

Approaches and Perspectives in the Study of the Afrighid Dynasty Period in Foreign Historiography

*Mardonbek Rajapov Qosimboy ugli*¹

Abstract: This article provides an in-depth analysis of the factors that sparked the interest of foreign scholars in studying the history of the Afrighid dynasty, which ruled the Khwarezm region (Uzbekistan) from the 4th to the 10th centuries, examines the evolution of approaches and perspectives in foreign scholarship on this topic, highlighting the key research directions and challenges encountered by scholars. The article also critically assesses the achievements and shortcomings of these researchers, contributing to a deeper understanding of the Afrighid dynasty and its historical significance.

Introduction. It is natural that the history of the Uzbek people and statehood has been consistently studied abroad to varying degrees for many years. This is due to the fact that our national development has always had a noticeable, and at certain stages, even decisive impact on the development of the entire region. This factor is particularly evident in the case of neighboring countries and regions. In this sense, it can be asserted that the study of the history of the Afrighid period by foreign scholars is an inevitable endeavor. The Afrighid dynasty (4th-10th centuries) represents one of the most complex and under-researched periods in the history of Khwarezm. This era was marked by significant shifts in the international political landscape and the emergence of new powers. Notably, during this period, states such as the Sassanids, Hephthalites, Turkic Khaganate, Arab Caliphate, Tahirids, and Samanids existed, and Khwarezm, under the Afrighid dynasty, continued its activities under the influence of various external forces.

Our previous research has shown that many valuable historical records of Khwarezm were lost as a result of the Arab invasions. This, in turn, makes it difficult to study the political, socio-economic, and cultural life of the Afrighid dynasty. For this reason, this period remains one of the least studied and problematic topics in the history of Khwarezm.[16,17,18]

Method. The research will culminate in a comprehensive analysis of how foreign historians have approached and interpreted the Afrighid dynasty period, highlighting the key trends, debates, and challenges in the field. It will also identify potential areas for future research and contribute to a deeper understanding of this important but often overlooked period in Central Asian history. The methodology is structured as follows:

1. *Comprehensive Literature Review:* This will involve examining primary and secondary sources from the Afrighid period, including Chinese, Pahlavi, Syriac, Armenian, and Arabo-Persian sources and any surviving chronicles, inscriptions, coins, or archaeological artifacts.
2. *Historiographical Analysis:* The literature review will be analyzed to identify recurring themes, arguments, and methodologies in the study of the Afrighid period and different approaches and perspectives identified will be compared and contrasted to highlight their strengths and weaknesses, and to understand the evolution of historiographical thought on the Afrighids. Also, the existing historiography will be critically evaluated to assess its objectivity, potential biases, and any gaps in knowledge or understanding.

¹ PhD student, Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, Institute of History, Tashkent, Uzbekistan



Results and Discussion. Foreign research has primarily focused on exploring specific problematic issues within the Afrighid dynasty period, encompassing the following areas: 1) Divergent approaches regarding the origins of the dynasty; 2) Varying perspectives on the nomenclature of the dynasty; 3) The extent of influence exerted by the Kushan and Sassanid empires on the dynasty; 4) The political status of the Afrighids during the Arab conquest.

The initial research pertinent to this matter was conducted in the 1740s by the French Orientalist J. De Guignes. In his treatise "Historical Memoirs on the Origin of the Huns and the Turks" and his work "General History of the Huns, Turks, Mongols, and other Western Tatars," the researcher utilized Chinese sources to investigate the ancient and medieval periods of Turanian history [11]. Another French Orientalist, A. Remusat, also drew upon Chinese sources to address issues such as the origins of the Khwarezmian rulers, their connection to the Zhou dynasty, and the economic and political relations between Khwarezm and the Han, Wei, and Sui dynasties. This scholar commented on both the strengths and weaknesses of Chinese sources, noting problems such as the existence of various versions of geographical place names in Western language translations and the lack of complete translations.[19]

Among the early research conducted in English, one can cite the works of H. Lansdell, de Gues, and Le.G. Strange, which primarily focus on the names of cities located in the Khwarezm oasis, the routes leading to the region, and maps. Specifically, H. Lansdell's work provides important information about the early medieval cities of Central Asia, particularly the Khwarezm oasis, as well as the lifestyle and economic activities of its people. Le.G. Strenj's work mentions the major cities of Khwarezm, including Kat, Jurjaniya (Urgench), Hazarasp, and Khiva, and the routes leading to these cities. Additionally, he included a map of the aforementioned cities in his work. De Gue, in his work, recalls the Zemarch embassy, which provided information about the Aral Sea and Khwarezm. He also explains that the Jayhun (Amu Darya) River originates from the Tibetan mountains, flows through Balkh, Termez, and Khwarezm, and eventually empties into the Caspian Sea. Furthermore, the work indicates the routes and approximate travel times to the early medieval cities of Kat, Jurjaniya, and Hazarasp.[10,13,21]

One of the subsequent studies, published in 1923 by H. Gibb, is titled "The Arab conquests in Central Asia." In this work, the researcher presents descriptions of the Arab conquest of Khwarezm based on Arab and Persian sources. However, the author did not conduct a comparative analysis of the contradictory and conflicting information found within these sources.[9]

The French Orientalist P. Pelliot's 1938 article, "The Name of Khwarezm in Chinese Texts," is dedicated to the study of how the name Khwarezm was written and pronounced in Chinese texts. It analyzes the various transcriptions and phonetic changes of the name Khwarezm in Chinese sources and attempts to determine the evolution of how this name was rendered in Chinese texts.[15]

Researcher E. Wolfram's 1949 work, "The Toba Empire of Northern China," is based on the Chinese chronicle "Wei Shu." In this work, Wolfram notes the Turkic ethnic origins of the Toba tribe. Another important aspect of this work is that it includes information about Central Asian states in the early Middle Ages, particularly Khwarezm, which is drawn from other sources [22].

In 1951, V.P. Zeldi and K. Kotes co-authored the book "Soviets in Central Asia." The second chapter, titled "The Evolution of Central Asian States," discusses the history of Khwarezm from its ancient period to the abolition of the Khanate of Khiva. The authors highlight the scarcity of information regarding the early medieval history of Khwarezm and emphasize the necessity of conducting archaeological research. The book mentions that at the beginning of the 3rd century AD, Khwarezm, which was growing stronger, severed its political ties with the weakening Kushan Empire, resulting in the Afrighid dynasty coming to power. Importantly, the authors refer to the Afrighid dynasty as the "Khusraws of Khwarezm," considering them successors to the Siyavushids. Additionally, the authors touch upon the socio-economic and cultural processes that occurred in Khwarezm during the early Middle Ages. They note that the region was on the verge of transitioning from ancient forms of governance to a feudal system, with a weakened central political authority. They also highlight the



frequent invasions by nomadic tribes, Huns, Hephthalites, and Turks, as well as sharp internal social conflicts. Furthermore, they emphasize that the influence of Kushan culture was preserved in Khwarezm more than in other regions, and that Buddhism coexisted with Zoroastrianism.[23]

Among subsequent researchers, R. Frye and W. Henning, based on their examination of numismatic materials obtained through the activities of the Khorezm Archaeological and Ethnographic Expedition, sharply criticized S.P. Tolstov's numismatic research. They characterized his attempt to align his findings with the works of al-Biruni as a forced effort lacking proper coordination. Furthermore, based on Pahlavi and Armenian sources, they asserted that Khwarezm was part of the Sasanian Empire from 242 to 350 AD.[8]

Researches illuminating the early medieval history of Khwarezm is directly associated with the name C.E. Bosworth. In more than ten monographs and articles, the author sheds light on various issues, including the origins of the Afrighid dynasty, the language, writing, and culture of Khwarezm in the early Middle Ages, the Arab invasion of Khwarezm and its socio-economic and political situation during the Caliphate period, the overthrow of the Afrighid dynasty, and the rise to power of the Ma'munids. Specifically, Bosworth directly addresses the emergence of the Afrighid dynasty, highlighting that most information about the dynasty was recorded solely by al-Biruni, whose reliability he questions. He further argues that al-Biruni did not, in fact, have a good understanding of pre-Islamic Khwarezmian history, citing the absence of the name "Afrig" in extensive Soviet archaeological findings as evidence.[5]

In 2000, researcher Y. Ling published an article that is significant for its compilation and chronological analysis of information related to Khwarezm found in Chinese sources. Despite its concise nature, this article opens up new possibilities for studying the history of Khwarezm. In particular, the data on the naming of Khwarezm and its cities, as well as the diplomatic relations between Khwarezm and China from 645 to 755, provide a comprehensive understanding of the political and economic situation of Khwarezm during that period. It can be emphasized that Ling's research is not only focused on collecting information about Khwarezm from Chinese sources but also on analyzing this data and drawing conclusions about the political, economic, and cultural life of Khwarezm in the past based on these sources.[14]

It can be asserted that the study of Khwarezm's history by Iranian scholars is an inevitable endeavor. This is because it is impossible to conceive or research the development of these two ancient civilizations in isolation from one another. Consequently, a considerable number of works pertaining to the subject at hand can be found in Iran. Among contemporary researchers, the works of P. Azkoi, J. Heravi, and J. Mofrad, I. Khasanzodah delve into various aspects of the Afrighid dynasty, including their origins, linguistic analysis of the rulers' names, the period of the Arab conquest, and the dynasty's vassalage to the Sassanids, Hephthalites, Turkic Khaganate, Arab Caliphate, Tahirids, and Samanids.[24,25,26,27]

Among contemporary Turkish researchers, the works of A. Özbayraktar, B. Avci, I. Zaki, G. Ceceli, S. Onur, Ö. Narin, E. Özcan, and A. Bademci have also extensively analyzed the aforementioned issues.[1,2,3,4,6,12]

Conclusion. The study of the Afrighid dynasty in foreign historiography, as evidenced by the research presented, reveals a rich and multifaceted field of inquiry. Early studies, primarily reliant on Chinese sources, laid the groundwork for understanding the broader historical context of Khwarezm and its interactions with neighboring powers. Subsequent research in English, French, and other languages expanded the scope of investigation, incorporating numismatic, archaeological, and textual evidence from various cultural spheres. While significant progress has been made, the Afrighid dynasty remains a subject of ongoing scholarly debate and exploration. Divergent interpretations persist regarding the dynasty's origins, nomenclature, political status, and the extent of influence from neighboring empires. These discrepancies underscore the complexities inherent in studying a period marked by limited primary sources and the confluence of diverse cultural and political forces. Nevertheless, the collective efforts of foreign scholars have illuminated crucial aspects of the Afrighid period, offering valuable



insights into the political, economic, and cultural dynamics of Khwarezm during this era. The ongoing research, drawing upon a wide range of sources and methodologies, promises to further enrich our understanding of this pivotal chapter in Central Asian history.

REFERENCES:

1. A.Özbayraktar. Afrîğ Hanedanı: Hârezmşâh II. Muhammed'in Soyağacı Üzerine Bir İnceleme. İran Çalışmaları Dergisi. Cilt: 7, Sayı: 1.2023. , ss.
2. A.Teneri. Hârizm. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı. İslam Ansiklopedesi.16 cilt. ss-218-2018
3. A.Usta. Sâmâniler. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı. İslam Ansiklopedesi.36 cilt. s-66
4. B.Avci.Selcuklularin ilk dönemlerine Harezmi bol.1.Harezmi Bölgesi'nin İslam Orduları Tarafından Fethi 7-10.
5. Bosworth C. C.E. Bosworth.The Ghaznavids.History of Civilizations of Central Asia, vol IVa.– Paris:Unesco Publishing 1998. –P. 108.; Āl-e Afrîğ” // Encyclopædia Iranica. – 1983. –№7. – P.743-745.; Āl-e Ma'mûn // Encyclopaedia Iranica. – 1984. –№7. –P.762-764.
6. C.Heravi, A.Özbayraktar. Āl-i 'Îrâk:Hârezm'de Sâmânîlere tâbi yüz yıllık bir iktidar hakkında yeni bir araştırma // ASOBİD. – 2018. –№2(4). –S.61-73.; Erken islamî dönemde (93-205/712-821) Hârezm'de yerel yönetim // Harezmişahlar ve etrafındaki dünya. Ed.O.Bozan, M.Saylik. –Bursa, 2024. –S.16-17.
7. Daryae T. The Fall of the Sasanian Empire and the End of Late Antiquity: Continuity and Change in the Province of Persis. PhD (Doctor of Philosophy). –Los Angeles, 1999.–P. –33.
8. Frye R.N. The political history of Iran under the Sasanians / The Cambridge History of Iran Vol.3. Part 1. Ed. Yarshater E. –Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983. –P.–124.
9. Gibb.H. The Arab conquests in Central Asia. – London : Royal Asiatic Society, 1923. –43-50 pages.
10. Goeje.M.J. Das alte Bett des Oxsus Amu-daraja.–Leiden, 1875.;
11. Guignes J de. Mémoire historique sur l'origine des Huns et des Turcs. Paris. 1748.; Also, Histoire générale des Huns, des Turcs, des Mongols, et des autres Tartares Occidentaux. Paris, 1756.
12. Kurat A. Kuteybe bin Müslim'in Hvârizm ve Semerkand'i zabti. – Ankara:DTCF Dergisi,1948. – S.396-400.,
13. Landsell H. Russian Central Asia including Kuldja, Bukhara, Khiva and Merv. Vol. I-II/ London,1885.;
14. Ling.Y. Some Chinese Sources on the Khazars and Khwarazm // Archivum Eurasiae Medii Aevi. – 2000. – №11. –P. 339-341.
15. Pelliot P. Le nom du çwârizm dans les textes chinois // T'oung Pao. –1938. – № 34. –P.146-152.
16. Rajapov M. Afrig' atamasining kelib chiqishi xususida yangi qarashlar va yondashuvlar // Ma'muniy xorazmshohlar davrida Im-fan taraqqiyoti va uning jahon tamaddunida tutgan o'rni mavzusida Xalqaro ilmiy-amaliy konferensiya. –Toshkent. –2024. –331-335-betlar
17. Rajapov M.Q. Afrig'iylar sulolasi zamonaviy tadqiqotlarda: Yondashuvlar va muhim qarashlar // Хоразм Маъмуни академияси ахборотномаси: илмий журнал. – 2024. – №4/3. –Б. 48-51. (07.00.00. № 15)
18. Rajapov M.Q. Afrig'iylar sulolasi tarixining turk tilli tadqiqotlarda yoritilishi // Ijtimoiy-gumanitar fanlarning dolzarb muammolari. – 2024. № 1 /4. – B. 23-26. (07.00.00. № 3)
19. Rémusat.A. Nouveaux mélanges asiatiques. – Paris: Schubart et Heideloff, 1829. – P.226-229.
20. Sachau E. Zur geschichte und chronologie von Khwarizm. –Wien: Bei Karl Gerolds Sohn, 1873. – 27-31 Seiten.,



21. Strange L.G. The Lands of the Eastern Califate. Cambridge, 1905.
22. Wolfram E. Das Toba-Reich Nord Chinas. – Leiden: Brill, 1949. – P.6-12
23. Zelda K W., Coates P. Soviets in Central Asia. – London, 1951. – P.31
24. . . ۱۰. شماره ۱۳۷۷. سال شناخت. ایران خوارزم شاهیه خوارزم ایران شناخت. سال ۱۳۷۷. شماره ۱۰. .
25. هروی جواد. ملوک خوارزم (آفریغی) از آغاز تا ظهور سامانیان. پژوهشنامه تاریخ. سال ۱۳۸۷.
26. هروی جواد. آل عراق : پژوهشی تازه در یک قرن حاکمیت تابع سامانیان بر خوارزم. تاریخ تمدن اسلامی. سال ۱۳۹۱. شماره ۴۵.
27. حسن زاده اسماعیل. تحلیل انتقادی روایتهای فتح خوارزم. مطالعات تاریخ اسلام. سال ۱۳۹۰. شماره ۸.

