

MILITARY WEAPONS FOUND AT AN ANCIENT SITE (AS A RESULT OF ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH)**Akhmadov Akhmadjon**

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Abstract: This article studies and historically analyzes the military weapons found in the Poykant area, one of the oldest settlements of the Bukhara oasis, as a result of archaeological research.

Keywords: Bukhara, Poykant, Arabs, military equipment, weapon, dagger, excavation, temple, treasure, helmet, Amu Darya.

According to sources, from the middle of the 7th century, Arab campaigns against Maverannahr began, and in 706, Poykent was captured and destroyed. At-Tabari notes in his historical work that after the conquest of the city, the Muslims received a huge amount of booty, which had not been seen before even in Khorasan [1]. That is, as a result of the conquest of Poykent, a large amount of military weapons and military equipment also fell into the hands of the Arabs.

The discovery of the coin hoard also opened a new page in the history of monetary circulation in Bukhara, which had not yet been sufficiently studied. The discovery of such a large amount of weapons for the first time served as evidence that they came not from nomadic graves, but from a Sogdian city. After many years of excavations, finally, the conquest of the city by the Arabs, mentioned in written sources, was confirmed by clear archaeological evidence.

The second (Appendix 28) and third (Appendix 29) hoards, consisting of a collection of weapons, were discovered in 2016-2017 in an adjacent corridor, south of the one where the mural was found. During the excavations, two shallow pits were discovered at the junction of the southern floor and the floor, which were filled with mud. Many military-related items were found in these pits and in the mud of the floor.

The composition of the finds: a sword or dagger fragment, knives, arrowheads. parts of armor, belt hardware (bone rack, copper plates), iron rings, iron and copper nails, small nails (including nails with heads decorated with turquoise), a fragment of a blue glass vessel, a piece of red-painted leather, etc.

These finds are considered one of the pieces of evidence confirming that Poykent was a unique metallurgical center. Earlier, similar finds were also found in the archers' corridor in the northwestern corner of the arch. This indicates that in ancient times there was an iron smelting and weapons manufacturing industry in the city of Poykent.

The discovery of the third treasure, located at a depth of 1.8 meters, indicates that there was a practice of storing military items in the Poykent citadel and later burying them in special "botros". This tradition is also found in other monuments of Central Asia, for example, in the famous Takhti-Sangin (Temple of the Ox) in Bactria. This third treasure is particularly interesting because it probably contained a set of equipment typical of a heavily armed warrior[2].

The second treasure contains a decorated bone buckle, turquoise-decorated nails (perhaps they served to decorate and strengthen certain parts of the helmet, belt, and clothing), and belt details (belts).



The third treasure was found in a special pit - a botros, in a heap. The objects in the collection are diverse, and most of them are in poor condition. The majority of these objects are similar to those in the previous treasures, but they differ significantly in number. The collection includes more than 500 objects of various types. Some of the objects have preserved the remains of yellow metal foil, which is decorated with a dotted pattern. It is possible that these foils were covered with armor plates or akinak handles.

In 2023, a collection of mostly iron objects was discovered in the passageway leading to the South Circular Corridor, 20 cm above the 3rd floor level[3] (Appendix 30). This collection, like three similar finds from previous excavations in 1999, 2016 and 2017, is interpreted as temple offerings. These objects, which had lost their original function and appearance, were "buried" on the outskirts of the fire temple in the citadel.

As in other cases, the main objects here are weapons, especially numerous akinak daggers, around which other objects are placed. This work was carried out before, just before, the filling of the corridor, during which in some places liquid clay penetrated between the objects[4]. Two main types of daggers have been identified: one with a horn-shaped handle, with a straight or forward-curving cruciform handle; the other with a handle and without handle. Among the arrowheads, two large three-leaf and one rhombic tip are distinguished.

Also found were the bone covering of the tip of a bow, a leaf-shaped, handle-shaped, two-leaf spearhead, and several plates, all of which have different shapes and sizes.

The most interesting find is this one with a semicircular cutout. The cheek piece of a heavy iron helmet, reinforced with hinged fasteners, was found at Poykent, which is the first site north of the Amu Darya River (and the first in the Sogdian region). The discovery of a cheek piece from an ancient helmet there makes Poykent the third site where such helmets have been found. Interestingly, similar finds have previously been found at Takhti-Sangin, where it is also believed to have contained a temple treasury.[5]

Objects related to the rituals of the fire temple are represented by several examples. First of all, this is a large incense burner with a ring at the top and a foot at the bottom, a disk-shaped burner with a burnt inside, found next to a long handle movably attached to the ring. Another circular recess is the scoop part of a large spoon, its diameter is 13.6 cm. A broken part of the handle attached to it has also been preserved. A heavy "kocherga" (iron rod) 90 cm long has an egg-shaped expansion at one end. Perhaps these objects were part of the temple equipment. An example of this is the bells found by G.L. Semenov in the Poykent fire temples[6]. The bronze hemispherical bell has an iron inner ring, and the second is larger - 10 cm high, up to 7.5 cm in diameter, made of iron and has a cylindrical shape.

Interestingly, this bell has a bone hammer and even a piece of rope for its attachment. Similar bells are known from nomadic monuments in Northern China[7]. Bells of this type have also been discovered in the Jartepa fire temple in Sogdiana[8]. As noted earlier, such bells may have been placed on the edges of portable fire altars. Their images are found in Sogdiana wall paintings. Also, objects such as spoons and "kocherga" are found in images of Zoroastrian priests performing rituals with sacred fire, for example, in Sogdiana ossuaries[9]. In conclusion, as in the previously discovered collection of objects from the Poykent temple treasure, this time too, objects belonging to chronologically long periods have been discovered. This indicates that the fire temple in Poykent was in operation for a long time and that religious practices were preserved continuously for almost a thousand years.

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