HSR (LONDON),
HOUGHTON STREET REVIEW JOURNAL
ISSN: 2058-5519|Impact factor-15.9
http://houghtonstreetreview.com/index.php/hsr

THE REIGN OF JANUKA BEK (YORMUHAMMAD BEK) IN THE DENAU BEKLIK AND HIS TAXATION POLICY: A CRITICAL HISTORICAL AND ARCHIVAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

This study provides a comprehensive historical investigation into the political, administrative, and agrarian-tax structures of the Denau Beklik—a highly critical strategic territory within the Emirate of Bukhara during the 19th century—under the specific governorship of Yormuhammad Bek, known natively and in popular tradition as Januka Bek. Utilizing the original archival records of the Central Administration of the Kushbegi of Bukhara, 19th-century military-geographical accounts by Russian imperial intelligence, and contemporary Central Asian historiography, this paper reconstructs the socio-economic anatomy of the provincial government. It dissects the institutionalized mechanics of the amlokdorlik divisions and the multi-layered fiscal extractions, specifically focusing on the khiraj, tanobona, and arbitrary supplementary imposts. Ultimately, the paper demonstrates the catastrophic systemic outcomes of late-feudal state exploitation on provincial demographics, peasant uprisings, and waves of forced migration across the Amu Darya into Afghan-controlled territories.

Keywords: Emirate of Bukhara, Denau Beklik, Januka Bek, Yormuhammad Bek, Kushbegi Archive, Khiraj, Tanobona, Amlokdorlik, Fiscal Exploitation, Social Crisis, Forced Migration.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the 19th century, the internal political cohesion and economic resilience of the Emirate of Bukhara were structurally contingent upon the administrative efficiency and fiscal capacity of its peripheral provinces (bekliks). Situated in the northernmost reaches of the Surkhan-Darya oasis, the Denau Beklik occupied a crucial geopolitical and economic nexus. Blessed with highly fertile lands watered by the Topalang and Sangardak river systems, and intersected by vital commercial arteries connecting the Bukhara core with the Hissar valleys, Denau functioned as one of the paramount financial backbones of the central treasury [1].

The consolidation of central authority in these distant borderlands required iron-fisted governance capable of both extracting maximum revenue and subduing regional tribal autonomies. The long-standing rule of Yormuhammad Bek, historically memorialized as Januka Bek, epitomizes the apex of late-feudal state exploitation in the Manghit era. This paper aims to deliver an exhaustive academic deconstruction of the fiscal apparati, corruption mechanisms, and socio-demographic crises that characterized Denau under Januka Bek's administrative tenure.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The historiographical foundation for analyzing the agrarian and fiscal dynamics of the Eastern and Southern provinces of the Bukharan Emirate relies heavily on primary field observations recorded by 19th and early 20th-century Russian imperial geographers, diplomats, and military emissaries. The extensive intelligence dispatches of D.N. Logofet provide meticulous empirical data regarding the annual budgets and comparative fiscal outputs of the individual provincial governments [2]. Concurrently, the fundamental ethnographical and socio-economic works of N.A. Kislyakov offer an

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invaluable structural framework for understanding land tenure, water rights, and patriarchal-feudal dependencies within the region [3].

In the post-independence era, Central Asian historiography has undergone a rigorous process of archival reclamation. Historians such as A. Tangriberdiyev have thoroughly examined the vast holdings of the Administration of the Kushbegi of Bukhara, shedding unprecedented light on the precise administrative titles, careers, and socio-political actions of regional governors like Yormuhammad Bek [4]. Methodologically, this study is grounded in historical contextualization, source-critical archival triangulation, and socio-economic determinism. Historical data extracted from the National Archives of Uzbekistan (O‘zMA) forms the definitive factual backbone of this analysis.

3. RESULTS AND FISCAL RECONSTRUCTION

Upon his royal appointment to the Denau Beklik, Januka Bek initiated a series of aggressive administrative measures designed to eliminate the separatist tendencies of the local Kungrat, Yuz, Durmen, and Saray Uzbek tribal oligarchies, thereby enforcing a rigid vertical hierarchy answerable directly to the Emir. To optimize tax collection and ensure absolute surveillance over the agrarian output, the province was partitioned into clearly demarcated administrative sub-districts known as amlokdorliks. Januka Bek personally installed fiercely loyal retainers (amlokdors) over the primary sub-districts of Sangardak, Poshor, Chambuloq, Yurchi, Sina, Qarluq, and Do‘rmon [4].

The archival revenue logs (daftars) from the Kushbegi central chancellery reveal a highly coordinated, relentless tax extraction apparatus operating under Januka Bek’s authority:

- **The Khiraj (Ushr) Mechanism:** Irrigated (obikor) agricultural lands were subjected to a mandatory crop tax fixed at **15 percent** of the gross annual yield [5]. The verification of the harvest was conducted through the strict application of the imperial Mann system. For every mann (equivalent to 128 kilograms) of grain or primary produce amassed, the provincial agents extracted **20 pounds** (approximately 8.2 kilograms) in physical, natural form directly from the threshing floors [6].
- **The Tanobona Impost:** Specialized cash crops, orchards, and vineyards—which constituted the primary wealth of the Denau lowlands—were subjected to the tanobona system. Imperial land-measurers (tanobchis) systematically gauged the plots using standard cords (tanobs, roughly equal to 0.24 hectares), levying heavy, non-negotiable cash taxes based on the qualitative valuation of the fruit or cotton produced [1].
- **The Zakat and Aminona Fees:** Pastoralist clans and specialized urban guilds were subjected to a 2.5 percent wealth tax on livestock and commercial capital. Furthermore, within the bustling markets (bozors) of Denau, state-appointed market supervisors (amins) extracted a mandatory transaction fee known as aminona (brokerage tax) on every sale of grain or cattle, a revenue explicitly ring-fenced to fund and weaponize the governor's permanent military garrison (sarbozs) [4].

Cross-referencing these localized records with the imperial accounts published by D.N. Logofet allows for a precise structural comparison of provincial tax outputs within Southern and Eastern Bukhara, as reconstructed in Table 1:

Table 1: Comparative Annual Fiscal Revenue Transmitted to the Central Bukharan Treasury and Local Diwans in the Late 19th Century (in Imperial Rubles)

No.	Name of the Beklik (Province)	Total Annual Fiscal Revenue (Rubles)	Economic-Strategic Classification of the Territory
1	Hissar Beklik	600,000	Regional administrative core; largest agrarian basin.

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2	Kulob Beklik	350,000	Major pastoralist hub and extensive rainfed grain producer.
3	**Denau Beklik**	**200,000**	**Highly fertile river oasis; hub of viticulture and trade.**
4	Boysun Beklik	150,000	Mountainous territory dominated by livestock husbandry.
5	Sherobod Beklik	150,000	Southern frontier gate; crucial transit and customs nexus.

Source: Reconstructed and systematized by the author based on the imperial geographical intelligence archives of D.N. Logofet [2], [7].

These statistics firmly establish that the Denau Beklik, yielding a net annual remittance of 200,000 rubles to the state, stood securely as the **third most lucrative asset** within the entire peripheral administration of the Emirate [2].

4. DISCUSSION AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC CONSEQUENCES

The structural reality behind Denau's stellar fiscal performance was an underlying web of systematic institutional corruption and profound human suffering. Archival records reveal that the taxation policy enforced by Januka Bek and his sub-district amlokdors actively catalyzed the socioeconomic collapse of the local peasantry through specific institutional mechanisms:

The Mechanics of the "Tanobchi" Fraud

In the execution of the tanobona land surveys, the tanobchis routinely utilized a deliberately shortened measuring cord. Consequently, a peasant's actual landholding of 1 tanob was fraudulently registered in the state logs as 1.5 or 2 tanobs [6]. This systemic fraud legally bound the agrarian laborer to pay double the statutory tax rate. The legal surplus was sent to the central treasury, while the illicit portion was pocketed by Januka Bek's administrative diwan and local mirzas.

Supplementary and Extraordinar Imposts

Beyond the core khiraj and zakat, the peasantry was completely crushed by arbitrary, customary extractions. These included the notorious kafsh puli (shoe money, collected from villagers to pay for the footwear of visiting tax collectors), ot puli (horse money, to feed the mounts of state officials), and havoriy (extraordinary wartime levies) [5]. To meet these incessant cash demands, smallholders frequently turned to predatory moneylenders (sudkhors), selling their unharvested crops in advance at fraction of market prices. This resulted in widespread land alienation, turning independent farmers into landless sharecroppers (chorakors) [3].

Collective Fiscal Punishment

When localized environmental shocks, such as severe droughts or locust infestations, rendered an entire village incapable of paying its khiraj, Januka Bek's administration strictly enforced collective financial responsibility. The tax deficit of a fugitive or bankrupt household was legally redistributed across the remaining neighbors or tribal kinship networks [5]. This ruthless policy tore the social fabric of the Bukharan villages apart, triggering internal violence, blood feuds, and communal fragmentation.

Peasant Insurgency and Trans-Amudaryo Flight

The cumulative pressure of this fiscal tyranny eventually triggered fierce peasant rebellions in the mountain sub-districts of Sina, Poshor, and Sangardak [4]. Januka Bek responded with

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uncompromising military brutality, deploying his sarboz units to crush the agrarian centers. Insurgent leaders were publicly executed or cast into the subterranean dungeons of the Denau fortress [4].

Seeing no institutional recourse, entire village communities—predominantly belonging to the Yuz and Durmen clans—resorted to mass midnight flights. Abandoning their ancestral fields, hundreds of families fled deep into the inhospitable valleys of the Hissar range or undertook the highly perilous crossing of the Amu Darya into Afghan-governed territory (Southern Turkestan) [2], [8]. This massive outward migration caused widespread depopulation, leaving vast swathes of previously fertile irrigated lands completely desolate and severely stunting the demographic and economic trajectory of the entire oasis for decades.

5. CONCLUSION

Ultimately, a critical look at primary sources reveals that the taxation policy under Januka Bek (Yormuhammad Bek) represents a classic, tragic case of predatory late-feudal state extraction. While Januka Bek successfully met the financial expectations of the Emir's central court—cementing Denau's status as a top-tier revenue asset—the internal cost of this compliance was paid entirely through the absolute degradation of the agrarian population. The institutionalized land-measurement fraud, collective punishment, and military suppression of tax protests did not just cause a local financial crisis; they drove a historical demographic shift, forcing thousands of families across the Afghan border. Thus, studying the administrative choices and fiscal machinery of the Denau Beklik remains essential for understanding the systemic socio-economic stagnation that historically preceded the collapse of the Bukharan state.

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