

The Turkic Ethnic Component of 19th–20th Century Bukhara: Historical and Ethnographic Perspectives Through the Lens of O.A. Sukhareva

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Abstract

The article is devoted to the study of the historical and ethnographic characteristics of the Uzbek tribes of Bukhara and their role in the socio-political and cultural life of the city in the 19th–20th centuries. The analytical framework is based on the fundamental works of O.A. Sukhareva, who employed a comprehensive approach by integrating archival documents, field ethnographic observations, statistical data, as well as the written accounts of Russian and European diplomats and travelers.

Keywords: Bukhara, Uzbek Tribes, Ethnic History, Historical-Ethnographic Study, Socio-Cultural Life, 19th–20th Centuries, O.A. Sukhareva.

1. Introduction

The city of Bukhara and its oasis hold significant academic importance in studying the ethnic history and socio-cultural life of the peoples of Central Asia. Because Bukhara was not only one of the major religious and political centres of the Islamic world, but also served as a distinctive crossroads in the historical formation of various ethnic groups, tribes and clans.

Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, Uzbek tribal lineages formed the core ethnic foundation of the Bukharan population, serving as pivotal participants in complex socio-historical and ethnographic transformations [1].

Olga Alexandrovna Sukhareva (1896–1983), a prominent representative of the school of ethnography, holds a distinguished place in the study of the ethnic history of the Turkic-speaking population in Bukhara. Throughout the 1940s–1960s, she conducted extensive research on the city of Bukhara and its **guzars** (neighborhood centers), the composition of the local population, socio-cultural life, and specifically the history and ethnography of Uzbek clans. Her scientific heritage remains one of the fundamental sources today for a profound understanding of the tribal system, ethnic composition, socio-economic and cultural life, and the traditional lifestyle of the Bukharan Uzbeks [2].

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O.A. Suxarevan's research is significant not only for its illumination of the genealogy of Uzbek tribes, their distribution by guzars, and their role in social life, but also for its examination of their relations with other ethnic groups (Tajiks, Arabs, Jews, Hindus, and others) is also significant. For this reason, a re-examination of this topic is relevant today for ethnology and the field of history.

Literature Review

Starting from the first half of the 19th century, valuable information regarding the population of Bukhara and its ethnic composition can be found in the works of Russian and European ambassadors, travelers, and researchers.

Specifically, ethnographic data and information on the ethnic history of Bukhara are provided in the accounts of envoys and travelers such as A. F. Negri and G. von Meyendorff, E. A. Eversmann, Budrin, P. I. Demezov, Ya. V. Vitkevich, N. Khanykov and A. Lehmann, A. Burnes A. Vambery G. I. Spassky, I. Poslavsky, N. F. Sitnyakovsky and P. P. Shubinsky [3].

The books and memoirs of E. A. Eversman, H. P. Yakovlev, Budrin, and Colonel E. K. Meyendorff, participants in the diplomatic mission led by A. F. Negri sent to Bukhara in 1820, are extremely rich in historical and ethnographic information.

E. K. Meyendorff's information gathered during the activities of the Orenburg–Bukhara diplomatic mission is presented in his work “Travel from Orenburg to Bukhara”. This source provides valuable information on the geographical position of the Emirate of Bukhara, its socio-economic condition, state structure, population and its occupations, agriculture, irrigation system, crafts, and internal and external trade. It should be noted that the notes of Eversman and Yakovlev, who were part of the mission, also formed the basis for Meyendorff's work [4].

Furthermore, the work titled “Travels into Bokhara” by the English traveler A. Burnes, who was proficient in the Persian language, contains observations regarding the population of Bukhara and their distribution within the city territory. Alexander Burnes residing in Bukhara between 1831 and 1832, collected significant political, economic, military, and ethnographic materials. His travelogue encompasses valuable ethnographic data concerning the lifestyle, social life, and cultural characteristics of the Uzbeks.

The contributions of the brothers Nikolai and Yakov Khanykov hold particular significance in the scientific study of the ethnography of the peoples of Kazakhstan and Central Asia during the 1840s and 1850s. In particular, N. V. Khanykov's work, “*Description of the Bukhara Khanate*”, is one of the first sources to provide a systematic account of the geography, population, economy, and political structure of the territory of the Emirate of Bukhara [5].

This work provides essential data regarding the population size, territorial distribution, and socio-political status of Uzbek tribes, Tajiks, Turkmens, and other ethnic groups. Furthermore, Yakov Khanykov made significant contributions to the study of the cultural and linguistic characteristics of Central Asian peoples through his research into Oriental languages and history. These scholarly works, authored by the Khanykov brothers, served as primary sources in Europe and Russia during the first half of the 19th century for conceptualizing the ethnographic profile of Bukhara and the broader Central Asian region [6].

In the first half of the 19th century, the Russian Orientalist N. V. Khanykov, who provided valuable information about the ethnic composition of the Bukhara Emirate, published his famous “*Description of the Bukhara Khanate*” in which he provided a detailed classification of the Uzbek clans and tribes of the khanate. According to him, the Bukharan Uzbek people, in terms of their internal structure, consisted of numerous clans and tribes, whose genealogy was described in accordance with the ancient source “*Nasabnomai O'zbekiy*” [7].

According to the data provided by N. V. Khanykov, there were 97 clans and tribes within the territory of the Emirate. The major groups among them included: the Manghit (with subdivisions such as Toq Manghit, Oq Manghit, and Qora Manghit), Ming, Yuz, Qirq, Qavchin, Jalayir, Saroy, Uyghur, Qangli, Nayman, Qipchoq, Qongiro, Qarluqs, Qataghan, Barlos, Suldus, Duvlat, Qorabayli, Qaraqalpoq, Turkmen, Chuvulchi, Shirin, Bakhrin, Durman, Mughal, Tatar, Arab, Arlot, Ilonli, Qochqorli, Shiq, Chimboy, and other minor clans. Furthermore, many of these major tribes possessed internal subdivisions that were identified as distinct ethnic groups.."

According to N. V. Khanykov, each of these clans and tribes resided in specific locations throughout the territory of the Emirate of Bukhara. For instance, the Manghits primarily inhabited the Zarafshan Valley and the environs of Bukhara, while the Kipchaks occupied desert regions. The Nayman, Kungrat, and Karluks were located toward Samarkand and Jizzakh; the Jalayir, Barlos, and Suldus traditionally resided in the central villages of the oasis. Meanwhile, the Turkmens and Karakalpaks inhabited the southern borders and semi-nomadic livestock-breeding areas [8].

These tribes were not only divided according to a genealogical lineage system, but they also had economic, social, and territorial differences. While the Manghits and Mings were active in state administration and military service, the Kipchaks and Naymans were more engaged in livestock farming.

This classification by N. V. Khanykov is extremely important for its time, as it allows one to gain an understanding of the diversity and historical roots of the Uzbek tribes living in the 19th-century Emirate of Bukhara.

The works of Western European travelers and orientalists hold a special place in the study of Central Asian history. One such researcher is the Hungarian orientalist and traveler Arminius Vambery (1832–1913), who lived in the second half of the 19th century. He entered Central Asia in 1863 in secret, disguised as a dervish. His work "Travels in Central Asia", written after this journey, aroused great interest not only in Europe but also in Russia [9].

The work is structured into two primary sections: the first part details Vambery's personal travel memoirs, describing the daily lives, lifestyles, and customs of the tribes and peoples he encountered along his journey. The second section is dedicated to historical and political matters. Specifically, Chapter 23 elucidates the internal and external political relations of Central Asia, while Chapter 24 contains Vambery's analytical conclusions regarding the rivalry between Russia and Great Britain in the region, as well as their respective regional policies. Following its publication, the work was promptly translated into Russian and published in St. Petersburg in 1865.

However, *Travels in Central Asia* was assessed by certain Western European Orientalists and specialists as "overly general and superficial." In particular, the work was criticized for its lack of historical substantiation and the brevity of its evidence. Taking these critiques into account, Vambery published *Sketches of Central Asia* (London) in 1868. This volume, consisting of 17 chapters, provides significantly more detailed scientific observations on the history, social life, customs, economic activities, and tribal structures of the Central Asian peoples.

In his discussion of the Uzbek tribes, Arminius Vambery was among the first scholars to offer reflections on the etymology of the term "Uzbek." Furthermore, Vambery compiled a systematic list of Uzbek tribes and provided detailed accounts of their traditional attire, dietary

habits, folk games, and musical instruments, as well as their customs and religious ceremonies.

Poslavsky who conducted research in Bukhara during the 1880s, asserts that Uzbeks constituted the overwhelming majority of the population. His observations provide critical demographic data on the ethnic predominance of the Uzbeks within the Emirate during the late nineteenth century [10].

The work by D. N. Logofet titled *The Bukhara Khanate under the Russian Protectorate* is a significant military-statistical and observational document that provides comprehensive insights into the ethnography and socio-economic structure of the Emirate of Bukhara during the Russian Imperial era. Chapter 6 of the volume offers detailed ethnic, political, and economic descriptions of the various ethnic entities within the Emirate, including Uzbeks, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Arabs, Galchas, Hazaras, Afghans, Jews, Indians, Russians, and Lulis.

Thus, the observations of European and Russian travelers from the 16th to the 19th centuries allow for an indirect depiction of the ethnic and linguistic composition of Buxoro's population. Although these sources provide limited demographic details, they record important observations on language and culture that are of great significance for studying Bukhara's historical and ethnic development.

O. A. Sukhareva utilizes the accounts provided by European and Russian travelers to analyze the ethnic and linguistic characteristics of the population of Bukhara. Her monograph, titled *Bukhara from the 19th to the Early 20th Centuries: A Late Feudal City and Its Population* is dedicated to a comprehensive and in-depth study of the historical-topographical development, population, and socio-economic and cultural life of the city. The monograph is structured into four primary sections, each of which provides a scholarly analysis of specific themes:

- **The first section** provides detailed information regarding the territory of Bukhara, its historical topography, geographical location, and natural environment. Additionally, it offers scholarly commentaries on the city's markets, caravanserais, historical sites, cemeteries, residential quarters (*guzars*), and urban planning.
- **The second section** meticulously examines the structural composition of families within the *guzars* of Bukhara, alongside the city's population size and demographic characteristics.
- **The third section** presents an in-depth analysis of the history of the population and its ethnic composition—including primary ethnic groups such as Turkic-speaking peoples, Arabs, Persians, and Jews—based on historical literature, specifically Tajik-language sources.
- **The fourth section** contains scholarly observations on the social lifestyle and daily occupations of Bukhara's inhabitants, their craftsmanship and commercial activities, as well as the lifestyles of various social strata, including large landowners, the military, and the intelligentsia.

The historical sources and literature analyzed above serve to fully illuminate the essence of the subject matter."

2. Research Method

The methodological basis of this scientific article is founded on the principles of historicity, objectivity, and a comparative-analytical approach. During the study, historical-

ethnographic methods, genealogical methods, linguistic-ethnographic analysis, and economic-cultural typology were employed alongside cultural anthropology methods. This allowed for a systematic study not only of the genealogical and territorial distribution of Uzbek lineages, but also of their daily life and socio-cultural specificities [12].

Using the historical-ethnographic method, the formation of the Uzbek clans of early 19th–20th century Bukhara and their ethnosocial role in the city were clarified. Based on Olga Aleksandrovna Sukhareva's observations, the ethnic composition of the mahallas (guzar), their interrelationships, and their role in the social infrastructure were reexamined.

Linguistic-ethnographic analysis. The language issue was studied as the main factor shaping the ethnic unity of the Uzbeks. As O. A. Sukhareva noted, although representatives of different clans communicated in a common Turkic dialect, certain phonetic and lexical features were preserved. Therefore, dialectological materials were used in the study.

Using an economic-cultural typology, the lifestyle, work activities, and cultural-domestic traditions of the Bukharan Uzbek people were systematized. The way of life based on agriculture and handicrafts, the organization of social production within the guzars, family relationships, and ceremonial traditions were analyzed based on ethnographic sources. Through this approach, the position of Uzbek clans in the social system and their cultural relations with representatives of other ethnic groups were illuminated.

This research methodology is based on harmonizing historical-ethnographic traditions with modern scientific approaches, enabling a comprehensive study of the ethnic history, cultural life, and social system of the Uzbek tribes of Bukhara.

The issue of the ethnic roots of the Uzbeks has been addressed differently in Orientalist, ethnographic, and historical anthropological studies at various times. The Russian school of Oriental Studies, which emerged in the early 19th–20th centuries, primarily traced their origins to “Turon” (Turkic-Mongol) concept, which links the Uzbek genealogy directly to the famous Golden Horde ruler Uzbek Khan (1312–1341). Recent studies, however, indicate that the Uzbek ethnonym has even more ancient Turkic roots. Therefore, relying solely on the Mongol factor in studying ethnogenesis is considered a one-sided methodological approach.

3. Results and Discussion

O. A. Sukhareva characterizes the Uzbeks as the stratum that constituted the military and administrative elite of the Emirate of Bukhara. She particularly emphasizes the political dominance of those belonging to the Manghit tribe. This underscores the preeminent position held by the Uzbeks in the political administration of the Khanate throughout the late 18th and 19th centuries. In this context, unlike other ethnic groups—such as Tajiks, Arabs, or Persians—the Uzbeks occupied the highest rungs of the social hierarchy.

Sources specifically emphasize that the Uzbeks occupied the “most fertile and irrigated lands.” These areas comprised the strategically significant territories of the Emirate of Bukhara—namely, Bukhara, Karmana, Shahrisabz, Denov, and Gijduvan—where agricultural and economic dominance was concentrated in their hands [13].

By the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the Uzbeks residing within the territory of the Emirate of Bukhara stood out as a major ethnic group that maintained a semi-nomadic lifestyle. Particularly in the provinces (*bekliks*) of Karshi, Karmana, Sherobod, Denov, Hisor, Kitob, Shahrisabz, Qabodiyon, Baljuvon, and Kulob, the Uzbeks held a numerical superiority in comparison to other ethnic groups.

While the Uzbeks were frequently engaged in agriculture, their primary economic sector was animal husbandry, particularly cattle and sheep breeding. This economic structure is further evidenced by their practice of utilizing hired labor to cultivate the land. As owners of vast herds, the Uzbeks migrated from pasture to pasture according to the seasons, spending the winters along the banks of the Amu Darya and the summers on the southern slopes of the Gissar Range.

In terms of their ethno-portrait, the Uzbeks are characterized as "typical merchant-nomads": they were regarded as a freedom-loving, hospitable, and candid people. They communicated in a common Uzbek Turkic dialect, which was utilized uniformly across nearly all territories of the Khanate. This linguistic consistency underscores the presence of a robust sense of ethnic identity and linguistic unity among the Uzbeks.

The Uzbeks adhered to a semi-nomadic lifestyle, residing in permanent dwellings during the winter months and in portable yurts (*o'tov*) during the summer. Simultaneously, a segment of the population possessed permanent residences and orchards, signifying a gradual stabilization of their lifestyle. The tribal and clan system persisted as a vital social institution among the Uzbeks. Every family and individual maintained a profound awareness of their lineage (*nasab*) and tribal affiliation, which played a crucial role in strengthening social bonds and stabilizing the social fabric of the society.

Analysis and Results. During the second half of the 19th and the early 20th centuries, the Uzbek population in the Emirate of Bukhara possessed a complex and multi-layered ethnic structure, primarily consisting of various tribal and clan entities. As documented in historical sources—including military-statistical records, ethnographic observations, and local manuscripts—both major and minor Uzbek tribal groups inhabited the Bukhara oasis. These groups were largely distinguished by their historical origins, migratory trajectories, economic specializations, social standings, and distinct cultural characteristics [14].

Among the Uzbek Bukharanis are the Mangit, Kungrat, Uzbek, Kyrgyz (or Kazakh), Major ethnic groups such as the Qataghan, Lakai, Sudunchi, Karluq, Uta-Bugut, Marqa-Kichik-Yuz, Dürmen, Saryq-Qalmıq, Neymans, Kipchak, and Adyg were encountered. Some of these (for example, the Manghits, the Kongrats, and the Kipchaks) historically spread across vast territories and also played an important role in the amirate's political elite and military class.

Also, in historical sources: Mang'it, To'rqt, Barut, Taz, Temes, Burqa, Saramatay, Sariqchi, Shemesh, Tutuq, Mutal, Bayo'g'li, Anbarberdi, Khaldakh-Khujagli, Malay, Chinese, Sariq-Malo, Apash, Tanayli, Balashchi, Davlatchi, Shigav, Saho, Yak-binich, Chalx-Khapaka, Abdal, Boyin-Kasimir, Balikchi, Karabash, Armanchi, Ganjachi, Qadr-Bug'ut, Qalmadash, Salpit, Ajinjon, Qunduzchi, Jinandi, Yant-Talaqt, Qonrat, G'azalik, Kalta-Toy, Polvon, Chal, Beshtentek, Mirishkor, Basovut, Bay-Geldy, Qalqaban, Fashg'in, Qosg'ona, Xo'ja-batcha, Momay, Qushchi, Cherek-bacha, Vakila-bacha, Xozar-Mamish, Sariq-Sangli, Foziliy, Qorovul, Mashatlar, Kanavatchi, Jau-Keldi, Zor-Buruch, Ozt-Temir, Ata-Berdy, Khoja-Ramazan, Yerg-Tebert, Katagant, Maralt, Shorat, Khant-Batcha, Barat, Tulkichi, Togalang, Eshpa, Shikht, Bay-Kashpa, Sary-Bapy, Subak, Sulduz, Pokirak, Zarmuxa, Yang-Gaur, Smaller clans and lineages such as Bayat and Ming are also recorded.

This list shows the complexity of the ethnic composition of the Emirate of Bukhara and how the clan-tribe system developed among the Uzbeks. The 102 tribal and clan names listed are primarily of Turkic origin, with some rooted in Mongol, Arab, or local Sogdian elements.

Within the population structure of the city of Bukhara, Turkic-speaking groups—primarily Uzbeks, along with a small number of Kazakh families—were present. According to the data

of O. A. Sukhareva, Uzbeks who had preserved their native language were recorded as residing in 34 neighborhoods (mahallas) of the city. However, in many cases they were settled in these areas temporarily as families of servants or officials, and their places of residence were closely connected with their service positions. Such families usually lived in state-owned houses, which were allocated to them in connection with their official appointments and were reclaimed when they were dismissed from service.

Therefore, the presence of Turkic-speaking families in certain neighborhoods cannot be regarded as the main demographic factor determining the stable ethnic composition of these areas. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in Bukhara there existed a permanent population that used the Uzbek language as their native tongue.

The largest and most densely populated Uzbek-speaking community in the city was located in the northeastern part of Bukhara, near the Samarkand Gate, in the neighborhood of Buyrobofon. The neighborhood consisted of 120 households, of which only 50, concentrated in one area, belonged to Tajik-speaking families engaged in soap-making. All the remaining households belonged to Uzbek families, who, according to observations, have preserved the Uzbek language up to the present day. During her study of the western part of the city of Bukhara, O. A. Sukhareva determined that a significant number of Turkic-speaking inhabitants, particularly Uzbek groups, were settled in this area. Alongside elements of the Kalmyks (Oirats), groups belonging to Uzbek tribes—among them the Kenagas—were also recorded as residing there. The Kenagas mainly lived in the neighborhoods of Do'rmon, Oq-Masjid, and Qatag'on. According to information found in historical and ethnographic literature regarding their origin, the majority of these groups were Uzbeks who had migrated to Bukhara from Shahrisabz. The migration of the Kenagas to Bukhara dates back to the first half of the nineteenth century, during the reign of the Emir of Bukhara Nasrullah Khan (1826–1860). At that time, the Bukhara Emirate maintained complex political relations with Shahrisabz, and the emir took decisive measures to strengthen his authority in this region.

Information about these political actions is provided by the contemporary historian Mirzo Shams Bukhari, who notes that after Nasrullah Khan subdued Shahrisabz, "its rulers, together with their families, relatives, and officials, were relocated to Bukhara, where they were granted houses and two orchards as gifts." This source indicates that the process was not merely a case of political exile, but rather a deliberate policy of population relocation.

As a result of this policy, not only from Shahrisabz but also from other regions inhabited by Uzbek tribal groups, young men from various tribes—particularly those possessing military capabilities—were sent to Bukhara to serve in the army of the Bukhara Emirate.

Military personnel belonging to Uzbek clans resided throughout the northwestern mahallas of the city, specifically in Kulmuhammad-hoji, Zindafil Ahmadiy Jome, Oqmachit, Bahodirbiy, Qalmoq, Machiti Kunjak, Ahmad Dorgo, Devori Paxsa, Taqiya, and Muddao. In the Sorvono quarter, half of the population was Turkic-speaking, primarily engaged in the maintenance of camels designated for the transportation of the Emir's goods. Furthermore, this neighborhood served as a residence for the Emir's confidants and personal attendants.

Several Turkic clans were settled in the southwestern part of the city. Notably, in the Qirg'izoyim neighborhood, military personnel constituted the majority, leading to the emergence of a large quarter popularly known as 'Sipohiyar' (the Soldiers' Quarter). This area was inhabited by such Turkic clans as the Mang'it and Qirq-Yuz. Additionally, a small number of Uzbek military families resided in the neighborhoods located to the west of the G'oziyon

quarter. In districts such as Kosagaron, Shayx-Jalol, Mirakon, and Havuzi-Nav, Uzbek families also formed a significant portion of the population.

The Uzbeks of the Turkic Burqut clan resided in the Qora Kamol neighborhood, situated at the easternmost point of the city. Historically, the Burquts belonged to the noble military class (*sipohiy*). Over time, due to their economic decline, they began to adopt the craft of shoemaking, which was traditionally associated with the Tajiks. Despite this socio-economic shift, they retained their linguistic characteristics and continued to append the title 'Bek' to their names. According to O. A. Sukhareva, the migration of Uzbek clans to the city of Bukhara primarily occurred from the 16th century onwards.

The phenomenon of mixed settlement among middle-tier ethnic groups and clans in the Emirate of Bukhara was most prominent in the Amu Darya delta and the western part of the Middle Zarafshan oasis. In these regions, Uzbek clans did not settle in a scattered manner across expansive territories; instead, they established cohesive, clan-based settlements within large villages. Consequently, toponyms derived from clan names—such as Saroy, Qo'ng'iro't, Mang'it, Qipchoq, Xitoy, Nukus, Nayman, Qiyot, Ass, Do'rman, Uyshun, Jaloyir, Qang'li, Qatag'on, Kerait, Chandir, and Urganji—are widely prevalent throughout these areas.

Uzbeks constituted more than half of the Emirate's population, primarily inhabiting the Zarafshan Valley and the oases of Qashqadaryo and Surxondaryo. The Tajiks, accounting for 30% of the total population, resided partly in the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, and predominantly in the mountainous regions of Eastern Bukhara. Turkmen populations situated along the right bank of the Amu Darya, specifically in Chardzhou and Kerki, comprised 10% of the inhabitants. Furthermore, alongside the Uzbek tribes in Karmana and Nurota, the region was home to Kazakhs; meanwhile, in the cities of Bukhara and Samarkand, Jews, Arabs, Lyuli (Roma), and Afghans lived in conjunction with the large Uzbek and Tajik populations [15].

4. Conclusion

The historical and ethnographic description of the Uzbek clans residing in the city of Bukhara is comprehensively and systematically elucidated in the research of O.A. Sukhareva. Her studies demonstrate that Uzbek clans played a pivotal role in the socio-political and economic life, the urban planning system, and the cultural traditions of both the city of Bukhara and the wider territory of the Emirate. Their lifestyle, professional activities, customs, and religious rituals were sustainably preserved through the clan-based organizational structures and the mahalla-guzar communal systems.

Overall, the historical and ethnographic study of Bukhara's Uzbek clans remains a pertinent issue for national ethnology and historical sciences. Such research serves to reconstruct the history of urban communities, preserve national cultural heritage, and provide a more profound understanding of contemporary socio-political processes.

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