

MESOLITHIC PERIOD OF ZARAFSHAN OASIS

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Abstract

This article is devoted to the mesolithic period coverage in the material culture system of the stone age communities of the Zarafshan oasis. It describes the mesolithic period history study in the oasis, the main monuments and their study methods, scientific analysis of archaeological sources and conclusions, the research prospects.

Keywords: archeology, stone age, mesolithic, Zarafshan oasis, Chorbakti, Sazogon 1, Zamichatosh, Karakamar, Achilgor, stone industry, stone tools, cuneiform weapons, scrapers, V.Vinogradov, Ya.Gulomov, U. Islomov, D.N.Lev, M.Djurakulov, N.Kholmatov, genesis.

Introduction. The Zarafshan River, which originates at Turkestan, Zarafshan and Alay Mountains junction, is the third largest oasis in Central Asia (the length of the river is 781 km, the area of the oasis is 41880 km²). Zarafshan oasis, in its turn, consists of 3 components: 1. Upper Zarafshan, 2. Central Zarafshan and Lower Zarafshan oases, Central Zarafshan oasis corresponds to the Samarkand lowlands. The Central Zarafshan oasis has a view extending in the submeridian direction between Turkestan and Zarafshan mountain ranges. The oasis is bounded on the south by the western part of Zarafshan mountain range (Chakilkalin, Koratepa, Ziyadin-Zirabulok)(Figure 1).

Zarafshan oasis is one of the most promising places in the material culture study of the stone age communities. Omonkoton, Takalisay cave sites, Kotirbulak, Zirabulak monuments, Samarkand sites of the late paleolithic period, Khojamazgil, Siabcha monuments belong to the Mousterian period communities of the oasis. The Neolithic monuments were first studied in the Lower Zarafshan oasis by Uzbek archaeological expedition staff of the UzAS (Ya. Gulomov, U. Islamov), in recent years by the IAE staff of the Russian Academy of Sciences (A.V.Vinogradov, E.D.Mamedov), the staff of "Geography" Faculty of Tashkent state

university(E.D.Mamedov), the staff of “Archeology” department of SamSU (M.Djurakulov, B.Amirkulov, N.Kholmatov) as well as Uzbek-Polish (K.Shimchak, M.Khojanazarov) and Uzbek-French (F. Brunet) international archeological expeditions.

The neolithic monuments study in the Central Zarafshan oasis was carried out in the 60s and 80s of the last century by the archeological expedition staff D.N.Lev, M. Djurakulov, N. Kholmatov of SamSU, from 1986 to the present, N.U. Kholmatov has been continuing this research directly, and as a result of his research, Sazoghan introduced the neolithic culture to Central Asian archeology as an independent culture. (Fig. 2).

Method and style - Zarafshan oasis is one of the most promising regions in the stone age monuments study. Many stone age monuments have been discovered on the basis of paleogeographic, hydro-geological, paleoclimatological and archeological researches carried out in the oasis. In particular, the mesolithic period monuments have been studied. Modern research methods were used in the study of monuments. As a result, a large amount of archaeological evidence, paleobotanical, paleozoological, geological materials, data were obtained. The achievements of the natural sciences were widely used in the study, i.e. pollination from the cultural layer (pollen), radiocarbon analysis (Uchashi 131, Oyokagitma, Achilgor sites). Also, the nature of the monuments stone industry was determined on the basis of technical-typological analysis. Based on the results obtained through this research method and techniques, the specific features of the material culture of the Mesolithic period communities are highlighted.

Results and observations. From the above data, it can be seen that until recent years, the mesolithic period monuments, which is the middle part of the stone age in the Zarafshan oasis, were unknown. Therefore, the culture genesis of the Sazogon neolithic communities was also controversial.

This article describes the scientific results obtained in recent years in the mesolithic monuments study in the Zarafshan oasis.

Based on the recent research results on the material culture of the mesolithic communities of the Zarafshan oasis, the following information can be given.

These data are monuments belonging to the material culture of the mesolithic period communities, such as Chorbakti, Sazogon 1, Zamichatosh, Karakamar, Achilgor sub-cultural stratum, which are currently being studied.

Chorbakti Mesolithic sites.

As soon as well-known archaeologist A.V. Vinogradov began researching the Mesolithic monuments of the Kyzylkum region, the Lower Zarafshan oasis, they suggest that stone tools typologically do not resemble stone tools in the Central East, Caspian Mesolithic communities, on the contrary, they emphasize that the eastern regions of Central Asia have mountain and mountain slopes, Late Paleolithic, Mesolithic monuments, stone industry traditions and this information is provided by the U.I. Islamov also admitted. This scientific view was confirmed in practice by the results of subsequent studies. In particular, in the

second half of the 80s of the last century, the Khorezm archaeological expedition of Ethnography institute of the RussianAS (A.V. Vinogradov), the Geography faculty of Tashkent state university (E.D. Mamedov), the archaeological expedition of SamSU (M.D. Djurakulov, N. Kholmatov) together, they managed to find the hitherto unknown Chorbakti oasis of the Zarafshan River and explore more than sixty Mesolithic and Neolithic sites. A study of the Chorbakti Mesolithic sites (Chorbakti 11, 23, 27, 41) showed that these communities material culture was markedly different from the local Kaltaminor communities cultures. A typological analysis of stone tools showed that the stone industry of these places was a slash-and-burn industry, Samarkand area, especially the Central Asian mountainous region of the Late Paleolithic, there are monuments of the Mesolithic period, self-propelled scrapers typical of the stone industry, "nail" scrapers, cuneiform weapons, scrapers with a vertical working area, nuclei processed on the front side, flake weapons with different finishes on the side edges, different types of firearms on the sides, and the raw material of stone weapons (black flint-shale slate) is similar to the raw materials of Samarkand weapons. On this basis, the material culture of these monuments was included in the group of cultures of the mountain communities of Central Asia and was dated to the Mesolithic period.

Archaeological sources obtained as the **Sazogon I site** study result are important in illuminating the material culture of the Mesolithic communities of the Central Zarafshan oasis. The area stone industry was a slash-and-burn industry, and a typological analysis of stone tools showed that it resembled the material culture of the Mesolithic-Neolithic communities of the mountainous region of Central Asia. Based on these features, the Sazogon I site was counted with the last stages of the Mesolithic period and the first Neolithic period. In their stone industry, the historical roots of culture origin have been clarified by observing the traditions of technological methods of processing weapons, typical of the Late Paleolithic monuments of Samarkand.

The typological analysis results of the sources obtained in the **Zamicha-Tash site** study are also of special importance in the material culture coverage of the Mesolithic communities of the Central Zarafshan oasis..

The **Achilgor site**, studied on the northern slope of the Koratepa mountain range in the Central Zarafshan oasis, is a multi-cultural stratified monument, the lower cultural stratum which belongs to the Mesolithic period. Cultural layer stone tools - shears and microparads, sheets processed when the side edge is not rounded, shears tools bent and straight in the upper section, scrapers (the upper section has a curved working area). Ribbed blades, archaic-looking broad blades, perforated blades, cuneiform blades, scraper blades, microchopper, large-bladed blades, disc scrapers, vertical work area scrapers, side-operated bladed blades, large-sized blades, disks, conical, prismatic stone cores. The stone culture of the lower cultural stratum combines elements typical of the material culture of the Mesolithic-Neolithic communities of the Central Asian mountainous region on the one hand, and the lowland region on the other. These stone tools are relatively old in their industry, and

they resemble monuments stone tools belonging to the Mesolithic and even Late Paleolithic communities of the Central Asian mountain region. This fact can be substantiated by the data obtained on high-scraping weapons (high scrapers) and ponasimon weapons, which have a vertical working area, found in the Late Paleolithic, Mesolithic monuments of Central Asia. In particular, the Jabal cave site in Central Asia is located in cultural layers 5a, 7,8, there are among the Dam-Dam-Chashma 1 space 3.5 cultural layers, Dam-Dam-Chashma 2 space 4 (upper) cultural layer, in the material culture of the Lower Zarafshan oasis Chorbakti Mesolithic sites, among the stone tools of Samarkand Upper Paleolithic site, Obishir Culture, Machay, Join, Tajikistan Cuisine, 1st cultural horizon of Shugnov space, on the 3rd cultural horizon of Tutkovul site, stone tools of the Chil-Chor-Chashma site. So, based on the above facts, we can make the following points: 1. Scrapers with a vertical working area made of flake are more relevant to the material culture of the Mesolithic, Upper Paleolithic communities than to the material culture of the Neolithic communities of Central Asia; 2. This type of weapon was found to be a weapon typical of the material culture of the Late Paleolithic, Mesolithic communities of the mountains and slopes, compared to the material culture of the Stone Age communities of the lowlands of Central Asia. As for the Ponasimon weapons, such weapons were found during the study of the Samarkand site, the Shugnov monument, as well as in the study of monuments such as Obishir 1-V, Machay, Beshkent 1-4, Ashxona, Tutqovul (2nd horizon). Based on the above information about the two types of stone tools and the typological analysis of other complex stone tools, it was concluded that the lower cultural stratum of Achilgor belongs to the material culture of the stone age Mesolithic communities.

The materials of the Mesolithic monuments of the Zarafshan oasis mentioned above provide a scientific basis for the genesis of the cultures of the Neolithic communities of the oasis.

Conclusion.

1. On the basis of archeological researches carried out in the Zarafshan oasis in recent years, new Mesolithic monuments such as Chorbakti 11, 23, 27, 41, Sazogon 1, Zamichatosh, Karakamar, Achilgor have been discovered.
2. In the study of these monuments, information was obtained on the paleogeographic, paleohydro-geological conditions of the Mesolithic period of the oasis.
3. In the study of these monuments, a large amount of archeological material was obtained, and on the basis of technical-typological analysis of stone tools, it was determined that the material culture of the Mesolithic communities of the oasis is part of the Mesolithic culture of the Central Asian mountain region.
4. In the genesis of the culture of the Sazoghan communities of the Middle Zarafshan oasis, the participation of the material culture of the local Mesolithic communities of the local Chorbakti, Sazogon 1, Zamichatosh, Karakamar, Achilgor was determined.

Suggestions:

1. Expansion of the archeological research scope in the ancient northern and southern valleys of Lower Zarafshan, the discovery of hitherto unknown Mesolithic monuments.
2. Expansion of the scope of archeological research in the Middle Zarafshan oasis, the discovery of hitherto unknown Mesolithic monuments.

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