



ECONOMIC FACTORS OF THE ENEOLITHIC PERIOD IN THE SOUTHERN ARAL REGION AND THE LOWER ZARAFSHAN VALLEY

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Abstract

This article highlights the socio-economic development factors of Eneolithic society in the Southern Aral region and the Lower Zarafshan Valley.

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Introduction

The Khorezm oasis and the Lower Zarafshan region are territories shaped by repeated geological processes. Their geographical environment consists of Kyzylkum sand dunes, ridges, depressions, heights, and plateaus. Both regions display differences in their borders and cartography, which can be explained as follows:

- The Khorezm oasis is located between the Karakum and Kyzylkum deserts;
- To the north lie the Sultan Uvays mountain and Karatau;
- Geographically, the territory is open on its sides;
- The plain is divided into left and right parts by the flow of the Amu Darya;
- The Akchadarya tributary of the Amu Darya once flowed independently;
- Abundant water basins rich in organic life were limited by the Sultan Uvays and Kyzylkum highlands.

2. Characteristics of the economic factors in the lower Zarafshan valley

- The role of the Zarafshan River in forming depressions and water basins in the Kyzylkum desert;



- The movement of five distributaries branching from the river, creating water basins in the Kyzylkum without fixed geographical boundaries;
- Unlike the Southern Aral region, there are no high mountains such as Sultan Uvays;
- Water basins and hills formed the general geographical environment.

Literature review

The study of factors influencing the economic and cultural development of Eneolithic populations in the Khorezm oasis and the Lower Zarafshan valley can be carried out based on information recorded in various sources. In this regard, artifacts obtained from archaeological research conducted extensively in settlements of the Lower Amu Darya basin by the Khorezm Expedition and the Mahondarya Archaeological Expedition of the Institute of History and Archaeology of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan named after Ya. G‘ulomov, are of significant importance.

According to historical and geographical sources, from about 25 million years BCE until the end of 600,000 years ago, the territory was a plain. Between 500,000–12,000 years, the Khorezm oasis and Lower Zarafshan region were covered by glaciers [1. C 290-291. 2.Б. 283. 3.Б 14, 4.-Б 14].

Between 12,000–7,000 years ago, when the climate approached modern conditions, the melting glaciers shifted northward, creating fertile and humid plains. Human populations settled here, exploiting natural resources for their daily activities [5. Б 128].

Archaeological research indicates that during the Eneolithic period, the populations of the Southern Aral region and Lower Zarafshan valley preserved the economic traditions of their ancestors [6.- C 42 C. 258-309]. The achievements of Neolithic tribal communities became the foundation of the Eneolithic economy, though the socio-economic relations developed unevenly [8.- C 266. 9. C. 48-50]. The activity of the Amu Darya and Zarafshan rivers played a vital role in socio-economic and ethno-cultural development. The harmony of natural resources and the rivers was of primary importance.

Research Methodology

This study applied principles of objectivity, scientific impartiality, historical-chronological analysis, comparison, synthesis, and conclusion, while also drawing on the achievements of archaeology, ethnography, geography, and anthropology.

Analysis and Results

Based on historical information from both past and post-independence literature, and a comparative-theoretical approach, the economic processes of Eneolithic society in the Akchadarya basin and Lower Zarafshan valley were analyzed. Sources describe that as a result of seismic activities, these regions formed a unified geographic system with Kyzylkum dunes, depressions, and highlands.

By the 8th–7th millennia BCE, the movement of the Amu Darya and Zarafshan rivers caused fundamental changes in the structure of the two natural-economic regions, producing important cultural and economic factors. The Neolithic tribal communities' knowledge in agriculture and animal husbandry continued into the Eneolithic period. However, fluctuations in river water levels also influenced economic expansion into new territories.

From this, the following results were established:

- The abundance of water in the Akchadarya basin and Lower Zarafshan valley allowed Neolithic tribal communities to maintain their daily livelihoods into the Eneolithic era.
- Variations in river water supply created changes in water basins and, consequently, natural-economic regions, forcing populations to relocate and adapt their economic activities. Migration to new economic territories became a necessity for daily survival. However, in the Lower Zarafshan valley and Akchadarya basin, ethnic processes developed steadily, and long-distance migration was not common.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Based on the findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

- Descendants of Neolithic tribal communities in the Akchadarya basin and Lower Zarafshan valley continued to exploit natural resources for daily needs during the Eneolithic period.
- Their economic activities centered on animal husbandry, hunting, and gathering, forming the extractive economy of society.

- Similarities existed in their settlements and daily occupations, and society developed gradually.

Conclusions were further explained as follows:

- Under the influence of geological processes, the Khorezm oasis and Lower Zarafshan valley were plains; between 500,000–12,000 years ago, they experienced glaciation; by the 7th millennium BCE, the Lower Zarafshan was inhabited by humans (Chorbaqti), while the Khorezm oasis was settled by primitive hunters at the end of the Stone Age (Burlı-3).

- In the Neolithic period, ethnic relations continued in both regions. The densest settlements were located along the right bank of the Amu Darya near Yonboshqala heights. In the Kyzylkum, populations concentrated near the lower reaches of the Zarafshan tributaries: Echkiliksoy, Daryosoy, Mahondarya, G‘ozhayli, and Oyoqagitma.

- In the Akchadarya basin (Janbos-4) and the Lower Zarafshan valley (Uchashi-131), descendants of tribal communities continued practical activities during the Eneolithic period. Ancestors skillfully utilized the fertile soil enriched by mineral deposits of the Amu Darya and Zarafshan rivers for their benefit.

Recommendations:

1. The Khorezm oasis and Lower Zarafshan valley share a unified geological foundation, though their hydrological features differ.

2. A detailed analysis of the unique geographical features of the two regions should be conducted.

3. The significance of both regions in Uzbekistan’s economy should be explained.

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