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

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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 (otdel) 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 Ėrəz 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 edi Estelikter, maqalalar men zertteuler (Almaty, 2009), 153.
the Communist Party and the centralized decisions on the restructuring and expansion of Soviet Oriental Studies, 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. It is to be noticed that in 1948, during the campaign against Kazakh historian Ermukhan Bekmakhanov, Nusupbekov defended Bekmakhanov and also regarded the movement of Kenesary Kasymov as national-liberating, though later he was forced to reject these views.

Grigorii Fedorovich Dakhshleiger 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, Dakhshleiger was a member of the Communist Party and also entered the Institute in 1946. For about thirty years, from 1957 onwards, Dakhshleiger was a Deputy Director of the Institute. Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger 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 Dakhshleiger. 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.\textsuperscript{534} 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 Dakhshleiger’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 Dakhshleiger, 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.\textsuperscript{535}

The Dakhshleiger 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, Dakhshleiger’s case still exemplifies that the Kazakhstani scientific institutions were not completely dominated by the Kazakhs.

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

- 1954-1969. \textit{Materialy po istorii kazakhskikh khanstv [Materials on the History of the Kazakh Khanates]}\textsuperscript{536}. Texts were translated by Sapar Ibragimov, Veniamin Iudin, Klavdia Pishchulina, Nadzhip Mingulov, Oleg Akimushkin, Munira Salakhetdinova;


\textsuperscript{535} Interview with Margarita G. Dakhshleiger by the author, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 5 July 2010.


Moiseev, V.K. Shukhtsov and others. Chokan 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 Kliahtorny).

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


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 benefited 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 obschestvennykh 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. 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

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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 obshchestvennykh 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 Bekmakhanov; 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 obschestvennykh nauk AN Kaz SSR, 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.550

Sauranbaev drew attention to a number of monographs dealing with Oriental Studies: The Kazakh Schools and Madrasas,551 a bibliographical index of work in Oriental languages (Arabic, Persian, and Turkish) on Kazakh history,552 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, ‘Umar Khayyām, Nawā‘ī, and Niẓāmī.553

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.


551 N. Sabitov, Mekteby i medrese u kazakhov (Alma-Ata, 1950).


553 Published in the journals Literatura i iskusstvo Kazakhstana (1947-1948), Kazakhstanskaia pravda (1948), Izvestiia KazFAN, seriia filologicheskaia (1945).
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 *Divan lughat at-turk* ("Dictionary of Turkic Language") by Mahmûd al-Kashgârî, the *Jami‘ at-tawârikh* ("Compendium of Chronicles") by Rashîd ad-Dîn, the *Rawdat as-ṣafâ* by Mirkhvând (1433-1498), the *Saḥā‘if al-Akhbâr* by Münnejim-Bashi (17th c.), the *Divân* of Mirzâ ‘Abd al-Qadîr Bîdîl (1644-1721), the *Khamsa* by Nizâmî (1141-1209), the *Gulistan* by Sa‘dî (1181-1291), and the *Bâbur-nâme* by Ŭahlî ad-Dîn Muḥammad Bâbur (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 *Thubût al-’âjîzîn* ("Firmness of the Weak," 1802) by Şûfî Allâhîyâr (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 obshchestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoï rabote za 1948 god, f. 8.

555 There is no information in existing literature on this copy of Rashîd ad-Dîn’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 obshchestvennykh nauk AN KazSSR, g. Almaty, Op.10, Sv. 11a, D. 2, Materialy po vostokovedcheskoï 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 Kamaleddîni, *Katalog rukopisnykh knig na persidskom iazyke: iz sobranii National’noi biblioteki Respubliki Kazakhstana* (Almaty, 2008).


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’īz al-Kāshīfī (d. 1505) and devoted to Abū-ʾl-Muḥsin, son of Sultan Ḫusayn Bāyar (1438-1506). 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).

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-Kāṭī (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 Masʿūdī* ("Prayers") by Masʿūd b. Maḥmūd b. Yūsuf as-Samarqandī in the Persian language, the basics of Muslim law. Copy of 1847.


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’īz al-Kāshīfī and his writings. Not to be confused with his famous son Fakhr ad-Dīn (d. 939/1532-3), the author of the *Rashahāt ’ayn al-hayāt*.


history of Sayrām with a catalogue of local places of veneration. 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. 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. 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 14th century. 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-


565 AIA MON RK, D. 110, f. 2, 6 (available on CD).


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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.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.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 Scienti-
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. Thus, 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,

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570 Ibid., f. 26.
571 Ibid., ff. 28-32.
572 Ibid., f. 28.
there were a number of scholars in the republic that regarded themselves as Arabists: T. Kuntuganov, Zh. Zhulaev, M. Kadyrbayev, 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); Kadyrbayev and Sarybaev 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 Kadyrbayev, 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

573 Ibid., f. 33
575 “Gorokhvodatskii Ivan Stepanovich,” in: Qazaqstannyng tarikh ghlymy, 338.
specifications). 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. 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. 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. 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.580

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).581 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, 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.583 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.


581 Ibid., D. 130, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1956, f. 145.

582 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 redkikh 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 Rossiskoi akademii nauk. Katalog vystavki (Moscow, 2008); D.A. Morozov, Kratkii katalog arabskikh rukopisei i dokumentov Rossiskogo gosudarstvennogo arkhiva drevnih aktov (Moscow, 1996).

583 OVA KN MON RK, F. 2, Op. 10, D. 130, Perepiska s Institutom istorii, arkheologii i etnografii po nauchnym voprosam, 1956, ff. 149-212.
Also from the second attempt by Gorokhvodatskii almost nothing was implemented; neither Matveev nor Khil’chenko 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.

cording 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 Dakhshleiger 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. Dakhshleiger 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

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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. 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. 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.

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 kandidat nauk. All others did not have the suitable training for scientific research. Therefore it was impossible to create the group of Is-


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.  

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 16th-17th centuries and later published a book on this subject.  

A. Anvarov translated the Uighur poetic historical treatise Ghazāt dar mulk-i Chīn (“Holy War in the Kingdom of China”) by Mullah Bilāl (b. 1825). A.K. Sultangalieva worked on the Arabic source ‘Ajā’īb al-maqdūr fī nawā’īb Tīmūr (“The Marvels of Fate in the History of Tīmūr”) by Ibn ‘Arabshāh (1389-1450). 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

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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 Tikhonov[^599] 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 Kazakhstani 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 Kazakh history. Ibragimov’s main task was to learn how to work with Oriental manuscripts and to learn at least the Persian language. So Ibragimov went to Leningrad.

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.”


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 Rūzbihān that Kazakhs had “the customs of unbelief”, Ibragimov declared that such an accusation of

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Ibid., 143-144.


Faḍlallāh al-Amlī 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 Miḥmān nāma-yi Bukhrāʾ (“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,\(^\text{609}\) which he argued are forbidden by Islamic law. Ibragimov did not touch upon the role of nomadic life style in the history of the Kazakhs; instead he only analyzed the settlement civilization of Southern Kazakhstan. Ibragimov formulated the conception that the Kazakh people (narydnošč’) 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\(^\text{610}\) and Nikolai Baskakov,\(^\text{611}\) Iranian Evgenii Bertel’s and the Arabists Evgenii Beliaev\(^\text{612}\) and Kharlampii Baranov\(^\text{613}\) had


\(^{611}\) 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 Nasilov 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. 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. 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. 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. Similar to other cases of source publications

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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, otnosishchikhsia k istorii Zolotoi Ordy, vol. 2, Izvlecheniia iz persidskikh sochenii, sobranne V.G. Tizengauzenom i obrabotanny A.A. Romaskевичem 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.\footnote{Klavdia Antonovna Pishchulina: Materialy k biobibliografii uchenykh Kazakhstana, ed. by Kanat Uskenbai (Almaty, 2009), 50.}

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,\footnote{Posthumously published as: V. P. Iudin, “Persidskie i tiurkskie istochniki po istorii kazakhskogo naroda XV-XVIII vekov,” in: V. P. Iudin, Tsentral’naia Azia, 17-71.} 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.
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 Chingīz-nāma, was published only after Iudin’s death and only due to the efforts of his students Mervert 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 (kruzhiok) 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*)\(^{624}\), 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 istoriologiiia*). 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.\(^{625}\)

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.”\(^{626}\) 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 Naṣīr ad-Dīn and the Muslim symbol of faith (*kalima-yi

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

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

According to Iudin’s conception, the Mongol elite created a World religion which he called Chingizizm. This intriguing hypothesis was based on research of court historiography, but unfortunately, Veniamin Iudin did not have enough time to describe Chingizizm 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 Chingizizm as a political-judicial concept rather than a religious system. Iudin outlined only very general characteristics of Chingizizm; what was really new in his concept was his perception of Chingizizm as a World religion. Iudin placed his Chingizizm 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 Chingizizm 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 predystorii 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 Rezā 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 Rezā 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.
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.634

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 Rashūdī* by Mirzā Muḥammad Ḥaydar and the fourth part of a historical-geographical work *Bahr al-asrār fi manāqib al-akhyār* by Maḥmūd ibn Wali (16th c.).635 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.636 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 dissertation637 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.638 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-Echen639 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 16<sup>th</sup> 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.<sup>640</sup> In 1979 at the Alma-Ata Institute of History during the defense of her kandidatskaia dissertation on the topic <i>South-Eastern Kazakhstan in the mid-14th-early 16<sup>th</sup> centuries</i>, 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 ethnus in sources is fixed well after the actual appearance of the feudal <i>narodnost’</i>. She exemplified this by reference to Bobojan Gafurov’s work <i>The Tajiks</i> (1972), where a similar situation was illustrated for Tajik and Uzbek history,<sup>641</sup> 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.<sup>642</sup>

Kanat Uskenbai published the protocol of the discussion of Pishchulina’s 1979 doctoral defense. At that event the Kazakh scholars Begedzhan 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.<sup>643</sup> This was in full correspondence with

<sup>640</sup> K. A. Pishchulina, <i>Iugo-Vostochnyi Kazakhstan</i>, 259, 262-263.

<sup>641</sup> B. B. Gafurov, <i>Tadjiki: Drevneishaia, drevniaia i srednevekovaia istoriia</i> (Moscow, 1972).

<sup>642</sup> K. A. Pishchulina, <i>Iugo-Vostochnyi Kazakhstan</i>, 223.

<sup>643</sup> [K. Uskenbai], “Tema Mogulistana i zarozhdения 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 autochthontism, 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 Artsikhovskii 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 Mu‘īnī* by Mu‘īn 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 Klavdia 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 wrote 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.649

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;650 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


650 [V. V. Bartol’d, “Kirgizy. Istoricheskii ocherk [1927],” in: V. V. Bartol’d, Sochineniiia, 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, Sochineniiia, vol 2, part 1, Obshchie raboty po istorii Srednej Azii, Raboty po istorii Kavkaza i Vostochnoi Evropy (Moscow, 1963), 547-626.]
on the History of Central Asia\textsuperscript{651}, 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. Petersburg, 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.”\textsuperscript{652}

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

\textsuperscript{652} Interview with Sergei G. Kliashtorny 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 Corps 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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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 Aleksandrovicha Romodina (K desiatiletiiu so dna smerti),” Peterburgskoe vostokovedenie 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. 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 on the basis of units from the former Institute of History, Archeology and Ethnography. This positive tendency in Kazakh science began with Veniamin Iudin.

A clear contradiction in Kliashtorny’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. Kliashtorny 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 Kliashtorny 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 Kliashtorny 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 Kliashtorny’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 Kliashtorny, 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-

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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. Kliashtornyi, 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 Eshmukhamedovich 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.\footnote{B. E. Kumekov, \textit{Gosudarstvo kimakov IX-XI vekov po arabskim istochnikam} (Alma-Ata, 1972).}

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 15th-16th 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?”

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.”

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.


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 region 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. Kliashtorny’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 *shajaras*, 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 Muhammad, 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

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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. 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.”

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

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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.672 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.673 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

672 OVA KN MON RK, F. 11, Op. 1 Id, 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 publication. Together with Nastich and Kirgiz colleagues Shukhovtsov also participated in a manuscript expedition to Kirgizia, which revealed a number of interesting narratives, including a unique manuscript of al-Fawā’id al-wāfiya bi-ḥall mushkilāt al-Kāfiya by Jāmī. 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 Nilovich Nastich was born in Alma-Ata in 1949. He also went to Leningrad University to study Arabic. After graduation from Leningrad 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.

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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 re-
marked however that “our contacts with Akimushkin, Kushev, Romodin, Bol’shakov and
others were merely personal, rather than institutional.”678 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*679 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 re-
tirement 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 Orien-
tal textology) and was able to conduct complicated research tasks and huge scientific pro-
jects. 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, be-
ing forced to participate in numerous Institute programs. In the late 1980s the group quick-
ly disappeared. Nusupbekov and Dakhshleiger, the administrative tandem that had created

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.

679 http://info.charm.ru/library/Nastich/BMU.pdf
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 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. 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. 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 (shajaras) and the tribal structure of Kazakh society. According to Irina V. Erofeeva, the quest for shajaras was included into the wider ethnographical study of Kazakhs tribes as conducted by the Institute’s employees Vostrov and Mukanov. 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. 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 20th century was men-


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

684 Ibid.

685 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 zhuza (Alma-Ata, 1974).

686 Narratives of this type from Western Siberia have been a subject of my own research. See: A.K. Bustanov, “Sufiiskie legendy ob islamizatsii Sibir,” in: 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 Tynyshpaev, 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 Qazaqtïn shïghu tegi turali (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.


688 M. Tynyshpaev, Materialy k istorii Kirgiz-kazakskogo naroda (chitanie v Turkestanskom Oitude Russkogo Geograficheskogo Obschestva v 1924 i 1925 gg.) (Tashkent, 1925)


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, zhuž) 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),692 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 Ka-


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 endeavors 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 (aqsaqaldar) 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 Arghîn, Qîpshaq, Naiman rulari zhiktelgen, ertedegi eski shezhïrden zhene kopti korgen kariïlar auzînan zhazïlp 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, Proiskhozhdenie 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 *shajara* at face value. 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. 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.

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. 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

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695 Ibid., f. 8. Today the Kazakh scholars are still trying to verify the data of genealogical legends by archeological materials. See: A.K. Muminov, *Rodoslovnaia Mukhtara Auezova*, 100-104.


698 Ibid., f. 27.
remembered in our interview,\(^6\) 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 *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,\(^7\) 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 *zhuzes* were present and

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\(^6\) 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 pretensions 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).\textsuperscript{704} 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.\textsuperscript{705}

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.\textsuperscript{706} 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-

\textsuperscript{704} M. Akhmetzianov, Tatarskie shedzhere (issledovanie tatarskih shedzhere v istochnikovedcheskom i lingvisticheskom aspektakh po spiskam XIX-XX vv.) (Kazan’, 1991), 23.

\textsuperscript{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\textsuperscript{707} 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.\textsuperscript{708}

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.\textsuperscript{709} 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.\textsuperscript{710} 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.\textsuperscript{711} 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

\textsuperscript{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).


\textsuperscript{709} Interview with Mervert Kh. Abuseitova, Institute of Oriental Studies, Almaty, Kazakhstan, 18 June 2010.


\textsuperscript{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.\footnote{Private letter from Amantai Isin (Petropavlovsk, Kazakhstan) to the author, July 2010.}

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.\footnote{M.A. Usmanov, “The Struggle for the Re-Establishment of Oriental Studies in Twentieth-Century Kazan,” in Kemper & Conermann (ed.), The Heritage of Soviet Oriental Studies, 169-202.} 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 \textit{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 \textit{fihrists} of such collections at the Institute of History, the discovery of documents in the Yasawî shrine, and the results of manuscript and \textit{shajara} studies were obvious markers of the serious presence of a local written tradition, which
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 pursuit 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.