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Study Of The Historical Geography Of The Ancient Sughd Oasis

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Abstract: This article covers the issues of the historical geography of Sogd, which has repeatedly become the center of world civilization in the past. The author, relying on archaeological data and written sources, made clarifications in the problem on the basis of existing scientific and historical literature. He made a comparative analysis of existing specific approaches and theories on the historical geography of Sogd.

As a result of the carried out research, the author concludes that the border of Sogd as a country in the early Iron Age could be limited to the Bukhara oasis in the West, the Gissar mountains in the East, the lower reaches of the Kashkadarya in the south and the Kukhitang hills as well as the Nurota mountains in the North.

Key words: Historical geography, archaeological data, written sources, scientific-comparative analysis, the first Iron Age, political boundaries, ethnocultural.

1. Introduction:

Sughd is one of the oldest historical and cultural regions in Central Asia. The country, which has been the center of world civilization several times in the past, was known as Sogdiana and Sughd before the Arab conquest. The historical geography of Sughd has long been one of the most controversial issues in the country's history. It should be noted that the sources on the historical geography of Sughd are written in different languages, and source analysis plays an important role in their identification.

Sughd, with its rich historical and cultural heritage, was left out of consistent research until the second half of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. Generalized historical publications on the history of the peoples of Central Asia contain very little information about the first centuries of the twentieth century, especially before the Arab conquest. This is due to the fact that written sources on these important stages of the past have not been thoroughly studied, and there are very few written monuments from the area itself to antiquity, especially to the period before the Arab conquest. In addition, archeological research was not widely developed during the period under review. However, since the second half of the 19th century, a number of studies have emerged based on the generalization of scientific sources. Researchers have done a lot of research on the historical geography of Sughd, and have developed their own approaches and scientific conclusions on this issue. The analysis of these studies will be the basis for drawing scientific conclusions about the historical geography of Sughd.



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2. Main part:

There is no comprehensive study of the exact historical geography of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages in Sughd. However, since the 1950s, with the expansion of archeological research, information on one or another aspect of the issue has appeared. Among these works are such researchers as V.Tarn, V.Tomashek, A.Terenojkin, V.Shishkin, M.Filanovich, Y.Buryakov, I.Pyankov, N.Khlopin, A.Sagdullayev, R.Sulaymonov, M.Isamiddinov. special mention should be made of their work.

The Avesto, the oldest written source in the common history of Uzbekistan and the peoples of Central Asia in general (the surviving parts of the book) contains a number of information about Sughd. According to the latest research in Avesta, the first parts of the Avesta date back to BC. It was built in the IX-VIII centuries, in the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages. Some of the surviving parts of this book contain valuable information about Sughd. In particular, in the first fragard of the "Videvdat" part of the Avesta, the following information is given by the supreme god Ahuramazda about the creation of favorable conditions for human (Zoroastrian) life:

4.The second most beautiful land
I created Gava Sugdi [1].
The Evil Spirit (Ahriman) who cursed him
He sent Skaiti here
He sowed the seeds of death in the whole herd.

It is clear from this verse that the territory of Sughd, at least in the Early Iron Age, was formed as a separate region, a historical and geographical place. In turn, this geographical space was instilled in the minds of members of society on the basis of a religious approach that the supreme god Ahuramazda created as a gift for his servants (Zoroastrians) as a source of their well-being. The oldest part of the Avesta, the 10th chapter of the Yasht, the Mihr-yasht, also mentions Sughd:

14. "Where are the brave rulers
Gather for battle;
Where in the high mountains
There are many pastures
The cattle graze peacefully
Where the waves in the lakes,
High and deep
Where for shipping
Broad-flowing rivers
It flows fast
To Ishkata in Porut
To Mouruga in Haraway
Hawaii in Sogdia,
Or it flows to Khorezm "[3].

These data show that Sughd has existed as a separate historical and cultural region since ancient times.

Written sources from the Achaemenid period also contain information about Sughd. The first information is written on the rocks of Behistun. In it, Darius I listed Sughd as one of his subjects. In rock inscriptions, the name Sugd is given as "Suguda". Another source, a gold label found in



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Hamadan, shows the borders of the state of Darius I. For example, "King Darius says, " This is the kingdom that I will rule over; The great god Ahuramazda gave me the lands from the Scythians behind Sogdia to Ethiopia and from India to Lydia. Let him protect me and my house in Ahuramazda." [4] The label is now housed in a museum in Tehran [5].

The Sughd region is also mentioned in the report on the construction of a palace built by Darius I in Suzada, another major city of the Achaemenid Empire. In particular, the report states that the rubies used in the construction of the palace (lazurite - blue stone) and mercury ore (cinnabar - red mineral) were imported from Sughd. Analyzing this information, A.V. Livshits concluded that the lal was originally from Badakhshan, and that Badakhshan was mentioned in this information because it was located on the south-eastern border of Sughd [6].

On the walls of the royal palace in Persepolis, the capital of the Achaemenid Empire, the inhabitants of the lands subjugated to Darius I are depicted in relief. These images show the Sogdians in line 8. There are seven Sogdians in the hands, carrying utensils, cloths, animal skins, and two sheep [7]. The mausoleum of Darius I in the Naqshi Rostam gorge is also embossed with images of the peoples who obeyed him. In it, Sogdians and Bactrians wear almost the same clothes: a shirt with a belt around the body, a hat that looks like a doppia. The Sogdians wore long skinny trousers, and the Bactrians wore high-heeled boots with trousers tucked up. The picture shows all the tribes of Central Asia with beards and akinak at the waist. Sogdians and Bactrians have longer beards

3. Results and Discussions:

Information about the geographical and administrative structure of the Sughd region of the Achaemenid Empire is also mentioned in the works of ancient Greek historians. For example, in the third and seventh books of Herodotus' History, information about Sughd, which was part of the Achaemenids, is preserved. The third book lists the Sogdians as the sixteenth satrap of the Achaemenid state, along with neighboring countries: "The Parthians, Khorezmians, Sogdians, and Aryans paid 300 talents. This is the sixteenth country" [8].

Book 7 of History describes the Persian military campaign against the Greeks during the reign of Emperor Xerxes I: "... the Sogdians were led by Azan, Arty's son ..." [9] It is clear from the data of Herodotus that the historical land of Sughd, the Sogdians as the inhabitants of this land in the administrative structure of the great Achaemenid kingdom with the inhabitants of neighboring lands (Parthia, Khorezm, Aria) together formed a separate region - satrapism. He paid a certain amount of taxes under the laws of the kingdom, and also took part in large-scale military campaigns of the emperors with his military units.

Greek and Roman written sources on the history and geography of Sughd often describe the period of Alexander the Great's invasion of Central Asia. It covers the invasion of Sughd by Alexander the Great, who pursued Bess, the struggle against Spitamen, the struggle against the rebellious Sogdians, the capture of the fortress of Khoreana, and the activities of the satrap Oxiart.

In Arrian's multi-part work, Alexander's Military March, we find valuable information about the historical geography of Sughd, as well as the central city of the country. Part 3 of the work states that the Sogdians were part of the army of Darius III, who fought against the army of Alexander the Great and led by Bess: They came. They were all led by Bess, the satrap of Bactria" [10]. "Alexander struggled because of the heavy snow and lack of basic necessities, but he was moving forward. When



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Bess was told that Alexander was close, she crossed the Ox River. After passing, he set fire to the things he had used (the ships - Kursi Ruf) and went to the land of Sughd - Nautaka. He was followed by Spitamen, Oxiart with Sogdian cavalry, and dais from Taniias. The Bactrian cavalry, on hearing of Bess's escape, dispersed to their homes"[11]. "Alexander filled the cavalry with local horses (he lost many horses while crossing the Caucasus Mountains and the Oxus) and went to Marakanda, the capital of Sughd"[12].

Book 4 contains information about Alexander the Great's conquest of Sughd and his struggle against Spitamen and Oxiart. From the information given in the play, we find reports that the Sogdians were constantly fighting for their independence: "He (Alexander the Great) decided to build a city on the river Taniias and named it after himself. It seemed to him that the place was conducive to building a city, which would later develop, be well protected from Scythian attacks, and serve as a base for fighting the barbarians living on the other side of the river. The larger the city, the greater the number of visitors. During this period, barbarians living by the river invaded and destroyed a garrison of Macedonian warriors. Many Sogdians, as well as those who took part in the capture of Bess, took part in the uprising, which turned some Bactrians to their side. Perhaps they were really afraid of Alexander, perhaps the reason for the revolt was Alexander's order to gather all the chiefs in Zariasp, who, in their opinion, had not been summoned for good." [13] This information is also given in the work of Quintus Curtius Rufus, which states that 7,000 Sogdians on horseback took part in the uprising, and that the Bactrians joined them. Alexander the Great sent a man to help Spitamen and Katen, who had helped capture Bess, to quell the revolt. But they themselves led the uprising. They spread rumors that Alexander was gathering and destroying local military commanders, urging everyone to take up arms and fight the enemy

4. Conclusion:

Sughd is a historical and cultural region that naturally and geographically occupies the inland and two major water basins of the Central Asian region - the Zarafshan and Kashkadarya oases. The region is geographically about 488 km from the Zarafshan Mountains in the east to the Kyzylkum Desert in the west, and 224 km in the north from the Qatvan steppes to the Iron Gate in the south[16]. occupies The Zarafshan River has its primary source in the Tien Shan Mountains, with a total length of 781 km. The total area of the oasis is 41,860 square meters. It is naturally divided into Mountainous Zarafshan, Middle Zarafshan and Lower Zarafshan[17].

From the above-mentioned written sources we can get certain information about the ancient historical geography of Sughd. At the same time, the results of archeological excavations in the ruins of the centuries-old monuments of ancient Sughd, which began in the last quarter of the XIX century and continue to this day, are important in obtaining complete information about the historical geography of Sughd.

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