

A. Burnes. Travels into Bokhara... in the years 1831-32-33.

VOL 1: <http://archive.org/details/travelsintobokha01burnuoft>

VOL 2: <http://archive.org/details/travelsintobokha02burnuoft>

English officer of the Indian army. Fluent in Farsi. Displays a fine irony and sense of humor. He seems to have a good level of education, with keen interest for old cultures, history and ordinary people. Quite sympathetic to the Afghan mentality, which he judges frank, even a trifle naive, not gifted for scheming, warlike, but a bit too idle at times. He visits Bokhara, Charjew (middle Amu darya), Merv, Sarakhs (less than one year before the Persian onslaught on the Salors) and the upper Gurgan Hills. His report belongs to the most interesting ones. He is killed a few years later during the Kabul revolt against British rule.

Vol I

From India to Bokhara, via Kabul.

Page 140- : At Kabul. Description of climate, people, city

(Note: Much more civilized and sophisticated than near-by Persian cities like Meshed, not to mention Khiva! About 60 000 inhabitants in 1834. The most important Afghan city, before Ghazni)

Page 145-149: At the lively Bazaar: one of the largest in this part of the world, featuring an arcade of over 200 m length.

The author is surprised by the preponderance of (extremely various) dried fruit- and of «fast food» shops, some selling a type of shish kebab. Kabulis are not indulging much in home cooking.

(Note: Although pile carpets (Burnes calls them «velvet carpets») might be the only piece of furniture in a reception room, the author does not mention any carpet-shop in the bazaar.

Burnes is a keen coin collector and antique connoisseur, alas not a «ruggie» (the race has yet to be created).

Page 149: Jews and Armenians have all left the city since alcohol has been severely prohibited. (They used to make a living with selling wine and spirit).

(Note: the frequent claim that Jews and Armenians are holding monopolies on indigo dyeing and carpet selling is apparently not true here in Kabul.)

Page 191: On the way to Bokhara via an Uzbek-ruled village. Nice mosque, its floor is covered with felt. Burnes notes a greater attention to the rules of the Koran than in Afghan cities.

The guest house is well carpeted.

Page 223: Meeting the Uzbek ruler of Kunduz. Not quite Burnes' type. Predatory instincts.

On the piedmont facing North, there are several semi-independent Khanates, mostly under Uzbek rule. The populations is mixed: Many Uzbeks and Tadjiks. No mention of Turkmen.

Page 248. Reaching Bokhara territory with his hired Turkmen escort, near Balk (a very antique city, which used to be often very large and wealthy, but quite run-down now) and the Amu darya.

Description of the area: Soil of clay as in most of Turkestan, thus potentially fertile if well irrigated, but neglected and barren: Balk never recovered from its destruction by the Mongols.

Page 251: The Amu darya water is bitter, muddy apparently containing a high concentration of salts and suspended clay.

(Note: According to modern analysis, the water of the Amu-darya is very hard, over 500 US hardness degree on average. High hardness of a dyeing-bath is rather favorable to wet fastness of wool dyeing, although it tends to reduce shade brightness. It also makes dyeing with cochineal impossible. The red color of the clay in suspension probably signals the presence of iron oxides and salts which, if sufficiently soluble, may contaminate water and contribute to make shades of most natural dyes duller if this water is used by the dyer.)

Page 252: Prayer-time in Burnes' (Turkmen) caravan, no hint at use of any prayer rug.

Page 255: Near Kirkinjuk (Kerki??). Mainly Turkmen population. No specific tribe is mentioned. Large flocks of camels, horses and sheep, with Persian slaves as shepherds.

Page 262: On the way from the Amu Darya to Bokhara, crossing a large oasis with 2 towns: Karchi and Kagan. Population: Uzbeks and Tadjiks, supported by a large number of slaves. The Turkmen remain concentrated closer to the Amu Darya (mostly, but not exclusively on the left bank which is also controlled by the Khan of Bukhara).

(Note: O'Donovan, 50 years later, still signals frequent raids by Ersari Turkmen against their brethren the Teke of Merv. Proof that these Ersari were far from being settled and tame, contrary, again, to some Rugdom experts' teaching).

Page 267-331: At Bokhara: 150 000 inhabitants (other source speak of 70 000, but anyway Bokhara is the largest and richest city in whole Transcaspia).

Page 275-276: About 4 000 Jews live in Bokhara. They are chiefly employed in dyeing cloth.

In Bokhara about 3/4 of the people are either slaves or former slaves, mostly Persians.

The slave market of Bokhara is chiefly supplied from Orgundje (Khiva Khanate).

Page 283: The ruling population is Uzbek, although their features show a significant infusion of Persian blood (hardly surprising if 3/4 of the population is of slave origin and a majority of the slaves taken to the market are women). Unlike Turkmen ladies, Bokhara ones are usually veiled.

Page 278: The Registan is the main market of Bokhara.

(Note: Much richer market than any visited by O'Donovan in Merv or Meshed or by Moser and Mouraviev in Khiva. Many products are imported from far away. « Bokharan » was a frequent synonym for merchant in all of 17th-19th century Central Asia).

(Note: No carpet is mentioned, but since there was a very large number of specialized bazaars in this large city, Burnes might have missed the carpet shops, later mentioned by several visitors, including O. Olufsen.) Given the higher living standard of the Bokharan elite, compared to Turkmen and Khivans, one could reasonably suppose that such shops existed and that rugs were woven in the city.

Merv, Khiva and Meshed are much smaller places than Bokhara, one can perhaps trust visitors who make no mention of carpets in these bazaars).

Page 284: Contradictions & hypocrisy in the enforcement of Islamic law in Bokhara.

page 310: However, «... the people are happy, the country is flourishing, trade prospers, and property is protected. the laws are sanguinary, but not unjust...»

Page 324: Burnes signals trouble West of Khiva, between the oasis and the Mangyshlak plateau: «...No caravan had passed from Khiva to the Caspian for a year, owing to a blood feud with the Kirghiz of the steppe ...»

(Note: Most probably Kazakhs and not Kirghiz: The Russian systematically call all Kazakhs « Kirghiz », even though these Turkic ethnic groups are politically distinct and settle different territories).

« ...A Bokhara caravan lay at Khiva, and one from Astrakhan at Mungyshlak on the Caspian. Neither party could advance till some adjustment was made; which was more hoped for than expected.....»

At the same time, the Khan of Khiva had moved with his army toward the Persian border and in that direction too caravan transit was hindered by the fear of being plundered or at least over-taxed.

(Note: In 1832, when he learned about the approach of the Crown Prince of Persia with a large army, the Khan of Khiva prudently retreated, leaving the Salors of Sharacks alone, to take a beating from the Persians).

Page 326: Leaving Bokhara and heading West: «....He (the Vizier of Bukhara the «Kush Begee») now summoned the (Turkmen) Cafila-bashee of the caravan, and a chief of the (Merv) Turkomans, who was to accompany it as a safeguard against his tribe....».

(Note: The Cafila Bashi being from Merv was probably a Saryk- or a Salor Turkmen, since these tribes were at the time still the owners of the Merv oasis. They kept switching their (nominal-) allegiance back and forth, between Khiva and Bukhara.)

The Turkmen nominally reporting to the Khan (or Amir-) of Bukhara often serve as caravan escort or in the irregular cavalry.

Page 335-340: Between Bokhara and the Amu darya, though not near the river, opposite Charjew.

Burnes stays nearly a month in this area, called Karakool, host of an Ersari tribe, meeting many Turkmen from various tribes, including some settled ones living in adobe houses:

«...We were now living among the Turkomans, who occupy the country between the Oxus and Bokhara. They only differ from the great family to which they belong in residing in permanent houses and being peaceable subjects of the King of Bokhara. About forty different " robots," or clusters of their habitations, lay in sight of ours; and we passed nearly a month in their neighborhood...To these we were made known through the means of the Turkoman chief, to whom we had been introduced at Bokhara... »

«...He (the Turkmen local chief) and the Cafila-bashee (the caravan-leader) used to appear twice or thrice during the day, bringing with them any new acquaintance they might have fallen in with at the neighboring markets..... In early life, he had followed the customs of his tribe, and proceeded on " alaman" (plundering) excursions to the countries of the Hazarahs (in Afghanistan) and of the Kizzil-bash... »

(Note: Kizzil Bash: «redheads», misleading surname of the Persians, derived from the name of the early supporters of the first Safavid Shah. They donned a red headscarf or turban.)

« ... and we sat down and enjoyed our tea together at all hours. We thus became acquainted with many of the peculiarities of the Turkmen tribes. Though he had transferred his family to Merv, as civilized and reformed Turkoman, his aspect and his speech were still those of a warrior.... »

(Note: He was probably a Saryk or a Salor too, but was said to have been living closer to Bokhara for a while. Merv Saryks and Salors were reputed much less wild than the Tekes, by several of Burnes' Turkmen visitors.)

Page 353: «...the little district of Karakool, where we had passed nearly a month, among Turkmen and shepherds, who talked of nothing but fleeces and markets....»

Pages 338-339: Meeting a wealthy Salor nomad «*the noblest of the Turkomans*», with his large herd of sheep and camels, on the right bank of the Amu darya, among semi nomad Ersari and settled Uzbeks, Sarts, aborigines and slaves.

(Note: This Salor elder was unlikely to live there alone, which proves that pockets of Salor nomads, in no way destitute, were living in the middle Amu darya area and that both banks were shared by settled, semi-settled and nomad people of various ethnic groups, even though the left bank was perhaps less densely inhabited, for fear of the raiders).

(Note: The middle Amu-darya is a large river, there was no bridge and it was not fordable, not even in summer).

The Salor elder described «*..in animated strains, his attacks on the Kizzil-Bash (Persians). 'We have a proverb'*» said he, " that a Turkoman on horseback knows neither father nor mother ; "and, from a Toorkee couplet, we gather the feelings of his race -

« *The Kizzil-Bashes have ten towers ;*

In each tower there is only a Georgian slave.

What power have the Kizzil-Bashes?

Let us attack them! »

Soobhan Verdi Ghilich (The-sword-given-by-God) «*..was of the tribe of Salor, the noblest of the Turkomans...*» «*..He shook with delight as I made him detail the mode of capturing the Kizzil-bashes, and sighed that his age now prevented him from making war on such infidels. Verdi now possessed some flocks of sheep and camels and, since his years did not permit of his continuing his forays, he had despatched his sons on that service.....*»

Page 340: «*...The tribe we were now living with, is known by the name of Ersari. The Ersari have most of the customs of the Turkomans, though their vicinity to Bokhara contributes to their partial civilization....Though the village in which we were now residing could not boast of more than twenty houses, there were yet eight Persian slaves...They are employed as cultivators, and were at this time engaged all day in gathering the crop, though the thermometer was 96°F within doors...*»

(Note: There are mentions of other, rather successful Ersaris, settled a bit more up-river, who raised silkworms and sold their silk).

Page 343: «*...The practice of enslaving the Persians is said to have been unknown before the invasion of the Uzbeks...*»

(Note: The Uzbeks are generally « credited » with creating the slave market in the area. The Turkmen were not keeping many slaves, since their own agriculture of subsistence did not require them.)

Vol II.

From Charjew on the Amu Darya to Merv, then to Sarakhs, Meshed, northern Khorassan and the upper Gurgien hills.

Page 7. «*... Amu Darya is a muddy river... 1/40 of the water is clay suspended in water...*»

Even the Roman author Curtius «*.. tells us that the Oxus was a muddy river, that bore much slime along with it ...*».

Page 8-10 Charjew: 4 000-5 000 inhabitants, on the left bank, a large percentage of them being semi-nomads. The rulers are Uzbek, often a son of the Khan of Bukhara. There is a bazaar, but in 1830 there were no carpet for sale.

(Note: Copper pots for sale, a sign of -relatively- high living standard)

(Note: 50 years later, O'Donovan signaled that the Atterek Yomuds had to be content with cheaper Russian cast-iron pots).

As usual, the bazaar is a men-only place.

It is an open-air market, no building. «*..the wares they were selling were in every respect poor. The vendors of many of these, retailed their goods on horseback, and all the purchasers were mounted. Most of the people were Turkomans of the Amu darya, dressed in high sheepskin caps...*».

The custom of having specific days for markets is typical Turkmen, not so common in India, Persia and Afghanistan at the time.

The different articles are arranged in separate parts of the bazaar, with much regularity, just as in the other regions of Asia. At Chajew, bazaar-time lasts from eleven to four o'clock.

Page 11: The usual remark about the clayish base of the soil in Turkmen plains. Same vegetation as the one found in the North and West by O'Donovan, namely the ubiquitous tamarisk (here called «kasura», two types of camel thorn (kuzzak, karagan) and a grass called «salun».

Page 14: Tale of a Persian who had been captured and enslaved three times and every time bought himself back, because the Uzbek are «*..easily imposed upon and cheated by their slaves who make money in their service...*».

Some populations were sold wholesale to the Turkmen by their own Persian princelings.

Page 18: As usual, mention of the high percentage of fetid, bitter, salty wells, whose water is not even deemed palatable by camels. The topsoil is sometimes covered with a crust of salt.

Page 19: Contrary to other assumptions, 'kimmiz' (fermented mare's milk is not used in Bokhara and not popular among Turkmen either. It is more typical of the Kirghiz- and Kazakhs tribes.

(Note: O'Donovan mentions repeatedly that all Turkmen tribes are fond of camel milk as well as of yughurt made of it.)

Page 21: Prayers: No mention of any prayer rug in Burnes' (ethnically very mixed) caravan, including Bokharans, Turkmen, Persians, Uzbeks, etc... The back of a horse or a camel is as legitimate a position as the most splendid mosque.

Page 22: Probably iron-containing soil, as it is very reddish. *(See consequences for dyeing)*

Meeting nomad shepherds, probably Saryks or Salors, at about 30 miles from the Merv oasis..

Page 23: Arrival on the shores of the Murgab, near Merv at an encampment of Saryk Turkmen.

Page 28: «...*They have but few fields, and one or two individuals may tend their countless flocks at pasture...*»

Page 24: An army of the Khan of Khiva is encamped on the Murgab, (a few pages ahead mention is made by the author of the hardship suffered by this army to reach Merv, losing 2000 camels and having to dig wells as it progressed).

Merv is under Khiva nominal jurisdiction in 1831.

(Note: probably since 1823, at least nominally.)

Page 29. Description of the Turkmen of the northern Merv oasis:

(Note: In 1831 they were either Salors or Saryks, but some Teke clans might have been settled there already, which would explain the apparent contradiction mentioned on page 385. It was frequent that various Turkmen tribes would live together peacefully.)

Page 30: The head of the Khivan military unit (and de facto Merv's custom officer) is assisted by a Saryk ak-saghal wearing a scarlet pelisse and by a party of Saryk Turkmen. They are taxing Burnes' caravan.

Page 34: Since the destruction of Merv by the Khan of Bokhara, Amir Masum, around 1788 and the destruction of its main dams, there is no real city anymore, all its Turko-Persian population having been either put to the sword or resettled in Bokhara in its own ghetto.

One only meets clusters of Turkmen Yurts.

(Note: according to O'Donovan, the Saryks had built a huge, strategically positioned fortress, called Porsa kala, in which 10 000-15 000 families could install their yurts, if necessary. It protected a rather big new dam allowing a significant agriculture in the oasis.)

Page 35: «...*the river (Murgab) only now irrigates the country in its immediate vicinity, where it is covered with the tenements, or "obas," of the Turkomans; for there are no fixed villages.*

These people cultivate by irrigation, and every thing grows in rich luxuriance. The Juwaree (holcus sorghum) has a stalk thicker than a walking-stick, and in the uncultivated parts there is the richest fodder for cattle and the finest thorny shrubs for the camel, an animal which is here found in vast herds....»

(Note: So much for the expertise of a self-styled rug guru again, who keeps teaching us that the Turkmen owned no camels and of another luminary who knows as a fact that the Merv Turkmen were no nomads but settled people. It appears that in 1831 the great dam had not yet been fully rebuilt. It took about 25 years more to complete it. In 1882, O' Donovan was impressed by the know-how and organization of the (now Teke-) Turkmen who were still keeping it in good shape. Another dam also existed upriver, at Yolatan.)

Page 37: «...*a Turkoman of Sarakhs...*» is mentioned as part of the horsemen party escorting the caravan, probably another Salor.

Page 39: The caravan is watching the departure from Merv of an (Uzbek-sponsored) Turkmen raid into Persia (so-called «alaman»): A party of 350 horsemen, probably mostly Saryk.

Burnes' caravan chief decides to move towards «...*Sarakhs, a large Turkoman settlement.... ... the greatest haunt of the Turkoman robbers; a paradox truly...*».

(Note: these distinguished caravan robbers were Salor Turkmen, at that time at the apex of their fortune, but soon to be dispersed through Khorassan by the Persian Crown Prince)

(Note: How could the caravan leader know that the Sarakhs Turkmen would not seize the caravan? One must suppose that the caravan leader's job was essentially to grease the right palms. Each caravan chief having probably greased his own safe routes? Old and reciprocal host duties between the caravan leaders and some tribal chiefs? Page 49 it is stated that «alamans» seldom attack a large caravan, however many cases of their complete destruction are known.)

Page 40: Still on the Murgab River, near the ruins of old Merv, north of the oasis.

«...*The Turkomans are Turks, but they differ from the Uzbeks, and are entirely devoted to a pastoral life.*

There are several great tribes of the race, all of whom claim a common origin: we had seen the Ersaris on the Oxus (Amu darya), and were now mingling with the tribe of Saryk, beyond which are the Salors. Towards the Caspian lie the Teke (Akhal Teke), Göklan, and Yomud, all of them great tribes, and of which I shall speak as we advance..... ».

« ...Among our Saryk acquaintances there was one individual who had passed his days in making incursions into Persia, he had, indeed, only returned with three captives, that had been secured by the small number of six horsemen....»

Page 41: Description by an experienced Saryk tribesman of Turkmen man-hunting tactics.

Description of the training of their famed horses, on the speed- and stamina of which the success of their raids depends very much.

Page 49: Meeting a discomfited alaman party which has lost 4 men (out of 11).

The caravan reaches Sarakhs: The Salor settlement extends on both shores of the Tejen River.

Page 50: The Turkmen settlement of Sarakhs consists of a small and weak fort (*Note: on the left bank*), almost in ruins. There are a few mud houses, built by Jews from Meshed, trading with the Salor Turkmen, The Salor all live in yurts.

Page 51: Spending 10 days at Sarakhs : «...Sarakhs is the residence of the Salor Turkomans, the noblest of the race... Two thousand families are here domiciled, and an equal number of horses, of the finest blood, may be raised in case of need. If unable to cope with their enemies, these people flee to the deserts, which lie before them, and there await the termination of the storm... »

« ..They pay a sparing and doubtful allegiance to Orgundje (to the Khiva Khanate) and to Persia, but it is only an impending force that leads to their submission. When we were at Sarakhs they had a Persian ambassador in chains. The Salor Turkomans are ruled by twelve ak-saghals, the heads of the different families; but they acknowledge no particular allegiance to any individual person..... The country around Sarakhs is well watered by aqueducts from the rivulet of Tejen, which is a little brackish, but its waters are usefully employed in fertilizing its fields. The soil is exceedingly rich, and possesses great aptness for agriculture. The crops of wheat and juwaree are here most abundant, and the melons are only inferior to those of Bokhara.....».

Not a tree or bush in sight anywhere.

(*Note: Only a few months later, in 1832, the crown prince of Persia, Abbas Mirza, after having taken Quchan, and chastised its rebellious Kurdish Khan, also conquered Sarakhs, liberating 3000 Persian slaves. (If this figure is right the Salors were apparently using more servile manpower than other Turkmen, or they were waiting for the right time to sell them to Khiva or Bokhara). Abba Mirza dispersed the Salors in smaller units along the Persian frontier. This defeat and the impoverishment it caused might be the real reason for the decrease of carpet weaving by this tribe, which, as we learn from Burnes, were still weaving beautiful rugs in 1832).*

Page 55-56: Salor customs: Description of Turkmen's «differently romantic» marriage customs and the best ways to get a bride at bargain price. A debt of honor facilitates paying back the bride in comfortable installments.

Page 56-57: Preparation of the dowry of carpet and clothes which are necessary for the new couple.

Page 58: Yet another indication that the mid -19th century Turkmen had no use for prayer rugs: «.....The Turkomans have no mosques; they say their prayers in the tent or in the desert, without ablution, and without a carpet. They have few Mullahs or priests, for the church has little honor among them, and they are but poor followers of the prophet.....»

(*Note: The frequent assumption that «Beshir» prayer rugs were woven by Turkmen rests therefore on very weak bases. It would seem a bit more logical to suggest that their weavers were living in Bokhara and other large cities of the Khanate and belonged to other ethnic groups.*)

«...They (the Turkmen) have no education to assuage the fiercer passions, which renders the men unsusceptible of pity, and the women indifferent to chastity. The men perform all the outdoor employments, and the women work at home. The Turkomans are a race of people who court alternate activity and idleness. Abroad they evince the greatest spirit, and at home saunter about in idleness and indolence, are fond of their horses, and of singing songs in honor of them. At night I have listened to the panegyrics on the feats of the " Chupraslee" and " Karooghlee" horses,... , the never-ending theme of praise.... »

Page 59-60: Inside a Salor yurt: «...our Turkoman Ernuzzer (*a Saryk*) said I was invited to a friend's house (*a Salor*),... I was very agreeably surprised to find these wandering people living here, at least, in luxury. The tent or khirgah was spacious, and had a diameter of about twenty-five feet. The sides were of lattice-work, and the roof was formed of laths, which branched from a circular hoop, about three feet in diameter, through which the light is admitted.

The floor was spread with felts and carpets of the richest manufacture, which looked like velvet. Fringed carpets were also hung up round the tent, which gave it a great finish, and their beauty was no doubt enhanced by their being the work of wives and daughters.

On one side of the tent was a small press, in which the females of the family kept their clothes, and above it were piled the quilts on which they slept. These are of variegated colored cloth, both silk and cotton. From the circular aperture in the roof, three large tassels of silk were suspended, differing in color, and neatly wrought by some fair young hand ... »

(*Note: these are probably the Salor equivalents of the Yomud «tooniks» mentioned by O'Donovan.*)

« ...Altogether, the apartment and its furniture bespoke anything but an erratic people ; yet the host explained to me that the whole house could be transported on one camel, and its furniture on another....»

(Note: the Salors here described by Burnes seem to have much less mixed their blood with Persians than the Yomuds described by O'Donovan 50 years later. An observation consistent with O'D.'s remark that many an abducted Persian woman was integrated as wife in Yomud families. The aristocratic Salor might have been a little more endogamic, perhaps due to their pride for being «the noblest of the Turkomans».)

Page 62: About Salor «haute cuisine».

Page 63-65: Burnes watches the return of the strong Saryk alaman which he saw leaving Merv. It takes some rest in Sarakhs,

(Note: This again confirms the good relationship between Saryks and Salors. The theory, mentioned for example by S. Azadi, that the Saryk had thrown the Salors out of Merv appears to be a red herring. Once more.

It seems much more likely that the Salors kept living in Merv mixed with the Saryks. O'Donovan mentions that nearly 50 years later there were still 170 families of Salors in Merv, «remnants of the former population» who did not leave the area when the Tekes took it over from the Saryks and Salors, while most inhabitants (Saryks and probably also many Salors) moved up-river to Yolatan and Pendj-deh areas, displacing the Yemshidi clans).

The Saryk alaman had captured 115 human beings & 200 camels, under the walls of Meshed, with no Persian military daring to confront them. One fifth of the spoils was for the Khan of Khiva their sponsor. The author notes that the Persian had a 20 000- strong army in Meshed, led by the heir-apparent to the throne and yet didn't dare to fight against a hundred Turkoman horsemen.

(Note: A trifle unfair I believe, the bulk of the Persian army was still near Quchan and not yet in Meshed at the time. It is the same army which only months later bashed the Salors, dispersed them in small, harmless units and induced the Khan of Khiva to a prudent retreat. British officers, in particular Captain Lindsay, were given credit for having given this Persian army a semblance of discipline and of fighting spirit)

Page 89-90 Near Quchan: The place was only shortly before besieged and conquered by the same Persian army. It was owned by a Kurdish Khan.

(Note: To whom the area was given by an earlier (stronger) Shah in exchange of protection of the frontier against the Turkmen.)

Page 92-96: Meeting the Crown Prince Abbas Mirza. «...The Prince then requested me to give him some notes on the resources of the country and about Sarakhs, which he shortly intended to visit....» Indeed he did.

Page 100: Journey among the Turkmen of the Caspian area. Burnes follows the Atterek River, which source is close to Quchan. To the South, the mountain ranges are covered with pine trees. To the North, the Kopet dash range, (increasingly Akhal Teke possession) is quite bare.

Near Boojnoord, another frontier towns settled by Kurds, who being more warlike than the Persians, are supposed to protect Persia from Turkmen attacks.

Page 102, Nearing the dangerous region which the Tekes (*Akhal Tekes*) consider being their man- hunting ground.

The party, which the author joins, consists in 200 Göklan- and Yomud irregular cavalry men, all having served in the Persian army at Quchan and now going back home to the Gurgien- and Atterek Rivers.

Page 108: The Göklan tribe: about 9 000 families living near the upper Gurgien in a hilly and wooden area with fertile soil and a high variety of fruit trees.

The Göklan were somewhat reluctant subjects to Persia, but had already exchanged their man-hunting habits for agriculture but still keeping pastoral habits. Their tribe was too small to rebel successfully against Persia (unlike the Yomuds who live between them and the Caspian sea and are a larger tribe (about 20 000 families) and therefore are more prone to rebel .

(Note: The Yomuds used to be great providers of Persian slaves to Khiva, as we know from Mouraviev, O'Donovan and other travelers).

(Note: Despite Burnes' opinion, even the small Göklan tribe still enjoyed very much killing Persian taxmen whenever the Shah was a bit weak. This was the case for example 40 years later, O'Donovan dixit).

*«...No scene could be more enchanting than that on which we had now entered : the hills were wooded to the summit, and the hue of the different trees was so varied and bright, as hardly to appear natural. A rivulet flowed through the dell ; and almost every fruit grew in a state of nature. The fig, the vine, pomegranate, raspberry, black currant, and the hazel, shot up everywhere ; and, as we approached the camp of the (*Gök-lan*) Turkomans, there were extensive plantations of the mulberry. The different groups of tents were pitched in grotesque order in the open lawn near the river...» .*

Page 110: Contrast between the Turkmen's warm hospitality and their cruel behavior during alamans.

Page 111-112: «...The tribe of Göklan Turkomans is subject to Persia, which has asserted its supremacy for the last thirty-six years.....Their allegiance is unwilling, but it is complete; for they have exchanged the habits of rapine for the peaceful vocation of agriculture. They lack the affluence and comfort which I have described among the Turkomans of Sarakhs (Salors)..... The Göklans... have no political power.....»

«...The Yomud tribe, which lies between them and the Caspian, have been also subdued by Persia, but the greater number of that clan, which is said to amount to twenty thousand families, enables them frequently to resist and rebel....»

«....The (Akhal-) Teke Turkomans which skirt to the north (the Göklans and the Yomuds) maintain their independence of Persia....»

«....The customs of the (Göklan-) Turkomans do not differ from those about Bokhara (the Ersari), only that they more nearly resemble citizens. (meaning settled people)....»

Page 114: «...At length we cleared the valley of the Gurgien river, and debouched upon the plain eastward of the Caspian. The landscape was very imposing. To our left, the hills, now running in a range, rose up to a great height, clad to the summit with forest trees and foliage. To our right, the extensive plains, which are watered by the rivers Atterek and Gurgien, and richly verdant, were studded with innumerable encampments of (Yomud) Turkomans, and diversified by flocks and herds...»

Page 137: The Shah of Persia implies that his son's army will attack Sarakhs and dislodge the (Salor) Turkomans.

(Note: This did indeed happen in 1832. The Salors lost the battle and were dispersed in smaller units through Khorassan. They did not stay long there but in part returned to Sarakhs (Were O'Donovan found them decades later) or joined other Turkmen tribes

My attempt at summarizing the timeline provided by De Blocqueville, Burnes and O'Donovan :

A. The
last great ruler of Persia, Nadir Shah, dies in **1747**. His army which held all of Turkestan including Khiva, the city and oasis of Merv, falls back behind the Persian frontier South on the Kopet dagh.

A. The
Saryks and Salors occupy the deserted Merv oasis, some time after its destruction in **1788** by the Amir of Bokhara Shah Murad. It is probable that Salor and Saryk were part of Murad's army and that they seized the opportunity of occupying the rich and now deserted oasis. The Saryks build the huge Porsa kala adobe fortress, near the main dam, which the tribes progressively restore after its destruction by Murad. Many Salors and perhaps a few Tekes also live in the Merv oasis.

B. Man
y Salors live in Sarakhs (mid-Tejen), while many Tekes live down-river of the Tejen, in its delta and most in the northern piedmont of the Kopet dagh (Akhal Tekes).

B. The
Persians, under Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, attack Sarakhs in **1832**, beat and pillage the Salor, free 3000 Persian slaves, and forcibly resettle the Salors in smaller groups, on the Khorassan frontier (see Sykes, page 127).

A. The
Tejen-Teke and some Akhal Tekes move upriver to occupy the emptied Sarakhs area.

C. In
1855, the Persians also dislodge the Tekes from Sarakhs.

A. Thes
e homeless Tekes confer dictatorial powers to Kushid Khan (an exception in Turkmen history) and attack the Saryk and Salors of the Merv area. Despite the strength of the mighty Porsa kala fortress, they dislodge them from the Merv oasis.

e) The Saryks and many Salors move upriver to Yolatan and Pendj-deh, dislodging the Jemshidi and perhaps also some Yomud, which according to Abbott, were holding the oasis for the Khan of Khiva.

A. Som
e displaced Salors return, apparently without Persian opposition, to Sarakhs.

D. In
1860, the Persians, with 300 Saryk allies, attack the Merv Tekes, but their army is routed and fully destroyed, creating a glut on the Bokhara-and Khiva slave markets. Monsieur de Blocqueville, taken prisoner, enjoys the hospitality of the victorious Tekes and later writes about it.

E. The
Merv Teke remain the owners of Merv. At least three other Turkmen tribes (guests and allies) also live peacefully in the oasis, among them about 170 families of Salors.

Page 167: Products of Bokhara

«...There is a small yellow flower, called " esbaruk, It produces a better color than the rind of the pomegranate.... »

(Note: according to analysis it is one of the most frequently used natural yellows in Turkmen rugs. Its botanical name is Delphinium zalil. It grows particularly well in the low hills near Karchi and Balkh.)

« ...Madder, called " bayak," is also produced. Its roots are permitted to remain eighteen months in the ground ; but a dye equally good and serviceable is found in the creeping roots of the vine, which yield a color that is dark red (?)... »

« ...Neither indigo nor sugar cane grow in Bokhara. They are the great imports from India, and might be acclimated....»

« ...There is another valuable jungle shrub, called " usl-soos" and " achick booe," by the Uzbeks, which appears to be a bastard indigo, and grows most luxuriantly on the banks of the Oxus (Amu darya) and the other rivers of the country.... »

Page 179 : « ...The most valuable insect is the silk-worm, which is reared in all parts of the Bokhara kingdom where there is water. Every stream or rivulet is lined with the mulberry tree; and the most extensive operations are carried on along the banks of the Oxus (Amu darya), where the whole of the wandering tribes are engaged in rearing the insect. The silk of the " Lub i ab," or banks of the river, as it is termed, is the most valuable, both from the softness and fineness of its thread..... The raw silk is dyed by cochineal and the already named, madder and " esbaruk." A black color is produced by mixing iron filings with water in which rice has been boiled, and allowing it to stand for a month....».

(Note: Madder was probably not very much used for dyeing silk since it had a mediocre lightfastness on this fiber. And iron with rice would hardly be enough to make a good black. Probably tannin or pomegranate-rinds is missing in the iron-based recipe).

Page 185: **About one half of Bokhara kingdom population is made up of nomads.**

(Note: Thus the settled «free» population, once the slaves have been deducted, was hardly more than 20% of the population. After deduction of the Uzbek rulers and of the foreign community (Mainly Afghan-, Jew-, Arab-and Hindi merchants, this would leave a relatively low number of settled Turkmen in 1831)

Page 187. The Amu darya fertilizes a tract of about a mile on either side. It is not fordable at any place lower than Kerki.

At Charjew the Amu darya is large about 650 yards. Reddish hue during the swell. (thus carrying suspended iron oxides and salts). 1/40 of the water is suspended silt.

Page 188: Already in 1832 Burnes has doubts about the then current theory that the Amu darya once ran into the Caspian. He notes that there are serious obstacles in between.

Page 196 on the 300 miles up river from Charjew there are about 15 «ferries». The inhabitants (including Ersari Turkmen) make no use of its navigability.

Page 197: Poplar is the only large tree, mulberry, tamarisks are the most frequent trees.

Page 249- : Details about Turkestan: «... this country is destitute of towns and villages for the Turkomans are an erratic tribe and wander from one well to another with their herds and flocks.....» , «...neither do they live under a fixed or permanent ruler...»

«....hard-caked surface of clay...the wells offer their supply of water at no great distance from the surface...the desert is not enlivened by a single tree....»

Page 252: The Turkmen themselves believe that they came from the Mangyshlak peninsula and the north-eastern shores of the Caspian till they gradually overran their present territories.

They claim a common lineage, though divided into different tribes and conceding to some a greater degree of honor than to others.

Page 253; Burnes estimates the population according to his sources as being, in 1832:

Salor of Sarakhs 2000 families,

Saryk of Merv 20 000 families,

Ersari of middle Amu darya 40 000 families,

Teke of the Tejen 40 000 families

(Note: probably including the Akhal Teke of the Kopet Dagh valleys)

Sakar of the Amu darya. 2 000 families,

Yomud of Asterabad., *(Atterek and Gurgien mouth)* and Khiva *(between Khiva and the Caspian Sea)*: 20 000 families

Göklan on the Gurgien river 9 000 families, the only tribe which inhabits a hilly forested country.

(Note: up-river from the Yomud settlements).

Ata of the Balkan 1000 destitute families

(Note: East of the Caspian shore).

Chodor of Mangyshlak peninsula 6 000 families.

Total estimated: 140 000 families

Page 254:

The most illustrious is the tribe of Salor, followed by the Sakar who are said to be descending from Calif Osman.

From the 3 great tribes, Yomud & Göklan are said to be descended from Osman's brothers, but the last one, the Teke only from a Persian slave.

Page 259: Merv was conquered in 1788 by Amir Masum (Shah Murad), king of Bokhara,

(Note: who massacred most inhabitants and forced the survivors to move to Bokhara, the dominant kingdom of the region until the Russian conquered it.)

Page 385-386: «...In 1832 the Khan of Khiva marched his own military force to Merv and levied contribution on the Teke the greatest of the Turkoman tribes....» He had custom houses at Merv, at Sarakhs (a town held by the Salors) and at the port of Mangyshlak (owned by the Chodors). The Khan of Khiva takes a fifth of all the booty captured.

(Note: This is probably a slip of the pen: The Khivan army either levied contribution on the Merv's population, therefore mainly on Saryks and Salors and perhaps on a minority of Tekes which might have lived there already or he levied contribution on the main of the Tekes tribe, meaning the Tejen-Tekes or the Akhal Tekes)

(Note: The Khan of Khiva indeed proceeded towards Sarakhs, but, informed of the arrival of a strong Persian army, led by the Crown Prince, wisely left the area without fighting, leaving the Salors alone)

Page 389-394

The Turkmen on the Northeast frontier of Persia:

«...They stretch from Balkh to the Caspian, and are composed of predatory hordes, with no king, and a most imperfect government to control them. The only portion which owes allegiance to the crown of Persia are the tribes of Göklan and Yomud, the least powerful of all the Turkomans...»

«...They occupy the south-eastern banks of the Caspian, having their country westward bounded by the rivers Giurgan and Atterek, and extending about 140 miles eastward of that sea. The Yomuds are farthest to the westward, and consist of 20,000 families. They are succeeded by the Göklans, who amount to 9000 families, the only tribe of Turkomans who inhabit a hilly country. These two tribes have been reduced to their present state of dependence within the last thirty years.... A guard of about 1000 of them attends on the King of Persia, but the rest of the tribe occupy their native seats, and pay a small tribute in horses or in kind to a Persian Governor, who is stationed on the river Giurgan....»

«....The country which lies between these Turkomans and the city of Meshed is occupied by the tribe of Kurds and other chiefs, who are nominally subjects of Persia. They acknowledge the supremacy of that crown, but commit every act of devastation and plunder, if not restrained by superior force.

The Kurds were fixed in this part of Persia by Shah Abbas, to strengthen the frontier; but they have proved a complete curse on its peace....»

- The greatest of these chiefs held the Kurdish fortress of Quchan (also called Kabooshan), and had a force of 8000 men. This place was captured by the crown prince Abbas Mirza in the autumn of 1832.

- Near Quchan is the smaller chiefship of Boojnoord, ruled by a Kurd, who can raise about 3000 horses.

- In this neighborhood lies Kelat, the chief of which is an Afshar Turkmen, who can muster about 2000 horses.

- Next in importance to the chief of Quchan is Mahommed Khan Kuraee or Torbut, who occupies a portion of the country between Meshed and Herat. He can raise about 6000 men, and is the most notorious freebooter in Khorasan.

- About eighty miles eastward of Meshed lies the town of Sarakhs, a Turkoman settlement, already mentioned, owing allegiance to Khiva. It submits to Persia, when the Prince at Meshed is able to enforce his commands. There are 2000 families at Sarakhs of the Salor tribe.

(Note: Burnes wrote this as Abbas Mirza was attacking the Salors and forcibly resettling them -for a short-while- in other places.)

«...The Turkomans view the Persians in the most odious light, from their religious opinions; and the only real advantage which the Shah may be said to have gained over the two tribes *(Note: Yomud and Göklan)* near Persia consists in their having discontinued their incursions into the kingdom. This only applies to a very small division of them, for the Salors of Sarakhs, and all the other Turkomans, carry-on their inroads with a fierce and daring spirit. Their brethren, on the S.E. shores of the Caspian, frequently exhibit proofs of discontent, and have, as I formerly observed, formed connexions with Russia, that time may improve to the advantage of themselves and that empire...»

(Note: Excellent prediction: when the Russian established beach-heads near the Atterek and at Krasnovodsk, the local Yomud immediately behaved as their allies).

«...They are not bound by the possession of houses and cities to the lands which they inhabit, and their strength lies in the great facility with which they can move from one country to another...»

«...The Kurds, on the contrary, are established on these frontiers as citizens (*settlers*). They have exhibited much bravery and considerable military knowledge in making their strongholds on the plains instead of the hills. The fortress of Quchan is a place of great strength.

These Kurds, though Shiah, form secret connexions with their Turkoman neighbors, and connive at the capture of the Persians and plunder of the provinces. The chiefs, who are generally in rebellion, can defy every force but an extraordinary one, such as has lately been sent to attack them (*Note: The army of crown prince Abbas Mirza*)....»

Page 434-435: «...One of the most important articles or import **from Russia in Bokhara** is kirmiz dye, or cochineal : it is used to die raw silk. I bear an impression that the kirmiz, or cochineal, may be procured in Bokhara but no one knows how to prepare it....The greatest import from India is indigo, which averages five hundred camel-loads a year. A portion of it is again exported (East) to Yarkand, in the Chinese territories where, though the plant is found, they are ignorant of the means of preparing it...»

Page 438: «...The Persian trade is inconsiderable, from the unsettled state of the roads, and the hatred which subsists between the people, who differ in their religious tenets...»

Page 489: Exports from Bokhara are discussed in great detail by Burns. There is no mention of any export of carpets. It seems probable that the rug production of the Khanate, was still largely for internal use during the 1830's.

page 445: «..It is an old and just remark, that the Persians states are not a trading nation, and have ever evinced in Persia, equal timidity in adventures of navigation and commerce...»

(*Note: Only Russia could have jump-started the rug market*)