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THE ACTIVITIES OF SOGDIANS IN ZHETYSU IN THE EARLY MIDDLE AGES

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Abstract: This article is an analysis of scientific literature and sources revealing the historical and geographical location of Zhetysu. Also, the article provides information about the resettlement of Sogdians in Zhetysu and their activities. As it is known that Zhetysu is called differently such as Zhetysu, Semirechye, Jetisuw, Jetysu, Jeti-su, Jity-su, Yedi-su and etc in different sources. This geographical name represents the north-west of Kazakhstan and the southeast of Kyrgyzstan and the debates on the use of this geographical term in relation to this region still continues. There is a range of questions such as which geographical names are better to use for these territories, and what names had been used in historical sources to represent these lands? Which names were mentioned in the written sources of Chinese, Ancient Turkish, Sogdian, Arabic-Persian, and other languages? Is it possible to resolve the issue by answering such questions? Above mentioned questions will be answered in this article.

Keywords: Semirechye, A.G.Vlangali, K.Baipakov, M.Eleuov, the country of Wusun, "S-yu" ("Western countries").

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INTRODUCTION

Zhetysu (Semirechye) has been playing an important role as one of the most important historical and geographical regions in the life of Central Asian people. Particularly in the first Middle Ages, Sogdians and Turks lived together in that region and this place is important to highlight the unknown aspects of the history of people of the region. It is

well known that today's geographical point of view, Zhetysu is used as a compact name for the Ili, Chu, and Talas rivers and several rivers which flow into Balhash lake. In general, this geographical name represents the north-west of Kazakhstan and the southeast of Kyrgyzstan and the debates on the use of this geographical term in relation to this region still continues.

LITERATURE REVIEW

In this research, "The state structure of the Western Turkic Kaganate" by G.Babayarov, "Ancient Ispidzhab", "Medieval urban culture of southern Kazakhstan and Semirechye (VI - early XIII centuries)" by K.M.Baypakov, "Cities of Kendzhida-Kendzhe district" by K.Baypakov, "Sughd colonization of Semirechye" by A.N.Bernshtam, "Collection of information about the peoples who lived in Central Asia in ancient times" by N.I.Bichurin (Iakinf), "Pre-Islamic Taraz coins" by M.Eleuov, G.Babayarov, A.Kubatin, "Name of the Redemption Turkistan" by M.Is'hakov, "Devonian Dictionary of the Turkish (Devonu-lug'at it-turk)" by Kashghariy Mahmud, "Genealogy and chronology of West Turkic and Turgesh kagans of the 6th - 8th centuries" by S.G.Klyashtorny, "Notes on the Early Islamic Road Builder to China" by P. Lurye, "Soʻdlularʻn Orta Asyaʻdaki Faaliyetleri" by M.Mori, "The Sogdian inscriptions of Kultobe" by N.Sims-Williams, F. Grenet, "Sogdian traders: a history" by Vaissiʻre E. de la and other sources are used efficiently.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This is qualitative research using the content analysis approach. More than twenty works are used to explain the theme called the activities of Sogdians in Zhetysu in the early Middle Ages. Besides that,

the researcher had used journals, manuscripts and articles to collect data related to the research.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

According to some source, this historic-geographical region is conditionally called by the researchers as "Zhetysu" ("Jetisu" in Kazakh and Kyrgyz historiography, "Semireche" in Russian literature). Semirechye (in the pre-revolutionary administrative division of the Semirechye region) is a geographical region that includes the southeastern part of Kazakhstan and northern Kyrgyzstan. The Zhetysu in the north is bounded - by the lakes Balkhash, Sasykol and Alakol; in the east - the Dzungarian Ala-Tau range; in the south - the ridges of the northern Tien Shan Terskey Ala-Too and Kirghiz; in the west - the rivers Karabalta, Chu and Lake Balkhash. However, these boundaries are conditional. Semirechye is currently located mainly in Kazakhstan (Almaty oblast, partly Zhambyl region); the upper reaches of the Or are part of the Xinjiang Uygur Autonomous Region of China; part of the Chui Valley, part of the extended historical interpretation of Seven Rivers, is part of Kyrgyzstan. According to R.I.Abolina (Soviet geographer), the Zhetysu includes a part of the Kazakh Hills (Highland north of Lake Balkhash), the whole Betpakdala steppe and the northern Tien Shan. That is, fully Dzhambul (Taraz), Almaty and Taldy-Kurgan regions, part of Chimkent,

Dzhezkazgan and Semipalatinsk regions and northern Kyrgyzstan [22]. And in the reference book "Geographical Names of the USSR" for 1983 it says: "Zhetysu is a geographical region lying to the south of Lake Balkhash. Alma-Ata region of the Kazakh SSR ", that is, Northern Kyrgyzstan is no longer included. As you can see, the discrepancy is quite significant. This region could not be called Zhetysu, but another composite word, in which the numeral would be even a two-digit number because there are much more rivers here. But which seven rivers exactly - opinions, as well as concerning borders, are also different.

In Almaty, on the fountain symbolizing Zhetysu, the names of seven rivers were carved: Ili, Chu, Aksu, Karatal, Lepsy, Tentek and Koksu. In the encyclopedia "Alma-Ata" we read that the name Semirechie comes from the rivers Ili, Karatal, Bien, Aksu, Lepsy, Baskan, and Sarkand. In this seven, three new rivers appeared, displacing three from the list depicted on the fountain. As we see, there are discrepancies, several variants of seven rivers. Some of this list excludes the southernmost river the Chu. Others insist on including in the list of the most northern river of the region - Ayaguz. Still, others consider only Or, and tributaries flowing into it: Charyn, Chilik, Turgen, Issyk, Talgar, and Kaskelen. I.Zavalishin in his work "Description of Western Siberia", narrating about the Kazakh steppe, argued that the

name "Zhetysu" was wrong in general because six rivers flow into Balkhash itself.

The name "Zhetysu" appeared in the 1840s when detachments of the Siberian Cossack troops arrived in this region. Accustomed to waterless, dry Irtyshpian steppes, the Siberian Cossacks were struck by the abundance of rivers and rivulets falling from the northern slopes of the Dzungarian Alatau and Kungei Ala-Too. Therefore, they called the newly occupied region Zhetysu. A happy figure and in folklore meaning "many" - seven wisps; seven don't wait for one; seven troubles, one answer, and others. It is more thoroughly considered that the term "Zhetysu" was introduced into the scientific circulation by the Russian geographer A.G.Vlangali, who described the rivers flowing into Lake Balkhash, in his report on travel to Zhetysu and Dzhungarsky Alatau in 1849-1851. The version associated with the seven largest rivers of the region, which the Russian troops had to overcome as they advanced from the northeast to the south, is the most common. Therefore, in this version, there is no river Chu. This is explained by the fact that Russian troops reached it much later, and originally Zhetysu called the area only to the Ili River. The rest of the Russian sources and documents called Zailiysky and Zachuysky areas. And only subsequently the area, called Zhetysu, was expanded to the borders described above. Since 1867, when the Semirechensk region was

formed, the names of the Ayaguz district, Zailiysky and Zachuysky regions disappear. Only one name remains - Zhetysu, assigned to the whole region included in the region. But this is one of the versions associated with the advancement of the Russians to this region. A detailed description is given to her because it is the most common. Let's start with an inaccurate translation. The term "Zhetysu" is either a free translation of the Kazakh name of the region "Dzhetysu" or an incorrect explanation of the term's origin from the number of rivers flowing into Balkhash. "Su" in Kazakh "water". It means that the exact translation is "Seven Waters, Semivodye", allegorically - "Many-water". Compare with the fabulous Russian "Belovodye". After all, the river in Kazakh "?zen" (or "Yezen" - the first letter is absent in the Russian alphabet (pronounced as E in the word "birch")), "the river - to the goose of the ozen". It turns out that the Zhetysu is a free, poetic translation of the Kazakh Dzhetysu. At Balkhash, between the rivers Ili and Karatal there was a natural boundary Seven Rivers. Kohl we are talking about the local name of the track, then, most likely, it is not the rivers or even small rivers that are meant, but some springs, streams or small lakes. Perhaps some combination of these water sources. "Seven Rivers", that is, the tract rich in water in the arid Kazakh steppes, why he was chosen for the construction of the Sultan's rate. The tract of the Seven Rivers was known

to Russians even before coming to Zhetysu. In 1819, the Sultan of the Great Horde of Suyuk (Suk) Ablaihanov, with a territory off the eastern shore of Lake Balkhash, accepted the citizenship of Russia. In commemoration of this event, by decree of Alexander I (the reign of 1801-25), it was ordered to build the Sultan "Seke" a house and a mosque on the shores of Lake Balkhash in the "Seven Rivers Tract". By the letter No. 450 dated June 9, 1822, the West-Siberian Governor-General P.M.Kaptsevich instructed the provincial secretary Mulla Tasbulat Bekbulatov "to go to the Seven Rivers to the Sultans of Adilev, wandering behind the Soh and Karatal rivers" to censor and swear oath to "entering them (sultans - B. M.) to the Russian citizenship of their subordinates biys and Kyrgyz" [15, p.334]. And in a report dated May 25, 1825, he reported on the dispatch of a detachment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Shubin to the sultan "Syuk Ablaykhanov to the boundary of Semirechic". The detachment was supposed to follow "along the well-known caravan route to the Seven Rivers located 600 miles from Semipalatinsk". B. Bronevsky in "Notes on the Kirghiz-Kaysaks of the Middle Horde" in 1830 wrote: "The big hordes of the Kirghiz who wonder at the natural boundary of the Seven Rivers near Lake Balkhash are engaged in farming with diligence.

Famous archeologist K.Baypakov, who has been

researching the region for almost fifty years, continues the idea of most Soviet-era scientists. He prefers to use the use of the term "Zhetysu" in relation to the three river basins. The upper and middle streams of the Talas and Chu rivers are the Central Zhetysu, one of which is the lower river basin of the Talas River and western regions, namely, Western Zhetysu for the Taraz (Jambul) and its surroundings, the lower river basin of the Chu River and the term "Northern Zhetysu" for the Ili River [4, p.5-15].

Another archaeologist from Kazakhstan M.Eleuov thinks that Zhetysu is originated on the 7 flowing rivers into Balkhash lake (Ili, Qoratal, Bien, Oksuv, Lepsi, Baskan and Sarkand rivers), so the name should be used for the south-eastern part of the lake and Chu and Talas river basins should be named after two rivers - Chu-Talas valley [7].

Some researchers claim that "Zhetysu" must actually be used in the form of Jete-SUV, in that case, the geographical term will be right for the area to which it expresses. They think that this title is not a hydronym and its origin is not related to seven rivers. There is another idea such as South-East Kazakhstan and North-West Kyrgyzstan are called "Mongolia" and "Jete Province" in the Middle Ages and the title of "Zhetysu" is named after "Jete Province".

So, which geographical names are better to use for these territories, and what names had been used in historical sources to represent these

lands? Which names were mentioned in the written sources of Chinese, Ancient Turkish, Sogdian, Arabic-Persian, and other languages? Is it possible to resolve the issue by answering such questions?

In ancient Chinese chronicles, countries in the west of the true China are summarized as "Si-yuy" ("Western countries") [6, p.269]. This name is mainly referred to as Central Asia's eastern Turkestan, Zhetysu, Amu-Darya, Syr-Darya, and Khurasan. In the chronicles, one unique name was used for the basins of Issiqkul, Talas, Chu, and Ili of Zhetysu or contradictory, the researchers did not agree. Only in the last centuries BC, in the surrounding islands of Issyk Kul and its north-western neighborhood, such phrases as "Usun", "Usun ulkesi", "the land of usun" were used. This tradition continued until early Middle Ages. In particular, in Chinese chronicles, some facts about Juan-juan era were revealed in the mid-millennium AD and there is written that some tribes moved into "to the land of ancient Usuns". Even in the period of Turkish Khanate, this place is called "the Old Town of Usun" in the annual books. "Western Turks" especially "Ten Arrows"'s location was about in this region [6, p.155-156].

It is well known that the Western Turkic, or rather the bases of the Western Turkic Khanate - "Davlat ulusi" ("Grand Nation") (domain) were located in the basins of Talas, Chu and Ili rivers and nowadays this

place is called Zhetysu. Indeed, in the first medieval Chinese sources, sometimes the terms of "Ten Aymaq Turks" and "Ten tribe country" were used for the Western Turkic Khanate. The area adjacent to the area of Zhetysu is mentioned under the names of "The Land of Ten Turks", "The Western Turks Territory" [6,p.289].

In the ancient Turkish epicographies, although there is no definite term for this region, Kul Tegin and Bilge Haqan argue that the term "Un Uq Haqqani" ("Ten Tribes") is used to refer to Zhetysu region. In particular, it is noteworthy that the terms of "Un Uq haqani" (Ten arrow haqan) and "Un Uq ughlim Turgash haqan" (Ten arrow son Turgash haqan) were used by Western Turks or Turgash rulers [10,p.165-168].

Thus, Chinese and Old Turkish sources have discovered that this region (Zhetysu) was traditionally viewed as a whole region. This similar tradition continued later, as Mahmud Koshgari was able to confirm that the place where the population from Isfijob until Balosoghun spoke in Turkish and Sogdian at the same level. He used the term "Arghu ulkasi" (Land of Arghu) for the region [9,p. 66, 94, 145, 148].

In Arab-Persian sources, it can be seen that the term "Bilod at-Turk" (The country of Turks) and "Turkistan" were applied to this region even though it is not so exact fact. In particular, Jamukat (Humukat) city where Sogdians

moved was called Turkiston. That information was written in the book titled "Tarikhi Bukhoro" by Abu Jafar an-Narshakhiy. Also, that book gives information on the people who migrated into Bukhara city were from Turkistan [14,p.91-92].

There are also some arguments in the sources that the term of Turkistan was used for this region. Especially, in Sogdian sources which were discovered in Turfan (639), can be found some information about "slave Upachah who was born in Turkistan, some researchers think that the place was Zhetysu [8,p.169]. In general, this idea seems to be true. Because Sogdians were familiar with East Turkestan and their surroundings and they called Kumul, Kucha, Kashgar, Turfan and other places with their names. Under the term Turkestan, Zhetysu may have been summarized as a part of the Amudarya - Syrdarya region. Perhaps this title could have been used to refer to the central regions of Western Turkic Khanate. It is well known that the central regions of this region, namely "Davlat ulusi" ("Grand Nation") are mainly concentrated in the basins of Talas, Chu and Ili rivers [1, p.38-39].

At the same time, in the sogdian documents of Mugh (for example A-14) can be found the term of "High", it is known that the contents of the document were shown the north or north-east regions of Chach oasis. In the first quarter of the eighth century, Zhetysu was the central region of the Western Turkic

Kaganate, and Turkash clans and military supporters of these kingdoms were mainly living in the area. The writer of the A-14 document (actually the letter) was sogdian Fatufari and the author of the document also mentions about "the rulers of Chach" and "Tudun" and the fact that Hun (Turks) went to "Upper" to live there [21, p.158-159]. Moreover, at this time, Zhetysu, especially Chu and Talas oases were the widely populated area by Turks and Sogdians and the archaeological monuments show the ruins of the historical city are often found in the cultural traces of Sogdians (writing, symbolic signs, ossuary and etc.). Thus, Sogdian used the geographical terms such as "Upper" and "Turkiston" for those areas. Nowadays, their correspondence to Zhetysu reflects the historical reality of their era.

At the same time, it should be noted in the written sources that sogdian registries mentioned in connection with Zhetysu region. Although there is insufficient information on this issue in sogdian monuments, sogdian toponomics names can be found in Chinese, Arabic-Persian, and partly in Greek (Byzantine) and Tibetan sources. Based on some sources in these languages, we quote them as follows (From the eastern direction of Zhetysu to northern part):

1. In sogdian documents and epigraphic findings: Tumkat, Tuydich, Navokat [12, p.356].

2. In Chinese Chronicles: Jehay (Issyqkul), Dun (Tun), Suye

(Suyab), Peylotszyanstyun (Balosogun), Mi-go (Maymurg), Sinchen (Navokat), Shuystzyan (Chuyket), Ashubulay (Ashpara), Dalosi (Talas/Taraz), Syan-Syuan (Ming-bulaq and others [23,p.272-273].

3. In Arab-Persian sources: Barskhan, Iskul (Issiqkul), Bolosogun, Navokat, Kirmirkat, Suyab, Bunjikat, Atlah, Qulon, Shelji, Taroz, Hamukat/Jamukat, Azarhoh (Ming-Buloq) and others [12, p.81-82].

4. In the book by Mahmoud Kashghariy: Issigh-Kul, (Issiqkul), Barskhan, Suyab, Urdu, Balosoghun, Atluq, Taroz and others [9, p.149,424].

Likewise, "Subaliq" was the capital city for "Eight northern provinces" in the ancient Tibetan book titled "Catalog of authorities", this was the central part of the Zhetysu. This place can be called as ancient Turkic Chu-baliq, ie "Chu (the city on the river bank)". Indeed, some researchers are comparing the Tibetan-based Shubaliq fortress with the "Shu shahri"(Shu city) near the city of Balasagun, which even can be found in Mahmoud Koshgary's work too. Therefore, it is possible to compare Shubaliq with the city of Suyab and to interpret it as Suyab in Turkic name.

In addition, Chinese sources point out that the significant part of Zhetysu was written under the name "Sogd" for some time. By the way, in the Middle Ages, the Sogdians were widely spread in the area from Zhetysu to Sogd and this is reflected

in the following information written by Chinese merchant Syuan Tszan (627-645) during his visit to the region: "The land, from Su-ye-shuy (Suyab) to the Stze-Shuan-na (Kesh) country, is called Su-li (Sogd). [This country]'s population, writing and language are also called with the name of country [16,p.113]. This information should be related to the early medieval, possibly even the earlier period, and it shows that sogdians migrated into Zhetysu from the original Sogd (Zarafshan-Kashgadarya basins) and they created a range of villages and towns.

In fact, this information goes back to the later centuries (630 BC), even earlier from the beginning of the AD to the X century, the sogdian community consisted of large portion of population in the different towns of the Syrdarya river basin, up to Zhetysu, in particular they lived in the major cities such as Utrar, Isfijob, Taraz, and relatively small towns such as Ashpara, Kulan, Merki and others, this information has been proven by both written and archaeological materials [4,14].

Meanwhile, applying Chinese and local sources for the distribution of sogdian areas in these regions will help to better understand this issue. First of all, it should be noted that in the early Middle Ages, mainly two ethnic groups: Turkish and sogdian existed in many parts of Central Asia. Sogdians lived not only in Sogd, and they lived in Ustrushana, the river basin of Syrdarya, Zhetysu, Eastern

Turkestan and North-west China. Sogdians and Turks lived together in the dozens of big cities from the river basin of Syrdarya (Chach, Utrar/Tarband. Isfijob/Sayram) to Zhetysu (Taraz, Suyab and Issiqkul) [13,p.15-24]. For above mentioned information, we can find a lot of evidences from Chinese and Byzantine sources and in those sources, the names of places were written in Turkish and Sogdian or Turkish-Sogdian languages. That is, one of the characteristics of this period is that at the moment the name of a population of mountain, river, and similar places is different, depending on the diversity of ethnic groups living in a particular area. Also, the adaptation of the original language in a second language was characteristic of the time. Specifically, the mountains in the northern part of the Utrar are called Shavghar (trans. Black Mountain) and Qorachuqi in Turkish language. Similarly, Sayram city, called Sayram / Saryam (trans. "Rare water" or "white water") in the Turkic language, is also called Isfijab (trans. White water) in Sogdian language [2, p.5-7].

The same situation can be seen with the connection of Zhetysu. There were hundreds of springs in the south-western part of province of Talas valley, Chinese sources simultaneously used Turkish words as Bing-yul ("Ming-Buloq"), sometimes translated into Chinese as Bin-yu, sometimes Tsyant-syuan (Ming-Bulak). In the works of Arab geographers it is mentioned in the

same place as Azar-Khakh, its linguistic meaning is derived from the Sogdian language - azar-"thousand" and khakh-" thousand springs"(Ming bulak) [12, p.82]. Also, according to some sources, the name of Suyab, the first medieval political administrative center of the Zhetysu, can be attributed to the Turkish "Su" as "water, river" and sogdian "yap/yab" as "water, river [23, p.263]

This is explained by the fact that both Turks and Sogdians lived side by side and they spoke in their own languages.

Therefore, it is necessary to identify another issue related to the distribution of Sogdians in these territories. First of all, it should be underlined that if the demographic situation and the circumstances of that period are taken into account, this issue will be clarified. It is well known that the Fergana valley and river basins of the Chach valley had favorable natural conditions and that's way, those places were widely populated area. It would have been difficult for another nation to come by peaceful means. One of the reasons for the high concentration of sogdians in the basins of Zhetysu and Syrdarya, which was relatively rare but suitable for life-threatening areas, so sogdians moved into those areas. These territories were the main sites in the northern branch of the

Great Silk Road so it is not surprising that these lands were attractive for natural trader sogdians.

Concluding Remarks: In summary, for a first millennium AD, sogdians built its communities in foreign countries and Zhetysu played an important role in this situation. For nearly a thousand years, sogdiands organized a range of groups and they travelled as traders to far away countries. As a result, new trade colonies namely, new mahallas, rabats, villages, towns were built in those places by sogdians. Particularly, dozens of towns were created in Zhetysu - historic-geographical region. Hence, today's archaeological excavations have its own historical foundations of the fact that the archaeological excavations of Zhetysu and its adjacent borders in the Chu and Talas valleys are almost the same as the history of Sogd findings and the epigraphic heritage of the archaeological artifacts, household items, sculptures. In the Middle Ages, Sogdians was economically and culturally active, with a significant number in Central Asia. Sogdian played an important role in the socio-political life of the region as a separate team at that time. Then the peoples of Zhetysu and adjacent territories joined with Turkic peoples. They played an important role in their ethnic background.

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