THE STUDY OF THE ANCIENT AND MEDIEVAL HISTORY OF THE PEOPLES OF CENTRAL ASIA BEHIND THE WRITTEN LEGACY OF ABU AL-GHAZI

Abstract

The article is devoted to the review and scientific analysis of the ancient and medieval history of the peoples of Central Asia based on the work of the historian-chronicler Abu'l-Ghazi "Shejere-i-tarakim". The main purpose of the article is to analyze and determine the scientific significance of the data presented in the work "Shejere-i-tarakim", describing the period from the appearance of man to the history of the Turkmen in the XVII century, as well as to conduct a scientific and theoretical analysis of the works of researchers of each period.

It is impossible to ignore the work of medieval scholars who consider the history of the origin and distribution of tribes that played an important role in the complex ethnic history of the peoples of Central Asia. In particular, Abu'l-Ghazi's work is important in reflecting the most important aspects of the formation of the ideological foundations of the Turkic-speaking peoples, in the study of ethnopolitical processes in the Middle Ages. The analysis of the data in the work not only helps to reveal more deeply some unknown moments of history, but also makes up a number of leading works on the reflection of economic, social, cultural and political interrelations between the Turkic peoples.

Today, a comprehensive, thorough study of the works of medieval authors in source studies and historiographical aspects is important for the history of Kazakhstan. Our main goal is to analyze the data of the historian Abu'l-Ghazi, which will help reveal the history of the ancient and medieval peoples of Central Asia in the work "Shejere-i-tarakim", compare these data with the works of domestic and foreign Turkologists.

Keywords: genealogy, Turkic tribes, Oghuzes, Turkmens, medieval authors, historiography, source study.
ИЗУЧЕНИЕ ДРЕВНЕЙ И СРЕДНЕВЕКОВОЙ ИСТОРИИ НАРОДОВ ЦЕНТРАЛЬНОЙ АЗИИ ПО ДАННЫМ АБУ-Л-ГАЗИ

Аннотация

Статья посвящена обзору и научному анализу древней и средневековой истории народов Центральной Азии по произведению историка-летописца Абу-л-Гази "Шеджере-и-таракиме". Основная цель статьи - проанализировать и определить научную значимость данных, изложенных в работе "Шеджере-и-таракиме", описывающей период от появления человека до истории туркмен в XVII веке, а также провести научно-теоретический анализ трудов исследователей каждого периода.

Нельзя обойти стороной труд средневековых ученых, рассматривающих историю происхождения и распространения племен, сыгравших важную роль в сложной этнической истории народов Центральной Азии. В том числе труд Абу-л-Гази важен в отражении важнейших аспектов формирования мировоззренческих основ тюркоязычных народов, в изучении этнополитических процессов в Средние века. Анализ данных в труде не только помогает глубже раскрыть некоторые неизвестные моменты истории, но и составляет ряд ведущих работ по отражению экономических, социальных, культурных и политических взаимосвязей между тюркскими народами.

Сегодня для истории Казахстана важно всестороннее, тщательное изучение трудов средневековых авторов в источниковедческих и историографических аспектах. Наша главная цель - проанализировать данные историка Абу-л-гази, которые помогут раскрыть историю древних и средневековых народов Центральной Азии в произведении "Шеджере-и-таракиме", сравнить эти данные с трудами отечественных и зарубежных тюркологов.

Ключевые слова: родословная, тюркские племена, огузы, туркмены, средневековые авторы, историография, источниковедение, произведение.
**Introduction.** The study of the foundations of the existence of the Turkic tribes, especially their characteristic properties of the organization of space, the true needs of individual existence and development, large-scale migration flows turned out to be important in understanding the space of Eurasia from the point of view of cultural and historical integrity. The social consequences of the world order on the territory of Eurasia at that time led to the merger of various centers of civilizations.

The historical ties of the Turkic peoples go back to ancient times, having developed widely in the Middle Ages and subsequent times. Throughout the Middle Ages, waves of people of Turkic origin came to the lands that were once part of the Western empires. These tribes have preserved a long history, traditions and skills on the way to their new homeland. They not only settled in new lands, but also developed their culture, customs and skills in an inextricable connection with the outside world.

Discussing the phenomenon of continuity of tradition in the spiritual culture of the Turkic peoples, it is worth paying attention to the versatility of customs and traditions of these peoples. Cultural traditions and customs in the life of peoples performed the functions of unification and ensured constancy and stability in relations. Sometimes they restricted certain actions that hindered the development of the population. Consistent consideration of the traditions and customs of peoples according to oral data undoubtedly leads to interesting discussions and reasonable conclusions. The disclosure of theoretical and methodological problems of the study of historical continuity in the spiritual culture of the Turks is one of the promising directions in the study of Eurasianism.

Shedzhere is a valuable piece of written heritage containing information on the origin and distribution of ancient peoples. Shedzhere began to be applied to paper surfaces starting from the early Middle Ages. One of them was the work of Abu-al-Ghazi ‘Shedzhere-i-terakim,’ which tells about the origin and distribution of the Turkic people starting from Adam.

However, prior to proceeding to the description of the Abu-al-Ghazi’s shedzhere, a proper review of the author’s biography would be appropriate. Abu-al-Ghazi was born in 1603 in the city of Urgench, Khanate of Khiva. He is of direct descent from Jochi, the eldest son of Genghis Khan. His father, Arab Mohammed Khan, is the eleventh khan of the Shaibanid dynasty in Khorezm, who in 1603 ascended the khan’s throne. Arab Mohammed achieved great success during the years of his reign in governing the state, in particular, finally setting an end to the Cossacks robberies in the Khiva Khanate. From the very childhood, Abu-al-Ghazi studied at the madrasah with majors in science, the art of war, and methods of governance. When he reached the age of sixteen, his father assigned him to rule over a part of Urgench, and from that time, he participated in political life along with his older brothers. As a result of the political struggle and resulting clashes, he was on the run several times and spent ten years as a prisoner in the fortress of Tabarek in Isfahan. It is considered to be the period when Abu-al-Ghazi enriched his knowledge of power and history and studied Arabic and Persian languages. Bartold believes that although Abu-al-Ghazi spent ten years in Persia, he was still much more educated than his fellow tribesmen[1]. After his successful escape from the fortress in 1643, the Uzbeks of the Aral Sea raised him as a khan. Further, after seventeen years of Abu-al-Ghazi’s reign, he handed over the throne to his son Anush Khan in 1662 and took up worship, and wrote the second well-known work, Shedzhere-i-Turk (Shajara-i Turk). 'Shedzhere-i-terakim’ was written earlier, in 1071 (1660-1661), when his kingdom had experienced temporary political stability in the country, and there were no enemy invasions. Both Abu-al-Ghazi’s works were based on tribal legends and genealogical tables, accompanied by tales about events associated with one or another historical figure.

**Materials and methods.** The principles of historicism, objectivity, continuity, and scientific knowledge were set to identify problems in research work. The analysis of oral sources in Abu'l-Ghazi’s work was carried out using the principle of an actual historical-comparative and historical-expert assessment of scientific knowledge and an attempt was made to identify the most controversial issues in the history of that period. Oral data and legends in the work formed the theoretical and methodological basis of the study, as well as medieval works considered by the author, covering topics such as ethnopolitical history, culture, the economy of the Turks in antiquity and the Middle Ages, data from oral traditions, as well as works of domestic and foreign researchers. In the course of the study, historical relativity theory, analytical research and other research methods were used.

As a historiographic source, the presented study essentially employed the works of foreign and Russian Turkologists of the pre-revolutionary and Soviet-era and researchers of medieval documents. Also, a more thorough and comprehensive analysis and assessment of the posed problem involved the congenial consideration of relevant works by post-Soviet historians and researchers.

Particular attention within the framework of the conducted research was paid to historical and objective scientific principles, providing impartial consideration and exploration of the works on this issue. Following these principles, the study employed comparative and systematic methods widely used in historiographic
research. The summary and conclusions of world researchers of different periods on Abu al-Ghazi’s ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’ were considered, compared, and analyzed in chronological order.

**Discussion.** The history of the peoples of Eurasia steppes has long attracted the attention of domestic and foreign scientists. In Europe, the first information about the Turkic peoples came to the Eastern Roman Empire simultaneously with the raids of nomads. Information about the life, culture and history of nomadic tribes, which has not lost its value to this day, is reflected in the reports of Byzantine diplomats and the works of historians.

Oral historical sources and legends are reflected in the work of many medieval authors who comprehensively describe the origin of peoples who lived for centuries in the expanses of Eurasia, their division into various tribes, the history of the origin and development of tribes, life traditions, relationships with each other. Particular attention is drawn to the data of the medieval historian Abu-l-ghazi in the work “Shezhire-i-terakim”, which provides information about the origin, socio-political history, culture, economy of the Turkic peoples of Eurasia steppes since ancient times.

Nowadays, the study of the works of medieval authors, which have become the main sources of the ancient and medieval history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, acquired particular importance. Abu al-Ghazi’s ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim definitely belongs to these prodigious accomplishments.

Abu al-Ghazi, in his work, written in an annalistic manner endowed with the traditions of Eastern historiography, describes the history of the period from the emergence of mankind to the historical events of this time being.

The work of Abu-al-Ghazi was first introduced to the learned world by A. Tumansky and caused a great interest among other scientists. Turkologist A.N. Kononov, working with the manuscripts cited in Shoedzhire-i-terakim, transformed the text into the academic form, thuswise contributing to the wide dissemination of this work in the scientific world.

Orientalist V. Bartold occupies a special place in the study of medieval manuscripts. Bartold specialized in the history of Islam and the Turkic peoples while studying them over a wide range of issues and chronology. Although he was not engaged in particular research of the ‘Genealogy of the Turkmens’ when writing an account on the history of the Turkmen people, Bartold cited the information contained in Abu-al-Ghazi’s work and conducted its comparative analysis.

The study of the topic can be considered in the following main stages:

1. Research before the entry of the text of the work into the scientific circulation (XIX century until the end).
2. The period of fame of the work in the scientific community (XX century from the beginning to 1958); During this period, the interest of scientists was aroused by the first text of the work in Russian. These works were used in research, some issues were analyzed.
3. Period of growth of scientific interest (XX century). This period is associated with the coverage of A. N. Kononov work, compiled on the basis of many years of research and morphological analysis of the text of the work. These works were used in complex studies and, accordingly, were based on fundamental research.
4. The period of the latest views on the work (since 1991). These works are rationally used to write the history of the Great Steppe.

The oral tradition of the historical and genealogical education of the Eurasia steppe peoples has been developing since immemorial time. History, significant events, problems of social life, poems that humanity considered important were passed down from generation to generation orally, and ancient traditions were preserved in the memory of the elders in the form of family memories.

Oriental historians S.P. Tolstov, A.M. Shcherbak, V.M. Zhirmunsky also adopted Abu-al-Ghazi’s cultural legacy in their writings and expressed their expert opinions on the source.

The literary work has become the main source for researchers of the history of Turkmen and Turkmenistan. In particular, the works of I.G. Karpov, O. Tumanovich, P.P. Ivanov, A. Karryev, and A.Yu. Yakubovsky contains a comparative analysis of the history of Turkmen ancestors and references to ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’.

Kazakh scientists also contributed to the study of the work. In the works of the outstanding scientist A.H. Margulan, along with the legends of the early period, there are studies concerning the ethnic history of tribes. Academician A.H. Margulan claims that Kangullar, along with the tribes of Sak, Gunn, Uysun, is one of the oldest tribes that inhabited the territory of modern Kazakhstan, the founder of state formations on the territory of Kazakhstan. Analyzing the content of Abylgaz’s work "Shezhire-i-tarakime" when studying the history of the origin of the Kanly tribe, he pays attention to the word "skeletons", "skeletons", its meaning in the ancient Turkic language "arba". Literary critic A.M. Zhyrenshin in his work "The History of the Kazakh book" noted that the "shezhire-i-tarakime" of Abylgaz is of great interest in studying the saga "Oguz-name"
In addition, the authors of "Oguz-name", who translated the text of "Mahhabbat-name" into Kazakh, A. Derbysalin, M. Zharmukhamedov, O. Kumisbayev, among the historical sources about Oguz, particularly appreciated the work of Abylgazy. They criticized researchers who considered Abilgaz's work to be a direct, exact copy of Rashid al-Din's work "Jami at-teh". Pointing out that the chronicle data about the Oguz in the work of Abylgaz are much more numerous, he proves the groundlessness of the above statement [3].

The research of Soviet and Kazakh historians-orientalists led by V.P. Yudin, B.E. Komekov, T.I. Sultanov is valuable. Of great interest are the works of V.P. Yudin devoted to the analysis of manuscripts that have never been studied before to study the history of Kazakhstan and East Turkestan. This is the XVI-XVII centuries. among the important works based on oral tradition, Abylgazy's information about the Oguz-Turkmens history was noted [4]. B.E. Komekov also turned to Abylgazy's work in the analysis of data concerning the history of the Kimaks [5].

A group of Turkic scientists led by N.Gultepe, N.Ugurlu, M.Ergin, Z.Bessmertny, A.B. Erchilasun studied and translated the works of Abilgaz. Devoting his life to archival research, N. Gultepe translated the work "Shejere-i-terakime" into Turkish and published the text with other valuable works under the name "Oguzname" [6]. N. Ugurlu used the data of Abylgazy in his voluminous studies of the historical development, life, settlements and works of art of the Turkic peoples [7, s. 8].

Results. According to the author, 'The Pedigree of the Turkmen' book was written in the ancient Turkic language with Chagatai inscription and without without adding Arabic or Persian words so it could be accessible to every Turk [10]. 'Shedzhere-i-terakim' is written in the traditional shedzhure form, reflecting the features peculiar to other medieval oriental works. The work reflects folk wisdom and traditions, history and culture, while also representing quite some legendary epic. The author describes the data following a chronological principle. That refers not only to the presentation of historical and political events but rather to the researcher's comments and statements that follow a certain system. This work is the most important historical source on the peoples of Central Asia, as well as the cultural heritage reflecting the totality of oral narratives, legends, and particular historical events. And certainly, this is one of the reasons why, since the 19th century, this work has aroused great interest among Russian and foreign scientists.

A prominent orientalist, one of the founders of the Russian school of Oriental studies, V.V. Barthold studied the Turkic peoples over a wide range of issues and chronology. Although he was not engaged in particular research of the 'Genealogy of the Turkmens', his valuable efforts also refer to the information contained in Abu-al-Ghazi's 'Shedzhere-i-Turk' and 'Shedzhere-i-terakim'. The orientalist-turkologist noted the particular peculiarity of this epic and its devotion to the Turkmens, which is not found in any of the other Turkic peoples, so this work should be considered with due circumspection since it is written mainly on the basis of oral legends[1]. The academician believes that Abu al-Ghazi could only have written from oral accounts and legends due to the lack of written sources, which is why there is a lot of ambiguity in his stories, especially in relation to chronological dates; and yet Bartold believes that given the chance to verify his story with other, earliesources, Abu al-Ghazi's writings could be generally confirmed [8].

Hungarian orientalist A. Vambéry, who made a significant contribution to the study of the antecedency of the peoples of Central Asia and Kazakhstan based on written sources, especially medieval authors, also expressed quite some interest in Abu al-Ghazi's writings. His works on the Chagatai and Uighur languages and on the Turkic-Tatar and Finno-Ugric lexicography are of the greatest scientific significance. Vambéry, in the preface to the 'History of Bokhara from the Earliest Period Down to the Present', classifies historical sources into two classes: old or known, which were published and translated by academicians-orientalists, and new and unknown manuscripts, brought from Central Asia by travelers and unknown to most orientalists. His work was largely resting on the first class and, among the listed authors, Vambéry mentions the work of Abu al-Ghazi. He notes in the explanatory text that 'Shedzhere-i-Turk', published by count Rumyantsev in Kazan in 1825, appears to be a mediocre copy of Rashid al-Din, and that particularly refers to the part describing the origin of the Turks thus the only sections that represent historical significance are the ones related to the era of Abu al-Ghazi and his adventures [9].

Kononov makes a pointed reference to the records that give some idea of the socio-economic relations that existed among the Turkmens, while also believing that the 'Genealogy of Turkmens' is not only an important historical source but a valuable literary monument, which masterfully presents many folklegends, tales, domestic etymologies of ethnonyms, proverbs and sayings [10].

Contributing to the study of the history of Central Asian peoples, theorist-historian S.P. Tolstov conducted a large historical and archaeological investigation of the Syr Darya Oghuzs. At the same time, he also tried to get 'Shedzhere-i-terakim' georeferenced around the Oghuzs settlements in the delta of Syr Darya River in an attempt to establish his hypothesis on the origin of the Oghuzs rested there in the early 10th and 11th centuries. The scientist believed that despite the chronological confusion and anachronisms, the
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issues of the Oghuzs, also analyzed Abul al-Ghazis legacy. Zhirmunsky especially focuses on the sources related to the batyrs in the time of Korkyt in ‘The Pedigree of the Turkmen’ by Abu al-Ghazi, noting, for instance, that the last section of the chapter ‘About Girls who were Beys in the Oghuz Settlements’ comprises important facts about Alpamys Batyr and his bride Barshina (Gulbarshyn) [12].

A prominent Turkologist who studied the history of the Oghuzs, A.M. Shcherbak, in the description of the ancient Uighur script ‘Oghuz-nameh’, quotes passages from ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’. Shcherbak emphasizes that quoted ‘Oghuz-nameh’ parts are of particular interest since they began with a new sheet, being written as a part of a separate manuscript [13].

The works of one of the few scholars who studied the issue of ethnogenesis and ethnic history of the Kirghiz people, the prominent Turkologist S.M. Abramzon, are also important for the ethnic history of the Kirghiz people, as this is a complex and, in many respects, confusing issue in Kirghiz historiography. Predicated on generalization and analysis of data related to various phenomena of ethnic history, life, and culture of the Kirghiz people, Abramzon investigated the ways of the formation of the ethnic and cultural image of the Kirghiz people. In his complex research, he also gave special consideration to Abu al-Ghazi’s written heritage. In his book ‘Kyrgyz and their ethnogetic and historical-cultural ties’ academician provided Abu al-Ghazi’s evidence on the localities and the birth of Oghuz Khan and his father Kara Khan [14].

At the beginning of the 20th century, Turkmen history and related issues became the object of attention of well-known historians such as V.G. Karpov, O. Tumanovich, P.P. Ivanov, A.K. Borovkov, A.Karryev, A.Yu. Yakubovsky, and others. The prominent researcher O. Tumanovich believed that Abu al-Ghazi’s ‘The Pedigree of the Turkmen’ can be used as the main source despite the large gaps in time and the fact that most of the cited data are of legendary nature. V.G. Karpov, who made a significant contribution to the study of the history of Turkmenistan, notes that ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’ provides valuable information on the history of Turkmen tribes. In the overview comments on the details of 19th-century Turkmen history in their book ‘Materials on the history of Turkmen and Turkmenistan’, P.P. Ivanov and A.K. Borovkov stated that even though the work is written on a semi-legendary basis, it is still an important source in determining some issues of Turkmen origin and early history. Also, researchers of Turkmenistian history A.Karryev and A.Ya. Yakubovsky wrote that Abu al-Ghazi’s ‘Shedzhire-i-Turk’ and ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’ (particularly the latter) are the only sources describing to a certain extent the new tribal organizations of the Turkmen and the process of their merger [15]. Yakubovsky, being an expert in written Muslim sources, wrote a large work on the history of the Turkmen from the 8th to the 15th centuries. He systematized the data on the Oghuzs and their tribal structure, economic life, and socio-economic relations. The researcher of literature of Turkic peoples H. G. Korogly noted in his academic writings that ‘The Pedigree of the Turkmen’ by Abu al-Ghazi is resting on the Oghuz epic tradition of the Chronicle and follows the Taurat and the Qur'an, starting from Adam Ata [16].

Later, the Ashgabat historian S.G. Agadzhanov drew the attention of the Soviet scientific community and authorities of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR and the Institute of History of the USSR in Moscow with his research work where he investigated the history of the Oghuz people using the medieval sources, including the writings of Abu al-Ghazi. In his ‘Essays on the history of Oghuzes and Turkmen of Central Asia IX-XIII centuries’, Agadzhanov also conducted a comparative analysis of ‘Shedzhire-i-terakim’. The researcher believed that Abu al-Ghazi was the first to try to connect and systematize data on the genealogy and written sources of the Turkic peoples and, in most cases, critically assessed the legends and gave appropriate chronological explanations [17].

Agadzhanov noted that Abu al-Ghazi’s writing represents the first work on the history of Turkmen in the world historiography, being based on the work of Rashid al-Din and chronicle of the Turks ‘Oghuz-nameh’.

Agadzhanov believed that it might as well be considered not only as a historical monument but also as an important source for the history of Oghuzes since the very manuscript of ‘Oghuz-nameh, used by Abu al-Ghazi, did not survive to our days [17].

Kazakh researchers also relied on Abu al-Ghazi’s writings in their works. Sh. Walikhanov, the first Kazakh researcher who made a significant contribution to world science, wrote a series of scientific works
relying on medieval sources. In his research, Ualikhanov conducted a comparative analysis of Abu al-Ghazi’s writings with other works, including Kadyrgali Zhalayri’s book ‘Jami-at-Muqihar’[18].

In her research ‘The Role of Oghuzes in the VIII–XIII centuries in the formation of ethnonogenesis of Turkic peoples’, A.O. Koshimova notes that Abu al-Ghazi’s ‘The Pedigree of the Turkmen’ comprises the names and the symbols of each of the sons and grandsons of Oghuz Khan [19], outstanding researcher of history and genealogy, Professor M. Alpysbes believes that ‘Shedzhere-i-terakim’ and other writings describing the Turko-Mongol era, written by well-known authors like Rashid al-Din, Babur, M.H. Dulati, Kadyrgali Zhalai, and Muhammad Shaybani, should be considered as a kind of genealogical protograph as they contain a lot of valuable insights [14]. Professor Alpysbes, in his monograph ‘Genealogy of the Kazakhs: Historiographical and Source Studies,’ claims that Abu al-Ghazi was the first ruler in Central Asia, who conveyed shezhire in writing, while also noting that ‘The Pedigree of Turkmen’ was first intended to record and analyze the ancestors of nobles residing in Asia, and especially in Central Asia [20].

**Conclusion.** An important result of the study should be considered the determination of the historical significance of the continuity of the Turkic peoples in the spiritual culture. The promotion of the idea of identity and integrity in the spiritual life of the Turkic peoples in today's difficult geopolitical situation contributes to the development of peace and stability.

The spiritual culture of the Turkic peoples has passed a difficult historical path. The Turkic peoples to this day have not lost their traditions, which are rooted in antiquity. True, in modern conditions of reality, many traditions and customs of the Turks have been preserved with some changes. In the period of today's globalization, consideration of the issues of the emergence and development of the relationship of the Turkic peoples in the Eurasian space is one of the most important topics in the context of the idea of Eurasianization. For many centuries, the Turks replenished and enriched each other's culture. The historical integration of ethnic communities of peoples on the Eurasian steppe led to the creation of the idea of a Eurasian union. Today, in a world where interethnic contradictions are growing every day, the way to preserve peace, as a guarantee of protecting national identity and social stability, is to search for the uniqueness of the roots of each people, loyalty to traditions that have been preserved for several thousand years.

Thus, a number of studies of the main aspects of ‘Shedzhere-i-terakim’ conducted by international researchers have become a prerequisite for further large-scale research. However, this task still requires a systematic approach. Moreover, the further challenge would be translating and publishing this work in modern Kazakh since it will positively contribute to a thoroughhand comprehensive study by Kazakh researchers. Certainly, this would also increase the value of this Abu al-Ghazi’s writing as a source of evidence on the ancient and medieval history and ethnography of Central Asia.

Thus, the strengthening of spiritual closeness, unity, modernization of the common values of the Turkic peoples is an urgent problem in the context of modern globalization. The promotion of universal human cultural values to the Turkic peoples is an ongoing process that continues to this day. Just so that its significance does not disappear, it is important that a virtuous society be in one unity, without destroying or reproaching it.

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