

## SOME ISSUES RELATED TO BURIALS DISCOVERED IN NEOLITHIC STRUCTURES IN THE LOWER AMU DARYA REGION

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**Abstract:** *The article analyzes the religious beliefs of Stone Age hunters and gatherers in the South Aral Sea Plain regarding the burial of the deceased.*

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The diverse surface structures of Central Asia arise from variations in geographical environments, climatic conditions, natural and economic resources, and the characteristics of populations within historical and geographical regions shaped by underground fluctuations. One notable country in this context is Uzbekistan, which is characterized by distinct natural and geographical regions, including Tashkent, Fergana, Zarafshan, Lower Amu Darya, and Surkhandarya.

Geographical literature classifies Uzbekistan's geographical position into two main natural and geographical regions based on its natural resources. The first region consists of plain areas, including Lower Amu Darya, the lower basin of the Zarafshan Valley, and Kyzylkum. The second region encompasses Tashkent, Fergana, Middle Zarafshan, Kashkadarya, and Surkhandarya<sup>27</sup>. The geographical characteristics of the aforementioned regions are defined by their anthropogenic landscapes, ecology, and uneven population distribution. This is particularly evident in the case of the Khorezm oasis.

Located in cold regions of Uzbekistan, the Khorezm oasis experienced human settlement much later than other areas of the country, primarily due to the arrival of air currents and its geographical positioning. Over the past fifty years, excavations on both the right and left banks of the Amu Darya, conducted by the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition led by S.P. Tolstov, have yielded unique findings that shed light on the history of this region. Historical data

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<sup>27</sup> Баратов П. Ўзбекистон табиий географияси. Т.: Фан, 1996. -Б. 204.

published by the Khorezm expedition indicates that humans began to inhabit the left bank of the Amu Darya around the end of the Stone Age. During the Mesolithic and early Neolithic periods, they established open settlements, engaged in hunting, and underwent various ethnic transformations<sup>28</sup>.

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In the Teshiktash cave site, situated in the Boysun Mountains of the Surkhandarya region, the remains of a nine-year-old Neanderthal boy were discovered. He was found lying with his knees bent and his head facing west. The grave is circular in shape, and the bones of a mountain goat are arranged in a circular pattern around the body<sup>30</sup>.

The burial structures of Stone Age inhabitants in the Khorezm oasis have not yet been examined from an archaeological perspective. Stone tools discovered at Mesolithic and Neolithic settlements provide insight into the ethnic dynamics of the population and their geographical context. This process occurred in the vicinity of the foothills of Mount Sultan Uvays, located in the northern part of the Khorezm oasis. Archaeological literature indicates that in the Ustyurt region, anthropological artifacts from the late Neolithic period were retrieved from graves, although the remains of the deceased were not preserved well<sup>31</sup>.

The historical information reveals that the natural conditions and ecological situation of the Ustyurt region enabled the daily activities of tribal communities. It

<sup>28</sup> Виноградова Е.А. Первые палеолитические памятники северо-западного Устюрта // Приаралье в древности и средневековье. – М.: Ивлран, наука, 1998. –С. 74-77.

<sup>29</sup> Бижанов Е.Б. Первые неолитические погребение на Устюрте. М.: Наука. 1985. –С. 250-252.

<sup>30</sup> O`zbekiston tarixi. T.: O`zbekiston, 2023. Jild-1, -B. 25

<sup>31</sup> Бижанов Е.Б. Первые неолитические погребение на Устюрте. М.: Наука. 1985. –С. 250-252.

is important to note that ethnic relations developed in this geographical area from the 1st millennium to the middle of the 5th millennium BC.

However, Tolstov's work does not provide information about the burial grounds associated with the 125 Neolithic tribal communities at the Jonbos-4 settlement site, which played a role in the early ethnic processes around the Yonboshkala elevation in the Lower Amu Darya Oqchadarya basin<sup>32</sup>.

Researchers should investigate the burial sites of late Neolithic populations, where various clan communities existed between Jonbos-4 and Jonbos-5 in the Akchadarya basin<sup>33</sup>.

Graves were found on the southwestern plain of the Sarikamish irrigation complex, which is geographically part of the Khorezm oasis territory where the deceased were interred. In the Tumek-Kichiljik cemetery, bodies were laid to rest on their backs, with both arms extended to the sides. The skeletal remains of the deceased, both singly and in pairs, were preserved but scattered within the graves<sup>34</sup>.

The grave was covered with red paint where the body had been placed. The upper part of the semi-basement of the grave was filled with stones. Two burial sites were investigated in the Tolstov settlement, located on the right bank of the Amu Darya River. The skeletal remains were found scattered in small fragments. Inside the grave, ceramic artifacts and slender, cylindrical jewelry were discovered<sup>35</sup>.

In the Lower Zarafshan Valley, which is connected to the right bank of the Amu Darya, an archaeological team led by Y. Ghulamov discovered that the water supply of the Mohandarya tributary had increased due to a rise in the water level of the Zarafshan River. As a result, the areas between the undulating sand dunes of Kyzylkum transformed into water basins. At the foot of the green bank, the team found open settlements, which were identified as both small and large settlements<sup>36</sup>. The tribal communities that resided at the Darvozakir 1 and 2

<sup>32</sup> Толстов С.П. Древний Хорезм. М.: МГУ. 1948. –С. 59-65; O'sha muallif. По древним дельтам Окса и Яксарта. М.: Наука. 1962. –С. 27-30.

<sup>33</sup> Виноградов А. Древние охотники и рыбоковы Среднеазиатского междуречья. ТХЭ. –С. 107-109.

<sup>34</sup> Вайнберг Б.И. Памятники Куйсайской культуры, качевники на границах Хорезма. М.: Наука. 1979. –С. 29.

<sup>35</sup> Виноградов А.В, Итина М.А, Яблонский Л.Т. Древнейшее население низовий Амударьи. М.: Наука. 1986. –С. 7-79.

<sup>36</sup> Гулямов Я.Г., Исломов У., Аскарлов А. Первобытная культура и возникновение орошаемого земледелия в низовьях Зерафшана. Т.: Фан, 1966. -С. 266.



monuments do not observe religious beliefs when it comes to placing the deceased in graves.

Thus, the following final conclusion can be drawn from the above information.

- The geographical environment of the northwestern part of Uzbekistan was shaped by geological processes, specifically the Lower Amu Darya basin. The area features two distinct climates, primarily due to the influence of the Amu Darya River.

- In the 4th-3rd millennium BC, the right and left banks of the Amu Darya were plains. The northwestern region of Uzbekistan has been shaped by geological processes, particularly those associated with the Lower Amu Darya basin. This area experiences two distinct climates, primarily due to the influence of the Amu Darya River.

- In 500-12 thousand years, the Great Ice Age formed the natural and geographical landscape of the region.

- Starting from 40,000 years ago during the glacial period, the territory of our country, specifically the foothills of Mount Sultan Uwais, was inhabited and developed by humans, as evidenced by the Burli-3 site. The increase in population, along with the utilization of natural resources and the ecological conditions of the area, led to the production of tools made from flint and quartzite sourced from the mining materials of Mount Sultan Uwais in the Burli workshop. However, archaeological studies on this development have been limited.

The region was further shaped by the division into natural and economic zones, initiated by the chief of the clan community in the 4th to 3rd millennia BC. This division occurred on the hills connected to the coastal areas of water basins formed as a result of the activity of the Akchadarya tributary, which became separated due to the rise in the water level of the Amu Darya River. Between the mounds of red sand dunes surrounding the Yonbaskala height, they artificially constructed the Jonbos-4 settlement using wooden pillars arranged in a circular shape. This settlement reflected their commitment to continuing ancestral professions, alongside cultural innovations and ethnic relations shaped by the new geographical conditions.

- At the end of the first half of the 3rd millennium BC, the hunters and foragers of the Jonbos-4 settlement, led by the "Wise Mother," developed the southeastern and southern Akchadaryo region, as well as the Tuyamoyin and Amu Darya

Dovdon tributary basins of the Kuyisay Heights, in response to a growing population.

- On this historical date, the Neolithic tribal communities of the Jonbos-5, Tolstov settlements and the southwestern territories of the Sarikamyshboy basin laid the deceased in rectangular graves on their backs, with their arms stretched along the body. The early traditions of the religious beliefs of the Central and Southern Akchadaryo and Kuyisay heights in the placement of the deceased were revealed.

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