



Scientific Analysis of the Medieval Archaeology of Uzbekistan

Morteza Khanipour
PhD, Associate Professor
Tehran University
Iran

Ishkuvatov Hamza Abdumannonovich
Lecturer of Department
Preservation of Cultural Heritage Objects
Samarkand State Architectural and construction University
Uzbekistan

Annotation

The article is devoted to the scientific analysis of the medieval archeology of Uzbekistan, covering the period from the VI to the XV centuries. Key aspects of research are considered, including urban architecture, irrigation systems, handicraft production, trade and religious life. Examples of archaeological sites such as Afrasiab, Toprak Kala and Magoki Attari Mosque are given, which illustrate the development of the social and economic structure of the region.

Keywords: Medieval archaeology, Uzbekistan, Afrasiab, Toprak-kala, the Great Silk Road, urban architecture, irrigation, handicraft production, cultural heritage, archaeological methods, Central Asia.



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INTRODUCTION

The main areas of research

Urban architecture.

One of the characteristic features of medieval Uzbekistan is the intensive development of cities. Excavations in Samarkand, Bukhara, Khiva and Tashkent have revealed complex urban planning systems, including citadels, artisan quarters and shopping districts. For example, the remains of palaces and mosques show the influence of Islamic architecture, especially since the 10th century. Of interest are such monuments as:

Afrasiab (Afrosiab) is an ancient settlement that was the prosperous capital of the rich and powerful state of Sogdiana. The city, called Makaranda in those days, was a developed center of trade and was located at the crossroads of the largest roads of the Great Silk Road. Caravans loaded with thousands of goods came here. There were rich caravanserais, merchants' shops were full of wonderful things. [1]

Afrasiab has been in oblivion for centuries. He remained only in legends and legends, like a lost treasure forever. However, in the 1870s, when Samarkand was under the rule of the Russian Empire, excavations began in the settlement, which made it possible to discover hundreds of priceless artifacts from different historical eras. Ceramic figurines, pottery with elegant ornaments, ossuaries, coins, jewelry, household utensils, tools and many other antique items. Fragments of the preserved walls of the ancient city, as well as unique frescoes dating from the VII-VIII centuries, are especially interesting. All these finds are on display in the halls of the historical museum of Samarkand, which stands next to the ruins of an ancient settlement. [1]



Figure 1. Afrasiab — ancient Samarkand, where unique wall paintings of the VIII century were discovered.

None of the ancient monuments of the city hides as many mysteries for archaeologists and historians as this one. Before the Arab conquest, there was a bazaar where idols, medicinal drugs and spices were sold-attoron; there was also a temple of the Moon (Moss). A mosque was later built on the site of this temple. The first part of the name of the mosque "Magok" means "pit", because it was already half hidden by rapidly growing cultural layers.

During excavations in the 1940s under the guidance of scientist V. Shishkin, it was discovered that the first mosque was erected on this site in the IX century. The mosque was four-pillar and decorated with carved stock and paintings. A fire in 937 destroyed the mosque. In the XII century, a new building was erected according to the same plan, from which a portal with a unique monochrome decor was preserved in the south, the building collapsed in the XV century. The revival of the mosque in a place illuminated for centuries dates back to 1546, judging by the inscriptions on the new eastern portal leading to a semi-underground, but already sixteen-column hall. [2]



Figure 2. Magoki-Attari Mosque in Bukhara, one of the oldest mosques in Central Asia.

The outstanding monument of Khorezm culture of the I—VI centuries AD is the Toprak-kala settlement. In the III century, the capital of Khorezm was located here. Toprak-kala was discovered by the Khorezm expedition led by S.P. Tolstov in 1938. The city was a regular rectangle in the plan. In the north-western corner was the ruler's palace, a huge

three—towered castle. To the southeast of the castle was the temple of fire. A long street ran south from it, cutting the city in two halves. The alleys that branched off from it separated from each other the massive houses-quarters that made up the capital of late slave-owning Khorezm. Built in the III century, the fortress was the residence of the rulers of the Khorezmshahs until 305. Due to the numerous wars of conquest, the rulers left the residence and the city gradually declined. [4]



Figure 3. Toprak-kala fortress in Khorezm, which served as an administrative and cultural center.

Irrigation systems

The medieval states of Uzbekistan widely used irrigation, which contributed to the development of agriculture. Excavations of ancient canals such as Ankhov and Uzun have revealed complex hydraulic systems that allowed large areas to be supplied with water. Archaeologists are identifying canal construction methods, as well as the adaptation of irrigation to changing natural conditions.

Handicraft production

Studies of craft workshops indicate highly developed ceramics, metallurgy, weaving and jewelry. For example, ceramic products from Afrasiab and Varakhshi are distinguished by complex patterns and polychrome glaze, and metal objects found indicate the development of foundry art.

Finds on the ancient hills of Afrasiab indicate that pottery was developed in Sogdiana in the time before our era. These are clay figurines of mythical animals personifying deities, bowls, humas, painted and covered with blue, greenish and brown glaze. Samarkand ceramics are probably one of the oldest in the territory of Maverranahr. [3]

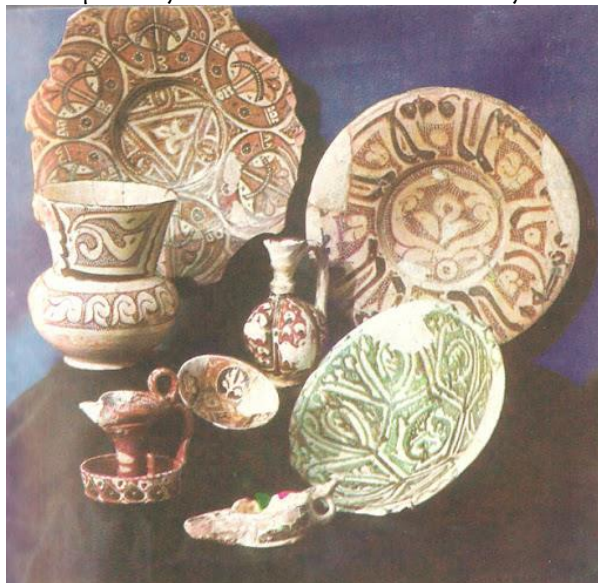


Figure 4. Finds on the ancient hills of Afrasiab

Trade and cultural exchange

Uzbekistan was located at the intersection of the Great Silk Road, which contributed to the development of trade and cultural exchange. Finds of imported ceramics, glass, coins and silk confirm intensive contacts with China, Persia and Byzantium. Coin hoards, such as finds of Sogdian dirhams, give an idea of the currency systems of the region.

Religious life

Medieval Uzbekistan was an important center for the spread of Islam, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism and Nestorianism. Archaeologists are discovering mosques, madrasas and religious texts, as well as temples belonging to earlier religions. For example, the excavations of the Buddhist monastery of Ajina Tepe show a mixture of Buddhist and local traditions.



Figure 5. Ajina Tepe dates back to the VI-VIII centuries

The first mention of Ajina Tepe dates back to the VI-VIII centuries, when a Buddhist monastery flourished on this land. Its architecture, combining Indian and Tocharistan traditions, was mesmerizing with its monumentality. Stupas towered in the center of the complex, and the walls of the temples were decorated with frescoes and reliefs with images of Buddhas, Bodhisattvas and other deities.

Research methods

Modern archaeology actively uses multidisciplinary approaches. Among the methods of analysis:

Geophysical research — allows you to discover underground structures without excavation.

Radiocarbon dating is used to determine the dating of finds.

Laboratory analysis of materials is the study of the composition of ceramics, metals and textiles to determine their origin and manufacturing technologies.

The use of GIS technologies for mapping archaeological sites and restoring the historical landscape also plays an important role.

The importance of research

Archaeological research of medieval Uzbekistan is of great importance for understanding the history of Central Asia. They reveal the complex processes of the formation of states, the interaction of peoples and the adaptation of society to natural and political changes. It also contributes to the preservation of the unique cultural heritage of the region, which is part of world history.

The scientific analysis of the data continues thanks to the joint efforts of Uzbek and international research teams. The archaeology of Uzbekistan remains a living source of new discoveries that help expand the horizons of our knowledge about the medieval era.

Conclusion

A scientific analysis of the medieval archaeology of Uzbekistan allows for a deeper understanding of the historical and cultural development of the region in the period from the VI to the XV centuries. Research shows that Uzbekistan was a key center of trade, crafts and intercultural exchange due to its location on the Great Silk Road. Archaeological finds such as urban buildings, irrigation systems and handicrafts attest to a high level of social organization and technological progress. The use of modern research methods, including geophysics and radiocarbon analysis, opens up new opportunities for studying ancient monuments and reconstructing the historical landscape. The archaeology of medieval Uzbekistan not only contributes to the preservation of a unique heritage, but also helps to highlight the role of the region in world history, confirming its importance as a cultural and economic center of the Middle Ages.

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