

# **Cultural links and changes in the ancient Central Asia: natural, political and economic factors (by the example of the Bukhara region)**

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## **Abstract**

The Bukhara oasis has long been a region of contacts between northern pastoralist and southern agricultural groups of people since the Chalcolithic period. Arrowheads of the Zamanbaba culture (mid-3rd millennium BCE) were found at the Paikend plateau as well. During the Bronze Age, the lower reaches of the Zeravshan and Kashkadarya rivers became an important transit area for cattle-breeders of the Andronovo cultural sphere. After some hiatus Saka tribes appeared in the 7th – 6th centuries BCE. As attested by finds in Paikend and Varakhsha they mainly related to Khorezmian nomads. In the Achaemenid period micro-oases in north-western part of the lower Zeravshan with numerous wandering channels were the largest and most densely settled zone. The situation changed in the Hellenistic period, when the density of population increased in the new areas. Migration of Sogdians fled from the invasion of Alexander the Great's army and changes of the hydrography had a great influence in the process. East boundaries of the Seleucid state had been delineated under the co-reign of Antiochus Soter. Paikend, like a number of other fortresses, evidently, became an important point on the new road leading from Sogdiana to Margiana. Nomads who crushed the power of Hellenistic rulers have left mounds on the periphery of Bukhara oasis and many things in the Paikend's temple. New domains headed by nomadic chiefs formed. But almost all urban centers in the Bukhara oasis had begun growing from fortresses of Sasanid dominion only after the 4th century CE.