

An Analysis of The Administrative Structure, Geography, And Climate of The Emirate of Bukhara In The “Kamus Ul-Alam” Encyclopedia

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Abstract: The article provides general information about the structural structure, geography, climate and location of Emirate of Bukhara. The information in “Kamus ul-alam” was analyzed and additions were made to them. It is worth noting that the information was given in sequence in the article. That is, it was presented within the geographical boundaries of the states that existed at that time.

Keywords: Central Asia, Bukhara, Samarkand, Amir Nasrullah, Amudarya, Syrdarya.

Introduction: If we look at the history of Central Asia in the 19th century, this region included the Khanates of Khiva and Kokand, the Emirate of Bukhara, as well as the colonies of the Russian Empire. Information about these territories in “Kamus ul-alam” is not presented in a unified or comprehensive manner, but rather appears in various separate sections.

In the encyclopedia, the Emirate of Bukhara appears in the Latinized form “Boukharie” and provides information about the location, borders, administrative structure, central cities, and natural features of the Emirate of Bukhara. In addition, it only mentions the reign of Amir Nasrullah Khan and states that he died in the Hijri year 1277 (1860 CE). [1, p.4578].

One of the smaller Islamic states of Central Asia, it was one of the two states in Turkestan that managed, to some extent, to preserve its independence (the other being the Khanate of Khiva). This khanate consisted of part of Transoxiana, beginning slightly beyond the Jayhun (Amu Darya) and extending to the mountain range that separates the basin of the Sayhun (Syr Darya) from that of the Jayhun (Amu Darya), as well as to the Kyzylkum Desert.

METHOD

Regarding the borders of the Emirate by the end of the

19th century, the encyclopedia provides the following information: “To the north and northeast, it bordered Turkestan and territories under Russian control, namely the provinces of Tashkent and Fergana; to the south, the land of Hind (Pamir) and Afghanistan; to the southwest, the basins of Merv and Khorezm under Russian possession; and to the west, the Khanate of Khiva. Although this khanate had once been quite large and powerful, most of its territories were gradually conquered by Russia, and in its present condition, within the described borders, it is situated approximately between 36° and 32° north latitude and 60° and 65° east longitude. Its area covers 590,000 square kilometers.” [2, p.1248].

Most of its lands are sandy, waterless, and saline; only the riverbanks—especially the Zarafshan Valley, which constitutes merely one-tenth or perhaps one-fifteenth of the entire territory—are fertile and prosperous. In other regions, nomadic tribes wander from place to place. The mountain systems of the Emirate of Bukhara, including the Turk Mountains, the Aq Tagh (White Mountains), and other ranges, separate the basin of the Sayhun (Syr Darya) from that of the Jayhun (Amu Darya). From the city of Bukhara toward the Jayhun (Amu Darya), these mountain chains gradually rise, then slowly descend, eventually ending in the

Kyzylkum Desert. Their principal southern extensions are the Qara Tagh and Ala Tagh ranges. The remaining parts of the emirate are flat and low-lying.

The Jayhun, known today as the Amu Darya, forms for a considerable distance the boundary between the Emirate of Bukhara and Afghanistan, while remaining within the territory of the emirate itself; stretching northwestward for approximately 500 kilometers, it also borders the Khanate of Khiva. Numerous rivers belonging to this watershed, including the Topalang, Hisar, Serh, and many others under Bukhara's domain, descend from the mountains and flow southward. The most significant river of the Emirate of Bukhara is the Zarafshan. This river originates in the mountains of the Khanate of Kokand, then under Russian dominion, emerging from the lake known as Iskandar Kul above Samarkand; from there it passes through Samarkand, enters Bukhara, and flows southwestward, creating a valley celebrated for the richness and beauty of its vegetation. The most cultivated regions of the khanate, together with many of its cities and towns, were situated within this valley, while villages were surrounded by fields and gardens. The total length of this river is 700 kilometers [3, p.1248].

The climate of the Emirate of Bukhara—particularly that of the city of Bukhara, its surrounding regions, and the basin of the Zarafshan River—was regarded as among the most pleasant climates. In winter, temperatures fall from 0°C to -2°C, while the highest winter temperature rises to 8°C. During winter, water freezes and snow falls; rainfall is abundant in autumn and February, while spring is exceptionally beautiful.

The air is often so clear that the sky appears extraordinarily splendid, and the stars shine with unusual brilliance.

Agricultural production is abundant and highly diverse. Rice, cotton, and flax are extensively cultivated, alongside wheat, barley, maize, and other grains, as well as all varieties of vegetables and fruits. Apples, pears, cherries, peaches, quinces, and many other fruits are plentiful; its raisins and melons are especially renowned. Even tobacco is produced in limited quantities. The leaves of mulberry trees are used to raise silkworms, resulting in substantial silk production. The most widespread tree is the poplar, which is also used extensively for timber.

As for livestock, sheep and goats are numerous. Fine lambskins are produced from sheep hides, while high-quality cashmere fabric is made in limited quantities from goat hair. There is also a breed of sheep with curly, short wool, from the skins of whose lambs elegant hats are manufactured. Camels are likewise abundant, and their wool is woven into a type of durable, waterproof garment of remarkable quality. Riding animals are plentiful and sufficient. Although the horses are large and strong, their bodies are elongated, and they are considered somewhat lacking in beauty.

Wild animals are relatively few and consist mainly of wolves, foxes, bears, wild boars, and jackals. Deer, black gazelles, and numerous species of gazelles are abundant, often traveling in herds. Scorpions and other insects are numerous as well, though they are generally not highly venomous. [4, p.1249].

The Khanate of Bukhara consisted of 6 provinces and 25 districts.

Province	Districts
Bukhara	Romitan Zandani Vobkent Vardonza Khayrobod Vakanzi Gijduvan
Karakul	
Karmana	Karmana Zevdin
Miyankal	Kattaqurgan Khatirchi

	Panjshanba Meytan Nurota Yangiqurgan Chelak
Karshi	Karshi Guzar Sherobod Seydabod Chiroqchi
Lebab	Naraz Kerki Charjuy Otar

Bukhara, the capital of the Emirate of Bukhara, was one of the two greatest and most important cities of Asia and had, since ancient times, served as the center of Transoxiana (Movarounnahr). Situated in the broad oasis of the Zarafshan River valley below the Jayhun (Amu Darya), it was located at 39°45' north latitude and 62°8' east longitude, 280 kilometers west of Samarkand and 280 kilometers northeast of Merv. Its elevation stood at 366 meters above sea level. The city was triangular in shape, with a circumference of approximately 13 kilometers. It was enclosed by fortress walls rising to a height of 20 paces and contained 12 gates. Surrounded by gardens and orchards, the city itself was not visible from afar.

Its water supply was limited, and although several canals had been constructed to bring the waters of the Zarafshan River into the city, the river's seasonal decline in volume necessitated the construction of numerous reservoirs. The city also possessed beautiful natural springs.

In more recent times, the Uzbeks had established Bukhara as their center, yet it was increasingly falling under Russian influence. A railway constructed by Russia, extending from the Caspian coast to Merv and from there to Samarkand, passed through Bukhara.

Hisar was the administrative center of the region bearing the same name within the Emirate of Bukhara. Located 380 kilometers to the east-southeast of Bukhara, it was regarded as a fortified town [5, p.1961]. The region also known as Hisori Shodmon was situated to the north of the Jayhun (Amu Darya). In this territory,

the river flowed into the Surkhab, while several other rivers also flowed southward, forming multiple valleys. The upper sections of these valleys were snow-covered, and although the lands near the banks of the Jayhun (Amu Darya) were marshy, their central parts enjoyed a moderate climate and remarkable beauty. Within these areas were several towns, including Nafis Hisar, Sherobod, Dushanbe, Sarijuy, and Fayzobod. Along the banks of the Jayhun (Amu Darya), the ruins of certain ancient cities, such as Termez, were still visible.

Romitan was one of the towns of the Emirate of Bukhara, located 38 kilometers northeast of Bukhara. Situated around one of the canals of the Zarafshan River and near the railway route connecting Merv to Samarkand, it served as the center of its district. In the year 1287 AH, both the town and its district were buried by sand. As a result, 16,000 families perished, while the surviving inhabitants migrated to the Khanate of Khiva.

Shahrisabz was likewise one of the renowned cities of the emirate, situated 58 kilometers southeast of Samarkand. Serving as the center of a province, the city was enclosed by fortress walls. The waters of the river flowing through the city were utilized by means of barriers and dams for irrigation, making the surrounding area rich with gardens and orchards. The greenery that gave the city its name prevailed there continuously. Formerly known as Kesh, it had once been a small town and was the birthplace of Amir Timur (Tamerlane) [6, p.2889].

The city and its surrounding territories were incorporated into the Emirate of Bukhara during the period of Russian conquest.

Qobadiyan was located in the Hisar province of the Emirate of Bukhara. The city was situated 125 kilometers southwest of Hisar, along the banks of the Kafirnigan, a tributary of the Jayhun (Amu Darya), approximately 60 kilometers upstream from its confluence, and it served as the center of a qadi district (judicial-administrative district) [7, p.3593].

Termez was located in the southern part of the emirate, on the northern side of the Amu Darya, as a small town on the bank of the Surkhab, one of the tributaries associated with that river. It was situated 380 kilometers southeast of Bukhara and 80 kilometers northeast of Balkh. During the age of Islamic civilization, it had been a great and celebrated city, serving as the homeland of many eminent scholars and literary figures. However, it was completely destroyed and devastated by Genghis Khan. Although it was later rebuilt and reestablished, it never regained its former prosperity [8, p.1644].

CONCLUSION

The accuracy of the above information, together with its consistency with the works of Central Asian historians, Western Orientalists, and archival sources, demonstrates that «Kamus ul-alam» encompassed significant information concerning Central Asia in the nineteenth century.

Although the encyclopedia was written in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, it nevertheless provided comprehensive information on the history of Central Asia during the second half of the nineteenth century.

A noteworthy feature is that repetition of information was deliberately avoided. When the articles are combined, they present a coherent and comprehensive general description. At the same time, in sections where information needed to be repeated, the title of the previously presented article was included as a reference.

The administrative units that emerged in Central Asia during the nineteenth century were also specifically emphasized, and preliminary general information regarding them was presented separately.

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