



# HISTORICAL STUDIES AND HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY OF THE HISTORY OF TRADE AND ECONOMIC RELATIONS OF THE CENTRAL SOGDIA

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## ABSTRACT

*This article will cover the issues of historical science and historical geography of the history of trade and economic relations of Central Sogdia of the early medieval period. Based on rich historical sources, the author first made a scientific-comparative analysis and scientific conclusions on the coverage of the history of Central Sogdia in local and foreign historiography, as well as the study of historical geography.*

**KEYWORDS.** *Sogdia-Sogdiana, Central Sogdia, historical-cultural heritage, historiography and source studies, historical geography, historical-cultural regions, past of the peoples of Central Asia, the scale of archaeological research, Sogdian texts in Dunhuan foundation, collection of "Khojali documents", Armenian and Turkic-runic sources, Shatial rock records.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Information about Sogdia-Sogdiana can be found in the historical monuments of Sogdian, Chinese, ancient Turkic, Persian, Arabic, Armenian and Greek peoples of different eras. These are mainly epigraphic and written sources, covering approximately three thousand years of history. Such sources have a special role in the study of the artistry and trade and economic relations of the early medieval period of Sogdia.

Central Sogdia, its rich historical and cultural heritage, remained aside from consistent research until the second half of the XIX – early XX century. In the generalizing historical publications devoted to the history of the peoples of Central Asia, information about the period from the early 30-ies of the XX century to around 50-ies of our era, especially until the Arab invasion, was incredibly scarce and far-fetched. The reason for this is that the written sources on these important stages of the past have not been studied perfectly, and still very little has been found in the written monuments of this territory from its time to antiquity, in particular, the Arab invasion. In addition, archaeological research in the period under review was not developed on a large scale. Nevertheless, since the second half of the XIX century, a number of studies have emerged on the basis of generalization of science-based sources.

## 2. THEORY

It is known that in connection with economic and political interests since the middle of the XIX century, the interest of European countries in the historical and cultural past of the peoples of the East, in particular, Central Asia, has intensified. As a result, serious attention was paid to the research of sources on the history of the region. Originally, in 1851 year O.Iakin's work [1] on the history of the region based on Chinese sources was published. In the work, such as «Bey shu "(V century), "Soy shu" (beginning of VII century) and "Tan shu" (621-907 years), the information on the location, economy, management and culture of countries, territories, properties and regions in East Turkestan and Central Asia, mentioned in Chinese chronicles was reflected. The work later gave impetus to the implementation of important source-studies on the history of Sogdia. There are also some Chinese-language travel books [2] on the cultural life of the country and social processes, as well as some the Armenian-language [3] sources with information on the history of Sogdia. In 1877, V.Tomashek published his first monographic research based on Chinese, Arab – Persian sources with the aim of restoring the historical – geographical and political map of ancient Sogdia and early medieval Sogdia. In this work, the researcher thinks that the early Middle Ages covered the present Zarafshan (Sogdia of Samarkand and Bukhara) and Kashkadarya (South Sogdia) oases [4]. The separation of Sogdia geographically into these



components was also preserved in subsequent studies.

### 3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

By the end of the XIX century, on the initiative of scientists from England, France and Russia, large expeditions for the study of historical and cultural monuments of Central Asia began to be organized. Thanks to the activities of these expeditions, huge discoveries were made in the Central Asian region for the development of the historical science of that period. During the first expedition, the inscription "**Karabulghasun manuscript**", which was written in three languages, which are ancient Turkic, Chinese and Sogdia languages, was found by N.Yadrintsev in 1889[5]. The Danish scientist F.K.Andreas in 1904 identified the fact that one part of this inscription has been written in Sogdian [6]. On the basis of the Chinese-language resources obtained during the expedition, the information on the relations of the Turkic Khanate with the Chinese empire and international trade and economic relations was studied by E.Shavann [7]. In his study, the researcher has come up with important information on the status of Sogdia, its central cities in trade and economic relations.

### 4. DISCUSSION

In the development of the source of the history of Central Sogdia in this period, V.V.Bartold's contribution is incredibly large. In particular, the researcher's investigation on the history of Sogdia based on Chinese and Arabic – Persian sources is one of the important research in this regard [8]. In addition, the researcher draws his conclusions on the historical and geographical details of Turanzamin as a result of attracting a huge amount of resources in one of his works, on the periodization of the political, socio – economic history of Central Asia, as well as on the impact of Sogdia on the cultural development of the countries of the army [9]. In addition, the translation of Narshakhy's work "History of Bukhara" in 1897 headed by the researcher [10] became an important stage in the research of Persian sources. These studies served as an incentive factor in the study of the historical geography of the peoples of Central Asia, in particular, the political, economic, cultural history of Central Asia in the ancient and early Middle Ages. As noted above, since the end of the XIX century, major scientific expeditions began to be organized on the territory of Central Asia. In particular, the expeditions of the English, led by **A.Stain** [11], the French, led by **P.Pelo** [12] and the Russian - by **S.Oldenburgh** [13], resulted in a number of findings, including dozens of Sogdian written monuments in the territory of Eastern Turkistan.

The expedition, headed by A.Stain, was able to find the remains of the Sogdia post, along with several documents from the ruins of the border fortifications in the west of Dunhuan (the largest fortress city on the western edge of the Great Chinese wall) in 1904-1907. In the winter of 1914-1915, the head of the second Russian-Turkistan expedition to Dunhuan, S.F.Oldenburgh discovered plethora of ancient handcuffs from the local population as well as their fragments in large quantities. Due to the research, it became known that some of these findings were Sogdian [14]. The above-mentioned findings laid the groundwork for the emergence of a separate line of science known as "Sogdiaology".

The discovery of a new group of manuscripts led to the "re-discovery" of the previously mentioned in the sources, but forgotten the Sogdian language, as well as the accumulation of rare sources in the Sogdian language in the funds of the libraries of Berlin, Paris and London, as well as the Asian Museum (St Petersburg). For this reason, the first scientific research in the field was concentrated in the West. In particular, the initial translations of the Sogdian writing and the research on the grammar text were carried out by **K.Zaleman** [15], **F.V.K.Muller** [16], **R.Gotho** [17]. In addition, in 1917-1920, F.A.Rosenberg published three excerpts from the Sogdian texts in the Dunhuan foundation of the Asian Museum of SanktPeterburg [18]. As a result of the consistent research conducted by the German scientist **Kh.Rihelt** in 1928 – 1931 the remains of the Sogdian Mail found by the Stain's expedition were included in scientific circulation under the name "old letters" with their translation and comments into German [19]. However, the researcher could not achieve a complete interpretation of many terms and historical dates in these texts [20] because of which the research in this regard was then consistently continued.

Furthermore, the translations of the Sogdian texts were published[24] by different researchers in different years (in 1933, F.V.K.Müller and V. Lents [21], in 1937-1938 F.Walter [22], in the 1940s E.Valdshmidtva V.Lents [23], E.Benvenist and V.B.Khenning). These texts were mainly composed of Buddhist, Christian and **МОНИЙ СУТРА-ДИНИЙ ОЯТЛАРДАН**. By 1942, M.Y.Drezden gave full information about the research carried out prior to this in his work called "Sogdian bibliography" [25]. After long years of research in 1948 V.B.Khenning from the content of the "old letters" concluded that the remains of mail are associated with the events of the second decade of the IV century, more precisely, BC 313-317 years [26]. This conclusion was important in the next major research on trade-economic relations of Central Sogdia. In 1956, the memory inscription found at the **саяп (СТОЯНКА)** named Bugut in Mongolia (583-588 yy.) demonstrated that it was the Sogdian writing [27].



This study revealed the international influence of the Sogdian writing and language in the period of Turkic Khaganate and showed that it was a valuable source of socio-political and economic life in Khanate.

In the 60-70-ies of the XX century, new research of this and other texts was carried out. In Particular, F.V.K.Müller and K.G.Zaleman's work at the beginning of the XX century was revised by V.Zunderman and a new scientific publication appeared on the basis of the materials of the Berlin foundation of the Sogdian texts [28]. In addition, the researchers like O.Hansen, M.Boys, N.Ragoza have developed a complete description of religious sutras [29]. This study was of great importance to the study of the language of Sogdia as well as the study of the sources found in Central Asia, in particular from the region of Central Sogdia, related to the craftsmanship and commodity-money relations. In 1962-1963 the collections of the Sogdian documents of Mug mountains were published along with translations and comments by A.A.Freyman and his apprentices – M.N.Bogolubov, O.I.Smirnova and V.A.Livshits [30].

Particularly, the collection under the name "Economic documents", which includes the research of documents on financial life and economic issues of the country conducted by M.N.Bogolubov and O.I.Smirnova, was published in 1963. The collection reflects scientific approaches on 46 documents and is divided into the following categories: documents, receipts, expense documents, orders and declarations [31]. This research work is significant in the investigation of some areas of Sogdia craftsmanship, money management and commodity-money relationship.

In the 70-80-ies of the XX century, the research in the field of source studies was consistently continued. In particular, Armenian and Turkic-Runic sources dating back to Central Asia in the V-VII centuries were studied. Research of Turkic-Runic sources [32] provides additional information on the position of the Sogdians in the economic life of the Khaganate during the reign of the Turkic Khaganate. In addition, the translation of the work "Tarixi Tabari", which contains specific information on the factors of the development of the Sogdian crafts [33] was an important stage in this regard.

During this period, a number of studies have also been carried out in the study of Sogdia [34]. In particular, based on the results of nearly 75 years of the study of Sogdia, the generalizing work was published [35]. These results were reflected in the second volume of the work, as a bibliographic appendix [36]. In addition, M.M.Iskhakov [37] made certain conclusions and provided with necessary data in his research on Mug mountains documents and the Sogdian inscriptions. Also during this period, studies on historical-geographic information in Chinese

chronicles were continued and important conclusions were drawn [38].

In the source of the trade and economic relations of Sogdia, the study of the Sogdian memoirs, which were found in different regions, was also important. In particular, the inscriptions on the rock surface in the Ladakh region, located on the Tibetan border with India, were originally investigated by F.V.K.Müller, later by E.Benvenist, V.B.Henning, S.G.Klyashtorniy and V.A.Livshits [39]. The inscriptions left on rock tombs along the Kulansay and Teraksay valleys in the Talas Valley (East Turkistan) were also an important finding in the 60s of the XX century [40]. The rock paintings in the Karakorum Valley (Pakistan) as well as the discovery of a complex of Sogdian inscriptions paved the way for the implementation of important research in the field of source science. The Sogdian inscriptions in Shatial rocks were primarily studied by Kh.Khumbakh [41]. Later the English scientist N.Sims-Williams published picture evidence of this complex gathering in a special album [42].

Due to the great attention given by the government to the objective study of the historical processes taking place in the territory of our country during the years of independence, the research in the field of source science has reached a new level. For almost a century and a half, a new scientific approach to research and works created on primary sources, their analysis, comparison with new data obtained because of achievements in other areas of historical science and replenishment were based on the development of separate scientific schools in the field of source science in our country. In particular, in the early years of independence, M.M.Iskhakov's research has surfaced based on the study of the completion of the Sogdian inscriptions [43]. Moreover, on the basis of research and analysis of the documents related to Mug mountain, the researcher [44] and his descendants – A.Atakhujaev, Sh.Shoyakubov, B.Bobokulova accomplished productive work [45]. While A.Atakhujaev is currently conducting research in the field of source studies on the topic "Turkic-Sogdian relations" in the political, socio-economic and cultural processes of the early Middle Ages", Sh.Shoyakubov's research, important data and conclusions on the commodity-money relations of Sogdia has emerged.

In recent years, some Arab sources related to the history and geography of Sogdia were also investigated [46]. In addition, thanks to the research by the sinologist A.Khujaev, important Chinese language-based research on the participation of the Sogdian in trade processes, as well as their status in the history of Central Asia and the life of the Sogdian in China is being currently published [47]. In addition, consistent research by both local and foreign researchers continues on Turkic-Runic



records identified from a number of regions of Central Asia [48].

## 5. CONCLUSION

Due to the interest in the history of Sogdia, foreign specialists important carry out research on source studies, as well. In particular, based on the involvement of many sources, the French researcher **Eten de la Vaser** published his study [49], in which the researcher has come up with important data based on sources on the active participation of the irrigation in international trade and economic relations.

In conclusion, the research carried out since the middle of the XIX century on the resources that were important in the coverage of various aspects of the past, allowed to obtain certain information on the historical geography and trade and economic relations of Sogdia. However, due to the inadequacy of such sources in the study of the areas of craftsmanship, as well as various approaches implemented by researchers and the lack of a final solution in conclusions while studying available sources (such cases can be observed in the example of geographic data from Chinese sources, as well as different approaches to the research of Sogdian sources), we cannot pick sufficient information about the history of Central Sogdia. In our opinion, it is desirable to give scientific conclusions on the basis of a comparative analysis of existing written sources of data on the research conducted on craft products and coins of the early medieval period obtained during archaeological excavations carried out directly in the territory of Central Sogdia during the detailed coverage of the aims and the objectives.

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