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Note from the Editor in Chief

We are happy to inform everyone who pursues to publish their research papers, written in an impartial manner and analyzes the historical past without political bias.

Reconstructing the Past: Journal of Historical Studies aims to foster recovering historical past without fear or favor, based not only on the historical methods and methodology, but also on an interdisciplinary approach.

Our purpose is to provide a forum for scientific research without political overtones.

Kind regards,

Professor Hussein Baghirov

Founder of the Western Caspian University

SAFAVID-ERA AZERBAIJANI CULTURE IN WORLD MUSEUMS: HERITAGE, IDENTITY, AND REPRESENTATION

Gunay Hasanova*

ABSTRACT

This article explores the material heritage of Azerbaijan during the Safavid era as preserved in leading world museums, including the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Islamic Art (Doha), and the Azerbaijan National Museum of History. While these artifacts are frequently exhibited under generalized labels such as "Islamic," "Persian," or "Eastern," the study emphasizes their Azerbaijani identity through historical, ethnographic, and stylistic analysis. The research applies a heritage studies perspective and a comparative analysis of museum catalogues, travellers' accounts, and visual ethnography. Findings reveal that while Safavid material culture contributed significantly to global artistic and economic exchange, its Azerbaijani origin remains underrepresented in international museum narratives. This article highlights the importance of contextualizing these artifacts as part of Azerbaijan's national heritage and calls for further scholarly and diplomatic engagement in reclaiming cultural identity in global heritage discourse.

Keywords: Safavid Era; Material Heritage; Museum Collections; National Heritage; World Museums; Azerbaijani Culture; Ethnography.

INTRODUCTION

The Safavid period (early 16th–mid-18th century) represents a defining era in the development of Azerbaijani culture. Established by Shah Ismail at a young age, the Safavid state unified almost the entire territories of present-day Azerbaijan and Iran, along with parts of Georgia, Turkey, and Iraq, forming a vast and diverse empire. Predominantly inhabited by Turkic peoples and enriched by other ethnic groups, this region became the setting for the emergence of a distinctive and enduring cultural identity. During this period, Azerbaijani traditions in crafts, literature, music, and architecture—rooted in earlier centuries—were further developed and refined, achieving unprecedented sophistication.

The period is particularly noted for remarkable achievements in miniature painting, carpet weaving, music, arts, and architecture. Many artifacts produced in these fields are preserved in world museums and collections, displayed in galleries, and recognized internationally for their artistic value. Despite this global recognition, the Azerbaijani origin of many Safavid-era artifacts is often obscured under broader cultural classifications.

Research Problem and Hypothesis: Although Safavid-era artifacts of Azerbaijani origin are widely preserved in world museums, they are frequently misrepresented under general cultural labels, which obscures their Azerbaijani identity. This study hypothesizes that a systematic historical and ethnographic analysis can reveal the true cultural affiliation of these artifacts and clarify the contributions of Azerbaijani Turks to the Safavid cultural heritage.

The purpose of this article is to examine Azerbaijani cultural achievements during the Safavid era through the analysis of artifacts preserved in world museums, emphasizing their global significance and advocating for a more accurate representation of their cultural origins. By doing so, the study also highlights the broader importance of initiatives aimed at preserving

and promoting cultural heritage.

Interest in Safavid culture and art attracted international scholarly attention from the early 20th century onwards. The Azerbaijani scholar Nizami Suleymanov, in his monograph "*The Azerbaijani Safavid State in the 17th Century (Based on the Diaries of J. Chardin, J. B. Tavernier, P. D. Valle, and*

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E. Kemper)”, provides a detailed account of the state’s structure, administration, economy, crafts, trade, and cultural life, drawing on European travel diaries (Suleymanov, 2021). These sources illuminate the context in which Azerbaijani cultural practices flourished under the Safavids.

Chardin’s observations on mathematics, philosophy, astronomy, miniature painting, medicine, music, architecture, education, calligraphy, history, sports, clothing, cuisine, customs, weaponry, language, trade, state structure, and governance remain invaluable primary sources for historians and scholars in multiple disciplines.

Subsequent studies, including “*A Survey of Persian Art from Prehistoric Times to the Present*” edited by Harari, Ralph, and Ettingshausen (1938); Maurice S. Demand’s “*A Handbook of Muhammadan Art*” (1958); Stuart Cary Welch’s “*The Islamic World*” (1987); and Ronald W. Ferrier’s “*Arts of Persia*” (1989), primarily focus on Persian, Islamic, or Iranian culture. Nevertheless, careful examination reveals substantial evidence of Azerbaijani contributions, underscoring the need to reassess and accurately acknowledge the role of Azerbaijani Turks in shaping the artistic and cultural landscape of the Safavid era.

METHODOLOGY

In order to address the research problem, this article adopts an interdisciplinary methodological framework situated at the intersection of history, ethnography, and heritage studies. The research builds on the historical-ethnographic method, but also incorporates theoretical perspectives from museum studies and postcolonial heritage discourse. This approach is particularly useful because it allows for the analysis of how Azerbaijani Safavid artifacts are both preserved as tangible heritage and simultaneously reinterpreted or misrepresented in global institutions.

The primary sources of evidence include European travellers’ diaries (Chardin, Tavernier, Jenkinson, Barbaro, Struys), which not only provide direct descriptions of Safavid society but also reflect the perceptions and biases of outsiders. These are analyzed alongside visual ethnographic data—museum catalogues, archival images, and contemporary digital collections—allowing for a comparative evaluation of the artifacts’ provenance and stylistic features. The cross-referencing of these sources with Azerbaijani ethnographic traditions helps establish stronger links between the objects and their cultural identity.

In parallel, the study engages with secondary sources from heritage and museum studies. Concepts of representation, cultural appropriation, and Orientalism (Said, 1978) provide interpretive tools for understanding why Azerbaijani heritage has often been subsumed under broader categories such as “Persian” or “Islamic.” By applying these theoretical perspectives, the article moves beyond descriptive cataloguing and situates the discussion in wider academic debates about cultural ownership and identity.

Finally, the analysis is structured around four interrelated dimensions: (1) provenance—determining the geographical and cultural origin of artifacts; (2) stylistic and symbolic features—examining motifs, inscriptions, and production techniques; (3) museum labeling practices—assessing the terminology used in exhibition narratives; and (4) identity discourse—exploring the implications of mislabeling for Azerbaijani cultural heritage and diplomacy. This comprehensive methodology ensures that the study contributes not only to national historiography but also to global conversations on heritage representation.

1. Development of Azerbaijani Culture During The Safavid Period

The Safavids were composed of Turkmen tribes known as Qizilbash, and in 1501, under the leadership of Ismail, they captured Tabriz and founded the state. Within a decade, not only Azerbaijan but also the whole of Iran and Iraq came under Safavid rule. Consolidating the borders of the state, the shah concentrated control over the arts, literature, music, crafts, and trade within his own hands. The most renowned scholars and artists flocked to the royal court. Shah Ismail himself composed poetry under

the pen name *Khatai*. His son, Shah Tahmasib, who had studied painting at a young age, became an active patron of the art of the book. During his reign, painters from the Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu, and Timurid courts were gathered together, and their collaboration contributed to the emergence of a new Safavid style of painting.

The Safavid shahs-maintained workshops for painting, carpet weaving, and other crafts. Inspired by the designs created there, luxurious textiles and carpets—especially from silk—were produced. By the 17th century, rows of floral motifs had become a fashionable design for textiles in Iran, India, and Turkey.

Let us consider a few examples of Azerbaijani cultural artifacts that adorn museums and galleries worldwide. The depicted panel illustrates fantastical combinations of flowers emerging from pools of coiled waves. The serrated edges of the leaves may also reflect the influence of the *saz* style, popular in Turkey. Safavid weavers of this era were especially skilled at creating intricate compositions. Safavid velvets were among the finest fabrics sold on international markets.

The most prominent ruler and greatest patron of the arts during the Safavid period was Shah Abbas I (1587–1629). His reign was marked by military and political reforms as well as cultural flourishing. In the early 17th century, thanks to his reforms, the Safavid forces finally managed to defeat the Ottoman army. The recovery of territories and the reorganization of the state brought lasting stability to the empire. In 1597–98, Shah Abbas moved the capital to Isfahan in the south of the empire and constructed a new city alongside the old one. The newly built center was called *Meydan-i Shah*. Over the next few decades, magnificent monuments were erected on three sides of the square by Shah Abbas and his successors. Their walls were decorated with blue and turquoise tiles.

The work “*Poetry Recitation in a Garden*” was displayed at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, in the Hagop Kevorkian Special Exhibitions Gallery during the 1993–1994 exhibition “*Persian Tiles*”. The work represents a fragment from the *Cahannama Pavilion*, built by Shah Abbas along the *Chahar Bagh* garden avenue in Isfahan. The composition includes Chinese-style blue-and-white boat-shaped vessels filled with fruits and drinks. Two men are shown seated in conversation—one is writing and holding a long-format book—while beside them stands another man, and on the right, a woman carrying a covered bowl decorated with Chinese motifs. The patterned robes, silk sashes, and striped turbans resemble the garments depicted in Safavid paintings of the 17th century.

Inscribed on the tile panel in manuscript form is a verse from a *ghazal* or *qasida* by the famous Persian poet Hafiz of Shiraz:

“*O king of the virtuous,
I cry out from the pain of separation,
My being suffers with heartache, the time has come for your return.*”

At the Leubsdorf Gallery of Hunter College, New York, during the 2008 exhibition “*Re-Orientations: Islamic Art and the West in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries*,” a beautifully crafted pen case was displayed. The Safavid artist Haji Muhammad engraved his signature on the object. The European-style landscape on the inner lid of the box is associated with the style of the artist and his family members, most notably his brother Muhammad Zaman. The high status granted to calligraphy and the art of writing in the Islamic world inspired the production of many elegant accessories such as this pen case.

Exquisite examples of woodcraft, including such pen boxes, caskets, and chests, are also preserved in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan. One casket, measuring 15×6×10 cm, is decorated with miniature scenes on each side, depicting various themes. These scenes are highly valuable for the study of 17th-century Azerbaijani domestic culture. For example, in one composition, a young man’s trousers, shirt, cap, socks, shoes, and sword, as well as the saddle and cloth of the horse, provide rich ethnographic details. In another, the clothing of a woman similarly offers insights into the fashion and lifestyle of the Safavid period (Hasanova, 2024, p.148).

2. Silk Production In Azerbaijan During The Safavid Period

The favourable natural conditions of Azerbaijan, particularly the abundance of mulberry trees, encouraged the breeding of silkworms and the development of sericulture. As early as the 6th century, high-quality silk was produced in Azerbaijan, highly valued, and traded across long distances. The passage of the Great Silk Road through this region, which connected East and West, also contributed to the flourishing of the silk trade in the country. European travellers and diplomats frequently mentioned the concentration of silk workshops in major cities such as Shamakhi, Shaki, Shusha, and Tabriz. The complex production process of silk and its elasticity compared to other fabrics made it highly valuable. Luxurious headgear, *kalaghayi* scarves, shawls, outer garments, and decorative household items were produced from silk and sold at high prices.

Today, traces of Azerbaijani silk craftsmanship can be found in major exhibition halls worldwide. One such example is the exhibition “*Fashioning an Empire: Textiles from Safavid Iran*” held in 2024 in Doha, the capital of Qatar. The exhibition, organized at the Museum of Islamic Art, was based on cooperation between Qatar’s innovation and design hub M7 and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of Asian Art in Washington. The fascinating exhibition highlighted the crucial role played by silk during the Safavid era (1501–1736). In an interview, the exhibition’s curator, Nicoletta Fazio, described its message as follows:

“I think one of the key messages is that objects actually participated in shaping historical events far more than we tend to imagine. Something that looks very fragile, complex, and delicate could in fact be the backbone of an empire, truly building its wealth and power. One can build an empire through trade—this means not only dressing people but also creating the soul or identity of a country.” (Qatar Museums, n.d.-a).

Let us consider some of the works displayed at the exhibition “*Fashioning an Empire: Textiles from Safavid Iran*.” One textile, designed and signed by Shafi Abbasi (1628–1674), was woven in Isfahan in the mid-17th century from silk interlaced with metal threads.

Shah Abbas I monopolized the revenues from international silk trade, as income from it was substantial. Within the Safavid Empire, the largest centers of silk production were in Shirvan, Karabakh, Gilan, and Mazandaran. European merchants and travellers often expressed great interest in silk production in Azerbaijan. For instance, Anthony Jenkinson, the head of an English Muscovy Company trade expedition to Azerbaijan in 1561–1563, wrote in his diary that Shirvan’s main local product was silk of various kinds, and that raw silk was abundant there (Suleymanov, 2021, p.146; 7, Jenkinson, 1961, p.113).

From 1538 onward, Shamakhi became the political and administrative center of the Shirvan beylerbeylik. The widespread development of sericulture in this region made it the silk hub of the South Caucasus. The northern trade route passed through Shamakhi, which stimulated domestic trade. The Dutch traveler Jan Struys noted the intensive trade relations between Shamakhi and Niyazabad, Shabran, and Derbent, as well as the presence of wealthy local merchants in the city (Suleymanov, 2021, p.193; 7, Jenkinson, 1961, p.243).

At the state level, economic measures were undertaken not only to encourage trade but also to remove obstacles hindering the development of crafts. In 1547, after the capture of Tbilisi, Shah Tahmasib I (1524–1576) issued a decree regulating units of measure and weight, trade practices in shops and caravanserais, and, in particular, the conditions of craft industries based on a charter (Suleymanov, 2021, p.163). During his reign, reforms were carried out to strengthen the domestic market, develop commodity-money relations, and expand crafts. He abolished the *mal-i-mohtarife* tax paid by artisans on manufactured goods, as well as the *tamgha* customs duty levied when artisans sold their products in domestic markets (Suleymanov, 2021, p.163). Such decrees increased artisans’ trust in the state and contributed to the flourishing of craft industries.

3. Metalworking Art In Azerbaijan During The Safavid Period

During the Safavid period, metalworking art in Azerbaijan also reached significant development. This included copperwork, jewelry, weapon-making, and the production of armor. Among the exhibits preserved in the National Museum of History of Azerbaijan is a copper basin belonging to Shah Tahmasib I, notable for its fine decoration. Another valuable artifact from the same period is a delicately crafted ewer with dragon-headed handles, preserved in the Metropolitan Museum of Art, USA. This vessel, dating to the reign of Shah Tahmasib I, was displayed in the exhibition "*The King's Book of Kings: Shah Tahmasp's Shahnama of 1528*" held between May 4 and December 31, 1972, and again in "*The Nature of Islamic Ornament II: Plant Designs*" from September 10, 1998, to January 10, 1999.

The lower part of the vessel, covered with intricate silver and gold inlay, bears an inscription. It is a dedication to Ali ibn Abi Talib, the son-in-law of the Prophet Muhammad. On the museum's website, scholars note:

"Since the Shi'a Muslim community held Ali in special reverence, it is assumed that this ewer was created in the early 16th century for a Shi'a ruler of the Safavid dynasty." (Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d.).

One of the most important branches of metalwork craftsmanship was the production of arms and armor. Since ancient times, Azerbaijan had been considered one of the largest centers of weapon-making in the Near and Middle East. As early as the 15th century, armor was manufactured for cavalrymen and their warhorses. Cavalry armor consisted of four iron parts joined together with rings: a breastplate, a backplate, and two arm guards. Special holes were made in the arm guards to secure them on the arms. These armors were decorated with fine ornaments, and even Qur'anic verses about warfare were inscribed on them.

From the late 15th century, in a place called Beshkuy on a high hill near Tabriz, cavalry armors were produced. The entire local population specialized in armor-making, and the secrets of the production techniques were carefully guarded. The Venetian envoy Josaphat Barbaro wrote:

"In this country, of course, armor is produced in other places as well, but none are as good as those made in Beshkuy." (Suleymanov, 2021, p. 176; Barbaro, 1970, p. 76).

The works of Azerbaijani weapon-makers are preserved in many of the world's most famous museums, including Turkey's Military Museum and Topkapi Palace Museum, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in the USA, and the State Hermitage Museum in Russia. These collections hold warrior masks, knee and arm guards, helmets, armors, and horse armors dating from the 15th to the 18th centuries.

In 2015, based on the materials held in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, a book titled "*Islamic Arms and Armor in The Metropolitan Museum of Art*" was published, authored by Stuart W. Pyhrr. The book includes many valuable artifacts from the periods of the Qara Qoyunlu, Aq Qoyunlu, Shirvanshahs, and Safavids of Azerbaijan. Among them, the armors and helmets of Aq Qoyunlu ruler Hasan Padishah Bayandur and Shirvanshah Farrukh Yassar stand out as exquisite masterpieces of Azerbaijani craftsmanship (Alexander, Pyhrr, & Kwiatkowski, 2015).

4. Discussion

The Safavid Empire, which lasted for nearly three centuries, continued later under the dynasties of the Afshars and the Qajars, during which time the primary ruling elite of the state still consisted of Azerbaijani Turks. Within the empire, the Turkic language, culture, literature, and art flourished, contributing significantly to world civilization.

The unique cultural treasures of Azerbaijan—its carpets, silk products, copperwork, and jewelry—left visible marks on the European Renaissance and today occupy irreplaceable places in the world's most famous museums and in private collections. Some of these artifacts have been temporarily brought back to the country for exhibitions. For example, exhibitions such as "*The Heritage of the Shirvanshahs in World Museums*," "*Uzun Hasan – The Ruler of the Aq Qoyunlu Dynasty*," and "*The Splendor of Azerbaijani Carpets: Treasures of the Safavid Period*" have been held. However, their

number remains very limited, and they represent only a small part of the cultural heritage of the Safavid era. The repatriation and promotion of these magnificent cultural masterpieces require the support of the state, civil society, researchers, and entrepreneurs alike.

Yet, when analyzing the representation of this cultural heritage in global museums, one immediately encounters contradictions. On the one hand, museums proudly display Safavid artifacts as examples of artistic refinement and world-class craftsmanship. On the other hand, these same objects are frequently detached from their Azerbaijani origin and placed under generalized categories such as *Persian art* or *Islamic art*. This duality raises a critical question: does the act of mislabeling dilute historical truth and national identity, or does it simply reflect broader regional frameworks used by curators?

From a heritage studies perspective, such labeling practices are not neutral. Postcolonial scholars have long argued that museum narratives mirror power structures: dominant cultures have historically shaped the way “others” are represented. Edward Said’s concept of *Orientalism* highlights how the West often collapsed diverse Eastern traditions into a single monolithic “Orient.” Applying this to Safavid artifacts, one sees how Azerbaijani cultural contributions became overshadowed by a more politically dominant “Persian” narrative that suited both Western curatorial practices and Iranian national historiography.

However, some may argue that museums, when labeling artifacts, do not always intend to deny cultural ownership. Instead, curators often adopt practical frameworks that reflect the geographic or dynastic umbrella under which objects were produced. For instance, artifacts created in Tabriz during the reign of Shah Abbas may be categorized as “Safavid, Iran” simply because the capital of the empire was moved to Isfahan. From this angle, museum practice reflects administrative geography rather than ethnic identity. But such explanations still fall short, because they ignore the ethnic and cultural roots of the artisans, many of whom were Azerbaijani Turks.

A second layer of the discussion involves cultural diplomacy. Cultural heritage today functions as soft power, shaping the image of nations on the global stage. If Safavid carpets, silks, or weapons are consistently presented as Iranian or “Islamic,” Azerbaijan’s contribution to world civilization risks being marginalized. Correct recognition would not only restore historical accuracy but also strengthen Azerbaijan’s cultural visibility internationally. Here, one must ask: should Azerbaijan seek formal agreements with museums for co-attribution? Could joint catalogues or digital databases present a fairer representation by acknowledging multiple cultural affiliations?

Another important dimension is heritage ownership and repatriation. Some argue for the return of artifacts to their places of origin, citing UNESCO conventions. Others stress the value of keeping them in world museums, where they reach broader audiences. For Azerbaijan, the key issue may not be full repatriation but rather recognition and visibility. Co-curated exhibitions, traveling displays, and shared narratives could serve as middle-ground solutions that balance global accessibility with national identity.

Finally, the discussion highlights a deeper epistemological issue: how do we define cultural ownership in multi-ethnic empires? The Safavid state was vast, and its heritage was shaped by many communities. However, denying the Azerbaijani core of this dynasty erases a fundamental part of its history. Thus, while museums may prefer broader categorizations, scholars and policymakers must insist on nuanced interpretations that restore the Azerbaijani dimension of Safavid heritage.

CONCLUSION

During the course of this research, it became evident that a great number of unique works belonging to the Safavid period of Azerbaijan are dispersed across various museums around the world. Thanks to online access to the collections of some museums, we had the opportunity to directly view and study these objects. Information about other artifacts was obtained through scholarly literature and media reports.

However, in none of the available resources was it explicitly stated that this cultural heritage directly belongs to the Azerbaijani people. Instead, these masterpieces are displayed under general labels such as “*Islamic Culture*,” “*Eastern Culture*,” or “*Persian Culture*.” It is the responsibility of researchers to prove their connection to Azerbaijan. Professional scholars familiar with the material and spiritual heritage of the Azerbaijani people can identify and confirm their ethnic identity through features such as symbols, inscriptions, intended usage, production techniques, and regions of distribution.

In conclusion, this study highlights several important findings that emerged during the research:

Richness of Safavid-era Azerbaijani culture – Miniature painting, carpet weaving, silk production, metalwork, and household objects confirm Azerbaijan’s invaluable contributions to world civilization during the Safavid period.

Problem of mislabeling in museums – Artifacts preserved in leading museums are frequently categorized under general terms such as “*Islamic*,” “*Persian*,” or “*Oriental*,” which obscures their Azerbaijani identity.

Postcolonial heritage perspective – Such museum practices reflect orientalist approaches in global heritage discourse, where the diversity of local cultures is often subsumed under generalized categories.

Methodological result – Historical sources, travelogues, museum catalogues, and ethnographic comparisons demonstrate the Azerbaijani origins of numerous artifacts.

National identity and diplomacy – Correct representation of Safavid heritage is not only an academic concern but also a matter of cultural diplomacy that reinforces Azerbaijan’s rightful place in global narratives.

Alternative viewpoints – While some argue that broad classifications are necessary for global museum practice, they should not erase specific cultural roots or identities.

Practical pathways – Even if full repatriation is not always feasible, joint exhibitions, digital heritage platforms, and multilayered labeling practices offer viable alternatives.

Scientific innovation – This article provides a novel attempt to systematize Safavid artifacts through the prism of Azerbaijani cultural identity while critically assessing international museum practices.

Future research directions – Further interdisciplinary studies, archival research, and collaboration with international institutions are required to enhance recognition of Azerbaijan’s role in Safavid heritage.

Recommendations:

Accurate museum labeling: Artifacts should be presented with multilayered identifiers (e.g., “*Safavid, Azerbaijani/Iran, 16–17th centuries*”) instead of generic categories.

Azerbaijani academic and cultural institutions should engage directly with museums to correct attributions.

International collaboration: Azerbaijani scholars should co-curate exhibitions, co-author catalogues, and publish with international partners to establish accurate cultural affiliations.

Digital heritage platforms

A unified open-access digital archive should be created to document Safavid-era Azerbaijani artifacts worldwide, including provenance, descriptions, and images.

Cultural diplomacy initiatives: The Ministry of Culture and Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Azerbaijan should use diplomatic channels and international platforms (UNESCO, ICOM) to promote correct representation of Azerbaijani heritage.

Academic and educational programs: Universities should introduce specialized courses on Safavid heritage, establish research fellowships, and create exchange opportunities for young scholars.

Exhibitions and temporary repatriation: Temporary returns of artifacts for exhibitions in Azerbaijan (e.g., “Safavid Heritage Days”) should be organized to foster national awareness and pride.

New research avenues: Detailed studies of inscriptions, symbols, ornamentation, and production techniques should be expanded to support Azerbaijani attribution.

Comparative analyses of Safavid influence on European Renaissance art and trade should be pursued.

Public awareness and outreach: Documentaries, digital storytelling, and public lectures should be used to inform society about Azerbaijani cultural treasures preserved abroad.

Educational materials for schools should include visual and digital resources from global museum collections.

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HISTORY OF THE SHAMAKHI KHANATE IN THE DOCUMENTS OF THE RUSSIAN STATE MILITARY HISTORICAL ARCHIVE

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ABSTRACT

The article is based on materials from the 18th century Russian State Military History Archive of the Shamakhi (Shirvan) Khanate, which covers the North-Eastern region of Azerbaijan. Thus, starting from the beginning of the 18th century, the Russian Empire, which was interested in the South Caucasus and the Caspian coast, sent merchants, scientists, travelers and consuls to the area to study and explore the region. These representatives studied the region, prepared various reviews, reports, and lectures. These documents are currently stored in Russian archives. In the funds of the Russian State Military History Archive, it is possible to find information about the policy of the Russian Empire towards Azerbaijan, including information about Azerbaijani khanates, cities, fortresses, villages, population, economic life, roads, bridges, etc.

Keywords: Archive, Fund, General geography, Climate, Population, City

INTRODUCTION

Shirvan region, which has been one of the most important political, economic and cultural centers of Azerbaijan since ancient times, holds a special place in the history of our country. During the Safavid Empire, the Shirvan region, which was an important region of Azerbaijan, was located in a wide geography. On the eve of the fall of the Safavid state and the collapse of Nadir Shah's empire, the Shirvan region consisted only of Shamakhi and the surrounding areas.

After the assassination of Nadir Shah Afshar in 1747, the Afshar Empire he founded collapsed shortly after. About 20 small feudal states were formed in the territory of Azerbaijan. Several of these states were established in the historical territory of Shirvan. The Shamakhi, Guba, Baku, Salyan, and Javad khanates were historically established in the Shirvan region, which covered a large geographical area. Although Salyan and Javad lost their independence shortly after, the Shamakhi, Guba, and Baku khanates played an important role in the history of Azerbaijan in the 18th and 19th centuries. In the 18th century, the Shamakhi Khanate stood out as one of the political centers of the South Caucasus.

The Shamakhi Khanate is located on the southeastern slope of the Greater Caucasus Mountains in present-day Azerbaijan, north of the Kura River. Its favorable geographical position has led to the region's ownership of trade routes since ancient times. Trade routes from Georgia, the Black Sea coast to Iran and the south passed through here, which made the region an important trade hub. Moreover, since the most convenient passage over the Kura River (Javad Pass) was here, the North-South trade route passed through it. In the 18th century, Shirvan, one of the most important political, economic and geographical regions of Azerbaijan, was in the sphere of interest of both internal and external political forces. The region, which covered the eastern coast of the Caspian Sea, controlled trade routes from the north and west. The Volga-Caspian highway, one of the safest trade routes, especially important for Russian merchants, passed through the region. It is no coincidence that when the Russian Empire began its military expansion to the Caspian coast at the beginning of the 17th century, one of the first regions to be noticed was the Shirvan region. Russia attached great importance to land routes in addition to sea trade. For this reason, Russia paid special attention to the occupation of the cities of Guba and Shamakhi, along with Derbent. The empire wanted to pass through here a new trade route connecting Europe and India. Therefore, capturing the Shirvan territories was a strategic issue for it. At the beginning of the 18th century, when Russia's interest in the region began to grow, the region was part of the Safavid state. After the collapse of the Safavid and Afshar states, the independent feudal states that emerged in the

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region fell into the sphere of interest of the Russian Empire (Abdullayev, 1982, p.12). Our main hypothesis is to show Russia's political and economic interests in the region based on archival materials.

Before Russia intervened militarily in the region, it began to explore the territory. For this reason, spies, especially military personnel, were sent to Shirvan and North-Eastern Azerbaijan under the guise of merchants, scientists, and diplomatic personnel. These spies explored the area and reported on its economic and military situation to the imperial court. Among this information are also comments on the geography, climate, natural conditions, population, and settlements of the region. These documents, in the form of reviews, reports, and lectures, are preserved in the Russian archives. These documents can be considered important sources in the study of the history of the region in the 18th century. The purpose of this research is to study the history of the Shamakhi Khanate based on the materials of the RSMHA.

Methodological basis of the study

The article is based on archival materials. The research used the funds of the Russian State Military Historical Archive and the Scientific Archive of the A.A. Bakikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology of the Azerbaijan Academy of Sciences.

Materials about the Shamakhi Khanate are stored in various archives of the Russian state, along with documents on the military expansion of Russia at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th centuries. Among these archives, the Russian State Military History Archive occupies one of the main places. The archive's documents play an important role in the study of the khanate period of Azerbaijani history and the Russian military expansion into Azerbaijan. Among the important documents reflecting the history of Azerbaijan in the 18th-19th centuries, there are also materials on the Shirvan Khanate in the RSMHA. Among these materials, one can find rich information about the economy, natural conditions and territory of the Shamakhi, Guba and Baku khanates.

In the mentioned archive, it is possible to obtain extensive information about the main cities of the Shamakhi Khanate, Shamakhi and New Shamakhi (present-day Agsu), as well as about the 18th-century fortress walls, palaces, caravanserais, baths, residential houses and other types of buildings. Through these documents, it is possible to study the urban planning and general architectural landscape of the period. Archival documents are a means of determining the general architectural and military character of cities, as well as providing detailed historical information about their economy, culture, demography, and political history.

The information about the Shirvan Khanate in the RSMHA funds mainly dates back to the late 17th and early 18th centuries. The archive's funds mainly preserve official diplomatic correspondence between the Shamakhi Khanate and the Russian Empire, military letters, spy reports, requests to the emperor, trade agreements, reviews and military campaigns, and military documents related to the war. The archive's fund No. 52, called Pyotomkin, contains documents expressing the interest of the Russian Empire in the South Caucasus. Among these documents, the official correspondence of Fatali Khan, the Khan of Guba, who annexed the territory of North-Eastern Azerbaijan, as well as the Shamakhi Khanate, is particularly noteworthy. From these documents it is possible to obtain detailed information about the political history of the Shamakhi Khanate in the 18th-19th centuries (Mustafazade, 2021, p. 76).

The documents related to the Russian army's march to Azerbaijan in the archive are included in the materials of the former VUA, current fund No. 846. Collection No. 468 of the Fund preserves documents from the Russian army's campaign against Azerbaijan in 1796-1797, and collection No. 475 preserves documents from the First Russian-Qajar War (Garkusha, 2011, p. 359). The documents in these collections contain information about the military campaign against the territory of the Shamakhi Khanate and its occupation.

The Scientific Archive of the A.A. Bakikhanov Institute of History and Ethnology stores the transcripts of the materials of the funds of the RSMHA. These materials are preserved in fund No. 1795. This fund includes 5 folders.

Although archival materials were used as a basis for the preparation of the article, scientific conclusions were obtained by comparing archival documents with other sources. In particular, the

information contained in the works of Azerbaijani and Western researchers played an important role in this comparison.

1. Information about the city of Shamakhi

The archive fund No.349, which specializes in storing military documents, stores documents of the Chief Engineer Department of the Ministry of War. Among these documents, plans and drawings of cities and fortresses predominate. Here are preserved drawings of plans of the cities and fortresses of Baku, Ganja, Shamakhi, Shusha, Sheki, Guba, Lankaran, Nakhchivan belonging to different years (Plans and descriptions of cities, fortresses, villages and other populated areas of the former Russian Empire, 1820, d. 3329, p.18). Documents related to the city of Shamakhi can be found in the fund. Through these documents, it is possible to study the urban development of Shamakhi and the general architectural landscape of the buildings in it.

The 21-28 sheets of the 6078 file of the 349th fund contain a plan of the city of Shamakhi drawn up in 1844 (Plan of the city of Shamakhi, 1844, d. 6078, pp. 21-28). Although Shamakhi is considered the main city of the Shirvan region, for some reason the plan differs from the plans of other cities in its inaccurate design. Thus, the plan mainly reflects the residential houses and neighborhoods of the city of Shamakhi in the first half and middle of the 19th century. The plan also shows the location of the khan's palace, which remained until the middle of the 19th century, and the remains of the city fortress walls (Salamzadeh, 1964, p. 207). The plan shows the city expanding downwards from a high hill.

Another interesting document about the city of Shamakhi kept in the archive are paintings. Thus, in the document No. 808, included in the collection No. 418 of the archive fund No. 846, the "Drawing of Old Shamakhi from the north" is stored (Description of the city of Shamakhi, 1835, d. 808, p. 473). Although the exact date is not indicated on the painting, the absence of new neighborhoods in the painting suggests that it was painted in the first half of the 19th century. In the picture, you can see two mosques with minarets and the remains of the fortress walls in the city.

The archive contains a large collection of documents on the history of the city of Shamakhi. They are mainly preserved in the fund 1105. The most interesting of the documents in list number 81 is related to the calculation and assessment of the damage caused to the local population during the 1828 Shamakhi earthquake. The documents included in the list mention the names of the masters who will participate in the restoration of the city. This helps us to clarify the names of the builders and architects of the buildings built in those years. Thus, on the 18th sheet of the work folder No. 81, the name of the builder Haji Taghi is mentioned, (Report of the Commandant of the Shirvan Province von Ascheberg to the Military Governor of Tbilisi General Nikolai Sipyagin, 1828, d.80, p. 81) and on the 81st sheet, the name of the master Yaqub. It should be noted that the architect of the Seven Domes Mausoleum built in Shamakhi during this period was Haji Tagi. Master Yayub is shown as the restorer of the collapsed bridge over the Zogalavay River in Shamakhi (Report of the Commandant of the Shirvan Province von Ascheberg to the Military Governor of Tbilisi General Nikolai Sipyagin, 1828, d. 80, p. 83).

In general, the archive contains a large number of documents about the earthquake that occurred in Shamakhi on July 28, 1828. One of them is a letter written by the Shirvan commandant von Ascheberg to the military governor of Tbilisi. It is thanks to this letter that we obtain detailed information about the earthquake. Based on this letter, we obtain detailed information about the earthquake (Report of the Commandant of the Shirvan Province von Ascheberg to the Military Governor of Tbilisi General Nikolai Sipyagin, 1828, d. 80, p. 14). The earthquake caused serious damage to the city, there were a lot of casualties, and a commission was created to eliminate the consequences, as reflected in several documents. Thus, on pages 14-15 of the 80th case file there is a report of the commandant. It is written there that 247 houses and 30 shops were destroyed in the city of Shamakhi and surrounding villages, and 197 houses and 20 shops were seriously damaged (Description of the city of Shamakhi, 1835, d. 808, p. 15).

One of the information reflecting the administrative and political situation of the Shamakhi Khanate preserved in the funds of the RSMHA is the information booklet prepared by the Russian army colonel S.D. Burnashev, who was an advisor and Russian consul to the Kartli-Kakheti Tsar Irakli II at

the end of the 18th century (1783). The booklet is of a general nature. The review names and describes the main political and state institutions in the territory of Azerbaijan. The document is called “Description of the Azerbaijani provinces in Persia and their political situation” (Burnashev, 1773, p. 1).

Burnashev's work was published in Kursk in 1793 as a booklet. In the section “Semi-separation of Azerbaijani possessions” of the description, Stepan Burnashev provides a brief overview of the khanates located on the territory of Azerbaijan (Mustafazade, 2020, p. 307). Burnashev mentions the Shamakhi Khanate in his work under its old name Shirvan. He describes Shirvan as a larger territory than it is today and shows the Safavid state as a province with access to the sea. He writes that it is currently located in Azerbaijan, its borders are with the Derbent Khanate (Guba Khanate - **author**) to the north, the Caspian Sea and the Baku Khanate to the east, the Kur River to the southwest, and the Nukha (Sheki) Khanate to the west. He notes that the Shirvan Khanate was ruled by two brothers, Muhammadsaid Khan and Agasi Khan, and their residence was located in New Shamakhi (Aghsu). He describes the khans as being powerless, unable to field 2,000,000 armed forces and unable to retain Lezgins as mercenaries, and notes that they were constantly oppressed by the Guba Khan, Fatali Khan. He explains the forced alliance with Fatali Khan against the Karabakh Khan Ibrahim Khan as being due to their weakness. Burnashov also specifically points out that, despite having extensive trade relations with Georgia, the khanate had no political relations with the Kakhetian Tsar Irakli II (Mustafazade, 2020, p. 311).

2. “Description of Shirvan” review

One of the most interesting documents about the Shirvan Khanate stored in the Russian State Military History Archive is the review “Description of Shirvan” prepared in 1796 by the Tsarist army officer Ober Quartermaster Ivan Dveryakin. The review consists of several parts. Ivan Dveryakin gives a detailed description of the Shirvan region in the review, attempting to study the economic and military power of the Shamakhi Khanate. Most likely, this description was a preparatory one, regarding how the army would use its supplies and infrastructure in the event of a possible military expansion of Russian troops into the region in the future. Because, there are many facts in the review that indicate this. Dveryakin notes the convenient route for the army to pass. He notes the army's food supply, horse feeding, and sources of fresh water.

The review includes sections entitled “Shirvan”, “Absheron”, “Salyan region”. Dveryakin notes that the mentioned regions are closely connected with the Shamakhi Khanate and states that, although they are currently separate khanate territories, they were eventually included in the Shirvan region.

The review is kept in the former VUA of the archive, currently in the 846th fund, in part II of the case number 18474. In the introduction to the 31-page review, Ivan Dveryakin states that the ruler of Shirvan was the Shamakhi Khan Mustafa Khan. The “Shirvan” part of the review consists of the following sections: “Administrative territory of Shirvan”, “Climate”, “Mountains, rivers, ports, lakes and water wells”, “Population, cities, villages and settlements of the population of Shirvan”, “Population management”, “Roads”, “Trade” and “Income of landowners from their properties” (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 2).

The Shirvan section begins with an indication of the borders and geographical location of the khanate. It is noted that it borders the Guba Khanate in the north through mountainous terrain, and in the east it covers the territory up to the Caspian Sea coast and the Yashma caravanserai. It is also explained in detail that the khanate bordered the Sheki Khanate from the mouth of the Kura River in the south along the Mughan steppe to the west along the Kura River and to the north of the Goychay River. The review states that the territory of the khanate extended 100 versts (1 verst - 1.06 km) from north to south, 150 versts from west to east, and thus the khanate had an area of 15,000 versts (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 3).

The section “Administrative territory of Shirvan” begins with the sentence that it was governed by the khan, whose main residence was Shamakhi. It is also shown that the Shirvan land consists of two parts: mountainous and plain. Dvaryakin's mention of Mustafa Khan's possession of ports on the Kur

and Goychay rivers is an example of the fairly developed transport and trade system in the khanate. The review mentions 6 large estates of Mustafa Khan. Dvoryakin does not mention the administrative divisions of the khanate, but lists the names of the estates that the khan ruled directly. The first estate is the historical Shamakhi lands located between the Kura and Goychay rivers, which encompass the mountainous area. The second estates are the territories between the Goychay and Girdman rivers, and the third is the territories between the Girdmanchay and Agsu rivers. The review included the Baku Khanate as the 4th civil war of Mustafa Khan (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 4).

The 5th estate mentioned in the review was the Caspian coastal areas seized after the death of Fatali Khan. It is noted that these territories previously belonged to the Guba Khan, where infertile clay soils prevailed. It is stated that only the Pirsaat River passes through the area, which is fed by seasonal waters and is of no benefit to the environment. The fact that this new estate has poor grass cover and that there is only one stone bridge over the Pirsaat River is also noteworthy. The Salyan district, which was mentioned as the 6th main estate of the Khan, was ruled by a sultan appointed by the Khan. The review noted that the Salyan district is located on both banks of the Kura River, covering the area up to the point where the Kura flows into the Caspian Sea. Previously, it belonged to the Guba Khan, but is currently among the possessions of Mustafa Khan. As can be seen, after the death of Fatali Khan, the Baku Khanate, Salyan and Javad Sultanates, which he had subordinated to himself, were seized by Mustafa Khan (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 5).

Historical literature contains extensive information about the names of 17 districts, which included various villages that existed in the Shamakhi Khanate from the 90s of the 18th century, who owned them, the geographical area they were located in, and the main occupations of their population (Bayramova, 2009, p. 18). It seems that Ivan Dvorakin did not go into the details of the administrative division of the Khanate, but only outlined the main territories that would be of interest to the tsarist court.

The section called “Climate” discusses the harsh climate of the Shirvan region. The description of the summer being very hot and the winter being sometimes terribly cold attracts attention. Dvoryakin, in addition to stating that the climate of the plains and the mountainous areas is different from each other, emphasizes that there are a lot of insects on the banks of the Kura even in November. He tries to show the high precipitation in the mountainous areas and the low precipitation in the plains, and the temperature of the air by season. He states that autumn and spring are mild, winter in the mountains is harsh, and in the plains it is mild. The fact that summers are too hot in the plains is one of the main points that Dvoryaki complained about (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 6).

Ivan Dvoryakin writes in the section “Mountains, rivers, ports, lakes and water wells” that the mountains in the Shirvan region are very high and have steep cliffs. He notes that “the tops of the mountains are always covered with snow and many rivers flowing in the area originate from these mountains. The rivers are abundant and flow from north to south. The Goychay River is the most prominent among the rivers. The distance between the river banks is 40-65 sazhens (1 sazhen – 50 cm-**author**). An important road to Shamakhi passes over the river. Ferries are used to cross from one bank of the river to the other. There are a large number of irrigation canals on the banks of the Goychay. Villages use these canals. The river flows into the Kura River (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 8).

When writing about the Girdman River, Dvoryakin states that it takes its source from Babadag. He writes that its banks are rocky and clayey and that it consists of three branches. The review states that the people of Shamakhi dug several canals from the river's branches. The canals are for irrigation purposes. One branch of the road to Ganja mentioned above also passes over the Girdmanchay (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 8).

The review also provides information about the Alijanchay, Turyanchay and Agsu rivers. Only the Agsu River is particularly distinguished. In addition to the extensive use of the river for irrigation, he also notes the existence of a fishery on its banks. Dvoryakin writes that Russian and Astrakhan merchants bought fish caught here for 18-20 thousand Derbent (Guba) coins per year. This, in turn, when converted into Russian rubles, amounted to 7 thousand 300 rubles (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 10).

In the section “Population, cities, villages and settlements of the population of Shirvan”, Dvoryakin writes that the city of Yeni Shamakhi is located in the estate of the Shamakhi Khan on the right bank of the Agsu River, on a flat place surrounded by stone fences. He notes that the fortress walls surrounding the city are built of red brick and have a thickness of 1 arshin to 5 arshin. It is surrounded by a moat 5 sazhens long and 2 sazhens deep. The length of the moat is about 270 sazhens. The city has three fortress gates. They are located in the north, west and south directions. The khan's palace and some of the residents' houses in the city are built of stone. But there are also a large number of houses made of reeds and clay. These houses are mainly located on the southern side of the city. The houses on the northern side of the city, located on the higher ground, are built of stone. Some houses are dugout-shaped and have only a chimney and no windows. The population living here mainly stays in these houses during the winter months. In the summer, they migrate to the mountains (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 11).

The Tsarist officer distinguishes the city of Shamakhi as the largest city of the khanate. He writes that there are 710 Muslim and 70 Christian houses in the city. In addition, 840 families living a nomadic life settled around the city. 25 canals were laid inside the city for water supply. Dvoryakin emphasizes that the Shamakhi Khanate had 38 villages and 2700 houses in them. From the review, we learn that there are 230 houses in 6 Christian villages. The review mentions all 38 villages and hamlets in the Shamakhi Khanate. The Tsarist officer groups the villages not by districts in the khanate, but by rivers. The villages are mainly listed along the banks of the Goyshay, Agsu, Pirsaat, Aljanchay, Turyanchay, Salut and Shamakhi rivers. Sometimes, the number of houses in the villages is also indicated by writing notes. He states that there are 23 houses in the village of Mochaghi, where Mustafa Khan lived (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 14).

Although the section on “Population Management” does not provide extensive information, it touches on the main occupations of the population. The main role of the ruling class in production relations in the khanate is noted. The section states that, the peasantry is mainly engaged in agriculture and pays taxes to the khanate. They store the grain they sow mainly in underground warehouses and grind it in mills. They and their pets are well fed. Grain is grown mainly in the plains of Shirvan and Absheron. Silk growing, one of the main occupations of the population in and around Shamakhi, did not escape Dvariaki's attention. The Tsarist officer wrote in his notes that there were a large number of mulberry gardens in the khanate. Silk was the main production area, and products were produced and sold from weaving looms in Shamakhi. Silk was the main production area, and products were produced and sold from weaving looms in Shamakhi. Not only textile, but also paper was produced from silk. The finished product was exported to foreign countries through the port of Baku (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 14).

Regarding the population of the Khanate, Dvaryakin writes that the local people are very hardworking and peaceful. The local population is not inclined to war, they are loyal to their beliefs and the Khan. Men play the main role in the family, women are completely dependent on them. The population is not friendly towards newcomers. If a stranger passes through their village, they do not show him hospitality (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 15).

The section of the review entitled “Roads” is about the roads leading to and from the city of Shamakhi. The author lists all the main transit routes through the khanate. The author lists all the main transit routes through the khanate. He mentions the first road as the difficult mountain road along which the Russian army came from Derbent to the khanate. He reminds us that there are difficult mountain passes on the road and that this creates additional difficulties for the army. The second road is the road from Baku. He notes that the condition of this road is also not good. The army may suffer greatly if it comes this way. The third road is from Baku and passes through a flat area. The road does not pose any difficulties as it passes through semi-desert terrain, but the sparse grass cover and lack of water along the road are some of the difficulties that pose problems. During the rainy season, the road is almost impassable. The road from Baku to Salyan is listed as the fourth road. This road is also undeveloped as it passes through flat and rugged terrain, but it is suitable for trailers to pass through (Dveryakin, 1796, p. 15).

One of the main roads mentioned by Dvaryakin is the road from Shamakhi to Ganja. This road attracts the attention of the Russian officer due to its military and economic importance. He writes that the road to Ganja is in relatively good condition, as it plays an important role in international trade. The

only drawback of the road is that it crosses several rivers and during the rainy season, when they overflow their banks, it becomes impassable. In addition to these main roads, Ivan Dvaryakin also mentions narrow paths from the capital city of Shamakhi to the villages. He writes that the roads are not wide, and that the local population mainly travels on horseback. However, one of the shortcomings of the section is that the author almost completely ignores the internal roads. He also writes that the roads from the fortress to the villages pass through flat terrain, adding the Baku roads. The only difficult road here is the mountain road to Guba (Dvaryakin, 1796, p. 16).

The author of the review does not ignore trade, which was the main source of income of the Shamakhi Khanate. In the section "Trade", he mentions the city of Shamakhi as a major trade center. It states that merchants and the population constantly flocked to the city to make purchases. Dvaryakin writes that silk, paper and grain were transported by caravans on camels and horses to Baku, and from there European goods, including iron, copper, lead, sugar, etc., were brought back (Dvaryakin, 1796, pp. 16-17). From the overview, it is clear that both domestic and international trade was very active in the khanate.

Since the Baku Khanate and the Salyan region were subordinate to the Shamakhi Khanate at the end of the 19th century, the review also provides brief information about these regions in the sections entitled "In Absheron" and "In the Salyan Circle". Dvaryakin mainly focuses on the sources of income, population and settlements in the Baku and Salyan territories. Most likely, the main purpose of the tsarist officer in compiling the review was to ensure future economic interests in the event of the Russian Empire's invasion of the territory. For this reason, the section of the review "Income from the landowners' estates" draws special attention. It is reported that the Shamakhi Khan collected taxes from the population under his control in the form of finished products. The population pays a tenth of the silk it produces as tax. When money is needed, he sends his tax collectors to their estates. From the nomadic population, he collects two animals for every 100 animals, two batmans of cheese, and one-fourth of honey from each village as a tax. The Khan collects taxes in the amount of 60 thousand per year from the city of Shamakhi, and 7 thousand per year from the coppersmiths (Dvaryakin, 1796, p. 18).

3. Documents reflecting Russian aggression

Among the documents reflecting the military expansion of the Russian Empire into the South Caucasus in the late 18th and early 19th centuries in the funds of the RSMHA, there are also materials related to the Shamakhi Khanate. These materials are mainly included in the archive's collection No. 52, called the Pyotimkin fund, and collection No. 475 of fund 846, which reflects the course of the First Russian-Qajar War. Also, collection No. 468 of fund No. 846 is an important source for studying the Russian army's march to Azerbaijan in 1796-1797 (Dmitrochenkova, 2009, p. 241).

Collection No. 468 of Fund No. 846 preserves documents of Russia's military expansion into Azerbaijan, which began in 1796 under the command of Count Valerian Zubov. These documents include instructions given to V. Zubov by the emperor and the palace, army supply documents, official correspondence and the count's travel diary. The documents allow us to obtain information about Zubov's attack on the Shamakhi Khanate during the campaign and about the city after the invasion. From the document "Instruction to General V.A. Zubov" dated February 18, 1796, consisting of 30 paragraphs, on sheets 1-7 of file number 2801 of list 1 of the collection, it is clear that before the start of the campaign, the Shamakhi Khanate was set as one of the territories to be captured in the first stage as a goal for Count Zubov (Zubov, 1796, p.2). For this reason, after capturing Derbent, Guba and Baku, Count Zubov moved on the Shamakhi Khanate (Zubov, 1796, p. 3; Bayramova, 2009, p.71). It is clear from the documents that before the march, in the February 19, 1796 instruction, after the capture of Baku, he was ordered to choose the Baku fortress as the main headquarters of the Russian army. Because the imperial court attached special importance to Baku. A project was being prepared to expand and strengthen the Baku port (Zubov, 1796, p. 5). However, Zubov, taking into account the geographical location and natural conditions of Baku, set off for New Shamakhi (Mamedova, 2003, p. 28). He believed that since there were no natural fortifications around Baku, he would not be able to organize the defense of the army during the attack. It is clear from the documents that the main place where Zubov

planned and organized operations during the campaign was the Shamakhi Khanate. Thus, after Zubov chose Yeni Shamakhi as his headquarters, he organized a march on the Ganja Khanate and chose the Mughan steppe, which was subordinate to the Shamakhi Khanate, for wintering (Mustafazade, 2013, p. 211).

In collection number 468, V. Zubov's appeal to the Khan of Shamakhi, as well as other Azerbaijani khans, against Agha Mohammad Qajar, is preserved. Responding to the appeal, Mustafa Khan stated that he was ready to gather all his forces against the Shah and unite with the Russian troops. Zubov's battle diary shows that Russian troops, who did not encounter any obstacles in Derbent and Salyan, entered Shamakhi. In early August, Russian troops took up positions on the Gurdbulag plateau on the banks of the Pirsaat River near Shamakhi (Zubov, 1796, p. 224).

In the fall, when Russian troops under the command of Major General Platov were moving towards New Shamakhi, Mustafa Khan left the city. V. Zubov, who wanted to capture the Khan of Shamakhi, sent him a letter with a gift, stating that the Khan could feel completely safe. However, Mustafa Khan, who did not trust Russia, was forced to resort to certain diplomatic maneuvers to save and protect his khanate from the Russian threat. It is clear from the correspondence between Zubov and the Russian generals that the Tsarist generals did not believe in Mustafa Khan's "sincerity" and did not trust him. For this reason, General Valerian Zubov decides to use Mustafa Khan's cousin, Qasim Khan, against him (Bayramova, 2009, p. 72.)

Zubov removed Mustafa Khan from the khanate on November 2, 1796 and replaced him with his cousin Gasim Khan. However, the sudden death of Catherine II in November 1796 led to a change in Russia's Caucasian policy. Having come to power, Paul I canceled all his mother's measures and ordered the withdrawal of Russian troops from Azerbaijan. In the spring of 1797, the Russian military expedition led by V. Zubov left Azerbaijan. Taking advantage of this, Mustafa Khan returned to the Shamakhi Khanate. He quickly deposed Qasim Khan and became the Khan of Shamakhi again (Bayramova, 2009, p. 73; Register of Azerbaijani khans, who were supposed to be informed about the acceptance of the Georgian king under the protection of the Russian emperor, 1803, f.3, p. 49).

The process of annexation and liquidation of the Shamakhi Khanate by the Russian Empire is reflected in the documents in the funds of the RSMHA. Documents showing the military operations of the Russian army against the khanate and its occupation are preserved in collection 475 of the archive's fund No. 846. The collection includes documents reflecting the Russo-Persian War of 1804–1813 (Garkusha, 2011, p. 360). The documents reflect the course of the war and the march of Russian troops to the Azerbaijani khanates.

It should be noted that at the beginning of the 19th century, the Russian Empire set itself the conquest of the South Caucasus as one of its main tasks. Thus, the Russian Empire, which won the last Russo-Turkish war, already saw the Qajar state as the only rival to fight it in the South Caucasus. Thus, on page 53 of file No. 6165 of the archive fund 846, there is a rescript of Emperor Alexander I to Lieutenant General Karl Fyodorovich Knorring, the commander-in-chief of the Russian army in the Caucasus, dated September 12, 1801 (Agayaan, 1972, p.36). In the rescript, the emperor instructed the commander-in-chief to spread Russian influence in the region and ensure the loyalty of the Iravan, Ganja, Sheki, Shamakhi (Shirvan), and Baku khanates. One of the most striking points in the text of the document is the emperor's instruction to Karl Knorring regarding the Shamakhi Khanate. Alexander I considered it important to control the coastal regions of the Kura and Araz rivers, which were part of the khanate, in order to ensure the supply of the army to Georgia. Because the imperial court considered it more preferable to deliver the army and heavy artillery to Georgia by sea from Astrakhan via the port of Baku and the Kura River, rather than by road through the mountainous regions of the Caucasus again (Rescript of His Majesty Emperor Alexander I to Lieutenant General Karl Fedorovich Knorring, Commander-in-Chief of the Russian Army in the Caucasus, 1801, d. 6165, p. 568)

On September 12, 1801, Alexander I signed a Manifesto addressed to the Georgian people, which abolished the Kartli-Kakheti Tsardom and annexed Eastern Georgia to Russia. A Supreme Government consisting of Russian military and civilian officials was established in Tbilisi to govern Georgia. General Pavel Sisianov was appointed governor of Georgia in 1802 (Mustafazade, 2013, p. 298). In addition to

his position as governor, Sisianov was also the commander of the Russian army in the South Caucasus. The tsarist government had entrusted him with the occupation of Azerbaijani lands. On January 3, 1804, Ganja became the first Azerbaijani khanate to be occupied. In order to ensure supplies and convenient communication with the main territories of Russia, Prince Sisianov set as his main goal the subjugation of the Shamakhi Khanate and its dependent Baku Khanate (Iskenderova, 1999, p. 60).

Pavel Sisianov first of all began to exert military diplomatic pressure on the Azerbaijani khans. For this, he first of all chose the Karabakh, Sheki and Shamakhi khanates. Sisianov pursued his intention through threats, promises, and diplomatic means. After the occupation of Ganja, diplomatic correspondence between Sisianov and the Khan of Shamakhi Mustafa Khan took place for about a year. In the letters preserved in the archive, Prince Sisianov tried to persuade Mustafa Khan, wanting to subjugate the Shamakhi Khanate without using military force. It is clear from the content of the letters that Mustafa Khan refused to submit in any way and tried to protect the independence of the khanate. Finally, in order to subjugate the khanate, Pavel Sisianov began a campaign against Shamakhi on November 31, 1805 (Bournoutian, 2021, p. 46). The Russian army approached the new Shamakhi on December 11. Mustafa Khan took refuge in the Fitdag fortress to resist. However, seeing the destructive power of the Russian army, Mustafa Khan was forced to accept Sisianov's demands. Sisianov invited Mustafa Khan to his military headquarters on the banks of the Kurakchay River. On December 27, 1805, an agreement was signed at the headquarters on the acceptance of the Shamakhi Khanate as a subject of Russia. Like the Karabakh and Sheki Khanates, the Shamakhi Khanate, which joined the Kurekchay Treaty, also received guarantees from Russia for its internal independence (Review of the Political Situation of the Georgian-Imereti Province, the Caspian Region and the Derbent Military District Administration, 1840, f. 3, p. 273; Bournoutian, 2021, p. 48). The treaty guaranteed that the administration of the khanate would remain with Mustafa Khan and his heirs. Thus, the independence of the Shamakhi Khanate, albeit formally, ended.

The documents kept in the archive show that although the Shamakhi Khanate was subordinated to the Russian Empire, Mustafa Khan tried to maintain his power within the khanate for a long time. His independent behavior in the internal affairs of the khanate did not satisfy the Russian government officials, who tried to prevent it in every possible way. It is clear from the documents kept in the fund 217 that in 1818, Lieutenant General Velyaminov wrote to General Aleksey Yermolov, commander of the Caucasian Army, that "Mustafa Khan is preparing, the main goal of this preparation is to retreat to Iran, together with the local feudal lords. Therefore, I have ordered to seize the crossings of the Kura River to prevent the Khan from escaping." As can be seen from the document, the Russian government did not trust Mustafa Khan and tried to limit his power in the khanate at all costs (Report of General Aleksey Yermolov, Commander of the Caucasus Army, 1820, d.3045, p. 514).

Seeing that relations with Russia were deteriorating further, Mustafa Khan finally decided to leave the khanate and seek refuge in the Qajar state. It is clear from the document in the 217th fund that in order to prevent the khan from escaping, Yermolov sent Russian troops to the Shamakhi Khanate. Under the command of General Vlasov, an army consisting of 4 battalions, 1000 Cossacks, 6 cannons and artillery entered the territory of the khanate. On August 19, 1820, Mustafa Khan left the khanate. Mustafa Khan's independent behavior did not satisfy the commander of the Caucasian Army, General Aleksey Yermolov (Russian State Military Historical Archive, 1820, p. 523). In his report to Emperor Nicholas I, he proposed the abolition of the vassal Sheki, Karabakh and Shirvan khanates and the imposition of direct Russian control over these territories (Tapper, 1997, p. 8).

Thus, after Mustafa Khan left the khanate, the Shamakhi Khanate was liquidated, and all the khan's property was confiscated. The Shirvan province was created on the territory of the Khanate. The Russian government turned Shirvan into its military and economic center. Thus, the conduct of military operations against the Dagestan feudal lords was ensured from here (Review of the Political Situation of the Georgian-Imereti Province, the Caspian Region and the Derbent Military District Administration, 1840, f. 3, p. 468).

It should be noted that information about the Shamakhi Khanate is also found in the materials of the Second Russo-Qajar War in the archive. Documents of the Second Russian-Qajar War are preserved in collection 477 of fund 846 of the archive. This collection includes relations with the Qajar state,

preparations for war, reports of Russian army generals, etc. Among the documents, there are materials on the Shamakhi Khanate. On July 16, 1826, Abbas Mirza's army, which attacked the South Caucasus, included Azerbaijani khans who had previously been forced to flee to the South (Tsutsiev, 2014, p.14). From the document on page 28 of file 4294 of collection 477, it is known that Abbas Mirza sent Mustafa Khan and Bakuli Huseyngulu Khan with 3,000 cavalry to the Shirvan territory. The khans defeated the Russian Absheron regiment at the Javad crossing on the Kura River on July 26 (Iskenderova, 1999, p. 38). Mustafa Khan was able to liberate the city of Shamakhi from the Russians with the help of the Qajar army. However, the overall superiority of the Russians in the Second Russo-Qajar War forced Mustafa Khan to leave the Shirvan territory (Bayramova, 2009, p. 79). Thus, Mustafa Khan's attempts to restore the Shamakhi Khanate failed.

CONCLUSION

As a result of this study, we can make the following generalizations, that the materials of the Russian State Military Historical Archive have an important database for studying the political and economic life of the Shamakhi Khanate. The documents stored in the archive allow us to analyze the political and economic situation of the period, and these documents allow us to draw important historical conclusions:

- The Shirvan region came to the attention of a power like Russia from the second half of the 18th century. For this reason, the invasion of the Shamakhi Khanate was one of the main goals in Russia's aggressive plans in the South Caucasus. For this reason, it is possible to get the attitude of the empire towards the Shamakhi Khanate from the documents preserved in the Russian State Military Historical Archive.
- Unlike local and Persian sources, Russian sources took a somewhat neutral position when providing information about the Shamakhi Khanate in the early periods. This significantly increases the importance of information obtained from Russian sources in terms of historical research. Especially during the Russo-Persian War, the Russians treated the Shamakhi Khanate as an independent state structure, trying to obtain a lot of information about its political, economic and geographical situation.
- The documents stored in the Russian State Military-Historical Archive allow us to create a complete historical picture of the period and, along with information obtained from other sources, to complete the study of the economic, political, and cultural life of the Shamakhi Khanate.

Most of the documents related to the Shamakhi Khanate are preserved in the archive's fund No. 846 (the former Military Scientific Archive collection). Fund No. 846 consists of several collections. Documents showing the course of military operations against Iran and Transcaucasia in 1803 and 1813 are stored in 23 boxes of the 475 collection included in the 846th fund. 17 works of the 476th collection contain documents related to the Russo-Persian War of 1826-1828 (Garkusha, 2011, p. 361). These documents reflect the course of the military operations of the imperial army against the Shamakhi Khanate. Among all these documents, materials related to the Shamakhi Khanate occupy a special place. From these materials, it is possible to obtain comprehensive information about the First and Second Russo-Persian Wars, as well as learn about Russia's plans and attitude towards the Shirvan Khanate:

- The Russian Empire planned to expand its borders to the south, so it intended to occupy the South Caucasus and the Caspian coast. The imperial court was making plans to gain access to India and the "warm seas".
- By occupying the Shirvan region, the Russians intended to complete the conquest of Dagestan. Russian official circles, while preparing for military operations in Dagestan, were planning to use the Shirvan region as a military and economic base. Reports by the commander of the Caucasian Army, General Alexei Yermolov, allow us to study these plans in detail.
- Archival documents reveal the Russian Empire's intention to encircle the North Caucasus from all sides in order to subjugate it, especially to completely subjugate the only independent territory that bordered the region, with the intention of severing any ties with the Ottoman Empire.

- The Russian state attached special importance to the conquest of the Shirvan region, since it needed a safe and economically resource-rich region in case of any war with the Ottoman Empire, its only rival on its southern border.

- The imperial court included the Shirvan region in its plans as a raw material base for Russia's developing industry. Thus, most of the documents in the archive are related to the geography and natural conditions of the region.

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ALISHER NAVOI IN THE SHARED CULTURAL HERITAGE OF THE ECONOMIC COOPERATION ORGANIZATION (ECO)**Ahmet Akalin*****Abstract**

Alisher Navoi, the founder of Chagatai literature and one of the most powerful cultural symbols of the region, has left profound traces in the collective memory of the contemporary Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) geography. His authorship in both the Turkic (Chagatai) and Persian languages makes him not merely a poet, but a guiding figure positioned between two great civilizations—Turkic and Persian literary traditions.

Navoi's influence, especially in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Iran, and Türkiye, possesses both historical depth and contemporary cultural functionality within ECO member states. His tomb in the city of Herat, Afghanistan, is considered not just a mausoleum but a symbol of shared historical consciousness and cultural affinity. The architectural monuments he commissioned in Mashhad and Nishapur during his governorship in Khorasan reflect the intensity of his interactions within the Iranian cultural sphere. In Türkiye, his works serve as an important point of reference in strengthening cultural ties with the ECO region. The Republic of Uzbekistan positions Alisher Navoi as a cornerstone of national identity, historical continuity, and cultural diplomacy within the vision of "New Uzbekistan," effectively utilizing his legacy as an instrument of soft power.

In this context, Navoi's literary and cultural heritage offers an essential resource for enhancing cultural diplomacy, strengthening soft power, and deepening regional cultural integration among ECO countries. His multilingual, multicultural, and humanistic works not only provide a cultural foundation that nurtures regional cooperation but also play a strategic role in reinforcing the international image and prestige of the respective states.

This study employs the descriptive analysis method, one of the qualitative research approaches. It conducts an in-depth examination of the reflections of literary heritage and architectural works on cultural diplomacy.

Keywords: Alisher Navoi, Cultural Heritage, Soft Power, ECO, ECO Cultural Institute.

1. The Mission of the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI)

The Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO) has adopted cultural cooperation, alongside economic integration, as one of its primary objectives. In line with this mission, the ECO Cultural Institute (ECI), functioning as the relevant cultural body of the organization, provides an important platform for the preservation of regional cultural heritage, the promotion of intercultural dialogue, and the development of joint cultural projects. Positioned as an instrument of cultural diplomacy, the institute aims to strengthen regional solidarity and deepen cooperation among member countries on the basis of shared cultural values.

1.1. The Unifying Role of Alisher Navoi in the ECO Region

Within the ECO region, Alisher Navoi stands as one of the symbolic figures of shared cultural and historical heritage, assuming a unifying role across member states. Residing in the collective memory of both Turkic and Persian literary traditions, Navoi—with his multilingual and multicultural identity—acts as an important figure fostering cultural proximity among ECO member nations. His works not only reinforce historical bonds among the peoples of the region but also inspire ECO's vision for cultural cooperation.

2. Afghanistan

Alisher Navoi occupies a significant place within the cultural and historical heritage of Afghanistan. Navoi was born in the city of Herat, which lies within the borders of present-day Afghanistan, and he also passed away there. His tomb is located in Herat, in a complex where a mosque¹ bearing his name stands.

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¹ <https://www.aa.com.tr/tr/dunya/tika-afganistandaki-tarihi-ali-sir-nevai-camii-ni-yeniledi/2004573>

During Navoi's lifetime, Herat served as the capital of the Timurid Empire. Within the Timurid court, he emerged both as a statesman and as a prominent literary figure. Through his works written in Chagatai Turkic and Persian (Ata, 2023, p. 529), he left profound marks not only on literature but also on the construction of cultural identity. With his writings and the architectural monuments he commissioned, he effectively articulated the ideology and cultural identity of the Timurid State. In subsequent periods, reflecting the region's multilingual and multicultural fabric, Navoi's works functioned as an intellectual bridge between the Turkic and Persian civilizational spheres.

Today, one of the conference halls at Herat University has been renovated and named the Alisher Navoi Conference Hall. Navoi's work *Mahbub-ul Kulub* has been translated from Chagatai into Dari² and published through the Baysungur Cultural Center in Herat. In Kabul, the Amir Ali Shir Navoi Foundation organized a panel/exhibition in 2021 on the occasion of the 580th anniversary of his birth. Activities such as the symposium "*A Tribute to the Master of Turkic Literature, Ali Shir Navoi*" have also been held. In addition, a bust erected in Mazar-i-Sharif commemorates Navoi, reflecting the symbolic acknowledgment of his contribution to Afghanistan's historical depth and cultural diversity.

3. Azerbaijan

Alisher Navoi is regarded as an important figure within the cultural and historical heritage of Azerbaijan. Navoi establishes strong connections with Azerbaijan's rich culture and literary tradition. He always expressed profound respect for Nizami Ganjavi, considering him one of his spiritual guides. While composing one of his most significant works, the *Khamsa*, Navoi took Nizami's *Khamsa*³ as his model. He begins this major work with the following verses:

*"Kolay degildir bu meydanda durmak,
Nizami'nin pençesine pençe vurmak.
Gerek aslan ile aslan cengi,
Aslan olunamazsa, bari pelengi"⁴*

His works have served as a source of inspiration in Azerbaijan, particularly in the fields of language and literature, and several of his texts have been translated into Azerbaijani Turkic. Navoi's multifaceted personality and literary legacy have played an important role in shaping Azerbaijan's historical identity and reinforcing regional cultural integration.

Research on Alisher Navoi has always held a prominent position in Azerbaijan. Among the notable studies in this field are Cennet Nağıyeva's works *Nevai in Azerbaijan* and *Alisher Navoi in Baku Manuscripts*, as well as the extensive scholarly examinations of Elmas Ulvi Binnatova. These studies have made significant contributions to the development of Navoi scholarship and enriched the literature with valuable sources.

Across Azerbaijan, various universities host research centers and cultural institutes named after Navoi, which actively continue academic activities. Moreover, his name is given to schools, streets⁵, avenues, and parks; monuments and busts dedicated to him have been erected. In 2020, the "Center for Literary

² The Persian dialect spoken in Afghanistan

³ Deriving from the feminine form of the Arabic word *khams* meaning 'five,' the term denotes a corpus consisting of five masnavis, (TDV İslam Ansiklopedisi, Tahsin Yazıcı & Cemal Kurnaz).

⁴Tiger.

*(It is no easy task to stand in this arena,
To challenge Nizami's powerful grasp.
A battle of lions must it be,
And if one cannot be a lion, let him at least be a leopard.)*.

⁵ In Baku, there are streets named "Alisher Navoi Street" located in the Nizami and Nardaran districts.

Studies" named after Alisher Navoi was established within the Nizami Ganjavi Institute of Literature of the Azerbaijan National Academy of Sciences (ANAS). After Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan is considered the country where the most extensive scholarly research on Navoi is conducted.

4. Iran

Alisher Navoi is recognized as a highly significant figure in the formation of cultural and historical heritage in Iran, particularly in the Khorasan region. During his tenure as governor of Khorasan, he commissioned the construction of numerous architectural monuments that today stand as cultural landmarks of the region—most notably the minarets of the Imam Reza Complex in Mashhad and the Mausoleum of Fariduddin Attar in Nishapur. These structures, reflecting the aesthetic and technical features of Timurid architecture, made substantial contributions to the enrichment of the region's historical and cultural fabric.

Navoi's Persian *divan* demonstrates that his literary influence extends not only across Turkic literature but also deeply and enduringly into classical Persian literature. His works have been published in Persian by various publishing houses, securing widespread recognition within Persian literary circles (Izzatillaev, 2023, pp. 491–500). Furthermore, several contemporary scholarly works on Navoi written in other languages continue to be translated into Persian. For example, the Uzbek-language monograph *Mana Ehli Şahib-i Sharirani* by Prof. Dr. Nurboy Jabborov, which explores Navoi's life and legacy, was translated into Persian in 2025 by Prof. Dr. Husayn Xushbotin of the University of Tabriz and published in Tehran by Uveyhi Mehdis Publishing under the title *Donya-ye Irfani-ye Emir Ali-Shir Nava'i* (The Mystical World of Amir Ali Shir Nava'i).

Navoi's literary and architectural contributions have played a central role in shaping cultural identity in Iran and in reinforcing the intellectual heritage of Khorasan in particular. His influence has been pivotal in preserving and disseminating the cultural richness of the region. In this regard, Navoi's legacy—spanning literature and architecture—constitutes an intellectual heritage that warrants comprehensive academic examination within the context of Iranian cultural history.

5. Kazakhstan

Alisher Navoi, one of the major literary and cultural figures whose influence extended from Transoxiana to Khorasan and further into the Kazakh steppe, enjoys great respect in Kazakhstan as well. A notable example is an 1857 text on Navoi written by Çokan Valikhanov (1835–1865), a pioneer of modern Kazakh historiography and a leading figure of the Alash movement.

Navoi's works attracted considerable interest in Kazakhstan even during the Soviet period, and following Kazakhstan's independence, his works—particularly the *Khamsa*—were published in Kazakh in 1948 and again in 1968. His writings served as an important source for the development of Kazakh language and literature and contributed to the shaping of regional cultural heritage as a shared civilizational foundation.

Many schools, streets⁶, and roads in Kazakhstan bear the name of Alisher Navoi, reflecting the tangible impact of his legacy on the strengthening of cultural and historical awareness. For example, the Alisher Navoi Center⁷ has been established at the Kazakh National Abai Pedagogical University in Almaty. Likewise, on 27 June 2024, the same university—one of Kazakhstan's leading pedagogical institutions—hosted the international forum titled “*Navoi and Abai: Continuity of Universal Values.*”

⁶ <https://baribar.kz/101139/almatydaghy-alem-adebieti-oekilderininh-aty-berilgen-koesheler/?amp=1>.

⁷ <https://www.kaznpu.kz/ru/35748/press/>.

6. Kyrgyzstan

Alisher Navoi holds a profound influence in Kyrgyzstan as an important literary and cultural figure. His works continue to serve as an inspiration in shaping the Kyrgyz literary tradition. Navoi's artistic and intellectual legacy constitutes a significant point of reference in the formation of Kyrgyzstan's shared cultural heritage and sense of identity. Within Kyrgyz cultural life, Navoi's position is also important in the context of regional cooperation and cultural integration. Today, in various parts of Kyrgyzstan, his name has been given to different places, most notably educational institutions (schools). For example, in the center of Osh, the country's second-largest city, the Alisher Navoi Park is located along the iconic Ak-Buura River, and a bust of the renowned poet stands at the entrance of the park.⁸

7. Pakistan

Compared to other ECO member states, Alisher Navoi is less widely known in Pakistan. However, due to the presence of numerous Chagatai Turkic loanwords in Urdu—the official language⁹ of Pakistan—and the historical influence of the Babur (Mughal/Gurkani) Empire across the region, a certain cultural affinity exists. Navoi's major works, such as his *Divan* and *Muhakemat al-Lughatayn*, have been studied particularly by literary scholars and academics in Pakistan.¹⁰ In recent years, Navoi's *Muhakemetü'l-Lügateyn* was published in Urdu by the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Islamabad.¹¹ At the University of Peshawar, a Research Center for Alisher Navoi has been established.¹² It is believed that expanding the Urdu and English translations of Navoi's works, as well as promoting academic research on his intellectual world, will contribute to increasing interest in Alisher Navoi in Pakistan in the coming years.

8. Tajikistan

Alisher Navoi is regarded as one of the notable figures in the literary and cultural history of Tajikistan, where he is considered a valuable part of the shared cultural heritage. Navoi's famous work *Farhad and Shirin* was translated into Tajik for the first time during the Soviet era. For instance, Uzbek scholar Sultanmurad Alim prepared a comparative doctoral dissertation in 1985 on the Russian, Tajik, and Azerbaijani translations of *Farhad and Shirin*.

Hamsat al-Mutahayyirin,¹³ written by Navoi's teacher and spiritual mentor Abdurrahman Jami, was also translated into Tajik during the Soviet period. After independence, another of Navoi's significant works—*Layli and Majnun*—was translated into Tajik. In Tashkent, Uzbekistan's capital, the correspondence between Navoi and his mentor Jami was published in both Uzbek and Tajik. This valuable work was formally presented by President Shavkat Mirziyoyev of Uzbekistan to President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan on 9 March 2018.

In Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, a statue depicting Alisher Navoi together with his mentor Abdurrahman Molla Jami stands in Friendship Park.¹⁴ Navoi's Persian works, written under the pen name “Fani,” are taught within the country's educational system, and in Uzbek schools in Tajikistan, the life and works of Navoi form an important part of the curriculum. Additionally, Khujand State University continues to train specialists in Uzbek language and literature. Alisher Navoi maintains a strong cultural presence in Tajikistan and attracts considerable scholarly attention.

⁸ https://24.kg/obschestvo/335244_vgorodeosh_otkryili_pamyatnik_alisheru_navoi/amp/.

⁹ <https://dnd.com.pk/alisher-navoi/104949/>.

¹⁰ <https://pakistanintheworld.pk/live/alisher-navoi-research-corner-its-role-in-strengthening-of-cultural-relations/>.

¹¹ <https://www.uzdaily.uz/en/presentation-of-alisher-navois-book-muhakamat-ul-lugatayn-in-urdu-takes-place-in-pakistan/>.

¹² <https://dnanews.com.pk/online-inauguration-of-the-alisher-navai-research-center/>.

¹³ “The Five Treatises of the Bewildered”.

¹⁴ <https://old.asiaplustj.info/tj/news/tajikistan/society/20180416/paikaraoi-abduramoni-om-va-alisheri-navo-dar-dushanbe/>.

In a speech delivered in 2021, President Emomali Rahmon of Tajikistan stated: “*The rich heritage of our peoples places a significant responsibility upon us politicians: to preserve, develop, and strengthen the friendly relations established by our ancestors. It is our duty to enrich in every respect the atmosphere of friendship and harmony created for future generations by Mawlana Abdurrahman Jami and Mir Alisher Navoi. As the founder of modern Tajik and Uzbek literature, Ustad Sadriddin Ayni said, ‘Jami and Navoi shared the same views on the key issues of their time and succeeded in addressing these matters through mutual support. ’*¹⁵

In 2025, within the framework of a joint project between Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, preparations began for a film portraying the lives of Alisher Navoi and his mentor Abdurrahman Molla Jami. Entitled¹⁶ “The Radiance of the Stars: Jami and Navoi,” the film aims to explore the intellectual relationship between the two great thinkers and men of letters within the cultural atmosphere of their era. Filming is being carried out in both Tajikistan and Uzbekistan to reflect the shared historical heritage of the two countries.¹⁷

9. Türkiye (Turkey)

Alisher Navoi, who holds a central position in the shared literary and cultural heritage of the Turkic world, is met with profound intellectual interest in Türkiye. Recognized in Türkiye as a foundational figure of the Turkic language, Navoi has been highly esteemed—particularly for his efforts to enhance the expressive power of Turkic—by linguistic and literary circles in the country. His works have served as an important reference point in both the Ottoman and Republican periods, especially within the context of language and literary policies.

Alisher Navoi, who wrote the first *hamse* in Turkic literature within the Chagatai literary sphere (Arslan, 2007), crowned the prestige he enjoyed in Khorasan and Turkestan during his lifetime with an equally strong influence in the Ottoman cultural geography. According to scholar Yusuf Çetindağ (2011), approximately seventy Ottoman poets—particularly Fuzuli—composed *nazire* poems in response to Navoi’s verses. This clearly and concretely demonstrates the decisive role Navoi played in the development of Turkish literature in Anatolia and in the advancement of poetic art within the Ottoman Empire.

Academic research, symposia, and translation activities conducted at Turkish universities indicate the continued vitality of Navoi’s cultural legacy. Various academic units dedicated to the study of Navoi have been established across universities. For example, in 2024, the Alisher Navoi Uzbek Language and Culture Center was inaugurated at Uludağ University in Bursa.¹⁸

A review conducted through the Turkish Council of Higher Education’s National Thesis Center reveals numerous master’s and doctoral dissertations on Alisher Navoi written across different universities and disciplines. A search using the term “Ali Şir” identifies 17 doctoral and 32 master’s theses. Considering alternative spellings such as “Ali Şer” and “Alişir,” a considerable number of academic studies in Türkiye explicitly reference “Alisher Navoi” in their titles.¹⁹

The statue²⁰ of Alisher Navoi erected in Ankara’s Keçiören district in 2024 is among the concrete expressions of Türkiye’s respect for this eminent thinker and poet. Likewise, several schools in

¹⁵ <https://president.tj/event/speeches/23349>.

¹⁶ <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rKX1CbbbFE>.

¹⁷ <https://caravan-info.pro/nachinajutsja-sjomki-istoricheskogo-filma-durahshi-ahtaron-om-va-navo-sovmestnyj-proekt-tadzhikistana-i-uzbekistana/>

¹⁸ <https://www.uludag.edu.tr/tudam/ali-sir-nevai-ozbek-dil-ve-kultur-merkezi-acildi-62453>.

¹⁹ A large number of theses can be found using the keywords Nevâî (6 master’s, 6 doctoral), Nevayî (7 master’s, 7 doctoral), Nevai (2 master’s, 4 doctoral), and Nevâî (3 master’s, 2 doctoral).

²⁰ https://www.kecioren.bel.tr/ali_s%C3%AEr_neva%C3%AE_keciorende_yasayacak-2604-haber.html.

Türkiye—such as those located in the Mamak²¹ district of Ankara and the Çiğli²² district of Izmir—bear his name.

10. Turkmenistan

The city of Herat, where Navoi was born and raised, lies geographically very close to the present-day borders of Turkmenistan. This proximity naturally intensified cultural interaction in the region. Especially among Turkmen communities living in the northern areas of Herat, Navoi has been embraced not only as a literary figure but also as a symbolic personality featured in folk narratives. According to Sultanmurad Alimov, Navoi appears in Turkmen folk literature as a wise and witty figure, much like Nasreddin Hodja in Anatolia. Numerous anecdotes, tales, and legends about him were created by the Turkmen people, preserved in oral tradition for generations. During the Soviet era, many of these oral narratives were compiled, written down, and published.

Not only folk narratives but also academic studies on Navoi intensified during the Soviet period. Turkmen scholars made significant contributions to the scientific literature by systematically examining this major figure of classical Turkic literature. In 1948, the 500th anniversary of Navoi's birth was celebrated across the Soviet Union with large-scale events, leading to the translation of his works into various languages of the Soviet republics. Turkmen also benefitted from these translation initiatives, and several of Navoi's important works were published in the Turkmen language.

The frequent presence of Oghuz elements in Navoi's writings is directly related to the cultural landscape of the region in which he lived. The language and culture of the Turkmen communities around Herat naturally influenced his linguistic preferences and literary style. As a result, Navoi produced works characterized by a multilayered linguistic structure that, while rooted in Chagatai Turkic, also bears evident traces of the Oghuz (Turkmen) dialect.

Following Turkmenistan's independence in 1991, great importance was placed on Alisher Navoi in the fields of language and literature. A statue²³ of Navoi stands in Magtymguly Pyragy Square in the capital, Ashgabat.²⁴ At the Institute of World Languages, a ceremony was held in honor of the 584th anniversary of Ali Shir Navoi's birth and the 542nd anniversary of Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur.²⁵

Navoi's connection to Turkmen culture extends far beyond geographical proximity; it manifests through folk narratives, academic scholarship, linguistic influence, and publication activities, forming a rich and multidimensional relationship.

10. Uzbekistan

Alisher Navoi is regarded as one of the most significant figures in the cultural and literary history of Uzbekistan. As the greatest poet and thinker of Chagatai Turkish, Navoi laid the foundational pillars of Uzbek literature and played a decisive role in the development and enrichment of the language. The monuments erected in his honor, the educational institutions bearing his name, and the cultural activities dedicated to him demonstrate Navoi's indispensable place within Uzbekistan's national identity and cultural heritage.

The Alisher Navoi Tashkent State University of Uzbek Language and Literature, located in Tashkent, serves as an important center for the study and teaching of the Uzbek language and literature, thus contributing to the preservation of Navoi's intellectual legacy in the academic sphere. Additionally, the Navoi Region, which is named after him, stands as a concrete reflection of his cultural influence at the

²¹ <https://alisirnevaiortaokulu.meb.k12.tr/>.

²² <https://alisirnevaioo.meb.k12.tr/>.

²³ On 7 February 2025, a statue of Navoi was inaugurated in Ashgabat.

²⁴ <https://www.newscentralasia.net/2025/02/07/v-ashkhabade-pochtili-pamyat-velikogo-poeta-vostoka-alishera-navoi/>.

²⁵ <https://turkmenistaninfo.gov.tm/news/10127>.

regional level, playing a key role in strengthening local identity and historical consciousness. Specialization in the study of Navoi's works and thought in Uzbekistan is known as *Navoishunoslik* (Navoi Studies) and is recognized as a prestigious field of scholarship.

Navoi's writings and ideas, both in their historical and contemporary contexts, are regarded in Uzbekistan as a crucial spiritual resource and an important instrument of soft power for enhancing cultural awareness and strengthening²⁶ intellectual ties across the ECO region.

Conclusion and Evaluation

Alisher Navoi is a widely recognized and respected historical figure across the member states of the Economic Cooperation Organization (ECO). His literary works and the architectural monuments built during his governorship serve as elements of shared cultural heritage, forming bridges that bring the peoples of the region closer together.

Uzbekistan, in particular, has taken significant steps to preserve and transmit Navoi's rich legacy to future generations. To further globalize this accumulated cultural heritage, establishing "Navoi Institutes"—similar to cultural diplomacy institutions such as the Goethe, Cervantes, Confucius, Dante, Liszt, and Camoes Institutes—would contribute to promoting his legacy internationally. Furthermore, academic and cultural collaborations under the umbrella of the ECO Cultural Institute could enhance regional integration and solidarity.

As Emir Alisher Navoi, who referred to himself as *zullisanayn* (master of two languages), reminds us through his works, his legacy reinforces the historical bonds between the countries of the region and deepens cultural cooperation—offering a remarkable and enduring foundation for shared understanding within the ECO geography.

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²⁶ <https://oyina.uz/uz/article/2532>.

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A CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE ON TURKISM IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF AKÇURA AND ATSIZ: CANER KARA'S INTERPRETATION**Oder Alizade*****Abstract**

This article examines Caner Kara's work "Türkçülük" (Turkism) through its ideological, historical, and systematic dimensions. Kara presents Türkçülük not merely as a declaration of identity, but as a proposal for social consciousness, moral stance, and a governance model. In the work, Türkçülük is defined around foundational principles such as "ethnic descent" and is integrated with ideals like communalism, legalism, and moralism. It is emphasized that Türkçülük is not only an intellectual orientation but also a historical reflex embodied in action. Kara also treats Turanism as the spatial and political extension of this ideological system. The book establishes a theoretical framework for addressing the issue of racism and explains Türkçülük's relationship to this concept. Furthermore, Türkçülük's connections with Islam, politics, and modern values are analyzed in a comprehensive manner. Ultimately, Kara's work attempts to present Türkçülük not merely as a historical ideology, but as a multidimensional system of thought with the potential to address contemporary social, political, and cultural problems.

Keywords: Turkism, Nationalism, Turanism, Sociology of Nationhood, Caner Kara,

INTRODUCTION

The idea of Turkism is not merely the outcome of a historical search for identity; it is a multilayered system of thought that has evolved in connection with various spheres such as social order, political orientation, and cultural continuity. Caner Kara's work Türkçülük (Turkism) is examined within the framework of an effort to define, interpret, and situate this multidimensional structure. In the book, Turkism is viewed not only as an expression of ethnic or cultural belonging but also as a worldview encompassing moral responsibility, social commitment, and political orientation.

Throughout the text, the theoretical framework of Turkism is analyzed alongside concepts such as racism, communalism, legalism, and moralism in terms of its definition, purpose, and method, and further discussed through its relationship with religious and political contexts. The author presents Turkism as a mode of thought that manifests continuity not only in individual identity but also in the domains of social structure, law, and morality. In this sense, while the book incorporates conceptual approaches that can be associated with theories of nationalism, it also attempts to delineate the boundaries of an ideological orientation.

The following sections provide evaluations based on the main themes presented in the work. The characterization of Kara's interpretation as "A Contemporary Perspective on Turkism in the Footsteps of Akçura and Atsız" arises from the fact that his conception of Türkük (Turkishness) and Türkçülük (Turkism) recalls the intellectual line of Yusuf Akçura and Hüseyin Nihal Atsız—particularly in its ethnological and race-based foundations. Kara interprets Turkism not simply as a matter of cultural affiliation or historical identity but as a worldview centered on lineage. In this respect, he exhibits a stance parallel to Akçura's "political nationalism based on race" articulated in his Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset (Three Political Systems) and to Atsız's approach grounded in "blood" and "national character derived from ancestry."

1. The Nature of Turkism

In the first chapter, the author defines Turkism around three fundamental principles: kinship shaped by blood ties, a sense of shared destiny based on common historical experiences, and uncompromising devotion to national independence (Kara, 2025, pp. 2–12). According to Kara, a true Turkist is not

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content merely with possessing a biological origin but internalizes the historical and cultural consciousness unique to the Turkish nation and dedicates their life to its collective future. In this context, Turkism represents not just an individual preference but the conscious acceptance of a historical obligation.

Kara emphasizes that a Turkist must assume responsibility not only intellectually but also through concrete action. Thus, the Turkist is portrayed as an agent responsible for diagnosing the threats confronting the nation and devising solutions to them. In this sense, Turkism is not simply a theoretical identity but an active endeavor aimed at recognizing and addressing social problems. Kara's use of the "microbe" metaphor reinforces this notion, attributing to Turkist individuals the duty of restoring the impaired components of the social structure.

Within this conceptual framework, the author positions Turanism as the spatial and political extension of Turkism. Comparing the fragmentation of territories belonging to the Turkish nation to the severed limbs of an organism, Kara interprets this not only as a physical disunity but also as a disruption of cultural and intellectual wholeness. For him, without unity in language, thought, and action, the reconstitution of the Turkish nation as an integrated entity is impossible.

Arguing that Turkism is grounded in an instinctive tendency toward solidarity, Kara associates this inclination with the natural affinity one feels toward those similar to oneself. He supports this claim with everyday examples—such as women preferring to sit next to other women on a bus or elderly people choosing to spend time with their peers. According to Kara, such behaviors stem not from hostility but from a sense of connection based on similarity, commonality, and belonging. Therefore, Turkism should be regarded not as an aggressive or exclusionary ideology but as a defensive mechanism shaped by the instinct for self-preservation.

The author asserts that ethnic origin and lineage possess a deeper binding power than religious affiliation or official identity documents. Using an example of family ties, he argues that one cannot remain indifferent to the suffering of a sister who bears a different surname, thereby defining Turkism not within political borders but as a moral and historical responsibility. This perspective reveals Turkism as not only a conceptual construct but also an ethical stance.

Kara's reflections on politics are grounded in the view that nationalism cannot be shaped around any political party or leader. In his opinion, Turkism is a comprehensive system of consciousness that cannot be confined within political engagement. A Turkist is defined not by loyalty to an ideological leadership but by their sense of duty toward their nation. Thus, Turkism prioritizes collective identity over individualism.

The author critiques the ideal of equality frequently encountered in folktales by contrasting it with the dynamics of real life. He argues that, in reality, individuals tend to associate based on similarity and that nationalism emerges naturally from this tendency. In this respect, Turkism is founded not on fictional narratives of unity but on biological and psychological realities.

2. The History of Practical Turkism

In the second chapter of his work, Kara argues that Turkism does not merely express an intellectual or emotional inclination; rather, it has historically evolved as a mode of existence grounded in concrete action and struggle. The author situates the history of Turkism in full alignment with the historical trajectory of the Turkish nation itself—since, in his view, every struggle for independence, every effort to preserve language and culture, and every act of state-building represents, at its core, a manifestation of a Turkist attitude (Kara, 2025, pp. 12–16).

Through historical references, this argument is substantiated: for example, İstemi and İşbara Qaghan's defiant stance against China, Mete Han's establishment of a systematic military organization, and Mahmud al-Kashgari's linguistic studies on the Turkish language are presented by Kara as historical

projections of Turkism. Through such examples, the author reframes Turkism not as a purely ideological domain but as a historical reflex rooted in production, resistance, and institutionalization.

Kara's use of the "immune system" metaphor plays a central role in explaining the nature of Turkism. He asserts that Turkism does not emerge as an externally imposed ideology under particular historical circumstances; rather, it functions as an internal defense mechanism that becomes active spontaneously during periods of national adversity. In this sense, Turkism is not merely a reaction to external pressures but a form of socio-cultural consciousness with historical continuity—one that persists at a genetic level within the national body.

Within this framework, the author draws attention to the methodological limitations commonly encountered in the historiography of Turkism. According to Kara, representing Turkism solely through literary or political figures constitutes a reductionist approach. In reality, Turkism is sustained through the dedication and effort of teachers in classrooms, artists on stage, and athletes in the field. Therefore, Turkism is not only a theoretical or discursive identity but also a tangible form of existence grounded in production, action, and professional devotion.

Kara connects this historical continuity to contemporary developments, interpreting the transformations that occurred in the Turkic republics following the dissolution of the Soviet Union as modern manifestations of practical Turkism. The adoption of the Latin alphabet by newly established Turkic states and their pursuit of academic and cultural cooperation with Turkey are regarded by the author as indicators of an awakening and revival within the Turkic world.

In light of these reflections, Kara emphasizes the resilient nature of Turkism—an ideology that, despite repeated attempts at suppression, has never been eradicated. This endurance, he argues, demonstrates that Turkism is not merely an ideological system but a lived practice embedded in the collective memory of the Turkish nation throughout history. The unity of action and thought within Turkism constitutes the essential foundation of its continuity and resilience.

3. The History of Intellectual Turkism

In this chapter (Kara, 2025, pp. 16–31), the author reveals that Turkism is not only an instinctive or reactive mode of existence but also a systematic intellectual movement shaped by cultural, intellectual, and historical dynamics. Kara examines the historical development of intellectual Turkism within the framework of both internal dynamics and external influences.

When exploring the emergence of Turkism as an intellectual program, Kara identifies two key tendencies observed in 18th- and 19th-century Europe: "Turquerie" and "Turkology." The first refers to the superficial and exotic fascination of European aristocrats with Ottoman-Turkish art, lifestyle, and aesthetics, while the latter represents a more academic discipline that investigates the historical and cultural existence of Turkic peoples. Although Kara notes that these tendencies did not directly give rise to Turkism, he argues that they indirectly influenced the external reflections of Turkish identity in the Western world.

The author emphasizes that intellectual Turkism developed independently of these external interests but that they nonetheless helped trigger a certain mental awakening. He highlights how the works of Western thinkers such as Joseph de Guignes, Pierre Loti, and Alphonse de Lamartine functioned as a kind of "mirror" for Turkish intellectuals, enabling them to question their own selfhood and historical identity—thus accelerating the emergence of intellectual Turkism.

Within this historical context, Kara identifies Ziya Gökalp, Yusuf Akçura, Ahmet Ağaoğlu, and Ömer Seyfettin as the founding figures of intellectual Turkism. The works of these intellectuals and their publication activities—particularly around journals such as *Genç Kalemler* ("Young Pens") and *Türk Yurdu* ("The Turkish Homeland")—played a pivotal role in transforming Turkism into a systematic intellectual movement.

According to Kara, these figures laid the intellectual foundation for constructing the modern identity of the Turkish nation. This foundation, in turn, represented a response both to Western colonial

and Orientalist discourses and to alternative ideological tendencies such as Ottomanism and Islamism. The central principle of intellectual Turkism, Kara stresses, is the concept of “the nation.” Within this framework, intellectual Turkism offers a nation-based definition of identity in contrast to the community-based (ummah) approaches of the period. This orientation promotes a thought structure rooted in indigenous and national values rather than universalist or cosmopolitan ideologies.

Another notable argument in this section concerns Kara’s critique of constructing the history of Turkism exclusively through political or literary figures. He insists that the history of Turkism has been enriched through the contributions of numerous actors—from theater artists to athletes, from educators to cultural producers—and that this broader perspective must be incorporated into historiographical approaches.

This perspective transcends chronological and figure-centered narratives, conceptualizing intellectual Turkism as a multidimensional cultural movement. Kara’s evaluation reveals that Turkism is not an instinctive reaction but a historically constructed, intellectually systematized tradition of thought developed in response to external influences. The framework he proposes invites readers to perceive Turkism not as an ideological relic of the past but as a dynamic model of thought capable of addressing contemporary social, political, and cultural challenges.

4. The Definition of Turkism

In the fourth chapter of his work, Kara does not confine himself to outlining the conceptual boundaries of a term; rather, he grounds Turkism as a comprehensive worldview, an ideological orientation, and an all-encompassing way of life. His approach treats Turkism neither as a mere political stance nor as a field of academic inquiry, but as a system of belonging that shapes one’s existential orientation by merging emotion, thought, and action into a unified whole. In this respect, the chapter transcends conventional definitional attempts, transforming into both a conceptual manifesto and a behavioral guide (Kara, 2025, pp. 31–40).

The author defines Turkism not merely as a cause (*dava*) but as a task (*iş*) in itself. This characterization carries both conceptual and technical meanings: through the notion of “work,” Turkism is described as the will to transform an existing condition under the influence of a specific force. According to Kara, “Turkism is the name of the work done by a Turk, for a Turk, and according to the Turk.” His “multiplication of force and path” metaphor is intended to demonstrate that Turkism is not a passive form of loyalty but an active, productive, and transformative field of struggle.

Before constructing his own definition, Kara seeks to eliminate conceptual ambiguities by clarifying what Turkism is not. Turkism, he argues, is neither a subject of academic curiosity, nor a professional duty, nor a hobby-like historical pursuit, nor an ideological extension of the state’s official discourse. Similarly, it cannot be reduced to an instrument of personal interest or a political organization’s ideological appendage. This approach aims to grant Turkism theoretical immunity against tendencies that would render it an empty or shapeless slogan.

Kara formulates the definition of Turkism not only on a conceptual level but also through insights drawn from human psychology and patterns of social behavior. He contends that nationalism is not an acquired ideological stance but an innate human inclination. The instinctive foundation of Turkism, therefore, is interpreted not as opposition to universal values but as an inward-oriented form of affection. Within this framework, Turkism is defined not as hostility toward other nations but as an expression of responsibility and loyalty toward the Turkish nation itself.

This definition elevates Turkism beyond the status of a reactive ideological reflex, situating it instead as a constructive, restorative, and unifying level of social consciousness. Kara further emphasizes that Turkism cannot be confined within the limits of territorial nationalism. In his view, political borders, official documents, and even differences in religion or language cannot eradicate the awareness of kinship.

In this chapter, Turkism is presented not as admiration for the past or mere historical knowledge, but as a holistic domain of responsibility that demands active engagement in both the present and the

future. Within this framework, Kara's interpretation of Turkism constitutes a call to action—one built not only upon cultural and historical consciousness but also upon political determination, social solidarity, and moral responsibility.

5. The Purpose of Turkism

In this section (Kara, 2025, pp. 40–43), the author treats Turkism not simply as a mode of thought, a declaration of identity, or a feeling of belonging, but as an ideal movement directed toward explicit and long-term objectives. Thus, he positions Turkism not merely as a system of ideas but as the *raison d'être* and guiding ideological compass of a nation. For Kara, the defining element of any intellectual or ideological formation lies in its ultimate destination—the final goal it seeks to achieve.

From the perspective of Turkism, this goal is not limited to short-term political or cultural ambitions; rather, it represents a far-reaching struggle for existence rooted in historical continuity and oriented toward the future. Kara's understanding aligns closely with Hüseyin Nihal Atsız's classical formulation:

“In the Great Turkish Land, the unconditional sovereignty and independence of the Turkish race, and the advancement of Turkdom beyond all other nations.”

Kara interprets this aim not as a romantic ideal, but as a duty imposed by historical experience, a responsibility implied by present realities, and a vision projected for the future. Within this framework, the goal of Turkism is to ensure the unity of all branches of the Turkish nation, to re-establish a civilizational center based on historical and cultural heritage, and to attain a position of global exemplarity.

The phrase “*Büyük Türk Eli*” (“Great Turkish Land”) refers not merely to the borders of the Republic of Turkey but to all the regions historically inhabited by Turks, where their cultural and political imprints remain visible. Kara thus adopts a sense of belonging that transcends conventional state boundaries, interpreting Turkism as a quest for unity shaped by historical and social bonds. Inns, bridges, gravestones, and other architectural or cultural remnants scattered across ancient Turkic lands are viewed as tangible and symbolic foundations of this ideal.

Equally noteworthy is Kara's interpretation of the concept “*Türk uruğu*” (“Turkish lineage”), which he likens to a tree that branches out in different directions over time yet grows from the same root. This metaphor underscores both historical continuity and unity within diversity. According to him, every individual who knows they descend from the same origin—regardless of the name they carry—is a natural part of this ideal. This approach constructs not only an ethnic unity but also a collective sense of “we” grounded in shared historical consciousness.

The aim of Turkism, therefore, extends beyond political union or geographical integration. As Kara emphasizes, this ideal also encompasses cultural excellence, scientific progress, and the advancement of social qualities. The concept of “superiority” here refers not to racial privilege but to the capacity for civilizational production, institutional efficiency, and the development of humanistic values.

This understanding, extending from Bilge Qaghan to Mustafa Kemal Atatürk, seeks to elevate the Turkish nation to a level compatible with the demands of the modern era. Kara interprets Atatürk's aspiration—“We shall raise our national culture above the level of contemporary civilization”—as the modern projection of the Turkist ideal.

Within this framework, Turkism is not a defensive effort to preserve identity but a forward-looking project of progress and transformation. Kara refuses to confine Turkism to nostalgic attachment to the past; instead, he interprets it through the will to construct the future. Education, art, science, politics, and cultural production are identified as key instruments in this process. Thus, the goal of Turkism is not merely to offer a vision but to necessitate its realization through action.

6. The Method of Turkism

In this chapter, Kara demonstrates that Turkism is not merely an idea or an ideal, but also a practical system grounded in specific methods, modes of struggle, and guiding principles. Moving beyond the theoretical dimension, the author seeks to develop a systematic strategy for how the Turkist ideal should be applied in practice. In this sense, the chapter offers a methodological framework that examines which approaches can be deemed legitimate and which should be considered problematic—without contradicting the essence of Turkism (Kara, 2025, pp. 43–52).

Kara emphasizes that every intellectual movement possesses both quantitative and qualitative dimensions. While the previous chapter addressed the goals of Turkism—the answers to the question of “why”—this section foregrounds the question of “how.” The author underlines the importance of discipline, methodology, and consistency in achieving the aims of Turkism. Within this framework, the notion of method (*usul*) is conceptualized as a multidimensional structure encompassing the practical realization of a belief system, the manner in which struggle is maintained, and the strategies for fostering social awareness.

In Kara’s framework, the essence of Turkism is immutable; flexibility is permissible only at the tactical level, according to the conditions of time. Social disorder, economic hardship, political oppression, or even occupation may affect the form of the struggle, but they cannot interfere with its principles. As Kara explicitly states: “The method may change, but the cause cannot.” A Turkist must be aware of their circumstances, yet never surrender to them.

Another key emphasis of the chapter lies in the responsibility to learn and to teach. According to Kara, the fundamental method of contemporary Turkism must rest on the principle of “educating oneself and educating others.” Turkism is not merely a matter of knowledge but a form of consciousness that must be carried with responsibility. At this point, the author stresses that a Turkist individual should not only strengthen their own intellectual capacity but also contribute to the mental transformation of those around them.

Kara illustrates this principle through the metaphor of “foreign burdens.” A Turkist, he argues, must recognize not only their own intellectual challenges but also the mental occupations, ideological deviations, and forms of cultural degeneration that afflict their fellow kin—and develop awareness in opposition to them.

The fundamental principles of Turkism are defined through the metaphor of insurance. According to this analogy, the core tenets of Turkism are fixed, secure, and immune to alteration. These principles cannot be reshaped, diluted, or adapted to fit temporal circumstances. Thus, Turkism is not a flexible ideology that can be redefined according to each person’s preference; rather, it is a faith-based system with clear boundaries, steadfast convictions, and uncompromising rules.

Another conceptual structure that stands out in this chapter is the emphasis on intransigence and determination. Kara argues that the method of Turkism cannot be built upon the desire to appear appealing to the masses, to develop populist rhetoric, or to seek political gain. The method of Turkism rests on the principles of clarity, truth, and resolve. Consequently, Turkism is not an object of social compromise but a moral stance shaped around immutable values. The method, therefore, must not dilute the cause but serve as a vehicle for preserving and transmitting its essence from generation to generation.

A further essential element highlighted by Kara is the principle of organization. The author asserts that for Turkism to evolve into an effective movement of struggle, it must manifest within an organized structure. However, this organization need not be limited to political parties or traditional associations. On the contrary, Turkist thought can find expression through diverse organizational forms—from academic clubs and artistic communities to sports associations and cultural initiatives. Thus, organization is conceptualized not only as an institutional structure but also as a moral and intellectual form of solidarity.

In the concluding section, Kara introduces a striking distinction between supporting a cause and belonging to it. He differentiates between holding a favorable opinion of Turkism and bearing the burden of its responsibility. For him, it is not enough to approve of an idea; one must also carry it, fight for it,

and be prepared to pay its price when necessary. This distinction underscores that Turkism is not a purely theoretical ideal but a mode of struggle with tangible, lived expression.

7. Racism

In this chapter, the author approaches one of the most controversial and frequently misunderstood aspects of Turkist thought—the issue of racism—from both theoretical and historical perspectives, aiming to clarify misconceptions and to articulate Turkism’s position on an ideological foundation (Kara, 2025, pp. 52–61). Kara argues that racism is not merely an external accusation directed against Turkism but also, at times, a distortion that arises internally from jealousy, identity crises, or intellectual deficiencies.

The chapter begins by noting that racism has been defined differently throughout history and has never been treated as an objective or ideologically neutral concept. Kara points out that this term has always been susceptible to manipulation and insists that Turkism must be evaluated independently of such distortions. In his view, Turkism is inherently related to a racial consciousness, and conceptualizing “Turkishness” as a *racial belonging* is both inevitable and necessary. Thus, a Turkist is not merely one who recognizes this belonging but also one who bears the responsibility to preserve and defend it.

While Kara does not deny that racism is perceived as a global threat in the modern world, he argues that this perception is largely shaped by global political agendas and ideological conditioning. Denying or discrediting the notion of race, he claims, does not eliminate its impact on social reality. According to him, races have historically played a decisive role in structuring human civilization, and even if rhetorically denied, this reality continues to exist in practice. Kara reinforces this argument through the metaphor: “The sun does not cease to exist simply because one denies its presence.”

In defending Turkism’s understanding of race, the author interprets it not as a doctrine of aggression but through the lens of *self-defense* (*nefs-i müdafaa*). In this sense, Turkish racial consciousness is presented not as an ideology that violates the rights of others but as a form of awareness grounded in the recognition and protection of one’s own rights. This approach may be understood as an effort to move the concept of race away from hate-based discourse toward historical and moral foundations.

In the historical context, Kara emphasizes the protective and regulatory role the Turkish nation has historically played toward other ethnic groups. He asserts that Armenian, Balkan, and Arab communities experienced relatively stable and prosperous lives under Ottoman-Turkish administration, but upon separating from this protective structure, they were drawn into crisis and instability. Through such examples, Kara argues that Turkish racial consciousness functioned not only for the benefit of Turks but also indirectly for the well-being of other peoples historically under their protection.

Another key argument concerns the idea that Turkish identity cannot be confined to a legal category of citizenship. For Kara, concepts such as “Turkish language,” “Turkish history,” “Turkish literature,” and “Turkish army” are not merely cultural products but manifestations of the creative power and historical existence of the Turkish race. He maintains that anyone who recognizes and values these elements must also acknowledge the race that produced them.

Kara’s framework positions Turkism within an ideological structure founded on national interests rather than universalist values. He defines racial consciousness not as a form of exclusion or hostility, as liberal and cosmopolitan critiques often suggest, but as an awareness of belonging, cultural loyalty, and historical responsibility. Thus, Turkism represents not only an emotional attachment but also a sense of affiliation that necessitates recognition, ownership, and, when necessary, defense.

In this context, one might recall Arsal’s thesis that “every human being must intellectually and scientifically recognize the existence of various races in the world, and the fact that they belong to one of them” (Arsal, 2018, p. 53). The racial foundation expressed by Kara is not *anthropological* but *ethnological*. The ethnological racial principle refers to the community of peoples who, in the past and

present, speak one of the dialects of the Turkish language and resemble each other in customs, traditions, and spiritual tendencies (Arsal, 2018).

Within the history of Turkist thought, Yusuf Akçura was among the first to base the notion of nationality explicitly on race. In his seminal work *Üç Tarz-ı Siyaset* (*Three Policies*), Akçura argues that the idea of political nationality should rest on a racial foundation, rejecting cultural definitions of nationhood in this context. The expression “a Turkish political nationality based on race” defines the third of the three political models he examines (Akçura, 2016, p. 15). Accordingly, the policy and conception of nationality among Turks should be clearly and explicitly founded upon racial principles. This race-based understanding of nationhood constitutes the essence of *political Turkism*.

Within Akçura’s framework, the political orientation stemming from a race-based conception of nationhood is the establishment of *Turkish unity*. He emphasizes the importance of grounding the idea of nation on race and cites German nationalism as a model. According to Akçura, the Germans’ success stemmed from their realistic interpretation of nationhood, one that accepted race as its fundamental essence (Akçura, 2016, p. 77).

By contrast, Akçura criticizes the Ottoman intelligentsia of the Sultan Mahmud II era (1808–1839) for failing to grasp the practical limitations of the French model of nationalism—which was based not on blood and race but on moral will and civic ideals (Akçura, 2016, p. 76). He argues that Eastern intellectuals did not fully comprehend the inapplicability of French nationalism to the East, where religion and race were becoming increasingly significant political factors (Akçura, 2016, p. 79). Nevertheless, Akçura expresses concern that the notion of a racially based Turkish political nationalism is historically new—that earlier Turkic states had not been organized on racial principles and that such a conception of nationalism had not previously become widespread among Turks (Akçura, 2016, p. 82).

Although Ziya Gökalp’s conception of Turkism was not founded upon race, he still viewed Turks as an independent race that had sustained its existence since prehistoric times (Gökalp, 2015, p. 28). Similarly, in 1905, *Hayat* magazine (issues 4, 9, 16, 22, 35, 52, 81, 82) published a series of articles by Turan titled “Who Are the Turks and What Are They Composed Of?”—which, like Arsal’s definition, interpreted Turkism on an ethnological racial basis. The same racial principle appears in Nihal Atsız’s writings, where it is defended under the concept of “*hereditary lineage*” (*soyculuk*) (Atsız, 2011).

8. Communitarianism

In this section, the author presents a theoretical framework demonstrating that Turkism is not merely an ethno-cultural discourse or a form of ideological belonging but, beyond that, a comprehensive proposal for a social system (Kara, 2025, pp. 61–76). Kara treats *communitarianism* both as an ideological and an economic category, defining it as the cornerstone of a model based on national resources and founded upon independent and indigenous development.

In Kara’s interpretation, communitarianism rests upon a conception of public interest that transcends individual gain—where *collective welfare* takes precedence over *personal wealth*. At the beginning of the chapter, the author distinguishes conceptually between “community” (*topluluk*) and “society” (*toplum*), arguing that a true society is built on shared ideals, laws, and emotional solidarity. Thus, for a nation to possess political existence, not only geographic unity but also the establishment of historical and cultural commonalities is required.

Kara directly links his concept of communitarianism to the *Turanist* vision within Turkism. He argues that the fragmented geography of the Turkic world and the conditions of oppression in some regions constitute the main obstacles to the realization of a unified national ideal. When the relative economic development of Turkey is considered alongside the continued poverty and repression in regions such as Türkmeneli or East Turkestan, he claims, it loses its moral meaning.

Hence, Kara’s communitarian approach is not merely an economic prescription but also a moral and conscientious obligation. In his framework, communitarianism is positioned vis-à-vis socialism, and its points of divergence are clearly articulated. According to Kara, socialism is incompatible with national principles because it operates from a universalist populism and relies on class-based structures.

In contrast, Turkist communitarianism rejects class conflict, seeking to unify rather than divide individuals, and envisions a system in which production and labor serve the nation as a whole. In this sense, Kara conceptualizes it as a form of *national and indigenous economics* (*yerli ve millî iktisat*).

The fundamental principle of communitarianism, therefore, is that national resources should be utilized by national labor for the benefit of the nation. Kara presents this system as one free from foreign dependency, shaped not by imported ideologies but derived directly from the historical and cultural codes of the Turkish nation. His description of capitalism and socialism as “monsters wearing clown masks” metaphorically conveys his criticism that these ideologies do not correspond to the structural realities of the Turkish people. Development, he asserts, must be sought not in external forces but within the nation’s own inner dynamics.

Thus, Kara’s communitarianism is not solely economic but also a model prioritizing *cultural independence*. He connects it with the philosophy of the state, emphasizing that governance should operate in accordance with the interests of the nation. In this framework, the ruling cadres are portrayed not as the “superiors” of the people but as their *servants*. This view resonates with the populist leadership ideal symbolized by Bilge Qaghan’s declaration: “I did not sleep at night, I did not rest during the day.”

The ultimate goal is to transform the state into an organism that works for the welfare and future of its people. Kara defines communitarianism not as a technical formula for development but as a *profound social revolution*. However, this revolution does not imply destructive upheaval but rather the restoration and renewal of existing structures by returning to their historical roots. Kara notes that while this system resembles models such as corporatism, mixed economy, or national economy, its uniqueness lies in its direct foundation upon *Türk töresi*—the traditional moral and legal code of the Turks.

In this context, communitarianism is presented not only as a model for Turkey but as a *universalizable national system* that could resonate throughout the entire Turkic world.

9. Legalism (Yasacılık)

In this chapter, Turkist thought is presented not merely as a form of ethnic or cultural belonging but as the foundation of a distinctive conception of law and statehood (Kara, 2025, pp. 76–84). According to Kara, the construction of a legal system rooted in a nation’s historical and cultural heritage is an indispensable component not only of political sovereignty but also of social legitimacy.

Within this framework, *legalism* (*yasacılık*), understood as the juridical reflection of Turkism, is described not as a form of governance but as a normative system grounded in cultural continuity. At the outset, the author centers his analysis on the concept of *töre*—a term that encompasses not only traditional behavioral norms but also the institutionalized social rules transmitted through history. Drawing on everyday expressions used among the Caucasian Turks, such as “*sit according to töre*,” “*speak according to töre*,” and “*live according to töre*,” Kara emphasizes that *töre* represents an intergenerational value system that determines social order.

In this sense, *töre* is not a static collection of traditions but a dynamic structure that regulates contemporary social relations and provides normative orientation for the future. Kara argues that Turkey’s current legal system, being of Western origin, has failed to fully integrate with the nation’s collective memory. He claims that this system contains structural elements that conflict with the historical codes and cultural values of the Turkish nation. The repeated political crises and coups experienced during the Republic, he argues, demonstrate that these imported legal norms have limited social resonance.

Therefore, the author proposes a *töre-centered legal system* derived from the Turkish nation’s own historical accumulation, rather than the translated Western codes that serve as the main reference point of the current legal order. Legalism, in Kara’s view, is not simply a legal preference but a “*case for Törecilik*”—a struggle for the preservation of cultural identity and political independence.

The function of law, in this understanding, extends beyond the imposition of penal sanctions; it serves as a comprehensive regulatory system intended to protect the family, the individual, social values,

and public morality. Within this context, Kara draws a categorical distinction between the *principle of equality*, often emphasized in modern legal theory, and the *principle of justice*, which occupies a central position in Turkish *töre*. He argues that an application that produces identical legal outcomes for everyone (for example, imposing the same penalty on individuals of different ages) may achieve *formal equality* but still violate the sense of justice.

Kara's theoretical orientation in this chapter is framed through Nihal Atsız's assertion:

“We support laws derived from national custom and grounded in modern legal principles, rather than translated codes.”

Kara adopts this statement as the foundational basis of legalism, asserting that the modernity of a legal system lies not merely in its formal adaptations but in its organic relationship with social reality. Hence, the origin of legal norms must be determined not by an abstract universal ideal of law but by their harmony with the nation's historical and cultural foundations.

10. Moralism (Ahlâkçılık)

This chapter argues that morality is not merely an individual behavioral norm but a central organizing principle that ensures a nation's historical continuity and social cohesion (Kara, 2025, pp. 84–92). Kara conceptualizes morality not as a private ethical category confined to the individual conscience but as a normative structure embedded in the collective consciousness of society—one that, though unwritten, possesses powerful social enforcement mechanisms. Within this framework, *moralism* functions as a sociological bond safeguarding the cultural and spiritual survival of the nation.

Kara treats the formation of morality as the product of a historical and cultural process. In his view, morality derives from shared experiences, values, and reflexes, forming a socially validated normative system. He contrasts this understanding with the exclusive and formal character of positivist legal systems: while written law cannot always regulate the individual's relationship with society, moral norms shaped by social conscience can either exclude the individual or confer legitimacy upon them. Thus, morality, as Kara interprets it, is not only a regulatory force but also a transformative social power.

Echoing Ziya Gökalp's assertion that “an individual born outside society can only be socialized through national education,” Kara situates the transmission of morality not in formal state mechanisms but within natural spheres of socialization such as the family, school, and community. Accordingly, morality functions not only as a system of values internalized by the individual but also as a social regulator transmitted across generations through mechanisms of social control.

Another dimension of moralism emerges in Kara's critical examination of modern cultural transformation. He argues that value systems disseminated through mass media and popular culture often conflict with the historical and cultural codes of Turkish society. These influences are described as “attacks disguised under the guise of civilization,” aimed at severing society from its own authentic values. Employing the metaphor of *mankurtization*, Kara warns of the danger of individuals becoming detached from their historical and cultural memory, resulting in identity loss.

The chapter frequently references Hüseyin Nihal Atsız's understanding of morality. The modern lifestyle practices Atsız termed “the sewers of civilization”—taverns, beaches, bars, and beauty contests—form the basis of Kara's defense of traditional moral superiority. Yet, Kara does not claim that modernity has eradicated morality entirely; rather, he argues that Turkish morality is sufficiently deep-rooted to adapt to the requirements of the age.

For Kara, morality is not merely a system of values but also an educational process. He approaches the notion of “social pressure” (*mahalle baskısı*) positively, viewing such mechanisms of social regulation as tools that align individuals with communal norms and enable society to reproduce itself. In this understanding, morality is not an external interference into private life but a functional mechanism that preserves social integrity and continuity.

Toward the end of the chapter, Kara places morality above positive law. He observes that an individual may be legally condemned yet celebrated as a hero in the public conscience. This perspective

reveals his conception of morality as a dynamic value system representing the collective conscience of society, transcending mere individual behavior and written legal norms.

11. Turkism and Islam

The chapter titled “*Turkism and Islam*” seeks to clarify aspects of Turkism that are frequently misunderstood or deliberately distorted within religious discourse (Kara, 2025, pp. 92–139). The author contends that Turkism does not represent an ideological opposition to Islam; rather, based on the demographic and historical realities of the Turkish nation, it offers an intellectual framework compatible with Islamic thought.

Kara argues that the misconceptions surrounding this issue arise not only from ignorance but also from deliberate manipulations by certain ideological groups. These groups, he claims, are disturbed by the Turkish nation’s rediscovery of its historical identity and have used Islamic rhetoric as a political tool in their opposition to Turkism. According to Kara, such attacks are motivated not by religious conviction but by political calculation.

Critiquing the notion that Turkism is inherently anti-Islamic, Kara asserts that this view is often legitimized through weakly grounded narratives and fabricated *hadiths*. In contrast, Turkist thought, he insists, bases its religious reflections on a Qur'an-centered approach. Citing verse 13 of *Surat al-Hujurat*, he notes that the creation of different nations for the purpose of mutual recognition is a divine principle that cannot be denied either rationally or theologically. Within this framework, the concept of nationhood is not contradictory to Islam but rather a natural expression of it.

Furthermore, Kara rejects the claim that nationalism was imported into Turkish society from the West, arguing instead that it represents an indigenous and historically rooted form of consciousness. The existence of national states, organized military systems, and codified legal traditions among pre-Islamic Turks, he maintains, demonstrates that the idea of national consciousness predates modern ideological formulations. To describe Turkism as a “Western invention,” he contends, is as inconsistent as interpreting Islam outside its historical context.

Kara also provides a critical examination of the idea of Islamic unity in modern discourse, arguing that it is often employed with double standards. He observes that while the principle of *religious brotherhood* is emphasized in relation to Arab, Albanian, Kurdish, or Persian communities, it is conspicuously disregarded when it comes to the Turkish nation. This inconsistency, according to Kara, reflects not only prejudice against Turkism but also the instrumentalization of the concept of Islamic solidarity.

The chapter further addresses accusations that portray Turkism as a source of *fitna* (discord). Kara argues that such claims largely originated from Muslim circles influenced by Western powers and that, while Arab and Albanian nationalisms were supported, Turkish nationalism was systematically suppressed. This double standard, he concludes, reveals the ideological bias underlying these positions.

Kara explicitly states that Turkism does not seek to replace Islam, to compete with it, or to contradict it. At its core lies national responsibility rather than religious identity. Accordingly, he suggests that common ground can be found among individuals who live their faith sincerely while prioritizing the interests of the nation. Turkism, in this regard, is defined not as a theological doctrine or sectarian ideology but as an intellectual system focused on addressing the Turkish nation’s social, cultural, and economic challenges.

12. Turkism and Politics

In the final chapter, the relationship between Turkism and the political sphere is analyzed from both theoretical and historical perspectives, providing a systematic explanation of this ideology’s approach to politics (Kara, 2025, pp. 139–151). Kara defines Turkism not as a conventional political movement but as an ethical and value-based system of ideals that transcends the limits of political structures and social existence itself.

The author does not regard Turkism as a pragmatic political instrument organized around any particular party, leader, or faction. Rather, it represents a form of collective consciousness grounded in a broad, historically continuous vision of the nation. Within this framework, Kara distinguishes between two types of movements: *causes confined by politics* and *causes that confine politics*. The first refers to movements defined by personal ambition and loyalty to leaders, where principles are subordinated to individuals. The second describes ideological attitudes that establish the framework of political life and prioritize moral principles over political convenience.

According to Kara, Turkism belongs to the latter category, as it possesses a system of values that is not imprisoned by political calculations but instead has the capacity to guide and shape them. He explicitly rejects the notion that Turkism could ever become part of a political party or an election-based system. While participation in politics by a Turkist individual is not prohibited, such involvement should not imply integration into, or acceptance of, the logic of existing political mechanisms.

Kara argues that the multiparty democratic system has turned citizens into a mere “vote reservoir,” legitimizing political cunning under the guise of “the art of politics.” Within such a system, the dissolution or corruption of Turkism would represent, in his view, an ideological deviation and a historical betrayal.

He also offers a critical reflection on the historical evolution of the concept of politics itself. Once understood as the art of governing societies, politics has, in the modern era, become an arena where deceit, intrigue, and personal gain are legitimized. Turkism, he insists, cannot coexist with such practices, for it is a worldview founded upon truth, honesty, and public transparency. In this sense, the aim of Turkism is not to seize power but to advocate for and build a just social order based on rights and integrity.

Kara supports his argument with historical examples, particularly invoking Hüseyin Nihal Atsız’s statement:

“Turkism is not a political party; it is a path of cultural and intellectual struggle.”

This declaration, he argues, makes it clear that Turkism is rooted in cultural and intellectual foundations rather than in political machinery, and that it cannot be reduced to any form of political leadership. Maintaining Atsız’s approach, Kara writes, requires independence from the temporary and tactical shifts that dominate politics.

He further notes that the ultimate goal of Turkism is not merely political authority but, above all, the construction of a Turkist society—one composed of individuals who embody moral and intellectual discipline not in parliament but in schools, markets, workplaces, neighborhoods, and all spheres of daily life. Thus, in Kara’s view, Turkism is not a struggle for state power but an ideal that must spread at the level of social consciousness.

In conclusion, Turkism represents not a political ideology seeking office through elections, but a value system deeply embedded in the nation’s spirit—a long-term ideal of social transformation and moral renewal.

13. An Assessment of the Work’s Limitations

Caner Kara’s Turkism is clearly designed not as an academic study but as an ideological and propagandistic text. However, this does not negate the need to critically evaluate its internal consistency and its claim to present a coherent intellectual system. The book’s ambition is not merely to evoke emotion but to construct a worldview, a political orientation, and a model of society. Within this framework, several limitations become evident.

First, the definition and scope of Turkism are articulated with remarkable clarity and internal consistency. The concept is established in a way that leaves little room for dilution or misinterpretation. This precision reflects the author’s determination to transform Turkism into a disciplined stance rather than a vague sentiment. Yet this very strength may also result in a certain rigidity that limits interpretative flexibility. While Kara’s framework provides a strong foundation, its intellectual vitality would be

enhanced by greater engagement with contemporary contexts—new conditions, threats, and opportunities that demand adaptive thought.

Second, although the book places strong emphasis on the idea of *unity*, the question of how such unity might be practically achieved remains largely abstract and emotional. Geographic, cultural, political, and economic realities are often overlooked, and the assumption that unity can be achieved solely through ethnic or genealogical kinship is left unchallenged. In the modern world—structured through communication, cooperation, and institutional complexity—this omission risks rendering the ideal of unity theoretical rather than actionable.

Third, the book's repeated emphasis on *instinct* tends to reduce Turkism from a rational ideological construction to a merely biological reflex. This perspective, while emotionally powerful, undermines the analytical and intellectual depth of the ideology, replacing reasoned conviction with intuition. When compared to modern ideological systems, such an instinctual focus can restrict Turkism's conceptual sophistication.

Methodologically, the work exhibits certain structural deficiencies that at times limit the reader's intellectual engagement. Although Kara explicitly states that his aim is not academic, these shortcomings create noticeable gaps for readers who approach the book as a reference text. The preface, for instance, focuses primarily on the author's personal motivation rather than providing conceptual orientation. In a work addressing such a comprehensive and multi-layered ideology, both a theoretical introduction and a concluding synthesis would have enhanced the text's coherence and readability. Their absence leaves the book's powerful ideas occasionally dispersed rather than systematically organized.

The inclusion of quotations from historical figures, events, and works adds interest and inspiration, yet many of these references lack precise citations or bibliographic details. For example, references to Hun history, the Göktürk inscriptions, or the works of Süleyman Pasha and Ahmet Vefik Pasha often appear without full sourcing, thereby limiting opportunities for scholarly verification and further inquiry. Even for an ideological text, basic referencing practices would strengthen its credibility and utility.

Given the work's scope and thematic breadth, the addition of an index of names and places would have greatly improved its functionality. The text mentions numerous Turkic regions, historical figures, concepts, and works; their absence from a systematic index makes cross-referencing difficult. This omission prevents the book from functioning not only as a one-time reading experience but as a reusable reference source.

The neglect of such structural refinements restricts the book's long-term intellectual impact and accessibility. For instance, the chapter "*The Method of Turkism*" stands out as one of the work's most compelling sections, intensifying the idealistic and resolute tone of the whole book. Yet Kara defines "method" not as a flexible strategy but as a rigid, unquestionable framework. While this offers a strong defense of ideological purity, it may also constrain practical applicability and popular dissemination. The repeated maxim "Turkism is a cause and cannot change" echoes almost as dogma, leaving open questions about how Turkism should operate within today's fast-changing, communicative, and globalized world.

Although Kara calls for theoretical discipline, he provides few examples of institutional or methodological strategies for implementing it. The statement "each person should work in the field suited to their abilities" reflects a modern, merit-based principle—but without a structured methodological framework, such insight remains abstract.

CONCLUSION

Caner Kara's *Turkism* is essentially an ideologically oriented text whose character is more directive than explanatory. This reveals that the author's purpose is not to provide an academic analysis but rather to present a coherent ideological orientation. The fundamental principles of Turkism are conveyed predominantly through normative discourse, relying more on moral and emotional emphases than on theoretical elaboration.

Although the book makes frequent historical references, it does not sufficiently explore the philosophical dimensions of key concepts, their contemporary interpretations, or their relevance to current social issues. This shortcoming leads to the presentation of Turkism not as an open and evolving intellectual framework but as a fixed and completed ideological structure.

While Kara articulates his position with remarkable clarity and determination, this assertiveness occasionally transforms into a discourse resistant to critique. Nevertheless, his call for Turkism to evolve from a historical memory into an organized way of life is noteworthy. A more detailed treatment of its institutional and methodological dimensions, however, would have strengthened the structural foundations of the ideological framework he seeks to construct.

Ultimately, *Turkism* stands as a declaration of belonging and conviction, voiced with passion and certainty. Yet, it is evident that this declaration would gain greater intellectual and practical significance were it to be accompanied by a broader theoretical vision and a strategic framework for implementation. The book makes a meaningful contribution to ongoing debates about Turkism, but it would achieve greater impact through deeper theoretical engagement and a more systematic articulation of its ideas.

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THE INFLUENCE OF JAMALUDDIN AFGHANI ON THE CONSTITUTIONAL MOVEMENTS IN IRAN AND TURKEY

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Abstract

Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was a prominent Islamic thinker and activist who had a significant influence in both the Qajar era in Iran and the Ottoman Empire during the late 19th century. His impact on the Turkish Constitutional Movement and the Iranian Constitutional Era made important contributions to how Islamic identity could be preserved amidst the modernization and reform processes in these two countries.

In the Ottoman Empire, al-Afghani promoted reformist ideas, inspiring political awakening and the quest for independence within the Islamic world. In Iran, he provided moral and intellectual support to the Constitutional Movement, emphasizing the need to balance Islam with modernization.

This article compares al-Afghani's influence on Turkey and Iran, examining how his ideas shaped the constitutional movements in both countries. It also considers al-Afghani's significant and noteworthy role in the emergence of political Islam in the modern era.

The aim of this article is to re-evaluate the ongoing issue of "Westernization" in the Middle East from an epistemic perspective. By analyzing al-Afghani's thoughts, this study seeks to offer a deeper understanding of the intellectual and political interactions between the West and the Islamic world. Furthermore, it aims to contribute to Middle Eastern studies by providing a broader perspective on the effects of the Westernization process on Islamic thought.

Keywords: Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, constitutional movement, Islamic thought, Iran, Turkey.

INTRODUCTION

Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897) is regarded as one of the most influential Islamic thinkers of the nineteenth century. He played a significant role in both the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran, contributing to the modernization processes of these two states. Afghani's ideas on how Islam could be reconciled with modernizing trends inspired various reform movements of the period. His influence was felt not only in Iran and Turkey but across the entire Islamic world, shaping numerous reformist currents (Nasr, 2006, p. 210).

Afghani's concept of "Islamic Unity" paved the way for political awakening and independence movements within the Islamic world. In the Ottoman Empire in particular, his reformist thought resonated strongly during the Second Constitutional Period and was embraced by Ottoman reformists (Algar, 2002, p. 112).

In Iran, Afghani's ideas formed the intellectual foundation of the Constitutional Revolution and provided moral and ideological support to the reformist movements of the era. Comparing Afghani's influence on constitutional movements in both Iran and the Ottoman Empire is crucial for understanding the modernization trajectories of these two countries (Beddie, 1971, p. 45).

Analyzing the interaction between these two regions and the way Afghani shaped this interaction also reveals the universal dimensions of their reform movements.

This article examines comparatively how Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's ideas were received in the Ottoman Empire and Qajar Iran in different ways, and to what extent these ideas had practical effects on political reform movements.

While Afghani's concepts of Pan-Islamism and Islamic modernism were transformed into an official ideology by the central government in the Ottoman Empire, in Qajar Iran they remained confined largely to intellectual circles and served primarily as a spiritual impetus for the Constitutional

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Movement. This divergence can be explained by the differing political structures, religious institutions, and external influences shaping each country.

1. Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's Life and Thought

1.1. Early Life and Education

Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani was born in 1838 in the town of Asadabad near Hamadan, Iran. Raised in a deeply Islamic milieu, Afghani began his education at an early age and, in his youth, engaged in extensive studies particularly in Islamic theology, philosophy, and politics. His interest in Western intellectual traditions alongside Islamic scholarship positioned him as a pioneering figure in the modernization and reform movements of the Islamic world (Nairn, 1977; Miller, 1994; Saeed, 2011).

Afghani's formative intellectual development was significantly shaped by his educational background and travels during his youth. He lived in India, Egypt, the Ottoman Empire, and Europe, observing firsthand the political and social dynamics of these regions. These experiences profoundly influenced his conviction regarding the necessity of modernization in the Islamic world (Schimmel, 1990, p. 67).

Afghani's engagement with Western thought played a crucial role in laying the groundwork for his leadership in Islamic reform movements. During his time in India, he acquired deep knowledge of Indian political and social structures and reflected extensively on local reform movements as well as British colonial policies (Akbar, 2010, pp. 90–95; Chatterjee, 2005, pp. 40–47).

His years in Egypt enabled him to further familiarize himself with Western intellectual systems, facilitating a synthesis between these perspectives and Islamic traditions. In Egypt, his ideas on modernization and reform gained both local and broader influence. His efforts to integrate Western scientific and technological advancements with the traditional values of Islam became fundamental pillars of his intellectual framework (El-Sayed, 2008, pp. 65–75; Khalil, 2012, pp. 110–115).

1.2. Afghani's Ideas on Islamic Unity and Reform

Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's concept of "Islamic Unity" resonated widely across the Islamic world and inspired numerous reform movements of the time. Afghani argued that Islamic societies could attain modernization and independence only through a unified Islamic front. This idea had a profound impact in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran, shaping the ideological foundations of several reformist movements (Nasr, 2006, pp. 77–80; Mahmoud, 1999, pp. 58–62).

As one of the pioneers of Islamic reform, Afghani proposed far-reaching ideas regarding the position Islam ought to assume in the modern world. He asserted that the Islamic world should not lag behind the West in the fields of science and technology, but modernization must remain in harmony with the preservation of Islamic identity (Hamid, 2008, p. 154).

Afghani's views on Islamic Unity were particularly embraced by reformist thinkers within the Ottoman Empire. His influence paralleled the development of the Second Constitutional Period, and his perspectives on modernization contributed significantly to Ottoman reformist thought. In this context, Afghani's role in the Ottoman modernization process is essential for understanding the social and political transformations of the era (Zarif, 2013, pp. 112–118; Karpat, 2006, pp. 135–140).

In Iran, Afghani's ideas formed the intellectual backbone of the Constitutional Period. His thought provided moral and ideological support for reformist movements and helped establish the intellectual foundations of the Constitutional Revolution. His contributions to Iran's modernization highlight the importance of his intellectual legacy (Jafari, 1995, pp. 85–90; Moussavi, 2010, pp. 95–100).

By advocating for the unity of the Islamic world, Afghani developed an ideology later known as "Pan-Islamism," which argued that Muslims must unite and resist Western imperialism. To

disseminate these views, he engaged with numerous intellectual and political leaders in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran, supporting their reformist initiatives (Shah, 2010, p. 39).

Afghani's influence in these two countries is crucial for understanding the universal dimensions of constitutional movements in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran. Analyzing the interaction between these two regions and Afghani's role in shaping this interaction reveals the broader, transregional dimensions of these reformist movements (Hosseini, 2001, pp. 120–125; Fattah, 2007, pp. 140–145).

1.3. Afghani's Role in the Iranian (Qajar) Constitutional Movement

Afghani's political career demonstrates the extent of his influence across the Islamic world. In the Ottoman Empire, he forged relations with key figures such as Sultan Abdülhamid II in an effort to disseminate his reformist ideas. During his time in Istanbul, he contributed to the intellectual foundations of reformist movements and influenced constitutionalist thought within the empire (Rodinson, 1974, p. 88).

In Iran, Afghani became known for his criticism of Nasreddin Shah. As one of the intellectual leaders of Iranian reformist circles, he emerged as one of the principal thinkers behind the Constitutional Period. His ideas played a decisive role in shaping the religious and political foundations of the Iranian constitutional movement (Al-Khatib, 1986, p. 142).

Afghani's influence in Iran's Constitutional Revolution became particularly evident toward the end of the nineteenth century. His efforts to promote constitutionalism in Iran contributed to the broader modernization and reform initiatives of Iranian society. As both a religious and intellectual figure, Afghani earned considerable respect among Iranian thinkers and became an important contributor to the ideological foundations of reformist movements (Bahar, 1997, pp. 90–95).

Afghani's role in Iran was not limited to intellectual influence alone. His explicit support for the Constitutional Movement resonated within the intellectual circles that advocated for fundamental political change in the Iranian state structure. His ideas centered on "ummah" (community) and "justice" helped reformist leaders communicate the necessity of constitutionalism to broader segments of society. In this regard, Afghani's contributions to the emergence of constitutional monarchy in Iran were integral to the intellectual infrastructure of the Constitutional Period (Ashrafi, 2005, pp. 110–115).

Afghani's intellectual impact in Iran was strongly tied to his stance against the West. His critiques of Western imperialism and his emphasis on unity within the Islamic world were well received among Iranian constitutionalists. These ideas are essential for understanding how the Iranian Constitutional Movement developed within the broader context of the Islamic world (Nurbakhsh, 2002, pp. 70–75; Kamali, 2008, pp. 89–94).

In this framework, Afghani's influence on the Iranian Constitutional Movement illustrates how reformist thought was blended with Islamic values. His impact extended beyond intellectual circles and became widely embraced by the public, triggering a significant transformation within Iranian society (Mirza, 2001, pp. 135–140; Tavakoli, 2011, pp. 145–150).

2. The Turkish (Ottoman) Constitutional Movement and Afghani's Influence

2.1. The Second Constitutional Era

Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's influence on the Ottoman Empire became particularly evident during the Second Constitutional Era. As an inspirational figure for Ottoman reform movements, Afghani advocated for the modernization of the Islamic world. His ideas left a profound impact on Ottoman intellectuals and statesmen alike. During the reign of Abdülhamid II, Afghani's anti-Western views were closely followed by the Ottoman intelligentsia (Karpat, 2002, pp. 84–87).

The Second Constitutional Period, proclaimed in 1908, marked a major turning point in Ottoman history. It was a time when modernization efforts accelerated and the constitutional order was re-established (Hourani, 1991, p. 302).

Afghani's influence in the Ottoman Empire was most visible in the Second Constitutional Movement and in his intellectual impact on Ottoman thinkers. As a prominent contributor to the modernization efforts of the late nineteenth century, Afghani advanced ideas on reconciling Islam with the modern world—ideas that were eagerly embraced by Ottoman reformist intellectuals (Küçük, 2000, pp. 55–60).

During his stay in the Ottoman Empire, Afghani built close relations with various intellectuals and reformists, spreading his anti-Western views and advocating for unity within the Islamic world. These ideas resonated strongly among the thinkers who spearheaded the Ottoman Constitutional Movement. Afghani's emphasis on Islamic unity and religious reform became central themes of the Second Constitutional Era (Çelik, 2003, pp. 72–77).

Afghani's influence in the Ottoman context was not limited to intellectual debates. His ideas on forming a unified Islamic political front aligned with the rising sentiments of nationalism and anti-Westernism within the empire. In this sense, his impact contributed to shaping the intellectual groundwork that prepared the way for the Second Constitutional Period (Ergin, 2004, pp. 102–107).

Afghani's role in the Ottoman modernization process extended beyond his support for constitutionalism. By asserting that Islam could support political and social reform, he played a significant role in the development of Islamic reformist thought within the empire. His ideas spread notably among reformists during the reign of Abdülhamid II and held an important place in the political discourse of the Ottoman state (Kara, 2005, pp. 180–185; Kafadar, 2010, pp. 92–98).

Throughout his time in Ottoman lands, Afghani left a profound influence on Ottoman intellectuals and reformists. As a strong advocate of Pan-Islamism, he emphasized the necessity of unity and solidarity within the Islamic world, a message that found wide resonance among Ottoman thinkers (Martin, 1999, p. 119). The Second Constitutional Era represents the period in which Afghani's ideas translated into concrete reforms within the Ottoman Empire.

Afghani's anti-Western stance and his call for resistance against imperialism gained further momentum following the proclamation of the Second Constitutional Period. His views inspired Ottoman reformists and contributed to the intellectual foundations of the reformist movement. Afghani's notion of Islamic unity reverberated not only throughout the Ottoman Empire but across the entire Islamic world (Davison, 1970, pp. 245–249).

2.2. Afghani's Role in Turkey

During his stay in Istanbul, Afghani established close relationships with the Ottoman intelligentsia and exercised considerable influence particularly on young intellectuals. At that time, debates among Ottoman thinkers centered on the necessity of modernization and renewal within the Islamic world. Afghani took an active role in these discussions and argued that Islam could be reconciled with the modern world. His ideas in the Ottoman Empire left a significant mark on the Young Turk movement (Mardin, 2004, pp. 114–118).

Afghani's influence in the Ottoman Empire extended beyond reformist thought and inspired political awakening as well. His criticisms of Abdülhamid II's rule and his support for independence movements across the Islamic world gained wide acceptance among Ottoman intellectuals. Afghani's ideas heightened demands for liberty, equality, and constitutional governance, thereby forming the intellectual foundation of the Ottoman constitutionalist movement (Sardar, 1999, p. 76).

Ottoman intellectuals, influenced by Afghani's ideology of Pan-Islamism, began to view the empire's ethnic and religious diversity through a unifying lens. This ideology advocated reforms aimed at preventing the fragmentation of the Ottoman state and achieving unity within the Islamic world. These ideas provided both an ideological and strategic foundation for the Ottoman constitutional movement (Keddie, 2003, p. 101).

2.3. Islamic Thought and Reform

Afghani's influence on Ottoman reformist movements was centered on his vision of Islamic unity (Pan-Islamism). He advocated for the unity of the Islamic world and called for strong resistance against Western imperialism. These ideas gained particular relevance at a time when the Ottoman Empire was struggling to preserve its existence. Sultan Abdülhamid II utilized Afghani's Pan-Islamic ideas strategically, both in domestic politics and international relations (Göcek, 2011, pp. 203–206).

Afghani argued that Islamic thought needed to be reinterpreted in a manner compatible with modernization. His reformist approach emphasized that Islam could coexist harmoniously with modern science and technology, and even take the lead in these fields. These views were enthusiastically received by Ottoman intellectuals and reformists and became increasingly widespread during the Second Constitutional Period (Gellner, 1983, p. 57).

Afghani's efforts to create a balance between Islam and modernization became one of the essential principles of Ottoman reform movements. His attempt to reinterpret Islamic thought according to the needs of the modern world was of critical importance for the future of the Ottoman Empire. Many reforms implemented during this period were shaped by Afghani's ideas, leading to significant transformations within Ottoman society (Berkey, 2003, p. 122).

Pan-Islamism, as developed by Afghani, was used as an ideological tool by the Ottoman state. Abdülhamid II employed this ideology both as a counterbalance to internal opposition and as a defensive mechanism against Western imperialism. Afghani's ideas symbolized a political and ideological revival within the Islamic world at a time when the Ottoman Empire was entering a period of decline (Lewis, 1968, pp. 164–168).

3. Afghani's Influence on the Iranian Constitutional Movement

3.1. The Emergence of Constitutionalism in Iran

The constitutional movement in Iran began to take shape during the reign of Nasreddin Shah and culminated in the proclamation of the Constitution in 1906. This movement sought to establish a constitutional order and limit the powers of the monarchy (Karsh, 2009, p. 88). Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's ideas played an important role in laying the intellectual foundations of the Iranian constitutional movement.

Afghani's influence on the Iranian Constitutional Movement was directly linked to his efforts to inspire a broader reform movement across the Islamic world. His influence on Iranian intellectuals and political actors was decisive in shaping the development of modernist and reformist thought. His ideas on the political and social dimensions of Islam contributed to the growing demands for constitutionalism in Iran (Rahimian, 1995, pp. 210–213).

During his travels in Iran, Afghani left a lasting impact not only on intellectual circles but also on the general public. He engaged in extensive discussions on Iran's socio-political structure and familiarized people with ideas opposing absolute monarchy. These ideas played a significant role in the Constitutional Revolution that erupted in Iran in the early twentieth century (Shayegan, 1999, pp. 157–162). His anti-Western stance and advocacy of Islamic unity were acknowledged—and at times supported—by both modernist intellectuals and traditional clerical circles.

Afghani's engagement with Iranian intellectual circles contributed to the emergence of significant intellectual movements in major cities such as Tehran and Isfahan. His lectures and political speeches provided the ideological groundwork for the constitutional movement. His calls for political reform garnered broad public support against the traditional monarchical system, ultimately contributing to the success of the Constitutional Revolution (Bayat, 2001, pp. 45–49).

During his stay in Iran, Afghani cultivated strong relationships with the country's political and religious leaders and made considerable efforts to encourage their support for reformist movements...

4. The Iranian Constitutional Period and Afghani's Influence

4.1. The Emergence of Constitutionalism in Iran

The resonance of Afghani's ideas in Iran became particularly evident during the Constitutional Period. Iran's constitutionalists evaluated Afghani's thought within a reformist framework and debated how Islam could function as a political instrument. His anti-Western discourse gained popularity especially among Iranian intellectuals who were engaged in resisting Western imperialism at the time (Arjomand, 2008, pp. 117–121).

Afghani's ideas played a crucial role in laying the intellectual foundations of the Iranian constitutional movement. In Iran, his concept of "Islamic Unity" merged with local reformist perspectives and strengthened the religious and social bases of the movement (Farah, 2009, p. 142).

Afghani's contributions to the constitutional movement were not limited to the intellectual level; they also influenced political strategies and organizational efforts. During the Constitutional Period, his ideas helped unite different social groups in Iran under a common objective inspired by his reformist vision (Daftary, 1990, p. 77).

4.2. Afghani's Contribution to Reform Movements in Iran

Afghani played an active role in spreading reformist ideas in Iran and supporting the constitutional movement. His endorsement of these reform efforts enabled his ideas to gain considerable traction in Iranian society (Khamenei, 2007, p. 99).

Afghani's influence on the Iranian constitutional movement manifested not only on the intellectual plane but also at political and societal levels. By adopting Afghani's ideas, Iranian reformist leaders made significant contributions to the country's modernization process. This demonstrates that Afghani's impact was not merely theoretical but also profoundly practical (Arjomand, 1984, p. 124).

4.3. Afghani's Legacy and Influence

The influence of Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani extended beyond his lifetime. In both the Ottoman Empire and Iran, his ideas formed the cornerstone of modernization and reform processes, playing a pivotal role in shaping these historical transformations (Ghabbin, 2008, p. 104).

Afghani's Pan-Islamist and reformist ideas led to significant transformations in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran in the early twentieth century. His legacy profoundly shaped the modernization processes of these two countries and influenced the direction of their political and social reforms (Lacey, 2009, p. 211). The Iranian Constitutional Movement stands as a concrete outcome of Afghani's reformist vision. His mission to enlighten the public and his reform-oriented ideas became the driving force behind Iran's political and social reform movements. Afghani was not only influential at a theoretical level but also played a direct role in practical political developments in Iran (Keddie, 1983, pp. 98–102).

CONCLUSION

Seyyed Jamal al-Din al-Afghani's influence in both the Ottoman Empire and Iran played a defining role in shaping the reformist movements of his era and guiding the course of modernization. His ideas contributed to profound political and social changes and established the intellectual and ideological foundations of the modernization processes in both societies (Ibrahim, 2011, p. 88).

Afghani's thought is widely regarded as pioneering within the modernization and reform movements of the Islamic world, and his legacy remains a crucial reference point in both historical and contemporary contexts. For this reason, a detailed examination of his ideas and influence is essential for understanding the dynamics of modernization in the Islamic world (Mernissi, 1991, p. 125).

Understanding Afghani's influence on both the Ottoman Empire and Iran provides not only a historical insight but also a deeper understanding of how modernization and reform took shape within the broader Islamic world. By inspiring constitutional movements in both societies, Afghani laid the groundwork for political, social, and intellectual reforms. His ideas on how Islam could be reconciled with the modern world significantly contributed to the emergence and spread of reformist thought across the Islamic sphere (Keddie, 1972, pp. 98–102).

His impact on the Ottoman Second Constitutional Movement reflects the strength and wide appeal of his reformist ideas. Afghani's emphasis on Islamic unity and independence served as a major source of motivation for Ottoman reformists. In Iran, his ideas formed the foundations of the Constitutional Movement, shaping debates on constitutional reforms and public participation in politics. Over time, Afghani's thought spread within Iran's intellectual circles and eventually transformed into organized political movements (Çelik, 1997, pp. 45–50).

Comprehending Afghani's influence on these two regions offers valuable insight into how modernization and reform took root throughout the Islamic world. The intellectual and political interaction between Iran and the Ottoman Empire accelerated both societies' modernization processes and contributed to the consolidation of reformist thought in the broader Islamic context (Mottahedeh, 1985, pp. 68–74).

Afghani's legacy continues to hold significance in contemporary debates on reform and modernization within the Islamic world. His ideas laid the foundation of modern Islamic thought and fostered a strong awareness regarding the necessity of political and social reforms (Hürriyet, 2001, pp. 120–125).

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