



THE REASONS FOR GENERAL JO‘RABEK’S TRANSITION TO THE SERVICE OF THE TURKESTAN GENERAL-GOVERNORATE: AN ANALYSIS OF HISTORICAL.

Parmonov Sharafiddin Shavkatovich

Chirchik State Pedagogical University

Faculty of Humanities

Lecturer, Department of History,

s.parmonov@cspu.uz

+998901743031

Annotation: This article examines the reasons behind the transition of Jurabek and Babobek—who were active in the Shahrisabz Bekdom during the 1860s–1870s—into the service of the Russian Empire. It explores their capture by the Kokand Khan Khudoyarkhan and their subsequent acceptance into the service of General von Kaufman, based on contemporary historical sources.

Keywords: Bukhara Emirate, Kokand Khanate, Russian Empire, Shahrisabz Bekdom, Kitab Bekdom, Jurabek, Babobek, von Kaufman, Abramov, Emir Muzaffar, Khudoyarkhan, Eugene Schuyler, Sven Hedin.

In 1870, after being defeated by Abramov, Jurabek and Babobek fled to Mag‘iyon with a small number of soldiers. Following orders from General Abramov, Colonel Mikhaylovskiy’s detachment pursued them. Jurabek and Babobek, with their small army, then retreated to the Farab fortress. Colonel Mikhaylovskiy’s detachment bombarded the fortress with cannons, destroying it. Jurabek and Babobek, with 300 soldiers, managed to outflank their enemies and moved towards Khujand. They hoped to cross through the Kokand Khanate to reach Kashgar and gather strength. However, the Kokand Khan Khudoyarkhan betrayed them and handed them over to Kaufman. Knowing the animosity between the Beks, Emir Muzaffar, and Khudoyarkhan, Kaufman took Jurabek and Babobek into his service, aiming to use their popularity among the people [1, 516-b]. Kaufman was also a master diplomat. Coming from a Russified German family, this shrewd, disgraced Tsarist official entered history as the person who conquered the Turkestan region for the Russian Empire’s interests, almost as a semi-king. Eugene Schuyler writes that at the age of twenty, Jurabek was elected as the Bek of one of the twin cities, Kitab. He expelled many of the Bukhara Emir’s officials and, in cooperation with Babobek, who had replaced his father, managed to preserve the independence of the small valley until August 1870. It lasted until Shahrisabz was captured by the Russians and handed over to the Emir’s control. He and Babobek fled towards Kokand but were betrayed by Khudoyarkhan. The reason for this betrayal was that, when Khudoyarkhan had once shared his worries about his exile with Emir Nasrullah, Jurabek had mocked him, calling him an "old fox," which caused lingering resentment between them. They were brought as prisoners to Tashkent and lived under supervision for a time.



Eventually, they were granted a pension of 2,000 rubles per year by the Bukhara government through a Russian agency, but the payments were irregular. Both of them had large families and lived in difficult conditions, which was not suitable for their status. Jurabek was convinced that the Russians' conquest of Central Asia had made them the true rulers, and he believed that he had the possibility to rise to power through them in the future.

Among the several local people I encountered, he was the only one I could trust in any matter. Jurabek was a tall, slender man with a dark beard, gray, charming eyes, and a serious, handsome appearance. He always dressed simply but with refined taste, and his face displayed an expression of sorrow, desire, and grace that attracted people without fail. He was truly a noble person. He was a true Muslim, but now, with his excessive connections to the Russians, he had lost some of his dedication and unquestioningly followed their customs. He had established close relations with the Russians: he would dine with them, even drink wine, and, with a sense of satisfaction, engaged in hypocrisy that others did not, aligning himself with both the Russians and his fellow countrymen. In addition, Jurabek, with his good manners and the distinctive politeness of Central Asia, was an honest and righteous man, although his actions were often without clear purpose. If treated well, it was only natural for him to serve Russia.

When the Emir of Bukhara or the Khan of Kokand was to be overthrown and a vassal appointed, Jurabek was the kind of person who suited both the local population's and the Russians' interests equally. Moreover, being from the Kenagas tribe, one of the four tribes that had the right to ascend to the Emir's throne, his legitimacy would have been unquestionable among the people, ensuring no resistance to his rise to power.

Babobek, like his companion in exile, was described as a helpless, 36-year-old man, although he appeared to be twenty years older. His troubles were evident on his face, and compared to his companion, he seemed more capable and fearless, living a peaceful life, and was known for his politeness. Since his overthrow, no one had been able to help him out of pity, but he was not the type of person who thought about returning to the field of battle [2, 60 b].

In his work *Heart of Asia*, Sven Hedin, based on what he heard directly from Jurabek, writes: "Together with his friend Babobek, Jurabek wandered for a long time in the mountains without shelter. Eventually, Jurabek, seeking generosity and assistance from Khudoyarkhan, arrives in Kokand. However, the Khan betrays Jurabek, arrests him, shackles his hands and feet, and sends him to the enemy of the Beks, von Kaufman. Von Kaufman greets Jurabek with an open face but keeps him imprisoned. After Jurabek and Babobek are kept under house arrest for quite some time, they are forced to accept Russian citizenship and join the Russian army." [3, 31 b].

Eugene Schuyler and Sven Hedin, who met Jurabek and were guests in his home, provided more reliable information than other sources. This is because both authors were considered independent writers, unlike Russian authors or historians of the Emirate or Khanate who wrote about Jurabek.

Avaz Muhammad Attor provides a different account. He writes: "The Shahrissabz governor Bobobek, along with his brothers and his deputy Jurabek, along with other officials, wandered for a while and entered the Fergana region, informing Khudoyar Khan of their arrival. Mr. Khudoyar Khan consulted with the emirs about the matter. The Khan's brother, Sultanmurodbek, along with many of the emirs and ministers, collectively advised that if we accept the Shahrissabz governor at the Fergana palace, the Emir of Bukhara will certainly raise objections against us and Russia will demand Shahrissabz. If we send him into Russian hands,



we will be dishonored. If we refuse Russia's request, they will find a pretext to violate the agreement. So, it would be better to assist the Shahrīsabz governor with his travel needs and provide him with hospitality for a few days, then send him toward Kashgar." [4, 409 b]

Once this prudent advice was accepted, one of the trusted people in the palace was sent with the necessary items for travel and the excuse for the delay. The official, sent on the mission, went to Bobobek, explained the situation, and gave him the money and various items as assistance. "The ruler of Fergana, in accordance with the agreement, is reluctant to keep you in Kokand. If you stay for several days on the outskirts of the Fergana region, we will fulfill the conditions of hospitality here. Then, if you head toward Kashgar, we will escort you to its territory."

The Shahrīsabz governor responded to this official: "We have no desire to go to Kashgar. We fled here from Bukhara because we feared the Emir of Bukhara. The Emir of Bukhara has killed many of our ancestors and elders. Considering the old animosity between our people and the Emir of Bukhara, and the close friendship of the general with the Emir, we thought it best not to surrender to the Samarkand general. If we had gone to the Samarkand governor, he might have accepted a bribe from the Emir of Bukhara and sent us to the Emir's hands through the efforts of Turkestan's military commander Kaufman. If His Excellency the Khan of Fergana sends us to Kaufman under his protection, it would be the best option. The right way and salvation for us is to surrender ourselves directly to Kaufman in Turkestan, without the intervention of the Samarkand general or others. Russia is a great and noble power, and in its system and laws, prisoners and those who surrender are not killed. I have heard from notable people repeatedly that when the rulers of various regions, such as the Tatar, Cherkess, and other tribes, fell into Russian hands, they were not sentenced to death but were educated. Therefore, we do not wish to travel to other regions. We prefer to surrender ourselves to Russia in Tashkent. If His Excellency the Khan of Fergana sends us with his envoy to Tashkent, we will be grateful and pleased."

Upon hearing these words, the official went back to the Khan and delivered the message. The generous and kind-hearted Khan accepted the request of the Shahrīsabz governor and sent the necessary funds for their travel expenses. The Shahrīsabz governor Bobobek, along with his assistant Hekimbiy's son, some officials, and his deputy Jurabek, was sent with an envoy from Kokand to Tashkent. The other relatives of the Shahrīsabz governor, who had come with him to escape the Emir of Bukhara's danger, were assigned their wages from the treasury. [5, 410 b] Since Avaz Muhammad Attor was one of Khudoyar Khan's personal historians, it is likely that he did not depict Khudoyar Khan as a traitor in this account.

Ishoqxon Ibrat, in his work *History of Fergana*, narrates the following episode based on the account of Mulla Muhammad Umarbek Andijani, one of the Khan's trusted associates:

"After spending the night, early in the morning we departed from the Mahram fortress and stopped in Isfisor. We spent one night there, and the following day, which was Friday, we arrived in Khujand. The scholars and the nobles came out to greet us. At the gate of Khujand, two individuals in Russian military uniforms were standing and stopped us. One of them greeted the Khan and said (his name was Jo'rabek): 'Peace be upon you, Your Highness the Khan. How are you? Are you well? So now you too have taken the same path that we once took. This is now your condition! When we came to you seeking protection, you seized us by the collar and handed us over to Russia. We did not die—praise be to God—we are now in government positions!' He further said: 'We asked for protection because a Muslim should



provide refuge to another Muslim. Now you will experience it yourself!' The Khan, becoming indignant, responded: 'What kind of apostate are you?' Jo‘rabek replied: 'You are the one who will be called an apostate, for you let your homeland be trampled and allowed Muslims to be humiliated!' At this, the Khan drew his sword, and Jo‘rabek also drew his sword, but Cossack soldiers protected the Khan and sent him away." [6, 30 b]

This episode clearly indicates that Khudoyorkhan betrayed Jo‘rabek and Bobobek, handing them over despite the fact that they came seeking protection. It is evident that the beks had gone to Khudoyorkhan in search of asylum.

According to Mirzo Abdulazim Somiy, in his work *Tarikhi Salatini Mang‘itiya*, after the Shahrizabz and Kitab principalities were seized by Russian troops, Bobobekbiy and Jo‘rabekbiy fled to Khoqand seeking refuge from Khudoyorkhan. However, Khudoyorkhan did not allow them to enter Khoqand. He separated the attendants who had accompanied the beks, and from Sariqsuv, sent the two beks as prisoners to Tashkent, to the governor’s presence, thereby rendering service to the governor. The governor, acting with foresight in the interest of his state, took the beks into his service and assigned them a residence and an estate of honor and importance. At the time this work is being written, they have reached positions of authority. Not long after, they were granted patronage, and they now reside in Tashkent. Shahrizabz and Kitab were again annexed to the territory of the Emirate of Bukhara; the state was strengthened, and a period of peace began in the lands formerly in opposition. Friendly relations were established between His Highness and the Russians, and paths of mutual communication and exchange were opened. It is clear from the evidence provided by Mirzo Abdulazim Somiy that Bobobek and Jo‘rabek were brought to Tashkent not as traitors, but as prisoners. [7, 17 b]

N. Ostroumov, in his book about von Kaufman (1899), describes how Jo‘rabek entered the service of the Russian army as follows: “The former beg of Shahrizabz, currently a colonel in the Russian army, Jo‘rabek, was defeated by Russian troops during the tenure of General-Gubernator K. P. fon Kaufman and was brought to Tashkent, where he was held in custody for a certain period. Later, in September 1870, General Kaufman invited him to his garden and treated him in such a manner that Jo‘rabek, adapting to a completely foreign way of life, was compelled to remain in the service of the Russian army.” [8, 85 b]

The controversial life paths of Jo‘rabek and Bobobek remain a topic of debate to this day. Sometimes they are accused of waging war against their own people by participating in the occupation of the Khanate of Khoqand. There is some truth in this view, of course. However, it must be emphasized that, first of all, it was Khudoyorkhan himself who, disregarding their former friendship, betrayed the beks by handing them over, igniting the fire of revenge in their hearts. Secondly, historical sources state that the beks, rather than submitting to the Amir of Bukhara in their struggle against the enemy, began minting their own coins, claiming to be independent rulers of their own lands, which undermined unity. In fact, Jo‘rabek and Bobobek did not pursue such a path. They were displeased that, instead of repelling the advancing Russian imperial forces that were violating the borders of Muzaffar’s emirate, warfare was being waged against the Khanate of Khoqand. The beks considered Abdumalik Tora—whose mother was from the Kenagas clan—as the one who should unite the country and lead the fight against the Russians, rather than Amir Muzaffar. Another aspect of the problem is that the beks, whose forces had been disbanded, had become dependent on the Governor-General of Turkestan in every respect. In turn, the beks may have believed that Kaufman would bring not only Russian dominance but also prosperity and enlightenment to the peoples of Turkestan.



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