Advances in Science and Humanities



Advances in Science and Humanities, 2026, 42–44

doi: 10.70728/human.v02.i04.011
Volume 02, Issue 04
ISSN: 3060-5393
Paper

PAPER

TITLE: FROM THE HISTORY PAGES OF THE VILLAGES OF THE LOWER SYR DARYA BASIN

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Abstract

This article analyzes the historical roots and development of early medieval villages in the Eastern Aral Sea region.

Key words: Vinogradov A.V., Itina M.A., Tolstov S.P., Matyakubov H.H., Sagdullaev A.S., Yusupov A., Makhmudov U., Central Asia, Amu Darya, Syr Darya, Eastern Aral Sea region, Saksaul, Zhalpak, Baraktam, Tagisken, Babishmulla, Balandi.

Introduction

The northeastern part of the Turan plain is represented by the Lower Syr Darya basin, whose geomorphology is described by the Kyzylkum desert. This plain was formed by the movement of branches that separated as a result of floods of the Amu Darya (Akchadarya) and Syr Darya (old riverbeds: Jonadarya, Kuvondarya, Inkordarya). The Eastern Aral Sea plain became a plain during the Neogene period of geological development, and by the 8th–7th millennia BC, the Syr Darya flowed from the Fergana Valley towards the Aral Sea, while the Amu Darya crossed the Karakum desert, dividing it into western and eastern parts and separating the Khorezm plain into western and eastern regions. If we pay attention to the map of the Khorezm oasis, the territory between the Amu Darya and Syr Darya rivers is referred to in the literature as the Eastern Aral Sea region. This article aims to highlight the historical period of settlement of the Eastern Aral Sea plain by the local population, the later stages of using natural resources, living in semi-dugout light dwellings, the ethnic relations carried out, and the history of the villages.

Literature review

Due to its geographical location, which was formed during the development of earth geology, the Lower Syr Darya basin has strategic significance. The plain was formed by the supply of mineral substances in

Compiled on: March 2, 2026.
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the water of the Amu Darya's Akchadarya branch and the Syr Darya's old riverbeds — Eskidaryolik, Jonadarya, Kuvondarya, and Inkordarya — and has been settled by humans since the Late Neolithic period. According to archaeological research, the settlements of Saksaul, Zhalpak, Kosmola, and Baraktam enabled the tribal communities of the Neolithic period to maintain their ethnic relations [1. – p. 125–126; 2. – p. 90–93].

According to the results of archaeological research conducted by M.A. Itina in the Eastern Aral Sea region, the tribal communities living in the above-mentioned sites continued the economic traditions of their ancestors due to the stable water sources and natural resources [3. – p. 27]. In our opinion, there were no interruptions in the water supply of the Inkordarya branch, because the Zhalpak site shows that Neolithic tribal communities continued to live there in semi-dugouts up to the Bronze and Early Iron Ages, with animal husbandry playing a major role in their economy. During the 10th–8th centuries BC, the construction of dwellings based on architectural knowledge began along the banks and terraces of the Inkordarya branch. The Khorezm expedition according to the publications of the Khorezm expedition staff, the Tagisken monument, built in a square shape out of mud bricks, was erected on the plain connected to the western branch bank of the Inkordarya [4. – p. 151–175; 5. – p. 37–38]. Historical sources note that the construction of the Tagisken mausoleums is associated with the activities of the Bactrian population [6. – p. 59–64].

In the publications of the Khorezm expedition, it is recorded that the Babishmulla and Balandi monuments, built in the 5th century BC, held the status of a village [7. – p. 396–397]. In the works of researchers, there are no discussions about the migration of the population of Balandi and Babishmulla to the Jetiasar oasis. In the studies of scholars, it is noted that the water supply of the Jonadarya branch existed during the Antique, Early, and Developed Medieval periods. Therefore, in the ethnonym Jetiasar, fortified and non-fortified dwellings equally served the interests of settled and semi-nomadic pastoral communities [8. – p. 137; 9. – p. 20; 10. – p. 102–103].

Research methodology

Objectivity, historical-chronological consistency, theoretical-comparative analysis, discussion, generalization, logical conclusion.

Analysis and results

Based on a theoretical-comparative analysis of the historical data recorded in the publications of the Khorezm archaeological and ethnographic expedition and the scientific literature published during the years of independence, it has been analyzed that during the last stage of the Neolithic period, the population effectively used the mineral-rich deposits formed over thousands of years by the floods of the Jonadarya, Kuvondarya, and Inkordarya branches of the Syr Darya in the Eastern Aral Sea plain. In the northeastern region of the Akchadarya branch, the descendants of the Baraktam-10 site's tribal communities abandoned semi-dugout dwellings in favor of fortified residential structures with village status, built with architectural knowledge. This indicates that local Khorezm craftsmen had mastered the art of clay architecture. Based on this, the following results were explained:

– The geographic foundation of the Eastern Aral Sea region is connected to the development of underground tectonic movements;

– The Akchadarya branch of the Amu Darya and the Eskidaryolik, Jonadarya, Kuvondarya, and Inkordarya branches of the Syr Darya jointly flowed toward the Aral Sea, shaping the Eastern Aral Sea plain;

– From the late Neolithic stage, the tribal communities settled the Eastern Aral Sea plain, living in simple seasonal dwellings and remaining distant from the knowledge of clay architecture up to the 9th–8th centuries BC;

– From the 9th–8th centuries BC onward, the first signs of architectural knowledge appeared around the Inkordarya branch, as evidenced at the Tagisken monument;

– Khorezmian engineers and fortification craftsmen mastered the Kuvondarya branch area, establishing fortified villages such as Babishmulla and Balandi. In the 5th–12th centuries AD, the cultural life of the Jetiasar oasis continued in

these fortresses, and new fortresses appeared. The construction of Yangikent and Zhand was led by the use of mudbrick (pakhsa) techniques;

– Due to the stable water supply in the Jetiasar oasis, the development of dwellings built in architectural style by semi-nomadic pastoral communities continued during the Early and Developed Medieval periods.

Conclusion and recommendations

Based on the analysis and results, the following conclusions and recommendations were put forward. The conclusions were explained as follows:

– The Eastern Aral Sea plain connects to the northeastern part of the Khorezm oasis, forming a unified geographical expanse;

– Until the 9th–8th centuries BC, no significant technological changes occurred in the construction of residential sites;

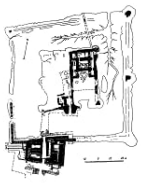
– Starting from the historical date mentioned above, the activities of the settled Khorezm population led to the construction of fortified, planned dwellings with square and rectangular layouts.

The recommendations were explained as follows:

– To compare the current state of the northeastern lowland plains of the Turan region;

– To analyze, with new ideas, the economic and cultural relations of villages built with architectural knowledge with the right bank region of the Amu Darya;

– To propose mapping the territorial border situation between Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan as part of this research



Plan of the town of Bobishmulla (Tolstov, 1962, Fig. 89)



Early Iron Age monuments of the Khorezm oasis and the Eastern Aral Sea region Saka tribes

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