



D. D. LANDLESS ON THE ECONOMIC ACTIVITIES OF THE POPULATION OF KHIVA

Sapayeva Yulduz Xudayorovna

E-mail: sternyulduz@gmail.com

Tel.: +998 99 968 57 79

ORCID: 0009-0002-7260-1561

Article history:	Abstract:
Received: 10 th April, 2026 Accepted: 8 th May 2026	<i>The article analyzes the economic activities of the population of Khiva based on the accounts of D. D. Landless. It examines agriculture, animal husbandry, caravan transport, related taxation practices, and the impact of external political processes on the economic life of the population</i>
Keywords: <i>Khanate of Khiva, D. D. Landless, economic activities, agriculture, animal husbandry, Karakalpaks, Kyrgyz, taxation, caravan transport.</i>	

INTRODUCTION. The works of foreign travelers and researchers are of significant source value for studying the economic life of the population of Khiva in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. One such researcher was the English traveler and clergyman Henry Lansdell (1841–1919), who made several journeys to Central Asia. According to the Library of Congress, Lansdell undertook extensive travels through Russian Asia in 1879 and 1882; his second journey in 1882 lasted 179 days, during which he traveled 12,145 miles. He visited such places as Tashkent, Kokand, Samarkand, Karshi, Bukhara, Khiva, and Merv. As a result of these journeys, his two-volume work, *Russian Central Asia, Including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva and Merv*, was published in London in 1885. The principal aim of the work was not only to provide a wider readership with information about Central Asia, but also to present researchers of the period with information on the region's geography, geology, population, customs, administration, language, and religion. The second volume contains special chapters devoted to the Khivan oasis and its history, population, natural environment, and economic life. Lansdell did not limit his research to his personal observations. During his travels, he conducted conversations with local people and officials and collected information from them. He also consulted the works of specialists and earlier researchers. His work is distinguished by its comprehensive coverage of the geography, natural environment, population, and social life of Central Asia. The Library of Congress description also notes that the author supplemented his personal observations through consultations with specialists and additional research. Lansdell's observations concerning Khiva are particularly valuable for the information they provide about the economic activities of its population. He describes the economic activities of the people of Khiva, including agriculture, horticulture, livestock breeding, sericulture, hunting, fishing, and caravan transport, in connection with their ethnic groups and ways of life. The author also pays attention to agricultural products, tax obligations, and the impact of external relations on the economic life of the population. This article analyzes Lansdell's observations from the perspective of the economic activities of the population of Khiva.

In this respect, Lansdell's work represents an important historical and ethnographic source for studying the economic life of the Khivan oasis in the late nineteenth century. His accounts incorporate direct observations and information obtained from local informants concerning the economic specialization of the local population, the labor activities of different social and ethnic groups, taxation practices, and economic processes related to external relations.

MAIN MATERIALS. D. D. Lansdell describes the economic activities of the population of the Khanate of Khiva in relation to the lifestyles of different ethnic groups. According to his accounts, the Karakalpaks were predominantly a nomadic population engaged in livestock breeding. They were also divided into clans and tribes. The Kyrgyz living in the northern part of the khanate were partly engaged in transporting goods along caravan routes. Lansdell notes that some of the Kyrgyz belonging to the Adai tribe were still subject to the authority of Khiva. His observations show that the economic specialization of different ethnic groups within the territory of the Khanate of Khiva also differed. While agriculture and horticulture predominated among the settled Uzbek population, livestock breeding was a major occupation among the nomadic Karakalpaks, whereas caravan transport was one of the important economic activities of the Kyrgyz.

Lansdell's accounts also provide a distinctive description of the social stratification of the population of the Khanate of Khiva. He notes that the Khan did not have a regular army and that the population was not sharply divided into social classes. At the same time, the religious estate and the sayyids occupied a special position in society. Mullahs and khojas were exempt from taxation and were also exempt from compulsory labor for the construction and maintenance of canals. Such duties were imposed on other subjects. According to Lansdell, the Karakalpaks were taxed at the rate of one sheep for every hundred sheep, one bullock for every twenty head of cattle, and one camel for every six camels.

Kazaks who came to the bazaar paid one shilling for each camel or the same amount for every ten sheep. In addition, there was also a harvest tax. Lansdell also refers to the difficult economic conditions of the population of Khiva. He notes that the indemnity imposed on the Khan by Russia had a negative impact on the economic well-being of the population.

Lansdell also records the perceptions of the population of Khiva regarding the outside world and their attitudes toward Russia. He shows that the main issues shaping relations between Khiva and Russia involved Russian prisoners, the security of caravans, trade, and the struggle for political influence. As the author approached Khiva, he recorded a conversation with a young man who expressed a negative attitude toward the Russians, describing the Turks and the English favorably, while speaking of the Russians in unfavorable terms. However, in a conversation with another Kyrgyz informant, Lansdell encountered a quite different view. According to this informant, the Russians initially imposed a small tax and later increased it. Some Kyrgyz, unable to understand this policy, fled to Bukhara and beyond. Nevertheless, the informant himself stated that relations with the Russians had been beneficial to the Kyrgyz people. These contrasting views indicate that attitudes toward Russia within the Khanate of Khiva were not uniform. Representatives of different groups assessed external political changes in accordance with their own social and economic interests.

Lansdell's accounts also reveal the direct impact of Russo-Khivan relations on the lives of the population. He provides information about the enslavement of Russians in Khiva, the liberation of Russian captives, the Perovsky expedition, Shakespeare's mediation mission, and the Russian occupation of Khiva in 1873. Of particular significance are the events surrounding the liberation of Russian prisoners in 1840. Shakespeare led 416 men, women, and children out of Khiva, taking them first to the Caspian Sea and then to Orenburg. A Russian source also records that, in an official letter addressed to Shakespeare by the commander of the New Alexandrovsk Fortress on September 5, 1840, the arrival of 416 Russian captives from Khiva was confirmed [13]. Lansdell's discussion of these events demonstrates that external political processes involving the Khanate of Khiva had a direct impact on the everyday lives of the population, particularly with regard to captivity, trade, and freedom of movement. The accounts of D. D. Lansdell are significant for the study of Khivan society in the late nineteenth century in several respects. First, the author relied on local informants. Through conversations with Matmurad and other individuals, he collected information on the ethnic composition, agriculture, prices of local products, and the life of the population. Second, Lansdell did not accept all information provided by his informants as absolute fact. For example, he compared figures concerning the territory and population of Khiva with estimates made by other researchers and questioned the accuracy of some of them. Third, the author presents Khivan society as an interconnected system encompassing both ethnic composition and economic activities. His accounts contain information on the involvement of Uzbeks in agriculture, horticulture, sericulture, hunting, and fishing; the predominance of livestock breeding among the Karakalpaks; and the participation of the Kyrgyz in caravan transport. Fourth, Lansdell left valuable information about the economic and cultural practices of the population of Khiva. His observations on melon varieties, their planting and ripening periods, methods of storage, and attempts to cultivate Khivan melons in England provide clear examples of this.

CONCLUSION. The accounts of D. D. Lansdell concerning the Khivan oasis constitute an important source for studying the ethnic, social, and economic life of the population of Khiva in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. His observations reveal important features of the social structure of Khivan society, including the privileged position of mullahs and khojas, who were exempt from taxation and compulsory labor for canal construction and maintenance. Information concerning the population of the khanate also demonstrates the uncertainty of contemporary statistical data, as Lansdell himself approached the estimates of 300,000 and 500,000 inhabitants critically. It should be emphasized that D. D. Lansdell's accounts make it possible to study the population of Khiva not merely as an object of political history, but as a complex society consisting of different ethnic groups and characterized by its own economic experience, social relations, and everyday culture. Therefore, his observations are of considerable source value for reconstructing the social and ethnocultural aspects of the history of Khiva.

REFERENCES

1. Landless D. D. *Russian Central Asia, including Kuldja, Bokhara, Khiva and Merv*. — London: Victorian, 1885. V.2
2. Howorth H. H. *History of the Mongols from the 9th to the 19th Century*. Vol. II. — London, 1876.
3. Vambéry A. *Travels in Central Asia*. — London: John Murray, 1864.
4. Schuyler E. *Turkistan: Notes of a Journey in Russian Turkistan, Khokand, Bukhara, and Kuldja*. Vol. I–II. — New York: Scribner, Armstrong & Co., 1876.
5. Mac Gahan J. A. *Campaigning on the Oxus, and the Fall of Khiva*. — London: Sampson Low, Marston, Low, & Searle, 1874.
6. Encyclopaedia Britannica. *Khiva / Khivan Khanate* — маълумотнома материаллари.
7. Conolly A. *Journey to the North of India, Overland from England, Through Russia, Persia, and Affghaunistaun*. Vol. I–II. — London, 1834.
8. Burnaby F. *A Ride to Khiva: Travels and Adventures in Central Asia*. — London: Cassell, Petter, Galpin & Co., 1876.
9. Muraviev N. N. *Journey to Khiva through the Turkoman Country*. — London, 1822.
10. Толстов С. П. *По древней дельте Окса и Джейхуна*. — Москва: Наука, 1962.

11. Толстов С. П. *Хорезмская археолого-этнографическая экспедиция*. — Москва: Издательство Академии наук СССР, 1948.
12. Иванов П.П. «Очерки по истории Средней Азии (XVI - начало XIX в.).» – М., 1958.
13. Likhoshostoff, " Commandant of Nova Alexandroffski, " Colonel of Artillery." Commandant at Nova Alexandroffski Fortress, 5th Sept., 1840, No. 1,097.