

CLASSIFICATION OF SOCIO-CULTURAL PROCESSES IN "KASBI" AND ITS SURROUNDING REGIONS DURING ANTIQUITY AND THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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Annotation: The ancient and medieval Kasbi and its surroundings are unique. At the same time, in addition to the fact that they are a common cultural space, some of its regions, especially Kasbi and the adjacent territories, have their own relatively separate development and cultural features. This article expresses opinions about the historical, cultural, political realities, historical roots, foundations and factors of these processes that took place in Kasbi and its surrounding areas.

Key words: Erkurgan, Sogd, Pishaktepa, Khontepa, Kichiktepalar, Kultepa, Oytug'ditepa, Laylakuytepa, Kichiktepa.

It is widely recognized that the formation and development of human civilization have been closely interconnected with sedentary lifestyles, statehood, and the cultural history of urban and nomadic craftsmanship. In this regard, the Antiquity and Early Middle Ages in Central Asia hold significant scientific importance in the study of ancient statehood, historical geography, historical toponymy, economic structures, and cultural life, which were distinctive features of this region.

A crucial aspect of studying the history of independent Uzbekistan and its ancient culture lies in examining statehood and urban planning traditions. Understanding the fundamental factors behind these traditions is of special importance. Each sovereign state possesses a unique history and cultural heritage, and the true creators of this history and culture are rightfully the people of that country.

In recent years, the revival of traditional handicraft products and their utilization in the development of tourism have been elevated to the level of state policy as part of Uzbekistan's economic development strategy. The field of "History of Uzbekistan", particularly the study of statehood and urban planning, remains one of the most crucial directions in historical research. This discipline plays a key role in periodizing ancient layers of civilization, identifying cultures, assessing the economic strength of states, and exploring international economic relations, making it an essential historical source for academic study.

The establishment of the Kushan Empire brought significant religious transformations, as Buddhism spread across all territories under its rule. Although it did not become the dominant religion, its influence was evident not only in Southern Sogdiana but also in regions like Ferghana, where the discovery of a Buddhist temple in the city of Kuva indicates that Buddhist influences extended not only to central regions but also to more distant territories.

Thus, the study of statehood, urban development, and cultural exchanges in Central Asia during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages remains a pivotal area in understanding the historical processes that shaped the region's economic, political, and cultural identity.

It is noteworthy that the late Japanese researcher and honorary citizen of Uzbekistan, Kyuzo Kato, after conducting studies in southern Uzbekistan, concluded that Buddhism spread to Eastern Turkestan, China, and Japan through Uzbekistan. This scholarly hypothesis has attracted considerable attention. The introduction of other religions into the region can also be observed as a result of similar socio-political and economic factors.

The development of several cities in the Nakhshab region and their social, economic, and cultural significance provide valuable insights into the progress of Southern Sogdiana during Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages.

Kasbi (also referred to as Kasbah) was located four farsakhs from Nasaf and six farsakhs from Bazda. Its ruins have been discovered near the modern village of Kasbi, approximately 35 km southwest of Qarshi. The city had a pentagonal fortress with remains of defensive walls, an inner city (shahristan), and a large outer suburb (rabod) stretching up to one kilometer southeast.

Medieval geographers noted that Kasbi was larger than Nasaf, a fact confirmed by archaeologists, who estimate the city's area to have reached 200 hectares. The site contains layers from ancient settlements, and during the Early Middle Ages, it functioned as a fortress, later developing into a city with a Friday mosque in the 9th-12th centuries.

Strategically located on the Bukhara-Balkh trade route, Kasbi remained a key commercial hub even in later centuries. It served as a major transit point for fast-riding camels, black and green Karakul pelts, and slaves. This indicates that even after the Mongol invasion, the region retained its significance as a transit corridor in Eurasian trade networks.

Bazda - Kunya Fazli village - located 40 km west of Nasaf, was also one of the largest centers on the Bukhara-Balkh route. All oriental authors (even Ibn Haukal, who classifies all settlements, including the Nasaf region, as settlements) emphasize the city's power, which is considered a symbol of the city in the east, the presence of the Bazda mosque, which is considered a symbol of the city.

Bazda consists of an ancient mound up to 20 m high, a pre-Arab quadrangular city with a perimeter of 1x0.5 km, surrounded by a moat, and an unfortified rabad. The area of the city is about 100 hectares. Studies have shown that the site arose in the Hellenistic period, and its heyday falls on the 7th-12th centuries. Moreover, it was not only a trade center, but also a fortress on the border of the oasis.

Among the large settlements that arose in ancient times in the south of Nakhshab, the fortresses of Bazda and Kasbi occupy a special place. These fortresses are mentioned in written sources at the beginning of the AD, as well as in the 10th-12th centuries. On the previous pages, it was mentioned that Kasbi is mentioned in Armenian sources as "Kazbion" (6th century). Kasbi and Bazda are settlements that appeared at the beginning of the AD, even in the 1st century BC. Academician V.V. Bartold, speaking of Nasaf (Nakhshab), the main city south of Kashkadarya, noted that there were two more cities in addition to it, noting that "the cities, in addition to the main one, were two more, Kesba (Kasbi) and Bezda (Bazda). The first was 4 farsakhs from Nasaf (it is often mentioned in the "Abdulla-noma" of the 16th century), on one of the roads leading to Bukhara. On the road from Bukhara to Kelif (west of Nasaf), the first

was 4 days' journey, the second 5 days' journey. It is mentioned that Sam'ani was 6 farsakhs from Nasaf to Bazda.

In the 3rd-4th centuries, the existing social system in Central Asia collapsed, and a new social system began to take its place. This system was a new land ownership system, which reflected a new stratification of the population. As in other regions, in Sughd, in particular in Kasbi and Bazda, the population began to be stratified according to landowners. According to O.I. Simirnov, the basis of the social structure of Sughd, according to written and numismatic sources, is the division of the population into three main groups. These were freemen (in some later sources they were considered peasants, peasants, slaves).

This division of the population into social strata had a great influence on the further development of society. The establishment of landowners was accompanied by the emergence of landownership forms and the development of the economy based on the landlord system.

Thus, in the early Middle Ages, a new landownership system began to take shape in Southern Sughd. New classes of the population were formed, and the economy began to develop on the basis of this social system. The division of labor not only between the layers of the population, but also between cities and villages, intensified, and the process of specialization in the economy developed.

As in all of Central Asia, in the early Middle Ages, political fragmentation prevailed in Sogd. As each estate owner became stronger, he began to mint coins. Their strengthening was supposed to be visible not only in political terms. The minted coins were intended for internal and external trade, and in this case, they were supposed to serve to increase the financial power of the political estates. Such minted coins are also characteristic of Nakhshab and the cities surrounding it. The minting of coins led to the growth of trade relations. In turn, "trade relations were of great importance in the acceleration of the process of exchange between cities and villages, the development of agriculture and crafts."

The fact that "in the Kashkadarya oasis, there was a cult of the sun, earth, water, and the god of fertility (the gods Mithra and Anahita)" also indicates that agriculture and cattle breeding were the main occupations of the population here.

In 1965, the Uzbek archaeological expedition of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan (group leader S.K. Kabanov) studied two ancient village ruins on the territory of the building materials factory near the city of Karshi. These were Pishaktepa and Kichiktepa. It was concluded that Pishaktepa was once inhabited by a representative of the ruling class, perhaps a peasant. Kichiktepa is smaller in size, and the absence of a fortress wall suggests that it was a settlement where ordinary agricultural workers lived. Kultepa, located two kilometers west of the city of Karshi, is a relatively large monument. At the time of archaeological excavations in 1965, its height was 15 meters, the adjacent parts were 7-8 meters, its length was 200 meters, and its width was 100 meters. We can also learn from the looms (weaving tools) and ready-made clay mixtures found here that Kultepa was a large peasant settlement, and its inhabitants were engaged in agriculture as well as home crafts such as weaving and pottery.

In Oytug-tepe, an archer is depicted on a wooden comb. A number of handicraft products, including coppersmithing, blacksmithing, and pottery, were found. In general, additional information about the culture of the early medieval population of Nakhshab was obtained from the above-mentioned archaeological sites.

In 1966, 2 km south of the city of Karshi, on the Beshkent road, S.K. Kabanov and L.L. Bukinich studied anthropological materials found in Nomsiztepe. As a result of examining 7

skulls, it was found that most of them were deformed. Such deformed skulls can be found in the Volga and Azov steppes, Ukraine, Crimea, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Altai, and Kazakhstan. Their distribution over such a large geographical area indicates that this was a widespread practice among the traditional pastoral population.

When researchers compare the deformed skulls with the images on the surface of coins minted by the Hephthalites, they observe a close resemblance. That is, in both cases, the deformed skulls are clearly visible.

During the 1990 archaeological excavation season, excavations were carried out in the ruins of the city of Kindiktepa in the village of Qazaqli, located in the Kosan district of the Kashkadarya region, and the settlements of the ancient and early medieval population were studied.

The pottery found in the lowest layers of the city fortress of Kindiktepa completes the complex. It is noteworthy that in a number of urban strata of Sogdiana dating back to the 4th-3rd centuries: Afrosiab, Yerkurgan and in the villages: Kurgancha, Laylakutepa, Sogdiana, in the Hissar oasis of Northern Bactria, Kushtepa, Parthia, Hontepa, Nurtepa, Ustrushona, we observe only basement or semi-basement-type dwellings. However, starting from the end of the 3rd-2nd centuries BC, the construction of fortresses, residential buildings, temples and dachas based on more monumental architecture begins in these aforementioned residential areas.

This change in the history of Central Asian architecture is, of course, connected with the important political changes that took place. After the disintegration of the empire of Alexander the Great, the Seleucids, then the Parthians and the Greco-Bactrian states arose in Central Asia. The internecine wars for the throne and the state posed a great threat to the stability of these states.

According to our material evidence, probably from the time of the Greco-Bactrian kingdom in 206 BC, they built structures of the type of Greek forts in order to strengthen their borders, and at the same time they spread a culture based on ancient Eastern culture, which is called Greek or "antique" in literature.

R. Sulaymanov's ideas about the development of Zoroastrianism and its place among the religious views of the Nakhshab population are especially noteworthy. The scientist concluded, based on the results of the excavations in Yerkurgan, that the Zoroastrians initially left the bodies of the deceased in open places, and later built separate buildings, left the bodies on their roofs, cleaned the bones, and placed them inside the buildings. R. Sulaymonov emphasized that the Zoroastrian tomb in Yerkurgan dates back to the 2nd century BC, and also said that it is the oldest among tombs of this type.

We can see the diversity of religious views in the Nakhshab region at the Khontep monument, located to the left of the Karshi-Kosan road. The research conducted here sheds some light on the socio-cultural life of Nakhshab in ancient and early medieval times.

In summary, by the Early Middle Ages, various ethnic groups had settled in the southern Sughd region, including the areas located on the site of the present-day city of Karshi or nearby (Kasbi, Kosan). As a result, one can see the influence of the melon culture, which originally emerged on the banks of the Syrdarya River and later spread widely throughout the lower reaches of the Syrdarya, Fergana, Ustrushona, and Sughd. The cultures of the sedentary and pastoral populations that lived side by side, developed and mixed with each other can be clearly seen in material objects. In the Early Middle Ages, a unique culture of Southern Sughd was

formed. We can also learn about this from the distribution of Nakhshab jars from pottery products. This is evidenced by the fact that such jars are very finely crafted, have thin walls, and are not found in other places.

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