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SOI: [1.1/TAS](#) DOI: [10.15863/TAS](#)

### International Scientific Journal Theoretical & Applied Science

p-ISSN: 2308-4944 (print) e-ISSN: 2409-0085 (online)

Year: 2019 Issue: 12 Volume: 80

Published: 30.12.2019 <http://T-Science.org>

QR – Issue



QR – Article



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## DATING OF THE ZAMANBABA CULTURE: ASSED ON ARCHAEOLOGICAL SOURCES

**Abstract:** The article deals with the analyses of the problem related to the formation of the Zamanbaba culture based on the results of archaeological studies and scholarly literature.

**Key words:** Zarafshan Valley, Zaman-baba culture, Bronze Age, Zaman-baba cemetery, graves.

**Language:** English

**Citation:** Ochilov, A. T. (2019). Dating of the zamanbaba culture: ased on archaeological sources. *ISJ Theoretical & Applied Science*, 12 (80), 589-591.

**Soi:** <http://s-o-i.org/1.1/TAS-12-80-113> **Doi:**  <https://dx.doi.org/10.15863/TAS.2019.12.80.113>

**Scopus ASCC:** 1204.

### Introduction

Bronze Age site of Zaman-baba culture is located 15 km north-west of Karakul town of Bukhara region on the territory of the republic of Uzbekistan. The archaeological study of this culture is important for the better understanding of the Bronze Age lifestyle and history of steppe tribes of Bukhara oasis. A large cemetery of patriarchal period was discovered at the site located on the banks of Lake Zaman-baba. During the archeological excavations at this cemetery, we can see that the hands and legs of the deceased were bended and bodies were buried in the shape of an embryo while placed on the left side. In the process of finding and studying 43 graves here, it was discovered that in some husband and wife were buried together. The reason for this is that in the patriarchal society the role of the man increased in the family and household, while the woman became subject of private property. That is why we can see that the wife was buried together with her husband, when he died, not only in the Zaman-baba cemetery, but also in other cemeteries from this period found in other area. In the process of studying the Zaman-baba culture, we can easily say that the people of Zaman-baba had their special place in the metallurgical industry. It can be testified by various vessels, arrow heads, jewelry, some weaponry, and even a mirror made of bronze found from the graves. It is noted in the sources that a

group of people who knew metallurgy well moved from the Kyzylkum Mountains to Zaman-baba, and from the 3rd millennium BC people of Zaman-baba were introduced to metal. Taking into consideration the findings of the metal objects, we can say that people of Zaman-baba had a good knowledge of working with metal. In general, Zaman-baba is the most prominent culture of the Zarafshan valley in the Bronze Age that sheds new light on the culture of the steppe tribes.

### Materials and methods

The chronology of the Zaman-baba culture and its historical roots were dated to end of the 3rd - beginning of the 2nd millennium BC by such scholars as V.M. Mason and E. Kuzmina on the basis of comparative analysis with the southern complexes [9,8]. When Zaman-baba site was discovered and studied, the age of both sites was revised by A. Askarov and their date was determined to be the first half of the 2nd millennium BC [2, P.65].

It should be noted that in the light of similarity between vessels from Zaman-baba and the Bronze Age site complexes from Northern Bactria, V.I. Sarianidi re-examined the chronology of the Zaman-baba culture, and made a claim that its age should not go beyond the range of between the 2nd and the 1st millenniums BC [10]. Under the influence

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of the erroneous conclusion by V.I. Sarianidi on the age of the Zaman-baba culture, A. Askarov hastened to reconsider the chronology of the Zaman-baba culture, and, even published an article [1] with the aim to rejuvenate the age of the Zaman-baba culture despite the fact that Zaman-baba-style dishes were never found among the complexes of the Sopolli culture that he studied. Such claims made by the scholars with a great knowledge of Bronze Age cultures who achieved great success in studying the agricultural cultures of ancient Bactria, in our view, were scientifically baseless. Because the theory of V.I. Sarianidi was not based on findings of pottery objects from cultural layers of the Bronze Age in southern Bactria, but instead on objects looted by the Afghan dealers from ancient graves and sold to foreign travelers.

Even though most of these pottery objects sold by the Afghan dealers belonged to the Bronze Age, it is still not clear where and in which archaeological site the specific group of vessels used by Sarianidi for comparative dating of the Zaman-baba culture was found. V.I. Sarianidi based his theory on the unreliable information from the dealers themselves who said that these objects were found from the grave sites and immediately started to write his article. The objects with unknown provenance that one can't connect with a datable cultural layer usually require additional research. Then the article may be scientifically based. However, in the scholarly literature supporters of the suggestion to rejuvenate the Zaman-baba culture started to come out. They attempted to justify the proposition of V. I. Sarianidi, referring to the Andronovo culture steppe tribes-type pottery gathered from the surface finds at the Zaman-baba settlement [7, P.161]. Academician A. Askarov in his later works corrected [3, P.64-65] the mistake he made under the influence of V.I. Sarianidi concerning the dating of the Zaman-baba culture, which means that he started to look at the Zaman-baba monuments in his scholarly works as at the early Bronze Age culture. If we base our theory on the fact that 98 percent of the pottery found from the Katta Tuzkon site 35 of the late Kaltaminor culture discovered in the lower reaches of Zarafshan's lowland basins, the pottery which are thicker than that of Darvozaqir, findings of copper nails, blades and Zaman-baba type vessels [6, P.168], it becomes clear that Zaman-baba culture can be dated to the late Eneolite and the early Bronze Age periods.

Indeed, a comprehensive analysis of the Zaman-baba culture materials suggests that the debate on the rejuvenation of its dating is scientifically unfounded. The dates initially proposed by Ya.G. Gulyamov, V.M. Masson, E.E. Kuzmina and A. Askarov actually reflected the historical truth. [4. P.35]

If we now turn to the problem of the Zaman-baba culture roots, it will become clear that it is even more complicated than its periodic date. Nowadays, a complex of these monuments, which amazes with the

diversity of its materials, is fully studied. Its ethno-cultural appearance implies that the economy of the people of Zaman-baba has been developed not only in one, but in two sectors, that is, Zaman-baba culture people practiced house animal breeding as well as farming. The historical roots of the Zaman-baba culture, on the one hand, were genetically linked with the last stage of local Kaltaminor culture and, on the other hand, were closely connected with the ancient farming culture communities of the southern regions of Central Asia. [11, P.22-27]

The local roots of the Zaman-baba culture are explained by the following: Firstly, until the formation of the Zaman-baba culture, the inhabitants of the Neolithic Kaltaminor culture were living in this region, from which the monuments of the last epoch were discovered. Secondly, when excavating the Zaman-baba site, author A. Askarov noted that a stratigraphic trench placed in the north-eastern corner of the excavation area, 160 sm. below the ground level under a thick earth a thin cultural layer was discovered. Thirdly, the other ceramic piece in the same ceramic complex is oval, unbroken, with a spherical angle, both of which have a thicker profile and the appearance of the clay is slender, red, gray, and bricks are characteristic of Zaman-baba ceramics [6, P.167].

Ceramics of Kaltaminor culture, in its early and advanced stages, were thin, dark-red, with much decoration. Later, in the final stages of Kaltaminor culture, ceramic vessels became thicker, heavier, with red surface, and black striped in their profile (that is, a sign that the vessel had not been cooked well) with not so much decoration. The surface of decorated pottery vessels was not decorated with flower drawings or most of the vessels were absolutely undecorated. The complexity of the geometric drawing patterns was lost, the patterns of the vessels were simplified, and the main of these are decorated with flowers and curly lines. The walls of the pottery got thickened; the surface became yellowish in color. The above-mentioned pottery from Katta Tuzkon (the name of cultural monument) 35 can be a good example of this [6, P.168]. The material which is similar to that of Katta Tuzkon (the name of cultural monument) 35 is also found in the district of Kaptarniqumi.

At the sites of Kaptarniqumi fragments of copper blades, rock quilts, and thumbwheel plaques of the final stages of the Kaltaminor culture are often found. The oval shaped vessels of that period's pottery with semi-spherical bowls that have flat bottom resemble those of the Zaman-baba pottery. As noted by A.V. Vinogradov the oval shaped jugs of the Zaman-baba culture, along with the semi-spherical bowls, are also found in Beshbulaq and Lavlakan sites of the latest stage of the Kaltaminor culture [5, P.80-81].

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### Conclusion

To conclude, Prof. V.I. Sarianidi came up with a new hypothesis concerning the formation of the Zaman-baba culture. He believed that a group of ancient Bactrian populations moved to the north and actively participated in the formation of the Zaman-baba culture [10,P.23-27]. However, in our opinion, there are no facts confirming that some of the early farmers from the old Bactria moved to the Zarafshan valley. If we talk about the participation of the people of Sarazm culture in the formation of the Zaman-baba culture, that needs further consideration. But even with this hypothesis, the natural-geographical and ecological conditions of the desert zones in the lower Zarafshan would not have brought to the level when the monumental architecture and farming are dominant. Because the same is true of the natural-geographical conditions of the northern Bactrian

lands, which are not suitable for farming, in the last part of the Bronze Age, from the Sherabad( the oasis which situated in Surkhandarya) river basin - from Jarqutan (the name of cultural monument) to Bishkent Valley, from the natural-geographical conditions of the new region and then proceeded to the path of livestock farming.

Thus, according to the deep analysis of archaeological materials and new scientific concepts, the influence of the south on the local ethnic origins in the formation of the Zaman-baba culture that grows from the last stage of Kaltaminor (the name of cultural monument) culture, is that the Zarafshan mountain ranges of the upper stream of the Zarafshan valley should take into account the participation of the people of the Sarazm culture that have migrated to mine.

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