



RELATIONS BETWEEN THE BUKHARA EMIRATE AND THE KOKAND KHANATE IN MUHAMMAD HAKIMKHAN TURA'S MUNTAKHAB AL-TAWARIKH

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Abstract

This article discusses the significance of Muhammad Hakimkhan Tura's Muntakhab al-Tawarikh in illuminating the history of the Central Asian khanates up to the second half of the nineteenth century, highlighting the valuable information contained in the work. The purpose of this article is to analyze the main stages of Bukhara–Kokand relations based on the evidence presented in the work and to reveal their socio-political consequences.

Keywords: Geo-economics; trade routes; fortress; northeast; beks; sultans; peace treaty; tribute, Kokand Khanate, Bukhara Emirate, geopolitical objectives, trade relations, Muhammad Ali Khan, Nasrulloh Khan.

Introduction

In the nineteenth century, the Emirate of Bukhara, the Khanate of Kokand, and the Khanate of Khiva emerged as the three major political centers of Central Asia, engaged in rivalry as well as occasional cooperation. The geopolitical situation of the region was largely defined by the struggle for control over strategic territories such as the Ferghana Valley, the Zarafshan basin, and the Syr Darya corridor. Among these dynamics, relations between Bukhara and Kokand were particularly significant, shaped by political competition, military campaigns, and diplomatic negotiations, leaving a profound mark on the region's history.



A key source for studying these processes is *Muntahab at-tavorix*, authored by Hakimkhan Tura, a Kokand historian and contemporary of the events. The chronicle provides detailed accounts of Amir Nasrulloh's campaigns, the struggles over Khujand, Mahram, Jizzakh, and Uratepe, as well as diplomatic practices such as embassies, peace treaties, and marriage alliances. [8:171]

The relevance of this study lies in the fact that *Muntahab at-tavorix* not only records events in chronological sequence but also sheds light on the political, social, and economic aspects of Bukhara–Kokand relations in the nineteenth century. Accordingly, this article analyzes the main stages, historical significance, and consequences of these relations based on the information contained in the chronicle.

Results

The work *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* (“The Book of Selected Histories”), authored by Muhammad Hakimkhan ibn Ma’sumkhan Tura, is recognized as one of the prominent examples of the Kokand historiographical school. Although information about the author’s life and activity is found mainly within the text itself, various scholars have provided valuable insights into both the chronicle and its compiler. In particular, Abdulla Qodiriy, A. A. Semyonov, Aziz Qayumov, Aqror Mukhtorov, Buriboy Akhmedov, Enver Khurshut, and Shodmon Vohidov have examined its content and historical significance from different perspectives. [9:3]

Academician Aziz Qayumov assessed certain features of *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* in comparison with Babur’s renowned memoir *Baburnama*. According to his view, the similarities in content and style enrich Muhammad Hakimkhan’s contribution to historical-memoir writing. It should be emphasized that the Uzbek translation of the work was also undertaken under Qayumov’s advice and direct support. The source has also been the subject of detailed investigation by the source scholar Enver Khurshut, who analyzed its manuscript copies, sources, historical and literary value, and its uniqueness as a work of the memoir genre.[9:8]

Muhammad Hakimkhan completed *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* in Persian-Tajik in the cities of Kitab and Shahrisabz in the summer of 1259/1843. This work belongs



to the category of unofficial historical writings of the Kokand historiographical tradition. Its supplementary section was likely written at the end of 1844 or in 1845. It is also known that in 1843, ten copies were transcribed from the author's version. Hakimkhan himself actively supported the reproduction of his work in order to ensure its circulation throughout the khanate.[5:13]

The inclusion of documents that served as sources for the author—such as Dost Muhammad Khan's letter to Lott, the secretary of the Governor-General of India, W. Macnaghten; Sultan Mahmud Khan's letter to Amir Nasrulloh; and Amir Nasrulloh's letter to Kokand Khan Muhammad Ali Khan—further enhanced the historical value of the text, serving as a documentary introduction. These materials can also supplement the information provided by Afghan and Indian historians. [7:11]

Muntakhab al-Tawarikh is also considered a unique specimen of Bukhara Emirate court historiography, as Amir Nasrulloh and his military campaigns form its central theme. The chronicle presents events in a year-by-year order and reflects the political interests of Bukhara. Stylistically, the text differs from other memoirs of the time. It frequently employs terms such as “demand for revenge,” “military march,” and “fortress siege,” which makes it a valuable source not only for political but also for military history. However, researchers must always remain mindful of the author's partiality and his narrative rooted in the central perspective of Bukhara. [7:12]

In scholarly literature, Bukhara–Kokand relations are explained by three main factors:

1. Geo-economic reasons. The fertility of the Fergana Valley, its proximity to trade routes, and control over fortresses along the rivers were decisive.

2. Political legitimization. To strengthen the stability of rule, external campaigns were justified by the ideas of “restoring justice” and “suppressing sedition.”

3. Military-geographical conditions. Fortresses such as Khujand, Mahram, Jizzakh, and Uratepe served as “key points” in regional politics. Although *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* does not provide a theoretical explanation of these factors, they can be understood through its narrative.

When Amir Nasrulloh mobilized his forces, the first target was Khujand, considered the gateway to the Fergana Valley and a strategic stronghold on the



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Syr Darya. Its capture or defense determined the outcome of subsequent campaigns. After securing Khujand, the army moved to seize Mahram fortress, which reinforced the natural frontier between Bukhara and Kokand. Thus, its conquest was interpreted in *Muntakhab al-Tawarikh* as an “act of justice restored.”[7:14]

Jizzakh, located at the crossroads of caravan routes, was of great economic importance. By capturing Jizzakh, Amir Nasrulloh gained control over trade routes extending from the Zarafshan Valley.[7:90]

Uratepe, as a strategic center in the northeastern territories, was repeatedly the scene of clashes. The chronicle provides detailed accounts of its capture, emphasizing the military superiority of Bukhara’s army. [8:12]

The city of Kokand, lacking defensive walls, faced persistent difficulties in organizing its defense. The chronicle records the population’s urgent preparations—digging trenches, building wooden barricades—as well as the active involvement of local beks and sultans in mobilizing the populace. This indicates both the relative weakness of Kokand’s central authority and its reliance on local elites for defense. After battles, peace treaties were often concluded, which included sending envoys, exchanging gifts and correspondence, as well as provisions for tribute payment, fortress surrender, appointment of governors, and ensuring the security of trade routes. At times, political marriages were arranged to secure temporary peace. However, these agreements were often short-lived, with conflicts resuming in later years. [1:20]

The wars inflicted severe damage on economic life: the security of trade caravans was disrupted, and markets declined. Therefore, clauses guaranteeing the safety of trade routes were often emphasized in peace agreements. During Bukhara’s campaigns, taxes were increased and new obligations imposed, which provoked discontent among the population, though the author portrayed these measures as “restoring order and justice.” The campaigns also had profound effects on society. Many peasants and craftsmen were forced into trench digging and fortress construction, while some communities were compelled to relocate for security reasons. The author, narrating events from the Bukhara court perspective, consistently described each campaign as the “suppression of sedition” and the “restoration of justice.” Thus, factual accounts are interwoven with ideological



interpretation, making it crucial for researchers to distinguish between the two. [8:19]

The analysis of *Muntahab at-tavorix* provides the following main results:

- 1. Historical Reconstruction:** The chronicle enables a step-by-step reconstruction of Bukhara–Kokand relations in the first half of the 19th century, especially the struggles for Khujand, Mahram, Jizzakh, and Uratepe.
- 2. Political Perspective:** The author consistently narrates events from the Bukhara court’s standpoint, framing campaigns as “justice restoration” or “punishment of rebellion.” This reveals both factual information and ideological interpretation.
- 3. Diplomatic Practices:** The text documents frequent exchanges of embassies, peace treaties, and marriage alliances, showing that diplomacy accompanied military conflicts.
- 4. Economic and Social Impact:** Wars disrupted trade routes and markets, imposed heavy taxation, and caused population displacements. These aspects highlight the socio-economic costs of conflict.
- 5. Historiographical Value:** *Muntahab at-tavorix* serves as a unique source for studying the geopolitical balance in Central Asia and demonstrates the narrative techniques of Kokand historiography.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that *Muntahab at-tavorix* presents Bukhara–Kokand relations from a one-sided perspective, aligned with the political interests of the Bukhara court. Amir Nasrulloh’s campaigns are portrayed as acts of “justice restoration” or “punishment of rebellion,” indicating both factual events and ideological framing.

When compared with other sources — such as Russian military-topographic reports or Kokand historiography — significant differences emerge. While *Muntahab at-tavorix* frames Bukhara’s campaigns as restoring order, other accounts highlight economic motives and territorial control. This underscores the need for critical, comparative analysis.

Diplomatic aspects (embassies, treaties, marriage policies) reveal the political culture of the 19th century. However, these measures brought only temporary



stability and failed to resolve underlying structural tensions. Consequently, Bukhara–Kokand relations remained locked in cycles of conflict.

Economic and social consequences, though less emphasized in *Muntahab at-tavorix*, become evident through broader comparison: wars disrupted markets, burdened taxation, and imposed hardships on the population. Overall, the chronicle is valuable not only as a factual source but also as a reflection of political ideology, offering insight into both the events themselves and the intellectual discourse of the Bukhara elite. [7:31]

Conclusion

The analysis demonstrates that *Muntahab at-tavorix* holds particular significance for the study of Bukhara–Kokand relations in the 19th century. The author, Hakimkhan Tura — a historian from Kokand and an eyewitness to certain events — recorded them in chronological order. His account therefore provides not only historical facts but also valuable insights into the political environment of his time.

The chronicle offers detailed descriptions of struggles over strategic centers such as Khujand, Mahram, Jizzakh, and Uratepe, highlighting Bukhara’s military campaigns and Kokand’s defensive measures. Furthermore, the documentation of diplomatic practices — including embassies, peace treaties, and marriage alliances — shows that relations between the two states were not limited to warfare but also encompassed a complex set of political and diplomatic interactions.

References to economic and social consequences in the text are equally noteworthy. Wars disrupted the security of trade routes, affected the taxation system, and shaped the living conditions of urban and rural populations. When studied comparatively with other contemporary sources, these aspects reveal the broader socio-political and economic foundations of Bukhara–Kokand relations. Thus, *Muntahab at-tavorix* should be regarded not merely as a record of specific events but as a key source for examining the geopolitical balance, interstate relations, and political-diplomatic traditions of 19th-century Central Asia.



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