

DESCRIPTION OF FERGANA CITIES IN MEDIEVAL HISTORICAL SOURCES

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ABSTRACT:

This article discusses the works on the history of medieval cities of Fergana Valley, mainly focusing on Ahsikent, Koson, Uzgen, Osh, Quva and other cities.

KEY WORDS: City, shahristan, rabat, ark, defensive wall, source, area, work, administrative building, baked brick, Karakhanids, Samanids, capital, culture, architecture, mausoleum.

INTRODUCTION:

There are plenty of written sources on the history of Central Asian cities. These sources provide information about emergence, structure, and socio-cultural life of the cities of our country. Arabic and Persian sources play a leading role in this regard. The first work in the Middle Ages written on the history of our country was "The History of Bukhara" by Abu Bakr Mohammad ibn Jafar an-Narshahi [9. P.84]. the works of Arab historians and geographers are also an important source in the study of the history of our cities today. The works, which were considered geographical works in their time, of such scholars as al-Istahri, al-Balzuri, al-Maqdisi, and Ibn Havqal are especially valuable.

In his work, the Arab historian al-Balazuri provides information about the life of cities on the eve of the arrival of Islam in our country. [1. P.120] we also use Arabic, Persian and Turkish language sources to write about the history of our cities after the introduction of Islam, i.e. the Middle Ages.

MATERIAL METHOD

The geographical location of Central Asian cities, and their social – political life can also be

learned through the works of al-Tabari, al-Muqaddasi, Yakut al-Hamavi, ibn Havqal, ibn Hordadbeh, Abu Zayd Ahmad ibn Sahl al-Balhi, Istahri, Sayyid Muhammad Tahir ibn Abdul Qasim, Muhammad binni Najib al-Baqran, Abdurazzaq Samarkandi, Muhammad Salih, Hafiz Tanish Bukhari, Abul Fazl Allami, Mirkhand, Abul Fazl Bayhaqi, al-Fasih Havafi, Khandamir, Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur, Mirza Muhammad Haydar, Mahmud ibn Vali.

Four major cities, namely Kasan, Akhsikat, Osh and Khojand, in Fergana Valley on the eve of the introduction of Islam, were mentioned in those works. The city of Khojand was surrounded by a strong defensive wall in the 10th century, and the structure of the city was divided into arches, shahristan, and rabat. The city of Kuva had a similar appearance.

10th century geographers listed 39 cities in Fergana.

Well-known scientists A.M.Belinitzky, I.B.Bentovich, O.G.Bolshakov noted in their book "Srednevekoviy gorod Sredney Azii" that many cities of Fergana were not studied archeologically. According to the authors they could add almost nothing to what Academician V.V.Barthold described earlier. Only in the cases of Ahsikent, Quva, Khojand and Uzgen, some clarifications were made. [4. P.201].

The authors wrote about Ahsikent city, the capital of Fergana, which consisted of kohandiz, medina, and rabat with strong defensive walls. They wrote that according to al-Muqaddasi the total size (length or diameter) of the city is 1/3 farsakh, 1.5 times larger than the Palestinian city of Ramli, while a square-shaped citadel (arch) has been preserved in the southwest of the city, which had an area of 27 hectares in the inner city.

According to researchers' urban measurement data, al-Muqaddasi had the following comparison: Chag'oniya is equal to Ramli and bigger than Termiz, and Ahsikent is 1.5 times bigger than Ramla, which means that Ahsikent is much bigger than Termiz. [4. P.202].

According to al-Istahri, Quva (Kubo) was close in size to Ahsikent (slightly larger than is as stated by al-Muqaddasi). However, the shahristan of Quva was not so big, it was close to 9 ha. The city began to grow from this area in the 7th and 8th centuries. It follows that Quva was also larger than Ahsikent with its densely built rabat. Its walls have been preserved only 300 meters to the north and northwest of the shahristan. If it passed approximately the same distance from the rest parts, the rabat area must have been more than 80 ha. In the tenth century, shahristan did not play a significant role in the life of Quva. All the markets, the administrative buildings and dungeons were located in rabat section. Excavations were carried out in Quva for several decades, with the emphasis on the pre-Muslim period. Brick kilns and glass workshops were found in the Medieval period, and little is known about the development of the city in the 8th-12th centuries. [4. P.203].

MAIN PART:

Ahsikat had a special attention in the works of medieval historians. In these works, the city's history, origin, location, structure, role in the region, the socio-cultural life were described in detail. Particularly, the book, "Hudud ul olam", the author of which is unknown, has the following statement: "Ahsikat is the main city of Fergana, the place of Emirs and respected people". [10. P.15-16] Ibn Havqal, who lived during this period, also named the city as Akhsikat. [6. P.79]

According to medieval authors, the third largest city in Fergana was Osh, which also

consisted of a walled kohandiz, medina, and rabat.

Uzgen was smaller than Osh 1.3 times. Its importance is marked by its location on the border with the Turks and its large-scale trade. Uzgen consisted of four parts that were separated from each other and was not big enough if compared with Ahsikent. That is to say, its area was a lot smaller than Ahsikent.

Uzgen rose during the Karakhanid period to be the capital of one of the largest administrative units (udel). Magnificent mausoleums and towers of this period have been preserved. [4. P.204].

There are several settlements-cities location of which need to be clarified. For example, identifying the location of Haylom, Shikit, Vonkas, Nasrabad and other similar cities, which are described as located in the Miyan ravzan (between the two rivers), is also a topical issue.

In ancient Khojand, a large kohandiz built in the period up to the 7th century has been preserved (320X200 m). It can be assumed from this size that its shahristan had a large size. In the tenth century the whole city stretched across the farsakh, that is, it was twice as large as in the ninth century [4. P.205].

Al-Istahri's opinion "Fergana has no city without kohandiz and solid medina", which means that nearly all cities had solid fortification, is vital in understanding the history of development of Fergana cities in 7th and 8th centuries. [2. P.312].

Some changes occurred in the significance of certain cities in 11th and 12th centuries: Kuva slowly began to fade, Rishtan lost its importance, but Marginon rose. It is difficult to give a definite idea about the development and change in the number of other cities.

While during the Samanid period, Fergana undoubtedly found its place in the history of Central Asia, it became an important

political center during the Karakhanid period. It took this position after Turks settled in Fergana. Turks were long considered the military and political force of Fergana. Uzgen was under the control of Turkish Hakans in the 9th century. During the Qarakhanid period, the Turks regained power in Fergana and chose ancient Uzgen as their capital for the first time. However, the economic potential of Fergana, which was obtained during Samanids, was maintained during the Karakhanid period. At that time, the Samanids used the fulus-coins of Nasr II and Nuh ibn Mansur minted in Ahsikent, along with the coins minted in Uzgen. The relatively ancient coins of Ahsikent date back to 861-862, and the later dates back to 1067-1068. It follows that Ahsikent retained its political position even during the Karakhanid period. However, it should be noted that a smaller number of Kasan (1037-1038) and Margilan coins were also used. According to the coins, the Karakhanids occupied Fergana in 1002-1003 [5. P.35].

According to sources, after the conquest of Bukhara and Movarounnahr march, Nasr ibn Ali returned to Uzgen and as the ruler of the Mavorounnahr province, he chose Uzgen as the provincial capital. Not only in the 9th century, but also in the 12th century, Uzgen maintains and strengthens its position as the capital of Fergana. Beautiful architectural monuments, northern and southern mausoleums, built in 1152 and 1187 proves this. Culture flourishes in Karakhanid period. This can be shown in the art of architecture, which reached its high level in Karakhanid period.

Uzgen was no longer under the control of Karakhanids at the beginning of 13th century, and became the place in which Kara Khitai vicegerent kept their treasury. Kuchluk, the leader of Naymans, was the governor in Uzgen in 1210. Nonetheless, he also could not settle in Fergana like other Kara Khitai people.

The economy and culture of Fergana formed in the 10th century changed only a little in the later Karakhanid period. Some cities that expanded during this period were of particular importance. The Uzgen Tower was built during this period.

The ark and shahristan of Uzgen were surrounded by a wall and the population was densely populated. Many archeological findings - pottery and coins - gives evidence to a busy life.

CONCLUSION:

In short, in the early middle Ages, the cities of Fergana rose in all respects. Socio-political and cultural life was revived in the cities. Many cultural and administrative facilities were built.

Scientists from the cities of Fergana made a significant contribution to the development of science in the region which was reflected in the works of medieval scholars.

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