

SOME REVIEWS ABOUT THE NORTHERN BORDER OF BACTRIA

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ANNOTATION

The article describes the ongoing discussions of scientists about the northern border of Ancient Bactria, the problem of determining the boundaries of this historical and cultural area as a result of archaeological research in recent years.

Keywords: Northern Bactria, Oks (Amu Darya), Gazaba, Iron Gate, Uzundara, Takhti Sangin, Paretaka, Bubakena.

INTRODUCTION

The article discusses in detail many assumptions and views on the northern administrative boundaries of the historical and cultural region, which is a very important topic, emphasizing the importance of the historical geography of ancient Bactria. Many years of scholarly discussion and controversy have been cleared up.

MAIN PART

Ancient Bactria is a large historical and cultural region and occupies a special place in the history of the peoples of Central Asia. Interest in the population, culture and history, the territorial location and geographical boundaries of ancient Bactria began in the 20th century.

MM Dyakonov in the 1950s, after excavations in the Termez area, introduced the concept of "Northern Bactria" into archeology (1956: 22). This description of the scientist includes the modern territories of the coast and foothills of Surkhandarya, Sherabaddarya, Sangardakdarya, Khojaipaksai, Kofirmikhondarya, Tupalagdarya and Amu Darya (Shaydullaev: 7).

According to the scientist, northern Bactria is divided into two parts - southern Uzbekistan and southwestern Tajikistan.

Based on this toponymy, place names of north-eastern and north-western Bactria also arose. The origin of the toponymy of northwestern Bactria led to a significant expansion of the territorial boundaries of northern Bactria and the inclusion of the southeastern region of Turkmenistan from Kelif to Kerki and even Chardzhui (Stavisky: 41).

B.Ya. Stavisky actively involved new archaeological and epigraphic data to solve the problem of the northern borders of Bactria and showed that during the Kushan period the region from south to north and from the Amu Darya to the Hissar ridge was a single historical and cultural region.

According to the American scientist R. Frey, Bactria is the cultural center of a large region surrounded by mountains in the north, east and south, the Amu Darya, which irrigates the lands of the region, divides it into two parts: the southern, i.e. Afghan Turkestan, and northern, right-bank, i.e. Tajikistan.

A number of scholars disagree with this point of view. Based on ancient sources, they believe that the above-mentioned area belonged to Sogdiana and that the northern border of Bactria passed through the Amu Darya-Oks (Sagdullaev, Eshov: 24).

In his thesis, K. Rapen put forward the idea that Alexander and Roxana from Macedonia had a wedding in Gazab in the Kyzyltepa territory of modern Surkhandarya, and that the southern border of Sogdiana extended to the Amu Darya (2018: 257; Kholiyarov: 80). E.V. Rtveladze notes that Alexander the Great married

Roxana, the daughter of the Bactrian aristocrat Oksiart-Vakhshuvar, in the Boysun Mountains, at the famous Iron Gate (2002: 13).

According to Claude Rapin, the southern border of Sogdiana began at the junction of Vakhsh and Pyanj near the settlements of Amu Darya and Takhti-Sangin (<https://fergana.ru/articles/112016/>).

The scientist believes that Termez and Takhti-Sangin are part of Sogdiana, Takhti-Sangin is Alexandria on the Oksa, the Iron Gate near Derbent (now a village in the Baysun district of the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan) not as a border 100 km from the Amu Darya, but as an important intersection of many roads in the central part of Sogdiana justifies its necessity (Figure 1).

From the Achaemenid and Hellenistic periods, fortresses were built in this mountainous region to protect the nomads living in the border areas of the oasis (especially in the Uzundara fortress, where excavations were carried out under the leadership of Nigora Dvurechenskaya).

Of course, in the Kushan period (1st-3rd centuries AD), the situation changed radically as a result of the nomadic invasion. This led to a complete rethinking of the region's political geography: at the time, the Iron Gate was indeed part of the Kushan Empire, which stretched from the south of modern Uzbekistan to northern India, and from central and northern Sogdiana as part of the nomadic Kang confederation.



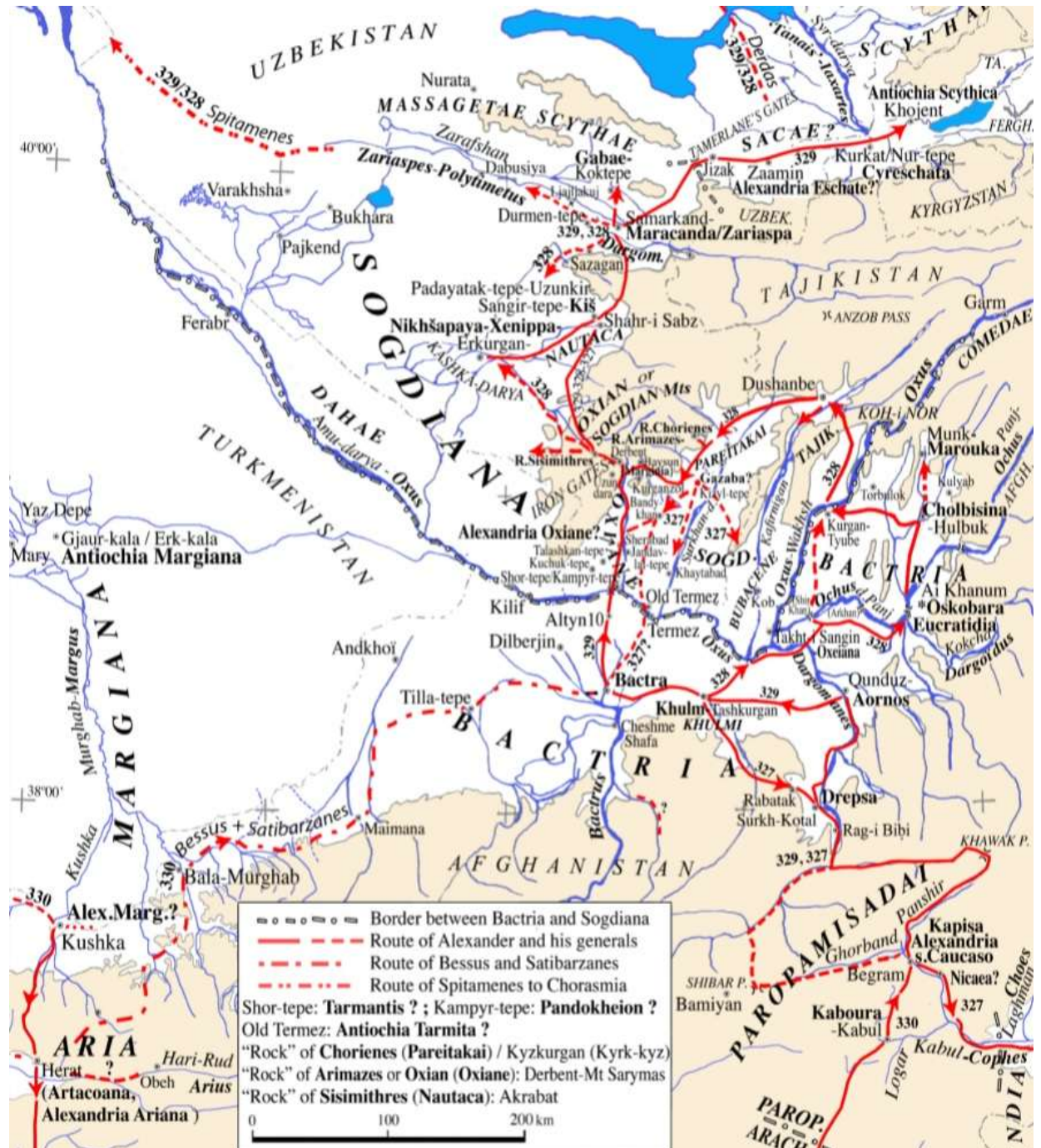


Figure-1. A source: <https://fergana.ru/articles/112016/#gallery-2>

IV Pyankov points out that in ancient written sources Oks was considered the border between Bactria and Sogdia, but there was also information that fundamentally contradicted him. This data is based on two different assumptions. According to one of them, the southwestern part of the Hissar ridge and the area between the Amu Darya differed from Bactria, but at the same time were clearly separated from Sogdiana.

According to the second hypothesis, this area was directly named "Bactria" (2008: 77). According to some researchers, the border between Bactria and Sogdiana runs along the Amu Darya and Surkhandarya rivers. There are also suggestions that this border passed through the Vakhsh and Amu Darya.

In discussions about the northern borders of Bactria, I.V. Pyankov points out, based on a careful analysis of ancient written sources, that the opinions of a number of Bactrian researchers that this is a region located only on the left bank of the Oks do not correspond to reality.

According to him, "Bactria" (in the sense of a purely geographical term) originally meant Balkh oasis. Later, its meaning expands: "Bactria" and "Bactrians" in ancient times meant the kingdom of Zoroaster, "the peoples who fought against Cyrus", the state of the Achaemenids, Alexander the Great, the Seleucids and, finally, the Scythians.

According to I.V. Pyankov, the idea that the Amu Darya Oaks is the border of Bactria and Sogdiana arose as a result of generalizing the position of Alexander the Great in Kelif (southeastern Turkmenistan), as well as in the upper reaches of the river, in Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

This border of Bactria was rebuilt mainly on the basis of data from Alexander the Great, historians of Macedonia. There are no written sources indicating the northern borders of Bactria before Alexander the Great and after his campaigns.

A.Zh. Yakhshiev, based on data from written sources, by the end of the third quarter of the 4th century. BC. the territories on the right bank of the Amu Darya - the Surkhandarya region of Uzbekistan and southern Tajikistan - were included in Bactria (2002: 21).

N. Dvurechenskaya carried out research at the Uzundara monument in the foothills of the village of Sairob, in the past it served as a road connecting Bactria and Sogdiana, and the artifacts found in the monuments of the times of Alexander the Great serve as an important source of Hellenic culture. Since the fortress was a strong defensive fortress on the border of ancient Bactria and Sogdiana. This proved that the northern border of Bactria passed through the Baysun mountains, and not through the ancient Amu Darya (2018: 19-21).

CONCLUSIONS

In our opinion, arguments about the northern borders of Bactria can be further clarified by the fact that a number of researchers believe that Bactria is a region located only on the left bank of the Oks, and no archaeological artifacts belonging to Sogdiana have been found in Northern Bactria, especially Surkhandarya. did not have.

In short, the ancient roads passing through Northern Bactria and their directions (from Balkh through the Amu Darya to Temirdarvoz through Guzar to Keshu), the location of provinces and fortresses (Paretak, Bubaken, Sisimitra, Gabaza, the Brankhid city, etc.) were resolved in as much as possible.

Based on this and the above data, in the middle of the 4th century BC, the territories on the right bank of the upper reaches of the Amu Darya - the Surkhandarya oasis and partially the lands of southern Tajikistan - became part of Bactria. But it is not yet known what these regions were called in those days.

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