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RUSTAKS OF SAMARKAND OASIS IN MEDIEVAL

Abstract: This article is providing a new interpretation of the location of the rustak according to historical sources in Central Asia and archaeological data with new studies. Principal attention is paid to the importance of the rustaks during IX-XIII centuries.

Key words: Central Asia, Zarafshan, Farsakh, Rustak, Kesh, Kurgantepa, Siyohob, Rabad.

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Introduction

Samarkand region is located in the central part of Uzbekistan, in the bank of the Zarafshan river. According to natural and geographical conditions, this region is one of the favorable regions in Central Asia for agriculture and economic exchanges. The territory of Samarkand region is a kind of combination of floodplains flat and mountainous terrain. Most of the territory of Samarkand is occupied by plains, where a complex system of artificial irrigation was developed since the antiquity

According to Medieval written sources (10th-12th) there were six rustaks (districts) in eastern and northern areas of Samarkand oasis. And they had grand mosques. They are Yarket, Burnamad, Buzmadzhan, Kabudanzhaketa, Vedar and Marzbon ibn Turgesh. Three of them - Buzmazhon, Kabudanzhaketa Vedar's location have been debating longly among historians, orientalist and archaeologists of Central Asia. Recently, this issue has been treated by A. A. Raimkulov.

Yarket and Burnamad rustak was bordered Ustrushana (historical region; according to research this place located Uratubin-Shakhristan territory of modern Tadjikistan and Zamin plain of the Dzhizzak-Syrdarya) and their lands were not irrigated with the waters of Zarafshan and other natural sources. The center of the Burnamad rustak was located on the ancient caravan route from Zamin to Samarkand. Distance between Zamin and Burnamad was about 4

farsakh (measure of length; widely used in Central Asia; in Khorezm, Bukhara, Samarkand, Tashkent and Fergana in the 19th century the farsakh was about 6-7 km). This road passes through the northern and western spurs of the Zarafshan Range and the Morguzar mountains. This rustak was located in the modern territory of the Bakhmal district in the Dzhizzak region.

Yarket rustak covered a large plain north of Burnamad, in the western and south-western part of Nurata Mountains, to the north and north-east of Gubduntau mountains and east of Karakchitau. Yarket rustak corresponds to the modern Gallyaaraal district. According to the sources, fields of Yarket had large pasture lands, while agriculture was rain-fed and without irrigation. People could go 5 farsakh along mountain road from Burnamad to Hushufagn. So, Hushufagn was situated in the western foothills of Turkestan range. There was Barket city in the distance between Hushufagn and Buzmazhon. It located for 4 farsakh into the Katvan desert. Archaeologist H. G. Akhunbabaev (1983. P.155), who made an archaeological survey in Bulungur district in 1980's, identified Barket with the large archaeological site of Aktepa, located in the modern village of Aktepa-Mita. According to the Arab traveler Ibn Havkal, Buzmazhon and Maymurg (the rustak covering the territory of modern Taylyak and Urgut districts in the south-east of modern city of Samarkand) were rustaks of Kesh, Southern Sogd. Perhaps in 12th century

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rustaks of Buzmazhon and Maymurg, at some time, were belonged to Kesh. In Barket the major road divided into two directions: the first run west to Samarkand, located four farsakh far from it; the second gone to the north-west - in the directions of Kabudanzhaket, Vedar, Marzbon ibn Turgash, and Ishtikhan. According to Akhunbabaev (1983.Pp156-157;1990. Pp 26-28), Kabudanzhaket was situated in the place of Mingtepa settlement, located near the modern village Korapichok. It is noteworthy that, still today, local inhabitants call Mingtepa as Afrasiab, which is the usual name of the archaeological site corresponding to the ancient Maracanda.

The next settlement along this road was the city Vedar. Medieval sources reported that this city was the center of the homonymous rustak and it was situated 4 farsakh (30 km) north of Samarkand. Vedar rustak had both irrigated and mountainous areas (Bartold,1963. P.193). Large fields were irrigated of Vedar took water from the artificial canals of Bulungur, Pai and Karasuv. The latter Karasuv river flowed east by the mountain Karakchitau and near Ishtikhan it merged the left tributary of the Akdarya (the right branch of the Zarafshan after that the river splits twice at the height of Chopan-Ata hill, just the north of Samarkand). Written sources also mention the Sinavab (sometimes also reported as Siyehob), which crossed the Vedar rustak and then reached Ishtikhan. In my opinion, Sinavab was the name of the medieval river Karasuv. Of course, Karasuv river did not reach Ishtikhan city, but the water of this river used for irrigation of land near the city.

Based on these data, it is possible that Vedar rustak was located in the north of Akdarya river, on the territory of modern Payaryk and Koshrobat districts and it occupied the western territory of neighboring modern Gallaaral district (ancient Yarket rustak). The centre of the rustak of Vedar was Vedar city. According to written sources in Vedar existed the earliest cathedral mosque of the Maverannah and here it was produced the famous "cotton waste tissue of Vedar". At the distance of 4 farsakh, today is situated the town of Chelek, where a large tepa (archaeological mound) is still well preserved.

In 1940, the hill of Chelek was firstly studied and drawn up topographical map by archaeologists I. A. Sukharev and P. F. Liferenko (1940.Pp. 61-62). Mounds consisted of three parts: citadel, shahristan and rabad. Citadel was situated in the center of the Shahristan and it was measured 100x70 m and 18 m in height. However, it was largely destroyed between 1950-1970's because of factory and nowadays, only a small part of the ancient citadel still remains. The southern part of the city is about 20-25 acres, and almost the entire area is now covered by modern residential buildings. In southern part there are partial remains of the southern ramparts of the Shakhristan. The northern part of the settlement is approximately 15 hectares. A part of the defensive wall, about 200

meters long, is still preserved in the north-eastern part of the monument. The Rabad was possibly located in the south of Shakhristan, where is situated a famous ancient bazar in Chelek. Also the Rabad is actually covered residential and public buildings.

Although largely damaged, the hill of Chelek can be identified as the Medieval city of Weder because its position coincides with the distance from Samarkand (4 farsakh) and because, except for it, there are no others such a large archaeological settlements in the north of Samarkand.

Archaeological explorations conducted on the territory of Payaryk and Koshrobat districts in Samarkand region indicates that in ancient times, there were several large cities like Sagardji (Sagishtepa, Arktepa) Kurgantepa in Arlate, Bekkurgantepa in Dzhushu and several of settlements were in the north of the Zarafshan and this area had become one of the densely populated areas of the ancient Sogd.

The famous orientalist V. V. Bartold wrote that Vedar city was famous with its clothes for example, in Khorasan, only the Emirs, ministers, Cadies and rich men were sewn garments from this fabric. In that century the Arab historian al-Mukaddas wrote that this textile was highly appreciated by Baghdad sultans. In that century Arab traveler and historian Ibn Haukal left this impression "... in the city made vedarian fabrics of cotton, they were put on without slicing (Bartold, 1963.P. 441). This information provides us with the possibility of representing the number of demand and production of high-quality, distinctive fabric in this city, and certainly in the city most of the population engaged in the production of fabric.

According to the Arab traveler Jacob a mosque existed in Vedar. It is worth noting that the Arab travelers arriving in Maverannah in the 10th century, considered as city only those settlements that had central mosques. From this point of view, it becomes quite obvious that in the 10th century Vedar was one of a full-fledged city of Maverannah.

In the 8th-9th, Arabs resettled to Vedar city and in several villages in the surrounding area. They belonged to an Arabic tribe of Bakir ibn Vayil called "Suba'i". This name comes from the name of Abu Muzahim bin Suba-an-Nadir al-Sukkori, the founder of the Vedar mosque, who died in the year 269 AH (882). In the 12th century Vederstill was an important city with its cathedral mosque, defensive wall and tower (Bartold,1963. P.195).

Nowadays, near the southern wall of Shakhristan in the territory of rabad, in the western part of the city Chelek bazaar, there is a shrine and tomb named "Gayib ata". Although this place holds an important part among local inhabitants, there is no gravestones so no one knows who was buried here, as well as there is no legend on it. It is likely that this tomb belongs to Abu Muzahimu bin Suba-an-Nadir al-Sukkori as the grave of the theologian was visited and made

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pilgrimage by a traveler Abulkarim al-Samoni after three hundred years in the 12th century.

Marzbon ibn Turgash was next the city to Vedar. The name of the city come from the title Mayor - Marzbon. Marzbon is a title rather than a name and it refers to the Sogdian farmers who were invited to the court of the Caliph. There aren't any view points and facts among scientists about location place of settlement Marzbon ibn Turgash. Near the Chelek settlement there is a medieval fort Sogishtepa (Arktepa) located in 15-16 km in the west of Chelek. Sogishtepa (Arktepa) localized to the medieval town Sagardji (Buriakov, Vafaev, 1990. Pp. 43-48).

Archaeological excavations carried out at Sogishtepa in 1983 revealed the ruins of a fortress of the 2nd-1st centuries BC. After the Arab conquest of the ancient city in the early 8th century, appeared neighborhoods and the fortress of the ancient city turns on the citadel. Thus, in Medieval centuries, like many other cities in Maverannahr, Sagardj consisted of the citadel, shakhristan and rabad and it covered an area of more than 100 hectares.

Marzbon ibn Turgash was undoubtedly the Sogdian name of a historical figure during the Arab conquest. The word "marzbon" means status (position), possibly the ruler of the city, hence, it is possible that Marzbon ibn Turgash lived in Sagardj.

The Medieval town of Sagardj always attracted the attention of historians and archaeologists. The mound was firstly noted by V. L. Vyatkin (1902. P.62) in 1899, who wrote that coins were minted in the early Islamic period. Another orientalist V.V. Bartold was suspicious, to this opinion. In this case, V.V. Bartold was right, because there was not found any minted coin in Central Asia. But these data can prove that Marzbon ibn Turgash lived in this city.

The first archaeological research was conducted by G.V. Grigorev and I.A. Suharev in 1940 (Grigorev, 1940. P. 148; Suharev, 1940. Pp. 61-62).

The Arab traveler and geographer Ibn Haukal, who visited Maverannahr in the 10th century, suggested that the toponym Sagardj meant mountain system, as Nurata Mountains. However, Ibn Haukal apparently has never been in Sagardj but he saw these mountains only from afar. The Arab traveler Jakub (10th century) and the traveler from Merv Abdalkarim al-Sam'ani (12th century.) described Sagardjas a village.

In the 14th-15th centuries, written sources on Amir Temur and his dynasty reported that Amir Temur had rested many times in Sagardj. Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babur wrote in his work of Baburname that Sagardj was ruled by his cousin and he was there several times. Here, in the 12th century, the famous Burhoniddin Sagardjiy sheikh was born (Muslim scholar). Amir Temur built mausoleum above his grave, which is called Rukhabad now.

During the 1960's, a vast area around Sogishtepa, corresponding to its rabad was destroyed. According to local residents, before reclamation of this land ca. 700-800 m to the south of Sogishtepa the remains of quadrilateral ponds (70-80x25- 30 m., depth 2.5- 3 m) were well visible. Perhaps these ponds treated to epoch of Amir Temur and maintained to have a rest after long military campaigns.

At the time of the Ashtarkhanids domination (17th century.) sources reported that Sagardj was the center of a large oasis. In his publication "Bahr ul-asror" of the 1640, the historian Mamud Ibn Vali wrote that Maverannahr was divided into Bukhara, Samarkand, Sagardj, Uratepa, Karshi and Guzar. Sagardj city may possibly started to lose its value in the 20's of the 17th century, when a terrible famine and the decline began in Maverannahr. During the reign of Mangits dynasty in Bukhara Emirate took its place Chelak, heir to the ancient Vedar city.

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