

THE COMPOSITION AND STRUCTURE OF THE ARMED FORCES IN THE CENTRAL ASIAN KHANATES (THE CASE OF THE KHIVA KHANATE)

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Abstract

This article examines the military forces of the Khiva Khanate, focusing on their structure and functions. The organization of the army, types of military units, command system, and the level of armament are analyzed. In addition, the role of the Khiva Khanate's military forces in maintaining internal stability and defending the state against external threats is highlighted. The article is based on historical sources and aims to identify the distinctive features of the military system of the Khiva Khanate.

Keywords: Khiva Khanate, military forces, military ranks, dodkhokh, artillery, elliqboshi, command system, beglerbegi, yasovulbashi, cannon.

Introduction

The Khiva Khanate, which occupied an important place in the history of Central Asia, was distinguished by its political, social, and military systems. Its armed forces served as the principal pillar for ensuring the independence and territorial integrity of the khanate. The military of the Khiva Khanate played an important role in maintaining internal stability, protecting the borders, and fighting external enemies. During the khanate period, the army consisted mainly of traditionally armed cavalry and infantry units, whose command was organized according to strict rules and procedures. The formation and development of the military system were closely connected with the political situation, economic capabilities, and foreign relations of the Khiva Khanate. Therefore, studying the khanate's armed forces is of considerable scholarly importance for understanding its overall historical development.

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the armed forces and military structures of the Central Asian khanates were similar to one another. Military forces were developed to ensure state security, defend the country against external political powers, and maintain law and order within the state.

The army of the Khiva Khanate consisted of regular and irregular forces. It was mainly divided into cavalry and infantry units, with the cavalry serving as the principal striking force. The navkars were mainly recruited from among the Uzbeks, Karakalpaks, and Turkmens. They were divided according to different tribes, including the Qongirat, Yomut, Teke, Jamshid, Imreli, Chovdur, Goklen, Saqar, Qorachaqa, Aral Qongirat, Agorli, Ali-Eli, Manghit, Kipchak, Qoradoshli, and others.

The army was directly subordinate to the khan. During military campaigns, the khan appointed commanders who led the members of their respective tribes. Muhammad Yusuf Bayani, describing the departure of the Khiva khan Muhammad Amin Khan, who ruled from 1846 to 1855, wrote that the banners of Pahlavon Mahmud, Eltuzar Khan, Muhammad Rahim Khan I, Allahquli Khan, and Rahimquli Khan were carried in front of the khan, followed by the banners of the Qongirat, Karakalpak, Yomut, Imreli, Goklen, Jamshid, and a total of twenty-five other tribes.

Military officials of the khanate relied on particular armed forces to strengthen the state borders, conduct foreign relations with neighbouring states, and pursue active domestic and foreign policies. As in the Bukhara and Kokand khanates, the command of the army in Khiva followed a particular hierarchy. The khanate had its own system of military administration, in which various military offices and titles occupied different levels. These included the commander, yasovulboshi, mingboshi, yuzboshi, ellikboshi, o'nboshi, and bahodir.

Initially, the titles of o'nboshi, ellikboshi, yuzboshi, mingboshi, and other offices, as well as the title of bahodir, were conferred. The supreme ruler himself was officially regarded as the commander-in-chief of the khanate's armed forces. However, historical sources record that, when circumstances required, military command was entrusted to holders of the office of sarkarda. Their loyalty to the khan, military experience, and reputation among the tribes were taken into consideration. Officials such as the qushbegi, mehtar, inoq, otaliq, biy, beklabegi,

parvonachi, and mirab also had their own navkars and could be appointed by the khan to command larger military forces when assigned to a particular formation. During the reign of Muhammad Amin Khan, the high military rank of amir ul-umaro was introduced, although this title had previously been granted during the rule of Muhammad Amin Inoq from 1762 to 1790. From the second half of the nineteenth century, changes began to appear in titles that had previously been officially used.

For example, during military operations, the holder of the office of yasovulboshi was appointed by the khan as commander of the army. In the first half of the nineteenth century, holders of this office commanded Turkmen tribes. In particular, Rahmatulla Yasovulboshi commanded the Yomut tribe, while Mahmud Yasovulboshi led the Qorachaqa tribe.

A person appointed as mingboshi commanded one thousand or more navkars. The to'pchiboshi was the head of the artillery, while the yuzboshi commanded one hundred soldiers, the ellikboshi fifty soldiers, and the o'nboshi ten soldiers.

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, holders of these military offices performed similar duties in all three khanates, and their responsibilities remained largely unchanged. Responsibility for the security of the state borders was assigned to the qorovulbegi, the head of the border service. The qorovulbegi also had his own navkars, who inspected every person crossing the border before allowing them to enter the country.

As in the other khanates, the chief judge who accompanied the khan on military campaigns was traditionally called the qozi inoq, inoq, or qozi askar. These officials issued judgments concerning military crimes in accordance with Islamic law. In certain cases, they also considered matters involving ordinary civilians.

The dodxoh reviewed petitions submitted to the khan, delivered them to him, and communicated the khan's response to the petitioner. The office of dodxoh was introduced into the Khiva Khanate from Bukhara. The dodxoh also participated in military operations. The eshik og'asi was responsible for guarding the palace gates and likewise took part in military campaigns.

Archival documents also indicate that officials such as the dasturxonchi, oshmehtar, and shig'ovul had their own navkars. The khanate's army also included musical units. Drummers and other military musicians played an important role in inspiring soldiers during campaigns and military reviews.

These musicians included karnay players, surnay players, drummers, and tabl players. In addition to announcing the khan's departure from the palace to the public, they provided psychological and moral encouragement to the troops when the army began to move or when battle commenced.

In the Khiva Khanate, every young man who had reached adulthood and voluntarily applied could be accepted into military service. Young men usually learned of their mobilization through tavochis or public announcers, who read the khan's decree concerning military action, as well as through announcements made in markets and mosques.

Lists of persons fit for military service were compiled through mosques, and those individuals were mobilized for military operations. Disabled persons and those unfit for service were not recruited. No specific term of military service was established, and elderly men could also be found within the army. Having gained experience in numerous battles, they passed their knowledge and skills on to younger navkars.

Special lists of recruited soldiers were compiled. The name of each soldier and the horse assigned to him were recorded in special registers maintained by military officials, the khan's chancery, or mosques. These lists also recorded the province and mosque from which each serviceman had been recruited, the identity of his father, and whether he was an older or younger child in the family. By the end of the sixteenth century, the production of artillery guns had begun to improve, and cannons manufactured by local craftsmen were increasingly used in military operations. The guns became more durable, and their dimensions became relatively standardized. By the end of the century, military operations mainly relied on artillery produced by local craftsmen, while European-style cannons were used only rarely. This demonstrates that certain progress had taken place in artillery production.

At the same time, earlier weapons such as the zarbzan, ra'd, zambarak, mangonel, stone-thrower, and other siege and projectile weapons continued to be used. Petroleum was employed as fuel in military technology. When defending fortress walls, soldiers fired burning arrows wrapped in petroleum-soaked cloth at the enemy. For that period, these were regarded as terrifying weapons.

During campaigns, navkars often provided for themselves. After the campaign, however, the khan usually reimbursed these expenses through a specified payment. Markets were established around military camps so that soldiers could purchase the necessary goods cheaply and quickly. This arrangement was convenient for peasants, merchants, and soldiers alike.

In terms of organization, the khanate's army preserved medieval military traditions. In Arabic terminology, the right wing was called the maymana and the left wing the maysara. In Turkic-Mongol terminology, the right wing was known as the burong'or and the left wing as the juvong'or.

During military operations, the unit advancing ahead of the main forces was called the vanguard, manglay, or hiroval. A reconnaissance or guard unit was sent ahead of it. The rearguard was the unit that moved behind the army. Troops raised from among the general population were called qoracherik, or volunteer forces.

There was also a group known as the bahodirlar dastasi, or detachment of warriors, whose members acted rapidly and courageously in battle. A commander who displayed bravery in combat was awarded both a banner and a drum. Members of the secret service were known as josus, munhiy, or buhri.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, a regular army had begun to be formed in the khanate. In particular, by 1850, a new formation of regular infantry and volunteer cavalry had been established in Khiva. It included one battalion composed mainly of Persian soldiers. The battalion numbered one thousand men and consisted of several groups of ten sarbozes. The principal duty of this force was to protect the khan.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, each province had up to one thousand navkars, while irregular troops were assembled during military campaigns. By 1869, the regular army of the Khiva Khanate had reached fifteen thousand men. Of these, five thousand served in fifteen infantry units, while ten thousand formed the regular cavalry.

During campaigns, volunteer cavalymen received five tillas, and if a soldier's horse was killed in battle, he was compensated with the same amount. In his work *Firdaws al-Iqbal*, Munis noted that during Muhammad Rahim Khan I's campaign against the Teke Turkmen tribe in 1817, every navkar received ten tillas for each prisoner he captured.

Military officeholders were paid ten, twenty, fifty, or one hundred tillas, and sometimes even more. A biy holding a military office received between fifty and one hundred tillas, while a yuzboshi received between ten and twenty tillas.

The Hungarian traveller Ármin Vámbéry, who visited Khiva, divided the khanate's military forces into groups in his work *Travels in Central Asia*. He wrote that the khan provided them with money and exempted them from taxation. By the second half of the nineteenth century, the regular army established in Khiva had its own barracks located near the military fortress. The government provided its members with wheat, monthly payments, and land. Each sarboz, or navkar, in the regular army received five tillas annually, equivalent to approximately twenty roubles, as well as between thirty and forty batmans of flour. One batman equalled seven poods and thirty-two pounds.

The volunteer cavalry was assembled only during wartime, and the majority of its members were Turkmens and Karakalpaks. N. N. Muravyov, who visited Khiva in 1819–1820, estimated the number of troops at twelve thousand. However, this information cannot be regarded as completely accurate. The khan assigned agents to follow every foreign visitor and monitor his activities. Consequently, Muravyov did not have access to every part of the khanate.

From the sixteenth to the nineteenth centuries, the size of the Khivan army varied according to circumstances. It generally depended on the importance and scale of military operations. During major campaigns, the number of troops increased considerably. In the campaign against Iran in 1813, 1,200 navkars took part. This confirms Muravyov's information.

By the 1820s, the number of troops may have reached as many as forty thousand. This is confirmed by a campaign against Iran organized by Allahquli Khan, who ruled from 1825 to 1842. Forty thousand soldiers took part in the campaign, but it could not be completed because of an outbreak of cholera along the route. The army was forced to return.

Forty thousand men also participated in Muhammad Amin Khan's campaign against Sarakhs in 1855. Navkars from the Jamshid, Qoravoy, Turkmen, Maymana, Sho'rquq, Teke, Goklen, Yomut, and other Turkmen tribes came to support the khan.

According to Russian sources, the supreme military forces of Khiva in 1855 numbered between twenty-five thousand and thirty-five thousand men. After the

Khiva Khanate became a Russian protectorate, the size of its army declined. The khanate was permitted to maintain approximately 1,500–2,000 troops. Their principal duties were maintaining public order, collecting revenues, and guarding the palace.

Conclusion

The armed forces of the Khiva Khanate played an important role in maintaining the political stability and territorial integrity of the state. The military system consisted mainly of traditional cavalry and infantry units, whose organization and activities developed in accordance with the conditions of the period. The composition of the army, its level of armament, and its command structure were closely connected with the economic capabilities and military-political needs of the Khiva Khanate.

Although the armed forces of the Khiva Khanate did not constitute a centralized standing army, they were capable of carrying out important military tasks. The army served as a major supporting force in strengthening the khan's authority, maintaining internal order, and defending the state against external threats. Thus, studying the military forces of the Khiva Khanate makes it possible to gain a deeper understanding of the history of the khanate, as well as its administrative and defence systems.

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