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FERGANA VALLEY AS SAGDIANA CITY ON THE SILK ROAD: A HISTORICAL AND CULTURAL REAPPRAISAL

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Introduction

The Fergana Valley, located in the heart of Central Asia, has long been considered a fertile and strategic area of trade, agriculture, and cultural exchange. Historically, it was one of the important cities associated with Sogdiana, the ancient Iranian civilization that flourished along the Silk Road.

Historical Context

Ancient Greek and Chinese sources such as those by Strabo and Zhang Qian identified Fergana (then part of Sogdiana) as a prosperous region. The Chinese referred to it as "Dawan" — a land of "Heavenly Horses" — which led to military expeditions and commercial exchanges between Han China and Central Asian principalities.

Fergana as Sogdiana's Gateway

Archaeological findings in sites like Kokand and Margilan indicate that the valley was not just a transit zone but a cultural center of Sogdian language, Zoroastrian religion, and local art. The city's location allowed it to connect China with Persia and India, making it a melting pot of cultures.

Legacy on the Silk Road

The Sogdians were known as merchants and interpreters of the Silk Road. The Fergana Valley's caravanserais, irrigation systems, and handicrafts (especially silk and pottery) signify its active participation in transcontinental trade networks from the 2nd century BCE to the 8th century CE.



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Conclusion

Today, understanding Fergana as part of Sogdiana reshapes how we view its historical role on the Silk Road. It was not a passive path but a vibrant city-region contributing to cultural, commercial, and linguistic exchange. This thesis repositions the Fergana Valley as a central actor in ancient Eurasian interactions.