

## Traditional Transport among the Peoples of the Aral Region (1800-1873)

By

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### Abstract

The article highlights the history of the development of traditional transport among the peoples of the Aral Sea region: Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Karakalpaks, and Turkmens. The significance of traditional transport in the development of the national economy, trade and culture is revealed.

**Key words:** traditional transport: water, land, caravan roads, merchants, trade products, imported goods, ethno-demographic processes.

### Introduction

It is important to study the history of traditional transport among the peoples of the Aral Sea region. Published historical sources, folklore, observations of travelers, archival data make it possible to highlight the main transport communications in the 19th century.

In the north of the Khiva Khanate, there were caravan overland roads connecting the trading cities of Chimbay, Khodjeyli, Kungrad, Kunya-Urgench with Khiva. One road from Kungrad through Khodjeyli, Kunya-Urgench went to Khiva along the left bank of the Amu Darya. Another road - along the right bank from Chimbay went to the crossing over the Kipchaks, going to the other side, passed further through Mangyt to Khiva. In addition, a caravan road passed through Chimbay, connecting Kazalinsk with Khiva. Another caravan road from Khiva towards Uralsk through Ustyurt passed not far from Kungrad.

In the 19th century Economically, two large regions have already been determined. These are the Chimbay region, with the center Chimbay on the first bank of the Amu Darya and the Kungrad region with the center Kungrad on the left bank of this river.<sup>1</sup>

The agricultural economy was directly dependent on the regime of the Amu Darya. The main water arteries of these regions (Kegeyli, Kuvanysh-Dzharma, Shortanbai, Shumanai, Kiyat-Zhargan, etc.) originated directly from the Amu Darya. All these waterways had imperfect, easily destroyed head structures, therefore, all fluctuations in the water levels of the Amu Darya, characteristic of its unstable regime, were reflected in the irrigation systems. Devastating floods were frequent.

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<sup>1</sup> Qaraqalpaqstan jańa tariyxı. Qaraqalpaqstan XIX ásir ekinshi yarımınan XXI ásirge shekem. – Nókis: Qaraqalpaqstan, 2003. pp.22.

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Roads and canals adjacent to the villages were planted with garden jida, silvery tals (“ak tal”), osokorya (“kara tal”), and primal poplars (“ak terek”).

The main transport of fishermen was a boat (“kayik”) and a raft (“sal”) made of reed (“zheken”). The Butakov expedition of 1859 observed that for fishing, the Karakalpaks have boats “composed of small pieces of wood fastened with iron; in the space from the sea to Kungrad, up to 150 such boats can be assembled. Large ones lift up to 150 pounds”<sup>2</sup>

Kaiyks had more prosperous fishermen, and the poor made a raft from sheaves of reeds (“zheken sal”), which was controlled with a long stick - “tayaǵ”. Often fishermen united, because fishing was difficult for singles, moreover, it required a lot of money to purchase tackle and a boat. Wealthy people have working fishing tools, boats, nets, “kaza” and workers, so they caught a lot of fish and sold it to agricultural areas or exchanged it for grain.

There were fish markets in Kungrad, Chimbai, Klych kale on Daukar and in Khodjeyli. According to the Russian scientist M.N. Bogdanov, every year in winter, until the Amu Darya froze, from 150 to 300 kaiyks loaded with fish were sent from the delta from Daukara to Chardjou. They carried mainly carp, catfish, barbel, and a large amount of thorn. Sometimes in winter camels sent fish to Bukhara.<sup>3</sup>

The main types of means of transportation for the Karakalpaks were carts and boats. There were two types of arba: “telegen arba” (spun according to the device and light) and “tat arba” (heavier). The light “telegen arba”, which was widespread mainly in the north of the delta, was a very important means of transportation for the constantly nomadic Karakalpaks. The passability of the “telegen arba”, harnessed by an ox or a horse, along the terrain crossed by small channels and drying lakes with wet marshy soil was quite high. “Tat arba” (or “gulmyykly arba”) was borrowed by the Karakalpaks from the Uzbeks.

In the northern part of the delta, boats became widespread. On boats, the Karakalpaks sailed up the Amu Darya to Chardzhuy, down to the Aral and further to the mouth of the Syr Darya.

The work of barge haulers was very difficult. They walked along the Amu Darya and the canal from Kungrad to Khiva and beyond, pulling boats against the current. The Cossack Ivan Letnikov, who was in Khiva captivity, said that he arrived from Kungrad to Khodjeyli with a load of 400 pounds in six days, and the ship was pulled by a tow line of 5 people.<sup>4</sup>

Boatmen also drove into internal canals and channels on the territory of the Karakalpaks. We know that Kegeyli, Kuuanysh-Dzharma, Shortanbay on the right bank of the Amu Darya, Kiyat zhargan, Shumanai, Kanzhab on the left bank served as good shipping routes.

Many boatmen served the crossing over the Amu Darya. For a long time there was a crossing between Khodjeyli and Nukus on it. The existence of a boat crossing through the Kuuanysh-Zharma canal was pointed out by the Russian scientist A.V. Kaulbars.<sup>5</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Lymarev V.I. Alexey Ivanovich Butakov, 1816-1869. - Moscow: Nauka, 2006. - P.6.

<sup>3</sup> Bogdanov Modest Nikolaevich (1841-1888). - M.: Edition of the Moscow City Society of Hunters and Fishermen, 2003. - P. 132.

<sup>4</sup> Ivanin M.I. Khiva and the Amu-Darya River // Marine collection. 1864, No. 8-9, pp. 149.

<sup>5</sup> Zhdanko T.A. Karakalpaks in scientific studies of the period of their accession to Russia (1873-1874). - Central Asian ethnographic collection, no. IV. - Moscow: Nauka, 2001. - P. 13

Karakalpak boatmen were engaged in transporting small merchant caravans across the Aybugir Lake. Goods are transported in boats, in camels and horses are transferred to wade or swim. In addition to boats, the above-mentioned rafts ("sal") were used on the lakes for fishing and crossing.

Horseback riding was widely developed among the Karakalpaks. Communication between auls was carried out by horsemen ("atly khabarshy"), but there were no special messengers. Any person was sent to notify of some event. Primitive roads were laid between the villages: "arba zhol" (cart road), "soqpaq zhol" (pedestrian path, suitable for horses).

Bridges across the inner ditches were built very rarely, because carts and horseback wagons waded through them. For pedestrians sometimes put "payapyl" (a log thrown across).

In the 19th century With the development of commodity relations in the Khiva Khanate, the Karakalpaks began to take an active part in the trade in agricultural products, cattle breeding and fishing, supplying them to the cities of the Khanate. The left-bank Karakalpaks sold their bread, livestock and fish in Khiva, Khodjeyli, Kungrad and other cities. They also bought Russian, Khiva and Bukhara goods there. Kungrad, Khodjeyli, Kipchak, Mangit on the left bank, Chimbay and Shurakhan on the right bank - the traveler A. Vamberi considered the main cities in the north of the khanate, which were of great trade importance for the Karakalpaks, Kazakhs, Uzbeks and Turkmens. In the middle of the XIX century. Chimbay, the center of the right-bank Karakalpaks, which arose around the estate of a rich man named Shynybay, turned into a fairly significant market. Here, with the exception of merchants and the clergy, there were no permanent residents, many came only for the time of trade. Chimbay was connected by water with the main points of the Khiva Khanate, as well as by land roads with many regions. Therefore, it quickly grew and turned into a busy shopping center. Many shops and a large caravanserai for visiting merchants were built in it.

Nukus is a fortress not far from Kungrad on one of the branches of the Amu Darya. This point was very weakly fortified and was of no strategic importance. It was remarkable only for its trading market, visited by many Karakalpaks and Kirghiz of different clans. It is quite possible that Nukus also acquired the importance of a trading center in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, starting from the second half of the 20th century.

The Karakalpaks came to the cities to trade on market days, which were held twice a week. "Uzak bazar" gathered every Friday, "kiska bazar" - on Monday. Trade in the bazaar went on from morning to evening. Karakalpaks brought cows, rams, horses, camels to the market; they brought - wheat, dzhugara, millet, fish, apricots, jida, dishes, vegetables, vegetable oil, etc. They purchased various handicraft products and other things necessary for the household - clothes, production tools, handicrafts, etc.

The Karakalpaks also traveled to Khiva to trade, bringing saxaul firewood and coal, as well as cattle and fish. They also traveled to the lower reaches of the Syr Darya to sell grain and fish.

Traders ("saudager") among the Karakalpaks were Uzbeks who came for a while. Over time, their own merchants, Karakalpaks, appeared: "Tolep-saudager" a merchant from the Sheriushi clan and "Yakub-chitker" a seller of calico from the Kandekli clan. Apparently, the Kazakhs were major merchants: "Koshvakht caravan-bashi", who had 100 goals. cattle and "Koytan bash caravan bashi", which owned 30 goals. cattle and 400 sheep.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Documents of the Khiva khans archive on the history and ethnography of the Karakalpaks. -T.: Fan 1967. -pp.219, 225, 230, 234.

From the beginning of the 19th century, a new stage of migration began in the social history of the peoples of the lower reaches of the Amu Darya - the resettlement of Kazakhs from the territory of the Little Zhuz.

A purposeful demographic policy aimed at resettling the Kazakhs of the Little Zhuz in the redistributions of the Khiva Khanate was started by Muhammad Rakhimkhan (1806-1825), one of the energetic khans of Khiva.

As a result of numerous campaigns, Muhammad Rakhim subdued 27,000 Kazakh tents to the Khiva Khanate, 10,000 of which belonged to the Alimulins, 7,000 to the Zhetru, 8,000 to the Baiuli.<sup>7</sup>

## Conclusion

On the territory of the Khiva Khanate, Kazakhs settled in the vicinity of the city of Gurlen, in the area of the Kipchak fortress, in Kungrad bekstvo, in the Mangit region, in the Daukara region, along the eastern and southwestern coasts of the Aral Sea, in the Aybugir lowland, in the Kunya-Urgench region, in the Kyzyl Kum, on Ustyurt. They mainly lived on those lands where natural and climatic conditions are favorable for livestock farming.

On the basis of these migration processes in the lower reaches of the Amu Darya, on the eve of the conquest by Russia, a demographic situation developed, when the population of the Khiva Khanate consisted mainly of three peoples: Uzbeks, Karakalpaks and Kazakhs.

Thus, in the 19th century, the traditional transport of the peoples of the Aral Sea region was preserved and changes took place in connection with the conquest of the region by the Russian Empire.

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