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Utubayev Zh.[1], Suyundikova M.[1], Shagirbayev M.[1,2], *Akkaliyeva A.[1,2]
[1]Margulan Institute of Archaeology
[2]Farabi University
Almaty, Kazakhstan
*e-mail: aybobek.akkaliyeva@gmail.com

EGISTIK MAUSOLEUM: RITUAL RITES AND TRADITIONS OF SACRIFICE

Abstract. The article discusses archaeological items and their ritual context, identified from the Egistik mausoleum in the Babish Mola archaeological complex in the lower reaches of the Syrdarya. In the course of the study, the structural and technological features of the products were identified, their cultural and historical connections and chronological place were clarified. As a result of the analysis, it was found that ceramic products, non-ferrous metal ornaments, beads made of various materials, as well as samples of textiles with a polychrome pattern indicate the high social status of buried individuals. Archaeological materials from the mausoleum prove that the monument had a pronounced ritual and symbolic content. In addition, through archeozoological analysis of osteological materials found in the mausoleum, skeletal remains of domestic and wild fauna associated with burial rites were identified. An analysis of a total of 126 bones on taxonomic composition, age characteristics and anatomical structure showed that the archaeozoological collection was selectively formed. The data obtained means that animals were used in ritual and funerary practices associated with sacrificial and memorial ceremonies.

Keywords: Egistik mausoleum, pottery, wooden crockery, jewelry, archeozoology, sacrifices, funeral and memorial rites.

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Introduction

In the second half of the first millennium BC, urbanization processes began to form in the southern part of the ancient channels of the Syrdarya. One of the main archaeological sites that clearly characterize this phenomenon is the Babish Mola settlement and the adjacent complex of concentrated monuments. In this territory, all the main features and structural elements characteristic of early urban culture were recorded.

The archaeological complex, generally known as «Babish Mola», was first introduced into scientific circulation in 1946-1948 through the research of the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition. From this region, the area of which covers an area of about 70-80 km^2, monuments of various types dating back to the ancient period are identified – townships, settlements without fortifications, individual residential buildings and burial facilities.

Later, in 2015, the route team of the Shikrabat archaeological expedition made a topographic survey of the monuments located in the Babish Mola complex and adjacent territories, and systematic archaeological excavations have been undertaken since then. Archaeological excavations at the Egistik Mausoleum, which correspond to our topic, were conducted in 2020. This object is located about 20 km south of the town of Babish Mola. The mausoleum is built in a round shape, with a diameter of 12,5 m and a height of more than 14 m. The internal space of the construction is divided into four sectors. The length of the cruciform wall in the central part is 11,5 m, the thickness ranges from 1,55 to 1,65 m. The sectors are connected to each other by corridors: the width of the corridor, directed from northwest to southwest, is 1,5 m, from southwest to southeast – 1,4 m, and from southeast to northeast – 1,45 m. Remains of reed mats have been identified from the floor of the

room. The funeral was carried out above the floor, on a stretcher or on wooden pedestals. Despite the fact that some of the burial sites were looted, well-preserved archaeological materials were found. Among them are ceramic vessels, candlesticks, clay spindle whorl, mirrors, fragments of wooden vessels and an iron knife, a gold necklace, bone and iron plaques, an iron arrowhead, a sharp stone, as well as stone and glass beads. In addition, fragments of ropes that were twisted from textile fabrics and plant fibers were also recorded.

As a result of the analysis of anthropological materials identified in the mausoleum, bone remains belonging to 42 individuals were recorded. This fact makes it possible to consider the object as a large dynastic-collective burial place (Utubayev et al., 2022: 31-46).

The osteological materials obtained during the study of the Egistik mausoleum are a valuable source for the reconstruction of the zoo component of funeral and ritual practices. The analysis of the taxonomic composition, anatomical representation of bones and age characteristics of animals allows to identify the features of the formation of this complex and assess the role of various types in the system of ritual actions related to the functioning of the mausoleum.

The results of the excavations showed that the mausoleum was repeatedly used for burial, as well as the procedures for cremation and placement of the body on wooden stretchers were carried out in parallel. Based on the archaeological research conducted by the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition (KAEE) in 1960–1965, L.M. Levina refers mausoleums with a bypass corridor to the early period of the culture of Shirikrabat. In addition, the scientist notes that in these mausoleums at the initial stage there were incineration (cremation) rituals (Weinberg, Levina, 1993: 37-55). Based on these conclusions, the Egistik Mausoleum can be considered as an early-term object belonging to the second group of funerary monuments of the Shirikabat culture.

Materials and research methods

The main data base of the article is a complex of archaeological materials identified during the excavation and research work carried out by ShRAE in 2020 at the Egistik Mausoleum. These materials are classified as ceramic and wooden vessels, household products, types of weapons, jewelry and paleozoological materials. Currently, all exhibits, except paleozoological materials, are kept in the funds of the Kyzylorda Regional Museum of local history, and animal bones are collected in the funds of the Margulan Institute of Archeology.

Paleozoological materials, jewelry, as well as pottery and wooden crockery are analyzed in detail, which are the basis for the reconstruction of the ritual-ceremonial system, culture and worldview of the inhabitants of the region.

In the process of research, ceramic and wooden vessels identified from the Egistik Mausoleum, as well as products of decorative and applied art, were comprehensively examined, a set of morphological, typological and comparative-historical methods were used. As a result of the form analysis, the general shape features of the vessels were identified and a typological grouping was carried out in accordance with morphological features. On this basis, the purpose of their use was determined, the technology of creation, the features of shaping and morphological differences were described. In addition, the shape, structure, manufacturing technique and decorative elements of ornamental-applied products were examined, their functional and symbolic meaning was analyzed. Using the method of comparative analysis, the materials of the studied monument were compared with data from other archaeological complexes, the similarities and differences were systematized. Based on these comparisons, the analogues of the products, the distribution area, cultural and historical links and the chronological place were clarified. In addition, the ritual content of individual products was interpreted with the involvement of ethnographic data.

During the study of osteological material from the Egistik mausoleum, 126 animal bone remains were analyzed. The preservation condition of the collection as a whole is characterized as good, most of the bones correspond to the 0 stage of weathering on the scale (Behrensmeyer, 1978), while a small part shows signs of weathering stages 1-2. Identification of the bone material was carried out using a comparative (reference) collection of animal skeletons from the Laboratory of Zooarchaeology at the Margulan Institute of Archaeology. The taxonomic affiliation was determined at the level of species or genus, depending on the degree of preservation of diagnostic features. The age of the animals was determined by the degree of fusion of the epiphyses of the long bones, as well as by the morphological features of the bones and the degree

of development of the articular surfaces (Silver, 1969). Additionally, the anatomical affiliation of the bones, the degree of their fragmentation, and traces of post-exposure effects, including animal bites, were recorded.

Analysis

The total number of all ceramic products registered in the mausoleum is 19, of which pottery made on a special potter's wheel is 60%, and 40% is made by the plague method.

Pottery can be divided into two main groups depending on the technology of manufacture. A large amount of crushed gypsum and fireclay is mixed into the clay composition of high-quality fired vessels, made in a special potter's wheel. Also, their surface is painted in rich red and brown engob. The mentioned group consists of jugs and cups.

It is observed that the clay composition of vessels made using the plague method, along with chamotte, contains a large amount of organic additives. This group includes cups with vessels such as koze, cans. Taking into account the morphological and technological features of the crockery, it was established that they belong to the group of tableware, depending on the purpose of use. In addition, depending on their shape, they were grouped into open and closed shaped vessels. If we denote them by Roman numerals: I – group of closed-form vessels (jugs, koze), II – group of open-form vessels (vessels in the form of cans, cups). The types of crockery were marked with capital letters: jug – J, koze – K, etc. Each type was divided into subtypes within itself and denoted by Latin letters (a, b, c, d, etc.).

Group of closed-form vessels I

Jugs – J.I. It is divided into two types according to the shape of the upper and lateral parts.

J.I.a – the side of the jar is spherically convex from the bottom upwards, narrows at the neck and widens again towards the rim (Fig. 1: 1, 2, 3). The neck and rim parts are clearly sculpted. The rim edge is bent outwards, round in cross-section. The bottom is smooth and flat.

Another jar of this type has a spherical side, but the upper part has not been preserved. On the bottom of this jar there is a sign «//» in the form of two diagonal lines (Fig. 1: 4).

J.I.b – the sides of pitchers of this type are oval in shape. The neck is short, cylindrical (Fig. 1: 5). The rim is turned outward, round in cross-section. The bottom part of this sample also has a «//» symbol, as in the jar described above. L.M. Levina notes the rarity of pottery with signs on monuments in the Shirik-Rabat complex (Weinberg, Levina, 1993: 77). However, it is worth considering that crockery with such signs are often found in monuments in the Babish mola oasis (Utubayev, Suyundikova, 2021: 10–20). In addition, pottery with such signs found in the catacomb burials of the Arys culture A. N. Podushkin notes that they were made to order, and the marks on the dishes were made according to the wishes of the customer. The scientist concludes that by these signs it is possible to determine the social status of the buried person (Podushkin, 2017: 60). In general, based on the shape and features of the side walls and upper parts of the jars, their closest analogues can be compared to jars found in the antique monuments of Khorezm (Bolelov, 2013: 29). In addition, jugs of this type are widely distributed in the settlement of the potters of Babish Mola 7 (Kurmankulov et al., 2021: 192–195) and in the city of Babish Mola 1 (Utubayev et al., 2024: 133–154).

Koze K.I. – a vessel with a spherical, convex shape on the sides. The neck narrows and widens again towards the top. The mouth is wide, the rim is turned outward, and the cross-section is round. The preservation of soot traces on the outer and inner surfaces indicates that it was used in a fire. At the point where it passes from the neck to the shoulder, a wave-like pattern is drawn up and down.

These morphological traits and technological features indicate that the vessel was used for culinary purposes, in the process of cooking or heating food. In terms of its shape and form, this vessel is widely known from the monuments of the Shirikrabat culture (Weinberg, Levina, 1993: 57–58), as well as from materials from the Babish Mola complex (Kurmankulov et al., 2021: 186–188). However, signs and patterns are very rare on the koze vessels from the complexes of the Shirikrabat culture, and in some cases they are completely absent. On the other hand, koze-shaped vessels decorated with signs and various pattern elements are more often found in the monuments of the Sarmatian period (Yagodin, 1990: 58). Wave-shaped pattern elements may have been decorative and have a certain symbolic meaning.

Group of open-form vessels II

Cups – C.II. Two types of vessels can be distinguished according to their shape: truncated cone and cylindrical (Fig. 2: 1–4). Vessels in this group were made using the potter's wheel and the plague method. The colors are pink and gray. Both

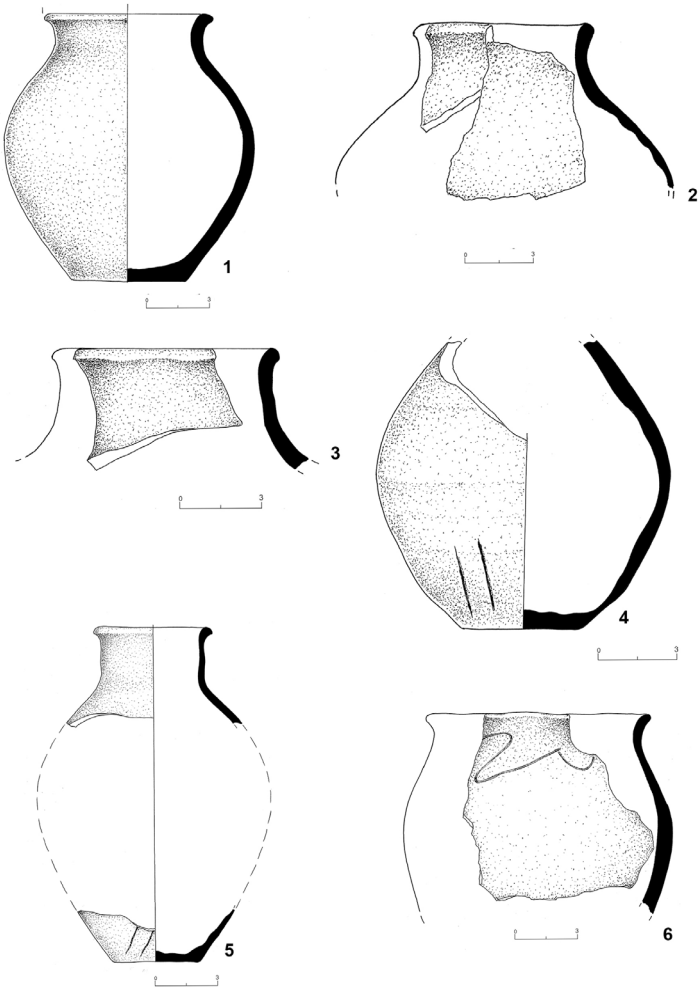


Fig. 1. Types of closed-form vessels: 1–5 – Types of jugs; 6 – Type of koze vessel.

sides of the cups made using the potter's wheel are covered with a rich red engobe.

C.II.a the shape of the cup is like a truncated cone. The wall, which opens upwards from the bottom, is slightly curved inward at the mouth and tapers or rises in a single shape. The rim is round in cross-section. (Fig. 2: 1,2,3).

C.II.b. The cup, which has a flat and smooth bottom, has a smooth upward slope. The rim of the cylindrical vessel is rounded upward. The rim section is round (Fig. 2: 4). In addition, a crockery similar in shape to this type of cup, but smaller in size, is particularly noteworthy. (Fig. 2: 5). The fact that these crockery were used for ritual purposes can be inferred from the soot and oil residues preserved on their inner surfaces. The traces of residues preserved on the cups indicate that they were used as lamps or incense burners for burning certain substances, emitting fragrances, and other ritual actions. This conclusion is confirmed by L.M. Levina's assumption that the cups found in the Uygarak burial ground were used for ritual purposes (Vishnevskaya, 1973: 77).

Jar-shaped J.II. only one copy of the vessel was identified. The crockery has a cylindrical shape with a smooth vertical rise from the bottom. The rim tapers upwards, and is triangular in cross section. Traces of soot are preserved on both surfaces of the crockery (Fig. 2: 6). Crockery of this shape are widely distributed in archaeological sites belonging to the Saka period near the Aral Sea, in addition to the monuments of the Bronze Age (Yablonsky, 1991: 72). In general, it can be seen that cup- and jar-shaped crockery were used by the population engaged in sedentary agriculture after the early nomadic monuments.



Fig. 2. Groups of open-types vessels: 1–5 – Types of cups; 6 – Jar-shaped vessel; 7–8 – Types of candlesticks

Candlesticks are one of the main ritual objects found in burial sites (Fig. 2: 7, 8). Two types of them were identified in the studied mausoleum. The first type is a square-shaped candlestick. It is dark brown in color, has a handle for holding on the side, and a small hole with a diameter of 0,5 cm is carved in the handle. The second type is an oval-shaped candlestick. It is black in color, the edge of the rim is smooth, and a hole with a diameter of 0,6 cm is visible on the side.

According to researchers, such candlesticks were used to perform certain rituals in funeral rites (Itina, Yablonsky, 1997: 96–103). Ethnographic data indicate that this trend continued in later eras. In particular, rituals such as lighting a fire, burning incense, and making incense were closely related to beliefs about protection and warding off evil forces. In the Kazakh tradition, rituals such as burning juniperus or peganumto ward off evil spirits, as well as making incense, making shelpek, and dedicating them to spirits were widespread. These similarities indicate that the candlesticks found in burial sites performed a sacred function and are related to the ancient religious and belief system. In general, if we consider the purpose of the pottery found in burial sites, the koze in the group of kitchen crockery were used for daily cooking. The jugs and cups in the group of kitchen crockery were used for consuming ready-made food. These data indicate that these vessels were not only widely used in everyday life, but also for ritual purposes.

Wooden crockery in addition to pottery, wooden crockery such as cups, jars, and lids were also recorded in burial sites (Suyundikova, 2021: 30–34).

There are different opinions among researchers about the purpose of the wooden crockery found in burials. In the archaeological literature, there are statements that these crockeries were used during ritual ceremonies. While the scientist E.E. Fialko considers wooden crockeries as a unique find characteristic of the burial places of warriors (Fialko, 2004: 269–272), E.F. Korolkova concludes that they were used in the funeral and burial ceremonies of the deceased, as well as in marriage ceremonies (Korolkova, 2003: 50–51). And A.P. Medvedev notes that crockeries of this type were used in everyday life, in addition to priestly rituals (Medvedev, 1997: 167–168). A number of researchers include this type of crockery among the crockeries most often found in burial places. Thus, it is observed that, along with pottery and stone crockery used in funeral rituals, wooden crockeries also played an important role (Antonova, 1986: 40–45).

In addition, as part of the research, *decorative*

and applied art products used for ritual purposes were also identified from the monument, including metal and bone products, beads, and textile samples.

One of them is *a gold pendant earrings (*Fig. 3: 1), which structurally consists of three main parts: the upper part is a ring wrapped with round wire, the middle part is a cylindrical shape similar to an amphora, and the lower part consists of thin wires with pendants twisted on four sides, with small beads attached to their ends (Treasures of Babish Mola, 2021: 44). In general, amphora-shaped pendant earrings have also been identified in Etruscan burial complexes of the 3rd–2nd centuries BC. Similar jewelry found in Mesopotamia and Iran are dated to the end of the 1st century BC – the 2nd century AD. In addition to amphora-shaped pendant earrings, necklaces made using similar elements are also found in Iran (Litvinsky, 1973: 42). In addition, the discovery of earring molds at the Munchak-Tepe monument (Uzbekistan) indicates that this type of jewelry was widespread in Central Asia. These molds were mainly intended for making earrings with a ring-shaped clasp and an amphora-shaped pendant. In addition, amphora-shaped earrings were also recorded from the burials of Iragi (Dagestan) and Untersiebenbrunn (Austria), which date back to the Migration Period (Ryabtseva, 1999: 349, fig. 11).

Jewelry of the Prokhorov culture can also be considered as analogues of the earrings found in the Egistik Mausoleum. The earrings, dated to the 3rd-2nd centuries BC, are gold-plated and made of bronze, with a crescent-shaped shield and small gold balls attached to its upper corner with a hook. Hollow gold tubes are placed between the shields. And loops are welded to the lower edge, from which gold balls are hung, and jingling chains are attached. In general, these earrings are considered a unique artifact among Prokhorov jewelry (Moshkova, 1963: 44, tab. 29–30).

In general, the discovery of earrings among the burial objects in most cases indicates that the grave belonged to a woman. However, the occurrence of earrings characteristic of men in a number of monuments in Central Asia and Siberia suggests that this view is not accurate. For example, in Tibet, men wore a heavy ring in their left ear, and sometimes a pearl was inserted into the right earlobe. In the Pamir region, before the revolution, men sometimes wore simple (silver or copper rings) earrings and used them as amulets. Such data are characteristic of ancient times, including Scythian society (Litvinsky, 1973: 46–47). Therefore, similar traditions may have been widespread in Central Asia. However, it is difficult to directly attribute the earrings found in the Egistik Mausoleum to a specific gender, as the monument was a collective burial. The anthropological materials recorded the bones of both men and women, as well as children of different age groups. In particular, the skulls identified 6 men, 7 women, and 1 child, and the mandibles identified 22 men, 11 women, and 7 children (Utubayev et al., 2022: 31–46).

The jewelry found at the monument includes a two-piece *pendant* made of several wires, a *ring* made of thin gold plates, and *gold beads* shaped like grains of wheat and rice (Fig. 3: 2, 3, 4, 5). In addition, a fragmentary *argali horn plague* is also of particular interest (Fig. 3: 5). Its surface features a plant-based pattern and the «argal horn» motif. It is likely that the sticker was attached to clothing through holes at the edges (Utubayev, Akkaliyeva, 2024). In general, the «argal horn» ornament belongs to the zoomorphic motifs in terms of its scope of application (Margulan, 1987) and is closely related to the worldview of ancient tribes and various cultural communities. In Scythian and Turkic mythological concepts, horned animals (rams, argali) are described as being associated with celestial forces that represent the upper layer of the universe. The inclusion of arcuate and spiral-shaped horns on the objects represented a divine symbol descended from heaven to earth to serve humans (Orazbayeva, 1970).

The next type of ritual metal item is a *bronze mirror,* which is round in shape and has a short handle (Fig. 3: 6). Morphologically, the mirror is considered to be an object of domestic and ritual significance. Most researchers consider mirrors found in burial complexes to be an attribute of women. In the worldview of the peoples of Central Asia, the mirror is often associated with the image of a woman, the cult of the mother earth, and the concepts of abundance. In addition, Kh.Yu.Mukhitdinov, who studied the traditional culture of the Tajik people, notes that the mirror had an apotropaic (protective) function. In his opinion, the mirror was used as a protective object against evil forces (Mukhitdinov, 1973: 105). Ethnographic data indicate that there was a tradition of placing a mirror, a knife, and hot pepper in a pocket sewn from white cloth under a newborn or young child in order to protect them from fright. There are also beliefs in oral literature that describe it as a protective device, and that water sources – springs, lakes, or streams – appear where

the mirror falls (Litvinsky, 1978: 111–112).

Also, several types of *beads* of round, oval, cylindrical and rectangular shapes were identified from the burial site. They were made of agate, glass, gagat, feroza and various natural stones with high quality and care. The color range is also diverse: white, light blue, black, gray, brown, pink. In addition, gold-glass beads samples are also found (Fig. 3: 7). These beads consist of two layers of glass, between which metal foil is placed as the main decorative element (Spaer, 1993: 9). In general, the main types of glass bead decoration, such as «eye» patterns, dot decor, molding, tooling and carving, are known prototypes of patterns formed as early as the 2nd millennium BC. However, no such specific direct prototypes have been identified for gold-glass beads. That is, although the practice of using colorless glass and gold together, including glass beads covered with gold foil, was known at this time, glass production was still in its development. In this regard, transparent stones were often used instead (Spaer, 1993). In general, gold-glass beads clearly imitated products made of precious metals. Their widespread use in Roman Egypt may have contributed to the decline in the use of gold and silver beads (Nai Xia, 2014). In general, gold-glass beads, despite their external decorative nature, may have had a certain symbolic content. Their discovery in funerary complexes probably indicates that these objects performed a status function. In this context, the imitation of gold may reflect a desire to convey the meaning of a valuable and sacred material in a more accessible way.

The next most common type of glass beads found in the Egistik mausoleum is small beads (biser). Their main distribution area between the 1st millennium BC and the 1st millennium AD covered a wide area from Central Asia to the Crimea. During excavations conducted at the ancient Khorezm monuments in Central Asia – Zhanbaskala (3rd century BC – 2nd century AD), Ayazkala (1st-2nd centuries), Topyrakkala (3rd century), as well as at archaeological sites in the Kerch region of Crimea (1st-2nd centuries, Glinishche), it was found that beads with similar shapes and material composition were found in large numbers (Kurmankulov, Torezhanova, 2014: 210–217).

Among the registered decorative and applied art products, two copies of the *belt buckle* are of special attention due to their morphological and technological features(Fig. 3: 8, 9). Both buckles are made of cattle femur and are rectangular in shape. Their front surface is carefully processed and polished, which indicates that the products are made of high quality (Treasures of Babish Mola, 2021: 51–52). On the smooth surface of the first buckle, a complex pattern made with the technique of embossing (carved ornament) is drawn. The decorative composition consists of seven circular patterns: two of them are located in the upper part near the loop, and five are located around the oval hole in the lower part. The structure of five patterns is symmetrical: four are depicted in the corners, one in the center. In the intervals of the circular patterns there are irregular linear traces touching them, which can be considered as additional engraving elements. It was found that the patterns were colored with a black pigment. In the upper part of the buckle there is a drop-shaped loop. The front surface of the second buckle is decorated with a floral pattern, with symmetrical holes on both ends. They may have performed a functional function for fixing the tab.

The next *bone item,* which is counted as a piece of harness, is made from the rib bone of a small animal (Fig. 3: 10). Both sides are evenly machined and polished, which shows that it has been carefully developed from a technological point of view (Treasures of Babish Mola, 2021: 52). The shape of the product is square, with two openings in the upper and lower parts. And the surface is decorated with linear patterns drawn with a hard tool. The direction and arrangement of the lines do not follow a clear compositional system, which indicates that they were engraved in a free manner.

In general, bone products are distinguished by their high level of processing, the combination of carved and painted decor, as well as the clarity of their constructive elements, which allows us to consider them as quality examples of decorative and applied arts.

In addition, several *textile* samples were also identified from the Egistik Mausoleum (Fig. 3: 11). Textile material is one of the rarest artifacts found in archaeological monuments and historical sites. Like all organic materials, textiles can undergo natural wear and tear over time and completely disappear. One of the studied textile samples consists of seven fragments and was woven from cotton fiber using a simple weaving method. The surface of the fabric is decorated with polychrome paint. Natural plant dyes were used in the pattern: red - madder, blue - indigo. The original background of the fabric is white, that is, it was not pre-dyed, so the colors are

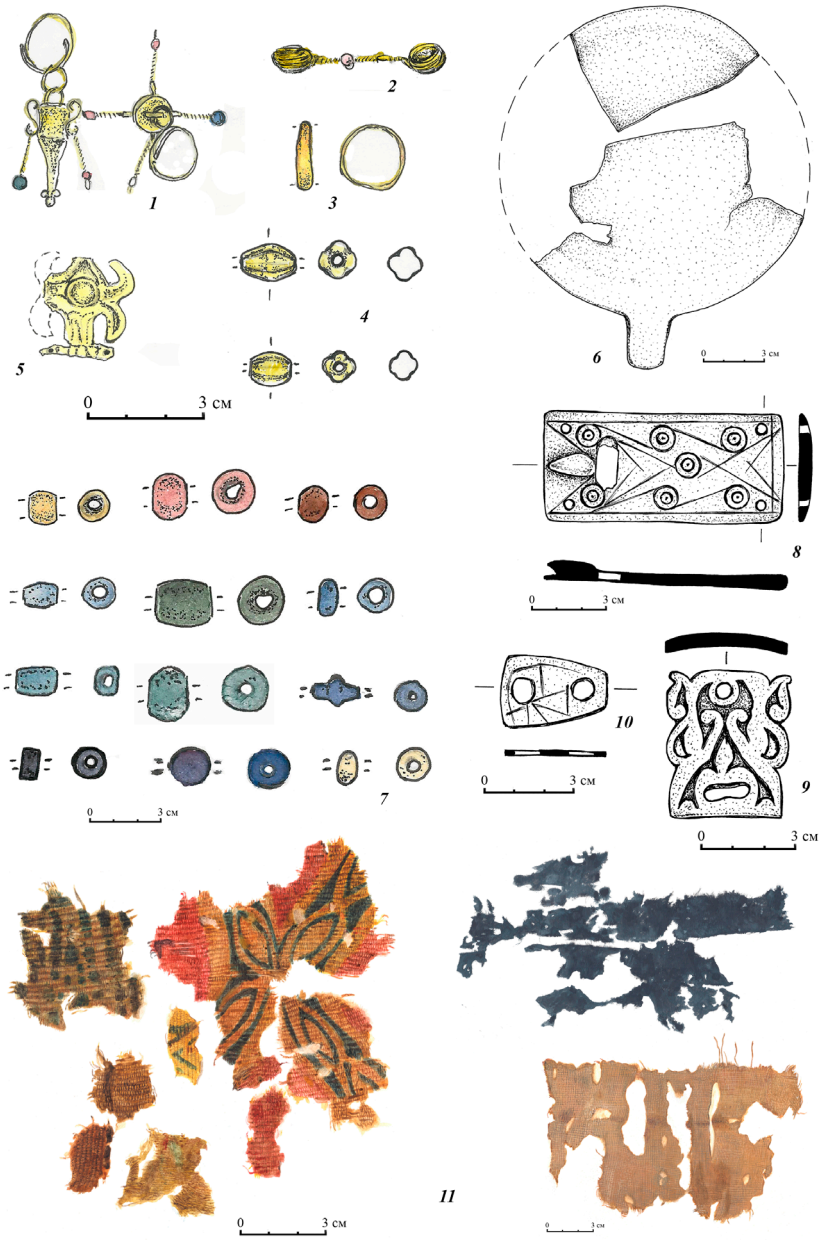


Fig. 3. Decorative and applied art objects from the Egistik mausoleum

preserved cleanly, without overlapping each other. Plant-like, leaf-shaped patterns are applied to the surface of the fabric. They are clearly outlined with indigo dye, pre-planned, and made symmetrically. The next fabric sample is also woven from cotton fiber, and we note that it was originally undyed and white. The color of the fabric has now changed slightly, which is due to the natural degradation of the fibers during prolonged storage in an archaeological environment. The third fabric sample was made of flax fiber. The textile was preserved in a blue color, and the results of the study indicate that it was dyed before the yarn was spun. These textile samples clearly demonstrate not only the skill of ancient craftsmen in working with the material, but also their artistic thinking, dyeing technology, and aesthetic taste (Akkaliyeva et al., 2025).

Results

A number of rituals preserved in modern Kazakh traditional society originate from ancient worldviews and clearly demonstrate the continuity

of beliefs and practices of that period. For example, the ritual of fumigating the bride with fire is an ancient tradition performed to protect the newlywed from the evil eye, negative influences, and for her spiritual «cleansing». In this ritual, fumigating the bride with the smoke of harmala or juniper is performed, wishing for the prosperity and peace of the new family, and pouring oil on the fire is intended to wish for the family to be blessed and prosperous. Similarly, the placing of gold and silver items in the forty spoons of water used to bathe a baby during the fulfillment of forty days for the newborn ceremony is associated with the belief that the child will have a bright future and a blessed life. Then distributing these items to guests represents goodwill, «may you be blessed, too». In the «stepping down» ritual, which is related to funeral and mourning traditions, the deceased's clothes or personal belongings are distributed as a memento to those who bathe the corpse.

All of these rituals are related to the concepts of the «continuation of the afterlife» in the ancient worldview. That is, the belief that a person's spirit and essence continue to exist at a certain level after death is preserved in modern traditions in a transformed form. Thus, the rituals in today's Kazakh society are a direct continuation of ancient beliefs, continuing their content core in a new form.

Taxonomic composition. The osteological collection from the Egistik mausoleum is represented by 126 bone remains of mammals and single finds of birds, while all identifiable bones are identified to two species. The main mass of the material consists of the bones of domestic hooves, the share of which reaches 91,2% of the total amount of determined remains. The leading place is occupied by the horse (52%), which indicates the dominant role of the horse in the formation of this complex. In the second place is sheep (26%), in the third the goat (about 12,6%). In addition to domestic animals, the collection contains unique remains of predators - fox (fragments of the lower jaw and teeth) and corsac (complete skull and lower jaw). Also, one fragment of a skull bird (Aves indet.) was recorded, which is not amenable to a more precise definition. The taxonomic spectrum of the complex is characterized by a pronounced predominance of domestic ungulates with minimal participation of wild fauna, which allows us to interpret the formation of osteological material as a result of purposeful human activity, connected with not everyday consumption, but with ritual and burial practices. Probably, the bones reflect sacrificial offerings or memorial meals that accompanied the functioning of the mausoleum (Fig. 4).

Age composition of animals. Analysis of the state of epiphyseal fusion and the degree of wear of the dental system allows to reconstruct the age structure of the animals presented in the collection.

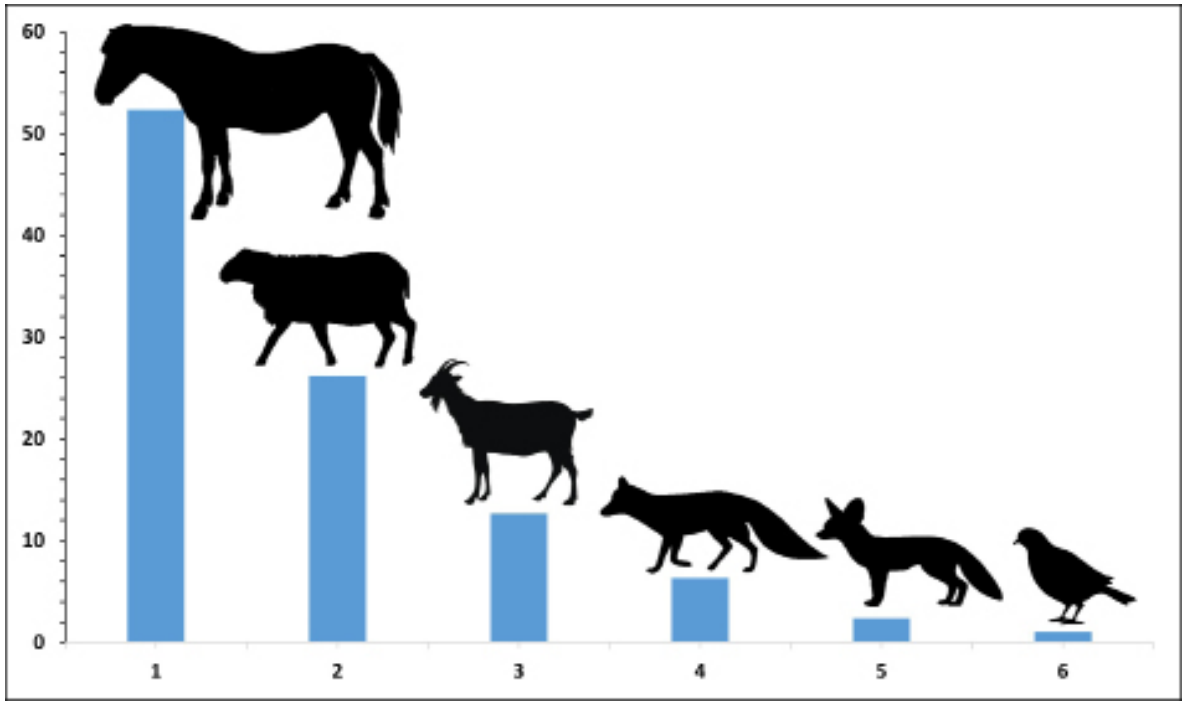


Fig. 4. Taxonomic composition of the osteological material from the Egistik mausoleum: 1 – horse; 2 –

Horse. In the horse, all the studied elements (radius and metatarsal bones, as well as ribs) demonstrate the complete union of epiphyses and articular surfaces. In particular, the fusion of rib tubercles (tuberculum costae) and articular facets with the body bone indicates that the remains belong to adult individuals. The minimum number of individuals (MNI) for this species is two individuals.

Sheep. A mixed age structure is observed in sheep. The presence of humerus and radius bones with unfused epiphyses (proximal and distal, respectively) indicates the presence of young animals. According to the data of epiphyseal fusion, the slaughter part occurred especially at the age of about 2,5–3 years. At the same time, the presence of fully formed bones indicates the presence of adult animals. The minimum number of individuals is six.

Goat. In goats, there is a predominance of bones with fallen (ungrown) proximal epiphyses of the humerus, which may indicate the slaughter of animals at a young age. However, the presence of fully formed elements (for example, the tarsal and fibula bones) indicates the variability of the age structure. The minimum number of individuals is two.

Predators are represented by adult individuals: in corsac, the degree of wear of the teeth indicates the mature age of the animal.

In general, the age profile of the collection shows the predominance of adult individuals among horses and the presence of animals of different ages among small cattle, which is probably connected with the peculiarities of ritual and burial practice. The selection of mainly adult horses could be due to their high symbolic value, while the participation of small cattle of different age groups allows their use in sacrifices or memorial rites that accompanied the functioning of the mausoleum.

Composition elements skeleton. Analysis of the anatomical distribution of bones reveals a pronounced selectivity in the representation of different parts of the skeleton.

In the horse, ribs are clearly dominant (64 of 66 specimens), while limb elements are present only occasionally (radius and metatarsus). This ratio indicates the predominance of the thoracic region of the carcass and the absence of a complete skeleton.

In the sheep, a more diverse set of elements is represented: scapulae, humeri, radius, tibiae, and astragalus. However, their quantitative distribution is uneven: scapulae (10 specimens) and radius (11 specimens) predominate, while humeri (6 specimens), astragalus (4 specimens), and tibiae (2 specimens) are present in smaller quantities. A significant proportion of fragmented bones (54,5%) indicates active processing of the carcass.

In the goat, elements of the trunk and proximal limbs predominate. However, the preservation of individual bones (talus and tibia) remains high, despite the general presence of unfused epiphyses.

The predators are represented primarily by cranial elements (skull and lower jaws), which distinguishes them from domestic ungulates and is likely due to the different nature of their placement in the archaeological context.

Overall, the anatomical structure of the collection does not correspond to a typical «kitchen» bone assemblage and is characterized by the selective inclusion of individual carcass parts, which likely reflects the targeted selection of anatomical elements within the context of ritual and burial practices.

Conclusion

Analysis of the complex of ceramic and wooden crockery, as well as decorative and applied art products found in the Egistik mausoleum, shows that they were widely used not only for domestic purposes, but also in ritual and ceremonial contexts. The morphological features of the crockeries, the technology of their manufacture and traces of use indicate that they were products used in everyday life, and their inclusion in the burial complex is associated with the worldview of that period, in particular, with the belief in the continuation of life in the afterlife. In addition, decorative and applied art products are an important source of information that determines the structure and symbolic content of the burial ritual, as well as the level of social stratification in society. The gold jewelry, complex amphora-shaped earrings, beads made of various materials and high-quality textile samples in the complex indicate the high social status of the buried individuals and testify to the existence of property inequality and social stratification in society. The registration of wide geographical analogues of the objects demonstrates the scale of cultural contacts and the intensity of exchange processes, proving that the studied community was in close interaction with the interregional cultural space.

An archaeozoological analysis of the osteological material from the Egistik mausoleum revealed that the complex's formation was purposeful and associated with ritual and burial practices. The minimum number of specimens

represented in the collection is at least ten, reflecting the participation of various domestic animal species in ritual ceremonies. The predominance of domestic ungulate bones, the selective inclusion of individual anatomical elements, and the age structure of the animals indicate the sacrificial and commemorative use of faunal resources. The data obtained significantly expand the understanding of the symbolism and structure of the rituals that accompanied the functioning of mausoleums in the studied region.

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Утубаев Ж.Р.[1], Суюндикова М.К.[1], Шағырбаев М.С.[1,2], *Аққалиева А.Ш.[1,2]
[1]Ә.Х.Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты
[2]Әл-Фараби атындағы Қазақ ұлттық университеті
Алматы, Қазақстан
*e-mail: aybobek.akkaliyeva@gmail.com

ЕГІСТІК КЕСЕНЕСІ: ҒҰРЫПТЫҚ ЖОРАЛҒЫЛАР МЕН ҚҰРБАНДЫҚ ШАЛУ ТӘЖІРИБЕСІ

Аңдатпа. Мақалада Сырдарияның төменгі ағысы бойындағы Бәбіш мола археологиялық кешеніндегі Егістік кесенесінен анықталған археологиялық бұйымдар мен олардың ғұрыптық контексті қарастырылады. Зерттеу барысында бұйымдардың құрылымдық және технологиялық ерекшеліктері анықталып, олардың мәдени-тарихи байланыстары мен хронологиялық тиесілілігі нақтыланды. Талдау нәтижелері кешен құрамындағы керамикалық ыдыстар, түсті металл әшекейлері, әртүрлі материалдардан жасалған моншақтар, сондай-ақ полихромды өрнекті текстиль үлгілері жерленген адамдардың жоғары әлеуметтік мәртебесін көрсетті. Кесенеден алынған археологиялық материалдар оның айқын ғұрыптық және символдық сипатын дәлелдейді. Сонымен қатар, кесенеден табылған остеологиялық материалдарға археозоологиялық талдау жүргізіліп, жерлеу ғұрпымен байланысты үй және жабайы жануарлардың қаңқа қалдықтары анықталды. Барлығы 126 сүйектің таксономиялық құрамы, жас ерекшеліктері және анатомиялық құрылымы бойынша жүргізілген зерттеу археозоологиялық коллекцияның арнайы іріктеліп қалыптасқанын көрсетті. Алынған мәліметтер жануарлардың жерлеу рәсімі мен культтік дәстүрлерге байланысты құрбандық шалу және қайтыс болғандарды еске алу рәсімдерінде пайдаланылғанын аңғартады.

Кілт сөздер: Егістік кесенесі, керамика, ағаш ыдыстар, әшекей бұйымдар, археозоология, құрбандық шалу, жерлеу-еске алу ғұрыптары.

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Утубаев Ж.Р.[1], Суюндикова М.К.[1], Шагирбаев М.С.[1,2], *Аккалиева А.Ш.[1,2]
[1]Институт археологии имени А.Х. Маргулана
[2]Казахский национальный университет имени аль-Фараби
Алматы, Казахстан
*e-mail: aybobek.akkaliyeva@gmail.com

МАВЗОЛЕЙ ЕГИСТИК: ОБРЯДНОСТЬ И ПРАКТИКА ЖЕРТВОПРИНОШЕНИЯ

Аннотация. В статье рассматриваются археологические находки, выявленные в мавзолее Егистик, входящем в состав археологического комплекса Бабиш мола, расположенного в нижнем течении реки Сырдарья, а также их ритуальный контекст. В ходе исследования были определены конструктивные и технологические особенности предметов, уточнены их культурно-исторические связи и хронологическая принадлежность. Результаты анализа показали, что керамические изделия, украшения из цветных металлов, бусы из различных материалов, а также образцы текстиля с полихромным орнаментом, входящие в состав комплекса, свидетельствуют о высоком социальном статусе погребенных. Археологические материалы, полученные из мавзолея, подтверждают его ярко выраженный обрядовый и символический характер. Кроме того, на основе археозоологического анализа остеологических материалов,

обнаруженных в мавзолее, были выявлены костные останки домашних и диких животных, связанные с погребально-ритуальными практиками. Анализ таксономического состава, возрастных характеристик и анатомической структуры 126 костных фрагментов показал, что археозоологическая коллекция имеет отборный характер формирования. Полученные данные свидетельствуют о том, что животные использовались в обрядах жертвоприношения и поминальных церемониях, связанных с погребальным ритуалом и культовыми традициями.

Ключевые слова: мавзолей Егистик, керамика, деревянная посуда, украшения, археозоология, жертвоприношение, погребально-поминальные обряды.

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Information about authors:

Utubayev Zhanbolat, Candidate of Historical Sciences, Leading Researcher, Head of the Department of Early Iron Age Archaeology, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan.

ORCID: 0000-0002-6484-2923

Scopus ID: 57220056938

Suyundikova Makpal, PhD Student, Al-Farabi Kazakh National University; Senior Researcher, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan.

ORCID: 0000-0002-8184-7830

Scopus ID: 58725829300

Shagirbayev Mambet, PhD Student, Farabi University; Head of the Zooarchaeology Laboratory, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan.

ORCID: 0000-0001-8176-9329

Scopus ID: 58090349000

Akkaliyeva Aibobek, PhD Student, Farabi University; Researcher, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Republic of Kazakhstan.

ORCID: 0000-0002-7274-7619

Scopus ID: 59984984100

Авторлар туралы мәлімет:

Утубаев Жанболат Раймқұлұлы, тарих ғылымдарының кандидаты, жетекші ғылыми қызметкер, ерте темір дәуірі археологиясы бөлімінің меңгерушісі, Ә.Х. Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы.

ORCID: 0000-0002-6484-2923

Scopus ID: 57220056938

Суюндикова Макпал Кожахметқызы, PhD докторант, Әл-Фараби атындағы ҚазҰУ; аға ғылыми қызметкер, Ә.Х. Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы.

ORCID: 0000-0002-8184-7830

Scopus ID: 58725829300

Шағырбаев Мәмбет Сапарбекұлы, PhD докторант, Әл-Фараби атындағы ҚазҰУ; зооархеология зертханасының меңгерушісі, Ә.Х. Марғұлан ат. Археология институты, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы.

ORCID: 0000-0001-8176-9329

Scopus ID: 58090349000

Аққалиева Айбөбек Шыныбекқызы, PhD докторант, Әл-Фараби атындағы ҚазҰУ; ғылыми қызметкер, Ә.Х. Марғұлан атындағы Археология институты, Алматы, Қазақстан Республикасы.

ORCID: 0000-0002-7274-7619
Scopus ID: 59984984100

Сведения об авторах:

Утубаев Жанболат Раймкулович, кандидат исторических наук, ведущий научный сотрудник, заведующий отделом археологии раннего железного века, Институт археологии им. А.Х. Маргулана, Алматы, Республика Казахстан.
ORCID 0000-0002-6484-2923
Scopus ID 57220056938

Суюндикова Макпал Кожахметовна, PhD докторант, КазНУ им. Аль-Фараби; старший научный сотрудник, Институт археологии им. А.Х. Маргулана, Алматы, Республика Казахстан.
ORCID: 0000-0002-8184-7830
Scopus ID: 58725829300

Шагирбаев Мамбет Сапарбекович, PhD докторант, КазНУ им. Аль-Фараби; заведующий лаборатории зооархеологии Института археологии им. А.Х. Маргулана, Алматы, Республика Казахстан.
ORCID: 0000-0001-8176-9329
Scopus ID: 58090349000

Аккалиева Айбобек Шыныбековна, PhD докторант, КазНУ им. Аль-Фараби; научный сотрудник, Институт археологии им. А.Х. Маргулана, Алматы, Республика Казахстан.
ORCID: 0000-0002-7274-7619
Scopus ID: 59984984100