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- 1 Yuri Bregel's magnificent translation of the *Firdaws al-iqbâl* follows the text edition published in 1988 of this major monument of Central Asian Chaghatay historiography in general and of Khivan court historiography in particular. In addition to the translation of the work itself, the publication includes an extensive introduction offering discussions of the work's sources, manuscripts, previous editions, the biographies and bibliographies of the authors, the work's historiographical antecedents, and subsequent works taking up the narrative where the *Firdaws al-iqbâl* leaves off. The *Firdaws al-iqbâl* was begun in 1819, although the khan of Khiva, Ertuzer Khan, ordered Shir Muhammad Munis to begin a history of the dynasty of the khans of Khiva probably in 1807. At the time of Munis' death in 1829 the work remained unfinished. However, it was continued by Munis' nephew, Muhammad Riza Agahi, and finished perhaps as early as 1842. The translation occupies the bulk of the work beginning with the legendary origins of the khans of Khiva and traces the history of the Chingisid and Qongrat rulers of Khorezm. The bulk of the work is devoted to the reigns of the Qonghrat rulers Ertuzer Khan and Muhammad Rahim Khan. In Bregel's estimation, the sheer volume of first-hand information on the court of Khiva transmitted by Munis and Agahi makes the work an incomparably informative source. The quality of the translation is flawless. The English is idiomatic, while at the same time, the flavor of the original Chaghatay is clearly evident and we are fortunate that Bregel left in many charming stylistic flourishes, especially the numerous delightful

metaphoric constructions, so characteristic of Munis and Agahi's style. Indeed, translation should convince readers to question the widely encountered claim that literary life in 19th century Central Asia was stagnant or retarded. The translation alone places the publication in the first rank of scholarship on Central Asia. However Bregel's extensive and impressively thorough annotations provide details of the region's historical geography, ethnography, and personalities based on an exhaustive study of published sources. The publication also includes indices of personal, geographic, and ethnic names, as well as genealogical tables and maps. Indeed, the annotation, index of geographic names, and maps are major contributions to the historical geography of Khorezm. The scope, detail, and preciseness of the work as a whole, complemented by Bregel's profound knowledge of the history of Islamic Central Asia in general and of Khorezm in particular, make this edition an outstanding achievement both in its own right, and as a means of exposing the tremendous indigenous literary heritage of Islamic Central Asia to a broader readership.

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Thèmes : 4.2.2. Asie centrale

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