

Food Supply in The Timurid Army: Problems and Solutions

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Abstract: This article analyzes the system of food supply for the troops during the Timurid era, its organization, and the problems that arose. The study examines issues related to supplying soldiers and horses with provisions during military campaigns, logistical processes, supply routes, and the use of local resources. It also highlights the difficulties associated with long-distance campaigns, climatic conditions, and transportation capabilities, as well as the practical measures implemented to address them. Based on historical sources, the article analyzes the experience of effectively organizing food supply in the Timurid army and reveals its impact on military successes. The research findings contribute to understanding key aspects of military management and logistics in the Timurid period.

Keywords: Timurid era, army, food supply, military logistics, military campaigns, supply system, historical sources.

Introduction: During the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, military success was determined not only by the number of troops or the perfection of weapons, but also by the thorough and uninterrupted functioning of the supply system. In written sources of this period, military supply issues were often covered not as a separate topic, but indirectly through descriptions of the details of campaigns, state administration or military discipline. In particular, works such as *Zafarnama* and *Temur's Regulations* contain important information about the preparation of food supplies necessary for the army during campaigns, the procedure for their distribution, and the persons responsible for this process. These sources show that the effectiveness of military power largely depended on the regular and sufficient nutrition of soldiers. Especially during long military campaigns, planning food supplies in advance and their rational distribution was considered one of the most important tasks of the command. The supply system covered not only the needs of soldiers, but also the necessary fodder for horses and other mounts in the army. Because during the Timurid era, the army consisted mainly of cavalry, and their combat agility and mobility directly depended

on the level of nutrition of their horses. Therefore, the issue of food in the Timurid army was considered very important, since the military supply system was one of the main factors ensuring the combat potential of the army.

METHOD

In the research process, logical thinking, scientific reasoning, and a systematic approach were used to study the information on the topic.

Analyzed some aspects of the army, weapons, military strategies, and food supply in the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids. Foreign scholars such as L. Keren[1], B. Mans[2], M. Ivanin[3] also touched upon the issues of weapons during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids. In Uzbekistan, this issue was also partially addressed by B. Ahmedov[4], Azamat Ziyov[5] Hamidulla Dadaboyev[6], Sh. Uljayeva[7] and others.

The topic has not been fully studied to date, and studying the history of the field is one of the current issues today.

RESULTS

Sahibkiran had great confidence in experienced commanders during the campaign. The soldiers, who

had been hardened in numerous battles and considered war to be their main occupation, were gathered before the start of the campaign, they were included in the income and expenditure book, as well as in the list of those who received salaries - ulufa, food, fodder and hay from the state. [8] The “Zafarnoma” contains the following information: “Amirzoda Miranshah came from Khorasan with his army and was honored to see the blessed face of the sovereign. After he regained strength, the sovereign ordered, “Let the army be given food and clothing!” After the Cherik was fed, each bek was obliged to provide one gajirchi.”[9] This information indicates that during the reign of Amir Temur, the army was centrally organized, and the provision of food and weapons was carried out on the basis of the decree of the supreme ruler. Also, the appointment of a separate gajirchi to each bek indicates that during the reign of the Timurids, a military logistics system was formed and managed by clearly responsible persons.

Since the cavalry formed the basis of the military force during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the supply system was not limited only to meeting the food needs of the soldiers. It also included providing the necessary fodder for the horses, which played an important role in battles, and for the animals used for transportation. Therefore, the food supply in the Timurid army can be divided into two main types: the first - food products intended for soldiers, and the second - fodder for horses and other animals.

I. Food intended for human consumption:

—Grains and grain products: wheat, barley, millet, flour and bread.

—Meat products: fresh, dried, salted and fried meats.

—Milk and dairy products: milk, yogurt, curd, butter.

—Additional foods: water, animal and vegetable fats, salt, various spices and vegetables.

I. Food for horses and pack animals:

—Barley, oats, hay, straw, pasture grass and water.

From this classification it can be seen that the supply system in the Timurid army was comprehensively thought out and aimed at maintaining the combat potential of the soldiers, as well as maintaining the stable condition of the horses and mounts. Therefore, the system of providing the army with food was organized in two directions - on the basis of satisfying the needs of people and animals.

During the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the supply of the army was extensive, covering not only the food needs of the soldiers, but also the necessary fodder for horses and pack animals. Therefore, fodder supply was considered an integral and important part

of the military-logistical system.

Based on this, the system of providing the army with food can be divided into two main types according to its content.

I. Central pre-prepared food supply system.

II. Food supply system based on the use of local and natural resources.

Central pre-prepared reserves system – This was the most basic reliable system. Before military campaigns, grain, meat, fodder and water reserves were prepared. Reserves were placed in central warehouses or base areas along the route of the campaign. This system shows that the issue of supply was taken into account in advance when planning military campaigns. The following information is contained in Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi’s “Zafarnoma”. “The orders were written and sent to the princes. Amirzoda Khalil Sultan went to Tashkent, and Amirzoda Sultan Husayn went to Sabron and Yassi. They brought food from the provinces for Cherik.[10] The source notes that Amirzoda Khalil Sultan was sent to Tashkent, and Amirzoda Sultan Husayn to Sabron and Yassi. This indicates that certain regions were selected as supply bases to meet the needs of the army on the eve of or during military campaigns. The direct sending of the princes to these regions indicates a high level of responsibility for supply work and strict control over the process. Also, the fact that the text states that “they brought food from the provinces for Cherik” reveals the existence of an inter-regional organizational system in the army’s food supply. The delivery of food by carts made it possible to transport large amounts of grain over long distances, which was a great advantage for the Timurids. shows that transport and logistics issues were also organized in accordance with military needs. At the same time, the delivery of food from the provinces means that local economic resources were used centrally to cover the needs of the army.

Amir Temur prepared for the Chinese campaign for a long time and thoroughly, although this campaign was not completed, it is very important for us to study the process of preparing for this campaign. One of the greatest difficulties in the Chinese campaign was to provide the army with food in a remote, sparsely populated area. For this reason, Amir Temur spent the winter of 1397 in Tashkent before the Indian campaign, and then appointed his grandson Muhammad Sultan as the governor of Mongolia, ordering him to build fortresses in the border areas, cultivate crops and improve the lands. He also sent Berdibek Sari Buga, Emir Haji Saifuddin, Khudododi Husayni, Emir Shamsuddin Abbas and other beys to the service of the prince with forty thousand people. [11] This

information shows that Amir Temur had already understood in advance one of the most important problems that could arise during the Chinese campaign - the complexity of the army's food supply.

The campaign in the direction of China was planned to be carried out through long distances, difficult natural and climatic conditions, and sparsely populated areas, which meant that the centrally prepared reserves would not be enough. The appointment of Muhammad Sultan as governor of Mongolia was a measure aimed at ensuring the continuity of the military-administrative supply policy. The assignment of the tasks of building fortresses on the borders, establishing agriculture, and improving the territories was aimed at forming a supply system based on the use of local and natural resources. This allowed the army to rely not only on external reserves during the future campaign, but also on food sources created along the way. Sharafiddin Ali Yazdi's "Zafarnama" describes the preparation for the Chinese campaign as follows "With this arrangement, all the equipment was provided. The weapons, the bow and arrow, the sword and shield, everything a soldier needs, were all ready. And how many thousands of acres of grain were prepared, so that they could travel together in carts and carts, and cultivate on the road, and burn in the fire. And how many thousands of camels were tamed, so that they could accompany them and drink their milk." [12] This information clearly shows that Amir Temur's preparations for the Chinese campaign were carried out in a comprehensive manner in terms of military, material and food supply. Particular attention was paid to the issue of food supply. In particular, it was stipulated that thousands of tons of grain would be prepared in advance and transported with the army by carts. This indicates that, taking into account the long-distance and difficult conditions of the Chinese campaign, a system of central pre-prepared food reserves was seen as the main support. At the same time, it also indicates that farming was also envisaged during the campaign, that is, the possibility of planting crops and using the harvest when necessary. This indicates that a system based on the use of local and natural resources also played an important role in the supply of the army. In addition, thousands of tons of grain

Supply system based on the use of local and natural resources.

During the Timurid era, special attention was paid to the rational use of local and natural resources in the supply of the army. This approach served to ensure the continuity of supply in the conditions of long military campaigns, a large number of troops, and operations in different geographical areas. First of all, the natural and economic potential of the territories that became part

of the empire during military campaigns was widely used.

Food products such as grain, flour, wheat, barley were obtained from oases and urban areas where agriculture was developed and concentrated in central warehouses or temporary supply points. In areas where livestock farming prevailed, the army was mainly supplied with meat, milk, and dairy products. Also, the collection of taxes and fees from nomadic cattle-breeding tribes in the form of livestock was one of the important elements of the supply system. This practice created a non-perishable and constantly replenishable source of food for the army. As a result, the army was provided with live livestock during the campaigns, partially reducing the need to transport food over long distances. This system was described by Clavix as follows. The Alawars had a large number of black cattle, sheep, cows, and about twenty thousand camels, which they carried with them. They gave three thousand camels and fifteen thousand sheep annually as a tribute for grazing their livestock on the pastures belonging to the ruler.[14]

Considering the issues of logistics and supply in military campaigns, problems with food arose during long-distance campaigns, which Amir Temur found solutions to with his wisdom and intelligence. In particular, he faced similar problems during the aforementioned Golden Horde campaign. These problems are described by Khandamir in his work "Khabib us-siyar" as follows. After the beginning of the march, that is, after 3-4 months from the beginning of the march from Tashkent, serious problems began to arise with the food of the army in the vast steppes of the Dashti-Kipchak. The price of a sheep reached one hundred dinars per bushel. When a man of grain was measured with a large stone containing sixteen sharia manas, it rose to one hundred dinars per bushel. The soldiers lived on bird eggs and herbs that were suitable for eating. In this situation, a decree was issued that no one should bake bread, kumoch, bugra, or tatmoch, everyone should be content with the balmok that they received from the cook. The emirs experimented with adding a little greens to it at the rate of eight sharia manas per mana of flour, and sixty bowls of balmok were produced from the pot. It was decided that each person would be content with one bowl of balmok per day.[15]

This episode, presented in Khandamir's work "Khabib us-siyar", clearly reflects the logistical and supply crisis that Amir Temur's army faced during long-distance military campaigns. In the vast and sparsely populated areas of the Kipchak steppe, the food resources necessary for the army are sharply reduced, and market mechanisms are disrupted. In particular, the

fact that the price of a sheep reaches one hundred dinars per head, and the price of grain increases to the same extent, indicates a sharp increase in food shortages and inflation. Here, Amir Temur's strategic thinking and management potential are manifested. He introduces a centralized and strict ration system in accordance with the emergency. Cooking dishes that require relatively large amounts of raw materials, such as bread, kumoch, bugra and tatmoch, is prohibited, and the entire army is prescribed to eat a single and economically efficient meal of balmoq. This decision served to control food consumption, prevent waste, and maximize the efficient distribution of available resources. The fact that the emirs experimentally determined that one man of flour could be obtained by taking eight sharia mans, indicates that the Timur army approached supply issues based on calculations and practical experience. The fact that each soldier was assigned one cup of flour per day indicates the formation of a ration system aimed at minimally but continuously meeting the needs of the army.

In general, this information provided by Khandamir shows that logistics in Amir Timur's military campaigns was solved not only by advance planning, but also by flexible and firm management decisions in response to the difficult conditions that arose. This confirms that the issue of army supply during the Timurid era was an integral and important component of military strategy. During his campaign to the Golden Horde through the Dashti-Kipchak, Amir Timur developed a unique hunting method to solve the food problem. This hunting method was called hunting by the jirga method. The army forms a circle so large that the sides of the circle meet each other after two days.

CONCLUSION

The analysis of written sources of the 14th–15th centuries shows that during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the supply of troops was one of the most important components of the military management system. Military success directly depended not only on the number of troops or the power of weapons, but also on the uninterrupted supply of food and fodder to soldiers and horses. Therefore, the issue of supply was carried out under separate control at the state and military management levels.

The analysis of sources shows that Amir Temur approached military-logistical issues at a strategic level. In particular, such measures as the creation of food reserves, the organization of farming and livestock bases along the way, the use of transport and livestock resources in the process of preparing for the Chinese campaign are a vivid example of long-term military

planning. In general, during the reign of Amir Temur and the Timurids, the army's food supply was based on the principles of centralized management, careful planning, effective use of local resources, and strict control, which played an important role in the military power and success of the empire. The study of this issue based on written sources is of great scientific importance in identifying the specific features of the military logistics system of the Timurid era and in further studying the military history of the Middle Ages.

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