



## **DYNAMICS OF FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE KHIVA KHANATE**

**Muborak Matyakubova Madrimovna**  
Associate Professor, Department of History,  
Urgench State University  
**muborak1979@mail.ru**  
*Tel: 94 230 78 79*

<b>Article history:</b>	<b>Abstract:</b>
<b>Received:</b> 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2025 <b>Accepted:</b> 20 <sup>th</sup> October 2025	The Khiva Khanate, as one of the important political and economic centers of the East, actively established international and regional trade relations in the 16th-19th centuries. The geostrategic location of the Khanate, bordering Iran, Afghanistan, Russia, the Kazakh steppes and other territories inhabited by Turkic peoples, created favorable conditions for foreign trade. Merchants from different countries, in addition to visiting the Khorezm markets for commercial purposes, also used the Khiva Khanate as a transit area. In particular, sources indicate that the route through which Russian, Kazakh, Turkmen and Bukhara merchants communicated with each other passed through the territory of the Khiva Khanate.

**Keywords:** Khiva Khanate, transit area, regional trade, Khorezm markets, trade relations.

**INTRODUCTION.** Khorezmian merchants were actively involved in the commercial centers of neighboring countries, which played an important role in international trade: Isfahan, Rasht, Shemakha, Astabad, Balkh, Mashhad, Merv, Bukhara, Astrakhan and Orenburg, as well as in the Dashti-Kipchak region [1, P.362.]. In the "Eastern Policy" of the Russian Empire, including its trade and diplomatic relations with Asian countries such as Bukhara, Afghanistan, Iran, India, the territory of the Khiva Khanate, due to its location, had not only regional, but also transregional significance. Written sources and historical documents indicate that although the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did not function in the state system, diplomatic relations with Russia, England, Turkey, Iran, Afghanistan, the Emirate of Bukhara and the Khanate of Kokand were carried out through ambassadors and missions. [2].

At that time, the Khiva Khanate traded with Russia mainly through Orenburg and Astrakhan, and trade transactions were often of a barter nature. Trade with Russia brought great benefits to the merchants of both countries. At that time, trade relations between the Khiva Khanate and Russia were carried out via the Khiva-Orenburg, and partly Khiva-Mangyslak and Astrakhan routes. [3, B.155.].

At the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries, Russia imported mainly yarn from Central Asia, but from the second quarter of the 19th century, it began to import more cotton instead of yarn. With the development of Russian industry and its increasing demand for raw materials, the importance of Central Asia in providing the growing Russian industry with

cotton, marena and other similar raw materials increased. The importance of the Russian market for the sale of its raw materials and coarse textile goods also increased for the Kheva Khanate. The Khanate used metal products from Russia to make tools necessary for the national economy. This had a great impact on the development of the agricultural economy. [3, B.155.].

For example, 15% of Russia's total exports were metal and metal tools, 30% were woven fabrics, 12% were leather, and 22% were gold and silver coins. During these periods, the export of woven goods such as yarn and wool from Russia to Central Asia increased, and these goods took first place in Russia's exports. The export of metal tools also increased. During the indicated period, 30% of the products exported from Central Asia to Russia were cotton and flax, 45% were local woven goods, and 12% were various furs. [4, B.154.].

The trade of the Khiva Khanate was mainly carried out through caravan routes, through which commercial relations were established with various countries. In particular, trade relations with Iran and Afghanistan were developed via the Khorezm-Merv-Herat route, and with Russia via the Khorezm-Orenburg-Astrakhan route. In addition, bilateral trade relations were established with the Bukhara and Kokand khanates. The traditional trade relations of the Khiva Khanate with neighboring countries continued to India, Iran, the Kazakh khanates, the Nogai steppe, Siberia and Kashgar, and in turn, the caravans of the above-mentioned countries reached Central Asia. [5, B.75.].



The economic potential of the Khiva Khanate, the income from internal and external trade, is mentioned in many sources. The memoirs of Ismail Mirpanji, an Iranian by origin, who was held captive in the khanate for 10 years, contain the following information: "When the roads were open and peaceful, and caravans came and went, 25,000 gold pieces of income were received per year (from trade), and all in all, the provinces brought the state 250,000 gold pieces of profit." [6, B.374.].

**LITERATURE ANALYSIS:** The city of New Urgench, founded by the Khan of Khiva, Abulgozi Khan, was an important trading center of the khanate. In the work "Firdaus ul Iqbal", New Urgench is described as "the great trading center of Khorezm". [7, B.91.]. – L. Kostenko describes the city of New Urgench as a market where the main trade and commercial activities were carried out, and writes that in the city's shops you can see luxurious and expensive products of the East. The author also emphasizes that wealthy merchants lived in New Urgench, who had wholesale trade relations with Russia, Iran and Bukhara. [8, B.250.]. The information provided by the American journalist Mac Gahan also supports the above ideas. He cites the city of Urgench as an important trading center and wealthy merchants who carried out wholesale trade there and conducted commercial business with Bukhara, Russia, and Iran [1, B.357.]. Merchants of the Khiva Khanate who traded with Russia were called "kolochi", and those who traded with Bukhara, Iran, and Afghanistan were called "bukharchi" [9, B.75.].

Iran when it comes to the economic and commercial activities of the Khiva Khanate in the 16th century, it is appropriate to cite the information of Anthony Jenkinson. Speaking about the main goods sold in the Urgench markets, he notes that the main goods sold in the markets were imported from Bukhara or Iran. [10, B.177.]. From Iran, "Mashhad bows and arrows", colored clothes, colorful silks, and steel daggers were brought to Khorezm in sufficient quantities and were among the gifts sent by the Khiva khans to the court of the Russian tsar. Historical sources indicate that the goods taken by Khorezm merchants to Iranian cities included a significant amount of various fabrics. It is reported that a trade caravan sent by the Khiva khan Shergozikhan arrived in the city of Mashhad and sold various fabrics along with other goods. Munis's "Firdaws ul Iqbal" cites a story about two hundred Khorezm merchants who set out for Mashhad (1804) with a large number of fabrics and countless various goods ("akshamayi bisyor va amtai – yi beshumor") [7, B.224.].

Merchants from Central Asia, including the Khiva Khanate, re-exported to Iran products from other countries, such as tea, paper, "Russian leather", silk, scarves, muslin, mirrors, crystal, porcelain, iron and copper vessels, pots, iron and chests, as well as Russian and domestically minted cash coins. Iranian merchants who brought various goods to Khiva took away from these places minted Khiva and Russian coins, as well as large quantities of Russian goods, such as leather and muslin.

**METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATIONS:** Among the products exported from Khorezm to neighboring regions, there were also many transit goods or goods brought from various countries for sale in the Khorezm markets. In particular, the author, who reported that it was profitable to transport Kazakh livestock and Russian goods to Iran, writes: "that is why, Khivan merchants willingly went there, and in just one week they left for Iran with Khiva and Urgench goods, furs and leather purchased from Russian merchants, Kazakh sheep and their own yarns" [11, P.80.].

The international relations between Khiva and Iran are also reflected in the work "Firdaws ul-Iqbal", which states that in 1814, ambassadors from Khorasan visited Khiva, and that the Khan of Khiva, Muhammad Rahim Khan I, sent them an ambassador named Saodatquli Khan with the following message: "If the people are loyal in their declaration of allegiance and obedience, we will, God willing, make a decision for them in the fall. If the people are opposed, we will make them agree to the terms of the treaty. If the people are, Saodatquli Khan should send many of the most powerful and trustworthy people to serve and send zakat and khira as they deserve." [7, B.446.]. Later, the Khan of Khiva Muhammad Amin Khan (1845 - 1855), who wanted to resolve the serious threat posed by Iran through negotiations, appointed one of the intelligent and attentive diplomats, Ataniyoz Mahram, as the head of the embassy in Tehran. [12, B.113]. The Khiva ambassador arrived in Tehran in 1850 with "rich gifts, several fast horses and valuable hunting birds on the seventh of the month of Rabi-us-Sani" and handed over a letter from the Khan of Khiva to the Shah of Iran, in which he proposed to strengthen the brotherly ties between the two. In response, in 1851, the Iranian embassy headed by Rizaqulikhan Lolabashi returned to Khorezm. However, since the Iranian ambassador was unable to fulfill the tasks assigned to him, in the same year, the ambassador of the Khan of Khiva, Muhammad Sharif Mahram, accompanied by the ambassador of the Khan of Khiva, departed for his homeland via Astrobad. Ogahi writes about this: "On Thursday, the fifteenth of



the month of Zulqa'da, his Majesty (Muhammad Amin Khan) sent an envoy sent by the Iranian king Muhammad Shah, accompanied by the wise and sincere Aroy Muhammad Sharifboy, one of the servants of the Atabay-e-Falak, with a letter of love, to the country of Iran." [13, B.177.]

**ANALYSIS:** According to historical sources, Russia began its trade and diplomatic relations with Central Asia, including the Khiva Khanate, in the 16th century. Before the founding of the city of Orenburg, both countries had economic and political relations along the Volga and Western Siberia. It should be noted that Uzbek merchants used to travel as far as the Ural River before the founding of the city of Orenburg, exchanging their goods for horses, sheep, camels, and other goods. [11, B.58.]. It should be noted that Russia also organized a number of embassies under the guise of merchants to develop trade relations and collect information about the khanate, including the embassies of O. Ivanov (1564-1565), S. Gorokhov and A. Gribov (1641-1643), and D. Rukavkin (1753). [14, B.106.]. It can be seen that the establishment of trade and commercial activities was of great importance in the 19th century embassy relations and in the activities of ambassadors visiting the khanate.

In 1818, at the initiative of the Orenburg Governor-General Essen, he visited Khiva under the leadership of the Poruchik Abdulnasil Subhankulov. The local historian Ogahiy writes about this in his "Firdaws ul-Iqbol": "... In the beginning of the month of Zulqa'da in 1233 (1817-1818), the chieftain of the Orusdin clan, Mullah Abdinosir, arrived in Khiva as an ambassador." [15, B.18.].

Interesting information is provided about the mission of the Russian ambassador Captain N.N. Muravyev, who carried out a successful embassy mission to Khiva in 1819 on the instructions of the Russian general Yermolov. N. Muravyev's mission was aimed at establishing contact with the Turkmens and "opening trade routes from their territories to Khiva, Bukhara and Northern India", as well as finding convenient and useful fortresses for the Russian military. [16, B.86.]. Ogahiy wrote about his visit: "On Tuesday, the 1st of Muharram (1235/20 (21) October 1819), the Russian ambassador Nikolai Nukuloyich arrived in Georgia and the governor of Tiflis, Alexei Petrovichdin. By order of the Khazrat Sahibkiran (Khan of Khiva Muhammad Rahimkhan I), Otchopar and Eshnazar the shiberghan went out to meet the ambassador and brought him to the courtyard of the mahram Khojash. And on Friday night, having appeared to the Russian ambassador, Yakubboy and Eshnazar the shiberghan joined him." [12, B.113.].

In 1841, during the discussion of the planned peace treaty between Khiva and Russia, the Russian ambassador Captain P. Nikiforov negotiated with the Khan of Khiva, Alloqli Khan, and due to the harsh treatment he received, Russian diplomacy ended in failure. [18, B.52.].

With the founding of the city of Orenburg, a third line of communication emerged. Since Central Asian merchants were initially not very active in trade with Orenburg, the tsarist government granted privileges to Central Asians to establish trade. The states also paid attention to the issue of customs duties in economic relations. The literature emphasizes that this issue was considered several times through embassies. The embassy, which initially considered the issue of not charging customs duties on embassy goods, was carried out by ambassador Shahbaba in 1647-1648, and a sample of the ambassador's letter to the Russian Tsar Mikhail Fyodorovich (1613-1645) (actually Alexei Mikhailovich (1645-1676) is also given. [19, B.41.]. H. Ziyoyev cites the following on this issue: "During the years 1736-1738, no duty was levied on trade in Orenburg. In 1739, a decree was issued to levy a duty of 3 kopecks for each sum of goods sold. This procedure continued until 1749. After that, the duty was increased from 3 kopecks to 5 kopecks. On this basis, Central Asian merchants, including merchants from the Khiva Khanate, traded in Orenburg. [11, B.111.]. However, they also tried to trade their goods in other parts of Russia. This was contrary to the interests of Russian merchants. Therefore, in 1755, merchants from Bukhara, Khiva, and in general, from the East were not allowed to go to Kazan and other Russian cities and trade with their goods. They could only be sent to the interior of Russia if, in addition to the border and internal duties of 13 kopecks, an additional duty of 10 kopecks per sum of goods was paid. This was a burden for the merchants of the Khanate, so they were forced to trade in Orenburg. However, they had the right to trade gold, silver, and precious stones duty-free in Orenburg, Moscow, and St. Petersburg. This situation caused objections from Russian merchants. Therefore, in 1763, the Russian government adopted a special decree not to allow Central Asian merchants to enter the interior of the country and thereby protect the interests of its merchants. [11, B.111.]. In turn, a small caravan with private goods of merchants was sent from Orenburg to Khiva. For example, in 1753, a trade caravan of Kozon merchants led by Murtaza Ayitov was sent to Khiva. The caravan traded in Khiva with various goods and returned to Orenburg. In this regard, I.I. Neplyuyev informed the government senate: "Tatar merchants



who were trading in Khiva came from there to Orenburg. According to the information about the state of trade, how they traded, Tatar merchants in Khiva traded freely and effectively. The good trade, coupled with the increase in gold in Bukhara and silver in Khiva, gives rise to hope that merchants from there will come to Orenburg." [11, B.79.].

"Firdaus ul Iqbal" tells about the Khorezm caravan that left Orenburg, the Russian trading post built on the banks of the Itil-Volga River, and returned to its homeland. The work reads: "My Khorezm caravan, full of goods, full of jewels, full of Chinese sand, countless Chinese sand, and countless French cloth," listing a large amount of copper, gold, Chinese silver, and French cloth [7, B.275.]. This indicates that large quantities of copper and silver were imported to Khorezm.

In the foreign trade of Khorezm, melons were considered a very popular agricultural product among melon crops. The Khorezm melon, which was described as having no equal in the East or the West, was sold in sun-dried pieces from Khorezm to distant cities in India and China. McGahan notes that dried fruits were the main export to Russia. He states that the quality of Khorezm melons was excellent, they were planted in large quantities, and they ripened mainly in late June and were the main food of the summer season, that the price of melons was determined depending on the type and were sold on average for 5 kopecks.

**CONCLUSION.** Trade between Central Asia and Russia was mainly in the form of complete goods. This played an important role in the growth of cities in Central Asia and the rise of trade and crafts. Merchants of the Khiva Khanate produced complete goods for the Russian market, especially a large and diverse range of textiles. At the end of the 18th century, the export of copper, iron, and other minerals and utensils made from them, which were previously prohibited, to Central Asia made trade between the two sides more effective.

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