



DETERMINATION OF FARMING SKILLS IN THE PASTORAL PEOPLES OF THE FERGHANA VALLEY (IN THE EXAMPLE OF THE FERGHANA KARAKALPAKS)

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Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 1 st February 2023 Accepted: 1 st March 2023 Published: 3 rd April 2023	The article analyzes and describes the agricultural skills of the herding peoples of the Fergana Valley, including the Karakalpak ethnic groups, based on scientific literature and field ethnographic materials. Information about the importance of farming in the economy of the Karakalpak, its specific aspects, traditional and modern types of crops is given.
Keywords: Fergana Valley, economic and cultural types, sedentary farmers, nomadic herders, semi-nomadic (semi-nomadic) herdsman-peasants, artificial irrigation, irrigation, cotton growing, grain crops, leguminous crops.	

Agriculture is the main branch of the people of Central Asia, and this industry has its ancient roots. In particular, the Fergana Valley is one of the lands where farming culture has developed since ancient times, and migration processes are active.

The agriculture of this region began in the last quarter of two thousand years BC and has a history of three thousand years. This opinion is based on archaeological materials found in the valley and written information about the ancient times of the country. According to the researches of archeologists, this process started in the Fergana Valley in the middle of the II millennium BC [1].

Researchers show that the population living in the region of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the early XIX -XX centuries belongs to the following economic and cultural type:

- Sedentary farmers - the basis of their farm is farming by plowing the land and using artificial irrigation;
- Nomadic herders - the main source of livelihood is cattle, and they feed it in pastures all year round;
- Semi-nomadic (semi-nomadic) pastoralist-peasant population - these are usually located in the surrounding areas of agricultural oases. Their economy is multi-faceted, combining traditional animal husbandry with agriculture [2].

The Karakalpak ethnic groups of the valley, who have been living in the Fergana valley for many years, have also actively participated in the ethnocultural processes in the valley.

Although the Karakalpak willingly settled around the rivers and lakes, these areas consisted of uncultivated areas of low productivity and fertility, inconvenient for irrigation, orchards, reeds, and several lakes.

In the territory of Uzbekistan, especially in the Fergana Valley, the process of transition of the Karakalpak ethnic groups to agriculture was due to the drying up of the lakes in the areas where they are located, and the sharp reduction of pasture and grazing areas for livestock [3]. Moreover, as a result of close ethno-cultural relations, active inter-ethnic integration and assimilation processes, as well as the settlement of herding peoples, the development of agriculture accelerated.

Also, in order to provide raw materials to the textile industrial enterprises of the Russian Empire, the forced development of cotton production accelerated this process.

Regarding the ethno-local characteristics of the traditional agriculture of the Fergana Valley, it is possible to distinguish two types of land suitable for agriculture in the region:

- irrigated land areas, i.e. "water lands".
- non-irrigated land areas, i.e. "lami", "spring" or "barren lands".

In the dry lands, mainly corn crops are planted. The semi-nomadic (more semi-arid) population was more engaged in grain crops. They cultivated grain crops such as millet, barley, and wheat. The role of these settled pastoral peoples in the acquisition of new lands for agriculture was great [4].

In Central Asia, the type of agriculture based on irrigated agriculture was formed historically, and farmers had to "lead" water to grow crops. Water was considered the main source of income for agriculture. Therefore, it has become an important task to convert the existing land into arable land through the construction of irrigation facilities - ditches and canals. This method of farming on the basis of artificial irrigation led to the creation of simple and

complex water structures and irrigation devices. The local aspect of valley agriculture is that the local farmers, on the basis of their experience, have subjugated river and lake waters to farming in an artificial manner.

For this purpose, the Karakalpaks settled along the banks of rivers and lakes and started farming by clearing the swampy lands of reeds and bushes. At first, they tried to cultivate grain crops such as millet, sorghum (white sorghum) rice, and a small amount of sugarcane crops such as watermelon and melon [5]. These reed and bush cleared fields, which have been cleared of manure, have also become possible for irrigation based farming years later. That is, they sought to use the water of the lakes located near the cultivated fields for irrigation. There is a lot of information in the sources that Karakalpaks made ditches from *Damkol*, *Ashikol*, and Minbulok lakes and irrigated their fields [6].

In addition, Karakalpak groups living in the area near Ko'kan used the water of the Sokh River to irrigate their fields. Until the beginning of the 19th century, artificial irrigation networks such as *Karakalpak*, *Oktepasoy*, *Qiyalisoy*, which were mined from the *Sokh River*, gained great importance in irrigating the lands of these Karakalpak groups.

The Karakalpaks irrigated their cultivated fields using artificial irrigation networks passing through their areas, such as *Yangariq*, *Khonariq*, *Andijonsoy*, *Shahrikhonsoy*, *Ulug'nor*, *Uchkurgon*. The expansion of irrigation networks has given the farmers of Karakalpak the opportunity to plant several new types of crops that are not traditional for them.

In the last periods of the Kokan Khanate, farming became more important in the economy of the Karakalpaks of Ferghana. During this period, Karakalpak farmers grew millet, sorghum, rice, wheat, corn, mash, sesame, carrot, melon, watermelon and local (jaidari) varieties of cotton in their fields [7].

It can be said that in the years following the inclusion of the territory of the Kokan Khanate into Tsarist Russia, agriculture became the leading economic sector in the Fergana steppes. This is confirmed by the following statistics: in 1897, 10199 out of 11056 Karakalpaks registered in the Fergana Valley, that is, about 92 percent, lived on the basis of agriculture [8].

At the beginning of the XX th century, the agricultural economy of the Karakalpaks was focused on cotton cultivation, and the main part of the suitable and fertile agricultural land was occupied with cotton cultivation. At this time, cotton cultivation made up 41.3% of the total cultivated areas, 17.7% due to the low productivity of the cultivated areas around Ko'kan region [9].

As a result of the large-scale growth of cotton cultivation in the valley, as it happened in all ethnic communities, cotton became the main agricultural crop in Karakalpak peasant farms. In a number of volosts of Andijan, Ko'kan, Margilon and Namangan uyezds, where the main groups of Karakalpaks are located, cotton growing has developed rapidly.

However, it should also be mentioned that the Karakalpaks living in all the above-mentioned volosts were not engaged in the cultivation of cotton and other agricultural crops to the same extent. Karakalpaks living in a favorable natural-geographical area are more engaged in cotton cultivation than the Karakalpaks of Ko'kan uezd located in fertile lands. This ratio, which is related to the geography of the regions, among the Karakalpak ethnic communities, in conducting economic activities, Shahrikhan district of Andijan region, *Dorulomon*, *Sakhavat*, *Sherkurgan*; Boz district: *Hovost*, *Khojaabad*, *Naiman*, *Koshtepasaroy*, Baliqchi district; *In Kemaboshi*, *Beshkapa*, *Shambil*, Karakalpak regions of Norin district of Namangan region, more cotton is grown and less grain products are grown, while in Fergana regions, it is the opposite, which has led to the cultivation of grain and cotton products instead of cotton [10].

The share of Kipchaks and Kyrgyz, who lived side by side with the Karakalpaks in the valley area, also increased, and 200,000 of them, or 65 percent, were engaged in agriculture during this period. The Kyrgyz and Kipchaks farmed mostly in dry lands, mainly cultivating grain crops such as *millet*, *wheat*, and *barley*, as well as many crops grown by Uzbek and Tajik farmers [11].

The tools used by the Karakalpaks in agriculture were almost no different from those of the Uzbeks. During the years of the Soviet power, as a result of the policy of cotton monopoly, cotton growing became more popular. The development of cotton farming has also seriously affected the traditional economic activities of the Karakalpak ethnic groups living in the Fergana Valley. First, all fertile and newly developed agricultural areas were allocated exclusively for the cotton sector. The cultivated areas for grains and pulses, which are the traditional crops of the Karakalpaks, have been seriously reduced. In 60 and even 80 percent of the total irrigated lands, new varieties of cotton have been planted [12].

Thus, in the late XIX th and early XX th centuries, the Karakalpaks of the Fergana Valley were mainly engaged in cotton farming, but in their farms, grain crops: *sorghum*, *wheat*, *rice (rice)*, *millet*, *corn*, *barley*; from legumes: *peas*, *mash*; from Polish products: *melon*, *watermelon*, *pumpkin*; for fodder: *alfalfa*; as well as *carrots*, *onions*, *potatoes*, *radishes*, *sesame seeds* for oil production.

In a word, under the influence of mutual economic and cultural relations, the Karakalpaks of Ferghana have mastered the cultivation of almost all types of crops grown in the fields of neighboring settled Uzbek farmers. As a result of such mutual economic and cultural relations, even agricultural fields such as *horticulture and viticulture* were developing in the valley Karakalpak economy. Caring for fruit trees such as grapes, apples, pears, and pomegranates in their farms has become a habit for the Karakalpaks of the Fergana Valley [13.]

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