

## THE WALLS OF KHIVA ICHAN-KALA

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**ABSTRACT:** This article provides information about the history of the Khiva Ichan-Kala wall.

**KEYWORDS:** Khorezm, Khiva, archaeological excavations, Ichan-Kala Palvanyop.

### INTRODUCTION

Khiva – city-museum, like Pompeii and Herculaneum, but unlike those places it is alive city. As many Eastern cities, Khiva was born "on the water" – in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya river and grew up on the irrigated lands of Khorezm oasis.

The written sources confirm the considerable age of Khiva. The historical information on Khorezm is given in "Avesta". The "father of history" Herodotus made a mention of Khorezm and the Khorezmian people. Beruni wrote about the ancient agriculture of Khorezm. Archaeological excavations also prove the age of Khiva to be 2500 years old. All these facts have enabled UNESCO to proclaim Khiva a city-reserve, and its inner part Ichan-Kala has been recognized as a historical monument of the world significance.

### THE MAIN FINDINGS AND RESULTS

Archaeological excavations are doing on in the city, the city to determine its age. These excavations were done in 1984-1995.

The first excavations were done in the north-west part of Kunya Ark. They found the remains of the walls, bricks and weapons which belonged to I B.C.

According to the archaeological excavations the ancient name of Khiva was Kheykonik and located on the coast of Palvanyop canal and adopted VI-V B.C. The width of the walls was 7-8 meters. For protection from enemies there were roads for carriages on the walls.

The second excavations were made in 10-14 square meters area on the north-west walls of Ichan-Kala. In this place they discovered 5 building periods. During the excavations the remains of the walls and their length was 20 meters, the height 0,35-1,37 (sizes of the bricks 49-42 centimetres, 41x43 centimetres, 9x13 centimetres). According to the archaeologists the ancient

name of Khiva was Kheykonik and it was located on Palvanyop canal which was created in VI-V B.C.

The third excavations were made in south-east part in 5-37 square meters territory, nine buildings were discovered. The walls and the part of the minaret which belongs to antique period. The minaret was square shaped the room which was in the minaret was built with raw bricks and filled with sand. The remains of the jug which belongs to I B.C.

The fourth excavations were done in the north-east part in 136 square meters area, nine buildings were discovered. The walls were built with mud bricks. The length of the walls was 7 meters, height was 27,5, width was 2 meters. The excavations were made in Ichan-Kala in 6 places they discovered in 1985-1995.

Total size was 1200 square meters. In the 7 parts of the walls. The most ancient layer was located 7 meters deep.

So according to the archaeologists, Khiva was located on Palvanyop canal and belongs VI-V B.C. The height of the walls 7-8 meters, the width is 2-3 meters.

The municipal walls are a rare example of medieval fortifications that lasted till the present; they also give the city the air of majesty. The city of Khiva was surrounded by two walls - Ichan-Kala and Dishan-Kala, which makes it different from other places. Ichan-Kala foundation was built between 5th and 4th century BC rising over the level of Dishan-Kala, probably due to the natural relief (according to the legends, the city was founded on a sand hill) The municipal walls made of adobe bricks (40x40x10 cm) were rebuilt several times in the course of centuries. Ichan-Kala wall is 8 till 10 meters high, 6 till 8 meters wide and 2250 meters long. There are massive round defensive towers protruding out of Ichan-Kala walls at the interval of 30 meters.

The top of the walls and towers is lined with toothed parapet with slit loopholes to fight off attackers during a siege. The system of defensive fortifications included water-filled ditches; even now traces of those ditches can be noticed in the micro-relief in the south area while asphalt streets cover former ditches in the north and west. Dishan-Kala walls were erected by Allah Kuli Khan in 1842. One might wonder where they got so much clay for the construction. The research revealed that clay was mined two kilometres north of the city in the territory, which is now called Ghovuk Kul; as the name says, there is a big lake there now. Since long ago local clay was thought to be of very high quality, and modern potters still use it.

The municipal gate was also a part of the town defensive system. It has a special design suitable for guards who stood their duty protecting the town, which is prominently expressed in its construction: on both sides of the arched driveway are "terror-inflicting" towers, a watching gallery is built over the gate. The drive-way is covered either with an arched roof (Koy-Darvaza) or, if the passage is too long, with several domes.

## CONCLUSION

There are domed rooms on each side of the passage, which housed sentries, customs, courthouse and sometimes a prison. In Oriental cities, the gates and entrances to public buildings and private houses were given great importance: the more impressive were the looks, the more grandeur and respect had a city, a building or its creator. In the course of time, however, defensive function of the gates grew less important, and gates became a part of city design. The gates were decorated with beautiful coloured glazed tiles and oyats from the Koran, some gates displayed texts praising Khans and, some-times, extracts from their poems. Some gates turned into shopping malls with time.

There are four gates in Ichan-Kala: Ata-Darvaza, Palvan-Darvaza, Tash-Darvaza and Bagcha-Darvaza. Dishan-Kala had ten gates but only three of them exist now.

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