
SILSILAT AS-SALATIN AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE

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ABSTRACT

Manuscripts play a significant role to disclose unknown pages of history. Hajji Mir Muhammad Salim's work "Silsilat as-salatin" is one of those providing huge and valuable information on some aspects of Central Asian history in the XVI - early XVIII centuries. Mainly, the work provides historical data on the types of land ownership, properties, measuring the length and distances, routes of communication and trade. Besides, the work contains information about waqf property and the chain of main religious personnel.

KEYWORDS: *Haji Mir Muhammad Salim, "Silsilat as-salatin", Sheibanids, Ashtarkhanids, suyurghal, waqf, routes.*

INTRODUCTION

"Silsilat as-salatin" is a rare and valuable source on the history of the peoples of Central Asia and neighbored Eastern countries in the 16th - early 18th centuries. However, the work became known to the scholarly world only in the XX century. It was compiled in 1143/1730-31 in India by Hajji Mir Muhammad Salim who was a native of Central Asia. Although "Silsilat al-salatin" is devoted to the political history of Central Asia and its relations with India, Iran, Afghanistan and Turkey, it also provides colossal authentic information on the economy, culture and geography of medieval Central Asia. The source brings information on such institutions as suyurghal, ikta, tanhah, waqf, on the construction of cults (mosques, madrasahs, khanakas, tombstones), social buildings (caravanserais, charsu, sardaba, etc.). Data on settlements, caravan routes, etc. are of great importance. Various information about prominent sheikhs, theologians, and others deserves researchers' attention.

MAIN PART

Illuminating the history of the arrival of Ashtrakhanid Hajji Yarmuhammad Khan in Turkestan under Sheibanid Iskandarkhan (963 / 1561-991 / 1583), the author reports that the Bukhara Khan allegedly offered Yarmukhammad to rule the country together. However, the offer was refused. After that, Iskandarkhan "allocated [him] as suyurghal [Suyurghal is a category of land ownership developed in the XIV-XV centuries and was mainly hereditary. Its owner was granted of administrative, judicial and tax immunity. In the XVI-XVII centuries, the term "suyurghal" was used in sources in the same sense with the term "ikta" and both meant a conditional land grant to the members of the royal house, sultans, military leaders, statesmen for special services to the throne, with the granting of economic and administrative-judicial rights] some cultivated land in [some] regions of the country" [2:100-112; 3:134-140]. It is characteristic that Hajji Yarmukhammadkhan was entitled to use the income from these lands only for his own needs and was completely exempted from taxes and duties [1-246].

Although the work does not indicate where these lands were located, it can be assumed that they were given in the Miyankal region. According to Mir Muhammad Salim, the last representative of

the Sheibanids on the Bukhara throne, Pirmukhammadkhan (1006 / 1598-1009/1601) in 1008/1599, assigned this area to Yarmukhammadkhan as a suyurghal [1:160]. And after the death of the latter during the reign of Ashtarkhanid Baki Muhammad Khan (1009 / 1601-1013 / 1605) “this region was granted to his descendants as a suyurghal” [1:163]. And under Ashtarkhanid Abd al-Azizkhan (1055/1645-1092/1681) Miyankal was considered a suyurghal (ikta) of Yarmukhammadkhan's great-grandsons - Kabul Muhammad Sultan and Tursun Muhammad Sultan [1:286]. The award (suyurghal) was depended on the decision of the supreme ruler. For example, he had the right to give several regions as suyurghal at once. About one of such cases (though not in the Bukhara Khanate), the work states the following. The ruler of Sefewid Iran, Shah Abbas I (945 / 1587-1038 / 1629) actively supported Rustam Sultan, the son of Ashtarkhanid khan Wali Muhammad (1013/1605-1020/1611), in his raids on Balkh. When the prince, having been defeated by the Balkh army in 1022/1613, fled to Herat, the shah ordered his governor of Herat to allocate the Asharkhanid sultan “as a suyurghal region Ubeh, Shafelai and some other areas” [1:187].

Suyurghal - (ikta) was awarded for various reasons. For example, the information provided about the relationship between the Bukhara Khanate and Khorezm in the first half of the 17th century is a clear statement. Mir Muhammad Salim mentions such a case. In 1052/1642, Khiva ambassadors arrived in Bukhara to enlist military assistance from Ashtarkhanid Nadr Muhammad Khan (1051 1642-1055 / 1645). The latter granted their request. Besides, the khan “allocated fertile land in the village of Vabkend” to the Khiva ambassadors who for political reasons could not return to their homeland and they settled there. According to the author of “Silsilat as-salatin”, the ikta inherited their descendants even during the years of compiling the aforementioned work [1:209]. There is some information about the institute of waqf [Wakf means movable and real estate (land, canals, mills, shops, caravanserais, etc.) donated by the sovereign or other persons in favor of religious institutions such as mosques, madrassas, charitable institutions, etc.] in “Silsilat al-salatin” [2:63-78]. In particular, it is reported that Shekbanid Abd al-Aziz Khan (947 / 1540-957 / 1550) converted his rich library into waqf, “which was very famous at that time and is still used by scientists” [1:121] in the first half of the 18th century.

It is noteworthy to mention the information which highlights the transformation of various material values into waqf. According to Mir Muhammad Salim, shortly after accession to the throne of Bukhara, in 1009/1601, Ashtarkhanid Baki Muhammad Khan managed to expel the last representatives of the Sheibanids and their supporters from Balkh. Some of them arrived in Isfahan to Shah Abbas I. Among the gifts they brought to the Shah “was a piece of a priceless diamond (almas)” [1:164a].

Mir Muhammad Salim recounts the history of this jewel as follows. In 951/1544, after being defeated by the Afghan Sherkhan, the ruler of India Baburid Humayun (937/1530, 947/1540; again 962/1555, 63/1556) appealed for support to Safavid Tahmasp I (930/1524 - 984/1576). He presented a large diamond taken from the state treasury as a gift to the Shah. Subsequently, that diamond fell into the hands of Sheibanid Abd al-Mumin (assassinated in 1598) when he conquered Khorasan. And when some Sheibanid emirs were forced to leave Balkh due to the onslaught of Baki Muhammad-khan, they took the precious stone with them and, arriving in Andkhuy, gave it to Muhammad Salim Sultan who was the son of Pirmukhammad Khan, who was there. The latter, having gone to Iran, as noted above, presented this diamond to Shah Abbas I. According to Mir Muhammad Salim, the cost of a diamond was equal to 30 thousand miskals of gold [one miskal is equal 4,8-5 gram]. Having sold it for such a price, the Shah bought various property and land and turned them into the waqf of the tomb of Imam Ali [1:164 a,b].

Furthermore, “Silsilat as-salatin” provides interesting information about the construction religious and other types of buildings in the cities of Central Asia and Northern Afghanistan in the XVI-XVII centuries.

According to the author's testimony, special attention was paid to the construction of religious institutions under Sheibanid Abd al-Aziz Khan. Considerable funds were allocated for these purposes by the khan himself. So, at his behest, many wakf structures were built, including mosques, madrasahs, among which Mir Muhammad Salim singles out a madrasah near the Sheikh Jalal gate, a cathedral mosque and khanakah (dervish monastery) in the Juybar area in west of Bukhara [1:120b]. By his own order, a tomb was built for the spiritual mentor of the khan Sheikh Jalal in 951/1544 [[1:120b].

Outlining the history of Abdallah Khan II (991/1583-1006/1598), Mir Muhammad Salim writes that the khan, "clearing the litter of enemies" from the territory to Ulughtagh and Kichiktagh, ordered to build a minaret next to a similar structure erected by Timur on one of these mountains. Since Timur at one time imprinted on the tower the words: "If any of the knights of the battle arena seizes these countries after us, then in his reign he will rise to similar heights", Abdallah-khan ordered to write the following on the minaret: "Who will reach these places, let him remember us with good prayer" [1:125b].

In 985/1577, by order of Abdallah Khan, a karavansarai which had six gates was built in Bukhara. And in the year of his official accession to the throne (991/1583), the khan ordered to build a covered market in Bukhara [[1:127b]. According to the author, it was a magnificent building; trade was always lively here. In general, under Abdallah Khan, there were built many mosques, madrassas, khanakas, mausoleums, etc. The geography of these structures is extensive in the territories of Maverannah, Khorasan, Turkestan, Dasht-i Kipchak [1:147b]. Mir Muhammad Salim claims that, while still being the commander-in-chief of the country's troops, Abdallah-khan contributed to the construction of 1001 karavansarais, 1001 sardabas and other structures. For example, "a magnificent khanakah and a mosque" were erected in the residence of Kasym Sheikh Azizan [Kasim Sheikh Azizan was one of the prominent sheikhs who played a significant role in the political life of Mawerannah in the 16th century. Born in Kerminah. Died in 986/1578.] in 964/1557 in Kerminah [4:866-876].

The successor of Abdallah Khan II, Abd al-Mu'min Khan who was known for his aggressiveness and cruelty nevertheless made sure that in Balkh, where he was for a certain time (991/1583-1006/1598) as heir to the throne, supported to erect various buildings. Among them, "Silsilat al-salatin" notes a portal and a dome on the Khoja Abu Nasr Pars tomb, the portal of the Balkh arch, some structures on the Khoja Ukkasha tomb, and the dome of the covered market Baba Janbaz [4:155ab].

The information in "Silsilat al-salatin" about the expansion of the Balkh fortress is interesting. Particular attention was paid to strengthening its western and southern parts. Daily hired laborers (mazduron) were also employed in these works. The control over them was very strict. According to Mir Muhammad Salim, the one who showed negligence was laid in the wall instead of clay and brick. Their skeletons were found in the destroyed parts of the wall and after a century and a half, that is, during the years of compiling this work. According to the historian, the work continued throughout the year and was completed in 995/1586. As a result, the length of the rampart reached 20 thousand steps (about 14 km) [5:117,120].

The following information belongs to the period of the Ashtarkhanid rule on the issue within the research. The Sheikh Shana Jami Mosque in Bukhara was built by the order of Baki Muhammad Khan [1:168b]. A "magnificent charbag [park]" erected in Balkh is also mentioned here. Another Ashtarkhanid, Vali Muhammad Khan, ordered to build several charbaghs around the tomb of Imam Ali, which later became widely known [1:170a]. Mir Muhammad Salim reports on two charbaghs erected in Mecca at the behest of Imamkuli Khan (1020/1611-1051/1642) [1: 1-204 a].

Theologians, scientists, calligraphers and other cultural figures studied in the madrasah built at the behest of Nadr Muhammad Khan in Balkh in 1021/1612 [1:265ab]. On the 15th of Sha'ban

1070/26 April 1660 during the reign of Subhankuli-Sultan in Balkh, the construction of another madrasah was started opposite the tomb of Khoja Abu Nasr Parsa. Mir Muhammad Salim reports that his first brick was laid by Khoja Abd al-Ghaffar, the second by Mir Muhammad Aliy and the third by Aga Khan Azizan. Subhankuli Sultan himself handed bricks and clay to these people [1:269b]. Two magnificent madrasahs were built during the reign of Abd al-Aziz Khan [1:296b].

It must be especially noted rich geographical material presented in “Silsilat al-salatin”. Mir Muhammad Salim names dozens of settlements, sometimes indicating their exact location. For instance, Khargun in half-farsakh (3-3.5 km) away from Mashhad, Pul-i salar in four farsakhs (24-28 km) away from Herat (fol. 1596), Davlatabad in 3.5 farsakhs (18-20 km) from away Isfahan (fol. 1766), Jizmend in a half-farsakh (3-3.5 km-) away from Bukhara (fol. 202a), Aksaray in four kurukhs (8 km) away from Kunduz (fol. 233a), Palaspush in a farsakh (6-7 km) away from Balkh (sheet 2336), Band-i khan four farsakhs (24 km) away from Merv (sheet 2496). The data of the works (fol. 1256) on the area of Dasht-i Kipchak are also interesting: 11,000 Farsakhs (6,000 km) in length, 600 Farsakhs (3,600 km) in width.

Attention is drawn to the information of “Silsilat al-salatin” about five roads connecting Balkh with Kabul. Mir Muhammad Salim writes that “from the dome of Islam Balkh to Kabul, only five routes are known, along which caravans of merchants and couriers moved”. These are Badjgah, Buyni Kara, Gurs, Aybak and Kunduz roads. The shortest one Gurs was equal to 98 kurukh-i jaribi, that is 460 km.

Here one kurukh is equal to 4.8 km, and not 2 km, as was usual. Mir Muhammad Salim reports, that “the distance between Balkh and Kabul, if one travels along the Bajgah road, is almost 55,5 farsakhs [Davidovich gave different length to farsakh: 8,5 km; 9,5 km; 9253 m]; each farsakh of which is equal to 9750 gaz-i bazzazi, or 114 kurukh-i jaribi, each kurukh-i [jaribi] which is equal to 5000 gaz-i buzzazi, each gaz-i buzzazi is equal to 42 angusht” [1:230b]. In an arithmetic calculation (for which the initial figure was taken to be the size of the angusht in the length of 2.28 cm) [5:109], we received the following data: one gaz-i buzzazi is equal to 95.76 cm, one kurukh-i jaribi is 4788 m (4.8 km), one farsakh - 9347 m (9.3 km) [5:120]. Thus, the length of the five mentioned roads from Balkh to Kabul was: 1) via Bajgah 55.5 farsakhs, or 114 kurukh-i jaribi (516-547 km); 2) by Buyni Kara 123 kurukh-i jaribi (590 km); 3) by Gurs 98 kurukh-i jaribi (460 km); 4) by Aybak 103 kurukh-i jaribi (494 km); 5) by Kunduz 140 kurukh-i jaribi (672 km). “Silsilat al-salatin” contains extensive information about the settlements located on these routes, the distance between each of these destinations. The seasons are also indicated when one could start moving along these roads, etc. (1:230a-231a).

The information “Silsilat al-salatin” about prominent theologians, scientists and cultural figures is not the same in terms of its volume. Sometimes the author is limited only to mentioning this or that person on some occasions. Thus, the prominent theologian Khoja Ubaydallah Ahrar (806/1404–895/1490) gave his name to Sheibanid Ubaydallah Khan (born in 892/1486). The latter's mentors were: Mawlana Yarmuhammad in reading Koran, Ruzbehkhan Isfahani in hadith, Imam Bukhari nicknamed Saniy, Mawlana Mahmud Azizan in fiqh, Mawlana Mir Ali in calligraphy [1:116b,117a].

The work also contains valuable information about one sphere of the calligraphic school of Central Asia. The aforementioned Mir Ali was a student of Mawlana Zayn ad-Din Mahmud, and the latter studied in the lessons of Mawlana Sultan Ali Mashhadi. A kind of “genealogy” of this school looks like this: Mawlana Mir Ali - Mawlana Zayn ad-Din Mahmud - Mawlana Sultan Ali Meshhedi - Mawlana Azhar - Mawlana Ja'far al-Sattar - Khoja Mir Ali Tabrizi [1:117a].

Sheikh Jalal was the mentor (murshid) of Sheibanid Abd al-Aziz Khan, as is known from the “Silsilat al-Salatin”. The work contains information about the teachers of the latter. Their “genealogy” is as follows: Sheikh Jalal - Shams ad-Din Muhammad Ruhi - Mawlana Sa'ad-Din

Kashghari - Mawlana Nizam ad-Din Hamush - Khoja Ala ad-Din Attor - Khoja Baha ad-Din Naqshband [1:120b].

The work also mentions such poets as Turabi, Nakhli, Mushfiki [1:126b, 127b, 196b, 197a, 198b], the scholar and nadim of Ashtarkhanid Imamkuli Khan, Maulan Yusuf Qarabaghi, scientists and cultural figures such as Mawlana Sufi, Khoja Yadgar, etc. [1:197a, 295b, 296a).

CONCLUSION

In general, the materials of "Silsilat al-salatin" clarify many previously unknown and little-known aspects of history and the history of culture of the peoples of Central Asia and neighboring countries of the East in the 16th - early 18th centuries. The work undoubtedly deserves further thorough study by historians, orientalists, philologists, etc.

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