

ABOUT THE STUDY OF MONUMENTS OF THE MESOLITHIC PERIOD IN UZBEKISTAN

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Abstract

This article discusses the Mesolithic monuments, early explored on the territory of Uzbekistan and their role in archeology. The discovery of ancient rock paintings of the Mesolithic era helps to clarify important questions regarding the worldview of the people of that time.

Keywords: Mesolithic, bow, Obishir, Machai, rock paintings.

INTRODUCTION

The Mesolithic is the period after the Paleolithic, which marked the end of the Ice Age and a warmer climate than the Paleolithic. The world of flora and fauna also got a little closer to the world of animals and plants.

The term Mesolithic comes from the Greek words "mesos" - middle and "lithos" - stone. The Mesolithic period became known to science at the end of the 19th century. The first monument belonging to this period was found and studied in Maz-d Azil cave by the French archaeologist D. Pet in 1887 [6: 53-54].

Archeologists still hotly debate about the nature, boundaries and name of the Mesolithic period. One group of scientists consider this period as a separate stage of the ancient stone age, while others see it as the last stage of the stone age. However, as a result of further research, changes in the form, use, and working techniques of stone weapons and the identification of new features, it was recognized that it is the middle stage of the Stone Age.

There are different opinions and considerations in determining the lower and upper limits of the Mesolithic period. While many scientists rely on the geographical environment to determine the boundaries of the Mesolithic period, others rely on stoneworking techniques. The third group of scientists prioritize economic training in this matter.

The natural conditions of the Mesolithic period changed with the melting of the glacier. As a result of the retreat of the glacier to the north, many lakes, land suitable for the growth of plants, swamps have increased. In the initial stage, during 100-85 thousand years, the climate was subtropical and very close to the Paleolithic. Later, during 85-50 thousand years BC, a hot and dry climate began to form. In the south, the climate improved, and at this time many horned animals and green plants spread. In Europe, it was covered with broad-leaved green forests. During this period, the Baltic Sea and Northern European lakes came to their present form. With the glacier movement (the glacier moved about 160 meters per year), people also moved to the north [4: 152-153].

By the Mesolithic period, small weapons - microliths - in the shape of sigmoid, trapezium and triangle appeared in Central Asia. People widely used these weapons for cutting and mowing purposes, as knives and scythes. One of the greatest discoveries and achievements of the Mesolithic era was the discovery of the rainbow and the arrow. The rainbow and the arrow were the first complex devices discovered by man, and it was the result of the long-term work experience and ingenuity of mankind. The discovery of the arrow bow was a unique revolution of the productive forces of the Mesolithic period. First, throwing weapons were used [1: 73]. It required physical strength in a certain sense. In the new conditions, the hunting culture, which has been

formed for thousands of years, will change. Due to the fact that the object of hunting is changing accordingly, the need for a new weapon begins to be felt. In the Mesolithic period, the spread of small animals led to a change in the hunting method. The emergence of the bow and arrow necessitated the development of production forces and was associated with the following features:

- physical law - the speed of the bullet - the perception of kinetic force (energy) is a long-term qualification and skill requirement, and for the first time (with its discovery) the use of kinetic energy by a person using a special tool;
- development of mind (not chasing animals and driving them into pits, but hunting them with arrows and bows) and awareness of activity;
- training the dog;
- the fact that in the Mesolithic, together with the hunting economy, fishing and harvesting activities did not lose their importance;
- highlighting of individual actions in hunting (hunting with a dog, setting a trap);
- in fishing - the appearance of methods of hunting with harpoons, nets, and hooks.

The Mesolithic period is the period of mastering the untrodden places on all the continents of the world. During this period, the border of human inhabited areas expanded. In the Mesolithic period, the collective work of clan members and mutual assistance was a necessary condition for hunting and fishing. It was impossible to fight alone against natural forces and monsters with stone weapons and arrows. People had to work together to hunt, gather fruits in the forest, and fish in order not to die of hunger, feed on wild animals, or die at the hands of neighboring communities [7: 204-206].

The use of the bow was supposed to increase hunting productivity and create new forms of farming. And so it happened, as a result:

- much more prey than consumption began to be found;
- wounded animals, live baby animals appeared and they were used as a food supply;
- the animals began to be taught to handle one by one.

We will consider the stages and monuments of the Mesolithic period as an example of studying the material culture of Europe and Central Asia, in particular, Uzbekistan.

Microliths were used as arrowheads (placed in the cracks on the end of a stick), steps (a row of flint fragments fixed in a row on a bone or wooden weapon) [8: 159].

During the Mesolithic period, as a result of the rise in temperature, changes occurred in the world of animals and plants in Central Asia. Large animals of the ancient stone age gradually disappeared, and in their place animals such as arhar, mouflon, mountain goats, deer, gazelle, saiga, lion, etc. began to multiply. Also, heat-loving plants - wild spiky plants and trees - began to multiply in Central Asia. These changes in nature also affected the lifestyle of people. During this period, people settled on the slopes of the Pamir and Tianshan mountains, along the Caspian Sea, in the lands from Central Kazakhstan to the Turkmen-Khorasan mountains. Mesolithic monuments in the territory of Uzbekistan have been extensively studied by archaeologists. Obishir I and Obishir V caves in the Fergana valley are important. Obishir I is located 4-5 km from the town of Haydarkon, the cave is 25.5 m wide and 12 m high. Here, microliths, particles, nuclei, beads, scrapers, knife-steps were found. The Obishir V area is located near the Obishir I cave, it is 8 m wide, 10 m high and 4-5 m deep. The cave consisted of 3 cultural layers. Knives, scrapers, and punches were also found here. Bones of wild animals were among the material resources. Packing stones found in the cave were used for fishing. Abishir people are engaged in fishing, hunting and harvesting [2: 117].

Machay cave is one of the monuments of the Mesolithic period. This monument is located on the southern slope of the Ketmonchopti mountain of the Hisar mountain range, between the Lower and Middle Mochay villages on the right bank of the

Mochay river. The width of the cave is 20 m, the depth is 11 m, and the height is 3.5 m. In the cave of Mochay, a needle, bone and stone weapons were found (15 types of weapons were identified). 870 stone weapons - parrak, nuclei, stone knives, lances, spears, arrowheads were found in the cave [3: 104-105]. Weapons found in cultural layers of Mochay Cave belong to VII-VI millennia BC. During the excavation of the cave, anthropological materials - remains of a human skull, teeth, jaw, and other organs were found. According to anthropologists, one of the bones found is that of an adult man, the second is that of a woman, and the third is that of a young child. They belong to the Europoid race. Thick layers of ash were found in cultural layers. It can be concluded that people cooked the meat from burnt bones and remains of fire.

Our ancestors who lived in the Machai cave were engaged in hunting and partly cattle breeding. At the same time, thermal farming existed in their farm. The bones found in the cave are belonging to goats and other animals such as red wolf, fox, leopard, fur marten, boar, gazelle, Asian sheep-mouflon, turtle.

A monument of the Mesolithic period in southern Uzbekistan is the site of Ayritom, which is located 18 km from Termez. Stone drills, cores, flints, and arrowheads were found in the multi-layered cultural layer of Ayritom monument.

There are Mesolithic sites in the open plains of the Fergana region, which are included in science under the name "Mesolithic monuments of Central Fergana". Mesolithic sites such as Ittak Castle, Shurkul, Achchik Lake, Yangikadam, Bekobad, Zambar, Toypok Lake, Damkol, Boskum have been found in Central Fergana. They formed more than 80 monuments, and there are many unretouched and retouched compact nuclei. Nuclei were used to obtain broken and small pieces. There were also scrapers, uchrindi, and small geometrical weapons (trapezes are also found). Central Fergana Mesolithic spaces are open spaces, cultural layers are not preserved in them. The Mesolithic tribes who lived in these places were engaged in farming, fishing and hunting. Central Fergana Mesolithic is studied in 2 stages:

1. Early Mesolithic - Ittak fortress, Achchik lake-1.7; New step-1-2; Toypok-I, they are dated to the IX-VII millennia BC.
2. Late Mesolithic - Achchikkol; New step 2; Bekobad - 3-4; Shorkul-2; Madiyar-11; Yangikadam-22; Toypok-2; Achchikkol-3; Zambar-2; Toypok - 3, 5, 7, their places are determined by the 7th millennium BC [9: 88-89].

Mesolithic monuments were also studied by archaeologists in the regions of Tashkent city and region. One of them is the Bozsuv area. The Bozsuv Mesolithic site is located on the edge of the Karakamish gorge in Tashkent. Nuclei, compact stone plates, geometric shaped weapons and scrapers were found here.

The Mesolithic site of the junction is located in the west of Tashkent and was found on the shore of the ancient Bozsuv river. Flint cores, small flakes, awls, scrapers, weapons of various shapes, stone knives, and polished stone objects were found in the area. Almost all stone weapons are made in geometric form. The Mesolithic site of the junction belongs to 11-10 thousand years BC, and tribes engaged in hunting and herding lived here [5: 58].

Mesolithic sites are also widespread in the Kyzylkum and Karakum deserts. For example, in the territory of Ustyurt, there are Zhaironkuduk spaces, from which small stone flakes, unretouched flakes, nuclei and its fragments, reworked stone fragments, scrapers, and retouched trapezoids were found. The tribes living here were engaged in fishing and hunting.

Aydabol Mesolithic sites were also studied in Ustyurt. This monument consists of a set of 26 Mesolithic sites found around the Aydabol well. From these places, flint objects, nuclei, stone fragments, ends of bow arrows worked on both sides, chisels, leaf-shaped scrapers, scraped stone fragments were found and studied.

The most famous monuments of the Mesolithic period of Central Asia were also found in the territories of the Republic of Tajikistan. One of them is the Kitchen area located in Pamir mountain. Bow arrows, nuclei, fragments, punches, microlithic weapons were found in the area. Another monument is the place of Chil-Tor spring, which is located in Shakhrituz region. Segments, prism-shaped nuclei, cells were found here. They belong to 8-7 thousand years BC.

Mesolithic tribes lived in the territory from the Caspian River to the Pamir Mountains, from the foothills of Kopetdog to Central Kazakhstan in the 11th-6th millennium BC. The geographical conditions of these places are diverse, the places are located in low plains, river banks and mountainous regions. Tribes and clans lived by hunting and gathering. Traces of domestic animals have also been preserved in the premises, which indicate the first stage of animal husbandry.

Our ancestors who lived in the Mesolithic period began to create miracles of primitive visual art. These are mainly hunting scenes depicted on caves and rocks using red paint or by carving. Such monuments were studied in the Zaravutsoi gorge in the Surkhondarya region, Takatosh maze in the Jizzakh region, Sarmish and Korungursoy in the Bukhara region, Parkent and Chotkal mountain ranges in the Tashkent region. Paintings on rock and cave walls are wonderful monuments of ancient history, they are widespread in the mountainous regions of Central Asia, especially Uzbekistan. These pictures are made by carving, rubbing and drawing. They are called petroglyphs in science. Ancient information about rock paintings in Uzbekistan can be found in the works of Abu Raykhan Beruni. Thanks to the researches of the archaeologist A. Kabirov in Uzbekistan, he got a lot of information about the rock paintings located in the southern regions of Uzbekistan. These colorful images belong to the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods, and there are many pictures of animals such as cows, mountain goats, wolves, deer, dogs, horses, and saigas [10: 155].

For example, different paintings were found on both sides of the Zarautsoy gorge in Surkhondarya region. The best-preserved of them are the pictures on the walls and ceiling of the shallow cave called Zarautkamar. In these pictures, the scene of hunting wild bulls is embodied with the help of red paints. Another scene shows a group of hunters rounding up wild bulls and mountain goats, with the hood closed and arrows and bows fired.

The pictures on Takatosh are carved on the rock. In one of the pictures, more than a dozen hunters are shooting from bows at a herd of wild bulls and arhars. The picture of an average woman is drawn in a large size. There is also an image of dogs in the picture.

On the rocks inside the Imomota cave in the territory of Khojaabad district, in a large plan, the image of a duldul horse, whose horns have been turned several times, huge arhars, and between them, made more noticeable, is significant. In Uzbekistan, wonderful examples of rock paintings have been found and studied in more than a hundred places. In Central Asia, in the territory of the Kyrgyz Republic, there are rock monuments in Sariyoz, Saymalitosh, Aravon, Ayrimachtog, Suratlisoi, Okhna, and Talos valleys, people and domestic animals are depicted.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Mesolithic monuments found in the territory of our country fill the gaps in the gradual formation of people living in Central Asia and prove that the Mesolithic communities lived in large areas throughout the region. There is no doubt that the ancient fine art monuments of the Mesolithic period are extremely valuable historical documents. These documents allow us to understand the thinking process of people in ancient times, to get acquainted with the features of the spiritual culture of the Mesolithic period.

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