

THE ROLE OF THE HARDURI ETHNIC GROUP IN THE POPULATION STRUCTURE OF GUZOR

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Abstract: *This study explores the role and historical development of the Harduri ethnic group living in the Qashqadaryo oasis, particularly in the Guzor district. The Harduris have historically been recognized as a Persian-speaking population group, and sources note that they made up a significant portion of the population in Guzor and its surrounding villages. The research analyzes their ethnic and social features, cultural traditions, interactions with other Uzbek and Tajik communities, and their participation in the demographic shifts of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.*

Keywords: *Harduri, ethnic group, Guzor district, population structure, ethnogenesis, ethnography, Bukhara Emirate, rural settlements, historical demography, Tajiks.*

During the time of the Bukhara Emirate, especially from the late 19th to early 20th century, the population of the Guzor beklik—one of the Emirate’s administrative-territorial units—consisted mainly of Uzbek and Tajik-speaking communities. Among them, a considerable segment was known as *Harduri*, a distinct ethnographic group that formed an important part of the local population. Studying the history of this group helps clarify several issues related to the past of the Guzor beklik; however, due to limited research on this topic, scholarly debates on the subject are still ongoing.

In the Guzor beklik, the term *Harduri* was often used to refer to Tajiks or Tajik-speaking people. They mainly lived in rural areas such as the villages of Gulshan, Martepa, Boyguzar, Mirishkor, and in several neighborhoods of the city of Guzor.

Information about the Harduri group can be found—albeit to a limited extent—in written sources from the late medieval period of the Bukhara Emirate and in records by Russian authors. These references provide a partial picture of this community. However, due to the lack of in-depth research, it remains difficult to fully understand the content and context of the information found in historical sources.

Among 20th-century and more recent studies on the ethnic composition of Central Asian peoples—particularly those in southern Uzbekistan—researchers such as M. Eshniyozov, B.Kh. Karmysheva, T. Nafasov, A. Doniyorov, O. Buriyev, A. Ashirov, A. Qayumov, and S. Tursunov have made notable contributions, although many of them focused more on the

Harduri communities in the Surkhan valley and only partially addressed those in Guzor and neighboring areas.

According to their findings, the Harduri people mainly live in the Dehqonobod and Guzor districts of Qashqadaryo region and speak Tajik and, to some extent, Uzbek with a Qarluq dialect. In both academic literature and oral accounts from local residents, the term *Harduri* is often interpreted to mean "people who have come from various places and settled together"—in other words, the meaning is nearly equivalent to the term *qurama* (mixed or blended population)¹³⁷.

Information about the Harduri population living in the Guzor beklik during the late 19th and early 20th centuries mainly comes from the *Kushbegi Archive* documents of the Bukhara Emirate and the work "*Tarikh-i Humoyun*" written by Muhammad Sodiqkhoja Gulshani in the early 20th century. According to the Kushbegi records, there was one village named *Harduri* in each of the Afghanbog and Eskibog amlaks within the Guzor beklik. In addition, the same archival documents mention villages such as *Har Dara* and *Har Darai Turk* in the Hisor beklik, which may also be connected to the *Harduri* ethnonym. This is supported by the existence of several settlements named *Harduri* in neighboring regions such as Boysun, Sherobod, and Sariosiyo, which border the Guzor beklik¹³⁸.

Gulshani provides relatively detailed information about the Harduris of Guzor. According to his writings, two major ethnic groups made up the majority in several villages under Guzor's jurisdiction: the *Qongirot* and the *Harduri*. He states that the Qongirot consisted of approximately forty thousand households and were considered Uzbek, while the Harduri had around twenty thousand households and were regarded as Tajik. According to Gulshani, the Qongirots were primarily engaged in herding, while the Harduris worked as farmers. Gulshani's description of the Guzor population—"The province of Khuzor consists of seventy thousand households: forty thousand Qongirot, twenty thousand Harduri, and ten thousand in and around the city"—appears to be somewhat exaggerated. In reality, by the early 20th century, there were many other Uzbek tribal settlements in the beklik besides those of the Qongirot and Harduri¹³⁹.

In several studies, there is a widespread view that the Harduri population group were originally nomadic Tajiks who later adopted a sedentary lifestyle. However, some written sources suggest that the Harduri community in Guzor consisted primarily of settled agriculturalists. Gulshani, who emphasized that members of the Harduri group in the Guzor

¹³⁷ Дониёров А., Бўриев О., Аширов А. Марказий Осиё халқлари этнографияси, этногенези ва этник тарихи, б. 131.

¹³⁸ Населенные пункты Бухарского эмирата (конец XIX – начало XX вв.). – С. 137.

¹³⁹ Муҳаммад Содикқочай Гулшанӣ. Таърихи Ҳумоюн. – Б. 102.

beklik were mainly engaged in farming, wrote the following: “*Along the streams in the mountainous areas, there are many fertile lands, and the Harduris are extremely skilled in agriculture. The Harduris have no other occupation besides farming. Among them, there are also wealthy individuals.*” This description contradicts the nomadic-origin hypothesis and highlights that the Harduris of Guzor were, in fact, a well-established, sedentary farming population¹⁴⁰.

It should be noted, however, that the information provided by the author may also be somewhat exaggerated. Considering the natural geographical location of the Guzor beklik and the fact that members of the Harduri community mainly lived in mountainous areas during that period, it is more likely that they were engaged in horticulture rather than large-scale irrigated farming. In this region, rain-fed (dryland) agriculture was more widespread than irrigated farming. Indeed, as Gulshani himself emphasized, the mountainous areas of Khuzor contained fertile lands suitable for agriculture, and both rain-fed and irrigated crops were cultivated in the valleys. This suggests that the Harduri population likely focused on mountain farming and gardening rather than intensive irrigation-based agriculture¹⁴¹.

Several researchers who briefly addressed the issue of the Harduri population group have also shown interest in the etymology of the ethnonym itself. According to M. Eshniyozov’s interpretation, the term may derive from the Hindi phrase “*har daurak*” (meaning “those who came from everywhere,” or “people who fled from various places”), to which the Persian suffix *-i* was added, resulting in forms such as *har dauraki* → *hardaragi* → *hardari* → *harduri*. In popular folk explanation, *har-duri* is understood as “*people from various valleys*” or “*a group made up of people from different places.*” Thus, *Harduri* is considered a Persian-derived term that initially referred to a territorial group and later evolved into an ethnonym. It is from this ethnonym that certain village names are believed to have originated¹⁴².

In addition to the Guzor beklik, representatives of the Harduri population group and settlements bearing this name have also been recorded in several other districts of the Qashqadaryo oasis. For example, in the Chirakchi district, there is a village named *Harduri* located between the villages of *Khushali* and *Taloqtepa*. However, the residents of this *Harduri* village speak Uzbek and primarily belong to the *Uz* tribe. It is understood that the village received its name in the early 20th century due to the mixed settlement of various Uzbek tribes—such as *Uz*, *Achamayli*, *Gala*, and *Qongirot*. Prior to that, the village was known as *Ashur-beka*. T. Nafasov, who commented on the name of the *Harduri* village in

¹⁴⁰ Муҳаммад Содикқочай Гулшанӣ. Таърихи Ҳумоюн. – Б. 101.

¹⁴¹ Муҳаммад Содикқочай Гулшанӣ. Таърихи Ҳумоюн. – Б. 101.

¹⁴² Эшнӣёзов М. Шеваи хардури. – Душанбе, 1967. – С. 214; Нафасов Т. Қашқадарё кишлоқномаси. – Б. 412-413.

Chirakchi, noted that the residents there do not speak Tajik. In the upper part of the Qashqadaryo oasis—specifically among the population of Shahrisabz district—the term *Harduri* has been preserved as the name of an ethnographic group. It is worth noting that in the lower Qashqadaryo region—especially in the districts of Karshi, Koson, and Kasbi—this ethnonym does not appear at all. Likewise, written sources and ethnographic materials related to this term are not found in the central regions of the former Bukhara Emirate, such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Karmana, and Jizzakh¹⁴³.

Most information about the Harduri population group is associated with the Guzor beklik and the Surkhan valley. A significant portion of the Harduri ethnographic group lived in the mountainous areas between Boysun and Guzor. In 1924–1925, their population was recorded at approximately 8,400 people. During the first half of the 20th century, the Harduri community lived in several districts of Surkhandarya region—primarily Boysun, Sariosiyo, and Sherobod—though they formed a minority compared to other population groups.

The Harduri name appears in the form of local place names such as *Guzar (Sharahun)* in the Sariosiyo district and *Guzar (Sina)* in the Oltinsay district. In the Surkhan valley, the Harduri lived in two villages located in the Machaydarya valley (upper reaches of the Sherobod River): *Khojadayak* and *Yuqori Machay* (also known as *Katta Qishloq*). According to B.Kh. Karmysheva, in the first quarter of the 20th century, the Harduri in Khojadayak numbered around 50 households. At that time, Yuqori Machay had around 300 households, with half of them made up of Harduri families, and the other half belonging to the *Turk* subgroup of Uzbeks. Under the influence of these “Turk” Uzbeks, the Harduri gradually adopted the Uzbek language and came to refer to themselves as *Uzbek Harduris*. Over time, they also increasingly assimilated with another Uzbek subgroup known as the *Chaghatay* (or *Chigatay*) Uzbeks¹⁴⁴.

Residents of a settlement in the Boysun district known as *Harduri-Qishloq* trace their origins to a cluster of villages located in the upper basin of the *Kichik-Uradarya* river, near the *Boshchorvog–Machay* mountains. This indicates that the Harduris of Boysun associate their roots with the Harduri population of the Guzor district. In the first quarter of the 20th century, Tajik-speaking Harduris formed the majority of the population in Boshchorvog, while part of the village cluster consisted of members of the *Turk* subgroup of Uzbeks. At

¹⁴³ Нафасов Т. Қашқадарё қишлоқномаси., б. 413.

¹⁴⁴ Кармышева Б.Х. Очерки этнической истории южных районов Таджикистана и Узбекистана (по этнографическим данным), с. 63.

that time, the total population of the Boshchorvog villages amounted to approximately 1,200 households¹⁴⁵.

During her ethnographic research in the Surkhan valley in the mid-20th century, B.Kh. Karmysheva recorded the presence of a Harduri population group in the village of *Taroqli*, which at one time had been part of the Denov beklik. This village was known by the name *Harduri-Qishloq*, and according to the 1926 population census, its residents were officially registered as Uzbeks.

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