

RESEARCHES OF RUSSIAN MILITARY ORIENTALISTS ABOUT THE POPULATION OF AFGHANISTAN IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE 19TH CENTURY

Shakhjakhon Riskulov

Researcher, Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Uzbekistan

Abstract

In this article it is explained that the Russian military orientalists recorded in their reports valuable information about the geographical location of Afghanistan, its political and administrative management system, as well as detailed information about the various peoples and tribes living in the country, the population of the regions, and their topographical location in their reports. The information of the Russian researchers about the ethnic composition of the Afghan population and their characteristics will later serve as a source for many studies. Most importantly, these data were collected and analyzed by Russian orientalists directly, without any tools, during their trips to the country.

Keywords Central Asia, Afghanistan, Russian Empire, Afrid, Orakzai, Atmanzai, Hatak, Wazir, Kabul, Herat, Ker, Helmand River, Kandahar, Baluchistan, Kakar, Khazars, Durrani, Ghilzai, Choraymaks, Firuzkuhis.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the territory of Afghanistan in Russia is rooted in the distant past. The study of this territory has been especially intensified since the 19th century. During this period, like Great Britain, Russia, based on its political goals, tried to comprehensively explore the territory of Afghanistan and did not spare forces and means for this. The main goal of almost all expeditions to Afghanistan was to study these territories from a geopolitical point of view, so mainly military orientalists worked there. Nevertheless, the information they collected aroused great interest from a historical point of view. In particular, information on the geographical position of Afghanistan, customs, lifestyle, diversity of nationalities, social conditions obtained by Russian

researchers is still considered invaluable.

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

In the second half of the 19th century, the Russian Empire actively pursued a policy of aggression in Central Asia, and after subjugating the Uzbek khanates and Turkmen tribes in the 1960s and 1970s, the need to define the borders of the empire with neighboring countries and divide the spheres of influence with Great Britain came to the fore. In the 80s of the 19th century, the "Pamir border" issue appeared in Russian foreign policy in order to determine the borders of the Russian Empire with Great Britain and Afghanistan. As a result, valuable information about the people living in Afghanistan was collected as a result of the research conducted by Russian researchers in

Afghanistan.

According to A.E. Snesev, Afghans are divided into three groups. In particular, a slightly larger group is the Kers, which consists of 128 clans. This group includes Afrid, Orakzai, Atmanzai, Hatak, Wazir and other tribes. These tribes lived in the northern part of the Solomon mountain range from the Gomala river to the Peshawar valley, as well as in the foothills of the Khyber and Gomul passes that connect Afghanistan with India. The tribes belonging to this group are mountain peoples, and many tourists say that they belong to the purest race ethnographically, and the main features of the Afghan race are clearly reflected in them. Kers lived in small villages and were mainly nomadic. Small tribal communities were governed by jirgas[1.113].

A.E. Snesev ethnographically notes that the remaining two groups of Afghans "separated from the Ker group at different times, moved to other regions and settled in new places as independent tribes, their original origin goes back to the Ker"[2. 115].

The second group of Afghans were the tribes called Gurgusht, who lived in the area from the southwestern part of the Solomon Mountains to the borders of Baluchistan, and were headed by the Kakar tribe. According to the researcher, the Hurghush tribes originated from the interbreeding of the Baluch and the Ker[3.60].

The third group of Afghans is a union of Sarban tribes, which include the Durrani (Abdol) and Yusufzai tribes. They lived in the southern and southwestern basin of the Helmand River, from Kandahar to Herat. The Barakzai clan emerged separately from the Durrani (Abdol) tribe, and they stood out militarily among the Afghan tribes. Among the Afghan tribes, the Ghilzai tribe is the majority in terms of numbers[1.113]. Ghilzais are of Turkic origin, and in the second half of the 19th century, their number was more than 1 million,

and they lived mainly in the area from Kabul to Kallat.

Many travelers have described the appearance and character of the Afghan people. In particular, A.E. Snesev, as a result of his many observations, describes the Afghans as "a people whose passion is hot, but gets hot in an instant, self-sufficient, capable of any kind of work, lives with hope, but quickly becomes disillusioned." In addition, the scientist, while thinking about their appearance, acknowledges that they are "tall, strong, handsome, with pointed noses, wide cheeks, wheat-colored, among them there are sometimes also black ones, with bald heads and hair growing up to their shoulders".

B. L. Tageev, speaking about the Afghans, described them: "Afghans have long mustaches, come from Karacha, have dark curly hair, wear thin and white turbans, grow long beards, keep their bodies upright like soldiers, from their lineage proud people," he says[3. 140].

Many researchers, most of whom are military orientalist, have described the specific features of the national character of Afghans. For example, Colonel Grodekov said, "Afghans as a people are hard-tempered, cold-hearted, demanding, brave, and fighters. The highlanders living in the country call themselves Afghans and are proud of it. At the same time, to find out to which clan a person belongs, you can find out about it not only from him, but from another stranger. It shows how mature Afghans are in terms of intelligence, insight and respect for each other[4. 100].

B. L. Tageev says about the specific characteristics of Afghans: "Afghans are sharply different from the surrounding eastern peoples in terms of their external and national character, their nature is somewhat delicate and less capable of work compared to other eastern peoples, they behave freely in any situation and treat others as Asians who do not like to live as dependents. Afghans are

a small nation, they live together as a strong family, they are always warlike, brave, not susceptible to external influences, and at the same time, they strictly adhere to their traditions[3. 140].

The reports of military travelers do not contain information about the population of Afghanistan. However, Colonel P. In Matveev's reports, one can find interesting information about the population of northern Afghanistan. It is noted in his reports that the majority of the population of northern Afghanistan consists of Uzbeks, and Tajiks are the majority in Badakhshan. Noting that more than 40,000 people live in Mazori Sharif, and more than 100,000 people in Balkh oasis, Matveev says that the population of Tashkurgan is a minority, and earlier there were many people living in this area. Also, despite the harsh climatic conditions in the Kunduz oasis, about 400,000 people live here, more than 500,000 people live in Badakhshan, no less than 20,000 people live in the city of Faizabad, and about 15,000 people live in the city of Rustak[5. 37-38].

In the years after the Second Anglo-Afghan War, Tajiks were the largest population in the country and their number was about 1 million, they mostly live in mountainous areas and some are nomads. According to the observations of many researchers, Tajiks mainly lived in Badakhshan, Herat, Vakhn Valley, Shugnan and Roshan[1.155]. Tajiks lived a sedentary life and were mainly engaged in agriculture.

In the works of military travelers, information is also given about the Khazars, whose origins go back to the Mongols. Military Orientalist traveler According to Captain V. Oranovsky's research, the Khazars came to Afghanistan in the Middle Ages and gradually mixed with the local population. Most of the Khazars lived a nomadic lifestyle in the areas between eastern Khurasan and Kabul, and some of them settled in Badakhshan[6.57]. N. During his expedition to the country, Blaramberg

noted that the Khazars are a people consisting of more than 50,000 families[7.288].

Among other tribes described in the works of military travelers, the Charaimaks can be distinguished. They include four tribes of different origins.

The first of them were the Taimurs, a tribe consisting of 15 thousand families who lived around Herat at the end of the 19th century. The next tribe is the Teymen. According to Blaramberg, they consisted of 30 thousand families and lived on the slopes of the mountains, in the vicinity of Herat, in the valley of the Farakh River. The next tribe was the Jamshids, whose number consisted of 6,000 families. They lived a nomadic life on the right banks of the Gerirud River and made their living up to the upper reaches of the Murgab River. The fourth tribe of Choraymaks is the Firuzkuhis, who lived in the areas not far from the Khazars, that is, in the western regions of central Afghanistan, between the Murghab and Gerirud rivers. At the end of the 19th century, their number did not exceed 10,000 families[7. 282].

Military orientalist tourist D.V.Putyata gave detailed information about Vakhn people in his diaries. He said that the appearance of the Vakhnites resembled the stony Tajiks, that they had their own colloquial language, but that most of them understood the Persian language well, that their appearance was handsome and round-faced, that the men were tall, on foot, and skilful archers, warlike, but at the same time cunning, careful, alert, notes that they are a nation that likes to boast. Also, the author wrote that most Vakhn men do not cut their hair, wear mustaches and short beards, women are thin, fair-skinned, beautiful, despite their oriental manners, they walk openly, i.e. without burqas, and behave freely in the company of men[8. 63]. Vakhn people are actually mountaineers who live in the valleys of the upper reaches of the Amudarya, and they lived at

the starting point of the Amudarya, on top of the high mountains, and their ethnic origin and language indicate that they are the most ancient representatives of the Aryans[9. 362].

Turkic peoples lived in the northern regions of Afghanistan, most of them were Uzbeks. According to A.E. Snesev, about 700-800 thousand Uzbeks lived in northern Afghanistan at the end of the 19th century. According to Unig's observations, in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the nomadic Uzbek people began to gradually move to a sedentary lifestyle under the influence of the Afghan emir's policy[1. 127].

According to Blaramberg, the Uzbeks who lived between the Murgob River and Balkh in the middle of the 19th century were divided into four main groups. The first of these were the Mayans, a group of 5,000 families. The Saripuls consisted of 4,000 families and lived west of Balkh. The Andhoys are located to the east of the Mayans and their number is 3700 families. The Shibirgons are Uzbeks consisting of 3,500 families, who engaged in nomadism in the southeast of Andkhoy Uzbeks. Maiman, Saripul, Andkhoy and Shibirgan are actually the only Uzbek people, and at the end of the 19th century, they lived together in Kunduz and Balkh as a whole people[7.289].

Almost all military orientalist who have conducted research in Afghanistan have noted in their memoirs that one of the main features of this country is the diversity of the national composition of the population. For example, according to military orientalist tourists, Turkmen, Kalmyks, Jews, Indians and Gypsies also made up a large part of the population in Afghanistan.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the government of the Russian Empire, based on its political and military interests and strategic plans, organized many scientific and military expeditions to the region in order to study

the geographical structure, nature, population and its unique aspects of Afghanistan, which were not well studied until then. The experts of various fields who participated in the expedition were at the same time military, they conducted oriental studies and in addition to fulfilling the orders of their governments, they managed to learn a lot of information about the Afghan land and people.

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