
HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH OF KESH OASIS IN ANCIENT AND EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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DOI: [10.5958/2249-7315.2021.00179.9](https://doi.org/10.5958/2249-7315.2021.00179.9)

ABSTRACT

This article deals with the study of the history of the Kashkadarya oasis and the scientific discoveries made as a result of many archeological researches. The study of the Kesh oasis has been extensively studied since the early twentieth century to the present day. When talking about the history of the oasis, the works of scientists such as M.E.Masson, S.K.Kabanov, V.D.Jukov, N.I.Krasheninnikova, R.H.Suleymanov, V.Rtveladze, A.S.Sagdullaev, A.A.Raimkulov and M.X.Isamiddinov are briefly mentioned. The successes and shortcomings of the scientific conclusions on this issue are analyzed below.

KEYWORDS: *Sogd, Kesh, Gava, Gau, Gavdara, Gavtepa, Oltintepa, Kosontepa, Arabtepa.*

INTRODUCTION

The Kashkadarya oasis (South Sogd) is one of the ancient historical geographical regions of Central Asia. The rich history of the oasis has attracted the attention of many researchers. Kashkadarya region is home to many archeological and architectural monuments, centers of folk crafts. The ancient history of the oasis is also rich in important events. The region is located at the crossroads of ancient trade routes, and information about this is also widely preserved in written sources. It can be assumed that the concept of Gava, Gau ("Sogdian settlement") mentioned in the Avesta of the Kashkadarya oasis (or the eastern part of the region) was relevant in Gava Sogda ("Sogdian settlement"). The word itself is preserved in many modern terms in the eastern part of Kashkadarya (Shahrisabz, Kitab, Yakkabag districts) (Gavdara, Gavtepa, Gavmard, Gavmurda, Govmardtepa, Gavgoglar, Gavchoqqisi, etc.). These are often the names of places, villages. The study of the subject has a long history and can be conditionally divided into three stages depending on the results obtained and the nature of the research. We can conditionally divide the period of archeological study of the Kashkadarya oasis into three stages:

The first stage: 1870-1940.

The second stage: 1946-1991.

The third stage: Independence period.

The first stage: After the Russian occupation of the Kashkadarya oasis in the 1870s, Russian government officials and amateur archaeologists conducted archaeological research in the South Sogd, or Kashkadarya oasis [1]. In addition to the above research and expeditions, scientists who conducted research in the South Sogd-Kashkadarya oasis: M.E.Masson (1977), Krasheninnikova (1968, 1977), Usmanova (1973, 1977), Lunina, Stolyarova (1977), Pruger (1970) in the results of their research made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the level of study of places such as Erkurgan, Shulluktepa, 47- unnamed hill, Talisortepa, Oltintepa, Kosontepa, Arabtepa, Zanjir Palace, Kalayi Zohaki Maron, Kitab, Shahrisabz, etc.,

The second stage: This stage begins in the years after the world war. It can be said that the

Kashkadarya oasis was an important period of archeological research in the study of the ruins of Erkurgan, Shulluktepa, Kitab, Shahrisabz, Kalayi Zohaki Maron, Kasbi, Arabtepa, Ovultepa, Xontepa, 47- unnamed hill and other cities. In 1946, a detachment of the Amudarya archeological expedition led by A.I.Trinochkin conducted archeological excavations in the lower reaches of the Kashkadarya, as a result of which an extraordinary number of archeological monuments were identified [2]. Simultaneously with Trinochkin (1946) S.K. Kabanov began a long-term search in the South Sughd-Kashkadarya oasis. SK Kabanov conducted research in the Kashkadarya oasis in 1946-1981. During his research, he discovered that the Kashkadarya oasis was an important link in Sogd, based on research on the ancient and medieval city monuments Erkurgan, Shulluktepa, Kalayi Zohaki Maron, Kosontepa and others [3].

The third stage: This stage covers the years of Independence, and after the declaration of Independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan on August 31, 1991, the first President of the Republic I.A Karimov paid special attention to history, especially archeology. As a result, archeological research in the Kashkadarya oasis has reached a new level. R.X. Suleymanov, who led the Kashkadarya archeological expedition in the 80s, continued the work of this expedition more consistently and led this expedition until 2000. During this period, Erkurgan, Shulluktepa, 47- unnamed hills, Talisortepa, Oltintepa, Kosontepa, Arabtepa, Zanjir Palace, Kalayi Zohaki Maron, Kitab, Shahrisabz, Kunjutlitepa, Erkurgan, Qoshtepa, Turtkultepa were brought [4]. Since 2000, this expedition has been led by A.A Raimkulov. Shahrisabz, Kitab, Yakkabog were included in the territory of ancient Nautaka in the Middle Ages. This city, which is revered as "Dilkash", Qubbatul ilm val-abad, at certain times was at the center of sometimes glorious, sometimes tragic events in world history. At the beginning of the 20th century, the study of the Kitab-Shahrizabz oasis from an archaeological point of view began, especially the study of the architectural monuments of Shahrisabz protected by the Association for the Protection of Ancient and Artistic Monuments in Central Asia. In 1925, V.V Bartold, V.A. Vyatkin, art historian B. Denike, and German art critic E. Kon-Wiener came to Shahrizabz. A.E Midji, a student of the Turkestan Institute of Oriental Studies, spoke about Kitab and Shakhrisabz ancient monuments at a meeting of ethnography and archeology of the Turkestan branch of the Russian Geographical Society in Tashkent [5]. In 1926, A.Y. Yakubovsky was sent to Shakhrisabz to study historical topography. In the 1930s, Shakhrisabz monuments were studied by Y.G. Gulamov, T.M. Mirgiyosov, S.K. Kabanov, S.A. Sudakov and photographer N.S. Lojkin. In 1936, Architect M.F. Maur got acquainted with the condition of architectural monuments in order to restore them through the Samarkand Committee for the Protection of Ancient and Artistic Monuments. And in 1938, a special joint of the Moscow Institute of Architecture determined their history. In the late 1930s, a detailed plan of the city was created, which included all the neighborhoods. In 1940, architects V.A. Voronina and G.N. Gachanov from the Institute of Art History of the USSR worked in Shakhrisabz. In 1942, the founder of the Department of Archeology of the Faculty of History M.E. Masson organized an expedition with the architect G.A. Pugachenkova to study Shakhrisabz from the historical-archaeological and cultural-historical point of view. In 1948, O.A. Sukhareva studied the city from an ethnographic point of view. The monuments of the Kashkadarya basin were initiated by M.E. Masson. In 1932, while studying the Shakhrisabz oasis, he drew up a thematic plan for future largescale historical and archeological works in the Kashkadarya valley. In the post-war years, the history of the study of the monuments of the eastern part of the Kashkadarya oasis can be divided into three periods.

I period 1940-1950.

II period 1960-1970.

III period 1980-1990.

The research was conducted in different directions. The first stage of the archeological study of the settlements in the Kesh oasis is connected with the archeological expeditions conducted by S.K. Kabanov in 1946-1950. Monuments of the Early Iron Age were studied by S.K. Kabanov 60 years ago and were found and examined in the lower reaches of the Tanhozdarya and Yakkabogdarya. S.K. Kabanov, who has worked for many years in the field of identification and study of past monuments in the lower Kashkadarya oasis, does not comment on these two views in the sources, but argues that Nautaka and Xenippe correspond to the upper or lower part of the present Kashkadarya region. S.K. Kabanov considers both Nautaka and Xenippe as provinces, not as cities. According to written sources, the two regions are known as Nautaka and Xenippe, says S.K. Kabanov. According to him, Nautaka belongs to the upper part of the oasis, and Xenippe to the lower part, i.e. Xenippe Nakhshab (Karshi) and Nautaka to Kesh (Shahrisabz) [6]. M.E. Masson, on the other hand, supports the opposite view, that is, according to him, Xenippe is at the top of the oasis, while Nautaka is at the bottom. The archaeologist points out that the main city of Navutak, the lower province, corresponds to the ruins of the city of Erkoghan. Uzunqir, Sangirtepa, Podayotoqtepa are located close to each other in the lower reaches of the Shurobsoy, formed on the basis of the springs of the Kaynarsay ridge in Kesh. As a result of research conducted by A.S. Sagdullaev at the Department of Central Asian Archeology of Tashkent State University in 1976-1979, a number of monuments of the Early Iron Age were discovered in the eastern part of the Kashkadarya oasis.

As a result of many years of research at the Daratepa monument, the structure of various settlements dating back to the VII-IV centuries BC, which is typical for this region, was excavated [7]. In 1981-1984, an expedition led by N.I. Krasheninnikova discovered and studied the monuments of Sangirtepa, Uzunqir, Podayotoqtepa in the first half of the first millennium BC in the middle reaches of the Shurobsoy, as well as the study of their defensive walls. Extensive research has been carried out in the Kesh oasis in different years, as a result of which valuable information on the ancient and early medieval history of the oasis has been collected. Important information about the medieval history of the oasis is given in the sources of the IX-XII centuries. These sources provide reliable information on the geographical location of the Kesh oasis, the lifestyle of the population of the oasis, the socio-economic life of the oasis, the structure of the city of Kesh. Historians such as Ibn Hawqal and Al-Muqaddisi have cited just such valuable information in their works. Ibn Hawqal, an Arab traveler and geographer, described in his book "The Image of the Earth" that Kesh was a mountainous country, with cool winters and mountain vegetation, and many rivers flowed from it [8]. While describing the nature of the Nakhshab, he mentions that it is located in a low plain that looks like a palm, and that he cultivates on the basis of streams flowing from the Kesh Mountains. Istakhri's "Roads and Countries" describes the routes of trade caravans from Samarkand, Bukhara and Balkh to Kesh and Nakhshab [9]. In addition to the above research and expeditions, scientists who conducted research in the South Sughd-Kashkadarya oasis: M.E. Masson (1977), Krasheninnikova (1968, 1977), Usmanova (1973, 1977), Lunina, Stolyarova (1977), Pruger (1970) in the products of their research: Erkurgan, Sulluktepa, 47- unnamed hill, Talisortepa, Oltintepa, Kosontepa, Arabtepa, Zanjir Palace, Kalayi Zohaki Maron, Kitab, Shahrisabz, etc., made a significant contribution to the enrichment of the level of study [10]. Although the unparalleled architectural monuments created by Amir Temur and his descendants in Shakhrisabz have always been at the center of interest in the history of the city, the study of ancient archeological monuments of the Kesh oasis (Kitab, Shakhrisabz) has not been neglected. In the 70s and 80s of the XX century, scientists of Tashkent State University, in recent years, the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan conducted archaeological research. The castle walls of Kesh-Shakhrisabz are one of the most unique archeological monuments of Uzbekistan. The Shahrisabz fortress is 1,680 m long and 1,200 to 1,250 meters wide, with a total area of 210 hectare.

Archaeological excavations were carried out on the walls of the fortress in 1963-1964 by the Kesh Archaeological and Topographic Expedition (KATE) of the Department of Central Asian Archeology of Tashkent State University (now the National University of Uzbekistan) under the leadership of Z.I.Usmanova. According to the data obtained, the highest storage area of the defensive walls was 11 meters, the thickness was 3.5-9 meters, and the combined thickness of the defensive towers was 17.5 meters. The total length of the walls is 5.6 km, which includes a total of 70 defensive towers. During this period, research was conducted near the northern Kitab Gate of the city, and during the first construction of the castle, it was found that its walls were built of layered straw 7-13 cm thick [11]. Unfortunately, in the fifty years that have elapsed since these studies, almost all of these constellations have been destroyed. In 1982, excavations resumed. It was studied by Raimkulov on the north side of the roof of the Oqsaroy, near the Kitab Gate, crossing the defensive walls. The section was excavated to a clean soil layer. At the top of the wall there is a repair wall made of gutters at a height of 2 m. The defensive wall is built on a solid foundation made of a special layer of silt soil with a height of 120-130 cm. Beneath the foundation is a 1 m thick cultural layer, which contains fragments of pottery from the XI-XII centuries. Beneath this cultural layer is a layer of clean earth. The thickness of the castle wall at the time of its first construction was 7 m [12].

Scientists of Tashkent State University have found the remains of a monumental building of XI-XII centuries under the Blue Dome Mosque in Shakhrisabz. It is known that this mosque, built by Mirzo Ulugbek, is based on the history of the ancient mosque, built in the XI-XII centuries. This building can be interpreted as a restored example of one of the majestic architectural structures built during the Karakhanids in the area of Kesh (Shahrissabz). According to A.S. Sagdullaev, in the IX-XII centuries Kesh was a small town consisting of an arch and an un fortified shahristan, the center of which was located on the south-western edge of Shakhrisabz on the site of Choshtepa [14]. So, according to the last conclusion of Z.I.Usmonova, who conducted many years of research in the city of Shakhrisabz, the defensive walls of the fortress were built by the Barlos dynasty princes who ruled the city in the late XIII - early XIV centuries.

During the years of independence, foreign experience was used in the archaeological study of the oasis. In particular, from 2011 to the present day, the Turkish-Uzbek joint archeological expedition has been consistently studying the monuments in the Kashkadarya oasis. As an example, we can cite the research conducted on the monuments of Erkurgan and Yalpoqtepa. In our opinion, the walls of the Kesh-Shahrissabz fortress were built in the early 13th century from layered cotton, which was typical for the construction of Khorezmshahs. Amir Temur began to rebuild the walls of the Kesh-Shahrissabz fortress in 1378. M.E. Masson and later Sh.S. Kamoliddinov also admitted that there were ancient walls mentioned by Hafiz Abro and that they may have been built in XI-XII centuries. Another aspect that confirms the idea that the city was built during the reign of Khorezmshahs is the general history of the city, which was built in the form of rectangular castles, which were widespread in the Khorezm oasis from antiquity to the middle Ages. From this point of view, the history of Kesh-Shahrissabz fortress, the location of the city gates is exactly the same as the history of Ichan fortress, built in the center of Khiva in the XVI century - a few hundred years later.

Research has also shown that the area of the Shahrissabz fortress has changed over the centuries. According to M.E. Masson, the southern walls of the fortress were built after the crisis of the XVIII century, during the reign of Shahrissabz Begi Nazarbek, 450 m inside the ancient walls of the city, and the fortress in the time of Amir Temur was much larger than the fortress in the XVIII century.

As for the concluding part of the article, Kashkadarya oasis is one of the best-studied historical regions in the country. For example: In the 1940s, archaeological research was conducted in the oasis by M.E. Masson. Archaeological excavations were carried out by S.K. Kabanov in 1946-

1950. In 1955, V.D. Zhukov conducted excavations at Kindiklitepa. The research conducted by N.I. Krashennikova in 1970-1980 is also important. Similar expeditions were carried out in the following periods. Among them are R.H. Suleymanov, V. Rtveladze, A.S. Sagdullaev, A.A. Raimkulov and M.H. Isamiddinov. It is the archeological researches and scientific researches of these scientists that served as an important basis in determining the age of the cities of the eastern (Kesh) and western (Karshi) oasis of Kashkadarya and their place in the urban culture of Central Asia. However, not all monuments in the oasis have been fully explored. There are enough unanswered questions about the urban settlements of the oasis, the monumental construction parts of some monuments, the historical localization of the cities and other issues, and we believe that further research can find answers to these questions as well.

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