Journal of Al-Tamaddun, Vol. 19 (1), 2024, 235-246
https://doi.org/10.22452/JAT.vol19no1.17

Absattar Haji Derbisali and the Importance of His Works for the Development of Islamic Studies in Kazakhstan

Dinara Zhanabergenova* & Nurlan Kairbekov**

Abstract

Religion is an essential element in the existence of society and the culture of the people. It embodies universal human values and principles for the realisation of public relations. From the beginning of Kazakhstan's independence to the present day, the issue of the spread of different religions in Kazakhstan, including Islam, remains relevant. The research aims to study the activity and creativity of Absattar Haji Derbisali in the context of the development of Islamic studies in Kazakh society. General scientific methods, the method of analysis and synthesis, as well as special historical methods: ideographic, historical-genetic, problem-chronological, and comparative-historical, were used. As a result, it was possible to describe the main stages in the biography of the scholar Absattar Haji Derbisali. The significance of his works and achievements in the field of Islamic studies and its dissemination in Kazakhstan were described. The study established that it was Absattar Haji Derbisali who was the founder of the Kazakh School of Arabic Studies. This indicates that the spread of Islam in the territory of Kazakhstan took place based on the approaches and methods of this scholar. It has been established that Islamology was little explored and did not develop in Kazakh society. Based on this it was proved that the role of Absattar Haji Derbisali in the development of Islamic studies was extremely high, which had a positive impact on the development of the independent state. It has been established that his approaches to the management and organization of society are a priority since they provide for the interests of various religious cells. The practical value of the study lies in the fact that its results can be used in the development of training programmes for Islamic studies or in the deepening of knowledge about the peculiarities of the development of Islam in the culture of Kazakhstan.

Keywords: Religion, Arabist, personal archival material, mosque, culture

Introduction

Kazakhstan's independence in 1991 brought many changes and challenges to society. One such challenge is the revival of Kazakhstan's cultural heritage. This process is quite complex, but at the same time of the highest priority. After all, culture and customs are the components on which a nation's identity is based. Although 31 years have passed since Kazakhstan's independence, the question of restoring the identity of Kazakh society is still relevant. In this context, Kazakh scholars who have explored the cultural heritage of the Kazakh people have played an important role. One of them was Absattar Haji Derbisali, whose work focused on a wide range of areas related to religion, politics, art and science.[1] He was particularly noted for the restoration and dissemination of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan. The study of Islamic culture and its influence on the formation and activities of the state are topical issues in Kazakh society today.[2] Therefore, it is necessary to determine the role and place of Islam in Kazakhstan, including a description of the universal values of Islamic civilisation in this country.[3]

* Dinara Zhanabergenova, Department of Religious Studies, L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, 010008, 2 Satpayev Str., Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan. Email: zhanabergenova_dina@outlook.com.
** Nurlan Kairbekov (corresponding author), Department of Religious Studies, L. N. Gumilyov Eurasian National University, 010008, 2 Satpayev Str., Astana, Republic of Kazakhstan. Email: kairbekovnurlan@yahoo.com.
[1] Mandaville, Peter. (2020), *Islam and politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.
[2] Bazaluk, Oleg (2019), "Plato's traditions in modern educational theories," *Analele Universitatii din Craiova, Seria Filozofie*, Vol. 43, No. 1, pp. 5-20.
[3] Suroso, Amat, Hendriarto, Prasetyono, Karika, Galuh Nashrulloh, Pattiasina, Petrus Jacob and Aslan, Aslan (2021), "Challenges and opportunities towards Islamic cultured generation: Socio-cultural analysis," *Linguistics and Culture Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, pp. 180-194.

Determining the relevance of the study of Absattar Haji Derbisali's contribution, the current negative phenomena in the information society are increasing due to the processes of globalization.[4] On this basis, secularization occurs, which distorts established institutions, e.g., the value of material goods increases over spiritual goods, resulting in a reformed society. Religion is no longer an instrument by which society can be governed.[5] Nevertheless, it must remain the basis for the realization of socio-political life in modern society. Thus, the relevance of the research is also determined by the fact that the study of the experience of the religious life of Absattar Haji Derbisali, as well as his scientific developments, allows to express the contribution of the figure in the spread of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan and contributes to express the features of the influence of religion in the modern information Kazakh society.

The problem of the study is to describe the formation of Derbisali's worldview and outlook, which were significantly influenced by his family, education, and level of upbringing. The research of the described problem implies a thorough analysis of Derbisali's career and his significance in Kazakhstan. Considering the topicality of this issue in scientific doctrine, several studies have been devoted to Islamic studies and Islam in general in Kazakhstan. However, there are still no works aimed at expressing the influence of Derbisali's activity on the development of the above-mentioned components. This shows that there is an objective need for a study aimed at analyzing the scholar's scientific biography. Erekesheva,[6] Clement,[7] and Benussi[8] have characterized the peculiarities of Islam and Islamic studies in post-Soviet states. The findings are useful to be applied in describing the difficulties encountered by Absattar Haji Derbisali during his activity. Aziz et al.[9] and Dianto[10] focused on the general principles and phases of Islamic studies. The researchers revealed ways of spreading Islam, particularly through science and educational institutions.[11] The findings should be used to compare their approaches with the activities of Absattar Haji Derbisali. Muminov[12] studied the work of Derbisali and his main achievements in the field of Islamic studies in general. The results of the study can be applied to eradicate the influence of the scholar's activity on the development of Islam in Kazakhstan.

Based on the above, the research aims to investigate the role of Absattar Haji Derbisali's creations in the process of the restoration of Islam and the spread of Islamic studies in Kazakh society. The following tasks were formed: to determine the main stages in the career of Derbisali; to describe his achievements in education; to express the connection between his activities and Islamic studies; to investigate the dynamics of the development of Islam in Kazakhstan and Derbisali's role in this process.

Materials and Methods

---

[4] Tanjung, Ellisa Fitri and Harfiani, Rizka (2020), "The role of Islamic religious education in overcoming the negative influence of technology on students SMK Muhammadiyah," Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies, Vol. 1, No. 1, pp. 532-542; Nurzannah, Nurzannah, Ginting, Nurman and Setiawan, Hasrian Rudi (2020), "Implementation of integrated quality management in the Islamic education system," Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies.

[5] Jeong, Moo-jin, Seo, In-seok, Chung and Jun-ki (2023), "Evolution and Progress of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: A Glimpse into the Future," *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, pp. 101-116.

[6] Erekesheva, Laura (2020, "Knowledge, culture, orientalism," *Founder of Ancient History*, Almaty: Kazak Universiteti, pp. 52-62.

[7] Clement, Victoria (2021), "Turkmen Islam" and the paucity of real pluralism in Turkmenistan's post-soviet nation-building," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 4, pp. 70-84.

[8] Benussi, Matteo (2021), "The golden cage: heritage, (ethnic) Muslimness, and the place of Islam in post-Soviet Tatarstan," *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 49, No. 4-5, pp. 314-330.

[9] Aziz, Azlisham Abdul, Mamat, Mohd Nor., Salleh, Daud Mohamed., Abdullah, Syarifah Fadylawaty Syed and Nordin, Mohd Norazmi (2021), "An analysis of systematic literature review on the development of Islamic oriented instruments," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, Vol. 27, No. 1, pp. 3222-3233.

[10] Dianto, Dianto (2021), "Character building in new normal Islamic education," Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, pp. 264-269.

[11] Kunanbayeva, Salima (2016), "Educational internationalisation as a major strategy of the Kazakhstani system of education," *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research,* Vol. 11, No. 11, pp. 7272-7277.

[12] Muminov, A. K. (2022), "The great researcher of Islamic civilization," *Kazakhstan and the Eastern World: Past, Present and Future*, No. 1, pp. 160-166.

Based on the method of analysis, the research was divided into its general object into constituent elements with distinctive features. In this context, such components as Islamic studies, religion, and the activities of Derbisali were expressed. Their structure and properties were analyzed, which made it possible to identify the links between them. In addition, the analysis method was used in the study of the content of the scientific works of Derbisali. The method of synthesis was applied in combining the components separated during the analysis. Based on this method, the article formed its object, as well as described the dependence between the activities of Derbisali and the development of Islamic studies. The comparative-historical method involved comparing different historical phenomena and highlighting common and distinctive features in them. This method was applied in the study of the peculiarities of the spread of Islamic studies before and after the independence of Kazakhstan. In addition, it was used to study the biography of Derbisali and the main stages of his activities aimed at the development of Islam in Kazakhstan.

The ideographic method was used to express the evaluation of individual properties of various historical events and scientifically formed facts. In the study, this method was necessary to describe the process of gaining independence from Kazakhstan and the restoration of its distinctive culture and traditions. Based on the ideographic method, the main stages in the career of Derbisali as a prominent Kazakhstani figure were revealed. Furthermore, the historical-genetic method of research was used. Its significance consisted in the step-by-step description of the features, tasks, and changes of the facts and circumstances under study during their historical development. Thus, this method was necessary to interpret the development of Islamic studies at different historical stages in Kazakhstan and to express the role of Islam in the culture of its people.

The problem-chronological method was used to divide the broad topic of the study into isolated narrower issues, which were studied in chronological order. Based on this method, the study identified separately the stage of Derbisali's education and his professional activities. In both cases, attention was paid to the impact of these processes on the development of Islamic studies. The archival materials used in this study include the personal files of Derbisali;[13] a study by A. Derbisali[14] on Arabic literature in Morocco; his mentor Zavadovskiy,[15] Doctor of Philology. The full set of Derbisali's file from the archival collection of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences has been taken into consideration. The chronological span spans the period of studies from 1969 to 1975. The personal file of Derbisali consists of 102 pages, each page numbered in pencil. The study of the Arabic-language literature of Morocco was analyzed separately. This dissertation consists of an introduction, 3 chapters, conclusions, appendices, and a bibliography. It is preserved in the library collection of the Institute of Sociology of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Results

The Life and Academic Legacy of Absattar Haji Derbisal

The study of the role of a particular subject in the process of development and dissemination of various categories in society presupposes the study of his biography. Therefore, it is necessary to consider his biography in the course of describing the impact of Absattar Derbisali's activities on the dissemination of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan. Such an approach aims to reveal the peculiarities of this person's work and the sources of his origins. Absattar Derbisali was born on September 15, 1947 in the village of Akbiyk (the former name of this village was Kuibyshev collective farm in the Tulkubassy district of the South Kazakhstan oblast). Describing this scientist, it should be noted that his activity was so wide that he could be called the founder of the Kazakh School of Oriental Studies, a member of the International Academy of Sciences of Arabic, a member of the National Academy of Sciences of Kazakhstan, a member of the Union of Writers and Journalists of Kazakhstan, an Islamic scholar, an Orientalist-Arabist, a Doctor of Philology. On the basis of the above list of titles of this person, it is important to describe his life path and consider his specific achievements in the field of Islamic studies.

[13] Personal file of A.B. Derbisali in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (1973), Inventory, Vol. 4, No. 415, p. 102.
[14] Derbisali, A. B. (1973), "Modern Arabic literature of Morocco," *Space*, No. 6, pp. 64-66.
[15] Zavadovskiy, Y. N. (1973), "Abd-ar-Rahman ibn Khaldun about the poetry of the Maghreb," Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the KazSSR, No. 5, pp. 8-17.

Absattar Derbisali graduated from high school in 1965 in the village of Vysokoye (Shakpak-baba). He then studied at the M. Auezov South Kazakhstan State University. M. Auezov and the M. O. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. It was during the course of his studies at higher educational institutions that he began to become acquainted with philology and oriental studies.[16] This was largely due to the lack of specialists in Oriental languages and literature. He enrolled in postgraduate studies at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, where he was supervised by Y.M. Zavadovsky and G.Sh. Sharbatov, both doctors of philology and professors. As for Absattar Derbisali's positive attitude towards Arabic, it was formed during his undergraduate studies through the work of his teacher, Adil Ermakov. After entering graduate school, he didn't lose his love for the field, so he continued to study Arabic in depth. In this process, an important role was played by Professor Yuri Nikolaevich Zavadovsky, as he recommended that Absattar Derbisali additionally attend the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University. It was he who advised him to study additionally at the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Lomonosov Moscow State University. The above assertions are confirmed by the memoirs of the figure himself, in which he positively describes his teacher: "Fate has prepared me such a wonderful gift – for life associated with this intelligent, noble, versatile erudite and deeply decent man!"[17]

He paid particular attention to Moroccan literature, which Professor Y. N. Zavadovsky had advised him to research. This was a completely new field, as no Kazakh scholar had ever worked on it before. He was in the Kingdom of Morocco for a year, namely from 1975 to 1976. Then he studied Arabic language and literature at Mohammed V University in Rabat. It is worth noting that with the help of scholar Mohammed al-Fasi, he was able to gather information from Moroccan oral folklore and use it accordingly in his research. When he returned to Almaty and finished his studies, he began his working life. This was primarily a scientific collaboration at the M. Auezov Institute of Literature and Art of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic. The development of his career took him from 1977 to 1985 when he became a lecturer, later a senior lecturer, associate professor, and eventually deputy dean of the Faculty of Philology at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. His first contribution to Islamic studies in Kazakhstan began with his opening of specialization in Arabic at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. At that time 12 people expressed a desire to study the discipline. Already in 1980-1985 Absattar Derbisali formed and opened the Department of Oriental Philology, where he served as deputy dean of the Faculty of Philology. Subsequently, he started working on the publication of Arabic textbooks for secondary school students.[18] Such activities were undertaken on behalf of the Ministry of Education of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic.

After this, Absattar began to write his doctoral thesis. For this purpose, he undertook an internship at a university in Tunisia from 1985 to 1986. Subsequently, he successfully defended his doctoral thesis and entered the doctoral program at the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. He got his title of professor and doctoral degree in 1988-1989. Absattar Derbisali's next major contribution to Islamic studies in Kazakhstan was the establishment of the Faculty of Oriental Studies in 1989. It was formed based on the Arabic department at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University, and Absattar himself became its dean. This faculty experienced a successful development, as new areas of Oriental studies subsequently began to emerge and develop there. In 1991, after the Independence of the Republic of Kazakhstan, he became Vice-Rector for Languages and Foreign Relations at Al-Farabi Kazakh National University. During his professional and academic activities, Absattar managed to significantly expand ties and establish cooperation with higher education institutions in other countries, such as Egypt, Morocco, Turkey, China, India, Pakistan, Iran, Libya, England, Germany, France and Spain.

---

[16] Ritonga, Mahyudin, Widodo, Hendro, Munirah, Munirah and Nurdianto, Talqis (2021), "Arabic language learning reconstruction as a response to strengthen Al-Islam studies at higher education. Studies at Higher Education," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, Vol. 10, No. 1, pp. 355-363.

[17] The Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan, Absattar Haji Derbisali, presented a new book "Islam: The Religion of Peace and Creation" in the United States (2012), https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31295622.

[18] Kultsum, Umi, Parinduri, Muhammad Abrar and Karim, Abdul (2022), "Comparative studies between public and private Islamic schools in the era of globalization," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, Vol. 11, No. 1, pp. 421-430.

Absattar started his diplomatic career in 2000 when he took up the post of Advisor to the Embassy of the Republic of Kazakhstan in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia. On this basis, he was promoted to the diplomatic rank of 'Counsellor 1st Class'. In addition, the kurultai of Muslims of Kazakhstan elected him as Supreme Mufti and Chairman of the Spiritual Board of Muslims of Kazakhstan. Already in 2001, Absattar became the main person to ensure the establishment of a new university in Almaty, namely the Egyptian University of Islamic Culture Nur-Mubarak. As a result, he was awarded the Egyptian Order of Science and Art, 1st degree, for his contribution to the field of Arabic philology and Islamic sciences in 2002. This was followed in 2004 when Absattar became an academician of the International Academy of Sciences of Egypt. His distinction did not end there, as he continued his activities, speaking at forums and conferences and disseminating his many years of experience in Islamic studies. In 2016 in Cannes, France, Absattar received the 'Name in Science' award from the International Socrates Committee. He was awarded the title of Professor Emeritus by the Academic Association of Oxford Universities in 2018. In Japan in 2019, he was awarded the "Order of the Rising Sun. Golden Rays with Neck Ribbon."

During the referred period from 2013 to 2020, he concurrently held the position of Director of the R.B. Suleimenov Institute of Oriental Studies of the Ministry of Education and Science of the Republic of Kazakhstan. He was also a member of the Union of Writers and Journalists of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the Turkish Centre. He was also a member of the Union of Writers and Journalists of the Republic of Kazakhstan, as well as the Turkish Centre for Asian Strategic Studies in Istanbul. In Kazakhstan, he belonged to the Human Rights Commission under the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan, the Department of Social and Human Sciences of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, and the Council of the Assembly of the People of Kazakhstan. Once the biography of Absattar Derbisali has been studied and his main successes in science, diplomacy, and religion have been revealed, one should focus on the specific objects of his work relating to Islamic studies. First, it should be noted that the works of this scholar are truly unique for the development of Kazakhstan, given the historical features of religion at the time. In this context, during the Soviet period, the study of religion was not possible, as this process was persecuted by the controlling state authorities. As a result, Kazakh science in the field of Islamic studies did not develop and spread. The globalization of scientific and technological progress has had a significant impact on this situation, allowing scientists to increase the volume of branches to be studied, including in the field of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan.

The Contributions of Absattar Derbisali to the Development of Islamic Studies in Kazakhstan

As for Islam itself, Absattar Derbisali considers it to be a peaceful and tolerant religion. He reached this view as a result of several studies, researching unique historical materials and developments.[19] In his creative and scholarly work, he has repeatedly stressed that the present branch of Islamic studies should be separate and independent in its educational environment.[20] In examining the scope of Derbisali's contribution to the development of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan, it should be established that it is impossible to describe it in full. This is determined by most of the scholar's works being published and are subject to analysis, some of the materials are still unknown and are contained in his archival materials. He studied in great depth the influence and relationship between the religion of Islam and the spirituality of the Kazakh people. He also reviewed the achievements of scholars who contributed to the development and dissemination of Islamic culture in Kazakhstan. Based on this, he was able to develop collections of works that dealt with Islamic civiliяation during his tenure as Supreme Mufti and Chairman of the Spiritual Administration of Muslims of Kazakhstan.[21]

The main part of A. Derbisali's scientific studies concerns religious issues and is presented in the form of reports, descriptions, manuscripts, lectures and speeches. His oral works were an indispensable part of his diplomatic activity, which was connected with frequent travels. The results of the analysis of the major works of the scholar are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Description of A. Derbisali's Books in the Field of Islamology

[19] Zavadovskiy (1973), "Abd-ar-Rahman ibn Khaldun about the poetry of the Maghreb"; Boiko, Vita and Kuleshov, Serhii (2023), "Movable monuments of history and culture in the state register of national cultural heritage: a comparative analysis," *Society. Document. Communication*, No. 19, pp. 60-80.
[20] Derbisali, A. B. (1973b), "Moroccan tales," *Leninskaya Smena*, Vol. 4, No. 9, p. 6.
[21] Milligan, Jeffrey Ayala (2020), *Islamic identity, postcoloniality, and educational policy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Book name	Contents
"Jewels and Treasures of Islam"	Absattar Haji Derbisali reveals the benefits of Islam as a religion. He highlights the influence of Islam on the culture of the people, its identity, and character. Based on this, the scholar concludes that the foundations of Islam should be integrated in both Arab and non-Arab countries. In this context, he describes the importance of Islamic studies for society and the training of specialists in this field. The scholar notes that the revival of Kazakhstan's culture is closely linked to the principles of Islam as a religion.
"Mosques and madrasas"	The book concerns the study of architectural Islamic structures in Kazakhstan. The scholar describes the style and methods of construction of mosques in different chronological periods, identifies places of their construction, and even classifies them according to different features. Thus A. Derbisali succeeded in making an inventory of mosques, linking this process with a study of the history and traditions of the Kazakh people. While analyzing the peculiarities of the location of mosques, as well as the study of medieval cities, he paid particular attention to the works of various historians. He used the works of such archaeologists as K. Akishev, K. Baipakov and L. Yerzakovich in his studies of cities in southern Kazakhstan.
"Spirituality and civilisation"	Materials that reveal the peculiarities of the spread of Islam and its consolidation by the Hanafi ancestors of this religion are described in this book. In this book Absattar Derbisali also proves the significance of the aqidah of Imam al-Maturidi, using materials from the written heritage of medieval scholars from Zhetis and southern Kazakhstan. On this basis, he has succeeded in revealing the dynamics of the formation of the ideology and civilizational approach to the principles of traditional Islam specifically for Turkic peoples. The value of this book is increased by the information concerning the study of the relationship between the Arabic language and the spread of Islam in the conquered territories, in particular, the language of the Holy Koran and the scholarly environment in large cities of the medieval East. The scholar refers to the latter as Damascus, Baghdad, Cairo, and others, where Kazakh scholar-intellectuals such as Al-Farabi, Hibatul al-Tarazi, and Husam al-Din al-Signaki studied.

Source: Zavadovskiy,[22] Derbisali,[23] Personal file of A.B. Derbisali in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow[24]

Describing the uniqueness of Absattar Derbisali's writings, it should be noted that his scholarly activities were carried out in parallel with his social activities. Thus, he was able to devote a great deal of attention to religious issues while combining this occupation with the strengthening of international relations. In his activities, Absattar Derbisali argued that true Muslim spiritual leaders must have well-developed skills in the field of Islamic doctrine to effectively understand the current state of socio-

[22] Zavadovskiy (1973), "Abd-ar-Rahman ibn Khaldun about the poetry of the Maghreb."
[23] Derbisali (1973b), "Moroccan tales."
[24] Personal file of A.B. Derbisali in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (1973).

political, and ethnocultural processes. He argues that a modern leader should be a theologian, a scholar, an economist, a diplomat, and, accordingly, a manager.[25]

In particular, Absattar Derbisali had a significant influence on the growth of Islamic studies in Kazakhstan through establishing the Faculty of Oriental Studies in 1989, which trained many of the country's foremost experts in Islamic studies. As Supreme Mufti from 2000-2009, he spearheaded major Islamic education initiatives. He also authored over 300 works on Islamic topics, fostered international partnerships, mentored students, and facilitated the translation of core texts.

Absattar Hajji Derbisali, the Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan, has had a significant influence on the management of mosques, religious books, Muslims, social institutes about Islam and Muslims, and the diplomatic stances of Islamic countries. He is a Sunni scholar who can interpret Islamic law. His influence can be seen in his criticism of a controversial religious law in Kazakhstan, particularly the ban on prayer rooms in state institutions, which indicates his involvement in the management of religious institutions and the rights of pious Muslims.[26] Additionally, Kazakhstan has undergone an Islamic revival, with the number of mosques increasing significantly, and Absattar Hajji Derbisali's role as the Supreme Mufti has likely played a part in this transformation.[27]

Thus, a certain tendency can be observed that Absattar Derbisali was able to develop in the field of Islamic studies throughout his life. This indicates that the works he developed in this field have a high practical and scientific value, as the researcher not only teaches his own experience but also interprets the achievements of other scholars in this field.

However, it should be noted that given his position as the Supreme Mufti and his involvement in criticizing certain laws, it is likely that his academic influence is viewed as both an opportunity and a threat by different national leaders. Some may see his influence as an opportunity for promoting a more traditional and moderate form of Islam, while others may view it as a threat to their own political agendas or interpretations of Islam. This would depend on the specific political and religious landscape of each country and the leaders' individual perspectives.

Discussion

Many scholars, both Kazakh and international, have studied the work of Absattar Haji Derbisali. They studied the principles of his work in different contexts, including Islamic studies. This allows to reveal the object of study from different sides and compare different views of scholars regarding the significance of Absattar Haji Derbisali's works in different spheres. For example, Heydarova[28] studied the activities of different European figures engaged in the study of religion, during which she drew attention to a work entitled "Divan." Its author was M. Kashgar, but in scientific doctrine, there is an opinion that its primary developer was Abu Ibrahim Ishak ibn Ibrahim Al-Farabi. There is no mention of the latter in scientific works, except for a single study by the Kazakh Orientalist Sheikh Absattar Haji Derbisali. The researcher notes that it was he who first gave the full name of the primary scholar of the Diwan. The work of Absattar Haji Derbisali has high value as it describes the life years of Abu Ibrahim, particularly around 870-950 in the second half of the IX century. Based on the above, it also classifies the work of Absattar as unique. What is common to the results of this study is that Absattar explored themes and people that were little known yet were important for the development of Islamic studies. This reveals those factors that relate to Islam that have not been explored.

[25] Personal file of A.B. Derbisali in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (1973).
[26] Weitz, R. (2012), "Holy Sultan Mosque Marks Kazakhstan's Muslim Revival," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 9, No. 158, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/50504dd42.html.
[27]Beisenov, A. (2023), "State-Mandated Muslimness in Kazakhstan," *Central Asia Program*, available at: https://centralasiaprogram.org/state-mandated-muslimness-kazakhstan/
[28] Heydarova, H. I. (2020), "The Construction of the dictionary by Mahmud Kashgari "Divan Lugat At-Turk" (A comparative analysis of the dictionaries by Al-Farabi "Divan Al-Adab Fi Bayan Lugatil-l-Arab" and Mahmud Kashgari "Divan Lugat At-Turk")," *International Academy Journal Web of Scholar*, Vol. 2, No. 44, pp. 37-40.

Kikimbayev et al.[29] and Malik[30] focused on the study of the development of religious education in the context of the Islamic revival in the post-Soviet space since the late 1980s, particularly in Kazakhstan. According to them, the special dynamics of the spread of religiosity occurred during the collapse of the USSR and the independence of several countries. In addition, the researchers drew attention to other factors contributing to the Islamic revival. First, they noted that religious education met the interests of many Muslims of different ages and social categories. They focused on the study of religious rites, the Koran, and the Arabic language in general. Thus, it triggered the birth of an educational infrastructure that dealt with religion and Islamic studies. Researchers point out that Absattar Haji Derbisali, who gradually developed Islam in Kazakhstan, played a key role in this process. In addition, they believe that the dissemination of Islamic studies is sufficiently linked to the assistance of foreign Islamic organizations of various kinds. Their activities were aimed at providing financial and material assistance for the development and improvement of Islamic educational institutions in Kazakhstan. In this context, researchers also mention Absattar Haji Derbisali, who promoted international cooperation and the exchange of experience between Kazakh and world universities. Separately, they noted that the Islamic revival in the post-Soviet space, including Kazakhstan, involved the return and restoration of closed mosques. Most of them were destroyed in the USSR and professional Muslim clergy were not developed. It is for this reason that after Kazakhstan gained its independence and the development of Islamic studies, this issue became particularly relevant. In this context, researchers again mention the works of Absattar Derbisali, as in them he studied the features of mosques, their location, and construction. Based on the above-mentioned, it can be established that the revealed position is intertwined with the conclusions obtained in this scientific research. In the same way, the stages of revival and spread of Islamic studies are compared with the activities of Absattar Derbisali, which allows to confirm the value of his developments in this field.

Seitakhmetova et al.[31] analyze the role and place of Islamic education in Kazakhstan. The researchers found that Islam has long played an important role in the process of development of Kazakh culture, as well as education and science. On this basis, she notes that Islamic studies are an important component in the formation of Kazakh society. The researcher devoted special attention to describing the specificities of Kazakhstan in the context of a Muslim environment of many millions of people. Given the traditional religious tolerance as well as the systemic integration of several destructive Salafi organizations, there is a need for quality training in the field of Islamic studies. In her view, opening Islamic higher education institutions and separate faculties is a priority. As an example, she cited the Khoja Akhmet Yassawi International Kazakh-Turkish University, which promotes Islamic studies through the teaching of specialised academic disciplines. The researcher drew attention to a certain tendency, namely that Islamic education in Kazakhstan is developing in conjunction with traditional Kazakh culture. Thus, Islam is being integrated into Kazakh society, allowing the restoration of lost customs, ancestral rituals and so on. The researcher believes that major universities in Kazakhstan need to develop special educational programmes aimed at Islamic studies and Islamic theology. She gives the example of the Kazakh National University named after Al-Farabi, which has developed such curricula, which allows to characterise the peculiarities of their essence and content. Based on the above, it should be established that the specificity of Islamic education in Kazakhstan lies in the fact that its development is interconnected with the peculiarities of the spiritual culture of the Kazakh people.[32] Thus, it is common that Islamic studies cannot be considered as a separate category, as it is closely connected with some aspects of the Kazakh environment.

---

[29] Kikimbayev, Meiram, Medeuova, Kulshat and Ramazanova, Adiya (2021), "Mosques in post-soviet Kazakhstan: Discourse interpretation and regulatory practices," *Central Asia & The Caucasus*, Vol. 22, No. 4, pp. 126-139.

[30] Malik, Bilal Ahmad (2021), "Reviving the legacy: Variant trends of Islamic revivalism in Kazakhstan," in Susan C. Pearce and Eugenia Sojka (eds.), *Cultural Change in East-Central European and Eurasian Spaces: Post-1989 Revisions and Re-imaginings*, Cham: Springer, pp. 85-100.

[31] Seitakhmetova, N. L., Kussainov, D. U., Ayupova, Z. K., Kuttybekkyzy, G. and Nurov, M. M. (2020), "The essence and content of Islamic education in the republic of Kazakhstan: Theoretical and methodological foundations," *Scientific Journal Bulletin of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, No. 5, pp. 270-274.

[32] Kim, Ho-Woog, Kang, Min-Soo, Lee, Joung-Jun, Seo, In-Seok and Chung, Jun-Ki (2022), "Herbert coddington's spirituality and medical work," *European Journal of Science and Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 3, pp. 83-96.

In contrast to their predecessors, Ayagan et al.[33] and Mahfud et al.[34] investigated the nature of the influence of Islam on Kazakh society, its culture and history. The researchers describe it in two contexts. First, they present Islam as having modified obsolete cults, positively influenced the moral state of the people, and facilitated their intellectual growth. On this basis, the spread of Islam in Kazakhstan has helped to establish and develop the traits of national character among citizens.[35] At the same time, scholars have expressed Islam in the context of a protective shield, which was a necessary element during dangerous confrontations with hostile neighbors, main representatives of the Far Eastern and Christian civilisations. Describing this approach, the shield preserved and embodied the national self of the Kazakhs, thus allowing for intra-national and pan-Turkic cooperation. The researchers note that religion, with its inherent spirit of liberty, corresponds to the modern manly embodiment of Turkic mentality. The disclosed position allows for outlining the peculiarities of the origin and development of Islam in Kazakhstan. It is consistent with the findings of this research, as it expresses the link between the Kazakh culture and the spread of Islam in it. This justifies the priority of Islamic studies and their development in Kazakhstan.

Jalilov and Batyrkhan[36] studied the biography of Absattar Haji Derbisali, particularly his role in the spiritual development of the Kazakh people. In their study, they emphasize that this scholar had a broad outlook and was able to combine knowledge of Islam with the governance of society.[37] They believe that Absattar Haji Derbisali represents the standard of personal responsibility for the fate of his country. The researchers note that Absattar was among an insignificant number of Kazakhs to enter the Kaaba. On this basis, only he could logically combine the peculiarities of socio-political institutions operating in conjunction with the socio-cultural transformation of the people. This enabled the scholar to help the Muslim part of Kazakh society to express its role and significance in this transformation. In this way, researchers have described the activities of Absattar Haji Derbisali. This approach is common to this paper as it relates to the analysis and description of this scholar's biography.

Based on the aforesaid, it should be established that Islamic studies are an important component of modern Kazakh society. For its effective implementation, most scholars consider it necessary to adhere to the views and methods of Absattar Haji Derbisali, who was an expert in this field.

Conclusions

Based on the research conducted, it should be established that Islamic studies in Kazakhstan are an important component of the cultural renaissance of society after independence. This process is complex, as it involves the reform of several spheres of social relations, such as education, science, politics, and international cooperation. It has been successfully implemented in Kazakhstan by Absattar Derbisali. The latter has a PhD in philology and is a member of the Academy of Sciences of Higher Education in Kazakhstan. On this basis, it can be said that he is the founder of the Kazakh School of Arabic Studies, an Islamic scholar, religious scholar, and orientalist. In addition, Derbisali is a member of the International Academy of Arabic Language Sciences, a corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan, a member of the Union of Writers and the Union of Journalists of Kazakhstan.

All this testifies to the complexity of his activity, which is simultaneously linked to different spheres. However, this is precisely the value of his work for the people of Kazakhstan. This is explained by the fact that all the separate areas of his activity concern one thing, namely the study of Islamic culture and

---

[33] Ayagan, B., Kaliyeva, M. and Satanov, A. (2021), "Islam in Kazakhstan: History of distribution and modernity," *Istoriya,* Vol. 12, No. 5, pp. 61-67.

[34] Mahfud, Choirul, Astari, Rika, Kasdi, Abdurrohman, Mu'ammar, Muhammad Arfan, Muyasaroh, Muyasaroh and Wajdi, Firdaus (2022), "Islamic cultural and Arabic linguistic influence on the languages of Nusantara; From lexical borrowing to localized Islamic lifestyles," *Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*, Vol. 22, No. 1, p. 11.

[35] Pohranychna, Iryna (2023), "Renovation of residences from previous historical eras and styles," *Architectural Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, pp. 65-73.

[36] Jalilov, Zaur and Batyrkhan, Bolatbek (2019), "Islam in Kazakhstan: History of revival under conditions of independence," *Central Asia & the Caucasus*, Vol. 20, No. 3, pp. 124-148.

[37] Zhussupov, Nartay, Orazbek, Maktagul, Mukusheva, Kuralay, Akynbekova, Altyn and Bakenova, Rizagul (2017), "Publicism of the early 20th century: Manuscripts of Maspkhur Zhusup," *Man in India*, Vol. 97, No. 14, pp. 419-429.

its dissemination. On this basis, it can be established that an analysis of his writings has helped to reveal the influence of Islam on the formation and development of Kazakhstan. It should be established that Derbisali in his work describes and proves the universal values of Islamic civilization. Given this, it was established in the scientific work that the scholar played an extremely important role in the process of formation and development of Islamic studies and religious studies in Kazakh society. His main achievements in education and science were described in the study, as it was based on this approach that the consolidation of Islamic studies and access to it for the citizens of Kazakhstan took place. Reference was also made to the importance of Derbisali's work for Kazakhstan as a state in the international arena, which has improved international cooperation, including with Islamic states. This issue is not exhaustive, and consequently, future research should focus on ways and means to improve Islamic studies in modern Kazakhstan, considering the processes of digitalization.

References

Ayagan, B., Kaliyeva, M. and Satanov, A. (2021), "Islam in Kazakhstan: History of distribution and modernity," *Istoriya*, Vol. 12, No. 5, 61-67.

Aziz, Azlisham Abdul, Mamat, Mohd Nor., Salleh, Daud Mohamed., Abdullah, Syarifah Fadylawaty Syed and Nordin, Mohd Norazmi (2021), "An analysis of systematic literature review on the development of Islamic oriented instruments," *Journal of Contemporary Issues in Business and Government*, Vol. 27, No. 1, 3222-3233.

Bazaluk, Oleg (2019), "Plato's traditions in modern educational theories," *Analele Universitatii din Craiova, Seria Filozofie*, Vol. 43, No. 1, 5-20.

Beisenov, A. (2023), "State-Mandated Muslimness in Kazakhstan," *Central Asia Program*, available at: https://centralasiaprogram.org/state-mandated-muslimness-kazakhstan/.

Benussi, Matteo (2021), "The golden cage: heritage, (ethnic) Muslimness, and the place of Islam in post-Soviet Tatarstan," *Religion, State and Society*, Vol. 49, No. 4-5, 314-330.

Boiko, Vita and Kuleshov, Serhii (2023), "Movable monuments of history and culture in the state register of national cultural heritage: a comparative analysis," *Society. Document. Communication*, No. 19, 60-80.

Clement, Victoria (2021), "Turkmen Islam" and the paucity of real pluralism in Turkmenistan's post-soviet nation-building," *The Review of Faith & International Affairs*, Vol. 19, No. 4, 70-84.

Derbisali, A. B. (1973a), "Modern Arabic literature of Morocco," *Space*, No. 6, 64-66.

Derbisali, A. B. (1973b), "Moroccan tales," *Leninskaya Smena*, Vol. 4, No. 9, 6.

Dianto, Dianto (2021), "Character building in new normal Islamic education," Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies, Vol. 2, No. 1, 264-269.

Erekesheva, Laura (2020), "Knowledge, culture, orientalism," *Founder of Ancient History,* Almaty: Kazak Universiteti, 52-62.

Heydarova, H. I. (2020), "The Construction of the dictionary by Mahmud Kashgari "Divan Lugat At-Turk" (A comparative analysis of the dictionaries by Al-Farabi "Divan Al-Adab Fi Bayan Lugatil-l-Arab" and Mahmud Kashgari "Divan Lugat At-Turk")," *International Academy Journal Web of Scholar*, Vol. 2, No. 44, 37-40.

Jalilov, Zaur and Batyrkhan, Bolatbek (2019), "Islam in Kazakhstan: History of revival under conditions of independence," *Central Asia & the Caucasus*, Vol. 20, No. 3, 124-148.

Jeong, Moo-jin, Seo, In-seok, Chung and Jun-ki (2023), "Evolution and Progress of the Ukrainian Orthodox Church: A Glimpse into the Future," *International Journal of Religion and Spirituality in Society*, Vol. 14, No. 3, 101-116.

Kikimbayev, Meiram, Medeuova, Kulshat and Ramazanova, Adiya (2021), "Mosques in post-soviet Kazakhstan: Discourse interpretation and regulatory practices," *Central Asia & The Caucasus*, Vol. 22, No. 4, 126-139.

Kim, Ho-Woog, Kang, Min-Soo, Lee, Joung-Jun, Seo, In-Seok and Chung, Jun-Ki (2022), "Herbert coddington's spirituality and medical work," *European Journal of Science and Theology*, Vol. 18, No. 3, 83-96.

Kultsum, Umi, Parinduri, Muhammad Abrar and Karim, Abdul (2022), "Comparative studies between public and private Islamic schools in the era of globalization," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education,* Vol. 11, No. 1, 421-430.

Kunanbayeva, Salima (2016), "Educational internationalisation as a major strategy of the Kazakhstani system of education," *International Journal of Applied Engineering Research*, Vol. 11, No. 11, 7272-7277.

Mahfud, Choirul, Astari, Rika, Kasdi, Abdurrohman, Mu'ammar, Muhammad Arfan, Muyasaroh, Muyasaroh and Wajdi, Firdaus (2022), "Islamic cultural and Arabic linguistic influence on the languages of Nusantara; From lexical borrowing to localized Islamic lifestyles," *Journal of the Humanities of Indonesia*, Vol. 22, No. 1, 11.

Malik, Bilal Ahmad (2021), "Reviving the legacy: Variant trends of Islamic revivalism in Kazakhstan," in Susan C. Pearce and Eugenia Sojka (eds.), *Cultural Change in East-Central European and Eurasian Spaces: Post-1989 Revisions and Re-imaginings*, Cham: Springer, 85-100.

Mandaville, Peter (2020), *Islam and politics*, Abingdon: Routledge.

Milligan, Jeffrey Ayala (2020), *Islamic identity, postcoloniality, and educational policy*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

Muminov, A. K. (2022), "The great researcher of Islamic civilization," *Kazakhstan and the Eastern World: Past, Present and Future*, No. 1, 160-166.

Nurzannah, Nurzannah, Ginting, Nurman and Setiawan, Hasrian Rudi (2020), "Implementation of integrated quality management in the Islamic education system," Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies, https://jurnal.umsu.ac.id/index.php/insis/article/view/4065.

Personal file of A.B. Derbisali in the archive of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow (1973), Inventory, Vol. 4, No. 415, 102.

Pohranychna, Iryna (2023), "Renovation of residences from previous historical eras and styles," *Architectural Studies*, Vol. 9, No. 1, 65-73.

Ritonga, Mahyudin, Widodo, Hendro, Munirah, Munirah and Nurdianto, Talqis (2021), "Arabic language learning reconstruction as a response to strengthen Al-Islam studies at higher education. Studies at Higher Education," *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, Vol. 10, No. 1, 355-363.

Seitakhmetova, N. L., Kussainov, D. U., Ayupova, Z. K., Kuttybekkyzy, G. and Nurov, M. M. (2020), "The essence and content of Islamic education in the republic of Kazakhstan: Theoretical and methodological foundations," *Scientific Journal Bulletin of the National Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan*, No. 5, 270-274.

Suroso, Amat, Hendriarto, Prasetyono, Karika, Galuh Nashrulloh, Pattiasina, Petrus Jacob and Aslan, Aslan (2021), "Challenges and opportunities towards Islamic cultured generation: Socio-cultural analysis," *Linguistics and Culture Review*, Vol. 5, No. 1, 180-194.

Tanjung, Ellisa Fitri and Harfiani, Rizka (2020), "The role of Islamic religious education in overcoming the negative influence of technology on students SMK Muhammadiyah," *Proceeding International Seminar of Islamic Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 1, 532-542.

The Supreme Mufti of Kazakhstan, Absattar Haji Derbisali, presented a new book "Islam: The Religion of Peace and Creation" in the United States (2012), https://online.zakon.kz/Document/?doc_id=31295622

Weitz, R. (2012), "Holy Sultan Mosque Marks Kazakhstan's Muslim Revival," *Eurasia Daily Monitor*, Vol. 9, No. 158, available at: https://www.refworld.org/docid/50504dd42.html.

Zavadovskiy, Y. N. (1973), "Abd-ar-Rahman ibn Khaldun about the poetry of the Maghreb," *Proceedings of the Academy of Sciences of the KazSSR*, No. 5, 8-17.

Zhussupov, Nartay, Orazbek, Maktagul, Mukusheva, Kuralay, Akynbekova, Altyn and Bakenova, Rizagul (2017), "Publicism of the early 20th century: Manuscripts of Maspkhur Zhusup," *Man in India*, Vol. 97, No. 14, 419-429.