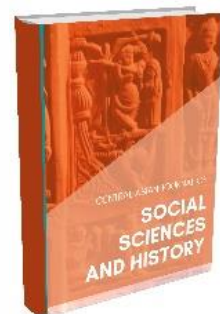




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CENTRAL ASIAN JOURNAL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES AND HISTORY

Journal homepage: www.cajssh.centralasianstudies.org/index.php/CAJSSH



Excavations at the Kushan Site Near the Defensive Wall of the Old Termez District

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Abstract:

The article describes the main features of the monuments and material culture studied as a result of archeological excavations in the territory of Old Termez, defensive structures and their structure, architectural structures located in the district and its territory, and their background.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 29 Sep 2021

Received in revised form

30 Oct 2021

Accepted 20 Nov

Available online 11 Oct 2021

Keywords: Old Termez, county, archeology, monuments, defense structures, underground structures, Fayoztepa, Qoratepa, Chingiztepa, Oikhanum, Bactria, Afghanistan, India, China, cultural relations, synchronous dates, scientific analogy.

Introduction

Archaeological excavations in the area have been underway since 2016. In the following seasons, archeological excavations continued in the south-eastern and central parts of the Kushan period. Last season, two subterranean structures were found in these parts of the structure. Ancient architects built stairs to make it easier to enter. Expedition members have been studying such underground structures since 1993. As a result, more than a dozen such structures have been studied in the north-eastern part

of the mausoleum of Hakim al-Termizi.

Materials and Methods

The study of these structures helped to open new pages in the religion and culture of Buddhism, which was widespread in Bactria at the beginning of our era. Such underground and above-ground Buddhist structures have also been studied through the monuments of Koratepa and Fayoztepa, located in the northern part of Old Termez. (Pidaev Sh.R.T., 2011.16 pages; Annaev T.Zh.T, 1997.5 pages; Botirov I., Annaev T.Zh. 2007.3 pages). This underground structure differs from the known ones in Old Termez by its depth, the presence of two rooms and a very well-preserved six-storey building. It is entered by nine steps. Due to their extensive use, they have been demolished and given various forms and misalignments. This confirms that the underground structure has been used for a long time.

In the first room of the building there are two columns from the natural continent. The room measures 2.45 x 3.18 m. There are four potholes in the wall 1 meter above the floor. The monks used these potholes to make lanterns and terracotta statues. Experts conclude that the pits were not used for any worship purposes because there were no traces of black smoke in them. On the south wall of the room, on either side of the door, were two shelves. The length of the entrance to the second room of the building is 2.15 m. One side of it is being explored. One side of the wall is 1.6 meters. Due to the expiration of the expedition, the structures were preserved so that the excavations could continue next year. The Kushan period structure provides information about the Kushan and Yuezhi periods with its pottery, various terracotta statues and coins. These findings suggest that further research is needed to study the sign of the Kushan period and its relationship to the defensive wall of this period. To solve these problems, it is planned to dig a trench 2 meters wide and 25 meters long between the medieval defensive wall and the Kushan structure. The expected result is the identification of the eastern boundaries of the city of Termez and the acquisition of stratigraphic data on the Kushan period. Numerous pottery of the Kushan period was found in the 2-meter-diameter ravine in the central part of the building. In fact, it was a tomb with a ceremonial shape, and two skulls and other parts of the human skeleton and buttons were found. We need to point out that the incorrect placement of the bones and their incompleteness indicate that similar graves were stolen in later times. The steps of a Buddhist underground structure were identified from the lower part of the urn.

The stairwells began to be excavated this year. In addition, excavations last season continued to study the construction of the defensive wall of the medieval county of Old Termez and its connection with the Kushan period. There is a scientific debate about the fact that the defensive structures of the city of Termez were formed during the Kushan Empire, and during this period the city expanded to the east (Khmelnitsky S. Berlin-Riga.2000). Several towers in the western part of the Shahrstan defense wall were cleared, and it was noted that their foundations were made of cotton blocks, and the upper part was made of cotton blocks. Many pottery fragments have been collected here. It is also confirmed that the area is rich in random materials. An altar made of limestone and carved in the style of carving was found near the old Termez fortress. In its decoration, it resembles an altar found at the Kampirtepa monument itself. We would like to emphasize that this monument is of the Hellenistic and Kushan period. This is the first and only altar found in Termez. In addition, a coin minted by the Kushan kings during the Vima Takto period (80-105) was found near the Kushan period building. This confirms that the territory of the medieval county was surrounded by a defensive wall during the Kushan kingdom (Khmelnitsky S. Berlin-Riga, 2000, p. 32). The new mission of the "Bactrian Expedition" is important

in revealing a lot of new scientific information as a result of the formation of the Greco-Bactrian and Kushan period of northern Bactria and the stages of its development through the study of archeological monuments. Archeological research at the Chingiz-Tepa monument is of great importance in this regard. On the one hand, these studies proved that Genghis Khan's palace was the Hellenistic center of North Bactria on the right bank of the Amu Darya-Ox. The collected archeological materials and new scientific conclusions clarified the chronology of the city from the time of Alexander to the invasion of Genghis Khan. The architectural decors found in the ancient palaces of Aikhanum and Old Termez and the decoration of the palace with acanthus revealed new features of the Hellenistic culture of Bactria.

On the other hand, such ornate architectural details have not been found in other parts of the Hellenistic Bactria. This discovery is exactly the same as the "table decorated for the moon" found by D. Schlumberger in the Red Cross temple of Afghanistan, which inspired the architects of the Kanishka period 300 years later (Leriche P.1997.p.11). Thus, our scientific analogy with the samples of Corinthian culture found in 1963 in Aikhanum, one of the Greek capital cities of Bactria, is a major scientific fact in the archeology of the Hellenistic period in Central Asia. This indicates that Old Termez was a permanent capital of ancient Bactria in Hellenism and antiquity in general (S. de Pontbriand, ZE Khalikov, Pierre Lerish. 2018).

Conclusion

Old Termez is not one of the most unexplored cities of ancient Bactria today. We want to recognize that in order to study the ancient history and culture of this city, it has the opportunity not only to update scientific research, but also to expand this research. We open new pages in the study of the history of art and applied art of ancient Bactria associated with the Hellenistic and Kushan periods. The region is one of the most important trade and handicraft centers in Central Asia, located on the main road connecting the Mediterranean countries with India and China. On the other hand, the ancient Termez Baktr, on the other hand, was the cradle of the Kushan Empire and Central Asian Buddhism until its appearance on the stage of history, and later played an important role as one of the capital cities in the spread of Islam and culture. (S. de Pontbriand, ZE Khalikov, Pierre Lerish. 2018).

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