DEPICTION OF DEFENSE FACILITIES OF KHOREZM CITY IN WRITTEN SOURCES OF THE TEMURIAN PERIOD

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Abstract: The article examines the issue of coverage of defense facilities in the cities of Khorezm in the written sources of the Timurid period. In the course of the research, the opinions expressed in the scientific literature on the subject were also analyzed. The state and military-strategic importance of the defense structures of the cities of Khorezm in the period of Amir Temur and the Temurids are based on historical sources. The analysis of historical events shows that the fortification of Khorezm with military-engineering structures played an important role in the protection of the oasis from the invasions of nomadic tribes, and thus played an important role in ensuring the security of the northwestern border of Movarounnahr.

Key words and expressions: Khorezm, Amir Temur, Tokhtamishkhan, Hussein Sufi, Yusuf Sufi, Shaibanikhan, Khiva, Khivak, Urgench, Vazir, Hazarasp, Kot, Jurjon, Adok.

Introduction

The issue of coverage of the defense facilities of Khorezm in the written sources of the Timurid period has not been widely studied in the scientific literature. V.V. Bartold, Ya.Yu. Yakubovskiy, B.F. Manz, Ismail Akka, B. Ahmedov, O. Although the works of Buriev and other historians mention some events that took place in Khorezm during this period, they do not comment on the topic under study [1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10]. Fundamental research on the history of Amir Temur and the Timurid period has not studied this issue separately [11, 12, 13]. In this regard, the study of this issue is one of the current scientific problems.

The study of the selected issue was based on historical sources written by Nizamiddin Shami, Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, Muiniddin Natanzi, Hafizi Abru, Fasih
Khawafi, Abdurazzaq Samarkandi, Mirkhand, Khandamir and Mirzo Muhammad Haydar [14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25]. These sources contain a number of important historical data on the subject we are studying.

II. Methodology

Khorezm is one of the regions that has played an important role in the life of the peoples of Central Asia with its political, economic and cultural development in all periods of history. The oasis played a strategic role in the political processes of Amir Temur and the Temurids, in strengthening the borders of the kingdom. Of course, in this process, the cities of Khorezm also served as a political, administrative, economic and military center.

There is not much information about the cities of Khorezm in the historical sources of the Timurid period. In the pages devoted to important political events, the description of military conflicts, there are some hints about the strategically important fortresses of the oasis, their defensive structures and capabilities. We have tried to analyze them as much as possible below.

III. Discussion

Historical sources state that the Khorezm oasis was “rich in great cities and vast regions” [26]. In the sources of the period under study, we first come across information about the city of Kot [27]. Because the first military campaign of Amir Temur in Khorezm was for this fortress. The depiction of the conquest of the city of Kot by the Sahibkiran army in 1372 gives some idea of the defensive structures and capabilities of this fortress. “… They attacked the fort of Kot writes Nizamiddin Shami. When the army reached there, they closed the gates of the helpless fortress and prepared the arroda, the living wheel. According to the order of Amir Sahibkiran, the soldiers gathered firewood and hay and filled the trench. … Humor was pointing at Yasovul, who obeyed the order and fell into the ditch. … Seeing this, the armies descended incessantly into the ditch and crossed the water. Sheikh Ali Bahadur rose to the break for the first time.” [28] The same is true of

According to the sources, the city of Kot was surrounded by a fortress wall, i.e. a fortress. Unfortunately, no information was given about the height and width of the fence. Judging by the texts about the battle, the castle walls were not very high. Almost all the authors spoke of the castle gate. That is, they did not use the plural suffix in relation to the castle gate. This leads to the conclusion that it was the only gate of the Ivory Coast. But relying on written sources does not provide complete clarity on the issue. In addition to the defensive wall, the city is also protected by a moat. Before the attack on the fortress, the ditch was filled with wood and hay by order of Amir Temur. It was not able to fill completely because it was so wide and deep. That is why a prince named Street Malik refused to fall into the ditch. According to Nizamiddin Shami, the soldiers who entered the ditch were also forced to cross the water. The biggest loss in the battles was also in the process of crossing the ditch. Because the soldiers passing by could not protect themselves from the bullets and stones falling on the castle walls.

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Historical sources state that the Khorezm oasis was “rich in great cities and vast regions” [26]. In the sources of the period under study, we first come across information about the city of Kot [27]. Because the first military campaign of Amir Temur in Khorezm was for this fortress. The depiction of the conquest of the city of Kot by the Sahibkiran army in 1372 gives some idea of the defensive structures and capabilities of this fortress. “... They attacked the fort of Kot writes Nizamiddin Shami. When the army reached there, they closed the gates of the helpless fortress and prepared the arroba, the living wheel. According to the order of Amir Sahibkiran, the soldiers gathered firewood and hay and filled the trench. ... Humor was pointing at Yasovul, who obeyed the order and fell into the ditch. ... Seeing this, the armies descended incessantly into the ditch and crossed the water. Sheikh Ali Bahadur rose to the break for the first time. ” [28] The same is true of Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi, Hafizi Abrui, Abdurazzaq Samarkandi, and Khandamir. Muiniddin Natanzi and Fasih Khawafi did not elaborate on the details of the battle at Kot.

According to the sources, the city of Kot was surrounded by a fortress wall, i.e. a fortress. Unfortunately, no information was given about the height and width of the fence. Judging by the texts about the battle, the castle walls were not very high. Almost all the authors spoke of the castle gate. That is, they did not use the plural suffix in relation to the castle gate. This leads to the conclusion that it was the only gate of the Ivory Coast. But relying on written sources does not provide complete clarity on the issue. In addition to the defensive wall, the city is also protected by a moat. Before the attack on the fortress, the ditch was filled with wood and hay by order of Amir Temur. It was not able to fill completely because it was so wide and deep. That is why a prince named Street Malik refused to fall into the ditch. According to Nizamiddin Shami, the soldiers who entered the ditch were also forced to cross the water. The biggest loss in the battles was also in the process of crossing the ditch. Because the soldiers passing by could not protect themselves
from the bullets and stones falling on the castle walls. Undoubtedly, the trench was one of the most important parts of Kot’s defensive structures.

It is also worth mentioning the military equipment used by the defenders of the city of Kot. Because without them it is impossible to fully understand the defensive capabilities of the city of Kot. As we have seen above, Nizamiddin Shami noted that the Kot’s had prepared the saw and the living wheels for battle. It is known that the saw is a complex military technique used to break down the castle wall during the siege, mounted on a wheel, a special device designed to throw large stones [33]. The living wheel is a rotating military device. In it, in many cases, iron-tipped arrows were fired at the enemy. Also, bullets with gunpowder in the form of shells were thrown at the opponent in the open position. At times, it was filled with oil and burned. In our opinion, the Kots in this battle fired three-pointed arrows at the opponent through a live wheel. From the above it can be seen that in fact these weapons were mainly intended for use in the assault of castles. But they have also been very effective in defending the city. Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi also commented on this:

“There was a war on both sides”

They closed the door of reconciliation.

The bullets and stones remained smooth

The ground was covered with bullets and stones.[35]

The fact that the defenders of the city of Kot had arrows and live wheels, as well as their effective use during the battle, testifies to the high military capabilities of the fortress. After the capture of the city by Amir Temur’s army, the defensive structures were not damaged. On the contrary, over the years they have become stronger. Historical sources do not contain information about other battles that took place in Kot. Only Abdurazzak Samarkandi mentions that the governor of the oasis, Amir Ibrahim, retreated to the city of Kot during the invasion of Khorezm by
Abulkhairkhan, the founder of the nomadic Uzbek state in 1430-1431. This also shows that our opinion above is valid. According to the sources, during the reign of Amir Temur and the Temurids, the city of Kot was a city with strong defensive structures. It was the main military center of the Khorezm lands on the right bank of the Amudarya.

In the XIV-XV centuries, one of the main cities of southern Khorezm was Khiva. In Timurid sources, the city was named Khiva [36] and Khevak [37]. However, the sources lack information about Khiva’s defense facilities. The main reason for this is that information about the hostilities in Khiva was not included in the works of Timurid historians. The name of the city is mentioned in historical sources only in connection with such historical events as Amir Temur’s arrival in Khiva with Hussein in 1362 and his battle with Tukal [38], Sahibkiran sent an ambassador to Khorezm in 1371 [39], Khorezm governor Amir Ibrahim retreated to Khiva in 1431. mentioned [40]. Only in the texts related to the activities of Sultan Hussein Bayqara in Khorezm there is interesting information about the gates of Khiva, the fortress wall, the upper corridors of the wall [41]. Observing the history of Khiva during the reign of Amir Temur and the Temurids through sources allows us to assume that the defensive structures and capabilities of this city were similar to the city of Kot.

During the reign of Amir Temur and the Temurids, the political, administrative, economic and military center of Khorezm was the city of Urgench. In the sources of the Timurid period, the city was mainly called Khorezm [42]. In the middle of the 14th century, Urgench was one of the largest and most economically developed cities of its time, and the information provided by Ibn Battuta and Ibn Arabshah is very valuable.

The high level of defense facilities and military capabilities of the city of Urgench is clearly reflected in the statement of military operations carried out by Amir Temur in Khorezm in the 70-80s of the XIV century. The city is surrounded
by a strong and high castle wall, a wide and deep ditch. The city also had several fortified gates. Due to the size of the city, the castle walls were also long, they were reinforced with high towers designed to shoot around at a certain distance, and covered a large area.

When Amir Temur first came to Urgench in 1372, he realized that a large military force was needed to lay siege to the city. Involving the army in a full siege could cause problems in providing the army with food and fodder. That is why he did not dare to besiege the city. Amir Temur marched away from the fort with his army and scattered a large part of his army around to gather food and fodder. Yusuf Sufi decided to take advantage of the dispersal of Amir Temur’s troops. This was also due to the fact that one of the great beys of Amir Temur’s army, Kaykhusrav Khuttalani, had secret contacts with the governor of Khorezm and called him to battle. Yusuf Sufi, who entered the battle two miles (about 12-16km) from the city, was defeated. It was only after this that Muiniddin Natanzi emphasized that Sahibkiran approached the fortress and tried to besiege it.

Urgench’s defensive structures and their capabilities were also seen during Amir Temur’s 1379 attack. During this march, for the first time, Sahibkiran ordered a complete siege of the fort and besieged it for three months and sixteen days. “The next day,” writes Natanziy, “Amir Sahibkiran ordered them to move and settled near the fortress wall.” After that, they began to build hills for manjans and arrods, and to set up thunderstorms and blackbirds. The first stone thrown from Manjanyk’s sledgehammer knocked down the dome of the tower. Another stone touched the roof of Yusuf Sufi’s palace and destroyed three floors, knocking down about a hundred gas walls. ... City engineers came up with the idea of making leather bags stuffed with straw and cotton as a precaution against manic stones. Amir Sahibkiran ordered the (flammable) substance in the oil containers to be fired at the device. ” [47]
Natanz’s data lead to several conclusions: First, because the city’s defensive walls were so high, Amir Temur built artificial hills to increase the effectiveness of his siege techniques, on which manganese, arrows, thunderbolts, and blackbirds were mounted. In this battle, Amir Temur was the first to use firearms.

Second, blows by siege techniques and firearms were mainly delivered to the towers and towers of the fort. Because it was convenient for the defenders of the castle to shoot the attackers through the towers and towers.

Third, as a subtle aspect of the castle defense, we can see that the governor’s palace was built close to the castle tower. This is confirmed by the fact that the stones thrown from Manjani reached the palace, and Shami also noted that the governor's palace was built in the tower of the castle. [48] It was the destruction of the castle that also had a negative effect on the fighting spirit of the city defenders.

Fourth, Yusuf Sufi’s palace was three stories high and was one of the tallest buildings of its time.

But Amir Temur was unable to capture the city by storm. As a result of the sudden death of Yusuf Sufi, one of the princes of Khorezm, Khojalyk, opened the gate to his rivals due to the internal struggle in the city.

According to historical sources, during the march of 1388, the city of Urgench was captured without a fight and its defensive structures were demolished. However, in 1391, Amir Temur ordered the reconstruction of the city of Urgench and its defensive structures, which was carried out by Amir Musoko.

Urgench’s newly rebuilt defensive structures were as solid as ever. The fact that the city underwent several long sieges or battles during the early 15th and 16th centuries, but was never stormed, testifies to the strength of the castle walls. The city was often captured as a result of a truce or the rulers fleeing the castle. In 1406, when the Dashti Kipchak Emir Idiku invaded, Emir Musa surrendered Khorezm without a fight and retreated to Khorasan. In 1411, the Dashti Kipchak
army, which had besieged Urgench for seven months, was forced to make a truce and retreat. In 1412, the army sent by Shahrukh Mirza returned to Khorasan, unable to capture the city. Only in 1413 did an army led by Amir Shahmalik restore Timurid rule in the city through negotiations. During the marches of Abul-Khairkhan in 1431 and 1435, as a result of the non-combat retreat of Amir Ibrahim, the governor of Khorezm, the population was forced to surrender the city.

The condition of the defensive structures of the Urgench fortress is described in more detail in the work “Shaybaniynoma” by Muhammad Salik. It is narrated in it that the fort was surrounded by a deep and wide ditch, and the Shaybani army suffered heavy losses as it passed through it. Attempts to climb the castle wall through the stairs were also unsuccessful. After that, the main focus was on demolishing the castle wall. Although they managed to break into the castle wall in several places, the townspeople quickly re-closed the damaged areas. The notable side is that the carts are mounted on wider broken areas of the wall and the top is covered with felt. This event gave good results and successfully defended the defenders from the bullets and stones of the opponents. During the ten-month siege, repeated attempts by the Shaybani army to capture the city were in vain. The city was captured as the defenders starved to death. The ruling arch inside the city was also a separate defensive object, where serious battles also took place. Muhammad Salih also noted that one of the city's most notable buildings was the Oksaroy.

Mirza Babur also spoke about the conquest of Urgench by the Shaybanid army: For ten months they suffered, and there was no hope. Some of the young men, speaking naked in Uzbek, took the Uzbek to the fort. When Chin Sufi became aware of this, he came and shot down the fortresses. There was no one left to fight, they took the fortress. Thanks to Chin Sufi: she is dying with courage.

One of the largest cities of Khorezm was the city of Vazir. The city was founded in the middle of the 15th century by Mustafa Khan of the Dashti Kipchak sultans, and
part of the population of Urgench was relocated there. It was located in the south of Ustyurt, 60 km south-west of Urgench. The city of Vazir was surrounded by deep ditches, the most notable of which were its defensive structures, namely, its towers and walls, which were built of local stone, not of mud and brick. Several fortified buildings outside the city fort were also used to defend the city. In 1460-1461, Sultan Hussein besieged the city of Baykara Vazir for 41 days and was unable to occupy it, according to sources. But soon after, he marched into the city for the second time and managed to conquer it. The historian noted that fierce battles were fought for the fortified gates of the Minister and for the bourgeoisie. However, it was only as a result of a dispute between the steppe emirs that Sultan Hussein managed to capture the city of Baykara.

There is very little information about the city of Khazarasp in the written sources of the Timurid period. They do not allow us to talk about the city's defense facilities and capabilities [57].

There were also several smaller city fortresses in the border areas of Khorezm. They were mainly located in the western part of Khorezm. These include the towns of Adok [58] (on the eastern shore of Lake Sariqkamish [59]), Bulumsoz (Buldumsoz) [60], Tirsak [61], and Kumkent (Kumkand) [62]. Although there is no detailed information about the defensive structures of these fortresses in written sources, they were important strategic objects that protected Khorezm from the attacks of nomads.

IV. Result and Conclusion

Written sources of the Timurid period can provide interesting and important information about the defense facilities and capabilities of the cities of Khorezm. A comparative study of them, together with the results of archaeological research, will complement the information in the written sources and allow for a more complete analysis of the issue. The study of the issue with the involvement of archeological materials also provides an opportunity to classify the cities of the
Khorezm oasis on the basis of military-engineering structures and their defense capabilities.

Analysis of the materials in the written sources and observation of the political processes that have taken place also allow us to draw several scientific conclusions. First, the political processes of the second half of the 14th century to the beginning of the 16th century, as well as the comprehensive border of the Khorezm oasis with the nomadic areas, required increased attention to the city's defense facilities and maintaining their military capabilities at a high level. Second, the weakening of the centralized state order in the early fifteenth century, as well as in the second half of the fifteenth and early sixteenth centuries, weakened the defenses of Khorezm cities and reduced their ability to withstand the attacks of nomadic tribes.

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