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Remarks on the Culture of the Neolithic Communities of Central Fergana

Mirsoatova Sayyora Turgunovna

Docent, PhD, Fergana State University

Abstract:

The article describes the study of the culture of the Neolithic period of Central Fergana, its importance in science, attention to this culture and preservation of archaeological monuments.

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It should be noted that the Fergana Valley has a special place in the study of the material culture of Stone Age communities on the scale of Uzbekistan. The oasis is a unique region due to its landscape and climatic conditions, consisting of mountains, mountain slopes and lowlands. This ecological feature is also reflected in the material culture of primitive communities of the valley.

In the Fergana Valley, it was found that people lived continuously and created a unique material culture in the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, which were the last stages of the Stone Age development [5; 6, P. 304]. In particular, the communities of the Mesolithic period lived in the mountains and slopes of the mountains, the last stage of the Mesolithic period, and the communities of the Neolithic period lived in the lowland regions of the valley. Of course, the exploitation of the valley by mankind in this case also indicates that favorable climatic conditions have been created for human habitation on the scale of Central Asia. In ancient times, the waters flowing from the gorges of the mountain regions formed large rivers and streams, and this phenomenon created unique lake basins in the central districts of the valley. Over the centuries, these water bodies have dried up or formed large depressions. From this point of view, most Neolithic communities used to live around existing lakes.

It should be pointed out that the first information about the material culture of the Stone Age communities of the Fergana Valley dates back to the mid-50s of the last century. In particular, the

results of research carried out by B. Z. Hamburg and N. G. Gorbunova in the vicinity of Damkol were of great importance. During the years 1963-64, Y.A.Zadneprovsky conducted extensive research in the central borders of the valley and managed to discover 21 Stone Age sites [3, P. 35-39]. In the following years, the cultural research of Neolithic communities was mainly carried out by U.I.Islamov and V.I.Timofeyev, and the scientific result was determined by the fact that the Neolithic of "Central Fergana" was proved to be a unique independent culture and included in the science [6, P. 304].

Places belonging to this culture (currently more than 80 in number) have been found and studied along different borders of the valley. In particular, in the northern part of the valley - the Madyar group, in the northeastern part - Sariksuv, Mingbulok group sites, in the southern part - Zambar, Taipok, Sigirchilik, Yangisuv group sites, and in the central part, the sites of the Yangi Kadam, Dorazkol, Khanabad groups were studied.

The cultural layers of the sites belonging to the communities of Central Fergana have not been preserved in their original state, and their area levels are not very large. Considering these features, researchers believe that these communities were seasonal settlements [6, P. 107].

As we mentioned above, the culture of Central Fergana also has its own characteristics, which seems to have been manifested in the stone industry. The sites of the Mesolithic and Neolithic communities of Central Fergana are considered to be a stone industry and a micro-stone industry. In the initial stages of the Neolithic development of these communities, the weight of weapons made of stone fragments was high, while in the later stages of development, most of the stone weapons were made of flakes. 80-90 percent of the weapons are made of micro-machine weapons. The high index weight of this type of weapons made of microplates has not been observed in any culture of the Neolithic communities studied in Central Asia. Another feature of the stone industry of the Central Fergana culture is that among the stone products, processed stone tools make up the majority, and the weight of production waste is less. Stone objects made of shards make up 15-30 percent of the total number of stone objects. Therefore, the stone cores extracted from the Central Fergana communities are relatively rare. Especially, many cores of this type were found in places belonging to the Obishir culture [6, P. 106-107].

That is why these features became the basis for distinguishing the culture of Central Fergana as a separate independent culture. Weapons made of stone chips are also interesting, mainly scrapers, awls and sharp weapons of various shapes are presented. Weapons are also available in series. Or, the presence of stone cores with faceted faces, scrapers with a steep, high inner area, and flint tools, albeit in small quantities, are also important factors in determining the distinctiveness of a culture. Microliths of geometric shape are not characteristic of the culture of Central Fergana communities. Only a very small number of microlithic weapons in the form of segments and trapezoids were found. The above-mentioned weapons made of fragments are characteristic of the material culture of the Mesolithic-Neolithic communities of the Central Asian mountain region in terms of their form and methods of processing, as well as their function in life.

In the process of researching the sites belonging to the communities of Central Fergana, almost no pieces of pottery were found. However, there are many ornaments and jewelry. Most of these jewels are made of small, thin stones. Most of them have holes drilled in three parts for wearing. They are very similar to the jewelry of the Lower Zarafshan oasis, Kaltaminor in the hinterland of Kyzylkum, and Sazaghon communities in the Middle Zarafshan oasis in terms of their manufacture, used material, shape, and processing method [2, P. 75].

Recently, more than 80 Neolithic sites have been discovered in the deserts of Central Fergana, which are known in science as the culture of Central Fergana.

Central Fergana Neolithic monuments include Zambar 1, 3, Yangikadam 12, 14, 16, 19, 23, 35, Dorozkul 1, 2, Sariksuv, Mingbulok, Uzunkul 1, 5, Toypok 2, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, Yangisuv, Gortepa, Sigirchilik, Damkol, Madyor 1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 16, Boskum 1-4 can be included. From these places, nuclei designed for the extraction of small fragments, various scrapers, perforators, small pieces of wood, scythes, stone mortars, sharpeners, stone knives, and symmetrical trapezoids were found. At the same time, pointed stone weapons, fragments, stone jewelry and lamps were also found in the places. Most of them were made of different colored flint, shale and river stones, and some weapons were double worked.

In addition, it is worth noting that in some places, weapons incorporating several weapons and, finally, the tips of bow arrows - paykons, which were processed on both sides, were found.

Most of the stone fragments and weapons have been treated and retouched. Stone objects and weapons, as well as ornaments, found in different regions of Central Fergana are remarkable for their similarity. Small pieces of wood used as buttons are common in these places.

Neolithic people made their weapons from flint, chalcedony, and muddy flint. They made a variety of ornaments - jewelry - from various stones. But for some reason, pottery and their fragments were not found in these places.

Of course, not all monuments of the culture of Central Fergana belong to the same era. Most of these cultural monuments belong to the shooting period - the end of the Mesolithic and the beginning of the Neolithic, and can be dated to the end of the 6th millennium BC and the 5th millennium BC. However, most of the weapons found in the northern part of Central Ferghana, i.e. Madyar 3, 4 and others, can belong to the last Neolithic period, i.e. IV-III millennia BC.

In the study of the material culture of the Neolithic communities of Central Fergana, sources were obtained that provide information about the fact that these communities had cultural contacts with neighboring communities that are chronologically the same as them. Studying the issue of mutual cultural relations between primitive communities is the most urgent issue and has been the constant focus of experts in the field. It is known that the Neolithic communities did not live limited to one region, natural conditions, landscape, but had close contact with neighboring communities and adopted one or another aspect of each other's material culture. These cultural connections are primarily manifested in their stone tools, pottery, jewelry, ornaments, and dwellings.

In the stone industry of the Sazaghon communities, there are weapons specific to the material culture of the Neolithic communities of the Central Asian mountain region, and the piece of wood is close to the culture of the Central Fergana communities in terms of the weight of micro piece of wood. Utkir Islamov, the main researcher of the material culture of the Neolithic communities of Central Fergana, in his research, provided evidence that the culture of these communities has some cultural similarities with the cultures of the Hisar Neolithic communities of the neighboring Tajikistan region, Sazaghon communities of the Middle Zarafshan oasis. [6, P. 108-109].

It is worth mentioning that at the time researchers recognized the culture of Central Fergana and Sazaghan as independent cultures that are part of the general Neolithic cultures of the Central Asian mountain region, but both of them have their own characteristics. [6, P. 305]. It should be said that

despite although these two cultures are located at a long distance from each other in terms of geographical location and distance, there is another feature that contributed to the similarities of their mutual material culture. This is explained by the fact that they are located in the intermediate region (mountain slopes) between the mountain region and the lowland region on the other hand, and they have the same unique ecological conditions.

The economy of the primitive tribes who lived on the shores of Central Fergana lakes was not much different from the economy of the Mesolithic tribes that lived before them. In this culture, stone tools related to the production economy were not found [4, P. 78-79]. Besides, as we mentioned above, the boundaries of the areas are small, and since there were short-term settlements here, it can be concluded that these communities were still engaged in herding and hunting, that is, subsistence farming.

However, in the research conducted in the following years, the comments about the transition of Central Fergana Neolithic communities from the absorbing economy to the producing economy were also revealed [7, P. 44-58]. This also reveals the need to conduct new research in scientific perspectives.

The re-examination of the Neolithic monuments located in the Central Fergana region is becoming more and more complicated in recent years in the lands that are being developed rapidly. Because, according to the decision PD-3657 adopted on April 6, 2018, in the course of the development of fisheries in the Fergana Valley, many ponds for breeding fish have been built in place of the Central Fergana desert barrens. done According to estimates, between 1986 and 2020, that is, for 36 years, only 23.27 km², i.e. 1/10, of the 235 km² area in 13 isolated areas remained untouched [1, P. 19]. This, of course, caused a change in the landscape of this region, but also in the fauna and flora.

In conclusion, material culture of the Neolithic communities of Central Fergana was formed on the basis of local cultures, that is, the culture of the Mesolithic communities of Obishir. However, the sites related to the material culture of the communities of the last stage of the development of this culture have hardly been found and studied. As a result of the above-mentioned researches, it is shown that the Fergana Valley was a continuous culture of Stone Age communities in the Neolithic period and this culture has its own characteristics. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve the monuments of the Neolithic period of Central Fergana and the rest of the natural landscape in the area as much as possible and leave them to future generations.

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