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**Turkestan in the Islamic Era; A Study of Historical Geography**

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**Abstract**

Historical events occur not only within the scope of time, but also in the scope of space. This factor requires the researcher of history to also consider the place where the events occurred in his study. In fact, it is not possible to study a historical event without paying attention to the geographical, cultural and social characteristics of the place where the event occurred. Therefore, more than any historical perspective, paying attention to historical geography is of indescribable importance. The province of Turkestan was considered one of the most important provinces of eastern Iran in different historical periods. From the perspective of Muslim geographers of the 4th and 5th centuries AH, this region began from the north of Transoxiana and before the breakup and fragmentation of Greater Khorasan, it was considered one of the most important provinces of this region in the context of the flourishing of Islamic civilization and was always important for Muslims from a political, economic and cultural perspective. The aim of this research is to identify the geographical, social, political, cultural and economic characteristics of Turkestan province in the Islamic era. The research method is descriptive-analytical, and relies on library resources. The findings of the research indicate that the natural and political geography of Turkestan, along with the growth of its cities in the Islamic era due to its proximity to the central government, its location on trade routes and the progress of agriculture, provided the grounds for the growth and expansion of this region. Also, in the field of trade, the export of slaves, animal skins, wool, and dried fish was considered one of the factors of the growth and progress of the region in different periods.

**Keywords:** Turkestan, Yasi, Historical Geography, Culture, Politics, Trade.

**Introduction**

Researching and studying the historical geography of a region as an interdisciplinary field of study is of great importance because it deals with the historical past of the city, the origin of the population, the way it was formed, the continuity of ethnic traditions, and the movement of social groups; therefore, historical geography, in a sense, seeks the results of the functioning of natural, political, economic, social, and cultural forces of past periods that are linked to the current space of the city. (Shekoui and Kazemi, 2005: 30) In studies of the field of historical geography, place is considered as geography and time as history. Therefore, the

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study of the science of human spatial relations in the context of past time periods is useful for solving the geographical problems of humanity today. (Bik Mohammadi, 2009: 15)

Before the twentieth century, "historical geography" was a term used to describe at least three distinct streams of thought: a) Recreating the geography described in the Bible and classical Greek works and Roman narratives; b) Geography as a supporter of history, which sought to show the changing boundaries and boundaries of states and empires, and c) the history of geographical exploration. (Butlin, 1993: 1-23) In the interval between the two world wars, the role of geography and consequently history as a structure became prominent. To the extent that in France, under the influence of the Annales school, the topic of historical geography was raised as a specific style. In Germany and England, the topic of historical geography was also pursued. However, theorists of the mid-twentieth century such as Darby and Sauer made a significant contribution to the growth of this science. (See: Darby/ Meinig)

In theoretical discussions that were first discussed academically in the twentieth century. By emphasizing the difficulty of research in historical geography, issues such as human culture, which had previously been in the field of human geography, had a historical nature; Therefore, in this type of research, man was introduced as the axis of evolution in historical geography, an influential factor in the creation of culture. In this type of view, although they placed originality on geography, it was important that its data were provided through historical studies. (Sauer, V 31, 4-15/ Wittlesey, 1945: V 35, 1-6, 30-32)

As a result, some believe that this field is a subfield of human geography that is close to history, environmental history and historical ecology. Historical ecology is a new interdisciplinary research program that deals with local environments and the global effects of these relationships by understanding the temporal and spatial dimensions of human society relationships. In historical ecology, human behavior in the landscape environment is actually derived as part of historical geography. (Balee, 2006: 75-98)

However, there is no clear definition of historical geography as a model for basic research and studies. However, in one view, it can be said that historical geography involves the reconstruction of past environments by examining a series of events at a time or evaluating them with respect to past developments. (Monkhouse, 1969: 176) However, at a practical level, various challenges have been introduced in this subject, which is the result of its difficulty and then its inefficiency. One of them is Kucera's important article entitled "Historical Geography Between Geography and Historiography". According to Kucera, the constant problem of historical geography, since its inception, has been its lack of sufficient distinction from other sciences.

Hence, he points to the ambiguities of the above position. He emphasizes that despite many efforts to solve these two problems, the lack of methodological and theoretical basis has caused them to remain unsolved. (Kucera, 2008: V 5, 5-13) However, he offers suggestions to avoid confusing discussions and getting bogged down in unnecessary issues: a) Scientific historical geography is geography and should not be considered as topography; b) Historical geography seeks to

reconstruct the past as a fact, therefore it helps us to understand the current situation of the region; c) The element of place is the main priority and one should not fall into the element of time in a chronological description; d) The necessity of learning geographical and historical sciences to understand the issues of historical geography. (Ibid, 9-10)

Accordingly, the province of Turkestan was considered one of the most important provinces of this region before the disintegration of Greater Khorasan. Cities of this region such as Balkh, Bukhara, Khorezm, Samarkand, etc. experienced separate political fates in different historical periods. Therefore, studying this region is of immense importance both from the point of view of geopolitical and historical geography.

Regarding the background of the research, it should be acknowledged that no article or book has been written under the title and approach of the above article, although various books and articles have made brief and brief references to this province, and there is no study that presents the cultural, social, political and geographical areas together as a complete research. Therefore, the author intends to present a general conclusion about the structures and characteristics of this region, in addition to introducing the cities of the province of Turkestan and its position in different historical periods - as far as historical data allows - and to give a general conclusion about the structures and characteristics of this region.

### 1. Nomenclature

The word "Turkestan" has generally been used in the sense of the Turkic region. Some

authors have called the other side of the Ceyhon Turkestan. (Tojik, 1987: 448) Nematov believes that the concept of Turkestan was not a specific and established term, and in different periods of history, the regions of Central Asia of Kazakhstan and some places were named in the same way. At the beginning of the term "Turkestan", only the place where mainly Turkic-speaking tribes lived was called Turkestan. (Muslims, 1386: 54). Baghdadi has stated: Turkestan "is a comprehensive name for all Turkic countries" (Baghdadi, 1412 AH: Vol. 1, 259). This region was also called "Turan" in the past. (Abul-Fida, 1970: 556) Therefore, the term Turkestan has its origin in the Turkish language and it was believed that it was used to mean a single nation.

## 2. Geographical Section

### 3-1- Historical Geography Section

Turkestan is a region in Asia that is bordered by Siberia to the north, Afghanistan, India, Tibet and Iran to the south, Mongolia to the east and the Caspian Sea to the west (Gladys, 1987: 163). This region is currently divided into the countries of Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan and Turkmenistan and present-day Afghanistan (Annette, 1997: 44).

The Republics of Turkestan extend from the meridian of 31.46 to 25.78 east longitude and from the latitude of 30.35 to 30.55 north latitude. Turkestan has a total area of 3,994,400 square kilometers. According to the statistics of 1990, the total population of Turkestan was 52,695,000 (Eshghi, 1995: 13). Lestranj introduced Turkestan as the ancient city of "Shavaghar", of which no traces have been found so far (Lestranj, 2007: 485). Muslim geographers of the fourth century AH have mentioned its name in their

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works, including Istakhri and Ibn Hawqal, who spoke of a war there that Nasr ibn Ahmad Samani (Haqq: 303-330) commanded with three hundred thousand soldiers (Ibn Hawqal, 1987: 467; Istakhri, 1961: 291). This matter is not mentioned in other sources of this period, such as Moqaddasi (Moqaddasi, 1982: 274, 342). In the sixth century, Samani described it as a region of resistance to the Turks (Samani, 1419 AH: Vol. 3, 392), while a century later, Yakut Hamavi introduced it as a Turkic city; none of them mentioned the name “Yasi/Assi”, by which the city gradually became known (Hamawi, 1399 AH: 245). According to historians, the Turkestan region consisted of three hundred cities, and became the main stronghold of a people who later became known as the Kazakhs. This region was destroyed by the Mongol invaders in the first half of the 7th century AH.

The city of Turkestan actually emerged and flourished with the development of the ancient city of “Yase” in the 5th century AD (Grosa, 1982: 724). This description, as mentioned in the 8th century in the Zafarname of Sharaf al-Din Ali Yazdi, has been confirmed by the use of this name in this century (Yazdi, 1957: vol. 2, 16; Barthold, 1993, 162). Some historians believe that not all of Transoxiana was Turkestan, as Zain al-Din Mahmud Wasifi (10th century AH) has named the province of Tashkent, the province of Samarkand, and the province of Turkestan. He speaks in such a way that Turkestan is a separate country. Wasifi says: “Finally, the jurist Maulana Amir Husayn, the son of the judge of Tashkent, asked for permission, and we headed to Tashkent, and from there we went to Turkestan. Incidentally, the sultans of Samarkand came to Turkestan to attack the Kazakhs” (Vasefi, 1962: 115, 264, 280). The famous Tajik scholar Mahmud Khajeh

Behbudi (1298/1919) wrote one of his works in Uzbek Turkish at the beginning of the 20th century and titled it “Map of Turkestan, Bukhara and Khiva” (Musalmanian, 2007: 56; Tojik, 1987: 448). Perhaps, with this statement, it can be stated that Turkestan does not include Bukhara and Khorezm and is outside the territory of this country.

Nevertheless, the Turkestan region roughly coincides with the ancient Transoxiana and the steppe lands to its north, although the steppe part from the Mongol period onwards (around the 7th century) has often been called Mongolia. Of course, for the Iranians, only the southern borders of the Turkic land, which formed the border with Iran, were important and naturally this border was subject to political circumstances. The Turks reached Ceyhon (Amu Darya) at the very beginning of their appearance in Central Asia, in the 6th century AD, hence in the Sasanian period, the land of the Turks began immediately north of Ceyhon (Barthold, 1999, 106). According to Tabari, with the shooting of Arash's arrow, Ceyhon became known as the border between the Turks and the Iranians (Tabari, 1996: vol. 1, 454). According to the Armenian Sebeus, Verut (Ceyhun) originated from the land of Turkestan (Marquardt, 1989: 148). In another part of the same work, Turkestan is equated with “Delhestan”, that is, “village” (Ibid, 73).

Therefore, according to the Muslim geographers of the third and fourth centuries, Turkestan did not begin north of Ceyhun, but rather north of the cultural territory of Islam, which was known as “the lands of Transoxiana”, and it is from then on that Turkestan was considered to be the northern and eastern regions of Transoxiana. The city of Kasan in Fergana, north of Seyhun (Syr Darya), was “the first land of Turkestan”

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(Hamvi, 1399 AH: vol. 4, 227; Belinsky, 1985: 12). The cities of Jand and Kent in the lower reaches of the same river were part of Turkestan (Belinsky, 1985: Vol. 2, 127, 403, Vol. 3, 344). Some historians have interpreted the use of this name as meaning that the name Turkestan was first used by the Russian conquerors of Central Asia as a convention to name the land of Transoxiana (Karred Vankoze, 1997: 198).

In literature, especially in travel writings, there is usually a distinction between Russian Turkestan, Chinese Turkestan, and Afghan Turkestan, although the term Turkestan has only a meaning in Russia and Afghanistan in the country divisions. Sometimes instead of these we come across the terms Western and Eastern Turkestan. For example, Western Turkestan is called Russian Turkestan so as not to be confused with Eastern Turkestan or Chinese Turkestan (currently part of the Chinese province of Xinjiang) (Barthold, 1999, 108).

In 1867, the Russians founded the "governorship" (general governorship) of Turkestan with Tashkent as its capital and appointed General Kaufmann as its head. The borders of this government were sometimes limited and sometimes extensive. From 1882 to 1898, the Semirechye [Seven Rivers] province, which had once been part of Turkestan, belonged to the Governorate-General of the Steppes with Omsk as its capital. In 1898, Semirechye and the Trans-Caspian state (Turkmenistan) were annexed to Turkestan (Karred Vankoze, 1997: 199). After the fall of Tsarist Russia in 1917, the Turkestan Trans-ethnic Autonomous State, also known as the "Khuqand Autonomous State", was formed on 24 and 25 Safar 1335/10 and 11 December 1917, when reformist elements or "newcomers"

established it in Khoqand, as the second independent indigenous state in Central Asia (after Khiva) (Fray, 1969: 36). This arrangement was changed on 18 Rajab 1336/30 April 1918 to a Soviet government, initially called the Turkestan Autonomous Republic, with Tashkent as its capital. But the Bolsheviks in Moscow were opposed to any ethnic, tribal, or local groupings, and therefore sought to overthrow the Turkestan Autonomous Republic. For example, they encouraged the Kazakhs of the northern Turkestan Autonomous Republic to unite with the Kazakhs within it, which resulted in the creation of Kyrgyzstan east of the Caspian Sea (Krai, 1916: 48-49).

In the autumn of 1924, Moscow encouraged the various ethnic groups of Central Asia to form their own ethnic units. This led to the official dissolution of the Turkestan Soviet Republic, which was decreed on 21 Ordibehesht 1324/11 May 1925, and the abolition of the Soviet Republics of Khorezm and Bukhara, which had been established in 1923 and 1924, respectively. The term "Turkestan" was removed from the press, and Stalinist-era censorship for several decades considered it a forbidden name and concept (Bennicken, 1997: 73).

Geographically, Turkestan is located in the coastal lowlands to the foothills of the Pamirs and Alai and fertile plains. The density of highlands increases from the west to the east and southeast. The main ruggedness of Turkestan is: the Balkan Mountains, the Alai Mountains, the Pamir Mountains, the upper Syr Darya Basin, the Tian Shan Mountains, the Balkhash Basin, the high Irtysh Basin (Ibid, 16). The distance from the seas and the presence of highlands have caused Turkestan to have a very variable continental climate, that is, it is very hot in summer and very cold



in winter. The vast majority of annual precipitation falls between late autumn and late spring. The central region of Turkestan imperceptibly notices three other centers, which are the three central nuclei of desert development, and they are the "Qizil Qom" desert in Transoxiana, the "Qara Qom" desert in the west of Umayyad, and the "Takla Makan" desert in the limited Tarim Basin, and finally the "Gobi" desert, which includes a very vast area that extends from the southwest to the north of Turkestan (Grosseh, 1989: 49-72; Verhram, 1994: 169). The rivers of Turkestan include the Seyhun, Jeyhun, Turk River (today Cherchak), Ilagh River (Igran), Sogd River, Murghab, Amba, Tobol, and Vakhshab, which "comes out of Turkestan and reaches the land of Vakhsh" (Istakhri, 1961: 232). The important provinces of Turkestan include Bukhara, Samarkand, Fergana, Atrar, Khoqand, Khiva, Chach, Taraz, and Asbijab (Lestranj, 2007: 513, 488, 507).

### 3-2- Current Geography

The current city of Turkestan, called "Yasi" or "Yasi", is located in southern Kazakhstan. This city, which is located in the "Chemkent" region on the Tashkent-Orenburg route, on the southern bank of the Syr Darya River and about thirty kilometers from this river, is an oasis on the outskirts of the Qizil-e Qom and is irrigated by streams originating from the Qara-Tao Mountains (the site of ancient gold mines) and also by karezs that take water from the Qarychak River (Ahmadian-Shalchi, 1999: 340). It has been said that this place was called "Shugar" in the fourth century AH, and in the sixth and seventh centuries AH it took the name "Yase/Yasi", but it has been called Turkestan since the ninth century AH (Muslims, 2007: 55). The location of this city along the caravan route

of the branches of the Silk Road, centered on Tashkent, Bukhara, and Samarkand, created a suitable geographical position and, from the 6th century AH onwards, a religious position for it due to the tomb of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi (Abul-Hasani, 1997: 11-12).

While developing and emerging from the state of a village, Turkestan enjoyed the greatest prosperity during the Mongol period due to the presence of the followers of "Sheikh Ahmad Yasawi" (d. 562 AH) or, as the Turks call him, "Ataiyasawi", the founder of the Sufi order "Yasaviyeh", who lived and died in that city. Since he was considered one of the Turks' inviters to Islam, he was buried there, and Timur built a large tomb for him at the end of the 8th century. In the 9th century, Yasawi took the name Turkestan and the tomb was called "Hazrat Turkestan". The site attracted many pilgrims and became the burial place of devout Muslims and later the tomb of Uzbek princes of the Sheybani dynasty and Kazakh sultans. (Sarli, 1985: 98-101, 112; Barthold, 1999, 162) At the 1999 census, present-day Turkestan had a population of 85,600. This population increased by 10 percent from 1989-99, making it the second-largest city in Kazakhstan, after Astana, the new capital.

## 3. Historical Section

### 4-1- Political History

Probably the first state to bring all of Turkestan under a single command was the Achaemenid Empire, which in 500 BC cut off the Lydian Empire from the area around the Caspian Sea. Alexander the Great overthrew the Achaemenid state, and after his death Turkestan became part of Seleucus's share (Blenistaki, 1985: 83). However, in the middle of the 2nd century BC, this area was divided between the Parthian and Bactrian

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states. The Parthians gradually advanced eastward, conquering the possessions of the Bactrian state. Around 130 BC, Bactrian bordered China to the east, and the latter state controlled most of the lands extending from Lake Balkhash towards Ceyhon to the Hindu Kush. At the end of the 1st century BC, the possessions of Bactrian were transferred to the Kushan state. And the Huns were in conflict with China over the lands adjacent to Lake Balkhash. With the fall of the Han Dynasty (220 AD), China lost control of East Turkestan. (Marquardt, 1985: 39, 64; Blenistki, 1985: 101)

For the Iranians, the southern border of Turkestan, which was naturally subject to political circumstances, was important. In the first century AH, when the Turks first appeared in Central Asia, they advanced to the Amu Darya, and as a result, during the Sasanian period, Turkestan began immediately from the Amu Darya to the north (Barthold, 1999: 106). The Arab conquerors drove the Turks from the Amu Darya to the north, and therefore, in the terminology of Muslim geographers of the 3rd and 4th centuries AH, Turkestan began from Transoxiana (Ibid, 107). In the middle of the third century AH, the Abbasid Caliphate was weak and China had lost its eastern possessions. Several states, including the Khwarazm Shahs and the Khwarazm Kingdom, occupied parts of Turkestan (Barthold, 1999, 107). All of Turkestan was conquered by the Mongols in the late 7th century AH, and most of it belonged to the Chagatai after the death of the Mongol Genghis Khan. Amir Timur conquered Turkestan in the late 8th century AH. After his death (807 AH/1405 AD), the Timurids dominated most of Turkestan for a century.

From the last quarter of the ninth century AH onwards, major conflicts over Turkestan erupted, lasting for decades and even centuries. The parties involved were the last Timurids of Transoxiana, the declining Chagatai khans of Mongolia (Yunus and his son Sultan Mahmud), the Kazakh khans, and Muhammad Khan Shaybani. Between the latter two groups, during the years 875–885 AH, wars were fought over the main cities of the Syr Darya basin, which were besieged and captured by either the Kazakhs or the Uzbeks in turn. By the end of the ninth century AH, the situation had stabilized: the cities of Signaghi, Suzak [Green], and Soran [Sabran] had been annexed to the Kazakh khanates, while the cities of Utrar, Ozkend, Arkuk, and Turkestan remained in the hands of the Uzbeks. Thus, in 893 AH, Mahmud Chagatai (Prince of Tashkent) appointed Muhammad Khan Shaybani to the government of Turkestan, and this was the beginning of Muhammad Khan's political role in Transoxiana (Ghaffari Fard, 1997: 153). The Uzbek sultans took refuge there in 915 AH, during one of Babur's last attacks. Tahir Khan the Kazakh died there in the second quarter of the 10th century AH. After 1007 AH, Turkestan became part of the Uzbek khanate of Astrakhan (Hashtar Khan / Haji Tarkhan), who had replaced the Shaybani when the city was once again under Kazakh control, and then expanded to Tashkent (Barthold, 1972: 357).

In 1062 AH, the Kazakh Jahangir Khan, who had been killed in a war with the Kalmyks/Qalmuks, was buried next to the tomb of Ahmad Yesuy. From then on, Turkestan became a sensitive point of contact between the Kazakhs and the Oirats and the Chinese, which ultimately served the interests of the Russians (Saghafi, 1992: 59). The Russians handed it over to the Kazakh

sultan, Yunus Khoja, who ruled Tashkent from 1194. At this time, Turkestan, despite its apparent subordination to Bukhara, had established an independent emirate. The Kazakh Tuzai Khan came to rule there after Omar Khan Uzbek, the ruler of Khoqand, captured the city in 1229 or 1230 AH (Ibid, 293-324).

Therefore, the recent history of Turkestan is mostly related to the long conflicts between the khanates of Khiva, Bukhara, and Khoqand and the nomads of this region (especially the Kyrgyz, Kazakhs, and Turkmen). Internationally, there have been struggles between Russia and China over control of this land. In the late 11th century and early 12th century, the powerful Chinese dynasty, the Qing, dominated East Turkestan, but gradually more and more lands were taken out of Chinese control and annexed to Russian possessions, and in 1858, the Russians had almost all of today's possessions (the final borders were established in 1912). Russian control over the khanates began in 1868, when the Russians established the Governor-General of Turkestan and made Tashkent its seat (Saghafi, 1992: 584-586). Turkestan, like other oasis cities of the Syr Darya basin, faced economic weakness and the decline of settled life in the 12th and 13th centuries AH, which could not be attributed solely to the activities of the Uzbeks. The city had a population of five thousand when it was annexed to Russian rule in Rajab 1281/December 1864 (Barthold, 1972, 294-324).

### 4-2- Social History

Sources have introduced the people of Turkestan as strong, warlike, and powerful (Ibn Hawqal, 1987: 210; Hudud al-Alam,

1993: 122, 76; Qazvini, 1994: 592). In terms of human geography, ethnic and racial diversity is clearly observed in Turkestan. The ethnic groups living in Turkestan include: Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Turkmens, Arabs, Hindus, and Jews. (Vambri, 1993: 445) The language of the current Turkestan state of Kazakhstan is Kazakh. This language is from the Central Turkic language group, and because it has a large dialect diversity, linguists considered it a unified language. The vocabulary of the Karachay language is Turkish, but over time words from Hebrew, Persian, Mongolian and Russian have entered it (Ahmadian-Shalchi, 1999: 330). In 1910, under the Tsarist government, the Turkestan province had a population of 514,130, 616,3 houses, 2 churches, 41 mosques, 24 educational institutions, a library and 57 workshops or factories (cotton ginning and trading companies) (Ibid).

Since the independence of Kazakhstan, the Turkestan province has received close attention from the Kazakh authorities. For example, the Turkish Republic has contributed to the reconstruction of the tombs and has contributed to the budget of the Turkish-Kazakh University (as well as the construction of a hotel), as a sign of the new government's solution to the reconstruction, emphasizing the distinctive identity of the city. The Turkestan province is considered a source of ancient and cultural relics for the people of Kazakhstan. (Abol-Hasani, 1997: 10). So much so that it has now become one of the important cultural and spiritual centers of the Turkic-speaking peoples. About seventy thousand people now live in this province (Saghafi, 1992: 585).

### 4-3- Economic History



Turkestan has been a bridge between the East and the West and a passage for many explorers and immigrant tribes. Due to its location on the Silk Road trade route, this region was a center of trade between Asia and Europe and had abundant wealth and prestigious cities (such as Bukhara, Samarkand and Merv). The most important way of life for the people of Turkestan was trade and agriculture. Slaves, animal skins, wool, and dried fish were considered among the most important export items of the Turks (Ibn Hawqal, 1987: 210; Jihani, 1989: 183; Tha'alabi, 68; Ya'qubi, 1986: 53). Parts of Turkestan are extremely fertile for agriculture. The tools of production in Turkestan were plows, sickles, shovels, axes, and the like. The Turkmen of Turkestan have gained more skills and expertise than other tribes in pottery, weaving, and handicrafts. Turkmen carpets and felt have a very long history (Kutashua, 1970: 33, 61). The land of Turkestan has provided the opportunity for livestock breeders to spend most of the year migrating and wandering in search of better pastures. Irrigation with aqueducts is an important phenomenon that plays a major role in Turkestan agriculture. Goods exported from Turkestan: from Termez, soap and anqoza; from Bukhara, soft textiles, carpets, Tabarstani fabrics, horse saddles, sheep wool; from Khorezm, sable and sable skins, tanned horse hides and furs, melons, falcons, swords, shields; from Samarkand, wire-like textiles and large copper pots, paper (Wambri, 1958: 70); silk fabrics from Fergana and Asfijab of Turkish slaves, white textiles, made of goat wool (Ibn Hawqal, 1987: 210; Jihani, 1987: 183; Tha'alabi, 265; Barthold, 1999: 506-507). Slavery was a common practice in Turkestan, as it is stated: "The slaves from Turkestan first fall into Transoxiana, and their excess reaches other

places, and there is no slave like the Turk" (Istakhri, 226). Vamberi states that after buying the slaves, they were employed in the farms of Turkestan (Vamberi, 1958: 81). Among the customs and traditions of the Turkestan people, one can mention the Naqali, the dagger dance, and singing. (Sarli, 1985: 110).

#### 4-4- Cultural and Scientific History

Turkestan was the birthplace of great thinkers and the place of great genius and innovation, and the history of Islam is full of evidence that confirms the scientific greatness of its thinkers. Therefore, hadith scholars, commentators, jurists, historians and thinkers, philosophy, history, social sciences, poetry and literature, made Turkestan the focus of their research. People such as Tirmidhi, Bukhari, Al-Khwarizmi, Biruni, Ibn Sina, Zamakhshari, Al-Farabi, Sakaqi, Tabarsi and... were among the thinkers whose works and writings are still reflected in Islamic history and culture (Saghfi, 1992: 583; Sarli, 1985: 124-127).

Regarding the religion of the people of Turkestan, it has been mentioned that initially, water and soil were considered as a single god among the Turks. However, with the emergence of Zoroastrianism, Zoroastrianism spread in the Turkestan region. But after Alexander's conquests, the eastern regions of Iran remained separated from the western regions of Iran for a long time and were influenced by Buddhist and Indian culture. Shortly after the fall of the Oghuz Turkic Empire, the Manichaean religion spread widely among the Turks. However, shamanistic beliefs were also present, especially in the burial ceremonies of the Turks (Barthold, 1997: 23). Qazvini stated in this regard, "And the Turk is not a

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religion. Some worship stars, some worship fire, and some are Armenians, and some consider the Manichaean painter a prophet, and a pagan tribe, a group of sorcerers. And their profession is war and conflict, and Mars is the sign of the Turks" (Qazvini, 1994: 592). Islam first entered the region in the first century AH by Arab armies. Turkestan, especially Bukhara, was conquered in 53 AH during the command of Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad (Fray, 1969: 17). The first lasting successes of Islam among the Turks were achieved during the reign of the Samanids in the third and fourth centuries AH (Narshkhi, 1931: 35). During this period, the Samanids were the undisputed rulers of the civilized areas of present-day Russian Turkestan. During the Samanids' time, their main religion was Hanafi, and Bukhara was one of the centers of the Hanafi religion. Before the spread of Islam, Christianity also had followers among the Turks. The first Muslim Turkic state was called the Qarakhanids, a state that overthrew the Samanid state at the end of the fourth century AH and founded the first Muslim Turkic state in Transoxiana. Simultaneously with the rise of the Seljuks, the Hanafi school of thought became widespread among the Turks (Ibid, 88, 156). Therefore, Islam was considered the religious belief of the majority of its inhabitants until the Russian communist government took control of Turkestan. With the establishment of the communist government, the process of anti-Islamism began and thousands of mosques and religious schools were destroyed. During this period, Turkestan was divided and Muslims were repressed several times. Therefore, the anti-Islamism of the Bolsheviks could not eliminate Islam from the lives of the people of Turkestan, so that today the republics of Turkestan are

recovering their identity as part of a single community of Muslim countries.

### **Conclusion**

The province of Turkestan was of particular importance to the governments of the region, both in ancient and Islamic times, because it was considered the heart of Islam in geopolitical terms, so guarding and protecting Islamic characteristics was one of the priorities of the rulers of the region at the time. Turkestan was known as a center of cultural, commercial and social exchanges due to its geographical location, including its location on the Silk Road trade route. This region was a center of trade between Asia and Europe and had abundant wealth and prestigious cities such as Bukhara, Samarkand and Merv. The most important way of life for the people of Turkestan was trade and agriculture. The geographical location and biodiversity had provided the conditions for the development of agricultural products in this region. In addition, with the growth of agriculture, trade also enjoyed a significant growth in line with it. These characteristics brought many economic advantages.

In terms of cultural characteristics, with the arrival of Muslims in Turkestan in the first century AH and the encouragement of Muslim rulers, Islam spread day by day in this region. The Karakhanids founded the first Muslim Turkic state in Turkestan at the end of the 4th century AH, and with the support of Muslim states, including the Samanids and Seljuks, Islam became the dominant religion in this region. Even the anti-Islamic Bolsheviks in the 19th century could not eliminate Islam from the lives of the people of Turkestan. In addition, Turkestan was the birthplace of great

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scientists such as Bukhari, Al-Khwarizmi, Biruni, Ibn Sina, etc., whose works and writings are still reflected in Islamic history and culture. In terms of social and human geography, there is great ethnic and racial diversity in Turkestan. The people living in Turkestan spoke Turkish in terms of dialect and included various tribes such as: Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Tajiks, Kyrgyz, Turkmen, Arabs, Hindus, and Jews.

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