



HISTORY OF STUDY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL MONUMENTS OF NORTHERN AFGHANISTAN

Z. E. Kholiqov

Associate Professor of Termiz State University

Sherahmad Khudayberdi

Master of Termiz State University

Abstract

This article is written about the history of the study of the archaeological monuments of northern Afghanistan. A group dealing with monuments of the Bronze Age of Afghanistan, led by V. I. Sarianidi, discovered four oases of settled farming communities between Andkhai and Khulm. First, in the territory of Afghanistan, he found the administrative center, palaces and temples of the Bronze Age surrounded by defensive walls.

Keywords: northern Afghanistan, archaeologist, monument, history, bronze, era, palace.

Afghanistan is a country located at the crossroads of the great roads that connect the peoples of Central Asia and the Mediterranean Sea, and later the peoples of Europe with China and India. Historians of antiquity localized the ancient state of Bactria, whose center was the city of Bactria (now Balkh), to the territory of northern Afghanistan. The history of this region is closely related to the history of the ancient peoples of Central Asia[1].

In the 19th century, the works of Western European and Russian travelers were published, which classified the archaeological monuments reflecting the ancient times of Afghanistan. Among the Russian researchers, N.A. Aristova conducted scientific research on the population of Afghanistan, V.V. Bartold and V.V. Grigorev on the history of Afghanistan, and N.I. Veselovsky on archaeological monuments.

In 1922, M. G. Vecheslov compiled a description of the archaeological monuments of Afghanistan. As a result of these researches, a collection entitled "Afghanistan" (Ch, 1.m., 1923) was published in 1923. 1929 "Zemledelchesky Afghanistan" by N.I. Vavilova and D.D. Bukinich, "Medieval historical topography of Herat" by A.M. Belenitsky and M.Ye.Masson, "Art of Afghanistan" by G.A. Pugachenkova, Afghanistan by A.M. Mandelshtam. His works on archaeological research in Estonia were published[2].





In 1969, after the establishment of a joint expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Archeology of Afghanistan, Soviet archaeologists began to conduct research in the archaeological monuments of Afghanistan. The task of the expedition was to create a map of archaeological monuments from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages located in the territory of Northern Afghanistan. Afghan archaeologists who were part of this expedition mapped more than 300 archaeological monuments between Herat and Khulm[12]. The discovery of bronze and early iron age monuments by SAE is of great importance. For the first time, archaeologists managed to uncover monuments belonging to three groups.

Monuments belonging to the first, western group, Davlatabad group, are located between the cities of Andhoy and Maimana.

Second, monuments belonging to the Dashli group were found north of Okcha.

The third group of Farukhabad monuments, located near the city of Balkh, will be included. When monuments are observed stratigraphically, the history of the local population in the Bronze Age is divided into three periods. These monuments are located in Davlatabad, Dashli and Farukhabad oases[3].

Among them, the oasis of Davlatabad, rich in finds from ancient times, is located in a wide area, emerging from a narrow mountain gorge of the Shirin Tago river. The monument here is divided into the following two types, depending on the four monuments that were opened[13].

- 1) Undefined monuments with an area of up to 1 hectare (Tikar 1, 2, 3);
- 2) Rectangular fortresses with defensive walls and corner towers are included. We can see this type in the example of Tikan 4 or Girday hill monument. The second type of monument has a central city or capital. Because a 7-meter-thick cultural layer has been preserved in it, smooth-made ceramic objects were found on the potter's wheel, but without any decorations. These earthenware, jar-shaped vases with deep and steep flanges or high bases, are dated to the early Iron Age. This period is called the Girdai stage[14].

In the remaining monuments of the Davlatabad oasis, the thickness of the cultural layer is 3.5 meters. Their ceramics belong to a later period, genetically related to the "Girday" phase. Among the ceramics of this period, it can be observed that vases with high bases are widespread. They were used to make molasses and "sauces", mainly with wavy and scratched designs on their surface. Based on these characteristics of ceramic products, it was reasonable to call the next period "Tikar" stage[5].

The inhabitants who occupied the Davlatabad oasis in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC were engaged in agriculture based on the irrigation of the current





Shirin Tagao river. Animal husbandry and boar or gazelle hunting also played an important role. Small villages consisted mainly of houses built of raw bricks[22]. The central monument was apparently surrounded by defensive walls and fortified with military towers. Ceramics, except for kitchen utensils, were made on a potter's wheel and made in two-tiered khumdons with a complex structure. The monuments belonging to the Davlatabad group are the culture left by the people who migrated to the eastern regions and settled here and were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry[15].

Dashli oasis is located in a wide direction and includes more than 20 monuments divided into two types. Currently, the Dashli oasis occupies an ordinary desert steppe zone, and is bordered by wide and flat barren areas, sometimes with shifting sand. Among such waterless sand dunes, only tuyakorin and yulgin plants can be observed. During the laying of gas pipelines from the city of Shibirgon to the north, many pieces of pottery were found. Following this news, starting in 1970, SAE began planned archaeological research[4].

Among the first discovered and widespread monuments are the remains of undefended villages. They are located on long, spreading hills. These monuments are included in the first type. The monuments of the second type are surrounded by strong defensive walls built of bricks, the defensive walls are protected by corner towers. Undefended villages are located near such fortresses[16]. According to ethnographic data, several families belonging to the same clan lived in such fortresses, separated from the society of ordinary people. Analogies of such fortresses are also characteristic of monuments such as Sopolli of North Bactria (Askarov A.A. Sapallitepa. Tashkent, 1974.) and Auchin, Gonur (Sarianidi V.I. Drevnosti nizoviy Murgaba.M., 1973.) of Margiyona. As a result, this situation reflects the development of the social life of the population in the Bronze Age of Bactria and Margiyona. Castles with rectangular and corner towers are of particular interest in the history of architecture. There were opinions that such castles existed only from ancient times[6].

Dashli 3 excavations provide complete information about the development of monumental architecture. The castle of this monument is on a high hill, and next to it there is a low hill with a village attached to it. As a result of the 3-year archaeological research conducted here, the circular fortress appears as a monumental structure. The castle is surrounded by two rows of defensive walls and four corner towers[23]. There is a corridor between the walls, and the towers are accessed through the corridors. The circular fortress is distinguished from the outside by its structure and nine towers. It appears as a separate complex with its construction design. There are





rectangular rooms in the center of the building. Their wall facades are plastered with thin plasters[17]. The structure has architectural decorations such as shaped pilasters, stepped wall shelves and a low sofa. Three-part hearths built on a brick riser are characteristic. The circular structure is the central core of the monument and a solid wall that surrounds the many rooms inside. Therefore, the sides of the monument are surrounded by trenches measuring 130x150 meters.

Based on the construction and purpose of the studied structure, i.e., the circular shape of the hearth and altars, the construction of the structure on a high foundation means that it was a fire temple. This temple was considered to be the first ancient monument studied in the Ancient East as a building of sacred worship. One of the constructions parallel to it is the temple of fire opened on the hill of Noshi John of Ahmenid Iran[7]. Another magnificent structure was discovered from the second mound in the Dashli 3 monument when excavations began. It is a rectangular building. Repeats one with the previous building. Inside, large galleried halls are connected by passageways and separated by T-shaped corridors. The roof of the halls is covered in a curved manner. All rooms are decorated with a common pilaster style. They also decorated the exterior of the facade. The complex was separated from the outside world by a trench 3 meters deep and 10 meters wide[18].

The only part of the monument is the remains of the rooms near the gate. This situation confirms that there was a single entrance to the building. All signs of an architectural monument indicate that it is a palace. Therefore, the opinion that the Dashli 3 complex was the religious administrative center of the entire Dashli oasis is close to the truth. And this is an artifact that confirms to us that there was a group separated from the society of that time as a separate social organism, that is, a religious and noble stratum.

Ancient burial rites provide important information about the social character of the ancient society of Central Asia in general. Graves were found among the remains of abandoned buildings. They are rectangular lahats, covered with raw bricks. The buried corpses were laid in a bent position, facing north. From 1 to 20 ceramic objects were found near the skeletons. Sometimes many stone and metal objects were found. A mirror, a bracelet, a necklace, and head jewelry were found[19].

The structure of the graves, the funeral rites and the objects buried with them do not differ from each other, but they repeat each other. The studied archeological complexes provide important information about the development of not only the material culture of Bactria, but also the highly developed spiritual life of Bactria.

The next stage of development is studied on the example of the monuments of the Farukhabad oasis. This oasis was known through stolen tombs. Its central structure





and several small villages were found. The Farukhabad phase belongs to the Late Bronze Age[8].

All three periods are dated from the second half of the 2nd millennium BC to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The issue of the origin of the Bactrian Margiyona archaeological complex is quite controversial, especially in the territory of northern Afghanistan, the settlements of the predecessors of these cultures were sought. In this regard, the archaeological research conducted by V.I.Sarianidi and SAE was important.

However, exactly similar parallels of these cultures are found and well studied in Northeast Iran and South Turkmenistan. A similar culture can be observed from the 1970s in the territory of South Uzbekistan, the Sopolli monument from the Olanbuloksoy basin and later the study of the Zharkoton monuments formed the centers of the first farming and the first urban cultures of northern and southern Bactria based on artificial irrigation farming[20].

The architectural constructions, burial rites, pottery and general material culture findings of the Pottery culture are exactly similar to the examples of material culture found in the monuments of India's Harappa, Afghanistan's Dashli, South Turkmenistan's Nomozgoh, and Iran's Tepe Hissar monuments. found (Askarov A.A. Sapalli tepe. Tashkent., 1974.)

Especially in this regard, the materials of the Tepe Hissar monument of Iran, known to science earlier, as well as the materials of all the monuments of the Murgob River basin of Southern Turkmenistan, indicate the development of material culture formed in one period and in one line. (Schmidt E. Excavation at Tepe Hissar. Philadelphia, 1937; Sarianidi V. I. Drevnosti nizoviy Murgaba. "AO1972g." M., 1973).

At this point, it is enough to recall the existence of a source in the Behistun inscriptions that confirms that Margiyona was part of Bactria in 523/522 BC.

The archaeological research conducted in both regions confirms that the combined period of Bactria and Margiyona coincides with the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. It is observed that it is close to the Bronze Age culture of Iran-Turkmenistan rather than to the synchronized culture of Estonia[9].

Also, if it is said that the archaeological complexes of Northern Afghanistan were formed under the influence of the Iranian Turkmen culture, there will be no doubt, but if it is said that they appeared under the influence of the culture of southern Afghanistan, then it belongs to the "Talibakun" culture of this culture[21]. The type of Mundigak Said fortress monuments was also not affected. Because these cultures of southern Afghanistan are common with the culture of southern Iran. (Lamberg-Korlovsky C.C. Excavations at Tepe Jahja, Iran. Cambridge, 1970; Cadwell J.





Investigation at Tal-i-iblis. Illonis, 1967; Dales G. Prehistoric Research in Southern Afghan Seistan.-"Afghanistan", 1972, v. XXIV, N 4.)

Between the 2nd and 1st millennium BC, Bactria entered the early Iron Age. This period was marked by the introduction of new potters into Bactria, their paleo-ethnographic features such as making pottery products by hand without using a pottery wheel and decorating the surface of pottery with various designs.

Samples of the material culture of this period are known through archaeological research conducted at the Tilla Tepa monument near the city of Shibirgan. All features of the details of the excavation here were highlighted as manifestations of the Eastern Khorasan culture. (Sarianidi V.I. Raskopki Tillya tepe v Severnom Afganistane.M., 1972.)

These cultures are based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Large monuments are built on high platforms made of raw bricks. The palaces of local nobles are located here[21]. In the early stages of this culture, copper bronze objects were common, but they also gave way to iron objects. In addition, hand-made and decorated pottery, as well as a small amount of wheel-worked pottery, were produced. According to the old custom, the dead were buried in village houses[10].

The archaeological complexes discovered in southern Turkmenistan, but for a long time did not find their analogues and remained unclear, are also similar and close to the cultures in Afghanistan[11]. The research made it possible to put forward the theory that the roots of the cultures of Southern Turkmenistan and Northern Afghanistan can be traced back to the cultures found in Iran's Khurasan. It is confirmed that these cultures, like the archaeological complexes of Central Asia, appeared not under the influence of the Andronovo culture of the nomadic pastoral population, but under the influence of the southern farming culture. forced to return to the theory of Because their entry into Central Asia never found its basis in material culture complexes. (Kruglikova I.T., V.I. Sarianidi Pyat let raboty Sovetsko-Afganskoy archeologicheskoy ekspeditsii//Drevnyaya Baktriya. M., "Nauka", 1976.str.8-9).

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