

ZAHIRIDDIN MUHAMMAD BOBUR'S MILITARY CAMPAIGNS: THE TULGHAMA TACTICAL SYSTEM AND ITS HISTORICAL SIGNIFICANCE*Xamdamov Alisher Samijonovich**Head of the Department of the Institute of Ground Forces*

Abstract. The article investigates the tulghama tactical system which Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur used during his military operations throughout Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. The research demonstrates that tulghama represented a sophisticated evolution of Timurid-Mongol military tradition which allowed smaller military units to achieve important victories by using their greater speed and ability to execute coordinated flanking attacks.

Keywords: Babur, tulghama, military tactics, Timurid military tradition, First Battle of Panipat, Central Asian warfare, flanking maneuver, Mughal Empire

Аннотация. В данной статье рассматривается тактическая система тулгана (фланговый охват), применявшаяся Захириддином Мухаммадом Бабуром в ходе военных походов в Центральной Азии и на Индийском субконтиненте. Исследование показывает, что тулгана представляла собой сложную эволюцию тимуридско-монгольской военной традиции, позволявшую численно уступающим силам одерживать решающие победы благодаря превосходящей манёвренности и скоординированным фланговым манёврам.

Ключевые слова: Бабур, тулгана, военная тактика, тимуридская военная традиция, Первая битва при Панипате, центральноазиатская война, фланговый манёвр, империя Великих Моголов

Annotatsiya. Ushbu maqolada Zahiriddin Muhammad Boburning Markaziy Osiyo va Hindiston quyi qit'asidagi harbiy yurishlarida qo'llagan to'lg'ama (qanotdan qurshab olish) taktik tizimi ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot shuni ko'rsatadiki, to'lg'ama temuriy-mo'g'ul harbiy an'anasining murakkab rivojlanishini ifodalab, raqamij jihatdan kam kuchli qo'shinlarga ustun harakatchanlik va muvofiqlashtirilgan qanotdan qurshab olish harakatlari orqali hal qiluvchi g'alabalarga erishish imkonini bergan.

Kalit so'zlar: Bobur, to'lg'ama, harbiy taktika, temuriy harbiy an'ana, Birinchi Panipat jangi, Markaziy Osiyo urushi, qanotdan qurshab olish, Buyuk Mo'g'ullar imperiyasi

Introduction. Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur (1483-1530) established a unique military legacy which defines the entire history of Central Asian and South Asian warfare. Babur established the Mughal Empire through his military achievements which combined his ancestral ties to Timur and Genghis Khan with various military customs he developed through years of fighting in the world's most disputed areas of the early modern period. The tulghama system represents the most important tactical development from his command because it combines Mongolian nomadic movement with Timurid military structure and new gunpowder weapon technology [1]. The dedicated analytical treatments which examine Babur's military methodology face scarcity in contemporary scholarship because researchers have focused more on his literary and political achievements. [2].

Methodology and Literature Review. The study methodology depends on systematic research which examines both primary and secondary materials that discuss Babur's military activities and the complete history of Inner Asian combat. The Baburnama which Babur wrote as his personal memoir establishes the primary source foundation because it delivers an unmatched firsthand record of his military expeditions while providing comprehensive yet brief accounts of his military strategies and combat choices [3]. Scholars from Uzbekistan have studied Babur's military work because it demonstrates his significance to national historical memory while they create important research about his military activities during the Timurid period [4]. Russian

imperial and Soviet researchers established extensive research about Central Asian military history which examined how nomadic and semi-nomadic armies fought because it built essential knowledge about tulghama in the context of steppe military practices [5]. Western researchers have offered thorough operational studies about Babur's key battles especially his First Battle of Panipat (1526) because they placed his military developments within global comparisons of early modern warfare practices [6]. The researchers Sverdlov and Gorelik studied Mongol battlefield techniques which include flanking encirclement tactics because they discovered these tactics needed special training to perform them successfully through their systematic usage [7]. The Timurid adaptation of these methods introduced greater emphasis on combined arms coordination, integrating cavalry with infantry and, under Babur, with artillery, a dimension that distinguished his application of tulghama from purely nomadic predecessors [8].

Results and Discussion. The tactical architecture of tulghama as practiced by Babur can be reconstructed from the convergent testimony of primary sources and military historical analysis. The tulghama units executed their mission through quick surrounding attacks which enabled them to hit the enemy from their rear and create an enclosed area which made escape impossible [9]. The First Battle of Panipat in April 1526 provides the most thoroughly documented and analytically significant demonstration of tulghama in Babur's career. Babur used the traditional tulghama battle arrangement against Ibrahim Lodi's larger Delhi Sultanate troops because he positioned his troops to defend their center with a cart barricade which he built in Ottoman fashion and used Ottoman artillery operators to control his cannon. The Mughal center stopped the attack which Ibrahim Lodi led into the confined area between Panipat's urban development and the ditch which Babur had created while his cavalry forces moved to surround the tightly packed enemy soldiers.

The tulghama detachments completed the encirclement, and the resulting envelopment destroyed the Delhi army's cohesion, killing Ibrahim Lodi on the field and effectively extinguishing the Sultanate's military resistance [3]. The application reached its peak because the team selected the right terrain while creating battle conditions which would take away their opponents' strength before they started fighting. The same tactical system which Babur used in Fergana and Samarkand battles, however, his military team needed to use tulghama system in Fergana because the situation demanded that most of his military resources need to be used. Babur faced challenges during his battles against the Shaybani Uzbek confederation because he had fewer cavalry forces than his enemies, and his tulghama strategy became limited because his enemies had better mobility as nomadic warriors who used similar battle methods [4]. The battles prove that tulghama needs particular battlefield conditions together with specific troop capabilities and effective leadership to reach its maximum effectiveness. Babur established a new path for his tulghama system through the incorporation of firearms, which separated his military approach from the traditional use of cavalry.

The central formation of artillery and matchlocks positioned at its core enabled multiple operational duties because the artillery established a firepower base which drew enemy combatants toward the weaponry while the weaponry created psychological distress to troops who had never experienced coordinated gunfire attacks and the system compensated for Babur's infantry shortcomings through its superior cavalry strength [8]. The combination of mobile encirclement together with stationary firepower created a completely new tactical system which lacked any exact counterpart in the Mongol and Timurid traditions and which would become the foundation of Mughal military operations until the 1600s [10]. The military transmission and adaptation processes involved with tulghama function as the main historical aspect of its existence. Babur's military operations acted as a mechanism which transported Inner Asian combat strategies into South Asian warfare methods that completely transformed existing military traditions.

Conclusion. The tulghama tactical system employed by Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur represents one of the most significant contributions to early modern military science to emerge

from the Central Asian tradition. Through a sophisticated synthesis of Mongol encirclement doctrine, Timurid combined-arms practice, and the emerging technology of firearms, Babur developed a battle method that repeatedly enabled decisive victory against numerically superior opponents. The analysis presented in this study demonstrates that tulghama was not a single maneuver but a comprehensive tactical system requiring careful preparation of terrain, precise coordination among multiple army elements, and the psychological exploitation of simultaneous multi-directional pressure. The First Battle of Panipat stands as its definitive expression, but the system's logic permeated Babur's entire military career.

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