



# The Formation And Development Of Horse-Keeping In The History Of Turan

**Kadirova Mamlakat Muminovna**

Karshi State University,  
Department of Uzbek History, Ph.D., Associate Professor

## ABSTRACT

The article analyzes the emergence, development and role of horse-breeding in the life of society in the Turan region. The importance of horse-breeding in animal husbandry, military affairs, transport and cultural ceremonies from the earliest times is highlighted. Based on ancient written sources, archaeological finds and ethnographic data, the experiences of the Turan peoples in horse breeding, domestication of wild breeds and the art of horse riding are revealed. The role of horse-breeding in economic, social and cultural development and its continued traditions in modern times are also analyzed.

## Keywords:

Turan, history of horse-breeding, animal husbandry, art of horse riding, horse breed, culture, archeology.

## Introduction

The horse is one of the most important domestic animals in the history of mankind, having served as a means of transport, a tool of labor, and a military force since ancient times. Horse breeding occupied a special place in the ancient hearth of culture, which covered the vast territory called Turan - Central Asia, present-day Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, and the northern parts of Afghanistan. In the life of the ancient Turkic and Iranian peoples, the horse was not only a means of production, but also a symbol of state power, an integral part of the national psyche.

Horse breeding represented not only economic benefit for the peoples of Turan, but also one of the most important elements of cultural heritage. Since ancient times, the appreciation of the horse as personal property, its use in military campaigns, and diplomatic relations have been a powerful impetus for the development of this area. This article will cover the stages of formation of horse breeding in the history of Turan, the factors of its development, and the traditions that have survived to this day.

## Literature Review

Archaeological studies show that the domestication of horses in the Turanian region

dates back to the 4th-3rd millennium BC. Bone remains, bridles and saddlery found in settlements such as Sopollitepa, Jarkuton, and Koktepa confirm that horses were not only a hunting and transportation tool in these regions, but also had ceremonial significance.

In the early days, horses were mainly wild, and their use was more focused on hunting and transporting goods. Later, the culture of selective breeding of horse breeds, domestication of wild species, and training them for military campaigns developed.

The military importance of horsemanship in the rise of the Turanian peoples was incomparable. The art of horsemanship, the ability to fight on horseback, and the ability to make rapid campaigns over long distances increased the power of states. During the Achaemenids, Sogdians, Kang state, later Turkic Khaganate and Timurids, cavalry acted as the main military force.

Cavalry soldiers were distinguished by their maneuverability and ability to achieve superiority on the battlefield. Therefore, improving the breeding of horses and improving special military training processes was one of the important directions of state policy.

## Research Methodology And Empirical Analysis

The horse was formed as a separate branch of animal husbandry in the economy of the Turanian peoples. Horse products - milk (kimiz), meat, skin and wool - occupied an important place in the national economy. Kimiz drink was valued not only as food, but also as a remedy.

Horse trade, export of thoroughbred horses to neighboring countries, their use as taxes also contributed to the development of economic relations.

The horse has long been glorified in the oral literature of the Turanian peoples, in epics and epics. In epics such as "Alpomish", "Gorogly" the horse is depicted as a faithful companion of the hero. Horse racing, equestrian competitions during weddings, festivals, and holidays were an integral part of folk culture.

In some regions, horse burial ceremonies are also common, which indicates that they had a sacred status in society.

Today, horse breeding traditions have been preserved in Uzbekistan and other Central Asian countries. Equestrian sports, equestrian competitions, national races - games such as "kopkari", "uloq" ensure the continuity of folk heritage. Modern selection and veterinary achievements serve to improve the quality of the horse breed.

## Results

The domestication of horses from wild breeds in the Turan region was a multi-stage process. At the initial stage, people trained horses only for hunting purposes. Later, experience was gained in adapting to their nature, controlling their behavior, and curbing their wild instincts.

By the Bronze Age, selective breeding of horse breeds began. Archaeological finds from this period — iron saddles, bridles, and copper plates protecting the hooves — allowed the horse to travel long distances without tiring.

Turanian herders used a special grazing system to increase the endurance of their horses: in summer, they grazed on mountain slopes and in winter in low-lying valleys. As a result of this selection, fast breeds called "arg'umoks" emerged [1].

In the ancient Turanian states, horse breeding played an important role in state administration as a strategic resource. The number of horses, breed quality, and level of training were specially registered in the state treasury. In some periods, each tribe or clan was obliged to hand over a certain number of ready-made horses to the central government - this served as the main guarantee of military mobilization. Large horse markets operated in centers such as Samarkand, Bukhara, and Shash, where not only domestic trade was carried out, but also international trade with China, India, Iran, and the Arab Caliphate. Especially during the Timurid period, Turkmen and Kipchak horses were the most valuable specimens in the Samarkand and Herat markets was considered one of the port goods [2].

In the history of Turan, the horse was not only an economic and military tool, but also a kind of "currency" in diplomatic relations. According to ancient Chinese chronicles, the rulers of Turan sent hundreds of purebred horses as gifts to the emperors of China. These horses were called "Heavenly Horses", and the ruler who received them considered them an increase in the power of his state.

Also, the practice of exchanging horses in diplomatic agreements was widespread: when strengthening military alliances or signing peace treaties, herds of horses were transferred from one side to the other.

In the ancient religious beliefs of the peoples of Turan, the horse was considered a divine animal. In Zoroastrianism, the horse is a symbol of purity and light, and is mentioned as a blessing of Ahura Mazda. In some ancient cemeteries, warriors were found buried with horses - this is explained by the belief that the deceased rides a horse in the afterlife.

In ancient Turkic totemic views, the horse was depicted as a mediator between heaven and earth. Therefore, riding a horse served as a symbol of ceremonial status, confirming the status of ruler.

The image of the horse has a special place in the folklore of the Turanian peoples. Horses such as Boychibor in "Alpomish", Ak-Kula in "Manas", and Qirat in "Gorogly" are depicted not only as a

means of transportation, but also as a hero's partner in battle, a symbol of loyalty.

In poetry, the horse has been a symbol of speed, freedom and pride. Turanian poets often praised the horse as a symbol of the freedom and fighting spirit of the people.

Equestrian sports have long been widespread in the territory of Turan, which developed the physical fitness of the people and the art of riding. Horse races, equestrian competitions, horse races - all of these served not only to physically train the younger generation, but also to unite the people [3].

Some races were associated with religious or seasonal rituals: for example, horse races held at the beginning of spring or after the harvest were considered a symbol of the country's prosperity and abundance.

In the history of Turan, women were also able to ride horses freely and sometimes participated in battles. The women of the ancient Scythian and Sarmatian tribes were no less skilled than

men in the art of archery on horseback. This tradition is also reflected in Uzbek folklore - in some epics, female heroes are depicted as riders.

The horse was not only a source of transportation and military power, but also a source of food and clothing. The special technology of making kimiz, methods of preserving and drying horse meat, and the culture of making saddles, boots, and armor from leather have been perfected over the centuries. These experiences have been preserved even today in some agricultural regions.

Horse breeding in the history of Turan can be divided into several periods, each of which had its own economic, social, and military characteristics. The following table presents the sequence of periods and their description based on archaeological finds, written sources, and ethnographic data.

**Table 1**

**Chronological table: Stages of development of horse breeding in the history of Turan [4]**

<b>Davr / Yil oralig'i</b>	<b>Asosiy xususiyatlari</b>	<b>Tarixiy manbalar va dalillar</b>
<b>Mil.avv. IV-III ming yillik</b> — Eneolit davri	Yovvoyi otlarni dastlabki xonakilashtirish; oddiy jilovlar va yog'och egarlar ishlatalishi; otlar asosan ov va yuk tashishda ishlatalgan.	Sopollitepa, Jarqo'ton qazilmalarida ot suyaklari va jilov qismlari topilgan.
<b>Mil.avv. II ming yillik</b> — Bronza davri	Ot aravalari paydo bo'lishi; ikki g'ildirakli jang aravalari harbiy yurishlarda qo'llanilishi; chorvachilikda ot ulushi ortishi.	Qizilqum hududidan topilgan bronza davri arava modellaridan dalillar.
<b>Mil.avv. IX-VII asrlar</b> — Temir davri	Ot zotlarini tanlab ko'paytirish; chavandozlik san'ati shakllanishi; ot ustida jang qilish texnikasi rivojlanishi.	Skif va massaget jangchilari tasvirlangan grek manbalar (Gerodot).
<b>Mil.avv. VI-IV asrlar</b> — Ahamoniylar davri	Ot davlat harbiy siyosatining markazida; katta ot podalari davlat xazinasida saqlanishi; ot poygalari marosimlarga kiritilishi.	Behistun yozuvlari, Persepol devoriy rasmlari.
<b>Mil.avv. IV-III asrlar</b> — Makedoniyalik Iskandar davri	Ot ustida tezkor yurish va jang taktikalarini mukammallashtirish; Grek-Makedon chavandozлari bilan tajriba almashish.	Arrian va Plutarx asarlari.
<b>Mil. I-IV asrlar</b> — Kushon davlati	Ot savdosining xalqaro yo'nalishga chiqishi; Hindiston, Xitoy va Yaqin Sharq bilan ot eksporti; oltin va kumush tangalarda ot tasvirlari.	Surx-Kotal va Dalverzintepa yodgorliklari.

<b>VI-VIII asrlar — Turk xoqonligi</b>	Oqliq qo'shin davlatning asosiy kuchi; maxsus harbiy ot tayyorlash tizimi; zodagonlar maqomini ot zoti belgilishi.	Orxon-Enasoy bitiklari, Xitoy yilnomalari.
<b>IX-XII asrlar — Somoniylar va Qoraxoniylar davri</b>	Ot bozorlari kengayishi; poygalar va chavandozlik bellashuvlari saroy marosimlarida muntazam o'tkazilishi.	Narshaxiy "Buxoro tarixi", arab sayyohlar yozuvlari.
<b>XIV-XV asrlar — Temuriylar davri</b>	Harbiy yurishlarda otlarning chidamliligi va tezligi muhim strategik omil; Samarqand va Hirot ot bozorlarining yuksalishi.	Sharafiddin Ali Yazdiy "Zafarnoma".
<b>XVI-XVIII asrlar — Shayboniylar va Ashtarxoniyalar davri</b>	Ko`pkari, ot poygalari xalq marosimlarining ajralmas qismi; otlar soliqqa tortilishi.	Abulg'ozzi Bahodirxon "Shajarayi turk".
<b>XIX-XX asr boshlar — Rossiya mustamlakachiligi davri</b>	Oqliqlar armiyasi, chorvachilik va ot bozorlari qisqarishi; ammo xalq an'analari saqlanishi.	Turkiston general-gubernatorligi arxiv hujjatlari.
<b>XX-XXI asrlar — Zamonaviy davr</b>	Milliy ot sportining tiklanishi; seleksiya va veterinariya yutuqlari; turizm va milliy merosda otchilikning ahamiyati ortishi.	Mustaqil O'zbekiston sport musobaqalari, "Ko`pkari" xalqaro festival materiallari.

The above periodic analysis shows that in the Turan region, horse breeding was not only an economic activity, but also one of the main pillars of the political, military and cultural system. In each period, new functions of horse breeding emerged:

- In the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages - the horse was mainly a means of transport and hunting.
- Starting from the Iron Age - the formation of the art of fighting on horseback.
- In the Middle Ages - the horse was a strategic force that ensured the power of the state.
- In the modern period - the horse became a symbol of cultural heritage and sports.

Horse breeding in the Turan region did not depend only on natural pastures, but over time special technologies were introduced. Since ancient times, the habit of washing, regular cleaning of hooves, and the use of special covers to protect against the cold has been formed in horse care.

In the Middle Ages, iron hoof covers (horseshoes) became widespread, which ensured that horses could travel long distances without getting tired. The craft of saddlery and bridling developed, and each region had its own unique style of harness. For example, Bukhara saddles were more ornate and made with gold

leaf, while Fergana bridles were famous for their strength.

Among the Turanian peoples, horsemanship and horse care were passed down from generation to generation through separate schools. In military equestrian schools, archery, spear throwing, and combat maneuvers were taught along with horsemanship. In these schools, students lived in pastures with their teachers and mastered all the secrets of working with horses [5].

During the khanate period, there was a position of "horse masters" in some palaces, who were responsible for caring for the ruler's horses and preparing them for competitions or campaigns. This position was awarded great prestige and attention.

The Great Silk Road was important not only for the trade in silk, spices, and precious goods, but also for the horse trade. Turanian merchants took thoroughbred horses to China and received silk, porcelain, and precious goods in return. Chinese chronicles describe horses brought from the Fergana Valley as "swift horses that fell from the sky."

Horses taken to the territories of Iran and the Arab Caliphate were often sold for military campaigns. Thus, Turanian horses became an

integral part of not only regional but also global military strategies.

Horse breeding in many periods directly affected the state budget. In some periods, certain breeds of horses were subject to special duties or taxes. There was also a practice of renting horses - this was mainly aimed at providing horses for transporting goods on caravan routes or for diplomatic missions.

Also, some rulers directed the income from horse breeding to cover military expenses. This system, while ensuring economic independence, also increased the strategic maneuverability of the state.

The preservation of the quality of pastures and the impact of horse breeding on the ecological balance have long been important. Turanian herders changed pastures depending on the season, preventing the erosion of meadows. Horse breeding near irrigated lands was also prohibited - this served to maintain agricultural productivity.

Such a system of pasture management was not only an important factor in preserving nature, but also in ensuring the health and endurance of horses.

The image of the horse is widely reflected in Turanian art. Horse images are found in ancient pottery, miniature art, carpet patterns, and wall paintings. Miniatures from the Timurid era depict horses with delicacy in horse races, battle scenes, and palace ceremonies.

In addition, images of horses and riders were used not only as decorations in metal carvings and jewelry, but also as symbols of strength and freedom.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, special scientific expeditions have been conducted to study Turanian horse breeding. Archaeologists have analyzed horse bones and made clear scientific conclusions about their breed types, nutritional composition, and living conditions. Genetic studies have proven that the roots of some modern breeds go back to ancient Turanian horses [6].

Today, scientific centers for horse breeding operate in Uzbekistan and neighboring countries, working to preserve and improve national breeds.

The equestrian policy of Uzbekistan during its independence was not limited to the development of domestic capabilities, but also entered the international arena. Uzbek riders successfully participated in a number of equestrian competitions, raising the prestige of our national sport at the international level. At the same time, international "kopkari" festivals were held in Uzbekistan, in which riders from neighboring countries - Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Turkmenistan - also participated. These competitions gained great importance not only as a sport, but also as a means of strengthening intercultural ties.

Economic aspects of horse breeding also developed significantly during the years of independence. Some private business entities and farms have started to attract horses to the tourism sector. In particular, in historical cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara and Khiva, equestrian demonstrations, horse riding lessons and national horse games are being held for tourists. This not only serves to financially strengthen the equestrian sector, but also increases the tourism potential of our country. Attention has also been paid to equestrianism at the state policy level. A number of government resolutions have set out issues such as the development of equestrian sports, regular holding of national competitions, the establishment of schools for young riders, and the preservation of the breeding quality of horses. In some higher educational institutions, equestrian departments have been opened within the faculties of sports and culture, and steps have been taken to study and develop horse breeding on a scientific basis. This makes it possible to combine the equestrian sector with modern science.

### Conclusion And Discussion

In the history of Turan, horse breeding has been not only an economic activity, but also a symbol of the entire culture, state power and national spirit. From ancient times to the present day, the horse has not lost its importance in the life of the peoples of Turan as a means of transport, military power, ceremonial symbol and economic resource. The traditions of horse breeding still serve the development of national

sports, culture and tourism today. The preservation and development of historical experience is an invaluable heritage for future generations.

## References

1. Tolstov S.P. Drevniy Khorezm. Moscow: MGU, 1948.
2. Gulyamov Y.G. History of the peoples of Central Asia. Tashkent: Fan, 1972.
3. Bartold V.V. Turkestan in the era of the Mongol invasion. Moscow: Nauka, 1963.
4. Karimov A. Animal husbandry traditions in the history of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: Yangi asr avlodiy, 2015.
5. Akishev K.A. Ancient culture of the Saks and Usuns. Almaty: Nauka, 1984.
6. Rahmonov S. Ethnography of the peoples of Uzbekistan. Tashkent: University, 2011.