RECONSTRUCTING THE PAST: *JOURNAL OF HISTORICAL STUDIES*

DOI.org/ 10,54414/QPZQ9820

Print ISSN 29595207
Online ISSN 29595215

Reconstructing the Past: Journal of Historical Studies is a double-blind peer-reviewed academic journal, published quarterly in English by Western Caspian University Press. The journal focuses on the publication of original research papers, devoted to the various issues of Historical Studies, and accepts articles from authors all around the World. Being published quarterly, the journal takes issues of copyright infringement and plagiarism in publication very seriously.

Contacts
Address: 31 Istiglaliyyat, Baku 1001
Email: historical_studies@wcu.edu.az
Phone: (+99412) 492 74 18

Volume 3 Number 2 July 2025

CONTENT:

Note from the Editor in Chief

We are happy to inform everyone who pursuits 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 for provide a forum for scientific research without political overtones.

Kind regards,
Professor Huseyn Baghirov
Founder of the Western Caspian University

MEJELLET AL-AHKAM AL-ADLIYYA FROM A HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Ulvu Rahimli*

ABSTRACT
The nineteenth century is recognized as an era of modernization in the Ottoman Empire. At the forefront of this process was the Tanzimat Edict. Based on the principles of the French Civil Code, the Tanzimat Edict necessitated other legal reforms. Alongside commercial legislation, the second half of the 19th century also witnessed the beginning of legal regulations concerning civil rights. The Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye was the first comprehensive legal codex prepared within the framework of either commercial or civil law, based on the Hanafi school of Islamic jurisprudence. Rather than adopting Western legal traditions, its content was formulated through the systematic organization of Islamic law. The Mecelle remained in force in various countries across the former Ottoman territories well into later periods.
Keywords: Ottoman legal reforms, Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye, Ottoman civil law, Ottoman modernization, French Civil Code and Ottoman law, Islamic law in the 19th century.

INTRODUCTION

The classical legal structure of the Ottoman Empire was divided into two main branches: shar'i (Islamic) law and örfi (customary) law. The primary reason for this division was the establishment of the Ottoman Empire as an Islamic state. Consequently, all legal regulations were designed in accordance with Islamic jurisprudence, and unlike Western states, a pluralistic legal and court system was not developed. However, the Westernization movement that began under Selim III and his successor Mahmud II continued with the promulgation of the Tanzimat Edict in 1839 and culminated in the adoption of the Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye. The Mecelle marks the foundational beginning of modern Turkish civil law.

The main purpose of this two-part study is to examine the legal developments that occurred in the Ottoman Empire following the Tanzimat Edict and to evaluate them from both legal and historical perspectives. The first part begins by defining shar'i and örfi law within the chronological progression of events and clarifies the differences between them. The second subsection of the first part addresses the developments in commercial law beginning in the 1840s. The second part of the study focuses on the factors that led to the emergence of the Mecelle, as well as the legal reforms concerning non-Muslim communities from the 1850s onward. The content of the Mecelle and the key motivations for its compilation are also examined.

Another aim of this study is to present a comparative analysis of the Mecelle and Western civil codes—especially the French Civil Code—highlighting both similarities and differences. Additionally, it aims to incorporate the evaluations of both historians and legal scholars in understanding the legal reforms of the 19th century. For this reason, the study draws upon both historical and legal sources pertaining to the Tanzimat era.

1. The Ottoman Legal System Prior to the Nineteenth Century

In order to understand the codification movements in the Ottoman Empire, it is essential to examine the Empire's legal structure. The Ottoman legal system was divided into two branches: shar'i (Islamic) law and örfi (customary) law. Shar'i law was formed independently of state intervention, based on the sources of Islamic jurisprudence and developed through the legal reasoning (ijtihad) of jurists within the framework of the principles of Islamic law.

* Dr., Head of Scientific Center, Western Caspian University, ulvi.r@wcu.edu.az, https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9427-9855, DOI: 10,54414/JZUX2706.

In contrast, örfi law consisted of legal regulations enacted under the legislative authority granted to the ruler (ulü'l-emr) by shar'i law.

In the formation of örfi law, the Divan-ı Hümayun—the imperial council composed of experienced statesmen in the legal, political, administrative, and military spheres—played a key role. Particularly influential were the nişancıs, who acted as the ministers responsible for customary law. The legal principles shaped through the efforts of the nişancıs and the deliberations held in the imperial council were formalized into laws upon approval by the sultan and thus entered into force.

It is important to emphasize that those involved in the drafting of legal codes—including the sultan, nişancı, and other members of the council—were educated in a society dominated by Islamic culture and were well-versed in Islamic law (Ellek, pp. 121–122).

Unlike shar'i law, örfi law evolved over time in response to specific needs. Particularly in the areas of land and taxation, instead of implementing a single law across the entire empire, regional laws were drafted to reflect local conditions. These laws were recorded at the beginning of the relevant region's tahrir (land survey) registers.

From a general perspective, shar'i and örfi laws coexisted within the Ottoman legal framework. Matters such as personal status, family, inheritance, property, obligations, and commercial law, which were central to Islamic law, were regulated according to shar'i principles. However, there were also instances of customary legal regulations, such as the performance of marriages by imams under judicial supervision or court permission in the domain of family law, and the administration and transfer of waqf (endowment) properties under örfi rules.

Similarly, inheritance law included customary adjustments, such as the regulation of succession rights for holders of miri lands (state-owned lands) that differed from traditional Islamic inheritance laws. Likewise, regulations on the use and transfer of miri lands demonstrate the application of örfi law in the fields of property and land law (Ellek, p. 122).

1.1. The Tanzimat Period

Until the 1800s, the Ottoman Empire did not undertake comprehensive codification initiatives. Although some legal codes were prepared during this period, they mostly addressed areas regulated by örfi (customary) law—filling legal gaps without contradicting the principles of Islamic law—rather than areas governed directly by Islamic jurisprudence. A major turning point in Ottoman legal history came with the Westernization movements of the 19th century, particularly marked by the 1839 Tanzimat Edict (Tanzimat Fermanı).

During the Tanzimat era, the traditional Ottoman judicial system, based on a single-judge model, was transformed into a multi-judge, multi-tiered judicial organization (İnalcık et al., p. 33). In the aftermath of the Industrial Revolution, Europe experienced a rapid expansion of colonial policies driven by broad trade networks. Within this framework, Western powers aimed to turn the Ottoman Empire into a vast market through mutual commercial relations. As a result, trade relations between the Ottoman Empire and Western countries significantly increased, reaching a peak particularly after the Crimean War.

Meanwhile, although slowly, the Ottoman production system began to exhibit changes akin to those in the West. This growing commercial activity, unlike anything seen before, made new legal regulations in the fields of contract and commercial law essential (Aydın, n.d).

Although the Tanzimat Edict was prepared based on the French Civil Code (Code Civil), it was generally considered to have deficiencies compared to Western legal systems. Moreover, the Tanzimat Edict alone proved insufficient to meet the need for broad legal reform and legislation. As a result, in 1840 the Commercial Council (Ticaret Meclisi) was established under the Ministry of Trade, and in 1847–1848, it was expanded and reorganized into the Mixed Commercial Court (Karma Ticaret Mahkemesi).

Further, with the 1860 amendment titled Zeyl to the Imperial Commercial Code (Ticaret Kanunname-i Hümayununa Zeyl), commercial courts were established both in Istanbul and in the provinces to handle all types of commercial disputes. Following the Tanzimat reforms, newly established nizamiye (secular) courts, which handled commercial and legal cases, urgently needed a civil code. Apart from the presiding judges, the members of both the commercial and nizamiye courts were typically bureaucrats without formal legal training, in line with the conditions of the time.

It is worth noting, however, that a Commercial Code (Kanunname-i Ticaret) was drafted in 1850, based largely on the French Commercial Code, to be implemented in commercial courts (İnalcık, pp. 35–36).

1.2. Reasons Behind the Adoption of the Mecelle

Article 4 of the Vienna negotiations, which addressed the principles of the 1856 Treaty of Paris, concerned reforms regarding non-Muslims. After considerable resistance, the Sublime Porte eventually followed France's recommendations and made goodwill gestures toward non-Muslim subjects. It declared its intention to abolish the harac (land tax) and jizya (poll tax), and granted non-Muslims the possibility of attaining the rank of miralay (colonel) in the military and first-class status in civil service.

However, these reforms failed to satisfy either Muslims or non-Muslims. Muslims were displeased by what they perceived as the erosion of their privileged status, while non-Muslims were not enthusiastic about being subjected to military conscription. In the end, the attempts made during the Tanzimat period to build cohesion through a millet-based (confessional community) organization were largely unsuccessful. Far from promoting integration between Muslims and non-Muslims, tensions even arose within the non-Muslim communities themselves (Küçük, pp. 549, 551, 553).

Although the steps leading to the Mecelle might appear to have been reforms primarily aimed at non-Muslims, the core motivations behind its codification were different.

One of the primary reasons for drafting the Mecelle was the inability of judges in the newly established Nizamiye courts to utilize classical Islamic legal texts effectively. The Mecelle, written in Turkish and in a clear and accessible style, aimed to equip these judges with a practical legal tool.

A second reason stemmed from the structural transformation of the Ottoman judiciary during the Tanzimat. The classical Ottoman court system, characterized by single-judge, single-instance courts, was replaced with a multi-judge, multi-tiered system. In this new framework, it became impractical to conduct trials and issue rulings based solely on Arabic jurisprudential texts, hence the need for a unified legal code applicable in Nizamiye and Commercial Courts.

A third reason involved the existence of divergent legal opinions within the Hanafi school of law, the dominant legal school in the empire. Since different rulings existed for the same legal matter, it was deemed necessary to adopt the most authoritative opinion to preserve legal unity and consistency.

Finally, the fourth major reason was the emergence of legal, social, and economic transformations in the 19th century, which made the creation of a civil code indispensable (Cin, pp. 465–467).

The Italian Encyclopedia has noted that one of the main reasons behind the drafting of the Mecelle was to provide assistance to the judges of the newly established Nizamiye Courts, who were largely lacking in legal expertise. Another major reason for the preparation of the Mecelle was the influence and pressure exerted by the West for the codification of a civil law. This influence and pressure were not only evident in the codification efforts but also in the restructuring of the Ottoman judicial system.

It is well established that the Tanzimat reforms themselves were launched under the influence of Western pressure and through consultations with Western statesmen. From the

very reading of the Tanzimat Edict and throughout the ensuing period of reform, the Western impact on legal changes, particularly in the field of law, remained persistent and visible.

As codification efforts progressed across various fields of law, it became impossible to neglect the sphere of civil law. Consequently, Ottoman statesmen continuously debated either preparing a national civil code or adopting a European one. The attempt to draft a Metn-i Metin prior to the Mecelle, and various initiatives to adapt the French Civil Code (Code Napoléon) to Ottoman law, clearly indicate that this issue remained on the agenda for an extended period (İnalcık, p. 39).

2. The Legal Structure and Evaluation of the Mecelle

On 26 September 1854, two councils were established under the names Meclis-i Âlî-i Tanzimat (The Supreme Council of Reforms) and Meclis-i Vâlâ-yı Ahkâm-ı Adliyye (The High Council of Judicial Ordinances). In 1861, these two bodies were merged into a single institution, the Meclis-i Vâlâ. Later, in 1868, it was separated once again into two entities: the Şûrâ-yı Devlet (Council of State) and the Divân-ı Ahkâm-ı Adliyye (Court of Judicial Ordinances) (Engelhardt, p. 254; Seyitdanlıoğlu, p. 380).

One of the key ideological clashes of the Tanzimat era emerged between Ali Pasha, a leading reformist, and Ahmet Cevdet Pasha, a staunch advocate of Islamic law. At the core of this dispute lay the issue of adopting a legal code derived from French sources. Cevdet Pasha and his supporters argued that borrowing a civil code from a Christian nation would pose significant concerns for a Muslim state. In particular, the idea of subjecting the Muslim population to a Christian-based code was viewed as problematic. Therefore, they believed that systematizing Islamic civil law would be a more suitable and purposeful approach (Üçok, p. 353).

After extensive debates, Cevdet Pasha's viewpoint was ultimately accepted, and he was appointed to lead the Mecelle Commission. Between 1868 and 1876, under the guidance of this commission, the Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye (commonly referred to as the Mecelle) was compiled. It became the first codified body of civil and contract law in the Islamic world, based on Hanafi jurisprudence. The Mecelle consisted of a preface with one article, a section of 99 general legal maxims (Kavâid-i Külliye), and 16 books. Each book was submitted to the sultan upon completion and quickly ratified with his approval (Üçok, p. 353).

The members of the commission that drafted the Mecelle included:
Ahmet Cevdet Pasha (chairman), Ahmet Hilmi Efendi (contributed to all volumes), Seyfeddin İsmail Efendi (signed the first two books as inspector of Imperial Foundations, and books five to seven as deputy of the Shaykh al-Islam), Şirvanizâde Ahmet Hulusi Efendi (participated in all books except the sixth and eighth), Kara Halil Efendi (signed books seven, eleven, thirteen, and sixteen as fetva emini, and book twelve without a title), Ahmed Halit Efendi (signed nine of the books), Alaaddin Efendi and Muhammed Emin Efendi (members of the Mecelle commission), Ömer Hilmi Efendi (contributed to the final four books), and others such as Yunus Vehbi Efendi, Abdüssettar Efendi, Abdüllatif Şükrü Efendi, and İsa Ruhi Efendi (Ekinci, pp. 338–340).

In terms of content, the Mecelle is a codified compilation of Islamic legal rules. However, it does not include the domain of ahwāl-i şahsiyye (personal status law), which comprises family, personal, and inheritance laws typically handled by the shar‘i (Islamic) courts. Instead, it primarily addresses matters governed by nizamiye courts, such as civil law, obligations law, commercial law, and procedural law.

Furthermore, the Mecelle also applied to non-Muslim subjects (dhimmīs) living within the Ottoman Empire—excluding matters of personal status. It contains sections related to land law, tax law, and criminal law, though these were codified separately with their own respective legal codes.

The Mecelle represents a legal system grounded in principles, but in its codification process, a concrete (casuistic) method was employed instead of an abstract, principle-based approach. In other words, rather than developing generalized legal types or categories, the drafters opted to create specific rules for each individual issue or relationship. This feature of the Mecelle has been subject to criticism by many modern jurists for its lack of abstraction and generalization (Karakoç, n.d. p. 342).

The Mecelle was based on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, the most widely followed Sunni madhhab among the Ottoman population. Notably, no provisions were drawn from other Sunni legal schools, and even within the Hanafi tradition, differing opinions gave rise to scholarly debates among 19th-century Ottoman scholars. The Mecelle's drafting process was marked by challenges in choosing among competing Hanafi opinions, particularly in identifying those deemed most authoritative and applicable. Previous efforts to systematize Hanafi legal thought—such as in the works Tatarhâniyye and Fatāwā al-Jihāngīriyya—were insufficient to fully resolve the fragmentation and intra-school disagreements in Hanafi jurisprudence (Karahasanoğlu, p. 102).

2.1. Comparison of the Mecelle with the French Civil Code and Its Historical Trajectory

In terms of content, the Mecelle is a codified compilation of Islamic legal rules. However, it does not include the domain of ahwāl-i şahsiyye (personal status law), which comprises family, personal, and inheritance laws typically handled by the shar'i (Islamic) courts. Instead, it primarily addresses matters governed by nizamiye courts, such as civil law, obligations law, commercial law, and procedural law.

Furthermore, the Mecelle also applied to non-Muslim subjects (dhimmīs) living within the Ottoman Empire—excluding matters of personal status. It contains sections related to land law, tax law, and criminal law, though these were codified separately with their own respective legal codes.

The Mecelle represents a legal system grounded in principles, but in its codification process, a concrete (casuistic) method was employed instead of an abstract, principle-based approach. In other words, rather than developing generalized legal types or categories, the drafters opted to create specific rules for each individual issue or relationship. This feature of the Mecelle has been subject to criticism by many modern jurists for its lack of abstraction and generalization (Karakoç, n.d. p. 342).

The Mecelle was based on the Hanafi school of jurisprudence, the most widely followed Sunni madhhab among the Ottoman population. Notably, no provisions were drawn from other Sunni legal schools, and even within the Hanafi tradition, differing opinions gave rise to scholarly debates among 19th-century Ottoman scholars. The Mecelle's drafting process was marked by challenges in choosing among competing Hanafi opinions, particularly in identifying those deemed most authoritative and applicable. Previous efforts to systematize Hanafi legal thought—such as in the works Tatarhâniyye and Fatāwā al-Jihāngīriyya—were insufficient to fully resolve the fragmentation and intra-school disagreements in Hanafi jurisprudence (Karahasanoğlu, p. 102).

This point is particularly important: During the preparation of the Mecelle, there was no direct opposition from the Islamic scholars (ulema) toward the codification effort. This can be attributed to the historical precedent of codifications within the realm of örfî (customary) law in the Ottoman Empire, as well as the sporadic developments toward codified law in the field of sharʿī (Islamic) law, as mentioned above. It should not be forgotten that a similar initiative failed in Egypt during the same period. It is well known that during the reign of Khedive Ismail Pasha, a draft law titled Murshid al-Hayr was prepared by the Minister of Justice, Kadri Pasha, as an attempt to codify Islamic law. However, the project was never implemented due to concerns that such a codification would elevate the

position of the Egyptian governor to that of a legislator and potentially undermine his authority. In light of this example, the Mecelle gains further significance.

The first comparable example following the Mecelle is the 1917 Family Law Decree (Hukūk-ı Aile Kararnamesi), which is regarded as the first legal regulation in the field of family law. However, a key distinction between the Mecelle and the Family Law Decree is that while the former relied exclusively on the Ḥanafī school, the latter also incorporated legal opinions (ijtihādāt) from other Sunni schools of law (madhāhib) (Aydın, 2006, p. 20).

The Mecelle was implemented in several countries that had once been part of the Ottoman Empire—namely, present-day Syria, Jordan, Iraq, Lebanon, Israel, and Palestine—and remained in effect in these regions for some time after the dissolution of the Empire. In Lebanon, the Mecelle remained in force until 1930 for property law and until 1934 for other provisions; similarly, in Syria, it was in effect until 1930 for property law and until 1949 for other provisions. It remained in effect in Iraq until 1951, and in Jordan until 1977. During the British Mandate in Palestine (1917–1948), the Mecelle continued to be enforced in most of its provisions, and it did not immediately cease to apply following the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. Additionally, parts of the Mecelle remained in effect in Albania until 1928, in Bosnia and Herzegovina until 1945, and in Cyprus until the 1960s (Aydın, n.d)

CONCLUSİON

The legal reforms initiated during the Tanzimat era necessitated a shift in the Ottoman Empire's legal system from the traditional dual framework of sharʿī (Islamic) and örfī (customary) law toward a more diversified legal structure. From the 1840s onward, in light of shortages in both qualified personnel and institutional infrastructure, the French Commercial Code was adopted as the basis for commercial legal regulations. However, this receptionist approach drew considerable criticism. Consequently, on the eve of preparing a comprehensive civil code for the Ottoman Empire, a consensus emerged in favor of drafting a civil and obligations code grounded not in Western models, but in a systematic compilation of Islamic civil law—particularly based on the Ḥanafī school.

Following the Crimean War, as a gesture of goodwill toward non-Muslim subjects, various legislative drafts were introduced. These reforms extended military and civil service positions to non-Muslims. Yet, these initiatives were not born of grassroots demand but rather as a result of external political pressure.

One of the most pressing reasons necessitating the drafting of a civil code in the Ottoman Empire was, again, the continued influence of Western demands that had persisted since the Tanzimat. A legal code was needed that would also apply to the Empire’s dhimmī (non-Muslim) population. Attempts to adapt the French Civil Code to the Ottoman legal context further underscore this concern. As a result, alongside citizenship-related legal reforms that had begun in the 1850s, the Mecelle-i Ahkām-ı ʿAdliyye—or simply the Mecelle—was prepared between 1868 and 1876 under the leadership of Ahmed Cevdet Pasha, taking into account the predominantly Muslim population and based on the principles of the Ḥanafī legal school. As the first codified Civil and Obligations Law in the Islamic world, the Mecelle remained in force in several countries, in some cases until the second quarter of the 20th century, depending on the legal structures of the respective states.

REFERENCES

- Aydın, M. A. (2006). İslâm hukukunun Osmanlı Devleti'nde kanun hukukuna doğru geçirdiği evrim. *Türk Hukuk Tarihi Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (1), 11–21.

- Aydın, M. A. (n.d.). *Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye. Türkiye Diyanet Vakfı İslâm Ansiklopedisi*. https://islamansiklopedisi.org.tr/mecelle-i-ahkam-i-adliye
- Cin, H., & Akyılmaz, G. (2009). *Türk hukuk tarihi*. Sayram Yayınları.
- Ellek, H. (2014). Osmanlı'da kanunlaştırma hareketleri ve Mecelle. *Gümüşhane Üniversitesi İlahiyat Fakültesi Dergisi, 3*(16), 121–140.
- Engelhardt, E. (1999). *Tanzimat ve Türkiye* (1. Baskı). Kaktüs Yayınları.
- İnalcık, H., Göyünç, N., & Lowry, H. W. (1989). *Osmanlı Araştırmaları IX*. Eren Yayıncılık.
- Karahasanoğlu, C. O. (2011). Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye'nin yürürlüğe girişi ve Türk hukuk tarihi bakımından önemi. *OTAM: Osmanlı Tarihi Araştırma ve Uygulama Merkezi Dergisi,* (29), 101–126.
- Karakoç, Y. (n.d.). Mecelle: Mecelle-i Ahkâm-ı Adliyye. *Güncel Hukuk Dergisi*. http://www.guncelhukuk.com.tr/dergiden/mecelle-mecelle-i-ahkam-adliyye.html
- Küçük, C. (2020). Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda millet sistemi ve Tanzimat. In H. İnalcık & M. Seyitdanlıoğlu (Eds.), *Tanzimat: Değişim sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (pp. 541–557). İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Seyitdanlıoğlu, M. (2020). Divân-ı Hümâyun'dan Meclis-i Meb'ûsana Osmanlı İmparatorluğu'nda yasama. In H. İnalcık & M. Seyitdanlıoğlu (Eds.), *Tanzimat: Değişim sürecinde Osmanlı İmparatorluğu* (pp. 371–387). İş Bankası Kültür Yayınları.
- Üçok, C., Mumcu, A., & Bozkurt, G. (2010). *Türk hukuk tarihi*. Turhan Kitabevi Yayınları.

THE COMMON TRADİTİONS AND VALUES OF TURKİC PEOPLES: FOLK CALENDAR (BASED ON THE MATERİALS OF CRİMEAN TURKS)

Hijran Mahmudova*

ABSTRACT
Throughout history, humans have sought to create systems to structure time in order to understand their past, present, and future, as well as to comprehend the world around them. Observing the movements of the moon and the sun, they developed their own calendars. Naturally, every culture ties the beginning of its calendar to a particular origin story, often passed down from generation to generation. In the cultural heritage of Turkic peoples, continuity and tradition are deeply rooted and consistently observed. This is supported by research in historical archaeology and cultural anthropology. Many customs found in intangible cultural heritage today serve as indicators of shared values among Turkic communities, even those living in different geographic regions. Although these communities have historically been subject to various ethnogenetic processes, traces of unity can still be seen in collective memory and customary law. In this regard, folk calendars and festivals play an important role and remain relevant subjects of study. The folk calendar is a system of timekeeping based on orally transmitted traditions and practical experience, passed down as cultural heritage by ethnocultural communities. It differs significantly from official calendars, dividing the year, months, and days according to unique logic and terminology. Natural phenomena and agricultural activities—especially those related to farming—often determined the structure of this time system. The Turkic calendar, widely based on the solstices, reflects this logic. Among ancient Turks, a lunar calendar was initially used, while the Gokturks introduced a solar calendar known as the "Twelve Animal Calendar." Overall, the folk calendar is a valuable source for learning about ancient Turkic societies. Contrary to the modern concept of the calendar, the first day of the year for Turkic peoples was the first day of March, coinciding with the celebration of Nowruz. The calendar festivals of the Crimean Turks show a strong resemblance to those of other Turkic groups, including Azerbaijanis. This resemblance is evident not only in the dates and rituals but also in the names of the celebrations. Interestingly, many of these traditions, including those originating from pre-Islamic beliefs, have survived and affirm the genetic and cultural kinship among Turkic peoples.
Keywords: custom, Turkic peoples, Crimean population, calendar, festivals, cultural heritage

INTRODUCTİON

While the culture of every nation is shaped by its millennia-old lifestyle and the natural-geographical conditions of its region, it is also undeniably connected to and influenced by the broader trajectory of world cultural development. In this context, the spiritual culture of the Turkic peoples of Crimea forms both a distinct branch and a foundational part of general Turkic and global cultural history. Crimea—often referred to as the "Pearl of Europe"—has long served as a meeting point for various civilizations and religions. Despite this multicultural landscape, the spiritual culture of the Crimean Turks has remained tightly connected to the broader Turkic tradition.

This article explores the essence of the folk calendar, examining festivals related to agriculture and religion, as well as issues connected to customary law. It presents beliefs and rituals associated with seasonal changes and the division of the year. Special emphasis is placed on spring festivals that mark the beginning of agricultural activities and are intended to ensure a bountiful harvest. Remarkably, these festivals are not exclusive to the Crimean Turks but reflect a pan-Turkic character.

Religious holidays also occupy a significant place in the folk calendar and are particularly emphasized in this study. These holidays, celebrated in accordance with common Turkic-Muslim traditions, were rooted in mutual aid and solidarity among the people.

Another important aspect addressed in the article is the wedding and mourning customs governed by customary law and based on particular stages of life. Most of these rituals have been preserved in the collective memory and passed on to younger generations. These traditions, which promote unity, respect for elders, and social justice within the community, bear the hallmarks of a shared Turkic heritage.

* Dr., Baku State University, hicranmahmudova@mail.ru, hicranmahmudova@bsu.edu.az, ORCİD NO: 0000-0003-0959-8419, DOI: 10,54414/CAUC8315.

The main goal of this study is to demonstrate the continuity of cultural traditions among Turkic peoples despite geographic dispersion. The customs related to the folk calendar of the Crimean Turks are analyzed comparatively, revealing similarities with the preserved traditions and festivals of other Turkic populations.

1.Main Section of the Article

The calendar systems used by most of the populations inhabiting the Crimean steppes were heavily influenced by the traditions and beliefs of Turkic peoples, whereas the calendars of the mountainous and coastal Tatars reflected the impact of Greek agricultural practices and the cultures of other local communities. Among these culturally unified populations, the traditional calendar year was historically divided into two major seasons—winter and summer—each of which was further segmented into smaller time periods. For instance, winter was subdivided into four unequal parts:

From mid-December to January 8 (according to the old calendar) – the period of "casting blessings upon the earth";

January 8 to February 18 – the time of strong winds and severe frosts;

February 18 to March 11 – an intense and variable period;

March 11 to March 17 – the time of strong winds again (Kurtametova, 1991, pp. 96–98). This system, shaped over many years through observation, enabled the population to plan in advance both food storage and preparatory activities for the next season.

Although by the early 19th century the Gregorian calendar with four seasons and twelve months became commonly accepted, March continued to be regarded as the beginning of the year in the folk calendar, and the New Year was celebrated on the spring equinox, March 20–21. The autumn equinox was likewise observed on September 23. Religious authorities, however, adhered exclusively to Islamic chronology and the lunar calendar (Kurtiev, 1994, pp. 89–90).

In daily life, especially in household matters, people preferred to follow the twelve-year cycle based on animal names, which was tied to weather forecasting. Additionally, common weather sayings adopted by various cultures were used to predict weather conditions and agricultural yields. For example, a red sunset was believed to indicate good weather the next day, and fog in spring was taken as a sign of a fruitful grain harvest. The division of the year according to animal names reflected a widespread tradition in Eastern folk calendars (Kozlov & Chizhova, 2003, p. 113). It was believed that the animal associated with a particular year symbolized the events and economic conditions expected for that year. Thus, to avoid angering the year's guardian spirit, people would sacrifice the corresponding animal before the new year began.

Alongside the deep-rooted teachings of Islam, pre-Islamic beliefs and associated rituals continued to exist among the local people. Among the nomadic populations of the steppe, a prominent example of such beliefs was the worship of multiple spirits. Though not considered central to the dominant religious worldview, these beliefs were gradually incorporated into Islam as a natural extension. It was commonly believed that jinn, taking the form of humans or animals, caused illness and misfortune. Consequently, an entire system of healing rituals developed, carried out primarily by a particular category of mullahs (Kessel′brenner, 1994, p. 67). Prayers were recited for the sick, and protective texts were written for amulets. This syncretized Islamic culture was widely reflected in oral traditions and folk creativity.

Among the Tatars living in the mountainous and coastal regions of Crimea, the spring season lasted 60 days, from April 13 to June 22. During the festival of Boz Karau (also known as Boz Ozatu), which symbolized spring's first victory over winter and the melting of ice, young people would gather by the riverside, sing songs, burn straw effigies, and throw them into the river—believing that this would hasten the arrival of warmth and ensure an abundant harvest. This period was followed by a 40-day "long summer," lasting until August 1. From August 1 to August 25, the "Aqostos" (August) period was observed, followed by a 60-day autumn season that lasted until October 26. The next 36 days marked a transitional phase from autumn to winter. Beginning on December 1, the calendar entered a 66-day "Great Winter," ending on February 4. The subsequent 24 days, lasting until April 1, were known as Küçük ("the little ones")—marking the transitional period from winter to spring. The period from April 1 to April 23 was referred to as "Mart" (March), and it was itself divided into three segments (Rebi & Lombrozo, 2001, pp. 46–49).

Among the Crimean Tatars, the Council of Elders played a central role in determining the dates of major celebrations, often based on empirical observation. The most significant calendar festivals were closely tied to livestock breeding or agriculture, depending on the region. Among these, the most prominent were Navruz, Hıdrellez, Derviza, and Yil Gedjesi. Additionally, festivals such as Sanbatuy, Narduqan, and Ciyen were also widely celebrated by the Tatars. The earliest of these, Narınkırt, marked the beginning of the agricultural season. The festival cycle began with the New Year celebration Navruz, held on the spring equinox (March 20–21) (Kurtiev,1994, p. 99). It was believed that the roots of this celebration traced back to ancient times, symbolizing the awakening of nature in spring. The celebration consisted of three phases: bidding farewell to the old year, welcoming the new year, and preparing for spring fieldwork (first furrow ceremony).

Preparations would begin a week in advance. Women would clean and whitewash homes, and prepare symbolic dishes such as boiled eggs (representing new life), baked kobete pastries, and sweet cookies. On the eve of the festival, bonfires were lit to burn old belongings, followed by sprinkling water on one another and jumping over the flames—rituals symbolizing purification by fire and water. After sunset, groups of boys would dress in symbolic masks, one of which would always depict a goat, symbolizing one of the 12 years in the traditional animal calendar cycle. Children holding flowers and branches would knock on doors singing songs, and women would come out and offer them sweets (Studenetskaia, 2014, pp. 158–159). Notably, similar customs are still practiced in Azerbaijan during Novruz.

On the day of Navruz, it was customary to visit cemeteries after communal prayer, recite remembrance prayers, and ask the Creator for a fruitful harvest. The holiday table included boiled eggs, halva, kobete pie, and homemade noodle soup with seasoned chicken. It was believed that if the noodles “escaped” (i.e., overcooked) during preparation, the year would be prosperous. Boys and girls, dressed in red garments, would again go door to door collecting food and singing songs. In the evening, girls would gather for divination rituals. One widespread form of divination involved placing personal jewelry in a jug, drawing water from the river, and secretly burying the jug beneath a rose bush. This was done days or even weeks before the festival. On New Year’s Eve, the jug was unearthed, and a young girl (or sometimes a boy) would draw out the items one by one. A fortune-teller would then open a book, considered a “book of fate,” and interpret what the year held for each participant (Zaatov, 2009, p. 5).

The New Year gathering concluded with the first furrow ritual. Men would prepare tools and seeds in advance and clean the stables. The most respected elder of the community would recite a prayer in the fields, then make the first furrow and cast a handful of seeds onto the earth, symbolizing the hope for a bountiful harvest (Kurtiev, 1996, pp. 24–34).

On May 6 (April 23, Old Style), the Hıdrellez (Khidr Elias) festival was celebrated, marking the start of the agricultural year. From this day onward, all fieldwork would begin. After Hıdrellez, Crimean shepherds would take their herds to mountain pastures. In preparation, housewives would perform thorough cleaning and bake round bread called gelekek. In the evening, the entire village—men and women—would gather for a community celebration. A fire would be lit near the mosque after evening prayer (symbolic purification by fire). The most respected villager would light the fire, and young people would jump over it while chanting magical formulas. At night, children would rub garlic on their heads, mouths, and feet as a talisman against evil forces. Housewives would sprinkle a handful of wheat on the windowsill and burn a small fire, then let its smoke pass over livestock brought from the stables, believing this would protect them from the evil eye. On the morning of the festival, the lady of the house would milk the cows and sprinkle the milk at the stable entrance as a symbol of abundance. Afterwards, families would go on pilgrimages and offer sacrifices, typically rams (Studenetskaia, 2014, pp. 163–164).

One particularly interesting custom was associated with matchmaking. During the celebration, the communal dance known as Khoran was performed, with participants forming a circle. Boys would build swings for girls, and these interactions often led to marriages, with the consent of the families (Kurtiev, 1996, pp. 34–36). The festival called Gendjez Mayram was a widely recognized calendar event among pastoralists. Held at the beginning of summer, it coincided with the shepherds’ return to the pastures. Traditional competitions such as archery, as well as folk dances and songs, were performed.

On the autumn equinox (typically September 22), the Derviza festival marked the beginning of fall and the completion of the harvest. In some regions, the festival was known as Kürkekend. By this time, all agricultural work would be finalized, and the sowing of autumn grains completed. Shepherds would return from the mountains, accounts would be settled, and wedding season would begin. On the eve of the celebration, following thorough cleaning, women would bake kobete bread. On the morning of the holiday, boys would clean the stables, burn the waste, and cleanse the area with smoke, while well-dressed girls would scatter the ashes across the fields. Residents of several neighboring villages would gather in a designated festive area. The celebration would begin with prayers and sacrificial offerings (Kurtiev, 1994, pp. 98–100).

The Role of Young Girls in Announcing the Holiday and the Beginning of Winter Celebrations. In Crimean Tatar tradition, it was young girls aged between 10 and 12 who would herald the beginning of the holiday. They would wear sheepskins, perform traditional music, and symbolically declare the approach of winter. These celebrations featured public fairs, contests among singers, poets, and dancers, and were concluded with the "Khoran" dance, much like in the Hidrellez festivities.

Winter Solstice and "Yıl Gedjesi" (New Year's Eve)

The winter solstice marked the celebration of the onset of winter and culminated in the holiday known as Yıl Gedjesi, which signified the closing of the annual festive calendar. This was considered a family-oriented holiday, known under different names across regions—for instance, along the southern coast it was called Kalenda. For Kalenda, housewives prepared a special dish made of chicken and boiled rice, topped with a boiled egg when served. Halva was a mandatory dish for the festive table. Before sitting at the table, the family would secretly mark one another's faces with soot taken from beneath the cooking pot, initiating the festive amusement.

Boys dressed in fur coats and paraded through neighbors' courtyards chanting "Kalenda, Kalenda!" in unison, receiving sweets in return. Girls sang traditional songs, and during the evening, young men would often secretly visit the girls they loved to seek their consent for marriage. If the girl agreed, the boy would present her with a piece of coal—a symbolic gesture that she was to become the mistress of his future household (Bonch-Osmolovskii, 2005, pp. 54–56).

Marriage Customs Among Crimean Turks

Marriage ceremonies among Crimean Turks involved a series of well-structured traditions: engagement, gift-giving by the groom, evening dress-cutting for the bride, the bath ritual and her preparation, the bridal farewell night, the groom's ceremonial bath visit with friends, horse races, drafting the marriage contract, dressing the groom, the wedding proper, the "shir" night, and the gift-giving evening. The organization of these events was entrusted to an experienced figure—çırakçı (master of ceremonies), often from a modest social background. (Beym, 2011, p.pp. 72–76).

Prior to the wedding, the marriage contract (shetar) was prepared in accordance with tradition. With the presence of honored guests and witnesses, the shetar was drawn up—a form that remained unchanged for centuries. All dowry items were inventoried, and the contract was compiled in two categories. Jewelry (gold, silver, diamonds, and other precious stones) was appraised and included in the contract, making the husband accountable for them. Other items such as clothing were listed without appraisal. The marriage contract was considered a mutual agreement between the bride and groom regarding their property and ethical rights and responsibilities (Polkanov, 2004, p. 35).

The contract consisted of a prologue and three main parts. The prologue referenced various verses from the Holy Scriptures. The first and central section addressed the wedding ceremony and mutual obligations: witnesses (şoşbinler), guarantors (community elders), location, time, names of the bride and groom, and reigning sovereigns of the country. This portion of the text remained largely unchanged over time.

The second part, şetar-kettubin, involved the detailed inventory of the bride's dowry and her rights within the new household. Dowries typically included silk, gold, luxurious fabrics, and jewelry. The literary form of şetar corresponded to the material richness of the Karaim community and offered a valuable source on their material culture: garments, ornaments, household items, and lifestyle (Kurtametova, 2014, pp. 39–40).

The third part featured the signatures of witnesses and community elders, offering insights into the village's social hierarchy. The manuscript was ornamentally framed and handwritten by clergy (qazzan or shamash) and their assistants (Beym, 2011, p. 77). These early şetars emulated sacred texts and Eastern ornamentation in style. Before the wedding, the bride's brother would read the contract aloud, and it would be signed by the groom and 12 witnesses. The şetar was then sealed in a container, into which a symbolic gold or silver coin was placed. The contract was only to be opened in case of divorce or the death of one of the spouses. It was believed that opening it without valid reason would bring misfortune. The şetar was given to the bride for safekeeping, thereby granting her the right to protect her own and her future children's interests.

During the ceremony, the couple stood on white felt or leather, symbolizing happiness and health. They were showered with coins, almonds, sugar, and grain. At the end, ash was sprinkled on the groom's head to symbolize the transience of earthly life. Clearly, the marriage and wedding were public celebrations.

Engagement and Related Customs

The engagement was the first formal step. Once the couple reached marriageable age, the parents would announce the engagement date. On the appointed evening, married relatives, friends, and elders would gather at the groom's home. The groom, through the qazzan, would declare his intent to be engaged to the girl, and engagement tokens—rings, bracelets, or other gold items—were presented to the bride's father, in return for which the groom's guests received embroidered handkerchiefs (Kurtametova, 2014, pp. 33–42).

Following the engagement, the bride was forbidden to pronounce the groom's name, a prohibition believed to protect her from misfortune. This restriction remained in effect even if years passed before the wedding (Polkanov, 2004, pp. 18–19).

The engagement agreement, made with the consent of the bride, her family, and relatives, was recorded in an engagement register. Although it did not place financial obligations on the groom, it prohibited the fiancée from marrying someone else unless divorced. Dissolving an engagement was easier than ending a marriage and could occur at the request of either party or by mutual agreement, but it had to be sanctioned by the Karaim Spiritual Council, which issued a formal document.

Pre-Wedding Rituals and "Khoncha" Tradition

Weeks before the wedding, the groom's relatives, friends, and acquaintances sent gifts—khoncha (literally "gift" or "dowry")—to the bride. These included fabrics, toiletries, and household items. The çırakçı, accompanied by musicians, delivered these gifts along with sweets to the bride's home. The items were added to her dowry and used for sewing her wedding dress. The bride's mother would present the çırakçı with a handkerchief and money. Simultaneously, the groom received a reciprocal khoncha avza ("echo gift").

Thereafter, the bride's garments were cut in a ceremonial evening. Women gathered, and garments were cut to music. Poor women and girls were invited to sew the dresses for payment. On the wedding day, the groom sent the bride a bowl of jam and a sweet pink drink called tatly-rakı (literally "sweet vodka"), accompanied by music. Two şoşbin (witnesses) from the groom's party were selected to accompany him throughout the entire ceremony.

The official wedding, lasting several days, began in the evening. Initially, rituals were conducted separately at the homes of the bride and groom. The first day began with the bridal farewell gathering and concluded at the groom's home (Kurtametova, 2014, pp. 37–38).

"Gyzlar Gedzhesi" (Girls' Night) and Rituals of Marriage among the Crimean Karaites

The "Gyzlar Gedzhesi" or "Girls' Night" was considered the bridal night among the Karaite community. On this occasion, specific traditional garments were worn. Girls adorned themselves in velvet dresses embroidered with gold and pearls, sleeveless jackets, ornate caps, and coin necklaces, with their hair styled in multiple thin braids. While the unmarried girls danced to music, the bride would sit quietly in a corner of the room, covered with a valuable shawl. Around midnight, *chiragchis* (ceremonial guides) and *cholchus* (male elders) arrived with their wives to join the celebration. The *chiragchi* would traditionally carry a tray on his head, into which the girls would drop money intended

for the poor. The groom's family would deliver a new veil (*tuvukh*) for the bride, symbolizing her protection from misfortune and evil eyes until the end of the wedding festivities.

Simultaneously, the groom held his bachelor's night (*subay gychesi*), which excluded married men and the bride's brothers. The young men would wander the streets until morning. On the following day, the groom, accompanied by a large group of male friends, would visit a bathhouse reserved for the entire day. Notably, the groom would ride to the bathhouse accompanied by numerous horsemen, with horses hired for all accompanying guests—a procession that could include up to 100 participants.

Upon leaving the bathhouse, all mounted their horses again. The groom was placed at the center of the cavalcade, and as the group approached the bride's home, several riders would break away and race ahead to announce his arrival. The first rider to reach the house was awarded a silk handkerchief, the second a paper one, and the third an onion.

The next day marked the bride's purification ritual, called *gelin-yuvmak* (bride-washing). Female relatives and friends gathered at the bride's home to bathe her. Her hair and nails were dyed with henna, and her hair was braided. By evening, amidst melancholic songs and laments, the bride was dressed and adorned. These songs often reflected on the sorrowful fate and hardships of married women.

On the seventh day of the wedding festivities, the *Bakhshysh Night*—an evening of gift-giving—was held, during which relatives offered presents to the newlyweds. The groom would kneel and kiss the hand and robe of his mother, seated among the women, and gift her a fur coat in a ritual called *ton-yapmak* ("covering with fur"). Those present would throw money onto the coat, which was later gifted to the wedding attendants.

Seven weeks after the wedding, on a Saturday, the young bride would attend the *kenasa* (Karaite temple) for the first time to perform her prayers. Over time, the lifestyle of the Crimean Turks changed, resulting in the simplification of wedding rituals. However, the essential structure of engagement, initial gifts by the groom, the drafting of the marriage contract, the groom's dressing, the wedding ceremony, and festive celebrations remained intact, preserving the spirit of folk tradition.

Birth and Naming Ceremonies

The birth of a child and the naming ceremony also constituted important calendrical rites. The arrival of a newborn was celebrated with joy. On the eighth day following the birth of a male child, a circumcision feast was held. If the child was unwell, the ceremony would be postponed until full recovery. Relatives, friends, neighbors, the *qazzan* (religious official), and the community leader would attend the event. The ritual was usually performed by the *qazzan* or a trained circumciser (surgeon).

During the ceremony, the *qazzan* would recite a prayer beginning with the phrase: "Oghlum dogdy, byanch biz-ge" ("My son is born, this is our joy"). After the circumcision, the symbolic godfather (*kirve*) would carry the crying child out of the room and hand him over to the symbolic godmother, who would pass him to his biological mother. The mother would then take the child to a separate room, feed him, and—according to tradition—weep with him.

Sometimes, birth certificates listed two names for a child. Among Turkic-speaking peoples, nearly any word could become a name—often reflecting the child's character traits (e.g., *Shunuk* – cheerful, *Bürçe* – jealous, *Oynak* – playful, *Qanukey* – stern), physical features (*Alyanok* – rosy-cheeked, *Karamon* – strong man, hero, *Aibeta* – moon-faced), or the circumstances of birth (*Arzu* – longed-for, *Tansyk* – accidental). If parents no longer desired more children, they might name their final son *Toxtamış* ("enough") or daughter *Toxtarı* with similar intent. Identical names for both boys and girls also expressed a desire for a son when given to a girl (Sariban & Shamash, 2011, p. 23).

Parents generally attempted to bestow names that forecasted good health, happiness, or prosperity: *Altın* (gold), *Kumuş* (silver), *Biana* (beloved), *Bice* (princess), *Babai* (father), *Parlak* (bright), *Lamcheri* (shining). Girls' names frequently derived from jewelry: *Göhər* (jewel), *Elmaz* (diamond), *Oynak* (thimble), while boys' names often referenced tools or weapons: *Balta* (axe), *Temir* (iron), *Çöklü* (trap) (Sariban & Shamash, 2011, p. 25).

There was a belief that a child's name could protect them from evil spirits. To deceive malicious spirits, parents sometimes chose intentionally unattractive names such as *Tizek* (manure),

Çekeley (spit), or *Sonuk* (blunt). In certain cases, a sick child would be "sold" symbolically to a relative or another person for a nominal token, and if the child recovered, they would be returned to their family with a new name. Those who "bought" the child assumed the role of second parents, caring for the child's upbringing, education, and general welfare throughout their life (Sariban & Shamash, 2011, p. 26).

Likewise, healthy children from large families were sometimes given to childless relatives upon the advice of community elders. This practice, known as *atalyq* (fosterage), was also common among Caucasian peoples and aimed at strengthening communal unity, mitigating inequality, and fostering reciprocal aid across social strata.

Crimean Tatars also celebrated the initiation of craftsmanship with the *Revan* festival—marking acceptance into a workshop and the beginning of an independent artisan's path. This tradition was believed to date back to the time of Prophet Muhammad and was primarily celebrated in Bakhchisarai, Karasubazar, and Yevpatoria (Bulatov, 1990, pp. 37–39). The festival, held on the outskirts of the city, was attended by nearly the entire population. The space was decorated with carpets, and a central seat was reserved for the *naq* (a religious leader) (Bulatov, 1990, pp. 46–47).

Among calendar-based holidays, religious ones held special significance. For every Muslim, Friday was considered a weekly holy day. From the mid-15th century, every aspect of Crimean Tatar life became deeply entwined with Islamic doctrine. The flourishing of science, art, literature, and education was closely linked to the strengthening of Islam in Crimea. During the Crimean Khanate (1443–1783), the supreme spiritual authority of Crimean Muslims—the *mufti*—was appointed and dismissed exclusively by the Ottoman Sultan. The *mufti* was an indispensable member of the Khan's *divan* (council), regarded as the interpreter of both the Quran and secular laws (Boitsova, 2009, pp. 26–27). He was selected from one of four prominent families known as *shaykhs*. The mufti and his subordinates were responsible for ensuring adherence to Islamic rules, overseeing religious education, and managing schools. Imams (khātibs) in Friday mosques and local village clerics (mullahs) were subordinate to him. The lowest-ranking position in this hierarchy was the *muezzin*, whose duty was to call the faithful to prayer (Zaatov, 2009, p. 93).

Thursday was traditionally reserved for household cleaning, bathing, and changing clothes. At the end of Ramadan, Crimean Tatars celebrated the *Oraza Bayram* (also known as *Uraza* or the Lesser Eid). Beginning on the first day of the 10th lunar month, the festival lasted three to four days. Prior to the celebration, new clothes were bought for children, sweets were prepared, and ancestral graves were tidied. Family members collectively cleaned their homes, bathed, and put on fresh linen. Women dyed their hair and fingernails with henna in preparation for the *Night of Destiny*, believed to determine one's fate for the coming year (Zaatov, 2009, pp. 57–59).

Strict observance of fasting was considered one of the most important Islamic duties. Fasting was not limited to abstaining from food but extended to refraining from worldly desires and actions. Clerics emphasized reciting the Quran during this time. The primary fast was observed during Ramadan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar. High-ranking religious figures in Crimea were responsible for announcing the start of Ramadan, relaying the news to all regions through messengers. During the Crimean Khanate, several devout individuals were appointed to monitor the moon's phases, confirm the start of fasting, and inform all villages. These individuals were honored and exempted from taxes. For 28 days, eating, drinking, and smoking were forbidden from sunrise to sunset, and people prioritized mosque visits.

In addition to prayers, charitable acts and offerings were expected. According to Islamic teachings, there were several forms of alms. Among Crimean Tatars, donating food or fruit from one's harvest—known as *isçura*—was common. Originally meant to support clerics, widows, and orphans, *isçura* later became a state tax during the Russian occupation. From the late 18th century, only wealthy Crimean Tatars were obligated to pay it, with the proceeds often going toward schools and seminaries.

Other traditional Islamic forms of charity also existed. The *zakat* (obligatory almsgiving) required donating 10% of livestock, crops, or wealth to the poor. *Pitir* alms were given on Eid al-Fitr, while *Qurban* alms supported communal feasts during Eid al-Adha. Zakat was considered a religious tax intended exclusively for the needy and was typically levied on the affluent (Zaatov, 2009, pp. 47–51).

Religious and Funeral Customs among the Crimean Tatars

During the fasting period, it was believed that God would fulfill all wishes, thus prayers were recited at night. On the day of the Eid or after the Eid prayer, Crimean Tatars distributed alms to the poor, orphans, and lonely elders in the mosque. On the first day of the holiday, they visited cemeteries and recited prayers at the graves of their loved ones. Upon returning home, they congratulated each other and asked for forgiveness. Children kissed the hands of elders in exchange for sweets and gifts, and there was a customary exchange of sweets among neighbors and relatives.

Every Crimean Tatar was expected to perform the Hajj pilgrimage to Mecca at least once in their lifetime. If someone was unable to undertake the journey, they would send a representative, thereby fulfilling the rite through what was believed to be a valid substitute, or *bedel*. During the Crimean Khanate period, such pilgrimages required considerable financial resources. Preparations for the pilgrimage began several weeks before Eid al-Adha. Each pilgrim publicly announced their intention to undertake the Hajj through town criers and requested that anyone with unsettled accounts approach them. Farewells were exchanged with relatives, including those living far away. Before departure, a communal feast (*ehsan*) was held, inviting even residents of neighboring villages (Boitsova, 2009, p. 33). After receiving blessings and saying farewell, the pilgrim would set out on a journey lasting up to a year and a half. Those who died in Mecca were considered chosen by God, and monuments were erected for them near mosque walls in Crimea. Returnees were honored with the title *hacı* (pilgrim); the entire village would greet them, kiss their hands or hems, and regard them as "signs of God."

Hospitality, caring for the sick, and organizing funerals for the poor were considered religious duties. Greeting passersby was an established norm, as it was believed to express reverence toward God (Gankevich, 2005, pp. 241–242). Respect for elders was obligatory and considered part of customary law. Crimean Tatars adhered strictly to all moral principles, especially during Ramadan (*Uraza*), inviting strangers and travelers for dinner and to stay overnight. In earlier times, special houses for the sick, supported by the collective efforts of villagers, were common. All deceased were treated with equal honor, as it was believed that wealth and poverty only distinguished people in life, and no one knew who would be more honored in the afterlife (Gankevich, 2005, p. 244). It was also believed that tombstones should not differ based on social status.

Among the Crimean Turks, funerals were marked by special customs. When a member of the Karaim community died, a friend or specially appointed rider would deliver the sad news to each family. Entering the house, the messenger would say "Başın sağ bolsun" ("May you be consoled"), and receive the reply "Dostlar sağ bolsun" ("May friends be consoled") (Khafuz, 2011, pp. 18–19). All funeral rites were performed by *kabaras*—special individuals—since it was forbidden for relatives to touch the body. Usually, two men or two women conducted the burial. According to tradition, only members of specific tribes could serve as *kabaras*, although by the early 20th century, they were often recruited from among the poorest. Once death was confirmed, a shroud was placed over the body, and the next day, a wooden coffin was brought. The bed was washed and sanitized, and if the person died from an infectious disease, it was destroyed (Kurtametova, 1995, p. 46).

Mourners refrained from eating meat for seven days. On the seventh day, close relatives visited the graveyard, and before sunset, a memorial ceremony was held. The *qazzan* (clergy) conducted a ritual over a black felt or leather cloth to indicate the end of deep mourning (*ai-aktan çıkmak*) and the lifting of certain taboos. Afterward, everyone returned to the deceased's house for the *et-ashı* ("meat meal"). Following the clergy's prayer, a communal meal was served, usually featuring lamb, black mourning halva, *kubete*, boiled meat pastries, and bean sauces. Alms in the form of cloth and money were also distributed to the poor. A 40th-day memorial ceremony followed, where light halva, known as "Khazar halva" or *halva consolation*, was offered in place of the dark mourning halva. It was typically prepared with abundant honey (Studenetskaia, 2014, pp. 163–164).

Eid al-Adha (*Qurban Bayramı*) began on the 10th day of the 12th lunar month, 62 days after *Uraza Bayramı*. Until the mid-19th century, the festival lasted four consecutive days. Traditionally, each family head was obliged to sacrifice an animal, and wealthy individuals could offer several. A *mullah* blessed the animal and later received its head and hide. Sacrifices began in the morning after the Eid prayer. Once the rites were fulfilled, the meat was distributed to the needy. While sheep were typically sacrificed, bulls, cows, or camels were also accepted (Rebi & Lombrozo, 2001, pp. 38–39).

The chosen animal had to be one-year-old and without defects. Its eyes were blindfolded with a cloth, henna was placed on its head, and sweets were put in its mouth. The animal was laid on its left side, its legs tied, and then it was slaughtered. The meat was not washed, but finely chopped, cleaned of wool and bones, and boiled. One-third of the meat was consumed by the family and neighbors, while the remaining two-thirds were given to the poor who could not perform the ritual themselves (Boitsova, 2009, p. 28). Visiting relatives' graves and sacred sites was customary during this time.

In Crimea, the *Aşır-Künyü* (*Ashura Day*) commemorated the martyrdom of Prophet Muhammad's grandson, Husayn. It fell on the 10th of Muharram, the first lunar month, which varied annually and was not tied to Nowruz. On this day, candles were lit, prayers were recited, and a ritual dish of seven required ingredients was prepared. It is known that Azerbaijanis also cooked *hedik* on Ashura. According to legend, Tatars, surrounded by infidels and out of food, found seven different types of ingredients in their pockets, boiled them together, and escaped the siege (Boitsova, 2009, pp. 31–32). These ingredients included corn, processed wheat, chickpeas, beans, dried fruits, nuts, and sweet molasses. Each item was cooked separately, then a pinch of salt was added and everything was mixed quickly before consumption. The dish was also offered to neighbors as *ehsan*. On the holiday, students from the *madrasa* visited homes, sang sacred hymns, and received gifts and food.

CONCLUSİON

As demonstrated, since the early stages of human worldview and the formation of primitive thinking, calendar-related customs, celebrations, and special rituals have consistently existed. As with other Turkic peoples, among the Crimean Turks the folk calendar symbolized the transition from winter to summer, from chaos to order—each marked by specific ceremonial practices. Although some of these calendar festivals were later replaced by religious holidays, they have survived in the collective national memory as traditional celebrations up to the modern day. These festivals not only bear a pan-Turkic character but are still observed among many Turkic communities, including Azerbaijanis.

REFERENCES

- Beym, S. A. (2011). Svad′ba u karaimov sto let tomu nazad [The wedding among the Karaites one hundred years ago]. *Karaimskaya Zhizn'*, (7), 72–81.
- Boitsova, E. E. (2009). *Rol' islama v etnogeneze krymskikh tatar* [The role of Islam in the ethnogenesis of the Crimean Tatars]. KNP, (7), 26–34.
- Bonch-Osmolovskii, G. A. (2005). *Krymskie tatary. Etnograficheskii ocherk* [The Crimean Tatars: An ethnographic sketch]. In *Putevoditel' po Krymu* [Guide to Crimea] (pp. 52–61). Moscow & Leningrad.
- Bulatov, E. (1990). *Revan ili torzhestvennyi obryad tatar-remeslennikov v Krymu* [Revan or the solemn ritual of Tatar craftsmen in Crimea]. In *Ocherki Rossii, ed. V. Passek*, Book III (pp. 37–55). Moscow.
- Gankevich, V. (2005). *Velikii krymsko-tatarskii prosveshchitel'* (Gasprinskii I.) [The great Crimean Tatar educator (Ismail Gasprinskii)]. *Brega Tavridy*, (1), 241–260.
- Zaatov, I. A. (2009). *Materialy po istorii i traditsionnoi dukhovnoi kul'ture krymskikh tatar* [Materials on the history and traditional spiritual culture of the Crimean Tatars]. Krasnodar.
- Kessel′brenner, G. L. (1994). *Krym. Stranitsy istorii* [Crimea: Pages of history]. Moscow.
- Rebi, D. I., & Lombrozo, V. M. (Eds.). (2001). *Krymchaki: Fol'klor, etnografiia, iazyk* [The Krymchaks: Folklore, ethnography, language]. Simferopol.
- Kurtametova, F. N. (1991). Obriady zhiznennogo tsikla krymskikh tatar [Life-cycle rituals of the Crimean Tatars]. *In Materialy nauchno-prakticheskoi konferentsii traditsionnoi natsional'noi kul'tury Kubani: Sostav, sostoyanie, problemy* (pp. 95–99). Krasnodar.
- Kurtametova, F. N. (2014). Sostav svadebnoi obriadnosti krymskikh tatar (konets XIX – nachalo XX vv.) [Structure of wedding rituals of the Crimean Tatars (late 19th – early 20th centuries)]. *In Itogi fol'klorno-etnograficheskikh issledovanii etnicheskikh kul'tur Kubani* (pp. 33–42). Belorechensk.
- Kurtametova, F. N. (1995). Pokhoronno-pominal′naia obriadnost′ krymskikh tatar (po materialam polevykh etnograficheskikh issledovanii) [Funeral and memorial rituals of the

- Crimean Tatars (based on field ethnographic research)]. *In Fol'klorno-etnograficheskie issledovaniia etnicheskikh kul'tur Krasnodarskogo kraia* (pp. 45–55). Krasnodar.
- Kurtiev, R. I. (1994). Kalendarʹnye prazdniki i obriady krymskikh tatar [Calendar holidays and rituals of the Crimean Tatars]. *Krymskii muzei*, (1), 89–101.
- Kurtiev, R. I. (1996). *Kalendar'nye obriady krymskikh tatar* [Calendar rituals of the Crimean Tatars]. Simferopol: Krymskoe uchebno-pedagogicheskoe gosudarstvennoe izdatelʹstvo.
- Ozenbashly, E. M. (1997). *Krymtsy: Sbornik rabot po istorii, etnografii i iazyku krymskikh tatar* [The Crimeans: Collection of works on the history, ethnography and language of the Crimean Tatars]. Akmesdzhit (Dolia): KPUniv.
- Polkanov, Iu. A. (2004). *Obriady i obychai krymskikh karaimov-tiurkov: Zhenit'ba, rozhdenie rebenka, pokhorony* [Rites and customs of the Crimean Karaims-Turks: Marriage, childbirth, funeral]. Bakhchisarai.
- Sariban, O. A., & Shamash, S. Ia. (2011). O nekotorykh osobennostiakh karaimskikh familii i imen [On some features of Karaim surnames and names]. *Vestnik Rossiiskogo fonda kul'tury,* (2), 19–27.
- Studenetskaia, E. N. (2014). Pishcha i sviazannye s nei obriady i obychai kak pokazatelʹ natsionalʹnogo svoeobraziia i mezhnatsionalʹnykh sviazei [Food and related rituals and customs as an indicator of national identity and interethnic relations]. *Arkheologo-etnograficheskii sbornik, Vol. 1*, 156–165. Nalchik.
- Tiurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy, krymskie tatary, krymchaki (S. Ia. Kozlov & L. V. Chizhova, Eds.). (2003). *Tiurkskie narody Kryma: Karaimy, krymskie tatary, krymchaki* [The Turkic peoples of Crimea: Karaims, Crimean Tatars, Krymchaks]. Moscow: Nauka.
- Khafuz, M. E. (2011). Pominalʹnyi obriad karaimov [The funeral rite of the Karaims]. *Qasevet,* (1/21), 18–27. Simferopol.

THE PRESS IN ALGERIA DURING THE FRENCH COLONIAL ADMINISTRATION: A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS (1830-1962)

Kamal Salimov*

ABSTRACT
This study analyzes the power structures established in the media domain during the French colonial rule in Algeria (1830–1962) and the continuities of these structures in the postcolonial period, within the framework of postcolonial theory. The theoretical foundation of the study is grounded in Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, Homi Bhabha's notions of hybridity and mimicry, Robert J. C. Young's idea of epistemic colonialism, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot's theory of silenced histories. The media is examined not merely as a tool for information transmission but as an apparatus of colonial power legitimization and a formative element of collective memory. The French colonial administration strategically utilized media to suppress the historical, linguistic, and cultural memory of the indigenous population. The exclusion of Arabic from the public sphere, the normalization of French-language press, and the criminalization of resistance constituted key elements of this strategy.
The transformation of the media field in the post-independence period reveals how the postcolonial state restructured its memory politics. Newspapers such as El Moudjahid, which played a revolutionary role in the anti-colonial struggle, later became vehicles for official state ideology, thereby limiting pluralistic representations. The national liberation war was selectively glorified through the media, while the historical contributions of Berber, communist, and women's movements were systematically marginalized. Pierre Nora's concept of lieux de mémoire (sites of memory) is employed here to reveal how institutionalized forms of forgetting rather than remembering were constructed. The analysis of the French press highlights that media discourse was not monolithic.
This article moves beyond viewing media history as a linear trajectory of technological or institutional development and conceptualizes it as a field of power where political imaginaries are shaped and collective memory is produced. Media assumes a foundational role in constructing collective identity through the political structuring of meanings attributed to the past. In the Algerian context, media functions as part of the continuity from colonial epistemic violence to the ideological apparatuses of the postcolonial state. Building a democratic media order requires a critical deconstruction of these historical memory regimes and the deeply entrenched epistemic inequalities.
Keywords: Postcolonial Media, Memory Regime, Colonial Representation, Epistemic Violence

INTRODUCTION

The French military intervention in Algeria in 1830 marked not only the beginning of political and administrative domination but also the onset of a cultural, linguistic, and epistemological colonization. Within this context, the media assumed a special role as one of the ideological apparatuses of the French colonial project. Far from serving merely as a channel for information dissemination, the press was strategically deployed to suppress indigenous identities, legitimize the French civilizational mission, and circulate colonial ideology (Ruedy, 2005, p. 41; McDougall, 2017, p. 63).

However, the media did not solely function as a vehicle of domination. It also became a vital platform for resistance, collective memory, and national identity construction. Algerian intellectuals—both within the country and in diaspora communities—developed counter-hegemonic media strategies through their publications, challenging colonial narratives and articulating alternative historical accounts. Therefore, the history of media in Algeria should not be analyzed merely as a tale of repression and censorship, but rather as the intellectual projection of a multilayered resistance (Shepard, 2006, p. 94; Ageron, 1991, p. 171).

This study analyzes hegemonic and counter-hegemonic practices carried out through the media in colonial Algeria between 1830 and 1962 within a postcolonial theoretical framework. It draws upon

*Dr., Ege University Institute of Social Sciences, Department of Journalism, Izmir, Türkiye, selimov.kamal@gmail.com, ORCID: 0000-0002-6125-5088, DOI: 10,54414/ZKST3308.

Edward Said's concept of *Orientalism* (1978), Homi K. Bhabha's notions of *mimicry* and *hybridity* (1994), and Robert J. C. Young's theory of *epistemic colonialism* (2001). In this regard, the media is positioned as a powerful actor at the intersection of narrative production, identity construction, collective memory, political power, and resistance.

1. Media and Discourse in French Colonialism

The French colonial administration positioned the media in Algeria not merely as a tool for communication or public information, but as an apparatus of hegemony that constructed the ideological and cultural foundations of colonial domination. From the mid-19th century onwards, newspapers such as *L'Estafette d'Alger*, *Le Moniteur Algérien*, and *Le Messager* became instruments for systematically reproducing the colonial gaze. In these publications, the indigenous population was frequently portrayed as "backward," "prone to violence," and "uncivilized," while French intervention was legitimized through the rhetoric of a civilizing mission (Conklin, 1997, p. 91; McDougall, 2017, p. 67).

Within Edward Said's framework of *Orientalism*, the language used in the French colonial press disseminated representations that underpinned the epistemological structure of the colonial order. According to Said (1978, pp. 2–3), Orientalism is an ideological narrative whereby the West legitimizes its superiority by defining the East as irrational, exotic, and passive—contrasted with the rational, progressive, and civilized West. The French colonial press systematically reproduced these ideological representations in the Algerian context, rendering the indigenous population either invisible or stereotyped (Lockman, 2004, p. 121; Burke, 1998, p. 64).

Homi Bhabha's (1994, p. 88) concepts of *mimicry* and *hybridity* offer a valuable theoretical lens for understanding how Algerian journalists educated in French institutions engaged with colonial discourse from within. Through French-language publications, they developed alternative discourses that challenged colonial narratives. This represented a subversive response to the colonizer's strategy of creating a "domesticated native" and instead signaled a transformation of discourse from within. Bhabha interprets such counter-narratives as creative interventions that expose the internal contradictions of colonial power (Bhabha, 1994, p. 114).

The French administration systematically pushed Arabic out of the public sphere. A decree in 1838 officially defined Arabic as a "foreign language" in administrative documents, and by 1895 the publication of Arabic-language newspapers was entirely banned (McDougall, 2017, p. 135). These policies extended beyond linguistic suppression to encompass the erasure of cultural memory, the fragmentation of identity, and the imposition of a singular narrative in the public domain (Young, 2001, p. 386). In this framework, the media emerged not only as a site for knowledge production but also as a contested space for identity formation and historical representation.

1.1. Theoretical Depth: State, Memory, and Domination in Postcolonial Media Theory

Colonial administrations established their authority not only through physical control over land and populations, but also through the power to produce meaning, write history, and shape collective memory. Postcolonial theory focuses on analyzing these multilayered forms of power. Within this framework, media is not merely a tool for the circulation of information, but a domain where discourse is constructed, memory is shaped, and legitimacy is produced. In colonial and postcolonial societies, media practices constitute one of the primary arenas in which power relations are both sustained and contested (Chatterjee, 1993, p. 10; Mbembe, 2001, p. 105).

Benedict Anderson's (1983) theory of "imagined communities" demonstrates how nation-building was made possible through print materials. According to Anderson, newspapers and journals create a shared perception of time and a sense of collective identity, laying the groundwork for national belonging among diverse populations. Within this framework, colonial media policies not only kept the colonized under control but also generated discourses that legitimized occupation and domination at the colonial

center. In the case of Algeria, French colonialism exemplified this form of "print domination," establishing a media regime that marginalized the indigenous population while glorifying Western identity (Conklin, 1997, p. 91; Lockman, 2004, p. 121).

Achille Mbembe (2001) draws attention to the persistent epistemological forms of domination in colonial systems. According to Mbembe, the knowledge production mechanisms of colonialism, when merged with the bureaucratic structure of the modern state, form a regime of meaning that encompasses the individual's modes of self-definition. This regime, which began in the colonial period, continues to exert influence throughout the postcolonial process. Media, as the ideological carrier of this regime of meaning, delineates the boundaries of representation and determines which memories will be visible in the public sphere. In Algeria, this function was manifested through the French press during the colonial era, and later through state-controlled media institutions following independence (Mbembe, 2001, p. 123).

Partha Chatterjee (2004) argues that modern nation-states, particularly after independence, continue the institutional legacy of colonialism in shaping their relationship with citizens. This continuity is not limited to the legal or political system; the media also becomes a crucial component of this structure. According to Chatterjee, postcolonial media assumes a directive function aligned with the normative framework of the state, extending beyond the role of public information. As such, media that once served as the voice of the people during resistance may transform into an instrument that carries the discourse of the state in the post-independence era (Chatterjee, 2004, p. 79).

Within this theoretical framework, media is positioned as a vehicle of ideological continuity, beginning with colonial domination and continuing through postcolonial control mechanisms. As Robert J. C. Young (2001) emphasizes, epistemic colonization is not achieved solely through texts; it is also established through modes of media representation. These representational strategies shape how concepts such as identity, belonging, history, and memory are perceived in the public sphere. In the Algerian context, these strategies can be traced across a broad spectrum—from the content of French-language newspapers and the systematic suppression of Arabic to the transformation of revolutionary media into a component of the state apparatus.

This section's theoretical framework seeks to conceptualize the historical trajectory of Algerian media not merely as a sequence of events, but at the levels of meaning, power, and representation. As an epistemological apparatus of colonialism, the media becomes one of the principal platforms used by the nation-state in the construction of its own mythology.

2. Forms of Resistance in the Indigenous Press

The absolute control over the sphere of knowledge imposed by colonial authority in Algeria began to erode in the final quarter of the 19th century due to various intellectual challenges. Despite the French administration's strict censorship practices and restrictive language policies against Arabic, indigenous journalists endeavored to develop alternative modes of communication—both in content and discourse—to achieve visibility in the public sphere (Shepard, 2006, p. 94; Ageron, 1991, p. 171). These efforts were not confined to individual journalistic practices alone; they also contributed to the formation of civil society, the emergence of critical thought, and the awakening of national consciousness.

One of the earliest examples of such counter-media practices was El-Hak, a weekly newspaper launched in 1893 by Slimane Bengui in Annaba. Although it included content in both French and partially in Arabic and refrained from directly targeting the French administration, it took a critical stance in defending the cultural rights of the indigenous population (McDougall, 2017, p. 144). The newspaper's closure within a year reveals the colonial regime's deep intolerance of press freedom and its determination to restrict the public space for expression.

Beyond content production, the indigenous press succeeded in creating discursive plurality. The cultural differences between secular intellectuals educated in the French system and Arabic-educated scholars from traditional religious schools produced a multi-layered representational landscape within

Algerian media. Although these differences occasionally led to ideological conflicts, they also provided a shared platform for critiquing the colonial order (Lorcin, 1995, p. 201; Grandguillaume, 2004, p. 44). While addressing their respective audiences, both nationalist and Islamist currents found expression in the media through distinct discursive codes.

An important example in the 1920s was El Ouma, published by Ahmed Messali Hadj, the leader of Étoile Nord-Africaine (ENA), a political organization founded in France. Printed in Paris, the newspaper aimed to disseminate the idea of independence among Algerian workers and appeal to both the migrant community and the French public. In doing so, it contributed to bringing the Algerian question onto the international agenda (Shepard, 2006, p. 157; McDougall, 2017, p. 189). Despite being written in French, its content directly targeted colonial power structures, thereby intervening from within the dominant discourse.

These interventions can be read within the framework of Homi Bhabha's theory of mimicry. This mode of discourse, which adopts the colonizer's language and form only to invert its meaning, constitutes a form of epistemological leakage within the colonial knowledge system (Bhabha, 1994, p. 86). Although written in the colonizer's language, these publications exposed the contradictions of the colonial system, developing a new language of resistance.

In the same period, Islamist-reformist publications developed a different form of resistance. Under the leadership of Sheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis, El-Munteqid (1925) and Esh-Shihab (1929–1940) redefined Arabic not merely as a medium of communication but as the main bearer of Islamic identity and collective memory (McDougall, 2017, p. 196). Through these publications, religious discourse was integrated with cultural resistance, helping to re-establish Arabic in the public sphere (Bouchène, 2012, p. 163).

In contrast to the nationalist line, reformist publications adopted a more cautious stance. Newspapers such as Al-Musawah, published by Ferhat Abbas, focused not on a structural critique of the colonial system but on demands for equal citizenship within the existing framework (Shepard, 2006, p. 211). However, after the 1945 Sétif and Guelma massacres, the social resonance of this moderate discourse diminished, and revolutionary demands gained momentum. This shift illustrates that, while media actors diverged in both content and strategy, they shared a common goal of undermining colonial hegemony (Stora, 2001, p. 122).

The diversity of the indigenous press also carries significance in light of Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere. These publications, developed in opposition to the official discourse of the colonial system, institutionalized practices of critical thinking and deliberation around shared grievances across diverse social groups. In doing so, they laid the foundation for an alternative public sphere (Habermas, 1962/1989, p. 83). The press thus emerged not only as a medium for circulating information, but also as a vehicle for collective memory, national identity, and cultural consciousness.

2.1. Silenced Identity: The Berbers and National Media Representation

The anti-colonial media resistance in Algeria has historically been closely associated with Arab identity, often excluding the cultural and political contributions of Berber communities from dominant narratives. Especially during the first half of the 20th century, nationalist and Islamist media outlets offered highly limited representations of Berber identity. This marginalization is directly related to both restricted access to media and the construction of a singular national identity—an extension of the colonial legacy (Silverstein, 2004, p. 81; Aït Kaki, 2001, p. 143).

The French colonial administration occasionally portrayed the Berbers as a "moderate native" or an "intermediate people" vis-à-vis the Arab majority—a designation that served as an extension of divide-and-rule tactics within the media sphere. The prohibition of publications in the Berber language deprived this community of essential tools for expressing cultural continuity. While the French press often depicted Berbers as objects of ethnographic interest, it deliberately avoided recognizing them as political subjects

(Goodman, 2005, p. 201). These representational practices rendered Berber identity invisible at both symbolic and structural levels during the colonial period.

In the post-independence period, the FLN's central Arab-Islamic nationalist discourse further narrowed the media space for Berber-identified actors. Following the "Berber Crisis" of 1949, ethnic diversity within the independence movement was suppressed, and Arab identity was imposed as the sole legitimate form of national belonging (Aït Kaki, 2001, p. 149). During this period, the national press framed cultural and political demands related to Berber identity as "separatism" or "reactionary," thereby transforming media into a mechanism of representational discipline (Silverstein, 2004, p. 86).

The few platforms where Berber intellectuals found space for expression were mostly cultural magazines not controlled by the state or diaspora publications abroad. Mouloud Mammeri's work on tribal poetry and literary production in the Berber language can be seen as both a literary and media-based intervention. Through his writings, Mammeri opened an alternative space for expression that challenged the monolithic narratives of the nation-state by emphasizing cultural continuity, historical memory, and linguistic resistance (Goodman, 2005, p. 205). However, such efforts were never integrated into official media structures and were kept outside publicly accessible communication channels.

The erasure of Berber identity in the media reflects more than representational neglect—it reveals how the modernist and unitary imagination of the nation-state was reproduced through media policies. In this context, the media became an ideological apparatus that glorified the FLN's military victory, established Arab identity as normative, and categorized Berber cultural diversity as a "threat." The absence of Berber representation in media should not be viewed as a technical or administrative oversight, but rather as part of a deliberate strategy of mnemonic exclusion.

In postcolonial media studies, the examination of such silences offers a critical framework for understanding crises of representation and the regulation of collective memory. The Algerian case compels us to interrogate which actors are centralized and which are marginalized in the writing of media history, urging an analysis that incorporates both the visible and the invisible. The systematic exclusion of Berber identity demonstrates that national media not only constructs identity but also selectively reconfigures it.

3. The Statization of Media in the Post-Independence Period

With Algeria's declaration of independence in 1962, the media landscape—shaped for decades under colonial domination—entered a new political and social phase. During the colonial period, journalism had developed under conditions of repression, serving as a vehicle for resistance, identity formation, and collective consciousness among the indigenous population. However, the rapid transition of media into state control following independence marked a significant shift. Media outlets, once regarded as symbols of resistance, were transformed into organs of official ideology, and pluralistic structures were replaced by monolithic representations (McDougall, 2017, p. 221).

One of the most striking examples of this transformation is the newspaper El Moudjahid, which had served as the voice of the National Liberation Front (FLN) during the anti-colonial struggle. During the war, the newspaper played a central role not only in disseminating information but also in constructing the revolutionary narrative. After independence, however, El Moudjahid evolved into an ideological apparatus that glorified the liberation struggle while legitimizing the policies of the new regime (Stora, 2001, p. 132). This transformation reflects the concern expressed by Frantz Fanon in The Wretched of the Earth (1961), where he warned of the danger that revolutionary values might be instrumentalized during the process of state formation (Fanon, 1963/2004, p. 122).

In the postcolonial period, the nation-state's media policies constructed collective memory not merely as a historical phenomenon but as a source of political legitimacy. The war of liberation became the founding myth of state ideology, systematically reproduced through various media channels (Roussel, 2017, p. 191). From the perspective of Pierre Nora's (1989) concept of lieux de mémoire (sites of

memory), media practices in independent Algeria served less to commemorate resistance and more to build a regime of memory under political control. Narratives constructed through television broadcasts, newspapers, and official ceremonies selectively reinterpreted the past, systematically excluding alternative historical accounts.

This univocal historical narrative gave little to no space to Berber identity, the role of women in the struggle, or resistance groups outside the FLN. Thus, national memory became a domain monopolized by state actors, and media outlets marginalized all discourses that diverged from this narrative (Evans & Phillips, 2007, p. 218). In a manner reminiscent of colonial practices of cultural homogenization, the postcolonial state utilized media as a tool for enforcing ideological uniformity, significantly limiting freedom of expression.

Following the 1965 military coup, pressure on the media intensified. Under the FLN's one-party regime, media became not a means of communication with the public but an instrument of ideological control. During this period, El Moudjahid transformed into a publication that not only conveyed official communiqués but also glorified the cult of leadership, reinforced national unity rhetoric, and propagated state values (Aït-Benali, 2013, p. 79). Journalism became grounded in loyalty, discipline, and uniformity rather than critical inquiry.

In this regard, Robert J. C. Young's (2001, p. 401) analysis of media transformation in postcolonial states is especially pertinent. Young emphasizes that media, once a tool of liberation during anti-colonial struggles, can be repurposed by post-independence ruling elites as a mechanism of ideological control. Algeria exemplifies this contradiction, wherein those who once challenged the colonial monopoly on knowledge production became agents in reproducing a similar monopoly.

The process of postcolonial authoritarianism extended beyond the control of media institutions to the suppression of journalists, intellectuals, and dissenting voices. The state permitted only narratives that reinforced its own legitimacy, while systematically censoring alternative interpretations of history, demands for diverse identities, and attempts at critical memory work. Discourses once developed to resist the epistemological hierarchy of colonialism were now enveloped by a new state-centered regime of knowledge (Young, 2003, p. 89).

The statization of media following the anti-colonial struggle signaled the emergence of a new form of domination. The consolidation of the national liberation ideology through an absolute narrative regime in the media threatened both freedom of expression and the principle of historical plurality. Thus, while formal colonial censorship had come to an end, it could be argued that censorship persisted in functional terms, albeit through different instruments.

3.1. FLN and El Moudjahid: The Transformation of Media from Resistance to State Power

During Algeria's struggle for independence from colonial rule, media functioned not merely as a tool of communication but as a vital instrument of resistance. El Moudjahid, first published in 1956 by the National Liberation Front (FLN), became one of the principal carriers of revolutionary communication. By publishing in French and, at times, other languages, the newspaper addressed both Algerian resistance fighters and the international public. In doing so, it helped articulate a national discourse while also contributing to the development of transnational anti-colonial solidarity (Evans & Philips, 2007, p. 204; Stora, 2001, p. 159).

Beyond merely reporting military victories, El Moudjahid sought to convey the FLN's political vision, garner popular support, and call for societal solidarity—thus helping to construct a revolutionary public sphere. Its journalistic language aimed not only to expose colonial violence but also to construct an alternative narrative of history and identity (Harbi, 1980, p. 87). In this sense, El Moudjahid can be considered a revolutionary adaptation of the "public sphere" described by Jürgen Habermas, emerging in the colonial context as a space for critical counter-discourse.

However, following Algeria's independence in 1962, the role of El Moudjahid underwent a profound transformation. It became the official publication of the newly established nation-state and evolved into a discursive apparatus legitimizing government policies (Zeraoui, 1994, p. 118). With the FLN consolidating political power and suppressing dissenting voices, the media sphere also lost its diversity. Thus, a newspaper that had once served as a revolutionary communication tool gradually turned into a monolithic ideological arm of the state.

This shift reflects a common pattern in postcolonial media structures. Media outlets that had emerged as the "voice of the people" during anti-colonial resistance are often co-opted into the state's control mechanisms following independence, thereby losing much of their critical character. In Algeria's case, this process aligned with the FLN's one-party system; El Moudjahid not only carried the memory of revolutionary struggle but also became instrumental in producing the ideological framework that would ensure the continuity of the ruling regime (Layachi, 1998, p. 212).

The symbiotic relationship between media and power can also be interpreted through Antonio Gramsci's theory of hegemony. According to Gramsci, power is maintained not only through coercion but also through the production of consent. In the post-revolutionary context, El Moudjahid did not merely inform the public—it functioned as a hegemonic tool aimed at embedding the values of the new regime in the popular consciousness (Gramsci, 1971, p. 123). As such, media became a discursive platform through which a regime born out of revolution could continuously reproduce its foundational myth.

The evolution of El Moudjahid reflects more than a change in editorial policy; it reveals the shifting position of media within the broader networks of power that extended from colonial domination to postcolonial statehood. The newspaper's journey from resistance to statehood illustrates how media shapes historical memory and plays a central role in the state's strategies of legitimation.

3.2. Post-Independence Media: Censorship and Monovocality

The independence process initiated in Algeria in 1962 was not only a historic victory for a people who had fought against colonial domination but also marked the construction of a new structure of power. However, this new political order failed to deliver the expected democratic openness in terms of freedom of expression and media pluralism. The media sector was swiftly placed under state control and transformed into a monovocal structure. The FLN's one-party regime regarded the media as a platform for reproducing political legitimacy, bringing the majority of press institutions under public supervision (Aït-Larbi, 1993, p. 34; Layachi, 1998, p. 207).

Although the post-independence media order appeared to be decolonized in a technical sense, it in practice reproduced a structure similar to the colonial regime's domination over knowledge. The state positioned the press as a tool to be shaped according to "national interests," and editorial independence or pluralistic representation were not constitutionally guaranteed. This approach transformed the media from a vehicle for informing the public into a propaganda apparatus reinforcing political power (Roberts, 2003, p. 117).

Nearly all newspapers operating during this period were either directly controlled by the state or supported through state funding. Outlets such as El Moudjahid, Algérie Actualité, Horizons, and Ech Chaâb adopted a narrative that predominantly highlighted the FLN's achievements, while systematically suppressing critical journalism addressing social problems. Political opposition was not allowed to express itself through the media; viewpoints outside the ruling ideology were either ignored or framed as a "threat to national unity" (Zeraoui, 1994, p. 124).

Censorship was not limited to direct prohibitions; indirect pressures on journalists were also applied systematically. Licensing regimes, financial controls, and bureaucratic sanctions rendered independent press initiatives nearly impossible. The Press Law enacted in 1968 criminalized publications deemed "contrary to the interests of the state," thereby institutionalizing self-censorship (Aït-Larbi, 1993,

p. 39). This legal framework constrained not only the content of journalistic production but also every aspect of editorial decision-making, from topic selection to headline wording.

Although the 1970s and 1980s witnessed a degree of media liberalization, these developments were limited and temporary. Economic crises, internal divisions within the FLN, and increasing social opposition brought reform demands to the fore. However, these demands were either co-opted and neutralized within the system or suppressed through repressive measures. For instance, during the 1980 Kabyle Uprising, the state ignored demands related to Berber identity in both print and visual media, framing the protests as acts of "separatism" (Silverstein, 2004, p. 92). This revealed the media's monolithic function in constructing national identity and its tendency to suppress cultural diversity.

This structure gave rise to a symbiotic relationship between media and the state. The press was used as a strategic tool to obscure crises of legitimacy and manipulate public reaction. Journalists working in this environment were often affiliated with the ruling party; ideological loyalty was prioritized over professional ethics. In such an atmosphere, critical journalism was not only suppressed but equated with "treason" or "espionage" (Roberts, 2003, p. 123).

All of these developments reveal that the media in Algeria functioned not as an independent public sphere but as a structure reinforcing the state's hegemonic discourse. The phenomenon of "reproducing colonial legacies," often emphasized in postcolonial literature, is clearly observable in the country's media institutions. Post-independence media did not become autonomous but rather integrated into the representational strategies of the new power structure. The absence of press freedom, therefore, constitutes more than a structural problem—it serves as an indicator of the limits imposed by the political imagination.

3.3. Memory Regimes in the Media and Representations of the War

In the post-independence period, the Algerian state employed the national media both as a vehicle for contemporary political narratives and as an instrument for shaping collective memory. During this time, the Algerian War of Independence (1954–1962) was reproduced in the media not simply as a historical event, but as a foundational narrative that reinforced the legitimacy of the state. The representation of the war was structured around specific stories of heroism, martyrdom, and victory myths, while alternative perspectives and conflicting memories were systematically marginalized (Stora, 1992, p. 28; Hachemaoui, 2015, p. 319).

The independence movement led by the FLN was transformed through media into a "national memory bloc," emphasizing an idealized historical narrative that glorified military victory and collective unity and sacrifice. This narrative was institutionalized by the continuous reproduction of selected events and figures, while internal conflicts, divisions among revolutionary groups, and the distinctive contributions of Berber, communist, and women's movements were largely excluded or relegated to secondary importance (Evans & Phillips, 2007, p. 72).

Official television broadcasts regularly featured programming commemorating the armed resistance launched on November 1, 1954, and the ceasefire on March 19, 1962. These anniversaries became central rituals in the state's memory politics. These commemorative events and broadcasts functioned as lieux de mémoire (sites of memory) in Pierre Nora's (1989) sense, forming a symbolic calendar of remembrance filled with selective representations designed to sustain a shared sense of history. This calendar did more than merely evoke the past—it also delineated the boundaries of current political belonging and definitions of citizenship.

This institutionalized memory regime in the media effectively excluded alternative narratives. The symbolic distinction drawn in media representations between civilians killed during the civil conflicts of the 1990s and the martyrs of the independence struggle illustrates how the state selectively remembered the past. This selective memory can be interpreted through Michel-Rolph Trouillot's (1995) concept of

"silenced histories." The dominant state narrative not only determined what would be remembered but also what would be forgotten or suppressed, thus turning the media into a mechanism for memory control.

4. The Representation of the Algerian Resistance in the French Press

The Algerian War of Independence was not only shaped by military and diplomatic struggles but also by its media and ideological dimensions. Newspapers, magazines, radio broadcasts, and news agencies in France played a decisive role in shaping public perception through their methods of defining and framing the conflict. These representations contributed either to the reproduction or to the critique of the colonial regime's legitimacy. The representation of the resistance in the media extended beyond information dissemination—it revealed the complex relationship between French national identity and its colonial past. The Algerian issue moved beyond the confines of "foreign news" and took center stage in domestic political debates within France.

The stance of the French press during this period was far from homogenous. Media outlets differed based on their political orientations, ideological affiliations, and degrees of economic independence. The mainstream press, which maintained organic ties with the state, generally adopted a discourse legitimizing colonial policies. These outlets often criminalized the resistance and steered public opinion accordingly. On the other hand, the left-wing opposition press developed a more critical stance, exposing issues such as torture, censorship, and racist policies. However, the impact of these alternative voices remained limited due to the structural constraints of the media system. Particularly during the early years of the war, deviating from the dominant discourse entailed considerable risk.

The representation of the Algerian resistance in the French media was shaped not only by the content of reporting but also by the identities of the subjects portrayed, the discursive strategies employed, censorship mechanisms, and the techniques used to manipulate public opinion. These modes of representation simultaneously revealed and obscured the colonial regime's crises. This section analyzes the French press's approach to the Algerian resistance under four key headings: the visibility of the war, discursive differences among newspapers, the representation of Algerian actors, and the role of the media in shaping post-independence memory politics.

4.1. The Visibility of the War and Mechanisms of Censorship in the French Press

The Algerian War of Independence, which began in 1954, was long presented to the French public not as a "war" in the official sense, but rather as a "series of events." This definitional manipulation by the French state directly impacted the scope of the press and shaped how the public understood the events. Censorship measures imposed on media organizations affected not only news content but also the language used. Terms such as "war," "occupation," and "torture" were systematically banned or replaced with euphemisms (Vidal-Naquet, 1972, p. 83). This censorship policy was implemented not only in right-leaning publications but also in mainstream newspapers.

The framing power of state-controlled news agencies, such as Agence France-Presse (AFP), suppressed the voices of local reporters. As a result, massacres, disappearances, and civilian deaths in Algeria were conveyed only indirectly or in ways unlikely to draw reader attention (Connelly, 2002, p. 173). These implicit narrative strategies did not merely obscure colonial violence but also blurred responsibility, deferring moral debate.

In addition to direct censorship, self-censorship became a widespread practice. Journalists, reluctant to risk their careers or publishing licenses, took care to present events in a "balanced" manner. This gave rise to a form of epistemic hegemony within the media, severely limiting the public circulation of truths concerning the anti-colonial resistance.

4.2. Le Monde and L'Humanité: Divergent Discourses in the Mainstream and Left-Wing Press

Despite the censorship regime, discursive diversity in the French press did not entirely disappear. Newspapers such as Le Monde and L'Humanité adopted different political stances on the Algerian issue. While Le Monde emphasized independent journalism and neutrality in its editorial line, its reporting on the Algerian War often adopted a tone sympathetic to the state's position (Thomas, 2008, p. 64). In thearly years of the conflict, the actions of the FLN were framed as "terrorism," while French military intervention was portrayed as a "restoration of order."

In contrast, L'Humanité, the organ of the French Communist Party, developed a more overtly anti-colonial stance. It framed the Algerian resistance as a struggle for liberation against imperialism and attempted to expose France's use of torture, executions, and collective punishment with supporting evidence (Shipway, 2008, p. 201). In this sense, L'Humanité played a critical role in rendering colonial violence visible to the French public.

Nevertheless, the influence of the leftist press was limited by both its low circulation and the prevailing political climate. With the rise of Charles de Gaulle in 1958, the media landscape underwent a re-centralization. This process, coupled with the restriction of dissenting voices, led to a growing homogenization in the representation of the war.

4.3. The Representation and Stereotyping of Algerian Actors in the Media

The representation of Algerian fighters and civilians in the French press was often constructed through orientalist and reductionist tropes. As an extension of the colonial legacy, Algerians were typically portrayed either as "savage insurgents" or "passive victims," with little regard for the historical and political complexity of their demands (Sivan, 1991, p. 44). As Frantz Fanon (1961) also noted, these depictions reproduced the logic of colonial thought through the medium of journalism.

Armed actions against the French military were frequently decontextualized and described with terms such as "terrorist," "bloody assault," or "barbaric attack" (Kumar, 2006, p. 59). By contrast, the repression exercised by the French army—including mass arrests and village burnings—was either absent from news coverage or neutralized through technical jargon.

These distorted representations persisted not only during the war but also in post-war memory. A significant portion of the French public continued to recall the Algerian War as a matter of "public order," with the political content of the resistance suppressed. In this way, the media functioned not merely as a vehicle for relaying information but also as a symbolic apparatus that obscured colonial violence.

4.4. Post-Independence Effects: Memory and Media Responsibility in France

Following Algeria's independence in 1962, the French media largely portrayed the process as a "loss" or a "national trauma." Neither politicians nor the media fully assumed responsibility for the war. This culture of denial hindered the public's historical reckoning (Stora, 1998, p. 43). Until the 1990s, it was nearly impossible for news about torture, mass executions, and colonial crimes to appear in the media.

This silence had both individual and institutional dimensions. French television and newspapers preferred to maintain a nostalgic national narrative rather than critically question the war's place in collective memory. The discrimination faced by Algerian-origin citizens in France serves as a concrete example of the social consequences of failing to confront the colonial past (Bancel, Blanchard & Lemaire, 2005, p. 91).

However, from the 2000s onward, a slow process of reckoning began to take shape in the media. Newspapers like Le Monde published self-critical editorials concerning their past stances, and some television channels produced documentaries on the Algerian War. These developments indicate a growing awareness of media responsibility. Nevertheless, it is clear that a comprehensive confrontation with the legacy of colonialism is still lacking, and the media must adopt a more proactive role in this regard.

CONCLUSION AND EVALUATION

Under French colonial rule, the media sphere functioned not merely as a repressive apparatus but as a strategic platform for establishing cultural hegemony. In the case of Algeria, the media became an instrument of colonialism's epistemic project, extending beyond censorship to institutionalize inequality in news production and access to information. Newspapers that published in French and aligned with the metropole systematically rendered the cultural and historical experiences of the local population invisible. The designation of the colonial language as the only legitimate medium of news played a decisive role in the colonization of knowledge. This constituted a process of mental occupation beyond physical control.

As demonstrated by the example of El Moudjahid, local media initiatives that emerged under colonial repression played a crucial role in organizing resistance and constructing national consciousness. These publications developed an alternative discourse that challenged the representational crisis of the colonial order and built a new language of history, identity, and solidarity. During the war years, they produced not just news but a memory of struggle. However, this critical and revolutionary potential was later absorbed by state ideology after independence. The media, which had functioned as a tool of liberation, became a central ideological apparatus in the reproduction of the new power structure.

Although the post-independence media order initially raised hopes of an end to colonial domination, it soon became clear that a new hegemonic national narrative was being constructed at the domestic level. The FLN's single-party rule shaped the media as a domain for maintaining political continuity. In this process, editorial autonomy was suppressed, and diversity of expression was significantly curtailed. This structural transformation suggests a linear continuity between the colonial regime's knowledge policies and the postcolonial state's mechanisms for producing legitimacy. In other words, colonial domination was not overcome but restructured in different forms and contents.

The state's dominance over the media extended beyond content control to reinforcing a singular narrative in the construction of national memory. Berber identity, female resisters, socialist factions, and local initiatives—actors in the broader resistance movement—were either ignored or marginalized in media discourse. In line with Michel-Rolph Trouillot's concept of "silenced history," this reveals how the past is remembered—or forgotten—under the control of power. The media thus became an instrument for directing both remembrance and forgetting.

Looking at the French press, the representational issues during the war, despite the divisions between mainstream and leftist outlets, reveal the persistence of a common colonial gaze. While publications like Le Monde acted out of a reflex to protect France's international reputation, leftist newspapers like L'Humanité did sometimes criticize colonial violence, but still maintained a significant distance from representing Algerians as autonomous subjects. This indicates a structural inequality in Western media regarding who gets to speak and when. Algerian actors were largely denied the right to represent their own struggle; their voices were often filtered through the lens of the French intelligentsia.

In post-independence Algerian media, a framework dominated by an absolute national narrative emerged, marginalizing all discourses that challenged this narrative. State-backed publications did not merely celebrate the FLN's victory; they also constructed a defensive front against any attempts to question or reinterpret that victory. The media became a political tool for reconstructing the past, rather than simply representing it. Memory thus ceased to be a fixed structure and became a political text that is continuously rewritten.

The analyses presented in this study demonstrate that the media in Algeria has functioned as a mechanism of domination intrinsic to both colonial and postcolonial power structures. The loss of the media's critical nature—formed within anti-colonial resistance—after independence offers a concrete example of how a tool of freedom can be transformed into a means of control. The history of media must be approached not merely in technological or institutional terms, but as a space of transformation for political imaginaries and collective memory.

The democratization of Algerian media depends not only on changes in state policy. This transformation requires the recognition of plural forms of memory, the creation of space for alternative historical narratives, and the structural safeguarding of freedom of expression. Today, media continues to produce silenced memories of the present alongside those of the past. Confronting the cultural traumas

created by colonialism necessitates dismantling the epistemic hierarchies that still persist in the media landscape.

REFERENCES

- Aït-Benali, H. (2013). *Médias et pouvoir politique en Algérie: Une histoire de tensions*. L'Harmattan.
- Aït-Larbi, S. (1993). *La presse algérienne: De l'indépendance à l'ouverture démocratique*. Éditions Enal.
- Evans, M., & Phillips, J. (2007). *Algeria: Anger of the Dispossessed*. Yale University Press.
- Fanon, F. (2004). *The Wretched of the Earth* (R. Philcox, Trans.). Grove Press. (Original work published 1961)
- Gramsci, A. (1971). *Selections from the Prison Notebooks* (Q. Hoare & G. Nowell Smith, Eds. & Trans.). International Publishers.
- Hachemaoui, M. (2015). The invisible origins of the Algerian authoritarian regime: On the socio-political genesis of the post-colonial state. *Middle East Critique*, 24(3), 309–327. https://doi.org/10.1080/19436149.2015.1060831
- Harbi, M. (1980). *Le FLN: Mirage et réalité: Des origines à la prise du pouvoir (1945–1962)*. Editions Jeune Afrique.
- Layachi, A. (1998). *Economic Crisis and Political Change in North Africa*. Praeger.
- McDougall, J. (2017). *A History of Algeria*. Cambridge University Press.
- Nora, P. (1989). Between memory and history: Les lieux de mémoire. *Representations*, 26, 7–24. https://doi.org/10.2307/2928520
- Roberts, H. (2003). *The Battlefield: Algeria 1988–2002. Studies in a Broken Polity*. Verso.
- Roussel, C. (2017). Mémoire officielle, mémoire sociale et politiques de la mémoire en Algérie. In M. Brulin & J. Frétigné (Eds.), *Mémoires algériennes: De la guerre à la crise politique* (pp. 183–201). L'Harmattan.
- Silverstein, P. A. (2004). *Algeria in France: Transpolitics, Race, and Nation*. Indiana University Press.
- Stora, B. (2001). *Algeria, 1830–2000: A Short History*. Cornell University Press.
- Stora, B. (1992). *La gangrène et l'oubli: La mémoire de la guerre d'Algérie*. La Découverte.
- Trouillot, M.-R. (1995). *Silencing the Past: Power and the Production of History*. Beacon Press.
- Young, R. J. C. (2001). *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. Blackwell.
- Young, R. J. C. (2003). *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford University Press.
- Zeraoui, Z. (1994). *Pouvoir et opposition en Algérie: Les acteurs politiques dans la crise*. Publisud.

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

Nargiz Aliyeva*

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

INTRODUCTION

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

1.THE MAIN PART OF THE ARTICLE

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

* Doctor of Historical Sciences, The National Museum of History of Azerbaijan, DOI: 10,54414/IKCB6876.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

CONCLUSION

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

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

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

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

REFERENCES:

- Al-Hamawi, Y. (1977). *Muʿjam al-Buldan* (Vol. 3). Beirut. [In Arabic].
- Al-Qalqashandi, A. A. *Ṣubḥ al-aʿshā* (Vol. 1). [In Arabic].
- Al-Qazwini, Z. (1960). *Āthār al-bilād wa akhbār al-ʿibād*. Beirut. [In Arabic].
- Al-Suyuti, J. A. A. B. (n.d.). *Nuzum al-ʿiqyān fī aʿyān al-aʿyān*. [In Arabic].
- Bünyadov, Z. M. (1984). *Azərbaycan Atabəylər dövləti (1136-1225)* [Atabegs of Azerbaijan (1136-1225)]. Bakı: Elm.
- Əliyeva, N. (2022). *"Omonimlər lüğəti"ndə Qafqaz və Azərbaycan* [Caucasus and Azerbaijan in the "Dictionary of Homonyms"]. Bakı: Elm və təhsil Nəşriyyatı.
- Əliyeva, N. A. (2010). *Əs-Səmaninin "Kitab əl-Ənsab" əsəri Azərbaycanın mədəniyyət tarixinə dair mənbə kimi [As-Samani's book "Kitab al-Ansab" as a source of cultural history of Azerbaijan]*. Bakı: Şərq-Qərb.
- Əliyeva, N. (2020). "*Mucəm əl-Buldən" əsərində Azərbaycan və Qafqaz [Azerbaijan and the Caucasus in "Mujam al-Buldan"]*. Bakı: Elm və təhsil Nəşriyyatı.
- Ibn Makula. (1990). *Al-Ikmal fi rafʿ al-irtiyab ʿan al-muʾtalif wa al-mukhtalif min al-asmaʾ wa al-kuna wa al-ansab* (Vol. 4). Beirut. [In Arabic].
- Jakut's Moschtarik. (1846). Das ist Lexicon geografische Homonyme: Aus den Handschriften zu Wien und Gotting (Preface in German).
- Mahmudov, M. (1983). *Ərəbcə yazmış azərbaycanlı şair və ədiblər. VII-XII əsrlər [Azerbaijani poets and writers who wrote in Arabic. Seventh and twelfth centuries]*. Bakı.
- Şərifli, M. X. (1962). Eyni adlı orta əsr Azərbaycan şəhər-qalaları [Medieval Azerbaijani cities and fortresses sharing identical names]. *Azərb. EA-nın məruzələri, XVIII (3)*, Bakı.
- Алиева, Н. А. (2016). *Ибн Макула о мухаддисах Азербайджана [Ibn Makula on the Muhaddiths of Azerbaijan] (Monograph). Серия «Восточная библиотека».* Москва: НИИ истории, экономики и права.
- Алиева, Н. А. (1989). Топонимы Азербайджана по «Китаб ал-муштарик вад`ан ва-л муфтарик сук'ан Иакута ал-Хамави» [Toponyms of Azerbaijan according to "Kitab al-mushtariq wad'an wa-l muftariq suq'an Yakuta al-Hamawi"]. В: *Тезисы II Республиканской Научно-Практической Конференции, Ташкент.*
- Асадов, М. (1983). «Китаб ал-муштарик вадан ва-л муфтарик сукан Йакута ал-Хамави» как источник по изучению средневековых географических омонимов [Yaqut al-Hamawi's "Kitab al-mushtarik wa'an wa-l muftarik suq'an" as a source for the study of medieval geographical homonyms]. В: *Тезисы Конференции Аспирантов и Молодых Научных Сотрудников. Т. II. М.*
- Ахмед ибн Лютфуллах (Munejjimbashi). (1957). «Джами ад-Дувал» Ибн ал-Азрака ал-Фарики из «Истории Маяфаррикина» ["Jami' ad-Duwal" by Ibn al-Azrak al-Fariqi from the "History of Mayafariqin"]. *Труды института истории, XII, 205–251*. Баку.

- Ашурбейли, С. Б. (1983). *История государство Ширваншахов (VI-XVI вв.) [History of the state of the Shirvanshahs (sixth-sixteenth centuries)]*. Баку: Элм.
- Гейдаров, М. Х. (1982). *Города и городское ремесло Азербайджана XIII-XVII веков [Cities and urban crafts of Azerbaijan thirteenth-seventeenth centuries Azerbaijan]*. Баку: Изд-во Элм.
- Крачковский, И. Ю. (1957). *Географы XII века на Востоке* [Geographers of the 12th Century in the East]. Избранные сочинения, 7 т., т. IV. Москва-Ленинград: Изд-во АН СССР.
- Мирзазаде, Ч. Х. (1988). *Топонимы Азербайджана в средневековых арабских географических источниках [Toponyms of Azerbaijan in medieval Arabic geographical sources*]. Баку.
- Шагинян, А. К. (2012). Нахичевань в составе Арабского Халифата [Nakhchivan as part of the Arab Caliphate]. *Журнал Восток*, (3), 109–114. Москва.