

THE TIMURID STATES IN THE FIFTEENTH AND SIXTEENTH CENTURIES*

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The aftermath of Timur's death

The great empire of Timur had been maintained by force of arms and by Timur's skill as a ruler and military leader. With his death in February 1405, the unity of the realm collapsed. Timur's sons and grandsons who had governed the provinces strove for independence; attempts to lead the realm by Timur's grandson Pīr Muhammad (designated by his grandfather as his successor) failed. In 1406 he was killed. The representatives of former dynasties, overthrown by Timur, were not slow to take advantage of the situation.

* See Map 8.

As a result of a long struggle in Azerbaijan, Armenia and western Persia, the state of the Kara Koyunlu (1410–68) was established; its rulers pursued a policy hostile towards the Timurids. Only later, in 1435, did Shāh Rukh make their ruler his vassal (see above, Chapter 16).

A bitter struggle raged throughout Transoxania. Samarkand was seized by Khalīl Sultān (Timur's grandson and the son of Mīrānshāh; 1405–9), but in fact he did not control even the whole territory of Transoxania: the steppes and Sawran were in the hands of Amir Berdi Beg; Tashkent, Khujand and Ferghana were in the hands of Amir Khudāydād. From late 1405 to early 1406, Khwarazm was ruled by Edigü of the Golden Horde, later by the Uzbek sultans; Khurasan with its adjacent regions was ruled by Shāh Rukh (1405–47), who had constantly to put down the revolts of governors. In May 1409 he was able to occupy Samarkand; his nephew, Khalīl Sultān, who had been captured by Khudāydād some time earlier, was made to surrender.

The rule of Ulugh Beg

Shāh Rukh handed over the government of Turkistan to Ulugh Beg (1409–49), his eldest son, then aged 15, and appointed Shāh Malik (d. 1426) as his tutor. However, at Ulugh Beg's insistence, the power-loving Shāh Malik was recalled to Herat in 1411. Some time later, Khwarazm was handed over to him as a *soyurghal* (land grant). Ulugh Beg's real name was Muhammad Taraghay, but from his youth he had been called Ulugh Beg (Great Prince) and it is under this name that he has gone down in history. Like his grandfather, Ulugh Beg had the title of Güregen because he was the Khan's son-in-law and under him there remained some Chinggisid fainéant Khans to whose names labels were issued. The name of the sovereign Shāh Rukh was mentioned in the *khutba*, and money was also coined in his name. The most important questions were solved by Ulugh Beg only with the consent of his father. When, in 1427, he mounted a campaign against the Dasht-i Kīpchak and suffered a defeat, Shāh Rukh temporarily debarred him from the government of Transoxania. Nevertheless, Ulugh Beg mainly pursued a policy that was independent of Herat. According to Dawlat Shāh, 'Ulugh Beg ruled independently over Samarkand and Transoxania for forty years.'

Ulugh Beg made a number of attempts to unite the separate areas of the Timurid realm. He was able to banish Ahmad b. °Umar Shaykh b. Timur (who had ruled over Ferghana) and, at some time, with the assistance of his father, to recall this same Ahmad from Kashghar (where he had tried to consolidate his power) to Herat. Thus Ulugh Beg assumed power over Ferghana in 1414 and Kashghar in 1416. He also tried, by diplomatic means,

but unsuccessfully, to defend his territories from raids by the nomadic tribes. Shortly after having come to power with Ulugh Beg's support, these tribal rulers became his political opponents, not infrequently uniting with forces hostile to both Ulugh Beg and Shāh Rukh. For example, the rulers of Moghulistan,¹ struggling against Ulugh Beg, more than once formed a unified front with the rulers of Badakhshan, who refused to recognize the supreme power of Shāh Rukh.

In February 1425 Ulugh Beg, at the head of a force assembled at Tashkent, departed on a campaign against Moghulistan. The campaign was successful and a record of it was inscribed at the Jilanut gorge. On their way home, the participants in the campaign loaded special carts with pieces of nephrite which Timur had previously tried to bring back and, having delivered them to Samarkand, used them for Timur's tomb. But as noted above, Ulugh Beg was unable to establish good relations with the nomads of the steppe bordering the northern regions of his domains. Baraq Khan, one of Urus Khan's grandsons, who with his support had been enthroned in the *ulus* (domain) of the Dasht-i Kipchak, laid claim to the towns along the Syr Darya, alleging that before Timur's time these areas had belonged to Jöchi's descendants. Hence in 1427 Ulugh Beg, having consulted with his father and received his support in the person of his brother Jūqī (d. 1444–5), embarked on a campaign to the north. However, at Signak his army was crushed. Pursuing the Timurid army, the conquerors penetrated into Transoxania and ravaged many towns and villages. The defeat at Signak, together with an attempt to close the Samarkand gates to Ulugh Beg and his temporary removal from power, played a decisive part in his subsequent political activity. From that time onwards he never again mounted a campaign in person, although troops belonging to the chiefs of nomadic Uzbeks and amirs of Moghulistan more than once attacked the areas subjected to him. During Ulugh Beg's last years, the Moghuls were able to attack Andijan and Kanibadam with impunity.

According to the historian ^cAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, when Shāh Rukh handed over the government of Transoxania to Ulugh Beg, he advised him to protect landholders from violence and unfairness and to keep the army ready for action, paying the soldiers' wages on time. Meanwhile, in order to protect villagers and town-dwellers alike, to maintain the irrigation system, to prevent officials from robbing the subjects and to guard the boundaries of the realm, it was necessary to establish a strong central government. Despite the attempts of various amirs to increase their own power, Ulugh Beg's forty-year reign was marked by a relative stability that contributed to the economic growth of his state.

Ulugh Beg took measures to develop both domestic and foreign trade, with India and China in particular. His monetary reform of 1428 played a role in encouraging internal

¹ The north-eastern part of the Chagatayid *ulus*, separated from it in the mid-fourteenth century.

trade. His reform of the coinage and organization of the circulation of copper money resulted in a ban on the old coins in 1420, and the putting into circulation of new ones; the weight of the new coins was also altered in order to regulate the circulation of money. Bukhara was later granted the monopoly of striking copper coins, though at the end of Ulugh Beg's life, there was a clear decentralization of the minting of coins.²

It was in the time of Ulugh Beg that the Registan Square, lying at the crossing of the six main roads through Samarkand, was laid out. Hundreds of local master craftsmen and workers, as well as those who had been collected by force from all regions at the time of Timur's reign, erected *madrasas*, mausoleums (including the mausoleum of the astronomer Qādī-zāde Rūmī, d. 1437), trading premises, bath-houses and bridges at Samarkand, Bukhara and Ghijduwan. On Ulugh Beg's orders, a garden was laid out. In it there was a pavilion: 'the whole lower part of its walls was made of china. It was called *chīnikhāna*. The china was delivered from China by one man.'³ After 1427 Ulugh Beg mainly gave himself up to scientific studies. Samarkand became a centre of scientific thought and here, at the observatory built under his guidance, worked Qādī-zāde Rūmī, Ghiyāth al-Dīn Jamshīd, Mu'īn al-Dīn Kāshānī and 'Alā' al-Dīn Abū 'l-Hasan 'Alā Qūshchī. Literary figures such as Lutfī, Saqqāqī, Khayālī and others wrote their works there – Ulugh Beg was fond of poetry and music.

The power struggle following Shāh Rukh's death

After Shāh Rukh's death in 1447, the heir apparent Ulugh Beg won the dynastic struggle but, unable to consolidate his power in Herat, was forced to return to Samarkand. Shāh Rukh's body, brought back by him, was buried in Timur's mausoleum. The power struggle in Herat contributed to the breaking-off of relations between Ulugh Beg and his son 'Abd al-Latīf. In autumn 1449 at Dimashq, near Samarkand, there was a battle between the two men; Ulugh Beg's army suffered a defeat and, on the orders of 'Abd al-Latīf, he left for the pilgrimage to Mecca. On his way, near Samarkand, he was killed on 25 (or 27) October 1449 at the instigation of 'Abd al-Latīf, who went down in history as a patricide; he himself was to reign for only six and a half months.

Subsequently, the struggle for succession raged mainly between 'Abd Allāh b. Ibrāhīm b. Shāh Rukh and Abū Sa'īd (son of Mirānshāh; 1451–69). In 1451 Abū Sa'īd, supported by the forces of Abu 'l-Khayr Khān, leader of the nomadic Uzbeks, crushed 'Abd Allāh's army and seized Samarkand. Mainly with support from the tribal chiefs, Abū Sa'īd then

² Davidovich, 1965, p. 298.

³ Bābur, 1905, p. 10a.

struggled against various pretenders, among whom was Sultān Husayn Bayqara, a future ruler of Khurasan (see below). Abū Saʿīd tried to consolidate his power through gaining the support of the religious classes: under his rule, great influence was exerted on state affairs by the Shaykh al-Islām of Samarkand, who subsequently had to yield his position to ʿUbayd Allāh Khōja Ahrār (1404–90), leader of the Naqshbandiyya Sufi order and later a powerful political figure. In 1454 and 1470 Khōja Ahrār organized the defence of Samarkand; he was the initiator of a peace deal at Shahrukhiyya between Sultān Ahmad, ʿUmar Shaykh b. Timur and Mahmūd Khān b. Yūnus Khan (d. 1487), who had all been at war with each other.

Abū Saʿīd was able to seize Khurasan twice. After the second conquest in 1458–9, he made Herat the capital of his realm and assigned Transoxania to his eldest son, Sultan Ahmad (d. 1494). According to the agreement with the ruler of the Kara Koyunlu, Jahānshāh (1436–67), the great central Persian desert (Dasht-i Kavir) was recognized as a border between their realms. Thus Transoxania and Khurasan with the adjacent provinces formed the Timurid realm, without Abū Saʿīd, however, being able to achieve his aim of the formation of a centralized state. Afraid of increasing the power of the Ak Koyunlu, who had replaced that of the Kara Koyunlu, Abū Saʿīd mounted a campaign into Azerbaijan early in 1469, but this ended in the defeat of his forces, his capture and execution. Subsequently, some disgraced Timurids sought the protection of the rulers of the Ak Koyunlu.

The realm divides

With Abū Saʿīd's death, the Timurid realm finally split into two sections, Khurasan and Transoxania, with their adjacent provinces. Power in Khurasan, with Herat as its capital, went to Sultān Husayn Bayqara (1469–1506), Mansūr's son, and the great-grandson of ʿUmar Shaykh b. Timur; he ruled the country, with a few intervals, for nearly forty years. Sultān Ahmad Mīrzā was considered the nominal governor of Transoxania. For some time, he was able to subjugate Tashkent, Sayram, Khujand and Ura-tūbe. But though he held power for twenty-five years, 'his will was in the hands of the Beg'.⁴ Under him, Samarkand was not the recognized capital of Transoxania; almost every town with its province had its own independent governor. Sultān ʿAlī Mīrzā (killed in 1501) was in Bukhara; Ferghana, with the towns of Andijan, Ush, Marghelan, Isfara, Khujand, Askhi and Kasan, was assigned to ʿUmar Shaykh, the fourth son of Abū Saʿīd, and Khujand (attributed by some historians of that time to Ferghana), was also part of his dominions; Tashkent, with its

⁴ Bābur, 1905, pp. 19a, 24a.

surrounding area, was ruled by the Khan of Moghulistan. The rulers of these provinces were often at war with each other.

The lands along the upper Oxus (Amu Darya) – Hisar, Termez, Chaghaniyan, Khuttalan, Qunduz and Badakhshan – were assigned to Mahmūd Sultān (d. 1495), another of Abū Saʿīd's sons, even during the reign of his father. However, the local amirs of these provinces also pursued an independent policy. After Sultān Ahmad's death, Mahmūd Sultān moved to Samarkand and reigned there for some five or six months, reportedly attempting to regulate the collection of taxes and strengthen his army. But with the deaths of Ahmad, Mahmūd and ʿUmar Shaykh, all occurring during the space of a year, civil strife intensified. The richest amirs tried to make use of the child Timurids, preferring to enthrone the weakest of them. The young Timurid Baysunqur Mīrzā's coming to power in Samarkand roused the governors of other provinces. Sultan Alī Mīrzā left Bukhara on a campaign against Samarkand, but the inhabitants of the city put up a fierce resistance. In the spring of 1497 Baysunqur Mīrzā engaged in a counter-attack against Bukhara. When Sultān ʿAlī learned of this action, he went towards Baysunqur Mīrzā at the head of an army. Meanwhile, the Andijan Begs decided to take advantage of the situation. Putting the young Bābur at the head of their forces, they set off to conquer Samarkand; having occupied the surrounding mountains and valleys, they bided their time. Khōja Ahrār's sons, Khōjagi Khōja (Khōja ʿAbd Allāh) and Khōja Yahyā, took an active part in the struggle for Samarkand, leading local groupings competing among themselves for power.

At the end of the fifteenth century, the Tarkhān Begs came to exert a great influence upon state affairs. Struggling to gain influence over the Timurids, they opposed the old aristocracy, including Ahmad Khōja Beg (who protected ʿAlīshīr Nawāʿī when the latter was in Samarkand), Abū ʿl-Makārim and Khōjagi Khōja b. Khōja Ahrār. In 1496 the Tarkhān Begs suffered a defeat, but continued to play a decisive part in state affairs until Shaybānī Khan's seizure of power in 1500. The resultant wrecking of the economy and the destruction of the foundations of the state were noted by contemporaries; starvation and poverty, and the deaths of many of the poor, contrasted sharply with the nobles' splendid garments, gold and silver plates and dishes, and seemingly infinite numbers of sheep and thoroughbred horses.

Interneine wars had been occurring in the south as well, with opposition against Sultān Masʿūd, the eldest son of Sultān Mahmūd Mīrzā: his most powerful opponent was Khusraw Shāh, the ruler of Qunduz. Although power was more centralized in Khurasan, Sultān Husayn Bayqara also had to restrain his sons' aspirations for independence, most notably his eldest son Badiʿ al-Zamān. Objecting to a redistribution of lands in 1497, Badiʿ al-Zamān came out against his father. Sultān Husayn was compelled to cede Balkh and the

territory from the Oxus to the Murghab to him; in those towns (Qunduz, Baghlan, Termez, Hisar, Qubadiyan, Khuttalan and Badakhshan) controlled by Khusraw Shāh, the name of Badi^c al-Zamān was included in the *khutba* and inscribed on coins.⁵ In 1498 the other sons of Sultān Husayn rose against him. A significant role in the restoration of peace between Sultān Husayn and his sons, Badi^c al-Zamān in particular, was played by the great author ^cAlīshīr Nawāʿī.

On the whole, in the fifteenth century and early in the sixteenth, the weakening of central power and the breaking down of the realm into separate domains were clearly discernible processes. The attempts by some Timurids to consolidate the central power had no lasting success and merely stimulated further internecine warfare which eventually resulted in the conquest of Transoxania by the Shaybanids.

Agriculture, livestock and hunting

Farming in the Timurid realm, as elsewhere in the East, was based on artificial irrigation. The main provider of irrigation was the state, so that the proper functioning of the irrigation system and the good state of farming were dependent on the vitality of the central authority; with the break-down of the state and the increased frequency of nomadic raids, agriculture also declined.

The Zarafshan valley was the main farming region of Transoxania. Corn, fruit and vegetables were also grown in the fields of Ferghana, the Tashkent oasis, the Surkhan Darya and Kashka Darya regions. Khuttalan (Kulab) and Hisar were famed for their rich harvests of corn and melons. Melons from Khwarazm and Bukhara enjoyed special fame. Wheat, barley, millet and maize were grown and vast areas were sown with lucerne. The manufacture of various cotton fabrics in all areas led to the spread of the cotton plant; a sixteenth-century document mentions *ghuza-puli*, monetary taxes on cotton. Suburban gardens sprang up all around Samarkand and Tashkent. Special varieties of grapes, apples and plums, exported to other regions, were prized. In former times, the 'golden peaches' of Samarkand had been sent to the Chinese emperor. Plants from which dyes (madder, henna etc.) were obtained, as well as herbs, also deserve mention. The leaves of the mulberry tree served as food for silkworms. Among the various branches of stock-raising, sheep-breeding was especially developed. There were many varieties of sheep; the Hisar meat and suet sheep enjoyed special renown. Karakul pelts were exported from the Bukhara and Karshi regions. The great number of horses, used in war, shows the level of horse-breeding; camel-breeding was also widespread, especially in the Karshi region.

⁵ Khwāndamir, 1857, p. 286.

The Timurids and their retinues took a great interest in hunting. According to Bābur, in the region adjacent to Kabul there lived a detachment of slaves who were hunters, together with 2–300 of their families; one of Timur’s descendants had brought these slaves from the environs of Multan. Their main task was to care for the hunting birds, of which the most powerful amirs kept several hundreds. A famous Bāqī Tarkhān who ‘grew up among the nobility and rich’ kept 700 such birds. In honour of the nobles who set out on the hunt, *ghazals* (poetry) were written and inscribed on the kettledrums; Ulugh Beg’s setting out on the hunt is mentioned in the writings of his contemporaries.

Landownership and taxation

Property in land was divided into three main categories: state, *waqf* and *mulk*. The revenues from state lands went to the maintenance of the administrative machinery and the army and for rewarding amirs for their service, for the most part military; they received lands for guarding the frontiers, participation in wars and the subjugation of rebellious lords.

Under the Timurids, one of the forms of transferring state lands into conditional grant lands, the *soyurghal*, became widespread (see above, Chapter 16). They were granted, as a rule, to members of the ruling dynasty, statesmen of high rank and military leaders. Thus Shāh Rukh transferred Hisar-i Shadman to Muhammad Jāhāngīr; Kabul, Kandahar and other provinces of Afghanistan to Muhammad’s son, Sind-Qaydu-Bahādur; and the province of Shiraz to Ibrāhim Sultān. He also granted *soyurghals* to many military leaders. Ulugh Beg gave Balkh as a *soyurghal* to ^cAbd al-Latīf. Sultān Husayn Bayqara also widely practised the granting of *soyurghals*. In almost all cases, such grants included the instruction to use profits received from a province for the maintenance of the armed forces and for preserving order. *Soyurghals* were often transferred from one province to another. Ulugh Beg, for example, before he received Transoxania, was twice granted a *soyurghal* in different provinces of the realm. Some of the holders of *soyurghals* simultaneously possessed *tarkhān* charters, which gave them a right to privileges additional to tax immunity. At the same time, the older term *iqṭāʿ* continued to be used in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in the realm of the Shaybanids and Astrakhanids with the meaning of *soyurghal*.

Another conditional land grant was the *tuyūl*. A *tuyūldār* gained the right to acquire tax receipts, collected by officials from the population of a locality and having been transferred into *tuyūl*, but he had no right to govern them. A *tuyūl* was usually allotted to military leaders in lieu of pay for their services. According to a *waqf* charter, at the beginning of the sixteenth century, the right to the revenues from land made into a *tuyūl* belonged to a group of tax-collectors, the *yasākiyān*.⁶

⁶ Mukminova, 1966, p. 287.

The personal estates of a sovereign and the members of a ruling dynasty were defined by the term *injü*; their vassals and servants, who lived there, were also included in this category. The profits derived from the *injü* lands went to the maintenance of the court. People, with their lands, frequently passed under the patronage of a ruler or high-ranking amir. Information given by ʿAlīshīr Nawāʿī shows that in Khurasan in the late fifteenth century, juridically free people tried to save themselves from extortion and plunder by entering into *injü* relationships. It should be noted, however, that the sources seldom define the Timurids' own domains as being in the category of *injü*, possibly because a sovereign and the members of his family came to regard what belonged to the treasury as their own property. As a result, by the end of the fifteenth century, the difference between state lands and *injü* lands had disappeared.

The *mulk* lands belonged, in the main, to landed proprietors. A certain part of the land, in the form of small plots, was in the hands of peasants. In the first case, these were the lands with leaseholders; in the second case, lands directly cultivated by their owners, that is, *mulkdārs* – in essence, these were two different categories of land. Under the last Timurids, there was a concentration of *mulk* plots and villages in the hands of both secular and clerical landowners. Among them was Kōkeltash, who had lands even outside the Timurid realm. ʿUbayd Allāh Khōja Ahrār was a large landlord; as a contemporary notes, 'his lands, fields and estates, as well as herds of livestock and other movable and unmovable personal property, were extraordinarily great and incalculable'. In the Samarkand region alone, he possessed 30,000 *tanaps* of *ʿushr* lands.⁷

In Transoxania in particular, *tarkhān* holdings – that is, freedom from taxation for the holder of *mulk* lands if he held a *tarkhān* charter, and the granting to him a number of other privileges – became widespread in the last quarter of the fifteenth century. A *tarkhān* was released from punishment for up to nine offences, and only after the ninth was he punished. He also enjoyed free access to the Khan. To enjoy the privileges of a *tarkhān* was recognized as conferring high status. Many *tarkhāns* were connected with the Timurids by family ties. Under Sultān Ahmad Mirzā, the greatest amir in the state was considered to be Darwīsh Muhammad Tarkhān. In 1496 Abd al-ʿAlī Tarkhān was appointed a *hākīm* (governor) of Bukhara, with Bukhara, Karakul and Karmina designated as his *soyurghal*; the fate of the last Timurids often depended on this 'authoritative, cruel, lewd and haughty' person.⁸ Ultimately, the transfer of state lands into *soyurghals* and the spread of the immunity of *tarkhān* holdings led to a loss of revenues to the treasury and to the decentralization of the realm. The Timurids' attempt to halt this process of disintegration gave only

⁷ Ivanov, 1945, pp. 11–13.

⁸ Bābur, 1905, p. 22a.

temporary results; on the whole, the trend of the transformation of conditional land grants into hereditary holdings continued.

Waqf lands were formed as a result of donations in favour of religious, charitable and other institutions. In theory, they were considered inviolable and hence, in comparison with the other forms of landownership, had a more firm juridical basis. They were cultivated by peasant leaseholders, who paid rent. According to a contract concluded with the *mutawallī* of the *waqf*, tax-farmers received the right to collect the tax over a fixed period; needless to say, there were many abuses.⁹ Property of different types and extents was made into *waqfs*. In 1420 Ulugh Beg allocated in favour of the *madrassa* in Samarkand, built by his own order, lands, crops and irrigation canals; the income they brought 'exceeds many times the expenses of the *madrassa*'.¹⁰ According to a document of 1464, half of the village of Saray Malik – with its adjacent lands, as well as 20 pairs of oxen used for the cultivation of the land, 32 slaves, 12 camels and other types of property – was transferred to a *waqf* for the tomb of Abū Saʿīd's daughter, Khawānd Sultān Bika. Khāja Ahrār transferred to a *waqf* about 400 plots, as well as 64 villages and 30 country gardens; and property endowed by him also included 11 houses with gardens, some tens of trading and handicraft establishments, bath-houses, and mills in Samarkand, Bukhara, Tashkent and the Kashka Darya provinces and in Afghanistan.

Peasants constituted a major part of the population; they were usually defined by the term *raʿiyyat*, although they were not a homogeneous socio-economic grouping. The most widespread form of exploitation of the peasants was *métayage*, and the typical peasant-leaseholder was a *métayager* who cultivated state, *waqf* and *mulk* lands belonging to well-to-do landowners. The cultivation of land on the base of *métayage* rent (in most cases, through an intermediary) served a number of peasants as the main, and in some cases the only, source of income; only a small part of the rural population constituted peasant-owners of *mulk* lands. Some land was occupied by nomadic cattle-breeders. The specific character of their economy demanded annual migrations to seasonal pastures. Close contacts with the settled population brought about interaction between the two ways of life.

Taxes from the peasants constituted the foundations of the state's income. The chief land tax was the *kharāj*, levied from a part of the harvest mainly in kind, with rates that usually exceeded the fixed norms. Constant military action absorbed the treasury's receipts. Under the Timurids, the repeated levy of the *kharāj* was practised, especially at times when there were frequent changes of ruler. Thus after Shāh Rukh's death, the *kharāj* was collected from the population of Herat in favour of Shāh Malik's court, and then again when he was

⁹ Mukminova, 1966, pp. 46–51.

¹⁰ ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, 1941–9, p. 421.

removed in favour of Mīrzā Ibrāhīm; *kharāj* was collected for the third time when Abū Saʿīd captured Herat. In 1458, when the power of Mīrzā Ibrāhīm was restored for a short time, he ordered the collection of the *kharāj* for that year; and in the same year, it was collected for the second time on the orders of Jahānshāh Kara Koyunlu, who had captured Khurasan.¹¹

Besides the *kharāj*, there were many other taxes – ‘permanent’, ‘legal’ and ‘extraordinary’ – which sprang up in periods of decentralization of power. Among them there were: *awārizāt*, levied for the defrayment of extraordinary expenses; *dārūghān*, a tax in favour of the head of the local aristocracy; *dūdī*, a hearth tax; *sar-shumār*, a poll tax; and *pīshkash* (formally voluntary, but in fact obligatory), gifts to high-ranking officials. Presentation of the *pīshkash* was considered an acknowledgement of supreme power; Sultān Mahmūd (the ruler of Khuttalan) and Saray Khōja Khalīl (the ruler of Sali) demonstrated their obedience to Shāh Rukh by sending him *pīshkash*. There were many taxes designated for the maintenance of tax-collectors and officials of the taxation apparatus (*mushrifān*, *muhassilān*, *dābitān*, etc.), the irrigation administration, messengers and so on, as well as for the provisioning and regular maintenance of the army, which were levied in some cases even in times of peace. The enforced conscription of ordinary inhabitants to local levies was practised. When Bābur found he had too few soldiers, he ordered people from the suburbs of Andijan to be taken, using ‘kindness or violence’.

Handicrafts and market trading taxes constituted a significant part of the treasury’s income. According to the author of the sixteenth-century *Matlab al-tālibīn*, the sum of the state revenues received from Samarkand constituted 1,600,000 *tamghas*. The tax from urban handicrafts and urban business, as well as domestic and foreign trade, was defined by this term *tamgha*. In the fifteenth century, the *tamgha* collected from the large trading and handicraft centres of Transoxania, in particular from Samarkand, brought in good returns to the treasury. The word *tamgha* was also used in the collective meaning of various taxes. At the same time, road taxes and taxes for crossing the rivers had their concrete denominations: *rāhdārī*, *kishtibānī*, etc. Mention of the terms *bāj* and *rāhdārī* in one and the same *nishān* allows us to see these two taxes as different kinds of road duties.

The *tamgha* related to taxes was not specified in Muslim law, the *sharīʿa*, and the Muslim clergy declared the abolition of the *tamgha* to be a deed that was pleasing in the sight of God. In 1460–1, at Khāja Ahrār’s request, the *tamgha* was abolished by Abū Saʿīd in Samarkand and Bukhara. In order to encourage the development of handicrafts, and domestic and foreign trade, the Timurids abolished the *tamgha* several times; however, the high returns from the *tamgha* did not allow them to renounce it wholly and its collection

¹¹ ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī, 1941–9, pp. 107–8, 148, 286.

was always resumed. Collection of the *tamgha*, as of some other duties, was farmed out as *muqātaʿa* (tax-farming), in which the *tamgha* was usually levied at a rate exceeding the fixed norm. Some Timurids let influential local lords have the *tamgha*. For example, Bāqi Beg Chaghāniyānī, brother of the independent prince Khusraw Shāh (killed in 1506), received all the *tamgha* of Kabul, though the sovereign of that province was nominally considered to be Bābur.¹² Part of the above-mentioned taxes was levied in cash. The documents mention taxes thus levied, judging by their denominations: *ghuza pulī* (cotton tax), *pillya pulī* (cocoon tax), *kuknar pulī* (poppy tax), *sabzī pulī* (carrot tax), *kharbuza pulī* (water-melon tax), and so on.

Even in the years of relative centralization of the realm, it was common for the normal rate of tax-collection to be exceeded. A convincing example is given in ʿAbd al-Razzāq Samarqandī’s *Matlaʿ al-saʿdayn*: the taxable population was to bring to the treasury one hen instead of one egg, one sheep instead of one *manā* of meat, ten *manās* of barley instead of one *manā*, one *kharwār* instead of one sack of straw. The author notes that, in that year (1407–8), these products were priced excessively high.

Towns, handicrafts and trade

Progress in the manufacture of handicrafts could be observed in Herat and Samarkand, the capitals of the two realms (although they were in fact independent from each other). According to Bābur, fifteenth-century Samarkand was a well-built town, with such handicrafts as weaving, garment-making, dyeing, pottery, the processing of metals and paper-making. Some towns specialized in certain wares. Samarkand, for example, was famous for its high-quality paper and *kermezi* velvet, which was exported to other towns and countries. Bābur notes, ‘This town has one peculiarity seldom met in other towns: every handicraft has its own market and they do not mix with each other. This is a good custom.’¹³ Bukhara was similar. Antony Jenkinson, an English envoy and the representative of a trading company, wrote in the middle of the sixteenth century: ‘every handicraft has its special place here and a special market’. He reported that in Bukhara there were ‘many stone houses, temples and structures luxuriously built and gilded’.¹⁴ By the end of the fifteenth century the role of Tashkent had grown significantly and it produced metalware, earthenware, fabrics and articles of leather, the development of many of these handicrafts being largely conditioned by trade with the neighbouring steppe nomads. In Shahr-i Sabz, Termez, Andijan, Khujand and Hisar, a lively trade was carried on, as well as between the towns and local

¹² Bābur, 1905, p. 159a.

¹³ Bābur, 1905, p. 47b.

¹⁴ Jenkinson, 1886.

villages. Herat, as a capital, played a major role in the political and cultural life of the area, and handicrafts and trade flourished. According to Bābur, in every branch of the arts, all the residents of Herat sought to perfect their work. Jāmi, °Alīshīr Nawā'ī and Bihzad all composed their literary and artistic works in Herat at this time. Meanwhile, the ruler Husayn Bayqara 'occupied himself only with having a good time, day and night'.¹⁵

The urban craftsmen used raw and semi-finished materials delivered from landowners and the stock-breeding regions. Some kinds of semi-finished products were brought from more distant countries. The handicrafts of the period were characterized by the division of labour and a small commodity production which can roughly be divided as follows: articles intended to satisfy the needs of the numerous local urban inhabitants; articles for sale in the adjacent villages and nomad encampments; goods for the narrow aristocratic circle (such as costly fabrics, jewellery, some kinds of weapons and metal goods, rich clothes, splendid manuscripts, etc.); and products exported to foreign countries as well (fabrics, writing paper, weapons, ready-made clothes). Under the Timurids, measures were taken to improve the condition of the roads, and trading houses, bridges and caravanserais were also built. Shāh Rukh considered guaranteeing the safety of the caravan routes as one of the duties of the owners of *soyurghals*.

In the fifteenth century, Samarkand was the largest Central Asian trading town and played a major role in the circulation of goods between East and West. By the ancient highways of the Great Silk Route came the most varied assortment of goods, such as articles made by Transoxanian skilled craftsmen from raw and semi-finished materials. Via Samarkand came goods from other towns: the Bukharan *alacha* bows (the 'Bukharan yellow bow' is even mentioned in the Buryat epic); wines, considered the strongest in Transoxania; dried plums, used as a purgative; the Shahr-i Sabz (Kish) unbleached calico; *koshma*, a kind of salt known for its specific quality; light-blue and grey astrakhan and the black astrakhan from Karshi and Karakul; and sal ammoniac and santonica (used as a medicament) from Tashkent. As in earlier times, *sandanachi* fabric (*senden*) was exported as far as Novgorod. From this point, traders of the Teutonic Knights' Order brought it to the towns of Europe, where it was considered one of the most serviceable fabrics for common citizens. Thoroughbred horses, including 'Turkic horses', were sent to Khiva from Transoxania; Ulugh Beg presented a Chinese emperor with 'a black horse having white legs'. From one country to another, tree seedlings were delivered; both fresh and dried fruit was exported, with Samarkand apples enjoying particular fame.

Contemporary documents testify to a high level of trade. For example, the largest towns had *sarrāf-khānas* (houses for the exchange of foreign currency) and the *sarrāfs*

¹⁵ Bābur, 1905, p. 166a.

(money-changers) also issued cheques. Relationships were established between the various trading companies, and by means of a cheque issued in one town a person could draw money in another. Subsequently, the Eastern (originally Arabic) word ‘cheque’ became widespread in the commercial world of western Europe. There are also references in the sources to the street of the *sarrāfs*, the Chaharsu-i Sarrafan, and to a mosque and a bathhouse of *sarrāfs*. Although this information relates to Bukhara in the sixteenth century, such establishments had certainly existed in Bukhara and Samarkand at an earlier period. According to Badr al-Dīn Kashmīrī, the Bukharan *sarrāf-khāna* was ‘well-known and famous’. There existed, moreover, the practice of giving capital for investment (*mudāraba*) that was legalized by an act made before the *qādī*. The Timurids, including Mirzā Ulugh Beg, themselves took part in such trading. Ulugh Beg gave money to merchants who, in their turn, gave it back to him with a share of their profit. On Ulugh Beg’s orders, a caravanserai named the Mirzā’ī was built in Samarkand; the income received from it was applied to Ulugh Beg’s *madrassa*.

During the fifteenth century, particularly in the first quarter, there were extensive commercial and diplomatic relations with China. Khalīl Sultān, Shāh Rukh, Ulugh Beg and even their provincial governors fitted out caravans whose journeys lasted, on average, some nine months. Silk fabrics including *kim-khāb* (*kamkā*), *atlas* and taffeta were brought from China; porcelain, silver, mirrors and paper were also brought from China, though in Herat and Samarkand in particular, paper of high quality was manufactured locally.¹⁶ Wares brought to China from adjacent countries were also called ‘Chinese’; they included sandalwood, Tibetan musk and other wares carried along the Silk Route. Timurid merchants in their turn dispatched locally made fabrics, horses and camels to China. Bābur reports on the mutual advantages derived from the trade between the two countries. Their respective rulers were both concerned about political conditions in the neighbouring countries; a letter of 1412 to Shāh Rukh, in which the Chinese emperor advises him to patronize his nephew Khalīl Sultān, shows that the emperor was aware of the succession struggle in the Timurid realm.

Trade connections with India were also close, according to Bābur:

On the way between Hindustan and Khurasan there are two trading towns: one is Kabul, another is Kandahar. The caravans from Ferghana, Turkistan, Samarkand, Bukhara, Balkh, Hisar and Badakhshan arrive in Kabul, and caravans from Khurasan arrive in Kandahar. Kabul province lies halfway between Hindustan and Khurasan. It is a very good trade market. Seven, eight or ten thousand horses are brought to Kabul every year. Ten, fifteen or twenty thousand merchants lead caravans from lower Hindustan. From Hindustan there are delivered slaves,

¹⁶ Mukminova, 1966, pp. 95–103.

white fabrics, sugar, dyestuffs and medicaments. Many merchants are not satisfied with the profit of thirty for ten or forty for ten.

Bābur also describes the foreign trade of Kabul: ‘In Kabul you can find wares from Khurasan, Iraq, Rum and China; it is as if it were the entrepôt of Hindustan.’¹⁷ From Kashmir came locally woven cloth (*shaki*), which subsequently became famed in Europe, and medicinal herbs; from Azerbaijan, mineral oil; from the Arab countries, prayer rugs, special towels and toothpicks; from Egypt, fabrics; from Turkey, weapons; and from the Kazan Khanate, leather. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, merchants from Bukhara, Samarkand and Herat visited Moscow. Several goods were imported from European countries: white and coloured *farangs*, woollen stuffs from England, and spectacles intended for ʿAbd al-Rahmān Jāmī, are mentioned in the sources.

Revolts

In the fifteenth century, a number of local revolts took place in Khurasan and Transoxania. The impact of the Sarbadar movement of the previous century was still felt (see above, Chapter 16). On the whole, these revolts were distinguished by their religious and mystical overtones, but they were also connected with the propagation of ideas concerning communal landownership and utopian ideals of social equality. In 1427 a clandestine Hurūfū group organized an attempt on Shāh Rukh’s life. Social oppression, the transfer of the right to land rents from the ruler’s treasury to local landed magnates, and the more frequent raids by nomads, all led to an increase in internal population migrations. Mass riots in Samarkand, Bukhara, Karshi and Shahr-i Sabz are noted in the sources for the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth; but such actions were mainly localized and dispersed, and were of a spontaneous, non-organized character.

The Dasht-i Kīpchak at the end of the fifteenth century and the beginning of the sixteenth

The region north of Transoxania, the Dasht-i Kīpchak or Kīpchak steppe, containing the realm of Abū ’l-Khayr Khan (1428–69), also included towns such as Sīgnak, Yasa, Uzgend, Arkuk and Ak-Kurgan. In this steppe, a leading position among the military-nomadic ruling class was occupied by the chosen Khans, Chinggis Khan’s descendants, who controlled the winter and summer pasture grounds:

¹⁷ Bābur, 1905, p. 129a.

In all of these families there are many respectable Khans; every family of the great and eminent descendants of Chinggis Khan had sultans and the most notable of them was called Khan, that is, the supreme sovereign.¹⁸

A significant role was also played by the tribal nobility of the Begs of non-Chinggisid origin, who during the fifteenth century sought to control handicraft and trading centres. At the call of the leader of the *ulus*, the nomads would depart on campaigns of plunder, a large part of which came to the sultans and tribal chiefs. The historian Muhammad Sālih describes expensive Altai squirrel and ermine fur coats which the Dasht-i Kīpchak amirs wore at the time of one of the campaigns into Moghulistan. Cattle-breeding was the main occupation of the Dasht-i Kīpchak tribesmen, and wealth was reckoned by the numbers of sheep and cattle, as well as horses.

From early times, the trade routes connecting Central Asia with eastern Europe – the Volga Bulgars and their successors and Russia in particular – and the roads to China passed through the Dasht-i Kīpchak. There was consequently a symbiosis between the nomadic tribes and the neighbouring sedentary peoples who supplied them with numerous manufactured products. The same demand for handicrafts, and cloth in particular, led the steppe inhabitants to raid the settled regions when these last were undergoing periods of internecine war, with the resulting interruption of trade connections.

The population living along the river valleys was occupied in farming, but campaigning raiders usually went along these valleys and damaged the local economy. There is, for example, a report of the forced collection of foodstuffs by Shaybāni Khan's soldiers among the inhabitants of the Arkuk fortress in 1509:

In spite of the fact that it was the middle of the winter, the time of the highest price of bread and scarcity of food products, innumerable forces ... settled around the area of the fortress and with haste made their way into the houses of the town for the collecting of foodstuffs and everything that was necessary for the forces ...¹⁹

Attempts by nomadic forces from the steppes to conquer the settled regions increased under Muhammad Shaybānī, Abū 'l-Khayr Khān's grandson (b. in 1451; killed 1510). In many years of wandering, he and his soldiers had served different rulers, taking advantage of the conflicts between the rulers of Transoxania, Moghulistan and Khurasan. Sometimes serving the Samarkand ruler as commander of a hired detachment, sometimes acting as a vassal of the Khan of Moghulistan, Muhammad Shaybānī gradually rose to the position of a Khan of the 'Turkistan realm'. In 1486, during one of his campaigns, he captured (and held for a period) some fortresses of Khwarazm. According to an anonymous author,

¹⁸ Fadl Allāh b. Rūzbihān Khūnjī, 1976, p. 22.

¹⁹ Fadl Allāh b. Rūzbihān Khūnjī, 1976, p. 70a.

Sultān Husayn Bayqara, whose territories included Khwarazm, sent women's veils to the amirs of Urgench after the defeat.

As the sources attest, numerous tribes took part in the conquest of Transoxania by Shaybāni Khan: they included the Qushchi, Naiman, Uighurs, Ichki, Durman, Kayat, Tuman, Manghit, Kungrat, Khitay, Tangut, Tatar, Jalayir, Karluk and Sulduz. According to Muhammad Sālih, the core of the tribes surrounding Shaybāni Khan was formed by the Shaybāns, stemming from the former *ulus* of Shaybān. The number of Uzbek forces who participated in the campaign against Transoxania reached several thousand. According to Muhammad Haydar, before the conquest of Bukhara and Samarkand, Shaybāni Khan had only 2–3,000 men, but after the occupation of these towns their number rose to 56,000.

After the Shaybanid conquest of the towns of Transoxania, the Timurid amirs are mentioned among the forces, though their role was now diminished. The Timurids had been unable to oppose the forces of the Dasht-i Kipchak rulers, and with internecine warfare and mutual distrust, no power was able to present a united front against the invaders. Hence by 1503 Shaybāni Khan's forces had seized Samarkand, Bukhara and Tashkent. In 1504 Ferghana and Khusraw Shāh's domains were conquered, followed by Khwarazm in 1505. Husayn Bayqara's death favoured the subsequent success of the Shaybanids. In 1506 Balkh was occupied and Herat in 1507. Thus the realm of the Shaybanids now included Transoxania, the towns of Khwarazm through which passed the trade routes to the lower Volga and further on to Russia, and Khurasan, with its transit trade routes to western Persia and north-western India.