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ARCHAEOLOGICAL RESEARCH ON THE KALTAMINOR CULTURE IN THE AKCHADARYA BASIN AND THEIR SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

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Abstract:: This article analyzes the history of archaeological research, research stages and scientific results of the monuments of the Akchadarya basin belonging to the Kaltaminor culture, which play an important role in shedding light on the Neolithic history of the Khorezm oasis. The author reveals the importance of material culture samples, in particular, ceramic vessels, tools and remains of dwellings, identified during archaeological expeditions in the region, in studying the economy and lifestyle of the Kaltaminors. The article evaluates the role of the archaeology of the Akchadarya basin in determining the chronology of the Central Asian Neolithic based on modern approaches.

Keywords: Kaltaminor culture, Akchadarya basin, Neolithic period, archaeological research, material culture, ceramic fragments, S.P. Tolstov, Khorezm expedition.

The local variant of the Akchadarya basin is considered to be the ancient right bank of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, and many sites belonging to the Kaltamina culture have been identified along the banks of the basin. The basin consists of southern and northern parts. The southern basin, which begins near the city of Tortkul, flows northward towards three main tributaries and ends at the slopes of the Sultan Uzdag mountain range. The water flow that bypasses Sultan Uzdag to the west forms the Akchadarya basin. Both basins, like the ancient lower reaches of the Zarafshan River, formed an integral part of the Kyzylkum with their natural conditions. Sites belonging to Neolithic communities are almost unknown in the northern Akchadarya area. On the contrary, a series of supporting sites were found on the southern borders of the Akchadarya.[1]. The results of archaeological research carried out in the Akchadarya basin in recent years have also allowed us to collect a number of sources on the material culture of the last stages of the development of the culture of the Kaltaminor communities. Colorful floral patterns also appeared on the rim of some ceramics. Instead of egg-shaped patterns, they began to use bowl-shaped vessels with a flat bottom. In this way, the communities created their own material culture at this stage. Lower Zarafshan local variant The largest number of sites belonging to Neolithic communities in Central Asia were found in the ancient basin of the lower reaches of the Zarafshan River, their number is more than 700[2]. However, most of them have not preserved cultural layers. The scientific interpretation of these sites allows us to observe the culture of communities belonging to almost all stages of the Neolithic period in this region. Their study also allows us to obtain valuable information about the ancient beds of the Zarafshan River, which have dried up now. According to the results of archaeological research, it was determined that a system of 3 ancient beds was in operation in the lower reaches of the Zarafshan River. The material culture of the sites found in the vicinity of Mohandaryo, Khojaly, Katta and Kichik Tuzkon was determined to belong to the Kaltaminor communities. Although the cultural layer has not been preserved in most of them, the cultural layers are much better preserved in the Darvozakyr 1, 2 sites, and valuable information was obtained about the daily life, economic activities, and settlements of the Neolithic communities belonging to them. The remains of the dwellings studied, especially at the Darvozakir 1 site, are

similar in shape and construction to the huts of Uchashi 131, differing only in size and small area levels. Remains of stone objects, pottery, and bone weapons were found at the sites[3]. Lavakon (Kyzylkum inner region) local cultural variant. Geographically, there is a system of more than 20 saltwater basins on the eastern side of the Karakotin lowland, which is a component of the southwestern Kyzylkum. The largest of them is Lavakon. In the climatic conditions of the Lavakon basin (6th-4th millennia BC), the surroundings of these water bodies were covered with dense thickets, rich in flora, fauna and birds, the lakes were full of fish, and there were full opportunities for primitive man to live. Along the ancient shores of Lake Lavakon, more than 300 sites belonging to Neolithic communities have been studied. These sites are diverse in terms of the discovery of archaeological material evidence. Their material culture is the last stage of the Mesolithic period and mainly the Neolithic period[4]. Most of the sites are very small in terms of area, and the cultural layer is not well preserved. A site such as Lavakon 26, which was studied during archaeological excavations, is almost as large in terms of the number of sources and the abundance of material objects as the Lower Zarafshan oasis, the Akchadarya basin, and the Mohandarya sites. These sources themselves indicate that the shores of lakes such as Lavakon were inhabited and occupied for a long time in the late Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, and that many people lived in these places and created a unique material culture[5]. The pottery used by the people of the Lavlakon site is similar in shape and manufacturing method to that of the Kaltaminor communities. Only the patterns on the pots are distinctive. In the pots of the Neolithic communities of the Lower Zarafshan and Akchadarya basins, not linear, but serrated patterns predominate. The pottery of the Lavlakon communities does not have patterns characteristic of the last stage of the Kaltaminor culture ("oscillating", "jumping comb-like"). These signs are a distinctive feature of the Lavlakon culture[6]. The monuments of the Kaltaminor culture were studied during archaeological excavations in the 30s and 40s of the 20th century by archaeologists A.I. Terenozhkin and S.P. Tolstov. The reason for this name is that they were found in the vicinity of the Kaltaminor canal, which emerged from the ancient bed of the Amu Darya. The Neolithic people who lived in these areas in the 7th-3rd millennia BC made a living by hunting, gathering and fishing. The technique of making stone tools used to engage in these activities reached its peak in the Neolithic period[7]. In 1948, S.P. Tolstov's monographs "Ancient Khorezm" ("Ancient Khorezm") and "In the footsteps of the ancient Khorezm civilization" (this work in Uzbek was published in 1964 with an appendix titled "In search of the culture of ancient Khorezm" were published)[8]. These monographs describe a number of archaeological monuments related to the history of ancient Khorezm, including important information about the culture, crafts, art and socio-economic life of the ancient Khorezm population. Based on the information collected during the excavations, archaeological monuments are divided into several periods as cultural complexes.

The monuments were divided into the following periods as separate cultural complexes:

I. Primitive Khorezm:

1. Kaltaminor culture - 4th-3rd millennia BC
2. Tozabogyob culture - 2nd millennium BC
3. Amirabad culture - first half of the 1st millennium BC

II. Ancient Khorezm:

1. Culture of "city inhabited within walls". Achaemenid period 6th-4th centuries BC
2. Kanguy culture. Hellenistic period 4th century BC - 1st century AD.
3. Kushan culture. Roman period. 2nd-3rd centuries AD.
4. Kushan-Afrgygian culture. 3rd-5th centuries. The crisis of the ancient culture of Khorezm.

III. Medieval Khorezm[9].

Several monuments of this culture have been examined and studied in the Akchadaryo basin, but only 3-4 cultural layers have been preserved, including the Tolstov site, Layer 7, the Jonbos-4 monument, and the Tumek Kichidjik cemetery. A.V. Vinogradov divided the Kaltaminor culture into early, developed, and late stages according to the method of making stone tools. This culture territorially consists of local complexes such as Akchadaryo, Lavlakon (Inner Kyzylkum), and Lower Zarafshan. The early stage is Daryosay (late 7th millennium BC - early 5th millennium BC), the developed stage is Yonbosh (mid-5th millennium BC - first half of the 4th millennium BC), and the late stage (second half of the 4th millennium BC - first half of the 3rd millennium BC). The monuments of the early stage include those located in the Kyzylkum area. The Uchashi 131 site in the Daryosay basin is considered the largest in terms of area, and the remains of wooden-based dwellings, stone tools, and pottery fragments were found there. Trapezoidal microliths were most often used as stone tools during this period. The monuments of the developed - Akchadaryo stage are well studied in the southern Akchadaryo basin in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya. More than 100 sites of the Kaltaminor culture have been identified here. Of these, excavations were carried out at the sites of Yonbosh IV, Tolstov, and Kavat IV[10]. The last stage (end of the 4th millennium BC - beginning of the 3rd millennium BC) corresponds to the last stage of the Lavlakon period of the Neolithic period. During this period, the climate became drier and the natural food reserves decreased due to the depletion of water resources. As a result, the living conditions of the primitive community members became more difficult. These climate changes have led to a shrinking of the Kaltaminor cultural community's habitat. The population's survival in a given area has become dependent on the natural food reserves of the local area.

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