

# THE DEPICTION OF THE KARAKHANID DYNASTY'S HISTORY IN TURKISH HISTORIOGRAPHY

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## Abstract

This article analyzes the coverage in Turkish historiography of issues related to the origins of the Karakhanid dynasty, the state structure of their empire, the friendly and hostile relations between the Karakhanids and Ghaznavids, the dynasty's acceptance of Islam, and changes in architecture and culture.

## Keywords and phrases

The Karakhanid dynasty, uyghurs, karluks, yagmas, state administration, Ghaznavids.

Currently, Turkish researchers are extensively studying and presenting to the public issues related to the origin of the Karakhanid dynasty, state governance, the adoption of Islam under the leadership of Sabuk Tegin, relations between the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids, architecture, and lifestyle.

Although researchers from various countries have conducted scientific studies on the origins of the Karakhanids, no definitive conclusion has been reached about which tribe they originated from. During our research, we observed that Turkish scholars link the origins of the Karakhanid dynasty to the Yaghma tribes.

Muhammet Kemaloglu research “Karahanlıların Menşe Ve Kuruluş Faraziyeleri” (“Hypotheses about the Origin and Formation of the Karakhanids”) explores the use of the term Karakhanids, researchers' investigations into this term, the meanings of the word Karakhanid in Turkish and Chinese sources, the fall of the Orkhon Uyghur state due to the Kyrgyz occupation of Uyghur lands in the 840s, the Uyghur occupation of Eastern Turkestan, and the formation of the Turfan Uyghur state[1]. The study analyzes, based on historical sources, the extent of tribal influence on the formation of the Karakhanid state. The research concludes that the theory proposed by Rashat Genj, V.V. Barthold, V. Minorsky, and Faruk Sumer about the Yaghmas founding the Karakhanid state has gained strength.

Yusufjan Yasin's article “Karahanlıların hükümdar sülalesi üzerine” (“On the Ruling Dynasty of the Karakhanids”) analyzes the aforementioned issue based on sources. The scholarly article provides detailed information about various researchers who proposed the hypothesis that the Uyghurs founded the Karakhanid state. The study states that scientists, relying on available sources, put forward hypotheses about the origin of the Karakhanids. The research spans 20 pages and effectively utilizes Chinese, Russian, and Turkic sources[2].

Turkish researcher Ekrem Kalan, in his work “Sarayı, askeri ve idari yönleriyle Karahanlı devletinin teşkilat tarihi” (“Organizational History of the Karakhanid State: Palace, Military, and Administrative Aspects”), dedicated to the history of the Karakhanids, attempts to comprehensively examine the origins of the dynasty and its governance foundations. The

first chapter of the work is devoted to analyzing sources and research on the topic. The study details the origins of the Karakhanids, the adoption of Islam and the Battle of Talas, the development of governance in the Karakhanid state, the functions of the state ruler, and the types of palace officials[3].

We know that the Samanid dynasty weakened after the Karakhanid attack and lost its significance as a dynasty. Historical sources indicate that the Karakhanids and Ghaznavids fought for control of Khorasan. This issue has not escaped the attention of Turkish researchers.

In his article “Gazneli Sultan Mahmud ile karahanlı ilig han'in Horasan mücadelesi” (“The Struggle for Khorasan between Sultan Mahmud of Ghazni and Ilig Khan of the Karakhanids”), Ilyas Topsakal analyzes the relations between the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids, noting that the agreement between them is mentioned in only two sources[4]. The author writes that relations between the two states were initially good but deteriorated in the last four or five years, citing Ilig Khan's good relations with the Arab Caliph and his claim to Khorasan as reasons. The article provides an in-depth analysis of two clashes between the two states, in both of which Ilig Khan was defeated.

Translated into Turkish by Dr. Ali Aksu and published in Turkey, Ali b. Salih al-Muhaymid's article “Karahanlılar devleti'nin gaznelilerle siyasi ilişkileri\* (389-536/999-1141)” (“Political Relations of the Karakhanid State with the Ghaznavids\* (389-536/999-1141)”) analyzes the political relations between the two states. The article discusses the friendship and hostility between the two Muslim Turkic states - the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids, the military conflicts between them, and the alliance formed through marriage[5]. Due to the lack of independent research on the Karakhanids' relations with other Muslim states and the scarcity of sources, historians have not delved deeply into this issue. The author attempts to illuminate the essence of this understudied topic. The author evaluates the political events between the two states during this period, effectively utilizing historical sources from that era.

In Mustafa Kalkan's article “Karahanlı hakanlığı'na ait yeni bulunan dirhemler, felsler ve bakır-bronz alaşımlı sikkeler” (“Dirhams, fels, and copper-bronze coins found in the Khanate of Karahans”) it is highlighted that after the Karakhanids gained full control over Transoxiana, Semirechye, and East Turkestan, they focused on establishing the country's economy and minting coins[6]. The author notes that silver and fals coins were minted during the Karakhanid period, reflecting both Islamic traditions and nomadic culture. It is evident that the issues in the article were presented without thorough analysis by the author. In some instances, digressions from the main topic are also observed.

Turkish researchers have conducted scientific studies on the cultural life of the dynasty before and after the adoption of Islam. Bakhtli Melis Ozgerish's article “Karahanlılar döneminde sultan ve devlet adamları etrafında oluşan edebî çevreler” (“Literary environment formed around the sultan and statesmen during the Karakhanid period”) discusses the literary and cultural environment that developed under the patronage of rulers and statesmen during the Karakhanid period, highlighting its formation, works created by creative individuals, and the activities of rulers such as Tamgach Khan Ibrahim, Harun Bughra Khan, as well as Yusuf Khas Hajib, Mahmud Kashgari, and Ahmad Yugnaki[7]. During this period, the Turkic literary language was used for the first time in written form at the state level, and literature was infused with Islamic ideas. Palaces functioned as cultural centers.

Ali Aksu's article “Karahanlılar ve islam’ın yayılmasındaki katkıları” (“The Karakhanids and their contribution to the spread of Islam”) highlights the adoption of Islam during the Karakhanid period, the development of science, literature, architecture, and education as a result of Islamic influence during this time, the establishment of the Islamic education system, and the construction of mosques and madrasas[8]. The Karakhanids, along with strengthening Islam in Central Asia, formed the religious and cultural unity of the Turkic peoples. This period holds a special place in history as the era when Turkic elements were introduced into Islamic civilization.

Emine Chakir's scholarly article “Satuk Buğra han menkibesinde halk hukuku olarak “Ata hakkı ve tuz-ekmek hakkı”” (“Father's Right and Bread-Salt Right as People's Law during the Reign of Satuk Bugra Khan”) analyzes the pre-Islamic lifestyle of the Karakhanids, their understanding of life, and examples of humanity, such as not betraying one's homeland or trust, avoiding extramarital relations, respecting parents, not surrendering someone who asks for shelter or submits to oneself even if they are an enemy, respecting guests, arranging marriages to ensure peace between two hostile families, not raising a sword, not beheading someone who has bowed, not killing relatives, and observing the right of bread and salt[9].

Mukhlisa Rustamova's research work “Karahanlı devri mimarisi bezemeleri” (“Ornaments of Karakhanid Period Architecture”) discusses the architecture of the Karakhanid period and the methods they used in construction. The study examined structures from the Karakhanid era and their remains, as well as their history, built in Kyrgyzstan (12), Uzbekistan (29), as well as in Southern Kazakhstan (9), Eastern Turkmenistan (2), Northern Tajikistan (7), and Afghanistan (1) [10]. The construction of these structures chronologically covers the period from the 9th to the end of the 12th century. Noting that the Karakhanid period has not been sufficiently studied in the history of Turkish architecture, the author mainly refers to the works of Russian authors in her research.

The study of the origins of the Karakhanid dynasty in Turkish historiography remains one of the most pressing issues. Turkish researchers have put forward theories linking the origins of the Karakhanids to the Yaghma or Karluk tribes, but there is no consensus on this issue. Turkish researchers have attempted to accurately illuminate the relationship between the Karakhanids and the Ghaznavids, and their struggle for territorial control. Additionally, in Turkish historiography, research is being conducted on the rise of science, education, literary life, and architecture as a result of the Karakhanids' adoption of Islam and its deep integration into society. This creates an opportunity for us readers to delve even deeper into the unexplored pages of Turkic peoples' history.

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