

Vassaf al-Hazrat and Hamdallah Kazvini

Protégés of Rashid ad-Din and court historiographers of the Ilkhans

A. A. ARSLANOVA



Rashid ad-Din, a medieval Persian historian, was the founder of the so-called "Mongolian school" in historiography and an "ideologist" of the Mongolian state machinery. Everything necessary to translate such a grandiose literary project as the *Djami at-tavarikh* into reality was at his hand, namely; power, access to archives, help of the best experts on the history of different countries of the world, and enormous financial means. Thus, this extensive historical encyclopedia became the highest achievement of Muslim historiography of the Middle Ages, appearing around 1300, long before the creation of the so-called "worldwide histories" in Western Europe. It also raised the problem of the history of the five world nations, that is to say, it covered the whole world of that period – from Western Europe up to India and China.

The *Djami at-tavarikh* of Rashid ad-Din is known as the main source for all the compilers who appeared later. Some historians (Banakati, Khafiz-i Abru, "Anonymous of Iskender" and some other later historians) copied it completely or partly. This was not considered to be dishonourable at that time since the concept of plagiarism itself was regarded differently, and was equally alien to all medieval compilers, no matter whether they were Muslim, European or Chinese. Borrowing was practised as a usual creative method and even possessed some literary canons. Sometimes even Rashid ad-Din himself made use of this method.

Being in the vanguard of science, the great *vezir* showed himself to be a far-sighted and wise person, as an administrator and as a scholar. The district of Rab'i Rashidi in Tabriz, which he had built, became the centre of all scholarship and knowledge of that time, a sort of academy of sciences. Many scientists from different countries, such as China, India, Byzantium and Egypt, were invited to live and work there. Many people arrived of their own accord, having heard about the glory and importance of that centre, and remained there to live and work. In spite of the fact that the existence of this international community of

scholars was rather short, Shirin Bayani, a researcher from Iran, believes that it has left its trace in the "dissemination of knowledge and culture of Iran, as well as in education of scientists".¹

The school of historiography created by Rashid ad-Din in a way reflected a standpoint of the Ilkhans, authorized and approved by them. Those of his subordinates who displayed considerable talent as historians were given his personal support and the right to participate in "presentation" of their historical works to the ruling elite. In this connection, it is necessary to note among his contemporaries prominent historians like Vassaf and Kazvini, each of whom, nevertheless, treated their work and the service of their patron quite differently.

The first of these was Shihab ad-Din (or Sharaf ad-Din?) 'Abdallah 'Sharaf' Shirazi, son of 'Izz ad-Din Fadlallah, known as Vassaf, or Vassaf al-Hadrat ("His Majesty's panegyrist", or "court panegyrist") (663-735/1264-1334) came from Fars, and was an intellectual, a man of letters and a poet. He served as a tax collector for the Mongolian government and was under the protection of the mighty *vezir* Rashid ad-Din, and later of his son and successor, Giyas ad-Din. Hence he had a clear view of the financial system in Iran and it was only natural that he placed special emphasis on it in his work. We do not have any other biographical information about him.

Vassaf began writing his composition, *Tadjziyat al-amsar va tazdjiyat al-a'asar* ("Division of the areas and passing of the times"), usually called *Tarikh-i Vassaf*, in *Sha'ban* 699 (22 April-20 May 1300) as a continuation of the chronicle of Ala ad-Din Djuveyni titled *Tarikh-i djahangusha*. The first part of *Tarikh-i Vassaf* covers the period of the rule of Khubilay-khan and Timur-khan and history of the Hulaguid state till 1284; the second part gives the history of Fars starting from its conquest by the Seljuks up to the Lurs rebellion in 1291; the third part is a continuation of history of the Hulaguids until the death of Gazan-khan; the fourth part is a history of the rule of Uljaytu-khan. Sixteen years after the presentation of his work to the sultan, Vassaf added one more part, the fifth part (finished in 1328), which contains a review of the history of Chingiz-khan, of the Djuchids and the Chagataids and also the continuation of the history of the Hulaguids until 723 (AD 1323), mainly a history of the rule of Abu-Sa'id to 728 (AD 1328).

Vassaf's main sources appear to have been works by Djuveyni and Rashid ad-Din, official documents (particularly from the financial department) and, probably, spoken tradition and stories of eyewitnesses. V. V. Bartold pointed out that Vassaf had made use of the works by Rashid ad-Din, but sometimes his account of the events which had been described earlier, was given in a different way.² Specifically, when describing the damage caused to the economy of China by the Mongol conquest, he supplemented his narration with considerable new information.

1. 498، دین و دولت در ایران عهد مغول، تألیف دکتر شیرین بیانی (اسلامی ندوشن).

مرکز نشر دانشگاهی، تهران، در سه جلد. جلد دوم ۱۳۷۱.

2. В. В. Бартольд, *Туркестан*, Tashkent 1922, 96-97.



The great book written by Vassaf is well known to scholars and is considered to be the most valuable narrative source for the study of the social-political history of the period, since it gives a broad picture of life in Iran during the period of the rule of the Ilkhans in the second half of the thirteenth and the first quarter of fourteenth centuries. Although it is well known, E. A. Polyakova has good reason to state that, because of its "curious", artificially elevated style, *Tarikh-i Vassaf* is one of the most poorly studied literary monuments of medieval historiography.

Much attention was given to *Tarikh-i Vassaf* by d'Ohsson in the review of sources for the first volume of his *Histoire des Mongols*. D'Ohsson worked with the manuscript from the Royal Library in Paris and noticed that Vassaf followed the same plan as Ala ad-Din Djuveyni, whom he praised so much, and Vassaf himself declared that his history should begin where the history of his predecessor stopped. Actually, Chapter VI depicts Hulagu's expedition to Baghdad, which immediately followed the conquest of the country of the Isma'ilites. D'Ohsson was quite right to recognize the trustworthiness of the Persian author. He wrote: "Vassaf [...] lets us know beforehand that he is speaking about events, the information of which he has got by word of mouth from extremely trustworthy people". As noted above, the date of AH 699 (AD 1300) is given in the preface, and the work also contains praise to sultan Ghazan (1295-1304), a great-grandson of Hulagu. Vassaf added a chapter describing how, on *Mukharram* 24, 712 (2 June 1312), he had the honour of presenting his historical research to sultan Uldjaytu, the successor of Gazan. He wrote that it had been written within a year, and at that time consisted of four parts. It was written under the protection of *vezir* Rashid, the author of *Djami at-tavarikh*. Vassaf described how, after having waited for this favour for a long time, he presented his work to the sovereign in the city of Sultaniya. Sultan Uldjaytu expressed his wish to listen to it and repeatedly interrupted the reading by asking questions about the meaning of this or that term or metaphor. The explanations were given to him either by the *vezir*, the chief *kadi*, or the author himself. Finally, Vassaf read the ode in which he praised the city of Sultaniya. The sultan, who had expressed his approval during the reading so many times, was so enchanted by his talent that he placed one of his own garments on Vassaf, and gave him the title of *Vassaf-ul-khazret*, or "His Majesty's panegyrist". Vassaf devoted a whole chapter to this royal reception, where his pride was fully satisfied.

V. V. Bartold noticed that Vassaf set out to flatter not only the sultan, but also his great patron, by comparing the latter with the greatest theological authorities or "revivalists of faith" of different epochs, such as Omar bin Abd al-'Aziz, Shafi'i, Ash'ari, Gazali, and Fahr ad-Din Razi. He also called him "a guide of truth, world peace and faith" (*Rashid al-Khakk va-d-Dunya va-d-Din*), or "a guide of state and faith" (*Rashid ad-Daulya va-d-Din*).³ It is obvious, by the way, that in his narration Vassaf preferred to keep silent about Rashid ad-Din's participation in palace intrigues, especially if it seemed to him improper.

³ В. В. Бартольд, Рец. на книгу: E. Blochet, *Introduction à l'Histoire des Mongols de Fadl Allah Rashid ed-Din* (1910), Соч. Vol. 8. Moscow 1973, 290.

The book is written in an extremely poetic, pompous and catastrophically florid style which was very popular at that time (see, for instance, the works of Nersavi and Ata Malik Djuveyni). The language is so pretentious, even bizarre, with many metaphors, poetical images, allegories, chronograms, quibbles, poetical riddles and quotations, that some parts of the text defy understanding. There are so many Arabic and Persian verses as well as dicta in the text that it makes the process of reading very complicated and the reader constantly has to overcome these difficulties. This literary work is nevertheless considered to be the best example of Persian eloquence, and it became a model for subsequent historiography. In this regard, Djuveyni's *Tarikh-i djahangusha* served Vassaf not only as a direct source of historical data, but also as a sort of stylistic example. This is remarkable, since within easy reach of his hand he had the work of his patron, written in "a good, simple, but figurative and expressive Persian, alien to florid and bizarre style".⁴ Rashid ad-Din's work seems to have been too innovative for the period. To be objective, Djuveyni's work completely satisfied the requirements of literary etiquette of that time, "depending on which reality was depicted not as it really was, but as it had to be according to the ideas of the epoch". E. A. Polyakova is right in saying that it was this etiquette that determined the selection of facts, and the author's interpretation of events as well as characteristics of historic figures. The task of the author was not to bring his narration nearer to reality, but to select linguistic standards in order to express his ideas about different events and personalities. Djuveyni's chronicle combines conditional, epic, generalized images and pictures with realistic details and sketches which gives brightness to his etiquette-bound narration. As for Vassaf, he had shown even greater adherence to specific details than Rashid ad-Din, who, reiterating Djuveyni, complemented him with the facts. Nevertheless, Vassaf's fascination with concrete details does not make him simplify the language. It is needless to say that between different parts of the chronicle there is a significant difference in verbal design, and the philosophical reflections of Vassaf are far more difficult than his narration about actual observations.⁵ One cannot, however, forget an apt remark made by D'Ohsson, who considered the florid style of Djuveyni "to be not his merit, but only an unpleasant bombast (*trop ampoulé*), and as for the attitude to these events, we can only wish the author had been more veracious in colouring the events and had more order in his narration".

Edward G. Brown, in his *Literary History of Persia*, agrees with the opinion expressed by Rieu that Vassaf's chronicle contains an authentic contemporary record of an important period, "but its undoubted value is in some degree diminished by the want of method in its arrangement, and still more by the highly artificial character and tedious redundancy of its style"⁶: "Uljaytu, we are told was

⁴ I. P. Petrushevskiy, *Введение - Рашид-ад-дин. Сборник летописей*. Пер. с перс. Л. А. Хетагурова, отв. ред. В. В. Семенова, Vol 1. Moscow-Leningrad 1952, 23.

⁵ Е. А. Полякова, „Некоторые сведения о «Тарих-и Вассаф»" *Общественные науки в Узбекистане* 8 (1978): 45-46.

⁶ A. J. Arberry, *Classical Persian Literature*. London 1994, 160.

unable to understand the passages read aloud to him by the author on the occasion of his audience [...] We could forgive the author more readily if his work were less valuable as an original authority on the period (1257-1328) of which it treats, but in fact it is as important as it is unreadable...."⁷ English-speaking scholars have paid special attention to the fact that though *Tarikh-i Vassaf* was written later than Rashid ad-Din's work, first and foremost, it appears to be the continuation of the *Tarikh-i jahangusha* written by Djuveyni.

Later V. V. Bartold also noted that Vassaf's composition was a direct continuation of Djuveyni's work and that it began with a story about the death of Munke, but the story about the rule of Khubilay differed substantially from the narration by Rashid ad-Din, and that is why "in some cases it is difficult to decide where the truth is".⁸ At the same time, in the fifth book written by Vassaf, which gives the ending of the Mongol history and also contains the chapter about the Djuchids and Chagatayids, "the author adheres to Rashid ad-Din's narration even though he himself had presented the same events differently in the first book".⁹

A lithographic publication of Vassaf's work, with a glossary of archaic and specific terms and expressions which overfill the book, was published in Bombay in 1853. In 1856 Hammer-Purgshtal published his first book of the text with a German translation, a beautiful edition published in Vienna. Further publication could not be continued, however, because of the death of this orientalist.¹⁰

In 1941 some extracts from the *Tarikh-i Vassaf* were published in a two-volume work, *The collection of materials on the history of the Golden Horde* [original in Russian].¹¹ The edition used was made from the lithographic publication (1853), with reference to the edition published by Hammer-Purgshtal (1856), as well as the manuscript from the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (ms C 384).

We will now turn to the other prominent historian who owed his career both as an official and historian to Rashid ad-Din, Hamdallah bin Abi Bakr bin Ahmad bin Nasr Mustaufi Kazvini (born in Kazvin about 680/1281, died 750/1349-1350). Little is known about the life of this dignitary, historian, geographer and poet, but for some short pieces of information which he gives in his work. He was descended from the old and noble Arabic family of Mustaufi, members of which had been holding posts in controlling the finances of Kazvin *vilayat* since the eleventh century. Blochet wrote that Kazvini's great-grandfather, Amin ad-Din Nasr, considered his family to descend from Hurr ibn Yezid Riyahi, who had performed the functions of *mustaufi* (the tax collector) of Iraq, but later he led an ascetic way of life and was killed by Mongols during their invasion in Iran. His brother, Zayn

⁷ E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*. Vol. III, London 1902, 67-68.

⁸ Бартольд, *Туркестан*, 97.

⁹ Бартольд, *Туркестан*, 97.

¹⁰ Н. М. Elliot. *Указ. соч.*, 25-26.

¹¹ *Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды*. Т. II. Извлечения из персидских сочинений, собранные В. Г. Тизенгаузеном и обработанные А. А. Ромаскевичем и С. Л. Волиным. Moscow-Leningrad 1941.

ad-Din Muhammad ibn Tadj ad-Din, filled the post of *na'ib-i divan-i vizarat* and was an associate of Rashid ad-Din. Probably it was this brother who introduced Hamdallah into the literary circle under the direct guidance of the mighty *vezir*. Browne adds the words of Hamdallah Kazvini that "from his youth upwards [he] eagerly cultivated the society of men of learning", especially that of Rashid ad-Din, had frequent scientific debates, especially on history, and though he had not been trained as a historian, he decided to write a short general history in his free time.¹²

It is known that Hamdallah Kazvini was a close friend of Rashid ad-Din, he considered the latter to be his tutor, and was under his patronage. After the murder of Sa'ad ad-Din Saudji, when Rashid ad-Din became independent in management, he employed Kazvini (about 711/1311) to be in charge of financial affairs of the Kazvin, Abhar and Zendjan regions and also of both Tarums (Tari-mayn). It seems that Hamdallah Kazvini is also obliged to him for his work on compiling historical and historical-geographical descriptions of the Moslem world. Three of his works have survived, namely; *Tarikh-i guzide* ("Selected history"), *Zafar-name* ("A book of victory"), and *Nuzhat'ul-kulub* ("Enjoyment of heart"). The first two books are on history, and the third on geography.

His compilation of general history, *Tarikh-i guzide*, was finished in 730/1329-1330 and was dedicated to Khodja Giyas ad-Din Muhammad Rashidi, Rashid ad-Din's son and successor. The composition is a beautiful piece written in an unsophisticated, clear style, just like *Tabakat-i nasiri* written by Djuzdjani, or Rashid's own *Djami at-tavarikh*. So, as we see, both styles - sophisticated and simple - existed at one and the same time. *Tarikh-i guzide* is based, mainly, on the plan and information of the second volume of *Djami at-tavarikh*, as well as on some original documents. According to V. V. Bartold, Kazvini came from a bureaucratic family, "and probably they had been keeping some of the documents of preceding centuries".¹³ Besides, he supplemented his work with information from other historians. In the preface to his book, Hamdallah Kazvini enumerated about two dozen sources.

This work consists of the preface, introduction (*fatikha*) and six large chapters (*babs*). Chapter 4 narrates the dynasties of the Moslem period, beginning from the Samanids to the Mongols (the Saffarids, Samanids, Gaznevids, Gurids, Deylemits, Seldjukids, Khorezmshakhs, Atabeks, Isma'ilits, Kara-kitays of Kerman, the rulers of Lur, the Mongols). The twelfth section of Chapter 4 gives a brief history of the Mongolian khans in Iran; Chapter 6 gives a detailed description of Kazvin, the native town of the author. The narration goes to the year 1329. Of no small importance also are some sections of Chapter 5 containing biographies of prominent people, in particular, biographies of many Persian poets.¹⁴

¹² Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*, 87.

¹³ В. В. Бартольд, *Хранение документов в государствах мусульманского востока*. Соч. Vol. 8., 355.

¹⁴ Н. Д. Миклухо-Маклай, *Указ.соч.*, 59.

Afterwards the author continued his narration up to the year 742/1341-1342, and his son, Zein ad-Din, whose biography is absolutely unknown, in an addendum, described as an eyewitness the events in Iran during the years 742-794 (1341/2-1391/2), which culminated in Timur's conquest. Many of the subsequent compilers made use of this continuation, primarily Abd-ar-Razzak Samarkandi, a successor of Rashid ad-Din, and Mirkhond (probably with the help of Hafiz-i Abru).¹⁵

Blochét, in his well-known work, *Introduction à l'Histoire des Mongols de Fadl Allah Rashid ed-Din*, draws attention to the fact that Kazvini's attitude to the patronage of his patron was not simple, and argues that he did everything not to make this fact widely known:

"Though the author says nothing in his preface and confines himself to mentioning his friends' support in this project, we can believe that Rashid ad-Din had given his consent, if not inspired him, since the basis of the chronicle written in verse by Hamd Allah is a description of Mongol history. Rashid could not officially involve anyone in writing such a work as was given to Kashani by Gazan, but it seems that Hamd Allah was near Rashid long before the History had been completed; his relations with the vazir and his son Giyas ad-Din, to whom later he dedicated his *Tarikh-i guzide*, show well enough that Rashid was aware of the project of his client; and obviously it was precisely these circumstances that forced Kazvini to be more restrained and not to acknowledge the fact that he was much obliged to his famous predecessor, since in his poetical history Hamd Allah gives uncertain information when writing that his sources were the stories about Persian and Mongolian chapters [...] It is certain that Hamd Allah knew about the viability of his undertaking; he realized that in several centuries his poetry would not cause any enthusiasm at all, and it is generally known that he stopped his composition when he had done two-thirds of it and simply wrote a short history of the world to 730 in prose. [...] The manuscripts are not rare in European libraries."¹⁶

In 1873 Hamdallah Kazvini's *Tarikh-i guzide* was edited by Melgunov, but it has not been published. *Tarikh-i guzide* was published in facsimile in London in two volumes, with an introduction by E. G. Browne, in memory of Gibb.¹⁷ In the first volume, published in 1910, there is a facsimile copy of a rather accurate manuscript of the year 857/1453,¹⁸ which also contains an *addendum* of the history of the Muzaffarid dynasty compiled by Mahmud Kutubi in approximately 1420. The second volume appeared in 1913 and contained a brief English translation and indices.¹⁹ In the preface to this edition, Browne stated that a lesser value

¹⁵ Сборник материалов, относящихся к истории Золотой Орды, 91.

¹⁶ Blochét, *Introduction*, 107.

¹⁷ *The Ta'rikh-i-guzida or "Select History" of Hamdu'llah Mustawfi-i-Qazvini*, ed. E. G. Browne, Vol. 1. Leiden 1910.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 88.

¹⁹ *The Ta'rikh-i-guzida or "Select History" of Hamdullah Mustawfi-i-Qazvini*, ed. E. G. Browne, Text by R. A. Nicholson, Vol. 2. London 1913.

should be given to the *Tarikh-i Vassaf* as a composition, compared with the works of Djuveyni, Rashid ad-Din and Vassaf, even though it was written only two years later than *Tarikh-i Vassaf*. As well as Banakati's work, it is written following the pattern of Rashid ad-Din's work, to whom both Hamdullah and Fahri owe their inspiration and whom the former calls his 'blessed master-martyr'.

A. A. Romaskevitch and S. L. Volin, the compilers of *The collection of materials on the history of the Golden Horde* (1941), considered that, in spite of being rather early, the manuscript which formed the basis for E. G. Brown's facsimile publication in 1910–1913 abounded in lacunas and errors. Because of this, the text of the translated fragments was given according to a manuscript (recopied in 813/1410–11²⁰) from the Leningrad State University (ms. N. 153), and a manuscript of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences (ms. S 501, previously 578a).²¹ In the introductory article to the translation, the compilers wrote:

In the manuscript N 153 (from the Leningrad State University), mentioned above, *Tarikh-i-guzide* is followed by the description of the events that happened in 725–744 (=1334–1344), compiled by Hamdallah Kazvini himself and written by him after finishing his chronicle in verse *Zafar-name*, which had survived in one manuscript of the British Museum no. 2833 and is inaccessible for us. This narration comes abruptly to an end and it is obvious that it is not finished. It seems that the author was going to add it to *Zafar-name* but not to *Tarikh-i-guzide*. However in the copy of Hamdallah Kazvini's son this continuation, obviously, had already been added to *Tarikh-i-guzide*, since he referred to the continuation written by his father.

Zeyn ad-Din, son of Hamdallah Kazvini, wrote the following continuation which embraced the events in Iran over the period of 742–794 (1341–1392). The author describes the events in the North-East Iran as an eyewitness. When describing the events of this period, many subsequent compilers made use of the information given in these two continuations, among them Abd-ar-razzak Samarkandi, the successor of Rashid ad-Din, and Mirkhond (probably due to Khafiz-I Abru).

In 1960, Abd al-Khuseyn Nava'i published the text of *Tarikh i-guzide* in Teheran based on six manuscripts, including the one used by Brown.

In relation to this work by Kazvini, I would like to note that in the library of Khazan State University there is an incomplete manuscript copy of *Tarikh-i guzide* in poor condition with a press-mark F-338 (2356), which was probably copied in the eighteenth century. *Fatikha* and the beginning of *bab I* are missing and it stops

²⁰ Тагирджанов Описание таджикских и персидских рукописей Восточного отдела библиотеки ЛГУ. Vol. 1. История, биографии, география, Leningrad 1962, 32; Хамдаллах Мустауфи Казвини, *Зайл-и тарих-и гузида* (дополнение к «Избранной истории», Вступ. ст., пер. с перс., приме. И указатели М. Д. Кязимова и В. З. Пириева, Ваку 1986, 81.

²¹ Н. Д. Миклухо-Маклай, *Некоторые персидские и таджикские исторические, биографические и географические рукописи Института востоковедения АН СССР. Ученые записки института востоковедения*, Vol. 16. Moscow-Leningrad 1958, 237–238.

in the middle of *fasl* 6 of *bab* VI. The copyist is unknown. This copy is mentioned in the reference books of Story²² and Bregel.²³

The second historical work of Hamdallah Kazvini is his chronicle in verse *Zafar-name* ("Book of the victories"), embracing a period of eight and a half centuries, and consisting of 75,000 *beyts*, written as a completion of Firdausi's legendary and historic epic, *Shah-name*. It was finished in 735/1334-1335, that is five years after *Tarikh-i guzide*. The only surviving manuscript had been preserved in the British Museum (ms. 2833). It was recopied in Shiraz in 807/1405, and was bought in Persia in 1885 by S. Cherrill for the British Museum. *Zafar-name* is valuable especially for its factual accuracy and in the third part it gives the interpretation of Mongol history to the time of Abu Sa'id.²⁴ According to Brown, *Zafar-name* begins with a description of life of the Prophet Muhammad and goes to the time of the life of the author, that is, to the years of 732/1331-1332, when Abu Sa'id was still in power. Almost half (30,000) of the *beyts* are dedicated to the Mongols. The author tells us that he was 40 years of age when he started writing his book, and he had been working on it for 15 years, so he was probably born around 680/1281-1282. In the opinion of Rieu, it is impossible to ignore the historical value of this work since the author is very accurate about the facts and dates. To illustrate, he gives a vivid description of a mass slaughter committed by the Mongols in Kazvin, from information apparently partly supplied by his great-great-grandfather, Amin Nasr Mustaufi, who was 93 at that time.²⁵

Carl Yahn had a very high opinion of the work of Hamdallah Kazvini, and considered that it deserved much greater attention from scholars, since it gives valuable information concerning not only the early Turkic and Mongolian period and the history of Chingiz-khan, but also concerning the late period of the Ilkhans.²⁶ Abd al-Huseyn Nava'i thought the fixation of pronunciation and writing of Mongol words and names to be of great importance in the given work of Kazvini.²⁷

Apart from the historical works mentioned above, Hamdallah Kazvini wrote a well-known book on cosmography and geography called *Nuzhat al-kulub* ("Enjoyment of the hearts"). Kazvini tells us this was written in 740/1339-1340, that is, five years after finishing *Zafar-name*, on request of some of his friends, who had strong desire for the book on geography to appear in Persian language.

Of special value is the third part of this work, which contains a detailed geographical description of Iran and the state of the Hulaguids. Having used assessment lists (*daftars*) from the financial department, the author gives important

²² Ч. А. Стори, *Указ. соч.* Ч. I. [245], 331.

²³ Ю. Э. Брегель, *Указ. соч.* [2], 370.

²⁴ Стори, *Указ. соч.* 327-328.

²⁵ E. G. Browne, *A Literary History of Persia*. Vol. III. The Tartar Dominion (1265-1502), Cambridge 1951, 90.

²⁶ K. Yahn, *Study on supplementary Persian sources for the Mongol History of Iran. Aspects of Altaic civilization. Proceedings of the fifth meeting of the Permanent Conference held at Indiana University, June 4-9*, ed. D. Sinor, Vol. 23, Bloomington 1962, 200.

²⁷ Абд ал-Хусейн Нава'и. *Указ. соч.* С. ИБ.

information about the administrative division of Iran at that time, and about the tax assessment in its districts.²⁸

In the collection of articles dedicated to the jubilee of Baron Rosen (1897), V. V. Bartold praised *Nuzhat al-kulub*, but Rieu was the first to draw attention to the importance of this work as a historical source. John Andrew Boyle believed Kazvini to be very accurate about facts and dates, and his book useful for the study of history of the Mongol period.²⁹

According to I. P. Petrushevskiy, *Nuzhat al-kulub* significantly differs from similar treatises written by Arabian geographers of the thirteenth century, who generally compiled the information from earlier authors. In contrast, Hamdallah Kazvini gave out-dated, second-hand information very seldom. The main part of this work gives material that is authentic and contemporary to the author.³⁰

The four historians, whom we have just mentioned – Djuveyni, Rashid ad-Din, Vassaf and Kazvini – are usually combined in one group because of their shared ideological and political views. Certainly, they expressed the pro-Mongolian ideas of the high-ranking nobility, who supported the centralistic traditions of the old-Iranian state system. Actually, each of them, in his own way, followed the orders of their Mongolian rulers. And undoubtedly, it is due to them that historiography of this period can be called one of the most unique and significant phenomena in world history. Its advantage, first and foremost, is in the fact that, during a short period of time, they gave to the world great, voluminous and authentic historical works which are the only ones of their kind.

²⁸ В. В. Бартольд, *Указ. соч.*, 99.

²⁹ J. A. Boyle, "Some thoughts on the sources for the Il-Khanid period of Persian history," *Iran* 12 (1974), 186.

³⁰ И. П. Петрушевский, *Земледелие и аграрные отношения в Иране в XIII-XIV вв.* Ленинград 1960, 16.