

## SOME OBSERVATIONS ON ETHNOCULTURAL PROCESSES IN THE KHIVA KHANATE IN THE MID-19TH CENTURY

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**Abstract:** This article examines the ethnic processes and ethnocultural relations in the Khiva Khanate based on historical sources from that period, the diaries of ambassadors who visited the Khiva Khanate, and the works of local historians.

**Key words:** Khiva Khanate, travelogue, ambassador, Iran, Khorezm, Central Asia, Muhammad Amin Khan, Russia, social, political processes, Turkmens, Uzbeks.

To understand the social and political realities of any people in any era, it is necessary to deeply study the ethnocultural and ethnodemographic processes that occurred in the region where that people lived. For this, primary sources serve as the foundation. During the Soviet period, not only foreign sources but even local sources were given little attention. With independence, broader opportunities were created for the publication of translations of primary sources. In this regard, the publication of the works of Ismail Bekjanov, who translated the reports of Iranian ambassadors who visited Khorezm in the mid-19th century, such as Muhammad Ali Khan Ghafur's "Roznomayi Safari Khorezm" [2] and Rizoqulikhan Hidoyat's "Safaratnomayi Khorezm" (Book of Ambassadorship to Khorezm) [3], is of great importance.

The Khiva khans' attempts to reform the state system in the 19th century, expand their territories through military means at the expense of neighboring lands, and increase the ethnic composition of the country's population by incorporating captives to boost the economy, as well as the rapid transformation of Central Asian states and the northeastern regions of Iran into a political competition ground by Russia and England, led to an increase in diplomatic relations in the region, including the Khiva Khanate. This also led to the arrival of European military specialists for political purposes. Similarly, Iranian ambassadors came to Khiva to negotiate the development of friendly relations and the release of Iranians who had been kidnapped by bandits and sold in Khiva markets.

At that time, ambassadors from Khiva, such as Durdibek to Muhammad Shah and Otanioz Mahram to Nasiruddin Shah, also visited Iran and returned with the aforementioned Iranian ambassadors. Muhammad Ali Khan Ghafur stayed in Khiva for three months, and Rizoqulikhan conducted negotiations for four months, achieving very few results before returning to Iran. However, the memoirs of both ambassadors provide valuable insights into the historical events taking place in Khorezm at that time, the state structure of the Khiva Khanate in the mid-19th century, its military capabilities, types of taxes, the lifestyle of the Khorezm people, the cultural environment, and the historical geography, nature, and ecology of the country, including rare information about the Aral Sea.

Additionally, the ambassadors left valuable records about the armed forces of the Khiva Khan, the composition of the population, city construction, agriculture, the country's nature, and some national customs, as well as the historical geography of the places they visited.

In the "Khorezm Travel Diaries," the ambassadors provide information about the peoples, tribes, and clans living in each stop, region, and fortress they passed through, their way of life, customs, peculiarities, and origins. Considering that the culture of each people, shaped in a

specific historical process, is called ethnosculture, [1,669-670] the "Khorezm Travel Diaries" can be considered one of the primary sources on the ethnocultural processes in the Khiva Khanate in the mid-19th century.

The following excerpts provide a clear understanding of the ethnogenesis, way of life, living conditions, occupations, customs, and values, in short, the ethnosculture, of the Turkmen tribes living in the territory of the Khiva Khanate in the mid-19th century: "Let it not remain hidden that the Turkmen are divided into countless tribes. It is very difficult to determine their number. Because, if they have settled in a city or permanently settled in a place, even approximately, one can say a number. They live scattered in an endless state in the Gurgan desert and the Khorezm steppe. Therefore, some estimate 30 thousand, while others suggest more or less than this number. They live scattered across the entire desert, which takes twenty days to travel from Astrabad to Khiva. If we try to clarify this distance, it takes two stops to travel in a day and night. Thus, the desert between these two cities consists of forty stops. On the other side of Astrabad, the Yavmut tribe and the hostile Goklan tribe are located. If I were to list the names of the tribes of these two clans, my speech would become quite lengthy.

Each tribe has its own khan and bek in its own land. No tribe serves another tribe. Even the lowest-ranking camel herder of a tribe does not listen to or accept the orders of the leader of another tribe. They are very similar to the Bedouin Arabs. Except that their language is Turkic, not Arabic, they are quite similar to the Arabs in other respects. According to some scholars, the Turkmen are not actually a Turkic tribe, but only resemble Turkic peoples in appearance. Therefore, they connect the origin of the term "Turkmen" with the Persian words "Turk-e monand" (resembling Turks) and the Persian pronunciation and writing of "Turkman." The sources of livelihood for the Turkmen are camel herding, camel breeding, camel milk, and camel meat production. Unfortunately, some of them have also taken up theft and banditry as a means of livelihood. Some Turkmen families also raise sheep. Their women are engaged in weaving shawls, carpets, saddlebags, horse covers, and nets. They are considered Hanafi in religion. However, in practice, they have no understanding of this school of thought." [3,101-102].

If we look, we indeed saw several oases and tents from a distance, and we continued towards them. However, we thought that the mirage was water and the black soil was coffee. We sent a man ahead, and when he returned, it became clear that the influence of ethnic groups and their interaction with each other shaped the culture. It turned out that Durdikilichkhan's oasis was not his, and the black tents belonged to the Yilqoy tribe, a branch of the Yavmut tribe. Some said, 'No problem, because any Turkmen tribe has the same law: whoever enters their home is considered a dear guest and is safe from enemies.' Unable to find another solution, we proceeded with fear and hope. When we arrived, we entered their homes. They brought bread and began to treat us hospitably. There, we noticed several Iranian captives from the Horde. It became clear that they were serving us because they were captives.

We quickly got up from our seats and moved two or three fields away from the oasis. During this short stop, the Khorezmshah ambassador Muhammad Sharifboy's gun was stolen by the people of this oasis. They also informed our worst enemies. They themselves, waiting for the enemy to arrive and not to lose sight of us, accompanied us on our way. Long live the enemy who, in the guise of a friend, guides us! We thought the Gurgan wolves were shepherds, and we thought the guide was a bandit leader." [3,195-196].

We can provide many such examples from the "Khorezm Travel Diaries." Since the ethnogenesis of each people occurs in a unique form and manner, their ethnosculture is also

unique and is shaped in the process of social development, where cultural traditions are passed down from the older generation to the younger generation. Ethnoculture is manifested in ethnic peculiarities, traditions, and values, and in the oral creativity of the people. Ethnic self-awareness occurs on the basis of ethnoculture.

In conclusion, the "Khorezm Travel Diaries" serve as a primary source for analyzing the ethnocultural processes that occurred in the lives of various peoples, tribes, and clans living in the territory of the Khiva Khanate in the mid-19th century.

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