

## Shihabutdin Marjani as the Founder of the Functional Scientific Style of the Tatar Language

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### Abstract

*This article discusses the issues of formation of the scientific style of the Kazan Tatars language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The main characteristics of the Tatar-Muslim scientific language were reviewed on the basis of the book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwal Qazan va Bulghar' by Shihabutdin Marjani, the great Tatar scientist-educator of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. The article discusses the structure of the book and the lexical and grammatical characteristics of the text.*

**Keywords:** Tatar Language, scientific style, Arabic borrowings, Persian borrowings, morphology, syntax, vocabulary, Shihabutdin Marjani.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### About Sh.Marjani's book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar'

The first volume of Shihabuddin Marjani's (1818-1889) book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar' ('The Book of Used information on the history of Kazan and Bulgar') was published in 1885 and 1897. And the second volume was published in 1900. Despite the fact that much time has passed, the interest in this scientific work does not weaken, but on the contrary, every day becomes more significant. First of all, this book is the most reliable source on the history of the Tatar people. According to the academician Mirkasim Usmanov, 'Shihabuddin Marjani built a complex of sources on the history of the Tatar people from ancient times to the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century'. When creating this work, Marjani used, interesting information of eastern historians regarding the history of the Tatars (Gosmanov, 1998, p. 206). He were found and studied them in Bukhara and Samarkand, where he had lived for 11 years of his life. The aim of this scientist was to systematize and introduce them to his people, Marjani himself writes about this in the foreword of the first part of the book. So while writing the book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar ' Marjani used the following works of eastern authors (Sharaf, 1915, p. 337): Ahmad ibn Fadlan, Shamsuddin Dimashqi, Abu Gabid al-Bakri, Abu Iskhaq al-Istahri, Abu Gabdullah al-Gharnati, Abu Ghali ibn Dasa (Note 1), Masghudi , Yaqut al-Hamawi, Muhammad ibn Sulaiman al-Qazwini, Gizzuddin Abu al-Hasan al-Athir, Zakariya ibn Muhammad al-Qazwini, Ibn Khaldun (his world famous 'Muqaddimah'), Ibn Haukal, Ibn Arabshah, Janabi Said Mustafa ibn Ahmad, Mir Akhund ('Rauzat al-Safa'), Hakim Sanai (Persian baits), Mirzakuli Lala Bashi (his 'Sifarat-name'), Abu al-Ghazi Khan ('Shajara-i Turk'), Hisamuddin al-Muslimi (his 'Tawarihe Bulgaria'), Said Mohammad Riza ('Al-sab' al-Sayyar fi Muluk at-Tatar'), Utyz-Imyani and others.

In addition to the literary sources, Marjani, perhaps, was the first who used a wide range of material evidences about the history of the Bulgar and Kazan: the inscriptions on the epitaphs, numismatics, information on architecture, ethnography, folklore, the system of chronology among the various peoples, geographic information, and more, allowing the readers to fully represent Bulgar-Tatar's history. In addition, Marjani often asked his friends for help in finding a particular material, for example, his disciple Husain Faezhanov, who lived in St. Petersburg, helped his teacher to find rare books by different Orientalists (Ibid, p.349).

Second, this work is a document that shows the development of the Tatar social thought in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. During this period, Tatar scientists are eager to spread secular knowledge in society, and to get people to think in new ways; we call them enlighteners. Sh.Marjani takes undoubtedly the leading position among them.

## 2. RESULTS

### 2.1 Researches on Sh.Marjani's heritage

Numerous studies by Russian scientists and historians were devoted to Marjani's heritage in different times. Nowadays the works by Marjani were accessed mainly by historians. The heritage of Marjani was investigated by Russian and Tatar academisian Mirkasim Usmanov (his article 'The Sources od Sh.Marjani's book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar') (Essays on the History of the Volga and Ural regions, 1969, pp. 144-155). In 1981 a book by M.Yusupov 'Shihabetdin Marjani as a historian' was published. This book examines Sh.Marjani's works on History, and focuses on theoretical issues of historical science that Marjani develops. In 1986 a book by S.Alishiev 'Traces of the past' was published, in which the author reflects on the significance of the historical works by Sh.Marjani. In 1989, an attempt of publication of a book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' was made in an abridged version, but a book of this magnitude deserves to be published in full in order to keep the idea of the book, because, in addition to the information on the history, it contains important philosophical views of the scientist Sh.Marjani; and besides, the book

itself is a unique monument of written literature of the Tatar people, which on the one hand embodied in itself an important information on the history of the Tatar people, on the other hand, it is representing a unique linguistic phenomenon.

## 2.2 Linguistic interest in Sh.Marjani's works

Thus, the book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' is interesting for us as an example of the scientific style of the Tatar literary language in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, that is serving an important step in the development of the Tatar literary language in its functional variants. Sh.Marjani was first who attempted to create the most important fundamental scientific and philosophical work in the native language of the Volga Turks.

On the basis of the text of Sh.Marjani's book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' a variety of linguistic means can be considered that builds the scientific style of the Tatar language of the 19<sup>th</sup> century: the lexical structure of the text, the morphological features of the language, in which the work was written, the syntactic features of the text, the structure of the text itself, etc. The source base of the work, of course, has had a decisive influence on writing of the book, and choice of language means of presentation by the author.

In 1915, in honor of the 100th anniversary since the birth of Mardjani (AH), an encyclopedic collection 'Marjani' released, which contains an interesting information about the life and work of Sh.Marjani, the memories of his contemporaries, and examines the contribution that Sh.Marjani introduced to the culture of the Tatar people. Without this information it would be difficult to give an objective assessment of the work by Sh.Marjani 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar' from the point of view of linguistics. Due to the poor knowledge of the language side of the Marjani's creativity, until recently, there was, and still continues to exist not enough the right idea about the language of the works of this great scientist.

It must be said that the book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' is an advanced and a significantly amended version of the previously created work of this author 'Ghilyalyat al-Zaman fi Tarikh Kazan va Bulgar' ('The Cover of the Times in the History of Bulgar and Kazan'). This work was translated by the famous orientalist V.V.Radlov and presented to the public at the Fourth Archaeological Congress, which was held in 1877 in Kazan.

The scientific community of those years gave a serious evaluation to this work. For example, V.V.Radlov praised this work: firstly, when writing this book unknown historical sources have been used, and secondly, it was the work of a Muslim scholar; third, it is a reflection of a Tatar man on the history of his people (Sharaf 1915, p. 468). In 1872 Professor Gottwald mentions this work in his article 'Analysis of works by Khvolson' that was published in the collection of articles of the Russian Academy of Sciences. This work was also mentioned in the work of Professor Shpilevsky 'The Ancient Cities and Other Bulgarian-Tatar Monuments in Kazan Province', that was published in 1877 in Kazan. And in 1895, Professor Zagoskin issued a 'Guide to Kazan', which in some places was based on the work of Marjani.

The appearance of this work comes at a time when an interest in the history of the Kazan region greatly increased. This was due to the preparation of the 4<sup>th</sup> Archaeological Congress, which was held in August 1877 in Kazan. Not to be embarrassed in front of the Congress, the organizers needed more researches in this area. The work by Marjani 'Ghilyalyat al-Zaman...' had to be very helpful. At the same time we can say that Marjani's interest in the history was born at this very time. In the words of Zaki Walidi, Marjani 'as a true son of his people' could not remain on the sidelines when anyone wrote about the history of the Tatars, but not the Tatar scientists.

As for the book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar', according to Z.Walidi, it appeared with some 'late'. This work has remained less studied, and as paradoxical as it

may sound, less popular. The fact is that at that time Central Asia and Transoxiana were annexed to the Russian Empire, and the Russian Orientalists' eyes were directed mainly to the East.

But still it can be noted that this book found its rating among Russian scientists. On January 2, 1895 at the meeting of Historical and Archaeological Society N.Katanov read a report on the book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar...'. The scholar commended the work of Marjani, and he believes that because of its historical and ethnographic value, this book deserves to be translated not only in Russian, but also in European languages. Marjani used all his available historical information in it and was able to arrange them on a scientific basis. The historical sources used in this book belong to 10-16<sup>th</sup> centuries. In addition, Marjani paid great attention to the language, traditions and customs of the nations of whom he wrote in his work (Sharaf, 1915, p. 478).

But here it is necessary to stipulate, when it came to the need for translation into Russian, N.Katanov found it necessary to note that the lack of this work was that the author has not sufficiently explored the relationship of persons standing at the head of the state, and it is impossible to reconstruct the genealogy chart of the royal persons of the Bulgarian state and the Kazan Khanate.

Z.Walidi objected, that however in fact Sh.Marjani in his work gave the highest priority to this matter. But after this remark of N.Katanov the problem of the Russian translation of this work remained unresolved. However, another well-known Russian orientalist S.E.Malov in 1910 translated into Russian the text on the history of Russia from this book, and published it in the Collection of articles of the Kazan Historical and Archaeological Society (v.26, pp.23-51). S.E.Malov provides a critical assessment of that section of the book. According to him, seven pages, which Marjani devoted to the Russian history, is clearly insufficient. In addition, Marjani is not writing a whole history of the Russian state, but only gives some facts from history, and if a Muslim reads them, it can cause only the strong amazement and laughter (Sharaf, 1915, p. 475).

However, the historian Z.Walidi disagrees with the assessment of S.E.Malov. 'We need to know, says Z.Walidi, that he (Marjani) presents only the information about Russians that was available in the works of Muslim scholars, and that Marjani, when creating his book, could be limited to the description of the life of the Muslims of the Middle Volga.'

It is fair to say that the book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar' is a book not only of a Russian scientist but, in our view, especially a work of a Muslim scholar, a scientist whose works have been known in the East. This was facilitated by the manner of presentation and language works. The author used them in so-called 'scientific language', the language full of Arabic and Persian borrowings, as well as in some places he cites passages from historical sources, mostly of Eastern origin, in the original language without translation (i.e. pure Arabic or Persian). Many people believed, and, unfortunately, now believe that this was lack of the work, the mistake of the author. They say that he could write his work either in pure Arabic, either in pure Tatar languages. For Example, N.Katanov reproached Marjani in the use of Arabic and Persian borrowings, so that Marjani looked at the Tatar language with disdain. Or another example, S.E.Malov said that, instead of writing in a language that is a mixture of Arabic, Persian and Turkish words, it would be better if Marjani wrote his book in pure Arabic, or in pure Tatar.<sup>2</sup> (Ibid, p.480).

But, in our opinion, the most objective assessment was given by Jamal Walidi, an outstanding Tatar thinker, an expert on Marjani's creativity. Here are his words: 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' by Shigap Marjani is not written in a clear Tatar. Perhaps this was his lack.... At a time when it was considered shameful to write books in the Tatar language, we call the man who wrote a book in the Tatar language, anyway, a Tatar writer... He certainly could not write in the modern language, he tried to write in an artificial language. However, we can not say this in relation to all the text, in some places he clearly wrote in Tatar without any fear (Ibid, p.624).

The same evaluation was given by another outstanding Tatar writer and scholar - Galimjan Ibrahimov (Hismatullin, 1968, p.80), who studied the works of Sh.Marjani. The language of 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' is interesting, therefore, also from the philological point of view.

Marjani has his own saying regarding to the language of his works, when asked why he wrote his works in Arabic, instead of writing in his native Tatar, he said that Arabic is the language of science, and that it is known to the scientists and shakirds of all the countries of the Muslim world; and maybe his works will be read by them, and in the Tatar language his works may be unclaimed (Shihabetdin Marjani, 1998, p. 125). It was said before the book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' was published. But still, it becomes clear the desire of Marjani to convey his thoughts to readers not only in his region but also in other countries. This applies in particular to works on the history of the Muslims of Bulgar and Kazan.

Indeed, Marjani was right. His works were known in such countries as India, the states of Central Asia, the Ottoman Empire, Egypt and others.

As for the book of 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' we can give such an example: the famous historian of the Ottoman Empire Najip Qasim introduced the book by Marjani to the scientists and the public of Istanbul. In his book 'Turkish history', he uses up to 65 pages of 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' that concerning the history of the Muslims of the Volga (Sharaf, 1915, p. 620).

Thus, Sh.Marjani's book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar' has caused a great interest in his time among the Russian scientist-orientalists, and scientists from other countries. In Soviet times, the work undeservedly remained in the shadows, perhaps this is due to the difficulty in reading of this work, and due to the ideological moments when the national history of the peoples of the former Soviet Union had received little attention.

In our time we again see an interest in Marjani's creativity. The study of the heritage of the great scholar and thinker is begun in our days. His works are being reissued. In 1989, his book 'Mustafad al-Akhbar' was partially translated into modern Tatar language and published for the Institute of Tatar Language, Literature and History n.a. G.Ibrahimov, and in 1997 in Turkey, the book was republished with using the reprint way (in two volumes).

Marjani took the best examples of the literature of the Muslim countries and created the first Tatar work on the history of the Tatars. And Marjani used historical sources by Muslim authors: he collected, studied and classified them into logically distinct sequences in two volumes of the book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar'. The systematization of information, the logical sequence of filing it makes it easy to find information on the history not only of Bulgar and Kazan, but also of other Turkic peoples. In addition, with philological hand, it is also interesting phenomenon in history of the Tatar literary language, when the author has created certain principles of scientific texts in the Tatar language, this is one of the most important values of Sh.Marjani's creation.

### **2.3 Terminology in the book 'Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahwali Kazan va Bulgar'**

Sh.Marjani paid serious attention to the problem of terminology of the Tatar language: he admitted that the Tatar language is not yet sufficiently mature for transmission of abstract concepts, that are so important in scientific presentation. Therefore he used a large number of terminology borrowed mainly from Arabic. Firstly, this vocabulary was understandable for the period of the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. Secondly, Marjani in the end of the first volume in a special section allocated a list of borrowed Arabic words found in the work, in alphabetical order. Thus, Marjani has shown that this is a transition stage to the time when Tatars will have established their own Tatar abstract vocabulary.

Next, we should talk about the structure of the book that consists of many parts. The location of the sections of the book are also subordinated to the logic and chronology, at first there are



sections on the Bulgars and their direct neighbors, then Marjani expands the scope of the narrative, talking about other Turkic peoples and tribes that have not had a direct impact on the lives of Bulgar and Kazan, but the knowledge of which is important for understanding the place of the Bulgars and the Kazan Tatars among other Turkic peoples. Thus, the text has an important function - the creation of consistency, the contextuality of information that is extremely important for fundamental research on the history of a people.

#### **2.4 Grammatical features of ‘Kitab Mustafad al-Akhbar fi Ahvali Kazan va Bulgar’**

The scientific character of the work is evident in other linguistic means - morphology and syntax.

The morphological parameters of abstract logical thinking, for example, can serve as a dual plural forms when türkic affix plurality is added to the Arabic plural forms, for example: äkabirlär ‘different respected elders’ - if you leave only the Arabic form äkibir, you get a specific set of plurality of items, and with the addition of the Turkic suffix -lär there appears a grammatical meaning ‘all sorts’ that is, it is an abstract notion, which is characteristic for generalization, classification, in a word, scientific speech. The text widely uses artificial verb forms - suffixal verbs derived from the Arabic and Persian noun stems: *arab.* täxqıqlab ‘confirming’ and *persian* penahlanyb ‘sheltering’; compound verbs, having in its composition a part name, borrowed from Arabic or Persian and the verbal part of Turkic origin, for example: muqatälä qylyb ‘fighting’. In the study of categories of grammatical voices, it is interesting to observe the parallel use of Turkic voice forms with their corresponding forms in Arabic, such as the passive voice of the Turkic verb kümelmeş ‘to be buried’ corresponds to the Arabic passive voice form mädfun.

### **3. DISCUSSION**

#### **The problem of the origin of the language of the book ‘Mustafad al-Akhbar’**

As for the origin of the language of the book ‘Mustafad al-Akhbar’, Marjani used language features that are characteristic of Kipchak and Oguz literary traditions. In the nouns, this is manifested in the presence of different types of inflected endings, for example, non-possessive and possessive endings, for example: kitabny ‘see the book’ and ätbayyny ‘see the followers’; the Kipchak forms of the referral case -ya/-kä and Oguz forms -a/-ä; bolıyara form may be used along with the form bolıyara ‘to Bulgar’ - the latter form is much rarer. In verbs one can very clearly see the two literary traditions: forms of Kipchak participles -yan/kän and Oguz participles forms -myş/-meş, as well as common form of participles -dyq/-dek; infinitive form -rya/-rkä and action name -maq/-mäk. In the syntax there are also many examples where Marjani chose different means of abstract logical thinking. Marjani used different types of syntactic constructions that imply some functional load - a simple nominal and verbal sentences, complex sentences with a variety of connection types: coordinating and subordinating. Special attention should be paid to the complex sentences with various types of subordinate clauses that express causal, consequence, adverbial, temporal, conditional, concessive, and other relationships within complex sentences - all of this is the first attempt to create the tools for building Tatar texts, of course, on samples of Arabic and Persian syntactic structures. Arabic and Persian conjunctions in many cases serve as means of communication. Thus, despite the existence of various forms of Oguz, Kipchak forms can be considered predominant in the language of this work, which is an important indicator of approaching the literary-book style to the nationwide-spoken language, which in turn, is a prerequisite for the formation of the national literary language in the last quarter of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

Speaking about the syntax, it is important to be said about the text itself, which is a larger form than the sentences. Text components, the sentences, are located logically and very carefully, because it affects the systemic nature of the presentation. Sections of the book are complete texts -

they are built logically clear: first the source material is given, and then there is a development of this material, accompanied by commentaries and explanations by Marjani, evidences from other sources, etc.

#### **4.CONCLUSION**

Thus, the work of Sh.Marjani is one of the first examples of functional scientific style of the Tatar language. The creation of such a work was impossible without recourse to the best traditions of literature of Muslim countries, starting with the idea of the book, its structure and ending with the terminology and abstract vocabulary, borrowed from Arabic and Persian.

#### **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

The work is performed according to the Russian Government Program of Competitive Growth of Kazan Federal University.



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**Notes**

Note 1. Many modern scholars believe that 'Das' - a misreading of the name 'Rushd'.