



DAŠT-E QAL'Ā

DAŠT-E QAL'Ā (lit., “plain of the fortress”), small *bāzār* village on an irrigation canal near the junction of the Kōkča and *Āmū Darya* (Panj) rivers in the province of Badakšān, northeastern Afghanistan, the site of several earlier settlements. It is the major village on the plain of Torḡay Tīppa (Moḥammad-Nāder Khan, pp. 402-03; tr., 236-37; ed. Sotūda, pp. 251-52), which extends over approximately 220 km² and forms part of *Ḳvāja-ye Ġār woloṣwalī* in *Taḳār welāyat*. It was founded in about 1335/1916-1917, and in 1344-54 Š./1965-75 its population was estimated at 400-750, the population of the plain at 1,760-6,472 (Gentelle, p. 53).

The plain around Dašt-e Qal'a, which has been irrigated and inhabited since the remote past, was thoroughly explored by a French archeological team between 1343 Š./1964 and 1358 Š./1979 (*MDAFA* XXI, XXVI-XXXI).

The first known settlement was a Bronze Age colony from the Mature Indus and post-Harappan periods (Francfort). Although the site was almost abandoned in the early Iron Age (early 1st millennium B.C.E.), it was reoccupied during the Achaemenid period (6th-4th centuries B.C.E.), when a circular fortress and several villages were constructed (Gardin and Lyonnet, pp. 132-36). In the Hellenistic period (3rd-1st century B.C.E.) the large city of *Āy Ḳānom* was founded, possibly as Alexandria Oxeiana, known in the 2nd century C.E. as Eukratideia. There was no break in occupation during the Kushan period (1st-3rd centuries C.E.). A small Islamic city of the pre-Mongol period, *Zūlm*, has been discovered (Bernard and Francfort, pp. 27-38), as well as a Timurid fortification on the old *Bālā Ḥesār* of *Āy Ḳānom*.



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