



Settlement Laws of Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age Peasant Communities in the Fergana Valley

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<i>Article History</i>	<i>Abstract</i>
Received: 19 October 2023 Revised: 28 November 2023 Accepted: 23 December 2023	Annotation: Since the ancient stone age, people have tried to occupy different areas based on natural climatic conditions. They occupied places with comfortable living conditions as much as possible. In this article highlights of settlement laws of eneolithic and early bronze age peasant communities in the fergana valley.
CC License CC-BY-NC-SA 4.0	Keywords: settlement laws, eneolithic and early bronze age, Fergana valley, community.

1. Introduction

Since the beginning of its history, mankind has tried to occupy the place where the living conditions are good. Therefore, ancient people's lifestyle, the methods of economic management were developed depending on natural factors such as natural geographical conditions - soil, water resources, flora and fauna, the presence or absence of minerals, and the areas where they are located.[1]

The tribes that fell into similar conditions, i.e. lands with favorable natural and climatic conditions, abundant land and water resources, and mineral resources, took early steps towards the first civilizations.[2] Due to the fact that in the recent past, they had the ability to make a living by collecting natural resources or farming, the process of adaptation to a new economy has been delayed. However, the greatest achievement of the first farming communities was that the whole community was full as soon as they received the harvest of the first crop. Now the most important thing for them to do was to collect their crops and maximize the possibility of keeping them as long as possible. Hence, the first peasant communities of the Joytun culture learned the methods of effective use of the soil architecture of Central Asia. Now, they have abandoned the old reeds and temporary living quarters made of various branches, such as basements and semi-basements. They gave up temporary residences such as reeds, basements, and semi-basements made of various branches. Then, they liked to live in one-room houses made of mud, brick or straw, and surrounded it with a small courtyard.[3] At one end of the yard, pits were dug for storing grain products, and they were plastered with straw plaster from the inside. Products such as barley or wheat stored in such baskets were well preserved until the next harvest. The method of storing grain products

in barns was used in the daily life of local peasant communities in the first half of the 20th century, both because of its well-thought-out design.[4]

However, we should not forget that there are several other factors that motivated the development of the first farming communities of the Neolithic period. In particular, the first farming culture of Joytun appeared and developed in the Neolithic period in Southern Turkmenistan. Artifacts similar to the archeological findings found in Joytun were also widespread in the Ancient Near East. For instance, the pottery found in Joytun is the exact origin of the pottery found in the monuments of Sialk I in Iran, Khasuna and Jarmo in northern Iraq, or the sickle steps made of stone with geometric shapes, which were common in the Neolithic period, are reminiscent of the steps that were common in the Ancient East. The overall shape of the scythes is also very similar.[5]

The monuments of Hassuna, Jarmo, and Sialk I (Iran), shown above, are located in the Ancient Near East and belong to the regions where the early farming culture spread. The Joytun culture, located in the territory of southern Turkmenistan, was also well connected with the regions of the Ancient East through the territory of Iran (especially through southwestern Iran). So, even though the Joytun culture is geographically located far north of the Two Rivers, it seems that the socio-economic and cultural relations between the two centers were sufficiently well developed, compared to the prevalence of the early farming culture here.

However, if we look at the evolution of ancient cultures in Central Asia, we can see how great the difference between the cultures of the tribes of the lower, middle and upper Zarafshan oases and the Zoitun culture in the Neolithic period is, and it is impossible to understand that there would be such a big difference. The fact is that the level of development of the culture gradually decreases as you go from the Joytun culture to the northeast. Why such a sharp difference? In a situation where the natural and climatic conditions are almost the same, on one side, the advanced Joytun early farming culture appeared, while on the other side, a very simple system of farming based on hunting, gathering and fishing appeared and developed in the neighboring area.[6] In some complexes of these regions, it is possible to see the first signs of animal husbandry and even agriculture.

The existence of favorable climatic conditions, sufficient land and water resources, and the abundance of sunny days were not enough for such a big difference. If only climatic and geographical conditions had formed the oldest agricultural culture, such a geographical area would have developed in the middle and upper reaches of the Zarafshan River,[7] or in very large parts of the Ferghana Valley, already in the Neolithic period. Unfortunately, the material culture of most of the Neolithic communities in these regions remained at the level of the Mesolithic period.[8]

That's why we have to emphasize not only that there is a favorable geo-economic space for the emergence of the Joytun culture in South Turkmenistan, but also that the ethno-cultural influence of the peasant communities of the Ancient East penetrated to the neighboring regions and took them under its sphere of influence.

A large part of Central Asia had regions with favorable climatic conditions for agriculture, but the living standards of the tribes residing there remained at the lifestyle of hunters, fishermen and gatherers. Because the life of these tribes had no direct cultural contact with the regions of the Ancient East, that is, with the population of developed peasant communities, and even if it was, it was clearly noticeable that its influence was small.

Tribes with favorable natural and climatic conditions, but located in regions somewhat distant from the central parts of the Ancient East, also lagged behind in development. The lack of advanced experiences is also evident in them. However, the population of the regions that do not have favorable climatic conditions and mineral resources are less compared to the surrounding regions, have been excluded from development. Another factor that led to this

situation is the deviating of the old roads. Ancient cities of Central Asia were often located along trade routes. Cities located on the outskirts of such roads have a very low level of development, and their backwardness is clearly visible in archaeological materials.

In ancient societies, one of the main reasons why the inhabitants of areas without water, poor soil, unsuitable for agriculture were left behind without economic development can be likened to the situation of being cut off from major highways. All this is known from the archaeological materials of Central Asia. Tribes who lived in places with unfavorable climatic conditions, little or no mineral resources, also fell into such a situation.

During the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, due to the large number of streams flowing from the mountains around the Ferghana Valley, many lakes appeared in the formation of the Central Ferghana, and around them, there were areas of bushes and forests, such as cane, reed, yulgun, and willow. That is why the thickets around these lakes were a convenient place for hunting and herding of Mesolithic and Neolithic communities. The lakes themselves gave the tribe members the opportunity to make a living by fishing.

The mountainous regions of the Ferghana Valley were one of the lands rich in flint deposits, the minerals necessary for the manufacture of stone weapons of primitive tribes. As an example, it is noted that near the Kapchigai cave at the foot of the Oloy mountains, there are wastes from the manufacture of stone tools, especially many flints and nuclei. However, such flints were not found in the Central Ferghana regions and it was rare to find them at all.

Therefore, while the life of Stone Age tribes in the Ferghana Valley used to be mostly in the upper parts of the mountains, from the second half of the Mesolithic period, they moved to the groves, lakes and their surroundings in the central part of the valley, and became important objects of the tribes who make a living by hunting, gathering and fishing. The tribes of Central Ferghana, who made their living by hunting, fishing, and harvesting, had very good conditions for living in the same way, so they could not easily accept the system of farming with heavy labor. The main reason for the relatively late introduction of farming culture to this area is the fact that the natural climatic conditions of Central Ferghana are very suitable for hunting, gathering, and especially fishing.

We are at least 60-70 years late to check these conclusions. If 80 years ago an archeologist with a better understanding of the anthropogenic landscape had carefully studied the natural and anthropogenic landscape of Central Ferghana, he could have found temporary settlements of primitive people.

In the current conditions, the upper part of such Mesolithic and Neolithic spaces was completely destroyed during the development of new, additional land for the expansion of cotton fields in the 60s and 70s of the last century. Now, if those ancient lakes are discovered and explored, it is possible to observe the changes of the layers of the lake from year to year due to the fact that the annual layers of the lakes change, i.e., the color of the winter and summer deposits under the lake is different. In the composition of the annual deposits of any lakes, it is possible to observe the changes of the flora and the skeletons of fish and other aquatic animals of the layers that formed the lake over the years. With the same method of observation, it is possible to learn when the lake appeared in the history of the earth and when anthropogenic layers began to appear from it.

In this process, the anthropogenic layers are considered to be the beginning of the finds such as fishing rods made of bone left by people, tools made of stone left in an emergency, and spears with pointed ends used for fishing. It is not surprising if the remains of the uppermost layers of the lakes reveal information about when the waters of the mountain rivers that formed the lakes of Central Ferghana began to dry up. But it is clear that the natural and climatic conditions created in the Mesolithic, Neolithic and Bronze Age in the Lower Zarafshan Oasis created very favorable conditions for the Stone Age people to live here, and the life here served as a space for the Bronze Age tribes as well.[9] Lake Zamonbobo and its

surrounding branches of the Zarafshan River must have continued parallel (synchronously) with the construction processes of Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze Age settlements and the construction processes of lakes in Central Fergana. In both areas, we see the drying up of ancient lakes and finally the ancient anthropogenic landscape covered by sand dunes. The lakes in Central Ferghana were formed by the use of Sokh, Shahimardonsoi and Isfayramsoy waters to irrigate the lands in the mountainous parts of the valley, while the Zamonbabo oasis and its surrounding lakes were formed by the use of Zarafshan River waters by the farming communities that appeared in the upper, middle and lower parts of the valley.

In any case, the stratigraphic study of lakes in Central Fergana does not give us any information about the period from which the first farming communities in the Fergana Valley switched to production farming. That is, we do not know from the study of the strata of the ancient lakes when the planting of grain crops in the valleys began, and in general, the issue of stratigraphic study of the ancient lakes of Central Asia is one of the most urgent issues.

Suratsoi rock paintings are preserved in the mountain part of the Sokh River, where about 10 cattle, goats, cows, calves and oxen are depicted. Several images of oxen are kept in it. Cows, calves and oxen are all of almost the same breed, 2 men tending a herd of black and mottled cattle with forward, upturned horns, and the oxen are depicted in an erotically excited position.[10] Art historians analyzing the rock paintings have the idea that the ox and the man exerting effort on the motherland will lead to more harvest from the earth, especially in the image of the man driving the ox in an erotic state.[11] However, different authors have different opinions about which period this picture belongs to. In our opinion, the representation of oxen in Suratlisoy must be definitely Neolithic, but the image of a man driving a horse can hardly be dated to a period earlier than the Bronze Age. Because the use of animal power in tilling the land, especially in loosening the land, did not occur before the Bronze Age. Although authors have different opinions about the period of the image of a man driving the plow, the opinions about the content of the image are almost the same. That is, in this image, the creator of existence, the giver of all creatures, the sustenance of people, is compared to Mother Earth. An ox plowing the land and a man's power being given to the land are alluding to the hope of a higher harvest.

Until this time, almost all Fergana archaeologists say that the complete life of the earliest farming communities in the Ferghana Valley is directly related to the Chust culture.[12] In our opinion, 2 remains of material culture played a major role in the periodization of the early farming culture. One of them is the Sokh “tashtumor” with the image of two snakes attacking each other, and the other is the above-mentioned rock image with the image of a man plowing a field with an ox. The same image as in the Sokh “tashtumor” can be compared to the culture spread in ancient Elam in southwestern Iran. The authors date this culture to the cultures of the early Bronze Age, but there is a fact that such works made of stone at the level of artistic works and depicting the cults of their time - creatures of their time - should have been preserved there without losing their significance for many periods.

We mentioned above that the second find should be dated to the Bronze Age, but most authors say that the period in which rock paintings are widespread should be dated to the Neolithic period. Therefore, we can only say that both materials in our hands are from the “Bronze Age” because they are not taken from an archaeological site in a definite stratigraphic position. At the same time, in which regions and when did the first farming culture in the Ferghana Valley begin?

According to G. Gulomov, “Artificial irrigation occurs not only in Central Asia, but in the East as a whole under the following physical and geographical conditions”.

1. In fertile valleys formed from alluvial mud of mountain rivers;

2. On the banks of rivers flowing in the plain.[13] I think that the location of the Neolithic, Eneolithic, and Early Bronze Age monuments in the upper reaches of the Kopetdog and Zarafshan valleys suggests that they were farmed by flooding in the gulf (liman) method.[14]

If we look at the stone tools found in the Joytun culture of southern Turkmenistan and the later Eneolithic monuments, there are two main types of stone tools that can be used in agriculture in these cultures. One is a mote (later also used as a plough), and the other is kelt, which makes this weapon similar in shape to a spade and more polished on the outside.

It should be noted that the same natural climatic conditions and natural resources existed during the period of the Neolithic communities. U.I.Islamov and V.I.Timofeev, who deeply studied the Mesolithic and Neolithic period of the Fergana Valley, pointed out that the way of life of the Neolithic communities in the central parts of the Fergana Valley, especially the level of development, remained underdeveloped at the level of the Mesolithic period.[15] We are sure that the Neolithic communities in the Fergana Valley must have developed in the same way as the Hisar culture in the south and the Sazaghan culture in the Zarafshan Valley, and were connected to the cultures of the next period. Since we do not have stratigraphic materials to study these periods, we are also looking for the natural and geographical conditions that gave rise to the ancient farming culture in the Fergana Valley, and it is convenient for the ancient peasant communities from the place where the city of Kochkorota is located in the northeastern part of the valley to Arslanbab.

From the mountains and hills east of Moylisoy, flowing from north to south, there are streams flowing from north to south. They collected the waters of such mountain streams as Sharqiratma, Inchksoy, Shaydansay, Uchbulaksoy, Govasoy, Kyzilsuv, and the Karaungir stream, which flows westward from Arslanbab, collected them and poured them into Karadarya. What made these streams convenient for the first farming communities to farm? First of all, since these streams are located in the northern part of the valley, they have a steep relief in relation to the sun, and the crops planted in these areas had the maximum solar temperature. Secondly, because the streams cut through the steep hills, they were more saturated with rain and flood waters, and they discharged mud into the fields below. We mentioned above that this situation was observed by Ya.G.Gulomov in southern Turkmenistan, and it was noted by D.D.Bukinich a little earlier.

At the time when we started looking for the first agricultural settlements in northeastern Fergana, a stone object named “scale stone”/”tarozhi toshi” was found in one of the houses of Bekmahalla village, Pakhtaabad district of Andijan province, 4.5 m above the ground. we found out that it was found at depth, and a 4x4 survey made for the purpose of identifying these layers showed that there is a cultural layer of about 3 meters, mainly ash layers.

The following conclusions can be drawn from the above facts:

1. Ya.G.Ghulomov's method of irrigation of the koltik (liman) type, which was used by the first farming communities of the southern tribes of Turkmenistan, was used in the north-eastern regions of Central Asia (Zarafshan Oasis, Tashkent and Fergana Valley) during the Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age.

2. Over time, the remains of the Eneolithic and early Bronze Age cultures in the Fergana Valley, Tashkent Oasis, and Zarafshan Oasis remained under the deposits of the later period (at a depth of about 3-5 m from the surface of the earth).

3. Migrants who moved from the regions of Southern Turkmenistan to Sarazm (the first farming communities) must have taken place during the xerothermic climate period of the 25th century BC (Gonurtepa) 1200 years ago. We believe that such a climate was cyclical and repeated every 1200-1300 years.

4 During the migration of the Sarazm people, they spread not only to the Zarafshan Valley, but also to lands such as the Fergana Valley and the Tashkent Oasis, and formed the

basis for the formation of peasant communities in the next period. The geographical distribution of more than 10 “scale stones” of the type of Sarazm scale stones, collected in the following years, is the basis for our conclusion.

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