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TAXES AND TRIBUTE FROM THE EASTERN QASHQADARYA BEKDOMS TO THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF BUKHARA: THE FINANCIAL DIMENSION OF CENTER BEKDOM RELATIONS (19TH CENTURY EARLY 20TH CENTURY)

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Abstract

The article examines the financial aspects of relations between the center of the Emirate of Bukhara and the beyliks of Eastern Kashkadarya — Shahrissabz, Kitab, Chiroqchi, and Yakkabag. Tax revenues and the practice of peshkash payments are analyzed separately, demonstrating that these two forms of payment served as important indicators of the degree of central authority's control over the remote territories of the emirate.

Keywords: Emirate of Bukhara, beylik, Shahrissabz, Kitab, kharaj, zakat, amlokdor, peshkash, center and periphery.

Introduction

When discussing the relationship between the Emirate of Bukhara and its peripheral bekdoms, attention usually shifts toward the administrative side of governance: whom the emir appointed as bek, representatives of which clans held power, and which territories sought to resist subordination. However, there was another important aspect of administration: what the center actually received

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from these territories and by what means it obtained these resources. In historical sources, relations of authority are often most clearly reflected precisely in the movement of money and goods. It would therefore be more accurate to say that the degree of a bek's subordination to the center was demonstrated not so much by words as by the amount of annual taxes sent to the capital.

The study of the Eastern Qashqadarya bekdoms provides an opportunity to examine this issue more clearly. On the one hand, these territories were relatively close to the capital; on the other, their location in the foothill zone gave them a certain degree of distance from the center. During much of the nineteenth century, the Shahrisabz and Kitab bekdoms were only nominally subordinate to the emir, while the Chiroqchi and Yakkabog bekdoms occupied a relatively neutral position. For this reason, it is possible to compare, within one oasis, bekdoms that were connected to the center in different ways.

As for the degree to which the subject has been studied, the general taxation system of the emirate was examined in detail in A.A. Semyonov's study of central administration [1] and in Yu. Bregel's work on administration during the Manghit period [2]. The situation of the Emirate of Bukhara during the protectorate period was analyzed in depth in the works of D.N. Logofet [3] and in S. Becker's monograph [4]. A. Morrison, in turn, revealed the practical mechanisms of the amlokdor administrative system using the Zarafshan Valley as an example [5]. However, none of these studies treated the Qashqadarya bekdoms as a separate object of research; rather, the region was considered only within the framework of broader themes. The present article seeks to fill this gap.

The taxation system of the emirate was formally linked to the norms of Sharia, although in practice it had become intertwined with local custom. Kharaj was levied on agricultural lands and was usually collected in kind as a certain share of the harvest. Gardens, vineyards, and melon fields were subject to the tanobona tax, calculated on the basis of the tanob unit of land measurement. Zakat was imposed on livestock and commercial goods. In addition, there were various

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minor levies and unofficial “fees” taken by collectors for their own benefit; although such payments did not appear in official registers, they constituted a significant burden for peasants [1; 5].

Tax collection was mainly in the hands of officials holding the position of amlokдор. An amlokдор was responsible for several districts within a bekdом and conducted his work through lower-level officials such as amins and village elders [5]. The collection of zakat, however, constituted a separate system: zakat collectors were often subordinated not to the bek, but to the zakotchikalon in the central administration. At first glance, this may seem like a minor administrative detail, yet it is extremely important for understanding relations between the center and the peripheral territories. In other words, the emirate maintained two different financial channels in the outlying bekdoms: one passed through the bek, while the other bypassed him. When the center was strong, the second channel expanded; when the center weakened, it could cease to function in practice.

This can be clearly observed in the cases of the Shahrissabz and Kitab bekdoms. Until 1870, the Keneges beks in these territories ruled almost as independent sovereigns, and the transfer of collected revenues to Bukhara encountered serious obstacles. In his memoirs, Mirzo Salimbek notes that this region remained outside the effective authority of the emir for many years and that military expeditions were repeatedly sent against it [6]. Mirza Abdulazim Sami, while describing the events of Amir Muzaffar’s reign, likewise presents the Shahrissabz question as a separate and unresolved problem [7].

In the emirate, beks did not receive salaries from the center. As a rule, a bek supported himself, his officials, and his retainers from the revenues collected within his bekdом. Only the remaining portion was sent to the center. This structure created a permanent internal contradiction: the amount transferred to the center was not a precisely fixed mandatory payment, but rather the residual sum left after local expenditures. The size of this remainder depended first of all on the bek himself and on the nature of his relationship with the center.

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For this reason, the emirs attached great importance to the frequent replacement of beks. A bek who remained in one locality for a long period could build a strong local support base, manage accounts according to his own interests, and gradually reduce the share of revenue sent to the center. Transferring a bek from one territory to another effectively disrupted this process. In his analysis of Manghit administration, Bregel interprets the frequent transfer of officials precisely as a mechanism of financial control [2]. This interpretation also applies to the Qashqadarya bekdoms: in Guzar and Yakkabog, the rotation of beks occurred more systematically than in Shahrissabz, and these territories were correspondingly more closely tied to the center.

Another important point should be emphasized here: the transfer of tax revenues to the center depended less on geographical distance than on the political condition of the relationship. Shahrissabz was only a few days' journey from Bukhara, yet this proximity did not in itself help keep the territory obedient. By contrast, the more distant Guzar was more regularly connected to the center because it lay on an important trade route and, due to its military significance on the southern frontier, remained under the emir's constant attention.

Another form of levy, entirely different from taxation, was peshkash. It did not appear in the official tax register, its amount was not fixed by law, and formally it was regarded as a gift. In practice, however, it was impossible to refuse it.

Peshkash was presented on several occasions: when a bek was appointed to office, when an emir ascended the throne, during Navruz and Eid celebrations, and when the emir personally visited a territory. The gift usually consisted of horses, weapons, textiles, valuable objects, and cash. Mirzo Salimbek, who witnessed such ceremonies directly in his capacity as an official, describes them in considerable detail [6].

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The significance of peshkash was more political than economic. If taxation expressed the relationship between the state and the population, peshkash can be understood as a mechanism through which personal loyalty between the emir and the bek was repeatedly renewed. For this reason, it serves as one of the most revealing indicators of relations between the center and the peripheral territories. A bekdom might fail to send taxes to the center, and this could remain a financial issue; however, if the presentation of peshkash ceased, it signified an open refusal of submission. This also explains why historical sources sometimes specifically note that certain beks had “delayed” their peshkash.

Placing these two systems side by side makes the distinction even clearer. Taxes passed through institutions, documents, and accounting procedures, whereas peshkash passed through individuals and ritual. When the center was strong, the former predominated; when the center weakened, relations increasingly relied on the latter, that is, on symbolic loyalty. The situation in Shahrissabz in the mid-nineteenth century is a clear example of this second type.

After 1868, when the emirate came under the Russian protectorate, the situation changed significantly. Although the emir lost external political independence, he became stronger in internal administration. As Becker has shown, Russian protection gave the emir opportunities for internal control that he had not previously possessed [4]. Once the peripheral territories lost the possibility of armed resistance, the basis for financial disobedience also diminished.

This transformation was reflected in the taxation system as well. In his description of the finances of the emirate, Logofet explains how revenues were accumulated in the emir’s personal treasury and how the accountability of the beks to the center increased [3]. After the events of 1870, Shahrissabz and Kitab were incorporated into the emirate as ordinary bekdoms, and this completely changed their financial status: territories that had previously sent almost nothing to the center became regular sources of revenue.

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At the same time, the practice of peshkash did not disappear. It continued until the abolition of the emirate and was even transferred into relations with the Russian administration. This demonstrates how deeply rooted the institution had become: even when the financial system changed, this form of expressing loyalty to authority retained its significance.

Conclusion

The example of the Eastern Qashqadarya bekdoms demonstrates that relations between the center and the peripheral territories in the Emirate of Bukhara were not organized within a single vertical system, but rather through two parallel financial mechanisms. The first was the institutional tax system operating through the amlokdor and zakat collectors, while the second was the peshkash system, which functioned through the personal authority of the bek.

The actual degree of central control over the peripheral territories depended on which of these two mechanisms predominated. Accordingly, when assessing the level of a bekdome's subordination to the emirate, its formal administrative status or the title of the bek should not be regarded as the primary criterion. Instead, the structure and direction of financial flows can serve as a more accurate indicator of the real relationship between the center and the bekdoms.

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