



SHILPYK - A FAIRY TALE OF THE EAST

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Introduction.

Shilpyk Fortress (in different sources - Chilpyk, Shylpyk, Chilpyk-kala) - Tower of Silence, is located 43 kilometers south of Nukus near the highway leading to Turtkul. The fortress is clearly visible right from the road.



"Chilpyk" in the Karakalpak language is written and sounds like "Shylpyk", which means "clay". In some sources, you can also see the name "Chilpyk-kala", which implies attributes of a fortress, which does not correspond to the purpose of the dakhma or the history of Chilpyk.

Upon gaining independence by the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Karakalpakstan within Uzbekistan, Chilpyk and the Amu Darya River were included as national symbols in the coat of arms of the Republic of Karakalpakstan.

Chilpyk is a structure with high adobe walls, located on the top of a separate natural 35-meter conical hill. The walls of the fortress form a slightly uneven circle with a diameter of 65 meters with an entrance on the north-west side. Once there was a 20-meter stairway with 72 steps, which led along the steepest part of the hill directly to the entrance. From the base of the structure there is a passage leading down towards the river. The adobe walls have survived in places up to a height of 15 meters. They are 2-3 meters thick at the top and a little more than 5 meters at the base. The entire interior of the fortress is a flat clay platform, paved on a backfill of black sandstone fragments, almost level with the outer wall. In the center of the platform, the top of a sandstone





cliff protrudes. Many fragments of clay ossuaries were found on the slopes, which allows us to conclude that the fortress was originally intended for cult purposes as Dakhma, which was used in Zoroastrian rituals.

This structure was discovered in 1940 during a large-scale archaeological expedition led by the famous archaeologist of that time, Sergei Tolstov. The tower was located on top of a natural conical hill about 35 meters high, and was crowned with something like a crown. The round shape of the structure reached 80 meters in diameter.

Archaeologists determined the age of the structure as the end of the 1st century BC - the beginning of the 1st century AD, however, work was noted on the reconstruction of the structure in the 7th-8th centuries after the arrival of the Arabs in these places, and then again in the 9th-10th centuries during the flourishing period of ancient Khorezm. At that time, the Chilpik fortress, along with many other fortresses of Khorezm, was used as a watchtower and signal tower.



After the Arabs came to these lands (7th century), the tower was rebuilt, and then again in the 9th-10th centuries during the heyday of Ancient Khorezm. A number of researchers believe that the Khorezmians used Chilpyk as a signal and defense tower along with other fortresses of the Khorezmshah

State. Chilpyk is one of the striking sights of Karakalpakstan.

It is better to visit Chilpyk early in the morning, before the sun beats down. The fortress offers an excellent view of the surrounding area: the full-flowing Amu Darya sparkles and shimmers in the sun, surrounded by green fields and gardens, and right next to it is a sun-dried wasteland covered with patches of green and reddish bushes and salt marshes. A tripod has been installed on Chilpyk, marking the highest point of the area, completely covered with ribbons of fabric: local residents tie them for happiness and good luck.





A visit to the fortress will undoubtedly please tourists, in addition, from the height of the fortress there is a stunning view of the Amu Darya River.

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