

THE EMERGENCE OF CITIES IN THE HISTORICAL REGIONS OF UZBEKISTAN, THEIR GEOGRAPHICAL CONDITIONS, AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

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Annotation. This article presents an analysis of information about the origin of cities in the historical regions of Uzbekistan since ancient times, their location, infrastructure, stages of socio-economic development, cultural centers, trade routes, and historical-geographical conditions.

Keywords: Ancient cities, cultural center, infrastructure, geographical location, trade routes.

Introduction. The emergence of cities in the territory of Uzbekistan has long been closely connected with natural-geographical conditions, trade routes, and political processes. The level and indicators of the formation and development of any nation are largely determined by the degree to which its cities have developed. Therefore, in order to understand the level of development of the culture and traditions of the peoples of Central Asia, it is first necessary to study the history of their cities. As our republic gained independence, we obtained the opportunity to express truthful and objective views on many issues of our history, including the emergence of cities and states in the territory of our country.

Until the 1970s, the prevailing view was that the earliest cities in Central Asia emerged after the invasion of the Achaemenids and within the sphere of their influence. However, studies conducted in Southern Uzbekistan in the 1970s demonstrated that Central Asia should also be included among the regions where the culture known in world historiography as “proto-urban culture” had spread. It is known that this culture was widely distributed in the territories of Ancient Mesopotamia, Assyria, and Babylonia, and it dates back to the 3rd–2nd millennia BCE.¹

Cities represent the starting point of every nation’s culture. Based on this idea, we have set the goal of presenting the history of cities through specific historical periods. In order to achieve this objective, we consider it necessary to examine the essence and structure of cities, their role in society, and the ways in which they differ from rural settlements. It is also important to highlight that cities functioned as centers of culture and commodity exchange, as well as places where ideology and beliefs flourished. Furthermore, cities primarily emerged due to the dense concentration of population, the separation of handicrafts from agriculture, and the gradual stages of urbanization.²

At this point, the First President Islam Karimov noted: “A nation that knows its history and draws spiritual strength from it cannot be defeated. We must restore our true history and equip our people and our nation with this history”,³ this statement was not made without reason, because a nation that does not know its own history cannot have a future.

¹ Alibekov U.Yu, Mamatov Sh.M “O’rta Osiyoning qadimgi shaharlari” o’quv qo’llanma. Guliston-2011, p.5.

² Alibekov U.Yu, Mamatov Sh.M “O’rta Osiyoning qadimgi shaharlari” o’quv qo’llanma. Guliston-2011, p.7.

³ Karimov I.A “Tarixiy xotirasiz kelajak yo’q”. – T.: Sharq, 1998

The question of when and how cities emerged, and how they differ from rural settlements, can be understood through the scientific works of scholars. In particular, according to the views of V. M. Masson, B. Litvinsky, A. Asqarov, Ya. Vodarskiy, E. Sayko, and T. Shirinov:

- a city is a place where trade and crafts are concentrated; it stands in economic contrast to the village and emerges as a result of the separation of crafts from agriculture;
- a city differs from a village not only in its economic characteristics, but also in that it has its own governing bodies, police, taxes, and, in short, its own system of social organization and political structure.

As villages merged, the first walled cities emerged, with the walls serving the purpose of protecting the inhabitants from external enemies.⁴

How were cities structured in ancient times? Ancient cities in Central Asia are mostly found in the southern regions, with many located in present-day Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

The cities of the Bronze Age represent the earliest forms of urban settlements, dating to the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE. Bronze Age settlements have been discovered in Turkmenistan, including Namazgohtepa, Anovtepa, Oqtepa, Oltintepa, and Gonurtepa.

The area of Namazgohtepa consists of 70 plots. Archaeological excavations on the mound have revealed the remains of multi-room buildings where villagers lived from the 4th millennium BCE to the end of the 2nd millennium BCE. The walls of these buildings were made of sun-dried bricks, each structure had a small courtyard, and most rooms were rectangular in shape, featuring platforms and hearths inside.⁵

The emergence and developmental stages of the earliest examples of urban planning in our country date back to times before the invention of writing. In this context, archaeological evidence plays an extremely important role and often sparks scholarly debates. The study of urbanization in ancient societies is highly significant today. Compared to the cities of Egypt, Iran, India, and Mesopotamia, the cities of Central Asia have been relatively less studied. The settlement of populations led to the formation of large villages, which in turn created favorable conditions for the accelerated development of urbanization.

The following are recognized as some of the world's earliest civilizations:

- Mesopotamia and Egypt
- Iran, Central Asia, and Afghanistan
- India and China
- Crete and Greece.

Looking at the Middle Ages, the regions during this period, and particularly the city-states, emerged and developed as a result of various factors. The development of city-states was influenced by economic, political, and cultural factors. Economic factors—such as industrial activity, trade routes, and the availability of resources—affected their formation and determined the course of socio-economic development.

From the late 15th century to the first half of the 19th century, ethnodemographic changes occurred in Central Asia. In particular, the migration of large numbers of nomadic populations from the Dashti Qipchoq region into Mavarounnahr and Khorezm, along with their transition to a sedentary lifestyle, also influenced the political situation in the region.

⁴ Водарский Я.Е. Город: сухность, критерии, факторў образования и функции.- В кн: Зонў и этапў урбанизации.- Т.:Фан, 1989. p.12

⁵ Alibekov U.Yu, Mamatov Sh.M “O’rta Osiyoning qadimgi shaharlari” o’quv qo’llanma. Guliston-2011, p.15.

As a single political territorial unit, this led to the establishment of the Bukhara and Khiva Khanates, and later the Kokand Khanate. Politically, the Bukhara Khanate occupied a distinctive position in the region.

In Hofiz Tanish Bukhariy's work *Abdullanoma*, it is noted: "From the borders of the Qoshgar province to Khorezm, and from the borders of Dashti Qipchoq to the outskirts of Kandahar, all lands, including Mavarounnahr, Khorasan, Turkistan, and Khorezm, came under the authority of Abdullakhon".⁶

The information regarding the territory of the Bukhara Khanate pertains to the second half of the 16th century, during the reign of Shaybani Abdullakhon II. At that time, the provinces mentioned above were not consistently part of the khanate. Throughout the 16th–19th centuries, wars between the states of Central Asia caused the borders of the Bukhara Khanate to fluctuate.

This situation explains why historical sources provide varying accounts of the territorial boundaries of the khanate.⁷

The Khiva Khanate, established as an independent state in 1511, was home to populations that differed not only ethnically but also in cultural and economic aspects. In this respect, the territory controlled by the khanate provides a certain insight into the ethnic composition and lifestyle of its inhabitants.

According to the work *Shajarai-turk*, during the reign of Sofiyonkhan, the territories of the Khiva Khanate were divided into two regions:

- Lowland: Xevak, Hazorasp, Kat, Bo'ldumsoz
- Highland: Bog'obod, Nisoy, Obivard, Chaxordeh, Maxna, and Chacha

The text also notes that during the reign of Avaneskhan (1526–1538), the lands from the outskirts of Khorasan to Astrobod were considered under the authority of Urganch rulers: "The highland belonged to Ani, and Urganch to the lowland."⁸

One of the major achievements during the period of independence was the celebration of the multi-thousand-year anniversaries of eight cities in our republic. These jubilees were marked on an international scale in cooperation with UNESCO, representing global recognition of our country. Artifacts found in the Ark of Afrosiyob and the cultural layers beneath the old city center proved that Samarkand is 2,750 years old, making it one of the oldest cities on our continent. Archaeologists discovered traces of a 2,700-year-old history at the Yerqo'rg'on ruins near the city of Qarshi, which confirms that Qarshi is also approximately 2,700 years old.

In the Bukhara region, traces of 3,000–4,000 years of history have been found, with ancient fortresses such as Boykent, Varakhsha, Domush, and Vardona standing in these areas.

The age of one of these cities was recognized as 2,500 years. In Margilan, archaeological excavations over many years uncovered the ruins of an ancient 30-hectare fortress beneath the city, and the artifacts found there helped determine the city's age as 2,000 years. Additionally, the anniversaries of Shahrisabz (2,700 years), Khiva and Termez (2,500 years), and Tashkent (2,200 years) became celebrations of humanity's ancient cultural heritage.

All of these milestones were realized thanks to the independence of the country and the efforts of our national leadership.

⁶ Hofiz Tanish Buxoriy. "Abdullanoma" 1-kitob, p.169.

⁷ O'rta Osiyo xalqlarining etnik tarixi va mintaqada yuz bergan demografik jarayonlarning manbalarda aks etishi. Mas'ul muharrir: D.A. Alimova, A.A. Ashirov – Toshkent, 2011. p.128.

⁸ Abulg'oziy Bahodirxon "Shajarai turk" p.129.

They have been recorded as glorious dates in the pages of our history and also represent international recognition of Uzbekistan's rich urban planning and cultural heritage.⁹

Conclusion. Cities in the historical regions of Uzbekistan, such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Khorezm, and Fergana, developed as centers of agriculture and craftsmanship due to their favorable geographical locations, fertile oases, and positions at the crossroads of the Great Silk Road. As these cities grew, trade relations were established with various regions, bringing in diverse cultural influences—a process that continues to the present day.

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⁹ Qodirova T.F, Lavrov V.A, Mamatmusayev T.Sh “O'rta Osiyo shaharsozlik madaniyati” o'quv qo'llanma Toshkent-2014, 166-167-betlar