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## ARCHAEOLOGICAL WORK AND RESEARCH OF THE UZBEK-FRENCH EXPEDITION ON THE TERRITORY OF THE SAMARKAND SOGD DURING THE YEARS OF INDEPENDENCE OF UZBEKISTAN

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### ABSTRACT

*The author of the article claims that after gaining independence in Uzbekistan, the attitude to historical science, including archaeological research on the territory of the republic, has radically changed. The article provides data on the ongoing archaeological research and archaeological work in order to study and research in Uzbekistan, including the archaeological study of the Samarkand Sogd. The article presents the material on the directions of development of archaeological science in Uzbekistan and in the Samarkand Sogd on the example of the works of major scientists and specialists who carried out archaeological excavations at the present stage. The author notes major international archaeological expeditions, their achievements during the period under study, as well as the role of international expeditions in the development of methods of conducting archaeological research.*

**KEYWORDS:** *Uzbekistan, Samarkand Sogd, Archeology, Archaeologists, History, Ancient, Historical Sources, Archaeological Excavations, Archaeological Finds, Archaeological Methods, Archaeological Research, and Archaeological International Expedition, Per Iodization.*

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### 1. INTRODUCTION

After gaining independence, Uzbekistan attaches great importance to the historical past of our people, whose ancestors have lived in this territory since ancient times, its rich historical and cultural heritage. The President of the Republic of Uzbekistan Sh. M.Mirziyoyev, in his speeches to historians, set the task of objective study and coverage of our history. Special attention is paid to the study of the roots of culture, folk traditions, the history of statehood, the formation of cities. [1]

The archaeological study of the history of the Samarkand Sogd is a direct response to the demands of the time, fully meets the state tasks set for the historians of Uzbekistan. Archaeology occupies a significant place in the knowledge of the historical process. Its peculiarity is that the knowledge of history occurs through the study of archaeological sites, with the help of excavations and other special methods used by this science. Archaeological sites are the only sources of knowledge in archaeology and at the same time part of modern reality. [2]

The Samarkand Sogd, being the political and economic core of ancient Sogdiana, is of fundamental importance for understanding many key issues of the history and culture of the Central Asian Mesopotamia. The importance of Samarkand in the history of Sogd culture is invaluable and was determined primarily by its advantageous geographical location in the heart of Central Asia.

For the history of the formation of statehood here, the first large urban centers - Samarkand and Koktepa - are of great interest, the material culture of which can be a benchmark for the study of ethnogenesis and the development of culture of the main central regions of Central Asia. Archaeological collections obtained during excavations at the settlements of Afrasiab, Koktepa and Yerkurgan have significantly enriched the funds of museums in Uzbekistan.

- Literature review on the topic (Literature review)

Considering the degree of study of the topic, it is necessary first to dwell on the works of such authors as Isamiddinov M.Kh. [3], Rapen K. [4], in which the issues of the origin of the ancient city are considered, data on the main aspects of the formation of the urban culture of the Samarkand Sogd are summarized, data on the archaeological study of this region are given. Also, the source base for this article was the results of many years of archaeological research at the settlements of Koktepa and Afrasiab of the joint Uzbek-French expedition [5], which contain data on archaeological work and research on the territory of the Samarkand Sogd, and also show archaeological methods in scientific research.

- Research Methodology (Research Methodology)

The methodology of writing this article is based on the principles of independence and the concept of a civilizational approach to the historical process. Also, speaking about the methodology of the article, I would like to emphasize that we used methods of selection and classification of material, comparative analysis of the facts, opinions and conclusions, as well as the method of historicism and objectivity. The principle of historicism and objectivity allowed us to study the historiography of the issue in its concrete diversity.

- Analysis and results of the study (Analysis and results)

During the years of independence, the archaeological science of Uzbekistan has been developing in close cooperation with international archaeological institutes. During the period of independence of Uzbekistan, archaeologists of the republic signed agreements on cooperation in the field of archaeological research with the most advanced research centers of European countries, universities of the USA, Japan, Turkey, China and Australia. The first such cooperation agreement was concluded between archaeologists of Uzbekistan and French colleagues, in particular, with the Center for Scientific Research of the Academy of Inscriptions and Fine Literature of France.

The relations of our archaeologists with French colleagues have been started since the 70s of the XX century, when excavations were carried out at the Ayhanum settlement, and exploration work to identify new archaeological sites located on the left bank of the Amu Darya and northern Afghanistan. However, the peaceful and very successful work of French archaeologists in Afghanistan was interrupted due to the entry of a "limited contingent" of troops of the former Soviet Union into Afghanistan in 1979. Since this year, the French scientific archaeological mission in this long-suffering country has been closed. Archaeologists who worked and had extensive experience in studying the material culture of Bactria were unable to continue studying the material culture of northern Afghanistan. Such an opportunity has been provided only since 1988, when an agreement was signed in Paris between the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Center for Scientific Research of France.

During the years of the totalitarian Soviet regime, international archaeological expeditions never worked on the territory of Uzbekistan. Any international relations of Uzbek scientists were controlled from Moscow. The first thaw of the totalitarian regime in the former Soviet Union began when Mikhail Gorbachev became the General Secretary of the Central Committee. In 1988, the first delegation of Uzbek archaeologists was sent to France to participate in a conference

dedicated to the cults of Central Asia of the early middle Ages.

During the years of independence, the archeology of Uzbekistan rose to the global level. The most prestigious archaeological centers of Europe, America and Asia began to come to Uzbekistan to jointly study the ancient and medieval history and culture of our country. Archaeologists from France, Italy, Germany, Russia, as well as historians and archaeologists from the USA and Australia come from Europe. From Asian countries, archaeologists from Japan were the first to begin excavations on the territory of the republic.

The main reason for the sharp increase in the number of archaeologists wishing to come to Uzbekistan to conduct archaeological excavations and archaeological research is the policy of openness to scientists around the world and the increased interest of Western archaeologists in the history and culture of Uzbekistan and Central Asia as a whole.

In the late 90s of the XX - early XXI century, the French Center for Scientific Research concluded a cooperation agreement with the Institute of Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan on the study of the history of ancient and medieval Sogdiana. The main forces of this expedition were concentrated on two major metropolitan sites of Sogdiana - Koktepe and Afrasiab.

On the ancient settlement of Koktepe, the development of ancient agricultural culture was established on the upper right terrace of the middle part of the Zarafshan River. The first Koktepin residents mastered new lands, where there were absolutely no traces of anthropogenic influences among the pure loess deposits. This is a clear sign that the Koktepe tribes are completely alien tribes for these places [6]. At the same time, M.Isamiddinov notes that in the material culture of the Koktepe tribes there are traces of the centuries-old tradition of the ancient agricultural tribes of the Sarazmian culture. Stratigraphically sequential complexes were identified on the Koktepe settlement, with the allocation of a sequential change in the development of material culture.

During the period of Koktepe I, the first farmers mastered the favorable water and land resources of the middle Zarafshan. Excavations laid on the ancient settlement of Koktepe revealed that the first farmers on the territory of Koktepe left numerous dugouts, semi-dugouts, and sometimes ground houses built of mud bricks [7]. These layers were dated to the end of the II - beginning of the I millennium BC, the period of the Yaz I complex.

The fragments of ceramics collected from these layers turned out to be hand-made, on top of which were roughly smeared paintings in the form of triangles filled with geometric strokes [8]. In addition, during the period of Koktepe I, bronze foundry production was developed. It is particularly important to note in this regard the discovery of stone matrices for the production of bronze sickles, the discovery of metal waste, especially slag, which is a clear proof of the presence of metallurgical workshops in the very center of the settlement. The second important conclusion of this expedition is that the "era of stucco-painted ceramics of Central Asia" is not included in the era of the Iron Age, which is an exceptional fact in comparison with the known data for this period. The current level of study of this stratigraphic object allows us to conclude that due to the lack of iron, this stage should be correlated with the traditions of the Bronze Age [9].

At the end of this period, large residential buildings and handmade ceramic dishes completely disappeared. The settlement is emptying, on top of which layers of organic remains are visible, originating from the garbage deposits of dwellings of the first period, and possibly also traces of simpler structures characteristic of the pastoral population with their herds, settled in the same place. The presence of yurts, huts or tents of nomads was recorded due to the detailed fixation of each brick, and the presence of traces of various logs led to the discovery of numerous pits for pillars [10].

In the period of Koktepe II, after the first period of modest settlement, sharp changes followed the

Koktepa plateau with the onset of a new stage of monumental architecture, which is characterized by the construction of two large independent fortifications ensembles towering over the surrounding plain [11].

The first ensemble in the south-east of the settlement is a fortified structure, the bypass walls of which in some areas reach a thickness of six meters. The interior space protected by them is supposed to have had no structures. The entrance to the ensemble could be located in the east.

The second ensemble in the northern part of the plateau is presented in the form of a fortified structure with irregular sides, the line of which repeats the natural relief. The walls of the structure are marked by semicircular towers; and the entrance to it, located from the south, passed through a monumental gate fortified with two towers. Inside the fortification there was a large hearth on a pillow of pebbles, representing an altar intended for the worship of fire. These two independent monuments may have been erected at the same time. The time of existence of these two ensembles is problematic, because after the construction of this building, the floors of the buildings were not subjected to restoration work. Ceramics of this period are non-painted pink ceramics and belong to the period between stucco-painted ceramics and Achaemenid ceramics.

The Koktepa III period – the Koktepa plateau and the immediately adjacent territories were protected by a monumental wall covering a significant area (about a hundred hectares). A square structure appears in the center – an altar in an open square [12].

During the period of Koktepa IV, an internal defensive wall of the Koktepa with intra-wall corridors is being built. In parallel with the wall, military barracks are being built in the inner part of the city, serving the soldiers of the garrison of Alexander the Great and possibly the Seleucids.

In the period of Koktepa V, post-Hellenistic nomadic tribes appeared, controlling even Samarkand during the reign of Eucratides, who restored the fortification of the city (150-145 BC). The period of Koktepa VI is the phase of settlement of the settlement by semi-settled nomadic tribes. The most important at this time is the discovery of an aristocratic grave in the form of a catacomb-type mound [13].

The Uzbek-French expedition carried out extensive excavation work to study the ancient settlement of Afrasiab. In a short time, the defensive walls of Afrasiab were studied. At the same time, the main emphasis was placed on the stratigraphic study of the sequence of the selected stages of these walls. As a result, a more realistic date of the ancient city of Samarkand was established. The Hellenistic wall of Afrasiab was also studied [14].

In addition to carrying out excavations on the defensive walls themselves, the head and main specialist in the "Hellenistic culture" of the Eastern countries, Paul Bernard, conducted excavations on the Hellenistic layers of the residential area in the northwestern part of Afrasiab [15].

French archaeologist Franz Grenet conducted excavations under the Cathedral Mosque of Afrasiab and for the first time in the Hellenistic layers revealed large warehouses for the storage of food products in the form of wheat, barley and millet. They were left in catastrophic situations during the fire. The grain stored in these warehouses was determined due to the charred remains of wheat, barley and millet [16].

On the eastern part of the citadel of Afrasiab, on its lower platform, a palace structure of the early Arab period – the middle of the VIII century AD was opened. The date of construction of this building was determined by F.Grene and Yu .Karev on Turgar II coins of the second type. This date falls on the time interval between the 40s and the beginning of the 60s of the VIII century [17].

By 2007, the first Arab palace complex, consisting of two parts (the common entrance part of the

complex consists of a large courtyard, with separate rooms located around a large square courtyard), was opened entirely. The second part of the palace consists of the part, located in the western part of the entire building and standing on 12 round columns. According to Yuri Karev, who studied this unique object, the first Arab palace was built by the Arab commander Abu Muslim Al-Khorasani. However, no one has ever lived in this palace. The palace was abandoned forever during the military conflicts of local pretenders to the throne [18].

Important results were obtained during the excavation of the Karakhanid palace complex, where it was possible to obtain material about the type of power, the nature of administrative management and the lifestyle of the rulers. The administrative complex of the middle of the VIII century, built by order of Abu Muslim al-Khorasani and the pavilions of the Karakhanid rulers erected on the same site in the XII century, are currently the main objects of study for the Islamic period. The main architectural unit in the Karakhanid period are the so-called pavilions or courtyards paved with burnt tiles, around each of which a separate residential and economic complex is formed [19].

In Central Asian archaeology, a wall painting was uncovered at this site, where human figures were depicted along with plant ornaments and round-faced men and women were highlighted. There are a large number of images of human-birds (with human heads and bird bodies), there is a fragment of a dancer (with bare feet in a dancing pose) [20]. All these fragments were found on the plaster of the fallen walls of the palace, indicating the tragedy that occurred as a result of the Mongol invasion.

- Conclusion and recommendations (Conclusion/Recommendations)

Thus, studying the stratigraphic situation only on the example of the ancient settlements of Koktepa and Afrasiab, one can make sure that the joint Uzbek-French expedition used the most modern methods of excavation work in settlements and settlements with adobe architecture and with the use of microstratigraphy. Thanks to this method, archaeologists from Uzbekistan and France were able to take into account the smallest fragment of brick and put it into the plan, and from small fragments of plaster from the rubble of the Karakhanid palace, they collected entire galleries of medieval wall paintings.

Under the Cathedral Mosque, a palace structure surrounded by a separate, single defensive wall was identified, which was attributed to the early medieval period. The Uzbek-French expedition also carried out excavations in the hill zone to the north of the Koktepa settlement, where a large number of burial mounds of nomadic pastoral tribes have been preserved. Not far from Yangirabad, several catacomb-type mounds were uncovered, looted in ancient times [21].

Archaeologists, using modern computer technology with the use of laser the odolite, took the most accurate plans of large objects, settlements and settlements. Photo-fixation of archaeological artifacts was carried out in the same way. In order to restore the anthropogenic impact on the ancient natural landscape, modern space surveys were used.

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