

HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF THE JARKOTON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SITE

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Abstract: This article analyzes the study history of the Zharkoton archaeological monument of the Bronze Age of the Pottery culture. Since 1969, regular research has been conducted by scholars from Tashkent state university and the institute of Archaeology of the Academy of sciences. During archaeological excavations, a temple with a complex structure, economic facilities, residential buildings, ceramics, metal objects and religious artifacts have been discovered. The Jarkoton site holds great scientific significance for studying the socio-economic life, beliefs and lifestyle of ancient peoples through its unique architectural style, religious symbols found in artistic samples and material cultural monuments. This site has been recognized as an important source for the study of proto-urban civilizations in Central Asia. These archaeological findings not only reflect the richness of Uzbekistan's historical heritage but also play an important role in shedding light on the ancient stages of human history and continue to attract significant interest in academic circles today.

Keywords: Jarqoton, fire worship temple, jewelry, ceramic dishes, household items, holy drink – khaoma.

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As a result of a meeting of the first President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, I. A. Karimov, with historians and archaeologists in 1998, the Resolution "On improving the activities of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the republic of Uzbekistan" was adopted. Based on the tasks in the paragraphs of this Resolution related to archaeology, a Concept for the Development of the Science of Archaeology in Uzbekistan was developed. The Concept became the main reason for the development of the field of Archaeology.

The Resolution of the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan No. 846 "On Approval of the National List of Immovable Property Objects of Tangible Cultural Heritage" of October 4, 2019, provided information for the implementation of search and excavation work at archaeological monuments in the country. The Jarkoton settlement was also identified among these monuments.

RESEARCH

Jarkoton, located on the left bank of the Bostonsoy stream, a tributary of the Sherabad River, in the Sherabad district of the Surkhandarya region, is a monument dating back to the second half of the II nd millennium BC. Its area is 100 hectares.

Academician A. Askarov specifically noted that the formation of cities is historically necessary, mainly due to the sedentary economic life of the population and the presence of three other factors related to it. These are:

Firstly, favorable natural conditions, new fertile soil, water and other geographical factors;

Secondly, productive irrigated agriculture;

Thirdly, the emergence of agricultural technology that ensures agriculture [1. P – 25]. These are due to the fact that the conditions were ripe for the emergence of a stratified society based on economic factors in the emergence of the city, which was formed religiously, militarily and politically. The radical changes that occurred in economic life, the discovery of an artificial irrigation system in agriculture, provided the release of water from rivers to new lands through main canals. The use of plows and animal power in tilling the land, the discovery of the wheel and complex kiln in pottery, the technology of metal smelting and casting, the transition to the use of domestic animals as transport, the invention of astronomy, astrology, sundials, calendars, complex counting systems based on accumulated knowledge about the environment, and other things led to stratification in social life.

Such advanced monuments consisted of three parts:

1. The arch section covered an area of 5 hectares. It was surrounded by defensive walls. The remains of the palace here were excavated and studied. It was square in shape (36x36 meters in size) and surrounded by a wall 4.5 m thick. The arch was entered through a special gate. In collaboration with A. Askarov and his students, a whole metal smelting workshop was opened here, and two two-tier circular metal smelting furnaces were opened, built close to each other at the “Metallurgical Plant”.

2. Shahrison – 50-75 hectares. In its highest part there was a temple of fire worship. The temple was surrounded by a wall 4,5 m thick. It consisted of two parts, the sacred fire pit and the production area. The fire pit was discovered in 1973 by an archaeological expedition led by A. Askarov. The sacred part of this place was square in shape (35x35 m), where there were elements related to the worship of sacred fire and water (sacred wells, altars, a khilkhona, a treasury and a raised area with 4 main altars). In the production and economic part of the temple there is a room for preparing the sacred drink – khaoma, workshops for preparing tomb inventories, and a food warehouse dedicated to the temple. Glazed, decorative ceramic vessels, clay human figurines, a vessel depicting the mythical bird Geruda – Humo, a ceramic pipe, and other items were found here. One of the greatest achievements of archaeological researches was the discovery of the grave of a tribal elder in one of the rooms during the excavation of residential complexes built on a wide foundation platform in the Shahrison part. This is the largest of the 4 rooms, with an area of 39 kv. m. A fireplace with a chimney is located inside its western wall. Based on the material sources found in the grave, it was possible to determine whether the elder was the leader of the community or his profession during his lifetime. The elder's grave contains more than 50 items, of which 17 are items related to the elder's profession. The deceased's relatives placed various ceramic vessels, two bronze bowls, a silverware jar, and two ladles in the grave so that his soul could reach the afterlife without any worries. The items prove that the owner of the grave was a master goldsmith and blacksmith.

3. The cemetery covered an area of 15-20 hectares [2. P – 189]. When the graves were opened and studied, it was found that men were buried with their right side facing backward. Human bones and small cylindrical conical vessels with a conical shape were found in seven graves. These were symbols of the Zoroastrian religion. However, the remains of a cremation ground were also found in this very place. During the excavation of the cemetery, grape and berry seeds were found in the humus, which indicated that gardening was also quite developed.

From the analysis of the research, it can be concluded that the special cemeteries built outside the settlement in Jarkoton were an important sign of the higher level of social development of the society compared to Sopoli. During this period, the specialization of pottery in the Jarkoton society was at a superior level in product production. In addition, the number and quality of items found in the graves also indicate a relatively strong property stratification.

According to research, the life of the ancient city was divided into five stage:

1. Sopoli – 1700-1500 BC;
2. Jarkoton – 1500-1350 BC;
3. Kozali – 1350-1200 BC;
4. Molali – 1200-1000 BC;
5. Boston – 1000-900 BC.

As a result of continuous research work carried out at this monument since 1973, it became possible to make many clarifications about the urbanization processes that took place in these areas [3. P – 60]. The remains of dwellings, a temple, a pottery district, metal smelting workshops, and more than 1,000 graves were excavated and studied and the site. Residential buildings were built of large-sized raw bricks (55x29x9 cm) with one or more rooms. The floors and walls of the rooms were plastered with straw mud. The streets are narrow, and the road leading to the temple is paved with gravel. In addition, a stone plowshare, numerous ceramic vessels (pots, jugs, bowls, cups, plates), brass needles, awls, daggers, ceramic axes, flint axes, brass jewelry (many ingots with colored stones, bracelets, carnelian, mirrors), beads made of precious stones and bone, brass ingots, tribal seal stamps, remnants of fabric, and other items were found in Jarkoton. The ceramic vessels were made so elegantly and resoundingly that this indicates that pottery was very developed at that time.

There are a number of common features that allow us to compare the Jarkoton settlement complex with the nomadic states. In particular, the fact that examples of writing typical of the nomadic states of Mesopotamia were also found here is of great scientific importance. Sh. Shaydullayev's article on pictographic signs – inscriptions found in the south of Uzbekistan was published in the press [3. P – 62]. According to the researcher, the discovery of a 47 character inscription on pottery from the Jarkoton monument shows that our ancestors created pictographic writing in the bronze age and expressed their thoughts in various symbols

In 1994-2003, excavations were carried out at the Jarkoton settlement in collaboration with the German Archaeological Institute. As a result of the excavations, a human bust, i.e. a statue of a man made in the portrait genre, was found. It was made of clay and dried in the sun, but was not well preserved because it was not burned in a fire [4].

From the analysis of the research conducted, it can be concluded that by the middle of the 2 nd millennium BC, Jarkoton had become a strong stronghold of tribal associations of the population engaged in farming in those regions. Apparently, through this stronghold, the migration of the population from the north to the foothills of Hissar and the western regions of Southern Tajikistan took place. The topography of the monuments found in these regions and the process of their periodization showed that they were consistent. In addition, it is also known that the development of this process created ample opportunities for the growth of the population and the development of productive forces in the settlements of the sedentary farming population on the right bank of the Amudarya in the second half of the 2 nd millennium BC.

According to scientists, life in Jarkoton ceased by the 10 th century BC due to a number of natural and social reasons. Jarkoton, considered the first city of the bronze age, lost its position as a cultural center, and traces of life that had flourished here for many years faded away.

In conclusion, it should be noted that when talking about the bronze age cities of Southern Uzbekistan, it is worth noting that the monuments of this period have been studied only through archaeological research, and the political-administrative structures and socio-economic relations of this period have been studied on the basis of comparative analysis, without written sources. Therefore, the conclusions of researchers about these processes have often been based on assumptions. For example, A. Askarov and B. Abdullayev considered the Jarkoton stage of the development of the Bronze Age (mid 2 nd millennium BC) to be the period of the collapse of the primitive communal system, and the Kozali and Molali stages (late 2 nd millennium BC) to be the period of the emergence of property inequality relations. V. I. Sarianidi, on the contrary, suggests not to overestimate the general level of social development of Bactria, where state relations began to form at the end of the 2 nd millennium BC – the beginning of the 1 st millennium BC. Each scientist who studied the monument gave conclusions based on the results of the research. In many cases, these conclusions led to a variety of opinions. However, scientific research has fully confirmed that all the features and signs of the early city were reflected here. As mentioned above, the remains of a portrait sculpture were found. If this sculpture had been burned in a fire, it would have survived to the present day. The examples of sculpture and art in Jarkoton have not yet been well studied, and examples of applied art have not been revealed. Studying these is one of the important tasks facing modern archaeologists. It is the duty of us archaeologists to establish museums in these places and preserve the monuments for future generations. Museums, on the other hand, create an opportunity to directly expand the scope of research and take a closer look at them in practice, expanding the circle of local and tourist interest.

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