



THE STUDY OF THE HISTORY OF EARLY MEDIEVAL CENTRAL ASIA IN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE RESEARCH

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Abstract: This article analyzes studies on the history of the early medieval period in Uzbekistan as reflected in English-language academic research. In particular, it examines scholarly perspectives on the political, socio-economic, and cultural processes of the region as presented in English-language literature.

The article also explores interpretations of political events, interstate relations, trade routes, ethnic processes, and religious-political movements that took place in Central Asia during the early medieval period, based on English-language studies. Furthermore, the scientific and methodological approaches employed in English-language historiography are analyzed, and their scholarly significance is evaluated from a historiographical perspective.

Keywords: Central Asia, English-language studies, historiography, early Middle Ages, political processes, socio-economic development, trade routes, cultural relations, historical sources, scientific methodology, historiography, international research.

The historiographical study of ideas and interpretations concerning the history of early medieval Central Asia in English-language scholarship from the late 19th to the early 21st century can be divided into three main groups:

1. Analysis of views on early medieval Central Asia by English-speaking researchers within foreign historiography;
2. Analysis of the perspectives of English-speaking scholars in works produced during the Russian Empire and the Soviet period;
3. Evaluation of views and interpretations in Uzbek historiography during the years of independence regarding the coverage of early medieval Central Asian history in English-language literature.

During the years of independence, Uzbek historiography has increasingly engaged with the representation of early medieval Central Asian history in English-language studies. Information from the works of Orientalists who conducted research in English on the early medieval history of Central Asia from the 19th to the early 21st centuries has been incorporated into studies produced by Uzbek historians.

A general characteristic of the research conducted in the early years of independence is that English-language sources were largely not utilized. This can be explained by the fact that the newly independent state had not yet fully integrated into the global academic community. For example, Azamat Ziya's book *"History of Uzbek Statehood"* [1], the study *"History of Uzbekistan: Development of State and Society"* prepared by the Center for the New History of Uzbekistan under the Academy of State and Social Construction under the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan, as well as the textbook *"History of Uzbekistan"* for undergraduate



students authored by Q. Usmonov, M. Sodiqov, and S. Burxonova [2], all address the early medieval period but primarily rely on Russian- and Uzbek-language research and sources [3]. Important aspects of the early medieval period have been examined in the works of scholars such as A. Atakhodjayev, G. B. Boboyorov, F. Jumaniyozova, Sh. Kamoliddinov, H. Mamadaliyev, S. B. Yuldashev, and A. Ungalov [4]. These studies describe the political situation of rulers in Sogd, Fergana, Shosh, Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khorezm, as well as the history of the Hephthalites and Turkic Khaganates, and the initial military campaigns of the Arabs into Transoxiana.

During the years of independence, attention to the study of the history of the Fergana Valley significantly increased. As a result, new research devoted to the history of this region was published. In particular, S. Baratov's article titled "*On the Question of the Hephthalites in the Fergana Valley*", published in 1997 in the journal "*History of the Material Culture of Uzbekistan*", provides information about one of the least studied periods of regional history—the rule of the Hephthalites [5]. In his research, S. Baratov utilized English-language studies on the history of the Hephthalites, including K. Enoki's article "*On the Nationality of the Hephthalites*" [6].

A. Otakhodjayev's research is devoted to revealing the historical reality of Central Asia during the early medieval period (5th–first half of the 8th centuries) within the framework of Turkic-Sogdian relations. It is demonstrated through historical examples that these two ethnic groups played a significant role in the socio-political and ethno-cultural processes that shaped the civilization of Central Asia [7]. The study reflects various aspects of early medieval Central Asian history, including source studies, religion, writing, political history, and other issues, making extensive use of the works of G. Azarpay, H. V. Bailey, G. Clauson, K. Enoki, R. N. Frye, P. B. Golden, and V. B. Henning [8].

During the years of independence, G. Boboyorov carried out significant research on the history of the Turkic Khaganate. In his doctoral dissertation titled "*The Administrative System of the Western Turkic Khaganate in Transoxiana*" (2012), the political history of Transoxiana and its regions during the period of the Turkic Khaganate is examined [9]. The study also addresses issues such as the unique coinage system of the Western Turkic Khaganate, the minting of coins in the Chach oasis in the names of the khagans, and the presence of symbols of authority characteristic of the khaganate. In addition, the research makes effective use of English-language studies, including works by K. Beckwith, H. Ecsedy, and other historians [10].

Azim Malikov's studies also analyze the culture of Central Asia during the early medieval period. These include issues such as the historical-geographical boundaries of Sogd, the territorial scope of Sogdian culture, the extent of the use of the ethnonym "Sogdians," and the meanings of the term "Turk" in different contexts. His research draws on the works of Y. Bregel, R. Frye, J. Skaff, S. Stark, and K. Wondovek [11].

M. Khotamova's research is devoted to the expansion of the Turkic territorial space and the increasing scale of integration and consolidation among peoples in Central Asia during the period of the Turkic Khaganate, which united nearly all nomadic tribes and sedentary populations of Eurasia. The study also addresses issues related to the history of cities [12]. It extensively incorporates information from English-language literature on the history of cities of the Turkic Khaganate, including works by K. Özjan, P. Andrews, T. Osawa, P. Golden, E. Pulleyblank, S. Beal, L. Moses, D. Vaut, and other historians [13].



In 2022, at the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan, U. Khalmuminov defended a PhD dissertation titled “*The Administrative System of the Fergana Valley during the Ashina Period.*” This dissertation reflects the results of numerous English-language studies by scholars such as K. Beckwith, G. Clauson, C. Bosworth, D. DeWeese, P. Golden, M. Shaban, and others [14].

In 2013, under the editorship of D. Alimova, the book “*Khorezm in the History of Statehood of Uzbekistan*” was published [15]. The book covers the history of Khorezm from ancient times to 1924. It provides important information on the Afrighid dynasty, the Arab military campaigns in Khorezm, and the rule of the Vazamarids [16] and the Iraqi dynasty [17] [18]. In studying these dynasties, the authors also used numismatic materials from M. Fedorov’s article [19].

In A. A. Ungalov’s research, resistance movements in Transoxiana are analyzed [20]. The study examines the process of the Arab Caliphate’s final conquest of Transoxiana between 715 and 751. In achieving the research objectives, particularly in analyzing military campaigns and popular uprisings of the early 8th century, the author used works by K. Beckwith, K. Blankinship, J. Blum, R. Frye, H. Gibb, P. Golden, and other historians. For example, the difficulty of maintaining the victories achieved by Qutayba ibn Muslim by subsequent Arab governors is analyzed based on the studies of S. Scott and S. Run [21].

B. Goibov is one of the scholars who stands out for his source-based and historical research on the history of Sogd during the years of independence. In particular, his article “*From the History of Arab Conquests in Sogd: On the Biography of Devashtich, Son of Yodakhshitak*” provides a detailed account of the Sogdian leader Devashtich, who fought against the Arabs [22]. The article presents information about Devashtich (708–722), the son of Yodakhshitak, ruler of Panj, one of the eastern possessions of the Sogdian confederation. References are also made to the English-language article by Frantz Grenet and Étienne de La Vaissière [23].

In F. Jumaniyozova’s monograph, the history of the Tokharistan Yabghus (620–750) and the Teginshahs of Kabul (640–870) is examined. These dynasties ruled in Tokharistan and the Kabul Valley. The origin of these Turkic dynasties, which came to power in the region, is associated with the Ashina ruling house. The study highlights that their political rise was closely linked to the expansion of the Western Turkic Khaganate’s authority in the first half of the 7th century into territories stretching south of the Amu Darya as far as Sind. These issues are analyzed based on the works of K. Bosworth, G. Clauson, J. Bury, and K. Enoki [24].

In S. B. Yuldashev’s PhD dissertation, devoted to the political, socio-economic, and cultural processes of the Fergana Valley—an integral part of Central Asia—during the 5th–10th centuries, information is presented on the Hephthalites, the Turkic Khaganates, and the early military campaigns of the Caliphate in the region. The dissertation analyzes the works of historians such as R. Frye, K. Enoki, H. Klimkeit, E. Reischauer, K. Beckwith, and others [25]. In conclusion, during the years of independence, the study of the history of early medieval Central Asia in Uzbekistan, using English-language research, has entered a new stage. However, it should be noted that in the early years of independence, the newly independent state had not yet fully integrated into the global academic community. Therefore, in the 1990s, the use of not only English-language but also foreign scholarly literature in research was quite limited.

Over time, foreign historiography—especially English-language academic literature—began to be widely used as an important historiographical source and methodological foundation for



studying this historical period. Through these studies, the political processes, ethnic composition, trade relations, and cultural interactions of Central Asia have been analyzed more deeply within an international context.

Researchers of the independence period, by analyzing English-language academic literature, have sought to present the history of the region in close connection with global historical processes. At the same time, certain theoretical approaches in foreign historiography have been critically examined and comparatively studied alongside local sources. As a result, the possibilities for a more comprehensive interpretation of the political, economic, and cultural aspects of early medieval Central Asian history have significantly expanded.

This process has not only enriched national historiography but also strengthened the collaboration of Uzbek scholars with the international academic community. Thus, English-language research is increasingly recognized as one of the key historiographical sources and conceptual directions in the study of early medieval Central Asian history.

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