

Archaeological Representation of Caspian Trade Route on the Territory of Azerbaijan

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Abstract

Historically the economic development on the western coast of the Caspian Sea depended largely on the functioning of international trade routes connecting the Middle East and the Caucasus to the Volga region. Strabo reported in the second century BC on the trade route from the south to the north, called the “Aorses Road”, along which “the goods of Babylon and India” were delivered to the northern countries. Trade arteries in this direction also functioned actively in the era of “geopolitical” rivalry, and then at the time of the trade alliance in the Caucasus between the Arab Caliphate and the Khazar Kaganate in the 7th and 10th centuries. During this period, Vikings used the overland and water routes from the Baltic to the Volga, and from there across the Caspian Sea to the south, which was reflected in numerous testimonies of medieval Arab authors. In the era of Mongolian and then Russian dominance in the 13th-17th centuries the so-called Volga-Caspian road remained the main trade route that connected the South and the North and ensured close inter-regional economic relations. The territory of the modern Azerbaijan (Caucasian Albania in the ancient times, and Shirvan in the Muslim period) was actively involved in this international trade. This is evidenced by numerous archaeological monuments of various kinds. The report will provide information on the status of a number of archaeological sites located on the territory of Azerbaijan along the western coast of the Caspian Sea, directly related to the Caspian trade route.