REFLECTIONS ON MARKETS AND REGULATORY PRINCIPLES IN THE CITIES OF THE LOWER ZARAFSHAN VALLEY

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Annotation. *The market system that emerged in the Lower Zarafshan Valley between 1868 and 1920 was characterized by a complex commercial infrastructure consisting of caravanserais,* tim, chorsu, *and specialized marketplaces. During this period, the abundance and functional diversification of trade facilities reflected the diversification and stable development of the urban economy. Market administration operated through a structured system that included a* rais, amlokdor, *and tax collectors. In monetary circulation, accounting and credit exchange based on gold–coin–cash ratios further intensified commercial activity. Overall, this period is distinguished by the advanced infrastructure, strict administrative governance, and balanced economic relations of the Bukhara markets.*

Keywords: *Lower Zarafshan Valley market system, caravanserai,* tim, chorsu *trade infrastructure, market administration, tax management.*

Between 1868 and 1920, trade centers—namely marketplaces—in the cities of the Lower Zarafshan Valley, including Bukhara, exhibited a distinctive structure. During this period, the trading environment consisted of caravanserais, *saroy*, *chorsu*, and various market units. Most of Bukhara's marketplaces were concentrated in the eastern part of the city, situated near the Shahrud River[1].

[1] *Крестовский В.В.* В гостях у эмира бухарскаго. – СПб,1887. С.297.

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Caravanserais were typically constructed in rectangular or square form and served as storage facilities for the goods brought by trading caravans arriving from abroad. Architecturally resembling madrasas, caravanserais consisted of two levels: the first floor functioned as a warehouse for merchandise, while the upper floor served as lodging for merchants. There were 38 caravanserais in the city, 24 of which were built of stone and 14 of wood. Ten of the stone-built caravanserais belonged to the treasury of the Emirate and were leased out. Depending on their location and size, the rented caravanserais paid between 100 and 300 gold coins as annual rent to the treasury. The remaining caravanserais were privately owned or constituted waqf property. In total, nearly 150 caravanserais were situated within the city and its surroundings, serving both commercial needs and travelers.

Tims—elongated, domed structures built from stone and wood—were designated for the sale of goods produced by craftsmen and artisans. Along the inner walls, shelves displayed the artisans' products. In its time, the Abdullakhan trading *tim* was known as a place where the finest goods were exhibited under its large dome, attracting active commercial exchange.

Chorsu was a market built in the form of a high, covered semi-dome with four entrances allowing access from all directions. According to one interpretation, the term *chorsu*—meaning "four streams"—emerged because people flowed into the market from four sides. In our view, the term derives from *chor soy*, meaning "four directions." Every major city of Central Asia traditionally had a *chorsu* at its center. In Bukhara, the Zargaron Chorsu constructed by Abdulaziz Khan became particularly renowned.

The term *bozor* itself is derived from Persian and literally means "bring again," referring to the continuous circulation of goods. In its historical usage, a *bozor* denoted either a row of eastern-style covered stalls or an open-air trading square. Such markets, including the horse market located 1.5 versts outside the Samarqand Gate, numbered around 50. Additionally, there were 22

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markets situated near the outskirts of the city where trade was conducted on designated days of the week.

Within the city, there were 3 bread markets, 1 grain market, 1 bran market, 2 meat markets, 1 fish market, 1 salt market, 1 firewood market, 1 candle market, 3 coal markets, 2 general markets, 2 fresh-fruit markets, 2 melon-and-watermelon markets, 2 egg markets, 6 dairy markets, 2 oil markets, 1 pharmaceuticals-and-dye market, 5 footwear markets, 1 soft-leather market, 1 raw-hide market, 2 cotton markets, 1 carpet, coat, and wool-products market, 1 copper and metalware market, 2 knife markets, 1 rope market, 1 saddlery-and-horse-gear market, as well as one horse market and one slave market. In addition, sellers of pottery and various household goods could be found throughout all parts of the city.

In the Bukhara Emirate, markets opened at 8 a.m. after prices were publicly announced, and trade activities peaked before noon. Prices for all goods entering the market were set and regulated directly by the Emir of Bukhara, with the exception of commodities brought in by Russian subjects, which were exempt from this regulation[2].

In the markets of the Emirate, commercial transactions were conducted using *tillo* (gold coin), *tanga* (silver coin), and *pul* (copper coin). These served as the internal currency units of the Emirate. According to the monetary ratios, 1 *tillo* equaled 22 *tanga*, and 1 *tanga* equaled 50 *pul*. Based on information from 1820, 1 *tillo* corresponded to 16 Russian rubles, while 1 *tanga* equaled 75 Russian kopecks at that time. Both the *tillo* and the *tanga* had three varieties, each inscribed in Persian[3].

Merchants in Bukhara were inclined to borrow funds. In market transactions, traders often paid half of the price in cash while taking the remaining half on credit at interest rates exceeding the standard. When a

[2] *Энпе.* Очерки Бухары // Туркестанский сборник. – Том.541. С. 183.
[3] Русские в Бухаре в 1820 году (Записки очевидца) // Туркестанский сборник. – Том.239. С. 295.

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merchant purchased goods on credit, the surcharge depended on the loan period: 60 *tanga* per month, 65 *tanga* for two months, 70 *tanga* for six months, and 80–100 *tanga* for a one-year term. As a result, the seller gained no additional profit, because after the specified period, the repayment equaled the original value of the goods without any price increase tied to market conditions.

The management and supervision of the markets in the Bukhara Emirate were carried out by several officials appointed by the state. In provinces or *bekliks*, the *hakim* or *bek* was responsible for the overall administrative governance and oversight. The *bek* managed his territory through a network of subordinate officials. Among the appointed positions within the administrative structure, only a few were directly responsible for market administration, while most held broader duties beyond market regulation.

One such official was the *rais*, a highly knowledgeable figure proficient in Qur'anic and jurisprudential sciences. His responsibilities included supervising public adherence to the law, managing religious affairs, and serving exclusively as a judge, handling judicial matters alongside his supervisory duties.

According to other sources, market regulations were overseen by the *amlokdor*. Throughout the market, the *amlokdor*'s attendants patrolled carrying red staffs as a symbol of authority. On market days, merchants and citizens brought complaints regarding disputes and other issues to the *amlokdor*'s residence for resolution. From 8 a.m. to 1 p.m., his office handled legal matters such as adjudicating disputes, claiming rights, imposing fines in cash, goods, or livestock, and settling conflicts.

Cases such as physical assaults, damage to clothing, or the collection of debts were resolved collaboratively by the *amlokdor* and the *qazi* (judge). When fines were imposed, a *mirokhur* acted as guarantor, ensuring the offender worked until the equivalent value of the debt or fine was covered, without the *amlokdor* profiting personally. Because Sharia law prohibited interest, fines

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were never collected in cash; instead, offenders could pay with goods equivalent to the fine. For example, if an offender brought goods valued at 80 *tanga*, the *amlokdor* or *qazi* would not appraise them above 35 *tanga*. Immediately, these goods were forwarded to the merchant who had originally sold them on credit, who would then purchase them for 40 *tanga*. That merchant could immediately resell the goods on credit to another buyer[4].

According to sources on the western territories of the Bukhara Emirate, the collection of market taxes was the responsibility of the *zakotchi*. In the western region of the Emirate, there were two chief *zakotchis*. One oversaw the towns of Karmana, Nurota, Khatirchi, Ziyoudin (Qal'a Dabus), Kattaqurghan, Panjshanba, and the villages of Mitan and Yangiqurghan (Dushanba), with his office located in Khatirchi. The second chief *zakotchi* collected taxes from the markets of Samarkand, Urgut, Panjikent, Chelak, Jizzakh, and Ura-Teppa, with his office in Samarkand. In some towns within their jurisdiction, *zakotchis* maintained permanent trusted agents, while in other towns their representatives only arrived on market days.

The chief *zakotchi* in Khatirchi had ten authorized agents: one permanent agent in Karmana, one visiting agent in Nurota, and one permanent agent in Kattaqurghan who traveled periodically to Panjshanba, Mitan, Yangiqurghan, and other localities. The chief *zakotchi* in Samarkand had fifteen agents: one visiting agent in Urgut, two agents in Panjikent (assigned during July or when sheep were driven from Hisor for zakot collection), four permanent agents in Chelak, one senior and six junior permanent agents in Jizzakh, one visiting agent in Zomin, and three permanent agents in Ura-Teppa.

The chief *zakotchis* presented in advance the expected tax amounts to the treasury, forming a structured method of trade regulation. For example, the chief *zakotchi* of Khatirchi submitted 20,000 *tanga* per year—equivalent to

[4] *Тимофеичь.* Пульс Бухары // Туркестанский сборник. – Том.545. С. 174-75.

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4,000 rubles or 1,000 *tillo*; while the chief *zakotchi* of Samarkand submitted 40,000 *tanga*—equivalent to 8,000 rubles or 2,000 *tillo*[5].

Between 1868 and 1920, the trade system of Bukhara city and the Lower Zarafshan Valley comprised a developed complex of caravanserais, *tims*, *chorsus*, and specialized markets. The abundance and functional differentiation of these commercial facilities indicate a highly diversified regional economic life. Market administration was conducted through an organized administrative and taxation system consisting of the *rais*, *amlokdor*, and *zakotchis*. Monetary circulation was based on the gold–*tanga*–*pul* system, and the widespread use of credit relationships reflects the active turnover of trade. The system of specialized markets demonstrated the structured nature of the city's consumer market. Sharia requirements were harmoniously integrated with local economic practices in commercial operations. Overall, this period in Bukhara's commercial history is characterized by complex governance, developed infrastructure, and stable trade relations.

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[5] *Хорошхин А.* Заметка о закате в Бухарском ханстве // Туркестанские ведомости. - №14. 1872. С. 61.