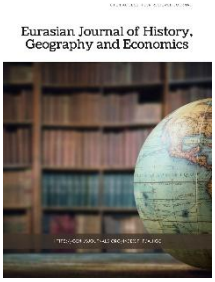

Socio-Economic Life In Tokharistan In The Early Middle Ages

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ABSTRACT

This article provides a detailed account of the socio-economic life of Tokharistan in the early Middle Ages (5th-8th centuries) based on the analysis of written sources (Song Yun, Xiong Szan) and archaeological finds (Kofir Qala, Bolaliktepa, Ajinatepa, etc.). The article provides information on the development of agriculture, in particular, the importance of large irrigation structures such as the Kofir Canal, cultivated crops (grain, cotton, grapes) and livestock (Tokharistan horses). In the field of crafts, it is noted that stone mining (Badakhshan rubies), metalworking, jewelry, glassmaking (colored glass exported to China) and textiles (local development of silk production, luxury fabrics) were at a high level. The breadth of foreign and domestic trade relations, the export of thoroughbred horses, precious stones, medicinal products, and the internal circulation of copper coins indicate that Tokharistan was a civilization that achieved high economic development for its time.

Keywords: Son Yun, Kafir, Kafirkala, Xun Szan, Munchaktepa, Bolaliktepa, Ajinatepa, Tokharistan horses, Badakhshan ruby, glassmaking.

Introduction.

The history of Central Asia has been a crossroads of centuries-old civilizations, cultures, and economic processes. The early Middle Ages in particular are considered an important stage in the socio-economic development of this region. This article is devoted to this period, in particular, to the study of the specific aspects of socio-economic life in the oasis of ancient Tokharistan (present-day southern Uzbekistan and Tajikistan). This period is characterized by the rapid economic activity of Tokharistan, its productive agriculture, developed crafts, and extensive trade relations between the East and the West. The article provides an in-depth analysis of the available written sources, in particular, valuable information left by Chinese chronicles and travelers (Song Yun, Xiong Szan), as well as the rich materials found in such important archaeological monuments as Kafirkala, Bolaliktepa, and Ajinatepa. The combination of this information allows us to form an idea of the social structure of Tokharistan, its material culture, the role of irrigation in agriculture, various branches of craftsmanship (stone quarrying, metalworking, jewelry, glassmaking, textiles), and the state of internal and external trade relations.

Results And Dıscussıon

Social life and agriculture in Tokharistan. Analysis of written sources and archaeological materials suggests that in the early Middle Ages a significant part of the population of Tokharistan was engaged in agriculture. Of course, an irrigation network existed in the valleys - and in a very developed state. In the higher regions, irrigated agriculture (i.e., agriculture irrigated with natural rainwater) developed. Archaeological research allows us to imagine the enormous scale of the irrigation network. Written sources, in particular, Chinese chronicles and traveler's accounts, report on this. The Chinese historian-traveler Song Yun

cites information from the cities of Tokharistan[1].

Archaeological research conducted in the oasis also revealed the existence of large irrigation structures and canals around the cities of Tokharistan. The role of the irrigation system in the activities of farmers and in irrigating the land was incomparable. According to the results of E. Zeymal's research, it is known that water was drained from the Vakhsh River through four canals, and the cities flourished. Among these canals, the Kafir Canal was of particular importance due to its strategic importance. Even in our modern era, this huge structure looks very impressive. Then the canal continued south again, irrigated many village groups and thus reached the modern Kumsangir district, crossing the main part of the Vakhsh valley. Two aspects of this canal should be noted separately. The first is that the canal was laid close to the base of the elevation and had a superior location relative to the valley, which allowed water to be discharged in any direction. The second is the amazing skill of ancient irrigators in accurately determining the direction of the canal.

The remains of the canal are located on the left bank of the Vakhsh River, 2.5 km west of the city of Kalininoabad. The head of the canal was considered only a walking section. The canal then heads south towards the village of Mardat, from where it approaches the eastern terrace of the valley. Here is a large group of monuments consisting of 16 objects. Its center is the ruins of the city of Chorgultepa - a fortified urban settlement of the early Middle Ages, near which is the Buddhist monastery of Ajinatepa.

Although the new main canal is currently being built by highly qualified surveyors and irrigators using aerial photographs and the most modern geodetic instruments, its route almost completely or completely corresponds to the route of the ancient canal.[2] Further south, the canal continues along the Akgazi plateau. Further south, in accordance with the relief, the canal turns west towards the Kyzyl-Tumshuq heights. Here too, there are remains of large early medieval villages. The height of the canal reaches 1.5–2 meters, and the width of the bed reaches 6 meters. The remains of the canal 4–5 km southeast of Beshkala are especially impressive. Here the canal had to be laid through a lowland. The ancient builders built a huge earthen dam and laid the canal over this dam. The total height of the canal is about 8 meters, the width of the dam base is up to 50 meters, and the canal bed itself is 13–15 meters [1].

The water released from this canal later led to the emergence of the city of Kafirkala. Xun Szan, who traveled throughout Central Asia in the early Middle Ages, left information about the city of Kafirkala in his memoirs.

In recent years, as a result of archaeological research conducted in the territory of historical Tokharistan, a number of archaeological sites dating back to the early Middle Ages were excavated and studied. In particular, in 1936-1938, under the leadership of M.Ye. Masson, and after the independence of the Republic of Uzbekistan, excavations of settlements of Tokharistan dating back to the Kushan period were carried out together with Japanese archaeologists. When such settlements of historical Tokharistan as Kafirkala, Bolaliktepa, and Zangtepa were studied, the conclusions about the history of this oasis and the social life of the peoples of the region became clearer.

One of the cities that played an important role in the history of the region is the ruins of the ancient city of Kafirkala, the center of the Vakhsh region, which is considered by researchers to have existed in the 3rd-8th centuries AD. In the Middle Ages, the main city of the Vakhsh region, Halovard, was located on the site of Kafirkala. On the eve of the Arab invasion, this city received the same name. The Arabs gave them the name Kafirkala when conquering a number of cities in Central Asia. Currently, Kafirkala is located on the western outskirts of the city of Kolkhozabad in the Republic of Tajikistan.

The area of the city of Kafirkala is 12 hectares, and the city typologically consists of ark, shahristan and rabad. The main and central street ran from the western gate of the shahristan to the eastern gate, which divided the city into 2 equal parts. In the center of the city there was a large square. The main street of the city is lined with artisans' dwellings. The city is surrounded by two rows of defensive walls

made of pakhsa, resembling an arch. Near the western gate of the city, on the inner side, there is a granary, where food received as taxes from farmers and merchants who came to the city was stored. The arch is located in the northeastern part of the city, separated from it by a wide ditch. Here, on the site of the ancient palace, the remains of a ruler's palace built in the 7th century AD were found. The walls of both palaces, the ancient and the latter, are decorated with picturesque paintings and sculptures. The ancient palace was built in the 5th century AD on the site of the last Kushan-era structure[3].

The latter palace occupied a larger area than the ancient one and differed from it in its architectural features. According to archaeological data, the city on the site of Kafirkala arose during the Kushan period and continued to develop in the early Middle Ages. As noted above, life in Kafirkala ended as a result of the Arab invasion[4].

Agricultural work was carried out using very simple, primitive tools. Plowing was carried out using a plow (a type of plow) made of wood with an iron three-toothed blade in the working part (such a tool was found in Ajinatepa). Other tools of the farmer (and irrigation master) were iron hoe and shovel. A fragment of an iron sickle (sickle) was found in Munchaktepa (Shartuz district). Grain was broken and threshed using small and medium-sized hand hoes and grain threshing devices (these were found in archaeological excavations in the lower reaches of the Kafirkhanihon River, in the Vakhsh and Surkhandarya valleys). Probably, as in other regions of Central Asia, there were water mills here.

When it comes to agricultural crops, we have a fairly complete list of them. Grain crops were sown in the fields. Legumes were also grown here. It is worth noting that there was high-quality cotton. There were also many vineyards and a certain amount of rice fields in the country[5].

According to information, in 647, the Turk Yabgus (from Tokharistan?) sent a special variety of grapes with long raisins[6]. Rare medicinal plants were also exported from Tokharistan[7].

Archaeological materials confirm the information in written sources. The abundance of grain harvesting devices and tarnovs indicates that grain crops had a large share. Dried grape berries were found at Bolaliktepe. Also found here were boxes of wheat, taro, mung beans, peaches, dried apricots, cherries, grapes, melon and watermelon seeds, walnuts, pistachios, almond butter, and cotton [8].

Tokharistan horses were highly valued. There were probably several breeds of horses here, including some that were small but very hardy, adapted to mountain conditions, and not afraid of long distances. At the same time, there were other types of horses that were adapted not for the hills, but for the plains. Myths were composed about horses, and some believed in mythological ancestors-horses.

In addition to horses, camels are also often mentioned. Oxen, horses, and donkeys were also used as pack and transport animals[9]. The country had large herds of cattle and sheep. Information about sheep is known not only from sources such as Khoi Chao, but also from numerous sources about woolen clothes and woolen carpets.

Crafts and trade. Stone-cutting was well developed in Tokharistan. Precious stones, especially the famous Badakhshan lapis lazuli (precious spinel), as well as lapis lazuli and other semi-precious and precious stones, can be found in travelers' reports and information about the export of various items.

According to Son Yu, precious stones were abundant in Tokharistan. A stone called "ma-pau" was mined here - a term that, according to Schaefer, means more like carnelian (red jasper) than agate[6]. Various items were made from this stone[7].

Salt was also mined. Some items were made of rock salt[10]. For example, a piece of a camel figurine made of pink rock salt was found at Balalek-tepe. Pink salt probably had ritual significance. At least, it is known for certain in Sasanian Iran - there salt was used as a symbol of loyalty during the festive oath-taking ceremony of the Sasanian kings. L.I. Albaum notes that, based on written sources, it can be said that salt also had a symbolic meaning in the worldview of the peoples of Central Asia,

especially the Hephthalites.[8] Although there is no direct evidence, based on the available information about Tokharistan, it can be concluded that minerals, from gold to iron, were mined here. Various ornaments, sculptures, and other jewelry were made from gold.[11] Iron was used to make tools, household items, weapons, and defensive armor.

Undoubtedly, various metal workshops operated. During the period of constant wars, one of the leading directions in the field of weapons manufacturing was the production of its products on a large scale. According to written sources, in the 5th–7th centuries, the inhabitants of Tokharistan were armed with bows, spears, axes, and swords, and they also had "Balkh armor" made in a wonderful lace-up technique.

Archaeological and iconographic materials allow us to further clarify this picture.

Tokharistan warriors, in addition to simple bows, also possessed complex bows[12]. Bow arrows were equipped with large iron tips, sometimes their warhead was divided into two. There were also multi-point bows with huge tips[13]. Tokharistan paintings depict male characters wearing daggers at their waists. The dagger's sheath was sometimes covered with a gold plate. Thus, these individuals were also armed with swords, the details of which are still unclear.

Cups and goblets made of gold and silver were widely used in everyday life. They are gracefully shaped, with a thin, high, intricately profiled foot or a straight, low base, their body-tubes covered with many vertical grooves (these are ancient vessels whose outer surface is divided into vertical lines, grooves or sections, i.e. vessels decorated or divided in a vertical direction) (hence they are called "grooved cups"). The rim of the cup is decorated with kalaf (a bundle of threads or fibers that have not yet been woven, spun, tangled or twisted). Sometimes the vessels are very complex in shape, with cuts and other elements.

The figures at Bolaliktepe were adorned with various hryvnias around their necks, and gold bracelets and rings on their fingers. The figures at Bolaliktepe and Ajinatepe wore intricate multi-part earrings. Archaeologists have found rings (with metal rings or inlays), similar bracelets and other ornaments during excavations[14].

There are also delicate copper objects, such as the copper cups from Bolaliktepe, which have realistic depictions of elephants[15].

We also know of the extremely skillful products of Tokharistan jewelers. Thus, in the second half of the 7th century, they made a three-foot-high tree-shaped chandelier from two pieces of agate stone[16].

Glassmaking in Tokharistan also reached a high level of perfection. Evidence of this is that Central Asian craftsmen taught the Chinese to make colored glass. According to the Chinese chronicle, in 424, merchants and craftsmen from the Great Yuezhi state, that is, Tokharistan, arrived in China.

They announced that they knew how to melt glass of various colors from stones, and also found ore in the mountains and conducted experiments on casting in the capital. The experiment was successful, and the glass, in its brilliance, surpassed even that of glass imported from Western countries. (The glass imported from Western countries probably refers to the shiha from Syria and Alexandria, the best glass of the ancient world.) Another source says that the Chinese learned the art of glassmaking from Central Asian masters.

“The glass was shiny and transparent. Everyone was amazed at it and considered it a work of God”[7].

But much later, at the beginning of the 8th century, red and emerald glass was sent from Tocharsiton to China, which was of an astonishing magnitude[16].

A remarkable example of glass was found at the Bolaliktep site. This cast medallion was made of green glass. It depicts a woman sitting and feeding a child. The medallion is covered with silver[8]. Very often, glass vessels were found in the form of small, long-necked glass bottles and flasks. Their bodies were sometimes decorated with rectilinear patterns of glass of a different color. Glass necklaces were even made.

As for the art of weaving, it was very developed. Written sources provide information about silk and cotton fabrics, and the clothes of celebrities, which were distinguished by their intricate

stitching. The most beautiful silk fabrics of various colors were exported to Khuttalon[6].

Archaeological and iconographic data allow us to expand this description considerably. Samples of three types of fabrics were found at Bolaliktepe: a striped woolen fabric with yellow and red stripes, a woolen fabric with blue patterns on a yellow ground (woolen fabric with blue or green patterns), and a blue and green silk fabric[8].

As for silk fabrics, in previous literature they were automatically considered to have been imported from China. However, recent archaeological finds indicate that sericulture and, undoubtedly, the art of silk weaving were fully mastered in Central Asia by the early Middle Ages.

At present, it is worth noting that a silkworm cocoon (cocoon) was found in the 6th-8th century layers of the Zangtepa (Surkhandarya) palace[8].

Judging by the Bolaliktepa paintings, the wealthy of Tokharistan wore clothes made of luxurious fabrics with bright colors and multi-colored patterns. The patterns, which were rarely repeated, sometimes covered the entire surface of the fabric. These patterns included simple geometric, floral (three-petaled flowers, rosettes), and other types.

The surface of the fabric is sometimes filled with geometric images of fish, schematic images of arhar horns, etc. Especially notable is the pattern of the fabric consisting of circles. Inside these circles, a mythical animal head with its tongue sticking out and teeth bared is depicted. Another fabric is completely covered with overlapping circles, and inside each circle a male head (or profile) is depicted. Interestingly, the clothes of the servants depicted in the same reliefs are usually made of shiny and undecorated fabrics.

The finds discovered at the Bolaliktepe monument confirm the high level of cultural development, craftsmanship, textiles and fine arts in the ancient Tokharistan and Khuttalon regions. In particular, glass objects (flacons, pendants, decorated medallions) and fabrics (silk, cotton, woolen) were widespread, and their aesthetic decoration and technical processing were high.

The silk fabrics and silkworm cocoons found in Central Asia prove that sericulture was not only imported from China, but was fully mastered in this region in the early Middle Ages. The patterns in archaeological finds — including geometric shapes, plant motifs, images of mythical animals, and circular compositions with human heads — demonstrate the artistic richness and variety of styles of textile art.

While representatives of the wealthy class wore luxurious, brightly colored, intricately patterned fabrics, servants used simpler, more shiny, and unadorned fabrics. This also shows that social stratification was clearly expressed through clothing.

The male figures in the Bolaliktepe paintings wear a narrow and long caftan with a triangular collar (otvorot) that opens to the right. The caftan tightly wraps the body and is tied at the waist with a belt. The female figures wear a sleeveless, upper cloak-nakidka, under which a second garment with wide sleeves is visible. A detail of the third garment is also noticeable - a narrow cuff.

Men carrying gifts depicted in the Ajnatepa wall paintings are depicted in tight, form-fitting, collarless clothing. This clothing is tied at the waist with a belt. The belt is decorated - yellow (i.e. gold) and black (iron?) plates are pinned on it. They wear heelless boots - ichigi. The magnificent sculptural image of a secular person found at Ajnatepa wears a narrow caftan with a double collar[8].

These images provide an idea of ancient fashion, social class, and belonging expressed through clothing. Men wear tight, sometimes decorated caftans; women wear multi-layered clothing, indicating their status or official status. The metal plates on the clothes of those who come to the ceremony probably indicate luxury or a military ceremonial nature.

Thus, it is impossible to speak only about the high development of the textile craft. In its best examples, this craft rose to the level of true art. We can also talk about achievements in sewing. Among other crafts, pottery should be mentioned first of all. Although the ceramics of the 5th-8th centuries lagged behind the best examples of the ceramics of the Kushan period in many characteristics, it would be dangerous

to conclude about the regression in ceramic production. A variety of ceramic products were produced: from small vessels to long-handled lamps (more than 350 of them were found in Ajinatepa alone) and huge humus, storage vessels. The quality of food and ceremonial vessels was high, some of their forms imitated metal prototypes (this is the first copy of something or a product, that is, the original, or an initial version, the shape and properties of which served as the basis for other copies). There were also leatherworking, woodworking, bone carving, pharmaceuticals, and other crafts.[14]

This evidence emphasizes the high development of ancient textiles and other crafts. emphasizes the high development of ancient textiles and other crafts. The art of weaving in its best examples rose to the level of true art. There were also achievements in tailoring. Ceramics, although in some respects lagging behind the best examples of the Kushan period, are distinguished by their diversity. Ceramic products were produced from small vessels to large storage khums, as well as forms that imitated metal prototypes. Other crafts, such as leatherworking, woodworking, and bone carving, were also developed.

The extensive foreign trade is evidenced by the fact that Tokharistan merchants traveled to distant countries[6]. Among the products exported from Tokharistan, especially from Khuttalon, thoroughbred horses occupied a special place. The arrival of these horse herds, for example, in China is recorded in 681, 720, 748 (Tokharistan), 729, 733, 746, 750 (Khuttalon). A large amount of precious and semi-precious stones were also exported, which were transported both in raw form and as finished products. We will not cite all the information from the sources, but we will say a few words about lapis lazuli. In later times, it was known in China as “Khotan stone” and in ancient times and in the Middle Ages, many products were made from it for the nobility. However, Khotan was only a transit point, and perhaps the processing of the stone was also carried out there. However, its extraction took place in Badakhshan[4].

Medicines were also exported from Tokharistan: tablets made to resemble fruits, containing aromatic medicinal mixtures, medicinal plants, as well as medicines that seemed “strange” to foreigners. One of the most imported medicines was citraganda, which consisted of several aromatic substances. This medicine was especially effective in treating wounds and bleeding. Its healing power so amazed the Chinese that a legend arose among them that it was possible to regrow a severed limb with the help of this medicine[6]. Trade between Tokharistan and other Central Asian possessions was also quite extensive. Sogdian coins have been found in Ajnatepa. It is noteworthy that the local minting of Tokharistan followed Sogdian prototypes in the second half of the 7th century - the first half of the 8th century[17. The numerous finds of copper coins from this period in the monuments of Northern Tokharistan indicate that internal trade — not only large, but also small — was developed. Money circulation had entered the daily life of the population.

According to the conclusions of our scientists in their scientific research, . It shows that Tokharistan had a highly developed external and internal trade system in ancient times. Foreign trade relations extended through Khuttalon and Tokharistan to China, and thoroughbred horses, precious and semi-precious stones (especially lapis lazuli), and medicinal products (for example, citragandha) were exported. It is an important fact that lapis lazuli was especially valued in ancient and medieval times and was known in China as the "Stone of Khotan".

Along with external trade, internal trade also developed: copper coins produced in Tokharistan itself were widely circulated, which indicates that along with large trade, small marketing was also active. Sogdian coins found at Ajinatepa are evidence of international trade relations. Local coins are based on Sogdian prototypes in design, indicating the depth of cultural and economic ties.

Conclusıon.

Overall, it clearly shows that Tokharistan was a highly developed civilization in its time, not only

economically, but also in the fields of pharmaceuticals, crafts, and international trade.

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