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## Non-Pourable Ceramics of Medieval Kazan

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**Abstract:**

*The article is devoted to one of the stages in the history of non-pourable ceramics study of the medieval Kazan. Ceramics is the most massive category of archaeological finds during the excavations of medieval cities. It contains significant information that contributes to the solution of layer chronology issues and associated structures of the population ethnic-cultural composition.*

*Moreover, the study of ceramics contributes to the issue of social-economic development of pottery and makes it possible to use it for the dating of archaeological sites. The work presents the main results of archaeological investigations of 1923-1956 conducted by N.F. Kalinin on the territory of the Kazan Kremlin and the historical part of the city. His works are the first attempts to classify and systematize non-pourable ceramics. He also uses technological attributes in the systematization of ceramics: texture, color, thickness and density of a crock, dividing the entire Tatar ceramics into 7 groups, and Russian ceramics into 5 groups on these grounds.*

*The ceramics of medieval Kazan still requires additional research. The obtained results are important not only for the study of the history of Kazan, but also for the study of the region history.*

**Keywords:** Archeology, Historiography, Non-Pouring Ceramics, City, Kazan, Excavations.

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## **1. Introduction**

During the pre-revolutionary period, archaeological excavations were not conducted in the city of Kazan. Only incidental findings that characterize the material culture of the population living on the territory of medieval Kazan, fell into the archaeological collections.

During the construction works in 1879 various items, including the fragments of circular and molded ceramics were found at the Kazan Kremlin, and some red clay spherical cones specific to XIII-XIV centuries (Khalikov, 1983).

In 1892, the local Kazan historian V.I. Zausaylov recorded the finds of Bulgarian ceramics minor fragments during the archaeological excavations at Old-Glassworks area (Khalikov, 1983). However, there was no special attention to the study of ceramic material at that time, the researchers focused only on unique findings.

## **2. Materials and methods**

The beginning of systematic archaeological research of the Kazan Kremlin and the environs of Kazan is connected with the name of the archaeologist, the local historian and the largest connoisseur of the medieval history of the city, Nikolai Filippovich Kalinin.

In the second half of the 1920-ies real conditions were created for the introduction of archaeological works in the historical part of the city (Sitdikov, 2006).

The archaeological studies by Kalinin in Kazan during 1923-1956 marked the beginning of systematic studies by the Kazan Kremlin. The first attempts were made to classify and systematize the material obtained after excavations. In addition to field research, he also studied the accumulated material, including non-pouring ceramics.

Based on the ceramic material from the excavations Kalinin made an attempt to create the classification of the Bulgaro-Tatar clayware (Khalikov, 1983). The researcher subdivides all the ceramics by color into 7 groups:

1. Brick-red, (bright red) from fine-grained clay, well-worn, good roasting. It is completely analogous to the Bulgarian dishes of the pre-Mongol period.
2. Yellow-red and yellow of the same texture as group 1. Similar to the Bulgarian ceramics of the same period.
3. Similar to group II - with green watering. In the Bulgars it occurred during the 13th century.
4. A variety of group I (brick-red). On the red background: a white engobe and red wavy drawing on the engobe. The predominance of brick-red dishes of good quality firing is typical for the Khan time. Pottery crafts by Kazan masters of the XV-XVI centuries is characterized by these features. The

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Kazan potters of the Khan period used a foot circle, according to the found samples of pottery. The forms of vessels: hum, large pots, jugs, kumgans, cups (Kalinin, 1958a).

5. Brownish-red, with a lot of sand in clay. The surface of a crock is uneven, rather loose. Medium firing.
6. Brown rolled. At the Bulgarian hillfort it is found mainly in the pre-Mongolian strata.
7. Gray, medium roasting. In the Bulgars it is found in all layers.

In the classification by Kalinin (1958a) the fifth group attracts interest. This group is represented by a brown-red dish with the addition of a large amount of sand in clay, uneven surface, medium firing (group XIII according to Khlebnikova). Kalinin (1958a) asserted that in Bulgar such ceramics "occurs in pre-Mongol and in the Golden Horde periods".

As the researcher notes, the sixth group, which consists of "brown glazed pottery", is found in Bulgar primarily in the pre-Mongolian strata (Kalinin, 1958a). Based on the analysis of the ceramic material Kalinin makes a contradictory conclusion about the emergence of a Bulgarian settlement on the Kremlin Hill not earlier than in the middle of the 14th century, explaining a strange presence of "archaic traditions" in the layer of pre-Mongolian materials (Kalinin, 1958a).

The Russian ceramics of the XVI-XVIII centuries is subdivided by Kalinin into 4 subgroups:

1. Rough red ceramics, thick-walled most simple in form, local product.
2. White ceramics of good firing has the color from white to light gray, sometimes with a yellow tinge. It is represented by medium and large pots with a fairly straight aureole and a drawn horizontal linear ornament along an aureole or below it. Kalinin considered these ceramics as imported from the central regions of Russia and close to the Gzhel ceramics near Moscow (Kalinin, 1955). But he does not exclude the fact that it was made by court Russian potters who worked in the Khan's court, as it was discovered in a court area.
3. Gray moraine ceramic of regenerative roasting, which is divided into two varieties: a) a gray one with a rough surface, b) a dark gray one with a polished surface. The polishing is a continuous horizontal one. The most elegant tableware is decorated with check polishing. Such dishes, completely analogous to Moscow one, was mostly imported in Kazan (Kalinin, 1958a).
4. Brown ceramics similar to red, weaker roasting, local.

Other types of Russian dishes are brown-red or black. According to Kalinin (1958a) they have a more ordinary appearance, lack of "elegance" and could hardly get into the Kazan Kremlin in the fifteenth and the first half of the sixteenth centuries through trade. Most likely, they were manufactured on site by the Russian population for their

own use. Such dishes can indicate the presence of Russian population on the Kremlin territory, for example, as the part of the khan's residence servants (Kalinin, 1958a).

Kalinin (1955) also reveals stucco ceramics, hand-made dishes, without the use of a potter's wheel. It occurs almost in all bayonets of the Russian layer, beginning with the fourth one. The vessels are made of clay with a large amount of coarse sand and white pieces of crushed limestone. It has a black color when fired. Its shape is a small bowl. The surface is uneven and bumpy. Kalinin (1955) considered the stucco ceramics to be household cooking utensils, which, along with professional pottery, lasted quite a long time. According to Kalinin, the fragments found in the Kazan Kremlin have a pronounced genetic similarity with the ceramics of the local Mari settlement at the Kazan region (Arkhipov, 1973). He also claims that the stucco ceramics were produced not in the city where the Bulgar-Tatar traditions of pottery existed, but in the countryside among the Finnish population. The stucco ceramics arrived in the city due to trade relations with the rural district. Kalinin believes, that quite several poor working people could have existed in the backyard of the khan's palace, who made dishes in a primitive way for themselves (Kalinin, 1958a).

### **3. Results and discussion**

The initial stage of research by Kalinin accounts for 1923-27 and it is associated with the observations of construction work on the territory of Kazan and the Kazan Kremlin, the accumulated lifting material and its interpretation.

In 1925 Kalinin together with the prof. Smolin conducted observations in the trench to the southeast of the tower Syuyumbike. The researcher first recorded the cultural strata of the Kazan Kremlin. They identified four layers in these cultural strata: a modern one - the layer of the XVII-XIX-th centuries with two cultural horizons, the layer of the second half of the 16th century, and the layer of Tatar Kazan (Kalinin, 1958c). In order to determine the chronology of the Golden Horde and pre-Mongolian layers of Kazan, the basis was red clay Bulgar-Tatar ceramics, among which there is yellow-red and dark brown one with banded and cruciform glazing, which is characteristic of the Bulgarian ceramics of the pre-Mongol period. In the southeast trench (it is closer to the palace garden) the fragments of a pitcher-shaped vessel of yellow-red clay and the fragments of pottery with green watering were also found. Smolin (1926) argued that these are the crocks of "Tatar type".

In 1926, during the spring flood of Kazanka, Kalinin and Gubaidullin, performed observations on the northern sole of the Kremlin Hill and the left bank of the Kazanka from Voskresenskaya to the Tainitskaya Tower. An interesting collection of red clay pottery in the Bulgarian traditions was collected, among which there were well-glazed ones, reminiscent of the Bulgarian pre-Mongolian period (Kalinin, 1949).

During the years of 1928-1929 the first expedition on the study of Bulgar-Tatar monuments was organized (Aidarov, 1985). Along with the excavations on the

Bulgarian hillforts, an archaeological study of the Kazan Kremlin began (Borozdin, 1929). Under the guidance of prof. Borozdin (1929) a series of pits was laid to the north and to the east of the Annunciation Cathedral, one of which was expanded to the scale of the excavation. Borozdin (1929) later wrote that these excavations "gave almost nothing" for the history of ancient Kazan. But Kalinin noted that all pits had a fairly clear stratigraphy of cultural strata. The bottom layer containing Bulgar-Tatar ceramics, was dated by the researcher as the period of the Kazan Khanate (Sitdikov, 2000).

During the same year Kalinin (1958b) laid pits behind the Annunciation Cathedral. For two years, epy area of about 100 square meters was opened. Almost all the pits had the layers of the Bulgar-Tatar period. The lower horizon was recorded at the depth of 360-380 cm, and described by him as consisting of "black, dark brown soil with lime inclusions" and containing rare fragments of pottery ceramics (Khalikov, 1983).

Only 214 fragments of Bulgar-Tatar ceramics were collected from these excavations. The ceramics were mostly red, bright, very fine-grained and plastic. The fragments with white engobe stood out. Kalinin (1958b) determined the ceramics of red color without glazing - 63, of yellow color - 9, of brownish-yellow muddy-sandy color, reminiscent of Bulgarian one - 47, gray - 74, black - 14 fragments of ceramics. The researcher was particularly interested in the fragments of brown and yellowish-brown ceramics, which were found in pits No. 4 and No. 5 in the yard of the People's Commissariat and the pits No. 2 and No. 6 in the TatCEC garden, similar to the pre-Mongol Bulgar one (Khalikov, 1983).

In 1928 Borozdin (1929) laid a small excavation in the form of a trench of 8x1 m, near the church of Cyprian and Ustiniya. He managed to record the cultural remains of Kazan until 1552. The ceramics of this layer was characterized by the features inherent in the ceramics of the Golden Horde and later period.

In 1929, the pit No. 8 of the previous year, which was located to the east of the Annunciation Cathedral, was expanded into the excavation of 480x300 m (Kalinin, 1929). The cultural strata of Kazan until 1552 were opened, which consisted of 3-4 cultural horizons and had the thickness of up to 125 cm. About 60 fragments of ceramics were found in the excavation, including red-clayed one - 11 (5 fragments with glazing), yellowish-gray - 17 (4 fragments with glazing), gray-clay - 28 (3 fragments with glazing), stucco clay with the admixture of chamotte - 1 fr. A particular interest is caused by the fragments of red ceramics with engobe and wavy ornamentation on the engobe; yellow-red ceramics with green glaze; brown ceramics with glazing characteristic of the pre-Mongol Bulgar culture (Kalinin, 1929).

In the same year, they performed archaeological work near the southern wall of the Syuyumbike tower. At the depth of 140-150 cm from the modern surface, the Kazan layer of the Khan period was revealed, which was divided into three horizons. The fragments of yellowish-red, red-clay, light-gray and yellowish-brown Bulgaro-Tatar

ceramics were found in the lower layer. Also, there were the fragments with vertical striped glazing, as well as with green watering (Kalinin, 1929).

In 1935, very interesting materials were obtained by Kalinin from a small excavation with the area of 12 square meters near the northern wall of the Kremlin. 11 stratigraphic horizons were traced in the cultural layer. The IVth "Tatar" layer included 9-11th interlayers at the depth of 3.3 - 5 m. Non-poured ceramics from the IVth layer was represented in the amount of 250 fragments by red clay dishes in Bulgarian traditions, as well as gray moraine ones with glazing and white clay Russian ceramics (Kalinin, 1958a; Khalikov, 1983; Sitdikov, 2006). The ceramics from the 9th layer is similar to the Bulgarian one. 29 fragments of yellow-red ceramics of good roasting and 14 fragments of dark gray and white utensils of the 16th century was found.

The ceramic material from the 10th interlayer consisted of red clay ceramics of the Golden Horde period (Kalinin, 1958a), as well as of ceramic fragments of "brown color, weak roasting, with vertical glazing dated by the 12th-14th centuries and earlier" (Sitdikov, 2006).

Non-poured ceramics from the 11th layer is represented by 58 fragments of dishes, 93% of which are of the usual Bulgar-Tatar type and 7% of Russian dishes. In one of the sites, a cluster of exceptionally red Bulgar-Tatar dishes of large size, with large vertical handles, was found. The dishes are decorated with a ribbon and a wavy ornament. Several fragments from the lower parts of the walls have neatly drilled round holes of 4-6 mm in diameter. According to Kalinin (1958a), such vessels served to recline the cottage cheese, for cheese production.

Archaeological works in the Kazan Kremlin were resumed by Kalinin resumed in 1947. In the south-eastern part of the Kremlin, in the courtyard of the Ministry of Agriculture, the trench about 150 m long was dug. Kalinin (1947) first recorded the remains of two Muslim cemeteries here. He also managed to record a ditch in the profile of the trench. In his opinion, this could be the trace of the defensive ditch of Khan Kazan of the XV-th - first half of the XVI-th century (Kalinin, 1947). The predominance of red clay ceramics was noted in the Bulgar-Tatar layers, among which there were the samples of the early pre-Mongolian ceramics according to Kalinin (1958a).

In 1947, archaeological work was carried out on the Sheikman passage at the northern gate of the Junkers College and in the trench of the school courtyard from the other side of the gate (Kalinin, 1947). During the works the 4th layer demonstrated the fragments of red clay glazed ceramics in the Bulgarian traditions.

In 1948 Kalinin conducted archaeological observations in the garden of the Governor's Palace near the monument to V.I. Lenin (Kalinin, 1948; 1958a; Khalikov, 1983). The profile of the trench showed the complete absence of layers of the 16th-18th centuries.

In the course of the work, 3 horizons were recorded in the 4th layer, with the thickness of 45-60 cm. The fragments of the Bulgar-Tatar ceramics were found in the layer: red dishes with glazing, brown, and dark gray one. The fragments of coarse black utensils with gruss (Kalinin, 1948; 1958a). In the lower layers of the excavation there were only 28 fragments of ceramics of typical Bulgarian dishes, including red one - 8 fragments, (4 fr. with glazing); brown-red, 3 fr. with glazing, brown with glazing - 5 frag., yellow-brown - 2 frag., yellow - 4 frag., glazed one - 2 frag., stucco with the admixture of crushed shells - 5 fr (Kalinin, 1948; 1958a).

The first large-scale archaeological excavations under the leadership by Kalinin were started in 1953. On the descent to the Taynitskaya Tower, two excavations were laid with the total area of 176 sq.m. The layer of Kazan until 1552 was revealed and an interesting Bulgar-Tatar material was obtained, including the fragment of brown ceramics that belonged to pre-Mongolian time (Kalinin, 1955).

In 1948-1953 Kalinin conducts archaeological observations in search of the initial location of the city of Kazan on Zilantovsky and on the Kaban fortifications. In his opinion, Kazan original place was located exactly on the territory of these monuments (Khuzin, 2001).

In 1953-54 Kalinin excavated the area of 313 sq.m in the northwestern part of the Kremlin. At a depth of about 5 m, the IVth (Tatar) layer of the 15th-16th centuries preserved quite well. The excavations of 1953-54 gave a rich ceramic material. According to Kalinin, Kazan-Tatar dishes of the XVth - the first half of the XVIth century are very similar to the late-Bulgarian ceramics from the Iske-Kazan complex. Large vessels of the type of hum, large earthenware pots and jugs are represented here.

The vessels of medium size are represented by jugs, kumgans, pots, balakirs. Among the kumgans the samples with long narrow nose-tubes or sometimes of zoomorphic form are interesting. A kumgan nose was also found in the form of a stylized bird's head. A narrow high ridge in the form of a plate with holes rises above the spout. Apparently, this is the head of a cock, the form that existed in Kazan and later in clay Russian kumgans of the 16th-17th centuries. Kalinin believes that this is a special Kazan ancient form, which, according to tradition, passed from the Bulgarian forms of the XIII-XIV centuries. He refers cups and inkwells to the smallest vessels. Kalinin also notes that the ornamentation of dishes is very similar to the Bulgarian one. This is the glazing strips, often by vertical ones, sometimes by checkered.

A scribbled ornament is a special form of glazing. It consists of continuously alternating lines - hairy, rising, pressed and downward ones. According to Kalinin, a potter who applied a similar ornament to a vessel, evidently had a skill in writing based on Arabic script. Hence, he draws an important conclusion about literacy, about the acquaintance with the writing of the Kazan potters of the 15th-16th centuries (Kalinin, 1958a).

On the Zilant mountain, he managed to find only a few fragments of late Bulgarian ceramics (Kalinin, 1945).

The studies by Kalinin of 1956-1957 in "Iske-Kazan" (Urmatskoe settlement and Kamaevo hillfort) (Kalinin, 1956; 1957) were of great importance for the archeology of ancient Kazan and its environs. The researcher believed that this city appeared in the middle of the 13th century at least, and existed until the 15th century, when "the New Kazan became its rival" (Kalinin, 1958a; Kalinin & Khalikov, 1954). Kalinin analyzed all the found ceramic material of Iske-Kazan, and concluded that it represented a complete analogy of the Bulgarian dishes of the 13th-16th centuries.

#### **4. Conclusions**

Kalinin made a huge contribution to the development of medieval archeology. During the considered time, the chronology of some categories of archaeological finds was poorly developed, primarily in respect of the most mass material - ceramics (Sitdikov, 2006; Khuzin, 2001). However, Kalinin managed to systematize all the accumulated ceramic material, to distinguish the groups of non-poured ceramics by color, to delineate them according by chronology and to associate them with the selected layers.

#### **5. Summary**

Archaeological research of the Kazan Kremlin, conducted by Kalinin in 1928-1956, gave the first materials on the Bulgar-Tatar ceramics, which in its turn allowed the researcher to identify the chronological horizons of cultural strata of the monument. An important aspect in the analysis of ceramics at that time was the allocation of pre-Mongolian Bulgarian ceramics on the territory of the Kremlin.

The results of Kalinin's works on the study of Kazan ceramics created the basis for its classification and further study.

#### **6. Acknowledgements**

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