

Towns and settlements in VI – the first half of IX century

The large historical-cultural regions of development of domiciled and city life in the middle ages have been emphasized since ancient times. One of the them were South Kazakhstan and Semirechye. South Kazakhstan borders on the steppe of Central Kazakhstan on the north, Talas Alatau – on the south, Juvaly highlands – on the east, Kyzyl-Kum sands – on the west.

The valley of Syrdarya takes a special place in South Kazakhstan. The ancient name of Syrdarya, given by the Greeks in the form Jaxartes was used until VI—VII centuries. Later it was named as Seikhun, Kangar, Gyul-Zariun, Yinchu-Oguz and in XVI century its primary name Syr became popular again. Two historical-cultural districts: South-Western and North-Eastern were distinguished in Semirechye.

The first description of the cities of Semirechye belongs to the Buddhist pilgrim Xuan Zang, who traveled here in 630.

Archaeological researches recorded 25 settlements with elements of VI-IX centuries in the south of Kazakhstan, that can be considered as remains of the cities. Some names of them are known – Isfidzhab, Sharab, Budukhket, Otrar (Farab), Shavgar. Citadel, shakhristan (inner city) and rabad (suburb) were distinguished in these cities.

There are 27 settlements in the south-western Semirechye (Chu and Talas) according to archaeological data, the majority of them identified with their historical cities Taraz, Kulan, Atlakh, Jamukat, Merke.

Towns and settlements in the second half of IX-early XIII centuries.

The Arab conquest made a great impact on the lives of Central Asia. Although, neither south of Kazakhstan nor Semirechye came under the power of the Arabs, consequences of the conquest affected on the urban culture of the region.

Connected closely with economic and cultural ties, it has experienced a strong impact of the Muslim culture, which spread primarily in the environment of the urban population.

Written sources indicate an increase in the number of cities at specified time.

According to this data, Jumishlagu and Mankent appeared at the foothills of Talas Alatau; district Kenjide was formed in Central Arys with center in Usbaniket; Keder, Vesij and Buruk in Otrar oasis; Yasen, Shagiljan, Karnak, Karachuk, Sauran in the district Shavgar, Sygnak, Jend, Asanas, Barchkent in the lower reaches of the Syrdarya, Baladj and Beruket on the northern slopes. Some of them existed before as small settlements and towns, but in IX-early XIII centuries they were formed into urban centers.

The mosque became a new element in construction of the city. A message of the author about construction of the mosque al-Maxidio, in Kedere (Kuiruktobe settlement) is known. Its remains were discovered and investigated by archaeologists. There were public baths among the components of urban development of South Kazakhstan and Semirechye, as in other cities of East. Two of them are opened on rabad of Otrar and two on shakhristan of Taraz.

In XI-early XII new types of dwellings appeared. These are dwellings consisted of three rooms located on the long axis (enfilade plan), a house with the rooms on intersecting axes, a house with the rooms, set in a row, with the long axis, perpendicular to the main line or block back street.

Horticulture, viticulture, vegetable gardening, crop farming and domestic cattle farming played an important role in the household of citizens.

In IX-XII a significant change in development of urban culture is observed. The involvement of South Kazakhstan and Semirechye in the field of political, economic and cultural relations of Khalifat, Samanid and Kharakhanid state brought an investigated area together with Central Asia. A new religion – Islam began to play an important role in the development of urban culture.