



Some Considerations on The History Of Human Settlement In The Natural-Geographical Regions Of Uzbekistan

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Abstract: This study explores the history of human settlement in the natural-geographical regions of Uzbekistan, focusing on the ethnogenesis and cultural development of various ethnic groups. The research aims to analyze historical sources and archaeological findings to trace settlement patterns and socio-economic transformations. The methodology includes a historical and comparative approach, utilizing archaeological, anthropological, and geological data. Key studies by researchers such as B.Ye. Bijanov, Ye.A. Vinogradov, and M.A. Itina provide insights into settlement activities from the Neolithic to the Bronze Age. Excavations in regions such as Ustyurt, Khorezm, and the Zarafshan Valley reveal evidence of economic adaptation, migration, and ethno-integration processes. The results highlight how geographical factors influenced human settlement, with nomadic and sedentary populations shaping distinct cultural traditions. Findings suggest that environmental changes, such as shifting river courses, played a crucial role in population movements and settlement structures. The study concludes that Uzbekistan's historical landscape was shaped by continuous interactions between various ethnic groups, contributing to the region's rich cultural heritage.

Keywords: Ustyurt, Sultan Uvays Mountains, Okchadarya, Kyzylkum, Aral Sea, Zamonbobo, Tozabog'yop, Chust, Sopollitepa, Suvyorgan.

Introduction

It should be noted that there are many works, articles, monographs and dissertations in the national historiographies of Central Asia that consider this period in one way or another. However, to this day there is no global concept or conceptual approaches. In addition, often in the works devoted to this period, the emotional and patriotic feelings of the authors suppress the possibility of comprehensive and objective coverage of the problem with all.

It is known that the natural location and territorial boundaries of historical-geographical regions do not overlap; they are separated by natural barriers such as towering mountains and steppes, each having its distinct territorial borders. Secondly, their geographical locations are not situated within the same coordinates, which is why humans have settled in specific regions since ancient times.

Usually, the population, whose lifestyle was associated with a settled agricultural culture, named their places of residence based on the natural and geographical features of the area, while nomadic peoples assigned their settlements the names of tribes and clans. In general, as a result of various historical events, including demographic processes, there was a change in the composition of the population, and the merger of various ethnic groups led to the fact that some tribal associations assimilated with the population of other regions. The intensification of ethnointegration processes had a significant impact on the ethnocultural and ethnocultural relations of peoples. The acceleration of the process of transition of the pastoral population to a sedentary lifestyle has led to a number of changes in the way of life and economic activity of people.

Methodology

Sources and literature devoted to natural-geographical condition indicate that they clearly preserve echoes of the historical past of peoples who led a sedentary or nomadic lifestyle. It is in this sense that one can say that natural-geographical conditions are a kind of mirror image of the people.

B.Ye. Bijanov conducted archaeological research in the Ustyurt region, specifically in the Shakhpakhta basin. According to his findings, artifacts obtained from cultural layers at sites No. 1, 2, 3, and 4 belong to the Lower Acheulean stage.

In the Ustyurt region, Ye.A. Vinogradov also carried out research and achieved significant results. It was noted that artifacts recovered from the cultural layer of the Burli-3 site, located in the left area of the Sultan Uvays Mountains, belong to the final stage of the Stone Age.

The studies conducted by S.P. Tolstov, A.V. Vinogradov, and M.A. Itina provide information about the factors influencing the development of all aspects of the economy of hunter-gatherers during the Neolithic, Eneolithic, and Bronze Ages. Their research also documents the discovery of stone tools at settlements and the presence of human remains in burial sites, indicating the rapid development of ethnic processes.

A.V. Vinogradov studied the topographical distribution of Neolithic tribal communities in the Khorezm oasis, as well as the architectural features of dwellings and the history of their material and spiritual culture, presenting his findings to the academic community.

The large-scale study of the construction activities of the Bronze Age population in the Lower Amu Darya region was initiated in the early 1950s by M.A. Itina, a researcher from the Khorezm expedition.

Ye.B. Bijanov continued archaeological research at the sites previously recorded in the Ustyurt region and succeeded in obtaining sources related to the history of the use of natural resources by hunters at the Yesen 2, 3, Qoraquduq, and Churuk 12 sites during the Middle and Late Acheulean periods, as well as the Mesolithic period.

During A.K. Avizova's study of the weapons found in the cultural layers of these sites, it was determined that 36-46-61% of the tools were hunting weapons (such as spear and arrowheads, stone scrapers, and stone knives).

Excavations of residential structures in northern Ustyurt revealed that in the second millennium BCE, livestock farming dominated the local economy. The dwellings were built

in the form of underground shelters, and handmade pottery as well as remnants of bronze tools were discovered.

Research conducted by Ye.A. Vinogradov in the Ustyurt region, specifically in the left area of the Sultan Uvays Mountains, revealed that artifacts recovered from the cultural layer of the Burli-3 site belonged to the final stage of the Stone Age.

Thus, during the Pleistocene glaciation period, the Sultan Uvays Mountains provided an open environment that was favorable for human habitation, the use of natural resources, and ecological stability.

The studies conducted by S.P. Tolstov, A.V. Vinogradov, and M.A. Itina provide insights into the factors influencing the development of various economic sectors of hunter-gatherer societies during the Neolithic, Eneolithic, and Bronze Ages. The discovery of stone tools at settlements and human remains in burial sites indicates the rapid progression of ethnic processes.

According to the results of archaeological research, it is noteworthy that the dense settlement of tribal communities in the Sho'roxon and Sultan Uvays Mountain regions during the Neolithic period was likely influenced by the rising water levels of the Amu Darya.

The large-scale study of the construction activities of the Bronze Age population in the Lower Amu Darya region was initiated in the early 1950s by M.A. Itina, a researcher from the Khorezm expedition. In her research on the Jonbos-Kukcha regions, she observed that settlements had significantly increased along the flatlands and elevated slopes near the water basins between the sand dunes of the Kyzylkum Desert. She attributed this expansion to the eventual drying up of the Dovdon and Daryoliq tributaries by the early second millennium BCE.

Indeed, the works of the Khorezm expedition researchers contain no evidence of artifacts from Bronze Age sites along the banks of the Dovdon and Daryoliq tributaries, confirming the cessation of water supply in these regions.

B.I. Vaynberg's assertion that the Amu Darya's waters shifted toward the Sarykamys and Uzboy regions at the beginning of the 7th century BCE can be supported, as he based his conclusion on artifacts recovered from the Quysis site.

From the late first half to the mid-second half of the second millennium BCE, populations from the northwestern Khorezm oasis and the northern-southwestern regions of the Aral Sea migrated to the southern Okchadarya basin, settling on the right bank of the Amu Darya. Around the same period, a group of pastoral tribes from northeastern Kazakhstan (associated with the Andronovo culture) also migrated to this area, while other groups settled in the Lower Zarafshan, the Tashkent and Akhangaran valleys, as well as Bukhara-Qarako'l and Central Fergana, engaging in ethnic interactions.

At the end of the 7th millennium BCE and the middle of the 5th millennium BCE, during the early Neolithic period, the Zarafshan River, which originates from towering mountains, expanded its reach into the northern Kyzylkum region. The subsequent rise in water levels led to the formation of the Daryosoy tributary, which created favorable conditions for human settlement along its banks. This facilitated economic activity in the area, as evidenced by artifacts discovered in the dwellings at the Uchashi 131 site.

The Zarafshan River is the third-largest river in Central Asia, with a length of 781 km. Originating from the Tian Shan mountains, it collects water and flows westward, forming three distinct natural-geographical regions: Western, Central, and Lower Zarafshan.

In the Central Zarafshan region (present-day Samarkand province), the abundance of natural resources led to a dense settlement of Neolithic tribal communities. Extensive archaeological research conducted by the Archaeology Group of Samarkand State University has yielded unique sources related to the history of Neolithic society. For instance, the Oxalik site, located in the ravines forming part of the Qaratepa mountain range, was one of the key settlement sites studied.

In the central plains of the Fergana Valley, the study of Neolithic tribal settlements began in the mid-1950s. The Neolithic communities in this region were divided into groups that settled in specific areas. The Madyar group resided in the northeastern part Sariqsuv; the Mingbuloq group in the south Zimbard, Tayloq, Sigirchilik, and Yangisuv; while the central part included settlements such as Yangi-Qadam, Dorazkol, and Xonobod. These settlements illustrate the ethnic processes that took place during the Neolithic period.

The geographical features of the Tashkent Valley distinguish it from other historical and cultural regions, influencing patterns of human settlement. In published research, archaeologists have found it challenging to trace archaeological sources related to the fate of Mesolithic hunter-gatherer successors around the city of Tashkent. However, in the Ohangaron Valley, archaeological studies have been conducted on Neolithic tribal settlements, particularly around the Tuyabo'g'iz Reservoir.

Scientific Methods in the Study of the Topic:

- Scientific approach;
- Chronological consistency;
- Historical analysis;
- Comparison and justification;
- Utilization of achievements in ethnography, archaeology, anthropology, geology, and geography.

Result and Discussion

Thus, in the geographical regions of Ustyurt, Zarafshan, Kyzylkum, Central Zarafshan, Fergana, and Tashkent, Neolithic tribal communities engaged in ethnic interactions. The daily activities of the populations settled in these regions adapted to the conditions of the Eneolithic period, during which ethnic relations facilitated economic and cultural exchanges over the years. The economic traditions established by the Eneolithic populations were carried forward by their descendants into the Bronze Age.

The management system based on public ownership has damaged animal husbandry, which had a set of rules that had become a tradition over the centuries. This complex was formed on the basis of family-kinship and clan-community relations. During the sociological study of the transformation of ethno-cultural identity and, in general, during the research process, it became clear that there are almost no local and tribal relations among the ethnic groups living in the lowlands of the studied region, whereas among the

Kungrats of mountainous regions they manifest themselves very clearly, especially during their family and community events.

In each cultural-economic type, the population, influenced by geographical factors, reached a certain level of economic development by the Bronze Age. Researchers have noted that in regions such as Khorezm, Bukhara-Qorako'l, Tashkent, and Central Zarafshan, daily activities were conducted in semi-underground dwellings, with construction materials consisting of tree bark, branches, reeds, and clay. However, in the Fergana and Surkhan regions, people abandoned underground dwellings in favor of above-ground structures, applying innovations in construction techniques. These advancements in construction, both in quality and scale, were carefully designed and implemented according to well-planned schemes, marking the beginning of a new phase in settlement architecture. This process continued into subsequent historical periods.

Conclusion

The information presented above allows us to draw the following conclusions:

- In the natural-geographical and paleoecological conditions of our republic, the number of inhabitants in open-type settlements increased from the Early Stone Age, gradually transitioning to cave dwellings. As population density grew, communities progressively assimilated neighboring natural-economic regions, expanding the geography of new cultural-economic settlement types.
- From the early to mid-2nd millennium BCE, sedentary wooden-structure dwellers from the Volga-Don and southwestern Ural regions, along with nomadic pastoralist tribes from northeastern Kazakhstan, migrated to the Lower Amu Darya, Lower Zarafshan Valley, Tashkent, and Fergana valleys. Through interactions and integration with the indigenous population, these groups contributed to the formation of regionally distinctive cultures, including the Tozabagyab and Suvyorgan cultures in Khorezm, the Zamanbaba culture in the Bukhara-Karakul oasis, the Akhangaran Valley culture in Tashkent, and the Chust culture in Fergana.
- During the second half of the 2nd millennium BCE, the Surkhan Valley saw the emergence of the Sopollitepa settlement, while in the late Bronze Age, the Chust settlement's architectural and construction activities became a subject of separate archaeological research.
- Based on the information presented above, the following suggestions are proposed:
- Continue the in-depth and scientifically grounded study of the complex historical path of our ancestors and enrich the topic with new sources.
- Conduct a theoretical and comparative analysis of the history of human adaptation to Uzbekistan's natural-geographical regions based on recorded historical sources to reach a unified conclusion.
- Utilize this article as a reference source for shedding light on the ancient history of Uzbekistan.

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