of Kazakhstan. In one of the significant works of the Golden (2015) Horde period - Khosrov and Shirin, written by the poet Kutb, a Kypchak by birth and lived in 1330-1340. In the town of Sygnak in the Middle Syrdarya, mention is made about shatranj-chess (Babur, 2015). According to the famous orientalist Roux (2014), Timur's chess remained his favorite pastime throughout his life:

Being too tense, tired, ready to succumb to a bad mood, he took out his chessboard. Infinite love of the game, which he got interested in as a child and whose excellent master, he was known, calmed him, distracted him from cares, and relieved nervous tension. It is known that when in Anatolia after the greatest battle of that epoch he was led by the captive Bayazid, after a terrible attack of anger he began to play chess (Arapova, 1977).

At the news of the birth of one of his sons, Timur gave him the name Shahruh, which denoted the names of chess figures - the shah (king) and the ruh (rook) (Sidikhmenov, 2016). Ornamented chess piece of ivory, most likely, could belong to one of the aristocrats who lived in the residence of Otrar, who played in this period of history the capital role in the Syrdarya region, or to Timur himself. It should be noted that it is from this site of Otrar that a unique piece of porcelain,

covered with yellow glaze, occurs (Figure 4). The shard is white, very thin. The wall thickness is only 2-3 mm. Under the watering, there was an engraved image of a wriggling dragon. On the fragment, a part of the scaly body and part of the dragon's paw are preserved.

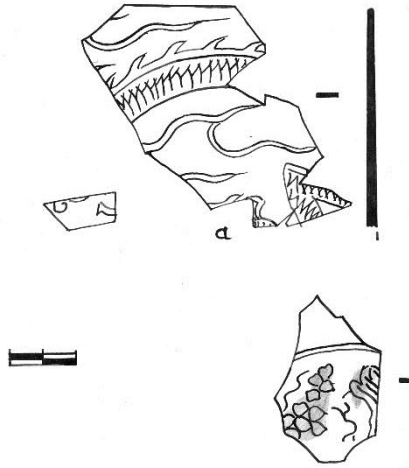


Figure 4. Chinese porcelain. Otrar

It is interesting that in the catalog "Chinese porcelain in the collections of the Hermitage" there are no samples of yellow-polished porcelain (Vakturskaya, 1966). The explanation for this is found in the traditional views of the Chinese, according to which the yellow color is considered imperial. Nobody except the emperor and his family members had the right to wear yellow clothes. Therefore, all the items used by the emperor and who surrounded him were also yellow. Even

the shingles on the walls and roofs of the imperial palaces were yellow. This tradition is described by the last Chinese emperor Puyi:

Every time, when I remember childhood, a yellow fog pops up in front of my eyes: glazed roof tiles - yellow, palanquin - yellow, carpets on chairs - yellow, linings on clothes and hat, sash, utensils, wadded covers for pots, wrappers on them, curtains, glass - all in yellow. This existent on personal property rights, the so-called "brilliant yellow color" from childhood, brought into my soul a sense of its own exclusivity; I considered myself unusual and unlike other people (Vakturskaya, 1966: 11).

As V.Ya. Sidikhmenov (2016), the sinologist of China, noted, "the dishes that the emperors used were necessarily made of yellow porcelain, painted with images of dragons and decorated with hieroglyph show (longevity)" (Kadyrbaev & Burnasheva, 1970: 4). Therefore, a fragment of a yellow dish depicting a dragon, symbolizing the emperor's power for a long time, is a product of state workshops that supplied the products to the court. Undoubtedly, such porcelain was not intended for export and one can only guess about the ways of its penetration into Otrar. The finding in Otrar, in the area of the architectural structure interpreted by us as the Berdibek palace, a fragment of unique dishes can serve as another argument supporting our version. In filling the room 9 of the northern building of the architectural complex, a copper earring was found in the form of a question mark with a passed bead (Babur, 2015). Earrings of this type are often found in archeological monuments of the XIII-XIV centuries. There is an opinion that earrings in the form of a question mark are an indicator of ethnic belonging to the Kypchaks of their western branch -

the cumans. It is noteworthy that Emir Berdibek, that the Otrar Palace was named after him by Sharaf ad-Din Ali Yazdi, was a Kipchak. His brother, according to Babur (2015)," a Kipchak bey from Turkestan named Sheikh Nur ad-din bey, to whom Timur favored". Mirza Muhammad Haidar (2014) left the following lines about this bey: "At that time, the ruler of Turkestan was Emir Shaykh Nuraddin b. Emir Sar Buga of the Kipchaks, who belonged to the number of outstanding military commanders of the Emir Timur" (Poslavsky, 1898: 7). Finding the earring in the form of a question mark serves as another argument in favor of interpreting the architectural complex from the southwestern section of the central ruins of Otrar as the Berdibek palace.

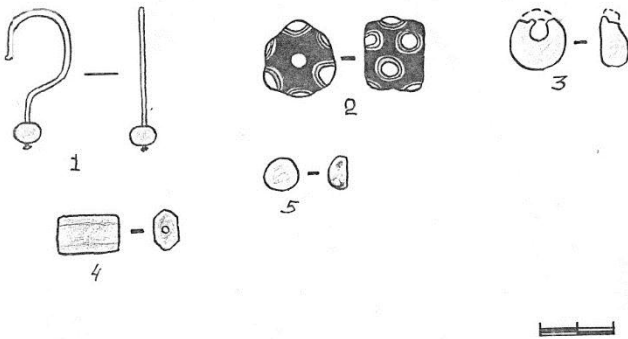


Figure 5. Findings from the excavations of the northern building of the architectural complex of Otrar.

5. DISCUSSION

After analyzing the different sources relating to our topic, we can say there were several views and beliefs about the causes of Timur's death in Otrar. Local legend had it that the death of Timur was from God and because it happened suddenly. But local legend turned to the death of Timur in ancient mythology, which was the Egyptians and the Greeks. Local legend tells following the data of written sources of the Palace of Timur. So the legends were closely related to the official data of the time. For example, the date and place of Timur's death have similar characteristics from oral and written sources. Only in establishing the cause of death of Timur diverge all kinds of sources. Official written sources of the time indicate that the cause of Timur's death was the winter cold. This was confirmed by oral folk sources. The objectivity of the information of written sources was questioned by scientists who studied them. Data from local legends and written sources are considered in terms of critical analysis. For example, the famous Russian scientist Bartold (1964) analyzing the situation concluded that the cause of Timur's death could be the excessive use of wine. Other researchers also supported this view. Our research work has attempted to find answers concerning the death of Timur. Archaeological work was carried out on the site of the death of Timur in the city of Otrar. Analyzing the results of archaeological excavations can be argued that the written sources in many ways objectively described the events that took place in the last days of Timur's life. For example, a fire at the Palace of Timur on the day of his death.

Archaeological evidence confirmed this. Some scientists led Zimmin believed that the fire also affected the death of the commander.

6. CONCLUSION

Thus, the Otrar legend and data from sources of origin show that Timur spent the last days in the Otrar citadel, at the residence of Berdibek. In the course of archaeological research, in the southwestern part of the central hill of Otrar, a complex of monumental structures is revealed, which, judging from the layout, decor and findings, is most likely the palace where the famous conqueror died. In the course of the research we came to the conclusion that the great commander Timur died in the present territory of Kazakhstan. His death left many legends. His place of death in these days has a railway station. This suggests that the local population respects the personality of the great man of Otrar as the city existed until the XVII century. In the years of its existence performed the role of a bridge between the Northern regions and Central Asia. Our opinion is reflected when mentioned about the hike of Genghis Khan. Otrar of the Central Asian cities took the first blow of the Mongols. It happened again when Tamerlane made their conquests to the North. The history of Otrar actively studied in the scientific centers of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The authors of this article are members of scientific projects in the study of the history of Otrar. In the future, it is planned the creation of a memorial complex for the promotion of the historical value of Otrar.

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