



Character Portraits Of The Fifth And Sixth Emirs Of Bukhara.

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ABSTRACT

This article analyzes the personalities and activities of two emirs who ruled in the Bukhara Emirate but remained relatively unknown in history. The study sheds light on the reigns of Amir Haydar's two sons: the fifth emir, Husayn, who ruled for over two months, and the sixth emir, Umar, who ruled for four months. The analysis is based on contemporary sources and later research studies.

Keywords:

Manghits, Bukhara Emirate, emir, Amir Haydar, Amir Husayn, Amir Umar, capital, reign, defense, siege, state, Bukhara, historian.

Information about the activities of the fifth and sixth emirs of the Bukhara Emirate is sparsely available in research works and educational literature. Although their reigns were brief, they left some trace in the history of statehood. Typically, historiography focuses on rulers who governed for extended periods, while the activities of those with short reigns remain in the shadows. However, the periods of these emirs were marked by factors that significantly influenced the existing regime, as well as the socio-political and cultural life of the era.

Sources mention that Amir Haydar left behind sons named Husaynxon, Nasrulloxon, Umarxon, Abdulloh, Zubayrxon, and Jahongirxon[1]. The mother of Zubayrxon and Jahongirxon was from the lineage of the Jo'ybor sheikhs[2]. According to the writings of Ahmad Donish and Abdulazim Somiy, when Amir Haydar fell ill and lay on his deathbed, he summoned members of the court and declared his eldest son, Husayn, as his heir. Thus, after Amir Haydar's death, his eldest son, Husayn To'ra, ascended the throne. According to sources, Husayn's maternal lineage traced back to the Sayyid Jo'yboriy khojas[3]. He was

described as noble, just, and compassionate toward his subjects. However, his emirate lasted only 76 days, as he suddenly passed away on December 21, 1826. Historian Mu'in, in his work Zikri Te'dodi Podshohoni O'zbek, wrote that Husayn succumbed to an incurable tumor at the age of 30[4]. Some foreign travelers, however, reported that Emir Husayn was poisoned by Hakimbiy, the Qo'shbegi[5].

Alexander Burnes (1805–1841), a trade representative of the East India Company and a lieutenant in the British Army, visited Bukhara a few years after Emir Husayn's death (1831–1833). In his extensive three-volume work Travels into Bukhara, Burnes was the first in global historiography to detail Husayn's death, asserting that the emir was poisoned by Hakim Qo'shbegi through tainted food. In 1863, the renowned orientalist and traveler German Vambery (1832–1913), who visited Bukhara disguised as a "Turkish pilgrim," confirmed Burnes' findings in his two-volume work Bukhara, or the History of Mawarannahr. He elaborated, stating: "After a three-month reign, Emir Husayn was poisoned by Bukhara's Qo'shbegi, Hakimbiy, and Hisar's governor,

Mo'minbiy. It is also suspected that Nasrullo was involved in Husayn's death"[6].

So, the ruler of Bukhara, Emir Husayn (also referred to as Mir Husayn To'ra), died in Bukhara as a result of poisoning. However, Bukhara historians recorded that Husayn died suddenly due to illness but left no details about the symptoms or causes of death. According to historian Q. Rajabov, Emir Husayn was indeed poisoned by a group of palace elites led by Hakimbiy Qo'shbegi. Nasrulloxon did not participate in the plot but made no attempt to stop the palace intrigue[7].

Husayn Tora was born on July 11, 1797, in the city of Bukhara[8]. He was the eldest son of Amir Haydar. As a prince, he mastered all the sciences at an early age. Husayn wrote poetry, had good knowledge of medicine, chemistry, and astrology, and was also skilled in fortune-telling[9]. According to sources, Husayn was mentored by Mavlono Sharif Khoja Mawlawi, a descendant of the famous Sheikh Muhammad Sharif Alawi al-Bukhari. Upon reaching maturity, Husayn Tora briefly served as the governor of Jizzakh. Later, he also held governorship positions (Naib) in the Karmana and Samarkand regions for short periods. During his tenure as governor, Husayn Tora gained the affection of the populace through his generosity, courage, and other virtues. Sources state that he distributed large sums of money, including one hundred and one thousand gold coins, to the citizens all at once[10]. However, such benevolence toward the people did not sit well with certain influential officials at court, particularly Hakim Biy Qushbegi.

Amir Husayn's generosity displeased some influential officials at court, who sought to depose him. Muhammad Hakim Biy, who had held the position of Qushbegi since Amir Haydar's reign, secretly sent an emissary to Nasrullo, who was then the governor of Qarshi, suggesting that he was the most suitable person for the throne of Bukhara and urging him to rebel against his brother Amir Husayn[11]. Amir Nasrullo set out for Bukhara with a large army from Qarshi. However, he did not openly oppose his brother and instead observed the political situation.

After Amir Husayn's death, with the support of some court nobles and military commanders, Sayyid Amir Umar ascended the throne of the Bukhara Emirate on December 23, 1826. Umar was born on December 19, 1810, in the city of Bukhara. During the reigns of his father, Amir Haydar, and his brother Husayn, he served as the governor of Karmana[12]. Amir Umar Khan became the sixth ruler of the Manghit dynasty and ruled for only four months[13]. At this time, Umar Khan was a mere 17-year-old youth. According to sources, Amir Umar Khan was not highly respected among the people and, during his reign, was primarily engaged in indulgence and leisure. One historical account from that time describes the situation as follows: "Amir Umar Khan's behavior was improper, and, moreover, he was unaware of state affairs." During this period, the governance of the Bukhara Emirate was under the influence of court dignitaries like Toghay Qazaq and Ismatulloh Biy Qalmoq, who prioritized their own interests. Distressed by this situation, many court nobles and officials wrote to Amir Umar Khan's brother, Nasrullo, the governor of Qarshi[14].

Ahmad Donish recounts these events as follows: "This man, inclined to vice by nature, quickly immersed himself in indulgence and enjoyed pleasures exceeding what one could experience in a lifetime. Night and day were spent in revelry, music, and wine, to the extent that, as a ruler, he was unaware of his brother Nasrullo's siege of Bukhara after arriving from Samarkand. When the sound of rifles and bows came from outside the city, his attendants would reassure him: "Your hunters are practicing target shooting outside the city, remain at ease". This continued until Nasrullo's soldiers broke through the gates of Bukhara, entered the Ark, and seized the city. At that moment, the Amir was preoccupied with listening to melodies played on the harp, tambourine, and drum. One of the renowned scholars saved him at the last moment by disguising him in women's veils and smuggling him out of the Ark. Afterward, the Amir fled in whatever direction he could"[15].

Amir Nasrullo captured Samarkand in December 1826 and ascended the famous Kok Tash throne, proclaiming himself Amir.

Following a tradition dating back to the Timurid era, rulers of Transoxiana would ascend the Koktash throne in Samarkand to lend political legitimacy to their reign[16]. After securing Samarkand, Nasrullo turned toward Bukhara, capturing the Miyankol oasis, Kattakurgan, Karmana, and the entire region between the two capitals. Supported by the residents of the Zarafshan valley and elated by his victories, Nasrullo launched a campaign against the capital, Bukhara.

When Amir Nasrullo advanced his army from Samarkand to Bukhara, Amir Umarxon also set out with his forces to face him. As the two armies stood face-to-face on the brink of battle, Amir Umarxon's troops fell into disarray and scattered. The late Amir Haydar's three sons turned their backs on Umarxon and joined their older brother Nasrullo. After nearly 50 days of siege (according to Mirzo Abdulazim Somiy, a 70-day siege), due to the actions of Hakimbiy, the military commander, Rajabbek, the herald, and the artillery chief Ayoziy, who had taken action from within the city, the capital was seized without a fight[17].

According to the renowned historian Hakimxon To'ra (19th century) in his work *Muntaxab at-tavorix*, when Nasrullo Khan advanced his army from Samarkand to Bukhara, Amir Umarxon also set out with his forces to confront him. The two armies met face-to-face near the Karmana region. However, on the eve of the battle, Amir Umarxon's troops fell into disarray and scattered. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sons of Amir Haydar—Zobirxon, Hamzaxon, and Safarxon—turned away from their brother Umarxon and joined their older brother Nasrullo[18]. The *Muntaxab at-tavorix* also includes the following passage: "Nasrullo Khan, considering their steps blessed and moved by brotherly affection, welcomed each of them with compassion and kindness, embracing them and assigning them places of honor beside him"[19].

Mu'in provides further details about these events, describing how the prolonged siege caused frustration among the people. Each morning, after the general salute, the commanders would patrol the city's outskirts to prevent the transport of grain and fodder into

Bukhara. Artillerymen fired cannons near the Horse Market. Over fifty days, heavy casualties were reported on both sides. Eventually, Rajabbek the herald, Hakimbek Qushbegi, and their ally Ayazbiy collaborated to open the northern Samarqand Gate of the city on the 27th of Ramadan. At dawn, Amir Nasrullo's men entered the city, and he himself followed after the morning prayers[20]. Amir Umar fled to the residence of Naqibkhoja but could not escape the unfolding chaos. On the same day, approximately fifty of Umar's loyalists were executed. Among those killed were Taraghoikhan Qozok, Ismatullo Biy along with his two sons, Mullah Tursunboboi Toshkandiy and his son Mirzo Aziz Munajjim, Mirzo Azim Munshi, Ghazibek, Rahmatullobek, Qozi Mahram, Khojakul Gulom, and fifteen others from the Nayman clan. However, many were spared and granted amnesty. On the morning of Thursday, Amir Umar was granted clemency and sent under escort to Khorasan[21].

50 people who supported him were executed. He lived in exile in Herat, Mashhad, and Balkh, later seeking refuge in Kokand under the protection of Kokand's ruler, Muhammad Alikhan (1822–1841)[22]. The Kokand ruler even married his sister to Umar[23]. However, Umar soon succumbed to a cholera outbreak in Kokand. His body was transported to Bukhara and interred near his grandfather Amir Daniyol at the Khoja Naqshband Mausoleum. Some historians, such as Mirzo Abdulazim Somiy, suggest that Umar was killed by his brother Nasrullo[24]. However, unbiased accounts from that era refute this claim, affirming that Umar died of cholera at the age of 19. After wandering for two years (1828/1829), he passed away in Kokand, and his remains were laid to rest in Bukhara[25].

Mirzo Olim Makxdum Hoji writes about the events as follows: "After leaving Bukhara, he went to Herat and stayed for a while in the presence of Komronshoh ibn Mahmudshoh. After receiving permission and leaving Herat, he traveled to Fergana, specifically to the state of Kokand, where he arrived at the court of Muhammad Alikhan. In the year 1245, he passed away from cholera, and his body was brought to Bukhara and buried next to his

grandfather Doniyolbiy in the sacred shrine. Only a young son remained, who also passed away after a short time. It is well-known among the people that Mullah Mirzo Solih ibn Nazarmuhammad al-Khojandiy was sent to read the prayers and bury Amir Nasrullo's body"[26].

Herman Vambéry, a historian, agrees that Umarxon passed away in Kokand due to cholera shortly afterward. This event occurred in the year 1245 AH (1828 CE). According to A. Byrons, a political representative of the East India Company, after Umarxon's death, his remains were brought from Kokand to Bukhara and buried there. Uzbek historian Mullah Olim Makhdom Hoji further clarifies this point, confirming that Umarxon died from cholera in 1245 AH and his body was indeed brought to Bukhara for burial beside his grandfather Muhammad Doniyolbiy. Considering that A. Byrons and H. Vambéry visited Bukhara several years after these events, their accounts are likely closer to the historical truth.

However, some historians have made the erroneous claim that Umarxon was killed by his brother Amir Nasrullo. For example, historian Mirzo Abdulazim Somiy, in his book *Ta'rikhi Salotini Mang'itiya*, writes that after Umarxon was sent to Kokand, Amir Nasrullo, under pressure from his supporters, sent a man named Khayrullohbek to kill his brother Umarxon. Khayrullohbek went to Kokand, killed Umarxon, and brought his head back to Bukhara to show Nasrullo. The scholar Fitrat repeats these mistaken ideas in his historical treatise *Amir Olimkhonning Hukmronlik Davri* (1930). However, these opinions, written around 100 years after Umarxon's time, are flawed and do not align with the historical facts[27].

Ultimately, while there is some ambiguity in the accounts of Umarxon's death, the most probable conclusion is that he died from cholera at the age of 19 in Kokand. There is no evidence that his brother Nasrullo had any involvement in his death. This is strongly supported by various contemporary historical sources.

In the struggle for power in Bukhara, Mirzo Shams Bukhari (1804–1868), a scribe and historian who served the three sons of Amir Haydar and worked in the courts of Bukhara,

Kokand, and Kashgar, wrote in his work *Bukhoro, Kokand va Qoshg'arning Ayrim Voqea-Hodisalarining Bayoni* that Amir Nasrullo spilled much blood in his rise to the throne. Even after ascending to power, he continued executing 50–100 people daily[28]. Mirzo Shams Bukhari himself had worked for Amir Nasrullo for a certain period but later moved to Shahrisabz. After living there for 11 months, he went to Kokand to join the exiled former Amir Umarxon. Given that Mirzo Shams Bukhari opposed Amir Nasrullo, his portrayal of him as excessively ruthless becomes clearer. Moreover, the numerous executions carried out by Amir Nasrullo, including the killing of poet Hoziq (which is discussed further in the "Amir Nasrulloxon" section of this book), earned him titles like "The Butcher's Hero" and "The Butcher Amir."

References:

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