

# Studying the processes of economic relations and social management in Central Asia

## Abstract

This article analyzes the socio-economic relations of the people of Central Asia during the appearance of the first signs of statehood. In this article, the study of the processes of economic relations and forms of social management in Central Asia are analyzed. The main attention is paid to the historical literatures published in the 1<sup>st</sup> half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, widely consecrated historical and cultural monuments (such as Yanbaskala, Namozgohtepa, Oltintepa) and others. And also, the high role of Ancient Khorezm in the development of Asian culture and history is noted.

**Keywords:** Central Asia, written sources, statehood, society management, kin society, mastering and production economy

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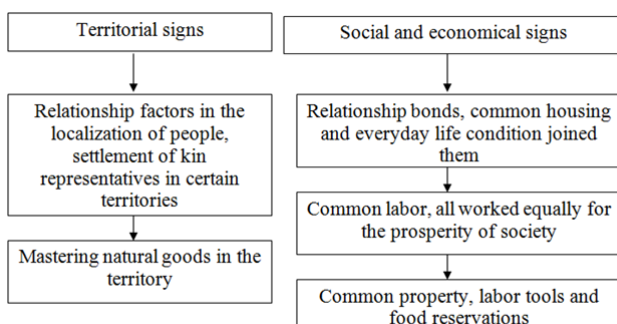
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## Introduction

In the twentieth century, researchers resorted to the history of the primitive kin society to study the peculiarities of the development of ancient societies and the origin of management. The role of archaeological sources in the study of the history of primitive society is indisputable. The results of the research were looked through by S P Tolstov, ME Masson, BA Litvinsky and other scientists in different years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>1</sup> Separate generalizing monographs were published on this issue in the 60-80s of this century.<sup>2,3</sup> It is known that at first, kin societies (the late Paleolith, the Mesolithic period) developed on the basis of mastering economy i.e. gathering harvests, hunting and fishery.<sup>4,5</sup> It has been defined in condition of compared to ethnographic data that common interests (the need to work together, find food and protect the community) combined the communities living in certain regions during this period. The signs of primitive (kin) society based on mastering economy were described the historical literatures of the 20<sup>th</sup> century as follows being based on ethnography and archeology:

## Methods of research

In the implementation of the study of scientific work, general theoretical and empirical methods-systemic, structural and institutional, should be a widely applied in historical sciences, are generally used. In addition, the scientific-theoretical and factual base of archaeological data on the territory of Central Asia and Ancient Khorezm was collected and analyzed (Figure 1).



**Figure 1** The signs of primitive (kin) society based on the farms.

In the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> millennium BC (the late Eneolithic and Bronze Ages), production economy began to actively spread to present-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan from the southern regions of Central Asia. From that period, the production relationships intensified and influenced social processes.<sup>6</sup> As it is known, the early stages of management rest on the history of primitive society. Its first forms appeared as a form of social management. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century, it has been discovered that the ancient population of Central Asia developed inaccurately from the Neolithic Age from the view point of material culture due to the research of the ancient scientists.<sup>2</sup> Mountains, steppes, lakes and coasts of the sea have been involved in hunting and fishing by people living there based on natural abilities. Their lifestyle varies widely compared to the farmers.<sup>7</sup> V M Masson writes that as a result of the “Neolithic revolution”, development of production led to the creation of additional products. Later, property stratification became an economic foundation for the formation of exploitation.<sup>8</sup> The new economic relationships complicated the organizational functions of the kin system and further enhanced the importance of leading rulers in the society.<sup>9</sup> From the ancient times of human history, the tasks in socio-economic relationships such as organizing, regulating and implementing were important in the life of each community. And exactly these issues haven’t been looked through as the subjects in the works of the scientists of ancient time in the continent. According to ethnographic sources, the first form of governance was a practical use of social management (with the participation of kin and tribal leader together with team members) in order to implement common interests of team members. The content of management based on mastering economy and production economy varied widely in terms of aims and objectives.<sup>9</sup>

An example of this is the remains of one-bedroom houses found in Joytun location in southern Turkmenistan belonging to Neolithic Age, which were mentioned in the 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific literatures. According to the researchers, each of those houses has a fire-place and a supa (a flat sitting place higher than the earth surface made of clay), where separate family members lived.<sup>10</sup> Remains of other type housing in Yanbaskala of Kaltaminar culture in Khorezm during the Neolithic era, it was in the form of a shelter of branches and they were built with a wooden pillars and lattice. There are about 100 small fire-places in the housing, which belonged to separate families.<sup>11</sup> The Yanbaskala area was based on the principles of life

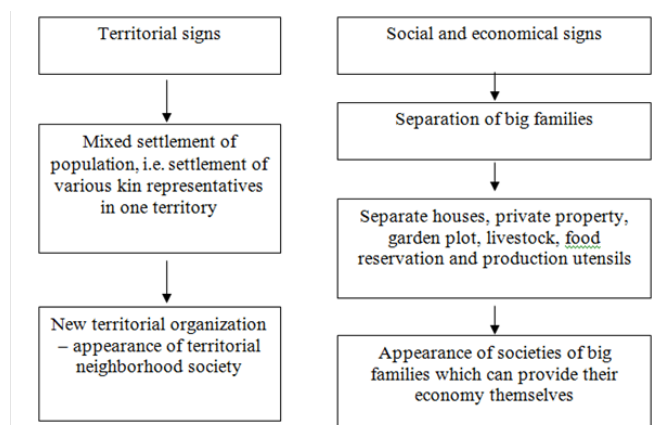
based on kin farms and their socio-economic relationships. According to archeologists, the implementation of hunting and fishing economy was based on organizational and management activities. Mastered ready product was consumed among the members of the society. The role of the elderly, who were distinguished by their experience and practical knowledge in the society, was to regulate relationships, control the society's internal relations. Customs, habits, traditions of the kin system, authority, moral qualities and social management based on the primitive society requirements had an important role in the primitive society without the formation of legal relations.<sup>12</sup>

In the community of agriculturalists, activity various productions was developed in comparison with economical relations of the societies based on mastering economy. According to archaeological data, by the beginning of the 3rd millennium B.C., settled villages with a population of 1000-2000 appeared in the southern part of Central Asia.<sup>13</sup> City-type settlements such as Namozgohtepa, Oltintepa became centers of major crafts and trade.<sup>14</sup> Farmers of that time lived in separate oasis, united into tribes and tribal associations.<sup>15</sup> According to archaeological evidence, inhabitants of Oltintepa were divided into groups of craftsmen, peasants of townspeople and aristocrats, who lived in separate houses of 90-50-100 sq.m. Here, there were specialized craftsmanship (pottery, metalworking, textile, jeweller), building construction and artificially irrigated agriculture.<sup>16</sup> On the other hand, different production process required different management principles and objectives. For example, during the Bronze Age around the villages of the Surkhan oasis, there were cultivated on average 50-75 hectares of land (mainly barley and wheat was sown).<sup>17</sup> The necessity of management was related to the tasks of organizing farming affairs, production, distribution of land and water in collective farms and carrying out irrigation affairs.<sup>18</sup> Researchers also point out that social issues such as regulating and coordinating community engagement, customary practices, and resolving disputes were also required. The development of production capacities within the farming and livestock farms led to qualitative changes in society. Social work distribution created enormous opportunities for trade and commerce.

Separate dwellings, furniture, livestock, labor and household goods became private property.<sup>19</sup> However, it is difficult to determine the degree of development and development of private property, excessive products in the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, only through the archeological data. At that time, social relations of society can be assumed to have characteristics inherent in the kin system. Large family members lived in a common house, and such houses formed thoroughfares in villages. According to AA Askarov's research, 8 housings belonging to different thoroughfares of Bronze Age in southern Uzbekistan were investigated in Sopollitepa. Houses consisted of dwelling houses, rooms of households.<sup>20</sup> The main features of the primitive system are the fact that the majority of family members are engaged in business, preserving the characteristics of the breeding regime and the mass distribution of food among the common households. According to the evidences of historical sciences, one of the reasons for the emergence of social rank is closely related to the beliefs and practices of the community. Faith, the first religious views emerged during the Stone Age, and the worship of fire, sun, land, water, and fertility was common in the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages.<sup>2</sup> The established temples became the religious centers of social life, creating the activity of priests and religious leaders.

According to information available in the literature, people were forced to look for raw materials (copper, lead, tin deposits) with the introduction of technological innovations in the field of metallurgy and

the change in the methods of production of labor weapon. As a result of the exploration of natural resources, exploration of metal deposits, the acquisition of new fertile land and water resources, the process of spreading the agricultural population to remote areas began.<sup>21</sup> The smaller tribes were located in separate districts. During the Bronze Age, large central buildings had city views and architectural planning (streets, squares, gardens and large communal buildings).<sup>22</sup> The building requires practical knowledge and specialization. Management was crucial when planning, organizing, and implementing anecdotal work. Thus, the emergence of social positions and governance is based on various factors. Initially, economic and social factors played an important role in the ancient governance system. According to the analysis, the signs of the primitive society, based on the production economy, were interpreted as the following in the last Eneolithic and Early Bronze Ages (Figure 2).



**Figure 2** Signs of the primitive society based on the production economy.

According to the conclusions of historical literature, the acquisition of social ranks was associated with the production affairs of society and distribution of social work. The need for managerial activity revealed some individuals who were involved in production organization, control over the production process and distribution of the product.<sup>23</sup> Indeed, the need for governance was not limited to economic factors. Along with the internal relations of the society there was a need to control its external relations. Individuals involved in arranging agriculture, artificial irrigation, building construction and craftsmanship can be included in the conclusions of their research that they did not participate in the production process themselves. The people involved in organizing, controlling, and implementing tasks were financially supported by teamwork.<sup>23</sup> Likewise, craftsmen who produce hand tools, jewelry, and ceramic bottles were given some share of the community's agricultural output, depending on their role and function, prior to the exchange of goods and trade. Because the masters involved in handicraft work were limited in their ability to participate in agriculture. In this historic situation, there appeared primitive-social management, based on the practical knowledge, authority and prestige of the elders of the kin.<sup>23</sup>

In the 50-60<sup>th</sup> years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Neolithic, Eneolithic and Bronze Age monuments were widely studied in different regions of Central Asia. The results of these studies have been shown by SP Tolstov, VM Masson, YG Gulyamov, IN Khlopin, AA Askarov, U Islamov, AV Vinogradov, MA Itina, YA Zadneprovsky and other scholars.<sup>24-26</sup> Researchers have drawn attention to the quality of ancient socio-economic relationships, including the number of settlements, the population's location, craftsmanship, farming, types of homes, graves and the products found there, based on archeological materials. This

approach is of great importance because, as a result of this research, it was identified that there had appeared production economy (farming and livestock breeding), settled locations, wattle and daub houses over 8,000-7,000 years ago (Neolithic Age) in southernmost parts of southern Central Asia (south-east of Turkmenistan). At the same time, information on the discovery of ceramics and textile in the Neolithic period, the development of mutual products, sharing goods of production economy was introduced in the history. According to V.M. Masson, socio-economic relationships in the society became much more complicated due to the “Neolithic revolution” as a result of the development of new production forces. These changes had an impact on the primitive-social forms of governance.<sup>25</sup>

This issue has also been discussed in previous years’ historiography and has been the basis for various conclusions. Due to the control of production, the share of collective goods increased the role, authority and efficiency of the manager-leader in society.<sup>27</sup> This situation created enormous opportunities for those who held positions in the social sphere to get the products of other people’s own business. However, according to the archeological sources of the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages in Central Asia, proprietary and social stratification was not developed in the region at first. Houses, weaponry, and the number of household items that were not very different from each other can confirm this idea. Researchers say that as a result of the development of production and exchange of goods, there were favorable conditions for large family groups to produce agricultural products and handicrafts. According to ethnography, sociable wealth was first assembled as jewelry, metal dishes and weapons.<sup>27</sup> From the Eneolithic Age in Central Asia, jewelry items were made of gold, silver, copper, various types of beads, precious stones—firuza, ruby and so on. Such items were found in ancient graves. The information obtained through studying them was used to study the old social system.<sup>28</sup> However, the number and quality of the findings in the graves are different, including those of Bronze Ages in the southern Uzbekistan, except ceramic bottles, there were found metal weapons, jewelry in the graves and only ceramic bottles were found from other graves.<sup>29</sup> In our opinion, all these items could be the property of the family.

According to the historical sources of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, the formation of private property occurred on the stage of controversy with the traditions of the kin system and public habits. According to ethnographic sources, the elder tribal leader, or tribal ruler, made a feast for his fellow countrymen and presented them with various gifts to preserve his reputation in the community. In some states, after the death of the leader, some of his property was distributed to the community representatives and the other part was placed in the grave.<sup>27</sup> However, such customs did not prevent the development of private property. Having own home, production facilities, agricultural products and livestock was linked to the development of communities which could economically provide themselves. SP Tolstov, YI Semyonov, AI Pershits approved that in the primitive community management system, the tribal leader and the elders’ council was important in solving socio-economic issues. This system did not have the status of political authority. This organization reflected the traditions of the tribal (equality of the community members’ interests and social status). SP Tolstov, YI Semyonov and AI Pershitz writes that without the creation of a special management body in the primitive society, social management was to the community’s interests as a useful activity and it was carried out as a result of the actions of some individuals.<sup>30</sup> The concepts of Morgan’s work “Ancient Society” had a profound impact on the literatures of the Soviet era from the 30s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century in learning the primitive society, its management system and the transition to the first statehood.<sup>31</sup> The researchers AI

Pershits, NA Butinov, VS Titov, YI Semyonov and others developed these ideas in their works on new bases.<sup>32</sup>

During the study of the social organizations of an ancient society, its management system was divided into the bodies of the supreme leader – the body of elders – the people’s assembly. This organization was known as “military democracy” as the last phase of the primitive society or as a transition from the primitive to statehood in SP Tolstov, MO Kosven, YI Semyonov and AM Khazanov’s publications.<sup>33</sup> However, linking the theory of “military democracy” to the history of all societies (producers, livestock farmers) and regions has become a very controversial issue. In our view, it is difficult to solve this problem only through sources of archeology and ethnography. As it is known, L Morgan developed his conclusions being based on the study of the tribal organization irokezes-seneka and its management system. In the Soviet era, L. Morgan’s ideas were widely used in the study of the history of ancient tribes and peoples.<sup>34</sup> Because of the archaeological researches in the 50-60<sup>th</sup> years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century information about the history of the livestock-nomadic population of the Bronze and early Iron Ages of Central Asia widened. They were used to study the history of economic and social relations among cattle breeders. In this regard SP Tolstov, YG Gulyamov, AM Mandelshtam, BA Litvinskiy, AA Askarov, MA Itina’s and other scientists’ researches are important.<sup>35</sup> According to researchers, the Bronze Age is commented with the rise of production forces. As a result of the development of metallurgy and livestock farming, the importance of patriarchal families grew in the economy, social life, population growth in the steppes and livestock breeding areas were widely spread. The community of livestock breeders consisted of family, kin and tribes and joined with the tribal association. Such associations existed in Orololdi, in the north-west of Turkmenistan and in southern Tajikistan.<sup>36</sup> The researchers examined the issues related to traditional property disparity and social inequality during the analysis of economical relations. According to scholars of ancient times, the process of property disparity began in the kin communities at the result of ownership of livestock by patriarchal families and collection of wealth by some rich families.<sup>36</sup> In the lower stream of the Syr-Darya, the mausoleums of livestock leaders were discovered.<sup>37</sup> The issue of the origin of governance was reflected in the monograph of EV Rtveladze, AK Saidov, YV Abdullaev in the years of Independence which was published in 2000 in Russian and in 2001 in Uzbek languages. Researchers say, “The primeval community was governed by the fact that there were institutions of social power. One of them was the general meeting of the kin representatives with the most important issues resolved. Elders and military leaders were also among the institutions of social power. There were no people in the primitive society who held executive functions and occupied a certain position and they did not have a special mass government”. Researchers concluded that “it would have been possible to carry out such affairs by the collective efforts of the kin representatives registering management functions based on production economy (regulating internal relations, protecting from the enemies) and without forming special governance bodies in society”. In this monograph, the major social and economic changes, as a result of the “Neolithic revolution”, were considered. This issue was related to the fact that wars between the tribes became a means of constant enrichment due to excessive product, private property and military organization.<sup>38</sup>

## Conclusion

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study of the emergence of social management in Central Asia in the 20<sup>th</sup> century:

- a. A comprehensive analysis of socio-economic relationships of the primitive society, based on mastering and production

economy, has been widely analyzed considering ethnographical and archeological data in historical literature;

- b. The researchers noted that as a result of the development of the productive economy, there was a growing role of the leader-rulers in the society, complicating organizational functions;
- c. The characteristics of social management and the development of historical development of the history of Central Asia, which require diverse production processes, have not been adequately analyzed;
- d. Ethnographic data were of great importance in the study of the question of the emergence of social governance in the Soviet period and they were used to illustrate the ancient history of Central Asia, but the relativity of the used data was determined on the basis of the characteristics of the region's history;
- e. In the 90s of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, there was a possibility to study the problem on a new basis and the approaches and scientific views, used in the previous years, began to be critically examined, but the researchers noted the need to make a comparative analysis of the positive outcomes.
- f. Generally speaking, there are scientific debates on the issue, and the issues of the origins of governance and the history of its study have not yet become the object of generalized research. There are clear pages and problems related to the history of Central Asia and their study and analysis are important.

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## Conflict of interest

Author declares no conflict of interest.

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