



## Monuments of Panjakent: Archaeological School for European Professionals.

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### Sarazm

Located 15 km west of the modern city of Panjakent, on the left bank of the river Zerafshan, there is an early farming settlement. It is named Sarazm, Tajik for "where the land begins"). This site shows the development of agriculture, crafts, and urban development in Central Asia, from 4000 to 3000 BCE.

Sarazm was declared a protected historical and archaeological site in 2000 by decree of the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan. In 2010 the monument became the first Tajik object to be included in the World Heritage List.

Some open excavations of fragments of ancient buildings are preserved on site (in situ); they are covered with protective canopies and are available for visitors to see.

The formation of the Historical and Archaeological Museum at Sarazm and its inclusion in the World Heritage List of UNESCO (July 31, 2010, in the capital of Brazil) is an important step in the way of conservation of archaeological sites in the region.

From 1984 to 1997 a group from the department of Archaeology, in the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in the name of A. Donish in Academy of Sciences in the Republic of Tajikistan conducted research in Sarazm. The National Center for Scientific Research (CNRS) in France under the direction of N. Frakfora and Roland Bezervalya from France also participated in the research. From the standpoint of science, Sarazm is an important place for

the exchange of experience between European and Tajik specialists in ancient history of Central Asia.

### The castle on Mount Mug

The castle on Mount Mug (Kal'ai Moog or Moog Kal'ai Kuhi) is located on the famous spot, which among local people is called Kuhi Moog (Moog Mountain). It is on the left bank of the Zarafshan River, a distance of about 2 km from the village Hayrabod (Hayrobod), 15 km from the center of the current Ayni district, Sughd province of Tajikistan and 80 km east of Panjakent, up the river, opposite the famous source of "Obi Togmat" (Obi Tormat) located on the right bank of the river. The position of Mount Mug, according to Google is 39 ° 27'14.90 "N, 68 ° 24'44.17" east longitude at an altitude of 1411 m. above sea level.

History of discovery. In the spring of 1932, on Mount Mug, a local shepherd — a resident of the village Hayrabad, accidentally found a wicker basket with a document written on paper silky incomprehensible letters. For several months, the document passed from hand to hand in the villages of the Upper Zarafshan, and none of the local experts in ancient writing were able to read this document. The document was delivered to the capital of the Tajik Soviet Socialist Republic, Stalinabad (now Dushanbe) only through the efforts of the then (1932) Secretary of the District Party Committee Zahmatabadskogo Abdulhamid Pulotov. In the capital, it was established that the document was written in the Sogdian script and a photograph of the document forwarded to Leningrad known orientalist, Professor A.A. Freiman.

In 1933, at the direction of the governing bodies of the Tajik Academy of Sciences of the USSR base, Freiman, the expedition leader, organized a special archeological expedition to the upper reaches of the Zerafshan, alongside Al Vasiliev and V. Vorobiev. The purpose for the expedition was to undertake an archaeological study of the castle on Mount Mug.

The expedition found about 400 artifacts, most notably the first sample of Sogdian painting — a shield with the image of a warrior, and more than 75 hand-written documents, which brought worldwide renown to this monument. The results of archaeological excavations on Mount Mug were published in several scientific articles and reports, including in "Sughd Collection". Also in 1946, members of the Sogd-Tajik archaeological expedition (STAE), the monument was cleaned again and re-measured by the architect V.L. Voronina.

*Significance of the monument.* The monument is significant because it was the beginning of subsequent archaeological discoveries, mostly early medieval monuments in the Zeravshan Valley. The castle on Mount Mug shows the historical events that occurred during the conquest of Arabs in the region – in the Sughd area at the end of the seventh and the beginning of the eighth centuries. It is from this monument, from which the whole story of the medieval Sughd begins.

The archaeological materials found in the castle have been widely used to address the main problems of Central Asian history, allowing a completely different way to present the historical process in Central Asia in the early Middle Ages and during the Arab conquest in the mountainous part of Sogd. The vague contours of Sogdian civilization have become much clearer, and thanks to the historical Mug documents the toponymy of the cities of Central Asia, especially in the mountainous part of the Sogdian period of the conquest of the Arabs has been better defined. Sogdian manuscripts demonstrate the existence of an early medieval settlement — ancient Panjakent. "We first met the title Pyadzhikent in Sogdian documents from Mount Mug, in the first quarter of the eighth century," writes the Soviet Orientalist, O.I. Smirnova. These documents clarified the economic and political life of the mountainous part of Sogd in the seventh and eighth centuries. Many of these documents are diplomatic correspondence. It should be noted that these materials have played an important role in the study and interpretation of the history of medieval Sogd. European scientists, in particular Sims Williams, played an important role in the interpretation of Sogdian texts.

### Sandzharshah

The Sandzharshah Mound is located 12 kilometers east of the city of Panjakent (Tajikistan, Sogd region), on the second terrace of the Zarafshan Valley, at an altitude of 1069 m above sea level, on the right bank of the Magian Darya River, where it flows into the Zeravshan.

In 1947 O.I. Smirnova investigated the first settlement. She performed the visual topographic survey of the monument, based on the description and material dated from the fifth to eighth centuries. In 1975, Yuri Yakubov led an archaeological exploration in the territory of the settlement. He noted that the settlement was severely damaged, but that there was a strong potential for archaeological work there.

History of the study. In 2003, the East Sughd group performed the first archaeological excavations on the site, led by S. Kurbanov and G. Groppa, a German Orientalist, archeologist, and specialist in the Avestan texts.

From 2008 to 2010 the East Sughd group, led by Tajik archaeologist Kurbanov, was the first to study the citadel in the Northwestern part of the settlement. The expedition excavated the dungeon consisting of two parts.

Excavations were begun on a separate hill in the Northwestern part of the settlement. Under a layer of loess sediments the expedition found a fortified residential tower-like structure on a mud platform. The tower was circular in plan, with a height of about 6.60 m, located at some distance from Shahristan.

### Ancient Panjakent

The site of ancient Panjakent is located near the modern city of Panjakent (Sughd region of Tajikistan) on the second terrace above the floodplain of the river Zarafshan. It is located in an oasis bordered by two mountain ridges, in the North by the Turkestan Mountains and in the South by the Zeravshan Mountains.

Zarafshan Valley was in the past the main part of the country Sughd (Sogdiana). By the banks of the mountain rivers and streams flowing into the Zarafshan, many remains of settlements and monuments left by the Sogdians were found.

Ancient Panjakent is the most important monument of fifth through eighth century Sughd today. This dead, scattered city lies about 60 km from Samarqand — the former capital of Sughd.

Ancient Panjakent as a city appeared in the fifth century, apparently, on the site of several pre-existing settlements. From the beginning, the town consisted of a citadel and shakhristan (residential part of the medieval city) with an area of about 8 hectares.

The systematic scientific study of the antiquities of Tajikistan (and, first of all, Panjakent settlement) began in 1946. After all these years, the Panjakent settlement of the fifth through eighth centuries was and still is "the capital" of the archeology of Tajikistan. The masterpieces of Sogdian art discovered here have become world famous. At the same time, Panjakent archaeological expedition is a kind of Archaeological School for many Russian, Tajik and European archaeologists.

In addition, we can say that there is continuing close cooperation between archaeologists in Tajikistan and scientists in Moscow and Leningrad, at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Leningrad branch of the USSR Academy Institute Archeology, the State Hermitage Museum.