

In Historical Documents and Sources Explanation of the Diplomatic Relations of the Ashtarkhan Dynasty and the Ottoman Empire

Umidjon Bakoev¹

Abstract: This article analyzes the diplomatic relations between the Ashtarkhanid dynasty and the Ottoman Empire, which ruled the Bukhara Khanate, through sources and scientific literature. The Ashtarkhanids, who ruled the Bukhara Khanate, which played an important role in the history of Uzbek statehood, developed friendly relations with the Ottoman state and relied on their military support. In foreign policy, the Ashtarkhanis had political relations with Iran, India, China, Kashgar, Russia and a number of other countries.

Key words: telkhis, weapon, sultan, diplomacy, qizilbash, ambassador, political letter.

Literature analysis. Information about the diplomacy of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty and the Ottoman Empire can be found from local sources in the works of Muhammad Yusuf Munshi “History of Muqimkhani”, Muhammad Amin Bukhari’s “Muhit al-tawarikh”, Khoja Mir Muhammad Salim’s “Silsilat us-salatin”.

In the work “History of Muqimkhani”, written by Muhammad Yusuf Munshi, dedicated to Muhammad Muqimkhan, a representative of the Ashtarkhani dynasty who ruled Balkh in 1702-1707, there is interesting information about the political relations of the Ashtarkhani rulers with a number of countries. There is valuable information about the diplomatic relations with Turkey, Kashgar and a number of other countries[4.43-44].

Muhammad Amin Bukhari’s work “Muhit al-Tawarikh” contains interesting information about the economic and political situation of the Bukhara Khanate. Muhammad Amin Bukhari in his work “Muhit-at tawarikh” mentioned that an ambassador came to the khan from Rum (Turkey. U.B.) and Kashgar. It is recorded in the work that the ambassador of Rum gives Muhammad Hungar’s greeting to Subkhanqulikhan. Ambassadors will live in Dar al-Salam Bukhara for one year. After that, they sent Subkhanqulikhan Mominboy Yobu as an ambassador to accompany the ambassador of Rum[2.102].

“Silsilat-us-Salatin” written by Khwaja Mir Muhammad Salim contains copies of the correspondence of the Ashtarkhan rulers with the rulers of countries such as India, Iran, and Turkey. The letters in the work are of great importance in the study of the political relations of the Bukhara Khanate with these countries. Historian scholar Azamat Ziya defended his candidacy dissertation on the work

¹ Bukhara State University
Specialization in history (by direction and type of activity)
1st stage master student
Bukhara, Uzbekistan
+99893 080-78-28
umidjonbaqoyev7@gmail.com



“Silsilat-us-Salotin”. In his candidacy, he studied and analyzed the political relations of the Ashtarkhans with Turkey, Iran, and India.

Ahmed Faridun Bey’s collection of letters “Majmuayi munshut us-salatin” was also used to cover the topic. This letter contains copies of the ambassadorial letters of the Ashtarkhan rulers with the sultans of the Ottoman Empire.

Also, a collection and a number of archival documents on the foreign relations of the two countries have been published. These archival documents were widely used by Mehmet Saray and Aleksandr Vasilyev in their research.

Turkish historian Mehmet Saray analyzed the political relations of the Central Asian khanates with the Ottoman Empire through archival documents, letters and sources.

In the researches of foreign scientist A. Burton, the genealogy and history of the dynasties and rulers of the Bukhara Khanate in 1550-1702, mainly the diplomatic and trade relations of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty with the neighboring countries were covered.

In his research, Russian historian Aleksandr Vasiliev analyzed the political and cultural relations between Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire in the middle of the 16th century and the beginning of the 20th century through archival documents, political letters and local sources. This research of his is of great importance in the study of the foreign relations of the Ashtarkhanids and the Ottoman Empire.

In the years of independence, Zumrad Rahmonkulova defended her candidate's thesis on the history of economic, political and cultural relations between Central Asia and the Ottoman Empire in the early 16th-20th centuries.

Results. Bukhara Khan Ashtarkhani ruler Baqi Muhammad Khan (1601-1605) sent his ambassadors to the palace of the Ottoman ruler in order to recover Khurasan from Iran. [5.73]. In his letter to the sultan, Baqi Muhammad Khan recalled the military alliances between Sultan Suleiman the Lawful and Shayban ruler Baraq Khan, and Murad III and Abdullah Khan II. He reminded about the actions taken against the Safavids who ruled in Iran at one time and informed about the plans to recapture Khurasan [20.88].

For this reason, Baqi Muhammad Khan asked the Sultan for military assistance. Baqi Muhammad Khan sent a letter with the ambassadors. The Ottoman devan discussed this letter and submitted its translation to the Sultan for consideration along with the Devan’s decision. Ismishchi Hasan Pasha, one of the ministers of Devon, was instructed to draw up a special telex paper for the sultan, to show the nature of the problem and the way to solve it. In Telkhis, it is stated that Baqi Muhammad Khan asked for cannons (guns) and cannons to fight against the Redheads[17.10].

The Uzbek rulers (meaning the Shaibanis. U.B.) seriously helped the Ottoman Empire in the fight against the Shiites. Therefore, the ambassador should not be rejected. However, the Ottoman sultan made peace with the Safavids on favorable terms and did not want to go to a conflict with Shah Abbas.

But in such a situation, the sultan's cabinet suggested to Davudbek, the Beklarbeg of the Ottomans in Shirvan, to send 20 tofans (rifles) and three cannons to the Ashtarkhan ruler by sea[20.88]. Ottoman ruler Mehmed III (1595-1603) sent 20 rifles and 3 cannons to Baqi Muhammad Khan[6.79-80]. The Ottoman sultan was in favor of maintaining good relations with the Khans of Bukhara. On the other hand, the tense situation was in favor of peace with Europe and King Abbas I of Anatolia. In such a situation, Mehmed III was forced to accept the appeal of Baqi Muhammad Khan. He wrote a reply letter to Baqi Muhamadkhan and informed about his decision. The Venetian ambassador, who was in the sultan's palace at that time, said that in 1603, the war between the Ottomans and the Safavids began with the delivery of weapons to Bukhara. But Shah Abbas did not attack the khanate, and Baqi Muhammad Khan did not use Ottoman weapons at this time[20.89].

The war between the Ottomans and the Safavids, which started in 1603, ended with the conclusion of a treaty of friendship in 1612. However, despite this agreement, both countries prepared for



war[20.89]. After the death of Baqi Muhammad Khan in 1605, Vali Muhammad Khan (1605-1611) ascended the throne of Bukhara Khanate. There is no information about his diplomatic relations with the Ottoman state.

We know from historical sources that there were friendly relations between Vali Muhammad Khan and Shah Abbas I of Iran. A conspiracy was organized against Wali Muhammad Khan in the country, and when he was helpless, he fled to Iran with his 2 sons to Abbas I. Abbas I welcomed the guest with great respect for the 3-hour journey from Isfahan to Dawlatabad, and 20 thousand soldiers lined up on the way of the two rulers[21.114]. In 1611, Vali Muhammad Khan marched from Iran to Movarounnahr with 80,000 troops[1.80]. In August 1611[19.120][11.107], Imamquli, relying on Mowarunnahr officials and nobles, defeated Wali Muhammad Khan in battle and executed him[16.209]. In 1611, after Vali Muhammad Khan, the throne was occupied by Imam Quli Khan. He is active in foreign policy and has established diplomatic relations with Turkey, India, China and other countries.

In 1616-1617, the Ottoman sultan Ahmed I (1603-1617) and Imam Quli Khan conducted diplomatic relations in order to fight against the Safavids. Imamquli Khan cited the death of his father in Puli Salor as the reason for these actions. With the sudden death of Ahmad II in December 1617, diplomatic relations between Imam Quli Khan and Ahmad II were broken. [18.145]. Although the Ottoman Empire did not want to break relations with Iran, some events forced Murad IV (1623-1640) to march to Revon and Baghdad. Murad IV sent a letter to Imam Qulikhan suggesting a joint attack against Iran[17.10]. The sources do not provide any information about how Imam Qulikhan responded to this letter. We only know that during this period there were diplomatic relations between Imam Quli Khan and the Shah of Iran, Abbas I[15.27].

In 1624-1625, ambassadors from the Ottoman Empire came to Bukhara. The main goal of the embassy was to recapture the city of Baghdad from Iran. In addition, the Ottoman sultan expected the ruler of Bukhara to fight together against the Safavid and Mongol rulers. [20.92].

In the last years of Imamquli Khan's reign, he became blind and called his brother Nadr Muhammad Khan from Balkh and handed over the throne (1642). In order to strengthen his power in the khanate, Nadr Muhammad Khan tried to limit the position of several emirs. The emirs who were dissatisfied with the khan elevated Abdulaziz to the throne as khan. After hearing this news, Nadr Muhammad Khan fled towards Balkh [14.261-266]. In order to regain the throne, Nadr Muhammad asked for help from Shah Jahan (1626-1658), the king of Iran Abbas II (1642-1666) and the Turkish Sultan. After this event, Baburites occupied Balkh and Badakhshan and ruled these areas for two years. By 1647, Balkh returned to Nadr Muhammad[14.266]. On March 30, 1649, Nadr Muhammad Khan sent ambassadors headed by Abdumannan to Istanbul. The ambassador sends valuable gifts to the court of Sultan Mehmed IV (1648-1687): 5 precious goblets, a sword and dagger decorated with precious stones, 10 magnificent horses, 27 cubits of gold cloth, a saddle and harness decorated with gold [18.257]. The Ottoman ruler sent letters to Abdulaziz Khan and Nadr Muhammad Khan to improve the relationship between father and son. [5.358-359]. In addition, the Ottoman sultan wrote a letter to the Safavid king Abbas II and the Baburi ruler Shah Jahan, asking them to help restore the rule of Nadr Muhammad Khan. [5.343]. But these actions did not give results, in 1651 Subkhanquli Khan took away the throne of Balkh from his father, and Nadr Muhammad Khan, who went on pilgrimage, died in Simnan (Iran) in the middle of the summer months of this year. [14.266]. Abdulaziz Khan established diplomatic relations with many countries, and in 1675 he sent ambassadors to the Ottoman city of Istanbul. In the letter of the embassy, Abdulaziz Khan asked the Sultan to help him fight against the governor of Balkh, Subkhan Qulikhan. In response to the letter, the sultan said that he could not help Abdulaziz Khan. The aged Abdulaziz Khan died in 1681 while he was on a pilgrimage to Mecca[20.92].



In 1689, the Ottoman sultan Suleiman II (1687-1691) sent a letter in response to the embassy of the ruler of Bukhara, Subhan Quli Khan. The letter was titled "We are pleased with the loyalty of the ruler of Bukhara, Sayyid Subhan Quli Khan, and stated that he had sent an ambassador named Abdulmominbi, that he was deprived of ties of friendship and loyalty, and that his intention to perform Hajj was accepted[7.62].

In response, Subhan Quli Khan sent a letter to the Sultan, telling about his campaigns in Khurasan, and also stating that he had defeated the Kalmyks and captured Turkestan in his letter, and expressed to the Sultan the need to unite and strengthen ties. [20.92]. Muhammad Yusuf Munshi's "History of Muqimkhani" contains a letter written by Ottoman sultan Ahmed II (1691-1695) to Ashtarkhani ruler Subhan Quli Khan. According to Armeny Vamberi, a Hungarian astrologer and tourist, Subhan Quli Khan sent ambassadors with gifts and greetings to Turkey. [21.140]. In response to the greetings, the Ottoman ruler Sultan Ahmed II sent his ambassadors to Bukhara under the leadership of Mustafa Chovush. The ambassadors who arrived in 1102 (1691) brought with them a political letter. In his work, Muhammad Yusuf Munshi talks about the embassy and notes that along with the letter, Mustafa Chovush came to Bukhara as an ambassador with various precious stones, Arabian horses, colorful fabrics and other gifts. The main purpose of the embassy was to fight together with the Ashtarkhanid rulers against the Shiites of Iran. The ambassador was received and shown special respect. Muhammad Yusuf Munshi writes in his work, "*At no time did ambassadors come from the capital of Rome, Istanbul, Kashgar, or China. All this was done only during the reign of the supreme ruler Subhonqulikhan*[1.154]".

Muhammad Amin Bukhari in his work "Muhit-at tawarikh" mentioned that an ambassador came to the khan (meaning Subkhanqulikhan U.B) from Rum (Turkey) and Kashgar. It is noted in the work that the ambassador of Rum gave the greeting of Muhammad Hungar (Ahmad II) to Subkhanqulikhan. Ambassadors will live in Dar al-Salam Bukhara for one year. After that, Subhanquli Khan sent Mominbai Yabu to accompany the ambassador of the Ottoman Empire. [2.102].

In his letter, Ahmed II wishes Subhan Quli Khan good health, states that it is necessary to cleanse the land of infidel farangs and qizilbash, and form an alliance against Iran. In his letter, he writes down the victories of the Ottomans over Europe, the fact that the Europeans came to Orkhan region and attacked the property of the Islamic people, and were able to resist them. He wrote in his letter that he would send his invincible soldiers against the Farangs and that they should act together and clear the beautiful Iraqi valleys of foreigners. [1.154-155].

Armenian Vamberi writes, "No matter how much Subhan Quli Khan was a devout Muslim and respected the caliph very much, he could not transfer his countless Uzbek soldiers to the other side of the Amudarya in response to the above-mentioned pompous letter of Rum (Ottoman Empire)[21.143]". Subhan Quli Khan could not take any action in response to this letter. Because internal conflicts in the khanate did not allow this during this period.

It is known from history that Balkh was the second capital of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. Balkhni was the heir to the throne, and sometimes he managed state affairs on his behalf.

As a separate khanate, Balkh also conducted an independent policy. This indicates the weakening of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. Muhammad Muqim Khan (1695-1707), who ruled Balkh, sent his ambassadors to Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730) of the Ottoman Empire and conducted an independent foreign policy. He sent ambassadors led by Baqibi Turkman to Sultan Ahmad III of the Ottoman Empire[12.197]. This ambassador's letter is included in the work "Silsilat us-salatin" by Khwaja Mir Muhammad Salim[3.328a-331a]. In the letter, Muhammad Muqim Khan informed about the death of his grandfather Subkhan Quli Khan, expressed his displeasure with the fact that Ubaydullah II took the throne due to the support of the Bukhara emirs, and that he should take the throne of Bukhara as the



crown prince[12.197]. At the end of the letter, it is written that a sermon was read in his name in Balkh[12.198][13.109].

In 1703[8.22], Ashtarkhanid ruler Ubaidullah Khan II (1702-1711) sent ambassadors led by Khoja Mahmud Amin to Istanbul to congratulate Sultan Ahmed III (1703-1730) on his accession to the throne. In his letter, Ubaidullah Khan II mentioned his successes, i.e. his victory over the Kalmyks and Kazakh tribes and his march to Khorezm[20.97].

Ubaidullah Khan II writes in his letter: *“We are fighting against the enemies of our religion. Muslims should help each other wherever they are. This is the commandment of our religion. We are ready to fight the enemies of our kingdom. This is our mission[15.30]”*.

Ottoman Sultan Ahmad III wrote in response to this letter: *“We received the letter you wrote through your ambassador expressing your friendship to us. We also pray for the continuation of our old relationship[17.16]”*.

In response to this letter, Ubaidullah Khan II sent another ambassador and wrote in the letter: *“Thank you sir for your letter. We are working for the citizens of our country to live well. We need each other’s help[17.16]”*.

In 1711, after Ubaidullah Khan II, Abulfayz Khan occupied the throne. In 1719, Abulfayz Khan (1711-1747) sent his guard Allahberdi as an ambassador to Istanbul, the capital of the Ottoman Empire. In Abulfaiz Khan’s letter, he wrote: *“We are managing the throne left by my father, according to Islamic traditions, putting the interests of the people first. Our respect for you is increasing day by day. Our ambassador will give more detailed information about our situation[15.32]”*. In the reply letter sent to the Ottoman sultan Ahmad III Abulfayz Khan, it was written: *“We have received your letter sent by your ambassador. We were very happy to read it. We will try to make our friendship eternal[15.32]”*.

In 1720, Abulfayz Khan sent ambassadors headed by Khoja Avaz Muhammad to Istanbul for the second time. In the letter, Abulfayz Khan expressed his thoughts about friendship and loyalty. *In 1721, Abulfayz Khan sent an ambassador named Abdusami Yasovul Khan to the Ottoman Empire for the third time.* Abulfayz Khan expressed his enmity towards Iran through the ambassador. The Ottoman sultan did not mention any practical activities in his reply letter[15.32].

In 1722, Abulfayz Khan sent an ambassador named Nematullah to Istanbul.

The embassy’s letter reads: *“It became known to us that the Russians and the Kalmyks were hostile to the people of Islam. We are brothers in religion, but they are hostile towards us. Now our goal is to fight against these two infidels together with us on this side and you on the other side[15.32]”*. In the letter sent by the Sultan of the Ottomans to Abulfayz Khan, it was written: *“We also support the peaceful and peaceful life of your people[17.18]”*. The Ottoman sultan did not express any opinion on the above opinion of Abdulfaiz Khan about fighting against the Kalmyks and Russians.

Conclusion. During the rule of the Ashtarkhanids, which lasted for more than one hundred and fifty years, diplomatic relations with the Ottoman state were carried out relatively more. During the reign of Baqi Muhammad Khan, Subkhan Quli Khan and Ubaidullah II, political relations became relatively stronger. Although the practical aspects of the letters have not always been realized, they are historically important sources for studying the history of relations between Central Asian khans and Turkish sultans. In the letters, the relationship of the rulers to each other, mainly taking the path of agreement, was continued during the reign of each ruler. In this case, studying the subtle aspects of embassy relations is of particular importance.

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