



SOCIAL LIFE AND ITS CHARACTERISTICS IN SAMARKAND IN THE IX-X CENTURIES

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Abstract

In this article, the author analyzed the social and religious processes in Samarkand during the reign of the Samanides based on the publications of written sources and scientific literature on the field. Also, in the article, the archaeological materials related to the period of Samanid rule in Samarkand are also included in the analysis of the article. In addition, the article also paid some attention to the role of religious scholars in the administration of the city of Samarkand in this period.

Keywords: Samanides, Islamic religion, Afrasiyab, typological features of the city

According to the researchers, the medieval cities of the main part of the Muslim world from the Nile to Yaxart during the reign of the Samanids had common features of social structure. During this period, Islam was dominant religion in the country, and the main units of society were families, neighborhoods and brotherhoods. The invasion of the Arab Caliphate led to the destruction of most of the old religious elite in Central Asia, especially in Sughd (Zarafshan and Kashkadarya oases) and Khorezm [1]. As Abu Rayhan Beruni wrote: - "*Whoever knows the writings of the Khorezms, their narrations, and what is in them, Qutayba ib Muslim scattered and destroyed all his scholars by all means. All this has been shrouded in darkness, and there is no real accurate knowledge or information about what was in their history at the time of the advent of Islam*" [2]. But individual figures, sometimes groups of Zoroastrian priests managed to survive [3]. For example, Muhammad ibn Musa al-Khorezmi (783-850) was a descendant of one of the representatives of the Zoroastrian religious elite. Sources of the 10th century mention sorcerers-priests in Samarkand [4].

Despite the theoretical ideas that the Ummah is a Muslim community, the division into Sunnis and Shias quickly took place. Representatives of both of them developed their religious doctrine, law, and theology schools rapidly. At the beginning of the 9th century, theorists such as Abu Hanifa and Malik al-Shafi'i appeared. They developed their doctrine. Based on the sources, it can be said that the followers of Abu Hanifa dominated in Samarkand in the 9th-10th centuries [5].

By the end of the 10th and 11th centuries, the scientific and religious elite - the ulama - became the social and political elite of the cities throughout the Muslim world. It is





assumed that this was caused by the establishment of Turkish empires and the change of the elite. Of all the elites, especially in Samarkand, only the ulama remained alive during this period. They took over some of the functions of the old administrative and agricultural elites. The main families of the ulama merged with the families of farmers, officials and merchants. Such families became leaders in the city [6].

Sufism sects led by sheikhs appeared during the period in question. Gradually, these sects united a group of people from different parts of Central Asia and the Muslim world. People have gathered around them because of their respect for the teachings of one or another Sufi sheikh. Rukn ad-din Abu Hamid Muhammad ibn al-Amid al-Hanafi al-Samarkandi *al-amidiya* from Samarkand was the founder of the Sufi order [7].

Representatives of the descendants of Prophet Muhammad moved to Samarkand from the western regions of the Muslim world. In the sources and on the tombstones of Samarkand, the names of al-Hasani and al-Husaini related sayyids are recorded from the 10th-11th centuries. Some of them were originally from Baghdad, Iraq. The sources mention more descendants of Hussain ibn Ali in Samarkand. [8].

If we dwell on the issue of house construction, luxurious houses have been built since the reign of the Samanides. Craftsmen moved to the lands occupied by wealthy townspeople and began to develop them. The city became the center of craft production, the social system of the townspeople has changed [9].

It is mentioned that the population of Samarkand had a diverse ethnic composition during the reign of the Samanids. According to sources, Turkish-speaking people made up a part of the city's population together with Persians [10]. A separate category of the population was made up of the military stratum that served in the Samanian Guard - the Turkish. During the early Islamic period, there was an increase in the population of cities. Undoubtedly, such a demographic growth took place in Samarkand as well. According to archaeological materials, this process expanded and covered a large area. The growth of trade led to the growth of the city's economy and attracted migrants. In most cases, the Arabs did not completely capture the cities. They preferred suburban villages, for example, in Bukhara, Marv, Nishapur and other cities. It is known that the terms "Sogdi", "Sogds", "Sogd of Samarkand" [11] are used in relation to some representatives of the population of Middle Zarafshan and the region only in connection with tax collections and payments [12].

In the 10th-11th centuries, immigrants from other regions and cities of the Muslim world played a significant role in the formation of the population of Samarkand. These include the population of Baghdad, Samarra, Nishapur, Marv, Nasaf, Balkh, Khojand, Kesh, Kokand, Khorezm, Choch, Zomin, Koson, Farob, and small villages. Also,





scholars from Bukhara, Termiz, Taroz, Serakhs, Kushania, Vobkent, Ishtikhan, Hamadan, Basra, Ustrushana, Isfahan lived and taught in the city. The governor of Samarkand, Abulhasan Faiq ibn Abdullah al-Hossa al-Andalusi, was from the Muslim part of Spain. The people of Samarkand themselves had the opportunity to live in different parts of the Islamic world in Iran, Kufa, Mecca and other cities [13].

Interesting information about the imaginations of the people of Samarkand and their spiritual life has been preserved in tombstone inscriptions. The first tombstone in Samarkand that has come down to us may belong to the end of the 10th-11th century. The first Kufic inscription on a brick found in Samarkand dates back to the 11th century. Often in epitaphs burial-mound is given by the word "grave". From the second half of the 12th century, the words of the Quran began to spread in writings. The most popular word is the verse of Surah 29, "The human heart is always ready for death". The first tombstone found in Samarkand dates back to 844-845. The Arabic text of the inscriptions is written in the "kufi" or "naskh" script, and the persian text is written in simple quick script. From the twelfth century, epigraphic inscriptions in persian appeared. Rubaiyats are also placed in them [14].

During the Samanid period, the house of worship in Samarkand was considered a mosque. It is known from history that towards the end of the period of the Arab Caliphate, the unique appearance of mosques began to be decided, and by this time minarets, maqsuras and mihrabs appeared. According to the results of archaeological excavations, a pulpit for the imam and a platform next to it appeared later. In addition to jumah, jameh mosques, house mosques in the neighborhood, palaces and rich houses, caravansary mosques, and later madrasa mosques appeared. The mosque occupied a special place in the life of the Muslim community, it was considered not only a house of worship, but also a public building that performed various functions. At the beginning of the 10th century, jameh or jumah mosques (or masjid al-jameh) appeared. Along with jumah prayers, khutba prayers were also read in them, which gathered all the muslims of the city and its surroundings [16].

Islam initially rejected the worship of any objects (with the exception of the "black stone" in Mecca), as one of the main signs of paganism. However, the construction of mausoleums and mosques over the graves of companions and notable Muslim scholars began to be recorded from the Samanid era. Also, graves, which are objects of pilgrimage, began to appear. These are generally considered tombs that appeared around the grave of a Muslim saint. Adoration of the tombs of saints became widespread from the end of the 10th century, and Sufism and its highly respected sheikhs played a major role in this.





The noteworthy aspect of the matter is that at least three religious and educational centers were formed in Samarkand in the 10th-11th centuries. The first of these was in the northern part of the city, with a large congregational mosque in its center. Next to the mosque was a mausoleum where representatives of the Karakhanids dynasty were buried. The second is the mausoleum of Kusam ibn Abbas, the uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, in the southern part of the city, and since the 11th century, representatives of the secular and religious elite of the city have been buried around it. The third center is the Chokardiza cemetery, which is located south of the Kusam Ibn Abbas mausoleum, where famous Islamic theologians are also buried.

In general, the main religious center of the city of Samarkand since the 9th century was the Jameh Mosque located in the north of Afrasiyab, in the west of the city fortifications. The mosque was thatched, and some parts were surrounded by a wall made of raw bricks. Based on the information of Al-Muqaddasi al-Jaykhani, informs that the most magnificent mosque in Sogd was located in Samarkand, then in Kesh, then in Nasaf, and then in Kushani. In particular, the Quran was read and hadith discussions were organized in the Jameh Mosque in Samarkand [17].

During the reign of the Samanids, khanaqahs (Persian: Khanqah) - places where Sufis lived together and performed prayers - began to appear in Khurasan and Movarounnahr. The first houses in Samarkand date back to the 11th century, and it is noted that some of them were built in front of mosques.

During the reign of the Samanides, religious institutions increased in Samarkand, as in the whole of Movarounnahr. In the 10th century, the process of increasing the number of mosques in the entire Muslim world began. During this period, for example, in Samarkand, a large mosque was built near the grave of Kusam ibn Abbas, the propagator of Islam, the uncle of our Prophet. Its foundations were discovered in 2004 during archaeological excavations. The appearance of another monument complex in the city of Samarkand is also connected with the name of Kusam ibn Abbas. Sources testify that Kusam ibn Abbas was outwardly similar to our prophet. During the reign of Caliph Ali (656-661), Kusam ibn Abbas first served as governor of Medina later, as the viceroy of Mecca, he was responsible for the performance of the Muslim Hajj pilgrimages. In 676, Kusam ibn Abbas arrived in Samarkand (according to other sources, Marv) with the advance troops of the Arabs, where he died [18]. Later, various stories and legends appeared about him.

According to legends, the troops of Kusam ibn Abbas were put to the sword by local residents during prayer. But Kusam ibn Abbas survived thanks to a miracle, that is, the mihrab in front of him was opened and he managed to hide. The origin of the name of the monument - "Shahi Zinda" - "living king" is also related to this legend. If we pay





attention to the records of "Kandia" and Ibn Battuta (14th century) about the 12th century, then the name Shahi Zinda did not exist at all. At the end of the 15th century, it was noted that the name Mazar Shah (tomb of the king) was used for this monument complex. The name Shahi Zinda appeared only in the 15th century, and around this time the name was used to name one of the holy places in the city of Herat. This is primarily explained by the emergence of new mysticism in Islam in the 10th-11th centuries, Sufism and related traditions of visiting the burial places of "saints". From this period, a large number of mausoleums and various rooms began to appear on the existing or non-existent graves of ghazis - "fighters for the true religion", theologians, scholars and secular rulers. For example, in Kabul, Oratepa and other places, there are many places of pilgrimage that people associate with the name of Kusam ibn Abbas or his relatives and followers [19].

According to L. Dodkhudoeva, in the middle ages, it was believed that "whoever dies in Samarkand, is considered to have died in the seventh heaven, and on the day of judgment, he will enter heaven together with the angels" [20]. In the 10th century, a new mausoleum appeared in Samarkand's Chokardiza (which means "fortification of warriors"), where one of the leading theologians, Abu Mansur al-Moturidi (870-944), was buried. Later, hundreds of great scholars, sayyids (descendants of our prophet), sheikhs, imams and ghazis who came from different regions of Central Asia: Nasaf, Ozgan, Shosh, Isfijab and others were buried here. A large mosque and other architectural monuments stand here. Burhanuddin al-Marginani, a great Islamic scholar and the sultan of jurisprudence, was also buried in the Chokardiza cemetery. Also buried here are the thousands of Muslim warriors who died in the battle with the karakhitans who invaded Movarounnhr on September 9, 1141, the combined army of Karakhanids and Seljuks led by Sultan Sanjar. According to further traditions, the prayers performed at the mosque in the Chokardiza tomb and the tomb of Abu Mansur al-Moturidi help ward off many diseases and attacks from enemies [21].

During the years of Soviet rule, the Chokardiza cemetery was demolished, the tombs of famous people were abandoned, and a large part of the cemetery was distributed to the population as a plot of land. Historical justice was restored only with the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the personal initiatives of first president I. Karimov. In 2000, a huge memorial complex was built in Chokardiza cemetery, where Abu Mansur al-Moturidi and Burhanuddin al-Marginani were buried.

At the border of the 10th-11th centuries, a mosque was built in the Kusam ibn Abbas complex, located in the southern part of Afrasiyab, and this is considered the first religious-monument building in the area of the modern complex. Banu Nakhiyya,





which is considered the first Muslim cemetery, was located here. Several scholars of hadiths in this tomb, for example, Abu Tawba Sayyid ibn Hashim ibn Hamza al-Atki al-Kogazi al-Samarqandi (died in 874) was buried, and according to reports, Ismail ibn Ahmad Samani personally read his funeral [22].

So, next to the mosque in Samarkand, as in other Muslim countries, there is a large city market and market square. It is known that in the cities of Iran, there was a public square near the bazaar and mosque, where various political, religious and socio-cultural events took place. For example, Navruz and other religious holidays were celebrated. South of the fortification in the town of Afrasiyab, the location of a large flat area was found, which was most likely the "square" of the town. From this period, the process of active settlement of the population can be observed in the southern part of Samarkand city. Materials obtained as a result of archaeological research testify to this.

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