

SOURCES ON THE HISTORY OF THE FOREIGN MOVEMENT IN KHORASAN AND MOVAROUNNAHR AND THEIR ANALYSIS

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Abstract

This article analyzes Arabic and Persian sources related to the history of the Kharijite movement—a major religious-political force that played a significant role in the political struggles in Khurasan and Transoxiana during the 8th–9th centuries. The study particularly examines sources such as al-Tabari’s *History of the Prophets and Kings* (*Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*), al-Baladhuri’s *Futuh al-Buldan*, Ibn A‘tham al-Kufi’s *Kitab al-Futuh*, al-Ya‘qubi’s *Tarikh*, and others.

Keywords: Kharijites, Khurasan and Transoxiana, Asad ibn Abdallah al-Qushayri, Kharith ibn Surayj, *Tarikh-i Seistan*, *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk*, *Futuh al-Buldan*, *Kitab al-Futuh*, *Tarikh*, Nasr ibn Sayyar, Hamza the Kharijite.

INTRODUCTION

During the period of Islamization policy in Central Asia, the incomplete fulfillment of tax exemptions granted to the population, certain social distinctions between Arab and non-Arab Muslims, and the fact that the majority of the Umayyads and their local deputies did not administer affairs based on Islamic norms, all contributed to the intensification of the Kharijite movement in the region. This movement also had its network in Transoxiana, where its leader was Khoris ibn Surayj. Historical sources related to the Kharijite movement include al-Baladhuri’s (9th century) *Futuh al-Buldan* (*The Conquests of the Lands*), al-Tabari’s (10th century) *Tarikh al-Umam wa al-Muluk* (*History of Nations and Kings*), and Ibn al-Athir’s (13th century) *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh* (*The Complete History*), which contain abundant information about the introduction and spread of Islam in our region [1].

LITERATURE REVIEW AND METHODOLOGY

The article employs methods such as historicism, comparative analysis, systematization, classification, and problem-chronological approaches. The main objective of the research is to reveal that the scientific hypotheses presented in scholarly works are based primarily on Arabic-language sources.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

One of the historical sources in Arabic concerning the history of the Kharijite movement is Ibn A'sam al-Kufi's *Kitab al-Futuh*, which contains important information about the military campaigns conducted by the Arabs in Central Asia. Ibn A'sam al-Kufi's *Kitab al-Futuh* has not yet been thoroughly studied by scholars from the perspective of source studies. The part of the work related to Khazar history has been examined by D.M. Dunlop [2], D. Ludwig [3], and M.I. Artamonov. Z.M. Buniyatov also translated some information about Azerbaijani history into Russian. Although the sections of the work related to Central Asian history have been involved in scientific research, they have not been specifically studied. There is almost no information about the author and his biography. The name of the author is not mentioned in the works of the known Arab historians available to us. There is almost no information about the author's life in specialized academic literature. Even his exact period of life is unknown. According to some scholars, he lived approximately in the 9th–10th centuries and was contemporary with famous Arab historians such as al-Ya'qubi, al-Baladhuri, and al-Tabari.

The anonymous work *Tarikh-i Seistan* is a source related to the history of the Kharijites active in Central Asia during the 8th–9th centuries. Thanks to the existence of *Tarikh-i Seistan* alone, it became possible to write monographs such as Professor Bosworth's book dedicated to the history of this region from the Arab conquest to the rise of the Saffarids (651–864).

In "*Tarikh-i Seistan*", we find detailed information not only about the peasant and artisan uprising in Seistan at the turn of the 8th–9th centuries, which is also well known from other sources (Tabari, Ibn al-Athir, Baghdadi), but also about the history of the Kharijite movement in general. This revolt was led by Hamza ibn Abdullah and emerged under the ideology of Kharijism. The author of the work expresses sympathy towards Hamza as the first national hero who rebelled against the oppression of the Abbasids. The people preserved the memory of Hamza by creating the heroic epic *Rumuz-i Hamza* ("Secrets of Hamza"), which combined the historical figure with legendary heroism. A major advantage of "*Tarikh-i Seistan*" is that it contains, preserved only in this source, letters from Harun al-Rashid to Hamza and Hamza's replies to Harun al-Rashid. The historical significance of these letters has been studied by Professor Skarči and Professor Bosworth.

Chapters dedicated to Khamza foreign and his struggle against oppression and unrest by Ali ibn Sino, who was caliphal Viceroy in Seistan and Khurasan in 796-807, were also written in the spirit of support for the foreign movement. This can also be seen in the eulogy of Yaakov and Amr ibn Lais, the founders of the Saffarid dynasty, Sons of Lais. In 213/828-29, Ahmad ibn [Abu] Khalid was appointed governor of Sijistan. When he arrived in Sijistan, a foreign movement led by Hamza al-Foreign opposed him and did not include him in the city. Ahmad fought fierce battles with them and returned to Khorasan without achieving victory [4]. Among the literary features of the work, it should be noted separately the presence of many poetic quotes. The work presents Persian and Arabic poems, which are found mainly in the form of fragments ranging from 1 to 6 Beits. Sometimes the author also gives place to all-headed *qasidas*, such as Rudaki's 94-byte poem.

In total, the work quotes 49 verses of Arabic and 126 verses of Persian verse. These poems also apply to well-known poets-representatives of Persian and Arabic literature, such as Rudaki, Minidi, Badi' az-Zamon, Ibn Mufarriq, Abdullah ibn Qays ar - Ruqayyat, as well as to little-known poets-such as Bu-l-Husayn foreign, Bu-l-Asad. The author also cites Persian poems by many local poets, in particular the works of Muhammad, son of Wasif, whom he mentions in Persian literature as the author of early poems in the new Persian language, as well as Muhammad, son of Bassom-Kurd and Mahlad (or Muxallad). Some Arabic dialects are given without the name of the poet. The work "Tarikhil Seistan" is a unique historical resource in covering the economic movements and expenses of foreigners. The information contained in the work is important in highlighting not only economic history, but also political and cultural ties. An important source on the history of the 5th-8th centuries of Central Asia is the work "Historia ar-rusul va-l-muluk". While the work is written in the direction of general history, it is distinguished from other works by the richness of factual material cited. It contains important information about the events that took place in Arabia, Asia Minor, the Arab Caliphate, Central Asia between the creation of the universe and 912-913 [5].

The Work *Tarikh al-Rusul wa al-Muluk* was translated into Old Uzbek and Uighur languages in the 19th century [6]. In 1989, an abridged version of the work was published in Russian by V.I. Belyayev and O.G. Bolshakov [7]. The full version of the work that has reached us was published in New York in 40 volumes in English translation [8]. This publication is considered the most complete translation of the work.

The book contains information about one of the largest Kharijite uprisings in Khurasan - the movement of Hamza the Kharijite. "In the year 179 AH (27 March 795 – 15 March 796), Hamza ibn Atrak al-Sijistani led a Kharijite revolt in Khurasan" [9]. In 185 AH (20 January 801 – 5 January 802), Abd al-Rahman al-Abnavi killed the rebel (Kharijite) Aban ibn Qataba at Marj al-Qal'a. That same year, in 185 AH, the Kharijite al-Shari (Hamza) started a rebellion in the province of Badghis, part of Khurasan. Later, 'Isa ibn 'Ali ibn 'Isa attacked Hamza's ten thousand followers, destroyed them, and advanced as far as Kabul, Zabulistan, and al-Qandahar.

Abu al-'Uzafir described the events as follows: "'Isa became like Alexander Dhu al-Qarnayn; he reached both the Easts and both the Wests. He conquered not only Kabul and Zabulistan, but also the surrounding regions up to the two al-Rukhkhaj.'" [10]

Numerous details on the history of the Kharijites are also found in Khalifa ibn Khayyat's work *Tarikh*. For example, in 117 AH (735–736 CE), Asad ibn 'Abdallah was reappointed as governor of Khurasan. He was sent to Marw al-Rudh with the troops from Kufa and al-Sham to suppress the Kharijite movement led by al-Harith ibn Surayj, who had rebelled against the Umayyads [11].

'Asim ibn 'Abdullah ibn Yazid al-Hilali served as governor of Khurasan for seven months or more between 115–116 AH (733–735 CE). When he arrived in Khurasan, the Kharijites under al-Harith ibn Surayj had already seized much of the region, including Balkh, Marw al-Rudh, al-Talaqan, al-Faryab, and the province of al-Juzjan. They were threatening the city of Marw,

while ‘Asim held authority only over Marw and Abarshahr. ‘Asim fought against al-Harith and defeated him near Marw but did not pursue him further and remained in Marw.

In 116–117 AH (734–736 CE), Caliph Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik appointed Khalid ibn ‘Abdullah as governor of Iraq, who then appointed Asad ibn ‘Abdullah as governor of Khurasan. That same year, al-Harith again attacked Marw, and ‘Asim was preparing for battle. However, upon hearing of Asad ibn ‘Abdullah’s arrival, ‘Asim concluded a treaty with al-Harith ibn Surayj, agreeing to rise together against Caliph Hisham ibn ‘Abd al-Malik. Some other military commanders also joined their alliance.

Nevertheless, ‘Asim later abandoned this plan and once again went to battle against al-Harith, defeating him a second time. When Asad ibn ‘Abdullah arrived in Marw, he had ‘Asim arrested and demanded 100,000 dirhams in revenue collected from tax. Afterward, Asad sent troops to Marw al-Rudh to combat al-Harith ibn Surayj and himself marched to Amul, and then proceeded to Balkh [12].

The prominent Arab historian Izz al-Din Ibn al-Athir al-Jazari (1160–1234) authored several historical works. Among them, his 12-volume work titled "Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh" ("The Complete History") holds great significance for us. Volumes 1 to 6 of the book are compilations, in which the author extensively used the works of al-Tabari, Ibn Miskawayh, al-Sulami, and others. Volumes 7 to 12, however, are of independent scholarly value, covering events from 924 to 1231 CE in Eastern lands, including Central Asia. These volumes are primarily based on manuscript sources, as well as information provided by individuals well-versed in history and the author's own observations.

Some parts of the book, specifically those dedicated to the history of certain countries and peoples, have been published in various periods in Russian, French, and Danish languages in cities such as Saint Petersburg, Algiers, Copenhagen, Istanbul, Moscow, Baku, Dushanbe, and Tashkent [13]. The work has been fully translated only into Turkish [14]. Between 1851 and 1876, S.J. Tornberg published a 14-volume edition of the text [15]. The parts of Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh related to Central Asia were translated into Russian by P.G. Bulgakov and his student Sh. Kamoliddin, and published in Tashkent in 2006 [16]. There are also Uzbek translations made during the reign of Muhammad Rahim Khan II in Khiva Khanate [17].

The work includes information about Central Asia from the time of the Hephthalites, Turks, and the Arab conquests, up until the fall of the Samanid state [18]. Regarding the Kharijites, the following passage is found in the work:

“That year, Harun al-Rashid dismissed Mansur ibn Yazid, who was governor of Khurasan, and appointed Ali ibn Isa ibn Mahan in his place. Ali ibn Isa governed Khurasan for ten years. During his governorship, the Kharijite rebel Hamza ibn Atruk arrived in Bushanj, and Amrawayh ibn Yazid al-Azdi, who was in Herat, confronted him with a force of six thousand men. Hamza defeated Amrawayh in battle and killed a number of his soldiers. In the chaos, Amrawayh himself died from suffocation in the crowd. After this, Ali ibn Isa sent his son Husayn with a ten-thousand-strong force against Hamza; however, since Husayn did not engage in battle, Ali ibn Isa removed him from his post and sent another son, Isa, in his place.

Isa fought against Hamza but was defeated. Ali ibn Isa again sent his son Isa against Hamza. When Isa was preparing for battle in Boharaz, Hamza was in Nishapur. In this battle, Hamza was defeated, and many of his followers were killed. Hamza, along with the forty men who remained, fled in the direction of Kuhistan.”

Afterward, Isa sent his troops toward Awq and Juvayn. His forces killed the Kharijites in those areas. Later, Isa attacked villages that had supported Hamza, burning them down and killing the inhabitants. By the time he reached Zaranj, Isa's soldiers had killed around thirty thousand people. In Zaranj, he left Abdullah ibn Abbas al-Nasafi in charge and returned. However, Abdullah, taking with him the wealth and possessions gathered from Zaranj, encountered Hamza in Isfizor.

During the battle, Abdullah, along with Sogdian warriors, fiercely resisted. As a result, Hamza was defeated, many of his supporters were killed, and Hamza himself was wounded in the face. Some of Hamza's remaining men were forced to hide in vineyards to escape. Afterwards, Abdullah continued attacking many villages, killing their residents without mercy.

When Tahir ibn Husayn was appointed governor of Bushanj by Ali ibn Isa, Hamza arrived at a local school, where he, along with his teacher, killed thirty students. When informed, Tahir went to a village inhabited by a Qa'ad faction of the Kharijites (those who had accepted arbitration and refrained from fighting). He killed them and seized their property. One of the torture methods he used was tying a Kharijite between two bent trees, then releasing the trees so the person's body would be torn apart.

After a letter from one of the Qa'ad to Hamza, he agreed to stop fighting and promised not to attack them, granting temporary peace to the region. However, many more battles occurred between Hamza and Ali ibn Isa's troops [19].

Events of Hijri Year 185 (801 CE)

In that year, the Kharijite Hamza stirred unrest in Buzajis. Following the deaths of about ten thousand of Hamza's followers at the hands of Isa ibn Ali ibn Isa, Isa advanced as far as Kabul and Zabulistan. Taking advantage of the emptied region of Khurasan, Hamza re-entered, killed some people, and seized much wealth—most of which had been en route to him from Herat and Sistan officials.

Abdurrahman al-Naysaburi, leading an army of twenty thousand, attacked Hamza's forces. After intense fighting, he killed many of Hamza's followers and pursued him to Herat, but Caliph Ma'mun recalled Abdurrahman through a letter. This battle occurred in Hijri 194 (809 CE). Meanwhile, Harsama continued the siege of Samarkand, and after capturing the city (as will be detailed later), he killed Rafi' ibn al-Layth and some of his associates. After appointing Ibn Yahya as governor of Transoxiana, he withdrew [20].

In the same year, Amir Abu Nasr Ahmad ibn Isma'il al-Samani sent a second expedition to Sistan, as the region had rebelled. The revolt stemmed from the influence of Muhammad ibn Khurmuz, known as al-Mawla al-Sandali, who had settled in Bukhara and followed Kharijite teachings. Originally from Sistan, al-Sandali was an elderly man. One day, he approached al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Muhammad al-'Arid for assistance. Al-Husayn said to him:

"Men like you, an old man, should stay in a cell and spend the rest of their lives in worship."

Offended by this remark, al-Sandali returned to Sistan, where the governor at the time was Mansur ibn Ishaq [21].

Al-Sandali began gathering Kharijite supporters, urging them to support the Saffarid dynasty, and secretly pledged allegiance to ‘Amr ibn Ya‘qub ibn Muhammad ibn ‘Amr ibn al-Layth. The Kharijites were led by Muhammad ibn al-Abbas, known as Ibn al-Khaffar, a powerful figure.

They marched and captured Governor Mansur ibn Ishaq, imprisoning him in a fortress in Zaranj. They began reading the Friday sermons in the name of ‘Amr ibn Ya‘qub and handed Sistan over to him.

Upon hearing the news, Amir Ahmad ibn Isma'il sent an army to Zaranj in Hijri 300 (912–913 CE), led by al-Husayn ibn Ali. He besieged Zaranj for nine months. During this time, al-Sandali climbed the fortress wall and mockingly shouted:

“Now look, what has the old man, who was supposed to spend his days in prayer in a cell, done?” - referring to al-‘Arid’s earlier comment in Bukhara.

Shortly thereafter, al-Sandali died, and ‘Amr ibn Ya‘qub along with Ibn al-Khaffar surrendered to al-Husayn ibn Ali, releasing Mansur ibn Ishaq. Al-Husayn showed kindness to Ibn al-Khaffar and drew him close. However, Ibn al-Khaffar incited rebellion against al-Husayn. Once aware, al-Husayn ordered his arrest. Ibn al-Khaffar, who used to have unrestricted access to al-Husayn, entered one day with a sword. Al-Husayn immediately had him seized and took him to Bukhara [21].

Conclusion. Arabic historical sources documenting the Kharijite movements in Khurasan and Transoxiana provide a valuable foundation for deeply understanding the political, military, and cultural dynamics of this region during the 7th and 8th centuries. A systematic analysis of these sources significantly contributes to a more nuanced interpretation of the complex and multifaceted history of Central Asia.

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