

Social and Political Life in Ustrushana in The Ancient and Middle Ages

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Abstract

It is known that it is not possible to give a complete description of the external and internal political events that took place in Ustrushana in the early Middle Ages, because the information in the ancient written sources that serve as a basis for the research is extremely scarce. Therefore, since the political life of the studied period is a continuation of the events and incidents that occurred in antiquity, there is a need to cover the political processes of this period in detail.

Introduction

According to early Greek sources, people called Sakas (Scythians) lived in this region in the first millennium BC. At the same time, it is also known that the inhabitants of the region were called Khorezms, Sughds, Margians, and Parkans, depending on the name of the place where they lived [1].

According to ancient Iranian epigraphic sources, in the centuries of Greek and Roman historians, around 546-539 BC, the territories of Central Asia up to the Syr Darya basin were conquered by the Iranian Ahmanids. As a part of Central Sughd, the territory of Ancient Ustrushana was under the control of the XII satrapy of the Ahmani Empire, which took the area "from the Bactrians to the Eglar land" under its control. Written sources state that 7 cities were built by Cyrus II to strengthen the northern borders of the empire, and 2 of these cities bear the name of Cyrus, the first being Cyropolis and the second being Gaza [2].

In the III-II centuries BC, the Greek-Macedonian troops led by Ayuleksandr the Macedonian continued their military campaigns in Central Asia after the Sughd oasis in Ustrushana. After subduing Marokand and its surrounding villages, Greek-Macedonian troops marched through Ustrushana toward Sirdarya. In the works of the ancient author Justin, it is mentioned that Alexander built 7 cities in Bactria and Sogdiya, one of them was the city of Alexandria Eskhata, which was built on the Yaxart (Syr Darya) river, and it was completed in seventeen days, and the circumference of the city walls was six thousand paces. Scientists say that this city was built on the site of the present city of Khojand. However, Professor M.M. Lutov said that the city of Alexandria Eskhata was not built in the exact place of the current Khojand, but near Bekobod on the Syrdarya [6].

According to the ancient author Arrian in his work "Alexander's Campaign", seven cities in Ustrushana revolted at this time, and Greek-Macedonian troops surrendered Gaza and four cities nearby in two days. One of the largest, most important political and administrative cities in Ustrushana faces Kiropolga. The army faced great resistance from well-fortified fortifications and many thousands of fighting defenders, then formed a special force and broke into the city. 8,000 natives of Kiropol will be exterminated. 18,000 able-bodied men stormed the fort, but they too surrendered after a day's siege due to a lack of water [7].



In the "History of Alexander the Great" by the ancient writer Quintus Curtius Rufus, it is stated that Alexander was seriously injured during the capture of the city of Kiropol on the northern border of Ustrushana. Ptolemy says that the city of Cyropolis itself surrendered. Aristotle, on the contrary, says that it was taken by battle and that Alexander killed all those who were captured. Ptolemy goes on to say that Alexander distributed all the captives to his soldiers and ordered them to be kept in chains until he left Asia [9].

According to Quintus Curtius Rufus, after Alexander destroyed six cities, he headed towards the seventh city - Mamakena. He notes as follows: "The Mamacenans vow not to surrender the city, and Alexander, enraged at this, goes on the offensive, ordering his generals Meliogres and Perdikkas to besiege the city immediately. No city had ever withstood a siege so heroically. After the city of Mamakena was dug out from under the defensive walls and a part of it fell, the Macedonians entered the city. The city will be conquered and destroyed" [1].

N.N. According to Negmatov, those who revolted against Alexander were the inhabitants of the cities of Kiropol, Gaza, Baga, Kurkat, Sabat, Shavkat, and Khovost located in the plain part of Ustrushana. A.A. According to Gritsina, "...one of these cities was Khontep (Sobot)". The beginning of the rebellion against the invaders at the agreed time in seven cities, the gathering of Saka troops to help them behind the Syr Darya and in the steppes up to Marokand, and the simultaneous rise of the resistance movement led by Spitamen in Marokand, show that the settled and nomadic population fought together against a common enemy based on an agreement [2].

After the death of Alexander the Great, the vast lands from the Tigris River to the Syrdarya were under the control of the Seleucids. The issue of ancient Ustrushana being a part of this state or not is one of the problems that cause deep scientific discussions and debates. At the end of the 3rd century BC, the Seleucid Demetrius organized a major military campaign against the attack of the Sakas (Syrdarya) on the Greek garrisons, where the influence of the Seleucids was significantly stronger in Ustrushana in ancient times. Alexandria Eschata, a city on the banks of the Syrdarya, was a stronghold of the Seleucids at that time. So, in 312, Ustrushana was incorporated into the Seleucid state along with almost all the cultural lands of Central Asia. It is very difficult to create a complete picture of the history of the peoples of Central Asia, including Ustrushana, because most of the given information is short and the development of historical events is very complicated.

In 250 BC, the Arsak dynasty revolted and separated from the Seleucids and founded the Parthian state. During this period, Ustrushana was subject to him only nominally, i.e. it only paid a certain amount of customs and taxes. In early antiquity, Ustrushana retained some aspects of its independence even though it was under the political control of the Seleucids and Greco-Bactrian states. In particular, the heads of the country were appointed not by representatives of the ruling state, but by local nobles [3].

According to Chinese sources, in the 2nd half of the 5th century, the Kang state was disintegrated, and small states such as Shosh (Shi), Samarkand (Kan), Maimurg (Mi), Shahrisabz (Shi), Kattakurgan (Xe), Ustrushona (Tsao) were formed on its territory. This area was gradually incorporated into the Ephthalite state. According to Tan-shu, during this period, Ustrushana was under the influence of the Davan state, whose capital was Ershi. The



emergence of Ustrushana as an independent country among the above-mentioned small states was a historical necessity of its time.

In 353 AD, the Khionites invaded Ustrushana. Dizak is one of the first cultural oases conquered by the Khionites. During this period, not only in Ustrushana but in the whole of Central Asia between the two rivers, there was no military force that could adequately resist the Khionites. From the 70s of the 4th century, the Khionites established their rule in Central Asia. In a wide region stretching from the banks of the Syrdarya to the Amudarya basin, the powerful state of the Khionis settled and this state has been active for more than 120 years. The middle of the 5th century is considered to be the period when the Ustrushana country began its official activities during the reign of the Khionids [4].

From the 20s of the 5th century, nomadic Tohars began to enter Central Asia. Since these nomads were led by a ruler named Kidar, they are mentioned in written sources as Kidars and Kidaris. During the reign of the Kidaris, Ustrushana remained part of the Khioni state. Because the Kidarians entered Central Asia from the lower reaches of the Syrdarya and occupied its southern regions. But its central, northern, and eastern lands were ruled by the Khionis until the conquest of the Hephthalites in Central Sughd, Ustrushana, Fergana, and Choch-Ilaq.

The Ephthalites, formed in the second half of the 5th century and the beginning of the 6th century, marched to Tochariston in 479-510. At the end of the 5th century, Ustrushana became part of the Hephthalite state. According to N.N. Negmatov, the subordination of the Ustrushana rulers to the Hephthalites was limited only to the payment of tribute. The Ephthalite kings did not interfere in the internal affairs of the Ustrushana Afshins, such as government management, economic management, and social and spiritual life [5].

From the beginning of the 7th century AD, Ustrushana operated as a nominal state under the Turkish khanate. During this period, there were more than fifteen small local governments and officials in Central Asia. Their economic and political management system is left under the control of local rulers, and the Turks are limited to collecting tribute from them. The rule of the Turkish khanate over Ustrushana was weak, and the Ustrushans did not pay tribute to the treasury of the khanate.

After the conquest of Iran by the Sassanids as a result of the violent attacks of the Arab Caliphate in the 7th century, the five-century reign of the Sassanids came to an end. After Khurasan fell into the hands of the Arabs, in 21/642-23/644, the Arab conquerors rushed to the other side of the Amudarya - Movarounnahr, in search of large booty. Even this action was given a divine tone [6].

The first appearance of Arabs in the territory of Ustrushana corresponds to the period when the governor of Khorasan, Said ibn Usman, conquered Movarounnahr during the reign of Caliph Muawiya (41/661-61/680). According to Abu Hafs al-Nasafi, in 43/663, the army led by Said ibn Usman marched towards Ustrushana after the conquest of Samarkand. Qusam ibn Abbas (2/624 - 57/677), the cousin of Muhammad, was also part of this army. Qusam ibn Abbas died when the army arrived at Shirakas, one of the villages of Ustrushana, and stayed there for a few days. Then they sent the coffin of Qusam ibn Abbas to the city (Samarkand) [7].

The second Arab campaign to Ustrushana was carried out under the command of Muhallab ibn Sufra (78/697-82/701). This army up to Khojand loots the city and its surroundings. During the reign of Yazid ibn Muhallab (82/701-85/704) and his son Muhammad, the next viceroy of



Khurasan, Buttam province was conquered. But after some time the inhabitants of Buttam revolted and expelled the garrison left by the Arabs. Al-Balazuri's work describes the first raids of the Arabs to the region of Buttam and Ustrushana in the last quarter of the 7th century, and the conquest efforts of Qutayba ibn Muslim al-Bahili (85/704-96/715), the Ummavi governor of Khurasan at the beginning of the 8th century. During this period, Buttam was reconquered by the forces of Jahma ibn Zahr, from where a large amount of wealth, including gold articles and dates, was transported [8].

Ibn Hawqal and al-Istari stated that during this period, attacks were made not only on the residential areas of Ustrushana but also on towns and villages in the mountain and sub-mountain regions. Qutayba ibn Muslim fought with the men wearing black clothes in the fortress of Mink, besieged al-Afshin. Some experts suspect that the medieval authors made a mistake, confusing al-Afshin, who was besieged in Mink, with Haidar al-Afshin, the prince of Ustrushana, who served under Caliph Mu'tasim in the 20s and 30s of the 9th century. The authors were not mistaken, but Afshin, who was besieged in Mink, was the ancestor of Haidar al-Afshin, another ruler of Ustrushana [9].

After conquering Samarkand in 94/712-713, Qutayba ibn Muslims began marching to Ustrushana, Tashkent, and Ferghana. A coalition consisting of the Turkish Khaganate, the eastern part of Sughd that did not obey the Arabs, Choch, and Fergana was formed against the Arab occupation. Devashtich, who considered himself a "claimant to the throne of Samarkand", became the head of this alliance from Sugd. The account of these events is in document A-14, found in the Mugh archive, "Treaty of Samarkand" in 94/712, the surrender of Gurak to the Arabs, the initiative of Panch governor Devashtich in the fight against the Arabs, the fact that he sent his ambassador Fatufarn to Choch and Fergana, and through them to the Turk Khagan, Fatufarn to Choch. The content of the letter was reflected in the fact that Ustrushana passed into the hands of the Arabs and his way was blocked during his return to Fatufarn Panch. Similarly, in Fatufarn's letter, he informed that the entire Ustrushana province had been handed over (to the enemy), and because of this, Choch had returned without being able to return. It can be concluded that when Fatufarn left Devashtich for Choch, these regions were still independent. It was dangerous for Fatufarn to return with letters of reply, as the Arabs had established control over Ustrushana in this period and moved towards Ferghana.

The first major battle of the Arabs in Ustrushana was with the army of the Turkish Khaganate near Dizak - on the river Ilonotti. Qutayba ibn Muslim, who won this battle, fought with the "black-clothed men" (laks) of Minq. Qutayba's army destroyed the protective wall of Dizak, and cities such as Burnamad, Zomin, Shaghar, and Sabot could not withstand the attack of the army. Ustrushana surrendered, and the precious jewels and gold were taken to the center of the caliphate. By 95/713-714, Qutayba ibn Muslim organized a march to Shosh, and a year later, he planned to march toward Kashgar and China [10].

In 105/723, the viceroy of Khurasan, Sa'id ibn Amir al-Kharashi, stopped in Ustrushana on his way back from Ferghana and made a peace agreement at the expense of a certain amount. Nasr ibn Sayyar, who was appointed to the viceroyalty of Khorasan in 120/738, made two campaigns to Movaraunnahr. According to historical sources, Nasr ibn Sayyar's army against Kursul and the Turks included representatives from Bukhara, Samarkand, Kesh, and Ustrushana (Ustrusana). When he arrives at Ustrushana, Ustrushana's amulet Abarakharra presents him



with gifts. After Nasr ibn Sayyar appointed Muhammad ibn Khalid al-Azdi as his deputy in Ferghana, he left a large number of idols in Ustrushana on his way back [11].

In 131/749, the Chinese marched on Ustrushana, and as a result, Ustrushana became a battleground between the Arabs and the Tang dynasty. Ustrushana was completely conquered by the Arabs after the Chinese were relieved at the Battle of Talas in 133/751 against the Chinese Tang Empire, united with the forces of the Qarluq Caliphate [12].

The socio-political way of life of Ustrushana in the later period, like other places in Central Asia, mainly consists of the history of the struggle against the conquests of the Arab caliphate, as well as the history of mutual diplomatic relations with them. In this period, Ustrushana Afshin was Kovus, the father of Haidar al-Afshin, the famous army commander in the history of the Abbasid caliphate. The Arab conquerors accuse Kovus of violating the treaty between the caliphate and Ustrushana, and of paying less tribute to al-Ma'mun's treasury [13].

According to the researcher M.H. Pardaev, the Afshin dynasty, which ruled Ustrushana during the Somonites period in Movarounnahr, was terminated in 280/893. The term Ustrushana, written in the written sources of the later period, began to be used as a geographical name for a specific province, not a political entity. So, Ustrushana received the status of a province within the Somonites and subsequent states [14].

After the end of the Samanid power in the 10th century, the Karakhanid state in the second half of the 10th century owned a large area from the upper and middle reaches of the Amudarya to Ettisuv, and in the east to the Torim River. Sotuq Bugra Khan's conversion to Islam paved the way for the territorial expansion of the Karakhanids. In 386/996, the Karakhanids completely occupied the territory of Ustrushana. By 524/1130, this state had become subordinate to the Seljuk ruler Sultan Sanjar, and the political administration of the lands under their control had passed completely into the hands of the Seljuks. The Seljuks (428/1037-699/1300), who appeared in the north of Movarounnahr at the end of the 10th century, took complete control of today's Central Asia by the beginning of the 12th century [15].

During the Seljuk period, the territory of Ustrushana became the scene of great bloody events. At the beginning of 524/1130, one of the supporters of Sultan Sanjar, Khaqan Mahmudkhan ibn Muhammad suffered a great loss from the Karakhitas near Khojand and wrote to Sultan Sanjar asking for help. In July 536/1141, Khurasan troops marched through Amudarya to Samarkand, and Sultan Sanjar began a military campaign against the Karakhitas with a large army [16].

The main reason for the conflict between the Seljuks and the Karakhitas was the disobedience of the Qarluqs to the Karakhanids. Therefore, the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar forced the Qarluqs to leave Movarounnahr. The Qarluqs asked for permission to live in this area and offered to the ruler to serve in his army in exchange for an annual contribution of 5,000 horsemen, camels, and 70,000 sheep. But the Sultan rejects the offer of the Qarluqs. Gorkhan Elyuy Dashi, the ruler of the Karakhitans, one of the Chinese tribes who lived in present-day East Turkestan, accepted the offer of the Qarluqs. As a result, the union of the Karakhites and the Karakhites became a great force against Sultan Sanjar. After that, Gurkhan sent a letter to Sultan Sanjar, asking him to forgive the disobedience of the Qarluqs to Mahmud Khan. But his letter received an insulting reply from the Seljuk ruler. This event is the cause of the Qatawan War [17].



After Rukniddin Mahmud Khan was defeated by the Karachitans, he asked for help from the Sultan of Seljuks, Sanjar. The army of the Seljuks consisted of Khorasanites, Seystanites, Mozandarites, Karakhan emirs, Mahmud Khan's troops, and Bukhara warriors led by the Oli Moza family. In July 535/1141, Sanjar with an army of 100,000 (according to other sources, 70,000) warriors crossed the Amudarya and went to Samarkand. The army of the head of the Karakhitai state, Gurkhan Elyuy Dashi, consisted of more than 100 thousand warriors composed of Kidans, Chinese and some Turkic peoples (an army of 50,000 people of the Garluqs went to their side). Some historians estimate the number of Gurkhan's soldiers at 300 thousand, but this may be an exaggeration. Most likely, the number of Karachinese and allied troops did not exceed 50,000. Even assuming that 150,000 soldiers were gathered on the battlefield in total, this would be the largest battle of that period in terms of the number of participants. For example, the number of soldiers in the battles of Antokia, Dirrakhi, and Hittin did not exceed 50,000, and in the battles of Malazgirt and Didgori, 100,000. According to the historian Ibn al-Asir, Sanjar gathered 100,000 horsemen against Karachitans. It took 6 months to review the fighters. Russian historian Lev Gumilyov writes that "the best warriors of the Muslim world gathered here, armed with the best weapons of that time, who fought against the Greeks and the Crusaders" [18].

The combined army of the Karakhanids and the Seljuks and the army of the Karakhitans clashed in the Qatvan valley on the eastern side of the Gubdin mountain in the Ustrushana region, on the banks of the Dargom River. In this battle, the Seljuk Sultan Sanjar was defeated and went to Khurasan, and because of this, both the Qatvan fortress and the village of Shirakas became an open cemetery. Husamuddin al-Sadr al-Shahid, the uncle of the famous Hanafi jurist Burhanuddin Mahmud al-Bukhari, died here in a battle with the enemies. Husamuddin al-Sadr al-Shahid was born in the city of Marv in 473/1090. According to Al-Kafavi, he taught the most mature jurists and judges of his time. As-Sadr al-Shahid was the chairman of Bukhara for twenty years, that is, from 512/1118-19 until he died in 536/1141. His fame as "al-Shahid" is related to his death in the Battle of Qatwan between the troops of Sultan Sanjar and the Karakhitas in 536/1141 [19].

The number of Muslim fighters who died in the Qatavon steppe is indicated in sources as 30,000, 70,000, and even 100,000 in some places. All of them were declared martyrs and buried in the eastern steppe of Samarkand. Ibn al-Asir wrote about this: "There was no bigger battle in the history of Islam, and there were no more people killed in Khurasan." He said that the Karakhitas and the Karluqs, "who are among the strongest fighters," filled the banks of the Dargom River with the corpses of the defeated. Sanjar lost about 30,000 soldiers, and his relatives, family, and many fighters were captured [20].

Elyuy Dashi stayed on the battlefield of Katvan Valley for about 3 months, then went to Karmana. Here he announced the establishment of a new state, the Karakhitai State (Western Liao). The Battle of Katvan opened the way for nomads to enter Central Asia. After the Battle of Katvan, Elyuy Dashi takes complete control of the territories between the Syrdarya and Amudarya. Later, one of the main rivals, Khorezmshah, also subdues Otsiz and forces him to pay tribute [21].

At the end of the 12th century and the beginning of the 13th century, the rule of the Seljuks completely ended. Khorezm takes the place of the main state of Islam in the region. The



subsequent history of the population of Ustrushana is related to the rule of the Khorezmshahs and the invasion of the Mongols.

According to the sources, on the eve of the Mongol invasion, Khorezm was one of the emerging large states, similar to the medieval Western feudal monarchy. At a time when Khorezmshah was strengthening his state in Movarounnahr, in the first half of the 13th century, the Mongolian state was established as a result of the conquest wars of Genghis Khan and his successors [22].

During the rule of Sultan Sanjar (512-552/1118-1157), Movarounnahr was subject to the Seljuks for some time, and to the Karakhanids from the thirties of the 12th century. The Karakhanid state was ended when Muhammad Khorezmshah completely occupied Movarounnahr in 609/1212 [23].

In the 12th-13th centuries, the invasion of Mongols in Ustrushana went down in history as it caused great destruction and cruelty. It turns most of the settlements of Northern Ustrushana and its capital into ruins. The names of places such as Mirasmanda, Kharakana, Shaghar, Bulsan, Khasht, Minq, and Yorkas mentioned in the sources of the 12th century do not appear in the sources of the 13th-14th centuries. It is a historical fact that for the Mongol conquerors, it was more important to acquire new pastures than to restore and improve any city or village. Already, in the sources related to the history of the Mongol invasion, the name Ustrushana is not found as an oasis [24].

It should be noted that in the period after the Mongol invasion, when the two largest cities of Ustrushana - Bunjiket and Zomin - lost their importance, Oratepa gradually began to gain a leading position. This land became the center of one of the lands of the Timurid dynasty, and many luxurious buildings were built. In the second half of the 18th century, under the leadership of a governor from the Hundred Tribes of Uzbeks, the power of Oratepa increased even more. Zomin, Dizak, Yom, and other fortified strongholds will be included in this country [25].

In conclusion, it can be said that when the ancient history of Ustrushana is mentioned in Greco-Roman sources, the given historical information causes many misunderstandings and controversial and suspicious thoughts in the text. In most of the sources, the same event and the activities of the people there are interpreted differently. Nevertheless, the works of Greco-Roman historians serve as primary sources for the study of the history of Ustrushana.

The information given in the Chinese and Arab sources allows for making sufficiently important, scientific clarifications about the political, economic, and cultural life of the Ustrushana country. These works contain valuable information about the historical-geographical location of Ustrushana, the customs of the population, the economy, the struggle of Ustrushana against the Arab invasion, and the genealogy of the Afshins.

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