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## Çin'deki Timurlu Elçilikleri Hakkında Ming Shilu'da Yer Alan Bilgiler

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### Öz

Bu makale Emir Timur ve ahfadı ile Ming hanedanı imparatorları arasındaki ticari-diplomatik ilişkilere dair, Çin kaynaklarında, bilhassa Ming Shilu [Ming Gerçek Kayıtları (Ming imparatorlarının saltanatı hakkında)] adlı eserde yer alan bilgileri içerir. İlk imparator Ming-Hongwu (hükümdarlık 1368-1398) “Çin dünya düzenini” ayağa kaldırmanın yanı sıra Çin’in komşu devletlerle önceki hanedanlar tarafından yıkılan ilişkilerini yeniden kurmaya çalışmıştır. İmparator Yongle (1402-1424) de ticaretin genişlemesini teşvik etmiş ve Çin’e gelen elçilerin sayısını artırmaya çabalamıştır. Ming sarayı, Türkistan ülkelerine ayrıcalık tanımak amacıyla, onların elçiliklerine, vergi vermeksizin halkla serbest ticaret yapma izni vermiştir. Bu ülkelerden elçiler gelmesini sağlamaya yönelik bir siyaset izleyen Yongle, kuzeyden gelen muazzam sayıdaki Moğol kuvvetlerini etkisiz hale getirmek için bu bölgedeki yerel siyasi güçleri kullanmıştır. “Haraç” ilişkisine rağmen, sözde “haraç” karşılığında oldukça cömert hediyeler ve ayrıcalıklar elde eden Türkistanlı tüccarlar, Çin’e sık sık gitmek istiyorlardı. Emir Timur’un ölümünün ardından, onun ahfadı ile Ming hanedanlığı arasındaki ilişkiler iyileşmiş ve faal biçimde gelişmeye başlamıştır. Çin sarayının ilgilendiği başlıca ticaret ürünü atlar olmuştur. Çin imparatorlarına her daim sevilen Türkistan atlarının dışında, yeşim taşı ve en çok aslan olmak üzere vahşi hayvanlar gibi başka ticari ürünler de vardı. Semerkand ve Girit’ten gelen elçiler beraberlerinde çok sayıda yeşim taşı getiriyorlardı. Özellikle Hoten yeşim taşı binlerce yıl öncesine dayanan tarihiyle ünlüydü. Vahşi hayvanlar konusunda ise Ming imparatorları başlarda Çin’e yabancı olan hediyeleri memnuniyetle karşılıyorlar ve elçileri değerli hediyelerle ödüllendiriyorlardı. Buna dair kanıtlar, birçok yazılı Çince kaynakta yer almaktadır. Ancak daha sonra vahşi hayvanları barındırmanın maliyetli oluşundan dolayı devlet memurları almaları sınırlandırmaya çabalamışlardır. Yongle’nin ölümünün ardından Çin, faydalı olmadığı gerekçesiyle eski genişleme siyasetinden vazgeçmiştir. Meşhur Amiral Zheng-He’nin deniz seferi gibi seferler de durdurulmuştur.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Emir Timur, Timurlular, Semerkand, Türkistan, Çin Kaynakları, Ticari-Diplomatik ilişkiler, Ming Hanedanı, Ming Shilu.

### Atf Bilgisi

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Research Article

## Information Contained in the “Ming Shilu” on the Timurid Embassies to China

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### Abstract

*Annotation.* The article is devoted to information from Chinese sources, first of all, “Ming shilu” (“True records [of the reign of the Ming Emperors]”), about trade and embassy relations between Amir Temur and his descendants with the emperors of the Ming dynasty. The first emperor Ming – Hongwu (1368-1398 ave.) tried, in addition to restoring the “Chinese world order”, to establish relations between China and neighboring states, destroyed by previous dynasties. The Yongle Emperor (1402-1424) also actively encouraged the expansion of trade and tried to increase the number of embassies arriving in China. For the preference of the Turkestan countries, the Minsk court allowed their embassies to trade freely with the population without levying taxes. Pursuing a policy of activating the visits of embassies from these countries, the Yongle Emperor thus used the local political power of this region to neutralize the huge Mongolian forces from the north. Despite the “tributary” relations, Turkestan’s traders, receiving rather generous gifts and preferences in return for the so-called “tribute”, were interested in frequent visits to China. After the death of Amir Temur, the relations between his descendants and the Ming Dynasty improved and began to develop actively. The main commodity in which the Chinese court was interested was horses. Along with the Turkestan horses, which were invariably welcomed by the Chinese emperors, other goods appear, such as jade and wild animals, mainly lions. Embassies from Samarkand and Herat brought jade to China in large quantities. Khotan jade, whose history dates back several millennia, was especially famous. As for wild animals, at first the Ming emperors welcomed gifts that were unusual for China and rewarded the envoys with valuable gifts. Data on this is contained in many Chinese written works. But later, due to the high cost of keeping wild animals, government officials tried to limit their intake. After Yongle's death, China abandoned its early expansionist policies due to their ineffectiveness. Expensive expeditions, such as the naval missions of the famous Admiral Zheng He, were also discontinued.

**Keywords:** Amir Temur, Temurids, Samarkand, Turkestan, Chinese sources, trade and diplomatic relations, Ming Dynasty, Ming shilu.

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## Introduction

After ascending the throne in 1368, the Ming court (*Ming*, 明)<sup>1</sup> decided to restore the “Chinese world order”<sup>2</sup>. There is a traditional belief that the Chinese developed a unique system of relations with foreigners over the centuries, which they practiced for much of their existence. According to this system, China (*Zhongguo*, 中國) was the Middle Kingdom, and all other countries were considered tributaries<sup>3</sup>.

No one before the first Ming emperor, Hongwu (洪武)<sup>4</sup>, had established stable and effective agreements with the most distant states of the Western Regions (*Xiyu*, 西域)<sup>5</sup>. Initially, the court focused on the neighboring areas of Eastern Turkestan (*Xinjiang*, 新疆, starting from the Qing era)<sup>6</sup>, and then on relations with more distant regions of Turkestan.

### 1. Horse Trade

The main commodity in trade between the Ming dynasty and the Turkestan rulers was horses. Horses are mentioned as “tribute or gifts” (*gong*, 貢)<sup>7</sup> in almost every mission from Turkestan’s countries, especially from the neighboring countries of Eastern Turkestan. Although Chinese officials often complained about the poor quality of the horses brought by the latter, this type of commodity was useful to China because the country was experiencing a shortage of

<sup>1</sup> Ming (明) – Chinese dynasty, empire, 1368–1644.

<sup>2</sup> FAIRBANK, J.K., *The Chinese World Order: Traditional China's Foreign Relation*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 1953; HE, Yan, “Mingdai Xiyu yu Zhongyuande tonggong hushi maoyi (和尙. 明代西域与中原的通贡互市贸易, On China's mutual trade with Western countries in the Ming Era)”, *Xinjiang lishi yanjiu (新疆历史研究. Research on the History of Xinjiang)*, 乌鲁木齐 (Wulumuqi) 1986, No 2, p. 42-50; ROSSABI, M., “The Ming and Inner Asia”, *Central Asiatic Journal*, 1972, vol.8, p. 221-246.

<sup>3</sup> ROSSABI, *ibid*, p. 223.

<sup>4</sup> Hongwu (洪武) – the reign title of Zhu Yuanzhang (朱元璋), the first emperor of the Ming dynasty. His temple name is Taizu (太祖). His reign lasted from 1368 to 1398.

<sup>5</sup> Xiyu (西域) – Western Regions or Western Countries. This term was used in Chinese written sources to refer to the lands lying west of China proper, including the territory of Eastern Turkestan or Xinjiang (starting from the Qing era).

<sup>6</sup> Qing (清) – Chinese dynasty, empire, 1644–1911.

<sup>7</sup> The Chinese emperor considered himself the ruler of all other rulers, whom the Chinese regarded as “vassals”. Their periodic gifts to the Chinese throne were presented as “tribute” (*gong*, 貢).

horses. The Ming emperors were eager to secure horses and were pleased even with such offerings<sup>8</sup>.

Chinese written sources, including the *History of the Ming Dynasty* (*Mingshi*, 明史)<sup>9</sup>, the *Materials of the “True Records of the Ming Dynasty” by Sections* (*Mingshibu leijuan*, 明实录类纂涉外史料卷)<sup>10</sup>, and others, contain numerous records of embassies from the Turkestan ruler Temur (*Temuer*, 帖木兒) and his descendants.

The first record is noted in Chapter (*juan*, 卷) 185 of the *True Records of the Reign of Emperor Taizu* (*Taizu shilu*, 太祖实录), which states that in 1387, “...the ruler of Samarkand, Amir Temur, sent the Muslim Mawlana Hafizi (Manla Hafeisi) and others to the dynasty. They brought 15 horses and 2 camels, and in return, the Ming emperor gifted them 15 ingots of white gold”.<sup>11</sup>

The *True Records of the Reign of Emperor Taizu* (*Taizu shilu*, 太祖实录) in Chapter 193 is noted that in 1388 “...Amir Temur, sent the Muslim Дашудин (答术丁) and others to the dynasty. They brought 300 horses and 2 camels...”<sup>12</sup>

In 1389 the ruler of Samarkand “...Amir Temur, sent the Muslim Mawlana Hafizi (Manla Hafeisi) and others to the dynasty. They brought 205 horses...” (Chapter (*juan*, 卷) 197 of the *True Records of the Reign of Emperor Taizu* (*Taizu shilu*, 太祖实录).<sup>13</sup>

In 1390 “...Amir Temur, sent the Muslim Sheqieer Ali-yi (舍怯兒阿里義) and others to the dynasty. They brought 670 horses...” (*Taizu shilu*, 太祖实录, *juan* 199).<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> ROSSABI, *ibid*, p. 239.

<sup>9</sup> Ming shi. (明史, The history of the Ming [Dynasty]), *Ersbi sishi* (二十四史, 24 dynastic stories), 上海 (Shanghai) 1958, vol.3 (三册).

<sup>10</sup> “Ming shilu” leijuan (明实录类纂 涉外史料卷. Materials of the “True Records of the Ming [Dynasty]” by section), Wuhan: Wuhan chubanshe 1991.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1063.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid*.

In 1391 “...the ruler of Samarkand Fuma-Temur<sup>15</sup>, sent the Muslim Shehali (舍哈厘) and others to the dynasty. They brought camels and horses ...” (*Taiizu shilu*, 太祖实录, *juan* 211).<sup>16</sup> In the same year, “...Samarkand sent Boyanhu (伯顏忽) and others to the dynasty. They brought 52 horses...” (*Taiizu shilu*, 太祖实录, *juan* 214).<sup>17</sup>

The generous return gifts from the Ming court not only attracted official envoys of the Timurid dynasty, who brought many horses, but also encouraged ordinary horse traders from Samarkand and other places to come to trade in China.

In the following years, Amir Temur regularly sent embassies to China—84 horses in 1392, 200 horses in 1394, 212 horses in 1395, 240-plus horses in 1396, and in the same year, 1,905 horses.<sup>18</sup>

These were the last reports in the *True Records* about the dispatch of embassies from Samarkand during the reign of Amir Temur.

## 2. Deterioration of Relations

Despite the absence of news about envoys already sent to Samarkand (for example, Fu An, 傅安)<sup>19</sup>, the Ming court nevertheless continued to send embassies with gifts.

So-called “tributary” missions regularly arrived in China, and Chinese official sources, particularly the *True Records* (*Shilu*, 實錄), provide a fairly complete description of the embassies and the goods they brought to the Ming rulers. The Ming emperors generously bestowed gifts upon the envoys and their rulers. Some of these gifts were direct presents given to the rulers, their envoys, attendants, and others according to the Chinese view of their status, power, and wealth. Such gifts included silks, satin, cotton goods, shoes, stockings, hats, and so on. Other gifts were specific payments for

<sup>15</sup> Fuma – son-in-law of the Yuan dynasty.

<sup>16</sup> “Ming shilu” *leijuan*, *ibid*, p. 1063.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid*.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1064.

<sup>19</sup> The Ming envoy Fu An (傅安) was sent to Samarkand in 1395 and was only released to return home by Khalil Sultan after the death of Amir Temur in 1407. For more details, see: KARIMOVA, N., *Information from Chinese written sources on the History of Relations between the Central Asian states and Ming China of the XIV-XVII centuries*. (2nd edition), Tashkent: “Donishmand” 2023, p.104-115.

“tributary” goods.<sup>20</sup> In exchange for horses, the Chinese court would provide a certain amount of silk, satin, or paper money, or other consumer items. This exchange was, in fact, trade, despite the Chinese label of “tribute.”

A significant portion of the embassies from Samarkand were undoubtedly commercial, led by merchants eager to trade with China. Hoping to receive generous gifts, the merchants skillfully presented themselves as official envoys and produced letters purportedly from Temur, in which he regarded the Chinese emperor as a superior ruler. This led to a deterioration of relations between the first Ming emperor and Amir Temur, who detained Chinese envoys and prepared for a campaign to the East.

The *True Records of the Reign of Emperor Taizong*, in *juan* 68, describe the changes that occurred in Amir Temur’s empire after his death and note the return of Fu An from captivity: in 1407, “...Fu An (傅安), a censor in the military section (*bingke jishi* 兵科給事中), Guo Ji (郭驥), and others returned from Samarkand (撒馬兒罕). Fu An had been sent as an envoy to the Western Regions (*Xiyu*, 西域) in the 28th year (1396)<sup>21</sup> of Hongwu’s reign and remained in Samarkand for 13 years. It was indeed heard that their leader Halil (*Hali*, 哈裏) ascended the throne, so he sent the envoy Khudaydad (*Hudaida*, 虎歹達) and others to escort An and the others home, also sending tribute (gifts) – local products. ... An and the others reported: “Fuma-Temur, (son-in-law) of the Yuan dynasty has died, Halil (Hali)<sup>22</sup> succeeded him, and is Temur’s grandson”. Immediately, an edict was issued to commission (*zhibhui*, 指揮) Baiaerjintai (白阿兒沂台) and others to mourn Temur and also to present Halil (Hali) with letters bearing the imperial seal, silver money... with distinctions based on rank”.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>20</sup> *Xinjiang difang lishi ziliao xuanji* (新疆地方历史资料选辑. Selected materials on the historiography of Xinjiang), 北京: 人民出版社 (Beijing: Renmin chubanshe) 1987, p. 218.

<sup>21</sup> According to other sources, it was in 1395. According to the *Mingshi*, in 1395, “the emperor ordered Censor Fu An and others to [deliver to Amir Temur] a message bearing the imperial seal, as well as paper money and fabrics, [as a token of] gratitude. The horses sent as gifts by them [the people of Samarkand] annually exceeded 1,000”. See: *Ming shi*, *ibid*, p. 31865 (3673a).

<sup>22</sup> Khalil Sultan – (14 September 1384 – 4 November 1411), grandson of Amir Temur, third son of Miran Shah.

<sup>23</sup> “*Ming shilu*” *leijuan leijuan*, *ibid*, p. 1066.

### 3. Jade trade

The usurpation of the throne by the Ming emperor Yongle (永樂)<sup>24</sup>, the dethronement of his nephew Jianwen (建文)<sup>25</sup>, and the subsequent concerns over the legitimacy of his rule may have inspired him to actively attract foreign embassies to China. In the Confucian view, a good emperor naturally attracts “barbarians,” who “come and transform” (*lai-hua*, 來化), that is, they recognize the superiority of Chinese civilization and become more submissive.<sup>26</sup> The more foreign embassies that arrived in China, the more significant and legitimate Yongle’s ascension to the throne appeared in the eyes of his subjects. It is possible that the costly maritime expeditions of Admiral Zheng He (鄭和)<sup>27</sup> also served to expand Chinese influence over neighboring and distant countries.

As noted in the “Account of the Western Regions” (*Xiyuzhuan*, 西域傳), Chapter 332 of the *History of the Ming Dynasty*, in the year of his ascension to the throne (1403), Yongle issued an imperial edict, in which it was stated: “From now on, all foreigners are to be allowed entry into China and to obey...”.<sup>28</sup> With this policy of encouragement, trade caravans from countries west of China “filled all the roads”, their carts laden with goods “numbering more than a hundred”.<sup>29</sup> The embassies from Samarkand and Herat were no exception. Over ten years, from the 20th year of the Hongwu reign (1387) to the 29th year of the Hongwu reign (1396), the number of horses brought by Amir Temur as gifts (referred to in Chinese sources as “tribute”) was recorded only in the *True Records of the Ming*

<sup>24</sup> Yongle (永樂) – the reign title of Zhu Di (Zhu Di, 朱棣), who ruled from 1402 to 1424. His posthumous temple name is Chengzu (Cheng-zu, 成祖).

<sup>25</sup> The grandson of the first emperor Hongwu, Zhu Yunwen (朱允炆), ruled under the reign title Jianwen (建文) for a very short time from 1398 to 1402. His posthumous temple name is Huidi (惠帝).

<sup>26</sup> *Xinjiang difang lishi ziliao xuanji*, ibid, p. 222.

<sup>27</sup> Zheng He (鄭和) – a famous navigator of the Ming era, who undertook seven maritime expeditions to the countries of Indochina, the Indian subcontinent, the Arabian Peninsula, and East Africa. Of Hui ethnicity (*Huizhu*, 回族), he was a descendant of immigrants from Bukhara. He lived from 1371 to 1435.

<sup>28</sup> HE, Yan, ibid, p. 42-43.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid, p. 43.

*Taiḗu* as no less than 3,050, although the actual number of horses was significantly higher than this.<sup>30</sup>

Trade was highly profitable, and the Yongle reign became the pinnacle of trade relations between China and the Western Regions (*Xiyu*, 西域) during the Ming era. Relations between the Timurids and the Ming emperors improved after the death of Amir Temur. By the end of the first third of Yongle's reign, China's passive-defensive stance had shifted to an active foreign policy.

In the summer of 1408, Khalil Sultan sent an envoy, Sheikh Nuruddin, with gifts, who was accompanied on his return journey by Fu An. This is reported in the *True Records of the [Reign] of Emperor Taiḗong*, Chapter 78: "...the leader (ruler) of Samarkand (撒馬兒罕) [sent] Sheikh Nuruddin (*Shabei Nuerdin*, 沙黑奴兒丁) and others with tribute (gifts). [Soon] they said their farewells and returned home. Censor of the Military Department (*jishizhong*, 給事中) Fu An (傅安) was sent to accompany [them]..."<sup>31</sup>

As a result of internal strife, Amir Temur's youngest son, Shahrukh<sup>32</sup>, managed to become the ruler of the Timurid Empire in 1409. He moved the empire's capital to Herat, while his son, Mirzo Ulugh Beg<sup>33</sup>, became the ruler of Samarkand. They continued active trade and diplomatic relations with the Ming dynasty.

The *True Records* meticulously list all Turkestan embassies and the goods and gifts they brought. Among the gifts sent from Samarkand, in addition to horses, jade (*yushi*, 玉石) began to appear. Chinese researchers believe that precious and semi-precious stones

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<sup>30</sup> *Temuer wangchao yu Mingchaode gongci maoyi yanjiu lunwen* (帖木儿王朝与明朝的贡赐贸易研究论文, A study on tributary trade between the Timurid and Ming dynasties), <https://www.gwyoo.com/lunwen/maoyilunwen/gjmylwtg/200910/286736.html>

<sup>31</sup> "*Ming shilu*" *leijuan leijuan*, *ibid*, p. 1067.

<sup>32</sup> Shahrukh – Mu'in al-Haqq wa-d-Din Shahrukh (August 20, 1377 – March 12, 1447), Emir, the youngest son of Amir Temur, was the ruler of Khorasan (from 1397) and the Timurid Empire (from 1409).

<sup>33</sup> Mirzo Ulugh Beg – Muhammad Taraghay ibn Shahrukh ibn Timur Ulugh Beg Guragan (March 22, 1394 – October 27, 1449). A statesman, an outstanding mathematician, astronomer, and educator of his time.



were the second most common items brought from Samarkand and Herat to China, after horses.<sup>34</sup>

According to the *True Records of the Ming Emperors*, embassies from Samarkand and Herat, sent by the descendants of Amir Temur, brought jade several times. For instance, in the 10th year (1445) of Zhengtong's (正統)<sup>35</sup> reign "... from Samarkand and other places, the ruler (王) Ulugh Beg Guragan (乌鲁伯苦列干) and others... presented ... jade (*yushi*, 玉石), and other goods...".<sup>36</sup>

In the 1447 "... Samarkand [sent] an envoy and presented jade (*yushi*, 玉石), and other goods..." (*Yingzong shilu*, 英宗实录, *juan* 161)".<sup>37</sup>

In the 7th year (1456) of Jintai's (景泰)<sup>38</sup> reign "... Samarkand sent ... accompanied by *zhibui* (指揮) Maheima Shelibang (馬黑麻舍力班)... presented jade..." (*Yingzong shilu*, 英宗实录, *juan* 264).<sup>39</sup>

In 1487, "...foreigners presented jade (*yu*, 玉)... an envoy from Samarkand and other Western barbarians (*Xifan*, 西番) Aladaolace (*Aladaolaqie*, 阿刺倒刺乱) and others presented jade (*yu*, 玉)..."<sup>40</sup>

According to the *True Records of the [Reign] of Emperor Xiaozong* (孝宗实录), *juan* 36 in 1490 "...Samarkand... and other places jointly sent embassies, presented horses (*ma*, 馬), camels (*tu*, 駝), jade (*yushi*, 玉石), and other goods...".<sup>41</sup>

The famous Chinese diplomat and traveler Chen Cheng (陈城)<sup>42</sup>, who visited Samarkand and Herat several times, noted in his

<sup>34</sup> *Temuer wangchao yu Mingchaode gongci maoyi yanjin lunwen*, *ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Zhengtong (正統) – the reign title of Zhu Zhanji (朱瞻基), who ruled from 1398 to 1435. His posthumous temple name is Ying-zong (英宗).

<sup>36</sup> "*Ming shilu*" *leijuan*, *ibid.*, p. 1075.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1076.

<sup>38</sup> Jintai (景泰) – the reign title of Zhu Qiyu (朱祁钰), who ruled from 1427 to 1464. His posthumous temple name is *Dai-zong* (代宗).

<sup>39</sup> "*Ming shilu*" *leijuan*, *ibid.*, p. 1078.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1081.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1082.

<sup>42</sup> The famous Chinese diplomat and traveler Chen Cheng (陈城) visited Central Asian countries several times and described them in his writings, among which the most notable are "Xiyu xingchengji" (*Records of Travel to the Western Regions*, 西域行程记) and "Xiyu fanguozhi" (*Description*

work *Xiyu fanguozhi* (“Account of the Western Countries”, 西域番国志) that in Herat (*Halie*, 哈烈) there were crystal (*shuijing*, 水晶), diamonds (*jingangzuan*, 金刚钻), and rubies (*lashi*, 刺石), so-called balas (*balasi*, 巴拉斯) or corundum ore (*hongyukuangshi*, 红玉矿石).<sup>43</sup>

Samarkand during the reign of Amir Temur attracted numerous visitors from various countries. The best, most talented, and inventive craftsmen from conquered cities were selected and brought to Samarkand, among whom were jewelers (*zhubaoshang*, 珠宝商), silk weavers (*sizhijiang*, 丝织匠), bow and arrow makers (*gongshijiang*, 弓矢匠), chariot builders (*zhanchezhihaojia*, 战车制造家), glassmakers (*liuli*, 琉璃), and potters (*taogong*, 陶工) from Damascus (*Damashige*, 大马士革), gunsmiths (*zaoqiangan*, 造枪匠), metal engravers (*loujingong*, 镂金工), and architects (*jianzhushi*, 建筑师) from Turkey (*Tuerqi*, 土耳其). This laid the economic foundation for the development of various forms of art in Samarkand, including jade carving (*yushi diaoke*, 玉石雕刻), and it became world-renowned, even considered “more skillful than Herat (哈烈)”.<sup>44</sup>

Regarding the origin of jade, it was most likely Hotan (*Hetian*, 和田), which has been renowned since ancient times for its craftsmen who worked with jade and had no equal anywhere in the world. The history of Hotan jade spans several millennia. As early as the Shang (商)<sup>45</sup> and Western Zhou (*Xi Zhou*, 西周)<sup>46</sup> dynasties, jade artifacts from Hotan were already known. In Anyang (安阳), Henan Province (*Henan*, 河南), 755 pieces of jade from the Shang-Yin

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*of the Western Regions*, 西域藩国志). For more details, see: KARIMOVA, *ibid*, p. 115-142.

<sup>43</sup> CHEN, Cheng, *Xiyu fanguozhi*. (陈城. 西域藩国志, Chen Cheng. Description of the states of the Western Region.), Ming chaoben (明朝本), Guoli Beiping tushuguan shanben congshu (国立北平图书馆山本丛书), Beijing (Beijing) 1936, p. 24-26.

<sup>44</sup> *Yushi zhilu* (玉石之路, Jade Road), <https://www.icangyu.com/index.php?m=content&c=mobile&a=show&catid=6&id=2598>

<sup>45</sup> Shang (商) – the earliest Chinese dynasty, which existed from the 17th to the 11th centuries BCE.

<sup>46</sup> Western Zhou (Xi Zhou, 西周) – the period that succeeded the Shang dynasty, lasting for approximately 800 years from 1045 to 770 BCE.

period were discovered in the Fu Hao tomb (*Fubaomu*, 妇好墓)<sup>47</sup>. After identification, it was found that most of the jade materials were Hotan jade (*Hetianyu*, 和田玉). The *Mutianzi zhuan* (Narrative of the Son of Heaven Mu, 穆天子传)<sup>48</sup> contains many valuable records about Hotan jade.<sup>49</sup>

#### 4. Trade in Wild Animals

Another commodity, alongside horses and jade, that was highly valued in China was rare birds and wild animals, such as lions (*shizi*, 狮子), leopards (*bao*, 豹), parrots (*yingwu*, 鹦鹉), etc., as well as their skins, including lion skins (*shizipi*, 狮子皮) and leopard skins (*jinqianbaoqi*, 金钱豹皮). As these were exotic animals to China, initially, the Ming emperors welcomed such gifts and rewarded them abundantly. Information about this can be found in many Chinese writings. According to the *True Records [of the Reigns] of the Ming Emperors*, in 1413, “from the Western Regions (西域)... Samarkand... and other places jointly sent embassies, accompanied by (*zhibui*, 指揮) *Bai'aersintai* (白阿兒忻台) and others, presenting Western horses (*xima*, 西馬), lions (*shi*, 獅), leopards (*bao*, 豹), and other goods...”<sup>50</sup>

In 1415 and 1417, leopards (*wenbao*, 文豹) were brought from Samarkand.<sup>51</sup>

After the death of Emperor Yongle, until the end of Emperor Xuan-de's (宣德)<sup>52</sup> reign in 1437, the Chinese court moved away from its earlier expansionist policy. Expansionism was criticized for its costliness and ineffectiveness. Large-scale expeditions, such as Zheng He's maritime missions (Zheng He, 鄭和), were discontinued. The Chinese government sought to restrict contact

<sup>47</sup> Fuhao (妇好) was the wife of the 23rd ruler of the Shang dynasty, Wuding (武丁), and was a valiant female military commander.

<sup>48</sup> “Mutianzi Zhuan” (穆天子传) – The “Narrative of the Son of Heaven Mu”, an ancient text recounting the journey of King Mu to the West in 989–988 BCE.

<sup>49</sup> *Yusbi zhibu*, *ibid.*

<sup>50</sup> “*Ming shilu*” *leijuan*, *ibid.*, p. 1068.

<sup>51</sup> “*Ming shilu*” *leijuan*, *ibid.*, p. 1070.

<sup>52</sup> Xuan-de (宣德) – the reign title of Zhu Zhanji (朱瞻基), the fifth emperor of the Ming dynasty. His temple name was Xuan-zong (宣宗). His reign lasted from 1425 to 1435.

with foreigners and reduce trade and “tribute relations” with neighbouring and more distant countries.<sup>53</sup> Nevertheless, relations between Turkestan rulers and the Ming dynasty, although interrupted by political circumstances on the empire's borders, did not cease. During the reigns of Ming emperors Cheng-hua (成化)<sup>54</sup> and Hong-zhi (弘治)<sup>55</sup>, there was a peak in the presentation of wild animals to the Chinese court.

In 1445, “... from Samarkand and other places, the ruler (王) Ulugh Beg Guragan (烏魯伯苦列干) and others... presented horses (*ma*, 馬), camels (*tuō*, 駝), leopards (*bao*, 豹), jade (*yushi*, 玉石), and other goods...”<sup>56</sup>

In 1478, “... Sultan Ahmad (*Suolutan Abama*, 鎖魯檀阿哈麻) and others from the lands of Samarkand (撒馬兒罕)... sent envoys with tribute (gifts) of lions (*shizi*, 獅子)...”<sup>57</sup>

In 1479, “... the Samarkand envoy Palyuwan (怕六灣) and others imported lions (獅子)... Sultan Muhammad (*Suolutan Mahama*, 速檀馬黑麻) sent an envoy with tribute of ferocious animals (*mengshou*, 猛獸), which is truly commendable”<sup>58</sup>

In the same year, “... the rulers of Herat (*Heilon*, 黑婁), Lasi (刺思), Samarkand (撒馬兒罕), Badakhshan (把丹), and also Yunus Khan (羽奴思王) sent envoys with tribute of lions (獅子)...”<sup>59</sup>

In the imperial Forbidden City Gugong, there was a vast park where many wild animals, including hundreds of lions brought by embassies from around the world, were kept. This led to protests from Chinese officials who lamented the high cost of maintaining these “useless” and “dangerous” animals from their perspective.

<sup>53</sup> *Xinjiang difang lishi ziliao xuanji*, ibid, p. 231.

<sup>54</sup> Cheng-hua (成化) – the reign title of Zhu Jianshen (朱見深), who ruled from 1447 to 1487. His temple name was Xian-zong (憲宗).

<sup>55</sup> Hong-zhi (弘治) – the reign title of Zhu Youtang (朱祐樞), who ruled from 1470 to 1505. His temple name was Xiao-zong (孝宗).

<sup>56</sup> “*Ming shilu*” *leijuan*, ibid, p. 1075.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid, p. 1079.

<sup>58</sup> Ibid, p. 1079.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid, p. 1080.

However, wild animals continued to arrive. As noted in Chinese sources, Turkestan embassies travelled to Southeast Asia for lions. In 1485, "... it is said that the Samarkand envoy returned [home] via Guangdong, and later travelled to Malacca (*Malajia-guo*, 滿刺加國)<sup>60</sup>, wishing to purchase lions (獅子) for tribute. Only the lion is a useless wild animal..."<sup>61</sup>

Another record in the *True Records* about sending envoys via Malacca: in 1489, "... following the old custom, the Samarkand envoys, travelling through Gansu (甘肅), presented tribute (gifts). Indeed, the ruler Ahema Wang (Ahema-wang, 阿黑麻王) sent an envoy via Malacca (*Malajia-guo*, 滿刺加國), having obtained lions (獅子), parrots (*yingwu*, 鸚鵡), and other goods, arriving in Guangzhou (廣州)..."<sup>62</sup>

In 1490, "... foreigners (*buren*, 胡人) from the Western Regions (西域)... once (already) brought lions (獅子) and other wild animals (*shou*, 獸), [which represent] a danger to China..."<sup>63</sup>

The popularity of rare and valuable lions in China was also due to the spread of Buddhism, which associated the lion with strength and wisdom. However, for the Ming dynasty, it was merely a matter of "prestige"<sup>64</sup>.

## Conclusion

After the death of Amir Timur, relations between his descendants and the Ming dynasty improved and became actively developed. Alongside horses, which were consistently welcomed by the Chinese emperors, other goods, such as jade and wild animals, began to appear. The popularity of jade artifacts during the Timurid dynasty in the early 15th century, especially during the reign of Shah Rukh, had a direct influence on the emergence of new forms of jade processing and its spread in the 16th and 17th centuries in Western and Southern Asia. Rare birds and animals were also highly valued

<sup>60</sup> Manlajia-guo (滿刺加國) refers to Malacca during the Ming dynasty, also known as Maluujia (馬六甲).

<sup>61</sup> "Ming shilu" *leijuan*, *ibid*, p. 1081.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid*, p. 1081.

<sup>63</sup> "Ming shilu" *leijuan*, *ibid*, p. 1082.

<sup>64</sup> *Temuer wangchao yu Mingchaode gongci maoyi yanjiu lunwen*, *ibid*.

by the Ming emperors, but over time, Chinese sources recorded their “uselessness” and the high cost of maintaining them.

Nevertheless, maintaining official relations with foreign countries contributed to the enhancement of the Ming empire's international prestige. Therefore, the policy of “attracting” Western countries to China served both to strengthen the Ming government's authority and to raise its international status. The policy of “attracting foreign envoys with goodwill” was intended to serve specific goals; thus, the Ming court initiated the establishment and expansion of diplomatic relations with Turkestan's countries.

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