

SCIENCE AND CULTURE DURING THE REIGN OF ASHTAR KHANID RULER
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Abstract: This article analyzes the socio-political and legal reforms, as well as the development of science and culture during the reign of Subkhanqulikhan, a prominent representative of the Ashtar Khanid dynasty who ruled the Bukhara Khanate.

Keywords: Balkh, culture, madrasa, library, social, poet, political, history, literature, medicine.

Аннотация: В трех статьях анализируются общественно-политические и правовые отношения, а также наука и культура в период правления Субханкулихана, представителя Аштарского ханства, правившего Бухарским ханством.

Ключевые слова: Балх, культура, медресе, библиотека, социальный, поэт, политический, история, литература, медицина.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada Buxoro xonligini boshqargan Ashtarxoniylar sulolasining yorqin vakili – Subxonqulixon hukmdorligi davridagi ijtimoiy-siyosiy, huquqiy islohotlar bilan birga, ilm-fan va madaniyati taxlil etilgan.

Kalit soʻzlar: Balx, madaniyat, madrasa, kutubxona, ijtimoiy, shoir, siyosiy, tarix, adabiyot, tibbiyot.

One of the dynasties that left a distinctive mark in the history of Central Asia is the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. The rulers of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty, like their predecessors—the Timurids and the Shaybanids—also paid special attention to science and culture. During the reign of the early rulers, the influence of Shaybanid prose and poetry could still be observed in the court life. At the same time, a number of prominent poets, scholars, and intellectuals emerged from this dynasty. Among them, Imamqulikhan, Prince Qosim Muhammad Sultan, son of Nodir Muhammad, Abdulazizkhan, Subhonqulikhan, and others can be cited. In particular, Qosim Muhammad Sultan's medical treatise serves as a notable example. Another ruler, Abdulazizkhan, who was famous in literature under the pen name "Aziziy", had an excellent knowledge of mathematics and possessed great calligraphic skills. Another prominent ruler of the khanate, who wrote poetry under the pseudonym "Nishoniy", gathered medical scholars around him and organized medical gatherings in which he himself actively participated and authored relevant works. [1]

Among the members of this dynasty, the reign of Subhonqulikhan is of particular contemporary relevance from the perspective of socio-political and legal reforms. Subhonqulikhan is remembered in history as one of the rulers who sought to strengthen the central government, restore centralized administration, enhance social order, and establish a system of governance based on the principles of justice amidst the complex political conditions of his time.

Despite numerous military conflicts during the reign of the Ashtarkhanid ruler Subhonqulikhan, he strived to leave behind the legacy of a “Just King” by paying particular attention to the prosperity of the country. In the cultural life of this period, especially in literature, there were two streams—one representing the main literary tradition and the other outside the court. Subhonqulikhan stood at the head of the former. According to the testimony of the poet Maleho Samarqandiy, who served as the mufti of Samarkand during Subhonqulikhan’s reign, there were about 150 poets in the khan’s court. [2] Subhonqulikhan himself was particularly engaged in literature and the medical sciences.

Numerous architectural monuments were constructed under the patronage of Subhonqulikhan in Balkh and Bukhara, including a madrasa in Balkh; Dar al-Shifa (house of healing), a large pool in Registan, a Salomkhona (reception hall), and a Jome mosque in Ark; and a chaharbagh (four-part garden) in Aminabad. Subhonqulikhan maintained a rare library containing a collection of books on medicine. He authored a medical treatise titled “Subhoniyy’s Medicine for Healing” and an astrological tract titled “The Nature of Lunar Mansions in Determining Auspicious Hours.” Under the pen name "Nishoniyy", he composed poetry and actively participated in literary gatherings held at the court. The "Dar al-Shifa" complex built at his command not only served as a hospital but also hosted various events. The madrasa-hospital consisted of 18 rooms and was constructed in 1697 under Subhonqulikhan's directive. The complex included a diagnostic center, pharmacy, library, and other auxiliary facilities. Regarding his medical treatise “Subhon’s Medicine”, the khan himself wrote: “The physicians of the past left us works written in Arabic and Persian. I have not encountered a single medical book written in the Turkic language. The local population cannot benefit from books written in Arabic and Persian. That is why I wrote my books in Turkic, so that our people may benefit from them.” [3]

The Dar al-Shifa complex (hospital, pharmacy, madrasa, and library) was funded through income derived from waqf (endowed) lands. From these funds, stipends were paid to students of the medical school. The annual income from the waqf averaged around 40,000 tangas. [4]

The library of the Dar al-Shifa was particularly rich in books. It contained works ranging from Avicenna’s "Canon of Medicine" to the treatises of nearly all recognized physicians. By special order of Subhonqulikhan, the books collected in the library were studied and many of them were annotated. Books necessary for students were translated into Uzbek. In the later years of his life, when Subhonqulikhan fell ill, he was treated by the famous physician Mulla Ghaffur of Turan and the Iranian physician Hakim Mir Qosim, who both worked at the Dar al-Shifa madrasa. [5]

During the reign of Subhonqulikhan, although modest, there was progress in the development of science. For example, Mulla Tursun Faroziy and Mulla Ne’mat Samarqandiy were active in the fields of mathematics, astronomy, and geometry; Abdulla Ofarinkentiy, Ali Buxoriy, and Mulla Rahmat Samarqandiy contributed to the study of musicology. Also, under the khan’s decree, a compilation of fundamental Islamic legal principles was prepared by the mufti of Qabodiyon to resolve various legal issues. [6]

This clearly indicates that Uzbek rulers began striving to facilitate the application of legal norms.

Subhonqulikhan paid special attention to the literary environment of the khanate as well. In 1692, under his patronage, Muhammad Bodi as-Samarqandiy compiled the “Bukhara Poetry” anthology. This collection provides biographical information on 150 literary figures of the period. The 5,000-bayt epic "Subhonqulinoma" by court poet Muhammad Balkhiy, the

historical work “Tarikh-i Subhonqulikhan” by Muhammad Amin Buxoriy, and several other works were written during this era. [7]

The 1696 work “Dastur al-Muluk” by Khwaja Samandar Termiziy, composed at Subhonqulikhan’s court and consisting of 22 chapters, is written in the genre of ethical counsel and advice. The author dedicates the work to the ruler and describes Subhonqulikhan as the “Second Sahibqiran”. [8]

In conclusion, the reign of Subhonqulikhan represents a relatively stable and reform-oriented phase in the history of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty. He gave special attention to the development of science and culture. During his reign, religious freedoms were ensured and efforts were made to maintain balance among various social strata. Overall, the reforms carried out during this period served as a significant foundation for future developments in state governance and legal systems.

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