

THE HISTORY OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXPEDITIONS CONDUCTED
IN SAMARKAND

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Annotatsiya: Samarqand O‘zbekiston hududidagi eng qadimiy shaharlardan biri bo‘lib, o‘zining boy tarixiga egadir. Bu hududni arxeologik jihatdan o‘rganish ishlari, va olib borilgan tadqiqotlarning natijalari ushbu maqolada muhokama qilinadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: Afrosiyob, N.V. Xanikov, V.V. Krestovski, shurf, “qazish” ishlari, Maroqand, mudofa devoir.

Abstract: Samarkand is one of the most ancient cities in Uzbekistan, with a rich history. The archaeological study of this area and the results of the research are discussed in this article.

Keywords: Afrosiyob, N.V. Khanikov, V.V. Krestovsky, shurf, "excavation" works, Marokand, defense duty.

For the past 150 years, Samarkand has attracted the attention of archaeologists, historians, orientalists, and other enthusiasts. It is worth noting that the study of the ancient history and culture of Sogdiana began with Russian scholars. The significant role of Samarkand in the history of Central Asia led to the early initiation of research activities in the region compared to other areas. The history of the study of Samarkand and Samarkand Sogdiana can be divided into three periods. Initially, Russian scholars, military personnel, and orientalists began their work by studying Afrasiab and its surroundings. In 1841, N.V. Kharikov, who visited the Bukhara Khanate, provided the topographic map of Samarkand and a classification of Afrasiab.¹ After Samarkand was incorporated into the Turkestan General Governorship, archaeological research on Afrasiab began. Unfortunately, the first excavations carried out by military amateurs were more focused on the search for treasures. The excavations were conducted by digging deep pits, as at that time, archaeological excavation methods had not yet been developed².

¹ Абдураззак Самаркандий “Матлаи саъдайн ва мажмаи бахрайн”. Форс тожик тилидан А. Ўринбоев таржимаси. Тошкент.: ФАН, 1969. 462 б.

² Соколовская Л.Ф. Некоторые итоги изучения керамики Афрасиаба XII века [УД](#) молодых ученых ИА АН РУз. Самарканд. 1993. С. 46-47.

Later, V.V. Krestovskiy, through excavations at Afrasiab, identified the presence of Hellenistic layers at the site. However, the methods of that time did not meet the archaeological excavation standards.

In 1883, the famous Orientalist N.I. Veselovskiy conducted work at Afrasiab. However, the lack of archaeological experience affected the results of his research. The work he conducted can be explained by one piece of evidence: during his four-month fieldwork, Veselovskiy dug small trenches at 109 points of Afrasiab. This method was inconsistent with the excavation techniques required for large city ruins. Nonetheless, Veselovskiy produced an accurate topographical map of Afrasiab, which remains significant to this day.

In 1894-1895, French archaeologist Shaffanjon carried out “excavations” at Afrasiab. Unfortunately, his methods were destructive, as he blew up cultural layers and then collected the materials. The materials he collected are currently housed in the Gime Museum in Paris. In the following years, S.M. Gorshenina took up the study of Samarkand and its surroundings.

The work of V.L. Vyatkin in the study of Samarkand and its surroundings should be especially noted. Vyatkin dated Samarkand to the 4th century BC and refuted the claim that it was referred to as Maracanda in ancient sources.

Thus, until the 1930s, the study of Afrasiab by Russian scholars was based on primitive methods, consisting mainly of initial research.

The second period of the study of Samarkand and its surroundings spans the 1930s to the late 1960s, and it can be divided into two stages. During the first stage of this period, the quality of archaeological research greatly improved. Excavations were conducted not only at Afrasiab but also in surrounding areas. During this time, G.V. Grigoryev’s research in studying the ancient and medieval cultures of the area was highly significant. In the 1930s-1940s, he carefully excavated and stratigraphically analyzed the Toli Barzu site located southeast of Samarkand. Many of his scientific works remain relevant today. Grigoryev's work was the first scientifically methodical excavation in Samarkand. He was the first to highlight that the Dargom Canal had been manually dug and proved that natural streambeds were sometimes used during its construction.

In the second stage of this period, the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR opened a base in Samarkand, led by A.I. Terenojkin. He soon developed the initial stratigraphy of Afrasiab's ancient culture by cleaning up the old excavations, a classification that later led to significant debates. The mistakes and shortcomings made during that time were later corrected by Terenojkin himself. His main contribution was the identification of cultural blocks in Afrasiab. A.I. Terenojkin

was able to separate the columns of unmixing complexes in a stratigraphic context, and these columns continue to be used in the dating of Afrasiab to this day.³

The complexes found in the lowest layers of Afrasiab are designated as the Afrasiab 1 stage, corresponding to the Achaemenid period (6th-4th centuries BCE). The Afrasiab 2 and 3 stages are associated with the "Saka Hellenistic" periods (4th-2nd centuries BCE), while the Afrasiab 4 stage corresponds to the Kanguy Yuechji period.

In 1958, the third period of Samarkand archaeology began, which is also divided into two stages. The first stage is marked by the declaration of Afrasiab as an open-air museum by the state and the organization of an archaeological expedition by the Institute of Archaeology and History of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR. This expedition was led by V.A. Shishkin. After his death in 1966, the expedition was led by Ya.G. Ghulomov. Over the years, various archaeologists, including T.R. Azamkhodjayeov, D.I. Varkhotova, V.D. Zhukov, S.K. Kabanov, Ya.K. Krikis, Yu.F. Buryakov, O.V. Obelchenko, G.V. Shishkina, and L.G. Bruchenkova, participated in the excavation works.

The main focus of the research was on the stratigraphy and topography of Afrasiab. Notable findings include the discovery of complexes from the 6th-5th centuries BCE during the excavations around Shakhi Zinda, led by N.B. Nemseva. Additionally, M.I. Filanovich's excavations in the northern part of the large pool in the northwest of Afrasiab revealed traces of settlement dating back to the 7th century BCE. This conclusion was later clarified through further cleaning works.

G.V. Shishkina and S.K. Kabanov achieved significant success in the study of the ancient layers of Afrasiab. During these years, A.R. Mukhammadjonov studied the water supply and irrigation systems of Samarkand and the surrounding region (1969, pp. 204-311).

While studying the nomadic fortresses, O.V. Obelchenko discovered a Bronze Age tomb in the Urgut district (Askarov A.A., 1969), which proved to be significant in studying the historical development of the Bronze Age in Sogdiana. Other important findings include the Siyobcha tomb in the Afrasiab region and the Chakka tomb found on the left bank of the Zarafshan River (Avanesova N.A., 1991). N.A. Avanesova also conducted research on the Tokay village in 1995.

Not all of the above research was successful. For example, M.K. Pachos, while studying the defensive walls of Afrasiab, incorrectly suggested that Samarkand was founded in the 4th century BCE.

³ Бартольд В.В. Туркестан в эпоху монгольского нашествия. Соч. т. 1. М.: 1963. С. 45-597.

From 1971-1979, the Afrasiab expedition was led by Sh.S. Toshkhodzhayev, and from 1979-1987, G.V. Shishkina took over. This period is characterized by the expansion of archaeological research covering all historical periods at Afrasiab. Specialists from various fields were involved in the study of the monument. Over the years, archaeologists such as I. Akhrorov, A.A. Anarboyev, X.G. Okhunboboyev, L.I. Albaum, L.G. Brusenko, Yu.F. Buryakov, E.Yu. Yurakova, O.N. Invatkina, I.D. Ivaniskiy, S.K. Kabanov, T.I. Lebedova, N. Rakhimobayeva, Sh. Shorakhimov, M.K. Pachos, M.I. Filanovich, and others participated in the work.

The restoration and conservation of wall paintings, defensive structures, pottery, and glass vessels found at Afrasiab were handled by a group of chemical technologists led by A.A. Abdurozzokov.

In 1998, with the establishment of the Uzbek-French Expedition (O'FAE), the second stage of the third period of research began. Since 1989, French scholars also joined the study of Afrasiab. The collaboration between Uzbek and French archaeologists elevated the research of Afrasiab to a new qualitative level.

The French side of the expedition was led by academician Paul Bernard, with other participants including the member of the Academy of Linguistics and Fine Arts, François Grenet, and scientists Claude Rappin, Bertil Lione, geographer Pierre Jantel, and later scientific staff like Lorient Sev Martinez. From the Uzbek side, M.H. Isomiddinov (expedition associate), and scientific staff H.G. Okhunboboyev, N. Rakhimbobayeva, L.F. Sokolovskaya, and I.D. Ivaniskiy took part⁴.

The involvement of O.N. Invatkina, a staff member of the Museum of Oriental Art in Moscow, in the expedition work is also noteworthy. She defended her dissertation on "The Palace in the Structure of Ancient Samarkand in the 6th century BCE and the 5th century CE" (1995, p. 135). In addition, doctoral candidate Yu. Karyev and architect Ye. Kurtkin also participated in the Afrasiab expedition. From the above, it is clear that the primary focus of research into the history of Samarkand has been Afrasiab. One of the most challenging aspects of studying this site is its multi-layered structure. In studying the ancient layers, the medieval pit graves, which were dug into the older layers, posed a significant problem, as they disturbed the ancient stratigraphy. However, the best-preserved structures from the ancient periods are the defensive walls of Afrasiab, as they were used during the medieval period as well. This indicates that the ancient defensive walls were constructed with great durability and placed on natural hilltops and the steep banks of the Siyob River, which made them suitable for use in later historical periods.

⁴ Анарбаев А.А. Благоустройства средневекового города Средней Азии. Под редакцией А.М. Белиницкого. Ташкент. ФАН. 1981, с. 119.

Specifically, the defensive walls in the northeastern part of Afrasiab were constructed along the steepest banks of the Siyob River, while those in the southwestern part were built at the highest points of the ravines.

Parallel excavations in other parts of Afrasiab have led to new factual evidence about the urbanization processes and the development of material culture from ancient times through the Mongol invasion. As a result, several issues have been clarified:

Chronology of Afrasiab: It is now widely accepted by experts that Afrasiab, one of the largest cities in Central Asia, dates to the 6th–4th centuries BCE, corresponding to the period when much of Central Asia was part of the Achaemenid Empire.

Historical and Archaeological Chronology: A historical and archaeological periodization from the middle of the 1st millennium BCE to the Mongol invasion has been established for Afrasiab.

Ancient City Planning: The city's major structural elements, including its gates, main roads, and irrigation channels, have been studied.

Defensive Structures: Significant attention has been given to studying Afrasiab's defensive structures. As a result, the main stages in the development of the city's defensive walls, a key element of ancient urban planning, have been identified.

However, some areas of Samarkand and Sogdiana's history remain underexplored. For example, the study of the ancient irrigation system and the general development of the middle Zarafshan Valley has not been fully addressed. Among the key water sources irrigating the upper and middle reaches of the Zarafshan River are the Dargom, Bulungur, Poyariq, Yangiariq, Eski Angor, and Siyob canals. Researchers have focused on the origins of certain canals like Dargom and Eski Angor, but other canals have remained largely unstudied. These canals are crucial for understanding the population density and agricultural capacity of the area during that time.

Irrigation has always been a vital factor in agriculture and human activity in Central Asia. The cultural genesis of Samarkand and Sogdiana from ancient times through the end of the classical period remains underdeveloped in research. Furthermore, the lack of comprehensive studies on the pottery from Samarkand and Sogdiana hinders the identification of the cultural roots and distinct characteristics of the region's material culture.

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