

## DIFFERENCES EMERGING IN THE COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF TWO WORKS BY YAQUT AL-HAMAWI

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### ABSTRACT

Researchers of medieval sources are aware that medieval scholars occasionally repeated the works of writers who lived before them without specifying the identity of the quoted source or author, added their own thoughts or remarks, and created new works on similar subjects. On the other hand, some authors expanded on previous works and wrote new ones under the name “zeyl” (supplement, “tail”). These types of works had as many differences as similarities. There were even differences between previous and subsequent works by any writer on similar topics. In this context, while comparing Yaqut al-Hamawi’s “Kitab Al-Mushtarik Waḍ’an Wa-Al- Muftarik Suq’an” (“A Book of Names, Common in Form and Different in Place”) with the author’s “Mu’jam al-Buldan” (“The Dictionary of Countries”), a few distinctions in information about the Caucasus and Azerbaijan appear. Probably, while writing his last work, Yaqut al-Hamawi revisited some facts, clarified, and developed the parts that raised doubts in the work. Therefore, the most recent written work of the author has been preferred in examining the data related to the region. Additionally, both the original and translated versions of the work are presented, making comparisons and enriching them with comments and notes.

**Keywords:** Azerbaijan, Caliphate, Yaqut al-Hamawi, “Mu’jam al-Buldan”, “Al-Ikmal”

### INTRODUCTION

The prominent Arab encyclopedist, scholar, and traveler Yaqut al-Hamawi was considered one of the most famous geographers in the history of Islamic culture, as well as an eminent writer, poet, calligrapher, and linguist of the Medieval Period. The authentic value of the author’s work “Mu’jam al-Buldan” can be measured by how much it has been applied centuries after it was written. Thus, no researcher scrutinizing the history, geography, and culture of the period could ignore the information provided by the work. Dozens of Azerbaijani scholars have also included Yaqut al-Hamawi’s materials in their research and relied on him as a fundamental source. The source reflects the geography of the numerous countries under the Caliphate, including the South Caucasus and the territories of Azerbaijan. The work “Mu’jam al-Buldan” is of great importance in studying the medieval historical geography of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus, as well as the intellectual environment and culture. Professor Malik Mahmudov includes this work in a series of noteworthy sources summarizing Muslim populations’ cultural and scientific development. The author compares the work “Mu’jam al-Buldan” with Yaqut’s other work “Mu’jam al-Udaba” (“Chronicle of Writers”) and points out that the literary significance of the former is not inferior to that of the latter. He stated that although the work generally appears to be an anthology dedicated to the etymology of different countries, cities, regions, geographical names, and climates, it widely covers literary subjects. By comparing “Mu’jam al-Buldan” with al-Samani’s “Kitab al-Ansab”, he believes that the former is more comprehensive in scope (Mahmudov, 1983, p. 17).

### 1. THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

The period in which Yaqut al-Hamawi lived is characterized by its unique features in the socio-economic and political life of the Middle East and the Caucasus. According to historical research, during this period, Islam strengthened in the region, and the decline period that replaced the prosperous era of the Seljuk Empire, which lasted until the nineties of the eleventh centuries, began and continued until the second half of the twelfth century.

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In the early thirteenth century, Yaqut al-Hamawi, who traveled south from the Aras River, included rich information about Azerbaijan and Iran in his work “Mu’jam al-Buldan”. Yaqut al-Hamawi, although he himself was not in the cities of the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, north of the Aras River, received oral data from people he met and acquired information from written sources. This situation leads to the conclusion that al-Hamawi’s information about the historical geography of these lands can be considered reliable. However, there are some complications. The main challenge is clarifying the statuses of the cities up to the thirteenth century. Researchers working with medieval sources generally know that these sources sometimes repeat each other to a certain extent; they use the works of previous authors but sometimes do not mention their names and the period they lived in. The work titled “Mu’jam al-Buldan” is no exception in this regard. As the prominent academician A.A. Alizadeh said about the author of the work: “It is not always possible to distinguish the information he (Yaqut al-Hamawi-N.A.) directly observed or heard from the locals from the materials leaked by others, which often become outdated”. Therefore, it can be concluded that the information in the work should be thoroughly analyzed and compared with the relevant information in Arabic sources. However, only then will it be possible to separate Yaqut’s original and primary materials from the compiled information. As the period changes, the statuses of the cities also change. So, researchers need to pay special attention to this matter when referring to primary sources.

The information provided in the work is one of the most valuable materials demonstrating the devastating impact of the first Mongol campaign on the cities of the Caucasus. No scholar scrutinizing the medieval urban history or culture of the region has overlooked Yaqut’s records. However, some researchers do not hesitate to criticize that source if they cannot obtain the data, they need from the author’s work. In his piece “Nashawa”, Yaqut al-Hamawi considered Nashawa a significant city in Azerbaijan or Arran. In his second piece about Nakhchivan, the author defined Nakhchivan not within the administrative territories of Armenia, but on its border, at the end of Azerbaijan. Researcher A. Shaginyan (Шагинян, 2012, pp. 109-114) considers the information provided by Yaqut al-Hamawi regarding this city as inaccurate. He asserts that Yaqut had not traveled north of the Aras River. According to the scholar, Yaqut, who lived in the twelfth century and had never visited north of the Aras, was unaware of Nakhchivan’s location. If Yaqut’s information is not satisfactory for the author, it is possible to present the information of Ibn Makula, who visited the northern part of Araz in the eleventh century and observed the region. In his work “Al-Ikmal”, Ibn Makula presented Nashava as a city belonging to the Arran Province, showing its reference also as Nakhchivan (نشوى هو بلد من أعمال أران و يقال له نخجوان) (Алиева, 2016, p. 86). Al-Muallimi, who authored the critical edition of the work, interestingly wrote the name of the city as Nasha (نشا) in one of the manuscript copies (Ibn Makula, 1990, p. 109). Ibn Makula asserted that Nasha connects Azerbaijan and Armenia (نشا تتصل بأذربي جان و أرم ي نية). A century after Ibn Makula, al-Samani repeated this information in his work but did not provide a reference (Əliyeva, 2010, p. 130). Ibn Makula’s traveling to both banks of the Araz and personal acquaintance with the librarian Khodadad ibn Asim of Nashava in Ganja enhances the value of his information. There is no doubt about the authenticity of the information provided by Ibn Makula. At the same time, al-Samani referred to Khodadad al-Nashavi as the sheikh of scholars like Ibn Makula (Əliyeva, 2010, p. 42). Al-Samani reported that when they met in Ganja, Ibn Makula heard a hadith from Khodadad al-Nashavi. These also further confirm the accuracy of Ibn Makula’s information that Nashava was a medium-sized city in the Arran Province in the eleventh century.

During the examination, the information about the region examined in the work “Mu’jam al-Buldan” was comprehensively compared with biographical sources, sources of previous and subsequent periods with the same and relevant content. The comparative analysis concluded that gaps in historical-geographical works could sometimes be filled with biographical sources. As a result of the research conducted with the participation of several biographical sources, it was possible to determine not only the period in which the information about the status of certain cities belonged but also the period in which the intellectuals of those cities lived. The founding date of the Ganja madrasa, which holds significant

importance in Azerbaijan's cultural life, and information about the madrasa's activities and teachers have been clarified.

Yaqut al-Hamawi's last work, "Kitab Al-Mushtarik Waḍ'an Wa-Al- Muftarik Suq'an" ("A Book of Names, Common in Form and Different in Place") is rich in toponyms related to the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, as well as other regions of the Medieval Caliphate. This work, which holds great importance in the field of onomastics, demonstrates the various aspects of the same toponym in distinct regions. In this way, it served to alleviate the possible doubts of historians and geographers regarding the localization of medieval provinces, cities, villages, and other settlements. The work clarified which prominent intellectuals belonged to regions sharing the same names. It is also noteworthy to evaluate the lives and activities of these intellectuals who contribute to the region's cultural life.

"Kitab Al-Mushtarik" is a practical source for history and geography. The work's inclusion of several specific examples of the use of the same toponym in different contexts indicates that it is also a significant source for the discipline of onomastics. Academician I.Y. Krachkovski referred to this work as the "Dictionary of Geographical Homonyms" (Крачковский, 1957, p. 340).

"Kitab Al-Mushtarik" is quite essential in terms of highlighting certain aspects of the economic and cultural life of the cities of Azerbaijan and the Caucasus during the pre-Mongol and early Mongol invasion periods, as well as the historical geography of the region. In particular, the current research provides information about the medieval toponyms in Azerbaijan and the Caucasus that have identical names as cities and settlements found in other territories of the Caliphate. This data is particularly critical for the localization of residential and other place names. The author's demonstration of which famous individuals belong to places with the same name further enhances the value of the piece.

For the first time in Azerbaijani historiography, in 1983, young researcher M. Asadov presented this work in his thesis at a conference attended by doctoral students and young research fellows (Асадов, 1983, pp. 3-4). Later, Nargiz Aliyeva presented a report on medieval toponymy based on the materials related to Azerbaijan in the mentioned work at a scientific-practical conference held in Tashkent (Алиева, 1989, pp. 8-9). While preparing the work titled "Mu'jam al-Buldan, the Work on Caucasus and Azerbaijan" (Əliyeva, 2020) in 2020, different points in the data given through "Mu'jam al-Buldan" and "Kitab Al-Mushtarik" were observed. Considering Yaqut al-Hamawi's prominence as a profound researcher and his revisions of some parts, "Kitab Al-Mushtarik", the author's last work, was prioritized when interpreting the data. Considering these factors, the Arabic version of the work, translation, and commentaries were included for review (Əliyeva, 2022).

Yaqut al-Hamawi worked on the issue of attribution of homonymous historical-geographical place names to distinct countries. He reassessed place names mentioned in his "Mu'jam al-Buldan" geography dictionary, which contained 16,000 toponyms. As a result, he created the book "Kitab Al-Mushtarik", of 1,091 place names and 4,261 geographical objects.

The author himself explains the reason that prompted him to write this work as follows: "I provided a brief example of names selected from "Mu'jam al-Buldan", which have similar spelling and pronunciation but different locations, roots that have been lost, and proportions preferred by speakers according to their preferences. I took this step to ease it for those who write these" (Jakut's Moschtarik, 1846, pp. 3-4). Attempts to classify toponyms indeed predate Yaqut al-Hamawi. However, this issue was presented in the context of another study and was not addressed as a unique research topic. The main objective of this work, which is an essential step in the identification and classification of names such as provinces, cities, castles, villages, and even neighborhoods, bazaars, sacred places, mountains, lakes, and islands with identical spellings, is to comparatively present place names. For example, when discussing Ganja, the author mentioned two geographically similar names. The first is a magnificent city that was the center of the Arran Province and was known as "Jenze", and the second was located between Isfahan and Lorestan (Jakut's Moschtarik, 1846, p. 376). One of the distinguishing aspects of the work is that it was written after "Mu'jam al-Buldan" and reindicates some of the concepts offered there.

The work “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” is exceptional since the information concerning the Caucasus and Azerbaijan was carefully picked and verified. For example, in “Mu’jam al-Buldan”, the author identified the river er-Rass (Araz-N. A.) and narrated a hadith stating that there were a thousand cities along this river in Arran and that God sent them a prophet named Moses. According to the hadith, Prophet Moses summoned them to God and faith, but they tricked him and refused to obey his instruction. He cursed those people, and Allah sent al-Haris and al-Havari from Taif against them. They claim that the people of Er-Rass live under these two mountains (Əliyeva, 2020, p. 205). The author revisited this record in “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” and asserted that he is far from such an idea, as this is not the place where prophets were sent (Jakut’s Moschtarik, 1846, p. 205).

Yaqut al-Hamawi, standing out for his accuracy among many authors, placed the Kura River between Armenia and Arran in his work “Mu’jam al-Buldan” (Əliyeva, 2020, p. 256). In his last work, “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, the author corrected the Kura River, considering it the largest of the famous rivers flowing between Arran and Azerbaijan, and placed it between Arran and Azerbaijan (Jakut’s Moschtarik, 1846, p. 370).

Medieval writers mainly focused on the method of explanation and utilized the “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” style in their works. Al-Qalqashandi (1355-1418) (əl-Qəlqəşəndi, pp. 359, 360, 363), al-Suyuti (fifteenth century) (əs-Suyuti, p. 8), and Munejjimbashi (sixteenth century) (Ахмед ибн Лютфуллах, 1957, pp. 205-251) referred to al-Hamawi’s work while providing the correct spelling of the names of individuals and the places they came from.

The period before the Mongols invaded the Caucasus and Azerbaijan was characterized by the growth of productive forces, the expansion of trade, and the development of commodity-money relations (Bünyadov, p. 202; Гейдаров, 1982, p. 49; Ашурбейли, 1983, p. 105). Based on the sources and archaeological materials, this view is confirmed by the original data emerging from the personal observations of Yaqut al-Hamawi. However, it should be noted that the author did not know all countries and personalities equally. However, the research presented concludes that although Yaqut al-Hamawi did not visit the South Caucasus, his records on this country and its scholars can be verified. For this purpose, the data of writers who lived in or near his era have been compared and explained.

Moreover, after comparing the manuscripts, F. Wüstenfeld, who presented the critical edition of the work, stated that both copies were written in two distinct editions under Yaqut’s guidance.

The manuscripts have distinct names: The title of the first one is “Kitab Al-Mushtarik Waḍ’an Wa-Al-Muftarik Suq’an”; in the second, the word “al-mukhtalif” was replaced by the synonym of “al-munfariq”. The reason for this is the addition of assonances (rhymes based solely on syllable similarity-N. A.) to Arabic book titles.

Comparing place names is the main focus of this research, which is a crucial step in classifying physical locations with the same name. It is noteworthy to note that in certain instances, Yaqut indicated different meanings for the same names based on their form, such as homonyms, while listing locations with identical names. For instance, he noted in his work that the phrase “Feyruzgubad”, which means a monetary unit equal to 1/4 danig, is also a homonymous word when referring to the name of the Feyruzgubad settlement (Jakut’s Moschtarik, 1846, p. 335).

Additionally, Yaqut provided examples of synonyms that were formerly used as place names but were no longer in use at that time. Noting that the word “Arran” has three geographical synonyms, the author explained that the first is a province between Azerbaijan and Armenia, the second is a well-known fortress in the Kazvin region, and the third is the old name of Harran (Jakut’s Moschtarik, 1846, p. 19). However, in his latest work, “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, he made corrections and clarifications to the article regarding Arran, stating it as a remarkable region between Azerbaijan and Armenia. He also mentioned Ganja and Beylagan as the prominent cities of Arran (Jakut’s Moschtarik, 1846, p. 19). The author probably did not include Barda among the famous cities of Arran because, following the Russian invasion in the middle of the tenth century, Barda was destroyed and lost its former glory. Zakariya al-Qazwini, a contemporary of

Yaqut, confirmed this approach. He added the cities of Shirvan (here, of course, Shamakhi) to the cities of Arran, along with Janza (Ganja) and Beylagan (Əl-Qəzvini, 1960, p. 493).

The life narratives of numerous cultural figures from various regions were also mentioned in the work. The presented study illustrates the significance of Yaqut's work in containing many new pieces of information about local toponyms. The identification of the well-known individuals' hometowns in the area further underscores this significance. Therefore, in addition to mentioning the prominent figures from the cities bearing identical names, Yaqut also confirmed their hometowns by identifying the region from which they hail.

In "Kitab Al-Mushtarik", the author systematically mentioned the toponyms in Azerbaijan that are similar to those in other areas, along with the cities, villages, and provinces where luminaries originated, as well as their lives, teachers, and students. As a result, this work can be regarded as a valuable source for determining the roots of several cultural personalities from various geographical locations. Consequently, the author highlighted the precise region that intellectuals with the same nisbahs (epithets of origin) belong to and provided a list of related place names to facilitate the work of researchers. For example, despite four places being called Al-Bab, it is clear that Zuhayr ibn Nuaym el-Babi's origin came from the Darband of Shirvan, Bab al-Abwab (Jakut's Moschtarik, 1846, p. 32).

The author mentioned the existence of Khuway (Khoy-N. A.) in two places, indicating that the first one is a valley behind the trench of Abu Musa. Additionally, he narrated how the Arabs experienced hunger here for a day. The second Khuway is a magnificent and famous city in Azerbaijan. According to the author, Abu Bakr Muhammad ibn Yahya ibn Muslim al-Khuwayi was a native of this city. It also indicates that many scientists from various fields of study got their nisbahs from this place (Jakut's Moschtarik, 1846, p. 164).

In his article "Mayanij", the author claimed that this name can be referred to two places; the first being the name of a place in Damascus, where Abu Bakr Yusuf ibn al-Qasim ibn Yusuf al-Mayaniji was from, while Qazi Abulhasan Ali ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali al-Mayaniji was from Mayanij in Azerbaijan (Jakut's Moschtarik, 1846, p. 411).

Yaqut's explanation of which city the famous person's name belongs to, differentiating place names with the same image, is one of the most significant and unique features of his work. One advantage of the work is that the author incorporated the vowels in addition to marking the words with diacritical marks (harakahs) to ensure that the toponyms are written and read correctly. The only mistake is related to Andaraba. When recording the vowels and consonants, the author did not write the vowel mark for the letter "ba" in words. However, according to the diacritical mark, the place name should be read as Andaraba rather than Andarab.

Yaqut al-Hamawi also attempted to highlight the differences in the prominent individuals' epithets of origin. For example, while showing the difference in the nisbahs of the notable figures from the cities of Sariya and Sarav, he emphasized that the former is "Sarawi", and the latter is "Sarāwi" with a long "a". Additionally, it showed that the prominent figures from Sarav, a city in the Ardabil district, were given the nickname "Ardabili" along with the "Sarawi" (Al-Hamawi, 1977, p. 204). It should also be noted that these nisbahs clarify the cities, villages, and origins of the luminaries mentioned in Yaqut's works.

During this research process, nearly 40 homonymous toponyms related to the Caucasus and Azerbaijan were gathered from Yaqut's "Kitab Al-Mushtarik" and were compared with his earlier works.

The mention of many specific examples where the same toponym is used in various places (e.g., the Karger toponym in Isfahan, Mosul, and Baghdad) is one of the points showing the value of the work from an onomastic perspective.

Yaqut was especially interested in the several toponyms that were given to the same location (e.g., Khunej-Kaghizkunan, Bab al-Abwab-Darband). The author considered the distinct phonetic variants of the same toponym and showed their superior variants (Miyane/Mayanij, Ganja/Janza).



The reader should also be aware of another toponym, the city of Andaraba, which was cited in his subsequent work even though it was not mentioned in “Mu’jam al-Buldan”. The author asserted that Andaraba, which has gardens, trees, and plenty of water, is two parasangs from Barda (Al-Hamawi, p. 28).

Modern Azerbaijani historians, who have extensively applied Yaqut el-Hamawi’s other works, have not utilized this one. It is particularly seen in the monograph by J. Mirzazadeh (Мирзазаде, 1988), who examined Azerbaijan’s geographical locations based on medieval Arab sources, and in the article by M. Sharifli (Şərifli, 1962, pp. 89-93), who studied the cities and fortresses with the same name in Azerbaijan and some nearby regions in the ninth and eleventh centuries.

It should also be noted that the comparatively low level of attention that scholars have exhibited in the work “Al-Mushtarik” does not diminish the value of this work, which is extremely beneficial for objectively assessing the information. Conversely, it shows that its application is equally significant.

The information in the “Ar-ran” article of “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” proves that the author corrected and viewed the data he had collected thus far from a new perspective. Yaqut, who questioned and even rejected the separate existence of the Arran province and city, gave details on the Arran province and city in “Mu’jam al-Buldan”.

The information in “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” is more comprehensive than Yaqut’s article on “Miyana” in “Mu’jam al-Buldan”. The author, showing the distance between Maragha and this city, noted that the people of Azerbaijan refer to the city as “Miyana” without pronouncing the letter “j”. In this article, he presented the city as a large residence with many bazaars and pulpits.

“Kitab Al-Mushtarik” is primarily considered a work that emerged from excerpts of a comprehensive geographical dictionary and is generally under-studied. The value of this work is evident in the additions made by the author after completing his extensive geographical dictionary. The additions in Yaqut al-Hamawi’s latest work on Azerbaijan and the Caucasus (e.g., in his articles on Arran and Maragha) have been compared with his “Mu’jam al-Buldan” and other works of his time. These analyses are of particular importance in concluding.

According to the “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, the majority of the luminaries are attributed to al-Bab, Qurran, Khuway, Mayanij, Barda, and Maragha, which have similar names but different locales.

“Kitab Al-Mushtarik” has been a distinctive source for identifying Muslim cultural luminaries, including intellectuals from Azerbaijan, and their endeavors for the peoples of different regions. This study has clarified the identification of the shared characteristics of these peoples’ cultures.

One of the problems facing the discipline of history in Azerbaijan today is finding and identifying more about notable figures, the cities they lived in, and the cultural milieu of these locations. Examining the identities and places of residence of medieval intellectuals from Azerbaijan and the Caucasus who wrote in Arabic and asserting the region’s intellectual legacy makes the work being presented significant.

## CONCLUSION

Following the scrutiny of the materials related to Azerbaijan and Caucasus some distinct points between Yaqut al-Hamawi’s two works “Mu’jam al-Buldan” and “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” became evident. When evaluating the data, the author’s last work, “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, was given priority due to Yaqut al-Hamawi’s reputation as a profound researcher and his revisions of certain sections. In light of these considerations, Arabic version of the work, translation, and commentaries were included for examination.

The value of “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, mainly understudied and consists of passages from an extensive geographical dictionary, is evident in the additions made by the author after completing his extensive geographical dictionary. The additions made on Azerbaijan and the Caucasus (e.g., in the articles of Arran, Maragha Itil, Bayda) are of particular significance for comparative analysis and results.

The materials in “Kitab Al-Mushtarik” obtained from scientists and travelers of the ninth to the eleventh centuries, such as al-Balazuri, Abu Dulafa, and al-Istakhri, not only portray the pre-Mongol political, economic, and cultural life in the region but also explain the proper name and pronunciation of

these toponyms, referencing to the linguists of the time. This is crucial for the localization of the place names. Furthermore, it should be emphasized that the comparatively low degree of attention that scholars have given to “Al-Mushtarik” does not undermine the significance of the work, which is highly helpful for objectively evaluating the data. On the other hand, it illustrates how equally crucial its application is. According to this study on the sections of “Kitab Al-Mushtarik”, related to the Caucasus and Azerbaijan, there were several toponyms that were homonymous to the other place names of the region during the Middle Ages. Cities, provinces, castles, and rivers are all included. In this study, even a currency has been added as a homonym.

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