

## **The Role of the Soviet-Afghan Archaeological Expedition in the Study of Archaeological and Architectural Monuments of Balk Region**

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**Abstract:** In this article, the Soviet-Afghan international archaeological expedition, which has been conducting large-scale research since the second half of the last century, divides the archaeological and architectural monuments of Balkh and its surroundings into several oases depending on their location. Information about learning is provided.

**Keywords:** Soviet-Afghan expeditions, Balkh region, Davlatabad, Andhoy, VISarianidi, Farrukhabad, Dashtli, Bactria, Margyona, YuTAKE.

In 1969, after the establishment of a joint expedition of the Institute of Archeology of the USSR Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Archeology of Afghanistan, Soviet archaeologists began to conduct research in the archaeological monuments of Afghanistan. The mission of the expedition was to create a map of the archaeological sites from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages located in the territory of Northern Afghanistan. Afghan archaeologists, who were part of this expedition, mapped more than 300 archaeological monuments between Herat and Khulm.

A group dealing with the monuments of the Bronze Age of Afghanistan, led by VISarianidi, discovered four oases of settled farming communities between Andhoi and Khulm. The first found an administrative center, palaces and temples of the Bronze Age surrounded by defensive walls in the territory of Afghanistan.

The discovery of bronze and early iron age monuments by SAE is of great importance. For the first time, archaeologists were able to uncover monuments belonging to three groups.

Monuments belonging to the first, western group, Davlatabad group, are located between the cities of Andhoi and Maimana.

Second, monuments belonging to the Dashli group were found north of Okcha.

The third group of Farukhabad monuments, located near the city of Balkh, will be included. When the monuments are observed stratigraphically, the history of the local population in the Bronze Age is divided into three periods. These monuments are located in Davlatabad, Dashli and Farukhabad oases.

Among them, the oasis of Davlatabad, rich in finds of ancient times, is located in a wide area, emerging from a narrow mountain gorge of the Shirin Tago river. The monument here is divided into the following two types according to the four monuments that have been opened.

- 1) Undefended monuments with an area of up to 1 hectare (Tikar 1, 2, 3);
- 2) Rectangular fortresses with defensive walls and corner towers are introduced. We can see this type in the example of Tikan 4 or Girday hill monument <sup>1</sup>. The second type of monument has a central

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<sup>1</sup> Кругликова И.Т., В.И.Сарианиди Пят лет работы Советско-Афганской археологической экспедиции//Древняя Бактрия. М., "Наука", 1976.стр.3-5

city or capital. Because a 7-meter-thick cultural layer has been preserved in it, smooth-made ceramic objects were found on the potter's wheel, but without any decorations. These earthenware, jar-shaped vases with deep and upright flanges or high bases, are dated to the early Iron Age. This period is called Girday stage <sup>2</sup>.

In the remaining monuments of the Davlatabad oasis, the thickness of the cultural layer is 3.5 meters. Their pottery belongs to a later period when it is genetically associated with the "Girday" phase. Among the ceramics of this period, it can be observed that vases with high bases are widespread. They were used to make molasses and "sauces", mainly with wavy and scratched designs on their surface. Based on these characteristics of ceramic products, it was reasonable to call the next period "Tikar" stage.

The inhabitants who occupied the Davlatabad oasis in the second half of the 2nd millennium BC were engaged in agriculture based on the irrigation of the current Shirin Tagao river. Animal husbandry and boar or gazelle hunting were also important. Small villages consisted mainly of houses built of raw bricks. The central monument was apparently surrounded by defensive walls and fortified with military bastions. Ceramics, except for kitchen utensils, were made on a potter's wheel and made in two-tiered khumdons with a complex structure. The monuments belonging to the Davlatabad group are the culture left by the people who moved to the eastern regions and settled here and were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry.

**Dashli oasis** is located in a wide direction and includes more than 20 monuments divided into two types. Currently, the Dashli oasis occupies an ordinary desert steppe zone, with wide and flat barren areas, sometimes bordered by shifting sands. Among such waterless sand dunes, one can observe only tuyakorin and yulgin plants. Many fragments of pottery were found during the laying of gas pipelines from the city of Shibirgon to the north. Following this announcement, starting in 1970, SAE began a planned archaeological survey.

The remains of undefended villages are among the first discovered and widespread monuments. They are located on long, spreading hills. These monuments are included in the first type. Monuments of the second type are surrounded by strong defensive walls built of bricks, defensive walls are protected by corner towers. Undefended villages are located near such fortresses. According to ethnographic data, several families belonging to the same clan, separated from the society of ordinary people, lived in such fortresses. Analogies of such fortresses are also characteristic of monuments such as Sopolli of Northern Bactria <sup>3</sup> and Auchin, Gonur of Marghiyona <sup>4</sup>. Ultimately, this situation reflects the development of the social life of the population of Bactria and Margyona during the Bronze Age. Castles with rectangular and corner towers are of special interest in the history of architecture. There were opinions that such castles existed only from antiquity.

Dashli 3 excavations provide complete information about the development of monumental architecture. The castle of this monument is on a high hill, and next to it there is a low hill with a village attached to it. As a result of the 3-year archaeological research conducted here, the monument shows a circular fortress as a monumental structure. The castle is surrounded by two rows of defensive walls and four corner towers. There is a corridor between the walls, and the towers are accessed through the corridors. The circular fort stands out from the outside with its structure and nine towers. It appears as a separate complex with its construction design. In the center of the building there are rectangular rooms. Their wall facades are plastered with thin plasters. The structure has architectural decorations such as shaped pilasters, stepped wall shelves and a low sofa. A characteristic feature is the three-part hearth built on a brick riser. The circular structure is the central core of the monument and a solid wall that surrounds the many rooms inside. Therefore, the sides of the monument are surrounded by trenches measuring 130x150 meters.

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<sup>2</sup>Кругликова И.Т., В.И.Сарианиди Пят лет работы Советско-Афганской археологической экспедиции//Древняя Бактрия. М., "Наука", 1976. стр.3-5

<sup>3</sup> Аскарлов А.А. Сапалли тепа. Ташкент. Фан, 1974, 13-с

<sup>4</sup>Сарианиди В.И. Древности низовий Мургаба. М., 1973. 49-с

Based on the construction and purpose of the structure under study, i.e. the circular shape of the hearth and altars, the construction of the structure on a high foundation means that it was a fire temple. This temple is considered to be the first ancient monument to be studied in the Ancient East as a sacred worship building. One of the constructions parallel to it is the fire temple opened on Noshi Jon hill of Ahmenid Iran.<sup>5</sup>

Another magnificent structure was discovered from the second mound in the Dashli 3 monument when excavations began. It is a rectangular building in design. Repeats one with the previous building. Inside, large galleried halls are connected by passageways and separated by T-shaped corridors. The roof of the halls is covered in a curved manner.

All rooms are decorated with the common pilaster style. They also decorated the exterior of the facade. The complex was separated from the outside world by a trench 3 meters deep and 10 meters wide.

The only part of the monument is the remains of the rooms near the gate. This fact confirms that there was a single entrance to the building. All signs of an architectural monument indicate that it is a palace. Therefore, the opinion that the Dashli 3 complex was the religious administrative center of the entire Dashli oasis is close to the truth. This is an artifact that proves to us that there was a group separated from the society of that time as a separate social organism, that is, as a religious and noble stratum.

**The next stage of development is studied on the example of the monuments of Farukhabad oasis .** This oasis was known through stolen tombs. Its central structure and several small villages were found. The Farukhabad phase belongs to the Late Bronze Age.

All three periods are dated from the second half of the 2nd millennium BC to the beginning of the 1st millennium BC. The issue of the origin of the Bactrian Marghiyona archaeological complex is quite controversial, especially in the territory of northern Afghanistan, the settlements of the predecessors of these cultures were sought. In this regard, the archaeological research conducted by VISarianidi and SAE was important.

However, exact parallels of these cultures are found and well studied in Northeastern Iran and Southern Turkmenistan. A similar culture can be observed from the 1970s in the territory of South Uzbekistan, the Sopolli monument from the Olanbuloksoy basin and later the study of the monuments of Jarqo'ton formed the centers of the first farming and the first urban cultures of northern and southern Bactria based on artificial irrigation farming.

The findings of architectural structures, burial ceremonies, pottery and material culture related to the pottery culture in general are similar to the examples of material culture found in the monuments of India's Harappa, Afghanistan's Dashli, South Turkmenistan's Nomozgoh, and Iran's Tepe Hissar monuments. found <sup>6</sup> \_

Especially in this regard, the materials of the Tepe Hissar monument of Iran, known to science earlier, as well as the materials of all the monuments of the Murgob river basin of South Turkmenistan, indicate the development of material culture formed in one period and in one line.<sup>7</sup>

At this point, it is enough to recall the existence of a source in the Behistun inscriptions confirming that Marghiyona was part of Bactria in 523/522 BC.<sup>8</sup>

Archaeological research conducted in both regions confirms that the combined period of Bactria and Margyona corresponds to the middle of the 2nd millennium BC. It is observed that it is close to the Bronze Age culture of Iran-Turkmenistan rather than to the synchronized culture of Estonia.

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<sup>5</sup> Roaf M., Stronach D. Tepe Nushi Jan, 1970.-"Iran", 1973, v. XI, p. 129-138

<sup>6</sup> Аскарлов А.А. Сапалли тепа. Ташкент. Фан, 1974.

<sup>7</sup> Schmidt E. Excavation at Tepe Hissar. Philadelphia, 1937: Sarianidi V.I. Drevnosti dispute Murgaba. "AO1972g." M., 1973. 67-s

<sup>8</sup> Гафуров Б.Г. Таджики. Древнейшая, древняя и средневековая история, Д. Ирфон., 1989. 157-с

Also, if it is said that the archaeological complexes of Northern Afghanistan were formed under the influence of the Iranian Turkmen culture, there will be no doubt, but if it is said that they appeared under the influence of the culture of Southern Afghanistan, then it belongs to the "Taliban" culture of this culture. The type of Mundigak Said fortress monuments was also not affected. Because these cultures of southern Afghanistan are common with the culture of southern Iran.<sup>9</sup>

Between the 2nd and 1st millennium BC, Bactria entered the early Iron Age. This period was marked by the introduction of new potters into Bactria, their paleo-ethnographic features such as making pottery products by hand without using the pottery wheel and decorating the surface of pottery with various designs.

Samples of material culture of this period are known through archaeological research conducted at the Tilla Tepa monument near the city of Shibirgan. All the features of the excavation details here were highlighted as manifestations of the Eastern Khorasan culture.<sup>10</sup>

These cultures are based on agriculture and animal husbandry. Large monuments are built on high platforms of raw bricks. The palaces of local nobles are located here. In the early stages of this culture, copper bronze objects were common, but they also gave way to iron objects. In addition, hand-made and decorated pottery, as well as small quantities of wheel-worked pottery, were produced. According to the old custom, the dead were buried in village houses.

Archeological complexes discovered in southern Turkmenistan, but for a long time did not find their analogues and remained unclear, are also similar and close to cultures in Afghanistan.<sup>11</sup> Because the research carried out by SAE gave an opportunity to put forward the theory that the roots of the cultures of Southern Turkmenistan and Northern Afghanistan can be traced back to the cultures found in Iran's Khurasan. It is confirmed that these cultures, like the archaeological complexes of Central Asia, appeared not under the influence of the Andronovo culture of the nomadic pastoral population, but under the influence of the southern farming culture. forced to return to the theory of Because their entry into Central Asia never found its basis in material culture complexes<sup>12</sup>.

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<sup>11</sup> Masson V.M. Drevnezemledelcheskaya kultura Margiany.-МИА, 1959, No. 73. S-107

<sup>12</sup> Кругликова И.Т, Сарианиди В.И. Пят лет работы Советско-Афганской археологической экспедиции//Древняя Бактрия. М.,”Наука”,1976.стр.8-9

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