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THE HISTORICAL TOPOGRAPHY OF THE KHAZOR ZHUSH MONUMENT

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ABSTRACT

when studying the history of a particular area or monument, it is important to pay attention to what it's natural-geographical and economic-political place in the region is, in addition to focusing on the coverage of the same monument in written sources, its archaeological study. Only then will we be able to properly restore the historical landscape of the monument that we want to explore. Any archaeological site, whether it is an ordinary village or a large city, can take its place in the region on the basis of certain laws.

This article examines the historical topography of the Khazor Zhush, a medieval monument located in the northern part of Samarkand, Sogdia. It is known that in the Middle Ages there were dozens of large and small towns, villages and towns in Samarkand Sogdiana. They also served as important regional economic hubs, depending on certain natural, geographical and economic conditions.

Local and Arab-Persian written sources have brought us a huge amount of valuable information about the local conditions of Samarkand-Sogdiana, their center, and their economy. Based on the information provided in these sources, it is possible to get an idea of the economic and political role of the cities of Sogdiana, their importance in the Silk Road system.

The article highlights the study of the Khazor Zhush monument in the sources, its archaeological description and economic and political significance in Central Sogdia.

KEYWORDS

Sogdiana, Samarkand, Hazora Zhush, Bekkurgontepa, advanced middle Ages, written sources, archaeological research, and metallurgy.

INTRODUCTION

A very large number of Central Asian regions have reached a new stage of development due to the advanced middle Ages, especially since the time of the Samanids and Karakhanids. The Sogdia region was one of the most important parts of Central Asia from a strategic point of view, even in the developed middle Ages. Therefore, this region was the center of interests of the main political forces of that period. Sogdia region has long been a part of Central Asia with very rich human and economic resources.

Central Sogdiana was considered the most densely populated and relatively developed region of Sogdia. This view is supported by written and archaeological evidence. During the middle Ages, Central Sogdiana had a number of large and small cities [Aslanov 2019: 22].

In the heyday of the Middle Ages, the districts and cities of central Sogdia, in a sense, had separate production networks and their own local economies. This tradition was an echo of the confederation that formed in the early middle Ages. For example, it confirmed the independent coinage and tax systems of the Sogdian rulers. Each ruler also had their own army, and the united rulers belonged to the same dynasty. The administrative units had independent state administrations, as well as independent international relations of Sogd. (Heyibov, 2014,14). While the territories of Sogd in the IX - early XIII centuries were part of the Samanid and Karakhanid states, the cities of the region and their centers were considered small economic cities, concentrated in a certain sense around Samarkand. Its natural and geographical

conditions were also important in the economic development of Central Samarkand.

Natural and geographical location: Naturally, geographically, the Nurata mountains are considered the northwestern branch of the Turkestan range, the location of which corresponds to the regions of our country - the Jizzakh, Samarkand, Navoi regions. In the southeast, the Snake Gorge (Ilonutdi) pass in the Sangzor River valley separates it from the Morguzar range, while its territorial border adjoins the Zarafshan marshes in the south and the Kyzylkum desert in the north. The Nurota Mountains are a range of mountains that consists of two parallel ridges, known as the North and South Nurota Mountains. In the southeastern part of the northern Nurota range, there are the Kuytosh Mountains. These mountains begin in the northwest at the Sovurbel pass and stretch southeastward to the Sangzor river, covering a distance of approximately 70 kilometers with an average elevation of 1,260 meters. The central part of the Northern Nurota range is relatively high, the average altitude above sea level is 1750 m, the highest point (Zargar peak-gornoe highway) is 2169 m, and in this area there are also such high peaks as Big Fozilmon (2134 m), Karchigai (2105 m). The northwestern part of the Northern Nurota Mountains is relatively low, with an average height of 900-1,100 meters. This area is separated from the southern branch of the range, known as the Southern Nurota Range, by a series of meridional valleys that are formed by streams originating in the Northern Nurota Mountains. These valleys include Gubdintog, Karokchitog, and Oktog, which flow from southeast to northwest. In the northwest of Oktog, Koratog is located within the mountains of the Southern Nurota

range. These mountains are separated by the territories of the districts of Kushrabot, Kuytosh, and Nurota. The Nurota Mountains stretch northwest of the Snake Gorge (Ilonutdi), and they are formed from Paleozoic metamorphic rocks, such as limestone, sandstone, and shale. The total length of this mountain range is about 180 kilometers, and the average elevation above sea level is between 1,000 and 1,500 meters [Koriev 1968: 44].

The mines in the mountains surrounding Central Sogdia and the fertile lands of the Zarafshan Valley were important factors in the economic development of Samarkand. These mines produced gold, silver, lead, and mercury, which were all valuable resources. The Nurota Mountains also had mines that contributed to the region's economy. In the developed Middle Ages, Samarkand and the surrounding cities and villages did not lose their cultural, socio-economic, and political significance. Although these successes in Central Sogd began during the Samanid period and continued to develop under the Karakhanids and Khorezmshahs, according to archaeological evidence, the cities of Maveranahr grew much faster in the 11th and 12th centuries than in the 9th and 10th centuries. The economic basis of the cities and trade expanded during this time. If the cities were still primarily agricultural during the Samanid era, they became more industrialized during the Karakhanid era [Aslanov, 2022, p. 13]

DISCUSSION

One of the major stops on the route from Samarkand to Vidor, and from there to the northern regions including the Northern Iron Gates of Sogd and Nur (Nurota), is the town of Hazora Zhush (see Figure 15). The name of this large settlement, which was mentioned in medieval written sources as Hazora, has survived to the present day as Zhush. A large

monument located in the eastern part of Zhush village, Bekkurgon Tepa, can be identified with the town of Hazora Zhush. Information about Hazora Zhush can be found in the events related to the construction of the Abdullah Khan dam, which was built near this village by Bukhara's ruler Abdullah Khan, who ruled from 1557 to 1598. This information is contained in the work "Abdullah" by the 16th century historian Khofiz Tanish Beg Mir Muhammad Bukhari. According to the historian, "Abdullah Khan Temur passed through Okchab, which is located in the valley of Hazora Zhush, on his way from Kobuk to Nurota. At that time, the valley was filled with floodwaters, which made it difficult to use for agriculture. To solve this problem, Abdullah Khan ordered Ahmad Ali Otalik Naiman to build a new dam in the narrow gorge of Hazora Zhush" [Berthold 1965: 204]. It mentioned the Abdullakhanbandi dam, which was built in Beklarsoy near the village of Okchab, near Zhush, located in the southern regions of the Nurota Mountains.

The monument to Bekkurgontepa, which has survived to this day, is now located on the territory of the village of Zhush in the Koshrabat district of the Samarkand region. Bekkurgontepa is a large archaeological site consisting of a large arch with sides measuring 190 x 170 meters, a height of 24 meters, and a triangular city that surrounds it on all sides, as well as a huge suburb. It is believed that the arch was built in the center of the Shahrstan. Archaeological finds in the form of pits and notches on the territory of Shahrstan indicate that the settlement began to form in the 5th century AD and ceased to exist by the 12th century. On the northern side of Shahrstan, extending 1 km from east to west and 800 m from south to north on a hill, there are the remains of the suburb of Bekkurgontepa. Several pits found in the Rabad area suggest that the cultural layers in this area are 2-3 meters deep (Vafaev, 1982, p. 69). Archaeological materials collected from the cultural

strata in Rabad indicate that this area was inhabited during the 9th-12th centuries. Due to the fact that most of Rabad's territory has been occupied by modern residential areas, its topography has changed significantly. However, in many places, the remnants of the streets that crossed through Rabad can still be seen, as well as the traces of trenches. Inside the trenches behind the eastern defensive walls of Shahristan and in the low-lying areas in the form of trenches, large quantities of iron gravel and ceramic slag have been scattered in many places along the remains of the streets of Rabad. In particular, the presence of pebbles suggests that there are burnt areas nearby, indicating that iron was processed at some point in the city of Bekkurgontepa and later in Rabad. These findings suggest that Hazora Zhush was one of the major metal production centers in Sogd. It appears that many metals, extracted from the rich deposits of the Nurota Mountains, were smelted in this city. In particular, iron ore, with its widespread use, was extracted and processed in high quality. Archaeological and geological research in the Nurota region has revealed that these mountains have long been rich in gold, silver, copper, mercury, lead, and iron, among other minerals, which have been mined in significant quantities. Ancient deposits of iron ore have been found in five locations within these mountains [Pruger 1978: 212-219]. Archaeological and written records confirm that the deposits in the mountains around Central Sogdiana, the fertile wildlife areas and the Zarafshan river basin, as well as foreign trade, formed the basis for the region's economy. The Nurota Mountains, located on the northern side of Sogd, were one of the major mining areas in Maverannahr during the 5th to 13th centuries. Gold, copper, lead, mercury, and marble, among other minerals, were extracted from the region for use in various crafts. In addition to these metals, gold, oil, and iron were also extracted

from deposits between Bukhara and Ustrushon [Karaev 1983: 212-219].

CONCLUSION

Bekkurgontepa was one of the largest cities in the Sughd region, covering an area of more than 100 hectares and located on the northern border of the Samarkand-Vidor-Nurota and Nurota-Shosh roads [Raimqulov 2017: 135-136]. The large income generated by the trade route through this area, as a result of the processing of metals and other minerals extracted from the mountains, and was a major factor in the transformation of this city into a major metropolis.

At the same time, this city lied in a contact zone between ancient nomadic and sedentary peoples who lived in the arid steppes beyond the mountains and on the southern and northern foothills of the Nurota Mountain range. Trade, economic, and cultural connections between people with different lifestyles played a significant role in the development of this city as well.

In general, the city of Hazor Zhush was one of the largest production centers in Central Sogdia during the era of the Middle Ages and played a significant role in supplying metal raw materials to Samarkand.

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