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## **Archaeological Survey of Fergana Valley in the Years of Independence**

### *Survei Arkeologi Lembah Fergana di Tahun-tahun Kemerdekaan*

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#### **Abstract**

It is known from the historiography of archeology that the material culture monuments of the Fergana Valley have been studied for more than 100 years. Fergana Valley has attracted primitive people since ancient times with its favorable paleo-ecological, climatic conditions, fauna and flora.

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The valley is an important crossroads of ancient stone age cultures, and it is considered the area where processes of intermingling of ancient cultures took place. This is inextricably linked with a convenient geographical location.

In the upper reaches of the Sokh River, Selungur and Chashma, famous in Central Asia, belonging to the Early Paleolithic period, were found and studied. Among them, the Selungur monument is considered a particularly important settlement with the remains of *Homo erectus*, which is included in the science under the name "Man of Fergana".[1]

Scientific research on the archeology of the valley began in the middle of the last century. The finds and settlements found as a result of the systematic research of the Stone Age, which was organized in 1953, were first studied by P.T. Konoplya, and later by A.P.Okladnikov. A.P.Okladnikov and V.A. Ranov identified and studied many settlements of the Old Stone Age in the southwestern part of the Fergana Valley during the construction of the Kairakkum reservoir in 1954-1956.[2] Since 1956, P. T. Konoplya has opened a number of ancient stone settlements: Ayirboz 1-7, Karamkol[3], Kapchugai Old Stone Age workshop and others. In 1958-1959, the workshop was studied by M. Kasimov, a representative of the Paleolithic group of the USSR FA TAI[4] headed by A.P. Okladnikov[5].

From May 25 to June 15, 1964, the archeological detachment of the FA TAI of the UzSSR led by Ya. G. Gulomov conducted archaeological excavations in the Fergana Valley. As a result, archeological monuments of different eras, including ancient stone age monuments located around the city of Fergana, at the bottom of the mountains on the northern slopes of the Aloy range and in the valley of the Sokh river, were discovered. In the Karakalpak steppe, two Neolithic settlements, the ruins of the ancient city of Ghargiz and Munchogtepa, around the ancient city of Pop, were examined. 30-40 m from the stream west of Haydarkon, which was also known by the group. the Selungur cave, located at a height, was studied [6].

In the hills located 10 km northeast of the city of Fergana, 2 km northwest of the village of Qal'acha, M.Qasimov collected and studied finds of the Middle Paleolithic period. Due to the floods, the upper layer of the hill was washed away, and the layer of limestone was exposed. In this area, 5 settlements of the Middle Paleolithic period were discovered, from which only lifting materials were taken. Nevertheless, these stone tools provided an opportunity for archaeological research of the area[7].

Kal'acha I-V settlements are 10 km long from north to south. The complex of stone tools found in the monuments is made of flint and walnut, which are typical only for the Middle Paleolithic period. It should be noted that about 150 retouched Levallois blades, scrapers, disk-shaped and two-field nuclei, plates and uchirindis are found among the findings [8].

During the research, the Kapchigay Paleolithic workshop, located in the Dangi gorge on the northern slope of the Oloy ridge, was studied in more detail. 423 copies of different types of nuclei were found here - disk-shaped, rectangular, single and multi-field Levallois nuclei, atypical nuclei, fragments from the nucleus site, plates, as well as many Middle Paleolithic fragments. At the same time, 76 stone objects of the Late Paleolithic era were found - nuclei, plates, uchirindi, etc. It is known that black flint was also found on the northern slope of Kapchigay, where this material was mined and processed by primitive people [9].

Another group of Middle Paleolithic settlements was found around the villages of Chongara and Sarikorgon in the valley of the Sokh River. On the left bank of the Sokh River, the terraces around the village of Chongara, especially the third terrace with a height of 30-40 meters, are clearly visible. It is connected to Pidau mountain. 4 settlements were studied around the village of Chongara. Stone weapons were found in piles of pebbles in separate sections of the third terrace. 31 replicas of Middle Paleolithic stone tools - nuclei, plates and uchirindi - were found in all settlements.

A relatively large number of finds were found in a settlement 2-2.5 km south of the village of Sarikorgan, on the right bank of the Sokh River. 187 copies of stone weapons were collected from the area of 600x600 m<sup>2</sup>. The weapons in Sarykurgan differ from the weapons in the Qalacha and Karamkol settlements by the presence of some weapons that are more ancient, typical of the first stage of the Middle Paleolithic. The stone tools found at the sites of Qalacha, Karamkol, Chongara, and Sariqurgan are mainly Levallois in appearance, which is due to their connection with the Middle Paleolithic culture of Qairaqququm and other neighboring regions of Central Asia. indicates [10].

There are almost no materials from the Eneolithic and Bronze Age, or monuments that provide information about the period when the first farming culture began in the Fergana Valley. Therefore, there are many controversial issues about the origin of the Chust culture, which is considered the first farming culture of the Fergana Valley.

In the years of independence, the scientist G. P. Ivanov, who comparatively studied the Chust and Qairaqququm cultures of the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, as well as the Stone Age of the Fergana Valley, emphasized that he discovered not only tombs, but also residential spaces of the Qairaqququm culture, and the area where this culture spread is the only place in the valley. states that not only the western part, but also the southern parts are included.

Archaeologist M.Kh.Isomiddinov expressed a new opinion on the same issues. He studied the ceramics of the

Sarazm culture of the Eneolithic and Early Bronze Age found in the upper reaches of the Zarafshan oasis, and found out that the production technology of the ceramics of the Chust culture is the same as that of the Sarazm culture.

M.H.Isomiddinov, who made his worthy contribution to the archeology of the Fergana Valley, is considered. M.Kh.Isomiddinov, who conducted a lot of archaeological research in the Zarafshan oasis, put forward the idea that the Zarafshan oasis was not in South Turkmenistan, but the Zarafshan oasis had a cultural impact on Northern Iran and South Turkmenistan. Because the pottery in Turkmenistan, which was made before the Geoxyur 3 period, was different, and in the Gexyur 3 period, the ceramics of both regions were the same. If ceramics up to the Geksyur 3 period were scattered in the Zarafshan oasis, then it could be believed that the culture of South Turkmenistan was influenced. From this, M.Isomiddinov concluded that the culture in the upper reaches of the Zarafshan oasis is the Sazogon culture of the Neolithic period here, the Tarb culture in the south, and the Neolithic cultures of the Fergana valley, and their connections with the developed agricultural cultures in the south. It is concluded that the Sarazm culture arose as a result and Geoksyur 3 archaeological complexes appeared as a result of the migration of these tribes towards Southern Turkmenistan.[11]

The archeology of the early Middle Ages in the Fergana valley was first discussed by the great Ferganologist B.A. Uploaded by Latinin. As a result of the archaeological work carried out in 1930, 1933-1934, this scientist distinguishes four stages of development in the history of the culture of the valley.[12] Later, in 1961, he enriched this periodic table with new materials and divided the materials of ancient farming cultures into three stages.

Another researcher of Ferghana, A.N.Bernstam described the history of early medieval culture of the valley for the first time. As a result of the archaeological expeditions of Pamir-Oloy (1946-1948) and Pamir-Fargana (1950-1952), the first monuments such as Mugkala (Mugtepa) in Koson, Aksiket and a group of monuments near Pop (Ayrtom, Munchogtepa, Balandtepa) were discovered. Medieval monuments were studied.[13]

A. N. Bernstam revealed for the first time the origins of the early medieval culture of the Fergana Valley.

In 1954, Yu.A.Zadneprovsky, another Ferganologist, collected enough information on the early Middle Ages and named a special period in the history of the valley as "Kason" after the well-known archeological monument of that time.[14]

In the analysis of the archaeological complexes of the early Middle Ages, the investigations carried out by V.A.Bulatova at the Kuva monument in Southern Fergana are significant. Large-scale excavations were carried out at various points of the monument. The only Buddhist temple for the valley in Rabad (Shahristan 2) was almost completely excavated.[15]

The special contribution of N.G.Gorbunova in the study of the early medieval history and culture of the Fergana Valley should be emphasized. In the works of N.G.Gorbunova, the issues of the origin of the culture of the early Middle Ages were also raised.[16]

In the large archaeological monument Akhsiket, first I.Akhrorov, later A.Anarboyev, G.Mirzaliev studied layers and complexes of the early Middle Ages.

During the years of independence, B.Matboboev carried out research on the medieval archeology of the Fergana valley. His findings in Munchogtepa, Koktash cemeteries, Balandtepa city ruins, Andijan and Kuva excavations enrich our knowledge about the early medieval culture and history of the valley. Among them, ceramic products that reflect the influence of Sogd, on the one hand, and Choch, on the other, and which have limited information until now, occupy the main place. In his research, B. Matboboev deeply and comprehensively studied the materials collected on the history and culture of the early Middle Ages.[17]

Archeological researches in the Fergana valley were conducted even in the years of independence, although not in a systematic and comprehensive manner. In the early years of independence, no significant archaeological research was conducted in the valley. Except for one or two archaeological expeditions, it can be seen that archaeological research has almost stopped in the valley. For example, G.I.Ivanov carried out excavations in the city of Qubo and other settlements and defended his candidate's thesis on the topic "Archeological monuments of Fergana: periodization and synchronization". I. T. Yoldoshev's candidate's dissertation was devoted to the history of the formation and development of urban planning culture in the Fergana Valley.

However, as a result of economic reforms, after the country got back on its feet, progress began in the field of archeology as well as in all fields. Archeologists from the Fergana Valley began to organize research that led to a new phase of archeology in the region. For example, as a result of research carried out in 2011, the finds of Sarigurgan 1, Jonabad (Fergana region) and Chodak (Namangan region) belonging to the Late Paleolithic period were identified and studied.

During the 2014 archaeological research conducted in Andijan region, located in the eastern part of the valley rich in Stone Age settlements, headed by B.Abdullaev, a senior researcher of the Institute of Archeology of the Russian Federation FA, a stone was found near the Koshtepa monument in the Yangihayot MFY area of the Korgontepa



district. was found. By 2016, special search operations were launched in the Koshtepa area, and several stone objects were collected from the area. As a result of the group's research in the Buloqboshi district, the settlement of Kotyrbulok, characteristic of the beginning of the Late Paleolithic period, was studied. Research has shown that the Kortybulok people wore leather clothes, made hunting weapons from wood and stone, and made jewelry from animal bones.[18]

These studies have shown that Kotyrbulok settlement, discovered as a result of archaeological research in Andijan conducted in recent years, was recognized as a part of the Obirakhmat culture of Tashkent region. Therefore, this world-famous culture, which reflects the processes of transition from the Middle Paleolithic to the Late Paleolithic, spread over wide areas, and the owners of this culture mastered the valley regions from the beginning of this period.

In conclusion, it can be said that as a result of more than sixty years of research, the Stone Age settlements in the Fergana Valley and the objects found in them enrich the history of the valley. Research conducted in recent years shows that the valley established cultural relations with neighboring regions 50,000 years ago. This confirms that people have been continuously living in the valley since ancient times.

In general, it is gratifying that the number and scope of research on the archeology of the Fergana Valley has been increasing in recent years. Through this article, we have only looked at the study of the archeology of the Fergana Valley. In fact, this topic can serve as a topic for a larger study that requires a separate study.

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