

ANALYSIS OF LOCAL WRITTEN SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF THE BUKHARA EMIRATE IN THE MID-18TH - EARLY 20TH CENTURIES

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Kamronbek Abdulazimov

researcher

Abstract

This article analyzes, on the basis of source studies, how the political, cultural, and diplomatic processes that developed in the Bukhara Emirate during the Manghit dynasty (1756–1920) are reflected in written historical sources. It presents information on the works of prominent historians and scholars active in Bukhara during the 18th–19th centuries, including Muhammad Vafo Karmiy, Mirzo Badiy Devon, Mirzo Sodiq Munshiy, Muhammad Sharif ibn Muhammad Naqi, Mulla Ibadulloh, and Muhammad Husayn Miriy. The study concludes that during this period, the historiography of the Bukhara Emirate evolved into an independent scholarly tradition, demonstrating the formation of Islamic diplomacy and political thought in Central Asia.

Keywords

Bukhara Emirate, Manghit dynasty, written sources, diplomacy, legitimization, Islamic politics, historiography.

In recent years, research dedicated to the study of the political, cultural, and diplomatic processes of the Emirate of Bukhara, particularly during the Manghit dynasty, has increased significantly. Analysis of scholarly sources related to this topic shows that the views of Russian, European, English, and local authors form a complementary body of materials on the history of the emirate. For example, local sources and the works of Uzbek scholars describe these processes from an internal perspective.

An in-depth examination of the intellectual environment that developed in Bukhara during the 18th–19th centuries, as well as the religious-ethical worldview and the culture of diplomatic correspondence, allows us to evaluate them as an integrated form of scholarly and political activity¹¹. The works of scholars such as Mirza Abdul-Karim Bukhari (1765–1830), Mirza Sodiq Munshi (1758–1820), Muhammad Husayn Miriy (1830–1899), and Khoja Samandar Termizi (1638–1740)

¹¹ **D.Kh. Juraabayev.** *Nauchne trudy svetskikh i religioznykh deiatel'eyi Bukharskogo Emirata*. Chelyabinsk: DU "Vestnik", 2013, No. 36(327), pp. 96–102.

demonstrate that alongside state diplomacy, spiritual and ethical ideals also held a central place. From a source studies perspective, systematizing the Persian, Turkic, and Arabic manuscripts related to this period allows us to emphasize the high scholarly value of works such as *Tuhfat al-Khani*, *Silsilat al-Salatin-i Mangitiya*, and *Tarikh-i Nafi'*.¹²

Russian and European researchers such as V. V. Barthold (1869–1930), L. Demaison (1852–1937), V. Grigoryev (1816–1881), G. Lansdell (1841–1919), A. Vambery (1832–1913), and E. Ross (1871–1940) interpreted the Emirate of Bukhara primarily as a “traditional model of Eastern diplomacy.” Although their works at times display certain orientalist stereotypes, they nonetheless recorded important evidence regarding the political structure of Bukhara and its international relations¹³. At the same time, research published in English – particularly the works of political figures such as J. Curzon (1899–1906) and F. Skrine (1847–1933) – demonstrates how perceptions of the Emirate of Bukhara were shaped within Western historiography through their approaches to studying its history¹⁴. These studies collectively represent a new stage in the history of the Emirate of Bukhara – a phase characterized by the synthesis of local and Western historiography. The perspectives put forward in these works serve as an important methodological source for understanding the diplomatic culture of the Emirate of Bukhara and its Islamic foundations¹⁵.

During the second half of the 18th century to the first half of the 20th century, when the Manghit dynasty held power in the Emirate of Bukhara, numerous Persian–Turkic written monuments created by Central Asian authors were produced. These manuscripts have been preserved and can be found today in manuscript collections located in Tashkent, Dushanbe, St. Petersburg, and Kazan¹⁶.

From a historical and chronological perspective, in studying the period of Muhammad Rahim Khan’s rule (1747–1758) within the history of the Manghit dynasty, particular importance is attached to the work “*Khon Tuhfasi*” (Tarixi Rahimxoniy) authored by Muhammad Vafo Karmanagi (1685–1769).¹⁷ The work holds particular scholarly significance.

¹² D.Kh. Djurabayev. *Sredneaziatskiye pismennyye istochniki po istorii Buxarskogo emirata*. *Tafakkur Scientific Journal*, 2020, p. 28.

¹³ O. M. Masaliyeva, *The History of Bukhara, Khiva, and Kokand Khanates in 20th-Century Anglo-American Historiography*, Dissertation for the degree of Candidate of Historical Sciences, Tashkent, 1999, - p. 44.

¹⁴ V. Y. Kholov, *The Significance of the Rare Publications Collection of the National Library of Uzbekistan in the Study of the History of Our Country*, *Kutubxona.uz Scientific and Methodological Journal*, No. 1 (45), 2020, - p. 48.

¹⁵ M. Mubinov. *The History of Bukhara Emirate in the researches of english-speaking authors*. *JLHSS*, Vol. 2, No. 3, March 2025 - pp 239-245.

¹⁶ Dj.Djurabayev. *Sredneaziatskiye pismennyye istochniki po istorii Buxarskogo Emirata vtoroy poloviny XVIII - pervoy poloviny XIX vv.* “*Vestnik*”, 2013, № 36(327), -s. 96–102.

¹⁷ **Tuhfat al-Khani** (تحفة الخاني). Muhammad Vafoyi Karmanagiy. Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan, Manuscript No. 12966, pp. 239 a-b.

Tuhfa-i Khani consists of two parts and serves as a primary source for the early political history of the Manghit dynasty. In the first section, the author provides a detailed account of the life, political activities, and administrative role of Muhammad Rahim Khan and his father Muhammad Hakimbiy Otaliq. Through this narrative, he reveals the process by which the Manghit dynasty consolidated its position in the political life of Bukhara, as well as the principles of legitimacy embraced by the new ruling lineage.

The text contains valuable information regarding the hierarchy of offices and administrative positions within the Bukhara state governance system, outlining their respective functions and their roles within the bureaucratic apparatus. These details make the work an important source for studying the institutional history of the Emirate.

The author consistently describes political events beginning from the final period of the Ashtarkhanid dynasty up to the early phase of Manghit rule. He depicts the socio-political dynamics unfolding in major urban centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, Nasaf, Shahrisabz, and Jizzakh based on his own observations¹⁸.

In *Tuhfat ul-Khani*, the author does not restrict himself solely to recounting the history of rulers, but presents a comprehensive depiction of the socio-political structure of the Bukhara state. The work provides detailed information on the role of Uzbek tribal groups within society, their participation in political processes, and their position in state administration. Moreover, it contains valuable data regarding the military organization, governmental apparatus, and economic relations of the Bukhara Khanate (later the Emirate) during the Ashtarkhanid and Manghit periods, including descriptions of measurement systems and the monetary economy.

The author also sheds light on the intellectual and literary environment of the time, the functioning of madrasas, and the scholarly activities of religious scholars ('ulama). In addition, the work offers extensive analysis of the political and diplomatic relations maintained by the Bukhara Khanate between 1722 and 1782 with Iran, Afghanistan, the Kazakh steppe, Kokand, and Kashgar.

These features allow the text to be regarded as an encyclopedic historical source that reflects the social, economic, cultural, and diplomatic life of its era in a holistic manner¹⁹.

To date, *Tuhfat ul-Khani* has not been sufficiently studied by the scholarly community. Only a few researchers have partially referred to this source. Notably,

¹⁸ B.A. Ahmedov. *Historical and Geographical Literature of Central Asia, 16th–18th Centuries*. Tashkent, 1985, p. 119.

¹⁹ B.A. Ahmedov. *Istoriko-geograficheskaya literatura Srednei Azii XVI–XVIII vv.* Tashkent, 1985, p. 115.

Anke von Kügelgen, in her fundamental study *“The Legitimation of the Manghit Dynasty in Central Asia in the Works of Its Own Historians (18th–19th Centuries)”*, draws on certain passages of *Tuhfat ul-Khani* to illuminate Muhammad Rahim Khan’s accession to power in Bukhara²⁰. Additionally, Bo’riboy Ahmedov also recognizes this source as a valuable historical reference in his work *“Historical and Geographical Literature of Central Asia in the 16th–18th Centuries”*²¹.

Mirzo Badiy Devon’s work *Majma al-Arkam* served to document the administrative and financial practices of the Bukhara Emirate’s diwan (government office) at the end of the 18th century and the beginning of the 19th century. Rules for compiling registers and official decrees (administrative documents), as well as the offices and their authorities, were recorded through the appendix *Taz’iyil dar Bayon-i Amolot va Dahladoron*. The work emphasizes the hierarchical structure of governance in the Bukhara Emirate and the meticulous formalization of all official documents²². In the concluding part of the work, detailed information is provided about the administrative system and offices of the Bukhara Emirate. Mirza Badiy Devon meticulously describes the hierarchy of state institutions from top to bottom. It includes important information on positions such as Shaykh al-Islam, qazis, muftis, muhtasibs, as well as officials of other departments and divisions, along with their respective duties²³. The author notes that the appointment criteria for various positions were determined based on scholarly competence, Sayyid lineage, ethnic affiliation, experience, and moral qualities. In particular, the title of “Otaliq” is specifically defined, with the holder of this office described as the “father of the people,” responsible for protection and care, as well as overseeing matters related to water distribution²⁴.

Another important source is Mirzo Sodiq Munshiy (1758–1820)’s work *Tarikh-i Manzum*, written in the masnavi (rhymed narrative) genre, which covers the political activities of Amir Shohmurod and Haydar at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. Its composition in the masnavi form allowed historical events to be conveyed in a literary format, making complex information more accessible to society. The work highlights the symbolic influence of regional politics and diplomatic relations through Amir Haydar’s campaigns to Merv. Alongside military campaigns, it demonstrates how the ruler strengthened his

²⁰ Anke von Kügelgen. *Legitimatziya Sredneaziatskoy dinastii Mangitov v proizvedeniyakh ikh istorikov (XVIII–XIX vv.)*. Almaty, 2004, p. 520.

²¹ B.A. Ahmedov. *Istoriko-geograficheskaya literatura Sredney Azii XVI–XVIII vv.* Tashkent, 1985, pp. 114–120.

²² Mirza Badi Devon. *Majma al-Arkam*. Facsimile manuscript, introduction, translation, notes, and appendices by A. B. Vildanova. – Moscow: Nauka, 1981. – p. 125.

²³ Kholov M. Sh., Gulmatov M. D. *Arithmetic of the Bukhara Emirate in the 18th–19th centuries in “Majma al-Arkam” by Mirza Badi-Devon*. “Vestnik Pedagogicheskogo Universiteta,” No. 4 (71), Dushanbe, 2017. – p. 18.

²⁴ Mirza Badi Devon. *Majma al-Arkam*. A. B. Vildanova. – Moscow: Nauka, 1981. – p. 93.

authority within his own territories and neighboring states, creating opportunities for negotiations and diplomatic engagement.

The text also addresses the issue of the ruler's legitimization—how a new generation of rulers consolidated their authority through lineage, ethics, and Islamic principles. This was particularly important in dealings with foreign states, in diplomatic correspondence, or within the environment of independent dynastic patronage. Additionally, the work provides valuable information on the internal state of the country, reflected in the construction of madrasas and mosques, the passing of scholars, and the condition of the intellectual and educational environment²⁵.

At the request of Amir Haydar, Muhammad Sharif ibn Muhammad Naqiy (19th century) in his work *Tajj at-Tavorix* attempts to trace the origins of the Mangit dynasty to both the Chinggisids and the lineage of the Prophet Muhammad, thereby providing a basis for legitimizing their rule. In this source, Amir Haydar's accession ceremony, the Friday sermon (khutbah), the distribution of official ranks, and the oath-taking of new officials are described in detail. The work represents one of the most important ideological sources of Bukhara amirate historiography of its time, illustrating the mechanism by which political authority was reinforced through religious principles. The author explains these ceremonies from the perspective of Islamic political ethics, aiming to demonstrate that the ruler's political authority was "legitimate based on Sharia and justice"²⁶.

In the work *Tarikh-i Amir Haydar* authored by Mulla Ibadulloh (19th century) and Mulla Muhammad Sharif (1837–1888), the period from Subhonqulixon's reign up to Amir Haydar's rule is extensively covered. Events such as the 1806 battle at Öratapa and the victory of the Bukhara army—supported by the sultans of Tashkent and Turkestan—over Kokand are described in detail²⁷.

Mahozin at-Taqqo (1830) by Muhammad Husayn Miriy (1778–1829) is an autobiographical work in which the author, a member of the Mang'it dynasty, recounts the influence of Naqshbandi sheikhs on society and the state apparatus. The work also contains materials related to socio-economic life and trade relations²⁸.

²⁵ Anke von Kügelgen. *Legitimization of the Manghit Dynasty in Central Asia in the Works of Their Historians (18th–19th Centuries)*. — Almaty: Daik Press, 2004. — p. 354.

²⁶ D. X. Juraev. *Nauchnye trudy svetskikh i religioznykh deiatelei Bukharskogo Emirata*. — Chelyabinsk DU "Vestnik", 2013, №36(327), pp. 98–100.

²⁷ D. Djurabayev. *Sredneaziatskiye pismennyye istochniki po istorii Bukharskogo Emirata vtoroy poloviny XVIII – pervoy poloviny XIX vv.* "Vestnik", 2013, №36(327), pp. 98–104.

²⁸ Anke von Kügelgen. *Legitimization of the Manghit Dynasty in Central Asia in the Works of Their Historians (18th–19th Centuries)*. Almaty: Daik Press, 2004. — p. 257.

The corpus of written sources analyzed above provides an in-depth account of the formation, development, and stabilization phases of the Bukhara Emirate during the Mang'it dynasty. Among these, *Tuhfat ul-Xoniy* holds particular significance as a primary source, reflecting the early years of Mang'it rule, the institutional system of state administration, economic relations, the social structure of society, and the Islamic-political foundations of external relations. The historiographical traditions initiated by this work were consistently continued in subsequent sources such as *Majma al-arkom*, *Tarikh-i Manzum*, *Tajj at-tavorix*, *Tarikh-i Amir Haydar*, and others. These works document the political system of the Bukhara Emirate, court-administrative practices, economic life, military organization, and the religious-intellectual environment from an internal, contemporary perspective.

Particularly noteworthy for the history of diplomacy is the detailed documentation of diplomatic activity, the ceremonial-Islamic basis of interactions with neighboring states, the ruler's bay'ah, diplomatic correspondence style, and the principles of political-cultural legitimation, which together illustrate a distinctive model of Bukhara's foreign policy. These sources not only record historical events but also interpret them through Islamic values, the ruler's ethics, and standards of political responsibility, thereby expressing the unique "Islamic diplomatic thought" of the Bukhara intellectual and cultural tradition. Collectively, these written sources form the methodological foundation for studying the history of the Bukhara Emirate and demonstrate the continuous development of political thought, historical memory, and diplomatic culture based on Islamic civilization in Central Asia.

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