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EARLY ARAB INVASIONS OF FERGANA

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ABSTRACT

The article discusses the early Arab invasions of the Fergana Valley for the first time, based on historical sources and literature. In particular, the visit of the Sassanid ruler Yazdigard III to the valley, the military campaigns of Umayr ibn Uthman, ar-Rabi al-Harithi, Salm ibn Ziyad, Salih ibn Muslim and Nasr ibn Sayyar to Fergana and Khojand in different years. The purpose of these marches and the reasons for them are also covered in the article.

Keywords: Fergana, Yazdigard III, Feruz, Nars, Arab Caliphate, Qutayba, Salih, Nasr ibn Sayyar, Turkish Khaganate, Kasan, Khojand.

Introduction.

Historical sources state that the Arabs entered the Fergana Valley several decades before Qutayba ibn Muslim's military campaigns in 713-715. The Arab invasions of Fergana in the second half of the 7th century and after that coincided with the height of the political crisis in this region.

In their articles and monographs, B. Gafurov [7; 8], A.N. Bernshtam [4], G.Goipov [9], Sh. Kamoliddin [13], A.Otakhujaev [17] spoke about the first Arab military campaigns in Fergana. However, in their studies, not all Arab invasions were analyzed in chronological order.

Among foreign researchers scholars such as O.G. Bolshakov [5], Julius Wellhausen [6], Hugh Kennedy [4], I.M. Filshinsky [19; 20], Zechariah Kitapchi [40] also studied the Arab military campaigns in Fergana. Yet the information they cite is mainly about military operations in 715 and later.

There is no information in either local or foreign studies about the marches of the Arabs to Fergana in the second half of the VII century and in the beginning of the VIII century.

Results of a research

One of the most important events related to the Fergana Valley in the first half of the 7th century was the clash of the Fergana people with the Arabs. During the reign of the Western Turkic Khagan Yopi Tolu (640–651) [17, p. 185] the Fergana people clashed with the Arabs in the upper reaches of the Tajan River [36, p. 59].

Historian Tabari gives the following information about the first military conflict of Fergana with the Arabs. In 643, Yazdigard III, the ruler of the Sassanid state, launched a military campaign against the Arabs, sending an envoy to the Ikhshid of Sughd and the Turk khagan and asking for their help. But because help did not come quickly, he retreated to the right bank of the Amudarya. Later, the Turkic khagan decided to help Yazdigard III. Tabari writes: “He (the Khagan) came with the Turks and gathered [soldiers] from the people of Fergana and Sughd. Then he began his march with them. Yazdigard also marched back to Khorasan: he crossed the river and stayed in Balkh. Khagan also crossed the water with him. The people of Kufa retreated to Marwarrud, to al-Ahnaф. The disbelievers (kafeers) (i.e, Yazdigard III and the Khagan army)

marched from Balkh and stopped at Marwarrud in front of al-Ahnaf" [11, p. 19]. Thus, the people of Fergana first took part in the Turkish Khagan army in 643 in a campaign against the Arab invaders near the city of Marwarrud.

Tabari brings another interesting piece of information related to this incident. After the Marwarrud incident, the Turkic khagan wanted to return to his homeland. Then, apparently, Yazdigard, who did not believe in his own strength, also expressed a desire to go with him. But some of his generals objected. As a result, a quarrel broke out in the middle, and part of the army left the king. Taking advantage of this, the Arabs attacked Yazdigard and defeated him. "He fled," writes Tabari, "and crossed the river (Amudarya) and sought refuge in Fergana, before the Turkic people. He remained on that side until the end of [Caliph] Umar's reign" [37, p. 62]. This means that Yazdigard, the king of Iran, took refuge in Fergana for a year in 643-644. The descendants of Yazdigard had a close relationship with Fergana for many years.

There is no information in the sources about who led the Fergana people who set out to fight the Arabs. Considering the fact that the relations of the ancient Persian state with Fergana was mainly dependant on the city of Quva [13, p. 21], it is possible that Yazdigard III came to the city of Quva in Fergana. Accordingly, in the above conflict, the Fergana people were led by Alsan who was the ruler of the southern territory of Fergana, the center of which was Quva, in 640 - 660 [117, p. 185]

According to historical sources, the first Arab invasion of the valley took place during the reign of Caliph Uthman (644-656). By the order of the Caliph, Umayr ibn 'Uthman ibn Sa'd was sent to Khurasan in 649/650. Umayr crossed the Amudarya and came to Fergana [21, p. 2829]. According to Abu Ali Balami, this march was carried out in 31/651-52 [45, p. 147]. This was the first march of the Arabs across the river, the purpose of which was to carry out the first reconnaissance of these lands under the pretext of finding the last Sassanid king Yazdagard III, who had fled from the Arabs to Fergana.

Historical sources mention that during the Arab conquest, the Persians (al-Ajam) and the Turkic people lived in the land of Fergana [11, p. 167a]. It was noted here that descendants of Yazdigard and nobles, who had been exiled since the 7th century, lived there. These events are also reflected in the folklore. According to the legend, after the Arabs conquered the lands of Ajam, the Persians fled from them and settled in Fergana [1, p. 71]. According to al-Balozuri, Feruz, the son of Yazdigard, the last king of the Sassanids, escaped from the Arabs and fell into the hands of the Turkic people, then he married a Turkic girl and stayed with them [23, p. 316]. According to sources, in the early eighth century, Feruz fought against Qutayba ibn Muslim in Movarounnahr [21, p. 196; 26, p. 184]. But the information about Feruz cited by Tabari and Balozuri is also less reliable. Because even if Feruz was born in Fergana, Qutayba was over 70 years old at the time of the invasion of Movarounnahr and Fergana, and probably died. But it is clear that the prince was born in

636 in Iran [27, p. 33]. According to G. Goipov, the information about Yazdigard's escape from the Arabs to Fergana and his return to Khorasan actually belonged to his son Feruz [9: 84]. However, according to al-Tabari, "by mutual agreement with the ruler of the Turkic people, Yazdigard remained in Fergana with his family" [21, p. 2692]. Arriving in Marv in 31/651-52, he wrote letters to al-Sin, Kabul and al-Khazar, as well as to the rulers of Fergana asking for help [36, p. 62]. In our opinion, after the defeat at the Battle of Nahovand in 22/642-43, Feruz fled from the Arabs to Fergana with his father Yazdigard, and returned to Khorasan with him during the reign of the Caliph Uthman. After Yazdigard was executed in Marv, Feruz returned to Fergana. It is also known that Feruz did not submit to the Arabs for a long time during his stay in Fergana. He then came to the independent province of Tabaristan, where he tried to restore Sassanid rule [3, p. 216]. According to Chinese sources, in 662, the Chinese emperor proclaimed Feruz as a king of Iran. After that, Feruz fought against the Arabs in Tokharistan. Chinese sources state that the last information about him dates back to the Xianxing years (670 - 673) and that he died after these years [46, p. 730]. Chinese sources also report Yazdigard's grandson named Ners (Ni-xuan-shi) [24, p. 257 - 258; 46, p. 730]. According to Tabari, he lived in the palace of the Chinese emperor in 58 / 677-78, and then led an uprising against the Arabs in Tokharistan [38, p. 16-22]. Chinese sources state that this event took place in the 1st year (679) of the Tyavlu rule [46, p. 730].

The next march of the Arabs to the valley was made by the governor of Khorasan, ar-Rabi al-Harithi. According to Tabari, al-Rabi al-Harithi crossed the Amu Darya in 671/672. He also took with him a slave named Farrukh and a maid named Sharifa. There ar-Rabi captured the booty, survived himself, and freed Farrukh from slavery. The source does not say exactly which areas the Khorasan governor raided after crossing the river. After the assassination of Yazdigard in Marv, the search for representatives of the Sassanid dynasty did not stop. Therefore, ar-Rabi al-Harithi may have come to Fergana during this march in search of the descendants of the Sassanids. Ibrat also narrates that ar-Rabi al-Harithi marched to Fergana in 666 [12, p. 280].

Salm ibn Ziyad, who was appointed governor of Khurasan in 61 / 680-81, came to Marv with a large army and began to march to Movarounnahr, recruiting the Arabs who had settled in Khurasan as well [22, p. 392 - 393; 23, p. 413; 26, p. 298]. Salm ibn Ziyad was the first Arab general to cross the Amu Darya with his wife in 61 / 680-81 and marched to Samarkand. Salm also marched on Khojand, but could not conquer it. Among his soldiers was a general named Asho Hamdon, who even wrote a poem about his defeat [1, p. 25].

There is no information in other sources about Salm ibn Ziyad's march to Khojand. It was not clear what the purpose of the march was in Balazuri. However, sources say that in 60 / 679-80, 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, along with Salm ibn Ziyad, again marched against the Sogdians and Turkic people in

Mawarannahr. 'Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad lost one eye in the battle of Samarkand [35, VI, p. 34]. Hence, it can be assumed that Salm ibn Ziyad's march to Khojand in 680 was connected with the conflict with the Turkic people and the Sogdians.

Another report on the Arab march to Fergana is related to the name of the governor of Khorasan, Abdullah ibn Hazim as-Sulami. Below we analyze how he actually came to the valley. Abdullah ibn Hazim as-Sulami (reigned 64-72/683-692) massacred the Arabs of the Tamim tribe in Fergana in 70/689-90. From this he sensed the coming of the Caliph's wrath, and felt that his own destiny was in danger. When he arrived in Marv, he handed over his property to his son Moses and said, "Cross the Balkh River and take refuge in the palace of a king in Movarounnahr, or find a stronghold there and stay there," and he himself went to Nishapur. Moses set out from Marv with 220 soldiers and came to Amul. Here he was joined by thugs and wanderers, bringing the number of his soldiers to 400. Moses went from Amul to Zamm, and on the way he was joined by more Arabs. They fought against the people of Zamm, captured the city, and gained many treasures there. Moses then crossed the river with his army [1, p. 235].

In the above text, it is narrated that Abdullah ibn Hazim as-Sulami massacred members of the Tamim tribe in Fergana. So this is the third march of the Arabs into the valley from 713-715. However, in Tabari's critical text prepared by de Gue and based on it, the English translation was translated as *فرتنا* – Fartana instead of the word Fergana [22, p. 1145 - 1146; 39, p. 90]. Therefore, the idea that the Arabs led by Abdullah ibn Hazim as-Sulami were in Fergana is not sufficiently substantiated. It is possible that a mistake was made when the work was copied several times by the secretaries, written as *فرتنا* instead of *فرغانه*. But there are no sources about it yet. It should also be noted that Tabari, Balozuri and Balami wrote their works almost two centuries after the Arabs entered Fergana. Therefore, a critical approach is important when using the information they provide.

We can learn about the next march of the Arabs to Fergana from Balazuri's work. It states that when Qutayba became a governor, he left an army in Movarounnahr under the command of his brother Salih. Salih, on the other hand, conquered Kasan and Urash in 86/705. Nasr ibn Sayyar was also with him in his army. Nasr ibn Sayyar captures the fortress of Beyanhar in Fergana [23, p. 420]. In Balazuri's critical text, published in 1863, the fortress occupied by Nasr ibn Sayyar was written in the form of *بئحار*, with the dots of the letters 1, 2 and 4 omitted. In the Turkish and Russian translations of Balozuri it is used in the form of *بئحار* – Bey'anhar and Bi'anhar [2, p. 78; 23, p. 482]. But there is no exact information about the location of this place. In our opinion, Beyanhar is probably one of the fortresses on the northern border of Fergana.

Now back to Salih's march to Fergana. There is no information in other Arabic sources about Salih ibn Muslim's march to Fergana. According to Tabari, he conquered a place called Bosoro, located between Salih as-Saghaniyan and Vashjird [22, p. 1180]. In our opinion, it was impossible for Salih to penetrate so

much into the inner districts of Fergana in 705, and therefore Balozuri's above views are somewhat enigmatic. It is possible that Balozuri relied on his predecessor Madoini in writing Salih's march to Fergana. However, this opinion is also unfounded, as Madoini's work has not survived to our day, and Balozuri did not quote Madoini when he gave information about Fergana.

Conclusions

As a result of several military campaigns carried out until 715, the Arabs gained detailed information about the geographical location, cities, water sources of the Fergana Valley. The fact that Qutayba ibn Muslim moved freely in the valley during the marches can be taken as evidence of these ideas. In some of these marches the Arabs won, while in others they were defeated by the Fergana and Khojand people.

In conclusion, it can be said that the Arabs organized several military campaigns in Fergana until 715. The main purpose of these actions was not to occupy Fergana, but to gather information about its political and military situation. Some of these marches are mentioned in written sources, while others have survived in the form of legends among the people.

Many unexplored aspects of the valley's history are explored through the study of military campaigns carried out. A number of misconceptions in our historiography are corrected to some extent.

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