

# Excavations Conducted At The Romitan Fortress

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**Abstract:** This article provides information on the geographical location of the Romitan fortress, the history of its study in archaeological and written sources, the emergence of the toponym Romitan and what meanings it reflects, as well as scientific innovations identified during archaeological research and studies conducted at the monument in recent years by the joint international expedition of Uzbekistan and France.

**Keywords:** Numismatics, Romitan's location, fire parapets, barracks.

**Introduction:** Romitan is located 25 km northwest of Bukhara, between the villages of Bogi Zirak and Alamdor, approximately 10 km west of the modern city of Romitan in Bukhara region. The settlement consists of four parts, including a fortress, two shahristans, and a rabod. The total area of the settlement is more than 25 hectares.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

from the 9th-11th centuries, Ramiton is described as a city in Western Sogdiana, and sometimes as a large village, and is referred to by various names. For example, an-Narshahi and an-Nisaburi call the city Ramtin, al- Istakri call it Ramisana, al-Muqaddasi call it Aryamisan, as-Sam'ani call it Ramisana, Armisana, Yaqut al-Hamawi call it Zamisan, Zamisana, and others.

As a major urban center of the Bukhara oasis, Ramitan attracted the attention of historians since the Middle Ages, which led to the preservation of many legends and traditions associated with its formation. According to Muhammad Narshahi, the author of "History of Bukhara", Ramitan was originally called "Bukhara" and was one of the main residences of the Bukhara rulers. Similar information was also provided by al-Muqaddasi. According to legends, in ancient times Ramitan was the main residence of the Turanian king Afrosiab, and the pleasant climate of the city relieved his daughter of constant headaches. There is also a legend about the marriage of a Chinese princess to the Bukhara ruler Bukharkhud od.

of the Tang Dynasty (618–907) mention Romitan as the residence of the ruler of the Ansu oasis, but the locals

called their country Bukha (Bukhara). These records date back to 656–661. [2 77]

During the Islamic period, Ramitan finally lost its city status and was later referred to as a village. However, after the conquest of Sogdiana in 751-752, Abu Muslim established his headquarters here.

According to al-Muqaddasi, at the time of his visit, the entire oasis was called "Bukhara" and its capital was called Numizhkat.

Regarding the etymology of the word "Romitan", in Persian the word "rokh" means "road", while the word "misan" means "house, shelter". Together, the word "Romitan" means "shelter, house or village on the road". The location of Romitan also supports the meaning of this word, as Romitan is located on the main road from Sogd to Khorezm.

The town has a complex structure, with a large, almost square, arched fortress in the center, the base of which is 220 x 200 meters and a height of about 10 meters. In the center of the fortress is a rectangular hill measuring 60 x 50 meters, located 5 meters above the surface of the fortress. According to experts, this hill may have served as a fortress. In the early 1970s, an employee of the Institute of Archaeology of Uzbekistan, RX Sulaymonov, excavated a pit 14 meters deep at this site. In the lowest layers of the pit, ceramics dating back to the 4th-5th centuries AD were found, thereby determining the date of the foundation of the city of Ramitan. Ceramics dating back to the 11th-12th centuries were found on the surface [4 118-129].

A 20x20 meter platform made entirely of mud bricks

was found on the surface of the fort. The location of any structures there has not yet been determined. The dense composition of the mud bricks suggests that they may have formed platforms on which a magnificent public building stood in the center of the fort. A medieval well was discovered during the excavations.

2013 and 2014, employees of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan AA Raimkulov and Sh.T. Adilov excavated a pit in the northeastern corner of the fortress, where important fortifications of the ancient city were located. A small square elevation is located here. Similar elevations are also present at the four corners of the arch. During the excavations, part of the fortification - the northeastern part of the fortress wall, about 12 meters long, with two rows of slit-shaped holes in the outer and inner corridors - was examined. The fortress wall was built of mud bricks 40-50 cm long, 32-36 cm wide and 10-12 cm thick. A thick layer of clay was laid between the bricks, which allowed for the rapid construction of the defensive wall. The holes were built in two rows in the shape of a chessboard inside the original wall. This indicates that the corridor inside the wall was two-story. The embrasure is 1.1–1.2 meters long, 12–18 cm wide, and the distance between the embrasures is about 1.5 meters. The width of the corridor is still unknown, as its inner wall has not yet been found. During the settlement period, the corridor was completely surrounded by a moat, and the city's defenses were located at the top of the fortress wall. Parapets for fire may have been built on top of the wall later.

Almost eight rooms were found here, arranged in a row, as part of the castle system.

Room 1. This room is located in the northernmost part of the excavation site and measures 6.80 x 2.23 m. Further north from this room, the city's defensive structures (outer fortress walls, corridors, etc.) begin. Due to the dense arrangement of the corridors inside the wall, it was not possible to determine their edges. The room served the function of a "tandoor room", since the remains of two tandoors for baking bread were found in the center of the room. A sofa is located under the eastern wall, and part of it continues under the northern wall. A low sofa is also located under the western wall. In the southwestern part of the room there was an entrance from room 2. In the final stage, the entrance was surrounded by a wall. The room has traces of heavy fire.

Room 2. This room, measuring 7.0 x 2.50 m, is located south of Room 1 and also served as a kitchen. A large two-chamber hearth measuring 68 x 50 cm is located under the eastern wall. A similar hearth measuring 165

x 65 cm is located under the southern wall. A sofa was built in the center under the northern wall. This room has been used in two phases. There are traces of fire on the walls and in this room. The only L-shaped entrance to the room is located in the western part and is connected to a transverse common corridor or courtyard.

Room 3. This room, measuring 5.75 x 3.05 m, is located south of Room 2 and served as a bedroom, as there are couches along the north, east, and south walls. There is a narrow space between the couches. The room was connected to a transverse common corridor or courtyard by an L-shaped passage.

Room 4. This room, measuring 5.10 x 3.05 m, is located south of Room 3 and, like Room 3, also served as a bedroom, as there are couches along the north, east, and south walls. There is a narrow space between the couches for a wall passage. The room is connected to a transverse common corridor or courtyard by an L-shaped passage.

Room 5. A large room resembling a great hall. Its original dimensions in the first phase were 8.55 x 4.15 meters. In the second phase, the room was narrowed to 8.55 x 2.45 meters. To achieve this, a new wall approximately 1 meter wide was built from the inside, parallel to the south wall. The resulting gaps, 80 cm wide, were filled with loose soil and construction waste. Although the general contours have been determined, the room has not yet been fully excavated.

Room 6. Located south of Room 5. It is square in plan, 6 meters wide, with sofas attached to the walls on all four sides. Part of the sofa under the north wall is reserved for the stage and the surface is higher than the rest of the sofa. The south wall has not yet been identified. The passage leading to the room is located in the southwest corner. Judging by the arrangement of the sofas, the room probably served a public function.

Room 7. Between the gate and Room 6 is a small, oblong room with a corner sofa. Its dimensions are 6.0 x 2.40 m. It may have formed a single complex with Room 6 and extended in a north-south direction. The corridor was located in the southern part.

Room 8. A large, L-shaped room. In the second phase, it may have served as a courtyard area next to the building's gate. The south wall has undergone various reconstructions, as a result of which the purpose of the room has constantly changed.

The nature and location of the uncovered rooms, as well as their proximity to the fortification system, suggest that they were part of a military barracks located in the north-eastern corner of the fortress. Apparently, similar buildings were also used in the four

corners of the fortress. Barrack-shaped structures were also found in the arch of the Varakhsha settlement. According to V. A. Shishkin, the barracks in Varakhsha consisted of two parts: the eastern part was used as a barracks, and the western part was intended for the residence of the ruler [5 92]

the barracks in the town of Romitan, especially in the kitchen, traces of a severe fire that destroyed the entire building are visible. This fire may be associated with the Arab conquest of the Bukhara oasis in 706-709, as there are records of battles between the ruler of Romitan, Hunukhud ot, and Qutayba ibn Muslim [ 3 154]. Alternatively, it may be associated with Abu Muslim's campaign against Sogd in 751-752. These military campaigns may have completely destroyed the Romitan fortress, as late medieval cultural layers and ceramic materials are visible in the upper layers. By the end of the Early Middle Ages, as in the town of Romitan, the cessation of the function of the fortress as a military structure is observed in almost all major medieval cities of Transoxiana.

Ceramic materials found in these rooms date back to the 6th-7th centuries. Among the items found in the kitchen was a coin that was identified as an imitation of an Absar coin minted in the 7th century.

### **METHODOLOGY**

This study uses a scientific analysis of the above-mentioned topic, combining several approaches from written sources and scientific literature. These include, in particular, a comparative and analogical analysis of the collected data. The study systematically uses data from recent archaeological research, taking into account the chronological sequence of the finds and their empirical accuracy. This multifaceted methodology allows for a reliable reconstruction of the cultural and historical processes at the Romitan citadel monument.

### **RESULTS**

During the research, information was provided about the natural geographical features of the Romitan fortress, the toponymic interpretation of the monument, and the archaeological excavations carried out there. In this, we can see that the city was

one of the major cultural centers of the Bukhara oasis in the early Middle Ages , and after the arrival of the Arabs, this place lost its city status and turned into a village. This is evidenced by archaeological research in the barracks part of the monument.

### **CONCLUSION**

Based on the above scientific analyses, it can be concluded that large urban cultures were formed in the Bukhara oasis by the early Middle Ages. As examples,

we can cite monuments such as Poykent, Varakhsha, Romitan, and Vardonze.

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