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Ulugbek Artikov

National archeology center under the Scientific Academy of Uzbekistan
trainee applicant

MEDIEVAL FEATURES AND MATERIAL CULTURE OF THE ANCIENT CAPITAL AKHSIKENT

Abstract: The article refers Akhsikent – one the ancient city of Central Asia. Detailed information about the general description of the monument has given. However, the author has made a comparative analysis of the archaeological excavations carried out at the monument in different years and their summaries. In conclusion, author noted the work done during the years of independence at the Akhsikent monument and its importance in the context of world tourism.

Key words: Zhang Xiang, Great Silk Road, Central Asia, Fergana Valley, Akhsikent, archeological excavations, Arab travelers, fortress, rabad, shakhristan, trade, UNESCO, world tourism.

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Introduction

In the 2nd century BC, after the journey of the talented Chinese diplomat Zhang Xiang through Fergana to Central Asia, the Great Silk Road became a permanent communication route between East and West[1].

During this period, the road had two routes in Central Asia, the first passing through Fergana. The role of the capital cities in the prosperity of the famous trade route was great. In this regard, the ancient capital of Fergana, Akhsikent, is noteworthy. Among the people it is called the Old Axis. In the cultural layers of this monument are hidden historical monuments that provide invaluable information about the life and culture of the peoples of Fergana for about 2.5 thousand years[2].

Ibn Khordadbeq, one of the Arab chroniclers, when describing the part of the Great Silk Road passing through Fergana, mentioned the following cities: Khojand, Bob (Pop), Fergana, Quba (Quva), Osh, Uzen, Atbash. If the above information of Ibn Khordadbeq is analyzed in depth, the city of Fergana mentioned by the author will replace the Old Aksi monument[3].

Archaeological excavations in the territory of the old Aksi shown that the city of Aksikent is the oldest

capital city in the history of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan. It turns out that, like other major cities in Central Asia, Akhsikent had its own fortress, shahristani (inner city) and rabodi (outer city). Based on the materials found, A.N. Bernstam concluded that real life in the city dates back to the Kushan period. However, the prosperity of Akhsikent dates back only to the Turkic (VI - VIII centuries) and later (IX - X centuries), when it became a major trade and handicraft center of Fergana[4].

The study of Akhsikent began in 1885. Initially, N. Veselovsky, a professor at the University of St. Petersburg, a well-known archeologist and orientalist, worked here. In 1913, I.Kastane conducted another excavation and research. During the construction of the Greater Fergana Canal in 1939, Professor M. Masson was engaged in archeological exploration here. In 1960, under the leadership of academician of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan Yakhyo Gulyamov, specialists carried out archeological excavations in Akhsikent[5].

Archaeological excavations have confirmed the information in written sources about the relief of the city of Aksikent, its structure and quarters. In addition, during the excavations, more detailed information was

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obtained about some parts of the city, its separate buildings, as well as handicrafts[6].

One example is a study in the 1980s that uncovered a complex of eleven rooms arranged in a row from west to east along the northern Ark fortress wall in the Aksikent settlement. Adjacent buildings did not have a direct connection, but rather existed in isolation from each other[7].

More than 350 hectares of land around Shakhristan are occupied by rabod. The rabodi of the town of Akhsikent is surrounded by a wall, and the houses in the rabodi are made by clay. Medieval sources mentions that Akhsikent was several times larger than the famous Palestinian city of Ramla. Roads led to Akhsikent from different directions. According to Arab travelers, in the territory of Rabad there were beautiful gardens and orchards, the houses of rich people. Archaeological excavations have revealed that there were also artisan settlements in the areas of Rabod that connected Shakhristan to the east and west.

According to written sources, in the X-XI centuries there were several dozen baths in large cities, the operation and cleanliness of which was controlled by a special representative of the state. The bath also served as a place for cultural rest and relaxation, and sometimes as a meeting place for merchants from distant lands, and therefore a solution to the great trade problems.

Baths similar to the Aksikent baths were found at the Shokhjuvor monument, which dates back to the Karakhanid period. Baths of this period are found in the ancient cities of Central Asia, Samarkand and Nisa, and are located on the ground.

In another studied object of the city was found an underground sewer structure - tazar, built in the form of a gallery of baked bricks. Written sources mainly describe the general condition of cities and there is almost no accurate information on urban sanitation. Archaeological research shows that residential, public and industrial buildings are equipped with separate sanitary facilities: thirst, reserve pits and garbage wells (badrab). In particular, thirst - special sewage facilities designed to absorb used (dirty) water. They are designed for individual buildings. Tashnau mainly consists of an assimilation well, a drainage pipe, a drainage "reservoir". Thirst in the courtyards of homes and public institutions was in a more compact form, i.e., it consisted of a suction

well and a drainage "reservoir" located above it. Similar thirst-quenching structures have been found in residential complexes and craft workshops.

Although the ceramics of Akhsikent are close to the ceramics of other regions of Central Asia, at the same time it has local features that significantly complement our understanding of "Fergana ceramics". Dishes and kitchen utensils for various purposes, jugs - from the water layer to the miniature, a rich variety of patterns, common gray, earthenware, a large assortment of open embroidered vessels and a large set of vessels found during the excavation of Akhsikent reflect the material culture of medieval townspeople. The material and cultural artifacts of this period, found in the ruins of the old Akhsikent, are very diverse. Especially noteworthy are the glazed pottery[8].

In some of them it is possible to read the different inscriptions. Some of them have images of mythical and wild animals and domestic birds. Akhsikent craftsmen created a unique school of decoration and glazing of mysterious pottery during this period. Samples of the pottery, which are the result of this, are also kept in the Louvre State Museum in Paris, one of the most prestigious museums in Europe[9].

In short, in the Middle Ages in Akhsikent handicrafts developed in all directions. It will become a city of metallurgists and blacksmiths, meaning that experienced metallurgists knew the secret of producing pure steel from iron. In the 20th year of the 13th century, Akhsikent was completely destroyed by the Mongols. The aforementioned taps, palaces, and mosques will be demolished, and the masters of Akhsikent have been enslaved and taken to Mongolia. After that, the city of Akhsikent had move to a new place - the site of the New Akhsi monument.

Today, the ancient monument of Akhsikent took place from the list of UNESCO World Heritage Site. In 2001, an international seminar on "Akhsikent in the history of Uzbek statehood" was held in Akhsi[10].

At the same time, its history was widely publicized and a museum was established. The general appearance of the Akhsikent fortress is being reconstructed by specialists, creating a clear map, and the boundaries are being clarified. An in-depth study of this unique monument, the history of which dates back to the IV century BC, the introduction of foreign tourists to the history of the ancient capital is a small contribution to the development of world tourism.

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