

GEOGRAPHICAL SOLUTIONS OF NEOLITHIC ECONOMIC CENTERS IN CENTRAL ASIA

Matyusubova Xurshida Xasanovna

Asia International University Master's student, specialty: History

Abstract

This article analyzes how primitive communities in the Neolithic period encountered various natural ecological environments and adapted their ways of life accordingly. The emergence of different Neolithic cultures is examined. River valleys, lake shores, foothill areas, and steppe zones are shown to have each defined their own specific economic forms and cultural traditions.

Keywords: culture, agriculture, ethnic processes, economic centers.

Introduction

The adaptation of primitive communities to various natural ecological environments necessitated changes in their ways of life. As a result, this process led to the emergence of different Neolithic cultures. River valleys, lake shores, foothill regions, and steppe zones each defined their own specific economic forms and cultural traditions.

From a geographical perspective, Neolithic communities in Central Asia were mainly distributed across three ecological zones: first, the southern foothill regions (the Kopetdag foothills, Murghab and Tejen oases) [1]; second, the central river deltas and lake basins (the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Zarafshan rivers, and the Aral Sea region) [2]; third, mountainous and semi-mountainous regions (the Hissar and Pamir-Alay foothills, and the Fergana Valley).

Main Part

Extensive archaeological research has scientifically proven the existence of several independent Neolithic cultures in Central Asia. These cultures differed from one another in terms of settlement areas, natural-geographical conditions, economic activities, and cultural characteristics. The Neolithic period is significant in human history due to the emergence of productive economies, the development of agriculture and animal husbandry, and the formation of permanent settlements [6].

The Jeitun culture is considered one of the earliest and most developed Neolithic cultures of Central Asia. It developed in the 6th–5th millennia BCE in the northern foothills of the Kopetdag Mountains, in present-day Turkmenistan. The climate and natural conditions of this region were favorable for agriculture.

The Jeitun culture is recognized as the earliest sedentary agricultural culture in Central Asia. Its population cultivated wheat and barley, kept domestic animals, and used simple irrigation techniques.

The Kelteminar culture is a fishing-hunting culture of tribes that lived in the 5th–3rd millennia BCE in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya and Zarafshan rivers, the Aral Sea region, and the Kyzylkum Desert [3]. The representatives of this culture primarily inhabited river, lake, and delta regions. Their economy was based on fishing, hunting, and gathering natural resources. Although they had not fully transitioned to agriculture, they efficiently utilized natural resources.

The Hissar culture developed in the Surkhandarya and Kashkadarya basins, the foothills of the Hissar mountain range, and mountainous regions. The people of this culture adapted to mountainous environmental conditions. Their economy was primarily based on hunting and animal husbandry. The extensive mountain pastures allowed for livestock breeding, while hunting wild animals also played an important role. One of the key features of the Hissar culture was the high level of stone tool technology. Archaeological findings such as knives, scrapers, spearheads, and other tools demonstrate its distinctive characteristics. According to V.A. Ranov, the main settlements of the Hissar communities include Tutqovul, Say-Sayyod, Kuyi-Bulon, and Kangurtut [4].

In the Fergana Valley, a distinctive Neolithic culture developed in the 5th–4th millennia BCE. The fertile soils, abundant water resources, and favorable climate of the Fergana Valley created excellent conditions for economic development. The representatives of the Central Fergana culture engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry, as well as hunting. They made effective use of natural resources and gradually transitioned to a sedentary lifestyle. Archaeological remains, including stone tools, pottery, and dwellings, confirm the advanced development of Neolithic culture in this region.

The Sazagan culture is one of the Neolithic cultures distributed in the Middle Zarafshan oasis. Archaeological sites belonging to this culture have been discovered in the Samarkand region, particularly in the Zarafshan River basin [5]. Research conducted by archaeologists of Samarkand State University has revealed numerous Neolithic settlements in the Middle Zarafshan oasis. These findings indicate that people lived in this area from ancient times, engaging in hunting, animal husbandry, and partly agriculture.

Conclusion

In conclusion, during the Neolithic period, population distribution was not uniform across regions. Sedentary agricultural communities formed in southern oases, while hunting-fishing and pastoral tribes inhabited desert, steppe, and mountainous areas. This spatial distribution later contributed to the formation of diverse cultures and the development of economic and cultural interactions among populations.

References

1. V.M. Masson. *Central Asia and the Ancient East*. Moscow, 1964.
2. S.P. Tolstov. *Following the Traces of Ancient Khorezm Civilization*. Moscow, 1948.
3. Egamberganov H. "On the historical reconstruction of the socio-economic and spiritual life of the Kelteminar communities." *Uzbek Archaeology*, No. 2, Samarkand, 2024.
4. N. Kholmatov. *Archaeology of Central Asia: Stone, Eneolithic and Bronze Ages*. Textbook. Samarkand: SamSU Publishing, 2021.
5. A.V. Vinogradov. "Neolithic Sites of Khorezm." *Moscow Archaeological Collection*, issue 8. Moscow: Nauka, 1968; Khujanazarov M., Sayfullaev B. "Kuk-Ayaz – A New Paleolithic Site in the North-Eastern Kyzylkum." *IMKU*, No. 31, Samarkand, 2000.
6. V.M. Masson. *Cultural Genesis of Ancient Central Asia*. St. Petersburg University, 2006.