

# A View at the Historical and Ancient Monuments of Kunduz Province-Afghanistan

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## ABSTRACT

*Kohandej is a combination of two words, alt and dej, meaning fence and old castle. Both words denote a high enclosure, and the historical course of Kunduz, which is the main basis of the enclosure at the time of the Aryan rulers of Balkh, namely Ki Khosro and Qiqbad, was formed in their time 1900 years before Christ. It was conquered and destroyed and rebuilt several times over time, earning it the name Kohandezh. The province of Kunduz, known as Kunduz, Kunduz, "Waki Dej" The kings of this period were also known as Kayanis, which the epic poet Ferdowsi mentions in his book Shahnameh about these kings. Our ancient and historical land of Afghanistan was a place where cultures and trade goods intersected on a regional level, and it has long been considered a trading center between East and West. The Kushans, who founded a large empire in Ariana in the early centuries of the Christian era, traded with neighboring rulers via the Silk Road. Qunduz or Kunduz, originally known as Kohan Dej, is located in northeastern Afghanistan, and its center is the city of Kunduz. This city was the capital of Yaptlian for 110 years. Unfortunately, the historical and ancient areas of Kunduz province have been severely damaged by the internal wars of the last four decades, and no attention has been paid to the insecurities and developments of the last decade. It originates from Islam, Hivan Tseng mentioned the city of Kunduz under the name (Heweh) and regarded it as the center of Buddhism.*

## KEYWORDS:

*Kunduz; Balahisar Kunduz; Zal Castle; historical sites.*

## INTRODUCTION

Kunduz lies 337 km from Kabul in the northeast, in the southern part of which lies Lake Amu, and forms the border between Kunduz province and Tajikistan, while Takhar province lies to the east, Baghlan province to the south, Samangan and Balkh provinces to the west, and the northeastern zone lies between Badakhshan, Takhar and Baghlan provinces.

At the time of Alexander the Great, the province of Kunduz belonged to the western regions and was considered an important center and junction of the Silk Road between the slopes of Para-Pamiris, Balkh and the headquarters of Etiotidmus. With 19 historical areas, it is considered one of the ancient provinces of Darzon in the northeast. These areas, which include historical hills, historical castles, masjids and shrines, are located partly in the city center and partly in the respective districts. These areas have remained unregistered for many years. With the exception of the historic hill of Balahisar (old castle) of Kunduz, which covers 174 hectares of land, the remaining areas have not yet been surveyed and registered by the honorable archeology department of the center in recent years. Kunduz is one of the strategically important provinces of Afghanistan. Shirkhan Bandar is located on the border

of modern Tajikistan and plays a very useful and productive role in the country's economy in terms of social, cultural, tourist and diverse cultural exchanges. The ancient areas of Kunduz Province are of special importance for relieving fatigue and checking tourists from different provinces of the country.

### **Research objectives**

1. Awareness and information of the young generation about the historical period and light of ancient Kunduz.
2. Understanding the history of Kunduz Fortress, Zal Castle, and the historical monuments of this province.
3. Identifying the military fortifications of ancient Kunduz and its role in the country's history.

### **Research Questions**

1. What is the historical age of the rivers of Kunduz province and what role did they play in the lives of the people living there?
2. Are the young generation of Kunduz province aware of the history of their province?
3. In which areas of Kunduz are the Kunduz Fortress, Qala Zal, and the historical ablutions of this province located?
4. What role did the military fortifications of ancient Kunduz play in the country's history?

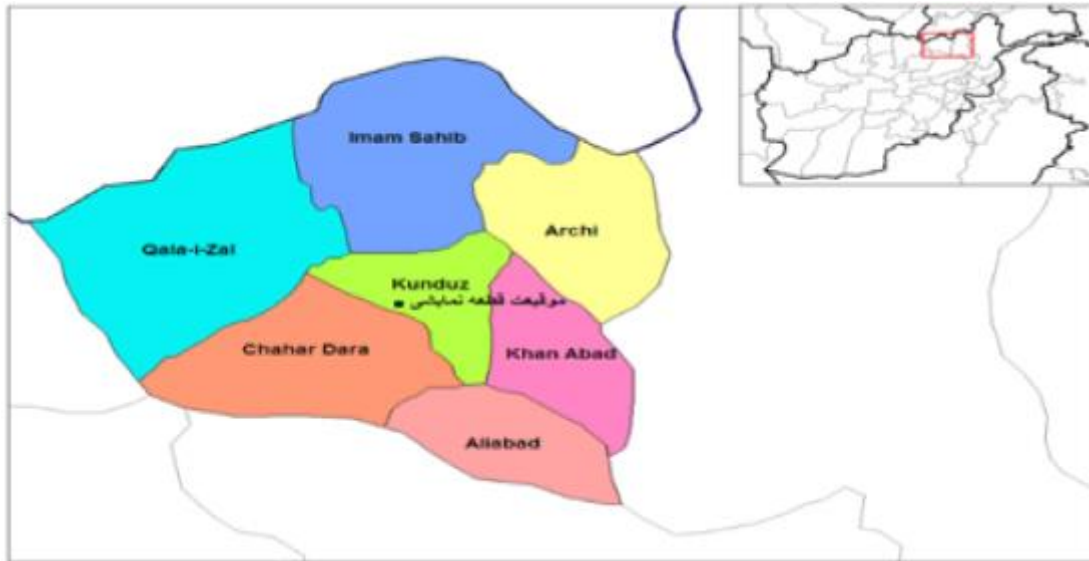
## **RESEARCH METHODS**

In this article, quantitative historical and descriptive library research methods have been carried out using various books and authentic historical articles of the country and also of Iran, and it has been tried to find out the ideas after deep analysis and all on the other hand, the above questions have been answered by receiving documents and documented scientific evidence.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Introduction of Kunduz province**

The province of Kunduz, with an area of 8,080.9 square kilometers, borders the provinces of Takhar, Baghlan, Samangan and Balkh. It is 433 meters above sea level. It is located at 58.12 minutes and 30 seconds north latitude and 68.6 degrees 52.52 minutes and 16 seconds east longitude. The topography of this province is 78.8 % flat, 3.7 % mountainous, 8.2 % semi-mountainous, 7.8 % semi-flat and only 6.6 % of it has not been mapped so far. Kunduz province has a population of more than (1042249) and most of its inhabitants are Pashtuns, Tajiks, Uzbeks, Hazara, Imaq, Baluch, Turkmen, Arabs, Peshayi Qazlbash, Sheikh Mohammadi and Mosli tribes and the population growth rate is 2%. Kunduz is located 337 km northeast of Kabul. Most of the people in this province are engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and horticulture. This province lies to the south of Lake Amu, bordered by Takhar province to the east, Baghlan province to the south and Samangan and Balkh provinces to the west. It forms the north-eastern zone between the provinces of Badakhshan, Takhar and Baghlan (Profile, 2018).



**Figure 1.** Political map of Kunduz province

### ***Kunduz in the mirror of history***

Kunduz province is one of the provinces in north-eastern zone of Afghanistan and is still considered a historical and agricultural province. Historical events show that several families ruled this historic city, namely: Kayani family in Balkh, Greeks in Takhar, Kushans in Takharistan, Badakhshan and Yaftali. in Badakhshan and Takhar), at the time Kunduz was considered as the territory of Takhar and Balkh (Propile, 2018).

The scientific and archeological researches and excavations carried out in this area show that Kunduz has always existed in the past as one of the historical and very important places of our country and has its roots in ancient civilizations. Even during the Aryan period, up to Khorasan and Takharistan, this province had special characteristics. It is said that people lived in this area hundreds of years before Christ, and Kunduz province is an ancient and civilized region after Balkh, which most historians refer to as Umm al-Bilad. but the famous scholar of the country, Ahmad Ali Kahzad, wrote clearly in a research article about Kunduz that ancient Kunduz had a wife with ancient Balkh, and from the point of view of politics and administration, it was better than Balkh in some eras, Kahzad wrote that Kunduz was once considered the center of all Bakhtar and Takharistan (Ranjbr, 2017).

**The Greek government and Afghanistan:** Alexander the Macedonian in Afghanistan, contrary to his hopes and expectations, faced the armed resistance of the people of this country, and for four years, from 327-324 BC, he came from the cities of Afghanistan, Tus, Herat, Kabul, Balkh, and later from the Amu River. It passes across Nahar and occupies some cities in Central Asia (Ghabar, 2008).

In 327 BC, Alexander the Great led a campaign against Bessus, who called himself King of Balkh, and made Apaska, today's Kunduz, his military base (Ranjbar, 2023).

Ai Khanum, the cradle of Greek and Western civilization, is located at the confluence of the Panj and Kokche seas and is one of the important Greek Alexandrias, known as Alexandria of Oxus or Amu Darya, forming part of the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan. The location of this area is given by some authors as 200 km from Balkh and by some from Kunduz province. A look at the administrative division of the country shows that this place is located in Kunduz province and belongs to the Dasht Qala district of Takhar province (Babayev, 2011).

The civilization of Ai Khanum with Greco-Bakhtar has a special feature compared to other civilizations of the world, and that is its strategic location. Because the city of Ai Khanum was located on the route of the Silk Road, and at that time European and Asian civilized people traveled through this route, especially the Greek people.

After this, it becomes clear that the existence of a city like Ai Khanum in the "old era" in terms of history, military, art, culture, commerce and ethics had a great impact on the social relations of Kunduz and Kunduz also had a special importance of this ancient city in that era. It was rich because trade caravans passed through this ancient province (Faizi, 2013).

**The Kushans in the West:** The extent of the Kushans' territory is not exactly known, especially at the beginning of the establishment of the Kushans, the limits of their control in the land of Afghanistan and Pakistan today were divided into five tribes, among them Kiushang or Kushan, with the victory over four other tribes, the Kushan political government They laid the foundation. Since the economic territory of the Kushans was beyond their political borders, it is difficult for historians to determine their territory precisely (Khademi, 2002).

Afghanistan, which is close and connected to the Central Asian deserts from the northern front, has been inhabited by humans since the earliest time that history cannot record, because the Central Asian plains are one of the oldest centers of civilization. It is the society of humanity and that is why the history of Afghanistan (especially the history of Kunduz) has a strong connection with the history of Central Asia (Ghabar, 2008).

According to some historians, around 165 BC, the Kushans, who were a branch of the Siti tribes and lived in Kashgar near China, after living between the two seas of Amu and Sihon in the first century (around 70 BC) passed through this region and captured the West. In these conquests, most of the northern Hindu Kush, such as Takharistan, Bakhtar Zameen, Balkh, etc., were brought under their authority, which (Kunduz at that time was the territory of the Takharistan government) (Qiami, 2019).

Kunduz province, like other provinces of Afghanistan, has an ancient and ancient history and in terms of its geographical location, it has a special status because it is on one side with the cities of the West and on the other side with the flat lands of Badakhshan, Qatghan (Takhar) provinces, which is a bridge. He had taken a relationship. According to the information of the time when the Yuchis (Yuchi descendants) entered modern day Kunduz from the Oxus Sea, the value of Kunduz increased, in this case the famous scholar Tarn (w.w..TARN) writes: 141 years before Christ, the Yochis crossed the Oxus Sea and settled in the present-day Kunduz area. At this time, the West had made progress in trade matters, and had even strengthened its trade relations with India. The famous Chinese historian Hiuan Tseng writes about Kunduz: When I entered Kunduz, it was one of the famous cities because after the fall of Takhar's rule, Kunduz still maintained the dignity of the capital, as many as 27 large houses that were built from different areas of Kunduz. They would gather and talk about various matters (Sangarwal, 2005).

Hivan Tseng called Kunduz "Hwoh" in his memoirs. The word "Hoh" not only means the city, but also had a special position because it had a separate capital that was administered by the Turks (Shaheswar, 2004).

Based on the notes of "Marinus", Ptolemy mentions the Takharis in various areas between Kansu and Bakhtar, he stated that including Kunduz, the Yuchi tribes settled in the nearby areas. The rules and customs of the Takhari and Yuchi people were close to each other because they lived together in most areas (Sangarwal, 2005).

The Kushan period is considered a great period in the ancient history of Afghanistan. The political and commercial relations of the Afghan Kushan state were with the empire (Chinese Han) in the east and with the Romans in the west (Kohzad, 1967).

**The Yaftilis:** The Yaftilis invaded Afghanistan from the northeastern part of Afghanistan through the Jihun Sea area and by the end of the 3rd century AD, they captured all the lands north of this sea. At the beginning of the 5th century AD, when the power of the Yaftali had increased on the one hand, and the Kushans weakened on the other hand, until finally the Yaftali succeeded in 425 AD, to capture the entire West and in Takharistan, which Kunduz also formed a government (Jabbar, 2018).

In the days of the Yaftali government, one of the most important trade routes that connected the southern plateaus of the Hindu Kush to the northern plateaus from Kuhdaman to the mountains, in the northern plateaus of the Hindu Kush, Kunduz was an important station between Takharistan and Bakhtarian. Takharistan and Sumi went directly to the Amu Sea. In ancient times, the historical silk road passed through Herat to Balkh to Kunduz and through this to Taleghan and Badakhshan and reached China from the high peaks of the Pamirs (Ranjbar, 2017).

This city was the capital of Yeptalians for 110 years and is the sixth largest city in Afghanistan, after Balkh city, it is the largest city in the northeastern part of the country. This city is located in the historical region of West Takharistan, near the confluence of Kunduz River and Khan Abad River (Jabbar, 2018).

In the 7th and 8th centuries, Kunduz was the main base of the Hetadians in their battle against the Islamic forces, and after that, until the Seljuk period, this city became an administrative center and a minting center in the northern region of Afghanistan. Throughout history, Kunduz has been the center of various governments, and in 1182, when Ahmad Shah Baba became the king, at the same time, Kunduz was removed from the hands of the lords of Iran and Bukhara and merged with Afghanistan, and after the death of Ahmad Shah Baba, the four provinces of the northeast Afghanistan was mentioned under the name of Katghan, and in the previous books, Kunduz was mentioned as Takharistan the Great and the Small, which, of course, was the center of Kunduz (Ranjbar, 2017).

In the 18th and 19th centuries, the capital of the Uzbek family, the Tajiks, was sometimes independent and sometimes autonomous, which in the 1820s covered the territory from Balkh to the Pamir mountains. It was part of the big game between England and Russia. In the early 20th century, under the rule of Shir Khan Nasher, Kunduz became one of the richest provinces of Afghanistan. This was mostly due to the publisher's founding of the Spinzer Cotton Company, which still exists in Afghanistan after the war. Kunduz is the most important agricultural province that produces wheat, rice, millet and other products and has earned the title of "Hive of the country" (Ranjbar, 2017).

### ***Denomination of Kunduz***

A number of researchers say that the name Kunduz is derived from two Yusaki letters, one of which is "Kand" which means city and the other "Yaz" which means area or region (Watanwal, 2011).

In the books of history, Ghayas-ul-ghat, Shahnameh Ferdowsi, Daira Al-Arif and Ariana Afghanistan, the term Kunduz is pronounced in three and sometimes four names: Kunduz, Kohandej, Kunduz and Ki Dej:

### ***Kunduz***

Kunduz is considered a Turkish word in Ghiyast al-Ghat and translated as a dumb dog or a water dog, which is a sea animal and has soft hair or wool, which was used to make skins

from its skin. In the past, this animal was abundant, especially in the rivers and streams of Kunduz. They say that the name "Kunduz" is derived from it, but this is mostly a myth and has no reliable historical source (Propile, 2019).

### *Kohandej*

Kohandej is a combination of two words, old + and dej, which means fence and old castle, both of which indicate a high fence, and the historical course of Kunduz, which is the main basis of the fence during the time of the Aryan rulers of Balkhi, Ki Khosro and Qiqbad, in Dud 1900 years BC. Over time, it has been destroyed and rebuilt many times, which has taken the name of Kohandezh. Even now, Balahisar Kunduz is known as the old castle among the common people (Propile, 2019).

### *Kundaz*

Kundaz is an abbreviation of Ghandej. In addition to that, in Uzbek language (day) is called Kundaz, according to the evidences, in the early days of Kundaz, the fence was built higher and higher than the current state, and a tower was built at every distance of one hundred meters and on top of each At night, the tower was lit with a big torch and it made the inside of the fence look like bright day, whose light could be seen from far away, that is why this city was called Kundaz, which means the city whose night is as bright as day. (Propile, 2019).

### *Ki Dej*

In this case, we must turn the pages of our country's five thousand-year history because "Ki Dej" is the first and oldest ancient name of Kunduz. The most famous kings of this era, who are also known as the Kayanis, are: Ki Qabad, Ki Kaus, Ki Siavash, Ki Khosro, Rostam and Zal, whose mother Rudaba was the daughter of Mehrab Kabuli, and was from the same family that created the epic (Propile, 2018).

### ***Ancient areas and historical sites of Kunduz province***

Unfortunately, the historical and ancient areas of Kunduz province were severely damaged by the Khanmansoz wars of the past four decades, and due to the insecurities and developments of the last decade, the necessary attention has not been paid. Its history dates back to the Kushan period, BC and before Islam.

### *High fence of Kunduz*

According to Tabari's history, Balahisar Kunduz was settled three thousand five hundred years ago by one of the Persian kings, who was Manouchehr, a great-grandson of Fereydun. This castle has four gates, two large and small fences and buildings and is located in the middle of a huge water ditch surrounded by a wall (Faqiri, 2024).



**Figure 2.** View from the historical hill

In addition, Balahasar Kunduz, which represents ancient Kunduz, its main building was built during the reign of King Khosrow of ancient Balkh (Ranjbar, 2017).

Ferdowsi, the epic writer of the 4th century, mentioned Kunduz in his Shahnameh and considered it to be "a region located between Balkh and Takharistan, and two raging seas pass through it." These seas are now in the north and west of Kunduz. It is a flowing and raging current that is known as the Alchin Sea and the Chahardara Valleys Sea (Propile, 2019).

The Alchin Sea enters from the east side and passes through the northern side of Kunduz, and the Chahar Dara Sea enters from the south of Kunduz and passes through the west side of Kunduz. Finally, both seas merge in the Qoshlesh region and in Boz Qasm, passing through the middle of Qala Zal district and flowing into the Amu Sea. (Iblagh, 2018).

According to Islamic geographers, near the Amu Sea (Jihun) there was a very strong bond with high walls, which was called Rabat Mila. Kohandej or old fort with old fence refers to this castle, this castle was destroyed by the Mughals and turned into ruins. But during the reign of Amanullah Khan, it was revived again and in 1300 AH it was decorated in a contemporary form (Arad, 2000).

Among the ancient forts of our country in today's Afghanistan, Kunduz's ancient fortress is one of them, which conveys the meaning of the ancient (fortress). According to historical evidence and documents, sometimes some other tribes were forced to move from Central Asian countries to the south of the Amu Sea as migrants due to the pressures of their neighbors. Western civilization brought a big headache. The Western government established a strong fortress for their defense, the historical and ancient remains of which have remained until now. I think it is most likely that the word Kunduz means "Kiandis" or "Kiandej". During the reign of the Kayani family of Bakhtar, this fence was built. In another story, Kunduz or Kohandej means the old castle, and based on the above explanation, this old castle was a war castle that had a high fence, its fortifications and importance indicate, it is said that Kunduz is in the north of the Hindu Kush between Bakhtar province. And Takharistan is located 24 kilometers from the current Khan Abad, after the Middle Ages it was called "Khandezh" which means the ancient castle .

The present city of Kunduz was built on top of the ruins of the old hill, i.e., the ancient fortress. From the ruins of Kunduz and its surroundings, archaeologists have found the remains of Buddhism and Greco-Buddhist and Greco-Bactrian Masjids, which indicate the mixing of ancient Greek, Bactrian, Greek and Buddhist cultures. May this be true for all the central, eastern and western provinces of Afghanistan (Arad, 2000).

Balahisar Kunduz, which currently exists in the north of this city, during the reign of Mohammad Zahir Shah, a number of Japanese researchers came to this city and excavated the mentioned area. It goes back to 304 AD (Propile, 2018).

### ***Qala-e-Zal***

Qala-e-Zal district is one of the old and ancient and light districts of Kunduz, which has historical traditions, ancient and ancient places, historical monuments and antique works. It is located in the northwest of Kunduz Bakhlam province, Shirmahi region and Chahardara district with 68 degrees 22 minutes and 18 seconds of east longitude and between 36 degrees 58 minutes and 13 seconds of north latitude.

The historical castle of Zal has four walls and covers approximately 2000 thousand acres in a square shape. This castle is the property of a historical citadel that is built in the form of a fortress on top of a hill known as Takht Qabad and there is a forest on its slope. According to Allameh Abdulshakur Rashad, the location of this fort has been mentioned as follows: In the area where the Kunduz Sea meets the Amu Sea, in the area where both seas meet, on the

left side of the Amu Sea and on the right side of the Kunduz Sea, this historic fort Persistence has a strong position.



**Figure 3.** A view of the historical parts of Zal Castle

According to the stories, this castle is attributed to Zal, the son of Sam Pahlevan and his father (Rostam Dastan), the hero of Jahan Shahnameh of Ferdowsi. Zal and his sons were built in the era of Afrasiab, Ki Khosrow, Ki Qabad and Ki Kaus who lived around (800) BC.

Qala Zal district, like other districts, is located 105 kilometers from the center of Kunduz city, which borders with Tajikistan. The majority of the people of this district are engaged in horticulture and farming, which is why it is one of the Sarsabar area and also this district has Rabgistan plains (Arshad, 2015).

#### *Sub-Dorah Hill or Buzkashi Ground*

This hill remains from different historical periods and is located five kilometers southeast of Kunduz Province, in the middle of which is Buzkashi Square. The range of these hills extends to Khanabad and Kandahari plains.



**Figure 4.** Historical view of Buzkashi hill, Kunduz province

In the mentioned hills, 40 x 40 x 10 cm clays from the Kushan period can be observed - in the northern part of the area, a road has been built, which has caused further destruction. And the school is surrounded by the village of Abraham Khel to the north and the hill and residential houses to the south. And it has been usurped that these ruins cover almost one kilometer from the northern part of the area and almost 500 meters and more from the eastern side (Faqiri, 2024).

#### *Zhubin Hill, Ali Abad*

This historical area is located approximately 30 kilometers southwest of the center of Kunduz and the Baghlan Sea, and from there, pottery pieces of the Islamic periods such as Timurid, Ghaznavid and before Islam, i.e. the Kushan period, were obtained (Faqiri, 2024: 4).



**Figure 5.** Historical view of Zhubin Hill, Ali Abad District, Kunduz Province

On the west side of it, the Baghlan Sea and the gate of the hill can be seen on the same side, which indicates that there is a house inside the said hill belonging to the historical era, which has not been discovered and explored in detail yet. This hill is of great historical importance and is considered one of the cultural heritages of this land, and the existence of this historically important hill is a proof of the bright history of Kunduz land (Ranjbar, 2023)

#### *Historical area of the old castle of Hazrat Imam Sahib district*

It is located 180 kilometers northeast of Kunduz province and 200 meters south of the shrine of Imam Sahib, and it has been destroyed and turned into ruins throughout history due to various climatic and environmental factors (Ranjbar, 2023)

The entrance gate of the castle is located to the west, inside these ranks, layers of ash have been noticed and the pottery fabrics of the pre-Islamic periods have been obtained. Moreover, the government building related to the local police has been constructed for the security of the area.



**Figure 6.** The ancient facade of the old Imam Sahib castle

#### *Kale Minareh ancient site*

One of the important historical areas known as Kale Minareh is mentioned in the old stories that in the 7th century of Hijri, when Genghisian with countless army and vampires crossed the Amu River after the destruction of the Khwarazm Shahs, the first brutal attack on the ancient Kunduz and Balkh. Outside the fence, a fierce war broke out. Finally, Genghis ordered a massacre, including animals, and raised a minaret from the dead and alive corpses of humans, the top of which is the most cruel monument of Genghis in Kunduz (Ranjbar, 2023)



**Figure 7.** The ancient view of the top of the minaret in Kunduz province

This area is located half a kilometer west of the fence behind the fruit market, in the middle of which is a road built from south to north, in the west is the cemetery of the Islamic period and agricultural lands, on the east side is the fruit market, and on the north side is the newly built road and on the south side It is connected to residential houses where people live (Faqiri, 2024).

#### *The hill and pilgrimage of forty girls*

This pilgrimage is located one kilometer southwest of Kale Minaret. It is surrounded by agricultural lands and houses from the north, residential houses from the south and east, and Qalavartepe from the west. According to the guidance and report of the archeology board, the mentioned place has a cultural value that should be preserved. There is a legend about this pond that during the invasion of Genghis's army on the first day of Eid al-Adha while forty young girls were busy (Eid Gestak) and the army wanted to attack them, at that time they entered the Masjid and prayed for their salvation. From the Allah "SAW" with his wisdom turned this Masjid into an earthen hill and their prayers were accepted to Allah's door. The current condition of this hill is that the soil around it has been dug up by the people and this caused the failure of the huge part. It has become waterlogged, but despite repeated efforts to preserve the said hill, no attention has been paid to it and it remains in a dilapidated state (Ranjbar, 2023)



**Figure 8.** The southern view of the historic Forty Daughters hill

#### *Imam Sahib district and Cemetery*

This district is located on the north side along 64 kilometers of Kunduz city, Imam Sahib's pilgrimage has assigned a special fame to this district (Arshad, 2015).

According to the history of the Turkish language, it is the former name of Imam Sahab (Arhang) or the treasure in the chest of the soil. According to the survey of the technical board of the Department of Historical Abdat, the shrine of Hazrat Imam Sahib covers more than 29 acres. The flag of Hazrat Imam Sahib is raised every year with the participation of thousands of people including scholars, government officials and people from different parts of the country (Faqiri, 2024).



**Figure 9.** Historical view of Haji Shahid Masjid

#### *The historical watershed of Haji Shahid Masjid*

One of the other ancient Masjid s of the Kunduz province is the Haji Shahid Masjid, which is located in the northern suburbs of Kunduz, near the historical hill of Balahisar. According to the historical books, this Masjid has a history of (400) years. The Masjid has a dome-shaped covered pond. With the passage of time, nothing remains of its remains.

The Haji Shahid Masjid, which was previously known as the Momin Masjid , according to the narration of the late Seyyed Abdul Qayyum "Askar", the author of the famous book of Kunduz, a person named Sheikh Ibrahim (Zahri), one of the teachers of Afghan pilgrims in Baitullah Sharif, who comes to Kunduz every year in 1311 with his 14-year-old son.



**Figure 10.** The historical view of Haji Shaheed Masjid

Who had come to Kunduz and was a guest in the house of Mohammad Amin, one of the residents of the neighborhood of Momin Masjid, a young man was killed by the robbers who were lying in wait at night. It turns out that after the same date, the said Masjid was renamed as the Haji Shahid Masjid, and the body of the said Haji and his son are buried in the same Masjid (Ranjbar, 2023).

### *The historical watershed of Saqi Bai Mosque*

Saqibai School is located in the old city of Kunduz, facing the sun, in the end of Ahangari village. The mentioned school has four corners and shape of square, made of baked clay, plaster and lime materials, portico and dome, in the architectural style of the Timurid era of Herat. It was built on three sides of the school, namely, north, south and west, for teachers and students. The domes and domes were built with special decorations. The buildings around the school have been completely destroyed, only the dome of the mosque remains in a dilapidated form (Ranjbar, 2017).



**Figure 11.** View of Saqibai Masjid

### *The historical watershed of Takharistan Masjid*

One of the historical monuments of the ancient land of Kunduz is the Takharistan Masjid. This Masjid, built in a relatively old style, is located in the center of the city of Kunduz. which is dome-shaped and made with baked clay and mud, there are long porticoes on the north and south sides, and many rooms are built on the east side of it, which are used by the students of today's Takharistan school. Its history reaches almost 100 years. This mosque was officially recognized under the title of Takharistan religious school in the Ministry of Education of the country in 1336, and since then, its allocation and budget have been paid by the central government (Ranjbar, 2023)



**Figure 12.** A view of Takharistan Grand Masjid

### *Shrine of Khwaja Mashhad Wali*

The historical shrine of Khwaja of Mashhad, located 6 kilometers east of Kunduz city, has a history of about 375 years (Ranjbar, 2023)



**Figure 13.** Historical view of Khwaja Mashhad Shrine

Khwaja Mashhad Baba is one of the famous shrines of Kunduz city, and it is commonly described after death among Khawariq people. The shrine of Khajeh Mashhad is located in the southeast corner of Kunduz city and he is buried in the village of Khajeh Mashhad, which is famous for his name. His Highness Khwaja Mashhad does not have any historical sources, except for the stone tablet that is buried above his mausoleum, from which land he came, during which one of the Shahs of Afghanistan did he live, and what was his job and occupation, it is only understood that his highness may have come here from Mashhad in Iran and was martyred. Be the tablet on the foot of Khaja of Mashhad was engraved in 1025 AH. Above the tomb of the Khawaja of Mashhad, the Barzag dome was built, and the construction style of the holy shrine has a general similarity with the buildings of the era of the great Sultan of Ghazni (Ranjbar, 2017).

#### *Khan old Abad Castle.*

This historical fort is located approximately five kilometers northeast of Khan Abad district and covers about three acres of land. The old castle has different historical and cultural periods in its heart and is among the rarest historical sites in Kunduz and it belongs to the Western period (Faqiri, 2024).

#### *Ancient site of Rabat, Hazrat Imam Sahib district*

This area is located half a kilometer from Hazrat Imam Sahib district, which contains about five acres of land, surrounded by residential houses, and even Rabat itself is under serious threat of being seized by unknown persons for residential purposes, which is probably the mentioned area was the command of the Alexandria convoy (Ranjbar, 2017).

#### *The historical hills of Chadara*

There are many historical hills in Chahardara district of Kunduz province, which have not yet been registered due to security considerations. Khurd and Bozor hills are located in Chahardara district, 15 km from Kunduz city. The historical tradition is not accurate, but according to local residents, its historical tradition reaches more than hundreds of years (Ranjbar, 2023).

#### *The ancient area of Merch Hill*

Merch Hill is located in the Naseri village of Kunduz, south of Chale Mazar, which is the Naseri village to the north, the airport or Rastaqabad village to the south, the Naseri village

to the east, and residential houses and agricultural lands to the west. There is no detailed information about the historical tradition (Ranjbar, 2017).

#### *Ancient area of Menge Hill*

Meng hill is also located in the village of Naseri near hill Merch. Which is surrounded by agricultural lands, its historical heritage is not known.

#### *Historical area of Gula Hill*

It is located in the south of Kunduz airport, five kilometers from the city. There are no accurate statistics about its historical existence, but according to the notes of the residents who live near that place, their existence has been confirmed for more than two hundred years. Unfortunately, due to the country's civil wars, in their preservation and preservation, like other historical monuments related to this province, not much attention has been paid (Ranjbar, 2017).

#### *Jargozar historical hill*

It is located 14 kilometers north of Kunduz city on the Kunduz Khan Abad highway, it contains three acres and 17 square meters of land and has 200 years of history (Ranjbar, 2023)

### **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis and studies of this article, it can be concluded that Kunduz province is one of the historical provinces of Afghanistan and it has been known by four names throughout history, Kunduz, Kohandez, Kidez and Kunduz. If we look at the history of Kunduz, its geographical location was on the route of the Silk Road. During the time of Alexander the Great and Yaftalian, it was part of the western regions, and it was considered an important center and intersection of the Silk Road between the countries of the East and West of that period.

On the one hand, the historical monuments of this province are of special importance for tourists from different provinces of Afghanistan as well as neighboring countries such as Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. And on the other hand, the mentioned areas of this province are being destroyed, if the government does not pay attention to it, it will turn into ruins after several years.

Kunduz is one of the strategic provinces of Afghanistan and has a very useful and productive role in the country's economy. Shir Khan Bandar is located on the border of modern Tajikistan in terms of the exchange of social, cultural, tourism and different civilizations. The ancient areas of Kunduz Province are of special importance for relieving fatigue and checking tourists from different provinces of the country.

### **Suggestions**

1. The top of the Kunduz fence has been turned into a ruin and has the status of an old castle. The current government of Afghanistan should pay attention to it, otherwise the people of that region will convert this historic shrine into agricultural land.
2. Regarding the preservation and care of the historic Zal castle, which is located in the Qala Zal district of Kunduz province, I request the respected official of the Ministry of Information and Culture to pay serious attention to the preservation and maintenance of this historical castle, which is considered as part of the country's cultural heritage.

3. 19 ancient sites of Kunduz Province, such as: Imam Sahib Mausoleum, Imam Sahib District Old Qala, Khan Abad Old Qala, Saqi Bai Mosque, Khwaja Shrine of Mashhad, Imam Sahib Mehrangar Fort and other historical monuments of this province are facing destruction by themselves. It is possible to prevent the destruction of these areas.

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