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THE KARAVAN-SARAY IN USTRUSHANA

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ABSTRACT

The article presents some of the results of excavations of the Turtkultep caravan-saray located near the city of Zaamin (Uzbekistan). Judging by the finds of coins and other artifacts, it was built in the X century and functioned until the XII century, after which it was abandoned. For the second time and for a short time, the caravan-saray settled down in the XVI-XVII centuries as a small settlement.

KEYWORDS: *Ustrushana, Fergana, Ancient Zaamin, Turtkultepa, Caravan-Saray, Ayvan, Brick, Blockage, Scythe, Bowl, Lid, Tagora, Pot, Jug.*

INTRODUCTION

The territory of Ustrushana includes the north-western part of present-day Tajikistan, the southern part of Uzbekistan and the western part of Kyrgyzstan, from the middle reaches of the Syrdarya to Samarkand to the upper basin of Zarafshan (Fig. 1). The main cultural centers of Ustrushana are located in the intermountain Shahrstan lowland (Ura-tepa cauldron), as well as in the northern regions of the Turkestan ridge in the Zaamin plains and in the upper basin of Zarafshan. It is bordered on the north by the upper reaches of the Syrdarya, on the south by the Gissar ridge. To the north, the historical provinces of Chach and Ilaq are bordered by the Fergana Valley to the east, Sogd to the west, and Chaghaniyan to the southwest. The geographical location of the areas north of the Turkestan mountain range is favorable for human habitation due to its climate, and people have lived since the Stone Age. From the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, the emergence of the need for production in the social environment of the population, a certain part of the northeastern nomadic pastoral tribes also adapted to sedentary life, as required by the ecological situation. Unlike other oases in terms of



Figure 1

geographical location and ecological environment, the main part of Ustrushana is mountainous and foothill areas. The assimilation of the country by the population was mainly "top-down" or mountainous areas, where water was abundant at first, took the mountain, and then in the plains the first villages and towns were formed from the archaic period. Traces of two different primitive cultures can be seen on the borders of Ustrushna and Fergana, where nomads lived on the right bank of the Syrdarya in the II-I millennia BC. On the left bank of the river, around Khojand and Ura-tepa, one can see the culture of the settled population.

The Turtkultepa caravan-seray is located 20 km west of the city of Zaamin (Uzbekistan). The monument attracted our attention back in the late 80s, but only in 1994 was it possible to examine it, and subsequently to carry out excavations.

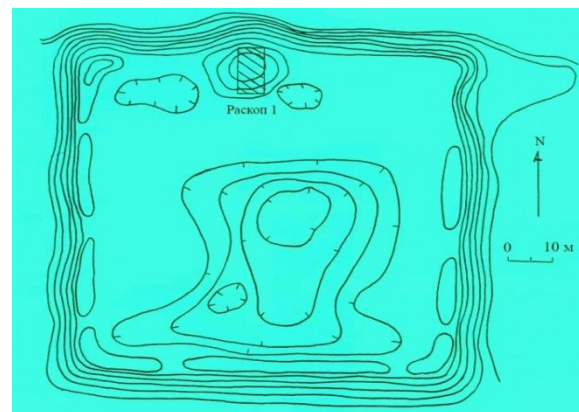
Turtkultepa has the shape of a square, measuring 110 x 110 m (Fig. 2). The most elevated are the northern and western walls. Approximately in the middle of the northern wall, a hill stands out, rising 2 m above the wall. Since the monument was identified as a caravan-seray during the first survey, the remains of the portal of the entranceivan were seen under this hill.

Opposite the hill, in the southern wall, on the contrary, a depression can be traced, indicating another side passage to the caravan-seray. Probably, the caravan-seray had two or four towers at the corners, which are more clearly traced in

the northern part. Also in the western and the eastern walls are distinguished by two more hills, along the southern wall **Figure 2**.

stretches a long rise. The height of the outer walls does not exceed 5 m. The middle part of the monument is occupied by the depression of a vast courtyard of

a rather complex configuration. There was probably a well here. The excavation was laid on the above-mentioned hill in the north wall, where the main entrance was supposed. During the excavations, the excavation area gradually increased and by the end of the field season it was about 80m² (Fig. 3). **Figure 3**.



Results

Immediately behind the sod layer in the northern part of the excavation, a 125 cm wide wall was laid out of mud 42x21x7 cm in size, characteristic of the samanid time [1, p. 97]. After the western and eastern walls of the entrance ayvan were discovered, excavations continued along them. The filling of the inayvan space was a heap of mud bricks, among which there were fragments and whole baked bricks of various sizes, as well as glazed and irrigated ceramics. Judging by the location and nature of the rubble, these were the remains of the collapsed parts of the portal and the side walls of the entrance ayvan. Sometimes ash pan lenses were encountered. The blockage continued until the end of the VI tier. Below there was soil of medium density up to the floor level at the end of the VII tier. The floor covered a wall running parallel to the western wall of the ayvan. It was located at a distance of 0.7 m from it and was preserved to the height of three rows of bricks. Raw brick, square, measuring 33x33x5.5 cm. in the middle of the VIII tier, the level of the floor connected with this wall was traced. Fragments of burnt bricks were also used in the masonry.

In the 7th-8th tiers, apart from fragments of ordinary dishes from the karakhanid period, there were glazed and non-glazed ceramics of the 16th - first half of the 17th centuries, fragments of glass vessels, a bronze handle and a rim from a bronze cauldron. All these findings determine the time of the construction of this wall, and the time of the secondary habitation of the monument, after a long desolation.

At the end of the 8th - beginning of the 9th tier, another floor level was cleared, below which a medium-density soil with ash interlayers and ceramics of the 11th-12th centuries continued, among which, however, in small fragments, there were also ceramics of the Samanid time. At the end of the 10th tier, the lowest level of the floor of the room to be opened was recorded, laid out of flat stones and large pebbles (Fig. 4). Apparently, the entire floor of the entrance ayvan was paved with a stone. A similar method of strengthening the floors of the entrance ayvan with pebbles is also known on other caravan-sarays [2, p. 751].

A sufa was cleared along the eastern wall of the ayvan. Its preserved dimensions are 4 x 1.15 m. The original height of the sufa was about 0.6 m. It was erected in the Karakhanid time from baked bricks and was repeatedly corrected with clay.

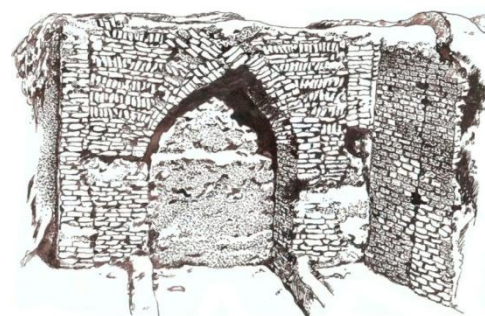
In order to determine the thickness of the main walls of the entrance

Figure 4

ayvan, three small excavations were laid, conventionally designated as room- 2, 3, and 4.

Room - 2 was laid in order to reveal the nature of the masonry of the preserved portal of the entrance arch from the outside, as well as to trace the preservation of the supports of the main portal (peshtak). The excavation was brought to the middle of the V tier. As a result, it was possible to trace the inner cheek of the western support by 0.65 m, and the eastern one by 1.05 m. Further, both supports were destroyed.

Room-3 is located to the west of room-1 and was aimed at revealing the thickness of the western wall of the entrance ayvan, as well as the location of the corner connecting the room -3 with an outer wall. As a result, it turned out that the thickness of the desired wall is 1.4 m. The angle formed by the northern wall of **Figure 5**.



theroom stands out clearly room 3 and the western wall of the entrance ayvan (Fig. 5).

Room-4 is located north of room-3 and laid down to determine the thickness of the outer wall of the caravan-saray. It is made of adobe bricks of the samanid format and has a thickness of 3.6 m.

During the excavations, quite a lot of burnt bricks were found, including whole ones - 26x26x6, 30x17x4.5, 25-26x25x26x5, 22x22x4, 38x19x4.5-5, 26x27x5.5 cm. The last format of bricks was used in the masonry of the sufa. Some of the bricks show stains.

The found coins were read by B.D. Kochnev and A.Kh.Atakhodjaev: one was fragmented and gave almost no information (except that it was Samanid); the second coin is also Samanid and a bit in Bukhara; third bit on behalf of the samanid ruler Mansur b. Nuha in 380-385 / 961-976

Examination of the opened walls of the entrance aivan revealed the following observations. Western wall its upper part was erected with regular masonry of bricks measuring 42x21x7cm, which lie on pakhsov blocks with a width of 53 to 70 cm. Their height is 112 cm. Then there are two rows of bricks and again pakhsov blocks and so on until the very end. It is believed that the bricks between the pakhsov blocks are antiseismic belts [3, p. 46, fig.4].

East wall it does not exactly repeat the western wall in terms of the nature of the masonry. Firstly, the dimensions of the bricks are somewhat different: 42x21x7cm. Secondly, in the masonry, there is no clear sequence in the alternation of the short and long sides of the bricks. Thirdly, it contains not three, but only two rows of groin blocks.

In both the western and eastern walls, passages to the side rooms were revealed. It is interesting to note that the passage in the eastern wall of the iwan was framed by pakhse semi-columns with a diameter of 30 cm.

Both the western and eastern walls have been repeatedly renovated with another layer of plaster. The thickness of the plaster layers reaches 8 cm. On the east wall 5 layers can be traced, and on the west - 4 layers of plaster. On the western wall, at the height of a person (160-170 cm from the floor), on the third, penultimate layer of plaster, there are several signs in the form of straight lines and signs resembling Arabic letters. The signs were apparently inscribed in charcoal. This layer of plaster was lighter - apparently, ganch was added to the solution. Unfortunately, the preservation of the signs turned out to be poor. The last, fourth layer of plaster was hardly separated from the layer with signs and collapsed along with it. And one more feature of the eastern wall is that a wall hearth measuring 35 x 45 cm is fixed in it.

The portal has undergone major repairs at least once. It was originally built, as noted above, from rectangular bricks of the samanid format. Then it was corrected with smaller bricks using the typical "figured" karakhanid masonry. Fragments of bricks and pakhsa were actively used. The dimensions of the bricks are 35x17x5-6cm. Such lying is typical for the Karakhanid time [4, p. 80-81; 5, p. 39] and, as the researchers note, well protects against destruction in the event of an earthquake [3, p. 46-50; 6, p. 110].

What caused the need for repairs? Even now, it is clearly visible that the entrance arch sagged from the edges to the center. This could be due to military actions or the destruction of the subsequent settlement of the monument. But, most likely, this happened as a result of an earthquake, as we already wrote about above.

The lower part of the portal, especially its corner parts, is badly damaged and calcined to redness. This is connected, apparently, with the period of secondary habitation of the caravanserai in the 16th - 17th centuries. The outer part of the portal was also repaired, however, the karakhanid repair masonry was made with bricks, which were not placed "with

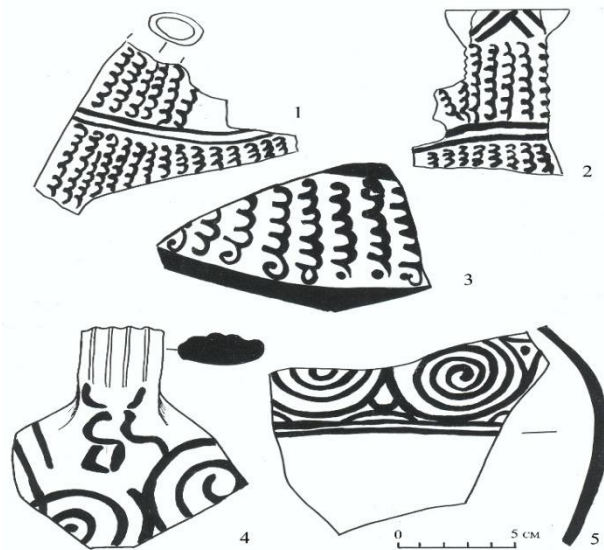
pokes", but flat, and after that it was also plastered. Thus, judging by its size, Turtkultepa is the largest pre-Mongol caravan-saray in Maverannahr.

Inventory

Glazed ceramics are represented by a few, but rather expressive fragments, related mainly to the karakhanid time. These are vessels of the lagan type with a low rim, which smoothly or more clearly separates from the squat body, scythe and bowl. All large vessels have a pronounced base with an annular cut. Smaller vessels are placed on a solid base. Of other forms of ceramics, chiragi with faceted reservoirs, covered with glaze of green, turquoise and yellowish colors, stand out. The latter were marked with dark specks along the edge of the nose. There are other forms of vessels, including pots covered with brown glaze on both sides. Some sprinklers have holes drilled to repair them - this is a fairly common way of extending their "life". Almost all the dishes were glazed only from the inside. The back side is a small stripe below the rim. Ceramics were decorated with painted floral and geometric ornaments, green, white, black and brown paints or their shades, often in combination with engraving. The engraved ornament is not very diverse, and was made in the form of spiral curls and a fine mesh. Sometimes there was also a stamped ornament. Unordered pottery was less common. Among the latter is a thin-walled kashin made, probably in imitation of Chinese porcelain. There are samples of dishes with a dull turquoise glaze. Non-glazed pottery also reflects the main Karakhanid forms. The leading forms are cauldrons, which exhibit a wide variety of beaters. Some of the edges are cut into the groove for the cover. The vessels each had a pair of horseshoe-shaped or flat, sub-triangular handles. The latter are rarely found in the Ustrushankarakhanid complexes. Most of the boilers were molded on a circle. Occasionally they were decorated with a simple ornament in the form of "pokes", dents and notches. Pots and jugs, the number of which is limited, were also molded on a circle and decorated with comb, stamped and embossed ornaments. Among them there are gray-clay vessels. The complex has tagore rims; the upper surface was decorated with a wavy comb. In terms of their forms and manufacturing methods, they are typical for the 11th - 13th centuries. The lids are concave, with a mushroom-shaped handle in the middle. The group of painted vessels consists of fragments of conical sinks and walls from molded vessels of the Murgobi type (Fig. 6). There are so-called "teapots" or drinking bowls [7, p. 65-66]. Similar painted vessels were found at the Kultepa settlement [8, p.159]. Probably, the distant prototype of these vessels is the Greek guttuses, which have a similar shape [9, p. 221, fig. 7]. There is a painted convex cover.

Among other finds, we note buttons from the walls of irrigated and non-irrigated vessels, shards of glass products and a fragment of a stone vessel. Another interesting find is a leaf-shaped kashin medallion covered with turquoise glaze. In the upper part there is a loop with a hanging hole. The back is flat. **Figure 6.**

On the obverse there is a relief image, most likely of a vegetable character. It is interesting to note that a similar medallion was found during the excavation of a Caravan-saray in the rabad of medieval Termez, dated to the 12th century. [10, p. 67].



In fact, such medallions became widespread in the second half of the 12th century and by the beginning of the 13th century are already disappearing from use. This observation makes finds of this kind very valuable because serve as a reliable dating reagent [1, p. 50].

Ceramics also stand out, covered with a blue glaze on the inside and a dark red engobe on the outside. Sometimes the pallet of these vessels has more than one, two annular cutouts. Such ceramics usually belong to the 12th-13th centuries. [1, p. 49; 11, p. 190, fig. 2.12

CONCLUSION

Thus, based on the results of excavations, the following preliminary conclusions can be drawn:

Turkultepe is really a caravan-saray, and the excavated architectural structure is the main entrance.

Judging by the nature of construction techniques, the standard of raw bricks from which the portal and walls of the entrance aivan were erected, the finds of coins and ceramics, the caravan-saray was built no later than 10th, and maybe even earlier.

During its operation, it has undergone repeated repairs and alterations. Judging by the nature of the lower cultural layer, the desolation of the caravan-saray occurred even before the Mongol invasion. By the end of the 12th or the very beginning of the 13th century the entrance iwan was already used not for its intended purpose, but as living quarters. It is possible that its desolation is associated with the military actions of the Khorezmshah Muhammad against the karakitays, when he ordered to devastate many areas of Shash, Fergana and Ustrushana [12, p. 411].

Secondary habitation of the monument occurs in the 16th-17th centuries, when the Zaamin fog is in relative prosperity after a long decline associated with the mongol devastation [13, p. 104-105]. The construction of a wall along the entrance aivan and the discovery of household items are associated with this period. Probably a settlement of the 16th - 17th centuries was destroyed because it turned out to be heaped from above with bricks of the portal and side walls of the ayvan.

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