

T. I. Sultanov

AUTHORS AND AUTHORSHIP IN PERSIAN AND TURKIC HISTORICAL WRITINGS

Historical works written in the Turkic and Persian languages in the Middle Ages are manuscripts, and all have their authors. These authors report their names, nicknames or pen-names in the introduction or the colophon or at various places in the text of their work. The affirmation of authorship through mention of the name in the work was not merely the overriding tendency in the medieval Muslim historiography, but rather a traditional rule.

The author's name is usually preceded by the epithets and formulas of self-abasement which is traditional in Muslim literature of the period. These formulas commonly run as following: "this poor one", "this humble one", or "this incapable one", "this insignificant, sinful slave", "this despicable [person]", etc. As for Muslim names themselves, they consist of several components. The full name of an adult can contain five components: (i) *ism* — personal name, given at birth; (ii) *kunya* — name component, formed by adding to the name Arabic words *abū* ("father"), *ibn* ("son"), for example, Ibn Hishām (lit. "son of Hishām"); (iii) *nisba* — name component indicating place of birth or residence, for example, al-Samarqandī (inhabitant of Samarqānd); (iv) *laqab* — nickname, title; (v) *takhalluṣ* — pen-name. *Laqabs* and *takhalluṣes* are often hard to be deciphered or transliterated. They frequently contain social, professional or individual descriptions of their bearers or their families [1].

The numerous components in the name of a Muslim historian present difficulties for scholars. Not every author gives his full name, referring to himself in a shortened form and citing the most popular, often used part of his name. For a number of professional literary figures, their nickname or pen-name entirely replaced the personal or family names, so that certain Central Asian historians of the fifteenth to the nineteenth centuries are known to us only by their *takhalluṣ* or *laqab*, such as, for example, Shādī and Suhayla.

The practice of "signing" works (especially poetic ones) with solely the pen-name complicates the task of establishing the author's real name. The issue is also obscured by the frequent presence in the literary environment of several individuals with the same pen-name or *laqab*. On the other hand, there are known examples of literary figures who replaced one *takhalluṣ* with another at the wish of a patron or on their own whim. Furthermore, some literary professionals, such as Nawā'ī, Binā'ī, Ḥāfīz-i Tanīsh, employed two *laqabs*, and others had as many as

three *laqabs*, for example, Wāṣifī. And alternately, we sometimes know the family and personal name of a writer, but not his *takhalluṣ*. For instance, the *takhalluṣ* of Maḥmūd b. Walī, a professional historian of the seventeenth century is unknown. This makes it impossible to attribute the majority of the poetic and other works written by him, which have possibly survived up to the present day.

About many of the historians we know only what they tell of themselves in their own works. Information on them in writings composed by other authors is usually scarce. But even in their own works autobiographical data is rarely vast. As a rule, Muslim historians mention only their name or *laqab*. Much more frequent are cases when the author tells of his reasons for writing, his intentions, etc., but does not give his name or *laqab*, referring to himself simply as *rāqīm* ("writer") or *kamīna* ("most insignificant", "most humble servant") [2].

Many writings by medieval Muslim historians bear no author's name. But in total, the number of anonymous works is small in comparison with those signed. The majority of historical works were written on special order and contained a dedication which indicated the name, honorary title or social position of the individual to whom they were addressed. Under such circumstances, there was no reason for an author to conceal his name. The existence of anonymous works can be explained by same special conditions of manuscripts: the loss of introduction, colophon or other part of the book, which may have contained the author's name, carelessness or the arbitrary decision of a copyist, etc. [3]. Only in rare cases did the absence of an author's name reflect his own desire: if he was, for example, driven by reasons of personal security or the security of his family. Thus, the author of the *Tārīkh-i Shaybānī-khān*, in his own words, intentionally did not give his own name, or those of his father or grandfather, of whom he writes in his work, "for political reasons" [4].

Scholars of medieval literature in many cases succeed in attributing anonymous works. An older generation of Orientalists were successful in establishing the authors of works known to scholars by the conventional titles the "Anonymous Work of Iskander", "Anonymous Work of Shāhrukh", and so on. Recently, M. Kh. Abuseitova has established that the anonymous manuscript of a historical work, described in the Tashkent catalogue as *Tārīkh-i Shaybānī* [5], is actually a defective copy of a work by