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# THE IMPORTANCE OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC FACTORS IN THE EMERGENCE AND DEVELOPMENT OF MILITARY ART IN CENTRAL ASIA

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**Abstract**

This article describes the importance of geopolitical and socio-economic factors in the emergence and development of military art in Central Asia.

**Key words**

Central Asia, Asia Minor, Uzbekistan, South Turkmenistan, Anov monument, Amudarya, Kaltaminor culture, Kyzylkum, Lower Zarafshan, Fergana, mining, metallurgy, military art, stone age, Neolithic period, bronze, iron age, weapons, hunting weapons. axes, spears and arrows, warrior, army.

## Introduction.

In ancient times, when animal and plant life was abundant and there were sufficient territories and food supplies for survival, the interests of primitive tribes rarely clashed. Therefore, large-scale wars in the early periods were infrequent. However, such conflicts still encouraged early humans to improve their offensive and defensive weapons and enhance their effectiveness. The development of military skills among the peoples inhabiting the territory of present-day Uzbekistan and the emergence of weapons have deep historical roots, dating back to very ancient times. During the Stone Age, people used weapons not only for hunting but also for self-defense. The earliest weapons were primarily wooden spears with fire-hardened tips. About 100,000 years ago, spears with tips made of flint and bone appeared, as well as short spears that were easy to throw. People would throw these using bone spear-throwing tools.

## Main body.

Daggers and knives made primarily of bone and flint began to appear (Appendix 1). In the Neolithic period, i.e., the 6th-4th millennia BCE, spear-throwing devices became more advanced, and people learned to throw initially stones and later specially prepared clay projectiles. During this period, military implements such as axes carved from stone or deer antlers also appeared. When humanity mastered the use of bronze, significant changes occurred in social life. The transition from stone to metal further improved weapons. Societies were divided economically and socially into nomadic pastoralists and settled farmers. People widely adopted bronze not only for labor tools but also for making military weapons.

In the Bronze Age, as pastoralism and agriculture developed rapidly, the importance of hunting declined. The need to occupy and protect pastures for livestock and lands for farming grew, making the possession of weapons increasingly important for defense against internal and external threats and resolving conflicts. By this period, weapon-making had become an independent area of human activity, as confirmed by numerous archaeological findings. The

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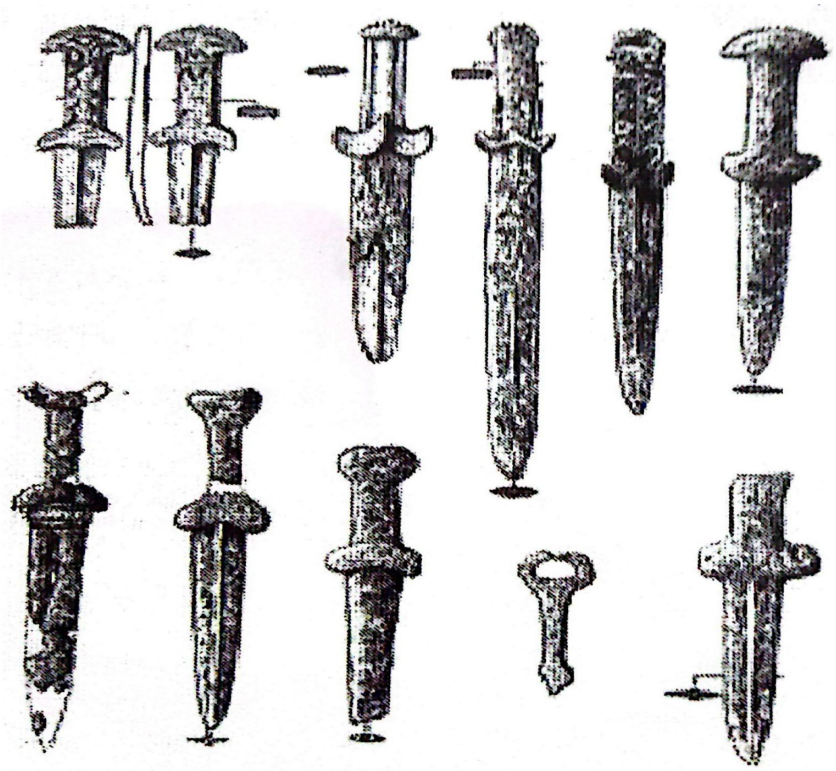
expansion and improvement of production tools and resources facilitated the development of metallurgy and the specialization of weapons for offense and defense.



Daggers and short swords (akinak), 6th-3rd centuries BCE

The next stage in the development of military art corresponds to the period when the first city-states emerged. Economic growth played a significant role in this process. The development of agriculture and pastoralism required the acquisition of new lands, pastures, and raw material sources. Economic factors expanded the boundaries of inhabited territories, which led to conflicts over fertile lands and pastures among different tribes. Early weapons such as axes, spears, and arrows gradually transformed from tools for labor and hunting into implements for attack and defense, making wars more constant and deadly [1].

It is worth briefly noting the influence of local mining and metallurgy on the formation and development of military art. From the Late Stone Age, people in Central Asia encountered natural copper, gold, meteoritic iron, and other metals while searching for stone for tool-making. Copper artifacts dating to the end of the 5th millennium BCE - beginning of the 4th millennium BCE were found at the Anau site in southern Turkmenistan. People in the lower Amu Darya region began using copper at the end of the Kal'taminor culture of the Neolithic period. This marks the beginning of a new era in regional metallurgy - the Copper Age [2]. From the early stages of metallurgy, ancient tribes not only mined copper but also explored tin, lead, arsenic, and other ores. During the Eneolithic and Bronze Ages, in addition to copper, they systematically used gold, silver, and precious stones such as lapis lazuli and turquoise.Copper and other metal ores were unevenly distributed in Central Asia, and mining and metallurgy developed unevenly across the region due to socio-economic factors.

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Ancient copper mines were discovered in Central Kyzylkum and the Fergana Valley [3], in Central Kazakhstan [4], and in the upper and middle reaches of the Zarafshan River and other locations [5]. By the 3rd millennium BCE, copper combined with tin or lead allowed the production of a much stronger metal - bronze. From the Bronze Age onwards, large-scale use of local ores began, and certain mines became regionally important. Copper weapons from early Bronze Age workshops in Central Kyzylkum indicate the use of ores from the Zarafshan or Fergana regions [6].

The development of mining and metallurgy also led to the emergence of specialized crafts. Since the discovery of copper metallurgy, groups of people specializing in this craft appeared [7]. Archaeological evidence from the early Bronze Age indicates that metalworking became a distinct type of production [8].

The use of iron ore and the production of iron tools and weapons marked a major shift in human history. Early iron items (iron daggers, etc.) were found in Anatolia, where iron metallurgy emerged in the mid-2nd millennium BCE, established by the Hittites and their predecessors, the Halebians. The Latin term “chalybs” (steel) derives from their name. By the 14th century BCE, after the Hittite state unified all of Anatolia, iron metallurgy spread throughout the region [9]. In the early 1st millennium BCE, early iron objects appeared in Central Asia. The gradual adoption and spread of iron in the region occurred from the 10th to the 6th centuries BCE [10]. The emergence of iron metallurgy coincided with the expansion of irrigated agriculture in major river valleys, the growth of urban culture, the development of writing and written sources, the rise of nomadic pastoralism in the steppe and mountain valleys, and other socio-economic changes. Another key feature of this period is the emergence of historical-cultural regions in Central Asia (Khwarezm, Bactria, Margiana, Sogdiana, Fergana, Chach), some of which united into large state formations (Ancient Bactria, Ancient Khwarezm) [11].

By the Bronze Age, ancient peoples of Asia (Sumerians, Akkadians, Assyrians, etc.) began military campaigns to subjugate neighboring and distant territories. The introduction of bronze and copper metallurgy expanded the variety of weapons. Early draft animals such as horses and camels also played an important role in warfare. It is necessary to emphasize the importance of these draft animals in enhancing the mobility and effectiveness of ancient armies.

**Conclusion.**

Thus, in the history and ethnogenesis of the peoples of Central Asia, particularly the Uzbek people, the ancient Massagetae tribes played a significant role, appearing under different names from the 2nd millennium BCE to the 4th-5th centuries CE. Previous periods influenced the military art of these peoples. Examining warfare methods, tactics, weapon types, and societal norms-where every adult male was considered a warrior and cavalryman-we see that military traditions persisted within everyday life. This continuity was closely linked to the economy and lifestyle of these peoples.

Situated at the crossroads of international trade routes of the ancient East, the territory of Central Asia, including Uzbekistan, was involved in the military-political relations of the region from early times. The appearance of fortified cities and strongholds in southern Central Asia in the 3rd-2nd millennia BCE was a natural result of military conflicts and wars in the region [12]. Overall, the military art of the Uzbek people developed in close connection with the military

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traditions of other Central Asian peoples. The formation and development of military art depended greatly on socio-political and economic factors. Examining the history of states in Central Asia during ancient and medieval times, we see that in periods dominated by strong centralized states-such as the Kushan Empire, the Kang state, the Hephthalite state, and the Turkic Khaganate-the military art of the Uzbek people reached a high level.

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