

**THE HISTORY OF THE EMERGENCE OF CITIES(IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE  
ENEOLITHIC PERIOD)**

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**Abstract:** The article highlights the material culture of Eneolithic communities of Southern Turkmenistan based on the lower three cultural layers of the Namazgah site (Namazgah I–III). The chronology of these stages, residential construction, defensive structures, and economic activities are analyzed. In addition, the stages of architectural development of the Sarazm site demonstrate the formation of regional cultural interactions and architectural traditions during the Eneolithic period. The article also provides information on the results and achievements of archaeological scholars who conducted in-depth scientific research on the history of the formation of cities.

**Keywords:** Namazgah culture, Eneolithic period, material culture, Sarazm site, residential architecture.

**INTRODUCTION**

The Eneolithic period represents a transitional stage in human history. It is the period between the end of the Stone Age and the beginning of the Metal Age and is also referred to as the Copper-Stone Age. In Central Asia, the Eneolithic period dates back to the 4th–3rd millennia BC. During this time, people began to use copper in the production of tools, although stone tools continued to play a significant role.

In the Eneolithic period, early forms of agriculture, animal husbandry, and handicrafts emerged. Eneolithic settlements have been discovered in various regions of Central Asia, particularly in Southern Turkmenistan, the Bukhara oasis, the Zarafshan Valley, and the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya regions. Archaeological findings indicate that the social life, religious beliefs, and economic activities of people during this period became increasingly complex [1].

**METHODOLOGY**

The research methodology is based on historical-comparative analysis, a systemic approach, and archaeological research methods. During the research process, materials from Eneolithic sites in Central Asia were studied comparatively. The main sources included the results of archaeological excavations, artifacts of material culture, remains of architectural structures, as well as scientific publications and historical-archaeological data presented by leading researchers.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The Namazgah settlement is considered a key reference site for studying the material culture of Eneolithic communities in Southern Turkmenistan. This site consists of six cultural layers and displays early features of urban development. The chronological sequence of these cultural layers has been scientifically substantiated based on the achievements of natural sciences. The lower three layers of the site belong to the Eneolithic period of Southern Turkmenistan and

include Namazgah I, Namazgah II (Anau II), and Namazgah III, corresponding to the early, developed, and late Eneolithic stages. Their chronology and material culture can be described as follows:

Namazgah I (mid–5th millennium BC – first half of the 4th millennium BC) represents the early Eneolithic period. This stage is characterized by female figurines, copper artifacts (137 items), handmade pottery painted in a single color, single burials with bodies placed in a flexed position, and residential structures built of mud bricks. The population mainly lived in the northern part of the settlement.

For the first time, mud bricks were used in residential construction during this period. The walls were plastered with straw-mixed clay. Houses were narrow and square-shaped, with an area of approximately 10 square meters. Near the entrance, on the left side, there was a square brick-built hearth. One corner of the room was separated by a low wall, which researchers believe may have served as a grain storage area. One-room houses of the Namazgah I period have been well studied at the Dashtlytepa site in the Geoksur oasis [2].

During the Namazgah II period, the area of settlements expanded, and small satellite villages emerged around large settlements. Residential construction techniques of this period have been well studied at the Yalangachtepa and Molalitepa sites in the Geoksur oasis. This stage is also referred to as the “Yalangach phase” of the Eneolithic period. During this phase, clan-based villages began to be surrounded by defensive walls. In some cases, only the central part of the settlement was fortified. The defensive walls were polygonal, with each side measuring 8.5–10 meters, and round-shaped rooms were located at the corners. The entrances of these rooms faced the interior of the settlement. V.M. Masson suggested that these structures may have been prototypes of later defensive towers. Residential rooms remained small, with areas not exceeding 10 square meters [3]. Archaeological studies of Eneolithic communities in the northern and central regions of Central Asia show that the earliest metal artifacts appeared in sites dating to the second half of the 4th millennium BC and the 3rd millennium BC. Such sites include Kaptarqumi and Katta Tuzkon 35, located in the Lower Zarafshan Valley, which were studied in the early 1960s by A.A. Askarov and U.I. Islamov [4].

The Sarazm site, an ancient center of stone raw material and ore processing, was discovered in the Upper Zarafshan Valley at the boundary between mountainous and lowland regions. The site, dating to the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, is located 15 km west of ancient Panjikent on the left bank of the Zarafshan River near the village of Sarazm.

Sarazm was discovered in 1976 by A. Isakov, a researcher at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan. Continuous archaeological research was carried out in subsequent years. From 1983, joint excavations were conducted by the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan (V.A. Ranov, A. Isakov) and the French CNRS (J.K. Gardin), continuing until 2010 (R. Besenval). Since 2011, excavations have been led by F. Brunet [5]. The development of construction and architecture at Sarazm can be traced through residential buildings and large communal structures. Research indicates four main stages of architectural development. Sarazm I corresponds to the formation of the settlement, where people lived in two-room houses with narrow corridors, sometimes enclosed by walls. During Sarazm II, multi-room houses appeared, forming residential quarters with courtyards connected by streets. Family shrines with circular hearth-altars emerged. Two religious structures were identified: one with a central altar and red-painted walls, and another circular structure. In Sarazm III, monumental

buildings used for communal religious rituals were constructed. The number of multi-room houses increased, courtyards expanded, and streets became more systematically organized.

The Sarazm II and III stages clearly demonstrate the initial formation of urban planning processes. The appearance of multi-room houses, courtyard-based dwellings, and an interconnected street network indicates planned settlement organization. The emergence of temples and later monumental communal religious structures highlights the growing importance of religious centers in social life. Functional differentiation between residential and religious buildings reflects the increasing complexity of urban spatial structure. During Sarazm IV, a decline in population is observed. Residential buildings became hut-like in form, as evidenced by shallow structures and remaining postholes. Houses took on a temporary character. Overall, four types of buildings were identified across all stages of Sarazm's development: residential buildings, economic structures, religious buildings, and communal-administrative structures. Scholars note that Eneolithic architecture at Sarazm reflects both the construction traditions of southern sedentary agricultural communities and those of local Neolithic groups [6].

### **CONCLUSION**

The research results demonstrate that the Eneolithic period was a crucial historical stage in the formation of early urbanization processes in Central Asia. Based on the lower three cultural layers of the Namazgah site (Namazgah I–III), it was determined that sedentary agriculture, residential architecture, economic activities, and social relations developed progressively. These processes laid the foundation for the emergence of urban culture in later periods.

The stages of architectural development at the Sarazm site indicate increasing complexity of settlements, the emergence of communal and religious structures, and the strengthening of interregional cultural connections during the Eneolithic period. These developments reflect the early formation of social stratification, labor specialization, and elements of governance. In general, systematic and comparative analysis of Eneolithic sites confirms that the emergence of cities in Central Asia was a long-term evolutionary process. Sites such as Namazgah and Sarazm serve as essential scientific sources for studying early urbanization processes and provide deeper insight into the ancient history of the region.

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