

E. Schuyler. Notes of Journey in Turkestan. Vol I & II. 1877.

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American diplomat. Present in Turkestan at the time of the conquest of the Khiva Khanate by General von Kaufmann, Governor of Turkestan. He has a great interest in economy and military affairs, but enjoys watching ordinary people's life as well.

He dislikes von Kaufmann and makes no mystery of it, but remains quite objective in his judgment.

His observations are mainly focussed on Tashkent, Khokand, the Bokhara- and Khiva Uzbek khanates and on Russian policy. Rare, but interesting mentions of the Turkmen.

He calls Vambéry a cheat and a fraud and quotes in-extenso Prof. Gregorieff's ferocious (and quite convincing-) charge against him.

Vol. I

Page 173-... **Tashkent:**

(Note: the city, capital of the former Tashkent Khanate was conquered by Chernayev in 1865, twelve years before this visit. It was the capital of the new Turkestan province of which von Kaufmann was the governor..)

The Tashkent Bazaar.

Page 174: Huge, narrow, crooked streets, lined with (one-or two room-) shops in mud with a flat roof. Each street is devoted to a single trade. Occasionally one meets a caravanserai, tea-houses or small open spaces with booths, sheltered by umbrellas, for fast-food, bakers, snow-and-syrup sherbets.

Next to the main bazaar, there are several other smaller ones in the city. The merchants affect detachment, do not advertise, are not pushy. The author mentions that most of the products are of rather low quality.

Page 182: The drug shop, selling as well dyes :

Indigo (imported from India and Brazil), madder (local, wild as well as cultivated), isparuk (larkspur, Delphinium sulphureum, which grows in abundance in the steppe and «gives a beautiful and permanent yellow»), tuhmak (the flowers of Sophora Japonica), pomegranate peel (tannin-containing, used for making strong black shades, with iron salts), buzguntch (gall-nut from the pistachio tree, again a source of tannin), cochineal (mainly imported from Bokhara, used for silk dyeing. Fuchsine (the earliest and very fugitive synthetic dye on the market, imported from Russia, and already affecting the market of natural dyes).

Page 183-184: The «Kirghiz bazaar» selling nomad products, especially felts, carpets, tent frames and ropes....

«...The best rugs and carpets are made by Turkomans near Karshi and Tchardjuï and are to be found in any quantity only in Bukhara...The rugs made by the Kirghiz are coarse...» .

Thus Schuyler confirms that, despite their ubiquity in homes of settled- and nomad people, rugs are not frequent item on markets, except in the main cities of the khanates. It is highly probable that before the Russian arrival most rugs were home-made and not often offered for sale.

Page 190: *«.....The manufacture of silk was revived after the capture of Merv by Shah Murad in 1785. The Bokhara ruler transferred all the Merv inhabitants to Bukhara (- khanate), where they continued the silk culture...».*

(Note: The destruction of Merv happened probably a little later, in 1788 according to Bregel and others).

Page 360-....: **In appendix**, a highly critical review by Prof. Grigoriev of Vambéry's 1873 « History of Bokhara»

Vambéry is accused of being conceited, of manipulating facts, of grossly minimizing the role of previous visitors in the informations he gives, of falsely presenting himself as the first European to have travelled there (while Grigoriev's still incomplete list shows that 35 people travelled to the Bokhara- & Khiva Khanates in the 75 years preceding Vambéry's book, some staying there for several years).

Most of these travelers had published accounts in idioms that this «outstanding linguist» should have been able to read (17 Russians, 10 Britons, assorted French, Italians, Germans..). ...

According to Grigoriev *«...every page of Mr. Vambéry's book only disappoints expectation and the general result of reading it shows that the very small particle of what is really new in his book is lost in the mass of what is old and well known, which in most cases too, he has misunderstood and has erroneously studied.*

It appears that instead of communicating new sources of information he has not even made use of very important books accessible to all and has not even known of their existence..... very light and superficial compilation...errors and omissions of the most unpardonable character...all that is nonsense...we found however that this geographer (an author grossly misquoted by Vambéry) says exactly the contrary to that stated by Vambéry...to show all the mistakes of Mr. Vambéry we should be obliged to write a book three times larger than his history of Bokhara...»

Follows an incredibly long list of Vambéry's factual errors (including enormous ones), misquotes of ancient historians or geographers, near complete lack of mention of his sources, gross chronological errors (errors of up to 250 years about dates concerning historical people etc..), shameless verbatim plagiarism of the British historian Malcolm and of the Russian Khanikof), ...

(Note: This fully fits with my own very poor opinion of Vambéry. His superior at the U.K. Foreign Office called him «a pimp». I would rather call him a mythomaniac and a fraud.)

Vol II

Page 15: **Khokand**

(Note: Situated In the almond-shaped Ferghana Valley, circled by high mountain ranges. Babur's birthplace, who describes the valley in his memoirs.)

Settled population of Uzbeks and nomad population of Kirghiz and Kiptchak-Uzbek. The ruler is an Uzbek with phony claims to Timurid ascent.

In **1873**, Khokand is not yet a genuine Russian protectorate, since the 1868 treaty was seen by both sides as a «misunderstanding»: The Russian feigning to believe that Khokand accepted a vassal status, while the Khan feigned to believe that complying with the clauses of the treaty was optional.

Foreigners were still insulted in the streets, when not molested. In **1875** the Khanate rebelled chiefly against its own predatory and cruel ruler, but some Russians, considered his protectors, were killed too.

Skobelev, the future hero of Geok tepe, barely escaped with his life. The Khanate was annexed and abolished by von Kaufman's troops in 1876.)

The bazaar: by far the best build seen by the author in Central Asia, with broad streets crossing at right angle, many shops built of burned bricks, shaded by a high wooden roof. Goods are of no better quality than in Tashkent.

Page 17: Main business of the Russian merchants is buying silk and cotton, selling cloths and printed calicoes.

Page 15: Water comes from glaciers which the authors suspects to be cause of very frequent goiters among the locals.

(Note: This very soft water is also ideal as a medium for dyeing silk or wool with cochineal. The main river, the Zerafshan, reaches Bokhara which dyers were known for their cochineal-dyed silk.)

Page 21 «...clear-water canals...», thus different from the muddy, calcareous ones, encountered between the Amu-darya and the Caspian Sea. Khokand is «in the midst of a stony waste». There are however very fertile, well cultivated areas in the Khanate.

Page 16: Description of Khokand's «Armata Brancaleone»: Every soldier dons a different costume, is poorly armed, in part only with clubs. Summary executions are a routine: For example, a few days after Schuyler's departure, 500 captured rebels are slaughtered.

Page 42: **Andijan**, The second largest city of Ferghana In a fertile valley,

Schuyler notes that there is surprisingly little visible Chinese influence despite the proximity of China (meaning Kashgar, the oases of the Takla Makan and the Tarim basin, which are at the time under control of the Chinese Empire).

Page 61: **En route to Bokhara**: Bokharans are a more refined, polite lot than the people of Kokhand. The countryside is much less attractive though.

Page 64: Shahrissabs, near the Kaska-darya river: His host, a city official, owns many Turkmen carpets.

Page 328-378: the **Khivan campaign**:

The relations started with disasters for the Russian, this as early as 1620. Several Cossaks raids into Khiva ended all with massacre or enslavement of the raiders.

In **1717** an army led by Prince Bekovitch-Tcherkasski met and defeated the Khan of Khiva, but the prince naively accepted to divide his army. His men were massacred.

In **1829** General Perovsky made the mistake of attacking Khiva in winter (thinking to solve the problem of lack of water!). He lost 2/3 of his men before even seeing an enemy.

Several embassies to Khiva failed to achieve any concrete progress.

Khiva kept supporting Kirghiz- or Kazakh raids on Russian settlements. Even as late as 1870 the Khivans were still playing with Russian nerves.

In **1869** the Russians established a beach-head (a fort and naval station) at Krasnovodsk and a little later another one, at Tchikishlar near the Atterek River.

Expeditions explored the route from Krasnovodsk to Khiva, a fact which for a while induced the Khan into keeping quiet, but Russian demands were further ignored.

General von Kaufman's poor administration of the new Turkestan province was known in St Petersburg and his position had become shaky. Thus, he was looking for a diversion and considered an annexation of either Khiva or Kashgar, both fairly good ideas by the way, and the former one was quite popular in his province, especially among his officers.

After the failure of a raid on Khiva by colonel Markozof, von Kaufman got the OK from the Tzar for a new try.

The great difficulty in attacking Khiva was not its army, which was lacking discipline and out-gunned, it was reaching the oasis while avoiding nomad raids on the regions left with too few defenders.

Thus, it was agreed to march on Khiva with several columns starting from Tashkent, Orenburg, Fort Alexandrofsky (Mangyshlak) and Tchikishlar (on the southeastern coast of the Caspian), each column deemed sufficient to beat the Khivans.

The Khan got nervous and attempted to placate the Russians, but it was already too late.

Two columns had great difficulties to reach their targets due to water shortage. The main one, with general von Kaufmann, eventually made it, but the column from Tchikislar, poorly organized- and led by Markozof, could not even come close to it, beaten by the heat and thirst and had to retreat to Krasnovodsk to avoid total destruction, although the Teke guerrilla on its flank was rather ineffectual and the southern Yomud, chastised by a recent raid of the Russians beyond the Giurgen, did not dare to move at all.

The Mangyslak column and the well prepared Orenburg column reached the oasis without particular problem nor delay.

These two columns occupied without fight Kungrad. They then marched upriver and encountered some resistance before reaching Khiva (June 7), where they waited for von Kaufmann to make his junction too.

To answer fire from the walls (of which the Khan accused his «unruly Yomud subjects»), colonel Skobelev stormed and captured the North gate, with some losses on his part.

At the same moment, General von Kaufmann, who had reached the other side of Khiva, was receiving the submission of the city, the Khan who had fled to his Yomud «unruly subjects», was represented by a son and by his uncle.

He later surrendered and was confirmed Khan, closely watched by a «divan» composed in part of Russians. At demand of the Russian commander, the Khan ordered abolition of slavery: Persian slaves could choose whether to stay or return to Persia. Unfortunately, some of their caravans were attacked by the Turkmen and they were either killed or re-enslaved.

The reconnoitering parties sent through the Khanate by the Russians were received well by the natives and nomads. The Yomud elders had made their unconditional submission too and offered great hospitality to the scouts.

However, in part to satisfy the officer's hunger for decorations (in particular for the St Georges cross which can only be gained in battle) and for promotions, in part out of fear that the Turkmen would soon return to their restless and predatory ways after the Russian departure, the commander decided to break their «pride and license». He thus placed a penalty of 300 000 rubles on the Yomuds, of which 1/3 had to be paid within 10 days and the remaining 200 000 within 15 days. The contribution was requested in cash.

The elders accepted the impossible demand, for nomad cannot easily raise cash. Part of the elders were kept as hostages until the money should be paid.

Von Kaufman directed the troops to attack the Turkmen without even waiting for the 15 days to expire. The disposition of the troops was to be such as to cut the Yomud from the steppe. «...*at the least attempt to migrate, carry out my order for the final extermination of the disobedient tribe...*» signed: von Kaufman.

Golovatchef ' campaign against the Yomud lasted for nearly a week, with some hard fight and even one near victory of the Yomud, when they attacked and penetrated the Russian camp inflicting them serious losses.

Eye witness, and report from the participants leave no doubt that the Russians were fully intending to commit a genocide and also killed women and children without mercy.

The Khan of Khiva was made a mere puppet by the treaty. The right bank of the low Amu-darya was annexed. A heavy penalty was to be paid every year.

The American war correspondent Mac Gahan, who assisted to the fall of Khiva too, adds an interesting anecdote, about the pride and dignity of the vanquished and unfairly treated Turkmen, including those who, unlike the Yomud, wisely had decided not to fight against the Russians:

«...*The Turkoman carpets, too, were very much in demand, and sold readily, in spite of the high prices demanded for them and of the fact that hundreds had been looted in the campaign against the Yomuds. A carpet, four yards long by two wide, brought £ 4 to £ 8.*

A curious feature of the sale was, that although the Turkomans must have been hard-pressed for money to pay the indemnity, they could not be induced to lower their prices a single kopeck. They simply named their price and you might take the article or leave it, as you pleased. The carpets are made by the women and will compare favorably with the best carpets made anywhere. Each family has a different pattern, which is handed down from generation to generation as an heirloom, without undergoing the slightest change. The colors are principally red and white (sic) interspersed with small patches of green and brown and are really very pretty, as well as durable...»

«... *The principal part of the war indemnity was paid, strange as it may seem, by the women. Every Turkoman woman possesses a great number of ornaments, such as bracelets, necklaces, buttons and head-dresses, in solid silver. In fact the principal wealth of the Turkomans, apart from horses, seems to consist in these silver ornaments....., the ornaments were all of purest silver, of very rude workmanship and usually very massive.....sometimes traces with gold and always set with cornelians....*»

Soon after the Russians had left, the Yomud started recouping part of their losses attacking Uzbeks and Kazakhs, plundering their villages, Merv Tekes attacked caravans, but were tracked by Russian troops and defeated. The Russians had to repeat yearly this kind of raids to cool down the Turkmen temper. Next to Yomuds and Merv Tekes, also Chodors, Karajenjeldi (?), Gultchas (?). The kul(?) Yomud got a particularly harsh treatment with extensive destruction of their village, this time without wholesale killing.

Page 379: Exploration of the Uzboy by Lomakin in 1874: «... in the bed there were many lakes of salt and fresh water and many wells, in which however the water was generally bitter and salt, or sulfurous...»

Page 381: On The Atterek, there were evidences that the southern Yomuds were getting friendly with the Russians, this including the purely nomad ones, the so called «tcharva» who until recently were fighting the Tekes. A cavalry unit of 500 Yomuds was formed to control the Tekes.

Page 381:

«...The Yomuds on the Caspian belong to the Kara-tchuka tribe and are divided according to their life style- settled or nomads- into tcharva (nomads) or tchomur (settled). The tchomur live in the valley of the lower Atterek, fishing in the mouths of the river and planting the fertile soil. Pasture is easily found along the banks of the Giurgan for their cattle...».

The tcharva remain between the Giurgan and the Atterek during the winter months. In march they migrate to the North of the Atterek and encamp extending north as far as the Gulf of Kara Bogaz.

Tchomur and Tcharva are closely connected, Sometimes a father will be settled and his sons nomads. And sometimes a nomad will become settled and a settler will turn nomad. About 80 000 souls.

These Yomud have but few camels but lots of horses.

Page 382: «...East of the Yomuds are the Göklans... their encampments extend as far as the sources of the Giurgan... also some of them are on the upper Sumbar and the Tchandyr.... About 15 000 souls. Formerly more numerous, but many were taken by force to Khiva. Nearly all are settled, agriculturists, some cultivate silkworms. They have but few camels.. »

(Note: O'Donovan , 6 years later contradicts this statement, having come across huge herds of camel between the Atterek and the Giurgen, thus in Yomud or Göklan territory.)

The **Akhal Tekes**: Akhal is fertile and watered by numerous streams descending from the Kopet dagh. Nominally reporting to the Khan of Khiva.... It was ruled by Nur Verdi Khan who enjoyed near absolute power.

(Note: This successor of Kuchid Kuli Khan was much less charismatic than the Teke «Buonaparte », who ruled from 1856 till about 1867).