

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE ANCIENT SOGDIAN STATE IN WRITTEN SOURCES

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Annotation. This article provides a brief overview of the Ancient Sogdian state, including when it was founded and the territories it encompassed. It also discusses the socio-economic structure and economic life of its ancient cities. Furthermore, the article presents concise information derived from the accounts of ancient Greek scholars and the findings of modern scientific research conducted on the Ancient Sogdian state.

Keywords. Ancient Sogdia (alternatively: Sogdiana), Shahnameh, Avesta, Vara, Kuchuktepa, Jarqoton, Bandikhan, Qiziltepa, Bakhtar, Herodotus, Ctesias, Arrian, Strabo, Quintus Curtius Rufus, Diodorus, Pliny

Introduction.

Sogdia, which occupied an important place in the socio-economic and political life of Central Asia during the Early Iron Age, is mentioned in various ancient sources under the names Sugda, Suguda, and Sogdiana. There is currently no definitive explanation for the origin and meaning of these names. Some researchers (V. Tomaschek) suggest that the name is derived from the Iranian word "SUS" – meaning "to burn, to shine, to radiate," while others (O. Smirnova) believe that the word means "the land of fertile oases." "Sugda of Gava," mentioned in the Yasht section of the Avesta, may have been the oldest province of Sogdiana. According to some sources (A. Sagdullaev), Gava (Gay) – meaning "bull" or "herd" – is associated with the Kashkadarya oasis. This word is repeated and preserved in numerous geographical names of the region (Gavdara, Gaykhana, Gaumurda, Gay Mountains, Gay Peak, etc.). "Sugd" is rendered as "Gava Sugda" in the Avesta and as "Sogdiana" in Greek and Roman sources. The etymology of the word "Sugd" has not yet been definitively established¹.

Methods

Information about ancient Sogdia and the Sogdians, encompassing the present-day Kashkadarya and Zarafshan valleys (the Bukhara, Navoi, Samarkand, and Kashkadarya regions of Uzbekistan, as well as the Panjikent area of Tajikistan), is

¹ Лившич В.А. История изучения Согда. – С. 5.

scarce in early written sources. In the Avesta, the name of the region is given in two forms – Gava Sugda and Sugda separately. Herodotus mentions the Sogdians twice – when listing the peoples of the 16th satrapy of the Achaemenid state and when indicating the position of Sogdian warriors in the ranks of the Persian army. However, the historian provides us with no information about Sogdian cities, rivers, mountains, or territorial boundaries. Achaemenid cuneiform inscriptions mainly announce Sogdia at the official level, making their use in studying various historical problems difficult. Information about the Sogdians is absent in the works of Hecataeus, Ctesias, and Xenophon. V. Tomaschek presents it as "purified by fire" or "sacred," while other researchers analyze it as derived from the ancient Iranian word "suxta," meaning "to burn"². Historical and geographical information is presented much more extensively in the works of Alexander the Great and later Greco-Roman historians. This includes reports of specific places, regions, and fortresses in Sogdiana – Nautaca, Xenippa, Marakanda, Bagi, Basileia – the "royal city," Polytimetus-Zarafshan, "the Sogdian Rock of Oxyartes," and others. Various interpretations can be drawn from this information. First, by the 4th century BCE, the territorial location of the Sogdians, the boundaries of their primary lands used for habitation, river valleys, and regions become clearer. However, the historical roots of this process – the expansion of the Sogdians, the emergence of settled oases, and the founding of major urban centers in these places – date back to even earlier periods.

During the Early Iron Age in Sogdia, there existed several types of settlements that served as central points within distinct territorial administrative groups. These included centers functioning as district or oasis hubs, ranging in size from 5 to 15 hectares – Daratepa, Konimekh, Chordara; and cities that may have served as regional centers, ranging in size from 20 to 80 hectares – Uzunkir, Yerqorgon, Khoja Bo'ston, and others. The Jom site, a Ko'ktepa-era monument, was discovered near the village of Jom in the Nurobod district of the Samarkand region³. The Afrosiab findings confirm this picture. Such settlements gradually developed into centers of craftsmanship, trade, and culture. Information about Sogdiana within the Achaemenid Empire is preserved in the third and seventh books of Herodotus's Histories. In the third book, the Sogdians are listed along with other peoples as the sixteenth satrapy of the Achaemenid state: "The Parvians, Chorasmians, Sogdians, and Arians paid 300 talents. This was the sixteenth province"⁴.

Results

Researcher Sh. Odilov conducts a detailed analysis, comparing archaeological data from the Early Iron Age discovered and investigated in Sogdiana, particularly in

² Ўша асар. – Б. 4.

³ Бердимуратов А.Э., Черосетти Б., Рахманов Ш.А., Ронделли Б. Новый пункт культуры лепной расписной керамики в Зарафшанской долине. – Б. 79 – 83.

⁴ Геродот. III, 93.

the Bukhara and Zarafshan oases, with other regions. The "Achaemenid period" monuments found in the Bukhara region are located in relatively small areas, requiring these areas to be included within a larger ethno-cultural region. In the Early Iron Age, a farming culture with a uniform appearance developed in these territories. This ethno-cultural region initially encompassed the Amu Darya oasis (Khwarazm, Margiana, Bactria), Southern Sogdiana, part of Central Sogdiana, the northwestern and northeastern regions of Bukhara Sogdiana, as well as historical regions such as Ustrushana. Migration from the territories of ancient Bactria occurred directly via the Amu Darya, Surkhan, and Kashkadarya river basins and their tributaries. As early as the Late Bronze Age, the bearers of the culture that existed in the upper reaches of the Kashkadarya River reached the territories of Central Sogdiana (Samarkand) through the mountains. Regarding the Zarafshan oasis, according to Sh. Odilov, a large part of Central Sogdiana (from the surroundings of the ancient city of Afrosiab and Ko'ktepa on one side to the Sarmishsay and Konimekh monuments on the other) was not cultivated at all during the Late Bronze Age and the "Achaemenid period" (until the beginning of the 4th century BCE). However, in our opinion, it was precisely during this period that a large part of Southern Sogdiana was occupied by settled agricultural populations, and river oases and plains were cultivated by rain-fed agricultural populations, with these territories specializing in rain-fed agriculture. We can observe the same process in large areas of neighboring ancient Bactria as well. Analyzing the results of the most recent archaeological research, we observe that the pottery and construction methods of ancient cities and settlements such as Kiziltepa (Surkhandarya), Yaztepa (Turkmenistan), Uzunkir, Yerqorgon (Kashkadarya), Afrosiab, and Koktepa (Samarkand) are remarkably similar to each other. However, objects similar to those from the 9th-7th centuries BCE found at Yerqorgon, Kuchuktepa, Kiziltepa, and Yaztepa have not yet been discovered in the Khwarazm region.

Discussion

Thus, the similarities in construction methods and material culture indicate that at least an ethno-historical and cultural unity existed between the territories of Bactria, Margiana, and Sogdiana at the beginning of the 1st millennium BCE. This similarity was also linked to trade relations, mutual exchange, and ancient trade and transit routes. By the 6th century BCE, Khwarazm emerged as an independent state. It should be noted here that the Early Iron Age trade and transit routes in Khwarazm, which were important for mutual exchange, served as internal or secondary routes within the oasis. The main trade routes passed from Bactria through Southern Sogdiana (Kashkadarya) and Central Sogdiana (Samarkand) to the Tashkent oasis and the Fergana Valley. Archaeological research indicates that social stratification and property inequality emerged in the regions of Central Asia as early as the Bronze Age as a result of the development of irrigated agriculture and specialized craftsmanship.

This process was not only linked to internal factors, but also to long-standing historical and cultural connections with the highly developed Near East. Although the development of each community stemmed from its internal dynamics, external influence from initial centers could have a significant impact on the fate of outlying regions. New archaeological data obtained from the territories of Uzbekistan provides an opportunity to interpret the emergence of early state formations in greater detail. According to this data, during the Early Iron Age, the main productive forces in communal societies consisted of household communities comprising several small families. The external features of settlement locations indicate that large family household communities belonged to larger associations. In terms of governance, the heads of large family communities or householders, as well as the old communities managing separate village fortresses, played a significant role. Despite possible kinship ties, each large family possessed a separate household, production tools, its own reserves of agricultural products and livestock, or reflected a household capable of sustaining itself economically.

Conclusion.

Comparing and summarizing the results of the research conducted, we can conclude that people entered the territories of Sogdiana in the most ancient periods, spreading to foothill regions, river oases, and later, to steppe areas. The favorable natural conditions that existed in these areas created ample opportunities for the development of socio-economic and cultural life.

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