



BOBOJON GHAFUROV AND HIS CONTRIBUTION TO THE FORMATION OF THE HISTORICAL SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS OF THE TAJIK NATION

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Abstract: *This article explores the scholarly contributions of Bobojon Ghafurov, a renowned Tajik historian and orientalist, focusing primarily on his seminal work «Tajiks». The study highlights Ghafurov's role in preserving and promoting the historical and cultural identity of the Tajik nation. Through a careful analysis of linguistic, archaeological, historical, and literary sources, Ghafurov offered a comprehensive account of the development of the Tajik people from ancient times through the medieval period. His academic methodology and deep commitment to historical truth established a strong foundation for national self-awareness and continue to inspire modern scholars. The article also reflects on the legacy of his collaboration with other intellectual figures such as Sadriiddin Ayni, and the significance of honoring his 110th anniversary as a symbol of enduring cultural unity.*

Keywords: *Bobojon Ghafurov, Tajiks, Tajik history, oriental studies, national identity, historical memory, Indo-Iranian languages, Sadriiddin Ayni, cultural heritage, historical scholarship.*

«I believe that the lofty ideals, noble ideas, patriotic efforts, and selfless devotion of Bobojon Ghafurov to the development of science and enlightenment will become a guiding light for every conscious citizen of our country»

Emomali Rahmon

The Founder of Peace and National Unity, Leader of the Nation, and President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon, said the following during the 90th anniversary celebration of the Hero of Tajikistan, Bobojon Ghafurov:

«The fate of the Tajik nation, like that of other peoples of Iranian origin, has been extremely complex and full of ups and downs throughout the centuries. Tajiks, through their labor and struggle for freedom, through construction and creativity, through the intelligence and genius of their great sons in the fields of science, literature, and politics, by reaching the era of state revival and experiencing the bitterness of defeat, and through their pursuit of self-awareness and national consciousness, have enriched and colored their history» [3, p.3].

In the study of the history of our country and the destiny of the Tajik people, the contribution of scientists and researchers from various fields has been very significant. History has entrusted them with a noble mission. One of these great individuals is the renowned historian and orientalist of Tajikistan, Bobojon Ghafurov, who introduced the name of our people to the world through his immortal work, «Tajiks».



It is widely known that this scholar's work, based on irrefutable historical facts and evidence, presents the ancient and historical past of our people - their language, way of life, labor, science, and culture.

The book «Tajiks» has played a worthy role in the study of historical sources and the clarification of truths about the lives of our ancestors. In this work, Bobojon Ghafurov's image as a serious historian, a prominent orientalist, and a competent specialist shines clearly. Emomali Rahmon specifically emphasizes this feature of Ghafurov's scholarly work:

«In his book «Tajiks», academician Bobojon Ghafurov studied the ancient, early, and medieval history of the Tajik people alongside the history of their science, literature, architecture, and spiritual-religious thought - all within the unified context of world history and from an academic point of view» [4, p.322].

The materials in the book «Tajiks» are considered highly valuable and important in the field of Tajik oriental studies. Already from the first chapters of «Tajiks», the reader, in addition to historical documents and archaeological findings, becomes acquainted with elements of language, script, and written texts of various Eastern peoples and Indo-Aryan tribes.

For example, in the first chapter of «Tajiks» - «The Structure of Primitive Society and Its Decline in Central Asia», Ghafurov discusses the history of Iranian languages and their kinship with Indo-European languages. He provides abundant and intriguing examples, and like a linguist, analyzes and explains the interconnections of ancient world languages within the framework of historical science [3, p.33–39].

Thus, the linguistic evidence of Indian and Iranian languages - showing their common origin - the deep similarities in religion and culture, social and political organization, economic activity, and lifestyle of Iranian and Indian tribes in the earliest periods of their recorded histories, and finally the original shared name of both peoples, all point to the ancestral unity of the Iranians and Indians during the «Aryan Era».

Therefore, Indo-Iranian unity is not only a linguistic phenomenon but also a true historical reality [3, p.33].

Taking into account the complexity of the task in this chapter, the scholar himself wrote:

«Many aspects of the ancient, early, and early medieval history of the Tajiks have not yet been studied as thoroughly as they should be. However, newly discovered materials are quite abundant. Often, issues related to these aspects cannot be definitively resolved. Therefore, alongside a pragmatic explanation of the facts, the author examines the theories of both Soviet and foreign colleagues, clearly presenting his own observations and viewpoints. Naturally, in this case, the narrative becomes more detailed, with increased references to historical sources and citations from research and publications in the fields of historiography, archaeology, numismatics, linguistics, epigraphy, and literary studies» [3, p.10].

As an orientalist, Bobojon Ghafurov meticulously demonstrated the development of Iranian peoples and languages, arriving at the conclusion:



«Iranian languages are closely related to the group of Indian or Indo-Aryan languages, which, in addition to the spoken dialects of today, include ancient dialects preserved in Vedic, Sanskrit, and Pali texts» [3, p.34].

Through the study and comparison of various Iranian and Indo-Aryan languages and numerous linguistic materials - words and phrases in both Hindi and Persian - the reader might even assume that a linguist is analyzing linguistic data [3, p.35].

From pages 33 to 38, a wide array of meaningful linguistic evidence is provided to compare these two ancient languages, which holds great scholarly value for Indo-Aryan linguistic studies.

The research method used by Bobojon Ghafurov relies heavily on historical sources and the works of orientalists to uncover scientific truth. This is essential for accurately reflecting historical realities. For example, the following quote confirms this approach:

«In our opinion, the hypothesis of I.M. Dyakonov regarding the spread of Indo-Iranian languages among the traditionally agrarian tribes of Central Asia in the later stages of their development - which occurred through various interactions with nomadic peoples - is close to the truth. During these interactions, ethnic commonalities emerged under the name 'Indo-Iranian,' along with their shared culture. This hypothesis, also supported by other researchers (e.g., B.A. Litvinsky), provides the most coherent explanation for the archaeological data obtained» [3, p.49].

In the second chapter of the work, titled «Society of Central Asia in the Early Iron Age» B. Ghafurov presents valuable scholarly information regarding the historical origins of the Avesta [3, p.54–63].

It should be noted that this section of the work is considered one of the first attempts by national scholars to study this extremely important historical and cultural source of our ancestors.

The academic value of this chapter lies in the fact that Bobojon Ghafurov, drawing on the research of European and Russian scholars as well as archaeological findings from both domestic and foreign excavations, conducts thorough analysis and reaches significant scientific conclusions.

He critically examines the assumptions and hypotheses of Avestan scholars, and by applying the principles of academic historiography - regarding the period, historical context, geographic and ethnographic setting, and sequence of events - he lays a solid foundation for uncovering historical truth.

Ghafurov's key academic insights into the study of the Avesta continue to serve as a guide for scholars in the field to this day.

The celebration of the 2700th anniversary of the Avesta, and the declaration of 2007 as the «Year of Aryan Culture and Civilization», once again encouraged orientalists to turn to the timeless work «Tajiks», drawing inspiration from the profound scientific conclusions of this outstanding scholar of our time.

In the study of the third chapter of «Tajiks», titled «The Culture of the 11th – Early 12th Century», and in the remaining chapters of the work as well, Bobojon Ghafurov examines a wealth of scholarly material, historical and literary sources, and the works of Persian and Tajik poets, scholars, and historians. In doing so, he reveals the historical



mission and cultural contributions of these figures. However, the scope of this brief report does not allow for a full analysis of all those materials.

Our national leader, Emomali Rahmon, was absolutely right when he stated:

«One of the sources of national self-awareness is precisely the acquaintance with historical heritage. Unless society internalizes the powerful historical memory preserved in the cultural and scientific works of the past and benefits from the wisdom and intellect of its ancestors, it cannot achieve the desired progress in any area of life» [3, p.5].

Hafez of Shiraz once said:

«Seek out the root of virtue and the path of inquiry» [6, p.58].

It would not be an exaggeration to say that Bobojon Ghafurov lived his life according to this very maxim. His guidance continues to serve as a model for young scholars and researchers in the study of history, literature, and culture. For example, when Ghaffurjon Haidarov, a professor at Khujand State University, was writing his doctoral dissertation, Ghafurov advised him:

«In general, the role of intellectuals and cultural figures during the years 1917–1937 was significant. Do not forget this when writing your dissertation» [3, p.41–42].

Today, we are fortunate to take part in celebrating the 110th anniversary of the great historian and orientalist Bobojon Ghafurov, and one famous couplet comes to mind:

The great are kept alive by the great,
The great are made eternal by other greats.

The renowned scholar, noble individual, Doctor of Historical Sciences, Professor of Khujand State University, and passionate promoter of Tajik history, science, and culture, Usmonjon Ghafforov, wrote the following in his work «The Scholar of the Age», dedicated to the memory of the late academic:

«Every century, every generation, and every nation has its prominent figures like Bobojon Ghafurov. His name has been inscribed in the book of life's history in golden letters. Every moment of this noble man's life - a distinguished representative of 20th-century civilization - is a source of inspiration for us» [5, p.3].

It is symbolic that we recently celebrated the 140th anniversary of the founder of modern Tajik literature and Hero of Tajikistan, Sadridin Ayni. Bobojon Ghafurov revered Ayni as his teacher, a powerful writer, encyclopedist, and great son of the nation. He once humbly said:

«I am not the father of the nation - I am its son, and I only wish to serve it. The father of the nation was Ustod Ayni, who more than anyone else struggled for the revival of the Tajiks and achieved victory» [2].

The friendship and cooperation between these two great men played an immensely important role in preserving the name and identity of the Tajik people in modern history. Today, though they are no longer with us, their graves lie side by side - a lasting symbol of the eternal unity of the Tajik nation. In accordance with Ghafurov's own wishes, his body was laid to rest in Ayni Park in Dushanbe, next to the grave of Ustod Ayni.

The celebration of the 110th anniversary of the great orientalist and national scholar Bobojon Ghafurov once again reminds us of the unbroken lineage of our nation's heritage and its worthy descendants. As Allama Muhammad Iqbal of Lahore so beautifully put it:



An individual earns respect from the nation,
A nation finds order through its individuals [5, p.4-5].

Let me conclude with the following lines, which rightly honor the poet and the person:

Half the world takes pride in Bobojon Ghafurov,
For he explored the depths of global scholarship.
He wrote «Tajiks» - a true historical marvel,
And brought the name of the Tajik to the world once more.

Bobojon Ghafurov was not only a prominent historian and orientalist, but also a true patriot whose scholarly legacy continues to shape the national consciousness of the Tajik people. Through his monumental work «Tajiks», he offered the world a comprehensive and well-researched account of the ancient, medieval, and modern history of the Tajik nation. His commitment to academic integrity, critical analysis, and cultural preservation laid a strong foundation for future generations of scholars.

By bridging historical facts with linguistic, archaeological, and literary evidence, Ghafurov strengthened the collective memory of the Tajik people and solidified their rightful place within the broader context of world civilization. His life and work remain a beacon for those striving to uncover and honor the cultural and intellectual treasures of their nation. Celebrating his legacy today is not only a tribute to his achievements but also a reaffirmation of the enduring value of history, heritage, and scholarly truth.

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