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ABOUT THE RELIGIOUS MONUMENTAL ARCHITECTURE OF CENTRAL ASIA

Abstract: In the article religious monumental architecture of Central Asia is shown based on the material sources of the Kirqkhujra archeological monument situated in Namangan region. In the process of investigations at the Kirqkhujra monument which was periodized with the V-IV centuries B.C it was defined that the high edge in the centre of the city was flattened and a high platform was built on it.

Key words: Kirqkhujra monument, religious monumental structure, shakhristan, architecture, clay platform, temple, Zoroastrianism.

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Introduction

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The emergence and formation of religious monumental structures in Central Asia has been the focus of many researchers. The discovery of several examples of religious architecture since the 1940s has intensified the controversy. Although there has been evidence of religious freedom in Central Asia since ancient times, as well as the conversion of urban and rural populations to different religions, researchers have not been able to identify to which religion belonged the religious monumental structures identified during archeological excavations. There are differing views on the most influential local religious movements in Central Asia. Although a number of religious monumental structures have been studied in Central Asia, the development of Zoroastrian temples through them has not been observed. The main reason for this is that the sources and archeological data are not carried out in harmony.

As for the archeological materials, as mentioned above, several temples have been excavated in Central Asia so far. Among them are such monuments as Yerkurgan, Poykend, Chilanzar Oktepasi, Kizlartepa. However, there is no clear idea as to which religion they belong to. In this regard, the study of Poykend

temples is still controversial, and no conclusion has been made to summarise all of the studies made until today [Omelchenko, 2008. p. 88]. For this reason, the conclusions can be made only with the help of the results obtained from the reports.

Another expert, who made a significant contribution to the study of religious architectural collections in Central Asia, R. X. Sulaymonov was able to analyze the religious monuments of Central Asia on the example of the Yerkurgan temple [Suleymanov, 2000]. On this basis, it is possible to divide them into several groups. However, X. Sulaymonov ignores the grouping of large urban temples and out-of-town religious buildings in the process of distinguishing these types. This is one of their main features. Because in the temples outside the city, due to the priority of defense capabilities, the four-tower building is the main one, and the rest of the buildings are formed around it.

The same idea prevailed in the study of Chilanzar Oktepasi in the Tashkent oasis. The researcher was not sure whether it belonged to any religion and used quotation marks with the word "temple". Only in his later research did he come to the final conclusion that this monumental structure was a religious architectural structure based on its unsuitability and findings [Filanovich, 1983. p.117-

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122]. It also connects this religious architectural structure with belief in the spirit of the ancestors.

The Kizlartepa temple in the Fergana Valley is an exception, and excavations have shown that the monumental structure is associated with religion [Maksudov, 2000. p.115-118].

Recent research has provided important information on the formation of Zoroastrian temples in Central Asia. In particular, the religious monumental complex identified at the Kirkhujra monument may be a starting point in this regard. The Kirkhujra monument, located on the banks of the Syr Darya River near the city of Pop in Namangan region, was erected by experts in the 6th century BC. Periodized to VI-IV centuries [Anarbaev, Baratov, Saidov, Kubaev, 2016]. During archeological excavations, which began in 2013, one of the oldest urban centers in the Fergana Valley was opened at the monument, and its unique defense and religious monuments were studied. The city consists of three parts, and the religious monumental building we are focusing on is located in the 2nd district of the city. Although a large part of this area was washed away by the floods of Olmosoi in the spring, the central part is well preserved [Anarbaev, Maksudov, Kubaev, Nasritdinov, 2018]. There is a high hill in the central part, and during archeological excavations the remains of a monumental structure were found here. The structure is open, the sides are made of clay, step by step. This, in turn, allows us to conclude that it is a religious-monumental structure in the form of ziggurat [Anarbaev, Maksudov, Kubaev, 2017]. The surface of the structure is smoothed by pouring thick clay. The entrance to the temple is on the east side. There are 4 rectangular fireplaces on the clay surface, the inner and side parts of which are plastered with mud. The camps have been in operation for several years, and the old ones have been covered with mud and new ones were built. It was found in 4 such fireplaces, all of which were cleared of slaves. The fireplaces date back to the 1st century BC. To the west of the campfires is a special hut, the inside of which is filled with clean ashes and various rubbish. Fragments of pottery, animal bones, and deer antlers were also collected in the upper part of the ash urn. The main part of the pottery is handmade, and there are traces of fabric on the inside. An analysis of the collection of pottery reveals that they date back to BC. It allowed to periodize with II-I centuries [Anarbaev, Baratov, Saidov, Kubaev, 2016]. The above-mentioned deer antlers are 25 cm long, 5 cm in diameter, and the upper and lower parts are cut with a sharp knife. Archaeological excavations have shown that the site was associated with religious activities.

Such open-air religious structures have been studied in a number of monuments in Central Asia. In particular, in Northern Bactria in the monuments of Pshaktepa, Pachmaktepa, in Khorezm oasis] in the monument Kuzalikir [Askarov, 1982. p. 30-40. There

are reports that in Yerkurgan there is a building with a sacred fire burning on a high foundation in the open air [Suleymanov, 2000. P.238]. In order to clarify this issue, the materials of the monumental structure opened at the Kirkhujra monument were reworked, as a result of which it was determined that this unique building could be a place of worship for the Zoroastrian faith. Our opinion is based on the fact that the building is located in the center of the monument, the entrance to which is on the east side, there are fireplaces on the base of the clay, as well as a special enclosure for handcuffs. Although the location of the religious structure on the Kirkhujra monument on a high pedestal, the eastern side of the exit, and other parts of the building, such as the armory, have developed and changed in recent years, it has not lost its main function. We see the unchanging application of these traditions in a number of cities and suburban temples opened in Central Asia. In particular, the temples of Panjikent, Yerkurgan, Poikend, Robinjon, located in the city, were built on a high pedestal. The central part of the relatively old Yerkurgan temple is built on a brick foundation, while the foundations of the temples of Khontepa, Poikend, and Panjikent (the first temple) are made of mud and clay blocks. The foundation of the second temple in Panjikent is unique, the walls are made of raw bricks and then filled with soil mixed with gravel. These traditions are also reflected in the temples of Zhartepa, Kizlartepa, Chilanzar Oktepasi, Khontepa, located outside the major cities. That is, all of them are located on the foundations made of clay. However, in all of them, special handcuffs have not been identified or existed. Only in the temple of Yerkurgan, to the west of the temple, a special place was laid to rest [Suleymanov, 2000. P.47-48]. This tradition is reflected in the newly opened temple of Khontepa. The Khontepa monument is located near the Yerkurgan monument in the center of the large city of South Sughd, and it was found that the first building on the territory of the monument was built in the III century AD [Kubaev, 2016]. The temple, which opened at the monument, was built on an 80 cm clay platform. The entrance to the temple is on the east side, as in the temples of Kirkhujra, Panjikent, Poykend. The peculiarity of the "house of worship" (sanctification) is that the walls are made of raw bricks higher than the floor [Kubaev, 2018].

In conclusion, the order of construction of temples, studied during archeological excavations in Central Asia today, embodies the traditions of Zoroastrian religious monumental architecture mentioned in the sources. These traditions are constantly evolving and improving. In particular, the temple of the Kirkhujra monument is still open, while the temples of Yerkurgan, Poykend, Rabinjon, Panjikent were large, with magnificent halls. The two fire halls in the Poikend temple are not separated as a separate complex, while in Panjikent they are separated as a separate complex. In the early days,

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“Kul Uralari” was a simple pit (in Kirkhujra, Yerkurgan), while in Khontepa it was in a more

developed form, the edges of which were made of raw bricks.

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