

Landscape and zonal features of the formation of producing economy in Russia

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Based on analysis of the extensive source base, including complex landscape, component, paleogeographic and archeological published and scientific materials as well as the connected analysis of published paleogeographical, paleolandscape and historical and geographic maps of the territory of Russia landscape and zonal features of the transition from appropriating economy to producing economy were determined.

All the specifics of historical changes in the landscape use of the vast areas of Russia is caused by the variety of its landscape zones and the specifics of their constituent landscapes. Human economic activities as a factor of differentiation and development of landscapes became apparent almost in all landscape zones together with the emergence of the producing type of economy from the Aeneolithic-Bronze Age (Atlantic period) in the southern steppe regions (in the northern areas of the main centers of the producing economy) and from the Bronze Age in the forest areas.

The emergence of the producing economy in the forest-steppe and steppe landscape zones on the territory of Russia is dated IV (Aeneolithic) - III (Early Bronze Age) millennium BC. It is from this period that on the European part of Russia and in Siberia the so-called Neolithic revolution begins. The use of copper and bronze axes helped to develop new areas for planting crops in the forest-steppe zone. In the forest-steppe zone swidden and lea tillage cultivation develops.

In the steppe and forest-steppe Eurasia depending on the local landscape conditions two ways of producing economy with a predominance of cattle-breeding developed: nomadic cattle breeding and house cattle breeding with a significant influence of agriculture in the economy and long-term settlements.

The steppe areas were completely dominated by the mobile nomadic herding, breeding cattle and small cattle. Along with the valley landscapes the interfluvial landscapes were also actively explored. Almost in all the steppe areas there was a cattle breeding economic and cultural type of producing economy with a simplified system of natural and anthropogenic and anthropogenic landscapes involving a maximum of 4-5 natural and economic systems.

In the forest-steppe zone a significant part of the population was settled in the valley landscapes. The basis of the economy was pastoral and house cattle breeding with a predominance of beef cattle and pigs and hoe-mattock agriculture, which was only possible in the floodplain landscape complexes. In the areas of permanent settlements long grazing in one place led to the complete destruction of vegetation. The forced reduction of the agricultural land areas led to significant ecologic crisis.

In the forest zone, along with hunters, fishermen and gatherers there appear the first tribes, who already engaged in the forest cattle breeding. First, they raised pigs and then small and beef cattle, while hunting and fishing were of subordinate nature. Pastures were situated mainly in floodplains and lakeside lowlands which had more open spaces. It is the extensive economy of that time that can be associated with the deforestation of flood plains of rivers and lakes and the emergence of meadows. There arises a natural-economic system with floodplain cattle-breeding (agricultural geo-systems of pasture type with floodplain meadows and woodlands), which existed for a long time. In all landscape zones the character of the relationship between men and the landscape was determined by the nature of producing activity, as well as natural features of "accommodating" landscape. The formation of nature use systems and settlement patterns strictly depend on the local landscape structure.

In all earlier historical periods in similar landscape (zonal) conditions the settlers had the same type of economy, thus forming the same types of natural and economic systems and similar anthropogenically transformed landscapes. The dramatic change in the nature use occurs with the settlement in the forest and steppe zones of the Iron Age tribes, which had a complex cattle-breeding and agricultural economy. Irreversible changes captured many of the components, including soils and lithogenic basis, of the landscapes. In the morphological structure of the landscapes there appear new permanent stable elements of anthropogenic origin: residential and arable, many of which have survived to this day.

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