

RESEARCH ARTICLE

Source Studies and The Problems of Historiography of Arabs Of Central Asia

Sherzod Iskandarov

Docent, Doctor of Philosophy in History, Department of Social Sciences, Tashkent Medical Academy, Uzbekistan

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Abstract

This article examines the unique devices of the Arabs of Central Asia. Foreign literature does not save everything related to the formation of ethno-cultural identity of Arabs and issues of social institutions. Arabs' lifestyle, ethnic composition, material and spiritual culture, customs, conditions, ethno-economics, places of residence, clothing and direct clothing, provision, upbringing, unique personal characteristics in the family lifestyle and modernity, transformation and innovation compatible with historiography and source studies. relevant literature was studied.

KEY WORDS

Problems, historiography, ethnocultural identity, ethnoeconomy, settlements, clothing, jewelry, traditionalism, modernity, transformational innovation.

INTRODUCTION

At the end of the 20th and early 21st century, the map of the world has undergone drastic alterations. In ethnological studies, along with the problems of ethnogenesis and ethnic history, investigation of communities living in different historical and ethnographic regions, including their national culture, customs, traditions, rituals, source studies, and historiography has acquired special urgency.

As is known, the ancient history of Central Asia abundant in events, the creative genius of our ancestors and invaluable cultural heritage they left behind have made a great contribution to the world civilization and contributed to its progress.

The first information about the appearance of the Arabs in Mawarannahr (Lat. Transoxiana or Transoxania) can be found in written historical sources of Arab geographers and travelers, as well as in the works of local historians of the period (Tabari, Balazuri, Ibn al-Asiri, Yakub Narshahi, Abu Tahirkhodja).[1; 120] Valuable information about the Arabs is found in the

works of the famous encyclopedic scholar Abu Rayhan Biruni, geographer al-Istahri, statesman and poet Zakhiriddin Muhammad Babur.[2; 468, 367]

Historical and geographical works of the above mentioned authors have a great scientific value as sources for studying socio-economic, political, traditional lifestyle of both the Arabs and of other peoples residing in Central Asia. Thus, the work of the Arab geographer al-Istahri contains evidence of toponymic and ethnotoponymic names of towns, villages, and communities appeared after the Arab conquest of Central Asia.[3] Together with providing the toponymic information, the author described in detail the climatic map of the region. Having clearly marked the climatic limits, al-Istahri divided the territory into smaller zones and described the cities and settlements situated there, including the ways linking them.

The author gives valuable information about the mountains, rivers, natural resources, agricultural crops, trade, and living conditions and everyday life, clothing, rituals and customs of

the population, mentioning the facts seemed to him amusing.[4;6] This work of Istakhri is considered one of the main sources that contain invaluable factual material related to the period of the Arab conquest of Central Asia. Istakhri is recognized as an outstanding scholar and historian of the Arab Muslim world, so his work is an important historical source not only to study the period of the Arab conquest of Central Asia, but also the questions of general history. The special value of the source is that it contains authentic data on the establishment of the Arab rule and information on every territory conquered.

The scholars still appreciate the work of the historian and geographer Balazuri, [5; 184, 120] outlining the events dated back to the settlement of the Arabs in Central Asia and the spread of Islam. While describing circumstantially the conquest of the lands of Khorasan and Mawarannahr, the author includes the unique information provided by eyewitnesses to the historic events. Among the writings of Balazuri is the work "Kitab Futuh al-Buldan" ("The Book of Conquering the Countries"), also dedicated to the period of conquest. The information directly recorded in the book describes not only the important cities and places of interest, but also the important aspects of social life such as economic activity, currency of money, taxation, the introduction of the Arabic language, etc. The book relates about tribal division of the Arabs, and of the fact that almost 80% of the Arabs settled in Central Asia, were resettled here from Yemen for the purpose of Islamization of the native population. Actually, the most Arabs of Uzbekistan consider themselves the descendants of immigrants from Yemen, Syria and Iraq.

In the course of studying historiography of the Arabs in Central Asia the work of the great encyclopedic Biruni "Osor al-bakiyan" ("Vestiges of the past generations") should be mentioned. The author narrates that the invasions exercised by Kuteiba in Mawarannahr, accompanied by the death of many famous people from the local population. According to Biruni, Kuteiba, in order to promote the Islamic religion, made the order to destroy the most valuable specimens of the literary heritage of the time, which could not but influence the national spiritual and material culture, and the way of life of the local population.

While speaking of the conquests of the Arabs in Central Asia in the 7th century, it is impossible to take no notice of the "History of Bukhara" by Abu Bakr Narshahi. [6; 120] Dated back to the 10th century this work contains a wealth of factual

material, including the Arab conquest. Narshahi claims that forced Islamization of the local population supplanted Zoroastrian beliefs and traditions in the region. Narshahi's work bears witness of battles and uprisings that accompanied the conquest of peoples of Central Asia by the Arabs. The special significance of this work is in that it is based on the information kept in the memory of the people a few centuries later.

The history of the Arab conquest is reflected in the work "Kitab al-ansab" ("The Book of Genealogy") composed by Abu Said Abdalkarim al-Samani,[7;184] which is considered one of the most important historical sources in the study of this era.

The information on the history of the peoples living in the region can be found in a number of works of foreign authors. Among these studies is the work "The History of Bukhara, or Transoxania from ancient times to the present" by the Hungarian linguist- turcologist, ethnographer and traveler Hermann Vambery. In 1990, this work was published in Uzbek. [8; 92] When Vambery wrote this work, he used literature in Turkish, Arabic and Persian languages, as well as his own notes taken during his travels to the region. The work is valuable by actual information about geography, history, social relations, life and culture of the peoples of Central Asia, including the Arabs lived in the territory of Bukhara since ancient times.

The material which is of interest for us is contained in the works of Russian historians and geographers N.V.Hanykov, Ch.Valihanov, A.D.Grebyonkin, V.L.Vyatkin, D.N.Logofet, O.Bibikova.[9; 163, 413, 110-120, 1-83, 98, 224, 446] This quite a long period from the middle of the 19th century to the mid-20th century was marked by a lot of works related to the historiographical period of time under consideration. However, the works of the above mentioned authors contain some of the important, though fragmentary information on historiography of the Arabs of Uzbekistan. While studying the historiography and the source base of the Arabs, the researchers analyzed the processes which took place in the life of the people from ancient times to the present day.

In the second half of the 19th - early 20th century the Arabs accounted for a very small part of the population of the Khiva Khanate. Living in the southern part of the Khanate, they led a nomadic life.[10; 58] By the middle of the 19th century, only a small part of the Arabs retained their native language. The Khiva dwellers consider them as descendants of the ancient population. According to legend, one of the Khorezmshahs

ordered to deliver to him experts in canons of Islam. Soon after, 10 Arabs came from Mecca. It is believed that these Arabs might be the ancestors of the present-day Arab population of Khorezm.

In the 19th and the 20th centuries, the Arabs of Central Asia continued to maintain their own material and spiritual culture. The study of sources and historiography of the Arabs of Uzbekistan is one of the most important issues of our time. Language is the most important aspect of the civilizing process of the existence of any nation. There were carried out several studies examining the language of the Central Asian Arabs. Among these studies the following works should be noted: the works of I.N.Vinnikov, G.V. Tsereteli, N.Burykina and M.M.Izmaylova.[11; 254-283, 133-148, 539-549, 112] Analysis of the linguistic features of local Arabs showed that they had managed to preserve their native language since ancient times. The reason for this is that they always stood somewhat apart and did not seek to enter into kinship relationship with other local peoples. They managed to preserve their own language in spite of the socio-economic and political processes underwent in the history throughout the ages.

In the works of some of the above-mentioned authors, the belief is traced that the dialect of the local Arab is very similar to the peculiar dialect of inhabitants of one of the villages situated between Iraq and Syria. We were allowed to come to this conclusion by the field research. It should be noted that a similar situation we observe in the dialect of the Arabs in the village Djugara, in which Arab and Afghan dialects intertwined. While treating the historiography of the Arabs, the American researcher T. Barfield comprehensively studied the life of the Arabs of northern Afghanistan. In his studies, he scientifically substantiated the existence of close relationships between the Arabs in Central Asia and Afghanistan. This is probably true, because G.G.Chikovani in his study drew a parallel between the linguistic features of local Arabs with the dialect of Arabs in Afghanistan. There is evidence that some of the Arab population moved to Central Asia through Afghanistan.[12] The field studies found out that representatives of some clans resided in Arab villages in the territory of Uzbekistan consider themselves descendants of immigrants from Afghanistan. Thus, the representatives of the Andkhui clan from the village Jeynau, Mirishkor district, Kashkadarya province, believe that their ancestors were natives of and came from the Afghan province of the same name.

Sociologist K. Kalonov's treatise on the analysis of socio-religious classes in Central Asia and A. Abdullajonov's research on the analysis of the term "sayid" gained great importance.[13; 45-46]

On the basis of the study of the issues of Uzbek identity, the professor of the University of Zurich P. Finke also touched on the issue of ethno-cultural identity of the Arabs of Uzbekistan. [14] The purpose and tasks of the dissertation were determined by analyzing the literature on the formation of Arab ethno-cultural identity and the issue of social institutions.

The specific features of the settlement of the Arabs in Central Asia in the 19th-20th centuries, the state of their language, traditions and rituals in the tsarist period are reflected in the work of Russian scholar S.L.Volin.[15; 114] Having turned to the work of Istakhri, collected extensive data on the customs, rituals and on the ethnography of the Arabs in the region, the author mainly highlighted the matters of language features and partially some issues of ethnography, almost without touching the ethnic history of the Arabs in Central Asia.

Great contribution to the study of the history of the Arabs was made by famous Arabist I.N.Vinnikov. He carried out a number of major studies on the history of Central Asia. Since the 1930s, the main objects of his studies became ethnography and the language of the Arabs living in the territory of Central Asia.[16; 2-3; 148; 126-146; 105] The author chose as one of the objects of study a major Arab province Djugari situated in the Bukhara province. The scholars analyzed the specific features of the dialect typical of the Arabs of the village. This work serves as an important source for the study not only the history of the Arabs in Bukhara, but of Asian Arabs in general.

The famous Russian ethnographer Kh.Karmysheva studied ethnography and ethnic history of the population of Central Asia for many years. During her long scientific career, the researcher studied the history of the population of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, that is why a certain part of her scientific studies was devoted to historiography and ethnography of the local Arabs. Kh.Karmysheva mentioned that the Arabs lived in the southern parts of both republics in small groups, speaking mostly Uzbek and Tajik.[17; 19] This period of time was a special period in studying ethnography of the Surkhan oasis. In her monographs that incorporate the results of nearly forty years of ethnographic research, the author provides the important scientific data about such ethnic groups of the Oasis as Kungrats, Yuzes, Katagans, Turks, as well as the valuable information on the history of ethnic history of Turkmen, Tajik,

Arabs and other ethnic groups. In her studies, the author, having designated the role of the Arab people in the history of Central Asia, had carried out a comparative analysis of traditions, rituals, history, language, culture, places of residence, family structure, the characteristics of craft activities, national clothes, etc.[18; 582-598]

Information on the history of the Arabs of Uzbekistan and their present-day status can be found in a number of scientific studies. Thus, a renowned scholar and ethnologist, academician K.Shaniyazov in his monograph provides a valuable factual material reflecting the ethnic history, ritual, spiritual and material culture, economic activity, changes in household structure, transformational and innovative processes in the life of the Arabs of Uzbekistan.[19; 281; 164; 41-42; 153;]

Conquests of the Arabs in the territory of Central Asia, the relationships with the local population, their settlements, population numbers, and the way of life were reflected to some extent in a number of scientific studies. Thus, the works by A.Myuller, V.L.Voronina, I.R.Mullyadjanov, P.Ravshanov, Sh.S.Kamaliddinov, Kh.M.Mamadaliyev, A.H. Daniyarov, A.A.Ashirov Sh.A.Iskandarov[20; 181; 164; 41-42; 153; 164; 337; 17; 238-239] represent the studies in historiography, ethnic culture, as well as the results of comparative analysis of the beliefs associated with the Islamic religion.

In general, many authors devoted their research works to studies of life of people living in Uzbekistan. Along with other ethnic groups, the Arabs also were the object of research, so the scholars and ethnographers collected the material about their way of life, customs, and rituals. However, most research works contain only general figures regarding the number of Arabs. In this context, the fundamental work of the demographer I.R.Mullyadjanov should be mentioned. I.R.Mullyadjanov explored the theoretical issues of the regional population and regional demographics and provided reliable, scientifically grounded and evidence-based facts and figures, including the data on the number of Arabs and their settlements, etc.[21; 164]

Archival documents show that in the 19th century the Arabs were residing in the territory of the Yangiaryk district in the village Shihbagi (Hodzhaylar mosque), in Pitnak (Artik Arab mosque) in the west of Kyyat (Kishlak Arabhana) [22; 146] in Hozarasp (Kishlak Karvak). [23] The conquerors, having conquered the city, took up the homes from local residents and gave them to the resettled Arabs. Thus, 6000 Arabs from

the Quraysh tribe settled in Samarkand, the Arabs, who arrived from Mecca and Medina. They were allotted with dwelling and property. [24; 253]

Dozens of similar examples might be cited. Having conquered Central Asia, the Arabs set about the Islamization of the population. The bulk of the local population in that age worshiped Zoroaster.

A significant contribution to the study of historiography and ethnography of the Arabs of Central Asia have become the works of the scholar-ethnologist Z.M.Madamindjanova. In her research on ethnography of the Arabs of southern Tajikistan, the author gives information on ethnic history, family and domestic rituals, on the language, national dress, national dishes. Yet, the author carried out a comparative analysis of the rites of the Uzbek and Tajik peoples.[25; 3-12; 131-157] Many years of research have enabled the author to draw comparative parallels in traditional and religious rituals of Uzbeks, Tajik and Arabs. According to Z.M.Madamindjanova, the arrival of the Arabs in Central Asia had brought about the fundamental changes in the national culture, traditional rituals and customs, everyday way of life of the population. Here we should mention the joint study of V.I.Bushkov and Z.M.Madamindjanova, who analyzed the issues of ethnic history, historiography and ethnography of the Arabs of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan.

In his work, Sh. Zakirov,[26; 190] while studying the ways of development of the ethnic history of the Arabs, paid special attention to the work of Istakhri, in particular, to texts directly related to the history of the peoples of Central Asia. Sh.Zakirov's research work might be considered the analysis of the ethnic history of the peoples of Central Asia in the period between the 9th and 12th centuries in terms of the source studies. Having made a comparative assessment of the historiographical information, the author had managed to identify places of residence of the Arabs, as well as to trace the social, economic and political processes of the time.

A number of scientific papers dealing with anthropology of the peoples of Central Asia also should be noted. The research works of M.S.Andreev, L.V.Oshanin, Ya.R.Vinnikov, K. Nadzhimov[27; 128; 56; 382-390; 156] discuss the issues of ethno genesis, settlement of ethnic groups and anthropological composition of the population of Central Asia, including the Arabs.

The arrival of the Arabs in Central Asia, especially their

settlement and anthropological image found their reflection in the work of K. Nadzhimov.[28;156] The author studied the anthropological appearance of more than 400 Arabs residing in the Kashkadarya and Surkhandarya oases. Based on the results of his observations the scholar came to the conclusion that the features of Near Eastern race Central are inherent in Asian Arabs. The author is convinced that the ancestors of these Arabs did not come from Arabia, as the elongated shape of the head of the Mediterranean type is characteristic of the Arabians. The Arabs of Central Asia are characterized by the round shape of the head, characteristic of the Arabs of Mesopotamia. According to Surkhandarya Arabs, the elongated head shape is inherent in a southern group of Arabs of Mesopotamia, as well. The researchers do not deny the participation of Arabs in the ethnogenesis of the peoples of Central Asia.

The history of Eastern culture retains specific characteristics of Arabs living in the oasis of the Lower Kashkadarya River, since they make it possible to form a general idea of their arrival in Mawarannahr and places of their settlement. Thus, the work of T.Nafasov and P.Ravshanov traces the history of the Jeynau Arabs and contains information about their ethnic lineages, the process of settlement in the oasis, dwellings, clothing, and, in general, their traditional culture. [29; 261] I would also like to mention the work of T.Nafasov of the toponymic nature,[30; 288] which reflect ethnotoponyms of the Arab origin. The problem under investigation, covering the issues of historiography of the Arabs of Uzbekistan, is an integral part of the above-mentioned scientific tasks. The treatment of the background of the question in the context of comparative analysis of these tasks is one of the important requirements of modern times.

Clothing culture of Arabs of Uzbekistan and their national costume were studied by such famous ethnographers as T.N.Tomina, N.P.Lobacheva, O.A.Sukhareva, and Kh.Ismailov, [31; 243; 32; 229-231] who noted that they were formed in accordance with the natural and geographical environment and life requirements. In these works the authors analyzed the characteristic peculiarities that appeared in traditional clothes during the process of sewing clothes and making particular items. As is known, the traditional costume was formed for centuries. Clothing ensemble were determined and secured by customs during the long period of time. The composition of clothes was different for people of different ages; it was stable and was considered mandatory. That is

why traditional Arab clothing and books about it might be useful in studying historiography of the question.

In the XX century. there was created a lot of interesting scientific papers, which reflect the material and spiritual culture, traditional lifestyle, ritual life of Uzbek and Arab peoples. A number of scientific studies highlighted the traditional characteristics of the Arabs living in different historical and ethnographical regions. Among them is the number of remarkable scientific papers of the ethnographer O.A. Sukhareva, [32; 327; 77-102] who based on vast factual material of the field research had traced the interrelationship between the ethnic history of Uzbek and Arab peoples. For example, studying the traditional lifestyle of the Arabs of the Bukhara province, the author analyzed historically the traditional clothes not separately, but as a whole, identifying the differences.

The research works of Kh.Ismailov are considered very fruitful, in which the author, among other issues, discussed the types of clothing, processes of manufacturing fabrics and tailoring items of the traditional costume of Arabs of Uzbekistan. The author also analyzed the clothes in burial and memorial ceremonies of the Arabs in the village Jeynau, Mirishkor district, Kashkadarya province. [33; 228-248]

The appearance of the Arabs in Central Asia, the history of their conquests and statehood, settlement and expansion of the Arabs in Mawarannahr over a period of millennium, their participation in social, economic and ethno-cultural processes of the region found in-depth coverage in the study by R. Radjabov. [34; 126; 415] Studying the issues of ethnic history, historiography, anthropology, language and some peculiar ethnographic features of Arabs, the scholar carried out a comparative analysis of the ethnocultural processes, family and everyday life rituals, and traditional burial and memorial ceremonies of the Arabs in parallel with other peoples of Central Asia.

Over a thousand of years the Arabs reside in the territory of Central Asia, peacefully coexisting with local peoples. Important ethnocultural features inherent in Arabs and manifested in traditional public, family-and-domestic customs and rituals, ethnic kin relations, ethnic composition, ethnic household and historiography have not yet been investigated comprehensively.

In general, the problems of ethnoculture of the Arabs of Uzbekistan are among the most discussed and topical issues

in the source studies and historiography. It should be recognized that the Arabs continue to maintain a sense of national identity, spiritual and material culture partially. In the complex of research works we have considered above, the comparative analysis is made of the source studies, historiography and ethnographic peculiarities of the peoples of Central Asia.

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