



THE DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF THE STRUGGLES FOR THE THRONE AND CROWN IN THE BUKHARA KHANATE IN THE LATE 17TH CENTURY AND THE FIRST HALF OF THE 18TH CENTURY

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ABSTRACT

In 1681, Abdulaziz Khan abdicated the throne. Several factors contributed to this decision. First, the prolonged war with the Khiva Khanate had exhausted the khan both physically and politically, while discontent among various social groups had sharply increased. Second, persistent conflicts with his younger brother further destabilized the situation. His brother, Subhonquli Khan, became governor of Balkh in 1651 and engaged in a struggle with Abdulaziz Khan for the throne.

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In 1658, a truce was concluded between them. Under its terms, Subhonquli Khan recognized his brother's authority. In return, he was declared heir apparent, and his governorship of Balkh was formally legitimized¹. Nevertheless, both the Friday sermon (khutbah) and the coinage continued to bear the name of Abdulaziz Khan².

In 1681, Subhonquli Khan arrived from Balkh and, in accordance with established custom, ascended the throne in Samarkand, after which he was proclaimed the Khan of Bukhara. Having abdicated in favor of his brother, Subhonquli Khan set out for the cities of Mecca and Medina to fulfill his Muslim religious obligation. After performing the obligatory pilgrimage (hajj), he passed away in 1682 in the city of Mecca.³

Upon ascending the throne, Subhonquli Khan, along with resolving the internal conflicts within the state, was also required to appoint an heir who would succeed him. He had several sons, including Iskandar Khan, Abulmansur Sultan, Ibadulla Sultan, Siddiq Muhammad Sultan, Ubaydulla Sultan, and Abulfayz Khan.⁴

¹ Тўраев Ҳ. Аштархоний Абдулазизхон. // Бухоро мавжлари. 4-сон, 2008. 39-б.

² Азамат Зиё. Ўзбек давлатчилиқ тарихи. Т.: Шарқ, 2001. 268-б.

³ Арминий Вамбери. Бухоро ёхуд Мовароуннахр тарихи. 2-қисм. 128-б.

⁴ Замонов А. Ўрта аср тарихий шахслари ҳаётининг айрим номаълум саҳифалари. Т.: Баёз, 2020. 135-б.

According to the dynastic tradition of the khanate, the heir apparent was required to serve as the governor of the Balkh province. Iskandar Khan was the first to be granted this distinction and assumed the administration of Balkh.⁵

However, his rule did not last long. In 1683, Mawzun Suray, a trusted associate of his brother Abulmansur Sultan, poisoned Iskandar Khan's food, which resulted in his death. At the time of his passing, Iskandar Khan was only 28 years old.⁶

After this, Abulmansur Sultan began to pursue the position of deputy governor of Balkh. However, his father, Subhonquli Khan, aware of his misconduct and recognizing his unfitness for the throne, granted the Balkh deputyship to Iskandar Khan's younger brother, Ibadulla Sultan (Iskandar and Ibadulla were born of the same mother). Nevertheless, the people of Balkh did not submit to him. The rule of Abulmansur Sultan — who effectively assumed the deputy governorship of the province in place of Ibadulla — lasted only four months. This was due to his fear that Ibadulla might lay claim to the throne; as a result, he plotted against him and thus became responsible for the death of yet another brother.⁷

Thus, in his pursuit of the throne, Abulmansur Sultan succeeded, through a series of conspiracies, in eliminating his brothers one after another—brothers who possessed significant military and political capabilities. Another son of Subhonquli Khan, Siddiq Muhammad, openly emerged as a claimant to the throne and began contending for power.⁸

Siddiq Muhammad, dissatisfied with the policies pursued by his brother Abulmansur, formed a conspiracy group composed of local beks. However, the prince was killed by the very conspirators he had gathered.⁹

At that time, Abulmansur was only 22 years old.¹⁰

It is evident that the turn to assume the governorship of Balkh now fell to Siddiq Muhammad — and so it did. From 1683 onward, he began administering Balkh independently.¹¹

The policies pursued by Siddiq Muhammad in Balkh caused dissatisfaction on the part of his father, Subhonquli Khan. This was due to his ambition and, at times, his unwillingness to obey his father. According to the author of *Muhit al-Tawarikh*, Siddiq Muhammad Sultan insulted Hasan Khoja, one of the most respected shaykhs, and expelled him from the city of Balkh.¹²

Realizing that the situation was becoming increasingly complicated, Subhonquli Khan launched a campaign against Balkh in the autumn of 1685 in order to restrain his son. As a

⁵ Мирзо Салимбек. Кашкўли Салимий. Таворихи муттақадимин ва муттаахирин. / Форс тилидан таржима ва изоҳлар муаллифи Н.Йўлдошев. Бухоро:Бухоро нашриёти, 2003. 279-280-б.

⁶ Арминий Вамбери. Бухоро ёхуд Мовароуннаҳр тарихи. 2-қисм. Т.: Info capital group, 2019. 136-б.

⁷ Мухаммед Юсуф Мунши. Муқим-ханская история. Перевод с таджикского, предисловие, примечания и указатели Семёнов А.А. - Ташкент: Издательство Академии наук Узбекской ССР, 1956. - С. 118.

⁸ Арминий Вамбери. Бухоро ёхуд Мовароуннаҳр тарихи. 2-қисм. Т.: Info capital group, 2019. 136-б.

⁹ Хожа Самандар Термизий. Дастур ул-мулук. / Форс-тожик тилидан таржима, кириш ва изоҳлар муаллифи Ж.Эсонов. Т.: Фафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти, 1997. 165-175-б.

¹⁰ Мирзо Салимбек. Кашкўли Салимий. Таворихи муттақадимин ва муттаахирин. / Форс тилидан таржима ва изоҳлар муаллифи Н.Йўлдошев. Бухоро:Бухоро нашриёти, 2003. 279-б.

¹¹ Мухаммед Юсуф Мунши. Муқим-ханская история. Перевод с таджикского, предисловие, примечания и указатели Семёнов А.А.- Т.: Издательство Академии наук Узбекской ССР, 1956. - С. 120-121.

¹² Хожа Самандар Термизий. Дастур ул-мулук. / Форс-тожик тилидан таржима, кириш ва изоҳлар муаллифи Ж.Эсонов. Т.: Фафур Ғулом номидаги Адабиёт ва санъат нашриёти, 1997. 165-б.

result, Siddiq Muhammad and the conspirators who supported him were captured. According to the Balkh historian Muhammad Yusuf Munshī, Subhonquli Khan ordered that his son Siddiq Muhammad be imprisoned. After spending three months in confinement, Siddiq Muhammad contracted malaria and died at the age of twenty-one.¹³ However, according to the account of the Bukharan historian Muhammad Amin Bukhari (1700), Subhonquli Khan sentenced his son to execution along with the other conspirators.¹⁴

Although Subhonquli Khan formally granted the governance of Balkh to Muqim Khan — the son of the late Iskandar Khan — actual administration of the region was carried out by his guardian, Mahmudbiy Otaliq. After Subhonquli Khan's death, Muqim Khan refused to recognize the authority of his uncle, Ubaydulla Khan (1702–1711), who ascended the Bukhara throne, and declared himself independent. From 1702 to 1707, he ruled as the sovereign of the Balkh Khanate.¹⁵

Before his death, Subhonquli Khan designated his grandson, Muhammad Muqim Khan, as heir to the throne. However, his son, Ubaydulla Khan, relying on the support of a powerful army and the backing of influential Bukharan ulama, seized power and assumed the khanate's throne.¹⁶

According to Muhammad Yusuf Munshī, Subhonquli Khan left the following testament before his death: “Among my descendants, I appoint my grandson, Muhammad Muqim Khan, as the heir to the throne, and after me he shall ascend to the khanate's seat.”¹⁷

However, his accession to the throne did not take place, as Muqim Khan was in Balkh at that time.¹⁸

Relying on the support of court officials and the military, Subhonquli Khan's eldest surviving son, Ubaydulla Khan (1702–1711), seized the throne. According to the Hungarian orientalist and traveler A. Vámbéry, who based his account on sources other than *Tarikh-i Muqimkhani*, Subhonquli Khan was deeply fond of his grandson, Muhammad Muqim Khan, the deputy governor of Balkh, and regretted that he had been unable to bid him farewell before his death. Since Muqim Khan had not yet reached maturity, Subhonquli Khan bequeathed the Bukhara throne to his elder son, Ubaydulla Khan.¹⁹ It is plausible that Muhammad Yusuf Munshī, the author of *Tarikh-i Muqimkhani* (a work dedicated to Muqim Khan), may have emphasized Muqim Khan's “status as heir apparent” in order to promote the interests of his patron.

In the spring of 1711, Ubaydulla Khan planned to travel to Balkh in order to expand and reinforce the southern frontiers of the state.²⁰

¹³ Muhammad Amin Buxoriy. Muhit at-tavorix. / Fors tilidan tarjima, kirish va izohlar muallifi D.Yu.Yusupova va U.Hamroyev. T.: Fan, 2020. 70-b.

¹⁴ Мухаммед Юсуф Мунши. Муким-ханская история. Перевод с таджикского, предисловие, примечания и указатели Семёнов А.А.- Ташкент: Издательство Академии наук Узбекской ССР, 1956. - С. 138-139.

¹⁵ Арминий Вамбери. Бухоро ёхуд Мовароуннахр тарихи. 2-қисм. Т.: Info capital group, 2019. 137-b.

¹⁶ Мухаммад Амин Бухорий. Мухит ат-таворих. / Форс тилидан таржима, кириш ва изохлар муаллифи Д.Ю.Юсупова ва У.Хамроев. Т.: Fan, 2020. 236-b.

¹⁷ История Узбекистана (XVI – первая половина XIX вв.). Ответ. редактор Д.Алимова. – Т.: Фан, 2012. – С. 56.

¹⁸ Мухаммед Юсуф Мунши. Муким-ханская история. Пер. с тадж., пред., примечания и указатели проф. Семёнов А.А. – Т.: Издательство Академии наук Узбекской ССР, 1956. - С.177-178.

¹⁹ Muqimxon 1697-1707-yillarda Balx xoni.

²⁰ Arminiyy Vamberi. Buxoro yoxud Movarounnahr tarixi. 2-qism. / Rus tilidan tarjima va izohlar muallifi Sirojiddin Ahmad. T.: Info capital group, 2019. 145-b.

The khan, who had set out accompanied by his close associates and six hundred members of his special guard, was killed by conspirators in the Piri Marza garden near Bukhara.²¹

Thus, the path to the throne was opened for his brother, Abulfayz Khan. As Abulfayz Khan was still very young, he was placed on the throne only nominally, while the weakened central authority allowed powerful amirs—who had amassed substantial wealth — to seize influential positions in the administration of the state. Javshan Qalmaq, having enthroned the eleven- or twelve-year-old Abulfayz Khan merely for appearance's sake, effectively concentrated power in his own hands and began ruling the state himself.²²

This became one of the principal factors contributing to the decline of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty and, more broadly, to the onset of the crisis within the Bukhara Khanate. Later, in 1740, taking advantage of internal turmoil and the weakening of central authority, the Iranian ruler Nadir Shah launched a campaign against the Bukhara Khanate and captured it almost without resistance. As a result of negotiations and a peace agreement between Nadir Shah and Abulfayz Khan, Bukhara became a vassal state of Iran for a certain period (until Nadir Shah's death in 1747). According to Mirzo Olim Mahdum Hoji: "Nadir Shah placed an ornamented crown upon the head of Abulfayz Khan and dressed him in a magnificent robe, addressing him as 'Abulfayz Shah'."²³

After spending eighteen days at the shah's court, the khan returned to Bukhara.²⁴

In addition, familial ties were established between Nadir Shah and Abulfayz Khan. The shah took one of Abulfayz Khan's daughters in marriage, while another daughter was given in marriage to his nephew, Odilshah ibn Ibrahim.²⁵

Nadir Shah entrusted the governance of Transoxiana (the Bukhara Khanate) to Abulfayz Khan himself.²⁶

However, Nadir Shah maintained communication with the Bukharan administration and population solely through Muhammad Hakim-biy. As a result, although Abulfayz Khan — the final de facto and de jure ruler of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty — bore the title of "shah," he effectively became a subordinate, dependent ruler.

²¹ O'sha joyda.

²² Abdurahmon Tole. Tarixi Abulfayzxon. / O'zbekiston tarixi. Xrestomatiya. XVI-XIX asrlar. T.: Fan va texnologiya, 2014. 48-b.

²³ Абдурахман-и Тали. История Абулфейз-хана / Перевод с таджикского, предисловие, примечания и указатель А.А.Семёнова. – Ташкент, 1959. С. 15.

²⁴ Mulla Olim Mahdum Hoji. Tarixi Turkiston. / Arab yozuvidan tabdil: Sh.Vohidov, R.Xoliqova; So'z boshi va izohlar muallifi Sh.Vohidov. T.: Yangi asr avlodi, 2009. 169-b.

²⁵ Barakayev J. Haydarov P. Buxoro tarixi (eng qadimgi davrdan ulug' oktabr inqilobigacha). – T.: O'qituvchi, 1991. 77-b.

²⁶ Mulla Olim Mahdum Hoji. Tarixi Turkiston. / Arab yozuvidan tabdil: Sh.Vohidov, R.Xoliqova; So'z boshi va izohlar muallifi Sh.Vohidov. T.: Yangi asr avlodi, 2009. 169-b.