

## **DEVELOPMENT OF BLACKSMITHING AND IRON CASTING CRAFTS IN 19TH-CENTURY KHOREZM: A STUDY BASED ON ARCHIVAL SOURCES**

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**Abstract.** This article explores the development of blacksmithing, iron casting, knife-making, weapon production, and the crafting of household and medical tools in 19th-century Khorezm. Drawing on archival documents, it analyzes the specialization and geographical distribution of craftsmen, the structure of production, workshop locations in urban and rural settings, their integration with the market, and their socio-economic significance.

**Keywords.** Khorezm, craftsmanship, blacksmithing, iron casting, 19th century, archival sources, knife-making, urban economy.

**Annotatsiya.** Mazkur maqolada XIX asrda Xorazmda temirchilik, choyangarlik, pichoqchilik, qurolsozlik, zaruriy maishiy va tibbiy anjomlarni ishlab chiqaruvchi hunarmandchilik sohalari bo'yicha tarixiy va arxiv manbalar asosida tahlil beriladi. Temirchilar va choyangarlarning joylashuvi, ixtisoslashuvi, ularning shahar va qishloqlardagi faoliyati, bozor bilan bog'liqligi, ishlab chiqarish mahsulotlarining tarkibi hamda ijtimoiy-iqtisodiy ahamiyati ochib beriladi.

**Kalit so'zlar.** Xorazm, hunarmandchilik, temirchilik, choyangarlik, XIX asr, arxiv hujjatlari, pichoqchilik, shahar iqtisodiyoti.

**Аннотация.** В статье рассматривается развитие кузнечного, литейного, ножевого и оружейного ремесла, а также производство бытовых и медицинских металлических изделий в Хорезме XIX века. На основе архивных источников анализируются специализация ремесленников, география размещения мастерских, структура производства, взаимодействие с рынком и их социально-экономическая значимость.

**Ключевые слова.** Хорезм, ремесло, кузнецы, литейщики, XIX век, архивные документы, ножевое дело, городская экономика.

**Introduction.** The crafts of blacksmithing and iron casting held significant roles in the socio-economic and technological landscape of 19th-century Khorezm. Despite the limited documentation for earlier periods, the archival

evidence from the 19th century offers insight into the specialization, scope, and importance of metal-based craftsmanship in the region. This paper aims to investigate the development, functions, and socio-economic relevance of blacksmiths and iron casters during the final phase of the Khiva Khanate.

**Literature Review.** The study of craftsmanship in Khorezm has been previously addressed by scholars such as A.O. Utemisov and M.Yu. Yuldashev, who highlighted artisan activities through ethnographic and archival approaches. Ivanov's works on the archives of Khiva khans and Jabbarov's research on southern Khorezm crafts also provide key primary data. While most of the existing literature focuses on general craft traditions, this paper builds upon these works by offering a focused analysis of metalworking professions using specific archival registers and documented workshop data.

**Methodological Foundations.** This research is grounded in qualitative historical analysis, with primary reliance on archival documents from the 19th century, including khanate registers, taxation reports, and handwritten chronicles. Comparative textual analysis and descriptive interpretation are employed to reconstruct the structure, distribution, and evolution of metal crafts in Khorezm. The study also incorporates geo-historical mapping of artisan settlements and thematic content analysis of specialized professions (e.g., knife-makers, blacksmiths, iron casters) in both urban and rural contexts.

It is important to note that forming definitive conclusions about the specialization of Khorezm's metallurgical industries during the 17th and 18th centuries remains challenging. Archival documents from the 19th century, however, record the names of artisans alongside their professions, allowing us to trace the development and specialization of artisanal production within the Khanate. Craft treatises from this era also serve as valuable sources for identifying specialized fields, as they contain essential information about distinct occupational categories and areas of expertise.

Knife-making (pichoqchilik) in Khorezm had already emerged as a specialized craft by the 10th–11th centuries. Artisans produced a wide variety of knives, and dedicated neighborhoods and districts of knife-makers existed in cities such as Khiva and Hazorasp. A document from the 1830s mentions a district named "Pichoqchi" (Knife-makers) in the Hazorasp region [1]. Another document from 1864–65 states that this same area, part of the Hazorasp bekship, contained five mosques [2].

Within the Khanate, there was a tradition of presenting high-status individuals with ornate, valuable knives as gifts. These presentation knives were

often embellished with precious stones, and some featured gold plating—earning them the name “gilded knives” (qizilli pichoq).

Knife-makers at times collaborated with jewelers. A document from the 1860s mentions a jeweler named Muhammad Karim who specialized in decorating knife blades with artistic craftsmanship [3].

From the second half of the 19th century, the range of products manufactured in the blacksmithing sector diversified significantly. A document from the 1860s records that a blacksmith named Usta Qurbon crafted iron spoons, crescent axes, hammers, shovels, and fire-starters [4].

In an 1854 account of events in the Khanate, Sayyid Hamid Tura Kamyob notes that soldiers had their knives sharpened at a blacksmith’s shop, suggesting that smiths actively operated out of fixed workshops in urban areas [5]. Some blacksmiths also produced medical instruments. The Ichan Qala Museum-Reserve houses 19th-century iron dental tools, forceps, and a special type of tweezer known as muchanak (used for removing facial hair), along with barbers’ razors consisting of steel blades and wooden handles [6].

An English officer, Gollibeff de Blocqueville, who was held captive in 1860, described a Turkmen field surgeon performing bloodletting by piercing three points of his hand with a nail-like iron instrument. He noted that these tools had been learned from local Jewish craftsmen.

In the 1850s–60s, foundrymen (cho’yandgar) in Khorezm remained among the main producers of cast iron products to meet domestic demand. In particular, by the 1860s there were seven functioning foundries in the city of Khiva [7].

By the end of the 19th century, foundries were located in six areas within Khiva, one in Urgench, two in Bogot, and also in the cities of Qo’ng’irot, Khojayli, Chimboy, and Sho’raxon. Each workshop employed dozens of foundry masters, workers, and apprentices. After Khiva, the city of Hazorasp became one of the region’s leading centers for the production of foundry and metal goods [8].

In Khorezm, blacksmiths and foundrymen generally worked on the outskirts of cities or in surrounding areas. Some even operated in distant villages. In Chimboy, for example, there was a village called “Kese Jol” (Narrow Road) along a trade route that specialized in iron casting. Near Hazorasp, there were villages known as “Pichoqchilar” (Knife-makers) and “Damirchilar” (Iron-workers) [9]. In Qo’ng’irot, neighborhoods were designated for blacksmiths (No. 56), coppersmiths and jewelers (No. 16), and foundrymen (No. 24) [10]. Specifically, in Qo’ng’irot, coppersmiths and jewelers worked in the city center,

blacksmiths operated on the periphery, while foundry workshops were located at a significant distance from the urban core.

In the 19th century, local foundrymen fulfilled custom orders for plow teeth (poza), and applied metal rims or rings to wagon wheels. Compared to other Central Asian provinces, the range of cast iron products in Khorezm was relatively limited. This was because most household and agricultural cast iron items were imported from Russia and Iran. In fact, some of the cast iron goods brought to Khiva by local merchants were re-exported to Bukhara for foreign trade.

In the late medieval period, the city of Khiva served as an important manufacturing center for blacksmithing, foundry work, coppersmithing, jewelry-making, and locksmithing.

These records clearly show that, even in the late medieval era, cities in the region primarily functioned as trade and artisanal hubs.

#### Referances:

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