

# Studying The Economic Issues Of The Ethnoses Of The Fergana Valley (On The Example Of Animal Husbandry)

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**Abstract:** This article is devoted to the study of cattle breeding in the Fergana Valley of Uzbekistan in the ethnographic and historical sources of the 20th and early 21st centuries. The author analyzed the results of the work carried out in this field and the problems of further development. Issues of ethnological research are considered separately.

**Keywords:** Fergana Valley, traditional, animal husbandry, modern history, Central Asia, Uzbekistan.

**Introduction:** The Fergana Valley holds a distinctive place in the history of the peoples of Central Asia. This region is also renowned as one of the earliest centers where humanity first took shape in Central Asia. The favorable natural conditions enabled settled agriculture, which played an important role in the economic life of the Fergana Valley. Likewise, throughout the valley's distant history, the role of nomadic herders, their cultural interactions with the settled population, and in most cases their influx and gradual settlement can be observed.

Although ethnographic studies on the economic life of the Fergana Valley's population created in the 20th and early 21st centuries do not include many works on animal husbandry, Although ethnographic studies on the economic life of the Fergana Valley's population from the 20th and early 21st centuries do not include many works on animal husbandry, the Fergana Valley has long been one of the most favorable regions for human settlement, and according to archaeologists, it has been inhabited since ancient times.

## METHODOLOGY

This study applies an interdisciplinary approach combining historical, ethnographic, archaeological, and ethnolinguistic methods to analyze animal husbandry in the Fergana Valley. The historical and comparative methods are used to trace the development and transformation of livestock farming from ancient times to the early 21st century and to identify continuity and change in economic practices.

Ethnographic materials, including published field studies and settlement research, are examined to reconstruct traditional forms of livestock breeding, seasonal migration, and pasture use among sedentary, semi-nomadic, and nomadic populations. Archaeological data, such as animal bone remains and burial materials, are used to determine the early origins of pastoral practices.

An ethnolinguistic approach is employed through the analysis of livestock-related terminology in regional dialects, reflecting the cultural and economic significance of animal husbandry. The systematic method integrates data from multiple disciplines, providing a comprehensive understanding of livestock farming within the traditional economy of the Fergana Valley.

## DISCUSSION

The Fergana Valley has long been one of the most favorable regions for human settlement, and according to archaeologists, the local population has employed two types of economy since ancient times: agriculture and livestock farming. These two types of economy were of great importance for the survival of ethnic groups and for family life.

In Y. A. Zadneprovsky's book [1], which deals with the ancient period of the region under study, there is also mention of the two types of economy. The remains of various animals – large-horned and small-horned cattle, horses, sheep, and, to some extent, camels – discovered in the Chust culture of the Bronze Age

provide insight into the activities of both ancient economies.

Chinese sources attest to the ancient use of horses in the main economy of the Fergana Valley population, and the presence of horse depictions on the cliffs of the Aravon Mountains further confirms this. In Y. A. Zadneprovsky's article dedicated to the ancient Ferghana horses [2].

This topic is illuminated through an analysis of rock paintings. The author refers to the works of M. E. Masson and A. N. Bernshtein on this issue.

In another article, the author describes the state of animal husbandry among the Chust tribes of Fergana based on materials from the Dalvarzin settlement [3]; the animals identified are primarily domestic animals, and the species are classified according to the number of bone remains found. These animal bones were studied in comparison with finds from Turkmenistan.

In G. A. Brykina's book on the history of the population of the Fergana region in the first half of the first millennium AD, archaeological materials are used to shed light on issues of economic and production activities, the population's culture, and cultural relations. The book also presents archaeological materials related to livestock farming [4].

In S.S. Sorokin's article titled "The Ancient Herdsmen of the Fergana Mountains" [5], various animal bones from Bronze and Iron Age settlements located in the mountains and on their slopes were discussed, and labor tools were found, which in turn indicates that archaeological data confirm that livestock farming in the valley dates back to ancient times.

In the article by G.N. Simakov [6], important information is presented on the classification of Kyrgyz livestock farms into types at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. The article's evidentiary basis consists of statistical studies, the works of Soviet researchers from the 1920s and 1930s, and field ethnographic materials collected by the author during expeditions. The article provides examples of the processes of semi-sedentarization and the Kyrgyz people's approach to agricultural settlements in the Kokand, Andijan, and Namangan uyezds.

## RESULTS

In S. P. Polyakov's monograph on the historical ethnography of Central Asia and Kazakhstan [7], information is provided on the ethnographic cultural characteristics of the region's sedentary farmers and nomadic herders, as well as on the peoples' way of life, ceremonies, and crafts. The author presents the division of economic activity in Central Asia into two

types – nomadic and semi-nomadic – and outlines the distinctions among these forms of economic organization.

Additionally, the author describes three types of nomadism: meridional, vertical, and stationary.

According to L. S. Tolstova's data, the Karakalpaks of the Fergana Valley raised more cattle than other types of livestock. In fact, they had been breeding cattle even before they migrated to this region. Moreover, the valley regions where they settled, especially the areas along the Syr Darya, were primarily suitable for raising cattle. The "Karakalpak Desert" in Central Fergana served as a pasture for this ethnic group [8]. Livestock farming, which formed the basis of the economic system, became the primary occupation of the Karakalpak, the valley's semi-nomadic (semi-sedentary) population. They grazed their livestock mainly on the foothill pastures surrounding the Fergana Valley and on the grasslands on the slopes of the hills. Some herding groups also wintered their relatively small herds on the valley's plains – its grasslands.

One of the objects of ethnographic study is settlements. Some of these settlements are considered important for study and for conducting field research. One of them is the village of Oyqiron, located in the Namangan region. The monograph by O. A. Sukhareva and M. A. Bijkhanova [9] presents the results of their studies on the village's history, population, and economy. The book also sheds light on issues related to the problem we are studying. Livestock farming in the Oyqiron village has not been very developed due to the scarcity of pastures for grazing. However, information is provided that oxen, dairy cows, and sheep were raised, while horses and donkeys were primarily used for household chores and organizing agriculture. According to the authors, owning a horse was considered a symbol of wealth in a household. Horses were also kept in categories, meaning there were horses used for farm work and horses used for horse racing and equestrian sports [9].

Studies on the livestock lexicon of the Uzbek language are of significant theoretical and practical value in illuminating this topic. Livestock farming is a broad-ranging sector. It includes horse breeding, cattle breeding, sheep breeding (including goat breeding), camel breeding, poultry farming, and so on. In the farmers' language, there are several thousand words, terms, and expressions related to these fields. Moreover, the concepts of feeding, keeping, breeding, fodder, and related notions number in the thousands.

In T. Khujamberdiev's doctoral dissertation [10], the lexicon of livestock farming in Uzbek was studied using

materials from the Fergana Valley. The author, during the years 1965-1971, conducted research in the cities and districts of the Fergana Valley that belonged to Kyrgyzstan, in the districts of the Andijan, Fergana, and Namangan regions and in approximately 200 surrounding villages, as well as on the Gulja and Olay pastures, with over 350 people of various ages and professions, primarily livestock specialists, recorded 2,000 livestock-related words, terms, and phrases through conversations with livestock specialists, herders, and butchers. In a word, the livestock lexicon of the Fergana Valley dialects was studied.

The works of K. Shoniyozov, S. Gubaeva, U. Abdullayev, Z. Isakov, and Sh. Atahanov deserves recognition for their coverage of the ethnography of the Fergana Valley. In the works by these authors, the issue of livestock farming – one of the main branches of the valley's ethnic economies – has been addressed to some extent.

K. Shoniyozov's monograph on the Kipchaks [11] contains information relevant to the issue under study. The author shows that in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Kipchaks of the Fergana Valley, in addition to sheep farming, primarily used karabayr horses, black cattle to supply the population with milk and dairy products, and oxen and camels for transporting loads.

S. Gubaeva is the author of numerous works on the ethnoses of the Fergana Valley at the turn of the 19th and 20th centuries. The book "The Fergana Valley. Ethnic Processes in the Late 19th–Early 20th Century," published in 2012 [12], contains ethnographic data on the issues we are studying. In particular, the book provides data that the population of Fergana used nomadic livestock farming, primarily grazing their herds in the Olay and Arpa valleys, that these processes mainly took place in May and October, and that the number of livestock even reached up to 65,000. According to the author, during the period in question, sheep farming was particularly dominant in the valley's semi-nomadic economy, with pastoralists from tribes such as the Kyrgyz, Yuz, and Turk playing the main role [12]. It is noted that in the Karakalpak and Kipchak ethnic groups, in addition to sheep, cattle, and also purebred Karabayr horses were also raised. The value of the work on the issue under study is that the author has been able to create a general impression of valley livestock farming through brief information.

In Iso Jabborov's book "The Uzbeks (Traditional Economy, Way of Life, and Ethnoculture)," dedicated to the Uzbeks—one of Central Asia's most ancient ethnic groups [13] – the issue under study is also addressed. In particular, information is provided that in the valley

Angor goats, large-horned cattle, and sheep were raised and that their milk, wool, and meat were used for various household needs. However, the author does not specify which period this livestock farm belongs to.

In his monograph "Interethnic Processes in the Fergana Valley," Ulugbek Abdullayev [14] provides, albeit briefly, theoretical information on the issue we are studying. In particular, the pastoral relations of the sedentary Uzbek and Tajik peoples, as well as ethnic groups such as the Kyrgyz, Kipchak, Karakalpak, Turk, Kurama, and Yuz, are illuminated in the context of interethnic processes.

"Traditional Interethnic Processes in the Territory of Uzbekistan (Late 19th – Early 20th Centuries)" prepared by the team of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan In the monograph, albeit briefly, the economic relations among the sedentary Uzbek, Tajik, Uyghur, and the semi-nomadic Kyrgyz, Kipchak, Turk, Kurama, Yuz, and Karakalpak populations of the Fergana Valley are illuminated [15].

Since ancient times, the Turkic-speaking peoples have made up the majority of the population in Central Asia; some of them lived settled lives, while others led nomadic and semi-nomadic existences, primarily engaging in livestock farming. O. In his article "From the History of Traditional Uzbek-Kyrgyz Relations (The Case of the Fergana Valley)" [16], Abduraupov notes that the Kyrgyz people's entry into the valley and, on the eve of this entry, the dominance of the livestock sector in their economy, mainly engaged in sheep, goat, horse, and cattle breeding, he emphasizes. "On the eve of the Russian Empire's invasion, horse breeding, in particular, increased. In the territories of the Fergana Valley, as a result of the transition from livestock farming to agriculture, the raising of cattle and goats, along with horses, also increased" [16]. The author demonstrates the impact of socio-political changes on economic life through concrete facts.

"The Role of Nomadic Peoples in the History of the Material Culture of the Fergana Valley in Antiquity and the Early Middle Ages" [17] the article shows the foundation of the Kayrokkum culture under the influence of nomadic pastoralists, and the excavation and study of numerous pit graves (gruntli yama), trench graves (podboy), and catacomb graves associated with the nomads, the discovery of animal bones characteristic of livestock in the graves, in a word, the article presents cases related to pastoralists based on material evidence from archaeological sites of the ancient and medieval periods.

Z. Isakov's 2011 monograph, "The Traditional Agricultural Culture of the Fergana Valley" [18], describes the agricultural processes of the valley in the

late 19th and early 20th centuries, namely, issues such as preparing the land for planting, sowing the crops, caring for them, processing them into a marketable product, harvesting them without damage, and storing them are detailed in a historical-ethnological aspect. It should be noted that information is provided, albeit incomplete, on the use of livestock in this process. In particular, it is shown that various types of livestock were used for plowing the land, preparing it for sowing, harvesting the mature crop, and during the threshing process.

Some studies examine the history of the Ferghana Valley's ethnic economies using the example of a tribal or clan economy. The works of G. Valiyakhonova, Sh. Atakhanov and R. Atakhanov can be included among these. These works, written in the post-independence period, are distinguished not only by their unique characteristics but also by their methodological approaches and source base, which set them apart from other studies.

In the years of independence, attention was paid to the study of individual ethnic groups. In particular, R. Atakhanov's "The Specific Features of Traditional Livestock Farming among the Karakalpak of the Fergana Valley (Description and Analysis of the Economic-Cultural Traditions)" reveals the Karakalpak, one of the major ethnic groups living in the Fergana Valley, their livestock-based economy, and its distinctive characteristics. The article also analyzes the ethnointegration processes of the Karakalpak people in the valley [19].

The study of the traces of ancient religious beliefs in the traditional way of life of the Uzbek people from a historical-ethnological perspective is one of the most pressing scientific problems. Y. A. Turdimurodov's research focuses on the study of totemic beliefs in domestic animals – horses, camels, rams, and oxen – among the peoples of Central Asia, including the Uzbek. According to the author, the ancient Turks regarded the horse, a divine miracle, as a talking, intelligent creature capable of flight. The horse, which held an important place in life, was sanctified and elevated to the level of a cult. For example, in the Fergana Valley, in the recent past, when a well-off person passed away, his mother, wife, sister, and several relatives would groom his horse, throw the deceased's clothes onto it, and circle it, recalling the good deeds the deceased had performed; they wept. This ceremony was called "davra solish" (surrounding the horse). At the end of the ceremony, the horse's tail was cut off, it was set free, and no one ever rode it again [20].

## CONCLUSION

In short, livestock farming played an important role in

the economic life of the valley's semi-nomadic (semi-settled) population, and it defined their way of life. Among the analyzed literature, no studies on the modern state of livestock farming were found, which indicates that the relationship, differences, and similarities between tradition and modernity in this field have not been studied. The lack of sufficient specialized historical and ethnographic research on the livestock farming of the Fergana Valley also prevents a complete understanding of the topic.

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