BG Pulse Journal USA
ISSN:1947-2536 http://www.bgpulseusa.com/index.php/bg

CONQUEST CAMPAIGNS TO THE FERGHANA VALLEY AND POLITICAL PROCESSES IN THE INTERPRETATION OF KHALIFA IBN KHAYYAT'S "TARIKH"

Asqarali Uktamov Akhmadaliyevich
Teacher of History, Technical College No. 1,
Fergana District, FerganaRegion
Phone: +998 90 290 73 16
Email: asqaraliuktamov833@gmail.com

Abstract: This article analyzes the accounts of Arab military campaigns and political developments in the Fergana Valley as described in the work *Tārīkh* (Chronicle) by the 9th-century historian Xalifa ibn Xayyot. Particular attention is given to the Arab expeditions in the early 8th century against Transoxiana, especially the Fergana Valley, as well as to political relations with local rulers and territorial changes. The *Tārīkh* serves as a primary historical source, and its content is correlated with major historical events of the period.

Keywords: Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Tārīkh*, Fergana Valley, Arab conquests, political processes, 9th-century historian.

Introduction

In the early eighth century, the Arab-Muslim state carried out large-scale military expeditions and conquered several regions of Central Asia. The Fergana Valley was among these territories, and due to its strategic, economic, and political significance, it received attention in the work *Tārīkh* by the Arab historian Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ. *Tārīkh* is considered one of the earliest chronicles of Islamic history; it narrates events of the eighth and ninth centuries according to the Hijrī calendar and encompasses the foreign policy and conquests of the Arab Empire.

At the beginning of the eighth century, the Fergana Valley became a centre of confrontation between Muslim forces and local rulers. These events are recorded in written sources produced by Arab historians. According to general historical data, Muslim forces conducted extensive campaigns in this region; however, these events are presented differently across various historical sources.

Methodology

The following research methods were primarily employed in the preparation of this article:

- **Historical-traditional analysis:** The original content of *Tārīkh* was analysed, and the conquest of the Fergana Valley as well as related political processes were interpreted.
- **Comparative source analysis:** The work of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ was compared with other historical materials (including general historical data on Fergana).
- **Chronological analysis:** The stages of military campaigns against the Fergana Valley and their political impact were presented in a systematic chronological sequence.

Results

1. **Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ's *Tārīkh*:** This work covers events from 1–232 A.H. (622–847 CE) and provides important historical information concerning the early Islamic conquests. It broadly discusses the foreign policy of Muslim forces, including campaigns against various cities and territorial expansion.
2. **Campaigns against the Fergana Valley:** In the early eighth century, Arab armies advanced into Transoxiana, including the Fergana Valley. These campaigns unfolded within a complex political environment marked by confrontations with the Türgesh and the intervention of Tang China.

3. **Political outcomes:** Although the Arab armies achieved initial successes, battles with the Türgesh ruler temporarily hindered their ability to establish full control over Fergana.

Analysis and Discussion

The major military successes achieved by the Arabs in the Northern Hemisphere during the seventh and eighth centuries, particularly their conquests in Central Asia—namely Transoxiana—fundamentally transformed local political structures. In order to fully understand these political processes, it is necessary to analyse not only the source value of *Tārīkh*, but also the broader context of Transoxiana, including the Fergana Valley.

One of the most significant features of Khalīfa ibn Khayyāṭ's work is its annalistic structure, in which events are systematically recorded year by year. This structure allows scholars to examine political developments of the period through precise chronological foundations. The original version of *Tārīkh*, dating to the ninth century, covers events from 1–232 A.H. The work is organised as a chronicle combining biographical and political narratives, and it includes accounts of the external conquests of the Arab Empire.

The initial Arab incursions into Transoxiana may be traced to the eighth century. The region was known in Arabic as *mā warāʾ al-nahr* ("the land beyond the river"), referring to the territory beyond the Amu Darya. This area included strategically significant regions such as Sogdiana, Khwarazm, and Fergana. Early Arab expeditions were primarily conducted as raids; however, from the beginning of the eighth century, these operations became systematic and formed part of a coherent state policy.

Among the commanders who played a decisive role in the Arab advance into Transoxiana was Qutayba ibn Muslim. Serving as governor of Khurasan from 705 to 715 CE, he conducted extensive campaigns that facilitated the spread of Islam and Arab political authority across Central Asia. Qutayba initially captured Paykand, Bukhara, and Samarkand, and subsequently advanced toward the Jaxartes (Syr Darya) and the Fergana Valley.

From a geographical perspective, the Fergana Valley represented one of the central regions of Central Asia. Its importance stemmed from its favourable natural conditions, developed economic infrastructure, trade routes, and political significance. Arab sources may have considered this territory within the broader context of Transoxiana, possibly as an extension of Sogdiana's sphere of influence. Consequently, Qutayba's campaigns eventually reached Fergana; after securing control over the Jaxartes basin, his forces also conducted operations in the direction of Fergana.

For a more comprehensive understanding of these historical processes, it is essential to analyse the political strategies employed by both the Arabs and the local rulers. During their struggles in Transoxiana, including the Fergana Valley, the Arabs established complex diplomatic relations with independent city-states and regional rulers. They sought to consolidate territorial dominance partly through military force and partly through negotiated agreements. For example, through alliances with local elites and the establishment of supplementary political arrangements, the Arabs attempted to secure temporary stability within the region.

However, for the Arabs, achieving absolute political control over Transoxiana and the Fergana Valley proved difficult. The primary reason lay in the presence of local rulers and nomadic or semi-nomadic forces in the region. For instance, while some local Sogdian rulers agreed to form alliances with the Arabs, others maintained relations with the Turks and encouraged resistance against Arab expansion. These internal political divisions functioned as both an advantage and a complication for the Arabs: on the one hand, they facilitated certain strategic alliances; on the other hand, they created additional instability and resistance.

Within the context of the Fergana Valley, political processes became even more complex, as they were embedded in a broader framework of international geopolitics. During the same period, powerful states such as the Chinese Empire and the Turgesh Khaganate sought to intervene in Central Asian political affairs. Particularly in the 720s, when Arab authority weakened, Turgesh power increased, triggering anti-Arab uprisings throughout Transoxiana. This development led to the loss of the Fergana Valley by the Arabs in 724, as Arab forces were exhausted by continuous conflicts with the Turgesh and their local allies.

At the same time, the Arabs experimented with political integration strategies. A notable example is Nasr ibn Sayyar, who, beyond relying on military superiority, implemented policies aimed at cooperation with local elites. By attempting to reform the taxation system and establish strategic alliances with influential regional actors, he sought to consolidate stable Arab rule. This demonstrates the complexity of political governance during the period: military campaigns were accompanied by diplomatic alliances and policies of political integration.

From another analytical perspective, the Fergana Valley constituted a highly strategic point within the Arab conquest. Control over the valley was seen as essential for establishing connections with major Sogdian urban centers and expanding influence along important trade routes. However, this strategic objective was not always successfully realized. Between 724 and 728, under the growing influence of the Turgesh, anti-Arab uprisings intensified across Transoxiana, resulting in the temporary loss of several territories, including Fergana.

The analysis indicates that a comprehensive understanding of the outcomes of the Arab conquest in the Fergana Valley requires a thorough examination of the region's ethnic composition, the political strategies of local rulers, and the broader external geopolitical dynamics. Fergana was not merely a geographical objective of Arab expansion; rather, it functioned as a center of delicate political relations, local revolts, and international geopolitical interactions.

It is also necessary to provide additional commentary on the source characteristics of the *Tārīkh*. From the beginning of Arab rule, the work records events in a concise and chronologically structured manner, often with limited detail. While this brevity provides clarity in establishing a timeline, it also presents challenges for historians, as it offers only brief accounts of political events without in-depth descriptions of local conflicts, diplomatic negotiations, or bilateral relations. Therefore, a fuller understanding of the political processes in Transoxiana requires comparative analysis of the *Tārīkh* alongside other Arabic, Persian, Turkic, and Chinese historical sources.

Conclusion

This article has analyzed the Arab campaigns and political processes in the Fergana Valley as reflected in Khalifa ibn Khayyat's *Tārīkh*. The study demonstrates that in the early eighth century, Muslim armies encountered extensive political resistance throughout Transoxiana, including Fergana. The chronological approach employed in the *Tārīkh* provides a structured account of events, allowing for a deeper understanding of the political landscape of the period. The events in the Fergana Valley, recorded in several Arab historical sources, merit further historiographical reassessment in light of comparative source analysis.

References

1. Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Al-Tārīkh*, ed. Suhayl Zakkar, Dar al-Qalam, Beirut, 1968, pp. 1–168.
2. Khalifa ibn Khayyat, *Al-Tārīkh*, translated and annotated edition, Leiden: Brill, 2018, pp. 149, 247.
3. R. Mamajonov, "Analysis of Arabic Language Sources on the History …," *Eurasian Journal of History, Geography and Economics*, 2023, pp. 40–41.

4. Shouyi Bai et al., *A History of Chinese Muslim*, Vol. 2, Zhonghua Book Company, Beijing, 2003.
5. Z. Zhang, "Farghānah Between the Sixth and Ninth Centuries CE …," Oriental Press, 2025.
6. "Fergana Valley," Wikipedia, en.wikipedia.org, 2026.
7. Andrew Marsham & Tobias Andersson, *The First Islamic Chronicle: The Chronicle of Khalifa b. Khayyat*, Boydell & Brewer, 2020.
8. Claude Cahen, *Pre-Ottoman Turkey*, Routledge, 2001, pp. 50–70.
9. H. Kennedy, *The Great Arab Conquests*, Princeton University Press, 2007, pp. 101–130.
10. M. Morony, *Iraq After the Muslim Conquest*, Princeton, 1984, pp. 85–112.
11. C. Edmund Bosworth, *The Islamic Dynasties*, Routledge, 1996, pp. 45–67.
12. T. Barfield, *The Perilous Frontier: Nomadic Empires and China*, Wiley, 1989, pp. 123–145.