

## Assessment of Urdu *Babarnamas* by Uzbek Researcher

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I have been asked to comment on abstract of Shar Hameedova's Ph D thesis which has been submitted to Tashqand State University's Department of Oriental Studies.<sup>1</sup>

The subject of the research is the available Urdu translations of *Babarnama* and their comparison with original Turki language manuscript. The abstracts have been published in Uzbek, Russian and English languages. I have received the abstract of English language. As the thesis deals with Urdu translations of *Babarnamas*, it is imperative that an abstract should be published in Urdu as well. It would have produced more interest in India and Pakistan if the abstract had also been in Urdu.

In the English abstract there are a plethora of mistakes. The mistakes are not only in spelling, composition, grammar, but also the literary presentation and clarity. This makes reading the abstract incoherent and unattractive. Even the title of English abstract 'Reflections of Authors style in the translation of *Baburnama* into Urdu' is confusing. It could be simplified and made more literary by modifying it to 'Assessment of Urdu *Babarnamas*'. 'اردو بابارناموں پر نقد و نظر'.

To compare the Urdu translations to Turki language the choice has not been made keeping the research point of view. For a common reader it may not matter but for a research worker proper selection is mandatory to advance the study of the subject. The Urdu translation selected is a repeat publication of Mirza Naseeruddin Haider which was edited by Ubaidullah Qudsi.<sup>2</sup> Ideally the original publication should have been chosen, which was edited by the author's daughter Khujista Sultans Begum in 1924.<sup>3</sup> The problem with Ubaidullah Qudsi edition is that it has removed original introduction of Khujista Sultana Begum and also important end-note by the translator Mirza Naseeruddin Haider. Both of these provide important information about the translation and its editing.

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The Uzbek language *Babarnama*, published from Tashqand in 2002,<sup>4</sup> has been chosen for comparison. It cannot be called the right choice. This is because it is a translation from original Turki language into Uzbek, which differs from original Turki of Babar. There are many original Turki manuscripts available to the researchers like, Hyderabad,<sup>5</sup> Edinburgh<sup>6</sup> manuscripts, or Kazan<sup>7</sup> and Japan's corrected edition of Eiji Mano<sup>8</sup>. It would have been better to select one of the original manuscripts.

I will like to point out to the researcher that her assumption that Naseeruddin's translation is from original Turki is based on superficial study and on wrong selection. If you compare Farsi and Turki editions, all Farsi editions; including Naseeruddin Haider's, start with Sura Al- Imran: 26, which is not the practice in Turki editions, thus Naseeruddin Haider has followed the Farsi edition. In addition all Farsi editions do not include the list of taxes collected from Babari provinces, but Turki editions have a long list of taxes, including, *Waqqa-i-Babar*<sup>9</sup>, as both Turki and Farsi editions were under study while editing this publication. All the above Farsi editions are copies of Mirza Mohammad Sherazi's publication dated 1890 AD<sup>10</sup>, from Bombay which does not include the lists of taxes.

Khujista's introduction to her father's translation does not confirm that he knew Turki language, fully. She says on page 3: 'ترکی زبان سے بھی خاصی واقفیت رکھتے تھے۔'

The title of Ameer Taimur and Naseeruddin Haider is 'KURGANI'. This is mentioned in the extract<sup>11</sup> as well; but both Naseeruddin Haider and Khujista write it as 'GURGANI', indicating their limited knowledge of Turki.<sup>12</sup>

Khujista is the editor who mainly compared the Naseeruddin's edition with John Laden/ William Erskine edition of 1826,<sup>13</sup> which is based of Khan-i-Khana Abdul-Raheem's Farsi edition of 1589 AD. It shows her access is mainly to Farsi edition of *Babarnama*.

She is also mistaken in saying that Bairam Khan is the translator of *Babarnama*.<sup>14</sup> This she has picked up from Mirza Mohammad Sherazi.<sup>15</sup> Mirza Naseeruddin in his end-note of completion has mentioned only one manuscript from which he has translated, without mentioning the language or the details of that manuscript he had used.<sup>16</sup>

Khujista while comparing her father's edition to the only English edition (Laden/Erskine) available to her at the time she had mentioned these authors 66 times in her notes which form about 95 percent of all the

references in her edition. Thus both father and daughter have very limited exposure to books and articles to draw on.

The variety of names used for the autobiography of Babar has changed with times. *Babar nama* is a common name, which relates to his name and is not specific.<sup>17</sup> *Tuzk Babari* is to follow the name of his forefather's book called *Tuzk Taimuri*.<sup>18</sup> If you compare the contents of *Tuzk Taimuri* to auto biography of Babar you will find that *Tuzk Taimuri* is mainly concerned with administration of the forces, and rules to govern the country and is in the form of orders initiated by Ameer Taimur. It has very little contents of biography, but Babar's writing is mainly his autobiography, his literary pursuits and his observations of nature and study of relatives, colleagues and courtiers, animals, birds, flora and fauna of Hindustan.

Mirza Mohammad Sherazi concocted a name of *Tajrab-ul-Mulook*, which has not been followed by any other Babar-shanas (بابر شناس). But Babar has mentioned the words 'Waqai' a number of times,<sup>19</sup> thus this name is the specific name which should be given to his book as chosen by Rasit Rahmeti<sup>20</sup> and Eiji Mano.<sup>21</sup>

The pronunciation of the name of Babar; I had discussed in details, as an appendix in my edited book.<sup>22</sup> The pronunciation of BABUR is a blind following of original western Orientalists, who never visited Turkistan. In my three visits to various parts of Central Asia I have never heard anyone pronouncing ب as 'A', they always say 'O'. The abstract under review has proved this by writing 'SHIROZI',<sup>23</sup> the correct being 'SHIRAZI'. In addition, the pronunciation and its general acceptance of a word is a complicated procedure. Pronunciations accepted by the masses are those which are uttered by the majority of general public and never what is proposed by academics. The whole south Asia calls him Babar and that is what should be accepted. It does not matter what academic write or pronounce.

Thus on the whole my view is that Naseeruddin Haider and his daughter Khujista Sultana Begum have mainly depended on Farsi additions of Babar's autobiography. They did not have access to other manuscripts and scholarly articles, books and references. Their edition also does not contain an index, bibliography etc. It fails to stand to current standards of a research work.

The other Urdu translations mentioned like Muhammad Qasim Siddiqui<sup>24</sup>, and Rashid Akhtar Nadvi<sup>25</sup> and others are only reduced versions of autobiography and are not academic publications. They can only be called glorified abstracts.

## ENDNOTES

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25. رشید اختر ندوی، تزک بابری، سنگ میل پبلی کیشنز، لاہور، سال اشاعت ندرار۔

## Abstract

This brief article shares comments on the research work of PhD about the Urdu translations of Babarnama and their comparisons with its original Turki language manuscript. The article points out many mistakes which is not supposed to come from a PhD research work. It is rightly pointed out that the research scholar should have chosen the original work of Babarnama edited by Khujista Sultana Begum in 1924 to carry out the comparison with the its Turki language manuscript. Contrary to this, the scholar chose an Urdu translation done by Naseeruddin Haider which was edited by Ubaidullah Qudsi. The base translation for the research work does not contain the introduction and notes by Khujista Sultana Begum. Moreover, its abstract in English language has many grammar and syntax mistakes to avoid. The selection of Uzbek translation of Babarnama is not the right choice as it differs from the original work of Turki.

**Keyword:** Babarnama, Turki original work, Urdu translations of Babarnama, Uzbek translation