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## Arminius Vambery and the urban culture of Samarkand

European essays on the journeys to distant regions had a great influence on the formation of ideas about the rest of the world. In early works, discursive structures of romanticization and idealization of other countries were usually presented. As knowledge and the historical development of European countries in the literature describing journeys accumulated, there arose binarism: the confrontation of the modern West with the historical stagnation of the “other”.<sup>1</sup> Edward Said’s book *Orientalism*<sup>2</sup> caused a wave of research that examined the ways in which writers of various journeys represented other cultures.

Travelers, diplomats, orientalists from Europe and Russia, who visited the oases of Central Asia from the beginning of the 19th century until the Russian invasion, had their own ideas about local peoples and cities. After the invasion of the region by the Russian Empire, new discourses arose in the perception of its residents and cities. In this regard, ideas about one of the ancient cities of Central Asia, Samarkand, its urban structure, and its culture on the eve of the invasion of the Russian Empire are of a great interest.

In the last years of the existence of Samarkand as a part of the Bukhara emirate, it was visited by the Hungarian orientalist A. Vambery (1832–1913), who left us valuable records of his observations. The purpose of this article is to study what Samarkand and his society were in the 1860s, when A. Vambery visited it. This paper focuses on the analysis of data related to the symbolically significant places, monuments, and events in Samarkand in the first half of the 1860s.<sup>3</sup> Of great interest is the data on the Bukharan Emir Muzaffar (1860–1885), who attached special importance to Samarkand as a holy city and the former capital of Timur. Apart from the Islamic shrines and Timur’s former citadel, the study of urban identity, reflected in citywide and region-wide sports competitions, deserves special attention. Particular attention is paid to the analysis of Vambery’s views on Samarkand, its culture and society. Russian orientalist Venyukov (1832–1901) admitted that among the researchers who described Samarkand in detail until 1873, N. Khanykov, A. Vambery and A. Khoroshkhin stand out.<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Paul SMETHURST: ‘Introduction.’ In: Kuehn, Julia, and Paul Smethurst, eds. *Travel Writing, Form, and Empire: The Poetics and Politics of Mobility*, Routledge, 2008, 1.

<sup>2</sup> Edward SAID: *Orientalism*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> This article has been prepared with financial support from the European Regional Development Fund – Project “Sinophone Borderlands: Interaction at the Edges” (science project no. CZ.02.1.01/0.0/0.0/16\_019/0000791)

<sup>4</sup> Mikhail VENYUKOV: ‘Materialy dlya voyennago obozreniya russkikh granits v Azii. Devyatyy uchastok: Nagorno-Turanskiy.’ In: *Voyennyi sbornik*, Tom, LXXXIX. 1, 1873: 50.

A. Vambéry's travels in Central Asia were published in English (1864, 1865) and German (1873). The German edition differs from the English edition in that the book was supplemented and corrected by the author himself. Vambéry's book was later translated into many languages, including Russian. In addition, A. Vambéry outlined his views on the society and culture of Central Asia in a number of his other publications.

The views of Russian and Soviet scientists on the scientific heritage of A. Vambéry concerning the culture of the peoples of Central Asia were contradictory. The Russian diplomat A. Tatarinov read Vambéry's papers, and characterized him as an expert on the "Asian dialects".<sup>5</sup> After the invasion of the biggest part of Central Asia by the Russian Empire, and after critical assessments of the policy of the Russian Empire by A. Vambéry, since the 1870s, estimates of the publications of A. Vambéry have become more negative among Russian military orientalists.<sup>6</sup> Obviously, the discourse formed among the military orientalists of the Russian Empire in the 1870s retains its influence among some Russian orientalists even in the Soviet period. V. Romodin supposed that in Vambéry's book on the journey to Central Asia, there is a strong influence of the discourse that belittles the Eastern peoples and ascribes to Muslim peoples "guile," "inhumanity," "savagery" and other negative features.<sup>7</sup> More detailed and diverse reviews of A. Vambéry's journey have been reflected in a number of publications based on modern methodologies.<sup>8</sup>

To understand the characteristics of A. Vambéry's perception of Muslim peoples and their representation in his publications, the identity of the orientalist himself is an important factor. Mandler claims that the identity of Vambéry influenced his political and academic works, significantly complicating the simplified picture of Orientalism that Said depicts.<sup>9</sup> Sarkozy, analyzing the complex levels of identity of A. Vambéry, notes that the education in the madrasah influenced Vambéry's cultural attachment to the Ottoman form of Islam.<sup>10</sup> I support this observation and my analysis of A. Vambéry's publications on Sa-

<sup>5</sup> Aleksandr TATARINOV: *Semimesyachnyy plen v Bukharii. Ripol Klassik*, 1867, 1.

<sup>6</sup> Mikhail VENYUKOV: *Rossiya i Vostok. Sobraniye geograficheskikh i politicheskikh statey*. Sankt-Peterburg, 1877, 53.

<sup>7</sup> Vadim ROMODIN: 'Predisloviye'. In: *Vambéri A. Puteshestviye po Sredney Azii. Perevod s nemetskogo Z.D. Golubevoy pod redaktsiyey V.A. Romodina*. Moskva: Vostochnaya literatura, 2003, 13.

<sup>8</sup> Richard DALBY – Lory ALDER: *The Dervish of Windsor Castle. The Life of Arminius Vambéry*. London, 1979; Ruth BARTHOLOMÄ: *Von Zentralasien nach Windsor Castle. Leben und Werk des Orientalisten Arminius Vámbéry (1832-1913)*. Würzburg, 2006; Ruth BARTHOLOMÄ: "The Perception of Arminius Vámbéry and His Journey in Central Asia. In the Past and Present". *Archivum Ottomanicum*, No.31, 2014, 41–48.

<sup>9</sup> David MANDLER: *Arminius Vambéry, the Eastern (br)other in Victorian politics and culture: Hungarian (Jewish) Orientalism and the invention of identities*. New York University, 2005; David MANDLER: 'Introduction to Arminius Vambéry.' In: *Shofar*, Spring 2007, Vol. 25, No. 3, 1–31.

<sup>10</sup> Miklós SÁRKÖZY: 'At the Crossroads of Identity: Arminius Vámbéry – Oriental Traveller and Scholar.' In: *Journal of Intercultural Inquiry*, Vol. 1, No. 1, Autumn 2015: 69–88.

markand demonstrates his understanding of the local context. It should be emphasized that even before his trip to Central Asia, in Istanbul, A. Vambery had the opportunity to get acquainted with natives from Central Asia.<sup>11</sup> The acquired knowledge made it easier for A. Vambery to understand the characteristics of the Muslim society in Central Asia, and also helped him to establish contacts with influential people of the Emirate of Bukhara and even get an audience with Emir Muzaffar. In my opinion, in the descriptions of Samarkand by A. Vambery there are no signs of humiliation or detraction of the local Muslim culture. When assessing A. Vambery's criticisms of nomadic residents of Central Asia, the influence of local discourses of representatives of the settled population on nomads should be taken into account.

To understand A. Vambery's ideas about Samarkand, I would like to highlight those European researchers who were his predecessors and visited Samarkand. Among them were Russian orientalists N. V. Khanykov (1822–1878) and A. Bogoslovsky. Although N. Khanykov and A. Bogoslovsky were part of the same Russian mission, their data on the description of Samarkand in certain aspects coincide, and in others differ from each other.<sup>12</sup> Valuable information on the history of Samarkand is contained in the unpublished materials of N. Khanykov's mission in 1841 and of the archaeologists who studied historical monuments of Samarkand.

Thanks to the records of A. Vambery, valuable descriptions of the urban culture of Samarkand on the eve of the Russian invasion have been preserved. The information of A. Vambery on Samarkand can be supplemented by the materials of the diplomat A. Tatarinov (1817–1886), the artist V. Vereshchagin (1842–1904) and the linguist V. Radlov (1837–1918), who visited Samarkand in 1866–1868. Thanks to the paintings of V. Vereshchagin, it is possible to imagine what some historical monuments of Samarkand looked like (the mausoleum of Qutbi Chahar dahum or Nur ad-din Basir, the Emir's Palace, the city fortress) which were destroyed in the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

The data of A. Vambery about Samarkand complements the information of Russian diplomats, orientalists, military, as well as Soviet ethnographers and archaeologists. One of the sources of my research were the unpublished archival records of the Soviet ethnographer Olga Sukhareva (1903–1983), stored in the funds of the scientific archive of the Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology named after N. N. Miklukho-Maklai RAN. Sukhareva, studying the ethnography of the population of Samarkand in the pre-Soviet era, conducted numerous interviews with residents of the city. She published some of the collected materials, but many archival records remained unpublished. I was able to study these records thanks to the permission of the administration of the N. N. Mikluk-

<sup>11</sup> ÁRMIN VÁMBÉRY: *Travels in Central Asia: Being the Account of a Journey from Teheran Across the Turkoman Desert on the Eastern Shore of the Caspian to Khiva, Bokhara, and Samarcand Performed in the Year 1863*. London: J. Murray, 1864, 246–247.

<sup>12</sup> Azim MALIKOV: 'Samarkand v nachlale 19 veka,' In: *Moziydan sado*, no.4, 2010: 31–33.

ho-Maklai Institute of Ethnology and Anthropology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Archaeological studies of the fortress and historical monuments of the city revealed some aspects of their history. Valuable information about the historical toponymy of Samarkand is contained in *vaqf* documents.

In modern studies, when studying the city and urban identity, the essentialist approach is often used, which greatly simplifies the concept content of the city. I am of the opinion that the urban life has a diverse and multiple nature.<sup>13</sup> Samarkand had its own uniqueness, which was manifested in a combination of various markers of cultural identity. Samarkand was known as the sacred city where the Prophet's descendants, the famous Islamic theologians, Sufi shayhs, etc. lived, worked and were buried. The importance of the city began to grow when it became the capital of Timur's Empire (1370–1405), and in subsequent periods the image of the city as the capital of Timur had a significant impact on the population and political elites. The semi-nomadic Turkic and Uzbek tribes surrounding the city had a certain influence on the daily life of Samarkandians and their culture.

The members of the Russian diplomatic mission sent to Bukhara under the leadership of Butenev in 1841 were unanimous in estimating the population in the city of Samarkand. According to N. V. Khanykov, Samarkand had between 25,000 and 30,000 inhabitants.<sup>14</sup> According to Lehman, Uzbeks, Persians, Tajiks, Nogai, Indians and Jews lived in the city.<sup>15</sup> According to A. Vambéry, the number of residents of Samarkand accounted for no more than 15–20 thousand, of which two thirds were Uzbeks, and a third of the city population was represented by Tajiks.<sup>16</sup> Apparently, Vambéry's idea of the ethnic composition of the population of Samarkand was due to the fact that he lived near the fortress and often met the representatives of the Uzbek military class. Moreover, there was a quarter of immigrants from Merv in the fortress who spoke only the Uzbek language. It should be noted that the N. Khanykov's expedition member G. Bogoslovsky also believed that Uzbeks made up 60% of the Samarkand population.<sup>17</sup>

The features of Samarkand, unlike the other cities of the Bukharan Emirate, were that there was a relatively large Shiite community – Turkic-speaking Iranians –, and the largest diaspora of Bukharan Jews. Historical facts show that Samarkand was a large center of the Bukharan Emirate, where not only the Tajik, but also the Uzbek population lived. A separate group of the urban population consisted of immigrants from Tashkent, who arrived due to tax benefits provided by Bukharan emirs. They spoke Uzbek among themselves, but the features of

<sup>13</sup> Ash AMIN – Nigel THRIFT: *Cities: Reimagining the Urban*. Polity Press, 2002, 8.

<sup>14</sup> Nikolay KHANYKOV: *Opisaniye Bukharskogo khanstva*, Sankt-Peterburg, 1843, 100–105.

<sup>15</sup> *Alexander Lehmann's Reise nach Buchara und Samarkand in den Jahren 1841 und 1842*, St. Petersburg, 1852, 148, 162.

<sup>16</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 213.

<sup>17</sup> *Rossiyskiy Gosudarstvennyy istoricheskiy arkhiv*, fond №44, opis 2, delo №704, 369ab.

their culture remained unexplored.<sup>18</sup> Groups of tribal Uzbeks who settled at the end of the 18th century in the empty areas of Samarkand, the quarters of Muborak and Kosh-havuz, switched to craft.<sup>19</sup> According to one of the local discourses of the second half of the 19th century, the urban population of Samarkand was divided into a number of territorial groups. Each group had its own mosques, mullahs, *aksakals*, and they held events together.<sup>20</sup>

Groups of Jews traditionally lived in Samarkand. Vambery noted that in the Bukharan Khanate there were about 10 thousand Jews who lived in Bukhara, Samarkand and Karshi. He emphasized that Jews lived under oppression.<sup>21</sup> Vambery does not give details of the life of the Jews of Samarkand, apparently for security purposes he did not meet with their representatives.

There are even some old maps, the most informative of which is the one by a Russian officer, Yakovlev (1841), who was a member of a small Russian diplomatic expedition to Bukhara in 1841. From Yakovlev's map we can see that the city was surrounded by a wall, in front of which a wide and deep moat ran around the city. The Ark, or citadel, was located in the western part of the city adjacent to the city wall. Here was a modest palace where the governor of Samarkand resided in. Near the palace were large stables, a state workshop, a granary, and barracks. Inside the residential quarters there are many religious buildings, mosques, and mazars (shrines). Through six gates in the middle of each wall six high roads left the city. The gates faced the cardinal points of the compass. Beginning at each gate a bazaar led into the centre of the city. There were six gates in Samarkand: 1) Darvazai Bukhara; 2) Darvazai Paykobak; 3) Darvazai Khazrati Shahi Zinda; 4) Darvazai Kalandar-Khane; 5) Darvazai Suzangaran, 6) Darvazai Khoja-Ahrar. The circumference of the city was equal to 13 *versts* (20 km), which exceeded the space occupied by Bukhara, but this was due to the large number of gardens located in the city.<sup>22</sup>

At the beginning of the 19th century, a four-part structure was formed in Samarkand, there were four *qit'a* (districts): Qalandarkhana, Khayrabad, Suzangaran, and Khoja Ahrar, ruled by *khakim* (local governors).<sup>23</sup> A similar structure was characteristic to the Ferghana city of Chust city in Ferghana Valley and Tashkent. The *dakha* of Samarkand, in turn, were divided into quarters called *guzars*. There were specialized bazaars in the city: of *alacha*, flour products, cereals, bread, etc.<sup>24</sup> The

<sup>18</sup> Olga SUKHAREVA: *Suzani: sredneaziatskaya dekorativnaya vyshivka*. Moscow: Vostochnaya literatura, 2006, 19.

<sup>19</sup> Olga SUKHAREVA: 'Ocherki po istorii Sredneaziatskikh gorodov.' In: *Istoriya i kultura narodov Sredney Azii. Drevnost i sredniye veka*, Moskva: Nauka, 1976, 134.

<sup>20</sup> Aleksandr GREBENKIN: 'Tadzhiki. Etnograficheskiy ocherk.' In: *Turkestankiye vedomosti*, №17, 24 maya 1871 goda.

<sup>21</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 372.

<sup>22</sup> KHANYKOV, 100–105.

<sup>23</sup> Monashe ABRAMOV: *Guzary Samarkanda*. Tashkent: Uzbekistan, 1989, 5.

<sup>24</sup> Asad FAYZIYEV: *Istoriya Samarkanda pervoy poloviny XIX veka*. Samarkand, 1992, 42–47.

center of the political and economic life of Samarkand was the Registan Square. To discuss especially important events and organize some city events, the *ulama*, students of the madrasah and active citizens usually gathered in the cathedral mosque-madrasah Tillya-kari.<sup>25</sup>

In the center of the city was the main part of the market, specialized in the sale of hats, so the people called it “*Char-su-i telpak furushon.*” From Char-su, the main streets of the city stretched around the circumference, where shops, barbers, and *chaykhanas* were located. Only the streets connecting the bazaar with the city gate were relatively straight.

Among the predecessors of A. Vambéry who gave relatively detailed descriptions of Samarkand and his historical monuments were orientalists G. Bogoslovsky and N. V. Khanykov, who lived in Samarkand for several days in 1841; they noted that the citadel of Samarkand occupied a vast territory, and it was larger than the citadel of Bukhara and Karshi, its circumference being 3.2 km. In the citadel were located the *mazar* of Qutbi Char-Dahum, the emir’s palace and the famous Kuk-tash (“blue stone”) on which the khans ascended. In addition, the citadel contained the house of the governor of Samarkand, several mosques, and houses of private people.<sup>26</sup>

Modern studies show that in the citadel there were two gates: the eastern (Samarkandian) at the mausoleum of the holy Sufi Nur ad-din Basir (Qutbi Char-Dahum), and the southern (Bukharan). The first gate went towards the Registan, connecting with the shopping center of the city through a suspension bridge, and the second gate went towards the modern boulevard. The fortress was surrounded by a wall of pakhsa and gummy bricks with a height of 8 meters. The walls of the citadel were double, surrounded by a moat filled with water from the Novadon Canal. The defensive walls were strengthened by round three-story defensive towers whose wall thickness reached almost 4 meters.<sup>27</sup> Inside, the citadel was divided into two parts: the northern, where the administration was located, the military part, and the southern with residential buildings.<sup>28</sup>

Vambéry, who arrived in Samarkand in 1863, stayed in it for 8 days in August. In Samarkand, he initially stayed in a caravan-saray near one of the bazaars, but then was invited to a private house near Timur’s grave. The owner of the house was an employee of the emir, who supervised the Samarkand Palace.<sup>29</sup> Obviously,

<sup>25</sup> ‘Rasskazy o vzyatii Samarkanda. (So slov uchastnikov dela). [Zapis’ i primechaniya L. X. Simonovoy (Khokhryakovoy)].’ In: *Turkestanskiy literaturnyy sbornik v pol’zu prokazhennykh*. Sankt-Peterburg, 1900, 131.

<sup>26</sup> KHANYKOV, 101–102.

<sup>27</sup> Elvira BURYAKOVA – Tamara LEBEDEVVA: ‘Oboronitelnaya sistema tsitadeli Timura.’ In: *Istoriya materialnoy kultury Uzbekistana*, Vypusk 22, Tashkent, 1988, 161–174.

<sup>28</sup> Tamara LEBEDEVVA: ‘Pozdnesrednevekovyy ark Samarkanda.’ In: *Istoriya materialnoy kultury Uzbekistana*. Vypusk 32, Samarkand, 2001, 209.

<sup>29</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 203, 215.

it was due to this circumstance that A. Vambery gained access to the fortress and to the emir's palace.

In the initial representations of A. Vambery, based on Persian poetry, Samarkand was considered “the focus of the whole globe” (*Samarkand saikali rui zamin est*). A. Vambery does not hide his disappointment in the state of the city in 1863. However, he emphasizes that the ancient capital of Central Asia, due to its location and the vegetation surrounding it, is “the most beautiful city in Turkestan”.<sup>30</sup>

During his stay, A. Vambery had every opportunity to inspect the sights of Samarkand. However, in his records he gives information only on certain historical monuments of the city. Apparently, Vambery decided not to repeat Khanykov's information, but to present his unique data, which Khanykov did not have. Analyzing the records of A. Vambery, it can be argued that, unlike N. Khanykov, he knew the Persian poetry perfectly, and his ideas about Islamic culture were much deeper. For the first time, Vambery also provides information about the famous Quran of Osman, stored in the mausoleum of Timur.<sup>31</sup> His attention was attracted by the citadel of Samarkand, founded by Timur in 1370. Archaeological studies have shown that over the course of five centuries the citadel has undergone numerous reconstructions. A. Vambery noted that the arch (citadel) of Samarkand was divided into two parts: internal and external; in the latter were private apartments, and in the first stayed the emir. He also described the emir's palace in the fortress, in which, among the rooms, the *aynakhana* (room with mirrors) stood out, lined with fragments of mirrors. Another room was called *Talari-Timur* (Timur reception hall) and represented a long narrow courtyard surrounded by a covered gallery; on the front side of it was the famous *Kuktash* (the throne stone), on which the coronation of Bukhara rulers traditionally took place. High above the stone were two *firman*s, one for Ottoman Sultan Mahmud, the other for Sultan Abdul Majid, which were sent from Istanbul to Bukharan Emir Nasrullah (1827–1860) and whose text contained *ruhsat-i namaz*, i.e., the official permission to pray.<sup>32</sup>

The last coronation took place in the spring of 1861, when the new emir Muzaffar (1860–1885) was crowned. Russian orientalists gave a description of the coronation ritual. Upon his arrival in Samarkand, Muzaffar first bowed at the Shah-i Zinda memorial complex, and then arrived at the citadel. Entering the throne hall, he sat on three white felt rugs, four corners of which were held by the representatives of the Uzbek tribes. They raised the emir over their heads twice and then raised him to *Kuktash*.<sup>33</sup> The artist V. Vereshchagin, who spent several months in Samarkand in 1868, gives the following description of the emir's palace: “The throne hall was a courtyard surrounded by a high gallery, in the depth

<sup>30</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 203, 214.

<sup>31</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 209.

<sup>32</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 205–206.

<sup>33</sup> ‘Rodoslovnaya mangytskoy dinastii’. In: *Turkestarskiye vedomosti*, 4, 1871, 55.

of which was the *Kuktash*. The palace consisted of tall and spacious rooms. Nearby was a room for a harem.”<sup>34</sup>

The linguist Radlov, who visited Samarkand in 1868, noted that the territory of the fortress was filled with narrow streets and lanes. In the center of this tangle of confused streets was the castle of the emir, in which the emir usually spent several months a year and where each new emir was crowned. The castle consisted of many courtyards, outbuildings, buildings and galleries adjacent to each other. All houses were made of clay, and only some of them were plastered.<sup>35</sup>

The Russian diplomat A. A. Tatarinov spent three months in captivity in the citadel of Samarkand. His memoirs date back to March–May 1866. Tatarinov mentions the prison in the citadel, the palace of the Samarkand bek, as well as the harem of the bek’s wives.<sup>36</sup> The palace of the Samarkand Bek was a building with stone steps. In front of it was a pool with tall trees planted around. In the hot period of the year, a tent of the son of the Governor of Samarkand was placed near the pool.<sup>37</sup> Archaeological excavations carried out in the 1980s demonstrated that behind the wall of the throne hall of the palace was the bathhouse of the emir. Barracks were built along the eastern wall of the citadel, to the north of them was the courtyard of the *sarbazs* (infantry of the emir).<sup>38</sup> Tatarinov conveys the most common ideas about Samarkand. He emphasizes that this is the holy city of Muslims and the former capital of Tamerlan, where the lords of Bukharia sit on the *Kuktash*.<sup>39</sup>

In a short period of Emir Muzaffar’s rule in Samarkand, on his initiative, several buildings were built in the city. A quarter mosque, a minaret, various office premises, a *hauz*-pool and a *khanaka* near the Ruhabad mausoleum were built. New doors depicting fish were installed in the mausoleum.<sup>40</sup> Emir Muzaffar built the Madrasa-i-Ali, in which there were 48 cells for mullahs. In the courtyard of this madrasah was a large pond surrounded by tall trees.<sup>41</sup> In 1862, Emir Muzaffar allocated funds for the construction of a bath (*hambomi oli*) in Samarkand.<sup>42</sup> Under Emir Muzaffar, there was a ceremonial for the departure and arrival of the emir on a campaign from the citadel of Samarkand, which was accompanied by

<sup>34</sup> Vasilij VERESHCHAGIN: *Na voyne v Azii i Yevrope*. Moskva: tipo-litografiya tovarishchestva I. N. Kushnerev, 1898, 1–2.

<sup>35</sup> Vasilij RADLOV: *Iz Sibiri*. Moskva: Nauka, 1989, 541–554.

<sup>36</sup> TATARINOV, 87–88.

<sup>37</sup> TATARINOV, 63, 93.

<sup>38</sup> BURYAKOVA – LEBEDEVA, 161–174.

<sup>39</sup> TATARINOV, 20, 91.

<sup>40</sup> Utkir ALIMOV: Otchet po arkheologicheskomu issledovaniyu na komplekse Rukhabad v g. Samarkande v 1987 godu. In: *Nauchnyy arkhiv Instituta arkheologii AN Ruz*, fond 4, opis 1, delo № 164, 5, 28.

<sup>41</sup> RADLOV, 541–554.

<sup>42</sup> Golib KURBANOV: *Materialy po sredneaziatskoy sfragistike. Bukhara XIX - nachalo XXvv.* Tashkent: izdatel’sko-poligraficheskiy tvorcheskiy dom imeni Gafura Gulyama. 2006, 135.



a cannon shot and music.<sup>43</sup> A. Vambéry gives some details that he observed in August 1863, when the Emir declared the day of entry into Samarkand a holiday, and on this occasion several large pots were put on Registan, in which they prepared pilav and distributed it to everyone.<sup>44</sup>

A. Vambéry as a dervish from the Ottoman Empire (Rum) managed to receive a letter of guarantee about security in the Persian language from a person close to the Emir, Rakhmetbiy. Vambéry emphasizes that Rakhmetbiy was very friendly. The Bukharians admired the sultan and the ulema of the Ottoman Empire, and this discourse was important in the positive perception of the educated dervish by A. Vambéry. Rakhmetbiy trusted A. Vambéry, so they managed to agree on a future meeting of A. Vambéry with the emir in Samarkand.<sup>45</sup> This letter, the text of which A. Vambéry cites in his later publications, indicates the main mission of Vambéry, which consists in performing a pilgrimage to the graves of saints (*ziareti buzurgani*) in the cities of Bukhara and the paradisaal Samarkand.<sup>46</sup>

The ceremony of acceptance of Vambéry by the Emir was much simpler than later descriptions of the receptions. However, the emir trusted A. Vambéry, so he was not strict with him. Vambéry himself naively believed that he deserved the trust of the emir thanks to the flexibility of his language.<sup>47</sup> A. Vambéry was lucky enough to get an appointment with the Emir Muzaffar because of the special day of receptions, which he calls an *arz*, that is, a day for public audiences. During a conversation with Vambéry, Emir Muzaffar was surprised that he had come such a long way to make a pilgrimage to Naqshband Bahauddin and other saints of Turkestan.<sup>48</sup> Thus, the official version of Vambéry's journey to the Emirate of Bukhara undoubtedly influenced his journey, accompanied by a visit to the holy places. A. Vambéry also gives brief information about the shrines of Samarkand. However, his records do not contain detailed ethnographic descriptions of local pilgrimage practices and the lives of saints.

In Samarkand, there were several hundred pilgrimage sites, and visitors usually followed a certain sequence when visiting them, depending on the importance of places or individuals. Among the shrines of Samarkand, A. Vambéry mentions in the first place the Hazreti Shah-i Zinda, in which Qusam bin Abbas was buried, who was highly respected as the head of those Arabs who brought Islam to Samarkand. Vambéry provided information that Khanykov did not have; in addition, he managed to make a pilgrimage to the shrine of Shahi Zinda, where he observed all the rituals traditional for Samarkandians. At the same time, he repeated the mistake of Khanykov, who claimed that this memorial complex was

<sup>43</sup> TATARINOV, 79–104.

<sup>44</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 217.

<sup>45</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 194, 208.

<sup>46</sup> VÁMBÉRY, Ármin. *The Story of My Struggles: The Memoirs of Arminius Vambéry*. Volume 1. New York, 1904, 208.

<sup>47</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 219.

<sup>48</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 217–218.

Timur's summer palace.<sup>49</sup> According to the Bukharan judge Sadri Ziyo, in the 19th century, the main shrines of Samarkand were the complex of Shahi Zinda and the Gur-i Mir mausoleum.<sup>50</sup>

Vambéry was one of the first European travelers to compare Timur-era monuments (the Friday mosque, Gur-i Mir mausoleum) with Iranian monuments. Based on the wall inscriptions of the Turbati Timur mausoleum (mausoleum of Timur), Vambéry draws a conclusion that the architect was a man from Isfahan. On the basis of a comparative analysis of the monuments of Herat, Mashhad and Isfahan, he believed that the Persians were also masters of the other monuments of Samarkand. Thus, Vambéry attributed the monuments of Samarkand to Persian art.<sup>51</sup> These approaches of A. Vambéry anticipated the views of the orientalist V. Bartold and art historians of the late 19th - early 20th century.

The following question arises: what content included the urban identity of Samarkandians and on what basis did it form in the 19th century? Historical buildings, legends about the pre-Islamic past of the city, legends about Islamic saints, the legacy of the era of Timur and the Timurids were important elements in the perception and imagination of Samarkand. In the social life of the city of the 19th century, they were supplemented by various holidays that were held within the city. However, were there any contrasts between the identifications "urban" and "rural," "settled" and "nomadic"? To understand this issue, I decided to turn to the analysis of the *kupkari* sports competition, which in the 19th century was part of the urban culture of Samarkand. Vambéry mentioned this game (*Kokburi* – green wolf) of the nomads of Central Asia,<sup>52</sup> but in fact he visited Samarkand in August 1863 when the game was not held, so he could not describe the details of its organization in Samarkand.

It should be noted that in the 19th century, the residents of Samarkand were intricately connected with rural areas. They combined craft with agriculture, in the spring they moved to their rural estates and remained there until deep autumn. As a result, many city blocks were empty in the summer.<sup>53</sup> According to G. Bogoslovsky, on the southern side Samarkand was surrounded by large gardens, where the residents of the city spent most of the summer.<sup>54</sup>

The study of archival materials by O. Sukhareva shows that Samarkand had its own uniqueness, which manifested in a combination of various markers of cul-

<sup>49</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 202–204.

<sup>50</sup> *The personal history of a Bukharan intellectual. The diary of Muhammad-Sharif-i Sadr-i Ziya*. Translated from the original manuscript by Rustam Shukurov with an introductory study and commentaries by M. Shakuri (Shukurov). Edited by Edward A. Allworth. Brill, Leiden, Boston, 2004, 251.

<sup>51</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 209, 213.

<sup>52</sup> VÁMBÉRY, 1864, 323.

<sup>53</sup> Olga SUKHAREVA: 'Traditsiya sochetaniya gorodskikh i selskikh zanyatiy v Sredney Azii kontsa XIX – nachala XX v.' In: *Tovarno-denezhnyye otnosheniya na Blizhnem i Srednem Vostoke v epokhu srednevekovya*, Moskva: Nauka, 1979, 204.

<sup>54</sup> MALIKOV, 2010, 31–33.

tural identity. In addition to the traditional rivalry of quarter residents, one of these elements was the game characteristic of the pastoralist population, *kupkari* (*ulaq*). The traditions of tribal confrontation among the Turkic-speaking population of the Zerafshan valley find analogies among other Turkic tribes of the Eurasian space, in which there was a famous rivalry between the clans, which was expressed during the struggle, games. The participants of the *kupkari* game spoke on behalf of a clan, tribe, or village and represented their clans with the support of relatives who gathered from other areas. The game contained both ritual meaning and game content.<sup>55</sup> Representatives of the ruling dynasty of the Bukhara Emirate, the Mangyts, actively participated in *kupkari*, and the participation of the reigning people gave this game a prestigious status in the eyes of the rest of the population. According to N. Khanykov, the emir himself (Nasrullah – A.M.) during autumn trips to Samarkand took part in this game.<sup>56</sup> In Samarkand, *kupkari* (*kok-bori*) was usually held in March and October, on the occasion of weddings and circumcision of minors.<sup>57</sup> The organizers of the *kupkari* were rich local people, in honor of the *tui pisar* or the rite of circumcision. The rich local man announced that he was giving *kupkari aspaki* (equestrian *kupkari*) and *kupkari piyoda* (pedestrian *kupkari*). *Kupkari aspaki* was held on Afrasiyab site, and *kupkari piyoda* was organized near Chorsu on the eve of *tuy*. The Chorsu trading dome was located on the central square of the city, Registan. Crowds of people from different parts of the city gathered at *kupkari* from the very morning: Kalandarkhona, Namozgokh, etc.<sup>58</sup>

In the game of *kupkari* held in Samarkand symbolism was included, read from the point of view of the traditional worldview of both pastoralist Turkic-speaking groups, as well as Tajiks and settled Uzbeks. In this case, *kupkari* acted as a sign of self-identification or self-awareness at the tribal and administrative-territorial level. Thus, from the late Middle Ages, the traditional game of the Turkic-speaking pastoralists of the Middle Zarafshan Valley entered the urban culture of Samarkand, where it was synthesized with “traditionally urban customs” of rivalry between quarters and parts of the city.<sup>59</sup> This cultural transformation defined the distinctive features of Samarkand and a special urban identity.

The Nowruz holiday was traditionally celebrated by the inhabitants of Central Asia, including Samarkand. Vambery notes that Nowruz is celebrated in a vast area from Istanbul to the eastern outskirts of the Muslim world. It was especially solemnly celebrated in Qajar Iran, and in the oases of Central Asia it

<sup>55</sup> Azim MALIKOV: ‘Kupkari kak element gorodskoy identichnosti i kul’tury Samarkanda v XIX – nachale XX v.’ In: *Istoriya i arkhologiya Tsentral’noy Azii: traditsii, innovatsii i perspektivy*. Tashkent, 2021, 448–452.

<sup>56</sup> KHANYKOV, 69.

<sup>57</sup> Georgiy ARENDARENKO: ‘Iz Samarkanda.’ In: *Turkestanskije vedomosti*, №19, 1877.

<sup>58</sup> Nauchnyy arkhiv Instituta etnologii i antropologii imeni N. N. Miklukho-Maklaya RAN, fond 62. l.106, 334.

<sup>59</sup> MALIKOV: 2021, 448–452.

was more popular in Khorezm than in Bukhara.<sup>60</sup> Features of the celebration of Nowruz in Samarkand were described at the end of the 19th century. The sacred places where Nowruz was celebrated in Samarkand in the 19th century were concentrated on the Registan Square, the Shakh-i Zinda complex and hills of the ancient city of Afrasiyab. In the Namazgah mosque, located on the southeastern outskirts of Samarkand, a collective prayer was performed, and in the garden adjacent to it, subsequent festivities – *sayil* – were held.<sup>61</sup> Vambery's notes did not reflect any discussions about local Islamic practices and the attitude of Islamic scholars towards the celebration of the non-Islamic holiday of Nowruz.

Thus, in the 1860s, Samarkand was known as the former capital of Timur's Empire and as a holy city, where dozens of Islamic shrines were located. This image of the city was used to their own advantage by the Bukharan emirs, who annually spent some time in the former citadel of Timur and held coronation ceremonies on the throne stone of Timur. Emirs visited the shrines of the city and participated in the sports game of *kupkari*, which marked the unique urban identity of Samarkandians. Despite some mistakes made in the description of the city, A. Vambery's approaches to the perception of Samarkand and its monuments had a strong influence on subsequent orientalists, primarily Russian researchers, who, after the invasion of Samarkand, had all the opportunities to study the city.

#### Abstract

*The article analyzes data collected by the Hungarian scholar A. Vambery on one of the major cities of the Bukhara Emirate, Samarkand. The description of Samarkand by A. Vambery had a great influence on subsequent perceptions of the city by European orientalists. In addition, sources from various archives and ethnographic notes are analyzed, providing additional information about the urban culture of Samarkand on the eve of the Russian conquest of the city. I argue that the urban culture of Samarkand had features similar to the other cities of Central Asia, but it was also possible to identify unique original features of the culture of Samarkand. The image of Samarkand as the capital of Timur's empire and an Islamic holy city had a strong influence on political elites until the Russian invasion. Since the late Middle Ages, a feature of the city had been the close interaction with the surrounding semi-nomadic Uzbek population, which was manifested in the spread of the sport game kupkari in the city.*

#### Keywords

culture, Bukharan Emirate, orientalism, urban history, symbols, historical monuments, urban identity.

<sup>60</sup> German VAMBERI: *Ocherki jizni i nraov Vostoka*. Sankt Peterburg, 1876, 167–170.

<sup>61</sup> Azim MALIKOV: 'Celebration of Nowruz in Bukhara and Samarkand in Ritual Practice and Social Discourses (the Second Half of the 19th to Early 20th Centuries).' In: *Archaeology, Ethnology & Anthropology of Eurasia*. 48, no. 2. (2020): 126–128.