

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE FOREIGN TRADE AND ECONOMIC
RELATIONS OF THE KOKAND KHANATE IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND
NINETEENTH CENTURIES BASED ON THE REPORTS OF RUSSIAN
TRAVELERS AND DIPLOMATIC ENVOYS**

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Abstract

This article examines, on the basis of the memoirs and official reports of Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys, how the Kokand Khanate emerged from the eighteenth century onward as an intermediary state that established extensive commercial relations with the peoples of Central Asia as well as with China and Eastern Turkestan. Particular attention is devoted to the movement of Chinese goods through the Kokand Khanate to the Bukhara and Khiva Khanates and, subsequently, to other countries of the East. The study also analyzes the development of the Khanate's relations with the Russian Empire, especially the process by which Russia expanded its influence following the incorporation of Tashkent into the Kokand Khanate. Drawing upon the reports of F. Nazarov, V. V. Velyaminov-Zernov, A. N. Teterevnikov, and other Russian travelers and diplomatic representatives, the article identifies the scope and principal directions of the Kokand Khanate's trade and economic relations with Bukhara, Khiva, Afghanistan, Iran, the Ottoman Empire, India, and Russia. Furthermore, it demonstrates, through quantitative evidence, the intermediary role of the city of Tashkent within these commercial networks.

Keywords: China, India, Bukhara, Central Asia, Russia, Khiva, Afghanistan, Dasht-i Qipchaq, Eastern Turkestan, Tashkent, Kokand paper, F. Nazarov, V. V.

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that, during the years of Uzbekistan's independence, objective research into the history of national statehood, including the foreign political and economic relations of the Kokand Khanate, has received support at the level of state policy. Nevertheless, the scholarly potential of sources based on the direct observations of foreign travelers and

diplomatic envoys has not yet been fully utilized in reconstructing the commercial and economic history of the Khanate.

Following Uzbekistan's independence, historical scholarship underwent profound methodological changes, providing researchers with broad opportunities to present an objective interpretation of the past. This article therefore focuses on the memoirs and accounts of diplomatic envoys and travelers concerning the commercial, economic, socio-cultural, and diplomatic relations maintained by the Russian Empire, Great Britain, and neighboring states with Central Asia, particularly the Kokand Khanate. For centuries, the states of Central Asia maintained economic, political, and cultural relations with China, India, Iran, Afghanistan, and other countries of the East, as well as with Russia. The friendly relations that contemporary Uzbekistan maintains with its neighboring countries have their historical roots in this long-standing tradition.

Trade relations between the Kokand Khanate and neighboring states during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries have not yet been examined comprehensively, despite the fact that the reports of Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys contain valuable information for reconstructing the economic history of this period. Earlier commercial contacts between Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan, and China during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are reflected in such historical works as Baburnama by Zahir al-Din Muhammad Babur, Bahr al-Asrar by Mahmud ibn Wali, and Tarikh-i Shahrukhi by Niyaz Muhammad Khoqandi. Babur's observation that a caravan arriving in Andijan from China consisted of approximately one thousand people provides convincing evidence of the long-standing commercial relations between the two regions.

The present study is based on three principal methodological approaches. First, it undertakes a comparative analysis of the official reports and personal travel diaries of nineteenth-century Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys as primary historical sources. Second, it systematizes the quantitative information contained in these sources, including data on trade volumes, caravan traffic, and commodity prices. Third, these historical materials are evaluated in the light of contemporary historiographical scholarship in order to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Kokand Khanate's position within the regional and international trading system. Such an approach makes it possible to demonstrate that the Khanate maintained not only commercial relations

with its immediate neighbors but also a complex and multilayered network of economic connections extending to distant regions.

The rapid development of the Kokand Khanate was largely determined by its favorable geographical location, the convergence of major caravan routes, and its long-established agricultural economy. Rebuilt in 1709, the city of Kokand became the capital of the Khanate in 1740 and subsequently developed into its principal political, economic, and cultural center. From this strategically advantageous position, the Khanate established extensive commercial relations with Bukhara, Khiva, Afghanistan, Iran, the Ottoman Empire, and India in the west and south; with China through Kashgar in the east; with the nomadic tribes of Dasht-i Qipchaq in the north; and, most importantly, with the Russian Empire. Certain historical sources even mention commercial contacts involving Japanese and British merchants.

The principal exports of the Kokand Khanate included raw silk, silk textiles, cotton, leather products, precious stones, and articles made of gold and silver. Imported commodities consisted primarily of tea, metals, porcelain, finished textiles, and clothing. Large urban centers such as Kokand, Tashkent, Andijan, and Namangan became renowned for numerous branches of handicraft production, including copper craftsmanship, jewelry making, weaving, and other specialized industries. The remarkable development of these crafts significantly contributed to the expansion of commercial relations with neighboring countries.

Particular importance should be attached to the production of Kokand paper. Following the migration of skilled papermakers from Samarkand to Kokand, the Khanate evolved into the principal center for paper production across a vast territory stretching from the Aral Sea to China. As a result, Kokand acquired an almost monopolistic position in the regional paper trade, while Kokand paper was exported to Kashgar and even to northern Afghanistan.

The trade and economic relations of the Kokand Khanate with foreign countries are extensively reflected in the reports of Russian diplomatic envoys and travelers. During his mission to Kokand in 1813-1814, Filipp Nazarov compiled valuable information that was later published in 1821 under the title *Zapiski o nekotorykh narodakh i zemlyakh sredney chasti Azii* (Notes on Certain Peoples and Lands of Central Asia). His work provides detailed observations on Kokand's commercial relations with Kashgar, China, Khiva, Bukhara, and Eastern Iran. Likewise, the journal *Aziatskii Vestnik* (1826)

contains important information concerning Kokand's cotton and silk production, as well as its commercial relations with China, Khiva, and Iran.

Another significant source is *Istoricheskiye izvestiya o Kokandskom khanstve* (Historical Information on the Kokand Khanate) by V. V. Velyaminov-Zernov, prepared on the basis of the diary of the merchant S. Ya. Klyucharev, who visited Tashkent in 1852. This work records detailed information concerning caravans arriving in Tashkent from Bukhara, the daily sale of as many as 20,000 sheep, and the remarkable profitability of the opium trade. Equally valuable is A. N. Teterevnikov's *Ocherk vnutrenney trgovli Kirgizskoy stepi* (Essay on the Internal Trade of the Kirghiz Steppe, 1867), in which he estimated that Tashkent's total annual trade turnover could reach approximately ten million rubles and provided a detailed analysis of the commercial routes through which British Indian goods entered Central Asia via the Peshawar-Kabul-Bukhara-Kokand corridor.

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The reports and memoirs of Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys examined in this study constitute indispensable primary sources for reconstructing the foreign trade and economic relations of the Kokand Khanate. Their significance lies not only in the extensive quantitative data they provide but also in the fact that they were compiled by contemporary observers who directly witnessed the commercial and political realities of the period. The official mission report of Filipp Nazarov, the travel diary of S. Ya. Klyucharev, and the analytical observations of A. N. Teterevnikov each illuminate different aspects of the Khanate's external commercial system from distinct chronological and methodological perspectives. Consequently, only a comparative examination of these diverse sources makes it possible to reconstruct the commercial and economic life of the Kokand Khanate in an objective, comprehensive, and historically balanced manner, since each source reflects particular regions, periods, and social environments within the broader economic landscape.

Conclusion

The present study demonstrates that the Kokand Khanate maintained an extensive network of foreign trade and economic relations with the Central Asian khanates, China (including Eastern Turkestan), India, Iran, the Ottoman Empire, Russia, and several other countries. Beyond conducting direct trade with Kashgar, the Khanate also functioned as an important intermediary in commercial exchanges between China and the Central Asian khanates, as well as between China and India, Iran, and the Russian Empire. This intermediary

role substantially enhanced the economic and geopolitical importance of the Kokand Khanate within the regional trading system.

The accounts of Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys—including Filipp Nazarov, V. V. Velyaminov-Zernov, A. N. Teterevnikov, and others—represent unique and highly valuable historical sources that enable scholars to reconstruct these commercial processes on the basis of reliable quantitative evidence. Their observations not only provide statistical information regarding trade volumes, caravan routes, and commodities but also offer first-hand descriptions of the mechanisms governing international commerce in nineteenth-century Central Asia.

Particular emphasis should also be placed on the strategic position of Tashkent, which emerged as the principal intermediary commercial center linking the Kokand Khanate with the Russian Empire and other neighboring regions. Owing to its advantageous geographical location and well-developed commercial infrastructure, Tashkent became one of the most influential trade hubs in Central Asia, facilitating the movement of goods between East and West while strengthening the Khanate's position within the broader Eurasian trading network.

Overall, the evidence examined in this article confirms that the Kokand Khanate occupied a prominent place in the international commercial system of Central Asia during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Its economic prosperity was sustained by a diversified network of caravan routes, active diplomatic engagement, and its ability to function as an intermediary between the major commercial centers of Asia. Consequently, the reports of Russian travelers and diplomatic envoys remain among the most reliable and informative historical sources for studying the foreign trade, economic development, and international relations of the Kokand Khanate.

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