

# Nicholson's Creation in World Scientific Research

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**Abstract:** Reynold Nicholson's creation and translations have been studied by several scholars and researchers in world scientific research. They expressed positive and negative points about Nicholson's translations.

**Key words:** Arab, Persian, oriental, poetic forms, tasavvuf, meditation, historian, religious studies, philosopher, literary studies, mysticism, Sufism.

## Introduction

Needles to say, in East and West literature Reynold Nicholson's life, creation and he had been written and translated rare works which attracted several orientalist and researchers' scientific attention. At the end of XIX century and at the beginning XX century one of prominent British scholars was Nicholson according to arab and persian languages. Although he had never travelled to Eastern countries during his life time, he was the most British orientalist who had done lots of research into oriental classical literature between England and Muslim world<sup>[1]</sup>.

## Materials

This research article has been used different resources and materials and PhD dissertations to show Reynold Nicholson's creation and works by having comparative analysis via Europe and English researchers as well.

## Methods

The research article was performed on the basis of the following scientific methods for achieving the set goals:

- systematization of the collected facts and materials;
- the consistent and systematic research;
- the scientific-theoretical application;
- a complex approach to the problem, the principle of historicity;
- obtaining of the scientific results on the base of generalizations

## Results

The results obtained from the conducted files and sources in the research article can be used as the source in the fields of Oriental Studies, world literature, Arabic literature, Islam religion, Sufism literature and some other fields. Furthermore, research article can be used in the compilation of programs, textbooks and teaching aids of the faculty of the Oriental Studies of higher education too

## Discussion

Turkish scientist Sultan Adanir learned Reynold Nicholson's translations and appreciated as follows. Even though Rumi's works had been learned by some translators and scholars, the english translation created by Nicholson was easier to understand thousand of people and readers<sup>[2]</sup>.

<sup>1</sup> A.J. Arberry, "Oriental Essays", 1960, London, 197 p.

<sup>2</sup> Jalaliddin Rumi I-II-III Mathnawi and Devani Shamsi Tabriz, research article, 2022, Istanbul, Turkey, 10 p.

As researcher Toni Calderbank's view, as Spain invaded by arabs, flourishing of arab culture and art and arab poetic forms studied by trubadours and the exposure of European audiences and the public made contribution by Nicholson immensely as scholars<sup>[3]</sup>.

Sufism is a multi-disciplinary and complex doctrine that occupies a large place in the social, philosophical and literary meditation of various nations who live in the world. Some important aspects of the history of Sufism, especially its epistemology, have not yet been fully elucidated<sup>[4]</sup>. According to Russian scientist I. M. Petrushevsky, the English orientalist R.A. Nicolson identified seventy-eight interpretations of the concept of Sufism, that is, Sufism, from written sources up to the 11th century. This fact itself confirms how diverse the viewpoints of Sufism have been. One wing of Sufism is mysticism, and another wing is asceticism. However, at the center of it is the idea of the existence of paternalism. Therefore, the cooperation of historians, theologians, philosophers, writers and psychologists is extremely important in the study of Sufism. It has been repeatedly explained in science that elements of paganism and Christianity exist in Eastern Sufism. Especially Neoplatonist ideas occupied a significant place in it. But the spirit of Sufism is the Islamic spirit. Sufism incorporates advanced views in other religions and philosophies.

As Azerbaijan researcher Gunel Serdar Salimova's view at the beginning of XX century Reynold Alleyne Nicholson who was the prominent orientalist did plenty of research Sufism in the West. In 1911 he translated and published "Tarjuman Al-Ashwaq" (Translator's Desire) by Ibn Al-Arabi<sup>[5]</sup> by using arab comments. Lately this work was republished religion publication in 1978. In the introduction part of the work Nicholson reminded one of more 150 works had been issued by Flugel in 1845 Europe relating to Ibn Arabiy's approximately. Even, Nicholson accentuated to start learning Ibn Arabiy life and scientific creative activity at the beginning of XX century and his vital works had not been still translated into European languages.

Besides, Reynold Alleyne Nicholson contemplated critically the literary comparison between arab poet Abul-Ala al-Ma'rri and West poets. He showed him belonged to their school although al-Ma'rri had not been the same level of "Dante and Milton and if he thought of Lucre's deep feeling about life, he used the topic with marvelous literary competency as Horace. Second, Nicholson took into account Abu Nuwas al-Hasan ibn Hani al-Hakami to be the greatest thoughtful poet of his all contemporaries and followers, even al-Mutanabi and was the same rank as ancient poets as his poetic style". These examples displayed clearly that Nicholson expressed actual critical points particular important issues of Arab literature.

Research scholars expressed their positive and negative views about Nicholson's "Kashf al-Mahjub" translations. First of all, researcher Muhammed Sultanshah explained Reynold Nicholson's life and creation. He worked as a persian teacher in Cambridge University as an orientalist<sup>[6]</sup>. He translated the most ancient persian treatise "Kashf al-Mahjub" into English and published it for "E. G. V. Gibb Memorial" in 1911 as persian language and literature specialist. Nicholson wrote the acknowledgment that contained eight pages. "Kashf al-Mahjub" was published 420 pages with three indexes.

The first index contains people, places, tribes, sects, name of place and eleven pages. The second index involves index subjects, terms relating to orientalism, technical terms with ten pages. The third index encompasses name of books. The second edition of this translation was published in 1936, it was republished in 1959 and 1967. In Lahore Nicholson translation was reissued "Islam Fund" in 1982 and 1996.

Reynold Nicholson translated Lahore publication texts into English as a unique style by comparing translation with British museum and manuscripts in India library. That is why, the translator was required to have a translation competency and art. But, Nicholson had all of these competencies.

It is fair to say that, when Nicholson ended his translation, "Kashf al-Mashjub" had been edited again. In 1917 V.A. Zuxoviskiy edited the persian text and wrote the acknowledgement into Russian. In 1926 after Zuxoviskiy died, it was published in Leningrad. In 1957 the same text was issued by Intisharat Amir Kabir in Tehran. But, Zuxoviskiy wrote the acknowledgement which was translated into Persian language. The

<sup>3</sup> Arabic and English poetry have much in common despite their linguistic differences, Tony Calderbank, research commentary, Spain, 2018

<sup>4</sup> "Sufism and Poetry, Ibrahim Hakkul, Tashkent, Gafur Gulam Publication, 1991, 3 p.

<sup>5</sup> The Development of Oriental studies in Great Britain in the XIX-XX century, abstract, Baku, 2022, 26 p

<sup>6</sup> Kash al-Mahjub, Muhammad Sultanshah, research article, Lahore 6 p.

english translation of the acknowledgement had already created by Sir Sidney Gerrold and it was published East school announcement of London University by E.Denison Ross.

Nicholson presented some information about Shaykh "Ali ibn Usman al-Hujwiri. He also spoke about Sufi teachers. While he was discussing about Said Hujwiri journeys, he told us how he had come to Lahore. Nicholson also prepared other writings which were spoken in "Kashf al-Mashjub", but any of them had never kept. One city resident asked a question from Abu Said al-Hujwiri was said to have written the book and he replied. So, Nicholson had such observation about "Kashf al-Mashjub" style.

The intrinsic treatment of the author is that the teacher should teach education for a pupil. Even, the biographic part of the work is actually to open a meaning. Before explaining one's viewpoints the author checks usually points at the same topic and if it is possible, he will reject them. Discussing mystical problems and their debates are embodied by personal experience and diverse opinions.

Nicholson had showed some sources "Kash al-Mahjub" as "Kitab al-Luma" written by Abu Nasr Sirraj. The translator said to the reader-" I hesitated to refuse it when I was enabled a chance".

The critic scholar Shahidullah Faridi wrote the acknowledgement of Reynold Nicholson's translation. Faridi presented further information about Shaykh Ali Hujwiri and showed some shortcomings that had in Nicholson's translation. He said a good point about origin of Hujwir. The editor of Tehran publication reminded Jullabi actually meant Gullabi in the novel theory and the poetry master of Hujwir Gullabi (arabic Jullab)[<sup>7</sup>] who was a person.

But, Shahidullah did not receive Jullab in this etymology. As Nicholson's view, Jullab and Hujwir that were both edge of Gazna. Prince Dara Shikoh explained Jullab and Hujwir that were both zone of Gazna. In the beginning, he lived in Jullab and later he used Hujwir as a residence. That is why, Jullab and Hujwir that were seen illogical each other.

As Faridi pointed out fairly, what we know about Hujwir's life he tells us about it in "Kash al-Mahjub". So, the intrinsic source was Said Ali Hujwir's biography to create his book. The acknowledgement of the work has been given information for readers about Hujwir's masters, contemporaries and his visit to various Islam centers. His spiritual genealogy has also been observed. After his Shaykh Abu Fazl Muhammad ibn Hasan al-Xuttali's death in Syria, Shahidullah thought about his coming to Lahore like this. As a tradition, when he was in Lahore, he felt spiritual education skill and he called numerous Hindus to accept Islam. Debates had been discussed about Hujwir's marriage. According to Faridi, Nicholson's interest in an invisible woman was actually wrong to get married, this is because it was against that Hujwir had written feeling.

"He usually starts with relevant quotation from the Qur'an and the Traditions of the Prophet, and then proceeds to his own analysis, interspersed with numerous references to the dicta of the saints."

Shahidullah Faridi spoke about sufism school organized by Hujwir who debated about sufism and several topics. Eleven veils opened by him were counted. Modernists spoke sufism which opposed to Islam doctrine. American critic doctor Carl Ernest wrote the acknowledgement which contained six pages to the translation of "Kash al-Mahjub"[<sup>8</sup>]. Famous orientalist and interest to Islam education has presented about Shaykh Ali bin Utman and his book "Kash al-Mahjub". Before final years of XII century Shaykh Munaliddin Chishti was said to have visited to Lahore to pray and visit the tomb of Shaykh Hujwir. According to Ernest, the mosque which was beside the tomb was built by Shaykh Hujwir. Some of the information in the introduction was not very different from Nicholson's foreword. But, according to Carl Ernest, the Persian text of "Kash al-Mahjub" was published in Lahore, Deoband, Samarkand and Tashkent several times. Arab translation was issued by Doctor Isad "Abd al-Xadi Candil in Cairo (Egypt) in 1974.

Nicholson's "Kash al-Mahjub" translation was estimated one of Europe orientalist's famous works. As other scholars of their generation, Nicholson confided sufism which was actually one part of Islam, but, it was said to have related to Indian and Greek sources. Carl Ernest also rejected it. As his view, Pakistan contemporary Chishti and Sufi leaders whose presumption was criticized Nicholson Sufi doctrine and practice which was close to pure Islam by them. They emphasized the most reliable guide was sufism which was true meaning of Qur'an and Muhammad(s.a.v)

<sup>7</sup> Kash al-Mahjub, Muhammad Sultanshah, research article, Lahore 8 p.

<sup>8</sup> Kash al-Mahjub, Muhammad Sultanshah, research article, Lahore 9 p.

Doctor Carl spoke about Persian text was the best critical publication issued by Russian orientalist Valentine Jucoviski and his translation was interpreted by Captain Vahid Baxsh Sial Rabboni.

Warwick University researcher Xeba el-Masri appreciated to Reynold Nicholson's creation and scientific activity. He translated extracts of seven *mullaqat* and he added these translations to his books published in 1907 and 1922 [9]. He also added extracts from all seven odes to his initial book "A literary History of Arabs", but he did not add extracts from al Hartiz and Antara odes to second book "Translations of Eastern Poetry and Prose". Nicholson selected extracts on the basis of personal preferences and used other meanings extracts translated both books. He presented the acknowledgement to history of Arab literature both ordinary people and Arab students in initial book and as it was considered "a true reflection of Arab life" of Arab poetry, he used extracts as one part of Arab meditation. In the second book Nicholson translated extracts that were combined examples expressing poems of different periods, replaced chosen extracts in the chronological order and in this way presented genealogical history of Arab history. Nicholson's goal was to present historical and educational information, it was said about historical documents of poetic of Arab and Arab literature and his research approach aimed to act as a academic. It goes without saying, Nicholson was a scholar who strived to be an effective orientalist as an Arabian language. Nicholson accentuated more cultural heritage his *mullaqat* translation that contained at headline page of his both books. At the headline page of "A literary History of Arabs" it was said Nicholson worked as a Persian teacher in his activity at Cambridge University and those periods as member of Trinity College he worked as an academician. He was said to have worked as a Persian teacher at Cambridge University at the headline page of "Translations of Eastern Poetry and Prose". Nicholson was considered to have enough knowledge and skills from Arab language to translate. As Arberry Nicholson translation did not suit to modern taste, it was expressed as basically research works of Nicholson translations [10].

Nicholson's loyal to Arab oriental research which can be seen following verses of one example Amr ibn Culsum *mullaqat*:

*Um 'Amr took the cup away from us  
and the cup was running to the right.  
The worst of the trio, Um 'Amr,  
is not your friend whom you denied the morning draught.*

Nicholson translated these verses as follows :

*Pass round from left to right! Why let'st thou, maiden,  
Me and my comrades thirst?  
Yet am I, whom thou wilt not serve this morning.  
Of us three not the worst!*

Nicholson did not speak about the lady Ummu Amr who lifted a wine bowl and spoke about as a maid and ordered glasses to pass from the left to the right instead of reminding them from the right to the left in his lecturer's translation. In this translation although the woman took part in a happy meeting, she was expressed as a modest, obedient servant. This reflected women oriental images in Arabia. Nicholson translations were said to try to be loyal in it, but he did not feel what loyalty meant at all. Because he added diverse changes to his word by word translation and sometimes he could not vary the spirit of original translation.

## Conclusion

In the world literature Reynold Alleyne Nicholson was a renowned orientalist who introduced oriental classical literature, Sufism branches to the universe. He was a translator to have a talented, translation skills, viewpoints which got into each scholar, student and readers' hearts as well as his prominent human features and attitudes among great orientalist and researchers in Great Britain and the USA. Following researchers, Sultan Adanir, Tony Calderbank, I.M. Petrushevsky, Gunel Serdar Salimova, Muhammad Sultanshax, Shahidullah Faridi, Carl Ernest and Xeba el-Masris actually researched about Reynold Nicholson's creation,

<sup>9</sup> A Comparative Study of Arthur John Arberry's and Desmond O'Grady's Translations of the Seven *Mu'allaqāt*, Heba Fawzy El-Masry, PhD dissertation, Warwick University, 2017, 64-67 p.

<sup>10</sup> Oriental Essays, Portraits of Seven Scholars, A.J. Arberry London, 1960, 206 p.

poetic translations, comparative analysis and proved him as a researcher of oriental classical literature. But they expressed positive and critical feedback and points about his creation.

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