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Khanate of Bukhara XVI-1920

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The Shaibanid dynasty

Name "Khanate of Bukhara "is used as a matter of convenience in European sources. In indigenous works the khanate was known either by the name of the ruling dynasty, by the name of its main region, Mawarannahr (Transoxania), or by the literature name "Turan". At the beginning of the 16th century the nomadic Uzbeks under Shaibani Khan conquered the two [Timurid](#) states of Central Asia and Khorasan. The resulting Shaibanid state included Transoxania, Balkh, and Badakhshan, Fergana, Tashkent, Turkestan and sometimes parts of Khorasan occupied during the wars with [Safavid](#) Iran. The Shaibanid state was divided into appanages between all male members (sultans) of the dynasty, who would designate the supreme ruler (Khan), the oldest member of clan. The seat of Khan was first Samarkand, the capital of the Timurids, but some of the Khans preferred to remain in their former appanages. Thus Bukhara became the seat of the Khan for the first time under Ubaid Allah Khan (r. 1533-1539). During the internal feuds of the middle of the 16th century, one of the Shaibanid sultans, Abd Allah, took possession of Bukhara in 1557; there in 1561, he proclaimed his father Iskandar as the supreme Khan of the Uzbeks. Thereafter, Bukhara remained the Transoxanian capital of the Uzbek Khanate and later dynasties. The nomadic Uzbeks who conquered the country seized the pastures and some of the best-irrigated lands on the plains, pushing both the old sedentary and pre-Uzbek nomadic population out toward the mountainous areas in the eastern parts of the Khanate. In many places, however, the old Tajik rural population remained, interspersed with the Uzbeks. The sedentarization of the Uzbeks by the 19th century was accompanied by the Turkization of the Tajiks, especially in the countryside on the plains. But the population of the main urban centres, such as Samarkand and Bukhara, remained predominantly Tajik; Tajik was language of literature and chancery in the Khanate until the end of its existence. The term *Uzbek* was applied to both the descendants of the nomadic conquerors and later newcomers, while the term *Tajik* was applied to both Iranian and Turkic-speaking sedentary non-tribal people. (In Fergana, Khwarazm, and Tashkent the term *Sart* instead of *Tajik*, was used in this latter sense.) Until the 19th century, the Uzbek nobility formed the ruling elite in the Khanate, as military commanders, court officials, and provincial governors; civil and especially financial affairs remained in the hands of the Tajik bureaucracy. Abd Allah Khan ibn Iskandar (first ruled in the name of his father; Khan from 1583

to 1598) united the khanate and abolished the system of appanages in the course of long wars with the other members of the Shaibanid dynasty. During his reign, Khorasan and Khwarazm were conquered and the khan's military campaigns were extended as far as the central parts of the Kazakh steppes in the north and Kashgar in the east. The strengthening of the central government was accompanied by new economic measures; the construction of irrigation canals and numerous public buildings, the improvement of roads, and monetary reforms that contributed to the development of commerce.

Janid dynasty

The period of political expansion and economical prosperity was short-lived. Soon after the death of Abd Allah Khan the Shaibanid dynasty died out, to be replaced by the Janid (Ashtarkhanid) dynasty, another branch of the descendants of Jochi, whose founder was related through marriage to Abd Allah Khan. The Janids, as outsiders for the Uzbeks, depended more than the Shaibanids on the support of the tribal chiefs; thus the power of the latter greatly increased during the 17th century. The Janid state was divided between the khan sitting in Bukhara and his heir (brother or son), often also bearing the title khan, who ruled the provinces to the south of Amu Darya, with his capital in Balkh. The ruler of Balkh was sometimes independent from Bukhara, and they were at odds with one another and often in war. The first half of the 17th century, especially the reign of Imam Quli Khan (1611-1642), was a period of relative political and economical stability for the Janids. Although they could not regain Khorasan, finally lost to Iran by the beginning of the 17th century, and although Khwarazm again became independent, the Janids were able to maintain their possessions against the attacks of the Kazakhs and Dzungars in the north and the Mughals in the south. However, already in the second half of the 17th century the signs of decline were obvious. Continuing sedentarization of the Uzbeks negatively affected the military prowess of the tribal troops of the khanate, and from the 1650s on Bukhara suffered from the recurrent raids of the Uzbeks of Khwarazm. The central government was unable to check the growing local particularism and tribal feuds. By the end of the 17th century the khanate lost Fergana and Badakhshan. An attempt by Khan Ubaid Allah II (r. 1702-1711) to suppress the tribal nobility and restore some degree of centralisation failed, after which the khanate disintegrated into a number of tribal principalities. From 1723 to 1729 the country suffered from devastations caused by the Kazakhs, who, fleeing from Dzungars, invaded the Zeravshan valley. In 1740 the khanate was conquered by Nadir Shah, the ruler of Iran. The Janid khan Abu al Fayz retained his throne, becoming Nadir's vassal.

Manghit dynasty

After the death of Nadir Shah in 1747, the chief of the Uzbek Manghit tribe, Muhammad Rahim Biy Analiq, overcame his rivals from other tribes with the support of the urban population, consolidated his rule in the khanate, and was proclaimed khan in 1756. His successor, however, ruled in the name of

puppet khans of Janid origin. The third Manghit ruler, Shah Murad (r.1785-1800), finally deposed the Janids and acceded to the throne himself. He did not assume the title of khan, preferring the title *Amir*, as did subsequent Manghit rulers. The khanate was smaller under Manghits than under their predecessors; it lost important provinces to the south of Amu Darya and the Syr Darya basin, and Merv, conquered by Shah Murad in 1785-1789, was lost in 1823. For half of a century the Amirs were unable to subdue the small principality of [Shahrisabz](#) (about 50 miles south of Samarkand), ruled by the chieftains of the Uzbek tribe of Keneges, hostile to Manghits. Another small principality, Ura-Tube, between Bukhara and [Khokand](#) was a bone of contention between the two khanates, but mostly remained independent. Under the Manghits, the administration of the country was more centralized. Uzbek tribal nobility finally lost its power under [Amir Nasr Allah](#) (r.1827-1860), who killed many of the members of the aristocratic clans and created a small standing army, including some artillery. The khanate became a despotic monarchy in which the Amir enjoyed almost [unlimited authority](#) and ruled through a ramified bureaucratic apparatus. The country was divided into more than 20 provinces, each administered by an appointed governor to whom all authority in the province was delegated. The first minister (*qoshbegi*) was always a Persian slave or a descendant of slaves; this status ensured his personal loyalty to the Amir. Besides frequent diplomatic exchanges with its Central Asia neighbors, the khanate perennially maintained limited relations with other states of the Islamic world; Iran, the Ottoman empire, the Mughal empire and Afghanistan. Diplomatic relations with Europe were practically nonexistent, but [trade](#) was significant, and the country did not experience any Western influence before the [Russian conquest](#).

Period from Russian conquest to the Soviets

Conflict with Russia started in 1865, shortly after Russian conquest of Tashkent. The army of Bukhara was utterly defeated in three battles, and on 18 June 1868 Amir Muzaffar al Din (r.1860-1885) signed a peace treaty with the Russian governor-general of Turkestan, A.P. Von Kaufman. Samarkand and its provinces were annexed by Russia and the country was opened to the Russian merchants. The Amir retained his throne as a vassal of Russia and made up his territorial losses by establishing, with Russian help, control over mountainous regions in the upper Zeravshan Valley in 1870 and by annexing the principalities of the western Pamir in 1895. The sovereignty of the khanate was not formally limited, but it became a de facto protectorate, especially after the crossing of its territory by the Central Asian Railroad (1887) and the subsequent inclusion of the khanate in Russia's customs frontier (1895). Officially, the two last Amirs were treated by the Russian government as independent rulers, maintaining close relations with the imperial court in Saint Petersburg. The Russians did not interfere in the internal affairs of the khanate, and the Russian conquest had but a superficial effect on the life of the country. A reform movement developed after 1905, but it met with strong opposition from the conservative Islamic clergy and was suppressed by the Amir. At the end of August 1920 the last Amir, Sayid Alim Khan, was overthrown as a result of the invasion of the khanate by Soviet troops,

and on 6 October the khanate was abolished and proclaimed the [Bukharan People's Soviet Republic](#).

