

Early Archaeological Research On The Cities Of The Kashkadarya Oasis (The Case Of Kesh–Shahrisabz)

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Аннотация

This article analyzes the history of the earliest archaeological investigations conducted in the cities of the Kashkadarya oasis in Southern Uzbekistan, with particular emphasis on the cities of Karshi and Kesh–Shahrisabz. It highlights the scholarly significance of historical-topographical, architectural, and archaeological studies carried out from the early twentieth century until the late 1940s by researchers such as I. Castagné, L. Zimin, V. V. Bartold, A. Yu. Yakubovsky, M. E. Masson, and others. The results of the study demonstrate that the initial archaeological research laid an important scientific foundation for investigating the historical development, urban planning traditions, and tangible cultural heritage of the cities of the Kashkadarya oasis.

Keywords

Kashkadarya Oasis, Southern Uzbekistan, Karshi, Kesh–Shahrisabz, archaeological research, historical topography, architectural monuments, urban planning, tangible cultural heritage, early twentieth century.

Первые Археологические Исследования Городов Каракалпакского Оазиса (На Примере Кеш–Шахрисабза)

Аннотация

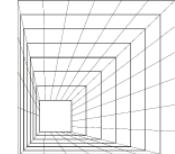
В статье анализируется история первых археологических исследований, проведённых в городах Каракалпакского оазиса Южного Узбекистана, в частности в Карши и Кеш–Шахрисабзе. Освещается научное значение историко-топографических, архитектурных и археологических изысканий, осуществлённых с начала XX века до конца 1940-х годов такими исследователями, как И. Кастане, Л. Зимин, В. В. Бартольд, А. Ю. Якубовский, М. Е. Массон и другие. Результаты исследования показывают, что первые археологические работы заложили важную научную основу для изучения исторического развития, традиций градостроительства и материально-культурного наследия городов Каракалпакского оазиса.

Ключевые слова

Кашкадарьинский оазис, Южный Узбекистан, Карши, Кеш–Шахрисабз, археологические исследования, историческая топография, архитектурные памятники, градостроительство, материально-культурное наследие, начало XX века.

Introduction

The study of the history of cities in the Kashkadarya oasis of Southern Uzbekistan on the basis of early archaeological research dates back to the beginning of the twentieth century. During this period, I. Castagné and L. Zimin (in 1916) conducted the first observational studies in ancient fortress and settlement ruins, as well as at archaeological sites such as Shulliktepa and



Qal'ayi Zahhoki Moron, with the aim of investigating the historical topography of the city of Karshi. As a result of their research, they succeeded in presenting brief but valuable information on the nineteenth-century urban structure of these sites, their trade and economic relations, and the everyday life of the local population in certain areas of the oasis. [1] From the 1920s onward, in many regions of Central Asia, including a number of cities in the Kashkadarya oasis, various aspects of social life—particularly historical and architectural monuments, tangible cultural heritage, the foundations of urban planning, and types of handicrafts—attracted the close attention of Russian military specialists. From this period, systematic studies of the rich tangible cultural heritage and historical monuments of the Kesh-Shahrisabz oasis also began. In particular, the first visits of Orientalist scholars to the protected architectural monuments of Shahrisabz were organized by the Committee for the Protection of Ancient and Artistic Monuments of Central Asia (Sredazkomstaris). As a result of these initial investigations, an album documenting the city's historical and architectural monuments was compiled. During 1925, scholars such as V. V. Bartold, V. L. Vyatkin, and art historians B. Denike and E. Cohn-Wiener visited Shahrisabz. It is also noteworthy that A. Yu. Madzhi, a student of the Turkestan Institute of Oriental Studies, presented written reports on the historical and architectural monuments of Kitab and Shahrisabz at a meeting of the Ethnography and Archaeology Section of the Turkestan branch of the Russian Geographical Society in Tashkent. [2]

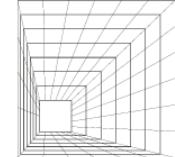
Methods

In the course of the research, historical-analytical, source-critical, historical-topographical, and comparative methods were employed. Particular attention was devoted to the analysis of archaeological observations, expedition materials, and scholarly reports produced from the early twentieth century to the late 1940s. In addition, data related to urban planning, architectural monuments, and the structural organization of urban neighborhoods were also examined.

Results

The views expressed by M. E. Masson and the architect G. A. Pugachenkova regarding the formation of a new city in the area of present-day Shahrisabz, located in the southern part of Kesh, as early as the Early Middle Ages—and the fact that this city was also called Kesh—are of particular scholarly interest. According to their interpretation, this settlement acquired urban status only after the twelfth century. In contrast, S. K. Kabanov, who carried out extensive archaeological research in the oasis, notes that Shahrisabz had already taken shape as a city by the ninth–tenth centuries. According to scholars and researchers, during the Antique period and the Early Middle Ages, Kesh began to develop on the right bank of the Oqsuv River, in the area of present-day Kitab. The main phase of development of the ancient city dates to the mid-seventh century, when Kesh became the center of Sogd, encompassing the Kashkadarya and Zarafshan oases. [3] From a scholarly perspective, the ancient cities of the region have long remained at the center of attention of historians, Orientalists, archaeologists, and ethnographers. Even today, traces of many cities have been preserved in the form of eroded mounds (archaeological sites), as well as the remains of structures, places of worship, or palaces buried beneath ruins. [4] Having passed through successive stages of development and decline, these monuments that have survived to the present day provide valuable information about the ancient and historical processes that took place in the region. Kesh–Shahrisabz can undoubtedly be included among such ancient cities. The history of the study of the Kesh–Shahrisabz oasis, based on analyses of written sources and numismatic materials, is reflected in the fundamental research and scholarly works of historians such as V. V. Bartold, M. E. Masson, G. A. Pugachenkova, O. I. Smirnova, S. K. Kabanov, and Z. I. Usmanova.

Discussion



The earliest archaeological investigations provided a solid scholarly foundation for demonstrating the multi-layered historical development of the cities of the Kashkadarya oasis. In particular, the study of historical topography, architectural monuments, and the neighborhood system in the case of the city of Shahrисабз contributed to identifying the stages of the city's socio-economic development. The research carried out in the first half of the twentieth century laid a strong scientific basis for subsequent archaeological and historical studies.

Conclusion

The earliest information related to the study of the history of the Kesh–Shahrисабз oasis is largely associated with the colonial policy of Tsarist Russia. Systematic archaeological research on the history and culture of Kesh–Shahrисабз, conducted in comparison with written sources, began in the 1920s–1930s, while significant scholarly achievements were attained mainly during the period from the 1950s to the 1980s. Subsequent studies were based on reports recorded by official representatives and military personnel of the British Empire, as well as on information provided by local authors. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, large-scale research aimed at compiling an archaeological map of the Eastern Kashkadarya region focused primarily on identifying ancient routes that had long connected the southern and central parts of Central Asia through the territory of Southern Sogd. In this context, ancient caravan routes located in the southern part of the oasis, their specific characteristics, and their relationship with the topography of population settlement were identified and documented. [5]

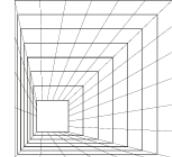
The investigation of the developmental dynamics of ancient agricultural micro-oases occupied by local populations in Eastern Kashkadarya made it possible to characterize the culture of the period, to study archaeological sites on the basis of written sources, and to systematically examine issues such as the most ancient routes linking the southern and central parts of the oasis. According to the results of archaeological research, the ancient urban planning traditions of Shahrисабз continued and developed on new foundations. Arab-Persian historians of the ninth–tenth centuries described Kesh–Shahrисабз in their works; however, contrary to assumptions made by some researchers, Inner Kesh could not have been located at the site of Qalandartepa during this period. No clear evidence of urban development has been identified in the Kitab area for the ninth–tenth centuries or subsequent periods. At the same time, cultural layers dating to the ninth–tenth centuries have been recorded both within and beyond the historical center of Shahrисабз and around its city walls.

The city's history, rich in ancient legends and numerous historical realities, has been studied by archaeologists and continues to be reflected both in its architectural monuments that have survived to the present day and in the values and traditions of the local population.

During the Early Middle Ages, the city of Shahrисабз was known as Kesh, the first capital located in the upper reaches of the Kashkadarya River, in the area of ancient and present-day Kitab. The presence of remains of fortification walls, ceramic vessels, terracotta objects, and coins belonging to local rulers within the cultural layers of the Kitab shahristan testifies to the fact that Kesh possessed distinctive urban planning traditions and had reached a high level of development already in the Early Middle Ages.

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