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Title **THE CITY OF NURATA AND ANCIENT FORTRESSES AND RESIDENTIAL KURGANS LOCATED IN MOUNTAIN GORGES**

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THE CITY OF NURATA AND ANCIENT FORTRESSES AND RESIDENTIAL KURGANS LOCATED IN MOUNTAIN GORGES.

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Abstract: Ancient fortresses and residential kurgans of Nurata city as well as mountain gorges. The given article examines the planning structure and location of an ancient fortress of Nurata city with a defensive system, as well as other ancient fortresses and residential mounds located in the gorges of Nurata mountains. Furthermore, the article discusses variants of reconstruction of fortresses and residential mounds of Nurata city with defensive system and mountainous villages are analyzed.

Keywords. composition, castle, fortress, residential mounds, defensive towers, mountain gorges, ruler, spring, hill.

Introduction

Introduction. As usual, the first settlements of ancient cities were founded on the banks of abundant springs, canals or rivers. It is known, that where there is water – there is life. Farming and cattle breeding is possible if there is water, you can make gardens and plant trees. From ancient times people tried to find vast territories around abundant springs and rivers and found new settlements. The settlements around springs where water does not decrease then widened and became cities. Nurata is one of these cities. The given article is devoted to the ancient fortress of Nurata city and some other fortresses and residential mounds of mountain gorges around it.

Main part. The city of Nurata is located in Bakhiltog mountain gorges of Nurata mountain range. The cultural spiritual centre of the city has been founded in the connection of an abundant spring and ancient fortress. From ancient times Nurata was famous for its abundant spring in the mountain gorges. Nurata had two fortresses around the spring. One of them was located, as it was mentioned

by Y.Gulomov in the history of Nurata, at the ending place of western wall forming a tower in the outer eastern wall. The fortress is in the

form of a right rectangle and has seven defensive towers. The size of the fortress was not large but in spite of this the towers were located close to each other. The fortress played the role of the defensive garrison for warding off the attack of an enemy coming from the east. The space between the mountain and fortress was about two hundred meters. This measure was for storm waters in mountain gorges. For, the flood could wash out the fortress and defensive walls. If the enemy came from the east, they would face here the attack of defensive tower in the form of a sphere. If the tower was hit by the enemy, they would face the attack of those in the fortress. Because the corners and middle parts of the fortress have defensive towers. This is the reason why the fortress had so many towers. The towers of the fortress were high enough and they were used to reflect the attack of the enemy directed to the inner part, the shahristan. (pic. 1)

The second fortress was located on the mountain and was surrounded by defensive walls and towers and was used as a palace. There was information about that palace in the book by V.A.Nilsen. But he did not write the approximate history of the palace. The palace may have located in the flat square with fresh air to the east of the spring, because that place

was suitable for construction. There were narrow stairs leading to the hill. Two corners of the square were formed as semicircle in the form of a tower. This circle must have belonged to the front side corners of defensive walls belonging to the palace. There are signs of defensive walls that surrounded back side of the square. The back side wall was built in the direction of in and out in accordance with the relief direction. This means that the city had its own defensive walls on all sides. Also, from the northern part of the fortress the general defensive wall of the city was directed. This wall went up to the narrowing place of the relief towards the mountain. That general wall had seven defensive towers. The towers on the southern part of the wall are partly preserved. The researchers did not bring forward any opinions on the construction and architecture of the palace.

We think that the palace had the basis in the form of a straight quadrangle. (pic.2) The reason for it was the flatness of the square. We think that the monument had a yard. There were towers in the corners. Also, the palace was surrounded by the defensive wall. But the upper part of the palace wall was surrounded by a one and a half meter wall with designed path. In the case of threat the protectors had the opportunity to shoot the enemy from that path. They had the opportunity to observe surroundings fully because the fortress was situated on the hill. There were different rooms around the fortress yard. They consisted of the rooms of rulers, receptions, soldiers' rooms, canteens. It should be mentioned that the walls and towers which are partly preserved in the south eastern part of Nurata were built in the VI – VIII centuries were reconstructed several times in the Middle Ages. [V.A.Nilsen, 1966, page 26-b].

The roads leading to inner path of fortress walls are preserved (local people call them caves). The walls of the fortress are built in the basis of clay from raw bricks and they were permanently restored. But some scientists think, that the sizes of a raw brick are close to those of ancient Sogdiana of the VI – IV

centuries B.C. in Uzunkir, Yerkurgan, Chordara settlements.

We can see the ruins of ancient fortresses in mountain ranges of Nurata territory. One of them is Fujak fortress located in the village of Big Ej. The fortress was built between the two gorges on the hill 1 – 1,5 kilometers high. It could be reached only by two paths from both sides. When approaching to the fortress we can see, that it was built on the layered stones.

The fortress had an elliptical form and surrounded with a thick stone wall. Around the walls there were rooms built stuck from inner side.(picture 3). Up to now only fragments of those room walls are preserved. In the construction of Fujak fortress the layered stones of that hill top were used. The stones of the fortress were gathered from surroundings and brought to the construction site.

There is a spring in the place of joining of the fortress and the mountain. Its water was delivered by canals to the farming fields. It is known that those who inhabited in the fortress belonged to one clan. Their economic affairs including cattle breeding and farming were general. There were no remains of places for stock found. It proves the fact that a part of the fortress was separated for household affairs.

It should be mentioned that there is a difference between the fortification of Fujak fortress and other mountain fortresses and the city fortresses of Central Asia. In the mountains the paths inside the walls and walls decorations are not often used. In the fortresses and residential mounds with no outer walls the dwelling houses which are connected with each other replace the outer walls. That is, the outer walls of dwelling houses have the function of defensive walls. This style was used in ancient times also. In the settlement of Elkin – tepe the central hill (it must have been the remain of a palace N.D.) was surrounded by a range of dwelling houses precisely separated 15 meters. [M.E.Masson, 1951, pages 25-26]. The dwelling houses form an open space of 10 meters round the hill, there was a wide obstacle around the fortress and it served as a steady

defensive wall in the case of a war. Elkin – Kala creates the image of the early antique period city. [G.A.Pugachenkova, 1958, age 17].

The fortresses like that were identified in the land of Badakhshon by A.N.Bernshtam. the scientist considers them to belong to the period from the third century till the sixth – seventh centuries A.D. As it is mentioned by D.A.Nozilov, the inhabitants of Fudjak fortress seem to have seen much damage by the enemy at their previous settlements. Otherwise they would not have constructed such a settlement with thick firm walls in such a high place. This fortress may belong approximately to the antique period or early middle ages.

Throughout the centuries, the natural growth of the population brings to the development of stock breeding and demand of living separately by forming 3 – 4 families. But because of the threat of outer attacks they did not go far from their society. That is why they searched for the place with fresh air which is not visible from outside and easy to defend. The inhabitants of Fudjak also partly moved to the high and fresh air place inside Big Ej valley on the bank of a stream. Later the whole society left Fudjak fortress and joined those who moved away earlier and built a settlement. They created a suitable place for the village inhabitants. It turned out a residential mound with surrounding consisting of the walls of dwelling houses. They called that place a residential mound. Most of such residential mounds and fortresses in Nurata mountain ranges were studied by D.Nozilov. [D.A.Nozilov, 1991; D.A.Nozilov, 1992, ages 35 – 37]. Most of these fortresses are found at the beginning or middle places of joining Nurata mountain ranges with villages of desert areas. The reason for this is that in the desert area there was a caravan rout belonging to the Middle Ages. The main fortress of some villages were located inside the gorge. The reason for it was that eastern part of Nurata mountain range was connected to the desert area valley. There were ancient routes at that places also. It was possible to reach the upper parts of gorges through those routes. The fortresses of those villages were

located on the upper parts of the gorges. They were planned to repel attacks from the top of the mountain. There is such fortress in the village named Chavak inside the Sintab gorge. The fortress is built on the high cliff. The fortress is surrounded by a high wall. The rooms are built close to the outer walls. In the middle there was a small yard. The inhabitants of Chavak left the fortress and founded a residential mound named Hisor in the middle of the gorge. When Hisor was ruined by the robbers the people founded a fortress at the turning place of Sintab stream on a high cliff. The fortress was located on the spot between the high mountain and deep gorge. Two serpentine roads led to the fortress from downside, one of them was like a springboard with cut stones at some parts. The middle part of the fortress formed a slope. The houses of the residential mound were raising high on the mountain sides forming an amphitheatre. There were two big mosques in the residential mound, one of them was located at the top of the mound on the hill, the other was on the high cliff at the middle. The residential mound was not surrounded with a wall because the place of its location formed a high cliff connected with a mountain from the side of a stream.

It should be mentioned, that some residential mounds, in spite of being located on a cliff, were surrounded with a high wall. Including a residential mound named by the local people as “ Kumkurgon ” located on a high cliff in the Safarota mountain gorge. (picture 4). Kumkurgon forms on the basis a straight quadrangle. It was surrounded by a high wall. The reserved walls in some parts are 2,00 and 3,00 meters high and 1,00 meters wide and in some places even more than that. The residential mound contained five neighborhoods. All parts of the residential mound were connected by two main streets. Small and short paths from them led to the houses. The streets at the relief were in the slope and in some places were in the height of dwelling houses. The residential mound was entered from the gate on the northern part. Also, there was a small door on the wall opposite the main gate of the residential mound. That small

door enabled to get water from the spring in the slope and make farming on the slopes on the mountain and feed the cattle. The main gate of the castle had a small yard. That yard may have had a function of a trap for the invaders. Some parts of the outer wall were raised and had a path. That fact showed that there might have been a threat of enemy attack at that place. The construction of houses connected to each other from the outer side enabled to protect the residential mound easily.

An interesting fact was that, some villages, including Old Forish village formed a yard surrounded with a wall on a high cliff. Local people call this yard a fortress. There was no room found inside of it. The inhabitants of such villages ran away to the fortress on the high cliff in the case of a danger. When there was no threat any more, they came back to the village. It should be mentioned, that most residential mounds used large natural stones and cliff properly. That is they used them for making doorsteps, fundamentals for observing the surrounding or building basis, walls. As in the mountain area not only castles and fortresses but also dwelling houses were built according to the relief, they managed to get a harmony with environmental landscape and nature. It should be mentioned, that there was one hill at the entrance of every gorge. For example, the hill in Ukhum village was named by local people "Mushi Biyron", the hill in Big Ej village was named "Tepi Lulok", in Sintab it was named "Ishkamtuda". Y.G.Gulomov considers that those artificial hills were defensive constructions belonging to ancient or early Middle Ages and there were troops for guarding the mountain gorge. [Y.G.Gulomov, 1979, page 133].

Besides, there was an observing tower on the highest place at the entrance of every gorge. The inhabitants of the residential mound observed the surroundings from that hill. In long gorges there were several such observing towers. At the case of danger the guards immediately burnt a torch and informed each other. Those in the fortress brought women and

children to the secure place of the mountain. Then they protected the village.

As a conclusion we can say that Nurata city was founded around an abundant spring. First a palace (citadel) was built on the cliff above the spring. The palace had its own defensive wall and observing towers. With the growth of population the shahristan was appeared around the spring. The shahristan also was surrounded with a high wall. The wall had defensive towers.

The territory of Nurata had abundant springs and streams and villages appeared around them. In the desert area connected to the mountains there was a caravan route belonging to the early Middle Ages and not only caravans but also robbers passed that route. Besides them nomadic tribes in early spring passed that route with their cattle from Chordara, Yettisuv settlements and in late autumn went back home. Mountain villages often suffered from attacks. That is why mountain people founded their fortresses high on the cliffs.

Later, because of the population growth, lack of pastures for the cattle and farming lands the inhabitants of residential mounds searched for wider and flatter areas in the high gorges and partly moved there. They founded fortresses surrounded with high walls at the new places. Because of outer attacks they built defensive walls at two or three parts of the gorge. That wall reflected the attack of the enemy's horsemen. There were observing towers on the high cliffs. The existence of such constructions in the mountain villages proves the fact, that there were outer attacks till the end of the nineteenth century.

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LIST OF PICTURES :

1. The basis of central part of Nurata city (according to V.A.Nilsen)
2. The reconstruction of the ancient fortress of Nurata city (according to D.Nazilov)
3. The reconstruction of general view of Fujak fortress in Nurata mountain area (according to D.Nazilov)
4. The reconstruction of “ Kumkurgan ” residential mound in the area of Nurata mountains (D.Nazilov, the name of the second author will be sent later)

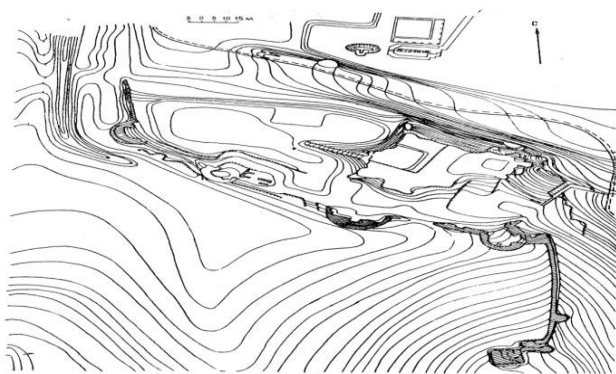
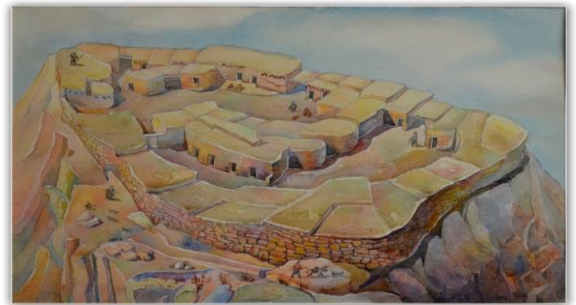


Рис. 8. План остатков крепости Нур (съемка автора).

1)



2)



3)



4)