

FROM THE HISTORY OF THE STUDY OF USTRUSHANA'S ARCHAEOLOGY

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Annotation: The article presents the author's views on the study of the archeology of Ustrushana, which is considered one of the historical regions of our country.

Key words: Turkestan, Jizzakh, P.I. Lerkh, N.S. Likoshin, A.A. Semenov, Ya. Gulomov, Ustrushana, Bunjikat, Shakhristan, expedition.

Аннотация: Мазкур мақолада муаллифнинг ўлкамиздаги тарихий вилоятларидан бири саналувчи Уструшона археологиясининг ўрганилиши хусусидаги фикр-мулоҳазалари келтирилган.

Калит сўзлар: Туркистон, Жиззах, П.И.Лерх, Н.С.Ликошин, А.А.Семёнов, Я.Гуломов, Уструшона, Бунжикат, Шахристон, экспедиция.

Independence has given the Uzbek people the opportunity to learn about their true history and to study it independently. We have gained the ability to restore historical truth, explore our national cultural heritage, and evaluate it objectively. Broad opportunities have been opened for archaeological and ethnographic research in our country. As a result, we witness that the peoples who lived between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers have made an invaluable contribution to the material and spiritual culture of humanity since ancient times. One of the historical regions within the territory of our homeland is the Ustrushana region.

In written sources, the territory of Ustrushana and its name have been mentioned under various designations. In historical records, the region was initially referred to as the “Sogdian lands beyond the Saks,” and later it became an independent administrative territory known as “Ustrushana.” Ustrushana bordered the Dasht-i Qipchaq (Kipchak Steppe) to the north, Sogdiana to the west, Tashkent and Fergana to the east, and the Turkestan Mountains to the south. Its capital, the city of Bunjikat, served as the residence of the ruler [1:91].

Indeed, the study of Ustrushana's history began in the 1860s, following the conquest of Turkestan by Tsarist Russia. This work was initiated by Russian intellectuals — Orientalists, archaeologists, and historians — who were considered enlightened scholars of their time. It is worth noting that in the early stages of exploring the region's material cultural monuments, Russian military topographers and officers mainly focused on collecting antique artifacts.

The formal study of cultural monuments in the territory of Ustrushana began in 1867. The well-known Orientalist P.I. Lerch organized a scientific expedition to Turkestan as part of a special mission of the Imperial Russian Academy [2:25]. Under the leadership of this Orientalist, the scientific group managed to copy and interpret two historical inscriptions written in Arabic script found on the Ilon-Otti rocks near Jizzakh. As a result, the academic world became acquainted with accounts of two major events: the victorious military campaign of Mirzo Ulughbek, a descendant of Timur, against the lands of the Jetti (Moghulistan) in 1425, and the triumphs of Bukhara Khan Abdullah Khan I over Tashkent, Fergana, and the Kazakh sultans, as described in historical chronicles [3:71–72].

In the 1870s, Colonel A. Kushakevich, head of the Khujand uyezd, visited Shahrستان — one of the region's historical and cultural centers. During his visit, he collected local legends and information related to the past of Shahrستان, particularly about a structure built of preserved baked bricks. As early as 1890, the renowned Orientalist and archaeologist N.S. Likoshin was among the first to provide a detailed description of the Chilkhujra fortress. By 1893, the first archaeological excavations were carried out in Shahrستان. During these excavations, the head

of the Ura-Tepa district unit, Staff Captain Stepanov, played a particularly active role. Information about these activities was presented at a meeting of the Turkestan Circle of Amateur Archaeologists held on October 16, 1896.

The renowned expert on the history of Turkic peoples, V.V. Bartold, succeeded in recording legends and oral narratives related to the history of Shahrīstan and Chilkhujra directly from the local population. As one of the first scholars, the famous Orientalist attempted to prove that Bunjikāt, the capital of Ustrushana, was located on the site of the ruins in Shahrīstan [4:331]. Later, thanks to the efforts of P.S. Skvarksky, the head of the Ura-Tepa district unit, numerous ancient material-cultural artifacts related to the past of Shahrīstan were collected, along with samples of ruins of several ancient settlements [5:41–45]. One of the most prominent experts on the antiquity of Ustrushana was, without doubt, I.A. Castagné. As one of the first researchers, he studied the medieval ruins of Shahrīstan (Qal'āi-Qahqaha), compiled their description, and managed to document valuable information about the city's defensive walls and water supply system.

Efforts to identify and document historical monuments related to the ancient history of Ustrushana were revived in the 1920s–1930s. The Russian scholar A.A. Semyonov wrote his archaeological commentary on the Shahrīstan monuments and succeeded in creating a comprehensive overview of the architectural heritage of Ura-Tepa. It was this archaeologist who, following V.V. Bartold, also emphasized that Bunjikāt, the capital of Ustrushana, was located at the site of present-day Shahrīstan.

The first major archaeological excavations in the territory of Ustrushana were conducted in 1943–1944 under the leadership of V.F. Gaydukevich, in connection with the construction of the Farhod Hydroelectric Power Station. As part of the Farhod expedition, two ancient cemeteries belonging to nomadic pastoralists were excavated, resulting in the study of a total of 28 burial mounds. The findings provided valuable information to science regarding the ancient population's religious beliefs and burial customs.

In 1951, the Zarafshan expedition of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, led by Yahyo Ghulomov, conducted archaeological research in Tuzkon and its surrounding area, located 50 kilometers north of Jizzakh. As a result, flint tools from the Neolithic period were discovered and studied at the sites of Tuzkon, Khonchorbog, and Qolgansir, along with fragments of ceramic vessels from the Bronze Age decorated with fir-tree and net-like patterns [6:55].

Subsequent research conducted by archaeologists such as A.Yu. Yakubovsky, O.I. Smirnova, A.M. Mandel'shtam, and N. Negmatov brought the study of Ustrushana's history to a new level. In particular, under the leadership of the well-known Tajik archaeologist N. Negmatov, large-scale archaeological excavations were launched. Under his direction, excavations continued in Bunjikāt, the capital of Ustrushana, resulting in the full exploration of sites such as the Qal'āi-Qahqaha I palace, Tirmizaktepa, Urtakurgan, and the village settlements of Chilkhujra [7:30]. By 1965–1972, the Ark of Bunjikāt (Qal'āi-Qahqaha I) was fully excavated, revealing rare architectural examples from the palace of the Ustrushana Afshins. During these years, the Chorkhokhatēpa mound, a Muslim cemetery, and a mosque on the eastern side of Shahrīstan were also uncovered. Research related to irrigation and irrigated agriculture was conducted in the basins of the flowing water channels such as Oqsuv, Shahrīstansoy, and Isfanasoy. According to archaeologist A. Bilolov, the total length of the royal canal irrigation networks in Ustrushana reached three thousand kilometers.

In 1964, the Samarkand detachment led by M. Aminjonova conducted archaeological surveys in the Zomin district of the Jizzakh oasis [8]. The detachment, aiming to identify the site of the main town of medieval Zomin, achieved significant results. Based on archaeological

findings, the scholar proposed that “Urdtepa cannot be the abandoned city of Zomin from the 9th–10th centuries; instead, the new city (Sarasanda) should be sought among the four settlement sites located at the source of the Zominsuv stream, emerging from the mountains.”

In 1978, with the aim of establishing permanent work in the territories of Jizzakh and Syrdarya regions, the Northern Ustrushana (later Jizzakh) detachment was formed at the Archaeology Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR. Under the leadership of archaeologist E.B. Kodirov, as an initial result of the detachment’s activities, about 20 rooms of the Qin'g'irtepa fortress in the village of Obiz, Gallarol district, were uncovered, and a hoard of 35 coins was discovered there. Among this treasure, coins minted in the 8th century by the rulers of the Turkic Khaganate were also identified [9].

Almantepa I settlement is located in the eastern part of Qashqabulok village, Gallarol district, Jizzakh region, on the right bank of the Sangzor River. This site was recorded and registered in 1982 by the Jizzakh archaeological detachment, which also conducted excavation research in the same year. From the geographical standpoint, Almantepa I stands out among nearby archaeological sites due to a number of favorable and advantageous features.

In 1982–1983, the Jizzakh detachment of the Archaeology Institute of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR excavated and studied an architectural complex consisting of six rooms constructed using the “comb-like corridors” method from the upper construction layers of Almantepa. This architectural complex has been dated to the 7th–8th centuries and is scientifically referred to as Almantepa I. By 1984, excavations continued with the aim of studying the lower construction layers of Almantepa and fully uncovering the architectural structures.

When discussing the study of archaeological sites in the historic region of Ustrushana, it is important to note that since 1985, the Jizzakh detachment led by M. Pardaev, one of the leading archaeologists of our republic, has been successfully conducting excavations and research at urban and predominantly rural sites such as Qaliyatepa, Komilbobotepa, Pardakultepa, and Rasulboykultepa, located in the lower reaches of the Sangzor River within the Jizzakh oasis.

In 1994, the book “Ancient Zaamin,” published by the “Fan” publishing house of our republic, contains in Chapter V a brief overview of the research by Yu.F. Buryakov and A.A. Gricina, including a historical and ethnographic description of the Jizzakh oasis during the late Middle Ages. Chapter IV of this book, authored by ethnologist T.U. Salimov, discusses the history of the ethnic formation of the region’s population in the late Middle Ages. The author attempts to consistently illuminate the ethno-historical roots of the oasis population using the example of the Zomin district [10].

When discussing the history of Ustrushana archaeology, it is worth noting that to study the features of the construction and development of the first fortress-settlements associated with the irrigation farming areas along the Sangzor River, as well as the continuity of architectural traditions and planning methods, excavations have been carried out at sites near Qaliyatepa, such as Pardakultepa and Komilbobotepa (M. Pardaev), Yoqubbobotepa (J. Gafurov), Jomatepa (Z. Kholboev), Qorgontepa (Gallarol), and around Qin'g'irtepa and Almantepa I and II (A. Berdimurodov, M. Pardaev). Through these residential complexes, we can gain an understanding of the emergence of planning methods in the architecture of the fortresses-settlements of Northwestern Ustrushana and their subsequent development over time.

A significant number of burial mounds have been preserved in the northern and northwestern parts of Ustrushana. These sites are mainly located in the mountainous and foothill areas of the Jizzakh and Syrdarya regions, as well as on the borders of the Mirzachul desert. Although some of these monuments have been partially studied by M.H. Pardaev, S.R.

Rahimov, A.A. Gricina, F.E. Toshboyev, and U.A. Alimov, information about them remains mostly confined to scientific reports and archival collections [11].

In summary, the Ustrushana region holds a unique place in the history of our homeland. Known far and wide for its political, military-strategic, and geographical advantages, as well as its rich underground and surface resources, this region has long been a center of urban development, construction, and rapidly advancing irrigation networks. As a result, various forms of agriculture, animal husbandry, and craftsmanship developed in distinctive ways in this ancient region. A comprehensive list of archaeological research conducted in Ustrushana and the scientific results obtained would provide a clear picture of the scale and significance of these studies.

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