Settling the past: Soviet oriental projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata

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Settling the Past: Soviet Oriental Projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata

On Wednesday February 27th, 2013 at 10:00 h in the Agnietenkapel of Amsterdam University, Oudezijds Voorburgwal 231, Amsterdam.

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Settling the Past

Soviet Oriental Projects in Leningrad and Alma-Ata

ACADEMISCH PROEFSCHRIFT

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aan de Universiteit van Amsterdam
op gezag van de Rector Magnificus
prof. dr. D.C. van den Boom
ten overstaan van een door het college voor promoties ingestelde
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door

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Map of the Kazakh SSR
## Note on Transliteration

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Introduction

The Politicization of Oriental Studies

The main goal of this dissertation is to analyze the history of Kazakh Oriental studies between the 1920s and 1980s in the Soviet context of science-power relations. My focus is on the academic discourse of Soviet Orientalists about historical sources from Central Asia. I thereby focus on the connection between philological/historical research and archeological work on the medieval and early modern periods.

The research literature on my topic reveals two opposing opinions on my subject. On the one hand, scholars who had been part of the scientific projects that my thesis is about give generally a very positive evaluation of those projects; they maintain that these projects were characterized by a purely scientific approach. On the other hand, the critics of Soviet sciences consider all Orientalist work to be political in the first place.

In between there are several major authors who maintain intermediary positions, who concede that there was a clear political agenda behind the state support for Orientalist work on Kazakhstan, but who also say that individual scholars maintained their agency, and that Soviet Oriental Studies did indeed produce a significant amount of important research that has not lost its value, and that was not compromised by the political setting to a high degree.

My material supports, in many aspects, this intermediary position; but it also demonstrates the rigidity of the political framework in which Soviet Orientalists worked.

The Study of Oriental Studies in Russia and the Soviet Union

Soviet Oriental Studies were in many respects the heir to Imperial Russian Orientology. A discussion by Adeeb Khalid, Nathaniel Knight, and Maria Todorova about the ‘Russian soul’ of Russian Orientalism in the pre-Soviet period up to the 1920s demonstrated that there is not one common picture of the Russian Orientalist: some scholars were indeed actively involved in imperialist politics, were engaged as officials and advisors of the government, while others distanced themselves from politics; and many expert voices were
simply not heard by those in power.¹ British historian Vera Tolz, in her recent work on these issues, distinguishes between several groups of experts on the Orient who had different views and agendas. For the second half of the nineteenth century Tolz distinguished between academic Orientalists, Christian missionaries and government officials. Secondly, Tolz suggests to move from the study of the overall relationship between Oriental studies and imperialism further to “the impact of the goals of nation-building […] on the research agendas, the public activities, and a sense of self-identity of academic Orientalists.”² This perspective is also at the center of my work: to bring the discussion closer to the individuals who framed and determined the course of Soviet Oriental scholarship on Kazakhstan.

In her study of the intellectual history of the Russian intelligentsia in the late Imperial and early Soviet periods Tolz concentrated on the ideas and biographies of significant Orientalists, especially on Arabist Baron V.P. Rozen (1849-1908) and his school in St. Petersburg.³ The other major monograph on this topic, David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye’s “Russian Orientalism”, studies the institutional development of the Tsarist Orientology in Kazan’ and St. Petersburg, and he also focusses on a number of outstanding scholars (but also painters and writers), such as Aleksandr Kazem-Bek (1802-1870); and most importantly, Schimmelpenninck van der Oye regards Russian Orientalism as a cultural phenomenon.⁴ There are a number of other recent works on more particular cases, such as Angela Brintlinger’s article on the great Russian writer Aleksandr Griboedov (1795-


1829) as an Orientalist who “could not separate knowledge from the power associated with the East and his role there.”

Against this new interest in “Imperial Orientalism” and Orientology (as the academic discipline on the Orient) it is quite natural that also the Soviet period invited for studies. By contrast to the previous era, with its many individual scholars, after 1917 Soviet Oriental Studies emerged as a state-organized discipline for clear political purposes. In his trilogy on the history of early Soviet discourses on Islam and on two prominent authors, Michael Kemper portrays Soviet Orientology as the extreme case of politicization. Kemper and Conermann edited a collective volume devoted to the phenomenon of Soviet Oriental studies, in which not only Western but also scholars from the former Soviet Union review the “Soviet schools” of Orientology in the 20th century, including also the memoirs of the eminent Arabist Amri R. Shikhsaidov and the prominent Tatar historian Mirkasym A. Usmanov who strove for the establishment of Oriental Studies centers in their respective home republics, Daghestan and Tatarstan. Equally important is the work of Stéphane Dudoignon on the relation between academic and religious research on Islam in the USSR, including his reflections on the impact of Soviet academics on the rehabilitation of Islam in the former Soviet south.

While Western approaches to Soviet Orientology are framed by the discourse on “Orientalism”, and by over thirty years of debates around Edward Said’s famous critique of Western Orientalism and Oriental Studies as colonial instruments, this whole debate seems to have largely gone unnoticed in the former Soviet Union; in Russia, and even more so in Central Asia and the Caucasus, the old connection between Oriental scholarship and state policies is still very much alive, and rarely reflected upon. Thus the first Russian

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full translation of Said’s book appeared only in 2006, which prompted the prominent Moscow-based Arabist and historian of the North Caucasus Vladimir Bobrovnikov to ask his readers: “Why are we so marginal?” To be sure, important questions related to Orientalism were also raised in the work of anthropologist Sergei Abashin and archeologist Svetlana Gorshenina, but these seem to have had more impact in the West than in Russia.

Russian Orientalists of today, in the two big academic research institutes in Moscow (Institute of Oriental Studies, IVAN) and in St. Petersburg (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, formerly the Leningrad Branch of IVAN) rarely enter into a conceptual debate about the Russian Orientalist experience; in the good old fashion of Russian/Soviet empiricism, Russian colleagues limit themselves to publishing archival materials and producing biographies of prominent individual authors. These works are very helpful for establishing facts and figures, but they usually fall short of a critical review of the politicization of Orientology in the USSR.

Important tools are also several recently published biographical dictionaries of Russian/Soviet orientalists, above all the third edition of Sofia D. Miliband’s Dictionary of Soviet (now: Russian) Orientalists (based on the first edition of 1975 that had turned into a three-volume corpus in the 1990s). Mikhail K. Baskhanov produced two reference works on prerevolutionary Russian military Orientalists (an important aspect of Orientology, in the light of the connection between orientalist knowledge and the military conquest of the East), and Ia.V. Vasil’kov and M.Iu. Sorokina edited a fine dictionary on the fates of Orientalists (in the very widest sense) who were repressed by the state, for the whole period between 1917 and 1991. Next to these reference works Rus-

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13 *Neizvestnye stranitsy otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia*, ed. by V.V. Naumkin, 3 vols. (Moscow, 1997-2008).
sian Orientalists and historians published and important archive materials that had been closed in the Soviet period. However, if Western authors are trying to conceptualize the history of Russian Oriental studies, post-Soviet authors rarely problematize these issues, preferring to publish only preliminary sources without a new theoretical cadre (and often maintaining the old one, in slightly different terms).

A study on Soviet Oriental studies needs a clear definition of this discipline. Following Yuri Bregel, I will use the term ‘Orientalist’ for the specialists of the history and culture of the Orient who were trained in language(s) of the respective cultural area that they studied; this term “Orientalist” is thus meant as a profession without any a priori negative connotations. Oriental studies (in Russian: vostokovedenie) appears as a multiple scientific discipline which unified the study of the Orient in historical, social, linguistic, cultural, political and other aspects. The object and goals of this discipline are subjects of discussion in scholarship. This is a very classical definition that is also handled by the editors of the unique Russian textbook Vostokovedenie, intended for the students of the Oriental Faculty at St Petersburg University; it suggests that the Orient as an object of complex research can be understood either geographically or historically and culturally. Geographically the Orient (Vostok) covers all Asian countries and northern Africa. In cultural terms the editors of this textbook define the Orient through the notion of traditionalism and of the authority of the past; this is, of course, already a more problematic approach, one that is not free of Eurocentrism.

Anyways, Soviet scholarship did indeed follow the common European notion of the Orient, though with some qualifications. First of all, Soviet scholars distinguished between the Soviet Orient (which typically comprised Central Asia and the Caucasus, but partly also the Volga-Urals and Siberia) and the Foreign Orient. In Soviet propaganda, the peoples of the Soviet Orient (narody sovetskogo Vostoka) were used as a showcase of success-


17 Vvedenie v vostokovedenie: Obshchii kurs, ed. by E.I. Zelenev and V.B. Kasevich (St Petersburg, 2011), 16.
ful socialist development; and in the research structures of the institutes, Soviet and Foreign Oriental research were neatly separated. The second big division was that between studies on the historical Orient and contemporary research. Classical Oriental studies investigated the distant past, mainly on the basis of textual evidence derived from manuscripts and epigraphic inscriptions. The “practical” Orientology studied the current situation in Eastern countries, which had an obvious political coloring and was understood as a background information for the Kremlin’s political decision making. In Soviet times there was, and still is, the widespread notion that the Moscow Orientalists were working “closer to the party demands” while the Leningrad scholars analyzed and published their dusty Oriental manuscripts. As we will see in the course of this book, this notion is misleading, since also manuscript editions were at times a highly political topic.

With these definitions in mind, the Orientalist appears as a researcher who devoted himself to the study of Oriental societies, whatever his specific subject. This definition is extremely large and includes almost everybody who has ever written something academic about the Orient. In this dissertation I narrow this field down significantly by introducing a geographical focus that at the same time also circumscribes the Orientalist discourse more precisely: I analyze only those Orientalists who were specialists in medieval Central Asian and Kazakhstani history, and who wrote on the history of the Kazakh SSR on the basis of written and archeological sources. This focus is legitimate from the perspective mentioned above with the words of Vera Tolz, namely that Oriental Studies in the USSR were an important arena, and agent, in the construction of Soviet “Muslim” nations in Central Asia.

**Soviet Nationality Policies**

While the Soviet Union has long been regarded as the “prison of nations”, and Stalin as the “breaker of nations”, recent Western research has focused on the nation-building aspects of Soviet policies and the role of Lenin and Stalin in the process of creation of nations. Stalin’s characterization of Soviet culture as “national in form and socialist in content” is crucial for understanding Bolshevik nationality politics. Terry Martin, in his monograph *The Affirmative Action Empire*, emphasized that Soviet policies included a comprehensive program of promoting cadres from the minorities and of modernizing the republican nations which were regarded as economically, culturally and politically ‘backward’. According to
Martin, “the category of cultural backwardness was, like indigenousness, related to the Bolshevik decolonization project, since Tsarist colonial oppression was said to have greatly exacerbated cultural backwardness. However, unlike indigenousness, cultural backwardness was even more closely linked to the Bolshevik ideology of developmentalism. The Bolsheviks believed there was one path to progress and that various nations were located at different points along the path. The Bolsheviks aimed to dramatically accelerate the modernization of the former Russian Empire, which for them meant industrialization, urbanization, secularization, education, universal literacy, and territorial nationhood.”

While Martin focused above all on minorities in Russia, several authors have done similar work on Central Asia. Francine Hirsch introduced the concept of “double assimilation”: first, “the assimilation of diverse peoples into nationality categories and [second] the assimilation of nationally categorized groups into the Soviet state and society.” This means that the Bolsheviks first imposed the European category of nation onto Central Asian peoples whose groups previously maintained a multitude of religious, tribal, geographical, and professional identities, and then integrated them into the family of Soviet peoples, as Francine Hirsch puts it, under the notion of ‘homo sovieticus’ (sovetskii chelovek). From a similar perspective Andrienne Edgar investigated the creation of the Turkmen nation out of numerous nomadic tribes; and Douglas Northrop looked at how the Bolsheviks used women to promote their influence on traditional society. All of these recent studies paid attention to the fact that Soviet scholars (linguists, ethnographers, statisticians and others) were involved in Soviet nationality politics and participated in the process of nation building; however, as of yet there is no systematic study of the contribution of Soviet Orientalists (historians, philologists, archeologists) to the construction of national histories, and on the transformation of the image of Islam in Soviet Central Asia – and this is what my thesis attempts to outline for the case of Kazakhstan.


The Kazakh Case

The relation between academic Oriental studies and politics was of a mutual character: just as scholarship contributed to, and partly shaped, the ‘creation of nations,’ so also the Bolshevik nationality policies shaped Soviet and post-Soviet Oriental studies.

Soviet Orientalist research on Kazakhstan must therefore be seen within the context of the larger Soviet modernization program of what was to become Kazakhstan. From the late 1920s to the early 1940s the Bolsheviks implemented a series of economic, political and cultural projects which were aimed at overcoming the Kazakhs’ ‘backwardness’: the national delimitation in Central Asia and the establishment of five national republics (1924-1936); the building of the Turksib railroad (1926-1931), which finally connected Central Asia with production centers in Siberia; the campaign of sedentarization and collectivization (1927-1940); the struggle against religion in the whole country (1930s-1941); the latinization (1927) and cyrilization (1939) of the script in which the literary Kazakh language was written; and the production the national/republican histories for each of the Central Asian republics (1941-1980s). These modernization actions reflect a clear ontological distinction between the progressive Europeans (Russians, Germans, Jews, etc.) on the one side, and the underdeveloped Oriental peoples, including the Kazakhs, on the other. In the 1920s, the latter had very little evidence of industry on their territory, which was an important marker for “progress”; rather, the Kazakhs mainly lived in the countryside, and were still caught up in what was called “vestiges of the past” (which, by contrast to neighboring Uzbekistan, was in the Kazakh case more associated with Shamanism than with Islam). The vast majority of the Kazakhs was illiterate. Accordingly, the very existence of a Kazakh nation was a quite sensitive question, even after the Kazakhs obtained their territorial and political body in the form of the Kazakh Autonomous Republic within the RSFSR, and then, in 1936, in the Kazakh SSR.

While the role of ethnography in these processes of nation building in Central Asia has already been studied by a number of scholars (though not with a focus on Kazakh-
the role of Oriental studies (in our definition above) has as of yet not received much attention. A first step was set by the Kazakh-born Dutch scholar Zifa Auezova, who gave an overview of the early Soviet attempts of writing Kazakh national history between 1920 and 1936. Auezova demonstrated that in a period where the Party line was much in flux, and where historiography was still continuing some conceptions of the time from before the Bolshevik Revolution, Russian and Kazakh scholars came up with several subsequent approaches to Kazakh history in order to compose the respective “ideologically correct” historical narrative with tragic results for some of these authors.23

**The Research Questions**

In this complex field, there are several overall issues that this thesis tries to shed light upon. The first of these is the question of center-periphery relations. In contrast to Tashkent, Dushanbe and other republican capitals in the Soviet east, Alma-Ata never obtained its own, Soviet Kazakhstani Oriental Institute; such an institute emerged only in the 1990s, in the light of independent Kazakhstan a new search for identity. This means that Kazakhstani Orientology had a weaker and smaller structural fundament in the republic, being situated at universities and history institutes, and that it was more dependent on the transfer of knowledge and of cadres from the existing institutes in Moscow and, above all, Leningrad. An additional factor is the role of Tashkent in neighboring Uzbekistan, which already hosted the first Central Asian University where also Oriental studies were conducted. We will have to ask what kind of labor divisions emerged in this triangular relationship.

Related to this question of center-periphery relations is the question how local, Kazakhstani cadres in Orientology were produced, and under which political conditions they operated. How did the role and views of “Russian” scholars change after moving from a metropolis to a local centre, and vice versa? What was the role of representatives of differ-

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ent nationalities in Kazakhstani Oriental studies? What was the role of national markers in the discourse of power in various centres and peripheries? Some scholars of indigenous origin even managed to be promoted to high-level academic positions in the central scientific institutions. How did this affect their vision of the Orient?

The second group of questions deals with the process of nation building itself. What was the role of academics in nation building, and how did this process influence the whole academic system? How did the regional and national discourses on Kazakhstani history develop under Soviet rule? Which parts of prerevolutionary discourses on Russia’s Orient were continued in the Soviet epoch, and which were completely replaced?

The last, third, group of bit questions touches upon the history of Soviet Islam. What was the fate of the Islamic heritage in the 20th century, and how did academic scholars shape the image of Islam in Kazakhstan? When many scholars of Muslim background entered the Academy of Sciences, did they accept the rules of the game imposed by the Bolsheviks, or did they have alternative ways for dealing with the system? This pool of questions has particular relevance for archeology, which dealt with the Islamic monuments of the past.

My overall aim is to identify the borders of autonomy in a field of scholarship that had its own hierarchies and tasks, and to analyze the diversity of knowledge-power in a complex field with several centres and peripheries. I try to identify the cases of politicization in scholarship with a number of very different case studies, ranging from historiography to archeology and Islamic studies. Furthermore, my goal is to identify the scholars who played the dominant roles in Soviet Oriental studies, and to see how they played the political game in order to increase their opportunities for research and promotion. As this will all be done on the basis of texts (and interviews with contemporary scholars some of whom participated in Soviet Oriental projects), my work is to a large degree a study of the discourse on Kazakhstan’s identity. Next to center-periphery relations, as discussed above, I am above all interested in the dynamics between regional (Central Asian) and republican (Kazakhstani) approaches to the history of the country. For which political purposes did the Soviets finance some huge and impressive Oriental projects (on this term see below) on Kazakhstan, while others ended up in the drawer? Which national historical narratives were legitimate at which point in time, and which were not – and for what reason? Here one guiding thread through the whole of my thesis is the issue of nomadism and urban cul-
ture, against the Soviet campaigns to settle the Kazakhs and to give them a worthy history that by definition also needed to include city civilization – hence the title of my thesis “Settling the Past” which refers not only to the idea that the Soviets wanted to create an unambiguous, generalized image of the Kazakhs’ past, but more specifically that they tried to attribute settled city civilization to the Kazakhs. In this context, how did Soviet scholarship conceptualize the interplay of philological, historical and archeological work? And again: in how far was the development of national discourses linked to the activities of individual scholars – what was their agency? My material will provide no coherent answers to these big questions, but it will shed significant light on them and provide preliminary evidence from my case studies.

Moving from these general problems to the concrete case studies that will be elaborated upon in this book, I would now like to summarize a number of hypothesis that came up during my work, and that I believe I can substantiate with archival evidence.

**Hypothesis I: Institutional Development of Oriental Studies**

Institutionally Oriental scholarship in the Kazakh SSR was introduced mainly by Leningrad specialists. My first hypothesis is that the group of Orientalists who worked in Kazakhstan was de facto a branch of Leningrad classical Oriental studies and archeology.

Leningrad and Moscow were the main centres of Soviet Oriental Studies. All the main institutions in the framework of the USSR Academy of Sciences were located there. Tashkent had the role of a local regional metropolis of Oriental studies and was an important educational centre for indigenous cadres from Central Asian republics. However, before the 1950s the majority of research projects dealing with Central Asia were carried out in Leningrad. In the post-war period we observe the geographical expansion of Orientalogy into the republics; while Kazakhstan did not get an own Oriental Institute, it still benefitted from this shift to the republics through the establishment of research teams in Alma-Ata at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR (IIAE ANKazSSR) and at the university. Representatives from the centres, foremost Leningrad scientific institutions, played a decisive role in this process, and the connections with Leningrad remained vital for the whole Soviet period. The education
of local cadres was guaranteed through the privileged position of students from the southern republics at major universities in Moscow and Leningrad, through short-term studies (or internships, ranging from several months to several years) at the central research institutions under the supervision of well-known specialists, and also through regular consultations and the collaboration in all-Soviet academic conferences. As a result, the first generation of Alma-Ata-based scholars received their education before the 1950s in Moscow, Leningrad and Tashkent or under the supervision of metropolitan scholars. The Kazakhstani scholars of various nationalities who studied in Leningrad returned with the methodological approaches characteristic for the Leningrad school of classical Oriental studies and Oriental archeology.

As mentioned above, one of the main characteristics of Soviet Oriental studies in Kazakhstan was the absence of an institution with a corresponding name. Yet all through the Soviet era there were several attempts to set up a special sector of Oriental studies in the framework of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in Alma-Ata. However, they all failed, and the major group of Orientalists working in Kazakhstan was located at the sectors of archeology and history of pre-revolutionary Kazakhstan in the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography.

**Hypothesis II: Settling the Past in Kazakhstan**

Soviet studies on medieval Kazakhstan dealt primarily with issues of ethnogenesis, statehood, and economic relations. The territory of present-day Kazakhstan, situated in the very heart of Eurasia, has always been an area of intense interaction between nomadic and settled populations. The Silk Road went through the Kazakh Steppe, and numerous empires were created and destroyed in this vast territory. In tenth century the Qarakhaniid rulers Satūq Boghrā Khan (920-955) and his son Mūsā (956-958) converted to Islam, and approximately at that time Islam started to spread in the Steppe. The Mongol invasion of the thirteenth century integrated this region into a new world empire, and since that time up to the Russian conquest descendants of Chingiz Khan monopolized the right of power. According to Steppe tradition only the Chingizids possessed the charisma and legitimacy for rule. The Kazakh Khanate, supposedly the first Kazakh state, emerged out of post-Mongol states in the second half of the 15th century. Essential in this process were the wars over the cities of
the middle Syr-Daria valley which the Kazakh khans waged, in the 16th to 18th centuries, against the Uzbek dynasties in what is now Uzbekistan. With its oasis towns and settlements, this region – present-day Southern Kazakhstan – played a crucial role as economic and political centres.

Since the second half of the 16th century Muscovy, and then the Russian Empire incorporated more and more large territories with significant non-Russian populations. By comparison to the colonial expansion of other European empires, the Russian Empire lacked a clear geographical border between the supposed metropolis and colonies. The Kazakh tribes were gradually included (some peacefully, others by force) into the Russian Empire since the 18th century, and became a part of ‘Russia’s own Orient’. However, due to the presumably nomadic character of its population, this region remained very different from the other “Oriental” areas of the Russian Empire, especially the Volga-Urals and the area inhabited by Siberian Muslims, and also differed from the Caucasus and Transoxiana.

Russia has a long tradition of Oriental scholarship which was always stimulated by the colonial and political context. The main feature of the pre-revolutionary Russian perception of the Kazakhs was the vision of the local population as exclusively nomadic. For most Russian observers this had negative connotations, for some others it did not per se; but in general, pastoralism was regarded as inferior to sedentary agriculture on the ladder of civilizations. The mobility of the nomads was associated with chaos, absence of state institutions and lack of productivity. The nomadic way of life was seen as something constant and predetermined. As Ian Campbell neatly put it, in the Russians’ view “the essential nature of the steppe was unchanging.” During Tsarist times the Kazakhs were not associated with urban life.

In the research literature there is indeed a broad consensus that pre-Soviet Kazakh identity was based on the nomadic way of life and on the common ancestry of tribes. And

24 V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 10.
already since the promulgation of the *Regulations on Siberian Kirgiz* (1822) the Tsarist authorities articulated the idea that the Kazakh nomads should gradually settle down and accept “Russian imperial culture and values.” Thus already for the Russian colonial administration sedentarization was a means for ‘civilizing’ peoples of the Empire. Russian administrational efforts at gradual sedentarization then led to the Soviet settlement campaigns that interrupted the long tradition of Kazakh nomadism. For Kazakhstan, it had most terrible consequences; the Soviet collectivization of rural economies in the late 1920s and early 1930s caused such a starvation that approximately a third of the Kazakhs either perished or moved out of the country.

My hypothesis is that in the Soviet period, historians struggled with this bi-polar framework of ‘nomads vs. farmers’; and there were various attempts to come to a more complex picture in which the population of the Kazakh Steppe practiced, in the medieval period, various forms of economy. The concept that also the Kazakhs possessed an urban culture, and statehood linked to towns, became central elements in the academic production on the Kazakh past. In the 1970s-80s Moscow archeologists suggested that Central Asian history was much more colorful than the division into two forms of socio-economic life would make us think: there were no ‘pure’ nomads but a wide range of economic relations between ‘farmers’ and ‘nomads’. Since the 1950s, Kazakh national scholars even regarded urban culture as the major part of the national heritage. This critique of the dichotomy of sedentary vs. nomadic civilizations lies in the core of my research, because I am trying to reveal the instruments and ideas by which academic sciences changed the image of a people. Oriental studies in Kazakhstan contributed much to the national narrative through the promotion of the idea that the Kazakhs were also city-dwellers.

**Hypothesis III: Regional History next to National Approaches**


One can distinguish two spatial approaches in Tsarist and Soviet traditions of studying Central Asia. The first approach is a regional one, one that regards Central Asia as a whole. In Tsarist times, this region comprised the administrative unit called Steppe region (*Stepnoi Krai*), largely coinciding with the territory of modern Kazakhstan, plus Turkestan (Transoxiana or Western Turkestan, Eastern Turkestan, and Afghan Turkestan, the latter two for most of the time beyond the borders of the Russian colonial state). Transoxiana was the main object of interest for Russian Oriental studies, and thus Turkestan studies (*turkestanovedenie*) or Central Asian history (*istoriia Srednei Azii*) meant above all this part of the overall region. The founding father of this regional view was the eminent Russian (of Baltic German origin) Orientalist of broadest profile, Vasilii V. Bartol’d (1869-1930), whose influence on the discipline was and still is tremendous. Soviet power, however, decided to introduce modernization through the creation of individual nations, and gave up the regional approach: the common Central Asian history was cut into national pieces. However, the regional perspective still continued for a while, and ran parallel to the “republican” approach. This ended in the 1930s, when, after national delimitation and the construction of national cultures, it became almost impossible to study the history from a regional point of view. Some scholars of Bartol’d’s school accepted the new rules, and participated in state-sponsored campaigns to produce national historiographies; others, like Aleksandr A. Semenov, did not give up their regional perspective.

My contention that the regional perspective did not simply vanish from the field is supported by the finding, not acknowledged in Western scholarship up to this day, that the regional approach returned into academic life in the 1970s. Again, this seems to have been the result of a change in the party line; and this is my third hypothesis. I argue that the first return of the regional approach occurred already right after the Stalin’s death, with the rehabilitation of several ‘bourgeois’ Orientalists: since the late 1950s, the major works of several prominent pre-revolutionary and early Soviet Orientalists were republished in Moscow and Leningrad, and widely disseminated all over the Soviet Union. The majority of these authors (like the Arabist Krachkovskii and the Iranist Bertel’s) in fact shared Bartol’d’s regional view on Central Asian history. In the 1970s, the Academy of Sciences (obviously on state demand) even went a significant step further and initiated a new program of writing regional histories, in which authors from various republics were engaged to pro-
duce a common history. My suggestion is that this return of regionalism was very much an attempt of the center to counter the strength of nationalisms, not only in the Baltic states and the Caucasus (the other big regions that were covered) but also in Central Asia, where the Party bosses of the republics gradually escaped Moscow’s control. As we will see, this program failed: the borders that the USSR and its scholars had set up between the newly created nations were by then already too strong to be incorporated, again by Orientalists, into a single historical narrative.

Here my research contributes to the broader discussion of the role of nationalism in the fall of the Soviet Union. I argue that already in the 1970s Moscow could not impose its decisions upon national elites and intelligentsias of Central Asia.

**Hypothesis IV: Oriental Projects as a Conceptual Framework**

The instruments of these policies towards academia were embodied in institutions, discourses, and in the everyday management of Soviet scholarship; an analysis of these instruments demonstrates the full extent of politicization in Oriental studies. In order to conceptualize these tools I would like to introduce here the term ‘Oriental projects’.

“Oriental projects” were important scholarly research programs in Soviet Oriental studies, of various size, duration, and contents. Usually they started with a proposal to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR or the respective institutions on republican level; these proposals were written by respected scholars in the field, and one can assume that they were submitted after preliminary discussions with the Academy, or even on higher demand. The projects were carried out by big collectives of specialists in the

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32 This concept was inspired by the notion of ‘Orientalist projects’ used by Edward Said, however in a completely different context – to denote the Western military campaigns in Oriental countries (more precisely – Napoleon’s wars in the Near East). See: E. Said, *Orientalism* (New York, 1978), 76. The concept of Oriental projects as I understand it is also applicable for Soviet ethnography, which was “tasked with several projects that were intended directly to contribute to the state program of cultural transformation, eradicating ‘harmful’ cultural phenomena and fostering progressive socialist culture” (J. Schoeberlein, “Heroes of Theory: Central Asian Islam in Post-War Soviet Ethnography,” in: F. Mühlfried, S. Sokolovskii (eds.), *Exploring the Edge of Empire. Soviet Era Anthropology in the Caucasus and Central Asia* (Münster, 2011), 61).

field and they were of interdisciplinary nature. Oriental projects united scholars of different disciplinary backgrounds from the same institution, and often they comprised representatives of several institutions from the centre and the periphery. The initial proposals – the ones that have been documented – usually included the substantiation of the project’s necessity; here it was emphasized that this or that individual project was not merely an academic enterprise but also essential for political reasons. These project proposals thus give striking evidence of the political side of Soviet Oriental scholarship, and of the fact that the project leaders were well aware of this, and used it for their purposes. In addition, these proposals usually provided information on the history of previous studies, included a working plan and a budget calculation, which sometimes reached impressive sums. I call these projects ‘Oriental’ because several of these huge projects had the translation and edition of Arabic, Persian, and Turkic manuscripts as their goal, thus the core business of classical Orientology in our definition. Sometimes a project proposal focused not on one single subject region but on several (e.g. when sources on one or several republics were to be published, over a few years); in such cases the project could turn into a prolonged scientific program. The Oriental projects could also be long scientific campaigns — as for example in the case of the Soviet archeological excavations in Khwarezm (Uzbek SSR) and in the Otrar Oasis (Kazakh SSR). However, not all Oriental projects have been fully documented. Sometimes all we found in the archives is a draft without its further development, whereas in other cases we have a complete history of the project from its first stages to the final publication of the project results. In these cases it is possible to compare the different “political narratives” and to link these to the individual research topics.

Oriental projects are a perfect case for studying two of the major characteristic features of academic Soviet Oriental studies: their collective mode (work in huge “brigades”) and their central planning. If previously scientific enterprises by the Russian Academy of Sciences were mainly the result of individual initiatives (except, probably, for the major geographical explorations, such as the Great Northern Expedition of 1733-43), starting in the 1930s the Soviet system forced scholars to work in huge scientific collectives, on long-term projects with a clearly defined time-schedule, and with openly expressed political goals. Important is that research jobs were assigned, not freely developed by the individual scholar; and the huge Oriental projects were directed by individual leaders of these groups (mostly those who also wrote the proposals, and defined the contents) who then also re-

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ported regularly to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences; in case the project failed, it was them who had to take the responsibility. These leaders quite often developed into ‘monopolizers’ of science, since once a project director managed to establish a link with the Academy and Party leadership, he obtained much freedom to pursue his favorite theories, and to develop his ambitions. Prime examples here would be scholars like the well-known linguist and Orientalist Nikolai Ia. Marr (1865-1934), archeologist Sergei P. Tolstov (1907-1976), and the Iranist Evgenii E. Bertel’s (1890-1957). As we will see on the book, they directed huge projects over many years or decades, and thereby shaped the development of Soviet Oriental studies.

My final, fourth, hypothesis is therefore that the development of Soviet Oriental scholarship on Kazakhstan can be conceptualized in the form of ‘scientific campaigns” or ‘projects’, in the definition introduced above. “Oriental projects” could both limit and increase the agency of the participants; and they were important links between the center and Kazakhstan.

**Individual Projects**

This thesis studies three groups of Oriental projects: philological, archeological, and meta-historical projects. The individual projects are often closely interwoven, which allows us to see not only the breaks caused by political circumstances but also the long lines of continuities in academic approaches, especially with regard to the competition between national and regional views (see Appendix 4 “Discourse Development”). These two competing approaches were employed in various Oriental projects, irrespective of the disciplines involved. ‘Meta-historical narratives’ are multi-volume history works that cover the whole history of the territory of an individual Soviet republic, since time immemorial.

In our case studies we will look at the following Oriental projects and campaigns:


   

   

4. *The History of Irrigation in Central Asia.*
   

   

6. *Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Authors about the History of the Kirgiz and Kirgizstan in the 9th-16th Centuries*
   
   1940-1941 (?). Leningrad Orientalists. Translation of sources. The project failed.

   

8. *History of the Kazakh SSR.*
   

   

    

11. [Rehabilitation of ‘Bourgeois’ Orientalists].
    

    

13. The Otrar Campaign.

14. The *Shajara* Project.


15. The Yasawī Shrine.

1974-1980s. Kazakh specialists. Restoration of the shrine and complex studies of the building

16. Regional Histories.


**Chapters**

The architecture of my dissertation is predetermined by the sub-disciplines of Soviet Oriental studies: philology, history and archeology.

In the **first chapter** I challenge the perception that classical philological Orientology is non-political. This will be done by an investigation of how, in the context of the national delimitation of Central Asia, medieval Islamic historiographies with regional perspectives were cut into national pieces. I argue that classical Oriental studies obtained a monopoly on the study of the Islamic heritage; furthermore, we will see that representatives of the “Islamic religious personnel” (that is, former imams and ‘ulama’) joined the institutional framework of Soviet scholarship, not to the least degree by donating their huge manuscript collections to the Soviet academic libraries. One of the main features of that generation of “Islamic Orientalists” was that they did not write and publish much, preferring instead to engage themselves in the unspectacular and long-term business of cataloging manuscripts, translating historical texts into Russian, and lecturing.

Classical Orientology was concentrated in Leningrad and Tashkent where the largest collections of Islamic manuscripts were located, and where the collectives of well-trained philologists and historians were employed. In this first chapter I put special emphasis on
the role of the collective form of scholarly work which was at the core of Oriental projects management. Smaller groups of classical Orientalists started to appear in other places, including in Alma-Ata, only after WWII.

The second chapter is devoted to the long process of writing national histories, and to the interaction of regional and national approaches. I demonstrate how prerevolutionary concepts of Kazakh history were continued by local authors well into the mid-1930s, when they were replaced by new approaches. The latter included a heavy infusion of Marxist ideology, the form of collective work, dependence on the current Party line, a national (re-publican) orientation and the attempt to depict the medieval Kazakhs as city-dwellers. We will encounter heated debates over the key concepts of national histories related to nomadic statehood, the sequence of socioeconomic formations, the re-evaluation of the Russian conquest, and national movements. I also argue that even though the national perspective of history writing became dominant in Soviet historical scholarship since the 1930s, the regional approach remained in existence and was even rehabilitated in the 1970s, when forces in the Communist Party decided to restructure historical narratives in a regional way.

The practical difficulties in the establishment of Kazakhstani Oriental studies and the success of a group of young scholars in Alma-Ata are addressed in the third chapter. I highlight that senior scholars who participated in those efforts, and whom I interviewed in St. Petersburg, Moscow, on the one hand, and in Almaty, on the other, come to very different evaluations about the Soviet academic experience. I use the interviews and the archival materials to elucidate how two successful administrators – Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger – played a tandem in the establishment and management of philological and archeological studies in the Kazakh SSR. The two managed to build up a very strong collective of highly qualified scholars who were able to implement a series of important projects. However, within this collective people had very different characters. Some scholars fully accepted the system and played a significant role in it, while others tried to implement their own agenda (for example, writing a parallel national history on the basis of genealogies) but usually failed in doing so. Significantly, the roles and functions in the team were distributed not in accordance with national or geographical criteria, but rather depending on a person’s attitudes towards ideological questions, on personal relations, and on the ability to work in the existing framework.
The final fourth chapter deals with the gradual ‘sedentarization of the past’ by means of Soviet Oriental archeology in Kazakhstan. Archeological research followed the model of how historical and philological work was organized in the Soviet Union. Decades-long Oriental project on edition of an individual medieval text (Rashīd ad-Dīn is the best example) is quite comparable to stationary works on a particular archeological site: scholars worked collectively, according to the five-year plan and with a goal to bring findings to meta-narrative, where historical evidence will be conceptualized in national terms. I also argue that the Kazakh case followed the general patterns of Soviet Central Asian archeology: the academic approaches and institutional framework were quite similar in all republics. Taking the Otrar campaign as an example, I demonstrate how archeology was closely tied with Oriental studies: the archeologists needed access to the information contained in medieval chronicles in Oriental languages; as they usually did not possess the necessary linguistic knowledge they depended on the collaboration with philologists. Classical Orientology thus provided the historical context for archeological reconstructions.

The archeological research of ancient cities was decisive for changing the general view on the Kazakhs as an exclusively nomadic people. Archeologists proved that in Southern Kazakhstan there were many cities, and that the Kazakhs possessed a tradition of high urban culture. I also address the issue of the fate of Islamic architecture under the Soviet regime: how and why the Yasawī shrine was used in politics. Each chapter encompasses a micro-analysis of views of particular authors, of the implementation of the scientific initiatives, and of the creation of new institutions.

**Sources: Archival Documentation and Oral History**

All of my conclusions are primarily based on the rich files of the Archive of the Ministry of Sciences of the Republic of Kazakhstan (Ob”edenennyi vedomstvennyi arkhiv komiteta nauki ministerstva nauki Respubliki Kazakhstan), the Institute of Archeology of the National Academy of Sciences, and the Central State Archive of the Republic of Kazakhstan, all in Almaty; the Archive of Orientalists of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg Branch of the Archive of Russian Academy of Sciences; the State Hermitage; and the Scientific Archive of the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg. The sources that I was able to find there are typed or
handwritten documents in Russian as well as in several Turkic (including Kazakh) languages and in English. Almost all of these texts are institutional documentations that cast light on the inner structure of the respective academic unit and on the day-to-day work of its employees, often also containing their private scientific files. These documents consist of five-year plans of the given organization, of project drafts, of internal and external correspondence, of party orders, of autobiographical accounts by employees, of discussion protocols on different topics, of reports on finished or closed projects, of unpublished research files (articles, monographs, notebooks, translated or typed texts of manuscripts) and of other materials.

In order to collect sources I spent three months in Almaty in summer 2010 and regularly visited St. Petersburg between 2009 and 2011. To write the history of Oriental archeology in Kazakhstan I participated in the Turkestan Archeological Expedition (Southern Kazakhstan), under the leadership of Dr. Erbulat A. Smagulov, in 2009 and 2010. After studying archival sources and performing field work. I used to test my preliminary results by discussing them in interviews with St. Petersburg and Almaty Orientalists. I benefitted from the opportunity to communicate with several participants — some of whom have now already passed away — of the Oriental projects analyzed here. One can argue that interviews as a source have a shortcoming: informants will give a tendentious picture and will try to downplay sensitive issues. However, the data from the interviews could often be compared with archival documents and published (auto-)biographical sources. Thus I went from documentation to interviews and then back from interviews to documents. In the interviewing process I have been relying on some classical theoretical works on oral history and on my own experience of ethnographic work since 2005. The narratives that I col-


lected from Orientalists are personal in style and reflect their present-day view on the events that happened some thirty or even sixty years ago. These perceptions in hindsight are heavily influenced by the dissolution of the country in which they spent the main part of their lives, and also by the present-day status of the scholar in post-Soviet societies. For example, the moving of Vladimir Nastich and Tursun Sultanov from Almaty to central scientific institutions in Moscow and St. Petersburg in the 1970s and 1980s determined their respective evaluation of the Soviet experience. Some of the Kazakh scholars with whom I conducted interviews also subjected Soviet Oriental studies to a critique from national positions. In their interpretation, this or that big initiative in Kazakh history writing failed mainly because of the pressure of the administrative regime. I also tried to catch all nuances by comparing the official documentation from the centres and the peripheries. Initially I planned to edit a collection of interviews with the elder generation of Russian Orientalists, but this idea did not find their support; a circumstance that supports my impression that my interview partners were completely honest and open during our conversations, without vanity. Unfortunately I came too late to conduct interviews with Vadim M. Masson (1929-2010), a leading archeologist of Central Asia, and Turkologist Iurii A. Petrosian (1929-2011), both renowned and competent Leningrad scholars.

When preparing interviews I had to decide whom to interview. Of course, I was above all interested in the memoirs of those colleagues who themselves participated in Oriental projects and who worked at the respective scientific institutions. Second, I tried to keep a balance between representatives of the St Petersburg academic circles and those in Almaty. Finally, I was lucky enough to talk to several relatives of those Orientalists who have already passed away, which was helpful for learning about their personal contacts, scientific trips, and for identifying their relations with colleagues and the administration of their institutes. All interviews were conducted in the Russian language and dealt in the first place with the career of each conversation partner, with his or her involvement.

Methods: Discourse, Network, and Institutions

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This huge corpus of sources was approached by a combination of discourse, network, and institutional analysis, a combined perspective that was first formulated by a team of scholars at Bochum University in the late 1990s and early 2000s.\textsuperscript{37} Private letters, autobiographies and memoirs map the geography of contacts of Soviet Orientalists all over the Union, as well as abroad. The sources suggest that informal contacts between individuals were indeed more important than the institutional ties,\textsuperscript{38} even though almost all Orientalists in question were employed at the USSR Academy of Sciences. Network analysis is aimed to study relations between persons and social groups and to reveal the links of individual actors to bigger social structures.\textsuperscript{39} The main question here is the problem of center-periphery relations: what were the relations between the scientific centers in Moscow/Leningrad (as well as between the two of them) and local republican groups of scholars? Which ties prevailed: horizontal ties between the colleagues from different republics, or vertical links between the central and republican centers? Was there a hierarchy of centres and peripheries in Central Asia, and inside of Kazakhstan? These questions are important for the characterization of Kazakh Orientology. In view of the Soviet system of strong institutionalization, network analysis should be combined with studying the dynamic process of institution building. As we shall see, the whole history of Kazakh Orientology consists of the endless establishment, reform, change and abolishing of various academic institutions which dealt with the Orient. Finally, in this dissertation I pay much attention not only to scientific programs and individual projects but also to a wide range of scholars with their dynamic views, who shaped the Soviet academic discourses on the Kazakh past. I reconstruct these discourses on the basis of the published and unpublished materials. To


visualize all these dynamic changes and to accent the role of individual players I drew several schemes that were placed in the attachment.
Chapter I: The Leningrad Connection: Oriental Projects of Source Editions

1.1 Classical Oriental Studies and Soviet Politics

With the establishment of the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg (1818) a new center of Russian Oriental Studies emerged which became famous for its rich manuscript collection and for its historical and philological studies of written sources. Even after the transfer of the academic Institute of Oriental Studies from Leningrad to Moscow (1950), the center of manuscript studies remained in its former place as the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, which continued to be regarded by foreign and native observers as a school of classical, non-political, philological Oriental Studies. The supposed distance from politics is the common feature for Leningrad Orientalists. The perceived ‘non-politicization’ of classical Orientalists is connected to the image of the Leningrad intelligentsia in general, which has been described as devoted to high ideals and values and not interested in politics. In his account of the history of the Leningrad intelligentsia in Soviet times, philologist Sergei Averintsev (1937-2004) remarked in 2004 that Leningrad was characterized by “the strongest [in comparison with Moscow] repressive-ideological atmosphere… The optimal stability of cultural values guaranteed a special pathos of professional honesty of the best members of the oppositional Leningrad intelligentsia… In Leningrad it was possible to meet real priests of science (zhretsya nauki) which seemed to be a special kind of people; the last citizens of Atlántida…”40 However, my argument is that since the 1917 Revolution, the Leningrad intelligentsia and the Orientalists among them found themselves in a situation in which involvement into politics became unavoidable.

In the given chapter I will study several philological projects conducted mostly by Leningrad Orientalists in the 1930s-70s. These projects deservedly became a matter of pride for Soviet research. At the same time, they clearly demonstrate the mechanism of

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involvement of Oriental philologists into politics. My thesis is the following: even though the source studies of Leningrad Orientalists remained remote from the most vulgar ideology of the state and party, the publication projects in the field of Oriental Studies were instigated and directed by political demand, and were later used as the main sources for the official historical narratives, especially in the new Soviet meta-histories of the individual Soviet republics of Central Asia. As for the Leningrad source publications of the 1930s, after WWII they were taken as the basis for comprehensive republican histories meant to demonstrate continuity from ancient times to the mid-20th century.

Traditionally, scholars explain the allegedly non-political image of the St. Petersburg/Leningrad school of Oriental Studies through the obvious influence of German Orientology, supposedly less connected to colonial politics than Oriental studies in Britain and France. Many great Russian Orientalists of the early 20th century were of German origin and represented the German model of textological Oriental studies, mainly focused on ancient texts. David Schimmelpenninck van der Oye underlines the idea that in 19th-century Russia a sophisticated scholarly approach dominated in St. Petersburg (sure, with some exceptions), while in the Kazan school priority was given to the practical needs for educating translators in state service. This supposed German neglect of politics is for example reflected in the words of Dutch Arabist J.J. Witkam, who remarked about his famous colleague Carl Brockelmann (1868-1956): “He survived the [Second World] war as a private scholar, and was never compromised in any official capacity before, during or after the war.”

Did the Orientalists-philologists manage to keep distance from the current Soviet politics? How did they behave in the new system of scholarship created by the Bolsheviks? In what extend did the prerevolutionary traditions of classical Orientology in St Petersburg

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41 Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient*, 73-79.
43 D. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, *Russian Orientalism: Asia in the Russian Mind from Peter the Great to the Emigration* (New Haven & London, 2010), 121, 175
continued, or one can speak of a radical break with the past? Is there a link between source editions and nation-building in Central Asia? What was the fate of Islamic scholarship in the field of source studies? Did the Islamic scholars cooperate with the new system or did they try to escape from any contacts with the Bolsheviks? How different were source studies in different centres of scholarship: Leningrad, Almaty and Tashkent? Is it possible to see the very language and methods of classical Oriental philology implemented in Central Asian republics as colonial? These are the questions which I seek to answer in this chapter.

1.2 Towards the New Scholarship: Planning and Collective Work

Throughout the 1920s, the Soviet government paid serious attention to the foreign Orient which was regarded as an object of exporting the Bolshevik revolution. Already at that time also the study of the Soviet Orient received the attention of the government, but the Civil war, the anarchy of institutions, and difficult relations with the Tsarist intelligentsia made serious and large-scale investigation programs impossible. The Bolsheviks decided to intervene directly in scientific structures and management. They understood the power of institutions and of large-scale research organizations through which it is possible to organize solid and broad investigations. The problem was that there were many scientific institutions of the Tsarist time in Leningrad that had very few employees and were unable to solve the issues which the Bolsheviks liked to see addressed. In response, the government tried to organize its own, parallel institutional network. The significance accorded to the Soviet Orient as a scientific topic of state priority resulted in the establishment of the Communist University of the Workers of the East (Komnunisticheskii universitet trudiaschchikhsia Vostoka, KUTV) in Moscow in 1921.

Four years later, on 18 May 1925, Joseph Stalin formulated the main tasks of this teaching institution as a University which united students from the Soviet and foreign Orient. According to Stalin, the KUTV had to prepare specialists from among the Oriental peoples in order to develop the “socialist construction” in the republics as well as the cultivation of national culture; the latter had to be “proletarian in its content and national in its

This idea was further elaborated in May 1930 when the Institute of the Peoples of the Soviet Orient at the Scientific Committee of the Central Executive Committee (TsIK) of the Communist Party of the USSR was set up in Moscow. Most probably this was just a bureaucratic office, but the fact that TsIK – one of the two parallel governmental structures of the early USSR – created an institute of this kind shows how important research on the Soviet Orient was for the Bolsheviks. The main task of the Institute was “to study the actual problems of socialist development of the peoples of the Soviet Orient and to train scientific and practical workers from among the local population.” Curiously, the Bolsheviks’ turn to the study of the Soviet Orient clearly resembled the call of Arabist Viktor R. Rozen’s (1864-1908) pre-revolutionary school of Oriental studies for research on ‘Russia’s Own Orient.’ The Soviet officials decided to use professional academics for their nationality policies in the Central Asian republics.

The large scholarly institution that was to become a bridgehead for the Soviet system of scientific work was, however, the Academy of Sciences. This was the main organization where Soviet Oriental studies were developed. However, it took the Bolsheviks several years from 1928 to 1931 to reconstruct and redirect this old institution which in many aspects did not fit into the new regime. Its location in Leningrad made it difficult to control. In the Tsarist time the Academy was rather a tight circle of privileged intellectuals than a collective of scientific workers. In Soviet parlance such an institution was regarded as a remnant of the bourgeois past. In the late 1920s the government decided to undertake efforts to achieve the so-called ‘Sovietization’ of the Academy. The ‘Sovietization’ of the Academy of Sciences started in 1928 with the anti-Academic campaign in the newspaper Leningradskaiia Pravda. On its pages the Academy was called a center for people of the Tsarist past. The authorities changed the social composition of its members and the entire manner of work. A significant feature of Soviet scholarship was its planned character (planirovanie). This system existed in the economy as well as in sciences. Every five years


47 Vestnik Komakademii (Moscow, 1931), No. 10-11, 54.

48 V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 10-13.

a given scientific institution received official orders (direktivy) from the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences that pointed out the important areas of research and gave general instructions on how to organize work. It was on 3 October 1930 that the general meeting of the Academy of Sciences accepted the system of five-year plans.\textsuperscript{50} In the same year of 1930 the Soviets also set up a number of new scientific Institutes that were to provide a new structure to the USSR Academy of Sciences as a whole, with the Presidium as its leading organ. Each Institute in the framework of the Academy included several thematically orientated sub-divisions (groups, sectors). The introduction of planning had a long-lasting effect on the Soviet scientific production. Scholars were given orders which scientific topics are actual and necessary for the state, because the Academy of Sciences was a state-sponsored institution and all its employees were on state service. Research tasks were to be fulfilled within a particular period of time, while the personal research interests of individual scholars were mainly ignored by the administrative management. This fact became crucial for generations of Orientalists who were forced to work in an established framework, and to regularly publish papers on a given topic, leaving aside their own pursuits and agendas.

Already in 1930 the administration of the Institute of Oriental Studies, at that time led by academician Sergei F. Ol’denburg (1863-1934), was obliged to compile its first plan. Academician Ol’denburg was a renowned organizer of science in his position as permanent secretary of the Russian/Soviet Academy (1904-1929) as well as director of the Asiatic Museum (1916-1930) and of its successor, the Institute of Oriental Studies (1930-1934).\textsuperscript{51} In the Archive of Orientalists in St. Petersburg I have found detailed documentations for each five-year plan (piatiletka) of the period 1930-1970 describing research topics, the schools attached to them and the time schedules. The first document of this kind, prepared by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, goes back to the year 1930. This is

\textsuperscript{50} “Materialy k khronike sovetskogo vostokovedeniia, 1917-1941,” Kratkie soobshcheniia Instituta narodov Azii, 76, Materialy k khronike sovetskogo vostokovedeniia, Istoriia Mongolii i Kitaia (Moscow, 1965), 81.

\textsuperscript{51} About him see: B.S. Kaganovich, Sergei Fedorovich Ol’denburg: Opyt biografii (St. Petersburg, 2006); V. Tolz, Russian Academicians and the Revolution: Combining Professionalism and Politics (London, 1997), 108-122. Nicholas Poppe wrote that “when Lenin was alive, i.e. until 1924, Ol’denburg’s authority was fully recognized by the Soviets... Lenin always listened to him attentively and, whenever possible, Lenin always fulfilled Ol’denburg’s entreaties” (N. Poppe, Reminiscences, ed. H.G. Schwarz (Western Washington, 1983), 51). Kaganovich shows that this was probably exaggerated. Already “in October 1929 Oldenburg was stripped of his post as permanent secretary, and he spent the following nights sleeping fully dressed in anticipation of arrest by the OGPU secret police (Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, Russian Orientalism, 197).”
very important because the period of 1928-31 is known as “the Great Break” in the Academy of Sciences, when the whole institution was reshaped and redirected towards tasks which were defined by the Bolsheviks.\textsuperscript{52} The instructions for drawing the first work-plan of the Institute of Oriental Studies, produced in the Academy’s Presidium, contain an introduction and three paragraphs: network, scientific staff, and financial/material support. The introduction states the general scientific goals that mirrored the state demands: 1) to connect scientific works with tasks of economic and cultural development and 2) to centralize studies in order to “speed up the building of socialism.”\textsuperscript{53} The section on networks contained an order to set up a scientific plan which covered the whole network of scientific institutions in Oriental studies from all over the Soviet Union. The projected work had to be coordinated with other institutions in order to avoid duplication; therefore each institution should have a clear specialization. The authors of the document suggested the establishment of big scientific centers, which were to be provided with competent staff and material support. These centers were obliged to adapt their scientific production to the political demand. These documents display the powerful influence of state politics on the development of science. This is not surprising, since the Academy was directly subordinated to the Council of the People’s Commissars and lost its former independence.\textsuperscript{54}

On the basis of the above mentioned document, administrators of the former Asiatic Museum (since 1930 the Institute of Oriental Studies) formulated \textit{The Work Plan of the Asiatic Museum in 1930-1934}. The anonymous author (most probably the director of the Institute, Sergei Ol’denburg) formulated the general task of the Institute as to collect, keep and study Oriental books and manuscripts and European literature related to academic Oriental studies. At the same time Orientalists had to work on the history, art and literature of the Soviet Orient.\textsuperscript{55} In addition the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad was also


\textsuperscript{54} A. Vuchinich, \textit{The Soviet Academy of Sciences}, 12.

aimed to study the history and culture of Soviet Oriental peoples.\textsuperscript{56} This task is also mentioned in Oriental publishing projects which were carried out in the 1930s. For example, in an introductory account (1938) devoted to the Persian sources on Turkmen history in the 16\textsuperscript{th}-19\textsuperscript{th} centuries, Iranian studies scholar Aleksandr A. Romaskevich (1855-1942) referred to “the task, which was formulated by the Party and government, of studying the civil history (grazhdanskaia istoriia) of the peoples of the USSR and the peoples of Soviet Central Asia.” This task was presupposing a close investigation of original sources.\textsuperscript{57}

The status of classical Orientology however remained ambivalent. In the early 1930s the official press openly turned against the ‘old’ philological Oriental Studies.\textsuperscript{58} Due to the pressure inside and outside of the Academy of Sciences many Orientalists decided to cooperate with the regime and fulfill the state requirements. While before 1917 some scholars dreamed that their research might gain more influence on the exercise of political power,\textsuperscript{59} the opposite occurred after the ‘Sovietization’ of the Academy: scholarly work was put under close political control. Already before the October Revolution Vasilii V. Bartol’d pointed out the political significance of studying the Orient through classical texts and antiquity as opposed to any direct and unprepared investigation of the contemporary situation. In Bartol’d’s view, “[e]quipped with the theory-based knowledge of Oriental languages, literature, history and geography of Eastern countries, a future diplomat, admin-

\textsuperscript{56} The first steps in this direction were conducted by the Institute of Oriental Studies in collaboration with the Historical-Archeographical Institute. See the following reports: “Rabota nad istochnikami po istorii Vostochnoi Evropy i Kavkaza v Akademii nauk SSSR” and “O rabote arkeograficheskogo sektora Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR” Istorik-marksist 1 (1937), 197-198, 250-253. On the appearance of Soviet Orient as a new research field see: S. Panarin, “The Soviet East as a New Subject of Oriental Studies,” in: V. Naumkin (red.), State, Religion, and Society in Central Asia: a post-Soviet Critique (London, 1993), 1-16.


\textsuperscript{59} V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 69-84.
istrator or tradesman will not find it difficult to acquire in a short period of time the specific language he needs, to learn about current politics, trading patterns in the East, etc.”

Since the early 1930s the study of the Soviet Orient was carried out in the framework of joint projects and large scholarly teams. Next to the imposition of planning, the collective form of Soviet Oriental studies through uniting the forces of individual scholars in research groups became one of the main features of its development. Already in 1933 Sergei F. Ol’denburg (perhaps in close collaboration with his colleagues at the Institute) projected the second five-year plan of the Institute of Oriental Studies, in which he argued for enlarging the academic staff of the Institute. “The scientific staff should be trained under the organizational leadership and with financial support of the Institute of Oriental Studies, but also of the national republics which are interested in scientific employees and can pay for that”. And then the document stated: “An important place in the process of training the new staff should be given to the advanced training of national employees under the directorship of the Institute of Oriental Studies and through conferences, academic exchange trips for concrete subjects, and through participation in joint projects.” This envisaged a close collaboration of the center of Orientology in Leningrad with local centers in the republics. While the national republics were mentioned as initiators of projects and the main expenses were to be covered by the national republics to which a given project was related, this did not mean a less significant role for the Leningrad Institute. It is important to know that the system of long guest studies (stazhirovka), conferences and work groups was established already in 1930 and remained common practice until the end of the Soviet Union. Special attention was paid to the training of national scientific personnel under supervision of the Institute of Oriental Studies. For this purpose Ol’denburg suggested to organize common conferences, mutual scientific visits (from the Center to the republics and the other way round), and participation in common projects (“research topics”, sing. tema). The work groups in this five-year plan comprised a large number of scholars (but not yet from republics). As Ol’denburg’s document explained, “science cannot be a privilege of a narrow circle of scholars; even an unprofessional employee deprived of an Oriental studies

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60 V.V. Bartol’d, “Po povodu proekta S.F. Ol’denburga [1902],” in: V.V. Bartol’d, Sochineniia, vol. 9 (Moscow, 1977), 492-3. Quoted in V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 78 and 84.

background can do some scientific work. For that reason it is necessary to work in collectives (*brigady*). The group work will help to share the experience and to support the participation of employees without professional education.” In this way the document proposed the solution of a social task: “to dilute” self-sufficient circles of scholars by including persons (‘non-professionals’) from the proletariat and to avoid the ‘harmful’ individualization of academic life. This system became very common for the Soviet Oriental projects: the self-organization of scholars in private circles (such as the circles for Altaic and Arabic studies in Leningrad) was replaced by the concentration of specialists at official academic institutions.

The document of 1933 also highlights the main goal for the emergence of source edition projects: “In the context of the new tasks [of Soviet scholarship], the work of sectors dealing with the Soviet Orient should be intensified. It is necessary to set up a Sector for the Soviet Orient.” This special sector in the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad was organized only in early 1938 (see below), but the study of the culture of Soviet Oriental peoples (the majority of them being Muslim) was systematically pursued since the early 1930s. In 1934, in the general course of the subjection of scholarship to the Soviet power the Academy of Sciences was moved from Leningrad to Moscow in order to be under closer control of the government. Two years later the ‘collectivization of the Academy’ was started: it presupposed the start of large collective projects, whereas individual studies beyond the general plan were regarded as harmful.

However, there still was space for individual initiative. Not all works published by Russian Orientalists in the 1930s and 1940s were the result of a general scientific program set up in Leningrad. Research also continued on an individual basis, yet also in those cases we observe a strong collaboration between the center and the federated republics. In 1935,

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62 Ibid., f. 7. According to Nicholas Poppe the introduction of team work was a consequence of the purge of the Academy of Sciences in 1929 (Poppe, *Reminiscences*, 117).


i.e. simultaneously with other projects of this kind, Iranian studies scholar Aleksandr N. Boldyrev (1909-1993) began to prepare a critical text of the Badāyi’ al-Waqāi (Amazing Events) by 15th-16th century Herat chronicler Zayn ad-Dīn Maḥmūd Wāṣīfī. Boldyrev started his work in the Tajik Base of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, continued it in the Sector for the Orient of the State Hermitage, and finished it in the Institute of Oriental Studies in 1949; yet it was only in 1961 that his work was published. The Tajik side was highly interested in this edition and supported Boldyrev. This situation is perhaps comparable to the editions of sources on individual republics, when the work was sponsored by respective republican institutions.

As a parallel to the Leningrad projects, in Central Asia source editions and classical Orientology were represented in the works of Aleksandr A. Semenov (1873-1958). Until 1917 Semenov worked in various official functions in Central Asia. He then entered academic institutions, but in the early 1930s he was arrested in Dushanbe and exiled to Kazan. Starting in 1935 Semenov worked in Tashkent at the Scientific Institute of Art Studies (Nauchno-issledovatel’skii institut iskusstvoznaniia UzSSR), where he studied medieval historiography and Arabic-script epigraphy of Central Asia. Even though he had a ‘dubious past’ as a Tsarist official, Semenov participated in various Leningrad projects, and for a while he even directed the Rashīd al-Dīn project (see below).

Already in the 1920s, Semenov was involved in the identification of Islamic manuscripts in Soviet Uzbekistan, and compiled a list of sources on the history of the Uzbek people. Shortly before WWII he formulated his own plan of manuscript editions, and this project was started at the historical faculty of Central Asian State University (SAGU) in May 1940. In October 1942 a commission for the translation of Central Asian Arabic-script manuscripts at the State Public Library of the Uzbek SSR obtained the order to publish major historiographical works on the history of Timūr (d. 1405). For this project Aleksandr A. Semenov translated the fifteenth-century Persian chronicle of Ghiyāth al-Dīn

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68 A.A. Semenov, Ukazatel’ persidskoj literatury po istorii uzbekov Srednei Azii (Tashkent, 1925). See also his catalogue of manuscripts in the Bukhara library: A.A. Semenov, Katalog rukopisei istoricheskogo otdela Bukharskoi Tsentral’noi biblioteki (Tashkent, 1925).
‘Alī Yazdī Kitāb-i rūznāma-yi ghazāwāt-i Hindustān (A Diary of [Timur’s] Holy War in India).’ Later Semenov published a series of important written sources in Persian and Chaghatai Turki, such as the Tā’rīkh-i Muqīm-Khānī (The History of Muqīm Khān), the ‘Ubaydullāh-nāme (The Book of ‘Ubaydullāh) and Tā’rīkh-i Abū-l-Faīd-Khān (The History of Abū-l-Faīd-Khān). Semenov combined his translation of Central Asian historiographical works with the start of a large catalogue program of rare manuscripts in the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies.

Work in the mausoleum of the Gūr-i Mīr occupied a special place in Semenov’s biography, because his investigation of the Timūrids’ burial place in the summer of 1941 had a great political significance. The expedition was sanctioned by no less than Stalin, who regarded Timūr as a great warlord and statesman. Simultaneously, Timūr’s figure was also canonized by one of the greatest ideologists of the Central Asian republics’ histories, Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii. He made Timūr a hero of Uzbek history, a strong and powerful leader who united separated provinces and tribes and who even contributed to the unification of the Russian lands through his wars with the Golden Horde in the 1390s. That Soviet scholarship put considerable efforts in building up the great image of Timūr had both political and scientific consequences. Anthropological material taken from the mausoleum was brought to Moscow by Mikhail Gerasimov (1907-1970), who produced anthro-


71 Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei Akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR, ed. by A.A. Semenov, vol. 1 (Tashkent, 1952); vol. 2 (Tashkent, 1954); vol. 3 (Tashkent, 1955); vol. 4 (Tashkent, 1957); vol. 5 (Tashkent, 1960); vol. 6 (Tashkent, 1963). After Semenov’s death the edition of the catalogue has been continuing up to present day.

72 See Iakubovskii’s detailed biography in the second chapter.


polological reconstructions on the basis of cranium measuring. The excavated skull allowed him to determine who was buried in the Gūr-i Mīr, and he reconstructed the physical outlook of several Tīmūrids, including Tīmūr himself. There is a legend that Tīmūr’s spirit was even used during the Battle of Moscow in 1942, when his remnants were flown over the Soviet capital as a protecting charm. After the war the Soviet government allocated about a million rubles for the restoration of the Tīmūrids’ mausoleum. Semenov translated Arabic inscriptions on Tīmūr’s tomb stone, which, as people believed, contained Tīmūr’s curse of anyone who would desecrate his burial place (though Semenov did not identify such an inscription in the mausoleum). The whole expedition in Samarqand was surrounded by rumors and mystifications. Some said that it was no coincidence that the Germans attacked the Soviet Union on the very day the sarcophagus was opened on 22 June 1941.

In Leningrad several works, which party activists used to call “incongruous with our times,” fell under the knife of censorship. For example, already in 1928 Leningrad Orientalist Nicholas Poppe (1897-1991) envisaged a philological edition of the Mongol part from the Arabic-Persian-Turkic-Mongolian dictionary Muqaddimat al-Ādāb. This is how Nicholas Poppe described this edition himself:

“The work was finally published in 1938-39, but not quite as I had planned it. In addition to the changes by censorship, I had to change the word “Chagatai” in the title to “Turkic” because Samoilovich, who had helped me much with the Turkic part, objected to the term “Chagatai” and insisted on using “literary language of Central Asia.” Ironically, I also had to omit Samoilovich’s name from my list of acknowledgements because in the meantime he had been arrested and disappeared in the summer of 1938. Likewise, I had to drop all mention of F.A. Rozenberg, specialist in Iranian and particularly in Sogdian, who had helped me with Persian words. He had been forced to retire and become a kind of “non-person.” I also had to omit all mention of Fitrat and


77 Poppe, Reminiscences, 118.

Ghazi ‘Ali Yunusov,\textsuperscript{79} two Uzbek scholars who had been instrumental in procuring a copy of the dictionary. Both were arrested and shot during the liquidation of the Uzbek intellectuals in 1937 [...]. Another taboo was any discussion of the genetic relationship of the Mongolian languages because the party was afraid that awareness of this relationship might foster nationalistic ideas and bring about Pan-Mongolism [...]. I had to eliminate all references to Buryat, Kalmuck, and Khalkha, and to replace “Buryat” with “North Mongolian” and “Kalmuck” with “West Mongolian.”\textsuperscript{80}

However, Poppe was ready to collaborate with the Bolsheviks. This readiness was the reason that in 1932 he obtained an award from the directorship of the Institute of Oriental Studies for his active work and high level of socio-political awareness. Moreover, the administration underlined that “the last works written by N.N. Poppe proved that he is armed with the Marxist-Leninist methodology.”\textsuperscript{81}

In the course of the 1920s and early 1930s the Bolshevik government changed the whole structure and spirit of the Academy of Sciences. This central scholarly institution in the country found itself under strong political pressure; its goals were reoriented toward areas in which the Party was most interested. Even the very style of everyday work was drastically transformed. The introduction of five-year plans and large scientific centres and collectives as well as long-term projects and research programs made a Soviet Orientalist quite dependent on the goals and rules the new type of scholarship. But this did not mean that all scientists readily accepted the imposed regulations. While in Leningrad almost all Orientalists were concentrated at the Asiatic Museum/Institute of Oriental Studies and were given long-term plans to work on, scholars in Tashkent were freer in organizational terms and could pursue their own research agendas.


\textsuperscript{80} Poppe, \textit{Reminiscences}, 119. Poppe’s memoirs are full of venomous remarks on Russia, on the eccentricity of eminent Russian Orientalists (from Boris Vladimirtsov to Vasilii Bartol’d), and his hatred of the Bolsheviks. Poppe (who had a long and tragic life) escaped from the Soviet Union during WWII when he and his family found themselves on occupied territory. Still, Poppe’s treatment of early Soviet times (until the end of the war) is often supported by reminiscences of scholars who remained in the country. See, for instance: A.N. Boldyrev, \textit{Osadnaya zapis’ (blokadnyi dnevnik)} (St. Petersburg, 1998); I.Iu. Krachkovskii, “Ispytanie vremenem”. I would like to thank Allen J. Frank (Takoma Park, USA) and Napil’ Bazylkhan (Almaty, Kazakhstan) for providing me with Poppe’s book.

1.3 The First Attempts: The Political Topicality of Classical Texts

On 27th November 1930, i.e. one month after the introduction of the plan system, Krachkovskii delivered a paper at the meeting of the Branch of Social Sciences of the Academy of Sciences, entitled *On the Preparation of a Corpus of Arabic Sources for the History of Eastern Europe, the Caucasus and Central Asia (The Tasks of Arabic Source Publication).*

In this speech Krachkovskii demonstrated how important Oriental sources are for the history of the Soviet Union. This speech was one of the first manifestations of the long-term source edition program which Leningrad Orientalists pursued during the 1930s.

In late 1932 a collection of medieval Russian translations of official Arabic-script documents on the history of the Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen republics was published in Leningrad under the editorship of Aleksandr N. Samoilovich. Several documents were represented only in typed Arabic script without translation, others only in old chancellery translation. This volume was prepared by the Leningrad Institute of History and Archeography of the Academy of Sciences (*Istoriko-arkheograficheskii institut*) in collaboration with the Institute of Oriental Studies. The book was also supplied with an article of A.P. Chuloshnikov, a specialist in Kazakh history, on the trade relations between Russia and Central Asian peoples. In the early 1930s, both the Institute of History and Archeography and the Institute of Oriental Studies were charged with the task of publishing sources on the history of the Soviet peoples. Also the later Turkmen project was con-

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84 Since 1936 this Institute was transformed into the Leningrad branch of the Institute of History of the Academy of Sciences with its head office in Moscow.
ducted by both institutions.\textsuperscript{85} The Institute of History and Archeography (renamed Institute of History in 1936) also participated in the publication of sources about the Volga Tatars.\textsuperscript{86} Here I will analyze only projects related to Central Asian history; Krachkovskii’s program also included the Volga-Ural region and the Caucasus, because he also paid serious philological attention to materials from Daghestan and the Caucasus in general. In the 1930s and 1940s Leningrad Arabists published the chronicle of al-Karakhi and extracts from the correspondence of Imam Shamil (1797-1871).\textsuperscript{87}

After more than a decade of the predominance of vulgar ideological works, the program of source edition and archeological investigations became the starting point of a ‘renewal’ of classical Orientology. In the 1930s, the edition and study of Oriental manuscripts became the main direction of works at the Institute of Oriental Studies.\textsuperscript{88} It is difficult to compile a comprehensive list of all planned and implemented philological projects and publications of the 1930s to the 1970s. Below I provide a list of the major projects with references to the time period, title and scientific staff involved:

- 1932: \textit{Materials on the History of Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen Soviet Republics, first volume, Trade with Moscow State and International Status of Central Asia in the 16\textsuperscript{th}-17\textsuperscript{th} Centuries},\textsuperscript{89} edited by A.N. Samoilovich, with articles by A.Iu. Iakubovskii and A.P. Chuloshnikov.


\textsuperscript{86} Istoriia Tatarii v materialakh i dokumentakh, pod redaktsiei N.L. Rubinshteina (Moscow, 1937).


\textsuperscript{88} N.A. Kuznetsova, L.M. Kulagina, Iz istorii sovetskogo vostokovedeniia 1917-1967 (Moscow, 1970), 83.

\textsuperscript{89} Materialy po istorii Uzbekskoi, Tadzhikskoi i Turkmenskoi SSR, vol. 1, Torgovlia s Moskovskim gosudarstvom i mezhdnarodnoe ploshchadie Srednei Azii v XVI-XVII vekakh (Leningrad, 1932).

\textsuperscript{90} Materialy po istorii turkmen i Turkmenii, vol. 1, VII-XV veka: Arabskie i persidskie istochniki (Moscow, Leningrad, 1939); vol. 2, XVI-XIX veka: Iranskie, bukharskie i khivinskie istochniki (Moscow, Leningrad, 1938).


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91 Materialy po istorii karakalpakov: Sbornik (Trudy Instituta vostokovedeniia Akademii nauk SSSR, vol. 7) (Moscow, Leningrad, 1935). This book is a great rarity, because after the deportation of the Karakalpaks (1944) it was banned and withdrawn from libraries. See also another collection of documents and narratives on the history of Karakalpaks, which was obviously prepared for edition, probably by Aleksandr Samoilovich: AV IVR RAN, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 46, Istoricheskie svedeniia o karakalpakakh, sobrannye iz opublikovannykh na russkom iazyke aktov, arkhivnykh materialov i drugikh istoricheskikh istochnikov, 339 folios.


93 Sbornik materialov, otnosiaschchiasia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, vol. 2, Izvlecheniia iz persidskich sochinenii, sobrannye V.G. Tizengauzenom i obrabotannye A.A. Romaskevicchem i S.L. Voilinyom (Moscow, Leningrad, 1941).


The prolonged timeframe of some of these projects demonstrates how much these projects shaped the activities of Soviet Orientology. All projects were elaborated and organized by several prominent scholars through the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. Borrowing a term from Michael Kemper, several scholars emerged as ‘monopolizers of science’. In archeology and ethnography this role was played by Sergei P. Tolstov (1907-1976), a Soviet ethnographer and archeologist of Central Asia. In the 1940s and 1950s he served as director of the Institutes of Oriental Studies and of Ethnography, as Dean of the Historical Faculty of Moscow University, and as Academic Secretary of the Academy of Sciences. In these functions Tolstov exerted great influence on the development of historical research, especially on Central Asian studies. In the field of philological Oriental studies a crucial role as organizer of ambitious projects was played by specialist of Iranian studies Evgenii Bertel’s (1890-1957) and by Arabist Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii (1883-1951). A certain role was also played by Vasilii V. Bartol’d who tried to start the publication of sources on the history of Central Asia. Usually it was claimed that the initiative for the publication and the financing of these works came from the respective Central Asian republican institutions (although we will see that such a request was often an obligation rather than an expression of sincere interest), and eventually all publications of sources for the republican histories were financed by those republics. This is mentioned in the final products as well as in a number of archival documents.

The aforementioned 1932 volume on the history of the Uzbek, Tajik, and Turkmen republics represented Central Asian sources in a regional Central Asian perspective, rather than in a national framework. In fact, the edition followed Bartol’d’s selection of Arabic


However already by 1932 this approach did not suit the political demand to conduct a cultural separation between the republics; in result, the envisaged framework of a common series for those three republics was not continued. The following editions of sources were exclusively devoted to the history of one individual republic and a given titular nation, or to individual literary monuments like Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle. This request from above also dictated a selective approach to the sources: the translators and editors had to choose which fragments of texts were relevant for each given nation, and which were politically acceptable. The rules of this game led to numerous manipulations of texts which are mostly difficult to discover in the final publications.

However, later scholars revealed a number of interferences in the translations of original texts conducted by Soviet Orientalists. For example, St. Petersburg scholar of Turkic studies Tursun I. Sultanov (b. 1940) drew my attention to Mikhail A. Sal’e’s (1899-1961) Russian translation of Zahīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur’s (1483-1530) memoirs, the Bābur-nāme. According to Sultanov, this book was published with essential cuts: most Persian insertions in the Turkic narrative were omitted and also the passages against Bābur’s opponents (Shībānī Khān, ‘Alī Shīr Nawa’t) were taken out of the translation after censorship.99 Another example is the Russian translation of Ármin Vámbéry’s (1832-1913) travel account to Central Asia. It was performed by the wife of Iranian studies scholar Vadim A. Romodin (1912-1984), Zinaida D. Golubeva.100 According to Sultanov, this book does not contain Vambéry’s negative views on the Turkmen people which are very prominent in the original text.101

Yet in spite of the general turn to the perspective of individual Soviet republics, ‘regional’ studies were produced all through the 1930s up to WWII. One major representative of this perspective was Pavel P. Ivanov (1893-1942) who participated very actively in the early phases of several philological projects, especially in the edition of the ‘Turkmen’

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98 V.V. Bartol’d, Turkestan v epokhu mongol’skogo nashestviia, vol. 1, Teksty (St. Petersburg, 1898). This volume contains only typed texts in Arabic, Persian, and Chaghatay languages without translations; it was never re-published because later the majority of these narratives later appeared in European translations.


100 A. Vamberi, Puteshestvie po Srednei Azii (Moscow, 2003).

volume. During the second half of the 1930s and the beginning of the 1940s he finished four books on the history and source studies of Muslim Central Asia: From the Archive of the Juibari Sheikhs: Materials on Landownership and Trade Relations in the 16th Century (1938); The Archive of the 19th-Century Khans of Khiva (1940); The Economy of the Juibary Sheikhs (1941); Essays on the History of Central Asia (1941). The last one, most probably, was a commissioned work. It had already been finished before WWII but was only posthumously published in 1958. This book was an introduction to Central Asian history, written not from a national but from a regional perspective. In the 1958 edition Ivanov’s introduction, in which he explained his regional approach, was cut out and replaced by a short foreword by Aleksandr K. Borovkov (1904-1962), a Leningrad scholar of Turkic studies who was known as an orthodox Communist.

The idea of using ancient texts for studying modern nations was outlined by Ignatii Krachkovskii in his 1939 Preface to the edition of the tenth-century account of a travel to the Volga region by Ibn Faḍlān, an Abbasid diplomat from Baghdad. Krachkovskii noted that “with the present book the Academy of Sciences of the USSR starts a series of translations of Arabic sources on the history of the Soviet peoples. The idea to prepare a corpus of these sources appeared already in the early 1930s, when a note [by Krachkovskii himself] published in the journals of the Academy of Sciences described the plan and methods [of

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102 Iz arkhiva sheikhov Dzhuibari. Materialy po zemel'nym i torgovym otnosheniiam Srednei Azii v XVI veke (Moscow, Leningrad, 1938); Arkhiv khivinskih khanov XIX veka. Issledovanie i opisaniiia dokumentov s istoricheskim vvedeniем (Moscow, 1940); P.P. Ivanov, Khoziaistvo Dzhuibarskih sheikhov. K istorii feodal'noego zemlevladieniia v Srednei Azii v XVI-XVII vekakh (Moscow, Leningrad, 1954); P.P. Ivanov, Ocherki po istorii Srednei Azii (XVI-seredina XIX veka). (Moscow, 1958). In fact Ivanov’s Khoziaistvo should be seen as a collective monograph because it also included materials of Ivanov’s colleague, scholar of Iranian studies Fedor Borisovich Rostopchin (1904-1937) who worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies and the State Hermitage and was exiled, then executed in Northern Kazakhstan in January 1938 (Liudi i sud'by (1917-1991), 329-330). At the moment of publication both authors had already died, and the editors decided to mention only the authorship of Pavel P. Ivanov. This story was told me by Oleg F. Akimushkin during our interview, St. Petersburg, 28 January 2010.

103 Aleksandr Konstantinovich Borovkov was born in Tashkent and obtained his education at the Oriental Faculty of the Central Asian University in Tashkent. The famous linguist Nikolai Marr supervised his second dissertation in Leningrad. In 1938-1959 Borovkov was head of the Central Asian cabinet of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. In the war time Borovkov worked in Tashkent with other evacuated colleagues, where he organized and directed an office of Turkic studies. Many native Uzbek students studied there. Borovkov’s main scientific interests were Uzbek and Chaghatay grammar and literature. It is no exaggeration to say that Borovkov contributed much to the creation of the modern Uzbek language. His Uzbek-Russian dictionary, which was repeatedly published in Tashkent (1941, 1951-55, 1959), is still the best work in this field. My thanks to Dmitrii Rukhliaev (Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, St. Petersburg) for providing me with this information. See also: [A.N. Kononov,] “Tiurkologiiia,” in: Aziatskii muzei – Leningradskoe otdelenie Instituta vostokovedeniia AN SSSR (Moscow, 1973), 423-424.
the project]. Originally it was planned to publish a large collection of volumes. This would require a long period of time and demand much preparation. [However,] the high speed of development in the historical science in our country and the rising interest in Arabic sources demands the [quick] publication of different books devoted to a certain author or to a group of related texts.”

The edition and translation of Ibn Faḍlān’s book equipped with a large and detailed philological commentary, was in fact the work of the Ukrainian scholar of Arabic studies Andrei Petrovich Kovalevskii (1895-1969) who worked at the Arabic Cabinet of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad between 1934 and 1945. As he was arrested in 1938, his translation of Ibn Faḍlān was published without mentioning his name. In this publication, neither Krachkovskii nor Kovalevskii could mention the Bashkir scholar and politician Ahmet Zeki Velidi-Togan (1890-1970) who had discovered the unique manuscript of Ibn Faḍlān in Mashhad (Eastern Iran). The reason is that besides his successful scholarly enterprises Velidi-Togan was an anti-Soviet politician who tried to organize a Bashkir Republic and who was therefore denounced as a public enemy in the Soviet Union. After the defeat of the Mujahid (so-called Basmachi) movement in Central Asia, in which he had also participated, Velidi-Togan emigrated to Afghanistan in 1923, then to Iran and Turkey. During this journey he visited local libraries and was lucky enough to discover several unique historical manuscripts, including the above-mentioned book by Ibn Faḍlān in 1923. Later Velidi-Togan indignantly wrote about the self-glorification of Soviet Orientalists and blamed them for plagiarism, also in the studies of the Old Khwarezmian language. He mentioned that in 1936 a Tatar scholar, S.A. Alimov, discovered in the city of

104 Puteshestvie Ibn-Fadlana na Volgu, perevod i kommentarii pod redaktsiei akademika I.Iu. Krachkovskogo (Moscow, Leningrad, 1939), 5.


Astrakhan a copy of the Risāla of Jamāl al-Dīn ‘Imādī, and presented it to Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad. Afterwards,

“the Russian scholars S. Volin and A. Freimann, who appropriated this discovery, in their publications of 1939 on the Khorezmian language mentioned incidentally the research I have been making since 1927 by remarking that “researches on the Khoresmian language is also carried out outside Russia”, without specifying any name (Zapiski Instituta Vostokovedeniia, VII, 1939, 89, 309, 319), and they presented themselves as the discoverers of the monuments of this language. A. Freimann, in his subsequent publications (Sovetskoe vostokovedenie, V, 1948, 191-199) completely ascribed this material to them [i.e., to Freimann and Volin] and reproduced the information in W. Wenning’s writings without deeming it necessary to mention his name or even to hint at his studies. They likewise appropriated Ibn Faḍlān’s Riḥla, of which I had announced the publication as early as 1924, and published it in 1939 at the same time as my publication. They also used throughout their translation, and without mentioning any name, the information about the results of my investigations in my article Der Reisebericht Ibn Faḍlāns published previously in Geistige Arbeit, 1937, No.19.”

Velidi-Togan knew the Russian tradition of Oriental Studies from inside and was in close relationship with such famous scholars as Vasilii V. Bartol’d (1869-1930), Nikolai F. Katanov (1862-1922), and Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii (1883-1951). His view and criticism of both Russian Oriental textual studies and archeology demonstrates how much Soviet scholarship was oriented toward seeking scientific priority even when they just repeated what colleagues had already established. Elsewhere Velidi-Togan made a distinction between scholars who agreed to cooperate with the new regime and those who preferred to

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remain true to their values. Sometimes he was too suspicious of his colleagues who remained in the Soviet Union, accusing them of espionage. For example, when Aleksandr N. Samoilovich (1880-1938) visited Istanbul in 1925, Velidi-Togan frankly blamed him for espionage for the Soviets, adding that Bartol’d and Krachkovskii would never have done something like this.^^110^^

The figure of Velidi-Togan represented a bridge between classical Islamic scholarship (his father was a Sufi shaykh) and Oriental studies. While Velidi-Togan emigrated from the Soviet Union to save his life and preferred to preserve his own library in Istanbul, what happened to Islamic scholars in his fatherland?

**1.4 Islamic Scholars and Classical Orientology**

It was not only ‘secular’ Orientalists who found themselves in difficult situations since the late 1920s. Since its very beginning, Russian Orientology had incorporated scholars of Muslim origin into its ranks — like in the 19\(^{th}\) century Aleksandr Kazem-Bek (1802-1870)^^111^^ who had converted to Presbyterianism and worked at Kazan and St. Petersburg Universities, and the Khal’fin family^^112^^ at the gymnasium in Kazan. Velidi Togan suggested a typology of Orientals who participated in secular Islamic Studies: a) those who “show indirect influence of Western scholarship, while, however, remaining essentially Oriental”; b) those who “studied in Europe or at least knew one foreign [i.e. European] language and could therefore profit directly from scientific European publications”; c) those who were able to “fully comprehend European scientific methods, conducted research work on this basis and published works in both eastern and European languages.”^^113^^ In Togan’s mind both sides, Islamic scholars and Western Orientalists profited from mutual collaboration, because Orientals were able to reflect upon Islamic topics applying the methods of European literary criticism, while Orientalists were improving their knowledge of Islamic

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^^111^^ D. Schimmelpenninck van der Oye, “Mirza Kazem-Bek and the Kazan School of Russian Orientology,” *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East*, vol. 28, no. 3 (2008), 443-458.


sources being in close contact with bearers of this culture. Moreover, Togan prophetically
mentioned that “Islam seems to be in the process of becoming an eastern religion in West-
ern accoutrement.”

What was the fate of Islamic scholarship in Soviet times? Mostly these Orientalists
of Muslim background were involved in philological studies like the edition of written
sources and the production of grammars, manuals, and dictionaries. Some secular or reli-
gious Muslim intellectuals were directly involved in politics. One interesting episode about
a cooperation of Orientalists and Muslim authorities goes back to the spring of 1921 when
the Uzbek government decided to establish “a special commission which would work to
harmonize (soglasovanie) the provisions of Islamic and Soviet law” and “to fight the
backwardness of Muslim culture, support the modernisation of the Muslim way of life
(byt), and introduce the modern norms of Soviet legislation to the indigenous Muslim pop-
ulation of the Republic of Turkestan.” The Arabists and historians Aleksandr E. Shmidt,
Vasilii L. Viatkin, and Evgenii A. Beliaev together with a Muslim scholar Shāmī Dāmullā
were included into this commission, whose work revealed the incompatibility of Soviet
and Islamic law and recommended to avoid the use of force. According to the commission,
the only way to harmonize relationships was educating people. Iranist Paolo Sartori, who
provided us with a translation and study of this recommendation, demonstrated that the
document was compiled by Muslim scholars rather than by Orientalists. Soviet authorities
obviously approved this tandem, even though it is unclear whether this document did have
any impact on official decisions.

Orientalists preserved manuscripts, saving them from destruction. On 7 August 1933
the Mufti of the Central Muslim Spiritual Assembly in Ufa, Riḍā ad-Dīn b. Fakhr ad-Dīn
(Riza Fakhretdinov, 1859-1936), dared to write a message to the Presidium of the Academ-
y of Sciences of the USSR. At that time the merciless anti-religious campaign developed
into the repression of religious authorities and led to the destruction of the literature written
in Arabic script. Mufti Fakhretdinov had spent a lot of time and energy in the collection of

114 Ibid., 14. This argument is fully elaborated in O. Roy, Globalized Islam: The Search for a New Ummah
(New York, 2004).

rare books and manuscripts, and in the early 1930s he tried to save his own collection and also to do something for other rich libraries all over the Soviet Union. In his letter to the Academy leadership he mentioned that after the repression of various Muslim scholars ('ulamā\') the Soviet authorities used their manuscript collections as waste paper. At the same time Fakhretdinov “had information that in the majority of these libraries there were old manuscripts obtained from Muslim countries,” some of which were “written in the time of the ‘Abbasid caliphate’ or by ancient Tatar scholars. The Mufti asked the Academy to collect at least the remaining manuscripts, because he was impressed by the rich collection of Oriental books and manuscripts of Asiatic Museum which he had seen during his Leningrad visit in 1925 when he was invited to the jubilee of the Academy of Sciences. After the Mufti’s wake-up call urgent manuscript expeditions were organized to collect and preserve the Islamic written heritage. It might be that Krachkovskii participated in the organization of these expeditions. At the celebration of the Academy’s jubilee in 1925 he had had a long conversation (in Arabic) with Fakhretdinov. In general, the close relations of the Mufti with the school of classical Oriental studies in St. Petersburg are of great interest for the history of the discipline, unfortunately they have not yet been explored.

The Presidium of the Academy reacted quickly to this letter, seemingly because it fitted well with the new academic program of source publication on the history of Soviet Muslims, promoted by Krachkovskii. One of the secretaries of the Academy (nepremennyi sekretar’), V.P. Volgin, appealed to the Cultural Department of the Communist Party to organize two manuscript expeditions to Central Asia. One expedition to Central Asia was indeed conducted by Iranian studies scholar Evgenii Bertel’s, and another one, to the Volga-Ural region by the Tatar scholar and book collector Sagid Vakhidov (1887-1938). The latter also decided to donate all of his manuscripts, which amounted to several thousands,
to various scientific institutions in Leningrad and Kazan. Officially, these expeditions were just launched because “the Institute of Oriental Studies and the Historical-Archeographical Institute are working on the collecting, processing, and publication of documents on the history of the Soviet peoples” with no mention of the special urgency after Fakhretdinov’s letter according to which it was exactly the Soviet politics that threatened the Islamic heritage. Both expeditions were successfully carried out between 1934 and 1936; the collected manuscripts were archived in the Institute of Oriental Studies.

Similar efforts for collecting old manuscripts were undertaken in Uzbekistan: in 1933 the Council of the People’s Commissars (Sovet narodnykh komissarov, i.e. government) of the Uzbek Republic declared the State Public Library in Tashkent to be the central depository of manuscripts for the whole republic. It was on the basis of this manuscript collection that the Tashkent Institute of Oriental Studies was established in January 1944. It was originally planned that Bertel’s would compile a catalogue of all manuscripts discovered in Central Asia, but this task was impossible to be carried out by one person alone.

This cooperation between local Muslim scholars and Soviet academics came to an end in the 1930s when most ‘ulamā’ were either obliged to keep silent, or to leave the Soviet Union. If not, they were exiled, and their large manuscript collections were destroyed. The local Muslim scholarship was to be replaced by new Communist scientists trained in

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Moscow and Leningrad. The U.S. historian Edward Allworth hinted at this monopoly of Soviet Orientalists in his analysis of the celebration of the 500th birthday of the Turkic poet ‘Alī Shīr Nawā‘ī in February 1926. At the occasion of this event one book on Nawā‘ī was published by a scholar with an Islamic background and another one by Leningrad Orientalists. “Three books appeared in Baku, one in Ashkhabad… One of those edited by Professor Chobanzada reproduced Mīr ‘Alī Shīr’s Waqfiya (1926) just when Russian authorities were forcing that benevolent tradition out of existence in Central Asia and made the scholar vulnerable to the Communist Party’s retaliation. Politicians purged him […] in 1937.”

Only Russian Orientalists (Bartol’d, Samoilovich, Bertel’s, etc.) participated in the official celebrations, without any of their Muslim colleagues. This demonstrates that the secular Leningrad Orientology slowly became the only source of opinion on the classical past of the Soviet Orient.

During the Soviet period of his life (1917-1936) Mufti Fakhretdinov produced a considerable amount of works devoted to the history of Islam. In 1935 Fakhretdinov sent his most important manuscripts to Aleksandr Samoilovich, director of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad. This transfer symbolized the turn in the possession of Islamic knowledge. Since the 1930s only Orientalists were able to save, translate, analyze, and interpret Muslim written heritage. However, some scholars with Islamic background or their children also moved to Oriental Studies. The best examples in this regard were prominent Tatar scholars Iranist Abdurakhman T. Tagirdzhanov (1907-1983), Arabists

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124 E.A. Allworth, *The Modern Uzbeks: From the Fourteenth Century to the Present. A Cultural History* (California, 1990), 224-225; Mir Ali Shir, *Sbornik k piatisotletiiu so dniya rozhdeniia* (Leningrad, 1928). A Crimean Tatar, Bekir Vagapovich Choban-zade (1893-1937), as he claimed, was the first professor of the Soviet Orient (as a linguist he studied the Azerbaijani language). In the early 1920s he actively participated in the public life of the Crimea, but later (1925) he was forced to move to Baku. In 1937 Choban-zade was accused of anti-Soviet Pan-Turkish activities and executed. F.D. Ashnin, V.M. Alpatov, “Delo professor a B.V. Choban-Zade,” *Vostok* 5 (1998), 125-133.

125 The detailed description of Mufti Ridi‘ al-Dīn’s huge manuscript archive in Ufa has been prepared by Arabist Ramil’ M. Bulgakov. Its publication is forthcoming. The Leningrad part of the archive was discovered by Mirkasym A. Usmanov, and later also well described by employees of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. M. Gosmanov, *Ütkännän – kilächäkkä* (Kazan, 1990), 65-67.


127 Tagirdzhanov was a son-in-law of famous Tatar theologian Musa Bigiev (1873-1949), who was forced to leave Russia by the Bolsheviks. On Tagirdzhanov’s Islamic background as the best Qur’an declaimer in the St. Petersburg Mosque, see the collection of historical documents: A.N. Tagirdzhanova, *Kniga o Museefendi, ego vremen i sovremennikakh* (Kazan, 2010), 314-328.
Baky Z. Khalidov (1905-1968) and his son Anas B. Khalidov (1929-2001), and ethnographer Balkys Kh. Karmysheva (1916-2000). The latter’s mother, Galiia Sh. Karmysheva (1888-1971) was married to the son of Muḥammad Fatiḥ al-Ilmanī (b. 1843), one of the authors of local history of Novouzensk district Tawārikh-i Aḥṭ Ṭā (1910). Generally speaking, a part of the former Islamic learned elite was incorporated into the group of professional Orientalists, who in the Soviet times monopolized the right of exegesis and interpretation of ancient texts.

Islamic scholars did not regard ‘secular’ specialists in Oriental languages as spies and servants of the system (except, probably, for Togan who was quite suspicious of his Soviet counterparts). Rather, they regarded classical Orientology as one of the most desirable preoccupations for a person well-versed in Islamic sciences as well as in Russian language and culture. Their trust in Orientalists was the reason that some of ‘ulamā’ transferred their wealthy book-treasures to scholarly institutions (Riḍā ad-Dīn b. Fakhr ad-Dīn, Ṣaghīḥ Vakhīdī), others actively collaborated (Mūsā Bīgī) or even jointed Orientalist circles (Abdurakhman Tagirdzhanov). Institutes of Oriental Studies in the Soviet Union became places where highly-developed Islamic thought in written form continued its existence, while the living tradition throughout the country was severely destroyed by the Bolsheviks since the 1930s.

1.5 Dividing Sources into National Pieces: the Turkmen Project

In 1934-1939 a special group at the Sector for Central Asian studies of the Institute of Oriental Studies compiled a compendium of sources about the Turkmens. Officially this project was an initiative of a certain Avsent’evskii, Minister of Education (Narkompros) of the

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Turkmen Soviet Republic. On this issue Gaik Papaian, an Academic Secretary of the Leningrad Institute of Oriental Studies, had an active exchange of letters with the Narkompros of the Turkmen Republic. On 22 March 1934 he wrote to Avsent’evskii: “According to the concluded contract, our Institute organized two work collectives (brigady): 1) a group focusing on the 16th-19th centuries, under the leadership of Academician Samoilovich; 2) a group studying materials from before the 16th century, under the direction of Academician Krachkovskii. The first group, which was expected to finish its work in the course of 1934, comprised fifteen employees. The second group is supposed to work during the period of 1934-1935.”

Iranist Pavel Ivanov was ordered to produce a list of sources and elaborated a very large program which included about fifty handwritten books in Turkish and Persian languages. At a work meeting Academician Krachkovskii agreed that the list was correct from a scientific point of view, but he also said that it was impossible to carry this program out within the short period of time that was granted (half a year for one volume). At the same time a specialist in Turkic history Vali Zabirov (1897-1937), who at that time was a PhD student at the Institute of Oriental Studies, suggested to also collect, when studying these manuscripts, everything that is mentioned on other Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union, obviously in view of future projects. The start was difficult: at that time Orientalists had to work intuitively, ‘by touch’: they found a lot of historical manuscripts that possibly included data about Central Asian peoples, but there was also the risk that whole volumes were explored in vain.

“The work program on the materials for the history of Turkmens in the 16th-19th centuries” presupposed a budget of 11.200 rubles, including costs for studies and scientific trips to Tashkent and Ashkhabad, for the copying and translating of texts and for their final editing. According to the decision of the Presidium of the USSR Academy of Sciences,

130 Unfortunately, I did not find any information about him.

131 Sinologist Gaik Kegamovich Papaian (1901-1937) obtained his education at the Oriental Institute in St. Petersburg. In 1936, already during the Turkmen project, he was arrested and shot. See: Liudi i sud’by, 296-297.


133 Ibid., f. 1.

134 Ibid., f. 17.
all these expenses were to be covered by the Turkmen Republic. The young republic faced
difficult circumstances: there were several financial problems, but two volumes of sources
were indeed published in time, though a number of interesting translations remained un-
published in the archive of Orientalists.\footnote{AV IVR RAN, Razriad 2, Op. 6, D. 79, Volin S.L., Materialy (perevody rukopisei), podgotovlyanye dlja sbornika 'Materialy po istorii turkmen i Turkmenii,' 1939, vol. 1. 48 folios.} The following methodological principles were
used for this edition: 1) each extract should be introduced by biographical data on the au-
thor, the time of compilation, a historical evaluation of the source and bibliographical ref-
ences; 2) the publication of sources was to follow a chronological order; a thematic class-
ification was deemed impossible; 3) the comments should be short and general, because a
lot of problems were yet unexplored.\footnote{Protokol zasedaniia brigady po sobiraniu materialov k istorii Turkmenii, f. 6, in: AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Op. 1a, №345, D. 632, Protokol zasedaniia brigady po sobiraniu materialov k istorii Turkmenii. Programma rabot, smeta i perepiska s Narkomprosom Turkmenskoi SSR po voprosam napisaniia istorii Turkmenii, 31 ianvaria 1934 - 16 dekabria 1934.} No original Arabic-script texts included in these
volumes, neither as facsimile nor in typed form. In their introduction to the first volume
(1939) the editors acknowledged that “it is impossible to study the history of the Turkmens
and Turkmenia in full isolation from those historical conditions in which they lived. It is
impossible to separate it from [the history of] Khwarezm, Mawara’annahr, Gurgan, and
Khurasan. Especially the latter region was closely tied to Central Asia for the main part of
its history.”\footnote{Materialy po istorii turkmen i Turkmenii, vol. 1, VII-XV veka. Arabskie i persidskie istochniki. (Moscow, Leningrad, 1939), 4.} Thus, even after the finishing of the first book entirely devoted to the medi-
eval history of a particular republic, Romaskevich found it necessary to defend his regional
approach, based on the historical evidence that Central Asian peoples lived in close inter-
action.

A similar project of collecting materials for the history of the Kara-Kalpaks was car-
ried out in 1935.\footnote{Materialy po istorii karakalpakov. Sbornik (Trudy Instituta vostokovedeniia Akademii nauk SSSR, vol. 7) (Moscow, Leningrad, 1935).} The methods applied by the Institute of Oriental Studies were success-
ful: a research group investigated and published sources in a very short period of time,
while the national republic or, in the Kara-Kalpak case, a national autonomy within Uzbek-
istan, paid for all the work.\footnote{AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Op. 1a, №448, D. 632.1, Protokoly zasedaniia brigady po izuchenii istorii Karakalpakii: dogovor i perepiska, 22 Dec. 1936.} Unfortunately, I do not have any additional information on
the Kara-Kalpak edition, but it is clear that it was part of the series on Central Asian nations.

The first results of these source investigations were used for the compilation of the general histories of the Soviet peoples as well as for a world history to be taught at high school: a number of documents in the Archive of Orientalists show that the Institute’s work was meant to be used for these textbooks of the late 1930s. These textbooks were intended to be used in higher education and were different from republican historical narratives that started to appear later. For this purpose a special historical sector was established at the Institute of Oriental Studies in January 1938. It united all historians of the Institute and was divided into two groups devoted, respectively, to the Soviet Orient (group leader Aleksandr N. Bernshtam) and the foreign Orient (led by M.S. Ivanov). The entire sector was directed by academician Vasiliy V. Struve, but his management was rather weak. The sector’s members did not approve of the work plan, for the high speed of work that was demanded from them would impact the quality of work. A certain comrade Adzhan stated at one of the meetings that “nothing is clear to the authors. The initiative is important, but we cannot do it in a hurry.” Another point of discussion was the heterogeneity of the scientific staff. Semen Volin mentioned the bad selection of collaborators: “Klimovich, Tolstov, and Tardov are not reliable. Because of the urgent order to achieve these works, Pavel P. Ivanov cannot finish his text about the Sheibanids. This is a great pity.”

Liutsian I. Klimovich (1907-1989) is notorious for his anti-religious books and malicious attacks on classical Oriental studies and was obviously disliked because of his ideological engagement. Strikingly, hot-tempered Semen Volin placed Klimovich and Tolstov on the same level, but because of different reasons: Klimovich was not capable to do philological work, while Tolstov was too busy, and for the same reason of active political position. Another thing they had in common was their active participation in various ideological campaigns against Islam and against classical Orientology (Klimovich), and local studies (Tolstov), in the 1920s.


141 Kemper, “Ljutsian Klimovič,” 93-133

Another scholar, a certain Mochanov, expressed his doubts in more evident form: “Klimovich is a defective candidate [for the work at the sector] who has [only] written several anti-religious articles and does not even know the Arabic language.” The concerns of the scholars cited above suggest that the policy to expand the scientific staff resulted in the employing of scholars with low qualifications from whom one could not expect meaningful contributions. This enlargement of intelligentsia circles led to serious criticism by the professionals. At the same time, the high speed of political requests forced specialists to neglect their own scientific plans: to take an example, it seems that Ivanov’s work on Sheibanid history, which was mentioned above, was never published.

Shortly after the appearance of translated sources on Turkmen history began the writing of the general, ‘canonized’ histories of the various Central Asian republics. Already in 1943 the official history of the Kazakh republic was published, with the communist activist Anna Pankratova (1897-1957) as chief editor. During the war time it was planned to compile a Turkmen national history from the very beginning of Turkmen ethnogenesis in the 7th century up to the Russian invasion in the 1860s, i.e. covering the classical epoch of Islamic Central Asia. This work was finished only in 1952; the part on the period until the 15th century was written by Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, who managed to participate in the volume shortly before he passed away. Analogous volumes on republic-scale histories were published during the following five decades based largely on translations produced by Leningrad Orientalists; in some cases the translations and the narratives were produced by the same specialist. This two-step drafting of republican histories (sources plus a general historical outline) played a crucial role in defining chronology, space, and symbols of the national identities of the newly-established Central Asian nations.


144 Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei (Alma-Ata, 1943).

1.6 Semen Volin: Bartol’d’s Unacknowledged Successor

The preparation of the source editions was performed by a number of internationally acknowledged Orientalists, but several less well-known employees also participated in the projects. In what follows I will pay special attention to the fate of one of the latter, the above-quoted Semen L’vovich Volin (1909-194?). Although Volin had great talents and ambitions, he was not recognized as a distinguished scholar. This was partly due to the acridity of his character, but also to the short period of time that was granted him to perform active scholarly work (five years, 1936-1941). He was a true member of the classical St. Petersburg/Leningrad Orientology who also had the courage to defend his own positions in debates with ideologically engaged scholars. At the same time Volin intensively worked in several groups which conducted Oriental projects.

Volin’s valuable contribution to science is almost forgotten today and there is no special literature dedicated to his scholarly life. Fortunately, his undated autobiography has been preserved in the Archive of Orientalists in St. Petersburg.146 This is a widespread type of narrative that had to be written from time to time by any Institute’s employees. These autobiographical accounts, usually even autographs, contain very short (from one to three pages maximum) information on a scholar’s background, education and professional career, sometimes supplemented by short remarks on family status. In what follows we will encounter this source type several times. Sometimes the data provided was incorrect or too smoothly put, because the narrative’s author did not want to make known certain aspects of his private life, even though such accounts were not intended for a broad public. According to his autobiography, Semen L’vovich Volin was born in Karlsruhe (Germany) in 1909. After one year his family moved to St. Petersburg. In 1917 his mother divorced from his father who was an employee at a gold-mining company. In 1926 Volin’s father was arrested and charged with participation in ‘economic counterrevolution’; thus the future Orientalist became the son of a public enemy. In the document Volin tried to distance himself from his father, emphasizing that his mother divorced at an early point, when his father had not been yet charged. In 1927 Semen L’vovich started his education at the Oriental, and later Historical Departments of Leningrad University. He wrote: “At the University I stud-

ied Arabic under supervision of academician Krachkovskii, Persian with professors Freiman, Romaskevich, and Bertel’s, Turkish with professor Dmitriev, Uzbek with professors Malov and Iudakhin, and Oriental history with Academician Bartol’d whom I regard as my teacher [emphasis added – A.B.].” Such a solid educational background, intentionally underlined by Volin, would promise a successful career in science, but already in 1929 Semen L’vovich was excluded from the university for having concealed his father’s execution when filling out the university entrance documents. After his expulsion (obviously, without finishing his higher education) he went to Tashkent where he worked as an archivist from 1930 to 1933. In his autobiography Volin wrote that in Tashkent he became disappointed by Oriental studies as a whole. Thereupon he went to the Donbas (Ukraine) where he worked as a metallurgist until 1935. In 1936 he returned to Leningrad where he continued his proletarian career. Surprisingly, he mentioned in his autobiography that he took a job at the Institute of Oriental Studies where he translated different Arabic and Persian sources only because he needed extra earnings. Probably, somebody from the Institute (perhaps Evgenii Bertel’s) invited him to participate in a program of source editions. The Institute of Oriental Studies needed Volin because it lacked specialists like Volin who were well-versed in several Oriental languages and Islamic manuscript tradition, and therefore searched for suitable workers who, for whatever reasons, did not yet work at the Institute. This policy is also reflected in the second five-year plan to which I referred above; according to this document, the administration of the Institute “did not manage to bring together at the Institute [of Oriental Studies] a large group of [Leningrad] Orientalists; the majority of our staff are quite valuable specialists, but they have only a very limited experience in scientific work. The gathering of [scientific] forces is the most important task in the second five-year plan.”

Volin’s self-proclamation as Bartol’d’s disciple became crucial in his relationship with colleagues at the Institute. Even in the context of ideological persecutions academi-

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147 In April 1936 Bertel’s asked administration of the Institute to include Al’fred K. Arends into the Iranian cabinet in order to enforce the edition of Rashid ad-Din’s chronicle. Something similar could have happen to Volin. See the letter signed by Bertel’s: AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Op. 1a, №451, D. 633, Plan, smeta, protokoly zasedanii, dokladnye zapiski i perepiska po izdaniu “Istoriia Rashid ad-Dina”, 1 ianvaria 1936-29 ianvaria 1936, f. 9.

cian Vasilii Bartol’d, who died in 1930, had always been an unquestionable authority for Orientalists both within and outside of the Soviet Union. Being his follower did not necessarily mean to follow his methodological approach, and his views. Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, whose sincere Communist views and important contributions to the creation of Central Asian republican histories are well known, was often regarded as Bartol’d’s successor in the field of Central Asian studies, although he held views opposite to Bartol’d’s regional approach.

Both claiming to be ‘new Bartol’d,’ Volin and Iakubovskii became competitors and uncompromising antagonists. For example, in 1938 Volin spoke with fierce criticism about Iakubovskii’s book on the history of the Golden Horde. Iakubovskii even asked Volin to be more civilized in his criticisms. The great ambitions of Semen Volin were not supported by his colleagues. Probably his discreditable origin and large pretentions in scientific circles paved the way for Volin’s repression: on 5 July 1941 he was sentenced to exile and sent to Siberia, where he died (the date of his death is unknown). Some of his works were published after his death without mentioning their author’s name.

Just like that of a number of his colleagues, Volin’s philological work contributed significantly to the continuity of pre-revolutionary and Soviet Orientology in St. Petersburg / Leningrad. Volin was employed in the project of editing parts of the major work of a famous Russian Orientalist, Baron Vladimir G. Tizengauzen. Volin’s detailed work for preparing Persian narratives related to the history of the Golden Horde for publication has symbolic meaning, in so far as Volin continued the tradition and fulfilled the duty of Russian scholarship, because the volume of sources collected by Tizengauzen had been waiting for edition already for several decades.

Baron Vladimir G. Tizengauzen (1825-1902), a collaborator of the Archeological Committee in St. Petersburg, who was also a famous numismatist had compiled extracts from medieval Muslim historiographical manuscripts from materials in famous European

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libraries by. Tizengauzen planned to publish an impressive number of sources in the original texts with Russian translation in four volumes. But before the death of count S.G. Stroganov, his sponsor and the Chairman of the Archeological committee, Tizengauzen managed to publish only the first volume which contained Arabic sources without translation (1881). Until the present day this edition remains a reference book for every scholar in the world who studies medieval Central Eurasian history. 151 All other materials, partly translated into Russian, partly only in original languages, remained in manuscript form in the scholar’s private archive. The necessity to publish these valuable extracts from Oriental manuscripts was already discussed in 1911 when Tizengauzen’s family turned his papers to the Archive of the Asiatic Museum in St. Petersburg. 152 The processing and description of the scholar’s archive were entrusted to Iranist Aleksandr A. Romaskevich. The latter, however, did not finish this work, 153 most probably because of the Revolution and of the hard conditions for scientific work in the subsequent years. Around 1936, when Semen Volin became a co-worker of the Institute of Oriental Studies, the administration of the Institute decided to publish the Persian materials collected by Vladimir Tizengauzen. The ensuing publication, edited by Romaskevich and Volin in 1941, copied the structure of the first volume of 1881, according to which each text was accompanied by some information on the author of the respective chronicle, bibliographical references, and a Russian translation. However, in their introduction Romaskevich and Volin placed Tizengauzen’s work in the new context of studying Soviet peoples. According to the editors, “the present volume will give new [information] on the history of many peoples of the Soviet Union, [namely] Russians, Ukrainians, as well as Tatar, Chuvash, Azerbaijani, Ossetian, Circassian, Daghestani, Noghay, Kazakh, and Uzbek peoples.”154

151 Sbornik materialov po istorii Zolotoi Ordy, otmosiashchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, vol. 1, Izvlecheniiia iz arabskikh istochnikov, ed. by V.G. Tizengauzen (St. Petersburg, 1884).

152 Now this is collection number 52 in the Archive of Orientalists of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (St. Petersburg).


For several years in the late 1930s Semen Volin translated and commented upon manuscripts for different compendiums. Yet while several collective works saw the light of the day before WWII (Tizengauzen and the Turkmen volume), one other project remained unfinished. The archeologist Aleksandr Bernshtam (1910-1956) mobilized several Lenin-grad Orientalists, including Semen Volin and Aleksandr Belenitskii (1904-1993), to translate historical Arabic-script sources into Russian, in particular sources related to the history of the Talas valley. The idea to produce such a compendium was connected to a demand by archeologists: the identification of ancient settlements required a list of their historical names and the descriptions of their locations as laid down in Arabic and Persian sources. The Institute charged Semen Volin with compiling a short description of the new project; this task was seen as a continuation of the volumes on the Turkmen history (see above). This draft was called *Arabic, Persian, and Turkic Authors about the History of the Kirgiz and Kirgizstan in the 9th-16th Centuries*. This preliminary plan of work does not have a date, but it must have been produced in the early 1940s (1940-1941), i.e. before Volin’s arrest.

The idea was quite similar to the Turkmen project: an attempt to create a possibly full collection of historical reports about an individual people of Central Asia. Even the sources were more or less the same. Volin understood the complexity of the national approach for Central Asian history and suggested to distinguish two categories of sources: 1) sources about the history of the people called Kirgiz on the Yenisei River as well as in other places; 2) sources about the history of the territory of modern Northern and Southern Kirgizstan. As in other publications, it was foreseen to provide short introductions and brief commentaries to each translation. This plan found Soviet support, because the state was guided by the concept of autochthonism; that is, it was interested in support for the theory that Central Asian peoples have always been living on their present territories.


Volin, however, suggested to also cover the history of the Yenisei Kirgiz, obviously to study the subject in broader geographical boarders, from a trans-republican perspective.

However, this book was not finished because of the war and Volin’s repression. True, it was suggested to include Volin’s first selection of extracts under the title Reports of Arabic and Persian Sources on the History of Isfijab Region and the Valleys of the Talas and Chu Rivers in one of the publications of the Institute of Material Culture in Leningrad. Yet after Volin’s arrest in 1941 the editors quickly excluded his article from their volume. Eventually, the article was published in 1960 due to the efforts of the Kazakh historian Sapar K. Ibragimov. The idea of a source volume for the Kirgiz Republic was taken up again in the 1950s, after Stalin’s death, but it was carried out in another theoretical framework, namely with a focus on the Kirgiz people in Central Asia. The autochthonous conception gained another victory.

To sum up, Volin’s skills and ambitions were used in three Oriental projects (including one unfinished): Arabic and Persian sources on the Turkmen and Kirgiz peoples, and the edition of Tizengauzen’s papers. Besides, Volin compiled a description of Bartol’d’s archive, which was later used for the edition of the great Orientalist’s collected works. This story is told in details in a following chapter.

1.7 Evgenii Bertel’s and the Crown of Source Editing:

\textit{Jāmi‘ at-tawārīkh}

Evgenii Bertel’s (1890-1957) obtained his education as a musician and then studied jurisprudence, but eventually he became a world-famous specialist in Iranian studies. Bertel’s studied Islamic languages at Petrograd University from which he graduated in 1920. In that year he began to work at the Asiatic Museum (later the Institute of Oriental Studies). During the 1930s to 1950s he was a ‘monopolizer’ of Soviet Persian studies whose name regularly appears in the archival materials on the Oriental projects. A scholar of classical Iranian and Islamic studies in the Soviet Union, Evgenii Bertel’s became very loyal to the Communist Party after several short-term imprisonments in the 1920s-1930s. There is no

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doubt about his outstanding scientific merits: a corresponding member of the Academy of Sciences since 1939, Bertel’s was the organizer of several prominent Oriental projects in the area of source publication, and his works created a fundament for Central Asian Iranian studies. On the other hand, Bertel’s, because of his fear of repression, played an unseemly role in the fates of some of his colleagues in the late 1930s. For example, in 1938 during his interrogation by the secret police Bertel’s claimed that his colleague L.F. Veksler, who participated in the Rashīd ad-Dīn project, “has always been an initiator and activist of anti-Soviet propaganda.” Later Bertel’s also denounced the Arabist A.N. Genko with a similar charge.159

Bertel’s played leading roles in a series of projects which had huge political significance: the jubilees of Firdawsī (1934), Nawāʾī (1941), Niẓāmī (1937-47), and Avicenna (1954)160, the translation and publication of the works of Sa’dī and other poets who wrote in Persian and whose works were significant for the Soviet definition of culture of the Soviet Orient. On 20-30 May 1934 the Institute of Oriental Studies together with the State Hermitage conducted a united session devoted to jubilee of Firdawsī. Iosif Orbeli (1887-1961), the Hermitage’s Director, stated at this conference: “For many of the Soviet peoples [Firdawsī’s epos] the Shah-name is a cultural heritage which united their past with the past of the Persian people”.161 For this jubilee a special exhibition of Persian art was conducted at the State Hermitage. These jubilees, conferences, publications, and exhibitions served the purpose of evaluating the Persian cultural heritage which played a first-rate role for the history of all Central Asian republics (including southern Kazakhstan) as well as Azerbaijan in the Caucasus. Of special significance was the question of Firdawsī’s national identity and where he and other prominent poets and writers were born.


Yuri Bregel, in 1980, described the whole evolution of the ‘nationalization’ of Islamic cultural heritage as follows: “[M]any Soviet works try to show that Central Asia produced a large number of great men and in their lists everybody is included who was born in Central Asia (even if he left it in his childhood), who died there, who came for a visit (very much like the medieval hagiographic local histories), and often, also, those who lived in neighboring countries, especially Iran. The tendency to encroach upon Iran in seeking “great ancestors” was especially strong after the WWII, when almost all Persian poets and writers (some of whom lived in southern Iran and never even approached the borders of Central Asia) were described as Tajiks. Later these claims were somewhat moderated and Central Asian historians began to speak about the “common cultural heritage” of Central Asia and Iran. On the other hand, this is supplemented by inner quarrels between various republics, each of them claiming its own part of the Central Asian cultural heritage. Suffice it to mention here the appropriation of Nawā’ī (together with Chaghatai language) by the Uzbeks, not to the delight of other Central Asian Turks. In the same way the Kazakhs recently tried to claim al-Fārābī.”  

Some historical narratives, however, were difficult to ‘nationalize’. In this case another interpretation was chosen: it was claimed that their works were of value to Soviet history, in particular to the history of Soviet Central Asia. The world history written by Rashīd ad-Dīn was one of these narratives, because, as Bartol’d mentioned, this is “a vast historical encyclopedia of which there was nothing comparable in the possession of any individual people in the Middle Ages, neither in Asia nor in Europe.”

Rashīd ad-Dīn Faḍlallāh was born in Hamadan (Western Iran) in 1247 and was executed in Tabriz in 1318. Copies of his works spread around the Muslim world. They were widely known in Central Asia and the Volga-Ural region and were even translated into the Volga-Ural Turki in the early 17th century. His chronicle Jāmi‘ at-tawārīkh was devoted to...
to the history of the leading Mongol dynasty in Iran, the Ilkhans, and consisted of several volumes. Volume one, Tārīkh-i Ghāzānī, is a history of the Mongols from the very beginning until the reign of Ghazān Khan (1271-1304). According to scholar of Iranian studies John A. Boyle, in the second volume of his work “Rashīd ad-Dīn set the formidable task of compiling a general history of all the Eurasian peoples with whom the Mongols had come into contact. Beginning with Adam and the Patriarchs the volume recounts the history of the pre-Islamic kings of Persia; of Muḥammad and the Caliphate down to its descendants, the Turks; of the Chinese; of the Jews; of the Franks and their Emperors and Popes; and of the Indians, with a detailed account of Buddha and Buddhism.”

For a long time, the last, third, volume under the title Shuʿāb-i panjgānā (Five Genealogies, or in earlier version Suwār al-Aqalīm – Figures of the Climates) was considered lost or never written until the Bashkir emigrant professor Zeki Velidi-Togan discovered a unique manuscript in the Topkapı Sarayı Müzesi in Istanbul in 1927.

It is evident that such a giant compendium was not written by one person alone. Rashīd ad-Dīn used his administrative power as a vezīr at the Khan’s court: he used original documents of the khan’s chancellery and had a number of assistants who helped him in collecting the material. One of them, Abū-I-Qasīm b. ‘Alī b. Muḥammad al-Qashānī in his chronicle Taʾrīkh-i Uljaytū even claimed the authorship of Jāmiʿ at-tawārīkh for himself. The Taʾrīkh-i Uljaytū was never published in Russia, but the work of Rashīd ad-Dīn gained indisputable interest among the scholars. In a 1980 critical edition of the second volume of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle, the Azerbaijani Orientalist Abdulkerim Ali-Zade (1906-1979) evaluated Rashīd ad-Dīn as a “philosopher and legislator of his time, and a reform-minded thinker.” Moreover Ali-Zade built a link between the modern Azerbaijani Soviet Republic and Rashid al-Din: “His life, career, permanent living place, and current position as a šāhib-dīwān were directly tied to Azerbaijan. The main part of his life Rashīd ad-Dīn spent in Azerbaijan, where he wrote almost all his works on different scientific areas and where he held important state positions at the Ilkhanid court.” Ali-Zade did

not even exclude that Rashīd ad-Dīn had a Turkic origin of Rashīd ad-Dīn (who, as it is commonly assumed, probably was a Muslim of Jewish origin), writing that “as far as both Persian and Turkologists wrote mostly in the Persian language, it is difficult to identify their ethnic belonging.” Thereby Rashīd ad-Dīn underwent the process of Soviet ‘nationalization’.

In the Soviet Union the grandiose idea to translate and study the greatest Persian historical work, Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh, was part of a larger phenomenon: the investigation of the Soviet Orient. The majority of the southern territories of the former Russian Empire was part of the Islamic civilization and had been heavily influenced by the Arabic and Persian cultures. For example, it was impossible to study the past of what was now called Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan without being familiar with the Persian literary tradition. Moreover, since the end of the 19th century also Iran was in the area of Russian imperial interests.

Even after the signing of the new ‘equal’ pact between the Soviet Union and the Iranian Republic in 1921, the Soviets were still attempting to ‘export’ the revolution to Iran. Still, in the interwar period the character of Soviet-Iranian relations was quite friendly, and only later it deteriorated due to the pro-German orientation of the Iranian government. Leningrad became a place where the friendship between these two countries was celebrated. In 1925 the State Hermitage opened an exhibition of the Iranian, Central Asian, and Caucasian medieval cultural heritage. The governmental turn towards studies of the Soviet Orient in the early 1930s also brought about another, permanent exhibition of the Oriental Section in the State Hermitage. This event was of special importance because foreign delegations visited the Hermitage, in addition to thousands of Soviet citizens who wanted to admire the culture of Persia in artifacts and paintings. Evgenii Bertel’s had close ties with employees at the Hermitage who conducted the first exhibitions of Iranian and in general

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168 A.A. Ali-Zade, “Predislovie,” in: Faḍlallāh Rashīd ad-Dīn, Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh, vol. 2, part 1, Kriticheskii tekst, predislovie i ukazateli A.A. Ali-Zade, redaktsiya persidskogo teksta E.E. Bertel'sem i A.A. Romaskevichem (Moscow, 1980), 3-4. The origin of Rashīd ad-Dīn was also discussed by B. Spuler, Die Mongolen in Iran (Leipzig, 1939), 247-249; W.J. Fishel, “Azerbaijan in Jewish History,” in: Proceedings of the American Academy for Jewish Research XXII (1953), 1-21. Abdulkerim Ali-Zade was right that the city of Hamadan, where Rashid ad-Dīn was born, historically belongs to Azerbaijan. Even the residence of the Atabeks was there over certain periods.

169 Valieva, Sovetsko-iranskie kul’turnye sviagzi, 26.

170 At the same years, 1929-1934, the Soviet government ‘pillaged’ the treasures of the Hermitage by selling many masterpieces abroad. R.C. Williams, Russian Art and American Money (Cambridge, 1980); Iu. Zhukov, Stalin: Operatsiia “Ermitazh” (Moscow, 2005).
Muslim art. An important role in the organization of the Hermitage’s exhibitions was played by Aleksandr Iakubovskii, who was working exactly at that time on the problems of Oriental feudalism, the Oriental city, and socio-economic relations in the Orient. As a result, Iakubovskii wrote several works for exhibitions of Oriental artifacts in Hermitage.\textsuperscript{171}

Generally, the school of Iranian Studies in Leningrad was so strong because of the large collections of manuscripts and other artifacts preserved in the city’s museums. Evgenii E. Bertel’s, Aleksandr A. Romaskevich and Aleksandr A. Freiman were the main representatives of the Leningrad School of classical Iranian Orientology at that time.\textsuperscript{172}

This concentration of well-trained scholars of Iranian studies in the city made it possible to host, in September 1935, the Third International Congress on Persian Art and Archeology in the State Hermitage. This was the first experience of Soviet Orientology to organize such an important meeting of scholars from all over the world; the next event of this international category would come only with the 25\textsuperscript{th} International Congress of Orientalists, held in 1960 in Moscow. Besides the proceedings of the conference,\textsuperscript{173} the organizational committee of the Congress, personified in the Director of the State Hermitage Iosif Orbeli, also agreed upon the publication of a number of books in Persian and Russian languages on Iranian poetry, miniatures, and art. The main aim was to strengthen Iranian sympathies towards Soviet culture and scholarship, the latter paying extraordinary attention to the Persian heritage.\textsuperscript{174} The international leadership of the Congress organization had been negotiating with the Soviet government since the close of the Second International Congress of Persian Art and Archeology in London in 1931,\textsuperscript{175} that means the interest of Soviet authorities in cultural partnership with Iran and the desire to demonstrate Soviet achieve-


\textsuperscript{173} \textit{III mezhunarodnyi congress po iranskomy iskusstvu i arkeologii} (Moscow, Leningrad, 1939).


\textsuperscript{175} Ibid., D. 276/ 285, vol. 2, \textit{Dokumenty o podgotovke k 3-mu mezhdunarodnomu kongressu po iranskomy iskusstvu i arkeologii (na russkom i angliskom iazykah)}, 1934-1935, f. 49.
ments to the world go back at least to the early 1930s and probably even further to the 1920s. The negotiation even included the issue of a mutual exchange of scholars between the Soviet Union and Western countries. In particular, Americans were interested in the investigation of Timurid architecture in Central Asia.\(^{176}\)

It is in this light that in 1936 Evgenii Bertel’s came up with a detailed plan how to publish the first volume of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle Jāmi‘ at-tawārīkh, known as Tā’rīkh-i Ghāzānī. Most probably, this idea was first discussed during the Congress of Iranists that was held in the fall of 1935, but the details are unknown from archival sources. For the first time we learn about negotiations of the Leningrad Orientalists for gaining the copies of the Tā’rīkh-i Ghāzānī manuscripts in January 1936. Before studying details I want to reproduce the text of Bertel’s’ draft project, fortunately preserved in the Archive of Orientalists in St. Petersburg. Written with great talent, this application could be successful even today:

“A report on the publication and commented translation of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s Persian chronicle dated from the 14th century.

The work of Rashīd ad-Dīn, containing about a hundred printer’s sheets [Rus. pechatnyi list, 40,000 signs] of Persian text, is a first-range source for Persian historiography as a whole. Written in the early 14th century, this book includes rich [historical] material, because the author pursued the aim to collect historical data about all peoples from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean. Along with the history of the Mongols, much material represented in this book is on the history of Iran, India, China, the Turkic peoples, the Franks, the Jews and others. Unfortunately, the four or five manuscripts which are known to Western Orientalists are extremely confusing: they abound in later insertions, which misrepresent the meaning of the lost original, and they contain many mistakes in the rendering of geographical and proper names. [In addition, they are full of] special legal, administrative, economic, political Mongol, Turkic, and Iranian terms the meanings of which have been lost a long time ago. Moreover, the [manuscripts] are written without diacritics and with a huge amount of obscure words. In spite of the exceptional scientific value of this chronicle and its interest for international scholarship in past and present, this book remains an inaccessible source for Orientalists. If this chronicle was published, it would provide elucidation for all

\(^{176}\) Ibid., f. 89-91 (a letter of director of American Institute for Persian Art and Archeology Arthur Upham Pope to Academician Iosif Orbeli).
epochs, and it would open unknown pages in the life of various peoples. It is no exaggeration that this work will signify a great victory of international importance – not only because it resolves various scientific problems, but mainly because it contains inexhaustible material on the history of peoples of the Near East, Western Europe, China, and India. [This material] could make a revolution in science. The grandiosity of the idea, the extensiveness of material, the scope of the work, the character of the scientific tasks, and its general importance for Oriental Studies would make the investigation and translation of Rashīd ad-Dīn one of the greatest historical events in scholarship.

The first attempt to publish the work of Rashīd ad-Dīn was undertaken by the French scientist [Antoine Chrysostome] Quatremère [(1755-1849)], hundred years ago. Quatremère planned a big series but published only two volumes [of the chronicle] with text and translation in 1836. After 75 years, in 1911, one more volume with an original text was published in the same country [France] by [Edgard] Blochet [(1870-1937)]. In the 19th century from among Russian Orientalists only Professor Ил'я Н. Березин [(1818-1896)] had studied Rashīd ad-Dīn. He intended to publish the whole chronicle, but he released only the text and translation of the introduction on the Turkic and Mongol peoples (two volumes). Thus since 1836 there were only three attempts [at publication]. Their results were more than modest, because it was only the initiatives of single scholars who embarked upon a work that required collective efforts. If in the 19th century and even in the early 20th century the work of the above-mentioned Orientalists did not find successors who would finish the project of the first pioneers, in the present time of the crisis of capitalism and the decline of Iranian Studies [in the West] even attempts in this direction are impossible in the West.

177 [Histoire des Mongols de la Perse, écrite en Persan par Raschid-Eldin, publiée, traduite en français, accompagnée de notes et d’un mémoire sur la vie et les ouvrages de l’auteur par M. Quatremère, t. I (Paris, 1836).]

178 [Djami et-tevarikh, Tarikh-i moubarek-i Ghāzānī, éditée par E. Blochet, t. II, contenant l’histoire des empereurs mongols successeurs de Tchinkiz-Khagan (London, 1911).]

179 [Reshid-eddin, Sbornik letopisei. Istoriia Mongolov, Sochinenie Rashid-Eddina, Vvedenie: O turetskikh i mongol'skikh plemenakh, Perevod s persidskogo, s vvedeniem i primechaniami I.P. Berezina (Zapiski Imperatorskogo arkeologicheskogo obshchestva, vol. 14) (St. Petersburg, 1858); Trudy vostochogo otdeleniia Rossiiskogo Arkheologicheskogo obshchestva, vol. 5 (St. Petersburg, 1858), vol. 7 (1861), vol. 8 (1868), vol. 15 (1888).]

180 [Here it should be added that in 1935 – just a year before Bertel’s proposal – Nicholas Martinovitch stressed the question of necessity to publish the whole Jāmi‘ at-tavārīkh: N.N. Martinovitch, “Die verlorene Handschrift von Raṣīd ad-Dīn,” in: Artibus Asiae, vol. 5, no, 2/4 (1935), 214. The work in this direction was started by the Austrian Orientalist Karl Jahn shortly before WWII, when he published a critical text of the
Today Soviet scholars should be the pioneers, who, in contrast to their bourgeois predecessors, can begin the work on Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle not merely out of goodwill [here and following the emphasis is mine – A.B.] which would not commit a single accidental scholar to do something, but in order to realize a demand of the state, with a precise work plan, with the joint participation of all scholars useful [to the project], and in full awareness of their responsibility towards the state. It goes without saying that the critical edition of the text with translation and comments would enhance the prestige of Soviet Iranian studies so much that they would fairly take the first place on the international arena. At the same time there is no country which is so much concerned with the publication of Rashīd ad-Dīn as the Soviet Union. The [work’s] extraordinarily rich information on the history of the Mongols, the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, the Caucasus, Siberia, and on the history of the Golden Horde – is all of first-rate interest to Soviet scholars. Though the expenses will reach an impressive sum, these expenses are trifling in comparison with the scientific fruits. In addition to the invaluable work experience for our scholars, the published manuscript could refund all expenses. According to tentative data, about one thousand exemplars could be sold to world libraries and to individual foreign scholars. If the price of one complete set of the edition in three volumes will be set at 100 gold rubles, then the income [from marketing the book] will be 100 000 gold rubles.

After the termination of the planning works the Soviet specialists will be able to fulfill the investigation of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle in six years. Four sectors of the Institute of Oriental Studies (the Iranian, Central Asian, Mongolian, and Caucasian Sectors) expressed their unanimous consent to organize and prepare this difficult work in this short period of time. In the middle of the 19th century the Russian professor N.I. Berezin published about ten sheets with translation in a more or less satisfactory manner. Today the Soviet scholarship has a huge amount of Orientalists at its disposal, who have achieved much higher standards [in their work and education] than [their colleagues] a hundred year ago. The Redaction Committee for leading the work will comprise the following [group of scholars]:

1. E. E. Bertel’s
2. A. Romaskevich. [Both] Iranists

3. Academician A.N. Samoilovich for the Chaghatay text and as a scientific supervisor on questions about Turkic peoples
4. Academician I.Iu. Krachkovskii for the Arabic and Persian texts
5. Academician I.A. Orbeli, Iranist
6. Corresponding member [of the Academy] A.A. Freiman, Iranist
7. A.Iu. Iakubovskii, for historical research on the history of the Mongol and Turkic peoples
8. Corresponding member N.N. Poppe
9. V.A. Kazakevich, for the Mongol terminology and history
10. G.V. Shitov, Iranist, scientific secretary of the redaction committee.

It is planned to involve an employee of the Iranian sector, L.F. Veksler, for scientific-technical work. Moreover it is planned to include about ten experienced translators-Iranists with good language skills. The above-mentioned difficulties, which made the success of work impossible for researchers who could not combine skills in the Mongol, Arabic, Turkic, and Iranian terminology and the history of different Oriental tribes and peoples, will be overcome by the joint efforts of scholars with various specializations, and by involving the high number of scholars which is required by the big size of the manuscript.

The Directorate of the Institute of Oriental Studies appointed the chief of the Persian sector [Evgenii Bertel’s] for managing the whole project. (...) [In the following, Bertel’s describes the official duties of the chief and his assistants and provides a calculation of the costs.] Because the chronicle contains huge material on the history of the Mongols and of the Turkic peoples of Central Asia, the Mongol National Republic and the Uzbek SSR will be interested in its publication as well. Hence it will be reasonable to discuss [also] the edition’s material support with scientific committees of those republics.

In conclusion, it is worth mentioning that the annual expenses of 39.850 rubles are relatively small and quite acceptable for the budget of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR for a duration of six years. The results of the planned investigation will open up a new world for the history of the different peoples and will be so encompassing that the Academy hardly needs more solid arguments.”

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This application was written in summer 1936 and already contained a clear definition of how the project should look like in many details. As Bertel’s’ draft aimed mainly to prove the necessity of the project and to receive financial support from the government, this document was sent to the Presidium of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which decided whether to accept Bertel’s’ proposal or not. The Bertel’s project to publish Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle, in the form outlined in the cited document, seems to be his personal (or collective together with his fellows) initiative, because he had to argue why exactly this historical source was of importance and what benefits it would produce for the Soviet state. Certainly, the whole project was born in the context of the Congress of Persian Art and Archeology, though Bertel’s did not explicitly refer to it.

Bertel’s proposal is a classical example of Soviet Oriental projects, and is interesting from several points of view. It reflects a number of issues that also appear in other official papers produced by the Academy in the early 1930s. First of all, the chronicle is presented as a central major source on the history of the Soviet Orient. The importance of this source for the history of Iran, Azerbaijan, Central Asia and Mongolia was elucidated by scholar of Iranian studies Il’ia P. Petrushevskii in his introductory article to the first volume (1952) of the translated chronicle, entitled Rashīd ad-Dīn and His Historical Work. In other words, Rashīd ad-Dīn could be used for the history of the Soviet peoples as well as for the intensification of Soviet political influence on the Muslim world through the mass of information it contains on many nations. It should be mentioned however that at that time there were no attempts to claim Rashīd ad-Dīn as a symbol of a particular republic in the Soviet Union. Second, suggesting a group character of scientific work (in the light of the second five-year plan of the Institute of 1933-1936), the project work was indeed to become a great school for the new, post-war generation of Leningrad Orientalists, who benefitted from the work with prominent researchers who already enjoyed a world reputation in the 1930s. However, the work on Rashīd ad-Dīn had not been included in the second five-year plan of 1933-1937, and scholars had combined the complex work on its translation with other ongoing tasks. It was also in concordance with five-year plan that the author of

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182 I. P. Petrushevskii, „Rashid ad-Dīn i ego istoricheskii trud,” in: Rashid ad-Dīn, Sbornik letopisei, vol. 1, part 1, 7. Il’ia Pavlovich Petrushevskii (1898-1977) was a first-rate Soviet specialist of Iranian history and socio-economic relations.

the project suggest to share expenses with those republics that were supposed to be inter-
ested in the edition of Rashīd ad-Dīn. Third, in order to guarantee the Party officials that
also economically the project will be a success, Bertel’s referred to financial profits from
selling the copies of the translated chronicle to foreign scholars. He knew that foreign cur-
rency (*valiuta*) was a convenient argument in negotiations with the authorities.

Finally, Bertel’s claimed the ‘unquestionable’ superiority of Soviet scholarship at a
time when Persian studies in the bourgeois world were in crisis. Bertel’s wrote that this
unprecedented initiative was too demanding for capitalist societies, but that it would be
successfully completed in ‘the country of victorious socialism’ and improve the knowledge
of the history of the Soviet peoples. This anti-imperialistic critique and rhetoric against
Western scholarship goes back to Sergei Ol’denburg, who “[a]lready in 1896 (…) dwelled
on the inability of the Europeans to understand ‘or even attempt to understand’ life in
Asia.” By the 1930s Ol’denburg came up with his critique of European Orientology in past
and present, whereas “the Soviet regime engendered new scholarship of non-European
societies, free from Eurocentric prejudices and stereotypes,” as he claimed.184 Already the
1935 International Congress on Persian Art and Archeology at the State Hermitage suc-
cessfully demonstrated, in the eyes of the Soviet organizers, the superiority of the Soviet
Iranian Studies.

Bertel’s personally knew Stalin’s repressive machine in action, so he understood that
an outstanding success of his enterprise had to be motivated not just by “good will”, but
rather because of a direct “state demand” and the scholars’ “full awareness of their respon-
sibility towards the state.” From our perspective – and certainly also in Bertel’s’ own per-
suasion – these words are terrible and run against the fundamental conviction of academic
liberty, but they precisely reflect the situation of Soviet scholarship at that time. The mod-
ern Tatarstani scholar of Iranian studies Alsu Arslanova, a spec ialist on Persian manu-
scripts, has already remarked that Bertel’s reflected the “spirit of his time.”185 Neverthe-
less, the phenomenon was much deeper than just that.

184 V. Tolz, *Russia’s Own Orient*, 95.
185 A.A. Arslanova, *Ostalis’ knigi ot vremey bylykh…* (Kazan, 2002), 122. This book is peculiar since it is
devoted to the historiography of Russian/ Soviet Iranian studies of the Mongol period as well as to
textological corrections in the publication of Persian historical accounts on the Golden Horde collected by
Baron Tizengauzen and first published by Semen Volin and Aleksandr Romaskevich.
The draft project proposal by Bertel’s was preceded by another document by the same author of January 1936 on the chronicle’s edition which suggested the following tasks: 1) to identify and decode the social terminology from the text of the manuscripts, and to produce a terminological dictionary; 2) to use the experience of Quatremère, Berezin, Blochet, and other Orientalists; 3) to study other Oriental narratives on Mongol history; 4) to achieve a special decision of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences confirming the project; 5) to publish an article on the project of publishing Rashīd ad-Dīn in the Soviet Union; 6) to procure the Arabic and Chaghatay translations of the chronicle; 7) to obtain photocopies of the first volume of the chronicle from foreign countries. Old translations into the Volga-Ural Turki were not taken into account because they did not contain the complete text. The list of expenses clearly demonstrates the idea that translation and publication of the medieval chronicle was not just part of a scientific program: it was a political event. Bertel’s designed the work for a period of five years: from January 1, 1936 to January 1, 1941, but in reality it took more than forty years to implement the preliminary idea.

After its approval by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences (probably in the second half of 1936) the government was interested in how the project was proceeding. Thus in 1937 Evgenii Bertel’s and Andrei Kovalevskii published two memoranda on the state of the translation work of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s opus. Bertel’s underlined the idea that only in the USSR this project could be brought to success because the Party, government, and the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences paid special attention to the history of the Soviet peoples. Difficulties were solved by abundant financing, by the acquisition of manuscripts from London, Paris, Istanbul, and Ardebil, and by the collective efforts of specialists in history and languages of the Islamic and Turk-Mongol worlds.

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188 E.E. Bertel’s, “Podgotovka izdaniia”, 224.
The total budget for 1936-1941 was fixed as 239,105 Soviet Roubles and 500 gold rubles\textsuperscript{189}. In 1936 one US Dollar was officially equivalent to 1.15 Roubles. The huge budget for collective work lead to turf wars: for example, there was a conflict around the financing of consultations provided by scholar of Mongol studies Kazakevich. When he was officially on vacation, Kazakevich was ordered to give consultations to the members of the project. In his memorandum he intelligently complained that nobody paid him for that overtime work. In addition, he claimed that “the Mongolian cabinet [where Kazakevich worked] was vitally concerned with the realization of this edition and even the initiative of this project substantially came from the Mongolian cabinet.”\textsuperscript{190}

The project presupposed a large international network in Europe, the Near East and Central Asia, including collaboration with ‘bourgeois’ scholars. The work plan included making photocopies from the Bibliothèque Nationale (Paris) and the British Museum (London), trips to Iran and Turkey for the search of manuscripts, and trips to Tashkent and Samarkand for work with Persian and Chaghatay texts. I know two cases when the Iranian cabinet of the Institute of Oriental Studies asked the Presidium of the Academy to help in international affairs. First, Academician Samoilovich and Bertel’s asked three thousands French Francs and fifty-seven British Pounds for copying French and English manuscripts. Second, one previously unstudied copy of Rashid ad-Dīn was brought to Leningrad in May 1936: an Iranian diplomatic delegation brought this copy to the exhibition of Persian art in the State Hermitage. This manuscript, even though it was a late copy (from 1595-96), had been made from a good original, and it rendered all names in a clear manner. The Leningrad specialists were surprised to find that this manuscript was a full copy of the first volume of the chronicle (including a unique story of Uljaytu Khān’s reign which was not known from any other manuscript) also featuring ninety-eight miniatures of an Indian school.\textsuperscript{191}

\textsuperscript{189} Smeta raskhodov na kriticheskoe izdanie i kommentirovannyi perevod persidskoi istoricheskoi rukopisi nachala 14 veka Rashid ad-Dina, na shest` let, s 1 ianvaria 1936 po 1 ianvaria 1941, f. 3, in: AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Opis 1a, №451, D. 633, Plan, smeta, protokoly zasedanii, dokladnye zapiski i perepiska po izdaniiu “Istorii Rashid ad-Dina”, 1-29 ianvaria 1936.

\textsuperscript{190} Ibid., f. 32 (italics are mine).

\textsuperscript{191} Ibid., f. 15. Other manuscripts which were used in the edition of Rashid ad-Din’s chronicle are described in: Rashid ad-Din, Sbornik letopisei, vol. 3, perevod s persidskogo A.K. Arendsa, pod redaksiei A.A. Romaskevicha, E.E. Bertel’sa i A.Iu. Iakubovskogo (Moscow, Leningrad, 1946), 9-14; B.W. Robinson, “Rashid ad-Din’s World History: The Significance of the Miniatures,” \textit{Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland} 2 (1980), 212-222.
There was a methodological problem: how to translate this difficult text into Russian? Is it correct to translate an old text into a modern style? If not, what is the alternative? During one of the first meetings the redaction committee decided to use the Russian language of the 19th century and to ask academician Boris Grekov (1882-1953) about a Russian historian of the past whose style they could use for translation. Scholar of Iranian studies Oleg Akimushkin (1929-2010) told me during an interview that the style of the Great Russian historians Vasilii O. Kliuchevskii (1815-1850) and Sergei V. Solov’ev (1820-1879) was chosen as most appropriate. The Russian language of the 19th century was accepted as best-suited for the translation of a medieval source. Putting aside philological nuances, one might think that this was not just a coincidence or simply an expression of Boris Grekov’s admiration of the Tsarist historians. First of all, in the aftermath of Stalin’s Great Retreat, 19th-century imperial historiography enjoyed a comeback, while early Soviet historians like Mikhail N. Pokrovskii (1868-1932) had long fallen out of grace. This was connected to the re-evaluation of the role played by the Russians in the building of the Empire, not as an ‘absolute evil,’ but rather as an ‘elderly brother,’ who helped to develop colonized territories. The world history written by a Persian historian was now intended to speak in the tongue of Russian classic of history writing.

As our list of Oriental projects (see above) shows, the majority of the best Soviet Orientalists and almost the whole Institute of Oriental Studies took part in the translation of Rashid ad-Dīn. While this project did not have problems with financing, the publication suffered from serious delays that resulted from the Second World War. Before the war, in 1939, only the translation by Iranist Al’fred K. Arends (1893-1977) of the third volume was ready for publication. All other parts, including the original Persian text, were only published in the course of the 1940s and 1950s. Two members of the redaction commit-

192 Interview with Oleg F. Akimushkin, St. Petersburg, 28 January 2010.


194 Arends worked at the Institute of Oriental Studies between 1936 and 1942. As a German he was send in exile to Nizhni Tagil. In 1947 Arends managed to settle in Tashkent, where he chaired department of Iranian philology at Central Asian State University and continued publication of Oriental manuscripts.

195 Rashid ad-Dīn, Sbornik letopisei, vol. 1, part 1, Pervov s persidskogo L. Khetagurova, redaktsiiia i kommentarii A. Semenova (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952); vol. 1, part 2 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952); vol. 2, Pervov s persidskogo Iu. Verkhovskogo, kommentarii Iu. Verkhovskogo i B. Pankratova, redaktsiiia I. Petrushovskogo (Moscow, Leningrad, 1960); vol. 3, perevod s persidskogo A.K. Arendsa, pod redaktsiei A.A. Romaskevicha, E.E. Bertel’sa i A.Iu. Iakubovskogo (Moscow, Leningrad, 1946); Faḍlallāh Rashīd ad-
Many others, (Aleksandr Romaskevich and Pavel Ivanov) died during the first years of the war; and Nicolas Poppe fled from the Soviet Union, as we have seen earlier.

Much later, at a special Rashid ad-Din celebration seminar (Tehran, 1-6 November 1969) A.K. Arends, one of the main translators of the chronicle, held a paper on the history of studying Jāmiʿ at-tawārīkh in the Soviet Union. According to this article, the research group (including A.A. Romaskevich, L.A. Khetagurov, A.A. Ali-Zade, O.I. Smirnova, B.I. Pankratov, and A.K. Arends) decided to start their work with the third part of the volume one. The reason for starting with this part was that it had hitherto been almost unavailable for scholars. In 1939 the translation of this part was completed, but due to the war it was published only in 1946 (the second edition appeared in 1957 together with a critical text). After the war, the collective of researchers, who at that time were working on the edition and translation of other parts of the first volume of Rashid ad-Din’s chronicle, changed its composition, with Semenov being the new supervisor in place of Bertel’s who passed away in 1957. The remaining two parts of the first volume appeared in press in 1952. While one sometimes reads that the Soviet scholars published the entire text of the chronicle, the project presupposed only the publication of the Ta’rikh-i Ghāzānī, i.e. of the first volume (in three parts) of the original chronicle, and not the second volume on the history of Europe, the Hebrews and India. In the introduction to the publication of the first part of the first volume Il’ia Petrushevskii specified that the Soviet project only meant the translation of Ta’rikh-i Ghāzānī, i.e. the first volume (in three parts) of Rashid ad-Din’s chronicle. Petrushevskii also underlined the scientific significance of Rashid ad-Din’s vol-

Din, Jāmiʿ at-tawārīkh, vol. 1, part 1, Kriticheskii tekst A. Romaskevicha, L. Khetagurova i A. Ali-Zade (Moscow, 1965); Faḍlallāh Rashīd ad-Dīn, Jāmiʿ at-tawārīkh, vol. 3, Kriticheskii tekst, podgotovlenyi A. Arendsom (Baku, 1957); Faḍlallāh Rashīd ad-Dīn, Jāmiʿ at-tawārīkh, vol. 2, part 1, Kriticheskii tekst, predislovi i ukazateli A.A. Ali-Zade, redaktsiia persidskogo teksta E.E. Bertel’sem i A.A. Romaskevichem (Moscow, 1980).


198 Rashid ad-Din, Sbornik letopisei, vol. 1, part 1, Pervvod s persidskogo L. Khetagurova, redaktsiia i kommentarii A. Semenova (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952); vol. 1, part 2 (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952).

199 Ibid., 55.
volume on the Non-Muslim peoples, but did not explain why this other part was not included in the publication. This means that the editors knew about the second volume of the chronicle, but did not publish it, because it did not fit into the task of studying the Soviet Orient. Other volumes of the chronicle devoted to the history of the Jews, Europe, and India were evaluated as less interesting from the historical perspective, because more precise and detailed data were given in other sources. In the 1970s-80s these parts were published in the original and in German translation by Karl Jahn, and therefore one might argue that there was kind of labor division between Jahn’s personal life-long efforts and the Soviet collective of Orientalists.

Soviet scholars of Iranian studies were aware of a parallel initiative of editing Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle by the Czech Orientalist Karl Jahn (1906-1985). The latter defended his dissertation on Arabic epistology in Prague in 1931. After that his interest in Central Asian history was intensified by short studies in Berlin and by a meeting with Ahmet Zeki Velidi, who had discovered the third volume of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle in Istanbul in 1927 (see above). Obviously, Zeki Velidi influenced Karl Jahn’s scientific interests and “became a lifelong friend of Jahn.” As a result, Karl Jahn started working on Rashīd ad-Dīn, went to Istanbul in 1934, and then presented his Habilitation on the first volume of the chronicle known as Ta’rīkh-i Ghāzānī at the German University in Prague in 1938. Even though the Soviet side and Karl Jahn, who edited the parts from Rashīd ad-Dīn’s oeuvre for the whole of his life, knew about the work of each other, no collaboration or contacts be-

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200 I. P. Petrushevskii, „Rashid ad-Din i ego istoricheskii trud,” in: Rashid ad-Din, Sbornik letopisei, vol. 1, part 1, Perevod s persidskogo L. Khetagurova, redaktsiia i kommentarii A. Semenova (Moscow, Leningrad, 1952), 31.

201 Die Geschichte der Kinder Israels des Rashid ad-Din (Wien, 1973); Die Frankengeschichte des Rashid ad-Din (Wien, 1977); Die Indiengeschichte des Rashid ad-Din: Einleitung, vollständige Übersetzung, Kommentar und 80 Texttafeln (Wien, 1980).


204 Ta’rīkh-i-mubāraki-Gāzānī des Rašīd al-Dīn Faḍl Allāh Abī-l-Hair, Geschichte der Ilkhāne Abāgā bis Gaihātū (1265-1295). Kritische Ausgabe mit Einleitung, Inhaltsgabe und Indices von Karl Jahn (Prag, 1941); Rashīd al-Dīn’s History of India: collected essays with facsimiles and indices (The Hague, 1965); Die Chinageschichte des Raṣīd ad-Dīn (Vienna, 1971); Die Geschichte der Kinder Israels des Raṣīd ad-Dīn
between them are traceable. The very first time when Karl Jahn visited the Soviet Union was the year 1980, when he traveled to Samarqand and Bukhara by an invitation of the Soviet Academy of Sciences.

Some interesting details on the history of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s project were mentioned by Oleg F. Akimushkin during our interview, conducted shortly before Akimushkin’s passing away in 2010. According to Akimushkin, the text and Russian translation of the second volume, carried out by Lev A. Khetagurov (1901-1942), were thought to have been destroyed during the German siege of Leningrad. It was a great surprise for Iurii P. Verkhovskii (1891–1962), one of the translators of Rashīd ad-Dīn, when Oleg F. Akimushkin, at that time a new employee at the Institute, discovered both text and Verkhovskii’s translation in one of the Institute’s offices in 1957. Iosif Orbeli, director of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies at that time, even though there was a tension between him and Verkhovskii, understood the importance of the rediscovered materials, and soon the book saw the light.205

In 1958, after the death of Aleksandr A. Semenov, Iranist Il’ia P. Petrushevskii replaced him in the position of project leader. The Russian translation of the second volume and the Persian text of the first volume of the Ta’rīkh-i Ghāzānī were published under Petrushevskii’s direction in 1960 and 1965 respectively.206 The 1971 edition of another part of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s heritage, his Maktūbāt (Correspondence), could be regarded as a continuation of the entire project.207 The last part of the edition of the text of Ta’rīkh-i Ghāzānī appeared as part of the old Leningrad project under editorship of Abdulkerim Ali-Zade in Baku in 1980.208 Anyway, a full publication of the Ta’rīkh-i Ghāzānī in the form suggested by Evegenii E. Bertel’s in 1936 was not achieved, because not all Russian translations were accompanied by a critical text of the original. A.K. Arends, in 1971, men-

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207 Rashīd ad-Dīn, Perepiska, ed. by A.I. Falina (Moscow, 1971).

208 Faḍllallāh Rashīd ad-Dīn, Jāmi’ at-tavārīkh, vol. 2, part 1, Kriticheskii tekst, predislovie i ukazateli A.A. Ali-Zade, redaktsia persidskogo teksta E.E. Bertel’sem i A.A. Romaskevichem (Moscow, 1980).
tioned that the remaining materials “have also been prepared for the press and are awaiting their turn of publication.” As far as I know they are “awaiting” until the present day in the Archive of Orientalists among other almost finished books that for some reason did not see the light of the day.

The Jāmi‘ at-tawārīkh was an important milestone in the series of Soviet philological Oriental projects: we can regard Rashīd ad-Dīn’s publication as the fundament of the grandiose series of source publications under the series title Monuments of the Literature of the Peoples of the East (Pamiatniki pis’mennosti Vostoka), which started in 1959. The Rashīd ad-Dīn project was continued by the edition of the Persian epic by Firdawsī, Shāh-nāme. Nine volumes of the latter were published between 1960 and 1971 under the scientific editorship of Evgenii Bertel’s. The start of this series was connected to the 25th International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow in 1960. By 2011 fifty-nine volumes of the Monuments series have been published. The main task of this series is still to publish texts and Russian translations from the written heritage of Oriental peoples, from North Africa to Korea.

The edition of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle was really an event of all-Soviet scale which symbolized the continuity from the pre-revolutionary tradition of Oriental Studies in St. Petersburg to the Soviet scholarly system of collective work. However, this literary monument was not officially tied to one particular Soviet republic (at least until the 1980 Baku edition). The project was central in the creation of a new type of scholarship, i.e. Soviet Oriental studies, since it trained a new generation of scholars. Previous projects had largely been confined to scholars of the pre-revolutionary generations. In the late 1950s and 1960s students entering scholarship saw them as examples of how good work should look like. Next to the much-celebrated works of the ‘classics’ like Bartol’d or Krachkovskii, the new generation now had a model of how philological methods could be combined with Marxist ideology.

1.8 The Kirgiz Group in Leningrad

To turn to the next Oriental project of that era, the Kirgiz project had already been planned by Semen Volin in the late 1930s (probably under Bernshtam’s influence). His plan re-

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mained topical after the war and after the end of the Stalin era. In 1954-1957 a special “Kirgiz group” was established at the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Scholars were working on Arabic, Persian and Turkic (later also Chinese) sources on the history of the Kirgiz in the 9th-19th centuries. It was Oleg F. Akimushkin, Zoia N. Vorozheikina, Sergei G. Kliashtornyi, Vadim A. Romodin, and Munira A. Salakhetdinova who were charged with identifying and translating suitable texts. Obviously, this group was created in order to support the writing of the history of the Kirgiz SSR, which was published as soon as 1956.²¹⁰ Initially, the materials on the history of the Kirgiz were not intended to be published, but rather to be used in typed form in the republic itself. The first volume of this book, which covered Arabic and Persian narratives, appeared only in 1973.²¹¹ The collected translations of sources dealt only with the territory of the Kirgiz SSR and not with the history of the Yenisei Kirgiz in Siberia. The different developments that this ethnic denomination underwent before and after the Mongol invasion was not discussed in the volume.²¹² The technical aspects of the publication (translations, short historical comments with bibliography) were the same as in previous projects. Arabic-script texts were excluded from the publication, which therefore contained only translations, no originals.

According to official data, in 1952 the Kirgiz Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (since 1955 the Academy of Sciences of the Kirgiz SSR) asked the Leningrad Orientalists for help in the writing of the republic’s history.²¹³ The Kirgiz capital Frunze (Bishkek) had few historians, no Institute of Oriental Studies, and even no collection of manuscripts during the entire Soviet time. It was inevitable that the Kirgiz history would be written by Moscow and Leningrad specialists. Yet I would go even further and argue that even the request for Leningrad help was inspired by Party officials in the Centre. The creation of republics’ histories was too important to leave it to local cadres. In 1952-53 the

²¹⁰ Istoriia Kirgizii, ed. by M.P. Viatkin, B.D. Dzhamgerchinov, A.P. Okladnikov, et. al (Frunze, 1956).
Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the highest scientific institution in the country, repeatedly examined the Kirgiz project, decided to form a special ‘Kirgiz group’ at the Institute of Oriental Studies and calculated that the costs would amount to 500,000 rubles for a five-year duration. The project was initially led by a certain M.Iu. Iuldashev, who was later replaced by Leningrad scholar of Iranian studies V.A. Romodin. The work team included a number of experienced specialists of Iranian studies, namely Natalia N. Tumanovich (1928-2005), Oleg F. Akimushkin (1929-2010), and Zinaida N. Vorozheikina.

When the scholars who worked in the Kirgiz group jointly compiled a short note on the project with a description of its goals and structure. It was argued that the project should not lead to quick publications; rather the texts were to be disseminated first in typed form among the scholarly community in order to acquaint the specialist with the first results so that they could already be used for the writing of the republic’s history. Significantly, this idea was explained by the need for broad historical material for writing the history of the Kirgiz SSR,\(^{214}\) which at that time, unlike in the other Central Asian republics, was still to be written. Among the sources to be translated and annotated in Russian Zinaida Vorozheikina also included Central Asian parts of hagiographical literature preserved in the Leningrad Branch of Institute of Oriental Studies, in order to elucidate the process of Islamization among the Kirgiz of the Tien-Shan, but with a special accent on pre-Islamic beliefs.\(^ {215}\) This fact is remarkable, since the scholars obviously focused not only on court historiography, as was the case in previous source edition projects, but also on religious literature, therefore Islamic Studies in the form of Oriental textology were also taken into account.

The entire translation work of Arabic, Turkic, Persian, and Chinese sources (46 manuscripts!) was finished in 1957, and two volumes of texts were sent in type-script to the Institute of Language, Literature, and History of the Academy of Sciences in Frunze. In 1958 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Kirgizia, satisfied with the results of this research, asked Bobodzhan Gafurov (1908-1977), the Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies, to continue the work of the Kirgiz group for five to seven more years in

\(^{214}\) AV IVR RAN, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 58, *Kratkoe poiasnenie k materialam po istorii kirgizov i Kirgizstana*, f. 1.

\(^{215}\) Ibid., f. 6.
order to translate more sources on Kirgiz history. Moreover, the Kirgiz official A. Kazakbekov frankly asked to publish the finished translations in Moscow, because the ty-
pographies in Frunze did not have Arabic-script letters and had no specialists who would
be able to correct the text in Oriental languages. Kazakbekov even suggested to achieve the
publication before the 25th International Congress of Orientalists, which was to be held in
the Soviet Union in 1960. Unfortunately, I do not know the reason for the long delay of
the publication: the first volume with Muslim narratives appeared only in 1973, and the
Chinese volume was published as late as in 2003. Obviously in the Kirgiz case the coop-
eration did not work so smoothly. As in the previous projects, the final goal was achieved
by close collaboration of specialists from Leningrad, Moscow and Frunze, and the Kirgiz
Republic received its codified history, based on the previous text edition by Leningrad
scholars, in 1956. This fact allowed Gafurov to stop the work of the Kirgiz group in
1958: the money provided by the Presidium was already spent, the Republic got the result
of the work, and local specialists even started writing more specific historical books on the
basis of the unpublished translations from Leningrad.

1.9 The Kazakh Project: Completion of the Program

Most probably already before Kazakbekov’s letter Gafurov had decided to support the new
project in Kazakhstan instead of continuing the Kirgiz project: in 1954 Ivan S.
Gorokhvodatskii, the director of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in
Alma-Ata, sent a description of the Kirgiz project as a model for a similar Kazakh project
to Dinmukhamed A. Kunaev (1912-1993), who was then President of the Kazakh Acade-

216 AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Op. 1a, № 1288, D. 633.1, Perepiska s TsK KP Kirgizii, Institutom istorii AN
Kirgizskoi SSR o sokhranenii kirgizskoi grupp pry LO IV i izdanii sbornika ee rabot, 27 sentiabria 1958-
mart 1959, f.2. The Kazakbekov’s letter is dated from 27 September 1958.

217 Materialy po istorii kirgizov i Kirgizii, vol. 1; Materialy po istorii kyrgyzov i Kyrgyzstana, vol. 2
(Bishkek, 2003).

218 Istoriia Kirgizii, ed. by M.P. Viatkin, B.D. Dzhangerchinov, A.P. Okladnikov, et. al (Frunze, 1956).
More three editions of the Kirgiz history were published in the Soviet times (1963; 1967-68; 1984-1990). All
of these new editions were based on the translated by the Kirgiz group sources, but at a different degree. For
example, the 1963 edition does not have references to this project at all; quotations from Oriental texts were
given without mentioning the actual source. All of the editions were written collectively by local Kirgiz his-
torians and their Moscow and Leningrad colleagues.

219 K.I. Petrov, K istorii dvizheniia kirgizov na Tian’-Shan’ i ikh vzaimodeistvie s oiratami v XIII-XV vv.
(Frunze, 1961); K.I. Petrov, Ocherki feodal’nykh otnoshenii u kirgizov v XIII-XV vv. (Frunze, 1961).
my of Sciences and later Secretary General of the Communist Party of Soviet Kazakhstan. Gorokhvodatskii underlined that the investigation of Oriental sources has a great significance for the historiography of Kazakhstan. The first attempt to identify a corpus of sources for Kazakhstan had already been undertaken in 1936-1937 by Aleksandr Semenov. Gorokhvodatskii however claimed that the Kazakh project was an initiative of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata (which was established only in 1945). Even if he meant the Kazakhstani Base of the Academy of Sciences that already existed in the 1930s, it is more correct to view the Kazakh project in the context of the other Central Asian/Leningrad projects of source editions which were developed simultaneously and in a centralized manner. In his letter to Kunaev, Gorokhvodatskii mentioned that Aleksandr A. Semenov, who was working in the Turkmen research group at that time, translated several passages on Kazakhs from Arabic and Persian manuscripts of the 14th century (unfortunately, there is no mention of which texts he had in mind). However, the Kazakh project had been stopped several times in 1936-1937, 1938-1939, and 1946-1947 because of the absence of specialists in Alma-Ata and the lack of funding.

In 1946 the publication of sources on the history of the Kazakh Republic was included in the five-year plan of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in Alma-Ata. It was planned that the first volume would contain narratives on the pre-modern period, i.e. from before the 18th century. This difficult task was assigned to Alkei Kh.

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221 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Op. 10, D. 83, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1954, f. 164. A year later, in 1955, the similar letter on the necessity of Oriental Studies for the Kazakh SSR was sent by Ivan S. Gorokhvodatskii to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR. See details in the paragraph Reincarnations of the Kazakh Orientology in the third chapter.


Margulan (1904-1985) who had studied in Leningrad before WWII. Margulan defended his first dissertation (kandidatskaia) at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies with a thesis about official documents of the Golden Horde (yarlïq and bitik). Hence the Kazakh scholars assumed that Margulan knew the necessary Oriental languages and had skills in reading old manuscripts. But in fact Margulan failed to provide results, and the work was prolonged until the end of 1949. In 1947, criticizing the year work plan of the Kazakh Institute of History, Leningrad historian Mikhail P. Viatkin asked in an internal document: “Is there any publication of sources on the history of the Kazakh SSR? It is desirable that this work would not be frozen.” Eventually, the whole idea collapsed because of the absence of elementary monographs on the main questions, mostly in the area of source studies, but also in methodology.

Against the background of this early but failed attempt Gorokhvodatskii suggested in 1954 to ask the Coordination Council at the USSR Academy of Sciences to oblige the Kirgiz group to collect materials related also to Kazakh history. He recommended sending Sapar Ibragimov, a collaborator of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata, to Leningrad in order to include him into the Kirgiz group. Sapar Ibragimov, a Kazakh historian who had obtained his education in Alma-Ata and then went to the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, indeed joined the Kirgiz group. His figure personified the succession of different Oriental projects in the philological area. The title of his own source edition project on the Kazakhs even underlined this continuity: it was called Collection of Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates. This title was similar to that of the two volumes of Tizengauzen’s materials on the history of the Golden Horde, the second of which had been published in the stream of the Soviet Oriental projects in 1941.

226 [A.Kh. Margulan,] Avtobiografiia, f. 7, in: AV IVR RAN, F. 152, Op. 3, №392, D. 339.2, Margulan Al’kei Khakanovich (soiskanie stepeni doktora istoricheskikh nauk po teme "Epicheskie skazaniiia kazakhskogo naroda"), 24 sentiabria 1945 – 8 iiunia 1946. His work on the Golden Horde Khans documents was not published and is totally forgotten today. There are absolutely no references to this dissertation in the literature.


228 Ibid., D. 34, Sv. 2, Tematicheski plan nauchno-issledovatel’skich rabot Instituta na 1948 god i zamechaniia k planu, f. 6.

Around 1958 Sapar Ibragimov changed his conception of the volume and wrote a general plan for a new edition of medieval written sources on the Kazakh history. The project was entitled *Collection of Materials Related to the History of Kazakhstan in the 13th-16th Centuries*. According to the document, the project was supposed to be completed in 1958-1959, which must have been very unrealistic. The book was to have two parts: the second edition of Tizengauzen’s Arabic volume and an original part called *Kazakhstan in the 13th-16th Centuries*. Ibragimov’s plan also mentioned the idea to edit some Persian and Arabic texts, but without an explanation of concrete steps and without mentioning which texts were envisaged for publication. In other characteristics this book was to follow the previous editions of this kind (translations with descriptions of texts and a bibliography). In 1958 there were only two Kazakh scholars who participated in the project: Ibragimov and Nadzhib N. Mingulov (in Alma-Ata). Ibragimov also promised to attract more specialists from the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Two famous Soviet Orientalists, Turkologist Aleksandr N. Borovkov and Arabic specialist Evgenii A. Beliaev, were supposed to be members of the redaction committee.

A little earlier, in 1957, Akai N. Nusupbekov became director of the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography in Alma-Ata and undertook active efforts for the establishment of a Kazakh center of classical philological Oriental studies. Actually, this was a result of the 20th Party Congress of 1956 and its call for the creation of new outposts of Oriental Studies in the republics of the Caucasus and Central Asia. In the late 1950s and early 1960s a series of projects to translate and publish Oriental narratives appeared in the Institute of History in Almaty. They were so numerous that sometimes it is unclear whether these projects duplicated each other or simply developed and changed their titles and content over time.

Between 1956 and 1960 Ibragimov published a multitude of short extracts from sources related to political and socio-economical topics. His activity was tragically
brought to an end by his unexpected death in 1960. His work on the collection of sources was not finished. The project was one more time facing the danger of collapse. But exactly in this year, 1960, Nusupbekov employed a new researcher, Veniamin P. Iudin. As a member of the Sector of the Pre-Revolutionary History of Kazakhstan, Iudin became leader of the project and decidedly changed its structure. The new program seemed to be more independent from Leningrad influence. Particularly, there is no mention anymore of a second edition of Tizengauzen; rather, emphasis was now put on the collection of Muslim, Chinese, and Russian sources on the history of the Kazakh khanates. These sources were meant to complement the information from Tizengauzen’s manuscripts. In 1959 Ibragimov’s book under the title Materials on the History of the Golden Horde was sent to the Moscow publishing house Vostochnaia literatura (Oriental Literature), but was not published (perhaps because of Ibragimov’s death). However, the idea itself remained quite topical for the Soviet and then post-Soviet scholarship. In the second half of the 20th century Leningrad Arabist Anas B. Khalidov voiced his intention to produce a new edition of Tizengauzen’s books, but his plan was not realized. In the early 2000s the materials on the history of the Golden Horde were finally published in Moscow and Almaty.


Istoriiia Kazakhstana v arabskih i storochikakh, vol. 1, Sbornik materialov, otnosiaushchia k i storii Zolotoi Ordy, Izlechenienia iz arabskih sochinenii, sobranne V.G. Tizengauzenom, pererobotannoe i dopolnennoe izdanie (Almaty, 2005); Istoriiia Kazakhstana v persidskih i storochikakh, vol. 4, Sbornik materialov, otnosiaushchia k i storii Zolotoi Ordy, Izlechenienia iz persidskih sochinenii, sobranne V.G. Tizengauzenom i obrabotannym A.A. Romaskevichem i S.L. Volinyom, dopolnennoe i pererobotannoe izdanie (Almaty, 2006).
ever, the edition by Roman Khrapechevskii was devoid of Arabic and Persian texts as well as of some of Tizengauzen’s comments, while the Kazakh Orientalists not only reproduced the original books (1881, 1941), but also performed the necessary corrections of the readings and provided references to the new literature. However, some extracts from Turkic (Ottoman and Chaghatay languages) manuscripts remained unpublished at the Archive of Orientalists in St. Petersburg.

The next five-year plan (1959-1964) included as a research topic *The Kazakh Khanates in the 15th-18th Centuries*, a project led by T.Zh. Shoinbaev.237 Among the scholars involved in this plan were V.Ia. Basin, V.S. Kuznetsov, K. Zhunisbaev, A.A. Ibragimova, N.N. Mingulov, and V.P. Iudin. The anonymous author of this project (obviously, Veniamin Iudin) admitted that the lack of sources was the main obstacle for the study of major questions: the formation of Kazakh nationality (*narodnost’*) as well as statehood, socio-economic relations (the question of feudalism) and international relations in the medieval epoch. The Russian tradition of ethnographic studies presupposed a triad of successive historical forms of ethnicity, namely tribe – nationality – nation (*plemia – narodnost’ - natsia*). Ideally, these stages corresponded with respective socio-economic formations in the Marxist historical framework, thus tribes belonged to primitive system, nationalities appeared in the feudal epoch, and the nation was a result of capitalistic development.238

In 1964 the scope of work had expanded significantly as is obvious from a special document 239 (*spravka*) devoted to the correction of research plans. Now it was planned to collect, translate and publish not only Persian, Turkic, and Arabic texts, but also Chinese and Slavic sources. The new version of the project suggested also writing articles based on this fresh material.

A similar project on sources was developed simultaneously also on the history of Eastern Turkestan (mostly Chinese territory at that time). Since its foundation in 1946 the Institute of History in Alma-Ata had a section of Uighur studies. This topic was of special interest for the Soviet government because of the unstable relations with the People’s Re-

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public of China during the second half of the 20th century. Hence Uighur studies in the Soviet Union (especially in Kazakhstan) underwent a spasmodic development. The project on Uighur history was drawn up in a way quite similar to the Kazakh project. This was perhaps because both of them were written by Veniamin Iudin, a specialist in Uighur studies. The project on Eastern Turkestan, intended for the same five years (1959-1964), was entitled Socio-Economic Relations and State Development in Eastern Turkestan in the 9th to the First Half of the 18th Century. Among the researchers (a leader was not mentioned) were the specialists in Uigur studies I.N. Kabirov, Iu.G. Baranova, Kh.Kh. Vakhidov, Sinologist Aleksandr Maliavkin, and Iranist Klavdia Pishchulina. It was planned to work with manuscript collections in Leningrad and Tashkent as well as with the Soviet and Western European literature on the history of Central Asia, Eastern Turkestan, and Mongolia. The work was divided into two parts: sources and articles. A later document mentions plans to edit already three volumes of sources and two monographs on socio-economic relations and state development in Eastern Turkestan in the 9th to 12th and the 13th to the first half of the 18th century, respectively. None of these ambitious plans materialized, partly because material resources were lacking, partly because of the lack of specialists.

Chinese sources continued to be an object of study in the project on medieval Kazakh history. In 1964 the expected results of work were discussed in an anonymous document (spravka); judging from the style of this text, it was written by Veniamin Iudin, the head of the research group. One of my arguments in this thesis is the continuity of Soviet Oriental research; in particular I maintain that all Soviet Oriental projects in the historical-

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240 This project had nothing to do with the pre-revolutionary tradition of Russian expeditions and investigation of non-Islamic cultures in Eastern Turkestan.


242 See about him my paragraph Veniamin Iudin: an Oppressed Orientalist in the third chapter.


244 Ibid., D. 184, Sv. 13, Problemmno-tematicheskii plan Instituta na 1959-1965, f. 21.

245 Ibid., D. 341, Sv. 24, Spravka po teme “Shbornik materialov po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv v 15-18 vekakh”, 1964 god, 6 ff.
philological area – also the Kazakh one – followed the same methodology and style of investigation that was based on the experience of the Leningrad school of classical Oriental studies. This is why I would like to place here the full text of Iudin’s report, showing that it clearly reflects in style, structure and political claims the spirit and intention of the Rashīd ad-Dīn edition project that had been written by Evgenii Bertel’s in 1936.

“At present, medieval studies is one of the most important scientific areas of Soviet historical scholarship. But if questions of the Russian Middle Ages are poorly studied, the same issues related to Kazakhstan are even less investigated. The absence of published sources is the main obstacle on our way. The Kazakhs did not have their own historiography. Existing information is dispersed over different sources which were written in other countries by other peoples in various languages, first of all in Oriental tongues. The available translations have become obsolete; they do not comply with the modern [standards of] Oriental Studies, they are short and also became a bibliographical rarity. The true history [here and in the following: italics mine, A.B.] of medieval Kazakhstan can not be reconstructed on this basis.

At the same time, the study of medieval history has enormous importance because it allows us to disprove wrong opinions and various speculative fabrications (izmyshlenia) of certain foreign circles which pursue political aims, in particular in territorial questions.

Hence the topic Collection of Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates was included into the scientific work plan of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in 1960. The work was finished by the collective of scholars in 1964. The collection contains extracts from important Persian, Turkic and Chinese sources containing the most important information on the history of Kazakhstan in the 15th to 18th centuries. Some of these sources were known to us previously, others were completely unknown. The list of sources comprises works as the Ta’rīkh-i Rashīdī, Bahr al-Asrār, Ta’rīkh-i Qipchāq-khānī, ʿAbdallāh-nāme (in Persian), Ta’rīkh-i Kāshghar,

\[246\] [This claim contradicts Iudin’s own conception of ‘oral steppe historiography’ which will be treated in details in the third chapter, but perfectly fits into the early Orientalist discourse on the Kazakhs as a non-historical people].

Extracts from such Oriental sources allow for a new investigation of medieval Kazakh history, in particular with regard to the ethno-genesis and formation of the Kazakh nationality (narodnost’), the origin and development of Kazakh statehood, the ethnic history of the Kazakh people, socio-economic history, the formation of the Kazakh Hordes (zhuz), as well as political, economic, and cultural relations with neighboring peoples and countries. In particular, the entire corpus of texts allows us to reject certain statements that large regions [of the Kazakh SSR] have for ages belonged to China.

It is worth mentioning that in the Soviet Union there are no recent studies of sources on the medieval history of Kazakhstan, except some insignificant articles and extracts from sources for very specific questions. This lack is even more striking in comparison with the numerous monographs, source publications and translations in the republics of Central Asia and even in Kirgizia.

The present volume received approval from specialists from Alma-Ata, Moscow, and Leningrad. In the interest of the development of historical science, a speedy publication of the already [compiled and translated] Collection of Materials is demanded. It is necessary to publish the book in two parts by 1967:

1. Extracts from Persian and Turkic sources
2. Extracts from Chinese sources

The first part contains an introduction “The Persian and Turkic Sources on the History of the Kazakh Khanates in the 15th-18th Centuries”, a corpus of extracts

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248 [According to St. Petersburg Sinologist Vladimir A. Beliaev, the first of these two Chinese titles refers to the work entitled 大清高宗純皇帝實錄 and written during the reign of Qian Long, Emperor of China, Qing dynasty (1711-1799), who ruled between 1735 and 1796. The second one is nothing else but 皇朝藩部要畧, which was published in 1846 in the years of Emperor Dao Guang’s rulership (Qing dynasty). I am very grateful to Vladimir Beliaev for his comment upon this entry.]

249 [This statement indicates Iudin’s authorship of this text. According to my interview with Prof. Tursun I. Sultanov (Oriental faculty of St. Petersburg University, 25.09.2009), Sapar Ibragimov tended to make mistakes in translations (especially, of Persian narratives), that is why Iudin rejected almost all of Ibragimov’s drafts and regarded the latter’s work (without directly saying so) as ‘unsubstantial’. Cf. also: OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 304, Sv. 21, Protokoly zasedanii otdela istorii dorevolutsionnogo Kazakhstana, 1963, f. 41.]

250 [Indeed, at that time the Kirgiz colleagues had a solid number of published translated sources in their possession. Several years after Iudin’s complaint a monograph on Oriental sources was published in Frunze: O. Karaev, Arabskie i persidskie pamiatniki 9-12 vekov o kirgizakh i Kirgizii (Frunze, 1968).]

251 [This introductory part was issued only in 2001, because of a personal conflict between Iudin and the Institute’s administration (from an interview with Irina V. Erofeeva by the author, Institute of Nomadic Stud-
from various sources, references and indexes (...). S.K. Ibragimov, V.P. Iudin, K.A. Pishchulina, N.N. Mingulov, A.A. Ibragimova as well as O. Akimushkin and M. Salakhetdinova, employees of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Peoples of Asia and Africa\(^{252}\) of the Academy of Sciences, participated in the preparation of the first part of this compendium (...).

The second part will have the following structure: analytical introduction, translated texts, comments, and indexes. Extracts from the chronicle of the Tsin dynasty and several other works will form the core of the second volume.”\(^{253}\)

The project in question and Rashīd ad-Dīn’s project have a number of similarities. First of all, they suggested to bring into circulation sources that had hitherto been poorly studied or unknown. Second, the authors of the projects frankly underlined the political background of the works they initiated. Seemingly, the first Marxist scholar who brought up the opposition ‘Soviet Orientology vs. bourgeois Orientology’ was Mikhail Pavlovich, targeting director of Asiatic Museum, Sergei Ol’denburg, in 1922. Ol’denburg appropriated the same expression in his article in 1931. He wrote that Soviet scholarship used the method of dialectical materialism and that it united the study of the West and the East.\(^{254}\)

Anti-imperialistic and anti-bourgeois rhetoric in scientific works was an important instrument of legitimacy not only against ‘Western’ scholarship, but also towards the heritage of pre-revolutionary Russian Oriental Studies. Even Academician Vasilii Bartol’d fell under strong Marxist criticism (especially in 1930, shortly before his death) as a bourgeois historiographer who supposedly did not understand and did not use Marxist methodology.\(^{255}\) In 1956 Geoffrey Wheeler wrote that “until recently Soviet writers have contrived to

\(^{252}\) [This was the official name of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the USSR Academy of Sciences in 1960-1969.]


\(^{254}\) S.F. Ol’denburg, Vostok i Zapad v sovetskikh usloviakh (Moscow, Leningrad, 1931), 14-15. This link was brilliantly studied by Vera Tolz, who compared this critique with that of Edward Said. See: Vera Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 88-101.

give the impression that most of the work of Tsarist Orientalists was of little or no value… [a] frequent criticism of Tsarist Orientalists is that they were too ready to defer to and quote from the works of Western scholars.”

Attacking their Western colleagues and Tsarist predecessors, Soviet Orientalists were setting up their own identity and a belief in their leadership in the international field. This relational self-identification is apparent from the title of the new central journal, *Soviet Oriental Studies (Sovetskoe vostokovedenie)*, launched in May 1955. There was no journal with an analogous name (for example, “French” or “German Oriental Studies”) in Europe. There were mainly journals of institutions, such as the *Journal asiatique*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* or *Zeitschrift der Deutschen Morgenländischen Gesellschaft*. However, this opposition to the West was not an exclusive feature of Soviet science but characteristic for the entire Soviet system. According to Yuri Bregel’s notes on the 1930s, this black-and-white picture was part of the whole Soviet propaganda: “Soviet citizens should know that they not only lived better than people in other parts of the world, they also had a better history. The glorious present must have a counterpart in the glorious past […]. Soviet historians of Central Asia are required to demonstrate the great cultural heritage of the peoples of Central Asia to counteract the bourgeois falsifiers of history who allegedly try to depreciate this heritage.”

In addition, the text of the projects reveals a competition between the Kazakh Republic and the Kirgiz Republic. Already the start of the collection of narratives about the Kazakh history was tied to the analogous project on the history of the Kirgiz people in the early 1950s that we have analyzed before. The geographical location of Kazakhstan and Kirgizia made it necessary to take into account Chinese sources and historical accounts which related to the history of Eastern (“Chinese”) Turkestan, i.e. Xinjiang. This factor stressed the political significance of Muslim sources which gave legitimacy to the modern boundaries of the USSR and China. Kazakh Uighur studies confirmed existing boundaries without challenging China’s claim on Xinjiang. Next to the investigation of Kazakh history, the study of the Uighur people was a central element of post-WWII scholarship in Alma-Ata.

While the debates around the Kazakh history had already flared up immediately after the publication of its first official historical outline in 1943, the most significant endeavor

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of this kind took place in the 1970s when archeologists and Orientalists united the results of their long-time investigations in a five-volume series *History of the Kazakh SSR*. The texts translated in the *Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates* of 1969 were widely used in the second volume of this edition.\(^{258}\)

In fact, the Kazakh project was the last among the philological projects devoted to the publication of sources on the history of a particular republic. Formally, the project had close ties with the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies: in particular, Oleg F. Akimushkin and Munira A. Salakhetdinova translated several texts for the volume. The bulk of the work, however, was done by scholars of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata. This sets the Kazakh project aside from the Turkmen and Kirgiz projects: the local research group became able to do the work which had hitherto been dominated by Leningrad scholarship. On the other hand, all of the participants of the project had studied in Moscow and then worked together on several themes. While thus conditions were good for establishing a separate school of Oriental studies in Kazakhstan, in Chapter III we will see that this did not materialize.

The history of philological projects had a post-scriptum. In 1974 the Kazakh scholar of Arabic studies Bulat I. Kumekov, Head of the Sector of pre-Revolutionary History of Kazakhstan at the Institute of History in Alma-Ata, tried to continue with the identification and translation of Islamic sources on the history of the Republic. Kumekov designed an ambitious project of studying manuscripts from Turkey, especially in Istanbul archives.\(^{259}\)

The directorate of the Institute (i.e., Director Akai N. Nusupbekov and his deputy Grigorii F. Dakhsleiger) asked support from the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh USSR. These highest echelons of Kazakh scholarship however rejected Kumekov’s request.

In his application Kumekov was arguing that the most important sources are kept in the archives of Istanbul due to the active efforts of the Ottoman rulers who collected rare


books and manuscripts from all over the Muslim world. Large Turkish archives had been of special interest for Russian Oriental Studies since the publication of Bartol’d’s 1926 report on the manuscript collections there.\textsuperscript{260} Kumekov was very persistent in his aim to go to Istanbul: he claims to have submitted his letter no less than fifteen times, but without any result. In an interview he explained this failure with the difficulties of international scholarly exchange in the Soviet time.\textsuperscript{261} This is certainly true, but in my opinion his lack of success was rather due to the lack of political interest and financial possibilities from the side of the Presidium. In the early 1970s the Kazakh Republic had already obtained both the complete set of historical books according to the well-known model: a collection of translated sources and a general outline of the history from ancient times until the present day. The Academy’s main efforts at that time were concentrated on the archeological investigations in the middle Syr Darya valley and on the reconstruction of the mausoleum of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī in the city of Turkestan (on which see chapter four).\textsuperscript{262} Yet even in the 1970s the investigation of Turkestan began slowly, suffering from a lack of specialists and resources.

Obviously, the idea to collect sources on the Kazakh history in Istanbul had the same methodological direction as the earlier Oriental philological enterprises of the 1930s-70s. However, this project was not supported because it was an individual enterprise, and also because it lacked the connections to the central centers of Orientology in Moscow and Leningrad, that were so crucial in all previous philological projects.

**Conclusion**

The Soviet government and the national republics generously supported philological Oriental projects led by the Leningrad Orientalists and, later, also by local specialists in collaboration with Leningrad colleagues. By cutting medieval court historiography into national pieces Orientalists contributed much to the process of history-writing in Central


\textsuperscript{261} Interview with Bulat Kumekov by the author, Institute of History, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12 July 2010.

Asian republics. It was a necessary step towards a national delimitation in the cultural sphere which, as history has clearly demonstrated, appeared to be even more powerful than just the establishment of political borders between the republics. I would not go as far as claiming that these projects envisaged the full nationalization of the medieval texts themselves, even though the authors of the published sources were often claimed as representatives of this or that particular nation or at least a carriers of the cultural heritage of this or that nation. Still, Soviet Orientalists for the first time read classical texts through an ethnic prism, trying to filter out only the historical information that pertained to one particular republic.

The philological projects of the Soviet Oriental Studies of the 1930s-70s had a number of common features. They comprised the discovery, translation, and publication of Arabic, Turkic, Persian, and later also Chinese written sources on the history of the newly established Soviet Republics where Muslims were the majority population. According to official documents of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the study of the Soviet Orient became the main task of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad. This task of the Institute was defined by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences in 1930. In contrast, the Tashkent centre of classical Oriental studies hardly played any significant role in this process, slowly loosing its former role as a regional metropoly for Central Asian studies. It is clear from the archival sources that all of the seven projects were planned already during the 1930s (and some of them were already completed before WWII). This period is very important for understanding the mechanisms and development of Soviet Orientology until the end of the USSR – and even beyond 1991 to the present day. According to the idea of the Party officials the creation of national republics in Central Asia was to be accompanied by the collection of sources (the translation of Islamic texts and the organization of the large-scale complex archeological expeditions) and the production of an official, codified version of history for each republic. Producing these volumes was a task of two generations of Soviet Orientalists: the old generation that began their career in the 1920s and the 1930s and the young one that entered the Institutes in the 1950s. Philological projects were carried out only by ‘secular’ Orientalists without any participation of Islamic religious scholars; they were excluded from the interpretation of historical narratives. This niche was fully taken by scholars at scientific institutes under governmental control, and on state and Party demand.
Leningrad Orientology also comprised the production of manuscript catalogues and often huge edition of the Oriental literary monuments. In this chapter I studied only that part of the history of the Leningrad Orientology which was strongly connected to the development of the discipline in the local republican centers. The publication of sources in the framework of a certain scientific program followed several general rules. The majority of the projects had a striking ‘anti-bourgeois and anti-imperialistic’ bias which was stressed as a watershed between the pre-revolutionary and European Orientology on the one hand and the new Soviet scholarship on the other. Still, also the new scholarship had to take as its basis the work of bourgeois scholars like Tizengauzen. As in other spheres of the social life in the USSR, the projects claimed an unquestionable superiority of the Soviet collective style of work and of its central planning and huge scale. However, the planned science system rarely if ever succeeded according to the plan: most projects ran far beyond the originally assigned frameworks of time, manpower, and money. While some projects were carried out very quickly (as the Turkmen project or the edition of Tizengauzen’s translations), others ran for more than five years, and the publication of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle took in total more than forty years. While the officials and ‘monopolizers of science’ stressed the independence of Soviet Orientology, it was still necessary to contact colleagues from abroad in order to get copies of manuscripts and literature, and the foreign partners were even “planned in” as potential customers of the scientific production (as suggested by Evgenii E. Bertel’s in his project), to legitimize the huge budget. In the Rashīd ad-Dīn edition one might even argue that there was a complementary division of labor with Western scholarship.

My approach is to study scholarship from different perspectives: from central institutions and from local viewpoints, from different groups inside the Soviet discourse, and as developing over decades. My overview of major Oriental projects leads to an important conclusion that contradicts the still prevalent interpretation of Soviet Oriental studies in Russia. There was no possibility to work outside of the system, and several scholars from the early Soviet period who have always been regarded as the best representatives of classical non-political Oriental Studies, directly participated in the state projects; several of them were later subject of political repressions.
Chapter II:
Nationalism and Regionalism:
Dividing and Integrating
Soviet Central Asia in Meta-Histories

“There are no Oriental studies in our republics, there are
only well established histories of individual republics.
This [should be] the future of our scholarship.”

Boris Zakhoder (1898-1960)

2.1. Regional and National Perspectives in History Writing

The main point of this chapter is to argue that there were two main trends in Kazakh history writing, characterized by national and regional approaches. These trends were common for republics of Central Asia and the Caucasus. Both tendencies had been in motion during the whole Soviet era, being sponsored by the government in various forms.

I define Soviet Oriental studies in Kazakhstan as an interdisciplinary research with the main goal to study written sources in ‘Oriental’ languages, mainly in Turkic, Arabic and Persian. Above all, these sources are related to the medieval history of the Kazakh republic. From this perspective I analyze general historical accounts on Kazakh history produced during the Soviet era, with an eye on how individual scholars and collectives of authors studied medieval Kazakh history as a crucial period for explaining Kazakh ethnogenesis, statehood, culture, and socioeconomic relations. What kind of general histories of


the Kazakh republic were written during the Soviet time? How did national and regional approaches interact with each other?

Historical and ethnographical studies of the Kazakhs (*Kirgiz-Kaisaks* in the pre-revolutionary Russian terminology) initially began in a large regional context. Since the historical outlines produced by Aleksei I. Levshin (1798-1879) and Vladimir V. Vel’iaminov-Zernov (1830-1904), the history of the Kazakh steppes was regarded as part of an enormous Eurasian nomadic world, and in particular of the Dasht-i Qipchāq. In medieval Islamic sources, the Dasht-i Qipchāq or Great Steppe was a historical region from the Danube up to the Syr Darya River and Lake Balkhash. This land was inhabited predominantly by Turks of the Kipchak linguistic group. Traditionally, the Dasht-i Qipchāq is divided in Eastern and Western parts, with the Volga and the Yaik (modern-day Ural) Rivers as the border between the two halves.265

Aleksei I. Levshin (1798-1879) is regarded as the ‘Herodotus of the Kazakh people’; in his famous 3-volume work on the Kazakh history and ethnography he drew a romantic picture of the nomadic peoples of the Dasht-i Qipchāq. This picture is of interest because it clearly reveals Orientalist perceptions. The Kazakhs, in Levshin’s analysis, were a freedom-loving people characterized by both moral purity and savage behavior:

“The way of life of the Kirgiz [i.e. the Kazakh – A.B.] people is a living picture of ancient times. One can say that this is a nomadic people which are living exclusively for their stock; their settlements suddenly disappear and emerge again in other places; their simplicity and closeness to nature are very attractive in the eyes of a novelist or a poet. Seeing a Kirgiz-Kazak, someone with an ardent imagination might envision light-hearted (*bespechnye*) shepherds of happy Arcadia or peaceful contemporaries of Abraham; someone might dream of the imaginary bliss of a people that is free from the vices of big cities; someone might search for eclogue and idyll there. However, a cool-blooded traveler will only see semi-barbarian people and compare them with the Scythes of Herodotus, the Mongols of Chingiz Khan, present-day Bedouins, Kurds, inhabitants of the banks of the Yenisei River, Hottentots, and other barbarian peoples of Asia and Africa.”266

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This polar view is very symptomatic. Even though every traveler paid respect to the Kazakhs’ passion for freedom, all that the nomads lacked turned them into a people of backwardness without history (according to the widespread concept of non-historical peoples), and full of barbarism. As a result of the slow Russian encroachment into Central Asia during the 18th and 19th centuries, the region inhabited by the Kazakh tribes was known in the Russian context as the Steppe Territory (*Stepnoi krai*), and contrasted to the southern oases of settled civilisation in Transoxiana and Khwarezm.

My hypothesis is that it was Vasilii V. Bartol’d who moved away from this sharp dichotomy and, instead, created the regional concept of Central Asia (Sredniaia Azia) which presupposed close historical ties in the development of two syncretic worlds: sedentary civilization in the south and nomadic civilization in the north. Bartol’d’s two-volume dissertation *Turkestan in the Epoch of the Mongol Invasion* (vol. 1, 1898; vol. 2, 1900) was a clear manifestation of his regional approach, though the word *Turkestan* in the title, associated at that time with agricultural regions of Central Asia, still suggested that the settled civilization was at the centre of his study. Of course, there were previous projects of studying Turkestan, but, as Bartol’d put it himself, the epoch of Governor-general Konstantin Petrovich von Kaufman (1818-1882; in office between 1867 and 1882) was fruitful for the geographical exploration of Turkestan but not for Oriental studies (“except for the growing number of Oriental manuscripts in central libraries”). During the whole Soviet era this view of history survived because it is difficult to neglect the close interaction between the two cultural areas. The Bolsheviks moved away from the encompassing concept of Turkestan because they feared the creation of a united Muslim state with a solid population number and economical potential. The project of national demarcation, which comprised the creation of several republics, on Union level or as autonomies within Union republics, was accomplished between 1924 and 1936. The cultural aspects of this demarcation, however, continued through the whole 20th century with the goal of establishing independent national identities. As we have seen, Leningrad Orientalists contributed significantly to this

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process by producing the histories of the respective republics, especially through the trans-
lation and edition of sources and through grandiose outlines of the republican pasts since
time immemorial.

The use of terms ‘national’ and ‘republican’ history should be clarified here. As Yuri
Bregel mentioned, the titles of such historical books “showed that they were dealing not so
much with the history of their ‘titular’ nationalities (Uzbeks, Kazakhs, Turkmens, etc.), but
with the history of the republics, which was traced back to prehistoric times. There were,
however, some difficulties and discrepancies,”\(^269\) namely that the authors of these narra-
tives often made excursions into the histories of neighboring republics. I will treat ‘nation-
al’ and ‘republican’ as synonymous, because republics were created according to national
principles, and each historical outline produced in these republics is “something like a his-
tory of Central Asia from the standpoint of, say, Uzbeks, or Tajiks,”\(^270\) i.e. of the titular
nations of respective republics.

Curiously, in the 1920s Bartol’d was obliged to participate himself in this work when
he was ordered to write the histories of several Central Asian peoples – not republics, but
their titular nations. While at that time Bartol’d did not express his own opinion in public,
in a special note on the “Solution of the National Question” in Central Asia he assessed the
Soviet style of nation-building very negatively: “The national principle of the 1924 state
delimitation of Central Asia was formulated according to [concepts drawn from] Western
European history in the 19th century, and is completely alien to native historical tradi-
tions.”\(^271\) The struggle between these two methodological views during the 1920s-80s is the
main subject of this chapter. It is against this dichotomy that I will investigate the view on
Kazakh history in its Islamic period as part of classical Orientology.

2.2. The Early Soviet Discourse on the Nomads

The early Soviet discourse on Central Asian nomads (especially Kazakhs, Kirgiz, and
Turkmens) was embodied as follows:


\(^{270}\) Ibid.

\(^{271}\) “V.V. Bartol’d o natsional’nom razmezhevanii v Srednei Azii” (ed. by M. Olimov) in: *Vostok*, 5 (1991),
165. This short report was prepared soon after the delimitation and was not published in this form in Soviet
times.
1. Nomads have a tribal social division; their political unions have always been quite unstable.

2. They are ‘superficial Muslims’. ‘Folk beliefs’ and Shamanism are at the core of their religious life. Islam did not play any substantial role in the history of nomadic peoples.

3. Nomads obviously do not have cities and written literature. Knowledge is transmitted in oral form as folklore.

4. They are dangerous for neighbors; their forays on sedentary civilizations lead to catastrophic devastations. This position was applied not only to the Kazakhs, but above all to external invasions of the Arabs and the Mongols which destroyed highly developed settled civilizations.

The view of nomads as described in those four points appeared already in the Tsarist time and still dominated in the early Soviet period. The general attitude towards nomads was heavily affected by the long tradition of studies on the Golden Horde civilization; Russian historians repeatedly underlined the important role that the Golden Horde had played in Russian history. The Golden Horde had been viewed as a union of barbarian bands, chimera, with rulers that despotically suppressed settled peoples such as the medieval Christian Russians and the Muslim Volga Bulghars. This approach began to change only since the late 1950s due to archeological and textual studies, both of the Golden Horde civilization and of the Kazakh nomads, whose history is closely connected to the history of the Mongol and post-Mongol states of the 13th to 18th centuries. In 1959 Moscow archeologists Aleksei P. Smirnov (1899-1974) and German A. Fedorov-Davydov (1931-2000) organized regular archeological excavations of the numerous Golden Horde cities along the Volga river. In the late 1960s and early 1970s St. Petersburg Orientalist Arkadii P. Grigor’ev (1931-2010) and Kazan Turkologist Mirkasym A. Usmanov (1934-2010) started their works on the written heritage of the Mongol and post-Mongol states, which revealed

272 When the Turkestan archeological circle was set up in 1895, its goal was defined as the investigation of ancient Arian culture “destroyed by barbaric Turks.” V.V. Bartol’d, “Zadachi russkogo sostokovedeniia v Turkestane [1914],” in: V.V. Bartol’d, Sochineniia, vol. 9, Raboty po istorii sostokovedeniia (Moscow, 1977), 529. German historian Beate Eschment has studied the 19th-century Russian perceptions of the Kazakh people, but her work unfortunately still remains unpublished.

hundreds of new sources and cast serious doubts on the alleged ‘barbarism’ of medieval nomadic civilizations.\textsuperscript{274} The impact of their work is studied in the fourth chapter of the present dissertation.

\textbf{2.3. The Impact of National Delimitation and Sedentarization}

At the moment of the 1917 Revolution the Kazakh tribes were constituted in three large tribal organizations, known as the Great, Middle, and Little Hordes, and in a number of groups which were standing outside of this structure and were bearing the name of \textit{aq sîyûk}, i.e. ‘white bone’ or aristocracy. The majority of the population was nomadic or semi-nomadic. In fact, the nomadic lifestyle, common tribal genealogy and Turkic language were the main attributes of Kazakh identity, which before the Soviet time was obviously not defined in ethnic terms. In the pre-Soviet period it was regional, confessional, cultural, and tribal distinctions which constructed the core of people’s identities in Central Asia. As Ingeborg Baldauf put it with respect to the Uzbeks, there were “several not clearly shaped indigenous concepts of nation (as being the whole of persons united by either religious belief, attribution to a professional group, citizenship or tribal links).”\textsuperscript{275} Due to the various linguistic and cultural dualisms in Central Asia (Turkic-Iranian, nomadic-sedentary), it was rather problematic to discern separate ‘nationalities’, not to speak of pre-Tsarist/pre-Soviet ‘nation states’. These binary oppositions are also a product of Russian and Soviet Oriental studies. Even though it is impossible to deny such cultural phenomena as Central Asian nomadism and settled civilization, reality, as a rule, is much more complicated: various economics, customs, political models coexisted with each other for centuries and developed in a symbiotic way. Therefore in the late Soviet epoch scholars claimed that there were no ‘pure’ nomads or farmers.\textsuperscript{276} For the Tsarist administration and

\begin{footnotesize}


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Orientology there was one huge Turkestan, with political distinctions between Chinese (or Eastern) Turkestan, Afghan Turkestan and Russian (or Western) Turkestan, closely interconnected by historical fates.

Western Sovietological works had a slightly different vision of the ethnic situation in Central Asia before the completion of the Russian conquest. According to A. Bennigsen and A. Wimbush, the nineteenth-century Kazakhs already had three levels of self-consciousness: 1) “sub-national identity,” i.e. identification with a particular Zhuz and tribe (or elite group); 2) “national awareness,” based on “superiority over the sedentaries,” a long tradition of statehood, and an authentic Kazakh culture; 3) “supra-national awareness” of belonging to a greater Turkestan. Whatever Bennigsen had to say about this problem was certainly derivative, because of his obvious lack of access to first-hand materials. Research done after the fall of the Soviet Union by Edward Schatz implies that in prerevolutionary period there were five layers of identity in the Kazakh Steppe, namely “local clan divisions, a limited class stratification, umbrella clans, ethnic difference, and a nomad-sedentary divide.”

According to historian Allen J. Frank, whose opinion is based on the study of indigenous sources from Kazakh society, such as Mashhur-Zhusip Kopeev’s (1858-1931) writings and the local poetry and naṣīḥat (advice) literature, the Kazakh people did have a common identity prior to the delimitation. But what that meant is another question. It is largely accepted that Kazakh identity was based on the nomadic way of life. However, this notion is perhaps not enough to distinguish the Kazakhs from other nomads. According to Frank,

“for example people like Bennigsen and Kazakh historians, both Soviet and post-Soviet, have assumed that the Kazakh “national” identity was dominant over other “tribal” identities. But from what one might observe in Kopeev it was not necessarily the case. Indeed, there was also a lot of ambiguity in the way they used terms like “el [people],” “ru [genus],” “tap [tribe],” etc. According to Soviet documents in the 1960s there were fist-fights in the Pavlodar mosque between the representatives of

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tribal divisions of Naymans and Arghins,\textsuperscript{280} which means that tribal divisions were very stable and may even in the second half of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century have dominated over the national identity. At least we can assume that the identity that existed among the Kazakhs before 1924 differed from what the Bolsheviks tried to put into practice. One can also suggest that a Westernized part of Kazakh society started to realize its Kazakhness already since the late 19\textsuperscript{th} century.”

Two radical political measures of the early Soviet period completely changed the discourse on the nomadic population of Central Asia. First of all, the process of national delimitation resulted in the creation of five Central Asian Soviet republics. The delimitation began with the first administrative change in 1920, when the former governorate of the Steppes of Tsarist Russia was turned into the Kirgiz (i.e. Kazakh) Autonomous Socialist Republic (ASSR) as a part of the Russian Federative Socialist Republic (RSFSR). Importantly, at that time two important regions in the south were not included into the Kirgiz ASSR, namely Semirech’e (with Vernyi/Alma-Ata) and the Sir Darya region, which in Tsarist times were attached to the Turkestan general-governorate and then to the Turkestan Autonomous Republic (within the RSFSR). Only in 1924 both regions were included into the Kirgiz ASSR, while Orenburg, the former centre of the Steppe region, was moved to Russia. In February 1925 the southern part of the Aral region was turned into the Karakalpak Autonomous Oblast which from time to time was attached to the RSFSR or the Kyrgyz ASSR. In April 1925 the whole Kirgiz ASSR was renamed Kazakh ASSR, and the Kara-Kirgiz Oblast was turned into a Kirgiz Oblast which soon also received the status of an autonomous republic within the RSFSR, thus establishing the national borders and names of these two nations as we know them today. Finally, in 1936 the Kazakh ASSR and the Kirgiz ASSR were upgraded to the status of Soviet Socialist republics; and Karakalpakia moved to the Uzbek Soviet Socialist Republic with the status of an autonomous republic.\textsuperscript{281}

\textsuperscript{280} A private letter to the author by Allen J. Frank (Takoma Park, USA), 06.04.2011.

\textsuperscript{281} Similar developments occurred in the Caucasus: “The Soviet Republic of Transcaucasia was divided into three Soviet republics: Georgia, Armenia and Azerbaijan. So now all the Muslim republics had achieved a defined status.” O. Roy, \textit{The New Central Asia} (London – New York, 2000), 51-61.
There are three main trends for explaining the national demarcation process in Central Asia. The first one is represented by Soviet historiography, which regarded the appearance of national republics as a logical end of the natural development of Central Asian peoples: it was their will to organize themselves in such a way. The second trend is represented by Russian non-Bolshevik writers, by the Turkic emigration from the former Russian Empire, and by Western Sovietologists. The adherents of this view claimed that Soviet politics were social engineering: an allegedly united Turkestan was split up for the ends of the Soviet Empire. This concept is sometimes called ‘divide et impera’ due to its colonialist, imperialist connotation. The post-Soviet generation of scholars in the West attacked this view for its lack of foundation in archival research. Before 1991, most political documents were classified; therefore scholars were forced to speculate on the basis of secondary literature produced in the Soviet Union. New research has put the question into the larger context of the Soviet concept of modernization, which presupposed the existence of nationhood as an important stage on the way to the Communist future. A medial position is taken by Arne Haugen. On the basis of large-scale archival work, Haugen argues that national delimitation was a complex, double-sided process: indeed, the Soviet government


sought to avoid the possible union of all Central Asian Muslims, and tried to build a system of ‘checks and balances’ by setting up several nation states. However, Moscow authorities did consult the opinion of the local elites and of specialists. Many problems connected to state boundaries were discussed in conversations or were administratively solved by Party decision. Yet overall Haugen agrees that the result of the national delimitation was that since then “[t]he frontiers of the various countries of Central Asia have no rationality, whether geographic, economic or ethnic.”

The complexity of the national demarcation in Central Asia caused not only political, economical, military, and cultural problems. It also caused historiographical issues; it gave birth to the national demarcation of histories, of common and divided pasts. The main issue for the Kazakh national history was the question of Tashkent and the Mid-Sir Darya Valley, because Tashkent was assigned to Soviet Uzbekistan.

The Tashkent question was studied in detail by Haugen. Obviously, the question of national ‘possession’ of numerous cities along the Mid-Sir Darya valley was at the heart of Kazakh-Uzbek competition. The complexity of the case was evident from the ‘ethnic’ character of the population of this area. Cities as Tashkent and Chimkent were almost totally inhabited by those who were claimed to be Uzbeks, because the Uzbeks were defined as sedentary Turks. To be precise, originally “the Uzbeks were the semi-nomadic population that preserved tribal traditions and spoke a pure Uzbek idiom. (…) The strict sense of the word Uzbek, i.e. “descendants of the invaders from the Dashti Kipchak,” had traditionally been dominant; besides that, however, the term had come to be used as an equivalent of “Turkic-speakers of Turkestan” (excluding, of course, the Kazakh, Kirgiz and Turkmen) by the Russians as well as by some natives.”

The areas surrounding Tashkent were however populated by a nomadic population, i.e. by Kazakhs. In fact, this situation was rather typical for Central Asia. To conduct a reasonable delimitation was nearly impossible. Both competing republics struggled for the entire Tashkent region, not just for the city or its outskirts. The Kazakh representatives in these debates claimed that the city was valued as


significant cultural capital: “Tashkent had enormous cultural significance for the Kazakh people; it was a ‘Kazakh Samarkand’.” The final decision was made by the central authorities in Moscow, and disappointed both Uzbeks and Kazakhs: Chimkent with its large Uzbek population was given to the Kazakh Republic, while Tashkent, the symbol of Kazakh military glory, remained in the Uzbek SSR. It is very important for understanding the ensuing historiographical research trends in Soviet Central Asian Orientology that “the decision to give Tashkent to the Uzbek republic without any kind of discussion (...) caused great dissatisfaction among the Kazakhs.”

Similar cases are Samarkand in Uzbekistan with its Tajik (Persian speaking) population and Osh in Kyrgyzstan with its Uzbek population. However, in these cases the pretentions of Tajiks and Uzbeks were based on the considerable ethnic presence of Tajiks inside Samarkand, and of Uzbeks inside Osh, not around the city as was the Kazakh case in Tashkent.

In the Tashkent case, the dissatisfaction led to numerous petitions by the Kazakhs who found themselves in the ‘wrong republic.’ Petitioners emphasized “close economic and cultural ties” with Kazakhstan and complained about ethnic discrimination: usually such groups of people were subject to forced assimilation by the titular nation (in this case, the Uzbeks). Officials did not reply to such claims; the Tashkent case was solved administratively.

Here is one of the typical reports to the Commission dated from 1924 dealing with the establishment of new republics. This document was signed by members of a territorial commission from the Kazakh side: Mendeshev, Khodzhanov, Eskaraev, Alibekov, and Sergaziev. This account represents the Kazakh view of the Tashkent issue and expresses concerns in Uzbek ‘domination’ in the region:

“There is an absolutely wrong and unacceptable tendency to include only the nomadic population into the Kirgiz people [i.e. Kazakh – A.B.], while the settled and farmer Kirgiz are regarded as Uzbeks when it comes to delimitation. This was the case with

291 A. Haugen, The Establishment of National Republics, 195. Haugen does not mention who is quoted here, referring just to the Kazakh side in the debates.

292 Ibid., 198.


the Qurama tribe, who are a settled Kirgiz people (lit. osartevshie²⁹⁵ [Sartified] i osedlye kirgizy), which was however attributed to the Uzbek Republic. A similar situation occurred with the purely Kirgiz territories of the Chirchik region in the Uzbek Republic. (...) This decision violated the principle of the national delimitation fundamentally, because as a result the most culturally developed and economically stable part of the Kirgiz people was artificially separated from the rest of the (Kirgiz, i.e. Kazakh) population of the Tashkent district. The Kirgiz people are still in the stage of national formation and its economy is unstable. For them, the loss of the major culturally developed and settled part [of their territory] is a serious challenge that makes a further development and the creation of a more or less strong statehood on the cultural territory impossible. (...) It is wrong to ignore the national interest of the Kirgiz people of the region only because Uzbekistan needs their treasures.”²⁹⁶

This report reflects the challenge to the early perceptions and emergence of a new discourse, which did not regard Kazaks as only nomads. The economical and political significance of cities was clearly understood by those who petitioned against the administrative decisions. Interestingly, among those who signed the document was the author of the first Kazakh national history, Sandzhar Asfendiiarov²⁹⁷ who was himself born in Tashkent. This discourse was clearly based on the Kazakh intelligentsia, who struggled for a higher status of their people in the general discourse of Soviet Central Asia, and used cultural arguments as well.

There can be no doubt that the Mid-Sir Darya valley with its numerous ancient cities was of great significance for the Kazaks. Already in the 16th century the Kazakh sultans claimed sovereignty over the important settlements of the region, such as Otrar, Turkestan, Sauran, Sayrām, and Tashkent. This struggle is traceable back to the time of Urus Khan (d. 1377), one of the latest rulers of the so-called Aq (White) Horde, the eastern part of the Ulus of Juchi, i.e. of the Golden Horde. It was Urus Khan who fought against Amir Tīmūr

²⁹⁵ The notion of osartevshie should probably be understood as a definition of those who changed their way of life from nomadic or semi-nomadic and settled in the city or village, thus turned into another state of social life.


²⁹⁷ On Asfendiiarov see the subchapter below.
(1336-1405) for this area. The Aq Horde’s capital was located in the city of Syghnāq (in the modern Qyzyl Orda oblast of the Kazakhstan Republic), near the holy shrines of the city of Turkestan. The struggle between northern nomads (future ‘Kazakhs’) and southern town-dwellers (future ‘Uzbeks’) continued up to the 17th century. Historically, the process of the conquest of the region by nomadic tribes made the Kazakh nomadic elite build up links, and also associate itself, with the local sacred geography, mainly with the saint Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī and his enormous mausoleum in the city of Turkestan (Yašī). Aḥmad Yasawī became famous (or rather was interpreted) as a legendary Islamic preacher among the nomads; therefore he enjoyed high respect among those who visited his tomb. Turkestan was transformed into the spiritual and political heart of Kazakh identity. Similarly, Tashkent had always been the center of the middle Sir Darya region, even after the latter was transformed by the Soviets into the southern province of Kazakhstan. In 1917-1924 Tashkent continued to be the center of the Russian administration for the whole Turkestan region.


Here we come to the second significant political action of the Soviet government – the sedentarization of the nomadic population. Even though before the Revolution the Russians viewed the Kazakhs only as cattle-breeders, the real state of affairs was much more complex. For example, Semipalatinsk “had one of the largest concentrations of sedentary Kazakhs in the Russian Empire.”\textsuperscript{301} The Kazakhs comprised more than 36 percent of the city population and kept a strong identity. Moreover, Allen J. Frank and Mirkasym A. Usmanov underlined that these Kazakhs actively participated in the life of the local Islamic community: in the 1830s the half of the students in the mosques were Kazakhs and in the 1880s they were already in the majority.\textsuperscript{302} These data challenge both the perception of the Kazakhs as ‘bad Muslims’ and the strict connection between Kazakh identity and the nomadic way of life.

Kazakh pastoralism became a matter of serious concern for the Russian government in the 1880s, when Tsar Alexander III approved the colonization of Kazakh Steppes by the Russian peasantry. It was necessary to organize the settlement of Russian farmers in a systematic way, therefore a decade later, between 1896 and 1903, a scientific expedition under the leadership of statistician F.A. Shcherbina was sent to Semipalatinsk, Akmolinsk and Turgai provinces.\textsuperscript{303} The result of the expedition’s work was ambiguous: on the one hand the specialists suggested that the sendentarization of the steppe was an inevitable process; on the other hand they claimed that mobile pastoralism had its advantages and was sometimes the only adequate way of using land.\textsuperscript{304} In the 1920s statistician V.G. Sokolovskii revealed that it is useless for economical research to refer to the Kazakhs as an exclusively nomadic people, because of the lack of clarity of the very notion of ‘nomad’. Sokolovskii also pointed out the uselessness of such classifications as semi-nomadic, settled, or semi-settled: 23% of the whole ethnic Kazakh population was sedentary, i.e. moved from their

\textsuperscript{301} A.J. Frank, M.A. Usmanov, \textit{Materials for the Islamic History of Semipalatinsk: Two Manuscripts by Ahmad-Wali al-Qazâni and Qurbân ‘alî Khâlidî} (Berlin, 2001), 6-7.

\textsuperscript{302} Ibid.


\textsuperscript{304} Ibid., 428, 433.
villages not further than 0.5 verst, but if we use the Russian farmers’ criteria of complete sedentarization all the Kazakhs would appear to be nomads.\textsuperscript{305}

According to Soviet statistics, during the 1920s there was a clear tendency of sedentarization among the Kazakhs, which is obvious from the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Settled population</th>
<th>1924-1925</th>
<th>1925-1926</th>
<th>1926-1927</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td>9.7%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>26.0%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72.4%</td>
<td>60.5%</td>
<td>52.1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

This gradual character of sedentarization was due to general difficulties of the First World War, famine, Civil War, and the 1916 revolt, which led to reducing of cattle in number and necessity to search for other sources of living.\textsuperscript{307}

From ideological, economic and political points of view the Bolsheviks saw the nomads as a backward population (creating difficulties for taxation and any kind of state control). Therefore the project of sedentarization of nomads was at the core of Soviet modernization in Kazakhstan. According to Nicolló Pianciola, a specialist in this field, “in theory, the sedentarization project had four different aims: freeing land for grain cultivation; incorporating the nomads into the collective farm system; making a work force available for agriculture and industry; ending friction between herdsmen and peasants, which had had a negative effect on the region’s agricultural production.”\textsuperscript{308} Olaf Caroe had theorized that “[a]ll dictators, or course, dislike nomads, so hard to reach and tax, or in any way to discipline or organize. It was so with Reza Shah of Persia, also a dictator, whose main and unfulfilled ambition was to settle all the nomadic tribes of Persia. And inevitably it has been so with the Soviets.”\textsuperscript{309}

\textsuperscript{305} V.G. Sokolovskii, "Kazakhskii aul. K voprosu o metodakh ego izuchenia gosudarstvennoi statistiki na osnove reshenii 5i Vsekazakhskoi Partkonferentsii i 2go Plenuma Kazrakoma VKP(b)" (Tashkent, 1926).

\textsuperscript{306} N. Pianciola, Stalinismo di frontiera: Colonizzazione agricola, sterminio dei nomadi e costruzione statale in Asia centrale (1905-1936) (Roma, 2009), 199.

\textsuperscript{307} Ibid., 203.


\textsuperscript{309} O. Caroe, Soviet Empire: The Turks of Central Asia and Stalinism (London, 1953), 185-186.
As Isabelle Ohayon puts it, sedentarization was not just the fixation of the population on a certain territory but a process of constructing Kazakh socialist society. Yet the enforced collectivization of 1930 to 1933 — that is, the establishment of collective farms — and the sedentarization of the Kazakhs led to a huge disaster. The Kazakhs were forced to hand over their cattle to the collective farms, without compensation; in the kolkhozes the cattle perished from starvation and lack of care. Already in the run-up of collectivization most Kazakhs had killed and eaten their cattle, or they emigrated wholesale from the Soviet Union to China, Western Turkestan (Xinjiang), Mongolia, Afghanistan, or Turkey. As according to the 1926 census 3.628.000 the ethnic Kazakhs lived in the Kazakh republic, the census of the year 1939 clearly demonstrated disastrous losses: 1.750.000 people or 42% percent of the whole ethnic Kazakh population died in the Kazakh Steppe as a result of the Great Starvation (in Kazakh: dzhut). While in the mid-1920s the Kazakhs as a national unit formed the majority population on their lands (for example, about 57.4 % in Semipalatinsk and approximately the same percentage over the whole of the Kazakh Autonomy), after 1934 they found themselves in a minority in their own Republic. In the republic’s official magazine Bolshevik Kazakhstana L.I. Mirzoian, the first Secretary of the Kazakhstan Kraikom, explained the ‘faults’ during the sedentarization of the Kazakhs by “disregard of such characteristics as cultural and national backwardness (of the Kazakhs – A.B.), the presence of backward forms of economy, the nomadic life-style, the presence of a patriarchal system, and the absence of cadres faithful to the Soviet power.”

In the late 1920s only 23% of the Kazakhs were entirely sedentary, “i.e. they did not move further than half of a verst from their villages.” Other sources provide similar data.

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312 Ibid., 149.

313 I. Mirzoian, “Ocherednye zadachi kazakstanskoi partiinoi organizatsii v aule i v derevne (rech’ na VI plenumе Kazakraikoma VKP (b),” in: Bolshevik Kazakhstana 8-9 (32-33), August-September, 1933), 1.

Saulesh Esenova demonstrated a line of rapid sedentarization of the Kazakhs during the 20th century: while in 1897 less than 2% of the Kazakhs lived in cities, in 1939 this number reached 16%, and in the 1970s already 25% of total urban population in Kazakhstan, though generally the Kazakhs remained a rural people. Before the 1930s the existing cities in the Kazakh republic were inhabited mainly by other peoples, such as Russians, Tatars, and Uzbeks. The ‘titular nation’ led a nomadic way of life in the countryside. Oriental projects portraying the Kazakhs as city-dwellers were started to support the actual sedentarization and urbanization and to include the Kazakhs into the orbit of ‘historical peoples.’

By 1930, 56.6 percent of the population of Kazakhstan was part of kolkhozes and by 1933 almost the whole rural population had been collectivized. Isabelle Ohayon suggests that the whole Kazakh population was estimated around 800 000 households and that 30% of them were settled already before 1930. Martha Brill Olcott concluded that “[t]he collectivization drive ended Kazakh pastoral nomadism by settling nearly 400 000 Kazakhs between 1930 and 1937. By late 1936 there were only 150 000 Kazakh nomadic households left in the republic, most in the deserts of central Kazakhstan.”

Historically, nomads in Central Asia and Siberia were at time moving between Russian territories and other countries, making their taxation and control impossible. According to Anatolii M. Khazanov, “nomads did not always manifest loyalty to a dynasty, even if this dynasty had itself emerged from amongst them. Even more difficult was it for a state to rely on nomads, quite apart from its sedentary inhabitants whose way of life, culture and frequently even ethnicity were different from those of nomads.”

The Soviet rationale


was to ease the process of collectivization, to control the nomads of Central Asia and also to fight against the rich cattle owners. Soviet writers claimed that “the experience of the peoples of the Soviet Orient shows that among the nomads it is much more difficult to conduct collectivization than among the sedentary population with its highly developed economical life.”³²¹

The decision to sedentarize the contemporary nomads gradually led to the ‘sedentarization of the past.’ This means that at a certain point science was forced to support the concept that the Kazakh Republic and the Kazakh people have an own history which was not exclusively the history of nomads, but that an important part of Kazakh society lived also in the cities, which played a crucial role in the history of this ethnos. The new view on history was mainly articulated in archeological studies (which will be discussed in the fourth chapter of the present work), again mainly on the materials from the Mid-Sir Darya region and Semirech’e. During the whole Soviet era ‘the sedentarization of the past’ had nothing to do with real historical processes. Scholars were obliged to acknowledge the necessity of making nomads settle down in cities or kolkhozes. They formulated the idea that the nomadic lifestyle is not viable and necessarily leads to gradual settlement, but it was the other way around: impoverishment lead to settlement. The Soviets enforced this sedentarization process not only in practice, but also in historical perspective. Since the 1930s Soviet historians did their best to demonstrate that the image of Kazakhs as eternal nomads was nothing but ‘a historical myth.’

In the following paragraphs I would like to analyze how the elements of the Soviet discourse on nomads were represented in the Kazakh national history since the emergence of the Kazakh Soviet Socialist Republic (KazSSR) in 1936 and then how this approach developed and changed after WWII.

2.4. Sandzhar Asfendiiarov: The Nomadic Concept of Kazakh History (1920s-30s)

In the context of Soviet state- and nation-building in Central Asia the Kazakhs needed to be (re-) classified and (re-) defined. The Kazakhs were subsumed under the category of the

³²¹ M. S. Dzhunusov, Mezhdunarodnoe znachenie opyta stroitel’stva sotsializma v respublikah Sovetskogo Vostoka (Frunze, 1958), 18.
peoples of the Soviet Orient (narody Sovetskogo Vostoka). An important issue for early Soviet historiography was to identify the place of nomadic peoples in the range of the Marxist system of socioeconomic formations. Did the nomads belong to the feudal or to the patriarchal system? Or is there a special way of nomadic development?


Auezova singles out three major authors who shaped the discipline: Aleksandr Chuloshnikov (1894-1941), Muhammedzhan Tynyshpaev (1879-1937), and Sandzhar Asfendiiarov (1889-1938).\footnote{S.D. Asfendiiarov, P.A. Kunte (eds.), \textit{Proshloe Kazakhstana v istochnikakh i materialakh}, part 1 (Moscow, 1935); part 2 (Moscow, 1936); M. Tynyshpaev, \textit{Materialy k istorii Kirgiz-kazakskogo naroda (chitany v Turkestanskom Otdel Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obshchestva v 1924 i 1925 gg.)} (Tashkent, 1925); A.P. Chuloshnikov, \textit{Ocherki po istorii Kazak-Kirgizskogo naroda v sviazi s obshchimi istoricheskimi sud’bami drugikh turkskikh plemen}, vol. 1: \textit{Drevnee vremja i srednie veka} (Orenburg, 1924).} All of these authors agreed on the fact that the Golden Horde and its successor states had played a huge role in the formation of the Kazakh nationhood and of the first Kazakh state. However, Zifa-Alua Auezova demonstrates that these three authors represented three different trends in history writing: Chuloshnikov viewing Kazakh history “from a predominantly Russian perspective”, Tynyshpaev constructing a nationalist narrative, and Asfendiiarov with his “ideologically motivated debunking of a whole corpus of (mainly Russian) studies on the Kazakhs.”\footnote{Z. Auezova, “Conceiving a People’s History,” 257.} While Chuloshnikov continued the prerevolutionary tradition of history writing about the Kazakhs and reproduced the abovementioned stereotypes, Tynyshpaev was well versed in the Kazakh genealogical tradition and represented an inner view on the tribal history of his own people. Tynyshpaev attached the main importance to tribal and clan identities which united the Kazakhs with other Turkic peoples of the former Russian Empire.\footnote{Ibid., 251.}
Asfendiiarov’s position differed significantly from both of them, because in the changing political contexts of the mid-1920s and 1930s Asfendiiarov had to use a new terminology and methodological framework. Significantly, both Asfendiiarov and Tynyshpaev were state officials. Before they were repressed, they accumulated much power in their hands.

The native Kazakh historians operated in an environment of a number of specific discussions and debates that overwhelmed the Soviet historical science during the late 1920s and 1930s. The main topic of these debates was the discussion on the character of socio-economic relations in prerevolutionary Oriental societies, particularly those on the territory of the modern Kazakh republic. Karl Marx perceived human history as a sequence of three socio-economic formations, namely classless formation, ‘economic’ formation (based on private ownership and trade) and finally communism. By 1933 this idea was further elaborated by Soviet Orientalist Vasilii V. Struve (1899-1965), who suggested a framework of five socio-economic formations: from classless societies to slaveholding formation which was then replaced by feudalism and then by capitalism, and eventually socialism as a final goal of human history. It was not clear which place in this scheme was occupied by Orientals, because Marx himself had at one point mentioned that there was a special Asiatic Mode of Production (aziatskii sposob proizvodstva, AMP), but did not elaborate this concept further. This circumstance gave birth to large debates, where Sandzhar Asfendiiarov participated as a historian of the Kazakhs.

Asfendiiarov was born in Tashkent in 1889. His way to scholarship was very tangled but he quickly rose to high positions in the period after the revolution. He was educated at the Academy of Military Medicine in St. Petersburg and then sent for military service to the city of Termez (present-day southern Uzbekistan). Resulting from his active political engagement in the early Soviet time, Asfendiiarov obtained executive positions in Central Asian councils (sovets) and governments. He represented Turkestan at meetings in Moscow and his practical knowledge of the Orient was useful for the young Soviet government. In 1927 he was appointed director of the N. Narimanov All-Union Institute of Oriental Studies (Vsesoizuzniy institut vostokovedeniia imeni N. Narimanova) in Moscow. In 1928 Asfendiiarov came to Alma-Ata. From 1928 to 1937 he was the Director of the Kazakh State University in Alma-Ata which gave him the possibility to conduct work on Ka-

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326 The Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (not to be confused with the academic Institute of Oriental Studies which was set up in Leningrad in 1930 and moved to Moscow in 1950) existed in 1921-1954.
zakh history. Asfendiiarov made several sketches (ocherki) on the general Kazakh history (actually, this was the first attempt in the Kazakh national historiography) in his monographs. Besides he produced several articles on the problem of the origin of Islam and the role of nomads in that process, as well as on the national liberation movement in the Orient.\footnote{S.D. Asfendiiarov, 	extit{Istoriia natsional’no-revoliutsionnykh dvizhenii na Vostoke} (Kazan’, 1932).} His biographer Ramazan Suleimenov mentions that Asfendiiarov had no special education in philology and in the textual studies of Oriental languages, but that he possessed a good philological grounding in Persian, Arabic and Western European languages.\footnote{R. B. Suleimanov, “Vidnyi deiatel’ sotsialisticheskogo stroitel’stva v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane, uchenyi-vostokoved,” in: 	extit{Sandzhar Dzhafarovich Asfendiiarov} (Alma-Ata, 1990), 10.} This is doubtful, since Asfendiiarov did not display any of these philological skills in his published works.

The main problem that Asfendiiarov focused on in his oeuvre is how to define medieval Kazakh society in the framework of socio-economic formations. In the 1920s-30s a large discussion developed in the Soviet Union about the sequence of pre-capitalistic formations. Until 1929 there were three major theories about how to conceptualize the past of the Orient, developed mostly on the basis of Chinese sources: 1) a feudal conception claimed that the pre-capitalistic formation of the Orient was simply feudal, thus based on private land ownership; 2) the so-called Asiatic Mode of Production theory claimed that there was a special formation of Oriental development characterized by Oriental despotism, absence of private property, huge state-organized irrigation systems, a caste of priests, economic autonomy of small communities, and under-developed trade; 3) the theory of trade capitalism presupposed an early form of capitalism in Asiatic societies.\footnote{V. N. Nikiforov, 	extit{Vostok i vsemirnaia istoriia} (Moscow, 1977), 179. On the AMP see: B. O’Leary, 	extit{The Asiatic Mode of Production: Oriental Despotism, Historical Materialism and Indian History} (Oxford, 1989).} Michael Kemper wrote an article about the different views on this problem with regard to Soviet anti-Islamic Islamology and examined Asfendiiarov’s approach to the study of Arab nomads in his early works.\footnote{S. D. Asfendiiarov, “Islam i kochevoe khoziaistvo” in: 	extit{Ateist}, No. 58 (November, 1930) 3-17; S. D. Asfendiiarov, 	extit{Materialy k izuchenii istorii Vostoka, chast’ 1, Prichiny vozniknoveniiia islama} (Samarkand, 1928); M. Kemper, “The Soviet Discourse,” 1-48.}

Investigating nomadism, Asfendiiarov studied two variants of medieval Oriental society: the Arab and Central Asian nomads with particular attention to the Mongols. Why
were these two ethnic groups so important for the discussion of Kazakh national history? First of all, as far as the Kazakhs were regarded as nomads, the Arabs and Mongols were of interest in a comparative perspective. Secondly, the Arabs and the Mongols brought fundamental socio-economic and religious changes to the peoples whom they conquered in the 7th-8th and the 13th centuries, respectively. A proper evaluation of the general role of nomadic invasions was very important; if one wanted to include the nomads into a general history of ‘progressive peoples’ one would have to demonstrate the complex and mutual character of relations between nomads and city-dwellers. The Arabs brought Islam to Central Asia, whereas the Mongol conquests fundamentally changed regional political structures and established new traditions of statehood, ideology and political legitimation, though following the patterns that had already been established in the Turkic Kaganates.\footnote{V.V. Trepavlov, Gosudarstvennyi stroi Mongol’skoj imperii XIII veka: problema istoricheskoi preemstvennosti (Moscow, 1993).} Both cultural and political phenomena affected the history of the Kazakh steppes. Finally, the period of Mongol suzerainty had always been important in the Russian historiography and also reflected the Russian experience of interaction with nomads.\footnote{Ch.J. Halperin, “Soviet Historography on Russia and the Mongols,” in: Russian Review 41, no. 3 (Jul., 1982), 306-322. An account with a focus on research of Persian historical works is represented in: A.A. Arslanova, Ostalis’ knigi ot vremen bylykh... (Kazan’, 2002).} Therefore the issue of the Arabs and Mongols, as we will see below, played a major role in the Soviet academic discourse on nomads, on the Kazakhs in particular.

Asfendiiarov in his early works regarded Islam not as a religion, but as an “economic movement of the tribes.”\footnote{M. Kemper, “The Soviet Discourse,” 18, 20-21; Asfendiiarov, “Materialy k izucheniiu,” 28, 48.} The fact that the Arab people were nomads and that they kept tribal divisions was crucial for Asfendiiarov. Asfendiiarov wrote that “nomadic centres in Asia were the centres from which the big waves of migration started and spread. These movements were an influential factor in historical development.”\footnote{S. D. Asfendiiarov, Materialy k izucheniiu, 7.} It should be mentioned that Asfendiiarov did not describe the Arab and Kazakh cases in the same way. According to the author, Arabs did not have feudal property; rather, property was tribal.\footnote{Ibid., 19.} At the same time, what Arab and Kazakh societies had in common was the nomadic, cattle-breeding character of economy. Asfendiiarov stressed the importance of tribal organisation
as a functional element of economy. Michael Kemper formulated Asfendiiarov’s opinion in the following way: “The Orient was characterized not by a historical sequence of primitive-patriarchal, feudal, and capitalistic society, as in the West, but by one tribal formation that combined elements from all three formations.” In other words, in the 1920s Asfendiiarov neglected feudal and trade capital conceptions and belonged to the adherents of a special way of Oriental development, which however also differed from the AMP. Asfendiiarov himself did not call this directly ‘tribal formation,’ but he stated that “nomadic economy was the main economic formation (formatsiia) in Central Asia.”

With these views Asfendiiarov entered the first round of discussions around the AMP which took place in the Soviet Union in 1925-1931. The adherents of the AMP claimed that Oriental societies had their own way of development, unlike the European way, and it was characterized by despotism, absence of private property, and natural economy. This theory was criticized by those historians who accepted the Marxist linear understanding of history, in which all societies went through the same socio-economic formations. In order to support their views the latter group of historians linked the adherents of the AMP with repressed Trotskyites and also referred to Stalin’s statement which characterized Chinese society as feudal. The AMP debate was muted in 1931, and the relatively free discussion was forcibly closed. A significant role in the ending of the debates around Oriental socio-economical formations was played by Vasilii Struve.

A leading specialist of ancient Oriental history, Vasilii Vasil’evich Struve (1899-1965) worked his whole life on old Egyptian texts and on philological questions. At the same time he elaborated the Soviet historical methodology with the famous five phases in the course of human history (piatichlenka). In connection, Struve tried to prove, from Marxist positions, that ancient Asiatic societies were based on a slaveholding system, not on a feudal one. Since 1931 he argued that societies of the Ancient Orient (especially in Egypt) were to be classified by the socioeconomic formation of slaveholding system as well as by the transition from that stage to feudal relations. Obviously on governmental

337 Ibid., 30.
request, over the next few years several Russian scholars produced basic works on feudalism in Russia and in nomadic societies: Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii, *Oriental Feudalism: The Capital of the Golden Horde – Sarai Berke* (1932), Boris D. Grekov, *Slavery and Feudalism in Ancient Rus’* (1934), and Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov, *The Social System of Mongols* (1934). After Stalin’s *History of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union: Short Course* (1939) the concept of five socio-economic stages became a dogma, without ‘special cases’ and ‘national peculiarities’. The reason for this change was clearly connected to current Soviet politics of modernization. In Kemper’s view, “[t]he integration of Muslim socio-economic history into the fold of the Eurocentristic *piatichlenka* legitimized the violent transformation of Muslim society according to the Bolshevik model.”

Taking this political environment into consideration, Asfendiiarov changed his opinion in the debate and moved to the camp of feudalists. As he had done before, he regarded the Kazakh history as a history of a nomadic people, which along with other nomads had played a crucial role in the past of Orient. In this context he did not raise the question of Kazakh cities, but he mentioned the influence of the cities of Transoxania on the Islamization of the Steppe. Contrary to his previous article on the origin of Islam, Asfendiiarov not only acknowledged that Islam was deeply rooted among the Kazakh nomads, but also took it as a proof for the existence of feudalism in the Kazakh lands prior to the Tsarist conquest.

Also in contradiction to his previous view on tribal Arab society, in his historical outline of the Kazakh past Asfendiiarov concluded that “nomadic peoples of Central Asia had a social class structure. […] The nomads did not have a tribal system.” He now claimed that their class structure was feudal with some specifics. I consider this claim as a direct

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342 Ibid.

343 S. D. Asfendiiarov, *Istoriia Kazakhstana (s drevneishikh vremen)*, 45.
influence of the works by Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov (1884-1931), Leningrad historian of the Mongol empire who defined in his posthumously published book (1934) the Mongol society of the fourteenth to seventeenth centuries as a society of advanced feudal relations. In his conclusions Boris Ia. Vladimirtsov, as an Orientalist philologist, relied on written sources, produced within the Mongol tradition of court historiography of the 13th century (the Yuan dynasty). Sandzhar Asfendiiarov claimed in 1935 that the Kazakhs had had the similar high level of development. In this regard, he pointed out the contribution of Vladimirtsov, who was the first to study medieval Asiatic feudalism. Later other authors developed more opinions on nomadic feudalism. As Vladimirtsov had done in his book *The Social System of the Mongols*, Asfendiiarov drew a direct parallel between the development of feudalism in the West and in the Orient. In his mind, nomadic feudalism was characterized by a combination of tribal elements and feudal relations. Asfendiiarov solved this contradiction very skillfully: after the Mongol conquest, Central Asian nomads had preserved the tribal structure of their society which was "in reality feudal in character."

Asfendiiarov does not mention any Kazakh city, and the Kazakhs in his works of the mid-1930s appear only as a nomadic people. He links the process of Islamization with the development of feudal relations and the cultural influence of settled peoples on nomads. In 1930 Asfendiiarov argued against the opinion that the Kazakhs were bad or “superficial” Muslims, a view that he called a result of Russian chauvinistic ideology and local nationalism. He assumed that Kazakh Islam was 'different' from that of their neighbors. For him, Muslim preachers adapted their religion to Kazakh traditions. Remarkable for a scholar working under conditions of official atheism, Asfendiiarov even ascribed a crucial

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role in the religious life of the Kazakhs to the Khwājas (representatives of sacred families which claimed to be descendants from the Prophet Muhammad), and dated the beginning of the spread of Islam in present-day Kazakhstan already with the tenth and eleventh centuries.\textsuperscript{348}

In 1935 the origin of the Kazakhs was understood by Asfendiiarov in the following terms. In the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries there was a coalition of Kazakh, Noghay and Uzbek nomadic peoples of the Western Dasht-i Qipchāq. Later on, in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, this union disintegrated into three respective parts. Asfendiiarov established a strong connection between the modern territory of Kazakhstan and medieval Kazakhs. He argued that the nomadic peoples (narody) living on the territory of present-day Kazakhstan had subsequently become one ethnic group.\textsuperscript{349} According to him, Kazakh feudal society was formed already by the sixteenth century in the framework of the Kazakh Hordes. He regarded them as an early form of a feudal state, the Kazakh Khanate.\textsuperscript{350}

However, even Asfendiarov’s moving to the camp of feudalists did not save his life. Already in 1933 he was publicly blamed for “a serious inversion of Marxist teaching on the socio-economic formations” and for “deviation from the Leninist national politics.”\textsuperscript{351} Sandzhar Asfendiiarov was executed in 1938 and his writings were banned.

\textbf{2.5. Mikhail Viatkin on Kazakh Ethnogenesis}

After the prohibition of Asfendiiarov’s books it became necessary to write a new variant of Kazakh history from a Marxist position. In 1941 Mikhail P. Viatkin (1895-1967) published a monograph on the history of the Kazakh people from ancient times up to 1870.\textsuperscript{352} Viatkin had graduated from Tomsk University in 1921 and was a senior researcher at the historical department of the Leningrad Pedagogical Institute. From 1957 to his death Viatkin served as Head of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of History of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Since 1935 his main field of academic interest was the past of nomadic peoples,


\textsuperscript{349} Ibid., 78.

\textsuperscript{350} Ibid., 82.

\textsuperscript{351} A. Larin, “Tri antitezisa (predvaritel’naia formulirovka osnovnykh vozrazhenii tov. Asfendiiarovu),” in: \textit{Bol’shevik Kazakhstana} 10 (34) 1933, 38.

\textsuperscript{352} M. Viatkin, \textit{Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR}, vol. 1, \textit{S drevneishikh vremen po 1870 g.} (Moscow, 1941).
mainly the Kazakhs and the Kirgiz. He was personally acquainted with Sandzhar Asfendiiarov and Anna Pankratova; with the latter he had a common project on Kazakh history (see below), in the 1950s he participated in the writing of the Kirgiz meta-history. Viatkin’s doctoral thesis (doktorskaiia) was devoted to the 1783-1797 uprising of the Kazakhs against Russian rule. The name of its leader, Srym Datov (1712-1802), provided the title for Viatkin’s monograph.

Before WWII, Viatkin regularly visited Alma-Ata and the Kazakh Base of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, which had been established in 1932 under Kanysh Imantaevich Satpaev (1899-1964). In his 1940 scientific report on one of the visits to the Historical Sector of the Kazakh Base, Mikhail Viatkin analyzed the present state and development of scientific life in Alma-Ata. According to him, the research made in the Historical Sector by local scholars had become much more active than before (he compared it with 1939). If previously a considerable part of the work was mainly done by Leningrad specialists (he did not specify to whom he referred precisely, but we can guess here Aleksandr Bernshtam and obviously Viatkin himself were meant), in 1940 Viatkin identified several finished historical works and dissertations written by Kazakhstani scholars. The time spent in the Kazakh Base allowed him to establish close relations with Kazakh historians, including Alkei Margulan (on him see the fourth chapter). The Historical Sector had three employees at that time, namely V.F. Shakhmatov, Kh. Iusurov (who, according to some, was “the only historian among the Dungan people”), and A.Kh. Margulan. Viatkin read all materials that the Kazakh colleagues had prepared for publication and acknowledged that the Historical Sector was becoming more and more independent from Leningrad support. Viatkin’s report is of special importance because it shows the close ties between the two

353 M.P. Viatkin, Stranitsy zhizni i raboty: k 110-letiui so dnia rozhdeniia (Moscow, 2006). In 1954 Viatkin was elected a Member Correspondent of the Kirgiz Academy of Sciences.

354 M.P. Viatkin, Batyr Srym (Moscow, Leningrad, 1947) (the dissertation had been defended in 1944).

355 The geologist Satpaev, since 1946 full member of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, was an important organizer of academic life in the young Kazakh republic. On 3 June 1946 Satpaev was elected as the first President of the newly established Kazakh Academy of Sciences.


357 Since the very beginning the administration of the Kazakh Base paid attention to Uighur studies, which was to become of special priority in the future Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography.
centers of scholarship even at this point. What we see here is that Kazakh historical science, and Oriental Studies as its organic part, emerged de facto as a branch of the Leningrad school of classical Orientology. Since the late 1930s the opinion of the Leningrad colleagues and their examination of preliminary results of studies largely influenced the perceptions and scholarly strategies of Kazakhstani science.

As a result of his travels and in-depth studies, Viatkin published a monograph on the history of the Kazakh Socialist Republic. He was the first to combine the analysis of archival, archeological and written sources on Kazakh history. The concept of autochthonism — the eternal dwelling of the respective nations on the territory which belonged to them in the Soviet period — was brought here to its logic end: Viatkin’s sketches of Kazakh history began with the early Stone Age (Upper Paleolithic). For this purpose Viatkin used materials from the 1939-1940 archeological expeditions in Southern and South-Eastern Kazakhstan led by Leningrad archeologist Aleksandr N. Bernshtam. And even though Viatkin claimed to have consulted manuscripts in Oriental languages (so-called ‘Oriental sources’), in fact, he relied only on prerevolutionary research and on the translations made by Leningrad Orientalists in the 1930s (sources on the history of the Turkmen and Kara-Kalpaks) that we have discussed in detail in a previous chapter. Still, Viatkin mentioned six, from his perspective, most important ‘Oriental sources’ on Kazakh history, namely Ta’rīkh-i Rashidd by Muḥammad Ḥaydar, Miḥmān-nāma-yī Buhārā by Rūzbihān, the anonymous Shāybaṇī-nāma, ‘Abdullāh-nāma by Ḥāfiz-i Tanīsh Buhārī, Shajara-yī ʿūr by Abūʾl-Ghāzī, and Firdaus al-Iqbal by Munīs and Āghā. Work on these texts was conducted by the Institute of Oriental Studies in the framework of the source publication projects in the 1930s. These references are important, because up to that time there was no clear information about which manuscripts reveal information on the history of this or that nationality of Central Asia. Moreover, as we shall see, some of these sources were preserved in the Alma-Ata archives, but Viatkin did not say whether he had seen them there.

Underlining the importance of the question of ethnogenesis, Viatkin was confronted with the contradiction that the first historically reliable reference to the Kazakhs goes back to as early as the middle of the 15th century, while the Kazakh nationality (narodnost’)

359 Ibid., 3.
was, according to Soviet scholarship, formed much later. In the footsteps of Iakubovskii, Viatkin made a distinction between the point in time when a nationality appeared and the time when its name first occurred, but the other way around: the Kazakh nationality appeared later than the ethnic name, because he maintained that originally, in the 14\textsuperscript{th}-15\textsuperscript{th} centuries, the term ‘Qazaq’ just meant ‘a free man.’ However, Viatkin had no final opinion as to when the Kazakh nationality finally appeared. He paid special attention to the presumably long period when a kind of dual term, ‘Uzbek-Qazaq,’ was in circulation, as well as to the point in history when the ‘Old-Uzbek’, i.e. the common Chaghatay language was accepted for history writing in Central Asia. The author stated that the Kazakh nationality was formed only in the late 15\textsuperscript{th} and in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, i.e. later than the sources that indicate the term ‘Qazaq’ for the first time, and before the first Kazakh political union of Janibek Khan and Giray Khan. Again, the main distinction of the Kazakhs from the Uzbeks was their way of life: since the 16\textsuperscript{th} century the Uzbeks had migrated to Central Asian urban regions and became settled, while the Kazakhs had remained (!) nomads. Though Viatkin must have known from Aleksandr Bernshtam about the excavations of the ancient cities of Southern Kazakhstan, it is significant that Viatkin did not connect any of these urban centers to Kazakh culture. In his mind, even though there were some elements of urban life in Kazakh-dominated areas, these had to be ascribed to other populations, and there was no Kazakh urban civilization.

Thus the Uzbek people became the ‘other’ that sharpened the definition of the Kazakhs, though this opposition existed previously not in national terms, but in terms of settled and nomadic societies. Viatkin found data in Rūzbihān’s chronicle for proving that Shaybānī Khan, the Uzbeks’ ruler in 1451-1510, tried to isolate the Kazakhs from important local trading centers. This was taken as the starting point for a centuries-long sequence of wars between Uzbeks and Kazakhs over such centers which were mainly located in the middle Sir Darya region (today Southern Kazakhstan).


361 M. Viatkin, *Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR*, vol. 1, 77-78.


In his theoretical analysis of Kazakh history Viatkin operated with such terms as backwardness and progress. As many other scholars, he acknowledged that the historical socioeconomic development of peoples living on the territory of the Kazakh SSR had not been even: the southern territories, i.e. those with settled populations, were more highly developed in the ancient and medieval times due to Iranian, Chinese, and Arab civilizational influences; while northern territories, almost totally inhabited by nomads, were regarded by Viatkin as backward due to ‘primitive’ social relations and the absence of feudalism.\(^{364}\) The terminological opposition of “nomadic vs. settled” became equivalent to the binary opposition of “backwardness vs. progress”. In fact, this distinction had roots in pre-revolutionary literature, but as the borders of the Kazakh SSR included territories with settled population, Viatkin accorded the republic a right to have a written history. Thereby the focus of attention was moved from the Steppe region (Dasht-i Qïpçhâq) to the southern territories which had always been touched by the histories of great empires and which were known from many narrative sources. The Soghdian colonization of Southern Kazakhstan (3\(^{\text{th}}\)-5\(^{\text{th}}\) c.) gave rise to another cultural opposition, according to Viatkin: the opposition of Iranian and Turkic populations. Soghdians in this respect were regarded as bearers of urban culture.\(^{365}\) This was obviously against Marr’s concept of autochthonism (see below) and in favor of the theory of migrations elaborated by German scholars.

Viatkin consistently described the cultural relations with foreign elements, such as Soghdians, Arabs, and Mongols, as a mutual influence with the Turkic population of the Kazakh Steppe. Viatkin did not evaluate foreign invasions only in negative terms; each of them, according to Viatkin, brought society to a certain level of feudalization and was therefore ultimately progressive in character, especially for the nomadic population which received a more complex social organization after the Mongol invasion.\(^{366}\) In contrast, the spread of Islam was characterized in terms of superficiality: it was popular only among the elite; the majority of the population remained shamanistic.\(^{367}\) Viatkin produced several

\(^{364}\) Ibid., 21.


\(^{366}\) M. Viatkin, Ocherki po istorii Kazakhskoi SSR, 62.

\(^{367}\) Ibid., 54.
general outlines of Kazakh history which appeared in the 1930s-40s. He analyzed the success-

cession of cultures since ancient times and maintained his postulate of the backwardness of nomads. Still, his work had one main peculiarity: it tied the crystallization of the Kazakh nationality not to the first appearance of the ethnic name in sources, but to the movement of the Uzbek tribes in southern direction.

Viatkin was the last Soviet scholar who wrote a Kazakh history on his own. His and Asfendiiarov’s experiences were based on a narrow scope of sources and on the personal networks of the authors with colleagues all over the Union. The next stage in the development of national history writing was characteristic to Soviet style scholarship: it was a switch to more centralized and collective monographs, carried out by state research institutions and by large academic networks with broad discussions before and after the book’s release.

2.6. Aleksandr Iakubovskii and the Soviet Concept of Ethnogenesis in Central Asia

Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii (1886-1953), the main successor of Vasilii V. Bartol’d, was a pioneer in the formation of national histories for Central Asian republics. As Iakubovskii wrote in his autobiography compiled for the Institute of History of Material Culture, he was born in a St. Petersburg family of a bank employee.\(^{368}\) In his early childhood the family moved to Samarkand, and then to Tashkent, where his father worked in the State Bank. No doubt, already at that time young Iakubovskii felt affection for the mysterious Central Asian Orient with its magnificent madrasas in Samarkand and narrow streets in Tashkent. Not surprising is therefore his permanent interest in the medieval epoch of the region, especially in the age of the Tīmūrids. He never wrote about his childhood, but it was certainly a decisive period for the future scholar. After graduating from the Tashkent gymnasium, Iakubovskii in 1906 entered the faculty of natural sciences at Geneva University, but was forced to return in fall 1907 because his father was not able to send him money anymore. Hence, in 1908 Iakubovskii became a student of the historic-philological faculty of St. Petersburg University, where he did not receive any deep education in Oriental Studies since

these subjects were taught at another faculty. In 1913, after his graduation, Iakubovskii went to work as a teacher of history in one of the Leningrad gymnasia, which was later turned into a Soviet school. There Iakubovskii worked until 1924, when his pedagogical experience in a high school came to an end. It was only in 1920 that the young historian started to study Oriental Studies disciplines at the same St. Petersburg University, namely the history of medieval Orient (especially Central Asia) with Vasilii Bartol’d, Arabic language with Ignatii Krachkovskii, and Persian language with Aleksandr Romaskevich. According to my interviewees “it is well known” that Iakubovskii was an archeologist and did not know Oriental languages. Yet I believe he had sufficient knowledge to read texts in Arabic and Persian, but of course he was not a philologist and did not spend much time with manuscripts, working instead mainly with published material. No doubt yet that Iakubovskii was among those who combined archeological and textual studies, though not in the first period of his career.

Iakubovskii became famous for his basic theses on the process of ethnogenesis in Central Asia which were later largely accepted by historians and politicians alike. The main idea was to differentiate between the historical conditions of national formation and the appearance of the ethnic name. This division enabled specialists to postulate autochthonous origins for the titular nation of republics in distant epochs when these peoples still did not have the current name, and thus to extend their ethnogenesis into antiquity. In his 1941 booklet on the Uzbek case, Iakubovskii concluded that the nomadic element that brought the name ‘Uzbek’ to the population of Transoxania in the 15th-16th centuries was only the final step in a long process of ethnic development. In other words, the Uzbek ethnos existed long before the arrival of ‘Uzbeks’ with this name. Iakubovskii’s brochure reveals a strong anti-Iranian inclination, when saying that nomadic Uzbeks, when they arrived from the north, were confronted in Transoxiana with a predominantly Turkic-

369 Ibid., ff. 56-57.
370 A. Iu. Iakubovskii, K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda (Tashkent, 1941).
373 A. Iu. Iakubovskii, K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda, 3, 12.
speaking population and thus not primarily with Iranians. Iakubovskii attributed the victory of Turkic language to the epoch of the Qarakhanids (840-1212), even though city-dwellers continued to speak Persian.\textsuperscript{374} In Iakubovskii’s construction, the sedentarization of nomads is an inevitable, teleological process, which eventually led to the appearance of cities populated by Turkic speakers, as for instance in Urgench and Andijan, and therefore to the active participation of Turks in the cultural life of the cities. In the same way Iakubovskii proposed that ‘it is impossible to explain the appearance of ‘Alî-Shîr Nawâyî only by the Iranian cultural heritage. The origin of his works goes back to the development of the Turkic language and literature before the 15\textsuperscript{th} century.’\textsuperscript{375}

Being aware of archeological realities, in other writings Iakubovskii rejected “the wrong opinion on the character and role of the Mongol invasion, which was previously represented as a barbaric irruption that resulted in the total liquidation of the conquered population.”\textsuperscript{376} For the first time a Soviet scholar paid attention to the quick recovery of the ‘destroyed’ cities.

U.S. scholar Edward Allworth\textsuperscript{377} spared no effort to demonstrate that Iakubovskii was a true Stalinist creature. He called Iakubovskii an ideologist and juxtaposed him to Aleksandr Semenov who had not yielded “completely to ideological pressure.” Allworth’s view is quite important in understanding the role of Iakubovskii in the creation of the Soviet national histories. Studying Iakubovskii’s account on the Uzbek ethnogenesis, Allworth argues that Iakubovskii’s perspective was inspired by ‘Stalin’s prose’, and drew the following conclusions:

“These nineteen pages . . . carried no reference footnotes or bibliography, which revealed them to be less a scholar’s investigation than an ideologist’s directive. ( . . .) Every circumstance connected with Prof. Iakubovskii’s tract — its substance, its issuance, and its form — suggests that this constituted an official policy statement, and that it exerted an impact commensurate with its authority. In retrospect, the new intellectuals of Central Asia would regard the contribution by Prof. Iakubovskii, who died about two weeks after Stalin, not only as a vocal Stalinist propagation of fictive dan-\textsuperscript{374}

\textsuperscript{374} Ibid., 9.
\textsuperscript{375} Ibid., 18-19.
\textsuperscript{376} A.Iu. Iakubovskii, “Feodalizm na Vostoke”, 10, 12.
\textsuperscript{377} Edward A. Allworth (b. 1920) is a historian of modern Central Asia based at Columbia University.
gers but as a polemic that endangered the educated populace. In clearing the way for Soviet-style unanimity around Marxist-Leninist internationalism, such efforts exerted strong pressure on writers, teachers, and students — the core of Central Asian intellectual strength."

Even though the political significance of Iakubovskii’s work has been expressed by Allworth very clearly, it should be also kept in the mind that Iakubovskii contributed much to the legitimation of the centuries-long history of the Uzbek people, and therefore his brochure might not have been regarded as an attack but as a support for the Uzbek national intelligentsia. Anyway, Iakubovskii’s brochure, which partly rejected his own earlier writings on the archeological sites in Transoxiana, set the tone of research in Soviet Central Asian studies. It was natural to use the same concept also for other peoples of Central Asia, the Kazakhs (and even the Tajiks) being no exception.

Yuri E. Bregel and Sergei N. Abashin mentioned that the concept of autochthonism in Iakubovskii’s brochure is influenced by the theories of linguist Nikolai Ia. Marr (1864-1934), whose impact on Soviet ethnology, archeology, history, and linguistics in the 1930s and 1940s was enormous. Marr rejected the migration theory, which envisaged cultural influence during movements of peoples, and instead developed his ‘new theory of language’ according to which autochthonous cultures pass through a certain range of socio-economic stages. However, as Uyama Tomohiko mentioned, the key term ‘autochthonism’ was not introduced by Marr himself and also the concept of ethnogenesis was not formulated by him. One should distinguish between the ideas of Marr and the form of Marrism that developed after the death of its eponym on the basis of Marr’s controversial heritage. As far as Nikolai Ia. Marr, Bartol’d’s relative and friend, was a founder and director of the State Academy of the History of Material Culture in Leningrad (1919-1934), where

379 Y. Bregel, Notes on the Study of Central Asia, 13-14.
Iakubovskii was also employed, Marr’s ideas were widespread among archeologists, including Sergei Tolstov,\(^\text{382}\) whose positions were close to those formulated in Iakubovskii’s pamphlet on Uzbek history.\(^\text{383}\) Different in Iakubovskii’s approach was that, according to Bregel, he did not understand Marr’s theories and used this officially approved concept only to express his political loyalty. In 1943, the scholars who found themselves evacuated in Tashkent agreed with the theses of Iakubovskii and Tolstov, and the autochthonous concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia was taken as the basis for republican histories. This concept continued even when Marrism was denounced by Stalin in 1950.\(^\text{384}\)

### 2.7. Anna Pankratova and the Official Kazakh History of the 1940s

The following project was directed by Anna Pankratova (1897-1957) during WWII when a number of prominent historians were evacuated to Tashkent (Uzbekistan) and Borovoe (Kazakhstan). This evacuation played a significant role in the historiography of Central Asia. Well-educated and experienced scholars from Moscow and Leningrad found themselves in a region which, in most cases, had not been central to their scientific interest before. Many of them began not only to teach at local universities but also to conduct collective work on the national histories of Central Asian peoples. For the first time such a collective monograph was requested by the Kazakh SSR soon after the appearance of the national republic, in 1936.\(^\text{385}\) The war-time evacuation of historians to Central Asia made the task easier. For example, in August 1941 one of the prominent specialists on Russian medieval history, the author of the comprehensive monograph *The Mongols and Ancient Russia* (1940)\(^\text{386}\), Arsenii N. Nasonov (1898-1965) was evacuated from Leningrad to Ash-

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\(^{386}\) A.N. Nasonov, *Mongoly i Rus’: Istoriiia tatarskoi politiki na Rusi* (Moscow, Leningrad, 1940). This book provided a feudal interpretation of the Russian medieval history and for the first time demonstrated the total dependence of Russian domestic politics on the Golden Horde’s rulers from the second half of 13\(^{\text{th}}\) to the early 15\(^{\text{th}}\) centuries. Before the war such a claim was still possible.
khabad, where he became head of the Historical Sector of the Institute of History, Language, and Literature of the Turkmen Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences. Here Nasonov headed the project of *Sketches on the History of Turkmenia and the Turkmen People* the results of which were published ten years later. Working together with other colleagues strengthened the existing network ties and allowed for a wide circulation and discussion of ideas and theories. This was especially the case when Tolstov and Iakubovskii, two major authorities in the Soviet humanitarian sciences, found themselves in the same place. At the same time Nasonov also wrote *A Short History of the Uzbek SSR*, which was never published and remained in manuscript form in his archive, maybe because Nasonov’s views were different from common theories or because the author, a specialist in Russian chronicles, did not consider it a work worthy of interest. Important to note is also that in evacuation, some prominent scholars from other fields, such as academicians (i.e. full members of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR) Sergei V. Bakhrushin and Iurii V. Gote could not continue to work in their specialties, and thus used the opportunity and began to investigate the poorly studied Central Asian history, which at that time still kept its “Orientalist” romantic and sacred aura. Still, for the careers of these scholars this period did not mean a crucial change in their professional orientation, since

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387 During the war time five hundred professors and their families were evacuated to Ashkhabad, while only two hundred of their colleagues found themselves in Tashkent, where facilities and infrastructure were much better (P. Stronski, *Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966* (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 94-95).


391 Iu.V. Krivosheev, M.V. Mandrik, “Arsenii Nikolaevich Nasonov i ego trudy po istorii Rusi,” in: A.N. Nasonov, *‘Russkaia zemlia’ i obrazovanie territorii Drevnerusskogo gosudarstva; Mongoly i Rus’* (St. Petersburg, 2006), 357. Unfortunately, the manuscript of Nasonov’s work has remained out of my reach.

392 In cooperation with Soviet Orientalists, the historian of Russian feudalism Sergei V. Bakhrushin edited the first version of the *History of Peoples of Uzbekistan* (Istoriia narodov Uzbekistana, 2 vols, eds. S.V. Bakhrushin et al. (Tashkent, 1947, 1950).

almost none of the evacuated scholars continued with Central Asi an studies after the war. Nevertheless, their temporary occupation with the history of Central Asian republics had very serious consequences for local scholarship.

Like Nasonov, before the evacuation also Anna Pankratova’s scientific interests were far remote from Kazakh history. Being a child of a working family and an active participant in the revolutionary movement, Pankratova obtained her education at the historical faculty of Odessa University and then at the Moscow Institute of Red Professors, from which she graduated in 1925. In Moscow Anna Mikhailovna’s historical views were heavily influenced by the famous historian Mikhail Pokrovskii (1868-1932), who in his writings preached internationalism and denounced the chauvinism of Russian historiography and the colonial character of the Russian Empire. The increasing criticism of Pokrovskii and his historical school began in 1936 and also affected Pankratova: “she was dismissed from her MGU professorship in spring 1937 and was exiled to Saratov,” where she worked at the University. In 1938-40 Pankratova was forced to publish articles attacking her former teacher Pokrovskii. In 1940 she was called back to Moscow. Pankratova’s writings show that she was an orthodox Marxist historian and of course not a professional Orientalist. Instead, Pankratova’s scientific interests revolved around the history of the labor movement and the first Russian Revolution of 1905-1907. These were classical topics of Soviet historiography, closely connected to the official ideology. Due to her skills and proudly pronounced party membership, Pankratova eventually enjoyed strong administrative authority as an academician, as the vice director of the Moscow Institute of History (1939-52) and as the chief editor of its official journal Questions of History (Voprosy istorii) in 1953-57. However, as Reginald E. Zelnik, one of Pankratova’s biographers, puts it, “during her professional career she was dethroned and restored more than once.”

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394 The Institute of Red Professors (Institut krasnoi professury) was established by the Soviet government in 1921. It was a governmental school for party officials and for lecturers in the humanities. In 1921-1931 Mikhail N. Pokrovskii, a famous Marxist historian, served as director of this organization. M. S. Fox, “Political Culture, Purges, and Proletarianization at the Institute of Red Professors, 1921-1929,” The Russian Review. 52 (January 1993), 20-42.


During evacuation Pankratova initiated and directed the writing of the first Soviet history of one individual republic, the Kazakh SSR. The presence of scholars evacuated to Alma-Ata allowed Pankratova to invite such specialists as Boris D. Grekov, Nikolai M. Druzhinin, Mikhail P. Viatkin, Ermukhan B. Bekmakhanov and Aleksandr N. Bernshtam into the authors’ collective. They started writing during evacuation in Alma-Ata in 1941. This book, the *History of Kazakh SSR*, appeared in 1943, with Anna Pankratova as chief editor.

It is both easy and difficult to analyze this collective monograph because footnotes and references are lacking altogether, except for the classics of Marxism: it was clearly presupposed that the reader would take its narrative as self-evident. We can only guess which parts of the text were written by whom and on the basis of which sources. What distinguishes this book from previous works is its strong stress on the role of city civilization, and that a debate of the nomadic life style is carefully avoided; this peculiarity and innovation might go back to Aleksandr N. Bernshtam, who had already spent considerable time with archeological work in Kazakhstan before WWII. Bernshtam contributed a lot to the change of the Soviet discourse from the nomadic conception of Asfendiiarov and Viatkin to the theory of a syncretism of settled and nomadic civilizations. Bernshtam distinguished two cultural areas in Kazakhstan, i.e. South and North, since the epoch of the Qarakhanid dynasty in the 10th-13th centuries. I assume that he chose the Qarakhanids as a watershed because Islam became the official religion in the time of this dynasty. The evaluation of Islam in the 1943 *History of the Kazakh SSR* is still negative, and the authors stated that both the central and the northern territories of Kazakhstan had not been subject to Islamic

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399 Ibid., 61.

400 More details see in the fourth chapter.

401 *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943), 91. The Qarakhanid state (991-1209) was located in the Eastern Turkestan and Semirech’e. This dynasty had a significant role in the process of Islamization of Southern Kazakhstan. Boris Kochnev was a leading specialist in Qarakhanid studies. See his posthumously published book: B. D. Kochnev, *Numizmaticheskaia istoriia Karakhanskogo Kaganata (991-1209)* (Moscow, 2006).
influence before the Mongols. This was perhaps a result of archeological investigations: archeologists did not find any trace of Islamic cultural presence in the 10th-13th centuries.

We do not know who authored it, but the book contained the first description of the Muslim scholars Abū Naṣr Muḥammad al-Fārābī (873-950) and Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī (1029-1101) as symbols of Kazakh cultural heritage: “In the cities of Southern Kazakhstan scholarship appeared in the 10th century… Al-Fārābī worked at the court of the caliphs of Baghdad, but by his origin he was a Turk from the city of Otrar on the Sir Darya River.” The national identity of these scholars was not discussed in detail; they were simply linked up with the territory of the modern Kazakh SSR.

Furthermore, the authors postulated a single (not plural) Kazakh state which was allegedly established in the 15th-16th centuries. Probably they intended to demonstrate a long history of Kazakh statehood, not a complex sequence of state development in the Steppe (i.e. several Khanates). According to the authors, the Kazakh Hordes of later centuries resulted from the sign of fragmentation (razdroblennost’) and split-up of the Kazakh khanate in the 16th century.

The *History of the Kazakh Republic* of 1943 met with a lot of critique, as we will see below; still, the book established a tradition of writing large series of national histories. In the following, similar works appeared on the history of Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, and Turkmenistan. The production of these volumes was also accompanied by serious debates around the question of regional and national approaches and concerning the issue how to divide the common cultural heritage. The variant of the Uzbek history partially written by Aleksandr Semenov, who was a ‘Bartol’dist’, was harshly criticized, and a new version was published under redaction of Aleksandr Iakubovskii. Significantly, some Oriental-

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402 *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei* (Alma-Ata, 1943), 71.
403 Ibid., 66.
404 Ibid., 94-108.
ists of the Leningrad school who had actively participated in the projects of source editions since the 1930s also played key roles in preparing and debating these new national histories of Central Asia.

2.8. Discussions around Kazakh History: The Late 1940s-1950s

The first edition of the 1943 history of the Kazakh republic became a subject of strong criticism because it evaluated the Russian Tsarist colonialism not as the ‘lesser evil’, according to the previously prevalent evaluation supported by Stalin, but as an ultimate evil.408 Also the time and circumstances of the formation of the Kazakh nationality (narodnost’) were among the most debated issues. A certain M. Morozov, in a review on the 1943 edition of the History of Kazakh SSR published in the Party journal Bolshevik,409 drew on several ‘mistakes’ of the authors of the book, mainly focusing on its positive evaluation of the “Kazakh national-liberation movements” and its rejection of Russian colonialism. According to Morozov, the authors did not use Marxist methodology and did not understand the characteristics of socio-economic development in the Kazakh steppes. Interestingly, Morozov repeated several Tsarist-time stereotypes on the history of nomads. First of all, he rejected the assumption that a Kazakh state came into being after, and partly as a result of, the thirteenth-century Mongol invasion. In Morozov’s eyes, the Mongols only “destroyed many cities, the agriculture of Central Asia, and killed thousands of people.”410 Morozov evaluated the nomadic state very strictly: “In reality, in the 15th-18th centuries there were only rudimental forms of a Kazakh state, which did not become centralized. The Kazakh state appeared and developed on a rather low level of economy and culture.” Nomadic life style was presented by Morozov as a regressive form of economy which prevented further development. Therefore, the Russian annexation of the Kazakh steppes was a progressive act, because Russia was “much more civilized than Asian states.”411 Morozov’s arguments were supported by Tolstov in his 1944 article where he claimed that there was no other

410 Ibid., 30.
411 Ibid., 33.
way for the Kazakh people but to be included in the Russian Empire.\footnote{S.P. Tostov, “Istoricheskie korni druzhby narodov SSSR [1944],” Etnograficheskoie obozrenie 5 (2007), 159.} Of course, this argumentation shows clearly that the Soviets to a large degree perpetuated the concept of Russia’s ‘civilizing mission’ of the 19th century, because in their view it was solely the Russians who brought modernization to Central Asia, pushing it onto a new stage of social-economic development.

The 1943 book was meant to prove that the Kazakh people were not barbaric. It revealed a serious level of political, economic, and cultural development in the region prior to Russian colonization. This postulate along with the description of the Russian invasion as a form of colonization became the focus of harsh critique. In summer 1944, on the initiative of Anna Pankratova herself, the Central Committee of the Communist Party convened a meeting on historical issues. Pankratova wanted to strengthen her positions within the Soviet historical scholarship and sent several letters to the Central Committee of the CP asking to solve the questions debated by historians, namely the estimation of the Tsarist past and national movements. Pankratova also wanted to have a Party feedback to the first experience of collective national history writing. Pankratova’s critique focused on the ‘chauvinistic’ historians who thought the Russian military conquest of Central Asia was legitimate (E.V. Tarle, B.D. Grekov). However, the reaction of the Party bosses was the opposite. The meeting of fifty leading historians was led by the Central Committee secretaries of A.S. Shcherbakov, A.A. Andreev and G.M. Malenkov. They did not agree with Pankratova’s view on the Russian conquest as ‘an absolute evil’ and blamed her for idealizing the Kazakh past.\footnote{“Novye dokumenty o soveshchaniy istorikov v TsK VKP(b) (1944 g.),” Voprosy istorii 1 (1991), 189-190.} Sergei Tolstov, who was also criticizing Gafurov’s 1944 book on Tajik history, for similar reasons, loathed the Kazakh narrative for its alleged anti-Russian inclination and recommended that all questions that go beyond the history of a particular republic should in the future be discussed in a centralized way.\footnote{S.S. Alymov, “Na puti k ’Drevnei istorii narodov SSSR”, 141-142; “Novye dokumenty,” 188-205; “Stenogramma soveshchaniia po voprosam istorii SSSR v TsVKP(b) v 1944,” in: Voprosy istorii 5-6 (1996), 84-90.} The History of the Kazakh SSR included a section by Mikhail Viatkin on Kenesary Kasymov’s national movement (1837-1847), which Viatkin evaluated as a progressive demarche against the Tsarist invasion. Given Stalin’s support of Russian nationalism in WWII and afterwards, such a
claim was now interpreted as harmful; the book was termed ‘anti-Russian’ and mandated to be re-written. The main reason for attack on Pankratova was that she ambitioned on the role in historical science that the Party and Stalin personally regarded as their prerogative. Though Pankratova ‘confessed’ her mistakes, she had to leave her post of the deputy director of the Moscow Institute of History. No further repression was implemented, she “truly had nine lives.”

On 1 April 1948 the project of the second edition of the book was discussed at a meeting of the Sector of the Pre-Nineteenth Century History of the Soviet Union of the Moscow Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences. The atmosphere of the discussion was politically tense: the influence of Iakubovskii’s dogmatic brochure on Uzbek ethnogenesis can be felt in almost any speech at the conference. The Moscow historian Serafim Iushkov (1888-1952), who had also been evacuated to Alma-Ata and for a short time even served as the first director of the Alma-Ata Institute of History (1946-48), stated that the process of the formation of the Kazakh nationality began during the Turkic Kaganate in the 6th-7th centuries. Iushkov followed the view that the nomadic societies were feudal in character; the appearance of feudal relations in the Qarakhanid Khanate enforced the Kazakh ethnogenesis. The Mongol invasion in the first half of the 13th century was also regarded as a step towards the consolidation of the Kazakh tribes, which were included into the Great Mongol Empire. Iushkov even referred to “our” linguists (without mentioning names) who believed that the Kazakh language appeared already in the 13th-14th centuries. However — and in this aspect Iakubovskii’s influence is obvious — Iushkov also stated that the newly appeared nationality of that time did not yet develop under the name of Qazaq. Just like Iakubovskii did with respect to the Uzbeks, Iushkov claimed that it is necessary to distinguish between the time of nationality formation and the time when the ethnic name appeared. Iushkov concluded that eventually the Kazakh na-


416 Ibid., 48.


418 Someone corrected it by pen into “the 14th-15th centuries”.

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tionality appeared in the 15\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} centuries, i.e. only with the creation of the centralized Kazakh state. The united Kazakh Khanate was established by Qasim Khan (1455-1523).\footnote{OVN KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 42, Sv. 3, \textit{Stenogramma zasedaniiya sektora istorii SSSR do XIX veka Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR po obsuzhdeniui glav “Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR”, ot 1 apritia 1948, ff. 5-7.}

In 1941 historian Mikhail P. Viatkin, the author of the sketches of the Kazakh history that we have discussed above, had put it the other way around: first the Kazakh Khanate emerged and only then the nationality slowly appeared, i.e. after the 16\textsuperscript{th} century. Another position was held by historian Viktor Shakhmatov (1908-1964),\footnote{“Shakhmatov Viktor Fedorovich,” in: \textit{Qazaqstannyaq tarih ghylmy}, 538-539.} who claimed that in the 15\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} centuries various nationalities of Central Asia appeared from similar tribal components of the Dasht-i Qipchāq and that originally the Kazakh people spoke “the old Uzbek language, i.e. Chaghatay.”\footnote{OVN KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 42, Sv. 3, \textit{Stenogramma zasedaniiya sektora istorii SSSR do XIX veka Instituta istorii Akademii nauk SSSR po obsuzhdeniui glav “Istorii Kazakhskoi SSR”, ot 1 apritia 1948, f. 37.}

Another issue which was discussed briefly is the possibility of using Vladimirtsov’s conception of nomadic feudalism. The specialists did not come to an agreement in this question. Savelii L. Fuks (1900-1976), a historian of Kazakh law,\footnote{S.L. Fuks, \textit{Obychnoe pravo kazakhov v XVIII – pervoi polovine XIX veka} (Alma-Ata, 1981). This doctoral dissertation by Fuks was defended in 1948, but was published only as late as in 1981, due to the efforts of a Kazakh scholar Salyk Z. Zimanov.} suggested at the 1948 conference to avoid a mechanic borrowing of this concept, because Vladimirtsov did not claim that nomadic feudalism existed in all nomadic societies. By contrast, Nikolai Ustiugov (1896-1963), a Moscow historian of socio-economic relations in seventeenth- to nineteenth-centuries Russia, stated that the existence of nomadic feudalism in medieval Kazakh society was obvious. Ustiugov claimed that the redaction committee or certain authors of the book were against Vladimirtsov’s conception, but that they did not provide any arguments for their opposition. They just disregarded the possibility of using the concept of nomadic feudalism, elaborated on the Mongol material, for their investigation of Kazakh history.\footnote{OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 39a, Sv. 2, \textit{Zamechniia ko vtoromu izdaniui istorii KazSSR, 1948 god}, f. 3.}

These debates had a certain connection to the notorious ‘struggle against cosmopolitism,’ which came up as a witch-hunt in the late Stalin period in 1948-53. One important
example, concerning Uzbek national history, should be taken into account. On 21-27 April 1949 there was a discussion at the meeting of the Department of Humanities of the Academy of Sciences of the Uzbek SSR between adherents of the regional approach (‘Bartol’dists’, now under suspicion of being ‘cosmopolitans’) and of the Soviet national approach. Among the main speakers at the meeting were: the Director of the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Uzbek SSR Academy of Sciences, V.Iu. Zakhidov, the Director of the Uzbek Institute of History and Archeology R.N. Nabiev, the Iranist A.A. Semenov, the Arabist M.A. Sal’e as well as the historian I.I. Umniakov and L.I. Klimovich, a major authority in Soviet anti-Islamic propaganda and by that time making himself a name of a specialist in literatures of the Soviet Orient.424

Vakhid Iu. Zakhidov (1914-?) provided the main report criticizing the research methods of V.V. Bartol’d, E.E. Bertel’s, A.A. Semenov and others who studied the culture of Central Asian peoples in the context of the great Persian culture. These authors were blamed for their misrepresentation of history, and for their denial to regard the Uzbek, Tajik etc. literatures as self-sufficient and independent of Persian models.425 Even though Bertel’s actively participated in the celebration of Nizāmī (1141-1202) as an Azerbaijani poet in 1938 (probably, Bertel’s’ previous political imprisonments made him careful enough to follow the Party line), in his 1948 article on Persian literature in Central Asia he still had attempted to explain that “Persian literature, although it is a multiple [phenomenon], is one integral whole." 426 He also had claimed that there were no special national literatures: “each attempt of studying the literature of only one certain territory inevitably leads to wrong interpretations and to the creation of abstract conceptions that lack any foundation.”427 Similar ideas were provided by Iranist A.A. Semenov who in his 1945 investigation of the history of Central Asian architecture detected strong Iranian influences.428 This work was edited and supported by Babadzhan Gafurov, at that time First

425 O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i istorii kul’tury narodov Uzbekistana, Stenograficheskii otchet rasshirennogo zasedaniia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk AN Uzb. SSR, 21-27 aprelia 1949 (Tashkent, 1951), 16-19.
427 Ibid., 202.
428 A.A. Semenov, Material’nye pamiatniki iranskoi kul’tury v Srednei Azii (Stalinabad, 1945).
Secretary of the Tajik Communist Party Branch, who two years later himself provided a Tajik interpretation of Central Asian history.\(^{429}\)

According to Semenov, all significant architectural monuments of Islamic Central Asia had been built by Arians. On the Tashkent meeting, all these claims of ‘Bartol’dist’s’ were strongly criticized by V.Iu. Zakhidov as manifestations of cosmopolitanism. Again, following Iakubovskii’s pattern, Zakhidov stated that the Uzbeks were the indigenous population of Central Asia and one of the most ancient peoples of the region. In his own words, “The cosmopolitan thesis of the Iranian character of Central Asian history, their neglect of the history of [the indigenous] Central Asian population, their tendency to disregard their culture and to attribute it to Iranians, Turks, and Arabs, their ignorance of the beneficial Russian influence and its progressive culture; Pan-Iranism, Pan-Turkism, and Pan-Islamism — all of these are very serious political dangers, because they mean an orientation on the feudal states of Iran, Turkey, and other countries whose governments sold their homelands to American and English imperialists and turned them into military bridgeheads against the Soviet Union.”\(^{430}\)

These were very heavy charges that could lead to serious consequences. Therefore both Bertel’s, whose position was discussed at the Institute of Oriental Studies in the same year of 1949,\(^ {431}\) and Semenov ‘confessed’ to their colleagues that they had committed such mistakes. Indeed, Bertel’s did not return to his ideas anymore. Semenov, on the contrary, said that he understood that he misinterpreted Central Asian history, but at the same time he brilliantly uncovered the incompetence of his opponents in concrete facts, such as the level of centralization in the Mongol states and the role of Khwāja Ḥārār in Ulughbek’s murder. Moreover, in his reply to Zakhidov, Aleksandr Semenov just replaced the words “Iranian” or “Persian” by other terms: “The art on the territory [of present-day] Uzbekistan and Tajikistan existed a long time before the Arab invasion. (...) Central Asian peoples

\(^{429}\) B.G. Gafurov, Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii (Dushanbe, 1949). There is nothing surprising in the fact that the recent English translation of Gafurov’s books was entitled as: B.G. Gafurov, Central Asia: Pre-Historic to Pre-Modern Times, 2 vols. (Kolkata, 2005), re-thinking the title of Gafurov’s opus magnum in a regional context.

\(^{430}\) O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii, 41. Cf.: A.O. Tamazishvili, “Posleslovie [k publikatsii doklada B.N. Zakhodera “E.E. Bertel’s”],” in Iranistika v Rossii i iranisty (Moscow, 2001), 185-186.

had their own scripts; especially the *Soghdian script* (italics is mine – A.B.) enjoyed wide circulation.”⁴³² Clear enough that his words “art” and “scripts” were meant to refer to the Iranian-speaking population. It is also important to mention here that Semenov referred to the opinion of “several of our scholars, such as Struve, Tolstov, Ptitsyn and others that Zoroastrianism, the epic of *Shāh-nāme*, and the Modern Persian language were created and [for the first time] appeared on the territory of Central Asia, and the Iranian people only adopted this culture [for Central Asia].”⁴³³ What he was doing here was putting the issue on its head — not Central Asia copied Iranian models, but Iran copied Central Asian culture. In this regard Semenov did not invent something new, he just repeated what Iakubovskii had stated shortly before, in 1950: “The peoples of Central Asia possess priority in the invention of the [so-called] ‘Iranian’ art, epic literature, architecture, and other aspects of cultural life.”⁴³⁴ This was an acceptable way of treating the role of Persian civilization in Central Asia. Such a claim was not regarded as nationalism, but rather as a patriotic point of view.

These debates did not find an echo in the Kazakh republic, even though in the meantime some scholars (for example, Alkei Kh. Margulan for his monograph on the Kazakh cities) were also punished for their ‘wrong perceptions of history’ and ‘nationalist approaches’. In the 1940s-50s nobody seriously discussed the role of Persian and Arabic civilization in Kazakh history, because scholars were more interested in the 14th-17th centuries when presumably the first Kazakh states were formed. The Islamic and Chinese sources, which formed the basis for any investigation, were helpful in studying that period.

In the same year of 1949 the second version of Pankratova’s Kazakh national historical narrative was published.⁴³⁵ Again, it was prepared by a collective of authors in close collaboration between specialists from Moscow, Leningrad and Alma-Ata. In the meantime an Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences had been established (1946). Since the very beginning it had close relations with

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⁴³² *O markistsko-leninskom osveshchenii*, 61-62.

⁴³³ Ibid., 82.


colleagues from Leningrad and Moscow. As mentioned above, Mikhail Viatkin visited the Institute in Alma-Ata several times and reviewed the work that had been done there. Personal and strong institutional ties played an important role in the renewed formulation of the main points of the 1943 book. Among the authors of the new edition were Mukhtar Auezov, Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, Aleksandr Bernshtam, Mikhail Viatkin, Nikolai Druzhinin and others. It is important to mention that the first volume, which dealt with prerevolutionary history, was produced in consultation with Aleksandr Iakubovskii. This fact set the tone of the whole treatment. The authors referred to the large experience of prerevolutionary Orientalists and to sources recently published by the Leningrad school, including Tizengauzen’s second volume of materials on the Golden Horde’s history and collections of sources on various republics, published in the 1930s. The entire book represented the history of the Kazakh SSR since times immemorial as a place of interaction between Turkic and Mongol tribes, with the latter gradually being assimilated by the Turkic ethnic component. Bartol’d was shown as a scholar who overestimated the role and influence of Persian culture in Central Asia and in particularly on the territory of the future Kazakh republic. In response to their previous ideological mistakes, the authors acknowledged in the second edition that in the first edition they overstressed the significance and importance of the Khans as rulers of centralized Kazakh states that emerged and developed in the 15th-18th centuries. The level of centralization of the local statehood was now depicted as considerably low, because this was crucial for justifying Russian colonization; Russian conquest was the force that ultimately united the dispersed Kazakh tribes and brought them the light of a better life.

The first volume of the 1949 edition begins with the Upper Paleolithic era, to which were attributed the first steps of humankind on the future Kazakh territory. The formation of the nomadic life-style was traced back to the society known as the Andronovo archeological culture (Rus., andronovskaiia kul’tura) of the 14th-9th centuries BC. Since that time nomadism had been a key feature of tribes in the region that “formed the core of the Kazakh people.” However, it was claimed all the time that since ancient times some

436 Ibid., vol. 1, 16.
437 Ibid., 30.
438 Ibid., 49. This was a clear contradiction to Viatkin’s thesis that the Andronovo archeological culture was an agricultural one (M. Viatkin, Ocherki po istorii, 25).
groups, especially in South Kazakhstan, practiced agriculture. No explanation was given for this special way of development of this region and its relation to the more southern lands, Transoxania. Indeed, even though there were clear references to the nomadic past of the Kazakhs and their predecessors, almost the whole historical narrative that followed in the book concentrated on the settled regions of Sir Darya and of Semirech’e. These lands were better known from the published sources and from systematic Soviet archeological investigations that had just started.

Even though Bartol’d was blamed for his Pan-Iranism, the authors repeated their statement that it were Iranian-speaking Soghdians who were at the core of economic life of the Turkic Kaganate (again, on the southern territories). The Qarakhanid State (10\(^{th}\)-13\(^{th}\) c.) in Semirech’e was claimed to be the first state of feudal type in the region. The ruling dynasty originated from a Turkic tribe and accepted Islam early. The authors’ evaluation of Islam remained the same: it “spread only among the elite of southern Kazakhstan, while central and northern Kazakhstan were beyond Islamic influence.” This means that the south-north binary opposition was kept in the second edition. Al-Fārābī, Yūsuf Balāsaghūnī, Maḥmūd Qāshgharī, and Aḥmad Yasawī were counted among the cultural symbols that were tied to the Kazakh history, and again all of them came from the south. As a result, Northern Kazakhstan appears as a blank spot. Curiously enough, the authors distinguished between two dimensions in Sufism, namely those Sufis who served only the aristocracy and those who shared the fate of the oppressed masses. According to the Soviet analysis of the Diwān-i Hikmat, a collection of Turkic verses ascribed to Aḥmad Yasawī by Soviet scholarship, Aḥmad Yasawī belonged to the latter group of Sufis and therefore could be celebrated as part of Kazakh history.


440 Arienne Dwyer regards the competition of the Soviet nations for cultural symbols as “overlapping identities”; “for example, the Uzbeks, Uyghurs, and Kyrgyz all claim Maḥmūd al-Kāshgharī, the well-known 11\(^{th}\) century scholar, as their own.” In the 1980s there were a number of Uighur translations of works by Yūsuf Balāsaghūnī and Maḥmūd Qāshgharī. See: A.M. Dwyer, The Xinjiang Conflict: Uyghur Identity, Language Policy, and Political Discourse (Washington, 2005), 30, 46-47.


442 Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR (Alma-Ata, 1949), 81.
The invasion of the ‘barbarian’ Mongol tribes in the early 13th century was regarded as a mere disaster. They destroyed many cities of Central Asia and Kazakhstan, including those along the river of Sir Darya. The denial of any positive effect of Central Asia’s inclusion into the Mongol Empire became a dogma and shaped all Soviet studies on the topic: “The sudden reduction of agricultural and settled civilization and the spread of nomadism were the main economical consequences of the Mongol conquest. The Mongol yoke [sic!] was harmful for the economies of Kazakhstan and terminated its historical progress. For a long time the processes of Kazakh ethnogenesis and formation of statehood ceased. The Tatar-Mongols brought to Central Asia and Kazakhstan nothing but destruction and oppression.” These claims were supported by reports from written sources about the conquest and by similar opinions expressed by some Soviet scholars, including Boris Grekov with regard to the Mongol campaigns against Russian lands. On the one hand this dogma reflected the limited amount of research done at that time (for example, numismatic materials were not used at all), but, on the other, it reflected the general aim to show the advantage of the settled way of life over nomadic societies. Cattle-breeders, according to the official historical narrative, caused danger to their neighbors, did not have any written history, and their states were characterized by pre-feudal unstable formations. Needless to say, the use of the terms “Mongol yoke” and “Tatar-Mongols” (which does not make sense for Central Asia at all) are clearly derived from nineteenth century Russian views of the Mongol period.

Of special interest was the question how the name of a Khan of the Golden Horde, Uzbek (1283-1341), was turned into the name of a people. First his name was given to the political entity which existed in the Kazakh steppes in the 15th century. In full agreement with Iakubovskii’s concept of ethnogenesis, the authors of the Kazakh national history claimed that the Uzbek Khanate was not named after any nationality which inhabited it, but rather after the name of the 14th century ruler. Moreover it was postulated that the

443 Ibid., 95.

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Uzbeks as a nationality emerged not in Uzbekistan but in what was is now Kazakhstan, and that the Kazakhs emerged on lands with nomadic economies.\textsuperscript{446} 

Another topic is related to Uzbek Khan’s ambition to make Islam the “official religion” in the Golden Horde which supposedly happened in 1320.\textsuperscript{447} As in all other cases when talking about the history of Islam, it was mentioned that the Islamic religion spread slowly, and only among the highest ranks of the aristocracy. In present-day Kazakhstan the spread of Islam was limited to the southern regions. Islam spread due to the activity of merchants and to military efforts by rulers. These claims showed the tendency to neglect Islam as a serious socioeconomic force — not only in the past, but also in contemporary Soviet society. The remnants of the feudal past, such as the nomadic way of life and the Islamic religion, symbolized the backwardness against which the Soviet regime fought so obstinately.\textsuperscript{448} Very symptomatic is the following quote from the 1949 History: “As the Kazakhs were less bound to the religious rules of Islam, they were freer to express their talents in poetry, music, and arts.”\textsuperscript{449} 

One might expect that as the southern regions were better known from Oriental written sources and were well-developed, then Kazakh statehood and nationhood should have appeared there. Yet instead, the authors claimed that it were the central and western regions of Kazakhstan with their Qipchaq populations that became the birthplace of Kazakh identity. This is surprising, because the Qipchaq tribes were characterized in the book as


\textsuperscript{449} Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR (Alma-Ata, 1949), 158.
those without cities and written culture.\textsuperscript{450} The Qipchaqs’ historical memory was represented as nothing but folklore.

When describing the separation of the first Kazakh Khans Janibek and Giray from the rule of Uzbek Khan Abul-Khayr, and their emigration from the Dasht-i Qipchāq to Eastern Turkestan in the 1450s, the authors of the Kazakh history did not claim that the emigrating population formed the first Kazakh state, but rather that the trek was only an important step towards the later formation of a united Kazakh state in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{451} This artificial delay aimed to attack the opinion that the strong Kazakh state appeared as early as in the 15\textsuperscript{th} century and that this ‘emigration’ (otkochevka) is a sign of state-building. Just like in the first edition of the History of the Kazakh SSR, it is not clear which particular authors were responsible for these statements.

The appearance of the Kazakh nationality was referred to the following 16\textsuperscript{th} century and “not earlier”, because it was in the early 1500s that the Uzbeks of Shaybāni Khān conquered cities of Transoxania and moved from Kazakhstan in southern direction. It was only in the 16\textsuperscript{th} century, in this conception, that a clear economical distinction between Kazakh nomads and Uzbek farmers (more precisely – settling nomads) crystallized. This turned out to be almost a colonial narrative, since the authors claimed that the ‘peculiar’ form of Kazakh society lay in the absence of cities and in illiteracy, and in a low level of economic development and in nomadism. In fact, the authors of the book just repeated what had been suggested by M. Morozov in his review on the first version of the History: “In the 15\textsuperscript{th}-18\textsuperscript{th} centuries there were only the basic forms of Kazakh statehood. (...) Nomadic life style supported the remnants of the patriarchal system, broke the feudal development, and caused the relatively slow progress among the Kazakhs.”\textsuperscript{452} This had been written against the 1943 edition, and probably in particular against archeologist Aleksandr Bernshtam\textsuperscript{453} who emphasized the existence of medieval city civilization on the territory of the Kazakh SSR. During the campaign against cosmopolitism in the early 1950s the topic itself became an issue for repression against those Kazakhstani scholars who agreed with Bernshtam’s

\begin{footnotesize}
\begin{enumerate}
\item \textsuperscript{450} Ibid., 104-105.
\item \textsuperscript{451} Ibid., 111.
\item \textsuperscript{452} M. Morozov, “Ob istorii Kazakhskoi SSR,” 31.
\item \textsuperscript{453} Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei (Alma-Ata, 1943), 61.
\end{enumerate}
\end{footnotesize}
views, as we will see in the last chapter. The pathos of this tendency is clear: destiny had it that it was the Russians who brought the Kazakhs from the darkness of their nomadic past to the light of socialist modernization. Therefore the Russian presence in the Kazakh steppe was more than justified.

In conclusion, the second edition of the Kazakh national history was a complete rejection of the first edition, and a return to and strengthening of the nomadic concept, which represented the Kazakhs as a backward people in need of foreign help for further development. According to this narrative, there was almost nothing in the Kazakh medieval history that could be useful in the future. The authors of the first edition were not purged: they just changed their minds and rewrote the historical narrative in a way suitable to the state. This situation (just like Asfendiiarov’s radical change of opinion in 1935) demonstrates that the political discourse was quite fluid, depending on the current political circumstances. The 1943 edition had been relatively ‘free’, because Pankratova was confident in her strong position within the Soviet historical science and relied on possible Party support. As a result, a second, very conservative version of the Kazakh history had to be produced riding the wave of Russian patriotism in the late Stalin time. However, as Lowell Tillett observed, “the 1949 history of the Kazakhs, like its predecessor of 1943, had the ill fortune to appear on the eve of a shift in the party line. In a few months it joined the growing number of ‘un-books’. So complete was its liquidation that, although 25,000 copies of it were published, not a single one appears to have reached a Western library.”

2.9. The 1954 Tashkent Conference: Freezing of the Dogma?

After Stalin’s death, debates around the national histories of Central Asian republics did not stop. These active discussions made it necessary to organize a conference where all problematic issues should be solved once and forever. As usual, the initiative for convening such a conference was ascribed to the Academies of Sciences of the Kazakh and Kirgiz republics. Most probably, this centralized enterprise was initiated by Party officials and then handed on to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR; the organizational committee of the conference worked in Moscow and included many famous Orientalists, such as S.P. Tolstov, E.E. Bertel’s, I.P. Petrushevskii, I.S. Braginskii, and A.A. Se-

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454 L. Tillett, The Great Friendship, 122.
menov (almost all of them being Iranists). The “United Scientific Conference Devoted to the History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in the Pre-October Period” was held in Tashkent between 30 January and 6 February 1954.

At this point we should remember the role of Tashkent in the cultural life of Central Asians, and of the Kazakhs in particular. As we have already seen above, in the 1920s the Kazakhs had made a strong claim on Tashkent, and regarded the city the key centre of Kazakh culture, as a ‘Kazakh Samarkand’. As Tashkent was eventually attached to the Uzbek SSR, it was Alma-Ata that became the main modern city of the Kazakhs in their republic. Significantly, during the war years Alma-Ata and Tashkent were regarded as the most preferable places for spending the evacuation time, because both were highly Russified and already equipped with some cultural infrastructure. Still, for the Soviet government Tashkent was the main city of Central Asia, which represented the Soviet modernization project for Asian countries. With this goal in mind, the Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies was set up in Tashkent in 1943. It was the only specialized academic institution of Orientology for the whole region; no wonder then that it was Tashkent, the cradle of Russian Turkestan studies (turkestanovedenie), where the most significant conferences on Central Asian history took place. Tashkent also hosted the Central Asian University (SAGU) with its strong expertise in the history, archeology and architecture of the region. After WWII Tashkent was portrayed as a national capital with a strong international flavor. Tashkent was also an important educational centre for the Kazakh students, especially for those who wanted to study Oriental languages (Arabic and Persian) as well as archeology. Yet in 1960 the Central Asian University was renamed as Tashkent University; this reflected the fact that Tashkent had gradually lost its regional significance.

The 1954 conference in Tashkent is an example of how Moscow installed scientific dogmas on Central Asian scholarly communities. Representatives of ‘Muslim’ Soviet republics took part in the conference, namely scholars from the Academies of Sciences of the Uzbek, Kazakh, Tajik, and Turkmen SSR, as well as from the Kirgiz Branch of the Soviet

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455 RGANI, F. 5, Obshchii otdel Tsentral’nogo komiteta KPSS, Op. 17, D. 427, ff. 58-61. I would like to express my gratitude to Artemy Kalinovsky (Universiteit van Amsterdam) who provided me with copies of these archival documents.

456 A. Haugen, The Establishment of National Republics, 195. Haugen does not mention who is quoted here, referring just to the Kazakh side in the debates.

457 P. Stronski, Tashkent: Forging a Soviet City, 1930-1966 (University of Pittsburgh Press, 2010), 95.
The Tashkent conference united specialists of various sciences, such as history, economics, and philosophy, from central and local scientific institutions. Three main problems were in the focus of the conference: 1) the character of socio-economic relations of nomadic peoples; 2) the formation of bourgeois nations of Central Asia; 3) the character of the 1916 rebellion; 4) the periodization of Central Asian history. In the following I will only discuss questions one and four. The conference rejected the ‘bourgeois-nationalist theory’ of classless tribal organization of nomads (probably, targeting Asfendiiarov) and evaluated their socio-economical structure as feudal, thus as having a class structure, since the 6th century. Moreover, it was underlined that there is no special way of nomadic societies, they had been developing according to the same rules as other peoples, including settled civilizations: feudalism in the Orient as well as in the West was based on the possession of land, not of cattle. Iranist Iosif S. Braginskii formulated the only ‘correct’ conception of the succession of formations in Central Asia: until the sixth century BC there was a slave system, which was then replaced by the feudal formation until the October revolution. Unfortunately, the available documentation on the conference does not indicate who was particularly accused at the Tashkent conference. The proceedings of the conference contain only general trends that were marked as harmful.

After the Tashkent conference the discussion became even more ideological and followed the strict rules that had been formulated at the conference. It had to be accepted that in the medieval Central Asian societies there were “patriarchic-feudal” economic relations (patriarkhal’no-feodal’nye otnosheniia), and not a clan system (rodovoi stroi). As the piatchlenka had rodovoi stroi as the more primitive formation, the emphasis on feudal relations meant an upgrading of Central Asia on Marx’s ‘ladder of human progress.’ The opposite view was represented only by the two scholars Viktor Shakhmatov and Sergali Tolybekov, who were working at the time at the Alma-Ata Institute of History. In their

458 Materialy ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana v dooktiabr’skii period (Tashkent, 1955); Reshenie ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana v dooktiabr’skii period (Tashkent, 1954).

459 For the study of other issues refer to: L. Tillett, The Great Friendship, 185-193.

460 Reshenie ob’edinennoi sessii, posviashchennoi istorii Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana, 4-5.

461 Ibid., 10.
statements at the discussion of the *History of the Kazakh SSR* they considered the socio-economic relations in medieval nomadic societies as early feudal or as transitional from a primitive communal system to feudal relations.\textsuperscript{462} In 1955 during a discussion of the commission of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, historian Tolybekov\textsuperscript{463} tried to defend his position by claiming that the Tashkent conference was conducted in an atmosphere of ideological pressure on so-called ‘dissidents’. Tolybekov, who was previously attacked as a ‘dissident’, complained that the colleagues at the Tashkent conference criticized his opinion by using political categories such as “anti-Marxist” and “anti-Leninist”. He was even blamed for supporting the concept of the Asiatic Mode of Production which had allegedly been elaborated by Trotskyites i.e., by counterrevolutionary thinkers. In the 1930s such criticism was more than enough for execution or at least for exile. And while after Stalin’s death such “dissidents” could express their opinion, they were still attacked by their more ‘orthodox’ Marxist colleagues.

Tolybekov underlined that in previous years (i.e. in Stalin’s time) the discussion was biased. Only one point of view was accepted, and adherents of opposite opinions were treated as non-Communists. In his conception of Central Asian history Tolybekov referred to the role of the geographical factor for the nomadic lifestyle in Kazakhstan. He distinguished three zones of nomadic economies in the Kazakh steppes: northern Kazakhstan with its settled cattle breeding, southern Kazakhstan with its semi-nomadic economies, and finally central Kazakhstan (in Tolybekov’s mind about 70-75% of the whole country) with its archaic fully nomadic civilization. Tolybekov believed that the latter area was intensively destroyed during the forced collectivization in the early 1930s.\textsuperscript{464} For this group of the Kazakh population it was impossible to switch from a nomadic economy to agriculture because of geographical and economical reasons.\textsuperscript{465} Tolybekov, at least from what we see in the protocols, was very careful in his statements and did not elaborate them, maintaining that it was a mistake to change traditional way of life in Central Kazakhstan.


\textsuperscript{463} Sergali E. Tolybekov (1907-1995) was an economist; he headed Institute of economics of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR between 1952 and 1963. Tolybekov was highly interested in socio-economic history of the Kazakh people and wrote a number of monographs in this field.

\textsuperscript{464} Ibid., f. 134.

\textsuperscript{465} Ibid., ff. 132-137.
The periodization of Kazakh history was also framed according to the general rules of Soviet historiography. There were no attempts to subdivide Kazakh histories according to the various ruling dynasties, simply because all Kazakh Khans belonged to the Chingizids, particularly to the descendants of Tukāy Timūr, the thirteenth son of Juchi, the son of Chingiz Khan. It was maintained by the conference organizers that Uzbek scholars were wrong when they divided Uzbek history into Chingizid, Timurid, Sheibanid and other dynastical periods. Also, Kazakh scholarship agreed to divide the history into one period before and one after the Russian invasion, with the watershed in the 1860s.

As we see, the discussions around Kazakh national history circulated mainly around certain theoretical positions among which the character of socioeconomic relations and the role of the Russian invasion remained the most disputed. The political context of these debates was clearly understood by the participants; however, some of them continued to struggle for their own views against the mainstream. The border-line dividing ‘dissidents’ from ‘orthodox’ did not correspond with such denominations as center vs. periphery or Russian vs. Kazakh scholars. The picture was much more complex.

In 1957 a post-Stalin version of Kazakh national history was published, again with Pankratova as chief editor. Curiously, in many respects this edition was a return to the concepts first expressed in the History of the Kazakh SSR of 1943. The reason was that in the situation of de-Stalinization it was possible to go back to previously banned opinions. Also archeologists played an important role in the writing of this book. Among them were E.I. Ageeva, A.Kh. Margulan and B.G. Erzakovich. All of these authors worked at the Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography; they tended to draw a more balanced picture, pointing out that “the process of feudalization passed differently in various regions: while in Semirech’e and South Kazakhstan it was stronger (along the rivers of Chu, Talas, and Sir Darya agriculture was developed, new cities appeared, even though


467 Scholars from the Turkmen SSR similarly opposed decisions of the 1954 Tashkent Conference. For example, A.A. Rosliakov and A. Karryev maintained their position of a critical evaluation of Tsarist colonization of Central Asia. L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 241-249.

468 *Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR*, 2 vols., ed. by A.M. Pankratova (Alma-Ata, 1957). Tillett suggested that most probably this third version of the History was ready at the eve of Stalin’s death, and that after a discussion it was completely rewritten. See: L. Tillett, *The Great Friendship*, 236.

469 Their detailed biographies see in the fourth chapter.
The local population of southern Kazakhstan was constantly represented in the monograph as Turkic-speaking. Iranian groups, such as the Soghdians, were regarded either as ‘colonizers’ or as refugees. In other words, the line of cities along the Middle-Sir Darya River, regularly destroyed by foreign nomadic attacks (Arab and Mongol), was attributed to the local Turkic population. What is also peculiar to mention is that even though there were no specialists in Oriental numismatics in the Kazakh republic, the authors of the book regularly referred to the coins issued by various dynasties and rulers, to demonstrate the active socio-economic process and to elucidate the history also of regions which were absent on the pages of medieval historical narratives.

It seems that the 1957 edition of the History of the Kazakh SSR was the first of this kind to come up with what was to become a long-lasting myth, namely that of the so-called ‘Otrar catastrophe.’ In details this point will be analyzed in the fourth chapter, here I would like to mention only that Soviet historians tended to believe firmly in the narratives about the total destruction of the city of Otrar by the Mongols in 1219. This story was mainly based on the famous account in Juwaynī’s Ta’rīkh-i Jihāngūshāy; in Soviet accounts it turned into the “heroic struggle of the masses of Kazakhstan and Central Asia against the Mongol conquerors.”

The concrete origins of this interpretation are unclear, especially when the authors claimed that the Mongols destroyed “many great cultural monuments, such as an Otrar library regarded as the second in the world according to the quantity and quality of books preserved there.” The opposition of nomadic barbarians against civili-

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470 Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR, vol. 1, 55-56.

471 Ibid., 60-61.

472 Ibid., 115. Much later, doubts on the catastrophic character of the 1219 campaign were first expressed by Vladimir N. Nastich, who analyzed written, numismatic, and archeological sources which contradict the generally accepted conception. See: V.N. Nastich, “K periodizatsii monetnoi chekanki Otrara i ee roli v denezhnom khoziaistve goroda i oblasti,” in: Blizhnii i Srednii Vostok: Tovarno-denezhnye otnosheniia pri feodalizme (Moscow, 1980), 162-171.

zation was again expressed in the monstrous acts of Mongols who allegedly killed thousands of people, destroyed settled civilization and the whole regional economy.\footnote{Also Western miniatures from the 13\textsuperscript{th}-14\textsuperscript{th} centuries represented ‘Tartars’ and ‘Moghuls’ as barbaric people who eat human flesh. See: A. Martyniouk, \textit{Die Mongolen im Bild. Orientalische, westeuropäische und russische Bildquellen zur Geschichte des Mongolischen Weltreiches und seiner Nachfolgestaaten im 13.-16. Jahrhundert} (Hamburg, 2002). These images had a long-lasting impact on Russia and European Orientalism.} Again, the Mongol invasion was claimed to be the only reason why since that time it was the fate of the Kazakh people to be nomadic. Curiously, in the same token Tīmūr, a big city builder, was also disliked in the book because of his savage treatment of enemies. Probably this negative appraisal resulted from the fact that Tīmūr was also a conqueror who originated from a nomadic tribe, the Barlas. On the contrary, the Uzbek treatment of Tīmūr, as first drawn by Iakubovskii, was more balanced and regarded him as a contradictory figure.\footnote{A.Iu. Iakubovskii, “Timur. Opyt kratkoi kharakteristiki,” in: \textit{Voprosy Istorii} 8-9 (1946), 42-74. This same account was repeated in many Uzbek national histories: \textit{Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR}, vol. 1, \textit{kniga pervaiia} (Tashkent, 1955), 313-364; \textit{Istoriia Uzbekskoi SSR}, vol. 1 (Tashkent, 1967), 435-460.} Generally speaking, the 1957 edition was a success, though no central journals reviewed it,\footnote{L. Tillett, \textit{The Great Friendship}, 237.} which probably was a sign that Moscow ideologists began to be less concerned with the content of national histories.

To sum up, what we observe over the 1940s is that the big projects of writing republican histories had a specific purpose: to identify and define, in the light of the frequently changing Party line, what needed to be accepted as the correct view on the crucial stages and events of Kazakh national history. The constant re-writing of Kazakh history in the 1940s and 1950s is therefore a clear reflection of the general trends in Soviet politics, and especially of the late Stalin years as well as during De-Stalinization.

The republican histories were all addressing large audiences, and were to popularize the view that had been agreed upon by the Party and the Academy of Sciences (and its sub-organizations) at a specific time. These general postulates would then be used and refined in articles and monographs on more specific questions.

Given this purpose of ‘cementing’ a dogma in a popular history book, it is stunning to see that the general line changed so often from Asfendiiarov’s account in 1935 and Viatkin’s book in 1941 to the first collective monograph on the Kazakh history in 1943, then to its corrected version in 1949, and finally to the more elaborated two-volume work of 1957. In view of these uncertainties, and of the dangers connected to political criticism
in periods of official campaigns against dissidents or “cosmopolitans”, scholars must have experienced a tremendous pressure from above to conform to the new dogmas, coupled with considerable insecurity as to how their work would be perceived.

Still, some of them (Shakhmatov, Semenov, and Tolybekov) managed to maintain a certain amount of agency, either by adjusting their perspectives only in form (and maintaining their own research agendas) or by defending themselves through a renunciation of their previous views, or by openly accusing the practices of their opponents, as for instance in the aftermath of the 1954 Tashkent Conference. The most striking case in point is Pankratova, who in spite of all criticism continued to be the driving force behind all Kazakh history editions between 1943 and 1957. She also appears to have been one of the few scholars who survived accusations without a serious loss of her authority as a scholar and science manager; this was due to her central position in the Moscow Institute of History and her function as editor of its journal *Voprosy istorii*. Probably her personal network, strong adherence to Marxist ideas, and ability to follow the Party line were the main pillars that saved her from repressions. Another example is a career of Aleksandr Semenov who, after the harsh criticism in Tashkent, moved to Dushanbe and perfectly fit into the system there.

Finally, the period of the 1940s also witnesses the emergence of a native Kazakh school of historians, institutionalized in the new Institute of History of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. The 1957 volume, although still edited by Pankratova, is therefore also a step in the process of building up a native Kazakh school, a process which culminated in the 1970s in the publication of a voluminous new version of the republican history (see below). To be sure, the school of Kazakh historians was guided and directed by the Center, but its work was carried out at home. It is this slow transfer of activity from Moscow/Leningrad to Alma-Ata which one can also observe in classical Oriental Studies and in archeology. This transfer made it possible to give a more nuanced view of the development of socioeconomic formations, especially with regard to the various local specificities on the enormous territory of Kazakhstan.
2.10. The Rehabilitation of ‘Bourgeois’ Orientalists: Bartol’d Re-Emerging in the 1950s-70s

The years after Stalin’s death and the 20th Congress of the Communist Party (1956) have been defined by M. Kemper as the time of an expansion of Soviet Oriental studies.\textsuperscript{477} This process was evident in the creation of new departments and research institutes mainly dealing with the study of ‘Oriental’ manuscripts. The government understood the importance of classical Orientology along with the study of the modern Orient, the latter being conducted mainly in Moscow. Perhaps not the least role in this turn towards the rebirth of classical topics belonged to Iosif A. Orbeli (1887-1961), Director of the State Hermitage (1934-51), Dean of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University (1955-60) and Director of the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (1956-61). In October 1954 he wrote a petition to the Academy of Sciences of the USSR arguing for the necessity to revive classical philological Orientology. At the same time he pointed out that also the investigation of the modern Orient was an organic part of the interests of Leningrad school of Oriental studies.\textsuperscript{478} According to Orbeli, “the progressive position [of Russia’s Oriental studies] was conditioned by the humanistic character of Russian science [in general], by the close ties between the best representatives of Russian Orientology and many Russian enlighteners who were in the vanguard of the Russian intelligentsia in the second half of the 19th century.”\textsuperscript{479} After Stalin’s death Orbeli dared to say that it was a mistake to carry out such a powerful reorganization of the biggest center of Soviet Oriental Studies, the Institute of Oriental Studies, when persons in charge “wrongly understood and interpreted” the orders of the government to strengthen studies of the new and modern Orient and thereby abolished the study of the Ancient Orient, resulting in the removal of very useful and promising scientific crafts from the Institute of Oriental Studies. As the main message of his letter Orbeli highly recommended to revive philological Oriental studies. His call was heard, and already in 1955-56 Orbeli became the leader of Leningrad Orientology: as a Dean of the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University (since 1955) and Director of the


\textsuperscript{479} Ibid.
Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies as well as Director of the State Hermitage, Academician Orbeli tried to guarantee the continuity with the prerevolutionary traditions of Russian Oriental Studies.480

A young generation of scholars was recruited in the Leningrad institutions headed by Orbeli. They were ordered to conduct several large Oriental projects, in the form of long-term programs. For the elderly generation who worked in the 1930s-40s there had been three main programs, namely the edition of sources, archeological investigations, and, on the basis of source editions and archeological evidences, the compilation of national histories. The generation of the 1950s and 1960s continued the previous archeological studies and was also engaged in the decades-long work of manuscript description. Yet they also embarked upon the edition of catalogues and started to re-edit the classics of Russian Orientology. Peculiar to mention that both of these new directions, i.e. the cataloguing of manuscripts and the rehabilitation of Orientalists, were started and largely completed under the directorship of Bobodzhan Gafurov (1908-1977) who actively supported these projects.481 Gafurov had been First Secretary of the Communist Party of Tajikistan (1946-56), and then, between 1956 and 1977, headed the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences in Moscow. In what follows I will discuss the rehabilitation of ‘bourgeois’ Orientalists since the late 1950s, especially through the multivolume editions of the full or selected writings of four early Soviet Orientalists, namely Arabist Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii (1883-1951), scholar of Central Asian studies Vasili V. Bartol’d (1860-1930), Turkologist Vladimir A. Gordlevskii (1876-1956), and Iranist Evgenii E. Bertel’s (1890-1957).482 Their extensive oeuvre was partly devoted to Islamology. As classical Islamic Studies had not

480 Ibid., 94-95, 97. See also: Iu.A. Petrosian, Vstrechi i rasstavaniia: zapiski vostokoveda (St. Petersburg, 2002), 28-50.

481 Iu.A. Petrosian, Vstrechi i rasstavaniia, 36.

been continued as such in the USSR, textological Islamic studies were accessible to the reading audience only through the works of scientists who had already passed away before 1957.

The central figure in the re-edition program was Vasili Bartol’d (1869-1930) whose in-depth study of Central Asian Islamic history had provided the solid ground for most of what came after him, and who also had brought to light many Arabic-script sources from European, Ottoman and Central Asian archives. Bartol’d’s academic authority in scientific circles had always been enormous, and had always been acknowledged as such. Bartol’d’s figure even grew after his death for anyone studying Central Asian history. Though there are many topics where modern scholarship went further and corrected his statements, Bartol’d’s works remain a handbook for Orientalists. After Bartol’d died in 1930 his heritage began a separate life. Bartol’d’s name became the incarnation of the regional (i.e., non-national) approach to the history of Central Asia, as well as the personification of a whole epoch in the history of Russian Oriental studies.

Paradoxically, Bartol’d’s writings had proven to be groundbreaking not only for studying Central Asia as a historic-cultural region, but also for the establishment of the national style of historiography. In this respect one might refer to one of his first works devoted to the area that was later transformed into a part of the Kazakh republic. This work was called A Sketch of the History of Semirech’e (first publication: Vernyi, 1898). Even though this monograph did not have any references to the individual modern nations (Kazakhs or Kirgiz), Valerii A. Romodin, editor of the first part of the second volume of Bartol’d’s Works (Moscow, 1963), evaluated this Sketch as the first step in the following line of Bartol’d’s monographs. In 1925, very soon after the national delimitation in Central Asia, the Academic Centre (Akademicheskii Tsentr) of the Kirgiz Autonomous Republic, which was a predecessor of the future Kirgiz Branch of the Soviet Academy of Sciences, asked Bartol’d to write a book on the history of the Kirgiz republic. This was published in Frunze in 1927. It was followed by two other sketches on the Tajik people (1925) and the Turkmens (1929). Bartol’d himself regarded these books as preliminary work that

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should encourage further in-depth studies. How Bartol’d worked on the national histories can be seen from his introduction to the *Sketch of the History of the Turkmen People*:

“This sketch, written in a short time, does of course not include the full range of information on the past of the Turkmen people. Such a goal would possibly require several generations of studies. My goal was [rather] to provide the cultural workers of Turkmenistan with a general report on the history of the Turkmens with which they were not familiar before, and which has not yet been put together because of the present state of affairs. I did not care much about the interpretation of facts in the fashion of modern historical science; this remains a task for the future. In my mind, any attempt of drawing up a historical picture on the basis of previously stated principles without the collection and critical analysis of facts will be utterly useless. My sketch [therefore] belongs to the field of preliminary works which have been absent so far. Without them it is impossible to solve serious scientific tasks. The future will show in how far it was successful.”

As we see, though Bartol’d wrote the history of a nation, he openly ignored Party lines, maintaining his own methodological approaches and rejecting ‘the fashion of modern historical science.’

There is clear evidence that Bartol’d’s huge experience in Central Asian studies was regarded as useful in the 1930s, when the Leningrad scientific institutions dealing with the Soviet Orient began with the production of national histories of Central Asian republics: first through the translation and publication of sources and then through compiling meta-histories for each republic. This double program was implemented in two ways: studying written sources (classical Oriental Studies, textual studies) and organizing large-scale archaeological investigations. Both directions were formulated already in Bartol’d’s works (even though he preferred libraries to field work). Thus, in 1938 Arabist Semen L. Volin (whose biography and work in the field of classical Orientology have been briefly discussed in the first chapter) came up with the idea of re-editing Bartol’d’s huge published and unpublished heritage, which was dispersed in archives and in various Russian and Western publications.

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485 V.V. Bartol’d, *Sochineniia*, vol. 2, part 1 (Moscow, 1963), 547.

486 RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, *Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem ‘Sobraniia sochinenii’ V.V. Bartol’dia*, l. 68.
The introduction of the first volume of Bartol’d’s *Sochineniia* (Works, 1963) maintains that Volin’s project did not succeed because of the war. This is, however, not correct; rather, Volin perished in a Siberian labor camp shortly after his arrest in July 1941. Another reason is that all of the Russian Orientalists were at the time busy with other projects. Such an initiative required serious attention as well as considerable financial support, at a time when other, ongoing projects already suffered from budgetary uncertainties.

Already in 1943, in Bishkek/ Frunze Aleksandr N. Bernshtam republished two works of Bartol’d on Kirgizia, namely *A Sketch of the History of Semirech’e* and *The Kirgiz: a Historical Survey*. This re-edition was meant for the use of historians in evacuation and local cadres. Encouraged by these publications, one of Bartol’d’s closest students and friends, Ignatii Iu. Krachkovskii, recommended the rehabilitation of Volin’s project. However, this idea was not accepted until Gafurov became Director of IVAN in 1956. Significantly, the first All-Union Conference of Orientalists, which was held in Tashkent in June 1957, suggested to the Soviet Academy of Sciences to start the edition of Bartol’d’s oeuvre as soon as possible, because the majority of his works was almost inaccessible for researchers. Therefore I assume that the whole campaign for editing the classics of late Imperial and early Soviet Orientalists was started in 1957, when the topic became one of the research directions of the Institute of Oriental Studies.

N.A. Mukhitdinov (Tashkent), First Secretary of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR (1955-57), stressed in his speech at the conference that “Soviet Orientology (…) went a long and difficult way. We have obtained a scientific heritage that should be used reasonably and critically. Russian Orientalists have contributed much to world science. (…) They have created basic works

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489 *Plan nauchno-issledovatel’skikh rabot Instituta vostokovedeniia na 1959-1965*, in: RGANI, F. 5, *Obshchii otdel Tsentral’nogo komiteta KPSS*, Op. 35, D. 118, ff. 97-98. In addition to the works of the Orientalists mentioned above also the comprehensive dictionary of Turkic languages by Vasilii V. Radlov (1837-1918) was republished in Moscow in 1963. First publication: V.V. Radloff, *Versuch eines Wörterbuches der Türk-Dialekte*, 4 vols. (St. Petersburg, 1893-1911). Interestingly, the European reproduction of the dictionary was published three years earlier in The Hague. For the first time this project had been proposed by Aleksandr Samoilovich as an all-European enterprise in the late 1920s, even though he knew that his colleagues in Europe did not particularly like Radlov. See: A.N. Samoilovich, “Pereizdanie ‘Opyta slovaria tiurkskikh narechii’ V.V. Radlova,” in: *Izvestiia Akademii Nauk SSSR*, seria 6, 1927, No. 18. In 1960 another famous dictionary of the Chaghatay language was also reproduced in facsimile in Moscow: L.Z. Budagov, *Sravnitel’nyi slovar’ turetsko-tatarskikh narechii*. 2 vols. (St Petersburg, 1869).
which sometimes opened up new fields of Orientology. These works influenced not only Russian but also foreign Orientalists. The Soviet Orientalists, in full awareness of the Marxist-Leninist theory, should creatively use all the best from the heritage of Russian and foreign scholars.490 The final decision to publish Bartol’d’s work was made by the Branch of Historical Sciences of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in June 1960. All organizational and financial issues were delivered to the Institute of Oriental Studies, with Gafurov and Orbeli in charge of the organization.491

First of all, why did Soviet scholarship turn towards the heritage of those Orientalists who had maintained a ‘bourgeois’ worldview in the 1920s-40s? Just a few years earlier they had been heavily criticized by ideologically engaged colleagues and blamed for their lack of Marxist methodology. However, the all-Union expansion and revival of academic Oriental studies, based on textology and in-depth knowledge of languages and academic instruments, was in heavy need of the previous experience, however nonorthodox it might have been. Responding to my question ethnologist Sergei N. Abashin summarized the reasons for this return to Bartol’d as follows. First, Bartol’d had died before the peak of the political repressions, and was himself no victim of incrimination; this made his ‘rehabilitation’ easy. Second, Bartol’d was a teacher of a huge number of Orientalists who exactly in the 1950s rose to positions of importance and decision-making. Third, the 1950s was the time of ‘rehabilitations’, which meant that ideological prescriptions turned to be less strong and rather vague. According to Abashin, multiple elements came together and allowed the re-emergence of Bartol’d.492

The present-day Director of the State Hermitage Mikhail B. Piotrovskii (b. 1944), when asked about the reasons for the rehabilitation of Orientalists, suggested the following: “First of all, the new generation of scholars came after WWII, when the Oriental faculty of Leningrad State University and the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies received a new life. This generation needed to know the research that had been

490 N.A. Mukhitdinov, K novym uspekham sovetskogo vostokovedeniia (Rech’ na pervoi Vsesoiuznoi konferentsiil vostokovedov 11 iunia 1957 g. v Tashkente) (Tashkent, 1957), 24-25. In the memories Mukhitdinov claimed that the conference was his initiative: N. Mukhitdinov, Gody, provedennye v Kremle, vol. 1. O deiatel’nosti TsK KPSS i ego Politbiuro v 50-e gody (Tashkent, 1994), 308-311.

491 The text of the project see: RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem ‘Sobrannia sochinenii’ V.V. Bartol’da, f. 3.

492 Private letter from Sergei N. Abashin to the author, 2 October 2011.
done earlier. Second, [the edition program] provided a great and important work experience for those young Orientalists, because they were to write massive commentaries for these editions, to express the last word of modern science on them. Otherwise it would have been very difficult to publish addenda and corrigenda for classical works that were produced about forty-fifty years earlier. And the specialists who worked on the editions also gained good money for that. The appearance of these books was a great fortune for Soviet scholarship, because now each student can find anything he needs in those collected works, and they did not lose their actuality to this very day. (...) Gafurov played a certain role in this process. He was a very good manager, invented new projects and proved to the whole world how important Orientology was for human culture in a global understanding. His role in these projects was positive: he provided work opportunities for many colleagues.\(^{493}\) Even though Piotrovskii suggested here the contrary, according to archival sources, scholars at the meeting of the Branch of Historical Sciences of the USSR Academy of Sciences initially restricted the number and extent of academic commentaries, which should be minimal and “in no way could have a goal to express the last word of science on this or that question after Bartol’d’s works. The main goal [of commentaries] is to mention new literature on the topic.”\(^{494}\) Obviously the initiators of the project wanted to leave Bartol’d’s works as they were written by him, without any further development of his ideas, which could have become difficult. In fact, the whole establishment of Soviet Orientology participated in the project, and many Orientalists received the best part of their professional training when working on these huge projects. Among those who collaborated in the edition program are many who later obtained huge authority: Iranian studies scholars Il’ia P. Petrushevskii, Iurii E. Bregel’, Aleksandr M. Belenitskii, and Aleksandr N. Boldyrev; Arabists Anas B. Khalidov and Oleg G. Bol’shakov; and Turkologists Anna S. Tveritinova, Andrei N. Kononov, and Sergei G. Kliashtornyi.\(^{495}\)

Sergei G. Kliashtornyi, who edited the fifth volume of Bartol’d’s works, told me an interesting story about international collaboration during this edition work. Kliashtornyi

\(^{493}\) Interview with Mikhail B. Piotrovskii by Hanna Jansen and the author; Amsterdam Hermitage, 16 April 2011. I would like to express my gratitude to the administration of the Amsterdam Hermitage that made this meeting possible.

\(^{494}\) [See: RA NA IIMK, Razriad 2, Op. 6, № 82, Dokumenty, sviazannye s izdaniem ‘Sobraniia sochinenii’ V.V. Bartol’d, f. 8].

\(^{495}\) Ibid., f. 5.
knew that the only Russian original of Bartol’d’s *Twelve Lectures on the History of the Turkic Peoples* was kept as a typescript by Ahmed Zeki Velidi, the well-known Bashkir émigré politician and historian in Istanbul. Kliashtornyи wrote him a letter asking to provide him with a copy. Another letter was written by Academician Iosif Orbeli to a certain V.A. Matveev, the Head of the Near and Middle East Sector of the Union of Soviet Societies of Friendship and Cultural Cooperation with Foreign Countries, asking to obtain a copy through the General Consulate of the USSR in Istanbul.496 This copy was finally brought to Leningrad from Istanbul by Andrei N. Kononov, the head of the Turkological Sector of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies, where Kliashtornyи was working. Accordingly, the redaction committee acknowledged Velidi in the introduction to the volume.497 This fact raised protests from Bashkir party officials. However, nobody paid special attention to their concerns.498

One should also mention that rehabilitation was rather selective. Of course, those were the greatest names, each of them representing a certain field in Oriental Studies. A vast range of works written by other scholars of various fields was not carried over to the new epoch. Among these are, for example, the ground-breaking monographs of the prominent Turkologist Vladimir V. Vel’iaminov-Zernov (1830-1904), of Arabist Aleksandr E. Shmidt (1871-1939) and many others; their publications were not re-edited and remained a bibliographical rarity.

One other interesting point here is that all these Orientalists had dealt, at some point, with the history of Islam and Sufism: the sixth volume of Bartol’d’s collection of works (1966, ed. by Arabist Anas B. Khalidov) was called *Works on the History of Islam and the Arabic Caliphate*, while the third volume of Bertel’s works was devoted to Sufism and Sufi culture (1965, ed. by specialists of Iranian studies Aleksandr N. Boldyrev and Mukhammad-Nuri O. Osmanov). Accordingly, classical Islamology as the investigation of Islamic history was kept alive. True, the study of the modern situation in the Muslim East

496 Ibid., f. 18.

497 V.V. Bartol’d, *Sochineniia*, vol. 5 (Moscow, 1968), 16.

was clearly not adequately continued before 1980, but academic Islamology was maintained in the form of the re-edition and research of textual studies by earlier Orientalists.

The next question is why these Orientalists were rehabilitated in spite of their allegedly ‘cosmopolitan’ views on Oriental cultures and their common rejection of the national character of the Islamic past. This still remains an open question, though we can only assume that the necessity of ‘objective’ knowledge for the new generation of scholars was of greater importance than their rejection of the national approach. However, as is evident from interviews, the edition of these volumes heavily influenced the new generation’s understanding of Central Asian history in a regional way. For example, Sergei G. Kliashtornyi proudly maintained that the Leningrad school of academic Orientology had always been adhering to the regional approach, rejecting national versions of history.

Bartol’d’s regional approach regained open prominence through the so-called ‘Bartol’d conferences’ (Bartol’dovskie chteniia), initiated by Boris A. Litvinskii’s wife, Elena A. Davidovich, in 1973. These regular conferences continued up to 1990 and aimed at the study of written sources of Central Asia from the perspective of scholars from local and central institutions, united by Bartol’d’s regional view. The re-edition of classical works, and simultaneously the publication of sources, were also started in a new series, Monuments of the Oriental Written Heritage. These new editions made significant contributions to the furnishing of Soviet Oriental studies libraries, which of course stimulated the further development of the field.

2.11. A Great Provocation? A Tentative Switch to the Regional Concept of History in the USSR

As we have seen in chapters one and two, the edition of sources in Oriental languages, archaeological investigations, and the projects of republican meta-histories had created since the 1930s very strong walls between previously interconnected populations. In fact, these

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500 Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtornyi by the author, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.
delimitations of the humanities appear ever stronger than geographical and political borders. Although the regional perspective continued to exist in limited form after WWII its voice was drowned by the new generation of scholars from the republics who used to operate within the frameworks of republican histories. The macro-regional approach was therefore limited to the center in Moscow and Leningrad — a curious observation given the widely-accepted assumption that it was the center that benefitted from the splitting-up of Central Asia into individual republics.

To be sure, state-supported work on the edition of sources and meta-histories deeply and very quickly affected scholarly perceptions. It was accepted that each republic has national symbols and a past of its own. Since the mid-1920s, the official Soviet policy of “affirmative action”, i.e. support of non-Russian ethnic groups, continued to contribute to the growth of national self-consciousness among the peoples of Central Asia after WWII. There are indications, however, that in the early 1970s it was the central government’s intention to manipulate or contain this process of growing nationalism.

The first event was inspired by two Orientalists from Tajikistan whom Gafurov brought to the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies, namely Boris A. Litvinskii (1923-2010) and his wife Elena A. Davidovich (b. 1922). Litvinskii was an archeologist of pre-Islamic Central Asia, while Davidovich became a world-famous specialist in Islamic numismatics of the same region. Shortly after their move from Dushanbe to Moscow Davidovich organized the above-mentioned regular all-Soviet conferences devoted to Vasilii V. Bartol’d, to his biography, scientific views and oeuvre. The goal of the Bartol’dovskie chteniiia was to continue Bartol’d’s scientific approaches in the investigation of Central Asia. Every four years a conference united scholars from various republics and Russia in Moscow. The individual lecturers usually did not go beyond the framework of this or that republic, but they used similar methods that go back to the Bartol’dist school. This regular conference was not a political event, and its organizers carefully cleaned up all issues which might relate to modern history. For example, in 1981 Timur K. Beisembiev, a historian from Alma-Ata, made a report on the political relations between

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the Kokand Khans and the rulers of Kashghar (Eastern Turkestan). For the subsequent publication he was requested to cut out passages on the bad relationships between certain historical persons, because this might have cast a shadow upon the friendship of the USSR and the Chinese republic.\(^{503}\)

Another important event happened in 1974, when a conference of historians of Central Asia and Kazakhstan devoted to the creation of a *Regional History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan (since the Ancient Times up to Present Days)* was organized in Moscow. Academician A.N. Narochnitskii delivered the main report *On the Plan and Principles of the Production of a History of Central Asia and Kazakhstan*, where he represented the idea of the project and its preliminary structure. Narochnitskii stated that the Institutes of History of the USSR, of Oriental Studies, of Ethnography, and of Archeology of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR as well as several scientific institutes in the USSR republics were obliged to include this project as a most prominent task in their work-plan of 1976-1980.\(^{504}\) The overall project was to be guided and coordinated by the Moscow Institute of History, not by the Oriental Institute.\(^{505}\)

For the first time in Soviet historiography, Narochnitskii, who was not himself a specialist in Central Asian studies,\(^{506}\) formulated and defended the concept of regional history. Here it should be mentioned, however, that Narochnitskii as a director of Moscow Institute of History played rather the role of a speaker of the enterprise, but not that of a generator of ideas. We still do not know who the author of the proposal of regional histories was.\(^{507}\) I assume that Narochnitskii did not write the speech himself; still we have to refer to him as the official author. Narochnitskii defended regional history as a progressive development of history writing and argued that historiography had to move from the republican narratives to regional ones. Narochnitskii evaluated the compilation of republican histories

\(^{503}\) From Timur K. Beisembiev’s private letter to the author, 24 March 2011.


\(^{506}\) Aleksei Leont’evich Narochnitskii (1907-1989) was a specialist in the history of Russian external affairs in the beginning of the 19th century. He became an Academician shortly before this enterprise in 1972.

\(^{507}\) Moscow-based historians Sergei Abashin and Dmitrii Arapov suggested in private conversation with the author that it might be Sergei G. Agadzhanyan (1928-1997), historian of mediaeval Turkmenistan, who worked at the Institute of History since 1976. However, there is no clear evidence for such a conclusion yet.
as an indicator of the maturity of the republican historical schools (even though he must have known that the majority of their books were written at least in close collaboration with central scientific institutions), but also as an already achieved goal. Narochnitskii called upon his colleagues to go further, to make a step towards the regional approach. He pointed out that this would yield a number of profits. First, regional histories would support the spirit of internationalism through the elucidation of centuries-old relations between peoples in various areas, their solidarity in anti-colonial and revolutionary movements. Regional histories were even to become an example of how to write the history of the Soviet peoples. From my perspective, the political inclination of this argument is more than clear. The Soviet government had detected the potential of nationalism in individual republics; therefore it tried to find a balance by appealing to internationalism and the concept of the Friendship of Peoples.

Second, regional histories would elaborate a common chronology, evaluate the most significant events and historical persons (although Narochnitskii did not mention names and dates) which had been ‘incorrectly’ represented from republican points of view. This statement recalls the large discussions and even the judicial verdicts against historians (for example, Bekmakhanov508) who offered an opinion different from the predominant scholarship. Obviously, Narochnitskii’s plan was to tackle the issue of national delimitation in the cultural field (arguments on the question to which national heritage this or that ‘great ancestor’ should be assigned). Thirdly, Narochnitskii argued that the work on the regional histories was to strengthen ties between historians in various republics and between the Centre and the periphery.509

In clear contrast to the previous republican historiographies, which had as their main goal to prove the birth of the respective nationalities in most ancient times, Narochnitskii argued that the majority of modern nations of Central Asia appeared rather late, and on the basis of other ethnic unions; these unions should be regarded as the common ancestors of the modern Uzbeks, Kazakhs and others. This was a clear reproduction of Marr’s ideas, who rejected the possibility of the construction of long national histories from times immemorial. Referring to Marr, Narochnitskii thus replaced republican autochthonism,

508 L. Tillett, The Great Friendship, 110-120.

which presupposed the birth and development of nationalities within the borders of the modern Soviet republics, by *regional autochthonism*, and by the idea of active interaction between the tribes in the region, recognizing that in ancient times the borders were not stable. No doubt, such a position could have serious consequences in politics, because there is only one more step to the claim of common (‘regional’) political borders.

In Narochnitskii’s mind, each work on the ancient and medieval history of any Central Asian people has to focus on a similar scope of scientific problems, common for the entire region. In the following Narochnitskii even showed that the regional entity of Central Asia was formed already in the Stone Age. He referred to the archeological works of Novosibirsk scholar Aleksei P. Okladnikov\(^{510}\) in order to demonstrate the close ties of the Central Asian population with contemporary cultures of Siberia. According to Narochnitskii, the regional approach helps to understand the history of Central Asia in the Bronze Age, when the bipolar world of settled farmers in the south and nomadic cattle-breeders in the north emerged. He marked Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Tajikistan as the border between two cultural zones.

Academician Narochnitskii concluded that “there is no reason to limit the work to producing the history of an individual people and republic separately, cutting a large historical picture into pieces by borders which appeared only much later and in a specific historical situation.”\(^{511}\) He also argued against extreme nationalistic opinions, such as claims that the entire cultural heritage written in Persian belongs to the Tajik people, not to Iran. This ‘nationalization’ of cultural heritage in Central Asia was officially going on since the 1930s.

It was planned to compose the Central Asian work in four volumes, each on a certain epoch. The project had to combine research results of specialists in research areas such as the history of cities, the study of written sources, political history, and socio-economical studies. Probably Narochnitskii was aware of the fact that before 1974 the scholars in almost all Central Asian republics made a lot of new discoveries in ancient and medieval

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history. Therefore the idea to create a generalizing book on the entire region was well justified, all political motivations notwithstanding.

Dmitrii Iu. Arapov, Moscow historian of Islam in Russia, once saw a part of Narochnitskii’s plan dealing with Central Asia and Kazakhstan in a special collection (Spetskhran) of the Russian State Library in Moscow. From this document Arapov assumes that the project had been drawn by the Moscow Institute of History on the order of the Central Committee. However, the Central Committee did not exert much pressure on the national scientific institutes that were responsible for writing the regional narratives; in Arapov’s mind, the idea met resistance in the republics and was eventually given up. 512

It is clear from all sources that the idea of regional histories was not just Narochnistkii’s initiative. First, institutes of four specializations (i.e. history, ethnography, archeology, and oriental studies) from all over the Union were obliged to participate in the project, therefore it must have been agreed with the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR or, most likely, by central governmental and party institutions. Second, there were similar regional history projects on the Northern Caucasus, Transcaucasia, and the Baltic republics. 513 Maybe the overall initiative for these projects was a governmental response on the rise of Mirasism – the general rehabilitation of the Islamic heritage by Muslim peoples of the Soviet Union – and nationalism in all republics. However, only the volume on the Northern Caucasus ever saw the light of the day. 515

Meanwhile the writing of national histories continued. The new collective of well-educated Orientalists in the Alma-Ata Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography started to edit a huge five-volume History of the Kazakh SSR since Ancient Times up to the

512 This is cited from a private letter of Sergei N. Abashin to the author. 26 September 2011. I am indebted to Sergei N. Abashin, who asked Dmitrii Iu. Arapov on my request about this project.


515 Istoriia narodov Severnogo Kavkaza, konets XVIII veka – 1917, 2 vols. ed. by A.L. Narochnitskii (Moscow, 1988). I am very grateful to Dr. Vadim V. Trepavlov, senior researcher of the Institute of Russian History (Moscow) for this reference.
*Present Day.* This edition is still most authoritative in scholarly circles, because of the large amount and diversity of sources used, and also because of the unquestionable skills of the collective of authors. However, the main theoretical positions remained the same as in the 1950s, except a more complex understanding of nomadism in close historical interaction with the settled world, and a growing acknowledgement of the common cultural characteristics in southern Kazakhstan and other Central Asian republics.

In 1975 the meeting of historians of Central Asia and Kazakhstan was organized in Andijan (Uzbek SSR). There it was decided to conduct symposiums on the less-studied problems of the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan in 1976-1977. Most probably, the conference *Early Medieval Culture of Central Asia and Kazakhstan* in Penjikent (Tajikistan, August 1977) was one of these symposiums, which were meant to help composing a regional history. As Daghestani Arabist Amri R. Shikhsaidov (b. 1928) remembers, also in the Northern Caucasus regional collectives of authors gathered for meetings, for example in Nal’chik. Shikhsaidov was a chief of the group responsible for the Northern Caucasus. He also underlined that even the participants of the project did not know who was behind the entire idea.

However, in 1979 the Branch of History of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR suddenly decided to abort the project. From the perspective of the Alma-Ata Institute of History it was stated that for two years (1977-1979) the scholars prepared considerable material which was now to be used in other works. In Kazakhstan documents I have found only one unclear explanation why the project was closed: “in the region of Central Asia and Kazakhstan there were certain problems with the writing of such a book”. Nothing surprising, since by contrast to the ‘central’ discourse on regionalism, the national discourses were overall aggressive. Their adherents did not want to share their identities with their neighbors.

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517 OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 1231, Sv. 120, Dokumenty po chetyrekhkomniki “Regional’naia istoriia Srednei Azii i Kazakhstana” (s drevneishikh vremen do nashikh dnei), 1976-1977, f. 52, 84.

518 Interview with Amri R. Shikhsaidov by Michael Kemper and the author, Makhachkala, Daghestan, 14 June 2011.


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Turkologist Sergei G. Kliashtorny provides us with a more detailed view from Leningrad. This is what he says:

“There was a surprising incident in our history in the 1970s. In the Academy of Sciences Academician Narochnitskii, a good historian of the Russian school, was Academic Secretary of the Branch of Historical Sciences. Probably someone suggested to him to organize work about regional histories instead of national differentiation. The thing is that peoples in the Caucasus and Central Asia have a common heritage, it is necessary to write regional history. Then emissaries from the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences came [to the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad] and ordered: here is your part of the general regional history of Central Asia which you have to write together with the Moscow colleagues and with scholars from the national republics. It is not a request and not a task, it is an order (italics is mine – A.B.). I obtained an order that was included in the scientific work plan of the Institute: you should write it by this and that date. To refuse it was impossible. The Soviet Academy of Sciences was a state institution: you have to do what the bosses order. I am a civil servant. Usually our themes appeared ‘from below’ as a result of how science develops out of itself; but sometimes political influence made itself felt.

Local scholars tried to write the history of adjacent territories on the basis of a common set of sources, everyone drew from the general heritage for his own nationality. We understood that it [i.e. trying to bring national histories together] does not work. When we wrote, for example, the history of Kirgizia or Kazakhstan, we put the same material into different books. This was [regarded as] correct, because a separate history within Turkestan did not exist. But suddenly the whole work was brought to a close. When materials from various places came to Moscow, the leaders of the project saw that the ‘national staff’ discredited each other in national matters, no people wanted to be in a general history with their neighbor. Scholars in the Academy of Sciences were puzzled, they rushed to the CPSU Central Committee, and the officials there were horrified: ‘Who in the Academy decided to have our Soviet peoples quarrel among themselves?’ All themes were closed, and we returned safely to the normal employment. Thus when politics interfere with science, they fail.”

Kliashtorny is also doubtful that the initiative came from Academician Narochnitskii, at least because the latter was not an expert in the question, although he al-

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520 Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtorny by the author, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.
ways appeared as the main promoter of the project. The leading Leningrad specialists were obliged to write certain parts of the regional history. They already began doing that, but it soon became clear that colleagues from Central Asian republics (and probably also in other regions) did not want to appear in a common history with their present neighbors. Cultural symbols had already been divided between the republics; nobody wanted to share his centuries-old cultural heritage with their neighbors.

When the program stopped, academician Narochnitskii was punished: the Party officials realized that a common history of Central Asian peoples is a utopia and sought a person in charge to blame. In Moscow it was explained that ‘someone’ had wanted to pose the Soviet peoples against each other. However, Narochnitskii did not suffer much; according to Kliashtornyi he was simply reprimanded. The entire project lasted six years (1974-1980), and judging from its large-scale character it was not an accidental decision to start writing regional histories. From the project’s concept it is obvious that the authorities wanted to equalize nationalities all over the Soviet Union. What is difficult to understand is that previously the government spent almost fifty years, millions of rubles, and two generations of scholars to build cultural borders between Central Asian nations. Of course, this project of regional history did not imply the dissolution of national republics. Rather, it aimed at finding a common language for the various national elites and intelligentsias, because at that time the disagreements between national schools were getting larger. This attempt failed, but the Soviet government did not put pressure on the elites. Obviously, the times had already changed — after Stalin the Center preferred to solve issues in the framework of agreements rather than by means of repression.

All manipulations in relation to the national peripheries, be it dividing or integrating, pursued the goal to achieve and maintain the unity of the Soviet state. As Francine Hirsch recommended, “it is important to remember that the Soviet regime was not interested in ‘making nations’ for their own sake. The regime’s administrators and experts delineated and manipulated nationality categories and territories with the aim of consolidating the Soviet state.”521 However, by the 1970s the Central Asian states had grown mature and the center clearly lacked both the authority and the power of conviction that it had enjoyed under Stalin and Khrushchev. The failure of imposed regionalization on Central Asian his-

toriography therefore provides another facet to our emerging understanding of Brezhnev’s ‘Stagnation’ — an immobility that had been achieved through the delegation of authority and resources to the republics.

**Conclusion**

The national historical narratives had a number of common features. First of all, the language of science: almost all works written in this genre were produced in Russian, from the 1920s up to the years of independence, when finally a couple of works appeared in Kazakh as well\(^{522}\). The use of Russian was a common feature of national metanarratives for the whole of Central Asia, but in the Kazakh as well as in the Kirgiz cases, the Russian language dominated the academic sphere more than anywhere else, not only in print form but also on the level of daily conversation. In other Central Asian republics this was not necessarily the case; while the main works were published in Russian, there was always a certain space for scientific publications in the native languages.

For example, Bobodzhan Gafurov first published his book *Istoriia tadzhikskogo naroda v kratkom izlozhenii* in the Tajik language (1947) and only later in Russian (1949). All other major national histories of Central Asia were published only in Russian, often with shorter versions in the native languages. The reason lies in the demographic situation in the Kazakh republic. It is well known that up to the 1990s the Kazakh people did not constitute a majority in their own republic, especially in urban centers. Russians, Uzbeks, and Tatars dominated the cities, where also the main academic institutions were located. Alma-Ata, the former Russian outpost Vernyi, had been the main (if not only) city of importance in this context. As Ronald Suny states:

> “[In] Kazakhstan the Russian language was overwhelmingly the language of urban Kazakhs — not to mention the more than 50 percent of the population that was not Kazakh. Although the government and party apparatus had been ethnically Kazakhized from the 1960s, that elite, as well as the great bulk of the educated population, preferred Russian to Kazakh in both their official and daily lives. (...) About 40 percent of Kazakhs could express themselves in their “mother tongue” and some three-quarters of urban Kazakhs [used] Russian [rather] than Kazakh in everyday conversations. Kazakh had a low status among non-Kazakhs, and few bothered to

\(^{522}\) For example: S. Aspendiiarov, *Kazaqstan tarikhïnïng ocherkteri* (Almaty, 1994).
learn the language, whereas Russian was understood by Kazakhs to be the medium for social advancement."

Indeed this demographical situation caused the appearance of a category of the Kazakh population which was purely Russian-speaking, and which the rural population pejoratively referred to as “asphalt Kazakhs” (Rus. asfal’tnye Kazakhî). The majority of Kazakh scholars, especially after WWII, was close to this category or was at least bilingual. This did not mean (or at least did not aim at) Russification: the Russian language became a lingua franca for a multiethnic intelligentsia\footnote{524}, which continued to be nationally colored.

The second feature is that the writing of national histories moved from the hands of the Kazakh intelligentsia (Asfendiiarov, Tynyshpaev) to the large academic collectives that included specialists from Leningrad, Moscow, and Alma-Ata. If the first experiences of history writing were individual work following pre-revolutionary traditions, the Soviet style of organizing scholarship transferred this task to huge collectives of authors.

National historiography was based on those sources which started to be discovered and published on a large scale since the mid-1930s, when the investigation of the Soviet Orient became a state priority. The combination of written and archeological sources allowed scholars to focus on the history of the southern regions of the Kazakh republic, while at the same time acknowledging that Kazakh statehood was born in the central and western provinces. The national narrative addressed a number of problematic issues concerning the role of nomadic lifestyle, its backwardness, the question of the existence of cities and the role of settled civilization, the time and birthplace of the first Kazakh state and its character, the type of socio-economic relations, and the role of foreign invasions in cultural development. The general Party line determined which opinions were accepted at which point in time, and which were treated as pan-Islamist, pan-Iranist, and so forth. It was possible to totally rewrite a given history (as for example the 1957 edition of the 1943 History of the Kazakh SSR) and to invite scholars to conferences where all decisions had already been made previously and were then aggressively lobbied.


The politics of creating independent histories of the different republics for cementing the national demarcation of the past bore fruits: when in the late 1970s the Soviet government tried to reintroduce an opposite approach, i.e. regional histories of the Baltic republics, the Caucasus, and Central Asia, this attempt failed. The construction of a common identity became impossible: each republic claimed its own rights on the symbols of the past. At the same time we see the development of ‘Mirasism’ – the revival of national pasts, often including a partial rehabilitation of the Islamic heritage.\textsuperscript{525} Also this phenomenon had its roots in the strategy of dividing history into national pieces.

The regional concept of Central Asian history had always been present. Sometimes it was used by adherents of the new national methods, or it was transformed into a new ‘friendship of republics myth’ on the new stage of socialist development. If regionalism in historiography was an attempt to manipulate ethnic identities through moving accents from national markers to regional ones, then we can state that it failed. Almost fifty years of the predominance of nationality obviously led to strong walls between republics on the cultural level. The national intelligentsia who participated in history writing did not want to be situated in a common historical space with its neighbors; vertical ties with Russians were overall accepted, but not horizontal ties on the regional level.

Chapter III:
The Establishment of Kazakh Orientology

3.1. The Institute of History and Its Structure

In this chapter I would like to study the institutional framework of Kazakh Orientology in the 1940s to 1980s as well as the networks of Kazakhstani Orientalists, their professional background and perceptions of the medieval Kazakh history. Special attention will be paid to several attempts at establishing a special institution for Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan, why these initiatives were undertaken and why all of them failed. The role of the administrative tandem of the scholars and managers Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger certainly deserves close attention together with their efforts to create and support a young team of Orientalists that emerged at the sector of ancient and medieval history of Kazakhstan in the late 1960s and early 1970s. We will also discuss the question of Oriental manuscript studies in Alma-Ata, because manuscripts could be an important basis for the development of local Orientology. The quest for manuscript genealogies of the Kazakh tribes, initiated by Begedzhan Suleimenov, demonstrated the attitude towards the written heritage on the territory of Kazakh SSR. Even before the opening of the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography in Alma-Ata in 1945, it was obvious that without an in-depth investigation of the written Arabic-script sources in Persian, Arabic, and Turkic languages it was impossible to write the history of Kazakhstan. The first attempt to identify and translate such texts goes back to the 1930s and 1940s, when Orientalist Aleksandr A. Semenov was asked by the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh republic (set up in 1946 out of the Kazakhstani Base of the USSR Academy of Sciences) to prepare such translations. Unfortunately, his source translations were never published.

The Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography opened its doors on 25 April 1945. It emerged on the basis of the previous sector of history at the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences. The structural development of Oriental studies in the Institute was as follows. Initially it had in total ten departments (отдел) in five sectors. In 1946 a De-

526 On him see below a sub-chapter “In Search of Shajaras: Genealogical Narratives of the Kazakh Tribes, 1970-1980”.

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partment of Ancient and Medieval Cities was carved out of the Department of Archeology. In Jambul the Institute set up an archeological station for the stationary investigation of the Țărăz Site (supervised by G.I. Patsevich), which existed between 1946 and 1954. A Manuscript Department was opened in 1947. In 1951-52 the sectors were liquidated and the departments were enlarged. Oriental studies issues were discussed in the Department of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan as well as in the Department of Archeology. On 19 December 1956 a Sector of Oriental Studies was established, though not at the Institute, but at the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. In 1959 this sector was demolished and staff was transferred to a new Department of Neighboring Countries of the Foreign Orient at the Institute of History. In 1963 the Department of Neighboring Countries of the Foreign Orient was united with the Department of Uighur Philology at the Institute of Linguistics. A part of the employees of the former department was moved to the Department of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the Institute of History. In details these reincarnations of Oriental studies institutions will be studied below.

3.2. The Nusupbekov – Dakhshleiger Tandem

The framework of this chapter is shaped by the life-time of the administrative tandem of Akai Nusupbekov (1909-1983) and Grigorii Dakhshleiger (1919-1983), whose management of the Institute of History became what has been called the ‘Golden Age’ of Orientology in Kazakhstan. Akai Nusupbekovich Nusupbekov was born in Alma-Ata region in 1909. His father perished in the 1916 uprising. Between 1926 and 1932 Nusupbekov studied in the Alma-Ata Agrarian College, and in 1934 he was sent to the Moscow Communist University of Workers of the Orient, where Akai Nusupbekovich graduated in 1937. When he returned to Kazakhstan, he was employed as party official in the area of cultural education. During the years 1941-45 he participated in WWII, and after demobilization he entered the newly established Institute of History in 1946. As the employees of the Institute of History remember, his military experience brought an atmosphere of order into the scientific institution. In June 1956, shortly after the 20th Congress of


528 For the first time this term was used by Irina V. Erofeeva, Director of the Institute of Nomadic Studies in Almaty: I.V. Erofeeva, “Moi pervyi nachal’nik v mire nauki,” in: Aituly Aqang edii Estelikter, maqalalar men zertteuler (Almaty, 2009), 153.
the Communist Party and the centralized decisions on the restructuring and expansion of Soviet Oriental Studies, \(^{529}\) Nusupbekov was appointed Director of the Institute, a position that he held for the rest of his life until 1983. He became Academician and served as Vice-President of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences between 1968 and 1976.\(^ {530}\) It is to be noticed that in 1948, during the campaign against Kazakh historian Ermukan Bekmakhanov, Nusupbekov defended Bekmakhanov and also regarded the movement of Kenesary Kasymov as national-liberating, though later he was forced to reject these views.\(^ {531}\)

Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhsleiger was born in Odessa in 1919 and graduated from the historical faculty of Odessa State University in 1941, and also participated in WWII. Just like Akai Nusupbekov, Dakhsleiger was a member of the Communist Party and also entered the Institute in 1946.\(^ {532}\) For about thirty years, from 1957 onwards, Dakhsleiger was a Deputy Director of the Institute. Nusupbekov and Dakhsleiger were good managers; from 1956 onwards several Oriental projects were carried out under their direct supervision. In the 1950s and 1960s Nusupbekov was able to collect a team of young specialists in Oriental textology and archeology: Sapar Ibragimov, Veniamin Iudin, Vladimir Nastich, Tursun Sultanov, Klavdiia Pishchulina, Vladimir Shukhovtsov, Bulat Kumekov, Karl Baipakov and others. Arabist Vladimir Nastich, who also worked at that Institute, considers that all concrete decisions were prepared by Dakhsleiger.\(^ {533}\) This successful combination of understanding the role of Oriental studies for Kazakhstan and the remarkable organizational skills of the two scientific managers resulted in a series of fundamental academic works. It was during the 1960 Congress of Orientalists in Moscow that the tandem began

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\(^{533}\) Interview with Vladimir N. Nastich by the author, Sector of Written Monuments of the Peoples of the Orient, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, 30 September 2009.
to build a large network among Soviet Orientalists. Above all they collaborated with Moscow and Leningrad in order to guarantee the thorough education of Kazakh junior scholars in the central faculties of Oriental Studies, to cooperate with prominent scholars in common projects and to invite young Orientalists from the central institutions to work in Alma-Ata. Nusupbekov went to Moscow that year and made a short presentation at the Central Asian panel of the Congress of Orientalists. As Dakhsheleiger’s wife remembers, their house was a meeting place for Orientalists. They established very warm friendly ties with Bobodzhan Gafurov, Sergei Kliashtornyi, Vladimir Livshits and many others. It was not surprising therefore that Elena, the older daughter of Dakhsheleiger, was sent to study Arabic at Leningrad University. She specialized on Mauritanian epigraphy, and later, on invitation by Boris B. Piotrovskii, she worked for a while at the State Hermitage. But soon after the collapse of the Soviet Union she returned to Alma-Ata, where Elena was employed at the Sector of Orientology of the Institute of History as a typewriter. Frustrated with this position she emigrated, together with her husband, to the United States. The Dakhsheleiger family in Alma-Ata is an example of the Russian (in a broadest sense) intelligentsia, which contributed much to the establishment of Orientology in Kazakhstan. Still, Dakhsheleiger’s case still exemplifies that the Kazakhstani scientific institutions were not completely dominated by the Kazakhs.

Here is a description of Nusupbekov and Dakhsheleiger’s Oriental projects in chronological order:

- 1954-1969. Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv [Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates]. Texts were translated by Sapar Ibragimov, Veniamin Iudin, Klavdia Pishchulina, Nadzhip Mingulov, Oleg Akimushkin, Munira Salakhetdinova;


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535 Interview with Margarita G. Dakhsheleiger by the author, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 July 2010.


Moiseev, V.K. Shukhovtsov and others. Chokin Valikhanov became an iconic figure for Kazakh Oriental studies: in 1960 the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography was officially named after Valikhanov. Approximately at the same time the Almaty Orientalists and historians began with the edition of his manuscripts preserved in numerous archives.

- 1960s-80s. The Otrar campaign. Works were organized by Kimal Akishev and Karl Baipakov.⁵³⁸

- 1970s-80s. Istoriia Kazakhskoi SSR s drevneishchikh vremen do nashikh dnei [The History of the Kazakh Republic. From Ancient Times to the Present].⁵³⁹ Five volumes were collected by all abovementioned authors in collaboration with Leningrad specialists (the Sector of Turkic Studies of the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of USSR, headed by Sergei Kliahtornyi).

An important meeting of the Branch of Social Sciences of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences took place exactly in the first year of Nusupbekov’s directorship, in November 1956. Because of his new status, Akai Nusupbekov at the meeting delivered the main report On the State of Ethnography in Kazakhstan and its Research Tasks. The conference decided that it is necessary to expand the scientific staff of the Institute of History.⁵⁴⁰ It was the first step to involve young specialists in the planned activity. This decision should be viewed in the context of the 20th Congress of the Communist Party of the USSR (February 14-25, 1956) and the first all-USSR Conference of Orientalists in Tashkent (July 4-11, 1957), where it was ordered to establish new centers of Oriental Studies in Azerbaijan, Georgia, Armenia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizia and Kazakhstan.⁵⁴¹ Nusupbekov did his best to establish Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan.

There were very few professional Orientalists in Alma-Ata, hence Nusupbekov looked for help in Leningrad and partly in Moscow, because the academic institutions in

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the center could train Orientalists for Kazakhstan and provide the theoretical background for Kazakh scholars through temporary studies (stazhirovka). Since the 1970s Sergei Kliashtornyi was managing the research group on nomadic societies in Central Asia at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Before the end of the USSR Kliashtornyi acted as a coordinator of Turkic studies in Central Asia, and accordingly the scholarly networks had their center at the Turkic-Mongolian sector of the Institute of Oriental Studies in Leningrad that Sergei Kliashtornyi directed since 1963. It was a school of classical Oriental Studies with an emphasis on original sources and textual criticism. The majority of Kazakh scholars who studied in Leningrad defended their dissertations at the Turkic-Mongolian Sector. This was agreed upon by Kliashtornyi and Nusupbekov.

The administration of the Alma-Ata Institute of History paid serious attention to the establishment of scientific networks, not only on official level (for example, between various institutions on the basis of common projects or contracts), but also on a private level, keeping friendly relations. In the 1960s-1980s Nusupbekov’s group of Orientalists benefitted from this policy.

Scientific conferences, especially on all-Soviet scale, played a crucial role in the expansion of this scholarly network. On 27-29 September 1976 the Division of the Social Sciences (Otdelenie obshchestvennykh nauk) of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences organized the Second All-Soviet Turkological Conference in Alma-Ata. Symbolically, it was devoted to the 50th anniversary of the First Turkological Congress in Baku (1926) which had heavily influenced the development of the Turkic languages and literatures of the Soviet Union by its support for the alphabet change. The 1976 Conference brought together about five hundred scholars from all over the USSR as well as from Germany, Poland, Turkey, the USA, and Sweden. Their scientific contributions were published in four volumes.542 This conference was an acknowledgment of the center of Turkological studies in Alma-Ata, associated mainly with Uighur studies and Kazakh literary criticism. Such an event was a chance for Kazakh specialists to meet their colleagues from all over the Union. Sergei G. Kliashtornyi was member of the Organizational Committee and obviously had

close contact with his Kazakhstani colleagues, first of all with the administration of the Institute of History.

3.3. Reincarnations of Orientology in Kazakhstan

Between the 1940s and 1980s the Kazakh scientific establishment undertook three attempts to create a center of Oriental Studies in Alma-Ata. Official documents point out three main chronological steps in this process, which I shall call ‘reincarnations of Orientology’ because every time when an initiative failed, a new institutional framework was chosen to implement Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan. These three attempts occurred in 1948, 1955, and 1980. Each of them reflects a certain point of development in the Kazakh academic life and of course reflects more general politico-scientific processes in the Soviet Union at that time.

The first initiative goes back to 1948, when the Division of Social Sciences of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences started a internal debates about establishment of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan. Most probably, this decision was connected to the general process of the establishment of an independent Kazakh Academy of Sciences and, in particular, the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. The focus was on the potential to study both the Foreign and the Soviet Orient. The debates began with the identification of scientific institutions close to Oriental studies that were already present in the republic; it was also discussed which specialists were already available and if there were any old manuscripts in the archives of the republic. On the basis of this information a document with a title On the State of Scientific Work in Oriental Studies in the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh USSR was prepared for the Central Committee of the Communist Party. No local party organization was mentioned in the documents; therefore we can assume that it was forwarded to the central Party institution in Moscow. The letter was signed by the high scientific official Nigmet Sauranbaev (1910-1958), who chaired the Division of Social Sciences of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

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543 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obschestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoj rabote za 1948 god, 46 f.

544 Nigmet Tnalievich Sauranbaev was a linguist, who directed the Institute of Language, Literature, and Art of the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1939-1946. Between 1951 and 1958 he was a vice-president of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR.
The document stated that the following institutes from within the structure of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences were related to Oriental Studies: the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography, the Institute of Language and Literature as well as the Sectors of Law, Philosophy, Architecture, and Art Studies at the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR. All of them focused their attention on Kazakh history. The author of the document stated that there were very few Orientalists in Kazakhstan and that in several scientific fields there was absolutely no specialist. Two of these few scholars had graduated from the Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and knew the languages, literature, and history of several foreign peoples: Nigmet Sabitov (1895-1955), who had obtained his education at the Arabic Department of the Narimanov Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow (MIV) and was working as Chair of the Sector of Ethnography of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata, and Begedzhan Suleimenov (1912-1984) who had obtained his education from the Turkic Department of the same Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies and was working at the Sector of Kazakh Language of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. It is to be noticed that Sauranbaev, the author of the document, listed also persons who studied before the October Revolution at the Islamic religious institutions in central regions of the Russian Empire, namely in the madrasas ‘Aliyya (Ufa), Ḥusaynīyya (Orenburg), and Muḥammadīyya (Kazan). However, he regarded them as not qualified and did not expect from them any serious scientific contribution. Sauranbaev believed that the literature, history, and ethnography of the peoples of the Soviet Orient could be studied by Mukhtar Auezov (1897-1961), Alkei Margulan, and Ermukhan Bekmahanov; their knowledge of ‘Oriental’ languages, except of course Kazakh, was however rather questionable.

During the whole Soviet era there was no educational institution in the entire Kazakh republic which produced professional Orientalists. Oriental studies were not represented at any level of high education in the Kazakh State University, pedagogical universities, and

546 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obshchestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoj rabote za 1948 god, f. 3-4.
547 Ibid., f. 4.
548 Mukhtar Omarkhanovich Auezov was a Kazakh writer and historian, author of the most praised novel The Way of Abay (1942-47).
there was also no such specialty foreseen in the PhD studies (*aspirantura*) of the Academy of Sciences. The above-mentioned document demonstrated, however, that the students of the department of Kazakh language and literature at the Kazakh State University and pedagogical university had a facultative course of Arabic language. Yet the level of this course was regarded as not satisfactory because there was no coherent program and no textbook. The teachers provided their students only superficial knowledge of various types of the Arabic-script, including Chaghatay and Kazakh. The course included a short description of Arabic grammar.

Uighur Studies were very important for humanities in the Kazakh academia, since there were several scholars working on the history and culture of Eastern Turkestan at that time. A. Shamieva, A. Ideiatov, Kh. Iusurov, M. Kabirov, and Iu. Tsunvazo were employed at the Sector of Uighur and Dungan Languages of the Academy of Sciences. Quantity was however not coupled with quality in this case.

Sauranbaev drew attention to a number of monographs dealing with Oriental Studies: *The Kazakh Schools and Madrasas*; a bibliographical index of work in Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) on Kazakh history, and an unpublished PhD dissertation *The Arabic-Persian Influence on the Kazakh Language*, all produced by Nigmet Sabitov; as well as popular philological articles on the roots of Kazakh poetry in the Persian heritage of Firdawsī, Ḥāfiẓ, ʿUmar Khayyām, Nawāʾī, and Niẓāmī.

Significantly, it was mentioned that even though the libraries in Alma-Ata and other cities preserved old manuscripts and rare books in Arabic, Persian, and Chaghatay languages, the specialists at the Academy of Sciences were not able to work with them be-

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549 Ibid., ff. 4-5. It was probably meant that students learned different ways of transliteration of Turkic texts into Arabic script.


cause of their lack of language skills. In the following Sauranbaev provided a list of manuscripts of famous Oriental works preserved at the libraries of the Academy of Sciences and the Kazakh State University: the *Divān lughat at-türk* ("Dictionary of Turkic Language") by Maḥmūd al-Kashgārī, the *Jāmi' at-tawārīkh* ("Compendium of Chronicles") by Rashīd ad-Dīn, the *Rawdat as-ṣafā* by Mirkhvānd (1433-1498), the *Sahā'if al-Akhbār* by Münnejem-Bashi (17th c.), the *Divān* of Mirzā ‘Abd al-Qadīr Bīdīl (1644-1721), the *Khamsa* by Niẓāmī (1141-1209), the *Gulistān* by Sa’dī (1181-1291), and the *Bābur-nāme* by Ṣahīr ad-Dīn Muḥammad Bābur (1483-1530).

Thus students of Oriental Studies in Alma-Ata had at least a starting point for research, because this list contained some classical works of Islamic poetry and prose. According to the author, new literature which appeared in foreign countries did not come to Kazakhstan at all. Unfortunately, both the origin of these manuscripts and their further fate is unknown. It is mysterious that the future generations of Kazakh Orientalists paid no attention to this collection.

There is a second list of texts that were kept at the Institute of History. This list was compiled in 1947 by Viktor F. Shakhmatov, then head of the manuscript office of the Institute of History of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

I assume that somebody helped him in these rather scanty attributions.

1. The Turkic poetical work *Thubāt al-‘ajīzīn* ("Firmness of the Weak," 1802) by Ṣūfī Allāhīyār (1644-1721), a copy dating from 1295/1878. This work was broadly used in Central Asian Islamic schools as a textbook.

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554 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obschestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoj rabote za 1948 god, f. 8.

555 There is no information in existing literature on this copy of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s chronicle. It might be that this book was an Arabic translation of the work, which is more widespread than its Persian original.

556 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obschestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoj rabote za 1948 god, f. 9.

557 Some of these manuscripts seem to have found their way into the catalogue of the Kazakh National Library in Alma-Ata: S. Abdullo, S.M. Bakir Kamaledini, *Katalog rukopisnykh knig na persidskom iazyke* iz sobrania National’noi biblioteki Respubliki Kazakhstan (Almaty, 2008).

558 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obschestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 2, D. 7, Spravki, informatsiia i dokladnye o khode realizatsii postanovleniia TsK KP(b) 'O grubeishikh politicheskikh oshibkakh Instituta iazyka i literatury AN KazSSR' ot 21 ianvaria 1947 g., spiski vostochnykh rukopise i, khraniashchikhsia v Institute istorii AN KazSSR, resenzii i zamechaniia na nauchnye raboty, materialy o shiatakh i struktura institutov i sektorov, 1947, f. 1.

2. A Persian-language book of ethics Akhlāq-i Muḥsinī ("Muhsin’s Ethics"), produced in 900/1494-5 by Kamāl ad-Dīn Ḫusayn b. ‘Alī al-Wā’iz al-Ḵāshīfī (d. 1505)\(^560\) and devoted to Abū-l-Muḥsin, son of Sultan Ḫusayn Bāyar (1438-1506).\(^561\) The manuscript was dated from 1564 AD and was thus among the oldest copies, two others being dated from 907/1501-2 (Tashkent) and 945/1539 (Paris).\(^562\)

3. A collection of seven moralizing and historical accounts in the Tatar and Kazakh languages, dated from the 19th century, without detailed description of each of these narratives.

4. The Ḥāshiya ("Commentary") by Mawlānā Ḫusām ad-Dīn, probably Ḫusām ad-Dīn al-Kātī (d. 760/1359), who wrote a commentary on logical work al-Isāghūjī (13th c.). The language of the work was defined rather vaguely: “a Persian manuscript in the Arabic language.” According to Shakhmatov’s description, it was very old copy, because of “the absence of diacritics.”

5. The Ṣalāt Mas‘ūdī ("Prayers") by Mas‘ūd b. Maḥmūd b. Yūsuf as-Samarqandī in the Persian language, the basics of Muslim law. Copy of 1847.\(^563\)


This modest collection obviously could not play any significant role in the establishment of Kazakh Oriental studies. However, Kazakhstan had been a very interesting region of manuscript production. There were indeed attempts to study local sources. For example, in 1946 G.V. Iskhakov discovered in Sayrām a Risāla (Treatise) written in Chaghatay language by Bek Muḥammad Qāḍī Kalān (d. 1865) which contained a sacred

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\(^{560}\) A special issue of *Iranian Studies* (vol. 36, no. 4, Dec. 2003) has been entirely devoted to Ḫusayn al-Wā’iz al-Ḵāshīfī and his writings. Not to be confused with his famous son Fakhr ad-Dīn (d. 939/1532-3), the author of the Rashabāt ‘ayn al-hayāt.


\(^{563}\) Other copies in the National Library of Kazakhstan are dated from 1297/1879-80 and 1311/1893-94. S.Abdullo, S.M. Bakir Kamaleddini, *Katalog rukopisnykh knig, 85, 99.*
history of Sayrām with a catalogue of local places of veneration.\textsuperscript{564} Iskhakov’s translation of this manuscript into Russian was reviewed by Nigmet Sabitov, who recommended to the administration of the Institute of History to purchase the manuscript from its owner.\textsuperscript{565} It is unclear whether the manuscript itself was eventually bought, but the Russian translation with a general description of the manuscript is still preserved in the archive of the Institute of Archeology in Almaty.\textsuperscript{566} Thus, by the late 1940s the Institute of History had quite a few ‘Oriental’ sources in originals and Russian translations, including those made by Aleksandr Semenov, which potentially could be used in research, but absolutely nothing was done in this area. Moreover, my attempts to find any Arabic-script manuscripts at the Institute of History in Almaty in 2010 failed. An overview of Arabic-script manuscripts in present-day Almaty, prepared by Mervert Kh. Abuseitova suggests that the books were transferred to the National Library of Kazakhstan, where a number of titles similar to the ones cited above are indeed present. With the establishment of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences and the Institute of History a number of valuable books were taken for the archive of the Academy, including those dated from the 14\textsuperscript{th} century.\textsuperscript{567} This should be kept in mind when Kazakh historians claim that there are no Oriental manuscripts in Alma-Ata. Taking into account the presence of interesting manuscripts in the city the initiative to open a center of classical Oriental Studies in 1948 was justifiable, but in practice nobody was able to analyze these books and put them into the context of Kazakh history.

The main conclusion of Sauranbaev was that it was necessary to have research institutes of Orientology not only in the central Academy of Sciences of the USSR, but also in the academies and universities of the Soviet national republics. Interestingly, this idea pre-
dated the actual expansion of the Orientology institutions in the Soviet Union in the 1950s for almost a decade. Moreover, Sauranbaev suggested a number of concrete steps towards the creation of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan. First of all, he proposed to introduce ethnographical, historical and anthropological research of the Soviet Orient into the five-year plan of existing scientific institutes. This research had to demonstrate the conservative, non-progressive character of the Islamic ideology. Sauranbaev underlined the persisting strength of the religious influence, especially in southern regions (probably he meant the South Kazakhstan oblast’). According to the author, the absence of Oriental and Islamic Studies at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences and the general weakness of anti-religious propaganda led to the penetration of Pan-Islamic and Pan-Turkic ideologies. Soviet Oriental Studies in this case were meant to defend the priority of Soviet culture over the ‘backward’ Islamic way of life.\textsuperscript{568}

The proposed ‘program’ for the establishment of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan included the following steps: 1) to accumulate literature on the Orient in the libraries of the Academy of Sciences and Kazakh State University. It was planned to collect books and manuscripts which were kept in disorder in the libraries of cities in regions neighboring to the republic, such as Omsk, Orenburg, Troitsk, and Orsk; 2) to organize the systematic provision of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences with modern literature edited in foreign countries. Besides it was suggested to give scholars open access to the secret materials dealing with the history of ‘Oriental countries’; 3) to use Orientalists in propaganda in relations with foreign countries; 4) to organize education in Arabic, Persian, and Chinese languages during PhD studies at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.\textsuperscript{569}

As is clear from this documentation, all measures concerning the organization of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan were discussed with the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party. In October 1948 Sauranbaev added some new measures to the ones already suggested: 1) to obtain information through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Kazakh Republic and the secret police whether it is possible to collect data on the current situation in ‘Oriental countries’, especially in neighboring lands such as China, Mongolia, Korea, and Iran; 2) to organize a Sector of Oriental Studies at the Branch of Social Scienc-

\textsuperscript{568} OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Otdelenie obshestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoj rabote za 1948 god, f. 10.

\textsuperscript{569} Ibid., ff. 11-12.
es of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences; 3) to include into the research plan a complex expedition of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences to Eastern Turkestan in 1949; 4) to consult with the rector of Kazakh State University the possibility for students of historical and philological departments to specialize in Eastern countries; 5) to organize education in Arabic, Persian, and Chinese languages at the philological and historical departments of Kazakh State University (probably instead of the previously suggested program at the Academy of Sciences); 6) to start the specialization of PhD students on Oriental Studies starting in 1949; 7) to use the journal *Qazaq eli (The Kazakh Land)* as the main forum for debates of Kazakh Orientology in the republic. Sauranbaev considered the problem very seriously, and in case the government provided the necessary support, Sauranbaev’s project seemed realistic; it reflected the most important directions of scientific research on Kazakhstan’s neighboring countries.

The political significance of Sauranbaev’s plan was even more obvious in his following report, which most probably was prepared for party officials in the same year of 1948. Sauranbaev viewed the main task of Soviet Oriental Studies in the fight against the “remnants of the old reactionary ideology of the Orient” (i.e. Islam) both inside and outside of the Kazakh republic. In order to achieve the best effect, he continued, it might be good to concentrate on one of the neighboring peoples, for example the Uighurs. Sauranbaev attached much political significance to the topic, declaring that “the reactionary ideology of the Orient is dangerous for the development of Soviet society,” and therefore he emphasized that the government would have a decisive role in the implementation of the aforementioned steps towards the creation of Kazakh Orientology. Sauranbaev also suggested setting up a coordinating center of research — the Sector of Oriental Studies at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, which was imagined to be in touch with Party officials as well as with the central institutions of Oriental studies in Moscow and Leningrad.

On 29 October 1948 in the context of these activities Nigmet Sabitov, the author of several monographs dealing with Islamic education in Kazakhstan, prepared a short report on Arabic studies in Alma-Ata. This report was requested by Sauranbaev, probably as additional support when addressing the party institutions. According to Sabitov’s knowledge,
there were a number of scholars in the republic that regarded themselves as Arabists: T. Kuntuganov, Zh. Zhulaev, M. Kadyrbaev, Sh. Sarybaev, and Kh. Azhikeev. We know, however, that from these only Kuntuganov and Zhulaev had practical experience by teaching Arabic language at the Kazakh State University (KazGU); Kadyrbaev and Sarbaev taught Kazakh language at the same University, and Azhikeev was unemployed (he had taught Arabic at KazGU only in 1947-48). All of them had a similar level of knowledge, except Kadyrbaev, whose skills and knowledge in the field was much more limited. All of them had obtained this narrow education at religious schools (madrasas). Those who taught at the University did not use textbooks, so their teaching was of little effect. As we see, the general picture was not promising at all. Even if the officials realized the political importance of Orientology and given the sources present the republic, the absence of institutional support and the low level of education among the envisaged scientific collective stood in the way of any prominent step further level.

The second attempt to establish Orientology in the Kazakh SSR goes back to 1955, still before the 20th Congress of the CPSU in 1956 that led to a cardinal restructuring of Oriental Studies and the opening of respective institutes and branches all over the Soviet Union. This fact complicates the history of this ‘expansion,’ which is usually explained as a result of the 20th Congress. Probably, already before the start of official de-Stalinization the need was felt for a revival of classical Orientology. It was Ivan Stepanovich Gorokhvodatskii (1906-1978), for a short period the Director of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata (1953-1956), who gave new life to Sauranbaev’s idea (1948). Gorokhvodatskii composed a new letter to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Republic and to the Sector of Science and Culture of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party in which he maintained the necessity to establish a Sector of Oriental Studies within the Institute of History, thus pointing at a concrete place at the Academy where the research should be done (Sauranbaev’s proposal had lacked such

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573 Ibid., f. 33


575 “Gorokhvodatskii Ivan Stepanovich,” in: Qazaqstannyng tarikh ghylmy, 338.

Gorokhvodatskii stated that this plan was an initiative of the Scientific Council of the Institute to appeal to the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences and to the Central Committee of the Party in Alma-Ata. In his mind, it was impossible to conduct serious scholarly work on the history of Kazakhstan without studying the history of the neighboring countries that had a shared past with the Kazakhs. In this sense he argued that the study of the foreign Orient and that of the Soviet Orient were interconnected. Gorokhvodatskii acknowledged that the manuscripts in Oriental languages were sometimes the only sources on the ancient and medieval history of Kazakhstan.\(^{577}\) Again, Eastern Turkestan was regarded as the main region of interest from among the neighboring countries. Therefore the foreign Orient in the Kazakh context was interpreted this time as Eastern Turkestan with its Uighur population.

Gorokhvodatskii referred to a recent article of the redaction committee of the Communist magazine, an official journal of the CPSU, which argued for the necessity to increase studies of the ancient and modern Orient for strengthening the Friendship of Peoples of the Soviet Union and the Orient.\(^{578}\) Most probably, this article had been Gorokhvodatskii’s starting point, a signal for action. Perhaps to emphasize that conditions had significantly improved since Sauranbaev’s proposal of 1948, Gorokhvodatskii wrote that exactly in 1955 conditions were good for the establishment of a Sector of Oriental Studies, because at that time the Institute had employed three qualified scholars. These were Sapar Ibragimov, who studied the history of Eastern Turkestan; Abbas A. Aliev, a professor at the Kazakh State University who did research of the foreign Orient and was regarded as a suitable chair for the sector; and Sinologist G.I. Khil’chenko. Gorokhvodatskii also promised that a certain V.V. Matveev would shortly return from Leningrad University where he was preparing the defense of his dissertation on the history of Russian Orientology.\(^{579}\) However, to my knowledge, Matveev never appeared at the Institute.

The above-mentioned Abbas Aliev also wrote an official letter to Leonid I. Brezhnev, to the secretary-general of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, and to Dinmukhamed A. Kunaev, then president of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

\(^{577}\) Ibid.

\(^{578}\) Kommunist 8 (1955).

Aliev emphasized the significance of Oriental Studies for the Kazakh SSR and its potential to help the neighboring countries of the revolutionary Orient to understand their history in a correct way, in addition to its value for studying the medieval history of Kazakhstan. Directly referring to the first initiative of 1948, Aliev claimed that back then there was no possibility to create the Sector of Oriental Studies because of the absence of specialists.\footnote{Ibid., F. 2, Op. 10, D. 108, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1955, f. 80. This letter is dated from 9 February 1955 and entitled as To Creation of the Sector of Oriental Studies at the Institute of History of the USSR Academy of Sciences.}

In 1957 Viktor Shakhmatov, the former Head of the Manuscript Department, moved to the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the same History Institute. The Sector had the task of the Institute to compose and publish a two-volume edition of *Materials on the Prerevolutionary History of Kazakhstan (Reports on the History of Ancient and Medieval Kazakhstan from Oriental Sources).*\footnote{Ibid., D. 130, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1956, f. 145.} This project comprised the republication of previously published sources, the quest for previously unknown materials and their translation into Russian, and the study of European works devoted to Oriental textology. Curiously, the Sector lacked specialists in Arabic and Turkic studies able to work with manuscripts. Even more striking was that Shakhmatov claimed that there was no repository of medieval Oriental manuscripts in Alma-Ata, therefore the scholars should turn to the collections in Leningrad, Moscow,\footnote{It is unclear why Moscow was included into this list, because Arabic-script manuscripts there are spread among many institutions and in rather small amount. See overviews: I.V. Zaitsev, *Arabskie, persidskie i tiurkskie rukopisi Otdela redkhikh knig i rukopisei Nauchnoi biblioteki Moskovskogo gosudarstvennogo universiteta im. M.V. Lomonosova. Katalog* (Moscow, 2006); I.V. Zaitsev, *Arabskie, persidskie i tiurkskie rukopisi i dokumenty v Arkhive Rossiiskoi akademii nauk. Katalog vystavki* (Moscow, 2008); D.A. Morozov, *Kratkii katalog arabskih rukopisei i dokumentov Rossiiskogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva drevnikh aktov* (Moscow, 1996).} Tashkent, and Samarkand. According to Shakhmatov, there were no Oriental historical narratives in Alma-Ata scientific institutions. In addition to this, Shakhmatov complained that nobody tried to search for manuscripts, and that scholarly ties with Central Asian institutions were weak.\footnote{OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Op. 10, D. 130, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1956, ff. 149-212.} One might agree with all of these complaints, but why did Shakhmatov not mention the manuscripts that he himself preserved at the Institute, a list of which we have briefly discussed above? Obviously there was a consensus among the scholars that Alma-Ata was not a suitable place for the study of old books.
Also from the second attempt by Gorokhvodbatskii almost nothing was implemented; neither Matveev nor Khilkhenko were employed. Probably, it was more than enough for the government to have a Sector of Uighur Philology at the Institute of Linguistics of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences and the Sector of Uighur and Dungan Culture (1946) at the Institute of History, which were regarded as a duplication of the Sector of Oriental Studies. Still a Sector of Oriental Studies was indeed set up in 1956 in place of the Institute’s Sector of Uighur and Dungan Culture, but at the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR, and not at the Institute of History, where it could have become an active research unit. In September 1959 this Sector was reorganized because of poor work results, and when it was finally moved to the Institute of History it was transformed into a Sector of the History of Neighboring Countries of the Foreign Orient. Because of the lack of qualified Orientalists (there was only one scholar who had defended his first dissertation, Sapar Ibragimov) the work of the Sector was concentrated on one single research subject under the title *Socio-Economic Relations and the Development of Statehood in Eastern Turkestan in the 9th to 18th Centuries.*

The scholars at the sector collected a number of Turkic *tadhkiras* from Eastern Turkestan, i.e. literary repertories, and translated them, but the quality of this work seemed to be not sufficient. As the scholars at the Institute complained, it was difficult to conduct scientific work because of the lack of originals and copies of manuscripts as well as of specialized literature in Western languages in Alma-Ata. All attempts of the administration of the Institute of History to strengthen the sector through employing highly-educated specialists from other cities of the Soviet Union failed. Moreover, sometimes the scholars at the Sector did work which had already been achieved in the central institutions of Oriental Studies. Kabirov did not finish his book on the Uyghurs, and the parts of it that he did write were regarded as not publishable. To understand the level of scientific work at the Sector it is enough to look at biography of one of its scholars, Khashir Vakhidov (b. 1922).


Ethnically an Uyghur, Vakhidov had graduated from the pedagogical faculty of Xinjiang University in the city of Urumqi in 1941, and then become a teacher of mathematics at a high school. In 1955 Vakhidov moved to the USSR and since 1957 he worked at the Sector of Oriental Studies of the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences in Alma-Ata. Most probably he was employed as a native speaker of the Uyghur language, but he hardly knew Russian. In 1961 Vakhidov made a report on his work on the Muntakhab at-tawārīkh (“Selected Chronicles”) of Ḥākim Khān, admitting freely his presentation does not have a scientific goal. Veniamin Iudin and his wife Iulia Baranova, specialists in Uyghur studies, reacted on this report by concluding that Vakhidov did not know the history of Central Asia and Eastern Turkestan and did not know how to detect and analyze the ‘interesting places’ in the manuscript that dealt with the history of Eastern Turkestan.

The expenses of the Sector exceeded the outcome; hence, in 1960 it became subject of an inspection of the Central Committee of the Kazakh Communist Party, which resulted in the recommendation to close it down and to open in its stead a Sector of Uyghur Philology at the Institute of Linguistics of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. Eventually the three historians M. Kabirov, Kh. Vakhidov, and G. Iskhakov were transferred to this new Sector. In 1962 the Institute of History finally created a Sector of Oriental Studies, but again with a focus not on Kazakhstan: it was studying only the history and culture of Eastern Turkestan. So Orientology in Kazakhstan at that time meant Uyghur Studies.

In 1962 Akai Nusupbekov, the new Director of the Institute, wrote a report to the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences on the work of the Sector of the History of Neighboring Countries of the Foreign Orient. Nusupbekov complained that even though the sector focused on only one research subject, Socio-Economic Relations and Development of Statehood in Eastern Turkestan in the 9th to 19th Centuries, the work of the Sector was not successful. There were very few employees at the sector, and they were poorly grounded in scholarship, without an education related to Oriental Studies. Moreover, ac-

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587 Ibid., ff. 1-2.

According to Nusupbekov, it was impossible to conduct an in-depth study of modern Xinjiang because of the lack of sources and specialists. This is probably the reason why during the whole Soviet era the numerous Kazakh specialists in Uyghur studies did not produce at least one large and well-founded investigation of the region, its history and culture.

As Sauranbaev had done in 1948, also Nusupbekov sent additional suggestions for concrete measures on the way of creation Kazakh Oriental Studies: 1) to enlarge the training of Orientalists by one or two additional PhD student positions (aspirant) for study at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Asian Peoples; 2) to find an Orientalist from Leningrad or Moscow to chair the sector. Nusupbekov asked to provide an apartment for this position in order to make the job more attractive; 3) to include in the five-year plan of the Institute a new research subject dealing with the modern situation – Economic and Cultural Ties of Soviet Kazakhstan with the Countries of the Foreign Orient after WWII, to be well-equipped with source literature; 4) in order to broaden the research area, to rename the Sector of the History of Neighboring Countries of the Foreign Orient into the Sector of Oriental Studies. Nusupbekov added that increasing Oriental Studies requires an additional three- to four-year training for the existing personnel.

Most probably, Nusupbekov’s deputy Dakshsheiger was behind this strategy. Already in 1960 the latter had appealed to the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Soviet Academy of Sciences for the inclusion of specialists from outside of Kazakhstan in the projects of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata. Dakshsheiger had also asked the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy to purchase technical equipment for the publication of texts in Eastern languages, to set up a specialized publishing house in Alma-Ata. This was obviously intended as a local imitation of the central publishing house Glavnaia redaktsiia vostovnoi literatury (“The Main Redaction of Oriental Literature”) which was established in 1957 and aimed to produce literature on Oriental studies. No doubt, the 1960 International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow played a crucial role in the establishment of

589 Ibid., f. 3.
590 This was the name of the Leningrad Branch of Institute of Oriental studies between 1960 and 1970.
close ties between the Alma-Ata administrative tandem and Orientalists from many Soviet scientific centers. Since that time Oriental Studies as a discipline moved to the Institute’s Sector of Prerevolutionary History.

The Sector of Oriental Studies at the Alma-Ata Institute of History was re-established again in 1980, after a meeting on Islamology in Baku. Faced with the Islamic Revolution in Iran and the Islamic opposition to the new regime in Afghanistan, i.e. in regions close to the Soviet Union, the Soviet government required the re-creation of Islamic Studies. The most authoritative group of Islamology appeared in Leningrad under the leadership of Stanislav M. Prozorov.\textsuperscript{593} Similar smaller groups were to be established in the republics, but again in Kazakhstan this idea was not successful. To be sure, for the first time, most probably because of Veniamin Iudin’s influence, the work of the Sector turned towards the quest of Islamic manuscripts in Kazakhstan. For example, in 1981 it was planned that Mervert Kh. Abuseitova and A.K. Sultangalieva to organize a manuscript expedition, though mainly through work in archives, not in the field.\textsuperscript{594} Yet again, manuscripts in Alma-Ata remained outside the scope of scholarly interest. Kazakh Orientalists preferred to go for sources abroad. Expeditions did not obtain the necessary financial support; therefore scholars collaborated with other institutions in order to keep expenses low. This lack of support reflected the fact that officials did not understand the importance of such studies, claiming such activities only led to a romantic image of the feudal past.\textsuperscript{595}

In the same year a certain S.S. Dzhubanysheva was sent to the Arabic department of Leningrad University to study under supervision of Arabist Olga B. Frolova (b. 1926), one of the last of Krachkovskii’s disciples. Dzhubanysheva specialized in Arabic sources on the medieval history of Kazakhstan, but again there are no further reports on her activity as a scholar in the republic. The scholars at the Sector complained that only five of the eighteen employees had the scientific degree of \textit{kandidat nauk}. All others did not have the suitable training for scientific research. Therefore it was impossible to create the group of Is-


\textsuperscript{595} Interview with Mervert Kh. Abuseitova by the author, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 18 June 2010.
Islamic Studies which was planned when the Sector was established in 1980. In general, it seems that the whole Sector was set up only formally, on state demand. Physically the Sector was located in a corridor, without the possibility to work or to store scientific literature.\textsuperscript{596}

In 1981 the Sector of Oriental Studies formed a group of Iranists, Turkologists and Arabists under the leadership of Mervert Abuseitova, who had graduated from Kazakh State University and defended her dissertation under supervision of Sergei G. Kliashtorny in Leningrad. This group was in touch with a more experienced scholar, Veniamin Iudin, who had been forced to leave the Institute but actively helped Abuseitova in her manuscript studies related to the history of Kazakhstan and neighboring territories. Each scholar within the group had a certain task. R.M. Mustafina was working on the spread of Sufism in Kazakhstan in the 16\textsuperscript{th}-17\textsuperscript{th} centuries and later published a book on this subject.\textsuperscript{597} A. Anvarov translated the Uighur poetic historical treatise \textit{Ghazāt dar mulk-i Chīn} (“Holy War in the Kingdom of China”) by Mullā Bilāl (b. 1825). A.K. Sultangalieva worked on the Arabic source \textit{‘Ajā‘īb al-maqdūr fī nawā‘īb Tīmūr} (“The Marvels of Fate in the History of Tīmūr”) by Ibn ‘Arabshāh (1389-1450).\textsuperscript{598} This group, which was oriented towards classical Oriental textology in the Leningrad tradition, became a starting point for the future development of Kazakh Orientology after the fall of the Soviet Union.

All three attempts to establish Kazakh Orientology at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences or at the Institute of History were results of administrative decisions. This led to the curious situation that all serious studies in the field of Oriental Studies were conducted outside of this Sector, namely at the Sector of Prerevolutionary Kazakhstan (see below). The Sector of Oriental Studies always changed its primary field of expertise: from the history and culture of the Uighurs and Dungans (1948) to its combination with medieval Kazakh history (1955) and finally to Islamic Studies (1980). From the very beginning in 1948 classical Orientology with its focus on research of ancient texts in manuscript form was chosen as one of the main priorities for Kazakhstani science, but the implementation of the


idea to set up a local center for such studies encountered a huge problem with cadres: nobody was able to read and interpret the Oriental manuscripts that had already been collected at the Institute of History and other institutions. During the Soviet times Orientalists in Alma-Ata preferred to go elsewhere, but not to use local sources, which mainly dealt with religious history of the region.

3.4. Sapar Ibragimov: Between Leningrad and Alma-Ata

Several prominent Kazakh Orientalists had begun their academic career with Uyghur Studies. Among these was Sapar Ibragimov (1929-1960). Born and raised in the Kustanai region of the Kazakh SSR, Ibragimov had obtained his professional education at the historical faculty of Kazakh State University (1945-1950), specializing in the history of the foreign Orient. In 1950 Ibragimov entered the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography as a PhD student (aspirant) and was sent to Leningrad, where he wrote his first dissertation (kandidatskaia) under the supervision of the Turkologist Dmitrii Tikhonov599 at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. The subject of his works was highly politicized: Democratic Changes in Xinjiang after the Victory of the Chinese National Revolution (1949-1951).600 Ibragimov finished his work right on time, because after Stalin’s death relations with the People’s Republic of China became difficult, and Uyghur Studies lost their political topicality.601 Afterwards Ibragimov never returned to Uyghur Studies. In 1953 he went back to Alma-Ata, where he became an employee at the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the Institute of History. His next career move was approved by Dinmukhamed Kunaev, the later head of the Kazakhstan Communist Party but at that time still serving as president of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. In October 1954 Mikhail I. Goriaev (1904-1981), vice-president of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences (1946-1955), asked the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Soviet


Union to include the young scholar Sapar Ibragimov into the Kirgiz group at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies (1954-1957) for studying sources on Kazak history. Ibragimov’s main task was to learn how to work with Oriental manuscripts and to learn at least the Persian language.  

Ibragimov began his work in the Kirgiz group of the LO IVAN already in 1955 and remained there until 1958. He studied Persian and read Turkic manuscripts, but his translations were usually paraphrases. In some publications Ibragimov made short translations from medieval sources about the early history of Kazakh statehood and the formation of Kazakh nationality (narodnost’) in the 15th-16th centuries. He regarded his short articles as preliminary works which should prepare the basic publication of sources. Ibragimov projected a new edition of Tizengauzen’s materials supplemented by new Turkic texts, and he also prepared some Turkic texts for publication. This project was studied in details in the first chapter of this dissertation.

In the Institute of History Ibragimov’s position between Alma-Ata and Leningrad caused mixed emotions. At one of the Institute’s meetings in 1955, when Kazakh historians listened to Ibragimov’s report on his work in Leningrad, Viktor Shakhmatov openly stated that “Ibragimov, most probably, cares only about himself; we should get him back [from Leningrad] for work at the Institute.”

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saying that the latter simply reproduced a lecture on the history of Central Asia and Kazakhstan and adding that Ibragimov even “forgot about his duty before the state. Monthly receiving a salary of twenty five hundred rubles he did not do anything on the topic [of Oriental sources on the history of Kazakhstan]. (...) His attitude towards science is not serious; he is attempting to rewrite the ancient history of Kazakhstan for no reason.”

I.S. Gorokhvodatskii, then the Director of the Institute, also mentioned that in 1954 Ibragimov applied to the Central Committee of the Kazakhstan Communist Party asking permission to leave the Kazakh SSR for good. What is surprising here is that at the meeting somebody asked Ibragimov why he went to Leningrad to study manuscripts when there were many of them in Alma-Ata. This claim was rightful but the same persons at the meeting (including Viktor Shakhmatov) also used to complain about the absence of source collections in Oriental languages. The charges voiced at the meeting led to the decision to send Ibragimov back to Alma-Ata. However, this happened only in 1958.

The pretentions against Ibragimov were justifiable in a sense that he indeed did not finish his project on the re-edition of Tizengauzen’s materials. However, he wrote a number of short articles, which led his opponents to the conclusion that Ibragimov did nothing else but collect material for his new dissertation. In these articles the main question for Ibragimov was when and how the Kazakh nationality was established. In his mind, since the mid-16th century the Kazakhs were independent from the Uzbeks, whereas the ethnic name of the Kazakhs passed a complicated way from the meaning of ‘free people’ (13th-15th c.) to the political name of a feudal union (15th c.), and finally to denote the ethnicity (16th c.).

He also touched upon the problem of the role of Islam among the Kazakhs. Ibragimov did not adhere to any concrete position here; he just referred to cases where also Uzbeks were characterized as superficial Muslims, in order to say that not only Kazakhs were “bad Muslims”. Responding to the reports of the medieval historian Rūzbihānī that Kazakhs had “the customs of unbelief”, Ibragimov declared that such an accusation of

606 Ibid., 143-144.


608 Fadlallāh al-A’mīn b. Rūzbihān al-Khunjī ash-Shirāzī al-Isfahānī (1457-1521) was a Muslim scholar who studied in Arabia, lived in Bukhara and was famous for his historical book Mihmān nāma-yi Būkhārā (“The Book of Bukhara’s Guest,” 1509) about the life and wars of Muḥammad Shaybānī Khān (1451-1510).
apostasy could also be leveled against the Uzbeks, because some sources mentioned slaveholding and witchcraft among them, which he argued are forbidden by Islamic law. Ibragimov did not touch upon the role of nomadic lifestyle in the history of the Kazakhs; instead he only analyzed the settlement civilization of Southern Kazakhstan. Ibragimov formulated the conception that the Kazakh people (národnost’) came into being at the same time as the first Kazakh state in the 16th century.

It was planned that Ibragimov would have participated at the 1960 International Congress of Orientalists in Moscow, and he even submitted a paper, but shortly before the conference Ibragimov tragically lost his life. Ibragimov’s later biographers argued that he was a very promising historian of the medieval history of Kazakhstan, not only because of his short articles on various Central Asian chronicles in relation to the Kazakhs but first of all because of his initiative to re-publish Tizengauzen’s collection of sources on the history of the Golden Horde, which he intended to supplement with previously unpublished materials. This project of his would later be implemented by another talented scholar, Veniamin P. Iudin.

### 3.5. Veniamin Iudin: An Oppressed Orientalist

An ethnic Russian, Veniamin Petrovich Iudin (1928-1983) was born in Volgograd and obtained his education at the Moscow Narimanov Institute of Oriental Studies, specializing in Uyghur language and history. Turkologists Emir Nadzhip and Nikolai Baskakov, Iranian Evgenii Bertel’s and the Arabists Evgenii Beliaev and Kharlampii Baranov had

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611 Nikolai Aleksandrovich Baskakov (1905-1995) was a prominent Soviet Turkologist; he participated in changing of Noghay Arabic script into Cyrillic, in writing of Turkic dictionaries, such as Noghay, Uyghur, Karakalpak, Turkmen and others. Baskakov formulated the classification of Turkic languages that also played a significant role in shaping Central Asian nations; he gave place in a system for each language of the Soviet Turkic Orient. N.A. Baskakov, Tiurkskie iazyki (Moscow, 1960).

612 Evgenii Aleksandrovich Beliaev (1895-1964) was a specialist in Islam and medieval history of the Arabic world. He obtained his education at the faculty of Oriental languages of St. Petersburg University. S. D. Miliband, Vostokovedy Rossii, 135-136.

613 Kharlampii Karpovich Baranov (1892-1980) was the author of a well-known Arabic-Russian dictionary.
been Iudin’s teachers at the University. All these specialists were renowned for their source studies, therefore Iudin obtained good skills in Turkic philology and paleography; Arabic and Persian he studied on his own. Vladimir Nasilov⁶¹⁴ was his supervisor in post-graduate study, but Iudin never finished his first (kandidatskaia) dissertation.

Because of its geographical location and the presence of ethnic Uyghurs in the Kazakh republic, Soviet Kazakhstan was the leader of Uyghur Studies in the USSR.⁶¹⁵ Iudin’s fate had it that in 1955, obviously in the context of the creation of the Sector of Oriental Studies, he was invited, as a young specialist, to work in Alma-Ata, at the Kazakh Pedagogic Institute, where a Uyghur department had been opened at the historical-philological faculty. There Iudin started to teach Uyghur literature and the history of this language. But after five years, probably by invitation of Akai Nusupbekov, he took on a new position at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography.⁶¹⁶ This transfer changed professional interests: since that time Kazakh history and Central Asian historiographical tradition appeared to be in the main focus of his scholarly life.

After Ibragimov’s death Veniamin Iudin became a new leader of the group which prepared the publication of Oriental sources on the history of Kazakhstan. Klavdia Pishchulina and Nadzhip Mingulov (on both scholars see below) were already in this group, and the two Leningrad colleagues Oleg Akimushkin and Munira Salakhetdinova participated in the project as outside translators of several Persian texts. Iudin soon transformed the initial project plan, which foresaw the publication of a supplemented edition of the Persian volume of Baron Tizengauzen’s grand opus.⁶¹⁷ Iudin rather decided to produce a new compendium of previously unpublished Turkic and Persian sources on the history of the Kazakh state in the 15th-18th centuries.⁶¹⁸ Similar to other cases of source publications

⁶¹⁴ Vladimir Michailovich Nasilov (1893-1970) studied Old Turkic inscriptions and their language; he was the editor of an academic dictionary of the Old Turkic language (Leningrad, 1969). Also Kazakh Turkologist Altai Amandzhalov obtained his education under Nasilov’s supervision.


⁶¹⁷ Sbornik materialov, otnosiashechkiisia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, vol. 2, Izvlecheniiia iz persidskikh sochineni, sobranne V.G. Tizengauzenom i obrabotanny A.A. Romaskevichem i S.L. Voilnym (Moscow, Leningrad, 1941).

in the Soviet Union, the new book became a basis for more elaborate research of the Kazakh past and for writing a new version of national history in the 1970s. It should be mentioned that Iudin was very strict in his attitude towards the quality of translations. He rejected the majority of Ibragimov’s paraphrases and was very harsh with regard to the texts of colleagues (for example, of his Leningrad colleague Salakhetdinova) within the group.

The Kazakh historian Kanat Uskenbai wrote that the publication of materials on Kazakh history signified the establishment of a genuine Kazakh school of Oriental studies. We might come to a different conclusion by having a closer look at the origins of the members of this team. All employees in this group had obtained their education at Moscow, Leningrad or Tashkent scientific centers. In my opinion, in this case we cannot conclude that a new school of Oriental studies appeared with its own leader, a specific methodology and new scientific traditions. Rather, what we see here is a research group (brigada) united only by particular tasks (a joint project) and by a common institution (the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography). This group did not elaborate its own scientific methodology that would justify to call it a school in the classical sense. The practice of setting up temporary scientific collectives (brigada, gruppa) had been initiated already in the 1930s, as we have seen in the case of other philological Oriental projects. In addition, the whole team of Orientalists, supported by the tandem of Akai Nusupbekov and Grigorii Dakhshleiger, broke up in the 1980s, i.e. after the death of its major protagonists, and did not leave a significant trace.

Veniamin Iudin alone translated ten out of the seventeen sources that were published in the 1969 book. To each translated text he produced a groundbreaking introduction with an explanation of its historical significance for the prerevolutionary history of Kazakhstan. However, when Veniamin Iudin wrote a summary review of the topic, which was to preface the rest of the material, someone in the administration of the Institute insisted on being named as coauthor of this article. According to Irina Erofeeva, this person was Begedzhan Suleimenov, with whom Iudin had very difficult personal relations. Suleimenov did not allow the publication of Iudin’s articles, and he blocked Iudin’s career.

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619 Klavdiia Antonovna Pishchulina: Materialy k biobibliografii uchenyk Kazakhstana, ed. by Kanat Uskenbai (Almaty, 2009), 50.

development. Iudin did not accept this intrusion and eventually left the Institute in 1970. Other accounts from Kazakhstan, whose authors I cannot name here, interpret Iudin’s departure from the Institute as a result of his ‘chauvinistic’ and ‘imperialistic’ worldview, and claim that he was dismissed by Nusupbekov. Besides, in 1962 Dakhshleiger once mentioned at an occasional meeting that “Iudin might work better. He procrastinates with the defense of his dissertation, though he could have finished it already a year ago. He is a talented and well-prepared scholar, but he does not work at full capacity.” Nadzhip Mingulov even called Iudin “lazy”, yet all these characterizations concealed a basic conflict between the scholars at the Institute which ultimately resulted in the fading away of any activity of Kazakh Orientology. The personal conflict with Suleimenov had a significant impact on Iudin’s fate. Iudin lacked a scientific grade (he did not defend his dissertation), some of his articles remained unpublished, and he was forced to frequently change his jobs. His main work, a translation of the Chingiz-nāma, was published only after Iudin’s death and only due to the efforts of his students Merve rt Abuseitova and Nurbulat Masanov.

In 1970 Iudin moved to the historical faculty of Kazakh State University, where he taught a special course entitled Persian and Turkic Sources on the History of Kazakhstan in the 15th to 18th Centuries. At the faculty Iudin very soon organized a student circle (kruzhok) that was labeled ‘Orientalist,’ where he taught Persian and Arabic languages and paleography for interested students. In his first lessons he had a lot of students, but only very few became true successors of Iudin in his fields of scientific interests. Mervert Abuseitova, today the Director of the post-Soviet Institute of the Oriental Studies in Almaty, obtained her university education under Iudin’s supervision. They worked together on sources from Tashkent and Leningrad collections, but Veniamin Iudin also initiated an Oriental manuscript expedition which was intended to collect sources in Kazakhstan and in other lands. Probably it was difficult to organize large-scale works because of the usual lack of specialists and of money.

In a scandalous article which was foreseen as a foreword of the collective work Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates, but then not included in the publication,

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621 Interview with Irina V. Erofeeva, Institute of Nomadic Studies, Almaty, 22 June 2010.


623 Interview with Mervert Kh. Abuseitova by the author, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty. 18 June 2010.
Iudin formulated an original concept of the correlation between the medieval terms “Kazakh” and “Uzbek”. Referring to ancient texts, he claimed that the territory of modern Kazakhstan was called Uzbekistan in sources dating from the 14th and 15th centuries. In the beginning of the 15th century a new political union of tribes, in Soviet historiography called ‘the state of nomadic Uzbeks’ (gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov)\textsuperscript{624}, emerged in the steppes. In this link one can see an attempt to analyze the past of Central Asian nations on the basis of common heritage, because ‘the state of the nomadic Uzbeks’ appeared to be part of national histories of the Uzbeks and the Kazakhs. Iudin made such conclusions on the basis of manuscript studies. Generally, his scientific work was guided by two forms of theoretical comprehension in source studies: the dynastic classification and the investigation of ‘nomadic historiography’ (stepnaia ustnaia istoriologiia). First of all, Iudin classified medieval historical works on Kazakh history by the dynastic principle and correlated them with each other. In general, his classification is still largely accepted in post-Soviet scholarship (and even beyond), even if his name remains mostly unmentioned. He differentiated four large circles of court historiography: Shaybanid, Chaghatay, Timurid and Safavid.\textsuperscript{625}

In addition to the dynastic principle, Veniamin Iudin elaborated the concept of ‘oral steppe historiography’ (stepnaia ustnaia istoriografiia) which reproduced a new kind of ideology. In Iudin’s own words, the “synthesis of Shamanism, Buddhism, Islam and Chingizid doctrine resulted in the creation of new ideology.”\textsuperscript{626} Indeed, in the 13th to 14th centuries the Mongol elite produced a new imperial ideology which came down to us in only few sources such as the Secret History of Mongols (1241). The concept of world supremacy of the Sky’s Son, Chingiz Khan, and his descendants was reflected in cultural symbols, such as architecture (for example, statues of tortoise), fashion (belts, drums, and valuables), literature and official acts (documents and coins). Mongol coins carry a lot of ideological information which can easily be characterized as resulting from cultural syncretism: dragon pictures with Uyghur inscriptions or the name of Chingiz Khan together with that of the Caliph Naṣîr ad-Dīn and the Muslim symbol of faith (kalima-yi

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\textsuperscript{624} This definition was suggested by Uzbek historian Bori Akhmedov in his book of similar title Gosudarstvo kochevykh uzbekov (Moscow, 1965).

\textsuperscript{625} V. P. Iudin, “Persidskie i tiurkskie istochniki,” 22.

According to Iudin’s conception, the Mongol elite created a World religion which he called Chingizism. This intriguing hypothesis was based on research of court historiography, but unfortunately, Veniamin Iudin did not have enough time to describe Chingizism as he saw it in details. The article on this phenomenon was published only after its author’s death. The concept of steppe historiography remains a very abstract theory, though recently Roman Pochekaev, a St. Petersburg historian of law, elaborated the idea of Chingizism as a political-judicial concept rather than a religious system. Iudin outlined only very general characteristics of Chingizism; what was really new in his concept was his perception of Chingizism as a World religion. Iudin placed his Chingizism and steppe historiography in the context of Kazakh national history and turned them into specific markers of nomadic society. What Iudin claimed was that nomads not only had urban culture, but that they also possessed an elaborated historiographical tradition which expressed a complex steppe ideology and was mainly preserved in oral form.

Orientalists are indebted to Iudin for his work on a unique source, the Chingiz-nāma (“Book of Chingiz”). Iudin stated that this chronicle was written by Utemish Hajji ibn Mavlana Dosti in the 16th century. For Iudin this was the central source for studying Chingizism and “oral steppe historiography”. Iudin even suggested the establishment of a new discipline with a respective title. It was to collect, systematize, and classify sources as well as to develop specific research methods. Iudin stated the general goal of this new discipline: to reconstruct the nomadic type of knowledge as a whole.

Iudin was one of the first Kazakhstani Orientalists who possessed the required knowledge for serious work with historical manuscripts and made several important steps on the way towards their critical study in the framework of Kazakh history. However, again, the potential of the scholar was not fully used. Intrigues and open conflict were the

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630 V. P. Iudin, “Perekhod vlasti k plemennym biiam i neizvestnoi dinastii Tukatimuridov v kazakhskikh stepiakh v XIV veke (k probleme vostochnykh pismennykh istochnikov, stepnoi ustnoi istoriografii i predistoryi Kazakhskogo khanstva),” in: Chingiz-name, 66.
main reasons of Iudin’s disadvantage on his scholarly path. Paradoxically, the Institute of History lost one of its most recognized and well-trained specialist at a time when Kazakh Orientology only made its first steps. However, Iudin’s special course and research team at KazGU enabled him to attract disciples, who continued his work in various ways. The most prominent among them are Mervert Abuseitova, Nurbulat Masanov and Timur Beisembiev. While Nurbulat Masanov in fact (re-) created Kazakh nomadic studies, Abuseitova and Beisembiev are still working in the field of classical Orientology.

3.6. Klavdiia Pishchulina: the Continuity of Kazakh Statehood

If Veniamin Iudin remained an outsider of active academic life, his colleague Klavdiia Pishchulina was well integrated in the Kazakh national historiography. She was born in Lipetsk region (Russia) in 1934 and studied Oriental history at the Moscow State University where Iudin too pursued his studies. In 1957 Pishchulina started her postgraduate study at the Institute of Oriental Languages (which had been integrated into the structure of MGU in 1956), the unit that is today still famous under the name of Institute of Asian and African States of Moscow State University. When she was still a student her studies were supported by the archeologist Artemii Artsikhovskii, who was the Dean of the Historical Faculty. In Moscow Pishchulina worked on the agrarian reforms and legislation under the Persian ruler Reżā Shāh Pahlavi (1878-1944). Already in 1959 Pishchulina married to Ali Dzhandosov, the son of the famous repressed Kazakh politician Uraz Dzhandosov, and they moved to Alma-Ata. Her planned dissertation on Režā Shāh’s time remained unfinished. Pishchulina took her place at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh Republic and became the first professional scholar of Iranian studies ever employed at that Institute. In Alma-Ata Pishchulina realized that Kazakh history was the only possible topic there, and her attention turned towards the

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631 Artemii Vladimirovich Artsikhovskii (1902-1978) obtained his education at historical faculty of Moscow State University. He directed the Novgorod archeological expedition and was a discoverer of the writings on birch bark.


633 Klavdiia Antonovna Pishchulina, 47.

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history of Eastern Turkestan and the formation of Kazakh medieval statehood. This became a new topic of her second kandidatskaia project that she successfully defended in 1979. Between 1972 and 1984 Pishchulina served as an academic secretary of the Institute of History; for the Institute this hiring of a professional Iranist of Moscow training was a great fortune.  

Thus, Pishchulina entered the Institute very soon after Iudin’s arrival from Moscow and enthusiastically joined the project on Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates. For this edition Pishchulina translated several Persian accounts, namely the first part of Ta’rīkh-i Rashīdī by Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥaydar and the fourth part of a historical-geographical work Bahr al-asrār fī manaqīb al-akhyār by Ḩamdūl ibn Wālī (16th c.).

The change of Soviet politics toward the People’s Republic of China and Xinjiang was the reason why Pishchulina’s comprehensive work on the Bahr al-asrār was published only in 1983, ten years after its completion. Her complete translation of this source is not yet published and remains in her private archive.

Very much in accordance with works of archeologists who were working on southern Kazakhstan (see the next chapter), Pishchulina in her dissertation developed her own concept of time, place and the historical context of the establishment of Kazakh medieval statehood. In spite of her being a Moscow-educated Orientalist, she created a nationally oriented version of Kazakh history which found its continuity in the recent historiography of Kazakhstan. Pishchulina saw the origin of the first Kazakh state in the heritage of the Mongol Empire, especially in the eastern part of the Golden Horde that was known as Aq-Orda, which was ruled by the dynasty of Orda-Echen in the 13th and 14th centuries. She

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634 Ibid., 47-49.
639 Orda Echen was the oldest son of Juchi, the son of Chingiz Khan.
argued for the continuity of the heritage of the Great Mongol Empire and of the tribal structure of Aq-Orda to the Kazakh Khanate that was established in the 16th century.

Pishchulina’s concept of the history of Kazakh statehood, reflected in her dissertation, is characterized by the assumption that statehood emerged very early, that one can speak of a clear feudal character of the socio-economical structure of this state, and that there was an autochthonous process of ethnogenesis in Moghulistan (Eastern Turkestan, Semirech’e). Pishchulina was challenging Iudin’s position concerning the degree of centralization in the Kazakh Khanate(s), since Veniamin Iudin took Asfendiiarov’s thesis on the existence of several un-centralized states in the medieval steppe region as his starting point. Klavdia Pishchulina wrote that a centralized Kazakh Khanate was formed in the late 1560s in Moghulistan. In 1979 at the Alma-Ata Institute of History during the defense of her kandidatskaia dissertation on the topic *South-Eastern Kazakhstan in the mid-14th-early 16th centuries*, she noted that written sources are always late in the fixation of the appearance of nationality. In other words, following Iakubovskii’s concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia, Pishchulina claimed that the name of the ethnos in sources is fixed well after the actual appearance of the feudal *narodnost’*. She exemplified this by reference to Bobojan Gafurov’s work *The Tajiks* (1972), where a similar situation was illustrated for Tajik and Uzbek history, therefore clearly leaning on Iakubovskii’s pamphlet of the year 1941 on the Uzbek ethnogenesis that we discussed above. Elsewhere, she tried to explain the contradiction that appears between, on the one hand, ethnogenetic theory and, on the other, written sources that report about many tribes, unions and little clans. In response to this contradiction she claimed that in Kazakhstan one encounters “a special form of nationality” which was preserved for a long period of time.

Kanat Uskenbai published the protocol of the discussion of Pishchulina’s 1979 doctoral defense. At that event the Kazakh scholars Begezhan Suleimenov and Bulat Kumekov expressed their opinion on the actuality and novelty of Pishchulina’s dissertation, and claimed that it was politically important to prove the autochthonous character of the present-day population in Eastern Turkestan. This was in full correspondence with


643 [K. Uskenbai], “Tema Mogulistana i zarozhdeniia kazakhskoi gosudarstvennosti,” 53.
Marrism and with the results of archeological works. This insistence on autochthonous origins united all studies of the Kazakh past by textologists and archeologists. The strong connection of Moghulistan to Kazakh ethnic history since very early times and the continuity of a common tribal structure allowed the Soviets to reject the territorial claims of the Mao government in the 1960s-70s. Pishchulina’s general conclusion was very strict: in the 14th-15th centuries the list of tribes in Moghulistan was identical to those in south-eastern Kazakhstan in pre-Mongol times meaning that these territories had a shared historical background, unlike the Chinese population which appeared to be a colonial force. Pishchulina found Kazakh clans of the Great Horde (Ulu Zhuz) already in the framework of the Western Turkic Kaganate (7th century), the Qarluq state (8th-10th centuries), the Qarakhanid Kaganate (10th-13th centuries) and the Mongol Empire (13th-14th centuries). The scholar concluded: “This territory (i.e. Semirech’e – A.B.), inhabited by native tribes, was located within the modern borders of the Kazakh Soviet Republic.”

The author needed this argument in order to construct a direct line of historical development from the Kazakh Khanate to the modern Kazakh republic. This amounts to nothing else but a legitimation of the national demarcation (natsional’noe razmezhevanie) of the 1920s-30s. The concept of autochthonism, i.e. an eternal belonging of territory to a given nation, was an ideological argument for the isolation of national histories from each other and for the rejection of the regional approach, as seen above.

While the publication of written sources in the 1969 Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates prepared the ground for historical research, Pishchulina provided in her monograph a complete survey of Kazakh medieval history on the basis of Marxist methodology. For her the major tasks of Kazakh historical science was to study ethnogenesis and statehood, socioeconomic and cultural development, the establishment of social inequalities and classes, the formation of tribal unions and first states on the Kazakh territory as well as the emergence of Kazakh nationality (narodnost’). The problem was how to substantiate features of nomadic feudalism and nomadic statehood. In the introduction to her work Pishchulina rejected the opinion of ‘bourgeois falsifiers’ (without providing any names) and argued that nomads had a class society and a feudal statehood.

644 K. A. Pishchulina, Iugo-Vostochnyi Kazakhstan, 243-244.
645 Ibid., 8.
In her works Pishchulina combined the analysis of manuscript data with the results of archeological investigation. This might have been an influence of her early mentor Artsikhouskii to whom we briefly referred above. Her article on the cities of the Sir Darya valley is useful for archeologists up to present day. Pishchulina proved that the Aq-Orda and the state of the nomadic Uzbeks as well as later political unions must be regarded as feudal states according to archeological data and some written sources, the most important of which is an extremely confusing compilation *Muntakhab at-tawārīkh-i Muʿīnī* by Muʿīn ad-Dīn Naṭanzī (15th century).

Pishchulina’s career is perhaps the most powerful example of political influence on Kazakh Oriental Studies, which is reflected not only in her high position at the Institute of History as an academic secretary, but also by her belonging to political circles: the family of her husband has been politically engaged until the present day. Her son Oraz Alievich (b. 1961) actively participates in Kazakh politics, whereas her daughter Zarine Alievna is a well-known scholar of Iranian studies at the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University. Unfortunately, I was not able to interview Klavdiia Antonovna during my visit to Almaty in 2010. After retirement she modestly avoided any public appearance and active involvement in the academic life of independent Kazakhstan. Fortunately, her successor Kanat Uskenbai was open for discussions on the history of Kazakh Orientology and I have relied here on many of his suggestions.

### 3.7. Sergei Kliashtorny: Orientalists in the State Service

Since the 1970s the Alma-Ata Institute of Oriental Studies had close relations with the Sector of Turkic and Mongol Studies in Leningrad headed by Sergei G. Kliashtorny (in office since 1963). Born in the city of Gomel’ (Belarus) in 1928, Kliashtorny obtained his education at Leningrad State University (departments of Turkic Philology and History of Near and Middle East). He became famous for his regular expeditions to Mongolia, where he

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discovered and studied numerous Old Turkic inscriptions. On the basis of this rich material Kliashtorny wore his famous dissertation *Old Turkic Runic Monuments as a Source on the History of Central Asia* and many monographs and articles on the history of pre-Mongol Central Asia. Besides he edited a series entitled *Turkological Collection* which continues to appear bi-annually. Kliashtorny actively participated in several big Oriental projects: the second volume of the *History of the Kazakh SSR*, the first volume of the *History of the Kirgiz SSR*, and the failed project of regional history of Central Asia, which has been discussed above. Today Sergei Grigor’evich is still working at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts, the former Leningrad Branch of the IVAN, which he entered in 1957.

In the 1970s Kliashtorny and the administration of the Alma-Ata Institute of History came to an agreement about cooperation that produced a highly educated collective of Orientalists in Kazakhstan in the 1970s and 1980s. I believe that Kliashtorny’s crucial role for the topic of this thesis justifies it to reproduce at this point a larger part of what he said during my interviews with him. Kliashtorny has heavily influenced my own perception of the role of Oriental Studies in Soviet Central Asia. This is how Kliashtorny views it:

“Leningrad was one of the significant training centers for the scientific personnel in the area of classical, non-political, academic Oriental Studies. Pure science is an investigation of a given object without connections to politics (…). However, it will be hypocritical to claim that our school has not been engaged in politics. Why? The formation of nationalities or identities is the result of very difficult processes, based on ‘national’ history and language. Without these categories nationality cannot exist. We currently observe a process of national formation which began in the early 20th century, when Muslim delegates were included into the State parliament and when national movements like Alash-Orda were established in Central Asia. It was the starting point of national formation. Stalinist politics gave an impulse to the national demarcation. The territory of Central Asia was divided according to an ethnic principle. Nations received either traditional names, or they were given names that existed but were not commonly used by the respective population, or [previously] non-existent names.

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The so-called “national staff” (Rus. natsional’nye kadry) was to lead this process of the formation of social structure within the Soviet Union: a national intelligentsia, a national working class, the transformation of the peasantry from rather traditional communal groups into something modern (and this process had not yet been completed). This process of national building was artificial and intensively accelerated. It became clear that this process needed support, otherwise it could develop only by way of administration, i.e. in no way. A general territory designated by one name and an ethnically homogeneous government could become the basis for this transformation.

It is impossible to convince people that they are a nation. The nation did not exist in their consciousness, in their soul. There is a typical joke of the Soviet postwar time. About half a million Kirgiz were living in the Ferghana Valley. Someone asked them: what is your nationality (millet)? The answer was “Kirgiz”. But as you live in Uzbekistan, you should have the “Uzbek” millet! People were afraid and therefore agreed. This was an administrative method of nation building, through lie. Of course, these Kirgiz did not become true Uzbeks. When I was in Central Asia for the first
time, in the Namangan valley, I asked an old man: “How do you understand nationality?” He did not understand me and answered only: “Men musulmon (I am a Muslim)”. This was in 1947. [When I asked further,] the old man told me the name of their territory and their neighborhood (mahalla). This was the limit of his consciousness, not a nationality. For them an Uzbek was a shepherd from the mountains, a bumpkin. The same held true for the term Sart. This is not a nationality; this is a condition, to be a city-dweller. Patrimonial relations were secondary for settled people, whereas the Uzbeks continued to assign importance to this kind of social organization. It was a shame for townspeople to be Uzbek. The nations did not exist at that time.  

How to generate a nation? The first way, purely administrative, territorial, did not produce an effect. At the top of it there was the national intelligentsia that began to become aware of its position in the 1930s. The national policy of the Party was only an administrative framework, they needed an ideology: an official language and a mythological historical past. Everything that was created on this territory became a national history, even if there was no connection between the former and the modern population. If common language and history do not exist, one has to create them. How? You must cut several national histories out of the regional [i.e. Central Asian] past. Before the Revolution Vasilii Bartol’d did not write about nations, he wrote a history of Turkestan. His essays about the Kirgiz and the Turkmens were the result of a political demand; however he did not view these tribes as nations. About the Kazakhs he could not write, they were too diverse.  

What was it that Soviet Oriental Studies created? Based on original sources, it created a more or less authentic history of those dispersed ethnic and territorial groups which became objects of national building and began to be designated as socialist nations. The Institute of Oriental studies as well as the Institute of History of the USSR received instructions to work in these directions. In the spirit of these instructions Orientalist produced such grandiose works as Materials on the History of Turkmen and Turkmenia [1934-1939]. Why did they do it? Pavel Petrovich Ivanov, in his Sketches

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650 [V. V. Bartol’d, “Kirgizy. Istoricheskii ocherk [1927],” in: V. V. Bartol’d, Sochinenia, vol. 2, part 1, Obshchie raboty po istorii Srednei Azii, Raboty po istorii Kavkaza i Vostochnoi Evropy (Moscow, 1963), 473-546; V. V. Bartol’d, „Ocherk istorii turkmenskogo naroda [1929],“ in: V. V. Bartol’d, Sochinenia, vol 2, part 1, Obshchie raboty po istorii Srednei Azii, Raboty po istorii Kavkaza i Vostochnoi Evropy (Moscow, 1963), 547-626.]
on the History of Central Asia, wrote about the state formations on this territory. This was the regional tradition of Vasilii Bartol’d — Turkestan studies (turkestanovedenie). Ivanov could not write in another manner. In 1942 Pavel Ivanov died from hunger without having published his book. Ivanov clearly understood that there was no nationality; [the subject of his work was not Uzbekistan but] the history of Kokand and Bukhara. This was all that such a respectable person as Pavel Petrovich Ivanov could produce (...). The main merit of the Bartol’d school is that they started to explore that huge file of local sources which Russia had collected in St. Peters burg, Kazan and Tashkent. Bartol’d had started to point his finger [at that body of sources] and said for the first time: “Here, colleagues, it is necessary to get started!” This is why the first volume of Turkestan down to the Mongol Conquest included the publication of original sources. Leningrad Orientalists, specialists of Central Asia, discovered a large body of primary sources, and already the following generation of scholars [in 1950s] had a clear methodology of source studies at their disposal. (…)

We use a lot of sources, we write the history of peoples; however we do not deny that all this is just a common cultural heritage. From a political point of view we participate in an enormous socio-historical and political creation of national self-identities for independent nations of Central Asia. At one point we had to make a choice: either development within the framework of large territorial-religious associations (Turkestan as a whole) or within the limits of a national history according to the principle which had been formulated for the first time by the Austrian school of sociology and had then been accepted by Stalin’s government. Politicians chose the ‘safe’ division into nationalities. The possible union of a Muslim block was dangerous for Moscow; five or six conflicting nations pleased both the Center and the local ruling elites. (...) We, the Orientalists, carefully refrain from politics. At the same time we solve a big part of an important political problem for the development of Eastern society, more than is done by researchers of other regions. Classical Oriental Studies created the fundament for the maturation of national consciousness in huge territories among various peoples. We always adhered to Bartol’d’s region-cultural approach. Even when we wrote books on political demand, we always meant a general Central Asian process."

651 [P. P. Ivanov, Ocherki po istorii Srednei Azii (XVI-seredina XIX veka) (Moscow, 1958).]

652 Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtornyi by the author, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.
Sergei G. Kliashornyi sees Oriental Studies in the Soviet Union as a service to the state. In the interview he distinguished between ‘direct’ and ‘indirect’ political influences of politics; both were incorrect, in his mind, because the whole system of science in the Soviet Union was incorporated into the political structure. Scholars at the Institute always received orders from the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences, in the form of five-year plans (*piatiletka*). In addition, there were extraordinary tasks which came from various institutions. What makes the matter more complicated is that in the majority of cases it is impossible to clearly identify the initiator of any given project; the available documentation only reflects how project plans were first formulated already according to specific standards of this or that organization, with a practical hierarchy of command that might conceal the initial political source, and that formulates political tasks already in the language of ‘neutral’ sciences. Much of our analysis is therefore to deconstruct these orders, to distill from them the underlying motivation.

Soviet scholars not only created national histories of Central Asian peoples which were accepted by the local scholarship, but they also educated this national scientific staff. The general context of Soviet studies of Central Asian history was ultimately political — to separate the territory of historical Turkestan according to national features. It makes no sense to judge this phenomenon from a moral standpoint. I agree with Tajik thinker Akbar Tursun, a Director of the Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, who wrote that “this should not denigrate Soviet Oriental Studies. The Muslim ethic tradition considers ingratitude the worst human streak,”[^653] because Orientalists contributed a lot to the modern independence of the Central Asian republics.

In the interview Kliashtorny also elaborated on the training of national cadres by Orientalists from the center, with the example of the collaboration of Leningrad’s Turkology with the team of young Orientalists at the Institute of History.

“Kazakh scholars consider Chokan Valikhanov as their first Orientalist; however he had his basic education only from *maktab*, a Muslim school. At the Omsk Cadet Corpus Valikhanov did not receive any skills in Oriental philology, though he knew Persian perfectly from private teachers who had been hired by Chokan’s father. The serious study of Arabic-Persian sources in Russia began with Vasilii Vel’iaminov-Zernov and Vladimir Tizengauzen. Their translations of sources provided the basics for Ka-

zakh historiography. The formation of the Kazakh Soviet school [of Oriental Studies] is connected to the name of Sapar Ibragimov. He obtained his postgraduate study here, in Leningrad. These teachers were the Turkologists Aleksandr Borovkov and Dmitrii Tikhonov. Ibragimov learned Arabic and Persian, started to use original sources, and left to Kazakhstan in 1958, when I took his place at the Sector of Turkology. Unfortunately, soon afterwards Ibragimov tragically died.

Once, the director of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata Akai Nusupbekov called me, saying “We have decided to revive Oriental Studies.” There was a fashionable topic *Al-Fārābī as the great Kazakh scholar*. As you know, Fārābī is an area of Otrar [in Kazakhstan], but there is also the second Farab located on the Amu Darya River [in present-day Uzbekistan]. Al-Fārābī lived in Bagdad, and because he was one of the great Islamic philosophers, Kazakhs decided that he is their fellow countryman and thus Kazakh by origin. (…)

All Kazakh experts of Persian and Arabic studied in Tashkent with Muhammad Baky Khalidov, who was the father of our Anas Bakievich Khalidov. In particular, the future academician Bulat Kumekov obtained his education at the Arabic Branch of Tashkent University. He was sent to Aswan [in Egypt] and later went for postgraduate study to the Institute of History in Alma-Ata. Akai Nusupbekov took care of Kumekov in order to organize Oriental source studies, because all medieval history writing of the Steppes was still based on Veliaminov-Zernov’s and Tizengauzen’s translations. There was a huge corpus of written sources, and except for “guerrilla sorties” organized by Aleksandr Bernshtam, nobody undertook any investigation of this material. Akai Nusupbekov knew this. From Moscow he called Veniamin Iudin, who graduated from the Uyghur department at that time.

There was another scholar, Suleimenov, who gave Kumekov the topic of his dissertation on al-Fārābī. However, this topic was completely beyond the history of Kazakhstan. At that time I organized, under direction of academician Andrei Kononov, a series of Turkological conferences, and I began to publish [the regular volumes of articles] *Turkological Collection* [in the 1970s until 1985, revived since

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654 [Anas Bakievich Khalidov (1929-2001) was a famous Leningrad Arabist, one of the last students of Ignatii Krachkovskii. About him: G. G. Zainullin, Anas Bakievich Khalidov, 1929-2001 (Kazan, 2003).]

655 [Academician Andrei Nikolaevich Kononov (1906-1986) obtained a degree from the Oriental Institute in Leningrad in 1930. He was professor at the Leningrad University and chief of Turkological cabinet at the Leningrad branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Kononov wrote comprehensive works on Turkic and Uzbek grammar as well as on the history of Soviet Oriental Studies (especially Turkology); he also edited several literary texts of medieval Central Asia. See: S. N. Ivanov, A. P. Velikov, L. M. Zhukova, Andrei Nikolaevich Kononov (Moscow, 1980).]
Bulat Kumekov regularly came to these conferences. Therefore Suleimenov sent Kumekov to me. Also, [there was] another student of ours, Tursun Sultanov, who needed to be integrated into our collective at the Institute of Oriental Studies. I admitted him to the sector of Turkology and found him a supervisor, Vadim Romodin, for Persian studies. The first Oriental Studies group of Turkestan researchers was [thus] created at our sector. I gave Bulat Kumekov a research topic on the history of the Kimak state. He did an excellent job; sure I put in it a lot of effort as well. Akai Nusupbekov also collected young Sinologists for the Institute of History, namely Viacheslav Kuznetsov and Zuev, as well as the Iranist Shukhovtsov and the Arabist Nastich. Shukhovtsov was connected to Vladimir Livshits from our sector. Nastich is more connected to Moscow; however he obtained a degree from our Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University. Then Mervert Abuseitova and Aleksandr Kadyrbaev were sent from Alma-Ata to me. Abuseitova graduated from the Kazakh State University and worked with Iudin; the latter had no time to particularly get to know her. Therefore Mervert learnt Persian from Lidia Pavlovna Smirnova when she was already in Leningrad. I was the supervisor of Abuseitova’s dissertation.

Since 1963 I am heading the sector of Turkology at the Leningrad Branch of Institute of Oriental Studies, and all of these young scholars worked at my sector. Tursun Sultanov completed his first dissertation on the tribes of the Aral Sea area. (. . .). [Before that,] when Tursun had just finished his postgraduate study, he together with his wife went to Kazakhstan and for three years worked in Alma-Ata as the Institute of History’s scientific secretary. There he understood that serious textological studies were impossible in Alma-Ata, because all collections of written sources are here [in Leningrad]. I found him a place at the Institute and even an apartment for his family. Sultanov became the scientific secretary of our sector and smartly began to write the second dissertation on the historical books in Central Asia.

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656 [For more details on personal relations between Tursun Sultanov and Vadim Romodin see: T. I. Sultanov, “Pamiati Vadima Aleksandroviicha Romodina (K desiatiletiiu so dnia smerti),” Peterburgskoe sostokovedenie 6 (St. Petersburg, 1994), 651-657.]

657 [B. E. Kumekov, Gosudarstvo kimakov IX-XI vekov po arabskim istochnikam (Alma-Ata, 1972). The Kimaks were the Turkic nomadic people which inhabited eastern and central territories of Kazakhstan in the 6th-11th centuries].

658 [M.Kh. Abuseitova, Kazakhskoe khanstvo vo vtoroi polovine XVI veka (Alma-Ata, 1985.).]

659 [T. I. Sultanov, Kochevye plemena Priaral’ia v XV-XVII vekakh (Moscow, 1982.).]

660 [T.I. Sultanov, Zertsalo minuvshikh stoletii: Istoricheskaia kniga v kul’ture Srednei Azii XV-XIX vv. (St. Petersburg, 2005.).]
In 1983, after the death of academician Akai Nusupbekov and of his faithful assistant Dakhshleiger, the Institute of History in Alma-Ata started to fall into decline. Kazykbaev, the new director, tried to maintain the high level of previous research; it did not work out. (...) Soon all scholarly activities [there] went into decay, because of the intrusion of politicians into the Institute’s structure. Employees of the Institute left for different places. However, several scholars contributed to the study of Kazakh history under Nurbulat Masanov.661 One year prior Masanov’s death (2006) he founded the Institute of Nomadic Studies; Irina Viktorovna Erofeeva was appointed as its director. Veniamin Iudin was a significant scholar for Kazakh Oriental studies, with a perfect command of Persian and Turkic languages. Later my young generation of scholars created the Institute of Oriental Studies in Almaty [1996] on the basis [of units from] the former Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. This positive tendency in Kazakh science began with Veniamin Iudin.”662

A clear contradiction in Kliashtornyi’s narrative should be analyzed here. On the one hand he praises the Bartol’dist approach of Central Asian regional history and claims his adherence to this dimension. Kliashtornyi admits that scholars from the centre and he himself participated in writing national histories. Today he evaluates this critically and, of course, there are good reasons to assume that he maintained this critical position already in the Soviet times. It is clear, however, that Kliashtornyi retrospectively tried to re-evaluate his role in the creation of republican meta-histories: he claims that the histories of different republics had similar content, thus Leningrad scholars tried to write each national meta-history from a regional perspective.

The Kazakh case is seen by Kliashtornyi as an example how Orientalists from the center and local institutions jointly created identities of Central Asian nations. In his narrative, the growth and development of Kazakh Oriental Studies were heavily dependent on central scientific institutions, especially on Kliashtornyi’s Turkological Sector in Leningrad which produced a number of specialists in manuscript studies for Alma-Ata. Again, the main link here was between the tandem Nusupbekov-Dakhshleiger and Kliashtornyi, who had an agreement on the training of Kazakh national cadres. When the tandem had passed away, the system gradually lost its efficiency, but the previous years of collabora-

661 [In 1976 Nurbulat Masanov graduated from the Historical faculty of Kazakh State University in Almaty. Since that time he has been working at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography.]

tion had set up a basis for the development of classical Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan after 1991. Against this central perspective of a Leningrad scholar it will now be useful to proceed to the local perspective of those who studied in Leningrad and then returned to Alma-Ata in order to work in a group of Orientalists.

3.8. The Team of Young Orientalists in Alma-Ata

I conducted interviews with several scholars from the team of young Orientalists mentioned by Sergei G. Kliashtorny, namely with Bulat Kumekov, Mervert Abuseitova, Nadzhip Mingulov, Vladimir Nastich, and Tursun Sultanov. Additional information was collected from Irina V. Erofeeva, Kanat Uskenbai as well as from archival sources. In the following I would like to tell their stories in greater details, showing how they experienced the concrete institutional and personal networks, and how they viewed Orientology and its relation to the authorities in power.

Bulat Eshmukhamedovich Kumekov was born in Dzhambul (Ṭarāz) in 1940. He was the oldest son and had six brothers and sisters. When Kumekov decided to become an Arabist, his father revealed to him that Kumekov’s ancestors were religious authorities: his great-grandfather had been an Imam in Sayrām, the latter’s son was a religious teacher, and also Kumekov’s father had learned the Qur’an by heart at the age of twelve.⁶⁶³ Bulat Eshmukhamedovich tells this story as an evidence of spiritual guidance by his ancestors. This link to Islamic scholarship has a strong position in how Kumekov explains his career (see below his story about Imam Ghilmānī), but not because it did matter in his scholarly career: as far as I know he never positioned himself as a scholar of Muslim identity within the Institute, otherwise his successful career as a chair of the sector would have been impossible. Having made his life decision, Bulat Eshmuhamedovich went to the Arabic Department of the Oriental Faculty of Central Asian State University in Tashkent, where he studied from 1957 to 1963. He was part of the first generation of students of Arabic at the University. One of the main teachers there at that time was the famous Arabist of Tatar origin Mukhammad Baky Khalidov. This fact is very important because, on the one hand, it again connects Kumekov to prerevolutionary Islamic scholars (Khalidov was a student of Mūsā Bīgī (1873-1949)), on the other hand, it shows that even though Tashkent had

⁶⁶³ Interview with Bulat Kumekov by the author, the Institute of History, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12 July 2010.
already lost its significance as a centre of regional Central Asian studies, it remained important as an educational centre, because no chairs of Arabic or Persian languages were available in the Kazakh SSR.

The year 1962 Kumekov spent at Baghdad University as a trainee. After graduating from Tashkent University he was employed at the Soviet construction site of the Aswan Dam in Egypt, where he worked as the main translator. In 1965 Kumekov entered the Institute of History in Alma-Ata as a PhD student and as the only Arabist. He had good personal relations with the Director, Akai Nusupbekov, while Begedzhan Suleimenov was his supervisor and advised him to write on the historical works of al-Fārābī. After three months Kumekov eventually realized that there are no sources on this topic, because al-Fārābī did not write on history. Nusupbekov recommended Kumekov to seek for a new supervisor and a research topic in Leningrad and Moscow. In Moscow they told him that medieval studies were concentrated in Leningrad, which was very much true at that time, because the Sector of Written Heritage of the Orient was not yet established at the Institute of Oriental Studies. However, in Leningrad Kumekov encountered other problems. Anas Bakievich Khalidov, the son of his Tashkent teacher, did not agree to be Kumekov’s supervisor, because he himself was no expert in the study of Central Asia; in turn another Arabist Oleg Georgievich Bol’shakov rejected him arguing that he was not a Turkologist, even if he studied Central Asian Arabic sources. The final choice fell on Sergei Grigor’evich Kliashtornyi, a specialist in Central Asian Turkic studies. Kumekov, as he said himself, defined the topic of his dissertation more or less by intuition, when he jumped into the ocean of Arabic manuscripts in Leningrad. Kumekov spent two and a half years in Leningrad, and his dissertation on the Kimak Khanate was successfully defended in 1970.664

Since 1974 Kumekov headed the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan, which concentrated Oriental Studies in the country. Kumekov was in close relations with Begedzhan Suleimenov, who had been head of that Sector before him and had supervised his work in Alma-Ata, but Suleimenov openly criticized Kumekov’s view on Kazakh statehood. On one of the Institute meetings Suleimenov claimed that archeologist Akishev had a view opposed to that of Kumekov and that Akishev was ‘right’ when saying that the Kazakh nomads maintained their ethnic territory since time immemorial, whereas

Kumekov ‘wrongly’ insisted that this territory was formed only in the 15\textsuperscript{th}-16\textsuperscript{th} centuries. Moreover, Suleimenov openly pointed at the stagnation of Kumekov’s scientific interests: “For how long are you going to study the Kipchaks in this or that centuries?”\textsuperscript{665}

An interesting episode in Kumekov’s biography is connected to the name of Sa’d Waqqās Ghilmānī (1890-1972), a Kazakh theologian and Imam in Almaty, who, according to Kumekov, was at a certain time teaching in Bukhara and was a teacher of the Central Asian Mufti Ziyā ad-Dīn Bābākhānov (1908-1982); the latter annually visited Alma-Ata to see Ghilmānī. According to Kumekov, shortly before his death Ghilmānī invited Kumekov to his residence. At that time, in 1972, Kumekov had just defended his dissertation and thought that Ghilmānī wanted to show him manuscripts for attribution. Ghilmānī warmly accepted him, explained that he needs to prepare a young successor with knowledge of Arabic language, and proposed him to study at al-Azhar in Cairo for several years and later take Ghilmānī’s position of an Islamic judge in Alma-Ata. Ghilmānī said that he is living well: he has three big houses, two cars and things like that. However, Kumekov rejected this offer, and “Ghilmānī did not find a successor, because there was no religious environment in Alma-Ata; unlike in Tashkent, where the tradition of Islamic thought was still alive in spite of the Bolsheviks’ efforts to destroy it. The majority of Kazakh Mullahs were very ignorant. Ghilmānī was alone in Alma-Ata; he did not have a fellow to speak with.”\textsuperscript{666}

Kumekov explained his decision to stay away from open entrance into Islamic circles at that point by saying that he preferred secular scholarship and led a secular life. This episode shows that the relation between classical Islamic scholarship and Soviet Oriental studies was one-sided before Perestroika: once entering the secular academic environment, scholars of Muslim (family) background did not want to openly engage with religion. After Perestroika, however, the situation has drastically changed and many Oriental experts have turned themselves into religious authorities.

\textsuperscript{665} OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1 ld, D. 560, Sv. 40, Kumekov Bulat Ekhmukhametovich, f. 48. This citation stems from a protocol of regular meetings in the sector of prerevolutionary history of Kazakhstan.

\textsuperscript{666} Interview with Bulat Kumekov by the author, Institute of History, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12 July 2010. Ghilmānī composed a biographical dictionary of Kazakh religious scholars, which is currently being prepared for edition by Ashirbek K. Muminov and Allen J. Frank. In his autobiography Ghilmānī does not mention any teaching in Bukhara.
Another Kazakh scholar who is close to religious circles (in this case by his origin
from Khwājas) is Tursun Ikramovich Sultanov, who came to this world in Alma-Ata re-
gion also in 1940. Unlike Kumekov, Sultanov went westwards and studied at the Oriental
faculty of Leningrad University between 1962 and 1967, where he learned Turkish and
Persian languages. He married in Leningrad and was even lucky to find an apartment.
On Sergei G. Kliashtornyi’s suggestion Vadim A. Romodin (1912-1984) acted as
Sultanov’s supervisor, and his PhD dissertation The Main Questions of the History of the
Kazakh People in the 16th-17th Centuries was finished in 1971. Since that time Central
Asian medieval historiography became the main scholarly interest for Sultanov, who spent
his life on textual studies. However, in 1971 Sultanov had to return to Alma-Ata, where he
worked at the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the Institute of
History, thus together with Kumekov, Shukhovtsov, Nastich and others. Very soon
Sultanov realized that in comparison to the Leningrad treasures of Oriental manuscripts

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667 OVA KN MON RK, F. 11. Op. 1 Id, D. 166, Sv. 7, Sultanov Tursun Ikramovich, f. 2. This biographical
information I am referring to is found in a schedule filled in by Sultanov for Institute’s documentation. This
schedule is an alternative type of autobiographical accounts to those more detailed which scholars used to
write before the 1950s.
there was almost nothing to do in Alma-Ata in this respect. He concentrated in his studies on classical historiography of Islamic Central Asia, without taking into account numerous historical accounts, including *shajara*s, produced locally. Moreover, it seems that in Leningrad Sultanov obtained a broader view on Central Asian history which was not reduced to national narratives. To support these assumptions I would like to reproduce here a short anecdote on the Uyghurs that Sultanov told me:

“Once I made a report at an international conference on the structure of Islamic historical books. Among other things I said that the Uyghur people desperately fought against the spread of Islam in Eastern Turkestan. All Uyghurs that were in the room protested. They really believed that they were Muslims even before Mohammad, but in reality the majority of Uyghurs had been Buddhists or Nestorians. Moreover, they are not even Uyghurs, at least they have nothing to do with the medieval Uyghurs. This ethnic name was suggested to them in 1934, when China provided only a choice between Chinese and Uyghur identity. Previously they did not have any ethnic consciousness, calling themselves by their place of living. (…) Similarly, at the time of ethnic delimitation an ethnic name of Kirgiz appeared in Central Asia as well as along the Yenisei River. The government forced them to decide who the ‘real’ Kirgiz was.”

This anecdote shows that Sultanov is clearly a ‘Bartol’dist’ who preferred to study Central Asia as a region. Generally, Sultanov associates himself only with the Leningrad school of classical Orientology and not the Kazakh one. He contributed to the Leningrad school as its full member. It was only during the short period of 1971-74 that Sultanov worked with other young Orientalists in Alma-Ata, but with all of them Sultanov maintained warm relationship.

Nadzhip Nighmatovich Mingulov was the only Tatar scholar at Kumekov’s department. He was born in a Bashkir village in 1926. Mingulov, just like Kumekov, studied at the Oriental faculty of Central Asian State University, but much earlier, in 1945-1950. He was a historian and philologist with good knowledge of English, Turkish, Tatar and all


Central Asian Turkic languages. He was a PhD student at Moscow State University, with a dissertation project on the Uyghurs’ struggle for democracy, but he did not defend it because the topic was suppressed in the context of Soviet-Chinese political relations. After entering the Institute of History in 1957, Mingulov worked there for forty three years.\textsuperscript{670} At the beginning he actively participated in a number of the Institute’s projects, such as the translation of Central Asian chronicles for the *Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates* (Alma-Ata, 1969) and the edition of Valikhanov’s works. As a single author, however, he was not very prolific just like the majority of scholars at the department. At one of the Institute’s meetings, probably in the late 1970s, Grigorii Dakhshleiger characterized the situation with Kazakh Orientology at that time:

“We get used to each other, and therefore we are afraid to say the truth, to injure each other. Our liberalism is harmful for those comrades towards whom we are liberal. This is about your publications, comrade Mingulov, they are too few for three years, especially for a person who has been working at the Institute for the last twenty years.”\textsuperscript{671}

Indeed, Mingulov published very few articles. For very long time he was busy with writing a new dissertation, which was devoted to the Turkic text, translation into Russian and investigation of the historical work *Jāmi’ at-tawārīkh* by Qadīr ‘Alī Bīk (17th century). What was strange in this story is that initially Mingulov evaluated this source as very valuable, but later he became disappointed in it and claimed it was not interesting; thus Mingulov did not defend the dissertation. Together with Kazakh historian Kanat Uskenbai I went to visit Nadzhip Mingulov in his house in summer 2010. He appeared to be a very mysterious person, who resembled rather a *diwāna*, an ascetic Muslim, who absolutely did not care about the physical world and appreciated only knowledge. It is said that Mingulov had always practiced the Islamic religious rituals and therefore suffered a lot from some of the Institute’s officials during Soviet times. Mingulov is also said to be a popular healer, which is not hard to believe when you see him, but as an interviewee he was not very helpful, unfortunately. Mingulov’s refusal to write much should not be explained by his indolence. Mingulov as well as other employees in the sector participated in all projects undertaken in the field of Oriental studies by the Nusupbekov-Dakhshleiger team, notably in the


\textsuperscript{671} Ibid., f. 71.
edition of sources on medieval Kazakh khanates and the preparation of Chokan Valikhanov’s oeuvre for edition. The refusal to publish articles and books was a form of social protest. For Mingulov whose religious views were under suspicion at the Institute such a practice was well-justified. Thus Islamic identity played a decisive role in Mingulov’s career and position at the Institute (no defended dissertation, very few publications), while his Tatar ethnic background did not play any significant role.

Viacheslav Konstantinovich Shukhovtsov was born in Alma-Ata in 1947 and obtained his education as an Iranian studies philologist at the Oriental Faculty of Leningrad University in 1971. When studying in Leningrad, Shukhovtsov established close relations with several Orientalists, especially with Vladimir A. Livshits who later used to provide consultation for his Alma-Ata colleagues. I was not able to interview Shukhovtsov in Almaty, because of the precarious state of his health, therefore in the following I will refer only to archival documents. According to these documents, Shukhovtsov was fluent in Persian. Oddly for a republic that declared it needed professional Orientalists, after University Shukhovtsov did not find work in Kazakhstan and was forced to work as a school teacher in Orenburg region and then in Tajikistan. It was difficult to enter the system of the Academy of Sciences where work was very prestigious and well-paid. Only in 1974 he found employment at the Department of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the Institute of History, in the modest position of assistant (laborant). Between 1980 and 1981 Shukhovtsov was sent to the department of Turkology (viz., to Kliashtorny and Livshits) at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies in order to study historical and mythical aspects in the Persian epic Shāh-nāma, but also to collect material for his kandidatskaia dissertation on the historical geography of Southern Kazakhstan. Together with Vladimir Nastich, his colleague and close friend, Shukhovtsov discovered and translated a number of Persian documents from the Yasawī shrine. In details this aspect will be treated below in the fourth chapter. Shukhovtsov did not publish much, but he participated in a number of general projects of the Institute, such as the edition of Chokan Valikhanov’s works, and in the field of textological analysis of Persian texts on the Qipchaqs. It is also mentioned in the documents that, for a short period, Shukhovtsov was

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672 OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1 ld, D. 603, Sv. 44, Shukhovtsov Viacheslav Konstantinovich, ff. 1-3. In this case details of Shukhovtsov’s career are taken from his autobiography written for the Institute of History.

673 Ibid., ff. 35-36.
engaged in work with old books and manuscripts in Persian and Turkic languages kept in
the State Book Museum in Alma-Ata, identifying their titles and authors and contributing
to cataloguing. According to Bulat Kumekov, these books and manuscripts were later
transferred to the present-day National Library. It seems, however, that Abdullo and
Kamaleddini did not use Shukhovtsov’s descriptions for their 2008 catalogue publica-
tion. Together with Nastich and Kirgiz colleagues Shukhovtsov also participated in a
manuscript expedition to Kirgizia, which revealed a number of interesting narratives, in-
cluding a unique manuscript of *al-Fawā‘id al-wāfiyya bi-ḥall mushkilāt al-Kāfiyya* by
Jāmi’. It should be mentioned that Shukhovtsov visited Afghanistan several times; for
example in 1987 he applied for a two-year stay there. His colleagues were curious to know
the reasons for his trips to that country; some of them assumed that he worked for the
KGB.

Shukhovtsov’s talented friend, Vladimir Nikolovich Nastich was born in Alma-Ata in
1949. He also went to Leningrad University to study Arabic. After graduation from Lenin-
grad University in 1971 Nastich spent two years in military service, where incidentally he
became acquainted with the Kirgiz archeologist Valentina D. Goriacheva, who asked
Nastich to read some Arabic-script texts from archeological sites. This acquaintance led to
the writing of a joint article on Arabic epigraphy in Kirgizia. In 1973-86 Nastich worked
at the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan at the Alma-Ata Institute of
History and participated in the big projects of that time: the edition of Valikhanov’s oeuvre
and the new version of the history of the Kazakh SSR. He was also able to write several
articles on Arabic-script manuscripts and various inscriptions, combining good language
proficiency (Arabic, Persian, Turkic languages next to the main European tongues) with
good skills in reading difficult ancient texts.

674 Ibid., f. 58.
In our interview Nastich adopted the view of the center and regarded the group of Orientalists in Alma-Ata as a branch of the school of classical Orientology in Leningrad, because the ties between the two centers were quite close, especially with the Arabic and Iranian Sectors at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies. Nastich remarked however that “our contacts with Akimushkin, Kushev, Romodin, Bol’shakov and others were merely personal, rather than institutional.”

The situation at the Alma-Ata Institute in the 1970s-80s has been colorfully described by Nastich in his short novel called *From the Memoirs of a Former Junior Scholar* written in the 2000s, where he ridiculed the administration of the Institute and ignorant scientific editors at the publishing house. Some of Nastich’s failed projects are described in the end of the fourth chapter. Nastich was not able to defend his dissertation in Alma-Ata or somehow move on in his career, so he moved to Moscow in 1986 where he was first employed at the State Museum of Art of the Peoples of Orient and then at the Institute of Oriental Studies, where he already knew Elena A. Davidovich, the leading specialist in Central Asian numismatics. After her retirement Nastich became head of the Sector of Written Monuments of the Peoples of the Orient of that Institute.

Generally, the team of young Orientalists at the Institute in the 1970s and early 1980s was well-educated. It was concentrated in one department, had a large personal scholarly network around the Soviet Union (especially with the Leningrad school of classical Oriental textology) and was able to conduct complicated research tasks and huge scientific projects. Central Asian University (Tashkent University since 1960) with its well-trained team played a significant role in preparation of a number of Kazakh Orientalists, including Bulat Kumekov and Nadzhip Mingulov. However, they received there only a basic education. Institutionally Kazakh ties with Leningrad and Moscow were stronger than with Tashkent, because the latter gradually became an Uzbek national centre and lost its significance as a regional metropolis. Still, the team of young Orientalists in Alma-Ata was not long-lived. Most scholars in this team were not able to fully use their talents in their own projects, being forced to participate in numerous Institute programs. In the late 1980s the group quickly disappeared. Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger, the administrative tandem that had created

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678 Interview with Vladimir N. Nastich by the author, Sector of Written Monuments of the Peoples of the Orient, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, 30 September 2009.

the team and managed it, died both in 1983. Sultanov moved to Leningrad, Nastich left for Moscow, Pishchulina and Mingulov retired, the Sinologist Iurii Zuev “came down morally” due to bad family circumstances, and Shukhovtsov was in Afghanistan and wrote almost nothing. Only Bulat Kumekov remained. Thus what Kliashtornyi and Nastich regarded as the Alma-Ata branch of the Leningrad school came to an end. Some members of the team were successfully integrated into the central scientific institutions in Leningrad and Moscow. The tradition thus returned to where it came from.

3.9. In Search of Shajaras: Genealogical Narratives of the Kazakh Tribes, 1970-80

Historians in Kazakhstan always complained that they had no or very limited access to historical manuscripts in Oriental languages in the country. While there were at least some manuscript deposits (as we have seen from Shakhmatov and Sauranbaev’s lists above), these did not contain important works on the history of Islamic Central Asia, and nobody tried to study these manuscripts, preferring to go to Leningrad and Tashkent (or simply to do nothing in this field). Only in 1970 did Begedzhan Suleimenov (1912-1984) decide to open the world of Kazakh written sources for in-depth research.

According to his autobiography, Begedzhan Suleimenov was born in 1912 in a village of the Aktube region, in the western part of the Kazakh SSR. He thus belonged to the same generation as Nusupbekov, Dakhshleiger, Akishev and Margulan. Like archeologist Kemal’ Akishev, Suleimenov lost his parents very early and grew up with a brother. Between 1923 and 1932 he studied in various kinds of schools and worked as a woodworker in Alma-Ata. In 1934 he entered the historical faculty of the Moscow State Pedagogical Institute, to which Suleimenov was probably sent by local officials. He remained in Moscow until 1938 and then began working at the Kazakh Pedagogical Institute. Since late 1943 Begedzhan Suleimenovich worked in the structure of the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences and later in the newly established Institute of History. In July 1952 Begedzhan Suleimenov was arrested in accordance with article 58, item 10 of the Criminal

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Code of RSFSR\textsuperscript{681} “propaganda and agitation for the overthrow of Soviet power.” Persons convicted under this item were regarded as political criminals and even after their full sentence they were not allowed to settle within the 100 km radius of any big city.\textsuperscript{682} In 1954, after Stalin’s death Suleimenov was fully rehabilitated, but his imprisonment resulted in psychological problems and in an addiction to alcohol. As Irina V. Erofeeva remembers, Suleimenov’s difficult fate prevented him from developing into a real scholar.\textsuperscript{683}

Being a Kazakh, Suleimenov knew that before the Revolution the culture of his people was based not only on the tradition of folklore, but also on a written heritage in Arabic-script. The main problem was that the majority of these manuscripts were of a clear Islamic character. Before 1970 there was no study of Kazakh Arabic-script literature — scholars simply did not pay attention to it. I do not think that Suleimenov took the Islamic question into consideration; he rather identified a link between written Kazakh genealogies (\textit{shajaras}) and the tribal structure of Kazakh society. According to Irina V. Erofeeva,\textsuperscript{684} the quest for \textit{shajaras} was included into the wider ethnographical study of Kazakhs tribes as conducted by the Institute’s employees Vostrov and Mukanov.\textsuperscript{685}

Here it should be explained that sometimes genealogical narratives and charters of Turkic peoples contain much more information than just an enumeration of the descendants of a certain person. Some genealogies are long texts of different shape, containing a certain community’s legends of origin and conversion to Islam, catalogues of sacred places, hagiographies of saints and their spiritual chains of succession.\textsuperscript{686} Suleimenov planned to use these narratives on the Kazakh history as a historical source for academic research. One particular feature of Kazakh genealogies compiled in the early 20\textsuperscript{th} century was men-


\textsuperscript{682} Rossiia XX vek. Stat’ia 58/10. Nadzornye proizvodstva prokuratury SSSR po delam ob antisovetskoi agitatsii i propagande: annotirovannyi katalog (Moscow, 1999).

\textsuperscript{683} Interview with Irina V. Erofeeva by the author, Institute of Nomadic studies, Almaty, 22 June 2010.

\textsuperscript{684} Ibid.

\textsuperscript{685} V.V. Vostrov, M.S. Mukanov, \textit{Rodoplemennoi sostav i rasselenie kazakhov (konets XIX – nachalo XX vv.)} (Alma-Ata, 1968); M.S. Mukanov, \textit{Etnicheskii sostav i rasselenie kazakhov Srednego zhuza} (Alma-Ata, 1974).

\textsuperscript{686} Narratives of this type from Western Siberia have been a subject of my own research. See: A.K. Bustanov, “Sufiiske legendy ob islamizatsii Sibiri,” in: \textit{Tiurkologicheskii sbornik 2009-2010: Tiurkskie narody Evrazii v drevnosti i srednevekov’e} (Moscow, 2011), 33-78.
tioned by Saulesh Esenova, who wrote that “the Shezhyre was the final step in the crystallization of the Kazakh ethnic concept that assured group membership for designed tribes and lineages. … Shezhyre was, perhaps, the most effective way of demonstrating the cultural unity of territorially dispersed and politically disjoined pastoral communities and of building the grounds for nationalist claims.”

I suppose that Suleimenov clearly understood this significance of *shajaras* for Kazakh national consciousness and as an independent source of identity, rather than as a source for ethnographical research as it was implemented at the Institute of History. Suleimenov’s initiative reminds us of Mukhamedzhan Tynshpaev, who was also interested in genealogies as a source on the Kazakh history. The novelty of Suleimenov’s approach was that he viewed genealogies not as a source on tribal history of the Kazakhs which was linked to the past of other Turkic peoples, but rather as narratives about a parallel, ‘true’ national history of the Kazakhs with an accent on modern national identity.

In the archive of the Institute of History in present-day Almaty there are enough documents to observe the history of the *shajara* project during the ten years between 1970 and 1980. Fortunately we have in our possession a ‘methodological instruction’ to the participants in the project for the study of Kazakh genealogies. It was composed by Suleimenov in January 1971. At the same time Begedzhan Suleimenov received a manuscript of genealogical narrative called *Qazaqtin shïghu tegi turalï* (*On the Origin of the Kazakhs*) composed by an elderly authority of a local community, Buzaubai Aqsaqal (literary a *white beard*). This *aqsaqal* was the first one who sent such materials to the address of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. Begedzhan Suleimenov found the text very useful and promised to publish it. He also asked Buzaubai to send additional documents on the history of a certain Janibek-batïr, whose name was mentioned in the main text as an actor.

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690 Ibid., f. 2.
However, it remains unclear from this letter whether Buzaubai Aqsaqal sent his manuscript on his own initiative, therefore providing the idea for the project, or whether the Kazakh Academy of Sciences had issued an invitation to the population to send historical narratives to specialists in Alma-Ata. In any case, Begedzhan Suleimenov maintained close contacts and communication with such representatives of the elderly generation who still kept manuscripts at home or wrote their own accounts on the basis of oral information.

The ‘methodological instruction’ was written in Kazakh. This is curious, since in the Institute’s archive almost all documentation was written in Russian. We must assume that this ‘instruction’ was either a preliminary variant of the project, or that it was meant only for Kazakh-speaking scholars at the Institute. The ‘instruction’ composes an introduction and two paragraphs. In the introduction Suleimenov stressed the necessity to collect and publish genealogies of the Kazakh people, which transmitted a parallel, the ‘true’ history of the people from the 7th to the 20th centuries. The latter claim implied, so without stating it openly, a critique of official republican meta-histories where the facts and interpretations of Kazakh history were dogmatized. Suleimenov found another source of historical information and construction of identity. Peculiarly, he claimed that each tribal division (ru, ulus, zhuz) has their own shajara. Some of these texts had been written in the medieval epoch (up including 18th century) by shajarashiler (literary: writers of shajaras) and were preserved by families whose origin goes back to sultans and beks, thus to the ‘feudal Kazakh aristocracy.’ Remarkably, this aspect of social identity did not bother Suleimenov, even though some of his colleagues were accused of idealizing the feudal past and oppressive regimes (Margulan, Auezov, later Abuseitova).

Since the early 20th century Kazakh genealogies appeared in printed form in the Russian, Kazakh and Tatar languages. According to Suleimenov, some writers and scholars, like Mashkhur Zhusup Kopeev (1858-1931), used to send letters to the Kazakh elite asking for copies of their genealogies. After this general statement of purpose the first paragraph of the document (entitled Investigation of Genealogies of Peoples Akin to the Kazakh) contains a methodological instruction for the collection, edition, and study of Kazakh genealogies.


692 Mashkhur Zhusup Kopeev was one of the most celebrated collectors of Kazakh folklore, including shajaras. A. Nurmanova, “La tradition historique orale des Kazakhs,” in: Cahiers d’Asie centrale 8 (2000), 98.
zakhs) Suleimenov discussed recent publication of genealogical narratives of neighboring Turkic peoples, including Bashkirs and Turkmens. However, there is no evidence that Suleimenov ever established contacts with colleagues from Leningrad, Ufa or Kazan in connection with his shajara project.

In the second paragraph he suggested to translate the Kazakh genealogies published in pre-revolutionary times in Arabic-script, and to organize field expeditions. The idea of collecting people’s people through regular manuscript expeditions all over the country is connected to the similar endouvs undertaken by Orientalists from Kazan, Ufa and Makhachkala. In 1971 the plan was to go to the Aq Tobe region. Third, it was proposed to cooperate with other institutions which conducted expeditions among the Kazakhs, first of all with the Institute of Linguistics of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences; fourth, to address the most authoritative elderly people (aqsaaqaldar) of each oblast’ asking them to send genealogies of their tribes and clans (ru, ulîs); fifth, to sign a contract with the Institute of Literature of the Academy of Sciences and to get acquainted with genealogies from its archive; and sixth, to copy genealogies from private archives and libraries of scholars such as S. Mukanov and A. Margulan. Suleimenov finally recommended to collect genealogical documents in the State Archives of Alma-Ata. The whole work was to be implemented by specialists at the Sector of Prerevolutionary History of Kazakhstan, namely B. Suleimenov (leader), L. Badamov, N. Mingulov, and N. Userov.

Already at the start the work promised to be very successful, at least when judging from the number of discovered manuscripts (or their typewritten copies) and their volume. The idea was spread further: already in 1971 genealogies were collected not only in Alma-Ata but also in the regions. For example, one of the texts they discovered turned out to be a statement of a committee on the genealogy of the Middle Zhuz (Orta zhuz Arghin, Qipshaq, Naiman ruları zhiktelgen, ertedegi eski shezhideren zhene kopti korgen kariialar auzinan zhazип toliktirilgan) discovered in the city of Dzhezkazan, Karaganda region. In this rather large historical narrative (173 typed pages) the scholars found useful information on the pre-revolutionary history of the Kazakh tribes which elucidated the complex

693 Here Suleimenov refers to: A.N. Kononov, Rodoslovaia Turkmen. Sochinenie Abu-l-Gazi, khana khivinskogo (Leningrad, 1958); R.G. Kuzeev, Proiskhozdenie bashkirskogo naroda. Emicheskii sostav, istoriia rasseleniia (Moscow, 1974).

process of ethnic consolidation in the Steppe region. What is more surprising is that Suleimenov regarded this source as historically reliable and as trustworthy for the writing of national history; obviously he took shajaras at face value.695 Suleimenov did not conduct deep source study showing how and what kind of information was included in genealogical texts, and he did not develop a typology of this genre of sources.696 Their narratives were proudly presented as important autochthonous material on the history of the social structure of the Great, Middle, and Little Hordes.

Nurali Userov was occupied with the transliteration of Arabic-script genealogies into Cyrillic to make these texts accessible for larger audiences. These documents were kept at the Special Collection of the Scientific Library of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. There he found thirty manuscripts dealing with Kazakh history, and in three months Userov copied 150 pages. The advice to collect genealogies at the library of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences went back to the recommendation of the academician Al’kei Khakanovich Margulan.697

The available documentation reflects a very Soviet approach of planning research by quantity, not quality. For example, the plan for 1972 included the promise to identify twenty genealogical manuscripts in the libraries of Alma-Ata, to transliterate ten manuscripts into the modern Kazakh-script, to organize one expedition to Aq-Tobe region, and to analyze ten discovered narratives in-depth.698 The main work in this year was to be conducted by Begedzhan Suleimenov and Nurali Userov. Some of the most valuable texts, such as a shajara of Aldabergen Nurbekov from Alma-Ata, were recommended to be purchased for the Institute. In 1978 Nadzhip Mingulov submitted sixteen handwritten shajaras to the Institute of History, collected from the population during expeditions or sent by post. As he

695 Ibid., f. 8. Today the Kazakh scholars are still trying to verify the data of genealogical legends by archaeological materials. See: A.K. Muminov, Rodoslovnaia Mukhtara Auezova, 100-104.
698 Ibid., f. 27.
remembered in our interview,\textsuperscript{699} the majority of these texts simply listed names of ancestors with no additional historical information.

In 1975 Suleimenov wrote a four-year research program on the topic \textit{Genealogical Legends of the Kazakhs in Central and Northern Kazakhstan}. The project had the ambitious goal of proving that the Kazakh nation was formed by nomadic, semi-nomadic, and settled tribes of autochthonous origin. Each tribe had its specifics in history and everyday life but was finally included into the large nation. The project presupposed large-scale field research in Kazakh provinces as well as archival work in Alma-Ata, Tashkent, Omsk, Orenburg, Astrakhan, Moscow, and Leningrad. At the same time it was necessary to search for material in the archives and libraries of Russian Orientalists, the USSR Academy of Sciences and the All-Soviet Geographical Society (all of these institutions were located in Leningrad). Suleimenov suggested the following schedule: 1) 1976: Collecting genealogies in Kustanai and Turgai oblasts; 2) 1977: Expedition to Aq-Tube region; 3) 1978: Expedition in Uralsk region; systematization and analysis of manuscripts; 4) 1979: Drawing up maps and schemes, description of tribal genealogies of the Little Horde; edition of genealogies. The whole program was designed to cover work over 15-20 years. As a result Suleimenov proposed to publish Kazakh genealogies of Central and Northern Kazakhstan with an introduction, historiographical study, and comments. It was also planned to organize a republican conference on Kazakh genealogies,\textsuperscript{700} in order to popularize the work’s results.

While before the year 1978 the collection and study of Kazakh genealogies was conducted only in the northern and south-eastern regions of the Kazakh Republic, in 1978 Bek Suleimenov decided to re-direct the research to the south. In that year it was already planned to visit Uralsk oblast of the Kazakh SSR in the north, but Suleimenov decided that the Institute already had enough data on the origin of tribes in that region. In his mind, it was more promising to go to the Bukhara oblast’ of the Uzbek SSR and to the Karakalpak Autonomous Republic in Uzbekistan where tribes of all Kazakh \textit{zhuzes} were present and

\textsuperscript{699} Interview with Nadzhip N. Mingulov by Kanat Uskenbay and the author, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 June 2010.

where they historically formed settlements. Yet from 1976 to 1978 Suleimenov had only one co-worker, S. Duisenov.

In general, over the ten years Suleimenov’s expedition attained significant results. They recorded genealogical legends from elderly people on tape, and they studied texts in the archives of the Central National Library and the Institute of Literature and Art. More than 100 letters were received from regions with written genealogies and comments on them. In 1981 the Institute of History already possessed 59 genealogical narratives (containing 3736 pages). Members of the expedition composed more than a hundred genealogical charters. All collected materials were systematized and even the introduction to the planned monograph was already written.

The intensive study of Kazakh genealogical legends promised to result in an interesting monograph which would elucidate unknown aspects of tribal history in Central Asia. However, in 1981 the expedition and the whole program were given up by the Institute’s administration. The relevant documents claim that already in 1979-1980 the expedition was not functioning anymore because of “lack in financial support and transport, and Suleimenov was busy with writing the third volume of the History of the Kazakh SSR.” It seems that after the expeditions to the regions of Bukhara and Karakalpakistan, Kazakh officials understood that it was politically dangerous to discover that the Kazakhs in Uzbekistan were also an autochthonous population. Such a discovery would either raise the question of Turkestan as a regional entity, or it could lead to Kazakh pretentions on the relevant territories inhabited by the Kazakhs. It is also possible that the genealogical narratives of the southern regions revealed a stronger Islamic factor than similar writings in the central and northern regions of Kazakhstan. This hypothesis was rejected by both Mervert Abuseitova and Irina Erofeeva when I asked them about the abortion of the project during the interviews.

Still, many *shajaras* from the archives were obviously of religious character. Marsel’ Akhmetzianov, the historian of Tatar *shajaras* and linguist from Kazan, once studied several genealogies in the archive of the Auezov Institute of Literature and Art of the Kazakh

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701 Ibid., f. 46.
703 Ibid., f. 2.
Academy of Sciences. One of these genealogies was taken to the archive from the Pavlodar region in 1964. This text included a narrative about the companions of the Prophet (ṣaḥāba) and their arrival in the city of Turkestan (Southern Kazakhstan). Peculiar here is that this genealogy represents these ṣaḥāba as representatives of the Kazakh tribe Arghyn, thus including the conversion narrative into a legend of origin. Some other semi- ‘religious’ shajaras were briefly described by M.Kh. Abuseitova and A. Nurmanova.

The official documents on this topic repeat that the work on genealogies is very useful, but they also claim that the Institute of History cannot provide the necessary number of specialists to study them. Moreover, the Institute’s administration insisted on an in-depth investigation of the texts that had already been collected instead of their simple reproduction in Cyrillic. Obviously, publications needed to include a politically correct interpretation — otherwise the materials were too sensitive to be explained by other actors than the state. The fate of the expedition and the study of genealogies were discussed by the Scientific Council of the Institute, and the decision to close the program was also supported by the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences. In accordance with the Soviet style of management, the lowest personnel were to be blamed for any mistakes, in this case Duseinov, and Suleimenov, the author of the project, was even forced to expel Duseinov, under the pretext that he was a philologist and therefore not of use for any other project in the Institute of History. Irina Erofeeva added that Duseinov had indeed not written any article for seven years. One gets the impression that the Institute and the Academy were afraid of the emergence and publication of genealogies that might support particular tribal identities, and that might question the Kazakh nation as a whole or at least provide an alternative to the official national histories of how the common Kazakh identity was formed, which was not similar to that of official national histories produced by the academic insti-

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705 M. Abuseitova, A. Nurmanova, “Les fonds manuscrits,” 76 (copied in Kokchetav in 1822), 80 (MSS no. 4704 and 4670 apparently resemble those related to legend of Islamization).

tutes. After the publication of Vostrov and Mukanov’s books on the tribal structure, it was decided that no further expeditions were necessary.

Suleimenov’s very promising research prospect was not fully implemented. The manuscripts discovered during the work remained in archives and are even today not in scholarly demand. Generally, the project was forgotten and new studies of Kazakh sacred genealogies do not even mention Suleimenov’s enterprise.

It is interesting to mention the conflicting answers of my informants when I asked about why Suleimenov’s project was closed down. My respondents Mervert Abuseitova, Irina Erofeeva and Bulat Kumekov participated in the last meeting on the project’s fate or heard about it from Begedzhan Suleimenov. Mervert Abuseitova flatly rejected my hypothesis that the closure was associated with the last expedition in Uzbekistan and with an Islamic factor. She argued that the Institute did not have the necessary budget to support this project. In my opinion, this is questionable, because the project was already in its final stage and moreover a huge number of texts were collected without the necessity of having a big collective of scholars. There were indeed references in the documents to a lack of financial resources, but Nusupbekov, the Institute’s Director, rather stressed the absence of highly qualified specialists to investigate these texts from Marxist positions.

Only Bulat Kumekov, who at that time (1981) was chair of the Sector of Pre-Revolutionary History at the Institute, stated that Suleimenov complained to him about ‘political barriers’ which prevented the continuation of this promising work. There is one more argument supporting this version: in the late Soviet times Amantai Isin, a Kazakh historian from Petropavlovsk, suggested to his teacher at the University of Petropavlovsk

707 V.V. Vostrov, M.S. Mukanov, Rodoplemennoi sostav i rasselenie kazakhov (konets XIX – nachalo XX vv.) (Alma-Ata, 1968); M.S. Mukanov, Etnicheskii sostav i rasselenie kazakhov Srednego zhuca (Alma-Ata, 1974).


709 Interview with Mervert Kh. Abuseitova, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan. 18 June 2010.


711 Interview with Bulat E. Kumekov, the Institute of History, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12 July 2010.
to supervise his dissertation on Kazakh genealogies, but the latter closed the doors and asked his student to forget about this idea forever.\textsuperscript{712}

In 1970, when Suleimenov first developed the idea of the project, he probably felt the ‘Wind of Change’. This was the time of a partial rehabilitation of the cultural heritage of the Turkic peoples of the USSR. In his project he referred to the experience of his colleagues in Kazan’ and Ufa who also started manuscript research at that time and thereby reinvigorated the tradition of Oriental Studies in both centers.\textsuperscript{713} This was exactly the opportunity that Kazakh scholars wanted to grasp, as they had been attempting to establish Orientology in Kazakhstan since the late 1940s. Even though the study of Kazakh genealogies was rather successful and brought to light abundant material from private and state archives, this ambitious program was closed down, because these narratives largely reflected Kazakh tribal identity mixed up with Islam. Both of these ‘ideologies’ were not of state interest and were even considered harmful, especially when Suleimenov started to study Kazakh genealogies outside of the Kazakh republic. The Kazakh Academy lost its chance to gain a fundament of old manuscripts for conducting Oriental Studies. Also peculiar in the shajara project is that it drew Central and Northern Kazakhstan into the orbit of written history. As we have seen almost all historical research was concentrated on the southern regions of the republic.

\section*{Conclusion}

Establishment of Kazakh Orientology was connected with almost thirty years of activity of scientific-administrative tandem at the Institute of History by Akai Nusupbekov and Grigorii Dakhshleiger. Due to their efforts, Oriental Studies finally found a weak place in the structure of the Institute: between mid1950s and early 1980s the Sector of Pre-Revolutionary History of Kazakhstan included in its staff several highly educated specialists in the field of Oriental manuscripts. However, local collections of Oriental manuscripts were left unused, even though several fihrists of such collections at the Institute of History, the discovery of documents in the Yasawī shrine, and the results of manuscript and shajara studies were obvious markers of the serious presence of a local written tradition, which

\textsuperscript{712} Private letter from Amantai Isin (Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan) to the author, July 2010.

certainly deserved the closer attention of specialists. However, the Kazakh Orientalists, with some exceptions, preferred to search manuscripts and other sources elsewhere, but not in the republic. This might be explained partly by the religious or tribal character of the respective sources, which were regarded as ‘useless’ in historical research and which mirrored only ‘harmful’ ideologies of the Orient with its fairy tales and miracles. Mainly historians were interested in narratives which contained clear reports on the political and socioeconomic life of medieval Kazakh society. Moreover the study of Kazakh genealogies initiated by Suleimenov revealed a clear contradiction between the national history and tribal narratives, which did not take into account modern republican borders.

The young team of specialists, who started to appear at the Sector of Pre-Revolutionary History of Kazakhstan in the late 1950s and 1960s, was closely interconnected with the Leningrad school of Oriental Studies, even though not all of Kazakh Orientalists had obtained their education there. The 1960 Congress of Orientalists in Moscow gave Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger the possibility to expand their scientific network over the Soviet Union, especially in Moscow and Leningrad. An agreement with Sergei Kliashtorny in the aftermath of this conference brought several young Kazakh historians to Leningrad in the 1970s-80s where they defended their dissertations under Kliashtorny’s careful supervision. However, from my point of view, this did not produce an independent school of Kazakh Oriental Studies. This team worked several decades on low steam in pursue of implementing large-scale scientific projects, whereas all personal initiatives failed. When the administrative tandem of the Institute passed away, the group of Orientalists slowly disappeared. Some scholars later did succeed in establishing an independent Institute of Oriental Studies, but only after the fall of the Soviet Union and in new political and social conditions.

Working at the same scientific institution, the Kazakh Orientalists that we looked at in this chapter differed significantly in their views on history writing and its role in politics. Begedzhan Suleimenov and Veniamin Iudin tried to go beyond the genre of republican histories through their turn towards genealogies, hagiographies and the classification of medieval sources in accordance with the dynastic principle. Iudin’s concept of oral steppe historiography also stressed tribal history rather than a republican one. By contrast, Klavdia Pishchulina (in spite of her seemingly neutral position) legitimized the national
delimitation in Central Asia and did her best to prove the autochthonous character of the peoples in the South-Eastern Kazakhstan.
Chapter IV: The Soviet Oriental Archeology: ‘Sedentarization of the Past’

“The archeology of Central Asia is developing as a historical discipline, appropriating the best traditions of Russian and Soviet Oriental studies.”

Aleksandr Bernshtam (1949)

4.1. Soviet Oriental Archeology

The pen of Orientalists was one of the most prominent tools in the hands of political elites. As we have seen, various groups of scientists participated in what I call Oriental projects. Some of them contributed to the formation of atheistic ideology and the transformation of religious life in the region. Others were involved in the grandiose program of creating histories, languages, and Central Asian nations. The participation of science in these processes had a complicated character; it included not only vulgar ideological works but also academic studies based on seemingly nonpolitical historical, philological and archeological approaches.

As research over the last twenty years has clearly demonstrated, also archeological practice has always been connected to state policy. Though there is much work done on archeological practice under repressive regimes and in political contexts in general, also in the Soviet case, there are few studies of the archeology – power connection in Central

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Asia, to say nothing about the Kazakhstani case which has so far been completely ignored in this debate. In the following, I will investigate how the image of nomadic societies evolved during the unfolding of archeological investigations in the Soviet republic of Kazakhstan.

The phenomenon of nomadic society, its statehood, class structure and socio-economic characteristics were the main subjects of debates in Kazakh Oriental Studies during the whole Soviet epoch. In this context specialists debated the history of Central Asia from different perspectives. Soviet archeological expeditions were characterized by their interdisciplinary character (kompleksnost’), i.e. they united specialists from different scientific areas who worked on various aspects of the human past at the same sites. It was very common to invite biologists, anthropologists, soil scientists to take part in archeological expeditions. On the basis of the archeological finds and ancient inscriptions and miniatures, archeologists provided narratives of national history.

The origins of Central Asian Oriental archeology can be traced back to Leningrad. Vadim M. Masson (1929-2010), a well-known Soviet archeologist and son of the even more eminent Soviet archeologist Mikhail E. Masson (1897-1986), wrote that the Leningrad school of Oriental archeology was connected to the scientific traditions of Vasilii Bartol’d, and that Oriental archeology was set up by Orientalists such as Aleksandr Jakubovskii, Aleksandr Bernshtam, and Mikhail D’iakonov. Orientar archeology as a scientific discipline was born in the State Academy of the History of Material Culture (Gosudarstvennaia akademija istorii material’noi kul’tury, GAIMK) in the 1920s. This Academy initiated active expedition work in Central Asia; its field work blossomed especially in the 1930s. As Sergei Tolstov stated, before the Revolution “our knowledge about Central Asian archeology (except works on medieval Muslim architecture) was confined to

\[716\] V. M. Masson, Kul’turogenez Drevnei Tsentral’noi Azii (St. Petersburg, 2006), 6-7.

\[717\] This organization was previously called the Imperial Archeological Commission (1859-1917), then the Russian State Archeological Commission (RGAK, 1918-1919), the Russian Academy of History of Material Culture (RAIMK, 1918-1926), the State Academy of History of Material Culture (GAIMK, 1926-1937), the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (IIMK AN SSR, 1937-1945), the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (LO IIMK AN SSSR, 1945-1991), and finally again the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Academy of Sciences of Russia (IIMK RAN, 1991-present). On these organizational transformations in regard to the study of Central Asia and Caucasus see: V.A. Alekshin, “Sektor/otdel arkheologii Srednei/Tsentral’noi Azii,” 10-92.
accidental finds and primitive excavations by dilettantes.”

This changed profoundly in the 1930s.

In this chapter I would like to address the following questions. What was the connection between Central Asian archeology and the St. Petersburg / Leningrad tradition of classical Oriental Studies? What were the national and regional approaches of those who conducted fieldwork and of those who later on interpreted it? How was the ‘settling of the past’ legitimated in archeological terms and how was it connected to national politics in the Kazakh SSR? What was the fate of Islamic architecture and places of veneration under Soviet rule and how were the meanings of these monuments (especially of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī’s mausoleum) redefined in the Soviet agenda?

These questions will be situated in the general pattern of how Central Asian archeological sources (in the broadest sense) and architectural monuments were studied and represented during Soviet times. It should be mentioned that I am far from reasoning that this pattern was set up by Soviet officials or academic bureaucrats at only one given point in time. Rather, the pattern was in development over the whole Soviet era, because interpretations of the significance of historical treasures were subject to significant change over time. The scheme that I propose here can be described as follows.

Each of the Central Asian Soviet republics received an individual archeological expedition (sometimes several, working in different provinces) conducted by the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in close collaboration with local cadres (later these expeditions were taken over by local institutes). This process took place in the 1930s and the 1950s, when expeditions to Khwarezm, Southern Kazakhstan, Turkmenia and Tajikistan were established. Even though these expeditions were given names that reflected only the specific territory on which the work was conducted, their output can be interpreted also in national/republican or regional frameworks. In turn, each expedition concentrated its intellectual efforts, finances, and material forces on a particular archeological site; as a rule this was an ancient city or a system of cities. This city became a matter of national pride for the individual titular nations, shaping the national consciousness of the republic as a whole, since these sites came to be regarded as the places of origin for the respective people. In the best case the site demonstrated local history in as much depth as possible, displaying all significant steps of ethenogenesis of a particular nation and, at the same time, allowing for region-

al, interethnic comparison and for creating national unity. At these archeological sites the institutes set up what is called ‘a basic site’, ‘a permanent camp’ (stationary); these camps were located in the vicinity of a shrine or another sacred place. How these shrines were interpreted as an architectural object and as part of national cultural heritage varied from republic to republic, but there were clear similarities in their interpretation.

The general pattern of Central Asian Oriental archeology thus consisted of three elements: archeological expedition – basic site – mausoleum. In the Kazakh case all elements of this scheme comprised the following places: first, the Kazakhstan archeological expedition (since 1947 the South Kazakhstan expedition and some others); second, the city of Otrar with the system of settlements on the Middle Sir Darya River; and third, the shrine of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī. The institutional, the archeological, and the architectural aspects — all of them being rather different symbols of national culture — constituted the discourse of Central Asian Oriental archeology, as a whole, and contributed to the turn of nomads into city-dwellers in the past as well as in the present. Needless to say, scholarly networks (personal rather than institutional) provided for the circulation of ideas among the specialists through conferences, correspondences, the common educational background (long- or short-term studies in Leningrad), and sometimes also through joint expeditions. As in previous chapters, my focus will be on those medievalists who dedicated their lives to studying the history of Islamic Central Asia.

In my dissertation I follow the history of Oriental projects since their ‘birth’ until their end, so that very often we have to go back to the early Soviet period in order to detect the roots of concrete scientific enterprises. The pattern of archeological studies which I have described above shaped the architecture of this chapter: I will first address the general history of comprehensive academic expeditions in the region, then I will turn to the myth of the ‘Otrar catastrophe,’ and finally I will proceed to the fate of Aḥmad Yasawī’s shrine. The history of Soviet archeological expeditions in Kazakhstan (thus, the first step in this pattern) can be divided into chronological periods on the basis of changes in the methodology of research: 1) 1867-1918, comprising the Tsarist era as a period characterized by the general search for antiquities only; 2) the 1920s – 1936, as a period of transition to Marxist methodology, achieving the identification of the most interesting sites and regions; 3) from 1936 to the 1950s, witnessing the institutionalization of archeology in Kazakhstan and finalizing the preliminary identification of ancient sites; 4) the 1950s-80s, in which time
Kazakh archeology obtained its emancipation from Leningrad, with the excavation of large areas and specifically the Otrar campaign.\textsuperscript{719}

I am not alone in considering archeological and architectural sources in a strong interconnection, because “simultaneous and parallel investigation of architectural and archeological monuments by the same authors was one of the main characteristics in the study of Central Asian antiquities.”\textsuperscript{720}

\textbf{4.2. Cultural History and the Study of Ethnicity in the Past}

Over the last thirty years science-power relations in archeology have become an object of much interest in academic research. Special attention has been paid to the position of archeologists under totalitarian regimes, with fascist Germany as the best-researched case. In particular, the ideas and writings of German archeologist Gustaf Kossinna (1858-1931) became central in the study of the history of archeology in Germany. Kossina’s so-called settlement-arheological method formed the ground for nationalist interpretations of history. In his book \textit{The Origin of Germany: On the Settlement-Archeological Method} (1911), Kossinna for the first time stated that “sharply defined archeological culture areas correspond at all times to the areas of particular peoples or tribes,”\textsuperscript{721} hence identifying a clear link between a modern nation with its territory and archeological culture, as a tool for tracing the historically known peoples to supposed origins.\textsuperscript{722}

The chronological and spatial systematization of archeological cultures was central to cultural history since the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.\textsuperscript{723} In the first half of


\textsuperscript{721} Cited in: U. Veit, “Gustav Kossinna and His Concept of a National Archaeology,” in: H. Härke (ed.), \textit{Archaeology, Ideology and Society: The German Experience} (Frankfurt am Main et al., 2000), 44.

\textsuperscript{722} S. Jones, \textit{The Archaeology of Ethnicity: Constructing Identities in the Past and Present} (London and New York, 1997), 2.

the twentieth century the cultural history paradigm dominated the theories of archeological schools throughout the world. According to S. Jones, the main assumption of this paradigm was that:

“bounded uniform cultural entities correlate with particular peoples, ethnic groups, tribes and/or races. (...) It is assumed that culture is made up of a set of shared ideas or beliefs, which are maintained by regular interaction within the group, and the transmission of shared cultural norms to subsequent generations through the process of socialization, which, it is assumed, results in a continuous cultural tradition. (...) Bound-ed material culture complexes are assumed to be the material manifestation of past peoples, who shared a set of prescriptive learned norms of behavior (...) [A]s in the case of contemporary claims concerning the relationship between nations and cultures, the relationship between archeological cultures and past peoples is based on teleologi-cal reasoning in that culture is both representative of, and constitutive of, the [contem-porary] nation or people concerned.”

The main problem encountered by scholars in this regard was that no expression of national consciousness can be found in artifacts. It is impossible to judge on the ethnic self-expression of peoples of the past. Only written sources contain data which might be interpreted in national terms. As the relics of material culture are silent about national attribution, they leave a broad space for interpretations by archeologists, who “may not be able to find a reflection of past ‘ethnic entities’ in the material record.” It is also commonplace for national historical accounts to produce a myth of origin of a particular ethnic identity by tracing it back to a perceived Golden Age, to construct a continuous track of cultural development. In other words, the relationship of archeological practice and national politics is universal.

An attempt to overcome the empiricist German school of cultural history has been undertaken by British and American researchers in the 1960s-70s. This trend was strongly influenced by social anthropology and marked a departure from problems of ethnicity to-

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725 Ibid., 72.


wards broad socio-cultural issues, focusing on processional and functionalist analysis rather than on a descriptive chronological approach.

The case of Soviet and post-Soviet archeology has been studied extensively, but with little or no attention to Central Asian republics, though general trends were identified there as well.728 As S. Jones rightfully stated, “irrespective of whether or not explicit reference is made to past peoples or ethnic groups, the same basic paradigm which was used in Nazi Germany has also formed the rudimentary framework for archeological enquiry worldwide.”729 This statement also holds true for Soviet archeology, in spite of the Soviets anti-fascist and anti-bourgeois rhetoric. In the following I will argue that Central Asian Oriental archeology in its Kazakh branch fully remained within in the framework of ethnically colored descriptive cultural history.

4.3. Tsarist Archeology in Transition: Early Expeditions in Kazakhstan, 1867-1918

Orientalists very soon realized the substantial lack of knowledge about the ancient history of Central Asia, which was known prior the revolution mainly from written sources.730 Even for the medieval period it was not clear whether the reports of Arabic, Turkic, Persian, and Chinese authors correspond to archeological realities or not. Attempts to verify manuscript data on the ground were conducted in the second half of the 19th and in the early 20th century. Yet before the Bolshevik revolution the large Central Asian territories were poorly studied archeologically, and only few attempts were undertaken to investigate ancient cities and architecture. The excavations that were indeed carried out in different plac-

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729 S. Jones, The Archaeology of Ethnicity, 5.

730 S.P. Tolstov, Po del’tam Oksa i laksarta (Moscow, 1962).
es were generally of amateurish quality. Among the most prominent pioneering Central Asian archeologists were Petr I. Lerkh (1828-1884), Vasilii V. Radlov (1837-1918), Nikolai N. Pantusov (1849-1909), Aleksei Selivanov (1851-1915), Nikolai I. Veselovskii (1848-1918), Valentin A. Zhukovskii (1858-1918), Vasilii V. Bartol’d (who modestly claimed to be rather a ‘cabinet’ scholar than an archeologist) and a number of other scholars. These first studies supplemented the history as it was known from manuscripts, mapping Central Asian settlements, collecting material findings, and in this way connecting the word and the object.

Was this prerevolutionary Central Asian archeology a colonial one, in the sense of using the colony as a source of cultural treasures for the metropolis? On the one hand, yes, the Tsarist-era archeology had indeed a colonial character, but not because of the low methodological level and the sheer hunt for ‘treasures’ but rather because the research trips were undertaken only on occasion, from time to time, by scholars from the metropolis, who used natives only as black-workers, and finally because findings were usually transported to the State Hermitage and not intended to be displayed to the indigenous population. This transfer of objects was even laid down in the statute of the Imperial Archeological Commission established by the Tsar Alexander II in 1859. However, Vera Tolz in-

731 P.I. Lerkh, Arkheologicheskaia poezdka v Turkestanskiy krai v 1867 godu (St. Petersburg, 1870).


735 For an overview of pre-revolutionary archeological excavations in Central Asia with very interesting photo-illustrations from the Photographic Archive of the Institute of History of Material Culture of the Russian Academy of Sciences (St. Petersburg) see: G.V. Dluzhnevskaia, L.B. Kircho, “Imperatorskaia arkheologicheskaiia komissia i izuchenie drevnostei Srednei Azii,” 783-812.

736 Imperatorskaia arkheologicheskaiia komissia (1859-1917): K 150-letiiu so dnia osnovaniia, 11.
sisted that already in the 1870s Russian archeologists tried to achieve local preservation of all discoveries, because of a lack of money for bringing everything to St. Petersburg but also to promote a ‘native homeland’ (rodina), for strengthening a pan-national identity of Russia. Moreover, this circumstance was actively used by Russian Orientalists to show their superiority over ‘vandal’ European counterparts who sought only to enrich their museums. Nevertheless, in Central Asia this practice did not find widespread until the first Soviet complex expeditions (first Imperial museums were mainly located in Tashkent). On the other hand, the Russian colonial society in Central Asia, especially in Tashkent, conducted the first steps toward the institutionalization of archeological science in the region. The establishment of the Turkestan Circle of Amateurs of Archeology (Turkestanskii kruzhok liubitelei arkheologii, 1895-1917) in Tashkent resulted from the cooperation between Bartol’d and local scholars, Nikolai Ostroumov (1846-1930) being the most prominent among them. The Society focused on the study of the role of the Aryan sedentary population, regarding it as the only civilized in the region. The Imperial Archeological Commission had a similar vision. By request of the Commission, Nikolai Veselovskii excavated the site of Afrasiyab near Samarkand over several months in 1885, and Valentin Zhukovskii spent a season on the ruins of ancient Marw in 1890. Both archeological sites were widely known centers of Iranian culture. Interestingly, Bartol’d’s colleague, Ol’denburg, “began presenting European archeological practices as a manifestation of Western colonialism in the ‘East’ and generally criticized Western scholarship for plunder-

739 B.V. Lunin, Sredniaia Azia v nauchnom nasledii otechestvennogo vostokovedeniia (Tashkent, 1979), 44-51.
ing Oriental societies for their cultural treasures.”741 Before the revolution, however, also Russian archeology was largely preoccupied with plundering.

With the creation of the Academy of History of Material Culture in 1919 a special Middle Asian Archeological Office (Razriad arkheologii Srednei Azii) was established there. Bartol’d headed this office and he recommended to continue the work on Marw because Marw was “the only place in Central Asia well-known from historical accounts,”742 as well as on Afrasiyab and Khiva. In this context Bartol’d raised the question whether the Iranians were the original inhabitants of Central Asia or whether they immigrated from elsewhere. He also underlined that “the exaggerated perception of the cultural achievements of the Aryans and of the barbarism of the Turks inevitably influenced the understanding of Russia’s scholarly tasks in Turkestan.”743 However, the Civil War (1919-1921) prevented intensive work in this direction. Individual scholars were only occasionally sent to the region in order to conduct excavations.

4.4. The Iranian Roots of Central Asian Cities (1920s)

In spite of the political storms that shook the former Russian Empire, a new generation of scholars continued archeological travels to Central Asia, leading to the transition from the research methods of the Tsarist time to Marxist methodology. In this paragraph I would like to address views of three outstanding representatives of this transition, namely Pavel P. Ivanov (1893-1942), Aleksandr A. Semenov (1873-1958), and Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii (1886-1953), whom we have already met in the context of philological and historical projects. In the 1920s all of them studied the ancient cities on the territory of the Kazakh SSR from the viewpoint of the Aryan/Iranian theory of their origin, supported by Vasilii Bartol’d, but later they changed their perceptions in response to the demands of active nation building in Central Asia.

Pavel Ivanov, whom we briefly discussed in the first and second chapters, was born in a Siberian village. In his childhood his family moved to Tashkent, where he learned both

741 Cited in: V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 56 also 101.
743 V.V. Bartol’d, “Zadachi russkogo vostokovedeniia,” 529; cited in: V. Tolz, Russia’s Own Orient, 61.
the Uzbek and Farsi languages. In 1919-1924 Ivanov was a student of Iranian studies at the Turkestan Oriental Institute in Tashkent. In 1920 and 1924-1926 Ivanov regularly visited Sayrām, located near Chimkent, which is one of the ancient cities on the middle Sir Darya and known from narrative sources as Isfijāb/Is pijāb. As a result of his works, Ivanov published two articles, in one of which he revealed his close relationship with Aleksandr Semenov, who also lived in Tashkent at that time; Ivanov’s second article was dedicated to Vasilii Bartol’d.

It is not clear why Ivanov’s choice fell on Sayrām, because this place was not very well known to Arabic geographers (the first short notes go back to the 9th century). Besides that, being an object of constant attacks by the nomads, Sayrām lost almost all of his historical monuments. However, Sayrām has always been a popular place for religious pilgrims, because numerous sacred graves are located inside the city, and they are strongly connected to the neighboring shrine of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī in Turkestan. Ivanov underlined the fact that the main feature of this region was its location on the border of settled and nomadic worlds and its independence from both of them. In his outline of the history of Sayrām, Ivanov started his narrative in the time of the Samanid dynasty (819-1005), when Sayrām was a frontier town. Acknowledging the fact that already in 1512 the Kazakh Khan Qasim captured Sayrām, Ivanov stated that ‘the Kazakhs’ settling in the north-eastern outskirts of the agricultural part of Central Asia (Tashkent region) was a ra-

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745 Sayrām was also visited by archeologist Mikhail Masson, whose article remained to me unavailable. M.E. Masson, “Staryi Sairam,” in: Izvestiiia Sredazkomstarisa, vol. 3 (Tashkent, 1928), 23-42.


747 P.P. Ivanov, “K voprosu ob istoricheskoi topografii starogo Sairama,” in: ‘Iqd al-Jumān, V.V. Bartol’du – turkestanske druz’ia, ucheniki i pochitately (Tashkent, 1927), 151-164. An off-print of this article which I used in the library of Institute of Oriental Manuscripts in St. Petersburg (No. 25729) bears Ivanov’s autograph: “To V.V. Bartol’d as a token of great respect from the author, 30.03.28. Frunze.”


ther late enterprise, which began not earlier than in the first half of the 16th century when the central part of Central Asia had already been populated by the Uzbeks (...). The political transfers of power from Uzbeks to Kazakhs and the other way around in the 16th-18th centuries did not seriously change the ethnic map of the region: the Angren River [south of Tashkent – A.B.] was the southern border for the Kazakh population.”

By saying this Ivanov took sides in the then burning debate between the Kazakhs and the Uzbeks over the Tashkent region, and he included the latter into the field of Kazakh ethnic influence. Unfortunately, besides collecting data from written sources about Sayrām (mainly from the Kokand historiographical tradition) and a description of the city’s fortification and mazārs, Ivanov was not able to do much for archeological exploration of the city.

Aleksandr Semenov, stemming from a baptized Tatar family from the Kasimov Khanate,751 was born in a family of merchants of the first guild in Tambov region. Since his childhood he knew the Tatar language and dreamt about the mysterious Orient, therefore in 1895 he entered the Lazarev Institute of Oriental Languages in Moscow (the forename of the Narimanov Institute of Oriental Studies). After studying Arabic, Persian and Turkic languages there, in 1900 Semenov went to Ashkhabad and spent the rest of his life in Central Asia. In 1902 he met Bartol’d when the latter visited Ashkhabad.752 It was a very significant meeting, because they continued to exchange letters and books and to keep friendship until Bartol’d’s death in 1930; moreover Semenov, in fact, became one of Bartol’d’s most successful students and continued to adhere to Bartol’d’s scientific principles even when this became politically dangerous.

In the 1920s Semenov was among other topics interested in Central Asian archeology and architecture in their relation to data from manuscripts and epigraphy. In 1922, together with Aleksandr Shmidt and other colleagues, Semenov visited the mausoleum of Khwāja Ahmad Yasawī in Turkestan and read its inscriptions.753 During 1925-1928 Semenov stud-


752 Ibid., 40.

ied several important architectural monuments in Tashkent and Marw. Semenov expressed his opinion on the cultural ‘possession’ of the main architectural masterpieces in Central Asia in his article Material Remnants of Aryan Culture (1925). Briefly reviewing numerous medieval monuments from all over the region, Semenov claimed that all of them belonged to the Aryan legacy. The Tajiks are descendants of Aryans, whose cultural influence went far beyond the borders of the modern Tajik ASSR: according to Semenov, one can observe its traces in each Central Asian republic. Peculiar to mention is that this idea of Tajik cultural predominance in Central Asia, and therefore Semenov’s regional view of Central Asia from the Tajik position, were later inherited by the author of Tojikon (“The Tajiks”) Bobojan Gafurov (1908-1977), the Secretary General of the Communist Party of Tajikistan (1946-56) and later the Director of Institute of Oriental Studies in Moscow (1956-77). In this context the link between Semenov and Gafurov (through archeologist Boris Litvinskii and Semenov’s disciple and Litvinskii’s wife Elena Davidovich) seems obvious, because Semenov was the Director of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography of the Tajik Academy of Sciences in 1954-58, when Gafurov was still in Dushanbe and then moved to Moscow.

Semenov’s article on Aryan culture in Central Asia was published in a volume that was called Tajikistan, and thus devoted to one of the newly-appeared national republics. Still, in his article Semenov underlined that he did not use the framework of national delimitation, but that his starting point was that whole space between Semirech’e and the border with Afghanistan was one cultural area. Here Semenov was a Bartol’dist and an adherent to the regional ‘Turkestani’ approach towards Central Asian history. With regards to the territory of the modern Kazakh SSR in Semirech’e Semenov discussed the ancient towers in Burana and Uzgend, further westwards he talked about the city of Ṭarāz with the mausoleums of Qarā Khān and ‘Āyisha Bībī (all of these monuments were dated from the Qarakhanid era), and on the middle Sir Darya he introduced the city of Sayrām, as well as Turkestan with its shrine as a unique masterpiece of the Tīmūrid era, and finally he also

756 For more details on Gafurov’s regional perceptions see the PhD project From Gafurov to Primakov: The Politicization of Academic Oriental Studies in Moscow and Leningrad/St Petersburg since 1950 by Hanna Jansen (University of Amsterdam).
discussed Otrar. From his analysis of epigraphic material and manuscripts Semenov concluded that “The settled Aryan population of Central Asia, being a medium of high culture in pre-Islamic times, kept its cultural traditions during the Islamic period, therefore all great buildings of that time were built either by the local Aryan population, or with the participation of Persian masters, or through cultural influence [from the Persian world].” Here, too, Semenov was a true Bartol’dist; already in 1898 Vasili Bartol’d maintained that “the farmer culture in the Chu valley existed already in the 7th century and was brought by migrants from Mawarannahr, like [agricultural] colonies set up by the Kokand Khanate in modern times.” Thus, the settlements north of the Sir Darya were established by Soghdian, i.e. Iranian, colonization.

Although Semenov’s views became an object of harsh critique by his colleagues, he did not change his mind. When his article Material Remnants of Aryan Culture was republished in 1944, Semenov only changed ‘Aryan’ in the title to ‘Iranian’. Semenov, an outstanding scholar with rich pre-revolutionary bureaucratic experience in Ashkhabad and Tashkent offices, was repeatedly accused and prosecuted. In 1932-34, when the Oriental faculty of the Central Asian State University had been closed down, Semenov was forced to move to Kazan’, from where he however soon returned back to Tashkent. In 1949 he was accused of being ‘a rootless cosmopolitan,’ in the last big Stalinist campaign of political intimidation and terror. However, Semenov was not repressed and peacefully moved to Dushanbe where he found much glory and the post of Director of the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography.


758 Ibid., 118.


760 A.A. Semenov, Material’nye pamiatniki Iranskoi kul’tury v Srednei Azii (Stalinabad, 1944). Critique against Semenov included the article of L. Bretanitskii in Voprosy istorii 7 (1947), 128-131 and protocols of the meeting about ‘true’ history of the Uzbek SSR: O marksistsko-leninskom osveshchenii istorii i kul’tury narodov Uzbekistana. Stenograficheskii otchet razshirennoi zasedaniiia otdeleniia gumanitarnykh nauk AN Uzb. SSR, 21-27 aprelia 1949 (Tashkent, 1951).

761 S. Gorshenina, Galina Pugachenkova (Tashkent, 2001), 111; B.A. Litvinskii, N.A. Akramov, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov, 100.

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One of the most prominent and controversial Orientalists of his time whose life and work reveal the whole complexity of the transition from Tsarist times to the Marxist order was Aleksandr Iu. Iakubovskii. A true student of Vasilii Bartol’d, Iakubovskii however strongly criticized his teacher of neglecting Marxist methodology. Eventually, Iakubovskii became an outstanding example of a Soviet Orientalist who yielded enormous ideological influence on the newly-built national republics of Central Asia. In the second chapter I already pointed out his role in the drawing up of the Soviet concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia as well as his participation in early Orientalist projects on source editions; Iakubovskii was of similar centrality in the field of archeology.

In 1925, on invitation of Vasilii Bartol’d, Aleksandr Iakubovskii was employed in Leningrad at the State Academy of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK) led by Marr, where his task was to analyze pictures of Central Asian architecture. This was the start of his career. After Bartol’d’s death in 1930, Iakuboskii took his place in the Central Asian Sector of GAIMK and simultaneously became Head of the Oriental Office at the State Hermitage (until 1936). In 1929-1941 Iakubovskii also worked as docent and professor of Leningrad University; and in 1933-1938 he was Research Associate at the Institute of Oriental Studies. During these fifteen years of work Iakubovskii enjoyed professional recognition as a leading specialist in Central Asian history. Together with historian Boris Grekov he authored a book that became a milestone of the Soviet historiography of the Golden Horde and its relations with the Ancient Rus’. 762 As the Tashkent historian Valerii Germanov rightfully mentioned, in the 1930s and 1940s “nobody could be celebrated as a genius without Stalin’s approval.” 763 Being able to combine encyclopedic knowledge of the Central Asian past with fervent adherence to Marxist ideology, Iakubovskii enjoyed considerable authority in scholarly circles all over the Union. His concepts were recognized as groundbreaking in many fields, the most visible of them being the concept of ethnogenesis in Central Asia. Already Edward Allworth heavily criticized Iakubovskii’s closeness to political authority. 764

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Of our concern here is that one of Iakubovskii’s first research trips in Central Asia was to Sīghnāq, the ancient capital of the Aq Horde, the eastern part of the Dasht-i Qipchāq, in the first half of the 14th century. Known from written sources since the 10th century, Sīghnāq was linked to the urban networks of the Mid-Sir Darya River with Otrar as its epicenter. As in other cities of the area, Sīghnāq’s inner city (shahrīstān) was surrounded by magnificent walls (which were, however, erected in the post-Mongol epoch). Such dignified ancient constructions with many towers inevitably attracted the attention of archeologists.

The only instrument that Iakubovskii had at his disposal when visiting the ruins of Sīghnāq on the order of GAIMK in 1927 was his photo camera. Not able to do any excavations, he was limited to taking notes on the city plan and some ancient buildings, and he came up with a hypothesis on the origin of the city. Pointing out the information provided by Faḍlallāh b. Rūzbihān Isfahānī in his Mihmān-nāma-yi Bukhārā (The Book of Bukhara’s Guest, 16th century) that since the 15th century Sīghnāq served as an aristocratic necropolis for the Uzbek Khans “of Shaybanid origin”, Iakubovskii suggested that the Kök Kesene shrine and its surroundings near Sīghnāq were nothing else but those graves of the Uzbek and later Kazakh khans. This hypothesis is closely connected to Iakubovskii’s idea that the cities on the middle and lower Sir Darya emerged as bazars of Muslim merchants (perhaps he intended to imply: Iranian speaking?), which only later developed into the real cities that connected the Steppe with the Central Asian urban world. Here one might mention the influence of Bartol’d, whose views on the origin of Central Asian cities were cited above. Besides this aristocratic cemetery, Iakubovskii explored the mausoleum of the local saint Ḥusām al-Dīn Sīghnāqī and a Sufi lodge (khānqāh), probably built by Urus Khan in the 1370s.

Still, what was important to him was that these cities and constructions were erected not by Turks but by Iranian colonists from the south. These cities belonged to the Turkic rulers and played a significant role in the history of the Kazakh Khanates in the 16th-17th centuries. That is, in 1927 Iakubovskii did not yet attribute the ancient cities on the terri-

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765 Here he meant the descendants of the fifth son Chingiz Khan, Shībān, not the dynasty of Sheybanids in Transoxania (1500-1598).


767 Ibid., 6, 23.
tory of the Kazakh SSR to the Kazakh people in the sense of developing urban culture: to govern a place does not mean to live there constantly and to contribute to urban civilization. Even though Iakubovskii did not mention the question which language those ‘Muslim merchants’ might have spoken, there is little doubt that he favored an Iranian version of the origin of cities in the region. It could not be otherwise, because we know that Bartol’d read and approved the draft of Iakubovskii’s article. Only in the 1940s Iakubovskii changed his views, criticizing the ‘Pan-Turkism’ and ‘Pan-Iranism’ of his colleagues and claiming the cultural priority of the peoples of Soviet Central Asia over their Muslim neighbors. He would then claim that not the Iranians brought civilization to Central Asia, but that the Central Asians brought the epos, architecture and other aspects of cultural life to Iran.

To sum up, all three scholars who visited Sayrām, Turkestan, and Sīghnāq — Semenov, Iakubovskii and Ivanov — agreed that these cities and its architecture reveal strong Aryan/Iranian influences. This assumption goes back to the prerevolutionary search for signs of Aryan culture in Central Asia and to the immigration theory that explained cultural development by movements of population. There can be no doubt that Bartol’d was a promotor of this theory among these scholars through his editing of their articles and through consultations. To put it shortly, in the 1920s the cities in Southern Kazakhstan were still regarded as part of Iranian, not Kazakh, culture.

4.5. ʿAwqāf, Irrigation Systems, and Archeology, 1935-1936

Archeology in Central Asia was connected to irrigation and to the cotton production. Already the Tsarist administration enlarged cotton fields in the region, but it was the Soviet transformation of Central Asia into a monoculture economic region that led to the great shortage of water, to ecological problems (the Aral Sea disaster being the most striking example), to the spread of diseases among the population, and the economical dependence from other parts of the Soviet Union. As Adeeb Khalid rightfully mentioned, this is the most evident argument for the colonial character of the relationship between Soviet Russia

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768 Ibid., 51.


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and Central Asia.\textsuperscript{770} Since the 1920s the Soviet program of ‘cotton independence’ presupposed the construction of large irrigation networks throughout the region. The Great Ferghana Canal was built by prisoners in 1939; many other canals were opened later.\textsuperscript{771} In this context it was deemed useful to study the peculiarities of the centuries old system of irrigation in Central Asia. As early as in 1934 the Central Committee of the Communist Party of the Uzbek SSR set up a team of scholars to publish several of old \textit{waqf} documents related to irrigation.\textsuperscript{772} Another initiative goes back to the year 1935, when the Central Asian Irrigational Institute in Tashkent (the Sazgiprovod) in collaboration with GAIMK initiated a project for collecting and analyzing Arabic-script materials for a monograph entitled \textit{The History of Irrigation in Central Asia}.\textsuperscript{773} For these purposes six specialists were brought together in a work-group (\textit{brigada}). Historian Malitskii was responsible for writing a history of the development of Central Asian hydro-resources; the Arabist Aleksandr Shmidt, who was living in Tashkent at that time, was to translate the notes of Arabic geographers as well as other Arabic sources on the topic;\textsuperscript{774} the Iranist Aleksandr Semenov intended to translate and annotate \textit{waqf}\textsuperscript{775} documents and other sources on the region of the Sir Darya Basin; comrades Kats, Saidzhanov, and Vasilii Shishkin (1894-1966) were instructed to translate and provide annotations to sources on the Zarafshan Basin and to work in the archives of Samarkand and Bukhara.\textsuperscript{776}

The intensive correspondence between the Sazgiprovod and participants of the project (Semenov being the most active correspondent) reveals more details on this initiative, which was, according to the authors, on the border of archeology with textual studies, and


\textsuperscript{772} B.A. Litvinskii, N.M. Akramov, \textit{Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov (nauchno-biograficheskii ocherk)} (Moscow, 1971), 101.


\textsuperscript{774} It seems that Shmidt did not produce anything for this project. It is not surprising, because the task was too ambitious.

\textsuperscript{775} A \textit{waqf} (Arabic, Pl. \textit{awqāf}) denotes a pious endowment, usually a building or land, for religious or charitable ends. For the study of the \textit{waqf} system in Central Asia, see: R.D. McChesney, \textit{Waqf in Central Asia: Four Hundred Years in the History of a Muslim Shrine, 1480-1889} (Princeton, New Jersey, 1991).

which was therefore close to the series of analogous projects that we analyzed in the first chapter of the present dissertation. As in other Oriental projects, the irrigation project was outlined in a short working plan. This plan was signed by a certain Rakhipbaev, the Director of Sazgiprovod, and sent to N.A. Paskutskii, the Head of the Main Cotton Office of the USSR in Moscow. The text of the project was the following:

“In 1935 Sazgiprovod allocated 30 thousand rubles and signed a contract with GAIMK for a compilation of the history of Central Asian irrigation. The necessity of such work is obvious, because besides Bartol’d’s small book,\(^\text{777}\) which is already outdated and incomplete, there is no other general outline of the irrigational history in Central Asia. According to the contract, during 1935 and in early 1936 GAIMK is obliged to collect and systemize texts from various historical documents, in particular to study the writings of all Arabic geographers, all (sic! – A.B.) Persian historical-geographical literature,\(^\text{778}\) and to study a serious amount of old waqf documents preserved in the archives of Tashkent, Samarkand, and Bukhara. It is planned that in 1936 GAIMK will start a series of publications on the history of irrigation in particular regions of Central Asia, especially the Ferghana, Chirchik-Angren, and Murghab. (...) As the importance of this work goes beyond the actual demand of Sagizprovod, it might be good to obtain financial support from other institutions.”\(^\text{779}\)

The irrigation project was of importance not only for the Uzbek, Turkmen, and Tajik SSR, but also for the Kazakh SSR, because its southern territories (the middle Sir Darya) were historically tied to the common Central Asian system of irrigation. However, the project was rather regional in its scope and approach, because it disregarded republican borders while accenting historical regions of irrigation.

While the mid-1930s were a period of severe state persecution against religious authorities, in 1936 GAIMK sent a letter to Musa Iuldashevich Saidzhanov, a religious authority in the Ṭillā Kārī Madrasa in Samarkand, asking him to help with the translation

\(^{777}\) [V.V. Bartol’d, “K istorii orosheniia Turkestana [1914],” in: V.V. Bartol’d, Sochineniiia, vol. 3, Raboty po istoricheskoi geografii (Moscow, 1965), 97-233.]

\(^{778}\) [Which would have been impossible, since there were no guidebooks for such a task. Krachkovskii produced his general outline of the history of Arabic geographical literature only in the 1940s, and Story’s survey of Persian literature became available in Russian translation only in 1972. I.Iu. Krachkovskii, Arabskaia geograficheskaia literatura (Moscow, Leningrad, 1957); Ch.A. Stori, Persidskaia literatura, 3 vols., translated into Russian by Iu.E. Bregel (Moscow, 1972).]

and annotation of *waqf* and other documents from the Samarkand archives. Unfortu-
nately, we do not know whether Saidzhanov agreed and contributed to this project.

In January 1936 Vasilii Shishkin reported from the Bukhara archive to GAIMK that
he identified about 2.5 thousand documents related to the history of irrigation. It was clear
to him that the task to translate them all by 1st February was ‘mission impossible.’ Simi-
lar complaints were brought forward by Aleskandr Semenov who carried out his part of the
project in the large Tashkent archives: “It is impossible to translate and compile an anno-
tated list of *waqf* documents on the Sir Darya Basin before 1st February, because there are
about 2.5 thousand texts. (...) Some of these documents have several meters in length, they
are damaged by dampness, and therefore it will take a lot of time to analyze even one of
these documents.” Important for the history of archeological studies in the Kazakh SSR
is that Semenov found and translated several excerpts from manuscripts on the irrigational
system in the Otrar region in the 14th century, but it seems that his work remained un-
published. Already in March 1936 Semenov submitted to GAIMK his work *Materials on
the History of Irrigation in Central Asia: the Sir Darya Basin in the Waqf Documents*.
Obviously this report contained information on the lands that had recently (1924) been
incorporated into the Kazakh SSR, namely the southern part of Kazakhstan. The scholar
also wrote from Tashkent to his Leningrad colleagues that he started working on the *waqf*
documents on the Ferghana Valley and intended to proceed with a collection of texts on
the Samarkand region. The part on the Ferghana Valley was finished and sent to Leningrad
in May 1936. Semenov asked GAIMK to send him his materials back after copying, but
there is no evidence that he ever used his first excerpts in his later writings. According to
Boris Litvinskii and N.M. Akramov, Semenov’s biographers, the reports and translations
of the documents prepared for the irrigation project were once located in the Central Ar-

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780 Ibid., f. 43.
781 Ibid., f. 33. Probably, part of those documents was published in: [V.L. Viatkin,] R.R. Fitrat, B.S. Sergeev,
*Kaziiskie dokumenty XVI veka* (Tashkent, 1937).
783 Ibid., f. 8.
784 In total Semenov prepared four folders with excerpts from the *waqāf* documents. Ibid., f. 4.

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chive of the Tajik Academy of Sciences. Litvinskii and Akramov give a short description of Semenov’s notes.  

In June 1936, i.e. two years after its start, GAIMK and Sazgiprovod stopped the project, because “everybody had received their money and the contract was over.” Semenov however believed the project remained unfinished. Most probably the reason was that Sazgiprovod did not succeed in attracting additional financial help for the project, which, therefore, did not go beyond its preparation phase. The start of political repressions may, of course, also have influenced the situation around the project, but this cannot be supported by evidence from the available documents.

The need of scholarly work in the regions where massive construction projects were going on remained topical also in the following years. The government generously allocated money for urgent archeological investigations before any major construction. For example, in early 1936 Evgenii Masson, in a note to colleagues, reported that for the 1937 season the financial support for excavations in the Tashkent region amounted to 350 thousand rubles.

The irrigation project reveals the important link between Soviet cotton policies, irrigational systems, documentary sources in Arabic script, and archeological investigations in Central Asia. As was the case with Semenov’s translations on the history of the Kazakh SSR, also his writings on the history of irrigation remained in the archive. Only in the 1960s did scholars in Kazakhstan return to the topics of irrigational history in South Kazakhstan in written sources.

4.6. The Central Asian Committee and the 1936 Plenum of GAIMK

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786 RA NA IIMK, F. 2, Op. 1, № 32, Sbor materialov po istorii irrigatsii Srednei Azii, 1936 god, f. 3.

787 B.A. Litvinskii, N.M. Akramov, Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Semenov, 102.

As in the field of textual studies, the mid-1930s were also a crucial period for the history of Central Asian archeology. A few years after the reconstruction of Oriental textual studies in Leningrad the first large-scale archeological expeditions were set up. The demand to create national histories of Central Asian peoples required both the archeological investigation of the region and the exploration of numerous written sources preserved in the archives. In the Kazakh case it is known from archival files that around 1936 the government of the Kazakh SSR and the Kazakh Communist Party District Committee organization (the Kazkraikom) decided to compile the three-volume *History of the Kazakh SSR*. Therefore archeological studies in Kazakhstan received priority.\(^{789}\) The authorities in Moscow pressed for the establishment of well-organized archeology centers in each of the republics which would be intensively supported by experienced Leningrad scholars. As in the cases of source publications and the writing of national historical narratives, the republican governments officially asked Leningrad archeologists to manage archeological work in the region; and again, the republics were to cover the expenses. In the same year of 1936 the Central Asian Committee of GAIMK in Leningrad organized a meeting at which the Kazakh representative, a certain Almanov, announced the request of the Kazakh government to send two or three specialists from the metropolis to the republic in order to organize excavations. GAIMK was, according to this demand, asked to prioritize the various ancient sites, because “there are many unknown [archeological] sites on the territory of Kazakhstan. We receive reports on the newly found ancient places all the time.”\(^{790}\)

The early 1936 meeting of the Central Asian Committee at GAIMK is very important for understanding the first steps towards the subsequent large-scale investigations throughout Central Asia. This Central Asian Committee was established in 1935 and included such famous Leningrad scholars as Aleksandr Iakubovskii (who seems to have been a dominant figure in the Committee), Mikhail Masson (1897-1986), Aleksandr Iessen (1896-1964) and others. The aim of the Committee was to coordinate the work of GAIMK and local institutions on the republican level in archeological excavations in the regions of intensive irrigational works.\(^{791}\)


\(^{790}\) Ibid.

\(^{791}\) V.A. Alekshin, “Sektor/ otdel arkheologii Srednei/ Tsentral’noi Azii,” 40.
At the meeting of the Committee Aleksandr Iakubovskii pointed out several important issues which were later to play an outstanding role in Central Asian archeology. First of all, he underlined the absence of any coordination between central and local institutions. Personal contacts with some scholars in Central Asia had already been established, but institutionally any joint enterprise was difficult to carry out. Coordination, in Iakubovskii’s mind, presupposed not only establishing stronger institutional ties, but also reviewing of what was already done in Central Asia; who was currently doing what and where in the field. This point obviously meant to institutionalize joint conferences on the related topics or a regular congress of Central Asian archeologists. Iakubovskii also identified the form of strengthening institutional contacts: collaborative and comprehensive expeditions, which should be carried out by GAIMK in close partnership with other institutions, mainly on the local, republican level. Here Iakubovskii mentioned the cancelled irrigation project as an example of a collaborative work initiative coming from a Central Asian institution, the Sazgiprovod. “We are able to organize a number of similar projects,” Iakubovskii claimed.  

The following reveals that Iakubovskii and some of his colleagues (probably, Mikhail Masson among them) prepared the pattern of future studies very well. Aleksandr Iakubovskii voiced the idea to devote the upcoming, 16th Plenum of GAIMK completely to the history of Central Asia. It was planned to open the Plenum on 20 March 1936 with a general report on the main problems in Central Asian studies. This report was to be delivered by Iakubovskii himself.  

The Committee also discussed the situation in Kazakh archeology. Iakubovskii demonstrated the lack of organization in common projects with the example of investigations of the Yasawī shrine in 1935. He complained to the Kazakh representative, the above-mentioned comrade Almanov, that an experienced co-worker of GAIMK by the name of Bachinskii, was forced to cancel his research trip to Kazakhstan because the

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793 Ibid., ff. 19-20.

794 On another occasion Iakubovskii characterized Bachinskii as a talented restaurateur of Central Asian monuments. According to Iakubovskii’s knowledge, Bachinskii worked on the restoration of the mausoleum of Khwaja Ahmad Yasawi in Turkestan in 1928 and 1929, and afterwards, in 1929-1934 he restored numerous badly ruined architectural monuments in Old Bukhara, some of which from the 9th century. In Iakubovskii’s words, “Many Bukharian monuments are indebted to Bachinskii for their survival.” RA NA IIMK, F. 2, Op. 1, 1935, № 243, Otzyvy o rabote sotrudnikov instituta s prilozheniem avtobiografii, f. 4.
Kazakh side unexpectedly realized that there was no money for his trip. Archival sources suggest that somebody on the meeting raised a methodological question: whether it was possible to select one particular archeological site as a basis for annual stationary works (in Russian archeological terminology: *statsionar*). Iakubovskii replied, quite correctly, that there were still many unknown settlements in the region, which made it necessary to first undertake broad archeological investigations to register the ancient sites over the vast territory, because only this type of work would provide the broad historical perspective and give a general idea of the dimensions of research. Also Aleksandr Iessen (1896-1964) was very cautious with regard to work in Kazakhstan. “Of course”, he said, “this is a very interesting territory for archeology, but first we have to arrange the training of young local specialists. As to the question of stationary work, it is too early to judge. The works of this year will reveal the most appropriate method.” As we see, in 1936 the scholars were still in search of the most suitable technique in both archeological investigation and its organizational framework.

Also Zeki Velidi-Togan believed it was impossible to identify a clear date when Soviet Oriental archeology of Central Asia was born; and he already pointed out that archeology emerged in the context of the program of creating republics’ histories in the 1930s. This is not an accident. The 1936 meeting on problems of Central Asian history and archeology at GAIMK in Leningrad identified that there were almost no publications of written sources on the period before the Arab conquest of the 7th-8th centuries. Therefore, in 1937 a number of academic (akademicheskie, i.e. organized by the Academy of Sciences) archeological expeditions were set up in different Central Asian regions. The linkage between the history of Oriental Studies and Central Asian archeology presupposed to combine the analysis of written sources with that of archeological material.

Archeologists faced a number of challenges: how to collaborate with local scholars? How to train ‘native’ specialists? How to excavate: in depth or over large territories? Which particular province of the Kazakh SSR deserved the main attention? As Evgenii

795 Aleksandr Aleksandrovich Iessen was a specialist on the archeology of the Caucasus in the Bronze Age; he was working at GAIMK.


797 See, for example: S.P. Tolstov, *Po drevnim del’tam Oksa i Iaksarta* (Moscow, 1962), 5-6. For Togan’s critique of these works see: Z. Velidi-Togan, *Documents on Khorezmian Culture*, 23, 29-35.
Masson reported at the meeting, already two years before, i.e. around 1934, he compiled a plan of explorations in Kazakhstan, prioritizing the left blank of the Sir Darya River, i.e. the Otrar region in southern Kazakhstan. A similar project of archeological investigations was proposed by Aleksandr Bernshtam, who would later become the father of Kazakh archeology.

4.7. The Establishment of Archeological Expeditions in Kazakhstan

The lack of written sources on Central Asian history before the Arabic conquest became a good reason for the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences to organize several long-term academic archeological expeditions in Central Asia. During the 1930s expeditions in Pendzhikent (Tajikistan), Semirech’e (Kazakhstan), Khwarezm (Uzbekistan), and several other provinces were conducted. These three expeditions were directed by the most prominent Orientalists-archeologists who played a crucial role in the process of establishing local national schools. Among them were Aleksandr Iakubovskii (who worked in Pendjikent, Tajikistan), Aleksandr Bernshtam (Kazakhstan), and Sergei Tolstov (Khwarezm, Uzbekistan).

All of these expeditions selected several basic ancient cities as the starting points of their investigation. The distribution of these activities clearly supported the cultural delimitation — the differentiation of the regional cultural heritage over the Soviet republics. Already after WWII Pendjikent became a matter of pride for the Tajik people; and the legendary Khwarezmian expedition brought fame not only to Tolstov but also to the Uzbeks. However, these republican expeditions and later also the national scientific schools were usually not united in common projects. There were very few examples of collaboration among Central Asian colleagues, not only because each director of an expedition was a renowned scholar with encyclopedic knowledge, but also because the system was based on

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the division of Central Asia into republics, and on each republic’s individual orientation to Moscow.

The start of systematic archeological exploration of Kazakhstan is firmly linked to the name of Aleksandr Bernshtam, who first visited Semirech’e in 1936. Born in 1910, Bernshtam had studied ethnography at Leningrad University and worked at GAIMK since 1930. He obtained Turkological knowledge under supervision of Sergei Malov and Aleksandr Samoilovich and wrote his first dissertation on the ancient history of the Turks in 1935. Bernshtam’s doctoral dissertation on the history of the Kirgiz was defended in Tashkent in 1942. In his work Bernshtam supposed that the Kirgiz emerged as an ethnos by repeated migrations of Turks from Southern Siberia to the Tian-Shan Mountains. It was a result of long-standing conflicts between the native Iranian components and the immigrating Turks. His works written in 1930-40s demonstrated that the relations of nomadic and settled worlds were complicated and comprised much more than just wars. On this matter Iu.A. Zadneprovskii and A.G. Podol’skii, two biographers of Bernshtam, concluded that “Turkic peoples participated in the establishment of high civilization. It is incorrect [to assume] that Turks acted only as destroyers”. In other words, Bernshtam’s studies started to change the negative image of Turks. In 1947-49 Bernshtam led the South Kazakhstan expedition, but in 1950, in the course of the fight against Marrism and his followers, Bernshtam was blamed of idealizing the nomads and was fired from Leningrad University. Since that time he was not allowed to supervise any archeological expeditions. Bernshtam passed away soon after these witch hunts in 1956.

Presumably in 1936, according to his disciple Kliashtornyi, 804 Bernshtam gathered in Leningrad a team that comprised not only archeologists but also several Orientalists, namely Semen Volin and Aleksandr Belenitskii. Volin and Belenitskii were to translate historical Arabic-script sources into Russian, in particular texts related to the history of the Talas valley region, because this territory was on the agenda of archeological investigation. 805 The envisaged book was not published because of WWII; later a part of these materials was included in the posthumously published works of Semen Volin. 806 The latter publication, too, was connected to the needs of the Kazakh archeologists, who had used Volin’s work in typed manuscript form as a guide for the ancient settlements in the region. 807 I was unable to find other materials related to the Talas project in the archives; probably only Volin finished his part of the joint work. Also, I was not allowed to work with Bernshtam’s personal archive in GAIMK, though an overview of related materials has been recently published by archivists. 808

The first academic expedition in Kazakhstan was undertaken by GAIMK in 1936, and Aleksandr Bernshtam led the expedition. On the basis of previous occasional research of his colleagues, Bernshtam in his preliminary plan of works for one season identified the city of Mirzoian (modern Ṭarāz) and its outskirts as the most interesting region for research. Bernshtam pointed out that this place was attractive in the context of research of medieval cities (the identification of ancient Ṭarāz) as well as in the context of the Turks’ interaction with Arabs, Iranians, and China. Even more promising in the Kazakh case was that, according to Bernshtam, southern Kazakhstan was the region where “the historical

804 Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtornyi by the author, the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, 24 September 2009.


process of the nomads’ settling and their inter-relations with city-dwellers were the most evident.” Yet it soon turned out that the central part of the city (shahrūstān) is located under the present-day bazar in the city of Mirzoian, therefore Bernshtam repeatedly asked various state institutions to move the bazar to another place. Needless to say, the same bazar, which was a historical monument in its own right, is still on the same place.

In the next year GAIMK was transformed into the Institute of History of Material Culture (IIMK) of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, and its research tasks were further focused on archeology. Bernshtam compiled a plan of archeological work in Kazakhstan for the 1937 season, which was included into the general three-year plan of archeological investigations into the history of the Kazakh SSR. Unfortunately, there is no data on the other parts of the three-year plan, but Bernshtam’s idea was to proceed to the Ili River and to the Trans-Ili Alatau in South Eastern Kazakhstan. This expedition included four persons, with only Bernshtam himself being a professional archeologist. Therefore Jakubovskii strongly advised Bernshtam to invite Aleksandr Belenitski, who combined knowledge of Islamic sources with archeological skills, and also to get acquainted with Minorsky’s recent publication of the Persian manuscript Hudūd al-‘ālam, which might include significant data on the region in question. Bernshtam took into account both of these recommendations.

After two years of successful excavations in the Kazakh SSR, Aleksandr Bernshtam submitted to GAIMK a short description of previous works and a prospect of future studies. First of all he pointed out that his archeological investigation, initiated by the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, was conducted in the framework of a three-year project on the compilation of an archeological map of southern Kazakhstan. As Bernshtam reported, in 1936 they found and brought to the Oriental Office of the State Hermitage a great amount of material findings, several perfectly preserved vessels of the

Qarakhanid epoch (the 11th-12th centuries) being the most valuable among them. Bernshtam’s expedition identified about four hundred ancient monuments; most importantly, it localized the medieval city of Ṭarāz, that had been known from Byzantine sources since the 6th century and which reached its peak of cultural development in the Qarakhanid era.\(^{814}\)

In contradiction to the main theory of Tsarist and early Soviet times on Central Asian cities as primarily a product of Aryan culture and supporting Bernshtam’s specialization on the Turkic peoples of Eurasia, the newly discovered settlements, including Ṭarāz, were defined as cities of a local Turkic population.\(^{815}\) What was the meaning of this switch from ‘Iranian’ to ‘Turkic’ origin? No doubt it was the beginning of the Soviet autochthonism concept which interpreted the heritage of all previous epochs as possessions of the titular nation of the republic, yet in this case not yet to the Kazakhs but to the Turkic peoples in general. Thereby Bernshtam followed the path of archeologist V.I. Ravdonikas (1894-1976) who argued for an autochthonous evolution of the population in the Crimea, rejecting a previously accepted identification of the Goths with the ancient Germans.\(^ {816}\) Later, in 1949, the idea of an independent and self-sufficient history of the peoples of the Soviet Union was addressed by Sergei Tolstov in a collection of articles devoted to the 70th anniversary of Iosif Stalin: “The works of Soviet archeologists rejected the idea [of the historical predominance of Europeans]. (…) These works demonstrated that ancient cultures of the Soviet peoples, even though they developed in close connection with other cultures of West and East, are not reducible to ‘influences’ and ‘derivations’ and are not a pale mirror of so-called ‘chosen peoples’ — Greeks, Romans, and Persians. All Soviet peoples had their own trajectory and influenced the culture of surrounding peoples.”\(^ {817}\)

The tricky aspect was that this autochthonism was legitimated through cultural traces of other civilizations. If Bernshtam saw the main result of the 1936 expedition in the detec-

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tion of links between the Turkic world and the Soghdian and Islamic cultures, the 1937 season was aimed to search for connections of the Turks with the Chinese world in eastern provinces of the Kazakh SSR, i.e. in Semirech’e, close to where also the republican capital Alma-Ata was located. The financial expenses were covered jointly by central research institutions, namely GAIMK and the State Hermitage, and by republican organizations, such as the Scientific Office at the Party Committee (Otdel nauki kraikoma) and the Scientific Committee at the TsIK of the Kazakh SSR. Here we observe the transition from a colonial style of archeology to the cooperation between the metropolis and local centers. Even though all findings were transported to Leningrad, the Kazakh side organized a protected area on the territory of historical Ṭarāz, and also the establishment of the local museum was planned.

By 1937 two areas were of special archeological interest in Kazakhstan: one in southern Kazakhstan and another in Semirech’e. As we have seen in the discussion of the national delimitation in Central Asia (in the second chapter of the present dissertation), both regions were initially not part of the Kazakh SSR, but after their integration they served as the main source for constructing the national historical memory. The two areas were of special importance for the ‘sedentarization of the past’, that is, for the replacement of the nomadic stereotype by the new dogma that the history of Kazakhstan was determined by the long development of cities that were inhabited by Turkic-speaking populations.

In 1937, after preliminary archeological travels, Bernshtam proposed a larger plan of works in Kazakhstan and even recommended to formulate, in accordance with the Soviet plan system, a five-year plan of archeological works in Central Asia in which he clearly identified the individual expeditions and their supervisors as well as the required results. This was probably a first sign of the emerging system of republican expeditions: in the late 1930s each national republic of Central Asia received its own expedition which interpreted the discoveries in a national light. Bernshtam underlined his confidence that “South-Eastern Kazakhstan is the first-rate region for understanding the ancient and medieval history of the Kazakh republic; here one can check the reports of ancient Arabic and Chinese

authors that are so important for historical topography."  Not surprising is therefore that Bernshtam focused the research plan on the Talas river and Ėrāz, because exactly this territory provided visible and powerful historical monuments and was well covered by various written sources. The Steppe regions of Kazakhstan did not completely vanish from the research agenda, however. It was exactly in 1936 that the so-called Karasakpian inscription was discovered on a stone near the city of Dzhezkazgan in Central Kazakhstan. This Arabic-Turkic inscription was performed by the order of Amir Timūr in 1391 during his war against the Golden Horde’s Khan Tokhtamysh (d. around 1406). As could be expected, the stone was brought to the State Hermitage and is still preserved there. However, this occasional discovery did not inspire active research in Central Kazakhstan. Besides Ėrāz as ‘a stationary point’ in the south, Bernshtam also raised the question of the city of Balasagūn, the capital of the Qarakhanid Kaganate, which he believed was located near the village of Krasnaia Rechka in Kirgizia, and Bernshtam suggested to organize a second ‘stationary point’ there.

In order to understand the tasks of academic expeditions in Central Asia it is interesting to look at a similar five-year work plan written by Aleksandr Iakubovskii for the Soghdian-Tajik expedition in the Tajik SSR, which was jointly organized by the State Hermitage and the Institute of History, Language, Literature, and Art (IIIaLI) of the Tajik Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR. This text goes back to the year 1946, but it clearly corresponds with what Bernshtam proposed in 1936-1937. I therefore suppose that the general setting for all expeditions was prepared already before WWII.

In his 1946 plan for the Soghdian expedition Iakubovskii, first of all, claimed that Tajikistan was the most poorly studied territory of all Central Asia. After that he moved to the problem of the very sensitive distinction between the Tajiks and the Uzbeks, making

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821 This hypothesis was disputed by Kazakh archaeologists, who identified a site called Aq Tobe in Western Kazakhstan as the historical Balasagūn: U. Shalakenov (Balasaguni [sic!]), Gorod Balasagun v V-XIII vv. (Almaty, 2009).
clear that “the Tajiks are descendants of the Soghdians, Bactrians, and Kushans,” whereas the Uzbeks of Zarafshan region and those of the cities of Tashkent, Margelan, and Shahrisabz are mainly turkicized Tajiks or Sarts, as they were called in sources of the 16th to early 20th centuries.”

From this passage the national context of archeological excavations becomes very clear: Iakubovskii tended to level ethnic differences between Tajiks and Uzbeks claiming the common heritage to be Tajik. Later on in the document Iakubovskii defended the concept of autochthonism, and he singled out two historical regions which, just like in the Kazakh case, were to be studied because they represent the general image of the country: “The population in Tajikistan has its local roots and an autochthonous origin. One part of the Tajik population was historically connected with Soghd, i.e. northern Tajikistan, whereas the other part had roots in the Bactrian culture in the south-eastern part of the country. These provinces were the most culturally developed, hence they should be studied in the first place.”

Iakubovskii’s account of the tasks of the Tajik expedition resemble the goals and techniques of other expeditions not only in the Kazakh republic, but also in other Central Asian republics: 1) the archeological expedition aimed to study the ‘darkest’ epochs and ‘white spots’ that were poorly known from written sources, i.e. the ancient and medieval periods in the history of the Tajik republic and Tajik people “on the territory of this republic.” This means that the republican expeditions were mainly isolated from each other by the existing republican borders (I use here term ‘republican’ here only in the territorial sense. Institutionally, until the 1960s these expeditions remained rather centrally organized with only slow tendency towards their ‘nativization’ in the republics); 2) to study the historical topography of the region on the basis of texts in ‘Oriental’ languages, and to conduct archeological studies in the vicinity of the cities and along the roads between them; 3) to localize ancient cities that were so far known only from old texts, and then to start stationary work there; 4) to register all architectural monuments on a systematic scale; 5) to

823 [This is inaccurate, because the modern Tajiks speak a Western Iranian language, whereas ancient Central Asian population used Eastern Iranian. See: P. Bergne, The Birth of Tajikistan. National Identity and the Origins of the Republic (London, New York, 2007), 3-6].


825 Ibid., f. 5.
add to the excavations a study of the history of the same region on the basis of written sources. In fact, all of these tasks had to deal with Oriental Studies.

Close connections with Oriental studies made it possible to investigate historical processes from a complex perspective. This methodology combined archeology with source studies, especially with numismatics and epigraphic studies, because the Arabic and Persian terminology is crucial for identifying the structural elements of medieval cities.

4.8. The Institutionalization of Kazakh Archeology in the 1940s-1950s

Archeological expeditions in the Kazakh SSR were interrupted by the war, but in 1945 a very intensive institutional development of Central Asian archeology began. Since the appearance of the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography in 1945, a number of provincial expeditions were organized in Central, Eastern (Semirech’e), and Southern (the Sir Darya valley) parts of Kazakhstan. The Central Kazakhstan expedition was the first expedition established by the Sector of Archeology, which existed since the first day of the Institute’s life. Both the Sector and the expedition were directed by the native Kazakh historian Al’kei Margulan. Margulan was the first scientist to interpret archeological findings in Kazakhstan in national terms.

Al’kei Khakanovich Margulan was born in Pavlodar region in 1904. As Margulan wrote himself in his autobiography, his parents were from the working class. When aged six to twelve Margulan studied in his village with local Islamic teachers, following the traditional system of education and learning of classical texts by heart. Obviously, this

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826 Ibid., ff. 9-11.
way Margulan learned how to read texts in Arabic script. In 1921 he went to Semipalatinsk where he studied for five years in the local Pedagogical College. After graduation he was sent to Leningrad, where he spent the years from 1925 to 1938. Being the first Kazakh scholar to go through the Leningrad school of Orientology, Margulan wrote that he benefited a lot from the classes of Bartol’d, Marr and Meshchaninov. In 1931-1934 he was an aspirant at GAIMK, studying the history of Central Asian material culture and art, but then he got sick and returned to work only in 1937. In the meantime the topic of his dissertation was changed to The Khan Yarlïqs. I have not been able to find the original text of this dissertation, but fortunately a review on this dissertation by Pavel Ivanov did survive in the Archive of Orientalists, hence we get an idea of what kind of scholarship Margulan represented in Leningrad.

According to Ivanov’s critical review Margulan had attempted a combination of philological and historical approaches towards primary sources. This resulted in many desperate and superficial claims, e.g. in Margulan’s explanation of the terminology in Mongol official documents (such as *tamgha*, *süyürğhâl*, and *tarkhân*). Ivanov’s general conclusion was that Margulan did not know the literature on the topic, and that he even ignored the collections of Mongol credential cards (*paiza*) preserved in the State Hermitage. Ivanov also pointed out Margulan’s problems with the Russian language and his arrogant attitude towards previous researchers, whose translations he high-handedly ‘corrected.’ Margulan, by contrast, maintained in his autobiographical notes that he possessed a good knowledge of Turkic languages and Russian, whereas he was not well acquainted with German, Eng-

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lish, Arabic, Persian, Ukrainian, and Belorussian.\textsuperscript{834} In spite of all troubles, Margulan’s dissertation was eventually defended in 1943, during the Siege of Leningrad.\textsuperscript{835}

In 1939-1945 Margulan worked at the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, combining this duty with lecturing at the Kazakh State University. His studies in Leningrad had given him the reputation of being a good specialist in Central Asian archaeology and written sources, therefore the administration of the newly established (1945) Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography counted on him and entrusted him with the task of translating written sources on Kazakh history.\textsuperscript{836} However, Margulan’s work focused only on Kazakh archeology. In the Kazakh republic he was highly celebrated, and very soon he became a corresponding member (1946) and full member (1958) of the republican Academy of Sciences.

Together with other representatives of the Kazakh intelligentsia Margulan became a victim of state repression of 1947, when he was largely criticized for a ‘perversion’ of Kazakh history and for promoting Pan-Turkism.\textsuperscript{837} In January 1947 the Central Committee of the Communist Party in the Kazakh SSR issued a decree On the Rough Mistakes of the Institute of Language and Literature, claiming that the studies of Kazakh folklore were not a suitable topic of research. This was also the time when Ermukhan Bekmakhanov’s book on the Kazakhs in the 1820s-40s was under heavy fire. Being criticized for an idealization of the epic hero Edigei, Margulan was forced to leave his office in the Archeological Sector of the Institute of History, which he had held since the establishment of the Institute, and he was incriminated for ‘national distortions’.\textsuperscript{839} Already in the 1940s the exped-
tion directed by Alkei Margulan had studied several ancient cities in Central Kazakhstan and the Sir Darya Valley. Despite the 1947 troubles, Margulan wrote a book on the history of settlement civilization in Southern Kazakhstan, published in 1950.840

There were three main arguments which Margulan addressed in his monograph. Relying on the works by Tolstov, Iakubovskii, and Bernshtam, he strongly criticized Semenov’s adherence to the Aryan theory of origin of the Central Asian cities. According to Margulan, Semenov denied the existence of urban culture and monumental architecture among the nomadic Turks, i.e. the Kazakhs, whom Semenov had called in 1940 ‘the Steppe predators.’841 By contrast, Margulan had proven that high urban culture existed on the territory of the Kazakh SSR not only in the southern regions, but also northwards, in Central Kazakhstan, where he identified the existence of an irrigational system and a number of settlements. In his discussion of the previous historiography Margulan pointed to the political significance of the topic, since he analyzed Kazakh culture as ‘national in form and socialist in content.’842 With this statement he obviously hoped to be on safe ideological grounds. Hence Margulan’s conclusion that cities have always been present on the Kazakh territory and that there is a continuous development of settled civilization. Though there were wars with the Uzbeks for control over the Sir Darya region, “the basin of the middle and low Sir Darya River, with all cities around it, had always [sic!] belonged to the Kazakh territory. In the 16th-17th centuries Sïghnāq was the capital of the Kazakh Khanate.”843 Margulan did not discuss the ethnicity of those who populated the cities in question, but from the context the message is clear: the cities belonged to the Kazakhs; the Kazakh urban civilization unfolded largely on the territory of the present-day republic. Thus Margulan revised Bartol’d’s and Semenov’s concept by replacing the Iranian version of origin by a Kazakh national concept. Peculiar to mention that this turn coincided with the

842 A.Kh. Margulan, Iz istorii gorodov i stroitel’nogo iskusstva, 4.
843 Ibid., 81.
However, Bernshtam did not support Margulan’s desire to expand the urban culture of southern Kazakhstan northwards. Together with his disciples, whom he trained on his expedition (which was renamed as the Southern Kazakhstan expedition since the year 1947), Bernshtam continued working in the region after the war. Bernshtam rejected Margulan’s main argument that the archeological sites of Central Kazakhstan were testimonies of Kazakh urban and agricultural civilization. Instead, Bernshtam promoted the idea of a cultural influence from Otrar on northern territories. In 1947-48 Bernshtam explored the same territories that Margulan did and claimed that “Margulan tended to represent these rare and weak medieval settlements in Central Kazakhstan as something comparable to the cities of the Talas valley. This is his mistake. Even the settlements on the northern slopes of the Qaratau Mountains have a periphery character, they fully depended on Otrar. (...) Our investigation clearly demonstrated that there was no ancient agricultural civilization in Central Kazakhstan. There is no correlation between the irrigational system in the region and ancient sites. The two big settlements of Tasty and Qyzyl-Kurgan were set up [only] in the 19th century. The first one was a Kokandian fortress, while the second place was rather a caravanserai (...). Is it possible to compare a fence of thirty meters length with the cities of the Talas region?! Most probably, the irrigational system was organized by later Kazakh or Uzbek settlers. This area is only suitable for ‘nomadic agriculture’ and nothing more than that.”

After thus reviewing Margulan’s conclusions, Bernshtam concluded that the Talas region and partly the northern slopes of the Qaratau were the northern border of agriculture in this border region with the Steppe. As a result of explorations in 1947, Bernshtam acknowledged that “no matter how strongly the region was devastated by the Mongols, economics proved to be more powerful than political events: life in the cities did not disappear.” This was against Margulan and his followers who, on the contrary, accentuated the disastrous consequences of the Mongol invasion.

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They called this ‘the Otrar Catastrophe’: “Otrar underwent a terrible disaster from Chingiz Khan’s hordes during their invasion in Central Asia. A booming town was turned into ruins.” We will return to the discussion of this myth around Otrar in a special section below.

Since 1947 archeological investigations in Southern Kazakhstan were continued by two of Bernshtam’s disciples, Geronim I. Patsevich (1893-1970) and Evgeniia I. Ageeva (1916?). Geronim Iosifovich Patsevich was born in Belorussia; in 1914 he graduated from the Moscow Archeological Institute; in 1934-38 he worked as a scientific secretary of the Alma-Ata Museum of Kazakhstan, and in 1945-1955 at the Alma-Ata Institute of History. Ageeva graduated from the archeological department of the historical faculty of Leningrad University and since 1947 worked in the Alma-Ata Institute of History. The five-year research plan of the Institute of History proposed archeological work not only in Central Kazakhstan but also in the Sir Darya Basin, the region of the Talas and Chu rivers, and in the city of Saraichik in north-western Kazakhstan. Peculiar to mention that also Aleksandr Iakubovskii is mentioned among the participants of these expeditions though there is no evidence that he actually participated in them.

The main goal of the South Kazakhstan Archeological Expedition (IuKAE) was to study Kazakh ethnogenesis. In September-October 1948 the expedition, including Bernshtam, Ageeva, Patsevich, Kliashtornyi and others, investigated the site of Otrar. Drawing attention to this place, Bernshtam wrote in his article that it is not the ‘Otrar catastrophe’ of 1220 and not the death of Timūr here in February 1405 that make Otrar so attractive for scholars, but rather the fact that this city was mentioned on the pages of almost all medieval Arabic and Persian historical narratives. In 1948 Bernshtam’s expedition finished its preliminary overview of the Otrar oasis and concluded that this was the

846 A.Kh. Margulan, Iz istorii gorodov i stroitel’nogo iskusstva, 72.
847 This city was set up by Batu, a famous grandson of Chingiz Khan, and served as an important sacred place for the Mongol aristocracy. See: V.V. Trepavlov, “Saraichuk: pereprava, nekropol’, stolitsa, razvaliny,” in: Tiurkologicheskii sbornik 2001 (Moscow, 2002), 225-244.
major site on the middle Sir Darya that required to be studied in detail by a stationary expedition.

The Sir Darya Region eventually became the main object of interest for Kazakh archaeology since it was regarded as crucial for any investigation of Kazakh ethnogenesis and the process of sedentarization of the nomads. In one of her institutional reports Ageeva claimed that it was necessary to start active stationary works on Otrar itself. Because of the political significance of the region and the visible magnificence of the archeological sites of the middle Sir Darya Valley, since the 1940s the main efforts of Kazakh archeology were concentrated on the south. While Bernshtam worked on the middle part of the river, Sergei Tolstov with his Khorezmian archeological-ethnographical expedition took over its lower part, closer to the Aral Sea.

This is how Ageeva characterized the results of archeological investigations in the middle Sir Darya in the 1940s: “The work of archeologists finally solved the question of historicity (istorichnost’) of peoples in Kazakhstan. These peoples were rather subjects than objects of history and contributed much to the cultural treasures on global level. The works of archeologists [also] dispelled the myth that the Turkic world was characterized by unity. It was discovered that Central Asian peoples, while speaking Turkic languages, had each their own history, ethnos, and culture. The Pan-Iranist theory, which argued that in Central Asia and Kazakhstan nothing was produced by the indigenous population, and that everything was imported or influenced by the Persian people, was [also] defeated.” In other place Patsevich and Ageeva concluded that “the works of the expedition refuted the conception, rooted in archeological and historical literature, that the cities of the middle Sir Darya had been erected by Muslim migrants. On the contrary, the cities of the middle Sir Darya are the product of an independent development of the local society.” Ageeva not only fought the Aryan theory, but also attacked Pan-Turkism and the claim that no-


851 E.I. Ageeva, Obzor arkhеologicheskikh issledovanii Syr Dar‘i i Semirech‘ia [not dated], in: AIA MON RK, D. 615, f. 38.

852 Ibid., f. 45.

853 [Here Patsevich and Ageeva cited Bartol’d, Ivanov, Masson, and early Iakubovskii].

mads were backward people. Ageeva and Bernshtam regarded all expeditions before 1950 as preliminary, aiming only at the identification of the main sites, whereas in 1951 stationary works began in the Otrar Oasis. It was these stationary research campaigns that allowed the Kazakh archeologists to claim that the cities on the territory of the republic appeared not in the 9\textsuperscript{th}-10\textsuperscript{th} centuries but much earlier, and that they were the result of an autochthonous development, not the product of influence from Transoxiana.\footnote{E.I. Ageeva, \textit{Predvaritel’nyi otchet o rabotakh Iuzhno-Kazakhstanskoi arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii 1951}, in: OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1, D. 81, Sv. 5. \textit{Kratkie predvaritel’nye otchety o rabote Iuzhno-Kazakhstanskoi arkheologicheskoi ekspeditsii Instituta i soobshchenia o rabote Khorezmskoi ekspeditsii na territorii Kazakhstana v 1951 godu}, ff. 18-31.}

The state provided the necessary financial support for archeological expeditions in the region because these expeditions were producing visible political and cultural capital, sedentarizing the Kazakh past and legitimizing the modern political borders. Ronald Suny is absolutely right when claiming that “[t]he efforts of historians, as well as ethnographic [and archeological – A.B.] expeditions sponsored by the state, aimed at ethnicizing the past of Kazakhstan, erasing its more multiethnic features, and establishing an ethnic Kazakh claim to territory. The experiences of pre-Kazakh Turkic tribes were assimilated into a Kazakh narrative.”\footnote{R.G. Suny, “Constructing Primordialism: Old Histories for New Nations,” in: \textit{The Journal of Modern History}, vol. 73, no. 4 (Dec. 2001), 882. Cf.: E. Schatz, “The Politics of Multiple Identities: Lineage and Ethnicity in Kazakhstan,” in: \textit{Europe-Asia Studies} 52, no. 3 (2000), 496.}
However, even after the expeditions of the late 1930s Bernshtam complained that the origin and character of such big cities as Otrar, Sîghnāq, and Sauran was still not clear. In contradiction to his students, Bernshtam assumed that the ways of urban development in the region probably differed from Semirech’e, where settlements appeared as ancient Soghdian colonies. According to Bernshtam, the investigation of this question would eventually determine the western border of Soghdian colonization. It was characteristic for Bernshtam to avoid the question of the origin of the Kazakhs, obviously in an effort to not get involved in the heavily politicized national discourse.

As we have seen, Margulan criticized Semenov for his Aryan theory, while Bernshtam demonstrated Margulan’s mistakes in his interpretation of ancient sites in Cen-

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858 V.A. Shnirel’man, “From Internationalism to Nationalism,” 128-129.
tral Kazakhstan. In 1952 all of them were strongly criticized by the Kazakhstani historian Shakhmatov, who worked at the Institute of History at that time. Shakhmatov’s attacks were obviously part of the political struggle against “cosmopolitanism”. In his article Shakhmatov identified a number of systematic ‘mistakes’ in Kazakh archeology. In the general context of the political campaign, he blamed archeologists Sergei Tolstov and Aleksandr Bernshtam for following Marr’s Japhetic theory with its development of languages and cultures. Here the Aryan theory was again used against Bernshtam, Masson, and even Iakubovskii. Shakhmatov stated that their teacher and colleague Vasili Bartol’d was a founder of the Soghdian theory of origin of the cities in Semirech’e and Southern Kazakhstan, which rejects the autochthonous character of the ancient cultures on Kazakh territory. According to Shakhmatov all these scholars, including early Iakubovskii, claimed that urban civilization in Kazakhstan was brought by foreign conquerors, Iranians and Arabs. Shakhmatov regarded this thesis as resulting from an exaggeration of the role of Soghdian colonization in the region. He found it disgusting that Tolstov, Iakubovskii and others considered all expressions of high culture as import from abroad: “Such claims lead to the theory of un-historicism of peoples in Kazakhstan [i.e., that the peoples of Kazakhstan have no history of their own - A.B.], to a differentiation of advanced and backward peoples in history.” This was however exactly the opposite of what Bernshtam had argued on the 1948 the GAIMK Conference, when he summarized the results of the previous ten years of Soviet archeology in the region. In his speech at the conference Aleksandr Bernshtam had argued that archeologists had in fact demonstrated the historicism of Central Asian peoples, had shown their centuries-old history as comparable to the history of the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. In an official letter to the president of the USSR Academy of Sciences the participants of the conference had rightfully claimed that the success of Soviet Central Asian archeology helped to write the histories of


Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan, Kirgizia, Tajikistan, and, I would add, Kazakhstan. Now, by 1952, both sides used to claim that they were fighting against racist theories, against the concept of historical and ahistorical peoples, but all scientists were forced to recognize the local origin of Kazakh urban culture. Since the early 1950s nobody questioned this axiom anymore, because of Stalin’s remarks on linguistics which obliged archeologists to interpret findings in ethnic terms and establish close links between the modern nations and societies of the past: “One of the main tasks of archeology was to develop a way of identifying an archeological culture in ethnic terms.”

Bernshtam’s disciples accepted the rules: in the first comprehensive monograph on the cities of Southern Kazakhstan Ageeva and Patsevich concluded that the hypothesis of the Soghdian origin of the cities was wrong, and all archeological and narrative material that had been collected was interpreted as signs of an independent, continuous development of urban culture in the region since the first centuries CE. Though the cities emerged independently from Transoxiana, Ageeva and Patsevich agreed that the structure of the Kazakh ancient cities was similar to what was found in Central Asia, and they also conceded that the Soghdian language was widespread in the Kazakh cities.

The period of the 1940s-50s was a time of transition from the organization of field work by Leningrad specialists to a collaboration with local cadres, and then to the emergence of the Kazakh branch of Oriental archeology. Already Bernshtam transmitted his duties as head of the South Kazakhstan Archeological Expedition to his disciple, Evgeniia Ageeva. In 1955 Begezhan Suleimenov, one of the Institute’s historians, underlined that “we have to train here [in Alma-Ata] archeologists with excellent knowledge of Oriental languages, because otherwise they will be unable to solve topical scientific problems.”

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862 Ibid., D. 280. Rezoliutsiiia, priimtaia na plenume, posviashchennom arkheologii Srednei Azii i pis’mo k prezidentu AN SSSR ot 31marta 1948 goda, f. 4.


Formally, since 1951 the documentation of the South Kazakhstan expedition was administered by the Sector of Archeology in Alma-Ata, and no documents on this region were sent anymore to the archive of GAIMK. While institutionally Kazakh archeology had thus become independent, it still needed specialists from Leningrad to conduct at least part of the work and provide general methodological insights. Still, with the shifting of education and coordination from Leningrad to Alma-Ata we observe a full-blown nationalization of archeology, and since the late 1950s Kazakh archeology was getting more and more oriented towards the national discourse. Finally, in the 1970s it became possible to specialize in archeology at Alma-Ata State University.

4.9. Kimal’ Akishev and the ‘Otrar Catastrophe’

The ‘Otrar catastrophe’ became one of the most widespread myths in Central Asian historiography. The oasis of Otrar (Farab) comprises a large territory of about three hundred square kilometers at the confluence of the Arïs and Sir Darya Rivers. The center of the oasis is located in the archeological site of Otrar-Tobe with its more than two hundred hectares. The main part of the city of Otrar (shahrīstān) rose from ten to eighteen meters over the neighboring landscape (see photo 4). This site is extremely rich in history and a visitor will detect countless remnants of artifacts still scattered over the place. It is not surprising therefore that the magnificent past of this area attracted the interest of historians and writers. The story of Chingiz Khan’s delegation to Inalchiq Ghayir Khan, the local ruler of Otrar, and its rejection, followed by the Mongol invasion, became the topic of a historical novel by the famous Uzbek writer Mirkarim Osim (1907-1984). The content of this narrative is that the city of Otrar was severely destroyed by the Mongols in 1219; this was the start of the Mongols’ war with the Khwarezmshah. For Soviet historians the major source on this was the thirteenth-century chronicle Ta’rikh-i Jahāngushāy (“History of the World Conqueror”) written by ‘Ala ad-Dīn Aṭā Malik Juwaynī (1226-1283).

866 M. Osim, Utror. Tarikhii povest’ (Toshkent, 1947). The novel was finished in 1944 and was largely based on Juwaynī’s account.

from the perspective of the Mongol elite, and being part of the Mongol bureaucratic apparatus he knew the early history of the Mongol Empire very well.

According to Juwaynī, after successful campaigns in Northern China and the lands of the Uighurs in 1218, Chingiz Khan dispatched two missions to Khwarezm: one of them with a diplomatic message, and another as a rich trade caravan. There is much discussion around the question of whether Chingiz Khan was intended to struggle with the Khwarezmshah ʿAlā ad-Dīn Muḥammad (1169-1220), but the missions were officially sent for the purpose of maintaining peace between the two rulers. The caravan was stopped in Otrar, which at that time was ruled by Inalchiq Ghayir Khan, a kinsman of the Khwarezmshah’s mother, Terken Khatun. As Juwaynī narrated, Ghayir Khan “placed them [the caravan and the diplomats] under arrest, and sent a messenger to the Sultan [Naṣr ad-Dīn?] in Iraq to inform him about them. Without pausing to think [whether] the Sultan

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*Tikhvinskii (ed.), Tataro-Mongoly v Azii i Evrope, 2nd ed. (Moscow, 1977), 112-139. Petrushevskii called the capture of Otrar as ‘the Otrar incident’ and provided a very negative account of the Mongol invasion (p. 112).* 

sanctioned the shedding of their blood and deemed the seizure of their goods to be lawful, not knowing that his own life would become unlawful, nay a crime [i.e. that arresting the delegates would be a crime], and that the bird of his prosperity would be lopped of feather and wing.”

the delegation was massacred, and this very soon became known to Chingiz Khan. The consequences for Otrar and the country were disastrous: the Mongol armies arrived in the region and besieged Otrar. After defeat,

“[A]ll the guilty and innocent of Otrar, both wearers of the veil and those that donned kulah and turban [i.e., the Muslim scholars], were driven forth from the town like a flock of sheep, and the Mongols looted whatever goods and wares there were to be found. As for Ghayir, together with twenty thousand brave men and lion-like warriors he took refuge in the citadel. (…) And so the battle went on for a whole month until only Ghayir and two others were left, and still he continued to do battle and would not turn tail and flee. (…) [Finally, Ghayir] was firmly bound and placed in heavy chains.

The citadel and the walls were leveled with the street and the Mongols departed. And those of the common people and artisans that had escaped the sword they bore away with them, either to serve in the levy (hashar) or to practice their trade. As for Ghayir, they caused him in the Kök-Sarai to drink the cup of annihilation and don the garb of eternity.”

The Mongols used to destroy the walls of all newly-captured cities, to ease the control of the population and to make any rebellion futile. The same was done in Otrar: the Mongols destroyed the walls. Soviet historiography took Juwaynī literally and believed in a complete destruction of the city. At the same time it was acknowledged, however, that Otrar very soon restored its importance. Numismatic material demonstrates that Otrar was not leveled with the ground: scholars detected the circulation of coins in the region shortly after the Mongol invasion. Moreover, the archeological investigations on the Otrar site did not detect a stratigraphic layer with conflagration that could be associated with the

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870 Ibid., 83-86.


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For comparison, such a layer of destruction of the early 13th century does exist in Bulghar, the capital of a pre-Mongol state on the Middle Volga River that was also captured, and obviously completely destroyed, by the Mongols. This brings up the question why the assumption of a complete destruction of Otrar was still maintained and how it was used in the Kazakh national discourse after WWII. This leads us to the work of Kimal’ Akishev (1924-2003) who at that time was the leading scholar of Otrar studies.

Kimal’ Akishevich Akishev was born in Pavlodar region in 1924. As his disciple Karl Baipakov remembers, “Akishev originated from famous Kazakh roots, he was a nephew of Kanysh Imantaevich Satpaev (Kimal’ s mother was Satpaev’s sister). His family is from the north of the Kazakh lands known for its orientation on Russian culture. Kimal’ s parents died of starvation in the 1930s. Kimal’ and his brother were taken from an orphanage by Satpaev. In fact, they grew up with Satpaev.” Satpaev (1899-1964) was a geologist, an academician of the USSR Academy of Sciences (1946), the first President of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences, and he became famous for his discovery of copper in Dzhezkazghan. During the repressions of 1951 Satpaev was relieved of his directorship of the Academy, but in 1955, after de-Stalinization, he returned to his office. During his long academic career Satpaev contributed much to the organization of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences in general and to the development of geology in particular. To have him as his patron was certainly a crucial factor in Akishev’s biography. At the same time there can be no doubt about Akishev’s high personal qualities. As Baipakov continued,

“Kimal’ Akishev received a good education in Alma-Ata. At that time, before the war, education was generally quite good. In 1941 he graduated from high school and immediately went to the front. Akishev was proud that he participated in the war, and Stalin remained a hero for him. After the war he went to Leningrad, where he studied archeology with Mikhail Petrovich Griaznov at GAIMK. After defending his candidate dissertation Akishev returned to Alma-Ata and headed the Archeological Sector


873 According to my Kazakh colleagues, a dissertation on the life of Kimal’ Akishev is currently being prepared in Astana.

874 Interview with Karl M. Baipakov by the author, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, 16 June 2010.

875 M. Sarsekeev, Satpaev (Moscow, 1980).
at the Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography, from 1954 until 1991 when the independent Institute of Archeology was set up. In 1995/96 Akishev went to Astana, where he opened a Centre of Archeology at the Eurasian University.”

The ancient cities of Kazakhstan were the main object of Akishev’s interests. His choice of a southern direction in archeological work was not accidental: as Kazakh archeologists believed, “Southern Kazakhstan is the cradle of the Kazakh people.”

Karl Baipakov, the former director of the Margulan Institute of Archeology, shared with me some of his reminiscences on Akishev’s role in the investigation of Otrar:

“The Otrar expedition was established in 1969 and became the biggest in the whole Soviet Union. The archeologists submitted the plan of the expedition to [the then Secretary General of the Communist Party of Kazakhstan] Kunaev. At that time everything was decided only through the Party organization. Several times they sent the project there. They also repeatedly asked to establish an independent Institute of Archeology, but this initiative was stopped from above. Akishev was very clever and persistent. He was able to show that “not everything is quiet in the Kazakh kingdom,” because the Kazakhs were previously shown only as nomadic people, even though the [names of] cities of Otrar, Turkestan, and Țarāz had always been in the air. Akishev transformed the studies from the nomadic conception towards that of urban civilization. He spoke very well, his speech would intrigue everybody, he certainly had charisma, and he was an intelligent and decent person. It was a great pleasure to work with him. Kunaev was interested in excavations. He once visited the on-site museum in Shaulder [near Otrar]. We built something like a castle there. It was the time when excavations of Otrar were popular, and when the first books on the Kazakh urban civilization appeared. Of course, Kunaev was more interested in how corn grows, but the cultural program included the visit to Otrar.”

Akishev prepared the project of long-term excavations on the Otrar site very carefully. He understood the importance of this region for the Kazakh national identity. The first draft of the project goes back to 1965, when Akishev, being supported by the administration of the Institute of History (the director Akai Nusupbekov and his deputy Grigorii

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876 Interview with Karl M. Baipakov by the author, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, 16 June 2010.


878 Interview with Karl M. Baipakov by the author, Margulan Institute of Archeology, Almaty, 16 June 2010.
Dakhshleiger) wrote a proposal to the Presidium of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences and also discussed it with Dinmukhamed Kunaev. The latter probably fully recognized the significance of the Otrar region for Kazakhstan and supported the project, which presupposed colossal assignations: a hundred thousand rubles for reconnaissance works, and then 500,000 rubles each year. In total Akishev indeed asked for ten million rubles to support twenty years of work. No doubt, serious political interests were at stake, and Akishev made perfect use of his talents to get the officials interested in seemingly purely scientific problems. To achieve success, Akishev referred to the world-wide fame of the Khwarezmian complex expedition that had discovered a magnificent ancient civilization.\(^{879}\) The author of the project argued that such an enterprise required a long period of work, a lot of money, and the optional concentration of labor forces. Under pressure of these arguments the Otrar project was supported at the highest academic levels in the Soviet Union: the Presidium of Academy of Sciences approved it in its resolution *On the Main Research Trends and Means of Support for the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR* dated from 29 July 1966.\(^{880}\)

Using the popularity of Oriental Studies at the Kazakh Academia at that time, Akishev even spread a rumor, which was included in the project of the expedition.\(^{881}\) Reproducing a myth that had already been mentioned in the third edition of *History of the Kazakh SSR* (1957),\(^{882}\) Akishev wrote that according to ancient Arabic sources (without mentioning individual authors), Otrar once had a great library of manuscripts that was comparable in the number of its volumes only with the legendary Alexandria library.\(^{883}\) Until the present day, after more than forty years of excavations, no remnants or indica-
tions of this library have been found, but it was a good argument for seeking financing and the government’s attention. To be sure, in the 1980s a single fragment of a manuscript was discovered, which survived in the ground under a bronze plate. Arabist Vladimir Nastich, as he told me, identified it as a geographical treatise in the Arabic language written in the 14th century. However, this unique book has been lost somewhere; my colleagues in Almaty were unable to say where it ended up. In continuation of seeking arguments for the cultural significance of Otrar for the Kazakhs it was claimed repeatedly that the famous philosopher al-Fārābī (873-950) and even poet Aḥmad Yasawī were born there.884 Also in our days archeologists continue to gather information from old written sources to celebrate the uniqueness of Otrar, building new myths on top of the old ones.

Even though Otrar had already been in the focus of scholarly attention for quite some time, it took three years of preliminary works in 1967-1970 before stationary excavations were started on the Otrar site. On 24 December 1970 the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR officially organized the South Kazakhstan Complex Archeological Expedition (IuKKAE), which was aimed to study the past of the region from the Stone Age to the late Middle Ages.885 Archeologists started working on the large territories, also excavating extending dwelling areas (quarters) of the late 18th century. The large scale of these works made this expedition indeed the largest in the whole Soviet Union.

Already the first results of his expedition allowed Aksheev to demonstrate the need to continue financing this initiative. He pointed to several important issues that had obvious political significance for the Kazakh authorities: 1) artifacts from Otrar proved the antiquity and independence in development of agriculture and city civilization in Kazakhstan. This thesis was extremely important for taking the republic out of the common Central Asian heritage and for rejecting the assumption of a shared origin of sedentary urban culture. 2) Otrar was given the status of a key region for explaining Kazakh ethnogenesis. Anthropological investigations here could also provide material for studying the formation


of the Kazakhs’ physical outlook. This thesis should be based on the assumption that the whole territory of the Otrar region had always been populated by Kazakhs or at least by their ancestors who actively participated in the creation of Kazakh nationhood. 3) Otrar studies were important for detecting and investigating ancient systems of water management. 4) The new data from Otrar denounced the racist myths of bourgeois historiography on the supposed eternal backwardness and lack of history of the Kazakhs.

Although the South Kazakhstan Archeological Expedition became totally independent from the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archeology (the former GAIMK), the Leningrad archeologist Aleksandr Belenitskii was invited to take part in archeological investigations on the site to make some practical suggestions. Already Bernshtam, following Iakubovskii’s recommendation, had suggested Aleksandr Belenitskii for participation in the Kazakhstan expedition. As a specialist in Arabic and Persian textual studies he was important for the study of the mid-Sir Darya cities, and, as Bernshtam suggested, had the potential to become the leading scholar in this field. Belenitskii indeed visited Otrar as a guest scholar and left some recommendations about how to conduct studies, but only as late as in 1972. He arrived in May 1972 and wrote a short report on the works on the Otrar site. First of all, Belenitskii underlined that before 1969 archeological studies on the object had a preliminary and exploratory character; the in-depth study did not reach the Otrar site itself. These works only demonstrated the general necessity and topicality of devoting more attention to Otrar. A photographic fixation of the topographical setting on the Otrar site in 1969 allowed archeologists to understand how the city was structured, including the location of irrigation systems. Belenitskii agreed that the site had great significance for studying the relations between nomadic and settled populations and for the analysis of the character of urban culture in Kazakhstan in the 16th-18th centuries. Belenitskii’s main recommendation was to reduce the scale of the planned excavations of the shahristān’s central part from 20 to 2 hectares.
On the basis of the achieved comprehensive archeological data Akishev and his colleagues wrote several monographs on the ancient history of Otrar and a huge amount of articles. Research done in Otrar allowed Kazakh archeologists to finally claim “a continuity of social development since the Stone Age. The discovery of Paleolithic artifacts demonstrated that Kazakhstan was one of the areas where the first humans on the Earth lived. Studies of Bronze cultures demonstrated a particular succession of cultures until the early stages in the history of the Kazakh people, which is an objective sign of its local origin.” Akishev maintained he was “against the theory of an indigenous origin in its ‘vulgar’ form and [instead] regarded the formation of the Kazakh people as a fusion of the indigenous Indo-European population with a newly arrived Turkic-Mongol population. On the other hand, Akishev assumed that there was ‘a significant proto-Turkic component in the local ethnic milieu.”

The results of archeological works on the Otrar site were represented on two All-Union conferences, namely The Early Medieval Culture of Central Asia and Kazakhstan held in Penjikent (Tajik SSR) in August 1977, and The Problems of Studying Medieval Archeology of Kazakhstan and Central Asia in the 13th-18th Centuries organized by the Institute of History in Alma-Ata in May 1981. Even though each report at these conferences dealt with one particular republic, these forums were aimed to coordinate research on inter-republican level and to intensify contacts between republics on a regional scale.

This has to be seen in the context of general attempts of the Soviet government to unify Central Asian republics in their history, promoting regional projects. And again, like the joint regional history overviews coordinated by Narochnitskii that we analyzed in chapter two, very little was achieved. Still, the participants of the conference admitted that Central


Asian and Kazakhstan archeology “is closely related to the best traditions of Russian Oriental Studies and to the progressive elements of Turkestan studies (turkestanovedenie).”

It was also mentioned that the interest in the late medieval urban centers was common for many Muslim regions of the Soviet Union: Otrar in Kazakhstan, Khujand in Tajikistan, Bukhara in Uzbekistan, and the Golden Horde cities in the Volga-Ural region. Everywhere the organizational forms of investigation were the same: the Academy of Sciences established comprehensive archeological expeditions which conducted annual stationary works on the most important objects, concentrating there the best scholarly cadres of the region and becoming a true educational institution for a generation of new researchers. Karl Baipakov is a representative of that generation. However, the effort to bring the republic’s archeologists together did not work — too entrenched were the national traditions that had developed over the preceding three decades.

After these conferences and the publication of a number of monographs the investigation of Otrar did not stop, but it slowly lost its former significance. Moreover, as I argued in the third chapter of my dissertation, after the death of the director of the Institute of History Akai Nusupbekov in 1983 and Kunaev’s withdrawal from office in 1986, this period in development of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan came to a close. The production of the Kazakh film The Death of Otrar (Gibel’ Otrara, 1991) as an artistic implementation of the Kazakh concept of urban civilization and the myth of ‘Otrar catastrophe’ in the Kazakh archeology, symbolized also the end of an epoch.

4.10. Kazakh Urban Civilization: Crystallization of the Concept

Urban studies combated the idea that Kazakh history was determined by the backwardness of the local population. Excavations at Novgorod determined similar processes were at work in Russia, when, after WWII, the scholars saw the wide spread of literacy among the ancient Russians as a proof for their argument that Russian towns had appeared simultane-


894 Margulan atyndaghy Arkheologiiia institutyna 15 zhyl (Almaty, 2007), 45.

895 The film’s scenario was written by Svetlana Karmalita and Aleksei German, since the early 1970s a prominent figure of the Russian cinema of the Perestroika period.
ously with towns in Western Europe. Obviously, the successful works of the Novgorod Expedition (which had been started by Artsikhovskii in 1951) inspired urban studies in other regions, especially in the Volga-Ural Region and in Central Asia. The quintessence of Central Asian urban studies was represented in a collective work of Leningrad Orientalists by the title of *The Medieval City of Central Asia* (1973). One of the co-authors, Oleg Bol’shakov, spent years in the Penjikent expedition (Tajikistan), where he became a recognized specialist in Arabic epigraphy. At that time Bol’shakov was working at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Archeology and produced dissertations about Arabic inscriptions on Central Asian ceramics from the 8th-12th centuries and about the phenomenon of the city in medieval Central Asia.

Bol’shakov mapped several regions of Central Asian urban civilization. His classification was determined by cultural similarity, but he also mentioned the influence of modern political borders. Among those regions Bol’shakov enumerated: Margiana (Southern Turkmenistan), Ancient Khwarezm (Western Uzbekistan/ Northern Turkmenistan), Tokharistan (southern regions of Uzbekistan and Tajikistan), Ferghana (Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kirgizia), Southern Kazakhstan and Northern Kirgizstan. The junction of archeological and textual data was crucial for characterizing each of these areas. Bol’shakov mentioned that cities on the lower and middle Sir Darya river were established only in the 5th-6th centuries, i.e. later than Transoxanian settlements; however some of those cities, for example Sayrām, could be compared with the major towns of Khwarezm and Soghd due to their economic and political importance.

According to Bol’shakov, big and small cities of the Sir Darya valley and Semirech’e played a significant role in the history of Central Asian culture and economics. There was a centuries-old border between settlement civilization and the world of steppes. Taking into account the necessity to claim the autochthonous character of urban centers, Bol’shakov

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899 A. M. Belenitskii et al., *Srednevekovyi gorod Srednei Azii*, 8-12.
stated that these cities were not only merchants’ outposts for the exchange of goods, but they also resulted from the settlements of the native Turkic population.  

The Kazakh SSR was not the only one to use archeology and urban studies as an instrument of overcoming the stigma of backwardness. In the late 1970s urban studies had become topical for archeologists in another Central Asian republic with nomadic background – the Kirgiz republic. Kirgiz archeologist Valentina Goriacheva, the main specialist there, recognized the importance of this topic: “Large ancient cities which preserved the monuments of old architecture are impressive objects of demonstration. It should serve for the noble tasks of cultural and educational work among society. Academic research of the Kirgiz cities is a significant source for acquainting [the population] with the Kirgiz cultural heritage, their relationship with other peoples, and for patriotic and international education”.  

For example, in 1976 the government of the Kirgiz Republic and in 1977 the Scientific Council of the Academy of Sciences of USSR defined the ancient city Krasnaia Rechka as an object of mass tourism in Kirgizistan. Archeological investigations of this site were conducted in close collaboration between the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography (Almaty, the respective research group being directed by Karl Baipakov) and the Institute of History of the Kirgiz Academy of Sciences (Frunze, Valentina Goriacheva). This is one of the rare cases of inter-republican cooperation in the field of archeological expeditions in Central Asia. The Kirgiz and Kazakh cases of ‘a backward people’ were quite similar, though Kirgiz and Kazakh scholars, of course, had different opinions about who built these cities.

In Kazakhstan investigations of the urban civilization were continued by Karl Baipakov, whose formulations finally entrenched the concept of Kazakhs as city-dwellers. Baipakov studied archeology at the historical faculty of Leningrad University and made a career from an ordinary researcher at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography

900 Ibid., 195.
901 Krasnaia Rechka i Burana (Frunze, 1989), 3.
902 Ibid. Asan Torgaev (the State Hermitage, St. Petersburg), one of my informants who lived in Kirgizia, remembers how he used to earn a considerable amount of money by organizing small touristic ‘tours’ to the tower of Burana.

It was a great pleasure for me to meet academician Karl Baipakov in Almaty in the summer of 2010. At that time he had just been replaced as Director of the Institute of Archeology. At this point I would like to reproduce a larger part of what Professor Baipakov stated during our meeting, for his statements encapsulate the complete concept of Kazakh urban civilization:

“I come from a family of historians who worked in a high school in a small town called Talghar near Alma-Ata. In the city’s outskirts there is an ancient site with the same name Talghar. After visiting that place together with my school teacher, I began to read historical literature. This is why I went to Leningrad and entered the Historical Faculty of Leningrad University. There I specialized in archeology. It was the only place in the whole Soviet Union where specialized archeological training started not with the third year of study but right in the first year. My supervisor in Leningrad was Vadim Mikhailovich Masson. It was the time when our country was united, so that while specializing in medieval Central Asian archeology I was able to go to Turkmenistan, Kazakhstan…. My master thesis was devoted to the archeological complex of Otrar. Three years later I defended my first dissertation and after twenty years the second one. What follows was, as usual, a career as Member Correspondent of the Kazakh Academy and then as academician.

A.B.: Some say that in Leningrad there was a school of Oriental archeology. What are the peculiarities of this school?

K.B.: This school was already formed in the times of the Russian Imperial Archeological Society (Russkoe imperatorskoe arkheologicheskoe obschestvo)\(^{904}\). Among other things they were interested in Oriental antiquity. In Soviet times there were such scholars as Bernshtam, Iakubovskii, and Belenitskii [who belonged to that school]. Before WWII there were big expeditions in Kazakhstan, for example the Semirech’e archeological expedition led by Bernshtam. In the Institute of History of Material Culture [in Leningrad] there was a Sector of Central Asia and Caucasus. Nowadays there is no such sector, because all those who studied Oriental archeology have already passed away. This school is almost dead now, but its students [from Cen-

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\(^{904}\) The Russian Imperial Archeological Society existed in St. Petersburg between 1846 and 1924 and was aimed to study archeology and numismatics on the territory of the Russian Empire.
entral Asia, who studied in Leningrad are still active [in the national republics]. We had close contacts with the Institute of Oriental Studies (Kliashtorny, Bol’shakov) and the State Hermitage (Artamonov, Piotrovskii, Griaznov).

To the peculiarities of this school belonged its methodology, which had been elaborated in the Penjikent Archeological Expedition that was started by Iakubovskii and continued by Belenitskii. The methodology is called “excavations of broad areas”. This differs from the Western methods, according to which one prefers to make holes (Rus. shurf) on the site and then to compare the material. From the very beginning our methodology was distinct. Excavations of broad areas allowed for the revealing of the [entire] urban topography and its development.

A.B.: Why was the issue of Central Asian settled civilization so important?

K.B.: Urbanization is a global issue. All of us, historians, archeologists, and Orientalists have to deal with it. For example, why did the renaissance of the Oriental city precede [the rebirth of] the Western city? Why were [medieval] Oriental cities culturally more developed than European cities? Why did the development of the Oriental city ‘suddenly’ stagnate? Why did Europe go further? There are lots of questions and hypotheses. The urbanization of society is a natural process. For Kazakhstan it is especially important because previously it was accepted that this was a land of nomads. Yet on the contrary, since the Bronze Age we observe the development of pre-urban civilization in the region. At that time cities on the territory of Kazakhstan were centers of metallurgy and artisanship. Soviet scholars Griaznov, Zadneprovskii, and Chernikov had believed that since the 8th-6th centuries BC nomadism prevailed on the territory of Kazakhstan. Almost nobody said that both the Turks and the Saka had cities. Now we know that the Saka905 were a settled population, city-dwellers (…). These Soviet scholars claimed that the first Kazakh state [sic!] was the Turkic Kaganate. Kimal’ Akishev in his doctoral dissertation on the Saka has demonstrated that Saka society had all attributes of a state, with a writing system, a social stratification, and an ideology. The Usun represented the next step. The Chinese sources called them nomads, but we have recently discovered lots of Usun settlements near Almaty which go back to the 8th century CE. It had always been accepted that the cities on the Great Silk Road were set up by the Soghdians. Now we know that both the Turks and the Soghdians lived there from the very beginning. The Soghdians did not arrive to an empty space: traditions of urban life were already present there before them.

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905 The Saka were an Iranian speaking people which lived in Kazakhstan and South Siberia between the first millennium BC and first centuries AD.
There were also the Kazakh cities. The cities on the Sir Darya River played a grandiose role in development of culture, politics, and economics of the Kazakh Khanate. [The city of] Turkestan was an ideological center. Numerous wars with the Shaybanids in the 16th century were fought over the possession of the cities in the Sir Darya region. This region was very important for the population, which at a certain point [however] turned to the nomadic way of life. Of course, there were periods of decline, for example after the Mongol invasion when the urban civilization in Semirech’e simply disappeared. But here is Almaty, which is 1200 years old, according to the coins.

A.B.: Can we link the interest in the urban topic with urbanization in Soviet society?

K.B.: They [i.e. the Soviet authorities] tried to settle the nomadic part of the Kazakhs by force, and to accumulate them in the kolkhozes. This attempt failed: many people died or went away. Our predecessors (for example, Ageeva and Patsevich) were thinking that the urban civilization in Kazakhstan developed only before the Mongol invasion, afterwards there was a decline. There was no ideological pressure with an aim ‘to elevate the Kazakh to urban society.’ On the contrary, when archeologists started to advance the claim that Semirech’e was an area of urbanization, then the Russian population said that this is not true. By the way, in Soviet times we had a better knowledge of Russian culture, the history of Russian cities [than of the Kazakh ones]. Our ancient history was hardly known. This was the ideological pressure – to show that there was ‘an older brother’ in the Union and the rest were just assistants.”

Baipakov’s way of interpretation is interesting from two sides. First, it is anti-Russian rhetoric which implied that Russian scholars opposed to see urban culture in Kazakhstan, which not entirely correct taking in consideration a range of work produced by Bartol’d, Iaukubovskii, Bernshtam and Ageeva. Still, within Kazakh CP this might have been important. Second, it denies any political demand to show the Kazakhs as city-dwellers. As we have seen, such claims are part of the game.

In his opus magnum Medieval Urban Culture of Southern Kazakhstan and Semirech’e (1986) Baipakov drew conclusions from extensive data on historical geography, social and political history. Baipakov suggested that Southern Kazakhstan and

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906 Interview with Karl M. Baipakov by the author, Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, 16 June 2010.
Semirech’ë were two distinct cultural areas. In his mind, in the 6th-9th centuries CE a unified cultural system of Soghdians and Turks in Central Asia came into being. “One of its characteristics is the uniformity of the urban civilization of Soghdiana, Mawarannahr, Southern Kazakhstan and Semirech’ë”.  

Even though a mosque was found in Otrar, Baipakov preferred to completely ignore Islam and to substitute it with the conception of religious syncretism: in his view Islam did not satisfy the peoples’ spiritual needs. Regarding the question of the so-called Sarts, i.e. the settled population of Central Asian cities, Baipakov incorporated them into the history of Kazakh ethnogenesis, claiming that the Sarts of Southern Kazakhstan were descendants of a local urban population that at a certain point lost its tribal affiliations under the influence of Islam and urban life-style. This allowed him to explain the particularities of the material culture of Southern Kazakhstan in comparison to the rest of the country, as well as the numerous similarities with urban centers of Transoxiana. To link the ancient population of the cities with the Kazakh tribes Baipakov turned to ethnographic realities. He identified numerous similarities between archeological remains and items from ethnographic research like the ornamentation of ceramics and tamghas (property signs). According to archeologists ornaments on ancient items were identical to tamghas of the nineteenth-century Kazakh tribes, leading then to the conclusion that representatives of these tribes had once inhabited cities. As the Kazakh historians believed, “many cultural achievements of the medieval epoch are buried in the ground of the Kazakh material culture.”

Excavations of broad areas also made it possible to conduct demographic research on the medieval population of Otrar. Taking into account the number of identified houses in the city, Baipakov suggested that in the early 16th century, when the whole population of


911 T.V. Savel’eva, D.M. Kostina, Otrar, Otrarskii oasis i Iuzhnyi Kazakhstan, 25.
the Kazakh Khanate (thus, without northern territories) was estimated at around a million, the urban population in the whole of Kazakhstan did not account for more than 70,000 people, or 7 per cents of the overall population. This shows that Baipakov acknowledged the limited role of Kazakh urban culture. Still, the city issue continued to attract the main attention as it was crucial for national history.

For similar reasons the Kazakh archeologists (as well as their Central Asian colleagues) were also highly interested in ancient systems of irrigation in the Otrar oasis, Sīghnāq, and Sauran. The investigation of this topic also revealed that the ancient water management system in south Kazakhstan largely resembled that of other Central Asian regions.

City triumphed over tents: “the transition of nomads to city-dwellers and their ethnic interaction can be observed over the whole ancient and medieval history.” The archeological works of Akishev and Baipakov claimed that ancient cities of Southern Kazakhstan and Semirech’e were set up on the basis of an autochthonic development of Turkic tribes since the Bronze Age. Even though these cities were culturally linked to the rest of Central Asia, the region was firmly bound to the main Kazakh territories. With hindsight this appears as a teleological argument for the unification of the Kazakh people in one state, in the borders of modern Kazakhstan. All cities of the middle Sir Darya valley belonged to the Kazakh Khanate and nobody but the Kazakhs is entitled to call them their patrimony.

4.11. The Fate of Islamic Architecture: The Yasawī Shrine

This paragraph was initially intended as an addendum to an article published by Devin DeWeese on the image of Khwāja Ḥamad Yasawī and the Divan-i Hikmat in Soviet

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912 K.M. Baipakov, Problemy arkheologicheskikh issledovanii, 41.


914 K. M. Baipakov, Srednevekovaia gorodskaiia kul’tura, 187; T. A. Zhdanko, „Nomadizm v Srednei Azii i Kazakhstane,” in: Istoriiia, arkheologiia i etnografiia Srednei Azii (Moscow, 1968), 279.
DeWeese focused his research on philological and historical studies around the personality of Aḥmad Yasawī and the collection of verses under the title of Divan-i Hikmat that are widely ascribed to Yasawī. DeWeese acknowledged the fact that Soviet scholarship put the main accent on the history of the mausoleum itself, i.e. on its architectural history, but he did not go into detail; therefore I will deal here with the research history of the shrine on the basis of archival and published sources as well as interviews. My thesis is that it was during the Soviet era that the mausoleum obtained its symbolic significance and visibility. The main question of interest here is how the mausoleum of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī was used in the national discourse.916

The shrine in the settlement of Yasī (later: Turkestan), after Yasawī as the “Pir of Turkestan”, was constructed in the 1390s, reportedly on the order of Amir Tīmūr (d. 1405) who had paid a brief visit to the assumed burial place of Aḥmad Yasawī. For centuries the mausoleum was in the hands of sacred Khwāja families that traced their real or mystified genealogies back to Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī and the Prophet Muḥammad. The large popularity of Aḥmad Yasawī as a great Sufi sheikh made his majestic tomb in the city of Turkestan a symbol of Islamic piety on the border between Transoxania and the Steppe region. In the tradition of the Yasawī Sufi brotherhood the Yasī shrine was a place of pilgrimage (ziyāra) and of various spiritual ceremonies. Yasawī’s great fame was reflected in the wide-spread saying that “in Mecca is Muḥammad, in Yasī is Aḥmad.”917 Yasawī hagiographies claim that seven pilgrimages to the shrine with the ritual circumambulation (tawāf) around the sarcophagus count as an equivalent to the hajj to Mecca. The sacred families which kept the mausoleum enjoyed large land ownership and also benefitted from the impressive amount of money that pilgrims brought every year as donations. Early on the sacred place became a subject of political and financial interests of various groups, including the rulers. In late Soviet times Kazakh historians began to claim that after the


916 Transformations in the image of Aḥmad Yasawī and his shrine after the fall of the Soviet Union have been analyzed in details by Thierry Zarcone. See: T. Zarcone, “Ahmad Yasavī héros des nouvelles républiques centraasiatiques,” in: Revue des mondes musulmans et de la Méditerranée 89-90 (juillet 2000), 297-323.

917 B. Privratsky, Muslim Turkistan. Kazak religion and Collective Memory (Richmond, 2001), 3, 53. Yasī was the original name of city Turkestan.
construction of the shrine in the late 14th century, the city of Yasĩ (Turkestan) started to grow significantly, and became “an ideological centre of the region.”

Before the Russian conquest the city of Turkestan had found itself from time to time in the hands of the Kazakh rulers, who were in conflict with the various Uzbek dynasties over this region. The Kazakh Khans used the immediate vicinity of the mausoleum as a necropolis for their families. As a result, two types of sacredness were joint at the shrine.

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There have been speculations that the remnants of some rulers were even kept inside the building. Yet according to Erbulat Smagulov, the leading archeologist in the Turkestan region, “it is a rather questionable claim that there were any burials of the Kazakh aristocracy inside (bold is mine – A.B.) the shrine. The inscriptions on the stones in the mausoleum do not indicate any name of Kazakh Khans or Sultans. Claims that such graves have been discovered are simply political speculation. All reports on the graves of the Kazakh elite inside of the building are based on oral tradition. I am not sure that we can rely on oral tradition in this case.” By contrast, the Kazakh anthropologist Orazak Smagulov (a full member of the Kazakh Academy of Sciences) claims that he identified the burial place of Ablai Khan inside of the mausoleum. The vicinity of the mausoleum certainly served as a burial place for the Chingizid dynasty; this seems to have started after the destruction of a previous sacred place in Saraichik, on the Iaik (Ural) river (South-Western Kazakhstan). In 1485 Rabi’a Sultan Khanum, the wife of Abu’l-Khayr Khan (1412-1468) and a daughter of Ulughbek (1394-1449), was buried in front of the Yasawī mausoleum; in 1524 Suyûnch Khwāja Khan, the ruler of Turkestan, was also buried in the neighborhood. In 1628 the Kazakh Khan Esim was buried behind the mausoleum. At the turn of the 16th-17th centuries the Kazakh sultans and khans used to be buried in Turkestan.

By the 19th century the mausoleum obviously needed restoration, especially after eleven artillery shots at the building during the capture of the mausoleum by the Russians. The Russian government even examined the possibility of a total destruction of the building, but fortunately, they preferred to spend money on its restoration (1872), and the shrine survived. This opened the long history of slow restorations of the building which is still continuing to date. In 1939 ustO Kuli Dzhalilov, a master from Samarkand, was invited to carry out restoration work. It is said that Dzhalilov even received the Stalin Prize for his

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919 Interview with Erbulat A. Smagulov by the author, Margulan Institute of Archeology, Almaty, 5 May 2010. A similar opinion was expressed by art historian Elena Khorosh. Interview with Elena Kh. Khorosh by the author, Institute of the Problems of the Cultural Heritage of Nomads, Almaty, 22 June 2010.


works in Uzbekistan. In September 1947 the Cabinet of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR approved the document *On the Measures for the Protection of Architectural and Archeological Monuments in the Kazakh SSR*. According to this law the mausoleum of Khwāja Ahmad Yasawī was taken under state protection. The Department of Architectural Affairs at the Cabinet was obliged to lead the restoration, investigation, and protection of the monument.

After WWII the party officials decided that once the restoration was completed an antireligious museum should be opened in the shrine. Yet nothing came out of this: the restoration works simply dragged on slowly. Most probably the funds for the restoration were largely used for non-productive ends or simply stolen. However, some archeological work around the shrine was initiated when a survey was made of the surrounding territory. When Khrushchev visited Kazakhstan in March 1961, he arrived to Turkestan after reviewing the Virgin Land projects. As Dinmukhamed Kunaev described in his memoirs, Khrushchev saw the shrine and asked Kunaev what that building was. Kunaev briefly told Khrushchev about the saint Aḥmad Yasawī, Tīmūr’s initiative to build the great shrine, and finally about the graves of Kazakh noblemen at the site. Yet Khrushchev’s curiosity did not result in any actions around the mausoleum.

In the early 1960s Kazakh officials were seriously worried about the religious situation in the southern regions of the republic. For 1963 documents mention that thousands of believers from the regions of South Kazakhstan, Tselinograd and Karaganda oblast’ continued visiting the shrine and regarded it as a sacred place. Therefore the Council of Religious Affairs of the Cabinet of the Kazakh SSR planned to enforce another renovation of the mausoleum and to re-open it as an atheistic, anti-religious museum in order to ‘enlighten’ the Soviet citizens about the true character of Islam. In general the authorities tried to fight the expanding “Islamic movement” through the closure of sacred places (mazar) and their transformation into museums. This strategy was not very successful, although many

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924 AIA MON RK, D. 475, 23 folios.

reports claimed that anti-religious lectures in museums (former mazars) indeed ended the veneration. For example, the shrine of Awliyā Atā Qarā Khān in Dzhambul (Ṭarāz) was turned into museum. It was claimed that already in 1961 twenty two thousand people visited the new museum. However, these huge numbers of visitors show that veneration was not stopped, but that it simply took another form: the mazar keepers became museum employees, pilgrims were seen as visitors of the museum. Also in the shrines of Arīstān-Bāb and Aḥmad Yasawī veneration simply continued. That the closure of sacred places was only a superficial measure can also be seen in Sayrām, where the authorities closed the mazars of Ibrahim Ata and ‘Abd al-‘Azīz and protected them as historical monuments. A special inspection discovered that the keys from the mazar had been handed over to two persons by the names of Asankhan Mansurov and Turakhan Usenkhodzhaev, whose family names already indicate that they claimed their origin from the saints – thus they were Khwājas. As hereditary keepers of the sacred place they organized the local pilgrimage and made money from it. In documents it is mentioned with indignation that several vagrant Mullahs had an impressive financial income from such veneration. Besides, also regular visits to living masters of the spiritual way were common in South Kazakhstan. As the Soviet officials pointed out, one Ishan Abdulvakhid Mukhamedshukurov (1875-1967), a local Sufi leader living in the Turkestan region, received visitors from many regions of Kazakhstan and even from as far as Tajikistan.

Authorities were helpless in their fight against the veneration of mazars. They tried to change at least the form of this phenomenon and put it under state control. Of course, the mausoleum of Aḥmad Yasawī was central in the process of antireligious propaganda.

Only in the late 1960s, simultaneously with Akishev’s Otrar project, the government understood the possibility to use the shrine as a popular place for tourism from all over the world and also as a symbol of Kazakh national identity. The Kazakh authorities realized that cultural heritage was used in the neighboring cultural centers of Tashkent, Bukhara,

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and Samarkand in the Uzbek SSR which were quite attractive for international tourists who longed for romantic pictures of a bygone Islamic Golden Age, embodied in the spectacular constructions of the Timurid dynasties and later epochs. Very soon, the antireligious pathos of restoration works in the Yasawī mausoleum was replaced by a pragmatic touristic approach with the task to make this place more attractive for visitors on a large scale. While the campaign to turn shrines into museums can, a little provocatively, be seen as an indirect legalization of tomb veneration, then it was logical that the foreign tourists were meant to see a certain picture of past and present religious life and a benevolent official attitude towards the great Islamic monuments in the Soviet Union. The contacts with foreign delegations were carried out through a special organization in Alma-Ata called the Society of Friendship (Obshchestvo druzhby), which had been opened back in 1947 as the Kazakh Branch of the All-Union Society of Cultural Contacts with Foreign Countries. It managed cultural relations with Oriental countries and organized mutual visits by scholars and artists. In 1958 special sections within this Society were established for China, India and Arab countries.

Some scholars of the Institute of History were involved in the work of this society as consultants. The government was interested in the creation of an image of the USSR as country of the Friendship of Peoples. For example, in 1967 an Indian delegation visited a historical mosque in Alma-Ata and concluded (in words of their Russian translator) that “in our country we heard many times that the communists in the Soviet Union closed all mosques and killed all their preachers. Now we see with our own eyes that this was just anti-Soviet propaganda. On the contrary, only in your wonderful country ruled by the Communists there is a real religious freedom regardless nation or race.” The issue of Islam was also topical for Western European tourists. In 1972 visitors of the Alma-Ata mosque from Belgium asked their guides how many Kazakhs were believers, if there were any religious schools in Kazakhstan, whether the government spent money on the restoration of religious buildings, and whether there was any pressure on believers from the


The answers on these questions are, unfortunately, not preserved in the documents. There is no evidence that any delegations from Islamic countries (for example, Egypt) were carried to the Yasawi mausoleum at that time, most probably because of the slow speed of restoration. Usually delegations of religious personnel or of political representatives coming to Tashkent from the world of Islam were conducted to Central Asia’s main pilgrimage places.

From the late 1960s to 1972 restoration works at the shrine were entrusted to Lidiia Man’kovskaia, an experienced specialist from the Tashkent Centre of Monumental Restoration, who belonged to the school of Galina Pugachenkova in Central Asian art studies. This Centre, which worked in close collaboration with native architects (usto), paid much attention to such great historical monuments as the complex of the Registan and the mausoleum Gūr-i Amīr in Samarkand. Man’kovskaia understood that the Yasawi mausoleum needed much more attention than it had so far received from the Kazakh government. According to her students, Man’kovskaia laid down the scientific principles of historical restoration for this monument, with minimal interference in the building and without any useless ‘reconstructions’. In 1968, according to the budget of scientific and architectural works on the Yasawi mausoleum, the direction of the restoration studio (restavratsionnaia nauchno-proektnaia masterskaia – RNPM) gave Man’kovskaia the order to write a guide book for the mausoleum. This book became matter of a scandal and did not see the

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931 Ibid., D. 464, Materialy po obsluzhivaniu zarubezhnykh delegatsii i turistov za 1972 god, f. 16.
932 We know that Arab visitors were brought to the kurgans of Saka.
933 S. Gorshenina, Galina Pugachenkova, 117.
934 Interview with Elena Kh. Khorosh by the author, Institute of the Problems of the Cultural Heritage of Nomads, Almaty, 22 June 2010.
936 This restoration studio was located within the institutional structure of the Ministry of Culture of the Kazakh SSR.
light, while two other guide books were published instead.\(^{937}\) Since Man’kovskaia’s materials remained unpublished it is unclear if there was a violation of the copyright.

In a broader political context the emergence of the Yasawī shrine as a symbol of Kazakh identity was inspired by a decision of the Council of Ministers of the USSR of 3 July 1970 to put the shrine under state protection.\(^{938}\) The draft of the law on the protection of historical and cultural monuments had been produced by the USSR Academy of Sciences. The final version of this document was to be applied in all republics of the Union. Already on 9 March 1971 the government of the Kazakh republic and the party officials set up the Society of Monuments’ Protection.\(^{939}\) This institution was to be led by historian Alkei Margulan whose life and work we discussed above. In 1972 it was decided to establish an independent Kazakh center for the restoration of historical monuments.

It was in March 1972 that the Council of Ministers of the Kazakh SSR finally decided to use the mausoleum for nation building and international tourism. The decree On the Means of Improvement of Scientific, Design, and Restoration Works at the Architectural Complex of Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī obliged the Kazakh Academy of Sciences to begin the archeological study of the territories around the shrine, including the underground constructions (so-called khilvet) and the destroyed mausoleum of Rabi’a Sultan Khanum.\(^{940}\) This decree should be viewed in the context of a broader movement for the preservation of cultural heritage in the Soviet Union in the 1950-60.\(^{941}\) The program of restoration of historical monuments on the territory of the Kazakh SSR included the renovation of mosques in Semipalatinsk and in other places.\(^{942}\) In addition to these measures a collection of official


\(^{939}\) Okhrana i ispol’zovanie pamiatnikov istorii i kul’tury (Alma-Ata, 1979), 116. The deputats of Turkestan City Coincil also asked the Ministry of Culture of the Kazakh SSR to organize tourism there: TsGA RK, F. 1890, Ministerstvo kul’tury KazSSR, Op. 3, D. 128, Dokumenty o deiatel’nosti restavratsionnoi masterskoi za 1971 god, f. 30.

\(^{940}\) Okhrana i ispol’zovanie pamiatnikov, 118-121.

\(^{941}\) N. Mitrokhin, Russkaia partiia: Dvizhenie russkikh natsionalistov v SSSR 1953-1985 gody (Moscow, 2003), 300-337. I am indebted to Christian Noack for this reference.

cial documents on the topic was published in the Kazakh SSR in 1979. Shortage of specialists was evident and Nusupbekov, the director of the Institute, complained to the Ministry of Culture that almost all archeologists in the republic were concentrated in the Otrar region and that he did not have enough people for work at the Yasawī shrine.

In 1974, shortly after the start of the works, Senigova claimed in a report at the Institute that “it was local masters who created this unique monument, the shrine of Ahmad Yasawī. Foreigners were called in only for furniture work on the domes, mihrab, and for the bronze boiler and lamps, objects on which they wrote their names.” The names of these masters are Ḥājjī Ḥasan from Shirāz, Shams ad-Dīn ‘Abd al-Wahhāb from Shirāz, ‘Izz ad-Dīn b. Tāj ad-Dīn from Isfahān, ‘Abd al-‘Azīz b. Sarwār ad-Dīn from Tabrīz. Senigova’s attempt to make a national claim for cultural heritage is of dubious character, especially as the building was erected very fast and even without any fundament. Western observers, on the contrary, saw the name of the artist (Ḥājjī Ḥasan from Shirāz) and of other masters as well as certain architectural features of the building as clear indicators for a “Persian origin of the late Timur style,” and would not even discuss the possibility that local masters produced the edifice. This was also the opinion of early Soviet experts, when Iosif Orbeli, the Director of the State Hermitage, requested that a bronze cauldron and candlesticks from the Yasawī shrine be brought to Leningrad for exhibition at the Third Congress on Persian Art and Archeology in 1935.
From the very beginning scholars played with the idea to undertake an anthropological investigation of the numerous burial places inside the mausoleum. First of all they tried to systemize the gravestones, which had been chaotically relocated in the building in the course of the restoration works. Two specialists at the Institute, namely Viacheslav Shukhovtsov and Vladimir Nastich carried out the translation of inscriptions on the tombs. Central Asian archeology had already undertaken similar work in Gūr-i Amīr, the family necropolis of the Tīmūrids in Samarkand. The tombs there were disclosed in 1941. The Soviet anthropologist Mikhail Gerasimov (1907-1970) used the bones from Gūr-i Amīr as indicators of how these historical personalities looked like, and on this basis he produced sculptures of Amir Tīmūr and his relatives. These works were very successful and made it attractive for Kazakh anthropologists to investigate the physical outlook also of those buried in the Yasawī mausoleum. The Institute of History envisaged the identification and sculptural reconstruction of certain historical persons buried in the shrine, but they also understood that, by contrast to Gūr-i Amīr, “many Islamic preachers who are buried in the mausoleum of Khwaja Aḥmad Yasawī [still] regarded as saints, therefore a special resolution of the Kazakh government and the establishment of governmental commission are required.” Georgii Dakhshleiger, deputy director of the Institute of History, cautioned that without a decision of the government no anthropological investigation of the graves was possible. On one of Dakhshleiger’s letters to the Ministry of Culture I saw the order of a Deputy Minister of Culture “to plan the disclosure of burials,” which means that the government was obviously not against this idea and indeed found it attractive, because it could deconstruct ‘myths’ around the shrine. A special anthropological team under the leadership of Orazak Ismagulov elaborated plans to identify the most interesting shrines and to open the burial chamber (gurkhāna) of Aḥmad Yasawī; methodological questions
they discussed with colleagues in Samarkand.954 Yet, it seems that eventually the government did not dare to start these works, and after 1973 the question of opening Yasawī’s grave disappears from the documentation. As to the reason for the abortion of the plans we can only guess that the saintly status of the place, the ongoing veneration, and Yasawī’s enormous popularity among the local population prevented the government and the scholars from opening the *gurkhāna*.

Even nowadays very few people know that a whole archive of *waqf* documents has been discovered in the shrine. This is how Vladimir Nastich remembers this event:

“I found those documents together with my colleague, Shukhovtsov. Literally, we dug them out in one of the befouled and dusty rooms (*ḥujra*) of the mausoleum. After that we spent a lot of time with classifying [the documents] and even started research, but the research topic was not officially approved by the Institute. Unofficially it was recommended to us to drop this topic, because of the ‘inner politics of the Institute.’ Probably the administration wanted to take [Russian scholars] away from the documents and to give [the task of studying them] to the Kazakhs [at the Institute], but they did not find suitable candidates [for this job]. Later I left Alma-Ata… Everything what we were able to finish is our short report on the discovery, Shukovtsov’s article with my active participation, my report at the Bartol’dist conference in 1990, and some short references in other works. That is it. Of course, it is much better than nothing, but anyways… In theory, those documents should today be located in the present-day Institute of History in Almaty.”955

But in practice these documents got lost. To be sure, Leningrad specialists Anas Khalidov and Oleg Akimushkin in their overview of Islamic manuscripts from Kazakhstan mentioned “several hundred of documents dating from the 16th-20th centuries in Persian and Turkic (gathered mainly in the shrine of Aḥmad Yasawī),”956 but nothing can be found in the Almaty Institute of History today. According to the several short publications that Nastich mentioned,957 this treasure contained an archive of economic documents of the

954 Ibid., ff. 3-4.

955 From a private letter to the author by Vladimir N. Nastich. 10 May 2011, Moscow.


mausoleum, worthy of course of a detailed academic publication and analysis. The scholars saw more than a thousand fragments and full texts in the Persian and Turkic languages. It was even claimed that somebody did indeed start with the cataloguing of this corpus of sources, but almost nothing was done in this regard. Still, this exceptionally important discovery demonstrated how promising the search for manuscripts in Kazakhstan can still be.

As to the inscriptions in the walls of the Yasawī shrine, initially the Ministry of Culture of the Kazakh SSR wanted to invite Oleg Bol’shakov from Leningrad for consultations in the reading of these inscriptions. Eventually the inscriptions were taken care of by the local scholars Viacheslav Shukhovtsov and Vladimir Nastich. The latter prepared the reconstruction of the Arabic inscriptions on the shrine’s frieze. This is what Nastich told me about the circumstances of this work:

“Together with Shukhovtsov we wanted to work on the epigraphy in the mausoleum, but they did not give us permission. There was a restoration studio Kazrestavratsiia (‘Kazakh Restoration’) headed by Ms. Tuiakbaeva, an odious person. [We] Orientalists regarded her as an architect, because she did not know anything about Oriental studies, while architects thought that she was an Orientalist. With such a degree of knowledge she wanted to reconstruct the inscription on the frieze. What did they do? Only part of the [original] inscription survived, but they knew that it was a citation from the Qur’an. Therefore they started to add elements [of inscription] in the upper parts of the frieze, but without any idea about Arabic paleography. The result is many distortions in the outlook of the [badly restored] inscription, but the text itself was reconstructed correctly because it was from the Qur’an. However, in the end of the inscription they again made a mistake: paleographically there should be the year 800, but they made 800 and something. Together with Shukhovtsov we made our own reconstruction on a paper and suggested this variant, but they rejected it. Foreigners [from Arab countries], of course, were dissatisfied with this. It is obvious that the inscription and the whole restoration are just a remake. The constructors, in order to get

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958 [For her work on the mausoleum see: B.T. Tuiakbaeva, Epigráficheskii dekor arkhitekturnogo kompleksa Akhmeda Iasavi (Alma-Ata, 1989)].

more money, knocked out the original fourteenth-century seven-color glaze — I saw it on the ground — and replaced it with their three-color glaze. Tuiakbaeva claimed that she has discovered the secret of Samarkand glaze, but the opposite is obvious: the difference with the original glaze can be seen even from a distance. They simply destroyed the monument… Just to give you an example. In the dome there is a special hole for air circulation. Once a certain Kazakh official appeared and asked why there was a whole, it should be closed. They closed it and the monument started to collapse. When they opened the hole again, bricks flew out of it with a whistle. 960

Indeed, in December 1976 Orientalists from the Sector of Ancient and Medieval History of Kazakhstan of the Institute of History in Alma-Ata, namely Bulat Kumekov, Vladimir Nastich, and Viacheslav Shukhovstov, wrote an expert resolution on the quality of the frieze reconstruction done by Kazrestavratsia. They underlined that this work was conducted without the participation of qualified specialists in Arabic language and paleography and that this caused mistakes in the renovation of many places in the inscription. The Orientalists mentioned that the text was written in the thulth style, the rules of which were repeatedly violated by the restorers, especially in the western and northern parts. Next to many stylistic and graphic mistakes, the specialists from the Institute detected wrong readings like صدق رسول الله [“The Prophet of Allah says the Truth”] instead of correct صدق الله [“Allah says the Truth”], the year 807 (809) instead of 800, and the distorted name of master Ḥājjī Ḥusnullāh instead of the correct form Ḥājjī Hasan. 961

The Kazakh government spent a lot of money on these restoration campaigns, and in spite of all scandals and struggles around the glorious past, the works of the late 1960s-70s achieved that the territory around the building became protected, that archeological studies could be conducted and that a historical museum was opened (1977), 962 that “booklets” for

960 Interview with Vladimir N. Nastich by the author, Sector of Written Monuments of the Peoples of the Orient, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, 30 September 2009.


tourists (= legitimate guides for pilgrims) were published. In result the construction became a symbol of Kazakh national pride, the major historical monument in the whole Kazakh republic. This is also obvious from the budget: in the 1970s the Kazakh government spent on the mausoleum more than a half of the total sum devoted to the protection and restoration of all historical monuments. Pamphlets and souvenirs popularized the building and its saint, turning their fame to the profit of the Kazakh national pride. The city of Turkestan has been studied in the same way as Kazakh archeologists approached the sites of the Otrar oasis, working on wast territory and studying the phenomenon of Kazakh urban culture.

Since the 1970s Kazakh Orientalists studied the Yasawī shrine in a comprehensive and interdisciplinary way: through the architectural restoration, the study of the epigraphic frieze, the aborted anthropological research of the human remnants in the graves, and through the failed publication of numerous Arabic-script sources related to the history of the shrine. Only the architectural restoration was carried out carefully. The rest of these initiatives, closely tied with tradition of classical Oriental Studies, unfortunately were characterized by grave mistakes.

**Conclusion**

The turn to urban studies in Soviet scholarship did stand in close connection to the social modernization of the former Russian Empire. Urban culture was regarded as progressive, whereas nomadic societies were understood as characterized by backwardness. The government tried to settle the nomads not only in the present but also in the past: it was important to show and prove their long sedentary history. The Kazakh scholars uncovered several ancient cities during their expeditions, and they described a continuous urban history in the region. This history of urban civilization was important for the Kazakh national identity and sometimes even in the interest of the state.

The first aspect is tied with the context of national demarcation and its results. Central Asian civilization as well as others ancient civilizations appeared on the banks of great rivers, in this case the Sir Darya and Amu Darya. Before the national demarcation, in the

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borders of the Kirgiz (Kazakh) autonomous republic there were only steppe regions. Sedentary regions, the Sir Darya valley and Semirech’e were included in the Turkestan autonomous republic in 1918. Only in the end of 1924 these territories were transferred to Kazakh administration. Actually, these two regions (especially the Sir Darya Valley) have always been a matter of conflicts between the northern (‘the Kazakh’) and the southern (‘the Uzbek’) population. Until the 1950s archeology in Kazakhstan remained non-national, but between the 1970s and the 1980s the rise of nationalism requested that these territories be firmly bound to Kazakhstan. The large-scale archeological works in the Otrar oasis and historical studies of medieval Semirech’e proved the centuries-old possession of the regions by the Kazakhs. Even the origin of state and ethnos was now attributed to the southern provinces. All cities of Southern Kazakhstan became historically Kazakh cities. This national approach in archeology in the 1970s was supplemented by a regional view on the Central Asian urban civilization as a whole, which reflected the same attempt in history that we discussed in the second chapter. However, this regional aspect was rather weak in archeology, which proves S. Jones’s notion that “archeological knowledge is not only appropriated at an abstract level within nationalist and ethnic ideologies, but at a more pragmatic level it is being used in the determination of land claims and the ownership of cultural heritage.”

As to the cultural context, archeological investigations focused on changing the image of the Kazakhs as an exclusively nomadic society. After the rejection of the Aryan theory of origin of the cities, all cities were attributed to the Kazakhs and the regional settled civilization was studied in its continuous aboriginal development since the Bronze Age. Indeed, the southern regions also provided several grandiose cultural symbols which also became part of Kazakh national heritage as a result of archeological investigations. The Muslim scholar Abū Naṣr al-Farābī, who spent his life in Baghdad, consisted to have come from the region of Pārāb/ Bārāb/ Fārāb which was allocated by some Orientalists exactly in the Otrar Oasis. Accordingly, it was the Kazakhs who gave al-Fārābī to the world. Another example is the mausoleum of the Sufi master Khwāja Aḥmad Yasawī in the city of Turkestan. When excavations of Otrar gave first fruits, the government initiated restoration and investigation of the shrine in 1972. The main goal was to organize international tourism that actually meant a legalization of the veneration of this sacred place by

Muslims: the keepers of the grave (shiraqchi) became watchmen; the mausoleum itself was transformed into a museum. Afterwards Ahmed Yasawī was nationalized and became a Kazakh poet and mystic. Moreover, like in the case of the Gūr-i Mīr mausoleum in Samarkand which was restored shortly after WWII, they even tried to undertake anthropological investigation of the graves located in mausoleum, particularly the grave of Yasawī himself, but eventually the Kazakh government did not dare to go that far.

Central Asian archeology in its Kazakh branch had been closely connected with the Leningrad center of Oriental studies. Relations between the academic metropolis and the province started from a colonial style of the Tsarist and early Soviet times, when all works were occasionally conducted by Russian scholars and all artifacts taken away to the capital. The second stage of relations was rather intermediary, because in the framework of comprehensive expeditions the local cadres slowly appeared and historical museums near important archeological sites were also established. Archeological works on Otrar in the late 1960s-80s manifested the independence of the Kazakh Oriental archeology, which fully served the process of nation-building. Kazakh archeology was nationally orientated and subordinated to writing of national history. This reflected in its achievements, and especially in its shortcomings and blundary.
Soviet Orientology in Kazakhstan was strongly dependent on the scholars from Moscow and Leningrad. This Leningrad connection provided a huge impetus for developing research on Oriental manuscripts, history and archeology on and in Kazakhstan. Especially the philological projects conducted by Leningrad colleagues were of high scientific quality. Archeological projects were most fruitful; this might have to do with the visibility of the sites, and their easy appropriation for national identity-building; accordingly, they were generously supported.

Still, with hindsight one cannot but conclude that the attempts to establish Orientology as an academic discipline in Kazakhstan largely failed. All attempts of using the huge manuscript heritage in Kazakhstan failed; individual scholars started manuscript expeditions but these were soon closed down because of political sensitivities. Among the most tragic failures of Kazakh scholarship was the negligence and then loss of a huge archive from the Yasawī shrine. Many decisions with regard of Oriental and Islamic Studies in the Kazakh SSR were made only on paper. Numerous institutional reincarnations of the discipline in the framework of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR did not improve the state of art.

The most successful period of Kazakh historical Orientalogy were the years of Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger, two managers at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. Between the 1960 and 1982 they managed to gather a strong team of specialists in source studies on the history of medieval Kazakhstan. Still this administrative tandem was only successful as long as it was directly linked to Leningrad, especially the Sector of Turkic and Mongol Studies and its chief Sergei G. Kliashtornyi. The group of young Orientalists that appeared in these twenty years should therefore be regarded as a branch of the Leningrad school of philological Orientology. In the first half of the 1980s this group gradually disappeared, and after independence Kazakh Orientology basically had to start again from the scratch.

In the field of teaching Oriental languages Kazakh scholars remained completely dependant on Leningrad and Tashkent. During the whole Soviet era there was no educa-
tional institution in the entire Kazakh republic which produced professional Orientalists. Oriental Studies were not represented at any level of high education in the Kazakh State University, pedagogical universities, and there was no PhD track for Orientology at the Kazakh Academy of Sciences.

These ups and downs in the development of Oriental Studies in the Kazakh SSR reflected general political changes in the whole country. The process of national delimitation deeply affected the whole style of history writing in Central Asia; histories and meta-histories were created on political demand. The introduction of the concept of Kazakh settlement civilization has to be seen as a result of the Soviet developmentalism and specifically of collectivization and sedentarization campaigns. Under Khrushchev we see the expansion of Soviet Orientology over the Union, obviously stimulated by Khrushchev’s breaking out the Stalinist self-isolation of the Soviet Union, and particularly his turn to the Third World and Asia. For the Kazakhs the promise of establishing a centre of Oriental Studies remained unfulfilled; the only branch of philological Orientology in Kazakhstan (perhaps outside of Kazakh linguistics) that developed a profile was Uighur studies because of the political interest in neighboring Eastern Turkestan and competition with China. After WWII it was politically important to prove the autochthonous character of the present-day population in Semirech’e in order to defend this territory from Chinese claims. This instance on autochthonous origins united all studies of the Kazakh past by textologists and archeologists. The concept of autochthonism, i.e. an eternal belonging of territory to a given nation, was an ideological argument for the isolation of national histories from each other and for the rejection of regional approach. In fact this legitimized the national demarcation of the 1920s-1930s.

In the post-war period re-edition of the works of ‘bourgeois’ Orientalists with regional approaches created optimal conditions for training a new generation of Soviet Orientalists. In Kazakhstan this trend was appropriated in a national colour, by focusing on Chokan Valikhanov’s oeuvre. This means that the regional approach was downplayed.

In the 1970s the development of Oriental Studies in Kazakhstan has to be seen in the context of the rise of nationalism. Specifically, this inspired restoration of historical monuments and a turn towards the sources of tribal identity (shajara). As a reaction to this national trend Moscow tried to impose a new project of writing regional histories instead

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of national ones. This new directive failed: obviously, Moscow was not anymore in a position to induce a cardinal change of perspective.

**Politicization of Philology**

National delimitation in Central Asia was not simply an expression of divide and rule politics because the Soviet did not invent something new, but supported one of the trends in expression of identities in Central Asia that existed in the second half of the 19th century. Secondly, the national delimitation with all its political consequences mobilized the Kazakhs for participation in the Soviet projects. Thirdly, ‘creation of nations’ in Central Asia was rather a complex and multi-sided process which included not only the drawing of political borders but also the codification of history, language, and national symbols.

Here the classical Orientalists, both philologists and archeologists, played a very important role: historical, archeological and philological initiatives which I brought together under the term of Oriental projects created strong walls between previously interconnected populations and therefore contributed lot to the delimitation of histories of Central Asian peoples.

The source edition projects of the 1930s divided the classical historical narratives of medieval Islamic authors into national pieces, identifying which parts of these texts relate to the history of a particular nation. In the 1940s this selective set of fragments became the basis of republican history writing. Central for national historiography was the issue of ethnogenesis, which was regarded in the fashion that legitimized the modern state borders.

The systematic Soviet-style study of written sources was started in Leningrad. The instrument of setting up huge brigades for carrying out scientific work was regarded as highly successful. Taking together, philological projects lasted over almost the whole Soviet period, starting in 1932 and stopping in the 1980s. Whily first publication of sources in 1932 still kept the regional view, later collective works became the major vehicle of national delimitation. The national method was implemented since 1934 in edition and translation projects of what Oriental sources had to say on individual nations (Turkmens, Kirgiz, Kazakhs). Even the edition of Rashīd ad-Dīn’s *World History* was legitimized by selling it as a product useful for production of national historiographies; and again the whole
project was also meant as a manifestation of the successful and strong Soviet scholarship against the West.

While the first experience of conducting philological projects was carried out in Leningrad (with the exemption of the irrigation project which required close collaboration with Tashkent), after WWII several important projects were fully conducted in the national republics. What we observe in setting up local projects is that the latter did not follow the same direction. While the publication of sources on the history of the Kazakh Khanates continued in the Leningrad tradition, the manuscript expeditions for gathering Kazakh genealogies were meant to produce an alternative vision of history, and would therefore contradict the highly dogmatic official meta-histories produced by the Institute of History. Kazakh genealogies had a more regional focus and would therefore ignore the national delimitation. Consequently, the project was abandoned.

The instrument of Oriental projects combined various functions. Oriental projects guaranteed the existence of stable research centres which provided many young Orientalists the best part of their professional training. Common Oriental projects of metropolitan and republican academic institutions contributed to the building of local research.

All philological, archeological and historical projects went through particular procedures at the Academy of Sciences of the Union or republican level. The initiative for individual projects came either from political circles (as in the case of writing regional history in 1974), or from particular scholars who used the existing administrative system for implementing their scholarly plans, and who understood that this or that topic was suitable in the context of contemporary politics (Rashīd ad-Dīn’s project by Evgenii E. Bertel’s, the shajara project by Begedzhan Suleimenov, the excavations of the Otrar oasis by Kimal’ Akishev). The idea was usually formulated in a separate document which contained the clarification of actuality of this topic, its political relevance, goals, research staff, time schedule, and expenses. This proposal was ratified by the Presidium of the Academy of Sciences or by the administration of a particular Institute.

**Oriental Projects as a Means of Settling Nomadic History**

Archeological projects in Soviet Kazakhstan were represented by three long-lasting programs: the establishment of the Kazakh archeological expedition in the 1930s, excava-
tions in the Otrar oasis in the 1960s-80s, and the restoration and archeological investigation of the Yasawī shrine in the 1970s-80s. Archeological studies were nationally oriented and were to result in the gradual transmission of authority from Leningrad, with its State Academy of the History of Material Culture (GAIMK), to the local Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography in Alma-Ata. Archeological projects concentrated on issues of urban culture and ethnogenesis of the Kazakh people in Southern Kazakhstan. In this respect they were strongly dependent on the evidence from written sources that were established by philological projects: the archeologists needed descriptions of the cities as well as data on political history and historical geography.

The Southern Kazakhstan expedition was directed by archeologists (A.N. Bernshtam, K.A. Akishev and K.M. Baipakov), but many specialists from other disciplines were involved in the projects as well: anthropologists, biologists, and art historians. The Yasawī shrine occupied a special place because of the inter-disciplinary approach chosen for its restoration. All findings of archeological investigation, which was mainly concentrated in Southern Kazakhstan, were used for building a concept of the Kazakh urban culture. This paradigm was first brought up by Leningrad scholars and then further elaborated by national cadres who had studied in Leningrad. Since the 1970s there was a trend towards a regional approach in the archeology of Central Asia, through common conferences and publications. However, this was an artificial enterprise, because only archeologists from the centre paid much attention to regional developments, while local specialists largely continued to work in national, republican frameworks.

Soviet Oriental Studies attempted to change the image of the Kazakhs as only nomads. The early authors, such as Sandzhar Asfendiiarov, Mikhail Viatkin and Aleksandr Bernshtam had not yet established a link between the presence of ancient cities on the territory of the Kazakh SSR with the existence of Kazakh urban culture. Moreover, Aleksandr Bernshtam opposed the view of Al’kei Margulan, who for the first time claimed that the cities in Southern Kazakhstan go back to the medieval Kazakhs. Viatkin treated this problem not yet in national but in geographic terms; he distinguished between the ‘progressive’ southern territories where the powerful civilizations of their neighbors left their impact, and the ‘primitive’ northern lands with their overwhelmingly nomadic population whose history is rarely mentioned on the pages of historical narratives.
However, since the mid-1950s the concept of Kazakh urban civilization became stronger. It was supported by Bernshtam’s students and by Kimal’ Akishev, who initiated the large-scale archeological investigation of the Otrar oasis. In collaboration with his disciple, Karl Baipakov, Kimal’ Akishev discovered the world of Kazakh medieval cities in Southern Kazakhstan and Semirech’e. These urban studies were initially started by Leningrad specialists (Iakubovskii, Bernshtam) in the 1920s-30s and developed in close connection with the Leningrad center after the 1950s, when many Kazakh archaeologists studied archeology in Leningrad where they got acquainted with the specific archaeological methods (large-scale excavations) as well as with the leading specialists in the field, such as Mikhail and Vadim M. Masson, Aleksandr I. Belenitskii and others. Akishev and Baipakov established their own school of medieval urban archeology in Kazakhstan, which still continues its work in the same regions and from similar scientific positions.

**Regional vs. Republican Approaches in Nation Building**

Since the national delimitation there had always been a competition of regional and national approaches in Central Asian historiography, both of which drew from the works of Vasilii V. Bartol’d. The regional view regarded Central Asia as a cultural, geographical and historical entity without taking into account national borders. The republican approach was a result of the national demarcation and was based on Oriental sources that had been published since the 1930s. The first attempts of writing Kazakh Soviet national history go back to individual scholars (Asfendiiarov, Viatkin); in 1943, when many scholars were evacuated from central Russia to Kazakhstan, a new collective approach was started under supervision of Anna Pankratova, in collaboration with local scholars. Meta-historical projects were aimed to compile the general history of the republic since time immemorial up to the modern Soviet period. Unlike the philological and archeological research, these conceptual meta-histories were to be broadly disseminated over the whole Union; such textbooks were always written in consultation with the centres in Moscow and Leningrad.

The several redactions of the *History of the Kazakh SSR* (1943, 1949, 1957) reflect the many changes of the Party line and the heated discussions on the crucial topics of republican history, which focused on questions of statehood, modes of production, the evaluation of the Russian conquest, and the very principles of the periodization of history.
These discussions around the national histories revealed that the Soviets perpetuated the concept of Russia’s ‘civilizing mission’ of the 18th and 19th centuries; also the Soviets aimed at bringing modernization to the backward population of Central Asia. While scientific problems were solved under strong political pressure by the Communist Party, some scholars were able to maintain their theoretical positions and to even keep their institutional positions and authority (Anna Pankratova, Aleksandr Semenov, Sergali Tolybekov). The main goal of these debates was to formulate the proper official version of a particular national history.

Though it were central institutions that promoted the republican approach in history writing, the regional view on the Central Asian past had always been present in Leningrad and Moscow, where scholars proudly claimed that they did not take those national borders in the region seriously, in spite of their participation in the writing of national histories. Meta-historical projects demonstrated the competition of regional and national approaches: while the re-publication of classical works of Russian Orientalists can be regarded as a sign of a unifying tendency towards regional perspectives, the works of Chokan Valikhanov (1835-1865) were used in late Soviet Kazakhstan as a symbol of native scholarship. The huge project of regional histories for the whole Soviet Union initiated by the Moscow Institute of History in 1974 was aimed to unite in a single narrative all the results of previous research on individual Central Asian nations. This attempt was aborted, because national intelligentsias did not want to share their pasts, and the authors simply continued their previous research lines.

**The Role of Islam and Islamic Scholars**

Among the main aims of Kazakh Oriental Studies was research on the Soviet Orient to defend the priority of Soviet culture over the ‘backward’ Islamic way of life, but during the Soviet times Islam in Kazakhstan did not become a topic of in-depth study. Still, many authors commented upon issues connected to the Islamic religion. All of these notes, except for those of Asfendiiarov, pointed at the superficiality of Islam among the Kazakhs, thus paving the way for the cliché that pre-Islamic beliefs and religious syncretism had always prevailed over Islam. Before the 1980s Islamic Studies in the Kazakh SSR (as well as in the Soviet Union) in general existed only in the form of philological studies. Islam
was neglected by the scholars and, just like the nomadic way of life, was regarded as a remnant of the feudal past.

The study of Islam in the Kazakh SSR was not institutionalized. Only some ethnographers of the late Soviet era were interested in the topic, basing their research on such misconceptions as ‘survivals’ (perezhitki) and ‘the cult of saints’ (kul’t sviatykh). No basic repository of Oriental manuscripts for academic Islamic studies was set up, because the old pre-revolutionary premise that the Kazakhs are ‘bad Muslims’ was still in force. This premise was not even given up after historiography and archeology established the image of the Kazakhs as city-dwellers.

Important in this respect is the transition of authoritative knowledge about Islam from the ‘ulamā’ to the trained Orientalists. The anti-religious repressions of the 1930s forced the learned Muslims to transfer their manuscript collections to the state archives (above all to the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies). Many religious scholars perished in the labor camps or were executed. After the 1950s some former Mullahs returned home, and a few of them entered scientific institutions; there they were employed for describing and copying Islamic manuscripts. Also in the Kazakh SSR some former students of Islamic schools were hired as employees at the Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. At the same time, some secular Soviet Orientalists originated from the families of Islamic scholars; one of these was Arabist Bulat Kumekov, whom the Alma-Ata qādi Sa’d Waqqās Ghilmānī at one point invited to become his successor in office.

Triangle: Moscow – Leningrad – Tashkent

Relations between centres and peripheries played a crucial role in the history of Soviet Oriental Studies. In particular, Kazakh Orientalists found themselves in a triangular relationship of academic networks between Moscow, Leningrad and Tashkent. Each of these centres was important for Almaty, for different reasons. Moscow, as the political and scientific centre of Soviet scholarship, was the place from where directives of the Party and Presidium of the Academy of Sciences were sent to the republican research institutes. Moscow as well as Leningrad had a long tradition of teaching Oriental languages and history and therefore were the main places for acquiring basic professional skills. However,
very few Kazakhstani Orientalists graduated from Moscow and Leningrad universities. Rather, Kazakh students obtained education in these centres through prolonged internships, which sometimes comprised several years. The main goal of this wide-spread practice of sending students from the peripheries to the main academic centres was to raise local cadres that were equipped with the necessary methodology. Since the establishment of the system of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR in 1930 and the centralization of the main scholarly institutions, many leading specialists in the humanities were concentrated in Moscow and Leningrad. Moscow was foremost important as the source of authority which provided local scholarship with established dogmas through the Party and academic channels.

In this triangle Tashkent occupied a special place. Before the Revolution Tashkent was a regional centre of Russian culture, and it was in Tashkent that the new academic discipline of Turkestan studies (turkestanovedenie) came into being, with active support by Bartol’d. With the establishment of Soviet rule Tashkent first became a place of refuge for ‘non-conformist’ scholars, including Aleksandr Shmidt and Aleksandr Semenov. In the early Soviet period the long distance from Moscow enabled scholars in Tashkent to maintain their own views. As the capital of the Uzbek SSR, in 1943 Tashkent was granted its own Beruni Institute of Oriental Studies, which became the main regional repository of Islamic manuscripts – and therefore the main Oriental Studies institution in the whole of Central Asia. Tashkent was also a significant educational centre: the Central Asian University (SAGU) welcomed students interested in the region’s past, including archeology, from all neighboring republics. In the war years Tashkent became a huge laboratory where many evacuated scholars continued their work. However, with the expansion of Soviet Oriental Studies after WWII, each republic of Central Asia received its own group of Orientalists or historians of the pre-revolutionary period, leading to a decline of Tashkent’s significance as a regional center. Still, for Kazakh students Tashkent retained its significance in the educational sphere until the end of the Soviet Union, since the Kazakhstani State University in Alma-Ata did not provide courses on Oriental Studies (Iudin’s classes being an exception).

But the central place in respect of classical Oriental philology and archeology was occupied by Leningrad. It were not only rich collections of Islamic manuscripts and artifacts gathered during the Imperial and early Soviet periods that attracted scholarly attention
from all over the country, but foremost the first-rate specialists in their particular fields, whom I called ‘monopolizers of science’. These specialists established close and stable links with the republican academics, so that Kazakhstani Oriental Studies became, in fact, a branch of the Leningrad school.

Networks of scholars enabled mobility inside of this triangle: young scholars visited the centres for study period, and later they continued to attend scientific conferences in Moscow and Leningrad, notably the All-Union conference Bartol’dovskie chteniia. Moving from the centre to the periphery and the other way around always meant a change of perspective. Nastich and Sultanov, who moved from Alma-Ata to Moscow and Leningrad in the 1970s and 1980s, disagreed with the national approaches of their fellows in Alma-Ata, including those who had studies in Moscow (Pishchulina).

I argue that the ethnic and religious identities of the individual actors did not have much influence on their careers during the Soviet period. Dakhshleiger, obviously of Jewish background, was the grey eminence of Kazakh Orientology for two decades. Conversely, Suleimenov’s project on the Kazakh genealogies was closed down although he was a Kazakh, because his project would have compromised the established version of republican history. Also Veniamin P. Iudin found itself out of the discourse not because of his non-Kazakh identity, but his views on Kazakh history differed from the broadly accepted ones. That nationality did not play a big role can also be seen from the fates of those who moved to the centres: Tursun I. Sultanov enjoyed a position at the Leningrad Branch of the Institute of Oriental Studies and after the fall of the Soviet Union he became a chair of the department of Central Asia and the Caucasus at the Oriental Faculty of St. Petersburg State University; he fully integrated himself into the Leningrad school of Orientology. The collective of scholars at the Institute of History in Alma-Ata was truly international, and authority was not concentrated in the hands of a particular ethnic group which would have played the role of an ‘oppressor’ in republican scholarship.

**Power and Scholarship**

This dissertation is about relations between power and academic life. The system of scholarship that the Soviets had established imposed very strong rules which determined the whole intellectual work from the writing of a research proposal to the final results in
the form of publications, exhibitions, or monument restorations. Scholarship in the Soviet Union lost the aristocratic, elite character that it had in Tsarist times. Academic study was not anymore an enterprise of a single intellectual but was concentrated in scientific institutions with a solid collective. The idea was to bring the forms of scientific work closer to the modes of industrial production: the products of scholarly work should be delivered according to a rigid schedule, they should correspond to established quality standards and be broadly applicable in practice. Everything depended on the resources that the state provided: money, time (enclosed in five-year plans), and labor force. When scientific endeavours found support of the state, impressive results could be booked. But in the Soviet Union there was always a political motivation behind the state interest in scholarship. Oriental studies were used in nation building, in the creation of national symbols, and in the strengthening of mental and state borders. Moreover, academics reshaped the perception of the people’s past, turning it from predominantly nomadic and ‘barbaric’ to a more ‘civilized’, settled image of the nation.

Many scholars in the Soviet Union were quite aware of their position in state service. Some of them accepted this and were successfully integrated into the Soviet system of academic life, others did not and sought to find various forms of ‘resistance’. With this ‘resistance’ they tried to maintain some sort of agency for themselves. Yet the fates of the very few who openly raised their heads against the imposition of dogmas and the politicization of science usually ended tragically: they were taken out of the dominant scholarly discourse and their careers became rather problematic. Academics took refuge in studying the remote past (hoping to escape the politicization of the modern period) and in annual archeological expeditions with their romantic, freedom-loving spirit. However, as it was shown in my dissertation, even this seemingly ‘non-political’ occupation was strongly bound to the current political demand.
Appendixes

Appendix 1. The Main Personalities

Bartol’d (1869-1930)

Major works: *Turkestan in the Epoch of the Mongol Invasion* (vol. 1, 1898; vol. 2, 1900)

Affiliation: Oriental faculty of St. Petersburg/Leningrad University (1901-1930)

Claims: “The national principle of the 1924 state delimitation of Central Asia was formulated by Western European history in the 19th century, and is completely alien to native historical traditions.”

See appendix 2.

Semenov (1873-1958)

Major works: *Sobranie vostochnykh rukopisei Akademii nauk Uzbekskoi SSR*, ed. by A.A. Semenov, vol. 1 (Tashkent, 1952); vol. 2 (Tashkent, 1954); vol. 3 (Tashkent, 1955); vol. 4 (Taskent, 1957); vol. 5 (Tashkent, 1960); vol. 6 (Tashkent, 1963); A.A. Semenov, *Material’nye pamiatniki iranskoi kul’tury v Srednei Azii* (Stalinabad, 1945).

Affiliation: Central Asian State University in Tashkent (1921-1931, 1940s); Dushanbe Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Tajik SSR.

Claims: Many Central Asian medieval monuments belonged to the Aryan legacy. The Tajiks are descendants of Aryans, whose cultural influence went far beyond the borders of the modern Tajik SSR: one can observe its traces in each Central Asian republic.

See appendix 2.


Asfendiiarov (1889-1938)


Affiliation: Moscow Institute of Oriental Studies (1927-28); Kazakh State University (1928-37)

Claims: “the Orient was characterized not by a historical sequence of primitive-patriarchal, feudal, and capitalistic society, as in the West, but by one tribal formation that combined elements from all three formations.”

Iakubovskii (1886-1953)

Major works: A. Iu. Iakubovskii, K voprosu ob etnogeneze uzbekskogo naroda (Tashkent, 1941)

Affiliation: GAIMK (1925-1953), the State Hermitage (1931-1936), Oriental faculty of Leningrad University (1929-1941), Institute of Oriental Studies (1933-1938)

Claims: ethnic name appears later than a national formation.

See appendix 2.

Bernshtam (1910-1956)

Major works: A.N. Bernshtam, Pamiatnikii stariny Talasskoi doliny (Alma-Ata, 1941); A.N. Bernshtam, Arkheologicheskii ocherk Severnoi Kirgizii (Alma-Ata, 1941)

Affiliation: GAIMK, the State Hermitage (1932-1956), Leningrad University (1936-1956).

968 S. D. Asfendiiarov, Materialy k izucheniiu, 51;
Claims: the settlements of Southern Kazakhstan, including Ėtarāz, were populated by Turks.969

“South-Eastern Kazakhstan is the first-rate region for understanding the ancient and medieval history of the Kazakh republic; here one can check the reports of ancient Arabic and Chinese authors that are so important for historical topography.”970

Archeologists had in fact demonstrated the historicism of Central Asian peoples, had shown their centuries-old history as comparable to the history of the ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia.971

There was no ancient agricultural civilization in Central Kazakhstan.972

See appendix 2.

Pankratova (1897-1957)


Affiliation: Moscow Institute of History (1939-52)

Claims: historians have to show not only the progressive role of the Russians in Central Asia but also to study glorious past of local people.

Ibragimov (1929-1960)


Claims: the Kazakh people (*narodnost’*) came into being at the same time as the first Kazakh state in the 16th century.

**Iudin (1928-1983)**


Claims: nomads produced a special kind of knowledge – ‘oral steppe historiography’

**Margulan (1904-1985)**


Affiliation: the Kazakh Branch of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR (1939-1945); Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR (1945-1985)

Claims: the Kazakh urban civilization covered not only southern regions of the country but also central part of Kazakhstan.

See appendix 2.

**Suleimenov (1912-1984)**

Major works:

Affiliation: Institute of History, Archeology, and Ethnography of the Academy of Sciences of the Kazakh SSR (1945-1984)

Claims: genealogies of the Kazakh people transmitted parallel, the ‘true’ history of the people from the 7th to the 20th centuries.

See appendix 2.
Akishev (1924-2003)


Claims: “Southern Kazakhstan is the cradle of the Kazakh people.”

See appendix 2.

Pishchulina (1934-)


Claims: Kazakh statehood emerged very early, one can speak of a clear feudal character of the socio-economic structure of this state, and there was an autochthonous process of ethnogenesis in Moghulistan (Eastern Turkestan, Semirech’e).

Kliashtornyi (1928-)


Affiliation: Leningrad Branch of Institute of Oriental Studies/ Institute of Oriental Manuscripts (1957-)

Claims: “We, the Orientalists, carefully refrain from politics. At the same time we solve a big part of an important political problem for the development of Eastern society, more than is done by researchers of other regions. Classical Oriental Studies created the fundament for the maturation of national consciousness in huge territories among various peoples.”

See appendix 2.

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Appendix 2. Networks of Soviet Orientalists: Teacher-Student Relations
Appendix 3. Networks of Soviet Orientalists: Relations with Islamic scholars

A commentary: Orientalists and Islamic scholars usually had loose connections (dotted lines in the scheme). Ties between colleagues in the same field (thus among Orientalists and among the ‘ulama circles) were much stronger. One exception: Musa Bigiev played a significant role in transition from the pre-revolutionary Tatar Islamic scholarship to Soviet Orientology, represented also by the Tatars, the Khalidovs family, Usmanov and A. Tagirjanov.
A Brief Commentary to Appendix 4.

This scheme deals with discourse development of two dimensions: debates on the scope (regional vs. national/republican) and character (settled vs. nomadic) of Kazakh history.

Our data identify a number of significant brakes in discourse development: a temporary close-down of regional approach in the mid-1920s, ethnic identification of archeological sites of Southern Kazakhstan in the mid-1930s, and freezing of debates about the nomads after the 1954 Tashkent conference.

However, the same scheme shows lines of continuities and co-existance of several different approaches in the realm of Soviet scholarship.
Appendix 5. Institution-Building
List of Interviews

Oleg F. Akimushkin, St. Petersburg, Russia, 28 January 2010

Safar A. Abdullo, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 20 June 2010

Mervert Kh. Abuseitova, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan. 18 June 2010

Karl M. Baipakov, the Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 16 June 2010

Timur K. Beisembiev, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 December 2010


Margarita G. Dakhshleiger, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 July 2010

Irina V. Erofeeva, Institute of the Problems of Cultural Heritage of Nomads, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 22 June 2010


Bulat I. Kumekov, Institute of History, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 12 July 2010

Nadzhip N. Mingulov, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 June 2010 (in collaboration with Kanat Uskenbay)

Vladimir N. Nastich, Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow, Russia, 30 September 2009

Mikhail B. Piotrovskii, Amsterdam Hermitage, The Netherlands, 16 April 2011 (in collaboration with Hanna Jansen)

Stanislav M. Prozorov, Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences, St. Petersburg, Russia, 24 September 2009

Erbulat A. Smagulov, the Margulan Institute of Archaeology, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 May 2010

Tursun I. Sultanov, Oriental faculty of St. Petersburg University, Russia, 25 September 2009

Elena Kh. Khorosh, Institute of the Problems of Cultural Heritage of Nomads, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 22 June 2010

Amri R. Shikhsaidov, Makhachkala, Daghestan, Russia, 14 June 2011 (in collaboration with Michael Kemper)
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№ 680, D. 409, Plan ekspeditsionnykh rabot i nauchnykh komandirovok na 1935 g., perepiska ob ekspeditsiiakh

№ 692, D. 060, Informatsionnyi material dlia TASS o nauchnykh rabotakh Instituta Vostokovedeniiia i Rashid ad-Din.

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### List of Abbreviations

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<tr>
<td>AV IVR RAN</td>
<td>Arkhiv vostokovedov Institutu vostochnyk rukopisei RAN, St. Petersburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>IVAN</td>
<td>Institute of Oriental Studies of the Academy of Sciences</td>
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<tr>
<td>OVA KN MON RK</td>
<td>Ob’edinennyi vedomstvennyi arkhiv Komiteta nauki Ministerstva nauki Respubliki Kazakhstana, Almaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>TsGA RK</td>
<td>Tsentral’nyi gosudarstvennyi arkhiv Respubliki Kazakhstana, Almaty</td>
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<tr>
<td>RGANI</td>
<td>Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv noveishei istorii, Moscow</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPFA RAN</td>
<td>Sankt-Peterburgskii filial Arkhiva Rossiiskoi Akademii Nauk, St. Petersburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>RA NA IIMK</td>
<td>Rukopisnyi arkhiv Nauchnogo arkhiva Instituta Istorii Material’noi kul’tury, St. Petersburg</td>
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<tr>
<td>AIA MON RK</td>
<td>Arkhiv Instituta Arkheologii Ministerstva obrazovaniia i nauki Respubliki Kazakhstana, Almaty</td>
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<td>RA GE</td>
<td>Rukopisnyi Arkhiv Gosudarstvennogo Ermitazha, St. Petersburg</td>
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Summary

My dissertation is devoted to the history of classical Oriental Studies in Soviet Kazakhstan in close relations with the Leningrad school. I tried to understand the patterns of politicization in seemingly non-political fields of academic enquiry, namely in philology, ancient and medieval history and archeology. At the center of my thesis is the conceptual framework which supported the ‘settling of the Kazakh past’, the turn from a predominantly nomadic perception of Kazakh tribes to an image of a well-developed urban civilization. Thereby I demonstrate that the Soviet Orientalist scholars made a significant contribution to the cultural delimitation of Central Asia and to the ‘creation’ of modern nations in the region. The whole range of academic selection, be it the choice of sources, terminology, chronological and spatial frameworks, was strongly connected to the changing agendas of Soviet politics.

There are several overall issues that this thesis tries to shed light upon. The first of these is the question of center-periphery relations. In contrast to Tashkent, Dushanbe and other republican capitals in the Soviet east, Alma-Ata never obtained its own, Soviet Kazakhstani Oriental Institute. This means that Kazakhstani Orientology had a weaker and smaller structural fundament, being situated at universities and history institutes, and that it was more dependent on the transfer of knowledge and of cadres from the existing institutes in Moscow and, above all, Leningrad. An additional factor is the role of Tashkent in neighboring Uzbekistan, which already hosted the first Central Asian University where also Oriental studies were conducted. Related to this is the question how local, Kazakhstani cadres in Orientology were produced, and under which political conditions they operated.

The second group of questions deals with the process of nation building. What was the role of academics in nation building, and how did this process influence the whole academic system? How did the regional and national discourses on Kazakhstani history develop under Soviet rule? Which parts of prerevolutionary discourses on Russia’s Orient were continued in the Soviet epoch, and which were completely replaced?

The last, third, group of questions touches upon the history of Soviet Islam. What was the fate of the Islamic heritage in the 20th century, and how did academic scholars shape the image of Islam in Kazakhstan? When many scholars of Muslim background en-
tered the Academy of Sciences, did they accept the rules of the game imposed by the Bol-
sheviks, or did they have alternative ways for dealing with the system? This pool of ques-
tions has particular relevance for archeology, which dealt with the Islamic monuments of
the past.

My overall aim is to identify the borders of autonomy in a field of scholarship that
had its own hierarchies and tasks, and to analyse the diversity of knowledge-power rela-
tions in a complex field with several centres and peripheries.

The backbone of my thesis is the analysis of several major “Oriental projects” that
were conducted in Leningrad and Alma-Ata between the 1920s and the late 1980s. These
academic projects covered the fields of philology (text editions, translations), history (the
production of republican/ national histories), and archeology (restoration and exploration
of monuments and ancient sites). These scholarly enterprises were organized upon the state
demand and embodied the collective and planned character of academic work in the Soviet
Union. The source edition projects of the 1930s divided the classical historical narratives
of medieval Islamic authors into national pieces, identifying which parts of these texts re-
late to the history of a particular nation. In the 1940s this selective set of fragments became
the basis of republican history writing. Central for national historiography was the issue of
ethnogenesis, which was regarded in the fashion that legitimized the modern state borders.
Archeological investigation in the republic was centered on the Southern Kazakhstani re-
gion and was aimed to explore and study the urban settlements, above all the site of Otrar
and its oasis.
Samenvatting

Mijn proefschrift behandelt de geschiedenis van de klassieke oriëntalistiek in Alma-Ata en Leningrad onder de sovjet tijd. Ik heb de patronen geprobeerd te begrijpen van de politisering die plaatsvond binnen ogenschijnlijk apolitieke wetenschapsgebieden, zoals filologie en de geschiedenis van oudheid en middeleeuwen. Mijn hoofdvraag hierbij gaat uit naar het conceptuele kader dat voorzag in de sedentarisatie (“settling”) van het nomadenverleden van Kazachstan, waardoor het beeld van Kazachse stammen als voornamelijk nomadisch verschoof naar dat van een goed ontwikkelde stedelijke civilisatie. Ik stel dat de Sovjet wetenschappers een grote rol speelden in de culturele begrenzing van Centraal Azië en in de ‘creatie’ van moderne naties in de regio. De algehele reikwijdte van academische selectie was sterk afhankelijk van de Sovjet politiek, of dit nou was met betrekking tot de keuze van bronmateriaal en terminologie, of de vaststelling van ruimte- en tijdskaders.

Dit proefschrift probeert verschillende onderwerpen te belichten. Allereerst de kwestie van centrum - periferie relaties. In tegenstelling tot Tasjkent, Doesjanbe en andere hoofdsteden van de Republieken in het Sovjet Oosten, kreeg Alma-Ata nooit een eigen Sovjet Kazachstaans Instituut voor Oriëntalistiek. Dit betekent dat de Kazachstaanse oriëntalistiek alleen was gevestigd in universiteiten en historische instituten, waardoor zij een smallere en zwakkere basis had en meer afhankelijk was van kennis- en kaderoverdracht via de bestaande instituten in Moskou en bovenal Leningrad. Een bijkomende factor is de rol van Tasjkent in naburig Oezbekistan, waar de eerste Centraal Aziatische Universiteit was gevestigd, waar ook studie naar de Oriënt werd gedaan. Een hieraan gekoppelde vraag is hoe de lokale, Kazachstaanse kaders voor de oriëntalistiek werden geproduceerd, en onder welke politieke condities zij handelden.

De tweede groep vragen hebben betrekking op het proces van natie opbouw. Wat was de rol van academici in dit proces, en hoe werd het algehele academische systeem erdoor beïnvloed? Hoe hebben de regionale en nationale discoursen van de Kazachstaanse geschiedenis zich ontwikkeld onder Sovjet bewind? Welke bestanddelen van de prerevolutionaire discoursen over de Russische Oriënt werden voortgezet in het Sovjet tijdperk, en welke werden volledig vervangen?
De laatste, derde groep vragen betreft de geschiedenis van de Sovjet Islam. Wat was het lot van de Islamitische erfenis in de 20ste eeuw en hoe vormden academische wetenschappers het beeld van de Islam in Kazachstan? Accepteerden de vele wetenschappers met een moslimachtergrond die de Sovjet Academie der Wetenschappen betraden de spelregels die hen werden opgelegd door de bolsjewieken, of hielden ze er alternatieve omgangswijzen met het systeem op na? Dit cluster van vragen is speciaal relevant voor de archeologie, die de Islamitische monumenten uit het verleden onderzocht.

Mijn overkoepelende doel is de grenzen van autonomie te onderscheiden in een wetenschapsveld dat gekenmerkt werd door zijn eigen hiërarchieën en taken, en daarnaast een analyse te bieden van de diversiteit aan wetenschaps-/machtsrelaties binnen een complex veld met verschillende centra en periferieën.

Ik heb mijn resultaten geordend in een reeks van oriëntaalse projecten op het gebied van filologie, geschiedenis en archeologie. Deze wetenschappelijke ondernemingen werden georganiseerd op gebod van de staat en belichaamden het collectieve en geplande karakter van het academische werk in de Sovjet Unie. De projecten van bronredties die werden uitgegeven in de jaren 1930 maakten een onderscheiding in de klassiek historische narratieve van middeleeuwse Islamitische auteurs volgens nationale lijn, en relateerden zo bepaalde gedeelten van deze teksten aan de geschiedenis van een specifieke natie. In de jaren 1940 werden deze selectieve ordeningen van fragmenten de basis voor de geschiedschrijving van de Republieken. Centraal in de nationale historiografie stond de kwestie van ethnegene, die zo werd beschouwd dat zij de grenzen van de moderne staat legitimeerde.