

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL LIFE OF KHOREZM DURING THE EARLY IRON AGE

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Abstract: *This article discusses the transition to the Early Iron Age and its distinctive features, focusing on the changes in the daily life of the population of the Khorezm oasis during this period. Based on archaeological materials, the article provides insights into the social structure, economic relations, and cultural transformations of the oasis population.*

Key words: *Iron Age, social life, Yonbosqala, Ya. Gulomov, S.P. Tolstov, archaeological sites, cultural layers, economic relations, the beginning of irrigation, agriculture, animal husbandry, cultural life, religion, deities.*

According to archaeological research, the fluctuating water levels of the Amu Darya sometimes rising and sometimes falling led to the formation of sand hills in the northern part of the Akchadarya basin, as well as in the Tuyamuyin basin and the Kaparas oasis, where water basins were covered by shifting sands. Around the Yonbosqala hills, adjacent to the borders of the Akchadarya basin, the activity of non-permanent settlements continued. The internal part of the settlements consisted of two rows of houses, covering an area of approximately 250x150 meters. Tools such as sickles and grinding stones found in the houses indicate that the inhabitants were engaged in irrigated agriculture. Researchers date the semi-underground dwellings, constructed with wooden pillars, to the 9th–8th centuries BCE.

This period marked significant developments in the social and economic life of the Khorezm oasis, including the expansion of agriculture, animal husbandry, and cultural practices, as well as the emergence of early religious beliefs and deities¹⁶.

Another such settlement, located south of the Bozor qala irrigation structure, was studied by Ya.G. Gulomov at Yonbosqala-7. Excavations revealed a settlement with a length of 77 meters, a width of 20 meters, and a thickness of 1.5–2 meters. The site featured two parallel rows of walls made of pakhsa (compressed clay), providing insights into the architectural and construction techniques of the time. This discovery highlights the advanced irrigation and settlement planning practices of the ancient Khorezmians during the Early Iron Age¹⁷. One of the characteristic features of the late 2nd millennium BCE and the beginning of the first millennium BCE was the southward migration of pastoralists settled in the steppe regions. This migration began during the Kauvinda phase in the Lower Amu Darya basin, particularly among the Suvorgan tribes. The migration of these nomadic and semi-nomadic groups was directed southward, southwestward, and

¹⁶ Итина М.А. Поселение Яккапарсон-2 (раскопки 1958-1959гг). МХЭ, Вып-6, М., "Наука", 1963, стр. 107-109.

¹⁷ Толстов С.П. Древний Хорезм. М. "Наука" 1948, стр 70, рис-7.

southeastward along the Uzboy, Arteke, Tajen, Murghab, Amu Darya, and Syr Darya rivers. However, not all Suvorgan tribes participated in this migration to new territories. In the Lower Akchadarya basin, the Yakkaparonlik and Yonbosqala communities continued the agricultural practices of their ancestors.

By the end of the 8th century BCE, a portion of the Yakkaparonlik population settled in the southern part of the Sarykamysh basin, specifically on the Kuyisoy highland, where they established a settlement. B.I. Vaynberg correctly noted that the decline in the water level of the Sarykamysh and the cessation of activity in the Uzboy led to the migration of the population from this region to the Lower Amu Darya basin. This migration marked a significant shift in the cultural and economic dynamics of the area¹⁸. Indeed, the information about the historical boundaries of the Bronze Age settlements mentioned above is not found in the literature. According to researchers, a portion of the tribes engaged in economic activities in the Akchadarya basin migrated to the borders of the Sarykamysh and Uzboy regions, giving rise to the "Kuyisoy" culture. These tribes continued to inhabit the previously existing ethnic territories, revitalizing and sustaining the cultural and economic practices of the region. This migration and settlement pattern highlight the dynamic nature of human movement and adaptation in response to environmental and socio-economic changes during that period¹⁹.

Indeed, the marshy lands and water basins in this region provided abundant food sources for pastoral settlements. The geographical conditions and the composition of the population in this area were accurately noted by Strabo, who stated that "each fortress had its own name." In the works of Greek historians, the people of Central Asia were referred to as "Sakas beyond the Sea," "Massaget-Sakas," "Omarby-Sakas," and "Sakas wearing pointed hats." The Khorezm expedition's research revealed that the inhabitants of the oasis began producing iron tools around the mid-6th century BCE.

According to B.I. Vaynberg's archaeological research on the Kuyisoy culture, the Kuyisoy people used bronze and iron tools in their daily lives. By the 7th–6th centuries BCE, large-scale artificial irrigation systems were already in place in Khorezm, indicating the importance of agriculture in the lives of our ancestors. The cultivation of grain, oil-producing plants, horticulture, and viticulture flourished during this period, as evidenced by archaeological findings. The social structure of this era, as recorded in the Avesta, included priests, warriors, farmers, and artisans as distinct social classes. From the 10th to the mid-6th century BCE, Khorezm experienced a stable historical period, with its economy based on irrigated agriculture and animal husbandry. The Avesta mentions "Khvarazm" alongside other historical-geographical regions of Central Asia, such as Mouru, Bakhdi, and Gava Suguda. It is important to emphasize that Khorezm was one of the oldest agricultural civilizations in Central Asia.

¹⁸ Вайнберг Б.И. Экология приаралья в древности и средневековье // этнографическое обозрение//М, "Наука", 1997. стр. 25.

¹⁹ Собиров Қ., Абдуллаев Ў. Этномаданий муносабатлар: шакилланиши ва ривожланиш босқичлари //Жамият ва бошқарув// Тошкент, №4, 2007. Б 62.

MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS

Historical records indicate that before the Achaemenid invasion, the people living within the borders of Central Asia were under the influence of "Greater Khorezm." The references to "Khvarazm" in the works of Hecataeus, Herodotus, and the Avesta contributed to the emergence of "Greater Khorezm historiography" in the field of history. By the early 20th century, S.P. Tolstov, in his first article, brought the issue of early statehood in the borders of Central Asia to the attention of the scientific community. This marked the beginning of a deeper understanding of the region's historical significance²⁰.

S.P. Tolstov concluded that a centralized state existed in Khorezm as early as the 8th–7th centuries BCE. He argued that the construction of large-scale irrigation systems during this period was a direct result of the state's organized activities. This centralized authority facilitated the development of advanced agricultural practices and infrastructure, which were crucial for sustaining the population and supporting the region's economic growth. Tolstov's findings highlight the early emergence of statehood and administrative complexity in Khorezm, underscoring its significance as one of the oldest centers of civilization in Central Asia²¹. According to archaeological research, there is no evidence of a centralized state in Khorezm during this period. Instead, the construction of irrigation systems in the Amirabad and Yonbosqala regions was carried out in a relatively simple and decentralized manner.

Academicians A. Askarov and K. Sobirov noted in their research that the construction of main canals in Khorezm began in the second half of the 6th century BCE. This indicates that while large-scale irrigation projects were initiated, they were not necessarily the result of a centralized state apparatus but rather reflected the collective efforts of local communities. This decentralized approach to infrastructure development highlights the adaptability and resourcefulness of the ancient Khorezmians in managing their environment and sustaining their agricultural practices²². Based on the historical information mentioned above, the following conclusions can be drawn: The Early Iron Age in Khorezm holds a unique place in the history of the ancient world. Due to the absence of external threats from nomadic tribes, the internal situation in society remained peaceful. The socio-economic and ethnic relations of this society are illustrated by the lifestyles of the tribes living in settlements such as Yonbosh-7, Yakkaparson-2, and Kuyisoy. During the Early Iron Age, two main economic activities were identified among the tribes of Khorezm: irrigated agriculture and animal husbandry. These activities shaped the landscape of Khorezm's Early Iron Age society.

At the same time, by the end of the 2nd millennium BCE and the middle of the 1st millennium BCE, pastoralists in the steppe regions faced a shortage of food resources, prompting them to migrate southward and establish new ethnic territories. The term "Khvarazm," mentioned in written sources, indicates the existence of a political union in

²⁰ Толстов С.П. Основные вопросы древней истории Средней Азии. М."Наука", 1938. Стр 176-203.

²¹ Толстов С.П. Древний Хорезм. М "Наука" 1948. стр 341.

²² Асқаров А. Қадимги Хоразм тарихига оид баъзи бир масалалар //Ўзбекистон этнологияси: янгича қарашлар ва ёндашувлар // Илмий тўплам. Тошкент, 2004. Б 76-84; Асқаров А. Ўзбек халқининг этноген ва этник тарихи.Т. "Университет" 2007. Б 113-114; Собиров Қ. Хоразмнинг қишлоқ ва шаҳарлари мудофаа иншоотлари. Тошкент. "Фан", 2009. Б 106-107.

this region. Under the leadership of "Greater Khorezm," a military alliance of Massaget-Saka tribes existed. Unfortunately, this alliance did not form a strong unity, which led to their eventual conquest by the Achaemenids.

Indeed, during the Early Iron Age in Khorezm, socio-economic and ethno-cultural relations developed in response to the geographical conditions. The urbanization process that had already taken hold in southern Central Asia did not rapidly penetrate Khorezm, and its influence was limited to minor waves that did not significantly alter the historical development of the region. This period reflects a unique blend of continuity and adaptation in Khorezm's ancient society.

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