

# Ancient Religions In Central Asia. Distribution Of Christianity In Tashkent Oas

Mirzaeva Dilorom Mashrabjon qizi

Fergana State University 2nd year student

+99891 121 22 67

[dilorommirzayeva2@gmail.com](mailto:dilorommirzayeva2@gmail.com)

**Annotation:** *The article examines the most common religions in Central Asia in the early Middle Ages and one of the least studied areas of Uzbek history - ancient Christianity, which dates back thousands of years, and the Christian monuments of the Tashkent oasis.*

**Keywords:** Central Asia, Tashkent oasis, Christianity, settlements, archeological research.

## I. INTRODUCTION

The religious beliefs of the local and immigrant peoples, who are the creators of the ancient culture of Central Asia, also play an important role in the formation and development of this culture. Religions such as paganism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Mazdakism, and Christianity have a role to play in the development of high-level culture in Central Asia before the rise of Islam. . It is noteworthy that before the spread of Islam, many religious worldviews operated simultaneously in Central Asia, and although the local population believed in several religions, none of these religions prevailed over the other. and no religion could officially rise to the level of a state religion.

## II. METHODS

From about the 5th century until the Arab rule, a large part of the population of Sogdiana, one of the central regions of Central Asia, the Hephthalites, who occupied the main part of Central Asia, converted to Christianity after the Hephthalites established a Turkish khanate in Central Asia. .

As a result of the Arab conquest in the VII-VIII centuries, in the regions where Islam was established, including the territory of Uzbekistan, such ancient religious worldviews as fire-worship, paganism, Zoroastrianism, Buddhism, Manichaeism, Mazdakism were completely lost. With the exception of these religions, Christianity has survived for centuries. This is because the founder of Christianity, Jesus Christ, is referred to in Muslim sources and religious books, including the Qur'an, as Jesus, and is acknowledged to be a historical figure. It is precisely this situation that has led to the survival of Christianity for hundreds of years after the Arabs in Islamic-dominated countries, including the territory of ancient Uzbekistan. Although Christianity was somewhat restricted during the Samanid period, it became more active during the Karakhanid and Karahitai periods.

In some Islamic countries, a certain part of the population still practices Christianity.

Many medieval written sources provide information about ancient Christianity, Christian villages, and Christian scholars in Central Asia. Some of this information is related to the ancient Shosh, that is, Christianity in the modern Tashkent oasis.

It was during this period that Ibn Hawqal and another Arab traveler, al-Istahri, reported on a Christian village called Vinkard on the western border of the Chach province.

Al-Ishtahri writes in *Kitab masalik al-mamalik*: "One border of (Chach) flows until the Chach River flows into the Khorezm Sea (probably Syrdarya - RA), the other border Safijob (Isfijob - now Sayram city of the Republic of Kazakhstan - RA) extends to the iron mines on its borders, (the other) Christians to Vincardi. The fact that the Arab scholar mentions the name of this village in the description of the boundaries of such a large region as Chach shows that this village was very large and famous in the 10th century.

Archaeological excavations at the Turtkultepa monument in the Charvak Valley of the Tashkent oasis in the 1980s have uncovered a Christian cross made of copper. The cross is thin and is designed to be worn on the chest of a Christian priest's robe. The top of the crossbar is broken. It was about 7 cm long in the upright position and 3.5 cm long in the crossbar, with small holes made at both ends for threading. The underside of the cross from the crossbar is depicted as flat, spear-shaped, against the background of two interlocking circles. This finding indicates that Christians, including priests, lived in the village that once housed the Turtkultepa monument in the Charvak Valley, and allows us to expand the geography of Christian areas. can be cycled over centuries.

Recent evidence suggests that Christians lived in the cities and villages of Central Asia, often in remote mountainous areas. Ibn Hawqal mentions the mountainous village of Vazkard in the Shavdor district of Samarkand, where the inhabitants of the village at that time wrote Christian-Syriac inscriptions on the Red Rock near the village and painted dozens of crosses. In 2007, a ceramic cross was found in the mountainous village of Gilan, 65-70 km from the town of Shakhrisabz in the Kashkadarya region, between the Gissar Mountains. In addition, the copper cross found in Turtkultepa in the Charvak Valley confirms this idea.

## III. RESULTS

Archaeological excavations in Uzbekistan in the twentieth century, including in the Tashkent oasis, have confirmed this information, but have also shed light on previously unknown aspects of the history of this religion. The ancient city of Harashket

(Qanqa monument) in Tashkent region is also one of the places where many Christians live. Archaeological excavations here have uncovered a large number of Christian artifacts. Remains of a house inhabited by Christians were also found in one of the neighborhoods of this city.

Given that these caves have been in use for hundreds of years (perhaps more than a thousand years - R.A.), it is possible that the ancient early signs of Christianity in them have disappeared or have been specifically lost in later centuries. Experts have repeatedly acknowledged that archeological finds related to the religion have not been found in the ruins of Christian buildings excavated in Central Asia and elsewhere.

#### **IV. DISCUSSION**

Archaeological excavations of ancient Christianity have revealed that the ancient Christians not only built various structures on the ground, but also built churches and other structures, often underground and in the hills. Such structures have been extensively studied by archaeologists in ancient Rome (Byzantium) and Armenia.

According to the sources, during the marches of Ismail Somoni to Talas in 280 / 893-894, the Christian churches operating in the cities of Talas and Mirki were converted into Muslim mosques.

The conversion of churches into Muslim mosques was not used as one of the main directions of the Khilafah's policy, but only in places where conditions were required. Built in the late Middle Ages as a Christian monastery, the company is thought to have been converted into a Muslim mosque.

Archaeological excavations of ancient Christianity have revealed that the ancient Christians not only built various structures on the ground, but also built churches and other structures, often underground and in the hills. Such structures have been extensively studied by archaeologists in ancient Rome (Byzantium) and Armenia.

#### **V. CONCLUSION**

In short, archeological excavations in the Tashkent oasis provide some insight into the history of ancient Christianity in the region. Of all the religions that prevailed in the country in the early Middle Ages, Christianity has a special significance, as its influence and importance on the way of life of the population increased significantly during this period. These studies contribute to the study of the early medieval history of Central Asia.

#### **VI. REFERENCES:**

1. Anboev I.A. Ancient Nestorian treasure (?) In the city of Tashkent // Bulletin of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan. Series "Social Sciences". 1959. No. 6.
2. Atakhanov T.M., Khmel'nitsky S.G. About the work of the Shaartuz archaeological detachment in 1968-1970. // Archaeological work in Tajikistan. Issue H. M., 1973.
3. Bartold V.V. About Christianity in Turkestan in the pre-Mongol period (about the Semirechye inscriptions) // Soch., T. II. Part 2. M., 1964.
4. Bogomolov G.I. About Christianity in Chach // From the history of ancient cults of Central Asia. Christianity. Tashkent, 1995.
5. Bolshakov O.G. Medieval city of the Middle East. M., 1984.
6. Masson M.E. Akhangeran. Archaeological and topographical sketch. Tashkent, 1953.
7. Nikitin A.B. Christianity in Central Asia (antiquity and the Middle Ages) // Votochny Turkestan and Central Asia. M., 1984.
8. Raimkulov A.A. About artificial caves in the territory of Central Asia // Sogd in the system of cultural relations of Central Asia (Abstracts). Samarkand, 1999.
9. Raimkulov A.A. Cave architectural structures of Central Asia // Study of the cultural heritage of the East. Materials int. conf. SPb., 1999.
10. Shapovalova V.V. Rostovtsev O.M., Askarov M.A. Report on the work done at the Karkhan monument for 1991-1994 // Archive of the Institute of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, f. 7, 01, d. 147.