IJTIMOIY-GUMANITAR SOHADA ILMIY-INNOVATSION TADQIQOTLAR

ILMIY METODIK JURNALI

ISSN 3060-5059

VOL.3 № 5 2026

SHARQIY FARG‘ONA VODIYSIDA SO‘NGGI BRONZA VA ILK TEMIR DAVRLARIDA MANZILGOHLARNING SHAKLLANISHI HAMDA MODDIY MADANIYAT

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Annotatsiya

Sharqiy Farg‘ona vodiysining so‘nggi bronza va ilk temir davrlaridagi antropogen manzilgohlarning shakllanish jarayonlari hamda ularning xronologik doirasi avvalgi ilmiy qarashlar va yangi tadqiqot natijalari asosida tizimli tahlil etishni talab qiladi. Mazkur davr bo‘yicha yagona ilmiy konsepsiyaning mavjud emasligi mavzuni yanada kengroq va chuqurroq o‘rganish zaruratini yuzaga keltiradi. Tadqiqotda qadimgi Farg‘onaga oid arxeologik moddiy manbalar va yozma manbalar umumlashtirilib, qiyosiy hamda tanqidiy tahlil qilinadi. Arxeologik dala tadqiqotlari eng qadimgi manzilgohlar vodiyning janubi-sharqiy qismida shakllanganligini tasdiqlaydi. Sharqiy hududning asosiy suv manbai bo‘lgan Qoradaryo daryosi manzilgohlarning shakllanishida hal qiluvchi omil bo‘lib xizmat qilgan, chunki dastlabki antropogen jamoalar suv manbalari yaqinida vujudga kelgan. 2021–2022-yillardagi arxeologik ekspeditsiya davomida aniqlangan Xonobod-1 manzilgohidan keramika buyumlari, mineral asosli taqinchoqlar, mehnat qurollari hamda inson va hayvon qoldiqlari topilgan. Sharqiy Farg‘ona tarixan tog‘ va tog‘oldi hududlarida ko‘chmanchi chorvadorlar yashagan mintaqa hisoblanadi. Shu bilan birga, arxeologik va ekologik dalillar tog‘oldi mikrovohalarida dehqonchilik jamoalari yashaganini hamda keyinchalik ular tekislik hududlariga kengayganini ko‘rsatadi. Bu esa ikki turli madaniy va xo‘jalik tizimining parallel ravishda mavjud bo‘lganini anglatadi.

Kalit so‘zlar: qo‘rg‘on, planigrafik, mineral, ekspeditsiya, tanchan uslubi, qimmatbaho tosh, mineral munchoqlar, sintez, semantika, ornament, antropogen landshaft, assimilatsiya

ФОРМИРОВАНИЕ ПОСЕЛЕНИЙ И МАТЕРИАЛЬНАЯ КУЛЬТУРА ВОСТОЧНОЙ ФЕРГАНСКОЙ ДОЛИНЫ В ЭПОХУ ПОЗДНЕЙ БРОНЗЫ И РАННЕГО ЖЕЛЕЗНОГО ВЕКА

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Аннотация

Процессы формирования и хронологические рамки антропогенных поселений Восточной Ферганской долины в эпоху поздней бронзы и раннего железного века требуют системного анализа на основе как предыдущих научных исследований, так и новейших данных. Отсутствие единой научной концепции по данному раннему периоду обусловливает необходимость более широкого и углублённого изучения. В исследовании синтезируются, сопоставляются и критически анализируются археологические материалы и письменные источники по древней Фергане. Археологические полевые исследования подтверждают, что самые ранние поселения возникли в юго-восточной части долины. Главный водный источник восточного региона — река Карадарья — сыграл решающую роль в формировании поселений, поскольку первые антропогенные сообщества возникали вблизи водных ресурсов. На поселении Ханабад-1, выявленном в ходе археологической экспедиции 2021–2022 годов, были обнаружены многочисленные артефакты, включая керамику, украшения на минеральной основе, орудия труда, а также останки людей и животных. Восточная Фергана представляет собой горную зону, исторически заселённую кочевыми скотоводами в горных и предгорных районах. Одновременно археологические и экологические данные свидетельствуют о существовании земледельческих сообществ в предгорных микрооазисах, которые позднее распространились на равнинные территории. Это подтверждает параллельное сосуществование двух различных культурно-хозяйственных систем.

Ключевые слова: курган, планиграфический, минерал, экспедиция, стиль танчан, драгоценный камень, минеральные бусины, синтез, семантика, орнамент, антропогенный ландшафт, ассимиляция.

SETTLEMENT FORMATION AND MATERIAL CULTURE IN THE EASTERN FERGANA VALLEY DURING THE LATE BRONZE AND EARLY IRON AGES

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Abstract

The formation processes and chronological framework of anthropogenic settlements in the eastern part of the Fergana Valley during the Late Bronze and Early Iron Ages require systematic analysis based on both earlier scholarship and recent research findings. The absence of a unified scholarly consensus regarding this early period necessitates broader and more in-depth investigation. Archaeological material evidence and written sources related to ancient Fergana are synthesized, compared, and critically analyzed. Archaeological fieldwork confirms that the earliest settlements emerged in the southeastern part of the valley. The primary water source of the eastern region, the Karadarya River, played a decisive role in settlement formation, as early anthropogenic communities were established in proximity to water resources. The Khanabad-1 settlement, identified during the 2021–2022 archaeological expedition, yielded numerous artifacts, including ceramics, mineral-based jewelry, tools, and human and animal remains. Eastern Fergana represents a mountainous zone historically inhabited by nomadic pastoralists in upland and foothill regions. Concurrently, archaeological and ecofactual evidence indicates that agricultural communities occupied micro-oases behind foothills and later expanded into plains. This demonstrates the parallel coexistence of two distinct cultural and economic systems.

Keywords: kurgan, planigraphic, mineral, expedition, tanchan style, gemstone, mineral beads, synthesis, semantics, ornament, anthropogenic landscape, assimilation.

The Fergana Valley, often referred to as the “Jewel of Central Asia,” is distinguished by its abundant water resources, temperate climate, and fertile soils, all of which have created highly favorable conditions for continuous human settlement and economic development since ancient times.

Geographically, the valley is surrounded by the Kurama Range to the west, the Chatkal Range to the north, the Fergana Range to the east, and the Alay and Turkestan mountain ranges to the south. Systematic scholarly investigations into the earliest historical stages of the region began only in the twentieth century. Archaeological research conducted throughout the valley has identified several important cultural complexes, including the Chust, Shoraboshot, and Eilaton cultures, which collectively illuminate the ancient history of the region.

Among the significant archaeological sites of the valley, the settlement of Sarvontepa occupies a special place and is often regarded as the “earliest core of Andijan.” Excavations carried out beneath the old city area, at depths of approximately four meters and with cultural deposits reaching nearly one meter in thickness, revealed an extensive archaeological layer. The ceramic assemblage recovered from Sarvontepa includes hand-made vessels such as bowls, jars, four-legged stands, and painted pottery comparable to the Eilaton cultural complex while simultaneously demonstrating affinities with the Chust culture. More than 80 percent of the discovered ceramics were hand-made and closely resemble pottery assemblages uncovered at Simtepa I, Sufan, Oktom, Kungay, and Eilaton sites throughout the Fergana Valley [1.207].

Several scholarly theories have been proposed regarding the ancient history of Fergana. One major reason for differing interpretations is that many settlements belonging to the Bronze and Iron Ages have not been completely preserved. Another important factor is the coexistence of two distinct socio-economic groups within the valley: settled agricultural communities and nomadic pastoral populations. Archaeological evidence suggests that some representatives of the Andronovo cultural complex, who originally inhabited the Altai region and later migrated into Central Asia, contributed to the formation of the Qayraqqum culture in the western regions of the Fergana Valley. Orientalist Alexander Nikolaevich Bernshtam emphasized that the geographical position of Fergana’s agricultural oases—surrounded by pastoral tribes inhabiting mountainous zones—played a decisive role in shaping the ethnic formation and historical development of the region’s population.

Materials and Methods

During the Late Bronze Age, Andronovo steppe tribes gradually settled in the southwestern regions of the Fergana Valley as part of the broader expansion of Andronovo populations into Central Asia. Archaeological evidence demonstrates similarities in pottery discovered within burial mounds, indicating that certain pastoral groups became increasingly sedentary under the influence of the more advanced agricultural cultures located in the southern regions.

Nevertheless, the Andronovo cultural tradition retained several distinctive characteristics, including burial mounds constructed with stone accumulations, interment within stone cists, placement of

the deceased with the head facing west, and ceramic production techniques utilizing fabric-template methods. Over time, anthropogenic landscape zones emerged through the gradual освоение of natural foothill environments suitable for pastoral activities.

Today, traces of artefacts, ecofacts, and geofacts associated with these ancient communities can still be identified through archaeological investigation, particularly within the newly researched Khanabad 1 settlement area. The burial mound structures associated with nomadic pastoral populations throughout the valley display strong similarities to those characteristic of the Bronze Age Qayraqqum culture. At the same time, important similarities and distinctions can also be observed in ceramic traditions.

Pottery remains one of the most significant archaeological indicators for determining the chronological dating of burial complexes. In addition to ceramic materials, archaeologists uncovered household utensils, working tools, ornaments, and jewelry within the graves. These findings demonstrate that ancient populations skillfully utilized natural minerals and metals in daily life, reflecting the relatively advanced technical knowledge of their period. As archaeologist B.A. Litvinsky noted, ancient communities attempted to “create as much comfort as possible for the deceased” [2.104], revealing the spiritual and ritual importance attached to burial practices in the ancient societies of the Fergana Valley.

The ceramic assemblage of the Eilaton culture is predominantly represented by compact, hand-made jugs and bowls. Researchers have noted that the pottery traditions of the Chust and Shoraboshot agricultural cultures differ significantly from those associated with the Eilaton culture, suggesting that the inhabitants of Eilaton primarily practiced a nomadic pastoral lifestyle [3.40–44]. A particularly striking distinction can be observed in the ornamental motifs applied to hand-made Eilaton pottery compared with the decorative traditions of the Chust culture [4.14]. Scholars studying the ceramic complexes of these cultures have emphasized that the differences are so substantial that they cannot be explained merely through gradual evolutionary development. Instead, they describe the transition between these traditions as a technological and stylistic “jump” from one period to another [5.96–97].

At the same time, the hand-made ceramic complexes of the Eilaton culture demonstrate strong similarities with the later ceramic traditions of the Qayraqqum culture. In particular, many vessel forms within the Eilaton ceramic assemblage are almost identical to those of Qayraqqum pottery [6.33–40], while production techniques and ornamental patterns are likewise closely related [7.256]. Evidence supporting the gradual transition toward a more sedentary lifestyle within the Eilaton culture can also be observed in pottery recovered from several Oktom and Kongai burial mounds. These ceramic vessels increased in size and display unique painted decorative patterns. The colors and ornamental backgrounds of these vessels resemble the stylistic traditions of Chust and Dalvarzin pottery. Such similarities encouraged researchers to propose the existence of a genetic or cultural connection between the Chust and Eilaton traditions [8.87; 9.42–43].

In her studies, archaeologist G. Gorbunova argued that the ceramic complexes of the Shoraboshot culture continued the traditions of hand-made vessels characteristic of the Chust cultural period. However, she emphasized that the Shoraboshot culture appeared later than the Eilaton–Oktom complex within the chronological sequence of ancient Fergana cultures. Conversely, archaeologist G.P. Ivanov, in his broader chronological synthesis, dated the Chust culture to the 12th–7th centuries BCE, the Eilaton culture to the 7th–3rd centuries BCE, and the Kangai–Karabulok culture to the 2nd century BCE–6th century CE, yet he did not discuss the Shoraboshot culture in detail. This omission later became a source of scholarly debate.

Subsequent research confirmed that the Shoraboshot culture represented a direct continuation of the Chust tradition, whereas the populations associated with the Oktom–Eilaton culture initially practiced mobile pastoralism and only later began constructing fortified settlements. Scholars therefore concluded that the Eilaton and Shoraboshot cultures likely coexisted simultaneously [10.7]. Some researchers further suggested that the ancient city of Eilaton itself belonged to nomadic pastoral Sak groups [11.53]. However, the urban layout of Eilaton—surrounded by agricultural fields and defensive fortifications on all sides—resembles the “Var”-type fortified settlements described in the Avesta.

Archaeologist B. Matboboyev argued against identifying Eilaton solely with nomadic pastoral groups, emphasizing that no archaeological evidence directly associated with Sak nomads had been discovered at the site. In his interpretation, the farming communities established in the Fergana Valley during the Bronze Age did not disappear entirely but continued their cultural development. According to his chronology, the Eilaton culture of the settled agricultural population dates to the 6th–3rd centuries BCE, the Shoraboshot culture to the 4th–1st centuries BCE, and the Marhamat culture—its widespread successor throughout the valley—to the 1st–4th centuries CE [12.9–10].

Archaeologist Bakhtiyor Abdullayev offers another important perspective. According to him, the Qayraqqum nomadic groups initially sought to establish active economic and cultural relations with both the Eilaton population and the agricultural communities of the Chust culture. These interactions reflected neighboring tribal relationships, suggesting that the cultures coexisted in parallel for a considerable period. Such evidence weakens arguments for a direct genetic continuity between the Chust and Eilaton cultures and instead indicates that the emergence of the Eilaton culture should be dated earlier than previously assumed. Abdullayev proposes that the Eilaton culture formed during the final phases of the agricultural Chust culture and should therefore be associated at least with the 7th century BCE rather than exclusively the 6th–3rd centuries BCE.

The Eilaton communities also maintained active contact with representatives of the agriculturally based Shoraboshot culture. As a result of these interactions, ornamental motifs and decorative elements were exchanged between the cultures, influencing one another's pottery traditions and leading to the mutual use of ceramic products [13.11–13].

Result and Discussion

At present, a large-scale archaeological project is being implemented in Eastern Fergana through cooperation between the Samarkand Institute of Archaeology, the "Hamkor Stimul Servis" innovative research center, and the Faculty of History of Andijan State University. Since 2022, the project titled "Creation of a 3D Archaeological Map and Electronic Database through the Study of Archaeological Sites on the Slopes of Mount Khanabad" (Project No. IL-462105791) has been underway in the Andijan region.

Within the framework of this initiative, archaeological excavations are being conducted under the leadership of archaeologist Bakhtiyor Abdullayev. The Khanabad settlement, preserved in the form of a mound at the foothills of the easternmost part of the Andijan region near the Kyrgyz border, represents one of the most significant newly investigated sites. Similar burial mounds have also been identified in other parts of the Fergana Valley. In the 1950s, for example, archaeologists N.G. Gorbunova and B.Z. Hamburg documented Bronze Age sites such as Vodil and Karamkol in the hilly areas of Southern Fergana.

Researchers classify the burial mounds into three main categories:

1. Type I mounds constructed from large stones mixed with soil;
2. Type II mounds composed primarily of earth mixed with small stones;
3. Type III flat stone mounds combined with fine gravel [14.85–93].

The burial mounds at the Khanabad 1 settlement consist of oval-shaped stone rings combined with soil and both large and small stones. Preliminary archaeological findings demonstrate that stone "pillows" were placed beneath the heads of the deceased, while in several graves the bodies were buried lying on either the right or left side. These burial traditions provide important evidence concerning the ritual practices, religious beliefs, and cultural identity of the ancient populations inhabiting Eastern Fergana during the late Bronze and early Iron Ages.

In Eastern Fergana, particularly in the graves of settled communities such as Dalvarzintepa, the heads of the deceased were placed facing east, whereas in Northern Fergana, especially within the Chust culture, burials were oriented toward the west [15.179]. These burial "pillows" likely embodied elements of ancient religious beliefs associated with the afterlife and the spiritual worldview of the ancient inhabitants of Fergana [16.256]. The earliest known pillow-bed tradition in the valley belongs to the Chust culture, where a stalk of grain with spikes was placed in a circular form beneath the head of the deceased.

Different burial structures have been identified across the region:

- the Oktom tomb was constructed from stone;
- the Khargush grave consisted primarily of soil;
- the Kengkol burial used garden soil;
- the Gormiron tomb was composed of gravel;
- the Karabulok burial incorporated straw or chaff materials;
- and the Khanabad 1 graves were constructed using stone.

Interestingly, similar burial structures continue to be reflected in funeral traditions practiced in several regions of present-day Uzbekistan. Throughout human history many customs and rituals have undergone transformation, yet burial ceremonies remain among the most stable cultural traditions. Due to the diversity of burial constructions identified at the Khanabad 1 settlement, researchers continue conducting detailed planigraphic studies in the area.

The placement of bodies in a flexed or crouched ("guzhanak") position has also been documented both in the Khanabad 1 burial mounds and within the Chust agricultural culture of the valley. Symbolically,

this posture may reflect the fetal position of the human body in the mother's womb, representing the cyclical concepts of birth, death, and rebirth. Archaeological evidence further demonstrates that burial methods were not uniform. In certain graves wooden supports were placed beneath the deceased, while stones were positioned under the head, legs, and along both sides of the burial pit. Such burial practices are characteristic of some funerary traditions associated with the Eilaton–Oktom cultural complex of the Fergana Valley.

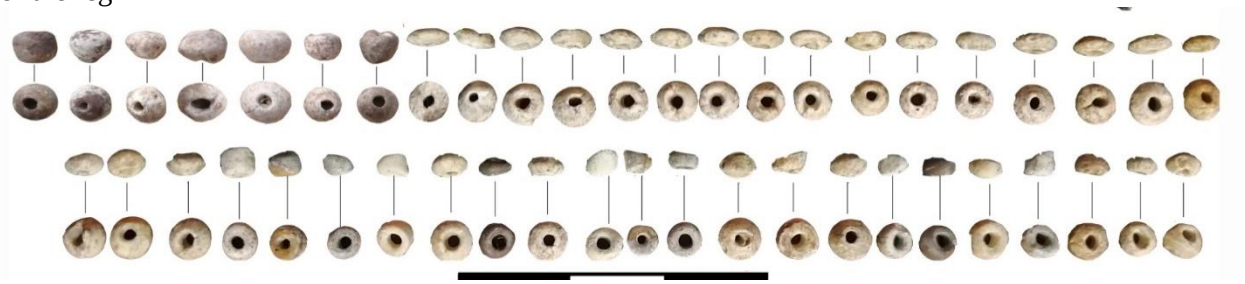
In another large grave excavated at Khanabad 1, the legs of the deceased were bent in a posture resembling that of a horse rider. Among the peoples of Central Asia, including the inhabitants of the Fergana Valley, the horse was regarded as a sacred animal from ancient times. During the Bronze Age there existed a tradition of burying individuals in positions symbolizing a horse, a stirrup, or a mounted rider. Archaeologist E.D. Salatovskaya, who conducted excavations in the Dasht Asht region in 1974, also reported the discovery of human remains buried in a "rider position."

The graves of nomadic populations in the Fergana Valley were frequently constructed using stone rings and accumulations of stones. The selection and arrangement of these stones may have reflected religious beliefs associated with celestial bodies and sacred cosmological concepts. Stone structures were often arranged in circular or square forms. G.F.A. Kushaev, discussing stone-ring burials discovered in the Yettisuv water basin, argued that "the stone rings in graves symbolically represented the sun, moon, and stars—the heavenly bodies." In the sacred Hindu text the Rigveda appears the statement: "I build this ring of stone to protect the living, so that none of them may cross these boundaries." B.A. Litvinsky interpreted this tradition as evidence that fear of the spirits of the dead motivated the practice of surrounding graves with stone rings. Archaeologist A.N. Bernshtam likewise associated such stone enclosures with the "cult of the sun" [17.33].

The Russian traveler Nikolai Mikhailovich Przhevalsky also described the significance of sacred stones among the peoples of Central Asia. According to his account, "The Chinese call nephrite 'yuy' or 'yuyshi,' while the peoples of Turkestan refer to it as 'khosh' or 'eyebrow stone.' Representatives of wealthy clans make pillows from this stone and place them in graves, believing in its great wisdom." Such accounts indicate that pastoral communities inhabiting the foothills of the Fergana Valley regarded stones not merely as symbolic objects, but as carriers of sacred and protective power.

Within their belief systems, mountains themselves were considered sacred entities possessing spiritual force. Stones originating from mountains were believed to protect people from evil influences. This tradition of venerating mountains and natural landscapes has survived in modified forms until the present day. Even today, pilgrims from across the Fergana Valley travel to Sulaiman-Too, commonly known as Solomon Mountain, which many continue to regard as a sacred place where offerings and rituals are performed [18.105].

The artefacts uncovered during the planigraphic excavations at the Khanabad 1 settlement further demonstrate that the ancient natural landscape of Eastern Fergana was rich in mineral resources and diverse natural materials, which significantly influenced the material culture, spiritual beliefs, and burial traditions of the region's ancient inhabitants.



Rounded mineral beads were among the artefacts discovered during archaeological excavations. Archaeologist Bakhtiyor Abdullayev states that the approximate period of the Khanabad 1 settlement is contemporaneous with the Shoraboshot and Eilaton cultures, and that the process of interaction and assimilation between these two cultures contains characteristic features. Based on the earliest antiquities discovered at the site, it can be concluded that nomadic herders of the Bronze Age possessed knowledge of the efficient use of natural resources within the surrounding landscape.

Among the grave goods were animal teeth, stone sickles, shell beads, iron ornaments, hairpins, hooks, rings, earrings, crutches, flints, whetstones, mineral beads, and mineral-based human figurines or remains. Molds for jewelry production, bone beads, and cubic beads made from mineral deposits were also

identified. These findings demonstrate that the cattle-breeding population inhabiting this region possessed a well-developed knowledge of early jewelry-making techniques.

The decorative semantics of the discovered handmade and engobed ceramic objects, painted externally with red pigment, closely resemble the ornamental traditions characteristic of the Shoraboshot and Eilaton cultures. At the same time, the ceramics of the Eilaton culture in eastern Fergana differ considerably from those found in the western regions of the valley. The ceramics of Eastern Fergana are distinguished by deeper and more complex ornamentation. In addition to the triangular motifs typical of western regions, eastern ceramics include rhombus-shaped patterns, interiors filled with square-ring motifs, small circular vertical ornaments, and hourglass-shaped designs.

The semantics of decorative motifs on ceramics appear to reflect the daily life of ancient communities as well as sacred elements associated with their worldview and belief systems. For example, triangular motifs, which are among the most frequently encountered decorative forms, are associated with mountain symbolism and the mythology of nomadic herders. Residents of the hilly and mountainous areas of South-Eastern Fergana regard mountains as sacred and refer to them as the “Great Mountain,” while in the Osh region they are associated with the Prophet Solomon as “Solomon Mountain.” In the Aravan district, rocks depicting famous horses continue to be especially revered, and until recently sacrifices were made there. Numerous examples of this kind indicate that such natural sites were regarded as sacred during the pre-Islamic period. In a broader sense, this may reflect the existence of mountain and nature cults, since rivers and streams flowing down from high mountains irrigated both livestock pastures and agricultural lands, thereby playing a vital role in daily life [19.56–59].

Rhombus-shaped ornamentation is considered one of the most widespread symbolic motifs. In the mythological traditions of Central Asian peoples, rhombuses are often associated with fertility, motherhood, and birth rituals. Another interpretation views the rhombus as a symbolic representation of mountains oriented upward and downward, whose combination forms a rhombic figure. In some cases, the symbol is also associated with the sun, food storage, or vessels used for keeping grain and provisions.

The semantics of vertical zigzag ornamentation are associated with lightning or divine natural forces. Slanted or drop-shaped lines are interpreted by researchers as representations of rain. Spiral ornaments are linked with plant imagery, while wave-shaped horizontal patterns may symbolize snakes. Among the peoples of Central Asia, the snake has long been regarded as a symbol of earth and water. In antiquity, it occupied an important place in religious rituals and visual art traditions. Oral narratives preserved until the twentieth century indicate that the snake symbolized fertility and performed one of the central functions associated with water deities [20.62]. In the mythologies of many ancient civilizations, from the Greeks and Romans in the West to India and China in the East, the snake or dragon was considered the guardian of moisture and water resources [21.27].

Net-shaped ornaments are associated with hunting symbolism. The ability to analyze the semantics of decorative motifs on ceramics and to interpret the meanings they were intended to convey serves as an important methodological tool for determining the chronological periods of archaeological settlements and understanding the worldview of ancient populations.

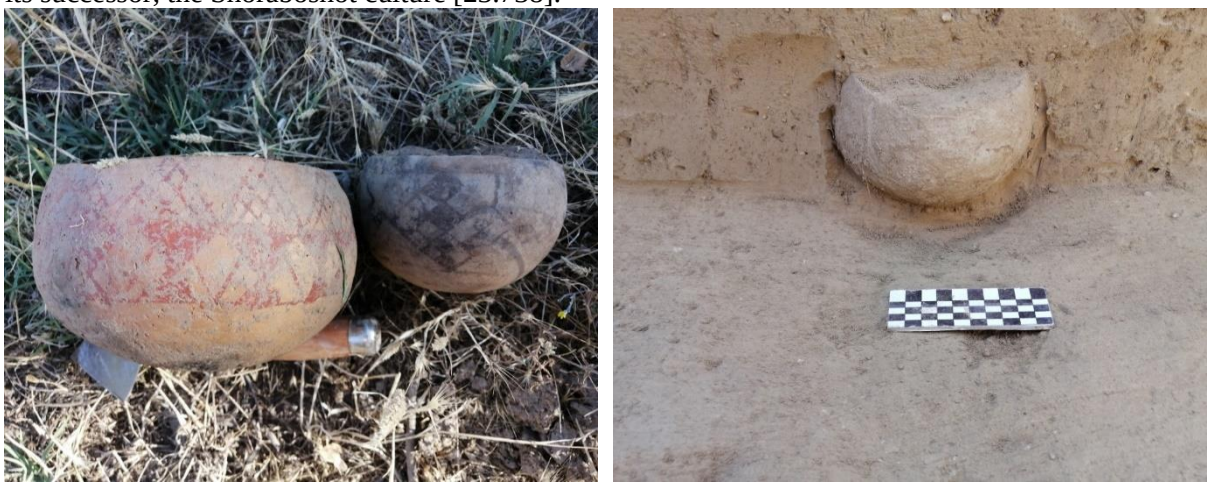
Conclusions

As a result of archaeological research carried out to date, it can be observed that the earliest settlements of the Fergana Valley were formed in its south-eastern regions, where numerous ecofacts and artefacts have been discovered. The Naryn River, one of the main water sources of the valley, merges with the Karadarya, which flows from the southeast, near the village of Mingbulok, and from this point takes the name Syrdarya. In this extensive territory, people have settled since the earliest times, practicing two main types of economy: farming and animal husbandry.

There are both differences and similarities in the structure of burial mounds and pottery production techniques associated with these communities. Kairakum-type ceramics are characteristic of the nomadic cultural tradition. The coexistence of two different cultures in the same area represents a distinctive feature of the historical development of Fergana. According to archaeological data, the earliest farming settlements in the valley belong to the second millennium BC. The agricultural traditions that emerged during this period continued in the following millennia on the basis of the simplest methods of irrigation farming. Naturally, these archaeological monuments are located on the banks of water sources or near them. The location of the first agricultural settlements in the Fergana Valley in oases near rivers and streams has also been archaeologically recorded [22.23–28].

It can be observed that all the settlements mentioned above are located near water sources. As a result of the formation of micro-oases in the areas behind the hills of river basins, the inhabitants of the south-eastern region began to establish fortified settlements. Many monuments belonging to the nomadic cattle-breeding population have been identified in the steppe, foothill, and mountainous regions of Central Asia. The main occupations of the nomadic herders of the Fergana Valley were animal husbandry and hunting. Under the influence of settled farmers, nomads also gradually adopted a more settled way of life. Therefore, the graves of nomads are located near settlements, in places where they spent the winter season. It is worth noting that in the flat part of the valley, settled farmers lived in areas suitable for agricultural production, while in the mountain, sub-mountain, and hilly zones, cattle breeders were concentrated. Representatives of these two economic systems supplied products to one another.

A comparative analysis of the materials identified by the team of archaeologist Bakhtiyor Abdullayev in eastern Fergana, particularly at Khanabad 1, shows that the ceramics belonging to the Eilaton culture are characterized by much richer ornamentation than those found in the western and south-western regions of the valley. Similar patterns can also be observed on ceramics of the Chust culture. This indicates that Eilaton was not a direct continuation of the Chust culture; rather, it suggests that the agricultural Chust culture and the nomadic Eilaton culture coexisted for a certain period. Thus, based on the information presented above, the owners of the Eilaton culture had a genetic affinity with the nomadic Kairakum culture rather than with earlier farming populations in terms of their ceramic complexes. At the same time, they first maintained economic and cultural contact with the representatives of the Chust culture and later with its successor, the Shoraboshot culture [23.738].



From the ceramics found in Khanabad 1 settlement

The ceramics found in the Khanabad 1 settlement demonstrate that the painted decoration of ceramic vessels reflects a synthesis of ornamental traditions characteristic of the Chust, Shoraboshot, and Eilaton cultural complexes. Notably, stone sickles discovered within burial contexts have so far been identified exclusively at sites associated with the Chust and Shoraboshot cultures. This evidence suggests the existence of direct or indirect cultural interactions among these three groups. Recent research further indicates that the formation of early statehood in ancient Fergana, referred to as “Davan” in Chinese historical annals, may have emerged as a result of cultural synthesis between the Eilaton and Shoraboshot traditions. Such findings highlight the importance of integrative and multidisciplinary archaeological investigations. Accordingly, it is essential to undertake comprehensive field studies encompassing both elevated burial sites, such as kurgans, and lowland settlement areas. These integrated approaches will not only contribute to a more nuanced understanding of cultural development in the region but will also enhance the international recognition of Uzbekistan’s rich archaeological heritage, thereby strengthening the tourism potential of the Fergana Valley through its unique and historically significant ancient settlements.

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