



## REVIEWS ABOUT EARLY NOMADS OF CENTRAL ASIA

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### Abstract

It is well known that nomads have played an important role in World history. Central Asian nomads in particular also played a major and important role in the political life of the continent. In this article geography of Central Asian nomads' distribution, the system of political governance and social life of early nomadic tribes of Central Asia is analyzed.

**Keywords :** Early nomads, Central Asia, Bronze age, nomadic tribes, Scythians, Saks, Massagets, Bactria, confederation, animal husbandry, Herodotus, historical geography of Central Asia.

### Introduction

Central Asia is geographically one of the crossroads of ancient Eastern civilization and nomadic cultures. Ancient authors give many names of nomadic tribes living in Central Asia, especially in the Amudarya and Syrdarya basins, Fergana and adjacent mountainous areas, along the Aral Sea and in the desert and various sources give different information. This is due to the political associations of the nomadic peoples and the governance of the state. Because the composition of the tribal alliance formed by the nomads to protect their territories was different. These alliances were sometimes disbanded and reorganized. As some of the nomadic tribes left the political associations, their names and areas of residence also changed. Due to the large number of names and lifestyle similarities of Central Asian nomads, information about them can be found in various contradictory forms in historical sources.

### Main part

The main part of the geographical landscape of Central Asia is the steppe zone. The Amu Darya and Syr Darya, the largest rivers in Central Asia, start from mountain streams and join the steppe zone in the middle and lower part. Various nomadic tribes engaged in animal husbandry since ancient times have inhabited the area. Researcher V.M. Masson envisions a political map of Central Asia before the Achaemenids as follows: "Bactria had a large political union (state) who's cultural and political scope extended to Margiana, possibly to the Aryans and Sogdians. The second political force





is the nomadic world. They had a confederation that united the various nomadic tribes. In the middle of the 6th century BC, the Massaget tribes played a hegemonic role among the nomads”. [4, pp. 178-187]

The main form of ownership among the nomads was livestock. Pastures that grazed livestock were common in the early stages of community development. However, as a result of the increase in the number of livestock, pastures will also be divided among tribes or tribal allies. Water bodies are one of the main factors for feeding and breeding cattle. Nomads form armed guards or a group of warriors to guard pastures, cattle, and water bodies.

There are more than two social strata in nomadic communities. These rulers have a large herd and the poor communities who are in their service. The issues of family relations and social stratification of the first nomads of Central Asia are reflected in the Avesta [1, p. 137-139], in the works of ancient Greek historians. [2; 5, p. 147]

Regular contacts with the settled population and other nomadic tribes also played an important role in the formation of political associations among Central Asian nomads. Political associations formed by the nomadic tribes of Central Asia were formed on the basis of clear agreements and confederate rules. Their nomadic lifestyle has led to the slow development of this condition.

Political associations of Central Asian migrants were formed to protect their lands from neighboring tribes or invasions in the event of a serious military threat. Bright examples of this can be seen in the formation of huge political alliances during the military campaigns of the Achaemenid kings Cyrus II and Darius I, as well as Alexander the Great.

The assassination of Cyrus, the defeat of Darius, the failure of Alexander the Great's military pressure in Central Asia to reach the lands of the nomads, or the cessation of the invasions marked the enormous political and military influence of the Central Asian nomadic confederations. [6, p. 164-170]

The factor influencing the subsequent duration of the union of tribes in the nomads is the confederate rules. In many cases, this violation of the terms of the treaty led to the rapid disintegration of the alliances.

This means that the demand for new lands has been steadily increasing as a result of the increase in population among the tribes. To meet the need for new lands, the lands of neighboring tribes were occupied, the weak were squeezed out, and an alliance of nomadic tribes was formed to defend their lands or to organize large military campaigns.



These nomads inherited the right to "kingdom" from generation to generation. The role and status of women in governance and public life among Central Asian nomads was high. This can be seen as a manifestation of social equality.

At the head of each nomadic tribe stands a king or queen. Example: Queen Tomiris in Massagets, Princes Zarina in Saks, King Amorg, Queen Sparetra, and others. The king or queen also commanded the army during the war.

Ancient Greek historians recorded the multiplicity of nomadic kings. The reason for the multiplicity of kings is in the diversity of nations and tribes. Their election shows that the democratic ideas of the nomads have a high place in society.

Aristobulus wrote that "... in the nomadic Scythians who lived on the banks of the river Tanais, kings were elected and he was given a staff ("sceptra"), a symbol of the kingdom by the river ..." [5, p. 147]. Strabo wrote, "... The nomads have two assemblies, one of which is a gathering of relatives, and the other of which is a gathering of sages and priests: the king may be elected from among the members of both congresses". [7, p. 193]

## Results And Discussions

There are many names of nomadic tribes living in the Central Asian regions and different sources. This can be seen as a situation related to the political associations of nomadic peoples and public administration. [3, p. 304.]

Because the composition of the tribal alliance formed by the nomads to protect their territories was different.

Demodamus, the commander of Seleucus I and Antiochus, marched to the lands beyond the Syrdarya (300 BC) and information about the peoples there has been preserved. This march of the Seleucids, with the intention of expanding their territory, initially sent Demodam on a military expedition across the Syrdarya for reconnaissance purposes.

According to the historian Pliny, as a result of the Demodamus marches many large tribes crossed the Syrdarya: Aryans, Rimmiks, Peziks, Amards, Ists, Edons, Kons, Kaniaks, Evharis, Katyars, Antoisians, Psaks, Antakats, Khroazars, Oyks, Yaseys, Napeys. [8, p.27]

Based on the data of Avesto and ancient Greek historians, the names of the first nomadic tribes of Central Asia and their habitats are analyzed in Table 1.



Table № 1. Names of Central Asian nomadic tribes and their location

№	Names of nomadic tribes	Living areas	Historical sources
	“Tur” tribes	In Central Asia	Avesto .Yasht. XVII.
	“Danay” tribes	In Central Asia	Avesto .Yasht. V.
	“Sak” tribes	In Central Asia	Herodotus. History. I.131.
	“Tigrahauda” Saks tribes	In South Kazakhstan	Herodotus. History. I.131.
	"Haumavarga" saks tribes	In mountainous areas of the Pamirs and Southern Tianshan	Herodotus. History. I.133.
	"Tigradaraya" saks tribes	In the middle reaches of the Syrdarya.	Herodotus. History. I.132.
	“Overseas” saks tribes	Around the Aral Sea, the lower reaches of the Syr Darya, the middle reaches and its shores.	Herodotus. History. I.150.
	"Orthocoribanti" tribes	unknown	Herodotus. History. .I.153.
	“Massaget” tribes	The lower reaches of the Amudarya and the Aral Sea, according to some sources, in the lower reaches of the Karakum and Syrdarya	Herodotus. History. I.134.
	“Scythian” tribes	In Western Europe	Herodotus. History. I.131.
	“Amazon” tribes	May be in the territories adjacent to Khorezm (perhaps in the Aral Sea and Amudarya delta)	Herodotus. History. IV,110,115.
	"Get" tribes ( <i>Those who call themselves immortal</i> )	In the lands before reaching Istra, the western neighbor of the Scythians	Herodotus. History. IV. 93.
	“Issedon” tribes	To the east of the Girkans, around the Murgab oasis	Herodotus. History. I.131.
	“Sakravl” tribes	On the northern bank of the Syrdarya	Strabo. Geography. XI, 8,2.
	“Adrasp” tribes	In areas adjacent to Massaget and Saks (may be around the Aral Sea and Khorezm)	Strabo. Geography. XI, 8,8.
	“Azi” tribes	On the northern bank of the Syrdarya	Strabo. Geography. XI, 8,2.
	“Pasian” tribes	On the northern bank of the Syrdarya	Strabo. Geography. XI, 8,2.
	“Arakhot” tribes	On the banks of the Oxus (Amu Darya), west of Bactria	Strabo. Geography. XI, 8.
	“Atasiy” tribes	Contained in massaget tribes	Strabo. Geography. XI, 11,8.
	“Soil” saks tribes	unknown	Quintus Curtius Ruf. Histories of Alexander the Great. V,6-17.
	“Arakhozi” tribes	On the banks of the Tanais (Syrdarya)	Quintus Curtius Ruf. Histories of Alexander the Great. IV,5,4.



“Pard” tribes ( <i>it could also be the Persians</i> )	On the south coast of the Oxus.	Quintus Curtius Ruf. Histories of Alexander the Great. V,6-17.
“Mamasen” tribes	Between Kiropol and Tanais	Quintus Curtius Ruf. Histories of Alexander the Great. VII ,6-10.
“ Savromat” tribes	On the shores of the Aral Sea	Quintus Curtius Ruf. Histories of Alexander the Great. VII ,6-10.
“Amurgiy” saks tribes	Between Bactria and India	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander , III.
“Roksanaki ” saks tribes	In Central Asia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III.
“Fastie” saks tribes	In Central Asia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III.
“Komedi” saks tribes	In Central Asia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV.
“Komari” saks tribes	In Central Asia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV.
“Karatti” saks tribes	In Central Asia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV.
“Ariasp” tribes	The southern neighbor of the Scythians	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III.
“Dai” tribes	On the other side of Tanais (Syrdarya)	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III, 28.
“Abi” tribes	On the other side of the Syrdarya	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV,I
“Kholh” tribes	In the territories adjacent to Khorezm, along the Aral Sea and in the Amudarya delta	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV,15.
“Paratek” tribes	In the territories adjacent to Sogdia	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. IV,21.
“Auchasi” massaget tribes	unknown	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III.
“Aparni” dai tribes	unknown	Arrian. The Anabasis of Alexander. III.
“Apasiak” tribes	Between Oxus and Yaksart (Amudarya and Syrdarya)	Polibius. X,48.
“Debrik” tribes	Lived in the Karakum Desert, the northern neighbor of the Days	Diodorus Siculus. Historical Library. Book II. Chapter 2.
“Arimas” tribes	In the border areas with Hercania	Diodorus Siculus. Historical Library. Chapter XVII, p.81.



“Gidrozi” tribes	In the border areas with the country of Hyrcania	Diodorus Siculus. Historical Library. Chapter VII, p.81.
“Pazik” tribes	Near the Oxus Mountains	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Yati” tribes	In the northern part of the Syrdarya	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Oxiadrak” tribes	At the foot of the Sogdian mountains	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Dribakt” tribes	At the foot of the Sogdian mountains	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Kandar” tribes	At the foot of the Sogdian mountains	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Mardien” tribes	At the foot of the Sogdian mountains	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Oxien” tribes	On the banks of the Oxus (Amudarya)	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Urapsian” tribes	In the lower reaches of the Amudarya and along the Aral Sea	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Aristi” tribes	On the banks of the Tanais (Syrdarya)	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Kirrodi” tribes	On the banks of the Oxus (Amudarya)	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 12.
“Orisp” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Sabodi” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Varn” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Skord” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Akinak” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Kom” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Khomar” tribes	In the south of Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Sagater” tribes	In Bactria	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.
“Amarisp” tribes	In Bactria, north of the river Oxus.	Ptolemy. Geography. Book IV, 11.



Also, by analyzing the data on the first settlers of Central Asia, the boundaries of their habitats can be classified as follows:

1. Nomadic tribes living in areas with no definite borders (indefinite borders).
2. Nomads living in definite areas. (boundary definite, unchanged)
3. Nomads living in neighboring oases or in lands suitable for farming.

Of the above, the settlement of the tribes of the third group was relatively rapid. However, in the 6th century BC, Central Asian nomads formed military tribal alliances or political alliances to protect their lands from attack by other tribes.

### **Archaeological sources about the first settlers of Central Asia**

According to the results of research conducted so far, Central Asia is divided into the following regions according to the complex forms of material culture samples left by nomads:

1. The territory around the Aral Sea;
2. Yettisuv, Tien-Shan, Fergana and Pamir regions;
3. Tashkent oasis, middle reaches of the Syrdarya and coastal areas of Central Asian rivers;
4. Khorezm and the territories of northwestern Turkmenistan.

Archaeological excavations in the Aral Sea region began in the middle of the twentieth century. As a result of research conducted under the leadership of S.Tolstov, the culture of "Chirikrabod" was formed. [9, p. 42] The owners of the Chirikrabod culture, according to the scientist, are the Apasiak tribes. We can also cite the Kuyusay culture, Tagisken, Uygarak and other archeological sites. Many settlements of the early nomads have also been studied in the Tien Shan and Yettisuv, Fergana and Pamir regions. In addition, as a result of research in the South Kazakhstan and Tashkent oases, the middle reaches of the Syrdarya and the rivers of Central Asia, the culture of "Kovunchi (I-II-III)" was introduced into science. Material sources studied in the monuments of nomads in Khorezm and northwestern Turkmenistan also give us reliable information about nomadic peoples.

### **Conclusion**

Historical sources prove that the first nomadic tribes of Central Asia created a unique culture. Many nomadic tribes inhabited the steppe zones of Central Asia during the Bronze and Iron Ages. And they are united into confederations of different tribes.

In particular, in the 6th century BC, a confederation of military tribes was formed in Central Asia by nomadic Sak-Massaget tribes to defend their lands. The study of these nomadic tribes is an actual issue in the science of history. Indeed, the study of these tribes may play a key role in the study of the ancient history of Central Asia.





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