

**SOME ISSUES RELATED TO THE HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE
KARSHI REGION IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES**

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Summary. This article analyzes the historical geography and topography of the city of Karshi in the early Middle Ages, the importance of its location for trade, the social processes that took place during this period, the ethnic composition of the nomadic and settled population, and the settlement process based on historical sources.

Keywords: Low Kashkadarya, Nikshapa, Ksenippa, Kason, Zahaki Maron Fortress, Nashabello, Beyshi, Shulluktepa, Iron Gate, KATE, gate Gubdin.

INTRODUCTION. In the plain of the lower Kashkadarya oasis lies the Karshi (Ancient Nakhshab) region, which is connected to the Kyzylkum in the West through the Sandykli sand dunes.

Recent studies have confirmed that the Kashkadarya oasis was called Nikshapa in ancient times, which in Greco-Roman sources was transformed into Xenippa, and the term Nakhshab itself is derived from the word Nikshapa. Some researchers believe that the name Xenippa underwent phonetic changes over time and became the modern city of Kason.

REFERENCY AND METHODOLOGY The arid climate and natural conditions also had a significant impact on the change in the historical geographical boundaries of the Kashkadarya oasis. However, the political situation and socio-economic changes that occurred during this period must also be acknowledged. During the Hephthalite state and the Turkic khaganate, due to the traditional socio-political situation, new changes also occurred in the historical geography of the oasis. In the early Middle Ages, the city of Nakhshab was a large city built in the early Middle Ages in the lower reaches of the Kashkadarya, its ruins were located in the place of the monument of the Zahoki Maran fortress south of the city of Karshi.

There is some information about this city in Chinese sources from the early Middle Ages, in particular in the "Bei-shi". It contains information that the residence of the governor of the Noshebolo region was in the city of Bolo, that the city was located on a plain, and that rice, wheat and various fruits were grown there.

The fact that the city of Nakhshab in Lower Kashkadarya was one of the residences of the Ephthalite ruler led to the increase in the political status of Southern Sogd (Kashkadarya oasis). However, the city of Nakhshab was depressed and destroyed during the Arab invasion and especially during the Mukanna rebellion. At the beginning of the developed Middle Ages, a new city was founded in Lower Kashkadarya, in the northwestern part of the present city of Karshi, on the left bank of the Kashkadarya.

In order to specifically study the role of the city of Nasaf in the Middle Ages, in 1946 an expedition was organized under the leadership of S.K. Kabanov. He conducted excavations in the Beshkent canal, which crossed the western part of the city, and found here various types of ceramics, medieval cobblestones, and fragments of vessels with printed patterns.

In 1965, members of the KATE led by M.E. Masson continued the work of S.K. Kabanov and conducted excavations at the site of the Karshi fortress.

As is known, medieval cities have a number of features and characteristics that distinguish them from other settlements. In written sources from the Middle Ages, cities are more often described as administrative centers. At the same time, all large settlements with a Friday mosque are also considered cities.

In the 10th century, the city of Nasaf was a large city consisting of three parts: the citadel, which was the residence of the city governor, the city itself, and its rabad. The city was surrounded by a defensive wall and had four gates. According to sources, the north-western one was called the Bukhara Gate, the north-eastern one was called the Samarkand Gate, the south-eastern one was called the Kesh Gate, and the south-western one was called the Gubdin Gate. Naturally, caravan routes leading to the corresponding cities began from these gates. There is information that there was a brick bridge over the river flowing through the middle of the city.

There is archaeological evidence that the inhabitants of Nasaf used the Kashkadarya River to meet their water needs. In particular, this is evidenced by the discovery of ceramic pipes in the north-eastern part of the city's aqueduct. However, since the water of the Kashkadarya River sharply decreased during droughts, especially in the summer, there were also many wells in the city. The sources indicate that the inhabitants of the city used well water not only for drinking water, but also for irrigating their crops. In ancient times, roads leading from Bukhara and Samarkand Sughd to the trading cities of South-Eastern Iran, Afghanistan and India passed through the oasis territory, and the study of the routes of these caravan routes is of great importance in clarifying the characteristics and boundaries of the location of Southern Sughd and its estates and settlements, as well as its historical geographical location.

In the early Middle Ages, the roads from Samarkand and Bukhara connected in Nakhshab, a large city on the lower Kashkadarya. From this city, which is called Nashebalo in Chinese sources of this period (Beishi), one could reach the middle reaches of the Amu Darya (Kelif, Kerki, Burdalyk) or Termez via Subah, Khuzor, and Temir Darvaza.

One of the main routes south from Samarkand passed through the present-day Kokdala steppes and the northern slopes of Kungurtag. In the early Middle Ages, there were few settled areas in this area, and there were mainly winter camps and wells of nomadic pastoral tribes, which were also of great importance as important stops on the Samarkand-Nakhshab road. At the same time, the information we gathered while studying ancient roads in the oasis shows that large fortifications appeared in the steppes between Samarkand and Nakhshab as early as the early Middle Ages.

The route connecting Samarkand with the international trade centers in the south also passed through the Kashkadarya oasis in ancient times. The most important and actively used of them was the Samarkand-Nasaf route. The road from Samarkand to Nasaf through the Jam steppe was divided into several branches here. One route joined the road from Bukhara and led to Termez via Subah, the village of Kindik, and Temir Darvaza. The village of Kindik was a 3-day journey from Nasaf and Kesh, and here the trade route from Samarkand through Kesh joined the Nasaf-Termez trade route and from Samarkand through Nasaf it also went to the crossings on the Amu Darya (Kelif, Kerki, Amul).

In Nasaf, the road from Bukhara branched off and one could go to Balkh in the following directions: Nasaf – Subah – Kindik village – Temir Darvaza – Termez – Balkh or Nasaf – Kelif – Balkh.

Kelif, one of the important crossings in the middle reaches of the Amu Darya, was located 2 days' journey from Termez and 18 farsakhs from Balkh. In Arab sources, the city of Kelif, named after this crossing, is noted as the only place on the Amu Darya located on both sides of the river.

To the west of Nasaf were the villages of Kaspi (4 farsakhs) and Bezda (6 farsakhs), which were located on the western borders of the Nakhshab state in the early Middle Ages. The city of Bezda, located in the western part of Nakhshab, was also one of the important possessions of Southern Sogd. Despite the lack of sufficient water sources, sources indicate that agriculture was developed in the estates around Bazda, and that the population irrigated their crops with well water. Due to their favorable geographical location, the cities of Kaspi and Bezda played an important role in the system of caravan routes from Bukhara to Termez, Balkh, and other trading cities of Khorasan. Cities such as Kesh, Nakshipa (Ksenipa), Nakhshab, and Subah in the basin of the Kashkadarya River, the main water source of Southern Sogdiana, and its left tributary, the Guzardarya River, played an important role in the internal and external economic relations of the oasis.

CONCLUSION. By highlighting the historical geographical classification of the oasis, on the example of the Kashkadarya oasis, we should emphasize the importance of historians and specialists in paying attention to the history of this oasis, and the importance of continuing research on the historical geography of the oasis, despite the difficult political situation characteristic of the Middle Ages. This plays a significant role in creating a complete and truthful history of Uzbekistan, and continuing research in this direction will undoubtedly lead to important results.

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