



ILLUMINATION OF THE ANCIENT HISTORY OF WESTERN SOGDIA IN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

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ABSTRACT

“G'arbiy Sug'dning qadimgi xalqlari tarixini arxeologik manbalarda yoritilishi” mavzusiga qisqacha ma'lumot. Maqolada G'arbiy Sug'dning qadimgi aholisi yashagan manzilgohlar paleolit, mezolit va neolit davriga mansub yodgorliklar Kichiktuzkon, Kattatuzkon, Darvozaqir I, Darvozaqir II, Uchtut, Sarmishsoy, bronza davriga yodgorligi Zamonbobo va boshqa manzilgohlardan topilgan arxeologik topilmalar haqida ma'lumotlar ko'rib chiqilgan.

In historical sources, the Zarafshan and Kashkadarya oases were referred to as Sogdiana. The territory of Sogdiana has been divided by historian scholars into three parts from a natural-geographical point of view: Southern Sogd, Central Sogd, and Western Sogd. The regions located west of the Zarafshan valley, that is, west of Karmana and the Malik desert, were included in Western Sogd. Its central city was Bukhara. Archaeological research work in Bukhara, which was part of the Western Sogd territory, began in the 1930s. In the study of archaeological sites throughout this territory, scholars such as Ya. G. Gulomov, V.A. Shishkin, A. Askarov, U. Islomov, M. R. Kosimov, I. Akhrrorov, T. Mirsoatov, O. B. Obelchenko, S. K. Kabanov, V.D. Zhukov, G. V. Shishkina, Kh. Duke, J.Q. Mirzaahmedov, P. Valiyev, G. Dadaboyev, U. Olimov, Sh. T. Odilov, and G.L. Semenov made a great contribution. (A. Muhammadjonov. 1991: 8) The archaeological research they conducted continuously over the years yielded results. Rich information was collected about the ancient nature of Western Sogd, its population, and the unique culture they created, as well as the formation of primitive cattle-breeding and farming economies, and the emergence of large and small villages and cities.

In ancient times, the inhabitants of Egypt called their homeland “the gift of the Nile,” while historians of our homeland called the Bukhara oasis “the gift of the Zarafshan River.” This is because this region, located at the lower reaches of the river, was formed due to the silt deposits carried by the Zarafshan over thousands of years. The countless streams, lakes, and ponds formed from its floods played a life-giving role in the formation of the oasis's nature and in its development and cultivation. After the glacial period ended and the climate began to warm, the thick glaciers and eternal snows in the Turkestan, Hisar, and Zarafshan mountain ranges melted, and as a result, the Zarafshan River flowed spreading over a very wide area. Its right bank washed the Payariq and Khatirchi hills in the present-day Samarkand region, while its left bank washed the Pastdargom and Kattakurgan ridges. Near the present-day Navoi city,

it broke through the narrow Khazora gorge and flowed into the cone-shaped Bukhara oasis. In the Bukhara oasis, it formed several branches such as the ancient Khitfar (Vabkent), Rudizar (Shahrud), Karakoldarya, Mokhondarya, and Tayqir, and flowed spreading throughout the entire oasis. In those times, the valley part of the present-day Bukhara region consisted of lakes and swamps formed from the floodwaters of the Zarafshan, which were covered with dense thickets, shrubs, and tugai forests. According to research conducted on a large scale in the lower part of the Zarafshan valley, this region was very suitable for the habitation of primitive human groups. The study of countless stone tools found from Stone Age monuments shows that in the distant past, people mainly lived on mountain slopes, along the banks of streams and ravines, as well as at the foothills and around springs gushing from tectonic cracks in the earth's crust. Because the nature of such places was rich in the animal world, it was suitable for hunting. Remains of various wild animal bones have been found from monuments belonging to the Paleolithic period. These included elephant, brown bear, hyena, wild bull, deer, kulan, mountain goat, argali, and other various hunted animals and birds that lived there. Traces of the primitive culture of the Stone Age have been found and studied mostly in the eastern part of the Bukhara region—at the foothills of the Karatau and Zarafshan ranges. The Uchtut Middle Paleolithic site and stone tool workshop, discovered by researcher Kh. Muhamedov in 1958, 22–25 km north of Navoi city, and first studied by M. R. Kosimov and later by T. Mirsoatov, is considered such a site. (A. Muhammadjonov. 1991: 13)

The Uchtut monument is multi-layered in terms of period; its lower layers belong to the Mousterian, Upper Paleolithic, and Mesolithic periods, while its upper layer belongs to the Neolithic period, as determined by archaeologists. According to T. Mirsoatov's statement, there are more than a hundred shafts at Uchtut, of which 35 have been opened and studied, and tools corresponding to them have been found from the shaft channels. (A. Askarov. 1994: 55)

Academician A. Askarov states in the book "History of Uzbekistan" that "shafts like the Uchtut monument are found only in monuments belonging to the Neolithic period. Neolithic shafts have also been studied in countries such as England, France, Denmark, Sweden, Northern Germany, and Belarus. Scholars are unanimous that the first shafts began to appear only from the Neolithic period. According to scholars, in this period, the specialized extraction of raw materials became widespread and reached the level of an art. Later, that is, by the Bronze Age, this discovery laid the foundation for the beginning of mining art." (A. Askarov. 1994: 56)

According to the information given by Muhammadjonov in the book "Ancient Bukhara," in the 1950s–1960s, under the leadership of Ya. G. Gulomov, a special archaeological group conducted large-scale archaeological research along the dried-up ancient beds of the Mokhondarya, Gujaili, and Gurdush rivers, which in ancient times had carried the waters of the Zarafshan to the Amu Darya. Through the archaeological monuments discovered in those years, it was determined that the waters of the Zarafshan had reached the Amu Darya along these beds, and later the water decreased and stopped flowing, and as a result, they dried up due to lack of water, and the ancient connections between the Amu Darya and the Zarafshan were severed. At the same time, hunting and fishing tribes settled in the basin of the ancient

beds in the V–III millennia BC, and traces of the unique culture they created were found and studied.

In 1960–1963, Neolithic period monument remains were discovered and examined in 3 places around Kichiktuzkon along Gujaili, in 35 places around Kattatuzkon, in 2 places around Lokhlikol and Echkiqiron along Mokhondarya, and in 11 places along the ancient bed of the Kashkadarya south of Paykand. (Gulomov. Ya. G., Islomov. U., Askarov. A. 1966: 61–62) Judging by the locations of the recorded and excavated monuments and the various material finds obtained from them, the Gujaili and Mokhondarya basins, which connected to the Amu Darya northwest and west of the Sayot village lands in the present-day Karakul district and from Zamonbobo, were among the most picturesque and populous places in the lower reaches of the Zarafshan valley in the V–III millennia BC. In 1961–1963, U. Ismoilov discovered and studied the remains of primitive people's dwellings at a place called Darvozaqir on the northern shore of Kattatuzkon, 40 km northwest of the center of Karakul district. Of the more than 40 Neolithic period sites recorded in the lower Zarafshan, only two—Darvozaqir I and Darvozaqir II monuments—have preserved traces of cultural layers. During the excavation work carried out at the Darvozaqir I site, the site of a quadrangular dwelling, and outside the dwelling, several hearth sites somewhat reddened from fire were excavated. Around the hearths and inside the dwelling, tools made of white, yellowish-white, reddish-brown flint stones, fragments of pottery vessels, bones of fish, birds, and various wild animals hunted and consumed were scattered. In addition, arrowheads, bow arrows, sickles used in making sickle handles, knife-like cutters widely used in processing, tanning, and sewing animal skins into clothing, wraps, bedding, and shoes, various scrapers, awls and needles, drills used in repairing broken pottery vessels and drilling beads and necklaces, wedges and small axes made of nephrite stone, and small stone fragments were found.

The analysis of the archaeological finds shows that in the Neolithic period, in the Darvozaqir I–II sites, hunting, especially fishing, was the main source of economic life for the ancient inhabitants. A deep study of the archaeological materials found from Neolithic period monuments and a comparison of the finds from Neolithic period monuments studied in Karakalpakstan, Kazakhstan, the Urals region, and other places have shown that the material culture traces preserved from the ancient hunting-fishing population who lived on the shores of Kattatuzkon belong to the famous “Kelteminar culture” discovered and studied by S. P. Tolstov on the Amu Darya foothills in the ancient Khorezm soil, and they are dated to the IV–III millennia BC.

Zamonbobo is the name of a lake that formed in ancient times in the lower reaches of the Zarafshan basin, on the bank of one of its drying beds. Archaeological research work was carried out here in 1950 by academician Ya. G. Gulomov, and later in 1961–1964 by academician A. Askarov. The archaeological materials found here indicate that the population of Zamonbobo engaged in agriculture and domestic cattle-breeding. This site was the settlement of a clan community of the early Bronze Age.

In Western Sogd, the role of the Zarafshan River in the social-economic development of the population's habitation is unparalleled. The population of Western Sogd, who initially lived by hunting and gathering, by the Bronze Age engaged in agriculture and domestic animal

husbandry. Labor tools were improved. Several types of crafts emerged. Painting appeared. Religious views took shape.

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