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MOVAROUNNAHR IN ARAB SOURCES OF THE 9TH–12TH CENTURIES: HISTORICAL ANALYSIS OF POLITICAL, ETHNIC AND SOCIAL PROCESSES

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Abstract: This article examines the significance of Arabic sources in the study of the political, social, and cultural history of Transoxiana and Turkestan during the 9th–12th centuries. Works by prominent scholars such as al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Masʿudi, al-Biruni, and al-Marwazi provide unique insights into the development of political institutions, tribal structures, economic relations, and the spread of Islam in the region. Through comparative historical and ethnological approaches, the study highlights both the methodological diversity and the subjectivity present in these sources. The article underscores the central role of Arabic geographical and historical literature in reconstructing the ethnopolitical processes of the Turkic peoples and assessing the integration of Islamic civilization into Central Asia. By analyzing these sources critically, the research contributes to a deeper understanding of medieval statehood, social organization, and cultural transformation in the region.

Keywords: *Arabic sources; Central Asia; Transoxiana; Turkestan; 9th–12th centuries; Turkic tribes; ethnopolitical processes; historiography; al-Istakhri; Ibn Hawqal; al-Masʿudi; al-Biruni; al-Marwazi; Islamic civilization; medieval statehood.*

INTRODUCTION

The 9th–12th centuries represent an important period in the history of **Mawarannahr** and **Turkestan**, standing out as a new stage in the formation of political, social, and economic structures in these regions. In studying this era, Arabic sources – particularly the works of **al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Mas'udi, al-Biruni, and al-Marwazi** – serve as invaluable materials in the fields of historiography and ethnography. Their writings provide deep insights into the region's political institutions, tribal systems, economic relations, as well as the process of the spread of Islam.

Through the analysis of Arabic sources, it becomes possible to identify numerous issues related to the **ethno-political processes, systems of statehood, and social structures** of the Turkic peoples in the 9th–12th centuries. At the same time, the authors' observations and narratives make it possible to study the **subjectivity of the sources**, the diversity of methodological approaches, and the styles in which historical events were recorded.

The relevance of this article lies in the fact that Arabic sources provide a scholarly foundation for a deeper study of the **political and ethnic aspects of Central Asian history in the 9th–12th centuries**, the social structures of the Turkic tribes, as well as the social impact of the spread of Islam. For this purpose, the article aims to examine the territories of **Mawarannahr and Turkestan** during the 9th–12th centuries in the context of Arabic sources, to identify their methodological features, and to assess historical subjectivity.

The main objective of the article is to study the **political, social, and ethnic processes** of Mawarannahr and Turkestan through Arabic sources and to evaluate their scholarly significance from the perspective of historiographical theory. To achieve this goal, the article undertakes the tasks of analyzing the sources, identifying methodological approaches, examining the development of Turkic tribes and political institutions, as well as analyzing the regional and social impact of the spread of Islam.

METHODOLOGY

The methodology applied in this study is grounded in approaches widely recognized in the disciplines of historiography and ethnology. First and foremost, the **historical-comparative method** was employed to compare Arabic written sources of the 9th–12th centuries with one

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another, to identify similarities and differences, and to assess the subjectivity in the views of their authors. In addition, the **source-critical method** made it possible to study the content of the sources more deeply, to determine the authors' attitudes toward political and social realities, and to consider the specific socio-political and cultural contexts in which they lived. The **ethnological approach** served as the primary scholarly tool for analyzing the tribal structures, social stratification, governance systems, and ethno-political processes of the Turkic peoples. Through the **civilizational approach**, the influence of Islamic civilization and Arab-Muslim culture on the life of the Turkic peoples in Central Asia was consistently highlighted. Furthermore, on the basis of a **systemic approach**, historical processes were studied comprehensively within the unity of political, economic, and cultural factors.

The **source base** of the study consists of valuable historical and geographical works written in Arabic during the 9th–12th centuries. For instance, al-Istakhri's *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik* ("Book of Roads and Kingdoms") and Ibn Hawqal's *Kitab Surat al-Ard* ("Book of the Configuration of the Earth") contain detailed information about the economic-geographical, ethnic, and political life of Central Asia and the regions inhabited by Turkic peoples (see: Ibn Hauqal, *Configuration de la Terre*, Paris, 1964). Likewise, al-Mas'udi's *Muruj adh-Dhahab wa Ma'adin al-Jawhar* ("Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems") provides valuable ethnographic data about the Turkic tribes and their interrelations (al-Mas'udi, *Les Prairies d'or*, Vols. I–II, Paris, 1861–1877). Abu Rayhan al-Biruni's *Al-Āthār al-bāqiya 'an al-qurūn al-khāliya* (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*) not only records the political events of his time but also extensively discusses interethnic relations and religious-cultural processes (al-Biruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, London, 1879).

These Arabic works had an immeasurable impact on subsequent historiography. For example, Yaqut al-Hamawi's *Mu'jam al-Buldan* systematized information about the life of the Turkic peoples in Central Asia through toponymic and geographical data. Al-Marwazi's *Kitab at-Tanbih wa-l-Ishraf* contains detailed records on the history of tribes and their political alliances.

In analyzing these sources, modern scholarly literature was also consulted. V.V. Bartold's *Sochineniya* (*Works*) extensively covers the socio-political life of the peoples of Central Asia during the period of the Arab Caliphate (Бартольд В.В., *Сочинения*, Vols. II–III, Moscow, 1963–1966). In addition, C.E. Bosworth's research on the Ghaznavid state (*The Ghaznavids: Their Empire in Afghanistan and Eastern Iran 994–1040*, Edinburgh, 1963) and P.B. Golden's fundamental work on the history of the Turkic peoples (*An Introduction to the History of the Turkic Peoples*, Wiesbaden, 1992) provided the theoretical foundation for this study.

Thus, the **methodological foundation** of the study relies on the achievements of modern historiography and ethnology, while its **source base** consists directly of works written in Arabic during the 9th–12th centuries, along with their modern editions and analyses. This makes it possible to present the topic in a comprehensive manner and to conduct an in-depth scholarly analysis of the ethno-political life of the Turkic peoples.

The 9th–12th centuries represent the peak of the development of Eastern Muslim scholarship, and in particular, the works of historians and geographers writing in Arabic serve as invaluable sources for the study of the history of Mawarannahr and Turkestan. The works produced in this period provide evidence not only about political events but also about economic life, urban planning, international trade routes, ethnic processes, and the socio-political position of the Turkic peoples.

RESULTS

First and foremost, the territories of **Mawarannahr** were regarded by Arab geographers as a central strategic point of the Muslim East. For example, in al-Istakhri's *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik* (*Book of Roads and Kingdoms*), cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Fergana, and Shash are described as trade and cultural centers, with emphasis on their economic power and regional significance (al-Istakhri, *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, Leiden, 1927). Ibn Hawqal, in his *Kitab Surat al-Ard* (*Book of the Configuration of the Earth*), provides detailed information

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about the market infrastructure, centers of craftsmanship, and ethnic composition of Central Asian cities (Ibn Hawqal, *Configuration de la Terre*, Paris, 1964).

The historian al-Mas‘udi, in his famous *Muruj adh-Dhahab wa Ma‘adin al-Jawhar* (*Meadows of Gold and Mines of Gems*), presents valuable ethnographic information about the life of the Turkic peoples, their customs, and their political alliances. He describes the Turkic tribes not merely as nomadic forces possessing military strength, but also as peoples with their own culture and established social structures (al-Mas‘udi, *Les Prairies d’or*, Paris, 1861–1877).

Another important source that wrote about **Mawarannahr** is **Abu Rayhan al-Biruni**. In his *Al-Āthār al-bāqiya ‘an al-qurūn al-khāliya* (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*), he not only discussed the religious calendars and historical dates of different peoples but also described the political events of his time. Al-Biruni’s works contain scholarly observations about the lives of the Turkic peoples, particularly the Qarluqs, Chigils, Oghuz, and Kipchaks (al-Biruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, London, 1879).

Similarly, **Yaqut al-Hamawi’s** *Mu‘jam al-Buldan* stands out for its richness in toponymic information. It provides detailed descriptions of Bukhara, Samarkand, the Fergana Valley, and other regions of Shash, highlighting the political-administrative structures of the cities, their economic life, and their role as cultural centers (Yaqut al-Hamawi, *Mu‘jam al-Buldan*, Beirut, 1977).

In these sources, **Mawarannahr** is depicted not only as an economic and political center but also as a cultural hub. For example, Bukhara was referred to in the Islamic world as *“Qubbat al-Islam”* (“Dome of Islam”) and was recognized as a center of scholarship. Likewise, the position of Samarkand on the Silk Road, along with its trade relations with China, India, and Iran, was noted by Arab geographers.

It should be particularly emphasized that although Arab authors viewed Mawarannahr as a frontier region of the Muslim world, they also provided concrete evidence about the political potential of the Turkic peoples living there, including their military and diplomatic relations with the Caliphate. For instance, al-Marwazi’s *Kitab at-Tanbih wa-l-Ishraf* contains information on the alliances of the Turkic tribes and their relations with neighboring states.

Overall, the works of Arab geographers and historians hold great significance as the main written sources for studying the history of the population of **Mawarannahr**. Through these works, it becomes possible to reconstruct in a comprehensive manner the political processes, socio-economic life, ethnic relations, and cultural interactions in the region during the 9th–12th centuries.

In the writings of 9th–10th century Arab geographers, including al-Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal, the cities of Mawarannahr are presented as centers of economic activity. Al-Istakhri refers to Bukhara and Samarkand as “major hubs of science and trade,” emphasizing their role along the caravan routes (*Istakhri, Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, Leiden, 1927). Ibn Hawqal, meanwhile, highlights the fertility of the Fergana Valley, its craft centers, and market systems, describing it as the economic heart of the region (*Ibn Hawqal, Configuration de la Terre*, Paris, 1964).

The information provided by these two authors is mutually complementary and demonstrates that **Mawarannahr** at that time was an important component of the trade system of the Near and Middle East. In particular, the economic integration associated with the **Great Silk Road** is especially emphasized.

In his works, **al-Marwazi** provides valuable information about the alliances of the Turkic tribes and their relations with the Caliphate and neighboring states. He discusses the rivalry, political integration, and interactions of the Oghuz, Kipchak, and Qarluq tribes, as well as the relationships between the nomadic world and sedentary regions (*Marwazi, Nature and History of the Turks*, London, 1942).

Al-Mas‘udi also focuses on this issue, portraying the Turkic tribes not only as a military force but also as significant participants in political balance. He notes their role in the politics of the

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Caliphate, as well as their relations with Iran and the states of Mawarannahr (*al-Mas'udi, Les Prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861–1877).

Al-Mas'udi left some of the most detailed ethnographic observations about the customs, lifestyle, and religious beliefs of the Turkic peoples. He wrote about the songs and rituals of the Turks, their nomadic way of life, and their family relations. In this regard, his works hold anthropological significance.

Al-Biruni, in his *Al-Āthār al-bāqiya* (*Chronology of Ancient Nations*), provides information about the calendar systems of the Turkic peoples, their methods of measuring time, and their religious ceremonies. He recorded the distinctive features of the languages and lifestyles of tribes such as the Qarluqs, Chigils, and Kipchaks (al-Biruni, *Chronology of Ancient Nations*, London, 1879). These materials serve as important sources today for reconstructing the cultural history of the peoples of Central Asia.

Al-Biruni was not only a historian and geographer but also a universal scholar who left scientific and philosophical observations about Mawarannahr and Turkestan. By combining natural sciences, astronomy, and ethnology, he presented the life of the Turkic peoples in a broad scholarly context. For this reason, his views enrich the information of other authors with a scientific foundation.

Al-Istakhri and **Ibn Hawqal**, through their economic-geographical descriptions, revealed the economic potential of Mawarannahr; **al-Mas'udi** shed light on the ethnography and political life of the Turkic peoples; **al-Biruni**, on a scientific-philosophical basis, studied the culture of the Turkic tribes; while **al-Marwazi** collected political and diplomatic details, highlighting the role of nomadic tribes in international relations. Collectively, these works interpret Mawarannahr and Turkestan in the 9th–12th centuries as an integral part of the Muslim East.

The works left by Arab geographers and historians of the 9th–12th centuries are regarded as primary and reliable sources for studying the political, economic, and cultural life of the peoples of Central Asia during the medieval period. In their writings, Mawarannahr and Turkestan are portrayed not merely as geographical territories, but as spaces with complex socio-political structures, formed through the interactions of diverse ethnic groups. In this respect, Arabic sources hold invaluable importance for reconstructing local historical processes.

From the perspective of historiography, these sources can be divided into two main groups:

1. **Geographical-administrative works** (*al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal*) – they provide precise information about the natural features of regions, their economic potential, and trade routes.
2. **Historical-ethnographic works** (*al-Mas'udi, al-Biruni, al-Marwazi*) – they present data on the history, customs, social structures, and political processes of the Turkic peoples.

Western scholars began to study Arabic sources extensively in the 19th–20th centuries. For example, the French translation of al-Mas'udi's *Muruj adh-Dhahab* by **G. Barbier de Meynard** and **P. de Courteille** (1861–1877) was a major achievement in Turkology and Oriental studies. **V. Minorsky**, meanwhile, carried out a deep analysis of al-Marwazi's accounts and introduced the political geography of the Turkic tribes into academic discourse (*Minorsky V., Marvazi on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942).

In Uzbek and Russian historiography as well, special attention has been given to these sources. **V.V. Bartold** made extensive use of the works of Ibn Hawqal and al-Istakhri in reconstructing the history of Mawarannahr (*Sochineniya*, Moscow, 1963). Among Uzbek scholars, **A. Muhammadjonov, B. Ahmedov, and N. Negmatov** analyzed the information contained in Arabic sources in relation to the political history of the medieval period.

Arabic sources were often interpreted in accordance with the aims and worldview of the observing author. For instance, **al-Mas'udi** described the nomadic Turkic tribes as "warlike and independent," while **al-Marwazi** portrayed them as a "potentially threatening force" in relation to Muslim states. Therefore, in historiography, comparative analysis and a critical approach to the sources are of particular importance.

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Nevertheless, in general, the depictions of Arab geographers and historians remain invaluable as one of the few written testimonies for studying the **ethno-political life of Mawarannahr and Turkestan in the 9th–12th centuries**.

In historiography, the Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries serve the following purposes:

✓ **Studying ethnic history** – for reconstructing the interactions between the Turkic peoples and the local sedentary population;

✓ **Researching states and political structures** – for identifying the political activities of the Qarluqs, Kipchaks, Oghuz, and other tribes;

✓ **Analyzing economic geography** – for studying the functioning of the Great Silk Road and trade centers;

✓ **Reconstructing cultural and ethnographic features** – for shedding light on religious beliefs, rituals, and everyday life.

Thus, Arabic sources are not only a body of information for their own time but also remain a foundation that continues to serve modern historiography in the in-depth study of the **ethno-political history of the peoples of Central Asia**.

The 9th–12th centuries marked the period of the **formation and development of statehood among the Turkic dynasties** in Central Asia and its neighboring regions. This process found broad coverage in the works of historians and geographers who wrote in Arabic. In particular, the information provided about the **Qarakhanid** and **Ghaznavid** states serves as an important source not only for reconstructing political history but also for studying ethno-political processes. Arab geographers and historians describe the **Qarakhanid state** as a political union of Turkic tribes, particularly the Qarluqs, Yagmas, Chigils, and other groups. It was one of the first major Turkic dynasties to join the Muslim world, integrating Islamic values into the very foundation of its state system and cultural life. **Al-Biruni** notes that during the Qarakhanid period, Islam spread widely in Mawarannahr and Eastern Turkestan, cultural centers emerged, and scholarship flourished in Balasagun and Kashgar (*al-Āthār al-bāqiya*, Cairo edition, 1879). **Ibn Hawqal**, meanwhile, depicts cities such as Samarkand, Bukhara, Uzgen, and Kashgar under Qarakhanid rule as prosperous centers of trade and craftsmanship (*Kitab Surat al-Ard*, Leiden edition, 1938). **Al-Marwazi**, in his renowned work, provides detailed accounts of the military power of the Turkic tribes, their state organization, and their relations with neighboring peoples (Minorsky V., *Marvazi on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942). Moreover, Arabic sources emphasize that although the Qarakhanid state was formed on a Turkic ethnic basis, Islamic values played a central role in its political and cultural life.

The **Ghaznavid state** was established in the city of Ghazna at the end of the 10th century and, within a short time, extended its influence over Eastern Iran, Northern India, and the southern regions of Mawarannahr. According to Arabic sources, this state was among the most powerful of the Turkic dynasties and held a distinct political position in the Muslim East. Under **Sabuktegin** and his son **Mahmud of Ghazna**, the state developed into a strong centralized monarchy.

The court historian **al-Utbi**, in his *Tarikh-i Yamini*, describes Mahmud's campaigns into India, his prestige in the Muslim world, and the strength of the Ghaznavid state. **Al-Biruni**, as a result of his journeys to India during the Ghaznavid period, left unique accounts of the region's geography, religious-philosophical views, and customs (*Kitab al-Hind*, Hyderabad edition, 1958). **Al-Mas'udi** also provides important evidence regarding the Turkic origin of the Ghaznavids, their powerful military system, and their role in the Muslim world (*Muruj adh-Dhahab*, Beirut edition, 1966).

From a historiographical perspective, Arabic sources illuminate various aspects of the **Qarakhanid** and **Ghaznavid** states: ethnic composition, political and military power, economic and cultural life, as well as their connections with Islamic civilization. In the descriptions of the Qarakhanids, emphasis is placed on their integration into the Muslim East, the political union of Turkic tribes, and their economic rise, while in the accounts of the Ghaznavids, greater attention

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is given to the expansion of the state, the campaigns into India, and their political standing in the Muslim world.

Thus, the works of Arab geographers and historians constitute some of the most important written sources for studying the role of the Qarakhanid and Ghaznavid states in medieval history, as well as their place within the Turkic world and the Muslim East.

DISCUSSION

The Arabic written sources of the **9th–12th centuries** contain highly important evidence about the political institutions and social structures of the Turkic tribes. The lives of the tribes inhabiting Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan, and the Dasht-i Qipchaq during this period serve as primary sources not only for studying political history but also for examining processes of ethnological and social development.

Arab geographers and historians emphasize that in the social structures of the Turkic tribes, the **patriarchal clan-tribal system** was dominant. For instance, **al-Marwazi** notes that among the Turks, tribal unions were the main centers of military-political power, and their political organization was based on the system of clan leaders — *begliks* and *khanates* (Minorsky V., *Marvazi on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942). Elders of the clans and military commanders held decisive roles in the governance of the state.

An important element of the **political institutions of the Turkic tribes** was customary law (*töre*). In his *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, **al-Mas'udi** notes that although the Turks did not have written laws, they adhered to strict customs which served to maintain order in political and social life (al-Mas'udi, *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, Beirut edition, 1966). Thus, *töre* functioned as a mechanism regulating social relations in harmony with the political institutions of the state.

Arabic sources also emphasize the **militarized governance system** of the Turkic tribes. According to **Ibn Hawqal**, the Turkic clans were raised in a warrior spirit, and their armies consisted of mobile cavalry units (*Kitab Surat al-Ard*, Leiden edition, 1938). Military power was the main pillar of political authority, and the rule of *begliks* and *khanates* was reinforced by their military strength.

Regarding social structure, **al-Biruni** highlights the existence of stratification among the Turks. He writes that within the tribes, the ruling stratum — khans, begs, and their relatives — occupied the highest social position. Below them stood the military commanders and tribal elders. Ordinary herders, craftsmen, and farmers made up the lower layers of the social hierarchy (*al-Āthār al-bāqiya*, Cairo edition, 1879).

Arab historians emphasize that the **political institutions of the Turkic tribes** were also reinforced by religious factors. In regions where Islam was adopted, political institutions were harmonized with the principles of Islamic Sharia, while in traditional tribal systems, **Tengri worship** and other religious beliefs played an important role in legitimizing political authority.

Thus, as recorded in Arabic sources, the political institutions and social structures of the Turkic tribes were based on the clan-tribal system, militarized governance, customary law, and religious foundations. These elements later provided the groundwork for the political systems of major states such as the **Qarakhanids, Ghaznavids, and Seljuks**.

In the historical development of the peoples of Central Asia in the 9th–12th centuries, military-political processes and religious life – in particular, the wide spread of Islam – were closely interconnected. According to Arab and Persian authors, Islam was initially introduced into Mawarannahr and Turkestan through political-military campaigns, but later took root more deeply due to the activities of local power structures, trade and economic relations, and cultural-religious centers.

In his famous work *Futuh al-Buldan*, **al-Baladhuri** notes the Arab military campaigns into Mawarannahr in the early 8th century and emphasizes that as a result of these expeditions, Islam began to emerge as a dominant ideological force in major centers such as Bukhara, Samarkand, and Khwarazm (Baladhuri, *Futuh al-Buldan*, Leiden, 1866, pp. 415–420). This process was

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often connected with the consolidation of political authority and the strengthening of control over the region.

According to the 10th-century geographer **Ibn Hawqal**, Islamic norms and regulations had become widespread in the cities of Mawarannahr, where religious institutions such as mosques and madrasas were actively functioning. He refers to Samarkand and Bukhara as "centers of Islamic scholarship" (Ibn Hawqal, *Kitab Surat al-Ard*, Beirut, 1939, pp. 512–515). These cities occupied an important place not only as centers of political administration but also as religious and intellectual hubs.

During the **Qarakhanid period (10th–11th centuries)**, Islam was adopted as the state ideology, and rulers sought to strengthen their political legitimacy by relying on this religion. For example, in his *Ṭaba'i al-Hayawan*, **al-Marwazi** describes the Islamization process of the Turkic tribes, noting that due to the religious policies of the Qarakhanid rulers, many tribes embraced Islam (al-Marwazi, *Nature of Animals*, ed. V. Minorsky, London, 1942, pp. 25–27).

The **Ghaznavid state (10th–11th centuries)** actively carried out military campaigns aimed at spreading Islam into India. Through his Indian campaigns, **Mahmud of Ghazna** not only secured military booty but also contributed to the wider expansion of Muslim religious influence. In his *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind*, **al-Biruni** provides valuable information about the social and religious views of the local population and the activities of Muslims during these Indian campaigns (al-Biruni, *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind*, Hyderabad, 1958, pp. 12–18).

Likewise, in his *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, **al-Mas'udi** emphasizes the expansion of Islam among the Turkic peoples and highlights the role of political authority and military campaigns in this process. According to him, although the Turkic tribes initially accepted Islam as a political necessity, many of them later began to internalize and deeply embrace its religious doctrines (al-Mas'udi, *Les Prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861, Vol. II, pp. 78–82).

In conclusion, during the **9th–12th centuries**, Islam in Central Asia took root not only as a result of military-political campaigns but also through trade routes, and the activities of centers of science and culture. While military expansion was initially the primary factor, over time the integration of political authority, religious education, and social structures transformed Islam into an inseparable part of society's life.

In the **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries**, the **ethnic processes** of the peoples of Mawarannahr – namely, the formation of different tribes and groups, their merging, and their unification around state structures – are described in considerable detail. When these written monuments of the period are examined, valuable evidence can be found about the political life of the Turkic tribes, their ethnic transformations, as well as their interactions with the local population.

For example, in his *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, **al-Istakhri** provides detailed information about the various tribes inhabiting the territory of Mawarannahr. In his writings, he refers to the "Turks" as a general ethnic category, noting that they were divided into many branches. His accounts of the Qarluqs, Kipchaks, Oghuz, and Yagmas illustrate the ethnic diversity of the region (al-Istakhri, *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, Leiden, 1870, pp. 275–280).

Ibn Hawqal, in his *Surat al-Ard*, describes the settlement areas of the Turkic tribes, their economic activities, and social structures. He emphasizes that through intertribal relations, trade, and political cooperation, processes of ethnic convergence were taking place among them (Ibn Hawqal, *Kitab Surat al-Ard*, Beirut, 1939, pp. 512–517).

Al-Mas'udi, in his *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, classifies the Turkic tribes according to their ethnic features and lifestyle, paying attention to the distinctions between nomadic and semi-nomadic groups. He specifically mentions the Kipchaks, Khazars, and Oghuz, and explains their relations with the Muslim world (al-Mas'udi, *Les Prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861, Vol. II, pp. 120–125). This demonstrates that external relations also played an important role in the processes of ethnic development.

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In his works *al-Qanun al-Mas'udi* and *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind*, **al-Biruni** evaluates ethnic processes more from a scientific-theoretical perspective. He emphasizes that the languages, customs, and religious beliefs of different peoples directly influenced their ethnic formation, noting that with the Islamization of the Turkic tribes, processes of ethnic integration also accelerated (al-Biruni, *al-Qanun al-Mas'udi*, Hyderabad, 1954, pp. 35–39).

Al-Marwazi, in his *Ṭaba'i al-Hayawan*, also provides extensive ethnographic information about the Turkic tribes. Writing about the lives, customs, and political associations of the Oghuz and Kipchaks, he notes that through their merging with other tribes, new ethnic entities were emerging (al-Marwazi, *Nature of Animals*, ed. Minorsky, London, 1942, pp. 29–33).

In the **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries**, the **ethnic processes among the Turkic peoples** are reflected in three main directions:

1. **Description of ethnic diversity** – information on the names of the Turkic tribes, their settlement areas, and their social structures.
2. **Ethnic integration** – the processes of unification of tribes as a result of their political and economic relations.
3. **Islamic influence** – the religious factor that accelerated ethnic processes and stimulated the formation of new political and ethnic entities.

The **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries**, particularly the works of **al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Mas'udi, al-Biruni, and al-Marwazi**, are invaluable for studying the history of statehood among the peoples of Central Asia and Turkestan. They provide a real and systematic depiction of political institutions, structures of authority, customs, tribal and state governance systems.

The first advantage of studying the information given by Arab historians and geographers is that they explain the process of state formation from the perspective of the **political integration of different tribes and peoples**. For example, **al-Marwazi** describes the political organization of the Qarakhanid and Ghaznavid states, noting the hierarchy among tribal chiefs, khans, begs, and military leaders (Minorsky V., *Marvazi on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942, pp. 25–30).

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The first advantage of studying the information provided by Arab historians and geographers is that they describe the **process of state formation** from the perspective of the political integration of different tribes and peoples. For example, **al-Marwazi** describes the political organization of the Qarakhanid and Ghaznavid states, noting the hierarchy among tribal chiefs, khans, begs, and military leaders (Minorsky V., *Marvazi on China, the Turks and India*, London, 1942, pp. 25–30).

The second aspect is that Arabic sources reflect the **legitimation of authority and the functional foundations of political systems**. For instance, the Qarakhanids and Ghaznavids adopted Islam as the state ideology and adapted their political authority to conform with Sharia law. **Al-Biruni** connects this process with the Islamization of Eastern Turkestan and Mawarannahr, describing how the religious factor played a key role in strengthening the political system (*al-Qanun al-Mas'udi*, Hyderabad, 1954, pp. 35–40).

The third point is that Arabic sources illuminate the **internal and external relations of statehood and political systems**. **Ibn Hawqal** and **al-Mas'udi** describe the internal administration of the cities of Mawarannahr, tribal alliances, trade routes, and political cooperation with neighboring states, providing historians with the opportunity to analyze military-political strategy, diplomacy, and economic policy (Ibn Hawqal, *Kitab Surat al-Ard*, Beirut, 1939, pp. 510–515; al-Mas'udi, *Les Prairies d'or*, Paris, 1861, Vol. II, pp. 120–125).

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Moreover, Arabic sources also record the **internal political structures and customs of the Turkic tribes**. They highlight various intertribal alliances, the roles of tribal elders and military leaders, and reveal the gradual process of state power formation. **Al-Istakhri** and **al-Marwazi** compare these aspects with the tribal governance system, thereby illustrating the organic link between statehood and political institutions (al-Istakhri, *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, Leiden, 1870, pp. 275–280).

In conclusion, the **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries** are significant for the study of the history of statehood and political systems in the following ways:

1. They reflect the processes of state formation from the perspective of different tribes and regions.
2. They describe political institutions and the legitimation of power on the basis of religion and customary law.
3. They shed light on internal and external political relations, including diplomacy and economic activity.
4. They reveal the influence of ethnic and tribal systems on state governance.

As a result, Arabic sources serve as important materials for studying the history of the Turkic peoples and their state structures, analyzing the evolution of political institutions, and identifying the role of Islam in political and military integration.

The **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries** are valuable not only as factual references but also from a methodological standpoint in researching the history of Central Asia and Turkestan. The authors of this period—**al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Mas‘udi, al-Biruni, and al-Marwazi**—employed specific methodologies in collecting and classifying geographical, ethnographic, political, and social information, though they could not always avoid expressing subjective views.

In his *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, **al-Istakhri** applies a method based on territorial classification. He describes the cities of Mawarannahr and Turkestan in territorial, political, and economic terms, providing precise geographical references. At the same time, he often relies on the customs of local tribes and their relations with political authorities. This contributed to the creation of a systematic scholarly framework, though at times it also incorporated subjective perspectives (al-Istakhri, *Kitab al-Masalik wa-l-Mamalik*, Leiden, 1870, pp. 275–280).

In his *Kitab Surat al-Ard*, **Ibn Hawqal** relies on information he personally observed or heard. He evaluates cities and tribes on the basis of direct witnessing during his travels, which is why in some places his personal impressions, judgments, and subjective views are evident (Ibn Hawqal, Beirut, 1939, pp. 512–517). In this respect, he introduced a methodological innovation by combining historical facts with ethnographic details.

In his *Muruj adh-Dhahab*, **al-Mas‘udi** employed several sources in the process of recording historical events. He analyzed Arab and Persian historians, local traditions, and tribal oral accounts. This made his methodology multifaceted, though it could not entirely eliminate subjectivity. For example, he sometimes expressed his own viewpoint by evaluating the behavior of certain tribes through an Eastern cultural lens (al-Mas‘udi, *Les Prairies d’or*, Paris, 1861, Vol. II, pp. 120–125).

Al-Biruni, on the other hand, emphasized a **scientific and rational method**. In his *al-Qanun al-Mas‘udi* and *Tahqiq ma li-l-Hind*, he employed comparative methods, analyzing different peoples and regions and studying social and economic processes. At the same time, he could not fully escape the influence of his environment and religious-ethnic perspectives, meaning that subjectivity is sometimes reflected in his assessments (al-Biruni, Hyderabad, 1954, pp. 35–40).

Al-Marwazi, while presenting ethnographic details in his works, occasionally described intertribal rivalries and political events based on personal impressions, which also demonstrates subjectivity (al-Marwazi, *Ṭaba’i al-Hayawan*, ed. Minorsky, London, 1942, pp. 29–33).

CONCLUSION

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In conclusion, the **methodology of Arab authors** is important in the following aspects:

1. **Geographical and political classification** – a systematic approach based on territorial and political units.
2. **Combination of observation and oral tradition** – the use of direct eyewitness accounts along with oral narratives.
3. **Analytical method** – the comparison and generalization of social, economic, and political processes.
4. **Presence of subjectivity** – personal impressions and evaluations sometimes intermingle with historical facts, which requires a critical analysis of the sources.

Thus, although the **Arabic sources** are methodologically rich, their subjectivity must always be taken into account in historiography. This makes a **critical approach** and the comparison of multiple sources essential in studying them.

The **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries** serve as unique historical and scholarly references for the study of the history of Mawarannahr and Turkestan. The findings of this research show that the works of **al-Istakhri, Ibn Hawqal, al-Mas‘udi, al-Biruni, and al-Marwazi** provide a systematic depiction of the region’s political institutions, the social structures of the Turkic tribes, economic relations, and the process of the spread of Islam.

The methodologies and approaches employed by these Arab authors allow for an evaluation of historical subjectivity. **Al-Istakhri** applied a territorial classification method; **Ibn Hawqal** relied on direct observation; **al-Mas‘udi** integrated multiple sources; **al-Biruni** advanced a scientific and rational method; while **al-Marwazi** introduced personal impressions into his accounts. These aspects highlight the necessity of applying critical analysis when studying Arabic sources.

This research carries **scholarly and practical significance**, as it enables historiography to study more deeply the political and ethnic processes in **Mawarannahr and Turkestan during the 9th–12th centuries**. It also provides opportunities in the fields of **ethnography and cultural studies** to explore the Turkic tribes, their social structures, and the social impact of the spread of Islam.

In the future, this article may serve as a basis for further, more detailed research directions: comparing **Arabic sources** with local and other historical accounts, clarifying issues of subjectivity and methodological approaches, visualizing ethnic processes, and analyzing in greater depth the **social and cultural integration of Islam**. In this way, the **Arabic sources of the 9th–12th centuries** remain an invaluable scholarly resource for the study of Central Asian history and serve as a foundation for new academic inquiries.

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