

CITY WALLS AND NOMADS: ARCHAEOLOGICAL PARALLELS IN THE POST-HELLENISTIC AND MEDIEVAL PERIODS¹

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ABSTRACT

Article concerns one of the weakly studied topics in Central Asian archaeology specifically category of the sites with waste free space between the fortification wall and citadel in the center. Usually on this space there no traces of any permanent buildings. Author suggests seeing in this type the transitional form from nomadic type of city with yurts located inside the walls around the central construction (yurt or palace of the leader) to the sedentary form. In the article there are examples of these sites in Central Asia of ancient and medieval periods.

Keywords: *Central Asia, archaeology, nomad, city walls, settlement, sedentary*

ŞEHİR DUVARLARI VE GÖÇEBELER: HELLENİSTİK ÇAĞ SONRASI VE ORTA ÇAĞ DÖNEMLERİNDE ARKEOLOJİK PARALELLER

ÖZET

Makale, Orta Asya arkeolojisinde az incelenmiş olan merkezdeki kale ile şehir suru arasında geniş boş alan bulunan yerleşimleri ele alır. Genellikle bu alanda kalıcı binaların izlerine rastlanmaz. Yazar bu tipte, sur içinde merkezi yapının (yurt veya liderin sarayı) etrafında yurtların yer aldığı göçebe şehir biçiminden yerleşik biçime geçişin görüldüğünü öne sürer. Makalede, Antik Çağ ve Orta Çağ dönemlerinde Orta Asya'daki bu yerleşim örneklerinden bahsedilmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Orta Asya, arkeoloji, göçebe, şehir duvarları, yerleşim, yerleşik.*

¹ I express my deep gratitude to O. Grabar and J. Bernheim for their valuable advice and assistance in the preparation of this article. In this article : I am introducing new materials and thoughts developed from the following works: K. Abdullaev, "K lokalizatsii gorodov v yuechzhiyski period," *Problemy istorii, filologii, kul'tury* Institute, Moskva-Magnitogorsk 2000, 208-219; P. Leriche, Sh. Pidaev, M. Gelin, K. Abdullaev, (Ed.), "La localisation de la capitale des Yueh-chih," *La Bactriane au carrefour des routes et des civilisations de l'Asie Centrale*, Maisonneuve & Larose, IFEAC, Paris 2001, 114-27.

In the history of the ancient world, there are numerous examples of great empires and kingdoms destroyed by the shattering force of nomad invasions and then, after a certain period of renewal, the emergence of a new configuration and a new culture. As written sources and archaeological data testify, in the history of Central Asia it is possible to follow the very largest movements of nomads from the written tradition, and these can be more or less correlated with archaeological sites. In the end, the nomads either merged with the local population, or, while still attempting to remain ethnically isolated, changed their nomadic way of life by accepting elements of city or sedentary-agricultural culture.

In Central Asia (Fig. 1) we know of such invasions from written sources: in Chinese chronicles from second- first centuries BCE we hear of Yueh Chih, creator of the great Kushan Kingdom in the first centuries CE, and the Parthian empire, initially created by a nomad tribe under the leadership of the Arsacid Dynasty. In the Middle Ages, we hear of the mighty Tatar Mongol Horde who destroyed many flourishing cities, including Samarkand. In the late 14th and early 15th centuries, a revitalized Samarkand becomes the capital of a great empire led by Timur Lenk (Tamerlaine), descendant of the nomadic tribe Barlas.

The goal of this investigation is to show how the image of the city walls symbolizing impregnability with the nomads try to destroy transforms into protecting construction after their settlement.

We take these two historical periods of Central Asia disposing archaeological evidences and giving us clear instances of one aspect of our investigation. However, it doesn't mean that destruction of a city walls is typical strategy only for nomads, it is known, for example, that the Greeco-Macedinians under leadership of Alexander the Great having being urban people destroyed several fortresses and revolting cities. It could be logic for every conqueror of every period. Specifically for the nomad the first extraordinary (unusual) step for the settling was to construct the wall surrounding and protecting from the enemies people (usually from the other nomadic tribe). The city wall has played a great role in the history of both nomad and sedentary people, as well as in the cultural interaction between them, as a symbol that both spiritually and literally divided nomads from townspeople. Nomads tried to destroy these city walls in order to set up a direct contact between their tribes and the townspeople—a contact that would help facilitate the governing of urban populations. So, they established direct power to control over all urban activities (industry). If the first phase of siege of a city was to penetrate into the city and afterwards the destiny of the resisting people depended from a concrete situation. Logically, however, it would have been more advantageous not to ruin the cities which the nomads themselves considered resources, except in the case of obstinate resistance and revolt. Why kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. The conqueror received regularly a contribution including all kind of urban production (textile, armors, trade: pottery, metal works etc.) and can use human resource in different aims.

In fact, nomads are often seen as destroyers of sedentary culture and, indeed, of many of the achievements of human civilization. However after an initial period, nomads did erect walls to protect themselves from the attacks of other nomadic tribes, usually related to them, often during internecine wars. It seems likely that this in fact represents the first step toward the transformation from nomadic to sedentary life. Let's concern now some peculiarities of archaeological sites that give us a possibility to trace certain elements of this transformation.

In the description of a plan of archaeological sites, one finds a structure sometimes called "enclosure for cattle". One of the early examples of the application of this term is the site of Dalverzin in the Fergana valley, belonging to the late Bronze Age and Iron period.² This identification of a cattle enclosure wanders from one publication to another, but only a detailed analysis of the structure and perhaps a special study of soil under laboratory conditions can show whether it is justified. Our task here is an attempt to explain some special features of this archaeological structure. The example which we study in fact elucidate one of the peculiarities of Central Asian archaeology and in certain measure fortification system. First, let us note that to construct a wall four-meter-thick as an "enclosure for the cattle" appears a little irrational. In reality it could be normal fortification wall which included certain area for the nomad settlement inside of fortification system and we should try to expose a sort of this mixed site as Dalverzin in the central Asian antiquity.

The Dalverzin site is one of the most studied large settlements (Fig. 2). It occupies the hill in the shape of an oval, whose area reaches 25 hectares, "the greater part of which was empty, and several habitable complexes were located along the internal wall; residential area (area 18 hectares); the area between them (area 5 hectares) is not built on and apparently, it served as enclosure for the cattle".³ The internal space of Dalverzin was divided by two walls into three sections and all this was included in the ring of the external wall.⁴ One of the internal walls, which separate the enclosure from the residential area, has a thickness of 4 m (preserved height of 1 m); another internal wall, which separates the citadel, was built of (mud) bricks and has a thickness of 2.5 m (and a height of 2.6 to 3 m).⁵

Building such massive walls would of course require large labor resources. Examples from contemporary rural life suggest that these enclosures for domestic

²See early publications: V. I. Sprishevskiy, "Chustskoe poselenie epohi bronzy," *Kratkie soobscheniya Instituta istorii material'noy kul'tury*, LXIX, 1957; V. I. Sprishevskiy, "Raskopki Chustskogo poseleniya v 1956 godu," *Izvestie Akademii Nauk Uzbekskoy SSR*, 1, 1957; V. I. Sprishevskiy, "Raskopki Chustskogo poseleniya v 1956 godu," *Sovetskaya Arkheologiya*, 3, 1958.

³ V. I. Sarianidi, G.A. Koshelenko, "Fergana, Chustskaya cultura," *Drevneshie gosudarstva Kavkaza i Sredney Azii.*, (Ed. G. A. Koshelenko), Izd-vo "Nauka", Moscow 1985, 193, pl. LXX, 1.

⁴ The external wall was a clay platform with a layer of packed earth on top (width of 0.6 m); it was made from raw brick, the thickness of the wall of 4-6 m, the preserved height of 2.5 m. Another section of this wall is a complex made of clay blocks, and there is an intra-wall corridor (width of 2 m).

⁵ Yu. A. Zadneprovskiy, "Ukrepleniya chustskiykh poseleniy i ih mesto v istorii pervobytnoy fortificatsii Tsentral'noy Azii," *Kratkie soobscheniya Institute arkheologii* 147, 1976, 7.

animals were made of branches or ordinary loess, and constructed for the sole purpose of keeping the cattle in one with no opportunity to disperse.

When enemy attack or siege threatened, it is more likely that cattle were kept in the city, where the animals could serve as reserve of provisions for possible long durations of sieges. There are many examples of domestic cattle kept within the fortress; one in particular, although dating from a later time, involved the ancient cities of Fergana and the military expeditions of Han China (103, 101 BCE) to capture the celestial horses (argamaks) of the reign of Dayuan, sent by emperor U-Di (156-87 BCE). During the well-organized expedition of 103 BCE, General Lee Guan-lee's army besieged the city of Ershi. The siege lasted 40 days until the Chinese broke the external wall and entered the city. Many Dayuan leaders, including their leader Mugu, fell in battle. The rest of the (military) residents [residents = Soldiers] were locked in the citadel and entered into negotiations with the Chinese. Their proposition was that they would agree to give the argamaks as well as to supply army with provisions; the only proviso was that the Chinese would leave the country. Otherwise, the dwellers (protectors of the city) would smash the argamaks and fight to the death, expecting aid from Kanghu.⁶ What is particularly interesting and relevant for us in this episode is the fact that the inhabitants of the besieged city took their horses away and hid them inside the citadel walls.

So what was the meaning of the empty space in the ancient settlement of Dalverzin, and the reason for keeping 5 hectares (a rather large area compared to the entire area of settlement), without any traces of buildings? Whatever the purpose, it has been definitively determined that the space between the walls of settlement did not bear the traces of any building. It is possible that the area was occupied with light constructions or by tent dwellings belonging to a semi-nomadic population. We have another example.

The ancient settlement of Kalai Zakhoki Maron, located in the valley of Kashkadarya (Uzbekistan), is by far the earliest known example of nomad city sites⁷ and is even more surprising as an archaeological site, in terms of both its dimensions of scale and its planning.

It would be logical to look for the existence of a city in transition. The Kalai Zakhoki Maron site (Fig. 3), discovered in the territory of modern Karshi (the capital of the Kashkadarya region), is evidently an example of such an archaeological site. What is immediately striking about this site is its huge dimension. Its first investigator, S.K. Kabanov, defined it as "one of the most considerable sites of the

⁶ Iakinf (N. Ya. Bichurin), *Istoriya Tibeta i Khukhunora*, 1, St. Petersburg, 1833, 17; N. Ya. Bichurin, *Sobranie svedeniy o narodah naselyavshih Srednyuy Aziyu v drevnie vremena*, 1, Izd-vo Nauka, Moscow-Leningrad, 1950, 214; M. A. Castrén, *Ethnologische Vorlesungen über die Altaischen Völker*, St. Petersburg: Kaiserlichen Akad. Wissen., 1857, 35-36; L. Ligeti, "Mots de civilisation de Haute Asie en transcription chinoise," *Acta Orientalia*, 1950, 141-49; S. V. Kisilev, *Drevnyaya istoriya Yzhnoy Sibiri* Izdatel'stvo Akademii nauk SSSR, Moskva, 1951, 321.

⁷ M. Turebekov, "Arheologicheskoe izuchenie oboronitel'nyh sooruzheniy gorodischa Kalai-Zakhoki-Marón," *Istoriya material'noy kul'tury Uzbekistana* 15, 1979, 68-75.

oasis - the ruins of an ancient fortress with castle, located on the southeastern extremity of Nakhshab.”

According to Kabanov the site consists of three concentric terraces “gradually rising to the centre.”⁸ The width of the outer rampart was 30 m and its height 7 m. Its exterior side was steep, but sloping toward the interior. Kalai Zakhoki Maron was shaped into a square with 400 m long sides (Fig. 4). Kabanov assumed the presence of only two ramparts, while another scholar, M. E. Masson described a third wall on an even greater scale. This third rampart had the same quadratic plan, but with sides of a length of 1.5 km⁹. Subsequent archaeological investigations of this site did in fact confirm the presence of the third wall (rampart). The archaeological context suggests that Kalai Zakhoki Maron was built in the 2nd-1st century BCE. Although dwellings were traced on the parts adjoining the ramparts (walls I and II), they have been dated to a later period¹⁰.

One of the remarkable characteristics of this city site is the absence of any foundations that would indicate interior constructions in the wide areas between the citadel and the fortification walls. This peculiarity gains even more weight if we take into account the huge area surrounded by the third city wall. If we accept its existence in the structure of the site (and archaeological digs do not contradict our hypothesis), the enormous dimensions of Kalai Zakhoki Maron (1.5 km by 1.5 km) make it to the largest site of the region, surpassing even the gigantic site at Afrasiab (located in the territory of modern Samarkand, Samarkand Reion).¹¹ The similar elements of Kalai Zakhoki Maron’s plan we can find in Shakhriyayron site in the Bukhara region and Janbaskala in Khorezm¹². So, Kalai Zakhoki Maron shows us a enormous vast space that was occupied by the yurts (tents) of nomads and at the same time it gives us one of the least understood aspects of nomadic migration period of transition from the nomadism to a sedentary mode of life. The latter means the development of urban culture, the establishing of the city and the formation of a state, such as the Kushan state. This process is not reflected in literary sources and has left only weak traces in archaeological sites. The mobile construction of their dwellings allowed the nomads to move easily over short or long distances, while seeking comfortable pasture and a place to stay. This usual pattern of migration, dictated by their mode of life, is known to some extent from ethnological data. But what did a nomadic city actually look like? This question has never been posed in the scholarly literature and archaeological investigations provide no clues. However, Kalai Zakhoki Maron site as we observed above gives us certain possibility to restore an evolution from a kind of a nomad city-site into

⁸ S. K. Kabanov, *Nahsheb na rubezhe drevnosti i srednevekov'ya (III-VII vv.)*, Izd-vo “Fan” Uzbekskoi SSR, Tashkent 1977, 47.

⁹ M. E. Masson, *Stolichnie goroda v oblasti nisol'ev Kashkadar'i s drevneyshih vremen*, Iz rabot Keshskoi arkheol.-topogr. Ekspeditsii TashGU: 1965-1966 gg, Fan, Tashkent 1973, 20-30.

¹⁰ M. Turebekov, *Oboronitel'nye sooruzhenia drevnikh poselenij i gorodov Sogda (VII-VI vv. do n. e. – VII v. n.e.)*, (Avtoreferat kandidatskoy dissertatsii), Moscow 1981., 9-10.

¹¹ Sarianidi, Koshelenko, “Fergana, Chustskaya kultura”, 278.

¹² S. P. Tolstov, *Drevnij Khorezm*, Moskva 1948, fig. 29, 29 a.; Turebekov, *Oborontel'nye*, 10.

normal city. It should be interesting to trace any information about Western Lands in the Chinese chronicles.

Chinese sources single out the capital of the Heavenly Empire as city [as what?], calling it Gin Shih, which, according to I. Bichurin, means 'mountain army', or 'people'. This is due to the fact that originally in China there was one military estate, and they chose the high banks of the Yellow River for the residence of the head of the Empire. However, for the name Gin Shih only implied their proper capital. They referred to capitals of other states by the name 'du', which means a residence (Bichurin, vol. II, p. 149, note 4).

All three Chinese sources (Shih-chi, Ch'ien Han-shu, Hou Han-shu) mention also a third type of city (capital), with the ending 'ch'eng added: for example, Ch'ien-shi ch'eng or Lan-shi ch'eng, meaning 'surrounded by walls'. The first to call attention to this detail was Professor K. Enoki, whose translation was used by A. K. Narain¹³. However, the question about the interior structure of this kind of city was left unanswered. Nevertheless, such definition of a city, identified by its surrounding walls, is of foremost importance. The fact that the cities mentioned in the sources of the Han epoch belonged to nomad states is especially intriguing. As noted above, the ending 'ch'eng' is applied to Ch'ien-shi and to Lan-shi that mean that these cities had city walls. Yet in the same source of Ch'ien Han-shu¹⁴, when he enumerates the capitals of the five principalities (Hsi-hou), formed by the population of numerous tribes on the territory of Central Asia, the term 'ch'eng' is not used¹⁵. It could mean that the capitals (cities) indicated in the source had not fortification walls.

Although literary sources of antiquity and Chinese chronicles provide some information about traditional cities in Central Asia, they contain no clues about the fate of ephemeral migrating cities, appearing and disappearing like a mirage on the endless steppe expanse, far from the flourishing agricultural oases. We find hints to migrating cities in other contemporary sources, such as the fragmentary descriptions by European travelers who undertook the long voyage to the court of a nomad king--for instance to the Tataro-Mongol Horde. Guillaume de Rubrouck, for example, gives us certain information in his colorful description of the court of the Mongol King Batu gives about the organization of that court:¹⁶ "When I saw the *ordu* of Batu, I was astonished, for it seemed like a great city stretched out about his dwelling, with people scattered all about for three or four leagues. And as among the people of Israel, where each one knew in which quarter from the tabernacle he had to pitch his tent, so these know on which side of the *ordu* they must place themselves when they set down their dwellings. A court (curia) is *orda* in their

¹³ A. K. Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, Clarendon Press, Oxford 1957, 129, note 7.

¹⁴ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 130.

¹⁵ Narain, *The Indo-Greeks*, 130

¹⁶ W. van Ruysbroeck, *Voyage...*, chap. XIX, 213 (p. 117). *Putshhestviya v Vostochnye strany/ Plano Karpini i Gil'oma de Rubruka*, (Ed. G. I. Patlina; Trans. A. I. Malein), Gylym, Almaty 1993, 103-104.

language, and it means 'middle,'¹⁷ for it is always in the middle of the people, with the exception, however, that no one places himself right to the south, for in that direction the doors of the court open. But to the right and left they may spread out as they wish, according to the lay of the land, so long as they do not bring the line of tents down right before or behind the court."

Ethnographic and archaeological studies of nomadic cultures in Central Asia show that for a considerable number of sites we have no signs of permanent buildings. This could be evidence that part of the terrain of the former city was occupied by yurts (nomadic tents), which apparently were arranged in quarters as they continued to be in later (and even modern) cities¹⁸. A similar type of city-site was discovered during the excavation of Novyj Sarai on the Volga¹⁹: a rich house with a paved yard was unearthed, and traces of yurts were found in the area. Even in the present time, one can find such combination of permanent dwellings, with nomad tents in rural areas and in towns, most commonly in an urban environment (for example at Ulan Bator)²⁰. So this ancient tradition that has survived millennia remains a characteristic feature of the cities and settlements of former nomadic peoples.

The next site of nomadic type known to me was located in the Volga region and was connected with nomadic ethnic Volga's Bulgarians. The ruins of the capital Bolgara are found near the village of Bulgarskoe (Bolgary in Tatarstan), a village which on the maps of imperial Russia appears as the village Uspenskoe in the district Spasskoe in the province of Kazan.²¹

We owe a colorful description of the state of Volga's Bulgaria geographical and ethnographic character to Ibn-Fadlan, who visited this place in the year 922. He writes about the local residents:

"all of them [live] in tents (yurts), with the only difference that the yurt of the king is so much bigger that it can contain one thousand souls, and that the greater part of it is covered by Armenian carpets. In the middle of it stands the throne [of the Tsar] covered by Byzantine brocade (207b)."²²

¹⁷ Compare with ancient Turc 'orta' 'middle', 'center'. See: *Dictionary of Ancient Turc*, Izd-vo Sovetskaya Entsiklopediya, Leningrad 1969, 371.

¹⁸ L. L. Victorova, *Mongoly. Proishozhdenie naroda i istoki kul'tury* Nauka, Moskva 1980, 59.

¹⁹ G. A. Fyodorov-Davydov, I. S. Vainer, A. G. Muhamadiev, "Arheologicheskie issledovania Tsarevskogo gorodischa (Novyj Saray) v 1959-1966 gg," *Povolzh'e v srednie veka*, Nauka, Moscow 1970, 71.

²⁰ Victorova, *Mongoly*, 59. See also N. M. Schepetil'nikov, *Arkhitektura Mongolii* Iskusstvo, Moskva 1960; D. Maidar, *Arkhitektura i gradostroitel'stvo Mongolii* Ocherki po istorii Stroizdat, Moscow 1971. It is interesting to note that even today in the mountain villages of the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya regions, the stock-breeding population keeps yurts beside its modern houses.

²¹ The distance between the site of the ancient settlement and the left bank of the Volga is about 6.5 km. Such distance corresponds to the description of Ibn-Fadlan, who wrote that to reach the river it was only necessary to go less than one farsakh. One can therefore conclude that neither the city nor the riverbed have changed their original site. V. V. Bartol'd, "Bolgary," *Sochineniya*, 5, Izd-vo vostochnoi litery, Moscow 1968, 514.

²² I. J. Krachkovskiy (Trans.), *Puteshestvie Ibn-Fadlana na Volgu*, Izd-vo Mifi-Servis, Moscow 1939, 73.

Istakhri also left (225) us an interesting account of two other cities, situated not far from each other: Bolgar and Suvar.²³ He reports that in each of them was a Friday mosque, and that the male population of both cities totaled about ten-thousand. Most interesting for us is his observation that during the winter the inhabitants lived in wooden houses, and in tents during the summer.

A still later source refers to a fragment quoted by Makdisi (361). According to this source, Bolgar was situated on both sides of the river, where houses were constructed of wood and reeds, while the inhabitants of Suvar lived in tents.²⁴

The archaeological researches conducted on these settlements have shown that

Bolgar in the tenth or early in the eleventh century occupied a comparatively small area, whereas Bilyar and Suvar (Fig. 5) territorially were large cities.²⁵

All of the examples cited above substantiate the origins of the nomadic city, and we would argue that an archaeological site such as Kalai Zakhoki Maron can be considered its prototype. Very likely it is the only archaeological site that, according to the archaeological context, was built in the 2nd – 1st century BCE and thus was directly contemporary with the migration of nomadic tribes, and which still preserves the original plan in spite of more recent dwellings built on certain parts of the city.

So we can presume that Kalai Zakhoki Maron embodies the typical nomadic city-residence, with a citadel in the center, which in former times would have been surrounded by streets and quarters of yurts (tents). The construction of fortification walls on such enormous scale required colossal strength and means, which most likely meant the local population was recruited for forced labor to erect the city walls.

An another period which possesses archaeological evidences on the transformation of nomad city-site into traditional city conduct us in medieval central Asian region, specifically in Maverranakhr.

If one looks at the political history of Maverranakhr (the territory between Amudarya and Syrdarya) during its inclusion in the Chagatay state, two tendencies clearly emerge which teach us more about the nature of the semi-nomadic city. These tendencies expressed the interests of a ruling clique of nomadic aristocracy:

²³ V. V. Bartold cites Afi (*Jamil'al-hikaiyat*, book IV, ch.18), according to whom "the distance between Bolgar and Suvar took two days one way; from what source this statement is drawn is not known", See Bartol'd, "Bolgary," 514.

²⁴ The source specifies that the Friday mosque stood on the market square: see Bartol'd, "Bolgary," 514. In his *Divanu lugat at-turk*, Mahmut Kachgary (eleventh century) writes that the language of "Bulgars, Suvars, Pechenegs, located close to the borders of Rum, connects the Turkic with equally truncated ends of words." (*Materialy po istorii Sredney i Tsentral'noy Azii 10-19 vv.* Fan, Tashkent 1988, 22.)

²⁵ A. P. Smirnov. "Voljskaya Bulgaria," *Archaeology of the USSR. Steppes of Eurasia during an Epoch of the Middle Ages*, (Ed. S. A. Pletneva) Nauka, Moscow 1981, 208-212. For literature on archaeological excavations, see : Smirnov, Voljskaya, 212.

forces of a nomadic nobility dedicated to the way of life of its ancestors. Their traditions, which they persistently defended, have been connected with the military-nomadic way of life, mobile character of their settlements and headquarters. However part of the patrimonial nobility was subject to the influence of city and sedentary-agricultural culture; the main objective of their politics was the establishment of a firm authority and a stable government with precise administrative divisions. These interests were not only supported by the nomadic aristocracy, but also by the local nobility, rich peasants and merchants. In all probability, these two opposed political tendencies were expressed at times over the entire nomadic empire of Chingizid. The history of the actual region of Central Asia between two rivers shows how complicated the process of adapting these nomadic ethnoses in fact was.

In the Maverranakhr the process of sedentarization went at a slow rate, given the large number of factors counteracting the process of the settlement of the nomads. This was partly due to the historical situation. The disunited state of Chagatay often lent itself to the scene of internecine wars between strong Turk-like Mongolian clans headed by individual princes (Ibn Arabshah lists the four most important clans of Maverranakhr as Orlat, Jalair, Kauchin and Barlas.)²⁶ The process of the attachment of nomads to the earth was very much non-uniform and inconsistent, and this fact is borne out by the life and deeds of Khan Kebek, one of most prominent personalities in the history of Maverranakhr.

Having chosen the Kashkadarya valley as his residence, Khan Kebek (1318-1326), as the first of the Mongolian khans, built himself a palace, changed the monetary system, and minted silver dirhems. The palace, which subsequently gave its name to the modern city of Karshi, most likely consisted of a monumental construction surrounded by powerful walls (Fig. 6). Thanks to the archaeological work of the expedition of Kesh, directed by M. E. Masson, it has been possible to delineate the plan of the ancient settlement that represented a square of 630 m by 630 m, meaning a total area of 40 hectares. The fortification system of powerful walls with a thickness of 4.5 m provided reliable protection against the enemy. The semicircular "towers" located on the perimeter of the walls had no living quarters and most likely only simulated this fortification element, taking the role of buttresses. The defense of the headquarters-residence with a palace in the middle ("urda") was reinforced by a moat with a width of 8-10 m and a depth of 3.5-4 m dug around the walls.²⁷

²⁶ The Arlats basically borrowed the territory of modern northern Afghanistan; the Jalairs the territory around Kojent, and the Barlas the valley of Kashkadarya. As V. V. Bartold explains, "kauchen," according to Yazdy, is the name of one thousand khans. See Bartol'd, "Bolgary," 34.

²⁷ M. E. Masson, *Stolichnye goroda v oblasti nizov'ev Kashkadaryi s drevneyshih vremen. Iz rabot keshkoy. Archeologo-topograficheskoy ekspeditsii Tashkentskogo Universiteta, (1965-1966)*, Fan, Tashkent 1973.

Unfortunately, we have no exact data about the layout of the palace and the overall shape of the residence of Khan Kebek,²⁸ but we may assume that initially the city had a plan similar to other early types of nomadic cities. Despite his efforts to strengthen the principality and settlement, Khan Kebek remained pagan, unlike his brother Tarmashirin (1326-1334), who became a Muslim. As noted by V. V. Bartold, the “too resolute break with nomadic traditions caused a revolt against Tarmashirin; the khan was deposed and killed; the residence of the khans for some years again transferred to the banks of Ili, and Islam, even as religion, lost its dominant position”.²⁹

Under the rule of Sultan Tarmashirin, the internecine wars continued, although during his reign the political situation remained relatively stable. A bright description of the court of Tarmashirin is given by the Arabian historian Ibn-Battuta, who visited Kashkadarya in 1333. The author does not give a description of the shape of city, observing that the sultan arranged receptions in his tent, sitting “on a throne similar to a *minbar*, covered with gold embroidered silk. The interior of the tent was decorated with gilded silk, and above the head of the sultan, at a height of one elbow, hung a wreath studded with jewels”.³⁰

We once again find cities with similar plans during the time of domination by the Mongolian khans. In the fourteenth century in Maverranakhr on the Kashkadarya, one of the khans named Kazan (1334-1340) built the palace of Zanjir Sarai, located two stops from Karshi on the road to Bukhara.³¹ The structure of a central palace of nomadic type, around whose extensive area stood powerful walls, it was in its shape reminiscent of the layout of Kalai Zakhoki Maron.³² The empty space without traces of any buildings inside the walls indicates, in our view, that it was a tent city of nomads. Such construction by Khan Kazan could have been, in the opinion of V. V. Bartold, an “attempt to establish firm authority” in Maverranakhr. This attempt, however, was unsuccessful, and ultimately led to the conflict between the leaders of the clans during which Khan Kazan was defeated and killed.

²⁸ Recent excavations in the territory of the modern city of Karshi have uncovered the remains of a powerful fortified construction, which, based on archaeological evidence, dates from the first half of the fourteenth century. The area trench, obstructed from different directions by modern buildings, (as in Kalai Zahjki Maron) represents a typical example of construction of modern buildings on ruins of ancient settlements and cities – that unfortunately limits the opportunities of archaeological research.

²⁹ Bartol'd, “Bolgary,” 33.

³⁰ N. Ibragimov, T. Muhtarov, (Trans.), *The Travels of Ibn-Battuta (in the Arabian world and Central Asia)*, Fan, Tashkent 1996, 270.

³¹ The distance is the result of data from Sharaf ad-din Yazdi (I, 259); See V. V. Bartold, “Mongolian Empire and the Chagatai State” *Ulugbek and His time*, V. V. Bartol'd, *Sochinenia*, II/t 2, Izd-vo vostochnoi lit-ry, Moscow 1964, 27-36. The monument lies near Kishlak Kukhna in the Mubarek district of the Kashkadarya region.

³² In the opinion of the director of the excavation, A. Raimkulov (material is not yet published), the construction could be the ruins of the palace of Khan Kebek, who, as is known, built a palace at a distance of two farsakh from the city of Nahsheb (Nesef), from which the name of the modern city of Karshi derives (Sharaf ad-din Yazdi, I, 111; V. V. Bartol'd, *Sochinenia*, II/t 2, Izd-vo vostochnoi lit-ry, Moscow 1964, 33)

It has been established from archaeology research that the monument was shaped approximately as a square with sides of 400 m each, the total area equal to 16 hectares (Fig. 7). The central edifice – the palace – was surrounded by a mighty defensive wall, with a thickness of 6 m at the base. Along the perimeter of the walls were semicircular towers, which, like the fortress of Karshi, took the role of buttresses.³³ In relief, the central part of the site of the ancient settlement represents a hill 70 by 70 m in size and 2-2.5 m high. The space between the hill (palace) and the walls shows no traces of buildings whatsoever, which could speak to the fact that the area was covered by tents of confidants and relatives of the khan. The excavations conducted on the central hill have uncovered a row of living-quarters and a small courtyard with an open colonnade (*ivan*), constructed of burnt bricks. The palace, as the topography of the hill suggests, was most likely a square with a central courtyard about 11 by 11 m.³⁴ Most likely, Zanjir Sarai, situated approximately 2.5 km from the Kashkadarya River, supplied itself with water from the river by means of a channel. The city headquarters would have presented a bright spectacle with a multitude of colorful tents, arranged in the appointed order with regard to the palace, as described at Plano Carpini. If one adds to this the green plantings that must have existed, the sight would be very picturesque. The place and its nearby hunting grounds enjoyed great popularity under the Mongolian khans and Turkic emirs, who often stayed there. Amir Timur inherited Zanjir Sarai in 1370, and spent a lot of time preparing his military campaigns. During one of these campaigns Khan Tohtamysh of the Golden Horde seized the opportunity and raided Maverranakhr, and as a result Zanjir Sarai was destroyed and never restored.

One of the book miniatures of the 15th century (1486) from the *Zafar nama* of Sharaf al Din Ali Yazdi, depicts, in all probability, Zanjir Sarai.³⁵ The miniature represents a banquet scene outside a structure, with music and dancing before an enthroned personage (evidently Timur) in the center (Fig. 8). The most interesting element of the composition is the fortification wall – with the tops of yurts located inside of the wall. It very much resembles the summer residence of a ruler, and it is tempting to associate this composition with Sanjir Sarai in the Kashkadarya valley.

A similarly planned archaeological site of Kashkadarya is Zanjir Dumolok, located 1.5 km to the north of Zanjir Sarai. Here a low hill (1-1.5 m high) with a diameter of 30 m was situated in the center of secluded ramparts in a square. The traces of the ramparts were only visually determined; however, according to the local residents, the ramparts had existed until the 1970s, when during the excavation many archaeological sites were leveled.³⁶ The size of this site is

³³ A. A. Raimkulov, D. N. Sultonova, "Cities and Settlements of Mongol and Timurid Time in the Kashkadarya Valley (Archaeological Studies, Interpretation, Localization)," *Civilizations of Nomadic and Sedentary Peoples of Central Asia*, UNESCO, Samarkand-Bishkek, 2005, 218.

³⁴ Raimkulov and Sultonova, "Cities and Settlements...", 218-19.

³⁵ D. J. Roxburgh (Ed.) *Turks: a journey of a thousand years, 600-1600*, Royal Academy of Arts, London, 2005, ill. 172. *Türk ve İslâm Eserleri Müzesi Akbank*, İstanbul 2002, 220.

³⁶ Raimkulov and Sultonova, "Cities and Settlements", 220.

considerably smaller than Zanjir Sarai, and, most likely belonged to a less wealthy owner.

The transitional phase from nomadic life to settling in one place is archaeologically reflected in the site of Kalai Zakhoki Maron. Today, this site, as ascertained by archaeologists, represents the earliest type of this intermediate period. We have every reason to assume that, provided the global climate has not changed significantly, this space was already built up with structures in mud bricks instead of nomadic tents. As the archaeological studies of Kalai Zakhoki Maron have shown, this site remained vacant; the reason of this phenomenon remains so far unclear.

The first wave of these numerous migrations is connected with the movement of Yueh Chih of the Chinese sources, and depicts their people's wanderings. After they settled in the territory of Central Asia, these nomads formed the core of the future Kushan Empire.

The archaeological evidence from the walls of Ai Khanum confirms this supposition (Leriche 1986: pl. 14). Here in the 'lower city', in trench no. 1, during excavation of the fortification wall, it was discovered that the wall had been repaired. It was strengthened with soil that had been taken from the moat which surrounded the wall. It is interesting to note that there was no connection between the re-fortified wall and dwelling complex. What is more, within the walls of the former city, burials of nomad type were discovered. Does this testify to the preservation and function of a fortification system after the destruction of the city? In this case, did it protect the nomads and their temporary camp within the destroyed city? I think, in this case, the answer can be yes.

The second great wave of nomads is connected with the invasion by the Tatar-Mongols of the territory of Central Asia in the thirteenth century. This period is better known from written sources, and scholars have a greater wealth of archaeological material. It is noteworthy that the design of the nomadic city resembles that of a much earlier period. The starting point of the architectural layout is the palace ("orda"), located in the center. This is enclosed on four sides with strong defensive walls – usually, the sides of the walls form a figure close to a square. The space between the walls and the palace is usually a level surface, without any traces of construction. Recall that in the above cited sources, the center of the city plan is occupied by the imperial tent, which surpasses in size the tents of the subjects and is more richly furnished.

One can therefore surmise that the first stage of the nomads settling into one place was expressed in the construction of a palace, already built of the more durable material of mud bricks characteristic of the early period, and of burnt brick (terracotta) for the medieval period. The archaeological data allows us also to assume that the erection of a palace and the fortification of the surrounding area occurred simultaneously. The decisive moment in the transformation of the

nomadic headquarters in the form of a tent city was the appearance of a palace and fortified walls. One of the key characteristics for this period is marked by the presence of empty space, which the tents of the favorites continue to occupy.³⁷

The building of free space in these cities depended on a specific historical situation. It is known, for example, that Zanjir Sarai was plundered and destroyed in 1387 by Khan Tohtamysh of the Golden Horde, while Amir Timur was on a campaign in Iran and Iraq. As the recent archaeological excavations in the modern city of Karshi have shown, the discovered remnants of a monumental structure, which chronologically belongs to the time of the rule of Kebek, were hidden under thick layers of subsequent building periods. This last example illustrates the hypothesis that the present city gradually expanded on the site of the nomadic city.

As part of a general scheme for the transition period, from nomad style of living to sedentary culture, one can propose the following stages: First, the installation of a fortification wall with free space inside for the tents (yurts), with the principal greater leader usually located in the center (*urda*). Second, the transformation of the leader's central yurt of leader into a palace, built from either mud or burnt brick. And third, the emergence of buildings for a prince or aristocracy, with main urban elements like irrigation (canals, gardens, etc).

This only includes the early phase of nomad sedentarization, and I am, of course, aware that this is a preliminary and very general scheme that in historical reality could have been much more variable and complicated. But by considering the development of nomadic cultures to semi-nomadic through the appearance of city walls, one can assess... learn... etc.

In all probability, the walls of captured cities were not always completely destroyed, but on the contrary used by the nomads for their own defensive construction.

³⁷ Describing the grounds of Karakitai, Plano Karpini remarks that the Tatars built there only one city, Omyl, during the rule of Ugedey khan. The Karakitai and Naymans, according to Karpini, were not engaged in agriculture, but like the Tatars, lived in tents. It is interesting in this respect to cite the statement by Plano Karpini: *"In this land, dwells Ordu, whom we say to be one of the more ancient Tartar dukes. And he lives at the court of his father, and one of his wives rules there. For it is a custom among the Tartars, that the Courts of Princes or of noble men are not dissolved, but always some women are appointed to keep and govern them, upon whom certain gifts are bestowed, as they are given to their Lords. And so, at length we arrived at the first court of the Emperor, where one of his wives dwelt. But because we had not yet seen the Emperor, they would not invite us nor admit us into his Orda, but caused good attendance and entertainment, after the Tartar fashion, to be given to us in our own tent, and they caused us to stay there, and to refresh ourselves with them one day."* (John de Plano Carpini, *The long and wonderful voyage of Friar John de Plano Carpini*, Chapt. 24, 25, eBooks@Adelaide, 2004. For the Russian translation see: A. Malenin (Trans.), *Istoria mongalov*, XVII, Nauka, Moscow 1957, 73-74. Most likely, in the constructed palace lived the closest relatives and the facilities and management of a court that was in the hands of one the wives of the khan.

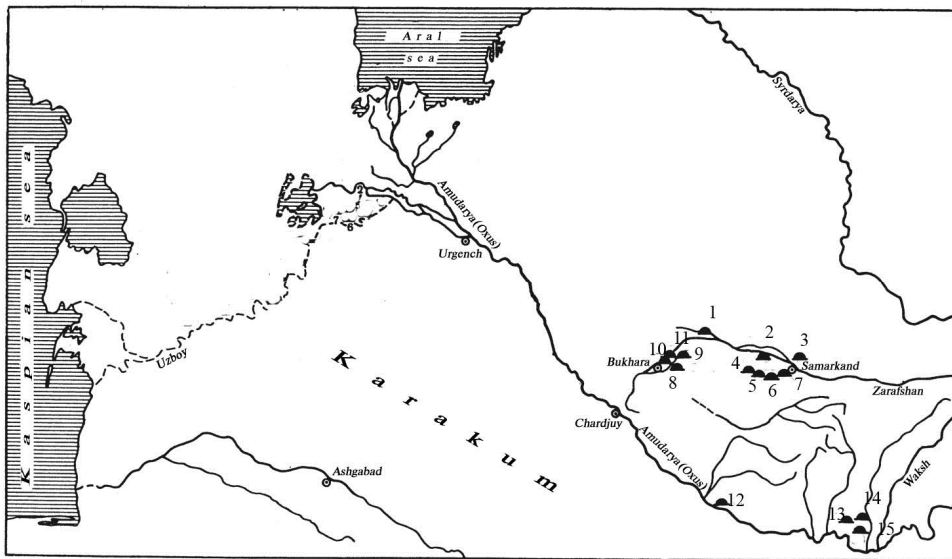


Fig. 1 Schematic map of ancient nomad sites (K. Abdullaev 2007).

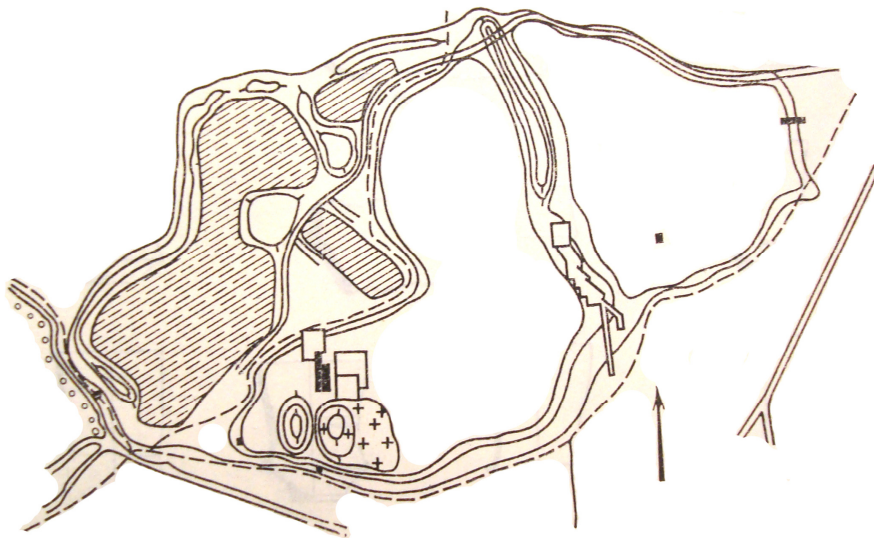


Fig. 2 Plan of the Dalverzin site. Late Bronze Age and Iron Period. (G. Koshelenko 1985)

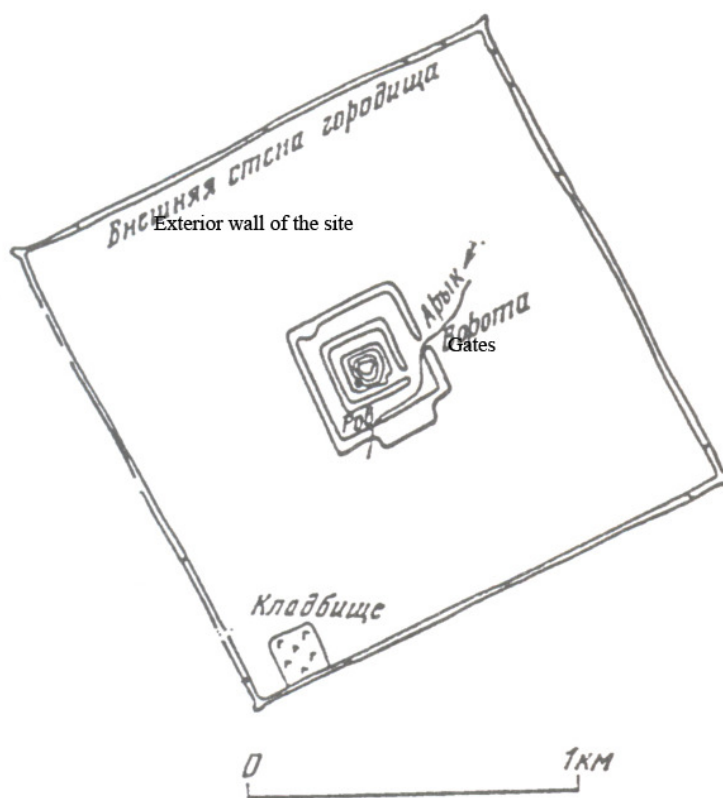


Fig. 3 Plan of Kalai Zakhoki Maron. II BCE.
(S.K. Kabanov 1977).

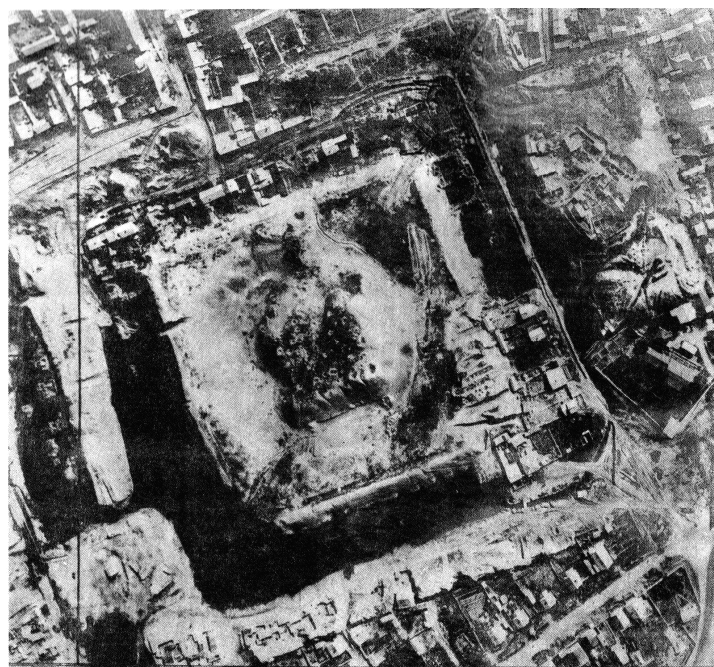


Fig. 4 View from air. Kalai Zakhoki Maron (Photograph courtesy of the Institute of Archaeology, Samarkand).

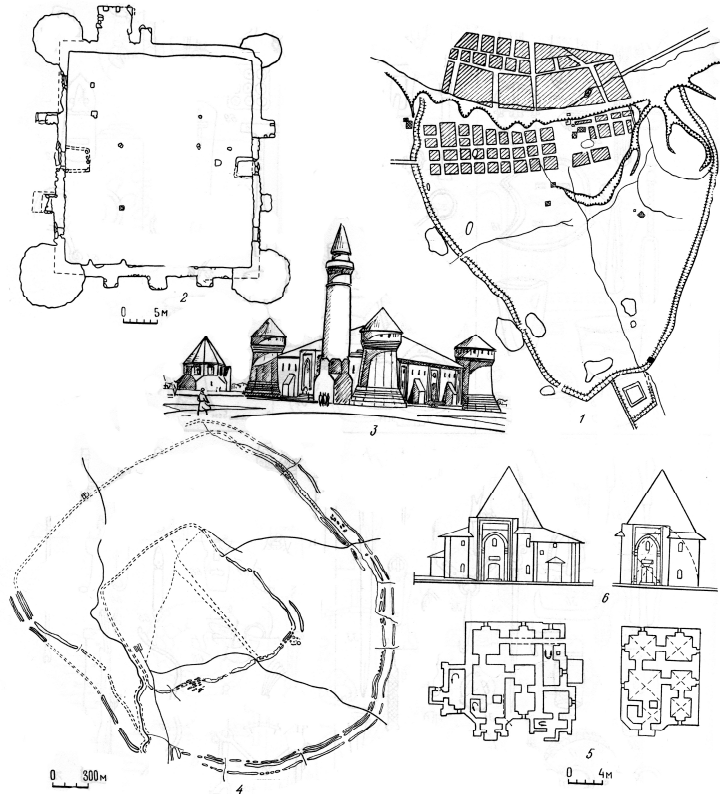


Fig. 5 Plan of Bulgar and Bilyar. IX CE (A. P. Smirnov, 1981).

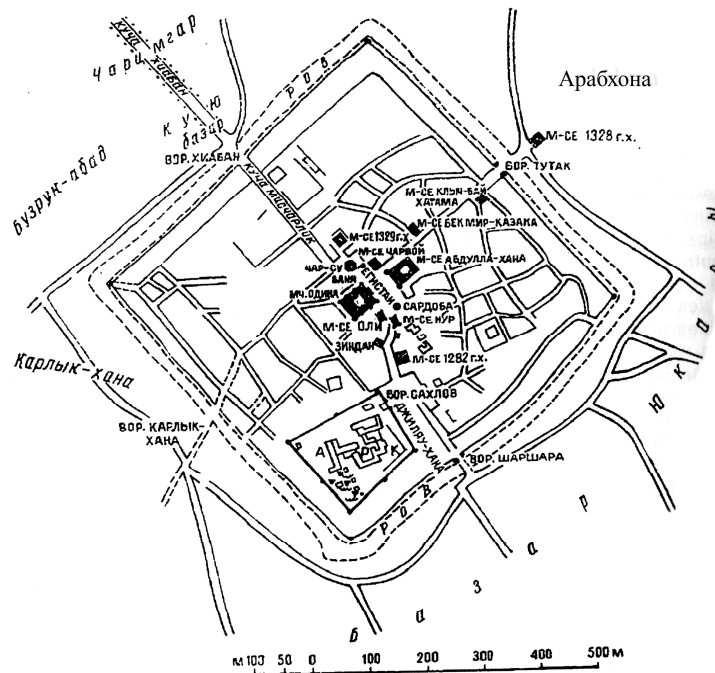


Fig. 6 Plan of Karshi site (M. E. Masson 1973).

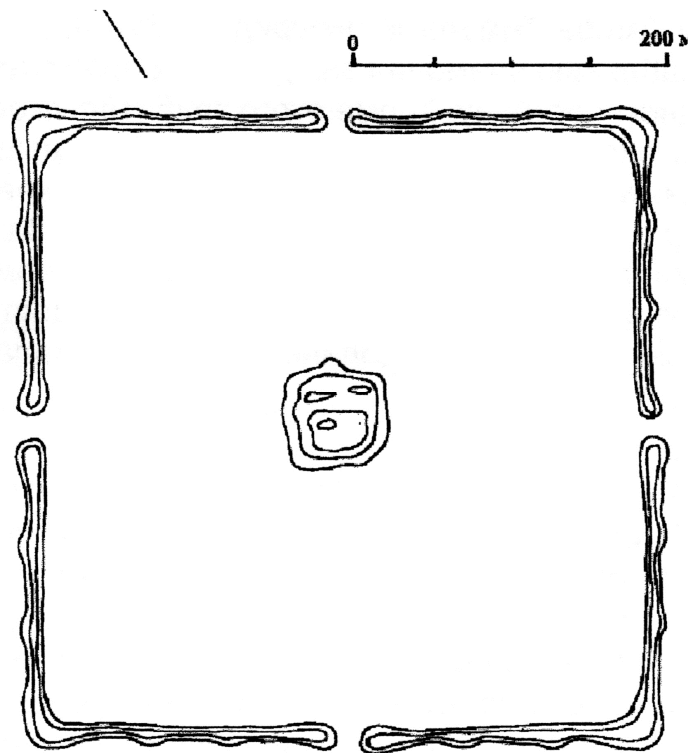


Fig. 7 Plan of Sanjir Sarai. 15 CE (A. Raimkulov 2000).



Fig. 8 Book miniature of 15th century (1486) from the *Zafarnama* of Sharaf al Din Ali Yazdi 15 CE (David J. Roxburgh Ed., *Turks: A Journey of a Thousand Years, 600-1600*, Royal Academy of Arts, London 2005).