ABSTRACT

Pre-Anatolian Turkish City and Architecture

Anadolu Öncesi Türklerde Şehir ve Mimarlık

This book traces the history of sedentary Pre-Anatolian Turks from the sixth to the sixteenth century discussing urbanism as well as architecture. The author points out that research on this area has been mainly conducted in the Soviet Union where Central Asia was treated as a uniform entity and the different ethnic groups were not taken into consideration. Studies in Europe and America in the meantime had focused on Iran. Consequently, this volume stands out as it covers Turkish cities and architecture in both Central Asia and Iran.

The early chapters of the book deal with the beginnings of the settled life of Turks and the emergence of their cities. There is a particular emphasis on the Islamic era, and the transformation of Turkish urban civilisation after the spread of Islam under the Karakhanid, the Ghaznavid and the Seljukid dynasties. The origins of caravanserai (ribat, hanakah/khan) along with its meaning and functions, as well as palace structures, are treated as individual chapters. Another chapter has been reserved for mural paintings and ornamentations as architectural examples.
The book covers architecture under the rule of other Turkic dynasties such as the Khwarazmshahs, Atabegs, Il-Khans Mongols and Timurids. The last chapter discusses pre-Turkish Anatolian civilisations from Hittites to Byzantines, and falls slightly outside the scope of the volume.

The author has not provided a map which could have defined the limits of Central and Inner Asia. He has also failed to explain which groups he is referring to when using the term “Pre-Anatolian Turks”, as the reader can be misled into thinking that no Turkic groups other than Oghuz Turks have moved to Anatolia. Oghuz communities from the shores of the Syr Darya are depicted as the first examples of early Turkic urban settlers. The author mentions that they coexisted with nomadic Turks such as the Göks. The author views the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids as the creators of the Turko-Islamic urban civilisation. He argues that the urban pattern composed of a mosque, türbe, caravanserai and madrasa which forms the essence of the Turkish-Islamic city, was set later by Great Seljukids.

Covering a large amount of material, the book remains an important reference on the early and medieval Turkish sedentary life, cities and architecture.

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