

The Establishment of The Bukhara Emirate and The Accession of The First Mangid Rulers to The Throne

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Abstract: This article highlights the political processes in Transoxiana in the mid-18th century, including the crisis of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty and the accession of the Manghit dynasty to the throne. Furthermore, based on scientific sources, the research analyzes the stages of the Bukhara Khanate's transformation into an emirate, reforms towards building a centralized state, and the specific characteristics of consolidating the power of the early Manghit rulers in state administration.

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Introduction. One of the most urgent tasks today is to research the history of the formation of the Bukhara Emirate, which left an indelible mark on the history of Uzbek statehood and was known for centuries as Qubbat al-Islam (the Dome of Islam). This involves studying the implemented reforms and the processes of centralization of state administration based on historical sources, presenting them to the general public from a scientific perspective, and harmonizing the accumulated theoretical experiences with modern democratic values for effective application in our contemporary society.

METHODS

The article is presented using methods such as historical comparison, comparative analysis, and systematization. It highlights the establishment of the Bukhara Emirate and the accession of the first Manghit rulers to the throne.

RESULTS

The Bukhara Khanate was a state that held a distinct position within the system of Uzbek statehood and encompassed vast territories. According to historical sources, in the first half of the 18th century, the final representatives of the Ashtarkhanid (Janid) dynasty, who were ruling the Bukhara Khanate, failed to devote sufficient attention to state administration, the consolidation of power, or issues regarding internal and external security [2.231]. Continuous warfare during the Ashtarkhanid era depleted the treasury, significantly hindering the economic development of the khanate.

As a result of the monetary reform conducted in 1708–1709, the value of the currency plummeted fourfold. The population, suffering from the consequences of the reform, rose in rebellion, though the uprising was ruthlessly suppressed. The deterioration of the political

and economic situation within the khanate further exacerbated internal tensions. Following a conspiracy orchestrated by several influential emirs, Ubaydullakhan was assassinated in 1711. His brother, Abulfayzkhan (1711–1747), was placed on the throne as a merely nominal ruler.

Key administrative positions fell into the hands of powerful emirs. Following the weakening of central authority, Balkh seceded from the Bukhara Khanate in 1711, followed by the Samarkand province in 1723. In the 1720s, the Tashkent province was occupied by the Kalmyks. During this period, Shergazikhan, the Khan of Khiva, also laid claim to the Bukhara Khanate, but his efforts ultimately proved unsuccessful.

In 1723, the Kalmyks invaded the Kazakh steppes, forcing the Kazakhs to flee toward Transoxiana. The Kazakhs entered the Zarafshan valley with their livestock, devastating gardens and croplands. As a result, economic and political distress intensified, leading the Bukhara Khanate toward decline. Transoxiana fragmented into three separate khanates: Bukhara, Kokand, and Khiva. Muhammad Hakim Ataliq, representing the Manghit tribe, held the title of Ataliq of the city of Bukhara and served as the leader of all ataliqs. Resenting his growing influence, court officials exerted pressure on Abulfayzkhan (1711–1747) and succeeded in having him sent back to the city of Karshi.

Taking advantage of the situation, the Persian ruler Nadir Shah captured Balkh in the spring of 1740 and, in the autumn of the same year, crossed the Amu Darya with a large army to subjugate the Bukhara Khanate. After Muhammad Hakim Biy Ataliq and his son Muhammad Rahim entered the service of Nadir Shah, the former was granted the Persian title of Amir-i Kabir (Great Emir). Consequently, the prestige of Abulfayzkhan declined. Following the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, the khanate freed itself from Persian vassalage and restored its independence. In 1747, conspirators assassinated Abulfayzkhan. Utilizing this power vacuum, Muhammad Rahim Biy became the de facto head of state. He did not rush to officially ascend the throne; instead, he proclaimed Abulfayzkhan's young son, Abdulmumin, as the Khan, while in reality, all administrative affairs of the state remained in his hands. Furthermore, he married his daughter to Abdulmumin (who was subsequently killed in 1748).

In the work of Jumaqli Khumuli, no information is provided regarding Abdulmumin, nor is the cause of his death explained. It is possible that this portion of the manuscript was not preserved or was omitted during transcription. The narrative in the work resumes during the period when Ubaydullakhan, another son of Abulfayzkhan who was nearing maturity, was placed on

the throne by Muhammad Rahim Biy. It is noted that he also married his daughter to Ubaydullakhan. However, several days later, it is recorded that "while Ubaydullah was playing with other children on the walls of the Bukhara fortress, they went to watch the water wheel (charkh-i falak) that supplied water to the citadel. During the observation, Ubaydullah slipped, fell from the fortress wall, and passed away" [1].

With this event, no male descendants remained from the lineage of Jochi, the son of Genghis Khan. It is stated that "Abulfayzkhan had executed his other sons with his own hands; only Ubaydullah had remained" [1, 63b.]. The historian Anke von Kügelgen suggests that this incident was deliberately orchestrated by Muhammad Rahim Biy. This is supported by the fact that following this event, Muhammad Rahim Biy became the sole, independent ruler of Bukhara.

In 1756, the official enthronement ceremony of Muhammad Rahim, the founder of the dynasty, took place. Following tradition, he was placed on a white felt mat, the four corners of which were lifted by representatives of the major Uzbek tribes (Mangit, Saroy, Qipchoq, and Bakhrin) as he was seated on the throne. However, since he was not a direct descendant of Genghis Khan, he was proclaimed not as "Khan," but as Naib ul-Hukumat (Deputy of the Government). After establishing order in Bukhara, he conquered the surrounding provinces, Transoxiana, and specifically the territories subject to Samarkand and Miyankol. Consequently, the Ashtarkhanid (Janid) dynasty came to an end, marking the beginning of the Mangit dynasty's rule. By the time of the ruler Shahmurad, the state began to be governed under the title of "Amir." When Shahmurad established the title of head of state as Amir, he justified it not through the traditions of Uzbek and Mongol tribes, but based on the principles of Sharia.

With the ascension of the Mangit dynasty (represented by Muhammad Rahim, 1753–1758)—a local tribal elite—to the throne of the Bukhara Khanate within the system of Uzbek statehood, the state began to be referred to as an "Emirate" rather than a "Khanate." This was because, during that period, only descendants of Genghis Khan were eligible to be proclaimed "Khan." The Mangit ruler Muhammad Rahim Khan (1756–1758) pursued a policy of establishing absolute sovereignty and ending internal anarchy. The primary objective of this policy was the restoration of a centralized state. Muhammad Rahim Khan vigorously undertook the implementation of this agenda. He summoned all local governors, informing them of his ultimate goals and administrative program. He emphasized that the ongoing internal conflicts and wars were devastating

the country, disrupting the economy and trade, and warned that if these processes continued, the collapse of the state would be inevitable. He further cautioned that any local ruler who refused to submit to the central authority would face ruthless punishment.

Jumaqli Xumuliy, in his work *Tarixi Xumuliy*, describes Muhammad Rahim as follows: “He was a king of wrath and anger. He was majestic. He walked with dignity and spoke words of high value. His generosity was great, his character was praiseworthy, and his kindness and wrath each had their proper place. In every matter, he would recite appropriate verses as if he had composed them himself. His stature was tall, his forehead broad, and his limbs were proportional to one another. Without affectation, all people of the ninety-nine Uzbek tribes were satisfied with his khanship and considered their service to him as a cause for gratitude. If he looked at black soil with affection, the soil of that place would turn into a healing collyrium for the eyes. If he looked toward the harvest in the heavenly fields with wrath, he would burn it like the sun. He constantly made additions to the statecraft policies of Nadir Shah and Genghis Khan. He possessed a grand vision for establishing the foundations of the sultanate's regulations. In many rules of world governance, he followed Nadir Shah. Muhammad Rahim cleared the territories of Turan, Balkh, Badakhshan, Hisar, and the areas around Hisar of opponents, and introduced his own unique regulations...” [1, 97b].

Qozi Vafo, the court historian of Muhammad Rahim, states the following about him: “from his youth, he was a skilled horseman. Furthermore, he was well-versed in handling weaponry (sipoh)...” [2, 308]. Muhammad Ya'qub, in his treatise written in 1830–1831, considers Muhammad Rahim the “greatest” among the Manghit rulers: “after him, no other ruler could manage the state in such order” [3], he describes. Indeed, unlike the rulers who governed the emirate after him, Muhammad Rahim attacked the Kesh province—governed by the Kenagas tribe—three times and captured Kitob and Shahrisabz.

Muhammad Rahim Khan subjugated the districts of Miyonqol, Nurota, Qobodiyon, Boysun, Shahrisabz, and Urgut, which had been claiming independence, over a period of four years. At the same time, he pursued a policy of forcibly relocating tribes that refused to submit or attempted to resist central authority. For instance, such a policy was implemented against the Burqut, Kipchak, Yetti Urug', Bahrin, Yuz, Kenagas, Saroy, and other tribes. Muhammad Rahim Khan managed to drastically reduce the long-standing interference of major landowners in the administration of the state. Nevertheless, he did not fully succeed in making all districts recognize the central authority.

Following his death in 1759 (1172 AH), uprisings broke out across the emirate, and Shahrisabz seceded from the territory of the emirate.

After the death of Muhammad Rahim Biy, the ulama (religious scholars) and umara (nobility) gathered to perform his funeral rites and bury him. Since Muhammad Rahim Biy had no male heirs, his grandson through his daughter, Foziltora ibn Norbotabiy ibn Badalbiy ibn Hakimbiy Otaliq, ascended the throne of Bukhara. However, as Foziltora was only six years old at the time, Muhammad Rahim Biy's uncle, Muhammad Doniyol Biy, was appointed as his ataliq (regent). Khoja Nizomiddin Mirakoni was appointed to the position of Qazi (judge), and Badal Devonboshi was appointed to the position of Amiri Devon (head of the chancery). Seeing Foziltora's incapacity for the role, the amir and umara removed him from the position of Khan after a few days. They formed an alliance and unanimously found Doniyol Otaliq worthy of ruling the state, subsequently placing him on the throne.

During the reign of Muhammad Doniyol Biy, the central authority weakened because he was forced to grant extensive privileges to regional governors. He granted large estates as tanho (land grants) to all Manghit beys. He also increased the taxes collected from the people. During his rule, the aspirations for independence in the districts of Balkh, Hisar, Kulob, and Uratapa intensified. Furthermore, he was unable to curb the arbitrary actions of major landowners, the Qushbegi, and the Qazikalon (chief judge). One of his sons, Shohmurod, led a dervish-like (ascetic) life; following a sheikh's advice, he worked as a porter in the market. Later, he supported his household by making and selling knife sheaths. Due to his great reputation among the people, Doniyol Biy decided to hand over the power to him.

The influence of Sufism played a crucial role in the development of Amir Shohmurod as a statesman; in this regard, his position as a disciple (*murid*) of Shayx Safar was decisive. He held people of knowledge in high esteem and ensured their financial support. However, Sufism did not prevent him from becoming the stern ruler known as Amir Shohmurod, nor did it hinder him from implementing several reforms to strengthen the state power of the Manghit dynasty. Although the clergy advised against appointing Ma'sum—the eldest of the 11 sons of the first Manghit ruler, Doniyolbiy Otaliq—to power, he was designated as the heir to the Bukhara throne. Following his father's death in 1785, he ascended the throne as the Amir of Bukhara.

Amir Shohmurod is considered one of the rulers who holds a special place in the history of the statehood of the Bukhara Emirate. His reign (1785–1800), during which he earned the title "Amiri Ma'sum" ("The

Sinless/Innocent Amir"), was a period of relative consolidation of central authority in Bukhara. By the time of Amir Shohmurod, the state had acquired fully solid foundations. The administration of the state in the Bukhara Emirate did not differ significantly from other khanates; the state was governed by the Amir, who possessed virtually unlimited de facto and official powers.

In his activities, Shohmurod relied on the masses and strictly adhered to the principles of justice. He lived an exceptionally humble life. For instance, he wore only one striped robe ("olacha chopon") and one cotton shirt per year. On his head, he wore a turban made of six meters of cotton cloth, and on his feet, he wore boots ("mahsi") and overshoes ("kavush") made of goat leather.

Amir Shohmurod carried out extensive construction work in the city of Samarkand. A hexagonal dome ("chorsu") was built in the city center and named "Toqi Musaddas". He personally appointed the imams, muezzins, and teachers ("mudarris") for every madrasah in Samarkand. He allocated endowment ("waqf") lands and properties to provide salaries for the teachers and support for the students.

Amir Shohmurod succeeded in strengthening the state by implementing several reforms. He introduced the office of Rais (market overseer/inspector of public morals) and the position of Qozi Askar (military judge) within the army. The monetary reform conducted by Shohmurod was of great importance in stabilizing the country's economy. During the Ashtarkhanid period, the silver content in minted coins had been significantly reduced. According to the law introduced by Shohmurod, anyone who betrayed or misappropriated property was to be severely punished, regardless of their social status. This measure prevented infringements upon the interests of the people.

Shohmurod put an end to the tradition of "puppet khans" from the Chingizid lineage and began his fully independent rule. Since Shohmurod ascended the throne at a time when the discontent of the common people, oppressed by heavy taxation, was growing, he began his reforms primarily by regulating the tax system. He granted a "tarkhan" (tax exemption) decree to the entire population of the city of Bukhara. He abolished various taxes introduced by his predecessors that did not comply with Sharia law—such as "yorg'u", "boj", "tarx", "tushmol", and "yasoq"—and retained only the Sharia-sanctioned taxes ("kharaj" and "zakat").

Shohmurod introduced a fair judicial system based on Islamic Sharia. According to this system, every Muslim, even a slave, had the right to bring their complaint to a judge ("qozi") and hold their master accountable for

illegal actions.

Almost all historians who have studied the history of Central Asia highly praise Amir Shohmurod's activities in the field of state administration. The scholar Ahmad Donish ranked him alongside Caliph Umar, giving him high praise: "He decorated the carpet of the emirate with the garments of poverty, uprooted enmity and evil from the garden of the world, and planted the seedlings of justice." [7]

In conclusion, although the amirs of the Manghit dynasty consistently pursued a policy of unifying the country and centralizing state power, the increasing influence of Uzbek tribal and clan leaders and their aspirations for independence further intensified political fragmentation. Frequent invasions of each other's territories by the khanates and the seizure of cities and villages escalated mutual confrontations.

The establishment of the Bukhara Emirate was of great significance in the history of Mawarannahr. Although the Manghit rulers were not descendants of the Chingizids, they preserved the integrity of the state through strong military and administrative reforms. This political system, founded by Muhammad Rahim-bi and strengthened by Amir Shohmurod, existed until 1920.

In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Bukhara Emirate consisted of 27 provinces and 11 districts, with all districts located around the city of Bukhara.

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