

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK “MÜKEMMEL TARIH-I FERGANA” AS A HISTORICAL SOURCE**Ziyadullaev Ulugbek Otabek ugli**

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Abstract: This article examines the historiographical significance, source base, and narrative characteristics of “Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana” and related works authored by Fozilbek Otabek oğlu, with particular attention to Mufassal Tavorixi Turkiston and the incomplete Tarixi umm. The study demonstrates that these works constitute important narrative sources for reconstructing the political, social, and cultural history of the Kokand Khanate and the wider Fergana Valley from the 16th to the 19th centuries. The research highlights that Fozilbek’s historiography is characterized by a synthesis of written chronicles, earlier historical works (including Ravzat us-safo, Boburnoma, and Russian historiographical materials), and oral traditions. His methodology reflects a critical, albeit contextually constrained, approach to source selection and verification, aiming to present a relatively balanced account of dynastic history. Particular emphasis is placed on his dual portrayal of rulers, in which both positive and negative attributes of khans are recorded, thereby distinguishing his work from purely panegyric historiographical traditions. The article further analyzes the manuscript tradition and textual transmission of Mukammal tarixi Fergana, preserved primarily in a later copy held at the Abu Rayhan Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies. It also considers the impact of its production under colonial administrative conditions, including its commissioning context, which may have influenced narrative framing and selection of historical events.

Key words: Kokand Khanate; Fergana Valley; Central Asian historiography; manuscript studies; Mukammal tarixi Fergana; Chagatai language; source criticism; oral history; Russian colonial period; historical methodology; Turkistan studies.

Introduction. During his scholarly career, Fozilbek Otabek oğlu produced two works devoted to the history of Turkestan and one work on general history: Mufassal Tavorikhi Turkiston (“Detailed History of Turkestan”), Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana (“Complete History of Fergana”), and Tarixi Umm (“Universal History”). The first-mentioned work was initially begun by his father but was completed by Fozilbek Otabek oğlu himself. In composing this work, he emphasized that he had studied such sources as Ravzat us-Safo, Baburnama, and works concerning the history of the peoples of Russia: “After attaining a state of personal tranquility, I regretted that such a useful book as Tavorikhi Turkiston had remained unfinished. Therefore, having found Baburnama, Ravzat us-Safo, and books on Russian history, I eventually completed it with the utmost effort.”

Mufassal Tavorikhi Turkiston is a substantial work consisting of 382 pages. The work Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana was planned in two parts; however, only the section covering the history of the Kokand khans up to the reign of Khudoyorkhan has survived. The work Tarixi Umm (“Universal History”) has not reached the present day. In the introduction to Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana, the author states that his purpose was to record the history of the region. He further explains that, beginning from the period of the construction and development of the capital of the Fergana province, namely the city of Kokand, he intended to concisely and accurately describe the lives, biographies, histories, political changes and revolutions, deaths, significant events during their lifetimes, periods of rule, victories, internal conflicts, and disputes among the khans.

The author also notes that, beginning with the era of Norbo‘taxon up to the reign of Sayyid Muhammad Khudoyorkhan, he selected information from books and manuscripts written by knowledgeable and wise contemporaries who had personally witnessed various rebellions, uprisings, intrigues, and political events of the period. He states that he critically examined and verified these materials in order to present an accurate account of the Kokand khans. This statement demonstrates Fozilbek Otabek oğlu’s intention to approach historical events objectively.

Literature review and methodology. The work encompasses a broad historical period. Sh. Vohidov classified its structure as follows:

1. the beginning of the reign of Shohruhkhhan (pp. 10–19);
2. scholars, sheikhs, and saints during the era of Shohruhkhhan (pp. 19–20);
3. the account of Abdurahimkhhan ibn Shohruhkhhan (pp. 21–26);
4. the reign of Abdulkarimkhhan (pp. 27–30);
5. the period of Erdonakhon (pp. 30–31);
6. the reign of Norbo‘taxon (pp. 32–37);
7. the khanate of Olimkhhan (pp. 37–75);
8. the period of Amir Umarxon (p. 75) and his distinguished contemporaries;
9. the reign of Muhammadalikhan (p. 94);
10. the rule of Sheralikhhan (p. 112);
11. the era of Shohmurodkhan (p. 132); and
12. the reign of Khudoyorkhan (p. 133).

The present study employs historical-comparative, source-critical, philological, and textual methodologies in examining the contents of Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana. Particular attention is given to the manuscript tradition, the author’s narrative techniques, the linguistic features of the text, and its relationship with earlier historiographical sources such as Tarixi Shohruhiya. The analysis also relies on comparative evaluation of oral traditions, archival materials, and modern scholarly publications prepared in Türkiye.

Results and discussion. Fozilbek Otabek oğlu notes that during the reign of Shohruhkhhan, Kokand existed “in a ruined condition,” whereas under Norbo‘taxon it became prosperous and was established as the capital. He further explains that Norbo‘taxon gathered scholars and intellectuals, expressing his desire to organize a great city and requesting them to propose a suitable name. Among the proposed names, “Mazharobod,” meaning “beautiful, prosperous, flourishing place,” appealed most to Norbo‘taxon.

In tazkiras and other historiographical works, it was customary to connect the genealogy of the Kokand khans to Zahiriddin Muhammad Bobur. To substantiate their descent from Amir Temur, chroniclers frequently referred to the legend of the “Golden Cradle” (Oltin Beshik). In this work as well, the story is artistically narrated in the form of a legend and presented in an engaging style. The genealogical chain is given as follows: Oltin Beshik – Sultan Elik – Sultan Khudoyor – Muhammad Aminkhan – Shah Abulqosim – Aslzodakhon – Siyamastbiy – Shohruhxonbiy – Rustambek – Hojibiy – Ashurbiy – Shohruhbiy. According to the work, 165 years elapsed between Oltin Beshik and Shohruhbiy.

An important feature of Fozilbek Otabek oğlu’s work is his careful citation of historical dates and references to sources, as well as his explanations regarding the basis of his narratives. For example, he describes the accession of Shohruhkhhan by citing Ravzat us-Safo, according to which a ruler, while hunting, encountered Shohruhkhhan after witnessing him kill a tiger with a spear. Impressed by the signs of bravery and royal dignity upon him, the ruler appointed Shohruhkhhan governor of the region and entrusted him with authority over the area. Shohruhkhhan subsequently founded the city plan of Kokand. Thus, Shohruhkhhan is portrayed as the founder of Kokand’s urban structure.

The author further relates that Shohruhkhhan deceitfully executed the Chodak khojas and brought their territories under his control. He also acknowledges the destruction suffered by

towns and provinces during such conquests, noting that Chust and Namangan, which had previously prospered, were plundered and subordinated to the khan's authority.

One of the valuable historical details preserved in the work is the chronogram concerning Shohruhkhān's accession to the throne. The chronogram corresponds to the Hijri year 1121 (1710 CE). Shohruhkhān is said to have had three sons: Abdulrahim, Abdulkarim, and Shodibek. Regarding Abdulrahim, scholars reportedly gave him the epithet "Qiron." The work recounts his military campaigns, his marriage to the daughter of Olimbek, governor of Shahrīsabz, and his conquest of Samarqand. The author characterizes Abdulrahim as "a ruler of foresight and wise counsel."

The capture of Samarqand is narrated in detail. Abdulrahimkhan besieged the city until its exhausted inhabitants requested peace. After accepting their appeal, he entered the city accompanied by his officials and military elite. He later summoned Rasul domod, envoy To'ra, and Olimbek, requesting the latter's daughter in marriage. Olimbek consented and presented his daughter with great ceremony. Following several days of festivities, Abdulrahimkhan returned to Kokand. Subsequently, the Emir of Bukhara seized Samarqand, set fire to parts of the city, and appointed a new governor. Abdulrahimkhan, fearing further advance toward Kokand, stationed troops in Khujand but later fell ill and died there. His death is commemorated with the chronogram "Dili jonash qarin mazhar shud," corresponding to the Hijri year 1146 (1734 CE).

After Abdulrahimkhan's death, his brother Abdulkarimkhan assumed power. The author notes that comparatively fewer wars occurred during his reign. He also records the construction of the "Madrasai Oliya" and the establishment of Kokand's city gates: Isfara, Qatag'on, Marg'inon, and Toshkand (or Haydarbek) gates.

Positive assessments are likewise offered regarding Erdonakhon, during whose reign Kokand became "more prosperous and flourishing." He is portrayed as a benevolent and compassionate ruler. Upon his death, the population, nobles, and religious figures reportedly mourned deeply.

Norbo'taxon ibn Abdulrahmonxon ibn Abdulkarimxon ibn Shohruhxon is described with particular admiration. According to the work, he ruled for thirty-six years, during which the khanate experienced prosperity, abundance, and stability free from warfare and unrest. The author emphasizes Norbo'taxon's merciful nature, especially in relation to his brother Hojibek, refusing to succumb to attempts to create discord between them.

The work vividly describes the succession struggle following Norbo'taxon's death. Potential claimants included Hojibek and Norbo'taxon's sons Olimkhan, Umarxon, and Rustambek. Ultimately, Olimkhan emerged victorious and ascended the throne of Kokand. He immediately eliminated opposition forces, executing several prominent figures and rivals in a single night. Following these actions, the populace reportedly began referring to him as "zolim" ("tyrant").

The author devotes extensive attention to Olimkhan's military campaigns and military organization. He recruited strong young men, rewarded them generously, and organized them under the title "Gala Bahodir." His army was divided into Uzbek and Tajik units, and he placed exceptional trust in highland Tajik groups, including Badakhshanis and Kohistanis. The text highlights their bravery in battle and notes that their valor inspired Uzbek soldiers to fight with equal courage.

The siege of Ura-Tepa is narrated in considerable detail. Olimkhan disguised himself in Tajik clothing among his troops to encourage morale. The Tajik forces launched fierce assaults, eventually breaching the fortress gates. Despite the eventual capture of the city, the text describes extensive looting carried out by the mountain troops. Olimkhan rewarded wounded soldiers lavishly, and the work records casualties among both Uzbek and Tajik troops.

Similarly detailed accounts are provided regarding campaigns against Jizzakh and Tashkent. The description of the siege of Tashkent is especially striking for its portrayal of famine and suffering among the population. The author recounts how shortages became so severe that

people struggled over animal blood and consumed leaves and roots. Such depictions reinforce the image of Olimkhan as both a powerful and ruthless ruler.

Nevertheless, the work does not present the khans in exclusively positive or negative terms. While Olimkhan is initially described as a courageous and heroic sovereign, the author openly acknowledges that the people referred to him as a tyrant. This balanced portrayal constitutes one of the distinctive features of the work.

In contrast, Umarxon is depicted positively and referred to as “jannatmakon” (“dweller of paradise”). He is described as refined, intelligent, scholarly, and supportive of intellectuals. The work explains that Umarxon restored confiscated territories, invited exiled nobles back to Kokand, and reinstated former officials. At the same time, it also records his execution of political opponents and supporters of Olimkhan.

The text additionally contains valuable information concerning the cultural and intellectual life of Kokand during Umarxon’s reign. Scholars, poets, and intellectuals from various regions reportedly gathered in Kokand, transforming the city into a flourishing cultural center. Numerous religious scholars and prominent figures associated with Umarxon’s court are listed by name.

Another noteworthy section of the work, entitled “Ajoyib Oriyat,” recounts the story of Mullo Karimquli dasturxonchi from the Ming tribe. The narrative illustrates a customary wedding tradition in which food, clothing, and gifts were distributed not only to attendees but also to absent relatives, including infants. When supplies proved insufficient, guests often confiscated household belongings. In the case described, Mullo Karimquli prepared an extravagant wedding feast but exhausted all resources before even one-third of the invited population had arrived. Ashamed, he fled to Tashkent at midnight, after which the crowd plundered his household possessions completely. The author emphasizes that this account was historically authentic.

Compared with the extensive narratives devoted to Olimkhan and Umarxon, the treatment of later rulers such as Muhammadalikhan, Sheralikhan, and Khudoyorkhan is comparatively brief. According to Sh. Vohidov, these sections were largely influenced by Tarixi Shohruhiya.

The work also contains important information regarding the charitable and architectural activities of Mohlaroyim. It records that she constructed the “Cholpoya” structure near the main cemetery and founded the “Mohlaroyim” madrasa in the blacksmiths’ quarter. She also established social institutions such as orphanages and guesthouses. The madrasa reportedly provided free education, clothing for students, and collections of books and manuscripts, reflecting Mohlaroyim’s commitment to educational and social reform.

The work *Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana* entered modern academic circulation through a scholarly edition prepared in Türkiye by the Turkish researcher Abdullah Yakşı and published in 2021 by Çizgi Kitabevi. This publication constitutes not merely a translation but a critical edition enriched with transcription and scholarly commentary. The edition was based on manuscript no. 5971 preserved at the Abu Rayhon Beruniy Institute of Oriental Studies in Tashkent, copied in 1941 by Muhabbet Gurayeva.

Later in 2021, Dilara Azman and Zühal Ölmez published an article devoted to the work in a scholarly collection issued by Kesit Publishing House in Istanbul. Their study analyzed *Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana* from source-critical and philological perspectives, emphasizing its value as both a historical and linguistic monument. The authors demonstrated that the text reflects the transitional stage between late Chagatai and emerging Uzbek literary language, revealing a mixture of linguistic layers characteristic of the period.

From a historiographical perspective, *Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana* constitutes a highly significant written source for the study of Central Asian history, particularly the history of the Fergana Valley and the Kokand Khanate. The work covers approximately three centuries, from 1560 to 1860, thereby documenting the formation, development, and internal political dynamics of the Kokand Khanate. It preserves valuable data concerning rulers’ genealogies, military campaigns, political transformations, and social conflicts.

The work also provides important insights into social and cultural life. Information concerning rebellions, conspiracies, and internal disputes contributes to the study of social relations and political tensions within the khanate. Furthermore, descriptions of scholars, saints, and Sufi traditions offer valuable material for the study of religious and intellectual history.

Another notable feature is the narrative style employed by the author. Historical events are presented in a vivid storytelling manner that enhances readability while simultaneously revealing causal relationships between events. Consequently, the text provides not only factual information but also insight into the internal dynamics of historical processes.

The manuscript itself possesses considerable source-critical importance. The surviving copy, preserved under inventory number 5971 at the Abu Rayhon Beruniy Institute of Oriental Studies, represents a secondary copy transcribed from the original manuscript in 1941. Nevertheless, the careful preservation of the text, inclusion of corrections, and editorial annotations enhance its scholarly value. The coexistence of Arabic script and occasional Cyrillic annotations further demonstrates that the manuscript underwent multiple stages of copying and editorial intervention.

The conditions under which the work was created also merit attention. The text was reportedly written at the request of General Aleksandr Ivanovich Gippius, a representative of the Russian imperial administration in Turkestan. This circumstance suggests that official political interests may have influenced the selection and interpretation of historical events. Therefore, the work must be analyzed critically and comparatively alongside independent historical sources.

The author also relied extensively on earlier historiographical traditions, especially works such as Tarixi Shohruhiya. Thus, Mükemmel Tarih-i Fergana represents both an original historical narrative and a continuation of earlier Eastern historiographical practices. The work combines written sources, oral traditions, legends, eyewitness observations, and personal commentary, thereby creating a multilayered historical text.

Linguistically, the work occupies a significant position in the transition from Chagatai to modern Uzbek literary language. Alongside traditional Chagatai forms, the text contains emerging Uzbek linguistic features as well as Oghuz and Kipchak lexical and phonetic elements. Such features make the work an important source for historical linguistics and philology.

Conclusion. Fozilbek Otabek oglu's "Complete (Mufassal) History of Fergana" is recognized as an important historical source with a complex and multi-layered structure from the point of view of source studies. This work is distinguished, first of all, by the fact that it has manuscript and excerpt copies, and its text was copied and reworked at different stages. This requires a separate textual study of the work, identifying differences between different copies and restoring a version close to the original text.

Also, the fact that the work was created on an official order had a certain impact on its content and style of presentation, and it is possible that it reflected the political and administrative views of the era. At the same time, since the work was created based on previous written historical sources, it continued the traditions of previous historiography, and the author processed and systematized existing historical knowledge. In addition, the fact that oral traditions, folk memory, and the author's personal observations are combined in the work further enriches its historical information base. This makes the work not only a source reflecting historical events, but also an important source for studying the socio-cultural environment, folk imagination, and ethnographic processes. The linguistic features of the work are also one of the important factors increasing its source-study value, as it embodies the characteristics of the last stage of the Chigatai language and the process of transition to the Uzbek literary language. The harmony of different language layers - Chigatai, Uzbek, Oghuz, and partly Kipchak elements - makes the text a valuable source from a linguistic point of view. Therefore, a comprehensive approach is necessary in the scientific study of this work, which requires the extensive use of critical analysis, comparative historical methods, and textual studies. Only then will it be possible to correctly understand the true content of the work, determine the level of reliability of the historical information contained in it, and make effective scientific use of it.

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