

## THE ROLE OF ETHNOGRAPHY IN THE STUDY OF THE KARAKALPAK

<https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.14890163>

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**Abstract:** This article examines the study of the Karakalpak people through ethnography.

**Key words:** Ethnography, Karakalpak people, Karakalpak tribes, dress, art, folklore.

Ethnography is a science that studies ethnic peoples and other ethnic formations, their ethnogenesis, composition, settlement, cultural and everyday characteristics, as well as their material and spiritual culture.

The Karakalpaks are the main indigenous population of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, part of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The Karakalpaks occupy the southern coast of the Aral Sea and the Amu Darya delta. As early as the 16th century, the Karakalpaks inhabited the lower reaches of the Syr Darya.

The Karakalpak people were formed from heterogeneous ethnic components, including ancient Iranian-speaking semi-settled tribes of the southern Aral Sea region and various groups of Turkic-speaking and Mongolian-speaking nomads. The tribal division of the Karakalpak reveals links with the Pechenegs, Oghuz, Kipchaks, Golden Horde, Kazakhs, Turkmens and Uzbeks.

In 1945, the first ethnographic detachment of the Khorezm expedition was organised to study the ethnography of the Karakalpak people.

In 1935, the orientalist historian P.P. Ivanov published his scientific work "Sketch of Karakalpak History", in which the results of the study of the ethnogenesis of Karakalpaks and their historical past in the XVII-XIX centuries were given.

The great Russian scientist S.P. Tolstov was deeply interested in the historical ethnography of the Karakalpaks. Collected new data of history, ethnography and linguistics of the Karakalpak people gave an opportunity to S.P. Tolstov to create a concept of the main stages of ethnogenesis of Karakalpak people,

The Karakalpaks preserved a peculiar type of economy, engaged in agriculture, animal husbandry and fishing. They built an extensive network of canals, water-lifting structures, protective dams and weirs.

The Karakalpak cultivated wheat, barley, rice, millet, dzhugara, pulses, oilseeds and fibre plants, and melons.

Almost all Karakalpak groups were involved in fishing, but it was particularly important for those groups living along the coasts of the Aral Sea and the Amu Darya delta.

Karakalpak settlement followed the structure of their tribal division and they settled by tribes, intra-tribal clan associations, clans and intra-clan subdivisions. The subdivisions had their own canals - branches of the clan canal. The clan villages - auls - were located along the channels.

Karakalpaks have long had two types of dwellings - the yurta and the earth or mud house. The Karakalpak yurt differed from the yurts of neighbouring nomadic peoples in some details of construction, interior and exterior decoration.

Karakalpak men wore a white tunic-style shirt, baggy trousers, a loose dressing gown of dark cloth and, in winter, a sheepskin tulup with wool inside. A quilted bodice - 'beshpent' - was a distinctive part of the costume. A flattened round cap made of dark sheepskin - 'kurash' - served as a headdress. In ancient times the Karakalpaks wore tall conical felt hats - 'kalpak-takyya', from which they got their ethnic name - 'karakalpak' - 'black hat'.

The women's costume also consisted of a shirt, trousers, bodice and dressing gown, but sometimes a sleeveless sleeve was worn instead of a bodice. Each age group had its own differences in costume. Karakalpachkas wore bright colours, with red and blue dominating, and an abundance of embroidery and metalwork. The usual headdress for women was a long scarf tied over the top of the skull. Ancient ritual headdresses for brides and young women were 'saukele' and 'kimeshek'.

The social and family structure of the Karakalpaks was determined by the norms of patriarchal tribal customary law and Muslim religious law.

The accumulated historical and ethnographic materials testify to the fact that in the past applied arts, folklore, etc. were one of the main spheres of spiritual culture of the Karakalpak people.

Karakalpaks have long been famous for various kinds of applied arts: jewellery, woodcarving, leather embossing, carpet making, embroidery.

The rich Karakalpak folklore has developed over many centuries. It is based on all genres of oral folk art: fairy tales, proverbs, sayings, legends, poems and others. The most characteristic and original of Karakalpak oral folklore is the epic

or epic poem, of which there are about fifty: heroic, lyrical, social and everyday, historical-legendary, fairy-tale-romantic and others. They are performed by storytellers and singers - baksy and zhyrau, accompanied by musical instruments - kobyz or dutar. A special place in the folklore is occupied by the epics of the XI-XVIII centuries: Sharyar, Koblan, Yedige, Yer Shora, Alpamys, Kurbanbek, Yer Ziuar, Kyrk-kyz and others. In the heroic epic Alpamys, the main ideas are the unification of ruined tribes, friendship and patriotism. The Kyrk-kyz epic, which is an outstanding monument and masterpiece of Karakalpak culture, tells the story of girl defenders and patriotic heroes who fought together against foreign invaders.

**Conclusion:** Thus, the ethnographic history of the Karakalpak people has preserved interesting plots and motifs that define the ethnographic image of distant ancestors. The epic works trace the historical and cultural tradition dating back to the ancient and medieval stages of the ethnic history of the Karakalpak people.

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