

Religion, Society and Urban Environment in Panjikent

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The religion of the Sogdians in the Late Antique period is usually referred to as a single phenomenon assuming the existence of a common “Sogdian Pantheon”. However, Sogdiana is a geographical and not a political term and in the 5th-8th centuries, Sogdiana was a “city-state culture”. There was never a unified “Sogdian state” but a collection of independent or semi-independent principalities sharing common culture, language and background, but also demonstrating important regional differences.

The paper will focus on the religious material from Panjikent – the most studied Sogdian city. We shall discuss the religious life of Panjikent, its religious institutions, the individual cultic practices of the inhabitants, and their interconnections with the urban environment, the social and the administrative structures of Panjikent. In addition, we shall analyze religious models and structures from other better-studied “city-state cultures” (such as the Greek *poleis*), which offer important comparative material for the Sogdian religion.