

Trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend Khanates in the 16 - earlier 17 centuries

G. Sulstonova

The 16 – earlier 17 centuries in the history of the Central Asia are notable for active ethno-demographic processes, confrontation between the two major trends of Islam and changes in ancient international trade routes. The factors above account for researchers' interest in the reviewed period and cause lively discussions. In particular, one of the key and debatable questions is the history of relations between Central Asian states in the 16 – earlier 17 centuries. Two approaches are presently applied in scientific-research literature to examine the issue. Thus, researchers N.Steensgaard, S.Adshead, M.Rossabi, F.Wood, M. Haidar¹ take the view that in the period under consideration inter-state relations of the Central Asia were in crisis. Another group of historians – O. Chekhovich, R.Mukminova, G.Nizametdinov, S.Levi, M. Alam, J.Gommans, S.Dale² refrain from using a definition “crisis” as to the reviewed period and, instead, define it as a stage of significant events in the history of the region. Note the author shares the last point of view.³

Most regress adherents of the Central Asian region tend to associate the phenomenon with the discovery of new sea routes that connected Europe and Asia. Quoting a report of Anthony Jenkinson who visited Bukhara in 1558,⁴ as well as materials of local historical annals, another group of researchers, among other reasons, referred to the destabilization of political life during the later Middle Ages that led to the weakening of trade-economic relations in the region.

Proceeding from the assumption that the development, not stagnation, was typical for the reviewed historical period, researchers are reliant on primary sources and deny no “negative impact of newly discovered sea routes on the development of caravan roads”. In their view, the factor above could have hardly led to the closure of trans-regional caravan routes across the Central Asia.

In addition to the difference of views, the historiography of the issue is notable for some essential gaps. Thus, despite voluminous literature on themes “Central Asia and India”, “Central Asia and China” or “Central Asia and Russia”, the publications on the subject touch upon relations between Bukhara or Yarkend khanates (in most cases of Eastern Turkestan) with the states mentioned, laying aside other regions of the Central Asia. Furthermore, the time span is very great, for chronological limits cover, as a rule, the 16-19 or 15-18 centuries; even so, the treatment of the question in the 16 century is of fragmentary nature. Yet-unexplored are questions of inter-state relations of the Central Asian region in the reviewed period. These unexplored questions include the history of trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend khanates.⁵

Thus, the present article attempts to scientifically substantiate a thesis that in the later Middle Ages an eastern branch of the Great Silk Way having no lost its importance kept on holding high positions in the foreign trade relations of Central Asian states. An emphasis has to be laid on trade relations

between the two Central Asian states – Bukhara and Yarkend khanates, as distinguished from researchers of the previous period that substantiated the thesis on the basis of coverage of the history of relations between the said region and India, Russia or China.

When examining trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend khanates, one has to pay attention to the dynamics of political processes. As is known, the first half of the 16 century proved to be a period of formation of new state formations in the region, including Bukhara, Khiva, Yarkend and Kazakh khanates. It was natural that the new borders on once unified political and economic expanse had a negative effect on intensity of contacts between its separate parts. A relative stabilization of the political life in the second half of the 16 century created prerequisites for the development of trade and other relations.

An eloquent testimony to the above is a letter of Yarkend ruler Abdurashidkhan to Hoja Islam Juybar, senior sheikh of Bukhara. In his letter, the ruler of Yarkend informed that it was a relative stabilization of the situation on trade routes between the two states that enabled the latter to send a certain Mavlono Mohammad Salim to Hoja Islam who was about to arrive in Bukhara.⁶ In considering into account the date of death of Hoja Islam and Abdurashidkhan (1561-1562 rr.), one can infer that the letter had been sent to Bukhara in 1560-1562.

Proceeding from sources of the reviewed period, one can conclude that despite some weakening of trade relations between the said states in 1500-1560, they had never ceased completely. Thus, sources of the period under consideration, such as “Mihman-name-yi Bukhara” by Fazlallah ibn Ruzbikhan Isfahani, “Babur-nameh” by Babur provide information that even in the depths of combat operations between them, trade relations kept on developing, trade caravans arrived and departed.⁷

Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent, Andijan, Yarkend, Kashgar, Turfan and Hami (Kumul) as large trade centers played an important role in trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend khanates. The caravan road from Yarkend to Bukhara on the territory of the former was divided into several routes. Major route laid to Seven Rivers and Fergana; starting point was Samarkand. The western route sprang from Kashgar, traversed Kashgardarya (Kizilsuv) to Irkeshtama where it forked as follows: the first led to Kuksuv valley, reached Terek; from there via river Gulchi it came to Fergana valley; the second went from Kashgar to Badakhshan, Balkh, Herat and Gissar in the south, and finally reached Termez after traversing Amu Darya.⁸

In describing caravan routes between Bukhara and Yarkend khanates, Mirza Mohammad Haidar, author of “Tarikh-i Rashidi”, wrote that it took 3 days to get from Tashkent to Andijan; 20 days from Andijan to Kashgar; 15 days from Kashgar to Aksu; 20 days from Aksu to Chalish; and 10 days from Chalish to Turfan.⁹ Author of “Tarikh-i Rashidi” also reported on Hoja Tajiddin from Turfan, murid (disciple) of Hoja Ahrar who played a significant role in trade relations between Bukhara and

Yarkend. When adjusted for the fact that Hoja Tajiddin was a spiritual guide (pir) of Sultan Saidkhan and Mansurkhan, rulers of Yarkend in the first half of the 16 century, it was obvious that Hoja Tajiddin had high opportunity to affect foreign trade relations.¹⁰

Along with local sources, valuable information on trade relations between the two states and caravan routes is provided in diaries and writing of foreign travelers. In particular, Batista Ramusio narrated a story of a prominent merchant from Gilan, Hoja Mohammad by name, who traveled from China to Venezia via So Chou, Hami, Turfan, Chalish, Kucha, Oksu, Kashgar, Samarkand, Bukhara, Herat, Vermin, the Caspian sea to Sultaniye. The author noted that the merchant traversed the path under escort of a trade caravan.¹¹ A report of a Turkish dervish as set forth to Ager Gislen de Busbeck says that in mid16 century Bukhara, Samarkand and Tashkent merchants acted go-betweens in the trade relations between China and Yarkend. The dervish returned from China to Turkey via Yarkend, Bukhara and Samarkand by caravans.¹² The facts above make it possible to infer that trade relations between the two states did not cease even in difficult terms of region's disintegration in the first half of the 16 century, and even visibly intensified afterwards.

The period of reign of Abdullakhan II (1557-1598) in Bukhara and Abdulkarimkhan (1561-1591) in Yarkend was noted by a relative stabilization of economic and political life of the two states and the development of trans-regional trade. This is vividly echoed in a work "Bahr al-asrar" by Mahmud ibn Vali that stressed an appreciable improvement of relations between the two states and protection of trade routes.¹³ Another historical source "Manakib-i Saadiya" by Huseyn al-Sarakhsi reports that merchants from Bukhara frequently visited Turfan during the reign of Shahkhan (1544-1570).¹⁴ The work refers to certain merchant Mavlana Abd al-Vahid who arrived in Turfan from Bukhara with valuable gifts.¹⁵

It should be noted that it was Juybar sheikhs that played crucial role in the political and economic life of Bukhara khanate of the reviewed period, and greatly contributed to the development of economic relations between Bukhara and Yarkend. Owners of large handicraft shops, dukans, caravanserais and trade caravans, they took active part in the foreign trade of Bukhara with other states. For example, Juybar sheikh Hoja Saad owned a large caravan-serai Gavgushan in Bukhara where merchants from Kashgar put up at.¹⁶ Materials of above twenty letters of Yarkend rulers addressed to Hoja Islam and Hoja Saad are indicative of regular sending of trade caravans to Yarkend. Using trade caravans, rulers and influential officials of the two khanates maintained correspondence and exchanged messages. Thus, while at Bukhara in 1561 to offer his condolences on the occasion of Hoja Islam's death, Yarkend's Ambassador reported on his inevitable return by the same caravan that he arrived with.¹⁷

In addition to valuable information about relations between Yarkend rulers and Juybar sheikhs, the letters provide important information about categories of goods transported from Kashgar to Bukhara.

In considering that all of them chronologically go back to the second half of the 16 century, about 20 trade caravans it may be said to have arrived from Yarkend to Bukhara in the reviewed period.

Turkish traveler Sefi Chelebi who visited the region in the 16 century reported on Bukhara merchants actively engaged in trade in the towns of Yarkend.¹⁸ One of the offspring of Juybar sheikhs – Abul Baka ibn Hodja Baha ad-Din, author of “Jame al-makamat” written in the second half of the 16 century, informed that he was a big employer and regularly arranged trade caravans to Kashgar and India.¹⁹

The present article also refers to women’s participation in the foreign trade relations of Yarkend khanate. According to Portuguese missionary-traveler Benedict Goes, it was Haji Khanum, sister of Mohammad-khann, ruler of Yarkend (1591-1608), who drove large-scale trade and played a crucial role in organizing the foreign trade of the khanate.²⁰

According to written sources, trade caravans of Yarkend imported silver coins, fabric, gold-plated tableware, Kashmir shawls, various perfumery (mushk anbar), agricultural produce, nephrite, etc. In his work “Ravzat ar-rizvan” Badriddin Kashmiriy points out that Embassadors of Abdurashidkhan who came to Bukhara in 1561, brought with them 2,000 silver coins, expensive fabric, various clothes and rarities.²¹ The work adds that Abdulkarimkhan and hakim of Aksu Sufi Sultan sent to Hoja Saad blue and yellow embroideries (kashta), Kashmir shawls and 30 gilded porcelain wares.²²

Another source – “Matlab al-talibin” says that Abdulkarimkhan sent to Juybar sheikh Tajiddin Chinese brocade, Kalmyk buttons, various perfumery and Chinese porcelain.²³ In turn, textile and dried fruit were exported from Bukhara to Yarkend.²⁴

Note that the intensification of bilateral relations contributed to the development of transit trade communication via the territories of the khanates. While the territory of Yarkend khanate served a transit route for Bukhara merchants to China, trade caravans from Yarkend via Maverannahr territory headed for countries of Western Europe. In particular, caravans from Bukhara to China traversed Yarkend’s territory and reached China from Kashgar over thirty days. The route was divided into the northern and southern ones. The northern route laid across the territory of Turfan and Hami; the southern one – across Kashgar, Yarkend and Khutan. These routes joined near the Great Wall of China, Chinese customs.²⁵ Turfan and Hami were economic centers to host merchants from various countries of the Central Asia. Worth mentioning is Turfan, a famed trade center on the Great Silk Way route where merchants hired caravan bashi to lead them from Yarkend to China.²⁶ While at Turfan, Bukhara merchants took active part in tenders, purchased horses and precious nephrite. Bukhara and Yarkend merchants, besides local commodity circulation, partook in trade operations with transit goods.²⁷ For instance, Russian Ambassador I.P. Novoseltsev who arrived in Istanbul in 1570, noted that Bukhara merchants were engaged in selling expensive fabric brought to Turkey from Kashgar.²⁸

The fact makes it possible to suppose that Bukhara merchants met the requirements of domestic market and simultaneously supplied imported goods to other countries.

Trade relations in the medieval Central Asia were noted for some distinctive features arising from traditions of official reciprocation of presents.²⁹ In other words, while visiting a foreign country merchants, together with goods for sale, were taking valuable gifts with them to present to rulers or top officials. This custom was observed by scores of western travelers that visited the countries of the East. In particular, travelers Seifi Chelebi, Benedict Goes et al noted in their diaries that foreign merchants presented the Chinese Emperor with valuable gifts.³⁰ This was also typical for trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend.

To sum up, proceeding from primary sources one can conclude that in the 16 – earlier 17 centuries trade relations between Bukhara and Yarkend khanates were of regular nature even despite long periods of political instability in the region. It was the stabilization of political situation in both states that increasingly consolidated these relations. In turn, this contributed to the development of trade relations not only within the limits of the Central Asian region but between the countries of the East and West.

References:

1. **Adshead S.A.M.** China in World History. Second edition. – St. Martin's Press, New York; Frances Wood. The Silk road: Two thousand years in the heart of Asia. ... ; Niels Steensgaard. The Asian Trade Revolution of the Seventeenth Century. The East India Companies and the Decline of the Caravan Trade. Chicago University Press, 1974; Morris Rossabi. The "decline" of the Central Asian caravan trade / In edited by James D. Tracy. The Rise of Merchant Empires (Long-Distance trade in the early modern world, 1350-1750) – Cambridge University Press. 1990. P.351-370; Haidar M. Indo-Central Asian Relations, from Early times to Medieval Period. New Delhi, 2004.
2. **Chehovich O.D.** K istorii Uzbekistana v XVIII v. // Trudi institute vostokovedeniya Akademii Nauk UzSSR. N 3. Tashkent, 1954. S.43-82; Mukminova R.G. The khanate (Emirate) of Bukhara. In: History of Civilizations of Central Asia. Development in contrast: from the sixteen to mid-nineteenth century - Multiple History Series UNESCO Publishing. Vol. V. 2003. P.33-52 and other her works; Nizametdinov I. Iz istorii sredneaziatsko-indiyskih otnosheniy (IX-XVIII vv.). Tashkent, 1969; Scott C. Levi. Indian Diaspora in Central Asia and it's trade, 1550-1900. Leiden, 2002; Stephen Dale. Indian merchants and Eurasian trade, 1600-1750. Cambridge, 1994; Jos Gommans. Mughal India and Central Asia in the Eighteenth Century: An Introduction to Wider Perspective; Muzaffar Alam. Trade, State Policy and

Regional Change: Aspects of Mughal-Uzbek Commercial Relations, c 1550-1750. In edited by Scott C. Levi. *India and Central Asia: Commerce and Culture, 1500-1800*. Oxford University Press, 2007. P.64-92.

3. The author of the article made a report titled “Foreign Historiography of Foreign Relations of the Central Asia in the 16-18 Centuries: Crisis, Development or Changes” at the Republican scientific conference devoted to the 525-anniversary of Zahiriddin Babur, whose summary was published in the collected materials of the conference (Tashkent, 2008. P. 95-96).
4. **Anthony Jenkinson**. The road to Bokhara / In: *Eastward Ho! The first English adventurers to the Orient – Richard Chancellor – Anthony Jenkinson – James Lancaster I William Adams – Sir Tomas Roe*. / Ed. by Foster Rhea Dulles. Freeport, New York. Books for Libraries Press. 1969.
5. One more debatable issue is a date of establishment of Yarkend khanate and its name. As viewed by some researchers, the khanate sprang up in 1465; other authors refer to 1514. Some works title this state formation as “Mogulistan”; others – as “Kashgar”, “Turfan”. Separate researchers tend to believe that the more correct is Yarkend khanate, for the town of Yarkend was its capital in the reviewed period. To our thinking, the lack of unanimous view on the subject is explained as being due to mentioning of different names in historical sources. Thus, “*Tarikh-i Rashidi*” by Mirza Mohammad Haidar and “*Abdullanameh*” by Hafiz Tanish refer to Mogulistan and Kashgar; “*Tarikh*” by Shah Mahmud Churas – Mogulistan; “*Ravzat ar-rizvan va hadikat al-gilman*” by Badriddin Kashmiri – Kashgar; “*Bahr al-asrar...*” By Mahmud ibn Vali – Kashgar and Mogulistan simultaneously. According to Wei Liangtao, in the 16 century the center of the khanate was located in the southern part of Tien Shan, while Mogulistan as a state established by Tugluk Temur – in the northern part. For this reason the state should be titled Yarkend, not Mogulistan. See for details: **Wei Liangtao**. *Yäkän khanliqi tarikhidin umumiy bayan*. – Urumchi. Shinjang khalq nashriyati, 1999, and **Hodong Kim**. The early history of the Moghul nomads: The legacy of Chaghatai Kanate. In *The Mongol Empire and its legacy*. / ed. By Reuven Amitai – Preiss and David O. Morgan. Brill. Leiden-Boston-Koin. 1996. P. 292-316; Sultonova G. *Svyazi Bukharskogo hanstva s Kazakhskim I Yarkendskim hanstvami vo vtoroy polovine XVI v.* / Avtoref. diss... k.i.n. Tashkent, 2005. S. 77-78. (s dissertaciyey mojno oznokomitsya v Fundamentalnoy biblioteke AN RUz).
6. **Badriddin Kashmiri**. *Ravzat ar-rizvan va hadikat al-gilman (avtograf)* / Rukopis Instituta vostokovedeniya AN RUz, inv. N 2094, 1.101 a; Sultonova G. *Svyazi Bukharskogo hanstva s Kazakhskim I Yarkendskim hanstvami vo vtoroy polovine XVI veka*. Avtoref. diss... k.i.n. Tashkent, 2005. S.18.
7. **Fazlallah ibn Ruzbihan Isfahani**. *Mihman-name-yi Buhara (Zapiski Buharskogo gostya)* / Pervod s persidskogo, predislovie i primechaniya R.P.Djalilovoy. Pod. Red. A.K.Arendsa.

- Moskva: Nauka. 1976. S. 86; **Mukminova R.G.** Ocherki po istorii remesla v Samarkande i Bukhare. Tashkent, 1976. S. 54.
8. The embassy sent by Shah Rukh to the court of China (A.D. 1419-1422. / In: Cathay and the way Thither. The Hakluyt Society. Vol. I. Second series №XXXVIII. 1915. P.286; **Mukminova R.G.** Tradicii vzaimosvyazey po Shelkovogo puti v pozdnefeodalniy period / Na srednea ziatskih trasah Velikogo Shelkovogo puti (Ocherki istorii i kulturi). Tashkent: Fan, 1986. S. 118; **Buriev A.** K voprosu o torgovih putyah iz Sredney Azii v Kitay / Na sredneaziatskih trassah Velikogo Shelkovogo puti (Ocherki istorii i kulturi). S. 46.
 9. **Mirza Muhammad Haydar.** Ta'rih-I Rashidi / Vvedenie, perevod s persidskogo A. Urunbayeva, R.P.Djalilovoy, L.M.Epifanovoy, primechaniya i ukazateli R.P.Djalilovoy. Tashkent: Fan, 1996. S.185; **Sultonova G.** Svyazi Bukharskogo hanstva s Kazakhskim i Yarkendskim hanstvami vo vtoroy polovine XVI veka. S. 17.
 10. **Vey Lyangtao.** Hojalar jamaati hakkinda / Hitay tilindan uygur tiliga tarjima kiluvchi Kyrban Turon. Beyjing. Millatlar nashriyati, 2006. B. 173; James A.Millward. Eurasian Crossroads a History of Xinjiang. Columbia University Press, New York, 2007. P. 83-88.
 11. Hajji Mahomed's account of Cathay as delivered to Messer Giov. Battista Ramusio (Circa 1550). In: Cathay and the Way Thither. Vol. I. Second series, No. XXXVIII. Works issued by the Hakluyt Society, 1915. P. 293.
 12. Account of Cathay by a Turkish Dervish related to Auger Gislen de Busbeck. In Cathay and the Way Thither. Vol. I. Second series, No. XXXVIII. Works issued by the Hakluyt Society. 1915. P. 296-297.
 13. **Mahmud ibn Vali.** Bahr al-asrar fi manakib al-ahyar / Rukopis Instituta vostokovedeniya AN RUz, inv. N 1385, l. 76 b.
 14. Huseyn al-Sarahsi. Manakib-i Sa'diya / Rukopis' Instituta vostokovedeniya AN RUz, inv. N1439/1, l. 100 b, 102 ab; Turayev H. Rol' djuybarskih hodjey v obshestvenno-politicheskoy i duhovno-kulturnoy jizni Bukharskogo hanstva v XVI-XVII vv. / Avtoref. diss... d.i.n. Tashkent, 2007. S. 7.
 15. **Huseyn al-Sarahsi.** Manakib-i Sa'diya. l. 146 b, 147 ab.
 16. **Mukminova R.G.** Social'naya differenciatsiya naseleniya gorodov Uzbekistana konca XV-nachala XVI vv. Tashkent: Fan, 1985. S. 120-121; Sultonova G. Svyazi Bukharskogo hanstva s Kazakhskim i Yarkendskim hanstvami vo vtoroy polovine XVI veka. S. 17.
 17. **Badridiin Kashmiri.** Ravzat ar-rizvan va hadikat al-gilman. L. 193 ab; Sultonova G. Svyazi Bukharskogo hanstva s Kazakhskim i Yarkendskim hanstvami vo vtoroy polovine XVI veka. S. 15.
 18. **Seyfi-Chelebi.** Kitab-i tavarih-i padshahan-i vilayat-i Hind va Sind va Hitay va Hutan va Dara va Darvaz va Kashmir va vilayat-i Ajam va Kashgar va Kalmak va Chin va Machin / Nacionalnaya biblioteka Parija, inv. N 1361, l. 4 b. (I used mic. copy kept in RIFIAS of

Indiana University. Many thanks to professors Scott C. Levi and Ron Sela for their help in acquiring this manuscript)

19. **Abul Baka ibn Baha ad-Din.** Jame' al-makamat / Rukopis' Instituta vostokovedeniya AN RUz, inv. N 72, l.87 b.
20. The journey of Benedict Goes from Agra to Chitay. P.207
21. **Badridiin Kashmiri.** Ravzat ar-rizvan va hadikat al-gilman. L. 101 a.
22. **Badridiin Kashmiri.** Ravzat ar-rizvan va hadikat al-gilman. L. 193 ab 338 b, 339 a.
23. **Muhammad Talib Hodja.** Matlab al-talibin. Rukopis' Instituta vostokovedeniya AN Ruz, inv. N3757, l. 161 ab, 162 ab; Turayev H. Juybor hojalarining Bukhoro honligi ijtimoiy-iktisodiy va siyosiy hayetida tutgan urni (XVI-XVII asrlar) / Tarih fanlari doktori ilmiy darajasini olish uchun yezilgan dissertatsiya avtoreferati. Toshkent, 2007 i ego dr. raboti.
24. **Burton O.** The Bukharans: A dynastic, diplomatic and commercial history (1550-1702). Great Britain: CURZON, 1997. P. 51, 62 and other.
25. **Mukminova R.G.** Tradicii vzaimosvyazey po Shelkovomu puti v pozdnefeodal'niy period. S. 118; **Buriyev A. K** voprosu o torgovih putyah iz Sredney Azii v Kitay. S. 46.
26. **Seyfi Chelebi.** L. 10 a; Joseph F, Fletcher. China and Central Asia. In: The Chinese World order. Traditional China's foreign relations. Edited by John King Fairbank. Cambridge, Massachusetts. 1968. P. 209; **Kutlukov M.** K istorii vzaimootnosheniy Yarkendskogo hanstva i Kitaya v XV-XVI vv. / Novoe v izuchenii Kitaya. Moskva: Nauka, 1988 b. S. 39.
27. **Seyfi Chelebi.** L.12 ab.
28. **Baykova N.** Rol' Sredney Azii v russko-indiyskih torgovih svyazyah (pervaya pol. XVI- vtoraya pol. XVIII vv.) Tashkent: Nauka, 1964 b. S. 133.
29. Encyclopedia Iranica. Edited by Ehsan Yarshater. Vol. V. Mazda Publishers. Costa Mesa, California, 1992. P.220
30. **Seyfi Chelebi,** l.86; The journey of **Benedict Goes** from Agra to Chitay. P. 219.